



CCF & CPAR - UNDP EARLY RECOVERY LIVELIHOODS



Introduction

As part of its commitment to the humanitarian and recovery efforts in Northern Uganda, UNDP has supported early recovery livelihoods activities in the Northern Uganda districts of Dokolo, Lira, and Pader. While Christian Children's Fund (CCF) implemented the ER Livelihoods project in Lira and Dokolo, in the Lango sub region, Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR) implemented a similar project in Pader district found in the Acholi sub region. With a total funding of \$ 600,000, the projects were implemented from September 2007 and came to a close in August 2008.

Objectives

The aims of the projects were to:

- Augment ongoing emergency assistance operations by building on humanitarian programmes
- Promote spontaneous recovery initiatives by affected communities and change the risk/conflict dynamics through support to local actors to lead early recovery planning and programming,
- Establish the foundations of longer-term recovery, by facilitating the integration of recovery in the development process

Achievements

The projects covered 8 sub-counties of Omot, Patongo and Lukole in Pader; Abako, Barr and Aloji in Lira and Batta and Dokolo in Dokolo districts. A total of 450 community groups covering 12,000 households totaling approximately 60,000 beneficiaries were reached through community capacity enhancement activities including trainings, provision of income generating activities, community rehabilitation efforts and psychosocial interventions. These interventions have contributed to the smooth return and reintegration of the former IDPs in Northern Uganda.

1. Capacity Building

Local capacity to take charge of recovery processes in northern Uganda is vital for a sustained development processes. The projects have had, as their focus effective participation of the returning communities as well the involvement of local actors including local governments, CSOs and NGOs in the entire project cycle from problem identification, needs prioritization, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of community interventions.

Over 2,500 TOTs, drawn from the communities were trained in several disciplines including agronomic practices, beekeeping, business management, tree planting as well as agricultural marketing. Of these, 1,100 beneficiaries were trained in agronomic practices; 1,000 people were trained in agricultural marketing while 460 people were trained in animal traction. Out of those trained, approximately 30% was women. As a result of the trainings the beneficiary communities have adopted improved agronomic practices such as row planting of sunflower, beans and rice. Similarly there has been an improved appreciation of the need for environmental conservation. In addition, exposure to alternative livelihoods options has enhanced business skills among the beneficiary communities.

2. Support to Agricultural Activities

Recognizing the importance of agriculture in the economy of the people in northern Uganda, the ER Livelihoods activities focused at supporting the revitalization of agricultural activities. This was aimed at addressing food insecurity in face of the reduction of food aid by World Food Programme, following the steady return of the IDPs.

A total of 1,200 ox-ploughs; 1,200 axes; 9,600 hoes; 1,800 pangas and 1,800 sickles were distributed to help clear and cultivate land for crop cultivation. In addition, a total of 62.9 tones of seeds comprising 37.5 tones of NERICA rice; 20 tones of K132 variety of beans and 5.4 tones of sunflower seeds were procured and distributed to 12,000 households in Pader, Lira and Dokolo. As a result of

this supply, over 10,000 acres of land was cultivated to increase production and productivity among these beneficiary households. Despite the long drought, it is envisaged that, these inputs including high-yielding and drought-resistant crop varieties are will improve food and income security in the target communities.

3. Environmental Management

The return process threatens to put a heavy burden on the environment in Northern Uganda. UNDP through the ER Livelihoods Projects has supported community initiatives aimed at addressing environmental degradation. 240 individuals have been trained in tree nursery management in Pader, Lira and Dokolo. Over 300 fruit tree seedlings were distributed to vulnerable households to address their dietary as well as income needs in the medium to long term. These fruit tree seedlings include fast-maturing grafted mangoes, oranges and jackfruit.

In addition, 50,000 timber species including 20,000 pine and eucalyptus tree seedlings have been distributed to returning communities. This immediate supply of tree seedlings has planted 70 acres of land that has been deforested during internal displacement. The tree planting drive will also provide an impetus for increased awareness on environmental issues in Northern Uganda.

4. Alternative Livelihoods for Former IDPs

To address the diverse livelihood needs of the returnee population, alternative livelihoods options have been introduced and supported. These interventions have targeted the more vulnerable members of the community including women, the elderly and the youth. Over 900 households including 900 youth, 210 elderly men and women were supported with various income generating activities including bee keeping, tree nursery businesses, Small-to-Medium Enterprises SMEs and other non-traditional agricultural activities.

In Dokolo and Lira, 150 youth were granted UGX 25,500,000 to conduct various small scale retail businesses including produce selling, fish mongering, poultry selling and pan cake baking among others while over 690 youth are involved in apiary. In Pader, 60 EVIs including 14 men and 46 women benefited from 60 local goats. This support will not only increase the household expenditure of the beneficiary households but provide a foundation for self sustenance of these vulnerable households.

5. Community Rehabilitation

The two decade war in northern Uganda has led to a total deterioration and or destruction of community infrastructure such as community access roads, schools, water points and churches. 15 community civil works groups were formed and equipped with basics tools and equipment to enable community

based rehabilitation of infrastructure. The tools supplied include: Sickles, hand slushers, wheel barrows, pick axe, hand hoes and pangas. Over 50 community assets have been rehabilitated as a result of this support.

6. Psychosocial Support

Provision of psychosocial support to the returning community is a prerequisite for meaningful participation of communities in recovery and development efforts. To address the psychosocial needs of the returning population, UNDP has supported youth recreational activities such as music, dance and drama, football and netball

Challenges

The following challenges are likely to undermine ER efforts in Northern Uganda:

1. Overwhelming Demand

The negative effect of internal displacement on Livelihoods has been a phenomenon. Community coping mechanisms and the asset base of households have been destroyed. This calls for an integrated and well thought through process of return, resettlement and reintegration with a corresponding budgetary support. The donor community has focused their attention to humanitarian response at the expense of recovery activities. This trend needs to be revisited if a smooth transition to recovery has to be realized.

2. Dependency attitude

Having lived in internal displacement for two decades the dependency attitude in former IDPs still lingers in most communities in Northern Uganda. This attitude might curtail self mobilization for a self sufficiency and sustainability. A deliberate effort at phasing out relief and taking a more development oriented approach to assistance will provide confidence in communities to take up and own their development processes.

3. Land

A Favorable land policy that provides access to and ownership over land by all sectors of the population in Northern Uganda will provide an impetus for increased agricultural production and productivity in the region. Following internal displacement that dislodged most people from their production land, most of the vulnerable people are unable to return to their original homeland. The patriarchal arrangement has denied widows, orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) access to land. This is likely going to exacerbate their vulnerability as their production capabilities will be curtailed. Conflict over land is likely to develop into another full scale conflict that will undermine the peace, reconciliation and recovery/development process.

4. Marketing

As communities come out of the humanitarian phase into recovery and development, there is need to address the marketing of agricultural inputs and outputs. The current supply of agricultural inputs is anchored on development assistance and can not be sustained post external funding. It is important that recovery and development actors start supporting private sector agricultural service providers for a sustained supply of the much needed agricultural inputs. On the output side, efforts should be more geared towards strengthening agricultural marketing through value addition interventions, market information, and provision of linkages to complementary service providers including microfinance services.

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