

OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Uganda is one of the top refugee-hosting countries in the world, with a protracted refugee situation and ongoing influxes of refugees from neighboring countries. The country hosts 1,524,352¹ refugees as of 30 September 2021, with 94% of refugees living in settlements primarily in the West Nile and Southwest regions of Uganda.

In view of this situation, the World Food Programme (WFP) has established a regular market price monitoring system across refugee settlements to inform cash-based response approaches. These monitoring efforts predate the COVID-19 crisis. However, due to the changing situation and ongoing COVID-19 containment measures, there is a risk that markets could be significantly affected and beneficiaries receiving cash assistance may not be able to access critical goods. In response, with the technical support of the Market Analysis Task Force and REACH in particular, this market price monitoring system has been expanded to capture crucial information to understand the impact of COVID-19 on commodity prices and functionality of markets in refugee communities across Uganda.

WFP collected the data through key informant (KI) interviews with traders, individuals selling key commodities, in markets across 13 refugee settlement locations from 1-30 September 2021. Part of the data was collected remotely, using the mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) phone-based survey system. Data for sold loose items was collected in person with items purchased and weighted where possible.

Finally, KIs were purposively sampled, meaning the findings are indicative only. The figures represented in this factsheet are presented at the national and regional² levels, unless stated otherwise. In total, **202** traders were interviewed nationwide in this round. Of these, **123** were from the **Southwest Region (SWR)** and **79** were from the **West Nile Region (WNR)**.

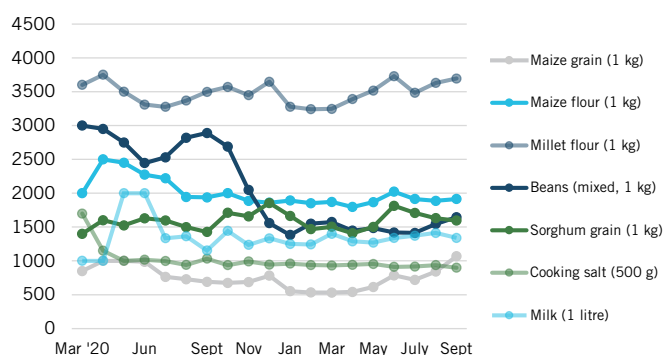
KEY FINDINGS

Average cost of the **full MEB** in September 2021: **412,723 UGX**
 ▼ **-7%** compared to the full MEB March 2021.³

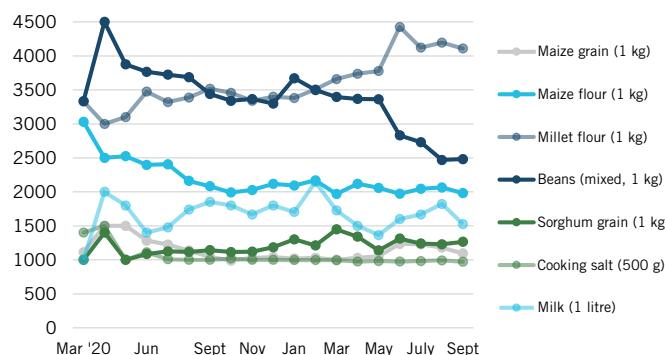
Average cost of the **food MEB** in September 2021: **256,147 UGX**
 ▼ **-8%** compared to the food MEB March 2021.

- Across regions, prices for key food items in the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) have remained mostly stable. Since February 2021, the price of 1kg of maize grain in the SWR has increased by 100% from 533 to 1067 UGX. Similarly, the price of beans in the SWR has slightly increased by 17% from 1413 to 1646 UGX over the past 3 months. In the WNR the price of 1 litre of milk has decreased by 16% from 1821 to 1525 UGX since the last round of data collection.
- Nationally, 45% of the interviewed vendors reported accepting mobile money payments. The percentage was much higher (51%) in the SWR compared to 32% in the WNR.
- At a national level, 16% of the interviewed vendors reported difficulties in meeting demand. However, in the SWR only 9% of the vendors reported difficulties, while in the WNR the proportion was much higher (27%).
- The market price of the WFP GFA food basket increased by 4% from August to September 2021. Overall, the WFP cash transfer value met the cost of the GFA food basket in all the refugee settlements except in Palabek.
- The average cost of the food MEB remained stable between August and September after a decrease of 4% from July to August 2021. The cost of the food MEB in September 2021 was 8% lower than the reference value of March 2021.
- By August 2021, the WFP cash transfer value could cover only 37% of the food MEB (39% in SWR and 36% in WNR).

