



THE UNITED NATIONS IN UGANDA
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FINDING LASTING SOLUTIONS IN **KARAMOJA**

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A word from the Resident Coordinator

Dear reader,

Karamoja has historically been one of Uganda's most under-developed regions, yet life is improving there. Concerted efforts by the Government of Uganda, the UN, development partners and civil society organizations have led to a reduction in poverty levels, down from 80 percent to below 60 percent of the population now living under the poverty line.

However, many challenges remain. Karamoja still lags behind the rest of Uganda in progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The maternal and infant mortality rates for Karamoja are the highest in Uganda. There are more children out of school and fewer children completing primary school in Karamoja than in any other part of Uganda. Literacy levels and life expectancy are also lower in Karamoja than in other parts of Uganda.

The UN in Uganda is committed to working with Government and other development stakeholders to overcome these challenges. Over the past few years, these stakeholders have made a significant transition from long-term humanitarian aid to, primarily, development programming.

To support sustainable development programming, reducing local vulnerability to the frequent disasters experienced by the region is essential. If left unchecked, natural hazards could quickly reverse the gains made in combating poverty in the region. Repeated exposure to drought, floods, epidemics and animal diseases often results in localised emergency situations due to the Karimojong's tenuous coping mechanisms. Climate change is likely to increase adverse effects on local communities. Therefore, the UN is



Theophane Nikyema, the UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Uganda

partnering with communities and the Government on disaster preparedness, in particular to build up local capacity and implement risk reduction measures.

The complexity of the challenges in Karamoja requires a joint effort from the Government, development partners and civil society to ensure that the remaining humanitarian needs are addressed and that the long-term development goals are achieved.

I invite you to discover some of the UN's activities through the stories in this newsletter.

UNITED NATIONS COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

This Newsletter, is produced by the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG). The UNCG is made up of designated public information, communications and advocacy officers representing UN entities in-country.

Between regular meetings and adhoc special events and initiatives, the UNCG works to promote public awareness and informed debate on critical issues affecting the lives and rights of members of the community served by the United Nations. In 2011, the UNCG is chaired by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and co-chaired by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). For further information, please contact:

Dheepa Pandian
dpandian@unicef.org
Tel: +256-417-171-114

Meredith Lwanga
lwangaM@unaid.org
Tel: +256-414-335-500



Sport brings life to Karamoja

By Jeremy Green, UNICEF

The school

day for Marina Ilukol, age 13, is full between school lessons and chores – but she also finds time for sports. Marina, who comes from Nakambi village in Moroto, loves running and netball, and through these activities she has boosted her health, team work and discipline. She is regularly among the top five students academically in her class, and she plans to become a school teacher.

Mary Achia, 12, from Lukorete village in Moroto, finds the time for sports, too: Mary has made new friends and gained self-confidence through running competitions. Last year, she came in 4th in the 5000 meter race in the national athletics competition in Mbale. Now she plans to have a career in athletics so she can help develop programmes in the region to inspire children like her.

Marina and Mary benefit from the UNICEF-supported Sports for Life in Karamoja (SLIK) initiative, which is making a difference in the lives of many young students, including other girls. In Karamoja, poverty, pastoralism, and negative attitudes to education keep children – especially girls – from enrolling in and finishing primary school.

Sports are helping to inspire girls and boys alike to enrol, attend, and complete primary school. In this way, Sports for development programmes such as SLIK represent a lasting solution that will contribute to Uganda reaching MDG 2 (ensure boys and girls complete primary school) and MDG 3 (eliminate gender disparity in schools). Enrolment is increasing in



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DAILY DRILL: Mary Achia (center, in blue skirt) leads the pack in a daily practice run through Moroto town. Below: Marina Ilukol shows off trophies that her netball team has worn, at Kasimeri Primary School, also in Moroto.



the sub-region, and recently in Kaabong and Nakapiripirit districts, a considerable increase in primary school attendance is partially attributable to the success of SLIK. School completion rates in Karamoja have also been raised – from 1.3 percent to 10 percent – since the beginning of the initiative in 2008.

