



Regional Learning & Advocacy Programme for Vulnerable Dryland Communities

TECHNICAL BRIEF: Using cross border programming to address cross border dynamics in Karamoja (Uganda) and Pokot (Kenya) by Sebastien Lambroschini, Regional Director, ACTED¹², February 2011

Summary

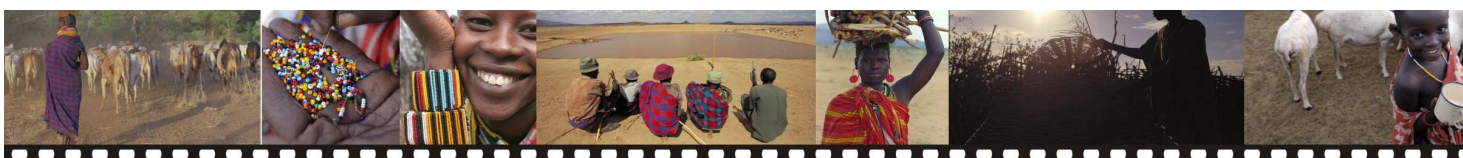
The international border between Kenya and Uganda has little significance to the (agro) pastoralist communities who constitute the majority of the population in the area of Karamoja and Pokot. In this dryland landscape the communities only have sufficient natural resources to sustain their livelihoods during the rainy season: In the dry season they are compelled to migrate to access other grazing areas and water points, and will often cross district and national borders. Increasing periods of drought, and unsupportive government policies, have led to an escalation in inter-community and cross-border competition over resources—resulting in conflict. This insecurity then further restricts access to resources, becoming a threat to the overall livelihoods of these communities who are already highly vulnerable to drought. This technical brief presents a cross-border approach to programming that ACTED has been using in Karamoja and Pokot over the past 4 years. During this time ACTED has switched from using a standardised approach in its cross-border interventions, to using an integrated methodology that comprehensively addresses the cross-border dynamics in the region. The challenges, successes, failures and lessons learned by ACTED may be of help to partners and stakeholders working in similar areas.

ACTED Uganda has been operating in Karamoja (Uganda) and Pokot (Kenya) since 2007. Between 2007 and 2009 ACTED focused on harmonising its interventions and strategies in the two countries. It used similar methodologies in Uganda and Kenya, as the target communities were known to be similar in terms of their needs, traditional governance systems, livelihood assets, and also shared resources. ACTED set about replicating programs in one country that had proved to be successful in the other—finding that lessons learned on one side of the border could help improve programming on the other. However by 2009 it had become obvious that, despite the successes of standardised programming, to address the dynamics of the cross-border area more effectively ACTED would need to take a more integrated approach and specifically facilitate inter-community and cross-border linkages and exchanges.

ACTED's approach since has been to mainstream a community-based methodology in all its activities to promote linkages. Community institutions have been formed and given training to address their specific challenges—including access to water and pasture, herd management and livelihood support. The community institutions have been linked

¹ Edited by Vanessa Tilstone, MEL Manager and Helen de Jode, consultant, REGLAP

² Copies of this brief can be accessed at: <http://www.disasterriskreduction.net/east-central-africa/library/?querystring=reglap>



to each other, to their local authorities within their target districts, and across the international border—with a view to improving inter-community understanding and disaster management at this higher level. Whilst undertaking this innovative approach ACTED has experienced a number of implementation challenges: Government officials on each side of the border do not generally coordinate, which means cross border problems are rarely addressed efficiently. In addition, although many aid actors are active in Karamoja, knowledge of cross border mobility and natural resource usage patterns is both limited and undocumented. Cross-border interventions also entail considerable operational challenges that create delays and additional costs.

Cross-border dynamics in Karamoja/Pokot

As is typical in the Horn of Africa, particularly in pastoralist regions, the border between Uganda and Kenya is incongruent with the ethnic boundaries in the area. The Pokot are scattered between Pokot North district in Kenya and the recently created Amudat district in Uganda. Nakapiripirit district in Uganda is populated by Karimojong—mostly belonging to the Pian sub-clan. Until 1972, when Uganda and Kenya agreed to exchange portions of their territories, Pokot North district had been a Ugandan territory. The district has continued to be neglected by both governments, with neither being keen to expend financial resources on its development. In Uganda the Karamoja region as a whole has received only marginal and largely inadequate attention from the government.

