SUPREME
ECONOMIC
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EUROPEAN UNION

END-LINE EVALUATION REPORT

SECURITY, PROTECTION AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (SUPREME) PROGRAMME IN TEREGO, MADI-OKOLLO, OBONGI AND MOYO DISTRICT

April 2024

World Vision

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RURAL INITIATIVE FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT - WN
RICE - WN

END-LINE EVALUATION REPORT

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AFFIRMATION

The consortium of World Vision Uganda, RICE West Nile, ZOA and SNV implemented SUPREME interventions in the districts of Madi Okollo, Terego, Obongi and Moyo since inception in July 2020. This endline evaluation was commissioned in March 2024 to provide relevant information on the impact of SUPREME project interventions and spar learning from the project. As such, except as acknowledged by the references in this report to other authors and publications, the primary quantitative and qualitative data collected throughout the evaluation exercise remains the property of the communities and families described in this document. Information and data must be used only with their consent.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
BTVET	Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSI	Coping Strategies Index
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EoP	End of Project/Programme Evaluation
ERI	Enabling Rural Innovation
EU	European Union
EUTF	European Union Trust Fund
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMNR	Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration
GoU	Government of Uganda
HH	Household
KII	Key Informant Interviews
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RICE-WN	Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment West Nile
RIMA	Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis
SDC	Saving and Development Cluster
SNV	Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (Netherlands Development Organisation)
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SUPREME	Security, Protection and Economic Empowerment
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNHCR	United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees
WVUK	World Vision Health Organisation
WVU	World Vision Uganda

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Duration:	4 years from 28 July 2020 to 28 July 2024
Partners & Budget breakdown (€):	
SNV	3,446,856
RICE	1,887,543
ZOA	2,489,801
WVU	3,329,475
Total budget	11,737,321
Project Participants	
Direct	27,372
Indirect	156,268
Total Project participants	183,640
Districts of operation	Terego, Obongi, Moyo & Madi-Okollo

The Security, Protection and Economic Empowerment (SUPREME) project was an umbrella of six partners funded by European Union under European Union Trust Fund (EUTF). Led by WVUK, the consortium of World Vision Uganda, World Vision Austria, ZOA, SNV, and RICE-West Nile delivered the Economic Empowerment component to direct and indirect project participants (women, men and youth) organized in 1,000 savings and development clusters (SDCs). The project's overall goal was to improve overall economic well-being for refugees and host communities in the districts of operation in Northern Uganda by 2024.

Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

The endline evaluation (EoP) assessed whether SUPREME achieved intended impact, assessed against the new OECD-DAC evaluation criteria checking on the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of project activities. The EoP assessed the project's design effectiveness in meeting the intended objectives as per indicators. Data collection was from 18th to 27th March 2024, started with training of Research Assistants (RAs). A cross-sectional design was adopted with a sample of 675 Savings and Development Cluster (SDC) HHs (188 Refugees, 487 host); 625 youth (400 host, 225 refugees); 416 SDC groups and 407 SDC mixed group members. A total of 63 key informant interviews (KIIs) and 20 focus group discussion (FGDs) were conducted. The evaluators interacted with stakeholders including WVU, SNV, ZOA and RICE West Nile staff, district and sub-county officials, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), UNHCR and other community structures like SDC groups. Validation meeting took place on 19 April 2024 in Arua.

Evaluation Findings

Relevance

SUPREME design was a highly participatory process that involved partners and stakeholders from community to district level. The project plans were logically designed with clear interventions under each output and outcome. The indicators selected at goal, outcome and output level were aligned

to the identified prioritised needs and interventions, specifically to the WVUK, WVU, ZOA, RICE West Nile and MFI Strategic Plans, National Development Plan III (NDPIII) which allowed for comparison and contribution to the national agenda. Other indications integrated gender and disability within the designs which allowed for disaggregation of data.

Prior to the project, the project participants faced food insecurity, adopted negative coping mechanism, and owned no or few productive assets (assets easily convertible to cash). By EoP, composite productive assets index increased from 0.081 (host, 0.085; refugees 0.077) at baseline to 0.547 (host 0.592, refugees 0.498). This improvement implies that due to the project, project participants now own physical assets that enable them to establish sustainable enterprises and accumulate wealth for better HH wellbeing, now, and into the future, to ensure sustainability when the project ends. Similarly, at baseline project participants had a higher coping strategy index of 5.8 (host, 6.3; refugees 5.6) but reduced to 2.8 (host 2.4, refugees 3.7). A higher coping strategy index suggests that households use harmful coping strategies when they do not have enough food or enough money to buy food. The proportion of the targeted population that was employed or self-employed in sustainable livelihood activities over the last 12 months increased from 25% (host, 33%; refugees, 17) at baseline to 78.1% (host, 79.9%; refugees, 73.3%) at endline. The project's interventions were relevant evidenced by the improved food security, the increased levels of employment and, the increased resilience of refugees and host communities thus improved wellbeing.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the interventions was assessed through the performance of the different outcome and output indicators in line with meeting the EoP targets. Overall, the project had a significant increase in all the project indicators in comparison to the baseline. Findings show that 78.0% of the project indicators (14 out of 18 indicators) met and surpassed their targets. All the 3 indicators under the goal were achieved satisfactorily while two out of the three indicators under the outcome surpassed their targets. At output level, 82% indicators (9 out of 11 indicators) met and surpassed their targets. The project therefore significantly contributed to improved overall economic well-being for refugees and host communities in Terego, Madi Okollo, Obongi and Moyo districts over the last 4 years through: increased access to decent employment and economic opportunities for refugees and host communities, increased financial inclusion and social cohesion among Savings and Development Clusters (SDCs), sustainable agricultural value chains and non-agricultural enterprises developed and young women and men (aged 18-30) from SDC member HHs were linked to private sector employment. Factors for the success included mindset change, business development trainings (development of business plans, record keeping, financial literacy). The project also had enabling rural innovation approach which strengthened farmers' social and entrepreneurial capacities in order to make the transition from subsistence to market–oriented agriculture while safeguarding food security and sustainable management of natural resources.

Efficiency

Project resources were efficiently used to realize desired benefits. It leveraged on WVU central system to ensure exploitation of economies of scale. The project budget utilization and activity implementation index at EoP was 93% compared to 57% at midterm with total spend of €10.959 million and €6.742 million respectively. Findings showed that goal-level indicators (2 out of 3) were achieved by endline and only coping strategy index score was marginally below target (EoP, 2.8 against target of 2.9) demonstrating efficient utilisation of funds. The project had a dedicated M&E Officer as well as the SUPREME PMU Reporting and Accountability Officer at the Project Management Unit which was key in ensuring aspects of M&E and reporting were handled without delay.

Impact

SUPREME impacted the project participants in the four districts, and the overall goal was achieved. Findings indicate that nearly 94.4% (host, 93.6%; refugees, 96.6%) of targeted HHs were investing in income generating activities compared to 21% (host, 26%; refugees 17%) at baseline. About 96% (host, 98.3%; refugees, 93.6%) of targeted HHs saved part of their income compared to 52% (host, 66%; refugees, 37%) at baseline due to increased access to financial services, availability and access to credit and business trainings received from the project. By EoP, composite productive assets index increased from 0.081 (host, 0.085; refugees 0.077) at baseline to 0.547 (host, 0.592; refugees, 0.498) implying project participants now own physical assets that enable them to establish sustainable enterprises and accumulate wealth for better HH wellbeing, now, and into the future, to ensure sustainability when the project ends.

The impact was summarised in the qualitative data by a refugee welfare committee member in Rigbo sub-county who said *"the grants are especially important because they elevated some individuals to a higher level, and I am a living example. Imagine hosting five people at home and only two are registered with UNHCR where you receive UGX.24,000 (€6) monthly. But with this support (grant), I am able to pay fees for two of my children who are in secondary school to a tune of over a million shillings. Because of the project grant, I can feed my family where I spend about UGX.400,000 (€100) monthly on food alone. As you can see, I have realized the positive impact in my life, otherwise without it, it was going to be difficult for me. This means that if it can be boosted up, it can make more members to reach a certain fair level."*

Sustainability of Project interventions

The project worked in partnership with many stakeholders such as technical and political district and sub-county stakeholders, community groups and project participants. As part of ownership, project participants were involved in annual review, planning, and budgeting processes, including participating in making decisions. Through these, community members and stakeholders had an opportunity to contribute to the changes made, which fostered community ownership right from the district level to the community level. The project also strengthened several community systems and structures such as SDC groups to sustain the project interventions, built local capacity and empowered communities to take ownership through skill development, knowledge transfer, institutional and financial strengthening to enhance resilience and self-reliance of stakeholders like SDCs, individual farmers and HHs. Community ownership was enhanced through community contributions providing land for agriculture and demonstration gardens for farmer groups.

Sustainability pillars in place can be judged from testimonies of some project participants. An SDC member in Lefori sub-county, Moyo remarked that "*We are confident to continue on our own. We have made rules in the group; these rules will guide us on what we do."*

Crosscutting Issues

Generally, the project mainstreamed gender, disability and environment into their plans, activities, and indicators. This was seen with the intentionality in the design process that targeted both women and men and people with disability. Additionally, the climate smart agricultural practices promoted by the project such as FMNR were geared towards conserving and protecting the environment.

Challenges

This section explains some of the challenges faced by the project during its implementation:

i. **Limited land for agriculture among the refugee communities:** The refugees are allocated small pieces of land/plots of 30 by 30 metres on which to construct a house and do farming. This severely limited refugees' ability to expand to large scale farming and often times, some hired land for farming which was quite expensive to sustain.

ii. **Impact of COVID 19:** The COVID-19 pandemic paralysed project interventions due lockdown for nearly two years. This impaired effective achievement of project results due to restrictions on movement and meetings, key aspects during implementation.

iii. **Creation of new administrative units**: At the time of the design of SUPREME, the present Obongi district was a county in Moyo district with its Palorinya sub-county hosting the refugees. Its elevation to the district status in 2019 meant that Moyo would remain with only host project participants, which is against the government's Humanitarian response nexus that recommends a 70%:30% shared benefits from an intervention for refugees and host communities respectively.

iv. **Lack of startup capital for** project **participants:** The project participants faced a lack of capital to invest in their enterprises. This inhibited achievement of optimal results in as far as project participants starting new income generating activities (IGAs) after training.

v. **High food prices:** At the time of the EoP, project participants expressed the challenge of the high food prices that limited their ability to save and invest.

Lessons Learned

The key lessons learned during this evaluation include the following;

i. **The formation of mixed SDC groups promoted social cohesion among members:** Findings showed 90.4% (host, 92.6%; refugees, 88.9%) of project participants in mixed SDC groups reported increased trust and confidence between the host and refugee populations with this cohesion promoting peaceful co-existence. Potentially forming youth SDCs alongside existing ones could have been more impactful.

ii. **Community structures foster sustainability**: The project worked closely with existing community structures such as sub-county, village agents and accountability champions who are part of the community. This enhanced active Involvement of the project participants and strengthened sustainability.

iii. **Youth programming should take care of different youth groups:** The design of SUPREME intervention was not specific or defined target project participants like criminals, drug abuse, teenage mothers. It generally considered hosts and refugees. There is a need to target particular categories of project participants who are vulnerable, often left out and need specific interventions like out-of-school youth, and teenage mothers.

iv. **Women involvement accelerates impact**: Findings showed that nearly eight in ten project participants in the project were women, whose participation in project interventions fostered community involvement and ownership. This catalysed success of many initiatives due to their loyalty and active participation.

v. **Periodic joint review meetings with all the consortium partners are critical for success:** The quarterly partner review meetings were effective because they tracked progress with the targeted activities and design new strategies for any bottlenecks. This kept the project on course to achieving its targets. The participatory planning by the consortium equally minimised duplication of efforts.

vi. **Linking young people to financial institutions and providing support to access loans is critical for growth and sustainability**: The project linked project participants to MFIs (Vision Fund and Centenary Bank) to enable them to access affordable loans and credit. SDCs and their members are now clients of MFIs and are receiving additional credits.

vii. **The exposure visits are critical:** Farmer visits were effective in enhancing the adoption of best practices in farming; which enhanced learning on different production strategies, technologies and crop varieties, and the rate of adoption was high. It also encouraged peer-to-peer learning for sustainability.

Recommendations

Basing on the findings of this evaluation, the following are the recommendations to the project, Government and other Partners.

i. **Create linkages with private sector to open up employment for opportunities for skilled youth:** It is critical that if the employment challenge is to be addressed for skilled youth, there is need to create partnerships with the private sector like Uganda Small Scale Industries Association, Private Sector Foundation and other agencies to widen the catchment area for potential employment opportunities.

ii. **Adoption of the mixed group approach in future interventions:** Findings revealed that the mixed group approach was critical in fostering community cohesion and social inclusion which accelerated achievement of project results. It is recommended that future projects in similar context could adopt this approach for accelerated results.

iii. **Digitalisation of cash box for e-recording of savings**: Findings showed that the process of rolling out e-recording of savings was slow. By EoP, only 20.7% of SDC groups had digitised their savings. SUPREME to work with DreamSave to ensure digitalisation to improve trust and transparency among project participants.

iv. **Involve older and male household heads in livelihood programme:** Over 50% of HH heads are male in both refugees and host populations. Studies show that ages and gender of HH heads affect HH wellbeing and livelihoods. For optimal impact, a project should engage older HH heads in food security interventions as well as male household heads.

v. **Involve private sector in marketable employable skills development programmes** – document review showed that Uganda is a private sector led economy which employs many youths and it employs over three-quarters of people. Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) report shows that private sector employs the largest number of people with 77 per cent, while public sector stood at 23 per cent. SDC members trained through vocational institutes potentially get opportunities in other areas of Uganda which requires understanding and working in partnership with Private Sector Foundation of Uganda (PSFU), Uganda Small Scale Industries Association (USSIA) and Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE). Therefore, interventions aimed at skilling youth should be designed in partnership with private sector umbrella organisations.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

SUPREME project was implemented in the districts of Terego, Madi Okollo, Obongi and Moyo in West-Nile Sub-region of Uganda. This EoP was conducted to document and inform stakeholders (the donor, partners and project participants) of the project's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, the potential impact in relation to relevant standards, challenges, recommendations and document the key lessons learned. It utilised a comparative approach of baseline, midterm evaluation and EoP against the 4-year target to assess whether the project objectives were achieved.

1.2 Background

SUPREME project was an umbrella of six partners funded by EUTF that started on 28 July 2020 and ends on 28 July 2024. The WVUK - led consortium included World Vision Uganda, World Vision Austria, ZOA, SNV, and RICE-West Nile that delivered the Economic Empowerment component. The project reached 27,372 direct project participants (women, men and youth) organised in 1,000 savings and development clusters (SDCs); 50 challenge fund grantees and 2,100 youths in cohorts 1 and 2. The project covered three of Uganda's refugee-hosting districts - Terego, Madi-Okollo and Obongi - and Moyo, which during the design of the Project, was hosting refugees. The refugee population in the target districts is Obongi – 130,889, Madi-Okollo and Terego a combined total of 224,671 (UNHCR, March 2024). Refugees are expected to remain in Uganda for an extended period since the situation in South Sudan, and DR Congo remains fragile.

The project's outcome was to increase access to formal employment and economic opportunities for refugees and host communities. The goal was improved overall economic well-being for refugees and host communities in the districts of operation. The outputs were 1) Financial inclusion and social cohesion among savings and development clusters increased; 2) Sustainable agricultural value chains and non-agricultural enterprises developed; and 3) Young women and men from SDC member households are linked to private sector employment.

The project's Theory of Change (ToC) was based on financial inclusion and social cohesion as necessary preconditions for the economic self-reliance of vulnerable populations. Financial inclusion was essential because it facilitated effective and efficient engagement in markets and enhanced access to key financial services and inputs, including savings, credit and financial safety nets. Social cohesion was necessary to ensure the inclusion of least resilient households, to create mutually beneficial connections between the host and refugee populations, and facilitate group-based economic activities. These were essential, as vulnerable populations were frequently unable to successfully engage with markets at an individual or household level. These two preconditions were synergetic and were developed simultaneously and complementarily through small community group-based approaches.

Uganda maintains an open-door policy to refugees. As of March 2024, the country had over 1,611,732 refugees and asylum seekers (UNHCR, Mar 2024). The refugees generally coexist peacefully with their host communities. Most refugees reside in rural settlements alongside local communities on land mainly donated by the host communities. The Government of Uganda and local communities incur high costs on the protection and management of refugees, and the

provision of essential services (UNDP 2017), with an average cost of US$277 per refugee per annum (excluding tax exemptions).

In the entire refugee-hosting areas, there is a heavy strain on the availability of resources, infrastructure and services, further compounding the long-standing difficulties within the development plans of hosting communities. The tension between refugees and host communities impacts on the protection and safety of both refugees and host communities. The majority (62%) of the Uganda refugee population live in the districts of Northern Uganda or West Nile, with the other regions of Uganda combined constituting 38%. Over 57% of Uganda's refugee population are South Sudanese living in West Nile districts, and more than 80% are women and children (66% of Uganda's refugees are under the age of 18).

1.3 Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

The main purpose of the EoP was to assess whether the project achieved its intended impact and assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of SUPREME project activities since its inception, using the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. The EoP also assessed the project design's effectiveness in meeting the intended objectives as per the project indicators. It further assessed the cross-cutting issues, including gender and social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion as regards the project's impact on different genders, vulnerable groups, and the overall community dynamics. The EoP analysed how the project interventions considered these aspects and their influence on achieving the project's economic empowerment outcomes.

1.3.1 Specific objectives of the evaluation

The specific objectives of the endline evaluation were;

1) Assess the performance of the project against key Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) evaluation parameters.

2) Assess the achievement of the project's overall objective, the outcomes and indicators presented in the Logical Framework and compare to the baseline and midline evaluations (where relevant) within the project timeframe.

3) Identify lessons learnt and explore potential promising practices and innovations across the project interventions (EDGs, Block Grants, Challenge Fund, Youth skilling, FMNR, Enterprise Development).

4) To measure the extent to which the project objectives and design responded to project participants' needs.

5) To measure the extent to which the project achieved its objectives.

6) To measure the extent to which the project has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

7) To assess whether the established project structures will promote sustainability beyond the project implementation period.

8) Identify successes and gaps in the action implementation for recommendations to the donor and implementers for improving Programme delivery in upcoming grants, or for future Actions.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

This section provides a description of the general approach and methodology used during the EoP. It outlines the data sources, survey design and sampling procedures, data collection methods and tools, data analysis processes, quality assurance and ethical considerations during the evaluation process.

2.2 Evaluation design

To address the objectives of the study, the EoP adopted a cross-sectional research design that employed a mixed methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) for data collection. A detailed literature review and desk studies were conducted to ascertain relevant information. Qualitative techniques used included desk review, KIIs, FGDs and observations. Quantitative methods involved survey questionnaires that were administered to household (HH) project participants who included; SDC members and youth years disaggregated by demographic characteristics, particularly age, sex, and residence status (host communities and refugees). In combination with Resilience Index Measurement Analysis (RIMA), the study team conducted FGDs and KIIs. The following methods, tools and target project participants were engaged during the field data collection.

(i) Household survey for host communities and refugees (targeted the SDCs);

(ii) Youth who participated in skills development with SNV;

(iii) FGDs with SUPREME project participants (refuges and host communities);

(iv) KIIs included partner staffs from WVU, SNV, ZOA and RICE-WN; and officials at the sub-county, district, private sector players, BTVET institutions, Community Development Officers (CDOs) at sub-county, district levels and Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

Secondary data was collected on a number of indicators relevant to the EoP for purposes of triangulation and validating the findings. Such data complemented the evaluation findings while data generated from the baseline and midterm review was used to compare with the EoP findings on respective indicators to provide trends and ascertain the level of change since project inception.

2.3 The Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA-II)

The RIMA methodology developed by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) provides statistically sound regression estimates and causal relationship on household resilience to food insecurity against both direct and indirect measures/shocks; provides better opportunities for assessing the effectiveness of interventions and statistical comparisons between population categorisations/disaggregation. RIMA is an innovative quantitative approach that estimates resilience to food insecurity and generates the evidence for more effectively assisting vulnerable populations.

RIMA allows explaining why and how some households cope with shocks and stressor better than others do and provides rigorous framework for humanitarian and long-term development initiatives to build food secure and resilient livelihoods. RIMA is focused on household. The household is the unit within which the most important decisions to manage uncertain events are made. It is the unit that benefits the positive effects of policies (interventions) and suffers for negative effects of shocks.

RIMA-II, an improvement in RIMA following methodological reviews by FAO assesses household resilience on four pillars - Adaptive Capacity (AC), Social Safety Nets (SSN), Assets (AST) and Access to Basic Services (ABS) as summarised in Table 1. Assets (AST) are the only pillar that provides information on income, allowing a better capture of the real household revenue. Shocks and food security indicators are considered exogenous and not included in regression estimation procedures.

It is important to note that programme indicators for this project included Refugee Response Plan (RRP) indicators and Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA) model indicators. RIMA assessment questions were integrated in the household survey tools to capture elements of the pillars of resilience in line with the indicators tracked at baseline and midterm.

Table 1: Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis Pillars

Pillars of Resilience	Definition
Adaptive Capacity (AC)	Ability of a household to adapt to a new situation and develop new livelihoods strategies.
Social Safety Nets (SSN)	Ability of households to access help from relatives and friends, from government and timely and reliable assistance provided by international agencies, charities, and NGOs.
Assets (AST)	Assets comprise both productive and non-productive assets. Productive assets are key elements of livelihood, enabling households to produce consumable or tradable goods. These include land, livestock and durables. Context-specific sets of productive assets which are able to determine the creation of the household income are evaluated. Tangible non-productive assets include house, vehicle, and household amenities reflect living standards and wealth of a household.
Access to Basic Services (ABS)	ability of a household to meet basic needs, and access and effective use of basic services; e.g., access to schools, health facilities; infrastructures and markets.

Source: FAO

2.4 Study Area and Focus of the Study

The EoP was conducted in the four districts of Terego, Madi Okollo, Obongi and Moyo in the West Nile sub-region. The EoP targeted project participants from both the host and refugee communities with focus on SDC members, youth, SDC groups and the SDC mixed groups. The content of the EoP focused on documenting and informing stakeholders of the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, the challenges, the lessons learned and the appropriateness of the programme in terms of community needs, project design, implementation and activities. The EoP considered all project interventions since inception in 18 July 2020 to date.

2.5 Targeted Respondents

The primary study population included SDC members, youth trained on vocational skills and Challenge Fund grantees in both refugee and host communities in the four target districts. Other groups included key informants and partners in the project implementation areas i.e., World Vision Uganda, ZOA, SNV and RICE - WN (Staff and Village Agents). Other key stakeholders included private sector actors, local leaders at district and sub-county technical (CDOs, Production Officers) and political leadership, and parish chiefs, SDC leaders, opinion leaders, OPM and UNHCR.

2.6 Sampling Methods and Sample Size Determination

The EoP adopted both probability and non-probability sampling designs. Non-probability sampling (purposive sampling) was used to invite respondents to participate in the KIIs and FGDs, while a probability (multistage random sampling strategy) was used to select HHs for the HH survey. The selection of KII participants was guided by project staff and partners, who provided the list of key people to interview. FGD participants were selected based on: 1) the person being a project participant; 2) a member of an SDC; 3) those expected to have adequate knowledge of project activities to provide accurate and reliable information.

2.6.1 Quantitative Sample Size Determination

The quantitative survey focused on HH survey targeting SDC members within HHs in zones and villages for refugees and host communities respectively. The same sampling approach at baseline was used at EoP. A **two-stage cluster sampling design** was adopted for this evaluation. The first stage involved a random selection of clusters (villages) where respondents were randomly selected. The second stage involved sampling respondents from the villages and zones i.e., SDC members, youth trained on vocational skills and challenge fund grantees. This was mainly guided by the SUPREME technical staff.

All HHs with eligible respondent (host or refugees in SDC) qualified for the survey. To ensure **randomisation**, not just any respondent was selected, a **central point** in the village was identified to randomly select a direction from the central point and count the number of HHs between the central point and the edge of the village in direction in order to get the starting point (HH) of the survey.

- From the total number of houses counted, one number was randomly selected. A number as high as the total number of houses in the direction was chosen. This random number determined how many houses must be passed before starting house.
- The RAs went back to the initial starting point and started walking in the same direction as he/she did, counting off the houses, until s/he reached the house s/he randomly selected. This selected HH was the starting HH and the RAs interviewed the family then went to the next nearest house in the selected direction.
- If, at the end of the cluster area, or at a natural boundary (river, large fields, etc.), interviewers were required to turn; if possible, turn to the right and proceed. This involved tossing a pen or pencil to determine a new direction, if necessary.

2.6.1.1 Sample Size Calculation

a) Sampling for household survey

To ensure data generated at EoP was comparable with baseline and midterm findings, the Taro Yamane sample size calculation formula below was used to determine the HH survey sample size for the evaluation.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N\left(e^2\right)} .+U$$

Where;

n = total sample size for the evaluation;

The **Probability Proportional to size (PPS)** approach was used to determine the sample sizes for each of the sampled villages in each district. Data provided by SUPREME on SDC membership indicated a distribution 39:61 between Refugees and host respectively. Total planned project participants to be reached was 27, 372 and actual reached 25,282 (balance of 2,090 represents SDC members not reached by SUPREME). In terms of district distribution, Terego had 34.0%, Obongi and Moyo 29.0% each and Madi-Okollo 8.0%. This distribution is due to project targets in each district contained in project database. The gender distribution between male and female showed that 30.0% of the SDC members were male and 70.0% female. These statistics were used in the estimation of sample sizes for the respective categories of respondents at district level targeting both refugee and host communities. Table 2 shows the distribution of the sample sizes per district and refugee or host communities as calculated using PPS. The planned sample size was 674 but achieved 675.

Table 2: Household sample distribution by district and respondent status

		Planned		Total Sample size		
District	Population	Refugees	Host	Planned	Actual	Percentage
Terego	8,596	91	140	231	248	107%
Madi Okollo	1,947	20	31	52	53	102%
Obongi	7,433	78	120	197	166	84%
Moyo	7,306	-	194	194	194	100%
Total	25,282	189	485	674	675	118%

Source: Primary Data, 2024.

a) Sampling for youth (men and women)

A total of 2,034 youth who enrolled at the BTVETs were skilled in cohorts 1 and 2. Of these, 156 were from Madi-Okollo, 627 from Obongi, 540 from Moyo and 711 from Terego. The sampling for these youths followed the Taro Yamen (1967) formula to obtain representative sample. Using the probability-proportional-to-size sampling methods, the sample for the youth was distributed as illustrated in Table 3. The overall planned sample size for youth was 531 youth but achieved 625 (118%).

