



World Food
Programme

OBD

The Ombuds Office

Briefing to the Executive Board

September 2025

Agenda

1.



Restructuring and downsizing

- Communication & decision making around abolishment / nonrenewal of posts
- Ongoing Uncertainty

2.



Increased need for support

- More employees reaching out
- Increase in cases around Job and Career

3.



Times of change – opportunities for WFP

- Talent retention and knowledge preservation
- Rebuilding teams and boost employee morale

4.



Advancing informal resolution at WFP

- Increased impact: more effective internal justice system
- Mediations and outreach to emergency settings

What moves WFP's employees?



Communication and decision-making around abolitionment / non-renewal of positions



Timing



Tone



Transparency of decisions



Rationale of decisions



Impact on all employee categories

Employees in
*'vulnerable
positions'* face
strong challenges



Ongoing uncertainty

Mixed picture:

- More clarity on who will stay / who will have to go in many offices
-
- Feelings of uncertainty persist:
 - Unassigned International Professional Staff
 - Anxiety on what is yet to come in 2026
-
- Continued fear of retaliation among employees when speaking up

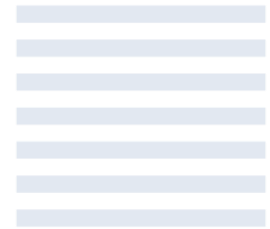
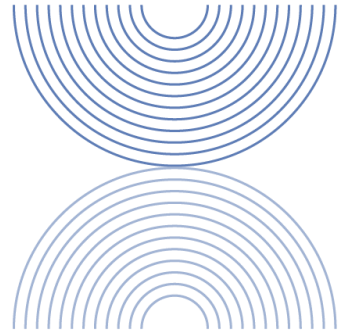


Leading through change



Perception of:

- Disconnection between field and HQ
 - Detachment between decision-makers and operational staff
-
- Lack of clarity in Regional Offices on their future role
 - Lack of courage to take decisions among leaders



Signs of employee disengagement and low morale

"I am so tired..."

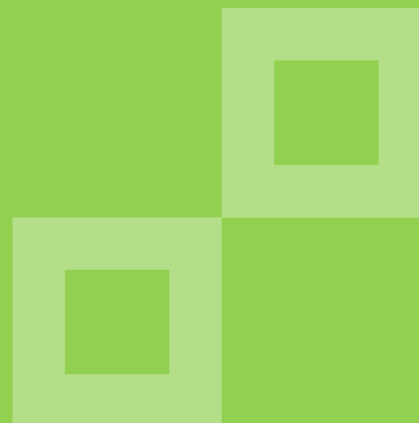
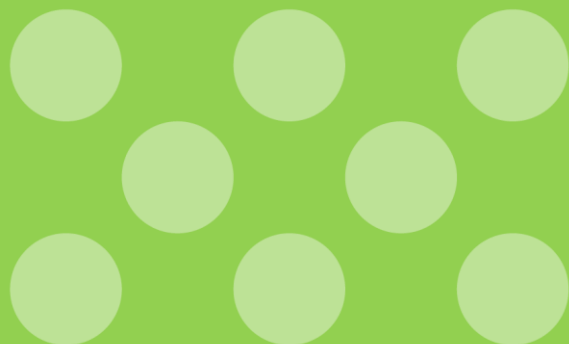
"Does my input even matter?..."

"Probably best to keep my head down..."

"I feel overwhelmed and disconnected..."

