

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 1,462,164¹ refugees as of 1 April 2021, with nearly 95% 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 since the Ugandan government introduced COVID-19 containment measures in mid-March 2020, 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 interviews with traders, individuals selling key commodities, in markets across 13 refugee settlement locations from 1-31 January 2021. 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. Key informants 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, **258 traders** were interviewed nationwide in this round, of these **59 in the Southwest Region (SWR)** and **199 in the West Nile Region (WNR)**.

KEY FINDINGS

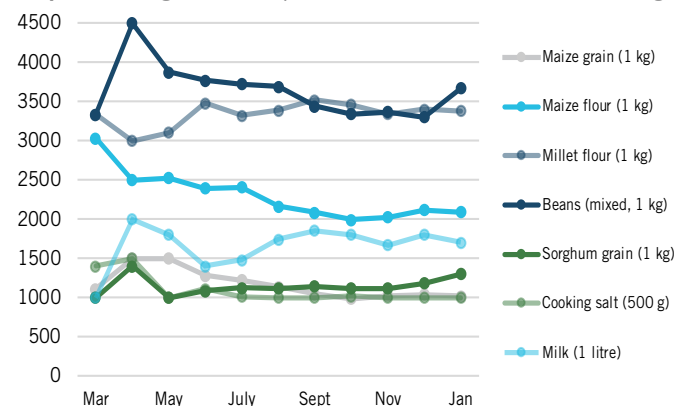
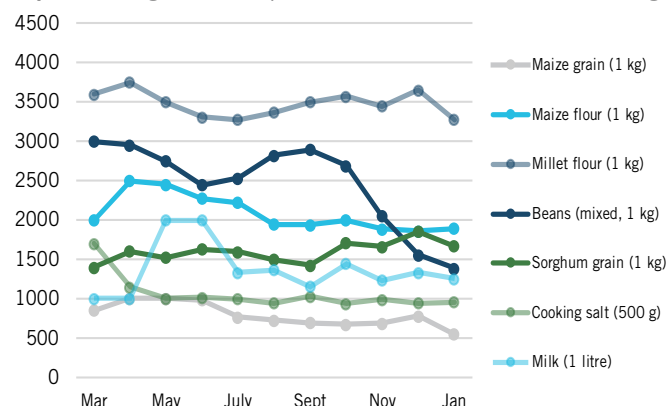
Average cost of the **full MEB** in January 2021: **444,380 UGX**
 ▼ **-12%** compared to the full MEB in March 2020.³

Average cost of the **food MEB** in January 2021: **287,348 UGX**
 ▼ **-14%** compared to the food MEB in March 2020.

- Prices of key items in the food MEB remain mostly stable, although the price of beans in SWR continued to fall below 1,500 UGX per KG, or 50% of its value in March 2020. The price of maize remains stable around 2,000 UGX per KG, around 66% of its March 2020 value in WNR.
- Nationally, 60% of the vendors reported accepting **mobile money**. This proportion was much higher in SWR (95%) as compared to WNR (50%)
- 90% of the interviewed traders nationwide reported no difficulties in finding enough supply to **meet the demand**. In WNR the proportion of traders reporting difficulties has reduced (from 20% to 12%) and in the SWR (from 10% to 5%).
- There was no major change in the perceptions of **security** among vendors. Nationwide, 88% reported no change in their feelings of security. 24% of traders in SWR reported feeling more secure, mostly due to an increase in presence of security personnel.
- The cost of the food MEB increased by 6%, after being stable from November to December 2020. By January 2021, the WFP cash transfer value could only cover 38% of the food MEB (45% in SWR and 35% in WNR).
- The WFP cash transfer value when averaged for all settlements could cover 127% of the cost of the WFP GFA food basket (173% in the SWR and 109% in WNR).

Graph 1: Changes in food prices (in UGX) in the Southwest Region

Graph 2: Changes in food prices (in UGX) in the West Nile Region



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	Price fluctuation of commodities	64%
2	Lack of cash to purchase more stock	55%
3	Increased price of transportation	50%

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).

3. The March full MEB cost constitutes the reference MEB cost for refugee settlements in Uganda in 2020. For more detailed information please refer to the "[Updated Guidance for Uganda Cash Working Group](#)" (Last updated: 12.05.2020).

