



Herder in Moroto. Credit: KDF Pictures 2018

Resilience building through shock-responsive social protection

Introduction

Social protection is widely recognised as an important strategy in building resilience by enhancing the capacity of vulnerable households to cope with, respond to and withstand shocks and stresses (Winder, 2017). Social protection programmes can therefore be made flexible and shock-responsive so that they can provide a timely response to crises and reduce the negative impacts of shock (Ulrichs, 2016).

In Uganda, the social protection sector is divided into different sectors and institutions. In Karamoja, one of the social protection avenues is provided under Northern

Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) III which aims to provide effective income support and build the resilience of poorer and vulnerable households. This is done through labour intensive public works (LIPW) which provide temporary employment and livelihood income support activities. LIPW link the construction of community assets and household livelihood needs (Ulrichs, 2017). The disaster risk finance is a sub-component of LIPW designed as a shock response strategy to scale-up LIPW to support poor and vulnerable households immediately following a drought.



INTERVENTION AREA

Disaster risk management, preparedness and effective response

LOCATION

Karamoja sub-region



STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

Implemented by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM); District Local Governments in the region and Communities
Financed by the World Bank

Impact

- The need for emergency relief in the event of drought has been reduced as income earned is used to purchase basic needs and to accumulate savings. For instance drought in 2016/17 did not result in a need for emergency aid as in 2009 (URN, 2009).
- Improvement in community infrastructure.
- Reduction in economic and food insecurity vulnerability as communities recovered from drought.
- Innovation and success factors.
- Having a scalable sub-component within an existing safety net (LIPW) enables early response to shock.
- Having an effective early warning service to trigger the safety net programme.

Lessons learnt

This is the first time shock-responsive social protection has been used in Uganda. Lessons have been learnt from its implementation in 2017:

- Sufficient LIPW activities are required to absorb the surge in beneficiary numbers,
- The daily wage rate has the biggest impact on the overall cost of a scale-up,
- A transparent rules-based approach is needed to determine when and to what extent a safety net is expanded following a shock (Maher, 2017).

Additional information

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Methodological approach

- Establish a satellite-based early warning system which will trigger the scale-up of the social safety net. An indexed satellite-based observation of ground vegetation (Normalised Difference Vegetation Index) is used as an indicator of drought conditions. This is combined with Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) indicator which provides information on food security status of the communities.
- Establish predefined guidelines on how many households will benefit from the support, where, for how long, etc.
- Beneficiaries are selected based on their vulnerability to food insecurity as determined by IPC and availability of labour in these households.

Validation

The Drought Response Fund (DRF) mechanism was triggered in 2016 when drought occurred resulting in successful scaling up of LIPW activities in early 2017 in all the seven districts. It reduced the economic and food insecurity vulnerability of the drought affected communities such that no humanitarian aid was required.

Results

- LIPW was scaled up in 2017 following drought in mid-2016, benefiting about 33,400 households which helped them to recover from drought in 2017 (OPM, 2017).
- Communities were employed in public works such as gully control, tree planting, construction of community access roads, terrace construction to control soil erosion, desilting of ponds, valley tanks and dams, among others.
- Beneficiaries earned UGX 3.3 billion which enabled them to cope with and recover from the drought.

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