



USAID Karamoja Resilience Support Unit: Turning evidence into action



© Kevin Di Salvo

Improving practice: enhancing pastoralism policy

The challenges

Although extensive research has been conducted into pastoralism, the sector – from its actors and systems to economic and environmental impacts – remains largely misunderstood. This is exacerbated by the fact that those living and working in pastoral communities often have trouble effectively expressing the processes they engage in and the benefits of pastoralism.

Negative perspectives – that pastoralism is a ‘backward’, environmentally destructive and uneconomic sector – are not only held by the general population, but those in influential positions, including government officials and policymakers. As such, existing policies do not serve to assist the development of agropastoralism and agropastoralists in creating a sustainable working environment.

What did KRSU's programme entail?

To overturn negative perceptions and encourage key actors to shape policies in ways that will provide agropastoralists with better and more relevant support, education is key. As such, the Karamoja Resilience Support

Key messages

- Pastoralism plays a key role in many Karamojong livelihoods. However, policies are not designed to aid its sustainability and success, as the sector is often incorrectly viewed as ‘backwards’, uneconomic and environmentally harmful.
- The Karamoja Resilience Support Unit (KRSU) designed pastoralism practice and policy (PPP) training workshops, information from which could be disseminated among stakeholders and policymakers to enhance their understanding of the sector and encourage support.
- The Karamoja Development Forum used learnings from the PPP course to improve their own awareness and share knowledge with high-level, local actors in a number of areas.
- Lecturers at Gulu University have incorporated teachings from PPP training into their own courses for students, as well as leading workshops with government and ministry officials and utilising information to create a textbook on pastoralism.
- Mercy Corps is working with KRSU to recruit trainers to lead workshops and educate leaders and decision makers on what pastoralism entails and its economic contribution.

On a continual basis we need to come up with evidence to change policy.

- Simon Peter Longoli, executive director at KDF

Unit (KRSU), together with the International Institute for Environment and Development, developed and conducted a five-day pastoralism and pastoral policy (PPP) training course.

A validation workshop was held in April 2017 with 29 stakeholders – including representatives from national and regional government organisations, universities, United Nations agencies, and civil society. Ultimately, all participants agreed that a PPP course would allow for more informed decision making within the field of pastoralism and in designing support interventions.

Several organisations – including Gulu and Makerere Universities, the Karamoja Development Forum (KDF) and the Center for Basic Research – decided to adapt the PPP course and aid in the training of trainers (ToT), who would further disseminate crucial information around pastoralism to leading stakeholders in government and related organisations. KRSU supported five ToT workshops between 2018 and 2019, each using lessons from the last to identify gaps in the material, to develop an accredited common pastoralism course that can be used to educate actors at all levels.

Use of programme by implementing partners: the case of KDF

The Karamoja Development Forum (KDF) – a community-based organisation – aims to drive positive change around pastoral rights, land rights, mining rights, and governance in the Karamoja region. Their activities are designed to educate and advocate for those within local communities, and engage these groups in relation to matters influencing their development.

KDF recognises the importance of pastoralism within the Karamoja region: it plays a crucial role in all areas of life, ranging from sustenance and livelihoods, to religious ceremonies and relationships, to cultural denotation. Yet, high-level actors generally have low awareness around the importance of mobility and access to land for pastoralism to thrive – meaning existing policies and processes typically don't offer the support these communities require.

To enhance knowledge among a number of actors, six key KDF members have been utilising KRSU's PPP course material. "The last training that we had targeted focal point persons from different districts in Karamoja who are

involved in livestock marketing, conflict management, and natural resources," explains Simon Peter Longoli, executive director at KDF.

Financial restraints mean the KDF team has been unable to conduct as much training as it would like and, when training has occurred, not all modules of the PPP course have been taught. So, to overcome such financial constraints and to enhance sustainability, KDF – through technical support from KRSU – are working on a plan to deliver tailor-made courses on a cost-recovery basis. The plan includes a training needs assessment, developing tailor-made course contents and training costs, advertising the courses, and the rolling-out of courses.

Despite facing challenges, Longoli praises the content of the PPP course, stating that its insights have been of benefit not only to external parties, but to KDF members themselves. A key aspect has been in enhancing KDF's broader understanding of pastoralism – not only as a form of livelihood, but in recognising what details need to be disseminated to political actors for them to make more informed decisions.

He adds that the PPP course has helped KDF recognise the importance of data in influencing policy, and the role the organisation can play in collecting this at community level to encourage change. "On a continual basis we need to come up with evidence to change policy," Longoli states.

Use of programme by implementing partners: the case of Gulu University

KRSU's PPP course has helped shape and develop material taught by the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment at Gulu University (a national university). Seven faculty members attended the PPP training course, and have since used the information in several key ways. Firstly, "we have improved our curriculum and our training," explains David Waiswa, lecturer at Gulu University. The insights from the PPP course were found to be so useful that Waiswa and his colleagues began using elements in their teachings before they had even completed all the modules themselves.

