



PEACE, PROSPERITY AND  
REGIONAL INTEGRATION



## POLICY BRIEF

### Priority Intervention Area 6: Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Peacebuilding

#### Introduction

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)'s Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) has since 2013 inspired and guided regional and national priorities to counter drought emergencies in the East and Horn of Africa countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. The IDDRSI Strategy (2019-2024) acknowledges that gender issues impact the conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding priority intervention (PIA 6). This brief examines the critical gender issues relating to conflicts and drought resistance. A gender analysis was undertaken for the IDDRSI Strategy, Regional Programming Paper, and the Country Programming Papers (CPP) (IGAD, 2016).<sup>1</sup> This brief illustrates how conflicts are driven by unequal distribution of resources and highlights the challenges women face when confronted by conflicts, including participating in peacebuilding. It is based on the review of the gender analysis report.

#### Women and the experience of conflicts

Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) occupy a vast proportion of the IGAD land area. At least 70% of the IGAD region comprises ASALs, which receive less than 600mm in annual rainfall and are characterised by recurrent droughts (Stark, 2011).<sup>2</sup> The livestock economy predominates the Horn of African rangelands, which is the most appropriate form of utilising these ASALs. However, the lack of water, specific inadequate government policies and increased human population pressure have accelerated these lands' impoverishment.

As a result of weak state penetration in ASAL regions, pastoralist communities have negatively experienced the state (Mwaura, 2005).<sup>3</sup> The state's role in service delivery in two areas - the provision of security to pastoral communities and support to pastoral livelihoods - is on the whole poor. As such, insecurity and conflict combined with limited investment in pastoral livelihood systems from the centre remain challenges to human development in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya. Violence and conflict over natural resources have led to the collapse of relationships between communities.

Conflicts that often results in impoverishment and displacement can exacerbate gender norms. In Uganda, Karamoja - a predominantly pastoralist region - is the most deprived due to the experience of inter-ethnic cattle rustling. Political upheavals, coupled with the famine of 1980 that decimated cattle herds in Karamoja, led to increased frequency of cattle raids to neighbouring districts to restock herds (Mirzeler and Young, 2000).<sup>4</sup> In the 1990s, conflicts in neighbouring countries, particularly in southern Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia, led to the proliferation of small arms trade within Karamoja. Since then, guns have acquired social and cultural status or values - they could be exchanged for cows and even used as bride price. For Ethiopia, the relatively slower decline in poverty in the Oromia region is partly explained by the prolonged drought and conflict experience. Southern Oromia experienced a prolonged drought during 2015/16, and the region

1. IGAD (2016): Gender Analysis of the Country Programming Papers (CPPs): To End Drought Emergencies in the Horn of Africa. Vol 2.

2. Stark Jeffrey, (2011): Climate Change and Conflict in Uganda: The Cattle Corridor and Karamoja.

3. Mwaura, C (2005): Kenya and Uganda Pastoral Conflict Case Study". Human Development Report 2005.

4. Mirzeler, M and C. Young (2000): Pastoral Politics in the Northeast Periphery in Uganda: AK-47 as Change Agent. The Journal of Modern African Studies. Vol. 38. No.3: 407-429.

is also affected by inter-ethnic conflict leading to internal displacement (World Bank and DfID, 2019).<sup>5</sup> Inter-ethnic conflict on the Oromo-Somali border has resulted in the internal displacement of approximately 750,000 people.

Conflict among and between communities that may arise because of shared resources, particularly in times of scarcity, impacts differently on men and women, boys and girls. Cattle rustling partly occurs primarily because of the seasonal migrations of cattle herders moving to grazing lands and river points, affecting local pastoralists' productivity. Livestock movement often leads to retaliatory actions to attack and grab animals. Simultaneously, poorly planned water infrastructure such as valley dams, may affect seasonal grazing patterns and ultimately turn out as flashpoints for cattle rustling (Mwaura, 2005). The frequent movement of animals by cattle raiders also aided the spread of animal diseases.

