

Final Evaluation Brief: Together

*AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF A COLLABORATION OF FOUR ORGANIZATIONS
TO BUILD RESILIENCE & IMPROVE HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES FOR THE
KARAMOJONG IN NORTHEASTERN UGANDA*

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TO BUILD RESILIENCE & IMPROVE HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES FOR THE
KARAMOJONG IN NORTHEASTERN UGANDA*

Prepared for:

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NOTICE

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Together Final Evaluation

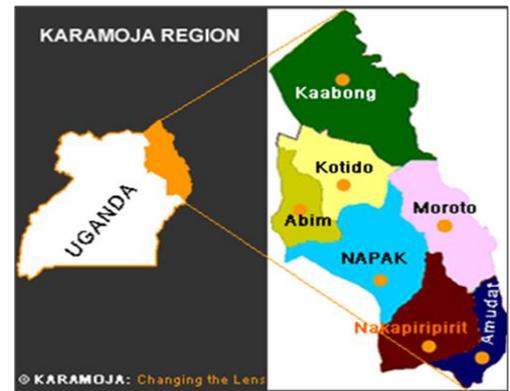
Impact Achieved, Model Effectiveness, & Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

Together is a collaboration of four nonprofit organizations:

- ✓ St. Marys United Methodist Church Foundation, Inc. (SMUMCF)
- ✓ MAP International (MAP)
- ✓ Church World Service (CWS)
- ✓ ECHO, Inc. (ECHO)

It was formed to serve the very poor in the Karamoja region of northeastern Uganda. *Together* created a 5-year, multi-faceted initiative to build community resilience and to improve health and development outcomes for people living in the 22 villages of Kacheri sub-county in the Kotido district, increasing their capacities and decreasing their vulnerabilities.



The Karamoja region is in the northeast corner of Uganda. *Together* worked in the Kotido district, shown in yellow, on the right.

OBJECTIVES

Together divided the goal of building community resilience and improving health and development into four primary objectives. Each objective has 2-5 components. The four objectives remained the same for the duration of the initiative. However, the components adjusted over time, aligning with the needs of the community. The four objectives and the final components are:

1. Community mobilization. Organize the community; engage and mobilize people around issues of community need with programs for building their resilience.

- 1.1 People organized, engaged, mobilized and equipped¹
 - ✓ Young people and youth active as change agents in the community
 - ✓ Youth and adult working groups in place and working to complement community activities
- 1.2 Safe and secure education for Karamoja children and functional literacy for adults²
- 1.3 Community-based savings and lending programs developed
- 1.4 Peace building and sustaining initiatives

¹ In the original plan, component 1.1 included only youth. This was changed to include adults.

² In the original plan, component 1.2 was defined as community mobilization to address the Holistic World View Analysis (HWVA), a tool developed by Dr. Ravi Jayakaran at MAP to understand a community's worldview and respond to its needs. In practice, this component was not implemented and, therefore, the component was removed.

2. Livelihoods secured. Improve short-term and long-term livelihoods of the communities.

- 2.1 Develop a variety of water retention and harvesting methods for production purposes
- 2.2 Improve food security³
- 2.3 Animals⁴
- 2.4 Diversify income sources

3. Environment and health improved. Significantly improve the environment in which people live and improve their health.

- 3.1 Environmental impact
 - ✓ Develop micro-watersheds for soil and water conservation
- 3.2 Improve public health awareness and treatment facilities
 - ✓ Improve water and sanitation practices
 - ✓ Basic healthcare provision and treatment



A young man receives training in brick laying at the youth vocational skills training center.

4. Disaster mitigation. Reduce the damage caused by disasters in the area through disaster risk reduction strategies and disaster mitigation training of community leaders.

- 4.1 Disaster Risk Reduction committees formed⁵
- 4.2 Disaster Risk Reduction committees trained
- 4.3 Disaster Risk Reduction plan developed for each village
- 4.4 Disaster Risk Reduction awareness created

FINAL EVALUATION

SMUMCF wished to evaluate the degree to which the desired objectives of the *Together* initiative were achieved after approximately five years of work. This would confirm its effectiveness (or not), provide input to improve the initiative or similar efforts in the future, support fundraising efforts if the initiative continued, and inform future international granting by SMUMCF. CEC conducted an independent, comprehensive evaluation of the *Together* initiative, and the *Final Evaluation Report* presents the findings. This *Brief* summarizes that *Report*.

OVERVIEW OF STUDIES ON TOGETHER

BASELINE STUDY

As the initiative began, *Together* conducted a multi-faceted baseline study that utilized a household survey, Water for Life Community Profile, Focus Group Discussions, and an Agriculture Profile. *Together* staff compiled three reports at the conclusion of data collection and analysis:

- ✓ A 24-page *Household Baseline Survey Report*, written by CWS Kenya staff
- ✓ A 42-page *Baseline Focus Group Discussion Report*, written by MAP staff in Kotido
- ✓ An 18-page *Agricultural Profile*, written by U.S. ECHO staff

MIDTERM ASSESSMENT

In 2015, *Together* conducted an internal midterm study to assess the progress of the initiative and recommend any changes in implementation. The midterm assessment consisted of administration of a household questionnaire, similar but not identical to the baseline questionnaire, and key

³ In the original plan, component 2.2 was the introduction of fodder cultivation for men rearing cattle. Early on, *Together* discovered that the community had no interest in this, and therefore, it was removed.

⁴ In the original plan, objective 2.3 included the term "agriculture." This term was removed.

