



Out-migration, Return, and Resettlement in Karamoja, Uganda: The case of Kobulin, Bokora County

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The “Livelihoods and Human Security in Karamoja” project documents and analyzes the current links among human security, insecurity, disarmament, and livelihoods in Karamoja, northeastern Uganda. The project focuses on how people experience, participate in and respond to these factors, with an emphasis on the Bokora, Matheniko and Tepeth populations. The project uses gender and generational perspectives to produce a more accurate and nuanced analysis.

I. Executive Summary

As part of a larger project entitled “Livelihoods and Human Security in Karamoja,” this briefing paper presents findings on causal factors and broad patterns in out-migration among the Bokora population. The paper also seeks to provide context for the specific case study of the population picked up on the streets of Kampala and sent to a reception site at Kobulin in Bokora County of Moroto District.¹ Using a gender and generational analysis, the briefing paper presents data on the

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¹ The final report by the Tufts team will provide more detail and nuance on the differences among groups, and will use this comparative analysis to further the discussion on causal factors of social disintegration, the effects of insecurity, and out-migration.



main factors underlying out-migration, the mechanics of this process, people's experiences in the cities, the return to Kobulin, and the population's current situation and hopes for the future.²

Out-migration from Bokora is caused by factors at multiple levels. The actual process of departure for individuals and households is spurred by a succession and compounding of these factors. The main underlying causes of migration are insecurity and widespread loss of livestock. Livestock holdings underpin nearly all traditional coping mechanisms of Karamojong communities, and the loss of livestock profoundly affects the food security and human security of households and manyattas. Periods of insecurity and fluctuations in animal herds have been a pattern of life in Karamojong for several decades, but the steady downward trend in these processes (i.e., *insecurity* and on-going *loss* of animals) became particularly pronounced for the Bokora following the break-down of tribal relations and increased attacks in the mid 1970s through 1980s and, more recently, the wide-scale disarmament in 2001/2002 and 2006/2007. The lack of subsequent adequate protection by the state, particularly in 2001/2002, left the Bokora communities exposed to repeated attacks, widespread asset stripping, and the increased adoption of distress coping mechanisms in order to survive.

At the level of individuals and families, most adults and children leave Bokora for a combination of reasons, including increased insecurity (which is often a contributing or causal factor in the other destabilizing processes), loss of livestock, a series of poor harvests, death of breadwinners or key family members, poverty, and the weakening or collapse of social safety nets. When these shocks occur simultaneously or in succession, individuals or households find that they are unable to meet their survival needs. Another factor affecting rates of out-migration from Bokora is a snowball effect, whereby one person follows the next who follows the next, resulting in the out-migration of a network of people who share familial, village, or clan connections. This snowball effect continues, in large part, because people living in Bokora perceive their situation at home to be worse than conditions experienced by those who have departed for Kampala and elsewhere.

The majority of people interviewed reported a steady decline in their livelihood situation and or health status prior to experiencing a final trigger event that resulted in out-migration. Trigger events include loss of assets through raids, violent death of family members, the death of a main breadwinner, escalating physical or sexual abuse within the household

² In the context of this briefing paper, 'out-migration' refers to the temporary or permanent departure from Karamoja of individuals or families. There has been a long history of migration from Karamoja, and in particular from Bokora, for seasonal work or in times of hardship. These out-migrations are usually driven by economic factors, but out-migration may also occur due to social issues (such as problems within a household or community) or for security reasons. The discussion of out-migration in this paper takes all three of these elements into account.

(particularly mentioned by girls who left on their own), and the inheritance of widows by negligent or abusive brother-in-laws. The high number of female headed-households in the Kobulin population slated for resettlement, estimated at over 90%, is illustrative of the important links among widowhood, traditional remarriage, neglect and abuse, and out-migration of women and their children.

In regard to out-migration, the main distress coping mechanism is the departure of young people, in particular girls and young women, in large numbers to work for employers with whom there is no prior connection or relationship. This is the adaptation of a well-established system of exchange of labor in particular seasons or periods of hardship. This system of exchange has traditionally been through 'stock associates': individuals and families with whom close social and economic ties were developed over years or even generations. According to key informants, this system of exchange existed throughout northeastern Uganda and into Kenya and Sudan. The current distress adaptation involves the departure of youth to people who are unknown to them and at times without the support or knowledge of their families. As in the case of Kobulin, there appears to be an expanding number of people and families leaving Karamoja not for casual agricultural labor, but to urban areas, urban lifestyles and urban livelihood options.

Most adults and children leave Bokora on public transportation that must be paid for. This means that people who leave for Kampala or elsewhere are often those who are, in some ways, at an *advantage* over other members of their communities, whether due to cash savings, availability of other assets, or family connections.

The data suggest that there are two groups of migrants from Bokora at present. The first are predominately young people who out-migrate for casual or seasonal labor and return to their communities throughout the year or to assist with cultivation in the rainy season. The second are those who appear on the streets of Kampala and other major cities, where they engage in a range of livelihood strategies that include begging (usually through the use of children), sweeping mills in exchange for collecting fallen grain, childcare for children of relatives living in the city, unloading lorries, stocking stores, collecting and selling metal found in garbage dumps and engaging in other odd jobs.

Begging is a highly visible livelihood strategy and one that attracts much attention due to the role and likely exploitation of children. Interviews with children and women, however, showed that begging was usually only one part of a more complex livelihood strategy. Most Karamojong children who engaged in begging did not do this as their full-time occupation or only source of livelihood. There are some children, particularly those who have been abandoned by their families or 'guardians' after arrival in the city, who do survive primarily off begging, as well as collecting and selling scrap metal and rubbish and eating garbage. Notably, numbers of Karamojong children picked up on Kampala's streets and taken to a

regional rehabilitation center has increased dramatically since 2002. Karamojong children differ from other street children in Kampala in a number of significant ways. Nearly all the children we interviewed at Kobulin left for an urban area with an immediate or extended family member. Those few children at Kobulin who left on their own had suffered neglect or abuse within their households. In the majority of the cases of the children at Kobulin, adults, most often their own family members, had orchestrated the children's movements into the cities, and in some cases had abandoned the children in these locations.

Bokora women and children experienced exploitation in a variety of areas while living in Kampala. Girls on the streets were at risk of sexual abuse as men reportedly propositioned these girls for sex and in some cases raped those who refused them. Children reported being tricked and forced into the vehicles of Kampala City Council officers and/or police officers, beaten, and then taken to a regional rehabilitation center. Some children reported being detained against their will by Kampala City Council officers until family members or 'guardians' paid for their release. They also alleged being beaten in the rehabilitation/detention center. Furthermore, none of the women or children with whom we spoke said that their return to Kobulin was voluntary; most said that they were forced to return and would have been kept in detention if they refused to go to Karamoja.

The proposed Nakiriomet (Lomoroit) resettlement site is in an area that is historically contested by the Teso and Bokora. Key informants in the area as well as external sources suggest that local Bokora politicians may have selected this area as a resettlement site as a means to stake a firmer claim to the land. A proposed alternative resettlement site is located in a known transit route for armed raiders; again it was suggested that local politicians chose this site in order to dissuade the movement of raiders through the area. The current proposal of creating settlements or manyattas composed of non-related and predominantly female-headed households (90% of the households at Nakiriomet) is unprecedented in the region and is unlikely to be sustainable.

II. Methods

Dr. Darlington Akabwai, Dr. Dyan Mazurana, Ms. Elizabeth Stites and two Karamojong colleagues who prefer to remain anonymous are responsible for the data collection and analysis presented in this briefing report. The data and analysis we present are drawn from three primary sources, which include in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with approximately 882 individuals. The first source is the team's on-going fieldwork, interviews and direct observations since 2005 on issues of insecurity, disarmament, and the weapons trade in Karamoja, and includes data from in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with approximately 457 individuals. The second source is from direct observations and interviews (both in-depth semi-structured and focus groups) conducted during fieldwork in December 2006 and March 2007 with traditional elders (always men), young men, women, young women, boys and girls from the Bokora, Matheniko, Tepeth and

Pokot in Moroto, as well as from interviews with key informants; during this phase of the research approximately 425 individuals were interviewed. The third source is through direct observations and interviews (both in-depth semi-structured and focus groups) at Kobulin and Nakiriomet (Lomoroitit) in the first week of March 2007. At Kobulin, we interviewed children who had returned with family members, unaccompanied children, women and men of varying ages, and several of the personnel working at Kobulin site. At the Nakiriomet resettlement site we talked to children, a few women and men, and several elders from the surrounding area that were present to view the possible relocation sites. We also interviewed social workers and community-based organizations involved in the resettlement process at Kobulin and at the Nakiriomet resettlement site. At Kobulin and Nakiriomet, we interviewed 39 individuals.

