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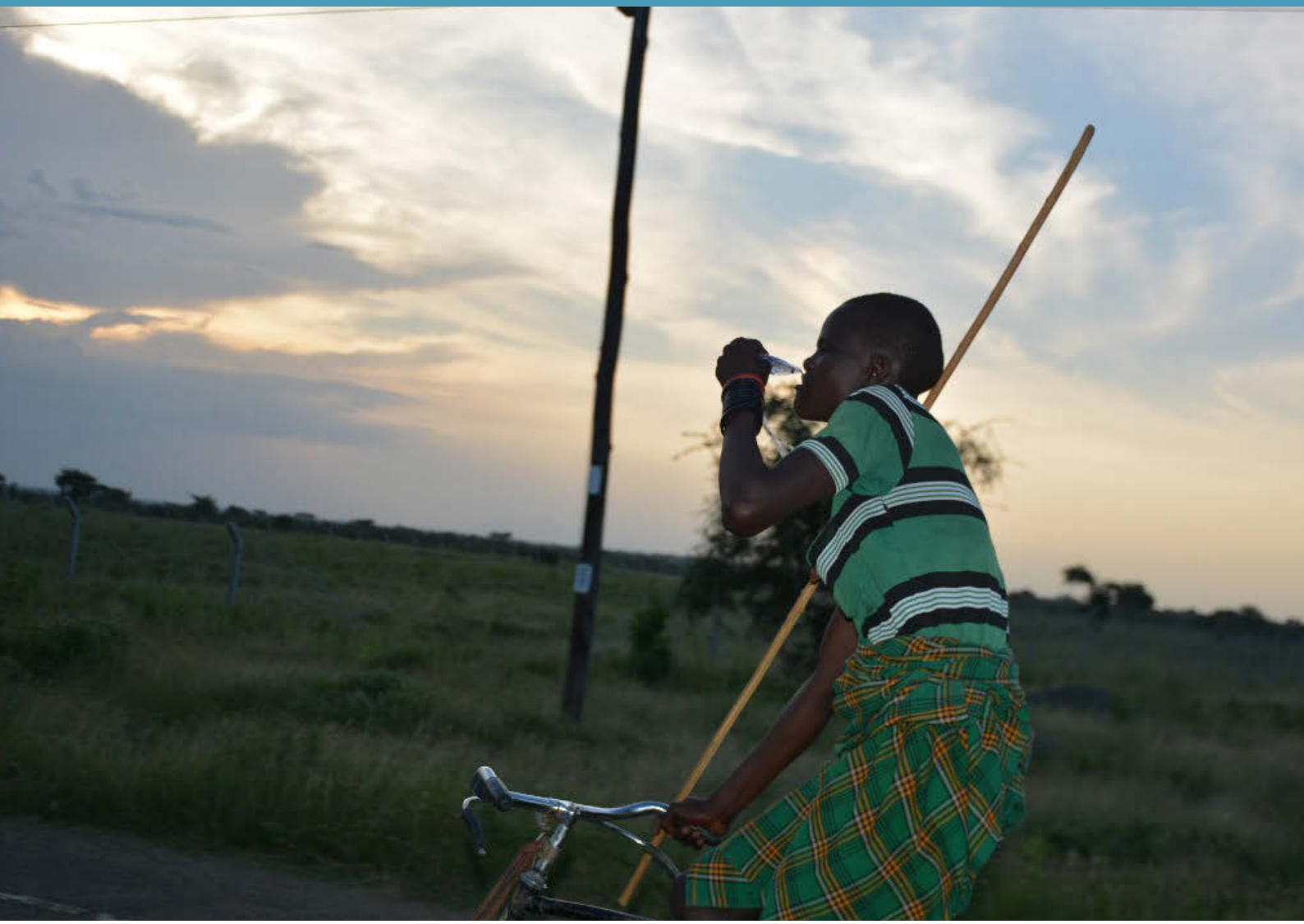

Karamoja Resilience Support Unit (KRSU)

THE SILENT GUN: CHANGES IN ALCOHOL PRODUCTION, SALE, AND CONSUMPTION IN POST-DISARMAMENT KARAMOJA, UGANDA

September 2018

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Photo on cover by Teba Arukol

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ACRONYMS

FGD	Focus group discussion
KII	Key informant interview
KRSU	Karamoja Resilience Support Unit
LC1	Local Council 1
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NUSAF	Northern Ugandan Social Action Fund
SC	Sub-county
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UGX	Uganda shillings
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States dollar
VHT	Village health technician
VSLA	Village savings and loans association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research and observations over the past decade have pointed to the high prevalence of alcohol use in Karamoja. Brews made locally of sorghum and maize have sociocultural, nutritional, and economic significance. Brewing has gained prominence as a relatively stable and lucrative economic activity for women, and the importance of local brews in the adult diet has increased significantly in recent years. An emerging trend in alcohol use that has become a cause for concern among health officials, development practitioners, and, especially, community members themselves is the rise in consumption of hard spirits. The import of homemade crude liquor and commercial gin (*waragi*) into Karamoja is said to have increased dramatically in recent years. Whereas there have been successful attempts to curb the sale of crude alcohol, sachet *waragi* (gin sold in typically 100 ml plastic sachets) is sold widely and cheaply. Reportedly, its consumption has had visible effects on household economy, interpersonal relationships, and the health and wellbeing of the communities.

Information on the trends in sale, consumption, and effects of hard liquor, however, remains sparse. Moreover, with the evolving nature of the socioeconomic landscape, it remains to be seen how the alcohol business is changing, as well as how these changes are affecting the communities. This study attempts to document the changing nature of alcohol production, sale, and consumption in Karamoja in the post-disarmament period. It investigates the structural drivers of alcohol production and consumption, and the effects on household economy, interpersonal relationships, and health.

Whereas the study set out to investigate issues around all types of alcohol, the report focuses on drivers and effects of hard liquor consumption (over local brews) due to emphasis and concern from study participants. Additionally, since brewing and sale of local brews is a primary livelihood strategy for many women and the sale of *waragi* has increased in recent years, the study also looks at the "positive" effects of alcohol on household economy, especially on women's economic status.

Fieldwork was conducted in five districts—Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Amudat, Kotido, and Kaabong. The study takes an inductive approach and uses a primarily qualitative methodology involving semi-structures interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). A total of 503 individuals participated in the study. Participants included rural, peri-urban, and urban community members (including elders), health officials, government officials, church officials, and development practitioners.

The main findings of the study are as follows.

Changes since disarmament

- There has been an increase in liquor consumption in the post-disarmament period due to both its availability and the decrease in insecurity. This increase is linked to a decrease in livestock-based livelihoods, decreasing insecurity, and burgeoning of markets, among other reasons.

- With the decrease in livestock after the years of raiding, a greater number of people engage in wage labor. This has increased the availability of cash and the ability to buy the cheap liquor that has permeated the market.

- During the time of intercommunity raiding, people needed to be vigilant to ward off attacks or safeguard their livestock. The need for this vigilance has markedly decreased since the guns were removed. As a consequence, people are free to drink until late hours in urban and peri-urban centers and walk back to rural areas without threat of attack.

- The secure environment of Karamoja has also contributed to the burgeoning of markets, leading in turn to the massive import of commercial *waragi* in sachets.

- The decreased insecurity and expanding markets afford the opportunity for sale of local brews as well. Drinking joints have sprouted up around Karamoja in rural and urban centers, allowing women to make a substantial living but simultaneously contributing to the alleged increase in alcohol consumption.

Structural drivers of alcohol production, sale, and consumption

- Although hunger and social/traditional reasons are commonly listed as reasons for consuming local brew, the triggers for the consumption of hard spirits range from economic to social to psychological reasons.

- An important driver of increased liquor consumption is shifting livelihood strategies. The increased dependence on the wage labor market, the availability of cash, and the growing urban and peri-urban centers were listed as contributing to the increase in hard alcohol use.

- Livelihood-related stress is cited as a key reason driving the increased consumption of hard liquor. Although all age groups are affected by the lack of stable and well-paying work, the problem appears to be particularly acute among rural and urban youth. Youth reported the improbability of investing in productive assets such as education or livestock, which not only influences their ability to establish a family but also leads to hopelessness.

- Stressors from lack of employment, loss of employment, and other factors were reported by respondents across the youth and middle age groups. Respondents listed stressors such as marred interpersonal relationships, inability to provide for children, and problems in sufficiently meeting basic household needs as constant stressors that drive people to drink.

- Peer pressure was another trigger of alcohol consumption, especially among youth. Some respondents believe that alcohol-drinking habits develop in the company of friends or peer group members who "are already spoilt."

Factors influencing alcohol production, sale, and consumption

- The making of local brew varies by season due to climate, access to inputs, economic considerations, and patterns of leisure time and social and economic activities. Seasonality influences the availability and cost of ingredients for making local brew. Respondents agreed that brewing increases in the post-harvest period when grains are available and/or cheap to purchase. Post-harvest is also a busy time for ceremonies, harvesting, and construction activities. Unlike local brew, consumption of hard spirits is relatively constant throughout the year.

- Locational factors such as living in peri-urban and urban areas or around mining sites also contribute to higher alcohol consumption, as these areas have ready availability.

- Age is also an important factor driving alcohol consumption. There was unanimous opinion that youth—both male and female—were the primary and heaviest drinkers. Youth themselves agreed with this assessment.

- Lastly, the availability and affordability of sachet *waragi* was also listed as an important factor behind its mass appeal.

Effects on communities of alcohol production, sale, and consumption

- Excessive consumption of liquor has had visible effects on the health of individuals. Some of the main signs of alcohol overuse as recounted by participants are frail body, weight loss, redness of mouth and lips, coughing, and even death.

- At the household and community level, there has been a noticeable rise in interpersonal conflicts, including gender-based and domestic violence. Elders feel that youth no longer respect age-related authority. Divorce, separation, and family breakages were commonly reported.

- Bartering or selling of grains from household granaries for alcohol was widely reported. In addition, spending on alcohol—both local brews and liquor—is also said to have increased. Money from the household is reportedly being diverted towards alcohol purchase, which is having a purported negative impact on the household economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Support promising local initiatives, learning across districts, and scaling up

In Karamoja, there is already high awareness among health workers and government officials of the problems caused by excessive alcohol consumption at the community level. Some local initiatives to reduce these problems have already started, largely without external assistance. There is an opportunity to bring the actors—especially community members—involved in these initiatives together to collectively review successes and failures, and to identify good practices for scaling up in other areas. As part of this process, it is important that:

- Professional stakeholders avoid taking a moralistic approach and involve community members of all demographics in crafting a community-based approach to dealing with the issue of *waragi*;

- The dialogue and resulting actions make a clear distinction between the problems caused by *waragi* sachets and other hard liquor, and the practice of local brewing and its economic importance to women in Karamoja.

Specific actions that warrant broad stakeholder analysis in terms of their relevance and likely impact include:

- Reviewing the work done to regulate excessive drinking in Tapac Sub-county in Moroto District, and how it might be adapted and used in other areas;
- Learning from changes in local legislation, and how best to write and structure new laws to prevent alcohol abuse. Assess the extent to which new bylaws or regulations can be enforced;
- At the level of health services and health extension:
  - Examine options for culturally appropriate non-judgemental programs to sensitize communities to negative health and wellbeing impacts of excessive alcohol consumption;
  - Consider if health workers at multiple levels (including village health technicians (VHTs)) should be trained (or re-trained) to recognize signs of alcohol abuse and seek to mitigate harmful behaviors;
  - Assess if local counselling or other support services (e.g., staffed by dedicated VHTs or others) can provide help when people want or need it, whether as a family member or an individual with an abuse problem. Such services would need to be advertised;
  - Assess if tax revenues from alcohol can be reinvested in health and education activities related to alcohol abuse.

As part of this process, stakeholders also need to consider the options for targeting interventions both geographically and socially. For example:

- Should efforts be targeted at areas with particularly high rates of drinking, such as mining areas and congested peri-urban settlements? If so, how?
- How can male and female youth be targeted, as they are heaviest drinkers? Should programs involving livelihood support, financial literary, technical and skills-based training, etc. be used and if so, how?

Support further evidence gathering and learning

- Assist ongoing and new initiatives to reduce alcohol-related problems and to monitor and assess the impact of these efforts, including through participatory and community-based methods.
- Work with community and professional stakeholders to identify evidence gaps and key information that is still needed to guide new approaches and programs. Fill these evidence gaps with relevant studies and reviews as needed. Provisional topics, not yet verified with stakeholders, include:
  - The role of brew, residue (*adakai*), and drinking in child-nutrition;
  - If and when people want to cut back or stop drinking in the region, how do they do it? Where do they turn? Is this successful?
  - Investigate how women's earnings from brewing could be better harnessed. By understanding how and why women in particular benefit from this industry, stakeholders might be able to come up with programs that seek to replicate the aspects of brewing that are so beneficial to them.

Use evidence to advocate for policy improvements

- Advocate for tax revenues from the sale of commercial alcohol to be invested in health, education, and welfare programs in Karamoja.
- If (and only if) there is evidence that banning sachet sales would reduce excessive *waragi* consumption, then advocate with strategic actors to get the ban passed.

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has a long history of alcohol brewing and consumption (Willis, 2002). Homemade fermented beers, made from sorghum, millet, maize, or honey, were historically brewed by women for traditional ceremonies and were mostly consumed by elders. Consumption of alcoholic beverages, in general, revolved around social events. In recent years, however, there have been considerable changes in the patterns of alcohol production, marketing, and consumption in SSA (Ferreira-Borges et al., 2017). The most consequential change in the SSA alcohol market is the proliferation of mass-produced alcoholic beverages, which has, in turn, led to changes in drinking behavior (Babor et al., 2014; Ferreira-Borges et al., 2017). Regular, heavy, and binge drinking of commercially-produced alcohol and other associated behaviors have significant impacts on morbidity and mortality continent-wide (Ferreira-Borges et al., 2015). At the same time, locally brewed beers are a significant source of income for the household (McCall, 1996).

A 2014 World Health Organization report showed that per capita alcohol consumption in Uganda was 23.7 liters, placing it in the highest category of consumption by country. Of this, 89% was non-commercially produced and unregulated alcohol. This includes local brews from millet, maize, and sorghum, as well as crude hard liquor (World Health Organization, 2014). Although there are important socioeconomic differences in drinking behavior and choice of alcohol, one common form of alcohol in Uganda is gin distilled from cane juice, banana, or molasses, popularly known as *waragi* (from "war gin"[1]). *Waragi* includes all forms of crudely and illegally distilled spirits as well as commercially and legally produced gin (e.g., the brand Uganda *Waragi*). For the low-income consumer, illicit liquor or legal low-grade *waragi* can be a vastly more affordable option than beers or other types of hard liquor. Whereas bottled beers, locally-made brews, and imported spirits are all popular in the Ugandan market, the large majority of the alcohol industry remains unregulated (Euromonitor International Consulting, 2016). Despite the host of problems associated with the illegal and unregulated alcohol industry, such as health issues and even deaths from methanol-laced *waragi* (BBC, 2010), a sizable section of Uganda's population depends on alcohol production and sale as a critical source of livelihood (Heath, 2015). In this sense, Uganda's illicit alcohol industry has a strong link to the country's floundering labor market.

The prevalence of alcohol consumption in Karamoja, Uganda's pastoralist-dominated northeastern region, is well known through both research and observations. However, only a few studies have systematically documented aspects of alcohol consumption and production in Karamoja (Arlt, 2013; Dancause et al., 2010; Mosebo, 2015; Stites, 2018). The most popular forms of alcohol in the region are local brews made from sorghum and maize, known collectively as *ngagwe*.[2] The production of local brews such as *ekweete* (maize/sorghum), *kutukuto* (maize/sorghum), *ebutia* (sorghum), and *marua* (millet) is an intensive multi-day process involving cleaning, drying, milling, roasting, and fermenting the grains, and, ultimately, filtering the brew (Namugumya and Muyanja, 2009). Due to the central role women play in its production and in reaping the benefits from its sale, local beer has been termed the "cattle of women"[3] (Dyson-Hudson, 1966). Historically produced in homes for seasonal ceremonies[4] (such as births, weddings, and initiations) and to feed agriculture work groups, local brews took on a commercialized character only in the early 2000s (Dancause et al., 2010; Stites and Akabwai, 2010). As livestock numbers dwindled due to intergroup raiding and state-imposed disarmament, women were pushed to assume greater or even sole responsibility for providing for the household. Brewing thus became an important income-generating activity.

