



News Flash

“Apalodou” is welcomed *Brings new hope to Karamoja*

As we made our way to Kangole village in Napak district, dark clouds advanced in the same direction right above us. Suddenly, people yell in excitement and music and can be heard from a distance. The colourful crowd leads us to their “field” classroom.

“Apalodou” or the one who brings clouds is officially welcomed. “Ikinyaunitai” or welcome to Kangole, they say. He was later decorated with the traditional regalia and welcomed to the Karimojong community by elders. From now onwards, the Head of the European Union Delegation to Uganda, His Excellency Roberto Ridolfi had acquired a third name – “Apalodou”, at least whenever he will visit Karamoja.

For a semi-arid sub region that has experienced frequent

drought in the past, the presence of “Apalodou” brings hope. Hope for rain because dark clouds are a sign that the rains are coming. With rain, the people can grow food and the livestock can have water and grass to feed on. Today, members of Kigangai Agro Pastoral Field School are demonstrating why they need “Apalodou”.

They show him beautiful vegetable gardens from which they have got about four harvests in the last six months. With funds from the government of Switzerland, FAO is supporting this group through a Non Governmental Organization-Cooperation and Development.

The farmers went through a season-long, practical and experimental training using the Farmer Field School methodology. They were also provided with an assortment of seeds, tools and an investment grant.



His Excellency Roberto Ridolfi is welcomed by an elder

Editorial

The EU Head of Delegation to Uganda, His Excellency Roberto Ridolfi visited the Karamoja region between 24th and 26th March 2011.

He went to a number of FAO and EU funded projects in the region in Napak, Moroto, Kotido and Kaabong districts.

The ambassador was accompanied by team from the Office of the Prime Minister comprising of Ms. Florence Naduk, a Project Officer and Irene

Tewungwa Kauma, the Principal Private Assistant Secretary-Pacification and Development-Karamoja.

Accompanying the ambassador from EU were the Head of Agriculture and Rural Development, Bernard CRABBE and the Northern Uganda Operations Officer, Andrea FERRERO.

The team from FAO comprised of the FAO Representative in Uganda, Mr. Percy Misika, the Chief of Service –

Emergency Operations for Africa, Latina America and the Caribbeans, Ms. Cristina Amaral, and the Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordinator for Uganda, Mr. Mario Samaja.

This is a snapshot of the visits to FAO implemented projects.

Happy reading!

*Rachel Nandelenga
Communication Officer - FAO Uganda*

Kigangai Farmer Field School took advantage of a borehole that is located just next to a one acre piece of land that was offered by one of the members. Using simple irrigation, they have managed to grow vegetables in the driest period of the year.

“Even in December and January when there are normally very few vegetables in the area, we irrigated our commercial plot and we managed to get a good harvest”, says Aboru Abiba.

No wonder, a Programme Officer in the Prime Minister's Office in Moroto finally discovered the source of the good vegetables that she had seen in the market during the dry season. “I found very good vegetables in the market and I wondered where they were grown. Today I have discovered the source”, said Florence Naduk.

From each harvest, the group gets between USD25 to USD40 every month. This money boosts their savings and credit portfolio. FAO provided the initial capital of about USD500 from which members borrow to meet their immediate needs including seeds, hand tools or school fees. For a region with limited banking facilities, getting an opportunity to save and borrow money brings both satisfaction and a sense of pride.

Using the knowledge acquired from the Agro Pastoral Field School, Rosemary Moding has earned a total of USD30 from vegetable sales. She used the money to pay school fees for her three children and kept some in the group to accumulate. Her plan is to open her two acre piece of land for commercial vegetable production. About an acre of land under vegetable production might seem small for a group but according to “Apalodou”, for a sub region

like Karamoja that is semi-arid in nature and lagging behind in development, small initiatives like this one when put together can create a big impact.

Loru Timothy testifies that since he joined the Agro Pastoral Field School, he had stopped raiding cattle. “I have learnt to grow vegetables that have a stable market here in Napak. I have also saved some money with the group. My dream is to produce vegetables commercially so that I educate my children,” he said. He has earned about USD80 in three harvests.

Timothy thinks that such activities can help curb the problem of raiding in the region. “Most of the youth raid because they are idle and they do not have a source of livelihood,” he said. Impressed with what he saw, “Apalodou” pledged his commitment to improve the livelihood of his people- the Karimojong.

