# THE REAL PROJECT CONTEXT

- The REAL project was implemented in Kyaka II and Rwamwanja refugee settlements in western Uganda
- It worked with both refugee and host communities
- The project combined access to finance, climate-smart agriculture, market-oriented livelihoods, gender equality and social cohesion
- Within this broader model, REAL supported 70 VSLAs and 7 VSLFs

## WHY REAL MOVED BEYOND VSLAs Alone

- Under REAL, individual VSLAs were effective for savings and small loans, but clear limits appeared as groups matured
- Demand increased for larger loans for agriculture, trade, livestock and other productive investments
- A single VSLA could often not mobilise enough capital for these larger needs
- This is why REAL introduced VSLFs as a second-tier structure to go beyond the limits of individual groups


# W VSLAs Worked in REAL Project

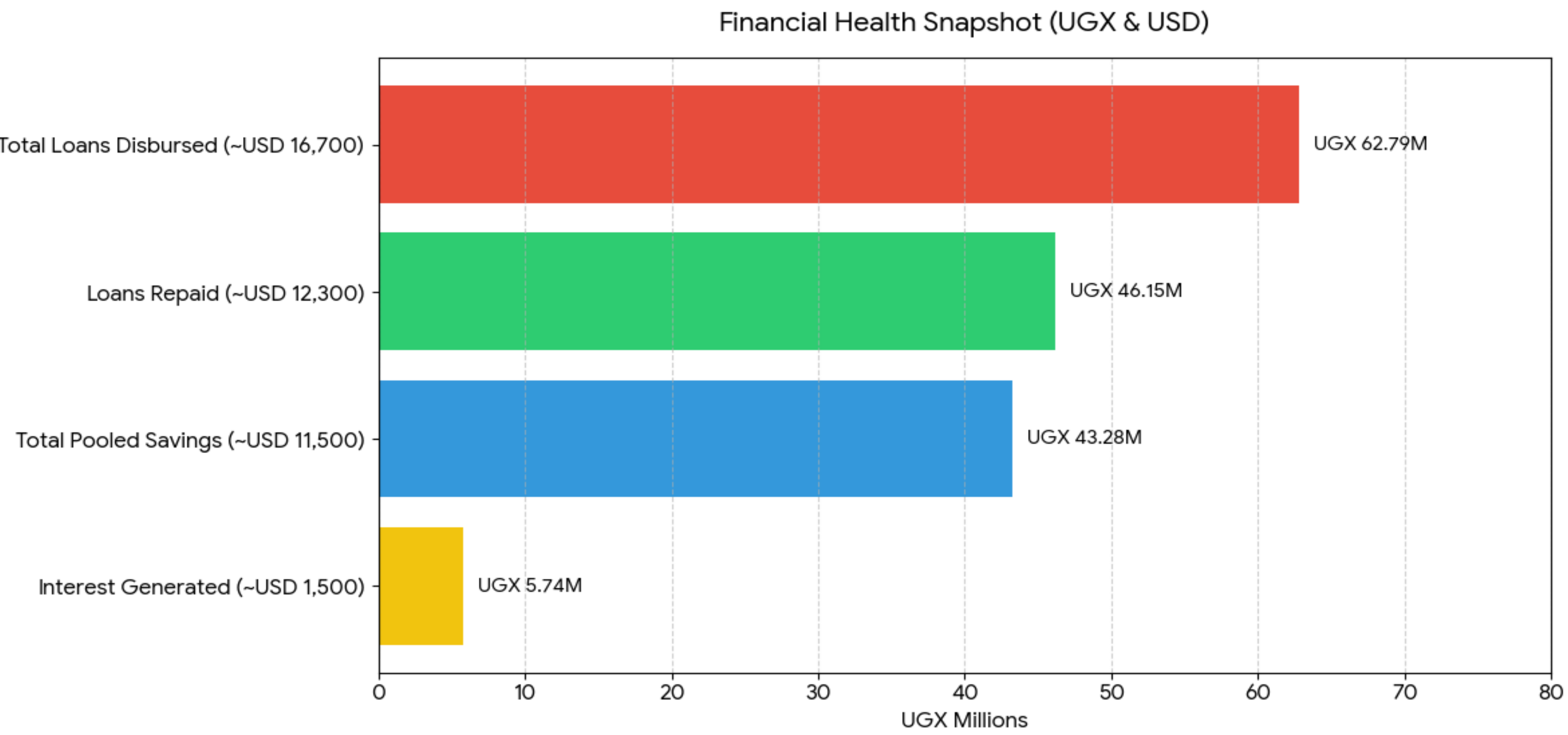
- In REAL, VSLFs brought multiple VSLAs together into a more structured financial platform
- They pooled capital across groups and made larger and more flexible loans possible
- They supported stronger governance, coordination and standardised practices
- They were still emerging structures, not fully mature institution

# What VSLFs made possible in REAL

- Enabled larger and more flexible loans than individual VSLAs
- Supported investments in agribusiness, trade, livestock and processing
- Strengthened financial coordination and discipline across groups
- Began functioning as emerging financial hubs

# Evidence for REAL

## VSLFs in Uganda are managing significant volumes of capital




## What drove strong performance for REAL

- Performance was not driven by capital alone
- Strong governance, leadership, trust and transparency were critical
- Clear roles and follow-up support mattered
- Institutional development is as important as financial growth

# Cross-cutting learning: Gender & Digitalisation

- Women played strong roles at VSLA level
- Women's influence declined at VSLF level
- Digital systems improved transparency
- Digitalisation could also create exclusion if poorly managed

# Limits & Bottlenecks

- VSLFs remained early-stage structures
- Capital still limited for larger investments
- Uneven maturity constrained growth
- Access to affordable growth capital remained unresolved

# What remains unresolved

- VSLFs can grow into stronger financial structures
- But cannot solve the financing gap alone
- Key question is how to build further without losing inclusion
- This is what the next phase will explore