Graph 1: Changes in food prices in Ugandan Shillings (UGX) in the SWR



Graph 2: Changes in food prices in Ugandan Shillings (UGX) in the WNR



FURTHER RESOURCES:

To see the past products as part of this series, [click here](#).
 To see further detail on MEB calculation methodology, [click here](#).
 A full data set with commodity prices can be provided upon request.

KEY CHALLENGES

Top 3 challenges reported by traders⁴:

1	Lack of customers	50%
2	Price fluctuation of commodities	47%
3	Lack of cash to purchase more stock	31%

1. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, [Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal](#).

2. For analysis purposes, the 13 refugee settlement locations have been aggregated to two regions: West Nile (Palorinya, Palabek, Bidi Bidi, Imvepi, Rhino Camp, Lobule, Adjumani, Kiryandongo settlements) and Southwest (Kyangwali, Rwamwanja, Kyaka, Oruchinga, Nakivale settlements).

3. The March MEB cost constitutes the calculated national reference MEB cost for Uganda in 2021. This calculation is based on average and median commodity prices in the six months prior, October 2020 - March 2021.

4. These challenges are presented at the national level. Vendors could select multiple options. Therefore, percentages might not add up to 100%.

Uganda Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB)

Food Items (monthly)

Maize flour	43.5 kg	Cassava (fresh)	3 kg
Beans	27 kg	Salt	0.75 kg
Sorghum grain	7.5 kg	Leafy vegetables	15 kg
Oil	3.75 L	Fish (smoked)	3 kg
Milk	1.5 L		

Non-Food Items (monthly)

Laundry soap	2.25 kg	Clothing*	3,806 UGX
Firewood	165 kg		

Other Components (monthly)

Water*	3,750 UGX	Livelihoods*	37,705 UGX
Education**	28,667 UGX	Transport*	11,001 UGX
Health*	2,669 UGX	Communication*	4,256 UGX
Lighting*	5,000 UGX		

Other Items (once per year)

Reusable sanitary pads	8 pc	Saucepan	3 pc
Jerry can (20 L)	2 pc	Plate	5 pc
Jerry can (5 L)	1 pc	Serving spoon	2 pc
Bucket with lid	1 pc	Cup	5 pc
Blanket	5 pc	Mingle (stirrer)	2 pc