With funding from a population of about 500 million people in Europe that he represents, “Apalodou” announced that the Agro Pastoral Field School members will receive more support through a new Government of Uganda programme - Karamoja Livelihood Programme (KALIP) that will be funded by the European Union. Using funds from this programme FAO will consolidate achievements gained from the 350 groups benefiting about 10,000 people in the region and also introduce the methodology to new areas.

As he made his way out of the community, His Excellency Roberto Ridolfi left new hope among the people in Kangole but also excitement for a new comer in the community. “Apalodou” is indeed always welcome to Karamoja.



◀ Looking at the group's records



◀ Some members harvest vegetables

“EU is committed to Uganda”

Funds Euro 11 million Government of Uganda programme for Karamoja



Some members of staff from EU, FAO, KALIP and Office of the Prime Minister

While addressing members of staff from the Karamoja Livelihood Programme (KALIP), FAO and the Office of the Prime Minister on 24th March 2011, the Head of the EU Delegation to Uganda, His Excellency Roberto Ridolfi echoed the EU's commitment to the development of Uganda and Karamoja in particular.

“I believe that Uganda can transform into a middle income country because there is a strong potential. I assure you of the renewed commitment of the EU to this country”, he said.

The ambassador applauded the enthusiasm of the Government and people of Karamoja. “I have seen Government allocating money for different activities including valley dams, electricity, irrigation and other things,” he

said.

Speaking at the same meeting, the FAO Representative in Uganda, Mr. Percy Misika said it was important for development partners to focus on the two major livelihood options of the people of Karamoja which are livestock and crop production.

Referring to the people of Karamoja as “a forgotten people”, the Programme Officer in the Prime Minister's Office, Ms. Florence Naduk thanked the EU and FAO for contributing to the development of Karamoja and particularly for the KALIP that will soon be rolled out.

The FAO Chief of Service – Emergency Operations for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbeans, Ms. Cristina Amaral said

FAO brings a wealth of experience and knowledge that member countries like Uganda can use to develop their fields of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and rural development.

She called for increased participation of Ugandans in development initiatives. “If Africa is to change, it has to be Africans to change it”, she said.

FAO will implement one component of the KALIP, which is – improving Agro-pastoral production and animal health services.

The others are: Protecting livelihoods through safety nets – labour intensive works; Strengthening local Governments; and Supporting Peace building activities

“Coordinate and keep close contact with Government”

EU ambassador tells UN

While addressing United Nations staff based in Moroto district on 25th march 2011, the EU Head of Delegation, His Excellency Roberto Ridolfi called upon UN agencies to coordinate and keep close contact with Government.

“There is a strong sense of enthusiasm towards development exhibited in northern Uganda and Karamoja by Government. We must not frustrate these efforts. Make coordination our ritual,” he said.

The FAO Representative in Uganda, Mr. Percy Misika also emphasized the importance of coordination to avoid duplication and improve division of labour among the United Nations agencies.

The ambassador commended the Government of Uganda for the improved security situation in Karamoja and called upon development partners to support this initiative.

On the mode of work, the ambassador said small actions, when well negotiated and owned by the community work very well. But the small actions have to be coordinated”, he said.



The ambassador meets UN staff in Moroto



Admiring tree seeds at another project site funded by the EU - (Left to right) Irene Kauma, Cristina Amaral and Alastair Taylor



Can we shake your hands? Members of Lokochil APFS wave to the visitors

“Thank you but support more people”

The opinion of the members of Lokochil Agro Pastoral Field School in Kotido districts is that more people need to be supported with agricultural inputs such as seeds in order to improve their livelihood.

In one of their songs as they welcomed the ambassador and his entourage, they asked to “shake hands” (sic) with officials from Government, the European Union and FAO as a sign of gratitude for the support that they have received so far.

But they are quick to add that many more people in Karamoja need the same support. “People see how we are benefiting and they request to join our group”, they said.

This group that is dominated by women was started when the men set off in search of pasture and water during the dry season of 2010. “We were left behind with nothing to do”, said Rose Ochero.

The group was mobilized and trained by ADRA, a local NGO using the Farmer Field School methodology with funds from FAO.

The group’s vegetable field is next to a water pump that was put up by ADRA. Located just a few kilometers from Kotido town, the members of Lokochil are able to produce vegetables even in the dry season because they can pump water and irrigate their gardens.

The group members say they are excited about the



The group’s vegetable gardens

new vegetables that have been introduced to the area such as egg plant.

