

# Why food insecurity persists

By Jacky Achan

In 2016, there were around 804 million people facing chronic food deprivation across the world. That number increased to 821 million people last year.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), State of Food Security

and Nutrition in the World report, for a third year in a row, hunger is on the rise.

October 16 marks World Food Day, dedicated to tackling global hunger. People from around the world, come together to declare their commitment to eradicating worldwide hunger.

The report says persistent instability in conflict-ridden

regions, adverse climate events in many regions of the world and economic slowdowns have affected the more peaceful regions and worsened the food security. Africa remains the continent with the highest prevalence of undernourishment.

The report also says almost 21% of the population (more than 256 million people) is affected by

undernourishment. This is the case for South America and Asia.

Prevalence of undernourishment as of last year stood at 10.9% in the world and 20.4% in Africa.

The percentage in Southern Africa was at 8.4%, North Africa 8.5%, West Africa at 15.1%, Central Africa 26.1% and East Africa at 31.4%. The report says without



A vegetable vendor in Napak district. Climate variability lead to income loss for people who depend on agriculture

**PERSISTENT INSTABILITY IN CONFLICT-RIDDEN REGIONS HAS AFFECTED THE MORE PEACEFUL ONES AND WORSENERD FOOD SECURITY**

The report says the impact of price spikes and volatility not only falls heaviest on the urban poor, but also the small-scale food producers, agriculture labourers and the rural poor who are net food buyers.

Climate variability and extremes also lead to income loss for those whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and natural resources, which then negatively impact food access.

## The climate aspect

According to the report, changes in climate also impact nutrition through impaired nutrient quality and dietary diversity of foods produced and consumed; impacts on water and sanitation, with their implications for patterns of health risks and disease.

Households adopt coping strategies in response to food and income reductions and increased prices following climate shocks.

Coping strategies include eating fewer meals per day and less at each meal, skipping meals and eating less nutrient-dense foods.

Alternatively, people eat more calorie-dense foods high in fat, sugars and salt, compromise dietary diversity and quality.

The report says even increased contamination of water used for irrigation can affect the safety of crops and animals that consume them, as well as the resulting food output.

## What is required?

According to FAO, addressing climate variability and extremes and their impact on food security and nutrition requires a focus on resilience.

There is need for context-specific interventions aimed at anticipating, limiting and adapting to the effects of climate variability and extremes and building the resilience of livelihoods, food systems and nutrition to climatic shocks and stresses.

Scaled-up action across sectors is urgently needed to strengthen the resilience of livelihoods and food systems to climate variability and extremes.

It includes risk monitoring and early warning systems, emergency preparedness and response, vulnerability reduction measures and shock-responsive social protection.

increased efforts directed at the problem, the world will fall short of achieving the SDG target of eradicating hunger by 2030.

## Who is most affected?

According to the report, the majority of people most vulnerable to climate shocks and natural hazards are the world's 2.5 billion small-scale farmers, herders, fishers and forest-dependent communities, who get their food and income from renewable natural resources.

It adds that climate variability and extremes are undermining all dimensions of food security: food availability; food access; food utilisation and food safety.

The report states that direct and indirect climate-driven impacts have a cumulative effect, leading to a downward spiral of increased food insecurity and malnutrition.

"As mentioned, an obvious impact is that climate variability and extremes negatively affect agricultural productivity, in terms of changes in crop yields, cropping areas or cropping intensity," it states.

The crop and livestock sub-sectors incur the highest damages and losses in agriculture due to climate-related disasters.

In addition, climate variability and extremes also affect food imports as countries try to compensate for domestic production losses.

The impact on production inevitably translates into loss of income for people, whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and natural resources, reducing their ability to access food.

## CARITAS KOTIDO DIOCESE EMPOWERS THE YOUTH TO FIGHT UNEMPLOYMENT CHALLENGE IN THE DISTRICT

### Introduction

Caritas Kotido Diocese was established in 1991, as the social services and development arm of the Catholic Diocese of Kotido. In the last twenty-seven years, Caritas Kotido Diocese has worked mainly in the areas of social economic development, and Emergency Humanitarian response, particularly targeting poor farmers and pastoralists, women and people living with HIV/AIDS as well as orphans and vulnerable children. It holistically does this with the aim of changing their lives in the entire Catholic Diocese of Kotido.

### The Vision, Mission and Core Values of Caritas Kotido Diocese

The Vision of Caritas Kotido Diocese is "to a self-reliant, just and peaceful communities." The mission is "to empower vulnerable communities through sustainable development programmes."

In line with the pillars and founding principles of Caritas International, the core values of Caritas Kotido Diocese are: Teamwork, Openness, Impartiality, Togetherness, Transparency, Accountability, Stewardship, Dignity of life, Gender equality and equity, Option for the poor, and Care for the common good.

### Project Background:

More than 78% of Ugandans are under age of 30 and the population is set to double by 2040 (UBOS, 2014). Karamoja is still challenged by high poverty levels (60.8%, UBOS 2017), unemployment of youths: over 62.8% of the youth in Uganda are unemployed (World Bank, 2015), making it the highest in East Africa. The youth in Karamoja are highly vulnerable, largely due to their lack of education and marketable skills. Over 80% of them are unemployed. Youth unemployment in the districts of Kotido, Napak and Nakapiripit stands at 78% (NSA, 2016).

In response to the above challenges, Caritas Kotido Diocese signed Cooperation Agreement with the DANACHURCHAD (DCA) to implement a three-year project (June 2016 to October 2019), on skilling 300 Youths through vocational skills training and Entrepreneurship on Non-formal programming. The project titled *Empowering youth through vocational training and Entrepreneurship in Karamoja-Uganda*, is funded by the European Union. This project is meant to provide the vulnerable youths in Kotido District with skills to build their capacities and significantly improve their chances of alternative employment and/or income opportunities.

