

Livelihoods, Culture and Gender: A Situational Analysis of the Challenges and Opportunities for  
addressing Gender-Based Violence in Karamoja Region

By

Alexander Kagaha  
Jacqueline Mugisha  
Sylvia Atugonza

Pokot Zonal Integrated Development Programme (POZIDEP)  
Karamoja Dioceses Development Services (KDDS)

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## Executive summary

This report is a Situational Analysis of GBV in Karamoja, conducted for UNFPA by a team of Consultants under Pokot Zonal Integrated Development Programme (POZIDEP), a development arm of Karamoja Dioceses Development services (KDDDS) in Pokot. The major objective of the study was to investigate the nature of GBV in Karamoja region. Specifically this study aimed at: First, gaining an increased understanding of how cultural values and practices, including livelihoods and migration; as well as instability factors affect women and girl's health, social and economic status. Second, gaining an increased understanding of indigenous community practices related to girls, boys, women and men's social and economic status. Third, Increased understanding of perceptions, attitudes and knowledge within various community groups and service providers; on girls and women's access to education, health and livelihoods decision-making. Lastly, to develop community-driven recommendations that respond to the short and long term needs of the most vulnerable groups; including health, education and livelihoods.

The study covered the five districts: Abim, Kotido, Kaabong, Moroto and Nakapiripirit districts. In these districts, data was generated from an array of key informants from government departments, law enforcement agencies, traditional and opinion leaders, political and technical servants. In addition, data was also gathered from independent groups of women, boys, girls and men, selected on the basis of their experience and similarity in socio-demographic characteristics, as well as the respondents at household level. This study was designed and conducted using focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and observations guides, and a carefully pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire. The findings from FGDs, Key informant Interviewees and observations were analysed using the socio-cultural and economic contexts, following the various themes and sub themes under the study. Findings from the semi structured questionnaire were analysed using the descriptive statistics in the SPSS. Prior to field data collection process, the consultants obtained inputs from the key stakeholders' workshops at national and regional level. Validation workshops were organised at regional and national level, during which the report was critically assessed/ inputs from these workshops have been incorporated into the final report herewith presented.

The study reveals that Karamoja is a heterogeneous region in terms of ethnicity, livelihoods, security status, and culture practices, norms and values. The region comprises 11 major ethnic communities: the Ethur and Nyakwae in Abim, Dodoth, Ngaporein, and Teuso in Kaabong, the Jie in Kotido, the Tipeth, Bokora, and Matheniko in Moroto, and the Pokot, Kadamas and the Pian in Nakapiripirit district. Majority of these ethnic communities survive on pastoralism (Pokot, Pian, Bokora, Matheniko, Jie, and Dodoth) with limited crops grown. Others like the Ngaporein, the Ethur and Nyakwae largely survive on crop growing with small scale cattle keeping, while the Teuso practice hunting and gathering. Agro-based communities are more secure as compared to pastoral communities due to inter-ethnic and cross-border raids, as a means of restocking. The social identity of women, girls, boys and men vary with ethnic groups but, women and girls occupy subordinate positions across all the ethnic groups. They hardly participate in household and community political structures. It also a very strong social fabric cohesion within ethnic groups, which are used to sustain life and act as safety nets during times of shocks such as drought, disease and any other shock that may befall them. Marriage in the region is largely based on traditional system, where parents take a central role in determining the choices of marriage partners for the girls. Marriage in the region is largely based on customs although increasingly, many couples are cohabiting in and around the towns. Marriage in Karamoja is concluded with payment of dowry, which take the forms of cattle in pastoral communities, a mix of money and cattle, a mix of farming implements and honey as the case is in Teuso. Marriage is the fulcrum around which wealth- cattle- is mobilised and redistributed and most of the abuses against boys, girls, and women are linked to the central place of livestock in the livelihood system. In addition, practices like courtship rape, early marriage, Female genital mutilation (FGM), and polygamous marriage, collective beating as disciplinary practice and widow inheritance, occur and are considered to be normal. There are also misperceptions about women's ability to contribute to decision-making process, both at home and in the community and this was linked to the misconception about the role of dowry that is paid upon marriage.

Karamoja is based on a duo system of governance. The traditional systems based on age sets and sex on one hand, and the formal governance system on the other. However the traditional system overrides the formal government particularly outside the towns. In addition, pastoral communities in Karamoja region have a duo settlement system, The *Manyattas* as areas of permanent settlement on one hand and the kraals on another, used to adjust to the hostile climatic conditions. These duo systems of governance and settlement make delivery of services difficult particularly formal justice, education and health care services. The social protection structures such as the family, clan and elder's council hardly recognise many of their practices as constituting violence. Consequently, domestic violence, and early marriage are but hardly reported because of the fear for further violence, and shame. Most cases of abuses occur within the *Manyattas* and kraals, and are resolved within the stinging. Reporting of violence is negatively sanctioned especially if reported outside the boundaries of the traditional courts. Order and justice in most ethnic communities is enforced using collective diplomacy mechanisms. In a nutshell, the study summarises that GBV in Karamoja region is a product of the social structures and system of values norms, habits and practices that are nurtured through the family institutions but also a cause reinforces further violence. It is attached to traditional customs, values, and norms that different ethnic communities cherish. All ethnic groups in Karamoja region cherish faithfulness, and negatively sanctions sex before marriage particularly on the side of girls. As a result, girls who get raped are forced into marriage against their will.

Karamoja region is also food insecure and women and children, particularly the girls, carry on their shoulders the burden of feeding their families. Child labour, out migration, and juvenile delinquencies are used as adaptation mechanisms.

In terms of health, the study reveals gender relations create specific vulnerabilities to accessing health care services. Boys in pastoral communities hardly access health care seeking during drought season when they migrate to distant places in search for pasture and water for the animals. Delivery of health care services to kraals is very difficult. Most mothers and pregnant women in the region hardly access ANC services; yet even those who come, do so for accessing food. There is limited level of knowledge about the role and importance of attending ANC, in addition to the long distances involved. Most women deliver outside the health care centres with the aid of Traditional Birth Attendants. Other health concerns that affect women also stem from the cultural practices such as FGM, wife inheritance, and domestic violence. Domestic violence has now become part of the traditions for conflict resolution in marital relations. In terms of family planning is rarely used and both men and women have low perception of family planning. The study also reveals a broad range of education services such as, ABEK, FAL, ECD and formal education. However there is a limited level of education across the entire region, for both girls and boys. Girl child education is undermined by the FGM practice in Pokot, Tepeth and Kadama, where as soon as a girl graduates, she is lured into marriage. Generally there is low perception of the education of the girl child in the area as her position is yet the school learning environment if not conducive to girls' education particularly those in adolescence stage. School sanitation and hygiene facilities are in many schools lacking and where they exist, they are inadequate in quality and numbers. Education infrastructures are inequitably distributed as some communities in hard to reach areas find difficulty in accessing schools in a conflict ridden region. Although this study recognises the historical factors, it points out that today; the gender roles in *Manyattas* and *Kraals* in pastoral livelihoods take most of the time girls and boys would be spent in school, as pastoral communities rely mainly on child labour to sustain the livestock.

The study identified a number of civil society organisations that are responding to some of the many developmental challenge. However there are very few actors with programmes specifically designed to address GBV; their interventions are general and limited in scope and scale of interventions. It is evident that there is uneven distribution of actors in the region, with Moroto and Kotido taking a disproportionate share. The level of partnership among actors at different level is limited and comprehensive interventions for addressing GBV has a number of opportunities to exploit. First, a broad networking of NGOs operating and local, national and international level, a broad based local government structure through which service delivery and interventions can be implemented. A wealth of experience of different actors in the region, and an increasingly peaceful environment within the region due to disarmament. There are also some with very limited evidence of capacity to challenge the deep rotted local structures that perpetuate abuse and exploitation of women and children.

Based on the findings, thus study makes the following recommendations. First, awareness-raising on the implications of the cultural practices, while building on the cherished values and norms in the specific communities, Working with such structures, and enhancing their knowledge and capacities to achieve deliver gender sensitive services for social protection. Second, working with the informal structures like the TBAs, council of elders, and the religious instructions in order to develop their capacities to deliver gender sensitive and balanced services, thereby expanding the scope and scale of interventions. In terms of education, we recommend designing a set of activities for promoting the sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools, Designing a flexible ABEK implementation approach that allows particularly the boys in kraals to get access to education while they carry out their specific tasks, conducting education campaign to deconstruct the negative perceptions particularly towards the education of the girl child. In addition, we recommend that it's necessary to work with the traditional structures such as the *Ekokevo* to use their power and influence in the community to encourage community members to send their children to schools. Use the FAL classes as an avenue for promoting GBV awareness in the community. We also recommend capacity building training for particularly the senior woman and man teachers to ensure that gender sensitive environments are created for the girl's education. In the field of health, the studies recommends broadening the structure for health care by supporting community health care outreach services, and strengthen the effectiveness of the existing structures for health care, awareness creation for sensitisation of the specific categories of people in the communities on the implications of their lifestyle to their health. Develop the capacities if the health care staff on the handling practices for cases of GBV, particularly the cases of the sexual nature like rape and defilement. There is need for other contraceptives and need to carry out compatibility tests before administering the same to clients. Develop a comprehensive strategy for promoting gender sensitive health care, referral of GBV cases with health care needs. Work in and with local structures to increase the delivery of health care Such as the Traditional Birth Attendants, by building the capacity delivering health care services and timely referral.

In order to enhance impact of GBV interventions, we recommend developing a comprehensive GBV Programme with specific components tailored to the specific realities, developing the capacity of actors at district and local level to implement GBV interventions, developing a joint monitoring and evaluation to assess progress towards achievement of joint goals, designing a GBV referral pathway and sensitisation the communities on the importance of reporting cases of GBV, and maintaining an effective district level and regional platforms for GBV actors to share and learn from their experiences.

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## List of acronyms

AA:	Affirmative Action
ABEK:	Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja
ANC:	Anti Natal Care
ANPPCAN:	African Network for Prevention and Protection of Children against Abuse and Neglect
AU:	African Union
CAHWS:	Community Animal Health Workers
CAOs:	Chief Administrative Officer
CBOs:	Community Based Organisations
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women
COPE:	Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education
DTPCs:	District Technical Planning Committees
DPPs:	District Development Plans
DIT:	District Implementing Team
DAW:	Discrimination Against Women
ECD:	Early Childhood Development
FAL:	Functional Adult Literacy
FGM:	Female Genital Mutilation
FGD:	Focus Group Discussions
HC:	Health Care Centre
IGA:	Income Generating Activities
LC:	Local Council
GBV:	Gender Based Violence
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
POZIDEP:	Pokot Zonal Integrated Development programme
KIDDS:	Karamoja Dioceses Development Services
WHO:	World Health Organisation
VAW:	Violence Against Women
RELOKA:	Restoration of Law and Order in Karamoja
UNCRC:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children
WRVH:	World Report on Violence and Health
UPE:	Universal Primary Education
SFG:	School Facilities Grant
PWDS:	People With Disabilities
GOU:	Government Of Uganda,
MGLSD:	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
TBA:	Traditional Birth Attendants
UDHRS:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
HIV:	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
UN:	United Nations
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
PEP:	Post Exposure Prophylaxis
UNOHCHR:	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHRC:	Uganda Human Rights Commission
HDR:	Human Development Report
UPDF:	Uganda People's Defence Forces
IDPs:	Internally Displaced People
NRM:	National Resistance Movement
CFPU:	Child and Family Protection Unit
MFPEDE:	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
WFP:	World Food Programme
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
SCIU:	Save the Children in Uganda
ITNs:	Insecticide Treated Nets
KNP:	Kidepo National Park
PMTCT:	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV/Aids
DHO:	District Health Officer
STIs:	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UBOS:	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
SPSS:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

## Operational Definition of Key Concepts

### Household:

Physical space inhabited by members of a family/ families. HH may have members not part of the family. Equally family members may be in turn absent from the HH for all or most of the time (Caroline 1996: 4). In many instance, family members may have differing interests which may clash with each other and therefore affect their status in the HHS will determine their centre of influence.

**GBV** Here is used in the context of CEDAW as defined as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".

**FGM** Female Genital Cutting or Female Genital Mutilation is defined as "all procedures, which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia and/or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or any non-therapeutic reasons" (WHO, 1995).

### Discrimination Against Women

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

**Child** a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

### Child abuse and neglect:

All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power" (Krug et al., 2002).

**Child labour:** Any form of labour a child is engaged into and it undermines his/her development

**VAW:**

**Karacuna**

**Warrior**

**Raider**

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

It is now eight years since the international community adopted the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and Seven years from now, the world today, will be celebrating the achievements of the set targets. Goal number three of the MDG, shows the commitment of the international community to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. It also recognizes that there are inherent imbalances nested within the socio-economic, cultural and political structures of our society that frustrate (rather than facilitating) the enjoyment of equality of rights of men and women, girls and boys. These structural inequalities further reproduce men and women, boys and girls whose thinking, practices, and attitudes sustain the imbalances. By doing so, such inequalities undermine equal access to opportunities for development of the capacities necessary for women and men, girls and boys to take advantage of the chances later in their lives. Thus promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment is a drive towards addressing the imbalances. Linked to this goal is also the commitment to attainment of universal access to primary education by 2015, by elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education; reducing, by three quarters, the maternal mortality ratio, and halving the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day<sup>1</sup>

CEDAW is the main international convention specifically linked to addressing the existing inequalities between men and women. In line with the MDGs, Article 10 of the convention calls upon states to ensure women's equal rights in the field of education by creating same opportunities for benefiting from scholarships, enhancing career guidance, and elimination of stereotyped roles of men and women in all forms of education, reduction of female drop-out rates and ensure that women have access to educational information to help ensure health and well-being of families, including information on family planning. Education in light of this article is a right, as well as an instrument in the process for achieving the MDGs. In addition, Article 12 calls upon state parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate DAW in the field of health care and ensure women's equal access to health care services and appropriate services in connection with pregnancy. The International law also affirms women's equal rights under laws relating to inheritance<sup>2</sup>. Further more, article 12 of UNCRC, provides for the Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account. Article 6, All children have the right to life while article 16 provides for children's right to privacy and that law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families, and their homes. In addition articles 28 and 24 provides children right to free primary education and obliges wealthy countries to help poorer countries achieve this, and that children have the right to good quality health care, to clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment, so as to stay healthy<sup>3</sup>. Although the covenants are specific, the interdependence and indivisibility of all rights is a highly accepted and consistently reaffirmed principle. The principle of universality and equality in the dignity and rights of all people is evident in UDHR, just as the UNCRC and CEDAW acknowledge the need to address the all customs and traditions that undermine the realisation of the former. In addition the conventions also call for non-discrimination and devotion to the best interests of women and children. These instruments place duties on state parties to guarantee their protection. Respect for civil and political rights rests in the enjoyment of economic, social, and cultural rights, and on the other hand, that genuine economic and social development requires the political and civil freedoms to participate in this process<sup>4</sup>.

At the regional level, Article 2 of the African Charter on Human and people's Rights (ACHPRs) provides that the rights and freedoms enshrined in it shall be enjoyed by all people irrespective of their sex. Like CEDAW, the African Women's Rights Protocol requires states to enact legislation to guarantee equality between women and men in marriage<sup>5</sup>. The Maputo Protocol, especially article 5 on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) adopted by consensus by all Heads of States of the African Union (AU) in July 2003, as well as the Cairo Declaration for the Elimination of FGM adopted at the Cairo Conference on Legal tools for the prevention of FGM in 2003 are but some of the regional instruments for addressing GBV and guaranteeing equality in enjoyment of rights and freedoms of women and men. The protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual VAW and Children in the great lakes region was also adopted in 2006 within the framework of the International Conference on the great lakes region. The regional instruments thus reflect the fact that African governments recognize the inheritance injustices and imbalances in the regional and the leaders commit themselves to addressing them. Many governments in Africa, including that of the Republic of Uganda, are signatory to the UDHR, CEDAW, CRC, and the regional conventions and declarations. By ratifying these conventions, these governments make a moral and political obligation to respect the equality in rights and freedoms of women and men and commit itself to being accountable to the international community in respect to the protection and promotion of the rights enshrined therein. As a sign of commitment, the legal regime in Uganda has greatly changed to incorporate the respect for the equality in dignity, rights and freedoms of women, children and men. As opposed to the preceding constitutions, the 1995 constitution of the republic of Uganda fully recognizes the rights of women. Article 31 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda entitles women and men to equal rights in all spheres.

The Government of Uganda (GoU) through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) formulated the National Action Plan on Women (NAPW) and the National Gender Policy (NGP) to help advocate for gender equity at all levels in all aspects of life. In response to article 10 of CEDAW, Uganda's education sector has undergone numerous changes in terms of policies and programmes, as an avenue for guaranteeing access to and the enjoyment of education services for both girls and boys. An affirmative Action (AA) was introduced in 1990, where female students qualifying to enter tertiary institutions are awarded 1.5 bonus points. Uganda's current Policy is on expanding the functional capacity of educational structures through the School Facilities Grant (SFG) and reducing on the inequities of access to education between sexes, geographical areas, and social classes in Uganda. In addition, the government launched the UPE programme<sup>6</sup> with gender-responsive mechanisms. It focuses on promoting gender parity in enrolment, retention, and performance in primary education. The dropout rate for girls fell from 11% in 1995 to 5.6 % in 1998<sup>7</sup>. Repetition rates among primary school girls reduced from 17.7% in 1995 to 6.3% in 1998.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the international legal instruments, women's status remains very low particularly in developing countries in Africa. Many women are denied an education because their role is considered primarily as one of caring for the family. Moreover, this role is often viewed as unimportant and not, in itself, worthy of an education. This occurs in complete disregard of subparagraph (b) of article 5 of CEDAW, which calls on states parties to ensure that education includes a proper understanding of the important role of maternity as a social function. In terms of health, the ability of a woman to control her own fertility is fundamental to her full enjoyment of the full range of human rights to which she is entitled, including the right to health. In recognition of this fact, article 12 makes specific reference to the area of family planning. It is estimated that, each year, at least half a million women die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, most of these deaths occurring in the developing countries of Asia and Africa. Gender-based violence kills and disables as many women between the ages of 15 and 44 as cancer. More often than not, perpetrators go unpunished. Rates of HIV infection among women are rapidly increasing. Among those 15-24 years of age, young women now constitute the majority of those newly infected, in part because of their economic and social vulnerability<sup>9</sup>. UNICEF notes that sub-Saharan Africa tops the rest of the world regions in early marriages and singles out poverty and the traditional desire to protect girls from out-of-wedlock pregnancies and the driving forces<sup>10</sup>. Access to health care is a problem affecting women, men and children in particularly the developing societies. The 2002 *World Report on Violence and Health* (WRVH), published by the World Health Organization (WHO), report that there are gross violence of the rights of people and these have gross negative implications to the achievement of the MDGs. The study shows that 520 000 individuals were victims of homicide in 2000; this number was almost certainly underestimated given incomplete reporting systems and the illicit nature of violence<sup>11</sup>.

Most cases of violence<sup>12</sup> occur in low-income countries<sup>13</sup>; the WRVH, which estimated that more than 90% of all violence-related deaths, occurred in these countries. As a result, the economic effects of violence are also likely to be more severe in poorer countries. However the report does not provide a gender disaggregated data to know the most vulnerable groups in terms of age and sex. There are an array of actors at personal, community, and societal level that may explain violence in terms of its causes and driving forces. Analysis of these factors needs to put into consideration the socio-cultural and economic realities within which such violence takes place. According to the Uganda Demographic Health Survey of 2006, over 60% of women aged 15-49 years experienced physical violence, 39% experienced sexual violence and 16% experienced violence during pregnancy. Amongst ever married women, 48% were physically violated by their husband or former husband<sup>14</sup>. This situation is not uncommon particularly in conflict-ridden areas. Pastoral communities are very poor and marred with insecurity, poverty and famine. This puts the region at the spot light in the analysis of the extent to which the millennium development goals will be realized by 2015. Early forced marriage is one of the burdens that the girl children in pastoral communities of Africa face. In some communities like the Kalenginin in Kenya, the Pokot and the Sabini, FGM adds the misery. In all these violations, girl children are exposed to child labour, domestic violence, sexual violence, early pregnancy, and to HIV/AIDS<sup>15</sup>. Early marriage violates the child's right to personal development and freedom and it also impacts negatively on her education and health.

A report by DRT indicates that, 50.6 of Uganda's population are children under 15 years of age. In terms of education, many OVCs are unable to benefit from free basic education because of the inability to meet non-tuition requirements<sup>16</sup>. Over 50% of the OVCs live with elderly people with no capacity to subsist. Although there is community-based rehabilitation programmes implemented for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs). However girls and boys with disabilities continue to miss such opportunities; there is no comprehensive assessment of the various disabilities of women and children, particularly in pastoral communities. Beekunda reports that about 1.3 million children aged 6-12 years are still excluded from UPE<sup>17</sup> but the author does not disaggregate this data to inform the gender disparities in this national programme. Karamoja is a region with difficult forms livelihoods, where children play a central role; insecurity in this region has engulfed the area since the pre-colonial times. Its uniqueness stems from the pastoral lifestyle that is characterized by seasonal migrations, cattle raiding and extreme drought conditions. In an attempt to enhance access to education in this region, area-specific interventions such as the Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education (COPE) programme and the Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK) have been designed to deliver education services that are tailored to the contexts. Their goal is to increase access to education among children who are unable to attend formal school. So far 162 COPE/ABEK centres benefiting 3502 disadvantaged girls and 2,906 disadvantaged boys have received support. These statistics also indicate that the benefits of ABEK are skewed towards the girls as compared to boys but do not explain this inclination.

Cattle serve an economic, political, social, and cultural resource and its survival depends on a constellation of variables. It requires a very large area for grazing and sustaining the mostly large herds of cattle. Traditional pastoral communities have a highly hierarchical structure based on age and sex, and power and wealth are vested in these structures. Lineage and ancestral ties are as important as proximate blood relations and age-set affinity as strong as sibling ties<sup>18</sup>. Pastoral conflict in the form of raiding is but a feature of the pastoralist societies of Eastern Africa. In areas of great political instability, as in the northernmost regions of Uganda, Kenya and the countries to the north, raiding has been experienced on a massive, even devastating, scale in the recent past. Robert Netting notes that the possession of cattle brings status and allows a man to lay claim to his children through the institution of bride wealth<sup>19</sup>. Marriage is never complete without dowry; debts, conflict resolution, and kinship are all governed with cattle. Defence of the herds and villages from outside hostility require a warrior caste, who is usually young boys.

Drought and famine situations create disproportionate level of vulnerability in terms of gender because of the differential roles, responsibilities, and property relations. Women are always at the centre because of their familial responsibilities of providing for the families. Boys are at the centre of pastoral livelihoods right from a tender age, while girls join their mothers in family chores, including milking and watering animals. Livelihoods in this region are very poor and many times people die of hunger. In Uganda, many children, women, and elderly persons die of hunger every year. However the adaptation mechanisms in the context of insecurity and HIV/AIDS, are not clearly understood, as well as their implications to health, wealth and dignity. Women and girls

in these contexts often sexually exploited and exposed to many other forms of GBV in the course of obtaining basic resources such as food, water, and fuel for themselves and their families. Many women and children are met with worn out faces flushing nothing but fires of distress and anger born out of vulnerability to hunger and constant violence.

Karamoja is a semi-arid region with rainfall patterns experienced only between April and September. Over 90% of the population in the region derives its livelihoods on pastoralism and agro-pastoralism<sup>20</sup>. Livestock is a fundamental form of pastoral capital, wealth, and power. It is the pastoralist's means for the production, storage, transport, and transfer of food, wealth and other services. Any threat to livestock such as lack of fodder or water, raiding, price variation, and disease, is a direct threat to pastoral livelihoods, wealth, and power. Women and girls are the fulcrum along which circulation of wealth in Karamoja rotates-through payment of dowry upon marriage. How do these conditions impact on women's access to basic services and development opportunities such as education? In absence of proper protection, pastoral livelihoods also get threatened during the extreme drought season and as a response, inter ethnic raiding is used to restock the flocks and to absorb the shock born out of the disastrous climatic conditions. Although the government has made tremendous efforts to disarm, the Karamojong have maintained the practice. A recent survey by the national focal point (NFP) puts the number of illegal guns in Karamoja alone, at 40000, one of the largest in a single region in Uganda<sup>21</sup>. In Karamoja, police- the law enforcing agency of the government- is also vulnerable; it cannot enforce law and order on people who are armed. However, increasingly the government of Uganda under the Restoration of Law and Order in Karamoja (RELOKA) has deployed about 1400 police personnel to serve at even sub county level. The traditional institutions override the formal law enforcement agencies<sup>22</sup>. Culture influences development through its various forms of expression; attitudes and behaviour related to sex, gender, sanctions, reward and exchange, discussion and participation, social support and association and influences on values and morals. However there is no critical assessment of the cultural realities and how these impacts facilitate the continued perpetuation of GBV in Karamoja region. Unfortunately, many studies conducted have focused on rights violations by the duty bearers without putting into consideration the driving forces that push children and women into the urban centres. Karamoja is a semi-arid area with acute shortage of water and food. How do these conditions affect the welfare and potential for human rights enjoyment among women and children! The basic legal norm of the CEDAW is the prohibition of all forms of discrimination against women. This norm cannot be satisfied merely by the enactment of gender- neutral laws. How efficacious are the laws in Karamoja region, a context with constant insecurity and vulnerable livelihoods that are also peaked with HIV/AIDS pandemic! Culture provides an important context within which rights are defined, enjoyed and sanctions enforced for and against the expected standards of behaviour. It defines the standards and principles upon which justice is defined and delivered. Different communities have different values, norms, beliefs, and practices. However does the culture in Karamoja region enhance protection of women against sexual and gender based violence?

#### **the existing gaps**

This study according to the literature reviewed indicates that there are a number of gaps in the protection and promotion of the rights of women. First there is a mismatch between the international legal instruments and the local practices. Second, there is inadequate information and understanding of the impact of the larger socio-cultural realities such as livelihoods, drought, and conflict and normative value systems, and beliefs on the protection of women and other vulnerable groups against GBV. It is against this background that this study was designed to address the above gaps by investigating the nature of GBV in Karamoja region from a socio-cultural perspective, and also to understand the copying mechanisms. This sexual and gender based violence situational analysis study sought to investigate the nature and magnitude of vulnerability of women and children to GBV and to document challenges and opportunities for advancing the protection of women and children against and prevention of GBV in five districts: Kaabong, Nakapiripirit, Kotido, Abim and Moroto in Karamoja region.

#### **1.3.1 Specific objective of the study**

- a) Gain an increased understanding of how cultural values and practices, including livelihoods and migration; as well as instability factors affecting women and girl's health, social and economic status
- b) Gain an increased understanding of indigenous community practices related to girls, boys, women and men's social and economic status
- c) Gain an increased understanding of perceptions, attitudes and knowledge within various community groups and service providers; on girls and women's access to education, health and livelihoods decision-making
- d) Develop community-driven recommendations that respond to the short and long term needs of the most vulnerable groups; including health, education and livelihoods.

#### **1.4 Terms and Reference of the consultant**

1. Take the overall responsibility for technical quality of the situational analysis
2. Prepare reasonable work plan and budget for implementing the situational analysis
3. Prepare quality survey instruments including: manuals, questionnaires, guidelines for FGD and KI interviews
4. Make appropriate preparations for all aspects of field work, including recruitment, supervision and distribution of materials,
5. Ensure that field work and other situational analysis activities are undertaken in accordance with the work plan and budgetary allocations
6. Undertake quantitative and qualitative data analyses and report writing
7. Undertake the report writing, and present a report to UNFPA and the UNCT for further dissemination

## Chapter two

### Methodology

#### 2.2 Study Design

This study was designed in the understanding that meaning, interpretations and perceptions of GBV varies from one community to another and changes over time and has its roots in the socio-cultural, political, and social organization of the communities. It is highly subjective and better understood from the contexts and perspective of the vulnerable groups and the community at large, who experience and live with it. In addition communities design diverse mechanisms (traditional and formal for sanctioning (positively or negatively) the deviations from the normally accepted forms of behaviour. This study design therefore sought to assess the cultural practices, institutional structures, and processes through which GBV is created, promoted, and sustained. In light of the above social realities, the study was designed and investigated using qualitative methodology<sup>23</sup>. Key Informant Interviews, observations and Group Discussion guides were used to investigate the nature and dimensions of GBV phenomena in Karamoja region. However, since the assessment also aimed at, establishing the nature and scope of GBV in Karamoja region, a carefully pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire was administered on 588 objectively and randomly selected respondents, drawn from the specific ally selected areas in each district. In summary the study used both the qualitative and quantitative approach to scientific inquiry<sup>24</sup>. This created opportunities for filling investigation gaps that would have been left if one investigative approach were used, hence enhanced the quality of the assessment<sup>25</sup>.

This assessment planned to select the study counties randomly, according to the proposal. However, settlement in the region is based on ethnicity, each county having a major ethnic community. Thus in order to capture the data from a diversity of the ethnic groups in the region, selection of counties, and sub counties in Moroto and Nakapiripirit districts was done purposively<sup>1</sup>. In Kaabong, Abim and Kotido districts, there is only one county in each district. Sub counties in these districts were selected because of their uniqueness in terms of cultural organisation, livelihood patterns, security concerns and accessibility/inaccessibility to services. Villages and parishes were randomly selected each sub county. Respondents to the survey tool were randomly selected to ensure that every member got an opportunity to participate in the study. In areas of concentrated settlement, the respondent skipped at least five households before getting the next respondent. Persons of similar socio-economic and demographic characteristics participated in sex and age-specific FGDs; the selection was based on the fact that they were part of the community, had lived-experience, knowledge and understanding of the community practices, habits, values and norms linked to GBV. They included women and men in reproductive ages, girls, and boys in adolescent stages, girls who had undergone FGM, Traditional Birth Attendants, elderly men and women, and members of the elders' council. Key informants, selected from civil societal organisations, the formal and traditional governance and service delivery structures, were selected because of their stake, authoritative position, technical knowledge, power and influence in each district.

Prior to field data collection, a planning meeting was held with UNFPA regional office and POZIDEP to map the regional districts, and sub counties in the districts in terms of the vulnerability contexts and the social cultural organization of the communities. In this meeting, persons with at least a minimum of bachelor's level of education and thorough knowledge of the local language were identified by UNFPA regional office and through POZIDEP were drawn selected from each of the districts, trained and oriented in Research, and GBV. After the training, the Research Assistants pre-tested the research tools in selected places in Moroto district and, jointly with the consultants, made the necessary adjustments. It is this team of Research assistants that conducted community-level data collection using the carefully pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire, in the *Manyattas* and the *kraals*, using the native language; they also facilitated FGDs under the supervision of the consultants. All interviews were conducted in socially approved environments, in many cases selected by the participants. At all times the Research Team sought an informed consent prior to the data collection process. The FGDs were moderated by two moderators recruited and trained and was supported by a translator. A total of 558 respondents (50%women, 20% girls and 20%boys and 20%men) drawn from the five districts in the region took part in the survey.

Qualitative data such as cultural beliefs, norms, values, habits, roles, identities, needs and experiences in relation to GBV was analyzed and interpreted using the socio-cultural, ecological, and political environments of the districts and in relation to the historical experiences<sup>26</sup>. This data was collaborated with quantitative data from the survey, analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Responses from Semi-structured questions were coded and entered along with pre-coded responses into SPSS designed screen sheet. This study upheld the ethical values in social science research at all stages. Prior to the interviews, an informed consent was sought from the respondents. During the introduction they were assured of confidentiality of their responses and that information would not be used for anything else other than the study. This is still help in the reporting of findings. Given the sensitivity of GBV issues, the interviews took place in socially approved but safe settings and were conducted in consideration and honour of the community values and norms. In instances where the household members were less willing to be interviewed, the researcher skipped the household and replaced it with another. Where recording machines were used, participants were informed about it, and the purpose; the tape recordings have not been used for any other purpose other than this study and will be destroyed at an appropriate time. In the reporting of findings, individual identifications have not be used, to guarantee anonymity of the respondents; only second names were used and where necessary, names have been replaced by initials (which are not the interviewee's actual initials).

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<sup>1</sup> In Moroto for instance there is the Bokora County for the Bokora Ethnic group and Matheniko County for the Matheniko Ethnic group; in Nakapiripirit, there is the Pokot County for the Pokot people, Pian County for the Pian people.

## Challenges

However there were some challenges experienced in the field. First, Karamoja region is a vast area with sparse population. Locating respondents in the survey was extremely difficult. In largely agro-pastoral communities, this was further made difficult by the out migration of particularly the young boys and men in search for pasture and water for the animals. In order to overcome this, challenge, the research team had to disperse very early in the morning so as to find them in the *Manyattas* before they left for the kraals. In many instances, they research team followed the young boys to the grazing fields.