Today, local brews play an important role in household food security from both nutritional and economic standpoints. Brewing provides women with various opportunities for income generation—whether as business owners, helpers/workers, or as retailers (also known as "bookers") (Iyer and Mosebo, 2017; Stites, 2018). Whereas some women only brew occasionally to meet household or personal needs, others engage in brewing as their primary

[1] **https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/how-africas-party-animals-drank-themselves-to-death-1792932.html**.

[2] People refer to local brews as *ngagwe ngunaongora*, meaning the "brew/beer that is dirty/brown," owing to the color of local brews. Sometimes, when using the word *ngagwe* for all types of brew—and rarely hard spirits—people will use the "dirty/brown" suffix to distinguish it from hard spirits.

[3] Besides its economic role, local brew also has social, ritual and, of course, nutritional value, thus making it comparable to the value of cattle among Karamojong people.

[4] *Epurot*, fermented honey beer produced by Tepeth communities (and less frequently by Karamojong communities), continues to retain its primarily traditional/ceremonial use.

livelihood activity (Stites, 2018). Although rates of production and consumption differ between the wet and dry seasons, brewing is considered a stable, year-round livelihood strategy by many women (Iyer and Mosebo, 2017). Profit margins range greatly depending on role within the brewing industry—whether as the owner of the business, helper, or booker. Payment can be done in cash and/or brew and dregs (residue).

The leftover residue or dregs (*adakai*) from the filtering process also has a critical nutritional function. For those families that do not have adequate grain stores or livestock for milk, residue is an important food substitute, especially for children (see also Dancause et al., 2010). Similarly, women who work for brewers are likely to receive residue as part of the payment (and sometimes as the whole payment), which is then fed to children as well as adults. Although residue has some nutritional and mineral content,[5] the commercialized and large-scale brewing process greatly reduces the availability of nutrients (see Arlt, 2013, 84 and Dancause et al., 2010, 1128 for a review). Dregs are also re-used to brew by adding water to them and filtering more beer; this process leads to a greater loss in the dregs' mineral content. The lowered nutritional value of residue from large-scale brewing has critical implications for children's health and wellbeing because of the increased reliance on residue as children's main food in the face of continuing food security (see section on *Gender and age as factors* below).

More critically, local brew is the refreshment of preference for a great majority of adults, especially those in rural or peri-urban areas. Because it is made from sorghum and maize, it has caloric value and is consumed on an extremely regular basis (see also Dancause et al., 2010). Local brew is a regular substitute for solid food in adults' diets. It is also used as a gift of appreciation for ad hoc groups of kin and non-kin social helpers who contribute to one's agricultural work. For employed agricultural labor, i.e., individuals hired regularly for performing agricultural tasks such as digging or weeding, local brew is often used as a mode of payment. Moreover, for women working in the farms or gardens, it is an easily transportable refreshment and meal option for the long and strenuous work day (see also Arlt, 2013).

Local brew continues to be central to all local rituals and ceremonies in rural Karamoja (with the exception of Amudat—see Box 1). In peri-urban and urban centers, the institution of drinking groups, comprised mainly of young and older men who get together in the evenings to drink local brews such as *marua* and *kutukuto*, has become an important feature of social life (Mosebo, 2008 and 2015). In these groups, young men pay a regular fee, which goes towards the purchase of the local brew. Drinking groups are not only a space for relaxation and socialization; they also serve as important forums for "sharing ideas and knowledge." Critically, a certain decorum is also to be maintained, and drinking too much or drinking alone is not considered proper. Mosebo's (2008) ethnographic work among drinking groups shows the "integrative" aspects of drinking, and how the drinking group "can become a space of freedom, unity and order in lives lived in an area of chaos and disorder" (p. 2). However, these somewhat positive aspects of local brew are overshadowed by changes in drinking behavior and its impact on health (Arlt, 2013). Some of these impacts include reduction in availability of breast milk in lactating mothers, negative impact of alcohol on breastfeeding children, alcohol-induced malabsorption and maldigestion among infants drinking brew, and malnutrition in general (Arlt, 2013).

Besides local brew and its by-products, hard liquor is also consumed widely in Karamoja. During the years of insecurity, hard liquor in Karamoja was mainly in the form of crude alcohol or "moonshine." Hard liquor has been consumed in Karamoja for a long time, and there is some evidence of it being brewed at the household level even in the 1960s.[6] It was mainly, however, outsiders who brought liquor to Karamoja. Elders in Kotido explained the arrival of *etule* (hard spirits) in the following way:[7]

> We got *etule* when we had migrated west. From Acholi, when we were grazing animals. It was not in Najie. There was *lejura* [crude alcohol] in Kotido. When you come across the path, you'll see the bottle showing that [*etule*] is there. They give you one bottle, they tell you to taste. You'll get it when it's very concentrated, it's sweet/delicious. Now, we started taking *etule, etule, etule* (signalling the advance of *etule* in Karamoja from Acholi). We did not know we had brought *etule* [to Karamoja]. It was following us. *Etule* followed us up to Baratanga (Teso Region). From Baratanga, it reached Tobur (Abim)…then the Acholi came and brought it by themselves. The kind of *etule* that they had put the metal around the neck of the pot (distillation) and the *etule* fell (drop by drop). Then they brought with these vehicles. They brought it up to Najie.

Today, hard liquor in Karamoja is almost entirely imported from other regions. Crude alcohol comes from surrounding districts such as Lira (which also lends its name to the term *eliralira*), and packed *waragi* in sachets

[5] These are to be found in the brew as well. See Dancause et al., 2010.

[6] Key informant, Moroto District, May 28, 2018.

[7] FGD, male elders, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018.

come from factories in Jinja and Kampala. In recent years, hard liquor, in particular, has posed a grave and sometimes fatal problem for communities in Karamoja. Field observations over the past few years have made apparent the extent of *waragi's* availability and reach, extending from Karamoja's urban and peri-urban centers to the farthest villages. Crude (illegal) and commercial *waragi* have taken a noticeable hold of the region. A study by the Moroto Catholic Diocese's Health Department shows a clear increasing trend in liver diseases as a cause of death in Matany Hospital, the largest private hospital in the region (Moroto Diocese, 2017). Between 2013 and 2016, the study shows an increase in cases of "alcohol abuse" in all Diocese Health Units across Karamoja, as well as an increase in number of inpatients with alcohol-related psychiatric diagnosis in Moroto Hospital.[8] Finally, among the districts, the study found an increasing number of cases from 2014–15 to 2015–16 of outpatient alcohol abuse in all districts, with a startling rise in Napak and Kotido.

Evidence of hard liquor's negative impact on communities also comes from reports of death from crude or other forms of *waragi*, especially around the mining site of Kosiroi in Moroto District (Ariong, 2018; Eninu, 2015). Sale of hard liquor provides income to retailers in trading centers and villages. Unlike brewing, hard liquor profits are not controlled solely by women. Due to the district ordinances and sub-county bylaws prohibiting production and import of crude alcohol in Karamoja, the availability of crude *waragi* has decreased significantly in the past three to five years. Today, it is mainly illegally smuggled and sold in far fewer locations than before. In its stead, the variant of *waragi* that has become the most prevalent on the market is sold in 100 ml plastic sachets. As demand for hard alcohol soars, so does the availability of sachet *waragi*. Yet the reasons behind the soaring demand, changes in drinking behavior, and the drivers of alcohol production, sale, and consumption remain less known. Whereas many reports and studies mention the issue of "alcohol" in reference to food security, maternal and child health, or nutrition, no systematic study has examined local communities' perspectives and experiences of these changes.

CURRENT STUDY AND OBJECTIVES

The present study investigates changes in alcohol production, sale, and consumption in Karamoja since the start of the 2006 disarmament campaign. We use the start of the disarmament as a memorable historical marker that many people cite as an event that heralded changes in multiple forms throughout the region. The study looks at the structural drivers of alcohol production and consumption, and the effects on the economy, interpersonal relationships, and health. Since brewing local alcohol is a primary livelihood strategy for many women in Karamoja,[9] and the sale of *waragi* has gained prominence in recent years, we also look at the "positive" effects of alcohol on household economy and on women's economic status especially.

The main objectives of the study were:

- To understand whether and how Karamoja is experiencing changes in alcohol production, sale, and consumption in the post-disarmament period;
- To examine the structural drivers of alcohol consumption in the post-disarmament period;
- To identify the effects of changes in alcohol consumption on interpersonal relations;
- To assess the effects of alcohol production, sale, and consumption on household economy and livelihoods;
- To assess the effectiveness of local initiatives in addressing changes in alcohol consumption.

Although we set out to examine both local brew and hard liquor, we found that, when asked about "alcohol," respondents by and large discussed hard liquor and its impact on individuals, households, and communities. This is due in part to the fact that local brew continues to be viewed as food and is central to Karamojong sociocultural life (see also *Findings section on Community perceptions of changes in alcohol production, sale, and consumption*). In addition, many respondents do not believe that one can become drunk from drinking the low-alcohol local brew. Moreover, all respondents, showed great concern over the issue of hard liquor. In fact, many community members expressed relief that the research team had come to inquire about this issue given the perceived crisis and lack of attention to this issue. As a consequence, this report focuses more on hard liquor than local brew.

This report distinguishes between the two main types of

[8] Whereas we report these data here, we have not reviewed the methodology used to arrive at the reported numbers and are not certain how "abuse" was defined. The report is as yet unpublished.

[9] The word *Karimojong* in the local language signifies the region of Karamoja. The following communities call the land area of Karamoja their home: Matheniko, Bokora, Pian, Jie, Dodoth, Tepeth, Labwor, Nyangea, Ik, and Pokot. In this report we use the word *Karamojong* for all people from Karamoja, except those from Amudat District who are *Pokot*. Even though we use the umbrella term *Karamojong* for the reader's benefit, we recognize the distinction of the constituent communities and identify them separately where appropriate.

alcohol based on the context. We use "local brew" for *ngagwe* or traditional beers made from sorghum and maize, which have low alcohol content. We distinguish these from "hard spirits" or liquor, which can be both home-brewed, unlicensed hard spirits and regulated sachet *waragi*. Hard spirits have many names in Karamoja and are clubbed under the term *etule* (plural *ngitule*). Crude alcohol (moonshine) sold in jerrycans and mostly illegally is referred to as *lotodok, lejura, eliralira, nyeroro, mogomogo, kasesekasese*, and *eguur. Waragi* sachets may also be called *etule*. The more common terms used are *coveras* (for the plastic sachet "cover") or *totpacks*. The term for the sachet used in each district may differ and correspond with either the most popular or first brand of sachet *waragi* to arrive (e.g., the brand Kick is referred to as *Ekick* or *Ngakickya*). Therefore, to distinguish drivers and effects of local brew vs. hard liquor, the report uses the term appropriate to the context (rather than the umbrella term "alcohol").[10]

[10] Although questions in the interview guide developed in English use the word "alcohol," the *Ngakarimojong* verbal translation used all major words for local brew and hard liquor. In the *Pökoot* language, there is one word for alcohol (*kumun*) but the translators again distinguished between "local brew" (e.g., *busaa, kumiket*) and "hard spirits" (*mandule*) to get a full complete picture.

METHODOLOGY

The study used an inductive reasoning approach and a qualitative methodology. Field research was carried out in five districts of Karamoja: Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Amudat, Kotido, and Kaabong. Within each district, two sub-counties were sampled.[11] The field sites were strategically and purposively chosen to investigate certain factors. To explore rural, urban, and peri-urban differences in alcohol production, sale, and consumption, town councils, peri-urban trading centers, and rural villages were sampled. In addition, the research team visited new settlements around mining and *Aloe vera* processing, such as Naput and Kosiroi in Moroto District. These areas have increasingly been associated with heavy and sometimes fatal alcohol use (Ariong, 2018). Moreover, unofficial reports of crude alcohol transportation to mining sites, such as Kosiroi, have recently surfaced. Lastly, Amudat District was included in the study based on tangential findings from a KRSU labor assessment (Iyer and Mosebo, 2017). Whereas alcohol-related issues came up regularly in the research for the labor assessment in other districts of Karamoja, especially in the context of wage labor and productivity, there was a noticeable lack of such accounts in Amudat.[12] The research team, therefore, attempted to delve deeper into understanding what we hypothesized might be an important difference in Amudat (See Box 1).

Fieldwork for the study was carried out between May 28 and June 19, 2018. The research team included two researchers, two *Ngakarimojong*[13] -speaking research assistants (for Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Kotido, and Kaabong Districts), and two *Pökoot*-speaking research assistants (for Amudat District). Data were collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) and individual semi-structured interviews. A set of participatory methods were also employed (see below). FGD and semi-structured interview guides were translated and back-translated prior to data collection. All interviews and discussions in the local languages, *Ngakarimojong* and *Pökoot*, were recorded and transcribed by transcribers and verified by the research team prior to data analysis.

A total of 503 individuals participated in the study across the five districts. Participants were selected through both random and purposive (for gender and age group) sampling. Besides age group and gender, sample selection also purposively targeted rural and urban/peri-urban groups. Participants included members of the community such as male and female elders, adult men and women, and male and female youth. FGDs were divided by age and, except for youth groups, also by gender. Whereas FGDs were more frequently used to collect data, we also interviewed individuals in the alcohol value chain such as brewers and bookers of local brews, and transporters and sellers of hard liquor. In all, 61 FGDs and 15 individual interviews were conducted. In addition, a total of 42 key informants, including government and health officials, development practitioners, religious leaders, and influential elders, were also interviewed. Validation workshops were conducted in Moroto and Kampala with stakeholders in which research team members presented initial findings. These events allowed for confirmation and refining of results, and the data from these meetings have been incorporated into this report.

Participatory methods

Facilitated participatory methods were used in a subset of FGDs to collect data on group perceptions regarding alcohol production, sale, and consumption. These methods included diagramming, proportional piling and ranking, and creation of calendars. Seasonal calendars illustrated how alcohol production, consumption, and sale changes over the course of the year. Daily calendars illustrated averages for the types and quantities of alcohol consumed and the portion of the household budget spent on alcohol. The calendars also depicted the availability of other economic opportunities and resource constraints. Proportional piling depicted the peak and low seasons for alcohol production, sale, and consumption. Daily alcohol consumption patterns were also explored by charting typical quantities of the different types of local brew and liquor consumed on a daily basis from morning to evening. One hundred twenty-seven participants (83 women and 44 men) participated in the nine gender-specific focus groups that included the participatory methods.

[11] Moroto District: Rupa, Nadunget Sub-counties (SCs); Nakapiripirit District: Lorengedwat and Namalu SCs; Kotido District: Kotido Town Council and Rengen SC; Kaabong District: Loyoro and Kapedo SCs; Amudat District: Amudat and Loro SCs.

[12] A part of this finding is related to the fact that wage labor is not as popular an activity among Pokot people as among Karamojong people. Nonetheless, reduced alcohol consumption in Amudat as a result of church (all denominations) activities was frequently invoked by informants.

[13] The main language in Karamoja is *Ngakarimojong*, which is spoken by all communities except Pokot, Labwor, Ik, and Nyangea. Pokot people in Amudat speak the Kalenjin *Pökoot* language. Labwor speak the *Thur* language, and Ik and Nyangea the *Kuliak* languages. The research sample only included *Ngakarimojong* and *Pökoot* speakers.

Analytical framework

Qualitative data were collected from men and women, and youth and elders from within the community using FGDs (including participatory approaches) and individual interviews. In order to understand connections between the individuals and the group as a whole, the study assumes that groups are systems, which are analyzed at multiple levels. Transcribed data generated by the systems were organized and managed through summarization, resulting in a robust and flexible matrix output, which allowed the researchers to analyze data both by case and theme. Transcribed data were read through multiple times, and codes were generated and grouped into clusters around similar and interrelated ideas or concepts.

Using the qualitative software Dedoose, the research team coded the transcribed text using content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis was carried out by coding the data and identifying the actors, patterns, and effects/outcomes. This was followed by thematic analysis, which was carried out by grouping the data into themes or domains. Categories and codes were arranged in a tree diagram structure used to manage, organize, and summarize the data by category from each transcript. We strived throughout to maintain the original meanings and feel of the interviewees' words.

Informed consent and ethical review

Verbal informed consent was obtained from participants prior to individual, focus group, and key informant interviews. Individual interviews were held away from groups of people to the extent possible. Those in focus groups were also reminded that what they say would be heard by others in the groups. Key informants, such as district officials, government health workers, and national and international staff of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who spoke in their professional capacity were given consent forms to sign. No children were interviewed for the study; reported observations and information on children's drinking behavior were acquired from adults in FGDs and individual interviews. The study was approved by Tufts University's Institutional Review Board, Mildmay Uganda Research Ethics Committee, and the Uganda National Council of Science and Technology.