⁵ Objective 4 components were adjusted from the original plan.

informant interviews. *Together* staff compiled the results in a 27-page report—*Interim Assessment Report: A Comparative Analysis between Baseline and Midterm Results*.

FINAL EVALUATION

CEC designed its evaluation to enable comparison with prior studies when possible. The primary objective for the final evaluation was:

1. **Impact.** What impact did *Together* have on the people of Kacheri sub-county? What changed?

In addition, the following secondary objectives were addressed:

2. **Collaboration benefit.** Did the *Together* collaboration create advantages over each party working on its own? Was working collectively a good model?
3. **Partnership learning.** How did the partnership function? What can be learned from *Together* for similar collaborations in the future?
4. **Peer exchange.** What did the implementing partners learn from each other that might be used elsewhere?



Community focus groups were facilitated using the Ten Seed Technique.

FINAL EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

CEC's methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of the *Together* initiative involved two broad components: desk studies and field studies. Work on these overlapped with each other, and each was comprised of several parts. CEC staff reviewed existing materials prepared by *Together* U.S. and field staff over the duration of the initiative, and interviewed five key personnel from *Together* Partners. Guided by the *Together* objectives, CEC used quantitative and qualitative approaches to conduct research in the field. Four field evaluation methods were developed:

- ✓ A household survey in the 22 villages served
- ✓ Focus group discussions using the Ten Seed Technique in the 22 villages served
- ✓ Interviews with key informants from the community
- ✓ Interviews with *Together* staff in Kotido

Additionally, CEC obtained some statistical reports from schools, health clinics, and local government agencies that informed CEC's field research and analysis.

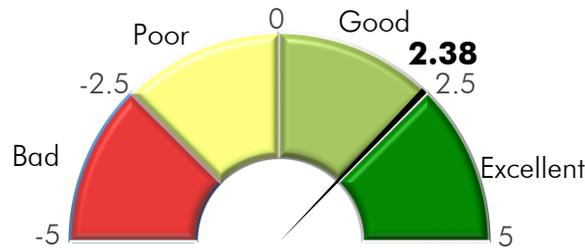
CEC completed 601 household surveys. The number of surveys administered in each village was proportional to the number of households in that village. Focus groups with 11 Ten Seed exercises were facilitated in all 22 villages. CEC conducted 20 key informant interviews with various government officials including health, water, and other officers, and head teachers in each of the three schools; and other community and NGO leaders. Also field leaders from each of the *Together* implementing partners were interviewed.

Key findings are presented on the following pages, by objective. The increases/decreases presented are the change from the baseline to the final evaluation unless otherwise noted. To indicate its source, each point is coded with an "FGD" for Focus Group Discussion participants or "SP" for survey participants.

OBJECTIVE

1 Community mobilization

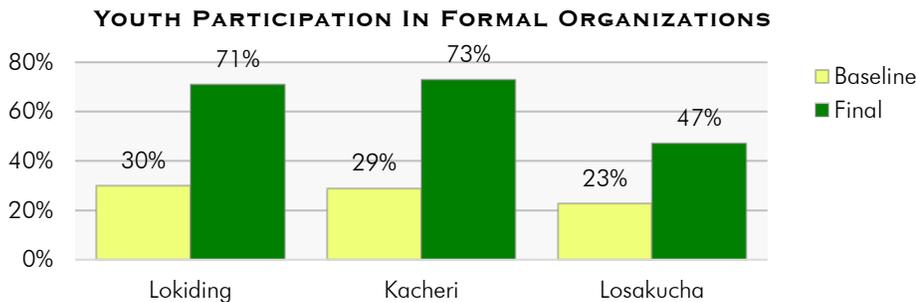
ORGANIZE THE COMMUNITY; ENGAGE AND MOBILIZE PEOPLE AROUND ISSUES OF COMMUNITY NEED WITH PROGRAMS FOR BUILDING THEIR RESILIENCE.



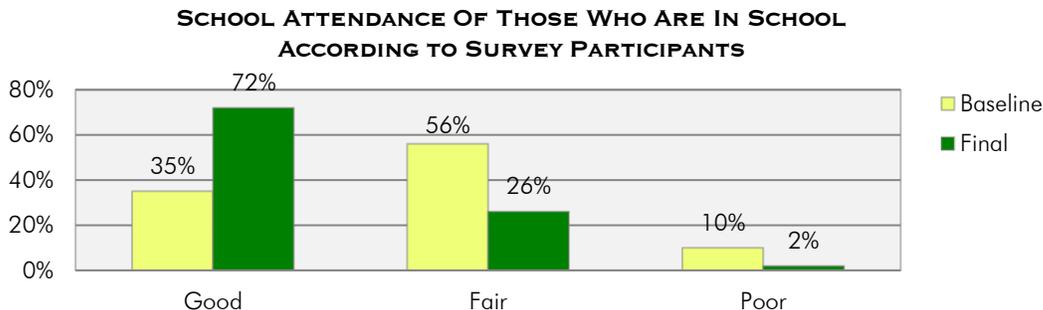
The first objective achieved a score of +2.38 on a scale of -5 to +5. Overall this objective was achieved quite well. Capacity was built through the VSLA training; conflict was reduced; good school attendance and performance increased for those enrolled in school; and formal community organization increased.