Secondly some ethnic communities such as the Kadamas live in highly isolated places, on mountain Kadama in Nakapiripirit district, where there were no any road networking leading to them. Given their location in such hard to reach areas, it's pertinent to the research team to locate and seek for their experiences. The research team braved a scorching sun, and withstood thirst , in an areas without any known source of safe water, for an average of 20 kilometre climbing journey that last for over 2 hours before reaching a relatively flat bottomed peak, Dooo Village, where communities settled and practiced farming. Yet upon seeing the alien faces, the community members scattered in disarray, fearing the strange faces which only reminded them of the previous visitors –the UPDF- who rounded them up for the disarmament exercise. The research team, panting like hunting dogs, rested their thirst on maize-stalks as their food as it patiently waited for the members being mobilised. To make matters worse, the research team rested in the very shelter where the cordon and search team from the UPDF also sat. Having been the second group of people to visit them, and second after the UPDF, mobilisation was difficult as the security alert community sent very young boys and girls to ascertain who the visitors were. When they finally came, it took time to establish rapportour with them. Researching in such hard to mobilise areas requires time and patience for the researcher to listen to their perspectives.

In some communities like Karenga in Kaabong district, getting accommodation was only possible by the generosity of the local communities who rented part of their home huts and or shared with the research team. In an insecure environment, the research team witnessed a midday raid in Nyakwae, which only got failed by the vigilant local militia, and broad day fire exchange between the UPDF and the warriors in Moroto. The above challenges, however did not affect the validity and or reliability of the findings in this report. In fact they served to enrich the study of the nature and conditions within which people live and experience GBV.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

#### Social-Demographic Background of Karamoja Region

This study was conducted in Karamoja region, in north eastern Uganda. The region is semi-arid and covers approximately 27,200 km<sup>2</sup>. It comprises about 11 different ethnic groupings. These include Bokora, Matheniko and Tepeth in Moroto; Pian, Pokot and Kadamas in Nakapiripirit; the Jie in Kotido; the Ethur and the Nyakwae in Abim, the Dodoth, the Ngiporein and the Teuso in Kaabong district. In most of the communities, and like any other traditional communities, order is maintained based on normative standards and social expectations. Such social expectations of the individual are largely dictated upon by the traditional structures that govern and regulate interactions, relationships, habits, and roles. In many cases, collective decisions are taken for the good of the community based on cases or precedents that contravene the commonly held values and norms. Thus custom is the guide to action. There is a strong collective power which ensures that social justice, in this community is based on, and defined within the scope of the expectations, and the age set hierarchy. Most communities in this region survive on pastoralism and agro-pastoral activities as the major sources of livelihoods. Due to the drought-prone conditions, characterised by unreliable and very little rainfall, crop growing in this region is very minimal, except in a few communities such as the Ethur, the Nyakwae, the Ngiporein neighbouring Southern Sudan, the Teuso neighbouring the Turkana in Kenya, the Kadamas bordering Kenya to the east and the Sabiny to the west. In addition some small scale agriculture is also carried out by some sections of the Bokora bordering Teso land and the some sections of Pian communities in Namalu. Pastoral communities adjust by moving to other places in search for pasture and water. In these movements, such communities establish kraals, where the herders stay with their animals during this season. The population in the kraals is largely male, as women and children, remain in the *Manyattas*. However the on-going disarmament exercise is reportedly causing some displacement from *Manyattas*, as people flee the exercise. The pastoral communities rely on this traditional adaptation approach in search of water and pasture for the cattle. Thus seasonal movements are a common feature of pastoral communities.

Insecurity is more pronounced at the boundaries of the pastoral ethnic groups, the spots where ethnic groups confront each other, both in attempted raids and in defence of their cattle. However, there is relative peace once one is within a given ethnic community, except in instances where raiders come to rob the community of its cattle, as is usually the case. Various ethnic groups in Karamoja region persistently raid and counter raid themselves, in an effort to carry out revenge for previous raids, retrieve stolen livestock from other clans; or to try and acquire more cattle as a means of restocking. Other raids largely occur to acquire cattle for paying dowry, which is usually between 30 to 200 heads of cattle. These raids regularly occur between neighbouring ethnic communities and are characterised by shooting and killing. In some cases there is also destruction of property, raping and abduction of women and young girls. Cattle rustling is not new, it dates as far back as 1954, when the first ever recorded raid took place, but its root causes are yet to be addressed. Uganda's post-independence governments have been ineffective; they have not only failed to enforce the rule of law and provide good governance in the region, but also have had a dismal impact in the provision of security to the region from outside raiders<sup>27</sup>. Ethnic communities in this region are vulnerable to raids from other ethnic neighbouring groups like the Turkana from Kenya, and the Dinka from Southern Sudan.

The region is also characterized by a combination of acute poverty, vulnerability to drought, poor infrastructure and basic social service delivery. There is limited marketing and alternative employment opportunities, socio-cultural marginalization, and long standing dependency on external aid<sup>28</sup>. Poverty in Karamoja is multi-dimensional, characterised by long dry spells, droughts, severe environmental degradation and chronic insecurity leading to perpetual vulnerability in the region. According to UNOCHR, at the current rate of progress, Karamoja will not attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015<sup>29</sup>. Based on the Human Development index, the sub region is at the bottom of the radar with one in every two people being poor (in terms of the human poverty index). In terms of consumption poverty, 8 of every 10 people do not meet their basic requirements<sup>30</sup>. The ethnic communities in Karamoja feel excluded from the rest of Uganda. In their opinion, Karamoja has from time immemorial been treated as a 'human zoo'<sup>31</sup>. Largely, the outside society carries a belief that every one from the region is hostile, wild and ruthless. There is minimal response to the social and economic needs of the people in this region as evidenced in the distribution of social services like road infrastructure within districts, education, water and health care centres. Today the majority of street children and women estimated at over 20,000 in major towns such as Mbale, Iganga, Jinja and Kampala come from the Karamoja region; these are direct victims of poverty and insecurity in the region<sup>32</sup>. In a nutshell, Karamoja is a heterogeneous region in terms of ethnicity and cultural heritage; there is a multiplicity of independent traditions, a diversity of physical environments, to which the various human groups have adapted themselves holistically, and duo government systems: the traditional and the formal government. However the traditional system of government, comprising councils of elders, which normally sit under its parliament locally called *Ekirikit* is used in settling any matters that arise, administering norms and sanctioning behaviours of the members. In terms of governance, there are similarities in the traditional structures and governance systems the communities have a hierarchical structure of leadership based on age sets and sex.

#### Feminine and Masculine Identities

Social identity is a construction of the meaning and interpretations of a person within a particular community. Such identities define the expectations, roles and obligations of such a person and are an expression of the hidden power relations in the

community. The role expectations are often defined and regulated by the most powerful in the community. This assessment traces the bases of gender inequality using the feminine and masculine identities.

## **Feminine social Identity**

The social identity of a girl in Karamoja region is generally similar though with slight differences amongst the different ethnic communities. Among the Bokora, a girl is respectful, dresses decently, and is fearful. A girl in this community puts on a round skirt that is slightly below the knees, and stays at home fulltime. She is friendly, and social. In addition, a Bokora girl tattoos her body for purposes of beauty. According to the interviews tattooing the body is a sign of beauty of the young girl. This practice is also associated to the category of girls approaching their adolescence stage. This can be taken to imply one of the attributes that the girl is growing and preparing for the roles of womanhood and motherhood. She is expected to be hardworking, clean and well dressed. This identity is also shared with a Matheniko, Jie, Dodoth, Ethur, Nyakwae, and Pian girl. However an Ethur, Nyakwae, Noporein and Teuso girl has a slightly different social identity. This difference is marked by the fact that a girl in this community does not tattoo her body. However according to key informant interviews, the Ngiporein girl used to tattoo her face or chest but, very few, if any, do it. This could be due to the influence of the neighbouring ethnic groups who do not tattoo. The Ngiporein border the Acholi people, the Didinga and the Toposa in southern Sudan. But even within the pastoral communities, the social identity of a girl differs according to the traditions of the specific ethnic group. Among the Pokot and the Tepeth in Nakapiripirit and Moroto districts respectively, a girl's social identity is also defined by the practice of undergoing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This is also an initiation ceremony during which, a girl's genitalia is removed. This practice has been practiced in the two ethnic groups since time immemorial. As a result, it has become a tradition that every girl has to undergo. However largely all people in these communities, men and women, girls and boys, could not explain why they practice it. FGM is unique to only these two ethnic groups in this region but it is also practiced across the neighbouring communities of the Sabinu in Kapchorwa, the Marakwet and Kalengin in Kenya; it is a defining feature of a young girl and also marks the girl's transition from childhood to adulthood.

In addition to the above practices, the culture of putting on beads by both girls and women is upheld in most of the ethnic communities. The sizes of the beads vary according to the age. Young girls put on very tiny beads and the size increases as they grow up. These beads are taken as a sign of beauty. Respect for a girl is attached to the girl way she dresses and particularly the expected dress code of that community, which is also a sign that the parents love and care about her. Many girls in pastoral communities obtain these items by requesting for parents to provide. For instance, for the Pokot girls, their fathers find no difficulty in providing them with the beads since sooner, the girl will fetch more dowry for them. Some girls neat the beads themselves while others seek the support of the close relatives and friends. Many girls who are unable to get these items resort to alternative ways of acquiring them. Such methods include going to offer labour in semi-urban areas. In the process some of these girls are sexually exploited by their casual employers. Inability of the girl to acquire these items attracts negative comments from both the girls and the boys since such a girl is seen to be very poor, and or unloved by the parents. Other practices such as tattooing the bodies are done, as a sign of beauty, it's not seen as causing any bodily harm.

Largely across all ethnic is a girl is expected to be loyal, and obedient to all elderly persons, particularly the parents. Respect is key and parents treat responsibly to girls who give them the respect they deserve. However this kind of respect some times makes girls vulnerable to all forms of abuses and exploitation. Many parents force their girls into early marriage and do not expect them to question their decisions. As a consequence, girls in this region are often under heavy pressure and influence of the parents and other elderly persons, to conform to decisions that are against their will. Yet even upon marriage, the young girl is always unable to effectively participate at equal level with the husband in deliberating on matters of domestic interest and where their rights are suppressed and abused, they are unable to assert themselves. However, a girl who behaves as expected receives a lot of praises and mothers influence their sons to marry such a girl. A well behaved girl receives a lot of blessings from community members, a lot of presents like goats, someone may also offer to pay school fees in case a girl is in school and fetches a lot of dowry when she is married. Good conduct of a girl creates incentives for parents to work very hard for the good of their child. Even the poor parents who cannot afford, at least try buying her items such as the beads and the dresses. However, a mother of a badly behaved girl may seek advice from friends and relatives. Once this fails, parents and elders curse such a girl. This is illustrated by the response from the girls in this study. In Moroto for instance, one girl said, *"a mother disowns a girl by milking her breasts on the ground and cursing. Elders may disown the girls and they may kill a bull to disown such a girl."* It is believed that these are the girls who become prostitutes in the community. In Bokora, about 10years ago, a badly behaved girl would for instance be made to sit in black ants when naked. These past practices still send a chilling sound down the spine of a girl and compels her to conform to the social pressures. In Ethur, In case of misconduct, her friends advise her but if she does not change, her friends may decide to abandon her. Sometimes a group of girls gathers to beat the girl who misbehaves. Such collective disciplinary actions are based on the fact that when a girl behaves badly, she embarrasses the whole group of her age mates in the village, thus calling for collective responsibility. In instances where the pressure of fellow girls does not work, a group of boys, the *Ebonyas*, is there ready to carry out disciplinary measures on the girl. During this *Ameto*- the collective disciplinary practice- she is beaten beyond recognition and this serves as an example to other girls. In addition such girls lose respect among friends because her friend parents may discourage their daughters from associating with such a girl.

In terms of roles, girls of your age participate to contribute to the basic needs of the family, go for firewood, sell this fire wood, buy food for the family, cultivate food when the season is friendly, sell the produce then buy things like clothes food and medical care. For the girls who are unable to sustain their identities using family resources, the journey to labouring in towns becomes the cheapest alternative. However the work in town often exposes the young girls to risky interactions with their bosses as many are forced to have sexual intercourse with them. Many girls in towns get employed by the working class of usually educated families, engaging them in household work as housemaids. Others spend their days fetching water for soldiers in barracks, and other army

installations. However the payments are very meagre to allow them make a useful benefit out of them yet all is done at the cost of sacrificing their education. In Rupa, a group of young girls said,

*We also go to work to town, we fetch water, we are over worked but paid little that cannot sustain our families at times the food may not be enough for the whole family, we give the children the remainder and we sleep hungry.*

Even those who continue in the expected roles, fetching water and firewood for the family, and felling trees to help their mothers in building houses, the journey is not without risks. Many girls are exposed to risks of rape, by unknown men in the bush, and this leaves a lot of psychological torture in cases of pregnancy and in the context of HIV/AIDS, and total humiliation of their dignity. One girl said,

*When we go for firewood, sometimes we meet raiders who rape us. The good ones rape you and leave you there, you may bleed to death, and you may not be able to come home until another group comes to fetch firewood and they help you. At times you are taken to hospital and sometimes we fear to go there because nurses are terrible. People are reluctant to help. We are survivors; some of our friends were killed when we went to fetch firewood.*

As an adaptation, girls have to take measures. Girls move to the bush, very conscious because any time raiders may be around. They also move in big groups and at times some young men escort them. These roles intensify during the dry season because of the scarcity of water and other livelihood forms. As a result during the dry season, many young girls are seen carrying heavy bundles of firewood for sell in towns, and thorns for fencing their homes. In Abim, girls have to cut and carry big logs of wood, for charcoal burning, and others for just firewood to sell. As a result, some suffer from chest pain, others are burnt in the process of burning charcoal, yet when they bring for selling, a meagre price is offered. Such girls have nothing to do but to endure since they have no one to help. Those involved in keeping the goats are often met with worn out faces, flashing with thirst and hunger; yet when any animal gets lost, her life is at risk. She is sent back to the bush to look for the lost goats, when it rains, it rains on her. Many other girls work in hotels, because of the inability to get school fees. This and other petty jobs characterise the life of orphans and vulnerable children. Men disturb them for sex; they want to 'fix' them in dark corners.

As a girl transcends into an adult woman, she is expected to get married; there is room for choosing to live an independent life. As a result, women in this region are under social pressure to get married off as single life for a woman in this region is not positively sanctioned. Even in instances where misfortune befalls her in marriage, a woman is inherited by the brother to the deceased husband. The social identity of a woman builds on the values and expectations she is brought up into as a girl. Usually the girls are socialised into womanhood on the same values and norms that were imparted on them while still girls. A woman in this region is generally expected to be very hard working, and respectful. One respondent notes, *she must be hard working, jolly, respectful and obedient to public and husband; she follows the rules of the elders, (FGD Alerek, Abim district)*. This identity is shared among all women regardless of the ethnic boundary. A woman in Matheniko is expected to be well behaved, able to discipline her children and should be able to feed her family. She is supposed to dress decently, respect her husband and in-laws and be hardworking, able to build her house, fetch water, firewood and to water animals. The unique feature that defines a woman and differentiates her from a young girl is largely the responsibilities she has to shoulder. After transition from girlhood to adulthood, a woman is expected to be married off. This transition varies from one community to another. For the Pokot and the Tepeth, it is marked by undergoing genital mutilation (GM); in other communities like the Ethur, it is based on her physical energy and signs of physical body developments such as widening of hip girdle, development of breasts among others. These features are also accompanied with signs of responsibility and hard work.

Once married, she is expected to be always loyal and obedient to the husband, in-laws and the entire husband's clan members at all times. In case a married woman fails to conform to this conduct, and does not perform her duties like building, bread winning for the family, the husband may decide to send her back to her parents, and demand back the dowry. However, prior to this, the collective power of fellow women descends on her in order to conform. Women gather to advise her and if she doesn't change, the council of elders is called. At times she is cursed and disowned; at times she is fined by, for instance, making local brew (*Busa*) for elders. The social status of a woman also depends on the social ranking of the husband. In Ethur, like the girl, a woman who misbehaves is subjected to collective disciplinary actions organised and conducted by a group of initiated young boys, the *Ebonyas*, who are at the lowest ladder of the male hierarchy. She is also made to brew local beer for the elders to drink. This practice is live in all communities and in some, like in Pokot there is also a council of women elders. These women, who are also the custodians of the morals among women, often intervene before such cases appear in the council of elderly men, the *Ekokvo*. In case the council of elderly women fail to discipline the non-conformer, the entire group is subjected to collective disciplinary action. In one of the FGDs in Alerek, Abim district, a vivid example was narrated and demonstrated to the research team. According to the group, in early July 2008, group women were assembled before the council of elderly men, commonly known as *Ameto* for collective disciplinary action, following signs of degeneration in the conduct and morals of some women in the entire village. Specifically this misconduct was associated with women singing and dancing *Badda*<sup>33</sup> with young men, and not respecting the elders. In this assembly, they were told to move around and sing the *Badda* dance while being caned. Yet good conduct according to the expected social identity is positively rewarded. In Abim, a clan of the man, where the woman is married take a big bull to her family slaughter it for them to eat. This practice also indicates that good conduct of a woman is a reward to her parents, as an appreciation for the well upbringing. However the woman also benefits since in many instances she attains for herself a leadership role in the husband's clan to advise other women. Such women are highly respected by their husbands. In case of a clan ceremony, she is honoured with a gift of appreciation, and she is given the food (usually local brew (*Kwete* and groundnut paste (*Odi*)) to serve other women on the occasion. In Alerek, Abim district a group of women said,

*She received praises from the community and even husband can be proud of her. In case a man wants to marry another wife, he first consult his wife, if she approves, then he goes a bead to bring; but if she doesn't, the man does not marry another wife for fear for loosing a wonderful wife.*

In addition a man may sell his goat then give part of the money to the women to start businesses like selling local brew. This reward given for conformity, act as an incentive for the women to always aim at behaving according to the expected values and norms in the community. However, by doing so, women, just like the girls fail to develop competencies for assertiveness, particularly in times of trouble, when their rights are violated, their dignity and freedom suppressed. This rewarding system is the way patriarchy in the region works to maintain the status-quo and achieve peace and stability in the communities. The danger with this practice is that it distorts the opportunities for women to acquire the necessary capacities to contribute more meaningfully to their own socio-economic and political transformations; and by doing so, the communities fail to tap the advantages that can accrue to it when all its members, male and female are given an opportunity to develop their potentials for development. Therefore peace and stability in a highly repressive patriarchal system is achieved at the cost of justice and wellbeing of women and girls. Like girls, the women in these regions are not any better. In Moroto, women wake up in the morning, telling the children, if there is any, to clean the compound, fetch water and to make break fast. Thereafter, they go to the garden in the morning, fetch water, make porridge for their families, and then wash the previous night's utensils. Later they wash any dirty clothes. At Noon (Napanan), women boil maize (Ngikaawo) for the family; in poorer communities like Rupa, in Moroto, women move to friends to ask for **local brew residues** for the children to feed on.

*When I come from the garden, I go for water then come to look for what children can eat in the evening. When there is something to eat, we eat especially boiled maize (Ngikaawo) but if there is nothing we sit at home or go to the neighbours for residue in case she made local brew.*

Generally most communities in this region starve. In Rupa, Moroto district, women have to gather wild fruits which they boil for the families to feed on. Providing food to family members is largely a woman's responsibility.



**Figure 1: Wild fruit- *Ekadoliai*- being boiled for a meal in Rupa, Moroto district**

The vulnerability of women in this context largely is nested within their inability to find meaningful alternative sources of food in the community and yet the social roles make them obliged to feed their families. Others burn charcoal in the morning. During rainy season women go to their gardens till evening. Like girls, women also spend their time in the bushes cutting trees for building houses, and thorns for fencing their homes. As an adaptation to the much work, girls invite their friends to help, for instance, going to the garden. Girls also acknowledge that they have to contribute to their families despite the challenges. To help parents to feed the family, girls engage in manual labour like fetching water for people or going to people's gardens, where they are under paid. It is in the evening that women get time to prepare meals for the family, in case, one succeeded in getting something to prepare. During this time, women also make a fire place, where they sit and tell their children stories about their life. It is also at this time that women impart values onto children. This fire is also used to light the house, make the bed, before they go to sleep. In the evening, women and their families gather as a family around the fire place. However this practice has greatly been undermined by insecurity and many families no longer have this opportunity. Like the girls, women are also raped while collecting firewood, fetching water and doing their garden work. They are therefore equally exposed to the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS. Yet in this region access to Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) services are rare to find particularly in rural settings. Cases of rape were reported in areas at the boundaries of the ethnic groups such as Iriri in Bokora, Rupa in Matheniko among others. As an adaptation, when going for water or firewood, women put on shorts inside their skirts so that they are not easily raped. However other boys also move with razor blades. They also move in big groups so that, in case one is attacked, others come in to help. For women, even the troubles that befall their daughters also grossly affect them psychologically. This is illustrated in the responses given by women in Moroto during the group discussions in Lorengechora One voice, speaking in a tone of vulnerability said,

*When we go for firewood, we may meet enemies, "Ngimoe" who may kill us. Our children are sexually exploited in town. They may deceive her with 500/= and in the long run she comes home pregnant or even sick. You may be reluctant to find out where your child is getting food from; sometimes they are given money for sex (Women FGD, in Lorengechora).*

In addition because of the difficulties involved in earning a living, young girls and women are forced to go and labour in town of Kotido, Moroto and Kaabong. Many of these girls work as housemaids and get paid between 500-2000/= shillings per day. However in their search for survival, the young girls and women get sexually exploited in this town, getting exposed to the risk of contracting STIs. Some of the girls who work in town come home pregnant; for the young girls unready to carry the pregnancy, abortion is the order and they do so using crude methods such as taking a solution made of half kilogram of sugar in cold water. A few who can afford use drugs from clinics, mostly in urban centres. These cases of unwanted pregnancy were reported in Moroto town. The journey to the water sources is very long and tiring for the women whose daily activities run from morning until they go to bed. Many times women fail to get water especially during the dry seasons. Some women report that during the menstruation period in the dry season, they are forced to go for some days without bathing. The good thing associated with being a female in Karamoja is that when growing up, men compete amongst themselves just to win her support to marry. In Ethur, for instance the parents benefit as some times the young men plough their garden free of charge, in addition to the dowry. However, stress is one of the things women have to confront, born out of the heavy workloads and domestic violence is another. Girls become women at an early age, when still an adolescent.

## **MASCULINE IDENTITY**

Given the heterogeneous nature of Karamoja region, the social identity of a boy is also heterogeneous, varying with and according to the major livelihood forms in that community. Among the pastoral communities such as the Pokot, the Pian, Jie, Matheniko, Dodoth and the Bokora, boy's social identity is defined in terms of their role in pastoralism. A boy here is one who does not fear any thing, moves at night to monitor and protect the herds. They are also expected to protect their sisters in case of any social or political anomaly befalling them. This protection also moves further into guarding the sisters while on the way to collect water and firewood. This marks the beginning of the differential power relations between the girls and boys in the community. Many girls grow up knowing they are under the powers of their brothers. In the same light, the boys begin to assume this power over the girls as they grow. At a tender age, 5-9years, a boy goes to look after calves and lambs near homesteads, after the sisters at home, escorting them to the borehole or water places. But as he approaches the adolescence stage, a boy does not sit with women or girls in the same cooking area. He instead is expected to move and sit with fellow boys and sits far away from the cooking pot, *Ekeno*. This is also the age at which the young boy begins to engage a girl from other villages, homesteads. For a boy in the upper category, their roles and expectations also begin to change. At this age, 10-18 years, a boy goes to raid animals in other areas communities in preparation for marriage. A successful raid, of a young boy brings pride and makes him famous in the community. These journeys are never safe all the time; many times these boys are killed in the process while those who survive remain psychologically tortured by the memories of the friends and brothers whose lives get terminated in the raid encounters. Some boys also kill other people who come to raid their cattle or those they meet and tend to counter their force while raiding. Where a boy kills any person, his body also has to shed blood, by getting multiple cuts (tattoos) on a given side.

The security of the cattle is in his hands while in the grazing fields, but on return, it is for the father. He is expected to be brave. At home, he is expected to come out and check whether everything is okay in the kraals. In light of the constant raids from the outside communities, many boys spend most of their time in the bush spying against the enemy. By doing so, a boy in this region is exposed to the risks involved in staying in the bush, among which include, mosquito bites, rain, sunshine, and snake bites. The boys are also expected to have much love for their herds. A boy's love for a cow is seen in terms of the care and attention he gives them and the special names for the most loved ones. A boy's love for cows is also linked to the fact that cows play an enormous role in their late ages, at moments of engagement and marriage. This is illustrated by a response from one of the boys FGD,

*As for us, we are expected to love cattle most; its cattle than make us a man, marry and even get respect from girls and parents. A boy is expected to look for cows to marry his wife. I am not to depend on my fathers animals alone. I have also to be a man by looking for my own animal through going for raids in Turkana land, Bokora, and even Jie.*

This social identity makes young boys prone to the risks involved in raiding. It is this social identity that partly explains the reasons why many young boys have lost their lives in the search for cattle through raids, and the reasons why cattle raids are hard to eradicate. Cattle raids in this region is one of the mostly-relied-on alternative young boys have to acquiring animals which they will later use in their marriage. For boys from richer families, in term of cattle, the young boys are at less risk since they easily rely on family herds to acquire property and pay for dowry upon marriage. However this has also created vulnerable situations since many boys in these families tend to marry a tender age, averaging 15 to 16 years. As a result these young boys tend to disregard their right to childhood as they become young fathers and husbands to equally young wives; most cases young than they are. Incidences of young boys marrying at a tender age are evident in cattle richer communities of Acoricoro in Loro Sub County in Pokot. Yet in poorer communities like the Teuso, the Kadamas, and the urban centres in Lopei, many young boys have the opportunity to enjoy their right to childhood simply because they cannot afford to marry at a tender age. Marriage in pastoral communities in this region is never concluded without payment of dowry. Even where it is allowed to take place, the husband will always pay for the dowry whenever a child is born in his family. However in agro based communities like the Ethur, and Nyakwae in Abim, the Teuso in Kaabong, and the Ngiporeins, marriage is concluded with other items such as money, hoes and honey. These resources are easily mobilised by the young man wishing to marry with or without the support of the social networks. As a result, many girls in these communities often are forced into marriage even though they are not ready, largely because of the ease with which the binding resources- dowry is mobilised.

In terms of behaviour, like the girls, a boy is also expected to respect elders, those who are above his age. A boy is expected to respect elders at all times and have to go and respond to what the elders instruct them to. Disrespectful behaviour attracts negative treatment like curses. The community has also designed mechanisms through which they ensure that boys maintain their social identity. For the young boys, in case one refuses to adhere to the commands from elders, his parents resort to beating. *My parents especially my father will call village boys to beat me if I refused to go after the lambs and calves.* In case he does not behave as expected, he

risks being cursed. The elders go ahead and curse those who do not behave expected. Many boys reported that such harsh treatments make them to go away from home to you other relatives

*Like now if I refuse to look after cattle, they will curse me never to get animals and even get killed if I go for a raid. Even the girls when try to engage do refuse me because they hear that I am a coward, I do not go for raid, and come out at night when there is suspicion of some cattle rustlers being around. When you refuse say to go for wood from home, parents beat you, very badly. Some times you are even denied food at home because you refused to carry a big water tin. They tell you, you see, even other young boys of other families are carrying big containers! Whom do you think you going to be? (FGD for boys in Rupa)*

The social identity of a boy is not immune to challenges. Many boys are now forced to look after animals instead of going to school. At a tender age of about 5years, a boy in pastoral communities in Karamoja begins socialised into herding. He begins with rearing goats; as he advances in age, his responsibility widens to include calves and later to all the livestock. During the dry season the boys spend most of their time in the kraals, looking for pasture and water for the animals. However such kraals are in most cases situated far from reach of an average person and outside the areas with social services like health care and education. Consequently diseases befalling them are often managed using local drugs. In such kraals only the herding groups stay there. The boys miss the opportunity of receiving the care of both the mother and the father. In most cases the father acts as the mother, providing food and water as the boys go to herd. During his growth and development, a boy is socialised into knowing that cattle is the wealth. He is taught how to acquire, protect and defend it. In the pastoral communities, raiding is traditionally the channel through which such wealth is acquired. According to the group discussions, traditionally raiding would involve the entire village *Karuumas* going for a raid. However these days, raiding is done by groups of boys. Among the Jie for instance, male elders often settle and camp around the fireplace, where the elders, youths and the young boys sit. At this place, the young boys share their experiences about the events of the day; such as the experience they had during the raiding, pointing out the gains and challenges. It is in such meetings that the young boys also develop the morale and encouragement from the elderly people. According to the elderly key informant, the fathers often abuse boys who stay at home during the time when their age mates are off for raids. Such treatments often are aimed at ensuring that a young boy joins the peers into the normal activities. Although he keeps and looks after the animals, a young boy in pastoral communities does not own any animal often times, at the time of marriage, he is told to go and look after his wealth-cattle in case he has not yet raided his. This pressure was also confirmed by the group discussions with young boys. Their responses indicated that the animals are there while in the bush. As soon as they reach home, they are for the father. Many boys complain that their parents refuse to pay dowry for them to marry girls of their choice yet they spend most of the time looking after the animals. This forces many to go away from home and resort to raiding. Further still, boys are exposed to beating from the armed forces during the disarmament exercise. This is mainly a result of the fact that boys are generally perceived as the ones who have guns since they guard their cattle and also raid others.

While herding, Some times a young boy is beaten-up by elderly boys on the village following the instructions from parents especially the father. This normally happen after the young boy refuses to respond to the interests and dictates of the father.

*Like if you refuse to look after animals, or go to school on your own, other boys are instructed to come for you. Cruel parents at times force us to fight with them especially when they tend to beat your mothers when we are even there (FGD for boys in Lopei).*

This response further reflects how socialisation process in this region has made the life of a young boy very difficult. A young boy fighting his father of the violence with the mother is both a sign of the psychological torture such abuses on women cause to the young boys but also an expression of the extent to which violent response to conflicts is created right from childhood and sustained through the copying mechanism. Such young boys become careers of violent behaviour in future because of the inability to obtain alternative mechanisms for resolving conflicts. In addition, young boys also reported that some times they are at loggerheads with their elders on the village over girls they compete for. This often results into killings perpetrated by the elder boys. According to the group discussions, such boys often organise and way lay the young one they suspect to have same interest in the girl. Such actions often are setoff by rumours, especially when they escort the girls for water and firewood. Yet because of the influence and expected behaviour, a boy in these communities is expected to engage a girl as a sign of maturity. However many of the boys who are unable to engage girls often get humiliated by their fellow boys. Some times we are laughed at by follows boys, sisters, and even parents. This makes you isolated. This occurs if they see that you are not engaging the girls in the village. Unfortunately for the young and adolescent boys, seeking guidance from their sisters does not yield any positive results as they also laugh and refer them to fellow boys for advice.

Sometime at the grazing fields, when there are people whom the father borrowed a bull to help for the elders sons pay dowry; however when such people find the young boys grazing the animals, they often want to grab the cows by force. The little boys have little resistance to make and are often times beaten up when they do so. Yet going home without the animals often attracts negative sanctions such as denial of food. As an adaptation, young boys run to their aunts, grand parents and relatives in the near by villages. However the boys hardly report such events to any authority. Those who report do so to the local council officers at the village level but do so with a risk of being ridiculed, that they are not men enough.

*We report to the local council I if it's a big issue like when your head was been hurt by fellow boys and blood is getting out. If the person beating or has beaten is not older than you, then you don't report because it is a sign that you are not a man or you are weak. So I just keep quiet to avoid being laughed at by fellow boys and girls.*

Others report to their mothers in the hope that they will go and quarrel. Some times they also report to the fathers who in turn call the council of elders to discuss about it. For the boys in and around the trading centres and towns, they resort to carrying charcoal, firewood in towns to get food. The few with strength fight back when attacked by fellow boys; by going so, others come to fear such a boy. In addition, the boys who are denied food are also forced to resort to alternative sources of food. Many boys go searching for wild fruits like “*Ngimongo*”. “*Ngalam*” when denied food at home. However the adaptation mechanisms differ from

rural to urban and semi urban centres. While the rural boys can afford to trace for such fruits, those in semi urban and urban centres resort to stealing food, even from the fireplace. As a result many of such boys, once caught in the act often face the wrath of the owners. This is illustrated by the case of a young boy in Kotido town whose eye was pricked by a woman who accused him of stealing her food. Unfortunately these cases receive limited attention because of the fact stealing is an illegal act. Such children hardly receive any support from even the parents who are also vulnerable to poverty. The level of juvenile delinquency is high in urban centres but largely as an adaptation to the difficulties in livelihoods. Yet there are limited interventions for offering psychological restoration. Other Some times they follow those who go for raids so as to also get some animal to sale or even marry and have our own hut. For the boys who migrate during the dry seasons, In the Kraals, they are not allowed to come home especially during the harvesting season. Those who dare escaping are threatened by their relatives and siblings who make gun shoots in the sky to threaten them. *And if you try to escape, they go a head of you and the rescue you by firing up and then you fear to go home, instead you come back to the Kraal.* Many of these boys reported that in search for protection, boys confide in their mothers, are unfortunately never around in the kraals. The life of a boy in a kraal is very difficult, with no motherly care since mothers go but on rare occasions to visit their sons and husbands in the kraals.