Limitations

This study was designed as a qualitative study to allow for in-depth discussion of key issues surrounding alcohol use in the Karamoja Region. The primary limitations are therefore in line with other qualitative studies: the data are not representative, the sample size is relatively small, and there is a likelihood of non-sampling errors. As with all qualitative studies, the data presented here only refer to the study population. That said, we believe that the situation is likely similar in other locations in the region, as the study population was not unique in any manner.

FINDINGS

CHANGES SINCE DISARMAMENT AND EFFECTS ON ALCOHOL PRODUCTION, SALE, AND CONSUMPTION

Community perceptions of changes in alcohol production, sale, and consumption

Increasing alcohol consumption is widely cited by development practitioners and policymakers as an issue plaguing Karamoja (see for example WFP, 2017a). In this study, we sought to corroborate these observations by asking community members what their perceptions are. We found overwhelming agreement among participants of all age groups and both genders that hard liquor sale and use has rocketed in Karamoja in the post-disarmament period.[14] Even though crude alcohol (also known as moonshine) made in neighboring districts or in Karamoja was consumed in the past, respondents have observed a drastic increase in liquor use as a result of the arrival and proliferation of sachet *waragi*. While hard liquor has been brewed in Karamoja for several decades in generally small quantities,[15] crude alcohol from Lira, Gulu, Sironko, and other regions has proved to be more popular, as evidenced by the sizable import of this alcohol in jerrycans into Karamoja. When district government and other local initiatives around Karamoja led to the near disappearance of imported crude alcohol between three and five years ago, it was quickly replaced by sachet *waragi*.

Sachet *waragi* is omnipresent in rural and urban areas of Karamoja, and its affordability (500 Uganda shillings (UGX) or 0.13 United States dollars (USD) per sachet) makes it a popular choice for even those who have poorly paid livelihoods. Community members, local government representatives, and health officials are unanimous in their opinion that sachet *waragi*, and to some extent crude *waragi*, consumption is one of the most serious issues in Karamoja today. In fact, a number of participants likened both crude and sachet *waragi* to "the gun"[16] or as "another bullet killing people."[17] An elder in Kotido explained how sachet *waragi* (*etule*) has proliferated and become deadly in a way similar to the spread of firearms in earlier decades:

> If the gun was there… they would have killed me in the house. Even my own son. Maybe the woman would have beaten me on the head and killed me. I would have also killed my wife. I would have also killed my son. *Etule* is just like that. *Etule* has finished people slowly, slowly, slowly.

According to several respondents, the hard liquor previously available in jerrycans and brought in from neighboring districts was less potent than the sachet *waragi* widely sold today. In the post-disarmament period, not only have the composition and quantity of hard liquor changed, but also the motivations to drink. Before disarmament, it was mainly men who drank hard liquor, and they consumed it to relieve fatigue during long trips, including raids, and for a quick boost before raiding:

> *Etule* came those days when we were raiding a lot. (Then) there was little *etule*. Those days if there was too much *etule* all these people wouldn't be there. I would have killed you. Any kind of disagreement, I would have just shot. If *etule* was as much those days as it is these days, people would have gotten finished. There was (a little amount) that we used to carry to *lokitela* (to another society/culture). When the home of the enemies came very near, we do like this (makes drinking gesture) a lot, a lot, a lot, so that we enter inside the enemies' home with force.[18]

Consumption of local brews, on the other hand, was not reported to have substantially changed in the post-disarmament period. This is because most participants, rural as well as urban, continue to consider local brew as a source of nourishment and quintessential to socializing with kin and non-kin relations. Not only is local brew perceived as having a lower alcohol content, it is also assumed to have health properties, such as its ability to increase the strength and weight of a person. A few respondents commented, however, that instead of quantity, changes in local brew consumption were related rather to the *mode* of drinking. The consumption pattern vis-à-vis traditional brew is said to have changed from occasional or ritualistic to routine. Whereas in the past local brew served a particular social purpose (e.g., to facilitate discussion

[14] A few exceptions to this statement, however, emerged. Two older brewers and youth in Kotido Town Council claimed that alcohol consumption was higher in the pre-disarmament period. In Kaabong, women elders and adult men and women claimed that drinking behavior had either not changed much or was higher prior to disarmament, but it became clear further in the interview that they were referring to crude alcohol.

[15] Government official, Rupa Sub-county, Moroto District, May 28, 2018.

[16] FGD, male elders, Kotido Town Council, Kotido District, June 8, 2018; FGD, male youth, Namalu Sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, June 14, 2018.

[17] FGD, men, Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 5, 2018.

[18] FGD, male elders, Kotido Town Council, Kotido District, June 8, 2018.

between potential in-laws on bridewealth or served as a refreshment for visitors to the home), its increasing commercialization has meant that it is now freely available for purchase, sometimes at very low prices (e.g., a jug of brew costs about 1,000 UGX or 0.26 USD; note, however, that this is twice the price of a *waragi* sachet). Allegedly, this has led to the substitution of solid foods with local brews. Moreover, when mixed with *etule* or sachet *waragi*, the effect that local brews have on a person are often seen as negative. With that said, respondents rarely cited local brews as problematic because of their presumed low alcohol content and their perceived nutritional aspects.

In general, though, there is an acute understanding of the ills of hard liquor consumption among community members, both young and old. Observations on the effects of excessive consumption of liquor on household economy, interpersonal relationships, health, livelihoods, and the community at large were reported animatedly by participants. It was not uncommon to hear that "the land is now spoiled" because of the proliferation and excessive use of hard spirits. Deaths from excessive consumption of *waragi* were regularly reported by respondents. Whereas statistics on deaths linked to liquor consumption are difficult to come by, this appears to be happening with some regularity in various communities. It is this that led a group of respondents to name sachet *waragi* "the silent gun." This group implied that although the real gun has exited Karamoja after the disarmament campaigns, the new "gun" is sachet *waragi*, silently causing sudden or gradual death among Karamoja's communities.

Nevertheless, many respondents, particularly youth, also conceded that because of its affordability and people's "habits," even knowing the problems associated with hard liquor has no positive effect on the consumption pattern. Some respondents were also of the belief that the forceful removal of the gun and the issues that emerged in the aftermath of disarmament have contributed greatly to the upsurge in liquor consumption. Below, we enumerate some of the important changes since disarmament that have had a palpable effect on alcohol production, sale, and consumption.

Livestock loss and shift in livelihoods

Karamoja has experienced drastic changes to its socioeconomic conditions since the disarmament campaigns of the 2000s (Bevan, 2008; Knighton, 2010; Stites and Akabwai 2009; Stites and Akabwai, 2010). Following over two decades of armed intercommunity livestock raiding, the Government of Uganda organized several campaigns to disarm the people of Karamoja (see Stites et al., 2007 for details). The disarmament was described as brutal and forceful and resulted in the apparent disappearance of small arms and light weapons from Karamoja; in its wake, it left widespread loss of livestock and lives, and massive human rights violations (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Although there are ebbs and flows in the security situation since the disarmament campaigns and weapons (albeit to a much less extent) remain in circulation today (Kingma et al., 2012; USAID, 2018), the disarmament has fundamentally altered livelihoods in Karamoja. Some of these impacts were a direct result of disarmament, whereas disarmament served as a catalyst for ongoing processes in other instances.

Some of the main changes to livelihoods include the loss of or decrease in livestock-based livelihoods, greater reliance on alternative livelihoods and wage labor, and the resulting loss of a range of traditional pastoralist mechanisms to deal with vulnerability (Stites and Akabwai, 2009). The scale of change in livelihood strategies in the aftermath of disarmament has been well documented. Studies show the extent to which people in Karamoja rely more on wage labor and petty trade today as a means of both fulfilling household needs and as a risk management strategy (Fernandes, 2013; Iyer and Mosebo, 2017; Stites and Akabwai, 2009; Stites et al., 2014). Although livestock-based livelihoods are recovering and showing promise after several years in decline (Stites et al., 2016), the widespread loss of animals has had cascading effects on household food security, customary authority, gender roles, and future prospects (Carlson et al., 2012; Stites and Akabwai, 2010). Ultimately, this shift in livelihoods is also a key driver of the changes in alcohol production, sale, and consumption.

The loss of livestock has also had some direct impacts upon the reported increase in consumption of alcohol, largely due to the decrease of milk as a central component of the pastoral diet. This has been discussed in depth elsewhere, particularly in regard to shifts in child nutrition (Sadler et al., 2010; Stites and Mitchard, 2011). Respondents in this study also made a direct connection between the decrease of milk availability in the *kraals* and the drinking behavior of male youth. A group of young men interviewed in Loyoro Sub-county in Kaabong explained:

> Before we used to hear from the elders that the herders of those days used to drink milk but now, their milk is alcohol…those days the youth, like the elders, would go to the *kraals* and grow (up) there while drinking milk; they knew nothing about alcohol…even if the elders carried the local brew to the *kraals*, they would give them only residue but not the local brew…but now their milk is the local brew.[19]

[19] FGD, male and female youth, Loyoro Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 5, 2018.

With increasing numbers of people joining wage labor sectors such as construction, agricultural labor, and mining, the cash available to the general population is assumed to have increased. Before disarmament, cash was not as readily available because of both the insecurity that deterred markets and trade and the dependence on traditional livelihoods. In the post-disarmament period, market activities have shown a steady rise as more and more businesses are established in Karamoja's urban centers. Availability of cash is further aided by large-scale development projects and cash-for-work programs such as the Northern Ugandan Social Action Fund (NUSAF).

Cash income, although beneficial for fulfilling immediate nutrition and other household needs, is limited in its potential. Due to generally low wages in most sectors, particularly for those in semi- or unskilled work, a significant proportion of the cash goes toward household food expenditure rather than productive assets such as education or livestock (Iyer and Mosebo, 2017). Furthermore, the availability of cash is thought by some to be responsible for the increase in alcohol consumption. Prior to disarmament, it was both difficult to find hard liquor in large quantities and to purchase it due to the lack of money. Explaining this change, a Jie elder recounted:[20]

> Those days people didn't like having money. People looked at people having money like these are some (other) kind of people. But nowadays people like having money. Everybody has money. That is why everyone is taking too much *etule*. People never say, "I lack money for drinking *etule*." Those days there were only two businessmen in all of Kanawat. Someone would come from far to reach the trader in Kanawat. Then he goes and asks him (trader), "Papa, loan me some money, someone is sick." This person would loan money. As many as 30 people would follow only one trader to borrow money. Then this one person who gets (money) would help us all. He would buy us *etule*. There were no people having money. You just can't give your cow in exchange for *etule*, just like that. That is why those days in Karamoja there was little drinking.

Although cash income today is a necessity in Karamoja as elsewhere, the low wages and rising costs of living in Uganda deter productive savings. Young people especially are greatly affected by the inability to substantially save their earnings in order to invest in education or training. As recounted by some youth, the problems of poverty force them to spend "the coin" (signifying a small amount of money) on liquor because they do not see many prospects for that "little" money.[21] While this rationale may be extended to other age groups, particularly those in the middle age, youth are particularly vulnerable.

Apart from a shift in livelihood strategies, there have also been critical changes to residence patterns in Karamoja. These include attempts to both sedentarize communities and promote settled agrarian livelihoods (Levine, 2010; Mwangu, 2015). Migration has always been a risk management strategy in Karamoja and elsewhere. Over the last decade, there has also been a steady migration of individuals and families from rural to urban locations in search of opportunities for income generation (Stites et al., 2014). Sedentarization and migration have resulted in the expansion of urban centers[22] and appearance of small peri-urban centers. Urbanization provides access to services and markets that are exceedingly important for male and female pastoralists (see Stites et al., 2014 for a review). On the other hand, urban and peri-urban centers are also areas where alcohol of all types is regularly and continuously available.

Decrease in insecurity and burgeoning of markets

Once held hostage by armed intercommunity livestock raiding, Karamoja now enjoys relative peace. Incidents of livestock theft, even though reported with some regularity, are today less destructive to lives and livelihoods as compared to the raiding of the past and the ensuing disarmament campaigns. These developments have led to a critical change in the positive direction: the ability of people to access markets, which has facilitated the increased sale and purchase of goods (Howe et al., 2015). Freedom of movement as a result of improved security has resulted in the growth of urban and peri-urban markets. A recent market assessment shows that among challenges in market access, insecurity scored lowest (9%) and long distance to markets scored highest (71%) (WFP, 2017b). As a result of this peace, the highways transporting goods and people into and out of Karamoja are bustling, and many have benefitted from infrastructural development. Over the last five to ten years, many people from outside Karamoja have come to the region to trade and to open new businesses (see also Iyer and Mosebo, 2017). Even though feeder roads going into rural areas remain less developed, the decrease in insecurity and state investment in highway development have meant the free movement of goods into and out of Karamoja. One of these goods is hard liquor.

Today, hard liquor is readily available in all towns, urban centers, peri-urban centers, and even in the most remote

[20] FGD, male elders, Kotido Town Council, Kotido District, June 8, 2018.

[21] FGD, youth (mixed genders), Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong, June 5, 2018.

[22] There has also been a migration of individuals from outside Karamoja to its major towns.

Padmini Iyer

Young woman carrying sachet* waragi *to sell in villages, Namalu Sub-County

villages. It is not uncommon to see the ground littered with empty plastic sachets. Sold by large-scale Kampala or Jinja-based distilleries through their trucks, *waragi* sachets appear to have taken a quick, yet strong, hold of Karamoja's population. Wholesale selling of *waragi* sachets generally happens on livestock market days, and *waragi* company trucks park near the markets for convenient wholesale purchases.[23] Small-scale traders purchase the sachets from wholesalers and retailers in towns and transport the sachets to villages. Despite the popularity of the drink, the village-level retailer appears to profit least in the supply chain. On average, a box of 120 *waragi* sachets fetches a retailer only 5,000 to 7,000 UGX or 1.30–1.82 USD in profits.[24] In a few instances, sellers in areas considerably far from the urban centers, such as in newly established trading centers on the Karamoja-Turkana borderlands, can earn much greater profits because they charge 1,000 UGX (.26 USD) per sachet[25] (one box sold at 120,000 UGX (31.20 USD)). Despite the generally low profit margins locally, the volume of sales is steady enough that selling *waragi* sachets has become another alternative livelihood in Karamoja. Unlike women's monopoly on making and selling traditional brew, sachet sales are not restricted to a particular gender. Both men and women can retail *waragi* sachets in villages or in towns. Some brewers also supply *waragi* in their shops.

In this sense, the decrease in insecurity as a result of forced disarmament has been a double-edged sword for the location population. The burgeoning of markets and the noticeable increase in liquor sales have had some specific detrimental effects on the lives and livelihoods of communities (see section of *Effects of alcohol production, consumption and sale*. Moreover, as opportunities for earning income abound in urban and peri-urban centers, a great number of people come to towns on a daily basis in search of work. Invariably, a number of them remain in town after work, drinking in makeshift bars. As reported by study participants, this type of casual labor puts people in close proximity to the liquor (in urban centers) and greatly increases the likelihood of drinking. Moreover, the growing markets have also afforded drinking places that serve traditional brews all day long, supposedly leading to changes in brew drinking behavior as well. For one, whereas traditional brews were previously mainly reserved for refreshment after communal agricultural work, the drinking places in urban and peri-urban centers also, apparently, result in all-day drinking of brew.

Further encouraging these changes in drinking behavior is the fact that people now have peace of mind, which, allegedly, allows them to remain in drinking areas until late. People can now drink alcohol and "even sleep on the way (because) nothing will touch (them)."[26] Walking alone from drinking areas closer to town or trading centers does not pose the same threat it did a decade ago.[27] The need to remain alert at night for fear of "enemies" or livestock thieves is no longer a necessity, thus providing the freedom to remain inebriated. Explaining this change, a Local Councillor 1 from Moroto District[28] said:

> Before the gun was removed, people were wise. They used to drink before the sun sets. They were already moving to their homes because they knew insecurity was there. If they get you on the way you will be killed. If you're moving alone. And those days people were wise because if one hears a friend was killed because he was singing while moving on the way, it becomes a lesson. But nowadays, because there is

[23] Although currently rare, companies have previously held promotional events where they distributed the sachets for free or at very low prices.

[24] A box of sachets containing 120 sachets costs about 55,000 UGX (14.30 USD) per box when purchased at wholesale and is sold at about 60,000 UGX (15.60 USD). Differences in profits occur due to distance from urban/peri-urban markets.

