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A Qualitative Micro-analysis of Underlying Drivers of Livelihoods Resilience in Selected Districts of Karamoja, Acholi and South-Western Regions of Uganda

Report



This report was produced at the request of the USAID Uganda Mission. It was prepared independently by **ResilientAfrica Network (RAN)**, Makerere University. **Authors: Prof. William Bazeyo, Dr. Roy William Mayega, Dr. Lynn Atuyambe, Nathan Tumuhamy, Christine Muhumuza, Julius Ssentongo, Dr. Dorothy Okello.**

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This report was aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the underlying (or latent) drivers of chronic risk and vulnerability to recurrent shocks and stresses, existing capacities to manage the risk. We also validated community options for increasing absorptive capacity at the individual, household, and community level. The following entities who contributed to the development of this report are duly acknowledged: USAID/Uganda Mission is acknowledged for providing financial support that made this work possible, and also for invaluable technical insights that shaped the scope and breadth of this study. The District Local Governments of Kisoro, Rubanda and Kabale (South Western Uganda), Kotido and Kaabong (Karamoja) and Lamwo District are thanked for helping to mobilize the respondents, particularly the Key Informants. We would also like to acknowledge and appreciate the various respondents (Key Informants, In-depth Interview respondents and Focus Group discussion participants who provided valuable information, as well as the research assistants (XYZ) who collected the data. Special thanks go to Amber Lily Kenny (Vulnerable Population Unit Team Lead USAID Uganda), Frank Kaharuza (USAID Uganda Mission) for their technical insights. Dr. Maggie Linak (RAN's AoR) is also acknowledged for coordination of the buy-in effort.

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Mark Ibanda
USAID-HESN Photo Contest
Father-daughter partnership to transport produce to the market, Eastern Uganda

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CLA	Collaborating, Learning and Adaption
DOs	Development Objectives
ECDE	Early Childhood Development Education
EPCMD	Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths
FAO	Food And Agricultural Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FP	Family Planning
GoU	Government of Uganda
IDIs	In-depth Interviews
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MoH	Ministry of Health
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
RAN	ResilientAfrica Network
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UDHS	Uganda Demographic and Health Survey
UNCST	Uganda National Council of Science and Technology
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMA	Uganda National Meteorological Authority
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USE	Universal Secondary Education
VHTs	Village Health Teams
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WFP	World Food Program

I.0 BACKGROUND

Uganda is vulnerable to a range of livelihoods shocks and stresses. Agriculture accounts for the bulk of Uganda's economic output, with over two thirds of Ugandans engaged in farming as the main source of their livelihood. Because the majority of households rely on rain-fed subsistence farming and agro-pastoralism, climate variability and extreme hydro-meteorological hazards have a major impact on household livelihoods. Although vulnerability to livelihoods related shocks and stresses is distributed ubiquitously across the country, some regions have been more affected than others. Karamoja region for instance has faced recurrent dry spells and high rates of child malnutrition as a result of persistent food insecurity. However, underneath the immediate causes of these stresses is a dearth of underlying social, economic, cultural and environmental factors driving risk and vulnerability. These latent underlying factors need to be understood in order to build sustained resilience to the recurrent shocks and stresses.

Substantial investments by Government and Development agencies have resulted into commendable reduction of loss of lives. However, similar cycles of vulnerability continue to recur. Recurrence of the same shocks and stresses with similar consequences in the same communities means a shortfall in resilience, adaptation and learning in the affected communities. It is, therefore, imperative to understand the underlying drivers of vulnerability as well as learn from the adaptive capacities of communities in order to break these recurrent negative cycles and build resilience.

USAID/Uganda's new Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2016-2021 departs from previous approaches by introducing an integrated approach to delivery of development interventions to advance Uganda's progress in the first five years of a longer-term trajectory for sustainable development. This new strategy provides an opportunity for USAID/Uganda's Mission to build upon its past success and learning by delivering integrated, cross-sectoral development, and demonstrates leadership among USAID Missions by leveraging science, technology, innovation and partnership approaches, and advancing the 'collaborating, learning and adaption' (CLA) approach to meet the development goal. The new CDCS articulates three Development Objectives (DOs): (1) Community and household resilience in select areas and target populations increased, (2) Demographic drivers affected to contribute to long term trend shift and (3) Key systems more accountable and responsive to Uganda's development needs.

Previously, USAID's resilience activities had a focus on areas experiencing humanitarian shocks, especially arid and semi-arid regions. The new strategy however is more encompassing and includes areas facing livelihoods stresses like poverty, ill-health, and poor access to services. The development hypothesis underlying DOI, the development objective targeting resilience, is that by increasing the capacity of households and communities to adapt to shocks and stresses, they will be better able to promote inclusive growth and lessen chronic vulnerability. This DO will be achieved through four intermediate results: (1.1) Key drivers of vulnerability identified, (1.2) Capacity to manage risk increased, (1.3) Enhanced prevention and treatment of HIV, malaria and other epidemics among the most vulnerable, and (1.4) Community and household assets increased and diversified. To achieve these results, there is need for a deeper understanding of the context specific factors driving risk and vulnerability, existing capacities to manage the risk, and community validation of options for increasing absorptive capacity at the individual, household, and community level.

ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) is a network of university-based innovation labs established to leverage science and scholarship to contribute to increased understanding of resilience for communities affected by recurrent livelihoods shocks and stresses in Africa. This micro-resilience assessment aligns with RAN's Objective 1 which aims to develop and operationalize a framework for assessing resilience in African communities, and Objective 3 which aims to enhance resilience-related knowledge sharing. Over the last five years, RAN has developed a set of approaches and tools to facilitate deep-dive micro-resilience assessments in target communities.

The ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) partnered with USAID/Uganda to perform a livelihoods micro-resilience analysis for Karamoja, Lamwo District in the Acholi sub-region and the South-Western region of Uganda. The micro-resilience analysis aims at further clarifying the underlying (or latent) drivers of chronic risk and vulnerability to recurrent shocks and stresses in the target regions. This analysis drills down into the underlying drivers of risk and vulnerability, the capacity to manage risk, and options for interventions to address the underlying drivers. The analysis also serves as a platform through which stakeholders at the grassroots level can be consulted so that their opinions and voices can be factored into the planned interventions targeting resilience building in these regions. The analysis complements the information available to the USAID/Uganda Mission and its implementing partners in operationalizing the resilience Development Objective of the Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) 2016-2021. In particular, findings from the analysis as well as the stakeholder consultations will inform the development of the Project Appraisal Strategy for operationalizing the CDCS.

USAID defines resilience as the ability of people, households and communities, countries and systems to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth¹. By integrating resilience mechanisms into development efforts, development practitioners seek to break the cycles of vulnerability and to find locally driven solutions for more sustainable livelihood impacts. The factors that affect resilience can be viewed as primary and underlying causes of shocks and stresses, drivers of vulnerability and drivers of adaptation. Getting to the bottom of these factors was at the core of this assessment. It is hoped that the findings from this study will inform the design of contextually relevant programs to address the root causes of risk and vulnerability in the target communities.

¹ The Resilience Agenda: Helping Vulnerable Communities Emerge from Cycles of Crisis onto a Pathway toward Development USAID: [web] Accessed Via: http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Briefer_USAID's%20Resilience%20Agenda_Dec%202012.pdf

2.0 JUSTIFICATION AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The knowledge gap

The persistence of recurrent livelihoods stresses in Karamoja, Acholi and South-Western Uganda despite longstanding investments in livelihoods programs implies a resilience gap in the affected communities. Several interventions have been implemented by both the government of Uganda and the development partners, targeting vulnerability factors in these regions. Amidst several successes in improving livelihoods, several challenges persist that keep these regions behind other regions in terms of livelihoods resilience. Tackling the resilience gap in these regions requires a clear understanding of the underlying drivers of risk, vulnerability and adaptation. It is these variables that need to be targeted by development programs so as to build sustainable capacity for affected communities to overcome recurrent risk and vulnerability. Therefore, this micro resilience assessment was aimed at assessing the underlying causes of vulnerability to recurrent shocks and stresses in these regions so as to inform the development of better resilience interventions.

2.2 Justification

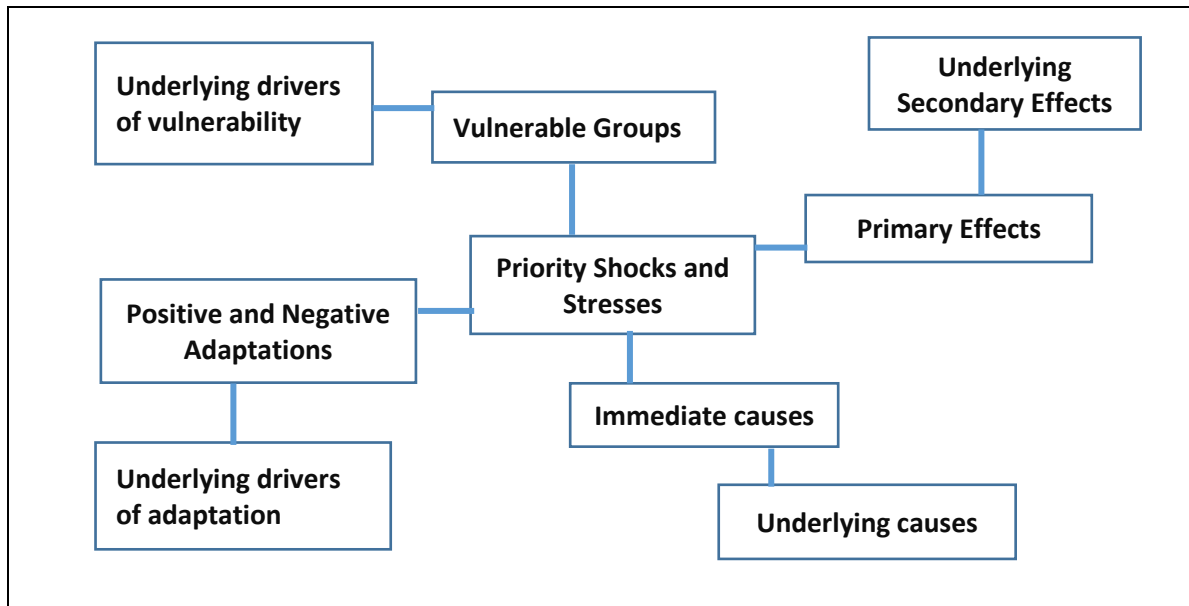
USAID and other development partners have been implementing several programs in various districts in Uganda including: Feed the Future; Food for Peace; Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths (EPCMD); PEPFAR; Power Africa and Trade Africa; Youth Development; and support to people with disabilities, to mention but a few. The new CDCS 2016-2021, states: “Given the interwoven nature of issues that Ugandans face, an integrated solution is necessary to achieve sustained impact”. The rationale for the integration is that the individual who faces recurrent shocks and stresses from a high burden of disease, for example, is the same individual who is affected by livelihoods stresses like food insecurity, poor access to quality health services and education and poorly functional governance systems. The new Uganda Country Program will seek to integrate different services so that they can target this individual in a holistic way. The new CDCS describes three geo-focused tiers of integration. Tier 3 districts will involve a ‘concerted integration of specific interventions into targeted areas of intensity’. This convergence is expected to maximize and amplify the results of the interventions to the most vulnerable populations. In addition to other vulnerable groups, the new CDCS recognizes ‘the 14-year-old-girl’ as one of the most vulnerable people in Uganda. Programs that can effectively converge and change her livelihoods environment will have far-reaching effects on the country’s development.

In developing the new CDCS, USAID/Uganda commissioned various assessments and analyses to strengthen the evidence base for the proposed approaches. These included among others the following: International Futures Analysis (2015); Gender and social inclusion analysis (2015); Conflict Assessment Framework update (2015); Political Economy Analysis (2015); Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (2013); Environmental Threats and Opportunities Assessment (2016); and Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Assessment (2016).

The micro resilience assessment adds to what is known by unpacking the underlying context-based drivers of risk, vulnerability, adaptive capacity, and transformative capacity of individuals, households, and communities in the selected districts where integrated approaches to the CDCS will be intensified. The analysis clarifies key resilience issues that intervention programs should

examine so that future intervention strategies target the underlying resilience drivers for individuals, households, and communities. The three target regions are: Southwestern Uganda (Rubanda and Kisoro districts), Karamoja region (Kotido, Kaabong districts), and Acholi region (Lamwo district).

2.3 Conceptual framework for underlying drivers of risk and vulnerability



The micro-resilience analysis model developed by RAN seeks to get to the bottom of drivers of risk and vulnerability by searching for underlying drivers. Exploration is centered on the priority shocks and stresses affecting the target region. It explores their immediate causes and underlying causes. It then explores their effects and underlying secondary effects. It elucidates the vulnerable groups and searches for the underlying drivers of vulnerability. Finally, it searches for adaptations to the shocks and stresses as well as the determinants of adaptation. The output of this analysis is a set of qualitative factors that represent underlying drivers of risk and vulnerability. The factors are grouped under emergent themes that represent livelihood dimensions.

2.4 Study Objectives

2.4.1 General objective

The overall objective of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying (or latent) drivers of chronic risk and vulnerability to recurrent shocks and stresses, existing capacities to manage the risk, and community validation of options for increasing absorptive capacity at the individual, household, and community level in selected districts in Karamoja, Acholi and South-Western regions of Uganda.

2.4.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the analysis were:

1. To identify drivers of chronic risk and vulnerability to recurrent priority shocks and stresses affecting the target communities in the selected districts.
2. To explore the underlying causes and effects of vulnerability to the shocks and stresses in the selected districts.
3. To explore the latent existing capacities to manage the risk that promote strategies to cope with, mitigate and adapt to the shocks and stresses among target communities.
4. To explore community validation of options for increasing absorptive capacity at the individual, household, and community level through asset and livelihood diversification in selected districts.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed qualitative approach where Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted. A narrative review of grey and published literature was also conducted. The purpose of this design was to get to the root of the underlying drivers of vulnerability in each selected communities.

3.1 Study site

The study was conducted in three regions: Karamoja, Acholi and South-Western Uganda and specifically in the districts of Kaabong and Kotido in Karamoja; Lamwo in Acholi; and Kisoro, Kabale and Rubanda in South-western Uganda. The selected districts have been earmarked by USAID/Uganda as primary intervention sites for the convergence of resilience programming in the country. The study communities are summarized in the tables below:

Table 1: Summary of the study areas

Region	Administrative Units	Study Areas
Karamoja	Kaabong District	Kalapata sub-county
	Kotido District	Rengen sub-county
Northern Uganda/Acholi	Lamwo District	Palabek Gem sub-county
South Western Uganda (Kigezi)	Kisoro District	Muramba sub-county
	Rubanda District	Nyamweru sub-county

Table 2: Summary of FGDs, KIIs & IDIs Participants

Region	Administrative Units	Study Areas	FGDs	KIIs	IDIs
Karamoja	Kaabong District	Kalapata sub-county	3(25)	3	3
	Kotido District	Rengen sub-county	3(25)	3	3
Northern Uganda/Acholi	Lamwo District	Palabek Gem sub-county	3(28)	3	3
South Western Uganda/Kigezi	Kisoro District	Muramba sub-county	(3)25	3	4
	Rubanda District	Nyamweru sub-county	(3)25	4	3

3.2 Data collection procedures

Rapid community consultations were conducted in the selected communities to capture voices from the local leaders, community members and other key stakeholders regarding their views on the underlying drivers of risk, vulnerability, capacity, and potential transformative approaches of individuals, households, and communities regarding livelihoods resilience and vulnerability. Data was collected using the RAN approach and tools for measuring resilience at a community level. A team of research assistants was trained on the data collection tools. Led by a RAN staff, the teams set out for the target communities in September 2017 and conducted Focus Group Discussions with community members, In-depth Interviews with individuals affected by recurrent shocks and stresses, as well as Key Informant Interviews with district leaders.

Desk reviews of literature: This involved a search and review of both published and unpublished literature. The review focused on existing policies and programs on livelihoods in Uganda that involve the target districts, interventions that have been implemented and their outcomes, and information obtained from other studies conducted in the target regions.

Key informant interviews: Key informant interviews targeted district leaders who were knowledgeable on livelihoods programming in the target districts. Key informants included District Focal Points for nutrition, District Community Development Officers, District Production Coordinators, District Planners, and local managers of NGOs.

FGDs: In each district, the FGD participants were identified from the listed sub counties in the study area. On average, a total of 8 participants were selected for each FGD. The FGDs were drawn from the community and included: an FGD for men only, an FGD for women and an FGD for the youth which had mixed sexes. The FGD composition included male and female youth, mothers and fathers of children affected by malnutrition, male and female Village Health Team members, male and female religious leaders, male and female teachers, male and female Local Council members, male and female opinion leaders, widows, and representatives of women and youth groups.

In-depth interviews: In-depth interviews were carried out with individuals affected by shocks and stresses the vulnerable individuals in each district. They included parents of children affected by malnutrition, in school and out of school 14 year old girls, people living with HIV, people in refugee hosting communities, refugees, and men and women households facing extreme poverty. In line with USAID's CDCS, we sought to understand how several factors converge on the vulnerable people. For ethical purposes, only vulnerable people that had disclosed their status and were open about participation in the discussions were identified. The purpose of this information was to uncover ways through which existing and new services can be improved, but will also be useful in identifying interventions that can be integrated.

A total of 9 FGDs (involving 128 people), 16 Key Informants, and 16 in-depth Interviews were conducted. In all, a total of 160 people were engaged, including 62 from Karamoja, 64 from South Western, and 34 from Lamwo. The description of all the participants is further highlighted in the Appendix I.

3.3 Data Management and analysis

Data from the IDIs, FGDs and KIIs were recorded using digital voice recorders. Thereafter, they were transcribed verbatim without losing meaning and then translated to English for the interviews that were conducted in the local languages. Thereafter, the typed transcripts were analyzed in two stages: first, the manifest content analysis following which latent interpretative analysis was done to derive underlying meanings of phenomena. The transcripts were carefully read and re-read and codes were developed and signed assigned (Open coding). Thereafter, metaphors with similar codes were coalesced into themes that guided the reporting of results. Verbatim statements about the participants' experiences were extracted and compiled into one text in Excel for each region, which constituted the unit of analysis. The text was divided into meaning units that were condensed. The condensed meaning units were abstracted, and the whole context was considered when condensing and labeling meaning units with sub-themes (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004). The various sub-themes were discussed and agreed on by a

team of researchers. Finally, the sub-themes that were related to each other were merged to constitute a 'layer' which was described as: Shocks/Stresses; Vulnerability factors; Drivers of vulnerability; Adaptive factors; or possible solutions. For the literature review, data analysis involved extraction of narratives and descriptive data from key documents. Upon completion, this information was synthesized and summarized into a report.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance for the study was sought and obtained from Makerere University School of Public Health Research and Ethics Committee. Permission to carry out the research was sought from the local governments of the respective districts. The objectives, benefits and risks of the study were explained to the prospective study participants and informed consent sought before interviewing them. Assent was obtained for the 14-year old girls while consent was obtained from the caretakers of the girls after full explanations were given about the importance of the study and the methods. No specific names of participants were taken. All information has been handled confidentially. Because the interviews involved some vulnerable individuals like people living with HIV, only those that had publicly declared their status and those that were confident to openly talk about their experiences were enrolled.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Karamoja Region (Kaabong and Kotido Districts)

4.1.1 Development context and gap

Karamoja Region consists of seven districts in northeastern Uganda (Kaabong, Kotido, Abim, Moroto, Napak, Amudat and Nakapiripirit). Home to approximately 1.3 million people, the region has the country's lowest human development indicators and is one of the world's poorest regions. A disproportionate number of its population (82%) live in absolute poverty (1) which is significantly higher than the national average of 37%. For decades, the people of Karamoja suffered higher than average loss of life and livelihoods assets from perennial dry spells and widespread insecurity from cattle rustling. Coupled with a range of socio-economic challenges, communities in Karamoja are trapped in multidimensional and intergenerational poverty (1). There has been a small shift in the region's income poverty trends from Uganda Shillings (Ushs) 24,224 earned per household in 2005/06 to Ushs 27,695 in 2012/13, which is equivalent to an annual growth rate of 1.9% (UNDP, 2015b). Most households lack stable income which creates unstable livelihoods. Reliance on itinerant nomadic pastoralism and subsistence agriculture without viable non-climate dependent livelihood alternatives sources persists.

Nutrition indicators for children in Karamoja are also worse than other regions in Uganda. According to the UDHS, stunting in the Karamoja region stands at 35.2%, compared to a national stunting rate of 29% (UBOS, 2017b). This makes Karamoja region the third most affected region in the country. Stunting is one of the key indicators for chronic undernutrition. Poor nutrition in Karamoja has in several reports been attributed to insufficient crop production, crop failure from repeated dry spells, a fall in livestock production, low purchasing power to facilitate dietary diversity, and a pervasive lack of awareness on appropriate child nutrition.

Adult literacy rates in Karamoja remain very low. Although Uganda's 2014 population and housing census indicated about 72% literacy levels for Uganda, literacy levels for Karamoja region stood at just 6%, a variance of 66%. Although the net enrolment rate (NER) for primary education in Karamoja increased from 30.7% to 54.9% between financial years 2005/6 and 2012/13, its NER for secondary education stood at only 3.5% in 2012/2013 compared to the county level of 20% (UNDP, 2015b). Attainment of secondary education by women has been shown to be an effect modifier in sharply reducing infant mortality (UBOS and Macro, 2007). Karamoja's level of secondary level education participation by the girls lags way being the national average (UNDP, 2015b).

Karamoja has been targeted by a number of development and humanitarian interventions, ranging from livelihoods diversification initiatives, support to agriculture, education and investments in physical infrastructure. However, a number of challenges persist in attaining sustainable human development outcomes in the areas of food security, livelihoods, agriculture, land and environment, education participation, local capacity development, and security. Food insecurity is a persistent threat arising from perennial dry spells. However it is underlied by poor methods of economic production especially in agriculture and livestock farming in addition to poor access to water resources. Karamoja is semi-arid and receives one season of rainfall implying that crop farming is only possible during a limited period in the year. Acute food shortages occur in

recurrent exacerbations leading to dependency on food aid for some households. In 2014, food insecurity in Karamoja affected 56% of households compared to a national level of 6.3% for all Ugandans (UNDP, 2015b). Adoption of settled agriculture is also a deep socio-cultural challenge.

Although crop farming is increasingly the main focus of support from Government and development partners, it is predominantly rain-fed making it vulnerable to climatic shocks and stresses. Participation in crop farming is mainly by women and girls, who are marginalized in this community. To incentivize crop farming, development partners have implemented a number of initiatives including: 'Cash-for-Work'; (CfW); 'Food-for-Work' (FfW); and 'Vouchers-for-Work' (VfW). Beneficiary households are paid to participate in crop farming activities, sometimes involving cultivation in their own gardens (UNDP, 2015b). The success of these programs has been affected by a number of contextual factors. Reports show that for most of the participants in the crop farming schemes, their main incentive is the 'digging wage', and if their crop farming activities eventually resulted in a fruitful harvest, the harvest was usually viewed as a bonus. It should be noted that despite its development challenges, Karamoja region is still endowed with a large land resource: The population density of is 54 people /Km² and 66 people /Km² in Kaabong and Kotido respectively, compared to a national average of 207 people /Km² respectively.

