



**CIVIL SOCIETY FOR
POVERTY REDUCTION**

2023/2024 DROUGHT RESPONSE PROGRAMMES SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ASSESSMENT REPORT - 2026

CHIPATA DISTRICT



2023/2024 DROUGHT RESPONSE
PROGRAMMES SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY
ASSESSMENT REPORT



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Abstract

In response to the severe drought experienced during the 2023/2024 farming season, the Government of Zambia implemented several emergency interventions in the adversely affected Chipata District. This report presents a comprehensive assessment of three key programmes: The Emergency Social Cash Transfer (ESCT), the Cash-for-Work (CfW) programme, and the Wetlands Food Security Packs (FSP) programme. The evaluation aimed to assess the inclusiveness, transparency, effectiveness, and governance of these interventions to inform future shock-responsive social protection programming.

A mixed-methods research design was employed, involving the collection of quantitative and qualitative data from 1,550 participants across seven wards. Data collection instruments included household questionnaires, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

Key findings indicate that the programmes had a significant positive impact on household welfare, though implementation challenges were noted. The ESCT was largely perceived as fair in its community-based targeting (67% rated it fair), but was hampered by payment delays (32% of beneficiaries). The CfW programme improved household well-being for the vast majority (95%), but faced issues with payment timeliness (47% experienced delays) and unsafe work conditions (44%). The FSP programme successfully increased household food production (82%) and food security (76%), but its effectiveness was constrained by poor quality and late delivery of agricultural inputs. Across all programmes, grievance redress mechanisms were found to be weak or inaccessible to a majority of beneficiaries.

The report provides practical recommendations focused on strengthening community-based targeting with enhanced oversight, improving the timeliness and predictability of cash payments, ensuring the quality and timely delivery of agricultural inputs, and establishing clear, accessible grievance redress mechanisms. Furthermore, it proposes a framework for strengthening national systems for crisis preparedness, recovery, and resilience by integrating social protection programmes, enhancing coordination, and building adaptive capacity to better manage future climate-related shocks.

INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

Context and Rationale for the Assessment



Zambia experienced a severe drought during the 2023/2024 farming season, which had far-reaching impacts on agricultural production, food security, household incomes, and overall livelihoods, particularly in rain-fed rural communities. The drought resulted in widespread crop failure, reduced access to food, loss of income for smallholder farmers, and increased vulnerability among already at-risk populations. Chipata District in Eastern Province was among the districts most adversely affected, given its heavy reliance on subsistence agriculture and favorable rainfall patterns for maize and other staple crops, which were significantly disrupted during the season.

In response to the drought and its associated socio-economic shocks, the Government of Zambia implemented a range of emergency and resilience-oriented drought response interventions aimed at cushioning vulnerable households and mitigating negative coping

strategies. Among these interventions, three key programmes were rolled out in Chipata District: The Emergency Social Cash Transfer (ESCT), the Cash-for-Work programme, and the Wetlands Food Security Packs programme. These programmes were designed to address

immediate consumption needs, restore household purchasing power, and support short-term livelihood recovery while promoting community resilience during the drought period.

The Emergency Social Cash Transfer programme sought to provide direct financial support to vulnerable households to enable them to meet basic needs such as food, health care, and education. The Cash-for-Work programme aimed to provide temporary income opportunities through labor-intensive public works, while simultaneously improving community assets. The Wetlands Food Security Packs programme focused on enhancing household food production by supporting farming activities in wetlands and other relatively resilient ecological zones.

Given the scale of the drought impact and the critical role of these interventions in safeguarding livelihoods, an assessment was undertaken by the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (**CSPR**) with support from the Chronic Poverty Advisory Network (**CPAN**) to examine the implementation, effectiveness, inclusiveness, and governance of the drought response programmes in Chipata District. The assessment was intended to generate evidence on programme performance, identify strengths and gaps in targeting and delivery, and inform policy and programme improvements for future shock-responsive social protection and disaster response interventions.

- Assess the inclusiveness of affected populations especially women, persons with disabilities, and smallholder farmers in planning and implementation of the drought response processes.
- Examine the transparency and fairness of targeting and resource utilization during the drought response.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of citizen feedback and grievance mechanisms of drought response social protection programs at district and ward levels.
- Identify systemic lessons and good practices that can inform long-term social protection and resilience programming.

Geographic Coverage

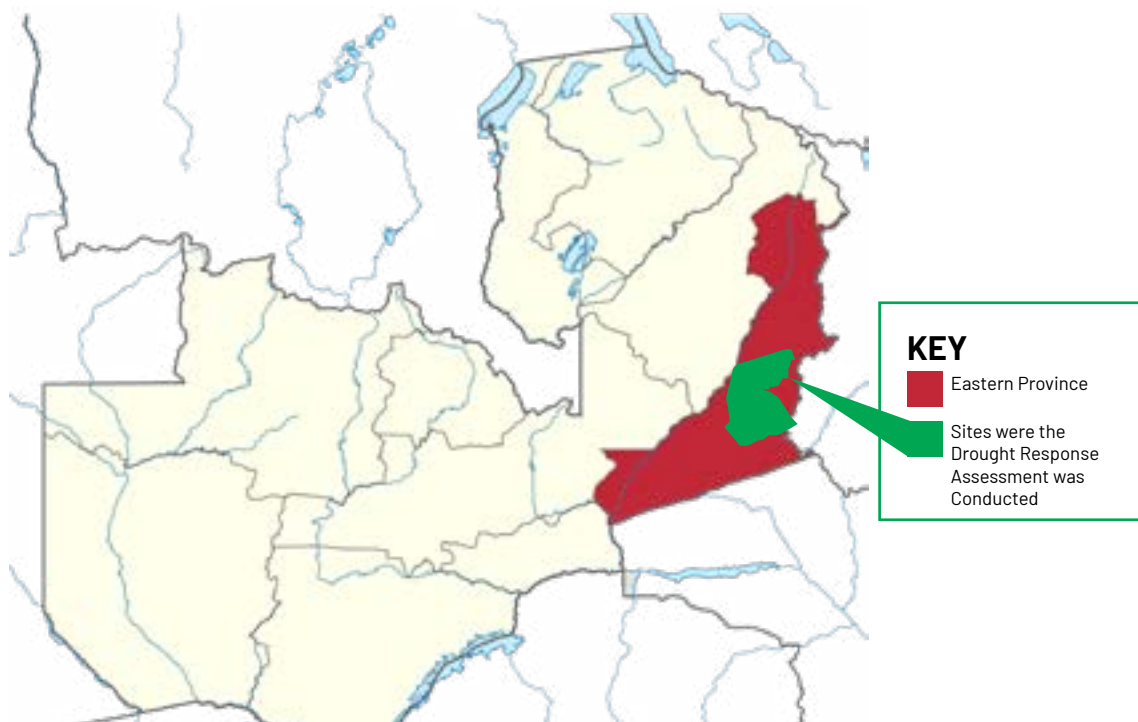
The assessment was conducted in the 7 wards of Chipata District of Eastern Province and focused on three key government-led drought response programmes, namely the Emergency Social Cash Transfer (ESCT), Wetlands Food Security Packs, and the Cash-for-Work programme. Chipata District was purposively selected due to its recurrent exposure to climate-induced shocks, particularly drought, which has significantly affected agricultural productivity, food security, and household livelihoods, thereby necessitating the implementation of multiple social protection and resilience-building interventions. Consequently, the assessment was undertaken in Chipata District to examine the coverage, implementation, and effectiveness of these drought response programmes in cushioning vulnerable households against the impacts of drought.





Research Methodology

Figure 1 Map of Zambia highlighting Chipata District – Sites where the Drought Response Assessment was Conducted



Research Approach and Design

The assessment adopted a mixed-methods research approach using a parallel convergent mixed-methods Design, an approach which allowed for the concurrent collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data during the same phase of fieldwork.

Sampling Design

Given the mixed-methods nature of this assessment and the need to balance methodological strength, the study employed a multi-stage purposive sampling approach complemented by stratified random sampling and convenience sampling at the community level.

Sample Size

The study sample size for the quantitative component was determined using Yamane's formula, which provides a statistically sound approach for calculating representative samples from known populations while maintaining an acceptable margin of error. Based on this formula, a total of 483 beneficiaries were sampled for the Cash for Work Program, 525 beneficiaries for the ESCT Program, and 478 beneficiaries for the Wetlands Security Packs Program, all of whom were engaged through semi-structured questionnaires. To complement the quantitative data and enhance contextual understanding, qualitative data were collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focused Group Discussions (FGDs). Three FGDs were conducted, comprising 20 beneficiaries each from the Cash for Work, ESCT, and Wetlands Food Security Packs Programmes, respectively. This mixed data collection approach strengthened the robustness of the study by enabling triangulation of findings and providing both breadth and depth in the analysis of program implementation and beneficiary experiences.

Table 1: Total determined sample size

Type of Participant	Types of Assessment Tool	Count of Research Participants
Semi Structured Household Questionnaire		
Beneficiaries of Cash for Work Program	Semi Structured - Questionnaire Cash for Work Program	483
Beneficiaries of Emergence Social Cash Transfer (ESCT) Program	Semi Structured Questionnaire - Emergence Social Cash Transfer (ESCT) Program	525
Beneficiaries of Wetlands Food Security Packs Program	Semi Structured Questionnaire - Wetlands Food Security Packs Program	478
Key Informant Interview (KII)		
Beneficiaries of Cash for Work Program	Focused Group Discussions (FGD)	20
Beneficiaries of Emergence Social Cash Transfer (ESCT) Program	Focused Group Discussions (FGD)	20
Beneficiaries of Wetlands Food Security Packs Program	Focused Group Discussions (FGD)	20
Key Informant Interview (KII)		
Officer – Department of Community Development (MCDSS)	Key Informant Interview (KII)	1
Officer – Department of Social Welfare (MCDSS)	Key Informant Interview (KII)	1
Officer – District Commissioners Office	Key Informant Interview (KII)	1
Officer – District Council	Key Informant Interview (KII)	1
Grand Total		1550

Data Collection and Analysis

The assessment employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both primary and secondary data to comprehensively assess performance across the three-drought response programmes. Triangulation of data sources enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings. Quantitative data was collected electronically using tablets with Kobo Toolbox and analysed using STATA, while qualitative data from interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews was analysed using NVivo to generate in-depth insights.

Ethical Considerations

The assessment adhered to strict ethical standards to ensure the protection, dignity, and rights of all participants. Informed consent was obtained from respondents prior to data collection, and participation was entirely voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study, and data was securely stored and used solely for assessment purposes.



Limitations and Mitigation Measures

The execution of this assessment had some limitations that however did not compromised the overall quality of the data collected. The assessment faced a few challenges during implementation, which are important to note for context and transparency. These challenges are outlined below:

- Limited availability of some respondents: Some key participants were unavailable due to competing commitments; the assessment was being done in the farming season.
- Incomplete programme information from Government authorities including the list of programme beneficiaries which was meant to serve as the sampling frame.
- Much of the data obtained through interviews and FGDs relied on participants' recall and perceptions, which may introduce bias.

Presentation of Study Findings

Presentation of Participants Demographic Data

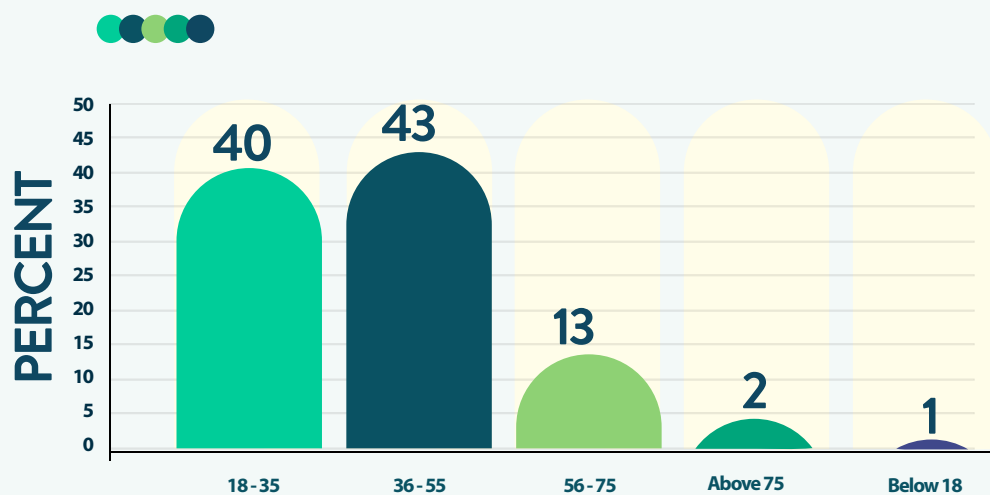
Distribution Participants Sex

Figure 1 below distribution of participants by sex indicates a relatively balanced representation of both females and males in the study. Females constituted a slightly higher proportion of respondents at 54%, while males accounted for 46%.



Distribution of Participant's Age

Figure 2 presents the distribution of participant's age. The majority of respondents were within the economically active age groups, with 43% aged 36–55 years and 40% aged 18–35 years. Smaller proportions were aged 56–75 years (13%), above 75 years (2%), and below 18 years (1%), indicating that program participation was predominantly among adult, working-age individuals.

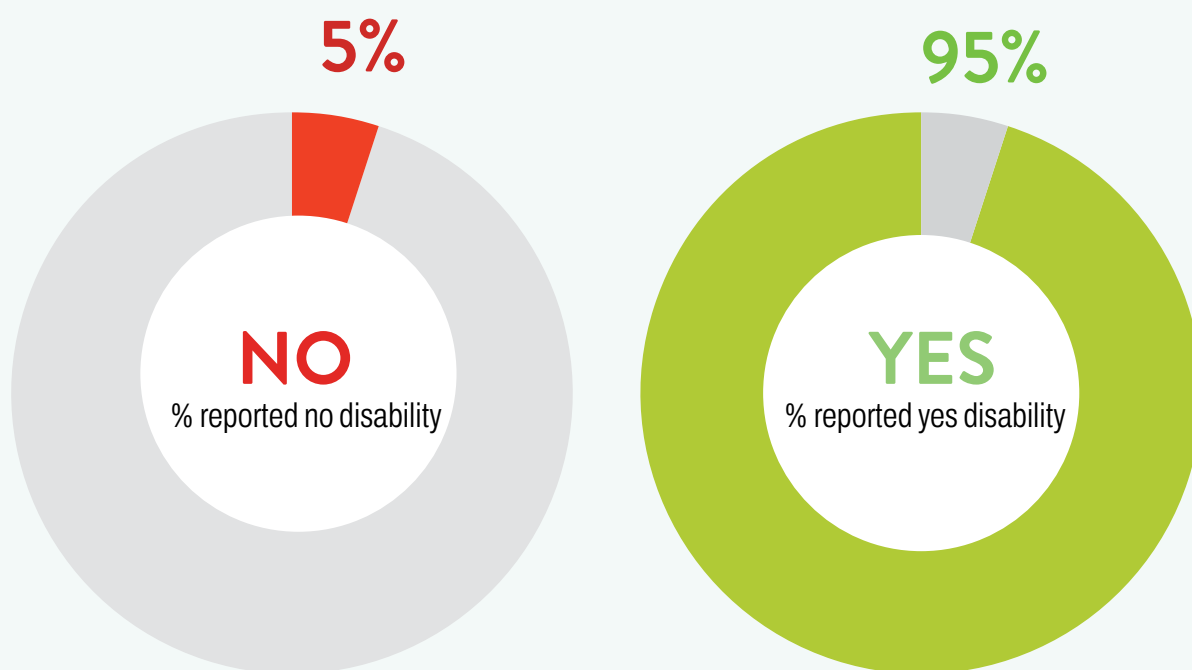


Distribution of Participants by Disability Status

Figure 3 presents the distribution of participants by disability status. The data indicates that 5% of respondents identified as Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), while 95% reported no disability. This distribution reflects the project's commitment to mainstreaming disability and social inclusion across all interventions. By ensuring the participation of PWDs, the project sought to promote equitable participation in environmental governance, access to information, and livelihood opportunities.



Do you have any form of disability?



1. Emergence Social Cash Transfer (ESCT)

Figure 4 below displays study findings on how the household was selected on the ESCT program. The study findings indicate that ESCT beneficiary households were predominantly selected through community-based targeting mechanisms, with the majority identified via CWACs and community meetings. Selection through formal institutional channels and other methods was minimal, while informal social networks played a limited supplementary role.

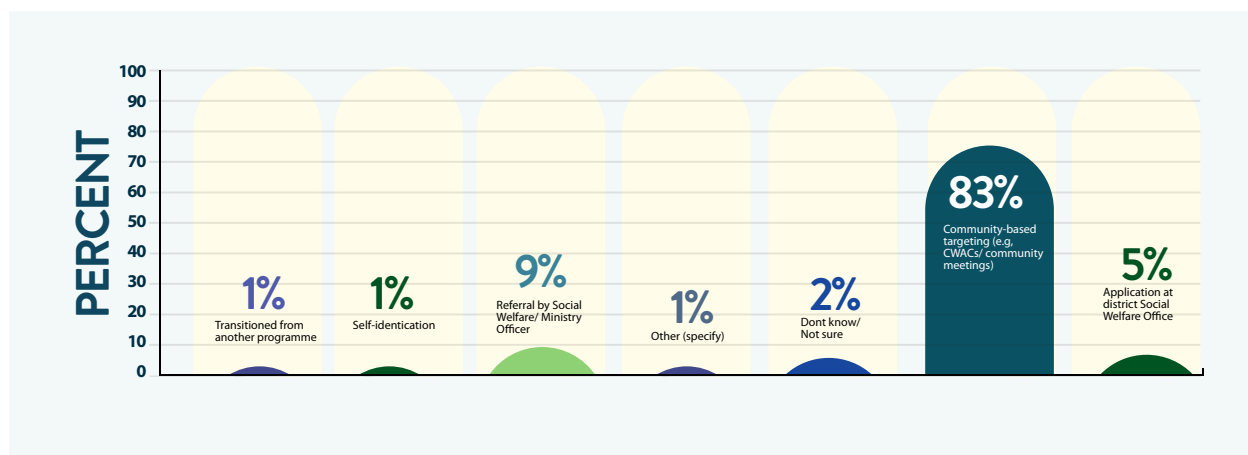


Figure 5 below displays respondents' perceptions of the fairness and transparency of the beneficiary selection process. The majority of participants rated the process positively, with 67% indicating that it was fair and 13% very fair. Only a small proportion perceived the process as unfair, while few respondents expressed neutral views, suggesting generally high confidence in the selection process.

