

Pastoralists, Peace and Livelihoods:

Economic interventions to build peace in Karamoja, Uganda



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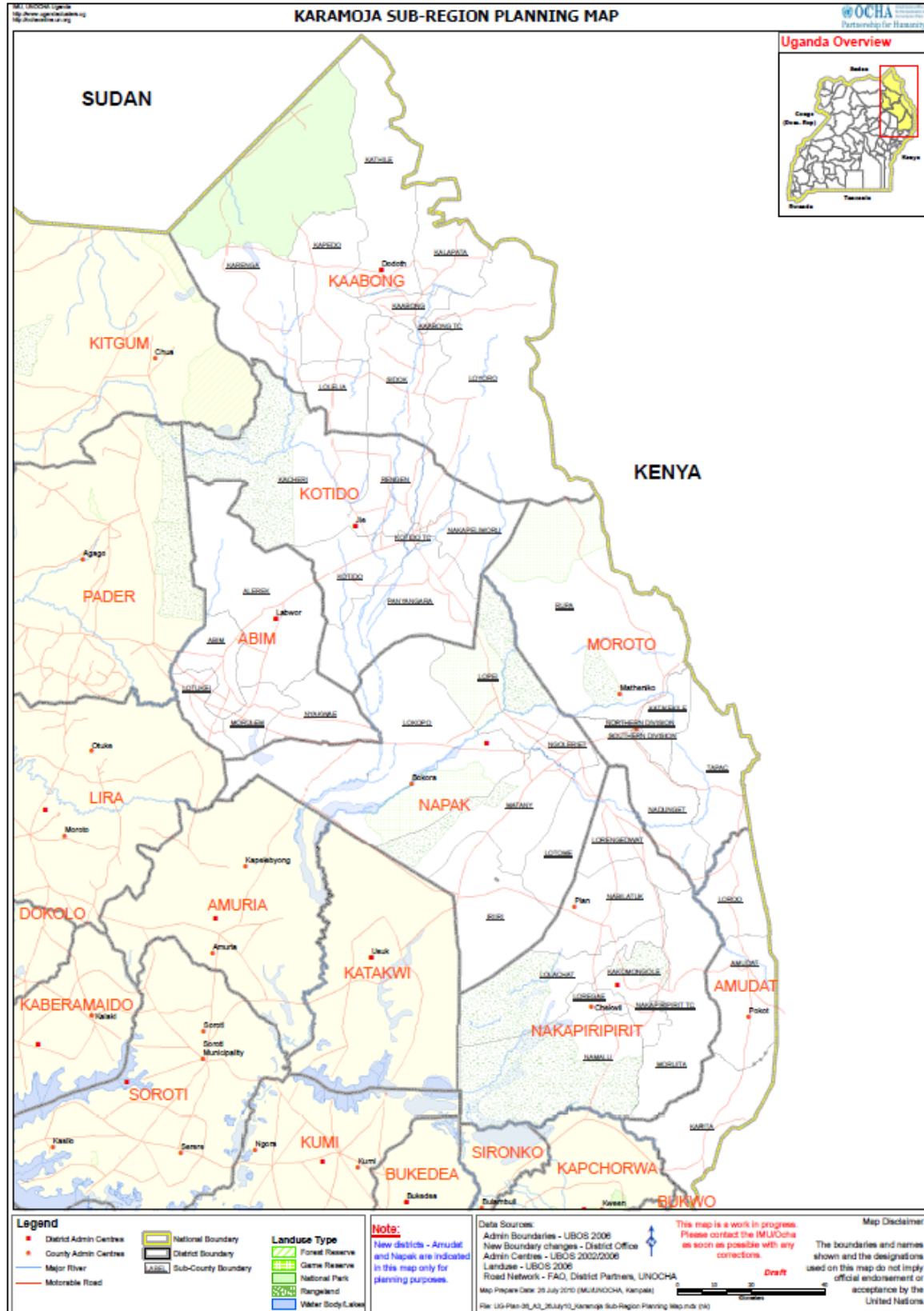
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Photo by Khristopher Carlson, Feinstein International Center

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MAP OF KARAMOJA	3
ACRONYMS.....	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
II. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF STUDY.....	7
III. DATA COLLECTION METHODS	10
IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR PEACE BUILDING	11
THEORY OF CHANGE	11
REGIONAL CONTEXT.....	12
DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT	13
POVERTY/DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS	13
CONFLICT ASSESSMENT – CAUSES OF INSECURITY	14
UGANDAN PEOPLE’S DEFENSE FORCE (UPDF)	15
CLIMATE AND NATURAL RESOURCES.....	19
CATTLE RAIDING.....	21
V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MERCY CORPS PROGRAMMING	23
A. VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS	24
B. ECONOMIC LIVELIHOOD DIVERSIFICATION	26
VILLAGE AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT.....	27
AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOOD DIVERSIFICATION.....	29
SAVINGS AND CREDIT INITIATIVES	33
MICROINSURANCE	37
SMALL ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND RUMINANTS DIVERSIFICATION	37
LIVESTOCK VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT	39
GUM ARABIC PRODUCTION	42
HONEY CULTIVATION.....	44
C. NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.....	45
SCENARIO PLANNING.....	46
AGRO FORESTRY	46
WATER POINT MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION	47
DROUGHT RESISTANT AGRICULTURE	48
D. CAPACITY BUILDING	49
DEVELOPING BUSINESS SKILLS.....	50
IMPROVED VETERINARY CARE	51
VI. CHALLENGES.....	52
A. GOVERNMENT.....	52
B. OUT-MIGRATION.....	53
C. WATER SCARCITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SHOCKS	54
D. LACK OF COORDINATION	54
VII. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	55
VIII. CONCLUSION	56
IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY	57
X. ANNEX OF PERSONAL INTERVIEWS.....	61

MAP OF KARAMOJA



ACRONYMS

ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
APFS	Agro-Pastoral Field Schools
ASTU	Anti Stock Theft Unit
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CBR	Centre for Basic Research
CPMR	Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFID	Department for International Development
DRT	Development Research & Training
GoU	Government of Uganda
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
INRM	Integrated National Resources Management
FAO	Food & Agriculture Organization
FHK	Food for the Hungry Kenya
KADP	Karamoja Agro-Pastoral Development Program Strategic Plan
KPSDPC	Karamoja Private Sector Development Promotion Centre
KDA	Karamoja Development Agency
KIDDP	Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme
KAPFS	Karamoja Action Plan for Food Security
LC	Local Council
LIT	Livestock-in-trust
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resources Management
NURP	Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PENHA	Pastoral and Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa- Uganda
PRODAP	Cape Verde Community-based Agriculture and Livestock Development Project
RAFFS	Rural and Agricultural Finance and Food Security
SACCOs	Savings and Credit Co-operatives
SPLA	Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army
TPDF	Tanzania Peoples Defense Force
UGAADEN	Ugandan Adult Education Network
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNO	United Nations Organization
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defense Force
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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While we initially consulted with a number of organizations for our field work, we were fortunate enough to find such a willing partner in Mercy Corps. We need to especially thank the Mercy Corps Niger office for putting us in contact with its Uganda office after insecurity prohibited our travel to Niger. To our primary contact at Mercy Corps Uganda, Tim Sparkman, thank you for direction and feedback. We also appreciate the feedback received from Chloe Stull-Lane in Mercy Corps' Somalia office on drafts of this report.

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Karamoja region of north eastern Uganda is home to around 1.2 million people, most of who are engaged in pastoralist and agro-pastoralist livelihoods. Decades of political marginalization, local and cross-border conflicts (most typically in the form of cattle raiding), and minimal investments in social and economic services, have contributed to widespread insecurity and destitution. Insecurity has limited people's ability to engage in traditional pastoralism, as their mobility is restricted and they are unable to access rangeland resources. Restricted mobility has compounded regional environmental challenges, as settlements have become increasingly concentrated and exploitation of certain natural resources has intensified. Social structures and traditional means of decision-making have also been affected, as most clearly seen in changing relations between generations and genders. In recent decades, these challenges have gained greater attention from the Government of Uganda (GoU), and a variety of NGOs. Despite this attention, development actors have struggled to develop and initiate interventions that support peace and promote economic stability for local populations.

Based on the security and development context of Karamoja, this report recommends that Mercy Corps programming in Karamoja be based in four key development areas: village and community-level investments, value-chain development, natural resource management and development, and local capacity building. Specific interventions within these areas are identified, and are based on the theory of change that links economic security with broader issues of security and peace. The theory is discussed in the section titled Economic Development for Peacebuilding, followed by discussion of key recommendations.

Programming in Karamoja should be created and implemented with a sound understanding of the root causes of insecurity in the region. Identifying core grievances, conflict mitigators, and drivers of conflict not only clarifies the overall development situation, but also sheds light on the types of development interventions that are likely to have the most success in the conflict context. In Karamoja, physical insecurity, political and economic marginalization, economic insecurity, regional insecurity, resource scarcity and ethnic divisions are among the key drivers of conflict. Based on the key conflict drivers, economic interventions have the potential to address peace building goals by strengthening connectors within groups and specifically addressing key grievances like underdevelopment. Nevertheless, given the broad range of conflict motivations, economic development interventions will be somewhat limited in their ability to reduce insecurity in Karamoja.

Village and Community Investment provides an essential foundation for economic livelihood interventions in conflict-affected environments like Karamoja. Infrastructure in many districts is either scarce or in disrepair. Since many interventions will rely on improving access to markets, encouraging private investment, and expanding outreach of extension and development services, infrastructure investment is critical.

Value Chain Development, particularly of livestock, is a key component to economic growth and peacebuilding in Karamoja. The cattle economy simply cannot be ignored due to its entrenchment in the culture of the people, the number of people who depend on it for survival, and role that it plays in organizing social relations in Karamoja. Interventions should be targeted in other sectors as well, such as agricultural livelihood diversification, small animal husbandry and ruminants diversification, gum acacia or honey, but care needs to be taken to ensure that they do not conflict with cattle livelihoods, or they will risk being irrelevant and will likely fail. Finally, savings and credit initiatives are one of the keys to

value chain development since capital in Karamoja remains scarce. Credit can help producers move beyond subsistence and take advantage of opportunities within markets, while savings outside of livestock can help to reduce vulnerability of Karamojong to external and environmental shocks.

Natural Resource Management heavily impacts livelihoods in Karamoja, and degradation of water sources, rangeland, forests, and soil contribute to food insecurity and erosion of indigenous knowledge and overall economic insecurity. Since nearly all supplemental income-generating activities rely to some degree on the exploitation of natural resources, interventions supporting the livestock sector and alternative livelihoods should be streamlined with integrated natural resource management.

Capacity Building should be an integral component of any economic intervention programming in Karamoja. From practical technical skills such as veterinarian practices and community health work to financial, business development, and entrepreneurship training, building capacity is key for sustainable long-term growth. Current programming is still spotty, in its early stages, and leaves many gaps to be filled. One of the primary challenges, particularly for the younger generation, is striking the appropriate balance between traditional cultural knowledge and modern education.

Challenges to implementing the above recommendations in Karamoja are numerous. This report fully recognizes that the success of any of the proposed interventions is contingent upon the participation of Karamojong communities, consistent and targeted implementation, and commitment on behalf of Mercy Corps. However, success is also dependent upon a number of factors outside of Mercy Corps's control or sphere of influence. In addition to ongoing challenges associated with insecurity, these include inconsistent government policy, out-migration, water scarcity, and insufficient coordination among development actors in the region.

Efforts thus far to bring peace and prosperity to Karamoja have seen little success. Without local ownership, it will be difficult for any interventions to bring about sustainable change. It is in the beneficiaries' best interest that any short-term interventions fit into a larger longer-term plan for the region, and that this plan ideally would be conceptualized and carried out by the government of Uganda with the support of the Karamojong. However, there are a variety of hurdles that need to be overcome before a government-owned comprehensive regional plan can be developed upon which all parties can agree.

Environmental uncertainty is one of the many sources of insecurity in Karamoja. The region has always had unpredictable rainfall, recurrent droughts, and high temperatures. Droughts can have serious negative impacts on alternative livelihood investments, especially in agriculture and livestock.

Currently there are well over 40 different development actors working in Karamoja. The number of organizations in the area has increased significantly as both the security situation in Karamoja has improved and projects in northern Uganda (Acholi and Teso) have been completed.¹ With this many actors, there are bound to be overlaps and contradictory activities. To the extent that coordination to ensure the equitable distribution of services among neighboring tribes is possible, the less likely it is that gaps in service provision will cause further conflict.

¹ O'Keefe 2011:1285

II. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

The Karamoja region of north eastern Uganda is home to around 1.2 million people, most of who are engaged in pastoralist and agro-pastoralist livelihoods. Decades of political marginalization, local and cross-border conflicts (most typically in the form of cattle raiding), and minimal investments in social and economic services, have contributed to widespread insecurity and destitution. Insecurity has limited people's ability to engage in traditional pastoralism, as their mobility is restricted and they are unable to access rangeland resources. Restricted mobility has compounded regional environmental challenges, as settlements have become increasingly concentrated and exploitation of certain natural resources has intensified. Social structures and traditional means of decision-making have also been affected, as most clearly seen in changing relations between generations and genders. In recent decades, these challenges have gained greater attention from the Government of Uganda (GoU), and a variety of NGOs. Despite this attention, development actors have struggled to develop and initiate interventions that support peace and promote economic stability for local populations.

In March 2011, a team of graduate students at the Elliott School of International Affairs at the George Washington University in Washington D.C. partnered with Mercy Corps Uganda to provide recommendations on economic programming that supports peace-building efforts in Karamoja. The following report sorts through a significant body of research, theory, and narratives that have been put forward regarding the development and insecurity context in Karamoja, as well as other applicable interventions in other pastoral contexts.

In order to present and rationalize recommendations, it is necessary to discuss the development and security context of Karamoja. Development indicators in the region reveal low levels of literacy, poor health and education, poor infrastructure, poor access to clean water and sanitation, and insufficient government capacity. These factors are further complicated by conflict in the region. A conflict analysis identifies core grievances, conflict mitigators, and drivers of conflict in order to bring forward narratives of conflict in the region. The analysis also informs the types of development interventions that might be successful in this context. The Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) is identified as a key actor in this context. Economic and political marginalization is found to be a grievance and driver of conflict, meanwhile climate and natural resources is found to both exacerbate grievances as well as bring to light conflict mitigators. Finally, cattle-raiding is discussed as both a root cause and consequence of conflict in Karamoja.

Recommendations for Mercy Corps Uganda programming are grounded in this examination of Karamoja's background and conflict context. These recommendations are organized into three areas: Economic livelihood diversification, livestock value chain development, natural resource management, and capacity building. Specific interventions within each area were chosen based on analysis of their possible success in the context, as well as their success in similar situations and areas. Potential adverse impacts and limitations of each recommendation are recognized, and it is strongly recommended that thorough analysis of environmental and human impacts be conducted prior to any development intervention.

In addition to risks associated with implementing specific interventions, there are numerous factors that could severely limit the success of Mercy Corps's work. These factors, which include government policies, out-migration, water scarcity and other climatic factors, and lack of development coordination, are outside of Mercy Corps's control. These factors will not influence Mercy Corps's work in the region, but are also key determinants of overall stability in the region. Despite being outside of Mercy Corps's influence, it is important the risks they pose be recognized in project design and implementation. Additional considerations include the number of agendas and goals being pursued by the various development actors in the region.

The complexity of challenges in Karamoja can appear insurmountable. Yet in spite of the region's insecurity, difficult climatic conditions, and political marginalization, there is reason to assume that well-planned, well-managed, and locally responsive development interventions can contribute to peacebuilding and greater prosperity in the region. With flexible programming that meets locally-identified needs, Mercy Corps has the potential to implement effective, innovative programming in the region.

III. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Since the Capstone Team was prohibited from traveling to the region because of circumstances beyond its control, it was unable to conduct individual interviews with key community stakeholders in Karamoja, conduct focus groups or perform mapping exercises of resources and ground-truth economic livelihood intervention recommendations as it had originally planned. Thus, the team has compiled the following report and provides recommendations on the basis of desk research and interviews with researchers and development experts at various institutes and agencies. The team reviewed a wide variety of project evaluation reports, government documents, anthropological studies, economic publications, conflict assessments, and agricultural reports to assemble the most comprehensive review of literature possible. Taking advantage of the team's proximity to a number of development organizations in the Washington DC area and an opportunity to attend a conference focusing on challenges faced by pastoralists, the team has been able to ground-truth recommendations with individuals who have had specific experience in Karamoja or in similar conflict-ridden contexts.

The Capstone Team consulted various economic development journals, project documents, monitoring and evaluation reports, conflict assessments, veterinary studies, agricultural and anthropological studies, and government documents when compiling the information herein. The government documents accessed were the National Development Plan (NDP), Karamoja Action Plan for Food Security (KAPFS) (2009 – 2014), Karamoja Agro-Pastoral Development Program Strategic Plan (KADP) (2005, 2006 – 2008, and 2009 –2013), Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Disarmament Programme (KIDDP).

The literature review was supplemented by interviews with various development agencies, including USAID, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, the Feinstein International Center, Pastoral and Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa-Uganda, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, the University of Colorado at Boulder, the International Development Studies Program at Sussex and the World Bank. Members of the team were fortunate enough to travel to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in March 2011 to attend the "Future of Pastoralism in Africa" conference hosted by the Future Agricultures Consortium (FAC) and the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University. There, we were able to speak directly with anthropological and geographical experts about various challenges facing pastoralists in Africa and successful and unsuccessful development programming addressing them. We are extremely indebted to the development professionals that took the time to meet with the team to discuss recommendations for the region, best practices and who provided context for development work in Karamoja.

The Report recommendations are based on the best information available within the consulted sources. As this is not an exhaustive assessment of available data, and the recommendations are subject to change based on the fluid development context.

IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR PEACEBUILDING

THEORY OF CHANGE

The growth in research linking insecurity and economic underdevelopment has been increasing, even though, as Klingebiel and Roehder note, it “is not a fundamentally new conceptual issue.”² In the international development field, major donors are paying increased attention to what is often termed the security-development nexus, especially as it relates to national security and government influence in areas that are underdeveloped and could support elements that would challenge state authority. The ‘ungoverned spaces argument’ – essentially the belief that regions without significant government influence can be dangerous to state systems because they can easily support elements that drive instability outside of the watchful eye of the government– has been a significant driver of the growth of the stability-oriented development paradigm.

