

**LASER PULSE**

**Long-term Assistance and Services for Research (LASER)  
Partners for University-Led Solutions Engine (PULSE)**

**A DESK REVIEW REPORT OF THE VOICES AND RIGHTS OF THE  
BATWA, THE IK, AND THE TEPETH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE  
TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN KARAMOJA, UGANDA**



**SUPPLEMENT TO AGREEMENT NO. AID-7200AA18CA00009**

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

*This publication was produced by the LASER PULSE Program, led by Purdue University, with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Gulu University Constituent College, and Makerere University in Uganda. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.*



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The ResilientAfrica Network team at Makerere University, composed of Prof. William Bazeyo, Chief of Party; Dr. Roy William Mayega, Deputy Chief of Party; Dr. Julius Ssentongo, Program Coordinator; Mr. Nathan Tumuhamy Kipande, Director Eastern Africa Resilience Innovation Lab; and Prof. Stella Neema.

Researchers from Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) composed of Dr. Viola Nilah Nyakato (Team Lead), Assoc. Prof. Robert Bitariho, Dr. Rogers Bariyo, Mr. Hannington Odongo, and Dr. Gad Ruzaaza. This team led the literature review of the Batwa community.

The Gulu University Constituent College (GUCC) composed of Dr. Sidonia Angom Ochieng (Team Lead), Dr. Frank Emmanuel Muhereza, Mr. John Bosco Ngoya, and Mr. Vincent Abura Omara. This team led the literature review of the indigenous groups within Karamoja.

Other contributors were provided by the LASER PULSE (Long-term Assistance and Services for Research Partners for University–Led Solutions Engine) Consortium: Dr Betty Bugusu LASER PULSE Technical Director and Dr. Jane Okwako, LASER PULSE Grants Administrator and USAID/Uganda, Office of Program & Policy Development: Joe Hirsch, Denis Okwar, and Jackee Batanda.

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**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AICM	African International Christian Ministries
DC	District Commissioner
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
FPP	Forest People's Program
GUCC	Gulu University Constituent College
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPAF	Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility
ITFC	Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation
LASER	Long-term Assistance and Services for Research
MBIFCT	Mgahinga Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Conservation Trust
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development
MUST	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
NRM	National Resistance Movement
PULSE	Partners for University–Led Solutions Engine
RCI	Regional Coordination Initiative
REPA	Restore Protected Areas' Program of CARE Uganda
RSCs	Regional Steering Committees
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UOBDU	United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority

**KEY DEFINITIONS**

**Cultural heritage:** The physical (tangible) and/or non-physical (intangible) manifestation of an indigenous peoples and local communities' cultural heritage, in accordance with the traditional inheritance and transmission (Diversity 2019).

**Discrimination:** Giving different treatment to different persons attributable only to their respective description by sex, race, color, ethnic origin, birth, creed or religion, social, culture, geographical, economic standing, political opinion or disability or any combination of the above (Ministry of Gender 2006).

**Empowerment:** The ability of Indigenous Peoples to acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and advance their own development priorities and aspirations as full and equal members of society (USAID 2020).

**Engagement:** Reaching out to relevant stakeholders through different means of communication that range from informal conversations to a deeper level of meaningful consultation (USAID 2020).

**Formal engagement:** Consultations that are a two-way flow of information during which USAID shares details of an activity with Indigenous Peoples, and those stakeholders freely provide informed feedback on those activities before implementation (USAID 2020).

**Indigenous Peoples:** People who inhabited a land before it was conquered by colonial societies and who consider themselves distinct from the societies currently governing those territories (UN 2007).

**Informal engagement:** An exchange of information between USAID and Indigenous Peoples/project stakeholders that could enable the Agency to learn about the interests, priorities, challenges, and opportunities of the group, but does not yet include any concrete details about USAID's proposed activity or program (USAID 2020).

**Marginalization:** The situation of being left at the periphery in accessing opportunities, resources, and services (Ministry of Gender 2006).

**Traditional territories:** Lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous peoples and local communities (Diversity 2019).

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Uganda Mission, has established a Regional Coordination Initiative (RCI) that engages local governments, local universities, researchers, and the private sector as partners in development. The RCI is implemented through Regional Steering Committees (RSCs) that are formed by clusters of districts within a region in Uganda. The RSCs for Karamoja and Southwestern Uganda have raised deep concerns over what they perceive as violations of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly the Batwa in southwestern Uganda and the Ik and Tepeth in Karamoja. The Karamoja RSC has also identified a chronic issue of child trafficking from the region through Teso and into Kampala, the capital city, where they are destitute.

**Purpose of the Desk Review**

Researchers from Makerere University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, and Gulu University Constituent College researched and identified relevant secondary literature including legal and policy documents, minutes of local government council meetings, program reports, and peer reviewed publications. The aim of this desk review report is to provide an understanding of the underlying drivers of marginalization of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the existing capacities and opportunities in order to inform development of program interventions.

**Institutional and Legal Frameworks Relevant to Indigenous Peoples**

Indigenous Peoples number over 370 million across the world and occupy approximately 20 percent of the earth's territory. A number of international, regional, and national frameworks have been put in place to protect and safeguard the rights of Indigenous Peoples as summarized below.

- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), provides an international consensus regarding the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and further provides a framework of action for the full engagement, protection and implementation of these rights by the different actors.
- USAID's Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples offers guidance for robust engagement and partnership with Indigenous Peoples to help USAID's programs align with these communities' own priorities, while also ensuring that

USAID staff and implementing partners safeguard against unintended adverse impact (USAID 2020). This mission is articulated within the four policy objectives: 1) strengthening engagement with indigenous peoples to safeguard against harm and support their development priorities and self-reliance; 2) increasing the integration of Indigenous Peoples' concerns; 3) empowering Indigenous Peoples and their representative organizations to advocate for, and exercise, their rights and practice self-determined development; and 4) fostering an enabling environment for Indigenous Peoples to advocate for, and exercise, their rights.

- At the country level, Uganda does not have a specific policy for engaging Indigenous Peoples. However, the issues that pertain to Indigenous communities are presented within some of the national policies and documents. Of utmost importance, the 1995 Constitution of Uganda lists 56 tribes as the Indigenous communities of Uganda, as of February 1926 (Uganda 1995). Article 32 of the Constitution makes it a mandatory duty on the State to take affirmative action in favor of marginalized groups. The Constitution and the Local Government's Act provide for the parliament and local governments to enact laws to provide for affirmative action for all marginalized groups. The Ik and Tepeth have each received a county (constituency) with an area member of parliament to represent their views on the floor of the Parliament of Uganda. These groups are also represented at the various local government councils.

### **The Batwa**

The Batwa are originally a hunter-gatherer forest dweller group that occupy a large expanse of forest of the Great Lakes Region, predominantly in southwestern Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Lewis 2000). According to the last population census, the Batwa are estimated at 6,200 and live in destitution with no land and homes. This is the effect of the creation of national parks and forest reserves, and clearance of forests for agriculture in southwestern Uganda. The Batwa have faced persistent cultural, social, and economic exclusion and marginalization. They lack access to basic social services such as healthcare and education. The Batwa have been vulnerable due to a number of factors including a lack of assets, limited income, and lack of a sense of belonging. A number of actors have come forward and are currently involved in the development and improvement of livelihoods for the Batwa. These include the United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU), Batwa Development Organization (BDP), African International Christian

Ministries (AICM), Forest People's Program (FPP), the Netherlands Centre for Indigenous peoples, UK Comic Relief, Mgahinga Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Conservation Trust (MBIFCT), Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). Local governments in the three districts that host the Batwa (Kanunugu, Kisoro and Kabale) are also implementing activities that support the livelihoods and rights of the Batwa.

### **Indigenous Peoples of Karamoja**

The Karamojong are mainly pastoralists and occupy northeastern Uganda. The Karamoja region borders Sudan in the north and Kenya in the east. The region is comprised of eight districts and nine ethnic groups: 1) the Matheniko and the Tepeth of Moroto district, 2) the Bokora of Napak district, 3) the Chekwi of Nakapiripirit and Pian of Nabilatuk districts, 4) the Jie of Kotido district, 5) the Pokot of Amudat district, 6) the Ethur (sometimes called the Labwor) of Abim district, 7) the Dodoth and Ik (sometimes called the Teuso) of Kaabong district and Nyangia (sometimes called the Napore) of Karenga district.

As a people, the Karamojong comprise one of the most significantly marginalized minorities in Uganda, isolated geographically, socially, economically, and politically. The term Indigenous Peoples has been exclusively deployed in reference to a few of these tribes and these differentiated ethnic or tribal groups are commonly referred to as the mountain tribes of Karamoja. They include the Ik (occupy Mount Murungole), the Tepeth (occupy Mt. Moroto), the Kadam (occupy Mt. Kadam), and the Nyangia (occupy Nyangea Mountains). This desk review report focuses on two groups- the Ik and the Tepeth. The creation of Kidepo National Park and Timu Central Forest Reserve led to forced evictions of the Ik people and consequently the reduction of the land they occupied. There has been some affirmative action for the Ik and Tepeth. The most significant is the creation of political constituencies for the Ik and Tepeth to address some of these groups' underlying social, cultural, political, and economic discrimination.

### **Child Trafficking in Karamoja**

There has been a growing concern over child trafficking from Karamoja to other parts of Uganda including Kampala, the capital city. Other destinations include places outside of Uganda such as Nairobi in Kenya, Juba in South Sudan, and some children are shipped to the Middle East. In some trafficking incidents in Karamoja, families of the victims have been complicit, because in return for money they have willingly offered their biological children,



or children in their care, to traffickers, often strangers (Kasirye 2007, IOM 2014, David 2018). The circumstances that lead to children becoming victims of trafficking are as diverse as there are children being trafficked. Traffickers take advantage of the poverty, parental ignorance, and absence or breakdown of social institutions in the communities where children are trafficked from, in addition to weaknesses in law enforcement. Government and other actors are constantly involved in rescue missions and the return of the trafficked children to Karamoja, where they are rehabilitated and reintegrated back into the community. Some of the traffickers have been apprehended and charged before the court of law.

## **1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE BUY-IN**

USAID/Uganda has established a RCI that engages local universities, researchers, local governments, private sector, civil society, faith-based and cultural institutions and development practitioners as partners in Uganda's development. The RCI is implemented through RSCs that are formed by clusters of districts within a region in Uganda. To-date, three independent RSCs have been formed in northern Uganda, southwestern Uganda, and Karamoja. The RSCs in Karamoja and southwestern Uganda have raised deep concerns over what they perceive as violations of the Indigenous Peoples' rights that dwell in these regions. The most marginalized are the Batwa who live in Kisoro and Kanungu districts (southwestern Uganda), and the Ik and Tepeth who live in Kaabong and Moroto districts (Karamoja region). These indigenous groups face several challenges that range from being voiceless to landlessness. Furthermore, the Karamojong as a whole are a marginalized group and they face the humanitarian issue of child trafficking. Children are trafficked from this region to several final destinations such as Kampala, the capital city, and other neighboring countries.