Table 3: Youth sample distribution by district, gender and respondent status

Youth	Total Population	Planned			Actual achieved			Percentage achieved
		Host	Refugees	Total	Host	Refugees	Total	
MADI_OKOLO	156	35	9	44	25	18	43	98%
MOYO	540	162	0	162	98	69	167	103%
OBONGI	627	47	94	141	114	81	195	138%
TEREGO	711	66	117	184	129	91	220	120%
Grand Total	2,034	310	220	531	366	259	625	118%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

b) Sampling for SDC Groups and Members

For this category, the sample size was estimated using the Taro Yamen formula. Thus, a total of 314 SDG groups out of 1,000 SDC groups were sampled but achieved was 416 (132%), who were interviewed as a group and 398 SDC mixed group members were sampled but 407 (102%) was achieved, and interviewed as individual members. Distribution across the districts was proportionately done as illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Youth sample distribution by district, gender and respondent status

District	Total Population	SDC Groups			SDC Mixed Group Members		
		Target	Actual	% achieved	Target	Actual	% achieved
Madi-Okollo	77	47	26	55%	43	43	100%
Moyo	289	94	91	97%	0	0	0%
Obongi	294	63	125	198%	165	170	103%
Terego	340	110	174	158%	190	194	102%
Grand Total	1,000	314	416	132%	398	407	102%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

2.6.1.2 Qualitative Sample Size Determination

Purposive sampling was used for identification of key informants, FGD participants, and case studies and MSC stories, who were selected with support of SUPREME project staff based on the level of their involvement in the project interventions, knowledge, length of stay, and influence in the operations of the project.

a) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Key informants were purposively identified based on a list shared by SUPREME. KIIs were conducted with key persons including district and sub-county leadership (political and technical), partner organisations and other stakeholders. These included people with expert knowledge about the project and the subject matter such as sub-county officials, Refugee Welfare Committees, SDC Group members, Village agents, TVET Institutions and MFI officials. A total of 63 KIIs were reached during the evaluation as illustrated in Appendix 7.

b) Focus Group Discussions

Evaluation planned for 24 FGDs but achieved 20 as illustrated in the table below. The evaluation conducted (men and women only) FGDs comprising of 6-12 participants and facilitated by a team of same gender for purposes of getting accurate findings in line with the objectives of the study. Table 5 below shows the number of FGDs conducted by district.

Table 5: FGDs conducted by district by status

	Status/Residence			Rationale
District	Host	Refugee	Total	
Terego	4	3	7	One per sub-county (one for host & the other for refugees)
Madi Okollo	2	2	4	
Obongi	3	1	4	
Moyo	5	-	5	
Total	15	5	20	

Source: Primary Data, 2024

2.7 Data Collection Methods and Tools

The EoP employed various data collection methods and tools for the quantitative and qualitative approaches as detailed below:

2.7.1 Quantitative methods

The quantitative instruments used for the EoP included the household survey, youth survey tool targeting SDC members, youth trained in vocational skills, Challenge Fund grantees, HH heads and youths under the skilling programme. Quantitative instruments included the SDC group survey tool and the mixed group survey tools.

a) Household Survey questionnaires

The EoP team designed household survey questionnaires based on the project indicators and objectives of the assignment using mobile phone Open Data Kit (ODK). The aim was to collect quantitative information that would inform the indicators of the study. The EoP adopted one-on-one interviews as the primary method of data collection to elicit facts and knowledge about the study objectives using a series of interview questions. The aim was to collect quantitative data that would inform the benefits from SUPREME implementation to the project participants. Timely data capture for data collected allowed for immediate preliminary analysis eliminate any errors or enhance improvements, where required.

b) Youth Questionnaire

Youth particularly those that enrolled for skilling development under cohorts 1 and 2 were sampled and interviewed using a youth survey questionnaire designed in ODK to collect and capture data. This tool was designed to respond to indicators and objectives of the study in relation to youth.

c) SDC Groups Questionnaire

The SDC group's questionnaire was designed to assess indicators in relation to the SDC groups such as group savings, digitalisation of group savings, access to loans and markets. The tool was designed using ODK and uploaded onto mobile applications for data collection. One-on-one interviews were conducted with the SDC group leadership such as the chairperson, secretary or treasurer or any member available at the time of the interview.

d) Mixed SDG Members Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed for the SDC members of mixed SDC groups to capture data in relation to group cohesion and social transformation between the refuges and host communities. The questionnaire was designed using ODK and uploaded onto mobile applications. One-on-one interviews were conducted with the members of the mixed SDC groups across the target districts.

2.7.2 Qualitative methods

Qualitative methods such as the KIIs, FGDs, and MSC stories were designed to capture narrative information in relation to the objectives of the EoP. Information collected through these methods was used to complement the quantitative findings.

a) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

An FGD guide with relevant discussion questions was designed to guide FGDs, used as a checklist to facilitate the FGDs. Summaries were generated that contained key themes that emerged from the FGDs and integrated into the report alongside respective data points. This process was guided by a moderator who ensured that the process was participatory to minimise few members dominating the discussions. Information collected from FGDs was analysed and triangulated with the data from other sources to guide and determine assessment values. Data collected from the FGDs was audio-recorded and transcribed and used to support information from other data sources.

b) Key Informant Guide

A key informant guide with relevant discussion questions to guide the interviews was designed to collect relevant qualitative information in relation to the objectives of the EoP. Key informants were identified because of expected "special or expert knowledge" on a topic.

(i) Case Studies/Most Significant Change Stories (MSC) Guide

An MSC stories guide was designed to capture relevant information in relation to change stories of interest. This captured background information about the storyteller, the problem before interventions, interventions in relation to the problem, key successes or changes in the lives of the project participants in relation to the intervention and how this has benefited the community. These were designed in form of guiding questions that helped in the generation of relevant data to write the change stories.

2.8 Measurement of Change

To ascertain impact or change, the following approaches were used:

(i) **Comparing baseline, midterm and EoP:** The consultant used the baseline report and midterm evaluation reports to ascertain whether there was significant difference with EoP, quantified the changes and evaluated impact whether attributable to SUPREME or not. This process was important in providing trends in data right from inception in July 2020 to date.

(ii) **Statistical tests of significance:** Statistical tests using the chi-square calculated P-values were done during analysis to ascertain whether the change calculated was significant and within a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval?

(iii) **Success stories:** Some success stories were documented from project participants. These included voices of project participants both women and men in regards to whether their lives were impacted. This involved qualitative approaches of ascertaining impact of SUPREME interventions. To enrich and enhance qualitative quotes, these were recorded to validate the quantitative values revealed by the EoP.

(iv) Attribution of change to ensure reported changes were attributable ton the project intervention taking into consideration external factors.

(v) Assess long-term sustainability of change especially on whether the reported changes are likely to be sustained over the long term beyond the project's completion.

2.9 Data Management and Analysis

The EoP adopted a combination of data analyses in which separate quantitative (descriptive and inferential statistics), and qualitative (narrative) analyses were conducted. Findings from each analysis were integrated through meta-inferences. Triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative findings were done for corroboration purposes. Results from qualitative data analysis were triangulated with the quantitative data to enable meaningful interpretation. Some quotations from qualitative data were used and included in the report to bring out the voices of the project participants but also to support explanations and findings from the quantitative data.

2.9.1 Quantitative Data

Data collection tools were designed using ODK mobile applications where data checks and limitations were designed to prevent collection of wrong data, provide for skips within the data, avoid missing data, and provide limitations to data e.g., limiting the age of respondents and any other numeric within the questionnaire. Data collected was uploaded onto the server and downloaded for export to SPSS 26.0 for data cleaning. Once data was cleaned, it was analysed using SPSS and descriptive statistics including means, medians and proportions estimated for continuous and categorical data, respectively. A comparison of key indicator data at baseline and endline was done using the chi-square statistical tests.

2.9.2 Qualitative Data

This data was in the form of textual form, consisting of notes and stories generated from KIIs, FGDs and MSCs/Case Studies, which were transcribed, edited and typed out. Qualitative data were read and re-read to identify responses that answered particular objectives and questions, and any emerging patterns of thinking, argument, and practice revealed by the survey participants. The scripts were analysed for content using latent content analysis. Results from qualitative data analysis were triangulated with the quantitative data to enable meaningful interpretation. Some quotations from qualitative data were used and included in the report to bring out the voices of the project participants but also to support explanations and findings from the qualitative data.

2.10 Quality Control

Quality control was considered from inception of the EoP process to the end. An Expert Advisory Team including the Lead Consultant, M&E Technical Advisor and eight supervisors oversaw the entire process of quality control to ensure deliverables were attained and targets met. This team also ensured learning points were outlined and feedback given to all evaluation team members. Quality control process undertaken in outlined below:

a) **Inception meeting:** Right from inception, the Expert Advisory Team ensured an inception meeting was organised to fully grasp the requirements of the EoP and to request for relevant project documents and receive clarifications from the project team before start of the actual

design of inception report. This enhanced good start to the EoP process with the right pace and direction.

b) **Tools design:** Quantitative data collection tools were designed using ODK and quality checks and limits to data inserted within the designed questionnaire. This prevented wrong data entry, missing entries and ensured only correct data were captured into the system. Qualitative and quantitative tools were reviewed by the consortium partners (PMU, WVUK, WVAUT, WVU, RICE WN, ZOA and SNV) to ensure the tools picked the right information needed for the evaluation. Access to the central server was restricted to authenticated users who were responsible for managing data and performing data quality measures on the data submitted.

c) **Training of RAs and pretesting of tools:** Experienced RAs, fluent in the local languages and had participated in similar assignments were locally hired with support of SUPREME and trained in data collection methods. The questionnaires were translated in the local languages of interest and back translated to English to ensure consistency in meaning. The questionnaire was pre-tested in a village in Terego District in a non-study area for purposes of clarity, validation, suitability and logical flow of the questions.

d) **Supervision of the data collection process:** RAs were trained together with the Supervisors for common understanding of the tools and for supervisors to provide necessary support. At the end of each day or activity the supervisors and RAs assessed and reviewed the day's work and made necessary consultation or corrections. These daily briefing sessions ensured lessons were clearly documented during actual data collection and lessons learnt compiled, discussed and documented for positive (successes) or negative (failures). Supervisors ensured proper code of conduct and ethical behaviour was exhibited in the entire process with mutual respect for one another given the sensitivity of the assignment (because it involves young people, women and children).

e) **Data Cleaning:** Once data had been collected and uploaded to the server, preliminary data cleaning was done to check for any inconsistencies, ensured correct sample sizes had been reached, any missing data resolved before finally converting to SPSS for data analysis.

f) **Quantitative Data cleaning:** Quality assurance for quantitative data capture was pre-determined by the computerised tools where any possible errors were programmed and a RA would have no chance for errors since the computerised system easily detected errors and stopped the RA from continuing until s/he corrected the error.

g) **Qualitative Data cleaning:** The FGDs were conducted by teams in the local language. Each team comprised of a moderator and note taker, and responses were translated to English. During discussions, all project participants were given chance to respond to the questions whilst responses were audio-recorded. The moderator ensured the whole process was participatory by minimising few members dominating the discussions. Data from FGDs and KIIs was analysed using thematic and content analysis to triangulate data from different sources. This enabled corroboration of information from different sources.

2.11 Ethical consideration

Ethical conduct is the cornerstone of any research or evaluation undertaking and requires practitioners to abide by certain standard practices. During this EoP, the evaluators integrated clear ethical standards to be followed throughout the assignment process, beginning from the choice of tools, RAs, and confirmed consent and respect for rights of respondents. Child protection was high on protocols. The following ethical standards and considerations guided the endline evaluation:

- An introductory letter was provided by the PMU to the leaders in the 4 districts clearly indicating that Primehouse was contracted to undertake the EoP for SUPREME and for any help to be extended to them.
- WVU Child and Adult safeguarding training was conducted by the WVU staff and each RA and Supervisors signed in person as confirmation of their acceptance to abide by the Policy. In addition, Primehouse also signed Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy as the lead consulting company.
- Training of RAs was conducted by Primehouse to explain the main objectives of the evaluation, demonstrate use of approved tools and instruments, transfer knowledge and learning on use of appropriate methodology. Consortium leadership provided an overview of the SUPREME project.
- Pre-testing of the tools was done to ensure RAs understood the tools and clarify aspects that were unclear.
- Consent forms were read word for word to the sampled project participants (either in English or local language of interest) to ensure a common understanding of the study objectives, requirements, risks and benefits. Only individuals who consented were included interviewed. Those who did not were thanked by the interviewer and let go.

2.12 Data Analysis, Synthesis of Information and Reporting

Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics including mean, frequencies, percentage, totals, and cross-tabulations generated in SPSS software package. Inferential analysis was conducted by testing for chi-square values (P-values) to determine statistical significance between baseline and EoP values at 95% confidence levels. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic and discourse analysis techniques. To enrich the report, direct quotes, pictorial evidence and case studies/stories from stakeholders were used. Information from the quantitative and qualitative analysis was triangulated and synthesised to inform the writing of the report.

2.13 Limitations to the evaluation

The EoP faced the following limitations. Specific remedial actions taken to address these limitations in the course of this evaluation are also discussed.

- **Absence or non-availability of respondents:** In some cases, there was absence of some key targeted informants at the scheduled times for interviews, because of other commitments, which resulted into re-scheduling of interviews (whenever possible). The team reconfirmed schedules through phone and made follow-ups to minimise cases of absences. Where it was not possible to meet with the key informants, phone interviews were conducted.

- **Sample limitation:** The EoP sample of SDC members, youth and women constituted majority of the total sample size. While the sampling provides an appropriate weighting in full, disaggregation of data reduces the statistical validity. This was especially apparent when comparing women to men, and when looking at differences across locations. This was mitigated by considering and validating with qualitative evidence to support disaggregated trend analysis.

- **Timing of the study:** The endline evaluation process took place at the time when certain project activities were still ongoing. To mitigate this, the evaluators reviewed monitoring reports as the evaluation generally depends to some extent on information generated through monitoring.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSIONS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the evaluation findings based on analysed data. It covers demographic characteristics of project participants from SDC households, youth aged 18-30 years and SDC groups. The chapter further provides findings on all project indicators and thematic areas while considering the objectives of the evaluation.

3.2 Demographic Characteristics

A total of 675 SDC households were interviewed with 72.1% and 27.9% of the interviews conducted among the host and refugee communities respectively, close to the Re-Hope requirement of 70:30 proportionate distribution. The split in the sample is 72:28 and is therefore highly reflective of the Re-Hope requirement and data presented is a representation of the population in West Nile.

Table 6: Proportion of HHs interviewed across districts, host and refugee communities

Category of Household	District				Sex		Total (n=675)
	Madi Okollo (n=53)	Moyo (n=194)	Obongi (n=180)	Terego (n=248)	Male (n=246)	Female (n=429)	
Host	62.3%	100.0%	66.1%	56.9%	66.7%	75.2%	72.1%
Refugee	37.7%	0.0%	33.9%	43.1%	33.3%	24.8%	27.9%
Overall	7.9%	28.7%	26.7%	36.7%	36.4%	63.6%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

3.2.1 Characteristics of Household Heads

Distinction of household heads by sex is important because it is often associated with household welfare. EoP findings revealed that 55.5% of the sampled HH heads were male and 44.5% female with a similar pattern among the refugees (Male=51.9% & Female=48.1%) and host (Male=56.9% & Female=43.1%). This finding is significant because the ages and gender of household heads affects household food security. A study by Awoke et al. (2022) on determinants of food security status of household in Ethiopia showed age and sex of HH head had a positive relationship with the food security status of HH. The older the HH head, the higher the probability that the HH would be food secure. Similarly, the male head HH had a positive impact on HH food security because the male-headed HH had better food security than a female-headed HH.

A study by Chace, Dwyer, Mathur, Kirk, et al. (2022) found that gender dynamics influence HH-level decision-making behaviours and subsequent outcomes. Therefore, for optimal impact of project benefits, a project should engage older HH heads in HH food security interventions as well as male HH heads. EoP findings in Table 7 show that majority (72.1%) of the HH heads were members of host community SDC groups only while 25.2% were members of refugee SDC groups only and 2.7% were members of the mixed SDC groups. It is instructive to investigate the impact of female headed HHs on food security. This is significant as the argument could be made that if HHs with older male are generally performing better than other HHs, they would not need support and therefore the focus on female-headed HH or younger male was the right call.

Findings indicate a fairly balanced age categorisation of HH members with 19.0% of the members aged 18-29 years, 31.5% aged 30-39 years, 27.6% aged 40-49 years and 21.9% aged 50+ years. Majority (57.9%) of the HH heads have primary level of education while 22.5% have secondary, 4.0% tertiary, while 15.5% never went to school. More host community members (61.3%) compared to refugees (49.2%) had primary education with nearly the same ratio with secondary level (22.4% and 23% for host and refugees respectively). There is a marginal difference between refugees (3.9%) and host community (4.3%) with tertiary education. More refugees (23.5%) compared to host community (12.4%) did not attain any level of education.

There is a higher proportion of HH heads in the host communities with some form of education (87.6%) compared to refugee community (76.5%). Majority of the HH heads are married or cohabiting (76.6%) with a similar pattern across the host community (76.2%) and refugee community (77.5%). Meanwhile 10.3% of the HH heads are divorced/separated, 12.4% are widow/widower and 0.7% not married/single.

Table 7: Demographic Characteristics of Household Heads

Demographic Characteristic	District				Residence status		Gender		Total
	Madi Okollo	Moyo	Obongi	Terego	Host	Refugee	Male	Female	
Which type of SDC are you in? (n=675)									
Refugees only	37.7%	0.0%	27.1%	40.7%	0.0%	100%	30.9%	21.9%	25.2%
Host only	62.3%	100.0%	66.1%	56.9%	100%	0.0%	66.7%	75.2%	72.1%
Mixed (Refugee & Host)	0.0%	0.0%	6.8%	2.4%	8.0%	7.5%	2.4%	2.8%	2.7%
Age of HH Head (n=670)									
18-29 years	7.5%	10.4%	7.9%	15.7%	10.6%	13.9%	15.0%	9.4%	11.5%
30-39 years	32.1%	22.4%	23.2%	35.9%	26.1%	34.2%	23.6%	31.1%	28.4%
40-49 years	56.6%	32.3%	40.1%	25.0%	34.2%	32.1%	38.2%	30.9%	33.6%
50+ years	3.8%	34.9%	28.8%	23.4%	29.2%	19.8%	23.2%	28.5%	26.6%
Level of Education of household head (n=670)									
Primary	54.7%	64.1%	49.2%	60.1%	61.3%	49.2%	48.8%	63.2%	57.9%
Secondary	11.3%	19.3%	22.0%	27.8%	22.4%	23.0%	34.1%	15.8%	22.5%
Tertiary	7.5%	7.3%	4.0%	0.8%	3.9%	4.3%	4.5%	3.8%	4.0%
None	26.4%	9.4%	24.9%	11.3%	12.4%	23.5%	12.6%	17.2%	15.5%
Marital status of the head of household (n=670)									
Married/Cohabiting	81.1%	75.0%	70.1%	81.5%	76.2%	77.5%	87.0%	70.5%	76.6%
Divorced/separated	17.0%	10.9%	10.7%	8.1%	9.5%	12.3%	8.1%	11.6%	10.3%
Widow/widower	1.9%	13.5%	18.6%	9.3%	13.5%	9.6%	3.7%	17.5%	12.4%
Not married/Single	0.0%	0.5%	0.6%	1.2%	0.8%	0.5%	1.2%	0.5%	0.7%
What's the main occupation of the household head (n=670)									
None	0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	1.6%	1.0%	4.3%	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%
Farming	88.7%	73.4%	50.3%	83.1%	77.2%	58.8%	74.0%	71.0%	72.1%
Salaried employment	0.0%	6.3%	4.5%	4.0%	4.6%	4.3%	3.7%	5.0%	4.5%
Self-employed e.g. business	11.3%	10.4%	19.8%	8.5%	11.2%	15.0%	8.1%	14.6%	12.2%
Casual worker	0.0%	8.3%	19.8%	2.8%	5.4%	17.1%	11.8%	6.8%	8.7%

Demographic Characteristic	District				Residence status		Gender		Total
	Madi Okollo	Moyo	Obongi	Terego	Host	Refugee	Male	Female	
Other (Specify)	0.0%	1.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	0.5%	0.4%	0.7%	0.6%
Average household size (n=670)									
Children 0-18 years	3.9	3.4	4.0	4.3	3.7	4.7	4.3	3.7	3.9
Adults (18+ years)	2.8	3.4	3.2	2.8	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.0	3.0
Overall	6.7	6.7	7.3	7.1	6.8	7.6	7.5	6.7	7.0
Do you Live with anyone having a disability on their body? (n=670)									
No	69.8%	77.6%	69.5%	64.9%	73.7%	61.0%	67.1%	71.9%	70.1%
Yes	30.2%	22.4%	30.5%	35.1%	26.3%	39.0%	32.9%	28.1%	29.9%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

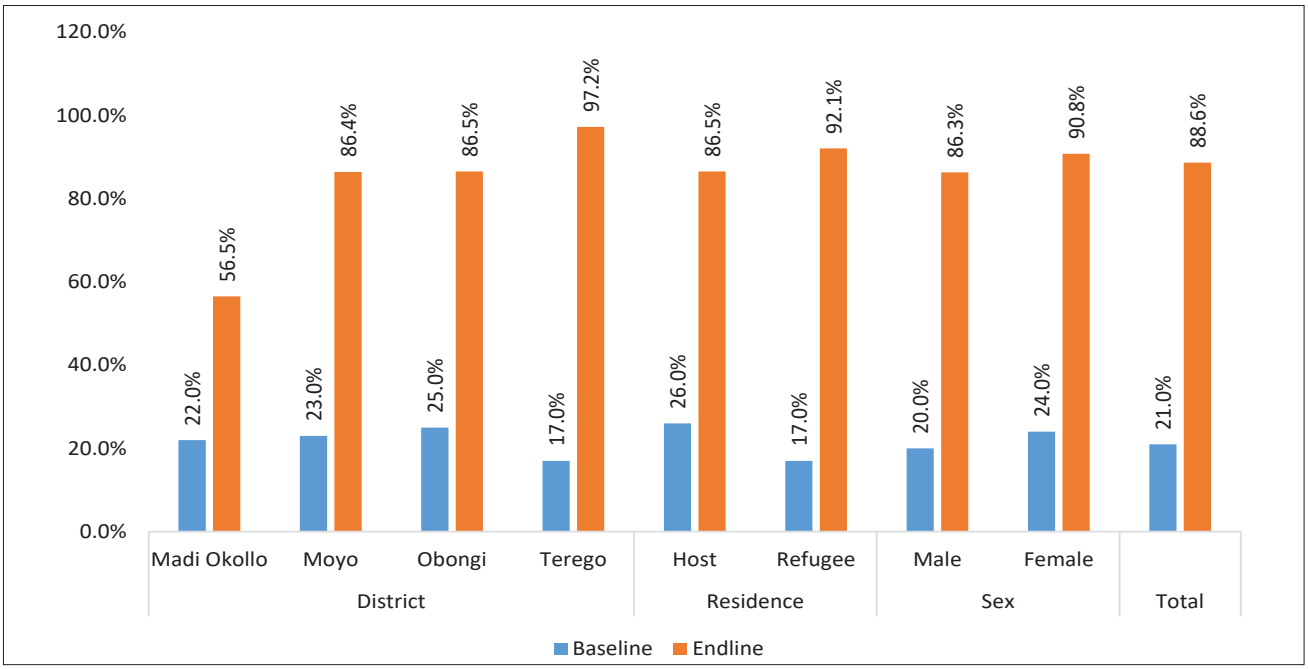
A study by (Mpendulo & Mang'unyi, 2018) in four municipalities in Oliver Tambo District, Eastern Cape, South Africa established that educational level was found to positively relate to unemployment and also had the highest effect on unemployment. The UBOS (2021) revealed that education is key determinant factor in exposing one to employment opportunities. The study showed that majority of those without education or had attained only some primary were engaged in subsistence agriculture while those who completed primary and other higher education levels were mostly in employment. Thus, the higher the education level, the higher the proportion in employment. The research study compares with the EoP results which indicated that about 96% of project participants had no formal education, attended primary or secondary education. This implies project participants are unable to meaningfully participate in economic activities without or lower level of education.

EoP findings in Table 7 above indicate that 72.1% of the households are engaged in agriculture as the main source of income with a higher proportion among the host communities (77.2%) as compared to the refugee (58.8%). This scenario arises from refugees having limited land to practice commercial agriculture. This is a true reflection of the situation in Uganda as 70.0% of Uganda's working economy is employed into agriculture (UBOS, 2022). Availability of land is a key contributor to food security. Studies have shown that agricultural land provides the largest share of food supplies and ensures an essential number of ecosystem services (e.g., providing food, fuel, fibre) (Pereira et al., 2018; Scown et al., 2019); and agricultural land contributes (directly or indirectly) to approximately 90% of food calories (Cassidy et al., 2013) and 80% of protein and fats (livestock production) (Steinfeld et al., 2006).

Therefore, agricultural areas support food security and SDGs goals (Avtar et al., 2020; FAO, 2017). Similarly, a study by Ibrahim, Hendriks and Schönfeldt (2023) on the effect of land tenure across food security outcomes among smallholder farmers in Nigeria revealed that smallholders who owned land and acquired plots for free were less likely to have high Household Dietary Diversity Scores (HDDS). On the other hand, owners of family-inherited plots were more likely to consume diverse diets and hold more assets.

The average HH household size is 7.0 household members, higher than Uganda's national household size of 4.6 members (UNHS, 2019/2022). The refugee community had a higher average household size (7.6) against the host community (6.8) and districts such as Obongi (7.3) and Terego (7.1) had higher average household size as compared to the other districts. Generally, households with large family size are characterised by high incidence of poverty.