At Kobulin, we gathered information through direct observation and in-depth semi-structured and focus group interviews with adults and children. In particular, we sought to identify and better understand:

- Primary push factors, including who makes decisions about when and where to go, who within families goes, and seasonal and security links to out-migration;
- Primary pull factors, including patterns regarding who might be on the receiving end, how information on opportunities comes back to Karamoja, and how these aspects vary seasonally;
- Systems for departure, including networks to move people and goods;
- Kinds of labor that people engage in;
- Risks created by the labor and livelihood activities;
- Threats, risks and violations experienced while residing in cities;
- Advantages created from doing labor and being located in an urban area;
- Goods or information sent back to families in Karamoja;
- Reception and treatment by communities upon return;
- New skills and information acquired while being away;
- Potential for being disadvantaged / discriminated against / marginalized within communities of origin based on the nature of labor in urban areas;
- Differences in the attitudes / service-seeking behavior / health between those who out-migrated and those who did not;
- Short and long-term goals, including desire to return to communities of origin, to resettle at new sites, or to return to urban areas outside Karamoja;
- Types of intervention or support likely needed to prevent out-migration.

We also investigated the process of return to Karamoja from the perspective of the interviewees; a precise picture of this process is not possible due to the nature of the removal and resettlement process.

The Tufts team transcribed all interviews and managed all the data. Triangulation was used throughout the study to check data validity and consistency. Data analysis was conducted primarily using text analysis through deductive coding.

III. Out-Migration from Bokora, Moroto

Historical Patterns: Why People Out-Migrate, Who Goes, Why and Where?

Seasonal out-migration for casual labor is a long-standing trend in Bokora County of Moroto. Key informants cite 1975 as the first year of substantial numbers of people out-migrating, and explain that the early 1970s through the early 1980s was a particularly harsh period due to the disintegration of an alliance between the Bokora, Pian and Matheniko and the subsequent increase in raids. Attacks by the military under Obote II further eroded human security. According to a Bokora elder:

The worst attacks on the Bokora came from an alliance between Matheniko and Turkana that intensified between 1979 and 1980 because of the acquisition of guns by the Matheniko from the Moroto barracks. The burning of Kangole in 1984 during an army operation by the Obote II government also left the Bokora people desperate. (*Elder, Nasiloit, 9 March*)

The proximity of Bokora to the Teso districts and the historical links between the Karamojong and the Teso people has historically allowed for relatively easy movement between these two populations. Populations from southern Karamoja traditionally moved their herds into Teso pastures during the dry seasons, and established ‘stock associates’ or long-term—even multi-generational—connections between patriarchs across the district border. Individuals would return to their stock associates each year, and prioritized these relationships for trade and exchange. People who out-migrated for casual labor on a temporary or seasonal basis often went to work for a stock associate of their family. Labor was provided in exchange for board and sometimes cash or food to take back home. When drought was severe or households fell on hard times, Bokora children would often be sent by their families to live and work with stock associates until conditions improved in Karamoja.

Similar to the situation today, it was young people who were the most likely to out-migrate on a temporary basis. Young boys would work as shepherds and girls would work in the agricultural fields, as domestics, or as child care providers. The labor of boys and young men was often required at home to look after the cattle of their own families, meaning that the proportion of females who out-migrated from Bokora was often higher. Additionally, gendered divisions of labor mean that there are more jobs for females (i.e., housekeeping, cooking, child care, fetching water, milking animals, farming, brewing, working in shops, etc), making girls more adaptable employees than boys.

Reasons for Current Out-Migration

Overall Factors

Of all the Karamojong groups in Moroto District, the Bokora are leaving Karamoja in the greatest numbers to seek work as casual laborers. There are several overall factors that contribute to this trend. The intensified out-migration of Bokora adults and children has roots in a series of shocks at the household and community level, as well as in broader security-related trends that are occurring within Karamoja as a whole. These security effects have had a particularly strong impact within Bokora County.

We identified a series of primary contributing factors for the out-migration of the Bokora. First, as mentioned previously, links through stock associates allowed the exchange of labor and goods in difficult times between the Bokora and their neighbors, including the Teso, Acholi, and Langi.

Second, the history and pattern of disarmament and militarization is one of the most critical current factors in the out-migration of the Bokora. The Bokora gave up a large number of their weapons in the 2001/2002 disarmament, with many given up voluntarily. A Member of Parliament (MP) for Bokora County at the time put much effort into getting the Bokora to turn over their weapons voluntarily. Today, many Bokora elders refer to this former MP with derision, and allege that he pushed for the disarmament of his people primarily to curry favor with President Museveni. Respondents state that the MP used (false) promises and dramatic rhetorical techniques to cajole his constituency into disarming, going so far as to weep in public to convince the Bokora to give up their guns.

Disarmament of neighboring Karamojong groups was less thorough and left the Bokora, who were not provided with adequate government protection following disarmament, open to attack. Many of these groups, in particular the Matheniko and Jie, were stronger than the Bokora to begin with and gained clear military superiority after the Bokora were disarmed. The number of raids upon the Bokora increased rapidly following disarmament. The Bokora lost a large number of livestock and people in this period. Importantly, livestock holdings allow households to mitigate and withstand shocks; when households lack livestock they are significantly more vulnerable. Interviews with Bokora at Kobulin and elsewhere in Moroto indicate that the economic situation of the Bokora changed for the worse after the 2001/2002 disarmament, contributing to factors that have since led to the increased out-migration. For example, Bokora men interviewed at Kobulin listed three main factors that underpinned their initial decisions to leave Karamoja: 1) the intensification of intra-tribal raids; 2) the uneven nature of the disarmament exercises, resulting in the disarmament of the Bokora while the Jie, Matheniko, Pian, and the Pokot retained many guns; and 3) irregular weather patterns and failed or poor harvests. As one man explained:

I ran from Lopei following the current disarmament that left us vulnerable to Jie attacks. And because of hunger and persistent Jie raids I left Bokora and traveled to Kampala.
(Man from Lopei, Kobulin, 8 March)

The current disarmament initiative (2006/2007) further exacerbated the insecurity in Bokora and undermined already stressed livelihood strategies and coping mechanisms. Interviewees in Bokora spoke of murder, rape, torture, looting and burning of manyattas by the UPDF during the on-going disarmament activities. Several interviewees reported that young people or entire families had left Moroto in recent months due in part to the negative consequences of the recent disarmament exercises by the UPDF, which were often followed by devastating raids by enemy groups. In response to questions regarding the causal factors behind out-migration, a male leader replied:

Who is so new in Uganda that he does not know the common problems of drought, raids and disarmament that have affected the Karamojong? (Man at Kobulin, 8 March)

The final report by the Tufts team will include more detailed findings and more extensive analysis on the role of disarmament and links to the undermining of livelihoods and human security, and will come at a later date. For the purposes of this briefing paper, it is clear to the Tufts team that disarmament that is not accompanied by proper protection of disarmed populations by the state is a main contributing factor in the pattern of out-migration from Bokora County.

The third overall factor in the disproportionately high rates of out-migration of Bokora can best be described as a snowball effect, whereby one person follows the next who follows the next and so on, resulting in the out-migration of a network of people connected through their clan associations, villages of origin and extended families. These networks initially existed through a system of stock associates going back generations; today these linkages appear to be most often through word of mouth when one person returns home temporarily or sends word of work opportunities in a particular location.

Individual and Family Level Factors

Most adults and children left Bokora for a combination of reasons, including increased insecurity (which is often a contributing or causal factor in the other destabilizing processes), loss of livestock, a series of poor harvests, death of breadwinners or key family members, poverty, and the weakening or collapse of social safety nets. When these shocks occurred simultaneously or in succession, individuals or households found that they were unable to meet their survival needs.

