

ABSTRACTS

Pastoralism, sustainability and the complexity of humanitarian crises in Africa: comparative analyses and case studies

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www.karamoja.eu; www.humanitarianstudies2009.org

- Myths and misconceptions on pastoralism: the root causes of humanitarian crisis - David Knaute (ACTED)

This paper will present different myths and misconceptions prevailing against pastoralist populations in the world, with a focus on East African groups, which are particularly vulnerable to humanitarian disasters. It will demonstrate how the 'exterior world' has permanently discriminated pastoralists, historically, socio-economically and culturally, thus limiting their coping capacities. Behavioural patterns will be described to understand the causes of this discrimination, from individual psychology to State-level policy strategies against the pastoralists. Pastoralists' perspectives on that matter will also be illustrated. Besides, the nature of the pastoral way of life will be explained, mainly its origins, rationale and social structures. The panellist will open the debate pertaining to the future of pastoralist societies, their adaptation to an often hostile environment and possible solutions for a sustainable evolution toward peaceful cohabitation between the pastoralists and the non-pastoralists. The conclusion will be that this process of marginalization is very prevalent, and is based on a lack of understanding, thus requires education, dialogue and peace-building efforts. Otherwise, it becomes

unlikely to counter the vicious cycles resulting from the combination of poverty and marginalization.

■ The Karamoja Syndrome: Transdisciplinary systems research informing policy and advocacy - Sacha Kagan (IKKK, Leuphana University Lüneburg)

In the framework of the 'Karamoja campaign', an exploratory research process was carried out with students from the universities of Lüneburg, Bordeaux, Groningen and Prague. The goal was to establish a systemic, transdisciplinary diagnosis of the contemporary development situation among pastoralist communities of Karamoja (North Eastern Uganda).

To reach a transdisciplinary level of systems research, within the limited time and means of our project, we followed the "syndrome approach" (Syndromansatz) that was developed in 1993 by the German Advisory Council on Global Change (Wissenschaftlicher Beirat der Bundesregierung Globale Umweltveränderungen, WBGU), and then further developed by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK). The approach uncovers local and global structures of unsustainable developments, identifying functional patterns (or "clinical pictures") of interaction between humans and nature.

Regarding Karamoja, the approach allowed us to bring together the insights from ecological, demographic, economic, political, cultural, technological, gender and other research perspectives. We took inspiration from the existing "syndrome approach" and also tailored its focus to the research questions of humanitarian and development studies, in consultation with the NGO ACTED. Among the many studied 'symptoms' are: climate change and desertification, loss of herding mobility, cattle raiding, different development processes (e.g. in terms of education or access to water) and various coping mechanisms among communities...

The paper will present the results of the Syndrome Approach as carried out with the students, and unveil the specific characteristics of a "Karamoja Syndrome". The

potential relevance of this syndrome for other semi-arid pastoral areas, as well as its policy and advocacy implications, will also be discussed.

■ Development approaches, reactive aid responses and indigenous social arrangements among East African pastoralists - Wario Adano (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle-Saale)

The pastoralists in East Africa have been subject to considerable, and sudden, changes. In retrospect, frequent droughts and other adversaries in the past decades have caused substantial livestock losses resulting in general decline in per person herd sizes. Despite that, many pastoral households can ill afford insurance premiums to protect themselves against future exposure to risks. This paper compares and contrasts past development approaches and intervention efforts in pastoral economies in East Africa. It then contrasts these practices with local (indigenous) institutional arrangements used by the pastoral households to cope with and mitigate effects of adverse factors that livestock herders often face. The circumstances under which development practices and reactive aid responses may result in a relatively successful outcome than is usually achieved are also examined. Coupling insights from development and intervention efforts with key aspects of indigenous social systems could have practical relevance for development and mitigation responses for the risk-prone pastoral communities. Moving beyond current development and reactive assistance approaches in practice might be helpful for sustainable production and livelihoods of the pastoral peoples in the future.

