



VISIT REPORT

WHEN EUROPEAN YOUTH TALKS ABOUT:

'SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,

UNSUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

IN AFRICA'

THE CASE OF THE KARAMOJA REGION OF UGANDA

JANUARY 23rd, 2009

BRUSSELS



university of
 groningen



SECTION 1:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION ON THE KARAMOJA CAMPAIGN (WWW.KARAMOJA.EU)

The Karamoja campaign brings together several actors from the non-governmental sector, and five European universities, to raise awareness in Europe about a forgotten crisis in Africa. The aim is to rethink global issues of non-sustainable development. The campaign is supported by the European Commission and it is coordinated by the French NGO ACTED and the Leuphana University of Lüneburg in Germany.

KARAMOJA IN BRIEF

Karamoja is an agro-pastoralist region, northeast of Uganda. For the past decades, it has been characterized by chronic underdevelopment and marginalization. The region is currently going through a deep humanitarian crisis, combining severe food insecurity, human insecurity and environmental destruction, all linked to global climate change.

ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITIES IN THE CAMPAIGN

Students from five European universities have worked in collaboration with ACTED, the University of Lüneburg and People in Need to carry out research on Karamoja, organize conferences on pastoralism, and prepare some advocacy material. In addition, students from three European secondary schools are engaged in a cultural exchange with three schools in the Karamoja region; the exchange will serve the students to organize some exhibitions and awareness-raising event in their community in Europe. Finally, several students have done their internship in Karamoja during the summer of 2008.

LIST OF UNIVERSITIES

Leuphana Universität Lüneburg (Lower Saxony, Germany); Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Bordeaux (Aquitaine, France); Czech students from several Czech universities (coordinating by the Czech NGO People in Need); University of Groningen (province of Groningen; Netherlands); Haute Ecole d'Art et de Design (Geneva, Switzerland).

SECTION 2:

THE VISIT IN BRUSSELS ON 23 JANUARY 2009

The visit in Brussels on January 23rd concluded a one-year series of awareness-raising events on the Karamoja region. A group of thirty-two European students accompanied by three coordinators and a colleague from Uganda, met with UN representatives at the UNEP office from 10am to 11am, and representatives of the DG Development at the External Cooperation Information Point from 1pm to 2pm. Lunch was offered by ACTED to all students at EC restaurant. In parallel to the advocacy conferences, the group of Geneva students displayed their art installation 'Caution Border' within and at the entrance of the Europaid building.

Conference with UN representatives:

The meeting was attended by the following representatives:

- Sylvie Motard, Head of the UNEP Office in Brussels
- Charles Akong, Technical Officer, WHO Office at the EU
- Emmanuelle Lecuyer, UN OCHA Liaison Office in Brussels
- Line Lassen Kaspersen, FAO Liaison Office with the EU and Belgium

Conference at the External Cooperation Information Point:

