

# **Integrated Community Livelihood Support and Care Systems Project,**

**Amuria, Uganda Ref IMP-02-CN-1243**

## **Evaluation Report for APT Action on Poverty**



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## Abbreviations and acronyms

AEW	Agricultural Extension Worker
AMUFACOS	Amuria United Farmers' Co-operative Society
CBRP	Community Based Resource Person
CLIP	Care and Livelihoods Integrated Project
DFID	Department for International Development
EC	Expert Client
GBP	British Pounds (Sterling)
GPAF	Global Poverty Action Fund
HI-U	Heifer International – Uganda
IDP	Internally Displaced People
LC	Local Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MoH	Ministry of Health
MTR	Mid-Term Review
PLWHA	People Living With HIV/AIDS
PWD	People Living With Disability
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
UC	AIDS Health Foundation - Uganda Cares
UGX	Uganda Shilling
USD	United States Dollar

## **Executive summary**

This multi-agency project set out to address issues of rural deprivation and high HIV prevalence in an area of Northern Uganda still recovering from long years of civil war, insecurity and privation. Levels of poverty are high therefore and the needs extensive. However by working with farmers' groups, and with and through local government health services, the project has brought about significant positive change in beneficiaries' lives to the extent that many of its targets had been hit by the time of the mid-term review. However it should be noted that some aspects of the intended impact were never achievable due to a flaw in the construction of the original project logframe, but this should not detract from the project's success. Further, while some of the tangible benefits may be threatened by climate change and its impact on weather patterns, other less concrete changes – such as greater confidence and solidarity among farmers, or knowledge of alternatives that offer options and choices were none existed before – will persist. The evaluation team would therefore recommend strongly that ways be found to replicate the project elsewhere and extend it in its current area so that some aspects which have yet to bed in fully, such as the co-operative, can be supported through to sustainable independence.

## **Introduction**

This three-year project – entitled the Integrated Community Livelihood Support and Care Systems Project (or CLIP) - was designed to address chronic poverty, severe food insecurity and malnutrition, and to improve access to HIV/AIDS services in four sub-counties of the Amuria District of Eastern Uganda. It was implemented by three agencies: Heifer Uganda, Uganda Cares and APT Action on Poverty, the latter being the contract holder who secured funding under the DFID Global Poverty Action Fund. It targeted smallholder farming families who make up more than two thirds of vulnerable poor people in the district, and many of whom are affected by HIV/AIDS. Its focus population was people infected with HIV/AIDS, women and women headed households, children, youth and other vulnerable individuals including PWD, who are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition.

Northern Amuria was directly affected by the 20 year LRA conflict where rural areas were de-populated for much of that time, leaving a legacy of relief programmes during and after the conflict ended in 2006, sometimes overlaid by a culture of dependency among the people who had spent many years in IDP camps. In addition the entire district has been badly affected by cattle rustling by armed Karamojong raiders from neighbouring districts until recently. The project therefore specifically sought to improve the nutrition, food security and household incomes of 2,565 vulnerable families (approx. 13,600 people) through direct inputs, while anticipating a further 4,395 neighbouring families (or approximately 23,000 people) as indirect beneficiaries. The original intention was to work in two sub-counties - Kapelebyong and Asamuk - but by the time the project was approved in 2012, both had been split into two so the project area

became the Kapelebyong, Asamuk, Okunguru and Apeduru sub-counties. The project was delivered by a three-part collaboration with HI-U largely responsible for the livestock and agriculture elements; UC (HIV/AIDS counseling, testing, treatment and prevention); and business skills from APT. The total budget was £ 680,542, of which DFID contributed £444,608, with an October 2015 completion date.

## **Progress against the project goals, outcomes and milestones**

Overall the project has been successful in reaching the overwhelming majority of its outcomes and milestones, as set out in detail below. Less tangibly it has also given farmers confidence, skills and a sense of cohesion with an appreciation of the value of collective effort that will enable them to better face the future. This represents empowerment, enabling some very poor, very marginalised people to take greater control of their lives and to have options and choices – often for the first time. For the main they remain poor, relatively, but they do now have hope coupled with greater resilience to cope with the unforeseen and the unplanned, as will undoubtedly happen as a result of climate change if nothing else. By this metric therefore the project can be considered a real success.

In terms of the project goals at the top level, a disconnect emerged around the framing of the first two impact statements and how they connect with the number of intended beneficiaries, which in effect means that full success was never going to be possible. This requires some unpicking, but essentially both statements fall down around a confusion over what precisely is the project's target population.

Essentially this problem flows from the fact the first two impact statements (the third is framed differently and is not affected) were set at the district (Amuria) level while the project only ever aimed to work in four of the sixteen sub-counties.

The first impact statement refers to the 'proportion of rural families in Amuria below the national poverty line' and while reliable data for the rural population of Amuria is hard to find, extrapolating from national figures it can be estimated to be 285,669. The baseline used by the project for those below the national poverty line was 54% - i.e. 154, 261 people - with a target of 48% or 137,121 people. The difference between these two numbers is 17,140 – *yet the project only ever aimed to work with 13,595 direct beneficiaries*. Even total success at field level therefore was always going to come up short at the impact level.

The numbers around the second impact statement are even further out of alignment. The project aimed to reduce the proportion of rural Amuria families below the minimum level of nutrition from 85% to 60% which in numerical terms means from 242,819 to 171,402, suggesting 71,417 people needed to benefit across the district. However against the target beneficiary number of 13, 595 in the four chosen sub-counties, this impact aspiration falls even further behind what was ever going to be achieved. As can be seen from Table 1 below

therefore, the project was always going to fail on two of the three impact metrics, however successful it was.