■ Karamoja: Humanitarian Outlook and Challenges towards Sustainable Improvement - Jessica Bowers (Head of Office of UNOCHA Kotido, Uganda)

The Karamoja sub-region of northeastern Uganda possesses some of the worst social indicators in Uganda. As a sub region there is little hope of achieving the MDGs on time. There is a complex array of factors that contribute to the vulnerability of the agro-pastoral communities: decades of political

marginalization, cultural and economic focus on cattle, higher than national average population growth, climate change, land use issues, with continuing forced disarmament process by government military forces. Though Karamoja is not a “normal” humanitarian operating environment, careful responses are being conducted to address the immediate needs of the vulnerable populations just as other programs are dually being implemented to address the longer-term development needs. Indeed, what humanitarian problems persist require developmental solutions.

This presentation will review challenges of a combined humanitarian and developmental approach wherein the complex ingredients of Karamoja, if left unattended over the next decade, may result in a much more severe and dangerous situation for the agro-pastoralist communities of Karamoja and their neighbours.

■ Burying the Gun: Policy Alternatives for Armed Violence Reduction in Karamoja, Uganda - Christina Yeung (Gordon Foundation fellow, Canada)

In response to the growing awareness of the destabilizing and detrimental effects of armed violence on development, international and national actors have implemented a variety of initiatives including weapons collection programs in the post-Cold War period.

In North-eastern Uganda, the national government, at times with the support of the international community, has unsuccessfully attempted disarmament of pastoralist areas multiple times in recent years. Failed attempts to disarm the pastoralists of their small arms have exacerbated state-society relations, and have worsened the security of both individuals and communities. Contrary to conventional wisdom, there has also been no demonstrable positive effect on development in the region.

This paper will seek to explore policy alternatives to the forceful disarmament of

communities in Karamoja, Uganda, based on the communities' needs and priorities. The aim is to provide policy-relevant findings to Ugandan and international development policy planners, and the pastoralist communities, to encourage local empowerment and ownership of strategies for reducing armed violence within the Karamojong communities.

■ A Struggle for Rites: Masculinity, Power and Livelihoods in Karamoja, Uganda - Elizabeth Stites (TUFTS University, Feinstein International Center)

Using the Karamoja region of northeastern Uganda as a case study, this paper will examine the role of armed violence in a pastoral society and the relation between this violence and livelihood sustainability in the region. In particular, the paper will look at the livelihood strategies of male youth and how these strategies have evolved over the past thirty years in the context of insecurity and marginalization. Based on research conducted from 2005-2008, the author uses a livelihoods framework and a gender analysis to examine decision-making, power relations, and the shifts in vulnerability for all population groups as livelihoods have become increasingly violent. The livelihood and security impacts of a government-led disarmament program will also be considered. The paper will discuss the challenges of humanitarian assessments and programming in such an environment.

■ Pastoralism, power and choice: the vulnerability of the camel herding Rizaygat of Darfur region, Sudan - Helen Young (TUFTS University, Feinstein International Center)

Livelihoods in Darfur are intimately linked to the conflict, none more so than the livelihoods of the camel herding nomads known as the Northern Rizaygat. Their notoriety as part of the Janjaweed militia and the governments counter-insurgency has obscured from view how their lives and livelihoods have been affected by five years of conflict. Limited knowledge about this group is one

reason why they have been relatively excluded from various forms of international action on Darfur – including humanitarian programming and international peace processes.

Apart from their politicized image, other reasons for their exclusion are because they are widely perceived by the international community as less vulnerable, and also because they are hard-to-reach, living in scattered rural communities and alienated by their treatment internationally.

Darfuri nomads have much in common with pastoralists in the wider East Africa region and globally, particularly in terms of their long-term social, economic and political marginalization and the challenges they face – particularly their secondary land rights, and increasing competition and conflict over natural resources. Underlying these processes is a governance gap, that applies to pastoralism in general, and more specifically to local, national and international governance systems.

This paper uses a livelihoods lens to illustrate the particular processes that have contributed to the vulnerability of the Northern Rizaygat, and brought them to a point where they were willing to actively engage in the counter-insurgency. These processes are deeply rooted in history, and embedded in complex interactions between people, the environment and institutional and policy processes. Lessons learned from this very specific case from Darfur are critical for a lasting peace, and have much wider regional and international policy implications.