Part of the objectives of this research is to leverage the expertise of Ugandan universities and researchers to undertake development research that will inform subsequent interventions by USAID/Uganda to strengthen the voices of Uganda's indigenous peoples. By working through local universities, the USAID/Uganda mission seeks to encourage sustainable partnerships with local universities positioned to institutionalize research and build local ownership and capacity around these issues. Two local universities within these regions will conduct research to understand the issues faced by these indigenous groups. Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) will conduct research among the Batwa, while Gulu University Constituent College (GUCC) will conduct research among the Ik and Tepeth. Makerere University will provide technical support and capacity-building to MUST and GUCC. The specific objectives of the Indigenous Peoples Buy-in Project are:

1. To better understand the voices of Uganda's Indigenous Peoples related to their unique and different rights as men, women, boys, and girls.
2. To design and pilot interventions that strengthen the voices of Uganda's Indigenous Peoples.
3. To empower local universities and researchers in Uganda to conduct development research.

## **2.0 DESK REVIEW METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this desk review is to provide an analysis of the historical and contemporary underlying causes and drivers of vulnerability affecting Uganda's Indigenous Peoples, particularly the Batwa, the Ik, and the Tepeth. Researchers from MUST, GUCC, and RAN independently researched and obtained historical writings and information focusing on these indigenous communities since the colonial period, from government archives at the national level and in the respective districts (Kanungu and Kaabong). Researchers also identified relevant secondary literature including legal and policy documents, minutes of local government council meetings, program reports, and peer reviewed publications. We identified the relevant documents through 1) systematic database searches conducted by MUST, GUCC, and RAN, 2) internet searches, and 3) through emails to partners including USAID. This literature review will help the research team to design primary research aimed at understanding the causes and drivers of vulnerabilities of these Indigenous Peoples, which will in turn inform development programming.

## **3.0 INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS RELEVANT TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

Indigenous Peoples number over 370 million across the world and occupy approximately 20 percent of the earth's territory. For decades, Indigenous Peoples have been instrumental in the conservation of critical ecosystems and of much of the earth's biological diversity. Their livelihoods, traditional knowledge, and resource-management strategies are among the most sustainable. However, Indigenous Peoples are among the world's most-marginalized populations and are often discriminated from participating in social, economic, and political systems. As such, a number of institutions and states have come up with policies and legal frameworks to protect the rights of Indigenous People and some of these instruments are highlighted below.

### **3.1 The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

The definition of Indigenous Peoples can be understood at two levels. The first level is intended to distinguish between original inhabitants and 'occupiers' associated with 'newcomers,' especially those akin to colonial conquest. This is the more generic definition of Indigenous Peoples, which is in line with the UNDRIP, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 13, 2007 that defines Indigenous Peoples as

*‘people who inhabited a land before it was conquered by colonial societies and who consider themselves distinct from the societies currently governing those territories’ (UNGA 2007).*

In 2007, the UNGA adopted the UNDRIP. The Declaration provides an international consensus regarding the individual and collective rights of Indigenous Peoples and further provides a framework of action for the full engagement, protection, and implementation of these rights by the different actors (Anaya 2013).

It is important to note that Indigenous Peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct legal, political, social, economic and cultural institutions, and to participate in the institutions of the state in which they live, as well as the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security, and not be subjected to any act of genocide or violence, forcible removal of children, forced assimilation or destruction of their culture. It is the duty of the state to provide mechanisms for the prevention of, and redress for any action which deprives Indigenous Peoples of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities; or from dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources.

### **3.2 USAID’s Policy on Indigenous Peoples**

This year, March 2020, USAID published its Policy on Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (USAID 2020). The overarching goal of this Policy is to improve the *“measurable impact and sustainability of USAID’s programs by ensuring that USAID staff and implementing partners engage Indigenous Peoples as meaningful partners in development processes; safeguard against harm; and enhance their ability to promote their rights, determine their own priorities, and advance their self-reliance.”* The Policy has four objectives:

- 1) Strengthen engagement with Indigenous Peoples to safeguard against harm and support their development priorities and self-reliance.
- 2) Increase the integration of Indigenous Peoples’ concerns across all sectors of USAID’s portfolio of investments and promote cross-sectoral development approaches.
- 3) Empower Indigenous Peoples and their representative organizations to advocate for, and exercise, their rights and practice self-determined development.
- 4) Foster an enabling environment for Indigenous Peoples to advocate for, and exercise, their rights.

These objectives are to be advanced through five operating principles:

- i. *Identify*, through a set criterion, whether an ethnic group or other marginalized population in a country qualifies as Indigenous Peoples.
- ii. *Analyze* Indigenous Peoples' opportunities and challenges.
- iii. *Engage* Indigenous Peoples to understand their aspirations, priorities, capacities, and preferred approaches so as to inform USAID programing.
- iv. *Safeguard* Indigenous Peoples' rights and well-being.
- v. *Establish partnerships* with Indigenous Peoples so that programs achieve and sustain measurable development results and self-reliance.

The Policy offers guidance for robust engagement and partnership with Indigenous Peoples to help USAID's programs align with these communities' own priorities, while also ensuring that USAID staff and implementing partners safeguard against unintended adverse impacts. USAID recognizes that any development effort that might affect Indigenous Peoples should consider and address the unique challenges and disadvantages they face, as well as their unique opportunities and contributions they can make towards advancing USAID's mission and the journey to self-reliance. This engagement in the development process is critical to: preventing and resolving conflicts; enhancing democratic, citizen-responsive governance; promoting human rights and religious freedom; reducing poverty, and sustainably managing the environment.

### **3.3 Frameworks for Uganda**

The 1995 Constitution of Uganda lists 56 tribes as the Indigenous communities of Uganda, as of February 1926 (Uganda 1995). Article 32 of the Constitution makes a mandatory duty on the state to take affirmative action in favor of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom, for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them. The Article further mandates parliament to make relevant laws, including laws for the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). Further, Article 180 (2)c of the Constitution provides for local governments to enact laws to provide for affirmative action for all marginalized groups.

In 2006, the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MGLSD) developed the National Equal Opportunities Policy. The Policy provides guidance and direction for planning, resource allocation and implementation of activities. It emphasizes that given the

same conditions and opportunities, all persons, irrespective of their social, economic, cultural or political backgrounds, can perform to the maximum of their potential. In compliance with the Constitution, the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda enacted the EOC Act, 2007. However, the Commission was not inaugurated until July 8, 2010.

The Local Government's Act Cap 243 Laws of Uganda 2000 provides for representation of marginalized groups at all local government levels. While this has been achieved for the youth, disabled, and women, a majority of the ethnic minorities are not represented at the local and central government levels. Towards the 2016 general elections, two counties (constituencies) were created: the Iki and Tepeth Counties. As such, the Iki and Tepeth, for the first time, voted a representative member of parliament to represent their areas at the national parliament.

Within the category of the 'original' (or the 'before-colonial conquest', especially for settler colonies) inhabitants of a country, there have been designated certain categories which exhibit characteristics that are akin to what the United Nations Special Rapporteur to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities defines as Indigenous communities, peoples and nations delineated as Indigenous Peoples. In the case of Uganda, this would apply to the categories of people that had maintained a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories. These categories of Indigenous Peoples consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in their midst, due to their historical marginalization. At present, they form non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop, and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions, and legal institutions.

In addition to the above policy and legal frameworks for upholding rights and freedoms of Indigenous Peoples, Uganda is also a signatory to the 2000 UN Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, which is supplementary to the UN convention against transnational organized crime of 2000 (otherwise referred to as the 'Palermo protocol') (UN 2000). The Protocol, which Uganda signed in 2004 and ratified in 2005, says countries will put in place national laws on trafficking in persons (TIP) and to harmonize national laws with regional legislation of TIP (Kasirye 2007). Uganda's 1995

Constitution (as amended) under Article 25(i) prohibits holding in slavery or servitude of any person in Uganda; and stipulates under subsection (ii) that ‘no person shall be required to perform forced labor’ (Uganda 1995). Further, under article 34 subsections (4) and (5), the 1995 Constitution provides for protection of children under 16 years of age from social or economic exploitation. The Penal Code Act (Cap 120) prohibits the following: abduction of children under section 126 and 239; procurement under section 131; pornography under section 166; and concealment under section 246. A Sexual Offences Bill is being developed to provide more protection for children against sexual abuse and raise the age of consent to 18 years.

## **4.0 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN UGANDA**

### **4.1 The Batwa**

The Batwa are former forest dwellers that lived a life of hunter-gatherers in most of the forest areas occupying the Great Lakes Region, predominantly in southwestern Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Lewis 2000). Currently, at an estimated population of 6,200, the Batwa have been marginalized and live in destitution with no land and homes. This began with the gazettement of national parks and forest reserves. Limited formal education among a vast majority of Batwa has led to unemployment. According to statistics from a local Batwa organization, the UOBDO, only 10 Batwa children in Kisoro district have attained the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education. The few Batwa children who go to school are often discriminated against by their peers.

The Batwa have been dispossessed of almost all their land rights and do not enjoy security of tenure for the limited land that they own (Lewis 2000). As such, they live a destitute life providing cheap labor. National park and forest managers often blame most illegal activities such as poaching, wild honey collection, and fishing within protected areas on the Batwa.

#### **4.1.1 Batwa historical aspects**

The first human settlements in southwest Uganda can only be traced mainly through oral history and pollen data records because there is little documented anthropological information. Human settlements in southwest Uganda may have coincided with the migrations of the Bantu speaking people from the southern and central parts of Africa into East Africa between 1000-1800AD (Huffman 1970). Before Bantus and other major ethnic

groups (majorly agriculturalists) started spreading from areas north of the African tropical forest to the Great Lakes region<sup>1</sup> around the first millennium BC, the Batwa were the sole inhabitants of most of the Great Lakes regions that had diverse land largely covered by expansive forests (Huffman 1970, IRIN 2006). The Batwa's dependence on the forests was symbiotic (Lewis 2000, IRIN 2006). The rainforests provided them with a home, supported their livelihood, and provided spiritual and cultural assets (Lewis 2000, IRIN 2006, Bitariho 2013). The Batwa were nomadic forest hunter-gatherers who occupied areas stretching from montane forests to savannah-forests in western Uganda. These are the present high-altitude forests of Bwindi, Echuya and Mgahinga as well as the lowland forests of Semuliki that are akin to the Congo basin forests. The Batwa continued to live a symbiotic relationship with the tropical rainforests of southwestern Uganda only until the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century when the Bakiga and Bafumbira-Bahutu started migrating into the Great Lakes region following wars in northern Rwanda (Kingdon 1990, Hamilton, Cunningham et al. 2000, Lewis 2000, Marchant, Taylor et al. 2001). The Batwa, Bakiga and Bafumbira clans lived together albeit in precarious harmony, due to their interdependent livelihoods as hunter-gatherers, agriculturalists, and pastoralists, respectively. It can be argued that the migration of the other Bantu tribes onto the Great Lakes region's forests sparked the onset of the marginalization of the Batwa.