<b>Table 1: Beneficiary numbers</b>		
	Impact # 1: Proportion of rural families in Amuria below the national poverty line	Impact # 2: proportion of rural Amuria families below the minimum level of nutrition
a) Baseline	54% or 154, 261 people	85% or 242,819 people
b) Target	48% or 137,121 people	60% or 171,402 people
c) Difference (a - b)	17,140	71,417
d) Direct beneficiaries	13,595	13,595
Gap (c - d)	3,545	57,822

The evaluation team strongly feel this framing flaw should not detract from the project's success but instead is something for those involved in its initial design – most of who are no longer involved, as it happens - to reflect on.

Below the impact level of the logical framework the project has met and often exceeded most of its targets. Final numbers are not yet available but the situation looks as follows:

<b>Table 2: Performance data</b>					
		Baseline	Target	Performance	Variance from target
<b>Outcome Indicator 1</b>	Number of rural families (# females) consuming the minimum recommended food requirements all year round	0	2,565 (7,183)	2564(10,696)	0%(+49%)
Output Indicator 1.1	Number of individuals in rural families (# women) having knowledge of at least 2 new crop technology options being disseminated by extension system	0	5,310 (3,000)	6450 (4350)	+12% (+45%)
Output Indicator 1.2	Number of individuals in rural families (# women) adopting 1 or more new technologies from extension systems on their farms	0	2,360 (1,334)	2375 (1597)	+1% (20%)
		<b>base-</b>	<b>target</b>		<b>Variance from target</b>

		<b>line</b>			
Output Indicator 1.3	Average area under cultivation by target rural families	4 acres	5 acres	6.3 acres	+26%
<b>Outcome Indicator 2</b>	Number of rural families having at least two meals per day	1,052 (41%)	2180 (85%)	2281(104%)	+5%
Output Indicator 2.1	Numbers of rural families (led by women) increasing their annual sales of farm produce by an average of at least 50%.	0	880 (530)	2354 (1585)	+267% (+299%)
Output Indicator 2.2	Numbers of rural families (led by women) enhancing their income through value addition enterprise by an average of at least 50%	0	200 (120)	516 (406)	+258% (+338%)
Output Indicator 2.3	Number of trained families adopting one or more value addition practices.	0	250	516	+206%
Output Indicator 2.4	Number of rural families supported to have backyard vegetable gardens (after using the seed inputs provided)	0	2160	2323	+8%
<b>Outcome Indicator 3</b>	Average target rural families' monthly gross income (increase % from baseline)	UGX 48,000	UGX 96,000 (100%)	UGX 100,500	+5% (+209%)
Output Indicator 3.1	Number of rural families able to prepare food for different people categories. e.g. children, pregnant women, PLWHA	0	1,900	3,102	+163%
Output Indicator 3.2	Number of rural families having hygiene facilities. e.g. drying racks, hand washing facilities, bath shelters, rubbish pits.	0	1,900	2,461	+130%
Output Indicator 3.3	Number of households with a PLWHA that have 3 main (breakfast, lunch, supper) balanced (carbohydrate and protein) meals per day.	0	308	370	+20%

		<b>base-line</b>	<b>target</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Variance from target</b>
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<b>Outcome Indicator 4</b>	Number of people with advanced HIV/AIDS (# women) accessing care services.	400 (240)	1,136 (681)	855	-25%
Output Indicator 4.1	Total number of people tested (# women)	6,500 (3,500)	18,750 (10,000)	49705	+265% (?)
Output Indicator 4.2	Number of condoms distributed	0	450,000	265,705	-41% distribution taken over by Ministry of Health and budget reallocated to clinic
Output Indicator 4.3	Number of referred clients (# women) enrolled into care	0	928 (520)	852 (552)	-8% (+1%)
Output Indicator 4.4	Numbers of people (# women) with advanced HIV infection receiving ARVs.	572 (310)	1,505 (903)	891	-49% Testing taken over by Ministry of Health and budget reallocation to clinic

## Commentary

Overall, **project performance** was found to have been very good, with the overwhelming majority of indicators being met and many being exceeded. Some indeed were exceeded even at the time of the mid-term review and the entire project team is to be congratulated. The evaluators understand that there was talk at some point of revising the targets upwards to take account of the strong performance, itself a very positive indicator, but support the decision not to do so as this might have the effect of downplaying the success and achievements. Two issues stand out from the data and observations of the evaluation team however. First, virtually without exception, farmers spoke about the increasingly **variable weather patterns** and their lack of dependability as compared with previous times. In recent years this has manifested itself in several prolonged dry periods but at times has also meant excessive rain and water-logging. This makes farming more precarious and where some targets were not being met, for instance to do with year-round food availability, this has to a large extent to do with external climate change factors rather than project failings (though more could be done, as is recommended below). Despite these climatic uncertainties, it is nevertheless the case that farmers report having choices and options where previously they had none and so have built some resilience to the increased vagaries of their weather. For instance, while 2-3 hunger months are still experienced by most every year, farmers report having more coping mechanisms: they all now store food in granaries and in gardens; they grow a wider variety of crops (two-thirds of them grow 5 or more food crops now); and 94% have food for sale – meaning they can in turn buy food themselves as the need arises. As one key informant said, “the project gives people a Plan B”. The evaluation team makes recommendations below relating to climate change and enhancing farmers’ resilience.