Figure 1: Forms of disability at household level



Source: Primary Data, 2024

EoP findings in Table 7 show that 29.9% (refugees, 26.3% and host 39%) of households have a member living with a disability which is far above the national average of 11.7% households with at least one person having a disability (UNHS, 2019/2020). Meanwhile 32.9% of male and 28.1% of female project participants have a person with disability with whom they live together. The different forms of disability included; physical disability (51.6%), visual disability (26.0%), hearing impairment (17.2%), mental disability (14.1%) and other forms of disability (3.1%) as illustrated in figure 1 below.

3.2.2 Demographic characteristics of SDC Mixed Group members

A total of 407 SDC mixed groups (comprised of both refugees and host community) were interviewed, of which 47.7% were from Terego, 41.8% Obongi and 10.6% Madi Okollo. Since the creation of Obongi district, refugees who were in Moyo district (Palorinya sub-county) moved to the newly created Obongi leaving Moyo with no refugees. Consequently, there were no mixed groups in Moyo district. Of the mixed group respondents, 57.7% were female while 42.3% male. Nearly half (47.4%) were aged 30-39 years, 24.6% aged 40-49 years, 15.5% aged less than 29 years and 12.5% aged 50+years. More than two-thirds (68.8%) of the respondents were household heads with higher proportions among the male (91.9%) against female of 51.6%. Madi Okollo had the highest proportion (90.7%) of SDC mixed group members who were household heads followed by Terego (70.1%), and Obongi (61.8%).

The above details are summarised in table 8 below:

Table 8: Demographic characteristics of SDC Groups

Demographic Characteristics	District (n=407)			Status		Gender		Total
	Madi Okollo	Obongi	Terego	Host	Refugee	Male	Female	
Age category of respondent								
< 29 years	9.3%	13.5%	18.6%	16.6%	14.8%	11.0%	18.7%	15.5%
30 - 39 years	41.9%	47.1%	49.0%	35.0%	55.7%	45.3%	48.9%	47.4%

Demographic Characteristics	District (n=407)			Status		Gender		Total
	Madi Okollo	Obongi	Terego	Host	Refugee	Male	Female	
40 - 49 years	30.2%	28.8%	19.6%	30.1%	20.9%	28.5%	21.7%	24.6%
50+ years	18.6%	10.6%	12.9%	18.4%	8.6%	15.1%	10.6%	12.5%
Are you a household head?								
No	9.3%	38.2%	29.9%	34.4%	29.1%	8.1%	48.1%	31.2%
Yes	90.7%	61.8%	70.1%	65.6%	70.9%	91.9%	51.9%	68.8%
What is the relationship to the household head?								
Spouse	100.0%	86.2%	79.3%	85.7%	81.7%	21.4%	91.2%	83.5%
Son/Daughter	0.0%	4.6%	17.2%	10.7%	9.9%	57.1%	4.4%	10.2%
Brother/Sister	0.0%	1.5%	1.7%	1.8%	1.4%	14.3%	0.0%	1.6%
Other relative	0.0%	7.7%	1.7%	1.8%	7.0%	7.1%	4.4%	4.7%
Do you live with any disability on your body?								
No	83.7%	84.7%	94.8%	85.9%	91.8%	90.7%	88.5%	89.4%
Yes	16.3%	15.3%	5.2%	14.1%	8.2%	9.3%	11.5%	10.6%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Of those that who were not household heads, majority (83.5%) were spouses to the household heads with higher proportions among the female (91.2%) as compared to the male (21.4%). About 10.6% of the mixed group SDC members had a disability with higher proportions among the female (11.5%) as compared to the male (9.3%) and as well higher proportions among the host communities (14.1%) as compared to the refugee community (8.2%). Madi Okollo (16.3%) and Obongi (15.3%) had higher proportions of PWDs as compared to Terego (5.2%).

3.2.3 Demographic characteristics of SDC Groups

The project had a total of 1,000 SDC groups distributed in the four districts with Terego having 340 (34), Obongi 294 (29%), Moyo 289 (29%) and Madi-Okollo 77 (8%). In terms of SUPREME partner distribution, World Vision had 334, ZOA 333 and RICE 333. A total of 416 SDC groups were sampled and interviewed with 44.5% from Terego, 30.0% from Obongi, 19.2% from Moyo and 6.3% from Madi Okollo. Of the SDC Group respondents, 62.0% were female and 38.0% male. Madi-Okollo had higher proportions of male respondents (65.4%) from the SDC groups than other districts.

About 71.4% of the respondents were household heads with higher proportions among the refugee community (75.5%) compared 69.2% in the host community. About 9 in 10 (92.3%) SDC groups interviewed had existed for more than 3 years with 75.9% of them being host community SDCs, 13.9% refugee community SDCs and 10.1% mixed group SDCs. Slightly more than half (57.7%) of the SDC group respondents were members of the groups while 19.0% were chairpersons, 14.4% secretary and 8.9% treasure.

Table 9: Demographic characteristics of SDC Groups

Demographic Characteristics	District				Status		Total
	Madi Okollo	Moyo	Obongi	Terego	Host	Refugee	
Sex of the respondent (n=416)							
Male	65.4%	33.8%	39.2%	35.1%	40.7%	32.9%	38.0%
Female	34.6%	66.3%	60.8%	64.9%	59.3%	67.1%	62.0%
Are you a household head? (n=416)							
No	15.4%	21.3%	26.4%	35.1%	30.8%	24.5%	28.6%
Yes	84.6%	78.8%	73.6%	64.9%	69.2%	75.5%	71.4%
How long has the group existed? (n=416)							
1 and 2 years	0.0%	18.8%	12.8%	0.5%	9.9%	3.5%	7.7%
More than 3 years	100.0%	81.3%	87.2%	99.5%	90.1%	96.5%	92.3%
Position of respondent in the SDC Group? (n=416)							
Chairperson	57.7%	45.0%	10.4%	8.1%	23.8%	9.8%	19.0%
Secretary	26.9%	33.8%	5.6%	10.3%	16.8%	9.8%	14.4%
Treasurer	7.7%	15.0%	6.4%	8.1%	8.8%	9.1%	8.9%
Member	7.7%	6.3%	77.6%	73.5%	50.5%	71.3%	57.7%
Which type of SDC are you in? (n=416)							
Refugees only	20.0%	0.0%	23.1%	33.3%	1.5%	71.4%	13.9%
Host community only	73.3%	100.0%	53.8%	40.0%	92.3%	0.0%	75.9%
Mixed (Refugee/Host)	6.7%	0.0%	23.1%	26.7%	6.2%	28.6%	10.1%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

3.2.4 Demographic characteristics of youth

A total of 625 youths were interviewed with 35.2% from Terego, 31.2% from Obongi, 26.7% from Moyo and 6.9% from Madi Okollo. Majority were from the host communities (64.0%) as compared to the refugee community (36.0%). Furthermore, 53.1% of those interviewed were female, while 46.9% were male. This is illustrated in table 10 below. Although this finding is within the Re-Hope requirement (70:30), it is clear that more host community youths were invited for the skill training than refugees.

Table 10: Demographic Characteristics of youth

Category of Youth	District (n=625)				Sex		Total (n=625)
	Madi Okollo (n=43)	Moyo (n=167)	Obongi (n=195)	Terego (n=220)	Male (n=293)	Female (n=332)	
Host	23.3%	100.0%	44.6%	61.8%	62.8%	65.1%	64.0%
Refugee	76.7%	0.0%	55.4%	38.2%	37.2%	34.9%	36.0%
Total	6.9%	26.7%	31.2%	35.2%	46.9%	53.1%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

In table 11, nearly half (47.4%) of the youth were household heads with higher proportions among female (56.3%) as compared to male (39.5%) and fairly equal distribution between the refugee (47.6%) and host communities (47.3%). Madi Okollo (60.5%) and Terego (59.1%) had higher proportions of youth who are household heads as compared to the other districts.

Table 11: Demographic characteristics of youth

Demographic Characteristics	District				Status		Gender		Total
	Madi Okollo	Moyo	Obongi	Terego	Host	Refugee	Male	Female	
Age category of youth (n=625)									
18-20 years	2.3%	7.2%	10.3%	15.0%	9.0%	13.3%	9.6%	11.4%	10.6%
21-25 years	27.9%	32.9%	53.3%	44.1%	39.5%	48.9%	45.1%	41.0%	42.9%
26-30 years	69.8%	59.9%	36.4%	40.9%	51.5%	37.8%	45.4%	47.6%	46.6%
Are you a member of the SDC/farmer group (n=625)									
No	0.0%	30.5%	66.7%	44.1%	40.8%	51.1%	46.1%	43.1%	44.5%
Yes	100.0%	69.5%	33.3%	55.9%	59.3%	48.9%	53.9%	56.9%	55.5%
Which type of SDC are you in? (n=625)									
Refugees	76.7%	0.9%	26.2%	43.1%	1.7%	90.9%	29.7%	30.2%	30.0%
Host community	20.9%	99.1%	58.5%	56.9%	97.5%	0.9%	66.5%	67.2%	66.9%
Mixed SDCs	2.3%	0.0%	15.4%	0.0%	0.8%	8.2%	3.8%	2.6%	3.2%
Are you a household head? (n=625)									
No	39.5%	56.9%	65.1%	40.9%	52.8%	52.4%	43.7%	60.5%	52.6%
Yes	60.5%	43.1%	34.9%	59.1%	47.3%	47.6%	56.3%	39.5%	47.4%
What is the relationship to the household head? (n=625)									
Spouse	17.6%	32.6%	32.3%	34.4%	36.0%	25.4%	2.3%	51.2%	32.2%
Son/Daughter	41.2%	51.6%	26.8%	51.1%	39.8%	44.1%	59.4%	29.9%	41.3%
Brother/Sister	23.5%	13.7%	10.2%	10.0%	10.4%	14.4%	20.3%	6.5%	11.9%
Other relative	17.6%	2.1%	29.9%	4.4%	13.7%	15.3%	17.2%	12.4%	14.3%
Non-Relative	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.0%	0.3%
Do you live with any disability on your body? (n=625)									
No	86.0%	87.4%	88.2%	82.7%	85.0%	87.6%	83.3%	88.3%	85.9%
Yes	14.0%	12.6%	11.8%	17.3%	15.0%	12.4%	16.7%	11.7%	14.1%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Of those who were not household heads, 32.2% were spouses to the household head, 41.3% children to household heads, 11.9% brother or sister and 14.6% other relative or even non-relative. About 14.1% had a disability with higher proportions among male (16.7%) as compared to female (11.7%). Meanwhile, the host community had more people with disability (15.0%) as compared to the refugee community (12.4%), Terego (17.3%) and Madi Okollo (14.0%) had higher proportions of youth with some form of disability as compared to the other districts.

Findings also show that nearly half of the youth (46.6%) were aged 26-30 years while 42.9% were aged 21-25 years and 10.6% aged 18-20 years. Slightly more than half of the youth (55.5%) reported to belong to SDC farmer groups, with slightly higher proportions among the females (56.9%) as

compared to the male (53.9%). Also, there were higher proportions among host communities (59.3%) as compared to the refugee communities (48.9%). A higher proportion of the youth (66.9%) were members of the host community SDCs, 30.0% from the refugee community SDC groups and 3.2% belonged to mixed group SDCs.

3.3 Review of the project against the OECD-DAC Criteria

This section provides a detailed assessment of the performance of SUPREME project interventions against the OECD-DAC criteria and the specific objectives of the EoP with focus on effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, impact and sustainability; and an analysis of cross-cutting themes including stakeholder participation and gender thereby providing specific, actionable, evidence-based lessons learned and recommendations for future programme developments.

3.4 Project Relevance

This is the extent to which the objectives of SUPREME interventions were consistent with project participants requirements, Uganda's comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, global priorities and partner' and EUTF's policies. Relevance is concerned with SUPREME's interventions were in line with local needs and priorities.

3.4.1 Design of the project interventions

The design of SUPREME was a highly participatory process that involved a number of partners and stakeholders right from community to the district level. The design process involved partners and stakeholders such as: the district and sub-county technical and political officers (DHO, DEO, DCDO, DPO, DCO, sub-county chiefs, LCIII), community members such as farmers, community resourceful persons. The design process was extensive and stretched for more than 3 months to identify community needs. Rigorous processes such as the root cause analysis, problem tree analysis and objective tree analysis were utilised to identify and prioritise community needs. Streamlined logical frameworks in alignment to the WVU, ZOA, RICE West Nile and MFI strategic plans, district and sub-county development plans were designed and reviewed and approved at numerous levels. This process was done in partnership with the district and sub-county leadership, district and sub-county development plans were integrated within the project plans.

In terms of how the partnership with MFI has benefitted them as a financial institution, a key informant within MFI remarked "*this partnership with SUPREME has increased our portfolio. For instance, as we give loans, our portfolios keep growing which also expands our branding and recognition by all consortium partners. To me, the relationship has grown and trust among group members also improved. Consortium partners ensure group members are well trained, and are also well organized. In fact, the groups have everything, and we are proud to associate with such success. Linking groups to institutions like MFI ensures we also grow and groups also get the much-needed credit which is key financial inclusion and improvement in livelihoods of both refugees and host community members*."

Regarding involvement and consultation with various stakeholders, a SUPREME staff from a partner echoed how key stakeholders were engaged that resulted in achievement of required outcome and output. Qualitative data captured this thus…

"…*we worked closely with all stakeholders in all the processes. For example, during selection of the youth, we worked closely with the districts, the government services, the political leaders, the sub-county and the district, OPM because they gave us the mandate to work there. The project*

also mapped some private actors in the communities, the local community structures which helped the project because we involved relevant stakeholders at every critical stage. Due to this collaboration, we targeted to skill 2,000 youth but achieved 2034. The other output was to have youth do Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) and the pass. Here, we achieved 170% because youth passed the DIT assessment. In terms of internship, we achieved 109% of the youth who completed the internship. On output two, the project onboarded private sector actors to support the SDC farmers in terms of accessing quality agro inputs and markets for their output. The project got 50 private sector actors here, who were given grants and worked closely with 1,000 groups and have the target of 2000-2500 farmers benefit from these private sector actors directly excluding those who benefited indirectly. In terms of access to market, farmers no longer buy poor quality inputs and also find market readily available and accessible."

The logical plans developed were designed with clear interventions under each output. Specific programme assumptions based on context were integrated within the project's designs. The indicators selected at goal, outcome and output level were aligned to the identified prioritized needs and interventions specifically to the WVUK, WVU, ZOA, RICE West Nile and MFI Strategic Plans, National Development Plan III (NDP III) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). This allowed for comparison and contribution to the national agenda. There were indications of integration of gender and disability within the designs as indicators provided for disaggregation of monitoring data by gender and disability.

On an annual basis, consortium partners conducted review of their implementation plans to check and readjust where necessary based on emerging contextual changes and needs. This process allowed for alignment with targets to adjust for under-or-overachievement, or even where there were increases or reduction in budgets. For areas where indicators were being under or overachieved, changes in strategies were made as well as budget. Project assumptions were as well assessed to ensure they were valid and still holding. In cases where this was not considered, key changes in line with context would be made. A clear example of this was during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project made changes in plans to address the problem at the time and the context then.

3.4.2 Alignment to community needs

Through the participatory community consultation processes, the gap analysis, root cause analysis and problem tree analysis were used to identify community gaps and problems. A review of the project design documents revealed a number of challenges at community level such as: high poverty levels at household level, low levels of income due to high unemployment rates, poor farming methods, unfavorable weather conditions, deforestation due to firewood and charcoal burning as the predominant challenges faced by communities in the 4 target districts for both the refugee and host communities. Based on these community needs, the project designed appropriate interventions to address these needs through implementing models such as the Savings & Development Clusters (SDC), Enabling Rural Innovation (ERI) approach, Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE) model, Economic stimulus approach, Private sector development and Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) approach.

A key informant from one of the partner organisations remarked that "*You know the context is a little complex. The current context is that we have these refugees and host communities and some of the Madi, but the number of refugees has reduced. Definitely, with the project, I believe there should have been a lot of challenges among the two groups. So, I am sure that the project has been very relevant to both the targeted people, the refugees and the host communities. It has been so good.*"

Another SUPREME staff key informant observed that the project was relevant and said "*Oh yes, I would say this program was and is still relevant to the needs of the target community. One, it was aligned to the refugee response plan and also to the respective development plans. Therefore, in one way or another, it met the aspirations of government, but also overall Uganda refugee response. From the design perspective, assessments were done at the beginning to find out the needs of the community. I can confidently say that the project was informed by what the community desired, the gaps that were there, but also what they aspired to that they felt needed to be supported.*"

A male FGD participant in the host community Palio Ox-traction Savings Group in Obongi district on community needs revealed that "*the project addressed the local needs and priorities because I remember during the inception stages of the project, the program officers held consultative meetings with our group to agree on how best we could be assisted. During the implementation stage, they distributed groundnut seedlings, cassava stems, tomatoes, onions and Sukuma seedlings which we had requested for to boost crop farming.*"

A refugee welfare committee member in Omugo sub-county in Terego district on the needs that the project addressed highlighted that "*yes, the project helped more vulnerable groups of people to access shops (from those who started own enterprises) and also get credits from the trusted shops within these villages especially for women, PwDs and the elderly groups in the communities because initially some of these services were not available and accessible to all. Here in the camps, there are not many ways of getting money rather than the one given as a grant to specifically to the group members.*"

EoP findings showed a high proportion (96.1%) of the SDC households reported that SUPREME addressed their needs with similar patterns among the refugee (95.7%) and host (96.3%). A female host community FGD participant in Moyo sub-county remarked that "*I was trained in hair dressing. When I got this training, there was change in my life. Previously, I could not do much. But now I can do a lot of things that bring me money. Before I could not plait hair very well, but now I can do very well. Little by little at home, people come, I work on their hair and earn money.*" Another refugee FGD participant in Itula sub-county in Obongi district reported that "*before the project, some of us who are refugees didn't have avenues for saving money, we could not even open accounts in banks since we didn't have the required documents. The creation of saving groups has created avenues where we can save money, and use the money to acquire what we want.*"

Similarly, a high proportion (96.4%) of the SDC households reported to be satisfied with the impact SUPREME project has brought into their lives with a similar pattern among the host (96.7%) and refugees (95.7%). This shows that the interventions that SUPREME implemented were geared towards addressing the needs of the project participants.

3.4.3 Alignment to government and district priorities

SUPREME project design was aligned to the district development plans, sub-county development plans and the different implementing partners across the project. The unemployment challenge and the need for increased household incomes at household levels remains the number one priority for the district and sub-county. SUPREME project supplemented on the intended government efforts of empowering households to have a source of income, access credit and remain resilient. The project did not set out to align with SDG 1, 2 and 13 that focus on reducing poverty, no hunger among HHs and climate action respectively. However, EoP established that this was a secondary outcome. Interventions such as empowering households to start up income generating activities (IGAs), belonging to an SDC and to be able save and access credit, adopt modern farming methods and techniques such as FMNR were key towards contributing to these SDGs.

A SUPREME staff from one of the partners observed that "*This project was designed in consultation with the district and the sub county. And its design meant that the alignment of the interventions was in line with the priorities of these districts we are working right now. And if you look at the different interventions of the project, most districts right now are aiming at poverty eradication, women empowerment, youth-skilling and so on. And those come out as priority issues for the districts. And that is exactly what the project was working towards addressing. So, in my opinion, yes, it was designed in line with priorities of those districts*."

Another key informant at Uriama sub-county in Terego district reported with satisfaction that "*World Vision provided a startup seed capital, trainings which the* project *participants have now applied and they are doing well. We see that even without World Vision, these* project *participants can meet their economic needs because they make profits out of them and this puts them in a better position to support their families through increase in income."*

3.5 Effectiveness

3.5.1 Overall project contribution to long-term results (goal and outcomes)

In this section, the evaluation looked at the extent to which SUPREME's objectives were achieved considering their relative importance. The overall outlook of the long-term results is positive because of recorded achievements. A SUPREME staff from one of the partners captured this well thus:

"Our targets were achieved because one of the things that influenced it was support. We had a lot of support from our stakeholders, the OPM, UNHCR, districts and sub-counties), which enabled us to reach the project *participants with ease. We used approaches that helped the* project *participants to engage themselves in different opportunities. One of the approaches was working with the SDCs to reach many farmers and saving component. So yes, working in the consortium enabled us to reach so many other locations. The staffing arrangement was good. For our side, we had a number of project officers who were close to the community. So that was a good thing."*

"Before we joined SUPREME, we didn't have much knowledge concerning savings and our expenses were so high on unnecessary things but when SUPREME came, it gave us training on savings and financial literacy where we come to understand things like how to save, when, whom, where and for what purpose which we have now improved. We have also invested our savings in profitable ventures like goats, pigs among others." ***FGD participant in Omugo sub-county***.

"With the credit knowledge and skills, before joining SUPREME, members could default and fail to pay their loans which led to collapse of the group. But when SUPREME came, we received lessons like how to borrow and whom to borrow from which were included in our rules and regulations hence eradicating the defaulters from our groups." ***FGD participant in Itula sub-county.***

Another SUPREME staff from a partner organisation alluded to the factors that enhanced the achievement of the project in terms of models and approaches employed was illustrated in this qualitative data ***"****I think for most likely good projects, it comes from mindset. This project did a lot of preparing in the areas for starting businesses for those who were starting for the first time but also helped those who had already started to mindset shift to prepare them for grants that they were about to get. So, you find that there are very many trainings that happened in terms of preparation. And one of them was Enabling Rural Innovation (ERI). This had many components, but one of the components was development of business plans, record-keeping, a bit of financial literacy and other components that are related to starting but also sustaining businesses and market research. So before even the* project *participants got any money, they were taken through a long time of preparation, being trained preparing their minds so that helps you."*

3.5.2 Project Goal

The SUPREME programme goal was to contribute to improved overall economic well-being for refugees and host communities in Northern Uganda in Terego, Madi Okollo, Obongi and Moyo districts. SUPREME partners closely cooperated with OPM, UNHCR, district governments, ENABEL, and other livelihood entities in Madi-Okollo, Terego, Moyo, and Obongi; which partnership ensured program activities were customized for the target community, aligned with local development agendas, and transparently reported to stakeholders. The partners also engaged in inter-agency groups, such as the Regional Cash Sector and Settlement Livelihood Sector meetings in Palorinya, Rhino Camp, and Imvepi. This collaborative approach has enhanced program planning and execution through shared expertise.

At goal level, attainment was tracked based on three goal indicators that included: Composite Productive Assets Index (CPAI), the average number of IGAs per household and the Coping Strategy Index Score (CSIS) for targeted households. This was assessed by looking at performance of the indicators at endline in comparison with the length of project targets and the baseline values as illustrated in Table 12.

Table 12: SUPREME Project Goal Level Indicators

Indicator	Baseline 2021			Midterm 2022			EoP 2024			EoP Target
	Host	Refugee	Total	Host	Refugee	Total	Host	Refugee	Total	
Composite Productive Assets Index	0.085	0.077	0.081	0.516	0.376	0.478	0.592	0.498	0.547	0.187
Average number of income-generating activities (IGA) per household	0.265	0.160	0.214	1.842	1.849	1.842	2.387	2.078	2.159	0.49
Coping Strategy Index Score of targeted households	6.3	5.6	5.8	2.8	3.3	2.9	2.4	3.7	2.8	2.9

Source: Primary Data, 2024

3.5.2.1 Composite Productive Asset Index

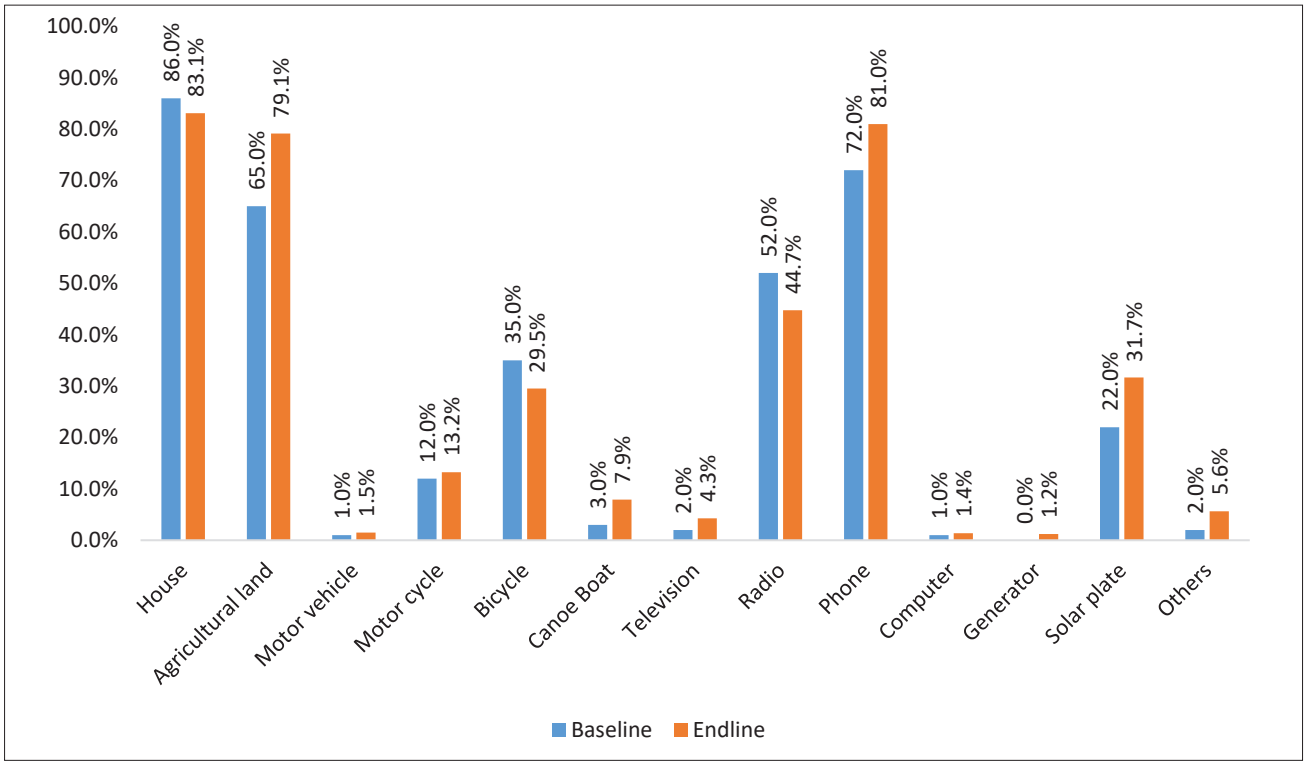
The Composite Productive Asset Index (CPAI) was computed based on physical and durable assets that can be liquidated in the event of a need to settle a financial obligation. EoP findings in table 12 above shows a significant improvement in the CPAI from 0.081 (refugees, 0.077; host 0.085) at baseline to 0.547 (refugees, 0.592; hots, .0498) above the EoP target of 0.187. This implies that households have more productive assets at EoP compared to both baseline and midterm. Consequently, households in the target areas now have assets that can be used to build stronger businesses and more wealth to ensure sustainability when the project ends. Evidently, there is improvement for both refugees and host from baseline to endline although more noticeable within the host due to advantages like easy access to land agricultural land to increase production hence more income to acquire assets.