Several development programmes in Karamoja have targeted livelihoods improvement at the household level. However, these initiatives have been faced several challenges arising from the socio-economic and cultural context. The level of skills to undertake improved production and alternative livelihood activities, the level of agency from a community with deeply rooted socio-cultural norms regarding production, and the unpredictability of the production environment that is largely rain-fed have been a challenge. Although the disarmament activities by the Government led to the withdrawal of guns from Karamoja, there are still some pockets of armed conflicts, associated with cattle rustling, especially attacks from neighboring communities in Kenya (the Turkana) and Sudan (the Toposa) who are not yet fully disarmed. The cow is central to the value system of the Karimojong and cattle enjoy a major social and cultural significance. Livestock ownership is a life security and an indicator of wealth and household pride.

4.1.2 Findings from the micro-resilience assessment in the Karamoja region

Livelihoods: Community members report a lack of access to markets where they can directly sell their produce to primary buyers and negotiate a fair price. While there are many cattle markets, communities say that transactions in the markets are to a reasonable degree controlled by local authorities and middlemen who largely determine the price of cattle. Crop produce markets are reported to be less accessible than the cattle markets and farmers rely on the middlemen to buy their produce. Produce buyers on the other hand pointed out that the prices they set for the farmers are determined on the basis of the quality of the produce. District leaders acknowledged that crop farmers in Karamoja do not pay attention to the quality of their crop right from planting, to harvesting, drying and sorting. District leaders also emphasized that cattle keepers were also more interested in having large herds, than the quality of their cattle, which contributed to the low prices they are offered.

"We do not get good prices for our cattle. Activities in the markets are controlled by the market officials and the middlemen. They own the business that sells the cattle outside the districts. They own the trucks. They decide which cattle go on the truck and those that should wait. We are arm twisted into accepting their price. The same applies to the traders who take our harvest – they

*say 'Ok, I will give you this for your bag of maize do you accept or not?' Your hands are tied because you need the money" **FGD Male Rengen***

Communities expressed that they faced many challenges regarding financial inclusion. There was difficulty in accessing small loans that are given by governments and development agencies to groups. Communities also expressed frustration that those who access the loans are given very limited time to pay back and there is almost no grace period. Their failure to payback sometimes leads to loss of property that they gave as collateral. Some households end up losing part of their land or assets. Loss of land or assets due to failure to pay a small loan is a negative coping mechanism that represents deep vulnerability.

*"And also there are these small groups government is giving some support like money. These groups give small loans to women. You find that even getting these loans is not very easy; when you get a loan, they start to demand for the payments very soon before you even get the money to start paying back. You have out up your assets and land as security" **FGD Female Rengen***

For cash transfer programs, the level of household cash transfers have in many cases not been sufficient to create sustainable livelihoods in a context where households are struggling to meet basic needs. As a result, a large percentage of the "cash-for-work" transfers is used to meet basic family needs, primarily food, leaving little for saving and investment.

Regarding diversification of livelihoods there have been efforts at expanding the communities' engagement in crop farming. Notwithstanding this, many households still rely majorly on cattle for livelihood. It is a source of income, a beast of burden used to plough land and a sign of wealth. Unfortunately, livestock are under constant threat especially from the dry spells but also a relatively high incidence of diseases. The communities describe 'new' diseases that were not previously known and 'old' diseases that are resurging and are reportedly resistant to the commonly used drugs. However, the common practice in the region is to treat fever in animals with antibiotics. Due to the lack of diagnostic support services, it could mean that what is observed is not drug resistance, but improper treatment. This situation is compounded by the problem of low access to agricultural extension services. However, communities and district officials reported an increasing acceptance of alternative livelihoods through activities like crop farming and apiary, which has driven a change in rangeland settlement practices.

*"There was also the insecurity part of it which had pushed people to live in clusters, so people have dispersed a bit they have gone to greener belts. Let me say they have gone to rangelands that were formally abandoned and people are practicing more of agriculture than pastoralism. They have diversified; it is no longer mainly animal keeping; people are now doing apiary and crop farming. Even in terms of business, there are more people who are engaged in petty trade compared to the past." **KII Kotido district***

Because of the centrality of agriculture in the transformation of a semi-arid region, agencies like Oxfam have supported the construction of communal valley dams. The dams help both people and livestock with water during the dry seasons and are on high demand. However, the current level of diffusion of such infrastructure is way below the need. Karamoja has limited viable off-farm employment activities and when they arise, they are on very high demand especially by the youth. Some people take on casual labor, for example working at dam construction sites. Other common livelihood activities include mining, and cutting of trees for charcoal burning and

firewood. However, these economic activities also leave a trail of damage on the environment as they are largely unstructured. Mining activities have also led to family related challenges. Men who go for mining tend to abandon taking care of their households. Community members also mentioned that household livelihoods are also substantially impacted by the high levels of drunkenness and reluctance to work, especially by men. Many men spend hours in the bar when they should be engaged in production.

Communities also stressed the need for intensified awareness creation on family planning. Several key informants expressed that that generic messages on family planning uptake will not be sufficient to change the behaviour of this highly conservative population. Rather, messages that take a livelihoods approach and creatively bring out the link between household size and livelihood will be more effective.

Food Security and Nutrition: Food insecurity and poor nutritional status in Karamoja region are driven by both climate related factors and socio-cultural factors. Because there is one main rainy season, food production systems should be structured in a way that the crop output from the one main season (or the yield from livestock for households engaged in pastoralism) is sufficient to cater for the population's food needs for the entire year either by storing excess harvest or by translating their additional income into ability to purchase food from other regions. This ideal situation is far from established in Karamoja. Not only do the unpredictable rains and prolonged dry spells destroy the crop, but households are also unlikely to store sufficient food, leading to a vicious cycle of food insecurity. Sorghum, a drought resistant crop is the predominant staple food for the region. Communities say that their know-how to adopt and integrate other drought resistant crops is lacking as is the access to seeds for alternative drought resistant crops. The high rates of failure for other crops severely impacts on dietary diversity.

Among the people most vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition are the elderly, pregnant and lactating women and the children. The elderly are too weak to undertake manual food production yet in this socio-cultural context, they are often abandoned by the able bodied. Pregnant women and children are the most vulnerable to the effects of the non-diverse diet arising from inadequate availability of alternative to cereals (e.g. pulses and vegetables) and household inability to purchase food. Community members report that in extreme cases, households have gone into starvation as a result of not only lack of food, but sometimes lack of water to prepare food. Starvation from inaccess to water for food preparation is an indicator of very high vulnerability at household level. There have been several programs put in place by different actors to tackle malnutrition in children. Children diagnosed with severe malnutrition are referred and enrolled into institutional feeding or therapeutic feeding programs managed by Community Action for Health (CAFH), a local NGO supported by WFP. Food distribution is also undertaken for pregnant mothers and their children at the health facilities during antenatal care and immunization. The mothers are also sensitized on nutritional methods and providing children with balanced diet foods to reduce malnutrition

Food production is mainly in the hands of women and girls and due to their pivotal role in crop farming. Socio-culturally, crop farming is viewed as a role for women, even in the contemporary context of expansion of engagement on agriculture. In Karamoja, it is the girls that traditionally help the mothers to cultivate the gardens. This impacts on their schooling. Since most crop

production in the region employs manual methods, the lack of participation by men impacts negatively on the production workforce and eventually the food output. Similarly, mothers often move out to the gardens for long work days leaving the younger children at home without sufficient food and other care. This unique form of unintended child neglect increases vulnerability of the children to undernutrition, accidents and other illnesses.

Many women leave the home very early in the morning to go to the garden, leaving the children alone at home with very little or no food. The children face poor feeding, lack of love and care. The children end up getting sick without the mother noticing; by the time they take them to the health centers you find that the children are already under weight and malnourished.” FGD Youth Kalapata

There are reported pockets of insecurity making it hard for households to move to inner areas to cultivate enough food. According to some Key Informants, violence including beatings, stabbings and physical altercations account for about 20% of cases reported to the local police stations, and this is very common in youth. Additionally, the increasing consumption of alcohol by women, amidst an epidemic of alcohol consumption by men has exacerbated the problem of child neglect and person-to-person violence. Many mothers are reported to abandon the children at home to engage in drinking alcohol for most of the day.

“Negligence by these mothers in our community is another factor making children vulnerable to malnutrition. You find that a woman leaves home very early in the morning and moves to some other villages to drink leaving the children untended. These days, many women are also taking alcohol like the men” FGD Youth Kalapata

The level of the ‘dependency syndrome’ among the community has also been cited as a driver of food insecurity and consequently malnutrition. In some communities that receive food-aid, a mere alteration of the distribution schedule will result in serious reprimand by the community members as expressed by one of the Key Informants, meaning that in many situations, the communities are desperate for assistance. Community members say that some food aid programs are structured in a way that they may reduce agency for households to produce their own food, hence creating dependency. They recommend that households that receive food aid represent very high vulnerability that should be followed up till the planting season and supported to become self-reliant.

“This is very evident especially when you are supposed to deliver some batch of a particular food ratio and you fail. My goodness some of these communities may not treat you well. Unless you go to them and explain that it is because of such and such reasons that we failed to deliver but don’t worry may be tomorrow we will deliver. This shows that they have the assumption that you are supposed to feed their household” Key Informant Kaabong.

Another factor that was reported to lead to food insecurity is the excessive selling of food at household level leading to food shortage. In the past, locally produced food was mainly used for home consumption. However, almost all food crops in the region are now viewed as cash-crops. Since they are one of the few sources of income, households sell the vast portion of their produce, leaving insufficient quantities to eat till the next season. Sometimes the households retain some food but the lengthening of the dry spell beyond what is usually expected leads to shortages. In many cases, households were reported to sell nearly the entire harvest. This problem is aggravated by the fact that the cash income is spent on alcohol consumption, further

leaving the households with no money to buy food when there are shortages, money to buy alternative foods for diet diversification, or money for investment to increase incomes. Some key informants report that due to the extended family units in 'kraal' settings and the population's mobility, the average household does not have a reliable estimate of how much food they would need to subsist on from one season to another.

There is also food wastage through demands from social functions. Sorghum, which is the main staple food is also a key ingredient in alcohol production. Because of the high burden of alcohol consumption, there is increasing competition for sorghum between alcohol making and household consumption. The high social demand of alcohol is driven by its centrality in the many cultural dances and marriage ceremonies.

One of the key consequences of household food and income insecurity in the region is school attendance. To be able to buy food, some households send their children to engage in casual labour for part of the school hours (e.g. herding cattle or clearing gardens) to earn some money to buy food and pay school fees.

Conversely, one of the emerging coping mechanisms to food insecurity in the worst hit sub-regions has been taking children to school as a means of accessing food as the parents go to cultivate. Some NGOs working in Karamoja are also providing food to malnourished children coupled to scholarships for children. Another coping strategy is the sale of household assets, especially livestock. During severe food shortages, households sell part of their herd to raise funds for food. However, because they are desperate during such times, they sell their animals and assets at a very cheap price. Households need skills in forecasting for financial security, so that such livestock sales are conducted at the time when they are likely to early the most from them, and so that they keep some of the money for the harder times.

Agriculture: Communities in Karamoja are increasingly becoming more involved in crop farming. However, they face several challenges including: prolonged dry spells with inaccess to water at the peak of the dry season, reliance on ox ploughs for tilling making it impossible to till the land during severe dry seasons when soils are hard and crusted, poor seeds, and inaccess to drought tolerant crop varieties among others. According to several key informants, there has been an observed change in the rainfall patterns regarding when the rains are expected to start as well as their duration. This unpredictability of the rainy season has affected planting and also resulted into frequent crop failure. In addition, community members report that the intensity of the rain increases unpredictably, causing flash floods that destroy their crops. An entire season's crop might be destroyed by one heavy rain, the seeds rotting in the soil. Communities felt 'trapped' by the inability to predict the behaviour of the rains which are so essential to their food cycle. They repeatedly appealed for reliable forecasts to support their crop farming. The erratic rain patterns amidst unreliable weather services often makes communities desperate to seek for intercession by the spiritual realm through offerings of burnt sacrifices (e.g. slaughtering of a bull to appease the gods).

"What has changed here is the climate. You find that other years we could start receiving rains in April but this year (2017) the rains started in June. If you look at that sorghum now the caterpillar has affected it because the time the rains started was not right, that's why you see there is hunger. And then those who had planted maize and beans never harvested anything at

all. The rains started after the crop had dried. This climate keeps changing from year to year, people don't know when to plant and we don't know what holds away the water from up there. These changes have brought drought and food insecurity in our community.” **FGD Female Rengen Sub-county**

“Seasons come differently, some seasons are really good that the rains fall regularly. Another year the season goes bad and some people get demoralized to cultivate and hunger hits them. The long dry spells are serious in some years that all the crops get destroyed leading to severe hunger and malnutrition and also there are some households that have labelled themselves as those with malnutrition and all this is because of ignorance.” **FGD Youth Rengen Sub-county**

“If only we could get very accurate information on when to plant what, so that our crops are not destroyed. When you lose your crop, you also lose your seeds. Where will you get other seeds to plant?” **FGD Male Rengen Sub-county**

While the technical officers at the district blame the change in the rainfall pattern the increasing cutting of trees for charcoal burning and firewood as well as the destruction of the few wetlands, the situation is also likely to be part of the natural cycles in climate variability. Nevertheless, continued deforestation and wetland degradation is likely to exacerbate the situation. The main driver of deforestation and wetland degradation is that communities have identified them as sources of alternative livelihood, feeding the increased demand for charcoal and firewood country wide. Karamoja's trees are mainly short thorny shrubs which can very rapidly regress as a result of such activities.

Crop and animal pests and diseases are another driver of vulnerability to food insecurity amidst widespread inaccess to quality agricultural extension services. The pests and diseases lead to low yields which affect both food and income for the households. There were reports of mass animal deaths due to diseases like nagana, foot and mouth disease and tick-borne disease. For instance, a massive outbreak of foot and mouth disease about 2-3 years ago wiped out significant proportions of household herds. Communal grazing which also involves sharing of the limited water points and pasture by a large herd further increase the spread of animal disease. Proximity of some communities to the wild life conservation centers and game parks within Karamoja has also led to spread of some disease from the wild animals to the domesticated animals, particularly nagana. As part of the nomadic lifestyle of Karimojong, sometimes the animals have to move very long distances within and outside of Karamoja region in search for pasture and water. The high prices of veterinary drugs amidst inaccessible animal health services has led to preventable loss animals to diseases which further worsens the poverty levels since animals are the main source of wealth.

“We sell off some animals in order to buy drugs for our sick animals. This is one of the strategies we are using to mitigate some of these shocks affecting our community. You find that if someone has like four cows, he first sells off one in order to get drugs to treat the rest. We also ensure that the drugs we buy are not expired so that they don't again affect the remaining animals.” **FGD Youth Kalapata**

The communities reported lack of veterinary medicines and veterinarians and this makes them to entirely rely on Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) who have limited capacity to

address the complex animal health issues. Further, these CAHWs are working as volunteers with little motivation. Previously, they were supported by an NGO (Oxfam) but since the project ended, the CAHWs are no longer motivated. Some of them charge the farmers for animal health services, which the farmers consider very expensive. At the district level, the officials cited a problem of attracting and retaining veterinarians.

Animal loss has been worsened by raids from neighboring countries (Turkana from Kenya and Toposa from South Sudan). Since the Karimojong were disarmed, they were left vulnerable with no means to protect the animals from the raiders. Communities reported a growing practice in which the Turkana sell animals such as goats to them at very cheap prices at the peak of the dry spell following which the same people raid them and take back the goats, leading households into a double loss.

The consultations revealed that the restoration of peace as a result of disarmament of the Karimojong has coincided with an improvement in the quantity of rains. Despite the repeated dry spells, Key Informants in the district note that overall, Karamoja has been receiving a substantial amount of rainfall over the past 5-10 years.

“There was something associated with the gun those days, but immediately after the disarmament, I don’t know what relationship there was between the guns and the drought. We do not know if the gun was scaring away the rains, something like that. So immediately after disarmament, there has been slight change in the climate. Though people are now talking about climate change, it’s now positive and that is why you are seeing the change in rainfall patterns. As you can see outside, it’s still raining. By now (September), there shouldn’t be any rain; that means that things are now changing positively. people are now about to talk about the second season in Karamoja which has not been the case, but this means that the trend is changing, and the issue of serious drought is not being heard of but may be talk of dry spells as opposed to real drought.” **Kil Kaabong**

Access to Information Access to education and information is key to community development. Regarding information access, the few educated people in the communities act as knowledge brokers but they are insufficient to penetrate all the villages and their voice will hardly match the normatively established informal hierarchies of opinion leaders through the Manyata System. FM Radio Stations are inadequately structured to promote educative information. Some entire districts (e.g. Kaabong) lack a local radio station and depend on the neighboring districts. Informed members of the community felt that they needed higher access to platforms that can enable them communicate to their communities. Regarding formal systems for information access, communities had this to say:

“The main stress here are access to education and information that can enable people live productively. The few people that have tried to advance in awareness are often denied access to local information platforms which limits the development of the community. Even this meeting we wouldn’t have known about it if it hadn’t been for our brother ‘Small Jesus’. Thank God that he mobilized us and told us there was a meeting at the Sub-county” **FGD Youth Rengen**

“Even in Kaabong, you can listen to a radio station from Moroto or Kotido; but people want to identify themselves with something that is theirs where they can also go and contribute and have their voices heard. That would even motivate them to procure their own radios. Some people in

those Manyatas have (mobile) phones. Not necessarily smart phones, but if I can afford a phone, I can afford a simple radio. Otherwise the frequency is okay. Some people at the borders listen to Kenyan radio stations. Like I have said if you have for example a radio station in Kalapata, some opinion leaders will get interested and even come one day and get involved in a dialogue.”
KII Kaabong

Some of the communities in Kaabong such as Kalapata sub-county do not have access to telecommunication which severely stifles communication.

“We need a booster, to help us to ease communication. In our community, even when enemies steal our cows there is no way to can communicate so fast because we don’t have ‘network’ here; even when someone is very sick we don’t have means of communication be it a radio or phone; we are out of touch with the world” **FGD Youth Kalapata Sub-county**

Formal Education: Karamoja has very high levels of illiteracy especially among the very poor households. The level of education participation in the region is way below the national average, while participation in secondary school education is even much lower, more especially for the girl child. But what are the underlying drivers? Regarding education participation, the drivers of low attendance differ between primary and secondary levels. In Primary schools lack of school feeding programs is cited as one of the key barriers. Pupils often spend the day very hungry because parents have not given them any food to eat at school. Not only is it associated with increased dropout rates but it is also associated with poor performance. Evidence from the community shows that communities are concerned about the high rates of drop outs, but they seemed to have no immediate solutions. The girls that drop out of the school fall victim to early pregnancies and they never have a chance to re-enroll back into school. Typically, most children were reported to drop out after completion of primary seven as a result of lack of fees to enable them join secondary school and also due to long distances to the nearest secondary school (for example in Kapalata Sub-county, Kaabong). Families headed by widows were reported to be the most vulnerable to dropouts attributed to lack of school fees. Some families cope by making the child re-sit P7 multiple times as they look for money to take them to Secondary school, which often results in failure.

“When it comes to time for children to report back to school, the children cannot come to school unless they see a vehicle of World Food Program entering into the school. Secondly, some children manage to study up to primary seven, but the parents cannot financially support them to study beyond that. This makes the children to reseat primary seven for even four times and at the end the boy or girl ends up into marriage.” **FGD Female Kalapata sub-county.**

Ignorance about the benefits of education has kept most children out of schools. For example, communities reported that because wealth is associated with number of cattle, some households hold on to their cattle, refusing to sell them to raise school fees because they value large herds over education. Water and sanitation related factors were also cited as a barrier to school attendance. Specifically, the lack of access to clean water affects school activities since children have to trek long distances in search for water and this hinders completion of the curriculum. The lack of access to sanitary pads has affected girl child school attendance due to fear of embarrassment, contributing to high rate of girl child dropouts.

“For us at school as a result of lack of water our time table is disorganized because in the morning children have to wake up they have to go like three kilometers away to fetch the water; by the

time they come back the time for starting class would have passed by with two lessons missed; hence we fail to catch up with the real curriculum of the day and the time table gets disorganized”
FGD Female Rengen sub-county

“Another stress we face in this community is in regard to girl child education. These girls face challenges to go to school when they start their monthly menstrual periods. They fear to sit with boys in the same class. This has made many of them to drop out of school because they cannot afford pads. There are cloth materials which they bring to schools to make pads but they always bring few.” **FGD Female Rengen.**

Social and peer influences were also cited as promoting the higher dropout rates by girls. Apart from the arranged marriages, rampant drop outs from peer influence were cited, especially those associated with cultural night dances. Community members said that adolescent girls ‘do not miss attending any cultural dance’ and while there, many of them end up engaging in early sex and early pregnancy due to lack of life skills, extreme poverty, and the short term disincentives to attend school.

Poor performance of the children while at school was also cited as a key stressor affecting their retention. The low teacher-pupil ratio, congestion, poor school infrastructure and aesthetics as well as lack of scholastic materials affects the concentration of pupils leading to chronically poor academic grades. Chronically poor grades are a disincentive to study and children do not see the benefit of going to school when they are always failing. It was highlighted that boys that drop out of school resort to risky behaviors such as engaging in cattle raids, stealing property and rape. Some are convicted and imprisoned. On the other hand, girls who drop out of school end up in early marriages.

A number of interventions have been undertaken to improve education services. For example, development partners like World Food Program (WFP) have provided food support to schools and this has increased enrollment and performance at school. There has also been an improvement in education as evidenced by an increase in enrollment of children in schools as a result of community mobilization. There is increasingly a positive attitude towards girl child education and some of the myths hindering girl child education have been resolved as highlighted in one of the discussions.

“Another thing I have seen is that people have increasingly accepted to take all children to school including girls compared to our time when girls were denied to go to school because they would turn out as prostitutes. So parents have accepted to take them to school and study.” **FGD Male Rengen**

Health and WASH: The health sector in Karamoja is constrained by a number of stressors including infrastructure (poor wards and staff houses), understaffing, absenteeism of healthcare professionals, inadequate medicines, laboratories and equipment, distant referral hospitals, absence of an emergency ambulance system especially for pregnant mothers and other resources required to handle the different health conditions. Key Informants said that the health facility buildings are too few to cater for the large numbers of patients, leading to sharing of wards by patients. For example, pregnant mothers share wards with other patients in some health facilities while in others, men share wards with women. Lack of privacy for patients has in some cases

resulted into fear to access medical services especially for people living with HIV (PLHIV). The available health facilities are very distant and thus poorly accessed by the communities. This situation is worse for the pregnant women, many of whom deliver on their way to the health facilities. Additionally, when it rains, the roads flood making patients and medical staff fail to reach health facilities.

Equipment and sundries for health conditions that are more common in the region (e.g. injuries and wounds from fights, cattle raids and gender-based violence) were reported to be in short supply. Several health facilities lack water, which results in health workers requiring patients to fetch water from surface wells and valley dams for use at health facilities. Many of these sites do not have clean water. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for flash floods to cut off access of health facilities to both health workers and patients.