The evaluation team also noted that **project timeframe** - 3 years - is very short for work in a post-conflict context, where recovery can be slow and difficult, where threats to security are still felt (from the Karamojong), and where sometimes a dependency culture bred in the IDP camps takes time to dissipate. The evaluation team feel the project is ending too soon therefore, as agricultural inputs need to go through several cycles to become embedded in the face of uncertain weather patterns and that even 1 more year would help to ensure the beneficial changes are permanent.

The second area where the project struggled to hit its targets, right to the end, was that of **condom distribution**. After a very slow start progress was made as the project team adapted, learned and adjusted – for instance by using a wider range of distribution points where collection could be done more discretely. This learning and adaptation is to be commended. It does not though address the fact that at least one of the project agencies will have had direct experience of condom distribution before and hence should have been better placed to set more realistic targets and to make use of more appropriate distribution points from the beginning. Despite this, the district health officials are happy with the project's impact on the HIV situation overall and if anything feel the project has had a more statistically significant impact than in the area of nutrition and diarrhoeal disease.

Overall **farmers reported being happy** with what they had received and to have received what they had expected from the project. Beneficiaries are keen for the project to expand and be replicated, and while that may be expected the evaluation found multiple examples of farmers taking active efforts to share what they had learned with friends, neighbours and other communities. The fuel efficient or Lorena stove was the intervention most shared, bringing much appreciated environmental, health, social and workload benefits, and some groups had even encouraged and mentored others to set up their own groups so as to bring shared benefits and community cohesion. And while the evaluation did not have the scope to assess the full extent of **the multiplier**, observation and feedback would suggest the project is achieving significantly more than the 1:1.7 predicted in the original proposal. The total beneficiaries will therefore be well in advance of the 36,895 originally projected, not only due to this greater multiplier but also due to the fact that the average family size (7-8 people) is larger than the assumptions made in the proposal, and hence for each group member a larger number of people benefit.

Families with livestock are saving extra in the group SACCO for paying veterinary fees. This practice – known as the **animal health insurance scheme** - is to be commended as famers would otherwise not have the ready cash for such bills due to the many competing needs of the families, and hence this is a means of sustaining the project benefits.

Much of the success of the project – from observations, interviews and surveys – is due to the valuable role played by **community based resource people and expert clients**. These people are the eyes and ears of the project, they understand and come from the communities in which they work, and have

formed a strong bond with the project – yet (bar a small transport and lunch allowance) it is all done on a voluntary basis. In the case of expert clients, being people living positively with HIV adds credence and power to the messages they take, to the life they model and to the example they set, all of which help practically in encouraging take-up of the services and in addressing stigma and marginalisation.

The value of the CBRP model can be further seen in the fact that it is being adopted by other agencies working in the area such as World Vision. However the evaluation team did feel that, given the important role they play, the project could and should value them and their EC colleagues more. It would cost little to provide certificates to attest to their participation and some form of formal agreement might also be possible. This would fall short of an employment contract but it could set out mutual expectations, roles and responsibilities for greater clarity and add a degree of status to what might otherwise be a slightly unacknowledged and under-valued contribution.

There has been a range of **unintended yet positive outcomes**. When the project started for instance there was scepticism in the area that zero-grazing of cross-bred cows was a viable and sustainable model. As noted elsewhere there have indeed been issues and challenges, but overall this approach has proved itself effective to the extent that it has been taken up by others such as World Vision and the local government of Amuria which is now planning to place 75 head of dairy cattle. In addition, as a result of their membership of active and confident groups, farmers have accessed government services and schemes in ways they had not before, such as the provision of water storage tanks in their villages. And the co-op has developed links with other service providers such as solar now which is helping farmers to access affordable solar lighting and other equipment to members.

The **Cornerstones** are a set of values that Heifer International use to underpin their engagement with communities. They include concepts such as ‘caring and sharing’, ‘sustainability and self-reliance’ and ‘genuine need and justice’. They are not required of the beneficiaries but their adoption is encouraged, including having group members as champions and promoters of the 12 different values. Both members of the evaluation team have used and worked with the Cornerstones elsewhere and appreciate the benefit they can bring, as an intangible yet powerful underpinning of a group’s sense of being, of community and of mutual responsibility. Used and adopted in full they can galvanise, bring people together and create real belonging and ownership. And while the evaluation found that the CLIP project had introduced and encouraged their adoption, better and more extensive use of them in practice would bring even greater benefits.

On the issue of **gender**, one Cornerstone talks about the ‘full and equitable development of both men and women to strengthen families and improve communities’. The evaluation found that decision-making between husband and wife was now more equitable, that the benefits such as cash from the sale of produce are now shared in virtually all homes and that family relations were

more harmonious. In some other areas though such as sharing of tasks and workload, there remains more to be done. However the evaluation found that while women are often the person from their family who is the group member, and hence is recorded as such in project data, that does not automatically signify that they head the family – as in fact there are very few female-headed households. This might mean that some data on the impact on women is less female-specific than it might imply.

Alongside project work, if the organisation is to be credible and respected the Cornerstones could and should apply as equally to staff as to beneficiaries. No strong sense of this emerged however: they didn't feature in conversation, there were no posters or signs in the office promoting the Cornerstones, and the staffing make-up did not appear to reflect an awareness of them, as it was noticeable that all the field staff of both HI-U were UC were male. Given that gender roles and relationships are so key to the project it was disappointing that the staff – however committed and sensitised to gender issues – was all male.