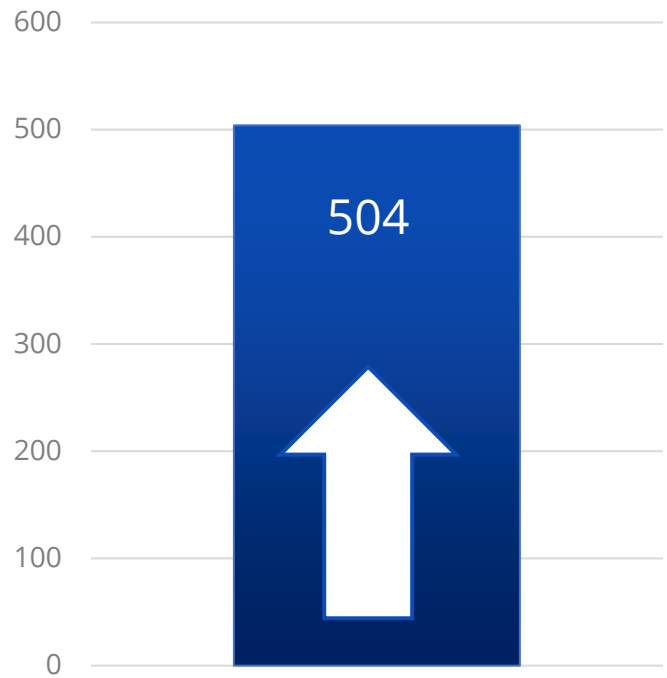


Increased need for support



Increase in caseload

Caseload January – August 2025



Increase in caseload – more employees reaching out directly

24%
of cases
from HQ and GO
Jan – Aug 2025

Increase in cases from Headquarters and Global Offices

60%
Of visitors are
female
Jan – Aug 2025

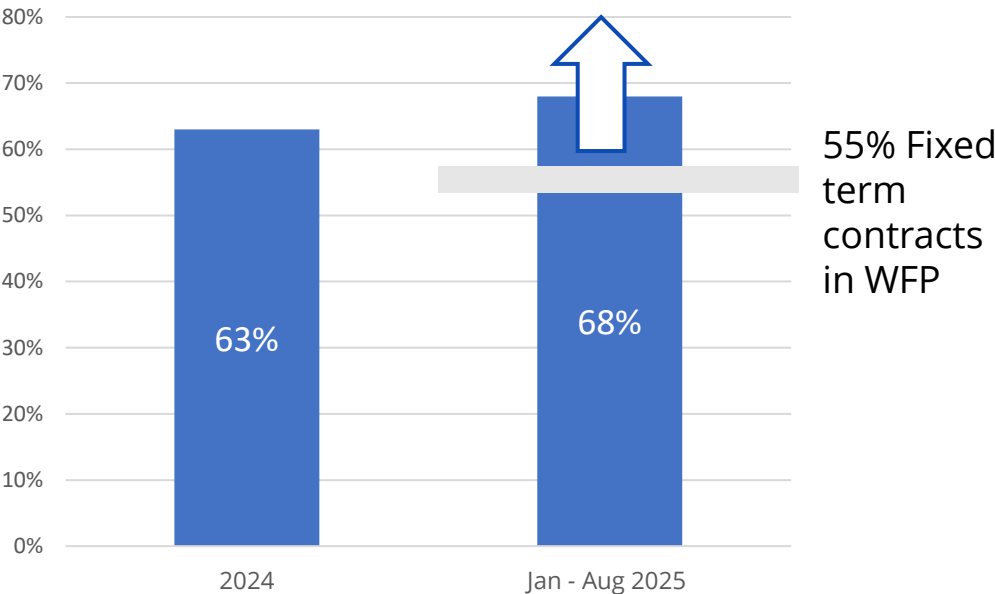
% of female visitors remains high; compared to 42 % of WFP’s workforce



Increase in visitors with FT contracts and High-Risk cases



OBD visitors with fixed term contracts (%)



Number of high-risk cases
Jan – Aug 2025 (%)



