Summary and Lessons learnt

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This report provides findings of the end of project evaluation exercise for the Karamoja Youth Empowerment Project which was implemented from January 2011 to December, 2013. The overall purpose of the terminal evaluation was to assess the achievements of the set project objectives, and identify and document lessons learnt, best practices plus design issues that may inform future similar project interventions. The evaluation focused on key aspects of the project including; Relevance; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Impact and potential areas for sustainability. More so, the evaluation sought to identify and assess influential factors (Enabling and impeding) during project implementation that in turn affected the achievement of desired results.

## Methodology

The evaluation covered the period from project inception in 2011 to end of the project in 2013. The study which took place in the three project districts of Abim, Kotido and Moroto, employed a multicity of methods of data collection including document analysis, individual in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. Focus group discussions, also utilised a selection of participatory techniques like the impact flow chart, SWOT analysis and time trend analysis. The study was largely qualitative but also generated quantitative data which was harmonised to bring out the complete picture on ground.

## Summary of Findings

The evaluation established a direct relationship between project interventions and needs of youth and policy priorities. The project thus set out to address the issues of youth marginalisation in the context of the current cultural dynamics and Government development initiatives in the area. It was asserted by over 95% of the respondents that the specific areas of concern, the implementation process and the stakeholders involved, and the results so far attained were reported to be a clear response to the emerging needs of youth in the context of relative peace as a result of the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament an Development Programme (KIDDP). The range of advocacy initiatives were acknowledged to advance the position of the youth in voicing their concerns and having them included in the development agendas of the three target districts and various levels of policy making.

However,needed to address the underlying gender and social exclusion factors that are influential in empowering the youth to voice their concerns. The traditional gender and age-set power relations in Karamoja under the Akiriket traditional governance system emphasizes silent presence on the side of male youth and absence of their female counter parts.The observed weak monitoring and evaluation plus follow-up mechanisms plus poor adherence to addressing risk factors, were reported to be largely due to limitations in financial facilitation of project activities.

UYONET endeavoured to draw a clear time frame for each of the planned activities. The designated partners in the names of Restless Development (Moroto), Warrior Squad Foundation (Kotido) and ADYOFU (Abim) continued to carry out their technical support roles as planned. There were however mixed views about the efficiency of the project both within UYONET and among partners. While 39% of the respondents expressed satisfaction, another 39% expressed reservations about how well the processes had gone on. Another 22% of the respondents expressed ignorance about how the project was implemented saying they stopped knowing about the project during the stakeholders workshop. The respondents observed some delays in the implementation of project sighting details in bureaucracy in administrative processes regarding internal financial transfers. This affected timely execution of some of the project activities at UYONET’s Kampala and Karamoja offices. And though the implementation of the project had to stick within the limits of the established budget of Ugx. 250,000,000/-, this was stringent which situation led to the compromise of some of the needs of the beneficiaries, late and hurried implementation of selected activities, while othersfell of the implementation list.

The baseline survey plus the ‘Eye on Karamoja’ documentary were effectively accomplished and within an agreeable time frame. The livelihood activities within the context of the agreed modifications were carried out by the 6 beneficiary groups out of the 15 youth groups that were engaged in advocacy activities, though some started off later than planned. The deliberate efforts byUYONET to ensure stakeholder involvementat the beginning and working with existing structures enhanced the level of achievement of set objectives. The key risky factors that affected the project during implementation ranged from poor climate conditions to infrastructural and unfriendly market dynamics.

Key areas of impact were; The improved performance of youth groups which now have comparatively stronger systems, committed membership, group cohesion also existing legally; The increased income among 6 of the target youth groups as a result of acquiring some basic skills and knowledge in entrepreneurship; The increase in the level of confidence among the youth leaders (Mostly male) in articulating their concerns to decision making fora. The youth initiating the culture of advocacy among fellow youth to abandon negative attitudes and practices like cattle theft and alcoholism plus gender based violence in communities; the inclusion of youth concerns in mainstream development planning in Abim; plus The establishment of a Youth Working Group in Moroto.