4. These challenges are presented at the national level.

Uganda Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB)

Food Items (monthly)

Maize flour	44 kg	Cassava (fresh)	3 kg
Beans	27 kg	Salt	1 kg
Sorghum grain	8 kg	Leafy vegetables	15 kg
Oil	4 L	Fish (smoked)	3 kg
Milk	2 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**	22,667 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

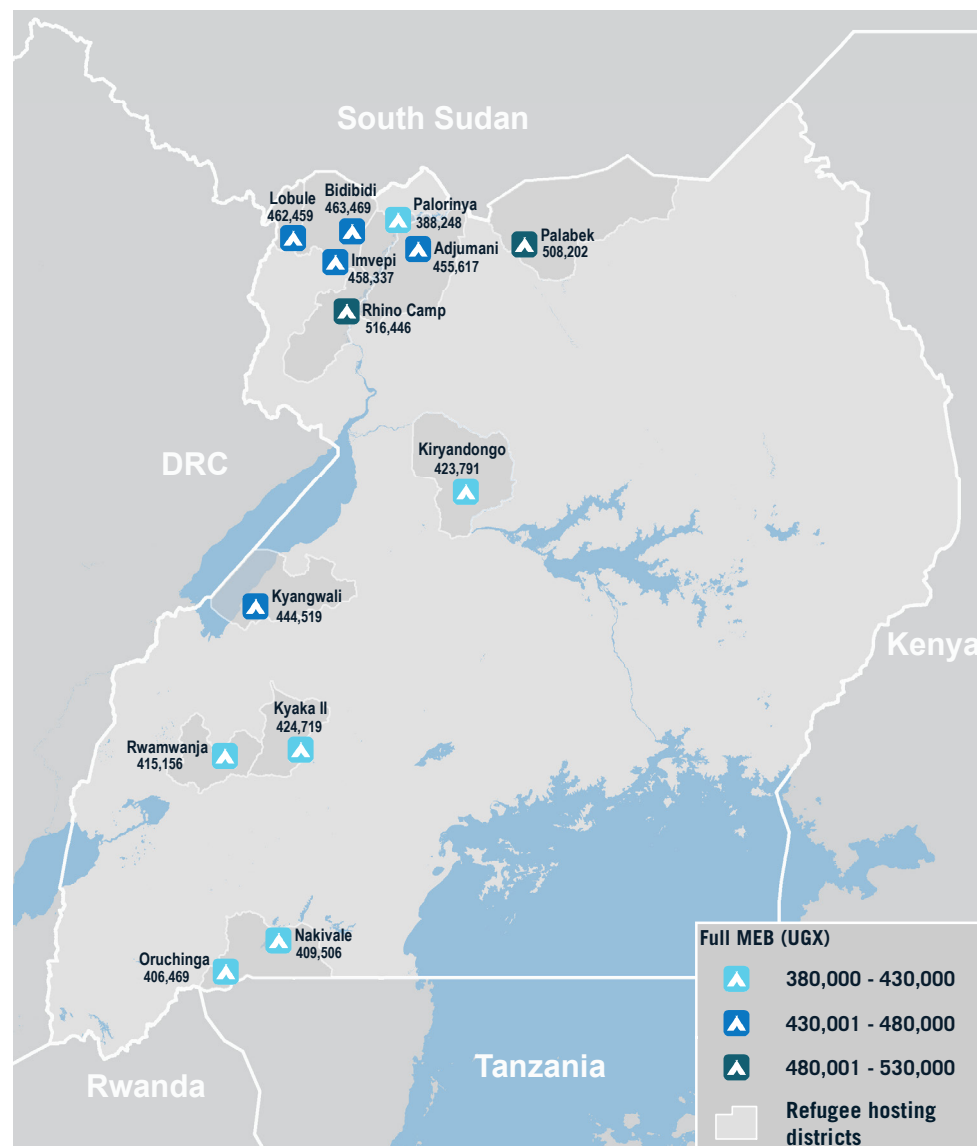
The MEB represents the minimum culturally adjusted group of items required to support a five-person refugee household in Uganda for one month. It is used as an operational tool to identify and quantify the average minimum cost of the regular or seasonal basic needs of a median household that can be covered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