“One main shock I’m going to talk about is on health centers. I don’t know if government supplies enough drugs to these health centers, when drugs are brought here, even before a week or a month, people just go back without drugs. There was an ambulance last year, but I don’t know what happened to it, even women in labor are picked by ambulances from Kotido after waiting for a long time for it to arrive. Now I don’t know where the problem is; I don’t know whether the problem is with the Sub-county or Kotido district.” **FGD Male Rengen**

The most frequent health shocks and stresses reported for Karamoja were related to malnutrition, WASH and infections. The problem of malnutrition has been described in a previous sub-section of this report. Communities said that the infectious diseases which stress them most were Malaria, and diarrhoea. Others include HIV, Hepatitis B, syphilis, brucellosis, tuberculosis and typhoid. The most affected group is children below five years. Malaria was described as a major problem in Karamoja. It was observed that although communities received mosquito nets during the bed net distribution campaigns, households are still reluctant to sleep under the nets. Part of this is driven by the social cultural factors, where households have not been used to sleeping under nets, but alcoholism was also cited as a barrier, especially where it involves mothers. In 2016, Karamoja was one of the regions that were recently hit by an epidemic of Hepatitis B. There have been efforts by the Ministry of Health to massively vaccinate the communities against Hepatitis B to curb its rapid spread. The spread of HIV/AIDS has been linked to a number of underlying factors including poverty and food insecurity. Due to poverty, some women marry in order to get support from the men, whereas the young girls get exposed to HIV when they seek money and other amenities from men.

“Spread of diseases like HIV is one of the effects of the shocks/stresses in this community. For example because of hunger you find that these young girls are being lied to by these men just in order to get what they want to eat. Some families even pick their young girls and give them away to the rich men not knowing that these men are already sick just because of hunger in order to get something to eat” **FGD Male, Kalapata Sub-county**

The lack of access to water coupled with open defecation are the key drivers for the poor sanitation situation. For instance, children attend school without having taken a bath while others resort to bathing in muddy ponds with stagnant water. The poor nature of soils leads to collapse of pit latrines further worsening the sanitation and hygiene in the community. Sinking of boreholes to provide clean water has also been a challenge due to the rocky nature of some areas within

Karamoja. Even in areas where borehole construction is successful, the water has been found to have a salty taste.

The high reports of rape and widow inheritance further exacerbate the issue of HIV in Karamoja region. There are reports of rape of young girls as they are sent out by their parents to gather green vegetables in the gardens, leading to spread of HIV. Because of low utilization of VCT services, many men do not even know their HIV status, which contributes to the spread of HIV. Once diagnosed with HIV, HIV positive youths tend to automatically drop out of school. They then engage further in high risk behaviours which exacerbate the spread of HIV in the community.

“And this poverty has resulted to forced marriages we are forced into marriage if there was a way in which this can be stopped because this is what has caused this high spread of diseases like HIV”. **FGD Youth Kalapata.**

The strong social beliefs and misconceptions also hinder people from seeking care from the health facilities. They believe a lot in witchcraft when they fall sick and use traditional healers instead of modern medicine. There is also a widespread misconception that health workers do not attend to pregnant women who deliver along the way to hospital. These mothers and their children will end up missing some key services including screening for HIV and immunization among others.

“Our people here believe a lot in witchcraft when they fall sick they don’t want to go to hospitals they want to be treated traditionally. They ignore hospitals not knowing that may be they are suffering from a disease that requires seeing a doctor”. **FGD Men Kalapata-Kaabong**

4.1.3 Discussion of findings from the Karamoja region

Access to markets: Communities reported a lack of fair access to markets mainly for crop produce but also for animal products, citing that they are constrained by middlemen. This finding seems to contradict existing information from some assessments done in the region. For example, a study done for the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) indicated that households in Karamoja typically participate in markets at a micro-level, where they are involved in directly selling or purchasing agricultural products or livestock, and this is often done to meet basic needs (Chemonics International Inc., 2016). Animals are often sold for a specific purpose or in times of distress to meet essential household needs such as food, education, health or buy veterinary medicine. Like most regions in Uganda, markets in Karamoja are diverse with respect to size, location, accessibility, frequency and mix of goods traded. The FEWS NET study highlighted three main types of markets: 1) Town center markets that operate in major trading centers, on a daily basis vend a wider variety of goods and operate as aggregating as well as retail points. These have good road access, permanent infrastructure including storage and some value addition processing. 2) Primary markets which are located closer to larger towns and deal in a variety of items (food and non-food). They operate during specific days during the week with some minor activities on other days. They serve as both retail and assembly/aggregating points with livestock trade being an important component of these markets. 3) Secondary markets are the most predominant markets and are located in sub-counties. They are the most diverse markets in terms of accessibility, size and market activity. On a typical market day, they attract a number of traders. Overall, all these three markets are interlinked.

The FEWS NET report indicated that barriers to trading in Karamoja region include both personal and contextual ones. Personal barriers include: lack of capital, dislike for long distance

travels and mistrusts among tribes. The contextual barriers include cultural/gender norms (men trading in livestock while women trade in crops), pockets of insecurity especially with livestock trading (cattle thefts), poor road network that translate to increased transport costs especially during rainy seasons, limited storage facilities, limited value addition such as milling, market conduct/dynamics (such as price setting and long-time negotiations especially for livestock; poor quality grades, standards, and units of measure; poor sources of market information and associative behavior; and cost-reduction strategies through tax evasion, back-or front-hauling among others) (Chemonics International Inc., 2016). Karamoja region mainly trades with the northern based marketing region linked through Gulu and Lira towns as well as the southern based region linked through Soroti. Better road access drives market linkage.

From the micro-resilience assessment, explanations for the observed mismatch in expectations between the communities and the market realities might include the following: (1) The lack of attention to quality of produce by at household level, which might lower their bargaining power, (2) lack of value addition at the farmer level, which leads to nominal prices as they sell to the first level produce buyers, and (3) Poor timing the sale of their produce, which they do at times of stress when they have a lot of pressure to meet basic needs at household level.

Financial inclusion: Financial inclusion was reported to be a major challenge for Karamoja Region. The main gaps cited were difficulty in accessing small loans, short repayment periods for these loans leading to loss of assets and the use of loans and cash transfers to meet basic needs instead of investments to generate more income. The financial environment of Karamoja is not very different from other rural predominantly subsistence-based communities in Uganda. The vast majority of financial transactions are cash-based with limited engagement of banks and financial institutions. There is however increasing engagement with smaller lenders like village savings and loan associations (VSLAs), which are viewed as more accessible by the local population. Reports also show that there are some approaches that have been successful in increasing access to loans and saving facilities when attached to routine transactions. For example, Mercy Corps piloted a program in northern Uganda whereby instead of direct cash payments to farmers for their produce, their payments were directly deposited to a local bank (Post Bank). It was observed that funds and this money that was saved was more likely to be used productively such as being reinvested into agriculture and other businesses (Mercy Corps, 2015). There is however need to address persisting barriers to financial inclusion including access to small loans through investment groups, lengthening the loan recovery period and determining appropriate thresholds for programs that involve cash transfers. Households that lose their land as a result of failure to pay loans represent a more vulnerable group that needs to be

Food insecurity: Food insecurity persists as one of the most pressing stresses in Karamoja region. The underlying drivers to food insecurity are the dry spells, inaccess to water, poor climate information leading to crop-failure, lack of replacement seeds when erratic rains destroy the crop, high losses of crops and animals due to pests and diseases and poor access to agricultural extension services. Sale of assets in crisis, receiving food aid, and use of loans to meet basic needs are key indicators of the most food insecure households. These households require follow-up in non-crisis times.

Being a predominantly pastoral region, Karamoja is structurally a deficit zone in terms of net staple food production and consumption. Even the best production years do not result in significant local market surpluses. This situation is worsened by inability for households to forecast food needs to take them through the dry season so as to store sufficient food. The bulk of the produce is sold, leaving little reserve for the region. Socio-cultural practices that promote wastage of food also exacerbate the shortages and especially alcohol brewing which competes for the sorghum crop. Because of the production deficit, market purchase is the primary food source for most parts of Karamoja, followed by household-level (subsistence) crop production. Food assistance through several initiatives such as food-for-work, school feeding, food gifts and consumption of wild foods also claim command a substantial component of the food sources for the region (ICF International, 2014, FEG, 2010). Although markets within Karamoja are relatively well integrated with neighboring surplus-producing areas such as Bugisu, Teso, Lango and Acholi, most households still struggle to meet their food requirements. Overall, food prices across Uganda are highly seasonal, and prices in the Karamoja sub-region are no exception.

Addressing the issue of food insecurity requires multidimensional programming. The dependency of households on food purchases means that any seasonal or event-based fluctuations in staple food prices, as may be experienced during a poor production year, translate into serious food insecurity. However, despite being a semi-arid region with one main rainy season, the amount of rain and arable land in Karamoja are sufficient to sustain increased production in the region if the capacity for rain-water catchment becomes sufficiently distributed across the region and households. Subsistence farming is affected by crop diseases, nuisance weeds and pests. The methods used to mitigate these in the region are still largely nominal (FEG, 2010). There is need to expand extension services to make them more accessible to the local population. Insufficient access to drought resistant crops and seeds is also a barrier to food security. This can be addressed by putting in place mechanisms to improve access to quality drought resistant seeds, and diversification to other traditional drought resistant starches where possible.

Livestock: The main resilience challenges identified from the analysis include a persistence of poor livestock practices characterized by a focus on quantity rather than quality of cattle, cattle diseases and conducting cattle sales at the peak of the dry season. The observations from our study are similar to the other studies. For instance, it was found out that poor households in Karamoja sold livestock at critical periods of the year -lean or dry seasons and when school fees are due- periods when household expenditures are greatest (Chemonics International Inc., 2016). Regarding the linkage to livelihoods, sale of cattle is supposed to cushion the households from livelihoods shocks by providing a financial buffer that households can rely on during the climate stressed periods. However, households have a poor saving culture and do not keep sufficient money to use when the dry spells hit. The limited access to veterinary services including animal health workers and veterinary drugs has made the region vulnerable to losses from animal diseases.

Some partners like Mercy Corps have intervened by attracting drug companies such as Norbrook to offer veterinary services and incentives. The incentives provided include free drug delivery, wholesale drug pricing and credit to local drug stores. These initiatives not only led to reduced retail drug prices in the region but attracted other wholesalers such as Quality Chemicals Uganda and Eram Uganda which further drove down the retail prices (Mercy Corps, 2015). However,

the persistence of socio-cultural norms that promote large herds over quality needs to be addressed through systematic capacity building that involves a well-coordinated extension service, an effective communication strategy, and creation of change champions.

Therefore, initiatives to develop livestock markets will be critical in reducing vulnerability to shocks and stresses. Approaches that increase access to information can mitigate a number of risks. For instance, in Karamoja, a commercial platform implemented by the Growth, Health and Governance (GHG)- a five-year Development Food Assistance Program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Food for Peace Program- linked kraal leaders with commercial traders who provided daily updates on pricing information (Chemonics International Inc., 2016). Combining such platforms with drought early warning systems can help pastoralists anticipate shocks/stresses and sell when prices are still high and livestock are healthy. We do anticipate that these approaches will enable households to better withstand market shocks/stresses resulting from drought.

Crop farming: Communities in Karamoja are increasingly getting involved in crop farming. However, they face several challenges including: prolonged dry spells with inaccess to water at the peak of the dry season, reliance on ox ploughs for tilling making it impossible to till the land during severe dry seasons when soils are hard and crusted, poor seeds, and inaccess to drought tolerant crop varieties among others. The district officials in both Kaabong and Kotido recommended that embracing crop farming will require a 'farmer group model'. With the restoration of peace and security, the communities should settle and engage in crop farming. On the side of communities, introduction of improved seeds, improved breed cows for milk, and locally appropriate technologies to improve crop management is one of the suggested interventions to improve animal production. The communities in Kotido district with support from CARITAS are increasingly engaged in tree planting to reduce the effects of the climate change. As earlier indicated, measures to increase access to extension services to support crop production ventures will need to be expanded.

For better water catchment, larger and distributed infrastructural projects such as dam construction be undertaken. Such projects could also provide additional livelihoods alternatives to youth in the region, including the maintenance of these facilities once they are set up. Karamoja has a number of rivers and flood plains that over-flow during the wet season but they dry up during the dry seasons. The amount of rainfall during the rainy season may be sufficient to sustain additional farming practices and livestock during the dry season. Effective ways to harness the surface water run-off can enable sustainable water for livestock, small-scale irrigation, and fish farming during off-season times.

Education services: The region has the lowest education participation rates (both enrollment and retention), which are even much lower at secondary school level. This is due to many underlying factors including casual labor during school hours to raise money for their families, schools (especially secondary) are very few and students have to walk long distances, chronic hunger is a key contributory factor to school dropouts at primary level and lack of school fees as key to drop outs at secondary level as well as lack of appropriate menstrual hygiene technologies.

From the previous studies, issues of protracted conflict in Karamoja region, poverty, and culture have all contributed to the low levels of literacy and overall education (Powell, 2010, Chemonics

International Inc., 2016). Specifically, some of the reasons mentioned in these surveys for the low education for Karamoja region include the notion that sending boys to school can stop them gaining intimate knowledge of the livestock upon which livelihoods depend while the girls fetch animals, therefore increasing the herd, through bride price. The region also offers minimal formal employment thus making formal education of limited value. Children therefore undertake casual labor to raise income for families. Schooling also brings costs in form of uniforms, books and other scholastic materials. Feeding programs at schools are also poor. In 2012 alone, the World Food Program cut its provision of meals to schools by 50%, resulting in a high rate of drop-outs.

Although the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) programs implemented in 1997 abolished school fees and significantly increased funding to public education, studies have showed that there are still other costs that have hindered education (Powell, 2010). The 2015 Uganda Human Development Report focused on the greater northern Uganda and indicated that schooling is not entirely free since parents contribute to education supplies (including books, uniforms) and food among others. Taking children to school also presents an opportunity cost since children would not participate in livelihoods. Further, the context whereby children travel far distances to attend school adds to the cost of schooling. Thus, cost remains a major constraint to education in Karamoja, a region which is severely hit with poverty (UNDP, 2015b). Finally, the indigenous culture, with its emphasis on pastoralism, can be critical of formal education and its uses in traditional society. Several studies note these criticisms among the Karamojong people (Powell, 2010).

In order to boost school enrolment rates in the Karamoja region, an Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK) initiative was introduced in the late 90s. The ABEK approach allowed for formal schooling to be organized alongside household and animal-rearing responsibilities of children. The lessons were conducted twice under the trees- early morning before the workday began and again in the evening when the workday ended. Girls brought along their younger siblings while boys learned as they watch their herds of goats graze nearby. The lessons were also attended by some parents and elders who monitored the progress of their children as they picked a few lessons as well. Instruction was in their own local language and some of the pedagogy involved traditional songs and dances. The ABEK program was however phased out and replaced by the Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) centers. The ECDE initiative leverages an integrated approach to early childhood development and education, targeting children aged 2-5 years, with a focus on early stimulation of the physical, cognitive and psychological maturation/development of children. This is built on the concept of traditional child rearing practices with an integrated package of services and an in-built framework of child protection and participation. The scaling of successes from such initiatives needs to be explored, alongside the need to construct more schools, provide sanitary pads to girls where possible, and expand the school feeding programs. However, the importance of quality cannot be understated: There is need to expand mechanisms for supporting quality improvement in local schools.

Health: The high burden of morbidity in the region is largely driven by infectious diseases whose preponderance can be addressed. The major causes of morbidity (malaria, diarrhoeal diseases, HIV/AIDS and injuries from violence) are closely linked to behaviours in households and communities. A behaviour change communication approach that tackles the socio-cultural drivers of household related risk needs to be instituted so as to increase uptake of behaviours like bed-net use, appropriate basic sanitation and safer sex practices. Among the suggested solutions to

improve on the sanitation at the community level is the construction of independent water sources for humans/domestic use and animals. Other measures would include immunization and good nutrition.

4.2 South Western (Kigezi) Region (Kisoro and Rubanda Districts)

4.2.1 Development context and gap

South Western Uganda (Kisoro and Rubanda Districts) faces a concentration of certain livelihoods stresses that make the region's vulnerability stand out compared to other districts in Uganda. Food insecurity, high population growth rates, land fragmentation due to land scarcity, exacerbations of climate variability leading to flash floods, and landslides in the rainy season and dry spells in the dry season are some of the stressors. The region also has higher than average rates of poverty, acute and chronic malnutrition (both acute and sub-acute malnutrition, micro-nutrient deficiencies and anaemia) and sanitation related diseases (e.g. diarrhoeal diseases, respiratory tract infections and intestinal worms). Literacy levels are below the national average. The region also faces sub-par quality of social service delivery (Kabale District Local Government, 2011b).

Akin to the national trends, the majority of households in South Western Uganda depend on subsistence agriculture for their livelihood which is predominantly rain fed. This reality, amidst exacerbations of climate variability, and the lack of diversified incomes creates vulnerability for the region. According to the 2016 UDHS, 29.3% of children under the age 5 in the region are stunted while 9.7% are severely stunted (UBOS, 2017b). This pattern has persisted for several decades in the region. For example, UNICEF's report titled 'Situation Analysis of Children in Uganda' reports that as of 2006, the stunting prevalence in Kampala was 22%, compared to 49.6% in the south-western region (UNICEF, 2015). The report further highlights that only a small proportion of this situation could be attributed to differences in income (UNICEF, 2015). Among the correlates of undernutrition, it is observed that the proportion of children who are underweight decreases with increasing levels of the mother's education and increasing wealth quintiles (UBOS, 2017b).

Many factors contribute to malnutrition in this region and key to these include poor sanitation and hygiene, poor infant feeding practices, lack of diverse diets (especially protein) and essential micronutrients, and recurring disease in children. In addition to the above challenges, Kisoro is home to Congolese refugees who transit through to other parts of Uganda. It is said that most of them do not leave the district hence compete with locals for natural resources, employment and services like health services.

4.2.2 Findings from the micro-resilience assessment in the Kigezi region

Health, water, sanitation and hygiene: Communities expressed that they are constrained by lack of access to safe water for domestic use. Because of the hilly terrain, households are located uphill on the steep hills yet the water is in the valleys, making movement of water a very tedious process. It is the women and children who mainly fetch the water for domestic use. The water has to be used sparingly, contributing to poor sanitation and water related diseases. Initially,

people used to live in the valleys but because of floods and large amounts of silt from the run-off, they moved to live up in the mountains. However this exacerbated the flooding due to increased run-off from roof-tops while the hill-sides are bear. These floods are associated with disease outbreaks. There is low latrine coverage (83%) which affects the hygiene and sanitation and predisposes communities to diseases like diarrhea especially in children and mostly during rainy seasons. Poorer households are disproportionately more affected.

“We are not equal; some are richer than others, if you are poor and the floods have hit, and you feel it harder than someone who is rich” FGD-Youth-Rubanda.

The health sector is also constrained by several stresses including lack of health workers within the existing health facilities, lack of access to health care and limited services integration. As part of the local mitigation approaches, communities have formed associations to improve access to health facilities. These associations help in transporting patients using ‘local carriers’. These are locally crafted stretchers that are used to manually carry emergency cases to health facilities. However, health care workers lack transport to go and sensitize because conditional grants for primary health care (PHC) are only sufficient to maintain the immunization outreaches. Although immunization outreaches are supposed to be integrated, their integration is according to some Key Informants not visible beyond immunization, family planning and child growth monitoring activities.

Among the health related stresses, the most common diseases affecting communities in Rubanda and Kisoro are Respiratory Tract Infection (RTIs), including both minor (cough or cold) and severe RTIs like pneumonia. Children are the most vulnerable to these infections. The second commonest reported morbidity is diarrhoeal diseases, reflecting the sanitation situation in the region. Other health related stresses include malaria (although the prevalence of malaria low in Rubanda) and road traffic accidents from boda-boda contributing to high burden of injuries.

Several Key Informants argue that the available health facilities are not adequate to create sufficient access, especially for the hard-to-reach areas. More importantly, medical supplies within the public health facilities were reported to be perennially insufficient. Drugs and medical supplies from the National Medical Stores meant for the district population are shared between the district and refugees from neighboring countries (Congo and Rwanda). This leads to repeated drug stockouts in the health facilities. The lack of money for direct expenditures, coupled with shortage of medicine, and understaffing in public health facilities affect the health care seeking behavior of households. Those that have the money often resort to using private clinics. The community leaders have requested the government and the district leadership to increase on the drug stocks as to reduce shortage of drugs in the facilities but there has been no lasting solution to the stressor.

“Shortage of medicine at the health facilities, you come here with a sick child and they don’t have drugs, you go to Kisoro and they tell you the same, those who have money go to the clinic, if you don’t have money, your child can even die so we are asking government to help us and put drugs in hospitals in Kisoro and more health workers”, FGD-Female – Kisoro.

“Communities have a way of knowing when drugs have arrived at the health centres. There is a surge of patients when the health centres receive drugs” KI, Male, Rubanda

Although health services in public health facilities are presumed to be free, communities report incurring high indirect costs from transport, maintenance (food and upkeep) in distant facilities and buying medicines as a result of stock-outs. It drives households not to buy the requisite medicines when they are told to do so. Those who fail to buy medicines fear to return to the health facilities. Diseases of extreme poverty such as jiggers, lice and intestinal worms are also a problem in Kigezi yet the primary health care (PHC) system neglects these diseases. Neglected populations such as orphans, the disabled, homeless people and the elderly are the most vulnerable groups to jigger infestations. Communities such as Kirundo, Nyakisiza and Kyahi sub-counties were reported to be highly infested.

“We have another problem here, which I thought was a lie, but it is true. There is a problem of jiggers. Jiggers are here in Kirundo, Nyakisiza and Kyahi sub counties. You find a young boy of 12 years with jiggers on hands, legs and everywhere. We found almost 100 people affected with jiggers in one visit. There is a lady who conducted an extensive search and she found 2000 people in, just in one Sub County. People were crying out to us. As a leader, we decided to take some doctors and CBOs to these communities and try to see if we can improve on this situation. For children who are studying, you cannot go to school when you have jiggers” KII-SSS.

The fear of indirect costs affects early care seeking, especially repeat ANC attendance and delivery in health facilities, especially transport, having to buy drugs when they are out of stock, and unofficial payments. Various key informants report that the mental health situation in the region is a challenge. They said that the high rates of psychosocial stress from livelihoods pressures has led to higher suicide rates in this region.

Reproductive health challenges were also noted. STDs, HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancies were cited as key health related stresses in the region. Poverty was mentioned as one of the key factors that exposes school girls to sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and early pregnancy.

“You know when the household is poor, some of these young girls are forced to leave school, and some of them end up working in bars and are exposed to these men so even the HIV rate in Kabale is going up”, KII-CSO-TPO.