[25] Interview with seller of sachets, Naput Trading Centre, Rupa Sub-county, Moroto District, May 29, 2018.

[26] FGD, men, Loyoro Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 5, 2018.

[27] Nonetheless, there are other threats. More than a handful of deaths have been reported (or witnessed by a team member) resulting from falling into or drowning in rivers late at night.

[28] Interview, LC1, Tapac Sub-county, Moroto District, May 31, 2018.

> peace, people don't mind. They drink *etule* and they know even if they lie down anywhere on the bare ground, no one will touch them.

Lastly, the growth of towns such as Kotido and Moroto has afforded many people the opportunity to establish drinking areas of traditional brew and regular bars serving beers and hard spirits. Bars serving local brew tend to be packed with people early in the morning, as people drink *ngagwe* as breakfast, and from afternoon onward when drinking groups get together. Bookers, or women who sell local brew purchased from large-scale brewers, also arrive to urban centers early in the morning to purchase jerrycans of brew to transport and sell in villages. Small shops selling sachet *waragi* and beers in trading centers are popular hangouts from observation.

STRUCTURAL DRIVERS OF ALCOHOL PRODUCTION, SALE, AND CONSUMPTION

Triggers of alcohol consumption

Similar to the distinction in people's perceptions about local brews and hard spirits, with the former viewed as having few negative effects (Stites 2018), the reasons respondents gave for consuming the two types of alcohol also varied greatly. Traditional brew is considered "food" and a source of nutrition, which can be consumed from early in the morning until late in the evening with limited impacts in terms of inebriation.[29] Consumption of brew can also be a simple alternative to acquiring nutrition at a low cost. For instance, a cup of brew can be purchased for 200 UGX (0.05 USD) and serves as a relatively filling drink prior to engaging in strenuous work such as agricultural labor or mining. Besides its ceremonial importance in events such as weddings and initiations, drinking traditional brew is also an important social activity in daily life. *Ekweete* is provided as refreshment for visitors and in-laws, given in appreciation of a friend's help with an important matter, and offered in appreciation for communal work on a garden. In urban and rural settings, traditional brew is shared by groups of men and women who congregate in the evenings to discuss activities of the day, share information, and consult with each other. This is an exceedingly important way of socializing among groups of youth in particular, as drinking groups provide forums for discussions on employment and future prospects (see also Mosebo, 2008).

Whereas "hunger" and social/traditional reasons are typically attributed to the consumption of local brew, the triggers for the consumption of hard spirits range from economic to social and even psychological reasons. The main triggers for liquor consumption, as given to us by respondents, can be categorized as follows.

Livelihood-related triggers

A central driver of increased liquor consumption in Karamoja is shifting livelihood strategies in the post-disarmament period. In Karamoja as in other parts of the Greater Horn of Africa, there is a growing cleavage between wealthy and stockless pastoralists, with the former reaping greater benefits of livestock commercialization. Those with few or no animals have little choice but to either "step out" temporarily or "move out" of pastoralism entirely, both economically and geographically, in order to survive (Catley, 2017; Catley and Aklilu, 2013). This is true also in Karamoja where political and environmental factors have led to diversification of livelihood strategies as a way for agro-pastoralist households to meet daily demands and buffer against risks.

The increased reliance on alternative livelihood strategies and on the wage labor market, and the regular and growing movement from rural to peri-urban and urban areas in search of work, has far-reaching effects not only on food security and resilience of Karamoja's communities but also on people's drinking behavior. Although wages are generally too little to be invested in productive assets such as livestock or education, this cash is important for meeting daily household needs such as food. However, this increased monetization of the economy is also held responsible by some respondents for leading to the overuse of liquor due to sachet *waragi's* affordability.

Related to the availability of cash and affordability of sachet *waragi* is the fact that casual wage labor has brought many people in close proximity to urban and peri-urban centers where alcohol is readily available. Casual laborers reportedly spend some of their daily earnings on drinking every day before returning to their villages late in the evenings. This trend is acutely noticeable in sub-counties close to large urban centers, where villages might seem nearly deserted of youth and adults during the day; they only come back later in the afternoon or evening after having consumed alcohol. Moreover, the establishment of temporary, semi-permanent, or permanent settlements adjacent to gold, limestone, and marble mining areas or in newly opened *Aloe vera* processing zones[30] has provided an opportunity for traders of various types of alcohol to set up their businesses. In addition to miners, truck drivers, loaders, sex workers, and miscellaneous other traders have settled in these locations, turning them into legitimate

[29] The practice of consuming sorghum or millet beer in the morning is by no means restricted to Karamoja. Bird and Shinyekwa (2005) document similar observations about men from villages in Mbale, Kamuli, and Mubende Districts in Uganda.

[30] The research team only visited such sites in Moroto District for this study. However, settlements around gold mining have also been established in Amudat District (e.g., Chepkarat in Karita Sub-county) and Kaabong District (e.g., Nakapel in Loyoro Sub-county).

trading centers. Moreover, in places such as the Lolung gold mining site and the Naput *Aloe vera* processing center, a large number of Turkana from the borderlands provide a substantial customer base.[31] In mining sites such as Kosiroi (Moroto District), the population is a mix of people from Karamoja, from West Pokot (Kenya) across the border, and from several other districts of Uganda. A growing population of temporary settlers and daily migrants to the area provides further incentive for the trade in alcohol. Motorcycles (*boda bodas*) and small trucks carrying *waragi* and beer regularly ply the routes between the nearest urban center and the mining settlements. The drinking culture and the high demand for both licit and illicit brew in these burgeoning areas is driven by a mixed and varied population, and the problem is not experienced by those from Karamoja alone.

Brewers of *ngagwe* report being able to make good profits from sale of traditional brew, which many artisanal miners and other workers consume in the morning. They believe that the brew gives them energy to do the strenuous labor involved in artisanal limestone or marble mining. By contrast, sachet or crude *waragi* is reportedly consumed in the evening to relieve fatigue. Some youth also mentioned drinking sachets prior to work to get a physical and mental boost to break limestone.[32] Over time, these trading centers have come to be associated with rampant and sometimes fatal hard liquor use (Ariong, 2018). Until a few years ago, and by some accounts even now, the import of crude alcohol in large quantities from outside Karamoja into mining areas was extremely regular.[33] Jerrycans of crude alcohol arrived in lorries and trucks that transport stones from Kosiroi to the cement processing factories in Tororo. Local government and community-led efforts over the past few years have forced the trade in crude alcohol to go underground or to move to neighboring districts, leading to a sharp decrease in availability. However, these efforts have had little influence on the sale and consumption of sachet *waragi* (see section on *Local initiatives*).

Psychosocial stress

Livelihood-related stress is cited as a key reason driving the increased consumption of hard liquor. Although all age groups are affected by livelihood-related stress, the problem appears to be particularly acute among youth, both urban and rural. The high costs of education, especially secondary and above, is a critical barrier to educational attainment in Karamoja. Compared to average wage rates in the region, covering the costs of education is often an insurmountable task, even for urban households with multiple earners.[34] Without completing secondary school or above, most semi- and skilled labor sector jobs are inaccessible to local youth, a gap that businesses fill by bringing workers from outside the region (Iyer and Mosebo, 2017). Because of incomplete education, inability to secure relatively better-paid semi-skilled or skilled jobs, and an exploitative and highly competitive labor market, many youth—especially in urban and peri-urban areas—express hopelessness in their current and future prospects. This hopelessness, according to youth respondents, is one of the main reasons for alcohol consumption.

For rural youth, the problems are different. According to some respondents, the confiscation of guns as part of the disarmament campaign has left a void in the lives of rural youth. Whereas earlier they would be occupied with matters of livestock, whether related to raiding or simply livestock management, today, with the loss of animals, rural youth are "not engaged in any activity anymore"[35] and have little to do but "sleep under the tree."[36] This idleness presumably leads them to drink on a regular basis, as explained by a group of men interviewed in Nadunget in Moroto:

> During those days, the herders were wise enough. People used not to drink *ngagwe* a lot, the youth also never used to drink…but now there are no animals to care of, we are all just here wandering going to town, there is nothing to herd…what [animals] is there is just for the young kids to herd, and the youth now have resorted to drinking.[37]

The lack of things to do, however, is not restricted to rural youth. Youth in urban and peri-urban centers also reported a lack of activities to occupy them as a reason for drinking to "pass time."

The lack of ability to invest in productive assets, both education and livestock, is an important driver of alcohol consumption. Youth engaged in wage labor reported the improbability of saving enough money from their pay to

[31] Sellers and transporters from Naput Trading Centre, Moroto District, May 29, 2018.

[32] FGD, youth, Tapac Sub-county, Moroto District, May 31, 2018.

[33] Key informants, Tapac Sub-county, Moroto District, May 30, 2018.

[34] Catley (2017) shows the economic value of pastoralism in this regard, where selling livestock can have greater success in defraying costs of education compared to wage labor.

[35] Government official, Namalu Sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, June 14, 2018.

[36] FGD, male youth, Namalu Sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, June 14, 2018.

[37] FGD, male youth, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District, May 30, 2018.

fund their education or for other investments. This is especially critical for male youth who aspire to establish a family. For most young men, establishing a livestock herd is the first step in preparing for marriage. Those without animals may struggle to acquire a partner, as explained by a group of young men in Kotido Town:

> For us (as) youth, I don't have anything (animals) that my parents have. I go and engage a lady, and she accepts me. Then afterwards, another person comes who has authority (animals). He comes and takes away my lady when she is already my wife. Then when I go back to the house and I'm lonely, I go and get *etule*. You drink until you sleep like a dead person and forget those thoughts. You sleep up to the morning and then your friends will come and talk to you the next morning to just leave the lady since she has already been taken.[38]

Stressors such as those from lack of employment, loss of employment, and other factors were reported by respondents across the middle age and youth groups. Clubbed under the term "thoughts" (*ngatameta*), a great number of respondents listed stressors such as marred interpersonal relationships, inability to provide for children, and problems sufficiently meeting basic household needs as constant stressors that drive people to drink. Women, particularly in urban centers, recounted turning to drink to remove the stress of managing their households single-handedly in the absence of a spouse and with little earnings. Compounding the issue is the generally low wage rates in sectors dominated by women, such as domestic work. Women admitted feeling inordinately stressed due to rising costs of food and school fees.

As explained to us by two women in a focus group in urban Kotido:

> I have two children. I don't have a husband, now it's seven years without a husband. So, I am a mother, I am a father. There is no business I am doing, but the children must go to school, must eat, must dress, sickness when it is there, and rent. But all these things should be paid. But now, if now I sit only in one place without drinking, the thoughts will kill me (laughter). So I just drink, drink! The child wants food, the child wants soda—I am just there drunk! All these thoughts are not there (then).
>
> Since I have two children, their father got another woman, and the other woman spoiled his mind. If I go to him sometime to give me some money to buy food for child, [sometimes] he does not give me money. So, I stay on stress. If someone gives me either 1,000 UGX (.26 USD) or 500 UGX (.13 USD), I go and get someone who's drinking. I also join drinking to forget the stress…So, when you think of the prices of other things, it just makes you stop and drink. So, you just continue drinking to forget.[39]

Thus, drinking to forget stress and "thoughts" is a common reason given by people in the middle age and youth groups. These stand in stark contrast to typical reasons given for consuming local brews, which are mainly hunger, ceremonies, and to socialize with kin and non-kin relations. Respondents are keenly aware that the high alcohol content in *waragi* that can help them "pass out," and thus, at least temporarily, relieve stress.

Peer and family influence

Both traditional brew and *waragi* are consumed socially, with friends, kin, or other non-kin relations. Drinking is a popular pastime in Karamoja, and as previously mentioned, drinking groups (particularly of male youth) are important social networks of support. Sharing of problems and discussing stressors with the peer group sometimes accompany sharing of alcohol. For youth with some form of employment or income, drinking groups provide an outlet to unwind. For others, drinking is a distraction from nothing to do. When asked why she drinks, a young woman said:

> To pass time. When I have nothing to do. I have finished all the housework, I have washed clothes, cooked food, washed dishes, I served my children. Now what do I do in the house next? To sit like this like an orphan? Now let me go and look for the group of women who are drinking I also join them to drink so that, time goes off. So, passing time. It's pastime.[40]

Similarly, respondents believe that family members' habits have a strong influence on the drinking behavior of children. For those who grew up in households where parents didn't consume much hard liquor, the (grown-up) children "go to the garden, go for firewood, cook food, and serve the parents."[41] But children whose parents drink alcohol, especially liquor, are thought to be susceptible to developing drinking habits themselves. "I blame the gene," said one woman who had grown up with parents who, allegedly, had serious drinking problems.[42]

[38] FGD, male youth, Kotido Town Council, June 7, 2018.

[39] FGD, women, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018.

[40] FGD, women, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018.

[41] FGD, women elders, Tapac Sub-county, Moroto District, May 31, 2018.

[42] Woman, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018.

Among youth, alongside stress from unemployment, lack of hope in future prospects, and inability to find sustainable and well-paying work, peer pressure was listed as one of the main triggers of alcohol consumption. Some respondents believe that alcohol-drinking habits develop in the company of friends or peer group members who "are already spoilt."[43] Peer groups also influence members to spend money on alcohol—buying rounds for each other, for instance. Doing so signals to the group that the person can also contribute, even if the contribution is towards harmful sachet liquor.[44]

Community perceptions of "addiction"

Alcohol use disorder and alcohol addiction are clinically determined diagnoses requiring careful examination on an individual basis. We have, therefore, abstained from making any references to addiction or alcohol use disorder in this report. However, in respondents' words, many people's "bodies have gotten used to *etule*."[45] Another way respondents described "addiction" in the vernacular was the prevalence of alcohol "in the blood stream"[46] or that the *etule* has "gotten used to their blood."[47] The word "addiction" or "addicted" was used frequently by English-speaking key informants such as health and government officials. This presumed "addiction" is said to be one of the drivers of excessive consumption of hard liquor in Karamoja.

"Addiction," it is claimed, makes people forget their families, sell their animals, and forget about food. So strong is *etule's* hold on such people that they drink "until his blood becomes only *etule*. Their head goes from normal to something abnormal—then it becomes madness."[48] Those classified as "addicts" were reportedly likely to sell their animals and spend what little they earn through wage labor on liquor.[49] According to some, they can "even go and bring back the dowry of (their) wife that (they) had paid before."[50] Moreover, refusing food or vomiting from eating certain foods such as oily dishes were also seen as signs of "addiction."[51]

Another characteristic of these persons was their consumption of liquor at all times of the day, rather than perhaps in the evening after a day of work. Although daily drinking is reportedly common, especially around towns and urban centers, drinking from early in the morning or when the sachet "has become (someone's) toothbrush"[52] is looked down upon. Men in Kaabong District described such a person as follows:

> We get him or her drinking all the time. Every morning he is drinking. Sometimes when his wife cooks food, he looks at it like it's feces that is supposed to be thrown out. Sometimes even if there is traditional beer in front of him, he will just leave it and go for Kick.[53]

Lastly, several health and government officials are of the view that excess alcohol consumption in Karamoja is indicative of "addiction," in that people have replaced food with alcohol, and drinking is a daily matter. This "addiction" is held responsible for all contemporary negative issues such as heightened food insecurity, dropping out of school, and selling of productive assets.[54] Future research needs to look closely at this question of "addiction" and whether and how it can be diagnosed in the Karamoja context.

When asked to describe local brew, study participants in the districts of Kaabong, Moroto, Kotido, and Nakapiripirit commonly used the terms "food," "traditional," "wholesome," and "socially acceptable." Both rural and urban respondents regarded brew as their primary traditional drink with wide public acceptance. This acceptance extended to brew as a form of food for children, male and female youth, and adult men and women. In addition, the brew is an essential component of traditional feasts and ceremonies.

[43] FGD, youth, Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong, June 5, 2018.

[44] Key informant, Kaabong District, June 11, 2018.

[45] FGDs and individual interviews, several districts. In *Ngakarimojong: anaikith* (get used to) *ngawat* (body) *etule*.

[46] FGD, male elders, Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 3, 2018.

[47] Ibid.

[48] FGD, male elders, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018.

[49] Government official, Kotido District, June 7, 2018.

[50] FGD, VHTs, Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 3, 2018.

[51] FGD, male youth, Namalu Sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, June.14, 2018.

[52] FGD, men, Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 5, 2018.

[53] FGD, male elders, Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 3, 2018.

[54] Several health and government officials in all districts.