The study showed a drop in the proportion of households with a house as a productive asset from 86% (host 92%, refugees 80%) at baseline to 83% (host 90%, refugees 76%) at endline. Refugees

recorded a higher reduction (4%) compared to the host communities (2%). Drop. The drop is attributed to the type of houses owned by participants with over four-fifth made of temporary roofs of grass and/or tarpaulin making such houses susceptible to wind and rain which destroy them and blow off roofs as a result of climate changes and poor maintenance. Grass and tarpaulin houses are usually inexpensive to build and also not durable. Some participants (especially refugees) do self-repatriation or find work in urban areas and abandon their houses in settlements without anyone to attend to or maintain them weakening these houses. A chairperson of a host community SDC in Gimara sub-county in Obongi reported that "*we have witnessed many refugees leaving the settlements to either go back to South Sudan or find work in urban areas. These people leave their houses, usually built of earth/mud or tarpaulin/grass roof materials, without maintenance leading to collapse or destruction by wind or rain.*"

In addition, there was also prioritisation by project participants where they chose to invest in other areas like solar plate for lighting, phones to ease communication and support mobile money system, acquisition of television and agricultural land. Project participants have however bought building materials as they plan to build their houses. A key male informant in Lefori sub-county observed that "***exactly, before SUPREME came, people had nothing and were not able to get food but now they are able to get food and have their priorities. And there was no house but now at least one room of iron sheets.*** Another FGD participants in Itula sub-county observed that "*and for the training they gave us, it opened up our minds. When you get money maybe from the SACCO (small banks), MFI; you draw up a list of what must be done with the money like starting up a business, sending children to school, acquiring small livestock, and large investments like building and huge savings are planned for later.*"

Figure 2: Assets owned at household level



Source: Primary Data, 2024

Figure 2 shows a significant improvement in the productive assets owned at household level with an increase in proportion of households owning agricultural land from 65.0% at baseline to 79.1% at EoP; an increase in the proportion of households owning a motorcycle from 12.0% at baseline to 13.2% at endline; an increase in the proportion of households owning a canoe boat from 3.0% at baseline to 7.9% at endline. Decrease in bicycle ownership is attributable to project participants opting for motor cycles as a mode of transport compared to bicycles. There was also a decrease in radio ownership due to more project participants owning mobile phones embedded with radios evidenced by an increase in phone ownership.

Similarly, there was an increase in the proportion of households owning a mobile phone from 72.0% at baseline to 81.0% at endline. According to UNHS (2020), 31.4% of HHs in West Nile owned a radio and 59.7% had a mobile phone. This finding implies that mobile phone and radio ownership in the four districts are higher than the national averages. In addition, there was an increase in the proportion of households owning a solar plate from 22.0% at baseline to 31.7% at endline. According to UNHS (2020), 28.4% of HHs in West Nile use solar system/kit. An evaluation of the GIZ Promotion of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Programme (PREEEP) in West Nile showed increase in uptake of solar use due to market development activities. The increases in ownership of these productive assets is because household incomes have improved over time and more households are now able to save and access credit to purchase some of these productive assets as they have realised and had a mindset change in as far as ownership of such productive assets.

3.5.2.2 Average number of income-generating activities (IGA) per household

Households were supported and empowered to start up IGAs for purposes of earning a regular income at HH level. This would ultimately contribute to improved overall economic wellbeing for refugees and host communities. EoP findings in Table 12 indicate a significant improvement in the average number of IGAs per household from 0.214 to 1.482 at midterm evaluation and 2.159 at EoP. The achievement was above the 4-year EoP target of 0.250. A similar pattern is observed among the refugees (increase from 0.160 at baseline to 2.078 at EoP) and host communities (increase from 0.265 at baseline to 2.387 at EoP).

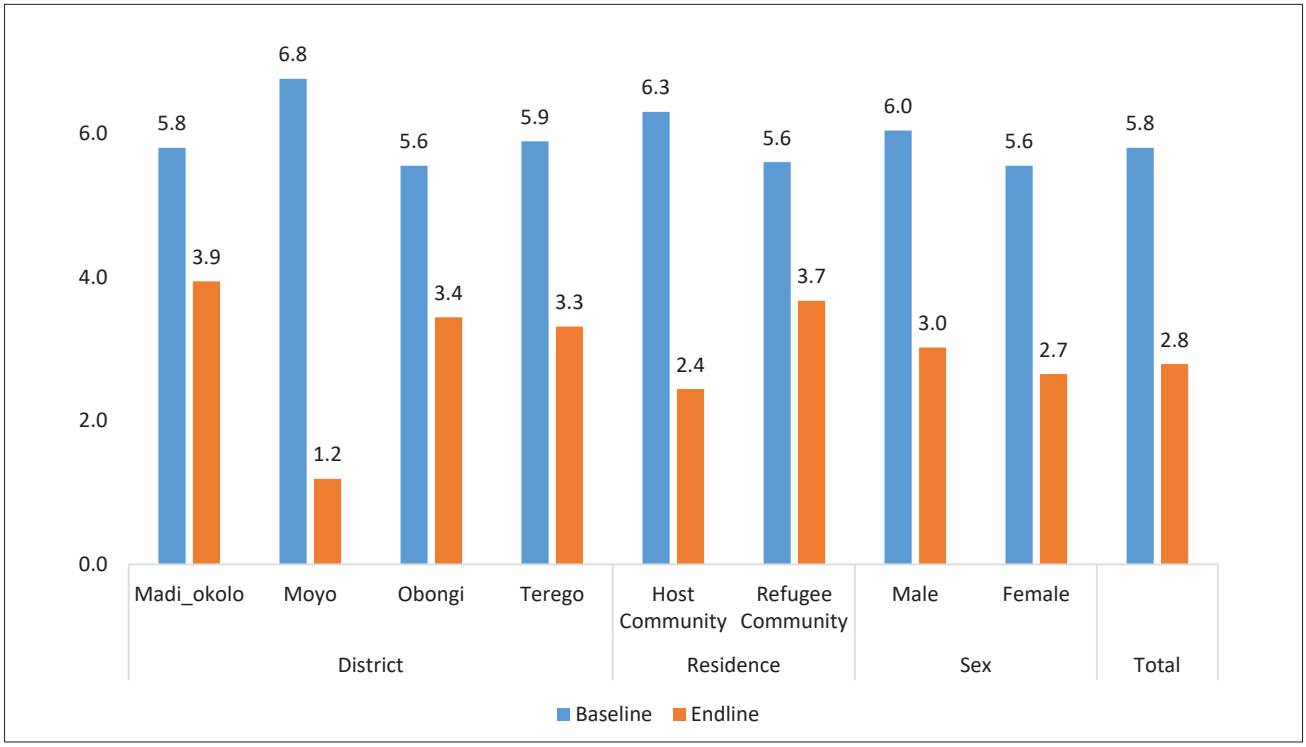
A mixed FGD participants in Omugo sub-county in Terego districts revealed that "t*he main sources of income are agriculture, market vending, livestock keeping, bee keeping, and all these activities we all participate in whether female or male and the youth to earn a living. SUPREME project supported us in (1) agriculture - with hoes and seeds for planting, (2) market vending to initiate the business, (3) beekeeping - with beehives and also supplemented us with trainings which improved on our income rates.*"

An SDC FGD in Lefori sub-county in Moyo district reported that "*what gives us money is the planting of groundnuts. After harvesting, pack in sacks and sell it. Secondly, the project also brought for us money as grant. Some of us work as casual labourers and this is how we make money. SUPREME people empowered us on how to make money including doing garden work. Before, we did not know how gardens were prepared but now since they empowered us what we do has improved and it is no longer like before.*"

Coping Strategy Index Score of targeted households

The Coping Strategies Index (CSI) is an indicator of household food security that is relatively simple and quick to use, straightforward to understand, and correlates well with more complex measures of food security. The indicator assesses the extent to which households use harmful coping strategies when they do not have enough food or enough money to buy food. The higher the score, the greater the food insecurity - a high score means an extensive use of negative coping strategies and hence increased food insecurity.

Figure 3: Coping Strategy Index Score of targeted households



Source: Primary Data, 2024

EoP findings in Figure 3 show a significant reduction in the CSIS of households from 5.8 at baseline to 2.8 at endline, which still higher than the life of project target of 0.12. Hosts registered improvement from 6.3 at baseline to 2.4 at EoP and refugees from 5.6 at baseline 3.7 at EoP. In terms of gender, male showed improvement from 6.0 at baseline to 3.0 at EoP and female 5.6 at baseline to 2.7 at EoP. The most common forms of coping mechanisms adopted by HHs included: reducing the amount of food eaten at home (90.8%), reducing the number of meals eaten at household level (85.7%) and borrowing money to buy food (63.3%). Other forms of coping mechanisms included: substituting commonly bought foods with cheaper kind/option (55.1%), getting food on credit (53.9%), and substituted commonly eaten food with cheaper ones (55.1%). This decline is attributed to the capacity enhanced among households to remain resilient and adopt appropriate coping mechanisms.

An FGD participant in Lefori sub-county in Moyo district said this on coping strategy "*At this time if you are not in the group, getting food is hard. But the project gave us knowledge that when you are saving, few things will hurt you, even if you do not have money. When you belong to a group, you can borrow money from the group. You ask the group to help you so that you are able to do what you wanted to do. Afterwards, you then look for the money and pay back. This is how we survive, implying the issue of hunger has been sorted after borrowing. Even if in the group they have borrowed all the money, you can still ask for help from a friend to add you little money to add on those things.*"

3.5.3 Project Outcome

The project outcome focused on increasing access to decent employment and economic opportunities for refugees and host communities. This was tracked using 3 indicators that included: percentage change of targeted HH investing in their IGAs, proportion of targeted population employed or self-employed in sustainable livelihoods activities over the last 12

months and proportion of targeted households with diverse source of income. Progress on these indicators was assessed based on comparing the baseline, life of project target to the EoP findings to assess whether the indicator was achieved accordingly.

Table 13: SUPREME Project Outcome Level Indicators

Indicator	Baseline 2021			Midterm 2022			EoP 2024			EoP Target
	Host	Refugee	Total	Host	Refugee	Total	Host	Refugee	Total	
% change of targeted HH investing in their income generating activities.	26.0%	17.0%	21.5%	89.1%	89.0%	89.1%	93.6%	96.6%	95.1%	32.0%
% of targeted population employed or self-employed in sustainable livelihoods activities over the last 12 months	33.0%	17.0%	25.0%	45.5%	42.8%	44.2%	79.9%	73.3%	76.6%	39.0%
% of targeted households with diverse source of income.	54.0%	38.0%	46.0%	25.7%	27.5%	26.6%	50.5%	70.8%	60.7%	59.0%

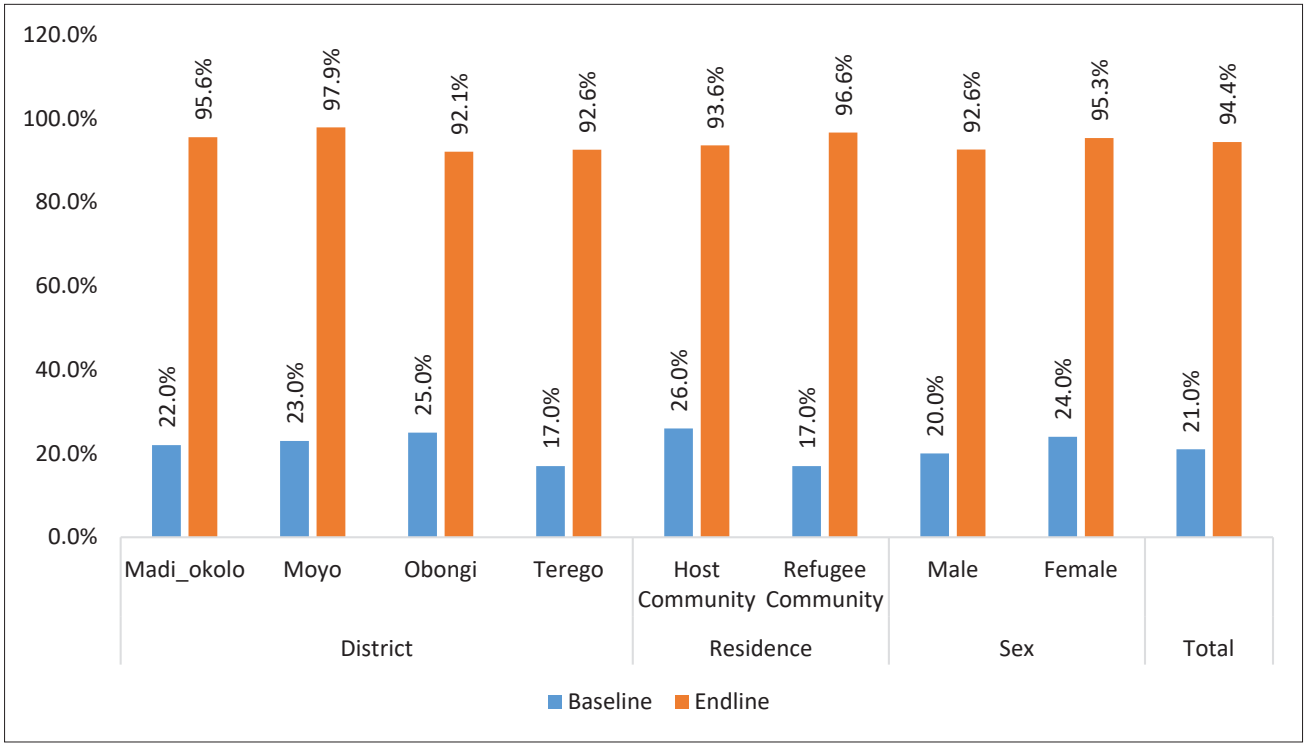
Source: Primary and Secondary Data, 2024

3.5.3.1 Percentage change of targeted HH investing in their income generating activities

The project focused on empowering HHs to invest their incomes in their IGAs for purposes of increasing the size of their business and eventually earning more. EoP findings in figure 4 indicate a significant improvement in the proportion of HHs investing in their IGAs from 21.0% at baseline to 94.4% at EoP with a similar pattern seen across all the districts of operation, refugee and host community and sex of the respondents. Table 13 above indicates that this achievement is above length of project 4-year target of 32.0%. This is because SDC households were empowered with knowledge and skills on the importance of investing in their businesses and more households have adopted this practise.

Slightly more than a third (36.4%) of the households investing in their IGAs invested between UGX. 200,000 (€50) to UGX. 500,000 (€125) while 34.2% invested less than UGX. 200,000 (€50), 19.5% invested between UGX. 500,000 (€125) to UGX. 1,000,000 (€250) and 9.8% invested more than UGX. 1,000,000. Whereas more households are investing in their IGAs, the majority are still investing in crop farming (82%), livestock keeping 29.8%, poultry keeping 23.5%, brewing and selling alcohol 19.9%, market vending 14.3%, fish processing and selling 13.4%, retail trade and general merchandise 9.1%, charcoal selling 6%, firewood selling 5% building and construction services 3.9% and tailoring 3.9%. A study by Sinha, et al., (2021) on livelihood assets and income generating activities showed that rural households engaged in a diverse set of IGAs to obtain additional income to reduce risk and maintain a balanced consumption.

Figure 4: Percentage change of targeted HH investing in their income generating activities



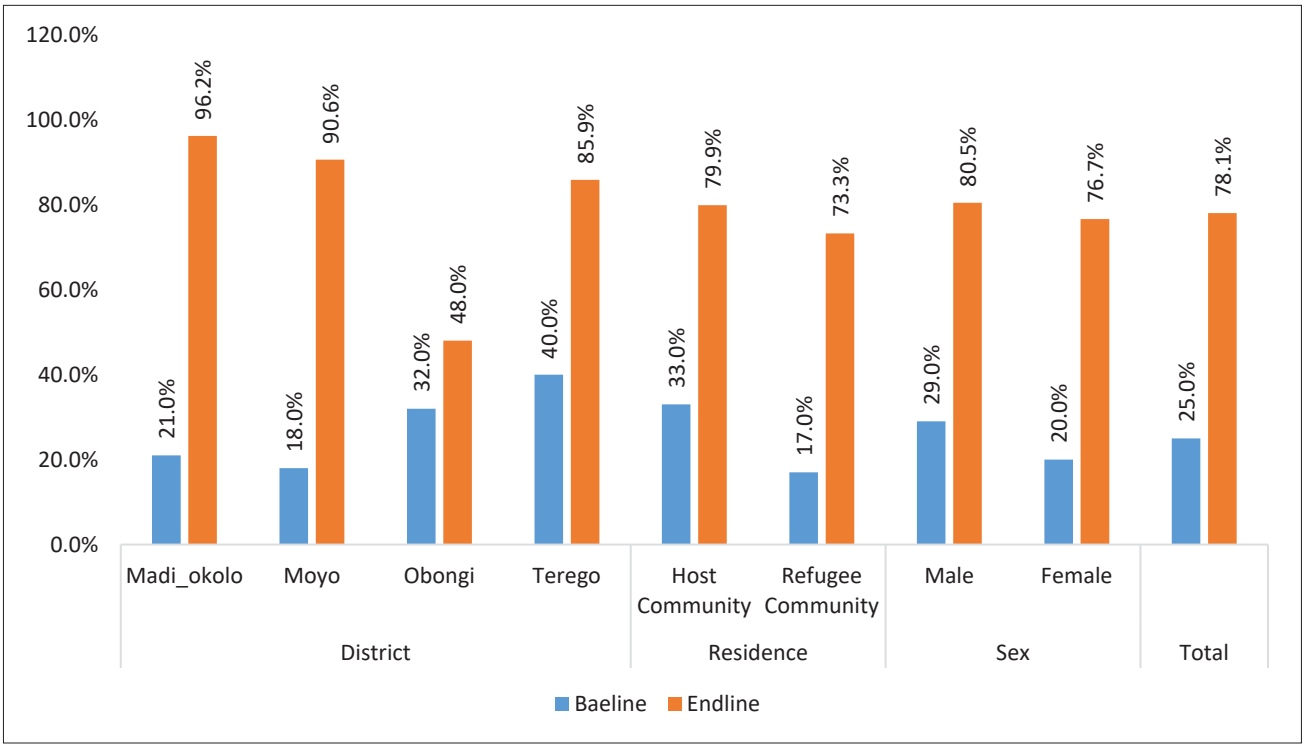
Source: Primary Data, 2024

Proportion of targeted population employed or self-employed in sustainable livelihoods activities over the last 12 months

EoP findings in figure 5 show a significant improvement in the proportion of targeted population employed or self-employed in sustainable livelihoods activities over the last 12 months from 25.0% at baseline to 78.1% at endline; above the life of project target of 39.0% with a similar pattern displayed among households across the 4 target districts, the host communities and refugee communities including the different gender at household level. Madi-Okollo (96.2%) and Moyo (90.6%) had the highest proportions of targeted population employed or self-employed in sustainable livelihoods activities over the last 12 months while more host community household members (79.9%) were employed or self-employed in a sustainable livelihoods activity as compared to the refugee community households (73.3%).

Of those employed or in self-employment, 76.9% have been employed since 2021 while 17.0% have been employed since 2022 and 6.1% employed in 2023. EoP findings further reveal that 44.2% of project participants are in permanent and pensionable employment, 26.0% in self-employment, 15.3% in casual employment and 11.1% in domestic employment. The achievements registered on this indicator are mainly as a result of strengthening capacity of households especially youth in employable skills and empowering households to start up IGAs.

Figure 5: Proportion of targeted population employed or self-employed in sustainable livelihoods activities over the last 12 months



Source: Primary Data, 2024

The study showed that unemployment rate was 21.9% (refugees, 26.7%; host 20.1%) and male was 19.5% compared to female of 23.3%. A study by Ogola and Okech (2022) on youth unemployment in West Nile showed that unemployment rate was 49.7%. According to the National Labour Force Survey report (UBOS, 2021), national youth unemployment was 16.5% (female 20.4%, male 13.5%). The above findings are significant and consistent with research studies.

Obongi has relatively remained behind compared to other areas because of creation of its own district. Refugees who were previously under Moyo district in Palorinya sub-county have now been transferred to Obongi district, and these had no or low level of education among project participants. A refugee welfare committee member in Bongilo village in Obongi district attributed the low employment levels to limited qualifications and absence of national ID for refugees highlighting that "*I won't say much on access to employment because most of the refugees cannot acquire jobs since they don't have the required academic qualifications and documents like the National Identity cards to get decent jobs in Uganda. On the side of crop farming, I acknowledge receiving various crop seedlings but it is so unfortunate that most of us don't have access to land.*" A host community member also observed that "*the rate of unemployment among the youths in Obongi District was very high before the project was brought here. I would like to thank SUPREME project because it paid attention by providing vocational skilling opportunities to the unemployed youth in Gimara Sub-county. We know the problem still persists, but we are thankful.*"

The issue of low level of education was also not isolated to refugees but featured among host communities too. A male host community key informant in Palio village (Gimara sub-county) revealed that "*most of us studied up to lower primary with a few lucky ones who reached secondary which is a challenge since most employment opportunities these days require A level, diploma and degree qualifications which most of us don't have.*"

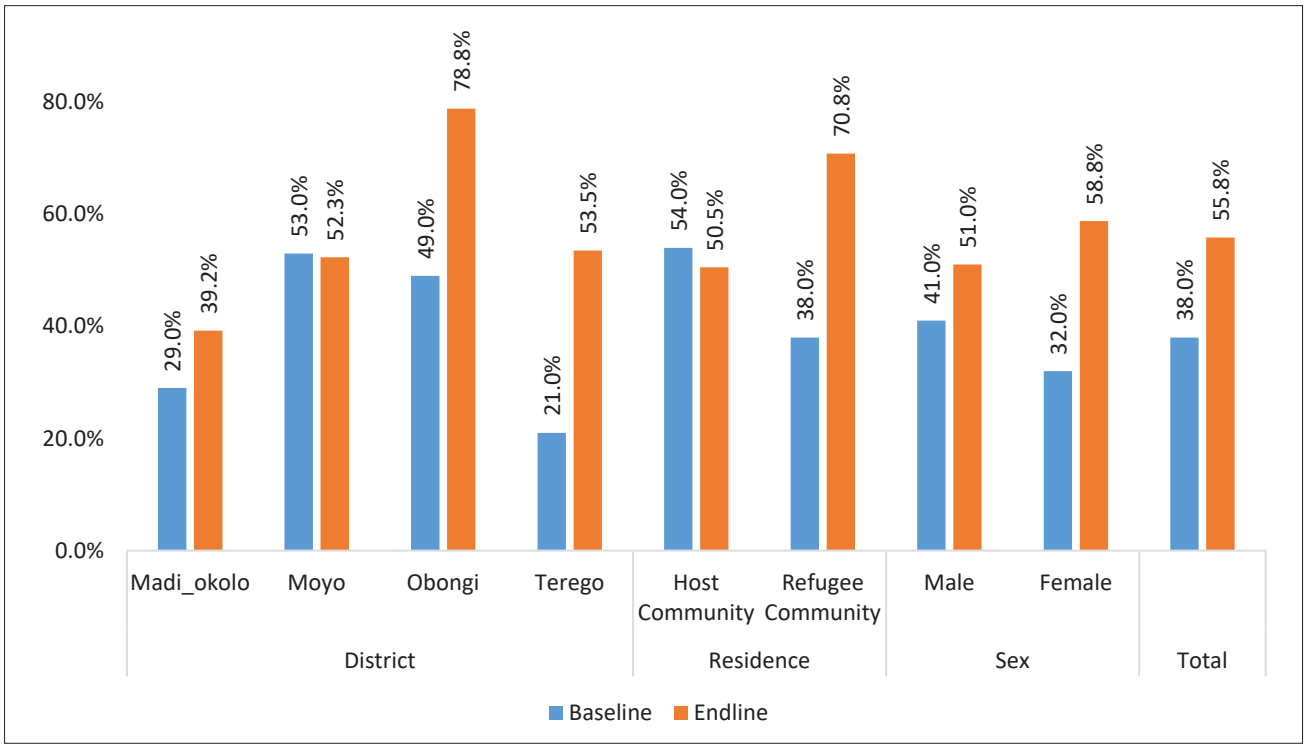
3.5.3.2 Proportion of targeted households with diverse source of income

Findings in table 13 above indicate a significant (P<0. 001) increase in the proportion of targeted households with diverse sources of income from 38.0% at baseline to 55.8% at EoP though below life of project target of 59.0%. Moyo registered a slight decline in the proportion of targeted households with diverse source of income from 53.0% at baseline to 52.3% at endline. The competing economy between the refugees and host population probably explains that because where both categories are, there is evidently increase in diversity of income sources.

Secondly, the creation of Obongi district means that services that attracted other players (NGOs, private sector players) due to presence of refugees have now shifted to Obongi district. Obongi registered the highest proportion of households with diverse source of incomes at 78.8%; an increase from 49.0% at baseline. A key informant in Palio village highlighted that "m*ost of us were mere fish mongers without alternative sources of income before diversifying to subsistence farming. The soils within Palio village are suitable for growing a limited variety of crops like groundnut seedlings, sweet potatoes and cassava. This makes it difficult for us to diversify to increase household income."*

The refugee community had more households (70.8%) with a diverse source of income as compared to the host community (50.5%) while more female headed households (58.8%) had diverse sources of income as compared to the male headed households (51.0%). This is because the project empowered more women with IGAs for purpose of increasing the economic power of women at household level. The study was unable to obtain information on average income by gender/ residence from diversified sources.