As research has increased on the impact of conflict on economic development and security, a wide spectrum of development actors recognize the importance of promoting development interventions that are either conflict sensitive or directly address the drivers/mitigators of conflict in a given society. The UN has long-been making statements that have come to define this sector of the field, the most well-recognized of which is likely Kofi Annan’s “There is no long-term security without development. There is no development without security.”³

The U.S. Government’s emphasis on the 3Ds paradigm – that Defense, Diplomacy and Development are the three key pillars of U.S. foreign policy – and its recent Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), along with the UK’s recent report on its overhaul of DFID are but three major examples that highlight the extent to which the development-security paradigm has impacted international development theory and policy. As evidence of this shift, the 2011 report, UK aid: Changing Lives, Delivering Results, prominently displays a quote by Paul Collier: “In breaking out of the conflict trap, security and development go hand in hand.”⁴ It is clear, across a wide variety of actors, that there is a strong assumption that peace can be supported through development, primarily economic development.

Economic development interventions can accomplish peacebuilding goals in a variety of different ways. In conflict situations where economic marginalization is a key grievance, projects can further peace goals by distributing economic benefits among conflicting groups or by reducing competition for key resources.⁵ Therefore, it is especially important that projects are viewed as inclusive within the communities they target in order to avoid creating new grievances among non-beneficiaries.⁶ It is also necessary to consider how donor funds are allocated and distributed, particularly with regard to local organizations, as the efficacy and sustainability of interventions can be impacted depending on which groups receive funding and how they are regarded within their own communities. The plethora of development organizations working in Karamoja all have respective reputations within the populations they serve, and it should go without saying that Mercy Corps should choose local partners wisely to ensure effective use of resources and sustainability. As much as possible, the flow of benefits from interventions should be taken into consideration to ensure that one group does not receive benefits

² Klingebiel and Roehder 2008:743

³ Annan 2005

⁴ DFID 2011:21

⁵ USAID 2008:4

⁶ GTZ 2009:7

over other groups. Program frameworks developed prior to implementation can help to mitigate post-intervention tensions in beneficiary communities, and they should be a part of pre-intervention planning and program design.⁷

Economic initiatives can also further peacebuilding aims by supporting “connectors” or strengthening conflict mitigators within society. To this end, projects that increase market interactions and interdependence between groups can have the potential to mitigate the emergence of conflict within those groups. With respect to the latter, Mercy Corps’s analysis of its Building Bridges to Peace Program in Karamoja found a statistically significant correlation between economic and market interactions between groups and increased mobility. However, a causal relationship between economic interaction and freedom of movement is not readily apparent.⁸

Consequently, the recommendations related to economic development in Karamoja seek to address the key causes of resource-based conflict by diversifying economic opportunities among key groups and reversing trends of environmental degradation, and building interdependent relationships within communities based on value chain development of products produced in Karamoja, namely cattle and honey. For a more comprehensive explanation of value chains and value chain development in conflict settings, please refer to Section A titled Value Chain Development under Recommendations for Mercy Corps Programming. Accordingly, capacity building of local individuals and institutions will also factor heavily into the broader support of these sectors, and will be particularly pertinent in the sustainability, development, and growth of these value chains. As will be clear from the conflict assessment discussion herein, it is clear that economic interventions alone will not be able to bring stability to the region. In the long term, it is clear that significant support from the local and national governments will determine Karamoja’s ability to achieve significant, positive development. Nevertheless, the recommendations presented should be part of a comprehensive development strategy that includes efforts to improve advocacy, governance and security sector institutions in the region.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Prior to addressing the causes of conflict, it is important to understand the demographic, climatic and physical make-up of Karamoja. The Karamoja region, located in the northeastern part of Uganda, spans 10,550 square miles with approximately 1.2 million inhabitants.⁹ It is organized into seven different districts – Kaabong, Kotido, Abim, Amudat, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, and Napak. The three principal ethnic groups in Karamoja are the Dodoth in the north, the Jie in the central region, the Karamojong (subdivided into the Bokora, Matheniko, and Pian groups) in the south. The Pokot, an unrelated tribe from a separate linguistic group, are located near the border of Kenya in the southeast of the region. There are also several minority ethnic groups – the Labwor, a sedentary group in the West, the Tepeth, Nyakwe, Ik, Ngipore, and Ethur who are located in the mountainous and border areas.¹⁰

Three livelihood zones exist within the region – the arid pastoral zone, the agro-pastoral zone (most of central Kaabong, most of Kotido, central Moroto, and central Nakapiripirit) and the wet-agricultural zone.¹¹ The regional climate consists of arid and semi-arid agro-ecological zones with rainfall ranging between 350-1000 mm per annum, although this varies widely throughout the year and by region.¹²

⁷ Kennan Rapp, Interview, World Bank

⁸ Mercy Corps 2011:7

⁹ Stites et al. 2009:6

¹⁰ Ezaga 2010:iv

¹¹ DanChurchAid 2010:1

¹² Nalule 2010:iv

Unlike other areas of Uganda, the region has a mono-modal rainfall pattern, with rainfall occurring sporadically from April to September and a prolonged drought from October to March.¹³ Since the rainy season does not begin and end at the same time in all zones, pastoralists need to be highly mobile in search for areas with sufficient productive resources.¹⁴ While the rainy season facilitates the growth of quality pastures, it is also associated with a higher prevalence of livestock diseases.¹⁵

Soils in the region are mostly black clays and dark grey clay, with moderate moisture storage capacity. When irrigated, these soils can be used for agriculture. Soil erosion is widespread, although it varies throughout the region based on topography, climate, soil type, and human land use.¹⁶

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

The Karamoja region of Uganda represents a confluence of several development challenges. Historical political marginalization has greatly contributed to underdevelopment of the region and left a legacy of chronic poverty. Lack of capacity and investment in the region has created a dearth of infrastructure, remaining an impediment to many development interventions. Also, insecurity in recent years has hindered economic development and limited the scope of successful interventions.

Approximately 50 percent of the Karamoja population is under 18 years of age.¹⁷ Compounded with higher population growth rates of 5.5 percent for the region, demographic trends create further stresses on an already fragile environment and population.¹⁸ Given this context, future development recommendations to enhance economic development and peacebuilding in the region must take into account the high illiteracy rates, poor health and education, lack of access to safe water and sanitation, poor infrastructure, and general lack of local government capacity.

One of the consequences of economic and physical insecurity in the region has been out-migration to cities and towns inside and outside of the region. As women and children are some of the most vulnerable groups, there has been large out-migration to larger cities such as Kampala. One estimate claims that 90 percent of street children under five years old in Kampala are from Karamoja, and the Kampala City Council estimates that 80 percent of all beggars in the city are from the region.¹⁹

POVERTY/DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Although recent figures are not currently available, as of the June 2009, development indicators for the region are significantly lower than the national averages.²⁰ An estimated 82 percent of the population lives below the poverty line as compared to national estimates of 31 percent. This results in a life expectancy for Karamojong that is lower than the national average (47.7 years, as compared to 50.4 years).²¹ Chronic poverty and lack of health infrastructure have contributed to higher maternal and infant mortality rates (750 vs. 505 per 100,000 live births²² and 178 vs. 88 per 1,000 live births²³,

¹³ DanChurchAid 2010:1

¹⁴ Nalule 2010:6

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ DanChurchAid 2010:1

¹⁷ Knaute and Kagan 2008:10

¹⁸ Kakande 2007

¹⁹ Powell 2010:4

²⁰ OCHA 2009

²¹ Ibid.

²² DRT 2008:8

²³ UNICEF/ WHO 2008

respectively) and an under-five mortality rate of 248 compared to 141 per 1,000 live births²⁴ for Uganda as a whole. Other estimates suggest that as many as 44.8 percent of children live in households in which they eat only one meal per day, resulting in significant stunting (35.5 percent), wasting (10.9 percent) and severe malnutrition (1.6 percent).²⁵

A significant lack of health infrastructure is one of the primary contributing factors to poor health in the region. According to a 2009 Report by Development Research and Training (DRT) titled Understanding Chronic Poverty and Vulnerability Issues in Karamoja Region, Karamoja only has five hospitals throughout the entire region and extremely low ratios of medical professionals to patients (doctor-patient ratio is estimated to be 1:50,000 and the nurse-patient ratio at 1:16,882).²⁶

Human development in the region has also been affected by extremely low school enrolment rates. The Uganda Clusters Consolidated Report on the education sector in the region stated that 60% of children were still not enrolled in schools, in spite of efforts to institute Non Form Education (ABEK).²⁷ Consequently, literacy rates for the region hover around 11 percent versus 67 percent nationally.

CONFLICT ASSESSMENT – CAUSES OF INSECURITY

Programming in Karamoja needs to be created and implemented with a sound understanding of the root causes of insecurity in the region. Additionally, it needs to be flexible enough to fit into the localized cultural contexts, otherwise risking failure from being irrelevant to the local population.²⁸ Identifying core grievances, conflict mitigators, and the drivers of conflict not only clarifies the overall development situation, but also sheds light on the types of development interventions that are likely to have the most success in the conflict context.

With respect to Karamoja, conflict analyses produced by various development institutions disagree on exactly what is driving conflict. Many local peacebuilding initiatives have been initiated by development organizations to change dynamics among communities; these have included the establishment of peace committees, increases in mechanisms that monitor conflict indicators, and the development of early warning infrastructure. Jeremy Lind argues that these types of interventions have largely been unsuccessful for three primary reasons: (i) they do not address the historical grievances of marginalization and underdevelopment, (ii) they do not achieve noticeable changes in the livelihoods of the destitute since they are not accompanied by support structures for the poorest, and (iii) peace and security committees have reinforced existing power structures and have simply been created by savvy locals to appease external donors.²⁹ Kagan et al. also suggest that as militarism has altered social relationships and hierarchies among Karamojong groups, peace talks organized by elders no longer have significant impact upon warriors, unless the latter find them in their own interest.³⁰ Consequently, results from economic development interventions will be limited unless they are accompanied by structural changes that empower Karamojong communities at national and regional levels and establish tangible support programs for the poorest in Karamoja.³¹

²⁴ UNICEF/ WHO 2008

²⁵ Powell 2010:3

²⁶ DRT 2010:8

²⁷ CAP Uganda Monitoring Report Karamoja 2010:1

²⁸ Kennan Rapp, interview, World Bank

²⁹ Lind 2006:114

³⁰ Kagan et al. 2009:19

³¹ Lind 2006:114

Text Box 1.1: The Karamojong did not always have guns

Everybody out there thinks the Karimojong are trigger happy individuals who use the gun to intimidate their neighbours. Nobody seems to remember when we were virtual captives in our own homes, rendered totally helpless by the Turkana who had guns while we only had spears. From the 1950s through to the late 1970s, the Turkana wreaked havoc in this region. They took away all our cattle, leaving us destitute, and at the mercy of hunger and famine. The government could not protect us from them. They would attack our homes, take away our cattle, and force us to watch as they raped our wives and daughters. It is only when we got guns that we were able to stand up to the Turkana and other neighbouring communities and to avenge the humiliation we had suffered forages at their hands.

-Oxfam Karamoja Conflict Study

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/learning/pastoralism/downloads/karamoja_conflict.pdf

In Karamoja, the Ugandan military, economic and political marginalization, local environment and ecology, and cattle raiding are among the key drivers of conflict. Jeremy Lind has argued that the role of competition over resources in conflict in pastoralist communities of East Africa has been over exaggerated in aid agency programming aimed at conflict mitigation.³² As Stites and Akabwai point out, peace between communities, even those who have had longstanding benevolent peaceful relations, tends to fluctuate after small-scale thefts erode trust between groups.³³

Our intent is to provide a broad overview of the significant conflict drivers in Karamoja as presented by the body of literature reviewed. Of course, Mercy Corps will not have the immediate capacity or interest to address each of them; however, its programming should take into account, as much as possible, the range of conflict drivers in order to design interventions that are able to be as comprehensible and sustainable as possible. Thus, though the conflict analysis presented below is broad in scope, our recommendations will include those aimed at increasing peace by supporting the development of alternative livelihoods *inside* a context of our understanding of Mercy Corp's immediate capacity, expertise, and level of interest.

UGANDAN PEOPLE'S DEFENSE FORCE (UPDF)

A number of recent surveys and reports conducted in the Karamoja region provide significant insight into the importance of security for the Karamojong people, and the challenges that insecurity currently presents, particularly for economic development. In a survey of 337 individuals in Karamoja, 84 percent listed insecurity/armed conflict as the biggest problem affecting their communities.³⁴ The Ugandan national army, the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF), has long been active in Karamoja because of this insecurity, focusing in the last 10 years on conducting a number of disarmament campaigns aimed at restoring security to the region via the removal of arms from the civilian population, through both voluntary and forceful arms appropriations.³⁵ The current disarmament campaign is embedded within the national development plan for the region called the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDDP). Disarmament, per the KIDDP, is a "means to an end" of broader development goals in the region, and is supposed to be part of a broader, more holistic process that addresses the roots of conflict more than previous disarmament exercises.³⁶

³² Lind 2006:112

³³ Stites et al. 2009:25

³⁴ Bevan 2008:35

³⁵ Saferworld 2010:7

³⁶ KIDDP 2007:4

Perspectives vary on the effectiveness of these campaigns. State actors cite the general effectiveness of disarmament campaigns in “collecting a large number of weapons, reducing public display/use of weapons by Karamojong *karachuna*³⁷ and reducing the number of arms-related casualties reported.”³⁸ However, the fact that the government is citing this success should not be surprising considering the effort that it has spent on exercises.

Though many weapons have certainly been removed from the region thanks to these campaigns, some observers remain highly pessimistic. Stites argues that disarmament has not yielded positive impacts in the medium or long terms.³⁹ David Eaton notes that the arms markets in Karamoja “are so entrenched that even disarmament campaigns have become little more than ‘forced upgrades’ where older weapons are confiscated and new ones rapidly acquired to replace them”.⁴⁰ Bevan asserts that of the eight separate disarmament campaigns conducted by the government of Uganda since 1943, “none of these initiatives has proved effective in reducing armed violence in the region.”⁴¹ He also suggests that the most recent disarmament initiatives have actually been counterproductive and have actually had an escalated effect on violence.⁴²

Some of these increases in violence can be attributed to the uneven application of disarmament activities in the communities that they target. Raids can increase as disarmament campaigns often “strip one ethnic group of their weapons while leaving other neighboring peoples fully armed”.⁴³ In a context in which many armed groups exploit each other through raiding, the removal of arms from one group simply opens the door for other groups to increase raids because they know the disarmed group is less able to defend itself. Stites and Akabwai note in their study of disarmament in Karamoja a common public “perception that the military and the government are *unwilling or unable* to disarm all population groups in a balanced manner. This fuels mistrust towards the institutions of the state and resentment toward neighboring groups that have been “allowed” to retain their weapons.”⁴⁴

Several important factors emerge from a review of recent literature that provide a more complete understanding of the roles that the UPDF and disarmament have played in contributing to insecurity in Karamoja. First, there is a broad consensus among the Karamojong in favor of disarmament.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the *way* that disarmament is carried out remains of extreme concern for Karamojong communities. Uneven or unequal disarmament is of particular concern since it has left some communities unarmed and vulnerable to attack by other communities yet to be disarmed.

Despite a significant presence in the region, the UPDF have been largely unable to ensure uniform security for Karamojong communities. As a basic level of security is needed not only to implement development projects, but also to ensure mobility, access to markets, and security of assets, this

³⁷ The *karachuna* are the “male youth in Karamojong society to implement the collective will of their community’s traditional decision-making systems, and often take on the roles of protectors and ‘warriors’.” Saferworld 2010:Glossary

³⁸ Saferworld 2010:v

³⁹ Stites et al. 2007:76

⁴⁰ Eaton 2008:103

⁴¹ Bevan 2010:53

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Eaton 2008:103

⁴⁴ Stites and Akabwai 2009:14

⁴⁵ Saferworld 2010:8

remains a major impediment to disarmament campaigns in the region. Eaton argues that much of the cattle raiding that occurs in Karamoja is retributive for prior, less significant thefts. Raiding is an escalated response based largely on revenge⁴⁶; this explanation for the violence would, then, necessitate an effective police force capable and willing to apprehend both petty thieves and cattle raiders, return stolen property to rightful owners, and follow up with appropriate justice for successful conflict resolution. However, Bevan explains that the UPDF largely does not fulfill this role effectively.

In almost all districts of Karamoja, [the UPDF] are stationed as a buffer force. By and large, they do not perform policing duties and, with the exception of the actions of a few commanders, they rarely attempt to mediate disputes or follow-up on raids. The same is true of government-created 'anti-stock theft' and 'local defence' units (LDUs), which—similar to the Kenya police reserves on the other side of the border—serve as defensive forces for border regions and urban areas, respectively. Because security forces are relatively immobile and perform static protective duties, there is little active conflict or crime resolution in Karamoja.⁴⁷

This is unfortunate for the state of security in Karamoja. Surveys indicate that the public's trust in the UPDF to provide good security is not high, particularly with regard to disarmament activities. "Public perceptions of the ongoing disarmament exercise being conducted by the UPDF remain poor as the UPDF have struggled to maintain good community relations and persuade the population they are acting to promote their security and welfare."⁴⁸

There are several reasons for this. One is that the UPDF, along with other security forces in the region, are sometimes unable to properly defend against attacks due to resource limitations or due to bureaucratic orders from their commanders. In some instances, cattle raids have occurred in very close proximity to army barracks, but they did not draw a response from the UPDF.⁴⁹

The widespread Karamojong distrust of the UPDF is also due to the many allegations of human rights abuses that have occurred/are occurring during the campaigns. Multiple reports highlight the significant issues that have been associated with disarmament methods. A 2007 Human Rights Watch report revealed serious human rights breaches by the UPDF including the use of excess violence resulting in significant unarmed casualties, total destruction of villages, severe beatings, violent interrogations, arbitrary detentions, theft, and deprivation of food, water, and shelter.⁵⁰

One last major factor in the distrust of the UPDF is that their presence can and often does disrupt normal livelihoods patterns. In 2007, 3,000 Pokot pastoralists were displaced during a disarmament campaign, which resulted in at least one human death and the death of over 170 of their cattle. Stites et al. note that this displacement also disrupted cultivation of crops and disturbed normal livestock rotations.⁵¹ Due to the social tension created by the UPDF's heavy-handedness and the institution of army involvement in the *kraal/manyatta*⁵² system of mobility, pastoralists also have experienced

⁴⁶ Eaton 2008:101

⁴⁷ Bevan 2008:33

⁴⁸ ACTED:3

⁴⁹ Bevan 2008:65-66

⁵⁰ Ibid:56

⁵¹ Stites et al. 2007:36

⁵² *Kraals* are mobile camps employed by the pastoralists; they are often fortified to protect against raids.