A man's social identity is built on the values and expectations he is nurtured with right from childhood. The transition of a boy to a man is punctuated with celebrations through the initiation ceremonies. Among the Pokot, the Ethur, the Jie and the Dodoth, a young man is initiated into manhood before being recognised as so. In Pokot for instance a young man has to under go *Sapana*, a cultural initiation ceremony for boys in this community. This involves serving elders with a bull to feast on and some times with booze. This ceremony also entailed circumcising the young man but this has graduated reduced. A man's social identity in this region is therefore linked to the extent to which he has initiated into various strata of differing privileges and authority in that community. These ceremonies create privileges for the young men who have initiated and also act as incentives to attract others young men into initiation. For instance, among the Ethur, it's only the initiated boys, the *Ebonyas*, who will have the opportunity to collectively discipline a lady or woman who has misbehaved. Among the Pokot, an uninitiated boy will not have the opportunity to serve elders during any ceremony. Such young men who do not conform always sit at the periphery of the meetings. Their decisions are never considered important. The social class of a woman is dependent of the social class of the husband. In case the husband has been initiated to a higher level rank like the Bonyo –the highest ranking age set in Ethur- the woman also automatically attains that status. In addition the social identity is also defined in terms of the roles they are expected to do. Upon marriage, the role of a man in guaranteeing security of the family is at the centre of this identity. In doing so, many of the young men often engage in fencing around the family and spying against the enemy. However the role expectations vary with the age and social class of the man. An one grows, a man's role get reduced to planning for the family and community while others of lower age classes engage in the continued survival tasks of the family. In this highly insecure area, the planning largely focuses on securing the grazing pasture and water for the animals.

Like the boys, the men who engage in raiding also encounter and confront similar forces guarding the animals where they go. In such confrontations, many young men also lose their lives while those who survive also do so at the cost of killing others. Shading blood is a universal feature of every person who kills a person in this region. Doing so, it is believed, is an expression of identifying with the deceased person since no culture treasures killing in Karamoja. Across all the communities, a man who killed any person is isolated from every community for a month. This is also a sign that indicates that the community disassociates it self from such an act. While in isolation, such a man is fed by only women who have reached their menopause. This category of women no longer in reproductive ages and therefore no children will be affected by this exposure. Such a man also does not sit, eat or share a cup with any other person except with one who also killed. As an act of reintegration, a cleansing ceremony is organised and a sacrifice is made of a white goat. A cleansing ceremony is done by elders. However this practice also is associated with status among the young men because of the special names they receive upon integration. In Pokot for instance, if the first person one killed was a woman, he is given names such as: Lobongtum and Adwaltum; in the first person killed was a man, names such as Kalyamoi, Aremle, are given to the warrior. These names are associated with high status among boys and men in this community and often used as symbols of achievement. As the young man grows, the scars on the body begin to protrude. According to the group discussion with men in Napolokokyo, the men with such bodies are seen to be romantic for the women. In return, men young boys are attracted to gaining such status in order to enjoy the privileges associated with them. In these practices women have been made vulnerable because they are the easy target to kill; they are never armed and are in most cases in vulnerable places where they cannot be defended. In a discussion with one of the community elders, it is clear that the elders desist and distaste such practices although it is their duty to cleanse them and reintegrate them in the community. In the interview with him, the elder said,

*The practice of going to kill Karamojong women is wrong. They have made Pokot women vulnerable. Before a massive raid is organized a cleansing is organized for the elders to bless and cleanse them to have a successful raid. Many times the elders tell young boys not to raid but they go and raid. They no longer respect for elders. We are tired of cleansing these boys.*

Restraint from the elders is considered cowardice. There is a general feeling among elders in pastoral communities that their powers to restraint, control and direct the actions of particularly the young men in the community has dwindled greatly. This loss of power is associated to the role of the gun and the ease with which the young men access it. In another interview an elder noted that one can get a gun from a friend; the power of the guns at their will and restraint from elders is considered cowardice. In many places where disarmament exercise has taken root, like in most places in Bokora among others, there is a reverse of trend. Elders in such places still care the powers. As the gun falls silent, there are no more raids and in many places the young men are now idle. This is a critical moment for them to adjust to alternative ways of life, which unfortunately are hard to get.

Therefore the social identity of a man in pastoral communities is largely dependent on his social strata. However the social control mechanisms for regulating a man's behaviour to suit the expected behaviour, lifestyle is much weaker because of the inability of the elders to use their powers to contain their excessive actions. As a consequence, because of the role of the gun in livelihood,

young men in these communities have equal and some times more powers than the elderly men in the community. The excess powers have now resulted into the young boys marrying at a tender age because they easily acquire the cattle for dowry through raids. They also clope with girls, without paying dowry in some instances. As a result of this practice, many girls in Pokot and Tepeth now marry at an early age before they get mutilated. 20 years ago, one could not marry a girl who had not circumcised, and a girl could not be circumcised before showing signs of maturity. This maturity would be judged basing on the physical appearances, enlargement of girls and mistreat cycle. All these things have emerged because of the fact that the elders no longer have an influence on the behaviour and lifestyle of the young men in the pastoral communities. There is a feeling however among the opinion leaders in this region that the power of the elderly men will come back to them because of the successes registered by their disarmament exercises in the region. This is based on the fact that guns, the major item that has made young men to robe the powers of the elders, are falling silent and elders have hardly benefited from them. Raiding is a highly risky activity yet, its benefits are very limited in most times. Using his experience one opinion leader in Nakapiripirit said,

*When people go to raid, they many bring about 500 cows. Not every raid gives a raider what is enough. The fortune teller would benefit say 5 cows, one from each of the raiders if they were five, after a successful raid. Many elders have not been benefiting from the raids. They will not see any difference after disarmament because they will remain the same.*

In all the above, the pastoral communities in Karamoja have traditional mechanisms for protecting the vulnerable boys. Such mechanisms entail invoking spiritual powers to curse all those who disturb them. According to the discussions with boys, cursing is a very common practice against those who behave contrary to the social expectations. In some instances, parents fight those who attack boys while in others, the elders and fathers organize and confiscate the animals of those responsible in beating the boys. However the study also reveals that the elders are increasing unable to enforce their powers because the boys no longer respect them very much. This compromised the effectiveness of the social protective structure in guaranteeing the protection of the young boys. According to group discussions, the powers of elderly gradually begun to shrink once the youths acquired guns. In Moroto this dates as far back as late 1970s and early 1980s when the armoury of Moroto barracks was overran by the local communities during the overthrow of the late President Idi Amin. Raiding eroded the power of cultural judges to executive their cultural ceremonies; an elderly man in any pastoral community find it hard to sit down a person with a gun. Prior to the spread of guns, a severe punishment would be given to perpetrators of rape but the gun raided it.

Despite the variations in the socialisation and orientation in the life of a boy and a girl, there is a positive attitude among young boys about females who are abused. During the group discussions, the young boys said,

*When the public following the orders of your fathers is beating your mother, you feel bad. Here we go ahead and fight with our fathers, and then they disown you and even chase you away. When a boy rapes the girl and yet she does not like that boy, the parents and some times village members do support the boy. I see it as being bad to the girls.*

This affection towards the mothers is the basis for the boy's reaction. It is also important to recognise that mothers play a strong role in the life of the boy especially as he plans to marry. Mothers often mobilise their cows to let their sons marry. However the stunning finding in this study is that such affection and love, which protects a mother in her family, reduces as boys graduate into men. This change could be a result of the fact that the young man now begins to see himself as a man and his relationship to the woman changes to that of the superior-subordinate relationship. Elderly women and mothers in this region are part of the system which continue in the creation, and sustenance of the established social identities, role expectations and the sanctions that accrue to the conformity and non conformity thereof. This is evidenced in the fact that in all communities mothers are at the forefront of making sure that the girls behave according to the expected ideals. Some boys reported that some times they feel like helping their sisters in fetching water but the mothers insist that such work is for girls alone. However this is done unconsciously. Men women have been used to such a system right from their childhood and therefore do not see any inequality or unfairness in the way the social construction of the identities of men and women are created, promoted and sustained. There is however the strong force that maintains the structural inequalities between women and men. Such forces are within the elderly men and men generally in the communities since these are the custodians of the moral positions of the communities. As a result, men's attitude towards female participation in community engagements and decision making structures is sanctioned negatively. Male elders in the community believe that women should not engage in community decision-making structures and meetings. According to the group discussions, women have their roles within the families and not in the community. However there are some men who believe that women can be given responsibility to listen to community wishes with men but should never be allowed to mix with men.

This boundary is also accepted by women in the community since it is the social order. Male participants in Nakapiripirit said, *Women feel insecure to mix with men. Women's dressing makes them insecure. They like holding their clothes all the time. This makes them insecure.* This response was further supported by another elderly voice which said,

*Women have different problems. They menstruate and during this period, women will also be ashamed to stand up and we will all be ashamed. This has ever happened and women failed to help themselves. That I why we do not need these things happen again.*

The group also reported that there are cases when women have failed to control their blood flow during the menstruation period, at a time when they are in social events, such as *Naleyo Dance*<sup>34</sup>. This also illustrates the vulnerability and reproductive health needs of women in this community; however rather than intervening to help the vulnerable members of the society, the elders, who are also the custodians of power and resources, decide to use such exceptional cases as the yardstick for determining regular behaviour, rather than helping the survivors. The finding also indicates that reproductive health information among women and girls is insufficient and highly needed in this community. Getting reproductive health information in Pokot, Kadam, and the Tepeth is very difficult because their unique language is hardly understood by actors in the region and other ethnic communities in Karamoja. As a result, the interventions rarely reach those who need it. Even the existing radio station broadcasts information in *Ngakarimojong*, a language understood by all except the Pokot and the Kadama.

In this highly traditional society, events are used to define and redefine the behaviour of the members. For instance, in Karita, it was revealed that male circumcision was stopped when a group of circumcised boys were killed by the raiders and their animals taken away, in middle 1980s. There are however other reasons elderly men give to justify the exclusion of women in the larger community interactions and structures. Other respondents in the group discussions report that sitting together with women make them sexually aroused and become uncomfortable, and unable to concentrate. Others explanations indicate that women have enormous responsibilities of caring for the children are often times move with them. Child rearing roles in this region is a female gender role. However, men, both those in reproductive ages and the elderly, feel uncomfortable to hear children cry in their presence, yet mothers find it difficult to avoid it.

Child rearing in this region is part of the feminine identity; women often move with their children in most of the engagements of the day, including in such community interactions. In some instances, women in reproductive ages leave their children either with their sibling sister or an elderly woman in the *Manyatta*. Once they grow and reach an age where they can engage in roles, mothers get an opportunity to leave them with the peers and siblings. This is further illustrated by the analogous statement one respondent gave in the group discussion, “Have you seen donkeys with cows? Even when they are sleeping, cows sleep alone and donkey alone they do not mix up.” The analogy used by the elder to illustrate how it is unlikely that women and men can mix in the community to deliberate on matters of common concern and for the welfare and development of the individual women and men. However, interestingly women and men mix up in church services and when seeking health care services. Also men and women in the trading centres like Amudat Mixing up easily. This is because the social economic conditions in trading centres making interactions more frequent in seeking and meeting the daily obligations and executing tasks. Trading centres also harbour people of diverse social economic and cultural backgrounds. It is these that have overtime transformed the relations between men and women. In healthcare seeking, men and women sit together on the sign bench wanting for the doctor to come and offer service. These are life-threatening moments but also during moments of celebrations men and women mix up. It is only in for a where deliberations are on making critical decisions that determine the allocation of resources in the community that women are pushed to the periphery. The responses from the key informants reveal that women in Pokot feel free when they are alone. One voice said,

*When we sit together they will not feel free especially the way they sit. Besides women here issues they discuss about men. So they will not discuss these things about men when there are all together. Women sit according to ages. The mothers discuss the character, behaviours of men so they know which families their daughters should get married to. In addition, women discuss with girls how to handle men in marriage.*

There is also another feeling that reflects a negative perception of the capacities of women in the community. This is revealed in another voice of the key informant who notes that men have a lot to think about for the future of families and cattle. Women have nothing to think about like men. So you cannot sit and discuss. This shows that women are considered to be less critical and reflective in decision making process; however there was no any evidence from their interactions or even any specific case that indicated that women’s critical thinking and reflection in planning was less as compared to men’. Women have not been given an opportunity to lead and plan. It is however important to note that these traditional ethnic pastoral have their own norms that are based on the powers expressing the interests dominant groups of male patriarchs. The events mentioned above, and the child rearing practice are just observable manifestation of the vulnerability of women in a male dominated, drought-prone and yet insecure region. Decision-making structures are the platform where interests are expressed, deliberated upon, and decisions for and against them made. By excluding women from major decision making structures, the interests, issues, needs of women are hardly presented and deliberated upon in such structures, implying that decisions are often made for them. Women and other vulnerable categories miss the opportunity to articulate their interests and develop competency and skills for negotiating for their interests. It should be noted however that the exclusion of women in the larger decision making structures in these ethnic communities did not destabilise peace at a manifest level; although it has grave implications, they are hardly seen by the stakeholders including women in the region, they are therefore hardly addressed at any level. The implications of gender identities in Karamoja region is that mothering is not recognized as work and by implication, women find it difficult seeing them as such. Yet the role of fathering does not have some implication as mothering. As (Caroline 1996) noted, mothering and fathering have very different meanings. While to father signifies to get a child, to mother signify constant nurturing, and life long concern for children<sup>35</sup>. In a nutshell, the social construction of social identities is a reflection of male power in shaping the relations, regulating them and defining access to opportunities for education, facilitating their control over women. All this serves to ensure that male dominance is maintained and its collective goals and interests are realized even against the resistance of women and children. Across all the ethnic communities, women and girls take a subordinate position. This is a true characteristic of patriarchy. The subordinate status of women and girls in Karamoja vis-à-vis men is universal, though with a difference in the nature and extent of subordination across the ethnic groups. The gender roles identified in this study are also in line with Rai who argues that gender role ideology does not only create duality of femininity and masculinity, it also places them in hierarchal fashion in which females are generally valued less than males because of their socially ascribed roles in reproductive sphere, and the benefits such roles bring<sup>36</sup>.

Women’s enhanced participation in governance structures is viewed as the key to redress gender inequalities in societies<sup>37</sup>. However this study reveals that in Karamoja, within the patriarchal context of pastoral lifestyle, they are unable to radically transform the relations but rather they largely play on male’s terms. The inequalities in Karamoja result from the socio-cultural barriers that frustrate rather than facilitate their participation and access to and ownership of the necessary resources for their development the families, which mediate micro level decisions regarding education, health or employment, reveal the system in which women’s subordination in all spheres including access to health care services, education and participation in the decision-making process is sustained. A woman has also compromised their chances of developing the skills necessary for them to articulate their interests within the existing so vial structures in the various ethnic groups.

## Initiation and Transition to Adulthoods

### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a traditional practice of mutilating a woman's genitalia either partially or wholly. It is practiced as a ceremony that marks a girl's transition from childhood to adulthood. The practice is a tradition among the Pokot and the Tepeth that entails the removal, (partial or fully) of the woman's genitalia. A girl of ages (10-15) years is mutilated as a sign of preparation for the tougher reproductive roles society expects them to undergo. FGM is a life long practice of the Pokot and the Tepeth of Karamoja. However there are other communities such as the Sabini in Kapchorwa, the Kalengin and Marakwet of Kenya who practice it. According to the group discussions with elderly women in Kakingol, FGM has been practiced by their fore generations, most of who have died. Many of the respondents could not easily trace the origins of the tradition. However the practice is conducted as an initiation ceremony from girlhood to womanhood.



Figure 2: Some of the Kadama girls in Moruita sub county

The girls of the same period of birth in the village are mutilated as a team on the village, by the elderly women who are also the custodians of the practice. After the practice girls are kept together in the same hut, in which they are locked and are given the key to keep. During their stay in this hut, the girls get the food through the window, which they open for any person who comes to visit them. Usually they receive support of the mothers and other girls and women on the village who underwent the practice. During this time, the girls are not expected to bathe until they heal. In case of any health concern that threatens their health, the elderly women often come to their rescue. In addition, the girls in this stage are considered unclean and do not shake hands with outside community members until the graduation day. In this highly cohesive community, circumcised girls use sticks as points of contact for other people who come to greet them. These girls dress in unique black attire made out of a cow's skin; this easily makes them identified easily in the community.

As an initiation ceremony, all girls of the above mentioned ages are expected to undergo FGM. In order to enhance the response to the practice there are enormous positive and negative sanctions which are brought to bear on conformity and non conformity. This study reveals that the girls who undergo the practice are highly respected and they receive a number of gifts from the relatives, the well-wishers, and the politicians as they target the votes. As a consequence the girls in this these ceremonial gifts create incentives for the girls to undergo the practice. Special names are given to girls who undergo the practice and these are used in the societal hierarchical ordering upon which social status is defined and accorded among the women. Such names include:



**Figure 3: Mutilated girls greeting using the stick in Pokot**

The night before mutilation is marked with singing and dancing; when morning comes, they move in the prepared hut. During this mutilation, girls who underwent the practice, come and bathe the candidate girls waiting to be circumcised. This is done very early in the morning. After this, the girls come and sit on the stone where they are mutilated. Preparations for the FGM begin much earlier with girls undergoing similar painful experiences, marked with tattooing of their bodies and removal of at least one incisor tooth. These are painful bodily practices that also are associated with beauty. Some respondents in the study also associated the practice of removing the tooth as an approach used for easy administration of medicine. However, very few respondents held this view. The majority noted that these practices are meant to test and prepare a young girl for the tougher FGM in the future. Once a girl withstand this pain, they are then in position to undergo the practice in future. During this practice, in some areas, a single knife is used while in others; there will be a knife for each candidate of circumcision. The latter cases occur around trading centres and this is related to the fact that they had heard about HIV/AIDS and how it is spread. However, even with this information, the circumcisers in this region still believe that there is no risk of contracting the disease because girls in this community live together with their boys on the same village. Consequently, their protection measures in the process of mutilating these girls may not guarantee their protection. Yet, because of their livelihood roles, many of these boys move beyond their areas in search for pasture and water for their animals. Sharing and using the same instrument when mutilating girls was reported in areas far away from the trading centres, for instance the Kadam communities living on the mountainous side. The mutilated girls – *Ngachomeri* – stay in the indoors, in the hut, for a period averaging to one month. After this period, girls graduate upon successful healing. For the second month following their mutilation, they, in a group, embark on mobilising financial assistance usually from young boys of their age not elderly. These are also the potential husbands in the community. Such money is used for buying beads and new clothes for their graduation ceremonies.

### **Genital Mutilators**

Mutilation of the young girls in this region is done by elderly women who in most cases also act as the Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) in the communities. However these women are not rewarded in any specific monetary value and they do not do so in return for monetary gains. However they take the old clothes of the *Ngachomeri*. The practice therefore has some reciprocal relations, which in some way relate to the rewards for the actions of the mutilators. These are however not seen as payments in the perspective of culture and neither the *Ngachomeri* nor the mutilators perceive the reciprocal relations as conditions to be fulfilled prior or in accordance to Genital mutilation.

After FGM, 2-4 months, they are put together, eat together and are taught several norms about relationships in marriage, values, and the about motherhood role expectations. For the last two months, elderly women orient the mutilated girls. This is the process through which the girls are fully integrated into the expectations of the dominant societal groups, the husbands and male

patriarchy in general. Therefore FGM is also a preparation phase during which girls are further socialised into their social identities, norm, and expected behaviour with husbands, respect and the wider society. Usually the girls who got mutilated at the same time and socialised together by the elderly women also creates a strong social bond among them which is also used by its members to monitor conduct, create pressure and sanction others who do not conform; this group also is the immediate reference point for a young woman who experiences family trouble. For girls who do not conform to the practice often receive negative sanctions throughout the time of their reproductive life. Such non-conformers are ridiculed, isolated in social gatherings and are largely taken to be unclean. In the FGDs, many women reported that non-conformity to the practice is used at a tool of fighting rivalry in the highly polygamous marriage. A woman is scorned before the husband until the latter gets humiliated and advises the unmotivated woman to consider under going the practice. Such women often circumcised during and at times of delivery, by the TBAs. Thus the TBAs in these communities largely act as the channel through which those who did not conform at the right time, are further targeted. The negative sanctions also act as disincentives for the young girls who have to make a choice. The social pressure brought to bear on the non-conformers to FGM serve also to discourage further non-conformity among the young ones who are expected to undergo the practice.

This study further reveals that the men are neither attracted to the practice not against it. The group discussions held in the various areas presented similar findings. They men said, *“women are sweet whether they are circumcised or not”*. This perception is held by the entire categories of men, the elderly, those in the reproductive ages and the potential husbands.

*We are not the ones responsible for FGM it is women themselves. There is no woman who does not get married because she never underwent FGM. Therefore, you ask the women themselves. However, as a tradition in our community we are part of it.* (FGD, Nabolokocha)

This finding was also collaborated with the findings from the female FGDs but the findings reveal that in many instances the fathers provided the financial support for the girls to go for the FGM. Many women however reported that eh practice is bad and have realized its dangers. Unfortunately they lack the moral authority to advice their daughters against the practice, since they underwent the same transient.

*These girls even if you tell them they do not listen; they ask you why do you stoop us from circumcising yet you were also circumcised? Moreover, when you stop them they go and ask money from their fathers and they go to the relatives where they are circumcised.*

The female group discussions also reveal that these girls seek permission from their fathers before they undergo the FGM. By consenting to the interests of the young girls, fathers in the community present themselves with influence and power over the practices. This finding contradicts the information from the male group discussions but also serves to emphasize that although fathers do not have a direct preference of circumcised women over the non-circumcised ones, they are first hand beneficiaries of the transition of the girls from childhood to adulthood. In this less literate community, knowing the exact age of the girl is very difficult and physical changes in the body is used to determine who is ready to undergo the FGM. In addition, girls who were born within the same period undergo the practice as a group. The challenge is that some times these girls are so young to the extent that it is difficult to get enough flesh of the clitoris for cutting. For such young girls, the circumcisers use a special thorn to prick the clitoris. By doing so, the flesh around the clitoris gets inflamed and the circumcisers have something to hold while before cutting. The Pokot and Tepeth communities are very hierarchical in terms of age set and gender. By ensuring that girls of similar age share similar roles and expectations, the girls of the similar age act as guardians on one another and through this association, the inbuilt interest into FGM is maintained. Some young girls reported that when moving together, they will not allow an uncircumcised woman to walk with them. *Who will walk with you who have “horns”? You are dirty you have to move alone.* This expression is used to refer to the two labia. There is a general feeling that women with the clitoris are dirty as compared to those with the circumcised ones. However hygiene in reproductive health is a product of personal health control rather than the absence of the clitoris. There is a strong desire among the girls to undergo the practice, perhaps to prove to others that they are really women in the context of their culture. This interest makes girls to do anything possible to undergo the practice. In one of the group discussion among the Tepeth in Kakingol, some young girl came and ridiculed the group of elderly women who were discussing about their practice. This clearly illustrated the desire and strong value they attached to the practice. FGM is a widely practiced in Among the Pokot, Kadama and Tepeth. However it is difficult to get comprehensive data on the number of girls who undergo the practice annually in a given community. This is largely because FGM is currently campaigned against and yet it is treasured by the communities who practice it. The available data does not reveal the true facts about the magnitude of FGM in these communities. The table below summarises the number of girls mutilated in Pokot community.

**Table 1: Number of Girls mutilated in Pokot since 2002**

Year	Number of girls circumcised
2002	60
2003	74
2004	120
2005	163
2007	106
Total	

Source: POZIDEP office

In table 1, the statistics indicate that the number of girls mutilated is gradually reducing since 2005. This could be attributed to the fact that the organisation, POZIDEP, conducted awareness campaign in the community against the practice. However given the fact that their interventions are also limited in scale and geographical scope, due to logistical constraints, it may be true that the magnitude of girls mutilated in the region is higher that the statistics presented. In Tepeth, it was reported that about 400 girls had

been circumcised, while in Kadam, it was difficult to get any statistics because of lack of any community based intervention in the area to document the cases.

The power that sustains the practice in these regions largely lies within the women and the young girls in the community. This is because of the negative sanctions that the girls and women impose on the non conformers. Such negative sanctions such as ridicule and exclusion in common interactions provide disincentives and compel girls to conform to the practice. In our interviews with male elders in the community, it was revealed that men do not have any significant attraction to mutilated women in disregard of those who are not. For the Pokot men for instance, they can marry both the mutilated and the non-mutilated girls. The group discussion in Napolokocho, Karita Sub County in Pokot community said, *Mutilated or not, a woman can be faithful unless they are not married officially; when dowry has not paid to her parents.*

**Table 2: matrix showing the power and influence of community members to FGM practice**

Category	Stake in FGM	Power and Influence rating by the community members
Young girls before mutilation	Have strong desire to under go the practice and they are driven by the social status and prestige given to mutilated girls and women. Driven also by the fear to be negatively sanctioned in case they do not conform to the practice, and the false belief that they may never get married. They are also ability to move to their relatives in case they do not receive the permission to undergo the practice Mutilated girls influence the young ones	Ranked first
Mutilated girls and women	Have undergone the practice and induce others into practicing FGM. Negatively sanction non conformers to FGM through ridiculing them in marriage, and isolating them in social interactions.	Ranked second
Boys	The future husbands to the girls who mutilate. Potential beneficiaries in the dowry that the family receives upon her marriage Give gifts to girls graduating after FGM	Ranked sixth
Husbands/ fathers	Negotiated for the dowry to be paid by the boy/husband and forced the young girl into marriage Upon successful mutilation Give permission for the girls to undergo the practice. In case the mother refuses the girl to undergo the practice, girls ask for money from fathers to go and visit their relatives from where they are mutilated. Give gifts to girls graduating after FGM	Ranked fourth
Elderly women	They are the mutilators and they take the old clothes of the girls after genital mutilation. In addition, they are the custodians of knowledge used in helping the mutilated girls to heal faster They are at the core of the socialisation process through which the girls educated on how to behave in their marriage. They have also strong attachment to the practice as guardians of culture.	Ranked second
Politicians and local leaders	Upon successful healing and graduation of the mutilated girls, politicians join relatives to well wish the girls and give gifts to them. Buy clothes to the mothers whose daughters are about to graduate. Have the knowledge and power to negatively sanction the practice Have strong and big following; their words on FGM can be taken more seriously	Ranked fifth

According to the matrix above, the strongest power and influence sustaining FGM resides in the female categories. In particular, the girls waiting to undergo the practice, the mutilated girls and women, and the elderly women who are also the genital mutilators. However, the males also have an indirect stake the practice particularly in light of the fact that the girls receive permission from them and money to facilitate their movements. The third category includes the local leaders like the politicians at local government council levels and at national levels because of the honour and appreciation given to the categories of mothers and daughters upon graduation. Unfortunately such leaders are unable to condemn it because of the fear to lose votes in the next election. As a result their power is rarely used to transform the practice. In these communities practicing FGM, there are very few actors advocating against the practice. Except the church of Uganda, under the Karamoja Diocesan Development Services (KDDS); yet even their interventions are very thin on ground because of the limited logistical and functional support to facilitate the design and implementation of such interventions

FGM creates vulnerability for the mutilated girls. Since it is an initiation ceremony, the girls upon mutilation and successful healing are perceived to be ready for marriage. Consequently, they are hijacked on the way, just like an eagle carrying a chick. Even the girls also know that upon mutilation, they are ready for marriage. However today, many girls are mutilated at a very tender age, even as tender as 10years. Such girls are unable to undergo normal deliveries and are prone to experiencing complicated births. According to interviews with elderly men in Amudat sub county, twenty year back, one could not marry a girl who had not circumcised, and no girl could be mutilated when had not shown maternity. This was done to ensure that nothing, after FGM, delayed the girl from marriage. However today, girls are mutilated even before they experience their menstruation cycle; many

girls are mutilated as soon as their breasts start protruding on their chest. This is illustrated by the case of a young girl, about 13 years, who was mutilated and on healing the vaginal opening narrowed so small that the man could not penetrate. The girl was brought to the elderly women, the experts and also circumcisers, to help in widening the opening. During this process, the elderly women inserted the goat's horn into the vaginal opening and used it as widening tool. This survivor had been brought to the elderly women by the husband, an equally young boy, who complained of having struggled for a week with no successful penetration. This happened around March 2007, when the girl from Locongenge happened to get the ordeal. There are many such cases but they go unnoticed because there are experts among the mutilators who are often consulted in such cases; and people normally confide within the family

Traditionally girls underwent genital mutilation before marriage. However, today some girls get married off before this practice. This is largely attributed to the role of the gun in these communities. The elders both women and men have lost the power to train the girls and boys, as they are rebellious through the influence of the gun. Today girls elope with boys they come without the knowledge of the parents. This is because of the fact that many boys are willing to marry, and do not necessarily depend on the fathers' animals for dowry; many boys raid animals and use them for dowry. This reduces the control the elderly parents have over their boys, thus contributing to the marriage before FGM. In addition some boys also encourage their friends to marry their sisters so they get the animals for their dowry. The gun and the practice of raiding eroded the power of cultural judges- the councils of elderly men- to execute their power because they cannot sit down a person with a gun. There are also concerns that some young boys now live in the bushes and do not come back home. Before they had the power to enforce a severe punishment to perpetrators of rape but the gun raided it.

### **Health Implications of Female Genital Mutilation**

FGM is a risky practice yet it is highly cherished by the young girls waiting to be initiated. Prior to genital mutilation, a girl who wish to retract her decision after having decided is threatened with death because she will have ashamed their mothers and elderly women in the village. Although the research team did not get any girl who was killed as a result of such, the girls in the mutilating communities reported that it happens. In addition, there is also pressure from the peers for the girl to be mutilated. Such pressure is enforced through the practice of isolating a girl who does not conform, in all social interactions in the community. This is also further reinforced by the insults and ridicule. It is this pressure which forces a girl to comply. Such threats cause a lot of psychological torture to the young girl and often times are forced to comply with the practice against their will.

Yet upon genital mutilation, a group of mutilated girls is put in a hut and isolated from the larger community. During this period, girls are not allowed to bathe until they heal. By doing so, girls are exposed to the risk of contracting genital infections arising out of less hygienic lifestyle they lead. This is further compounded by the fact that such girls do not receive any biomedical services since they are secluded. However the structure of elderly women organises and offer ethno medical care to the candidates as they wait for their graduation upon successful healing. At times, some girls also over bleed as a result of mutilation. This study also reveals that as an adaptation, the circumcisers rub the wounds with paraffin to deter excess bleeding but the effect of this to the girl's health is not yet established; the implications of using paraffin on a wound need to be further investigated in order to provide a scientifically based analysis of its effect on the health of the girl. It is very difficult to establish how many girls die as a result of such bleeding and the less hygienic conditions because of the limited data in these less literate communities in the region.

Further more, many of the girls who heal remain with scars leave psychological torture and make complications during delivery. Some of the girls who undergo the practice at a very tender age, 10-13 years experience difficulties in enjoying their sexuality and making their reproductive roles. Such a girl has less developed genitalia, and the circumcisers find it difficult to mutilate. As a way forward, the genitalia of such a girl is pricked using a thorn in order to get inflamed, for the mutilator to handle. Such a practice brings a long of pain to the little girl. Yet, on healing, the girl's reproductive opening almost seals off, since their bodies are still developing. This makes it difficult for the young girl to deliver. In some instances the ability of the girls to enjoy her sexuality is tampered with. In this study this is illustrated by a case of a girl whose vaginal opening had to be widened by the elderly women, using a goat's horn, after the husband, an equally young boy, reported his failure to penetrate after a week of marriage! As a consequence, many women, particularly those who deliver in rural settings get highly cut by the traditional birth attendants in an effort to save the baby. In an interview with the MS of Amudat hospital, many women are referred to the hospital after they have failed to deliver in such areas. This finding further reaffirms the findings by ANPPCAN that many of these cases reach the hospital when they are highly mutilated and the doctors find it difficult to work on them.

According to the interviews with the doctors and health workers in Amudat hospital, many of the women who underwent FGM do not want to deliver in the health care centres because of the perception that the medical staffs in the health centres and hospital do not have the expertise to help these women in times of deliveries. As a consequence, mutilated women deliver with TBAs who they believe that have the expertise to guide them successfully in their deliveries. However, although women particularly in far rural areas held this perception too, they could not reveal any case of a mutilated woman who failed to deliver successfully in the hands of the biomedical staff. This belief was also held by a number of the TBAs who were interviewed. This perception greatly compromises the health of mothers and also explains why some times the cases of complicated deliveries come to the hospital when they are highly mutilated.

Genital mutilation of girls in among the Pokot and the Tepeth entail, in some instance, the use of only one knife on a group of girls waiting to be mutilated on a village. In some places this has reduced because of the increased awareness about HIV/AIDS, and exposure to education among the girls, who emphasise, "each child each knife" principle. However many mutilators in particularly areas far away from the trading centres still use one knife to mutilate a group of girls. This increases the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Other concerns reported include the fact that many girls take long before they heal, and yet even the

scars left behind on healing often complicate the process of delivery. As an adaptation to long time taken in healing, sacrifices are made to appease the spirit. This delay in healing is also associated to the behavioural lifestyle the mutilated girls live in. These girls are not allowed to bathe, creating conditions that encourage sepsis of wound. Unfortunately, most of the young girls and women in this region are less aware of the health implications of the practice. They are driven more by the power of the social pressure and the social status attained after mutilating.