STRONG PERFORMANCE AREAS

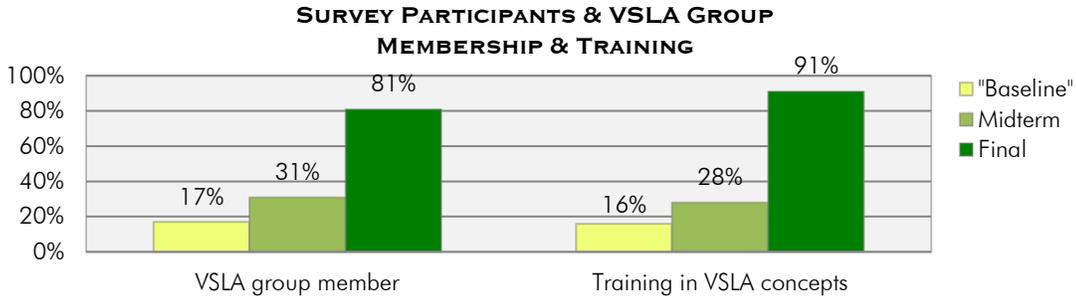
- Youth organization.** 14-25% increase in level of organization among youth (FGD)
- Youth formal organization.** 24-44% increase in youth participation in formal organization (FGD)



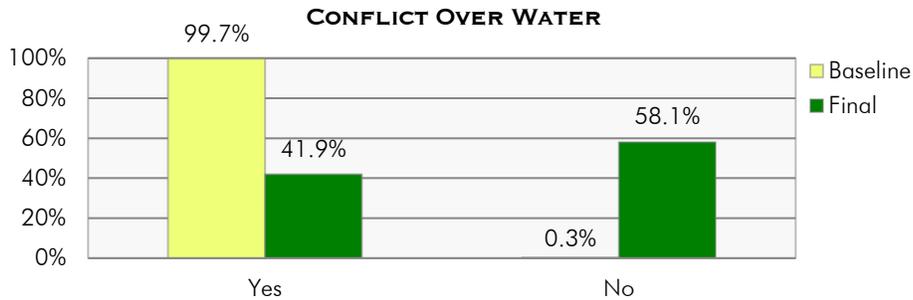
- Adult formal organization.** 33-34% increase in adult participation in formal organization in Lokiding and Kacheri (FGD)
- Types of organized groups.** Farming groups and VSLA groups are the top two formal groups for youth and adults (FGD)
- Education.** 16% decrease in no education (SP)
- School attendance.** 37% increase in good attendance for children who are enrolled in school (SP)



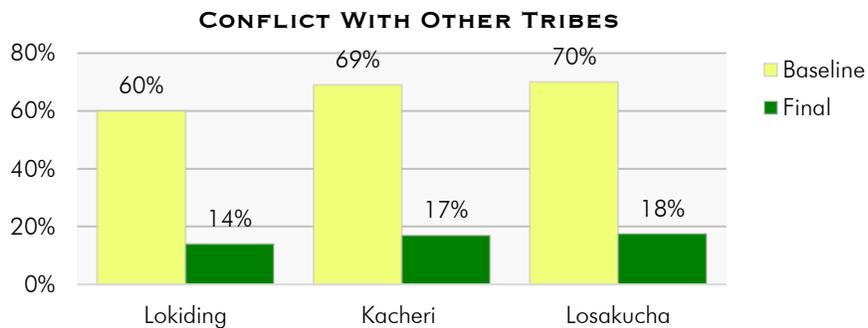
- 7. **School performance.** 16% increase good performance for children who are enrolled in school (SP)
- 8. **VSLA.** 64% increase in VSLA group membership; and 75% increase in VSLA concepts training (SP)



- 9. **Conflict over water.** 58% decrease in conflict over water (SP)



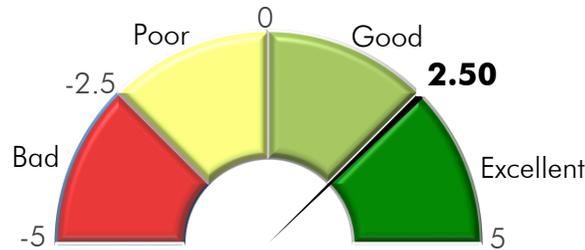
- 10. **Conflict between communities.** 34% decrease in conflict between different communities over water (SP)
- 11. **Level of conflict.** 9-20% decrease in level of conflict in Lokiding and Kacheri (FGD)
- 12. **Tribal conflict.** 46-52% decrease in conflict with other tribes across the three parishes (FGD)



SHORTFALLS

- 13. **Self-directed change agents.** 23-26% decrease in self-directed change agents in the community across the three parishes (FGD)
- 14. **Adult organization.** 23-34% decrease in level of organization among adults in Lokiding and Kacheri (FGD)

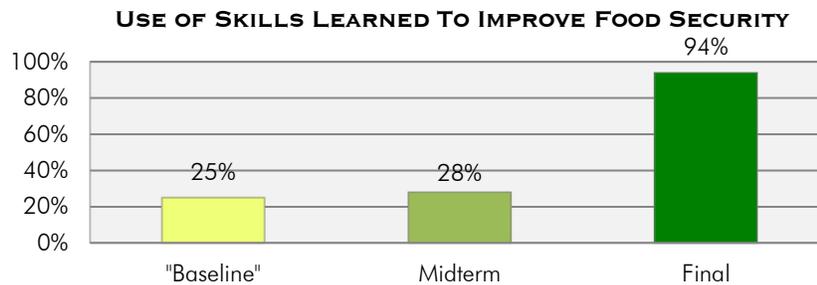
OBJECTIVE 2 *Livelihoods secured.*
IMPROVE SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM LIVELIHOODS OF THE COMMUNITIES.