Due to non-affordability of sanitary pads, girls adapt by cutting pieces of old cloth which they use as sanitary pads. The underlying driver for the high fertility rates in the region include the cultural desire for many children, religious teachings against family planning (FP) methods, negative attitudes and myths in the communities about FP methods (e.g. that FP methods cause infertility and cancer) and family planning side effects such as palpitations, weight gains, hot flushes and general weakness. Community members complain that health workers do not explain clearly the side effects of FP methods and their implications to the user. Additionally, failure of men to support their wives in using FP is another reason for underutilization of FP services. Inconsistent use of FP, along with FP side effects have discouraged some people from using them, especially since the support systems for people who develop risk factors are viewed by communities to be insufficient, something that the community considers ‘sinister’.

Education services: Schools’ infrastructure is affected by floods and heavy rains, leading children to miss school days during the rainy season. Communities also cite crop destruction from heavy rains as contributing to lack of school fees.

“When the floods have come, you have to miss school. This is because the money to pay for your school fees was expected from these crops yet they have been destroyed” **FGD-Youth-Rubanda.**

In addition, there is a low school-to-pupil ratio in the sub-region leading children to walk long distances to and from school. Communities were particularly concerned about the low quality of teaching and learning in the available schools due to poor scholastic materials. Inadequate household incomes mean the girls will not access basic necessities like sanitary pads, leading to embarrassing incidents at school. Performance in school is also affected by the failure to study at night due to lack of electricity or alternative lighting. Community members said that many households are not able to afford paraffin for candidate children to study in the late hours. Communities report that many children do not go beyond primary school. Dropping out from school is associated with an increase in antisocial behaviour e.g. theft. When caught in such acts, parents have to sell of their assets to settle the cases. To obtain school fees, some women sell their reserve food from the granaries. This is not sustainable.

“They (teachers) do not have copies of the current syllabus yet the syllabuses change. We wonder what they are teaching. They also have very old text books. The teachers are demotivated and always absent”. **FGD-Youth-Rubanda.**

“I have 5 siblings but one, who is 12 years old is attending school in primary six. Our father tried to send us to school but failed to get the money so myself, and my elder sister also stopped in S.I, so he now resorted to trying to get us to finish primary school and after that he fails to cater for our school needs because we are many and poor” **IDI, 14-year old girl.**

“I am not at school because of lack of money for school fees; it makes me feel sad as there is even not enough food at home. When I see others of my age going to school, I feel sad but have nothing to do about it” **IDI, 14-year old girl.**

Staying hungry while at school is also another factor that leads children to miss school days. Government schools do not provide meals. The policy is that households/parents must contribute by providing lunch packs for the children. Inability by many households to provide this basic necessity forces children to search for casual labor to earn money for meals during school hours, which eventually lures them to drop out of school. Dropping out of school leads to migration to semi-urban centres where these unskilled youth cannot access formal jobs. Some of them take up antisocial behaviours like drug abuse.

“When the children drop out of school say because at home they were unable to pack lunch for this child, the child will not go to school hungry term after term and he remains in school remember government schools do not cook food for pupils. He may decide to drop out and go to look for money” **KII-CSO-TPO**

“When we don’t get where to work, we can spend the whole day minus eating and like I told you earlier, I got ashamed seeing my siblings begging for food from the neighborhood, so I had to leave school and work for food” **IDI, 14-year girl**

Within households, young girls report discrimination in the amount of scholastic materials provided to boys and girls. Some discussants report cases in which fathers tend to favor their

daughters. This is a unique finding compared to other rural contexts in Uganda where girls tend to be discriminated against.

“I think it is different for me; because like for text-books, my father does not easily give them to my brother. Because he is a boy, he expects him to cope. He gives the text-books to me” **IDI, 14-year girl**

In the areas visited, there are no organizations helping boys and girls who dropped out, to go back to school. However, there are some initiatives trying to support young girls to stay in school. One example is the Muramba Child development center that gives scholastic materials to girls. Kisoro district also helps vulnerable girls by providing school fees bursaries and other scholastic materials. However, community members reported that to access these schemes, a student needs someone to negotiate for him/her at the district.

Despite the many stresses and barriers, most parents have a positive desire to keep children in school as long as possible, many of them viewing it as a means to protecting them from negative influences in life. They also view educated children as a form of social security to support them in old age. These perceptions indicate an opportunity for increasing school participation and completion rates.

Livelihoods: Due to the mountainous terrain in this region, most of the roads are in the valleys where they often get washed away by floods making it difficult to transport produce to trading centres. Soil erosion and floods are reported to be one of the biggest shock/stress that communities regularly face in this sub-region. Communities report substantial losses of property from floods in different magnitudes (houses, shops, merchandise, animals, crops, clothes, cars, tables, food items) with occasional losses of life. However, community agency to undertake local actions to mitigate flooding is limited. Participation for instance in digging or desilting trenches is low.

“When the floods killed my son in law, he left a wife with 3 children and they had nothing like food to put on the cooking stones and no house; even the house they were living in was built by well-wishers but still also the floods almost put it down. And he had no land, what was available has also been washed away by floods. They had planted in sweet potato vines, but they were all washed away” **IDI-Widow-Female.**

Subsistence agriculture is central to livelihoods in Kigezi sub-region. However, inaccess to land limits the potential for productivity of households. Distribution of land among the many children further leads families into deeper poverty, since they are not able to engage in larger scale production as land gets more and more fragmented. The lack of access to viable livelihood alternatives beyond subsistence agriculture has caused some communities to migrate to distant places such as Kibale, Kabarole and Masindi. Households with elderly people are particularly vulnerable because they are unable to do strenuous menial work. However, communities report that some household’s poverty arises from their reluctance to work.

Within households, women were reported to be much more vulnerable than men because many of them were unable to start an independent business, earn an income or control family resources. Women spend most of their day working in gardens and doing all the domestic work without the support of their husbands, yet the men tend to control the income from the sale of

the produce. Communities report that women often return home late from an entire day of working, meaning they do not have sufficient time for their children. Because they are tired and because they lack the money to purchase additional food items, they cannot prepare quality meals for the children. Women also repeatedly said that they lacked access to meaningful income that can allow them to invest and grow their incomes.

“We don’t have the “capital” needed to be able to start any business; we can never even earn 10,000 shillings in come go. From the work that we do we can only earn about 2,000 shillings, yet we spend much of it. When can this ever accumulate to the level that we can invest even in one simple thing like a chicken to lay eggs?” **FGD - Women – Nyamweru**

Conversely, it was reported that many men spend their day in alcohol consumption leaving women without support, and to engage in food production alone. It was also reported that men sometimes sell the food produced by women while it is still in the gardens, sometimes leaving very little for home consumption. This is one of the key drivers of undernutrition. There is a widespread perception that the money earned by the men is meant for them to take care of themselves while women are responsible for taking care of children. Alcoholism is a key driver of family neglect by men.

“In this area, men are not used to looking for money. Its women that are known for looking for some money through cultivation for others from which they are paid a little money. Some men try to get necessities like salt and soap but these are few. Some men have a belief that their money is for taking care of them while the wife takes care of the children (Laughs). They tell their wives: ‘As a man, I won’t ask you for your money, but don’t ask me as well, just take care of the children’ **FGD - Men - Nyamweru.**

Alcohol consumption, a common practice in the district is especially a problem among men. Some of them drink from morning to evening after selling household produce, which in turn affects household’s ability to diversify food. Peer pressure coupled with the availability of potent forms of alcohol in affordable packaging fuels uptake. Youth and children are also increasingly vulnerable to uptake of alcohol. The lack of local laws and regulations on alcohol consumption have made alcoholism a challenge in the community. Alcoholism is also a key driver of high fertility and domestic violence.

Domestic violence is common in the region as a result of men’s refusal to contribute to household needs while controlling the resources from the household produce. Men who do not provide for their families are not respected by wives and children. This often fuels quarrels, physical fights and emotional abuse. Alcoholism by these men is often a key cause of recurrent cycles of domestic violence. Others causes of domestic violence include infidelity especially by men, failure of families to work together (e.g. one party acquiring loans but using the household’s land as collateral without consent), and HIV/AIDs. In this region, domestic violence is associated with high separation rates, the women often leaving their homes with no assets but with the young children.

“For a woman to respect and listen to you, you must be meeting her needs. But because we don’t give them anything, they tend to live their own way independently. When you ask your child to do for you something, the child will not have any respect because you’ve even failed to pay school fees or meeting basic needs. So, the child won’t listen to you. They lose respect for you and may

end up into drugs and family violence. Most men here no longer have sleep at night” FGD - Men - Nyamweru

It is hard to find employment during the rainy season as farm-owners fear for their gardens to be swept away when they are cultivated. This seasonal scarcity of work leads community members to borrow food from the farm owners which they later pay for by working on their farms when the rains reduce. The influx of refugees is affecting job opportunities for residents. Many women engage in casual labor to obtain food since the fertility of their own pieces of land has been lost due to over cropping and soil exhaustion.

Household poverty was reported to be a leading underlying driver of many of the stresses the communities face. It exacerbates domestic violence. Poverty also leads to early marriages, and early pregnancies due to school dropout as parents seek to relinquish responsibility but also acquire dowry. People marry off their daughters at an early age to relieve themselves of the responsibility. Children leave their homes to avoid competing with parents over food, shelter and land, but also to look for work opportunities in farms away from their villages. Poverty also predisposes women to risky behavior like prostitution.

“We are no longer strong enough to migrate because we don’t have the energy to till the land there. We remained here because we were better off. We had managed to buy some land but we have distributed it among our children and ended up with less land for crop production. We are now used to the poverty”, FGD-Male-Muramba.

“If the child is lucky enough to complete P.7, we let her go so that they start taking care of themselves – to relieve us” FGD - Women – Nyamweru.

As part of the coping mechanisms, communities have been encouraged by authorities to form groups to benefit from government programs and civil society interventions. The communities’ objective of forming these groups is to facilitate diversification of income. Some NGOs like TPO contribute to community development by paying school fees for children, supporting vocational skills training and supporting formation of farmer groups. Community members said that their aspirational goal is to be able to ‘educate their children for a brighter future’.

“To live a fulfilled life, we need to educate our children. We need to increase on the level at which we are educating our children for a brighter future. They might even help us in the future” FGD - Men - Nyamweru.

Young girls who have dropped out of school lack specialized skills to diversify their income. As a result, they rely on casual labor to survive. The aspirational goal of such girls is to learn some vocational skills (like weaving, tailoring and hair dressing) to be able to earn money for their livelihood. However, available programs to support them acquire these skills are not sufficient.

Despite these challenges, community members report that there is a high degree of resilience to crop failure among farming households the community members. Farming households often persevere some seed and plant more crops even when earlier crops are destroyed by floods. They multi-task by working in both their own small holdings and as casual laborers in larger holdings. Primary school children are obliged by their guardians to do casual labor over the weekends as a means of raising money to buy books and other necessities for themselves. Other

adaptations to livelihood demands at household level include joining saving groups (SACCOs). However, pressure to pay back the loans and accumulation of interest often forces households to sell their crops prematurely, exacerbating their food shortage and income poverty. Additionally, those who have accessed loans have had their security deposit taken by these SACCOs when they fail to pay back what they borrowed.

“These money lenders usually lend money to these peasants. When you fail to pay back, the money lender will come to your garden, look at the small garden of sorghum, Irish potatoes and beans and ask, how much is this? They then come and park their vehicles and take everything right from the garden. Because the borrowed money accumulates some interest, these farmers are usually cheated at the point of harvest. So that is the issue of social factors” **KII-DHO-Senior Clinical Officer.**

Livelihoods strategies that have failed to work in the community include tea planting and rearing exotic livestock. Interventions to support diversification to these initiatives instead left the communities poorer as tea gardens collapsed and the expensive animals died.

Local communities seemed to have a fair understanding of resilience. To many community members, resilience means being able to cope with the shocks or find alternative solutions. Others defined resilience as being able to survive amidst hardships and survive without getting any disabilities. However, a spirituality angle was ever present as several discussants mentioned trusting in God as part of their coping mechanisms to survive the effects of shocks and stresses. To others, being able to bounce back and live a positive life after being exposed to a difficult experience is how they define resilience. They cite men who do not provide for their families and who do not listen to advice from friends about providing for their families as not being resilient.

Food Security and nutrition: Despite having two rainy seasons, communities complained about dry spells that affect their crop production, contributing to poor nutrition. On the other hand, heavy rains destroy crops, animals, and structures like homes, roads, bridges and schools. Communities are also concerned about wide-spread environmental degradation as people seek for more land for production. This includes deforestation, bush burning, charcoal making and poor methods of agriculture that promote soil erosion and leaching of minerals.

Crop pests and diseases were also cited as a key stressor contributing to food shortage in the region. Additionally, the lack of knowledge about proper child feeding coupled with limited food diversity due to land shortage and limited capacity to purchase protein food contribute to childhood malnutrition. The influx of refugees in the region is reported to have a high impact on the food security in the region, causing food shortage through refugees buying, stealing, or bartering menial work for food. The struggle to share resources (e.g. food, shelter, and firewood) for a densely populated region that is also hosting refugees is intense. The food shortage has brought about food theft from the storage shelters (granaries) causing more food insecurity and the cycle continues. People residing close to the national parks and conservation zones complained about destruction of their crops by animals.

Unpredictable seasonal variations in onset of rains were reported to contribute to crop failure and income poverty. Variation in onset of expected rains by a few weeks could result into crop

failure from the seeds rotting in the soil. Communities appealed for support in adapting to climate variability by receiving timely and accurate information on when to plant.

“The seasons keep changing, sometimes taking longer or shorter than expected. We can adjust to the season changes instead of waiting for the old seasons. If only we could have accurate forecasts, we would plant depending on the seasonal changes; the rain and dry spells destroy our crops” **FGD-Male-Muramba SC**

Communities say that the little money that they generate from agriculture is prioritized for school fees and expenditure on ill-health. In many instances, the bulk of the food yield at the household level is sold to raise school fees, leaving the households with no food for consumption, and insufficient money to buy food. Being the only default for earning cash and because of small holdings, households want to maximize their cash earnings by selling all they can. There is a ready market for their food, fueled by demand from Kampala and the neighboring countries (South Sudan, DRC and Rwanda). Households then resort to buying maize meal (posho) from the shops, becoming net food buyers. The economics of these transactions and whether households have a net benefit from ‘selling food to buy food’ are not clear.

“The big challenge is that there is no major kind of cash crop like a cereal which is there to support the communities. They usually plant sorghum and it commercial. After harvest, within a month you find when it is all sold and it is harvested once a year, that is around May – June. So by July – august it is already sold. The other business is of Irish. Immediately it is harvested, trucks are there waiting, from Rwanda, Kampala, southern Sudan. That is how you find people don’t have food in their homes. In fact they buy posho from town. They used to have sweet potatoes but they are so scarce now. So, the community is always in need of food” **KII-DHO-Senior Clinical Officer.**

Eating healthy means eating a variety of foods, but there is a limited variety of foods to eat in the region. This is fueled by widespread mono-cropping especially of Irish potatoes, which is the main food crop produced by farmers in the region. Because of the small holdings, communities are left with limited space for growing other crops like beans and vegetables. Irish potatoes are on high demand by the traders.

“Nyarusiza is largely Irish potato growing community, and there is no other optional food that is grown in these communities. They have a lot of Irish potatoes, but Irish potatoes alone cannot sustain a household. Muramba is also the same, it is an Irish potato growing community; these communities have scarcity of beans, and they don’t grow vegetables **KII-CSO - RED CROSS KISORO.**

Early marriages also predispose children to malnutrition, because young parents do not have knowledge about how to look after their children. Children in big families, child headed homes, children with disability, those cared for by men and elderly, and the orphans are also prone to malnutrition. Having many children brings about stress on family heads due to failure to provide food and cater for other household needs. The lack of nutrition knowledge among some parents in the community leads to poor child feeding resulting in malnutrition. Children are initiated early on complementary feeding with a limited diversification of the complementary foods.

“There is no milk, no eggs, no porridge, no beans and similar higher protein or energy feeds. People simply do not have them” **KII-NURSE-Muramba HCIII**

Some health facilities have been supported by different programs to provide rehabilitative therapy for acutely malnourished children. Because of the training received, health facilities have also improved in diagnosis of severe malnutrition at the Out Patient Departments. However, health workers have been identifying the children and giving them food supplements upon which they recover, only to return with recurrence of severe malnutrition shortly after they are discharged.

“I may admit a child for example, and she starts on “Rutafa”, a nutritional supplement, and when this child is ok, and I discharge. After like one month I do follow up through VHT to monitor the progress of the child and see if the child will get malnourished again; you find this child who has been on Rutafa is malnourished again, meaning the mother did not do much as far as feeding is concerned. So, either they don’t have time for the children or even the foods you’ve described for the mother to give to the child, probably they don’t have them. So, such a child will be brought back for re-admission” **KII-NURSE-Muramba HCIII.**

Malnutrition causes stunting, wasting and recurrent illness leading to poor performance in school, loss of self-esteem and missing of school attendance. Stunting rates in the region are reported to have reduced to 29.3% (UBOS, 2017a) due to interventions like provision of food and micronutrient supplements and improved potato varieties that are given to communities. Low levels of education also contribute to child undernutrition. Children who stay with grandparents are the most affected. The need for employment forces mothers to leave their breastfeeding children with their grand-parents as they seek casual labour on farms away from their villages of residence.

The growing practice of planting a lot of eucalyptus trees as a commercial venture mainly by higher socio-economic status households at the expense of food crops has also contributed to food insecurity as food casual labour opportunities for women are reduced. In some communities, the exhaustion of the soils due to over cultivation and surface run-off has made some communities to shift to tree planting. The planting of eucalyptus trees is reported to facilitate further deterioration of the soils as the trees exhaust all the surface moisture. No crops can be inter-planted with Eucalyptus. The trees are used for construction and to make charcoal and firewood while they are also sold for income. Their seedlings are reported to be cheaper than other tree seedlings while they mature faster. Tobacco growing was another key driver of food insecurity. However, tobacco growing communities have realized this problem and some of them have diversified to growing food crops like beans and pumpkin alongside tobacco to improve food availability. Additionally, polygamy, which is a key driver of fertility and food stress is reportedly reducing in the communities.

Communities also expressed the need for improved food storage facilities to enable them store their produce instead of selling all of it. Communities should also be encouraged to save both money for buying food because diversification of food requires purchasing of other foods beyond what is produced in the household. Sensitization on better feeding practices and how to identify signs of malnutrition in children is necessary. Communities should also be sensitized about seasonal variations in onset of rain, but also supported with improved weather forecasts. Interventions from partners such as UNICEF that include provision of food supplements and sensitizing communities on how to prepare a balanced diet with the available food supplements (Ekitoobero) have been effective where implemented. The reach of such programs should be expanded, alongside mobilization of households to diversify their food crops. Communities

should be supported by extension staff to efficiently use the little land available by planting fast growing crops for their subsistence.

Some households have negatively coped with food shortage by reducing sizes of portions of food or by skipping meals in a day. On the other hand, other households have adapted positively by starting to rear domestic animals (Chicken, rabbits, pigs, goats) as a quick means of diversifying their food options, but also providing them a much needed source of manure for their exhausted soils.

Agriculture and Markets: In the rural communities of South-Western Uganda, agriculture is mostly practiced by women, on which they rely as the main source of both income and household food needs. In most communities, they plant the same crop (Irish potatoes) every season without crop rotation, which has led to soil degradation and erosion. On part of their holdings, some women also grow tobacco which has demand both locally and commercially. However, tobacco promotes further soil degradation and has no value as a food-crop. Because of this, some women have now resorted to cultivating vegetables alongside the tobacco to supplement child feeding and fight malnutrition.

The population pressure resulting from polygamy, high fertility rates and unplanned families has reduced the available land, making people to cultivate and settle in high risk areas on steep slopes, exacerbating not only their food insecurity but also making them more prone to mud-slides. These communities should be empowered to learn how to do intensive diversified farming on small pieces of land to ensure maximum productivity from their small holdings. Farmers should engage in agricultural and livestock projects that require small pieces of land (piggery, poultry, growing of vegetables).

“Initially, the land was sparsely populated. Being a remote village, children were not educated. So the order was to grow up, get married and produce children without thinking about how you will manage the family. Sometimes you would find a young girl getting married to a man with three women yet they were already squeezed in their house. The children would also produce and so on. Eventually we became many and the land has disappeared. As a result, people started cultivating and settling in places where they were not supposed to settle. We are encroaching on the water ways and watersheds; that’s why our houses and crops are being washed away. If the land is not cultivated, water runoffs would pass smoothly without destroying anything. This is the reason we have food insecurity” **FGD - Women – Nyamweru.**

Communities have learned from others some new practices like the use of pesticides, fertilizers and manure and better farming methods (e.g. digging drainage trenches, shifting cultivation and crop rotation) as a way of controlling soil fertility, pests and diseases. Some community members use compost rubbish, while others use the improved seeds and fertilizers. However, communities are concerned about the cost of fertilizers and improved seeds.

Fake seeds have been reported to be available on the market. These have led not only to poor yield for the farmers but have exacerbated their income poverty as it costs money to acquire the seeds. These seeds are normally acquired from nearby towns and trading centers. Some community members observed that some crops die immediately after sprouting:

“We tried using fertilizers and pesticides but still you apply fertilizers hoping that the yield will be fine but the crops sprout out well and in the end they die with poor yields, this we have tried it especially with Irish potatoes but all the same it has not yielded well” **FGD-Male-Muramba SC**

Most of the respondents reported that floods affect the agricultural produce by washing away their crops, and this is intensified by the hilly terrain of the area, feeding into the cycles of income poverty and food insecurity as well as loss of casual jobs in the rainy season. To prevent torrential runoff from the steep slopes and flooding effect, communities should be mobilized to restore and maintain terraces and to plant elephant grass along the terrace borders as a government policy.

Some community members have allocated most of the little land they have to growing tobacco, onions and tea for money. In many cases, the money earned from these is insufficient for them to be able to buy food. The high cost of transport within to the trading centers diminishes their profit margins as middle men transfer the costs to them through a lower price. Farmers need help to access markets directly. There is also need for government to regulate the market prices of seeds and to disband fake seed syndicates so as to reduce farmer exploitation.

“Of recent, there was introduction of tea growing and the largest wetlands which are swamps were picked up by this cash crop (tea). For example, a very big wetland in a place called Rugyegye, it has about 400 hectares, all this one was used for growing Irish potatoes and sweet potatoes that grown by that time of June, July months, so today this wetland is no more for these two crops, it is now available for only tea and that is why you can no longer find a lot of Irish potatoes in the market because much of it used to come from the wet land of Rugyegye. All these combined contribute to the malnutrition facts” **KII-CSO (Red Cross) Kisoro.**

“We try to plant crops but still we don’t have market, so if we got market for our produce, I think poverty would be eradicated. Because now for example a mug of beans is at 2500ugx, now when you try to compare, the middle men will give you 1500ugx or even less, yet a worker is at Ushs 7,000 but the harvest is taken cheaply. You invest in a lot but upon harvesting, it is the middle man to gain from the toils of the farmer. So, if we can be helped to avoid the challenge of middle men by giving us ready market, then we could fight poverty” **FGD-Female – Kisoro.**

Land and Environment: There is limited land in South-Western Uganda for construction and agriculture due to high population density in the area. This is a consequence of negative attitudes towards family planning, early marriages and low levels of education leading to high population growth. In addition, political instability in neighboring countries (Rwanda & DRC) bring influx of refugees since 1959 up to date. There is also high immigration from Congo and Rwanda due to high fertile soils (volcanic soils) resulting in overpopulation immense pressure on the land. Additionally, the refugee influx has had a high impact on deforestation due to cutting trees for firewood. The land shortage makes people grow similar crops continuously on the same land leading to soil exhaustion and poor yields. People have encroached on high risk places like swamps and steep hills-sides which are prone to runoff, floods and mudslides.