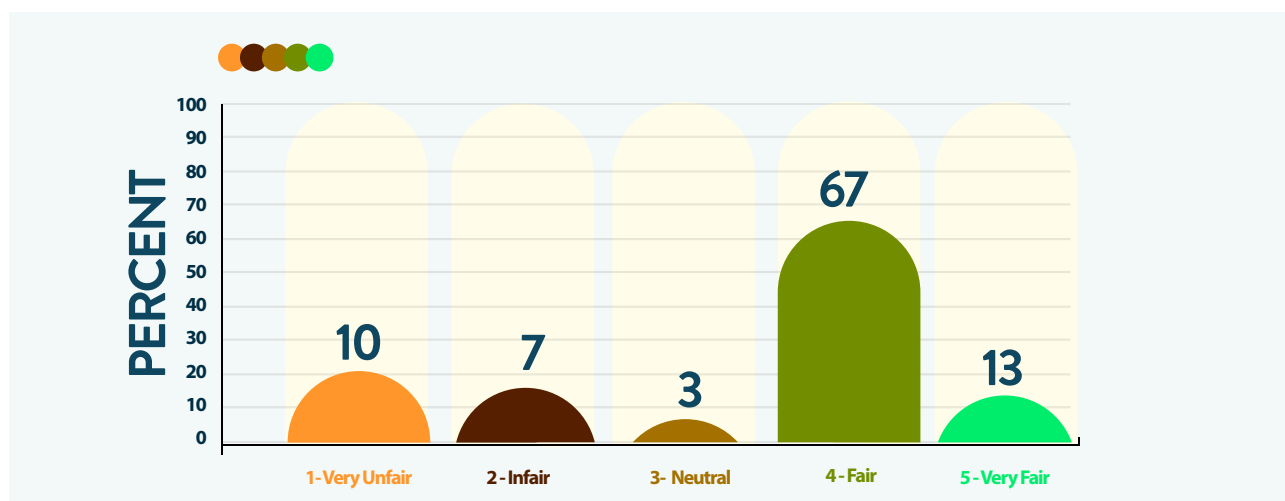
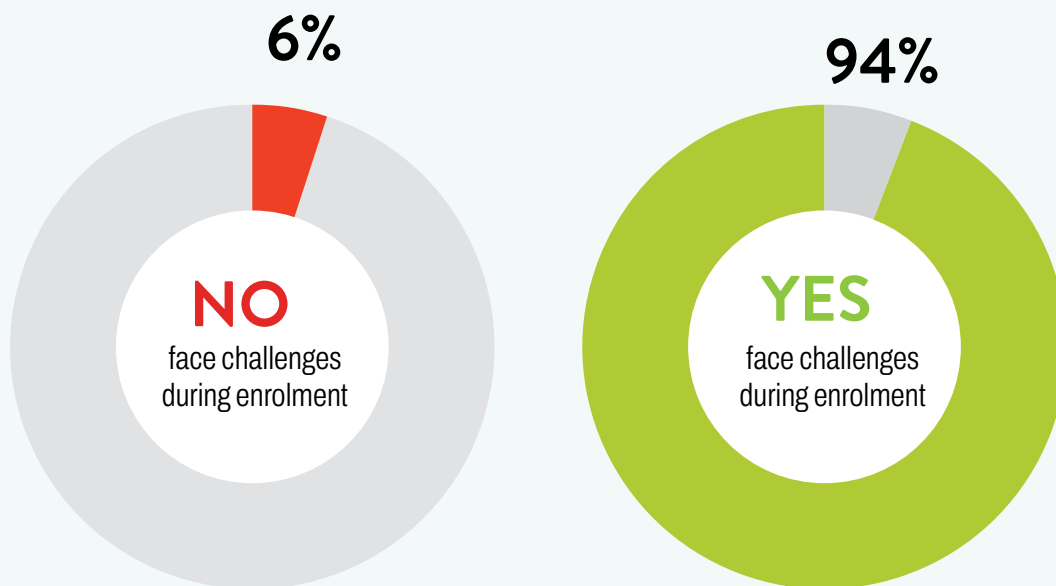


Figure 6 below presents study findings on challenges faced by households during enrolment and payments under the ESCT programme. The majority of respondents (94%) reported no challenges during enrolment, while a small proportion (6%) experienced difficulty. Reported enrolment challenges included repeated applications before being accepted, delays in being added to the beneficiary list, exclusion due to age or disability, and occasional favoritism or administrative errors.



Did your household face challenges during enrolment?



In terms of payment, households reported delays, missed payments, or receiving partial amounts. Other challenges included long distances to payment points, technical issues with mobile payments, and lack of timely communication about payment schedules. Overall, while enrolment was largely reported to have been successful for most participants, payment processes emerged as a significant area needing improvement to ensure timely and equitable delivery of benefits.

Figure 7 below presents the primary payment methods used in the ESCT programme. The majority of beneficiaries received payments in cash through Paypoint Managers (51%), followed by Mobile Money transfers (44%), while bank transfers were not utilized (0%), and other methods accounted for (5%) and this included those that were initially paid in cash then later transitioned to mobile money payment. Despite the availability of these payment channels, beneficiaries reported several challenges related to payment delivery. Common issues included delayed or missed payments, receiving only partial or single payments instead of the full entitlement, and technical or logistical difficulties such as long distances to payment points, incorrect mobile phone numbers, and extended queues. Some respondents also reported not receiving payments for a certain period since the transitioning to mobile money payments.

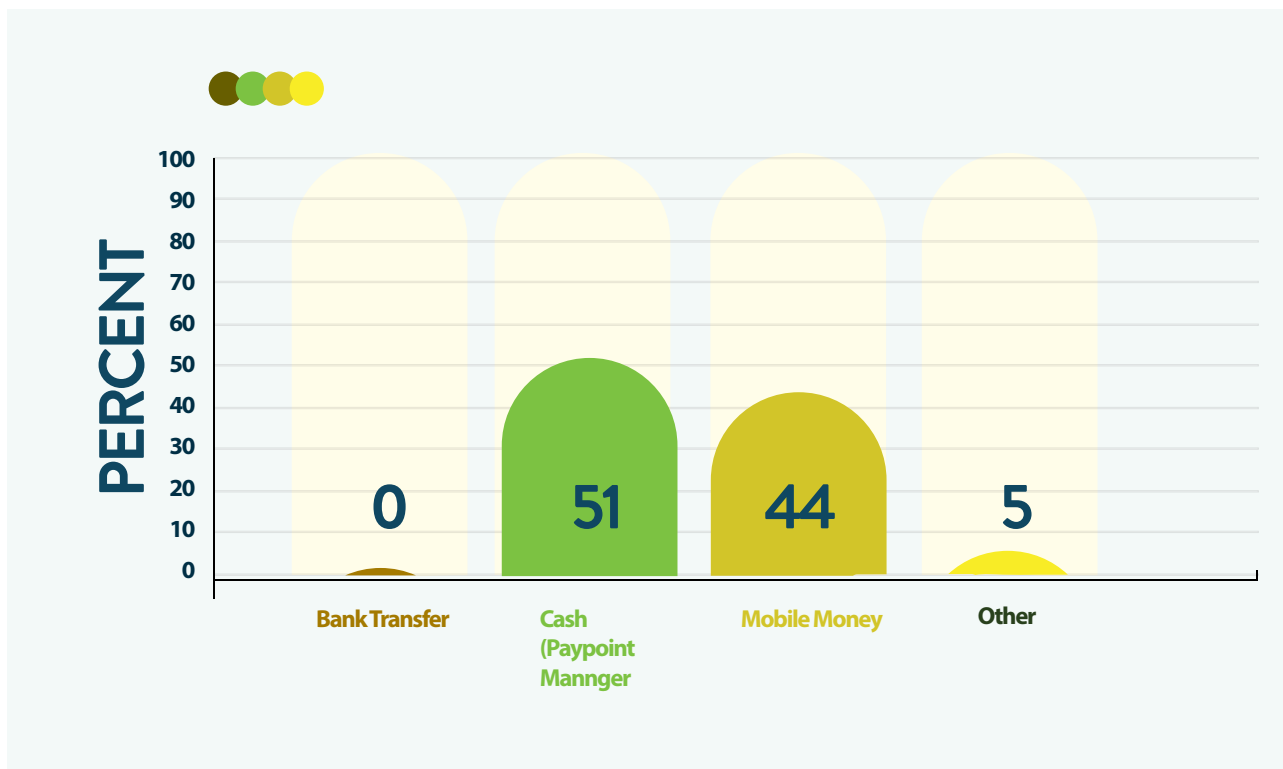




Figure 8 below presents beneficiaries' perceptions of the reliability of the ESCT payment schedule. The findings indicate that while a substantial proportion of respondents perceived payments to be relatively reliable, with 36% reporting that payments were mostly on time and 27% indicating they were always on time, notable inconsistencies remain. Nearly one-third of respondents (32%) reported that payments were sometimes delayed, while smaller proportions described payments as often delayed (4%) or very unpredictable (2%). Overall, the results suggest moderate reliability of the payment schedule, albeit with recurring delays that may undermine beneficiaries' ability to plan and manage household needs effectively.

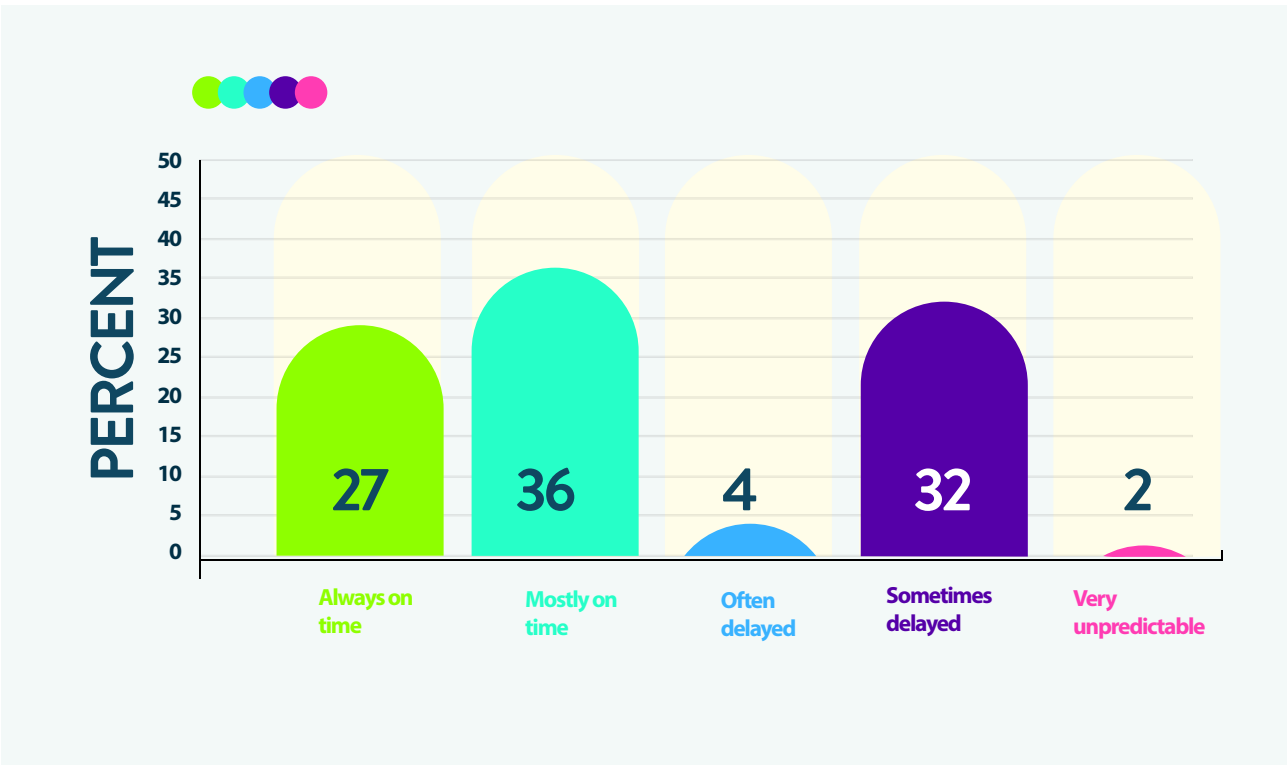
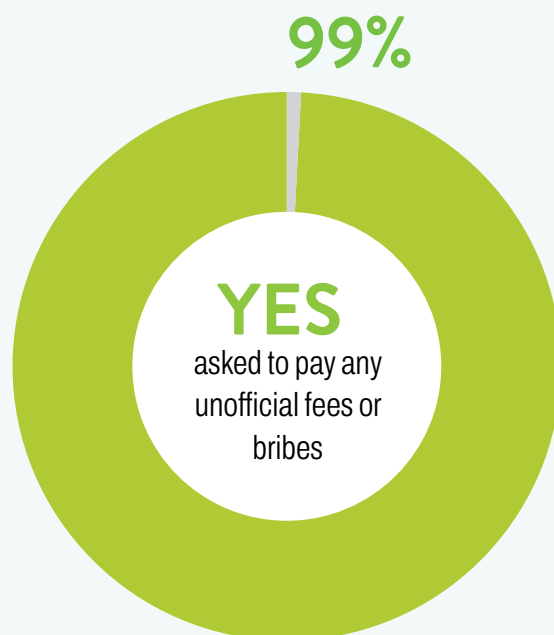


Figure 9 presents findings on whether ESCT beneficiaries were asked to pay any unofficial fees or bribes. The results show that the practice was almost entirely absent, with 99% of respondents reporting that they were not asked to pay any unofficial fees. Only 1% indicated having experienced such a request. Among this very small proportion, respondents reported that the requests originated from individuals linked to programme implementation at community and payment levels, specifically CWAC officials and Pay Point Managers.

Were you asked to pay any
unofficial fees or bribes?





2. CASH FOR WORK (CfW)

Figure 10 below presents study findings on the extent to which participants perceived the targeting of the Cash-for-Work programme as fair and transparent. The study findings demonstrate that a substantial majority of respondents (76%) reported that the selection of beneficiaries was fair and transparent, suggesting a generally positive perception of the targeting process implemented under the programme. This indicates that the mechanisms used for beneficiary identification were largely viewed as credible and acceptable by participants. However, 18% of respondents indicated that the selection process was not fair and transparent, highlighting the presence of perceived exclusion or dissatisfaction among a notable minority of participants, respondents from Klls confirmed that there were instances of complaints and rumors from some community members, even when processes were conducted properly. Majority of these participants indicated that the selection criteria was elite influenced at community level and that not every person that was identified and selected met the eligibility criteria.

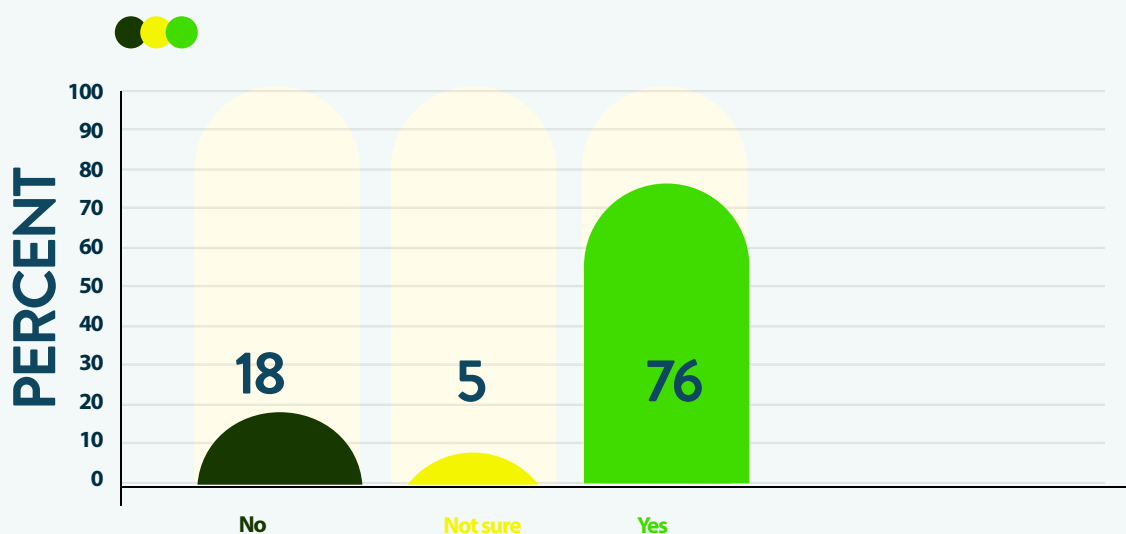


Figure 11 below presents study findings on whether the Cash-for-Work programme raised concerns within the community regarding its management. The study findings indicate that the majority of respondents (70%) reported that the programme did not raise any concerns within the community regarding how it was managed. This suggests that, for most participants, programme implementation processes including supervision, coordination, and day-to-day management were perceived as generally acceptable. On the other hand, 30% of respondents reported that the programme did raise concerns within the community. This proportion represents a substantial minority and points to the existence of management-related challenges that may have affected community perceptions. These concerns were mainly associated with payment processes, work environments and perceived inequities in programme administration. Respondents from KILs confirmed that complaints were submitted and some were addressed while others were not due to reporting structures in the communities, as some information would not be reached with some weak dissemination of information by some local leaders."

Did the programme raise any concerns in the community regarding how it was managed?

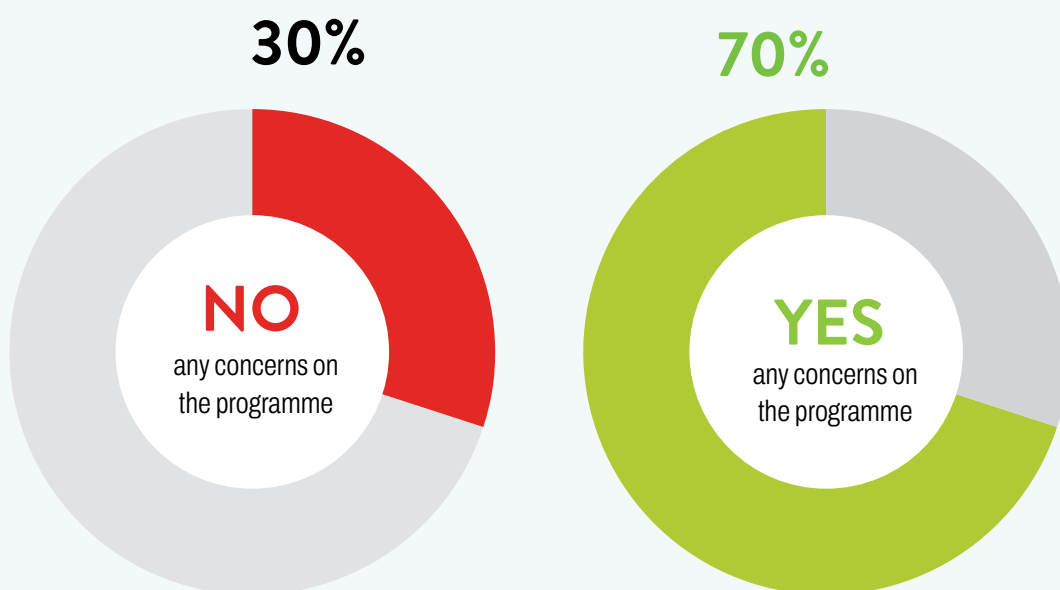




Figure 12 below presents study findings on the effectiveness of the feedback process among respondents who reported that the Cash-for-Work programme raised concerns within the community. The findings indicate mixed perceptions regarding the functionality of the feedback mechanism. While 28% of respondents reported that the feedback process was effective, nearly half of the respondents within this subgroup (49%) perceived it as ineffective. Most participants noted that complaints frequently went unaddressed, and where responses were provided, they were often significantly delayed. In addition, 24% of respondents indicated uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of the feedback process, with some reporting that they attempted to follow up on raised issues, while others were not aware of the existing complaints and feedback channels. Overall, the results point to gaps in responsiveness and awareness, highlighting the need to strengthen feedback and grievance redress mechanisms to enhance programme accountability and community trust.