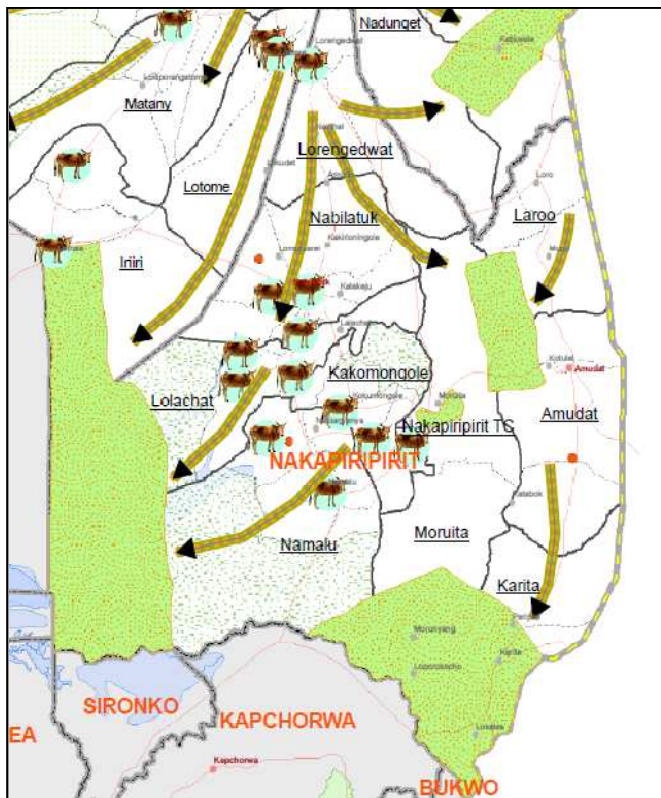


Figure 1: Migration patterns in Nakapiripirit and Amudat Districts, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 23 March 2010

Population movements and natural resource use

The Karamoja region is mostly inhabited by pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities, apart from the farming communities in the Karimojong ‘green belt’ (agricultural livelihood zone), which spreads through the southern part of Amudat district and the south and western parts of Nakapiripirit district. As pastoralists and agro-pastoralists they rely mainly on livestock herding, as the soil—which is rocky and poorly nourished by limited rainfall—cannot sustain intensive agriculture. Most of the pastoralists are able to find grazing areas and water points near their homesteads during and shortly after the rainy season, but the onset of the dry season compels them to migrate in order to access the resources they need for their cattle to survive. This is particularly true in the case of the Pokot as most of

Amudat and Pokot North is drier than Nakapiripirit District. Many Karimojong pastoralists will migrate seasonally towards the western part of their region, and even to the neighbouring Teso region, where their dry season pasture areas are located. Both the Pian-Karimojong and Pokot communities will share the same dry season grazing areas in the south of Amudat and the south west of Nakapiripirit district as can be seen in Figure 1³. As conflict and policies

³ Migration patterns only show Karimojong migrations, as Pokot migration patterns have not been studied in detail. ACTED’s experience in the region shows that Pokot communities from Amudat and Pokot North migrate to the pasture areas shown on this map.



restrict access to their dry season grazing areas it is getting more and more difficult for pastoralists to implement these traditional migration patterns—leading to the overgrazing of the accessible pastures. The policy of the Ugandan government encourages the settlements of nomadic populations, promoting agricultural production at the expense of more sustainable pastoralist livelihoods.