In addition the girls after the FGM are forced into marriage, an early age, when their bodies are not even ready to hold reproductive roles. Some girls report that after the successful healing some girls find themselves carried away by a group of unknown men, who later become to become their husbands. Unfortunately these girls have limited opportunities to seek protection. Forced marriage of this nature is usually arranged by the fathers, without even informing the mothers of the girls, for fear they will let their daughters escape.

*The issue of forced marriage is there. Even for mothers it is difficult to be told that there's somebody who wants to marry your daughter. Because it is decided by fathers who discuss with in-laws before.*

Maintaining the Social Identity and the Culture of FGM is an act of honour and prestige for those who succeed. However it has its own implications especially in terms of health, dignity and welfare, in the context of HIV/AIDS due to the use of the knife. Fortunately, there is a broad-based structure, POZIDEP under the Church of Uganda, Karamoja dioceses with interventions aimed at positively transforming this practice. But as will be seen later, there still exist enormous challenges in trying to achieve this mission.

## Sapana

Like FGM, *Sapana* is the initiation ceremony for the boys graduating to adulthood in Pokot land. This practice entailed circumcision of the boys, and offering of animals to the council of elders in this region. Uninitiated man cannot cut the thigh of a bull, your views not taken, cannot participate. During the ceremony, a young boy need a bull to slaughter on a shrine, (*Akiihet*) where there is a gathering of elderly men. A lot of food prepared, seeds of cucumber are crushed for sauce, mix it with sorghum flour, milk special beans *Abolodve*, butter, a lot of dancing (if no bull borrow). He must be naked to under do this. During this occasion, a special piece of meat "*Elamackari*" is not eaten by uninitiated- the thigh, drinks blood. Without initiation a man remains regarded as a young boy. Like FGM the time for *Sapana* determined by the harvest got. During drought season, *Sapana* does not take place because there will be no food to feed the people during the ceremony. An initiated man in Pokot is given the opportunity to teach others about initiation ceremonies and what to be done, and is the one who directs the ceremonies. He is respected in the community both within and outside.

*Sapana* in this community is more respected but has also gone under serious changes. For instance, although initiation takes place today, very few boys get circumcised in the process. This change is according to the group discussions with elderly men in Karita, a result of the past misfortune that befell a group of circumcised boys in this sub county. According to the findings, over 40 boys who had been circumcised were killed by the raiders. This group was unable to defend itself because they were nursing the wounds. As a consequence, the entire group members were killed, animals raided, and community was left vulnerable. It is this misfortune of the mid 1980s that brought male circumcision on halt in this region.

## Livelihoods in Karamoja

Livelihoods in Karamoja region are diverse from one community to another. This study investigated the major occupations of the respondents in an attempt to identify the different ways in which people earned a living. The findings indicate that most of the respondents in the survey were housewives, followed the category of the cattle keepers. 39% of the respondents reported that they were housewives while 17 percent were cattle keepers. Other occupations reported in the survey included business, accounting for 7% and students. Most of the business conducted includes brewing local gin, harvesting honey and aloe Vera, burning charcoal, fetching water in towns. These occupation reported in the study reflect also the major spheres of work in the communities and they are structured according to gender and age. In addition, there were a significant percent of respondents who reported that they were unemployed. This category of responses included the men and young boys who had been disarmed by the UPDF and consider themselves to be helpless. The unemployment level resulting from the disarmament in the region also reflects a serious need for engagement interventions to avoid the negative consequences that may result from the idleness. As an adaptation some boys now engage in cattle trade, within the ethnic groups and across the borders. In addition women and girls in the survey did not consider housework as constituting work despite the fact that it occupied all their day's work. Detailed analysis was made of the major livelihoods that were reported.

## Pastoralism

This is the main livelihood practice in the region particularly among the Pokot, the Bokora, the Jie, the Dodoth and the Pian. These communities have lived on cattle keeping as a source of food, income and wealth in their communities. Pastoralism in Karamoja is sustained on the fact that there is an expanse of grazing land in the region that is held communally by the major ethnic groups. This allows free grazing within the communities and in situations of drought, when pasture becomes scarce, the pastoralists adjust by shifting to alternative areas where there is greener pasture and water for the animals. The physical resource-land and water, and customary land tenure allows pastoral communities to adjust in times of scarcity and drought. However there is also a strong social capital in terms of the wealth of knowledge and experience with the environment resources, the elderly people in this region present to their young generations. Key informant interviews held revealed that elderly people often mastered

reading the stars in the universe and could easily tell whether rain will come soon or not. Such knowledge enhanced livelihood planning in communities. However insecurity in this region is greatly compromising this resource for enhancing livelihoods, as the elderly people no longer have the opportunity to stay outside to notice the stars and predict the likely changes.

Pastoralism entails many activities that are structured according to age and sex. Such activities include milking the animals, watering calves and kids, herding and offering protection. However in terms of gender relations, the tasks of ensuring security and protection of the animals is left for men and boys while watering the animals and milking is done by women and girls in these communities. In this conflict-ridden region, planning is a central function in the maintenance of the herds. The elderly men in the different ethnic communities take charge of planning for pastoral activities, planning for where to graze, water, defence systems for protecting the herds as well as offensive mechanisms for restocking. Marriage is the fulcrum around which cattle is mobilised and redistributed among the pastoral communities. However on a limited scale some people in the communities acquire and distribute cattle through markets that are held regularly. Selling cattle is an act of last resort particularly done during the drought season when food is scarce, and or in situations where the animals are vulnerable to drought and diseases.

As an adaptation, pastoral communities in the region have adopted a duo system of settlement: the *Manyattas*<sup>2</sup> and the *Kraals*. The former is the place for permanent settlement while the latter is used during the drought season when communities shift in search for pasture and water for the animals. During the dry season the pastoral communities to places far from their usual settlement in search for pasture and water for their animals. In these migrations, it is mostly the young boys and fathers who migrate, living the elderly, mothers and daughters in the *Manyatta*. During this time the elders men in the kraals act like mothers to the boys, preparing for them food, while the boys go keeping the cattle. In addition they also fetch water and provide food for their sons to eat when very come back to the kraal. This change in the roles is common among all men who migrate and leave their wives behind here to behave and at this way.

The women, daughters, the elderly, and the very young children left in the *Manyatta* are also left with a few goats and cows for milking, to take care for the family food requirements. Such milk is also some times sold in order to buy other family needs, prepare gardens, and cater for any unforeseen contingencies that may befall the family. However they are not expected to sell any of the animals left. In case of illness, women have to send information to the husband through some people. It's upon this information that the husband decides either to go or instruct them to borrow money for health care while they wait for his return. This usually occurs also when the husband is unapproachable, or with other women, or is in the kraals (out of reach situations). In times of hunger the woman has to send some one to the husband, asking for permission to sell a goat for food. It will be a very big mistake it is an offence. In case they sell, he will have to trace for the buyer and bring it back. Where this fails, a woman is beaten and sent away from home. Interestingly, the husband in the Kraal can sell the animals without her consent. A man sells the animal and take the money distribute among his wives to buy food. Women do not ask or question and they are not expected to ask.

*“How can a child ask me? Women are like children and we should remain keeping them the providing to them like children. Women are children because they do not head households. Women did not come here with anything because they got every thing, the husband, and children from the family.”*

Like all children, women are treated as low status persons even in marriage and they are not expected to question the decisions of their husbands. This perception is so much linked to the fact that upon marriage, they leave their parents home to join their husbands and start off a new family. And it is further maintained by the fact that upon marriage, husbands pay dowry to the girl's family. While this practice is traditionally meant to act as a sign of appreciation, the exchange of dowry upon marriage is misunderstood to be an equivalent of the worth of a woman in these communities. This misperception is held widely among both the elderly and the young boys waiting to graduate into adult men. Migrant boys and men never have even time for caring themselves in a group discussion with the men at the water point in Morita sub county, the participants noted to the research team how lucky it were to find them since most of their day's life is punctuated with moving long distances; it is never easy to get time for even our wives.

*It is rare to find time for all the women, when water is scarce, we are all searching for water; you are lucky to have met us all here.” We never have time to relax. It is because the ponds have some water. Because of insecurity even women fear to follow us. Sometimes we spend even 5 – 6 months without treating our women. Sometimes women come for two days and go back.*

The group however noted that their women always understand the difficulties they undergo. Staying away from home for a period of 5 months is a very long time for a woman in an extremely dry land, shouldering all the responsibilities of feeding and taking care of the entire family in absence of the husband. This is further compounded by the fact that women in these places rarely get the autonomy in decision making to use the available resources to facilitate their execution of the expected gender roles. However according to an interview with elderly men in Kotido, moving out of home for five months is not a very long time compared to what they used to undergo. According to him, an elderly man in his 90s, men and young boys could go even for a year without meeting a wife but these young boys are after women. In spite of this, a married wife rarely engages in extra marital affairs. For the men, usually they send verbal communication through friends for a wife to visit the husband. But also they get other wives while on the move; they have the freedom to marry provided they pay dowry. This practice creates a window for HIV/AIDS to enter and terminate the community. The broader context of insecurity and drought is largely responsible for transhumance as an attempt to adapt to the extremely hard conditions. There is no any year the pastoral communities in this region have escaped extreme drought. As a consequence there is limited hope that out migrations will stop. Drought push the young and elderly men into the wilderness searching for pasture and water for their animals also leave their families in extreme conditions of food insecurity. By the time of migration, the herding groups leave elderly persons when they can hardly walk because of hunger. Unlike

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<sup>2</sup> A Manyatta is comprised of several huts, one per family, in a large enclosure with one entrance. It is normally built from thorn trees and serves to protect them from raids. It is a settlement pattern found all over the region).

the elderly, the young boys and elderly men who are strong come to the kraals, leaving the women, young boys and girls plus the elderly men and women at risk, only with a handful of cows to milk. Out migration is the only way of maintaining pastoral livelihood in drought.

In addition, raiding is commonly practiced by pastoral communities as a restocking mechanism. These raids occur between pastoral ethnic groups in the region, and across the neighbours in Teso, Lango and Acholi; and in some instances neighbouring countries such as the Turkana in Kenya, Topossa and the Didinga in Southern Sudan are raided just like they do. As a result, raiding creates interethnic conflicts and distorts the peace infrastructure within which vulnerable groups such as the usually unarmed girls and women have to execute their gender roles. Some respondents reported that some people have business interests in the raids. However this study could not independently verify this. Raiding has changed; in the past decades, a whole village would go and raid but today, it only done by groups of the *Karacimas*. This change reflects not, food security within the raiding groups but disarmament and sensitisation has changed the meaning and perception towards the practice. Most of the respondents reported that raiding was done because they did not have any animals to survive on. The increasing climatic hardships were responsible for the practice of raiding. Respondents reported that they had lost the seasonal calendar of rain.

*September used to be time for harvest. Now there is nothing. Harvest is only in spotted areas such as Namalu. Each rain they see, they run to the gardens and the plants wither in a shorter time. From January to June, no rain has come; it is just coming now. Elders used to know seasonal calendar and project future. They used to read a star sport and inform the communities on when rain would come. This knowledge is now gone. Now insecurity keeps them in houses, they cannot know and read the stars. 30 years back, when a frog made noise, it was a sign of good harvest now even the frogs do not. (Elder key informant in Moroto district)*

## Crop growing

Crop growing is also done in Karamoja region. Although most of the communities survive largely on pastoralism, there are also predominantly agricultural communities such as the Ethur, the Nyakwae and the Ngiporein. The Ethur people, who live on the border between Acholi and Karamoja, have adopted much of the life-style of the Acholi. The Ethur region is also a centre of trade between cultivators to the west and pastoralists to the east. The local economy centres around crops—chiefly sorghum, maize, gourds, sweet potatoes, beans, and peanuts—but people also raise cattle and goats. In addition, age-sets are important stabilizing factor.

In addition, some pastoral communities also mix pastoral activities with crop growing. Such communities include the Dodoth, the Pian, and the Bokora among others. Such farming usually takes place along the river banks and at the borders with Teso where the climatic conditions can support farming. In these farming communities, women and men are at the centre for all the field preparations and planting. During the field clearing stage, many women come under attack from the raiders, who never respect their rights when they meet them on the way. Many women in Iriiri, Nyakwae, Teuso, and Ngiporein reported that cases of rape are commonly experienced by women as they carry out their roles. The women in these communities are highly vulnerable in because these are also known to be largely humble communities which do not participate in raiding. As a result, the women in these communities become easily exploited and there is insufficient protection from their husbands. Raids in Nyakwae were reportedly committed by the raiders from the neighbouring communities of Jie; in Ngiporein, the Didinga, Bari and Toposa from southern Sudan were reportedly the major perpetrators just like the Turkana were for the Teuso women. Women from the ethnic communities bordering the neighbouring countries of Kenya and Sudan noted that they experienced rape cases much more than any other. These communities are not protected and the border area is just an open land where there is free entry and exit. However even women from in land ethnic communities like the Bokora also reported that their women were vulnerable to rape from the raiders particularly from the most hostile communities. Such rape cases often get committed when the raiders have been frustrated in their mission. Cross examination with the elders in all the ethnic communities however did not reveal any systematic plan for the raiders to rape the women. Many elders reported that such rape was an act of indiscipline among some youths. These rape cases were reported across the entire region. However the communities living at the ethnic and national borders were more vulnerable to rape. This could be attributed to the fact that such places often experience heavy battles as some raiders make their way through. In Nakapiripirit district, women reported that in November 2007, a group of over 40 raiders raided the seven women who were in the field, leaving one of the women in coma, having been found nursing a one week child! Her life was only saved by the team of the district car which rushed her to the hospital. In that raid, only a very old woman was spared.

During the harvest, women's plight further gets manifested; harvesting of the produce is largely done by women and children. In situations where women do not have enough labour, it is also common for them to mobilise fellow women to come and support during this harvesting time. In addition, women carry the heavy produce on their backs because of the limited alternative ways of carrying the produce. For women coming from relatively richer families, donkeys are used as beasts of burden. This is common in Jie, Dodoth and Teuso communities. In the poorer families, women adjust to the heavy load by engaging children into the same tasks.



**Figure 4: Pokot women and children carrying produce in Napolokocha, Karita Sub County**

In agro-pastoral communities like the Pokot, the Bokora among others, farming is a women's gender role. It's the women's responsibility to clear the field, plant and harvest the produce. However the challenges involved in these roles are a mix of the inadequate technology, insecurity and role stress, as women have a lot of other chores to execute. During times of insecurity, women migrate to other places, leaving their produce in the garden for the raiders and wild animals to feast on. Yet they are also expected to rely on this produce to feed the entire family and the friends. Agro-based, and hunting and gathering ethnic communities in Karamoja re more prone to famine and exhibit high-level of malnutrition in the region. Unlike pastoral communities; the agro-based communities cannot shift once their crops are planted. They thus get scorched with sunshine. Agro-based communities rely on low level of technology and natural climatic conditions. Many children in these agro-based communities are met with children whose faces flash with hunger, and high level of malnutrition. There are many cases of malnutrition that the research team saw in Napore and Bokora as well. Malnutrition is a product of both the inability of the parents, both the fathers and mothers to provide for the family as well as limited level of awareness about the nutritional requirements. In the case of the above figure, the parent had no knowledge that the girl was anaemic; malaria was used to refer to most of the health case, until the medical staff in Abim hospital diagnosed and advised the mother on the feeding package. Malnutrition is more seen in agro-based as compared to the pastoral communities. This could be attributed to the fact that children and entire family members in the pastoral communities live on milk, a highly nutritious food. Thus even without sufficient knowledge about the feeding requirements, children in such communities are protected. This is also due to the fact that in such communities, there are limited level of adaptation mechanisms in absence of crop harvest, apart from the food aid. Yet food aid as a basket of endless harvest does not address the entire food needs of the families, particularly in terms of quantity. Feeding family members is a female gender role. As a result, men tend to ignore their responsibilities, of supporting their spouses and mothers in providing food.

In addition to farming and pastoral activities, hunting is also done by some ethnic communities. Hunting is mainly practiced among the Teuso bordering the Kenya. However some other ethnic communities such as the Pokot also practice hunting on a small scale. These communities hunt for both honey and wild game. Other communities such as the Tepeth and the Matheniko also practice gathering of wild fruits as a basis for survival. Hunting is largely practiced in communities where an alternative livelihood mechanism is almost impossible. For instance the women in Matheniko reportedly engaged hunting for wild fruits because after any alternative for survival, including local beer residue had failed.

## **Gender and property relations in Karamoja**

Property ownership and control in this region is largely similar. Women hardly own any property except the chicken, granary and cooking utensils. In some areas women are given the opportunity to own and control household items. However women have the opportunity to access animals as their husbands distribute them so they can milk, but they cannot own cattle. When the daughter

visits father and gives a cow, that cow belongs to the husband; even if it produced 10 calves, she has no direct ownership and cannot sell it. According to the interviews, a father gives the cow for purposes of feeding her family; it is not for her, independent of the husband. The only property women can own chicken, which they can sell the chicken and eggs.

Women do not own cows but they own the milk; if they want something, they can sell the milk. This relationship in property ownership is linked to the fact that cattle are a resource that is taken care of, secured, and protected by males. Some respondents noted that women do not know how to take care of animals; they cannot walk long distances taking care of them. In addition there is also a negative perception of women. Women are regarded as children and are thus treated like children. Many group discussions noted that women belong to the class of children; and since they produce children, their boys later need the animals to marry. Given the context of polygamy, if women owned cows, it would be difficult to allocate to the boys who need to pay dowry. When animals are in the Kraal, there are specific cows belonging to women can take care of but not ownership, but those which are owned by the men, any one in the family can milk. Women assist to water, but cannot dig very deeply to get water especially in the dry season for the cows to drink. The major concern in these relations is that many men, upon selling the animals often resort to portioning it for you.

*Even when you give him the responsibility to keep the money, he instead spends it with other women in towns who sell themselves. When brewing, we credit money from people, at times it fails and you are faced with a challenge of paying back the borrowed money. Men take money from us only to use it to bring another woman, sometimes girls detoath or milk our men and when he becomes bankrupt, the girls disappear.*

Such cases are common among married couples living in urban centres. Even among non pastoral communities, property relations often cause conflict and tense in marriage.

*This is my experience, I used to be wealthy, I had a shop, I had a grinding machine, I use to get a lot of money but my husband wasted all we had on women, they could drink alcohol the way they wanted; he could give the girls parents the money I worked for. My children and I did not benefit from my sweat. This is why I am now looking like no body.*

Some parents especially mothers give land to their children. This is however rare because land is held communally and cannot be sold by an individual. However in urban centres, there are plots owned by women and men and it is in these cases that a mother can sell or give land to a child. Upon married, a man distributes land to his marry wives. Even though the man dies, the women remain with the right to access and use that land. In case the husband dies, if she is old, she stays at her home but if she is still young, the brothers of the husband inherit her and the property. In cases where there are no brothers, the man's elders son may inherit the mother. In Kadama, women and youths engage in selling the abusive drug such as *mira*, while others sell *Waragi* (local gin) in order to get the money needed to buy the basic necessities in the family. However upon selling, women in this community have to keep their money with husbands after buying the necessities. Some times such money accumulates and animals are bought but such animals belong to the husband. However men also complain about the behaviours of women when they get the money. Like many men, some women also resort to drinking after *Waragi* and thus lose trust from their husbands.

Cattle is owned by men because they are the ones who go for raids, take care of the animal because it's their gender roles in these pastoral communities. However this has turned into a legitimating factor for them to solely command ownership over the resource and sanction against women's ownership and control over cattle on the assumption that women cannot raise money to buy animals. There is also a belief that women cannot control cattle because they are unable to identify signs of ill health and therefore unable to respond in time. However what is forgotten is that such competencies are just acquired through the process of regularly looking after cattle. These commonly held beliefs frustrate equality in ownership rights over family resources. Other resources like land are also under the custodianship of the male power structure. This is largely linked to the fact that upon marriage, a woman comes to stay in the land of the husband. In case she is barren she can't be part of that land. However in case she has children, it's the children who takes control over the land. Women have serious control and ownership over resources like granary, milk, butter, grinding stone. These are also the practical needs women need in order to be able to execute their gender roles. In *Ethur*, women own resources similar to what women in other communities do: Granaries, Utensils and the Gardens. However she has to report to husbands, first in case she wishes to sell anything. She can own land if husband is dead. But even in these situations the influence of the family male relatives to take control of the deceased brother's resources cannot be resisted.

## Livelihood copying mechanisms and Gender

As an adaptation women continue doing manual jobs like fetching water for people, going to their gardens and at the end of the day they are paid peanuts which may not be enough for a family.

*We appreciate even the little they give us because without that we may end up going to bed hungry. The little we get, I buy food for my large family and I make sue that every one at least testes. We depend on food aid (world food programme) to survive. Sometimes we send children to places like Busia. Mbale, Jinja to look for work, when they succeed they may bring some money and food home.*

During dry season, most of the *Karacunas* have limited time. They have to walk spying for where there is water and pasture for the animals. During the dry season, pasture is left in very fewer areas and most ethnic communities raze their animals closer to each other. This makes it very risky for raiders because the other groups can easily respond and may lose all the herds. *The risk is that you may raid 10 cows and then you lose the whole Kraal, you have to the enemies. So we normally raid when the risk is very low.*

Challenges in livelihoods have forced the families to intensify vulnerability conditions for the children, both girls and boys in the communities. Many children in communities are now sent by their families to go and engage in child labour as a way of earning a living. However some respondents reported that many of these children went into child labour even without the consent of their parents. Bokora community provided the vivid case of the livelihood vulnerability. Most of the children in neighbouring towns like

Mbale, Soroti, Jinja, Iganga and Kampala come from this community. Both historical and socio-economic factors can be used to explain this phenomenon. The Bokora were the first people to run out of Karamoja region; when the Amin regime was overthrown, the Matheniko raided the Moroto Barracks and acquired weapons which were used to against the Bokora, for cattle, forcing them to leave their communities. In 1980, the outbreak of the East African Coast Fever in the region killed the livestock and most of the people in the region lost their animals. As an adaptation, the Bokora children and other vulnerable groups followed their ethnic members already displaced to other regions for survival. The displaced ethnic members provided the shock-absorber to the famine was created by the outbreak. Many of these people who begun as porters gradually established themselves economically, and continue to support their kinsmen and women. Thus children from Bokora easily find affective networks of relatives outside Karamoja region for their survival. Many times these relatives come for them as helpers in their businesses and families. However it's not only the Bokora children who move out of their ethnic communities. Other communities such as the Matheniko also labour in Moroto and Kotido town, particularly those from conflict and drought prone areas like Rupa. Matheniko and Bokora girls also labour in Kotido district; the Jie girls and women also often move to Ethur where they work on people's farms and gardens. Therefore out migration is a very effective strategy for ethnic communities in this region. However the girls and boys are pulled to different places. Girls and women find it easy to move to the neighbouring towns like Mbale and Soroti, and Lira for work but the boys move far away from the neighbouring districts. According to the interviews, many boys feel insecure to migrate to districts closer to Karamoja region because they are perceived by the host communities to be spying for raids, unlike the girls.

### Child Labour and Out Migration as Copying Strategies

As an adaptation to the difficult livelihoods in the region, many children, both the girls and boys in the most vulnerable ethnic groups are forced into labour in urban centres as a means of earning a living. In many instances there has also been media reports that children in Karamoja are sold like goats in the markets. However this study did not reveal any response that would confirm such reports. The parents interviewed in the areas prone to child trafficking as reported in the media, said,

*We don't sell our children but at time, some people request to have our children to help them and they give us something little. Our children have got attracted to the money of the UPDF soldiers in the barracks, sometimes, the soldiers buy children food, give them money and they bring home and our daughters in the army Barracks end up selling themselves for the sake of money).*

The responses indicated that although parents did not sell children for any money, there are many instances where children particularly the girls are exposed to the risk of unwanted sex with those they worked for. As a result cases of defilement in this region are like to increase as livelihood alternatives get worse. This finding was further cross checked from the girls and boys in the community. According to the findings from group discussions with girls, many of them were sent to the centres in order to find alternatives for earning a living.

*Our parents are too poor to take care of their families, so they send us to the nearby towns to look for livelihood. Some of our parents treat us badly so we decide to go away from them. You work but they say you don't work, you are beaten so often. When girls come back from Busia, Jinja, Mbale, they come very smart with a lot of property so we are also influenced to go. When you are an orphan and nobody takes care of you, you move to take care of yourself.*

Poverty in this community has led to a systematic breakdown in the social protection structures. Vulnerable families are no longer able to cater for the children particularly those who the orphans. As an adaptation, Poverty and insecurity has made their children go to the streets i.e. in Kampala. They struggle to get some money/ transport that can take them. In addition there is also Peer influence as those who go come back and influence others to go. Some escape and some of the parents know when they live. For those who escape, they first save money up to a tune necessary for transport to the destination. They sale things like land so as to get transport to go. During their stay in these towns, these children largely get social networks for emotional support and expression of their bodily desires. Many enter into sexual relations as an adaptation to the hard environment. Thus even when they are resettled in the settlement camps, their minds and souls are far from Karamoja. As a consequence they never get settled in these new homes. Earning a living in Karamoja is harder than begging in the town in surrounding town: Soroti,

*A woman who was brought from Kampala went back and left the kids and they say she is married there. Most returnees sale the properties they are given and they go back. Some deceive others to go to Kampala to work as beggars. Since others are in Kampala, others back at home tend to go and join others (Elderly key informant in Lorencechorva, Bokora community)*

Many parents confirm this in the group discussions and note that some of their relatives come and ask for baby sitters and they give them their children. In return the parents are paid some money in exchange for the labour the child will provide. Many times local authorities have stopped children from boarding any means but again parents complain that let them go it's not your money that they use. Business people from Karamoja who stay in Kampala take children to take care of their business. Some orphans go to towns because of lack of access to basic needs. According to the data from the key informants, children leave their parents to see their relatives but when they reach their, they are taken up by different people to work for them and when they try to come back they have no where to shelter from other than looking for money to go back to their towns. As people lose their cattle, the rate at which children leave their families for towns also increases. Children go to towns and look for some thing for their family's survival. However there are some people who do not really understand why their children are collected off the streets in towns because, to them, they are looking for survival. *When people go to look for food in towns, why are they chased away? Are they not part of Uganda? Because of lack of food, insecurity and others, people are not comfortable in Karamoja so they tend to go to other towns (elderly key informant in Iriri).*

Uniquely most of the children going to the streets in Soroti, and Kampala are both girls and boys. According to the actors in the region, and a fact that was also confirmed by the group discussions in Bokora area, these children come from particularly in

Bokora ethnic community. Both current developments and past history explains this. The elderly people in this community link this to the current disarmament. They believe that, they, the plain-land ethnic community have been disarmed while highland ethnic groups have not. As a consequence, their community has been made vulnerable to easy raids, a practice that has robbed them of their cattle—the basis for survival. As a result they are unable to keep their children in the kraals simply because there is no milk. *Places that are not mountainous still have guns and these are the people culminating insecurity situations. For example, the Jie, why does the government fear those who still have guns? (Asked an elder in Lorencechorwa, Bokora Community).*

Many families whose children are in trading centres do not have adequate access to enough milk and alternative food is limited; their animals are now kept by the UPDF in the protected kraals, where access to milk is regulated, no longer as it were before. They are thus unable to stop hungry children from moving out to towns. In times of complete vulnerability to raids and hunger families are unable to fend for the children. Famine and war have eroded the social protection mechanisms; some orphans; can't stay with relatives because even relatives are poor so the alternative is to go to towns, sent or independently moving in search for work. Raiders also cross to the neighbouring districts of Soroti, Lira and Mbale. It is this experience which creates feelings of vulnerability among the boys in Karamoja region. However the Bokora are not the only plain-landers in this region; there are the Pokot, the Pian and the Matheniko among others. But the Bokora still believe they are more vulnerable than these other ethnic entities.

*Pokot are like Jie where the ones are in Uganda and Sudan so even the Pokot are being supported by two countries i.e. Uganda and Kenya. Matheniko people are near the town so they easily access services and small businesses where they get some income, i.e. marbles, market for charcoal, firewood.*

To illustrate this further the groups of elders also indicate that the Matheniko cows are in kraals and being guarded by armed warriors than in Bokora where animals are kept in Army Barracks. The availability of alternative livelihoods in the Matheniko, and support networks across borders of the Jie and the Pokot may explain their continued ability to offer social protection to these children. However there historical explanations to this reality. It's because of the historical background ever since Amin's time when people were displaced and they went to these different towns and this has made others to join them easily especially in Bokora county.

For the communities that engage in cattle raids, there is a structure of fortune tellers who act as a radar system, directing the *Karacuma* where to go for the raids and predicting the likely outcomes of the raids. However the fortune tellers are in some instances not very perfect with the information they give to the raiders. As a result many die in the raids. Unfortunately, failure of the raid is always attributed to the failure of the youths to follow the instructions given to them by the fortune tellers. One respondent said, *Sometimes the information they get give us is not correct, we sometimes miss to get the cattle and ever have many of our colleagues killed.* To the fortune tellers, they are always perfect. In instances where the *Karacumas* register success in the raid battles, the fortune tellers get a share of the animals from each member of the raiding group. Every raiding community has a number of fortune tellers and who ever registers success for the raiders, he gains fame and receives many *Karacuma* coming for the consultations. The successful raid will attract praises from the community. These praises makes him superior over others. Sometimes the community being raided gets the information and they perform scarifies that disorganize the raiders. Fortune tellers are accessed from friendly communities. As a result, warriors—and, indeed, most men—guarding the villages sleep outside of their huts to avoid being trapped inside should a raid take place. This kind of behaviour takes its toll on family relations, particularly on male–female relations. The need for constant night-time security has also negatively impacted on the traditional forums for discussion and learning. The government of the republic of Uganda embarked on a disarmament exercise in Karamoja region. This programme begun with peaceful disarmament via sensitization in the counties about advantages and disadvantages of not disorganisation created by gun wielders. As a response some *Karacuma* voluntarily handed over guns but many did not. As a result, forceful disarmament was resorted to. This entails impounding cows and taking them to the barracks. In this process, the young boys who take charge of the animals also get arrested. As an adaptation to this unwelcome practice, the boys and young men in this region hardly sleep in their houses at time when they suspect the disarmament exercise to be in the offing.

## Marriage and Courtships in Karamoja Region

### Courtship across Ethnic groups

Courtship and marriage is organised differently in the various ethnic groups of Karamoja region and this has been changing over time. In Ethur, a boy would go very early in the morning to the girl's father to request for a donkey to go and help me carry the "load". The father then would ask which donkey and the boy would mention the name of the girl. This practice is not there these days. The father these days asks if you have spoken to the daughter. It is not by force these days as it used to be. These days the girl can refer you to talk to the parents. In case the girl does not like you, you go for another one but these days you would carry her. The act of asking for a donkey also clearly indicates the very low status would be associated with.

In the past parent would identify a girl for their son or a boy for their daughter, but today, the story is different, girls choose their own partners. This trend is common in Ethur, Napore, and around the trading centres. Couples intending to marry talk to parents after developing interest. In other communities like among the Pokot, if the girl refused the man identified for her, sometimes the parents would disown the daughter. When a girl is forced to marry some one who is not of her choice, she may end up committing suicide; others escape to other areas or may elope with the one of her choice. There are many cases of suicide that have occurred in the past. During courtship, local brew is sometimes carried to the boy home and water is sprinkled on the girl to welcome her to the boy's home. A girl who does not behave as expected is advised by her parent but when she does not heed to

their advice, the male youth (*Ebonyas*) invited to punish such a girl. This girl is beaten severely and no medical treatment is administered unless badly injured. In addition such girls lose respect among friends because her friend parents may discourage their daughters from associating with such a girl. In addition the mother of the girl may seek advice from friends and relatives. Parents and elders curse her. Many times, such “badly behaved” people in my community; girls reported that a mother disowns a girl by milking her breasts on the ground and cursing. Elders may disown the girls and they may kill a bull to disown such a girl. It is believed that these are the girls who become prostitutes in the community. About 10 years ago, a badly behaved girl would for instance be made to sit in black ants when naked. These past practices still send a chilling sound down the spine of a girl and compels her to conform to the social pressures. Such cases are rarely reported. In cases where they are report, for instance in cases of rape, parents call a meeting of elders then a man is fined heavily and sometimes, the girl is made the perpetrators wife.

The courtship varies slightly; in Jie, girls sleep together in the house. Dating takes long time, some times even four year. Once the girl accepts the man dating her, she informs him to come and visit her in the night. During this night, the girl puts on an identifying factor, which the boy knows and will use to identify her in the group of girls sleeping in the same hut. Once identified, she is forced into sexual intercourse that night and that becomes the husband. A boy knows the girl friends beads, bangles and the texture of the *Suka* they use for covering sometime the girls may tell the boy the side she sleeps, and when the boy comes, it is rare that he goes for another. However interviews with women reveal that some times boys end up having sex with wrong partners. Once this has happened, the other girls inform the parents and arrangements for marriage begin. This is particularly so in rural areas where girls still sleep in the same hut.

