

Apolou - RCF Close Out

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

01 Why is Apolou/RCF closing?

Apolou and RCF comes to an end in September 2023. This is when funding from the donor ends.

02 Is it only Apolou/RCF or Mercy Corps as an organization in Karamoja?

Apolou/RCF is leaving Karamoja. However, Mercy Corps will continue to implement programmes in Karamoja, including Ekisil and GIRL-H in Amudat, Moroto, Abim, Kotido and Kaabong Districts.

03 When is the program officially closing?

Apolou/ RCF Activity formally closes in September 2023. However, the phase out of the Activity will begin in January 2023 to ensure a smooth transition.

- December 2022: Activity implementation ends
- January – March 2023: Follow up and hand over of structures
- April – June 2023: Monitoring of structures
- June 2023: Close Out Events
- July-September 2023: Final reporting
- September 30, 2023: Apolou award agreement ends

04 Who has been the funder of Apolou/RCF? What is the total budget?

- Apolou/ RCF is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Under the Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and made possible by the support of the American people through USAID and is implemented by Mercy Corps and its partners.
- The total budget for Apolou/ RCF is USD 54,812,364 over six years.

05 What has the journey been like so far right from inception to now?

- Apolou Activity started in October 2017 and RCF started in September 2019.

P1

Built the capacity of four CSOs; KAPDA, Riam Riam, NARWOA, and AIDI through training and mentorships.

Empowered the communities to advocate for their needs as indicated by 92% in FY5 annual survey results who reported advocating for their needs.

Built the capacity of the District Local Government (DLGs) on budgeting, planning, and resource mobilization, as a result, 56% of the Local Government out of the target 50% allocated funds towards addressing the priorities of the communities.

P2

Reached 45,324 CU2 and CU5, through their caregivers who gained knowledge on essential infant and young child feeding behaviors. Reached 12,086 pregnant women through training, home visits, and outreaches.

Percentage of female participants consuming a diet of a minimum acceptable diet increased from 16.5% during the baseline to 30%. Improved health services at the health unit as indicated by 98% of the participants up from 61% at baseline who reported being satisfied with services provided at the health unit.

Increased adoption of positive gender norms by men and boys among other, jointly developing birth plans, husbands escorting their wives for ANC visits, and sharing domestic chores between men and women.

P3

Declared 77 villages ODF out of the target 69 villages indicating 116% achieved.

A total of 56,405 people out the target 39,912 are accessing basic sanitation services. 181,017 people are accessing basic drinking water from the 408 boreholes rehabilitated across all 5 program districts.

Apolou also distributed water quality testing equipment to all 5 program districts and established the water testing laboratories in Amudat and Moroto.

P4

3,250 farmers both crop & Livestock realized increased sales and income because of the capacity building received, private sector engagement, and market infrastructure development.

Built the capacity of the Private Service Providers (AVAs, LCs, CAHWs, and FAs) to operate sustainable businesses to continue to provide services to their communities.



Increased women's and youth control over productive resources and earnings through the business grants for women and youth, Linkages to FIs savings and loans, and advocacy with traditional authorities.

Reduced livestock disease prevalence through evidence based advocacy and private sector engagement in Animal health services creating an enabling environment for animal health interventions.

Reached a total of 18,438 participants out of the target 19566 layered across other sectors through group based saving and micro-finance lending.

Adolescents

22,400 adolescent girls gained knowledge, positive attitudes, and practices (KAP) toward a safe, healthy, and stable future.

06 Have the objectives, goal and mission of Apolou/RCF been achieved? What is the status update?

- The main goal of the Apolou activity is to improve the food and nutrition security of vulnerable households in the districts of Karenga, Moroto, Kaabong, Kotido and Amudat.

- The goal of the RCF Activity is to “Increase Public and Private Investment in Animal Health Systems to Strengthen Productive Assets and Veterinary Governance for Improved Resilience in Karamoja Yes, Apolou is on track to meet its objectives based on results from the FY5 annual survey, i.e

Overall statistics. Apolou reached a cumulative total of 361,705 out of the target 310,000 participants across 5 districts indicating 117% achieved through various interventions including, training, mentorships, home visits, private sector engagement, financial linkages, groups-based savings and micro-finance lending and market infrastructure development.

07 What have been the districts of Apolou/RCF Coverage?

Kaabong, Kotido, Karenga, Amudat, Moroto

08 Why were these the only selected areas, and not any other?

- USAID awarded two programmes to two different implementing partners i.e Mercy Corps and CRS.
- Mercy Corps implemented Apolou in the Districts of Kaabong, Kotido, Karenga, Amudat, Moroto while CRS implemented Nuyok in the Districts of Abim, Napak, Nabilatuk, and Nakapiripirit.
- The reason for this was to avoid duplication of the same intervention by two different USAID funded programs in the same district.
- Resilience challenge fund (RCF) was an add on to the Apolou Activity to implement animal health systems programming in Amudat and Kaabong districts.

09 Who will take over/ be handed the program structures/ products to?

- The structures will be handed over to the Local government, partners with the same interventions, and the private sector.
- However, not all structures are a handover, but rather linked to other private sector players for example the SILC groups linked to financial institutions like Microfinance Support Center and Centenary Bank.



