

Karamoja



An awareness-raising campaign accross Europe



INFOKIT

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KARAMOJA: an awareness-raising campaign across Europe

While public policies in Africa and in the world tend to assume that there is no future for pastoralist societies, the KARAMOJA campaign clearly states that:

“Yes, there is a future for pastoralism!”

With support from the European Commission, the KARAMOJA campaign aims to raise awareness in Europe about the current situation of pastoralist societies in the Great Horn of Africa.

By focusing on the Karamoja region of North-Eastern Uganda, the campaign highlights development challenges in one of the most unknown, albeit also problematic, pastoral societies.

Karamoja?

Karamoja is a semi-arid region of Northeastern Uganda. It borders Kenya and Sudan, with Ethiopia nearby. The region counts at least a million inhabitants, among which are the semi-pastoralist Karimojong and Pokot tribes. While their traditional, semi-nomadic way of life is jeopardized, both tribes are also feared for their armed cattle-raids. Karamoja is a region in crisis, plagued by small arms (AK-47), demographic explosion, climate change, border conflicts and difficult development issues. But it is more than a hotspot of growing major crisis: Karamoja is a region where the complex issues of “development” and “sustainability” unfold, in all dimensions ecological, historical, cultural, economic and political dimensions.

Why raise awareness in Europe?

Raising awareness is key to gaining public support for development policies implemented by the European Commission and national governments. Recently, many donors have stepped up their cooperation with African governments to develop pastoralist areas, including the Karamoja region. Europeans are also entitled to know and better understand the development problems in the South and decide what policies are adapted to assist vulnerable population in their plight. The media holds a strategic role in educating and mobilizing Europeans at local, national and international levels.

This brochure presents the KARAMOJA campaign to the media. The objective is to promote a direct collaboration between the campaign organizers and interested media organizations.

The brochure is divided into two sections:

- Perspectives on the Karamoja, explaining *why* the media can be interested in covering the Karamoja region; includes facts and figures.
- Perspectives on the KARAMOJA campaign, detailing the events taking place and *how* media can cover them.

Happy reading!

David Knaute, KARAMOJA campaign coordinator

PERSPECTIVES ON KARAMOJA (I)

SPECIFIC THEMES

We identified five themes illustrating the variety of issues to be covered on the Karamoja: climate change; pastoralism and its future; conflict and regional security; arms trafficking; traditional culture; humanitarian aid and development.

Climate change: the Karamoja region has been affected by recurrent climate crisis, characterized by more frequent drought periods and the elevation of average temperatures. During each dry season, most of the population is directly affected by a prolonged drought. During the summer 2007, devastating floods have also made the headlines, destroying cultivation and grazing areas.



Pastoralism and its future: the migration of Karimojong tribes and their pastoral culture have been omnipresent for centuries throughout North-East Uganda. However, the pressures of modernity and globalisation have never been felt so much as today. While it might bring new services such as access to clinics and schools, modernity also destabilizes the balance of traditional ways of life.

High population growth, added to a rural exodus caused by widespread food insecurity, results in a rapid urban growth. Urban dwellers risk to lose their pastoral culture and values; meanwhile, the absence of urban livelihoods also creates a situation of dependence upon external support from NGOs, etc.

Conflict and regional security, arms trafficking: the security situation in the Karamoja region is unique, due to open conflict between the government and tribes being forcefully disarmed. On-going competition between tribes to protect cattle or rustle the neighbours also contributes to an arms race. The massive influx of automatic weapons (AK-47 and others) since the 1970s has deeply transformed traditional local practices. The presence of weapons also contributes to arms trafficking at a regional level, involving neighbouring countries also and generating protracted conflicts, such as South-Sudan and Somalia.

Traditional culture: the long isolation of the Karamoja region has contributed to the preservation of very traditional cultures, untouched by foreign practices such as tourism. Daily life revolves around two centres: the manyatta, a permanent settlement where subsistence agriculture is practiced, and the kraal, a mobile camp for cattle. Besides the 3 Karimojong tribes of Pian, Bokora, Matheniko, are also present mountain tribes of Ik, Kadam and Tepeth, each with their own identity.



Humanitarian aid and development the humanitarian crisis has long been forgotten. Since the Great Famine of 1980 during which 20% of the total population perished, several consecutive droughts have elevated the risk of food insecurity. As of today, 560,000 people (almost 60% of the population) depends on food distribution by the World Food Program (WFP). Insecurity problems and the presence of weapons have also caused serious displacement and humanitarian challenges, with hundreds of women and children fleeing to major Uganda towns (Kampala, Mbale, Jinja, Soroti) to make a living by begging and most vulnerable populations settling near urban centres with no source of income.

PERSPECTIVES ON KARAMOJA (II)

CROSS-CUTTING FEATURES

The themes mentioned on the previous page have three cross-cutting features: they belong in the news, they can easily be illustrated and they are exclusive.