Settlements with the most expensive average full MEB costs:

1. Rhino camp
2. Palabek
3. Bidibidi

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

Adjumani	-28%	-1%
Bidibidi	-19%	+4%
Imvepi	+1%	+3%
Kiryandongo	-20%	-9%
Lobule	-6%	+1%
Kyaka II	-10%	+2%
Kyangwali	-8%	-14%
Nakivale	-7%	+1%
Oruchinga	-8%	+1%
Palabek	-1%	+8%
Palorinya	-28%	+10%
Rhino Camp	+11%	+4%
Rwamwanja	-17%	-4%

Market Monitor – Refugee Hosting Areas



REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

UGANDA

Refugee Settlement Price and Market Functionality Snapshot, 1-31 January 2021

COMMODITY PRICES

Table 1: Average⁶ commodity prices in Uganda Shillings (UGX)⁷, by refugee settlement location, and percentage price change since March (upper)⁸ and last round 1-31 Dec 2020 (lower) respectively.⁹

Item (unit)	Regions					Settlements																												
	Nationwide	Southwest Region	West Nile Region	Adjumani	Bitlibidi	Imvepi	Kiryandongo	Kyaka II	Kyangwali	Lobule	Nakivale	Oruchinga	Palabek	Palorinya	Rhino Camp	Rwamwanja																		
MEB food items	Maize flour (1 kg)	2034	-17% 0%	1893	-11% +2%	2093	-23% -1%	1913	-5% +9%	1989	-38% +6%	1800	+89% +5%	1571	+3% +5%	2041	-18% +8%	2000	-13% -38%	2250	-36% -2%	1550	-20% 0%	1471	-24% -3%	2486	-34% +6%	1857	+26% +20%	2833	-37% +2%	1900	-5% -2%	
	Fish* (smoked, 1kg)	19409	n/a +7%	n/a	n/a	19409	+6% -11%	18881	n/a -11%	16027	-4% +6%	10000	n/a n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	24722	+27% +84%	13158	+26% +15%	30556	+162% +7%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Beans (mixed, 1 kg)	2998	-7% +10%	1383	-58% -11%	3672	+16% -11%	3508	+10% +6%	3450	+7% +5%	4000	-8% +13%	2967	-66% -15%	1355	+4% +5%	1789	-40% -28%	3250	-18% +2%	1750	-45% +32%	1471	-47% +15%	4500	+80% +32%	2286	+15% -14%	3700	-17% +7%	1062	-67% -29%	
	Sorghum grain (1 kg)	1386	+18% +1%	1665	-18% -10%	1301	+26% +10%	1219	-67% -9%	1000	+8% -3%	2500	+67% -30%	1344	-49% -30%	1612	-39% -19%	2078	+60% -28%	1500	+12% +3%	1500	-2% -5%	1267	-15% -28%	800	-20% -24%	1057	+13% +6%	1188	+28% -14%	n/a	n/a	
	Cooking oil (1 litre)	6241	+10% +3%	6667	+13% +4%	6121	+10% +3%	6775	-17% -3%	5667	+7% +6%	5000	-26% +11%	5988	+5% +6%	6528	+20% +2%	6444	+7% -8%	5900	+10% 0%	7000	+25% +10%	7286	+21% +5%	6174	+23% +3%	6000	+16% +4%	5844	-4% +3%	6375	+13% +6%	