10 What challenges have you encountered while implementing Apolou/ RCF?

The region has experienced several challenges which have required us to adapt our programming, including:

- COVID-19 lockdown, cholera outbreaks, desert locusts & army worm invasion, erratic rainfalls/ flash floods and increased insecurity, Vandalism of water sources and prolonged drought.
- Low, or slow adoption of our interventions by the communities in an attempt to reduce on malnutrition, and Migration of HouseHolds to farmlands.

11 What has worked best and what did not go as planned?

P1- The platforms created for the communities to constructively interact and engage with the duty bearers has enabled the former to highlight and influence priority issues of service delivery.

Working with Peace committees in terms of mitigating, of the different forms of conflict worked well. The challenge was that they became a target for insecurity.

P2- The mother care group and male change agent participants gained knowledge on appropriate feeding and care for children, and are actively engaged in saving, poultry, permagardening and sanitation practices at every household realising resilience. What has worked fairly and need support from the gov't is strengthening of nutritional leadership especially using the subcounty nutrition coordination committees.





Send us feedback at:
 Toll free line ☎ 0800 203 056 Or
 WhatsApp 📞 +256 771 308 995
 ✉ feedbackuganda@mercycorps.org

APOLOU
 Improved food and nutrition security for vulnerable Households in Kaabong, Kotido, Amudat, Moroto and Karenga Districts of Karamoja



P3- Working with the different system actors, there has been great improvement in WASH practices, rehabilitation of boreholes and building governance structures has led to O&M improvement. However, household tend to prioritize lifesaving food items compared to WASH products which is the main constraint for scaling up the WASH marketing initiatives as expected, as well as by laws to curb open defecation. RCF- Through policy advocacy and promotion, there has been a significant increase in Public and Private Investment in Animal Health Systems which has also strengthened veterinary Governance. Through this, achievements on improved herd health, ability of livestock keepers to afford health services, value addition (fattening). The Nadunget Livestock market construction and its operationalization by formation of a functional market user committee, Rehabilitation of valley tanks, the farmers access to animal health services has also worked well.

What has not worked well is the active commitment and involvement of top policy leadership officials to deliver learnings from the studies conducted, who appoint lower officers for these disseminations and thereby not advocating for these commitments.

Economic Empowerment & Financial Inclusion- Linkage of structures such as SILC groups to financial institutions worked well, along side their successful registration of other business initiatives. However, the set back is realized from the side of the financial institutions such as MSC and Centenary bank who have struggled to support them with loans.

Agronomy/Livelihoods- Built the capacity of system actors able to respond to any concerns of the community as and when they arise. Private sector players were brought on board e.g agro in-put dealers, LSPs.

G&Y. Culture had much influence in what women, men, boy and girls do in society, women face a lot of challenges as a result of cultural beliefs and practices. However, Apolou through gender intergration helped in breaking cultural barriers. Now the number of women in leadership positions is increasing, male involvement sharing of household chores is increasing, Elders have condemned bad cultural practices hindering women and girls from participating in society. Much focus needs to be put on Traditional Authorities and Elders in breaking bad cultural practices with support from the districts.

12 What are the lessons learnt so far regarding what was intended to be done to where the program stands now?,

Apolou/ RCF Activity has seen improvements in savings, livelihood activities, behaviour change to support child nutrition, and engagement of civil society with governance structures.

13 We request for some items such as Bikes, Cars, Laptops or other assets to use as a district/ sector after Apolou/RCF closure.

For Assets (Over \$5,000)

- Mercy Corps is required to submit an asset disposition plan to USAID for approval.
- The deadline for submission of requests has passed.
- Mercy Corps will consider your request if you submitted one. However, the final decision regarding disposition rests with USAID and may take several months.



For inventory (Below \$5,000)

- The inventory disposition does not require USAID approval. Once we have a final inventory list, Mercy Corps will determine which items it intends to keep. The list of the remaining items will be shared with SMT who will solicit feedback from team members regarding which structures could benefit from the remaining items.
- We encourage them to submit a request. It will be considered, and feedback will be given over the coming months. However, it should be noted that most inventory is still being used by Apolou.

14 Who have been Apolou/RCF's target participants? What has been the selection criteria for all Apolou's participants?

- Apolou/RCF has reached over 268,000 participants out of its targeted 310,000 participants.
- The main goal of the activity was to improve the food and nutrition security of vulnerable households.
- The most vulnerable participants selected included pregnant and lactating women, adolescents, caregivers of children less than two years.

NB: It is not that we failed to hit the target of 310,000 hhs, but, there was an agreement to do more of layering, sequencing and integration and hence using the same resources diversified in these interventions.



15 What should participants or any concerned person do if they have any outstanding problem, complaint or related issue?

- Reach us on the toll free hotline, (0800 203 056)
- Talk to an Apolou staff
- Visit our Mercy Corps Office
- Email us on feedbackuganda@mercycorps.org
- WhatsApp number +256 771 308 995
- mercycorps.org/integrityhotline

16 Is there any incoming player in the Karamoja context to replace, or maintain what Apolou/RCF has been able to put up?

- Participants should acknowledge the fact that the Gov't is the primary stakeholder available to provide these services to its Citizens before other donors come into place so we need not bias the attention to only USAID but a number of other stakeholders that play the same role/ mandate.



Apolou - RCF Close Out



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