#### **4.1.2 A chronology of how the Batwa became marginalized and vulnerable**

The introduction of iron smelting technology (2500- 2000 years BP) needed to support agricultural expansion in forestlands by the Bakiga and Bafumbira probably was the onset of Batwa vulnerability (Marchant, Taylor et al. 1997). The Bakiga and Bafumbira developed improved agricultural methods and metallurgy which enabled them to colonize and encroach on forestlands with more widely varying technologies than the hunting and foraging permitted (Edel 1957, Kingdon 1990, Lewis 2000). Increased inter-tribal and clan wars in northern Rwanda led to a population influx and expansion of iron and agricultural technology which in turn led to increased clearing of forests for agriculture (Edel 1957, Lewis 2000, Marchant, Taylor et al. 2001). The Bakiga and Bafumbira were nomadic cultivators who practiced shifting cultivation of slash-and-burn in the high-altitude forests of southwestern Uganda (Bitariho 2013, Edel 2018). This practice eventually led to encroachment on the Batwa forest

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<sup>1</sup> Countries in the African Great Lakes region include Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.



territories as the Bakiga and Bafumbira populations increased. Declining forestland generated conflicts between the Bakiga/Bafumbira agriculturalists and the Batwa forest hunter-gatherers (Edel 1957, Kingdon 1990, Bitariho 2013). A series of ensuing wars between Bakiga, Bafumbira and Batwa archers was only quelled by the British colonial administrators in 1912 after many lives had been lost (Lewis 2000, Marchant, Taylor et al. 2001, Bitariho 2013). This exacerbated the marginalization and vulnerability of the Batwa people.

In 1932, the British colonial government enacted legislation for the protection of forests and game reserves in southwestern Uganda that led to the creation of the Bwindi, Mgahinga, Semuliki and Echuya forests and game reserves. The aim was to stop encroachment on the forests by the cultivators and hunters and to regulate timber exploitation (Kingdon 1990, Lewis 2000). By that time, cultivation and tree felling had greatly reduced the forest territories of the Batwa hunter-gatherers (Lewis 2000). When the colonial administration gazetted the game and forest reserves, the traditional ownership of the forests by the Batwa was completely ignored although they continued to use the forest for hunting and fruit gathering, rather “illegally” (Lewis 2000). By 1954, large chunks of forests in southwestern Uganda had been cleared by the agriculturalist and timber exploiters (Butynski 1984) and this greatly affected the Batwa livelihoods.

In 1991, Bwindi, Semuliki and Mgahinga were published in the official gazette (or gazetted) as national parks with subsequent eviction of all the Batwa out of the forests. The creation of these national parks led to restrictions of all human activities within the forests. The Batwa traditional forest users were denied access to the forests. The parks recruited and employed paramilitary rangers to patrol the forest and stop any forms of human activities. Threatened Batwa livelihoods led to destitution. This exacerbated the Batwa people’s already precarious situation. To-date, the Batwa people remain the most vulnerable and marginalized people in southwestern Uganda. The Batwa vulnerability issues can be grouped into four categories:

- Lack of assets (land, shelter, livestock and functional clothing) in comparison the Bakiga and Bafumbira communities
- Limited income (due to limited formal and informal employment) in comparison to their peer tribes
- Insecurity (due to threatened forest-dependent livelihoods)

- Lack of a sense of belonging (due to assimilation by other tribes such as the Bakiga and the Bafumbira)

#### **4.1.3 Cultural and socio-economic development context of the Batwa people**

This section will highlight the key factors synthesized from the literature. The first subsection describes an understanding of the cultural and socio-economic development context of the Batwa people. Subsection two examines previous and ongoing development interventions among the Batwa people. Sub-section three articulates the strategic directions for empowering the Batwa people and provides some insights from the literature synthesis.

Literature on the Batwa reveals how before the establishment of colonial administration the Batwa, Bakiga and Bafumbira communities lived cordially sharing land and benefiting from the available natural resources (GRACE 1990). The Bakiga and Bafumbira used land for cultivation and animal grazing, while the Batwa lived in the forest hunting, gathering fruits, vegetables and medicines sustainably. The forests were both their home and a source of survival (Zaninka 2001).

There is a body of research from anthropology that reveals how there was a harmonious coexistence among tribal groupings. Environmental degradation was minimal, and almost non-existent (Bitariho 2013). It is evident that conservation efforts and the growth of the tourism sector were rapid and invasive, in turn disrupting the ecosystem, life support systems, and livelihoods of the protected areas. These negative impacts were largely felt by the Batwa communities (Zaninka 2001, Baker, Bitariho et al. 2013).

In their analysis Hamilton, Cunningham, Byarugaba and Kayanja reveal how conservation of park areas led to insecurity (Hamilton, Cunningham et al. 2000). This later became the springboard to strengthen research in protected areas, protect the mountain gorilla, and for the formation of the Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation (ITFC) of MUST. Overtime, however, the benefits of the park conservation process, particularly tourism revenue, appear not to have been equitably distributed and manifested in the Uganda Wildlife Statute and the tourism revenue sharing policy, an issue that appears to have further marginalized the Batwa community (Twinamasiko 2015). According to Twinamasiko, the revenue sharing policy and its implementation guidelines have remained unresponsive to the needs of the Batwa.

Although there are different subgroups of the Batwa, there is general consensus that the Batwa are marginalized across other governance and service delivery systems at all levels (Berrang-Ford, Dingle et al. 2012).

The Batwa have faced persistent cultural, social, and economic exclusion and marginalization (Zaninka 2001, Berrang-Ford, Dingle et al. 2012, Twinamatsiko 2015). Notable, is the lack of access to social services such as modern healthcare and education (Willis, Jackson et al. 2006, Warrilow 2008). In combination, these factors generate conditions that produce poor indicators of health and wellbeing among the Batwa communities (Willis, Jackson et al. 2006, Berrang-Ford, Dingle et al. 2012). It is on record that the year 2019 marked the turning point of when the first two members of the Batwa community graduated with degrees. This event received wide coverage in Uganda's print and digital media platforms.

The marginalization of the Batwa has been a prolonged issue across the forest in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, particularly Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Burundi. Until 2002, Uganda was the only country that had ever included the Batwa in its national population and housing census as a tribe (Ramsay 2010). Marginalization of the Batwa takes on a heavier toll on women and children (Ramsay 2010, Beswick 2011).

#### **4.1.4 Stakeholders involved in Batwa's development**

Several stakeholders and agencies are currently involved in the development and improvement of Batwa livelihoods. These include the UOBDU, BDP, AICM, FPP, the Netherlands Centre for Indigenous peoples, UK Comic Relief, MBIFCT, UWA, and the local governments in the three districts of Kanungu, Kisoro and Kabale. The next subsection describes the various stakeholder categories supporting the Batwa's development.

##### **Local Government Agencies**

Local governments from the districts of Kisoro, Kanungu and Kabale maintain relative contact with the Batwa. UWA revenue sharing programs are implemented through the local governments' structures. Local governments also play a big role in lobbying and advocating for the Batwa's needs and requirements (Table 1).

**Table 1: Roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders**

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Returns/Revenue</b>
Donors/funders ( <i>Rainforest Concern, CARE-REPA, FPP, IPAF, USAID, etc.</i> )	Donor	-Provision of funds	- Improved Batwa livelihoods - Batwa livelihood needs addressed sustainably
Partners ( <i>UOBDU, BDP, AICM, UWA, BMCT</i> )	Facilitating Batwa development activities	- Revenue collection from tourists (UWA) - Skills development for Batwa - Batwa mobilization - Collaboration with other stakeholders - Lobbying and advocacy	- Batwa livelihood improved - Batwa livelihood needs addressed sustainably
Local Government	Partner	- Lobbying and advocacy - Security issues - Mobilization of Batwa communities - Revenue sharing programs	- Batwa livelihood improved - Batwa livelihood needs addressed sustainably

**Donor Agencies**

Donor agencies have, and are currently, funding several projects for Batwa Development. A list of these entities include; FPP, Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF), UK-based Rainforest Concern, CARE, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Comic Relief, Minority Rights Group and Netherlands Centre for Indigenous Peoples, Adventists Development and Relief Agency (Table 1). Several additional potential donors and partners that may support the management plan were identified.

CARE is an organization with extensive experience in southwestern Uganda and has a project titled Rights Equity and Protected Areas. The project has supported the Batwa through UOBDU by facilitating capacity building workshops and dialogue between the Batwa and conservation agencies. It has also supported Batwa adult literacy at the Uganda Functional Adult Literacy Centre in Kanungu.

UOBDU also solicits funds from other donors such as the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, Comic Relief, Minority Rights Group, and the Netherlands Centre for Indigenous People to fund their activities. UOBDU includes land advocacy and acquisition for Batwa, dialogue with conservation agencies about access to park resources, and consultation with the Batwa communities to identify problems and areas where they need support.

**Development Partners**

Notable potential partners who could provide additional support to empower the Batwa include UOBDU, BDP, AICM, Uganda Wildlife Authority, and MBIFCT.

The UWA, through the management of Mgahinga and Bwindi National Park, is a key partner because the parks border most of the Batwa lands and homesteads. The Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation is a Mbarara University of Science and Technology research station based at Ruhija whose mandate is to carry out research and the ecological monitoring of activities within and around the Albertine Rift forests of southwestern Uganda. ITFC has been working on Batwa projects such as plant resource assessments for Batwa requirements in Bwindi National Park.

**4.1.5 Insights from the literature review on the Batwa**

Conclusively, Batwa communities remain one of the most marginalized and excluded communities. It is only recently that efforts have begun focusing on their plight as a people, when indicators of the health and wellbeing of the rest of the population have greatly improved.

It appears there will be a need for a broad range of interventions focused on amplifying the voices of the Batwa. The critical entry areas appear to be educational and health programming.

From the literature, one can draw a conclusion that there has never been any deliberate, genuine effort to address the plight of the Batwa people. Generally, prioritized efforts are prescriptive rather than participatory. There is a diverse record of efforts by humanitarian organizations, religious groups, and conservation organizations. For the purposes of this analysis, it is not possible to examine all the types of support and interventions. Thus, we provide a list of the efforts and attempt to provide evidence from literature.

It is proposed that interventions and strategies that aim at empowering the Batwa be required to deliberately explore means and methods for involving the Batwa themselves in providing their views and contributions to their own development. The emphasis will need to be based on both inclusion and participation (Burkey 1993, White 1996, Lyons, Smuts et al. 2001).

The historical lived experiences of the Batwa still has consequences on the present day marginalization and vulnerability. Whereas the Batwa were initially not evicted from the forests when the colonialists created forests and game reserves, limited ownership and restricted use of the forest affected their livelihoods. Restrictions on hunting and harvesting of rattan canes and other climbers led to increased dependency of the Batwa on Bakiga and Bafumbira farmers for food. The Batwa were thus exploited for cheap labor by the Bakiga and Bafumbira. These changes affected the Batwa more than the Bakiga or Bafumbira.

The creation and gazettement of the national parks in Southwestern Uganda in 1991 exacerbated the already precarious situation for the Batwa. The complete eviction of the Batwa from the forests that they solely depended on for their livelihoods led them to destitution. The gazettement of forests in southwestern Uganda completely ignored the Batwa hunter-gatherer livelihood. Gazetting the forest as a protected area altered the lifestyle of the Batwa, but minimally interfered with the farming and pastoralist communities. This is the reason why even after almost three decades, the Batwa are still destitute.

#### **4.2 Indigenous Peoples of Karamoja**

The Karamojong are mainly pastoralists and occupy north-eastern Uganda. The Karamoja region borders Sudan in the north and Kenya in the east. The region is comprised of eight districts and nine ethnic groups: 1) the Matheniko and the Tepeth of Moroto district, 2) the Bokora of Napak district, 3) the Pian of Nakapiripirit district, 4) the Jie of Kotido district, 5) the Pokot of Amudat district, 6) the Labwor (sometimes called the AcholiLabwor) of Abim district, 7) the Dodoth, Nyangia (sometimes called the Napore) and Ik (sometimes called the Teuso) of Kaabong and Karenga districts.