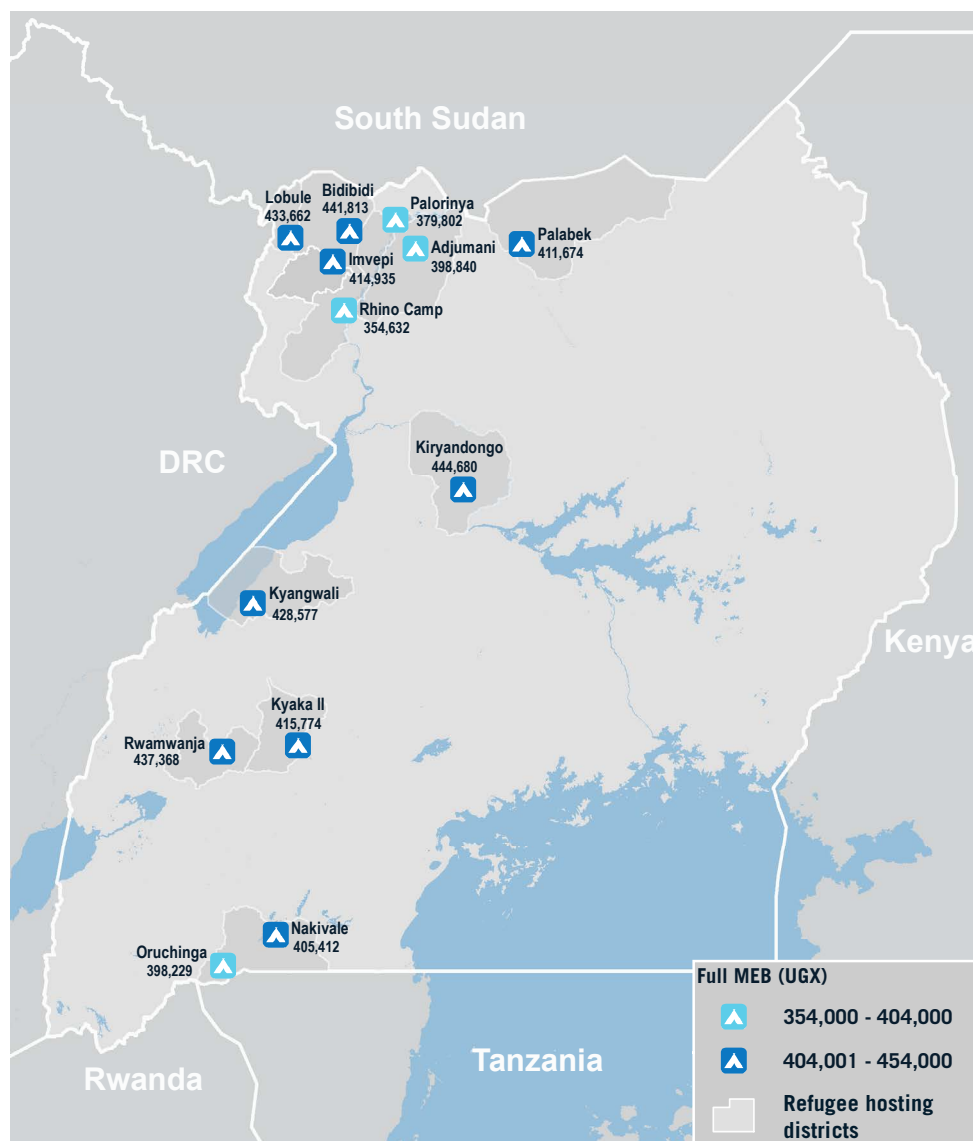
The MEB represents the minimum culturally adjusted group of items required to support a five-person refugee household in Uganda for one month. It is used as an operational tool to identify and quantify the average minimum cost of the regular or seasonal basic needs of a median household that can be covered through the local market.

Several core items were identified as being required once per year, so the total cost was divided by 12 to calculate the monthly amount. The MEB's contents were defined by the Cash Working Group in consultation with relevant sector leads. Some components were calculated based on item cost and others through a combination of analysis of household expenditures and sector-expert opinion.

*The starred items or components were calculated based on average sectoral or component cost per month based on expenditure data.

**Education costs were calculated based on average cost of school fees per year.

Map 1: Average cost of full MEB by settlement



Settlements with the least expensive average full MEB costs:

1. Rhino camp
2. Palorinya
3. Oruchinga

Settlements with the most expensive average full MEB costs:

1. Kiryandongo
2. Bidibidi
3. Rwamwanja

Full MEB cost percentage change since March 2021 (left) and August 2021 (right):

Settlement	March 2021 (%)	August 2021 (%)
Adjumani	-15%	-5%
Bidibidi	-2%	0%
Imvepi	-2%	-5%
Kiryandongo	-4%	+3%
Lobule	-6%	+3%
Kyaka II	-2%	-8%
Kyangwali	-7%	+8%
Nakivale	-1%	+18%
Oruchinga	-1%	+12%
Palabek	-14%	+1%
Palorinya	-3%	-14%
Rhino Camp	-25%	-13%
Rwamwanja	-2%	-1%

Market Monitor – Refugee Hosting Areas



Refugee Settlement Price and Market Functionality Snapshot, 1-30 September 2021

COMMODITY PRICES

Table 1: Average⁶ commodity prices in UGX⁶, by refugee settlement location, and percentage price change since March 2021 (upper)⁷ and last round 1- 31 August 2021 (lower) respectively.⁸