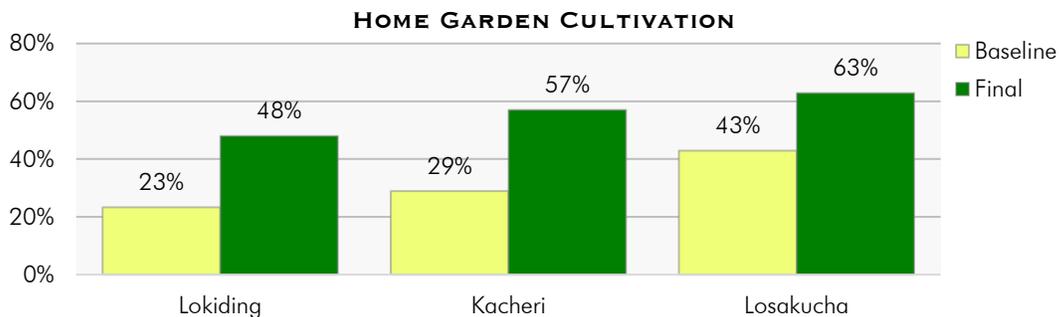
The second objective achieved a score of +2.50 on a scale of -5 to +5. Overall this objective was achieved quite well. Home garden cultivation increased across all three parishes. The average amount of crops cultivated increased. East Coast Fever vaccinations were successful in increasing the survival rate of calves. Involvement in income generating activities such as farming, business/trade, and casual labor increased.

STRONG PERFORMANCE AREAS

- 1. Water harvesting structures.** 19% increase in use of water harvesting structures for production (SP)
- 2. Use of skills learned.** 69% increase in use of skills learned during a *Together* program to improve household livelihood for food security (SP)

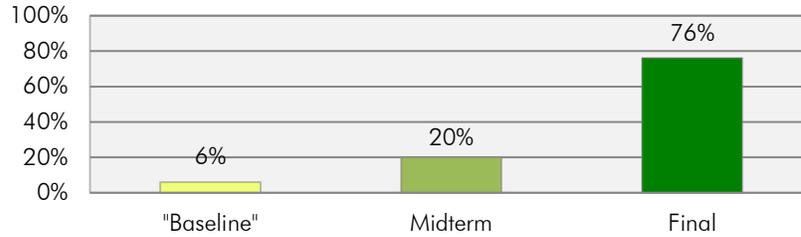


- 3. Improved agriculture & conservation.** 66% increase from the midterm to the final evaluation in use of good agricultural practices; 30% increase in use of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration; 53% increase in use of soil & water conservation methods (SP)
- 4. Nutrition.** 25% increase in households having at least 2 meals a day (SP)
- 5. Home gardens.** 20-28% increase in home garden cultivation (FGD)



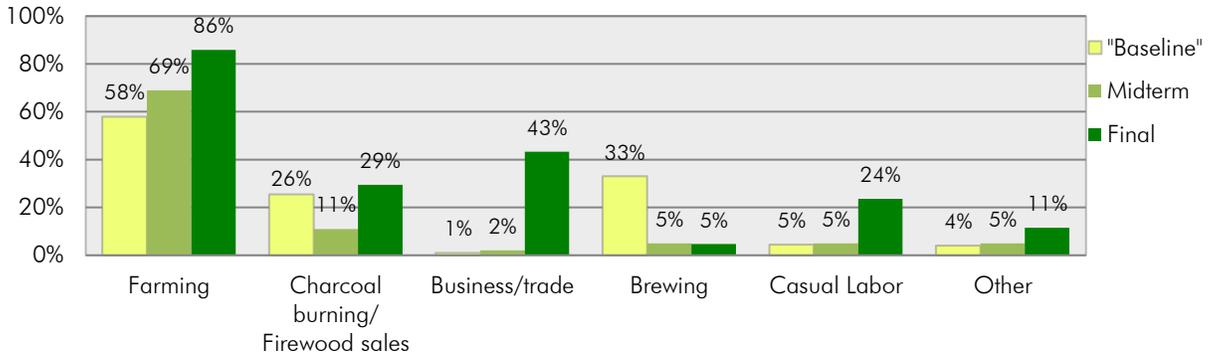
- 6. **Youth involvement in home gardens.** 33% increase in youth involvement in home garden cultivation in Losakucha; 10% increase in Kacheri; and 2% increase in Lokiding (FGD)
- 7. **Land cultivation.** 15% increase in 4 or more acres of land under cultivation; 5% increase in 2-3 acres under cultivation (SP)
- 8. **East Coast Fever vaccinations.** 70% increase in calf survival; monitoring conducted by local government found that 94% of ECF vaccinated animals were still alive (SP)

CALF SURVIVAL RATE



- 9. **Newcastle Disease vaccinations.** 36% increase in the percentage of birds vaccinated against Newcastle Disease (SP)
- 10. **Income generating activities.** Increases in involvement in proportion of people engaged in income generating activities: (SP)
 - 28% increase in farming
 - 19% increase in casual labor
 - 42% increase in business/trade
 - 28% decrease in brewing

INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES

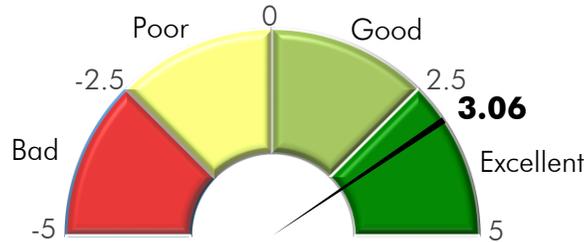


- 11. **Asset ownership.** Increase in the percentage of people that own cattle, goats, chicken, pigs, ox ploughs, bicycles, motorcycles, radios, and mobile phones (SP)