As a people, the Karamojong comprise one of the most significantly marginalized minorities in Uganda, isolated geographically, socially, economically, and politically. The term Indigenous Peoples has been exclusively deployed in reference to a few of these tribes and these differentiated ethnic or tribal groups are commonly referred to as the mountain tribes of Karamoja. They include the Ik (occupy Mount Morungole), the Tepeth (occupy Mt. Moroto), the Kadam (occupy Mt. Kadam), and the Nyangia (occupy Nyangea Mountains).

Mountain tribes experience two forms of marginalization, first for being Karamojong (who are marginalized vis-à-vis the rest of Uganda), and secondly, for being linguistically and

culturally distinct minorities within the mainstream Karamojong society. Although the World Indigenous Report for 2019 lists only Ik (Teuso) of Karamoja as part of the category of Indigenous Peoples in Uganda (IWGIA 2019), the term is usually considered applicable to other minority groups akin to the Ik that inhabit Karamoja's mountainous areas, such as the Tepeth, Kadam, and Nyangia.

These mountain tribes of Karamoja are demographically a minority group, and because of inhabiting mountainous areas of Karamoja, have to some extent maintained their pristine characteristics, quite distinct from the mainstream Karamojong. They are identified by their linguistic and cultural distinctiveness from the mainstream Karamojong groups, although there are fears of them becoming extinct.

While they are largely subsistence crop farmers, they still depend on traditional foraging, hunter-gathering during periods of stress, while some may have acquired a few livestock. Their immediate concerns are preserving their land and traditional ways of life, protecting their language, and promoting their culture while seeking greater participation in the current state structures. All the mountains where these marginalized groups are in Karamoja were declared Central Forest Reserves, and hence are protected resources where human activity and presence are prohibited.

This study will focus on the Ik and the Tepeth. Estimated by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) at 13,939 people, the Ik inhabit a stretch of land that extends from Mt. Lopokok and Timu Forest where they occupy a narrow, 50 km long by 1km wide swath of ground along the frontier between Uganda and Kenya in Kamion Sub-county to Mt. Morujole and Kidepo National Park in Morujole sub-county in Dodoth County, Kaabong district. A group of several hundred Ik people are also reported to be living in New Site, Sudan, while around 100 or so more can be found scattered across north-western Kenya seeking livelihoods in urban centers. Beyond these, a small community of Ik from one family lives in Masindi, western Uganda (Schrock 2014).

According to UBOS, the 2014 estimated population of the Ik was 4,023, that is, 2.3% of that of Kaabong (UBOS 2016). The Ik, according to Wiedemann and Nannyombi, consider themselves as the "icá-am" (pl. "Ik") and their language is "Ik" or "Icetot" (Wiedemann and Nannyombi 2007). The Ik are considered to be indigenous predominantly because they have

remained a relatively closely knit community with a language distinct from mainstream *ɲa'karimojong*, and despite hundreds of years of attempt to incorporate them into the modern Karamojong society, they have largely remained at its periphery. The Dodoth and Turkana neighbors call them “Teuso”, meaning “*poor people without cattle or guns*” (Heine 1999). Their closest relatives are the Tepeth, also referred to as the ‘So’. The other sub-groups include the Nyangea, and the *ɲi'kuliak*, splitting off from a single ethnic group, proto-*ɲi'kuliak* (Weatherby 2012).

The Ik live in what they refer to as *awik* synonymous with a *manyatta* or villages or homesteads enclosed by a high fence made of sticks, poles, and thorns. These homesteads may be small, hosting only one family, or big, hosting ten to twenty related or unrelated families (Schrock 2014). It is reported that the *Kuliak* peoples spent several thousand years migrating down from south-western Ethiopia and roaming the deserts and desolate hills among the borderlands of Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.

Knighon (2016) established that the initial migration from Ethiopia is thought to have been motivated by hunger (Knighon 2016). After finding wild honey and fruits on *Soyot* mountain in Kenya, the Ik sent young men further south in search of even better lands. Eventually they all moved southward, and settled in *Tulutul*, on the edge of *Timu* Forest. After some years, a skin disease ravaged the people, forcing them to split up and to settle in other areas. Later, raids from slave traders separated, displaced, and led to more outward migration among the Karamoja. This pattern of migrating to escape hunger, thirst, disease, and insecurity has characterized Ik pre-history up to this day. As a result, the Ik have become masters of surviving against terrible odds. The good humor they maintain in the face of hardship is testimony to their indomitable spirit and its struggle for life (Knighon 2005). Schrock (2005) reiterates that the Ik's past tells a story of eking out survival amidst difficult, traumatic situations. To some degree, these difficulties have persisted into the 21st century in the form of an extreme climatic flux, tribal conflict, and lack of government services, ethnic discrimination, and political marginalization. Despite these challenges, the Ik are growing numerically and are poised to grow as a culture and society (Schrock 2014).

The Tepeth (also referred to as the So) live on three mountains: Kadam, Moroto, and Napak in northeastern Uganda (Weatherby 2012). The National Population and Housing Census 2014 estimated the population of the Tepeth at 23,422 (UBOS 2016). The Tepeth, like the Ik,



have also remained a relatively close-knit community with a language distinct from mainstream ŋa'karimojong, but akin to the Kadam and Pokot. Despite hundreds of years of attempt to integrate them into the modern Karamojong society, they have remained at its periphery, hence their characterization as an Indigenous People within Karamoja.

The Tepeth occupy a mountainous terrain laden with huge mineral deposits, rich flora and fauna. The Tepeth are, like the Ik, predominantly settled crop farmers, although they are more likely than the Ik to keep some livestock. The creation of Central Forest Reserves on all mountains in Karamoja dispossessed the Tepeth of much of their homelands. The remaining territory of the Tepeth has been heavily encroached upon by mining companies. The largest mines in Karamoja are located within the territorial boundaries of the Tepeth in the sub-counties of Tapac and Katikekile. These mines are located on two mining leases held by Tororo Cement Ltd (ECO 2011).

#### **4.2.1 Debates around Indigenous Peoples in Karamoja**

The vulnerabilities of Indigenous groups in Karamoja were first vividly, but controversially brought to light by an American anthropologist, Colin Turnbull, who carried out research among the Ik between 1964 and 1967, and published a highly disparaging account of the Ik in a book titled 'The Mountain People' (Turnbull 1972). Apart from making reference to the drought period that afflicted the Ik, it was also evident from accounts in the book that there was a severe famine among the Ik at the time when Turnbull carried out his research. It was also a time when the Ik were struggling to comprehend vagaries of European colonialism, having been evicted from their seasonal hunting areas in Kidepo valley when the area was declared a game reserve in 1958 by the British colonial government. Four years later (1962), Kidepo Reserve was declared as Kidepo Valley National Game Park. Turnbull, however, chose not to investigate the underlying causes and drivers of the famine that was taking place at the time, and as a consequence, was unable to unravel the linkage between the crises of morality and social systems that he was so obsessed with, in addition to the colonial penetration of Ik society.

Turnbull wrote: "*not once did I see food being cooked, or any sign of what might be called domestic activity.*" He wrote "*every granary I saw was empty but for a few bundles of personal belongings... any food received was disposed of immediately and individually just as rapidly as possible, regardless of whether one was hungry or not*" (Turnbull 1972). While

Turnbull, who spent two years living among the Ik, rather obstinately acknowledged that it took him long to see that there was famine among the Ik simply because starvation was confined to the elderly who were often left to die from starvation, in different sections of his book, he described in graphic details the symptoms of famine that afflicted the Ik.

The boldest of Turnbull's views regarding the Ik was his claims that there was '*no evidence of family life such as is found almost everywhere else in the world.*' Turnbull claimed that the Ik no longer existed as families or other collective entities, but as individuals, after having successfully abandoned "*cooperative sociality, belief, love, and hope,*" which, among others, unfortunately turned against their very survival. For Turnbull, the Ik were a "*classic society that was too poor for morality.*"

Willerslev & Meinert concluded that Turnbull depicted a 'Hobbesian nightmare of all against all' as having set in among the Ik, to such an extreme that husbands did not share with their wives; parents didn't care for their children; and the stronger ones took unscrupulous advantage of their greater physical strength, wresting the little food available from the weaker ones, usually children and the elderly, who were left to die (Willerslev and Meinert 2017). That, Turnbull's description of how he watched with antipathy as people snatched food out of the mouths of the elderly and blind or induced others to regurgitate so they could eat the vomit, could in no way merit a correct depiction of Ik society.

Many writings disagree with many of Turnbull's claims (Barth and Turnbull 1974, Wilson, McCall et al. 1975, Heine 1985, Willerslev and Meinert 2017). Heine wrote about how in 1983, he found difficulty (as a non-native person) doing research among the Ik who "*were shocked about the way their name had been tarnished*" in Turnbull's book, suggesting that many findings from his research among the Ik was at variance with many accounts of the Ik culture documented by Turnbull.

It is herein acknowledged that Turnbull's description of Ik social organization and systems was full of contradictions. For example, Turnbull described the vulnerabilities of the Ik, as encompassing, among others, the absence of family, the lack of love, hope and friendship; and constantly reminded his readers how Ik societies were bedeviled with decay (Turnbull 1972). However, while in one section of his book, Turnbull describes how the Ik "*had lost family, friendship, hope and love;*" in another section, Turnbull fondly described various relations of

affection and a rich social life that characterized 'Icien' (plural for Ik) society; how 'Icien' households divided family labor to maximum survival; co-operated to manufacture iron-ore wares; and practiced reciprocity manifested through gift and sacrifices exchanged as weapons of co-operation and control (Turnbull 1972).

Contrary to suggestions by Turnbull regarding how the Ik were a pristine and uncorrupted society that existed as a 'pariah caste' living on the margins of their neighbors' worlds, the Ik had more robust interaction with outsiders (Turkana, Pokot and Dodoth, as well as Toposa and Didiḡa), which in Turnbull's own admission, offered not only necessary goods for local conflicts, but also closely integrated the Ik into the complex business of the intertribal management of cattle and associated traditional weaponry. The Ik, according to Turnbull, manufactured stone and iron-ore weaponry that they exchanged for basic supplies with neighboring groups.

Turnbull also observed that the Ik were known as a group for their special services through which they related to their neighbors through special forms of 'friendship.' In other words, the Ik were after-all not as unfriendly, unrelenting, unhelpful and remorselessly selfish as depicted by Turnbull. On the contrary, the Ik were integrated in an economy that was external to their existence, in which co-operation, friendship and reciprocity were cardinal, and Turnbull seemed to have ignored these virtues among the Ik, preferring to headline only specific vices to make his argument.

Turnbull's obsession with comparing the Ik with Western societies leads to claims of how the extinction that was evident among the Ik was a likely possibility in the West if nothing was done to stem the possibility of its occurrence. Turnbull, in other words saw, in the Ik, a picture of the future of the West that had to be avoided at all costs, although this comparison was considered rather unconvincing by many subsequent writings on the subject (Wilson, McCall et al. 1975). Western anthropologists were not convinced by Turnbull's interpretations of the social relations among the Ik, with some suggesting how Turnbull failed to contextualize the conditions of the Ik that he encountered (Wilson, in Wilson et.al 1975, 343).