Item (unit)	Regions											Settlements																				
	Nationwide	Southwest Region		West Nile Region		Adjumani		Bidibidi		Imvepi		Kiryandongo		Kyaka II		Kyangwali		Lobule		Nakivale		Oruchinga		Palabek		Palorinya		Rhino Camp		Rwamwanja		
Maize flour (1 kg)	1942	-1%	1914	+5%	1982	-3%	1893	-3%	1850	-5%	2900	+73%	2000	+15%	2174	+9%	1687	-25%	2000	-11%	1700	+15%	1871	+26%	2000	-13%	1823	+3%	2000	-28%	2072	+6%
Fish* (smoked, 1kg)	15678	-2%	18806	+3%	13513	-3%	14683	+19%	16406	+2%	n/a	n/a	30000	+31%	25000	+5%	17500	+5%	10000	n/a	10000	n/a	9000	+20%	10625	+30%	6705	-11%	14426	-34%	18857	-6%
Beans (mixed, 1 kg)	2021	-26%	1646	-6%	2482	-26%	2511	-28%	3145	-6%	1900	-47%	2000	-36%	1505	-8%	1865	-5%	2300	-29%	1759	-1%	1700	-1%	3250	-12%	2308	-19%	1611	-54%	1528	-8%
Sorghum grain (1 kg)	1397	-1%	1596	-2%	1264	+1%	1079	-12%	1000	+1%	1460	-27%	2000	-57%	1847	+3%	1691	-15%	2000	+33%	1200	+16%	1529	+17%	n/a	n/a	1217	+9%	1167	-6%	1500	0%
Cooking oil (1 litre)	7526	+23%	7973	+21%	7013	+21%	7316	+11%	6100	+18%	7000	+51%	8000	+37%	8053	+22%	8050	+19%	7900	+35%	7845	+20%	8000	+20%	7750	+22%	7115	+19%	7000	+16%	8000	+24%
Fresh cassava* (1 kg)	482	-29%	425	-49%	516	-13%	502	-10%	476	-10%	n/a	n/a	500	-5%	432	-9%	376	-51%	667	+2%	333	-70%	333	-74%	500	+57%	486	+22%	484	+10%	500	0%
Cooking salt (500 g)	930	-6%	899	-8%	972	-3%	972	-4%	1000	0%	1000	-1%	700	-28%	780	-10%	979	-5%	940	-6%	953	-4%	1000	0%	1000	0%	938	-6%	1000	0%	817	-18%
Leafy greens* (1 kg)	1682	-12%	1485	+3%	1791	-18%	1334	+9%	3233	+2%	1429	+98%	1250	-36%	812	-43%	1306	-11%	1000	-10%	2000	+67%	1111	+38%	714	-57%	1502	+169%	778	-61%	2000	-40%
Milk (1 litre)	1432	-11%	1340	0%	1525	-14%	n/a	n/a	1250	0%	2000	+10%	n/a	n/a	1257	+17%	2000	0%	2000	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1500	-6%	1500	-25%	1200	+14%
Food MEB	256,147	-15%	244754	-5%	263268	-16%	249923	-16%	302412	0%	281312	+5%	299700	+9%	261750	-8%	251204	-9%	251000	-14%	226250	-2%	221317	+8%	262195	+6%	235215	+5%	224383	-19%	263250	-7%
Firewood* (1 kg)	239	-23%	314	-21%	211	-17%	n/a	n/a	151	-15%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	216	-32%	392	-17%	417	+13%	n/a	n/a	375	-6%	n/a	n/a	212	-63%	93	+3%	n/a	n/a
Laundry soap (1 kg)	3184	+3%	3384	-9%	2953	+3%	3750	+5%	3125	+4%	3500	+39%	2000	-46%	3938	+6%	2750	-22%	2000	-14%	3170	+10%	2500	-28%	4000	+59%	2125	-16%	2000	-39%	3889	-3%
Underwear (1 piece)	2149	-11%	2594	-14%	1864	-21%	2000	-19%	1200	0%	4000	+26%	2000	n/a	3000	n/a	2417	n/a	1500	n/a	2500	n/a	2833	n/a	3000	0%	2000	n/a	1667	-17%	2625	-12%
Big jerry can (20L, 1 piece)	6897	+3%	6350	+5%	7125	0%	6000	+5%	7500	+7%	10000	+25%	6000	0%	7000	+14%	6000	0%	7250	-5%	6000	-1%	7500	+24%	n/a	n/a	5500	-24%	7333	+2%	6500	+8%
Millet flour (1 kg)	3868	0%	3695	+9%	4109	+18%	3833	+13%	4133	+1%	4750	+46%	6000	+60%	4192	+30%	3567	+11%	4130	+30%	3333	-1%	3350	-5%	3000	-14%	4308	+22%	3400	+12%	3833	+5%
Disposable torch (1 packet)	976	-64%	1000	-6%	958	-75%	1000	0%	1000	-71%	1250	-50%	1000	-33%	1000	0%	1000	0%	1000	0%	1000	-13%	1000	-13%	n/a	n/a	625	-95%	1000	-83%	1000	0%
Charcoal* (1 kg)	604	-36%	826	-43%	438	-30%	384	-36%	335	-8%	n/a	n/a	667	-33%	752	-37%	819	-42%	667	+27%	1000	-37%	1500	-25%	312	-52%	425	+5%	445	-19%	773	-26%
Maize grain (1 kg)	1081	+28%	1067	+72%	1095	+12%	1147	+8%	1125	+8%	1250	+16%	1000	+49%	1067	+51%	930	+82%	920	-1%	1156	+76%	1271	+92%	1500	+56%	985	+15%	1167	-7%	988	+73%
		+4%		+27%		-7%		-5%		-2%		+8%		-12%		+17%		-8%		-8%		+37%		+44%		+10%		-11%		-5%		+26%