SHORTFALLS

- 12. **Children eating well.** 27% increase in the proportion of children that eat less well than they need (SP)
- 13. **Average monthly income.** \$4 USD (10,000 Ugandan shillings) decrease in average monthly household income from the midterm to the final evaluation; however \$1 USD (2,500 Ugandan shillings) increase from the "baseline" (SP)

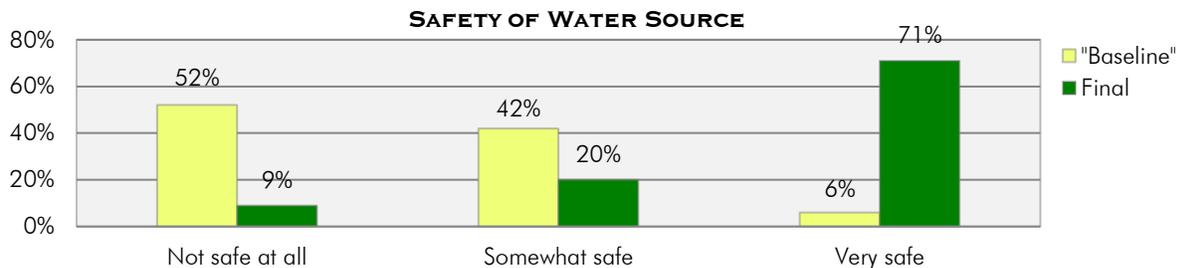
OBJECTIVE 3 *Environment & health improved*
SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH PEOPLE LIVE AND IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH.



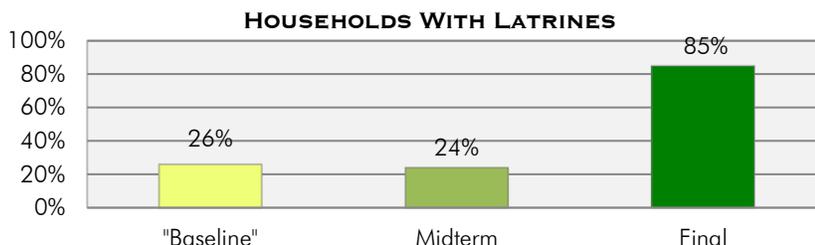
The third objective achieved a score of +3.06 on a scale of -5 to +5. Overall this objective was achieved very well. Water reliability and safety increased. Sand dams have positively affected lives a lot. There was a very large increase in households with latrines. In general, children are healthy and receive better health services.

STRONG PERFORMANCE AREAS

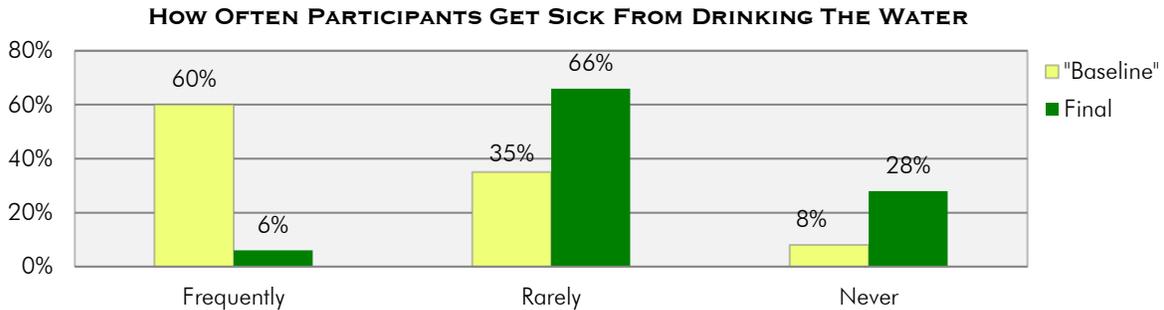
- Distance to main water source.** 7% increase in main water sources located less than 1 km from homes; 5% increase in main water sources located 1-2 km from homes (SP)
- Water source reliability.** 54% increase in “very reliable” water sources (SP)
- Water source safety.** 65% increase in “very safe” water sources (SP)



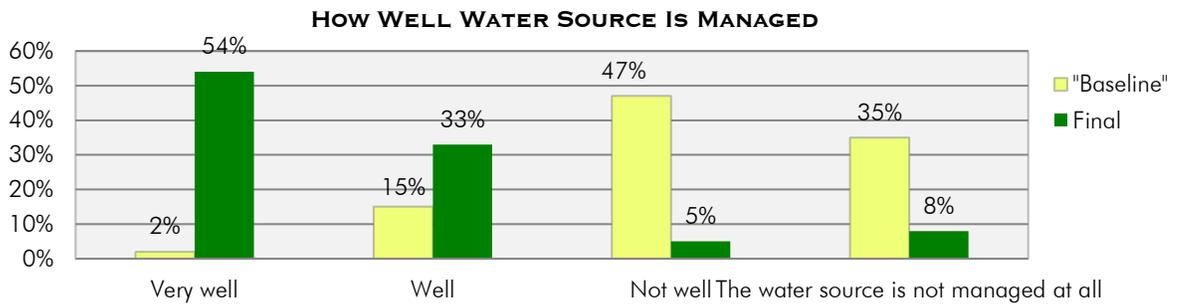
- Sand dams.** 39% use a sand dam, and of those 65% indicated that they have positively affected their lives a lot (SP)
- Watershed development.** 7-19% increase in the proportion of land that has watershed development (FGD)
- Environmental activity.** Increase in environmental activities (SP)
 - 10% increase in tree planting
 - 37% increase in “clean up rubbish”
 - 50% increase in “environmental education”
- Latrines.** 59% increase in households with a latrine (SP)



