PROMISING RESILIENCE PRACTICES

Peacebuilding in Karamoja. Credit: KDF Pictures 2018.

Community-centred system for reducing livestock raids through binding resolutions

Introduction

The conflict management system in Karamoja includes both formal government and customary actors, who play complimentary roles in maintaining peace and security. Their collaboration is crucial in ensuring effective and appropriate response to security incidents, resolution of disputes, and facilitation of the return of stolen livestock. The recovery and return of stolen livestock is essential to preventing retaliatory raids and breaking the cycle of conflict. There was therefore, a need to break the cycle of livestock based conflict using community mechanisms that would punish and deter theft of livestock at individual and community levels.

Customary institutions wield significant authority and are often considered to be responsible for the social well-being of their communities. The Councils of Elders in northern and southern Karamoja adopted the "Moruitit Resolution" and "Nabilatuk Resolution" respectively. These resolutions require the perpetrator of livestock theft to return double the number of stolen animals plus one additional animal. Communities that protect or host the perpetrators are also held responsible.

Methodological Approach

- Elders pass community binding resolutions on livestock rustling.
- Communities are required to cooperate with peace committees and the formal government system in tracking stolen livestock.
- Elders implement the resolutions.
- To encourage the identification of offenders, communities are held responsible for aiding and abetting livestock thieves

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Result

- Improved security and decline in conflict
- Cessation of large-scale cattle raids.
- Considerable reduction in violent and unpredictable attacks.
- Increased freedom of movement, enabling improvement and security of livelihoods.
- There was a cultural shift from violence as the repercussions are severe on communities found with stolen livestock.
- Elders actively discourage young men from the warrior lifestyle because of the increased likelihood of getting caught, killed and the implications of the local resolutions on the livelihoods of their communities.

- Enhancement of the authority of elders and strengthening of traditional systems.

Success factors

Police sensitisation to use, uphold and maintain the Moruitit and Nabilatuk Resolutions Supporting culturally accepted institutions (Council of Elders) to pass binding resolutions Cooperation of all the stakeholders, particularly the communities, elders and police and other security agencies.

Constraints

Some community members may not readily abide by the resolutions, especially the youth who may engage in opportunistic theft of a few livestock for immediate sale.

Sustainability and replicability

Depends on:
- Effective communication between conflict management actors.•Understanding of, and respect for the role of elders in passing and implementing the resolutions.
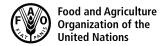
Additional information

District Local Governments in Karamoja