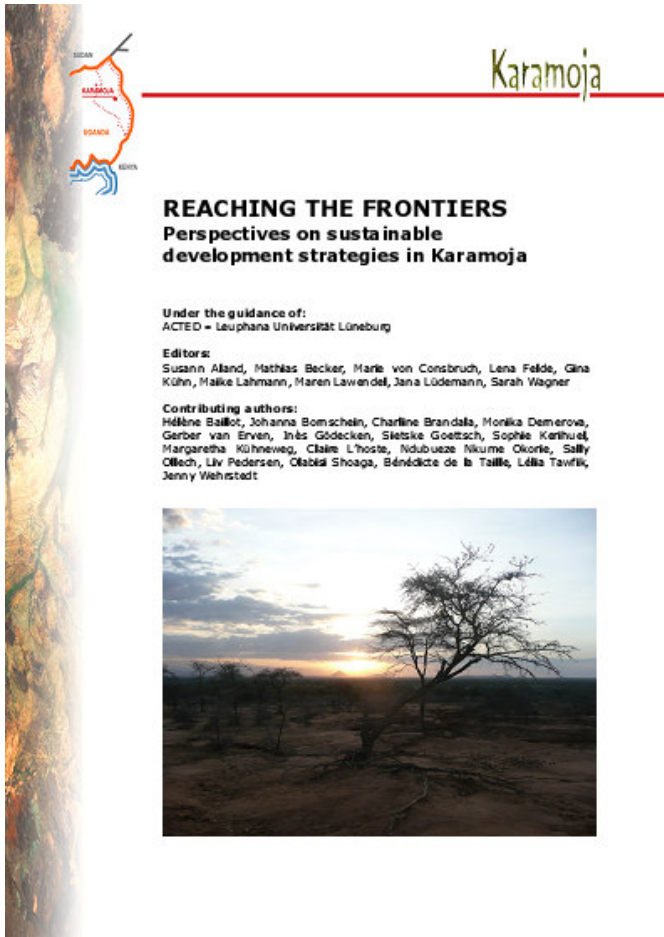


The meeting was chaired by Maria-Paola Piazzardi, Desk Officer for Uganda at DG Development, who came on behalf of the Commissioner.

Following the presentation and the discussion, Mrs Piazzardi, together with a representative of ACTED administrative board, handed over certificates to the students for their commitment to raising European awareness of development.

SECTION 3:

ADVOCACY CONFERENCES: 'REACHING THE FRONTIERS'



During their visit, the students presented the advocacy paper 'Reaching the frontiers' based on the 'Karamoja Syndrome' analysis, which pictures issues of non-sustainable development in agro-pastoralist regions of East Africa.

The paper is addressed to: the industrial countries; the United Nations; the European Commission; NGOs acting or willing to act in Karamoja; the African Union/ Governments of East Africa; the Government of Uganda; the LCV of Karamoja district.

Out of the many recommendations, four main topics were highlighted by students:

- Global climate change
- Future of pastoralism
- Public services & infrastructure
- Intercultural dialogue