FACTORS INFLUENCING ALCOHOL PRODUCTION, SALE, AND CONSUMPTION

Seasonal fluctuations

An overarching finding is that while local brew production and consumption varies with the seasons, consumption of hard spirits is relatively constant throughout the year.

The making of local brew varies by season due to climate, access to inputs, economic considerations, and patterns of leisure time and social and economic activities. Seasonality influences the availability and cost of ingredients for making local brew. Participants in focus groups indicated that scarcity of grains in the dry season can result in the circulation of diluted brew, which has been linked to typhoid, cholera, and diarrhea in some locations. Expressing their concern about the use of dirty water, a group of male elders in Moroto said, "They should emphasize to those people brewing in town that the *ngagwe* you brew, brew it well…when people from the village bring their money to buy it…they should not get cholera."[55]

People consume *waragi* and local brew at special events and festivals; these events are clustered around the harvest period, which also corresponds with a ready supply of grains for making local brews. In the case of *waragi*, the participants mentioned that its sale and consumption was not dependent on seasons.

Data from FGDs varied in terms of the periods in which alcohol consumption peaked and waned; these variations likely reflected the different economic factors and stressors in particular locations. For instance, in Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, and Nakapiripirit,[56] men and women in FGDs reported that local brew production, sale, and consumption were very high during the January to March dry season (*akamu*). Respondents said that this was due to the availability of sorghum in granaries (left from the harvest) and the high demand for and payment for labor for construction of houses, fences, and *manyattas* (homestead), and for clearing of gardens. In contrast, some respondents reported low production and consumption of local brew during these same months, as grain supplies are normally long since finished, purchase costs are high, water is scarce, and ceremonies are few. The few women who have the money to purchase sorghum on the market (or in neighboring regions) are likely to experience high demand for their product in this period but will pay higher costs for transport and inputs.

According to male and female focus group respondents in Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, and Nakapiripirit, production, sale, and consumption of local brew is reduced during the wet season (*akiporo*), which starts in March or April and extends into August or later in some locations. Locally available sorghum is reserved for planting during this time, and the new crops are not yet mature. Brew that is available is often reserved for refreshment following work in the gardens.

Male and female respondents in all locations agreed that brewing increases in the post-harvest period and extends into December. Grains are available and/or cheap to purchase in the market, and this is a busy time for marriages, ceremonies, and visits from in-laws. Local brew serves both a social and ritual function at these ceremonies, illustrating its role as an important cultural symbol. As explained by a local health official in Loyoro Sub-county in Kaabong, "When a child is born, during the naming ceremony, a child is given little local brew on the finger to taste…it is culture."[57] Harvesting and construction activities also drive up the demand for local brew, which reaches its peak in these months. In contrast, respondents felt that the main factor in *waragi* consumption was supply, which was linked to external supply. *Waragi* is consumed throughout the year, regardless of season, although consumption increases in periods when cash is more readily available, such as in the post-harvest season. Factors of stress may drive consumption in other periods, such as the dry season, but only those groups with access to cash are likely to be able to consume at the same rate (Stites and Marshak, 2016).

Locational factors

Environmental factors and the geographic location are important in determining specific patterns of alcohol production, sale, and consumption. However, the data illustrate that both local brew and *waragi* are widely sold and consumed (and produced in the case of local brew) in both urban and rural locations. This is primarily because the drivers behind alcohol supply and demand, as discussed earlier, cut across nearly all communities.

Location does affect how alcohol is distributed. For instance, in Rupa and Nadunget Sub-counties in Moroto District, high levels of local demand have resulted in a ready supply of bookers, or distributors of local brew. These bookers include businessmen and women of various ages. Distribution mechanisms ranged from distribution of local brew to family and neighbors to more widespread

[55] FGD, male elders, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District, June 19, 2018.

[56] FGD, men, Lokoli Village, Loroi Parish, Loyoro Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 3, 2018; FGD, males, Toroi West, Loyoro Sub-County, Kaabong District, June 5, 2018; FGD, females, Lokourot, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District, May 30, 2018; FGD, males, Toroi West, Loyoro Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 5, 2018.

[57] Key informant interview (KII), Loyoro Health Centre official, June 5, 2018.

distribution by bookers who might combine alcohol from several producers, which increases the opportunity for dilution and adulteration (and hence also increases the risk to consumers). This was, however, not the case in the sampled sub-counties in the districts of Amudat, Kaabong, Kotido, and Nakapiripirit. There were no bookers in these locations, and female brewers sold their products directly to consumers.

Location also influences the drivers and patterns of consumption. In Rupa Sub-county of Moroto, for instance, a local health worker explained that three major factors drive alcohol production, sale, and consumption: "artisanal mining, seasons, and social cultural aspect."[58] While seasons and culture are uniform, the presence of the large, young, and mixed populations in the mining areas greatly increases demand in this sub-county. As mentioned earlier, living in a peri-urban or urban area also shaped the patterns of alcohol production, sale, and consumption. In and around Moroto, for instance, consumption of alcohol is widespread and socially acceptable. This is not the case in other locations, such as much of Amudat District. As detailed in Box 1, Christian religious influences appear to have tempered the sale and consumption of local brew and *waragi* in at least some areas of Amudat. Male and female respondents in focus groups in two locations in Loroo Sub-county in Amudat indicated that they no longer take local brew to the garden during the planting season and instead now drink tea during garden work.[59]

Gender and age as factors

Apart from general changes in alcohol production, sale, and consumption since disarmament, we also investigated how age and gender influence drinking behavior. It is critical to note at the outset that men, women, the young, and the old are directly or indirectly negatively influenced by the excessive consumption of crude or sachet *waragi*. In focus groups, all groups—men, women, older men, older women, youth—pointed fingers at all other groups as having problematic drinking behavior or drinking excessively and "causing conflicts." Elders, for instance, reportedly use their money from the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) social protection program to purchase alcohol.[60] Similarly, men's over-consumption of and expenditure on alcohol have previously been implicated in cases of domestic violence (Howe, 2013). Whereas this section highlights particular groups of people—namely women and youth—and how their liquor use affects the communities, it does not imply that the problem is restricted to these groups.

An important change in trends in drinking behavior from the past is the consumption of hard alcohol by women. According to respondents, including women, *etule* was generally consumed by men before going on raids in the pre-disarmament period. Women's consumption of hard liquor was generally low and, due to the unavailability of sachet *waragi*, was restricted to the less potent "homemade" type. With the arrival of the sachet, women's drinking is said to have increased exponentially. Whereas sweeping generalizations about demographic trends, especially women's drinking behavior, cannot be made from the data for this particular study, the reported increase in women's drinking has potentially significant influence on the food security and general wellbeing of households.[61] The erosion of livestock-based livelihoods and the increasing responsibility of women for providing subsistence needs for their families is in part responsible for this change. Women are much more heavily engaged in alternative livelihoods than in the past, and many migrate to town daily in search of casual labor opportunities or to sell natural resources. These activities increase the cash available to women and also provide access to the informal bars and shops selling the cheap sachets. At the same time, women remain the primary caretakers of children, and bear primary responsibility for both household nutrition and for agricultural labor. This means that any time *not* dedicated to these activities can have a negative impact on the household. In addition, women's excessive consumption of *waragi* can have a more direct impact on children's wellbeing. As explained to us by women in Kaabong:[62]

> This thing called Kick has also spoiled women here. They have forgotten the time they are supposed to be home. You find they go home at the wrong time because they drink in their group, become drunk, forget about the children and come back home late and go to sleep directly. Some even sleep away. Some even forget their garden work.

Charges of "child neglect" as a result of drinking were frequently levelled against women by those of the same and opposite gender. A cause for concern among community members were mothers who left their children at home to fend for themselves while they remained in drinking places in peri-urban and urban centers. Though to note, the lack of childcare options and the gendered

[58] KII, Rupa Health Centre III official, Moroto District, May 29, 2018.

[59] FGDs with women, two locations in Loroo Sub-county, Amudat District, June 13 and 14, 2018; FGDs with men, two locations in Loroo Sub-county, Amudat District, June 13 and 14, 2018.

[60] Note that this program specifically targets the elderly.

[61] Within SSA, alcohol consumption is high among Ugandan women in general. See Martinez et al., 2011.

[62] FGD, women, Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 4, 2018.

divisions around household labor means that children are also left alone while women engage in productive activities, such as farming or collecting firewood. Women are generally blamed for not providing food for their children before leaving home, though a group of men interviewed in Nadunget Sub-county in Moroto did point to their personal involvement in feeding brew to children. They said, "A woman goes early in the morning to look for casual work, what do we give to the child when the mother is not there?...We get a feeding bottle and put *ngagwe* in it and feed it to the child."[63] Among the more horrific effects of women's over-consumption of *waragi*, as reported to us by a few respondents and mentioned only in one location, was when drunk mothers accidentally rolled over their children tied to their backs. Allegedly, this has led to suffocation and, in rare instances, death of children.

Moreover, it was also reported to us that because women have control over household granaries, one of the ways they indulge their drinking habit is by exchanging grains directly for crude *waragi*. Some women reportedly exchange cups or jugs of grain directly for crude *waragi* (from jerrycans); others sell their grain for money to buy alcohol. An effect of this on the household is "poverty." Speaking of her mother's alcohol "problem," a young woman explained:[64]

> My mother is a farmer. She digs an acre of sorghum, and at the end of the cultivation they put all the sorghum in the granary. She goes with one jug, every day one jug. For drinking alcohol. Every day. Every day. You see. Until at the end of the cultivation season, everything is washed away from the granary.

Women are normally blamed for problems at the household level; problems around excessive alcohol consumption are no exception. Interestingly, however, men were not given a free pass by community members in the study population. Respondents blamed men for spending household income on alcohol, thereby negatively influencing the family's wellbeing. Several people reported instances of men selling animals—the backbone of the rural household's economy—to buy hard liquor in particular. A man would, as an example, go to the livestock market to sell an animal allegedly to help his wife pay for their sick child's medical treatment. He would, however, end up drinking most of the money rather than fulfilling his obligation as the child's caretaker.[65] We also heard cases of men taking grain from the granary and selling it to buy alcohol.[66] Thus, expenditure on alcohol and excessive use of alcohol by parents has a negative impact on the household. The fact that respondents levied the brunt of criticism against women (as opposed to men) is due to a number of factors, and this study was not designed to parse out specific causes or impacts. Women's visible and increased consumption of alcohol goes against cultural norms and past traditions of drinking, and hence is a cause for concern and a topic of discussion among communities. In addition, women's greater role in reproductive and domestic duties exposes them to condemnation when household issues arise.

While there are strong opinions about excessive drinking by women, there was unanimous opinion that youth—both male and female—were the primary and heaviest drinkers. Youth themselves agreed with this assessment. As outlined earlier, youth are particularly susceptible to drinking because of high rates of unemployment, lack of hope in future prospects, and other psychosocial and livelihood stressors. Youth reportedly drink to "push (through their) days,"[67] and to forget "thoughts" such as "failing to (plan) for the future."[68] Although communities acknowledge the problems of alcohol for all demographics, many respondents felt that the issues were most pronounced for youth, with impacts on their physical, mental, and economic wellbeing.

Information on children's consumption of various types of alcohol was uniform in some ways, varied in others. For instance, it was reported that children's consumption of residue (*adakai*) continues to be practiced in several parts of Karamoja (but not Amudat). It was generally agreed by respondents that whereas residue was a supplement to milk, rather than being the main food, the consumption pattern for residue had changed in the present. Children are also given local brew (especially *ekweete*) to drink, but there is great variation in this from one location to the next, as well as in community views on whether this practice is harmful to children or not. Children's consumption of local brew and residue needs further, closer, and more extensive examination[69] (although see Arlt, 2013). Aside from the variation in children's consumption of local brew and its products, respondents reported that when livestock were more plentiful and

[63] FGD, males, Komaret, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District, May 30, 2018.

[64] Woman, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018.

[65] Woman, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018.

[66] Woman, Kotido Town Council June 8, 2018; elder, Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 3, 2018

[67] FGD, youth, Namalu Sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, June 13, 2018.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Equally important here would be definitions of the category "children."

equitably spread, feeding residue to children was not nearly as widespread as it is today. According to an elder in Moroto District:[70]

> In our times our fathers never wanted us to drink. We grew to the age of grazing animals without taking local brew since our fathers believed that it would spoil a child's brain. The brew was only for the elderly. Children would take milk [and] *adakai* whose [alcohol content] was now weak. We would eat [residue] in case food was not there.

In other words, while residue was still fed to children, this was not common and was done when food was very scarce. This contrasts with children's diets of today, where residue is given to top up the belly and help children get to the next meal. It is added to porridge and other dishes to compensate for a lack of food. In addition, the composition and nutritional value of residue is also thought to have changed. Residue was previously prepared with milk, thus fortifying it. Today, the residue available to most children tends to be of poorer quality due to the large-scale production of brew compared to home production, as large-scale production effectively leeches more of the nutrients that would otherwise remain in the grains (see also Dancause et al., 2010). The decrease in milk consumption on its own or as an addition to residue is linked to loss of livestock and deterioration of livestock-based livelihoods (see also Stites and Mitchard, 2011). Instead of adding milk and honey to residue, some women reported adding Jolly Jus (a powdered sugary drink) and sugar.[71]

Whereas children's consumption of local brew and residue is viewed as having minimal negative influence—even by some health practitioners—children's consumption of hard liquor is uniformly denounced, and instances of young children consuming hard alcohol appear to be rare. However, whether or not children consume hard liquor at all is a matter of differing opinions: some respondents said they do, and others denied this observation. Likewise, some respondents noted that it is only children above the ages of 8–10 who drink *etule*; others mentioned younger age groups. For example, elders in Kotido said:[72]

> These young, young children, like five years, they are taking *etule*, even right now. With their mothers. Because [the mothers] are just drinking there. The children are seeing and suckling from them. At some point, the [mothers] say, "You also taste *etule*."

Not surprisingly, young children's consumption of hard alcohol is normally blamed on the parents. There are reports of children of *etule* sellers who end up drinking because of their parent's trade. One brewer in Moroto District, for example, stressed that the reason she does not keep sachets in her brewing shop was she did not want to expose her children to them.[73] One instance of a child being brought to the health center in an alcoholic coma was reported to us; the child's mother happened to be a *eliralira* seller.[74] Moreover, some parents are of the belief that *etule* has medicinal properties and reportedly give a drop or two to children who complain of stomach problems.[75] To stress, while few young children appear to consume hard alcohol, children above the age of 10 reportedly do drink hard liquor more regularly. When asked how young children acquire the funds to buy alcohol, respondents reported that some can earn money through casual work, and others play "casino" games (arcade games) in urban areas to earn some coins.[76]

LOCAL BREW AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO WOMEN'S ECONOMY

Brewing of traditional beers—*ekweete* or *ebutia*—or working in the small-scale brewing industry are some of the most important income generation strategies for women in Karamoja today (Stites et al., 2014). With the commercialization of the brewing industry starting in the early 2000s, a great number of women participate directly or indirectly in some aspect of brewing, whether as primary brewers, helpers, or bookers/sellers (Dancause et al., 2010). Engagement in brewing varies greatly; some women use the activity to generate income for a specific purpose, while others rely on it year round (Stites, 2018). Likewise, while some use their own grain stocks to brew, others (especially regular brewers) rely on purchase of cereals from within and outside the region. Women living close to urban centers acquire brew from larger-scale brewers based in towns and retail this brew in villages for a profit. Because of brew's year-round popularity and importance in adult diets today, brewers and retailers become important sources of credit—for brew as well as cash—in village networks, especially in the dry season (Iyer, 2016).

[70] KII elder, Tapac Sub-county, Moroto District, May 30, 2018.

[71] FGD, women, Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 4, 2018.

[72] FGD, elders, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018.

[73] Interview with brewer, Tapac Sub-county, Moroto District, May 31, 2018.

[74] Health center official, Kotido District, June 7, 2018.

[75] Woman, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018; elder, Moroto District, May 30, 2018.

[76] FGD, youth, Namalu Sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, June 13, 2018.

Thomas Cole

Women roasting maize/sorghum for local brew preparation (not sure of location)

Even though it can be considered a maladaptation or a negative coping strategy in response to the loss of livestock (Stites and Mitchard, 2011), brewing's importance to the household economy can hardly be overstated. In an area of economic vulnerability like Karamoja, brewing remains the most stable and widespread livelihood option for women (Iyer and Mosebo, 2017). For instance, in Kaabong and Abim Districts, brewing was the second and third most important source of income in 2017 (WFP, 2017a). This is especially relevant in the dry season when there are fewer wage labor options for women compared to men. So high is brewing's importance in women's economy that a 2013 assessment concluded: "If the practice is discouraged it could potentially lead to an increase in the consumption of cheap commercially available alternatives such as *kicks* (sic) and *waragi* and represent a loss of income for women" (Burns, Bekele, and Akabwai, 2013: 51).