Some of the above listed commodities (*) are not traded in standard units (litres or kg), but in informal units (“bundles” or “basins”). These informal units are not strictly defined by weight, can vary from vendor to vendor or by time, and are therefore not directly comparable. To address this issue, price data needs to be determined via the actual purchase of a given commodity, by its weight and conversion into standard units. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the price data of these commodities could not be collected for the month of June as enumerators were unable to make access the markets and make purchases. Prices reflect the weights and prices imputed based on April and May average.

6. One United States Dollar (USD) was equivalent to 3,690 UGX as of 9th of January 2021, according to [Uganda currency converter](#).

7. Price data for items listed under “other MEB items” and underwear are only collected once every 6 months and can therefore only be compared against prices from March 2021 (upper).

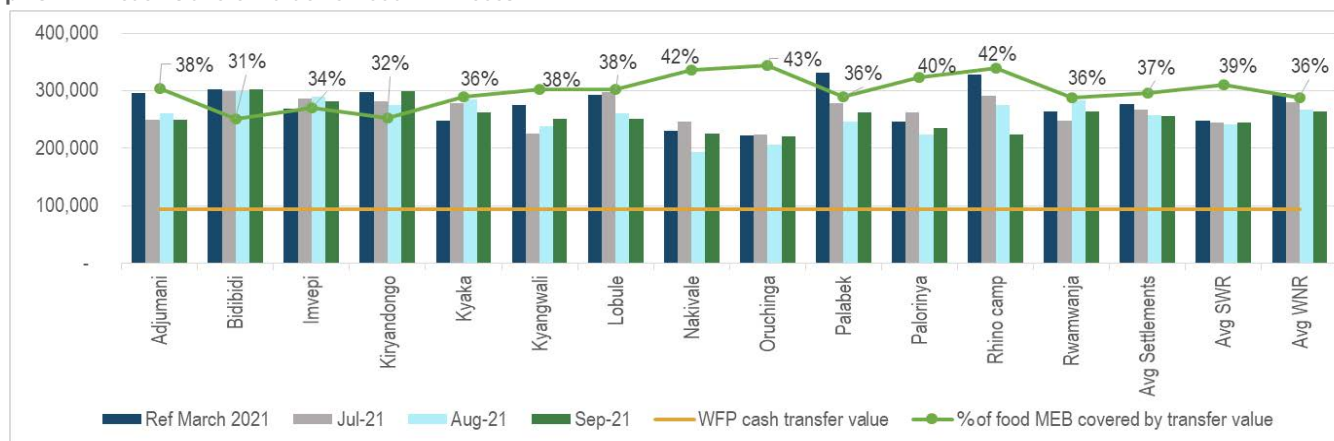
8. Regional and national price aggregations are only reported, if enough price data exists across various settlements. Price changes are only reported where price data for a given item exists for both this reporting round and the reference periods, i.e. March 2021 and the last reporting round.