UNICEF support through SLIK provides playing equipment to schools, pays for training of Physical Education teachers, and goes to the construction and renovation of school sports grounds. In addition, SLIK helps create district-level sports leagues, and aids these teams toward participating in national sporting competitions. In 2010 the Moroto District team came in 10th in the nationals in Mbale, where it won two gold medals.

www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uganda

WFP supports livelihoods to help end dependency

By Lydia Wamala, WFP



© WFP/LYDIA WAMALA

Namuya and others work on the surface dam project in Kapadakook

In the end, the community at Kapadakook village in Kotido District quietly took a decision: they were not going to wait for the paper procedures. While WFP worked with local leaders and other partners to get the final signatures for an expanded asset-creation programme, the community began to take measurements, to stake out territory. Each family was allocated a piece of land to excavate for a community surface dam.

“We were assured that WFP was going to give us food, and we knew we would need that food soon,” says mother of three, Rose Namuya, who also cares for her late sister’s four children. “We saw no point in waiting.”

“Look,” she points at a pile of bricks, “there is a school under

construction over there. We expect our children to attend it. We are building the dam because we need water close by.”

“The dam will enable us to water our animals and vegetables and help us to make bricks for the school and our houses,” says another member of the village, Paulina Angura. “But our main motivation is food. Food will help us feed our families.”

The community, comprising 77 households, has been working on this dam for two weeks. They expect to finish it in about another three but already there are large patches of water in evidence.

As Namuya and others work here, other families in the group toil a short distance away, across an unpaved main road that winds through

Panyangara sub-county. They are establishing a community sorghum and sesame garden.

Initially, it appears a quarrel has broken out as women exchange words in loud, uncontrolled voices, but that soon dies down. Then the group resumes erecting a fence of tough thorns to keep out stray animals.

“I look forward to the benefit of seeds,” says 70-year-old Maria Lojip, one of the people working here. “After we harvest sorghum and sesame, we will each keep something to plant in our gardens.”

All over Karamoja, WFP has launched activities that build on the livelihood programme’s success last year. People are constructing dams, establishing staple crop farms, growing vegetables, fruits and other. Working through the Government’s Second Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), WFP provides cash or food to support these people, who are selected from families with able-bodied members.

“People in the region face chronic food shortages and malnutrition,” says WFP Country Director Stanlake Samkange, “but if we can help them to better provide for their livestock and also increase crop production, then food can be more available. Karamoja has been dependent on food aid too long. WFP is determined to help bring an end to this.”

www.wfp.org/countries/uganda

UN working with state institutions to re-enforce human rights

By OHCHR team in Karamoja

The Restoring

Law and Order in Karamoja (RELOKA) programme has led to improvements in justice, law and order in the region. The achievement has been through an increased number of police officers and the re-opening of police outposts in every sub-county.

Furthermore, RELOKA is supporting community sensitization on the Penal Code and the reporting of crimes and human rights violations, though human rights violations still persist. While the disarmament programme, re-launched in May 2006, has greatly contributed to a better security environment in Karamoja, it has also resulted in human rights violations. The cordon-and-search guidelines issued by Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) are a welcome measure, but these regulations are not enforced and their application is relatively low.

As a state actor, the UPDF is mandated to respect and protect human rights by the Constitution. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Uganda Human Rights Commission implemented training to enable the UPDF conduct disarmament operations in accordance with human rights standards on the use of force, legal detentions, protection of life, integrity and property of the people.

Highlighting the challenges that the army faces, a UPDF trainee said, "OHCHR has sensitized us not to shoot directly at armed Karimojong, but instead shoot in the air to scare them away. Unfortunately, the armed Karimojong shoot us directly, killing or injuring us."



© OHCHR/FRANCIS OLOKA

An OHCHR officer trains policemen on the minimum use of force, in Kotido

OHCHR has continuously lobbied for the release of those who were arrested arbitrarily, particularly the terminally ill, the elderly, women and children. In July 2009, OHCHR's intervention led to the release of more than 60 detainees in the 405 Brigade in Kotido. In August the same year, OHCHR's intervention led to the release of over 200 community members arrested from Watakau ward in Nakapelimoru Sub-county. Constant lobbying by UNICEF, OHCHR and district authorities led to the release of over 20 children arrested and detained between August and September 2010.