Figure 6: Proportion of targeted households with diverse source of income



Source: Primary Data, 2024

Similarly, the host community realised a decline in the proportion of targeted households with diverse source of income from 54.0% at baseline to 50.5% at endline. Qualitative data indicates that refugees do not discriminate on the kind of activities they engage in as long as they receive some

form of income, host communities are choosy on what to do. Refugees engage in casual work which included several items like gardening work (digging, weeding, support in harvesting), work at construction site, collecting water for people and most menial jobs fell under this category. A key informant in Palorinya sub-county succinctly captured this saying *"just like you know, poverty is a mind-set. The first thing is mind-set that you remain poor. Nobody is born with money; nobody is born with clothing. I think, first of all, trying to trigger the minds of the group is a step towards reduction of poverty. So, it helped in so many ways and mind-set change has made them to produce. Of course, I know out of one, you cannot get 100% from a group because sometimes others come late for activities but of course generally, it has been doing well and, even if you go now at least you can see some kind of difference with what they were before the project was in the inception."*

Both the male and female headed households realised significant improvements from baseline. Of the households engaged in diverse sources of income, 82.9% were engaged in crop farming, 29.8% engaged in livestock keeping, 23.5% in poultry keeping, 19.9% engaged in brewing & selling alcohol/local brew, 14.3% engaged as market vendors and 9.1% engaged in retail trade/shop with general merchandise as an alternative source of income. A study by Watema (2023) on improving household welfare through income diversity in Uganda showed that having a variety of sources of income significantly improves household welfare. The context of this study is the entire Uganda using Uganda National Panel Survey waves. The specifics of the evaluation must be appreciated by the differences in study design and methodology.

Other qualitative data on HHs with diverse source of captured below speak to the above findings as outlined below:

"What gives me money, is making local brew. From my brewing business, I am able to pay school fees for my children. Secondly, I also plant groundnuts and cassava, when harvested I sell and get some money too. Thirdly, I practice piggery and this also gives me good money." ***A male FGD participant in Moyo sub-county.***

3.5.4 Project Outputs

In order to realise its outcome, the project implemented three outputs that focused on; 1) increasing financial inclusion and social cohesion among Savings and Development Clusters (SDCs), 2) sustainable agricultural value chains and non-agricultural enterprises developed and 3) linking young women and men (aged 18-30) from SDC member households to private sector employment. Discussions on the performance under each of the outputs illustrates overall performance of the indicators in comparison to the baseline and EoP target.

3.5.4.1 Financial inclusion and social cohesion among Savings and Development Clusters (SDCs) increased

This output focused on increasing financial inclusion and social cohesion among SDCs and the farmer groups at community level. This output involved empowering households to form SDCs and save part of their income, digitalising of the savings groups, and linkage of the SDCs to microfinance institutions (MFIs) to enable them to access loans to boost their savings as well as strengthening social cohesion and trust among the participating refugees and host communities. Studies on financial inclusion advocate for a policy to achieve sustainable or inclusive economic growth and reduce poverty levels. Performance of each of the indicators in comparison to EoP findings to the baseline and life project 4-year target are illustrated in Table 14 below.

Table 14: SUPREME Project Output 1 Indicator performance

Indicator	Baseline 2021			Midterm 2022			EoP 2024			EoP Target
	Host	Refugee	Total	Host	Refugee	Total	Host	Refugee	Total	
% of targeted households who save part of their income	66.0%	37.0%	51.5%	86.9%	84.9%	86.2%	98.3%	93.6%	97.0%	90.0%
% of members in mixed SDCs who feel trust between participating refugee and host households	85.0%	95.0%	90.0%	78.2%	81.4%	79.1%	92.6%	88.9%	90.4%	95%
% of SDCs whose savings data is fully digitalised			0			18.0%	26.4%	9.8%	20.7%	90%
% of SDCs accessing loans from MFIs			2.0%			2.0%	31.6%	37.1%	33.5%	10.0%
Total MFI loans amount disbursed to SDCs			925.1 Million			-			185.3 million	-

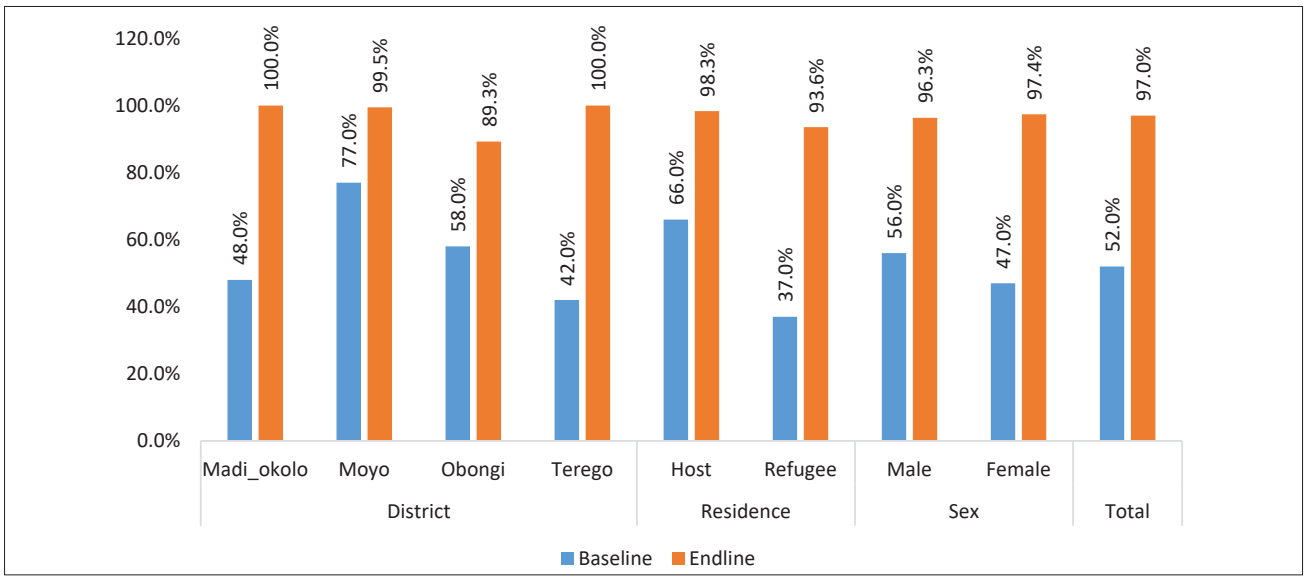
Source: Primary and Secondary Data, 2024

Indicator 1: Percentage of targeted households who save part of their income

The project embarked on empowering households to join SDCs and have the ability to save part of their income and access credit for purposes of investing in their IGAs. EoP findings in Table 14 reveal a significant improvement (P<0.00001) in the proportion of households who save part of their income from 52.0% at baseline to 97.0% at EoP surpassing life of project target of 90.0%.

Figure 7 below shows a similar pattern across all the districts, the refugee and host communities including the different sex. About 99.1% of SDCs save their money with SDC groups while 17.3% save with the SACCOs, 16.0% save their money using mobile money, 2.5% save using the banks such as Post bank, and Centenary bank. and 0.9% use the Microfinance Deposit Taking Institutions (MDIs) such as Pride and FINCA. This improvement on this indicator is as a result of the project empowering households to be part of the SDC groups at community level and have the ability to save part of their income.

Figure 7: Proportion of targeted households who save part of their income



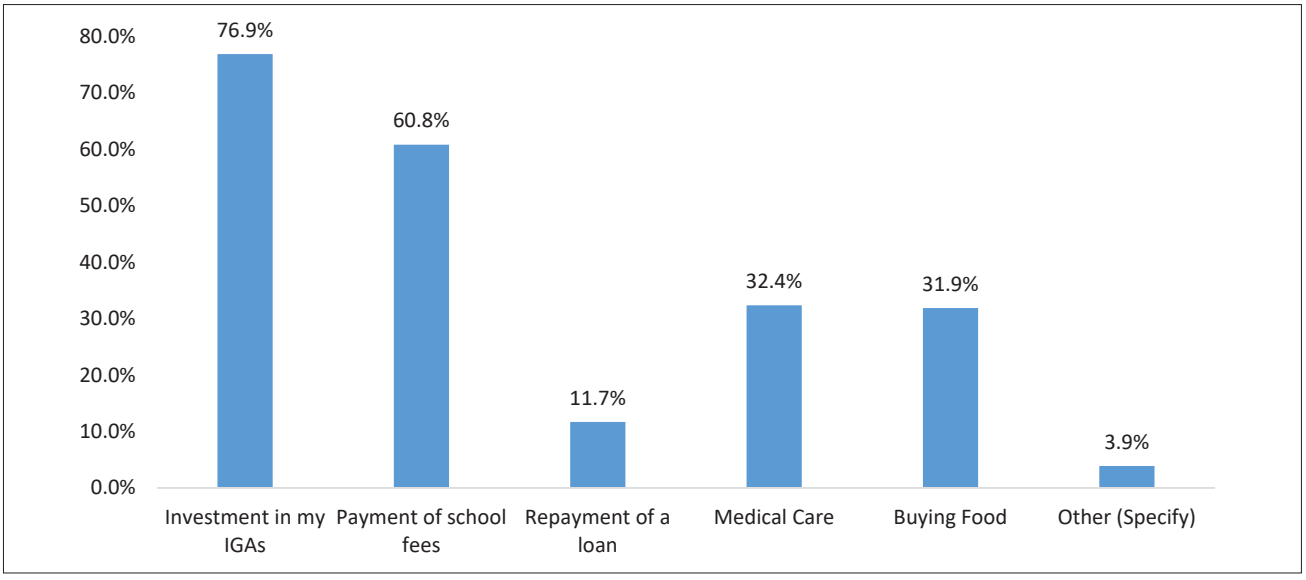
Source: Primary Data, 2024

Qualitative data capture the essence of targeted households who save part of their income:

> *"The training conducted under SUPREME project went deep in so many ways. For example, people are able to plan for their families as they save and after sharing, they are able to buy goats, cows, small size grinding mill, and earn from the mill."* ***A female refugee FGD participant in Odupi sub-county***.
>
> *"Here we rear animals. When we save and share at the end of a cycle, we buy things that we want and in situations when food is insufficient at home, we use this very money to buy things to eat. Like recently I didn't have food in my house, I bought a pig with the money I had saved. Later, I sold the pig and bought food at home."* ***A male FGD participant in Lefori sub-county.***
>
> *"In the past, before the project, the fisher men in this village could spend all their monies on drinking alcohol and acquiring more women. However, when the project came in, the men were encouraged to save which reduced domestic violence, polygamy and alcohol abuse." A* ***female FGD participant in Gimara sub-county.***

Further findings indicate that 61.8% of the SDC households have borrowed a loan or credit from a finance institution with Moyo (80.2%) and Obongi (72.1%) having the highest proportion. The proportion of SDC households borrowing among the host communities was higher (67.1%) compared to the refugee community (48.1%) due to challenges of accessing these financial institutions for bigger loans. About 97.1% of the SDC households that accessed loans did so from the SDC Groups while 14.3% accessed from the SACCOs, 3.4% from MFIs, 1.0% from banks and another 1.0% from money lenders.

Figure 8: What the SDC households used the loan or credit facility for



Source: Primary Data, 2024

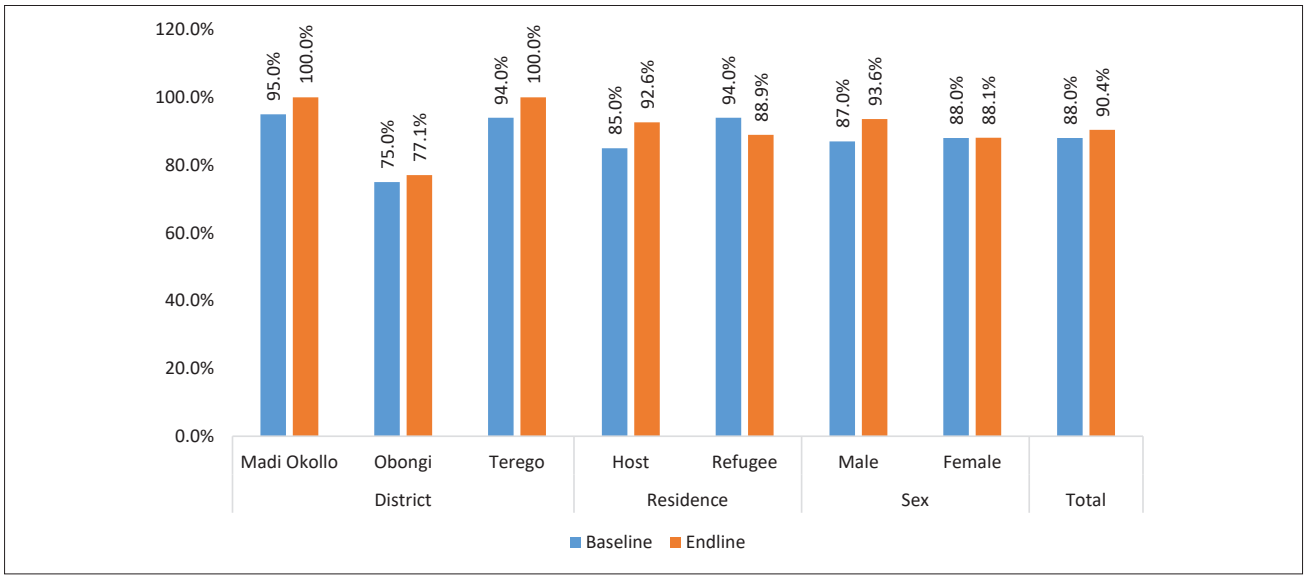
Of the SDC households that accessed loans or credit facility from a financial institution, figure 8 shows that majority (76.9%) accessed the loans for purposes of investing in their IGAs while 60.8% used the loans to pay for school fees for their children, 32.4% accessed the loans for medical care reasons, 31.9% for buying food for their households and 11.7% for the repayment of a loan. These findings imply that more SDC households have had a mind-set shift of strengthening their businesses for purposes of growing them and reaping higher incomes.

Indicator 2: Percentage of members in mixed SDCs who feel trust between participating refugee and host households

The project embarked on building social cohesion and trust between the participating refugees and host community households through the mixed SDC groups approach. Table 14 shows a significant improvement (P<0.001) in the proportion of members in mixed SDCs who felt trust between participating refugee and host households from 88.0% at baseline to 90.4% at EoP slightly surpassing the life of project target of 90.0%. The same trend was registered across all the districts with Madi Okollo (100.0%) and Terego (100.0%) reporting the highest proportion of household members in mixed SDCs who felt trust between participating refugee and host households.

The host community had a higher proportion (92.6%) of members in mixed SDCs who felt trust between participating refugee and host households, compared to the refugee community (88.9%) while male had higher proportion of trust (93.6%) compared to their female counterparts (88.1%).

Figure 9: Percentage of members in mixed SDCs who feel trust between participating refugee and host households



Source: Primary Data, 2024

Further engagement with the members of SDC mixed groups revealed that (97.3%) reported to have benefitted from the mixed SDC groups while 94.6%, are satisfied with being part of the mixed SDC groups. In addition, 92.1% reported to feel free to interact with members of the host community, 93.6% reported to feel free to interact with members of the refugee community.

Similarly, 87.2% reported feeling safe and secure as a member of a mixed group. About 90.4% of the members of the mixed SDCs revealed that the host community and refugee community live in harmony, 83.1% reported that if they needed help, there were members of the host community who could readily be approached for help while 90.4% reported that if they had a need, there were members of the refugee community that they could easily approach. Overall, 90.1% of the members in the mixed SDCs indicated that they felt their children were secure in the community. These findings indicate an increase in members in mixed SDCs who felt trust between refugee and host households.

Findings from FGDs and key informants demonstrate a similar feeling of security and safety between host community and refugees as highlighted here... ***"here in Ongurua there is good relationship***

and social cohesion. *Refugees and host communities are united since we arrived here, we are sharing our resources together with them even through funerals refugees contribute something to console the family, and the host community give us free land for agriculture."* ***A male refugee FGD participant in mixed SDC in Odupi sub-county.***

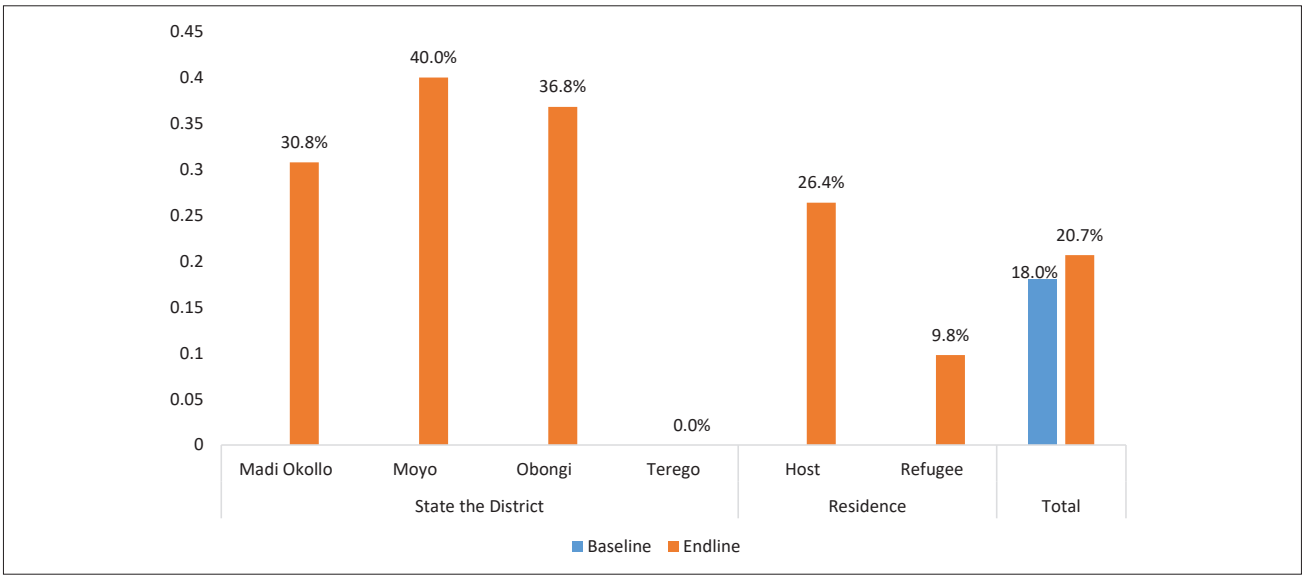
During an interview, a local council official observed that trust among refugees in Obongi declined because of new arrivals who do not understand the dynamics in the settlements. Some of these refugees tend to breach group working dynamics. Those refugees who have stayed longer in the settlements tend to go back to South Sudan. An RWC key informant in Itula sub-county observed that *"like I said before, this money was given to support the groups. But you will find that some people/group members are saying that they are now going to leave the group and that they should give them their share/part of the grant. This is the major challenge which is affecting the group's cohesion and to me, this is a bad practice."* Such statements indicate that there are some project participants who disrupt group proper functioning making them less effective.

Indicator 3: Percentage of SDCs whose savings data is fully digitalised

The project empowered SDC groups to fully digitalise their savings through capacity building and mentorship. It is expected that technical support will come from DreamStart Labs. Digitalisation in this context involved e-recording using electronic cashbox. As part of empowerment, SDCs had the choice to digitalise their savings, it was not forced on them. EoP findings in table 14 reveal a slight improvement in the proportion of SDCs whose savings data was fully digitalised from 0% at baseline to 20.7% at EoP; below the life of project target of 90.0% with more digitalised groups registered in Moyo (40.0%), Obongi (36.8%) and Madi Okollo (30.8%).

There was no fully digitalised SDC groups reported in Terego district. The project team indicated this as an area of attention that will be closed before project exit at the end of July 2024. The host community had more digitalised groups (26.4%) as compared to the refugee community (9.8%). A review of the project documents also revealed that it targeted to establish and roll out digital cashbox for e-recording to at least 600 SDCs but had achieved only 148 (25%) by the time of the endline survey.

Figure 10: Percentage of SDCs whose savings data is fully digitalised



Source: Primary Data, 2024

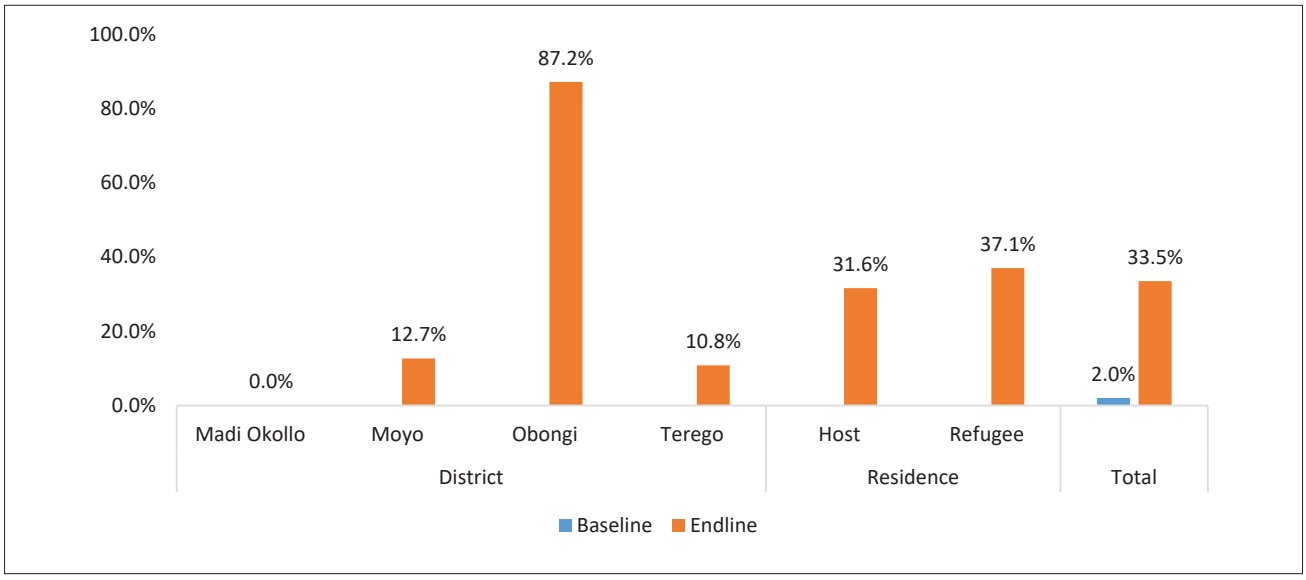
Of the SDC groups that have not digitalised their savings, 87.0% reported not to have resources to digitalise their savings, 62.3% not to have received trainings or capacity in regards to digitalisation and are not aware, while 35.4% feared hidden costs/charges. It is clear that whereas SDC groups aren't trained and should be encouraged to digitalise their savings, majority have not yet done so for a number of reasons. It is important that before the project comes to an end, SDC groups are linked to appropriate financial institutions and other stakeholders for purposes of digitalising their savings.

Digitalization of the SDCs operations through an innovative digital ledger application goes a long way in helping capture all the manual records that were on paper in the past. There is no doubt that when done right, digitalisation of VSLAs can result in rapid acceleration of financial inclusion in developing countries since VSLAs have already proven to work for those hard to reach through conventional means. Digitalisation is an avenue for helping VSLAs build data that they can use as collateral –transactional historical data that financial institutions could make use of in extending digital credit to its members. A study by Reis et. al., (2020) showed that groups that digitalise expect to enhance their competitive advantage by offering services throughout virtual channels and operationalize its operations management. Digital financial inclusion also recognises that project participants (refugee and host households) may be mobile; which eases movement to many other places that offer opportunity and hope.

Indicator 4: Percentage of SDCs accessing loans from MFIs

As part of the process of ensuring that SDC groups had access to loans, the project provided linkages to MFIs for the SDC groups to be able to access loans to boost their portfolio. EoP findings indicate that 41.6% reported to have received some support from MFI; a significant improvement from 10.0% at baseline with higher proportions in Madi Okollo (100.0%) and Obongi (88.1%). There were fairly equal proportions of SDC groups that received support from VF among the refugee (42.7%) and host (41.0%) communities. Of those that received some support, 73.3% reported to have received support in form of capacity building/training or awareness while 33.5% received loans and 24.4% received support on digitalisation.

Figure 11: Percentage of SDCs accessing loans from MFI



Source: Primary Data, 2024

Figure 11 shows a significant improvement in the proportion of SDCs accessing loans from VF from 2.0% at baseline to 33.5% at EoP; surpassing the life of project target of 10.0%. Obongi (87.2%) had the highest proportion of SDC groups accessing MFI loans as compared to the other districts. Slightly more than half (53.2%) of the SDC groups that accessed loans received the VF loans twice while 46.8% received the loans once. On average, SDC groups received about UGX. 3,779,755 as loans and a high majority (96.4%) reported to have benefited from the VF loan(s) obtained through; growth of loan portfolio (92.5%), improved credit service delivery (86.6%), more members able to borrow and access loans (81.3%) and improved livelihood opportunities for SDC group members (76.1%).

As can be seen from figure 11, Obongi witnessed the highest proportion of SDC groups who accessed loans from MFI. A key informant leader in a Refugee Welfare Committee in Bongilo village remarked that *"the positive lesson Learnt is the project has supported many savings and farmer groups with grants and financial linkages to MFI. Individual group members who carefully planned for their loans have prospered economically, some have even bought their own land for crop farming."*

Qualitative data from project participants in Obongi demonstrate the reason why it has performed better than other districts as captured in these voices:

> *"The groups which were linked to MFI by World Vision accessed loans that they utilised to establish businesses like kiosks, chapati selling, brick making and mini restaurant which enabled them to return back the loans.* ***A male participant in FGD in Bongilo village****.*

Regarding those who spoil relationship with one of the MFIs, it was revealed that some SDC members borrowed money and never paid back with potential consequences of the group being blacklisted by the MFI. Group members have expressed frustration with such members who exhibit unethical behaviour that may ruin other's chances.

3.5.4.2 Sustainable agricultural value chains and non-agricultural enterprises developed

The project supported and developed sustainable value chains for agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises in both the host and refugee communities. This involved the linkage of SDC groups to market actors in the relevant value chains, empowered SDC household members to develop business plans for their new enterprises.

Table 15 shows the performance of the three output indicators while comparing the EoP achievement to baseline and life of project target. Other non-agricultural enterprises may include retail services, baking and confectionaries, wielding and metal fabrication, saloon and hairdressing, among others. The project aimed to invest in sustainable agriculture and non-agriculture value chain development to diversify production systems, generate increases in productivity and foster job creation. This was meant to create decent jobs, particularly for women and youth, which was deemed an essential element for inclusive and sustainable growth.