The current study investigated both the importance of brewing to the household as well as changes to the industry since disarmament. Findings from this study on the importance of brewing echo many of the findings of previous such inquiries (e.g., Stites, 2018; see Figure 1 below). Profits from brewing play an important role for young women seeking an education for themselves, as well as for women who aspire to provide their children with an education. It is common for young school-going women to work with family members or other non-kin relations in the brewing business during time off from school, which gives them a chance to earn money for school fees and associated expenses. Profits are also used for reinvestment in the brewing business, investment in other businesses such as hiring labor for breaking limestone, hiring agricultural labor, purchasing small stock, and meeting household needs such as education and medical fees. Profits are also invested in Village savings and loans associations (VSLAs), which have been shown to have a positive impact on women's empowerment (Karlan et al., 2017), reportedly also in the Karamoja context (FAO, n.d.).

Frequently, women who run brewing businesses also sell cheaply priced Ugandan bottled beers such as Senator or Eagle, in addition to sachet *waragi*. Comparing the different types of alcohol sales in their shops, several brewers/sellers agreed that brewing fetches the most profit in comparison to commercial beer or *waragi*.[77] Commercially brewed beer, for instance, draws about 15,000 to 17,000 UGX (3.90 to 4.42 USD) in profits per batch, and, as noted earlier, sachet *waragi* generally sells for a profit of 5,000 to 15,000 UGX (1.30 to 3.90 USD) per carton. Comparatively, a producer of brew (as opposed to a booker) can potentially make 200,000 UGX (52 USD) in profits per month.[78] Daily profits on local brew, in general, range from a few thousand shillings to 15–20,000 UGX (3.90 to 5.20 USD) per day (see also Stites, 2018). Profit calculations, however, take into account number of days required for brewing (usually between three and four) and

[77] Interviews with brewers, various locations.

[78] Brewers, Kotido Town Council.

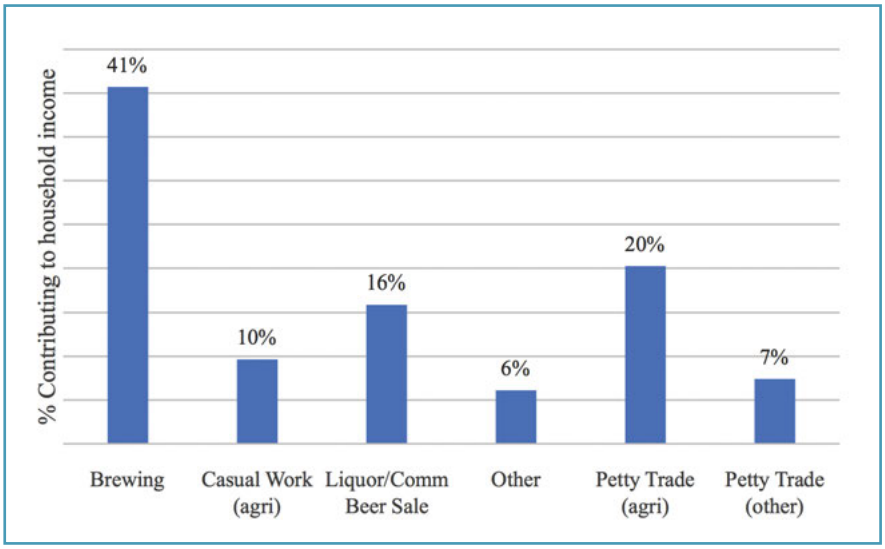
the type of brew made. *Ekweete* costs more than *kutukuto* because of the addition of cassava in the former.[79] Large-scale brewers from urban centers report even greater profits.

Among strategies used by brewers to maximize earnings and profits is the careful selection of days for brewing. In Kotido, for example, brewers tend to concentrate the activities involved in making the brew in the days preceding the livestock market on Wednesdays in Kanawat. Profits are likely to be greatest during the livestock markets due to the high concentration of people coming from surrounding areas and the increased amount of cash on hand after people make sales. Compared to market days when customers are high in number, brewers run the risk of not offloading their entire stock on other days. This could result in wastage of prepared brew, which spoils quickly.

Similar to taking advantage of market days, brewers in mining areas such as Kosiroi and Lolung in Moroto District have a large customer base. This is due to the influx of people into these areas seeking mining as an alternative income-generating activity. Production costs for brew are high in some of these locations, such as Lolung, which is still a small trading center, and hence all materials must be brought from Moroto Town. (This is not the case for Kosiroi, which is a firmly established peri-urban center). However, each brewer has a different strategy for both maximizing profits and integrating other livelihoods into the brewing business (e.g., while waiting for the brew to ferment). Exact information is not available on the strategies used by individual brewers, the monetary contribution of brewing to the household income, or the factors that affect the business.

Despite the popularity and importance of brewing as a livelihood, there are a number of challenges to succeeding in the business. First, there are several production costs in the preparation of brew such as acquisition of water, hiring of helpers, and the rental of large drums for fermentation. Secondly, because brewing provides a stable year-round option for women, there is high competition among brewers and bookers, especially in peri-urban areas. Brewers in rural areas face the additional problem of finding working boreholes around their area of production. In Naput, for instance, the breakdown of boreholes places additional costs on brewers as they may have to rent a motorbike to transport water from the next closest borehole.[80] An additional issue in Naput, which is on the Karamoja-Turkana borderlands, is fragile security conditions that can have a substantial impact on business. The area around Naput has been historically used by Turkana for dry season grazing; these herders are an important customer base. Hence, a flare-up of intercommunity violence between the Jie and Turkana in

Figure 1. Results of proportional piling with women (N = 17) on livelihood and contribution to household income.



Notes:
Other: (3 observations) 1 grass cutting, 2 slaughtering goats for sale
Petty trade (agri): tomatoes, beans, greens, etc.
Petty trade (other): shop items, charcoal, firewood, sale

[79] Brewers, Moroto District.

[80] Interview with brewer, Naput Trading Centre, Moroto District, May 29, 2018.

late 2017 and early 2018 cost brewers in Naput because of the sudden and mass departure of Turkana herders from the area.[81] Brewing of *ngagwe* is, allegedly, not practiced by Turkana women (in this area), and it was only the "only the Matheniko who knew how to" brew.[82] Given the sizable Turkana population that affords business to Karamoja brewers on the borderlands, the resurgence of insecurity brought substantial losses to women in these locations.

Contribution of waragi *sales to household economy*

Waragi sales contribute to the household economy as well, but, compared to brewing, retailing sachet *waragi* appears less profitable for the individual seller. As noted earlier, whereas brewing can generate profits up to 40,000 UGX (10.40 USD) in a day (Stites, 2018), a box of sachet *waragi* in general generates 5,000 UGX (1.30 USD) in profits and may take multiple days to sell. Retailers in deeper villages and on the borderlands may be able to charge more than 500 UGX (.13 USD) per sachet, making their profits marginally higher, but they also face greater transportation costs. Despite the volume of sales in a district or sub-county, the retailer might not make significant amounts, compared to, for example, wholesale stores in town or, of course, the company producing the *waragi*. In Namalu Sub-county, for instance, the research team was told that two trucks arrive each week carrying 700 boxes of *waragi* in each truck. Although this means high earnings for the company—700 boxes twice a week yield approximately 77,000,000 UGX (20,020 USD) in total earnings annually—the profit margins for retailers remain paltry.

Transporting *waragi* is a source of income for young men in towns who haul boxes to villages, to trading centers on the borderlands, and across the border to Kenya. Transporters can be intermediaries or primary suppliers in the cross-border *waragi* trade. For instance, one woman from Moroto District claimed to make regular trips to Lodwar to sell *waragi* (as an intermediary seller) brought to her trading center by transporters.[83] Young men transport the boxes on *boda bodas* from towns where wholesalers run businesses. Besides *waragi* boxes, they also bring water for brewing, crates of beer, ground maize/sorghum for brew, and other items. Typically, they charge 5,000 UGX (1.30 USD) for beer crates and 2,000 UGX (.52 USD) for each box of *waragi* as transport cost (not cost of goods) from Moroto Town to villages/trading centers.[84]

Although this business of transporting alcohol to the hinterlands can be lucrative, there are costs involved for the transporters as well. For men who do not own their motorbikes, a payment of 10,000 UGX (2.60 USD) is levied by the bike owners.[85] Fuel costs are another added expense. However, transporting alcohol may result in 10,000 UGX (2.60 USD) per day in earnings, which is relatively better than daily wage rates in other sectors such as agriculture and casual labor (Iyer and Mosebo, 2017). These profits may be even higher; one transporter claimed to transport 20 boxes in a day.[86] Moreover, for those transporting *waragi* to Turkana County centers such as Lokiriama, Lorugum, and Lodwar,[87] prices may vary according to distance. Further research is needed to examine the contribution of alcohol transportation to the household economy.

EFFECTS ON COMMUNITIES OF ALCOHOL PRODUCTION, SALE, AND CONSUMPTION

Effects on health and wellbeing

Respondents in the study were acutely aware of the health consequences of excessive liquor use. When asked about how alcohol consumption affected communities, health consequences were often the first to be recounted. According to respondents, those who drink excessive amounts of *waragi* look like "AIDS victims."[88] People reportedly lose weight, look frail, and have reddened mouths and lips. Not only does *etule* affect the body, it is also said to affect the mind. Fighting among family members at night and inability to remember the fight the next morning is one manifestation. "Madness" is another. As an elder in Kotido explained:

> When you look at these people moving naked, these people of madness (*ngicen*), they are becoming so many. Because that thing is confusing the brain. Some people drink until his blood becomes only *etule*. The head goes from normal to something abnormal—then it becomes madness.[89]

[81] Interview with brewer, Naput Trading Centre, Moroto District, May 29, 2018.

[82] FGD, Turkana male herders, Naput Trading Centre, Moroto District, May 29, 2018.

[83] Interview with seller/brewer, Naput Trading Centre, Moroto District, May 29, 2018.

[84] Interview with seller/brewer, Naput Trading Centre, Moroto District, May 29, 2018.

[85] Interview with transporter, Naput Trading Centre, Moroto District, May 29, 2018.

[86] Interview with transporter, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District, May 31, 2018.

[87] *Waragi* is transported at night to Turkana because of restrictions in Kenya. See for example: **https://ugandaradionetwork.com/story/turkana-leaders-want-cross-border-sale-of-alcohol-stopped**.

[88] FGD, male elders, Kaabong District, June 3, 2018; FGD, male elders, Nakapiripirit District, June 14, 2018.

[89] Elder, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018.

Erratic behavior was associated with excessive drinking, as explained by men in Loyoro in Kaabong: "Alcohol is just bad…you see those days, someone drank alcohol, ran mad and started climbing over the mountain."[90] A booker in Moroto shared a similar account: a "bad thing is when someone drinks alcohol; he/she becomes confused [and] mad and can just get up and run somewhere far away because of confusion."[91]

One of the more interesting physical effects of drinking *etule*, according to community members and health and government officials alike was the inability to reproduce. It is widely assumed that sachet *waragi* is leading to growing impotence among men in Karamoja. Moreover, due to the high level of inebriation caused by sachet *waragi*, couples are reportedly not able to fulfil their sexual responsibilities toward each other, which is, allegedly, concerning for Karamoja's future demographic outlook.[92]

Health center staff interviewed for the study enumerated various medical and health problems related to *waragi* consumption. A health worker in Rengen Sub-county in Kotido explained the ubiquitous nature of alcohol-related complaints:

> Looking at the cases to the health facility every morning, at least you don't miss a case of alcohol and domestic violence and when you interview the client, the cause of the medical and social problem is alcohol.[93]

A health worker in Loyoro Sub-county in Kaabong discussed the ways in which excessive alcohol consumption is contributing to other conditions and ailments:

> As a result of increased alcohol consumption, patients come presenting with oedema, diarrhea, mentally disturbed, sore lips, arthritis, swollen stomach and aging at a fast rate compared to their actual years.[94]

These issues, she added, contribute to memory problems and a lack of appetite, which "prevents them from engaging in productive work."[95] A sub-county leader, also in Loyoro, raised additional issues brought by heavy alcohol consumption, saying, "Vulnerability has increased, paralysis, madness, complaints of barrenness, quarrelling, fighting and children are suffering as a result."[96]

A senior nursing officer in Matany Hospital, the largest hospital in the region, cited alcohol as a factor in the increase of cases in diseases such as cardiovascular problems, cirrhosis of the liver, and pancreatitis, as well as a factor in external trauma and accidents, murder, and suicide.[97] A health officer in Nadunget Sub-county in Nakapiripirit noted that vision loss had been reported in some instances,[98] and a health official in Rupa in Moroto cited the problem of depression among youth drinkers.[99]

Medical officials also reported specific and negative health impacts of excessive alcohol consumption on children. A health official in Lorengedwat Sub-county in Nakapiripirit said:

> Sometimes, children are brought to us when they are in comatose as a result of alcohol consumption… however, we normally do not document whether they have been given local brew or *waragi*…we just have to fight to save their lives.[100]

A nurse at Matany Hospital discussed the problems of adults being intoxicated while caring for children: "We have seen children dying as a result of alcohol consumption….mothers sleeping on their babies because they are drunk."[101] The health official in Loyoro mentioned that miscarriage due to excessive drinking was a maternal health problem in his area,[102] and the nurse at Matany reported a connection between heavy drinking and premature births.[103]

[90] FGD, males, Toroi West, Loyoro Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 5, 2018.

[91] Individual interview, booker, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District, June 1, 2018.

[92] Multiple FGDs and individual interviews.

[93] KII Rengen Health Centre III official, June 7, 2018.

[94] KII, Loyoro Health Centre III official, June 5, 2018.

[95] Ibid.

[96] KII, LCIII Chairperson Loyoro Sub-county, June 4, 2018.

[97] KII senior nursing officer, Matany Hospital, June 1, 2018.

[98] KII, Nadunget Health Centre III official, May 31, 2018.

[99] KII, Rupa Health Centre III official, Moroto District, May 29, 2018; it is unclear how this depression was diagnosed.

[100] KII, Lorengedwat Health Centre III official, June 15, 2018.

[101] KII, senior nursing officer, Matany Hospital, Napak District, June 1, 2018.

[102] KII, Loyoro Health Centre III Official, June 5, 2018.

[103] KII, senior nursing officer, Matany Hospital, Napak District, June 1, 2018.

One of the factors in the health complications arising from alcohol consumption in Karamoja and elsewhere in Uganda is the lack of knowledge, information, or regulation about the contents in any batch of liquor. The World Health Organization (2011) estimates that unregulated alcohol accounts for nearly 30% of all alcohol consumed globally, at least two-thirds of all alcohol on the Indian subcontinent, and over 90% of all alcohol in East Africa. Unfortunately, the study team could not get official statistics of *waragi* sale and consumption from the districts of study. However, it is presumed that the *waragi* that is being consumed in the community is derived from industrial liquids containing ethanol or other types of alcohol such as methanol or isopropanol, which are associated with negative health outcomes and can result in poisoning and even death.[104]

In line with the medical personnel cited above, most of the study participants agreed that excessive consumption of *waragi* was contributing to mortality and morbidity among men and women in the sampled districts. Respondents also reported that the number of medical cases indirectly related to consumption of *waragi* was increasing. In contrast to *waragi*, study participants listed both personal and community benefits (economic, health, and social) from the sale and consumption of local brew. Respondents reported that people typically consumed 2–4 jugs of local brew on a daily basis. Local brew is served warm and is often taken as a food at meal times.

Community members indicated that the convenient packaging, low price points, and widespread availability of *waragi* sachets contribute to heavy drinking. A key informant mentioned that many people drank both *waragi* and local brew on a daily basis,[105] whether they had money to buy the alcohol for themselves or sought drinks from friends or on credit. Using a daily calendar exercise, male and female respondents indicated that many people drank local brew and *waragi* in sachets in the morning, *ekweete* in the afternoon, and beer and *waragi* in sachets in the evening. Others explained that local brew was particularly popular in the morning as a warm substitute for porridge and then again at mid-day because it stays in the stomach "like food." In the evening, they drink beer and *etule* to relax and "kill" the hunger and lingering thoughts.[106] Some of this consumption is to compensate for the norm of having one meal a day. Overall, this drinking can last for more than six hours in a day, with expected impacts on functionality.