	Fresh cassava* (1 kg)	616	n/a +11%	n/a	n/a	616	+11% -8%	580	n/a -8%	533	-8% -8%	1333	n/a n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	342	+14% -68%	331	n/a -68%	445	n/a -1%	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Cooking salt (500 g)	988	-58% 0%	960	-54% +1%	997	-61% 0%	1000	+30% 0%	1000	-59% 0%	1000	-24% 0%	975	-55% -2%	869	-64% 0%	1056	-41% +6%	1000	-35% 0%	1000	-47% 0%	1000	-46% 0%	1000	-80% 0%	1000	-58% 0%	989	-79% -1%	1000	-64% 0%	
	Leafy greens* (1 kg)	2475	n/a -27%	n/a	n/a	2475	+28% +1%	2147	+5% +1%	3183	+1% +1%	2000	n/a n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3214	+93% -2%	2041	-2% +105%	2222	+105% n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Milk (1 litre)	1549	+9% -11%	1250	-9% -6%	1704	+17% -5%	2000	n/a 0%	1250	+25% 0%	n/a	0% n/a	1367	-34% +3%	1000	+100% n/a	2000	0% n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2000	+67% 0%	2000	0% +33%	2000	0% -45%	1000	0% n/a	
	Firewood* (1 kg)	185	-51% -19%	n/a	n/a	185	-55% -17%	n/a	-16% n/a	166	-72% -8%	250	-52% n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	180	-9% +14%	155	-69% -21%	143	n/a -68%	n/a	n/a
Laundry soap (1 kg)	3330	+21% +23%	3506	-1% -6%	3260	+38% +31%	3000	-6% -1%	3000	+50% 0%	3300	+11% n/a	3967	-8% +1%	3700	-23% -1%	3433	-14% n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3250	-7% n/a	3500	+40% n/a	3300	-18% +65%	3300	+65% +65%	3333	+98% +33%	3500	+17% +17%
Underwear (1 piece)	2291	n/a -4%	2833	n/a +31%	2205	n/a 0%	2000	n/a -6%	1200	n/a 0%	2500	n/a 0%	2300	n/a +6%	3000	n/a n/a	2667	n/a n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3000	n/a n/a	3500	n/a 0%	2000	n/a -11%	1500	n/a 0%	3000	n/a n/a		
Big jerry can (20L, 1 piece)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Dry cells (1 packet)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Disposable torch (1 packet)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Millet flour (1 kg)	3343	-11% -5%	3277	-7% -10%	3381	-13% -1%	2969	+7% -26%	4167	+4% +16%	3467	-14% +16%	3500	-21% -5%	3135	-1% -1%	2833	-23% -33%	3000	-16% -3%	3375	-6% -4%	3500	-12% -5%	3500	0% 0%	3400	-3% -7%	3000	-30% 0%	3682	+64% -8%		
Maize grain (1 kg)	884	-14% -8%	551	-37% -29%	1019	-11% -2%	1059	-29% +2%	1050	+5% +2%	1067	+22% +7%	810	-47% +52%	589	+11% -37%	456	-30% -9%	900	-27% -6%	725	-11% -8%	650	-19% -20%	1000	0% -3%	943	-26% +18%	1222	-42% -14%	456	-51% -35%		
Charcoal* (1 kg)	646	n/a +3%	n/a	n/a	646	-45% +4%	691	+29% +28%	338	-57% +4%	1000	+91% n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	616	-8% -24%	422	-92% +31%	478	n/a -27%	n/a	n/a	n/a	