Table 15 illustrates the respective indicator performance on this output:

Table 15: SUPREME Project Output 2 Indicator performance

Indicator	Baseline 2021			Midterm 2022			EoP 2024			EoP Target
	Host	Refugee	Total	Host	Refugee	Total	Host	Refugee	Total	
% of SDCs linked to market actors in the relevant value chain.	22.0%	3.0%	17.0%	68.9%	70.3%	69.3%	72.9%	78.3%	74.8%	90.0%
% of SDC members that develop business plans	8.0%	6.0%	8.0%	46.4%	61.3%	50.3%	66.3%	45.4%	60.9%	85%
% of SDC members that established new enterprises	32.0%	34.0%	33.0%	45.0%	53.0%	47.4%	71.2%	63.1%	69.0%	50.0%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

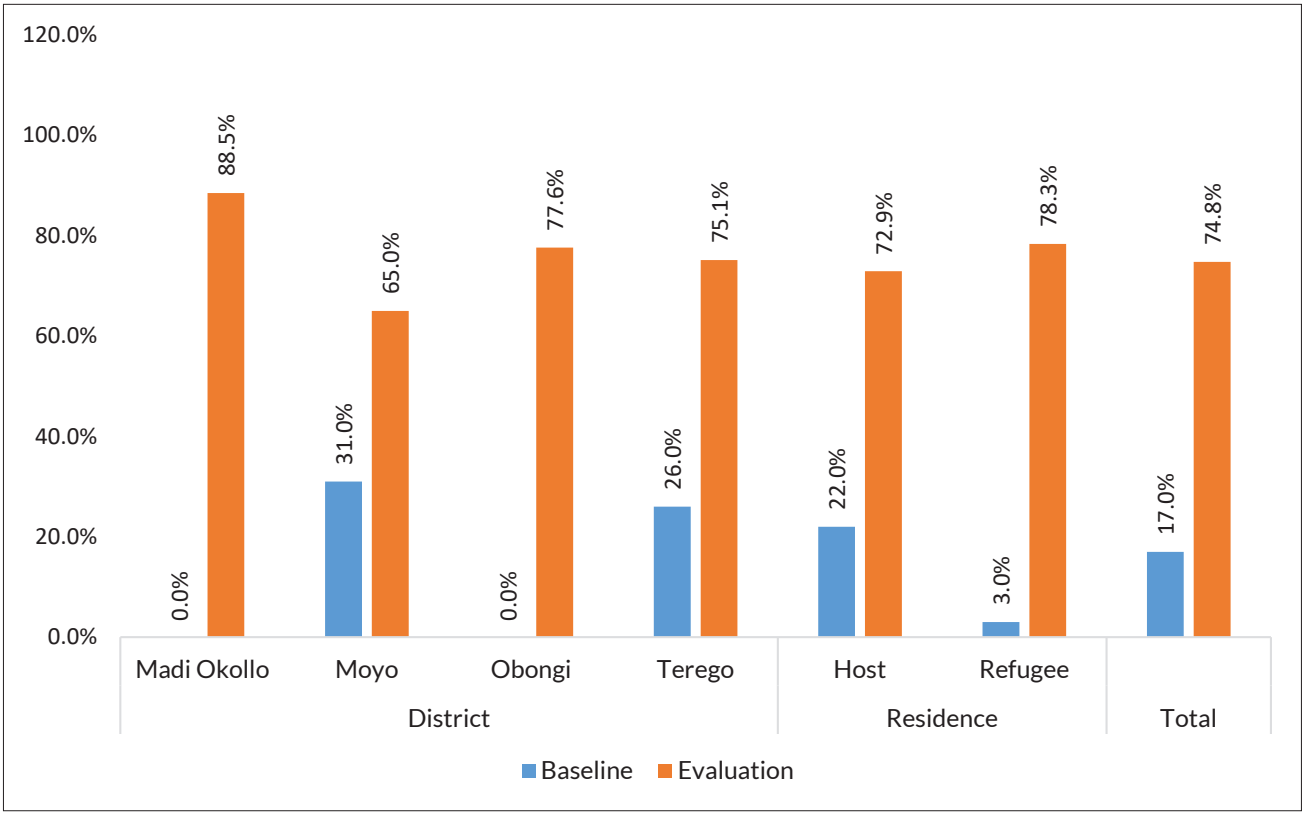
Indicator 1: Percentage of SDCs linked to market actors in the relevant value chain

In the context of this project, market linkage referred to SDCs being connected/introduced to and being made aware of the different actors. Therefore, the project has been tracking SDCs linked and making use of the actors being reported as a sub-activity. Table 15 shows a significant improvement in the proportion of SDCs linked to market actors in the relevant value chains from 17.0% at baseline to 74.8% at EoP. However, this is below the life of project target of 90.0%. The shortfall in target market linkage could be attributed to production capacity inadequacies.

Many Smallholder Farmers (SHFs) involved were novices in these value chains, like tomatoes, or watermelon lacking the capacity to meet demand satisfactorily. A similar pattern is exhibited for the refugee community that registered an increase from 3.0% at baseline to 78.3% at EoP and the host community with an increase from 22.0% at baseline to 72.9% at EoP. The same trend was observed in the 4 districts with a significant improvement from baseline to EoP with Madi Okollo (88.5%) registering the highest proportion of SDC groups linked to market actors followed by Obongi (77.6%), Terego (75.1%) and Moyo (65.0%). This improvement is a result of increased capacity of the SDC groups through trainings in various aspects, effective use of opportunities created through linkage and mindset change towards engagement with market actors in their relevant value chains. A male FGD participant in Laropi sub-county revealed that *"what this project has done under market linkage is like if you plant groundnuts, harvest it; and if you fail to get the market, they look for you the market. The choice is yours, you may take it to the market yourself, but if you want, they link you up with a buyer who can buy from you."*

Project participants were provided multiple options to choose from. About 95.2% of SDCs were linked to suppliers of agricultural inputs such as seeds and farm tools; 21.3% to Non-Government Organisations or private entities that train or support the SDC members; 15.8% to financial institutions that give them credit; and 15.2% to bulk purchasers, an individual or company that buys their outputs in large quantities. About 7.1% were linked to at least one category of market actor and 5.2% to government agency that trains or supports the SDC members. Slightly more than a third (37.1%) of the SDC groups were linked to these markets by ZOA Uganda, 33.8% by World Vision, 30.5% by RICE West Nile, 9.3% by SNV, 3.3% by Vision Fund and 0.7% linked by other financial institutions.

Figure 12: Percentage of SDCs linked to market actors in the relevant value chain



Source: Primary Data, 2024

The majority (81.6%) of the SDC groups reported to have benefited from these market linkages with higher proportions among the refugee SDC groups (86.9%) as compared to the host community SDC groups (78.0%). Moyo had the highest proportion of SDC groups (98.7%) that reported to have benefited from the market linkages, followed by Terego (85.7%), Obongi (85.4%) and Madi Okollo (43.5%). The low performance in Madi-Okollo is attributed to refugees (especially those who have stayed longer in Uganda) who migrate back to South Sudan after acquiring some skills; and high costs of hiring land by refugees. When these refugees return to South Sudan, new ones enter Uganda (Ewanga sub-county) and are not absorbed into the project which retards progress in meeting project targets. Similarly, high land hire costs affect productivity because land affordable by refugees are usually smaller characterised by disputes with landlords due to verbal nature of agreement on land usage and mode payment (cash, through agricultural products or a combination of both). This mix of contextual factors impacted performance in Madi-Okollo. Similarly, small sample size (43) compared to others: Moyo (194), Obongi (180) and Terego (248) contributes to this performance. Larger samples give more precise estimates of the population characteristics while small samples create risks of drawing incorrect policy conclusions as explained in Faber and Fonseca (2014) on how sample size influences research outcomes.

Almost all the groups (95.1%) reported to have benefited through improved market opportunities while 79.7% reported to have increased capacity building/training and awareness in relation to their value chains and the available markets, 65.9% reported increased loan portfolio and 52.8% reported increased diversity of services. All responses from project participants are above 50% implying that the linkage to various market actors is paying dividends as confirmed by the proportion of project participants who have benefited from the various linkage activities.

Qualitative data on SDC members who were linked to markets actors point towards satisfaction with what SUPREME did for the project participants as reflected in the excerpts below:

> *"The SUPREME program endeavored to link us to better markets for our farm produce. The only challenge is that we only practice subsistence farming due to inadequate land. For those who produce in bulk, they get good money from buyers who offer good prices and come to where farmers are."* ***A female refugee FGD participant in Itula sub-county.***

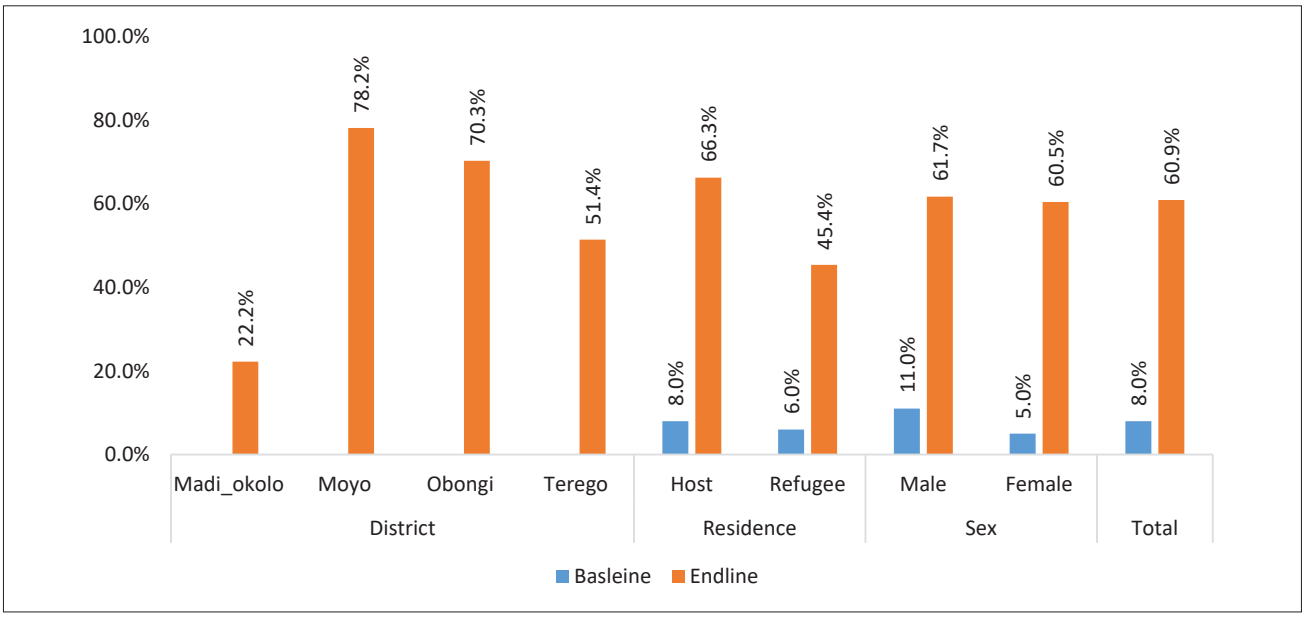
> *"The SUPREME project assured us about linkage to better market for our products especially if we produced on a large scale. However, we don't have the capacity to practice commercial farming as a result of little income to hire tractors. We practice more of subsistence farming where we consume more at home and sell less to the local Market."* ***A male host FGD participant in Gimara sub-county.***

> *"SUPREME project linked us to better markets but we didn't have capacity to deliver our produce in bulk due to inadequate income to practice commercial farming. We also experience difficulties in transporting the little produce to the local market in Obongi Town Council since we rely more on boda-bodas which are expensive to travel with and get back home.* ***A male SDC chairperson in Gimara sub-county.***

Indicator 2: Percentage of SDC members that develop business plans

SDC members were trained to develop business plans for their business. EoP findings in table 15 above indicate a significant improvement in the percentage of SDCs members that develop business plans from 8.0% at baseline to 60.9% at EoP though still below the life of project target of 85%. Moyo (78.2%) had the highest proportion followed by Obongi (70.3%), Terego (51.4%) and least in Madi Okollo (22.2%). The development of business plans translated into access to credit and other financial services from financial institutions. The low performance in Madi-Okollo is attributed to refugees (especially those who have stayed longer in Uganda) who migrate back to South Sudan after acquiring some skills; and high costs of hiring land by refugees. When these refugees return to South Sudan, new ones enter Uganda (Ewanga sub-county) and are not absorbed into the project which retards progress in meeting project targets. Similarly, high land hire costs affect productivity because land affordable by refugees are usually smaller characterised by disputes with landlords due to verbal nature of agreement on land usage and mode payment (cash, through agricultural products or a combination of both). This mix of contextual factors impacted performance in Madi-Okollo. The host community had higher proportions (66.5%) as compared to the refugee community (45.4%) mainly due to capacity (low level of education) issues among refugees.

Figure 13: Percentage of SDCs members that develop business plans



Source: Primary Data, 2024

Of the SDC members that developed business plans for their enterprises, the majority were for Agricultural enterprises (61.0%) while 39.0% were for the non-agricultural businesses. The host community had higher proportions (64.0%) of SDC that developed business plan for agricultural enterprises as compared to the refugee community (48.1%). In terms of district performance, Terego (64.4%) had the highest proportion of SDC members developing agricultural enterprises followed by Moyo (63.1%), Obongi (56.3%) and lastly Madi Okollo (40.0%).

Qualitative data indicates the extent of the impact of the project on development of business plans as outlined in these sample excerpts:

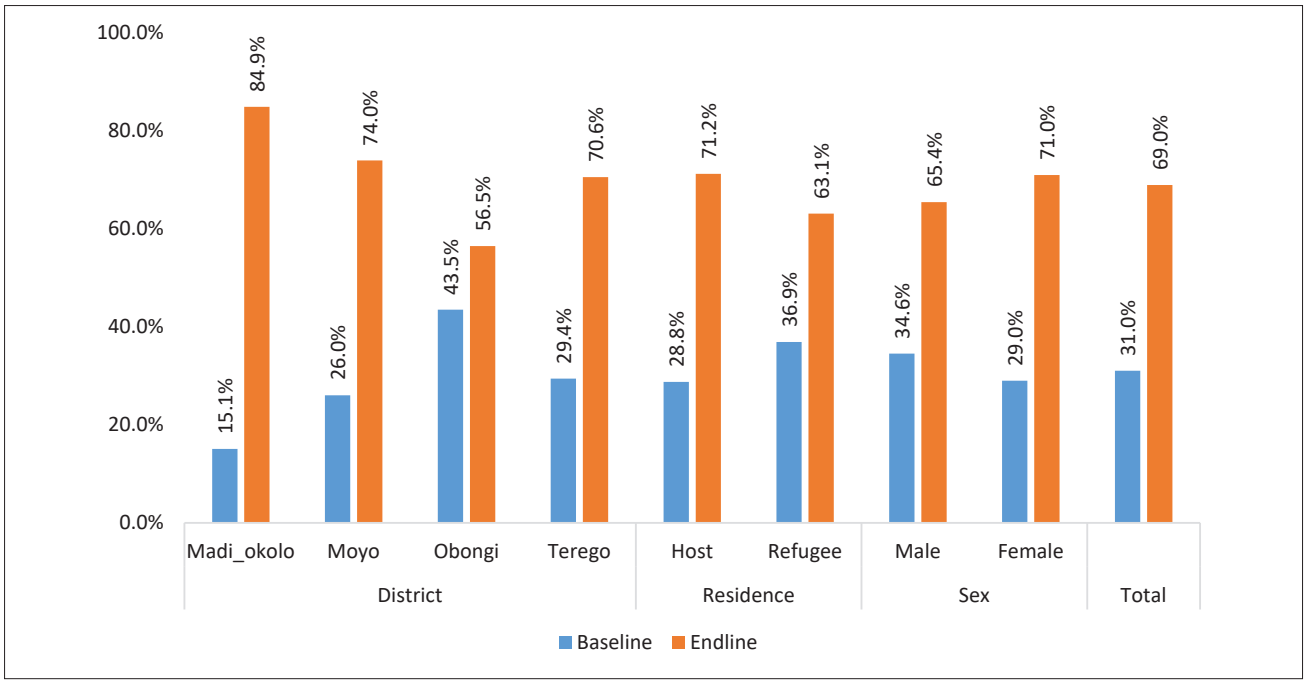
> *"The project guided us on how to prepare business plans and apply for loans from financial institutions. However, they need to conduct another refresher training for most members who have not yet Learnt."* ***A male host FGD participant in Itula sub-county.***
>
> *"We were given a chance to participate in the business plan challenge and they selected the best people, supported them and they progressed on well which we see in their improved wellbeing. However, some people weren't selected and supported which left them behind without progressing. We urge the project to also support them with whatever is possible."* ***A female FGD participant in Uriama sub-county.***
>
> *"We have written a business plan in this project SUPREME about enterprise development grant (EDG). We also came up with a project called green energy that required a business plan which we wrote but we were successful with only the Enterprise Development Grant where I emerged as one of the winners of that grant."* ***A male SDC FGD participant in Imvepi Refugee settlement in Terego district.***

Indicator 3: Percentage of SDC members that established new enterprises

EoP findings in table 15 indicate a significant (P<0.001) improvement in the proportion of SDC members that established new enterprises from 31.0% at baseline to 69.0% at EoP; far above the life of project

target of 50.0%. The same pattern is shown across the districts and among the refugee and host communities with the highest proportions in Madi Okollo (84.9%) followed by Moyo (74.0%), Terego (70.6%) and Obongi (56.5%). The host community had higher proportions (71.2%) of SDC members that established new enterprises as compared to refugee communities (63.1%). Meanwhile more female (71.0%) had higher proportions than their male counterparts (65.4%).

Figure 14: Percentage of SDC members that established new enterprises



Source: Primary Data, 2024

Enterprises established by project participants were reported across the four districts as expressed in the qualitative excerpts selected below:

> *"Please note that 4 out of 12 have been able to employ other community members because of the enterprises they are engaged in like, charging shop, motorcycle garage, salon".* ***A male refugee FGD participant in Odupi sub-county.***
>
> *"Yes, the project is building a foundation because like I said earlier.... many group members are benefiting from the project and starting their small businesses like selling cassava, that is helping them generate income to start up future enterprises."* ***A key informant in Lefori sub-county.***
>
> *"When I was trained in bakery, I came back and got some capital and started my own business for selling bread (mandazi)."* ***A female mixed group FGD participant in Rigbo sub-county.***

3.5.4.3 Young women and men (aged 18-30) from SDC member households are linked to private sector employment

The project embarked on supporting youths to attain marketable skills, job placement, coaching and mentoring through local service providers facilitated through the Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE) model. This output was tracked and measured by three output indicators that

included: 1) percentage of young women and men receive training certificates, 2) percentage of young women and men who complete intern-and-apprenticeships and 3) percentage of young women and men employed through formal employment. Progress was assessed based on comparing the baseline findings with the EoP, and life of project target as illustrated in Table 16.

Table 16: SUPREME Project Output 3 Indicator performance

Indicator	Baseline 2021			Midterm 2022			EP 2024			EoP Target
	Host	Refugee	Total	Host	Refugee	Total	Host	Refugee	Total	
Percentage of young women and men receive training certificates	13.0%	18.0%	15.5%	10.7%	8.8%	9.8%	89.2%	83.6%	87.2%	85%
Percentage of young women and men complete intern- and apprenticeships	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.0%	29.0%	31.0%	95.7%	92.9%	94.8%	75%
% of young women and men employed through formal employment	26.0%	17.0%	21.5%	88.6%	87.7%	88.2%	86.5%	92.1%	88.6%	50%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Over the course of the project implementation, efforts were made to link project participants to various employment opportunities as can be gleaned from these qualitative data captured below:

> *"We participated in salon, fashion and design, mechanics, hair dressing under this project and they have led us into employment due to the skills and certificate we got from the training".* ***A female refugee youth in Omugo sub-county.***
>
> *"SNV also went forth to find for us areas of internships where we were exposed to new techniques and we added on our experiences."* ***A male refugee youth in Odupi sub-county.***
>
> *"We participated in salon, fashion and design, mechanics, hair dressing under this project and they have led us into employment due to the skills and certificate we got from the training."* ***A female FGD participant in Palorinya sub-county.***

Indicator 1: Percentage of young women and men that receive training certificates

The project supported the identification of Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTVETs) and youth training institutions and empowerment to build their capacities to provide market-oriented skills trainings for youth. To this extent, a high proportion of the youth (95.8%) reported to have received training to improve their skills from the BTVET trainers supported by SNV with higher proportions in Terego (100.0%), followed by Moyo (99.2%), Obongi (92.3%) and Madi Okollo (76.7%). This low performance in Madi-Okollo is attributed to refugees (especially those who have stayed longer in Uganda) who migrate back to South Sudan after acquiring some skills; and high costs of hiring land by refugees.

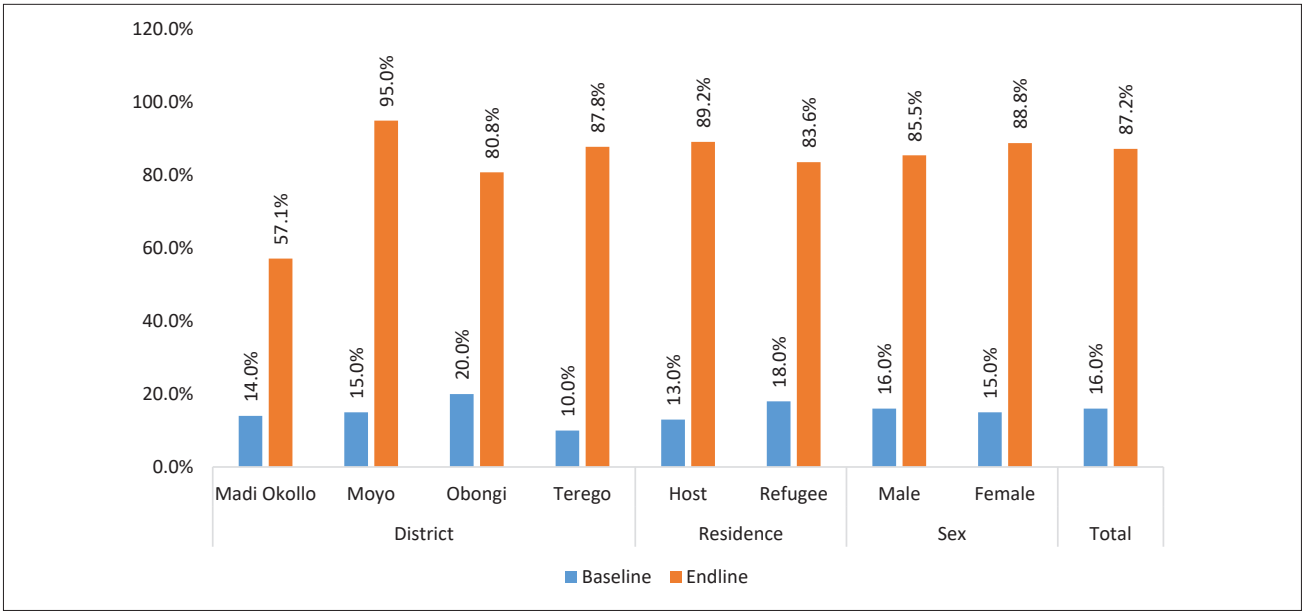
When these refugees return to South Sudan, new ones enter Uganda (Ewanga sub-county) and are not absorbed into the project which retards progress in meeting project targets. Similarly, high land hire costs affect productivity because land affordable by refugees are usually smaller characterised by disputes with landlords due to verbal nature of agreement on land usage and mode payment (cash, through agricultural products or a combination of both). This mix of contextual factors impacted performance in Madi-Okollo. Another key factor is smaller sample size. Larger samples give more precise estimates of the population characteristics while small samples create risks of drawing incorrect policy conclusions as explained in Faber and Fonseca (2014) on how sample size influences research outcomes.

There was a similar proportion of youth that received training to improve their skills from the BTVET trainers among the refugee (95.6%) and host (96.0%) communities, and female (95.8%) and male 95.9%). Also, 82.2% of the youth reported to have participated in some initiatives to link them to employment opportunities with the highest proportions registered in Terego (87.3%), followed by Moyo (85.0%), Obongi (81.0%) and Madi Okollo (51.2%). The host community had a higher proportion (83.5%) as compared to the refugee community (80.0%). Female youth had higher proportions (83.7%) who participated in some initiatives to link them to employment opportunities as compared to their male counterparts (80.5%).

EoP findings in figure 15 indicate a significant improvement ($P<0.001$) in the percentage of young women and men that received training certificates from 0% at baseline to 87.2% at EoP; more than life of project target of 85%. Findings further reveal a similar pattern across all the districts with the highest proportions registered in Moyo (95.0%), followed by Terego (87.8%), Obongi (80.8%) and Madi Okollo (57.1%). There were higher proportions among the host community (89.2%) as compared to the refugee community (83.6%) and higher proportions among the female youths (88.8%) as compared to their male counterparts. This means skilling uptake had more female project participants and host communities by the nature of their numbers – female 70% and host 61% as per project records.

The majority of youths (83.2%) were satisfied about the training content while 73.1% (male=68.3%; female=77.4%) were satisfied about the youth internship program and 66.4% (Male=61.1% & Female=71.1%) were satisfied with the youth mentorship program. Furthermore, 69.0% of the youth (male=62.1%; Female= 75.0%) were satisfied about the gender inclusive and green employment identification.