On behalf of the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Mercy Corps, Waiswa and his colleagues also provided training to high-level government personnel, ministry members, other universities and fellow NGOs, in November 2021. At the start of 2022, they conducted similar training with similar actors at district level.

Secondly, Waiswa and his co-workers have been able to use their new knowledge to create textbooks and learning materials around pastoralism to help widen awareness. Around 200 print copies of the textbook were printed and distributed in 2018, and it can also be accessed online.

The PPP course, says Waiswa, provided the team at Gulu University with data and knowledge around pastoralism



© Kevin Di Salvo

they did not previously possess. Plus, it provided valuable insights as to how they can continue to develop their knowledge base going forward through interviews and research.

Waiswa and his colleagues recognise the positive impact that their revised teaching has had on their students. While the COVID-19 pandemic means they have, so far, been unable to measure the full impacts of their revised programme on the wider community, plans are underway to better gauge achievements as restrictions ease.

Use of programme by implementing partners: the case of Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps, an international NGO which launched in Uganda in 2006, works with a number of different partners in implementing their activities, but for their pastoralism work, they collaborated with KRSU alone. "KRSU was involved in the revision of some policies and write-ups on pastoralism," explains Emmanuel Kalema, senior veterinarian at Mercy Corps' Resilience Challenge Fund (RCF), and this encouraged the Mercy Corps team "to start training leaders and decision makers at various levels

on what pastoralism actually is and its contribution to the economy of the country and the region."

KRSU supported Mercy Corps in the roll out of the training by providing technical support in a number of areas:

- Assisted in developing a concept note outlining steps to be undertaken in the roll out of the training;
- Sharing a training needs assessment template;
- Creating a list of ToTs for Mercy Corps to select from, with an emphasis on the need to combine unique training skills and expertise of different ToTs (e.g., from KDF and Gulu University);
- Providing training materials;
- Offering technical guidance during training sessions;
- Sharing advice on the sustainability of the PPP course.

Rather than conducting the training themselves, Mercy Corps recruits consultants that have been trained through KRSU's ToT programme. So far, two training sessions have occurred; the first of which was held in October 2021 and involved national-level participants from the Ministry of Agriculture and organisations such as the Microfinance Support Centre, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, Dynamic Agropastoralist Development Organisation, Uganda Veterinary Association, and Uganda Veterinary Board. Following this, the second training session focused on actors at a regional level: "We targeted local government officials, chief administrative officers, financial officers, production departments (which involves people from the agricultural sector), and community involvement officers," reveals Kalema.

We have used information from the PPP course to improve our own curriculum and training at Gulu University.

- David Waiswa, lecturer at Gulu University

Following the dissemination of PPP, we've seen changes in the way of thinking.

– Dr Maureen Kamusiime, Resilience Challenge Fund programme manager

"Pastoralism has been perceived negatively before – people tend to think it is backward, uneconomical and environmentally destructive, and it's no longer able to provide pastoralists with a sustainable and decent livelihood," Kalema states. "So we wanted people to be informed and appreciate the importance of pastoralism."

Enhancing the knowledge of high-level actors is essential, states Dr Maureen Kamusiime, the programme manager of RCF. "Resources [from the government] are allocated considering the productivity and income arising from livelihood opportunities within a certain region," she explains. "Karamoja gets the short end of the stick as officials know the populations are pastoral, so they assume that productivity within the systems is low." As such, the PPP training acts as an advocacy tool to evidence that the pastoralism system is worth investment.

The Mercy Corps team has already garnered some impressive results. "We've seen changes in the way of thinking," shares Kamusiime. "Some people were actually astounded at the productivity of the region." Kalema concurs that participants have been enlightened about pastoralism – and recalls one piece of feedback from the commissioner for the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Industries. "Through this training, she was able to learn what pastoralism contributes to the economy of the region and the country in general," he says.

This educational approach is also having a positive effect on policy change. Although it's still in the pipeline, "there is a policy on pastoralism and rangelands that has been held back by the Ministry," explains Kalema. "But, after the first training, Ministry representatives said that they are now able to defend that policy in front of cabinet members. So, through this, they've been able to push it further."



© K Carlson

And it doesn't end there. One element of Uganda's National Development Plan 3 is focussed on agricultural industrialisation – and, following PPP training, "policy makers asked us to provide evidence on how pastoralism can contribute to this and can support it," Kamusiime reveals.

With a total of US\$5 million in funding from USAID, Mercy Corps' training project is due to end in September 2023 (following its launch in 2019), but Kalema hopes they will be able to obtain additional funding to continue past this date, and provide training at national and regional levels on a quarterly basis. Looking ahead, the team hopes to train other high-level officials, such as those from the Ministry of Finance.

Through training, one Ministry official was able to learn what pastoralism contributes to the economy of the region and the country in general.

– Emmanuel Kalema, senior veterinarian at RCF

USAID Karamoja Resilience Support Unit (KRSU)

The KRSU is implemented by the Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University and is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The views expressed in this Briefing Paper do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID.

For more information about the KRSU:

- Please visit www.karamojaresilience.org
- Contact Mesfin Ayele, KRSU Chief of Party: Mesfin.Molla@tufts.edu

Published: May 2022