Efforts which link with the above impact to ensure continuity of the initiatives the project introducedThe Local Governments taking over the support of project target groups through the Community Development Office (CDO); and Mechanisms in Moroto and Abim to ensure youth active engagement at district level in decision making; and The capacity building activities for youth I advocacy and entrepreneurship are expected to promote a multiplier effect whereby other youth learn from those who directly benefitted from the project.

# Conclusion

The two-year Youth Empowerment Project in Karamoja by UYONET served as a huge and timely opportunity to draw stakeholder attention to the concerns of youth in Karamoja. In general, despite the observed limitations during project implementation, it came out clearly that the relevance of the initiative to the needs of youth in the three districts was high. The focus on youth, the participatory approach to project design and implementation, the key project components of governance and livelihoods development, and a deliberate effort to strengthen inter-institutional linkages was widely appreciated as timely given the current development policy trends and the political economy of the changing socio-cultural dynamics in Karamoja.

More so, save for the failure in the realization of the regional civil society platform for advancing youth issues, the baseline study was successfully carried out and it informed the subsequent interventions. The ‘Eye on Karamoja’ was a powerful tool for advocacy work both at national and local levels. The alternative livelihoods activities took root and continue to be implemented. These werelargely determined in the context of the expressed need of the youth groups themselves. And though the project has been widely criticized its in-built short life span, the emerging impact in terms of awakening/consciousness raising and in areas of advocacy and entrepreneurship skills and knowledge among youth across the three districts cannot be over-looked. These contributed to the sustainability mechanisms in project districts where advocacy initiatives for youth will be taken to another level.

## Recommendations

To consolidate the achievements so far registered under the project and ensure the utilization of lessons while ensuring the more profound and wider impact, the following recommendations need consideration.

1. **UYONET**
* Adopt a program approach and also widen scope to include a bigger number of youth groups with the aim of working towards real impact (Five and more years).
* Build on the initiative of youth as change agents to train and influence more youth as agents of change among fellow youth and in their immediate communities.
* Work in partnership with other relevant stakeholders like the Private Sector Foundation to continue with context relevant entrepreneurship skills development among youth groups that have decided to engage in commercial farming in Abim. This should fit within the existing Government policy drive on Local economic Development.
* With support from UNDP, translate the documentaryinto the local languages and also presentillustrations in picture form to enable those who only read the local languages plus illiterate youth who constitute the majority of the young population in the Karamoja sub-region to utilize and understand the messages.

**b) UNDP**

* Support moreorganizations specializing in Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) to engage the youth in adult education programs alongside the advocacy initiative for the youth. This will put the youth in the best position to engage with both the traditional and local leadership and the Government stakeholders in pursuing their rights.
* Available literature plus the discussions in the field clearly revealed the influence of the gender social identity and forms of social exclusion in addressing concerns of youth in development. Establish gender and social equity mainstreaming as one of the criteria for assessing applications for funding.
* Review the partner funds disbursement, accountability and financial reporting mechanisms to ensure timely funds flows to avoid delays in work in the field.
1. **Local stakeholders**
* The three District Local Governments (DLGs) of Moroto, Kotido and Abim in collaboration with other development partners build on existing local knowledge systems and technology for youth to develop a niche in particular value chains that will economically advance them even beyond the sub-region.

# 3.9.0 Lessons Learnt

* The UYONET Youth Empowerment Project was timely in the three districts given the emerging needs following the drastic reduction in cattle rustling as a result of the disarmament process leading to fundamental changes in livelihood patterns among youth in Karamoja.
* Effective stakeholder involvement at various stages of the project life cycle enhances cost effectiveness, local ownership and creates a favourable ground for the sustainability of the effort after the project has ended.
* A partnership and collaborative approach helped the UYONET youth Empowerment Project to ensure continuity even when it seemed to experience challenges of staff shortage.
* A clear communication strategy and risk identification and management mechanism was very crucial in ensuring effective implementation and realisation of desired results of the Youth Empowerment project in Karamoja
* Given the general economic vulnerability of the Karamoja region, the component of livelihoods development becomes central to the success of any other development intervention. The successes in realizing positive results in the area of governance had a close linkage with the livelihoods component in the Youth Empowerment Project
* The traditional governance systems in Karamoja remain strong and influential in advancing the rights of the youth and their ability to engage in key decision making processes.