Increasingly courtship has changed; Girls used to marry when they were very mature. Traditional settings girls used to sleep together in one room (10 – 15years) from 18 another age set they slept together, work was done as a group and every one becomes a witness about the other. Any man engaging a girl, others would know. There was no way a girl would misbehave. This would be an embarrassment to the group and negative sanctions would be brought to bear on the child. Girls from the lower groups would not marry before the elders. The elders would sanction and spy the man on behalf of the girl. In the process marriage used to go as a process. Today things have changed. There is privacy; a girl stays in her room alone, mess up without anything being known. They come to a town for labour and hunger and they are tempted. In a process marriage for girls is a process of trying to earn a living. These early marriages are common in towns not in rural areas. However, villages are becoming insecure. People flee to towns and girls who come as IDPs easily mess up with boys. Today people sleep in bushes because of the fear of cordon and search operations. In the bushes there is no control and yet they need protection. The social protection mechanisms that used to assess and help the girl in assessing the boys are no longer effective because of increasing urbanisation and insecurity.

Similarly the circumstances in which girls find themselves engaged are a result of abrupt rape, without prior courtship but this is still used as basis for sanctioning marriage. Today, men follow up girls going for water and firewood and marry them off, forced into sex and end up marrying her. A man with the number of animals the parents want takes the first priority. One, who has cows, finds it easy because parents of the girl cannot refuse. Girl are forced to marry, they have no right to refuse as long as her parents have accepted. As a result even the poor boys have been made vulnerable because they cannot get girls of their choice. As an adaptation, poor men resort to raping girls of their choice in order to claim the first penetration. Once this is done, the richer man has to surrender the girl to the poor man. Thus both poverty and wealth serve to the disadvantage of the girls. In Iriiri for instance many of such girls are raped on days of social interaction, on Sunday, a day for prayers and Wednesday, the market days. Field reports also revealed to the research team that on November 24<sup>th</sup> 2008, about three girls were raped in Iriiri area.

According to the interviews with elderly men, girls are not given freedom to choose their partners because they may choose poor men who cannot rewards properly the parents. A poor man can marry the girls who have been rejected, the disabled, the insane, there they can pay dowry slowly. But girls on competition cannot marry a poor man. In instances when a girl married a poor man, the parents negotiate the number of cows they want and wait until the girl gives birth to a daughter and her dowry will go to the girl's parents. In Iriiri for instance, girls reported that once a girl goes to work or for water, on her way back, her boy friend and his friends way-lay her, grab and force her into sex even in thorny areas. Marriage in many communities is defined by an act of penetration, whether forced or not.

*During this group forced sex, his friends hold your hands and legs, two at the feet and two at the hands then the so called boy friend rapes you very easily. Some times we put on light shot as a coping mechanism, but these men have started moving with knives and razor blades for cutting these shorts. If you don't have that a man, you forget about the rape and get married to the man of your choice.*

Such acts bring a lot of psychological torture to the young girl yet also exposed to the risk of contracting HIV/Aids and other sexually transmitted infections. If a girl does not want the boy, she resorts to committing suicide or eloping. Others disappear to another community to look for another boy of her choice. Marriage is almost compulsory. If a girl does not totally want to marry, the entire community laughs at her. In addition, her age mates give her children to carry, forcing her to gain interest in marriage.

These cases are reported to parents who then call a meeting from which the marriage ceremony is arranged. According to group discussions with girls, sometimes, it is parents who plan for the rape. They send the girl somewhere while knowing the boy they want is already there waiting. Some girls keep quite and behave as if nothing happened, but the perpetrator knows he did it and may even tell his friends and family who then report to the girl's family. Parents side with the boy and encourage the perpetrator to take her. In such cases girls report to their brothers who then follow the perpetrator to their home. Unfortunately there are hardly any actors advocating against such acts of violence in the region. Yet the communities still use it as starting point for initiating marriage rather than seeking justice, or supporting the survivor to regain her psychological, health and social dignity.

## Widow Inheritance

Wife inheritance is a tradition in most ethnic groups of Karamoja region. Traditionally marriage establishes a social contract between the girl's and boy's family, and upon paying a dowry, the later family acquires rights over girl. Such rights include conjugal rights. In unfortunate situations where the wife loses the husband, the boy's family continue to hold these rights and therefore design wife inheritance as a mechanism for ensuring continuity in the enjoyment of these rights, and helping the family cope with the challenge of managing the family and property of the deceased. Wife inheritance is still practiced among the Pokot, Pian, Bokora, Matheniko, Dodoth, Tepeth, and the Teuso among others but on different scales. These pastoral communities, because of insecurity created out of raids, expense deaths of particularly the young boys and men who engage in cattle raiding and protection. These are in many times husbands to wives in the community, who become widows upon their death.

In an interview with key informants in Kotido, it was revealed that, in pastoral communities, dowry is contributed to but many relatives and friends; a woman therefore comes as a wife to the community or family not merely the boy marrying her. Widow inheritance is used to for the purpose of ensuring the maintenance of the children so they can live in their family rather than going away with the mother. Karamoja communities are patriarchal and children born in the family follow the father's lineage. Inheritance of a woman is the only guarantee of keeping children in the home. Once dowry was paid, even the parents of the girl, have no say about the inheritance of the daughter; she can even be inherited even for four (4) times. There are however instances where the widow refuses to be inherited. Such a widow is free to go and get married to any other man of her choice and interest. However when such happen, the family of the new husband has to pay cows to the family of her first marriage. This illustrates the fact that the family of first marriage has the rights in this widow.

Although the rationale is good for the purpose of maintaining the children and protecting the widows, many times widowed women are in practice, merely used for the enjoyment of eth conjugal rights but not really helping the children of the deceased. Many times the property of the deceased- cattle- is some times distributed by the elders. Thus the social protection that inheritance is supposed to give never gets to be seen. Widows are often abandoned or ostracized by their relatives who refuse to support them. The competition for scarce resources, animals to milk in order to feed their families, and land for farming, places conflict widows in intense need. They are unable to prove their right to family resources and this creates vulnerable situations for widows. Yet the family resources left by the deceased husband are often taken and controlled by the new husband. However according to the group discussions, with elders in Iriri, such practices only occur in families where the elders fail to protect the family. This practice was however reported to be on the increase, perhaps because of the increasing levels of insecurity, poverty and loss of power to the young men wielding guns in the region.

Widow inheritance is a tradition which people as part and parcel of their cultural heritage. More important however is that the children need to be looked after plus their property. It thus guarantees Protection for the widow, and continuation of family reproductive rights obtained through bride wealth- more children for the family. A group of women, in Matheniko also reveal that widow inheritance in this region has a number of malfunctions. First the successive husband cannot treat the woman as the husband did; many times the children of the deceased are segregated upon. *The man does not treat your children like he does to his. There is segregation between his and your children. Yet the other women will mistreat you because they think you are taking their husband (women FGD in Nyakwae).* All these happen at a time when HIV/AIDS is rampant. Usually, the successor to the deceased husband is chosen by the elders in the family. However, although all group discussions revealed that inheritance does not take place where the deceased died of HIV/AIDS, there is neither an independent HIV/AIDS screening for the widow or the successor to the deceased husband to know whether they are free of the virus. This is further complicated by the fact that the level of education among men and women in this region is very low. Yet there are also limited alternative sources of information, particularly among the Pokot, the Teuso, Ngiporein and the Kadama, because of the fact that their language is unique and there are limited programmes broadcasted in these languages.

Widow inheritance is a concern in the community although many men and women die of HIV/AIDS, widow inheritance is very common. Women also long to be inherited because it is the tradition and even women look at men as providers. Many widowed women also reported that cases of neglect by their successive husbands. For the few who know the law, seek protection from the district office for probation and welfare. But these cases mainly came from the come from towns, in Abim and Kaabong. Interview with the key informants revealed that the there is high level of neglect of women and children in urban settings than in rural settings and this was attributed to the "easy marriage" (cohabiting). In such marriages where there is limited social sanctioning and contract, there is limited social pressure put on the husband in order to take up the responsibilities of fatherhood and a husband. It was linked to the fact that many men in towns are unable to provide for the families. Such men tend to move with women who can contribute the family and ignore those who cannot provide.

Widow inheritance also serves to ensure the continuity of the enjoyment of rights the family of the deceased husband has in the woman, the rights over her sexuality for instance is sustained through this practice. In many communities in this region, the traditional protection structures have broken down and the widows' welfare is greatly compromised, yet they do not have many alternatives. Often times many widows have to surrender to the demands of the male relatives and the social pressure is put on them to comply. In absence of social protection, widows adjust to their terrible situations by withdrawing children from school, sending them to work as domestic servants or sacrificing them to other areas of exploitative child labour. Others adjust by coercing female children to early marriages or abandoning them. These shock absorbers are detrimental to the development of young girls and boys left in such misfortunes but will continue until social protection structures are revived, or when widows can access social recognition and respect and economic independence through meaningful income-generating activities.

## Payment of Dowry

This is a practice that is universal to all ethnic groups in Karamoja region. However the nature and scale at which dowry is paid greatly differ. The variations are linked to the kind of major forms of livelihoods that exist in these places. In hunting and gathering communities like the Teuso, in Kaabong district, dowry takes the form of taking honey and a hoe to the girls' family. Among the Teuso, a boy identifies the girl and they do courtship without the notice the parents. Later the boy and the girl go and inform their parents about her partner. Boys intending to marry go and offer labour to the girl's family. Among the Teuso, Farm equipment like pangas, hoes and Honey are used as bride wealth. In this community it is largely the boy who has to work hard and get the wealth. Respondent in Teuso inform this study that bride wealth is paid as a sign of appreciation for the parents of a girl. It's not a kind of payment but it's an issue of creating the relationship between the family of a girl and the boy. During marriage dissolution, When the divorce take place when the woman has children they don't take the bride wealth but if the woman does not have the children the bride wealth will be returned to the parents of the boy. Among the Ngiporein, dowry takes the form of taking a hoe, and a goat to the bride's family. Among the Ethur and Nyakwae in Abim district, bride wealth tends to blend cattle, labour, and money. In such communities dowry is mobilised largely by the individual families; it does not entail a lot of resource mobilisation from the general community. Equally in times of divorce and separation, the woman and her family are not obliged to return the dowry to the man's family.

In pastoral communities like the Pokot, Bokora, Jie, Pian and Matheniko, marriage is concluded by payment of dowry which takes form of cattle. During the past decades, marriage of a girl would entail exchanging as much as 80 heads of cattle and above but this has gradually lowered because of the difficulties involved in getting it. Today marriage can be concluded on Payment of cattle as low as 15 cows, in poorer communities like the Kadamas. However among the Jie, Pokot and Matheniko, the number of animals paid to the bride's family remains relatively high, ranging between 20- 80 cows according to the group discussions. In situations where the marriage fails to work out, bride wealth is taken back by the boy's family. This particularly so among the pastoral communities. However in non pastoral communities like the Ngiporein, and the Teuso, where bride wealth takes the form of honey and other farm implements, there were no reports of repayment. In pastoral communities, mobilisation of dowry is done communally, bringing together the family members, friends and relatives. However in some instances boys intending to marry engage in long journeys, travelling to distant ethnic groups to raid in order to get cattle for dowry. One respondent said,

*For me I got my girl and I loved her so much; but I did not have the animals, the father needed 60 cows. What I did is I went with Jimmy and John (not the real names) to raid in Turkana. We went and stayed for some two days, spying. Then in the evening, we noticed that only the little boys had been left behind looking for the animals. We watched the elderly men going back. That is when we began to shoot while driving the animals. We came with 300 cows. Then I took the 60 to the father of my wife. But after some months they came and raided some.*

Sam, narrating his journey to marriage in 2004, also reveals the difficulties young men particularly from poor families have to undergo in order to meet the dowry requirements. This study also reveals that boys coming from families marry at a later age in their life because they have to spend some time working in order to get the animals. However for boys coming from the rich families, with enough cattle, often marry at a very tender age, about 15 and 17years. Thus the animal wealth in this regard becomes a barrier to their enjoyment of their wealth. In Pokot, a boy becomes ready for marriage once he starts to experience wet dreaming. Once this happens, the boy ceases eating and sitting together with the mother and the process of beginning to identify a wife begins. Wet dreaming in some boys begins as early as 14years. Dowry is mobilized from their parents. Well behaved boys are supported by their parents even at marriage, unlike the badly behaved ones who may struggle on their own to marry their wives. In urban settings the situation is different as some marry without dowry. The cases of so habiting are very common in urban setting and this is largely a result of the fact that many boys and their families are unable to get the dowry for their marriage. Some times when a man and a girl love each other so much but cannot afford dowry, they decide to stay together, while doing some businesses. When businesses prosper, they contribute to their marriage at times by buying cattle themselves in order to please the girls' parents. It's a tradition that has been found in place.

The practice of payment of dowry is therefore a positive mechanism aimed at strengthening the relations between the two families. However it has made women vulnerable in their marriages because dowry is misconceived to mean the value of the women. As a result women become powerless in marriage and cannot engage or participate in the decision making process at the same level with their husbands. At dissolution of a marriage, the children that are fully paid remain with their father because they rightly belong to him but if they are not paid for, these children belong to their mother and the mother's clan. At the dissolution of marriage, women participate in conflict resolution through their parents. Mothers come to support their daughters. However it reduces the influence and the role of a woman in solving issues that affect her. yet in many instances the parents are less willing to let the daughter leave a burden some marriage because they will be obliged to return the dowry, many times which get distributed to eth family and clan members and its difficult to re mobilises it from them. The boy's family demand for the return of the dowry but this is in many times difficult because, the cows may have been raided or eaten up. In this case there is nothing they can do but the relationships between the two families get constrained.

Dowry is a very big form of expenditure in the various communities. Rather than mobilizing resources for the boys to go and attend school, resources are easily mobilized for marriage. However in agro based communities, hunting and gathering marriage is no long very much based on the dowry in forms of cattle but on other resources including honey. In these ethnic groups, the role of other relatives and community members has gradually reduced, thereby reducing the pressure on married couple. However this has increased vulnerable situations for women sine the social protection has equally ceased in these areas. As a consequence, more levels of domestic violence exist. In addition, parents receiving such dowry do not share such money with other relatives, thus reduction in the role of the community social protection mechanisms in term of family domestic violence.

## Law and order in the context of Karamoja

Violence against women and children take different forms in different communities. Karamoja context is unique because of the difficulties in livelihoods and the conflict nature of the inter-ethnic relations. In this study the respondents acknowledged that there are diverse forms of violence that constitute abuse of women and children's rights. The table below summarises the findings.

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Food denial	18	5.8	5.8
Denied to go to school	32	10.3	16.1
Neglected	16	5.2	21.3
Forced into Labour	26	8.4	29.7
Attempted forced marriage	14	4.5	34.2
Forcefully circumcised	8	2.6	36.8
Attempts to forceful circumcision	2	.6	37.4
Forced to marry	89	28.7	66.1
Attempted forced sex	20	6.5	72.6
Forced sex	85	27.4	100.0
Total	310	100.0	

Forced marriage, and rape were reported as the most common abuses occurring in the communities. Forced marriage accounted for 29 percent of the responses while forced sex accounted for 27 percent of the total responses. Other abuses included denial of food and chance to go to school, forced labour and attempted forced sex. Forced marriage, forced sex and attempted forced sex reportedly occurred against girls in the ethnic groups. Other studies have also acknowledged the presence of forced marriage in the region. This study cross tabulated the findings with the districts in order to identify the variations in reporting of this case. According to the cross tabulation results,

	violence form-physical	Percent	violence form-sexual	Percent	violence form-emotional	Percent	Total
District	Physical		Sexual		Emotional		
Abim	75		27		37		
Kaabong	52		28		34		
Kotido	75		53		43		
Moroto	67		47		35		
Nakapiripirit	82		42		26		
Total	351		197		175		

The study reveals that physical violence was the most highly reported form of abuse in the region followed by sexual violence which constitutes. Among the districts, Nakapiripirit and Abim ranked highest in physical violence while Kaabong reported the lowest. In terms of sexual violence, Kotido ranked the highest followed by Moroto district. Kaabong reported the lowest cases of violence in the region. However physical violence was reported lowest as compared to the other two forms of abuse. However, all the five districts reported it almost in the same number of cases. According to Namubiru of the *straight talk foundation*, forced marriage in the region is a result of the need for dowry. She notes that the need for dowry in form of cattle is a major driver of these marriages. Cattle are a highly valuable item in Karamojong tradition and culture and life. The number of cows one has is associated with wealth and social prestige. Marriage is one of the ways through which cattle is mobilized, and obtained among the pastoral communities<sup>38</sup>.

Many of the girls forced into marriage often resort to alternative mechanisms that also endanger their lives the more. Some of the girls commit suicide while others abandon their homes for the streets. Jane, (not real name), a Bokora girl who escaped to the streets of Kampala when her uncle forced her into marriage. left her home in 2007 for the street begging life in order to live because her father was trying to force her into early marriage, contrary to her interests in education. There are an array of the implications of this practice to the health and development of the young girls in the region. Such girls are deprived of their rights to childhood, denied the chance of attending school, and exposed to the risk of engaging into reproductive roles when their bodies are still young. As a consequence, the young girls stand the risk of experiencing difficulties during birth. In addition the young girls are exposed to sexually transmitted infections given the fact that there is hardly any knowledge of the health risks among the parents who force them, and therefore no attempt for carrying out HIV/AIDS tests before. Thus both the intending husband and the girl are at risk pf contracting HIV/Aids and other sexually transmitted infections. The respondents were also asked where the abuses take place. According to the descriptive statistics, most of the abuses occurred at home, in the kraals, and at water points. Most of the abuses

**Figure 5: places where abuses take place**

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Home	222	63.6	63.6
Kraal	29	8.3	71.9
School	9	2.6	74.5

Cattle grazing yard	6	1.7	76.2
Water point	35	10.0	86.2
Along the way	22	6.3	92.6
Trading centre	6	1.7	94.3
Garden	5	1.4	95.7
Bush	5	1.4	97.1
Drinking joint	6	1.7	98.9
Dance	3	.9	99.7
Neighborhoods	1	.3	100.0
Total	349	100.0	

These practices include forced marriage, rape and defilement, and domestic violence. In Kadama community women are always beaten, beaten like oxen dragging the plough in its yoke. Such violence against women is often perpetrated by their spouses and some times by their other closer relatives as fathers, brothers and in laws. According to the survey results, physical violence is the most common form of violence experienced in the region. In the survey conducted, 48.5% reported that they had experienced physical violence while 27% reportedly experienced sexual abuse. Psychological torture was reported lowest, with 24%. The most common forms of physical violence experienced is wife beating.. These described statistics were cross tabulated with sex to help in analysing the most vulnerable categories to all these forms of abuses. The table below summarizes the cross tabulation of the abuse with sex of the respondent.

Wife beating reduces the dignity of a woman before the husband and her family, in addition to undermining her dignity in the community. This also compromises her participation in decision making process both within and outside the community. Wife beating in Karamoja region has become a common practice of disciplining particularly women and children in the communities. This practice has been practiced for so, long that even the women themselves no longer see it as abuse. Consequently, domestic violence is tolerated by the survivors and the community at large. The survivors tolerate domestic violence as an adaptation to the highly male dominated societies. However there are instances when a woman reports such cases. These are often extreme cases of physical abuse that result into bodily injuries. Even there, her response largely remains seeking intervention of the parents, who in most times intervene by asking her to be patient with the husband. While this is ok, there is limited intervention aimed at compelling the man to consider respecting the wife as equal partners who understand. Wife beating is now a tradition in resolving particularly family and domestic issues. Figure 1 show a case of a woman who was severely beating by the husband.



**Figure 6: a woman severely beaten by the husband in Iriri Sub County**

Even in such instances, some women are beaten in their private parts by their spouses as an expression of their anger. Physical abuse takes different forms, some are beaten with sticks, metals, and some use physical fights with the woman. Wife beating some times gets tougher. Most of these abuses take place within the family and it's only the close relatives and neighbours who come to know of such cases. Even then, their interventions largely leave the woman nursing her wounds with no additional counselling to enable the women heal psychologically.

These cases of cruel treatment of women is not only characteristic to Karamoja but to the Ugandan society as a whole. However what makes Karamoja women so vulnerable is that such cases are never reported to any centres and there are hardly any services within the region to enable women get protected within their marital relations. Cruelty in marriage is an act that constitutes discrimination and undermining the dignity of a woman and such acts are well provided against in the constitution of the republic of Uganda. Divorce in this region is highly negatively sanctioned and involves the refund of the bride wealth that the girl's parent received because of this, very few cases of divorce and separation occur in this community. Although these cases are some times brought to the local council courts for hearing, this is an act considered after the council of elders has failed. In most cases

reporting outside the council of elders is sanctioned negatively in the community and it is considered an act of disrespect for the elders. Yet even the few who seek justice from these courts largely get the protection. This is largely because these courts are constituted by a team of elderly people in the community and who hold the norms, the values and customs of the community. These custodians of morality only dispense justice that is in line with the socio-cultural expectations of the community rather than on the basis of the individual liberty, rights and freedoms. On a whole, the council of elders dispenses communal justice which already has structural inequalities inherent in them.

Most of the women interviewed in this study report their plight in marriage as they are often subjected to beatings even in the presence of their children. As a result children who witness their mothers getting beaten also are socialised into believing that beating is the normal way for resolving conflicts, particularly in their relationships with women and girls in the community. This practice creates conditions within which abuse against women and girls is sustained in the community. Proving cases of cruel treatment in marriage is not easy; in most cases the women who report are also required to prove beyond reasonable doubt that such cruelty was in such a way that it could render future relationship more or less dangerous to her life, limb, or mental health. When beaten women are not allowed to report to either side either to their parents or the parents of the boy. However this study did not reveal any truth that women were barred from reporting. On the contrary, the study reveals that women are compelled not to report because of the act often brings even harder repercussion. Women who report often times receive more beating from the husband. This is further compounded by the belief that the husband carries unquestionable authority by virtue of the fact that he is the head of the family. One female respondent said, *“The husband is the head of the family, a woman is not allowed to complain since when you complain he will constantly beat you.”* There is no dialogue with a husband due to beating; the situation gets tougher even for the young ones who witness their mothers and sisters being beaten. Often times, young children are psychologically tortured seeing mothers and sisters beaten one respondent reported that when a woman is beaten, her children cry and they are also beaten.

In terms of sexual abuses, the most common cases are rape. Most cases of rape were reportedly encountered during the execution of the gender roles women are expected to do in the community. From the group discussions, most cases of rape occurred to women while in the bush fetching firewood, when fetching water, and *Miraa*. Also rape cases are perpetrated by old men when drunk. Alcohol is a common beverage in the region particularly in and around the trading centres. Some districts such as Kotido have banned selling of the local gin as a way of controlling the excessive drinking and misuse. Alcohol induced rape was reported most in Pokot, Napore, and Nyakwae. Drinking alcohol is a common practice for enjoying leisure and almost all celebrations in the traditional communities are climaxed with alcohol. In instances when the rape survivor is married, the perpetrator is fined thirty (30) cows and slaughter one for cleansing) after a thorough beating by the community council of elders. Women mobilize fellow women to come and beat the husband in the wrong, and he has to slaughter a bull for forgiveness to be granted.

In all the ethnic groups in the region, rape is condemned. Once a rape case is reported, such a man is fined by the council of elders in the community, and also slaughters a bull to the council of elders as a form of cleansing. Under extreme cases the council of elders sit and sentence the perpetrators to death. For instance, in October 2008, a man in Nakapiripirit sentenced the two sons to death after they raped their sister. Cleansing is an approach for deviant/perpetrator reintegrating the person into the community. In instances where the rape survivor gets pregnant, the perpetrator is fined according to the sex of the child born. In Kadam for instance such cases are never reported to police. The police station is far from an average reach of a survivor. Such cases are only reported to mothers and fathers, who in return call for family meeting. In such distant places, referred to here as hard to reach areas, even the Local councils are highly inefficient in guaranteeing the protection of the survivors. This study reveals that sex before marriage in Karamoja region is negatively sanctioned. It is for this reason that the girls are forced to marry those who rape them. This finding is illustrated by the response from the group of elderly men in Iriri who noted, *“Here it is our culture. Once you have sex with a girl you must marry her. You will not misuse my daughter and you leave her. This is not allowed”*.

Courtship in many ethnic groups involve rape Among the Jie, Pian and Matheniko, courtship traditionally involved hi-jacking the girl on way, into forcing her to have sex. Once this happens, the girl's family goes and demand for dowry from the boy's. Because of its use in the courtship, such forced sexual relations are considered normal and are never reported as forms of injustice. It is only considered rape if the perpetrator did so without the intention of marrying her. According to the group discussion with girls, many times the cases involving the way-laying of the girls are many but in most cases, the girls are aware of the plan. In many instances, such girls give a clue to the potential husband when coming to grab her. Apart from the girls who are raped for marriage other categories such as the women who drink, and when as imbeciles also vulnerable to rape. In this case the women did not know it was not the husbands. The event occurred at night, and the woman had consented thinking it was husband coming back but later realized it was a foreigner. She withdraw the consent, these causes often die a natural death because of no evidence. Rape is common and does not segregate in terms of age. Rapists live with the community without any penalty given. The cases normally bailed out. According to group discussion, courtship rape is reducing but reckless rape increasing. Raiders rape in groups, especially after they have been repulsed and are frustrated. However group discussions with the youths of raiding age indicated that during raiding, a young man cannot think of sex or even erect. However many respondents reported many cases of rape during very successful raids, the enemy has been completely overrun, and also during the failed raids, when the raiders are frustrated.

Unfortunately cases of rape are rarely report; survivors of rape seek neither medical responses nor justice. Karamoja region is a bi-government community in a sense that it has both the formal government structures and the traditional systems of governance where powers and authority is vested in the councils of elders among other important structures. These systems have their systems of service delivery based on the normative standards, values and belief systems. However in such traditional systems, cases such as violence against women, girls, and boys are never seen as constituting an abuse. For instance, in Bokora, beating a woman is a corrective action and many believe that without beating, women would never understand. Beating a woman is not breaking any

norm. On the contrary, it has become a tradition for negatively sanctioning women who behave and act contrary to the expected set of norms, values, beliefs and habits.

It is also common for married women to be forced into having sexual relations with their husbands. This, according to Uganda's law constitutes marital rape. However, there is hardly any knowledge among women that such an act is illegal and violates their rights. In Iriri, Bokora county in Moroto district, respondents reported that when such cases happen, there is no where to report to because one can even be laughed at. For the married women, rape only when she is raped by any other man not the husband, and does so without the intention of marrying her. Such cases occur to women especially as they execute their gender roles, collecting firewood, fetching water and looking for the building materials in the bush. Rape of this nature was reportedly common at the borders of the different ethnic communities, and at drinking places. The practice of forcing girls into sex is a tradition in most of the communities, and usually done for the purpose of marrying her. Once a girl is penetrated sexually, she becomes a wife to the man who penetrated her. In addition it's also common for girls to be forced into marriage. These cases are common. In Dodoth for instance, the study reveals that even a young girl of 14 years can be forced to marry a 70 year old man provided such a man has enough dowry for the parents. Many girls cannot not object the decisions made by their parents. However some of them report such cases to the office of the probation and welfare at the district. Those who report are usually girls who are around trading centres or have gone to school. For the orphaned girls, their brothers and relatives also force them into marriage as a way of getting dowry. Such girls are expected to respect such decisions at their own cost. Yet there are also negative sanctions for those who disobey. Those who refuse are often subjected to beating. Beating has become a tradition of disciplining those who do not conform to the expected behaviours. One elderly lady said,

*In case the lady refused the man, they would cane her. I was caned seriously because I never would and the boy had very many animals. Cows and my parent needed them. I was married without my consent. The father had reared 80 cows. He said that I was denying him the 80 cows. I was very beautiful and everybody needed me. The man I married had the highest number of cows.*

Defilement cases are hardly reported to any protection centre because of the share it brings to the person and the entire family. Once it's reported, parents of a defiled girl ask for the perpetrator to refund the school fees spent on her as a way of resolving the case. The practice, which is locally termed as "paying school fees" gives an impression that the girls is sent back to school but this is not the case; usually after paying "school fees", the girl is free to get married to the boy or man who defiled her and dowry will be set. In Ethur, this is a common practice. This practice is further maintained because of the increasingly limited ability of parents to guide their daughters. Parents reported that, today, children in school can even abuse the elders; can even move without seeking consent. In some instances, girls threaten to commit suicide in cases where the parents refuse them from marrying their loved ones.

Decision-making at home is made by the husband because he is the centre of authority. There is a belief among women that since he married, a man has all the power over a woman. Thus they fear to report the superiors. Even in the normal relations, women hardly question their husbands, because of the unequal power relations. Seeking even medical responses requires some facilitation for transport and medical services in the health centres. However women hardly have any powers. The power relations in a traditional community are such that in case the husband is not around, women seek and consult the brothers in law but not to make their independent decisions. Most of the abuses are occasioned to them by close relatives and therefore find it difficult to report cases involving persons of higher authority. Even in agricultural communities the situation is largely the same.

*You go to the garden digging alone. The husband goes for drinking. When hunger comes, you are the one to suffer for the family. When you go to work in other people's gardens and buy food. It is not enough. When you serve him less food, a fight erupts. Children fall sick and when you ask for help, they say they do not have money. These days even the community does even take case. They just laugh at you that your husband is irresponsible. They only allow you to work in their gardens. Some women come and counsel you, often telling you, "My husband is worse off than yours, so you stay". Others advise you to divorce.*

In many cases women do not report because of the fear of the repercussion as the husband may be forced to slaughter a bull to the elders yet there is not enough even for the family. In such instances, reporting such abuses to the council of elders tantamount to impoverishing the family. In addition, the entire clan members come to hate such a woman and yet she will not have any other alternative. Some few are men who suffer under the heavy weight of the domestic chores resulting from inability of women to do their part, particularly in Ethur, Nyakwae, and Napore. However, they adjust by moving out of the family; only come back to sleep. Forced sex with husband, cannot be reported for fear of getting ashamed. Others said,

*"Your husband cannot hurt you" He cannot hurt you the way another man would hurt you. When he throws you down he will not hurt you. Violence by the husband is a family issue. You do not report anywhere. If the beating is terrible, you report to the parents. If it is higher you can report to the elders. You only report to police if he has broken the leg.*

Even in the limited instances where such cases are reported the council of elders assesses the man's past behaviour in terms of meeting the obligations and duties to the family; the same thing is done for the woman and the decision made is informed by such factors. Women in urban centres in Karamoja region are more vulnerable as compared to those in rural settings. In towns most women are inferior to their husbands in terms of their earning capacity yet life is dependent on money, accessing basic needs from the market. Because of the limited exposure to education, women have limited competencies to undertake higher paying jobs. As a result, many women survive on the mercy of their husbands; if they earn the get less of what the man receives. The man is a very thing to the extent that when there are disagreements, a man looks at his wife as a burden. In Rural setting, a woman has a garden, a cow to milk and can even prepare local brew to welcome the husband. In case husband is away, she survives on the granary to sustain the family. Men in these areas can not chase away a woman, she can entertain the visitors.

Ethnic communities in the region have collective structures through which conflict on norms, values and practices is resolved. Such structures include the council of elders, *Ekoakwa*, the council of elderly women, and the group of young men, the *Ebonyas* in

Ethur, the newly initiated age set is the disciplinary organ used to enforce morality. In addition there is the peer group that is used to settle and regulate the behaviour of an individual even prior to the collective disciplinary action of the councils. In cases of adultery, a woman is beaten together with the man but the man is also fined. He is also made to slaughter a bull as an act of getting cleansed by the elders and reintegrating him back into the community. When the bull is slaughtered, no body is allowed to help these two people, they slaughter it, skin and cut, they are made to carry the meat for along distance. After the meat is eaten, a woman is warned and she continues staying with her husband. Once this is done, such a deviant is received back without any other repercussion. The women who does not behave as expected is called to the council of elders who then advice her but if she is not willing to change she is disowned and she goes with a lot of curses.

Communities in Karamoja region have a diversity of mechanism they rely on to protect women and ensure their stability in marriage. In cases of mistreatment by the husband, the first attempt involves counselling the couple; in case there is no change, the man is put to communal (Clan) disciplinary committee and caned. In case caning does not solve the conflict, the woman is sent to go home and the family does not ask for dowry compensation. When this happens, the children remain at the man's place, provided he paid dowry. In this separation, the animals remain for the children. All resources are left behind; however a woman goes back as she joined the marriage, only with her clothes! However there are traditional mechanisms for controlling excessive powers of the husband. A girl's parents take measures to monitor and ensure that their daughter is not mistreated. In cases where the wife's family feel the daughter is being harassed, they offer to return the bride wealth. Among the Dodoth in Kaabong, payment of dowry is a gradual process to the level that a man can even pay it even when the grandchildren have married. This practice is used by the girl's parents as a string to control the man and ensure that he does not mistreat their daughter. Whenever their daughter is mistreated, parents come to remind him of the dowry he has not paid. In Teuso, When the wife is beaten by the husband the woman makes an alarm for calling people to rescuer her for the first time. When the husband repeats the beating, the wife reports to her parents to come and solve the problem. When the man is found guilty, the parents of the women warn him.