Figure 15: Percentage of young women and men that receive training certificates



Source: Primary Data, 2024

Qualitative data below illustrates the significance of acquiring certificates for the youths and youth prospects:

> *"The partnership I had with SUPREME was that I was a trainee at Omugo Technical School where I managed to get a certificate in Fashion and Design. This has already helped to get more money and support my family."* ***A female key informant youth trainee, Omugo sub-county.***

> *"On the side of the youth, I am very pleased with the project because the youth were equipped with vocational skills and they were awarded certificates in those respective courses. I believe some of them will use those qualifications to either create or seek for Jobs."* ***A male FGD participant in Itula sub-county.***

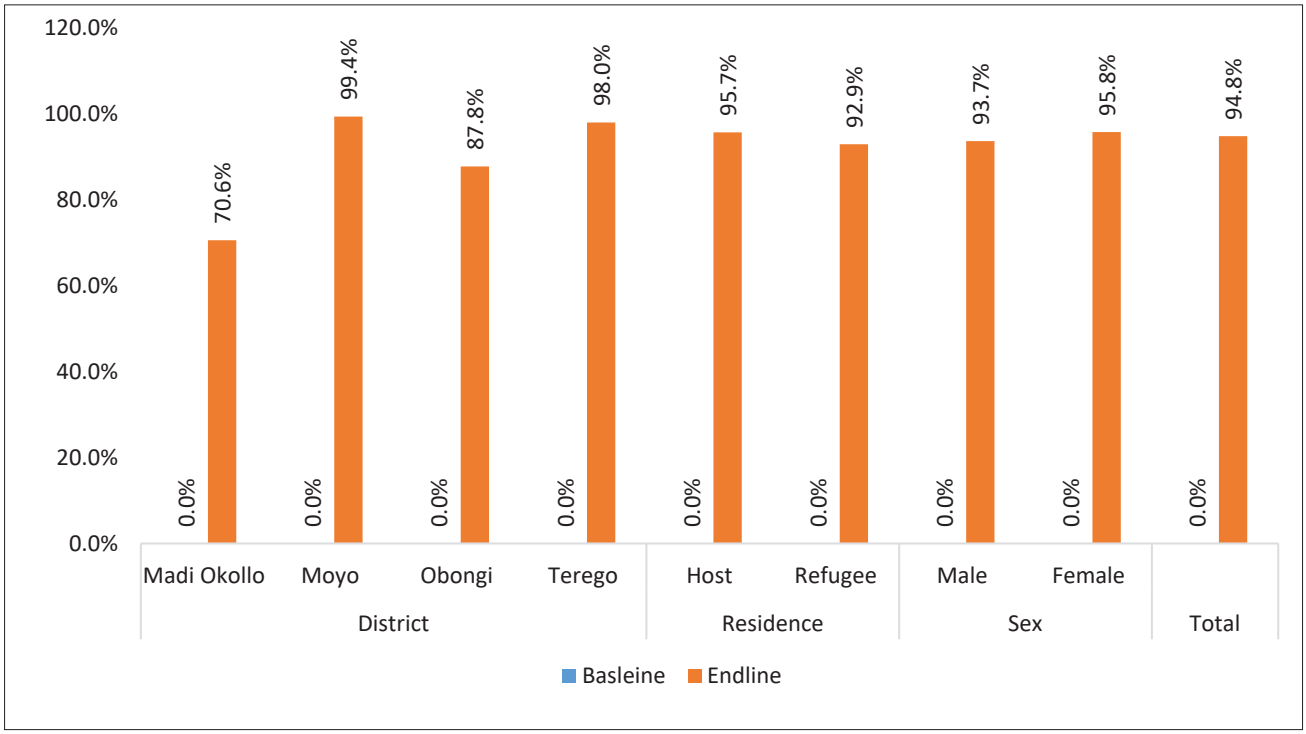
Indicator 2: Percentage of young women & men who complete intern-and apprenticeships

EoP findings in figure 16 illustrate a high proportion (94.8%) of young women and men who completed internships and apprenticeships when compared to a baseline of 0.0%, above the life of project target of 75%. Findings also show that Moyo (99.4%) had the highest proportion of young women and men who completed internship and apprenticeships, followed by Terego (98.0%), Obongi (87.8%) and Madi Okollo (70.6%). By residence, host community (95.7%) had slightly higher proportions as compared to the refugees (92.9%). More female youth (95.8%) had higher proportions young women and men who completed internship and apprenticeships compared to the male youth (93.7%).

The majority of the youths (95.4%) commended the quality and relevance or appropriateness of the trainings provided for life skills and occupational/employment skills with slightly higher proportions among the refugee community (97.3%) compared to the host community

(94.4%). There were relatively similar patterns among the male (95.2%) and female (95.5%) with the highest proportions revealed in Madi Okollo (100.0%) followed by Terego (98.1%), Moyo (96.3%) and Obongi (89.7%).

Figure 16: Percentage of young women and men who complete intern-and apprenticeships



Source: Primary Data, 2024

Qualitative data from respondents supports the above information on the graph as outlined in the quotations below:

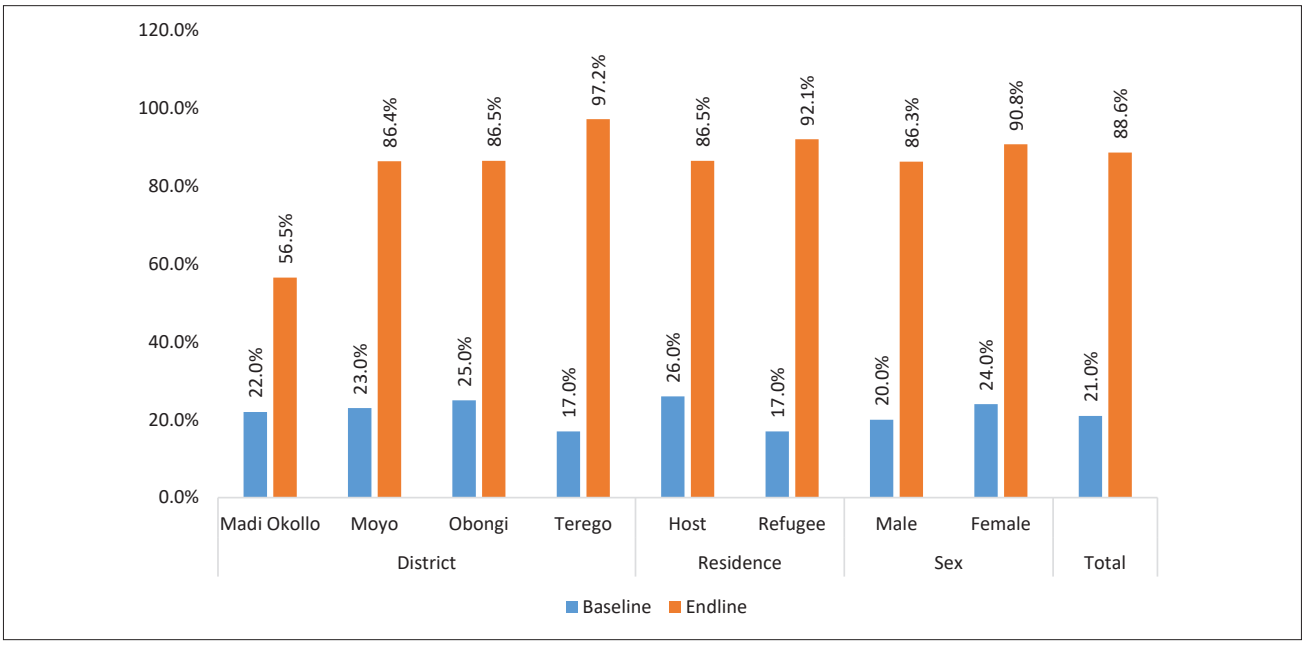
> *"For me, I say this has been done well. Before, people did not know about it, but since people have learnt of it, it has been embraced well because everyone has been given time."* ***A male FGD participant in Metu sub-county.***

> *"When I finished the training, I was taken for internship in Arua and they did not teach us many things that actually generate more money. They only taught us how to make Mandazi and not any other things. I would request that if they are taking youth for Internship, they can take them to other places like hotels."* ***A mixed group FGD participant in Rigbo sub-county.***

Indicator 3: Percentage of young women and men employed through formal employment

As a result of the trainings and empowerment received by the youth regarding enhancing their employment skills and abilities, EoP findings show a significant improvement ($P<0.001$) in the proportion of young women and men employed through formal employment from 0% at baseline to 88.6% at EoP; above the life of project target of 50%.

Figure 17: Percentage of young women and men employed through formal employment



Source: Primary Data, 2024

Findings in figure 17 indicate a similar trend exhibited across all the districts with the highest proportions registered in Terego (97.2%), followed by Obongi (86.5%), Moyo (86.4%) and Madi Okollo (56.5%). The low performance in Madi-Okollo is attributed to refugees (especially those who have stayed longer in Uganda) who migrate back to South Sudan after acquiring some skills; and high costs of hiring land by refugees. High land hire costs affect productivity because land affordable by refugees are usually smaller characterised by disputes with landlords due to verbal nature of agreement on land usage and mode payment (cash, through agricultural products or a combination of both). This mix of contextual factors impacted performance in Madi-Okollo. Another key factor is the smaller sample size. Larger samples give more precise estimates of the population characteristics while small samples create risks of drawing incorrect policy conclusions as explained in Faber and Fonseca (2014) on how sample size influences research outcomes. The refugee community had higher proportions (92.1%) of young women and men employed through formal employment as compared to the host community (86.5%) while the female youth had higher proportions (90.8%) as compared to the male youth (86.3%).

3.6 Efficiency

Project efficiency was assessed through determining the extent to which project outcomes were achieved within planned costs, in terms of value for money (e.g., cost/benefit; social return on investment and if the project objectives were delivered. The EoP also assessed the extent to which project participant's women, men and youths from refugee and host communities were involved in project outcomes. Findings showed through a review of project annual reports over the years, that SUPREME project implemented its interventions within time and underspends are carried over into the following year, through budget revisions This shows that all resources for financing the project were put to full use. A review of some of the financial reports indicated that project's budget utilisation increased from 57% at midterm to 93% at EoP and from projections, it is estimated to 100% by the time the project will close on 28 July 2024.

Similarly, a review of the activity implementation schedules, and progress showed that the project implemented its planned interventions. This is a good indication that planned project activities were

routinely implemented on time and project specific outputs would be easily translated in time into outcomes hence realising planned annual and multi-year targets of the project.

The project adopted the nexus approach through three pillars of humanitarian, peace building and development; although the project intervention hinged on development pillar. The humanitarian pillar focused on climate smart agriculture and provision of some inputs for both the immediate needs and long-term. Through trainings, project participants gained skills in climate smart agriculture that enabled them produce food for immediate and long-term needs. The peace-building intervention promoted peace between the refugees and the host. The mixed group approach was beneficial especially for the refugee project participants because they were able to access land from their host friends to produce additional foods. The attainment of this nexus is a demonstration of the efficiency in resource utilisation.

Bringing people together in a group was a social capital gained which is a big development ingredient because of the transformative effective. This is significant for refugees because they were suffering from trauma especially of what happened back home. The mixed group has worked as psychosocial support as refugees were able to open up, share and get support. Consequently, this has facilitated peace but also mindset opened to development thinking. This is seen with their level of mindset change and ability to establish business enterprises, ability to save within the SDC savings groups, ability to cope in times of stress, ability to secure productive assets and the ability to continue investing their incomes into their businesses. Project monitoring reports showed that these were achieved with optimal resource allocation, utilisation and reporting. This illustrates a high level of community participation in project interventions and as such being able to take charge of project results.

The next section below, the evaluators look at the various elements of efficiency and how they affected project success over the last years:

3.6.1 Budget Utilisation

The consortium had a total budget of €11.7 million with EUTF contributing €9.6million and partners €2.1 million. And this was broken down as: SNV had €3.45 million (29%), WVU with €3.33 million (28%), ZOA had €2.49million (21%) and RICE-WN with €1.86million (16%). By the time of EoP, budget utilisation rate was 93% (€10.96) and projected spend to time of closure was €0.777million implying full budget utilisation against planned expenditure. This rate was attained because of fully complying with the policies and strategies as laid out the design stage. The table on the next page illustrates how the project budget was utilized during the implementation period.

Table 17: Project Budget Utilisation

Partner	Approved Budget-4 Years		Cumulative Expenditure to date		Projected Expenditure to July-24		Total Expenditure to date		Burn rate
	(EUROs)	UGX (million)	(EUROs)	UGX (million)	(EUROs)	UGX (million)	(EUROs)	UGX (million)	
SNV	3,446,856	13,787	3,204,139	12,817	242,717	971	3,446,856	13,787	100%
RICE	1,862,543	7,450	1,709,046	6,836	153,497	614	1,862,543	7,450	100%
ZOA	2,489,801	9,959	2,328,275	9,313	161,526	646	2,489,801	9,959	100%
WVU	3,329,475	13,318	3,087,753	12,351	241,722	967	3,329,475	13,318	100%
Total (Inc. Support Office & ICR)	11,737,321	44,515	10,959,840	41,317	777,481	3,198	11,737,321	44,515	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2024

In terms of resource utilisation, a SUPREME staff delved into it as reflected by the qualitative data that "*we used so much of the policies and strategies and the current affairs to stay afloat. Inflation affected the grant, for example, a group would get €1,000, may an equivalent in UGX.4million. However, due to fluctuation in exchange rate (appreciation of UGX), it meant that they got less money. The project worked proactively to avoid over-or-under spending and also to help us in programmatic implementation.*"

Another SUPREME staff key informant remarked on the effective of budget utilisation saying "***yes, resource utilisation was very cost effective because we have not got any challenge on not implementing anything. All the activities that we planned to carry out were done, so I believe they were very cost effective.***" On whether, there were alternatives for achieving the same results with less inputs/funds, the project staff observed that "*you could say yes because we worked hand in hand with other project partners and were able to achieve more than targeted/planned. For example, if instead of duplicating training, we jointly organised them to achieve better results because mobilization was made together as partners and the project was able to connect with other project participants. Consequently, the project spent less on mobilization, so you achieve more than you had actually had planned to put in.*"

As regards, whether the project had return on investment, a SUPREME staff from a partner organisation said that "*there was return on investment. When you look at what is happening in the field, if you visited the field, you would see what actually is the output, farmers have been able to form groups, big groups, now they are able to sell their commodities to bigger markets. Some of them have even employed other people. You find someone who started with one project now has three projects and are employing more people, they are able to save. We are able to see all these from what is shared by members at the end of a cycle. Those who had children not going to school are now able to go to school. So, I can say there was high return on investment.*

3.6.2 Timely identification of challenges and addressing them

Through the continued reflection and learning engagements of the project over the years, there was pro-active identification of challenges and timely solutions to them. This involved routine reflection and learning events, active community monitoring exercises, annual review meetings and planning processes that would be used to identify challenges and design appropriate responses through a participatory approach while at the same time involving different partners and stakeholders. Similarly, there was disruption in programme implementation by COVID-19 through lockdown measures which limited programme activities.

A key SUPREME staff informant described how the project was able to adjust and scale down due to effect of COVID-19 saying "*there was really a lot that was affected by COVID-19 because the initial design of the approaches, there were minimal ways to deliver them. And time came when GoU had to issue guidance and how to go about the engagements, no public gatherings, restrictions on numbers and all that had a direct implication on how some of the models had to be delivered. So, we had to change, adapt to the model to be able to remain relevant during that time. Luckily, this being a livelihood project, it passed the GoU directive and had to continue implementation but you are aware that certain sectors were closed during lockdown. So, yeah, we had to become adaptive and design new ways of implementing the models and that we kept the donor informed of these proposals to be able to deliver now, that was in the peak of COVID-19 pandemic.*

3.6.3 Proactive engagement of stakeholders for better results

In order to enhance community participation and accelerated impact, the project embraced and promoted a participatory and consultative approach to planning, implementation, monitoring and reflections. This promoted the effective implementation of project activities as per planned work plans. This project worked closely with the district and sub county leadership, farmer groups, SDC groups and youth across the areas of implementation.

The project engaged with various stakeholders in many ways as echoed by the voice of this key informant… "*We provided stakeholders with relevant information because information empowers* project *participants. The project believed that if any partner or stakeholder got relevant information, they were able to make informed decisions. For example, somebody could be stuck with their soybean, but you know there may be actors buying soybean. Sharing that information can bridge this buyer-seller gap. Through engagement, the project was able to proactively address stakeholders' interests which resulted in better outcome as demonstrated in the outcome indicators and outputs. If there are other similar interventions to come, this can be recommended so that they can be able to be supported to ensure they grow to maturity. So, this can be within SUPREME partners, if they have programs, similar programs, or even externally other programs may be by government or other actors that can be quite critical for them.*

OPM and UNHCR were instrumental in this engagement especially on allowing refugees access to land, management of conflicts arising from host and refugee communities, spearheading the settlement livelihoods sector meetings as well as participating in activity joint monitoring.

3.6.4 MEAL contribution to effective management and result measurement

The Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) system for the project had clear reporting lines, data collection procedures, databases, data quality enhancement procedures, monitoring and reporting procedures. The project had a stationed M&E Coordinator at the office which was key in ensuring that aspects of M&E were handled without delay. The project also implemented the results chain effectively with all reports at all levels (Activities, Outputs, Outcomes and Impact) available. This was seen with the ease at which monitoring data and baseline, or evaluation data were obtained during the evaluation.

A SUPREME staff key informant highlighted how MEAL activities contributed to effective management and result saying "*I can tell you MEAL was integrated in the routine activities during implementation. We had routine monitoring with data collection and analysis. There were some moments when we would have intentional output monitoring on a quarterly basis. We had all these learnings which were integrated in accountability framework. Evidently, there were lots of best practices integrated directly in the project. During reflection meetings, we also discussed issues relating to men and their responsibilities in resilience and livelihoods. It was not like project was a standalone, and monitoring evaluation also a standalone. It has not been like that. MEAL has been completely embedded in the day-to-day implementation.*"

3.7 Impact

Project impact was assessed using positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects, directly and indirectly, intended and unintended changes over time. Impact is the long-term change or achievement that is attributable to a programme of implementation. The project tracked several long-term impact indicators that can be used to describe the overall impact of the project's interventions. The evaluators are cognisant of the fact that this is not an impact evaluation, but have taken appropriate steps to recognise short-term immediate impact of the project at this material time.

3.7.1 Positive Impact

The overall goal of the project was to improve the overall economic well-being for refugees and host communities in Terego, Madi Okollo, Obongi and Moyo districts in Northern Uganda. As a result of empowering households to adopt IGAs as one way of enhancing their incomes, the EoP revealed a significant improvement in the average number of IGAs per household from 0.214 at baseline to 2.159 at EoP; above the life of project target of 0.49. This means that more SDC households have an alternative source of income should the main source of income cease.

As a result of the increased income levels and the ability to access credit from the SDC savings groups, the Composite Productive Assets Index improved significantly from 0.081 at baseline to 0.547; above the life of project target of 0.187. This pattern was observed among the host (increase from 0.085 at baseline to 0.592 at endline) and refugee communities (increase from 0.077 at baseline to 0.498 at endline). This implies that more SDC households have access to productive assets that they can use to access money in case of stressful conditions. As a result of empowering households to be able to adopt and cope with appropriate food coping mechanisms in times of stress, there was a significant improvement in the Coping Strategy Index Score of targeted households from 5.8 at baseline to 2.8 with a similar pattern noted among the host (decline from 6.3 at baseline to 2.4) and refugee community (decline from 5.6 at baseline to 3.7 at endline). This means that more households are adopting appropriate (less negative) coping mechanisms in both the refugee and host communities.

Some qualitative quotes below capture the voices and perspective of stakeholders in the project:

> *"I would grade the project participants in three levels, they are those who are slightly much higher, those that are medium and those that are slightly below. Not everybody is able to meet their economic needs. I do not have statistics now, but hopefully this discussion will be very accurate but from the conversations, from the engagement I see in the field that is what I will be able to do to state. We have seen some project participants really take the project home and they have grown and this is attributable to the project. There was a youth we met out of excitement; they almost had it as a fear of joy because it was just a spike that was able to progress. Last year, the youth closed with UGX. 10 million. This year alone, the funding was a very easy, he bought two acres and he was telling us it was in excess of 20 million. It is an amazing story if you see what he is doing, he is confident that he will continue, he has put additional land to be able to produce. Another youth, we supported by the enterprise grant, doing carpentry has employed now six other youth who are working in the carpentry and believe me or not that one is going to continue offering also internship to two additional youth in this community."* ***A SUPREME staff key informant.***

> *"When World Vision exits, most of our project participants will be able to continue because they have started sustainable IGAs, income generating activities coupled with grants, they continue to exist at group level hence boosting their loanable funds. We know project participants are able to continue and meet their basic needs without anyone coming to their rescue. Maybe it will take a long time for someone to forget the lessons that they had to forget their personal their household visions and then fall back to take some time."* ***SUPREME staff key Informant.***

> *"There has been a great change among persons between 20 and 50 years due to the testimonies due to the training they receiving from SUPREME. Evidence from the groups proves to a great extent that their lives have been impacted by the project because they have been able to start their own business and others copy from their friends so as to improve their livelihood."* ***CDO in Odupi sub-county.***

3.7.2 Negative Impact

Whereas the project interventions aimed at increasing household incomes, this was achieved in the long run. Women were empowered to have IGAs, join savings groups and be able to access money (credit) whenever needed. However, findings indicate that this led to unintended consequences of gender-based violence (GBV) due to disputes on the distribution of money and assets at household level. Some men in the communities had access to income and ended up in alcoholism and this accelerated challenges of GBV at community level.

A classic case of unintended consequence is captured by this key informant's experience with one of the project participants:

> *"Women sometimes are empowered, and then this becomes some sort of family conflict within the household. But also, I will give an example at the training institution. At one point, we were taking people's women to vocational training schools, and there was this married woman. The programme did not seek her husband's consent, and we did not anticipate consent, or any challenge. The husband went to school and got her back from the school. Those are unintended outcomes because we could have caused divorce within families. We also have issues with men, people who have gotten money and they have married another woman. Those are basically things that the program did not know would come up."*

Another SUPREME key informant participant narrated a similar where women who benefited from grants faced the undesirable unintended consequences where increased cases of GBV were reported among the female project participants. These cases are best viewed in the words of some key informants captured below:

> *"This scenario involves giving out grants, as the project did. One unintended result was domestic violence caused by giving to women within households. Yeah, I think future projects need to guard against that, because it results in negative effect to the project. One way to deal with it is to undertake gender analysis to understand what roles women play vis-à-vis men and role of decision making in a household. But the other is that it is also key to involve both women and men in project activities from the start. For example, someone's wife is involved in an activity with SUPREME and spouse is not, there is need for sensitization to spouses of such women. This is important to ensure male spouses understand what the other person is actually involved in. This was not done. And the project suffered from the negative effects that I would like other projects to guard against in the future."*

There has also been reported cases of some group members not paying money borrowed from groups which has created instances of conflict leading group disintegration. A SUPREME staff key informant highlighted this as outlined below:

> *"I think one of the most important things is the granting process because the EDG grant and block grants, I think it was amazing. However, not everybody could have accessed it but also it presents challenges. One, in terms of block grant which we gave, this money was sent to different groups and then the groups used it to borrow and to reinvest. But I am sure because if you are me and you are used to borrow, some of these people are so indebted. For example, if you are used to borrow UGX.5,000 from the normal little money that you had and now because you think there is money, you are going to borrow UGX.1,000,000 and you fail to pay, it will cause conflict within the groups. This will certainly lead to group dissolving because we are 30 people and I have borrowed what I have failed to pay! What about the rest? And they are running away from homes because of the money which is too much in the box. So, it is causing a lot of conflict within the groups and we may see groups dissolving because of block grant."*

3.8 Integrating Gender and Disability in the project interventions

3.8.1 Gender

Gender inequality is discrimination on the basis of sex or gender causing one sex or gender to be routinely privileged or prioritised over another. Gender equality is a fundamental human right and often violated by gender-based discrimination. A lack of awareness, knowledge, or understanding of women's human rights is a key barrier to the achievement of gender equality in interventions (Murphy-Graham, 2009), while Gervais (2010) posits that awareness-raising can have direct effects on project participants by giving them confidence to speak up against violations of their rights. In Uganda women are considered anything but equal to their male counterparts due to a lack of education, cultural beliefs, and low access and acceptance of birth control, and most women have been forced into accepting the role of second-class citizens (Milazzo, 2013).

EoP findings showed that the project clearly integrated interventions on gender within its plans through the national gender strategy. Gender was mainstreamed through specific activity lines but also the gender disaggregation of data for the indicators. There were activities with men and women involvement in decision making in various aspects of life and the circles of money including having women in leadership. Activities on gender implemented by the project included among others; training of 1,000 SDCs in Enabling Rural Innovation (ERI), including Gender Action Learning System (GALS) and Local Capacities for Peace trainings (LCP), conducting a gender inclusive and green employment opportunity identification and market scan and developing gender-responsive services and curricula for life, business ('opportunity grabbing') and leadership skills development. All project indicators were designed to disaggregate data by male and female. Project databases and data provided were adequately disaggregated by gender and similarly reports both annual and semiannual disaggregated data by gender accordingly.

Through the SDC groups, youth, women and young women were intentionally targeted as project participants. It is for this reason that the highest proportion of project participants in the SDC groups are women whose economic wellbeing has been empowered through project activities. Studies have shown that interventions aimed at women's economic empowerment are most successful at the micro level focusing on increasing savings, providing childcare, conditional cash transfers, and job services (Buvinic & O'Donnell, 2016).

3.8.2 Disability

People with Disability (PwDs) are considered among the most vulnerable, especially Children with Disability (CwD) because they are often neglected and deprived of access to social services. Whereas there were attempts for the project to integrate issues of disability within the project plans, this was to a limited extent. Interviews with SUPREME partner staff revealed that there was an assessment i.e. gender, equality, social inclusion (GESI) where the design of the project required using gender disaggregated indicators (disaggregated in terms of gender, Nationality and disability.

The project in its approach also targeted 60% of females and 40% as project. Essentially, the project had PwDs actively participating in various activities. For example, PwDs benefited from the grants. Not because the project target was intentional in giving them the grants, but because they competed fairly with other people, through creating a conducive environment within the project. This is evidenced with 29.9% (male, 32.9% and female, 28.1%) of the SDC households having one or more PwDs with higher proportions among the refugee community (39.0%) as compared to the host community (26.3%). The same applies with the selection of project participants as EoP findings revealed 14.1% of project participants (male, 16.7% and female, 11.7%) had a disability. On the other hand, project-based indicators were designed to disaggregate data by disability during reporting. This means that whereas there were efforts to integrate disability within the implementation of the project, the project design was largely lacking in as far as intentionally integrating disability within the project's interventions.

> *On mainstreaming PwDs a key informant revealed that "....and even persons with disabilities, we deliberately ensured they were part of the project without any discrimination. You may find that in one or two groups, they may be missing, but they were always involved intentionally really."* ***Key informant from project partner****.*

3.9 Sustainability

Intervention sustainability is its ability to continue operations after the funding and support from the donor ceases (Lungo et al., 2017; Myers, Fisher, Pickering, & Garnett, 2014). The continued maintenance of development project varies across contexts and results from several intertwined factors, ranging from project management, through institutional setting, to environmental characteristics (Silvius, Kampinga, Paniagua, & Mooi, 2017; Sparks & Rutkowski, 2016). Project sustainability is an important aspect of any intervention that should be planned for right from the start of the intervention.