In April 2008, OHCHR and the probation office in Kotido lobbied for the release of 4 juveniles detained together with adults in Kotido prison. The intervention of OHCHR in Kumet and Lolelia army barracks in Kaabong District in September 2010 led to the release of community members arrested from Lokerui parish and detained in the two barracks.

Another issue of concern to OHCHR is that many suspects resulting from the cordon-and-search operations are left at the prisons and police cells without a charge sheet, leading to the police detaining the suspects beyond the mandatory 48 hours before being committed to court for trial.

The judiciary in Karamoja is lacking in capacity. The entire region has one Resident State Attorney, one Chief Magistrate, one Grade I Magistrate, and three Grade II Magistrates. This has contributed to a backlog of cases, some of which are only tried by the High Court.

OHCHR is collaborating with UPDF to meet this objective through trainings, but also continuous monitoring of incidents which will be brought up with authorities of UPDF and the Uganda Police Force for further prevention and investment into human rights violations.

www.uganda.ohchr.org

A time for better health, better families

By Stijn Aelbers, UNFPA



Midwife Lily Awilli attends to a newborn in Moroto Hospital

She smiles,

as the midwife asks again. Anna still does not answer. The thing is, she has no idea how old she is. A nurse standing close by thinks she is “at least 60”.

Anna Modo has come to Kaabong hospital with her daughter, who is in the process of delivering a baby. Anna sits on a bed in the maternity ward, surrounded by young mothers with babies.

With a population growth rate of 6.9 percent per year, Kaabong District in Karamoja is way over the national average of 3.2 percent. But only six percent of the women in this remote area in northeastern Uganda deliver at health centres. Anna set an example: all of her eight children were born with the help of a nurse or midwife at a health centre. She was a teenager when she had her first baby “Maybe I was 14,” she says. “I don’t remember

exactly.”

The nurse asks if she is aware of family planning methods. Anna nods and says, “When a woman delivers, her partner moves out of the couple’s hut into the kraal (where cattle are kept). When their baby reaches the age of three, the man comes back into the hut. And when he is back, he can re-unite with his wife.”

The nurse asks if she knows about modern methods. Suddenly the whole room where Anna sits joins in the conversation. Condoms! Pills! Injectables! Yes, Anna has heard about all these, but she has not used any. However, her friends have told her they are worth considering.

Anna lost three of her children. One had diarrhoea, another died of measles while the third died after having “a bad headache”. These days, she says, things are better. When her daughter is sick, she gets treatment in Kaabong hospital. And, pointing at a man sitting at the other side

of the room, next to his wife and his first child, she says, “Also these days, husbands often accompany their wives to hospital.”

If her daughter gets a son, Anna would like him to attend school. That way he would not end up “going for cows” (raiding cattle). After years of disarmament campaigns, the Government of Uganda has reduced the number of guns that are in circulation Karamoja. But still, for some of the pastoral people in the region, it is hard to give up raiding. It is part of their culture.

Anna wears a serious expression as she says she would also want her grandson to “marry highly”, which means finding an educated woman to marry. She has seen so much fighting, death and instability in her community that she wonders if this is at all possible.

“There is so much violence in our community. How can we change this?” Anna wonders. Maybe this can start with a grandmother’s wish for a brighter future for her daughter, a wish for her to have a family that she can manage, so that her children can get a good education that can help develop Karamoja. Anna smiles as this is told to her, and agrees.

www.unfpa.uganda.org

Community initiatives strengthen animal health services

By Rachel Nandelenga, FAO

“My name is

Robert Akol. I am going to show you how to make a mineral lik for livestock. First, you need dry bones. Then, you have to burn the bones until they are grey-black. Next, crush them into powder and mix the powder with clay and table salt.

Mineral lik is a block that contains mineral salts in definite quantities needed to keep livestock healthy and producing sufficient milk.