In nearly all cases of people interviewed, the livelihood situation and/or health status of the individual or household had been in steady decline prior to departure. In most cases of out-migration, a final trigger event caused people to leave their homes. An important trigger

factor for widows was the tradition of being inherited by a brother-in-law, which frequently resulted in the man refusing to provide support for the woman or her children from her first marriage, as well as increased physical abuse by the new husband against the widow and her children.

Movement Patterns from Karamoja to Kampala or Other Cities for Work

Historically, young people who out-migrated from Karamoja would usually be sent by their parents to stock associates or others known to the family. Children could also approach their parents to suggest that they out-migrate to generate food and cash to help the family survive, or, less often, as a means to keep themselves alive in times of extreme hardship and hunger. Most often, the parents would be aware and approve of their children leaving on a temporary basis.

Today both male and female youth out-migrate in greater numbers than in the past, travel farther from Karamoja, and often work for people with whom neither they nor their families have any pre-established contacts or relations. Respondents report that today some young people leave without the blessing or even knowledge of their parents. These shifts indicate an intensification of coping mechanisms, some of which may have negative consequences, such as the collapse of the traditional safety net between sending and receiving families.

In many instances, women and in particular mothers were found to be key decision makers regarding out-migration. Women often made the decision to leave Bokora alone or with children, often because they were neglected or abused by a male relative or husband. Several women interviewed at Kobulin explained that they left after being inherited by brothers-in-law who were unable or unwilling to provide support for them or their children. Women play an important role in managing food security within Karamojong households, and may be more inclined to depart for economic reasons in difficult periods than their male counterparts. Mothers were also central in the few cases of child abandonment and in instances when children were sent to Kampala on their own or with strangers.

Young people and adults who out-migrate travel primarily by bus or lorry after saving enough cash for the fare. Lorries preferred because they are cheaper, and traders are usually willing to carry a load of people after unloading goods in trading centers such as Matany, Kangole and Iriiri. Girls and women report selling firewood to accumulate enough cash for their transport fare. People who do not have adequate fares often are able to get rides for free, and their fare is then paid by a prospective employer at the end of their journey. It was also reported to be possible to move with the livestock traders, whose movements are well known in the county.

Both today and in the past, traders and other migrants serve as a communication and exchange network between labor migrants and their families, including passing information

and goods. Likewise, many labor migrants who are working in Teso or other nearby regions return home regularly and bring information, food, cash and other goods back whenever possible. Many young people return to Karamoja in the rainy season to help cultivate. Many of the young people who work outside of Karamoja return home two to three times per year.

We documented several cases of young people who returned to Moroto (bringing food, cash or coming to help cultivate) and then took siblings with them when they left the region to continue their outside employment. When the children who were taken were younger (including some under five years of age), this was often done to ensure that the younger children had access to food, given poor food security in many households. In some cases, this pattern may lead to the separation of highly stressed families into multiple households, a distress coping mechanism commonly seen in crises. Children or youth who take younger children into their labor network to ensure their survival become responsible for the well-being of their young siblings, some of whom may not work due to their young age. We also heard of older siblings joining those who had out-migrated, sometimes to attend school or to cook for those who were working regular jobs.

It is worth repeating that the pattern we are seeing today is markedly different from the past, in that the majority of young people who are out-migrating are going to work for families or businesses that neither they nor their families knew beforehand.

Begging and Increased Visibility on the Streets of Major Cities

Evidence points to two groups of migrants from Bokora in particular and, to a lesser extent, Karamoja as a whole. The first are predominately young people who out-migrate to engage in casual or seasonal labor and return to their communities throughout the year or seasonally. The second are those who end up on the streets of Kampala and other major cities, where they engage in a range of livelihood strategies that may include begging (usually through using children), sweeping mills in exchange for collecting fallen grain, childcare for children of relatives living in the city, unloading lorries, stocking stores, collecting and selling metal found in garbage dumps and working other odd jobs. As in many poor urban environments, some Karamojong children, in particular those who have been abandoned, largely survive off begging, collecting and selling scrap metal and rubbish and eating garbage.

The increased number of Bokora children and adults ending up on the streets of Kampala and Jinja indicates another stress adaptation in the coping mechanisms of the Bokora. While Karamojong have moved into these cities for years to find work, rates of Karamojong and, in particular, Karamojong children begging and working on the streets of Kampala and other large cities have allegedly climbed dramatically in the last three years. To illustrate, authorities have been bringing street children who are rounded up in Kampala to Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre since 2002. According to the head of the center, in 2002 and 2003 there were no Karamojong among the children received by the facility, and this

number rose to four Karamojong children in 2004. The numbers increased markedly in 2005, and in 2006 approximately 80% of the children at Kampiringisa were Karamojong (Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre, 15 March 2007). Notably, the majority of these children were Bokora.

Staff members at Kampiringisa report that there are important differences between the Karamojong and the non-Karamojong children brought to the center. First, children on the streets in Kampala from other parts of the country are typically unaccompanied and have homes to which they may potentially return. In contrast, Karamojong children often accompany their parents to Kampala, and many are in fact living in the city with their closest family members. Second, and related, the practice of ‘supervised begging’ that is common among the Karamojong does not seem to appear in other ethnic groups. Third, the ratio of girls to boys among the Karamojong children on the street is higher than in other groups, which tend to have more boys than girls on the streets. Fourth, Karamojong children generally appear to be younger than other street children, for whom the average age is 13 to 17 years. Lastly, Karamojong children are believed to engage in significantly less drug use than street children from other areas. Again, this may be linked to the presence of the family structure in Kampala.

Key questions on the links between these two groups of out-migrants remain unanswered, including: Do people who leave Karamoja to seek casual work end up on the streets if they are unable to find labor? What are the demographic differences between these groups? How do push factors differ? At present we can hypothesize that many people are leaving Karamoja, and Bokora in particular, with the explicit intent of going to Kampala, Jinja and Mbale. A number have used family and information networks to move between these and other cities, migrating as labor availability (or rumors of labor availability) ebb and flow. Others may leave Karamoja with a less clear plan of their destination and may work in various locations for extended period of time before eventually coming to Kampala. A number of these people end up living off the streets for at least part of the time.

IV. The Case of Kobulin

Overview

Having presented the larger context of Bokora out-migration, we now turn to the case of persons picked up on the streets of Kampala and taken to a site in Bokora County called Kobulin. It is important to note that the dominant factor that this population shares is that at least one family member was rounded up in Kampala and deposited back in Karamoja. The majority of these people were removed from the streets in raids or sweeps conducted by Kampala City Council (KCC) officers or the Kampala police. They were then sent to

Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre, which was serving as a detention site and holding center prior to return to Karamoja and arrival at the Kobulin reception site.³ Because of the ad hoc way in which these people came to be in Kobulin, we cannot say that they represent the larger Karamojong or even Bokora population in Kampala. Likewise, we cannot say that they do not represent this population. Simply put, we are unable to make broader suppositions or claims one way or the other based on the way in which this ‘sample’ was drawn.

We visited Kobulin and Nakiriomet in the first week of March 2007, at which point 671 people had been returned by government officials to Bokora country from Kampala. Of these, 347 wished to be settled at new sites as opposed to returning to their original villages. (This number may have decreased in the intervening time due to the delay and controversy surrounding the resettlement process and relocation sites). All of the people interviewed by the Tufts team and all respondents referred to in this briefing note are those who arrived at Kobulin in February or March 2006.

Reasons for Leaving Karamoja

Many returnees at Kobulin explained that they had tried to survive for a time in Karamoja after a series of related hardships, most notably increased insecurity, raids which depleted their herds, irregular rains, failed harvests and hunger. As discussed above, most people in the study population at Kobulin reported a final ‘trigger’ event that served to push them out of Karamoja. As described in the following account, the sequence of events leading to a crisis point and accompanying decision to leave for Kampala was fairly typical in the stories of the women at Kobulin:

Why did you decide to go to Kampala?