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. The price data of these commodities is collected only in the last week of the month; when price data is not collected, the price table above shows the last price data available.

6. In April and May 2020, this market monitor snapshot reported median commodity prices, rather than average prices. Because surveys were conducted remotely, without weighting items, there was a higher possibility of outlier prices, which would have a greater impact on averages. To align with WFP's global methodology and past reporting of MEB item prices in the Uganda response, since June 2020, the methodology was changed to report average commodity prices.

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

8. Pre-COVID-19 price data for Adjumani settlement corresponds to prices collected in December 2019. For all other settlements, March 2020 data is used. 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 January 2020 (upper).

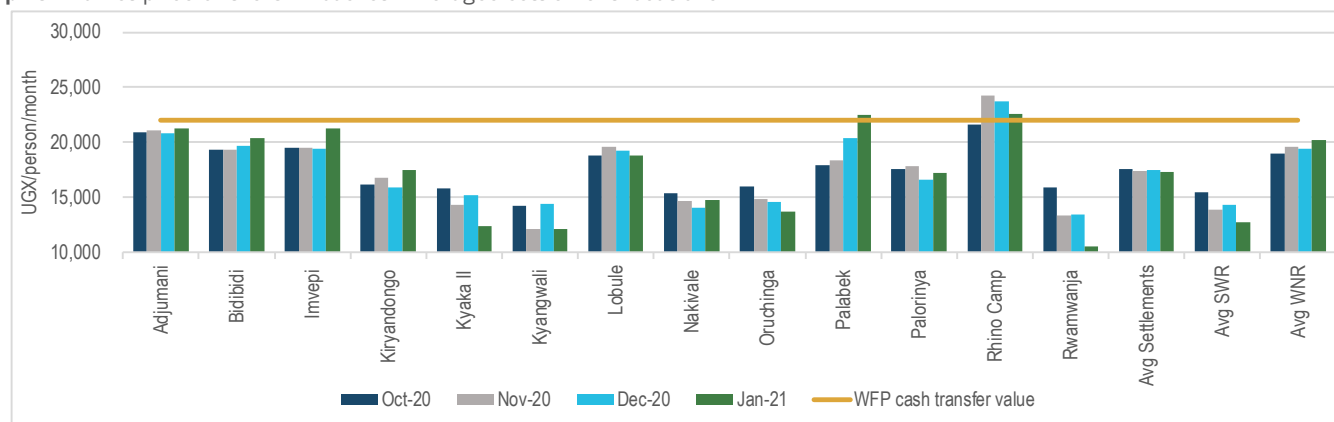
9. Regional and national price aggregations are only reported, if enough price data exists across various settlements. Price changes are only reported where price data for a given item exists for both this reporting round and the reference periods, i.e. March 2020 and the last reporting round.

ANALYSIS OF WFP GENERAL FOOD ASSISTANCE (GFA) BASKET

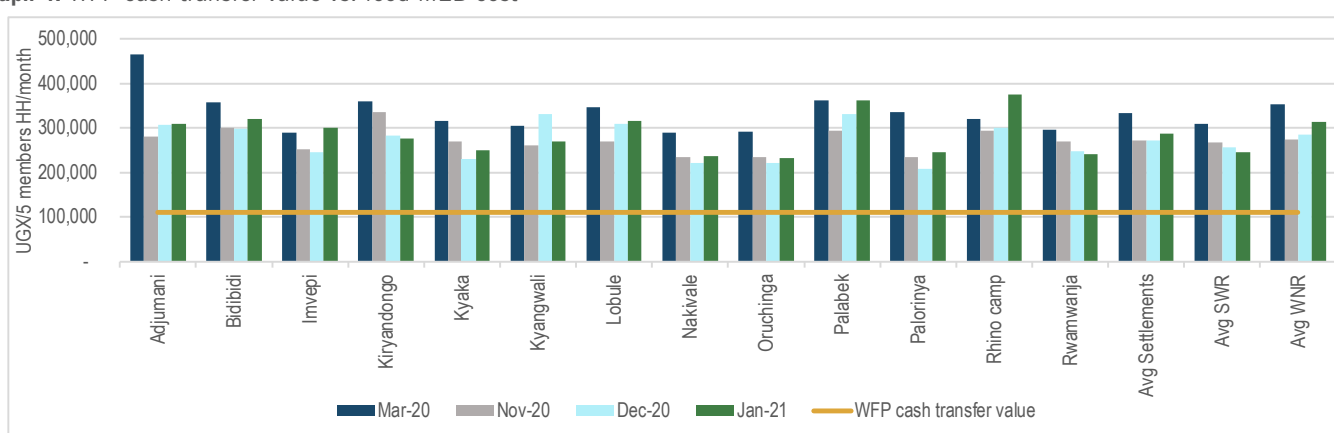
The analysis focuses on the market prices of commodities that make up the in-kind food basket that WFP provides to refugees for GFA and compares the price of the GFA basket with the GFA cash transfer value (22,000 UGX per person per month). The food basket consists of the following items and quantities: 8.84 kg of maize grain, 2.1 kg of beans, 0.63 kg of vegetable oil, and 0.15 kg of salt per person per month. The quantities represent 70% of the normal WFP GFA basket as a result of ration cuts that were implemented starting April 2020.