The establishment of the **Amuria United Farmers' Co-operative Society** was not originally envisaged in the project design, and emerged as a need when the project ran ahead of its target expectations. HI-U and APT are to be congratulated therefore for their flexibility, for responding to the changing and emerging situation on the ground and for being ready to adapt in the face of a positively changed situation. The co-op model is based on learning HI-U have drawn from their experience with a much larger, regional programme funded by the Gates Foundation called the East African Dairy Development Programme and as a consequence the co-op appears to be establishing itself in practical terms very quickly. There is strong demand for its products such as yoghurt ('a miracle') that out-strips supply and marketing outlets have been quickly set up beyond Amuria Town in places such as Soroti, and Karamoja. Youth employment collecting milk and selling yoghurt has also been boosted by the co-op, another unforeseen benefit of the project.

Not surprisingly though much remains to be done before AMUFACOS can be said to be established and secure. It has yet to hold its first, full AGM, a business plan is in preparation but not yet implemented and its relationship with the CLIP project needs clarification and demarcation. The board members have also identified the need for further training and support around issues such as leadership and governance; membership development; and financial management. These are not criticisms though as much has been achieved in a short time but they remain outstanding tasks – as does the simple bedding in of good practice and protocols - if the co-op is to have a strong future able to support its members in producing and selling their farm outputs.

Another aspect of the project that was not originally planned but which has also proved a successful addition was the refurbishment of part of the Asamuk Health Centre to provide a base for **HIV/AIDS** treatment, counselling and care. At the time of the evaluation it had not formally opened but was already being put to good use, providing much larger and more pleasant surroundings for both patients and staff, which is so important when some may still be reluctant to come forward for testing. The view of the district Ministry of Health was that this aspect of the programme was having a more demonstrable impact than the area of malnutrition and diarrhoeal diseases (where any changes or improvements are likely to be seen over a longer time-frame) with a reduction in HIV prevalence in Amuria District from 6% in 2002 to 3% now. Other benefits as seen by the MoH include much reduced stigma, better adherence to treatment regimes, and reduced maternal transmission due to better understanding and behavioural change among mothers. The liaison with – and inclusion of – all the relevant stakeholders, the role of the expert clients and the training provided to the village health teams were also cited as success factors.

Two challenges the evaluation faced in this area however were that HIV/AIDS element of the project is well integrated into government systems and practices, which is important in ensuring the sustainability of the inputs and benefits, and that some aspects of the work both pre-date and will continue after the project. Together these factors make it difficult to isolate changes brought about solely and exclusively by the project and hence to make any attribution. But despite this the evaluation team feel it is very likely that many of the beneficial changes reported can be credited to the project, at least in part if not in whole.

Project staff value highly the technical input, training and support received from **APT**. This has centred around business counselling for farmers; work on value chain analysis; and analysis of the pass-on system from a sustainability perspective. In all these areas amendments were made to project delivery that resulted in a better outcome. APT also made some albeit less significant though still appreciated input to project management processes. Despite this added value from APT though, the evaluation team still found it surprising that inter-agency meetings only happened when APT staff visited from the UK. Collaboration and co-ordination between UC and HI-U at country office level would still have been valuable without APT's presence, while the lack of integration at field level resulted in potential synergies being missed. As the MTR reported, the work is close to two parallel projects running side-by-side rather than one project with different elements feeding off – and into – each other. Each parallel line has been effective in its own terms, but greater value could have been delivered had there been closer collaboration and integration at both country office and field level.

The project received a very good **mid-term review** which even at that point found that a number of targets had already been reached. Since then project staff have addressed the MTR's various findings and recommendations.

<b>Table 3: MTR recommendations</b>	
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Project response</b>
With the majority of project indicators and targets either on track, ahead of progress or already exceeded, pay particular attention to the two under-achieving targets in the second half of the project	At the time of the MTR there were only vegetable sales contributing towards farmers' incomes. Since then numerous other sources have come on stream and this indicator is now on track. However it is accepted that condom distribution will not hit its target, for the reasons discussed above.
Although AHF-UC have reviewed the end of project target for condom distribution and maintain it is achievable, this indicator should again be reviewed at the end of Year 2	This was discussed but it was agreed to leave the target as originally set, despite the recognition that while distribution rates have doubled it will not be met.
Review the four output indicators that have already exceeded their end of project targets and consider whether higher targets should be set	This was discussed but it was agreed to leave the output indicators as originally set, not least as it was anticipated that rates of progress would tend to plateau out in the final year of the project.
Seek to replicate similar levels of co-operation between HI-U and AHF-UC that happen at headquarter and district level at field level also with both sets of outreach workers in order to ensure the broadest possible support beneficiaries	It was acknowledged that contact and liaison between CBRPs and ECs was lacking. The project social development extension worker was then charged with fostering links and this has helped build links and communication.
Ensure adequate support is provided to AMUFACOS over the remaining period of the project to ensure that it is capable of sustaining and advancing project inputs, activities and achievements	AMUFACOS had only just been registered at the time of the MTR. It now has elected leaders, training has been provided, profitable activities are well underway and a sensitisation process as to its role and function undertaken at sub-county level. The agro-vet drug sales have started and the project has assisted with market surveys.