I left for Kampala because of a very big problem. The enemies raided at night and took the animals and killed a relative of mine. One of the enemies was wounded, and crawled into our home. In the morning, he became wild, and we went to the UPDF for help. But the man set fire to the houses and destroyed everything. The fire destroyed the homes of two families; only then was the rest of the manyatta saved.

Why did you go to Kampala instead of rebuilding?

Our family assets were destroyed in the fire, including our sorghum. We were frustrated. My husband began trapping rats to survive. One day my husband met the enemy while

³ Interviewees consistently referred to being in “detention” and being sent to a “detention center,” hence our use of the term here. Although the security at Kampiringisa Centre was minimal, the facility is located almost an hour’s drive from Kampala, and those who “escaped” talked of walking through the night and fear of getting lost. Once at Kampiringisa people, particularly children, felt they had few options other than to stay. Furthermore, the center staff reported that children *were not* released to parents or guardians *unless* those adults could prove that they were able to provide a good home for the children. Parents and guardians are also only able to visit children at the center once or twice a month while the children are at the center.

trapping rats. He escaped, but was scared to hunt anymore. We sat down together and found that we had saved some money from selling rats. My husband said I should just go to Kampala with the children to try to survive. If he died, he wanted to die alone.
(*Woman from Lokopo, Kobulin, 8 March*)

This woman left for Kampala with four of her children, leaving her husband behind. Her fifth child, a daughter of about eight or nine years, fled during the attack on the manyatta and has not been back since, although relatives reported seeing the girl on the streets in Mbale. This example illustrates how families become stressed to the point of disintegration and the limited options they perceive to be available for continued survival, even if only some of the family members take part in these strategies. The woman's account also reveals the experiences of deprivation and violence that may result in some children deciding to leave the district on their own volition.

A number of the people at Kobulin had been able to gather financial resources to enable them to make the journey out of Karamoja. Notably, like the woman above, several of the women interviewed at Kobulin pointed out that they had gone to Kampala because they had been able to save money for the journey, usually through the sale of firewood. They often emphasized that this gave them an advantage over others in their manyattas. For instance, one woman, also from Lokopo, explained:

Other people also had hunger, but they lacked the money to travel to Kampala. They would have all gone if they could. I saved money by collecting firewood until I could afford to go. (*Woman from Lokopo, Kobulin, 8 March*)

Others left for Kampala because they were "lucky enough to have a relative there." Thus, leaving for Kampala or other cities is something done by those who are, in some ways, at an *advantage* over other members of their community, either through cash savings, availability of other assets, or family connections. Although trigger factors often push people into making the decision to go, it is *not* the case that those who leave are always the most vulnerable or are out-casts from their sending communities. Indeed, as discussed below, people who remain behind assume that life for out-migrants in Kampala or other cities is better than in Karamoja, and they expect their relatives to return with clothes, food and gifts.

Many of the female returnees at Kobulin initially left Karamoja with other family members or with their entire immediate family. In a number of cases, the decision to go was described as a joint decision between husband and wife. In some cases, one spouse would go first and be followed by the husband or wife at a later date.

Nearly all the children interviewed at Kobulin, including children that were unaccompanied at the time, had left Karamoja with an immediate or extended family member. In some cases,

the children reported that they would move with multiple relatives (often an intact immediate family) from city to city, with Soroti, Mbale, Jinja and Kampala being the most commonly cited locations. Members of the family would leave or drop off the group in various locations. Some went back to Karamoja, others left to seek work in other locations, and others stayed behind while the rest of the family moved on.

Notably, those few children at Kobulin who left for Kampala or other cities on their own had suffered neglect or abuse within their households. In the cases of 'unaccompanied' or 'separated' children we met at Kobulin, these children fell into two categories: 1) those that had initially left Karamoja on their own due to hunger and or physical or sexual abuse at home and who showed no interest in returning to their families; and 2) those who had been abandoned by family members in Kampala. Some children in this latter group held on to the belief that their relatives had gone ahead to look for a better life in another city and were going to come back for them, even if they had been abandoned up to two years ago. It was adults who orchestrated the movement of children into cities in the case of most of the children at Kobulin, and in some cases these same adults then abandoned these children or simply disappeared.

In one case, a child was sent by her mother to Kampala with an adult whom neither she nor her mother knew. The woman arrived at the manyatta while the girl was out fetching water, and allegedly asked if there was anyone who would allow her to take their child to beg on the streets of Kampala, with the stipulation that money would be sent back to the family. This girl's mother apparently agreed, and the girl returned from fetching water to learn that she was going to Kampala with a stranger. The girl reported that she cried and objected, but she was beaten by her mother and forced to go. In Kampala the girl begged on the streets under the supervision of the woman, who kept all of the girl's money. The woman eventually abandoned the girl on the streets. We highlight this example as one of the destructive distress coping mechanisms being adopted by households in Bokora. This example is also important because it is in line with standard patterns of child trafficking. While we note that we did not encounter this type of arrangement as a widespread pattern, nonetheless it does raise concerns.

Life in Kampala

Women and children who out-migrated to Kampala or other cities usually had very little information on where they were going or what the conditions would be. For many, 'Kampala' was simply a place where other Karamojong had gone. Some had relatives in Kampala; many did not. Those who did have relatives in Kampala often found these people difficult to locate and unable to provide any assistance.

Not surprisingly, many women found that their expectations of a better life in Kampala were not realized. They had hoped to be able to find ready employment and to make money, but

ended up scavenging for food in the markets, working odd jobs for almost no pay, and sending their children to the streets to beg. One woman explained:

There was no way to make money in Kampala. The Baganda would not give us work. The only resort was to beg on the streets. In the course of going to the streets we were rounded up...and eventually transported back here. (*Woman from Lokopo, Kobulin, 8 March*)

This reality was in contrast to the image of Kampala held by many people in Karamoja. This nature of these conflicting images was apparent in the response of relatives to the arrival of the returnees at Kobulin. “Our relatives assume we have clothes and money,” a woman from Kaabong explained, “and they come here asking for these things” (*Woman, Kobulin, 8 March*).

Livelihood Strategies

Although many interviewees found life in Kampala to be more difficult than they had expected, families and individuals did manage to get by. The stereotype of a Karamojong in Kampala is of someone living on the streets, sleeping on the streets, and surviving through begging, often through the exploitative use of children. This stereotype is inaccurate.

Begging, although highly visible, was usually only one part of a more complex livelihood strategy. For example, women who sent their children out to beg were themselves doing odd jobs, including sweeping granaries, selling water, selling small goods on the street for a local trader, helping to process grains or nuts, providing domestic labor and looking for food at the vegetable markets. For example, one woman from Matany held a job at a hotel for three years. She was unable to make enough money to put her children in school, but her children usually did not have to beg on the streets. Importantly, most children who engaged in begging did not do this full-time or as their only means of income. Most children interviewed engaged in a number of different ‘jobs’ to make ends meet, including sweeping mills in exchange for collecting fallen grain, unloading lorries, providing childcare for the children of relatives in the city, stocking stores, collecting and selling metal found in garbage dumps and engaging in other daily odd jobs. Some children, in particular children whose parents had abandoned them in one of the major cities, largely survived off begging, collecting and selling scrap metal and rubbish and eating food out of garbage bins.

In the cases where multiple family members were together in Kampala, usually only one or two of the children would beg and these would only beg part time. The other children would engage in other forms of labor and some even attended school. Children who were regularly sent to beg said that they did not like begging because of potential arrest and abuse by the police and KCC officers. They also reported that if they refused to go out to beg, their parents, relatives or self-appointed ‘guardians’ would beat them until they went out to the streets.

My mother would beat me and force me onto the streets to beg. Even when I could go to school [through sponsorship by Dwelling Places], she would beat me to go beg on the street before school started... When I was in school my younger sister [age 9] stayed on the streets to beg. (*12 year old girl, Kobulin, 8 February 2007*)

Another girl who was living with a non-relative reported:

An older girl forced me to go to the street. If I refused, I was beaten and told that I would be sent back to my parents, who did not want me. So my only choice was to go to the street and beg. (*10 year old girl, Kobulin, 8 February 2007*)

Notably, begging was one of the most lucrative forms of labor available to children. Young children could earn 1,000 to 20,000 UsG a day, with most reporting that an income of 5,000 UsG was a typical good day. In comparison, children reported earning in the range of 200-900 UsG for a morning of labor in the granaries, which was much harder labor and included sweeping the floors and collecting, sorting and washing fallen grains.