- In seven out of 13 settlements, the average market price of the WFP GFA food basket in January 2021 was higher than that of December 2020. However, overall, the cost of the WFP GFA food basket remained stable from December 2020 (UGX 17,491) to January 2021 (UGX 17,320) (Graph 3).
- In January 2021, the WFP cash transfer value could on average cover 127 percent of the cost of the WFP GFA food basket (109 percent in West Nile and 173 percent in the South West).
- The WFP cash transfer value was enough to meet the cost of the WFP GFA food basket in all the refugee settlements except in Rhino camp and Palabek settlements where it could cover 98 percent of the cost of the GFA food basket.
- The average price of the WFP GFA food basket decreased by 11 percent in South West (from UGX 14,345 in December 2020 to UGX 12,737 in January 2021). Conversely, the cost increased by four percent in West Nile (from UGX 19,457 in December 2020 to UGX 20,184 in January 2021).
- In January 2021, the WFP GFA food basket was most expensive in Palabek (UGX 22,480) and Rhino camp (UGX 22,553). In these settlements, the WFP cash transfer value could cover 98 percent of the cost of the GFA food basket.
- The GFA food basket was least expensive in Rwamwanja (UGX 10,577) and Kyangwali (UGX 12,160) settlements where the WFP cash transfer value could cover 208 percent and 181 percent of the cost of the WFP GFA basket respectively.

Graph 3: Market price of the GFA basket in refugee settlement locations



Graph 4: WFP cash transfer value vs. food MEB cost



The analysis further compares the WFP cash transfer value with the cost of the food MEB (detailed in page 2) across settlements.

- The average cost of the food MEB in January 2021 was 14 percent lower than the reference value of March 2020. This represents an increase of 6 percent from UGX 271,923 in December to UGX 287,348 in January 2021 (Graph 4).
- In South West and West Nile settlements, the food MEB was 26 percent and 6 percent respectively lower than the national reference food MEB of March 2020 indicating regional differences in the cost of the food MEB.
- By January 2021, the WFP cash transfer value could only cover 38 percent of the food MEB (45 percent in South West and 35 percent in West Nile).
- The food MEB was most expensive in Rhino camp settlement (UGX 375,284), where the WFP cash transfer value could only cover 29 percent of the food MEB. The food MEB was least expensive in Palorinya settlement (UGX 232,235) where the WFP transfer value could cover 47 percent of the food MEB.

Market Monitor – Refugee Hosting Areas

Refugee Settlement Price and Market Functionality Snapshot, 1-31 January 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 3%	NOVEMBER 21
	DECREASE 7%	DECEMBER 28
	NO CHANGE 90%	JANUARY 21
Southwest Region	INCREASE 12%	NOVEMBER 20
	DECREASE 2%	DECEMBER 41
	NO CHANGE 86%	JANUARY 19
West Nile Region	INCREASE 0%	NOVEMBER 22
	DECREASE 9%	DECEMBER 21
	NO CHANGE 91%	JANUARY 22

SAFETY

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

LESS SECURE	3%
MORE SECURE	9%
NO DIFFERENCE	88%
LESS SECURE	0%
MORE SECURE	24%
NO DIFFERENCE	76%
LESS SECURE	>5%
MORE SECURE	5%
NO DIFFERENCE	91%

Top reported reasons by traders feeling more or less secure:¹⁰

1	Increased presence of security personnel	8%
2	Non-compliance with official rules and regulations of COVID-19 prevention	3%
1	Increased presence of security personnel	20%
2	Corona-infected individuals in the area	0%
1	Increased presence of security personnel	4%
2	Non-compliance with official rules and regulations of COVID-19 prevention	4%

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 10%	YES 22%
	NO 90%	NO 78%
Southwest Region	YES 5%	YES 2%
	NO 95%	NO 98%
West Nile Region	YES 12%	YES 28%
	NO 88%	NO 72%

PAYMENT AND LIQUIDITY

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

YES	60%
NO	40%
YES	95%
NO	5%
YES	50%
NO	50%

Nationwide	Top 3 reasons why traders reported difficulty in obtaining enough supply to meet demand:¹¹	1	Supplier unable to provide enough	8%
		2	Can no longer obtain items due to restrictions	1%
		3	Not enough money to source items	1%

PREPARED BY:



REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action

ON BEHALF OF:

Market Analysis Task Force



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

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