In addition to the fledgling co-operative AMUFACOS, consider alternative strategies to support beneficiaries to access markets and avoid being overly dependent on a single and fledgling structure, as well as giving beneficiaries a broader range of options and skills	The project has helped 20 groups to bulk and market their produce. It is recognised however that more expertise is needed in this area and that more than the current 25% of households could be encouraged to join AMUFACOS
Consider encouraging groups to establish seed multiplication/bulking sites to address insufficient quantities and consider whether AMUFACOS can support with this	This has started but has been hit by the dry weather. 100 farmers were given pasture seed and mango tree seedlings for multiplication. The aim is for each group to have a garden where seed multiplication can take place.
Consider the use of hired tractors in addition to oxen and plough teams in order to further scale up the opening of land for cultivation, again possibly as a function of AMUFACOS	This has been investigated, but generally they are in short supply with a long waiting list. One source would loan a tractor but only on condition that sorghum was grown.
Consider supporting more groups to access more food processing equipment and similar machines for value addition, indirectly and/or directly	There has been no real progress on this recommendation, but the project is hoping to help farmers build links in any phase 2.
With 61% of clients counselled, tested and enrolled at health centres being female (against targets of 53-56%), seek to increase the numbers of men accessing these services	Sensitisation programmes have been undertaken. One feature to have emerged is that while more women than men collect ARVs, the drugs are then sometimes shared or used exclusively by the men.
Consider additional and alternative ways of distributing condoms in privacy and with discretion such as placing these in community facilities and public places to further expand access and increase overall supply	This has been done and take-up rates have improved as a consequence.
Adjust outcome indicator 1 to make it consistent with the rest of the log-frame	Done.

Elements of the project fit with the **District Development Plan**, which is good for future funding and integration. Amuria District had prioritised dairy production in its plan as a key enterprise for promotion, and had started to revamp the public extension service, mobilising and organising farmers into associations and co-operatives. AMUFACO therefore provided a good example of a successful enterprise and the district pledged to support it, with value addition to produce being another area of commonality. This aside though there has been little sign of planning or **fundraising for any follow-on phase or continuation of the project**, which given the time lag involved in such processes means there will inevitably be a gap during which time farmers will be left without support and project staff are likely to be lost to other jobs.

## **Delivery of the intended outcomes and any learning points**

### **How well has the project been managed?**

On the financial side the project appears to have been very well managed. With a month to go, the project looks likely to land on budget, despite the fact that there have been various amendments and changes and, more particularly, a variance in the exchange rate from UGX 3,911 : £1.00 to UGX 5,600 – a staggering 43% shift. To deliver on-budget in these circumstances is very creditable.

On the programme delivery side, the evaluation team was impressed on various levels. First and most obviously is the fact that the vast majority of the objectives will have been achieved. Much of this is due to the fact that the project team appear to know the area well, with a good understanding of local culture, political considerations and agricultural possibilities. They have also exhibited adaptability and learning, adjusting the programme design as the project has gone on to respond to changes on the ground – such as the establishment of the co-operative, or the new locations for condom distribution or the remodelling and refurbishing of a community hall into a block to house HIV/AIDS services. There were some locations though where some staff appeared not to speak the local language that will have been a constraint on project delivery and engagement with the beneficiaries. At district level however the project leadership was well known and appeared well respected among all the local government circles.

### **Which activities were being implemented correctly and which were not?**

The evaluation team felt that there was scope to improve some aspects of animal welfare among the beneficiaries, which suggests the training and support provided by the project could be improved. For instance the four non-functional village bull services could be re-established to supplement the artificial insemination services (which are seen as expensive and/or not very reliable). More drought tolerant pastures and fodder trees could be promoted and participants better encouraged to compost and apply animal and vegetative manure as a means of recycling soil nutrients. The bull and cow sheds should have better exercise yards and watering facilities for the animals. General care

given to offspring from artificial insemination and the village bull scheme should be stepped up so as to raise a better replacement herd. However the fact that the project has overall been very successful would indicate that these weaknesses were not central to its delivery.

### **What were the challenges to delivery of the project and what lessons can be learnt?**

The biggest challenge faced by the project and its beneficiaries was that of climate change and the resulting uncertain weather. This means that the well-understood patterns of dry and wet seasons are increasingly unreliable, making it more and more difficult for farmers to plan their cropping cycles. What's more it also results in increasingly frequent extreme weather events, be they floods or droughts, and this too causes huge disruption and cost to agriculture. And while these changes are of course well beyond the scope of the project, the evaluation team did feel the project could and should do more work around drought-tolerant, quick maturing crops to enable farmers to cope better with prolonged dry spells – as is discussed below in the Recommendations section.

Another learning to be embraced is the targeting of older people who during FGDs had knowledge gaps concerning condom use, availability and access. Some did not know the messages and how to talk to younger people (their relatives) about condom use. Some older people thought they did not need information on condom use since they were no longer sexually active. Religious leaders (particularly Catholics) could also be targeted because of the influence they have on their faithful.

### **Were there any unplanned results?**

Yes, a number as has been discussed, most notably the establishment of the co-operative which was not in the original project proposal and which has led to a range of benefits for the beneficiary farmers as well as providing unplanned employment and making available products such as yoghurt and veterinary drugs to a wider population. The scale of the multiplier was also greater than envisaged, leading to a larger number of indirect beneficiaries, as was the confidence engendered in other development agencies to venture into dairy cattle enterprise for farmers.

### **Achievement of milestones through baseline studies and surveys**

The project was developed on the back of a very comprehensive **baseline survey** that had widespread stakeholder involvement and which numerous interviewees attested as being important in the success of the project. This in turn also formed the base for the MTR, which was able to measure project

progress very thoroughly against its starting position so overall provided a very solid foundation for all project activities.