Some of the children interviewed reported that they had never begged or labored on the streets. These children said that they had been sent back to Karamoja after one child in their family was picked up for begging and the entire family was detained and then expelled.

A number of children were employed to sweep the floors of the grinding mills. In exchange for their labor they were allowed to collect the grains that had spilled onto the floor. If they were diligent, this would often amount to one cup of grain per day. This was a popular livelihood strategy, and children reported rising very early in the morning to reach the mills before other Karamojong women and children who also wanted to sweep the grains. The children described the labor as arduous and the mills full of airborne particles that irritated their lungs and eyes.

Nearly all children collected food from garbage piles and from the granary floors. All the children said that they had enough to eat in Kampala and reported that the food was better and more plentiful than in Karamoja. When asked about their lives in Kampala, almost all children started with the fact that they had enough food. A 15 year old girl expressed a commonly heard sentiment: "It was good, we ate daily" (*Kobulin, February 8, 2007*). Another girl said, "It was good to be a family, we ate and cooked together" (*12 year old girl, Kobulin, February 8, 2007*). Like others who were able to support their families, a third girl said, "There is plenty of food in Kampala and I can help support my family back home" (*12 year old girl, Kobulin, February 8, 2007*).

When asked if they had learned anything new in Kampala, many children spoke proudly of being able to help support their families either in Kampala or back in Bokora. These children

were able to save money or food to send home to their families, sometimes in significant amounts. Children brought sacks of grain accumulated over months of sweeping mill floors, saucepans, clothes, and cash back to their families. In a few cases, however, the adult 'guardians' stole the savings accumulated by the children and then abandoned the children in the city.

Exploitation When Trying to Meet Basic Needs

Based on interviews in Kobulin, Karamojong face exploitation in Kampala in almost every aspect of trying to meet basic needs, and had to pay high rates to acquire shelter, food, water, health care and the use of a toilet. People were also exploited economically and often had to struggle to maintain their own physical integrity.⁴

Every woman and most of the children interviewed described sleeping in temporary shelters that served as beer halls during the day and evening hours. The cost for staying in these shelters was 500 UsG a night per adult and 300 UsG per child. Because of the operating hours of the drinking establishments, most women and children were only allowed into the sleeping areas very late at night. They had to leave when the beer halls opened the next day, taking their belongings with them.

Children said that they were sometimes able to live in a rented apartment space. This usually only occurred if the children generated sufficient money from begging, sweeping grains, or collecting metal scraps and then turned this money over to an adult who paid the rent and other expenses. Pressure on children to continue to generate money to cover rent was intense and the children reported being beaten by the adults if they refused to go to the streets to beg or if they did not bring back enough money. This was the case both for children who lived with relatives and those who lived with adults who were not their relatives in rented accommodations.

The majority of children interviewed were responsible for finding their own food, which was most often acquired by picking through rubbish and garbage dumps. Although there are significant health risks to eating spoiled food and collecting garbage, we learned that the children take enormous pride in being able to find their own food and provide for themselves. They spoke of learning how to clean and prepare food that others had discarded in ways that kept them fed and (relatively) healthy. As mentioned above, the majority of the children interviewed said that the quantity and quality of food available to them was better in Kampala than in Karamoja. In the words of one eight year old girl: "In Kampala, I was fat and looking good!" (*Kobulin, 8 February 2007*).

⁴ We do not have data to show that the Karamojong in Kampala are any *more* or *less* exploited than other groups and are not making any relative claims. Rather we are seeking to explain life in Kampala as explained by interviewees.

Most women reported similar strategies for acquiring food. Women explained that they would send their children out to the streets (often supervised by older children) and would then scavenge the vegetable markets for rotten food or food that had fallen from the traders' tables. Many also reported going through rubbish bins for food. A main source of food was through purchase from the cash brought from the streets or through casual labor by their children at the end of the day. Women who had odd jobs or occasional labor reported being paid in cash and using this money to purchase food for themselves and their children.

Children and women reported difficulty in accessing clean drinking water. At times they would have to pay for drinking water from street vendors. Accessing sufficient water for bathing was particularly difficult, especially in the dry season. Children who slept in beer halls or collective living spaces said they were charged money by the landlords for each use of the toilet. Being charged to use the toilets was also reported by adult men and women.

Children reported having better access to health care in Kampala than in Karamoja, and said that there was a free clinic where they could access health care.⁵ In contrast, women interviewed said that payment was required for health care in Kampala except at the clinic support by the NGO Dwelling Places, where care was free.⁶ Prior to being moved to Kobulin, some of children were receiving medical treatments for significant diseases, including syphilis. In these cases, the children expressed concern that they were not able to finish their treatments and worried that the disease might come back. Notably, health services at Kobulin were insufficient and the staff members at the center were unaware that some of the children had previously been taking medication for serious diseases and were now without medicines.

Children were concerned about their own bodily integrity during their time in Kampala or other cities, including physical and sexual abuse. Girls in particular reported threats of sexual violence as a concern, especially adolescents laboring on the streets. One girl reported that when she was begging she was raped by an adult male who then threw a few shillings at her. Girls said that men would often proposition girls on the street for sex but most maintained that neither they nor their friends would voluntarily engage in this behavior, which they considered frightening and high risk. There were no reports of sexual abuse against boys on the street, but this may be due to stigma associated with homosexual sex and male sexual abuse. Likewise, no women at Kobulin reported sexual abuse or engagement

⁵ There is discrepancy between the reports regarding fees for health services among the respondents. The children said that they could "go to a hospital" for medical care, but it was established that they were not clear on the differences between a hospital and a clinic. The reference to "free" health care may also refer only to the period after Dwelling Places gave support through a clinic.

⁶ The NGO Dwelling Places is well-known among the Karamojong at Kobulin as an organization that has provided support and assistance to Karamojong in Kampala and Jinja.

in sex as an economic transaction. Notably, the main social worker at Kobulin said that she had not considered the possibility that any of the women or children might have experienced sexual abuse or engaged in transactional sex. The male head of a local CBO helping to establish people at the resettlement site said that because Karamojong on the streets are considered unclean and because the Karamojong do not sexually abuse children there was no need to check for or discuss sexual abuse or infections. There was no screening of or counseling for sexual abuse or sexually-transmitted diseases by the nurse at the reception site.

Nearly all the children reported harassment and beatings by police and Kampala City Council (KCC) officers. Younger children could not distinguish between police and KCC officers so it is unclear which group is primarily responsible for the alleged abuses. Children described being lured to police/KCC vehicles with bribes of food. They alleged that they were then grabbed, beaten, and taken to the detention centers. Others described raids on the streets in which children were captured, thoroughly beaten with police batons, and “thrown like pieces of wood” into the police/KCC vehicles. Older children reported seeing small children of two to four years old beaten by police and forced into vehicles. Children of any age who cried or called out in the vehicles allegedly were further beaten. According to a 12 year old girl,

We had problems in Kampala, especially with the KCC people, they would beat us and force us into their cars. If you resist they beat you with a heavy stick [police baton]. We were then picked up and thrown into the cars. They don't let you go home, they force you into their car. We are then beaten more and taken to Kampiringisa center and then we look for any way to escape. (*Kobulin, 8 February 2007*).

The majority of the children reported they were taken to Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre upon being arrested or rounded up. Children reported different experiences at the center. The majority reported that the boarding and food at the center were fine. A number complained of being forced to labor in the orchards or fields and to collect firewood and water, and said that those who refused to work were beaten by center staff. Nearly all the children reported that children who cried for prolonged periods or caused trouble (such as fighting, verbally antagonizing others or “being stubborn”) were beaten by the staff. Only one child interviewee liked being at the center and this young girl reported that it was her first opportunity to attend school (there is a school at the center). Some children said that they escaped and walked throughout the night to get back to Kampala.