Conflict & Insecurity

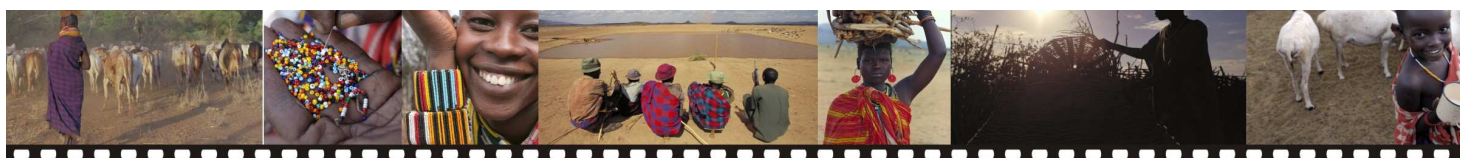
Recurrent conflicts and insecurity in the region have diminished both the capacity and the will of pastoralists to move in search of better pasture. The causes of these conflicts are many:

Traditional and untraditional raids – Although cattle raids between pastoralist communities have been performed since time immemorial by all the tribes in the Karimojong cluster, the practice was traditionally authorised by tribal leaders, and was carried out by warriors in order to prove one’s braveness, meet the demands of a bride-price for marriage, as well as to re-stock cattle after a prolonged dry spell. The raiding typically manifested itself in large-scale incursions into enemy territory by extensive groups of warriors with the aim of rustling many herds of cattle at once. Nowadays however the proliferation of small arms, diminished access to resources, and a constantly increasing human population has undermined the authority of traditional leaders. These factors, coupled with a deeply rooted need for revenge, the increasing importance of money within society (meaning cattle are being raided for sale only) and the overall lack of economic development, are some of the reasons why there are now increasingly frequent raids and thuggery across the region.

Shifting alliances – Conflict is not indiscriminate however. For a long time strict social rules have been in place so as to minimise violence within specific ethnic groups or sub-groups. Many of these rules are still valid and generally functional, and explain the minimal violence encountered at the border between Uganda and Kenya where the Pokot live on both sides of the border. Amudat can be seen as a ‘buffer’ zone, explaining the relative peace encountered in Kenya. There are flashes of violence that occasionally erupt at the border of Amudat and Nakapiripirit districts however. The Pokot have ongoing conflicts with the Luhya, Sebei, Pian, Matheniko, Bokora, Samburu, and Turkana. The Pian are in conflict with the Matheniko and the Bokora (other Karimojong sub-groups), as well as with the Pokot, Jie and Teso. Overall the conflict dynamics can be extremely difficult to understand as there may be shifting alliances depending on interests of each group, and one interesting feature of cross-border raids is that they always tend to be organised in alliance with a local group.

Power imbalances - The ongoing forced disarmament policy in Karamoja has also created a power imbalance between ‘enemy’ groups both within Karamoja and between Uganda and Kenya. Within Karamoja disarmament has been unevenly implemented, which means that one clan can be disarmed while its ‘enemies’ are not, making the disarmed clan much more vulnerable to cattle raids. At the same time the armed forces (Uganda People’s Defence Force) and the police are unable to ensure civilian protection and social order—having insufficient resources or means for reinforcing justice mechanisms (judiciary personnel, number of functioning courts, fight against impunity etc.). In addition, as arms flow freely across borders from South Sudan into Uganda and Kenya, any disarmament operation will not be successful unless it is undertaken regionally by securing borders and by carrying out disarmament concurrently in all countries.

Uneven disarmament - Although in Uganda forced disarmament is being implemented, in Kenya it is not. The Kenyan government has only initiated a voluntary disarmament process that has not been very effective. With no systematic disarmament in Pokot North, Pokot warriors from Amudat are able to cross the border and hide their weapons in Kenya. The consequence of this uneven disarmament process is that disarmed Karimojong communities in



Nakapiripirit become more vulnerable to Pokot raids, prompting them to re-arm however they can. The Government of Uganda did introduce a temporary policy of 'protected kraals', wherein soldiers protected cattle during the night in confined spaces. But confining cattle creates an excellent breeding space for epizootics, and the surrounding area becomes overgrazed. The 'protected kraal' system has officially been suspended since mid-2010.