Turnbull's work was considered part of a genre of western 'travelogues' that told tales by western travelers of 'other' peoples that were constructed to depict differences from those

who were unlike them. Willerslev & Meinert categorized Turnbull's book as one of those that, for mostly ethical and methodological reasons, had been "*allocated a shadowy existence in the 'hall of shame' of anthropology*" (Willerslev and Meinert 2017).

Even amid criticisms, Turnbull insisted he perceived no structure that warranted the term 'social system' or 'social organization' (Wilson, McCall et al. 1975). Turnbull's account of despondency among the Ik, other than being dismissed as untrue, can also be read as metaphors of depravity that beset the socially atrophied Ik who clung onto the mountains as their home, and in the process were adversely affected by the ongoing development (Wilson, McCall et al. 1975).

In other words, Turnbull appears to suggest that the fatalism of the Ik he encountered was likely to be the outcome of the fate of those that attempted to defy or resist the imperatives of modernity, rather than the direct consequence of modernity itself. For Turnbull, whatever was happening to the Ik was a problem of the Ik, a posturing in which victims were to blame squarely for their predicaments (Willerslev and Meinert 2017). What was it about the famine of the Turnbull times that made it that lethal in ways that were unlike any other famine before it?

Turnbull recommended that the Ik be rounded up and apprehended in a military-like operation so they could be relocated to other remote parts of Uganda, so as to avoid their extermination. The latter recommendation was not heeded to by the Obote I government (1966-1971) and was challenged by writers such as Geddes who argued that this would be a sure way to make them extinct as their language and sense of belonging would disappear (Wilson, McCall et al. 1975).

Barth described Turnbull's recommendations as a recipe for 'culturicide' (Barth and Turnbull 1974), to which the unrepentant Turnbull replied "*there was no culture to kill*" (Wilson, McCall et al. 1975). He argued further that, "*the prospect that in small groups the Ik would have had to become assimilated to other social systems, and thus would have become re-socialized and restored to a fuller, richer, more truly social life, making use of a potential for humanity, or sociality, that had been reduced to just that, a mere potential*" (Wilson, McCall et al. 1975).

In his critique of Turnbull, Barth argues that though Turnbull's book was presented as a popular account, it revealed itself as poor in anthropological methods, in data, and in reasoning, and "*it is emotionally either dishonest or superficial. It is deeply misleading to the public it sets out to inform. Most disturbingly, it is grossly irresponsible and harmful to its unwitting objects of study*" (Barth and Turnbull 1974). According to Wilson, Turnbull failed to comprehend the Ik and to understand them on their own terms (Wilson, McCall et al. 1975). Heine has even suggested Turnbull's selection of Pirre as his research site was wrong, as it was occupied mainly by non-Ik (Heine 1985); Turnbull's main informants on Ik culture were mostly non-Ik; his key interpreter (Lomeja), whom Heine claims to have interviewed in 1983, was Didiņa and without a good comprehension of the Ik.

Grinker intimated that Turnbull's mid-60's writings about the Ik could have been influenced by his relationship with the Ik, the subject of his writings, which bordered on rejection. It needs to be understood from Turnbull's worldview as a somewhat disillusioned Western anthropologist who did his research in the highly volatile and famine-riddled context of an uncompromising Ik society that was struggling to cope with a famine and drought (Grinker 2000).

Heine is categorical about how Turnbull may have mischaracterized not only his respondents (by describing them as hunter-gatherers-turned farmers), but also misconstrued the social structures he claimed to have studied, even as he is credited to have described in explicit detail what he saw, let alone his failure to explain why what he encountered was the way he saw it (Heine 1985). Turnbull, in his reply to his critics, also admitted that intellectual rigor was not his objective in writing the book, nor was academia his targeted audience (Wilson, McCall et al. 1975).

However, even among those who criticized Turnbull, on account of his own admission of subjectivity, projecting his own biases onto his research subjects (Heine 1985), and manifesting blind prejudices and unsubstantiated stereotypes akin to descriptions of Ik as savage or in 'less-than-human' terms (Turnbull 1972), most of their scholarship on Karamoja has not enabled a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of the vulnerabilities that afflicted Indigenous Peoples in Karamoja, such as the Ik or the Tepeth. It was never entirely clear from Turnbull's work, why, despite occurrences of famines before the one Turnbull

encountered in the mid-60s in Karamoja, the Ik had never suffered so adversely as Turnbull depicted the Ik he encountered. What happened that compromised the adaptability of the Ik?

While acknowledging Turnbull's shortcoming, McCall (Wilson, McCall et al. 1975) suggested that Turnbull provided an account of the Ik as an intimate example of the functioning of social man under conditions of prolonged and extreme stress; occasionally reading into Turnbull's descriptions of the Ik as indicating a very cohesive group that was unfortunately trapped in a disastrous situation in which internal and external relations were defined by aggression as a strategy to exploit niches in the cultural ecology that was largely imposed on them.

Far beyond denigrating, Turnbull's study of the Ik is what Fredrick Barth described as 'a Western ethno-centric curiosity' (Barth and Turnbull 1974), and Heine characterized as 'a dubious source on Ik culture and social structures' (Heine 1985); McCall (Wilson, McCall et al. 1975) called for and offered a more nuanced interpretation of contextual impact on the Ik that Turnbull studied; they were afflicted by different forms of shocks mentioned in Turnbull's writings. McCall was not alone. Recently, Willerslev & Meinert made a similar pitch – 'what does one do with Turnbull's book when conducting fieldwork in the Ik community?' Rather than an outright dismissal of the writings of Turnbull, like many western scholars have done, this study will seek an intellectual engagement with some of his ideas to try and understand the dimensions of vulnerability of the Ik and tragedy of family, especially the treatment of children in Karamojong families.

Even among the western scholars who returned to the Ik to disprove or validate Turnbull's claims, there was never unanimity of opinion. Heine considered most of the assertions that had been made by Turnbull as falsehoods (Heine 1985, Willerslev and Meinert 2017). He conducted research among the Ik elders specifically to discuss Turnbull's book and found that "elders in all three groups had recognized most of Turnbull's descriptions as an accurate picture of what occurs during severe famine." Those who criticized Turnbull for projecting his own feelings onto his research subjects (Heine 1985), for subjectivity (Barth and Turnbull 1974), were all guilty of similar deficiencies for which Turnbull stood accused – value judgement. If some of what Turnbull described happened, then, as pointed out by Willerslev & Meinert, Turnbull was guilty of failing to situate what he observed among his research subjects within concrete realities of their lived experiences (Willerslev and Meinert 2017).

Turnbull's disclaimer regarding the lack of intellectual rigor was a convenient excuse for avoiding responsibility for his inadequacies and failures in providing proper explanations for whatever he had observed among his research subjects in Ik lands, for which he stands convicted.

Such an extensive engagement with Turnbull's writings and his critics provides us with a rare opportunity not only to interrogate the massive literature that was generated about the historical dimensions of the vulnerabilities of the Karamojong in general, and the Ik in particular, but also to take methodological caution regarding what the study ought not to do in selecting study sites, determining key respondents, and making meaning of subsequently generated data. It is averred in this proposal that perhaps trying to unravel what actually could have happened to Turnbull's Ik, and the way in which they responded, could help us understand not only the complexities of the changing dynamics of the Indigenous People's vulnerabilities, but also what could be happening to Karamojong children who are sold by their mothers and trafficked into modern-day slavery under circumstances similar to those that were described by Turnbull in his classical text.

In trying to come to terms with this phenomenon of the trafficking of Karamojong children, we pick a cue from Turnbull's extremely controversial and highly criticized account of the treatment of children among the Ik society from 1964 to 1967. How come some of the graphic descriptions of the maltreatment of children Turnbull made reference to in the aftermath of a severe famine from 1965 to 1966, may have come to pass, albeit, in a different form and in different contexts?

#### **4.2.2 Indigenous People and Karamoja's Development Discourse**

The literature is replete with historical accounts of the Ik and Tepeth's dispossession in order to establish protected areas including Kidepo National Park and Timu Central Forest Reserve. When Kidepo Game Reserve was created, up to 1,233 kms<sup>2</sup> of prime fertile land, which received average annual rainfall of between 350 to 500 mm, was alienated from the Ik and surrounding communities. After Kidepo Game Reserve was upgraded to a National Park in 1962, the boundary of the Park had to be extended to include more of the surrounding areas where wildlife migrated during the dry season, including the upper Narus catchment where they spend months outside the Park. Extension of the park boundaries further south to Geremech hill and the Lokalas, so as to include the upper Narus catchment within the Park

since it was an integral part of the habitat of the Kidepo valley animals, alienated more land from the ŋi'Porein, ŋi'nyangea and Ik. The ŋi'Porein and ŋi'nyangea are indigenous tribes that border with the Ik on the western part of Kidepo National Park. Most of the land between Moruŋole and Pirre is within Kidepo National Park's conservation area.

In a bid to stem land degradation in the 1940s, the colonial state created 19 Central Forest Reserves on all the Karamoja mountains, covering 3,222 kms<sup>2</sup>, almost 11.6 percent of the total area of Karamoja. By Independence, a total of 26,204 kms<sup>2</sup> out of 27,700 kms<sup>2</sup>, the total land area of Karamoja, equivalent to 94.6 percent was under protected areas (Rugadya and Kamusiime 2013).

It has been observed in the Indigenous World Report of 2019 that all the Indigenous People in Uganda have a common experience of state-induced landlessness and historical injustices caused by the creation of conservation areas, including the Ik and Tepeth of Karamoja. They have experienced various forms of human rights violations, including continued forced evictions and/or exclusions from ancestral lands without community consultation, consent or adequate (or any) compensation; violence and the destruction of homes and property, including livestock; denial of their means of subsistence and of their cultural and religious life through their exclusion from ancestral lands and natural resources; and resulting in their continued impoverishment, social and political exploitation and marginalization (IWGIA 2019).

The governments of Obote I, Idi Amin, UNLF and Obote II (between 1966 and 1985) were mostly preoccupied with vulnerabilities associated with the breakdown of law and order, caused by the proliferation of illegal firearms, with which raiding activities were perpetuated within Karamoja, as well as in neighboring districts. Famine was a common occurrence in Karamoja during this period, which was interpreted as a signal for accelerating adoption of settled crop farming throughout Karamojong. Where mobility was identified as the problem, the solution proposed was permanent settlement. Government policies towards Karamoja within this period focused on the pursuit of rapid state-led development as a strategy to not only address law and order challenges, but also to enable Karamoja to 'catch-up' with the rest of Uganda where the population was permanently settled. In continuing with the colonial policy of Karamojong resettlement as the quintessence for development- better administration



and increased public service delivery- various governments treated the Karamojong as a homogenous category.

The subject of Indigenous People in Karamoja was inconsequential to the extent that the Karamojong were collectively identified as the problem of not only law and order in Karamoja, but also sanitation and hygiene. Other than 'bringing rapid development to Karamoja' to ensure Karamoja was on the same footing with the rest of Uganda, Amin's government policy, as was outlined by then Karamoja Provincial Governor, Major Nasur Abdual Abdallah, was more concerned with increasing food production by compelling men to start participating in farming alongside their women, and stemming 'nakedness'.

While Karamoja generally had food shortages during the 70s and 80s, the Tepeth were not as vulnerable as the Ik, due to a more entrenched crop farming system. A 1974 Food Assessment report presented to the then provincial governor, for example, revealed that in the entire Rupa sub-county, 'it was only in Tepeth that people were well-off'. No one had died from starvation and crops had not failed.