The implementation of the **co-operative methodology** was different however, as it was not in the original plan. The project very sensibly drew on Heifer International's wider experience of marketing and bulking through its East Africa Dairy Development Project, and this is likely to have made the co-op establishment quicker and easier. However there is still some way to go before the co-op can confidently stand on its own two feet, as would be expected in any such venture so soon after its initiation. The co-op's potential and value is not in doubt therefore, but there must remain concerns for its future without some continuing level of support for a further 18-24 months – which at the time of the evaluation is far from certain.

The evaluation survey questionnaire – which essentially triangulates the project's own data collection and the evaluation's observations and farmer interviews - suggests there has been very significant **income enhancement** indeed. While the precise *scale* of the improvement suggested by the survey must be treated with some caution (it would have taken far longer and much greater resources than were available to the evaluation to deliver really reliable results) there can be no doubt that there were widespread and significant increases in farmers' incomes as a result of the project.

From both focus group discussions with relevant farmers and key informant interviews, it would appear there have been positive **changes in behaviour and attitudes towards HIV+ farmers**. This will inevitably be a long and slow process and will need to encompass more than just farmers, but the project can certainly claim to have made a contribution in this area, and the evaluation suggests that it is expert clients who have been a key part in this shift. However some farmers living positively report a paradox in that, because they now live healthy, active lives, some people in the wider community are sceptical that they are actually HIV+. However as role models to others who are positive who have yet to start treatment they are very powerful and they make a strong statement as to the impact and efficacy of the ARVs.

The health centres and the Ministry of Health do not differentiate in their records between project beneficiaries and non- beneficiaries, so it is not possible to draw definitive links between project activities and the take-up of **HIV and AIDS focussed health care support**. What's more, as discussed above, UC were delivering some activities that fall within the project's remit before it started and will continue to do so after it ends. Drawing conclusions on causation therefore is not possible, as the reality is too complex and too multi-factorial. However there is no doubt that the project has contributed to the enhancement of those services and there is widespread anecdotal evidence to suggest beneficiaries are making much greater use of them than before the project. The contribution of the expert clients, the refurbishment of some facilities, the greater availability of condoms and the more general greater attention paid to HIV services has meant a boost to staff morale by providing support and encouragement to them in what otherwise can sometime be seen as somewhat thankless work.

## **How can such a project be further developed and/or replicated?**

The project budget totalled £680,542, of which £444,608 came from DFID. Taking the project's original target beneficiary figures (which, as has been discussed, have been exceeded) generates a cost per direct beneficiary of £50.06, or just £18.45 if the indirect beneficiaries are also included. Clearly indirect beneficiaries do not derive the same level of benefit but this nevertheless represents extremely good value for money when set against the range and likely sustainability of the impact enjoyed by the farmers. For this reason alone – and given the context is one where the needs addressed by the project are widespread in Northern Uganda – the evaluation team believe ways to both replicate and extend the project should be explored. What's more there is some urgency to this, as with funding and hence project activities ending soon, staff are likely to disburse in search of other jobs and relations with farmers groups will deteriorate if left unsupported for any length of time.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made for any future programming in this area, such that any project replication or phase two extension should:

1. Consider drought resistant/drought tolerant crops and embrace more climate smart agriculture. This will involve strengthening partnership with the National Agricultural Research Organisation, doing further research and development. The project should take advantage of the available food crops and pasture/fodder planting materials.
2. Work to help connect groups to other NGOs, DPOs, government services etc. so that groups can access complementary services (for example to do with land rights, education or water harvesting) from other players, sustain the project benefits and minimise the risk associated with dependence on the project.
3. Include water capture/harvesting and simple irrigation techniques. This will help to save time and put to better use the labour expended particularly during the dry season when water sources are further away. There will be increased access to safe and clean water for domestic use. Growing and eating high value crops like vegetables through out the year will reduce micro-nutrient deficiencies in children, pregnant and lactating mothers and HIV/AIDS affected people

4. Review the animal placement models. This has several elements to it:
  - Four out of 5 bulls died in the project while by their nature all animal inputs are expensive, so it is essential that households receiving high value dairy animals should also have – in advance - the necessary skills and resources to manage their livestock – for their benefit, for that of the animal and for sustainability reasons.
  - More support should be given to village bull farmers in terms of training, pasture establishment and management, while mobilization and sensitisation of communities is necessary for the sustainability of the bull scheme.
  - The evaluation team felt that placing just one or two ox traction units with a group of over 30 farmers in a recent post-conflict situation was too little and that this aspect of the project design should be reviewed in any future programme.
  - Alongside this as a complement or an alternative, consideration should be given to short generation and prolific livestock inputs such as poultry
  - A future project should also consider alternative inputs to livestock such as horticulture (e.g. growing tomatoes) for youths who are looking for quicker money and who reported that cattle and goat projects take too long to generate an income.
  
5. Seek better integration of the two elements of the programme at all levels. In the field the UC and HI-U teams should work more closely with each other so as to manage day-to-day aspects of the project among farmer participants, while at country office level there should be more joint review and planning meetings between UC and HI-U to help make decision-making faster and more effective, thereby enhancing impact.
  
6. Re-model the steering committee, as a group with fewer members with the right skills and competence would be more effective, easier to mobilise and make for more productive meetings.
  
7. Build a higher profile for Uganda Cares. Beneficiaries were familiar with and liked the HIV/AIDS services by the project however many did not know about UC. The evaluation team feels UC needs to do more to raise its profile in the communities it serves.
  
8. Build, foster and maintain stronger contact with the groups, both through more frequent contact by staff and through enhancing the status and role of CBRPs and ECs through mechanisms such as certificates, contracts etc.