Strategies for ACTED's intervention

From standardised to integrated programming across international borders

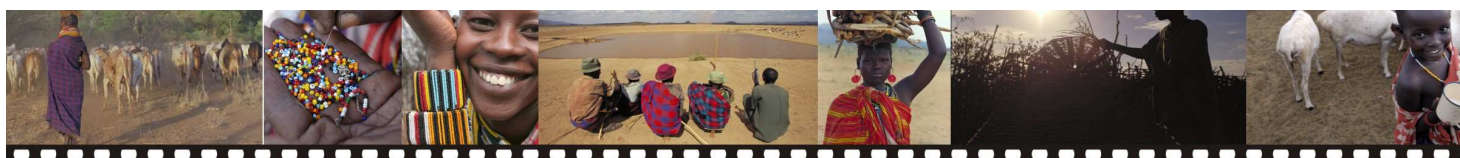
ACTED Uganda began implementing cross-border projects in the districts of Nakapiripirit and Amudat (Karamoja, Uganda) and Pokot North (Kenya) in 2007. Initially the aim was to implement standardised projects on both sides of the border, rather than work specifically on cross-border dynamics and challenges. The rationale for standardisation was that aid interventions across international borders often followed different designs and strategies—being implemented by separate country missions whose communication with counterparts across borders to other country offices was often limited. In late 2009 ACTED Uganda decided to take a closer look at the cross-border dynamics in the Karamoja and Pokot areas and realised that because the international border has little meaning to the communities living in the areas, there was a need to address the cross-border dynamics in its projects. The cross-border dimension of the conflict aspect also provided an opportunity for addressing problems at more than one levels—crucially important if a lasting solution to the problems in the Karamoja cluster are to be found.

ACTED created Pastoral Field Schools (PFS) in Pokot North, Amudat and Nakapiripirit districts. Using an FAO driven methodology this has been implemented in the same way in all three districts. ACTED has also trained Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) in Kenya and in Uganda. Common training sessions have been held so as to link the CAHWs from both countries. (The CAHWs in Kenya and Uganda are not officially recognised by the governments, but are tolerated owing to a lack of better alternatives.) Although the involvement of local authorities in cross-border CAHW initiatives is limited, the increased communication at the community level is a valuable first step towards a regional tackling of epizootics. CAHWs have been linked to the district veterinary officers during training sessions, helping spread the word about animal diseases across international borders and thus decreasing the amount of time it takes the government to respond.

Drug outlets have also been set up on both sides of the border. This is problematic as drug prices and regulations differ widely on either side. Pharmaceuticals in Kenya are much cheaper, making it difficult for drug traders in Karamoja who subsequently have to import drugs from Kenya illegally (the quality of which is not certified) in order to remain competitive. ACTED has also implemented water point rehabilitations as part of a Dan Church Aid consortium and organised cross-border exchanges with the consortium members. The Water User Committees (WUCs) of the partner organisation visited ACTED-trained WUCs in Alale, Kenya, where ACTED was rehabilitating water structures. Water pump mechanics have also been successfully trained during common sessions in Moroto, Karamoja.

Applying lessons learned/successes from one country to the other

Based on its successful experiences elsewhere in Northern Uganda, ACTED began implementing Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), in Karamoja as well as in Pokot North (Kenya). In Kenya they are known as Village Community Bank Associations (VICOBAs) but are otherwise identical. Implementing such a scheme is quite challenging in a pastoral setup; In particular the distance between the VSLA/VICOBA members is a challenge to the implementation of the methodology, which requires regular meetings—as is the high illiteracy rates amongst target



communities and the limited experience of cash and a business culture. However these challenges have been overcome by close monitoring of the groups.

ACTED are currently supporting 9 VICOBA's and 11 VSLA's across the Karamoja and North Pokot areas. Based on the monitoring information so far, VSLA has been a tremendous success in Karamoja to date, as shown by the members' active participation (especially in women's groups), the constitution of a significant savings fund, and the use of loans by all the group members. ACTED has now introduced the methodology into Pokot North and is seeing positive results in Kenya as well—illustrated by community requests for a scaling up of the intervention.