After coming to power in 1986, the development trajectory adopted by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government towards Karamoja has largely been defined by a double affirmative action strategy, focusing first on Karamoja as a whole, and subsequently targeting the various vulnerabilities within Karamoja. The resettlement of the 'long-suffering Karamojong' displaced by armed conflicts was a long-standing commitment of the NRM that was clearly stipulated in its Ten Point program. This program, launched on February 6, 1981, was launched immediately after Museveni ascended to power and guided its five-year protracted, armed struggle against the Obote II regime (Movement 1986).

The NRM was convinced that leaving the Karamojong 'behind'- marginalized and isolated- would lead to their eventual extinction. Land lost to protected areas was not returned to the Indigenous People, while many interventions were undertaken to transform Karamoja that targeted the Ik and the Tepeth. However, initiatives to rationalize land use in Karamoja's protected areas mainly benefited the inhabitants of wildlife reserves in the plains along the Bokora-Matheniko wildlife reserves, where in 2002, the UWA, with approval of Parliament, excised from protected areas status a total of 14,904 kms<sup>2</sup> (53.8 percent of total land area in Karamoja) in the three wildlife reserves.

The changes in Karamoja, as a result of migrations from rural to urban areas, also affect Indigenous People. Migrations of Ik into Kaabong town were documented by several scholars (Stites, Burns et al. 2014). Indigenous People's land dispossession continued. Recently, a part of Timu forest around Tultul, which used to be a homeland for a section of the Ik, was found to be inside the central forest reserve when boundaries were opened (Willerslev and Meinert 2017). This meant the Ik would no longer be allowed to access part of the forest for their survival. A recent study has documented how the Ik around Timu were dispossessed of their land not only by their neighbors, the Dodoth, but also by elites in their own communities (Muhereza 2019).

Among initiatives that were undertaken to address marginalization in Karamoja, was one to create opportunities for mountain tribes to be represented politically. In May 2015, the government approved the creation of two counties as political constituencies: Ik County and Tepeth County. These were carved out of Dodoth East in Kaabong district and Matheniko County in Moroto district respectively in order to secure representation of marginalized Indigenous People in Karamoja in Parliament. These two counties, created along with 37 others in other parts of the country, were justified on the grounds of effective representation, streamlining administration, internal emancipation, and the reduction of marginalization. Parliament approved the creation of the new counties in July 2015.

The decision by the government to create Ik County was the subject of contestation in Kaabong District Council. Some councilors were not convinced of the justification of creating Ik County on the grounds of marginalization in Kaabong by the dominant Dodoth. It was argued that creating a constituency for the Ik would marginalize other smaller ethnic groups, such as the Ketebo and Okuti in Kamion who are not recognized in the constitution. Some councilors wanted a stand-alone sub-county for the Ik instead of a county, since more sub-counties and parishes would create "employment to many Ugandans unlike a constituency which employs only one individual." The council however resolved to "let the Ik take their offer from His Excellency, the President." The motion for creating Ik County was passed when put to vote, 19 to one.

However, even after creating political constituencies for the Ik and Tepeth, underlying forms of social, cultural, and political discrimination from the more dominant categories in the

original districts' local governments appears to have continued. Participation of Indigenous People in national functions at district levels was still a challenge, blamed largely on the inaccessibility of the affected communities due to tough terrain. The available literature on Karamoja is replete with anecdotal information on different types of vulnerabilities that continue to afflict the Ik and Tepeth. The Ik especially continue to suffer from insecurity caused by their armed neighbors who continue raiding each other, namely the Turkana from Kenya and Dodoth from Kaabong.

Indigenous Peoples' cultural identities are threatened as well. There is a sense that indigenous communities face challenges associated with the 'crowding out' of their traditional beliefs and value systems as a result of assimilation by dominant Karamojong groups who are seen as 'infringing' on the indigenous world (Weatherby 2012). There are writings that show that Indigenous Peoples' languages and cultures risk dying off with the elderly generation, since the younger populations had become assimilated into the cultures of their more dominant neighbors (Weatherby 2012, Beer 2017).

Beer reiterated Weatherby's claims about the disappearance of the "So", the original language of the Tepeth and their culture as a result, largely, of external pressures from their Matheniko and Pokot neighbors (Weatherby 2012, Beer 2015). A study published in 2007 found that by 1975, only 100 people could speak the Nyaṅ'i language, with the majority being elderly. Those younger than 40 had adopted the Dodoth dialect of ṅa'Karimojong. While the Nyaṅ'i language was disappearing, there was still significant local interest in not only the Ik language but also in its development, suggesting that it will continue to be used by generations to come, unlike Nyaṅ'i (Wiedemann and Nannyombi 2007).

Knigton (2016) in his review of the work of Weatherby (2012), affirms the existence of tensions emerging between the Tepeth culture and religion and an infringing 'modern world' (Knigton 2016). In acknowledging the increasing vulnerability of the So and their culture and religion, Knigton shows how the Mount Moroto population had tripled in forty years. Though, this increase was caused largely by immigrants from neighboring Pokot communities who accepted the local polity, as well as the Karimojong and the Turkana who intermarried with them leading to assimilation of the Sor (Knigton 2016).

Increased interaction between the Ik and Tepeth with their neighbors led to intermarriages. Wiedemann and Nannyombi argue that among the Ik, it was mainly women who were getting married to non-Ik, and not the Ik men because they lacked cattle with which to pay bride-price (Wiedemann and Nannyombi 2007). Ik women who married non-Ik men became assimilated into their husbands' cultures.

As the Sor adopted more cattle herding after 1972 (compared to the Ik who have remained predominantly settled crop farmers), they were driven not only into making alliances with the Maseniko, and participating in local government at Moroto Municipality, but also into speaking ɲa'karimojong (Knighton 2016). According to Weatherby, the language of the Tepeth on Mt. Kadam had been influenced mostly by Pokot than ɲa'karimojong, while those on Mt. Moroto had been compelled to learn ɲa'karimojong (Weatherby 2012).

## 5.0 TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS IN KARAMOJA

The 2009 Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Act defines 'trafficking in persons' as *“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”*

Child trafficking from Karamoja can be described as a form of modern day slavery, although unlike historical slavery, which involved raids by slavers on African villages, sometimes in connivance with rival communities, today's trafficking in Karamoja is predominantly orchestrated from within victims' own families. In return for money, these families willing offer their biological children, or children in their care, to traffickers, who are often strangers. The circumstances that lead to children becoming victims of trafficking are as diverse as there are children being trafficked. There are cases where some children have run away from their homes and drawn to false promises of opportunities for a better life, education, and jobs, find themselves in the hands of human traffickers (Kasirye 2007, IOM 2014, David 2018).

While adult migrations out of Karamoja started in the 1970s in response to famine and reaching a peak after the 1980 famine, it is not clear when child trafficking from Karamojong began. However, a review of the available literature on the subject reveals that the trafficking

of Karamojong children started after the return of relative peace to Karamoja, in the aftermath of a successful, forceful disarmament campaign that ended in July 2010. By 2014, there were already concerns about a large number of Karamojong teenagers flocking to towns and cities in Soroti, Jinja, Busia, Tororo, Mbale, and Kampala. A report shows that between June and October 2014, an estimated 6,000 school-aged children were trafficked from Napak and Moroto districts, from Apeitolim, and from other places.

Traffickers take advantage of the poverty, parental ignorance, and the absence or breakdown of social institutions in the communities where children are trafficked from (Walakira 2016). There are cases where children have been bought directly from their biological parents (usually mothers) at a fee as low as 5,000 UGX. In December 2019, investigative journalists unearthed perpetrators operating at various weekly markets including Abarata Kere market, in Usuk County, Arapai market in Soroti, and Ochorimongin market in Katakwi. There, Karamojong teenage girls are bargained and bought for prices ranging from as low as 5,000-20,000 UGX to a maximum of 30,000-50,000 UGX (David 2018).

Karamojong children are bought not only from their parents, but also from their guardians and benefactors. Karamojong children are sold not only in weekly markets in Teso, but also sometimes to agents who find the children at their village homes. Traffickers may offer cash for the children, but sometimes parents, guardians and benefactors may agree to a deal after being duped or conned by traffickers, with false promises of offering the children scholarships for education, or opportunities for lucrative employment either in Kampala and other big towns, or abroad.

In trying to come to terms with this issue of trafficking of Karamojong children, it is important to underscore Karamojong childrens' agency. According to the New Vision, one of Uganda's leading newspapers, Karamojong girls as young as 10 years are trafficked from Napak district into Kenya's capital Nairobi. Some of the trafficked girls ended up in Somalia, in the hands of the Al-Shabaab, with hardly any hope of returning home (New Vision, 2019). With the rise in incidents of 're-trafficking' - a term used by Walakira et. al to refer to Karamojong children rescued from trafficking, taken to reception centers where they are rehabilitated and resettled in Karamoja, only to end up being trafficked again (willingly or not) with most returning to places where they were rescued from (Walakira 2016)- the

Karamojong childrens' agency needs to be properly analyzed in order to understand the driving forces.

Upon seeing or hearing tales of cohorts who return with money and many token 'gifts' and aided by improved transport and technology-enhanced communication, some of the children willingly offer themselves to opportunities for work outside Karamoja. Some venture on their own, ending up in markets, unaccompanied, where they land in the hands of unscrupulous traffickers. Many look to opportunities for employment within Uganda as domestic servants, herdsmen, waitresses, shop attendants and bat tenders, among others. Some of the trafficked Karamojong children are coerced into agricultural labor on farms.

The situation is dire for those trafficked outside the country. One worrying trend, which for a long time had been thought to merely be a rumor, came to light: the existence of an unspecified number of transnational syndicates involved in the trafficking of Karamojong children. According the 2018 Annual Police Crime Report, a total of 286 incidents of human trafficking were registered during 2018 as compared to 177 in 2017 (UPF 2019). The majority of registered incidents were transnational in nature, involving 254 adults and 16 children in 2018, compared to 123 adults and 11 children in 2017. Internal trafficking was dominated by children; 43 incidents were reported in 2017, reduced to 16 in 2018 (14 children and 2 adults) (UPF 2019).

The aforementioned means incidents of reported internal trafficking are reducing as transnational trafficking incidents are increasing. Transnational trafficking incidents involving adults increased faster than children between 2017 and 2018. The number of trafficking victims also increased from 355 in 2017 to 650 in 2018. The majority of cases were transnational trafficking victims- from 249 in 2017 to 505 in 2018 (compared to a rise in internal trafficking victims from 106 in 2017 to 145 in 2018) (UPF 2019). The 2018 Annual Police Crime report registered Karamoja as a major source of persons who have been victims of internal trafficking (UPF 2019).