Heavy rains and floods which are common in April and September lead to substantial soil erosion. Communities have been sensitized to dig and desilt drainage trenches, to construct terraces and to plant elephant grass around their gardens to reduce the speed of runoff water and soil erosion.

However, due to the small and fragmented pieces of land, some people have refused to comply with the protection mechanisms leaving the soil vulnerable to floods and heavy run-off.

There is no doubt that the South Western region is endowed with sufficient rains from two main rainy seasons. However, periodic exacerbations of climate variability have caused dry spells. These dry spells are fairly frequent. Often times, the dry spells alternate with heavy rains which destroys entire crops.

Governance: According to communities, government resources and services do not seem to penetrate to the lower level communities. Many community members say they do not have access to and do not 'feel' the reach of the district services. Many of them say they have never seen the agricultural extension staff to help and advise them on how to improve productivity. However, Village Health Teams are visible. Sometimes, people have to pay transport for government workers like veterinary if they need the service. Communities said that government should provide the services it is mandated to including like teachers and teaching materials, health worker staffing, providing enough drugs, renovating schools and health facilities, motivating public servants and improving on the roads' infrastructure.

"If government can provide the services it is mandated to provide. For example in the health sector, providing enough drugs, recruiting enough health workers, renovating some health centers; schools, through employing enough teachers and rehabilitating those that are in poor shape, and also motivating the teachers by increasing their salaries. There is need for improvement in infrastructure; this being a hilly area, there are places that are not accessible by road" **KII-CSO-TPO.**

"The systems are not strong. They are pronounced on the surface but they don't trickle down. Like these agricultural extension workers; you reach a sub county, there is no life, they have no motorcycles, they cannot even move to the field. We had issues with our animals dying; there are veterinary offices here, the officers are disabled. If they are called that a cow is sick, the onus is on the farmer to transport the veterinary doctor to go and see the livestock. How many people can afford? That is why I say the systems are really down. We are not there for the people", **KII-DHO-Senior Clinical Officer.**

Community members expresses some demands regarding actions that can be taken to improve livelihoods. They demanded enactment and enforcement of by-laws regarding alcohol consumption hours, local taxes on alcohol and illicit packaging. They also demanded for by-laws on land use management and encroachment on wetlands. Communities also expressed the need for government to improve the road network by upgrading key feeder roads, especially to render them more resilient to heavy rains. Communities also requested for stand-by road equipment to facilitate rapid clearing of roads during heavy rains. Insecurity was reported in the border sub-county of Nyabwishenya where people were attacked and sometimes abducted to Congo and their property was looted. However, government has been effective in putting an end to the insecurity by establishing an army unit in the area.

Regarding capacity for response to shocks, the district local government should be empowered to operationalize sub-county disaster response teams especially regarding flood disasters. A comprehensive contingency plan for disaster preparedness that integrates different stakeholders

including local leaders should be developed by the district authorities and disseminated to sub-counties with a focus on flood prone areas. Community participation in maintenance of storm drains should be promoted and supported by appropriate by-laws. Leadership courses for local leaders should be institutionalized to promote accountability.

Infrastructure: Flooding and run-off water from hill top deposit silt and stones which affects physical infrastructure. Floods and sometimes landslides destroy houses, roads, pipelines, schools and hospitals and electricity lines. This affects access to services by community members as well as business, trade and markets.

“The roads are poor. If you have a sick person and you call a vehicle, it will take a lot of time before it arrives because the road is muddy and yet the patient could be wanting quick attention, the patient might even die as you are still waiting for the vehicle to arrive” FGD-Youth-Rubanda.

Community members complained that school infrastructure is very poor. Many primary and secondary schools in the districts have very old buildings. Classes are interrupted by rain and wind during the rainy season. Some communities have mobilized themselves to renovate the destroyed critical infrastructure like water ways and roads but several community leaders said that it was the role of local government to renovate critical feeder roads. Not only was infrastructure an encumbrance to movement of agricultural produce but community members said it had hampered the exploitation of natural resources like sand and precious stones that could provide employment opportunities for the region.

“We are worried about the fact that we are not progressing because the infrastructure remains poor; those who could have come to this place to give us business are restricted by poor roads; no serious investment will happen here because we don’t have good infrastructure. We have valuable things here like sand and precious stones that can be crafted into useful objects and cement; an industry around these could provide employment opportunities for people around and I think this could have helped us.” FGD-Male-Muramba.

4.2.3 Discussion of findings from South-Western Uganda region

Water Sanitation and Hygiene: The sanitation challenges resulting from inaccess to safe water cannot be over-emphasized. In Kigezi sub-region, the main source of the challenge is the hilly terrain, where communities that mostly live on the steep slopes have to fetch water from the valleys. This contributes to the high reported burden of diarrhoea diseases in the region. Driven the local gender inequities, it is the women and children who commonly fetch the water. Transportation of water using head portorage is associated with high physical exertion and subsequent exhaustion among women and children. Children have to fetch water before they go to school.

The programmatic implications of these findings is that unless water and sanitation is addressed, the region will continue to have a high burden of sanitation related diseases. There is need to expand WatSan activities in the region, focusing on getting water nearer to the households. Programmatic approaches that can address these challenges include innovative approaches to water harvesting, including promotion of rain water harvesting and gravity flow schemes. Schemes of rain water harvesting such as plastic line points or fallow cement tanks are the other possible interventions that would limit the water runoffs but also help trap the rain water that would be

used for domestic use uphill in the homes and in the gardens for irrigation during the dry spells. Improved latrine systems that can withstand the conditions and the terrain upstream would contribute to reducing contamination of the water table.

Health: The main health related issues raised by communities included low coverage with health facilities hence long distances to seek care, poor quality of infrastructure in the health facilities, frequent stock outs of drugs in the health facilities in the region, and a high burden of preventable health conditions, mainly diarrhoeal diseases, respiratory tract infections and reproductive health problems. The issue of infrastructure is a bedrock issue. Being a nationwide challenge, it would require long-term investments in construction and rehabilitation of health facilities. The low hanging fruits however lie in addressing the frequent shortages of drugs, plugging the sanitation challenges that drive the high burden of sanitation related diseases and improving reproductive health services. Regarding the high burden of respiratory infections and sanitation related diseases, there is need to scale up preventive activities that empower households to improve their sanitation practices.

Essential drugs and supplies: Non-availability or stock-outs of essential medical supplies in public health facilities has been a country wide problem more especially in rural areas (Ministry of Health, 2006). The Ministerial Statement and the Auditor general's report for 2016 both indicate emphasize this problem which the attribute to poor planning, prioritization and forecasting, inadequate data management and monitoring systems to track amounts of drugs ordered and dispensed, non-supply or undersupply of ordered items by National Medical Stores, and poor clinical and dispensing practices characterized by some clinicians prescribing more drugs than needed. In all these, challenges are highlighted across the supply chain including; medicine selection, quantification, procurement, storage, distribution and use (Nakyanzi et al., 2010).

The programmatic implication of this finding is the need to improve supply chain management at all levels. There need for local capacity building to optimize needs forecasting and use. At the national level, there is need to strengthen mechanisms for procurement and disbursement of commodities. Innovative approaches that can support planning, ordering, receipting, storage distribution and delivery of orders to health facilities will need to be put in place so as to improve drug management. Procurement planning should be based on the local disease burden other than the current push approaches used for lower health facilities.

Reproductive health: Socio-cultural pressure for large family sizes amidst shrinking land resources, unaddressed community concerns regarding family planning, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections and menstrual hygiene challenges for young girls were they issues raised. These issues need to be addressed at service delivery and community level.

Family planning is an essential component in the national development agenda to become a middle-income country in the next 30 years as well as contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (MOH, 2014). Access to family planning and contraception is a fundamental dimension of sexual and reproductive Health and reproductive rights (World Health Organization, 2011). In Uganda, inaccess to information to debunk socio-cultural beliefs and practices and to explain misconceptions, and insufficient provision of support services for people who have experienced side effects are some of the main barriers to utilization of family planning.

Addressing other reproductive health challenges would require scaling up of Implementation of Uganda's policies and programs on sexual and reproductive health including the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2015/16 –2019/20, the Reproductive Health Commodity Security Strategic Plan, 2009/10–2013/14, the Roadmap for Accelerating the Reduction of Maternal and Neonatal Mortality and Morbidity in Uganda, 2007–2015, the National Family Planning Advocacy Strategy, 2005–2010 and the Family Planning costed implementation plan (CIP). These plans include strategies for scaling-up comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRH)/HIV programs targeting, adolescents (both in and out of school) and young people including menstrual hygiene programs and providing a comprehensive package of SRH, HIV prevention, care and treatment through harmonized programming and ensure access by vulnerable populations such as people with disabilities, women and girls, and integration of SRH, maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) and TB services with HIV prevention. The CIP emphasizes demand creation as one of the key strategies to promote family planning uptake, and identifies male involvement as being crucial to the success of this strategy.

At 5.4 children per woman, Uganda's Total Fertility Rate remains high, a situation that is attributed to low contraceptive prevalence. According to the 2016 health and demographic survey, contraceptive prevalence for the South Western region stands at 46.5% which is slightly higher than the national average of 39%. This assessment recommends the strengthening of service delivery in hard to reach areas like Kigezi routine service provision, outreaches, social franchising, community-based distribution of commodities, task sharing such as community-based distribution (CBD) of injectable contraception by VHTs, and provision of long acting FP methods by midwives as well as targeted sensitization. We similarly recommend innovative approaches such as the transport voucher scheme, postpartum IUD, and postpartum FP to increase access as well as Integration of FP into other services. All these interventions should be supported by efforts to break the gender barriers that prevent active male involvement in family planning. Most importantly however, sensitization will not be effective if it does not address the main concerns of communities: namely, what to expect regarding side effects and how people who develop side effects can be assisted.

Quality of education: This analysis indicated major challenges with education services in the region, including inadequate numbers of schools leading students to walk long distances, poor infrastructure in the existing schools, poor quality of education, lack of scholastic materials, school children facing hunger due to non-provision of lunch packs by their parents and high rates of school drop outs.

Children have a right to a quality education, a complex system embedded in a political, cultural and economic context (UNICEF, 2017). Quality education includes healthy learners, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities. It also includes healthy environments, which are safe, protective, gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities. Additionally, quality education should include content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life. It should include cross-cutting knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace. Quality education also demands that trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well-

managed classrooms and schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities (UNICEF, 2000).

Uganda was one of the first East African countries to adopt a Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy in 1997, in response to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, specifically the Goal number 2: achieve Universal Primary Education by 2015 (UNDP, 2015a). Following the roll out of UPE, school enrolment in the country increased substantially from about 2.5 million children in 1996 to 7.5 million in 2003, and then progressively up to 11 million in 2012 (UBOS, 2014). Under UPE, the government of Uganda pays children's tuition fees through the transfer of a capitation grant (the UPE grant) to schools. However, it is the responsibility of parents and guardians to provide or pay for other schooling expenses, such as scholastic materials (books and supplies), uniforms, food, and transportation (Karlan and Linden, 2014). In Uganda, the rapid increase in enrollment did not match the infrastructure in place, including a shortage of classrooms, teachers, instructional materials, and other related facilities affecting the level of school performance and high student's dropouts. The lack of motivation both materially and non-materially among the teachers coupled with the tough working conditions especially in the hard to reach areas seems to be a fact of poor performance which leads to school dropout of learners (Christine Mbabazi Mpyangu et al., 2014).

The causes of school dropout include pregnancy among young girls, poverty especially where people live in absolute poverty and fail to cater for school need for their children, lack of food to eat at school and even back at home, child labor, long distances to school, repeated poor performance in class, orphan-hood, poor perception or attitude of parents towards education, domestic violence and menstrual hygiene (Christine Mbabazi Mpyangu et al., 2014).

Based on the priorities identified in this assessment, longer term investments should include support to improving physical infrastructure in schools. However, shorter term interventions should involve provision of basic scholastic materials (syllabuses, textbooks and skills lab materials) and other teaching aids to improve the quality of teaching. Where possible, teachers in the hard-to-reach schools should receive incentives so as to increase their motivation. Extensive consultative community dialogues to get buy-in from parents to provide lunch packs for their children should be undertaken. This should be integrated into the food security strategy for community and household outreaches and should also be integrated across programs. In the hardest-to-reach areas, development agencies may consider direct support to school feeding programs.

Programs to identify school dropouts and support them to acquire additional livelihood skills should be expanded. This should aim at skilling them to be able to engage in viable enterprise and to identify and take advantage of opportunities for enterprise.

Environmental degradation: The high population density of the region has resulted in high rates of environmental degradation from pressure on land, leading too soil exhaustion, high rates of soil erosion and silting of the wetlands. Underlying these are high rates of deforestation, high rates of water run-off from the steep slopes and encroachment on wetlands.

Majority of Ugandans fully rely on natural resources to survive. They obtain water, food, fuel, clean air and construction materials from the environment. Forests provide fuel-wood and cleared land frees arable soil for agriculture. As forests give way to agricultural land, the soil is exposed to erosion and loses its fertility. Where cattle are introduced, grazing also affects soil quality, opens the way for invasive species and reduces the diversity of plant species. Other related problems include falling quality and availability of water. Environmental degradation comes about due to erosion and decline of the quality of the natural environment (Ministry of Water and Environment, 2016). A large percentage of environmental degradation is therefore caused directly or indirectly by anthropogenic activities that extract various environmental resources at a faster rate than they are replaced, and thus depleting them.

As the human populations keep increasing in Kigezi region, a lot of pressure is on the utilization of these natural resources is expected. Without a sustainably addressing to the ever growing population, land fragmentation, deforestation and poor methods of agriculture, the environment in South Western Uganda will likely see further deterioration. Programmatic implications arising from this analysis include the need for strategies to reduce land fragmentation by providing alternative livelihoods for youth, promotion of re-forestation and agro-forestry, land-use management to mitigate soil erosion, composting and fertilizers to reduce soil exhaustion, enactment and enforcement of ordinances regarding wetland use, as well as promotion of improved agriculture techniques to increase productivity of small holdings. By-laws on farming practices (e.g. laws on farrowing, terracing and drainages) should be put in place to promote soil conservation as well as enforcement of by-laws to protect swamps.

Gender gap: This analysis shows existence of a high gender equity gap in which activities related to production and looking after the household are left to the women yet men who control the household income. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also a pre-condition for sustainable development. Providing women and girls who represent half of the global population, with quality education, health care, decent work, access and ownership rights over property and technology, and equal participation in political and economic decision-making processes will lead to social, economic and environmental sustainability across the globe (UNDP, 2017). Data for the last decade has revealed slow progress for realizing the full potential of gender equity. It therefore imperative to take actions towards empowering women and accelerate progress towards gender equality, adding to the well-established economic case for gender equality (Leopold et al., 2016).

Uganda prioritizes gender equality as a crosscutting enabler for socioeconomic transformation, while highlighting the progress made in the legal and policy arena, in political representation, and in lowering gaps in education. On the other hand, gender disparities in access and control over productive resources like land, limited share of women in wage employment in non-agricultural sectors, sexual and gender-based violence, limited participation in household, community and national decision-making are still prevalent and need to be addressed (UNDP, 2017). Therefore part of the situation in Kisoro represents the broader context. However, despite the inequalities observed in the country-wide context, the depth and nature of inequalities regarding economic participation observed in the South Western region seemed to be higher than those in other regions. In Karamoja for instance, women were also for undertaking crop farming. However, the men there atleast took charge of looking after the household livestock. Conversely, region, the

men who were not participating in agriculture in the South Western took on no alternative production role. Rather, they engaged in alcohol taking, moreover using some of the resources generated by the women.

To change the disparities observed in the region requires close engagement with households to discuss their interpretations of gender roles so as to guide them to identify the inequities. Campaigns to reduce alcohol consumption cannot be excluded from the interventions targeting reduction of gender inequities. Such a campaign should draw on local scenarios to demonstrate how alcohol consumption has affected household livelihoods and productivity. If possible, local by-laws and ordinances to regulate alcohol consumption hours should be instituted and enforced. School-based interventions to address gender norms and equality early in life should be promoted.

Community interventions that tend to reduce gender inequality by empowering women strengthen their economic position through microfinance schemes and change gender stereotypes and norms. The gender equality interventions focusing on male involvement, women's empowerment and address gender roles related to communication and decision-making at a household level are necessary. They should be built around a consensus-based approach in which men and women discuss what they see and how it can be improved.

Malnutrition: Persistently high rates of chronic undernutrition, especially stunting, have been observed in Kigezi. Malnutrition affects millions of people in Uganda. However, Kigezi region has been consistently hard hit with stunting rates that are above the national average. In 2001, 50% of children under 5 years in Kabale district were malnourished, with stunting (an indicator of chronic undernutrition) was the most prevalent form of deficiency (Kabale District Local Government, 2011a). Nearly a decade later, a report published in 2010 on analysis of nutrition situation in Uganda by the FANTA-2 project showed that these two districts had high levels of stunting, underweight and wasting respectively at 41.7%, 15.5% and 4.9% (FANTA-2, 2010).

Many factors contribute to malnutrition in this region and key to these include poor sanitation and hygiene, poor infant feeding practices, lack of protein and essential micronutrients and recurring disease cycle (Rubanda District LG, 2016). However, contextualized factors that underlie undernutrition are important to tackling it and they include low awareness about health diets, perceptions that large quantities of mainly starchy foods are nutritionally sufficient, monocropping of food that cannot be stored for long, families not keeping sufficient money to enable them buy and diversify food, and treatment for acute malnutrition is mainly facility and health worker centered. Children treated for malnutrition tend to keep coming back with recurrences. Parents often leave their children alone all day to tend for themselves as they undertake casual labour away from the home. The lack of school feeding programs yet children are not given land packs further exacerbates the problem.

In order to break these cycles, public health and food security programs should use a multi-faceted multi-disciplinary household-based approach that targets the underlying drivers at household level rather than the facility based nutritional centres. Such programs should not only address nutritional rehabilitation but should include assessment of the food available in the home, ability to purchase food to address dietary diversity, and ability to plan for food needs during times of stress. There is also need to break the cycles of recurrent severe malnutrition among

children seen at therapeutic centres by going beyond the facility support to visit and assess their home environment. Malnutrition programs should also aim to improve sanitation and hygiene practices so as to reduce the occurrence of diarrhoeal diseases. Innovative approaches to improving diet diversity should be explored, using the local resources. Such interventions should also be integrated in the gender and livelihoods programs and should shift from mother/child focused to household focused interventions to involve men. It is important to harness the potential for the district local government departments to participate in the multi-dimensional intervention. There will also be need for dialogues with families to provide food packs for school-going children.

Agriculture, the main source of livelihood: Agriculture, the main source of livelihood in the South Western Region is faced with several challenges including lack of modern farming technologies to increase productivity from small holdings, low access to agricultural extension services, lack of mechanisms for bulking to increase market leverage from small-holdings, loss of soil fertility from soil erosion and nutrient, low access to reliable seasonal climate outlooks and near-season forecasts leading to crop failure, and high rates of fake seeds on the market.

Agriculture is a core sector of Uganda's economy, which contributed about 23% of GDP in 2011 while it accounted for half of total exports in 2012. About 60% of Uganda's population is engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishing with a growth rate of 2.8% per year. Agriculture sector includes the traditional Cash Crops (coffee, cotton, tea, cocoa, tobacco, and sugarcane), non-traditional Cash Crops (Maize, Rice, Beans); livestock (cattle, goats, pigs) and fishing farming. Although Uganda is largely endowed with fertile soils and over 60% of the land is arable, agricultural activities are fragmented and the vast majority of farmers practice subsistence farming (GOU, 2017).

In South Western Uganda the steep hilly terrain predisposes the land to soil erosion and leaching. The community tries to mitigate this by building terraces but their efficiency is partly affected by the menial nature in which they are built. To mitigate this, some farmers plant protective crops at the edges of the gardens. However, other approaches that can be explored and scaled include Conservative Agriculture (CA) which is based on a minimal mechanical soil disturbance, a permanent organic soil cover by crop residues and/or cover crops, and diversified crop rotations or intercropping with legumes, as well as composting (Ngwira et al., 2014). Farmers need to be educated on these measures. In addition, the increasing land fragmentation from a growing population requires innovative approaches to improving productivity on small holdings, as well as mechanisms for produce bulking to increase market leverage.

Climate forecasting has emerged as an adaptation option for agriculture to better cope with climate variability (Choi et al., 2015). However, near season climate forecasting services tend to be inaccessible and often times variable. It is therefore not uncommon for a farmer to plan after two rains following which there are no rains for three weeks. This leads to seeds rotting in the ground or failure of the young crop. Farmers do not have replacement seed. Improved climate forecasting and communication of climate information to farmers is crucial to informed choices by the farmers. Predictive climate information may translate into different adaptive farming strategies including changing sowing date or crop variety, applying manure or chemical fertilizers or a mix of the two (Roudier et al., 2014).

Access to information, seed supply and funds to access new higher yield crop varieties can be empowering to farmers. A social capital approach in which local farmer groups work together to create networks with seed sellers and extension workers can be used to access to information on reliable improved seed (Shiferaw et al., 2015). Other programmatic considerations could include innovations to increase access of rural farmers to agricultural extension services should be explored, as should interventions to increase access to chemicals to tackle crop diseases. Production Officers should learn from the health sector on how the vigilance and reach of Village Health Teams (VHTs) has been sustained amidst resource constraints.

There is need to guide agricultural practices in the region by promoting produce bulking of single crops to increase leverage from produce buyers. Additionally, the government should provide a balanced food market by reducing or removing or regulating taxes on essential foods for the population to access a balanced diet at affordable prices. To mitigate the effects of dry spells, interventions to increase rain water harvesting and small-holder irrigation should be put in place, with appropriate incentives for households to harvest water.

The problem of fake seeds, while occurring to varying extents seems to be a problem in different parts of the country. These seeds are obtained from traders in local trading centres and towns. Farmers do not have reliable information on where to acquire genuine seeds. It is also not clear the extent to which terminator seeds play a role – but farmers report that sometimes the crops sprout only to wilt after a few days. There is need for local vigilance by the district production teams to identify the flow streams for these fake seeds so that they can be addressed from the source.

Food insecurity: Despite having sufficient rainfall, food insecurity is a persisting challenge for the South Western districts region. Food insecurity occurs when people lack sustainable access to enough, nutritious, and socially acceptable food for a productive and health life, which can be temporal, seasonal or chronic in nature (MAAIF, 2003). Food insecurity is especially a big issue in Eastern Africa, where one-third of the population is estimated to be undernourished (FAO, 2016). Food insecurity leads to malnutrition. Malnutrition makes children weak and vulnerable, and less able to fight common illnesses like diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections, malaria, and measles (Kikafunda et al., 2014). Food security on the other hand is based on three main pillars availability, accessibility and utilization In Kigezi region, food insecurity often occurs around the time before the crop is ready for harvesting, which is mainly the months of March to April and October to November (Kisoro District LG, 2016).