Manyattas are semi-permanent family dwellings, often including huts and granaries. Saferworld 2010:Glossary

difficulties gaining access to their own cattle when the UPDF has been tasked with protecting them. In these situations, pastoralists have reported significant intimidation, accusatory questioning, red tape requiring permission letters from local officials, and rent-seeking on behalf of UPDF commanders, all simply to sell a cow to meet a need or pay a necessary expense.⁵³

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MARGINALIZATION

Much of the literature on Karamoja is based on perspectives that prescribe some level of blame for Karamoja's long-term underdevelopment on the GoU, arguing that many of its policies have resulted in economic and political marginalization of the region.⁵⁴ During the colonial period under British rule, this marginalization was exemplified primarily by the "forcible acquisition of land" which closed access to "nearly a fifth of what was formerly grazing and agricultural land" used by the Karamojong. These policies were also connected to a broader marginalization process that declared Karamoja a "restricted area," essentially establishing a system that minimized "contact between the people of Karamoja and those of the rest of Uganda."⁵⁵

The end of colonial rule certainly did not do away with the consequences of these initial policies. Idi Amin set in motion policies to force changes to the Karamojong's traditional style of dress, and also arguably implemented policies designed to increase sedentarization of the Karamojong.⁵⁶ Kagan et al. argue that the Karamoja region still suffers prejudice from Uganda's national government, which has led to a lack of investment in infrastructure, the establishment of systems of local governance that exclude the authority of traditional Karamojong social systems, and policies that inhibit pastoralist livelihoods, such as the expansion of land privatization. They argue that this is directly connected to breakdown of social relations in Karamoja, which currently plays a significant role in the region's insecurity.⁵⁷

A number of other authors cite GoU policies that seemed to be designed to change the underlying dynamics of society and production in Karamoja, particularly pastoral modes of production. Human Rights Watch argues that "government initiatives have been directed historically almost wholly toward increasing the sustainability of settled agriculture and central control."⁵⁸ Stites and Akabwai claim that

Many observers of Ugandan politics would argue that the Government of Uganda is interested in radically transforming Karamoja society through a process of sedentarization and that the consequences listed above [food insecurity, shifts in gender roles, collapse of systems of mobility, etc] are by no means accidental. Parallel national debates lend credence to this argument, including the recurring discussion on forcing Karamojong children into boarding schools and the various enticements to draw people into large (and largely unsustainable) 'resettlement' sites to practice agriculture.⁵⁹

⁵³ Stites and Akabwai 2009:21

⁵⁴ For examples, see Mkutu 2009:102; DRT 2008:7; Stites et al. 2007:6; ACTED:2; Saferworld 2010:3; Stites and Akabwai 2009:6

⁵⁵ Mamdani 1982:68; this paper also shows a significant change in ecological health during Uganda's colonial period due, at least partially, to these colonial policies

⁵⁶ Powell 2010:23

⁵⁷ Kagan et al. 2009:27-28

⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch 2007:13

⁵⁹ Stites and Akabwai 2009:11 footnote

It could be argued that the GoU's recent earmarking of 6 billion USh (approximately 2.4 million USD) to "enable parents in Karamoja [to] send their children to school in the next five years" is evidence in support of this argument.⁶⁰

This desire to fundamentally change Karamojong culture, especially with regard to pastoralist production, is also exemplified through the government's development initiatives. In speaking of the current GoU development plan for Karamoja, Stites and Akabwai note that "the government has shown a much greater commitment (in terms of both financial and human resources) to the disarmament than to the development components of the KIDDP plan. Most communities in our study population have an impression of the government based almost entirely on their experiences with disarmament."⁶¹ Bevan echoes this thought and argues that "short-term policies directed at addressing the symptoms of the region's problems – such as number of weapons – rather than structural reasons for conflict, such as marginalization, poverty, and scarcity" are not likely to bring positive change.⁶² Instead, he argues that

Above all, Karamoja needs to receive adequate government attention. Its roads, towns, and people all exemplify neglect by central authority. As a result, in the eyes of many Karimojong, the army's use of force is the only role the government plays in their lives. The government needs to restore the confidence of the people of Karamoja if it to begin to address armed violence, insecurity, and underdevelopment in the region.⁶³

In the long term, Bevan's analysis is apt. Without significant investment, particularly in infrastructure, economic development in Karamoja will likely be constrained and limited to smaller-scale interventions that are within the scope of NGOs and local government. Some of the major infrastructure projects needed to significantly open Karamoja to wider economic activities in Uganda and the region are outside of the scope of all but the largest development organizations, and at any rate, are the responsibility of the central government to finance and carry out.

CLIMATE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Pastoralism is a livelihood mechanism designed to be as adaptable as possible in order to create space for survival regardless of challenging environmental factors. Strategic mobility allows pastoralists to maximize resources where they are available, as they are available. For this reason, pastoralism is increasingly recognized as the most productive use of land in arid and semi-arid climates by some policymakers, though academics have long argued along these lines. As with other environments in which pastoralists are found, the ecology, climate, political context, and natural resource base play heavily into (i) pastoralists' ability to maintain their livelihoods, and (ii) the range of options that development actors can choose from in designing and implementing effective interventions.

Due to the variety of climatic and geographic factors mentioned in the background section of this report, numerous reports assert that pastoralism is the most effective and rational use of the land.⁶⁴ However, general insecurity, population growth and dispersion, ecological factors, and government policies that promote sedentarization, hinder mobility and restrict land use severely constrain pastoralists' abilities to successfully sustain their livelihoods. Limited mobility has resulted in intensified grazing and human

⁶⁰ Wanyama 2011

⁶¹ Stites and Akabwai 2009:10-11

⁶² Bevan 2008:81

⁶³ Ibid.:81

⁶⁴ Stites et al. 2007; Powell 2010; O'Keefe 2011; ACTED

settlement in smaller areas, which has contributed to greater degradation of land and its natural resources. Thus, development actors need to take into account interventions that will decrease environmental degradation while also allowing for legitimate alternative livelihoods, in addition to programming that supports livestock-based livelihoods.

A significant amount of research attempts to connect the ecological factors in Karamoja with the variety of problems also present in the region. Drought is a part of life in Karamoja, and obviously exacts a heavy toll on pastoralist livelihoods. A study conducted by Uganda's Ministry of Water, Land and Environment showed that the occurrence of droughts has increased significantly in the Karamoja region during the past century; currently, surveys indicate that there is generally one year of good rainfall every five years.⁶⁵

In times when food security is compromised, pastoralists often partially shift to coping mechanisms in order to supplement their main livelihood mechanism of cattle ownership. Often, these coping mechanisms have a relatively more substantial negative impact on the natural environment, particularly when taking into account any government policies that limit pastoralists' mobility. As in many other dryland regions, droughts and associated increases in poverty drive "greater reliance on natural resource exploitation" in Karamoja.⁶⁶ A recent USAID food security survey notes that this has been observed as recent below-normal crop production has led to increased reliance on wood, particularly in regions in which it is used for fuel, charcoal, and fence construction for homestead protection. The report also suggests that, over the long-term, the livelihoods that pastoralists turn to during drought will eventually impact their ability to resume their main livelihood activities, even in years with good rainfall.⁶⁷ Particularly pertinent in this issue of environmental degradation seems to be firewood gathering and charcoal making, which are commonly employed coping strategies in Karamoja. As drought conditions worsen and people increasingly rely on wood for fuel, construction material, and charcoal, "the availability of these materials, and this means of coping, will also decrease."⁶⁸ The long-term impact of environmental degradation will be especially poignant for pastoralists whose existence is so closely aligned to the natural environment.

Natural resource exploitation is an additional source of insecurity. Mobility is compromised in areas with significant conflict, as people are afraid to travel as they otherwise would due to increased vulnerability when away from their home villages. Naturally, the longer people are immobile, the greater their immediate impact on their environment will be; concurrently, the more they exploit the natural resources in their immediate vicinity, the fewer resources will be available for future use. Stites notes that cattle raiding has been a driving factor of immobility in Karamoja, which has also significantly contributed to both deforestation and erosion.⁶⁹ Other non-conflict factors have also historically decreased mobility in Karamoja including the development of water points, establishment of nature reserves, and increased agricultural activities, which have all impacted mobility and had a negative environmental impact.⁷⁰

Environmentally, the future of Karamoja is uncertain. The area is likely to continue experiencing climate

⁶⁵ Magunda 2010:6,13

⁶⁶ Stites and Akabwai 2010:19

⁶⁷ Browne and Glaeser 2010:2,8

⁶⁸ Ibid.:21

⁶⁹ Stites et al. 2007:14

⁷⁰ Mwaura 2005:8

change, which is expected to increase rainfall variability.⁷¹ Historically, pastoralists have been able to successfully adapt to changing climates. Depending on the significance of the impending changes and the interaction of those factors that continue to impede their mobility in Karamoja, this may not be the case in the future. Kagan et al. describe this as being a factor of the 'Karamoja syndrome', which they characterize as a

complex cycle of unsustainable development whereby ecological degradation (ultimately leading to desertification) on the one hand, and the destitution of social institutions and aggravation of raids and conflicts on the other hand, reinforce each other via the deterioration of livelihoods and the reinforcement of unsustainable livelihood mixes such as inappropriate agricultural practices, a loss of pastoral mobility resulting in overgrazing and alternative livelihoods (such as firewood selling) with devastating environmental consequences.⁷²

This Syndrome framework presents an extremely complex map of Karamoja's challenges with chronic underdevelopment and insecurity. However, it does provide some of the most comprehensive articulation of how the many factors of the Syndrome are interconnected, and it encourages a long-term view of Karamoja's development, which is a useful tool for program design and implementation.

CATTLE RAIDING

Karamoja is perhaps most notorious for the high incidence of cattle raiding in the area. While difficult to ascertain, a recent Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) livestock estimate suggests that there are approximately 1.1 million cattle, 2.07 million shoats, 960 donkeys, 32,030 camels and a small number of pigs.⁷³ According to Mark O'Keefe, the estimated 2,000 violent cattle raiding incidents between 2003 and 2009 have not only had a devastating impact on social capital in the region, they have also resulted in the loss of approximately \$8 million in livestock assets.⁷⁴ Cattle's importance in Karamoja's cultural identity remains a challenge to security in the region. Although some argue that other types of livestock have a similar status to cattle, Mercy Corps's experiences with a Jie focus group in Kotido suggest that small ruminants are primarily kept for exchange and food and do not hold equal status.⁷⁵ Historically, livestock raiding in Karamoja has occurred between different ethnic groups and infrequently within groups; it has been commonly used as a mechanism for rebuilding herds after disease or drought, securing bride-price or as an expression of manhood.⁷⁶ However, Eaton has also noted that revenge has been a large motivation in the cycle of raiding and counter-raiding.

Raiding usually results from some form of asymmetrical retaliation. An innocent, unprepared group of people will be targeted for an attack, which they perceive to be entirely unprovoked. This creates a cycle of violence. While factors like poverty, resource scarcity, bride wealth, and arms proliferation may enable violence in the North Rift, their absence will not lead to an end of raiding. In this way, the search for the 'root causes' of raiding ignores the real issues: the decisions made regarding whether or not to respond to

⁷¹ Stites et al. 2007:11

⁷² Knaute et al. 2009:24

⁷³ Nalule 2010:2

⁷⁴ O'Keefe 2011: 1283

⁷⁵ Mercy Corps 2011:32

⁷⁶ ACF 2008: 3

minor thefts combined with the complete collapse of any method of legal recourse for the victims.⁷⁷

Eaton's assertions exemplify the debate about the current nature of cattle raiding in the region. Authors disagree about the nature of the increase in violent raiding over the last two decades. Many have argued that as resources in the area have become scarcer due to drought, climate change, and insecurity, raiding has increased as a simple survival mechanism. However, there is also evidence that these factors have contributed to peace among groups in the past as a survival strategy.⁷⁸ Eaton supports this by citing incidences of cooperation and peace agreements among Pokot and Pian communities in the face of extreme drought:

Pian elders generally believe the Pokot will only seek peace during a period of extreme drought. One Pokot raider confirmed this, claiming that 'with us, usually when we foresee famine looming, we send for a peace pact with the Karimojong'. Another group of Sebei elders bitterly noted that 'if there is drought in their [Pokot and Pian] land, they will ask for peace but during rainy season they will go back without any appreciation other than more raiding'.⁷⁹

Terry McCabe has supported this logic by noting that "access to external resources can be negotiated or fought over...[w]hich path is chosen depends on far more than environmental conditions, and it can only be understood as part of broader political and economic relationships on the regional, state, and international levels."⁸⁰

As Knighton has warned, the "common assumption is that pastoralist raiding has become more frequent, widespread, and severe ... in some parts of the region where raiding is thought to be most intense, such as the Karamoja area of northeastern Uganda, there is no evidence of a continuous escalation over time in levels of armed violence."⁸¹ Nevertheless, some of the development literature has focused on the increasing prevalence of violent cattle raiding in Karamoja due to the proliferation of small arms and economic insecurity.⁸² This logic coincides with the results of numerous community surveys and focus groups that argue that additional livelihoods development will be helpful in decreasing insecurity in the region.

There is considerable disagreement among the literature regarding causes, motivations, and trends of the prevalence of raiding in Karamoja. There appears to be multiple motivations and rationales for continued cattle raiding, and each argument explaining causes of raiding (historical, cultural, arms, commercialization, revenge, etc) likely addresses one or several aspects of reality. This lack of clarity, however, means that programming that aims to improve build peace in the region is unlikely to address all aspects of raiding; however, it also means that interventions must take great care that impacts of interventions do not unnecessarily and unintentionally exacerbate factors outside the scope of planned impacts.

⁷⁷ Eaton 2008:109-110

⁷⁸ Ibid.:101

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.:100

⁸¹ Lind 2006:112

⁸² Powell 2010:4; ACF 2008:3

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MERCY CORPS PROGRAMMING

Based on the security and development context of Karamoja, this report recommends that Mercy Corps programming in Karamoja be based in four key development areas: village and community-level investments, value-chain development in cattle-oriented trade and other locally cultivated products, natural resource management and development, and local capacity building. Specific interventions within these areas are identified, and are based on the theory of change that links economic security with broader issues of security and peace. These four areas were chosen based on our assessment of greatest needs in the region, Mercy Corps' core strengths, and perceived viability of interventions within each area.

In considering how economic development might support peacebuilding efforts, it is helpful to differentiate between peace and issues of security. Though related, they are different, and thus, measures to promote each will also be different. Particularly with regard to Mercy Corps operations in Karamoja, peace is a much stronger motivation and end goal. Inherent in this issue is the idea that peace is a result of structures that limit direct competition, promote positive interaction among various groups, and contribute to the broader growth in the region. Security, on the other hand, is concerned with the structures of a framework that can allow activities designed to promote peace to thrive. Under this framework, a strong police force (security) allows for trade to occur between groups, which theoretically results in increased interdependence among groups that have an economic interest in maintaining good relations with the other (peace). Similar to the democratic peace theory on a micro scale, increased connections between groups decrease the likelihood for instability between them by increasing the opportunity cost of destabilizing the relationship.

In Karamoja, insecurity is often associated with the cattle raids that feature prominently in the region's security profile. A conflict assessment conducted by Saferworld in 2010 argues that many involved in development policy and implementation in Karamoja closely align the presence of cattle and pastoralist livelihoods with conflict. The theoretical ideas underpinning their programs blame the presence of cattle for conflict, or at least pastoralists' over-reliance on cattle as their main livelihood mechanism. Naturally, then, their interventions are often "targeted at reducing dependency on livestock [which will] lead to a consequent reduction in the conflict and raiding associated with livestock keeping."⁸³ The report goes on to explain that alternative livelihoods will "increase general prosperity and provide a more settled way of life, thereby consolidating peace and security."⁸⁴

Though rational based on a specific understanding of the conflict, an overemphasis on alternative livelihoods completely disregards the historical, cultural, and environmental factors that have led to pastoralist's existence in Karamoja. It follows, then, that development interventions that don't fully take into account these factors are not likely to achieve a high rate of success. If anything has been proven over and over in the development field in the last half-century, this is that a lack of cultural understanding in program design will be a direct hindrance to its long-term success. Therefore, economic interventions need to support livestock livelihoods since cattle are revered in Karamojong society and associated with wealth, status and savings.

⁸³ Saferworld 2010:30

⁸⁴ Ibid.

To this end, Saferworld’s conflict assessment revealed the various perspectives for development interventions in the region. Their respondents noted that, while alternative livelihood options might be generally a good idea, some respondents

emphasized that support to cattle-based livelihoods continues to be of paramount importance. They suggested livestock and pastoralist livelihoods should be strengthened through support to cross-breeding and improved animal nutrition projects. They implied that “hatred” and conflict would be reduced if Karamojong communities could get assistance to improve the quality and health of their livestock.⁸⁵

This is a revealing statement, and one that was repeated often throughout the literature. People of Karamoja seem to be very open to alternative livelihoods programming, but at the end of the day, much of the literature shows that cattle as a livelihoods strategy is still very rooted in the economic and social fabric of life.