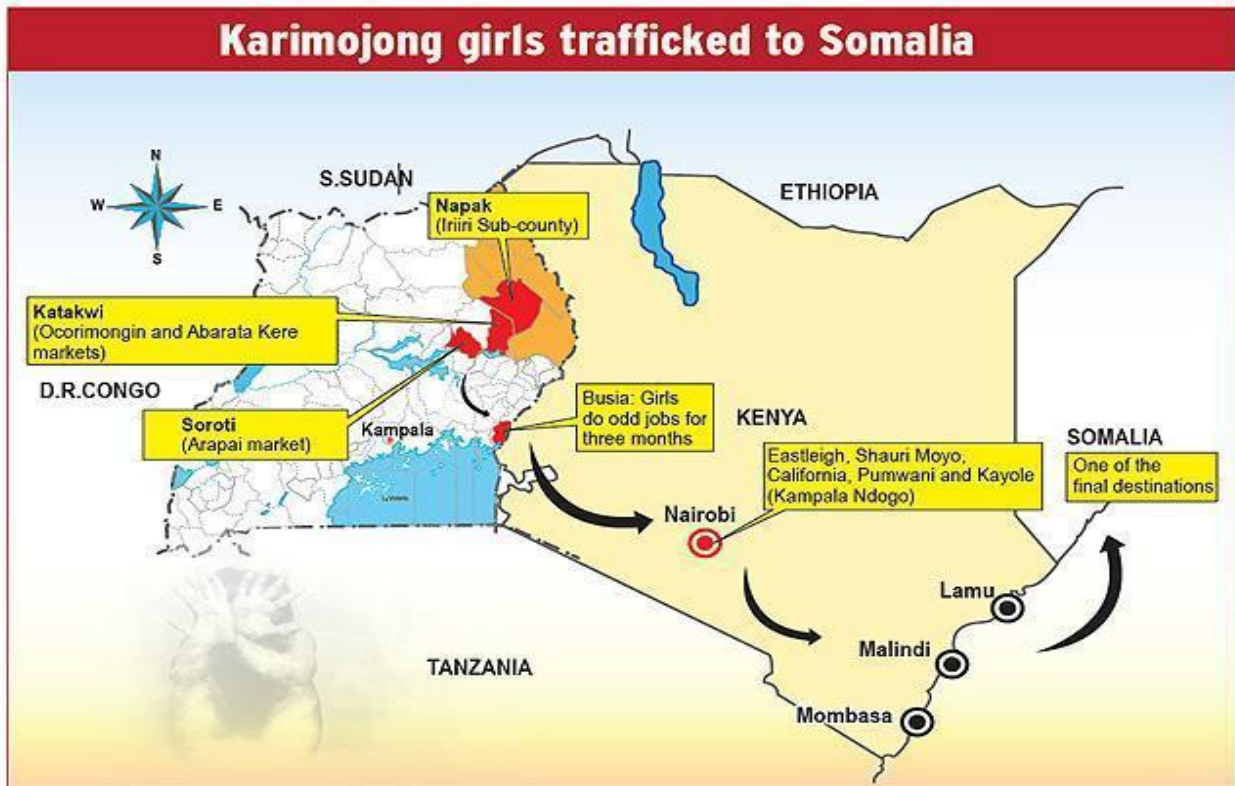
The most common destinations of female children trafficked from Karamoja are the Nairobi suburbs of Shauri Moyo and Eastleigh (also known as 'Little Mogadishu') occupied predominantly by the Somali community. Other places include a slum area nicknamed 'California', Pumwani, Majengo, Pangani (Chai road), and Kayole (Kampala Ndogo). Some

of the Karamojong children are trafficked to Juba, South Sudan (David 2018). Other trafficked Karamojong children are shipped to the Middle East.

Often, the reality of what happens when they arrive at their destinations is contrary to what they are told when they are being trafficked. Several girls from Karamoja, some as young as ten-years-old, have ended up working as housemaids for the Somali community in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, and are reportedly paid as little as 1,000 Ksh (36,000 sh.so) per month and live in harsh conditions. Many are working as bar tenders and others in massage parlors where they indulge in prostitution. However, most of the children end up coerced into begging on the streets and prostitution, with many working in brothels (David 2018).

There are many trafficking syndicates involved in the trafficking of Karamojong children. One of these syndicates comprises unscrupulous Somali nationals who work with bus operators in Busia, Kenya and Nairobi, Kenya, to transport the trafficked children to Garissa and Mandera. Those who were rescued in January 2020 from the suburbs of Nairobi were destined for Somalia. Once in Somalia, girls have been turned into sex slaves. Links between these transnational trafficking syndicates and terrorism networks in the region linked to Al-Shabaab have been established, implying that the possibility of trafficked Karamojong children being turned into suicide bombers cannot be overlooked. Fears have been expressed that young girls and boys were being recruited to join criminal and terror networks in Somalia and Libya.

The main route has been mapped through Mombasa to Malindi to Lamu, before crossing into Somalia at Kiunga border, as shown in the figure below:



Source: [https://www.newvision.co.ug/new\\_vision/news/1511526/trafficked-karimojong-girls-al-shabaab](https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1511526/trafficked-karimojong-girls-al-shabaab)

### 5.1 The phenomenal increase in the Trafficking in Persons

Over the last ten years, a plethora of literature on human trafficking in Karamoja has emerged. In most of this literature where attempts have been made to come to terms with the rise in TIP from Karamoja, focus has been placed on identifying how best to stem the vice while ensuring interventions undertaken do not make TIP worse than it already is. There have also been concerns that some of the interventions that are currently taking place aimed at the socio-economic transformation of Karamoja could have the opposite effect of accelerating the vulnerability of children to trafficking (Haug 2014, IOM 2014, Corps 2016, Walakira 2016).

Some of the writings have treated the emergence of the child trafficking phenomenon in Karamojong as the flip-side of the usual dry season migrations of Karamojong herders into neighboring districts of Teso, Lango, and Acholi. This migration happens not only in search of water and pastures, but also to access markets where they sell livestock and buy food which is then returned to Karamoja to support the part of the family that remains behind in permanent settlements (Stites and Akabwai 2012, Corps 2016). These dry season migrations were often accompanied by Karamojong migrations in search of temporary off-season jobs to



earn a source of income and these migrants would return to Karamoja after the start of rains. These types of migrations have continued, but alongside them, these syndicates of child laborers trafficked from Karamoja have emerged.

While some researchers who analyze migrations from the villages to the urban areas in Northern Karamoja make no mention of TIP as a phenomenon associated with migrations (Stites, Burns et al. 2014), we seek to make that connection in this research study. There is a need to unpack the different forms of Karamojong out-migrations in order to understand the new dynamics of migrations associated with women and children, out of which, child trafficking has emerged. The point is to try and understand why it has skyrocketed at exactly the time it did, and not in the past; what went wrong? To understand what happened, it is essential to relate it to what was going on inside Karamoja, as well as what has been happening in the districts neighboring Karamoja where there is increasing resistance to the presence of Karamojong herds. Additionally, the impact of all these happenings on the survival of the Karamojong and how this is related to child trafficking is critical.

While out-migrations of different categories of Karamojong during the dry season are undeniably one of the available distress coping mechanisms that Karamojong have since time immemorial adopted to survive their harsh physical environment, the trafficking of Karamojong children cannot be simply reduced to negative coping mechanisms, adaptation strategies, or even survival strategies, as has been argued in some reports and publications (Haug 2014, IOM 2014, Corps 2016, Walakira 2016).

Studies have pointed at human trafficking in Karamoja as being the direct consequence of the violent conflicts associated with livestock raiding. These conflicts have had extremely adverse long-term negative effects not only on the moral fiber of the affected population, but also the institutions in the society (Sundal 2010). The causality between armed conflicts and human trafficking needs to be properly contextualized. There are so many parts of Uganda where there have been armed conflicts, but which have not resulted in child trafficking.

The Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) 2016/17 revealed that at 9.8%, Karamoja had the highest percentage of heads of households who were widows/widowers. This was followed by Acholi at 8.6%, Lango at 8.0%, and at Teso 6.5% (UBOS 2018, 27-8). Perhaps the high rates of widowhood in these regions were related to their past histories of armed

conflicts. However, this does not explain why children were not being trafficked from Acholi, Lango and Teso, compared to Karamoja. Could it be the result of domestic violence, as has been observed in many writings on child trafficking in Karamoja (Walakira 2016), which is believed to be rife in polygamous relationships, leading to children dropping out of school and running away from their homes? Karamoja had the highest rate of polygamy in the country at 31.2%. It was followed by Acholi with 15.7%, Teso with 10.1%, and Lango with 7.8% (UBOS 2018, 27-8). How come the high cases of domestic violence in say Acholi has not led to child trafficking from Acholi as compared to Karamoja?

Could the prevalence of armed conflicts be linked to high levels of Karamojong child trafficking due to another reason – the high number of double orphans (those who have lost both their parents), for example? It is a known fact that the largest demographic of fatalities as a result of raidings were adult males, as they comprise the bulk of the Karamojong warrior machine. Raids create large numbers of orphans in Karamoja. It has been argued in some writings (Walakira 2016) that double orphans are 80% more likely to be trafficked compared to other children. Unfortunately, this also does not fully explain why Karamojong children were the most trafficked. From the statistics in the 2016/7 UNHS, Acholi had the highest percentage of children who were orphans (at 19%), followed by Karamoja (16.8%), Lango (15.6%), Kigezi (13.4%), Bukedi (12.3%), and Teso (12.2%) (UBOS 2018, 148). Orphanhood could be a factor, but on its own, cannot explain why it is Karamojong children, and not Acholi, Langi or Bakiga children who are being trafficked. It cannot also be explained by double orphan-hood, because the 2016/17 UNHS revealed that the highest percentage of children who were double orphans were still from Acholi (with 5.5%), followed in 2<sup>nd</sup> place by Bukedi with 3.8%. In 3<sup>rd</sup> place with 3.0% of the children as double orphans were Karamoja and Lango. Kigezi was 5<sup>th</sup> with 2.5%, Tooro 6<sup>th</sup> with 2.4%, and Bunyoro 7<sup>th</sup> with 2.2% (UBOS 2018, 148).

Similarly, while we are sympathetic to the suggestion in the 2016/7 UNHS that past insurgencies in Karamoja, Acholi, Lango and Teso sub-regions were partially to blame for the high incidences of paternal orphan-hood (UBOS 2018, 147), it can, however not be inferred, therefore, that insurgencies are one of major reasons why Karamojong children were the most trafficked; while it may be an underlying factor that makes trafficking a possibility, it cannot be among the key drivers. If it were a key driver, there would be many children trafficked from Acholi and other conflict affected areas in Uganda.

The link between absolute poverty and child trafficking in Karamoja is also not completely clear in the literature because of mixed signals, and therefore cannot be taken at face value. To try and understand their connections, the starting point is to acknowledge that poverty is experienced differently by women, children, and men (UBOS 2018, 94), and Karamoja is no exception. A study conducted by the International Organization of Migration in 2014 revealed how the breakdown of the traditional Karamojong livelihood systems associated with livestock herding had driven children into searching for alternative sources of livelihoods to contribute meaningfully to the survival of their households, even when they were not the heads of the households (IOM 2014). Increasingly, children in Karamoja were shouldering more responsibilities and obligation for looking after their biological families as compared to their peers elsewhere.

A 2015 Children in Uganda report by the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MGLSD) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) pointed out that the percentage of children aged 0-4 experiencing multiple deprivations, in other words, living in absolute poverty, was highest in Karamoja and West Nile sub-regions at 68% (MGLSD and UNICEF Uganda 2015, 24). If the highest percentages of children in absolute poverty are found in Karamoja and West Nile, why is it only children in Karamoja who are the subject of trafficking and not those in West Nile? The 2015 MGLSD and UNICEF report also revealed that the percentage of children living in extreme poverty was even higher for Karamoja's children aged 6–18 years, at 82%. In addition, the report revealed that child poverty was at 60% in South Central Uganda and East Central Uganda, 57% in Eastern Uganda, and 54% in Northern Uganda (MGLSD and UNICEF Uganda 2015, 24). What is it that happens to Karamojong children between ages 6 and 18, which is the age group of those subject to trafficking, that makes them vulnerable to being trafficked, compared to children in other regions such as West Nile, Eastern Uganda, Northern Uganda, and East Central Uganda?