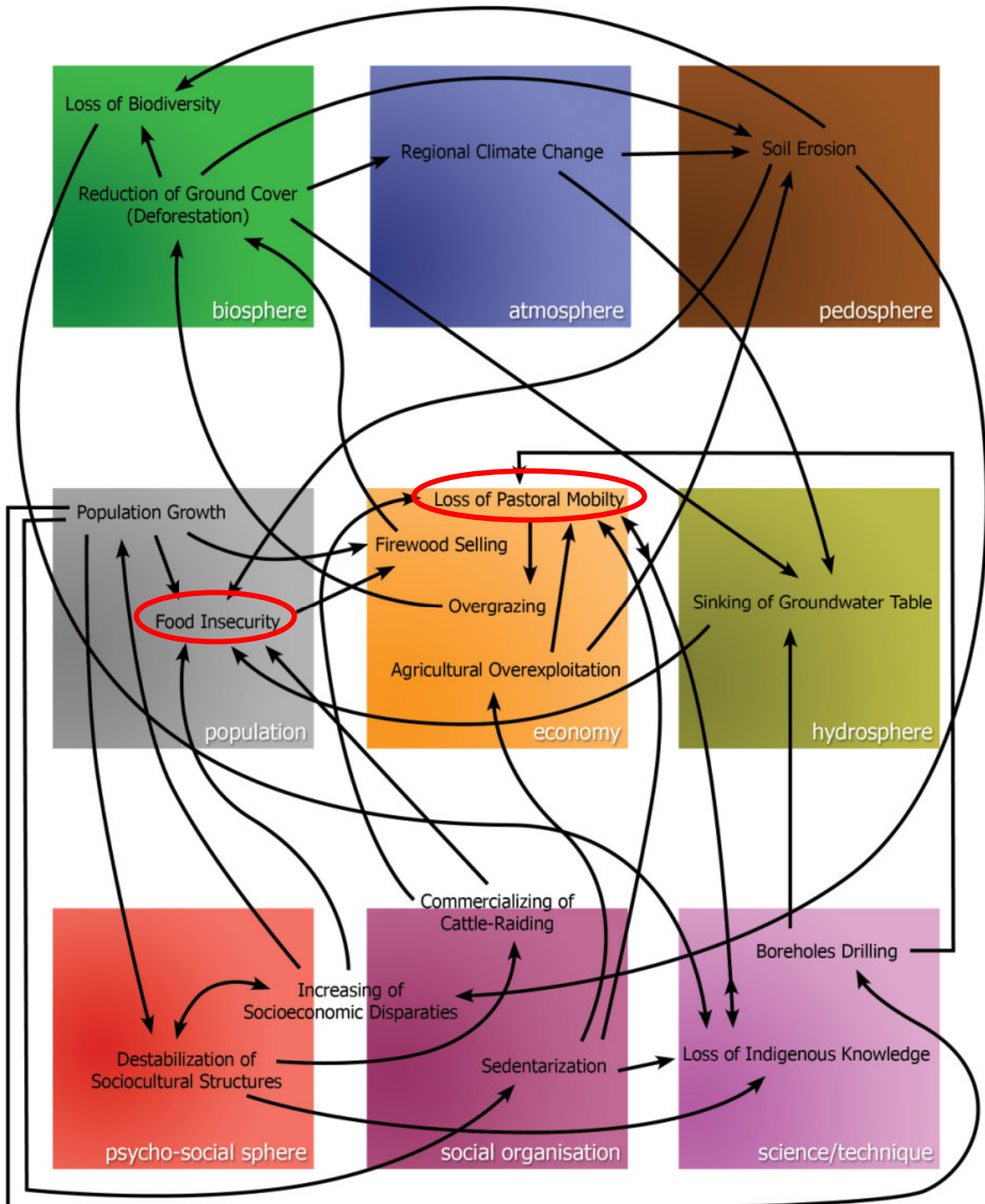
In their conclusion, the students stressed the following basic requirements:

- the acknowledgement of pastoralism as a sustainable way of life, and
- the need for the pastoralists to have freedom of choice.

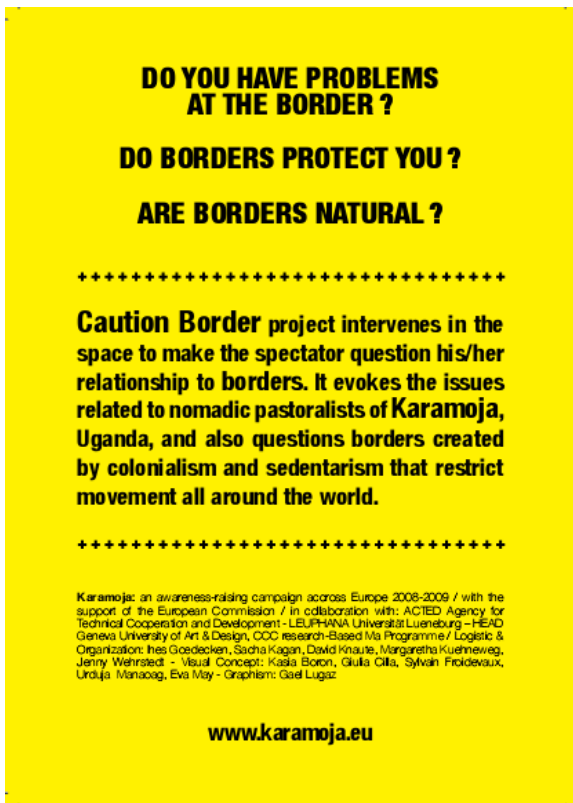
All their recommendations are interrelated and thus cannot be considered separately.