If yes, was the feedback process effective?



Further insights from respondents highlighted several reasons why the feedback and grievance process was perceived as ineffective. Many participants reported that they were not aware of where or to whom grievances should be reported. In addition, grievance procedures were not adequately explained, and even among the few respondents who were aware of the mechanisms, little or no assistance was provided to support their use. Concerns were also raised regarding the beneficiary selection process, which was perceived as biased, while issues related to delayed payments remained unresolved. Collectively, these challenges contributed to dissatisfaction with the programme and undermined confidence in the feedback and grievance mechanisms, reinforcing perceptions that reported concerns did not result in timely or meaningful corrective action.

Tables 1 and 2 below present the study findings on the number of days beneficiaries worked under the Cash-for-Work Programme and the corresponding cash payments received, respectively. Findings from Table 1 indicate that the majority of beneficiaries reported working for 10 days, followed by those who worked for 20 days, while the remaining beneficiaries reported varying workdays. While the finding from table 2 further show that most beneficiaries who worked between 7 and 14 days received a payment of K600, indicating a disparity in payment structure aligned with days worked. In addition, a small number of outlier cases were observed. In one instance, a beneficiary reported working for 10 days but received K1,800, while another reported working for 20 days and received K2,600. These findings reflect variations in task allocation, payment rates, or potential administrative discrepancies. the presence of such anomalies highlights the need for clearer communication of wage rates and strengthened monitoring mechanisms to ensure transparency, equity, and uniform application of payment guidelines across beneficiaries.

How many days did you work per month?	Survey Respondents
1	1
2	1
5	9
6	4
7	12
8	2
9	2
10	395
12	3
14	8
18	1
19	1
20	22
30	2
Grand Total	463

How much were you paid?	Survey Respondents
0	13
300	1
580	7



600	420
1200	18
1800	3
2600	1
Grand Total	
	463

Figure 13 below presents study findings on beneficiaries' perceptions of the adequacy of the cash amount received under the Cash-for-Work programme in meeting basic household needs. The results show that slightly over half of the respondents (55%) perceived the transfer as adequate to meet some of their basic needs during the drought period especially in rural areas, indicating that the programme contributed to household food security and short-term coping in a context of constrained livelihoods and heightened vulnerability. On the hand, 45% of the participants reported that the cash received was not adequate especially urban areas, which demonstrated different levels of vulnerability and varied capacity to translate the transfer into meaningful welfare gains. Other contributing factors included household size, dependency ratios, and the severity of drought impacts, as well as rising prices of food, services, and other essential commodities.

Was the amount received adequate to meet some of your basic needs?

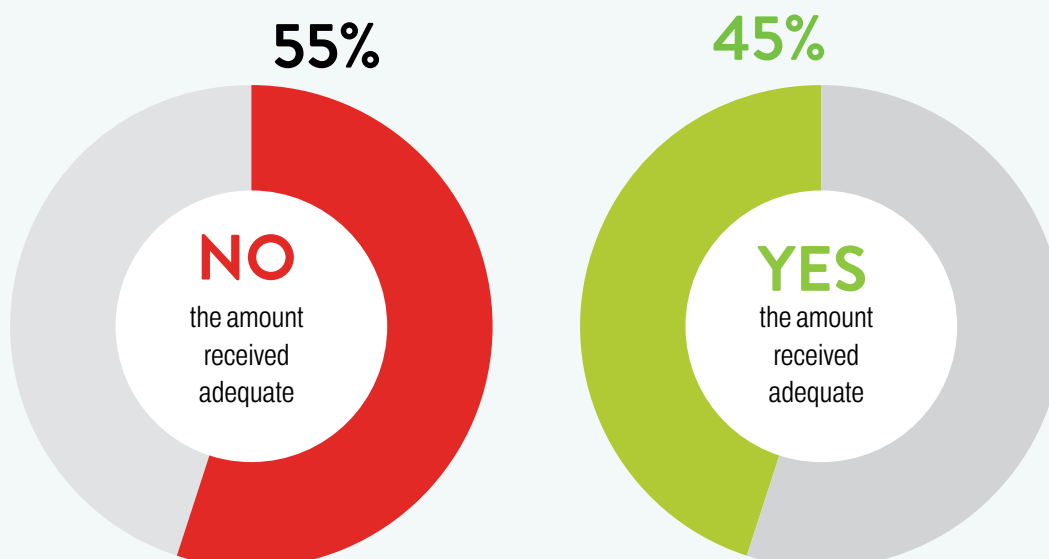
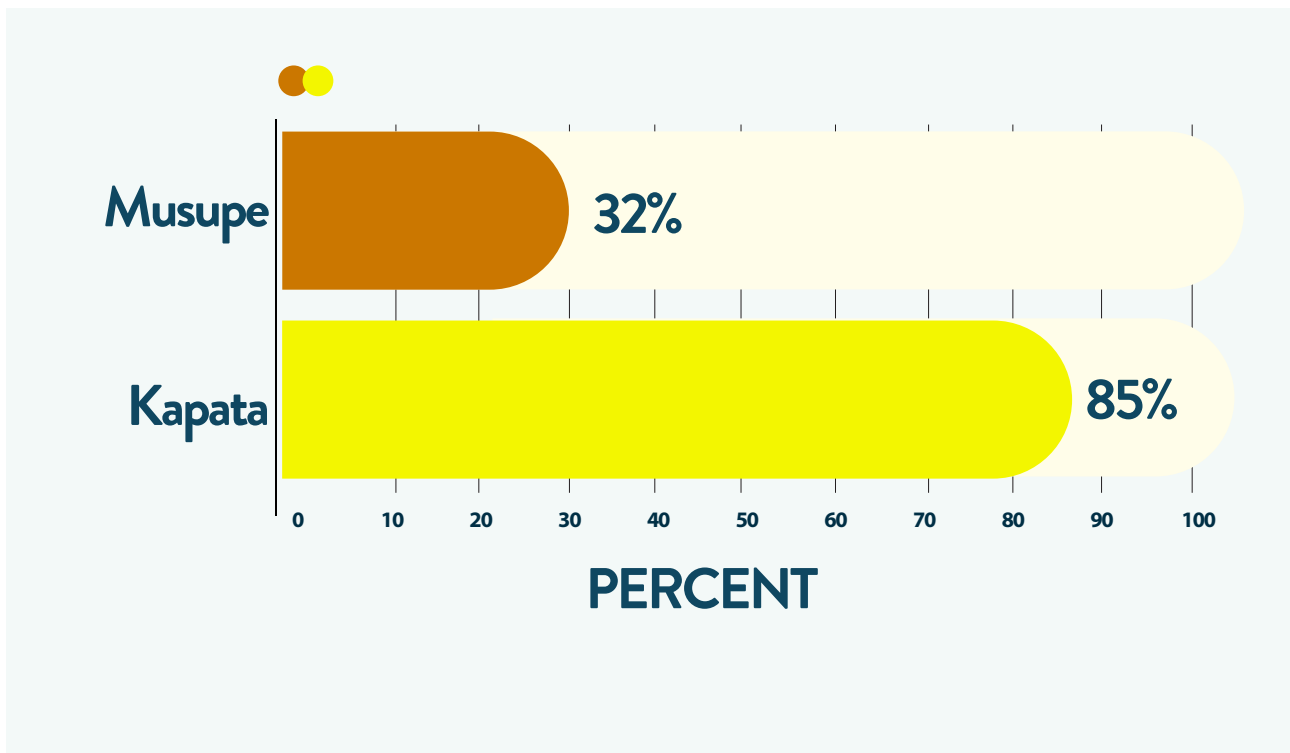


Figure 14 below presents a comparative analysis of the perceived adequacy of the Cash-for-Work transfer in meeting basic household needs across the two sampled communities—Kapata (urban) and Masupe (rural). The findings indicate a marked disparity between the two settings. In Kapata, 85% of respondents reported that the amount received was adequate to meet some of their basic needs, compared to only 32% of respondents in Masupe.

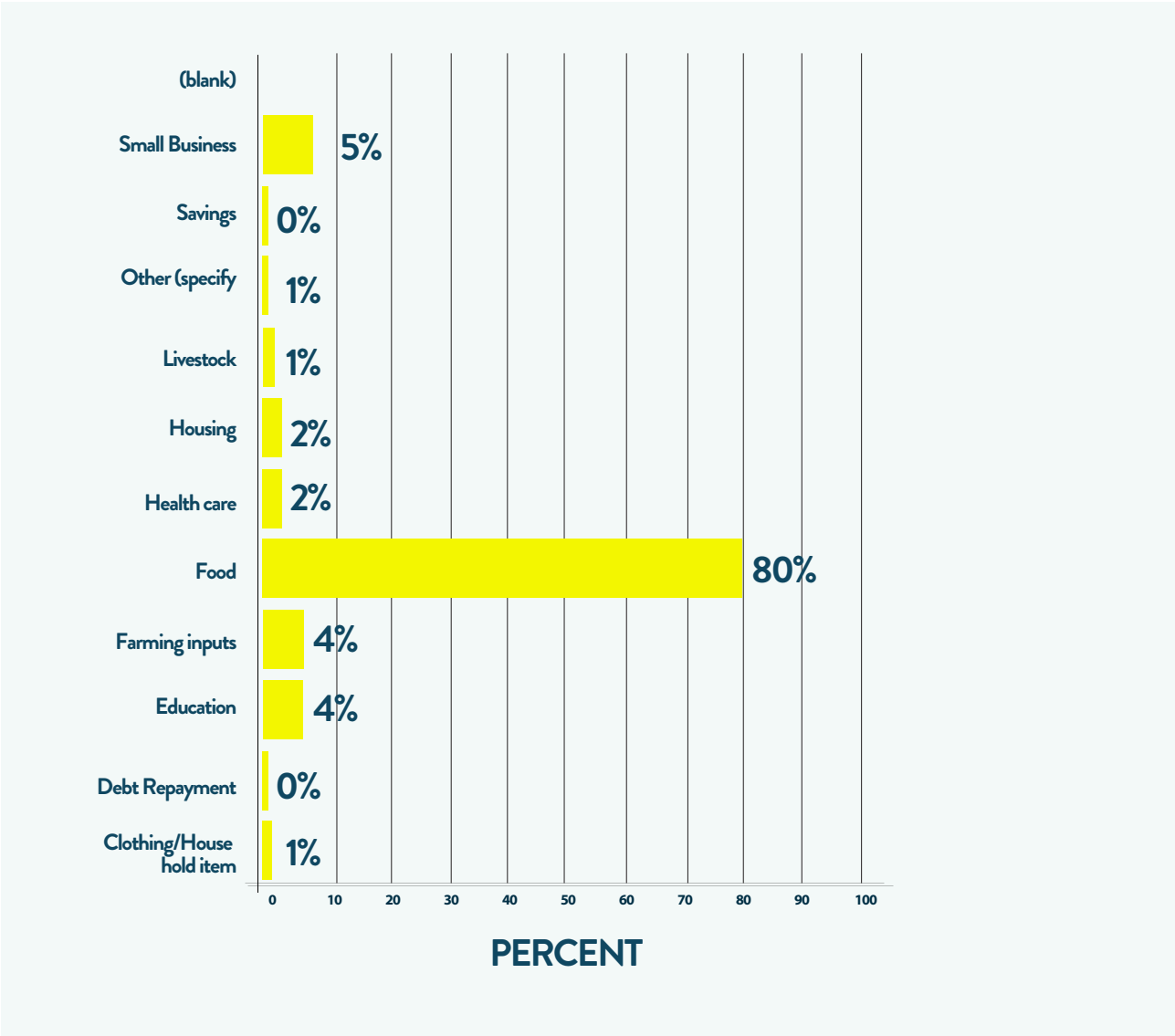


This variation can be attributed to differences in livelihood structures and income diversification between urban and rural contexts. Respondents in the urban community of Kapata generally have access to multiple and more diversified sources of income, including informal employment and small-scale trading, which allows the Cash-for-Work support to complement existing earnings. As a result, the transfer is perceived as adequate in cushioning basic household expenditures.

Further analysis with the communities revealed, the rural community of Masupe is largely dependent on subsistence farming as the primary source of livelihood. Given the seasonal nature of agricultural income and limited alternative income opportunities, the Cash-for-Work amount was insufficient to address broader household needs. Consequently, a significantly lower proportion of rural respondents perceived the transfer as adequate. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of contextualizing Cash-for-Work transfer values to reflect differing economic realities between urban and rural communities, particularly levels of income diversification and vulnerability.



Figure 15 below presents findings on the primary use of the Emergency Social Cash Transfer (ESCT) at household level among the sampled respondents (n = 24). The results indicate that the ESCT was predominantly utilized to meet immediate consumption needs, with 80% of households reporting that the transfer was mainly spent on food. This overwhelming prioritization of food underscores the prevalence of basic consumption deficits and highlights food security as the most pressing household need among beneficiary communities.



Other uses of the ESCT were reported at substantially lower levels. Small business investments accounted for 5% of responses, suggesting limited scope for livelihood diversification or income-generating activities using the transfer. Expenditure on education and farming inputs each accounted for 4%, indicating modest investment in human capital development and productive assets. Minimal proportions of households reported using the ESCT for health care (2%), housing (2%), clothing and household items (1%), livestock (1%), and other purposes (1%). Notably, no respondents reported using the transfer for debt repayment or savings.

Figure 16 below presents study findings on the timeliness of cash payments to beneficiaries under the Cash-for-Work programme. The study findings show that slightly more than half of the respondents (53%) reported that they always received their payments on time. This indicates that, for a majority of beneficiaries, the payment system functioned as intended and provided predictable income support, which is particularly important for households relying on cash assistance to meet immediate needs during a drought period. However, 29% of respondents indicated that they sometimes received payments on time, while 19% reported that they never received payments on time. Respondents from KILs noted that “The initial plan was for beneficiaries to be paid immediately after completing work. However, delays occurred due to favoritism by some supervisors who held on to attendance sheets, negligence or lack of seriousness by some council officials in submitting documentation promptly and errors in the payment sheets”. These findings reveal notable inconsistencies in payment timeliness and suggest the presence of operational challenges within the payment delivery system. The affected participants indicated that the delayed payments may undermine the effectiveness of Cash-for-Work interventions, as they disrupt household planning, increase reliance on negative coping strategies, and reduce overall beneficiary confidence in the programme.

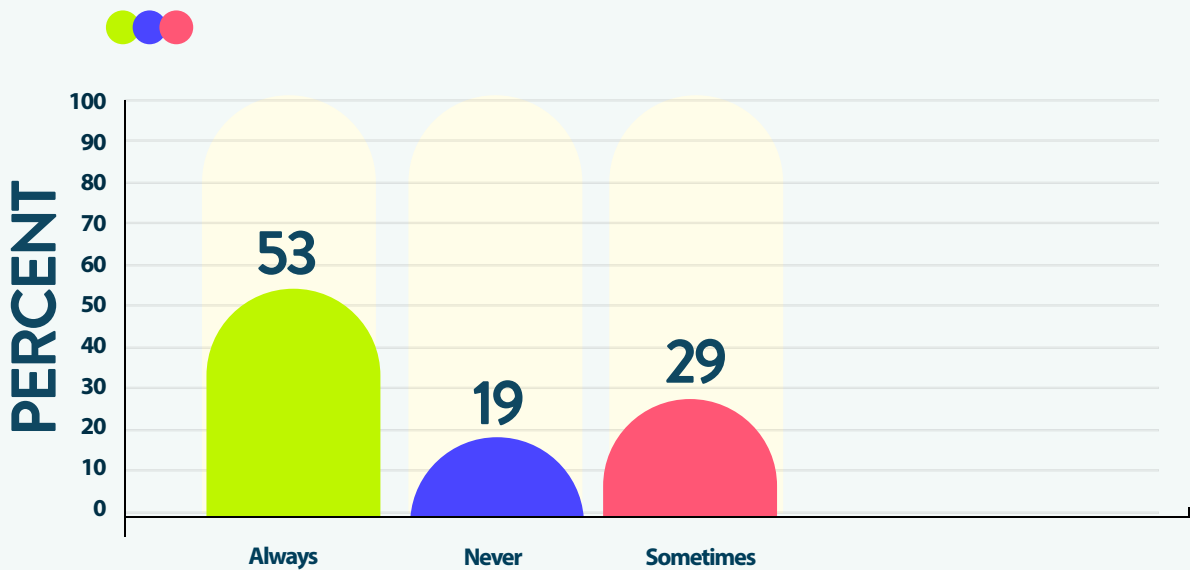




Figure 17 below presents study findings on the occurrence of formal or informal deductions from payments received under the Cash-for-Work programme. The study findings indicate that the vast majority of respondents (90%) reported that no deductions were made from their payments, suggesting that beneficiaries largely received the full cash amounts as intended. This reflects a generally positive level of financial integrity in the programme's payment process and indicates limited prevalence of unauthorized deductions of funds at community or administrative levels. However, 10% of respondents reported that deductions were made from their payments, which, although affecting a minority, is a matter of concern in the context of social protection and humanitarian assistance. Even limited instances of deductions can undermine programme credibility, reduce the net benefit to vulnerable households, and raise accountability and protection risks.

Were there any deductions from your payment (formal or informal)?