Importantly, our interviews and interactions with senior staff members at Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre suggest the presence of a professional staff concerned with the well-being of street children. At the same time, we do have concerns about the treatment of

children at the center, given that nearly all the children we interviewed in separate interviews gave similar accounts of how, when, and why children were beaten by center staff.

Several children reported in individual interviews that that they were not taken to Kampiringisa but rather to a holding room in Kampala where they were detained by police or KCC officers. The children said that their families or the people exploiting them on the streets had to pay money to the police or KCC officers to gain their release. Children gave relatively consistent information on the amount charged per child, for example:

A man called [name] picks us up and takes us to Kampala and locks us up again in the office of the city council. Then parents or guardians come and pay money to get us out. The price is based on the size of the child, 10,000 UsG for a younger child of 8 to 10, the very little ones are 5,000 UsG, and up to 50,000 UsG for teenagers. If people failed to pay, you go to Kampiringisa. (*Girl, Kobulin, 8 February 2007*)

If no one came to pay for their release after a few days, then the police or KCC officers took the children to Kampiringisa. Interviews with the staff at Kampiringisa indicate that the staff members were unaware of these practices alleged by the children. The center staff said that by law the children should be brought directly to the rehabilitation center. To note, the center was not initially designed or officially gazetted to be part of a mass custodial process, and only youth who have been through a legal process were intended to be brought to Kampiringisa.⁷

Being Sent to Kobulin Reception Site

We interviewed three categories of returnees at Kobulin: women, children and men, all of whom had arrived at Kobulin in February or early March 2006. The accounts of the process varied considerably among these groups. To illustrate, many of the men said that they had left Kampala voluntarily based on the incentives they had been promised upon their return to Karamoja, including cash infusions for start-up businesses, free education for children through secondary school, and high quality food and non-food items such as mattresses. The source of these false promises has not been determined, but in interviews the men expressed anger and resentment that their expectations had not been met. Notably, in many cases the men were not related to the women and children at Kobulin, nor did most appear to be participating in begging as a means of livelihood. In fact, a number of the men had held relatively well paying jobs in Kampala, including several who owned and ran their own business. Some men identified local politicians as the source of the promises regarding start-up grants for businesses. Others believed that they were pushed out of Kampala because

⁷ Correspondence with Unicef/Kampala, May 2007. The exact details on possible legislative changes affecting temporary status of Kampiringisa for the purpose of Karamojong removals are unclear.

their businesses provided services for Karamojong and thus they were seen as a draw for more Karamojong to come to Kampala.

In contrast, the women described a process of forced return, in which they were rounded-up, usually on the streets in the Kisenyi neighborhood, taken to Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre and then loaded onto buses for Karamoja. This process was described as an “abrupt operation” and as being sudden, chaotic and without consent. One woman was separated from her young son while being loaded onto a bus in Kisenyi. The boy was frightened by the commotion during the operation and ran away; she was forced to board the bus with her other children. She does not know what happened to the boy. Another woman told how she argued with one of the organizers of the return:

As we were boarding the vehicle I asked one of the women leaders if she understood the problems that forced me to come to Kampala. I said, ‘Will you solve these problems for me?’ And the woman leader said, ‘Yes, the government will solve them for you.’” (*Woman from Namalu, at Kobulin, March 8, 2007*)

All of the female respondents said that their only choice was to board the bus and return to Karamoja: they were given no alternatives. All the children spoke similarly, saying that their only choice was to get on buses for Karamoja or to remain in detention at Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre.

To note, however, a few women stated that even if they had been given a choice, they still might have opted for a free ride back to Karamoja. One elderly woman who went to Kampala after the death of her husband and son said:

I had no alternative to come back here. But if it had been my choice, I would have preferred to come back, because no one could help me in Kampala. But no one here has much either. (*Woman from Lokopo, 8 March, 2007*)

No children indicated that they would have chosen to come back to Karamoja at the time they were forced to return, although once at Kobulin, some said they would stay if they could be guaranteed access to school. The children stressed that they would need to go to boarding school, as otherwise the amount of labor their parents or families would require of them would require quitting school. Others said they planned to return to Kampala or another city at the next opportunity.

Hopes and Concerns for the Future

Respondents at Kobulin expressed a great deal of concern regarding their future. Immediate issues included the shortage of food at Kobulin,⁸ the lack of transport for those still waiting to return to their home areas, the unfulfilled promises that they had been offered as incentives to return, and the failure to secure a resettlement site for those who did not want to return to their communities of origin. A woman who was one of the few people from Pian at the site worried about possible ethnic tensions with the Bokora, especially if there were to be a raid or any other security incident. She had been waiting for a bus to take her to Namalu for several days and was told repeatedly that it was arriving imminently.

Current security concerns included the presence of raiders in the area (although people said that security had improved after an increase in the number of soldiers), fighting among residents, and the potential for sexual predation, particular at night. At the time of our visit there was no regular source of lighting at Kobulin, and recent arrivals were staying in two large tents at the site. Kobulin is also inhabited by a group of residents who were brought from the streets of Kampala between 2004 and 2006, many of whom were still squatting in buildings at the site. Relations between this group and the recent arrivals were not entirely positive, and the presence of alcohol in the evening hours exacerbated tensions. Serious concerns exist both on the part of the Tufts team and respondents at Kobulin regarding the potential of sexual assault and exploitation at the site, particularly after dark.

Of larger concern to the adult population at Kobulin was the question of permanent settlement.⁹ The proposed Nakiriomet (Lomoroit) resettlement site has long been a disputed area between the Teso and the Bokora. Some of the male respondents and other key informants speculated that local politicians may have seen the high profile situation of the Karamojong being returned from Kampala as a way to stake a firmer claim to the land by establishing a new settlement in the disputed area. One key informant had heard that people were told *not* to move from Nakiriomet in order to establish the land as “a Karamojong area.” Regardless of the underlying motives or factors, the group we interviewed had already been at Kobulin for more than 10 days and was aware of the political problems with the proposed resettlement site. Poor security at the alternate resettlement site was also a concern, as the site is located in a corridor known to be a route used by armed raiders moving through the area. It was suggested that local politicians had proposed settling people in this location as a way to disrupt the movement of raiding parties.

⁸ The recent arrivals at Kobulin were being provided with WFP rations at the time of our visit. Interviewees complained that these rations were insufficient and that the earlier returnees (2004-2006) who were squatting at the site were eating some of the food. Other likely factors include inappropriate portion size (i.e., larger than WFP's kilocalorie allocations per person) due to lack of training and/or coordination between camp management, managers of the food store, cooks and servers. This would result in premature consumption of the food provided.

⁹ At the time of writing, there was no decision regarding permanent settlement site. Populations were understandably hesitant to begin preparing fields due to uncertainty of longer term residency.

Several of the women interviewees raised the question of their children's education. A number of children had been in school in Kampala, either at Kampiringisa or through private sponsorship. The round-up operation had occurred during school holidays, and children who would normally be in school were now lying idle at Kobulin. Many people, including the social workers, were under the impression that the returnee children would receive free education through secondary school. When we visited, however, the school term had already begun and no one had come to collect the children from Kobulin and register them in schools.¹⁰

The few adults that we were able to interview at Nakiriomet expressed less anxiety than those at Kobulin, but it should be noted that not everyone had heard that there was a problem with the resettlement site. Two unaccompanied teenage girls at Nakiriomet who had heard about the problem with the site were upset and frustrated and told the social worker that they would rather go back to Kobulin than remain at Nakiriomet.

The Tufts team raised two points of concern regarding the planned new settlements with the staff of one of the community-based organizations managing the return process. The first is the notion of creating a community from a disparate group of people who have nothing in common other than being Karamojong picked up in Kampala. Manyattas are normally comprised of extended family members related by blood and marriage, and the sharing of resources among family members within the manyattas is crucial to maintaining households and the manyattas as a whole. Few of the households present at Nakiriomet or Kobulin were related.

The second and related point is the extremely high proportion of female-headed households in the group to be resettled, estimated by a local CBO at close to 90%. A member of our team with 30 years of experience in the Karamoja region said that he had never encountered a manyatta with such high numbers of female headed households and wondered how such a group could function given the gendered divisions of labor and protection. To counter this lack of protection, a UPDF detach had been stationed at Nakiriomet, and the CBO staff said that the detach would remain "until the manyatta could provide protection for itself." The indicators of this threshold being reached were unclear. Several respondents worried that creating new manyattas of non-related and largely female-headed households guarded by the UPDF was not a viable long-term solution. Our team finds the success and sustainability of this scenario highly improbable.