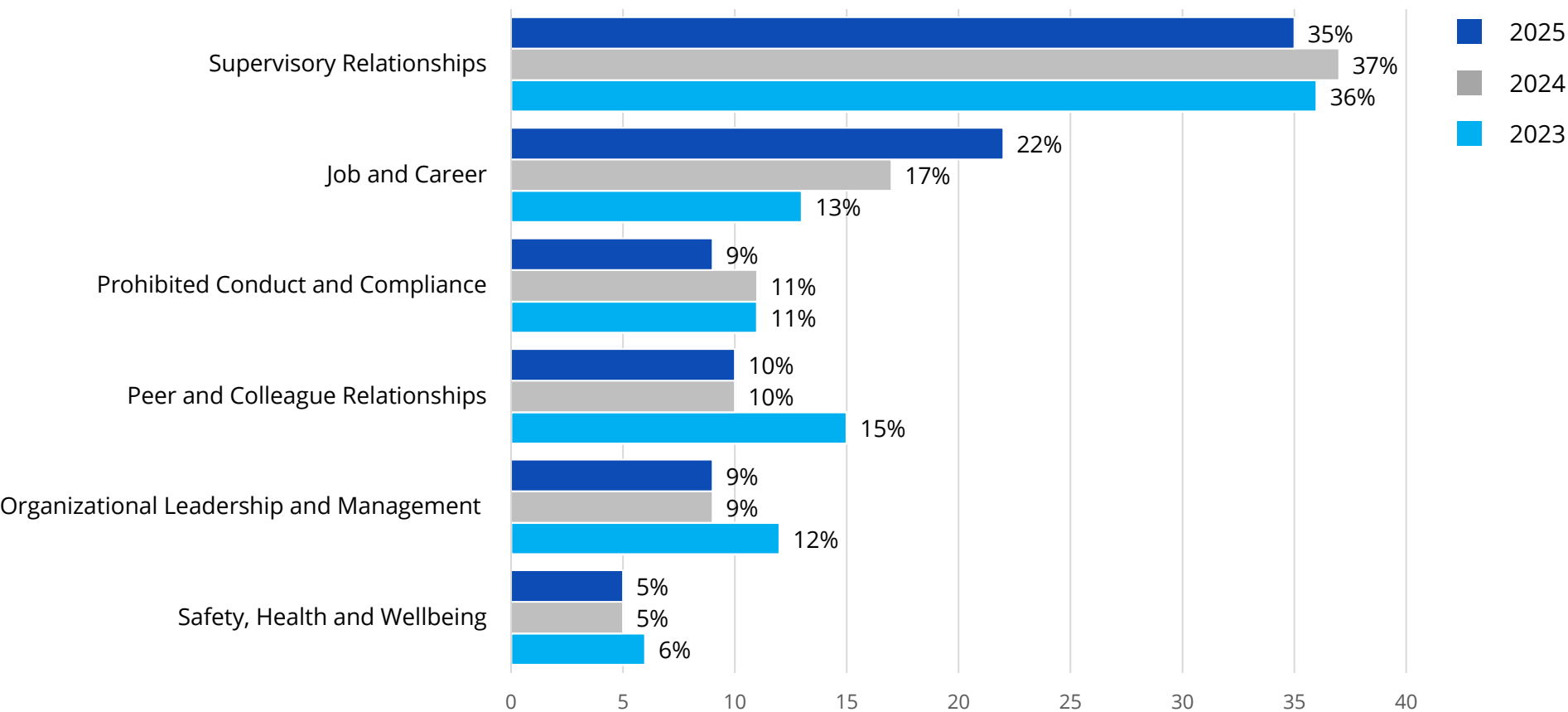
Share of visitors to OBD on fixed term contracts higher than their share within WFP workforce