The council of elders-*Ekokwa*- is a male-dominated structure; there are no women but if it is for eating, women may come in just to prepare food, they do not take part in the council meetings. According to group discussions, the justice in these traditional courts is largely based on the male supremacy. A woman alleged to have committed an offence has to be disciplined whether or not she is found guilty, in order not to become big-headed. The council listens to her issues to her issues but at the end, she has to be beaten! According to the group of elders in Ethur, once she is not disciplined, other women will become big-headed. The *Ekokwa* is a very strong court in the ethnic groups of the region. In many instance, it has powers to sentence and even execute the perpetrators. Mr Abura Apalalu chaired the court, set up under traditional cultural rules, that sat at Longorinyangai village, Namalu Sub-county in Nakapiripit District on October 3 and sentenced the two men, both his sons, to death, UPDF 3rd Division Spokesman, Capt. Henry Obbo confirmed<sup>39</sup>. The two young men sneaked into their sister's room and raped her. According to the elders in the ethnic group, this is abominable in Karamoja; it is equated to wizardry and one in traditional Karamoja society is supposed to be hanged for committing such an act. These cases are not new in the region. The Five people have been hanged on orders of the Karimajong traditional clan court sitting at Namalu in the last year. Last May, a village court in Karamoja condemned to death three men and hanged one of them before the UPDF intervened and rescued the others. The three had been accused of murdering a man who had beaten them in a cards game. Many young boys and men have also fallen victims and their lives terminated through such traditional courts of law. The practices of this court send a strong message to the young boys and girls likely to indulge in such practices and it acts as a deterrent for further misbehaviour. However the practices of the courts also constitutive an abuse against the victims whose lives get terminated and yet the right to life is universal. They are denied an opportunity to learn from their practices, and as a result they practices remain unfair. Yet these courts are not legally recognised under the constitutions of the republic of Uganda.

The Karamojong age-class system has proven persistent in the face of various attempts to 'develop' Karamoja. The key to the maintenance of the rule of elders is the performance of prayer at the sacrifice of an ox, yet prayer has been relatively little studied in maintenance of the hierarchical power and gender relations. During prayers, the leaders command the spiritual powers in their world to bless the life and lives of the community<sup>40</sup>. This system privileges the power of elders in a way that enables them to direct their people in ways that maximize Karamojong autonomy to a surprising degree in these times of global intervention. The superiority of these informal systems of justice delivery is based on the inability of the formal law and order system to advance and assert its presence in the region. Because of insecurity, the region has historically operated on informal structure because the formal courts of law are far and out of reach of ordinary people. In addition this is further exacerbated by the fact that during the migration seasons, the formal courts remain stationed and unable to deliver services to the kraal communities. However increasingly the government, under the restoration of law and order in Karamoja region programme has increased the number of police officers in the region to counter such criminal conduct and also provide an opportunity for the vulnerable groups to access fair justice. According to the interview with the districts police officer, the government has deployed over 1400 police personnel to serve at community level. The challenge however is that many of the centres have not yet acquired the housing infrastructure to accommodate the police personnel. This still has undermined the rate at which such protection is attained at community level.

Every society and or communities within every society have social mechanisms for regulating the behaviour of the members in order to suit the expected behaviours that are also socially defined. These social mechanisms are the customs upon which order is defined and sanctioned enforced for and against a member's conformity to the expected behaviour. In the context of Africa in general and pastoral communities in east Africa and Uganda in particular formal law has not really penetrated to a level needed to enhance the protection of all the member of the society. In this respect, custom and practice has remained as important basis upon which order is defined, maintained and sustained in the communities. There are varied behaviours standards that define the presence of justice or its absence in a given society. These vary from on ethnic group to another but universally base on the patriarchal power structure used to regulate the conduct of the vulnerable members in the community. Findings in this assessment

reveal that order in this region is founded on customs of the specific ethnic groups in the region. Norms and order in this region is rooted within the historical relations between and within the ethnic groups. The foundations of law, order and justice in Karamoja region is based on the commonly held values and belief systems about what constitutes good and bad in the light of female and male conduct. Thus understanding the gender inequalities in the region requires understanding the historical and socio-cultural foundations of the norms and order. Many instances such social systems of defining and dispensing order do not imply individual liberty for women and men. But the administration of justice is done as if these courts are impartial in terms of the ideals they seek to rely on as the basis for order in the communities. In Karamoja region, the formal system of law and order has not yet destabilised the social regulatory mechanisms that predates back to pre-colonial times.

## **Formal law and order systems**

### **Local council systems**

In cases of violence, women report to fathers clan and the man is summoned or warning. Others with health care needs report to hospital, In case where are terribly hurt you tell the nurses. We also do not disclose the perpetrator who may be a man. We don't disclose for fear of being beaten again and we also hear nurses. Parents advice us to take heart and they say it is normal. Sometimes they (the perpetrators are fined. When we report to the chairman (LC1) he presides over simple cases like assault but tough case he sends to police. For children in Alerek, because police can give a letter recommending medical examination. police, to help her check in case of pregnancy or HIV/AIDS. So that the perpetrator is arrested some report that My mother knows all about me, she will help me, tell me what to do, and even help me report to police. She will help me with the money to go for medical check up. Others Father can arrest the perpetrator. Poor reporting culture in the villages. Reporting last resort on very serious cases, otherwise chose to keep quiet over their problems. Mothers take initiative to report, no child reporting . Attitude of men, towards police “. The police C and FPU is still in nascent stages, still trying to sensitive the county on the role of police. UNICEF motorbike but no fuel, there is still need for sensitization, but very difficult to access the deep villages. There is also a negative feeling on reporting cases of violence against women. In this study the respondents in the survey were asked about their feelings when violence against women is reported to the local council leaders. The findings indicate that 61% do not think it is proper for violence against women to be reported. Only 36 reported that it was proper, while 2.5% obtained.

Local council courts in Uganda operate as an alternative system for dispensing justice in the community as part of the system of instituting popular democracy and decent living as evidenced in the NRM ideals. These courts have been in place since early 1990s; although they are introduced prior to the 1995 constitution, there is enough bases for their recognition under the constitution, based in the principle of the supremacy of the people- that all power belongs to the people. These courts are established at village, parish and sub county level. The challenge with the local council courts in Karamoja region is that, although they are recognised under the local governments act chapter 243 these courts exercise powers that are a fusion of political, administrative and, legislative and judicial functions. Yet these councils do not have necessary and minimum competencies to handle cases of violence against particularly the most vulnerable categories, the women and children. In terms of procedures, the decisions and judgements of this court are determined on the basis of consensus and in default of consensus it is determined by the majority of the members in the sitting. However most of these council courts are comprised men and in rare circumstances are women involved in these councils. Yet even there, such women constituting the courts are accomplices of the strong and highly institutionalised gender inequalities in the region. Consequently, popular justices in these courts only serve to guarantee the maintenance of the already in built inequalities that serve against the interest of women and children in this region.

The 2006 act in section 24 enjoins the courts to apply the rules of natural justice and each party is allowed to call a witness, cross examine any witness and tender in all kinds of evidence. However the environments within which such judgements are delivered does not guarantee the protection of particularly the women, girls and boys whose safety is in most cases dependent on their relationships with their spouses, fathers and relatives. In terms of the areas of jurisdiction, the local council courts are mandated to handle case of civil nature and whose value does not exceed 200,000 shillings only. However these courts also exercise their mandate on issues beyond what they are mandated to handle. As a consequence, cases that are a preserve of the high court are also held and handled by the local council courts. As a consequence these courts dispense justice based on the norms, values, and beliefs of the ethnic communities rather than on the normative standards and principles of justice. In essence these courts in Karamoja region are an extension of the informal social regulatory mechanisms.

The local council courts in this region are hard to find and their ability to deliver justice without undue delay is actually compromised by insecurity and lack of infrastructure. Formal courts are elitist and yet most people in this community are unable to read and write. Thus such courts seem to be less relevant in light of the social economic and political contexts in the region. The LC system is an attempt to take government to the people, but a lot more needs to be done if it is to realize its potential in this respect. In particular, funding for effective operation and delivery of services by the LC system must be addressed urgently if the system is not to lose legitimacy with the people. There many complaints of no funding being availed at the local level, in spite of planning and budgeting, and promises made to the people. This has serious implications for the legitimacy of not just the LC system, but the entire government.

### **The child and family protection unit (CFPU)**

This is an arm under the Uganda police aimed at handling issues of domestic violence and reconciling the parents and their children. These units are found in all police centres in every district in Karamoja region. However they are very vulnerable in term of facilitation. Although it is charged with the tasks of sensitising the communities and families about children's issues, neglect, and child labour paid, domestic violence, the office does not have adequate facilitation to execute its duties. As a result many children are unaware about their rights children. In Kotido district, there is only one vehicle for the district and does not have capacity to facilitate the central administration and the Child and Family protection Unit officer.

*We have no office furniture and equipment including paper. We need some reinforcement. We are given 10,000/= for office work per month but this cannot even by statutory for a month. This cannot work. They stopped in May 2008. Now I use my own money. Even going out for community policing, I use my own money. In villages, people also expect something from you (Child and family protection Officer, Kotido).*

Further more, the officers in this unit report that they are expected to go for community work twice a week but end up going only thrice a month because of the transport challenges, as the available vehicle is used for both administrative work and operations within the district. Abandoned children are brought to the centre for police but no resources to support them. This are very common herein Kotido and Moroto districts. As a result the officers are forced to use their money to support them. There is no any facilitation to cater for abandoned children, yet it's very expensive to keep them. Sometimes such children are kept for 2 – 3 weeks and there is no food. There is no space for the abandonment children you here they stay with them, sharing our houses.

The children, both girls and boys in conflict with the law have no detention centre in the entire five districts in the region. They are kept together with the adults. There is only once call for the women and another for the men. Many of the street children are daily offenders and are brought to police on a daily basis. These end up getting wrong advice from the adults. There is no reformatory school for juvenile offenders; once released, they come back the following day. Some of these cases are kept for a month when negotiation with pro urban offices to see how they can go back. Within the district, the LC leaders are used to summon the parents for counselling. Both girls and boys are abandoned. Parents fail to eat even themselves and they abandon the children. Most of these cases come from urban areas. Family domestic violence also offset neglect of eth boys and girls at home. According to the interviews with the law enforcement centres, cases of neglect were a result of fathers failing to provide for the family. These cases were common with soldiers and polygamous marriages. Further more, defilement cases were reportedly many but girls do not report. Those who reported were those whose parents forced to marry old men.

However there are enormous challenges in enforcing law and order in Karamoja region. Many of the violence committed against women and girls such as forceful sex during courtship and in marriage, beating and early marriages are part of the traditions in many ethnic groups. They are therefore seen as normal practices and therefore never create even a feeling of reporting. Reporting of such cases only occurs to girls in and around the towns and who have had some education. but even in such areas other barriers also exist to deter protection of the survivors. Some times, the parents of defiled girls negotiate with perpetrators to settle cases outside their office. Such cases are only reported to police when perpetrators fail to comply. The few cases that report are further discouraged as they are tasked to pay 20,000/= for medical examination by a medical doctor. Hospital charges for medical examination have to be paid by patients yet they even fail to get the two meals in a day! The majority end up abandoning the cases. Where such cases are reported, the time lag between reporting and actual event is long, some times taking as many days as a week. This makes it difficult for the victims of sexual abuse to be protected from HIV/Aids and other infections, including unwarranted pregnancy.

The distribution of the protection centres in the region is largely very poor and skewed towards urban centres. This makes it difficult for the survivors in distant rural areas to access such protection services. In Nakapiripirit for instance, there is no resident magistrate, yet according to the law, police is not supposed to detain some one beyond 48 hours. Many times the suspects are released on bond. In addition, girls and boys in conflict with the law are made to stay in the same detention centres with adults because there child detention centres at police stations. Besides the environments at the police stations does not offer safety and privacy in reporting. In many centres, some police centres, there are no female police officers to carry out the examination.

Nakapiripirit court operates 4 times a month. The two district, Moroto and Nakapiripirit have only one magistrate who. He has to balance working in both places. The clerk to court registers cases of rape and defilement but Most of the rape victims fear to testify. When day come, they fear mentioning actual words yet in rape cases evidence is based on actual evidence adduced by the victims. Besides Court environment not friendly for victims of GBV because yet people fear court in these cases. They do not know court is a free place for them to assess services. Many assume that they can be arrested when they enter courts. Cases of sexual and rape cases are not heard in camera. These cases die naturally as girls take off because of natural fear of the court environment. Police officers fail to do their work as they fail to summon witnesses.

## **ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES**

### **Education**

Education is key to the social economic transformations of communities; it's an important instrument in creation of the capabilities necessary for the individuals to enhance their economic growth<sup>41</sup>. Thus education is instrumental to economic growth generation as well as a right whose enjoyment leads to the improved flourishing of communities. Article 30 of the constitution of the republic of Uganda provides that all persons have a right to education. The right to education is also provided for under article 10 of CEDAW. According to the convention, all children irrespective of the age, sex and or any other factor are entitled to the equality in the enjoyment of the right to education and calls upon government's party to the convention to put in place measures that address inequalities in access to education<sup>42</sup>. In light of the above legal and conventions statements, a number of interventions

have been made by the governments in Africa and Uganda in particular to promote access to education. Specific to Karamoja region, there are many context specific education systems that have been put in place.

## Early Childhood Development

This study reveals that the ethnic communities in Karamoja region recognize the role of education in the development of their children, both the girls and boys. This is reflected in the socialization process through which the boys and girls acquire the skills necessary for their survival and that of their families. However, the traditional education that the children acquire is only in as far as supporting the survival of the families, and the community at large. In such an education the interests of the community take priority. As a result the children are hardly separated from the survival of the families and community at large. Therefore, the early childhood education in Karamoja is largely based on these traditional systems of education rather than the formal education. Boys as young as five years of age boys are involved in herding livestock while the girls engage in domestic chores particularly child-rearing roles. Such early child education also takes place in a hostile climate with scarce water, very low and unreliable rainfall, frequent famines, and insecurity associated with cattle rustling. It also occurs within a very poor social service delivery infrastructure. However there are early childhood and education centres in some part of the region. These ECD centres, supported by SCIU largely focus on health, immunization centres, deworming of children and training them on latrine manners. These are also the major issues that affect children in these ethnic communities. The caregivers to the children get some small facilitation to the caregivers. However the curriculum for the ECD education is yet to come. In addition there are some challenges in this education; most of the caregivers are illiterate mothers who cannot administer curriculum. These ECDs are located at the ABEK centres but there are no developed structures and facilities for sanitation and health care centres. ECD education centres are also limited in scope as they were not reported in some districts like Abim and Kaabong.

## Functional Adult Literacy

Functional Adult Literacy is bigger programme is one of the education programmes under the ministry of gender, labour and social development (MGLSD) and is designed to enable elderly persons who did not have an opportunity to access education to do so in light. This programme is designed on the understanding that the target population is largely engaged in major activities of life and therefore should be given a chance to study without compromising on their work. In this education, the focus is also put on functional issues such as food security, HIV/Aids, human rights and gender. However these are only introductory programmes as less emphasis is put on the issues; it largely stops at awareness. Some of the participants are also trained in income generating activities (IGAs). FAL learners range from (15-80yrs). FAL programmes focus on (9-10) months training before graduation. After this they can easily enrol for primary education. In these classes, hygiene personal health and home hygiene are incorporated into the education. It aims at building capacity to earn a living. There is however limited comprehensive data on the number of females and males in FAL but the data accessed in Kotido district indicate that there are 36 FAL classes with a total of 1794 learners. This data is not disaggregated in terms of gender. However the key informants in this study notes that there are very few men in this programme.

## Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja

Alternative Basic education for Karamoja (ABEK) was designed to enable children access education while they continue supporting their families with the core roles in pastoral livelihoods. ABEK Programme begun in 1998, as an intervention to harmonize challenges of pastoral childhood with education as a right in childhood. It's a non formal education Programme designed for the pastoral community of Karamoja as a response to barriers in basic education experienced by children (6 to 18 year) in semi-nomadic pastoral communities of semi-arid region where they play a central role in house hold livelihoods. Enrolment of children in ABEK increased 4682 males 7679 girls 12361 total for 2008. This is the opposite in primary schools where Boys total to 8271 as compared to 6065 girls. Most of male boys are in the Kraals, the ABEK centres are in the *Manyattas* where most all girls are at home. SCIU planned a mobile education in the Kraals but it is yet to begin. ABEK are located near *Manyattas*, making it easy for the boys and girls to enrol and balance education with the family responsibilities. There are more girls than boys in ABEK; girls easily run back home to cook and attend. Boys have no time to attend ABEK especially during the drought season when they move and live in kraals located far from ABEK centres. In Pokot, Kadama, and the Tepeth, girls drop out easily. After FGM, they run to marry and drop out. In addition, like in formal education, during drought, many parents look at children, both girls and boys as sources of bread; children engage in child labour in towns and this reduces their education. However the parents embrace ABEK and this is evidenced by 290 centres in the region. ABEK programme has been under SCIU but plans are underway to formalise the programme. As a consequence, SCIU plans to phase put as the local governments take over the ABEK programme. In many places the government had taken over the centres and many were coded. However, not all ABEK centres were coded, making it difficult for ABEK facilitators in such un-coded centres to get any facilitation. ABEK centres have no latrines and water facilities and other relevant structures because of resources. There are no permanent structures; during the rainy season the schools centres, usually under trees, get flooded. Local governments are unable to provide these services because of the limited funds. Facilitators have low levels of education; they need to be trained in service but this is yet to be done. The programme operates with teachers of at least a minimum of primary seven class education but in some areas like the Kadamas and the Pokot, it is hard to find teachers with these standards. Yet the programme is conducted in local language. This study assessed the extent to which girls and boys in these communities have access to education. The table below summarises the findings.

**Table 3: Education level of respondents in the survey according to age**

Age of respondent	highest education level								Total
	Never been to school	lower primary (under P.4)	upper primary (P.5-P.7)	lower secondary	upper secondary	post secondary	ABEK	Functional Adult Literacy	
8-14	32	12	6	1					51
15-19	46	13	22	13	4				98
20-24	42	7	10	13	5	3			80
25-29	44	9	5	8	4	5			75
30-34	40	7	4	6	2	2	1	1	63
35-39	31	9	5	4		3		1	53
40-44	39	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	50
45-49	26	3	4	2	1				36
50+	30	4	6	4	2	1		4	51
Total	330	67	64	52	20	15	2	7	557

Findings in the survey reveal that out of the 557 respondents, 330 (52%) had never been to school. Only 24% had attended primary education while 16% had attended secondary education. This finding is also closer to the earlier research finding by Oxfam GB (2004) which revealed that of all the households surveyed, only 53% reported sending children to school<sup>43</sup>. The low level of education in this region is a concern for development workers in this region, as well as the government. Some key informants attribute the low education levels to the historical relations between the local communities and the colonial government which did not prioritise education for Karamoja. *Karamoja was taken as a human zoo and there was a gate at Iriri where people would pay money to enter and see naked people.* This explanation is held widely among the political leadership in the community. However despite the generally held historical relations, there are variations in the level of education among the female and males in this region. Further analysis of this data reveal that most of those who attended school were largely men as illustrated by the figure below:

**Table 4 : Levels of education of the respondents in teh survey according to sex**

Level of education	Sex of respondent		Total
	Male	Female	
Highest education level			
Never been to school	132	198	331
Lower primary (under P.4)	38	30	68
Upper primary (P.5-P.7)	32	32	64
Lower secondary	31	21	52
Upper secondary	12	8	20
Post secondary	12	3	15
ABEK		2	2
Functional Adult Literacy	1	6	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>559</b>

This table indicates that more females (300 respondents) attended education as compared to the males. However the data also reveal that the number of females also dropped significantly as they approached higher education ladder. Many females enrolled for education but they dropped out once they reached the upper primary education level. This study finding is also supported by the gender disaggregated data by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MFPED)<sup>44</sup>.

## Perception and Attitude towards Girl and Boy's Education

Perceptions towards girl child education in ethnic communities in Karamoja region are less supportive. At family level, the boys are often favoured at the expense of girls. There is a common belief that, girls who go to school become prostitutes. This belief is based on the fact many girls who go to school also tended to elope with men in and around the trading centres. In addition such girls distaste marrying from within since most of the men in the community are less educated. By doing so, the girls deny their parents the opportunity to benefit from dowry since in many instances they fail to ask for it when their daughters elope. In Karamoja, dowry is the vehicle through which families restock their livestock, and marriage is the fulcrum around which wealth – livestock – rotates.

For girls in the region, even when they enrol for school, it is not unusual for them to be recalled at home in order to care for their siblings as mothers engage in looking for food and other household needs. For the orphaned girls, their vulnerability is again graver. They are forced into child labour, and many times have to drop out of school as no one is willing to pay their school requirements. In a traditional setting all children were part of the family and there would appear not segregation in the treatment of such children. However today the social protection mechanisms for the children- the guardians- the orphans- are no longer

effective as they used to be. This is largely attributed difficulties involved in meeting the day-to-day needs of life. As a consequence, the orphans and other vulnerable children are neglected, particular in the enjoyment of their rights to education. Many of such children are on the contrary used as providers of food to the families where they stay. Orphaned girls have to look after the sibling, cannot go to school, as there is no one to pay for their education needs and have no money to sustain their families. Like the orphans, the girls in poor communities are also forced to stay at home, in favour of their brothers and many times are also forced to marry early.

Many families look at the boys with favour because they are become the family heirs. According to the findings the girls are ignored because, upon marriage, they join other clans. By doing so, families ignore the fact that such girls remain their children and respond to their needs in times of trouble. Besides their sons also, bring in the family, the daughters-in-law. There is a belief that once girl joins another clan, upon marriage, she will not help the family. Forced marriage is also a common practice in Karamoja region. Many girls are forced to into marriage relationships without their consent. This practice is well illustrated by the responses from the participants in group discussions. According to the findings, girls are abused that they are big enough to provide for themselves and are forced to marry. Girls raped, also drop out of school for fear of being laughed at. Others opt to leave for town in order to avoid the shame. By having low attitude towards the girl education, many parents fail to tap the benefits that would accrue from their education. Many such parents reflect on the benefits from other daughters whom they have married off. Many such daughters are unable to support their families, due to fact that they did not have the opportunities to develop their competencies and earning potential.

Given this low perception and attitude towards their education, girls in school hardly receive the necessary support to enable them stay in school. As a result, girls particularly in their adolescence stage are forced to drop out because of the inability to maintain their hygiene. This is further complicated by the fact that there are hardly any school that supports girls with sanitary material during this period. Most of the girls in this region enrol school at a late stage, some enrolling in primary one when they are 9years. Because of this, many girls begin experiencing their menstrual cycle when still in lower primary levels. Unfortunately, most of the schools in this region hardly have any sanitary materials for girls in such stages. This is made worse by the fact that most of the schools in this region are mixed school. Many girls in menstruation have limited ability to afford, sanitary pads; they even fear that the boys will mock her. As an adaptation, they use rags instead, yet changing them while at school is difficult. The few schools with such services largely depend on the support from UNICEF, and the “school in a box” programme. Even then, such materials are only reserved for girls in primary seven in order to enable them to complete at least the primary education. However, given the fact that most girls in this region enrol schools at a later age, about 9 years, there are many girls in schools who need such services; parents are unable to support. This is also compromised by the fact that senior man and woman teachers in schools still need skills training in handling such children. Normally children join school when they are beyond school going age. The government policy is that children should enrol when they are 6 years of age so that by around 12 years they complete the primary cycle. However, in Karamoja, children enrol even at 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 years. By Primary six and seven, they have lost interest school. For the girls, parents start negotiating for their marriage in order to get dowry.

This low perception of girl child education is further compromised by the fact that some girls get laughed at when they are unable to maintain hygiene. As a result girls shun schools, leading to their dropout. Many such girls also further influenced by their age mate peers who got married earlier, also to join the institution. Further more, because girls are perceived in terms of wealth-livestock, among the Teuso, Ethur, and Nyakwae, Napore, if the girl is impregnated from school, the parents charge the person responsible for the pregnancy, for the school fees costs incurred; once this is done, going back to school is dependent on the person who impregnated her. Usually after this fine, the girl and the man can decide to marry.

In some districts like Kotido, there are by-laws against child labour but their enforcement is too weak. There is no facilitation. People look at child labour as a need for survival. The division of labour in Karamoja is such that as one grows in age, the amount of work becomes smaller. Children carry the yolk in the family. During drought season, girls in many communities like Iriri in Moroto district are forced to go and labour in other towns in order to get food for their families. Such girls often come back as an appropriate time when they have gathered some support for their parents. But like girls, boys in this region are also perceived in terms of their roles in livestock keeping and restocking. As a consequence, boys hardly get any time to go to school. During drought, they have to move into kraals, in places where even the ABEK centres do not exist. This is complicated by the inability to implement a flexible ABEK programme, which would serve communities in the kraals. This is because they are in most cases in the grazing fields looking for water and pasture for the animals. The formal education learning centres are far from reach of an average boy, who unfortunately may have interest or see no role of education in his life. Even the ABEK centres are mostly fixed (and rigidly so) in and around the *Manayattas*, where the larger population stays. In addition, the young boys staying in these kraals are unable to access formal schools, let alone the ABEK programme. By doing so, ABEK programme succeeds in reaching to most of the boys and girls in these areas. However its inability to adjust to the changes in the lifestyle of the boys and girls in these communities creates unequal opportunities for boys to benefit from the programme. This is further compromised by the low attitude towards education, a social reality that has existed for decades. The perception towards education among the parents is very low and inadequate to support their access to education. However, gradually the communities are realising the need to send their sons and daughters to school. In a group discussion with elderly men in Karinga, one voice notes,

*Increasingly, we are beginning to realize the importance of the schools. Now we see these Karamojong boys riding to bicycles in Nakapiripirit and we cannot. We were stupid but now can send children to schools. We used to attend ABEK in Amudat but when we came this way, there is no ABEK here (Male FGD in Karinga).*

The negative perceptions have been held for so long that even the elders now see how less useful their decision to send children to school was. These perceptions are still intact, in communities, far way from the trading centres and the main town. Thus the livelihood copying mechanism, migration, makes boys' access to education opportunities very difficult.

But in addition to poor perception and low attitude towards education, there are other factors that provide disincentives to their education. According to the findings, beating pupils in class create disincentives for both girls and boys to attend school. Many girls and boys in FGDs reported that they are beaten while at school. Beating children contravenes the fundamental and universal right to dignity but it's a common African practice of disciplining particularly children and women. This practice is has greatly changed and gradually ceased in many communities in Uganda. Because of its implications to the growth and development of the child, the government of the republic of Uganda, banned corporal punishments in schools. However many children in this region do not have any protection from this abuse. Beating is a tradition in African society, used for disciplining wrongdoers. As a consequence, girl and boys are frustrated because they hardly see anything good about school other than food brought by the WFP. School attendance in Karamoja region is largely linked to availability of food in the school. Many ethnic communities in the region are food insecure and as such, they are unable to maintain their children (girls and boys) at home. Yet boys are particularly at the centre of the pastoral livelihoods of many ethnic groups. Low education level of boys in the region is a consequence of the structural gender relations that dictate upon them to look after animals at a time when schools are operating. During drought, the student population in schools skyrockets for both girls and boys because of the need to access food, but takes a nose-dive, as soon as soon as harvest and food is available in the *Manyattas*. The school feeding programme is the incentive for the increased students' population during the drought season as many schools receive food from the WFP. However for the boys in the kraals, still they are unable to attend school during this time of food supply as they spend their time looking after cattle, under deplorable conditions. Although there are school campaigns, the level of education in the different communities remains low. In Pokot for instance, the district inspectors of school indicate that only 5% Pokot and Kadama girls are in school. Yet even they drop off as soon as they are ready for FGM. After the practice, girls hardly come back to school; girls are ready for marriage and the parents also eagerly wait for dowry. Educating children in small ethnic communities such as the Teuso in Abim, the Pokot and Kadamas in Nakapiripirit is very difficult because there are limited numbers of teachers from such areas. According to the policy learning in the low classes is supposed to be facilitated in the local language. Even when Swahili is adopted not all teachers can teach in Swahili. Most of the learning materials are also not translated in the local language and therefore children cannot read them.

Perception is an important factor that may facilitate or frustrate access to education among girls and boys. This study investigated whether the perceptions of the people in the region support children's access to education. The findings reveal that there are varied perception about the role of education in the life of girls and boys. However the majority of the respondents in the survey believe that girls and boys should be given equal opportunities including education. There is a relatively good response among parents to check on the learning environment where the children attend school. According to the survey, 73% of the respondents have reported that they visited the schools where the children studied; only 23 percent did not attend. Of the percentage that visited the school, majority reported that the school was safe for the children. Safety was however, understood in terms of the absence of wars, guns, and death. However the conditions of learning particularly in terms of the school hygiene and sanitation are hardly seen as constituting safety of the children in the schools.

**Table 5: perception about equality in opportunities among girls and boys**

Do you think girl and boys should have equal opportunities?	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	398	70.9	70.9
Disagree	152	27.1	98.0
Do not know	11	2.0	100.0
Total	561	100.0	

The above table indicates that the general community feel that girls and boys need to have equal opportunities including in the field of education. 71% reported that girls and boys need to have equality in opportunities including that in education, as compared to 27% who disagreed. This gives an indication that there is a positive appreciation for the education of the girls in this community. This data was cross tabulated with the sex of the respondents and the findings are summarised in the table below:

**Table 6: Cross tabulation and perception of equality in opportunities among girls and boys**

		Girls and boys should have equal opportunities			Total
		Agree	Disagree	Don't know	
Sex of respondent	Male	166	85	7	258
	Female	232	66	4	301
Total		398	151	11	561

The results from the cross tabulation indicate that more males than females disagreed when asked about equality in opportunities for girls and boys. Karamoja is a highly closed community in a sense that there is limited influence to influence such perceptions. Besides women in this region have never had a better say in matters regarding their welfare because of their vulnerability to male patriarchy.

In terms of education infrastructure, there is limited number of latrines in relation to the number of students. According to interviews with head teachers in all schools, there was a higher need to increase pupil stance ratio. The current ratio of pupils to stances is about 55:1 yet the national ration is averaged at a ratio of 40:1. This is further compromised by the fact that even in schools where the ratio is 55:1; the latrines do not have adequate doors in order to guarantee enough and adequate privacy to particularly the girls under adolescence stage. Most of the schools in this region are day schools; they are therefore unable to provide an environment that can allow concentration on studies. Most of the children have to go back after school to look after cattle and engage in restocking exercise. Ideally education in Karamoja region would serve better if it were delivered in boarding schools. The boys particularly need to change their attitude towards raiding. According to the interviews with key informants in the region, most of the currently highly learned persons in the region studied in boarding schools. In day schools they concentrate on thinking on raiding rather than education. Thus it is very difficult for education in this region to change the perception and orientation to life in a pastoral community. In the entire education infrastructure in the region, there is no Special attention paid to the children (girls and boys) with special needs. The infrastructure such as schools and latrines are made on the basis of the all body-able bodied and girls. As a result, the boys and girls with special needs do not receive the necessary attention from the schools. This is further complicated by the fact that there are limited staffs with the basic skills for handling children with special needs. In the same way no special attention given to pupils with disabilities in class, the entrance has been levelled, latrines have also been made to accommodate pupils with disabilities. Schools for blind pupils have not been provided. There has not been a comprehensive assessment to identify the magnitude and nature of the disabilities for girls and boys in the region. Therefore, planning for the education of such vulnerable categories becomes very difficult.

There are a number of explanations that were given to explain the low attitude towards education in this region; these relate to the historical and cultural factors in this region. According to the Education Officer, rejection of formal education was heightened when reading and writing (the pen) symbolized the registration of people who were conscripted into the colonial British army during the Second World War. Many conscripts died in battle far from their motherland fighting for a cause the people of Karamoja did not understand. The pen together with the formal education that it represented were cursed and rejected. The recruitment of the young men into the army also resulted into the vulnerability of the elderly population to insecurity since the protective force was taken away. In addition the young boys who would play a central role in herding cattle were no more. A significant number of elderly opinion leaders interviewed in this study also hold this perception. They believe that, by burying a pen, they conquered colonial education. The challenge formal education imposes on the communities is that it occupied a child from 8oclock in the morning to 5oclock in the evening, sparing no time to support family members. Yet by the time such education is finished, children have forgotten their culture. According to the interviews with the key informants in the education sector, there are a number of girls transcending into formal education from ABEK. However they hard last in this second phase of their learning. This is largely attributed to the fact that there are hardly any psychosocial counselling and guidance given to such girls enrolling into formal education. The approach to formal education is different from that of the ABEK and as a result, the new environment and the moderation of classes barely support girls' progress. Children in the ages 10 – 18 years are sceptical to go formal schools. Secondly, many children in Karamoja region enrol for education at a late age. For the girls, even those who enrol at a right age are also pulled out to come and support their mothers in looking after their sibling (sisters and brothers) as they look for food and perform other gender roles. These are also marriage materials and community pressure forces them out. No plan for ABEK to be integrated, strengthen linkage between ABEK to formal schools.