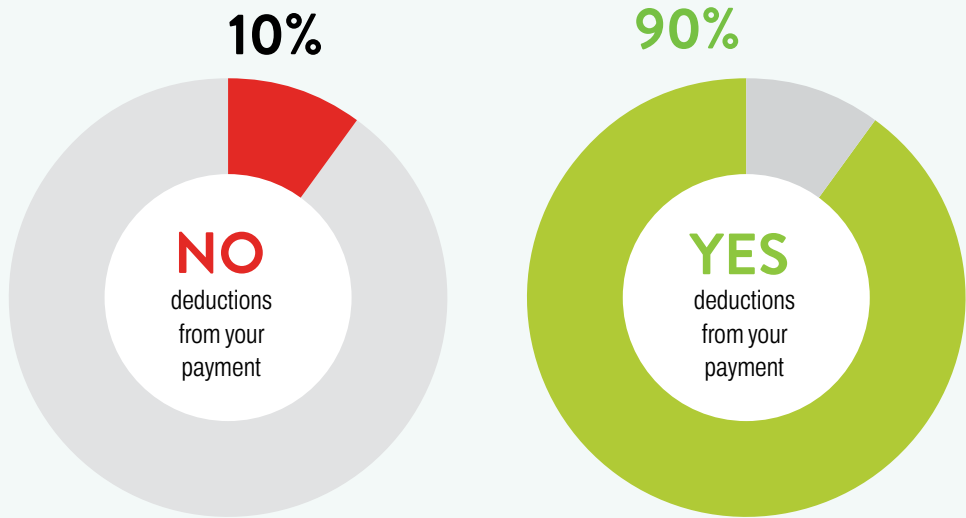


Figure 18 below presents study findings on the type of work performed by beneficiaries under the Cash-for-Work programme. The study findings indicate that the majority of participants were engaged in road works (44%) and community services (41%). Environmental activities, such as tree planting, accounted for 11% of reported work, highlighting a smaller but notable effort to support ecological sustainability and environmental restoration within the community. A minority of respondents (4%) reported engaging in other types of work, which were highly context-specific and aimed at addressing local community needs. Examples included cleaning and renovating school and clinic facilities, constructing and maintaining toilets, drawing water for clinic projects, clearing land, molding bricks, preparing drainage systems, crushing and transporting stones, and assisting in harvesting activities. These tasks demonstrate the programme's flexibility in addressing immediate community priorities beyond the standard road and environmental works.

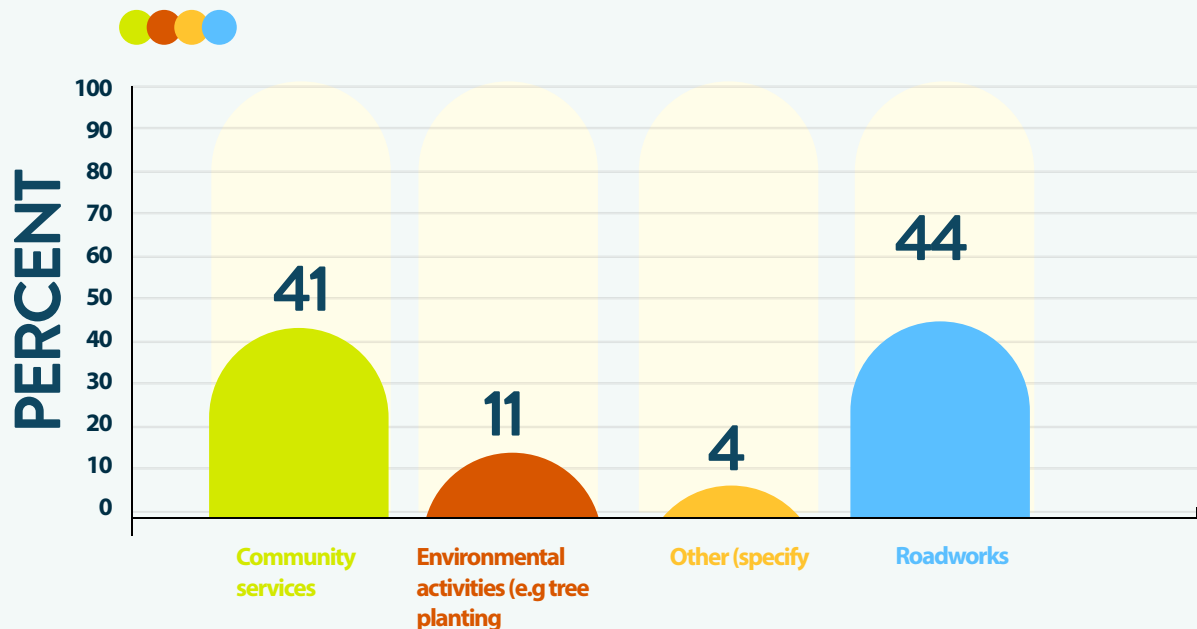




Figure 19 below presents study findings on the safety and manageability of work conditions under the Cash-for-Work programme. The findings reveal that just over half of the respondents (56%) perceived the work conditions as safe and manageable, while 44% reported unsafe or challenging conditions. Those who considered the conditions safe highlighted that tasks were achievable, often supported by teamwork, and in some cases, necessary tools or protective equipment such as gloves, gumboots, or wheelbarrows were provided. Participants noted that work like sweeping, water fetching, or light community cleaning was generally manageable, and the organization of tasks sometimes allowed sufficient time for rest or other activities. On the other hand, other respondents reported unsafe or difficult work conditions. Key challenges included the lack of protective clothing, insufficient or absent working tools, heavy labor requirements, and exposure to hazardous environments such as slippery roads, garbage, or areas with potential snakes. Women and older participants frequently reported greater difficulties due to the physical demands of tasks such as tree cutting, road excavation, or manual waste removal. Many participants had to rely on their own tools, and some reported injuries or near-hazardous situations, underscoring gaps in occupational safety and work preparedness.

Were work conditions safe and manageable for beneficiaries?

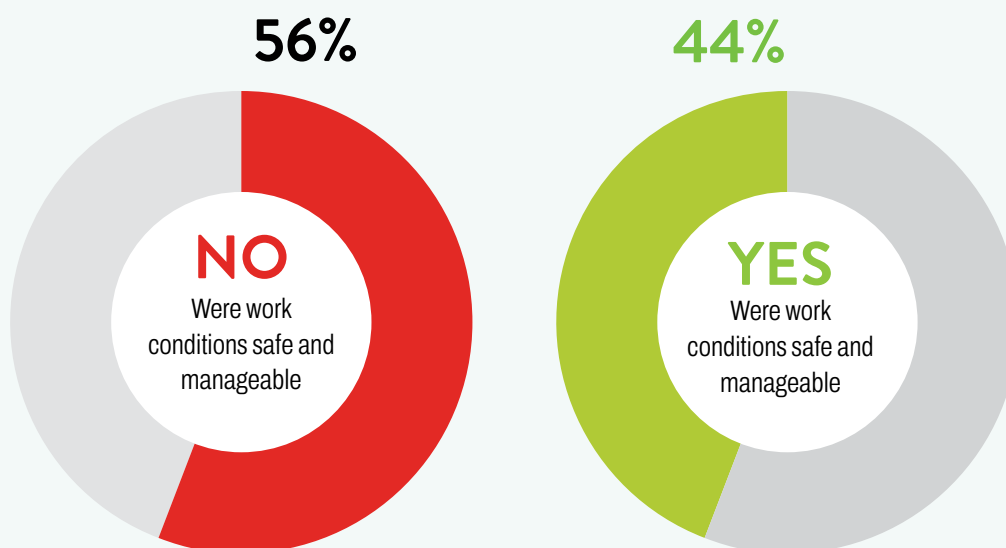


Figure 20 below presents study findings on whether an orientation was conducted prior to the commencement of work under the Cash-for-Work programme. The results indicate that 76% of participants reported that beneficiaries received an orientation before starting work. Most respondents noted that the orientation was delivered through brief meetings or community gatherings facilitated by local structures, including Ward Development Committees (WDCs), CWACs, chairpersons, and other community leaders. These sessions generally covered key programme components such as the nature and location of the work, duration and daily working hours, expected code of conduct, reporting procedures, payment amounts, and payment modalities, particularly the use of mobile money. In some instances, beneficiaries were also escorted to work sites and provided with practical guidance or demonstrations related to assigned tasks, including road maintenance, drainage cleaning, and activities within schools and markets. On the other hand, 24% of respondents indicated that they did not receive any orientation prior to starting work. Among these respondents, beneficiaries reported that the information provided was either absent or insufficient, particularly regarding critical programme details. Key gaps highlighted included a lack of clarity on the number of days beneficiaries were expected to work and the length of time required for payments to be processed and disbursed. This suggests inconsistencies in the delivery and quality of orientation across implementation sites, with potential implications for beneficiary understanding, expectations, and overall programme satisfaction.

Was any orientation provided before starting work?

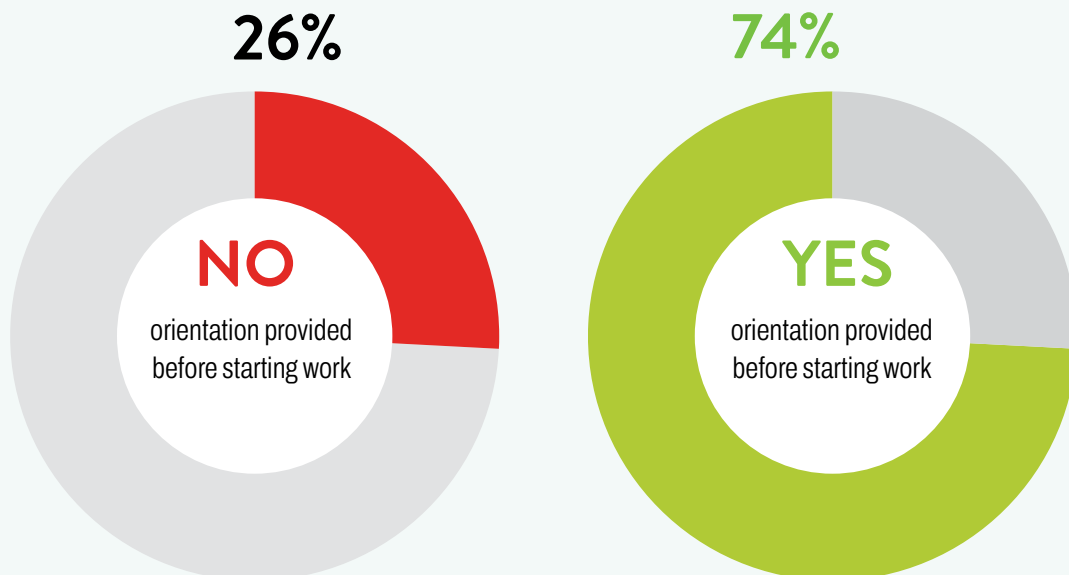




Figure 21 below presents study findings on the extent to which participation in the Cash-for-Work programme improved household well-being. The findings indicate that participation in the programme had a positive impact on most beneficiaries, with 38% reporting significant improvement and 57% reporting slight improvement in their household well-being. Only 5% of respondents indicated that the programme did not improve their household situation, largely because they had not received any payments. Qualitative responses provide further insight into the nature of these improvements. Many beneficiaries reported that the cash received enabled them to purchase food, pay school fees, access medical care, buy farming inputs, and invest in small businesses or livestock, contributing to short-term household resilience during the drought. Others noted that the amount was not always sufficient to meet all household needs, particularly for larger families or those affected by delayed payments. Despite some limitations in payment amounts and delays, the programme was widely perceived as a critical support mechanism, helping households cope with the immediate effects of drought, maintain basic consumption, and, in some cases, invest in income-generating activities that could support longer-term livelihood recovery.

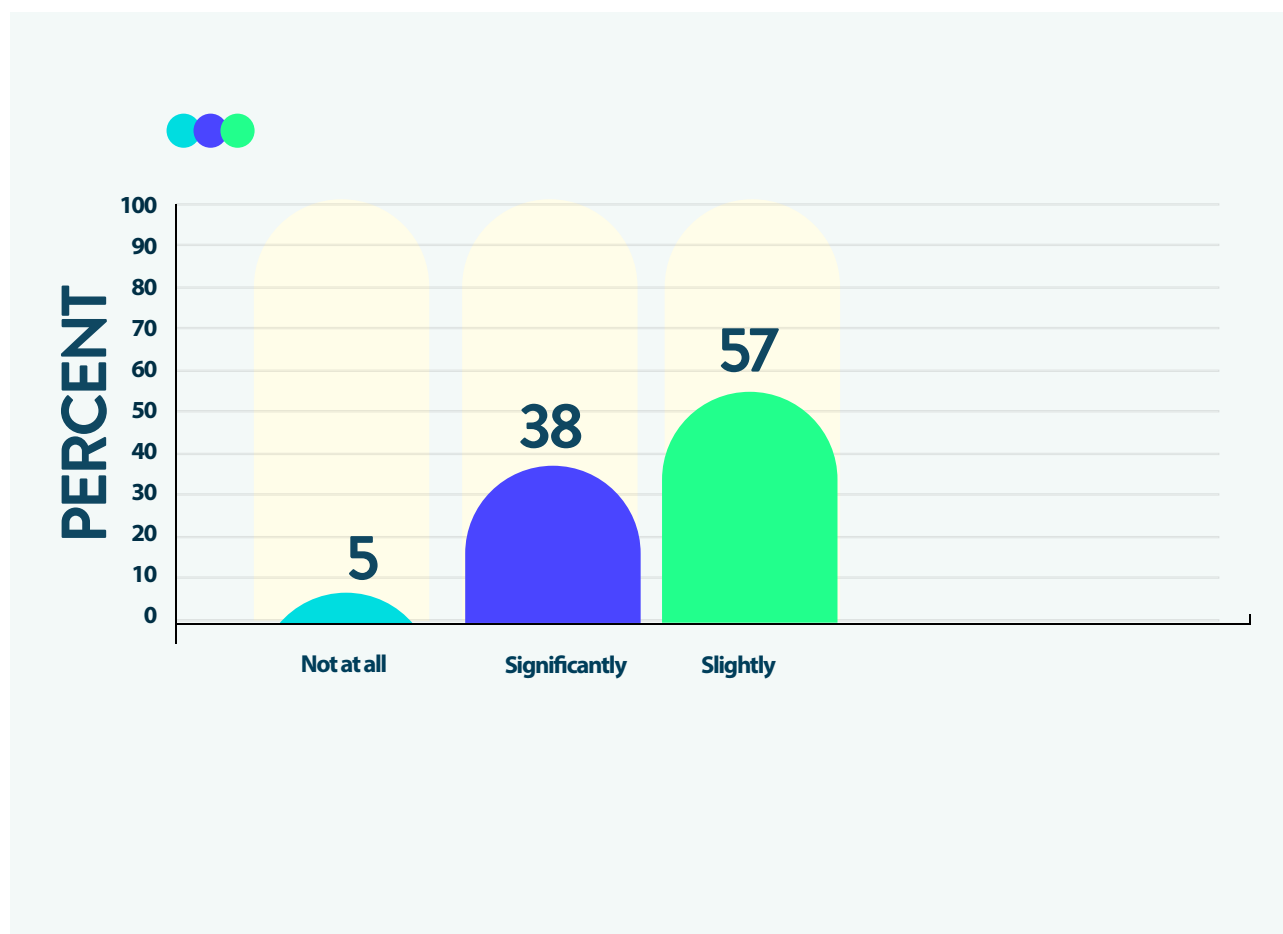


Figure 22 below presents study findings on beneficiaries' awareness of programme management under the Cash-for-Work programme. The findings show that a large majority of respondents (82%) were aware of who managed the programme in their area, while 18% reported not knowing. Among those who were aware, programme management was primarily attributed to local leadership structures, including the Ward Development Committee (WDC), Community Welfare Assistance Committees (CWACs), area chairpersons, and other community leaders such as headmen or ward councillors. The variation in responses highlights a knowledge gap among beneficiaries regarding the duty bearers responsible for programme management and accountability at the community level.

Do you know who managed the programme in your area?

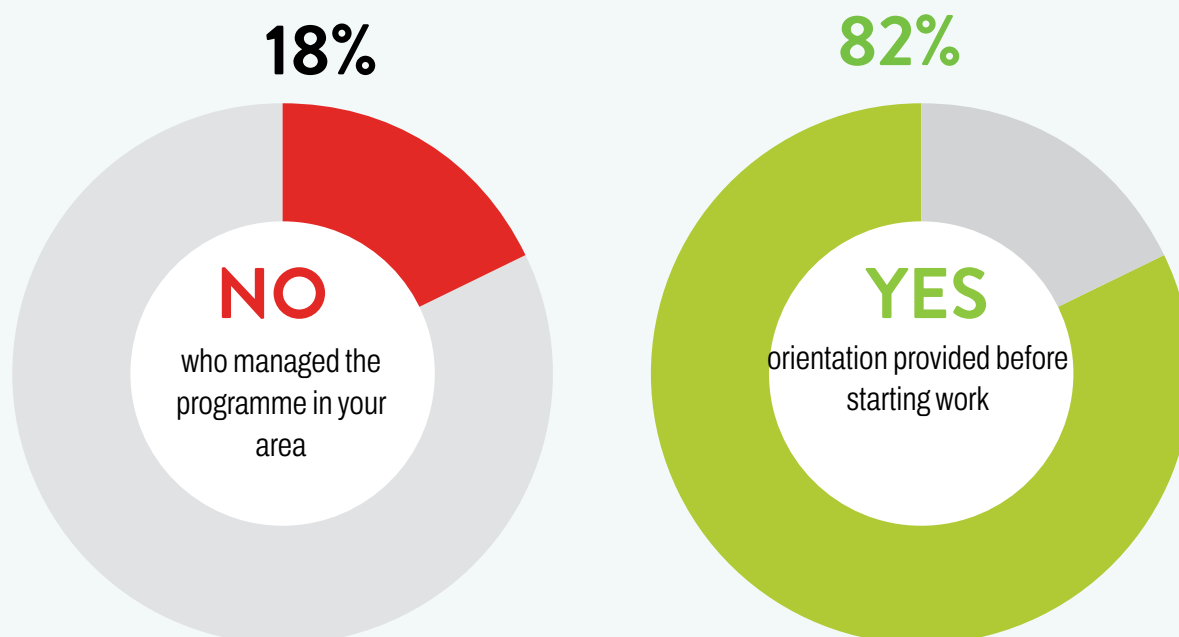




Figure 23 below presents study findings on whether information about project goals, budgets, or work plans was shared with the programme beneficiaries under the Cash-for-Work programme. The study findings indicate that the majority of respondents (80%) reported that information was shared with the community, suggesting that the programme largely ensured transparency regarding its objectives and operational plans. This demonstrates a positive effort by programme implementers to engage beneficiaries and enhance understanding of the Cash-for-Work intervention. However, 17% of respondents indicated that they did not receive information, while 3% reported that information was shared only partially. Qualitative responses revealed several reasons for limited information dissemination: some participants missed meetings or were not present when details were shared, others were unaware of the full programme budget or administrative processes, and a few noted that information on payment processes and timelines was unclear. Additionally, some respondents perceived that leaders or programme officials were not always available to communicate key details.