To argue like Walakira et. al, that in some parts of Karamoja, 'people see child trafficking (the selling of children) as an acceptable strategy for economic survival in response to adversity occasioned by drought, armed conflicts and famine,' is extremely fatalistic in as far as it fails to interrogate the undercurrents that inform such narratives (Walakira 2016). Turnbull (1972) made a similar observation regarding the breakdown of morals and social institutions among the Ik, who in the aftermath of a severe famine in the mid-60s, could,

among others, leave their children to starve to death so the adults could survive to produce more children in future.

While largely disagreeing with, and therefore disregarding some of the inferences and interpretations of, events that were observed by Turnbull (1972), we make mention of some events the veracity of which have been corroborated by subsequent anthropological writings, such as children being abandoned by their parents for lacking in what to feed them during periods of famine (Turnbull 1972, 288). One group of elderly Ik interlocutors in Tultul, Kamion reported that it used to happen before and after Turnbull's encounter with the Ik, although never deliberate, but as the only option available to those who did it (Willerslev and Meinert 2017). Another group of elderly Ik women interlocutors in the same place corroborated the same issue about babies being abandoned while out searching for food, saying 'when bad times come, we have to survive the best we can. This also means that people do things that they wouldn't otherwise have done' (Willerslev and Meinert 2017). In another site in Morungole, elderly Ik men said they had never experienced it (Willerslev and Meinert 2017).

Many studies have revealed how children are the greatest victims of shocks and disasters that afflict the Karamojong in general. In the past, before mounting large scale cattle raids, there were reports that children from 'enemy' ethnic groups were used as human sacrifices among the Matheniko, Tepeth, and Pokot (Stites, Mazurana et al. 2007, Stites and Akabwai 2012, Weatherby 2012). In present day societies, children are kept out of school, and compelled to support their homestead's survival by either working for wages on a piece-rate basis, or looking after smaller livestock that remain in the permanent settlement. Karamoja has the highest number of school-age children who are not in school. As such, children bear the brunt of poverty in their societies.

But let us problematize this linkage between poverty and child trafficking in Karamoja. As early as the 1970s, despondency was already a cause of concern in Karamoja in general, as the number of 'beggars' and 'vagrants' that were roaming the streets of Moroto Town was a cause of concern by April 1975.<sup>2</sup> Despite the latter, child trafficking from Karamoja was not

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<sup>2</sup>. See Minute 19/75 – Beggars and Vagrants, in 'Minutes of Karamoja Provincial Team and Planning Committee held on 25 April 1975 in the Provincial Governor's Chambers (pp. 4).

taking place. So, what changed in Karamoja, Uganda, Africa and across the globe in the last decade (2010-2019), that resulted in child trafficking from Karamoja, among other parts of Uganda?

If current poverty statistics are unpacked, one can infer that while there are on average more incidences of absolute poverty in Karamoja, there are also large numbers of equally poor people in other regions of Uganda (especially Northern and Eastern Uganda). What is it then that drives impoverished people in Karamoja into selling their children into human trafficking that does not happen in Teso, Lango, and Acholi or West Nile sub-regions? Some child trafficking has been reported in other parts of Uganda such as Busia, Pader, Kalangala Masaka, and Kampala (Kasirye 2007, ASF 2010), but not at the scale and openness with which it happens in Karamoja. If child trafficking from Karamoja cannot be explained by poverty alone, could it be because of the differences in the dynamics and manifestations of this poverty? Is it possible that poverty in Karamoja is much more feminized, than it is in other regions, borrowing from Ahikire (2018)? That the majority of those who are poor in Karamoja are female heads of households, in a deeply patriarchal society, where resources are male-controlled, can be a useful entry point into an investigation of the underlying causes of child trafficking in Karamoja.

Ngaka (2009) proffered a possible linkage by submitting in his PhD dissertation that low literacy levels disadvantaged and inhibited women's full participation in agriculturally oriented interventions such as PMA activities, leading to the feminization of poverty. While illiteracy may be linked to women's inability to make the most of agricultural-improvement interventions, extending the same logic to explain why women affected by poverty sell their children to traffickers could lead to over-stretching the linkage, even though female adult literacy in Karamoja was the lowest in the whole country (UBOS 2018, 42).

National adult literacy rates increased from an average of 66.9% (77.7% for males and 57.4% for females) in 2012/13 to 73.5% (80.8% for males and 67.2% for females) in 2016/17. In the Teso sub region, overall adult literacy rates increased from 60.3% in 2012/13 to 66.1% in 2016/17. Particularly, adult literacy rates among the females increased from 46.1% to 59.3%, while that of males fell from 76.2% to 73.8% between 2012/13 and 2016/17. A similar trend was present in Acholi and Lango where female literacy increased faster than that of males, although in all cases male literacy was still higher than that of females. In Acholi, adult

literacy rates increased from 61.4% in 2012/13 to 61.7% in 2016/17. While literacy rates reduced for males from 85.0% to 79.0% between 2012/3 and 2016/7, it increased for females from 39.9% to 45.5%. In Lango, adult literacy rates increased from 66.7% (83.1% for males and 51.3% for females) in 2012/13 to 77.6% (91.3% for males and 65.6% for females) in 2016/17. In Karamoja, on the other hand, while there was a reduction in adult literacy rates from 28.6% in 2012/13 to 26.8% in 2016/17, female adult literacy increased from 17.9% to 19.6%, while male adult literacy reduced from 42.3% to 37.1% (UBOS 2018, 42).

It is possible that low literacy can explain why female headed households are also among the poorest. It cannot, however, be inferred directly that low literacy was the reason why there was a high rate of child trafficking from Karamoja. Does one need to have been to formal school to understand that selling one's own child is bad, inhuman and unthinkable? What happened to the non-formal socialization through which traditional social values are imparted to members of a particular community? A 2016 evaluation of a project to counter child trafficking found that in Moroto FM radio stations were used extensively to pass along messages targeting raising community awareness against child trafficking (Walakira 2016), but whether this reduced child trafficking from Karamoja is highly doubted.

TIP seems quite a complex phenomenon that can only be attributable to a combination of factors accentuated as a consequence of long-term decay and possibly an irredeemable collapse in the social safety nets (Stites, Mazurana et al. 2007). What social structures and institutions in the traditional systems of the Karamojong broke down, as a result of pervasive armed conflicts associated with cattle raiding, making possible the occurrence of Karamojong mothers selling their children to strangers in order that they can survive in the short-term?

What Colin Turnbull said about how the Ik treated their children in times of a severe famine, such as sacrificing their children for the sake of adults' survival, on the assumption that after all, they would produce other children, was dismissed. There were even calls for his book to be banned. And yet there were some scholars who argued that instead of banning his book, there should be an engagement with his ideas. Not even subsequent research focusing specifically on assertions made in Turnbull's book have come anywhere near to either confirming or refuting his assertions. Some writings merely dismissed Turnbull, while others have just raised more controversy by restating his ideas, especially those asserting his ideas about how children were treated as true.

Our readers need to be reminded about a similar discussion that happened between colonial officials; it was in reference to how Karamojong valued cattle more than the life of other human beings. It had become clear to colonial officials by the 1930s that Karamojong had a profound proclivity to livestock. Howard, a district commissioner (DC) in Karamoja in 1961/2, mentioned in his brief to the Karamoja Security Committee of 1961 how: “when 14 Bokora were killed by Jie in February 1962, a few people went to Kangole county headquarters to complain to their chief, but when 2,700 heads of cattle were seized by government to pay blood money to the Suk, every influential man in Bokora converged on the District Commissioner’s office;” the conclusion drawn being that they valued cattle more than human lives. However far-fetched this may appear, it could imply they did not value the life of people who were not their own flesh and blood. This perhaps would explain why someone could sell a child that is not theirs, but it does not explain how a mother can sell her own child!

Is it the naivety or ignorance of Karamojong mothers, considering that adult illiteracy rates are higher among Karamojong women compared to men? Or is it a much wider social problem at the family or societal level? Is it a new type of rationality that is emerging that we need to pay attention to – men who brag to their colleagues about how they have children who have gone to work in Kampala – considering the remittances which they make to support the families they leave behind?

Governmental agencies and some non-state actors have approached the phenomenal increase in child trafficking from Karamojong as a law enforcement challenge, necessitating intensified law enforcement, security surveillance, and increased administrative controls. This highly formalistic and legalistic approach has revolved mainly around on the one hand, identifying, apprehending, and charging traffickers (and their promoters) in courts of law, and on the other hand, rescuing those being trafficked from their captors, screening them in a holding place (reception center), and subsequently returning and resettling them back to their areas of origin. Law enforcement and policing have been accelerated, including mounting roadblocks along presumed trafficking routes, in addition to impromptu stop-checks on commuter buses and taxis (UPF 2019).

Sometimes, the responsibility for arresting unaccompanied children suspected to be in the process of being trafficked has been placed on taxi and bus drivers; otherwise owners of

vehicles transporting children being trafficking are considered culpable. Other interventions akin to this approach have entailed initiatives aimed at purging loopholes in the legislative and regulatory environment, resulting in calls for new or better laws, policies, and regulations (Gackle, Lolem et al. 2007).

This approach is considered plausible on account of the existing legal and policy environment. The Ugandan Constitution prohibits child slavery, servitude, and forced labor. Article 125 of the Penal Code prohibits the procurement of girls under the age of 21 for sex in Uganda. In 2009, the government enacted the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act of 2009. This legislation puts in place a framework for the prosecution of offenders, protection of victims, and preventative measures. At the Uganda Police Special Investigation Unit, a desk was established specifically to handle human trafficking issues. There have been many cases where the police, in collaboration with other security agencies, have succeeded in arresting and apprehending not only children being trafficked, but also the perpetrators of the trafficking. The most recent arrests, which happened in January 2020, involved a bilateral operation between law enforcement agencies in Uganda and Kenya in which 89 children were rescued from suburbs of Nairobi as they were about to be trafficked to Somalia as sex slaves.

The main setback to this approach has been the assumption regarding the infallibility of rank-and-file law enforcement agencies, as if amongst them, no vested interests exist, nor ineptness occasioned by poor facilitation occurs. Enforcement of the existing laws is ineffective. Studies show this approach to resettlement initiatives for children rescued from traffickers is unsustainable. Settlements, such as the one at Nakiriomet, are comprised of people who are unrelated; the majority, approximately 90%, are from female-headed households (Stites, Mazurana et al. 2007). The greatest challenge to the resettlement approach is the different ways in which trafficking is conceptualized and how the victims and survivors of trafficking are labelled. Victims are sometimes considered as the key embodiment of the problem, instead of the other actors involved in the trade at source (including their syndicates, promoters and purveyors, as well as the families and benefactors of the victims and survivors) at the receiving end. As has been demonstrated by the re-occurrences of previously-rescued child trafficking, criminalizing the survivors and victims without appropriately dealing with the other key actors is not sustainable.



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