8. Water-borne sickness. 54% decrease in “frequent” sickness from drinking the water (SP)



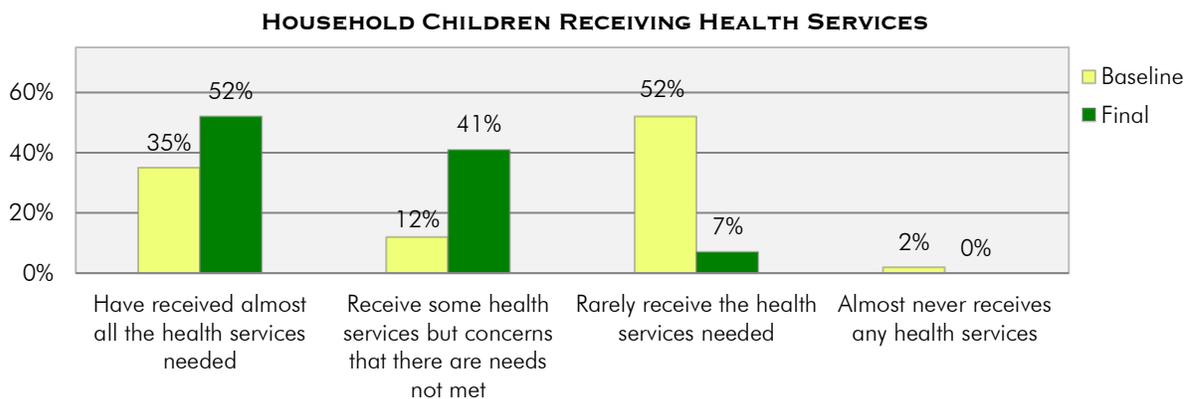
9. Water source management. 52% increase in “very well” managed water sources (SP)



10. Insecticide treated nets. 11% increase in insecticide treated net usage by pregnant mothers (SP)

11. General health. 14% increase in children that are “healthy, doing well, and rarely ill with fever/diarrhea”; 28% decrease in children that are “frequently ill” (SP)

12. Health services. 17% increase in children receiving almost all the health services needed; 39% increase in children receiving some health services; 45% decrease in children rarely receiving the health services needed; and 0% (down from 2%) of children almost never receive any health services (SP)

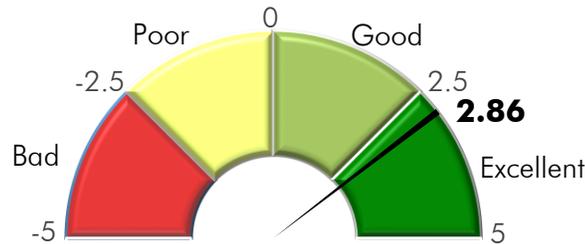


SHORTFALLS

13. Water source availability. 3% decrease in main water source availability during all seasons (SP)

14. Insecticide treated nets. 3% decrease in insecticide treated net usage by children under 5 (SP)

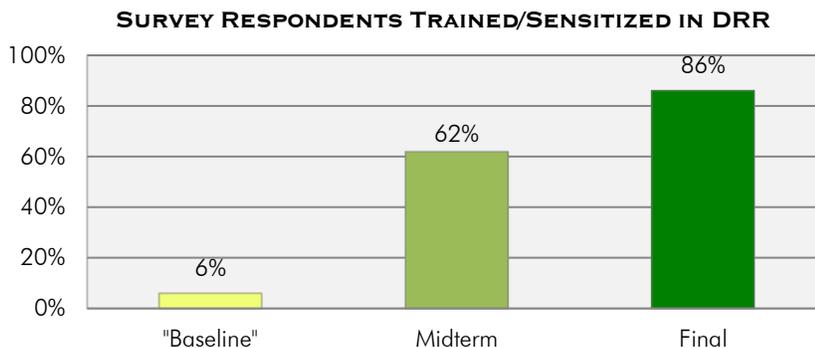
OBJECTIVE 4 *Disaster mitigation*
REDUCE THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY DISASTERS IN THE AREA THROUGH DISASTER RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES AND DISASTER MITIGATION TRAINING OF COMMUNITY LEADERS.



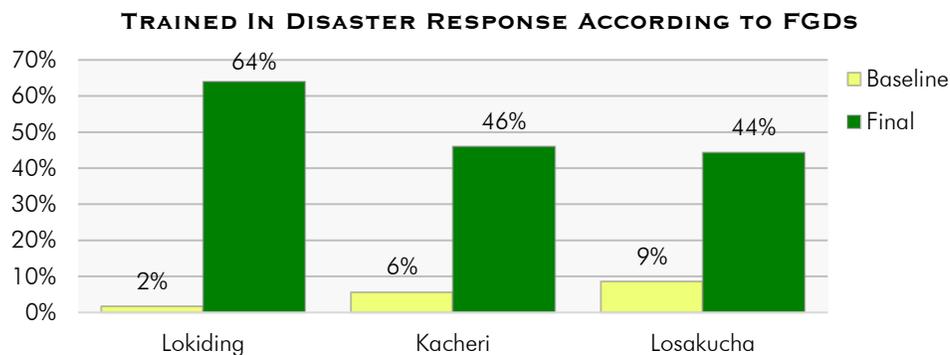
The fourth objective achieved a score of +2.86 on a scale of -5 to +5. Overall this objective was achieved very well. A DRR committee was formed and trained in all 22 villages, and each created a Community Based Disaster Management (CBDM) plan. Capacity was built through disaster response training, and engagement in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities increased.