In the following paragraphs, we will explore a number of potential economic livelihood initiatives that, taken in the context of Karamoja, could address some of the underlying drivers of conflict. Also, we briefly discuss the lessons learned from economic interventions in other African pastoralist contexts, and how they may be instructive to Mercy Corps activities in Karamoja. In considering these interventions, we attempted to be realistic in light of Mercy Corps organizational strengths and interests, while balancing the various development needs in Karamoja. Given the multitude of programming activities in the region by other various agencies, Mercy Corps can choose to focus its efforts on addressing gaps in these interventions. This can include conducting market and value-chain analyses to assess market opportunities, building market linkages and value chains with the private sector, supporting agricultural research institutes and communities to promote economic activity, and working with underserved communities in the region. Since there are undoubtedly a number of challenges related to implementing economic development activities, we have provided a discussion of these in the following section.



A. VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

Value chain analysis and development should be the foundation of Mercy Corps Uganda’s economic livelihood diversification programming. As defined by USAID, the value chain entails “the flow of a product from early stages through higher value-add stages until it reaches the ultimate consumer.”⁸⁶ The graphic on the left illustrates the various sectors and actors involved in an individual value chain. This approach includes an analysis of firms in a market chain and the relationships between them, as well as looking at how information is shared between members of a product chain, access to markets, resource constraints and benefits.⁸⁷ Consequently, value chain development looks to improve the incomes of actors within the chain by identifying ways to

⁸⁵ Saferworld 2010:30

⁸⁶ USAID 2010:6

⁸⁷ ACDI-VOCA http://www.acdivoca.org/site/ID/ourwork_valuechains

both upgrade the products produced and by making transactions within the value chain more efficient to improve competitiveness and profitability.⁸⁸ *Since trust or social capital is a major component of value chain development, value chain programming requires conflict sensitive approaches so as not to exacerbate fissures among and within Karamojong groups.*

Text Box 1.2

Value Chain Challenges – Sudan Shea Butter

Based on the extreme level of disruption in South Sudan, there were few, if any, private-sector partners to take on value chain functions. As a result, the implementing organization took the unusual (and generally discouraged) step of undertaking entire functions within the project itself, including such efforts as communication, transportation, research and development, and product marketing, in order to build the chain from harvesters to the end market. The project is now working hard to attract private-sector participants into the chain, who are undoubtedly weighing the market incentives against the still-substantial risks. While it is understandable that the Sudan context would require initial subsidies to test the market and offset private-sector risk, the use of subsidies to undertake entire functions of the value chain will likely create future difficulties in extracting donor resources without disruptions to the chain.

- USAID A SYNTHESIS OF PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM VALUE CHAIN PROJECTS IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED ENVIRONMENTS, p. 26

USAID, GTZ and International Alert have produced publications on conflict sensitive approaches to value chain development that should be consulted when implementing value chain development projects.⁸⁹ Some of the considerations include, but are not limited to: (i) measuring risk that infrastructure improvements undertaken by a project could benefit conflict actors or illicit business activity and including ways to mitigate this risk in programming; (ii) examining whether the value chain intervention will reinforce existing divisions and ways to mitigate this impact; (iii) Do value chain group identities correspond to those featuring in the conflict? What are the implications for the value chain and any interventions?; and (iv) Do any of the identified conflict actors have a stake in the value chain and if so, in what form? For example, do they comprise an end market supplied by the value chain; control specific functions in it; or benefit from it financially or in other ways?⁹⁰

Although USAID acknowledges that value chain programming is not as effective an instrument for achieving peacebuilding or reconciliation goals as compared to education, health, infrastructure or credit programs implemented across fault lines⁹¹, diversification of livelihoods through value chain development may help to mitigate the cattle raiding that is practiced as a survival strategy or help to establish value chain relationships within and between conflict parties. Despite these limitations, USAID has recognized the importance of facilitating exchange of information and communication among value chain participants, allowing them to work together for direct business benefit, increasing trust among parties along the way.⁹²

To ensure that value chain programming is conflict sensitive, mapping social ties across the functions and relationships of the value chain will illustrate where trust within value chains is present or deficient. Building upon this, USAID recommends that implementers use existing social networks

⁸⁸ USAID 2010:6

⁸⁹ Please refer to Value Chain in Conflict Affected Environments Project on microlinks - http://www.microlinks.org/ev02.php?ID=23261_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC

⁹⁰ USAID 2008:1-15

⁹¹ Ibid.29

⁹² Ibid.19

as a starting point for value chain programming to increase trust among homogeneous groups, but also to use successes in the first stage as a platform for expanding programming across social networks.⁹³ In addition to mapping conflict relationships and variables within a value chain map and working across fault lines, some other key methods of achieving peacebuilding goals within a value chain framework have been creating forums across social groups and functions that provide a mechanism for transparency and information sharing. Using ‘private sector champions’ from different conflict groups highlights opportunities for working together or common interests among groups.⁹⁴

The following recommendations for economic livelihood diversification should be pursued only after a comprehensive value chain and supply/demand analysis is performed so that communities can pursue crop cultivation and product development where opportunities exist in local, regional and international markets. Above all, performing a value chain analysis should ensure that livelihood diversification strategies are rooted in market opportunities and local contexts instead of donor priorities. Furthermore, the value chain analysis will help to identify where capacity building activities can be provided by local businesses or government and the areas where Mercy Corps needs to supplement or facilitate services.⁹⁵

B. ECONOMIC LIVELIHOOD DIVERSIFICATION

Historically, development approaches in the region have focused on converting livestock herders to sedentary farming. Approaches have also focused on top-down approaches and other interventions that have often been resisted by pastoralist groups. Karamojong have also been frustrated by outsider-led development interventions.⁹⁶ However, there is now recognition among the majority of development actors operating within the region that pastoralist livelihood systems offer the greatest potential in the Karamoja region due to climate conditions and available resources. “[A]gricultural activity has only a complementary role in the field of Karamojong economic activity, but it is an important role because, without it, survival would be a much more complicated matter.”⁹⁷ While livestock is often considered the main source of income by the Karamojong, it has often been supplemented by small scale agricultural production in *manyattas*⁹⁸. Most households in the region practice some form of agro-pastoralism, supplementing livestock rearing with crop production as needed or possible.

“[A]gricultural activity has only a complementary role in the field of Karamojong economic activity, but it is an important role because, without it, survival would be a much more complicated matter.”
-Kagan, et al. p 15

As drought, raiding, and disease have caused declines in the number of livestock, the Karamojong have also begun pursuing a number of additional livelihood activities to supplement incomes, such as brick making, small-scale mining, exploitation of natural resources, and wage labor.⁹⁹ The GoU’s often contradictory stance on support of pastoralist livelihoods, and the range of survival strategies being pursued by pastoralists, necessitate that development initiatives support a variety of economic

⁹³ USAID 2010:19

⁹⁴ Ibid.:32-33

⁹⁵ Stull-Lane, Mercy Corps Somalia 2011

⁹⁶ Kagan et al. 2009:15

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ As Stites and Akabwai note the people of Karamoja traditionally split their time and population between villages and mobile cattle camps, widely called ‘manyattas’ and ‘kraals’ respectively.

⁹⁹ Kagan et al. 2009:11

activities. This will not only help to ensure government coordination and participation, but also allow individuals to exploit different opportunities relevant to their individual circumstances.

Accordingly, livelihood intervention recommendations will vary by region, by proximity to population centers, and by the socio-economic status of groups or households. A 2008 ACF assessment in the Kaabong and Moroto districts found that poorer households have less livelihood diversity and are more dependent on agriculture than other middle- and upper-income households.¹⁰⁰ As agriculture in the region remains susceptible to climate change and drought, interventions in these areas should not only focus on developing drought-tolerant agriculture and sustainable water resource development, but also support supplemental livelihoods such as small ruminant production systems and alternative products such as gum Arabic and honey. Livelihood interventions should include feedback from community members, especially male and female youth, in order to ensure local buy-in for economic diversification.

There is a sizeable amount of literature dedicated to the implementation of economic livelihood diversification programming. Switzer and Mason emphasize that livelihood strategies should be demand-driven and integrated into existing local development plans.¹⁰¹ Consequently, any Mercy Corps livelihood diversification program should be preceded by a comprehensive market assessment.¹⁰² Although economic diversification is a viable strategy for the region, success in projects will still be significantly limited by persistent insecurity in the region, which continues to restrict mobility, wider agricultural development, and long-term planning by communities. Moreover, unless the underlying reasons for conflict are deeply understood by development actors, economic development initiatives could increase instability, e.g. conflict originally fuelled by preferential access to natural resources could be restarted if these systems of access are reinstated.¹⁰³ This is certainly one of the valid downsides of the economic development-peacebuilding argument, and it must be approached carefully in order to avoid creating increased instability in communities in which Mercy Corps works.

VILLAGE AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Infrastructure in many districts within Karamoja is either scarce or in disrepair. Since many of the economic livelihood interventions will rely on improving access to markets, encouraging private investment, and expanding outreach of extension and development services, infrastructure investment is critical. USAID has underscored the importance of “infrastructure value chains” in conflict affected environments – those at the center of post-conflict reconstruction such as transportation or construction services – in creating the foundation for stability and future economic activities.¹⁰⁴

ACDI-VOCA notes that the lack of an adequate road network in targeted rural districts in northern Uganda remained a major impediment to rural economic growth,

Text Box 1.3.

USAID’s Liberia Community Infrastructure Program Cash for Work Program called for employment-generating programs related to road and bridge rehabilitations, school renovations, agriculture and agribusiness, administrative building renovation, health center rehabilitations and environmental sanitation/drainage.
- USAID Guide to Economic Growth in Post-Conflict Countries

¹⁰⁰ ACF 2008:5

¹⁰¹ Powell 2010:8

¹⁰² Stites et al. 2009:37

¹⁰³ DFID Stabilization Unit:8

¹⁰⁴ USAID 2008:29

hindering information flow, the delivery of agricultural inputs and services, and market access. Consequently, it has included road construction activities in its development programming in the Soroti and Amuria districts in Eastern Uganda.¹⁰⁵ While USAID has employed Cash for Work programs for developing the Liberia Community Infrastructure Program (see Text Box 1.3), Chloe Stull-Lane rightly points out that this is unsustainable for long-term development. Therefore, where local capacity and governance exists, Mercy Corps role should be more as facilitator between local government budgets and community infrastructure development.¹⁰⁶

Best practices emphasize that projects should be based on community-identified priorities. Lack of community ownership for infrastructure project can result in facilities going unused or being abandoned. As acknowledged in a February 2009 COMESA policy brief, expensive market infrastructure investments in Ethiopia, completed without local community input, have either closed or have not been maintained (see text box 1.5.).¹⁰⁷ Community asset and infrastructure investments may include, where appropriate, building or rehabilitating feeder roads, constructing additional granaries for storing agricultural outputs, water collection activities¹⁰⁸, rehabilitating or constructing facilities for farmer field schools, terracing, and rehabilitating livestock-related infrastructure (discussed later in following section on Livestock Value Chains). Previous efforts by the Ugandan Government and various aid donors to upgrade the infrastructure of the region in the form of roads, water supplies, health facilities and schools using IDA loans through the Northern Uganda Reconstruction Project (NURP-I), faced challenges to sustainability since projects were implemented in such a top-down manner.¹⁰⁹

These types of infrastructure projects should be labor intensive and employ local labor, in rotation if there is excess supply of labor.¹¹⁰ Although major infrastructure projects in Karamoja will need to be addressed by the government or major donors, investing in small infrastructure projects within and shared by different ethnic groups has the ability to achieve peacebuilding goals of increasing interaction and fostering cooperation. To strengthen cohesion among sub-clan stakeholders, activities should be implemented on a community level, with participation from all individuals. In conflict-affected environments, projects should utilize a participatory and dialogue-oriented process, engaging different

With the help of USAID Peace II facilitators, cross-border warring communities from Diff, a Kenyan/ Somali border town jointly successfully built a maternity wing and elected a joint commission for long-term monitoring and management.

-USAID East Africa, Aid In Action
<http://eastafrika.usaid.gov/en/Article.1294.aspx>

stakeholders in joint problem analysis, planning and implementation, and local and regional economic development planning.¹¹¹ As evidence of successful joint infrastructure projects with conflict parties, USAID's Peace II program facilitators helped cross-border warring communities from Diff, a Kenyan/ Somali border town jointly successfully built a maternity wing and elected a joint commission for long-term monitoring and management.¹¹²

Where governance and local capacity does not exist, community investment projects have been implemented are through food-for-work, cash-for-work, and voucher-for-work

¹⁰⁵ Tango International:35

¹⁰⁶ Stull-Lane, Mercy Corps Somalia 2011

¹⁰⁷ COMESA 2009:3

¹⁰⁸ See <http://www.waterforaridland.com/> for resources on this topic.

¹⁰⁹ Robinson 2004:2

¹¹⁰ Stites et al. 2009:37

¹¹¹ GTZ, 2009:8

¹¹² USAID 2010 <http://eastafrika.usaid.gov/en/Article.1294.aspx>

programs, as well as in-kind transfers. ACTED Uganda is one organization pursuing voucher-for-work and cash-for-work schemes for infrastructure rehabilitation. The goal of these programs is to enable individual beneficiaries to access cash or productive inputs, such as seeds, tools or livestock, while working on facilities beneficial to the entire community.¹¹³ As evidence of this type of investment, ACTED is currently engaged in constructing an agricultural processing and storage facility in the Namalu sub-County of Karamoja as part of its programming to strengthen and diversify livelihoods and improve food security in the region.

Village and community investment must also extend beyond infrastructure. Accordingly, Mercy Corps efforts in the region should also relate to investments in livelihoods training (Please refer to section V.d. titled - Capacity Building. Building skills capacity in individual communities is integral to livelihood diversification. To ensure that programs are sustainable, Mercy Corps should conduct assessments to gather pertinent information about existing income generation activities so that it may focus on where it can add value in the form of trainings, marketing and business skills, capacity building, planning, and management. Since many of the recommended areas for programming include market accessibility as a key component, Mercy Corps can support diversification efforts by conducting market assessments to gauge demand and supply of products and services in local and regional markets.

For livelihoods skills training programs to be effective in the region, they will need to include a focus on male youth that have been adversely impacted from disarmament and loss of cattle, and provide for continued follow-up and outreach.¹¹⁴ They should also include business management modules.¹¹⁵ This will further enhance any future economic development initiatives implemented by Mercy Corps or other development agencies.

AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOOD DIVERSIFICATION

Within the agro-pastoral zone, the vulnerability of small scale agriculture to variable rainfall and soil degradation inhibits communities' abilities to support household income. Studies of agricultural markets in Kaabong and Moroto illustrate that forward and backward linkages for farming inputs and sales of products are still very weak and in need of improvement.¹¹⁶ Sales are typically in small quantities and input purchases are often limited to small hand tools.¹¹⁷ Therefore, appropriate support of agricultural value-chain development should be a major goal of Mercy Corps programming. Although agricultural diversification may exacerbate tension between groups as rangelands are further utilized for small-scale farming, development in this sector also has the potential to contribute to conflict mitigation by reducing economic insecurity among groups and also providing opportunities for cross-ethnic collaboration through the value chain. Demonstration farms can be facilitated across social networks within and across communities.

Due to farmers' increasing vulnerability, agricultural value chains in Karamoja appear to be extremely inefficient. Often agro-pastoralists access markets through intermediaries. Small scale farmers are oftentimes selling crops during times of vulnerability at very low prices, only to have to purchase the same goods from traders at higher prices during the dry season.¹¹⁸ This is despite the fact that the

¹¹³ ACTED, <http://www.acted.org/en/uganda>

¹¹⁴ Stites et al. 2009:37

¹¹⁵ Ibid.:37

¹¹⁶ ACF 2008:19

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

government of Uganda's planned budget expenditures within the National Development Plan 2011-2014 provide strong support for agricultural inputs such as tractors, improved seeds, and irrigation schemes.¹¹⁹ Mercy Corps can support agro-pastoralists in the region by enhancing local knowledge – i.e. current practices among Karamojong communities. Nevertheless, increased agricultural development must be done with consideration that increased agricultural production and land use may come at the expense of former dry season grazing areas. To ensure that programs are conflict sensitive, Mercy Corps should carefully monitor the impact of agricultural livelihoods development and rangeland use among groups within communities.¹²⁰ This can reduce the likelihood that expanding agricultural land use will further conflict among groups relying on rangelands access.

Studies of agricultural practices in Kaabong and Moroto have illustrated that the Karamojong agro-pastoral system is a recent development.¹²¹ Given this context, there is ample opportunity for development interventions to invest in agricultural trainings to disseminate improved planting techniques and rainwater collection for irrigation. Agricultural livelihood promotion programming could entail conducting trainings on improved crop husbandry, promotion of drought-tolerant crops, post-harvest handling, and seed multiplication.

Any agricultural training and capacity building should first be preceded by a market assessment and value chain analysis so that investments are tied to markets and are capable of income generation. As it is currently being pursued in Pader and Agago districts, agricultural livelihoods development should connect to the expanding World Food Programme Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative. The process of building agricultural capacity also offers the potential to build relationships of interdependence within communities and among inter-ethnic groups. While the following sections are not exhaustive, they do highlight several of the mechanisms being employed with success and also include lessons learned from other development contexts that can be applied to interventions in Karamoja.

One of the mechanisms used to impart agricultural trainings by other development actors are Agro-pastoralist field schools (APFS). ACTED Uganda has created member-led “open-air classrooms” in Pokot that facilitate knowledge transfer by experimentation and innovation.¹²² This guarantees that interventions reflect local contexts and also provide opportunities for farmers through experimentation. The program in Pokot also includes exchange visits among APFS that build interdependence between communities and facilitate information sharing. Notably, concerns about the sustainability of APFS after NGO funding is no longer available have been raised during the monitoring phase of these types of projects.¹²³ Therefore, Mercy Corps should only utilize APFS or support APFS projects that have identified income-generation strategies or are able to access government education funds for long-term sustainability.