Betty Atol quickly takes over from Robert with a session on disease control: “Before you administer any drug to livestock, measure the weight and height of the animal, And, Apply acaricides (pesticides that kill members of the Acari group, which includes ticks and mites) to the skin of livestock at least once every week to prevent infestation by ticks.”. Like Robert, she goes on and on until instructions are clear.

One by one, a group of farmers, some of them illiterate, explain not only what they have learnt but also what they practice in Moroto West Agro-Pastoral Field School.

The training is field-oriented and participatory; the farmers get to practice what is taught before they can adopt it back home.

Modified from the Farmer Field School system that was originally implemented countrywide in Uganda, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has introduced Agro Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) in support of livestock health, water and crop production in Karamoja. The APFS has also been integrated with a village savings loan mechanism.

In Kaabong District, FAO is working through the Non-Governmental Organization Cooperation and



© FAO/

Spraying a goat; communities are now involved in delivering livestock health services in Karamoja

Development, to mobilize and implement the APFS among 192 groups. The APFS is complementing the overstretched Government veterinary extension services in Karamoja. The APFS is complimented with the Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) system in which members of the community are trained to treat simple livestock ailments and diseases and to sensitize communities

on animal health. So far, 100 CAHWs have been trained and equipped with simple veterinary kits.

Lotyang Phillip was trained as CAHW in 2003. He has since served the communities by treating sick livestock and sensitizing them on disease control. “I treat about 30 animals every month”, he says.

www.fao.org/reliefoperations

Delivering as One in the Ik community

By Ambrose Toolit, UN Resident Coordinator's Office



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An Ik woman with her tomatoe harvest in the UN supported community of Lokwakalmoi

that links the Ik community to Kapedo. In addition, local government will provide the furniture for the school and deploy teachers and health personnel.

The UN will work hand-in-hand with Kaabong District leadership and other partners to ensure that the rights of the Ik minority community are realized and their unique culture is preserved.

The UN is increasingly adopting Delivering as One principles in order to provide a more coherent response to development needs. In Karamoja, as an initial step, a mapping of activities was undertaken in selected sub-counties in the seven Districts, to show where the UN is currently working and to eventually determine where the UN could work in a more coordinated manner. The mapping was completed in the sub counties of Nyakwae (Abim); Kalapata and Kamion (Kaabong); Kacheri (Kotido); Loro and Karita (Amudat); Lorengdwat and Namalu (Nakapiripirit); and Iriiri and Lokopo (Napak), Tapac (Moroto).

The exercise analysed possibilities for further convergence and coordination of UN interventions in the focused areas on a sectoral basis. It showed where agencies are implementing activities based on their work plans illustrating the complementarity of the various mandates of the UN agencies, funds and programmes. The UN is committed to continue such exercises and through them to improve programming efficiency and coherence.

To other Ugandans the Ik may look like Karimajong, but they are not. The Ik community is a marginalized ethnic minority group, a farming community of less than 10,000 people found between the more populous pastoral Karamajong and Turkana people. Whereas Karamoja has the highest poverty levels in Uganda, deprivation among the Ik is even worse. Their remote location in the mountainous parishes of Lokwakalmoi, Kamion and Timu in Kaabong District, difficult to access due to poor roads, leaves them lacking basic services such as health and education.

In support of the local government's efforts to address the challenges

faced by the Ik community, UN agencies in consultation with the Kaabong District authorities, adopted a collaborative approach to strengthen service delivery. In a spirit of Delivering as One, the UN agencies combined their varied expertise to (a) construct a school (UNICEF); (b) provide the school garden with seeds and tools (FAO); (c) undertake school meals and tree planting programs (WFP); and (d) construct and equip the health centre with furniture (UNICEF, together with Doctors with Africa Cuamm, WHO and UNFPA).

There is already an existing early childhood development centre and an agro-pastoral farmers field school managed by FAO. The local government has started to construct a road

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Editorial: Lydia Wamala (WFP), Michael Wangusa and Silla Ristimaki (RCO)