## OECD-DAC criteria

### **Relevance**

*To what extent did the grantee support achievement towards the MDGs, specifically off-track MDGs?*

The project sought to have an impact on two MDGs: MDG 1 - its primary focus - namely working towards the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, and MDG 6, the combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Good progress has been made on both of these fronts with the target beneficiaries, though they represent only a small fraction of the need even in the project area, still less across the whole of Uganda. On MDG 1 the baseline study found that 85% of families did not have enough food to meet their families' needs while 53% ate only one meal a day. Now however hunger has decreased among the project households, all families have at least two meals a day, income has increased and the ability to withstand shocks that might cause a set-back has been enhanced.

MDG 6 has been addressed through extensive work encouraging the uptake of testing, treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS (the prevalence in Amuria District i.e. wider than the project area has fallen since 2012 from 6% to 3%) while greater food security and incomes from farm production has reduced the incidence of diarrhoeal disease and malnutrition.

*To what extent did the project target and reach the poor and marginalised?*

The project's target beneficiaries were all poor and/or marginalised. They included people subsisting on 1-2 meals a day; female-headed households; people living with HIV/AIDS and people living with disability.

*To what extent did the project mainstream gender equality in the design and delivery of activities (and or other relevant excluded groups)?*

There is good evidence that the project led to greater gender equality among the target households. Decision-making is now shared more equally as is control of assets, while the benefits from the sale of farm produce are shared between husband and wife – and hence to the benefit of the wider family. Similar gains were achieved in the context of people with disability, a traditionally very marginalised group in society whose socio-economic status is very low yet who report a range of positive impacts as a result of the project. In terms of delivery however it was noticeable that all the project field staff were male, and it this fact is likely to have constrained their interaction with women and women's groups.

*How well did the project respond to the needs of target beneficiaries, including how these needs evolved over time?*

The project was planned with widespread beneficiary involvement so started with a design well tuned to their needs and situation. It also adapted and evolved as the situation itself changed and beneficiaries report the project as having delivered from their point of view.

### ***Effectiveness***

*To what extent are the results that are reported a fair and accurate record of achievement?*

The evaluation process identified nothing to contradict the project's own data or assessment, nor that of the MTR. Some benefits and achievements, such as the establishment of the co-operative have yet to be fully tested but that will take more time than is available to the project.

*To what extent has the project delivered results that are value for money?*

As has been remarked on above, the project represents very good value for money, bringing about positive and sustainable results in nutrition, livelihoods and HIV/AIDS for very little per capita cost. Some of this is due to the highly effective 'pass-on' principle of HI-U, whereby farmers are encouraged to share both tangible and intangible benefits with family, friends and neighbours. Overall this appears to have happened to a greater extent than originally anticipated (with evidence that some groups actively sought out or encouraged new groups to form which they then mentored) and serves as a graphic indicator of the value accorded to the project inputs by the beneficiaries.

*What has happened because of DFID funding that wouldn't have otherwise happened;*

It is likely that had DFID not funded the project then other donors may well have come in. It was a well planned project based on extensive fact-finding and baseline data collection from - and with - intended beneficiaries, operating in an area of clear need – to which it was directly responding. It is likely therefore that alternative sources of funds could have been sought.

*To what extent has the project used learning to improve delivery?*

The establishment of the co-operative is a clear and very substantial example of the way the project adapted, learned and improved its delivery over time. While still too new to have had the chance to become fully-fledged and running smoothly, it quickly proved its worth to the farmers by finding a ready market outlet for some of their produce. The revised condom distribution points was another example of adaptation based on learning and reflection. It is also worth noting that the project responded very well to the MTR learning and findings,

and implemented the vast majority of the recommendations. Artificial insemination services have been made more available as bull breeding centres became unsustainable.

*What are the key drivers and barriers affecting the delivery of results for the project?*

Success is, as always, down to a number of factors. These include local knowledge by the project staff; the laying of good foundations with good project planning and design based on a baseline survey drawn up with participation of the intended beneficiaries; the operational practice whereby groups were well supported by CBRPs and ECs, who were in turn backed up by project staff; good relations with – and understanding of – local government systems, personnel and protocols; and the fact the project was directly responding to clear need in an area still recovering from conflict and insecurity.

Barriers include the restricted budget that prevented a better-resourced oxen/plough placement model that would have delivered benefits more rapidly to much greater numbers. In addition there were probably cultural or institutional barriers that prevented or slowed greater collaboration and interchange between HI-U and UC, with the result that potential synergies were not captured as the two elements effectively ran on separate, parallel lines.

### ***Efficiency***

*To what extent did the grantee deliver results on time and on budget against agreed plans?*

The project delivered ahead of schedule on most of the targets, to the extent there was discussion of revising them upwards (which the evaluation team agree would not have been appropriate). It also came in on budget, there having been a number of revisions suggested and approved as the project progressed.

*To what extent did the project understand cost drivers and manage these in relation to performance requirements?*

The cost drivers context of project was challenging, with the value of the Ugandan shilling falling substantially over the life of the project, with inevitable knock-on consequences for inflation. It is therefore to the credit of the project manager, the financial staff and those responsible for the overview that the project has landed so close to budget.

## ***Sustainability***

*To what extent has the project leveraged additional resources (financial and in-kind) from other sources? What effect has this had on the scale, delivery or sustainability of activities?*

The project has exceeded the number of direct beneficiaries it intended to reach, while the multiplier effect was also greater than anticipated. It has also acted as a role model or demonstration of how a nutrition, livelihoods and HIV project can be effective on the Amuria context – and in particular how a zero-grazing model with cross-bred cows can be effective, where previously there was much scepticism about this prospect. The fact that others are now adopting this approach therefore is a clear demonstration of its effectiveness. Also the use of government medical infrastructure has enhanced sustainability and leverage, with existing buildings being remodelled rather than new, more expensive structures constructed, while project staff from government drew their salaries from there while the project simply provided top up allowances.