STRONG PERFORMANCE AREAS

- DRR training.** 80% increase in training/sensitization in Disaster Risk Reduction (SP)

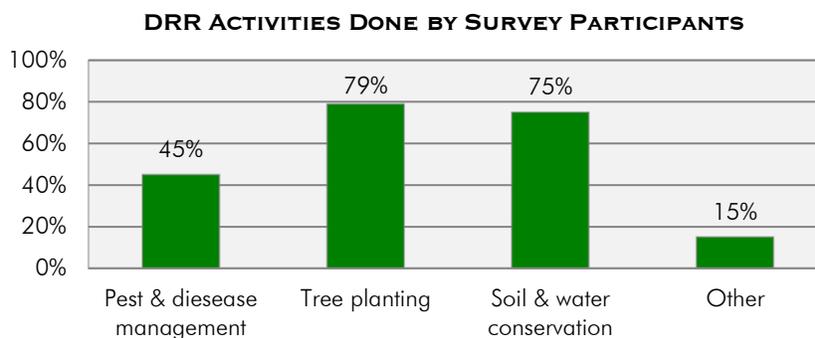


- Disaster response training.** 35-62% increase in percentage of people trained in disaster response (FGD)

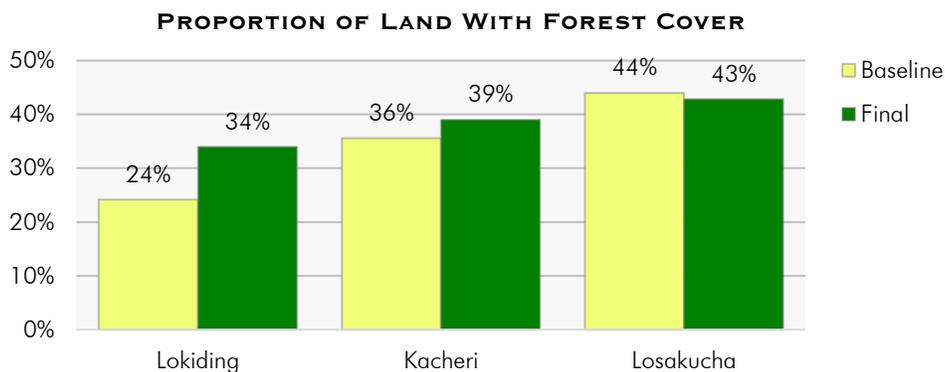


- Risk reduction strategies.** 19% increase from the midterm to the final evaluation in the number of people trained in risk reduction strategies (SP)

4. **DRR related activities.** 89% engaged in at least one activity related to Disaster Risk Reduction; 74% engaged in more than one activity (SP)



5. **Forest cover.** 10% increase in proportion of land in Lokiding parish with forest cover; 3% increase in Kacheri parish (FGD)



SHORTFALLS

6. **Introduction to disasters.** 44% decrease from the midterm to the final evaluation in the number of people trained in Introduction to Disasters (SP)

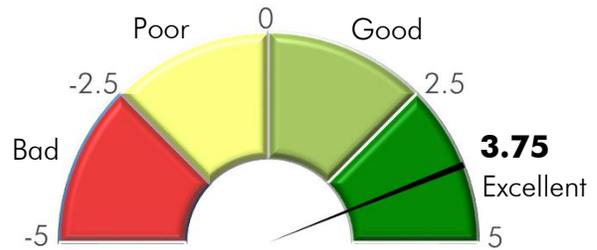
OBSERVATIONS & INSIGHTS

How the *Together* partnership functioned, and observations about whether it performed better than individual organizations acting independently, are examined here. Input for observations was obtained from several sources. These include:

- ✓ Interviews of key partner personnel (including one former chief executive)
- ✓ Portions of key informant interviews in Kotido
- ✓ Interviews with field leaders of MAP, ECHO, and CWS relating to the operations of the collaboration
- ✓ Observations by the evaluation team, both within the evaluation process and over the preceding years⁶

COLLABORATION BENEFITS

For SMUMCF, one of the ancillary goals of the initiative was to determine the value of working in a partnership. This issue is addressed below. Overall, CEC rated the value that the partnership provided to accomplish the *Together* mission as high—with a score of 3.75 on a scale of -5 to +5, it landed in the “Excellent” category.



Implementing partners uniformly expressed that there was value to the model of collaborating, and were unequivocal in expressing that the model had substantial value. Numerous benefits were referenced such as: wider impact, best practices, cooperation and teamwork, access, trust and acceptance, credibility, partner access, prudent adjustments, greater accountability, and wise decisions.

The majority of focus group participants and key informants noted the complementary diversity of *Together’s* programs as the primary key to effectiveness. Community members and local leaders considered *Together* uniquely successful because it was a collaboration.



Newly constructed sand dam.

Community members rated the contribution of *Together* at least three times higher than the next nearest NGO. The comparable strength of *Together* was reported across all three parishes. During key informant interviews, community leaders were asked to list all the NGOs that served in their area, and to identify the one which provided the most benefit to the community. That one was assigned 10 points out of 10, and then the interviewee was asked to score the other NGOs in relation to “10” for the most beneficial one. *Together* was given the top

position with 10 points by 10 of 12 interviewees.