In order to assess progress towards the sustainability of the project's interventions over time, the EoP focused on examining the five drivers of sustainability. World Vision has identified five **key social drivers** of sustainability which are built into the Development Programme Approach and increase the likelihood that improvements in children's well-being will continue beyond WV's involvement in an intervention. Drivers of sustainability were defined as those interventions which determine the likelihood of the project's interventions in ensuring continuity beyond SUPREME's involvement in the project area. These included: local or community ownership; partnering; transformed relationships; local and national level advocacy; household and family resilience.

> *A key informant remarked on sustainability saying "project participants will continue with their employment opportunities that they got. They started saving so that they can start a business or can achieve a goal. Then from the farming, a good number moved away from just farming for home use, subsistence farming to commercial farming, meaning you now farm, take some in the market, leave some at home. So already the adoption of good practices, will spur to achieve by themselves even if the SUPREME*

> *project ends, still they will continue with this journey. They will continue to do what they are doing. But for me, key is the shift in the mindset of these communities. Yes, it was done right in." **Key informant from partner**.*

Progress on each of these drivers is outlined in the sections below:

3.9.1 Community Ownership

Community ownership was enhanced through involvement and participation of different partners and stakeholders such as technical and political district and sub-county stakeholders, CBOs, community groups and project participants, children and families especially the most vulnerable. As part of ownership, project participants were involved in annual review, planning and budgeting processes, including participating in making decisions. Through these processes, community members and stakeholders had an opportunity to add a voice and contribute to the changes made. This fostered community ownership right from the district level to the community level.

A male FGD participant in Uriama sub-county in Terego district reflected that "*as for our group, we have been trained enough to survive with various skills by SUPREME. Through our savings, we are able to invest in other profit-making business as well as access to loans that give us confidence to continue operating."* Another FGD participant in Gimara sub-county in Obongi district remarked that "*we shall try to sustain the group with the little resources which were provided to us by World Vision. However, they should first hold dialogues with the sub-county officials, the village agents and the group leaders to come up with strategies aimed at sustaining all the 13 groups in Gopele Parish."*

A Community Development Officer (CDO) in Moyo district on community ownership revealed that

> *"In SUPREME project has been educating farmers not just to come and distribute money. No, project participants first underwent rigorous trainings conducted by Production officers. They were trained on proper farming methods which has helped increase yield and that is why the businesses are still available and visibly resilient. Farmers are happily continuing with their businesses. Trainings were also conducted for those in saving groups. Previously, people used to save for Christmas but after SUPREME project came, this mentality changed and now project participants save for school fees, medical care. SDCs also changed their sharing of money from December to February so that it rhymes with school fees payment time. So that's why I am saying that it really has a sustainability factor."*

The project also strengthened a number of community systems and structures such as SDC groups and farmer groups to implement and sustain the project interventions even after closure of the project. Community ownership was enhanced through community contributions such as land for agriculture and demonstration gardens for farmer groups. EoP findings indicate that a significant proportion (78.8%) of community members were involved in making programme decisions including: planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation with a higher proportion among the host (82.4%) as compared to the refugee (69.4%) community. Similarly, almost all (96.1%) of the project participants believed that the project had indeed addressed their needs with similar proportions among the refugee (95.7%) and host (96.3%) communities.

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ownership was enhanced through community contributions such as land for agriculture and demonstration gardens for farmer groups.

3.9.2 Partnering

The project worked with several partners and stakeholders during the implementation of its interventions. For example, the project worked with SDC groups, and youth groups. It is also clear that the project worked closely with the district and sub county structures on both the technical and political wings such as the District Production Officer, District Commercial Officers, District Natural Resource Officers, District Community Development Officers, Sub-County Chiefs, Local Councils, and Extension workers. A community development worker in Moyo sub-county highlighted that "*here we use the community-based office because they are usually with the community, understand real saving, encourage community to cooperate and work together. You know for us to really see that the project is sustainable, we can use community-based office to go and talk to community and also as administrators we do monitoring, give out advice which will need production team. We go to extension workers because we know people who brought the project are will be gone. But as members of Sub County and community, we have to own the project and that is why we can keep on helping them, supporting them where necessary*."

However, there were some observed areas of weakness as a sub-county chief in Omugo observed. In his words he said "*In Omugo sub-county, we have only one production officer specializing in veterinary services which means what he does best is animals leaving out crops. So, staffing gap makes sustainability a problem. There is need to critically look at what exactly can be done so that we take over that transition based on the staffing levels*".

A MEAL Officer from a partner organisation reflected that "*SUPREME worked in relationship with the stakeholders at district level. From the start of this project, it was actually a positive buy-in. When we introduced the idea that SUPREME was coming to improve the overall economic well-being of the refugee and host community, the district leaders were like, "wow, this is it". So that positive support from them was one key factor that led to the success of this project."*

Another key informant from a partner organisation also remarked that "*there was a time when we had a meeting with the district team in Moyo and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) made a remark that this project was well implemented and how we wished that they should now implement even the government Parish Development Model (PDM) that we did. Because the way the groups were managing the funds was so well, compared to what they were hearing under the PDM. I have not yet tracked all what the government has done but that could be a positive spill-over in the community."*

EoP findings showed a significant proportion (78.8%) of community members were involved in making programme decisions including: planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation with a higher proportion among the host (82.4%) compared to the refugee (69.4%) community. The project had a deliberate accountability system where it promoted real-time complaints and feedback from the community. The project encouraged that World Vision availed toll free number to the community which was tracked using the feedback and compliance tracker. Then, there were village agents, who were empowered and trained to be agents of accountability in the community. EoP findings showed almost all (96.1%) of the project participants believed that the project had indeed addressed their needs with similar proportions among the refugee (95.7%) and host (96.3%) communities.

During project period, as a compliance measure, the project data was uploaded on Activity Information managed by UNHCR and Uganda Refugee Response Monitoring System (URRMS) managed by OPM every quarter to ensure the results were captured at the national level. The

consortium participated in the International Youth Day 2023 organised by Ministry of Labour Gender and Social Development in collaboration with SNV under the theme "Accelerating Recovery from COVID-19. The Role of Youths" and also participated in Global Handwashing Day 2023 preparatory meetings, the event and cleaning exercises organised by Arua District local government, and Ministry of Health.

3.9.3 Transformed Relationships

To ensure that households in the project target areas were transformed, the project embarked on adopting the SDC approach to empower households to become resilient and self-sustaining. This approach fostered community groups coming together for a common cause in as far as being able to save and access loans as a group. The approach also fostered community cohesion and social engagements among the project participants. The mixed groups enhanced social cohesion and transformation with a significant improvement in the proportion of members in mixed SDCs who felt trust between participating refugee and host households from 88.0% at baseline to 90.4% at endline.

3.9.4 Household and family resilience

SUPREME embarked on empowering HHs to stand strong in times of stress through equipping them with knowledge and skills to improve their livelihoods and have an alternative source of income, skills of modern farming methods and post-harvest handling including copying mechanisms and the ability to save and access credit in times of stress and schools. These approaches strengthened and empowered HHs to sustain themselves even after SUPREME interventions have ceased. The resilience was assessed focusing on empowering HHs to produce food using modern farming methods, have income generating sources to support families, protect the environment through the adoption of climate smart technologies and strengthen a savings culture across HHs. This was strengthened through adoption of SDC model that acted as a pivot upon which HH resilience would be measured. An SDC chairman in Gimara sub-county remarked that "we ***have benefited directly from the groundnuts, vegetable seedlings and cassava stems which were given to us by the program officers. Some of the farmers who practiced beekeeping were given barbed wires for fencing their gardens through the farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR) activity.***"

Evaluation findings showed that 78.1% of the project participants were employed or engaged in any form of sustainable IGA with higher proportions among the host community (79.9%) against for the refugee community (73.3%); while 55.8% of the targeted households had a diverse source of income compared to 38.0% at baseline. Additionally, 61.8% of the community members had access to credit in times of need compared to 26.7% at baseline with higher proportions among the host community (67.1%) as compared to refugee community (48.1%). The Coping Strategy Index Score of targeted households improved from 5.8 at baseline to 2.8 meaning that households have adopted and practicing appropriate coping mechanisms in times of stress and crisis.

4 CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

4.1 Conclusions

This endline evaluation assessed the overall impact of the project over its implementation cycle. This section summarises the findings according to the DAC evaluation criteria, i.e., relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, crosscutting issues and the lessons learned.

4.1.1 Relevance

The design of SUPREME was a highly participatory process that involved a number of partners and stakeholders right from community to the district level. The design process involved partners and stakeholders such as; the district and sub county technical and political officers (DHO, DEO, DCDO, DPO, DCO, Sub County Chiefs, LCIII), community members such as farmers, community resourceful persons. The project plans were logically designed with clear interventions under each output and outcome. Specific programme assumptions based on context were integrated within the project's designs.

The indicators selected at goal, outcome and output level were aligned to the identified prioritised needs and interventions but more to the WVUK, WVU, ZOA, RICE West Nile and MFI Strategic Plans, National Development Plan III (NDPIII) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO). This allowed for comparison and contribution to the national agenda. There were indications of integration of gender and disability within the designs as indicators clearly provided for disaggregation of monitoring data by gender and disability.

On an annual basis, the project conducted review of their plans and adjusted plans based on changes in context and needs. This process allowed for changes in interventions based on changes in context, targets that or even where there were increases or reduction in budgets. A review of the project design documents revealed a number of challenges at community level such as; high poverty levels at household level, low levels of income due to high unemployment rates, poor farming methods, un favorable weather conditions, deforestation due to fire wood and charcoal burning etc. as the predominant challenges faced by communities in the 4 target districts for both the refugee and host communities.

Based on these community needs, the project designed appropriate interventions that addressed these needs through implementing models such as the SDC, ERI approach, OYE model, Economic stimulus approach, Private sector development and FMNR approach. Consequently, both host and refugee SDC households reported that SUPREME addressed their needs in the community. In addition, SDC households reported satisfaction with the impact SUPREME project has brought into their lives. This shows that the interventions that SUPREME implemented were indeed geared towards addressing the needs of the project participants.

SUPREME project design was aligned to the district development plans, sub-county development plans and the different implementing partners across the project. The unemployment challenge and need for increased household incomes at household levels remains a number one priority of at the districts and sub-counties. The SUPREME project supplemented government efforts of empowering households to have a source of income, access credit and remain resilient. Interventions such as

empowering households to start up IGAs, belong to an SDC savings group and to be able to save and access credit, adopt modern farming methods and techniques such as FMNR were key towards contributing to these SDGs.

4.1.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the interventions was assessed through the performance of the different outcome and output indicators in line with meeting the set life of project targets. Overall, the project achieved its targets, at goal and outcome levels. The project significantly contributed to improvement of overall economic wellbeing for refugees and host communities in the four districts over the last 4 years through; increased access to decent employment and economic opportunities for refugees and host communities, increased financial inclusion and social cohesion among SDCs, sustainable agricultural value chains and non-agricultural enterprises developed and young women and men from SDC member households linked to private sector employment. It can therefore be concluded that the project was largely effective in realising its set targets.

4.1.3 Efficiency

The SUPREME project efficiently used resources to realise the benefits of its interventions. The project leveraged on WVU central system to ensure economies of scale, by reviewing technical proposals alongside financial to have a balanced position of each bid. Budget utilisation and activity implementation indices were consistently high over the four years. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for the project had clear reporting lines, data collection procedures, data quality enhancement procedures and reporting procedures. The project as well had a dedicated M&E Officer at the office which was key in ensuring aspects of M&E were handled without delay. The project additionally implemented the results chain effectively with reports (Activities, Outputs, Outcomes and Impact) at all levels for the last phases available. This was confirmed with the ease with which monitoring data and baseline, or evaluation data was easy to obtain in preparation of the endline evaluation report.

4.1.4 Impact

Overall, the project's interventions had a positive impact on the refugee and host communities as their overall economic wellbeing was improved in all the target districts. It is evident that there were significant improvements in the average number of IGAs per household. This means that households have more diverse income sources as compared at baseline as a result of the project's interventions of empowering households to start up IGAs and skilling youth with employable skills.

The Composite Productive Asset Index (CPAI) also improved as compared between baseline and EoP. This implies that households have more productive assets at EoP compared to baseline. This was because household incomes have improved over time and more households are now able to save and access credit to purchase some of these productive assets as they have realised and had a mindset change in as far as ownership of such productive assets.

More project participants were employed or engaged in any form of sustainable IGAs within both the refugees and host communities. Similarly, project targeted households had more diverse source of income by the time of EoP. Community members were able to and have had access to credit in times of need. The Coping Strategy Index Score of targeted households significantly reduced meaning that households have adopted and practicing appropriate coping mechanisms in times of stress and crisis. The most common forms of coping mechanisms adopted by households included; reducing the amount of food eaten at home, reducing the amount of meals eaten at household level and borrowing money to buy food. Other forms of coping mechanisms included; substituting commonly bought foods with cheaper kind or getting food on credit.

4.1.5 Project Sustainability

It is evident that the project implemented appropriate and sustainable interventions in line with enhancing sustainability of its interventions. The project worked in partnership with different partners and stakeholders such as technical and political district and sub-county stakeholders, community groups and project participants, youth and families especially the most vulnerable. As part of ownership, project participants were involved in annual review, planning and budgeting processes, including participating in making decisions. Through these, community members and stakeholders had an opportunity to add a voice and contribute to desired changes. This fostered community ownership right from the district level to the community level.

The project also strengthened a number of community systems and structures such as SDC groups to implement and sustain the project interventions even after closure of the project. Community ownership was enhanced through community contributions such as land for agriculture and demonstration gardens for farmer groups. More community members were involved in making programme decisions including: planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation. Both refugees and host community project participants agreed that the project addressed their needs making them form resilient.

To ensure households in the project target areas were transformed, the project embarked on adopting the SDC approach to empower households to become resilient and self-sustaining. This approach fostered community groups coming together for a common cause in as far as being able to save and access loans. The mixed group approach fostered and enhanced community cohesion and social engagements among the project participants.

SUPREME embarked on empowering HHs to stand strong in times of stress through equipping them with knowledge and skills to improve their livelihoods and have an alternative source of income, skills of modern farming methods and post-harvest handling including copying mechanisms and the ability to save and access credit in times of stress and schools. These approaches strengthened and empowered HHs to sustain themselves even after SUPREME interventions have ceased. Project models such as the SDC, ERI approach, OYE model, Economic stimulus approach, Private sector development and FMNR approach empowered households to become resilient and self-sustaining.

4.1.6 Crosscutting Issues

On a large scale, the project mainstreamed gender, disability and environment into their plans, activities and indicators. This was embedded intentional in the design process to include interventions targeting both women and men and people with disability. The climate smart agricultural practices promoted by the project such as FMNR were geared towards conserving and protecting the environment.

4.2 Challenges

This section provides some of the challenges that were faced by the project during its implementation.

i. **Prioritization and theft** - spike in theft on business and gardens affecting business growth. The project sensitized project participants to embrace self-reliance mindset and community policing.

ii. **Limited land for agriculture among the refugee communities:** The refugees are allocated small land pieces/plots of 30 by 30 meters on which they construct a house and farm. The land that the refugees have limited their ability to expand to large scale farming practices and often times, some of them hired land for farming which was quite expensive for them to sustain. Formed mixed groups and facilitated meetings with landlords.

iii. **Impact of COVID 19:** The COVID-19 pandemic paralysed the project's interventions and slowed down process for close to two years. This limited accelerated achievement of project results as there were restrictions to movement and meetings which were key for the project.

iv. **Creation of new administrative units**: At the time of the design of the project, the present Obongi district was a county of Moyo district with its Itula sub-county hosting the refugees. Its elevation to the district status in 2019 meant that Moyo would remain with only host project participants, which is against the government's Humanitarian response nexus that recommends a 70%:30% shared benefits from an intervention for refugees and host communities respectively.

v. **Lack of startup capital for youth:** Youth faced a major challenge of lack of capital to fully invest in their businesses. This as such crippled accelerated achievement of project results in as far as youths starting up their IGAs after being empowered and skilled with the relevant knowledge and skills.

vi. **High food prices:** At the time of the endline evaluation, project participants expressed the challenge of the high food prices that have limited their ability to save and invest in their businesses. Project participants encouraged to enter into purchase agreements.

vii. **Prolonged dry spells** – there were prolonged dry spells which affected timely farm operations and ultimately yields. The project promoted drought tolerant crop varieties and trained project participants on climate smart agricultural practices as well as FMNR which supports regeneration of the soil structure.

viii. **Security and financial management concerns** – there were reported cases of misuse of grant funds including block grant. In some instances, SDC members who borrowed from groups failed to pay creating a risk group getting dissolved. The project trained and mentored SDCs on proper grant use and management.

4.3 Lessons Learned

The key lessons learned during this evaluation include the following;

i. **The formation of mixed SDC groups has promoted social cohesion among members:** The evaluation revealed that there is increased trust and confidence between the host and refugee groups. Cohesion was reported within the mixed SDCs, thus promoting peaceful co-existence evidenced by increased levels of trust between participating refugee and host households.

ii. **Community structures foster sustainability**: The project worked closely with already existing community structures such as the village agents and accountability champions who are part of the community. This as such enhanced active Involvement of the project participants and sustainability.

iii. **Financial inclusion for vulnerable populations requires alternative mechanisms.** Barriers to banking services faced by refugees highlighted the need for alternative financial mechanisms, such as mobile cash transfers, to ensure their inclusion in economic initiatives. This emphasizes the necessity of tailoring financial services to the specific needs and circumstances of marginalized communities.

iv. **Engagement of Finance Institutions (FIs) enhances access to financial services including credits for vulnerable persons.** The partnership between SDCs and FIs has proven instrumental in expanding access to credit and loans. By linking SDCs with FIs, project participants have gained increased opportunities to grow their businesses. This collaboration emphasizes

the significance of flexible lending practices and tailored financial solutions to address the unique needs and challenges faced by SDCs. Building strong and sustainable partnerships between SDCs and FIs is essential for overcoming barriers such as identification and collateral constraints, ensuring equitable access to financial services for all members of the community, including vulnerable refugee populations.

v. **Digitalization has the potential to overcome identification challenges, poor record keeping, mistrust leading to improved access to financial services for refugees and host communities:** The promotion of digitalization of financial transactions demonstrated the potential to overcome identification challenges, improves access to financial services for refugees and host communities. Providing training and technical support on digital platforms enhanced financial literacy and empowered SDC members to manage their finances effectively in the digitally.

vi. **Women involvement accelerates impact**: Women formed the majority of project participants in the project. Their participation in project interventions fosters community involvement and ownership. This catalysed success of many initiatives due to their loyalty and active participation. It is important to note that all programs that involved women received overwhelming participation such as the SDC savings groups where women were the majority.

vii. **Periodic joint review meetings with all the consortium partners are critical for success:** The quarterly partner review meetings have been effective as they track progress with the targeted activities and design new strategies for any bottlenecks. This has kept the project on course to achieving its targets. The participatory planning by the consortium as well minimised duplication of efforts.

viii. **Linking young people to financial institutions and giving them support to access loans is critical for growth and sustainability**: The project empowered young people to have employable skills and provided linkages to private sector employment and financial institutions for them to be able to access loans and credit services.

ix. **Community-based trainings conducted in collaboration with Private Sector Entities leads to higher participation:** Training sessions conducted in collaboration with Private Sector Entities (PSEs) at the community level yielded higher participation and attendance rates even for young mothers with children compared to centralized training at BTVETs. This suggests that localized training approaches can better accommodate project participants' needs and contexts, fostering greater engagement and learning outcomes.

x. **The exposure visits are critical:** Farmer visits were effective in enhancing the adoption of best practices in farming. This approach enhances practical learning on different production strategies, technologies and crop varieties, and the rate of adoption is high. It also encourages peer-to-peer learning for sustainability.

xi. **Tailoring grant amounts to capacity of** project **participants and cost sharing maximizes effectiveness of grant utilization:** Providing grant amounts based on the capacity of participant rather than a uniform figure and use of cost sharing fostered a sense of ownership, responsibility, and provided equitable access to resources and maximized the effectiveness of grant utilization.

xii. **Fostering social cohesion is crucial for promoting financial inclusion, access to resources and community engagement among both refugee and host populations:** Investment in initiatives promoting social cohesion, improved interaction and trust between refugee and host community members, and has facilitated greater participation in SDC groups and economic

activities. Strategies such as mixed-group formations and joint activities have been effective in promoting collaboration and unity, leading to improved harmony and cooperation within refugee and host community. This has led to access to resources including land.

xiii. **Leveraging youth potential as trainers contributes to skills development within the community.** Youth who have undergone apprenticeships can serve as effective trainers for their peers, contributing to skill development and knowledge dissemination within the community. Harnessing the potential of youth as trainers can promote sustainable capacity-building initiatives and empower younger generations economically.

4.4 Recommendations

Basing on the findings of this evaluation, the following are the recommendations to the project, Government and other Partners.

A. Partners/Consortium

i. **Poverty mitigating strategies to recognise self-employment as essential tool to alleviate poverty:** Qualitative data showed that project participants did not recognise self-employment with negative connotation attached to jobs like casual work. In future project should consider recognising self-employment as an essential tool to alleviate poverty although poverty-reducing effects differ based on poverty measure and threshold. Sensitisation and mindset change be geared towards recognition and appreciation of self-employment. Focus should also be on creating more and better self-employment opportunities for the poor. Effective strategies be designed to reduce poverty.

ii. **Create linkages and partnership with private sector players to open up employment for opportunities for skilled youth:** The project worked with some private sector players during implementation, left out umbrella organisations like Private Sector Foundation (PSFU), Uganda Small Scale Industries Association (USSIA) and Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE) that play central role in employment sector. It is critical that if the employment challenge is to be addressed especially for skilled youth, there is need to link up or create partnerships with these umbrella organisations and other agencies to widen the catchment area to other districts of operation as this was a challenge within the districts of operation.

iii. **Develop skilling programme that targets project participants with no/lower level of education:** Future projects should target project participants with no formal education, primary or lower secondary education. Both refugees and host community project participants should be trained in various TVET disciplines of carpentry and joinery, bakery, salon business, among others in order to earn a living independently. This approach could increase access to quality skills development through vocational training and provision of entrepreneurial skills hence contributes to improve in their economic wellbeing through creation of income generating activities.

iv. **Digitalisation of cash box for e-recording of savings**: The evaluation team noted that the process of rolling out e-recording of savings and use of electronic cashbox was slow. SDCs had the choice to digitalise their savings, it was voluntary, a sign of empowerment because SDCs assessed and decided themselves. Notwithstanding this, due to benefits of digitalisation, more efforts be geared towards digitalisation of SDC group savings Working in partnership with DreamSave.

B. Project

i. **Involve private sector in marketable employable skills development programmes** – qualitative data and document review revealed that Uganda is a private sector led economy which employs many youths. Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) report shows that private sector employs the largest number of people. Interventions aimed at skilling youth should be designed in partnership with and to include private sector or umbrella organisation. In future, before any intervention aimed at improving employable skills is implemented, a gap assessment should be conducted to determine which skills are lacking and extent of the gap. Training should be targeted to such areas.

ii. **Inclusion of spouses encourages participation and goodwill–** the project experienced instances where women project participants were either continued or disrupted by their spouses because the project did not anticipate consent. Future programmes should consider including aspects of joint decision making, instituting right protection mechanism through referral system to eliminate GBV, encourage and enhance participation.

iii. **Adoption of the mixed group approach in future interventions:** The evaluation revealed that the mixed group approach was critical in fostering community cohesion and social inclusion and as such accelerated achievement of project results. It is therefore recommended that future projects in the refugee settlement adopt this approach of having mixed groups for accelerated results.

C. Local Government and Community

i. **Provide training certificates to trainees on completion of course**: SDC youth members were trained in various vocational skills including bakery, tailoring, brick making and concrete practice. Qualitative data shows that some youths were not awarded certificates as confirmation that they passed or failed a course. Project management team should ensure youth get their certificates through follow up with respective training institutions.

ii. **Maintain group cohesion and togetherness –** Qualitative data showed some groups are likely to disintegrate for various reasons (including fraud, failure to pay funds borrowed from groups) with no possibility of members coalescing again. A group is as strong as the members that constitute it. Local governments and community leaders should identify tendencies that breach group unity and togetherness and address them through training on group dynamics so that the cohesiveness of the group is maintained.

iii. **Strengthen sustainability mechanism for continued benefits**: Qualitative data indicate that structures at sub-county lack some key staff to fully support agricultural enterprises (animal and crop) through extension services. Sub-county leadership should fill existing vacant positions so that both animal and crop extension services can effective be provided to project participants.

iv. **Cascade the youth empowerment approach to other projects and programmes:** Projects that engage in empowering youth economic wellbeing need to adopt the youth empowerment approach of skilling targeted youth and linking them to employment opportunities in the private sector but also linkage to financial institutions so as to access credit.

v. **Inclusion of cross cutting issues such as disability:** The project was not pro-actively designed to include issues of disability during its design. As much as there were traces of disability involvement in the project interventions, it is important that this is streamlined and integrated within project design documents.

5 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Assignment Terms of Reference

Appendix 2: Key Project Outcome and Impact Indicators

Appendix 3: Evaluation Matrix

Appendix 4: Focus Group Discussion Guides for Youth

Appendix 5: Focus Group Discussion Guide for SDC Members

Appendix 6: Key Informant Interview Tool for Village Agents and Market Facilitators

Appendix 7: Key Informant Interview Tool for TVET and Financial Institutions

Appendix 8: Key Informant Interview Tool for SDC farmer group leaders

Appendix 9: Key Informant Interview Tool for Project Staff & Local Govt Officials

Appendix 10: Most Significant Change Story Interview Guide

Appendix 11: Youth Questionnaire

Appendix 12: SDC Mixed Group Survey Tool

Appendix 13: SDC Household Survey Tool

Appendix 14: SDC Group Survey Tool

Appendix 15: List of KII Participants

Appendix 16: List of FGD Participants

Appendix 17: Indicator Assessment Tool

SUPREME ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

EUROPEAN UNION

World Vision

SNV

ZOA
from relief to recovery