Prevailing wisdom in agricultural productivity literature now calls for building linkages between research scientists, NGOs, farmer leaders, local governance, and the private sector since it is understood that these actors together will be more successful in establishing institutional relationships that will allow farmers to be more competitive in markets.¹²⁴ These relationships are critical in providing farmers with

¹¹⁹ Levine 2010:4,8

¹²⁰ Mwaura 2005:8

¹²¹ ACF 2008:19

¹²² ACTED Uganda:7

¹²³ Stull-Lane, Mercy Corps Somalia 2011

¹²⁴ Kimenye 2006:3

access to technology, capital, marketing arrangements, and pertinent market information.¹²⁵ Wherever possible, Mercy Corps' programming in this area should seek to facilitate relationships between the private sector, local governance and research institutes. In Kenya and Tanzania, development organizations have participated in linkages development by assisting in market identification, development and access – a market survey identified six formal market channels (three supermarkets and three green grocery stores) and six informal ones key channel actors and their roles, provided information about demand (types of vegetables, varieties, quality requirements, quantities etc.,) and other opportunities for farmers as well as business development services and farmer empowerment initiatives, such as Business Support Units, to encourage participation in markets.¹²⁶

Based on a pilot program in Kaabong, the National Agricultural Advisory Service (NAADS) plans to expand agricultural demonstration sites introducing modern crop husbandry.¹²⁷ "Agricultural demonstration farms have proved to be an effective way of increasing interest in new products and methods of production throughout East Africa."¹²⁸ To the extent possible, Mercy Corps activities should support these demonstration sites by providing communities with additional skills training in market identification, business development support services, and marketing to strengthen outcomes and improve sustainability from these government-directed projects. The farms, run by local businesses are used as a marketing platform for selling training and inputs to other farmers or marketing the government extension service. By promoting the aforementioned linkages between demonstration farms, the farms provide information to interested households and serve as a physical space where linkages between scientists, NGOs, farmer leaders, local governance, and the private sector could manifest. Demonstration farms could also display other technologies as appropriate (rain-fed agriculture, improved seed and crop storage, plant breeding, etc). Ultimately, demonstration farms should be convincing so that households are motivated to purchase agricultural goods and services, including training opportunities.

Other areas for technical assistance and investment include rain-fed agriculture, improved seed distributions, improved crop storage, and participatory plant breeding. These trainings should also examine existing farming practices to determine environmental impact. While intercropping of various plants is a common practice in local crop production that manages risks associated with unpredictable rainfall, changing market conditions, and crop pests, other development projects have shown that this technique may have the tradeoff of decreasing soil fertility since certain crops do not replenish nitrogen levels in the soil. Thus, recommended cropping procedures and decisions must also help small-scale farmers offset those risks in other ways, promote the appropriate mix of crops that both serve market demand and fix nitrogen levels in the soil or find locally grown solutions to address both issues.

Improved crop storage is important since it allows farmers to sell grain or agricultural products later when prices are higher. These technologies are critical for post-harvest handling and crop preservation. The accessibility of improved seed remains a challenge for many small-scale rural farmers. Oftentimes, these seeds are cost prohibitive; development agencies have responded to this hurdle by adding seed distribution to programming. Finally, since establishing market connections for agricultural livelihood

¹²⁵ Kimenye 2006:3

¹²⁶ For more information about this project, please refer to the discussion of the World Vegetable Centre, Family Concern International and Farmers Group projects in Kimenye, Lydia. "Research Extension-Farmer Linkages for Market Orientation , Symposium Paper, September 2006, p.7-8

¹²⁷ ACF 2008:20

¹²⁸ Stull-Lane, Mercy Corps Somalia 2011

interventions is integral to their success, technical assistance should also include agro-processing, and where applicable, marketing and business skill development.¹²⁹

Among the lessons learned for agricultural programs, sustainability remains a major hurdle. Seed distribution programs have several pitfalls, including creating dependency among communities for hand-outs, and limited crop performance when seeds distributed do not fit local contexts or do not reflect farmer variety preferences.¹³⁰ Given the way that the seed has been made available, i.e. by free distribution directly to participants, there are high expectations among participants that the project will continue to provide seed.¹³¹ To avoid dependency creation, development agencies have limited seed distributions to a single year. Therefore, it is increasingly important that Farm Extension Workers inform and educate recipients about planning and savings for future seed purchases.

Farmer trainings conducted by ACIDI-VOCA have faced challenges related to the complexity of curriculum and training materials, especially given low literacy rates. As a result, materials have been revised to be more concise, less theoretical, and more visually oriented.¹³² In other rural contexts, the use of radio programming has been used successfully to deliver different training topics and provide space for feedback and questions. The Ugandan *Entre Bugagga* Program (see text box 1.3) implemented by International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) & Heifer has creatively used radio and SMS technology to transmit trainings to geographically remote farmers and provide a platform for interactive knowledge exchange.¹³³ Solar powered recording devices, such as 'SecondVoice', offer additional ways to engage and expand the audience of agricultural trainings through the use of blue-tooth technology.¹³⁴

Possible uses for the devices include recording trainings/podcasts for transmission to rural participants, circulation of information on agricultural prices, and information dissemination on crop improvement processes or livestock disease outbreaks.

**Text Box 1.4. Ente Bugagga
Livestock is Wealth Program**

International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) & Heifer offering trainings to hundreds of dairy farmers on different topics relating to the dairy industry as presented by different experts assisted by EADD field staff, also includes forum in which farmers can discuss issues that are affecting their dairy production through interactive call-in and short messaging (sms) sessions. Programs are mostly re-recorded based on issues that farmers on the ground are asking for and once in a while experts are brought into the studios for live discussions with farmers. The programs also feature news updates on events and happenings in the dairy sector as well as provide weekly updates on milk market prices in the different EADD project sites and the country at large.

- East African Dairy Development

For more information please refer to:
http://mahider.ilri.org/bitstream/10568/2552/1/DairyNewsVol_6.pdf

¹²⁹ Agency for Technical Cooperation & Development, <http://www.acted.org/en>

¹³⁰ Tango International 2009:28

¹³¹ Tango International 2009:28

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ East Africa Dairy Development News 2010:5

¹³⁴ For additional information, please refer to (Practical action http://practicalaction.org/icts_secondvoice)

Other barriers to post-harvest handling have been that necessary technology is too expensive. However, in some cases locals were able to improvise the most cost efficient local alternatives.¹³⁵ As noted by IFAD, with the exception of a few recommendations, such as rouging of cassava plants affected by cassava mosaic disease, cassava spacing and the use of an improved maize variety, uptake of recommended farming techniques was limited due to lack of finance, shortages of improved seed varieties and lack of confidence in markets.¹³⁶ Therefore, successful agricultural livelihoods interventions require either partnering with financial intermediaries or creating rural forms of finance appropriate for agricultural inputs.

Loan conditions – short loan duration, high interest rates, and a need for collateral – are not attractive to herders.
-J. Swift “Financial Services for Risk Management in Pastoral Systems”, 2010

Since women have traditionally been responsible for crop rearing, agricultural trainings should be directed at both men and women, incorporating women’s perspectives and paying special attention to additional challenges that women may face in terms of social and economic position within communities. Women should also receive trainings on complementary skill sets required for accessing markets, including, but not limited to, marketing and financial and business skills development.

SAVINGS AND CREDIT INITIATIVES

Formal financial services in Karamoja are very limited. There is currently only one bank in Karamoja, with branches located in Kotido, Moroto, and Kaabong.¹³⁷ Given the very high barriers to accessing credit and savings services through traditional financial intermediaries, Savings and Credit Co-operatives (SACCOs) and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) or credit provided by wholesalers are some of the only forms of credit available in the region. Yet, it is not clear whether these mechanisms are the most appropriate for value chain development in agriculture, livestock, or other products.¹³⁸ These rural microfinance alternatives are also limited since they rely only on internally generated capital in the region to provide loans, which due to increasing vulnerability, which is understandably limited. Existing MFIs also suffer from poor financial management and governance. Excessive barriers to entry for formal banking services have prevented expansion of services to the majority of the population. Therefore, there are significant opportunities for Mercy Corps to include the promotion or development of new financial products within traditional banks for pastoralist and agro-pastoralist specialized uses.

Microfinance contributes greatly to groups’ abilities to withstand shocks by providing platforms for savings and loans, and oftentimes loans are used to invest in small-scale businesses or to buy assets such as livestock.¹³⁹ In addition to the strengthening value chain development, reducing vulnerability among households and diversifying income sources of Karamojong, microfinance can also create substantial social capital through the process of working with others across sectors and building relationships where trust is essential.¹⁴⁰ However, it is not apparent how much access pastoralist populations have to these types of programs. As noted by Jeremy Swift, there are not currently any savings products designed to address pastoralists’ needs and constraints as short loan duration, high

¹³⁵ Tango International 2009:29

¹³⁶ IFAD Uganda: Agricultural Development Project Completion Evaluation

http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/public_html/eksyst/doc/prj/region/pf/uganda/r159ugce.htm

¹³⁷ Mercy Corps 2011:36-37

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Tango International 2009:37

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

interest rates and collateral requirements are prohibitive to these communities.¹⁴¹ There may also be additional challenges in promoting savings products among pastoralist communities since they perceive cattle as a savings product in of itself. Nevertheless, many authors have observed that the cash economy has increased as insecurity remains since cash is more mobile than livestock or crops. Mercy Corps can either work with existing banking and microfinance structures to development products that better align with pastoralist and agro-pastoralist production cycles, or create its own.

Microfinance offers numerous additional benefits, such as empowering individuals and communities, especially women, to make decisions about investments for themselves. It can mitigate the creation of dependency structures; or it can be used to pay for community or veterinary health services; seed purchases, and agricultural inputs until crops yield, as well as provide funds for restocking livestock in the region. Small credit group loans are well adapted to rural areas, where access to credit or deposit facilities is most limited.¹⁴² Apart from credit, facilitating opportunities for savings among Karamojong through formal financial markets may have a direct impact upon expanding markets.

However, credit can also be supplied through the value chain by those higher up. USAID has identified three benefits of value chain or embedded credit: (i) it can address issues of appropriateness by directly pertaining to purchase of goods, such as fertilizer or seed; (ii) timeliness, both in terms of credit delivery arrival and in terms of repayment; and (3) it does not have excessive barriers to entry or requirements like other formal financial products.¹⁴³ This is currently a credit strategy pursued by some women in Karamoja to support beer-making businesses.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, problems with non-repayment of credit and men and family members refusing to pay for products, has left many women indebted without further access to this seed credit.

There are several savings and credit programs being piloted for herders and small farmers in similar contexts. Food for the Hungry Kenya (FHK) developed a loan product for pastoralists in Northern Kenya that was marketed by Equity Bank (see Text Box 1.5) after observing that the few rural agricultural loan products available in the market did not typically provide access to pastoralists. The product was marketed to rural cattle traders and offered loans at 13% per month on the basis that the credit would improve the traders' ability to purchase livestock at higher prices, so that herders would be incentivized to sell before drought due to better terms of trade.¹⁴⁵ "Most traders have low income, and have limited capital so they don't effectively and efficiently take livestock off the market. Livestock producers on the other hand don't

Text Box 1.5. Food for the Hungry Kenya – Equity Bank Microfinance Product

FHK facilitated formal banking engagement in the rural livestock sector by providing loan guarantees to Equity Bank and working with them to develop a specialized microfinance product for livestock traders in Northern Kenya designed to increase incomes of small herders and livestock traders. Eligibility of the program was limited to participants who opened bank accounts with Equity, were members of pastoralist associations and have received FHK trainings.

For more information please see:
<http://www.seepnetwork.org/PDFfiles/FFH-Podcast-Script.pdf>

¹⁴¹ Swift 2010:1

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ USAID 2008:22

¹⁴⁴ Gray in Knaute and Kagan 2009:484

¹⁴⁵ The SEEP Network 2010

want to sell their livestock due to low price and most cannot access the terminal market so the livestock during drought end up dying and they lose a lot of livestock.”¹⁴⁶ Notably, the program was able to offer loans without the 100% collateral requirement of most other agricultural loans because a 25% loan guarantee (that was not disclosed to loan recipients) from FHK. Although FHK still maintains the risk of loan default, the program thus far has learned that by buying down some of the risk of the private sector, it can encourage its participation in this market.

To respond to the collateral limitations of herders, the Center for Policy Research in Mongolia has also initiated a micro-credit program for small and medium enterprises using livestock as collateral. The loans themselves are provided to local NGOs and the program uses a group lending methodology.¹⁴⁷ Collateral levels for the program are limited to no more than one half of the total herd size. While such a program could further social capital within communities, special attention to who is accruing the benefits of such loans would be required.

Other credit alternatives include in-kind livestock loans or livestock-in-trust (LIT), like one utilized in the Provincial Development Program of Java Province, Indonesia, with the assistance of the World Bank. An in-kind credit program may be more amenable to herders in Karamoja since financial markets and interest rates may be viewed as too volatile. The Indonesia program was employed to replace the existing small ruminant credit system, and groups of farmers in the program received two female goats or sheep, with interest collected in the form of livestock offspring. A leader for each group was also selected and provided with training in small ruminant management.¹⁴⁸ Based on the World Bank’s evaluation, the program provided several benefits including the provision of a platform for disseminating new technologies, increased incomes, improved animal husbandry practices, and improvement in group dynamics of farmer groups.¹⁴⁹ Since other credit programs can be fungible, in-kind credit programs like this offer a way to target vulnerable populations.¹⁵⁰

Results from this program indicate that farmer repayments for the program conformed to average calving rates, with 65% of farmers making full repayment by the time of the final project assessment. As cited by the World Bank, the repayment rate for this project was better than most other agricultural credit programs. Nevertheless, the program’s initial five year time horizon for full repayment of loans was found to be too optimistic, with average time for full repayment of approximately seven years.¹⁵¹ In addition to the formation of groups and leadership within groups has been a key to the success of these programs, provision of support services such as package loans that include health packages and feed for the first 3-6 months, and technical advice on fertility and ways to reduce animal mortality. Alternatively, this type of program can be implemented in areas where trainings of community animal health workers occur to ensure that animal health extension services are available in the private market.

The eligibility requirements of recipients in large part have been able to mitigate some of the risks of non-payment of loans. The World Bank has highlighted the following selection criteria for LIT programs which include “need and demonstration of interest, minimal technical ability, and acceptable good farming practices from both technical and environmental standpoints.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁶ The SEEP Network 2010

¹⁴⁷ Swift 2010:5

¹⁴⁸ World Bank 2001:2

¹⁴⁹ De Haan et al. 2001:45-46

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. 2001: 46

¹⁵² World Bank 2001:3

Figure 1.2

Precondition type	Description
Financial	Candidates should be informed about risks, rights, and responsibilities. They must sign a loan agreement with agency, community, or bank, and may have to take out insurance.
Environmental	Preconditions for receiving the 'loan' include at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal enclosure should be located and constructed in such a way that it will not lead to erosion and/or manure run-off in water systems (whether public waters such as groundwater, rivers, and lakes; or private wells).• Animal grazing should be controlled; for example, through fencing or housing.
Social	Animal ownership needs to be accepted in the community. New owners should be informed and aware of responsibilities (keep animals confined, compensate neighbors for crop damage, keep animals healthy, etc.)
<i>Poverty</i>	Candidates should not have similar or larger animals and a need should be demonstrated.
<i>Participation in groups</i>	In-kind credit is in principle provided to a group (a community/village or within community/village). Candidates must be a member, and participate in various group activities. They agree to participate in continuing training sessions while holding the in-kind animal.
Technical	Candidates should be familiar with the technical aspects and risk of animal ownership, feeding, reproduction, animal care, etc.
<i>Husbandry</i>	Candidates should have been trained and/or familiar with housing, grazing, and overall management of their animal(s).
<i>Feed resources</i>	Candidates must show proof that their farm produces sufficient fodder to maintain the animal (and future off spring).
<i>Training</i>	A sound and hands-on training program should be established and implemented well before the first animals are procured.

World Bank, "Livestock In-Kind Credit – Helping the Poor to Invest and Save, April 2001

Among the lessons learned about the implementation of the in-kind program were that: (i) financial institutions have not been as successful in carrying out in-kind livestock credit programs since they often lack the specific knowledge about livestock and the ability to interface with communities on a regular basis; (ii) the most successful beneficiary groups were those who had been in existence for a while and had already established trust among participants; (iii) lending procedures need to be simplified, and include sufficient transparency about terms of repayment, eligibility, default penalties and flexible to respond to drought ; (iv) local repayment performance was largely based on sound social control, (v) in the case of national agency implementation, repayment rates could be hurt by a lack of trust between parties, (vi) implementing agencies need to monitor the absorptive capacity of markets periodically throughout the program to ensure that livestock levels do not exceed it and limit returns to participants, and (vii) the most successful communities have good and strictly enforced bylaws and a plan for leadership rotation (generally two years).¹⁵³ The World Bank also highlights that such programs should be a temporary response to market failures and be clear about the timeframe of the program with communities.

Nevertheless, developing appropriate and successful products for Karamojong will require extensive consultation with these communities to design savings and credit initiatives that will correspond to the specific challenges and environmental constraints in Karamoja. As noted in USAID's lessons learned about value chain development in conflict contexts, support services such as financial services are integral and should be aligned with credit that matches the production cycle.¹⁵⁴ Training and institution building must accompany microfinance, credit, and savings initiatives. To support existing structures, Mercy Corps can continue financial skills and empowerment trainings for women and men to ensure that credit programs do not create over-indebtedness or become predatory. As a part of value chain development in all production sectors, credit programs should be supported by business and marketing

¹⁵³ World Bank 2001:4

¹⁵⁴ USAID 2008:21

skills training to ensure that recipients fully understand risks and make sound decisions about uses of monies.

Problems in microfinance provision have occurred when loans were not well adapted to the technical and financial capacities of recipients. For these reasons, loan repayment rates were very low at approximately 54 percent for the Cape Verde community-based agriculture and livestock development project credit program PRODAP, even though the program included extensive monitoring and incorporated debt rescheduling.¹⁵⁵ Other lessons learned from development programs are related to the need for simplified and adapted training materials to encourage better record keeping, transparency, and management practices.¹⁵⁶

MICROINSURANCE

Although diversification and contingency planning are both forms of risk management, other potential products like microinsurance for livestock and crop losses may have potential in the Karamoja region.