Effects on interpersonal relations

Needless to say, one of the gravest consequences of liquor consumption on the communities is destabilized interpersonal relationships. Fighting between spouses, between children and parents, and between individuals in general is said to be linked to *waragi*. Respondents mentioned the increase in cases of divorce and separation, and interpersonal conflicts due to excessive consumption of liquor. Extramarital relations, for instance, are on the rise, assumed to be leading to a rise in both family breakages as well as an increase in HIV infection.[107]

Relations between generations have also suffered. Elders mention the loss of authority as a result of youth's consumption of liquor. Conversely, elders' drinking also affects youth, and thus it is difficult to point the finger of blame at one particular group. Elders in Nakapiripirit District explained:[108]

> The youth have lost respect for their parents. They are getting spoilt. You can't advise these young boys these days. They will want to fight you. They have even gone to the extent of abusing and insulting their parents. No respect at all. Sometime even we the parents are the ones who are [in] the wrong. We go and drink and start disturbing these young ones. At the end of the day we end up being beaten.

Although alcohol is consumed by and adversely affects many demographic groups, young women and girls appear to suffer most from its consequences on interpersonal relations. Gender-based violence is said to be on the rise. A curious turn of events affecting girls is the negotiation of marriage and bridewealth under the influence of alcohol. Families of grooms are said to ply the bride's father with *waragi* in order to facilitate quick wedding arrangements—sometimes with underaged girls.[109] This appears to have contributed to the reported increase in number of young girls running away from home. There has also been a rise in reported cases of domestic violence, particularly towards women.[110]

Crude and sachet *waragi* are generally held responsible for a great proportion of alcohol-related interpersonal conflicts

[104] Data is forthcoming in Moroto Catholic Diocese's study on chemical composition of sachet *waragi*.

[105] KII, Rupa Health Centre III official, Moroto District, May 29, 2018.

[106] FGD, women producers, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District, June 19, 2018.

[107] This statement cannot be corroborated with quantitative data and represents the views of respondents.

[108] FGD, male elders, Nakapiripirit District, June 14, 2018.

[109] FGDs in Tapac Sub-county, May 30–31, 2018.

[110] KII, health center official, Rupa Sub-county, Moroto District, May 29, 2018.

due to their high alcohol content. Locally made brew, however, was not considered entirely blameless. Fights and disagreements over payment by consumers to bookers or brewers were mentioned by women. People who drank on credit would sometimes refuse to pay and would fight with the booker/brewer.[111] However, generally respondents do not believe the levels of interpersonal conflicts or other problems would occur if individuals were only consuming *ngagwe*. It is when *waragi* is mixed with local brew that conflicts occur.[112]

Effects on household economy

Alcohol has both positive and negative effects on the household economy. As outlined earlier, local brew production plays an important role in women's contribution to the household economy. Some of the money earned in the brewing business is invested by women in productive assets such as children's education or rotating VSLAs. Transporters who carry liquor or raw materials for the production of brew and other small-scale sellers of liquor also reap economic benefits from the current trends in alcohol consumption in Karamoja. The profits from these trades, however, appear to be less when compared to profits from large-scale brewing.

On the other hand, expenditure on alcohol by household members, needless to say, has a detrimental effect. Besides exchanging animals or household grains for money for purchase of alcohol or exchanging grains directly for alcohol, a certain, presumably significant, amount of money is reportedly being diverted to alcohol purchases. According to respondents, money is being used to purchase alcohol while "[not remembering] the children at home."[113]

Amounts spent on alcohol vary widely and depend on the individual drinker or the combination of drinking profiles in the household. One way the study team tried to arrive at estimates of amount spent on alcohol was to ask about the quantity of alcohol consumed per day by a "typical" drinker. This question investigated liquor, especially *waragi* sachets, as opposed to local brew. Estimations of money spent on local brew can be misleading as it is a drink shared by people, typically in jugs, and it is not necessary that all individuals contribute to the amount purchased.[114] Sachets, on the other hand, are easy to count, and the amount spent on them can be easier to calculate.

Estimates on the number of sachets a "typical" drinker drinks generally produced a number of 12 sachets per day. We believe, however, that respondents understood the question as "heavy" drinker rather than typical. In Moroto Diocese's study, the average number of sachets consumed per day, as estimated by study authors, was four.[115] Using these estimates, a heavy drinker spends an average of 6,000 UGX (1.56 USD)/day drinking 12 sachets. By contrast, even the average daily consumption of four sachets as per Moroto Diocese's estimation means an expenditure of approximately 2,000 UGX (.52 USD)/day on liquor. In an area where daily and monthly wage rates are typically low[116] (Iyer and Mosebo, 2017), even the 2,000 UGX (.52 USD) figure has serious implications for the household economy. Coupled with the reported loss of productivity from excessive consumption and exchange of animals/grains for alcohol, the diversion of household income towards alcohol purchase has serious implications for household food security and wellbeing.

Box 1. Alcohol in Amudat District

Field research in Amudat District revealed a few key differences from other districts in Karamoja on questions of alcohol production, sale, and consumption.[117] Although drinking behavior and patterns have changed and there is increased consumption of liquor compared to the past in Amudat as in the rest of Karamoja, overall drinking in Amudat is much lower than in the other districts sampled. This box points out a few reasons why this might be the case.

Amudat District is home to the Pokot people who are of Kalenjin origin, a Southern Nilotic linguistic group (non-mutually intelligible with the rest of Karamoja's mainly Eastern Nilotic population). Pokot are

continued on next page

[111] FGD, female, Lokourot, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District, May 30, 2018.

[112] FGD, male elders, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District; FGD, women elders, Tapac Sub-county, Moroto District, May 31, 2018.

[113] FGD, male, Loyoro Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 5, 2018.

[114] This does not include the more formalized "drinking group" structure among young men in urban areas. See Mosebo, 2008 for further details.

[115] Study author, personal communication with Pier Luigi Rossanigo,.

[116] Daily wage rates in Karamoja are typically low: for example, casual labor (e.g., fetching water, sorting cereals) can earn 2,000–3,000 UGX (.52–.78 USD) per day, brewing 1,500–4,000 UGX (.39–1.04 USD) per day, and agricultural labor 2,000–5,500 UGX (.52 to 1.43 USD) a day.

[117] Preliminary findings due to short research period and limited geographic scope of fieldwork.

continued from previous page

agro-pastoralist and share many of the sociocultural institutions with Karamoja's other communities. Research was conducted in Amudat Sub-county and Loro Sub-county, as well as Amudat Town Council. Amudat District shares an open border with Kenya's West Pokot County, and most residents of Amudat hold dual citizenship in Kenya. Movement across this border is fluid for trade and for access to pastoral resources such as pasture and water.

The main traditional drinks in the Pokot community are *kumiket*, a beer made from honey, and *busaa*,[118] which is a maize-based drink similar to *ngagwe*. *Kumiket* holds great importance in Pokot culture, and is central to a number of important traditional ceremonies such as male initiation and female circumcision (Maundu et al., 2013). Traditionally-brewed drinks, particularly *kumiket*, were generally reserved for elders, and there was not "a single Pokot meeting where beer is not prepared for the elders," even in the 1950s (Peristiany, 1951: 203). *Lapan*, the word used for *busaa* consumed during ceremonies, was prepared in large quantities during ceremonies, such as female circumcision, and was consumed by men and women, elders and middle-aged.[119] Although literature on alcohol use specifically about Pokot communities living in Amudat District is sparse, studies in East Pokot (Baringo County, Kenya) note the increase in alcohol use between the 1980s and the early 2000s (Bollig et al., 2014). Beer-drinking places (*kapkumin*) are said to have replaced neighborhood councils of initiated men (*kokwö*), and negotiations that previously occurred at councils were moved to drinking places.

In Amudat, besides *kumiket* and *busaa*, illicit spirits, called *mandule* or *chang'aa* (a name of Kenyan origin), were also consumed heavily until a few years ago. Hard spirits are said to have become popular in Amudat in the early 2000s[120] and have replaced *busaa*. Sachet *waragi* (called "Knock Out" for the name of the popular brand) also abounds in trading centers and in Amudat Town. When these spirits arrived, people allegedly considered them "more superior than local (brews) and they took it with pride, which later spoiled them."[121] Although there was consumption of alcohol prior to disarmament, respondents reported that young men generally drank less because of the responsibility of ensuring security in the community. When the insecurity effectively ended, the "traditional" drinking behavior is said to have changed, and alcohol consumption in the community increased. While in the past, male elders would be the only ones drinking during ceremonies, and only rarely did older women get a chance to taste the honey beer,[122] the younger generation is said to have upset this traditional way by recklessly and heavily consuming alcohol. A part of this change is attributed to the influence of other communities coming to Amudat and bringing along their drinking behaviors.[123] A host of issues reportedly followed on the heels of this change in drinking behavior, including interpersonal conflicts, loss of authority of elders, divorces, child neglect, and rise in diseases.[124]

However, consumption of alcohol in Amudat is markedly different in some ways from the rest of Karamoja. For one, traditional beer or *busaa* is not nearly as important for women's economy as it is in other parts of Karamoja. Although brewing *busaa* for income was practiced in Amudat in the recent past, reportedly it was never to the same extent as elsewhere in Karamoja.[125] Moreover, feeding children with the residue was extremely rare to absent and was generally considered a thing of the past[126] (see also WFP,

continued on next page

[118] *Busaa* is not a Pokot-only drink and is brewed and consumed by several communities in Kenya.

[119] KII, Amudat Sub-county, June 17, 2018.

[120] "At the time of Gutti (Andrew, Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF))"; FGD, men, Amudat Sub-county, June 17, 2018.

[121] FGD, men, Amudat Sub-county, June 17, 2018.

[122] Elder, Amudat Sub-county, June 17, 2018.

[123] Key informants, Amudat Sub-county.

[124] Various FGDs, Amudat Sub-county.

[125] According to one key informant, "making *busaa* and selling was the business of poor people;" June 17, 2018.

[126] Key informant, Amudat Town Council, June 17, 2018.

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2017a). *Busaa*, similar to *ngagwe*, was also previously used to "compensate" people for helping out in agricultural work. These days, however, women have switched to making *githeri* (a Kenyan dish made of maize and beans) and milk tea for those helping out with communal garden work.[127] The places in Amudat Town Center that continue to provide local beers are mostly owned by women from other parts of Karamoja or neighboring districts such as Soroti and Gulu.

In terms of spirits, heavy alcohol consumption is readily visible in Amudat Town Center, in an area called Lokirimo. Consumers come from all parts of Karamoja, as well as other regions of Uganda. In trading centers, such as Alakas in Amudat Sub-county, the ground is littered with sachets, especially around drinking places. However, *chang'aa*, or crude, illicit liquor is rarely available in Amudat due to district restrictions on its import. Impounding of trucks and pouring out of the crude alcohol is said to have reduced its appearance in Amudat. In addition, the consumption of hard alcohol in villages and rural areas is drastically lower than in other districts of Karamoja.

Perhaps the biggest difference in Amudat District is the repeated mention of the importance of "the churches" and Christianity in changing drinking behavior among Pokot communities.[128] According to every respondent in Amudat, the church and its anti-alcohol stance has helped rid Amudat of excessive alcohol consumption and the issues that accompany it. Churches from across the border in Kenya and from within Uganda have had such a visible influence on drinking behavior that, according to one young man:[129]

> When I grew up I found my father had stopped drinking. For me, I have never taken alcohol. My father used to tell me that alcohol is harmful, so I have never drunk.

Churches have established a number of ministries deep in the villages in the district and has trained locals as pastors. Pastors conduct home visits to families who are still drinking in an effort to convert them to Christianity, as well as to change their alcohol consumption behavior. This grassroots work also includes organization of *Harambee* (the Swahili word denoting "all pull together") or community self-help events. Members of the church collect household items and school fees for children for those families who have "converted from alcohol drinking."[130] The churches also, supposedly, provide a couple of goats to these "converted Christians."

The reduction in consumption of alcohol (of all types) is also explained by some respondents as concurrent to the decline in traditional practices in Amudat. This is specifically related to female circumcision, which has a long history among Pokot people. As the movement by the churches as well as NGOs to reduce or eradicate female circumcision grows in reach and influence, the need for preparing traditional beers for the events also disappears. So strong is the influence of churches that, according to one government official "alcohol will become history in this community."[131]

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[127] FGD, women, Amudat Sub-county, June 19, 2018.

[128] We heard a similar anecdote in Tapac Sub-county, where women who have joined or come into the Church's fold have changed their behavior due to the "prohibition" on *etule* by the Church. FGD, women, Tapac Sub-county, May 31, 2018.

[129] Youth, Amudat Sub-county, June 19, 2018.

[130] FGD, men, Amudat Sub-county, June 17, 2018.

[131] Government official, Amudat District, June 18, 2018.

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Besides the external influence of the churches, there is also an internal, community initiative to address the problem of excessive alcohol consumption. For those who are visibly affected by alcohol consumption, community members come together to counsel the family or individuals. Whereas in some villages hard liquor consumption may be condemned or looked down upon, in others it is tolerated as long as the drinker does not create issues for others. Those consuming hard alcohol in trading centers or town are said to come back to the villages quietly so as to not make it publicly known that they have been drinking. Were it to be revealed that a person was drinking—for instance if they create a commotion in the community—collective punishment would be meted out to them. This community policing is, apparently, another reason for the reduction in consumption and alcohol-related interpersonal conflicts in the community.

INITIATIVES ADDRESSING ALCOHOL SALE AND CONSUMPTION

Father Jurey Jame de la Cerna

Community members leading the removal and destruction of sachet **waragi** *from shops, Tapac Sub County*

In response to the observable and reported effects of excessive hard liquor consumption, several official and unofficial initiatives have been undertaken around Karamoja. In particular, crude alcohol (*eliralira* and other types) has been the target of sub-county bylaws and district ordinances. Almost all districts in Karamoja have (or are in the process of formulating) some form of ban on the import and sale of crude alcohol. At the checkpoints in Nakapiripirit and Amudat Districts, for instance, there are prominent signs announcing this prohibition. In other districts, such as Moroto, Kaabong, and Kotido,[132] crude alcohol has been impounded and destroyed (Mafabi, 2016). Despite these bans, crude alcohol "pours" into Karamoja somewhat regularly and is smuggled in at night on *boda bodas* or trucks.[133] To avoid being caught, smugglers have devised some ingenious methods such as packing alcohol in used 500 ml plastic bottles and putting it in cut-open jerrycans, which are then filled to the brim with produce such as tomatoes.[134] Night-time deliveries to small trading centers are another common way of bringing in crude alcohol. Lastly, drop-offs in villages far away from trading centers are another strategy that is used by transporters.[135]

Sachet *waragi*, however, has no such regulations aimed at banning or discouraging it. Although there are preliminary conversations at the national level about banning sachet alcohol by March 2019 (Kamukama, 2018), doubts over implementation of this measure exist at multiple levels, including among respondents in Karamoja.[136] The only known initiative to ban or at least significantly impede the sale of sachet *waragi* is one at the local level in Tapac Sub-county (Moroto District) where community members, the Regional Police Commander, members of the UPDF, and the Tapac Parish Catholic Church have joined hands. The parish priest, along with influential community elders, held several meetings and dialogues to discuss the impact of both crude alcohol and sachet *waragi*. The group made a list of shop owners in the area who sell alcohol and started going from door to door to clear out the hard liquor from much of the sub-county. This has made a striking difference in specific areas of Tapac Sub-county. Although the socioeconomic impacts of alcohol consumption remain visible in the Kosiroi area of the sub-county, smaller trading centers in Tapac are visibly different. Women elders in Tapac explained the changes as follows:[137]

[132] FGDs and interviews, all districts.

[133] Within Karamoja, we only heard of two individuals who produce crude liquor, neither of whom is a native Karamojong. We could not interview them because one declined, and the other was elusive.

[134] FGD, women, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018.

[135] Key informant, Moroto District, May 30, 2018.

[136] Key informants, Moroto and Kaabong Districts.

[137] FGD, women elders, Tapac Sub-county, May 31, 2018.

> [If you had come one month ago] you would have found the community in chaos. Before we could wake up and just enter into [the houses where they sell *etule*]. Since Afro [a brand of sachet *waragi*] was removed, we are able to stay in peace. We are really happy (for the persons—elders, priest, etc.) who came to help us remove Afro. [The place] is now clean. People are now living happily. There is no noise. Women have known where the gardens are. The boys now go to the *kraal* to take care of the animals. If the girl is told to do housework, she is willing to maybe sweep the compound since no one used to sweep before.