There is also the FAL programme, where both women and men are equally encouraged to enrol; by doing so, FAL engages the minds of men and young boys and guards against raiding and other risky practices. However the participation of the male population is very limited in these programmes. Unlike the women, most of the elderly men spend their time along the river and stream banks at a time when they are expected to engage in this education. In addition, although there are many classes, young men and boys move for water and pasture, thereby getting interrupted; they fail to attend the classes. Although there are a number of women benefiting in the FAL classes, there are a number of challenges that compromise their attendance and their benefit from the classes. Most of women fail to attend these classes because of family responsibilities. In this food insecure region, women find it difficult to attend FAL classes yet they also have to look for food, water and firewood at home. In Pokot for instance, in moments of hunger, women travel to Kenyan relatives in search for food. No one attends to FAL when there is no food and water at home. Further more, mothers have many children to attend too, yet the distance to the health centres, in cases of sickness is very long for a mother with such children. Many times they get admitted for a full weak at hospital. These are the mothers who are expected to attend classes! The learning centres are also limited, and learners have to travel for a long distance before they can reach. As an adaptation some of the organisations such as POZIDEP have turned their board room into class room to act as learning a learning centre. It was also noted that mothers come for FAL classes with children because the classes are far from home and have no one to lave their children with. However the design of the FAL classes in this community does not provide for shelters where mothers can keep their children while studying. This would be an opportunity for expanding ECD education but it is not exploited. Mothers are not allowed to attend classes with their children. As an adaptation, mothers coming from Amudat centre leave their children at the church and come for the classes at the offices. Those from far distance sometimes come with the ground mother or the elder girl to care for the young ones. Women being bread winners experience disruptions from familial responsibilities. Domestic chores affect women more than men because  $\frac{3}{4}$  of chores are done by women. In addition, the Learning materials are limited supplies of books, pencil; FAL learners provide for themselves the learning materials; those who cannot afford write on the ground. Shelter for learning study under trees in the open, concentration limited, bad weather affects learning process. Transhumance life styles, interferes with the learning process. Men have to walk long distances during the dry seasons to the learning centres; in the process many drop off and those who continue fail to catch-up with learning time. This complicated by the negative attitude to learning; there is limited interest because people hardly see the importance of education. Appreciate value of education though benefits are long term, beginning to appreciate education.

## Major Health Concerns

Although this study recognises the peculiar health concerns spotted in the various communities in Karamoja region, on the overall, it was found that Malaria is the leading cause of deaths and admissions in all health centres and hospitals, in both adults and children. Malaria control is undermined by the lifestyle of pastoral communities make its prevention more complex. The lifestyle and gender roles make the *Karacunas* vulnerability to malaria, as these spend their nights outside the huts, guarding the animals from possible raids. As a result, they are exposed to mosquito bites. These categories hardly get time to sleep in the huts is regularly; thus use of preventive measures like Insecticide treated nets (ITNs) is more of a myth. Yet during the dry seasons, the *Karacunas* and a few elderly men move with the animals to kraals and all they go with is their “*Suka*” which acts both as clothing during the day, and for covering at night. The conditions in the kraal are very harsh and barely do they sleep at night, as they keep watch over their cattle. Therefore they are exposed to mosquito bites, and are at a big risk of getting malaria. What makes the situation more complex is that access to health care amidst these condition is very difficult, and the most common practice is self treatment with herbs. Here, recovering is entirely at the mercy of God, and most die.

The people are living below the poverty line, and are struggling to meet the basic needs like food, clothing, medical care, shelter; therefore, essential preventive kits like a mosquito net is not close to their most immediate needs. However, Organisations like UNICEF have distributed mosquito nets to households in a bid to promote prevention of malaria. There is also an arrangement by the Malaria consortium of distributing mosquito nets to pregnant mothers because of their vulnerability to malaria attacks. This is because pregnant women and children are more vulnerable to malaria. However this also leaves the rest of the family members exposed to the risk of mosquito bites hence malaria. Unfortunately, even the few pregnant women who receive these nets do not use them for their own protection; they reserve them for their husbands, while they remain exposed to the risk. The conditions on the ground further do not favour sleeping under a mosquito net, for instance, around 6-10 girls (this applies to boys in a few agronomist communities as well) sleeping in the same small hut, with no bed but just lying on the floor. Use of a mosquito net in such conditions is more of an extra inconvenience. In addition, more than 80% of the distributed nets are not used for the intended purpose. Some are just hang in the huts as decoration; others are used for covering in the form of bed sheets. In an interview with one of the health workers he had this to say. Only 3.4% of the households in Karamoja have the required two ITNs and only 5.9% have one ITN; this compared to the regional target of 60% of the households having two ITNs.

**Table 7: Major health concerns in the community**

Health concerns	Frequency	percent
Malaria	522	51
Diarrhoea	296	29
STIs	36	3.5
Chicken pox	13	1.3
TB	121	12
Eye problems	10	1
Typhoid	8	0.8
Measles	11	1.1
Flu	9	0.9
Total	1026	100%

*Note: frequency of responses exceed percent because multiple responses were allowed*

The data from the survey indicate that malaria accounts for 51% of the major health concerns reported, followed by diarrhea, at 29%. Other health concerns reported in high levels included sexually transmitted infections and Tuberculosis. In a similar development, diarrhoea is a major problem affecting children in Karamoja region, and this is mainly attributed to the poor hygiene in the *Manyattas*. These are characterised by high housefly infestation levels, because of cows, milk and meat. In addition latrine coverage in Karamoja is the lowest in the whole country; hence management of human waste is still a big problem. Bushes are used as alternative to latrines for disposing of human waste, even when there is such a provision as a toilet.

Sexually transmitted diseases were further reported particularly in Napore community, at the border with southern Sudan. According to the discussions, Napore community is vulnerable to the infections because of the sexual relations with traders across along the border and the game rangers in Kidepe National Park (KNP). The young girls and women are more vulnerable to this infection as most of the traders are males. However, by infecting women with the sexually transmitted infections, the boys and men also fall victims of the infections. **Napore is one of the hard to reach communities in the region. As a result access to health care services is difficult. STIs are aggravated by polygamous marriages and the limited participation of the husbands in seeking health care with their husbands. One of the many wives may go to the health centre and seek treatment, but her co-wives and later on the husband may refuse to go for treatment. This exposes them to the risk of re-infection since they have no control over their sex lives.** There are however other serious health concerns that never got revealed through the survey but through the group discussions and key informant interviews. Many women are unable to access Anti Natal Care services in the region because of insecurity and the long distances involved, yet public transport is extremely difficult to find. Even then, very few women can afford transport to the health care centres. The few, who can afford, use the available means of transport- the trucks. **A woman in the region remains at a bigger risk than that of men. This is because women are the sole bread winners for their families and they have to fulfil this role in all circumstances; whether sick or healthy, whether they have just delivered and need some rest, because failure to do can easily earn them a good beating from their husbands. The DHO Abim narrated her experience in relation to this; “ a mother who had just given birth here at the hospital was resting in the ward with her baby, when her husband stormed the ward and started beating her up, accusing her of coming to sleep at the hospital and neglecting her role of giving him food at home.”**

Women's roles in Karamoja involve walking for long distances for example in search of water and firewood, and Karamoja being a semi-arid region implies, water is a very scarce commodity. By nature, a woman's body requires maximum hygiene and bathing is one of the ways to maintain one's body clean. However, the situation in Karamoja does not always favour this since water is unreliable. Women go for weeks without bathing, and this causes itching of the private parts and other health related problems like Candida.

*"We get problems with our private parts, they itch when we take long without bathing, yet we cannot avoid it. Water is very scarce, the little we get is for drinking, cooking and brewing. Washing and bathing are not priorities all the time. In case of menstruation periods, we are faced with a difficulty of getting water. We take long distances to get water but when you are in your periods, you find you can't walk a long distance"*

In Moroto district, waterborne diseases were raised as very common, resulting from poor hygiene which also increases vulnerability to other diseases like diarrhoea and eye infections. More specifically, the women in Abim district raised a concern about a problem they have been experiencing, that is bleeding to death for both women who are in menopause, and even young girls; they bleed non-stop. In the health centre, they are told it is cancer, but they don't understand what kind of cancer it is. This is a very common problem but for the elderly women, it is more complex.

In addition there are specific health concerns that undermine the health of adolescent girls and boys in the region. Such concerns include knowledge and information gaps personal health promotion and sexuality education. As a consequence there are many teenage pregnancies. Health care provision in the region is delivered generally without putting into consideration the health care issues such as privacy and the fear of the teenagers from seeking services together with the adult communities in the region. Ethnic groups in Karamoja treasure virginity and therefore, girls fear the negative sanctions that may occur to them once they are identified by the adults. Many girls with such health concerns are thus unable to report because of the larger community issues. There are hardly any adolescent friendly services tailored to their needs, nor adolescent clinic. However there are some interventions of *straight talk and radios* distributed by UNICEF. These serve to promote health education for the adolescent girls and boys. However they are also limited in coverage and therefore, their sphere of influence is greatly compromised.

Although there are health centres in every ethnic community, the human resource is so limited. As a result, many times, communities fail to access services once the health centre in-charge is away. In Nakapiripit district, especially in Pokot, the few health centres are very far from the communities, and overwhelmed by the populations they serve. In Karita Health Centre III, the health centre in-charge noted that, at times the stock runs out and stay even for three months without any medicine. This is also compromised by the fact that the road to the health centre is very unreliable for any medical care access from Amudat Hospital. In an area with no public transport means, men, women, girls, and boys in Karita have to trek over 70 kilometres in order to reach Amudat Hospital. As an adaptation, people they refer themselves to Kenya for health care, an area about 45 kilometres.

For the boys involved in cattle keeping, they are prone to *Kalazar* disease. According to the interviews, this is caused by a special fly that harbours in anthills. According to the findings, most of the boys spend part of their time playing on and around the anthills because they are warm. By doing so, they expose themselves to the risk of Nairobi fly bites, there by contracting the disease. Fortunately, this disease is treated in Amudat hospital. However many boys are unable to afford the medical expenses required for their treatment.

Family care and feeding is perceived as a woman's gender role. As a result women receive limited support from their spouses in feeding the family. This aggravates the level of, malnutrition. Malnutrition was reported in the region, particularly in Nyakwae, and Moroto districts. Malnutrition is a product of famine, unequal gender relations, and knowledge gap on the nutritional requirements for the study. Many husbands have left family feeding roles to women alone and yet they have limited opportunities for accessing the necessary food both in terms of quality and in terms of amounts. Many families in Moroto for instance have to survive on **alcohol residues**, which are obtained at a fee from the neighbours. Others have to boil wild fruits as food. Although there is a recommendation of the national Infant and Young Child Feeding policy on the provision of 5 meals a day to children, this is not the case in Karamoja region, where most of the children eat 1 to 2 meals a day. Moroto provides the highest proportion of children 1 taking meal a day at 40percent. The nutritional value of such foods cannot support attainment of the relevant and required nutrients for a healthy living. Yet even the food aid from World Food Programme is never enough because of the limited amounts given. According to the data from MOH, The prevalence of malnutrition in Karamoja region was highest in the districts of Moroto (15.6 percent), Nakapiripit (15.1 percent), and Kaabong (9.1 percent). The lowest rates of malnutrition in the region were 8.3 percent in Abim and 6.3 percent in Kotido districts. The report further adds that the prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition of 10.9percent and severe malnutrition rate of 1.7percent for children 6–59 months of age is alarming in the region. Kaabong however had the highest prevalence of Severe Acute Malnutrition of 2.6 percent followed by Nakapiripit (2.2 percent) and Moroto (2percent). The acceptable prevalence of SAM should be below 1 percent<sup>45</sup>. These cases were so many in the field especially in Nyakwae, Moroto and Napore. For women living closer to the town centres their alternatives to income are widely spread as compared to far rural women. Such women collect and sell firewood to make sure that our families survive. Others bum charcoal, sell some, and use this money for food, health care, clothes and some alcohol (Waragi) to strengthen me. However some women also give up their roles and resort to drinking local gin just like the men do. It is not surprising for malnutrition to be high in particularly Moroto, because of the biting poverty in the district, evidenced by the fact that many people also survive on mere local brew residues.

As an adaptation, children particularly the girls are sent to Labour outside their home area. In a group discussion in Moroto, many women reported that they send children to Busia to work, when they come back, they bring money, clothes for us. Other copying mechanisms are not vary encouraging as some women particularly in trading centres and main towns have reported to prostitution. *The barracks is very close to us, you find that because of extreme poverty, women have resorted to prostitution. You find a mother and*

*daughter in the barracks with soldiers.* There were however also reports that some women are forced into sexual relations with the soldiers. However no significant evidence was gathered to support this. In this poverty stricken region, there are very few regular/salaried earners. The soldiers are the most common rich categories with money and yet they also need to quench their sexual interests. As a consequence, many women get easily attracted and induced to sex with them.

Pastoral communities are also vulnerable but a little better because milk is highly nutritious. During the drought season, many boys are left with no option but to go and live in the kraals as they look after the animals. The kraals are often located far from centres where medical services are delivered from. Yet there are limited capacities of the health care centres to deliver outreach services in the community. In the kraals, mothers are never their, except in a few cases when they are called by the husbands or when there is no milk at home. As a result most of the boys rely on local medicine to cure the diseases that befall them. However the effectiveness of such drugs is highly varied. While the majority reported that they are in many cases treated, many also noted they were less effective.

*When I was in the Kraal, I got measles, nobody gave me modern medicine, I only took herbs and I got healed immediately. I was told that measles cannot be treated using modern medicine so I resorted to herbs which killed my child.*

These perceptions continue to undermine the access to medical care in this community. Like the agro and agro-pastoral communities, there are many other challenges that befall them. During the out migration, men freely engage in other sexual relations with other women. This creates vulnerability situations to the women who remain at home as they stand the risk of contracting STIs from the husbands when they return. For women because of the social control system, their chances of having sexual relations is limited, and their sexuality hardly enjoyed until their husbands come back.

These seasonal movements occur within known location where relatively greener pasture land and water exist. However these locales are mostly outside the areas where education and health facilities are lacking and where such services are hard to be delivered because of the transport costs involved and the risky nature of the environments. As a consequence, the boys and men who engage in herding animals during this season find it difficult to access biomedical health care services. As an adaptation, most of the young boys rely on their parents, mostly the elderly men in the kraals for information and knowledge on how to respond to the illnesses that befall them. Life in the kraals is not a simple one; most, if not all the migrant communities live on nothing but the skins and hides, laid down on the floor, and cover themselves with nothing but the sheets they use through the day as their traditional attire. Consequently, their bodies are subjected to grave risks of attack from the insects. Kraals are also very prone to mosquitoes. Kraals where men and boys sleep are also the places where they keep the animals for the purpose of protecting them against the raiders. As a consequence, the kraals are often muddy, dirty, and dumpy, creating conditions that attract and enhance breeding of mosquitoes. The young boys in these areas are therefore at great risk of mosquito bites and the resultant malaria disease. Unfortunately, there is no sufficient mechanism to track the magnitude to young boys and men who get exposed to malaria during these periods, because they do not seek biomedical interventions where such records are kept. Mostly malaria in these places, just like in the *Manyattas* is treated mostly using ethno medical medicines.

Access to health care services in the region is varied. Some communities living around town centres have regular access to the health centre care services. However communities living far from town centres find difficulties in getting the services. For instance, women in Kadam have to take their children to hospital in either Alapat or Orolwo in Kenya. The richer families do so by bicycle but the poorer families have to trek. Some times, children die on the way before reaching the hospital. For pregnant women, giving birth is done by help of the Traditional Birth Attendance (TBAs). Most of the TBAs are yet to receive any medical training in the handling cases of women in pregnancy. However a few who received some training refer women with complication to the health centres and the hospital. Complicated cases handled by untrained TBAs are referred to the health centres but many of such cases reach when they are highly mutilated. The boys who fall ill while in the kraals have to rely on traditional herbs for treatment of the illnesses. Traditional medicines in Karamoja take a centre stage in the response to health concerns because of the absence and or limited access to biomedicine, the beliefs in its efficacy in healing, and the extreme poverty which makes it difficult to access the biomedicine from the health centres. However some times traditional medicines conflict with biomedical medicines in times when healing is the priority for a woman. According to the interviews with the medical officers in Amudat, many women come to the health centres with their local medicines during their labour yet this is advised against. Communities which are closer to health centres have learned the culture of visiting the same for medical assistance whenever they are in need unlike those far from the available health centres, which rely on self administered herbs, visiting traditional healers, and few go to church for prayers; as one respondent commented.

*“Most people go to Health centre but when it fails you go to traditional healers, once this fails you take the patient to church for prayers”*

*“We go to the health unit for treatment. Sometimes the conditions becomes worse that you can't think of handling the situation at home.”*

In situations where medical interventions in the health centres fail, women and men refer themselves to the traditional doctors.

Among the communities living in highly isolated places like the mountains and others far from where the main centres of public service infrastructures are located there is enormous challenges in trying to get the necessary services they need to attain a high lying-in standard. According to the interviews with the community participants in the group discussions, the challenges are related to the fact that their places are located far from reach of an average person and yet at the same time, the insecurity in these places make it difficult for particularly women to travel to the centres where they can obtain health care services. An example of such communities is the Kadama, living on the Kadam hills of Nakapiripirit district. There are not even any visitors to this community. In fact, according to the group of male respondents with whom the research team held an interactive discussion, the research team was the second group of visitors to the place, Dooo, second only to the UPDF who visited it for the disarmament exercise. Unfortunately, the first visitors never treated them well, as they rounded up people from the village made them walk for 18km to Lemusei, where they were relocated to other places. The Kadamas have adapted to living in the hills because the soil is fertile they grow food maize throughout the year. We even supply the plain land ethnic communities with food. As a result they are less

willing and ready to leave in areas where health care services can be accessed and delivered easily. For women who are entangled in gender roles for most of their time of the day, they rely on girl children to take care of their siblings. However such young girls are hardly in position to give a proper history of the health concerns of their siblings.

Access to health care services is a right women, boys, girls and men are equally entitled to. Article 12 of CEDAW provides for the equality in right to health for men and women without any distinction on the basis of gender or any other factors. It also mandated government parties to put in place mechanisms that allow women and men to enjoy their rights to equality to health care services. In the context of Uganda, the government, in an effort to improve access to health care services, abolished user fees in public health centres. However vulnerable groups still face enormous challenges in accessing the health care services they need. According to the Uganda national health survey, it was revealed that about 1.4 million people who fell sick did not seek medical attention<sup>46</sup> (UBOS, 2005/6). The health concerns for women, girls and boys in these regions are greatly shaped by and linked to the livelihoods of the ethnic communities. In agro-based communities, the garden is the source of livelihood. When there is enough harvest; some is sold to dress children and to buy them other foods. Some sell food to get money to start small business like selling tomatoes while others keep few chickens and sell the eggs and some chicken in order to take care of my family's basic needs. However in situations of extreme drought many women have leave their children starving to go to towns in search for survival while others, particular in urban centres like Kotido, abandon their children on the streets. Such children are left to the mercy of the on lookers and the Child and family Protection Unit under police to handle. According to the interview with the head of CFPU in Kotido, cases of child abandonment are on the increase and yet there is hardly any structure and facilitation to nurse and accommodate such children. Famine has crippled the social protection structures in the communities and as a result, children, both the girls and boys, as well as the elderly men and women are left malnourished and starved.

## Health Care Infrastructure

Karamoja region meets the minimum required national standard of at least a major referral hospital in each district; that is Abim Hospital in Abim district, Moroto and Matany Hospitals in Moroto district, Kaabong Hospital in Kaabong district, Kanawit mission hospital in Kotido district, Amudat in Nakapiripirit district. In addition to the major referral hospitals, there are Health centre IIIs, Health centre IIs and health centre IVs, although most of these are not to the required standard in terms of personnel, drugs, medical equipment, physical infrastructure and other essential facilities like transport (ambulances) and electricity. The coverage of these health centres and hospitals is very big, and they are overwhelmed by the population they have to serve. A number of challenges were raised as affecting health care delivery in Karamoja region. Attraction and retention of staff is a major challenge and this is attributed to the long established history of insecurity in the region, and lack of basic social services necessary for minimum living standards. These include; water, electricity, transport, housing and food. *"If one is not born here, the maximum a health worker can sacrifice to work here is a year. When it comes to midwives and doctors, we have surely failed to attract them, in fact what we are doing is training support staff to switch tasks. Our biggest challenge here is staff accommodation<sup>47</sup>"*

The Referral system is not so good, due to network problems and transport. Referral of cases from HCIIIs and below is more difficult; patients have to be carried on stretchers and bicycles to be brought to the hospitals. With the few ambulances provided by UNFPA to assist expectant mothers and a few hospital vehicles, the community has to assist with fuel sometimes, because the allocated fuel is not enough and yet these are people living below the poverty line. This means some patients may not be successfully referred, especially when they cannot afford to contribute to transport. The DHO Abim district had this comment to make in respect to referral. *"Our hands are tied. Sometimes we really cannot do much because of the limited funding. Referral can sometimes be a very big challenge to us."* Funding is very specific, that is strictly for service delivery and therefore it is very difficult to support any thing else like sensitization and training. However, given the culture, attitude and ignorance of the populations sensitisation and training remains a priority and therefore at the centre of healthcare delivery. Basic hygiene issues like use of latrines is still a major issue requiring sensitisation, Pit latrine coverage is very low and even then it is only 26% of those in place that are correctly used.

In addition, Karamoja region has many hard to reach areas, yet the people there are in dire need. The road network is only limited to areas closer to major towns, and in many other places there are no roads. Some areas have very steep hills and rocks, making accessibility very difficult. When it comes to posting health workers in such places, many are not willing to work there, because there are no social services like electricity, water, housing and transport. Therefore providing healthcare in such areas is very challenging, it's insecure, and one can be ambushed any time. Health workers feel insecure most of the time and this limits their effectiveness as well.

## Perception towards Health Care Seeking

The distribution of health centres in the region is relatively very limited and skewed to the urban centres. Where there are health centre IIIs, their services are often inaccessible because of the limited staff, or medical care. As an adaptation to the long distances, many communities do not attend health care centres but rely on local medicines for treatment of the infections that befall them. It is only in severe cases of illnesses that patients are referred to the health centres.

In an interview with women and men in Iriri, it was revealed that a line about eight (8) family members move to health centres to escort a mother taking a child hospital. They have mother, father, and grand mothers on either side. At the health centres, a woman nurses the child as the father goes to look for food in trading centres, other family member continue giving their ethno medical advice while others go to inform the members at home about the condition of the sick child. In addition to maintaining information flow, this strategy is also used such that in case the child needs blood transfusion, a member can donate. Thus moving in team serves to maintain information flow; no phones to communicate, the same others with communicate. It is also used for role sharing and looking for money and food, blood transfusion, and ethno medical advice.

Decision-making is in most cases a monopoly of the men. Even when it comes to issues of reproductive health, the women in question rarely have a say in what should or shouldn't be done. For example decisions on when to have the next pregnancy, whether to go for family planning or not are taken by either the husband, the mothers in law, and the husband's clan at large. The women are there to agree with whatever decision taken. Women have limited say over the number of children to produce. As a consequence, many women are exposed to the risks of having continuous pregnancies over their reproductive life. According to the data from the survey, 47percent of the decisions over family planning are made by the husbands, while only 41 percent of these decisions are made by both the husband and wife. However about 2 percent of the decisions are influenced by mothers in law to the women.

The people in Karamoja have a natural appreciation for child spacing. As such, they have some norms that encourage and facilitate child spacing the natural way. For example the women disclosed that they do not engage in sexual intercourse when the child is still very young and still breastfeeding until they have weaned such a baby. There are even sanctions on men who do not respect such norms. In one of the FGDs with the women in Abim, they told us, "if a man forces his wife into sex while she is still breast feeding, and the wife reports such an incidence, we mobilise fellow women and look for the man wherever he is, beat him up thoroughly, after which he slaughters for us a bull as a sign of asking for forgiveness". However, this is only child spacing, but as for the number of children, there is no limit and in fact, the popularly held belief is that a woman is supposed to produce all the children that her life span can possibly allow. The mindsets of many have been tuned to believe the same, so much so that talking of family planning in Karamoja especially to the ordinary people in the *Manyattas* is welcomed with rejection, and perceived as an enemy to human kind. In addition, there are many myths surrounding the use of family planning and modern contraceptives which we established during discussions with both women and men. For example some women had this to say; "We hear that family planning comes with terrible effects, so we are already scared. What if I joined and my children die, I won't be able to have any other children. So I can't join." Such statements are a reflection of many issues, for example it is true that the Infant mortality rate in Karamoja is very high, but also it shows inadequate education and sensitisation on the subject of Family planning. All they know seems to be hearsay and very few know the facts. However there are a section of women who expressed their willingness and interest in family planning, although a number of factors influence both their decision and ability to embrace the same. This was ascertained through the following responses. "Some of us wish to join family planning but our husbands and the clan cannot allow. These days you produce until you stop. Many women have no powers over sex if you want and do not want. He can even slap you". This is in line with the earlier stated fact that decisions on reproductive health do not lie in the hands of the women but their husbands and the clan.

As a result Traditional Birth Attendants remain the only vital alternative for women to access ANC and maternal health care services. However, in some cases the TBAs may not be in position to detect complications early enough to give time for referral. By the time the expectant mother moves to a health centre with the services she requires, it is too late. Sometimes women die on their way to the health centres. Many of these TBAs have not received the basic training in essentials of midwifery as required by the ministry of health. Most of them are just relying on their natural wisdom, and more to that, they do not have the required toolkit (with essential things like gloves, blades, injections to stop bleeding) meaning they use their bare hands to assist women to deliver, and in cases of excessive bleeding, they are incapacitated to help. As a result, the health of the mothers is at a great risk. This service is provided by Health centre IIIS, IVs and major hospitals found in the region. However, the culture of attending ANC in Karamoja is despite the interventions of incentives like food for expectant mothers. Where WFP is still providing these rations, the attendance is very high, and in areas where the programme has been suspended, the reverse is true. According to interviews with the medical officers in Moroto and Nakapiripirit, the attendance of ANC sky rocket during food distribution days but suffers a nose dive in absence of the food. However attendance rates for ANC are higher in Abim district than any other district in the region. This could be attributed to the fact that there are a big number of health care services as compared to other districts. ANC attendance is largely perceived as a responsibility of the women alone, although women are expected to go with their husbands for ANC. It is only in very few instances where husbands accept this responsibility and it is the highly educated husbands who respond. In 2007 however, there was a lot of emphasis and strictness on husbands accompanying their wives, and the women who came alone would not be attended to. Many husbands responded but again stopped shortly after.

*There was a time 2007 when they said they needed husbands at the Health Centre and many responded to receive ANC and getting them ITN. These days they do not because they stopped. When I told my husband to go with me for ANC, he said; "You are asking me to go with you, Am I also pregnant, if you do not want, remain there."*

There is a gap in knowledge about the role of ANC among both women and men in the community. The husbands hardly recognise their need to attend ANC services with their wives. Yet given their roles, the campaign for attendance of ANC hardly reaches them since they spend their time in looking after the animals. During times of delivery, more than 90% of the women who attend ANC do not deliver from the health centres. In one of the interviews with the DHO of Abim, she had this to say;

*"Women come faithfully to be checked (ANC) (98%) although they start late (5-6 months) and as such do not fulfil the four quality tests. However when it comes to delivery, it is only a small %age of 8% which is not good. They give reasons like unexpected labour when they are deep in the villages with no means of transport, prefer TBAs that midwives are rude, the delivery position in the hospitals i.e. lying on the bed yet they are used to squatting in the villages. They also have a belief that they are not supposed to prepare or do any shopping for the unborn babies, and yet when they come here for delivery, we ask them for these things."*

There is also a feeling among men in the community that the TBAs are more effective than the trained nurses in handling women during the labour pain. One respond in Nakapiripirit notes that women have a lot of knowledge and skills especially the TBA and elderly women. "I took my wife to deliver at the hospital; the nurse told me it would be at 7:00pm – 9pm when she will deliver. When I went home, I said, let me tell the TBA about it. As soon as we reached home, they touched her and delivered immediately. TBAs are more skilled than nurses. Many nurses are young girls who have not delivered even. (Male FGD, Abongai). This was further supported by some respondents who reported that, many times there are cases where the doctors fail and they call the TBAs. However these exceptional cases are used as a yardstick for determining the efficiency of the medical personnel yet, they influence the decision making process during times of delivery. During delivery, many beliefs are associated with delivering from health centres. for example, women believe that TBAs

are the best and mothers only come after very serious complications, they believe that a woman should deliver while squatting as opposed to lying on a bed in the hospital. However, a lot of health education is being done but culture is still strong. There is high maternal mortality, especially resulting from over bleeding causing loss of blood; some are brought too late to the health centres, having bled too much.

There are many deliveries outside the Health Centre and this is attributed to the distances involved before accessing a health centre, the negative attitude to midwives, the differing positions of delivery and the basic preparation required by the health centres which the majority of the women cannot afford. *“Many other people fear the HC because they ask very many questions and touch you everywhere. The nurses sometimes mistreat the women and they resort to caesarean knives even when it would have been avoided.”* In most cases, TBAs are preferred at times of delivery since they are closer to the women at their level, and they handle them the way they wish to be handled. These TBAs do not handle complicated cases. Some TBAs are not able to detect complicated cases. Sometimes they delay to refer women to the Health care centres until it is too late. Other barriers include beliefs that a woman’s labour pains should be secret and therefore not many people should know about it, because this can cause delayed delivery or even complications as one lady expressed; *“If some body is under labour, and every body discovers that she is in labour, that person will not deliver immediately. They will be operated. Many people fear to be operated.”* Such beliefs of superstitions in the community are the bases for determining the decision making for choice of health care system for a woman to deliver from. These beliefs are widely held in communities with high level of superstitions.

Uganda has a number of health care promotion and prevention programmes that are implemented nationally. Results of studies on such programmes indicate that the number of pregnant women in Uganda accessing Nevirapine, the drug that stops mothers from passing HIV to their newborn babies, is rapidly growing with all districts in the country now offering the service. However the situation for women in Karamoja region is still limited and appalling because of a limited number of health care centres with the necessary resources and infrastructure to administer the services under PMTCT. Some districts like Rakai, Tororo, near the Kenyan border, and Jinja, in the east, where access to PMTCT is about 80 percent coverage have HC III facilities providing services. Uganda was among the first countries in sub-Saharan Africa to initiate clinical PMTCT programs but status Karamoja region still remains less known because of the limited HIV/AIDS testing and counselling facilities. However there are efforts by the central and local governments to improve the situation of access to such services. To improve access to health services at the local level, the government is building these facilities and has so far upgraded 169 Health Centre IV outlets and 180 Health Centre III outlets in the country. The challenge that remains is that many such centres have limited infrastructures for the delivery of such services, especially in Karamoja region. The centres need to be well equipped with wards, operating theatres, staff housing and equipment, improving access to health services where at least 72 percent of the population is within 5 kilometres of a health facility.

Women’s participation in decision making on matters of their sexuality is limited. According to responses from most of the group discussions with men in reproductive ages, women’s participation in the decision-making is very limited. One voice in the group discussion said, *“A woman has nothing to contribute to the decisions I make. You can only discuss with women when all other work has been finished; may be in the night after work and the brains are tired. Even then, you do not have to take them seriously.”* This view was held by participants both in and around the trading centres as well as in rural settings; the relationship between men and women largely remains the same. Women have limited participation in the decision making process because of the perception that women are under the power and control of their husbands and male relatives. One respondent said, *These Women have no say. We are supposed to go by nature. She cannot refuse, except the only time she can be excused is when she is having her monthly periods, (Menstruation cycle) and the second time is when feeding, he is not began walking (male FGD in Karinga).*

Among the Pokot, women are often free during their menstruation cycle. During this time, women are considered unclean and are not supposed to touch any utensil that a man uses. In case she does so and it is noticed, she can be divorced. It is believed that touching utensils during this period brings bad omen and the man can get killed once they go for raids. This perception is largely held in rural areas of Pokot land. This could be due to the fact that there is no any form of interaction without the outside community and therefore such beliefs remain intact.

*In the evening, after cooking, you make your bed. Some men have five wives, and if it is your turn to have him and he doesn’t come you follow him to the other house and you end up quarrelling in the night with your co-wife and the man comes out and beats you up. For those with no co wives, support I expect to have sex in order to get a child. This is the time women get to relax and reproduce. We don’t have sex always, sometimes we sleep without. But sex is very common especially when a man comes from a journey (that is in case he did not have sex with some one else).*

The above response also implies that many times men alternate ladies with whom they enjoy sex. This kind of work creates risks for women and likely result into contraction of sexually transmitted diseases. This is further compounded by the unequal power relations. Very few women can have the ability to say no to sex, or propose the use of contraceptives to guard against STIs. In order to convince the husbands against not having sex, women often give reasons that children are awake.

Yet some women reported that at times whether they are their periods or tired, some husbands force them into sexual relations. This however is rare because in many communities such as the Pokot, having any contact with a woman in her menstruation periods is believed to bring bad omen. Although there are many women also who report that husbands respect their decisions, many women in the FGDs reported, *some men are terrible, when you say no, he beats you up, tears yours cloth and forces you into it.* In some instances, both the man and women initiate sexual interaction in marriage but for different purposes. Women’s initiation is linked to the interest to have another child rather than for satisfaction. *After menstruation periods, and you are badly in need of a child. A man may come and sleep, and if that night he does not initiate, you tell him. “My husband, I have finished my period. By this, he will know that you want him.*

There is a strong value attached to having a child in the community because of insecurity; women feel that having many children gives protection to the family and they also offer support in domestic chores. However there are child spacing practices in the ethnic groups. For instance in all the groups, having sex when the child is young is not allowed. Women do not allow and in case a man insist she will run to the house of mother-in-law. Generally, the number of children is determined by the ability of the woman to deliver. There is limited knowledge and appreciation of the family planning practice. The women are supposed to deliver as many as they can. This is attached to the value of children in the communities.