*To what extent is there evidence that the benefits delivered by the project will be sustained after the project ends?*

Some benefits have yet to be fully tested over time, and the increased variability of weather patterns makes this more uncertain. So it is possible that some of the tangible benefits may not be sustained if, for instance, the area experiences a prolonged drought – which is an increasingly likely event. That is not to say however that beneficiaries are not substantially better off – and sustainably so. They now have skills, options and choices that were not available to them before, and more importantly they have the confidence in themselves and their peers that they can withstand and survive shocks and set-backs far better than they could have before the project. This resilience is sustainable, as it rests on positive attitudinal change rather than any specific physical benefit or project input.

## ***Impact***

*To what extent and how has the project built the capacity of civil society?*

There are a number of different aspects to this. First, the project sought to build farmers' capacity in cooperative managerial skills. The project did not originally envisage doing this by way of setting up a co-operative, but this adaptation to the original design was a good one and appears to be paying dividends. However it is too early to assess how viable the co-operative is in the long-term as it is still in its early stages of formation and establishment. The project though has enabled farmers to manage their own savings and credit systems through their groups and, in some instances, to access government and other NGO services as a consequence of their being in a stronger, more confident group.

Second it sought to build the capacity of existing community centres, including condom distribution, drug supply and laboratory support. Condom distribution,

as has been noted elsewhere, fell well below the original target but in all other aspects the project appears to have delivered on its intentions. And in the case of the refurbishment of a health facility for use as an HIV/AIDS treatment/counselling centre it has far exceeded its original plan.

Third it sought to build capacity among groups' in resource mobilisation, health centres to provide HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and referral services, and community volunteers to offer HIV/AIDS prevention and care services. This it has done, and it is the network of ECs – i.e. community volunteers – that has been particularly effective and appropriate. As with the CBPRs, the ECs feel empowered, that they are playing a valuable role in their communities (as indeed they are) and that they have gained skills and experience that could help them get paid employment should they wish to move on. This aspect of the project therefore has been especially successful.

*How many people are receiving support from the project that otherwise would not have received support?*

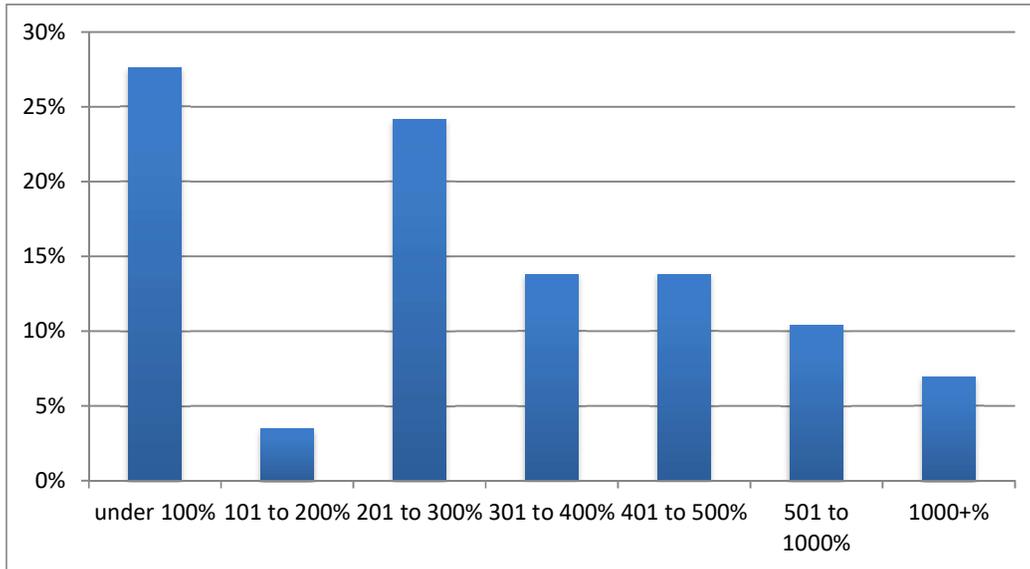
As has been noted, some aspects of UC's project activities were already being delivered prior to the project and are things they expect to continue to do after its end. What's more, the data gathered by health centres and the Ministry of Health does not differentiate between project beneficiaries and the wider population, thus making it hard to separate out the project's impact. However on the nutrition and livelihoods side of the project it is likely that none of the 37,000+ direct and indirect beneficiaries would have received the support they did without the project. *To what extent and how has the project affected people in ways that were not originally intended?*

First, the project design was amended – and expanded – from its original shape, and many people will have been affected by this. So for instance, the co-operative is enabling beneficiary farmers to bulk and sell their produce to a much wider market than originally envisaged, and its buyers are also benefitting. Equally the refurbished health centre is also bringing benefits to many that were not first intended, but it is not possible to put numbers on these additional developments.

Second, it is noteworthy that the project has acted as a demonstration of an approach to supporting smallholder farmers that others had not thought would work (or had not considered). As a role model it has persuaded and encouraged others such as World Vision and the local council to adopt its methodology, and while it is not possible to estimate numbers affected in this way it is nevertheless a very creditable outcome.

## Annex

### Chart 1: Income growth



### Chart 2: Farm level changes