Livestock insurance is yet another common proposal that, despite its apparent attractions, has never been put into practice. The transaction costs of both registering animals and insuring against fraud seem to be too high to make the scheme workable, even assuming pastoralists were willing to pay money up front for an eventuality that might not occur.¹⁵⁷

Despite these challenges, economists like Andrew Mude at the International Livestock Research Institute, have begun to develop index based insurance products to overcome some of the transaction costs associated with individual insurance, such as fraud, and measuring losses in remote areas. This type of product can also help to remove issues of adverse selection and can offer pastoralists and agro-pastoralists more timely payouts.¹⁵⁸ Mercy Corps can assist in the further development and use of these types of products by buying down the risk of private sector providers to encourage their expansion to Karamoja, by helping to promote a more favorable regulatory environment for insurance products in the region, or working to establish more effective and informed demand.¹⁵⁹

SMALL ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND RUMINANTS DIVERSIFICATION

Small ruminants offer potential for Karamoja for several reasons. First, since they have lower entry costs, they are an appropriate livelihood adaptation for the poor.¹⁶⁰ They are also more easily traded for goods and services, and this offers the opportunity for increasing agro-pastoralist incomes.¹⁶¹ While it is difficult to find accurate up-to-date estimates for the numbers of small ruminants, livelihood diversification should also include supporting investments in livestock apart from cattle. The types of programs in this sector include investments in health and improved animal husbandry for goats, sheep,

¹⁵⁵ IFAD Uganda: Agricultural Development Project Completion Evaluation
http://www.ifad.org/evaluation/public_html/eksyst/doc/prj/region/pf/uganda/r159ugce.htm

¹⁵⁶ Tango International 2009:38

¹⁵⁷ Ezaga 2010:150

¹⁵⁸ Mude 2011

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Mercy Corps 2011:32

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

camels¹⁶², and poultry. “Camels are not traditionally kept in Karamoja, but they offer an important economic opportunity. Camels do not compete with cattle for pasture but rather take advantage of currently under-exploited browse.”¹⁶³ Achieving genetic improvement and creating efficiency in the production systems of small ruminants is easier because of a rapid population turnover rate.¹⁶⁴ Pastoralists currently utilize shoats as an immediate cash source; selling them at any time the household needs to supplement its income to purchase goods or services.¹⁶⁵

Poultry are also typically cared for by women, so improving the economic viability of these animals will have direct

effects on women’s ability to generate income. Mercy Corps can assist efforts in these areas by performing a value chain analysis of small ruminant production, investing in improved health and vaccination for shoats, poultry, etc., and supporting activities for value-added products from animals.

Camels are not traditionally kept in Karamoja, but they offer an important economic opportunity. Camels do not compete with cattle for pasture but rather take advantage of currently under-exploited browse.

- A food security analysis of Karamoja, FAO, 9

The FAO’s recent study on food security in the region highlights that the mortality rates for smaller ruminants, such as goats, are currently an impediment to higher incomes. Veterinary experts believe that the majority of abortions and deaths are caused by easily preventable or curable diseases. Herders have shown that they are very willing to pay for good veterinary services.¹⁶⁶ Although recent 2008 estimates for goats in the districts Moroto, Nakapiritpirit, Abim and Kotido indicated the presence of 1,499,906 animals, an outbreak of Peste des Petits Ruminants has affected reproduction rates and sustainability of small ruminants.¹⁶⁷ Accordingly, support to vaccination campaigns and investment in community health workers (see following section entitled *Capacity Building-Improved Veterinary Care*) is closely linked to this initiative.

While a number of projects are already dedicated to small animal husbandry and expanding livestock diversification in the area, many of these programs have focused on distributing dairy goats or chicks to recipients in Karamoja. However, the success of such campaigns has hinged on the spread of disease and availability of forage resources or browse for animals to increase productivity. Previous diversification efforts have found that the cost of feed for poultry has made it costly and difficult to sustain. Therefore, this type of intervention should only be pursued after agricultural training and crop diversification are able to improve yields.

Since small ruminant production is still subject to raiding, efforts to improve incomes in these areas will still require increased security in the region. In Moroto district, insecurity has forced cross-breeding of goats to occur in the sub-county headquarters where police can provide protection from raiding.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶² The expansion of camels into Karamoja offers another opportunity for promoting diversification. In the wake of instability in Sudan, the success of camel milk marketing by women in the Kenyan/Ethiopian border regions could offer potential for Karamoja.

¹⁶³ Levine 2010:9

¹⁶⁴ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/ah221e/AH221E18.htm>

¹⁶⁵ Levine 2010:24

¹⁶⁶ Levine 2010:11

¹⁶⁷ Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries 2009

¹⁶⁸ DanChurchAid 2010:21

LIVESTOCK VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

A recurring factor that has been apparent throughout the research is the fact that cattle and cattle-oriented livelihoods are not going to significantly decrease in Karamoja in the foreseeable future. This may be obvious for those familiar with the region; however, it is critical in determining a foundation for overall recommendations to support alternative livelihood options. The cattle economy simply cannot be ignored due to its entrenchment in the Karamojong culture, the number of people who depend on it for survival, and role that it plays in organizing social relations in the region. Even for development actors who are not involved directly with cattle-oriented interventions, it is critically important that they take this reality into account from a sustainability standpoint; interventions can and should certainly be targeted in different sectors, but care needs to be taken to ensure that they do not conflict with cattle livelihoods, or they will risk being irrelevant and will likely fail.

Additionally, with expected increases in regional temperatures, droughts, and environmental degradation, the natural response for many Karamojong tribes is likely stronger interest in cattle as their best measure to suppress shocks associated with these environmental changes rather than increasing reliance on alternative livelihoods. This makes it all the more critical that development projects are sufficiently incorporated within the prevailing cattle context. USAID has been increasingly aware that livestock-oriented interventions should view droughts less as a shock in the ecological systems that support pastoralists, but more as a “regular and predicable event that occurs seasonally.”¹⁶⁹ This important awareness helps to drive sustainable practices into the intervention framework, planning for drought and including interventions to mitigate its impact in the initial program design. This forward-thinking paradigm is certainly preferred to past ways of thinking that reacted to droughts instead of planning for them. Taking these factors into account, one of the most obvious sectors in which Mercy Corps might work is the cattle-oriented value chain. Our research has shown that there are a number of opportunities for legitimate market development including veterinary services, butchering and its associated products, milk, physical market improvements, and development of cattle-oriented transportation.

The value chain analysis also shows very high percentages being made between the markets in Karamoja and those outside (e.g. Mbale)
- A food security analysis of Karamoja, FAO, 10

The role of pastoralist production for Ugandan livestock markets is made clear by the fact that pastoralists produce a significant amount of livestock products in Uganda. A 2008 OCHA report estimates that 55 percent of Uganda’s livestock is owned by pastoralists.¹⁷⁰ The fact that a market exists is significant, as a major part of the necessary infrastructure is already established and in operation. USAID’s report on value chains in conflict-affected

environments notes that markets are the most critical piece in the value chain equation.¹⁷¹ This general market for cattle in Uganda is also unlikely to change given urbanization and population growth in Uganda,¹⁷² and the resulting market stability provides a good foundation for effective and meaningful interventions.

Cattle markets are spread throughout Karamoja. Most are small and the volume of cattle traded is quite minimal when compared to the overall population; these markets are generally oriented around local

¹⁶⁹ USAID Pastoral guidelines 2006:4

¹⁷⁰ OCHA 2008:4

¹⁷¹ USAID 2008:6

¹⁷² UNICEF 2010

buyers and sellers. However, six regional markets located in Iriir, Matany, Kangle, Nataikwae, Kacheri and Komuria have larger volumes of trade, and are more focused on regional and national markets.¹⁷³ However, ACF's 2008 food security assessment conducted notes that even these larger regional markets "are small, fragmented, and difficult to access, all of which lead to price distortions, low farm gate prices, and high prices for merchandise."¹⁷⁴

The physical and organizational infrastructure of these markets is fairly limited. Regional markets are more organized with official oversight and associations that represent buyers. However, the local markets lack this organization, which impacts the prices at which pastoralists can sell. This is particularly pertinent factor that deserves more explanation. Similar to how pastoralists sell shoats, pastoralists generally choose to sell cattle when they have an economic need – thus, prices are highly variable depending on the seller's immediate needs. Obviously, this circumstance does not benefit the seller, as immediate needs often take precedence over negotiation of higher prices. It has even been documented that some buyers wait until conditions are bad in Karamoja so they have more leverage to pay lower prices due to the increasing need of the sellers.¹⁷⁵ As noted in text box 1.4 on the previous page, special attention to the needs of pastoralists and traders should dictate decisions to invest in market infrastructure to guarantee that facilities are utilized by local and regional communities.

Text Box 1.5. Lessons Learned from World Bank Livestock Infrastructure Development Programs

The terminal market in Abidjan was built in the 1960s to a design based on a European model without any involvement of local personnel. Traders refused to use the new facility because of its inconvenient design, and the market has remained unused. Also, investments in markets with relatively low maintenance costs have generally been more satisfactory than constructing huge structures. The Sudan Livestock Marketing Project is a good example.

Livestock Development, World Bank, 2001, 54

Initiatives that support pastoralists' ability to sell their cattle at better prices would be a valuable investment for Mercy Corps. These can be as simple as construction of facilities that improve cattle's appearance at market – watering troughs, for instance. In surveys, pastoralists have noted that cattle markets often do not have any physical infrastructure/shelter, unlike crop markets.¹⁷⁶ Appropriate research would need to be conducted to determine specific structures and specific placement for maximum usage and benefit, but it appears that there is a local desire for increased cattle market infrastructure that could help build market capacity, potentially increasing the market size by attracting more buyers, and providing space for pastoralists to bargain for higher selling prices.

The market itself is also a place where interventions might be targeted. Ezaga study of the cattle value chain in Karamoja shows that middleman and brokers often play a role in reducing profits for pastoralists. Cattle brokers sometimes sell cows directly on behalf of pastoralists, generally charging between 10,000-20,000 USh per transaction¹⁷⁷, which can be a significant amount, particularly during times when prices are low or pastoralists' need is high. Though the reasons for pastoralists' employ of cattle brokers was not revealed in the reviewed literature, it would be an important factor in determining an appropriate intervention. The relative inaccessibility of markets likely plays into this

¹⁷³ Ezaga 2010:iv,7

¹⁷⁴ ACF 2008:21

¹⁷⁵ Ezaga 2010:6

¹⁷⁶ Ezaga 2010:8

¹⁷⁷ Almost 10% of total purchase price cattle, assuming a cost of approximately 300,000 USh per head of cattle.

issue. The ACF report indicates that access to some major regional markets is a significant problem for pastoralists.¹⁷⁸

Middlemen enter the cattle market for profit, and thus, have incentives to buy cattle from pastoralists as cheaply as possible.¹⁷⁹ Several interventions could positively impact issues of lost profit to middlemen and brokers. First, pastoralist associations should be promoted that increase their selling power to maximize prices for their cattle. Currently, selling is conducted on a rather *ad hoc* basis, and it occurs on a very individual scale. One pastoralist sells a cow or two when he has a need, and often is not able to significantly leverage the price that he receives. Establishment of cattle seller's associations could help to coordinate selling activities, help to foment better price formation across the board, could function as a conglomerate to offset any necessary transportation costs, and ultimately, increase beneficial interaction among pastoralists. Sellers associations could also increase information and transparency of prevailing market conditions, and provide trainings that could effectively help pastoralists negotiate to sell at higher prices. Significant resources are available that predict market conditions, and increasing access to this information can also help pastoralists plan in advance, increasing the price that they would receive.¹⁸⁰ Such resources, such as those provided by OCHA and FEWSNET that track regional prices of cattle and other products, are significant because they offer excellent up-to-date information that can inform the timing of interventions with livestock. USAID's guidelines for pastoralist interventions note the importance of functioning early warning systems that can help to direct timing of livestock interventions and encourage early destocking efforts in potential crisis situations.¹⁸¹

Also, potential exists for increasing pastoralists' direct linkages to bigger markets, as this would often increase the prices they can get for their cattle. Transportation may be an issue due to Karamoja's remote location; cattle buyers that come into Karamoja often cooperate with each other to hire one truck to ship their purchased cattle, thus reducing transportation costs. It is entirely possible that the pastoralists/sellers associations could hire a truck to ship cattle to markets where they could get better prices. Difference in market prices can be significant.¹⁸²

Ezaga also suggests other mechanisms that could increase pastoralists' benefit of selling their cattle including savings associations and cooperation among pastoralists to set up satellite markets to increase collection of cattle prior to market days.¹⁸³ Levine offers an insightful aspect of increased marketing of Karamoja cattle that has good potential. He argues that

Serious attention to livestock marketing would greatly improve the value of herds. Essentially this is of importance both to development and humanitarian actors. On the one hand, increasing the price herders receive would increase their income very significantly. This would be of most benefit to those able to sell the most animals. At the same time, in years of difficulty it would reduce the number of animals that a household needed to sell in order to meet its basic needs. This would reduce the size of a "sustainable herd", meaning that many more households would have sustainable herds, i.e. large enough to sell off more animals in a bad year without undermining the long-term viability of the herd. This is of most importance to the poorer households.

¹⁷⁸ ACF 2008:23

¹⁷⁹ Ezaga 2010:5

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.:8

¹⁸¹ USAID 2006:4

¹⁸² Ezaga 2010:5

¹⁸³ Ibid.:8

Livestock marketing interventions are therefore an area deserving of serious study for humanitarian actors, as well as for development actors.¹⁸⁴

This would be an excellent cycle to attempt to enter, but in reality it does not take prevailing insecurity into account. Rational behavior for pastoralists, who may be at risk of losing their herds to raids, would be to maximize the size of their herd. However, if widespread security increases, there may be space to encourage pastoralists to sell cattle at times when they are not facing immediate food security issues in order to build up a reserve of capital/resources that could introduce them into a new cycle, described above.

GUM ARABIC PRODUCTION

The Karamoja Private Sector Development Promotion Centre (KPSDPC) has been supporting the promotion of alternative livelihoods as a means to discourage cattle raiding and to diversify economic activity in the region.¹⁸⁵ A number of the sources reviewed included gum Arabic as a potential viable alternative livelihood mechanism for Karamoja for a variety of reasons.¹⁸⁶ One reason is simply due to the vast number of uses for the product. Gum Arabic, derived from the sap-like gum of acacia trees common in Karamoja, is often mentioned as an option for alternative livelihoods development due to its extensive use in a vast array of products. It is used in alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, pharmaceuticals and medicines, inks, paints, wax, and nearly all processed foods including candy and sweets, baked goods, puddings, cereals, and a host of others.¹⁸⁷ Another reason is due to the prevalence of at least five species of gum-producing acacia trees in the gum tree belt in Uganda, which spans a number of districts in Uganda including three in the Karamoja region – Kotido, Moroto, and Nakapiririt.¹⁸⁸ Lastly, gum Arabic has proven to be a significant economic activity in other countries in Africa, specifically Sudan, where gum from the *Acacia senegal* species has become Sudan's most important non-wood forest crop; the country annually exports 45,000 tons of gum Arabic.¹⁸⁹ In addition the sector contributes heavily to the economy's foreign exchange earnings due to the fact that it has no comparable synthetic substitutes, which helps to keep international demand strong.¹⁹⁰ Gum Arabic production in Sudan also provides "important off-farm activity for more than 5 million people."¹⁹¹ Evidence provided below suggests that there is a room for the growth of a significant gum Arabic sector in Karamoja, which could increase economic livelihoods options.

Historically, the Karamoja region had an active industry for gum Arabic. A 2007 survey conducted in Karamoja indicated that local residents were well aware of gum Arabic, and they noted ten different uses for it in their daily lives. Sealing pots, repairing broken wooden implements, and using the gum as food were among the most common.¹⁹² The survey also revealed the regional nature of the sector in which gum was collected, cleaned, stored, and then delivered to regional collection centers in Moroto and Nakapiririt districts for sale. Additionally, the sector was a source of employment, as some would be hired to collect gum and then paid as wage laborers.¹⁹³ However, though the gum Arabic sector was

¹⁸⁴ Levine 2010:9

¹⁸⁵ Powell 2010: 8

¹⁸⁶ Ondoga 2010; Powell 2010; Mubiro 2010; Ezaga 2010; Egadu et al. 2007; KIDDP 2007

¹⁸⁷ Duke 1983

¹⁸⁸ Egadu et al. 2006:236

¹⁸⁹ United Nations Environment Programme 2009:17

¹⁹⁰ Egadu et al. 2007:17

¹⁹¹ Geller et al. 2006:13

¹⁹² Egadu et al. 2007:19

¹⁹³ Ibid.:20-21

strong throughout the 1960s-1990s, it eventually crashed due to insecurity and a “lack of adequate quantities of gum Arabic to guarantee profitable trade.”¹⁹⁴

Current information concerning gum Arabic production in Karamoja is rather sparse, but the sector seems to be gaining increased attention in recent years. Since 2001, it has been promoted from within the national government. A Gum Arabic Development Project was formed and funded by the Ugandan government with the intention to increase livelihoods diversification, decrease the Karamoja region’s reliance on cattle, and act as a means for biodiversity conservation. The initiative established the Uganda Gum Arabic Cooperative and conducted a survey of acacia in Karamoja; however, even with GOU funding and human resources, the plan failed to gain traction. Thus, in 2006, the plan was incorporated into the KIDDP in an attempt to jumpstart the sector again.¹⁹⁵ It is clear that the GOU sees it as a viable economic development mechanism and according to GoU figures in the KIDDP, Karamoja has the potential to export gum Arabic over worth over \$175 million per year.¹⁹⁶

More recently, the sector has continued to grow. The Karamoja Private Sector conducted mapping exercises of the region where the pertinent acacia trees grow, and has also established a number of groups to expand local capacities to harvest the gum. Seventy trainers of trainers (TOTs) have been taught how to properly harvest, handle, and process the gum, and contacts with international buyers have been made. Though there are still challenges in this sector, such as transportation issues due to the remote locations in which the gum is collected and ongoing needs to find buyers, the development seems positive.¹⁹⁷

As with other economic sectors in Karamoja, insecurity will also be a hindrance to development of the sector. Though acacia trees are spread over a wide expanse of the region, some of the highest densities of trees were found in relatively uninhabited regions due to their insecurity. Obviously, regions with fewer people and livestock suffer less environmental impact, allowing the acacia to better thrive.¹⁹⁸ Attempts to collect gum, particularly in insecure environments, will be significant hurdle. In studies, sizeable numbers of Matheniko and Bokora women noted the danger of venturing into the bush to collect natural resources.¹⁹⁹

Additionally, acacia species seem to have a poor regeneration and therefore it is important that more studies be carried out if acacia species are to be economically exploited.²⁰⁰ “The level of regeneration seemed to be better in cultivated land as shown by the large number of small diameter trees. The reason for high regeneration in cultivated land could be the higher germination percentage resulting from seeds that have been buried in well-prepared soils during land preparation. The level of regeneration could be even better if it was not for the fact that most of these trees are cut during weeding.”²⁰¹

¹⁹⁴ Obua et al. 2006:186-187

¹⁹⁵ Development Research and Training 2008:55

¹⁹⁶ KIDDP 2007:37

¹⁹⁷ Ongoda 2010:3

¹⁹⁸ Egadu et al. 2006:239-240

¹⁹⁹ Stites et al. 2007:59

²⁰⁰ Nalule 2010:17

²⁰¹ Egadu et al. 2006: 240

Gum Arabic samples from Karamoja have met international standards for quality.²⁰² Thus, these factors show that there is some important human capital already present within Karamoja that could likely be used to increase the necessary infrastructure to reinstate this potentially viable sector. In this light, Mercy Corps may be able to cooperate effectively with the ongoing plans to develop the gum Arabic sector in Karamoja through a variety of means. Agroforestry that promotes the planting of acacia trees might be one fairly simple intervention, which could also play a positive role in slowing environmental degradation. Additionally, Mercy Corps could support increased livelihoods through gum Arabic by hosting trainings, providing tools for harvest and collection, providing small grants for the construction of storage facilities, and support the organization of community/family cooperatives for harvest, storage, and sale of gum Arabic.