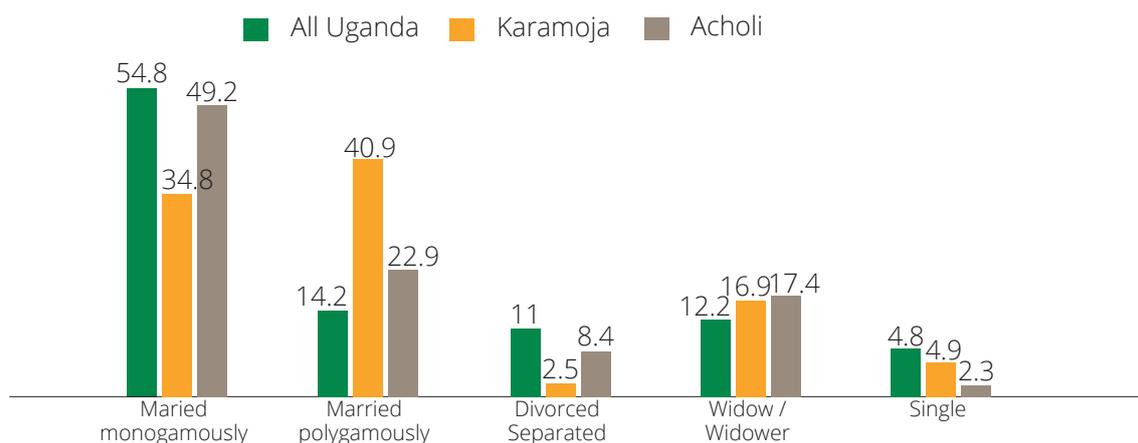
Furthermore, veterinary services were limited in ASALs because veterinary personnel found it hard to locate the communities due to migration and insecurity. Consequently, communities that had not lost cattle due to direct theft ended up losing animals due to movements and diseases - some across borders. There are differences in how conflict is seen, felt, and understood by men and women. Women may play a significant role in urging an end to the conflict, mobilising social movements for peace, and building social reconciliation after conflicts.

## Gendered impacts of conflicts in the ASALs

Some of the most profound impacts of conflicts are demographic. Armed conflict impacts women and girls differently. Women and girls are often targeted for rape and other forms of violence, while men and boys are recruited as fighters and may end up killed. Cattle rustling has resulted in the rape of young girls leading to hatred between communities, which makes it difficult for these communities to engage in trade, ceremonies, and other social gatherings for socio-economic development.

Due to inter-clan conflicts and cattle rustling, male heads have experienced widespread deaths. Figure 1 compares households' marital characteristics in Karamoja and the rest of the country. It is indicated that a substantial proportion of household heads in Karamoja are widows/widowers - 17% compared to 12% for Uganda. Specific for women, across Uganda, at least 11.3% of all women aged at least 18 years are widows; the corresponding rate in Karamoja is 16.1%. As such, the sub-region has the highest rate of female household heads.

Figure 1: Uganda Marital Status of Household Heads, 2016/27 (%)



Source: Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2017)<sup>6</sup>

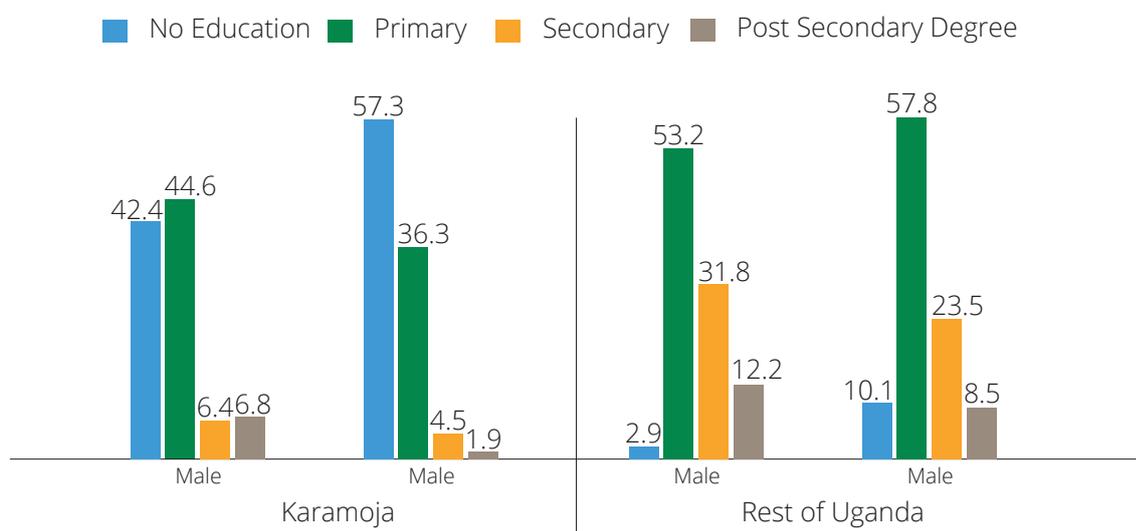
5. World Bank and DfID (2019): Poverty and Vulnerability in the Ethiopian Lowlands: Building a More Resilient Future.

6. Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2017): 2016/17 Uganda National Household Survey.

Furthermore, polygamy regularly occurs in conflict-affected areas. Karamojong women are about three times more likely to be in a polygamous marriage than the national average (36.3% versus 12.4%). In Ethiopia, the ASAL regions of Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Gambela have polygamy rates of 29.2%, 20.9% and 20.6%, respectively - about twice the national average of 10.5% (Central Statistical Agency and ICF, 2016).<sup>7</sup> In Kenya, the polygamy rate in the North Eastern province (32%) is about three times the national average of 11.4% (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and ICF International, 2015)<sup>8</sup>. In times of conflict, women may acquire unaccustomed social and political leadership roles as they are left in charge of the household and the community when the men go to fight. The absence of men may transform traditional gender roles. Simultaneously, women who join conflicts as combatants may experience an unaccustomed degree of social equality in various military groups.

The threats of conflicts significantly affect schooling in ASALs, and this has disproportionately affected girls. Figure 2 shows that more than half of the Karamoja population does not have formal education (59%) compared to about 12% for Uganda. Women have higher rates of not having received school than men (57.3% vs 42.4%). The exceptionally low school attainment in Karamoja implies that most adults do not have any skills and thus would find it hard to take up formal employment. Indeed, partly due to limited educational attainment, women have limited paid employment compared to men (who can work on construction sites); women have to migrate to other sub-regions to receive paid employment opportunities.

Figure 2: Education Attainment (persons aged 15 years and above)



Source: Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2020)<sup>9</sup>

Marriage norms partly drive conflicts - the pressure to acquire cows for bridewealth fuels cattle rustling. For example, in South Sudan, cattle are the only path to marriage. The bride price is typically 20 to 40 animals, each worth up to US\$ 500. A girl who is perceived as beautiful, fertile and of high social rank can fetch as many as 200 cattle. These relatively high bride price costs provide an incentive for young men to raid livestock from other communities. Furthermore, in South Sudan, the large population of uneducated and unemployed youth has pushed many to enlist in militias and join cattle raids because of their inability to meet the increasing dowry of brides (Shteir, 2006<sup>10</sup>, Sommers and Schwartz, 2011)<sup>11</sup>. These raids exacerbate existing conflicts.

7. Central Statistical Agency (CSA) [Ethiopia] and ICF (2016): Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2016. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: CSA and ICF.

8. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics et al. (2015): The 2014 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey. Nairobi, Kenya KNBS and ICF International.

9. Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2020): Uganda National Panel Survey 2019-2020.

10. Shteir, S. (2006): The Impact of Conflict on the Practice of Bride Wealth in Southern Sudan.

11. Sommers, M. and S. Schwartz (2011): Dowry and Division: Youth and State Building in South Sudan.

On the other hand, due to cattle rustling, the decreasing available resources may influence some families' decision to proceed with young girls' marriages (child marriage) as a means of securing resources. The rationale is to ensure a stable livelihood for girls, secure alliances for cattle protection, and attain financial resources through settlement in times of economic/financial pressures.