⁶ For example, CEC conducted a one-day event on May 20, 2014 for *Together* U.S. and field staff to participate in a structured conversation about what had been achieved and what problems or challenges existed for the second half of the initiative. Mr. Edwards participated in a number of *Together* Council meetings during the partnership. These provided perspective for the Observations & Insights chapter of the *Report*.

It was observed that the consultative process between organizations generated better solutions. The partnership brought together the partners for the wisest answer to a problem, where diverse experience could be drawn upon.

PARTNERSHIP LEARNING

Observations about the partnership itself constituted lessons learned that could guide similar partnerships in the future. These included careful partner selection, agreed upon policies and practices, advance preparation of field staff, clear and precise communication, in-person Council meetings, Council composition, in-country leadership capabilities, field-based funding requests that inform budgets and funding, a practical monitoring system, early engagement of local authorities, clear assignment of reporting responsibility, reliable payment system to the field, proactively creating continuity, communication to the funder, a means for all to celebrate successes, and agreement on the role of formal third-party evaluation.

PEER EXCHANGE

Despite inherent limitations, interviewees reported unequivocally that they did learn from each other and that they would likely use information that they learned in future situations.

FURTHER OBSERVATIONS & OPINIONS

The overarching goal of *Together* was to help the Karamojong people achieve resilience. This is a tall order, and it is not clear that its difficulty was fully contemplated as *Together* was launched.

A more modest goal, then, is that programs begun by *Together*, might

continue after it has completed its work. *Together* proceeded with a set of assumptions associated with such a strategy, and this resulted in a youth training center, VSLA groups, small vaccination “businesses,” water source maintenance by water committees, education clubs, labor to build watershed structures, and other such efforts. Yet there are also programs that simply cannot be resilient such as a classroom renovation and the provision of furniture and supplies, or the provision of medical supplies. If these kinds of expensive specialty items are not provided by the government or an NGO, they simply are not available. Thus, there are respects in which the people cannot be fully self-sufficient, or resilient.

Among the *Together* Council interviews, when discussing issues or problems, the greatest issue was preparing and training field staff, early on, so they understood and executed the plan. Fortunately, the primary issue appears to be quite readily solvable. Future collaborations can plan and execute adequate training and orientation in advance of program launch.



Women carry home bags of seeds Together distributed to villagers.

Interviewees readily pointed out challenges and problems, but simply did not rate them as so significant to impair the overall positive value they attributed to the partnership. When asked if they would welcome the opportunity to engage in another, similar, partnership, all implementing partners indicated that they would.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Independent recommendations from the evaluator based on the evidence it gathered are presented here. They are organized to address three parties: SMUMCF, the Together Council, and future initiators of similar partnerships.



Together borehole

SMUMC FOUNDATION

1. **Leveraging the asset base.** Prayerfully consider next steps with *Together*, given its success and the assets in place.
2. **Graceful exit.** In the event that thoughtful consideration leads to a decision to fully exit *Together*, provide instruction and oversight to the Together Council to ensure that the least possible impact occurs on the community served.

TOGETHER

3. **Improved internal communications.** Work with in-country partner leaders to strengthen communication procedures.
4. **Strengthened accountability.** Strictly hold partner staff accountable to not just program objectives, but also to their commitments regarding internal communications and reporting.
5. **Sustainability.** Actively initiate recruitment of alternate funding sources to avoid loss of the considerable investment and organizational momentum built over the past five years.
6. **Best practices.** Systematically review the actions that have contributed to its success and ensure they are continued, and review the “challenges” cataloged in the *Evaluation Report* to take action on any that are urgent (some are listed immediately above in other recommendations).

In the event that *Together* does not continue, two recommendations apply.

7. **Pass it off.** Work closely with the Foundation (see point 2 above), or independently if necessary, to continue or transfer the programs, one at a time.
8. **Stay in touch.** Voluntarily “meet” once a year to continue learning, exchange ideas, and explore other possible collaborations.

FUTURE COLLABORATIONS

9. **Learning from Together.** Scrutinize *Together* documentation—particularly its first and last formal documents—to infer its critical success factors.

10. **Use of baseline study.** Build in a formal process to analyze and utilize research such as a baseline study in the design and implementation of programs.
11. **Use of third-party evaluator.** Resolve the issue of third-party evaluation definitively as a part of the formation of the partnership.
12. **Leveraging the partnership.** Explicitly clarify in advance expectations about responsibilities of each partner, specifically including the degree to which implementing partners will leverage the partnership and its assets with their stakeholders. Where significant unresolved discrepancies persistently exist in expectations, an alternate implementing partner may be identified.

CONCLUSION

Together had a substantial impact on the resilience of the Karamojong in the Kotido district of Uganda. Health and other development outcomes such as education, community mobilization, saving and lending, water access, conflict reduction, land cultivation, animal vaccination, income generation, crop management and diversification, environmental protection, and latrine usage all improved. The degree of improvement varied from outstanding (latrine construction and use, and vaccinations) to less extensive (insecticide treated nets and child nutrition). But overall, virtually all measured indicators improved significantly.

Further, *Together* partners—executives and field staff—were universally positive about the collaborative approach that defined *Together*. Similarly, local leaders—from NGOs and government departments—rated *Together* as providing significantly more benefit than any other nonprofit organization. A substantial contributor to this outstanding achievement was the partnership model *Together* employed.

SMUMC Foundation and the *Together* Council can praise God for the success of this initiative and know that the people of Karamoja have taken steps towards the resilience they need.