¹⁰ As of late May 2007, Unicef Kampala reported that the Church of Uganda had provided support for 203 children to attend boarding school and others to attend day schools in their home villages upon return. The longer term sustainability and oversight of these arrangements is yet to be determined.

V. Conclusion

Our findings suggest that the livelihood systems of many Bokora households have been significantly undermined, with the combined effects of insecurity, responses to insecurity and loss of livestock seriously eroding people's ability to cope with repeat and prolonged shocks such as multi-year droughts or repeated crop failures. Certain long-standing coping mechanisms, such as out-migration for labor and the inheritance of widows and their children by male in-laws, are in some cases compounding vulnerabilities.

Current interventions that seek to improve conditions in Bokora appear unlikely to be successful in stemming the flow of migrants. For example, the livelihood systems of many Bokora households and communities are stressed to the point at which interventions of school feeding, improved medical care, and flow of information will likely have little impact. In fact, some of the young people interviewed who are out-migrating for casual or seasonal labor from Bokora manyattas had been attending school and participating in the school feeding programs until the day they departed. While these programs do encourage parents to send children to school and do provide children with meals, they are not sufficient to counter the stress on the livelihood system and the enactment of coping mechanisms in response to this stress.

The current form of out-migration visible among the Bokora is a distress adaptation of a previously existing and effective coping mechanism that involved negotiated and planned movement between stock associates and relatives. This adaptation has had negative impacts, and the Bokora themselves speak of the disintegration of families, creation of second households headed by children, abandonment of children in cities, sexual abuse of children on the streets, increased vulnerability of children to trafficking and, in some cases, children caught up in trafficking networks. On the positive side, children said they learned important skills in how to survive and provide for themselves under difficult conditions. A number of children also contributed significantly to the survival of other members of their families, including younger siblings, both in Kampala and back in their manyattas in Bokora. Those children who were able to provide inputs for their families back home felt positively about themselves and their abilities. Likewise, all the children reported having better quality and quantity of food in Kampala than Karamoja. The fact that children speak glowingly of eating food from garbage dumps should serve as a wake-up call as to the levels of food insecurity among the Bokora populations from which these children originate.

Women, in particular mothers, appear to be key decision makers in the process of out-migration, with the decision to out-migrate or to send children out with relatives or unknown persons frequently made by the child's mother. In seeking to understand this pattern, we recognize that widows are a particularly vulnerable group within Karamoja, even though few are likely to remain technically 'widows' for long due to the practice of widow inheritance and the pressure to remarry. It is apparent, however, that some of these women and their

children are more vulnerable upon remarrying, as our data indicate that new husbands are often unwilling or unable to support the women or their children from first marriages. A widow has customary rights to the cattle of her deceased husband, but this asset is often non-existent, split among multiple wives, or lost in the same raid that took the husband's life. A widow who does inherit cattle upon the death of her husband may lose the cattle through force (i.e., the animals are taken over by the new husband) or through distress sales as she seeks to support herself and her children. Once again, the children of these women may be attending school for free and receiving school feeding. This program is cited as very helpful for the children, but does not help support the larger family unless a child is eligible for take-home rations. Hence, efforts to combat out-migration of children will have to strongly factor in the vulnerabilities of widows or women who have been traditionally inherited (and neglected) by their brothers-in-law.

The Government of Uganda now recognizes that protection for disarmed populations is necessary. Currently in Bokora, manyattas that have livestock are expected to bring the herds to the barracks for protection by UPDF soldiers and members of local defense units. Although the recognition of the need for protection is an important development, the security scheme—which entails all animals being held together under UPDF control—is not sustainable in its current form. One of the major concerns relates to the level of UPDF awareness of seasonal migration patterns. The question of who migrates with the herds—this nearly always includes women and vulnerable children seeking access to a supply of animal products—and how the soldiers will deal with this reality from a protection perspective is of particular importance. The 2006/2007 dry season was reported to be unusually wet, with sporadic rainfall which resulted in more grasses and fresh water sources than in a normal year. This meant that the UPDF were able to keep several thousand head of cattle near the barracks. This concentration of animals will not be possible in normal dry seasons, and it is unclear (to the UPDF commanders interviewed as well as to the Tufts team) how the UPDF will deal with the need to split the animals into smaller groups for dry season migration. Finally, better security schemes for livestock do nothing to assist those who have already lost their livestock due to raids or in the disarmament processes.

Karamojong children laboring on the streets of Kampala and other cities are highly vulnerable to exploitation and violence. It is important to recognize that the relatives and purported 'guardians' of these children may be part of this cycle of violence and exploitation, both in the cities and at future reception and resettlement sites. Policy makers and programmers should not a priori assume that these people will make decisions in the best interest of the children under their supervision. Likewise, some of the unaccompanied children left their homes due to abuse within their families, including sexual abuse, which means that returning these children to their original homes is not a solution. Other children were abandoned by their families in Kampala or other cities. Again, returning children to such families without first conducting home visits and family assessments is not advised.

Views and perceptions of the Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre were decidedly mixed, with some reported cases of the treatment of juveniles a serious cause for concern. There needs to be more investigation and work with the authorities at this center regarding allegations of abuse, beatings and discipline. This is particularly the case if the process of deportation of Karamojong is to continue and/or if the center is to be used to detain children found on the streets or other youngsters.

If the removal of Karamojong from cities continues it will be necessary to address the legality of this process as well as the repercussions of expulsion. The process of removing people from the streets should be carried out in accordance with Ugandan law, including observing due legal process and officially gazetted sites for detaining and transporting adults and children. There will need to be pre-determined locations for resettlement and trained and facilitated social workers on site to handle these arrivals. More thought will need to be given as to how to structure the sites to minimize sexual violence or exploitation. There is also a need to ensure that the staff members at these locations are well-trained and have adequate supervision. Of note, the staff at the centers and the facilitating community based organizations or NGOs need to have drugs on hand to continue with any courses of medication that people are taking before their arrival.

Addressing the issue of out-migration from Karamoja and Bokora in particular will require dealing with the underlying causes of out-migration. This will require the Government of Uganda to recognize the causal factors in this process, which we have outlined in this paper and which we will present in more detail in our final report. Unless those underlying factors – insecurity and widespread loss of livestock due to raids, attacks during disarmament and distress sale – are recognized and addressed, we do not see a reversal in the coping mechanism of out-migration.

VI. Recommendations

Recommendations are made to the relevant bodies of the Government of Uganda, donor governments, the United Nations, NGOs, and community-based organizations working in Uganda. Although we direct our comments to all relevant actors, we stress that the Government of Uganda bears primary responsibility for peace, security and development in the Karamoja region and for protecting and upholding the rights of the Karamojong people, wherever they may choose to live in Uganda. All actions regarding children should be undertaken in the best interest of each individual child and in line with international standards contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, as well as and national standards set forth in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and the Ugandan Children's Act.

Trends suggest that the removal of Karamojong from Kampala and other cities is likely to continue in some form or another. By putting forward these recommendations the Tufts team emphasizes that it is not condoning this process.