THE SYNDROME APPROACH: TOWARDS THE KARAMOJA SYNDROME

The Syndrome Approach was developed in 1993 by the German Advisory Council on Global Change, to describe processes of global change in a systematic way. It identifies the non-sustainable development of specific processes to be able to point out the leverage points of sustainable development. Students taking part in the campaign have adopted the Syndrome Approach to analyze and understand the current crisis in Karamoja.



SECTION 4: ART INSTALLATION 'CAUTION BORDER'



A group of students from the CCC Postgraduate Studies at Geneva University of Art and Design have been invited by ACTED and the Leuphana University Lüneburg to produce an art intervention in and around the EU buildings in Brussels.



For the art intervention, the group has chosen to focus on the notion of “borders” in a broad sense. During the day of January 23, the group built up installations in and around the EC buildings. The installations consisted of barriers placed in busy areas, thus complicating people’s movement through them. These consisted, inside the EC buildings, of customized caution tape with the text “This is not a natural border” as well as so-called “wet signs”, on

which the common text “caution wet floor”

has been replaced by “caution border”. The caution tape was also used for interventions in the public space of Brussels (Grand Place).

The aim of the intervention was to stimulate a reflection on borders by confronting the public with a concrete experience of them. Wet signs are a familiar sight in corridors, but when they warn us of a border instead of a wet floor, something is turned upside down. As the public physically negotiated these obstacles, an environment was created where the spectator could question his or her notions of borders. The obstacle also includes a caution tape that warns us that this border is not natural. But what is a natural border anyway? The thought of a border being build up in a corridor, and then called natural is absurd. And by stating this, the group hoped to make the public consider how natural any kind of border is (Political borders? Colonial? Social? Cultural? Etc.).

The intervention included a postcard with the pictogram also reproduced on the wet signs, showing a man attempting to overcome a border, with the text of the caution tape "this is not a natural border". On the back of the postcard is a text, which links the questioning of the notion of the border directly to the issues that are raised by the situation in Karamoja. This not only in relation to the physical borders, which prevent the semi-nomadic pastoralists from using the pastures that incidentally lie on the other side of an imposed border. But also in relation to social and cultural borders that we have to consider when thinking about sustainable development in an area, which is ecologically and culturally very different from our own.



Entrance of the info-point



The Geneva students inside the Europaid building

SECTION 5:

‘BURNING ICE’ ART AND CLIMATE CHANGE FESTIVAL AT KAAI THEATRE IN BRUSSELS

In addition to the advocacy conferences and the art installation, the Karamoja campaign organizers were invited to participate to the ‘Burning Ice’ festival, firstly for a panel debate, then to present the ‘Caution Border’ installation.

Panel debate

In the twentieth century, mobility became the symbol of freedom and progress. But at a time of greenhouse gases and peak oil, the symbolic value of mobility is being rapidly reversed. The exponential increase in the number of cars, air travel, food miles and so on is having a huge impact. And the other side of the story is a different, more distressing form of mobility: that of climate refugees.

In an afternoon session on the theme ‘Re-routing mobility’, artists, academics and culture critics were brought together to discuss the topic of the day and the role that art can play in all this, with each other and the public. The moderator was the critic, dramaturge and curator Jeroen Peeters. Sacha Kagan, coordinator of the Karamoja campaign at the Leuphana University in Lüneburg, talked about East African pastoralism and climate change. As stewards of the commons, semi-nomadic pastoralists in East Africa promote biodiversity and plants’ resilience to climate change. But longer and more frequent droughts reduce their mobility and harm their ecological habitat. In need of a larger area to maintain their activity, also national borders turn out to be a hindrance for adaptation to climate change.

Caution Border

In the evening, the Geneva students were invited to install their work in the main exhibition room.

SECTION 6:

CHRONOLOGY OF THE CAMPAIGN

FEBRUARY 2008: *preparation of the documentary film “Land of Thorns: struggling for survival in Karamoja”, in collaboration with Leuphana University of Lüneburg.*

The documentary film is linked to the Syndrome Approach in the sense that it pictures the complexity of the crisis in Karamoja and highlights the interconnectedness of humanitarian and development issues at stake. Students from the five universities watched the film as a starting point in their thinking process.