ANALYSIS OF WFP GENERAL FOOD ASSISTANCE (GFA) BASKET

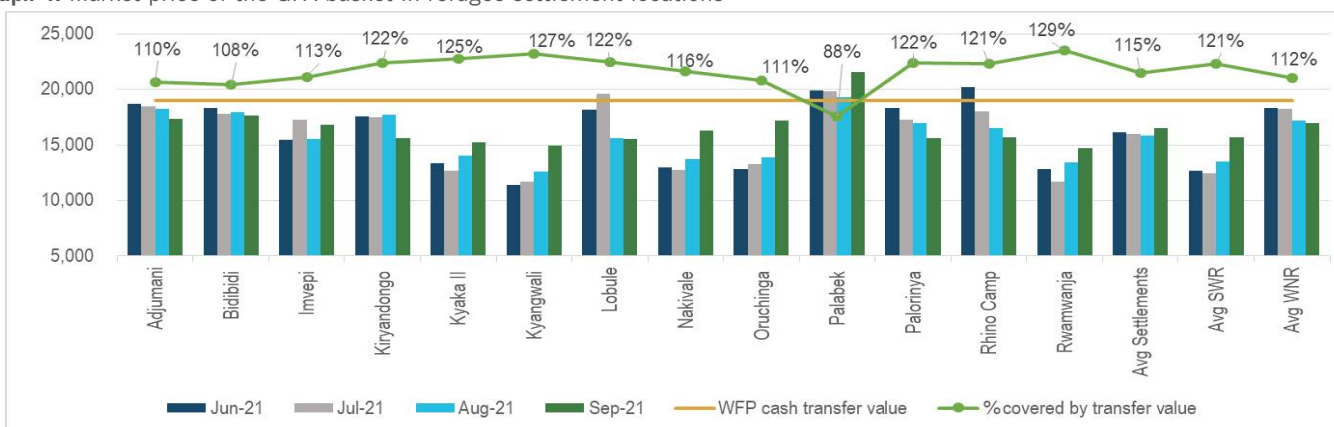
The analysis focuses on the market prices of commodities that make up the in-kind food basket that WFP provides to refugees for GFA and compares the price of the GFA basket with the GFA cash transfer value (19,000 UGX/person/month). The food basket consists of the following items and quantities: 7.56kg of maize grain, 1.8kg of beans, 0.54kg of vegetable oil and 0.09kg of salt per person per month. The quantities represent 60% of the normal WFP GFA basket as a result of ration cuts that were implemented starting February 2021. The analysis further compares the cost of the food MEB basket with the cash transfer value.

- The market price of the WFP GFA food basket⁹ increased by 4% from August to September 2021. At regional level, the price of the GFA food basket increased by 16% in SWR, whereas WNR registered a marginal decrease (1%) during the same period (graph 4)
- In September 2021, the average cost of the WFP GFA food basket across all settlements was UGX 16,470 /person/month (UGX 16,971 in WNR and UGX 15,668 in SWR). The cost of the WFP GFA food basket in WNR was 8% greater than the cost in SWR.
- In September 2021, the WFP cash transfer value could on average cover 115% of the cost of the WFP GFA food basket (112% in WNR and 121% in the SWR) (graph 4).
- The WFP cash transfer value was enough to meet the cost of the WFP GFA food basket in all the refugee settlements, except in Palabek where it could cover 88% of the cost of the GFA food basket.