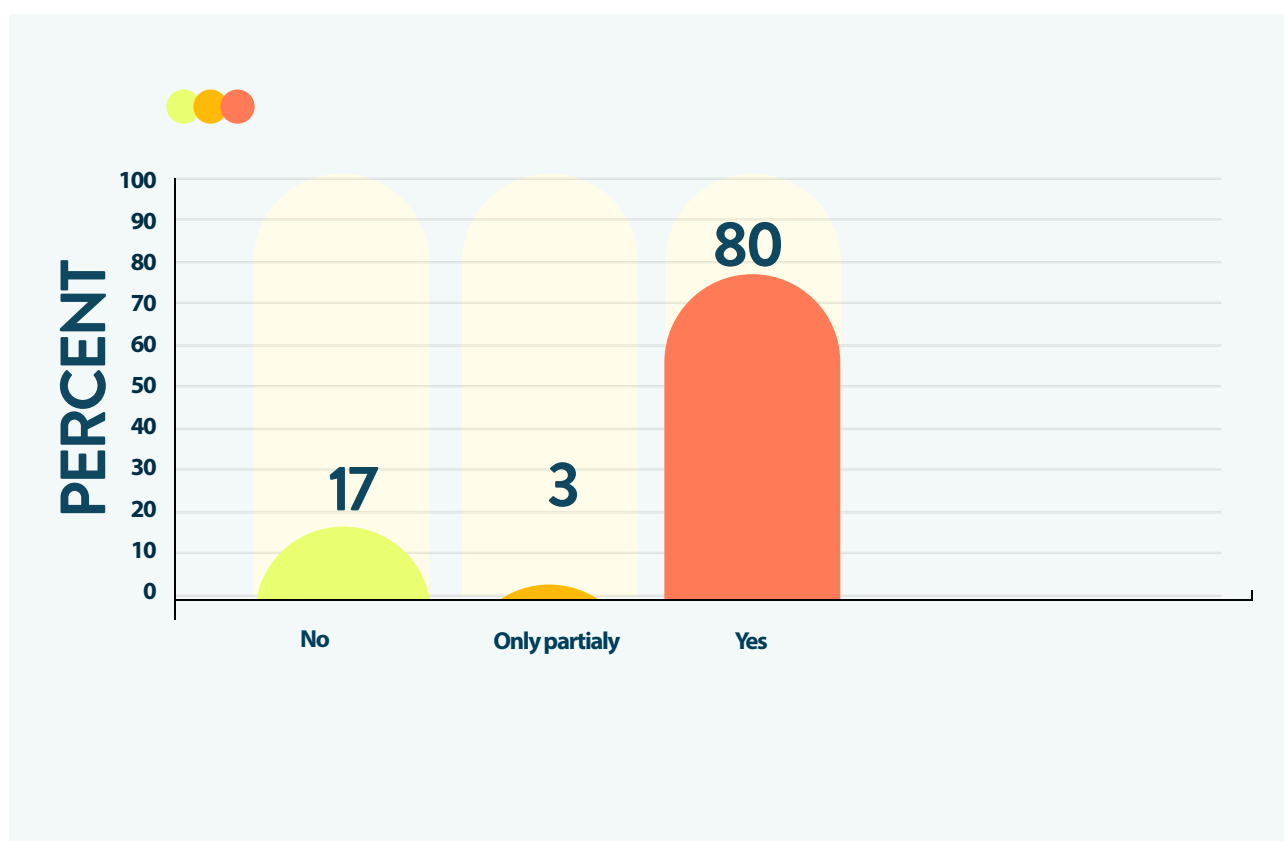


Figure 24 below presents study findings on beneficiaries' observations of favoritism, corruption, or mismanagement in the Cash-for-Work programme. The study findings show that a majority of respondents (76%) did not observe any favoritism, corruption, or mismanagement, indicating that, for most participants, the programme was implemented in a fair and acceptable manner. However, a significant minority (24%) reported instances of favoritism, corruption, or mismanagement, highlighting areas where programme governance may have been compromised. The qualitative descriptions provided by respondents suggest that most issues were related to favoritism in beneficiary selection and unequal distribution of work or payments. Common concerns included leaders or Ward Development Committee members selecting family members, friends, or politically connected individuals to participate multiple times, while more vulnerable households or individuals were left out. Some respondents noted that payments were made to individuals who had not worked, while others who completed their work were delayed or not paid at all. Additionally, there were reports of bias in work assignments, where certain participants were given easier tasks or fewer days, and some meetings were held at times inconvenient for broader community participation, limiting transparency.

Did you observe any favoritism, corruption, or mismanagement?

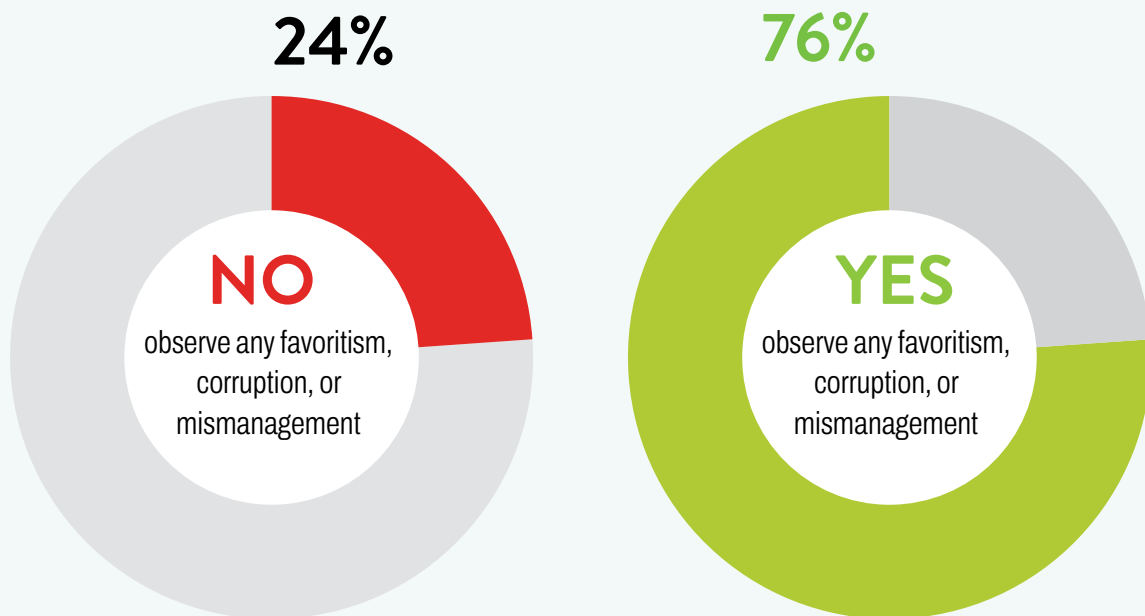
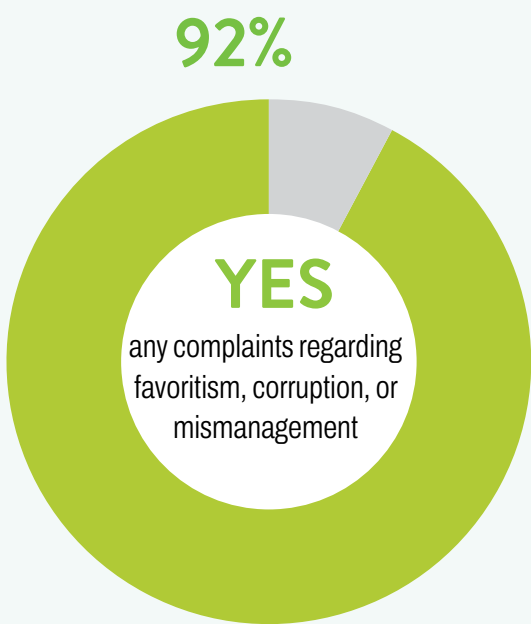
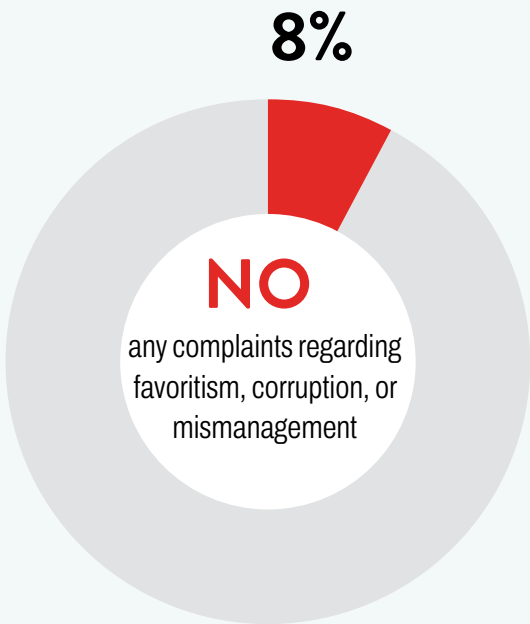




Figure 25 below presents study findings on whether beneficiaries lodged complaints regarding favoritism, corruption, or mismanagement in the Cash-for-Work programme. The study findings indicate that the vast majority of respondents (92%) did not lodge any complaints, suggesting either a perception that issues were minimal, a lack of awareness about complaint mechanisms, or potential barriers to accessing grievance channels. Only 8% of respondents reported lodging complaints, with the issues raised primarily relating to delayed payments, perceived favoritism in beneficiary selection, allocation of work, and mismanagement by supervisors or local leaders. Among those who lodged complaints, some reported positive outcomes, including adjustments in the payment process, changes in beneficiary selection, or correction of administrative errors. For example, certain respondents noted that after reporting, the working system was modified, and delayed payments were resolved. However, other complaints remained unresolved, highlighting gaps in responsiveness, especially when complaints involved entrenched local power dynamics or political interference. Several respondents reported taking complaints to Ward Development Committees, District Commissioners, local councilors, or supervisors, with mixed effectiveness in resolving the issues.

Did you lodge any complaints regarding
favoritism, corruption, or mismanagement?



3. Wetlands Food Security Packs (FSP)

Figure 25 below presents study findings on how beneficiaries were selected to participate in the Wetlands Food Security Pack (FSP) programme. The study findings indicate that the majority of respondents (57%) reported being selected through community meetings headed by CWACs who shared information about the programme with the focus was on those who were not benefiting from any programme, suggesting that participatory and community-based approaches were the primary mechanism for beneficiary identification. A substantial proportion of respondents (37%) indicated that they were selected through local leader nomination, highlighting the significant role played by traditional and community leadership structures in the targeting process. While local leader involvement can enhance contextual understanding of household vulnerability, it may also introduce risks of favoritism if not adequately guided by clear and transparent selection criteria. Only a very small proportion of respondents reported being selected by an NGO (1%), while 5% selected other methods. Further explanation from this group revealed that selection was conducted through Community Welfare Assistance Committees (CWACs), either independently or in collaboration with traditional leaders. This reflects the involvement of established community-based social protection structures in programme targeting.

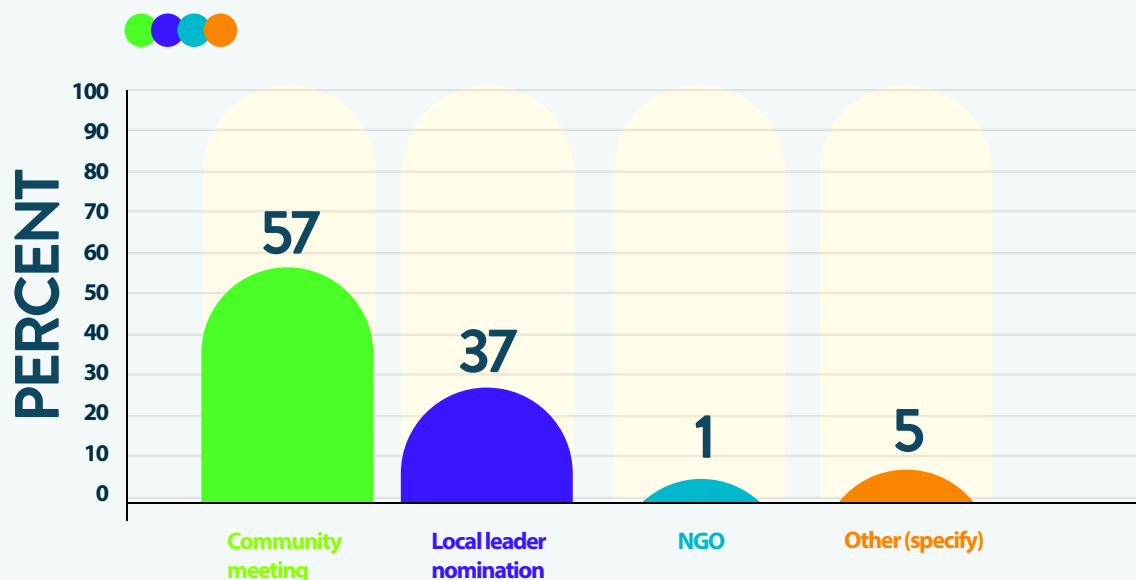




Figure 26 below presents beneficiaries' perceptions regarding fairness and transparency in the selection process for the Wetlands Food Security Pack (FSP) programme. The assessment findings indicate that an overwhelming majority of respondents (95%) perceived the selection process as fair and transparent, while 3% expressed negative views and 2% were unsure. Respondents who reported positive perceptions largely attributed this to the open and community-based nature of the selection process. Respondents from the KIs revealed that "the selection process was fair". Beneficiary identification was commonly conducted through community meetings in which programme information was widely disseminated, eligibility criteria were clearly explained, and beneficiary names were recorded openly. Many respondents noted that vulnerability assessments were undertaken with the involvement of CWACs, headmen, and other local leaders, prioritizing households affected by drought, those without alternative sources of income, households with elderly persons or persons with disabilities, unemployed youth, and households not benefiting from other social protection programmes. Participants further highlighted measures to promote equity, such as selecting one beneficiary per household and distributing opportunities across villages. The absence of corruption, favoritism, or informal payments was frequently cited, reinforcing perceptions of procedural fairness. On the other hand, some beneficiaries expressed concerns, indicating that not all selected participants met the eligibility criteria, as instances were reported where individuals were included in the programme while some of the most vulnerable community members were excluded.

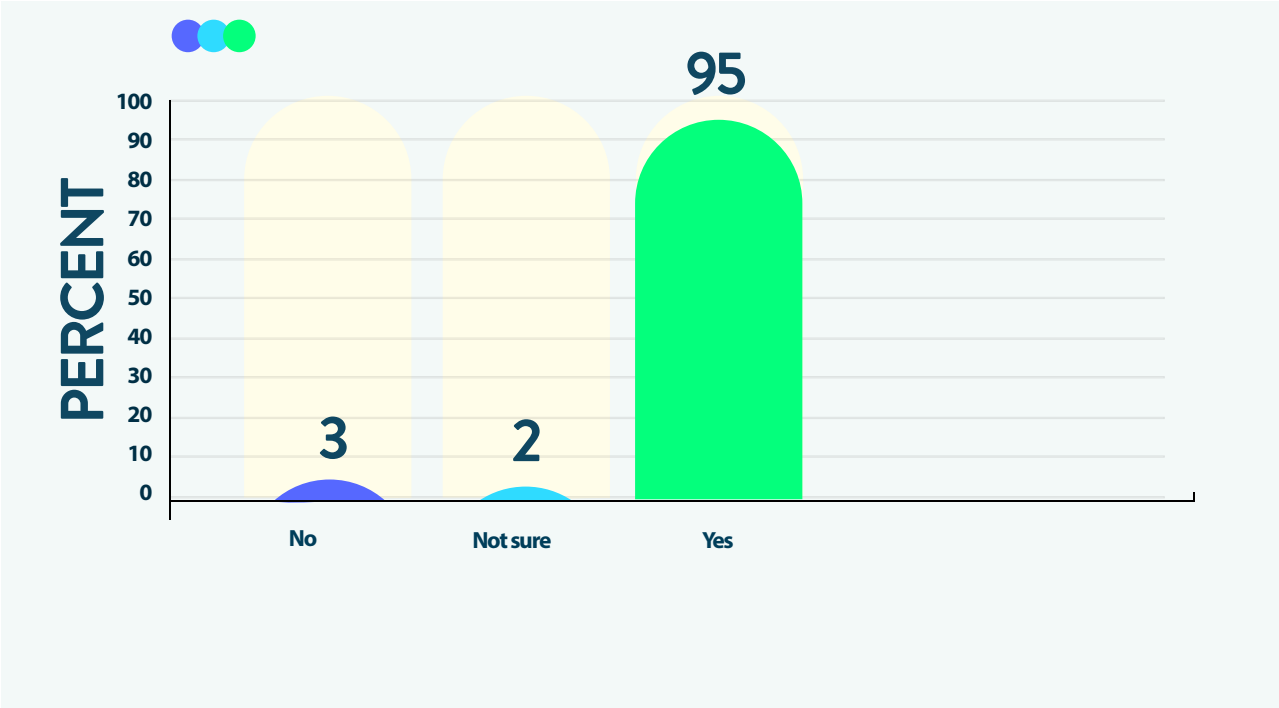
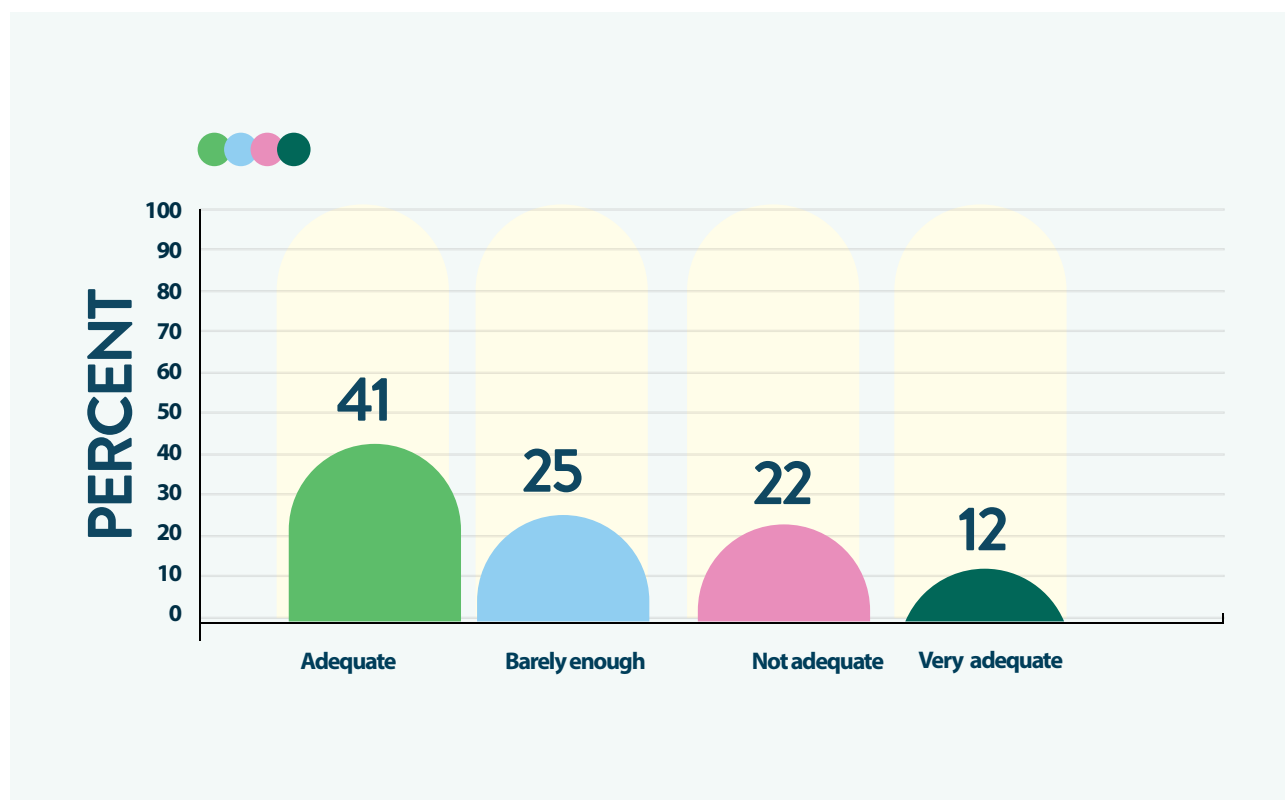


Figure 27 below presents study findings on beneficiaries' perceptions regarding the adequacy of agricultural inputs provided under the programme. The findings indicate that perceptions of input adequacy were generally positive, with a combined 53% of respondents reporting that the inputs were either adequate (41%) **or** very adequate (12%), while 25% indicated that the inputs were barely enough, and 22% reported that they were not adequate. Respondents who perceived the inputs as adequate or very adequate largely attributed this to the fact that the assistance came at a critical time during the drought, when many households had no access to seed, fertilizer, or other productive resources. For these households, even limited quantities enabled them to plant, harvest, and secure food for household consumption, thereby reducing hunger and improving short-term food security. Several respondents reported being able to harvest measurable yields, in some cases exceeding previous seasons, and emphasized that the inputs were appropriate relative to the size of their garden plots and wetland farming areas.