*You see a man marries because you want to have children. That is why you get and marry many more women. Families with many children cannot be at risk in case of raids. People will fear to come and raid your family. You see for less, all these people you see, have been lived in very extremely hardships. The numbers of people we have lost are almost the same as the number of people living. So if we do not produce many children, how will we survive? Even there are no women who will think about having very few children. An average woman has 8 children.*

In other communities, the Pokot, women are considered unclean during the menstruation cycle periods; women are considered unclean and cannot touch the utensils used by the husband. Doing so, it is believed, brings a bad omen to the man when in raids. Thus women are exonerated from major works. Water is also a problem for an average woman in Karamoja region. This makes personal hygiene promotion very difficult. *We cannot afford pads, knickers are expensive knickers for ourselves; we make pads using rags. Those who love their bodies work so hard to make sure they are clean, so even though the boreholes are far, you have to walk.* This challenge is well felt among women in areas where accessing water is very difficult. In such instances, women its normal for women to go for even three days without bathing because of lack of water. Other girls and women end up selling the food from WFP in order to buy themselves the knickers and pads.

*To manage these challenges, girls depend on relief food from world food programme. We also depend on wild fruits and greens. Some food is eaten but some people like those of Loputuk sell that food and this creates an impression that we have food.*

Some times women are assaulted and lose body parts e.g. eyes. Women's private parts stuffed by stick due to alleged cheating. Defilement cases common but never reported except initiating marriage, and parents to get dowry. Girls getting pregnant at such tender age are in many instances unable to have normal deliveries and many end up having caesarean deliveries. Because of food insecurity, some desperate girls and women get pregnant and or claim HIV status in order to benefit from the food given by WFP at the health centres.

# Local government and Civil Society

## Introduction

This chapter introduces the prevailing intervention for enhancement of the respect of the dignity of all people in the region. It specifically shows the areas of intervention, the gaps and strengths and the opportunities that can be exploited to expand the scope and scale of the interventions. Secondly, shows the partnerships and linkages between actors at different levels; in so doing, this chapter highlights the gaps, challenges and opportunities for expanding the scope and scale of GBV interventions and enhancing their effectiveness towards achieving and sustaining the impact created in the region. The government of Uganda has through the various ministries undertaken enormous efforts in protecting the vulnerable groups of people in Karamoja region. These interventions are similar to interventions elsewhere in Uganda since they are implemented as national development programmes and departments. Such departments include the department of gender under the community services department of the local governments, the child and family protection units (CFPU) under Uganda police and the justice law and order sector. This study identified the preceding two departments and made the following observations:

## Department of Gender

All local governments in the districts have a community services department, the development arm of the local governments that links the community with the government in the development interventions. In order to ensure gender responsive delivery of services and development plans, there is a specific office of Gender within the department. The office is charged with the responsibility of, among other things, mainstreaming Gender into development plans by conducting gender sensitive analysis of the sub county and district development plans; monitoring and evaluating the development projects in the districts to establish their impact from the perspective of gender. However there are a number of challenges in ensuring Gender mainstreaming in the development plans.

First, the planning process in the local government system begins from the bottom, the lower local council levels to the district level. The parish development committees together with the local councillors at sub county level make the sub county development plans that are then forward to the district. District development plans are made under the district forum, the district technical planning committee. However there is no systemic capacity building for gender needs identification, assessment and integration into the development plans. Development planning in local government is governed by the needs of the communities and it is assumed that communities are capable of identifying and planning to address these needs. Unfortunately this is not the case especially in Karamoja region where women's participation in the development planning process is less hardly evidenced particularly in the lower local councils. Yet even those who participate in the development process are greatly compromised by the male dominated structures; in addition, given the fact that they are part of the communities, many women are unable to see gender based violence they have experienced in their life. Although gender mainstreaming can be addressed with or without women's participation, the situation in Karamoja region does not reflect the abilities of even the participating men to effectively be in position to diagnose the gender needs and plan to allocate resources towards bridging them. Consequently gender mainstreaming is only evident at district level planning where the technical officers for gender mainstreaming stay. According to the interviews with the gender officer in Nakapiripirit district, some local councils at sub county level were trained in gender mainstreaming but this is long overdue and refreshment training. Gender mainstreaming under the local government begins at the level of the parish, through the sub county to the district level. However parish and sub county technical planning committees in the region are yet to receive any training in gender mainstreaming. These have not yet been Gender mainstreamed at Sub County because even at the district not much has been achieved in this respect.

At the district level, planning is done under the District Technical Planning Committees (DTPCs). Gender sensitive analysis of the development plans at the district level is done only after receiving the District Development Plans (DDP) made by the DTPC. Unfortunately, many times it's difficult to integrate the analysed gender gaps as many officers of different sectors submit their development plans to the higher level structures. Gender mainstreaming in the local government is a desired and necessary objective but there is no negative sanctioning for non conformity. Many of the officers in the diverse development sectors in the districts are also part of the broader communities whose values, norms, habits and practices hardly recognise the negative implications of gender based violence. Gender mainstreaming is also constrained by the limited resources to facilitate the process and or implement the activities.

*We do not have funds to facilitate activities. As a result, a district hardly gives money to the gender office for gender mainstreaming. The various departments in the district often conduct gender mainstreaming independent of the office of gender yet they hardly have the necessary technical expertise needed. Although some departments underwent some training in gender mainstreaming, their level of comprehension is still wanting. (Freda, Gender Officer, Nakapiripirit district).*

District development planning is also based on the available resources. However the financial resource base in local governments of Karamoja region is very narrow and limited to the very meagre resources that hardly meet the priority needs of the government. As a result, many local governments are unable to mobilise locally generated resources for expanding the scope of gender mainstreaming interventions. Gender officers in the region depend largely on the limited financial resources from the national ministry of gender, labour and social development. Resources prioritisation for gender based interventions in the local government systems is also constrained by the fact that, budget allocations are made by the district budget committees whose appreciation of the need to financing gender related activities require further transformation. According to the interviews with the officer in Nakapiripirit, neither the DTPC nor the budget desk has received any standardised training on Gender mainstreaming. Members of Budget Desk need a training in planning and budgeting in Gender.

Some districts like Abim have not yet received the officer specifically dealing with gender. As a result, gender mainstreaming is compromised by the fact that the departmental staffs in the community development office are over stretched in terms of roles. As a result, little time is obtained to specifically under take gender sensitive analysis of the development plans and implementation of the gender. The Senior Probation Officer also doubles as the gender officer, yet with hardly any other support staffs in the department. Yet the work of probation and welfare officer in the district is tasking as one has to move to courts outside the districts to defend children in conflict with the law. There is hardly any structure to support the office of gender in mainstreaming gender issues in the district development plans. Gender office hardly ever gets involved in the planning meetings of different departments. Thus it becomes difficult to influence planning process at a later stage. When they are submitted to their line ministry, they do not adjust. Ever those who accept to adjust do so on paper but not on implementation. Mainstreaming gender requires that plans are assessed during the planning and implementation process. In the context of limited financial resources, departments in the local governments are often involved in competitive resources struggles rather than complementary role in integrating gender issues. Thus symbiotic linkage is still missing in the interventions.

Although there are a number of organisations operating in the region, there are very few organisations that have specifically designed interventions to address gender issues in the region. Most of the organisation address gender issues indirectly through the provision the services. While this is very good since gender is a cross cutting issue, the absence of the specific interventions for gender-based violence makes it difficult for the achievement of joint impact since there is no joint interventions. In addition, it compromises the opportunities for collecting gender specific data that would help in the understanding of the extent to which the interventions are achieving gender equity. In terms of capacity building, there is limited number of organizations, including the local government departments whose technical staffs has the necessary technical competence to deliver gender responsive services to the community and or track gender disaggregated data on the level of access to such services by gender. Yet even some of the organisations which collect gender disaggregated data largely focus on the numbers rather than process indicators. Gender responsive service delivery requires that the environment within which services are enjoyed is supportive to the survivors, and the way services are delivered puts into consideration the feelings, interpretations and meanings survivors attach to the whole process of seeking protection.

Within with the government development interventions, there are challenges that constrain effective service delivery. Some of the FAL centres closed after WFP pulled-out because of the inability to provide food for self sustenance. In addition there is Low attitude towards education, and women who are the majority of the population in these classes are also the bread-winners in their homes. They do not participate in fully even in ABEK; the communities are mobile, yet the benefits of education yet to be appreciated. The challenges are not limited to non state actors but also to the state agencies. For instance, in some districts, getting information from the Child and Family Protection Unit at the police station is not easy; Information is not given when it is needed. In addition to the gender office, there is also the office of probation and welfare at the district level, which among other things, coordinates child rights and welfare protection, support interest groups such as elderly and disabled persons, and also coordinates relief and rehabilitation services. The office of probation and welfare is the advocates on behalf of juveniles in conflict with the law, and offers guidance and counselling to families. However there are also diverse challenges that constrain the protection of vulnerable categories that come for assistance from this office. In Abim district for instance, the probation and welfare office noted that the culture of children engaging in roles that are beyond their ability to handle remain a big challenge c constraining the development of both girls and boys in the region. There is no universal understanding of the boundary between roles that are given to children with the intention of enabling them to acquire competencies necessary for their future life and those which constitute labour. In terms of interventions for helping children access justice, the offices of probation and welfare have limited facilitation to enable them to follow up cases of juveniles who are in conflict with the law.

The Uganda police have an independent structure, the child and family protection unit (CFPU) in each district. The unit is charged with the responsibility of uniting families with their children in cases of conflict and ensuring that parents take full responsibility the upbringing of such issues. However, like the probation and welfare office, the CFPU in the district has limited facilitation to under take proactive interventions for preventing abuses and violence against children, women and other vulnerable categories in the region. In Kotido for instance the police unit operates on a meagre amount of 10,000/= only per month to facilitate its work such an amount cannot be used for even transporting the survivors of domestic violence to their respective areas. The police station has limited transport facilities, only one vehicle used for both the distractive and operational tasks in the district. Like all the CFPU in the districts, there is no any centre for detaining girls and boys independent of the adult offenders. As a result boys mix with the adult offenders in the detention centres, just like girls do with women. Many times the abandoned children have limited support and the officers have to feed and accommodate them in their homes. Investigating cases of violence against women and girls in the districts is also difficult because of the limited cooperation from the community.

The perception of the police force is still low in the communities. The CID in charge of Moroto noted that in this region, violence is accepted as normal. Many communities are unaware about the role of police and the rights and obligations of children. In Tepeth for instance, the CID officer noted that there are no any cases reported in this region. Communities have their own structures for conflict resolution and reporting to police is hardly done. Even where cases are reported, case follow up is hardly done because of the limited interest. Even when police prosecutes the cases and takes the files to the courts, people fear going to court. In Pokot for instance, going to court is seen as getting closer to the prison. Handing cases of GBV in the is also compromised by the fact that the officers in charge of the CFPU are yet to receive any capacity building training to acquire skills and knowledge of handling cases of GBV. Most of the cases of rape are reported by authorities other than survivors; yet it's also difficult to get evidence due to delayed reporting and knowledge gap of the evidence required to prove cases of rape. Many times the reporting centre is less conducive even to the very few who may wish to report cases of GBV. The work of the CFPU is complemented by the investigations made by the criminal investigation officer in the department but the department is yet to

receive any laboratory for keeping and examining the evidence. In Uganda, there is only a centralized laboratory for this department based in Kampala. There are no facilities to handle rape case evidence; simple gadget for preservation of specimen not there. In addition, there is no police surgeons and it's hard to get doctors to carry out medical examination of survivors; only doctors in the hospital are used and yet they are often too busy. Protection services of police are further exacerbated by the low perception of police among community members and the fact that communities have informal systems that are effective in handling cases. Such informal courts sit and settle cases without involving the police.

## **NGO and CBO Interventions**

Karamoja have a number of NGOs and CBOs operating, at national level and the international level. In addition there is also the church and other religious institutions and media. This study specifically focussed its analysis on the operations of the first three categories. According to the data obtained, there is a thin layer of community based associations particularly operating in the field of gender. Even those that exist are weak in terms of both the economic ability to sustain implement and technical capacity to effectively design and implement interventions for addressing GBV.

## **Partnerships: Challenges and Opportunities**

Partnership between government and NGO actors in GBV interventions is very necessary. This is public institutions such as the department of community based violence has a broad based structure and systems through which services can be delivered, data collected, impact monitored and evaluated. In addition public institutions also enjoy the support of the local communities because of the local leadership structures, power and influences in the local communities. Just like the public structures, the private sector institutions (community based, national and international non –government organisations) have a wealth of experiences of working in different societies, access to donor financial resources and a faster decision making structures, and independence from the government systems. All these provide ample opportunities for enhancing the delivering of services for addressing GBV in the region, by expanding the financial resource base, the knowledge and wealth of lessons drawn from different contexts, and a broad based structure of expanding the scope and scale of interventions.

Public private partnership for GBV is enhanced by the existence of coordination structures, which bring together actors in different areas in specific fields. GBV interventions in Karamoja region is coordinated by the UNFPA regional office based in Moroto. However there are limited actors with interventions specifically designed to address GBV. As a consequence, data collection and monitoring of the impact of the interventions is hardly obtained. In addition, the district priorities may not be their priority. According to the interviews with the gender officers across the region, the level of cooperation with other partners still requires strengthening, as many of the NGOs and CBOs hardly like to share their reports and work plans with the district department.

Interaction between the international development agencies and the local government departments was reportedly less cognisant of the various roles and resource constraints that the latter interface in the course of their work. According to the interviews with the district probation and welfare as well as the gender office, it was noted that the international development agencies often expect the local government officer to do all they needed in the shortest time yet they equally have other tasks to respond to. In addition there was a feeling that time is not enough and there is no clear reporting format especially for reporting gender issues since no gender sensitive training and interventions have been implemented in the region. As a result there is a gap in knowledge of the kind of data to collect, and some data required by the international development agencies is not available because interventions are yet to begin.

There are a number of coordination and sector specific structures in the district aimed at enhancing the impact of the interventions among the various actors in the region. However the number of district coordination structures is so big that it creates inefficiency in the coordination. For instance, in Moroto district, under the education sector, there is the District ABEK committee from village parish, District Implementation Team for ECD, District Quality Education Programme task force, Under UNICEF Support activities, DIT (District implementation team) Under WFP, activity monitory committee among others. Yet the membership of these committees is the same for each committee. The independent comities are required to meet quarterly. Thus more time is spent on meeting and this brings stress on part of the actors. The table below summarises the actors in GBV sector within the region.

**Table 8: Matrix on GBV intervening actors in Karamoja**

DISTRICT	AGENCY	AREAS OF INTERVENTION									Coordination	
		Psychosocial	PEP	FGM	Legal Aid	Sensitization/ Advocacy	Education	Health	Food security and Economic empowerment	Training		
Moroto	UNFPA					X					X	X
	IRC	X	X			X					X	
	SCIU					X						
	KADP					X						
	Arelimok					X						
	WECOP					X						
	KAWUO					X						
	MAZIDEP			X		X	X	X	X			
	SSD											
	WHO		X									X
	UNICEF		X									
	DHO		X									X
	Kotido	Kotido Strive for Development					X					
UNFPA						X					X	X
DHO												X
OXFAM							X		X	X	X	
JIZIDEP						X	X	X	X			
Nakapiripirit	WHO		X									X
	UNFPA					X					X	X
	WHO		X									X
	POZIDEP			X		X	X	X	X			
	DHO		X									X
Kaabong	IRC					X						
	UNFPA					X					X	X
	WHO		X									X
	DOZIDEP					X	X	X	X			
	AWAL											
Abim	DHO		X									X
	UNFPA					X					X	X
	LAZDEP											
	WHO		X									X
	DHO		X									X

The matrix above indicates that there are a number of organisations working in the region. However many of these interventions have no specific interventions for addressing GBV, although it's addressed through the indirect interventions made. Failing to design and implement the specific GBV interventions creates inability of the coordination structures to track and document the impact of the intervention in the region, and therefore becomes difficult to tell the extent to which the various interventions have addressed GBV in the region. There are hardly any specific systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of GBV since very few programme interventions have gender specific indicators.

In addition, some areas such as FGM, psychosocial support and legal aid services have not yet received the necessary interventions in the region. Most of the interventions are concentrated in Moroto and Kotido districts, limiting the scope of the interventions in terms of coverage. GBV interventions have limited interventions despite the fact that its impact is felt in the fields of health, education and justice. Interventions in districts like Nakapiripirit are further compromised by the fact that the road infrastructures to places out side the trading centres is also limited by the poor roads that become impassable during the rainy season. Some communities practicing FGM live in hilly areas in Tepeth, in Moroto district, and Kadama Mountains in Nakapiripirit district. These communities are hardly reached by the intervening actors, both the government and private actors. Yet the uniqueness of the Pokot language, and the Tepeth, make use of media communication as an alternative very difficult.

While there are many actors in the region, many community based organizations have limited financial resources to support their interventions. As a result most of the interventions are limited in scope of geographical coverage and scale of the activities for insertions. This compromises the ability of delivering services to the survivors in the local communities. Development agencies at district level such as the UN agencies have the capacity to support technically and financially, the community based organisations

in this region. Given the limited level of interactions between the community based and the agencies at the interventional level, their ability to tap and exploit such resources is very limited. Further more; the conception of GBV in the region requires to be strengthened particularly among the actors at community level. Although this study did not specifically focus on analysis of the technical and managerial capacities of eth actors, there is evidence that the technical and managerial capacity of many actors at community requires some support. This is based on the fact that the conception of GBV among actors at this level is largely limited to the physical manifestation of the occurrences, ignoring the hidden and indirect consequences of the violence to the actors. In addition, documentation and reporting of GBV in the region very compromised by the absence of the proper reporting system, tools and structures. Further more, some organizations reportedly referred cases to the actors at different level, such as the CFPU in the police. However there is hardly any data indicating the number of cases referred, and no system for monitoring and following up such cases. Thus the interventions of many actors end as soon as the cases get referred. Proper protection of the survivors also requires that the actor follow-up to know the level and extent to which the survivor is receiving the necessary help. The absence of a proper referral system among eth actors also undermines the ability of the survivors and the general communities to know where to access services from which actor.

Independent actors but a multiplicity of actors targeting different aspects of the system that sustains it is better placed to address GBV in Karamoja region. Technical, financial, and managerial resources from an array of actors are desperately needed, as well as new ways of knowledge and thinking about the approaches to be used. GBV is also generated and sustained by interactional variables, such as family and peers, school environment, religiosity and individual psychological factors, e.g., personality traits, behavioral patterns, and motivation. (Hawkins et al., 1992). These risk factors can be addressed individually or collectively, and can be managed by a single development agency. However, given the diversity of the causes, comprehensive and joint programme interventions for addressing GBV can yield more and lasting impact. Partnerships are better suited than individual agencies to identify and accurately define the target problems of greatest concern in a given community. They are more likely to include diverse perspectives and theories about GBV. In addition, they are better suited to developing creative targeted interventions because they include a diverse group of individuals representing a diverse group of organizations with different philosophies of intervention. Prestby and Wandersman (1985) argue that partnership among actors are likely to remain viable if they acquire the necessary resources (skills, experiences, funding) and create a structure that allows actors to goals and meet them collectively by engaging in both strategy-related actions and activities that serve to protect and deliver services to the survivors.

## Action-oriented recommendations

### GBV Programme Management

- 1.1. *Capacity Building:* there is need for technical and managerial capacity building for the key actors particularly at community level to understand the meaning and acquire the competencies to respond to the GBV interventions. This will help to counter the negative perception communities have on Gender based intervention.
- 1.2. *Strengthen Partnership:* there is need to establish networking for a in each district level for the actors in every district to regularly meet and review the progress, challenges and draw lessons from their interventions. Although some districts have already developed NGO Forum, the ability of the structure to create and enhance effective service delivery in the districts is compromised by the limited participation of actors, financial resource inadequacies and coordination capacities. Strengthening the partnership and coordination structure requires a thorough focus on the roles, duties and responsibilities and rights of the member organisations, the capacities to execute these roles, the resources and capacities for coordinating such interventions.
- 1.3. *Joint Advocacy Plan:* From the findings, it is clear that the challenges to enhancing the welfare and capacities of women, boys and girls in the region is linked to a number of structural inequalities whose systems of sustenance are equally strong. There is therefore need for the intervening actors to develop a comprehensive advocacy strategy and plan to address the roots of GBV in the region.
- 1.4. *GBV Data Collection and Monitoring system:* This study further reveals that monitoring and assessing the nature and magnitude of GBV in the region is very difficult because of the limited data available among the actors, and the non-supportive perceptions of practices in the community as constituting GBV. There is need to develop data collection capacities among the actors, design and support usage of comprehensive GBV data collection tools and systems. This will support further analysis of such data on a regular basis to reveal the trend and the impact of GBV interventions.
- 1.5. *Cross-Sectoral Coordination:* although there are sectoral working group and coordination structures, there is need for continued focus on information sharing and coordination towards achieving the impact of gender responsive interventions priorities, coherence and complementarity in sector response plans and consistency
- 1.6. *Referral pathway:* Although there are a number of actors involved in the region, there is need to develop a comprehensive referral system indicating for the survivors to know where protection services can be obtained. This will help to increase appreciation of the existing structures such as the police and the judiciary whose perception in community if mixed with fear and suspicion
- 1.7. *Support District level Structure:* There is need to boost such community level actors with the financial and technical resources since they have the necessary understanding of the local contexts and cultures and are closer to communities. Actors at regional and national level will work better if they jointly delivery services the district level CBOs. This would boost the opportunities for such actors to mentor in GBV responses.
- 1.8. Consider proactive integration of a gender and GBV response and prevention perspective into their needs assessment, response and indicators, to enhance beneficiary targeting and, therefore, overall programme quality and effectiveness.
- 1.9. *Work in and with traditional structures:* this study recognises that every ethnic community in the region has a very strong traditional structure through which cases are resolved, order maintained and continuity guaranteed. GBV interventions should seek to transform these structures into support structures for fighting GBV cases and also be used in the implementation and proportion of services for GBV.
- 1.10. Involve the communities in programme design and implementation to ensure delivery sensitive to indigenous values of communities in the region
- 1.11. Sensitise the religious leaders on GBV and the role of the church in promoting and frustrating GBV; in addition develop their capacity to deliver gender balanced messages for transformation.

### ***FGM, Widow Inheritance and other Cultural practices***

- 2.1. Advocate against the practice but retains the highly cherished values ought to be maintained and promoted. Interventions need to create alternative system for passage from one stratum to another without
- 2.2. Sensitize the community about the negative implications of the FGM. This will enable to establish a knowledge system that can be used to champion community driven transformations.
- 2.3. Design a structure of disincentives to discourage FGM. Such disincentives ought to target the mutilators and the young girls. The disincentives ought to go hand in hand with incentives to girls who resist mutilation.
- 2.4. Build on the existing interventions in the communities and use role models in such communities to champion the campaign against FGM. Interventions need to put into consideration the fact that the practice has been there for a long period of time and thus transforming it requires patience and long-term interventions.

- 2.5. Build the technical capacity of community-based associations, where they exist to deliver services that can help to respond to the needs of the mutilated girls in the communities, as well as developing their capacity to create awareness particularly among the girls and women about the implications of the mutilation.
- 2.6. Mainstream FGM interventions into the entire sectors that are directly or indirectly linked to the practice. Such sectors include education, health, legal and human rights departments. This will help to increase the scope and scale of interventions against the practice.
- 2.7. Sensitise the community on the health implications of widow inheritance in light of HIV/Aids.
- 2.8. Develop alternative livelihoods to support widows and widowers with income generating alternatives to support their lives
- 2.9. Create awareness in terms of the positive and negative implications of gender inequality in the region. This should aim at creating internal mechanisms for creating positive transformation. The social identity of a man, boy, girl, and a woman is the foundation of gender inequality, the inequalities created and sustained by these identities are not visible to both the perpetrators and the survivors.
- 2.10. Identify and build on the highly cherished and important values such as virginity, fidelity and norms in the specific communities, while advocating (realistically) against the bad practices that are used to enforce such good values. Such as wife beating and FGM
- 2.11. Develop interventions that work with community based traditional structures that have been used over time and have a great social legitimacy, by enhancing their capacities to deliver gender sensitive services for social protection.
- 2.12. GBV interventions need to use approaches that enhance the existing peace and stability, while enhancing gender equity. While striving to address the underlying inequalities.
- 2.13. Design a strong advocacy intervention to influence development actors and the government to address the conditions that make the entire region vulnerable to famine, drought and insecurity. This is needed because individual welfare will not be enjoyed when the broader environment does not support.

#### **Education Sector**

- 3.1. There is need Support development of education infrastructure in hard to reach communities. While communities like the Ethur may have the averagely better schools, other communities like the Kadama, and the Teuso have but limited schools.
- 3.2. There is need for the actors to design a special package of school hygiene and sanitation programme aimed at promoting a conducive environment for girls and boys education across the entire region. There is need to recognise the fact that even communities with averagely better schools, the school learning environment is not supportive of particularly girl child education.
- 3.3. There is need to design a flexible ABEK implementation approach that allows children, particularly the boys in kraals to get access to education while they carry out their specific tasks in ensuring the pastoral livelihoods in the family
- 3.4. Conduct education campaign in the region to deconstruct the negative perceptions towards particularly the education of the girl child and also support the, and the negative practices that undermine the education opportunities of girls in the region. Such practices include early marriage, FGM among others. Such interventions can be better implemented jointly with the police personnel so as to provide an opportunity for the communities to understand the legal implications of forced and early child marriages.
- 3.5. Work with the traditional structures such as the *Ekoeno* to use their power and influence in the community to encourage community members to send their children to schools.
- 3.6. Use the FAL classes as an avenue for promoting GBV awareness in the community. Actors need to lobby for more resources to support the FAL and encourage the FAL learners to forms GBV groups to disseminate awareness to other members in the community.
- 3.7. Support extra curriculum activities are needed for the girls and boys during holidays, and boarding schools for both girls and boys.
- 3.8. Include gender equality and gender-sensitive teaching strategies in any proposed teacher-training courses to ensure teachers are able to create gender-equal and -sensitive learning environments.
- 3.9. Sensitise communities on the referral pathway for accessing protection services in the community.
- 3.10. Provide psychosocial support to children who may be coping with their own psychosocial issues as well as those of their students. Such support may help reduce negative or destructive coping behaviours.

- 3.11. Introduce and seek community support for school-based psychosocial support – especially in the area of GBV – and the risks for children in emergencies.
- 3.12. Support the assessment of the nature and magnitude of boys and girls disabilities, to establish their learning needs and address them. In addition, based on the assessment, support the establishment of the education infrastructure, and technical capacities for handling children with disabilities
- 3.13. In schools, develop a reporting system for tracking aspect of GBV in schools and train teachers on how to handle GBV in schools.
- 3.14. Support the structure of matrons and patrons in the schools through capacity building training in handling psycho social problems of the girls and boys in school.

#### **Health Sector**

- 4.1. *Broaden structure for health care:* in order to increase access to health care services for women, men, girls and boys, there is need to expand the structures for health care service delivery by supporting community health care outreach services, and strengthen the effectiveness of the existing structures for health care.
- 4.2. *Increase information access:* Information needs on reproductive health care, personal hygiene, family planning among others should be availed to the women and men, using the local structures such as the schools clubs, and the radio station in the region. The information needs should be specific for categories of people and broadcasted in a language that is understood by the different ethnic communities.
- 4.3. *Awareness creation:* in order to enhance the protection of women, and girls, boys and men, there is need for sensitisation of the specific categories of people in the communities on the implications of their lifestyle to their health.
- 4.4. Provide supplementary feeding for very young and pregnant mothers in Health centres since malnutrition is a major problem fro children less than five years.
- 4.5. The health centre only provides pills and Depo-Provera, which the health workers just administer to whoever comes without carrying out compatibility tests, and sometimes the effects are very unhealthy. There is need for other contraceptives and need to carry out compatibility tests before administering the same to clients.
- 4.6. *Capacity building:* There is need to train the capacities if the health care staff on the handling practices for cases of GBV, particularly the cases of the sexual nature like rape and defilement. This will enhance the delivery of gender responsive interventions in health care.
- 4.7. *Coordination structure:* In order to monitor the implementation of the GBV interventions in the health sector, there is need to identify the actors and develop a comprehensive strategy for promoting gender sensitive health care, referral of GBV cases with health care needs
- 4.8. *Joint Monitoring and Evaluation of GBV Intervention Impacts:* there is need to develop a joint monitoring and evaluation plan of the Impact of GBV interventions in the health care service delivery. This should also entail developing a comprehensive reporting system for cases of GBV reaching the health care actors and a regular platform for sharing such information among the actors, as a basis for re-examining their intervention strategy, processes and coverage.
- 4.9. *Work in and with local structures:* In order to increase the delivery of health care, it is important to recognise the fact that every community has its own structures for delivering health care services, and practices for responding to health care needs among the members. Such structures include the Traditional Birth Attendants, Council of Elders, and elderly women. GBV interventions should build the capacity delivering health care services that are inline with the capacities they have. In addition, such structures should be used to refer cases to health care centres.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *The Millennium Development Goals, 2006*, UNDP Report
- <sup>2</sup> General Recommendation 21 of the CEDAW Committee states: "There are many countries where the law and practice concerning inheritance and property result in serious discrimination against women.
- <sup>3</sup> See UNICEF UK's website for children and young people: [www.therightssite.org.uk](http://www.therightssite.org.uk)
- <sup>4</sup> Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/2/fs22.htm>
- <sup>5</sup> Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, art. 6.
- <sup>6</sup> This programme was designed basing on the recommendations of the Uganda Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC, 1989) and the 1996 children's statute.
- <sup>7</sup> (MGLSD, 2000)
- <sup>8</sup> (Nyanzi, 2002).
- <sup>9</sup> <http://www.unfpa.org/rights/women.htm>
- <sup>10</sup> UNICEF (2002)
- <sup>11</sup> (WHO, 2004: 1)
- <sup>12</sup> "The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation" (Krug et al., 2002).
- <sup>13</sup> The report classified countries by income level using the following categories from the 2003 World Development Report (World Bank, 2003): low-income - \$745 per capita or less; lower middle-income - \$746 to \$2975; upper middle-income - \$2976 to \$9205; high-income - \$9206 or more.
- <sup>14</sup> This is taken from the GBV Sub Cluster report, 2008
- <sup>15</sup> (Ondiwo, 2002)
- <sup>16</sup> (DRT, 2008: 17)
- <sup>17</sup> Beekunda (2007) reports that about
- <sup>18</sup> <http://nature.berkeley.edu/classes/espm-165/lectures/senpastoral.htm>
- <sup>19</sup> Robert Netting, 1986, "East African Pastoralists", chapter 4 in *Cultural Ecology*, 2nd edition, Waveland Press
- <sup>20</sup> (CAFOD, 2007:10)
- <sup>21</sup> NFP is a section within the Uganda police force which coordinates efforts against proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the region.
- <sup>22</sup> ANPPCAN (2008), *Social Justice Amidst Complex Realities: Protecting The Rights Of Children And Women In Pokot Pastoral Community*, by Alexander Kagaha, Deogratias Yiga and Sarah Akera , Anppcan-Uganda
- <sup>23</sup> D.Silverman (2001) "Beginning research" chapter 1 and "What is qualitative research?" chapter 2 in *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. London: Sage
- <sup>24</sup> Fitzgerald, B. and Howcroft, D. "Towards dissolution of the IS research debate: from polarization to polarity," *Journal of Information technology*, 13, (1998), 313-326.
- <sup>25</sup> Gubrium, J. F. and J.A. Holstein (1997) *The New Language of Qualitative Methods* New York: Oxford University Press (pages 3-16)
- <sup>26</sup> D.Silverman (2001) *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (pp.83-218): Ch. 3 "Ethnography and Observation" and Ch. 4 "Interviews"
- <sup>27</sup> (UHRC, 2004)
- <sup>28</sup> Angering Akuju (2007): *Survival and Suffering: A report on Livelihoods and Human Security in the Karamoja Region of Uganda*. Feinstein International Centre
- <sup>29</sup> IRIN (May 2008)
- <sup>30</sup> Margaret Kakande: *Understanding and Addressing Spatial Poverty Traps: The case of Karamoja in Uganda*
- <sup>31</sup> This is obtained from key informant interviews held in all the districts, both from the technical and political leadership at different levels
- <sup>32</sup> (HDR, 2005).
- <sup>33</sup> *Badda* is one of the popular song in Kampala sang by Bobi Wine, a popular local artist and it attracted all people across the other regions in the country.
- <sup>34</sup> *Naleyo* is a traditional dance for the Pokot people in Nakapiripirit district.
- <sup>35</sup> (Caroline 1996:12)
- <sup>36</sup> Rai (2000)
- <sup>37</sup> Farzana Bari. **Women's Political Participation: Issues and Challenges**, Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/enabling-environment2005/docs/EGM-WPD-EE-2005-EP.12%20%20draft%20F.pdf>
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