Graph 3: WFP cash transfer value vs. food MEB cost



Graph 4: Market price of the GFA basket in refugee settlement locations



The analysis further compares the WFP cash transfer value with the cost of the food MEB (detailed in graph 3) across settlements.

- The average cost of the food MEB across all settlements remained stable between August (UGX 256,811) and September (UGX 256,147) after a decrease of 4% from July to August 2021. The food MEB increased in SWR (2%) but decreased in WNR (1%) during the same period (graph 3).
- At regional level, the cost of the food MEB was lower than reference value of March 2021 in both SWR (12%) and WNR (5%). Overall, the cost of the food MEB in September 2021 was 8% lower than the reference value of March 2021.
- By September 2021, the WFP cash transfer value could cover only 37% of the food MEB (39% in SWR and 36% in WNR).
- The food MEB was most expensive in Bidibidi settlement (UGX 302,412), where the WFP cash transfer value could cover only 31% of the food MEB. The food MEB was least expensive in Nakivale settlement (UGX 221,317) where the WFP transfer value could cover 43% of the food MEB.

9. The GFA food basket represents 60% of the normal WFP GFA ration due to further ration cuts that started in February 2021. Similarly, the transfer value for cash beneficiaries reduced from 22,000 per person per month to UGX 19,000 per person per month in February 2021.

Market Monitor – Refugee Hosting Areas



Refugee Settlement Price and Market Functionality Snapshot, 1-30 September 2021

UGANDA

MARKET FUNCTIONALITY

Unless specified otherwise, the following results refer to a recall period of one week prior to data collection.

TRADER AND CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR

	% of interviewed traders reporting a change in the number of vendors:	Average numbers of customers per day reported by interviewed traders:
Nationwide	INCREASE 6%	JULY 24
	DECREASE 8%	AUGUST 26
	NO CHANGE 86%	SEPTEMBER 28
SWR	INCREASE 10%	JULY 19
	DECREASE 13%	AUGUST 21
	NO CHANGE 77%	SEPTEMBER 29
WNR	INCREASE 0%	JULY 29
	DECREASE 0%	AUGUST 29
	NO CHANGE 100%	SEPTEMBER 26

SAFETY

% of interviewed traders reporting changes in perceptions of security relating to operating in their marketplace:

LESS SECURE	0%
MORE SECURE	16%
NO DIFFERENCE	84%
LESS SECURE	1%
MORE SECURE	25%
NO DIFFERENCE	74%
LESS SECURE	0%
MORE SECURE	1%
NO DIFFERENCE	99%

Top reported reasons by traders for feeling more or less secure¹⁰:

1	Fear of theft	0%
2	Increased awareness about health risks and appropriate behaviour	12%
1	Fear of theft	1%
2	Increased awareness about health risks and appropriate behaviour	20%
1	Corona-infected individuals in the area	0%
2	Implementation of rules and regulations	1%

STOCK AND SUPPLY

	% of interviewed traders reporting difficulty in obtaining enough supply to meet demand:	% of interviewed traders reporting concern that their stocks will run out within one week following data collection:
Nationwide	YES 16%	YES 9%
	NO 84%	NO 91%
SWR	YES 9%	YES 6%
	NO 91%	NO 94%
WNR	YES 27%	YES 15%
	NO 73%	NO 85%

PAYMENT AND LIQUIDITY

% of interviewed traders accepting mobile money payments when data was collected:

YES	44%
NO	56%
YES	51%
NO	49%
YES	32%
NO	68%

Nationwide	Top 3 reasons why traders reported difficulty in obtaining enough supply to meet demand:¹¹	1	Producers not producing enough	7%
		2	Scarcity of specific items (Sorghum)	5%
		3	Supplier unable to provide enough	5%

PREPARED BY: World Food Programme

ON BEHALF OF: Market Analysis Task Force

Informing more effective humanitarian action

The UN Refugee Agency

DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL

THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

10. This indicator refers to all the interviewed traders. Respondents could select multiple response options.

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