On the other hand, respondents who described the inputs as barely enough or not adequate cited insufficient quantities relative to farm size and household needs, large family sizes as inputs were not enough to cover for the entire family, and quality-related concerns, particularly poor or rotten seed that failed to germinate, late distribution, and inadequate pesticides or insecticides. Seed quality challenges especially for maize, beans, and okra were repeatedly highlighted as undermining productivity, while some respondents reported having to top up fertilizer or seed using their own limited resources. Overall, the findings suggest that while the inputs played a critical role in supporting vulnerable households to cope with the drought, improvements are needed in input quality assurance, timely distribution, and alignment of quantities with farm size and household vulnerability to maximize programme effectiveness and sustainability.

Figure 28 below presents findings on whether beneficiaries received agricultural inputs in time for the planting season. The results show a divided perception, with 50% of respondents indicating that inputs were received on time, while the remaining 50% reported delays. This split reflects significant variability in both the timing and sequencing of input distribution across communities and households. Respondents who reported delayed



receipt consistently highlighted that inputs—particularly maize seed were delivered after the optimal planting window, often when gardens and wetlands (Dambos) were already drying up due to the drought. A dominant concern was the asynchronous delivery of inputs, where fertilizer was distributed earlier, but seed arrived weeks or even months later. In several cases, maize seed reportedly arrived two months after fertilizer, with some respondents further noting poor seed quality, including rotten seed that failed to germinate. Responses from the key informant's information (KIIs) revealed that indeed that the delivery of inputs could either be early or late year by year at times inputs come in time while other times there were delays due to late release of inputs in the district. These delays forced households to either plant late, shift planting from gardens to rain-fed fields, rely on local seed, or abandon planting altogether. Many respondents attributed the delays to slow programme implementation processes, late beneficiary listing, and unclear communication, with several indicating that no explanation was provided for the delayed delivery.

In contrast, respondents who indicated that inputs were received on time emphasized that delivery coincided with the planting season particularly between October and November when sufficient moisture was still available. For wetland and garden-based production, some beneficiaries noted that planting was possible even during the dry season due to access to wells or residual water, allowing them to utilize the inputs effectively despite broader drought conditions. These respondents reported being able to plant and, in some cases, harvest successfully, underscoring that timeliness was context-specific and heavily influenced by local water availability.

Did you receive the inputs in time for the planting season?

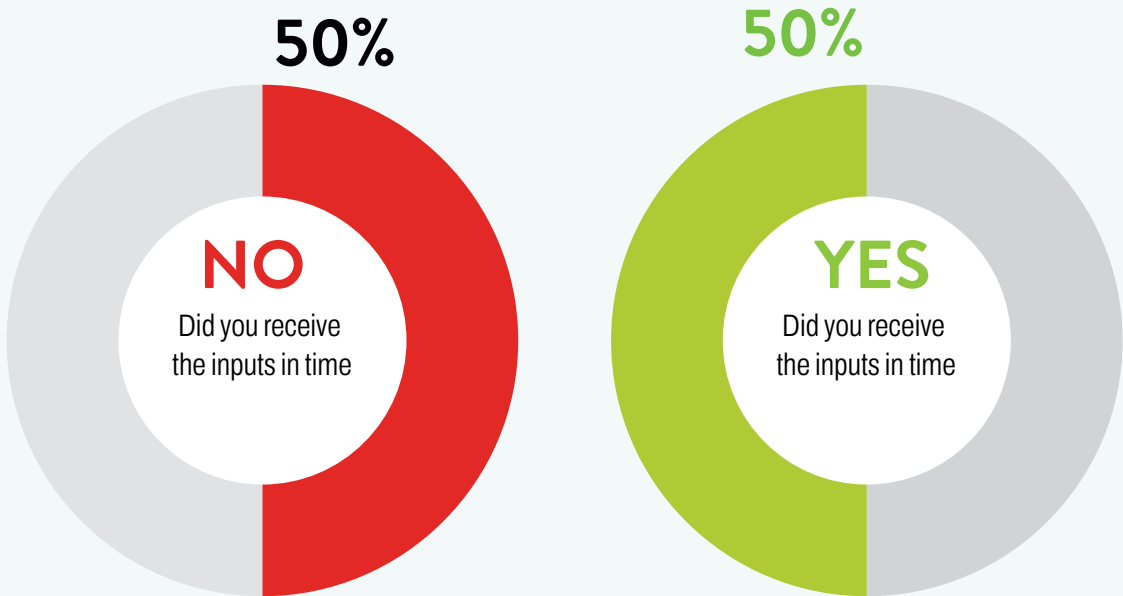


Figure 29 below presents beneficiaries' responses on whether they received all items promised in the input pack. The findings indicate a high level of reported completeness, with 96% of respondents stating that they received all the items promised, while 4% reported that they did not receive the full input package. This was confirmed in the KIIs where they noted that indeed at some point beneficiaries were supposed to receive both white and orange maize 5kg each but there was a short supply of orange maize; suggesting that at an aggregate level, the programme largely met its commitment regarding the composition of the input packs. However, qualitative explanations provided by respondents who indicated gaps reveal important implementation inconsistencies. Reported missing items primarily included okra seed, groundnut seed, soya beans, vegetable seed, fungicide, and portions of fertilizer. In some cases, beneficiaries indicated that they received only fertilizer without accompanying seed, while others reported receiving fewer quantities than promised, such as two bags of fertilizer instead of four or one bottle instead of two. A small number of respondents attributed these shortfalls to insufficient supplies relative to the number of beneficiaries, with indications that some items were reportedly reallocated to other villages.

Although these cases represent a minority, the nature of the missing items particularly seed and crop protection inputs have substantive implications for agricultural productivity, as the absence of complementary inputs undermines the effective use of fertilizer and limits crop diversification. Furthermore, the overlap between reports of missing items and earlier findings on delayed input delivery suggests broader supply chain and distribution planning challenges.

Did you receive all the items promised in the pack?

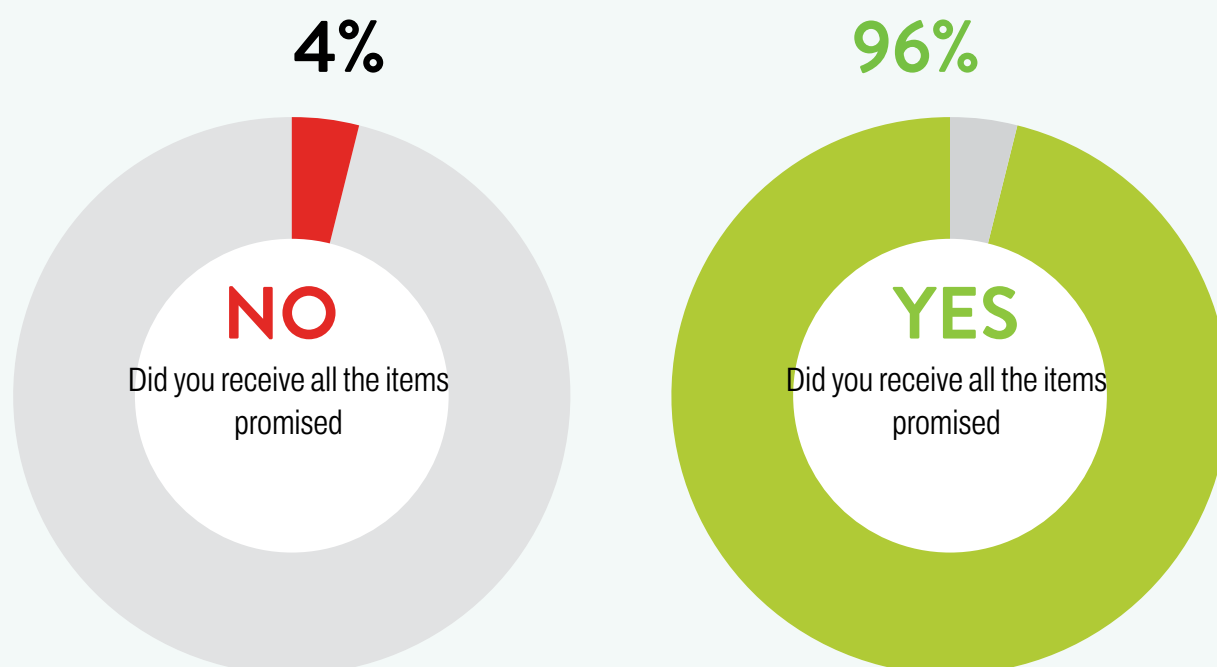




Figure 30 below illustrates how beneficiaries utilized the support received under the programme. The results show that the primary use of the support was for agricultural production, with 88% of respondents reporting that they planted the inputs received. This finding indicates a strong alignment between programme intent and beneficiary behavior, suggesting that the support effectively translated into productive use at household level. A smaller proportion of beneficiaries reported combined utilization strategies, reflecting both production and livelihood needs. Specifically, 5% indicated that they planted and stored part of the produce, while 2% reported planting and selling, and a further 2% both planted, sold, and stored their produce. These patterns suggest that, beyond subsistence consumption, some households were able to generate surplus output for income generation or future food security. Only 1% reported exclusively storing the support, and another 1% indicated planting other unspecified crops, while no respondents reported sharing the inputs or relying solely on alternative uses. The absence of responses under “shared” categories further underscores that the assistance was largely retained and utilized at household level.

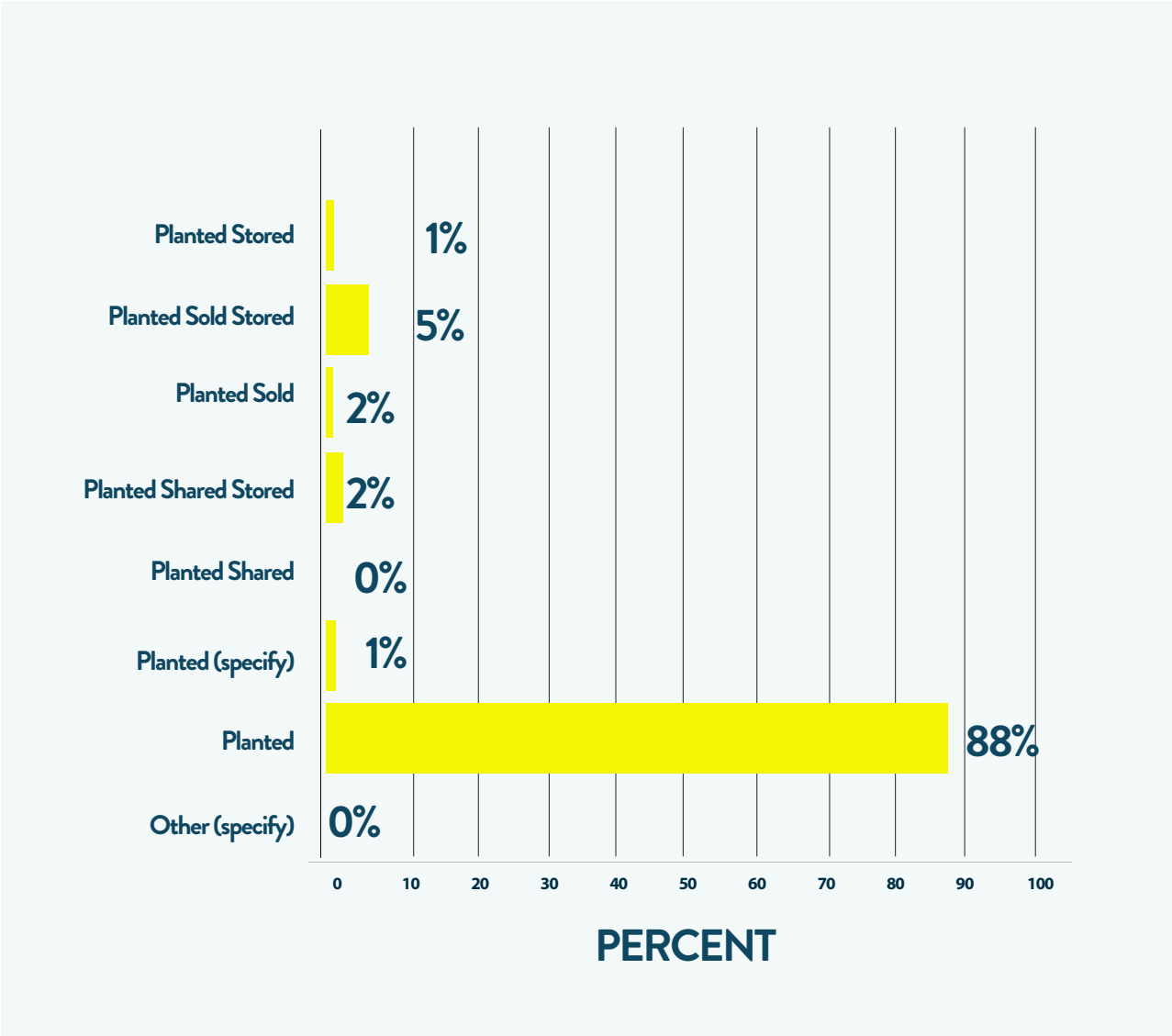


Figure 31 below presents respondents' perceptions on whether the FSP support increased household food production. The findings indicate that 82% of respondents reported an increase in household food production as a result of the FSP support, demonstrating that the intervention largely achieved its core objective of enhancing food availability at household level. This positive outcome suggests that, where inputs were planted under relatively favorable conditions, beneficiaries were able to translate the support into tangible production gains, including improved maize and legume harvests.

However, 15% of respondents indicated that the support did not increase their household food production, while 3% were not sure. Qualitative explanations provided by these respondents highlight several interrelated constraints that limited production outcomes. Predominant among these were severe drought conditions, inadequate rainfall, and insufficient water for irrigation, which resulted in crop failure, reduced yields, or complete loss of planted crops. Many respondents specifically cited dry gardens, dried-up wells, and poor soil moisture, which significantly undermined crop performance despite receiving inputs.

In addition, input-related challenges were frequently reported. These included poor seed quality, with several beneficiaries noting that seeds were rotten, damaged, or failed to germinate, as well as late delivery of inputs, which forced planting outside the optimal planting window. Some households reported receiving fertilizer without seed, seed without fertilizer, or quantities that were inadequate relative to household land size and food needs. Pest attacks, particularly by insects such as termites, further compounded production losses in some cases.

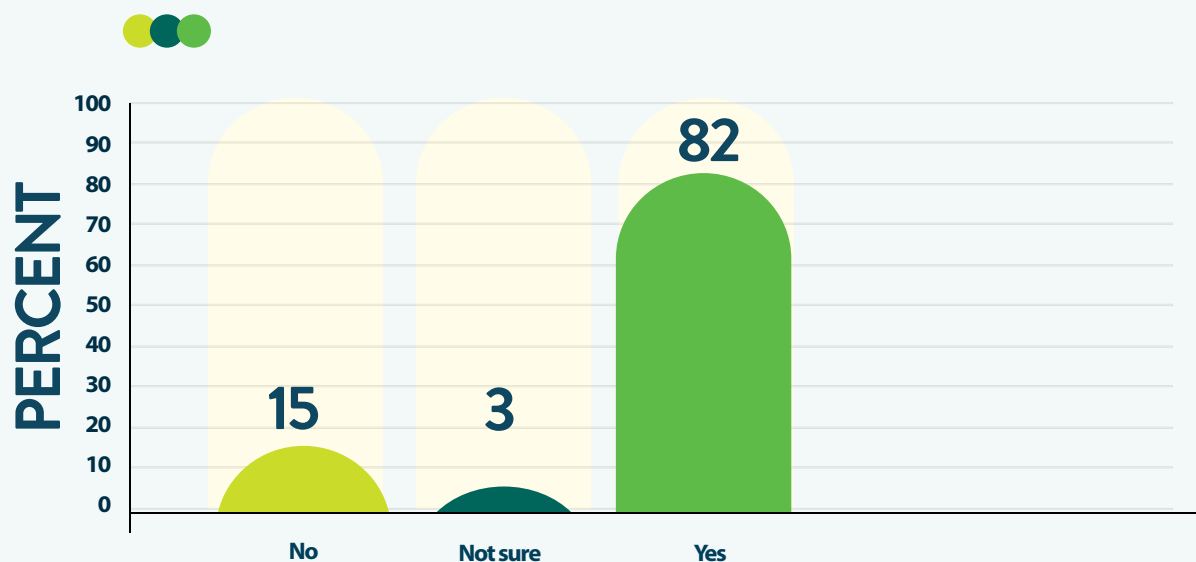




Figure 32 below presents respondents' perceptions on whether the FSP support improved household food security. The findings indicate that 76% of respondents reported that the support improved their household food security, while 10% indicated that it improved food security only somewhat, and 14% reported no improvement. Overall, these results suggest that the FSP intervention made a substantial contribution to enhancing food access and availability at household level for the majority of beneficiaries.

Among those who reported improved food security, qualitative responses consistently point to increased food availability, improved meal frequency, and enhanced dietary stability. Many households indicated that they were able to feed their families more consistently, access staple foods such as mealie meal without frequent market purchases, and in some cases move from one meal per day to two or three meals per day. Several respondents emphasized that harvests were stored for household consumption, thereby extending food availability over several months and reducing hunger during the drought period. Others noted that surplus production, particularly of maize, beans, and okra, enabled them to sell part of the harvest, generating income used to purchase complementary food items, meet basic household needs, or prepare for subsequent farming seasons. These outcomes reflect a clear pathway through which the FSP support contributed to both direct food consumption and indirect food access via income generation.