In Uganda threats to food security include unpredictable climatic conditions, insecurity, outbreaks of crop and livestock diseases, extreme poverty and several socio-economic, geographical and environmental factors (OPM, 2017). The government of Uganda adopted the “Integrated Food Security Phase Classification” (IPC) protocol as the main tool for determining and reporting on the country’s food security situation, which has facilitated coordination among humanitarian and development partners, NGOs, and CSOs. The IPC provides insights on key characteristics of Uganda’s food insecure populations, in terms of their number, geographical location, social conditions and severity of food insecurity. Combined with other data collected by government agencies such as the National Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the Uganda National Meteorological

Authority (UNMA), key line ministries responsible for agriculture, livestock, land and water management, this information provides a fairly good representation of the food security situation in the country.

Uganda has made some progress in reducing extreme poverty. However, some communities and social groups remain vulnerable to food insecurity, often creating a humanitarian and social development challenge. Some household characteristics such as gender of the head of household, household size, main sources of income, livelihood and livelihood alternatives explain the wide differences in food insecurity and nutritional outcomes in Uganda (UBOS, 2016). Female-headed households for example are more likely to face food insecurity than male-headed households while smaller households are less likely to face food consumption deficiencies than larger households. In terms of sources of income, households relying on agriculture suffer the highest food insecurity rates. The country's food security early warning system, highlights that about 25% of the Ugandan population is experiencing severe shortage of food as a result of delayed and short lived rainfall, signaling a potential further deterioration of the affected regions' food security situation in (OPM, 2017)

In Kigezi sub-region, the problem of food insecurity is a complex one, as the region leads in production of certain crops like Irish potatoes. However, due to a high population density, land is getting scarce, which limits household productivity. Many families engage in mono-cropping, especially for Irish potatoes, which drives the non-diverse diets. Households often sell the entire crop, living very little to take them through the dry season. Households also use up their savings without keeping some for use to buy food. Tobacco and commercial tree growing were also cited as competitors for the limited land.

In light of these challenges, program implementers need to pay attention to the fact that shortage of food is closely related to crop production and ability to buy food. Hitherto, crop production in the South Western region suffers from limited access to land, low adoption rates for modern farming practices (such as drought- and pest-resistant varieties and new production technologies), lack of innovative insurance schemes for agriculture (such as index-based weather insurance and crop insurance), lack of timely meteorological information and agricultural advisory services for effective preparedness and response to extreme events. On the market side, programmers need to pay attention to the key market challenges and bridge the existing gaps on the production and supply chain, especially the farmers' control of the prices for their produce. Agricultural infrastructure particularly irrigation schemes and food storage facilities are limited.

4.3 Acholi Region (Lamwo District)

4.3.1 Development context and gap

Northern Uganda was devastated by a 20-year armed conflict between rebel groups and government forces from 1986 to 2006 (Otunnu, 2002, OPM, 2007). The most affected areas included Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts (Acholi region), with later spill over into Lira, Otuke and Alebtong districts (Lango region) (ACF, 2010b, ACF, 2010a, Bozzoli et al., 2012). The conflict led to tremendous loss of lives in the magnitude of tens of thousands of people as well as assets (Otunnu, 2002, OPM, 2007). Over 2 million people were left internally displaced and this level

of displacement has been reported to be one of the highest in the world (Jens Claussen and Nordby, 2008, UNDP, 2010).

Lamwo District is a district in the Northern Region of Uganda that was cut out of Kitgum District, and is part of the larger Acholi region. The town of Lamwo is the site of the district headquarters. Lamwo District is bordered by South Sudan to the north, Kitgum District to the east and southeast, Pader District to the south, Gulu District to the southwest, and Amuru District to the west. In 2012, the district's population was estimated at 171,300. Lamwo District was established by act of Parliament and it became functional in July 2009. The district has an area of 5,588.3 km², of which 90% is arable. However, the district is sparsely populated with population density of 24.5 persons per sq. km. This means that the district has vast land resources for agriculture. The district is mainly engaged in crop farming as the main source of livelihood with cotton as the main cash crop. Other cash crops such as sunflower, simsim, rice, millet, sorghum, Ground nuts and beans are growing in importance.

The insurgency in Northern Uganda left a foot-print of impacts on the population in the region. The region shows some of the highest poverty rates compared to other regions in the country. Largely reliant on subsistence agriculture, the vast majority of households use poor method of agricultural production, limiting their yields. As a long-term consequence of the insurgent past, many youths have a negative attitude towards work, exacerbated by the already limited employment/livelihood opportunities leading to idleness and unproductivity. In any case, many of the youth dropped out from school before acquiring sufficient skills to enable them to participate in skilled employment. Some attempts at diversification of livelihoods for income generation have resulted into negative adaptation. For example, there are many reported cases of alcoholism among men in this region as a result of women taking on alcohol production as an alternative means of income generation. This has resulted into reduced productivity and a dramatic increase in the rates of gender-based violence in the region. The region has the highest burden of HIV and epidemic prone diseases in Uganda. The respondents frequently identified similar drivers of vulnerability: lack of social services, corruption and violence from frequent land disputes – all of which ideally fall within the purview of the government.

Lamwo is one of the Ugandan districts that are participating in settling the refugees who have migrated from South Sudan because of politically triggered violence. The refugees are registered in a reception center, allocated plots of land in a refugee settlement and supported to build homes, farm and establish income generating businesses. This effort is in line with Uganda's transformational approach of making refugees in Uganda self-reliant and locally integrated with the host communities thus alleviating their restriction, lack and uncertainty. Since conflict in South Sudan flared in June 2016, there has been a sharp increase in the number of people fleeing to the West Nile and Acholi regions of Northern Uganda and leading it to face one of the World's largest and fastest-growing refugee crises. This unprecedented mass influx is placing enormous strain on Uganda's public services, local infrastructure and the already shrinking resources including land, firewood and water. With more than one million refugees, Uganda has now become the top-ranking refugee-hosting country in Africa, topping Kenya and Ethiopia. To date Lamwo district has received a total of 33,000 refugees. Many of these are resettled in Palabek Refugee Settlement. Because of this influx, there is growing need for emergency response capacity; food, water, sanitation, and hygiene; shelter; health, and protection.

4.3.2 Findings from the micro-resilience assessment in the Acholi region

Governance and leadership: This analysis showed that there might be tensions between the refugee host communities and the refugees. These tensions range from cultural unease, to land, perceived privileges and unmet expectations regarding compensation – most of these seem to be coming from the host communities. For example, host communities demanded for by-laws to guide how refugees should live in social cultural harmony with the host communities. They specify that the laws ought to consider community acceptable norms with clear involvement of host communities so as to gain their buy-in on the proposed norms. Examples of the suggested issues include Christianity and religious related norms, culturally acceptable dress codes, norms on intermarriages, as well as addressing community perceptions that the refugees have hostile and violent behaviors and that the refugees possess guns. These perceptions about non-compliance to host-community norms were increasingly causing stress among the host communities. The underlying driver of the need for a refugee population to let go of some of its norms was not clear but pointed to possible cultural stigma. Refugees on the other hand held no grudges with the host communities.

“When you look at the way they are mixing up, some of these refugees especially this tribe called the Dinkas and Lutugu do not want their tribes to get married to other tribes and it is bringing tensions in the community. They also tend to use a violent approach to resolving issues. They will not listen. We think some of them are in possession of guns”. **KII, Lamwo**

In further manifestation of the animosity from the host population, there were also reported concerns about the services given to refugees which communities feel are far better than what the host communities receive. Host communities feel that refugees are given priority in service delivery than the local people especially regarding relief aid in the event of shocks, land distribution, health services access to water, and household utensils like blankets among other services. Host communities feel entitled to receive similar support when they face household shocks, even when they are not refugees. The mentality of entitlement to items distributed to refugee has exacerbated the tension among the host communities.

“I see a refugee is benefitting a lot in my country; it gives me shock and stress. When I talk of these benefits, there is a lot of it including land that they are being offered. They’re given nice things, if you look at the cooking sets, blankets of high quality are given to refugees and they all driven through my land. I am not happy, and according to UN, we cannot prioritize local people first, but we prioritize the refugees” **KII, Lamwo**

There was concern regarding transparency in acquisition of land for hosting refugees. It was clear from the discussants that the host community was not adequately consulted during planning for the settlement and as such, an opportunity was lost to manage expectations. Host communities demanded that their involvement should be beyond just the local council leaders and cultural leaders but should be expanded to represent the average community voices especially those that are offering land since to some people, the land taken is their only source of livelihood. Communities expect compensation when their land is given out to the settlement areas. They say that government promised to compensate them for their land that is hosting resettlement camps, but this was not fulfilled. There is also fear that once the land is given out to refugees, it will never be returned to the original owners hence creating some hesitation among host

community members in offering land to host refugees and tension among those who already offered their land.

“It is because of them (the refugees) because this was not happening before they came. Our land has also been taken, how are we going to feed the children now? You have to buy things from the market; you have to buy drugs; you have to pay school fees. That was land my husband had given to me to meet all these demands which is taken away by government and they have not paid me back”. **IDI Female**

“Camp land is camp land forever; look at Bweyale: every time there is a war they put the displaced people in the camps. That land will always be camp land. So, I advise those who had not given out their land to not give it out. They will waste no time drilling water and building schools. They are even building permanent structures nowadays. So, in case there is war in any place, it becomes the fallback camp”. **FGD with Men**

“No but when they were asking us for the land, they kept on convincing us that they are going to register us in order for us to be receiving food items. The people of UN then turned around and refused afterwards, saying that they are not going to give us any food or anything”. **IDI Female**

The rapid influx of refugees has put a strain on service delivery in a district that has not traditionally hosted large numbers of refugees. The current refugee population in Lamwo district is estimated at 34,000 people.

“We receive 500 to 1000 refugees daily and on a low scale, we receive 200-300 people. In a week, we are receiving between 2500 and 4000 and currently the general population of the settlement is standing at 34,000.” **KII, Lamwo**

Security was reported to be an issue of concern to the local population. Local communities said that while they were all required to have a national identity card, entry and exit of refugees into and out of the country is not regulated, with refugees freely entering and leaving the country at many unofficial border points. This, the local communities say, is causing security threats as some of the refugees may exert terror on the local population. Only refugees using the official boarder points are regulated while others are received within settlement camps without prior registration. However, community members did not cite any evidence to indicate that the refugees were a source of conflict. There are reports that some refugees exit the camp to return to their countries without officially informing the authorities. Others are reportedly moving to the host communities, buying pieces of land and settling there without being documented. This situation has caused stress among the host community members.

“Another challenge we have is that, there are these people called recyclers and they stay like for two days and go back to the border again when they war escalates, you see them coming back here. The freedom of movement can lead to insecurity”. **KII, Lamwo**

There were reports of corruption among the local leaders who communities accuse of serving their local interests instead of improvement of service delivery and infrastructure. Related to this, the local communities consider themselves incapable of addressing most of these issues, yet they view their leaders as not bothered. In general, there appears to be a mismatch in expectations between the host communities, their leaders and refugee management. There does not seem to be adequate dialogue and mechanisms to manage expectations. Some community members even

think that their local leaders received compensation for their land on their behalf but did not share with them. However, the local leaders vehemently deny this.

“Another thing is that the kind of leadership we have here is not good at all, the leaders only work on increasing the size of their stomachs, yet the people are not benefitting and it is very hard for the community members to benefit from such corrupt leaders”. **IDI, Female**

Agriculture, food security and markets: The majority of community members say they depend on agriculture for both livelihoods and household food consumption. Their main source of income is the sale of food items that they produce through subsistence methods. They cite ‘raising school fees for children’ and ‘expenses on treatment of household members’ as the main needs for which they spend the income they get from agriculture and other sources. However, agriculture is faced with several challenges including lack of access to climate-related early warning information to optimize planting, inaccessibility to seed distribution programs, inaccessible extension services to facilitate consultation by farmers, and poor-quality seeds distributed by government. Additionally, land in the region is communally owned which limits the level of investment one can have on the land. Commercial farming is constrained because of the system for land tenure. The inability to produce in larger quantities than their usual subsistence holdings makes communities vulnerable to food insecurity as well as financial insecurity as they do not earn sufficiently from the sale of their produce. To increase agricultural productivity, communities demand support from government to mechanize their agriculture as well as increased access to ox-ploughs and other available technologies.

“We lack sensitization, we need people to come and teach us about farming, government brings us orange seedlings late like in September when the rains are about to end that is yet they say that they are getting us out of poverty. Right now, they are giving us maize but who will it help? In this month they are giving out the maize but how are we going to benefit? This distribution should have happened two months ago”. **FGD with Men Lamwo**

“We have rigid land tenure system. So, people are not even allowed to own land because it is communally owned, and you are restricted and not allowed to carry out commercial farming on the community land. So, you cannot do much when you are restricted”. **KII, Lamwo**

Food insecurity resulting from unpredictable climatic conditions that lead to prolonged dry spells was mentioned as a major stress affecting the district. As a result of dry spell, all food crops including maize, sorghum and beans were lost causing substantial food shortages. The food shortages are reported to have led to loss of life. The dry spell attracted some response from the in form of food aid to the worst hit households. Communities said that local leaders were involved in mobilizing this assistance, which means that the community is conscious about connectedness within crisis.

Apart from food shortages as a result of the dry spell, community members say they gave land for refugee settlement with the understanding that they would receive compensation in form of food in the same way that refugees receive food aid. This insufficiently managed expectation has made them vulnerable to food insecurity as some of them no longer have enough land to cultivate yet the government does not have the resources to provide free food to non-crisis communities. Some communities said that while they gave away free land to resettle refugees, they are now renting land to cultivate their crops. They say the land they have rented is not as fertile as the

land they gave away. This is exacerbating the already heated up land wrangles that have been rampant in greater Northern Uganda. The camp management also reported land related issues and negotiations are the major challenge currently as most landlords are no longer willing to offer free land to resettle refugees.

*“Things concerning food are all related to low rainfall; there was no rainfall and the sun shined too much so the food crops dried out and this affected the price of food even sorghum is rear. And people don’t say somebody died of famine, they always make up some disease that suits them but recently I was mobilizing people and some little six year old girl died of hunger and that was the first time people accepted that people die of hunger but they refused that I should not write the cause of death as hunger”. **IDI Male***

*“I am not happy about my land that was taken; 30 acres to be exact; because the hunger I am now facing makes me annoyed; if only I had where to cultivate the food. It is now impossible to even talk about it now; also my children should be employed in the camp but right now as I am talking none of them has been employed yet they have taken my land and now I cannot get money to look after the children”. **IDI Female***

Access to markets was identified as one of the major stresses in the region. Host communities cite the domination of middlemen in the market who offer low prices as well as counterfeit money to farmers. On a positive note however, the communities said that the resettlement of refugees in this region as also created some opportunities. They said that small scale markets for cereals like simsim and millet and pulses like beans have sprung up as the refugees are currently buying these items from the locals. Moreover, refugees are buying the food crops at slightly higher prices than what the middlemen usually offer.

Host communities’ failure to raise sufficient income to meet livelihood essentials and to pay school fees is partly attributed to the lack of access to markets as well as inability to get fair value for their produce. They say that this is demotivating young people from engaging in agriculture. This is in addition to lack of information on climate forecasts and outlooks affects their productivity. Regarding traditional cash crops, communities are hesitant to engage in the cultivation of cash crops due to lack of access to market information on the cash crops. Communities suggested that if organized in cooperatives and groups, they would pool the agricultural produce together which in turn would increase their bargaining power in the market hence minimizing exploitation by middlemen

*“It’s about farming, the only thing we depend on....The middlemen who buy our produce cheat us. Instead of buying at one hundred thousand (Uganda shillings) they buy at thirty thousand; this makes our lives so hard” **FGD with Men***

*“If we don’t have a market we will not be able to afford school fees for our children as well as health services and without a health facility we are in trouble”. **FGD with Men***

“When you look at my age I have only two years before I hit sixty, meaning that I have seen a lot. There is no market, when time for farming comes, the leaders we chose and I am among them come and tell you that companies are coming to buy your produce, they talk about big names like companies from china and other places. So at this time like now (evening), you are still in the garden because you want to get something out of it. When harvest time comes, they

send someone who just comes to decide on the price of your own produce which is usually low off course. So you have to sell your produce at a bad rate, we have no market because in the dry season when we harvest we sell our things just like we have always done. Let me tell you that we get money once a year after sale of farm produce” **FGD with Men**

“The prices of produce are very low like if you have 10 bags of simsim it cannot bring for you anything and it demotivate the farmers”. **FGD with Men**

On the other hand, communities said that refugees are also selling the relief food aid and other livelihood assets to the host communities at cheaper prices than their market value so as to raise money to buy commodities that are not provided to them through the aid they receive. Communities also report that refugees are providing labour especially for land cultivation. However, they say refugee labour is at a slightly higher cost than the existing casual laborers in the by communities

“The coming of the refugees has helped us with market for food stuff because last year we had famine but now the influx of refugees has improved on supply of relief like they sell posho, tents, solar lights, saucepan and soap. These items are cheaper in the market”. **FGD with youth**

There are limitations in the capacity of farmers to add value to their produce before selling it. This affects post-harvest handling, storage, drying and sorting of produce to ensure that it is of higher quality before it is sold.

Livelihoods: There is dependency on perennial crops for both consumption and sale with predominant crops identified as simsim, beans, cassava, maize, millet and sorghum. Communities entirely depend on these crops as their source of livelihoods. Communities also reported that the benefit from government support in form of seeds and seedlings. However, they were concerned that the seedlings are supplied in seasons that are not consistent with the planting seasons which has made the planting more vulnerable to climate variability. Due to low market leverage and small holdings, they said that their earnings from these perennial crops are too low to meet daily demands given the large family sizes.

Alcohol brewing is one of the alternative sources of livelihoods in the region. This economic activity has however resulted into many livelihoods challenges at the household level especially the high rates of alcoholism among the men in the region. This region registers some of the highest alcohol consumption levels in Uganda. Consumption of alcohol among men seemed to have risen sharply during the civil war. There are some gender connotations from the alcohol situation in this region: While most consumers are men, the proprietors of most of the small bars that sell the alcohol are women. The business is attractive because it generates quick money, from a target group that controls household resources. However, while attractive to those who brew and sell it, it has led to negative adaptation in the region as it hinders men and young people from engaging in productive work. Not only has it reduced male participation in household productivity but it has increases gender-based violence. Additionally, the use of food items to brew alcohol contributes to food insecurity.

While there have been a number of livelihoods support initiatives targeting the region, communities feel that the best way to roll out such programs is for government and civil society

organizations to involve them at all stages from conceptualization, prioritization, and design so that these programs may result in sustainable impact. They describe current approaches as ‘dumping products and plans on selected community members’ without consulting the beneficiaries.

“Here in the village, you find that there are so many children in the family and the little that is earned from agriculture may not be able to support these children at the end of the season to attend school. The parents merely depend on agriculture without any other alternative source of income”. **FGD with youth**

“So the government just brings things like operation wealth creation, they don’t involve the recipients. They should be involved in the planning, what kind of seeds do they need? Like sometimes like this time they are still bringing the seedlings, do you think they will mature? Wrong season”. **KII, Lamwo**

Although communities express interest in accessing financial services through village SACCOs, they report frequent failure to pay back their loans. Failure to pay back loans is attributed to inadequate knowledge about business ventures that generate good profit margins. They report that often times they invest in ventures that eventually bring very little returns. Other community members noted that the funds borrowed are often times used to settle pressing family issues like the payment of school fees. This has led to sale of household assets like livestock so as to recover money to pay back the loans and their interest. Community members complain that the interest rates on the small loans from SACCOs are very high. The youth also reported lack of adequate information on how to access microloans, how to manage businesses and in which businesses to invest. Many youth said they end up investing their loans in non-viable ventures. Others squander the money on amenities, alcohol and high risk sex.

Despite these challenges, some NGOs like Mercy Corps are reported to be supporting the communities to start up small business ventures to promote alternative livelihoods. Some women and youth report success in improving their incomes as a result of these initiatives.

“Some issues might arise in the family and I can get some loan but after failing to pay, then the cows which we have bought will be sold to recover the loan so some loans have become a hindrance to development in the community”. **FGD with youth**

“These organizations are acting as meeting points for us to learn about business. Like Mercy Corps. They have helped some people in the community to start up small businesses like selling mukene (silver fish) and baking bread and pastries. This has increased the income for those who benefitted; they have some money on them at all times”. **FGD with youth**

Communities said that some refugees who used to operate retail business in their home countries have pursued the same businesses in their current settlements. This has caused some tension among the host community’s business class due to fear of competition. Additionally, livelihood sources and household productivity are affected by frequent alcohol abuse. This is reported by youth, women and men as one of the post conflict challenge that has eroded people in the district. The problem of alcohol is more frequently reported among the youth and men and has greatly contributed to domestic violence. Communities attribute alcohol consumption to frustrations by the youth who resort to drinking after dropping out of school. Alcohol consumption was

reported as one of the main factors affecting household productivity as the men and youth spend entire days in the bars. Alcohol consumption increases after the harvest and sale of produce as men squander their households' incomes. Alcohol abuse is also reported to contribute to high risk sexual behaviours that could contribute to the spread of HIV which is a major health challenge in the district. Some women discussants feel trapped and helpless on how to tackle the alcohol problem among men.

“High consumption of alcohol started long time ago and it has been mainly been as a result of frustration after the youth dropped out of school because of lack of fees from their parents. Many of them are redundant. What I see in Ogili is the high level of domestic violence which in most cases according to me starts with heavy drinking. Many youth are also vulnerable to HIV and other STDs because of alcohol. We do not know how to get rid of this vice especially among our men”. **FGD with Women**

Environment: Most of reported issues related to the environment were as a result of refugee influx. Host communities reported high levels of environmental degradation due to high population which resulted in massive cutting of trees so as to raise firewood for use in the settlement camps as well as stone quarrying as an alternative source of livelihood for refugees. This has created fear that the effects of this degradation is already affecting land for agriculture hence making the community vulnerable to the effects of food insecurity as land will no longer be productive to feed the community. However, even before the refugee situation, there was a lot of wood cutting to make charcoal. This charcoal was bought by middlemen and sold to meet demand in Gulu, Hoima and even Kampala. Communities called on government and development partners to provide alternative sources of energy if this degradation is to be averted. Additionally, the communities are blaming environmental degradation on poor leadership. They said that their leaders simply watch over degradation activities yet they have the power to take action.