## Women's participation in conflict prevention

Traditional approaches to conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding have tended to see women primarily as victims. The way conflict is experienced, and understood by individuals and groups, is quite complicated. When engaging major actors in a conflict, it is essential to involve women at all levels, including monitoring, negotiations, prevention, resolution efforts and peacebuilding. Some of the interventions implemented to ensure conflict prevention arising from cattle rustling have affected masculinities in the ASALs. In Karamoja, conflict prevention was achieved through instituting a disarmament policy, where warriors who surrendered weapons were compensated with items such as ox-ploughs, seeds, money, and iron sheets. This disarmament process restored the security situation and impacted the frequency of raids and casualties.

The other measure was adopting a cattle theft sanction policy established by the Nabilatuk peace committee in 2012. Henceforth, the perpetrators of cattle raids would be required to pay back double the number of animals stolen plus one additional animal (to be allocated to the peace committee) as a deterrent (Stites et al., 2016).<sup>12</sup> Before disarmament, women played a critical role among pastoralist communities as the caretakers of children, elders and small cattle. Women also provided water, wood and even additional revenue through farming and small commercial activities. The loss of incomes due to the disarmament forced women to become the households' primary breadwinners; this affected male masculinity.

Before starting the disarmament process, there was a limited presence of security forces like the police and the army. The lack of access to infrastructure in remote places like Karamoja increased the overall policing cost (Deininger, 2003).<sup>13</sup> With the commencement of the disarmament process in 2001, the policy environment changed significantly. Currently, there is a constant presence of security forces, and the major highways have roadblocks that check on the authenticity/ownership of animals being moved.

## Recommendations Member states should

1. Reduce the proliferation of Small and Light Weapons in affected counties.
2. Enhance the capacity of cross-border peace and security committees in frontier counties.
3. Construct and upgrade priority roads in ASALs to enhance economic and social integration.
4. Sensitise ASAL communities on harmful cultural practices. For example, adopting children may be no longer untenable given the decline in livestock holdings. In the same vein, women should be sensitised not to marry for pride now that livestock is limited.
5. Reduce animal loses in the post cattle rustling environment; the Member States should also expand public veterinary services. Regular spraying of animals and providing veterinary drugs could substantially reduce costs faced by communities. Furthermore, Member States should also increase the number of watering points for animals by constructing valley dams. Increased sources of water will reduce the need to migrate long distances, which contribute to cattle raids.
6. Include women's groups and women's organisations in alternative dispute resolution and natural resource management.
7. Strengthen women's organisations, networks, and groups.
8. vEnsure women's presence in all conflict management and conflict resolution mechanisms.
9. Establish national action plans for women, peace and conflict prevention and fund these actions for effective implementation.

12. Stites, E., K. Howe, T. Redda, and D. Akabwai (2016): A Better Balance: Revitalized Pastoral Livelihoods in Karamoja, Uganda. Feinstein International Center.

13. Deininger, K. (2003): Causes and Consequences of Civil Strife: micro-level evidence from Uganda. Oxford Economic Papers (55): 579-606.

## IGAD

10. Given the importance of migration and the continued existence of cross-border cattle raids, there is a need for more regional efforts to address cattle rustling. For example, Kenya can also implement forceful disarmament to reduce small arms proliferation in the sub-region.
11. Fast-track the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, which calls for women to participate in peacebuilding, be protected from human rights violations, and access justice. Gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding will ensure women's engagement in conflict resolution, gender-responsive conflict prevention and protection, women's participation in peacebuilding and recovery.
12. Capacity building of national and local institutions on conflict and security to build the capacity to address grievances and disputes relating to resource-sharing, boundaries, and significant development projects.
13. Develop and establish a contractual system to monitor/report on indicators on gender-related risks in conflict early warning and response systems.
14. Strengthen the coordination of shared challenges relating to cross-border women, peace, and security through a harmonised regional action plan on women, peace, and security.



Acknowledgement: This publication has been produced with the assistance of the Government of Sweden. The contents of this publication can in no way be taken to reflect the view of the Government of Sweden.