The Regional Police Commander, along with the community members, is said to have played a central role in impounding and discarding crude liquor from the Tapac area. However, other police officers, especially at the junior level, have been implicated in alcohol smuggling. In fact, some respondents report that the main obstacle in the implementation of crude alcohol-related bylaws and ordinances is the police at checkpoints who allow alcohol to be transported in exchange for bribes.[138] A second obstacle is the lack of "political will."[139] The lack of proper attention to the issues of hard alcohol is often attributed to the disinterest of politicians in people's wellbeing, politicians who are instead interested in their personal income. This was rumored to be particularly true of sachet *waragi*, which is taxed by the government. Each sachet worth 500 UGX (.13 USD) delivers 150 UGX (.039 USD) in taxes to national coffers.[140] Even by conservative standards, this means that the two lorries each carrying 700 boxes of *waragi* to Namalu Sub-county generates 25,200,000 UGX (6,552 USD) in taxes per week.[141] Formal reports on the alcohol industry's contribution to the Ugandan economy only serve to bolster this point; in 2015–16, the industry contributed 235 billion UGX (61,100,000 USD) in excise duty (Kamukama, 2018). As an elder in Kotido succinctly put it: "Wherever there was money, *etule* followed…Ah, there's money in this thing."[142]

Finally, a specific issue identified as a gap in Kaabong District was the wording of the alcohol ordinance.[143] A District Council ordinance passed in year 2010 stipulated a ban on illicit alcohol—or *eliralira*—and a particular brand of sachet *waragi* with the brand name Sunny Gin. The brand of sachet *waragi* was named in the ordinance because of its availability and visibility in the Kaabong market at the time of the ordinance's development by the District Council. Whereas the ordinance was largely successful in eradicating *eliralira* from the district (except what is now illegally and secretly smuggled in), it had little effect on sachets. Because of the wording and naming of a particular brand of sachet *waragi*, needless to say, by the time of the ordinance went into effect, Sunny Gin was replaced in the market by a number of other brands. Thus, it became difficult to enforce the ordinance because manufacturers had simply rebranded the *waragi*. The ordinance has since reportedly been rewritten to include all sachet *waragi* brands under an umbrella name and has been sent to the Attorney General. No further information on the status or enforcement of the ordinance was available at the time of writing this report.

Overall, many of the local government initiatives are noble in their cause but lack proper development and enforcement. Not all local government initiatives, however, have failed in achieving their intent. In Tapac Sub-county, in addition to the community's initiative as highlighted above, the Sub-county Office has also reportedly become involved in removing licit and illicit liquor from the area. Illicit alcohol was, at one time, being transported by lorries that came to collect limestone from Kosiroi. Many respondents reported that in the past, these lorries would also exchange jerrycans of crude alcohol for limestone (rather than cash), thus exacerbating the effects of hard liquor consumption in Kosiroi. With the bylaw ban on crude alcohol and enforcement with the help of community members, the Tapac Parish Church, and the Regional Police Commander, import of crude liquor is now confined to smugglers bringing it in on motorbikes at night. Likewise, in addition to the initiative to remove sachet *waragi* in Tapac (as discussed above), the Sub-county Office also tried to convince shop owners to sell the remainder of their sachet stock by May 10, 2017.[144] The Sub-county Office also held many meetings to both raise awareness in the community and to inform people of the threat of prosecution for anyone found selling crude liquor. However, Tapac community members, similar to respondents in other locations, believe that producers of

[138] Multiple FGDs and interviews, including with government officials.

[139] Government official, Kaabong District, June 11, 2018.

[140] Key informant, NGO, Moroto District, June 25, 2018.

[141] Unverified. Estimated as follows: 2 trucks x 700 boxes x 120 sachets x 150 UGX (.039 USD).

[142] Elder, Kotido Town Council, June 8, 2018.

[143] This information comes from an incumbent government official in the district.

[144] Government official, Tapac Sub-county, Moroto District, June 1, 2018.

crude alcohol have found a way to continue selling their illicit product by packaging them in sachets.[145]

There have been other initiatives to raise awareness among community members on the dangers of liquor. Demonstrations on what excessive consumption does to the liver—by submerging a piece of an animal's liver into water and another into sachet *waragi* or crude alcohol—have been used by the Tapac Parish priest as a way to "sensitize" community members.[146] In addition, demonstrations on the potency of liquor by showing the expansion of a jerrycan when it has liquor in it versus water have also been used. In various districts, the Church also includes messages on the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption within sermons. Local government-led community meetings, for example in connection to large-scale development projects such as NUSAF 3, also include some type of awareness messaging on alcohol. Finally, in Kaabong, VHTs are using an additional strategy of informing people of the dangers of the sachet to the environment.[147] They inform people of the dangers of the plastic to the soil and the future effect on crops. Whether this and other strategies are having the intended effect remains to be seen.

Community-led initiatives using customary mechanisms are also used to address issues of liquor, although they remain limited. Tapac Sub-county's fight against liquor, as detailed previously, is perhaps the most active effort by community members, especially elders. In other areas, such as in Kaabong and Kotido, *ameto* ("collective punishment"), generally by beating, is practiced to punish those who drink too much and create trouble in the community (see also Box 1 on Amudat). A notable case of collective punishment is an "anti-violence group" created by a group of women in Kapedo Sub-county in Kaabong. The group punishes women who get drunk and fight loudly with their husbands. Punishment is handled in two ways: the offender either gets 30 strokes or has to pay 30,000 UGX (7.80 USD) in compensation. They also do this with male offenders. As a result of this initiative, the group has noticed a reduction in household brawls caused by liquor. This is not to say that brawls do not occur or that people have decreased their consumption of alcohol. Only now, people don't "make too much noise in the village because of fear of *ameto*." The group, largely unsupported by any external entity, seeks the help of the LC1 and the police only when the matter is severe.[148]

Lastly, in terms of programs or projects addressing alcohol consumption in particular, the Moroto Catholic Diocese features prominently.[149] The Diocesan project on "alcoholism" (sic) began with an in-depth research study investigating alcohol consumption and "abuse" and the transition from local drinks to *waragi* and crude alcohol (Moroto Diocese, 2017). The project was designed to include three components. The "sensitization" component is carried out through the Diocese's existing Justice and Peace (J&P) groups that have previously worked on raising awareness on issues such as charcoal burning and environmental degradation. In the same vein, J&P groups raise awareness among community members about the consequences of alcohol use. This was carried out in Amudat, Tapac, and Naoi Parishes (the latter two in Moroto District). The J&P groups also work in three schools in Moroto and Napak Districts, organizing debates and discussions on alcohol and the implication of alcohol use within the school and in the family. The "advocacy" component involves meetings with local authorities, not only to inform them about the problems of alcohol use in Karamoja, but also about how to address them through regulation. The project promotes creating bylaws and other regulations such as restriction on alcohol sale and consumption at the district level in Moroto, Napak, and Nakapiripirit. Finally, the "therapy" component is based on the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) model and is being carried out in Tapac, Matany, and Moroto. AA groups are composed of people who have "realized they have a problem" and attend meetings at health centers or hospitals. These meetings include external facilitators such as doctors or nurses,[150] who organize and facilitate the sessions. As they are trained medical staff, they are also able to provide emergency help should the need arise. Participation in the group offers no compensation and is based solely on the individual's own initiative to address his/her issue with alcohol consumption. The popularization of the existence of these groups occurs in conjunction with the Church's other activities.

[145] This cannot be proven currently due to lack of data on chemical composition of various sachet brands.

[146] Key informants, Tapac Sub-county, Moroto District, May 30–31, 2018.

[147] FGD, VHTs, Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 3, 2018.

[148] FGD, women, Kapedo Sub-county, Kaabong District, June 4, 2018.

[149] Projects and programs from other development organizations can include a component on alcohol. We choose to highlight the Diocese's program for its sole focus on addressing "alcoholism" (sic). We use "sic" after the word "alcoholism" because of lack of information on how "alcoholism" was defined for project purposes.

[150] In so doing, the program breaks away from the conventional AA method, since the group is not completely independent.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Views on the merits or evils of alcohol in Karamoja vary widely depending on whom one talks to. Local officials are quick to blame excessive alcohol consumption for a wide range of problems, including issues that have existed for years prior to the influx of cheap sachet *waragi*. From their perspective, alcohol seems to be a root cause of poverty, lack of childcare for working women, inability to afford school expenses, child labor, and domestic violence. Some of these officials, such as the sub-county chief in Rengen, Kotido District, felt that *waragi* imports should be blocked off. He said that we "need to use force…in the same way the gun was removed, should be the same way *waragi* is removed."[151]

Health officials by and large use clinical observations when discussing the problems caused by alcohol, though they are likely to be seeing mostly the most extreme cases. Drunkenness and alcohol-related illnesses and injuries are difficult for already weak health systems to take on, as are increasing levels of morbidity, mortality, and, most likely, susceptibility to malnutrition and various other communicable diseases. Some of the health officials interviewed for this study recommended a community-based approach to addressing the issue. For instance, the senior nursing officer at Matany Hospital said, "Community members should initiate rejection of alcohol in this community…and elders should be involved in the rejection process."[152] This view fits with some of the local initiatives that have already started to reduce alcohol abuse.

Local people themselves were also divided in their opinions. While many highlighted the negative impacts of excessive consumption of hard alcohol, many were quick to point fingers at other demographic groups—such as women, the elderly, the youth, or people who live in urban areas—as the ones with a problem. However, an area of consensus was around the differentiation between local brew and hard alcohol, whether illicit or sachet *waragi*. Local brew and its by-products (residue) are considered important food substitutes in times of scarcity, a warming beverage, an easy product with which to travel, and a valuable nutritional input. In addition, local brew serves an important social and ritual function. Brew is offered to visitors to a home and is shared upon completion of a communal work project. Young men share brew and discuss issues and challenges; women work together to make and sell brew. It is central to ceremonies such as initiations and weddings and to rituals around birth, naming ceremonies, and harvests.

The sale of both local brew and hard alcohol plays an important economic function, although the bulk of the profits from the sale of sachet *waragi* goes to manufacturers and suppliers based outside the region. As discussed in this report, the tax revenues paid to the government from the sale of sachet *waragi* are substantial. It is unclear how or where these revenues are used, but if reinvested into Karamoja and other impoverished communities they could fund numerous social welfare programs. At the household level, brewing makes an important economic contribution and is largely controlled by women. Profits from brewing go to school fees, investments, emergency expenses, and household food needs. Local brew can be drunk to excess, but this is relatively rare; much more common is brew being consumed at the same time as *waragi*, leading to drunkenness.

The substitution of local brew for food for all demographic groups, including children, is a symptom and possibly a cause of broader problems in Karamoja. It is a symptom of inadequate food security in the region and, in particular, the loss of milk as a central component of the household diet. Brew and residue are used the way milk once was in the diet: as a complement to porridge, as a warm and filling drink, as something easy to access when on the move, and something to feed young children to alleviate hunger pangs. While local brew itself contains relatively low levels of alcohol and the residue by-product even less, the regular consumption of these products by children may encourage heavier drinking, including of hard alcohol, at an earlier age and in greater amounts.

Importantly, community members interviewed for this study were acutely aware and equally alarmed (as government and health officials were) about the effects of liquor use on the lives and livelihoods of Karamoja's residents. The study team was positively received in all communities in part because of the urgency of the issue and the fact that no one else had approached these communities to ask them their views on the drivers and effects of alcohol consumption. Many, if not most, respondents said that they wished to see sachet *waragi* removed from their communities. Local initiatives, such as the one in Tapac Sub-county highlighted earlier, must serve as a "good practice" for interested stakeholders. It is only through the participation and direct action of community members, and leadership of community elders, that a culturally-appropriate and sensitive action plan can be formulated.

[151] KII, sub-county chief, Rengen Sub-county, Kotido District, June 7, 2018.

[152] KII, senior nursing officer, Matany Hospital, Napak District, June 1, 2018.

Lastly, learning events with other districts that have taken legal steps to limit the sale of sachet *waragi* should be undertaken. The Moroto Catholic Diocese and Tapac Parish are in the process of organizing these events, in addition to seeking legal guidance from Gulu District authorities. Gulu District's alcohol control ordinance came into effect in 2016. Among its stipulations are that alcohol cannot be sold in quantities less than 250 ml packets, sale points cannot be located less than half a kilometer from educational institutions, and all sellers must be licensed. There are also restrictions on sale to minors and hours of sale (Gulu District Council, 2015; Labeja, 2016). Such measures are also being taken in other districts in northern Uganda (Ojok, 2018). Cross-learning events on how minimum pricing and restrictions on accessibility and affordability of sachet *waragi* have influenced the lives of communities in Gulu District would be valuable for stakeholders in Karamoja.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Support promising local initiatives, learning across districts, and scaling up

In Karamoja, there is already high awareness of the problems caused by excessive alcohol consumption at the community level, and among health workers and government officials. Some local initiatives to reduce these problems have already started, largely without external assistance. There is an opportunity to bring the actors—especially community members—involved in these initiatives together, collectively review successes and failures, and identify good practices for scaling up in other areas. As part of this process, it is important that:

- Professional stakeholders avoid taking a moralistic approach and involve community members of all demographics in crafting a community-based approach to dealing with the issue of *waragi*;
- The dialogue and resulting actions make a clear distinction between the problems caused by *waragi* sachets and other hard liquor, and the practice of local brewing and its economic importance to women in Karamoja.

Specific actions that warrant broad stakeholder analysis in terms of their relevance and likely impact include:

- Reviewing the work done to regulate excessive drinking in Tapac Sub-county in Moroto District, and how it might be adapted and used in other areas;
- Learning from changes in local legislation, and how best to write and structure new laws to prevent alcohol abuse. Assess the extent to which new bylaws or regulations can be enforced;
- At the level of health services and health extension:
  - o Examine options for culturally-appropriate non-judgemental programs to sensitize communities to negative health and wellbeing impacts of excessive alcohol consumption;
  - o Consider if health workers at multiple levels (including VHTs) should be trained (or re-trained) to recognize signs of alcohol abuse and seek to mitigate harmful behaviors;
  - o Assess if local counselling or other support services (e.g., staffed by dedicated VHTs or others) can provide help when people want or need it, whether as a family member or an individual with an abuse problem. Such services would need to be advertised;
  - o Assess if tax revenues from alcohol can be reinvested in health and education activities related to alcohol abuse.

As part of this process, stakeholders also need to consider the options for targeting interventions both geographically and socially. For example:

- Should efforts be targeted at areas with particularly high rates of drinking, such as mining areas and congested peri-urban settlements? If so, how?
- How can male and female youth be targeted, as they are heaviest drinkers? Should programs involving livelihood support, financial literary, technical and skills-based training, etc. be used, and if so, how?

Support further evidence gathering and learning

- Assist ongoing and new initiatives to reduce alcohol-related problems and to monitor and assess the impact of these efforts, including through participatory and community-based methods.
- Work with community and professional stakeholders to identify evidence gaps and key information that is still needed to guide new approaches and programs. Fill these evidence gaps with relevant studies and reviews as needed. Provisional topics, not yet verified with stakeholders include:
  - o The role of brew, residue, and drinking in child nutrition;

- If and when people want to cut back or stop drinking in the region, how do they do it? Where do they turn? Is this successful?

- Investigate how women's earnings from brewing could be better harnessed. By understanding how and why women in particular benefit from this industry, stakeholders might be able to come up with programs that seek to replicate the aspects of brewing that are so beneficial to them.

Use evidence to advocate for policy improvements

- Advocate for tax revenues from the sale of commercial alcohol to be invested in health, education, and welfare programs in Karamoja.

- If (and only if) there is evidence that banning sachet sales would reduce excessive *waragi* consumption, then advocate with strategic actors to get the ban passed.

GLOSSARY OF ALCOHOL TERMS

Ngagwe - can be used for all alcohol, but most frequently used for traditional brews made from maize and sorghum

Ekweete - traditional brew made of maize and sorghum

Kutokuto - traditional brew made of maize and sorghum

Etule (pl. *ngitule*) - usually used for all hard spirits (i.e. excluding traditional brews)

Waragi - Ugandan term used for gin

Totpak - term for sachet waragi in Karamoja

Busaa - (of Kenyan origin) brew made from maize

Kumun - Pökoot word for (all) alcohol

Mandule - Pökoot word for hard spirits

Lotodok, lejura, eliralira, nyeroro, mogomogo, kasesekasese, eguur - crude alcohol or 'moonshine'

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