HONEY CULTIVATION

Honey is an additional, oft-cited livelihood option for Karamojong pastoralists.²⁰³ Generally, this is due to the fact that the Great Lakes region has a strong honey production sector, with significant numbers of beekeepers and active hives throughout Uganda itself.²⁰⁴ A 2006 market analysis aimed at mapping the honey sector in Uganda cooperated with several organizations working in the Karamoja region including the Matheniko Development Foundation and Integrated Rural Development Initiative; the report showed that the honey sector was a high potential sector for growth, but generally “rudimentary and unexploited” in how it functions within the Ugandan economy.²⁰⁵ Kajobe et al. argue that Uganda currently produces only 1% of a potential 50,000 tons of honey.²⁰⁶

Ogaba notes a number of positive aspects about the expansion of honey cultivation that are relevant to the context in Karamoja. These include simple integration into agricultural production, meaning that agricultural production often benefits from bees’ pollination and has no negative side effects. She also notes that the low level of pesticide use in agricultural production in Uganda is good for bee health. Additionally, beekeeping does not necessitate significant front-end investment, but can employ local materials to construct hives and conduct low-tech honey processing.²⁰⁷ Also, the numbers of beekeepers in Karamoja is low, estimated to be at less than 1,000 for the entire region.²⁰⁸ Thus, it is clear that the potential market space for beekeeping in Karamoja is not saturated.

The Karamojong have traditionally gathered wild honey, and several organizations have conducted programming aimed at increasingly beekeeping’s viability to produce extra cash income. Ondongo notes that demand for honey from the Karamoja region is present within Uganda, and that it is associated with medicinal benefits as the bees primarily obtain their nectar from acacia and aloe. He estimates that ten beehives could annually contribute up to an extra 800,000 US\$ (~\$350 USD in 2010) to a household income. His recommendations for interventions include supporting communities’ establishment of apiary farms, provision of improved hives and related honey extraction equipment, establishment of a regional honey processing plant, construction of honey storage facilities, and ensuring links to markets.²⁰⁹

²⁰² Ezaga 2010:10

²⁰³ KIDDP 2007:43; ACF 2008:22; Uganda Climate Report 2010: 27; Levine 2010:23

²⁰⁴ Okiria 2010:1

²⁰⁵ Dathine Agricultural Consult Ltd. 2006:5

²⁰⁶ Kajobe et al. 2009:iv

²⁰⁷ Ogaba:2

²⁰⁸ Kajobe et al. 2009:39

²⁰⁹ Ondongo 2010:8-9

Studies of beekeeping and honey production initiatives with the Turkana in western Kenya show that there is significant potential for intervention in this sector, and some of the information could certainly translate to the Karamoja context. Honey production is occurring and is a viable means for economic production in the Turkana region; constraints occur primarily in marketing and value-added activities such as low-quality processing techniques. This general assessment is consistent with how literature portrays markets in Karamoja as well. Turkana beekeepers emphasized that entry into the sector was simple and did not require specialized tools for hive construction (other than an axe and panga); however, they did note that proximity to water plays a major role in successful beekeeping. Turkana beekeepers from the Kaptir area reported that honey production “enabled communities to survive droughts that had catastrophic impacts on livestock production.”²¹⁰ If properly transferred to the Karamoja region, this is exactly the type alternative livelihoods option that could address drought’s impact in the region, and may provide potential connectors among Karamojong communities to increase cooperation.

Though there are certainly gaps on the literature with regard to beekeeping and honey production in Karamoja, what is available shows significant interest from various groups of Karamojong. Currently, it appears that local environmental factors will be the main constraints to honey production. As highlighted by the FAO,

Jie focus groups in Kotido highlighted a desire for beekeeping training and honey cultivation development. However, in the current environmental status of the area, there is minimal bee keeping potential considering the extent of deforestation, water shortage, drought and lack of appropriate trees for honey production. It would be possible if the mentioned limitations are addressed first.²¹¹

Other potential constraints are lack of training and information, which some organizations are attempting to address, and limited market access.²¹² However, as with other interventions, these hindrances simply show that appropriate research must be conducted on where/how beekeeping could be successfully employed in consideration with local contexts. In concert with other livelihoods interventions aimed at agro forestry and water management, there are opportunities to support larger-scale honey production in Karamoja and to connect it to broader honey markets in Kenya and East Africa.

C. NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Livelihoods in Karamoja are heavily dependent upon natural resources, and degradation of water sources, rangeland, forests, and soil contribute to food insecurity and erosion of indigenous knowledge and overall economic insecurity, as discussed in greater detail in section IV.²¹³ Since nearly all supplemental income-generating activities currently being pursued by people in Karamoja rely to some degree of exploitation of natural resources, interventions supporting the livestock sector and alternative livelihoods should be streamlined with integrated natural resource management (INRM). Along with explicit INRM activities, an INRM lens should be used with any intervention promoted in Karamoja. Scenario planning activities with Karamojong stakeholders, reforestation, water point rehabilitation, and investments in drought-resistant agriculture are among the interventions that Mercy Corps can pursue in support of Natural Resource Management.

²¹⁰ Watson and Binsbergen 2008:8-12

²¹¹ Nalule 2010:35

²¹² Ogaba:3

²¹³ Knaute and Kagan 2009:21

Ensuring local participation in each of these activities is a key to their success. Insufficient local consultation and participation has been a classic source of failure in natural resource management. Local populations should be involved in the design of NRM projects, and projects should be site-specific.²¹⁴

SCENARIO PLANNING

In order to elicit community involvement and ensure that any natural resource management intervention is embraced and owned by Karamojong communities, Mercy Corps can assist communities in organizing and holding Scenario Planning workshops. Scenario planning at the community level has successfully allowed different pastoralist communities to identify “drivers of change” to encourage strategic thinking and influence policy. SOS Sahel has seen some success in implementing scenario planning amongst pastoralists in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Niger. The Scenario Planning framework used in these instances allowed pastoralist communities to identify drivers of change, analyze their situation, and “marshal their own arguments and evidence in order to advocate for the future they desire.”²¹⁵ The Scenario Planning framework developed by SOS Sahel requires participants to identify past, current and future drivers of change, categorize and combine them, and then create future scenario stories by considering how different combinations of different circumstances could lead to different outcomes.²¹⁶

Participatory approaches such as Scenario Planning allow communities to identify both problems and prepare solutions. Recognizing that the future is uncertain allows communities and individuals to conceive of responses to various possible futures, better equipping them to respond to disasters such as drought, as well as long-term changes, such as soil erosion. Facilitating discussion and reflection on what sorts of institutions will work, what it is that people want, and how they will work to achieve goals can be of immense value given the complex set of environmental and social challenges in Karamoja.²¹⁷

AGRO FORESTRY

Tree-cutting, both for firewood and charcoal-making, has been a common alternative source of income, particularly for women. However, it has also significantly contributed to deforestation in the region. Negative externalities of deforestation include limiting the ability to utilize tree products for alternative income, contributing to reduced soil fertility, decreased carbon stocks, and reduction of ground cover.

Instead of working to curb tree-cutting, which meets a local demand for charcoal and firewood, Mercy Corps should consider local agro forestry projects in order to support this supplemental livelihood. These projects should be conducted with a special emphasis on including women, who are the primary users and gatherers of firewood, and are often risk attack to venture into the bush for firewood foraging. They are also, according to one study, less likely to perceive of problems with current tree-cutting practices.²¹⁸ As the primary users of timber resources, sensitizations and training on forestry management are likely to have greater impact when directed towards women. Gender inclusiveness however, is especially important, as there is a vital disconnect between those who ostensibly oversee natural resources (elders) and those who are using them (women).

²¹⁴ People in Marginal Drylands:11

²¹⁵ SOS Sahel UK 2009:7

²¹⁶ Ibid.:23

²¹⁷ Adrian Cullis, Interview, FAO Ethiopia

²¹⁸ Stites and Akabwai 2010:20.

Village reforestation projects have had success in communities across Africa. In Mali, USAID’s Village Reforestation Project has resulted in local forests that are self-financed, market-driven, and integrated into the rural production system of around 30 villages in the Yame Valley. Initial investments into these projects were limited to seedlings and training.²¹⁹ In Ethiopia and Tanzania, FARM Africa has experienced success in helping villages to form Participatory Forestry Management Groups, who are responsible for managing local timber resources.²²⁰ The World Food Programme (WFP) is currently engaged in school tree-planting projects, improved stove-making, and the promotion of improved charcoal production techniques in Karamoja.²²¹ Their programming has identified *Moringa oleifera* and Pigeon pea as two species that can meet a variety of needs in the region, including firewood, nutrition, and fodder for livestock, as well as combating soil erosion.

Text Box 1.6. A study examining the impacts of water-point creation in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia conducted by the FAO provides a word of caution regarding providing new water sources in dryland pastoralist areas. The study revealed that the areas under study lacked land use and land tenure analysis, analysis of vegetation cover and the effects of new transhumance patterns on vegetation, and local socio-economic stakeholder analysis prior to creating new water points. This contributed to negative environmental impacts as a result of new herding patterns around the new water points; increased conflict due to unclear management systems; and changes in land use and tenure, including fencing and privatization of land that was exploited by local elites, and numerous technical constraints. This study underscores the extremely sensitive and multi-faceted nature of water resources in drylands and pastoralist areas.

Gomes, Natalie. “Access to water, pastoral resource management and pastoralists’ livelihoods”. FAO. 2006.

WATER POINT MANAGEMENT AND REHABILITATION

As in drylands across the continent, water is perhaps the most important natural resources for human survival. As mentioned, Karamoja has a mono-modal rainfall pattern, with high variability in distribution and amount of annual rainfall. Rivers in the region are seasonal and cannot be depended upon, and groundwater accessibility has become a larger problem in the past few years as it appears the water table is sinking in some areas due to overutilization of wells and water points near settlements.²²² Apart from meeting a basic human need, water points in Karamoja have a direct impact on the distribution of livestock and human settlement.²²³ Boreholes, ponds, and dams in the region are not sufficient to meet human needs, and heavy concentration of livestock, settlements, and crop cultivation around existing water points leads to degradation and overutilization. As was noted by the UNDP in its Human Development Report on Kenyan and Ugandan Pastoral Conflict, water point construction since the colonial period has not taken into account grazing patterns and has created environmental degradation by promoting permanent grazing patterns.²²⁴

While the construction of new water points, including the necessary environmental and socio-economic impact analyses, is primarily the responsibility of local and national

²¹⁹ USAID, Investing in Tomorrow’s Forests 2002:10

²²⁰ FARM Africa, <http://www.farmafrica.org.uk/ethiopia/strengthening-sustainable-livelihoods-and-forest-management-project>

²²¹ Bizzarri 2009:32

²²² Kagan and Knaute 2009:49

²²³ Nalule 2010:12

²²⁴ Mwaura 2005:8

government, Mercy Corps may support efforts to improve provision in a variety of ways. For instance, it can support water point management training to Water User Committees or assisting the organization of communities to plant and care for grass and tree species needed to stabilize soils and evaporation rates around water points. With sustainability in mind, Mercy Corps could hold capacity building workshops for local water management committees, including training on applying for/accessing funding for rehabilitating or creation of water points.

Water point creation and care depend on both local and government-level inputs, and communities often do not have the resources or capacity to control critical protection of water points.²²⁵ Improving the management of existing water points and increasing community capacity to care for existing water points and lobby for new ones would contribute to ongoing national efforts to improve water security in the region.

DROUGHT-RESISTANT AGRICULTURE

Water issues also directly affect the productivity of crop farming in the region. Promoting the use of drought-tolerant seeds and improved farming techniques is one way Mercy Corps might address the high variability of rainfall, impacts of climate change, and need for supplemental income. While the region cannot be expected to support large-scale crop cultivation given various environmental constraints, strengthening current agricultural production and limiting environmental degradation would benefit numerous communities in Karamoja.²²⁶ Although under way in many areas of Karamoja, the promotion of drought-tolerant agriculture and planting mechanisms for retaining soil moisture and fertility still should be a priority for agricultural livelihood development. Planting acacia to increase fertility of soils is a practice applied in several Karamoja communities.²²⁷ Many of the sources consulted noted that increased agricultural production for the region would be possible if agro-pastoralists were informed and provided with the means to access faster maturing and drought-resistant varieties of popular crops such as sorghum, millet, and maize, as well as received complementary training on cultivation techniques, such as rows, spacing, and priming in order to increase yields.²²⁸

Expanding these practices to include other types of crops, can not only mitigate drought, but also provide additional income.²²⁹ Mercy Corps might consider promoting drought-tolerant crops²³⁰ and improved farming techniques in the following ways:

“Almost certainly, the most cost effective and culturally appropriate way into [crop farming] would be through low-cost and zero-maintenance infrastructure such as sub-surface dams and sand dams. These would enable small communities to have closer access to water for their households, for their livestock, and they would support both higher value fruit and vegetables and also some fodder crops and fodder trees. Much could be grown by exploiting a higher and more reliable water table rather than by having to water crops. If their siting was undertaken together with the local communities, rather than only by the technical experts, they could be made in such a way that was compatible with a pastoral livelihood and lifestyle.”

- A food security analysis of Karamoja, FAO, 13

²²⁵ Stites and Akabwai 2010:20

²²⁶ Levine 2010:12

²²⁷ Egadu et al. 2007:17

²²⁸ ACF 2008:19

²²⁹ Tango International 2009:31

²³⁰ Improved seeds that meet local demands include sorghum, green grams, cow peas, pigeon peas, K131 (bean). Karamoja Climate Change and Adaption Options:10

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- Provide direct seed transfers to farmers through community groups organized in *manyattas*.
 - Provide access to seeds through credit programs, in ways discussed in previous sections on credit.
 - Provide training on improved farming techniques (mixed cropping/intercropping, shifting planting and harvesting dates, etc.) provided through community groups.

The government of Uganda Karamoja Action Plan for Food Security (KAPFS) places an emphasis on strengthening crop production in Karamoja's Agricultural Zone, and includes provision of improved seeds. Coordinating activities with KAPFS activities will further ensure that these efforts are successful.²³¹

Lessons can be drawn from a study conducted by the International Food Policy Research Institute that examined seed provision for dryland crops in arid and semi-arid areas of Eastern Kenya. The study looked at seed provision during regular times and emergency and relief situations, and seed-based development interventions carried out by the government of Kenya along with NGOs and research institutions. Initiatives included community-based seed production programs, producer marketing groups, and small seed packs distribution. The key finding was that, while these initiatives were able to play a role in providing good quality planting materials, the role of local markets in providing dryland cereal and legume seeds, is indispensable. The report recommends creating synergies between formal seed interventions and informal markets, by helping to organize village-level entrepreneurs interested in seed propagation and linking them to existing markets. These linkages would benefit both farmer-entrepreneurs as well as farmers who are currently unable to access quality improved planting materials at the right times.²³²

Again, it is important to recognize the limitations of crop farming in this region. While the returns on rain-fed agriculture can certainly be strengthened and improved, crop farming in the agricultural belt of Karamoja is a less secure livelihood strategy than pastoralism in the dry belt, even for the very poor.²³³ Investments and interventions in farming should be promoted with a clear understanding of their limitations, and should be targeted at those groups and individuals who are already involved in dryland farming, due to the limited carrying capacity of land in Karamoja and the insecure nature of crop farming.²³⁴ Moreover, the GoU's current five-year food security budget is highly supportive of agriculture (currently anticipating expenditures for farm inputs of around \$20.9MM vs. 1.8MM for livestock development).

D. CAPACITY BUILDING

With an overabundance of organizations operating within the region, there is no shortage of programming focused on trainings and workshops to 'build local capacity.' However most of these exercises seem to focus primarily on peacebuilding efforts as opposed to technical capacity building. As with any effective development initiative, any of the above economic interventions should be coupled with capacity building elements if there is to be any hope of bringing long-lasting sustainable economic growth to the region. While much work is already being done in the area of capacity building throughout Karamoja, the programming is still in its early stages, and leaves many gaps to be filled.