News: the Karamoja region has rarely made the headlines, except for the Great Famine of 1980. Since 2005, the evolution of regional geopolitics has been changing this situation. The international community has initially reacted to series of consecutive drought periods, as well as to the violence of the disarmament program run by the Ugandan army. Uganda made international headlines during the Juba negotiations between the government and the LRA. The Ugandan army, by sending on behalf of the African Union troops to Somalia, partly to tackle regional roots of arms trafficking, highlighted the regional dimension of the conflict in Karamoja. Since the controversial Kenyan elections of December 2007, the Rift Valley and the Ugandan border have been at the heart of international news. In 2008, the African Union launched the definition of a new frame for pastoralist policies, which has become a major stake in development policies. On the European level, the KARAMOJA campaign takes place in the context of the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue.

Images: the above-mentioned themes also represent a source of inspiration for photographic reports (photography, documentary). Long isolated, the Karamoja region offers plenty in terms of preserved landscapes, and hosts several natural reserves such as the Kidepo National Park. The variety of cultures and traditional ways of life are also very visual. The presence of weapons, the on-going conflict with the army and humanitarian problems, are also themes to be represented.

Exclusivity: several pieces of work have recently been completed on the Karamoja region (photography, academic studies, ..), highlighting a growing interest. At the same time, media coverage remains rare, partly because of the scarcity of actors on the ground to disseminate information. Media organizations who can take the lead with Karamoja region coverage in the coming months will therefore establish a position of exclusivity.

FACTS AND FIGURES

On Uganda:

- Capital: Kampala
- Area: 236,040km²
- Total population: 30,900,000
- HDI: 0,505 (157th)

On the Karamoja:

- Area: 27,900
- Total population: 966,245 (2002)
- Life expectancy: 37 years (lowest in the country)

(source: Uganda government)



PERSPECTIVES ON THE CAMPAIGN

EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

The following events and activities will take place throughout the campaign:

Documentary film: filmmakers Steffen Keulig and Sacha Kagan, with the support of ACTED, have produced an exclusive documentary film in February 2008. This documentary will be broadcasted on national TV channels in four European countries and extracts will also be available online.

Website: all information on the campaign is available on the website www.karamoja.eu; media organizations are highly encouraged to log in to download information documents, photographs, find useful contacts and resources, etc.

High profile conferences/symposia: during the autumn 2008, four conferences/symposia on the Karamoja region will take place in Bordeaux (France), Groningen (Netherlands), Lueneburg (Germany) and Prague (Czech Republic). Guest speakers, including leading public figures, will debate about the future of pastoralism and issues of sustainable development.

Awareness-raising and cultural events/exhibitions: artistic interventions in public space, cultural exhibitions and other cultural events will take place in the same four cities as the conferences/symposia.

Advocacy: Students from four European universities will prepare an advocacy paper to be disseminated to European institutions, through the support of ACTED. The students will prepare and participate in an advocacy trip to Brussels; the event will be covered by media.

Networking: throughout the campaign, actors from different sectors will work to raise awareness, including NGOs, universities, schools, research centres, UN/donor organizations, media, etc. It is an opportunity to identify key contacts, obtain information on pastoralist issues and collaborate with various actors for the media.

ACTORS

The KARAMOJA campaign will be a European campaign. Citizens and organizations from six European countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Netherlands and Switzerland) will mobilize to raise awareness both in their community and at a national level. The campaign will involve the following actors:

- **European Commission:** the EC is supporting the campaign and will also be a direct target audience of the advocacy activities organized during the campaign.
- **University/highschool students:** students from Bordeaux, Groningen, Lueneburg and Prague will participate in the campaign and organize awareness-raising events. Interactivity and exchange between the four groups of students will be promoted.
- **NGOs:** several European NGOs will coordinate the campaign and/or disseminate information.
- **Researchers:** researchers and research institutes from both Europe and Africa will get help prepare the advocacy activities.
- **Artists:** artists from France, Germany and Switzerland will also be engaged to create awareness among the population.
- **Leading figures:** Renowned guest speakers from different fields will be invited to awareness-raising events.

COLLABORATION WITH THE MEDIA

IDEAS/TIPS FOR THE MEDIA

The KARAMOJA campaign can be covered by the media in the following ways:

- Broadcasting of the documentary: the documentary will be ready for broadcast by the end of April 2008. It will be available in four languages (English, French, German and Czech)
- Articles/reports/debates (newspaper, web, television): Advocacy messages and reports about the campaign will be disseminated through various media.
- Awareness-raising events to be covered in 6 European countries: the different events organized during the campaign will be covered by local media
- Production by the media: ACTED will assist media organizations interested in coverage of the Karamoja.
- Information sharing: ACTED and other partners in the project (Leuphana University Lueneburg, People in Need) can provide upon request, documentation, contacts and other material for media organizations.



We welcome any innovative ideas to disseminate information on the KARAMOJA campaign.

WHICH MEDIA?

The KARAMOJA campaign will take place at local, national and international levels, and we look forward to collaborating with all types of media.

Information can be disseminated through various media including television, radio, press, web, public events, etc.

CALENDAR

The KARAMOJA campaign will take place from March 2008 to March 2009.

Questions and comments are welcome at karamoja@acted.org!



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.

Email: karamoja@acted.org

Websites: www.karamoja.eu; www.acted.org

Address: 33, rue Godot de Mauroy
75009 Paris, France

Office phone: + 33 (0)1 42 65 33 33