Rose Ochero says “previously, we did not know how vegetables such as onions, tomatoes and egg plants grow. Now we have acquired the

skills to grow the vegetables right from the stage at which they are in the nursery beds”, she said.

While visiting this group, the EU ambassador said, “after seeing how committed you are, we shall support more groups”.

Community Initiatives Strengthen Animal Health Services in Karamoja

“My name is Akol Robert. Today I am going to show you how to make a mineral lik for livestock. First, you need dry bones. Then, you burn the bones until they are grey-black. Next, you crush them into powder. Mix the powder with clay and table salt”. . . . he goes on and on until it is clear how to make mineral lik.

Then Atol Betty takes over with a session on disease control. . . . “before you administer any drug to livestock, measure its weight and height. apply acaricides to the skin of livestock at least once every week to prevent tick infestation”, she also goes on to the end of the session.

Might you be thinking it is a lecture

delivered by trained veterinarians? No, it is a group of farmers, probably illiterate, taking turns to explain not only what they have learnt but also what they practice in Moroto West Agro-Pastoral Field School. It is no wonder that they do it with such ease.

The sessions range from animal production to crop production and savings and credit. Modified from the Farmer Field School methodology that was originally implemented in the rest of Uganda, Agro pastoral Field Schools have been introduced to take care of the situation in Karamoja. Unlike other field schools that majorly focus on crop production, in Karamoja, they also tackle livestock

and water production issues.

The training is field oriented and participatory; so the farmers get opportunities to practice what is taught before they adopt the recommended practices back home.

In Kaabong district, FAO is working through Cooperation and Development, an NGO to mobilize and implement the Agro pastoral Field Schools. Up to 192 groups are being implemented in Kaabong district.

The APFS has also been integrated with Village Savings Loan mechanism. Moroto West APFS group’s fund portfolio has grown to about USD1,250. Members have accessed loans to meet



Final product - mineral lick

▶ their domestic needs while their savings have accumulated with the highest saver keeping about USD60.

The savings and credit scheme was boosted with an investment of USD500 that the group used to acquire two cows that they are using for learning purposes and experimentation.

Their plan is to sell the cows once they mature and use the proceeds to build an office for the group.

The APFS is a farmer-led extension system that is complimenting the overstretched Government veterinary extension services in the Karamoja sub region.

The APFS is complimented with the Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) system in which some community members are trained to treat simple livestock ailments and diseases and sensitize communities on animal health. So far, 700 CAHWs have been trained and equipped with simple veterinary kits.

In Kaabong district, the CAHWs have come together under the umbrella of KADEPO Agro-Input Stores to serve the communities. The CAHWs have teamed with APFS in the district to rent a shop in which they sell both agro-inputs and veterinary drugs. Lotyang Phillip was trained as CAHW in 2003. He has since served the communities by treating sick livestock and sensitizing them on disease control. "I treat about 30 animals every month", he says. Like other CAHWs in the region, Lotyang requests for more training and a mode of transport in order for him to carry out his duties efficiently.

"Sometimes we walk very long distances and we get tired. We need some mode of transport", he says.

Lotyang also says they need training on especially new epidemics so that they can be able to identify them easily.

Despite the challenges however, CAHWs under KADEPO Agro-input Stores are happy they are making an impact in the community.

According to the group's records, since they started working in the community, the livestock disease spread prevalence has reduced from 80 to 30 percent.

Livestock health in Karamoja is still an area of priority to FAO. Under KALIP, FAO plans to train and equip more CAHWs, while the capacity of the existing ones will be strengthened.

"Don't rush to change the lifestyle of the people"

Local leaders and development partners advised

"They should move at their own will", said His Excellency Roberto Ridolfi while making reference to the gradual shift by some Karimojong from pastoralism to crop cultivation.

He said this while addressing leaders of Napak district local Government on 24th March 2011.

The Chief Administrative Officer of Napak district, Mr Joseph Lomongin said people in his district were slowly moving towards settled farming and they needed to be supported.

The Local Council V Chairman for Napak Mr. Joseph Lomonyang said the district suffered crop losses due to diseases and drought and appealed for support from the EU and FAO.

"Even former cattle raiders were turning to cultivation. We need to support them so that they stop raiding", he said.

The ambassador also met district leaders of Moroto, Kotido and Kaabong.

Pictorial



▲ *The ambassador joins Karimojong dancers*

▲ *Children wearing EU branded T-shirts in Napak*



▲ *Addressing farmers in Kotido*



▲ *The Government is constructing a dam in Moroto*



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