Employees on FT contracts feel safer to speak up, more willing to address issues

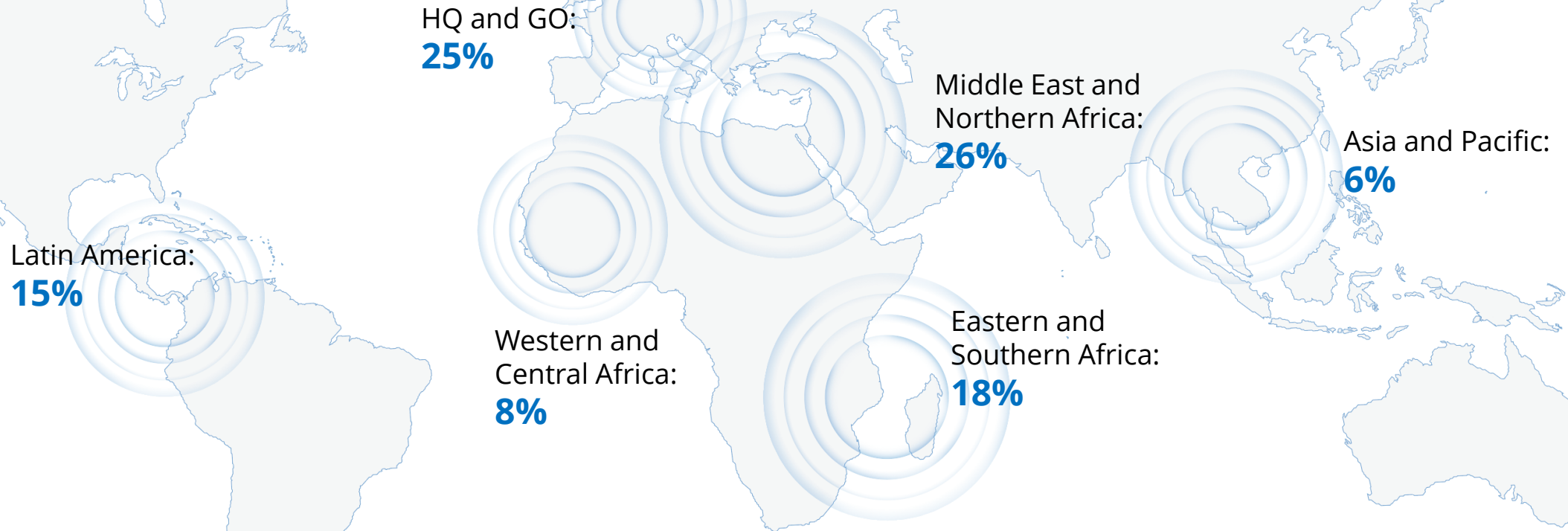
OBD as an early warning system

Main issue categories

Data comparison 2023, 2024. Jan - Aug 2025 (%)



Ombuds cases - Regional distribution





Opportunities for WFP

Transparent and proactive communication

As much transparency, clarity and communication as possible from senior leadership



All employee meeting with the Executive Director
Democratic Republic of the Congo, May 2025



Global All-Employee Event with the Executive Director
and Leadership Team, September 2025

Moving forward



Talent retention strategy



Knowledge preservation strategy



Support for leaders and mid-level managers



Campaigns and support to rebuild teams





Advancing informal resolution at WFP

Advancing informal resolution at WFP



More effective and impactful internal justice system:

- Increased collaboration
- Joint missions and outreach

Integrated help: Jointly set up 2025 'Employee Support Programme'