Removing Karamojong People from Kampala and other Cities

- Any process of return to Karamoja should be one of facilitated voluntary return based on informed consent, not one of coercion, detention and forced removal and return. To this end, all aspects of the return process should be voluntary and based upon full and transparent information provided to people who might consider return.
- Trained and informed social workers working in conjunction with trained Kampala City Council officers should offer facilitated voluntary return as part of an outreach program to people spending all or part of their time on the streets.
- Any temporary processing location required for the process of facilitated voluntary return should be gazetted as such. This center should be staffed with trained and informed social workers, and should be open for daily services, not overnight accommodation.
- Accurate information should be available regarding any incentives for return, including details on finalized resettlement sites, options for family reunification, transport once in Karamoja, education for children, duration of food rations, types of return kits or non-food rations provided, expected time in any 'reception' center within Karamoja, and health care and social support services to be provided at the reception center and/or the resettlement site.
- Due process of law should be upheld for adults and children who are arrested for infractions in Kampala. This process should include informing those detained of the reason for the arrest, prompt notification of family members in the case of minors, the ability of the accused to access legal council and appear before a regularly constituted court, and officially gazetted detention and/or rehabilitation sites.
- If children without caregivers are removed from the streets they should be handled by specially trained child protection officers and held separately from adults. Notification of family members should be of the utmost priority. Parents or legal guardians should have the right to take children from official custody unless a crime has been committed, and should have the right to full information regarding criminal cases. Lawyers and social workers trained in dealing with children should be available for criminal cases.
- The principle of maintaining family unity should be upheld at all times.
- Allegations regarding police and Kampala City Council officers beating children, illegally detaining children, and extorting money from family members for the release of children should be promptly investigated by the relevant government bodies and the findings released in a public report.

Return and Resettlement Process in Karamoja

- Returnees should have access to complete, accurate and transparent information in advance of arrival in Karamoja. This should include information regarding resettlement options, education, health care, food and non-food assistance, and protection. Information on all these topics should include indications of the duration of these services and the actors responsible for providing these services.

- In Karamoja, returnees should be facilitated in returning to their communities of origin if this is their preference, and this should occur in a timely and transparent manner.
- In the case of unaccompanied children wishing to return to their village of origins, trained social workers should accompany the children to the family and any decision should be based on the best interest of the individual child. Trained social workers should conduct follow-up visits to monitor reintegration of children.
- Effective coordination should take place between national and local government officials and a specific plan agreed and committed to prior to any return operation being launched. Community-based or other relevant organizations should be consulted in advance of returns and resettlements, and efforts made to ensure the capacity of these bodies to support return and resettlement.
- Resettlement sites should be selected and officially approved in advance of the arrival of any returnees. These sites should be away from contested areas and raider's corridors, and should have access to potable water, land for cultivation, and roads.
- Time spent in any reception or processing sites should be as short as possible. Professional trained social workers should be at these sites in advance, and should have regular oversight and facilitation in their work.
- Any reception sites should have the following basic aspects:
 - adequate food rations (with personnel trained in ration management and allocation);
 - adequate security provided by trained security guards/police;
 - artificial lighting at night;
 - separate sleeping areas for families and unmarried men and women/children;
 - prohibitions on the consumption and/or sale of alcohol;
 - access to clean water and adequate sanitation, including separate latrines for males and females;
 - health screening and medical treatment, including screening and treatment for sexually-transmitted diseases in men, women and youth;
 - continuing courses of medication for any returnees who may have been receiving treatment for illnesses in Kampala.
- Social workers at reception sites should be trained in responding to sexual abuse and exploitation. Social workers should also have training and experience in counseling, family tracing and family reunification.
- Provisions should be made for on-going monitoring and follow-up with returnees and resettled populations. Organizations or officials conducting follow-up visits should have information on referrals and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Out-migration from Bokora

Preventing the negative aspects of distress out-migration from Bokora and elsewhere in Karamoja will require addressing the underlying and causal factors that have led to the intensification and adaptation of this coping mechanism. This will require overall development and economic investment in the region to address the on-going loss of livelihoods, particularly for youth, and to counter decades of social, economic and political

marginalization. Social services provided by the government will be a key aspect of this development strategy. Addressing the causal factors of out-migration will also require sustained improvements to security, but with a re-thinking of the current disarmament strategy, which has resulted in further abuses and greater imbalances between communities, in turn leading to a heightened insecurity.

Migration as a coping strategy

Seasonal and temporary migration of men, women and youth is a long-standing means of coping with seasonal fluctuations and periods of hardship in Karamoja, and has a number of positive aspects. Interventions should seek to support the positive aspects of this system.

- Support conflict negotiation and mitigation activities across tribal and district borders to minimize attacks and revenge attacks and improve relations between groups.
- Encourage local district officials to allow movement for trade and grazing across district and national borders to enable stock associate connections to be reinvigorated.
- Support tribal, district and national cross-border trade to bolster markets.

Securing rights for children is necessary to help prevent and address the harmful effects of out-migration of children and youth.

- Promote and support the realization of human rights of children, in particular through improved access to health, education, and justice, including the improvement of the security situation in Karamoja.
- Strengthen child protection measures, including monitoring, reporting, referral and response structures. Strengthen and develop mechanisms to respond to allegations of child rights violations and child abuse in the region.

Disarmament

- Disarmament should follow, not precede, development in an area. Development in Karamoja is primarily the responsibility of the national government.
- Disarmament should be voluntary and based upon realistic incentives developed through participation with communities and with local and national stakeholders.
- Weapons collected in disarmament exercises should be compiled, catalogued and destroyed. This process should be transparent and open to scrutiny. Written proof of disarmament should be provided to individuals, households and communities that have disarmed.
- Force should not be used disproportionately against civilians. Disarmament should occur in as uniform a manner as possible. There is a need for coordinated disarmament operations amongst the various ethnic groups.
- Adequate protection measures should be put in place for groups that have been disarmed, including protection of remaining livestock.
- If livestock are to be housed with security personnel, these security personnel need to take responsibility for protecting the people (including women, children and infants) who will accompany these animals. Security personnel need to have plans in place for animal

migration. Decisions regarding animal movement should be taken only through collaboration with kraal and manyatta leaders.

- For persons detained during disarmament exercises, all sites of detention should be gazetted and open to inspection at any time by the Ugandan Human Rights Commission and ICRC.
- Allegations of rape, murder, torture, abuse, looting and other crimes committed by the UPDF or militias during disarmament should be investigated immediately and responsive measures put into place to prevent such crimes and prosecute perpetrators. The Government of Uganda should act swiftly to hold perpetrators accountable for violations of the UPDF code of conduct and of international human rights standards.
- Trained and facilitated police should be introduced in greater numbers in Karamoja. The UPDF should act in support of police operations (including disarmament and detention) only under special circumstances and only with full transparency.

Pastoral Livelihoods

- Recognize that sedentarization is not a viable option in a region characterized by a shifting and fragile ecosystem, as is the case in Karamoja. Recognize that pastoral transhumance is the appropriate livelihood strategy for this environment.
- Recognize that forcefully removing Karamojong children from their families and placing them in boarding schools violates the rights of children and their families, and that similar practices have met with devastating long term consequences in every country where such actions have been carried out. This option has been proposed recently by Karamojong leaders and other elected officials based both within and outside of Karamoja.
- Seek to train and facilitate community-based animal health workers (CAHWs) that are selected and trained from the beneficiary communities. Male and female youth should be identified for this training, and regular training updates should be available. CAHWs should be split between manyattas and kraals and should move with animal herds.
- Seek national and international partners to provide adequate, accessible, inexpensive and quality veterinary medicines.
- Through community participation, conduct an evaluation of existing boreholes, dams and improved watering points and rehabilitate these facilities wherever possible.
- Identify and train community health workers from the beneficiary communities. Facilitate these health workers to work in manyattas and kraals, including traveling with kraal populations. In areas where community health workers do not exist, provide mobile clinics for vaccination and dispersal of basic medications. Ensure that these clinics travel to both manyattas and kraals on a regular basis.
- Ensure continuation and expansion of school-feeding program in all primary schools.
- Continue expansion of ABEK with community participation, although with on-going evaluation of success and response by local communities. To prevent falsely raised expectations, ensure that ABEK facilitators are trained and facilitated throughout their work, and that schedules are maintained for the start of programs. ABEK is not a substitute for properly managed and adapted primary education, and the Government of

Uganda should work to develop and strengthen the school system in Karamoja in a way that incorporates on-going lessons learned from ABEK.

- Conduct awareness campaign in rural areas on the value of education.
- Ensure that uniforms are not compulsory in any schools in Karamoja, as this negates Karamojong children's right to cultural expression.
- Ensure that school curricula use concepts that are relevant to Karamojong children and portray the many positive aspects of pastoral communities.
- Investigate possible expansion of technical training programs in areas of animal health, community water management, human health, and drought-resistance agriculture.
- Investigate possible expansion of agriculture extension officers with experience in drought-resistance crops and farming techniques.