MARCH-OCTOBER 2008: *organization of seminars in the five universities*

Students were trained on the Syndrome Approach and system-thinking methodologies, and mobilized for the organization of the conferences. They were introduced to some issues of development and had the opportunity to interact with NGO representatives.

APRIL 2008-APRIL 2009: *cultural exchange between schools*

Several schools in Europe (Lycée Professionnel Toulouse Lautrec in Bordeaux; Gymnasium Johanneum in Lüneburg; Londynska primary school in Prague) have started a cultural exchange with schools in Karamoja, and Ethiopia for the Czech group. They exchanged letters, drawings, videos, and awareness-raising events are planned at their respective schools next spring.

JUNE-AUGUST 2008: *internships in Karamoja*

Two students from France and Germany have spent the summer in Karamoja, joining projects implemented by ACTED and visiting the schools participating to the cultural exchange.

OCTOBER 2008: *art performance in Bordeaux*

In collaboration with the University of Bordeaux, Karl Lakolak, a French artist, organized a performance entitled ‘Karamojadream’. This event was a reflexion on the relation of people from Karamoja to their tribal land, as well as on the interconnectedness of Europe and Africa.

OCTOBER 2008-JANUARY 2009: *cycle of conferences on Africa*

On October 24th and November 27th, two conferences focusing on the crisis in Karamoja were organized, respectively in Lüneburg, Germany, and Groningen, Netherlands. It was the first time such events took place in Europe. On November 26th, People in Need organized a conference on 'education in Africa' in Prague. Finally, ACTED co-organized with Egmont a conference on 'climate change and security in Africa' on January 20th in Paris at CERI.

JANUARY 2009: *visit to European institutions in Brussels*

See section 2

FEBRUARY 2009: *participation to the World Conference on Humanitarian Studies*

ACTED and the Leuphana University of Lüneburg will organize a panel at the World Conference on Humanitarian Studies, a major event organized by ECHO-sponsored Network of Humanitarian Action. The panel will be entitled: *"Pastoralism, sustainability and the complexity of humanitarian crises in Africa: comparative analyses and case studies"*.

MARCH/APRIL: *awareness-raising events at schools in Europe*

Students aged 12 to 18 years old, from , will organize a

SPRING 2009: *publication of a scientific publication on the Karamoja region*

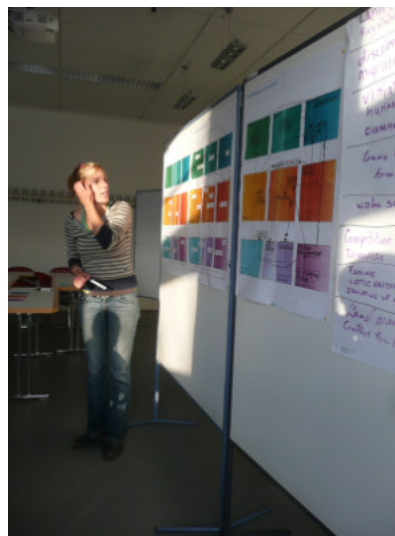
The campaign will be analyzed in a scientific publication, with many reports and articles on the Karamoja region.

SECTION 7: PICTURES FROM THE CAMPAIGN

Left: 'Land of Thorns', film in making



Right: a typical view from Karamoja — women carrying wood back to their village



Left: students at a workshop in Germany

Right: Sharing of first results of the research on the 'Karamoja Syndrome'

Left: Participants to Lüneburg conference



Right: Presentation on advocacy by UNOCHA



Left: Students from Karamoja at a mobile school

Right: Sample of an exhibition organized about the cultural exchange



Karamoja



*ACTED is a French non-government organization created in 1993.
ACTED's vocation is to support vulnerable populations worldwide and
to accompany them in the construction of a better future.*

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