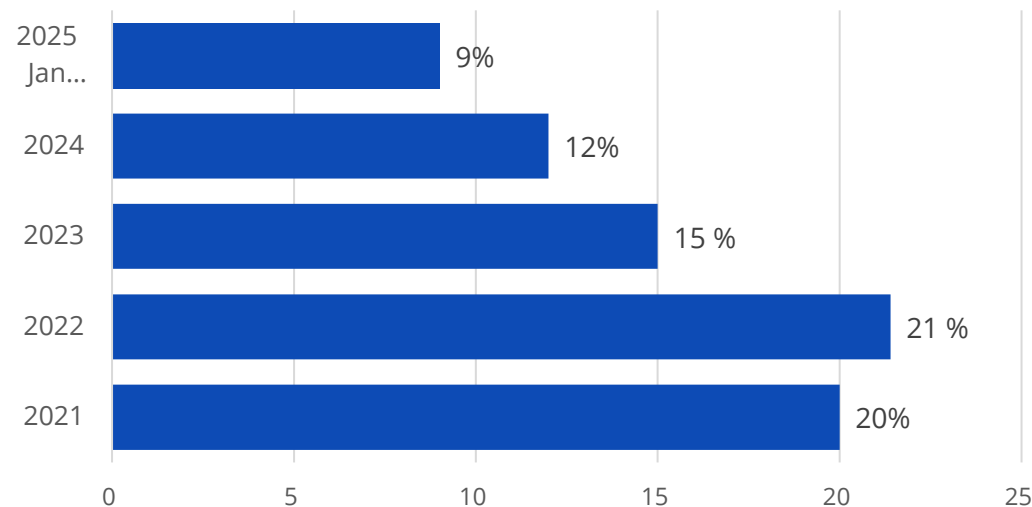
- Support to all employees during phase of organizational change and restructuring



Advancing informal resolution at WFP



Abusive Conduct cases out of total caseload
2020-2024, Jan – Aug 2025 (%)



30%*

“Escalation or Formal channel”

87%*

“Equipped to address issues in future”

** OBD Visitor Survey Jan – Aug 2025*

Mediation

- New Mediation Framework launched in October 2024
- Strong increase in Mediations



Informal resolution as a first step: faster and more satisfying resolution, also in case of formal appeals

Want to settle a dispute? WE MEDiate.

I had a serious issue with my colleague about how we share our office space. It escalated into a conflict that hurt me a lot. Thanks to the mediation process I was able to understand my colleague's perspective, and also explain why the matter was important to me. We agreed on how to work better together without excluding each other in the future. I am really glad I reached out for help so we could repair our relationship!"

The Ombuds Office
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newgo.wfp.org/about/office-of-ombudsperson

Confidential.
Informal.
Impartial.
Independent.

The Ombuds Office

Mediation Services

Mediation can be a very powerful tool to help settle disputes and to restore working relationships among colleagues, teams and the Organization, that otherwise might drag on for a long time.

WFP employees are strongly encouraged to use informal means of conflict resolution and to address and resolve work-related concerns as early as possible. The earlier you reach out, the more likelihood there is of a successful resolution!

Mediation is a mechanism that:

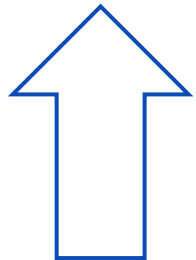
Allows the parties involved to learn more about each other and themselves.

Strengthens open communication and improves working relationships.

Mediation is voluntary: in all cases, the parties involved need to agree to the process. A party can withdraw from a mediation process at any time.

Mediation cannot be used in situations where an investigation is conducted in connection with the same issue and the same parties.

If you are unsure if mediation could be useful in resolving an issue you are facing, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Ombuds Office via mediation@wfp.org



21

Mediations Jan – Aug 2025

14

Mediations Jan – Dec 2024

Key Ombuds support in challenging times



Increased in-person outreach in RBs and HQ, and to emergency settings



Jamal Kasem, Outposted Ombuds Consultant to the Middle East and Northern Africa region, supporting employees in Hodeidah, Yemen CO; August 2025



Marieme Ndiaye, Outposted Ombuds Officer to the Western and Central Africa region, supporting employees in the Haiti CO, September 2025

Key Ombuds support in challenging times



3750

employees
supported
through webinars, in-
person training, and peer
learning sessions for
supervisors

30

Sessions to
managers

53

Trainings

Rebuilding Teams
Psychological Safety
Interpersonal
Communication
Feedback
Conflict Resolution

16 Team Climate
Assessments
involving **843**
employees

** all figures Jan – Aug 2025*



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Thank you!



Ombuds@wfp.org

Contacting the Ombuds Office is always a safe first step –
Everybody is welcome with any work-related issue