“We as a community should send out our cries to the people at the top because by the time these refugees leave this place, they shall have totally destroyed it. The trees will be gone and the land exhausted”. **FGD with Men**

“I see that the problem is the leaders we vote for, they do things without informing us; in the future we are not going to have rain because the trees are being cut down here and there. They do it and keep quiet; when you try to stop the tree cutting there is nothing you can do about it since people cutting these trees have support from leaders”. **FGD with Men**

Education services: Despite the high value attributed to quality education services in changing lives and opening opportunities for employment, communities reported limited education services especially availability of secondary schools to serve both the host communities and the refugees. This lack of secondary schools and poor quality education services is attributed to poor leadership with many leaders described as ‘not minding about the quality of education services but instead engaging in corrupt tendencies and not listening to community voices’. This is in addition to school drop outs reported mostly in secondary schools. The limited number of secondary schools located at long distances is reported to contribute to the high cost of secondary education. One of the local strategies to adapt to the high costs of education services was the practice of mobilizing relatives and friends to contribute towards raising school fees for the secondary school going children. Other reported issues affecting the quality of education services include the lack of scholastic materials (e.g. books, pens, uniforms and text books), high

enrollments per school that do not match the service capability and teacher availability, and lack of sanitary services like pads and latrine stances which have contributed to school drop outs especially among young girls. However, the region has had some interventions to try and improve education infrastructure and services, including from agencies like AVSI, UNHCR and government programs like NUSAF. The shortfall in such programs is the level of need which is higher than the supply.

“I should say that it is the low levels of education, the leaders are the ones making us vulnerable. They cannot voice out our views and sometimes things come from up and they don’t want us to know they are greedy and want to be satisfied alone”. FGD with Men
*Students in schools are not getting good education and in most cases children leave school after secondary school, very few go beyond secondary. **IDI, Female***

*“I feel that the most pressing problem is the lack of school, I study from Palabek Gem and I have to rent a house when I am studying. I have to go to school and study while also thinking about what I have left behind in my rented house. If there were many schools, there would have been cheaper but now they know it is the only school so they hike the school fees. You either pay or go to Kitgum”. **IDI, 14 Year Old Girl***

Health and WASH: Most of the Health issues reported by communities were related to WASH and lack of medicines in the health facilities. There were reports that the influx of refugees worsened the sanitation issues with a lot of contamination of water bodies which are serving communities. There were reports of lack of clean water with majority of people sharing water wells with animals hence causing fears related to water borne diseases. Communities also reported improper disposal of human waste with fear of cholera outbreak and poor latrine coverage. The host communities also complained about the low levels of sanitation and hygiene among the refugees which could lead to disease outbreaks.

*“Our biggest stress is the problem of water in this area where you find that in the rainy season like this we are drinking dirty water. We are drinking from shallow unprotected wells and sharing the water with the animals. You find many people here complaining of a stomach ache all the time”. **FGD with Men APYETA-Parish***

*“Well I forgot to mention a certain problem earlier on; these refugees do not know how to use pit latrines. They just defecate anywhere and this is very bad because little children can end up playing with their feaces thus causing diseases. They should start using pit latrines to avoid causing disease outbreaks”. **FGD with Women APYETA***

Apart from WASH, a range of other issues were raised regarding the health status of households and communities and the high burden of disease as well as the quality of health services. Communities cited a high burden of preventable diseases like Malaria, HIV/AIDS, respiratory infections, Hepatitis B, diarrhoeal diseases, and intestinal worms. The high burden of disease is reported to be one of the main stressors affecting household income. Regarding Malaria, communities note however that programs targeting malaria reduction e.g. mass distribution of bed nets have resulted into a visible reduction in the frequency of malaria in their community. They however request that the coverage of such programs is scaled to cover all households.

HIV was noted to be a key health related stressor in the region. However, communities expressed optimism because all those that are found to have the infection are initiated immediately on treatment and the drugs are accessible for free. People living with HIV that we talked to said that it was easy for them to access treatments. However, they expressed frustration from occasional stockouts of HIV drugs. On probing this issue further, Key Informants said that stockouts for first-line commodities were not common – the main problem was with the second-line commodities. This often happened due to delays in procurement but was also exacerbated by country level changes in the regimen, which mainly affected the second line drugs. HIV affected households also incurred an additional expenditure burden from indirect costs of health care, especially transport to health facilities.

Communities reported the widespread problem of individuals fearing to know their HIV status through routine screening. Uptake of VCT was low. This was mainly attributed to self-stigma since, according to them, stigma from other community members has reduced. They said that even those that are screened and found to be positive do not want to initiate ARVs despite the current policy that all people found to have HIV are initiated on treatment from the outset. This has led to people shunning away from visiting public health facilities for treatment instead going to private facilities since public facilities often ask about the client’s HIV status. Going to private health facilities results in increased health expenditures. Some of the drivers of HIV spread include alcoholism which has led the youth to engage in unprotected sex, rampant extramarital affairs and poverty which drives some women and youth engage in sex to get money for school fees. The youth engage in night clubs where they report meeting ‘sugar mummies’. Young people fear to test for HIV because they fear losing relationships with their partners. However, many youth respondents said that they were well informed on what to do should they find out that they are infected with HIV. Such messages were mainly received from radio campaigns.

“Whereas young girls are engaging in sexual relationships in exchange for materials even without minding about the HIV status of the sexual partners, young boys are engaged in alcohol drinking to gain courage to approach the old ladies whom they engage to acquire money.” **FGD Youth Apyeta**

Communities note that the HIV has led to an increase in the number of orphans, reduced productivity due to weakening of the body by HIV yet people living with HIV/AIDS need proper nutrition. Communities also mentioned some of the preventive ways to reduce HIV spread including encouraging males to go for circumcision. The community is also positive about people living with HIV/AIDS taking their medications.

“On the issue of infections and diseases, if we are in a home and later find out that we are infected, we need to have courage and go to the health center to get medication as this disease cannot kill you rapidly so even though you have a child who is still in PI, you can pay them in school until they go to secondary school if you get and follow the right advice given to you by health workers from the health center; hence by taking all your medications as instructed by the physician you can stay longer.” **FGD Women Apyeta**

The quality of health services provided in many communities was described as poor with several participants citing frequent stock-outs of drugs in the public health facilities, few health workers in the health facilities who are frequently absent, dual practice in which the same health workers

in the public health facilities run local private clinics to make ends meet, and inadequate access to health information including family planning information.

“They start at eleven am, you find that they have their private clinics and they do not attend to you well. It happened recently in the settlement, a patient was brought but there was no one to attend to him, so he died and was buried in the cemetery. Supervision starts from the district and then comes down here to the management. You find that management of all these facilities is poor. He said that the medicine disappears, how does it disappear yet it was brought like today? It was counted and you know the number of patients. The health worker comes late and works for a small period of time and then gone back to work in his or her clinic. This has always been the case and I don’t know how it is going to be corrected.” **FGD Male, Apyeta parish**

The communities also cited rudeness among health workers and pilferage of drugs as key challenges. Communities were also concerned about the poor living conditions of their health workers as well as poorly funded health facilities, some with run-down buildings. Communities are also concerned about escalation of medical costs due to high frequency of drug stock-outs. Drug stockouts and attitude of health workers were cited as the most important factors affecting health care seeking in public health facilities. Some part of the district face low physical access to some health facilities due to long distances or poor roads. Sometimes the patients are referred to seek care from distant facilities yet there are no means of transport and where these are available (such as boda-boda), it is costly to transport the patients.

4.3.3 Discussion of findings from the Northern Uganda region

Relations between refugees and host communities: There were reported tensions and animosity between the host communities some of which caused by cultural differences between refugee and host populations. This is contrary to the reports that have indicated progressive developments in hosting refugees in Uganda. Policy analysis by world Bank revealed that the Uganda Refugee Policy, embodied in the 2006 Refugees Act and 2010 Refugees Regulations, has many progressive aspects including: (1) opening Uganda’s door to all asylum seekers irrespective of their nationality or ethnic affiliation, (2) granting refugees relative freedom of movement and the right to seek employment, (3) providing prima facie asylum for refugees of certain nationalities, and (4) giving a piece of land to each refugee family for their own exclusive (agricultural) use (World Bank Group, 2016). However, the underlying poverty and vulnerabilities exacerbated by already weak basic social services delivery, poor infrastructure, and limited market opportunities in the refugee hosting settlement areas that impacts refugees and host communities alike and is a likely source of animosity. There are also some reported economic opportunities despite the animosity. An assessment of economic opportunities by the World Bank indicated that more than 78% of refugees in rural settlements in Uganda are engaged in agricultural activities and it was reported that crop surpluses attract Ugandan traders to the refugee settlements, operating as a direct supply chain. The refugee labor force participation rate (LFPR) is an average of 38% compared with Uganda’s 74% general rate.

A variety of non-farm activities supplement agriculture, including trade, which is facilitated by the freedom of movement and right to work per the Ugandan Refugees Act. Some Business enterprises such as bars, hair dressing, milling, transportation, money transfers, and retail are run by refugees. In terms of employability and economic integration of refugees, almost 43 percent

are actively engaged in the labor market of their host communities: 12 percent in the formal sector and 31 percent self-employed (World Bank Group, 2016).

In Lamwo, it is apparent from the animosity that host populations are showing that the communities were not adequately engaged before the refugees were settled in their area. Communities need sensitization on humanitarian law and the implications for populations who have lost everything. There is need for dialogue with communities to allay their anxieties and expectations and this should be tackled from a human-rights perspective regarding how refugees should be treated. Authorities may also organize meetings between community leaders in the camps and host community leaders to foster such dialogues. The animosity arising from refugees walking in and out of the camps and across borders needs to be investigated and addressed through improved refugee identification.

Access to social services: Host populations reported that refugee services are not accessible to them and refugee services are viewed as of better quality than host population services. It was reported that host populations are restricted from using refugee services. However to the contrary, the resettlement authorities indicated that services related education, Health and water are accessible to both host communities and refugees. They said that host communities are not entitled to relief services like food and nonfood items (e.g. source pans, blankets, jerrycans and cups) as these are restricted to refugees as per the policy. Additionally, Uganda adopted an integrated refugee management model for providing asylum. Under this model, refugees are provided with humanitarian relief as well as support to become self-reliant. Uganda's second National Development Plan covers refugee protection and support and the current laws in the country allow for refugees to have access to health, education, skills training and access to land as a way to promote self-reliance. Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA) clearly speculates that Refugees should enjoy security as well as legal, physical and social protection. They should utilize natural resources such as water and firewood, and share available social services such as health and universal primary and lower secondary education as well as economic opportunities without discrimination.

The Uganda's 2006 Refugee Act also allows refugees to work, travel and access public services including education. According to an assessment by UNDP (UNDP, 2016), Uganda through office of the prime minister and UN agencies have taken several interventions to achieve self-reliance including Governance and rule of law to ensure that settlements are governed in an environment that respects rights and promotes rule of law among refugees and host communities; Peaceful coexistence with the creation of an enabling environment for safety, harmony and dignity among refugees and host communities as well environmental protection and conservation of the natural environment in and around refugee settlement. However, the implementation of these pronouncements by the government is still a challenge given that there are a lot of issues around community engagement in implementing these pronouncements and both the refugees and host communities are not well sensitized on peaceful coexistence given the current laws and provisions. This is what has caused some tensions within the community.

Despite the complaints on the humanitarian assistance to refugees and host communities, the findings indicate that both refugees and host communities receive various supports. However, the support received cannot assist them to live independently. For example the farming support

in biased towards tools leaving out important components like quality seeds, agricultural advisory services as well as capacity building services. To allay these anxieties, it is important to sensitize communities about refugee entitlements and humanitarian law, since this is the first time for this community to host refugees. This will help to manage the host communities' expectations. More importantly, there is need to improve service delivery within the host communities, so that the quality of their services matches that of refugee populations, especially regarding health, education, infrastructure and support to agricultural production. There is also need to investigate and where they exist remove all barriers to local communities accessing refugee health services.

Land rights: There were negative reports regarding transparency in acquisition of land for hosting communities as well as involving host communities in managing the expectations. Communities complained that they were not compensated for their land which was given to refugees for the settlements. Customary land tenure is the most prevalent in the Lamwo district. Uganda National Panel Survey 2012 indicated that over 90% of land in Northern Uganda is customary owned which means that the rights over large tracts of land, including transfers of user rights, are vested in the community, under the guidance of the elders and clan leaders hence leading a phenomenon called "tragedy of commons". Most of the land is unregistered, with huge chunks of households having no documents to prove their user rights to the land. This predilection for this land system in Northern Uganda is an indicated of low confidence in other forms of land tenure by the community due to increasing reports on land grabbing across the country. The mistrust has been much exhibited during the current consultations on the land amendments to allow government acquire land for development projects and settle cases in court when government is already using the land. The land dispute resolution mechanism is also weak and not trusted hence exacerbating the current situation

Land conflicts are pervasive in Uganda, and usually disproportionately affect marginalized groups, including women, widows and orphans (Deininger and Castagnini, 2006). Therefore, given the two-decade conflict that ravaged the region, these emerging conflicts especially related to Land need to be urgently addressed to allow the local communities concentrate on livelihood strengthening options. Since the region is largely sparsely populated, commercialized agriculture with deeper community engagement for buy in could enhance productivity in the region and make the region food basket for the country. It is already reported that some investors like Mukwano Industries and Madhvani Group of Companies have already acquired land for commercial agriculture and communities.

However, the community engagement in the process is still questioned by host communities. It appears that despite the land in the region being owned communally, some communities perceive that they were not adequately consulted. This should be resolved through the dialogues and expectations management cited earlier.

Agricultural services: Poor agricultural practices drive low productivity coupled with low access to agricultural extension services and limited access to mechanization, yet the region is suited to mechanized farming due to its relatively flat plains, dual rains and fertile soils. Agricultural extension system in Uganda has remained relatively static over the years. A significant number of smallholder farmers and other vulnerable groups remain unreached by the various public extension systems, while the private sector plays only a limited role. According to Barungi and

colleagues (Barungi et al., 2016) organizational performance issues and changing institutional mandates (e.g. the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS)) have hindered the effectiveness and efficiency of the public extension system as such agencies are faced with inadequate extension staff, corruption, inadequate funding from the central government, a very small number of private-public partnerships, and a continued top-down linear focus on extension. Uganda has a National Agricultural Extension Strategy 2016 (MAAIF, 2016) to guide, harmonize and implement agricultural extension services to farmers, farmers' groups, and other actors in agriculture value chains throughout the country. However, implementation of the strategy has been limited by poor integration into the current government programs like NAADS, OWC and other village level support services.

Mechanization of Agriculture in Uganda is still very low ranging from 88.6% hand hoe to 10.2% and 1.2% for animal traction and tractor respectively. Agricultural mechanization is hindered by challenges at institutional, farmer, and equipment manufacturers' levels (Alphonse et al., 2011). At institutional level there is weak extension support with respect to soil fertility management to address the fall out effects of mechanized production, low level of back-up and support services for machinery, as well as mechanization focusing on production (land opening) without addressing the complete value chain to markets. At farmer level, limited access to efficient and economically viable machinery and equipment, in-adequate knowledge base of farmers in mechanized farming, and limited access to financial services for farmers are key factors.

Despite these challenges, Acholi region provides many opportunities for transition of the farmers from subsistence farming to mechanized farming due to its relatively flat plains, highly arable land and low population density. However, the potential impediment from the communal type of land ownership can be addressed by pushing for farmers to work together in small cooperatives for families that share land. It is also necessary to improve extension services, flow of improved seeds to the region, and availability of small-scale water catchment and irrigation technologies to facilitate off-season sustainability of crops during prolonged dry spells.

Agricultural markets and value addition: Communities complained of poor earnings from produce due to low leverage in the produce markets, markets being controlled by middlemen and inadequate capacity for value addition to improve the quality of produce. Current agricultural markets in Uganda are characterized by asymmetries in information and market access. These create a distortion of supply and demand in which the rural farmers are substantially less informed about market dynamics and have no direct access to buyers. High level regional or international markets are largely inaccessible to rural farmers because they do not understand how they operate and where the definitive buyers are located. Market interfaces are often controlled by exploitative middlemen who reap massive profits at the expense of farmers and out-growers (Atingi-Ego et al., 2006). There is need to disrupt the current structure and state of agriculture/livestock markets to substantially shift the level of market access and market interaction in favor of the rural farmer by obliterating current market access asymmetries and increasing direct interface between rural farmers and definitive buyers. Relatedly, because of reliance on small holdings and non-bulk sales, rural farmers have little leverage on the price of their produce. Most importantly, rural farmers have low appreciation and capacity to brand their produce in a way that positions their produce's competitiveness in the market. This creates a

situation in which the rural farmer is substantially weaker than the buyer, and also limits the markets that local produce attracts.

Rural communities face major challenges with post-harvest handling of produce. This includes both rapidly perishable produce (e.g. vegetables and fruits) and less rapidly perishable produce (e.g. grain and legume seeds). A substantial part of their produce is wasted in post-harvest-losses. Communities also have limited access to affordable technologies for produce processing to improve its quality before sale (lack of value addition to raw produce). These two factors interplay to drastically reduce the price of their produce. On the other hand, produce distributors who are able to sort, refine and add value to produce often get much higher profits than the farmers. These communities are also affected by climate variability related shocks and stresses since they lack off-season livelihood options. This lack of livelihoods diversification is driven by a lack of options for viable business in their contexts, a lack of skills to try extra-agricultural businesses, a pervasive fear of risk taking due to lack of entrepreneurial skills, or inaccess to credit. The result of this is that individuals can be trapped in low income trades. Educated and uneducated youth are increasingly unemployed because not only do they lack access to land for production but also lack the expertise needed to venture into viable businesses. Women, who are the primary producers of wealth in many households, are also excluded from more profitable businesses due to a combination of lack of skills and gender power imbalances in decision making in households.

Youth participation in agriculture: There is a lack of both interest and skills among youth who dropped out of school to engage in agriculture, leading to their inability to engage in productive life. Many of them view agriculture as a lowly undertaking, yet they lack the skills and financial capital to undertake enterprise outside of agriculture. Despite this, data from the Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) indicate that youth are more at a disadvantage in securing gainful employment today compared to six years ago (Ahaibwe et al., 2013). While many people still view employment in the formal wage sector as the solution to youth unemployment, prospects of finding this kind of employment is limited as the number of people entering the labour force far outweighs the number of jobs available in the formal wage sector. Brooks and Kararachi (Brooks et al., 2012) (Kararachi et al., 2011) reveal that creation of non-agricultural jobs may not happen in the short run as agriculture is likely to continue being a source of employment and livelihood in the medium to long term especially for countries that heavily depend on agriculture. In Uganda, the five-year National Development Plan (NDP) 2010-2015 identifies agriculture as one of the core growth sectors. However, despite the recognition of employment creation within the sector, youth participation in agriculture especially as farmers is declining not only in Uganda but in other African countries alike (Leavy and Smith, 2010). Apparently, the agriculture sector is not looked at as a viable sector of employment and remains highly unattractive to the youth due to the risks, intensive nature of labour and low profitability (Raney et al., 2009)

Additionally, the education system is structured around formal instruction which brings out graduates who are more inclined to formal employment. As a result, the youth view jobs in the formal wage sector as the more secure and the best alternative. While increasingly specific training focused on agriculture and entrepreneurship is being offered at secondary school level, teaching tends to be highly theoretical and barely takes into account the realities and challenges of small-scale farming in rural Uganda. The resulting turn away from agriculture due to lack of the

necessary attitudes and skills or the idea of 'higher aspirations' is also supported by general societal expectations that education presents a tool to enable one's movement away from agricultural pursuits into the more highly regarded formal wage employment (Young Leaders Think Tank, 2015). This in turn results in the predominance of a highly unskilled labour force in agriculture that works ineffectively. This is a serious impediment to Uganda's agriculture as even at a regional comparison, the value added per worker in Uganda is far below that in other EAC member states.

Alcohol consumption: There are very high rates of alcohol consumption in the region, especially among the men who drain household resources. The high rates of alcohol consumption have led to high rates of sexual and gender based violence. Alcohol use in Uganda is a widely accepted social activity, embedded in the local culture and traditions of most communities. It is an integral part of the whole culture and a catalyst in social interactions. Cultural functions such as weddings, births, deaths and funeral rites, and circumcision ceremonies cannot be complete without alcohol. Uganda is abundantly supplied with alcoholic beverages from imported beer, wine and liquor to cheap locally manufactured local beer produced in factories in the country and to informally manufactured local brew and distilled liquor in local makeshift bars and homes. The capacity to manufacture local brew is widely distributed in almost all communities in Uganda. In addition, between 11-13 million crates of beer are produced in factories in Uganda each year, contributing to about 10% of the state revenue. Consumption of factory beer is largely urban and the price of manufactured beer ranges from about a half a dollar and upwards for a large bottle (Tumwesigye and Kasirye, 2005).

Uganda, as in many other countries, produces many traditional, locally produced and home-brewed beer and distilled alcohol beverages. It is difficult to accurately measure how much of these informally produced alcoholic beverages are produced as they are unrecorded. Many households in the country are involved in informal alcohol production at home, from which they get substantial cash income. The amount of cash income generated from locally produced alcohol is unknown but many households cite that they are able to pay for school fees, medical treatments and other day-to-day home expenses from monies generated producing and selling alcohol from the home. Producers of home-brewed alcohol tend to be predominantly women. They go into alcohol production, many times, due to poverty and lack of alternative income-generating choices (Tumwesigye and Kasirye, 2005). The majority of the population consumes informally produced local alcoholic beverages. Informally produced alcohol make up about 80% of alcohol drunk in Uganda today. Traditional, locally produced alcohol are inexpensive to manufacture, their production is labor intensive, and techniques are passed down from older to younger generations of the family

Apparently, there are few programs currently available in Uganda that promote responsible drinking behavior. Alcohol prevention messages may be embedded in other health prevention /promotion programs such as HIV prevention messages as alcohol consumption has been shown to increase risky behavior that could lead to HIV infection. But, specific programs that focus on alcohol abuse prevention and education are very few and mainly in urban areas such as Kampala. The alcohol industry has attempted some self-regulation by putting small messages on their labels and advertisements (e.g. 'you must be 18 years of age to purchase and consume alcohol'). These messages are clearly overshadowed by the number of other messages and advertisements that

the alcohol industry puts out to promote their alcoholic beverages that reach all minors and adults alike, as advertisements are currently not regulated. Currently, Uganda lacks a strong policy to regulate alcohol consumption. The draft alcohol policy that was developed in 2006-2008 faced a lot of criticism from civil society and development partners and has since been shelved (Swahn et al., 2013). The three main laws regulating alcohol consumption, production and sale (Enguli Act, The Liquor Act and the Traffic and Road safety Act) are weak, outdated and not seriously enforced. Both rural and urban areas in Uganda have easy to access outlets supplying alcohol. These range from bars to informal drinking places among which include homes and small multipurpose shops that sell high concentrated spirits. Drinking hours are not restricted with a significant number of people spending much time drinking. Unregulated alcohol brewed without a license is extremely cheap and affordable

There are no legal restrictions on advertising and marketing of alcohol in Uganda as regulation is left entirely to the alcohol industry and their own codes of marketing. Accordingly, alcohol advertising saturates Ugandan radios, billboards and newspapers and alcohol producers are left free to use any tactic they wish to increase their market. Alcohol companies sponsor youth entertainment, cultural and sporting events (De Bruijn, 2011). Promotional drives advertise alcohol with loud speakers moving through trading centers. At such promotional events, companies give away free samples and branded merchandise, creating a lasting connection with their customers. Such advertising is targeted specifically at youth.