Respondents who reported that food security improved only somewhat highlighted that, although the support was helpful, its effects were limited by contextual and implementation challenges. These included poor rainfall, drought conditions, late delivery of inputs, inadequate quantities, and poor seed quality, which constrained yields and reduced the duration for which harvested food could sustain households. In such cases, the support mitigated hunger temporarily but was insufficient to ensure sustained food security, particularly for larger households.

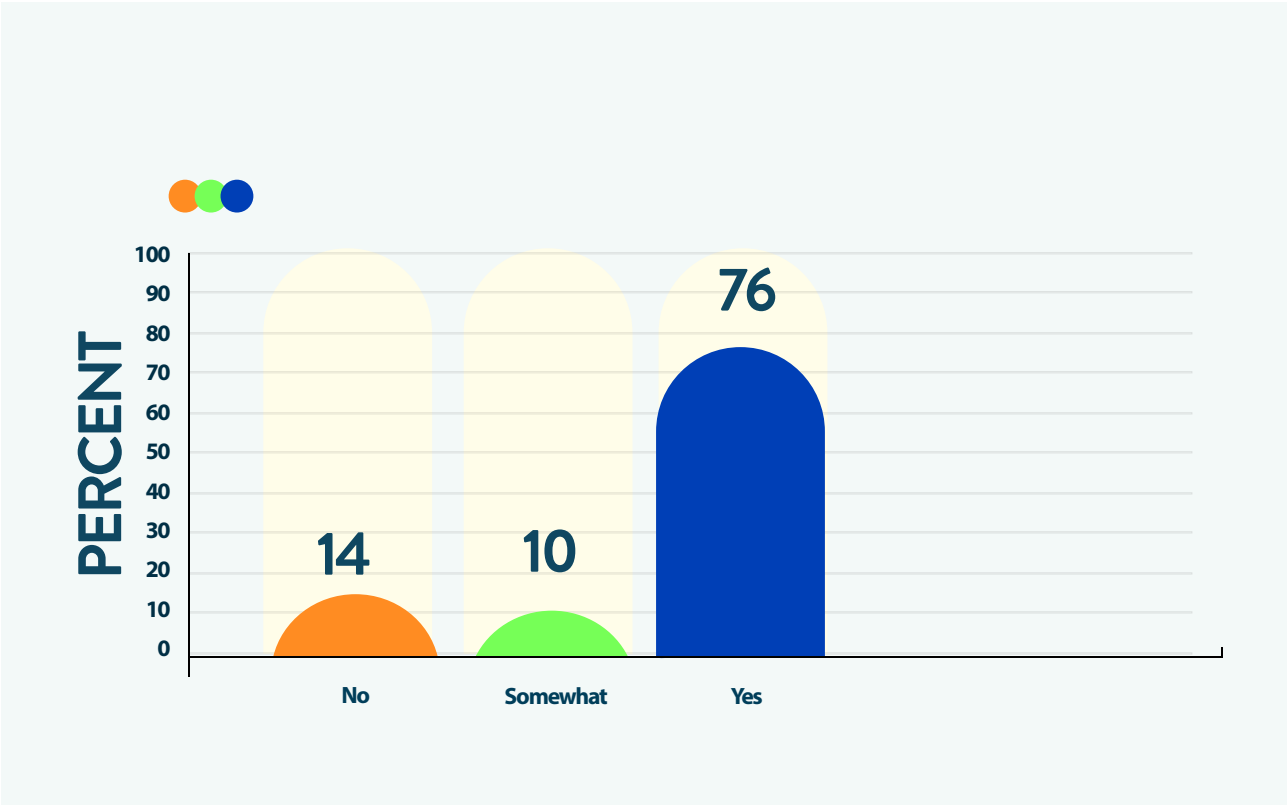


Figure 33 below illustrates respondents' ability to save or generate income from the FSP support. The findings show that 65% of respondents reported that they were able to save or generate some income from the support, while 35% indicated that they were not able to do so. This suggests that, although the programme created income-generation opportunities for a majority of beneficiaries, a substantial proportion of households were unable to translate the support into financial gains.

Among respondents who reported no income generation or savings, qualitative explanations overwhelmingly indicate that the support was primarily used for household consumption rather than for sale. Many households emphasized that harvests were too small to allow surplus sales, with respondents reporting outcomes such as harvesting only a tin, one bag, or a few bags of maize or legumes. This situation was strongly linked to drought conditions, poor rainfall, and crop failure, which significantly reduced yields. In addition, several respondents cited poor seed quality, poor germination, and late delivery of inputs, which resulted in weak crop performance or, in some cases, complete loss of the crop. Large household sizes further compounded this challenge, as available produce was prioritized for feeding family members to mitigate hunger risks. Fear of future food shortages and the need to ensure household food availability led many respondents to deliberately reserve all produce for consumption, even where minimal surplus might have existed.

Conversely, respondents who reported being able to save or generate income indicated that this was achieved through the sale of a small portion of their harvest, typically after securing food for household consumption. Income generated was mainly used to meet basic household needs, support children, repay programme-related obligations, or purchase additional inputs such as fertilizer. However, even among this group, income gains were generally modest, reflecting limited production volumes and prevailing climatic constraints.

Were you able to save or generate income from the support?

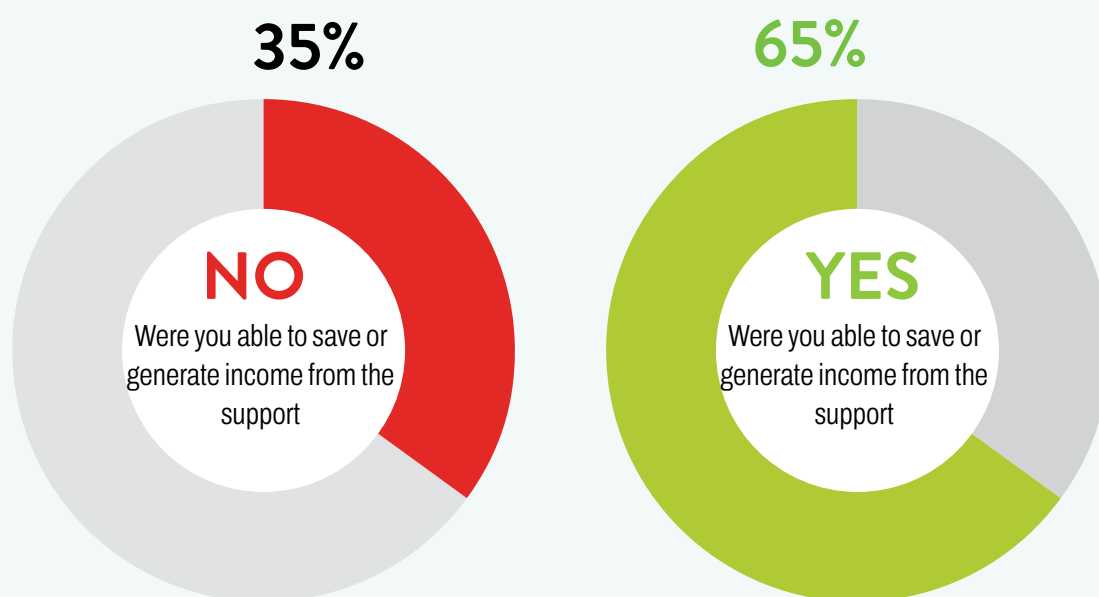




Figure 34 below illustrates respondents' ability to improve the number of meals per day from the FSP support. The findings indicate a generally positive perceived change in household meal consumption following programme implementation. A majority of respondents (58%) reported that the number of meals consumed per day by their household had improved, suggesting that the programme contributed to enhanced food access and dietary frequency for more than half of the beneficiaries.

However, a considerable proportion of respondents (36%) indicated that there had been no improvement in the number of meals consumed per day. This suggests that programme benefits were not uniformly experienced across all households, potentially due to contextual constraints such as low agricultural yields, delayed input delivery, drought conditions, or household size. Additionally, a smaller segment of respondents (7%) reported partial improvement, implying marginal gains that were insufficient to result in a full transition to higher meal frequency.

Has the number of meals your household consumes per day improved?



Figure 35 below presents a comparative analysis of the number of meals consumed per day by beneficiary households before and after benefitting from the programme, providing an important proxy indicator for household food security. Prior to programme implementation, the majority of respondents (76%) reported consuming two meals per day, while a notable proportion (19%) survived on only one meal per day, indicating significant food insecurity. Only a small fraction of households (5%) were able to access three meals per day, and none reported consuming four meals per day. This distribution reflects constrained food availability and limited dietary adequacy among beneficiary households before programme support.

Following programme implementation, there is a pronounced positive shift in meal consumption patterns. The proportion of households consuming only one meal per day declined to zero, suggesting a complete elimination of extreme food deprivation among surveyed beneficiaries. Those consuming two meals per day reduced substantially to 17%, while a dominant majority (82%) reported consuming three meals per day. A small proportion (1%) further progressed to four meals per day.

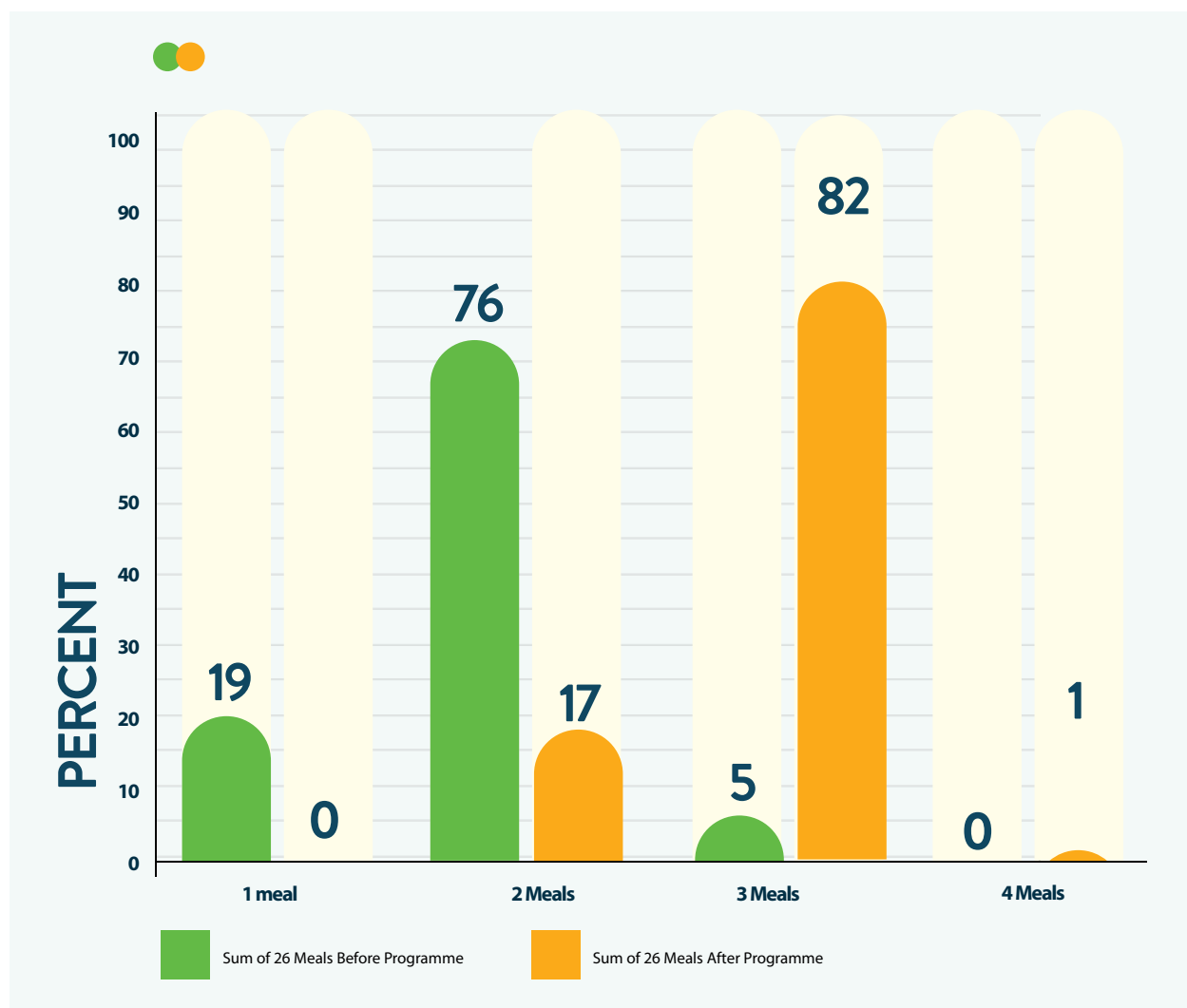




Figure 36 below presents respondents' perceptions on whether the FSP support contributed to a more diverse household diet. The data indicate that 66% of respondents reported that their household diet became more diverse, 12% said it improved only somewhat, and 23% reported no change in dietary diversity. These results suggest that for the majority of households, the FSP support contributed not only to food availability but also to improved access to a wider variety of foods. Among respondents reporting increased dietary diversity, qualitative feedback highlights two main pathways:

- **Increased production and harvest diversity:** Households were able to grow different crops, particularly maize, beans, okra, and other vegetables. Gardening and crop sales allowed families to either consume a variety of foods directly from their own production or use proceeds from sales to purchase other food items. Several respondents emphasized that the support enabled them to incorporate protein-rich foods such as soya beans, eggs, fish, and meat, which were previously unaffordable or unavailable.
- **Income generation and food purchasing power:** Selling part of the harvest, particularly maize, okra, and beans, provided households with cash to buy foods not previously accessible. This facilitated inclusion of rice, potatoes, vegetables, and other protein sources in daily meals, improving both the quality and variety of diets. Some households reported being able to increase the number of meals per day and include breakfast items such as samp, porridge, or eggs, reflecting broader improvements in food access.

Households reporting limited or no improvement (35%) cited constraints such as low harvests, poor germination, drought, late delivery or poor quality of inputs, and large family sizes, which restricted both the quantity and variety of foods consumed. In these cases, households maintained a diet dominated by maize and a limited number of relishes, with minimal changes in dietary patterns despite the support.

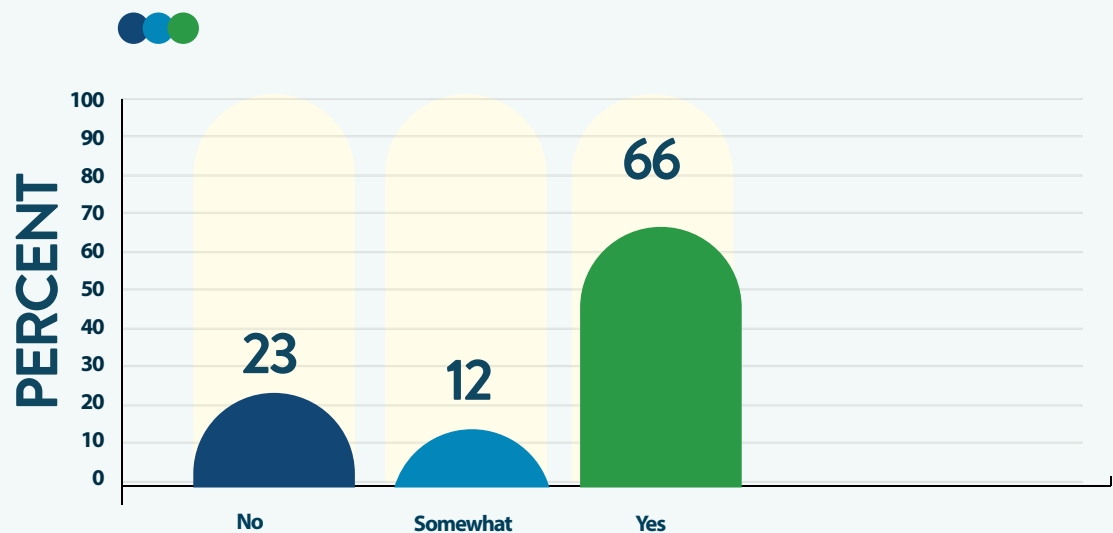


Figure 37 below presents beneficiaries' perceptions regarding respect and fairness during programme delivery. The findings show that an overwhelming 97% of respondents reported that they were treated with respect and fairness during programme delivery, while only 3% indicated otherwise. This indicates a very high level of satisfaction with the manner in which the programme was implemented at community level.

The high proportion of positive responses suggests that programme staff, local leaders, and other implementing actors largely adhered to principles of dignity, equity, and respectful engagement when interacting with beneficiaries. Respectful treatment is a critical component of effective social protection and humanitarian programming, as it enhances community trust, promotes beneficiary participation, and reduces the likelihood of grievances or social tensions. The small proportion of respondents who reported a lack of respect or fairness may pointed to isolated incidents of perceived bias, poor communication, or interpersonal challenges during programme delivery.

Were beneficiaries treated with respect and fairness during programme delivery?

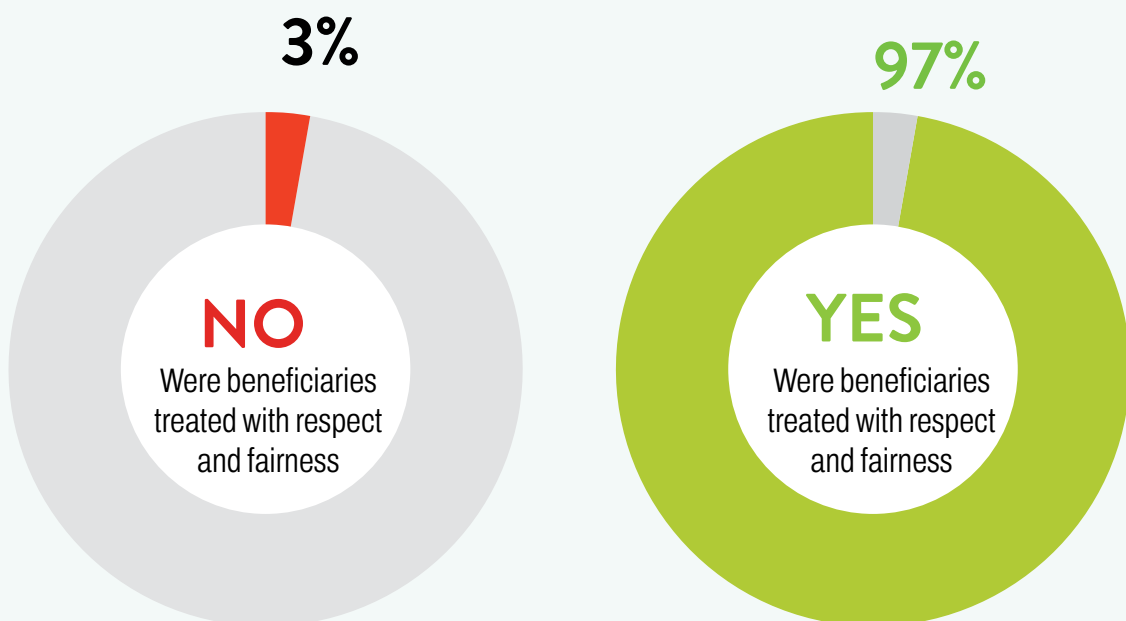




Figure 39 below illustrates beneficiaries' access to clear information on how the programme operates. The results indicate that 94% of respondents reported that they were provided with clear information about how the programme works, while 6% stated that they did not receive adequate information. This suggests that information dissemination and programme sensitization were largely effective among the targeted beneficiaries. The high level of reported clarity implies that implementing actors successfully communicated key programme elements, including eligibility criteria, support modalities, and beneficiary expectations.