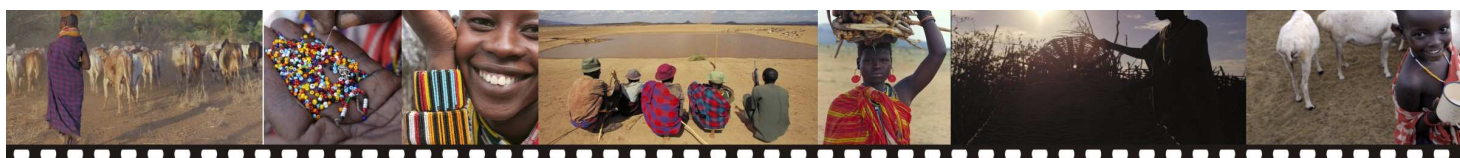
ACTED began forming Village Land Use Planning Committees (VLUPCs) in Kenya, under the European Commission funded Drought Management Initiative (DMI). The project aims to analyse common resources used by the community, and to establish dry season grazing agreements between the Pokot and the Turkana. The successes encountered during this project, especially oral commitments to pasture sharing amongst target communities, have encouraged ACTED to extend this approach across the border and into Karamoja. In Uganda the project is currently being implemented under the ECHO funded Regional Drought Decision, using a generalised Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) approach. ACTED, with its consortium partners, supports communities in analysing the risks they are facing, e.g. climatic shocks, conflicts/insecurity, and by developing Community Disaster Management Plans aims at improving the preparedness of the community for their many potential hardships.

By shifting from the VLUPC methodology to CMDRR, ACTED is encouraging the communities to take into consideration the various factors – including access to resources – that can negatively impact their livelihoods and to be better prepared to address them. Cross-border exchange visits have been conducted for groups of beneficiaries, allowing them to discuss the challenges that they face in their respective communities, and to share locally driven solutions. [For example, water user committees (WUCs) have discussed the difficulties of implementing a cost recovery system for their water points during visits. They realised by themselves how difficult it was for them to start such a system long after the rehabilitation of the water point. However, experiences from the successful WUCs encouraged the others to promote the idea more forcibly, and provided them with arguments to convince their community of the long-term benefits.]

Specifically addressing the cross border dynamics

The cross-border exchange visits and training provided a genuine basis for the sharing of experiences. Beneficiaries got to know more about their neighbour's environment, culture and lifestyle, and realised that they have a lot in common. They are also able to integrate differences and analyse the reasons of their neighbour's behaviour. For example, some Pian Pastoral Field School (PFS) members were surprised to discover how arid the Pokot area was, and thus understood better the reason why Pokot pastoralists have to migrate to Karamoja during the dry season. And while visiting the Pian PFSs, the Pokot came to realise the complexity of the ethnic patchwork in Karamoja, and thus the difficulties encountered by the Pian to ensure their daily security.

With initial contacts between Pian and Pokot beneficiaries proving encouraging, ACTED will continue to organise exchange visits as part of its CMDRR approach. As a first step towards conflict mitigation, ACTED will mobilise the Pokot and Karimojong-Pian communities to develop dry season natural resource use agreements. ACTED facilitated the negotiation that led to such an NRM agreement between Turkana and Pokot in Kenya, and hopes that a similar success can be achieved between the Pian and the Pokot.



Limited exchanges between the authorities of both countries and the lack of integrated ASALs policies

Although there have been attempts by the Kenyan and Ugandan governments to coordinate activities in the cross-border region, they are typically inefficient—and often counter-productive—disarmament campaigns. Human vaccination campaigns are often implemented in a cross-border manner, but only when there has been strong involvement by international organisations. Animal vaccination campaigns are usually conducted by one country at a time, and do not take into consideration the cross-border movements of the population and cattle.

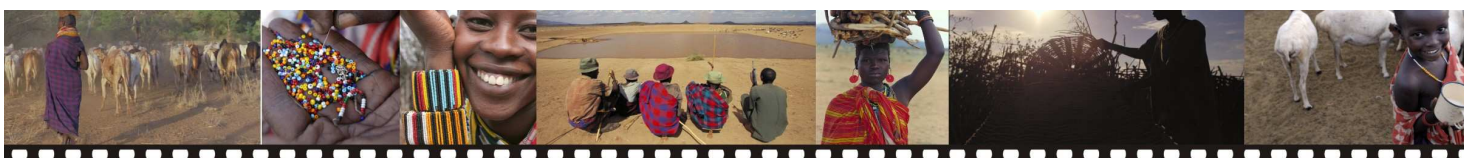
Both the Kenyan and Ugandan governments have had ASAL policies in their 'pipelines' for a long time, but neither government is yet ready to implement them. This is particularly true for Uganda where the government is currently keen to settle pastoral communities, and move their local economy towards agriculture. Both governments are willing to brand animals, so as to avoid cattle rustling, but technically this is very difficult to implement in the absence of a uniformed pastoralist policy amongst migrating Kenyan Pokot pastoralists. Both governments, and much of society, see the region as a 'no-go' area because of its conflict and insecurity. This limits the numbers of Kenyans and Ugandans who visit the region, and consequently their opportunity to understand the Pokot and Karimojong way of life—and more importantly the economic viability of the pastoral system. This lack of understanding is particularly strong at national government level. The limited interaction also constrains the flow of economic goods to the region, which is a key obstacle its development.