Quality of health services: The communities complained of poor quality of health services in the primary health care facilities especially the high rates of drug stock outs of essential medicines and supplies as well as attitude of health workers. Despite the reported improvement in access to government health facilities (within a 5km radius) in Northern Uganda, quality of services still remains a major concern. In 2012/13, nearly 20.8 percent of health service users in rated public health facilities to be good. In contrast, the health services provided in health units owned by NGOs was rated as good by 56 percent of users. This finding demonstrates a rather worrisome quality gap between government and private providers (World Bank, 2013). Absenteeism of health workers remains a key obstacle to healthcare services. Even though health workers are urged to attend work regardless of the availability of medicines and drugs, absenteeism is still a significant problem in the region (RLP, 2012). Reports seem to suggest that this problem is not peculiar to the Northern Uganda region, but a National problem. Absenteeism at the facilities reported at 46% in Northern Uganda (UNDP, 2016). The issues of capacity and staffing are major hindrances to the ability to provide essential services, and many health centres are not functional because of the failure to both attract and retain qualified staff. Poor remuneration rates, geographical location, physical infrastructure, preconceived notions and biases about the region, partly explain this state of affairs. This highlights a very important factor in the overall human development agenda, namely, that so many of the indicators are inextricably linked with other social issues, as improving one requires improvement in the others in order to achieve effectiveness. For example, staffing schools and hospitals with qualified personnel requires other socio-economic improvements and developments to attract workers to the region and retain them.

This micro analysis highlights the need to address the following issues in the region: Appropriate basic sanitation, malaria burden, frequent stockouts of essential drugs in health facilities,

occasional stockouts of HIV commodities, especially second line drugs, high levels of self-stigma that lead to low uptake of VCT and low initiation of treatment for people found to have HIV infection, and high rates of Hepatitis B infection.

5.0 PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Karamoja Region

- 1 **Access to markets:** Innovations are needed to increase direct access to produce markets by crop farmers in the region and to empower them to negotiate for better prices. Additionally, farmers should be empowered with the basic skills to improve the quality of their produce before selling it. Farmers should also be empowered to undertake better post-harvest processing and storage of produce to reduce post-harvest losses of produce quality. Regarding infrastructure for communication, all districts in the region should be supported to have a local radio station (especially Kaabong District). Development agencies should invest in more community radio programs with the local FM stations to facilitate extensive dialogues on the issues affecting the region.
- 2 **Financial Inclusion:** Organizations providing small loans to farmer groups should be engaged to revise the repayment terms especially for households that risk losing their assets. Innovations to improve the effectiveness of cash transfers for should be explored. Cash transfers to very vulnerable households should be unconditional and large enough to meet both critical basic needs and a reserve for investments. Evaluation of cash transfers should include an assessment of how households use the cash provided, including expenditures on assets acquisition, and use of these funds for food, seed and school fees.
- 3 **Livestock:** Households should be sensitized to focus on the quality rather than quantity of cattle herds. This should be achieved through dialogues and extension services at community and Manyata level. More so, households need to be advised on when best to sell some of their livestock to gain cash reserves that can support them at the peak of the dry season when they need to buy food. Households should also be supported regarding saving of the cash earned from their sales. This requires innovations on access to saving platforms that can effectively reach even the most vulnerable household. Because surface water catchment is crucial to sustainable animal husbandry in the region, development agencies should explore a business model around valley dam construction and maintenance as a livelihoods alternative for unemployed youth in the region.
- 4 **Agriculture:** Intensified promotion and provision of drought resistant crop varieties should be undertaken. These should be supported with provision of adequate quality seeds. Development organizations should also explore diversification to other non-traditional drought tolerant cereals and starches like sweet potatoes and cassava in this region, as an alternative to sorghum. Farmers should be supported to mitigate crop and animal diseases by increasing access to extension services, affordable medicines for crop and animal diseases and sensitization on disease prevention. Innovations to increase access to agricultural and livestock extension support services should be co-created and established, so that farmers in remote villages can be reached. Being the most vulnerable to recurrent food insecurity, households that receive food aid should form the focus for forward going support. They should be continually tracked and supported to develop food security plans to break the cycles of recurrence. They should be followed up till the planting season and supported to undertake measures to mitigate re-occurrence of severe food shortages.

- 5 **Education:** The very low enrollments rates amidst high drop-out rates, especially for adolescent girls, calls for a multi-faceted strategy to promote enrollment, but more importantly retention, in schools. Without school feeding programs, keeping children in school in the region might be very hard, especially during food stressed periods. In the most vulnerable communities therefore, development programs should prioritize supporting school feeding programs for Primary Schools as a means to increasing school attendance at that level. Community based co-creation on how to involve the community in supporting these SFPs should be conducted to spur innovation in the community's involvement. At Secondary School levels, the very high levels of drop outs require a substantial change in the region's strategy for secondary education. Not only should more secondary schools be built and the infrastructure of existing ones improved, but improvement of quality of teaching should be supported by providing basic scholastic materials. Where possible, secondary school teachers in the region should receive direct incentives for working in a hard to reach area. Resources available, access to free secondary education should be prioritized for all capable students especially in the most remote areas of the region. Community radio shows should repeatedly emphasize the benefits of education for the region. Programs for provision of sanitary pads or mass awareness creation on menstrual hygiene alternatives using locally appropriate technologies should be implemented for all for adolescent girls. By-laws against casual labour for school going children during school hours should be enacted and enforced, amidst dialogue with the communities on the importance of child education

- 6 **Health:** Regarding family planning, messages that take a livelihoods approach and creatively bring out the link between household size and livelihood vulnerability will be more effective than generic messages promoting uptake of family planning. Promotion of family planning should employ a household approach in which the men are included, other than facility dominated approaches. There is urgent need to co-create approaches to reducing alcohol consumption in Karamoja region. Innovations should integrate social, regulatory and gender dimensions and should target households and communities. They should incorporate community dialogues on how to control this emerging public health challenge. Cultural night dances should be targeted for education on safe sex as these are associated with an increase in unprotected sex, especially targeting youth. A community approach to health promotion should be used to target socio-cultural barriers that underlie the high burden of infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, diarrhoeal diseases, Hepatitis B and malaria. Measures to address the high levels of violence in the society should be instituted, including community dialogues to develop local mitigation measures for conflict at individual and household level, arbitration mechanisms at local police stations, and counselling measures at health facilities.

5.2 South Western Region (Kisoro and Rubanda)

- I **Water, sanitation and hygiene:** Innovations to improve rain water harvesting and transmission of water from lower ground to higher ground should be explored in order to reduce the hard labour and wastage of school time involved in water portorage by women and children. Options could include gravity flow schemes, household level rain water harvesting and fallow rain water tanks. However, locally affordable technologies for these approaches should be developed. Promotion of latrine construction should be prioritized in public health promotion programs for the region to reduce the proportion of households without a latrine.

- 2 **Health:** At national and district level, interventions to improve essential drug fore-casting, optimization and availability should be put in place, so that stockouts are eliminated. Within districts, optimization of drug management through redistribution between health facilities may help mitigate acute shortages in the short run. Drugs supplies to the region should be marked up to adjust for the influx of refugees. Adolescent girls should be educated on how to improvise for menstrual hygiene using appropriate local technologies. Development agencies should target setting up local production facilities for low cost sanitary pads. Regarding reproductive health, family planning messages should address the misconceptions regarding side effects of FP methods. Family planning messages should also show how and where those who develop side effects can be helped, so that they are as transparent as possible. Longer term methods of family planning should be promoted. Given that practices by men are a key driver of the high fertility rate, innovative approaches to reach men with family planning messages should be co-created together with the communities.
- 3 **Financial inclusion, markets and livelihoods diversification:** Regarding village saving groups, mechanisms and innovations to improve loan repayment and to reduce interest rates should be explored. Mechanisms and platforms to promote local value addition and local produce bulking by farmers should be explored so as to increase their leverage in the markets. Innovations to link rural farmers directly to produce buyers should be co-created and tested, so that farmers can negotiate better prices for their produce.
- 4 **Education:** Schools in the region need support to improve their physical infrastructure. They should also be supported with scholastic and teaching materials including text books, syllabuses, skills lab materials and other teaching aids, so as to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers in the hard to reach schools should receive incentives, so as to improve their quality of teaching. Innovative approaches to promoting teaching and learning in resource constrained settings should be explored and piloted. Extensive consultative community dialogues to get buy-in from parents to provide lunch packs for their children should be undertaken. This should be integrated into the food security strategy for community and household outreaches and should also be integrated across programs. In the hardest-to-reach areas, development agencies may consider direct support to school feeding programs. Those in communities with the highest school dropout rates should identified and supported with free sanitary pads. Programs to identify school drop-outs and support them to acquire additional livelihood skills should be expanded. This should aim at skilling them to be able to engage in viable enterprise and to identify and take advantage of opportunities for enterprise
- 5 **Environmental degradation:** Given the high proneness of the local terrain to soil erosion, local mechanisms to reduce destruction of infrastructure from storm water run-off should be put in place, especially the construction and rehabilitation of terraces and protective crops around them. Communities should be supported to regularize initiatives for maintenance of water drainage channels and farm terraces and the planting of protective plants on the boundaries of terraces to reduce soil erosion. Promotion of tree planting on the hilly slopes be explored, especially in form of agro-forestry. Bylaws to protect swamps from encroachment need to be put in place and enforced, to reduce the rapid encroachment on swamps.

- 6 **Gender gap:** Interventions to change the gender disparities in production roles and responsibility for looking after the family that were observed in the region should be instituted. This requires close engagement with households to discuss their interpretations of gender roles so as to guide them to identify and act on the inequities. To get to the root of the problem, both men and women must be involved in the discussions. The region needs a wide reaching campaign targeting the reduction of alcohol consumption especially among men, as well as increasing male responsibility and participation in taking care of their households. Such a campaign should draw on local scenarios to demonstrate how alcohol consumption has affected household livelihoods and productivity. If possible, local by-laws and ordinances to regulate alcohol consumption hours should be instituted and enforced.
- 7 **Malnutrition:** To break the cycle of chronic malnutrition, a multi-faceted multi-disciplinary household-based approach that targets the underlying drivers at household level rather than the facility based nutritional centres is needed. Such programs should not only address nutritional rehabilitation but should include assessment of the food available in the home, ability to purchase food to address dietary diversity, and ability to plan for food needs during times of stress. There is need to scale up awareness creation on appropriate infant feeding. Interventions should consider a community and household dialogue approach in addition to the health facility-based treatment centres for severe undernutrition. Since one of the observed proximal determinants of child undernutrition in the region seemed to be lack of dietary diversity, interventions to improve nutritional status should incorporate a strong household component that allows households to assess their current nutritional practices so as to identify gaps. Children who return to treatment centres with acute malnutrition should as a routine be followed up to their homes, so as to assess the home environment that drives recurrent of malnutrition.
- 8 **Agriculture:** There is need to improve climate services and forecasts to enable more climate-ready agricultural practices. This will help to mitigate crop failure due to unpredicted dry spells arising from exacerbations of climate variability. To restore local soil fertility, households should consider composting. This can be further supported by diversifying to include limited animal husbandry on their holdings. Innovations to increase access of rural farmers to agricultural extension services should be explored, as should interventions to increase access to chemicals to tackle crop diseases. Production Officers should learn from the health sector on how the vigilance and reach of VHTs has been sustained amidst resource constraints. Due to the limited land, technologies, mechanisms and innovations to increase productivity from small holdings should be explored. Although the current practice of crop specialization should be supported to promote farmer excellence, there is need to create some local food diversification for purposes of promoting dietary diversity in the homes. Dedication of small parts of household land to growing of alternative crops to increase local dietary diversity should be explored, amidst continued support to growing of the priority cash-deriving foods like Irish potatoes. Government and development partners should increase access to improved seeds. They should also improve regulatory measures and institute certification to curb selling of fake seeds and chemicals to farmers by regularly inspecting the farm supply shops.

- 9 **Food security:** Development programs need to develop models for the minimum amount of food that households need to save to enable them go through the dry seasons so that they do not sell all their food produced in the household. Conversely, households should also be encouraged to save some money for use in buying additional foods that they do not produce in their households as well as during the dry season. Innovations to make saving more accessible should be explored. Households should also receive advice on which foods to buy when they consider buying food, so as to create optimum dietary diversity. Models to wean off households from growing tobacco and other crops that reduce their resilience to food related shocks and stress should be explored, and such households supported to diversify to other viable crops.
- 10 **Infrastructure:** Given the harsh terrain, local authorities should be supported to increase feeder road maintenance to facilitate transportation of agricultural produce from various locations in the districts.

5.3 Acholi Region (Lamwo)

- 1 **Relations between refugees and host communities:** Evidence points to the possibility that communities were not adequately consulted during the establishment of the settlements. There is need for more dialogue with host communities as well as dissemination of the international humanitarian law to facilitate co-existence with the refugees. Cultural and opinion leaders on either side should be facilitated to meet and dialogue, so as to break the animosity and perceived barriers for co-existence.
- 2 **Access to social services:** Public services given to the refugees should be made accessible to the host populations and vice versa (including static and outreach health services). However, host communities should be sensitized to remove the misconception that they are entitled receive emergency aid items like shelter, utensils, food and other non-food items which are given to refugees due to their serious vulnerability status. Further, to reduce animosity of host populations, basic service delivery (e.g. support to agriculture) and infrastructure (e.g. roads) in their communities should be improved.
- 3 **Land rights and access:** The land question remains unresolved in the greater Northern Uganda as most of the land is customary owned. The biggest challenge arises from ownership and patterns of usage. Because land is communally owned in family and clan lines, decisions taken on acquisition, usage and development of land require a community approach. Innovations that can improve land relations and custodial safety without stifling modernization should be explored. Recent attempts by government to allocate land for investment has met with significant resistance, partly because of suspicions among the community members. There is need for dialogue with the clan leaders and representatives of communities who provided land for the resettlement so as to address expectations and allay the growing anxiety regarding land tenure by the refugees. Beyond that, there is need for innovations around farmer collaboration for mechanization of agriculture and improved farming practices.
- 4 **Agricultural services:** Innovations to improve agricultural extension services for rural farmers should be explored. Mechanisms for improved access to mechanized farming (tractors and ox-ploughs) should be explored owing to the mechanization-ready terrain in

the region. As indicated earlier, mechanisms to improve climate fore-casting for farmers as well as climate information support should be put in place so that farmers can access more reliable weather information to reduce crop failure. Farmers should be facilitated to form production-based cooperatives so as to jointly acquire better farming technologies.

- 5 **Food security:** In Uganda, with an estimated population of 40 million, and a refugee population expected to rise to more than 1.5 million in the next one year, the country is also responding to considerable levels of food insecurity. Over 1.3 million Ugandans are reported to be facing severe shortages of food, scarcity of water and pasture as a result of failed rains. If the country is to prevent these communities from seeking humanitarian assistance, a new type of financing that focuses on resilience-building through natural resource management, enhanced land and livestock management and integrated service delivery is needed. The region also needs promotion of better nutritional practices at household level. Given that the range of foods that can grow there is wide, achieving adequate dietary diversity is possible through guiding households on appropriate food combinations.
- 6 **Markets and value enterprise:** There is need for new and disruptive approaches to small farmer networking to multiply capacity for produce bulking, supply stabilization and price leverage in markets. There is also need for innovative platforms or approaches to linking multiple farmer networks to create stronger farmer led supply networks that increase farmer leverage in the market. This should be integrated with technology driven platforms that address market related information asymmetries. Support to farmers to undertake value addition to their produce to mark it up for better prices in the markets should be undertaken, including basic measures like proper drying, storage and sorting of cereals.
- 7 **Youth entrepreneurship:** For the young people to be gainfully employed in the agriculture sector there is need for targeted interventions that should consider their aspirations and resource accessibility. A large number of youth have remained on the family land holdings with access to land, but need skills and capital to invest in high-valued agricultural enterprises like coffee as pointed out by (Ahaibwe et al., 2013, Brooks et al., 2012). Interventions to skills youth who dropped out of school, and programs to interest the youth in agriculture should be explored. In addition, models to tap into local university students to provide extension services to rural areas should be explored and supported. Alternative livelihoods programs that support non-climate dependent enterprise at household level should be co-created to promote diversification of livelihoods in the region
- 8 **Alcohol and gender:** A comprehensive community-based strategy to reduce alcohol consumption in the region should be designed and rolled out, especially targeting men. The program should be multi-faceted, including community dialogues, enactment and enforcement of local by-laws restricting opening hours for bars, and dissemination of evidence-supported messages on how alcohol affects household incomes.
- 9 **Health services:** Interventions to improve the quality of health service delivery in primary care facilities should be co-created and rolled out. Such programs should include improved staffing, improving the health facility infrastructure, improving drug forecasting, supply and management, and improving client service delivery. Health care workers should receive

training in quality improvement while health workers in hard-to-reach health facilities should receive incentives where possible. HIV prevention programs should target higher risk groups including alcohol takers. Regarding health conditions of importance to the region, the importance of scaling access to appropriate basic sanitation cannot be overemphasized. To sustain the apparent reduction in Malaria burden, programs like bed-net distribution and indoor residual spraying should be maintained at scale to create a sustained reduction in the burden of malaria on the communities. Stock outs of commodities in health facilities needs to be addressed by building better capacity for forecasting of needs, local logistics management, and reordering practices. With regard to HIV commodities, efforts at improving fore-cast efficiency for second-line commodities, re-order lead times, and provision for sufficient buffer stocks before regimen switches are made should be emphasized at national level. The high levels of self-stigma that drive fear to test for HIV and early initiation of ART needs to be addressed through counselling and health promotional activities that target self-stigma. Addressing the high burden of other health conditions like epidemics should be tagged to the improvement of sanitation programs while the high burden of Hepatitis B in the region should be addressed by expanding the access to Hepatitis B immunization in the region.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Description of respondent categories

Ia) Karamoja Region (Kaabong and Kotido Districts)

Category	Description of participants
Focus group discussions (FGD) Kaabong	
Youth FGD (8)	A group of male and female youth (18-30) years of age from different backgrounds who could express themselves on issues of concern in Kalapata sub-county.
Male FGD (9)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men with children who had suffered malnutrition (2) 2. Male village health team members (2) 3. Male religious leader (1) 4. Male teacher (1) 5. Male member of the local council (2) 6. Male opinion leader (1) 7. Village LCI chairman (1)
Female FGD (8)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women who have had malnourished children (2) 2. Female VHT members (2) 3. Female religious leader (1) 4. Senior woman teacher (1) 5. Woman representative on local council (1) 6. Female opinion leader (1) 7. Representative of a women group (1) 8. Widow (1) and female farmers (2)
Focus group discussions (FGD) Kotido	
Youth FGD (8)	A group of male and female youth (18-30) years of age from different backgrounds who could express themselves on issues of concern in Rengen sub-county
Male FGD (9)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men who have had malnourished children (2) 2. Male VHT members (2) 3. Male religious leader (1) 4. Male teacher (1) 5. Male member of the local council (1) 6. Male opinion leader (1) 7. Male veterinary assistant (1) 8. Farmer (1)
Female FGD (8)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women who have had malnourished children (2) 2. Female VHT members (2) 3. Female religious leader (1) 4. Senior woman teacher (1) 5. Women representative of council (1) 6. Female opinion leader (1) 7. Representative of a women group (1) 8. Women who lost someone due to hunger (2)
IDIs and KIIs	

Category	M	F	Total	Description
In depth Interviews (IDI) kaabong	1	2	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A mother of a malnourished child 2. A man who lost a child due to hunger 3. A 14-year girl child who was forced into marriage
In depth Interviews (IDI) kotido	1	2	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A mother whose child was malnourished 2. A man who lost his child to malnutrition 3. A 14-year old orphanage girl child who dropped out of school.
Key informant interviews (KII) Kaabong district	2	1	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focal point person for nutrition 2. District Community Development Officer 3. District Senior Veterinary Officer and in-charge of livelihoods
Key informant interviews (KII) Kotido district	3		3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. District Planner 2. District Community Development Officer 3. Branch Manager, Uganda Red Cross Society- Kotido Branch

Ib) South Western Uganda (Kisoro, Kabale and Rubanda Districts)

Category	Description of participants
Focus group discussions (FGD) Kisoro	
Youth FGD (8)	A group of male and female youths (18 to 30 years) from different backgrounds who could express themselves and discuss the issues of concern to them.
Male FGD (9)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men who have had a malnourished child -2 2. Village Health Team members 3. Religious leader 4. Teacher 5. Member of the local council 6. Opinion leaders 2
Female FGD (8)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women who have had a malnourished child -2 2. Female Village Health Team member 3. Female religious leader 4. Matron OR Senior woman teacher 5. Woman representative on the local council 6. Female opinion/cultural leader 7. Representative of a women group
Focus group discussions (FGD) Rubanda	
Youth FGD (8)	A group of male and female youths (18 to 30 years) from different backgrounds who could express themselves and discuss the issues of concern to them.
Male FGD (9)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men who have had a malnourished child -2 2. Village Health Team members 3. Religious leader 4. Teacher 5. Member of the local council 6. Opinion leaders 2

Female FGD (8)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women who have had a malnourished child -2 2. Female Village Health Team member 3. Female religious leader 4. Matron OR Senior woman teacher 5. Woman representative on the local council 6. Female opinion/cultural leader 7. Representative of a women group 			
IDIs and KIIs				
Category	M	F	Total	Description
In depth Interviews (IDI) Kisoro	1	3	4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1 mother of a stunted child 2. 1 father of a stunted and 3. 2 14-year old adolescent girls from families with a stunted child
In depth Interviews (IDI) Rubanda	1	2	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1 mothers of a stunted child 2. 1 father of a stunted and 3. 1- 14-year old adolescent girl in a family with a stunted child
Key informant interviews (KII) Kisoro	2	1	3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secretary social services (SSS) Kisoro District 2. Nurse/Nutritionist Muramba HCIII 3. Manager Uganda Red Cross Kisoro Branch.
Key informant interviews (KII)	3	1	4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Development officer (CDO) Kabale District 2. District Health Officer (DHO) office Kabale 3. In-charge Nyamweru Health Center (HC) III 4. Civil Society Organisation (TPO Uganda)

Ic) Northern Uganda (Lamwo District)

Category	Description of participants
Focus group discussions (FGD)	
Youth FGD (8) All these were living near the Refugee Settlement at Palabek Gem	A mixed group of female and male youths aged (18-30) years of age from different backgrounds who could articulate clearly the discussion questions in Palabek Gem sub-county
Male FGD (10) All these were living near the Refugee Settlement at Palabek Gem	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Men Farmers (5) 2. Male religious leader(1) 3. Male member of the local council(1) 4. Male VHT members (2) 5. Male opinion leader(1)
Female FGD (10) All these were living near the Refugee Settlement at Palabek Gem	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women with malnourished children (4) 2. Female VHT members(2) 3. Female cultural leader(1) 4. Senior woman teacher(2) 5. Women representative of council(1)

6. Representative of a women group(1)				
IDIs and KIIs				
Category	M	F	Total	Description
In depth Interviews (IDI)		1	1	A 14 year girl child who was forced into marriage
Key informant interviews (KII)		1	1	Program Coordinator SCORE Project-USAID funded
Key informant interviews (KII)	1		1	District Community Development Officer
Key informant interviews (KII)	1		1	Camp Commander