²³¹ Everse Ruhindi, Interview, PENHA

²³² Nagarajan et al 2007:27

²³³ Levine 2010:12

²³⁴ Adrian Cullis, Interview, FAO

The aforementioned Agro Pastoralist Field Schools (APFS) offer an example of effective programming in this area. ACTED Uganda has been building the capacity of individuals and groups at the community level with the two-fold goal of strengthening pastoralist livelihoods through technical improvements and interacting more effectively with the local government in order to demand better services and support for livelihoods. “Made up of 15 to 20 members of whom around 50 percent are women, APFS are ‘open-air classrooms’ directed by the members themselves where agro-pastoralists learn by doing through experiments and innovation tailored to the local context.”²³⁵ Future grassroots empowerment goals for such organizations could include mobilization of communities, community planning, and advocacy, all of which could contribute positively to peacebuilding efforts.

This illuminates one of the primary challenges across the spectrum of trainings and education among the Karamojong, particularly for the younger generation – striking a balance between traditional cultural knowledge and more ‘modern’ business skills and western-style education.²³⁶

Kagan et al. note that the government of Uganda’s education programming has not been successfully adapted to meet the educational needs of young Karamojong, “who are instead mocked by their elders for their lack of knowledge of pastoralist techniques.”²³⁷ Such is the criticism of many formal education initiatives for pastoralist communities – that they separate the children from their communities and culture. This is reflected in the GoU’s education budget for the region, which recently allocated 6 billion US\$ to encourage parents in Karamoja to send their children to school, which in many instances means boarding school, an option that certainly furthers the disconnect between youth and adult.²³⁸ To counter this trend, innovative approaches, such as the Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK), attempt to adapt the curriculum in order to provide a more locally relevant education, “including lessons in livestock management, crop production, and peace and security” in addition to elements of more traditional curricula.²³⁹

DEVELOPING BUSINESS SKILLS

Swisscontact – through local partners in the districts of Abim, Nakapiripirit, and Moroto – has begun to use trainings to assist young Karamojong in finding or creating employment and income opportunities through their Skills Empowerment for Alternative Livelihood (SEAL-Karamoja) project. The project aims to create technical vocational training institutions that emphasize agri-business and agro-processing skills, with the goal that these skills trainings will increase entrepreneurship, competitive services, and the availability of products in the local and regional markets. Their target is for the project to have served over 600 young men and women by 2012. SEAL uses a “learning groups” model, which forms trainees into groups of 15-20 individuals who will rely on one another to problem-solve, mobilize resources, and start their own businesses in response to the technical skills trainings they receive. Since its launch in November 2010, SEAL has set up skills training learning groups throughout Karamoja targeted on such vocations as jewelry making, car washing, bicycle assembly and repair, hair dressing, weaving, and tailoring.²⁴⁰

While this is a noteworthy model, the subject matter of some of their more agriculture-focused trainings favors subsistence farming practices over pastoralism. For instance, trainings that cover how to harvest

²³⁵ ACTED 2010:7

²³⁶ Knaute and Kagan 2008:9

²³⁷ Kagan et al. 2009:58

²³⁸ Wanyama 2011

²³⁹ Ibid.:74

²⁴⁰ Swisscontact 2011:1

and dry grass that grows in abundance during the rainy season so it can serve as livestock feed during the dry season, or training Karamojong on the use of simple irrigation systems to grow a wider variety of vegetables, do not necessarily represent the best use of local resources and livelihood options.

Still, course content aside, an assessment of the region's current training programs' strengths and weaknesses can better inform the design of future training models in an effort to more effectively connect youth to local labor markets.

A recent study funded by the EU and overseen by the Ugandan Adult Education Network (UGAADEN) assessed current capacity levels among local authorities and non-state actors to provide livelihood skills training for youth and adults in Karamoja. The assessment found that limited capacity does exist among local authorities and that government vocational and technical training institutes are being established in many districts. As for non-state actors, despite the large number of agencies present, very few are engaging in skills trainings programs.

Overall, challenges to training programs are the result of limited funding and under-qualified trainers. Recommendations call for NGOs to negotiate with existing community groups for the use of their facilities in the short term while concurrently encouraging GoU to establish "low-cost multipurpose community skills training centers." While training facilities would allow for a permanent space for trainees to come together, the sedentary nature of such centers could be accompanied by mobile training units for selected skills training to allow for mobility.²⁴¹

IMPROVED VETERINARY CARE

Attention should also be paid to current efforts to train community veterinary workers. Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWS) provide low-cost veterinary services as well as technical support to the aforementioned APFS. Most significantly, these community veterinarians serve as the local source and disseminator of information on animal diseases and how to cope with and prepare for droughts. CAHWS also provide direct support to the larger district veterinary offices by assisting the officers in vaccination campaigns, community animal health care, and data collection. Organizations such as ACTED Uganda are also working with CAHWS to "form associations through which they can share information, lobby collectively and pool resources."²⁴²

Recognizing that the CAHWS are an excellent resource in the region, the FAO recently commissioned a comprehensive exercise to map out all of the CAHWS and veterinary drug shops in Karamoja. Through smart phone technology, the exercise was able to provide the geo-spatial distribution and status of CAHWS and veterinary drug shops. This new knowledge will enhance planning and coordination abilities in the region and hopefully revitalize the CAHWS network in Karamoja.²⁴³

Other efforts, such as the Pastoral Community Harmonization Initiative (PCHI), attempt to couple veterinary services with peacebuilding efforts. This conflict-mitigation intervention targets pastoralists who have been provided with veterinary services by the African Union's Community-Based Health and Participatory Epidemiology Unit. When first attempting to address the conflict in Karamoja, PCHI

²⁴¹ Okech 2010:xii

²⁴² ACTED 2010:7-8

²⁴³ FAO 2011:1-4

administered vaccines at community-level meetings to gain the people's trust. Subsequently, livestock management became an important vehicle for peacebuilding efforts in the region.²⁴⁴

In short, capacity building should be an integral component of any economic intervention programming in Karamoja. From practical technical skills such as veterinarian practices and community health work to financial, business development, and entrepreneurship training, building capacity is key for sustainable long-term growth for both those Karamojong who will continue to live in the region and those migrating out.

VI. CHALLENGES

This report fully recognizes that the success of any of the proposed interventions is contingent upon the participation of Karamojong communities, consistent and targeted implementation, and commitment on behalf of Mercy Corps. However, success is also dependent upon a number of factors outside of Mercy Corps' sphere of influence. Development interventions are taking place in a context of insecurity, and the same factors that contribute to regional insecurity also threaten the success of development interventions. Challenges to implementation of the recommended economic development interventions include a lack of formal banking services, inadequate branding and recovery of stolen cattle, and ineffective policing in the region, as well as the following, which present particularly difficult challenges that are outside of Mercy Corps' control:

- Inconsistent or harmful government policy with regard to pastoralists
- Out-migration
- Water scarcity, climate change, and environmental shocks
- Insufficient coordination among development actors in the region

A. GOVERNMENT

Tensions between the GoU and populations in Karamoja have been widely documented and researched. The absence of a clear, consistent, and visible national government policy in and towards Karamoja, as well as the lack of effective government within the region has been a major cause of insecurity in the region. A history of hostile relations between the Karamojong and successive national governments has left a legacy of distrust between the two parties, which threaten to undermine any future efforts on behalf of the government to improve livelihoods in Karamoja.²⁴⁵ This situation also threatens to limit the success of development interventions in the region, and it is possible to see how government policies could severely limit the success of Mercy Corps in its work in Karamoja.

The GoU's Karamoja Action Plan for Food Security (KAPFS) theoretically outlines a comprehensive and balanced national policy on development in Karamoja. However, a review of the budget illustrates the prioritization of sedentarization schemes for the region. Moreover, recent interactions between the Minister of Karamoja, Ms. Janet Museveni, and development actors in the region indicate that political will to meet the goals outlined in the KAPFS is lacking. Without a published and followed timeline of GoU work in Karamoja, it is difficult to tell how committed the government is to enacting what has been promised (i.e. transitioning out all protected kraals, transitioning to civilian policing, building roads, providing social services, etc). This creates an environment of uncertainty that, when combined with

²⁴⁴ Minear 2002:4

²⁴⁵ Oxfam www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/learning/.../karamoja_conflict.pdf

existing uncertainty and insecurity in the region, makes it difficult to predict how successful interventions can be.

In addition to the role of the national government, local government continues to lack the power and capacity needed not only to be a strong partner for Mercy Corps, but also to lobby and advocate for local needs at the national level. This is not to say that Mercy Corps should avoid partnering with and fully involving local government into development interventions, but means that Mercy Corps should enter into work and partnership with local government institutions understanding their limited capacity.

Differing visions and metrics for success in Karamoja and/or differing strategies to achieving shared goals may prove to be a further challenge in regards to governance and Mercy Corps strategy in Karamoja. Ideally, Mercy Corps would find a strong partner in the national government. Realistically, though, the Government of Uganda is sovereign, and Mercy Corps will need to undertake work in Karamoja that is in line with national priorities for the region.

B. OUT-MIGRATION

Out-migration from Karamoja to other regions of Uganda can be viewed as either an adaptive strategy or a sign of development failure within the region. The Government of Uganda tends to take the latter stance, which is especially evidenced by the rounding up of Karamojong in Kampala to resettle them back into camps in Karamoja.²⁴⁶

The reality is most likely a combination of the two: opportunities are lacking in Karamoja, and therefore people migrate to areas where they believe opportunities may exist. Out-migration has two types: youth migrating out to find casual or seasonal labor, often returning within the year; and women and children who leave for towns to search for labor, mostly in the informal sector.²⁴⁷ Those in the second category seem to be disproportionately Bokora, and often end up begging on the streets of Kampala. Karamojong migrants to Ugandan cities often find themselves in situations similar to or worse than in Karamoja. Illiteracy, poor educational attainment, language barriers, and lack of transferable skills make it difficult for many Karamojong migrants to succeed elsewhere.

Whether or not there is a fundamental difference between the out-migration of women and children and the out-migration of youth (a trend in many pastoralist and rural areas across Africa) is debatable. History has shown that pastoralist areas are rarely able to absorb excess people, who tend to be pushed out of pastoralist livelihoods and areas.²⁴⁸ What seems clear is that out-migration is likely to continue, and should not always be considered a sign of failure. Instead, those in Karamoja who are likely to migrate should be able to do so, but efforts should be put in place to equip them with basic skills needed to succeed elsewhere. Improving literacy, providing livelihoods training outside of the livestock and agricultural sectors, and other training programs may in fact allow for more Karamojong to seek work outside of the region, as has been the trend in other pastoralist communities across the continent.

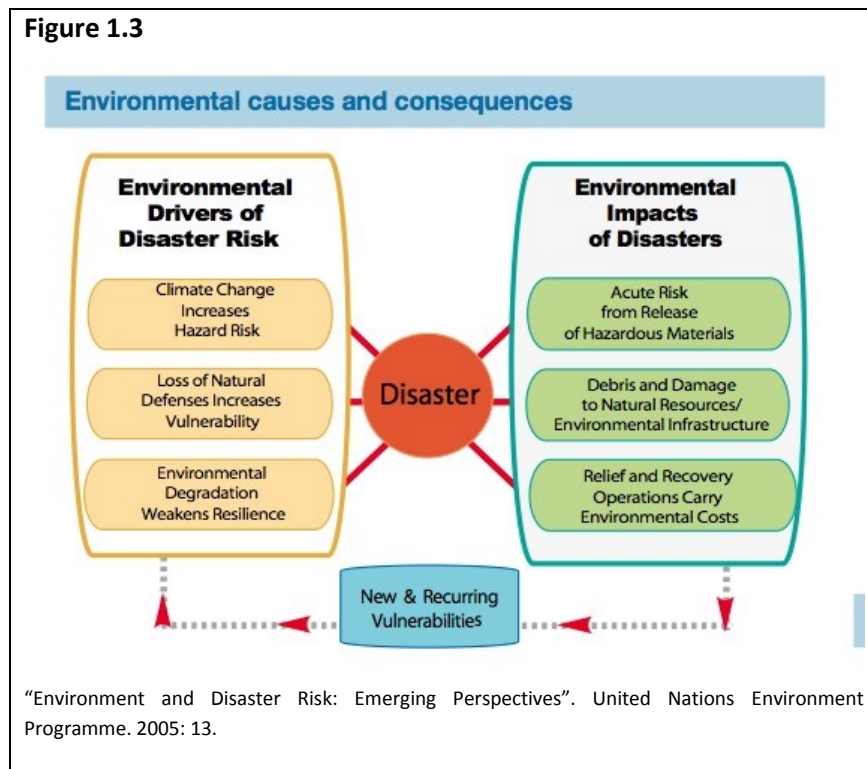
²⁴⁶ Stites and Akabwai 2007:1

²⁴⁷ Kagan and Knaute 2009: 65

²⁴⁸ Catley 2010

C. WATER SCARCITY, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SHOCKS

Figure 1.3



Environmental uncertainty is one of the many sources of insecurity in Karamoja. Unpredictable rainfall, recurrent droughts, and high temperatures, when paired with accelerated loss of biodiversity, land degradation, changing settlement patterns, livelihood choices, effects of global climate change, and other activities that put additional strain on already fragile drylands environments, increase disaster risk.

Mercy Corps should also recognize the vulnerabilities of development projects in this context. Droughts can have serious negative impacts on alternative livelihood

investments, especially in agriculture and livestock. Projects directed towards women, who are more likely to be involved in other supplemental livelihood activities that rely on the environment, are at greater risk. Pests and disease epidemics can damage investments in veterinary training, restocking, and livestock diversification. And while the relationship between natural resources and conflict remains hazy, greater pressure on limited resources has the potential to exacerbate tensions between groups and undermine peacebuilding work.²⁴⁹

D. LACK OF COORDINATION

Currently there are well over 40 different development actors working in Karamoja. With this many actors, there are bound to be overlaps and doubled efforts, as well as opposing missions and contradictory activities. While coordinating the work of all development actors in the region may be an impossible task, coordination of at least the major contributors to development, especially government bodies, UN agencies, and major international NGOs, is necessary for ensuring that activities are meeting their goals and that they feed into larger development goals for the region.²⁵⁰ The degree to which development actors are able to collaborate, share information, and synthesize efforts will determine, to some extent, the success of interventions in this region.

To the extent that some harmonization of efforts is possible, the greater the likelihood will be that those efforts will prevent further conflict. A coordinated attempt to ensure the equitable distribution of

²⁴⁹ Mubiru 2010

²⁵⁰ Adrian Cullis, Interview, FAO

services among neighboring tribes will also further reduce the likelihood of raids erupting as a result of newly formed disparities in economic assets and opportunities. Thus, remaining mindful of the potential for harm caused by gaps in service provision should be emphasized. While Mercy Corps cannot have a goal of reconciling inconsistencies among these various actors, the presence and capacity of these other potential partners should be heavily factored into any efforts undertaken by Mercy Corps.

VII. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Thus far, efforts to bring peace and prosperity to Karamoja have seen little success. Without local ownership, it will be difficult for any interventions to bring about sustainable change. Clearly, it is in the beneficiaries' best interest that any short-term interventions fit into a larger longer-term plan for the region, and that this plan ideally would be conceptualized and carried out by the government of Uganda with the support of the Karamojong. As previously noted, there are a variety of hurdles that need to be overcome before a government-owned comprehensive regional plan can be developed upon which all parties can agree.

Still, the eventual development of such a plan should be a long-term goal, and one that will remain out of reach as long as the agendas of the numerous aid organizations in Karamoja fail to include a component of advocacy at the national level. And while communication and knowledge sharing between the international organizations and government of Uganda are essential, the greater need is for the scaled up capacity of the Karamojong to advocate for themselves. The establishment of a political voice for pastoralist groups (in part through civil society) is essential to the peacebuilding process and the chances for economic development in the region.²⁵¹

The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) recently mapped all Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Karamoja with the aim of generating more detailed information on the nature, opportunities, challenges and gaps of CSO activities. The study found that with recent improvements to security in Karamoja and Uganda as a whole, there has been a significant increase in the number of CSOs engaged in development activities, especially in the area of peacebuilding.²⁵² Civil society presents an opportunity for capacity building and for coordination with current development programming, service delivery, and peacebuilding efforts. Organizations, such as ACTED Uganda, have also emphasized the importance of strengthening political representation for the Karamojong and encouraging international organizations to assume a greater role in advocacy efforts.²⁵³ Advocacy initiatives may not align with Mercy Corps' overall mission, but recognizing the need for such programming in the region can better inform Mercy Corps' long-term plan as well as provide increased opportunities for viable local partnerships.

Unfortunately, the current fractures that exist within Karamoja make it unlikely that CSOs will be able to effectively come together to advocate on behalf of the Karamojong. Fractures within Karamoja, such as those that occur along the lines of gender, ethnicity, age, and income, as well as fractures that occur within the development community for financial, mission-oriented, or political reasons will need to be addressed to some degree before successful organization, unification, and regional advocacy efforts will be able to yield results.

²⁵¹ Switzer and Mason 2006:5

²⁵² Muhumuza 2009:12

²⁵³ Knaute and Kagan 2008:12

VIII. CONCLUSION

Holding in tension the complexity of circumstances, actors, and politics in Karamoja may make designing and implementing development programs difficult, but will ultimately result in programs that are better prepared to address the short- and long-term needs of Karamojong communities. Based on the research conducted here, we are able to conclude that programs that capitalize on the strengths of Karamoja in order to improve incomes and facilitate economic improvements can contribute to peace-building by reducing competition, promoting cooperation, and strengthening livelihoods mechanisms. It is nonetheless understood that the success of the aforementioned programming will require additional simultaneous efforts to strengthen local governance, regional advocacy within national structures and improve security.

The recommendations provided here have proven successful in a variety of contexts, and if implemented, should be tailored to Karamoja's unique situation. Pastoralists' characteristic adaptability can and should be met with programming that is also adaptable. Programming should be thoroughly monitored and evaluated, and be flexible enough to adapt to changes in the region. It should also clearly identify at what level of analysis success will be determined: individual, communal, regional, or national. Without defining at what level success is to be expected, projects may be set up to fail if community-level interventions are measured by regional indicators.

While the interventions that Mercy Corps implements in Karamoja cannot be expected to result in a complete conflict transformation within the region, the organization can be a strong leader among development actors and can add value to livelihood strategies currently being pursued by Karamojong communities and individuals.

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