Limited scientific research and knowledge of cross border dynamics in Karamoja/Pokot

The presence of UNOCHA and many other international organisations has led to numerous studies and maps in Karamoja, but Pokot North has been largely excluded from this work. For example, it is still not possible to get an official map with the district boundaries of Pokot North district—three years after its official creation. Studies of the cross-border region itself are rare, and analysis is often limited either to the Karamoja region, or to Northern Kenya—where Pokot North is sometimes included. Given the mobility patterns between Karamoja and Pokot, it is essential to develop a more in-depth understanding of the region—one that does not stop at the international border. The Turkana-Karamoja cross-border area has been studied in some depth, but in the Karamoja-Pokot area migratory patterns, conflict dynamics and natural resource usage are only known about superficially. No formal attempt has yet been made to understand the relationship between the Karimojong clans in Nakapiripirit and the Pokot.

Operational challenges

Implementing cross-border activities also has its operational challenges. Programmatic costs are often higher, with implementing agencies having to pay for vehicle insurance in both countries, for example. Crossing the border can also be challenging in terms of visas and checkpoints, resulting in significant delays. And finally cross-border programming creates administrative constraints: Labour laws in the two countries differ, making it difficult to harmonise contracts, benefits, and salary scales for cross-border staff. In addition, implementing agencies have to deal with two currencies and several bank accounts, which slows down financial procedures. In order to address and try to smooth out these operational challenges ACTED has now set up standard regional procedures and a regional office in charge of cross-border programmes.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Since ACTED started its cross-border activities in 2007 the organisation has moved from the implementation of standardised projects on both sides of the border to interventions specifically focusing on cross-border dynamics. ACTED has successfully supported the development of community-based structures ranging from Water Users Committees to Pastoralist Field Schools, VLUPCs, VICOBA/VSLAs, CAHWs and, more recently, Community Disaster Management Committees aimed at strengthening livelihoods, enhancing access to essential resources and improving community level disaster planning. ACTED strives to mainstream a holistic cross-border approach in all activities it implements, in cooperation with the established groups and their local authorities. During these past 3 to 4 years ACTED has developed an in-depth knowledge of cross-border dynamics and challenges. From this experience, the following lessons learned can be drawn:

- Cross-border interventions should recognise that official country borders are of little significance to (agro) pastoralist communities and should be designed with this in mind.
- Project implementation in countries with pastoralist communities should be harmonised, with cross-border projects targeting communities that have similar needs, traditional governance systems, livelihood assets, and which share resources.
- The core of each cross-border intervention should be the establishment of linkages including: exchange visits, joint trainings, sharing of methodologies and inter-community meetings. They should aim to build trust among the various ethnic groups and communities, improve understanding, and foster cooperation.
- Building trust among conflict-prone communities should start with discussions focused on one very specific issue—e.g. access to dry season land—as all the challenges cannot be addressed at once.
- Linkages between government officials from both countries should be strongly encouraged through exchange visits and information sharing.
- Using a community-based approach, and supporting community management structures, will ensure greater ownership and sustainability of community-led cross-border conflict mitigation.
- Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction is highly recommended as a relevant holistic approach to address the priorities of cross-border communities in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands. Inter-community planning for common challenges and resource use agreements are key to mitigate disaster-based cross-border conflicts and to improve community disaster preparedness.

Please send comments/suggestions to sebastien.lambroschini@acted.org and vtilstone@oxfam.org.uk

EUROPEAN COMMISSION



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