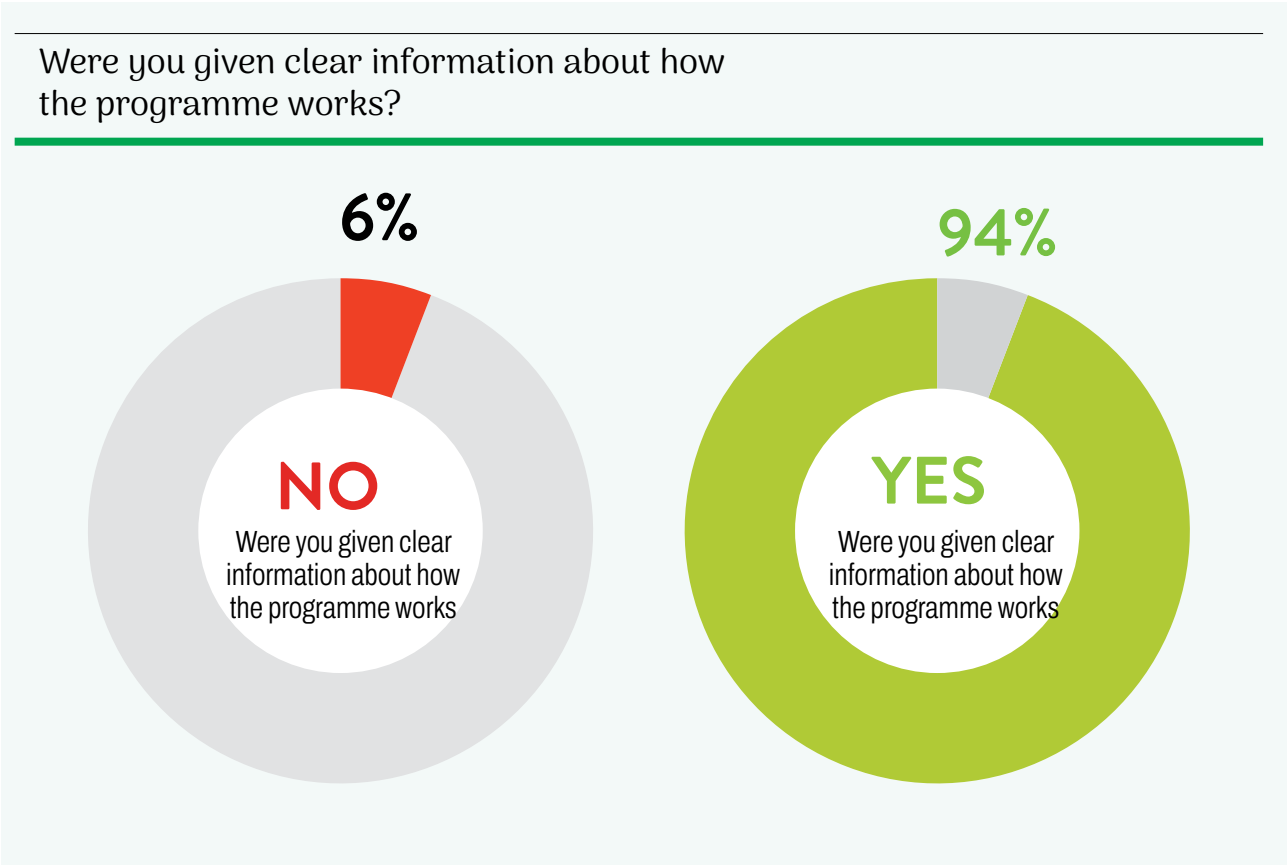


Figure 41 below presents beneficiaries' access to complaints and feedback mechanisms under the programme. The findings reveal that 62% of respondents reported that there was no clear place to report complaints or provide feedback, while 38% indicated that such a mechanism existed. This distribution suggests that, although grievance redress structures were present within the programme design, their visibility, accessibility, or consistent functionality was limited for a substantial proportion of beneficiaries.

Among respondents who acknowledged the existence of a complaint's mechanism, the most frequently cited channels were suggestion boxes and community-based structures, particularly CWACs (Community Welfare Assistance Committees), local leaders, WDCs, and community development officers. Several beneficiaries described these structures as *effective*, noting that complaints were received respectfully, issues were discussed, and in some cases follow-up actions were taken, such as field inspections or adjustments to repayment arrangements. This demonstrates that where community structures were functional and responsive, they played an important role in facilitating programme accountability and beneficiary engagement.

However, qualitative feedback highlights significant inconsistencies in the effectiveness of complaint resolution. A considerable number of beneficiaries reported that, despite lodging complaints especially regarding poor-quality or rotten seed, poor germination, late input delivery, and pest damage their concerns were not resolved, and replacement inputs were not provided. In some cases, local leaders themselves were affected by the same challenges, limiting their ability to provide redress. This contributed to perceptions that reporting mechanisms were either symbolic or ineffective, thereby undermining beneficiary trust in the system.

Was there a place to report complaints or feedback?

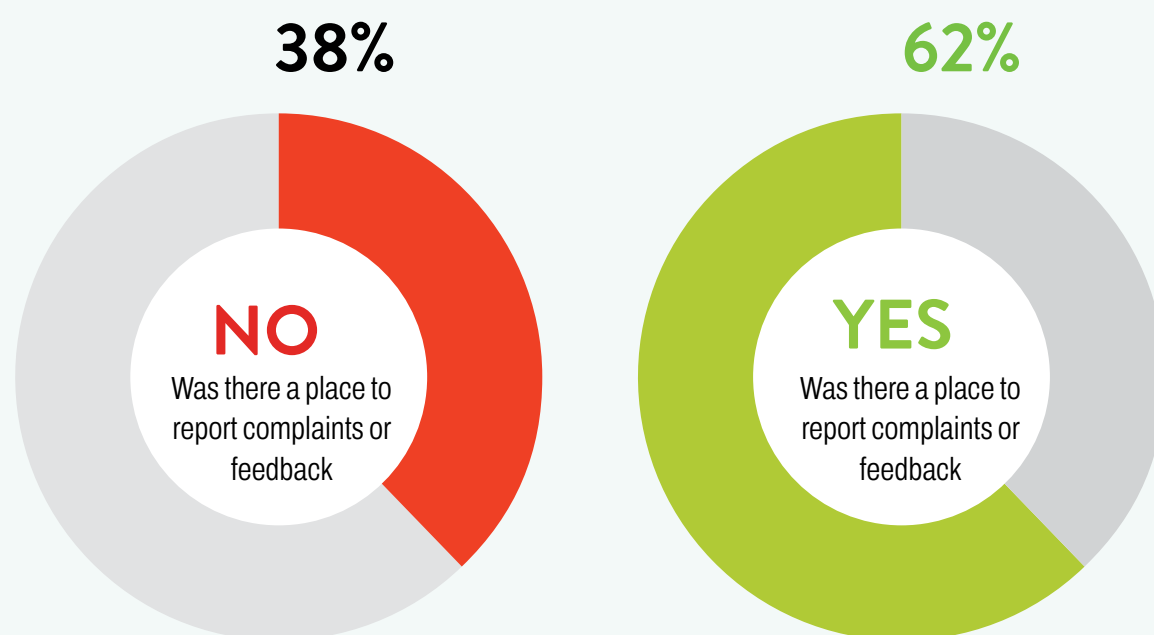
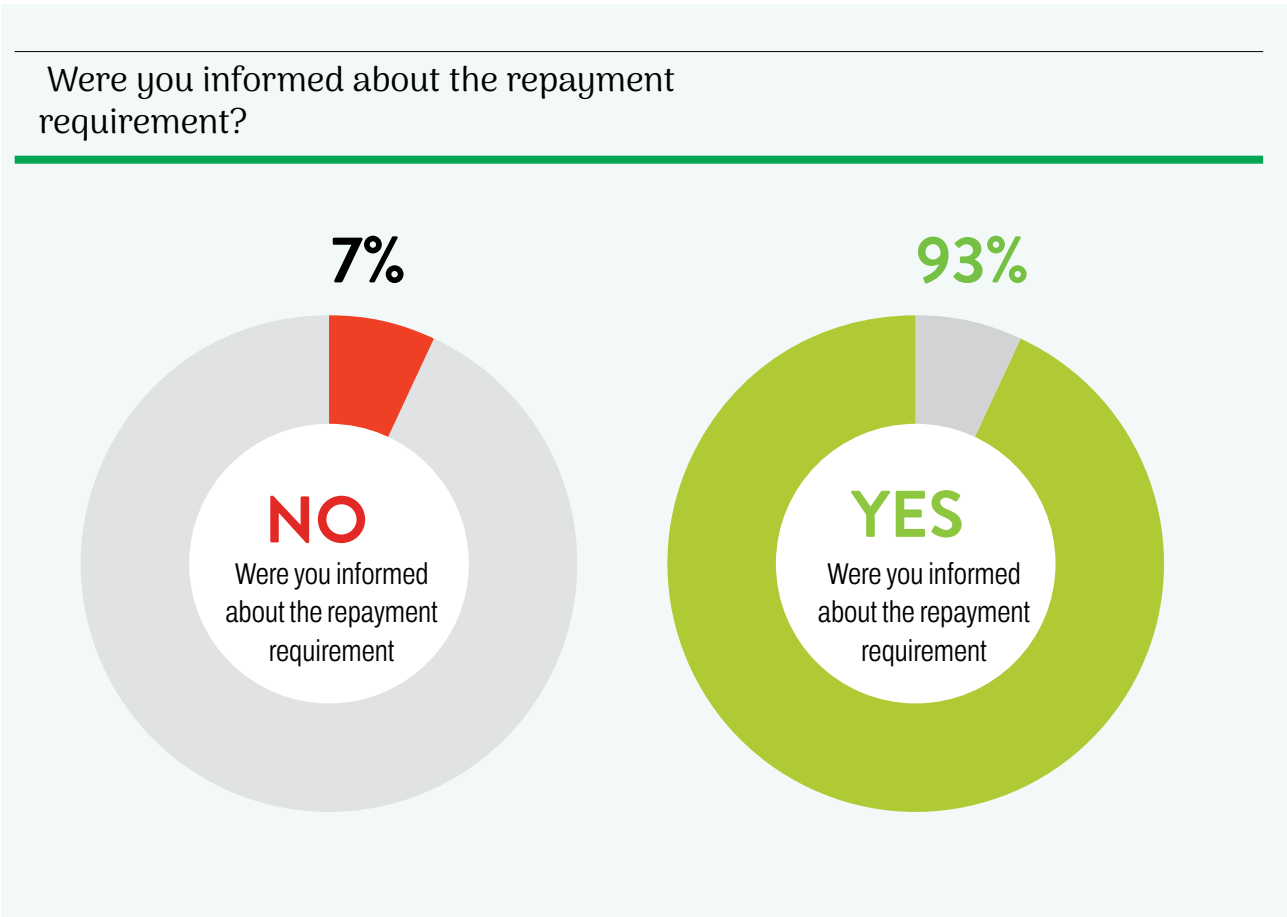




Figure 43 below presents beneficiaries' awareness of the repayment requirements under the programme. The results indicate that 93% of respondents reported that they were aware about the repayment requirement, while 7% stated that they were not aware. This finding suggests that, overall, programme communication regarding repayment obligations was largely effective, with the majority of beneficiaries demonstrating awareness of their responsibilities under the FSP support arrangement. The high level of reported awareness reflects the role of community-level sensitization mechanisms, including meetings and radio programmes conducted through local leaders, CWAC members, and programme implementers,



Key Recommendations



1. Strengthen and Institutionalize Community-Based Targeting with Enhanced Oversight

Targeting should be strengthened through:

- ✓ Clear, standardized eligibility criteria shared publicly in all communities;
- ✓ Independent verification and spot checks by district-level officers;
- ✓ Rotational beneficiary selection systems to reduce repeated participation by the same individuals, particularly under Cash-for-Work.

This will enhance equity, credibility, and community trust in beneficiary selection processes.



2. Improve Timeliness, Predictability, and Transparency of Cash Payments

Delays, partial payments, and inconsistencies in payment schedules under both ESCT and Cash-for-Work undermined households' ability to plan and meet basic needs. To address this:

- ✓ Payment schedules should be clearly communicated in advance and adhered to;
- ✓ Transition to mobile money should be accompanied by beneficiary verification, updated contact details, and parallel contingency arrangements for failed transactions;
- ✓ Stronger coordination between programme implementers, Pay Point Managers, and mobile service providers should be established to minimize disruptions.

Predictable and timely payments are critical for the effectiveness of shock-responsive social protection.



3. Review Cash Transfer and Wage Levels to Reflect Cost of Living and Work Intensity

Findings indicate that while cash support contributed positively to household well-being, a substantial proportion of beneficiaries considered the amounts inadequate, particularly in the context of rising food prices and household dependency ratios. It is recommended that:

- ✓ Cash-for-Work wage rates be periodically reviewed to reflect inflation, workload intensity, and duration of work;
- ✓ Consideration be given to differentiated wage structures for labor-intensive tasks and vulnerable groups such as older persons and women.

Adjusting transfer values would enhance the welfare impact of the programmes.



4. Strengthen Payment Integrity and Accountability Mechanisms

Although unofficial fees and deductions were reported by a small minority, even isolated cases pose risks to programme credibility. To mitigate this:

- ✓ Clear zero-tolerance messaging on bribery and deductions should be reinforced at all implementation levels;
- ✓ Routine monitoring of Pay Point Managers and community structures should be institutionalized.
- ✓ Beneficiaries should be sensitized on their entitlements and payment amounts to reduce exploitation risks.

Key Recommendations



5. Enhance Occupational Safety and Provision of Work Tools under Cash-for-Work

A significant proportion of beneficiaries reported unsafe or difficult working conditions, often due to lack of tools and protective equipment. It is recommended that:

- ✓ Basic tools and protective gear (e.g., gloves, gumboots, hoes, shovels, reflective vests) be systematically provided before work commences;
- ✓ Task allocation considers physical capacity, age, and gender to reduce occupational risks;
- ✓ Safety standards be incorporated into programme design and supervision.

Improved work conditions will protect beneficiaries and improve programme acceptability.



6. Standardize and Strengthen Beneficiary Orientation and Information Sharing

Inconsistencies in orientation led to gaps in beneficiary understanding, particularly regarding work duration, payment timelines, and repayment requirements. It is recommended that:

- ✓ Mandatory pre-engagement orientations be conducted for all beneficiaries across programmes;
- ✓ Standardized orientation guidelines be developed and used consistently;
- ✓ Key programme information be provided in both verbal and simple written formats where possible.

This will improve expectation management, compliance, and satisfaction.



7. Improve Quality, Timeliness, and Suitability of Agricultural Inputs under FSP

While the FSP contributed positively to food production and food security, its impact was constrained by delayed delivery, poor seed quality, and insufficient quantities. It is recommended that:

- ✓ Inputs be distributed in a synchronized and timely manner ahead of the planting season;
- ✓ Strong quality assurance mechanisms be enforced to prevent distribution of poor or rotten seed;
- ✓ Input packages be aligned to household land size, vulnerability levels, and local agro-ecological conditions.
- ✓ Greater emphasis be placed on drought-tolerant and early-maturing crop varieties.

These measures will enhance productivity, repayment capacity, and programme sustainability.



8. Strengthen Complaints and Grievance Redress Mechanisms

Limited awareness and inconsistent responsiveness of complaints mechanisms weakened accountability. To address this:

- ✓ Clear, accessible, and well-publicized grievance channels should be established in all communities;
- ✓ CWACs and WDCs should be trained on complaint handling, documentation, and follow-up;
- ✓ District-level oversight should ensure timely resolution of grievances, particularly those related to payments, targeting, and input quality.

Functional grievance systems are essential for accountability and beneficiary protection.



9. Enhance Integration of Drought Response Interventions

The assessment demonstrates that households benefitted most where cash support and productive inputs complemented each other. It is recommended that:

- ✓ Greater coordination be promoted between ESCT, Cash-for-Work, and FSP to maximize synergies;
- ✓ Graduation pathways be explored, linking short-term relief to medium-term livelihood recovery and resilience-building.

Key Recommendations



10. Sustain and Scale Shock-Responsive Social Protection

Given the widespread positive impacts on consumption, food security, and household resilience, it is recommended that:

- ✓ Drought response programmes be sustained beyond emergency periods and integrated into national shock-responsive social protection systems;
- ✓ Lessons from this assessment inform future drought and climate response programming, particularly in climate-vulnerable districts such as Chipata.



11. Strengthen coordination mechanisms at ward level

- ✓ Strengthen coordination at ward level by enhancing collaboration and clarifying roles between Ward Development Committees (WDCs) and Community Welfare Assistance Committees (CWACs) to improve community mobilization, information flow, and oversight of programme implementation.



12. Strengthen community resilience to climate change

by adopting integrated approaches that address both drought- and flood-related disasters, and align social protection interventions with broader climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies.



13. Improve biometric systems

- ✓ Enhance beneficiary identification, reduce duplication, and strengthen the integrity and reliability of programme databases.



14. Synchronize and harmonize social protection programmes

- ✓ Improve coherence, efficiency, and coordinated delivery of services.



15. Review and enhance operational procedures under the Cash for Work

- ✓ Cash for Work (CfW) programme, including improving access to and use of (PPEs), and consider extending the duration of work from 10 days to up to 30 **days** where feasible, while providing clarity on cases where individuals worked beyond the standard duration



16. Merge Cash-Plus assistance with the FSP

- ✓ Merge Cash-Plus assistance with FSP to increase the level of support provided to the most vulnerable households and maximize programme impact.



17. Integrate a stronger gender-responsive approach in programme design and recommendations to address the differentiated impacts of drought on women, youth, and persons with disabilities, who are often disproportionately affected.



18. Enhance beneficiary orientation and sensitization to ensure that communities clearly understand programme objectives, eligibility criteria, benefits, and implementation procedures.



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