### Goal and objectives:

The overall goal of this project is to **reduce extreme poverty and marginalization of vulnerable youth in Karamoja through vocational training, entrepreneurship and capacity building.**

The overall objective is to **improve the livelihoods of 900 (300 in each District) vulnerable youth in Kotido, Nakapiripit and Napak districts through access to vocational training and entrepreneurship with two clear specific objectives of:**

- Improved job opportunities for the target youth through access to vocational training, basic education and skills development.
- Improved Capacity of local government and civil society workers/ staff to be better provide skills to youth and strengthen links with the private sector.

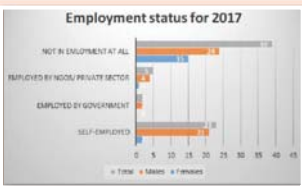
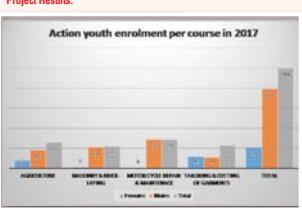
### Strategies:

The strategies used to achieve the desired results include:

- Collaboration and networking with the Local Government, especially the department of Community Based Services to carry out mobilization and sensitization of Communities.
- Community dialogues to trigger enrolment through the involvement of the existing grass root structures such as village Local Councils, Church Agents and parish Chiefs.
- Vocational training proper embedded with entrepreneurship and life skills training.
- Exposure learning visits to bigger vocational institutes to appreciate the relevance of vocational training as a means of livelihoods improvement.
- Equipping of trained youth with tool kits immediately after graduation.
- Continuous monitoring of trained youth in their respective sub counties.
- Formation of the Recruitment Steering Committee (RSC) to conduct all-inclusive and gender sensitive selection for the target Youth.
- Assessment of the Action youth by the Directorate of Industrial training (DIT) for the Award of nationally recognized certificates that can expose them to the job markets both within their locality and outside for improved livelihoods and employment opportunities.
- Capacity building for Instructors and Local Government CDOs to provide skills and linkages with the private sector.
- Assessment of Kotido technical institute to identify capacity gaps in infrastructure and human resource.



### Project Results:



Other reasons for drop out is lack of enthusiasm by the youth to embrace vocational skills training as an equal job opportunity alternative. There is also lack of guidance and counselling on the relevance of the vocational training courses to the youth.

The Technical institute lacks a range of both training instructional materials and equipment tools to boost effective teaching and learning process. Besides this, also adequate workshops, sanitary facilities and accommodation are virtually lacking.

The placement of the learners for industrial training has not been successful in that, the owners of the workshops, saloons and business entities want payment for their premises in order to allow the learners practice.

The timing of the training still poses another challenge in that a number of those who enrol do not complete the courses because they are conducted during cultivation period from February to June. This was partly one of the reasons why 31% did graduate in year one.

### Conclusion:

The youth in Karamoja just like in any other parts of the country are increasingly finding themselves left behind to the side lines either because they are under-employed or are ordinarily employed.

To harness the power of young people we must recognize their individual potential, and contribution as well as emphasize their responsibilities through participatory planning since many a time the youth are left behind in the planning table.

They must be encouraged to take constructive actions across all areas crucial for the implementation of the inclusive development agenda of our country. For example, here in Karamoja, the youth should be engaged in constructive, construction and agricultural production now that the region is equally catching up with development initiatives.

Further, the youth in the region should be stimulated to form and promote youth platforms where they articulate their issues and reflect on the diversity of all youth groups by involving the unheard lot like the disadvantaged rural youth. Promoting creativity and innovation as well as reaching out to vulnerable marginalized young people should be encouraged to change their mind set to embrace the much needed knowledge areas such as tailored leadership and management skills, enterprise development, educational awareness and advocacy initiatives among others.

Failure to offer them encouragement for self-esteem compromises their potential. This is because the elderly people are reluctant to entrust them with responsibility and yet the youth eagerly desire to be involved in their present and future development agenda.



The Carpentry Action youth being guided by the instructor



Tailoring on Business



Graduates of 2018 entertaining the Guests during the Graduation Ceremony

- Apart from this, other results that have been felt are: Collaboration between Caritas Kotido and the Sub-Counties administration has been strengthened and enhanced through joint participation of mobilization and validating the youths in the respective Sub-Counties.
- Synergy promotion among the NGOs in the district delivering on the youths' agenda has been promoted and enhanced through joint coordination meetings, information sharing and planning.

### Lessons learnt and challenges:

During the project implementation in the last 2 years, the following lessons were learnt:

Awareness creation and sensitization about the project activities is key and necessary to the stakeholders and beneficiaries to appreciate what the project has in store for them.

For effective implementation of the project, collaboration and consultation with the District and Sub-County Administrations is paramount. For easy entry and access to the Communities it is important to pass through the existing local structures such as Elders, Opinion leaders and Local Councils' Chairpersons at their respective villages, parishes and Sub-Counties.

The use of the media is very instrumental in sending out information to the community. The Radio announcements from 92.7 Voice of Karamoja FM Radio has enhanced easy programme implementation and recruitment exercise for the youth in the various locations.

### Challenges:

It as well goes without mentioning that in the course of the project implementation, there were some challenges encountered and major among them are: Gender imbalance in that fewer females expressed interest in applying for the courses advertised. For example, in the 2017 intake, only 21 of the females applied for the training. This perhaps shows lack of interest by the girls or they may have not got the information regarding recruitment. Some courses that enhance female training were limited.

Lack of Instructors to handle some training components, for example hair-dressing and catering.

Impatience by the youth to complete the training as a number of them want employment and income in the shortest time possible. This led to 68% and 31% completion and dropout rates respectively.