

# TAO FACTSHEET 2: NORTHERN UGANDA

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## Background

Two decades of conflict in Northern Uganda's Lango region have resulted in thousands of people being killed or displaced. Now a semblance of stability is returning, despite the refusal of Lords Resistance Army leader Joseph Koni to take part in the peace talks that began in 2006. Camps for internally displaced people are being closed – and women and children returning home are finding that their land has been taken over.

## The issues

- Many of those who have taken over the land do not have legitimate claim to it and women and children are intimidated from claiming their rights
- Grandparents and even children as young as 13 are heading households because the parents have been killed as a result of the conflict or AIDS
- Providing food is of paramount importance but those returning from the camps lack the basic skills to grow food crops
- They have no money to buy and no knowledge of how to manage livestock
- Housing lacks the most basic amenities such as toilets, poor hygiene contributes to illness.

## What TAO is doing

Thanks to significant funding from The Big Lottery and the Baring and John Ellerman Foundations, TAO is helping these displaced people secure tenure, and training them in hygiene and sustainable smallholding agriculture. That includes the use of oxen for cultivation, managing livestock, beekeeping, raising crops for food and cash and planting fruit trees and trees for reforestation. These sustainable farming activities provide both food and income for medicine, school fees and transport from the sale of surplus produce. Awareness campaigns are helping not only the direct beneficiaries and their communities but many thousands living in neighbouring districts.

TAO is working in partnership in Uganda with the **Uganda Women's Efforts to Save Orphans (UWESO)**. UWESO's key strengths lie in their extensive network of men and women in rural areas and effective lobbying of government at central, regional district and local levels. Their trained agricultural extension experts teach sustainable farming skills, provide seeds for crops, goats for milk and meat, and oxen to plough the land.

But for this they need secure tenure of what is rightfully theirs. On the legal side TAO is working with **Uganda's Facilitation for Peace and Development (FAPAD)** and the relevant government agencies, land tribunals and magistrates' courts. FAPAD is training local leaders as land advocacy support workers to handle cases related to property and land rights, inheritance, succession and

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contractual rights, so making the training sustainable beyond the project's immediate life. Workshops, publications and radio programmes are helping raise awareness.

In November 2008 four representatives from the Baring and John Ellerman Foundations visited the project and confirmed they were impressed by the use to which TAO has put their funding.

### **Footnotes:**

- 1 FAPAD is currently dealing with 800 cases a year and has a success rate of 80% - 90%, achieved by mediation at the parish level with the local clan and church leaders.
- 2 Since the project was launched in May 2008:
  - more than 600 beneficiaries have been empowered with land rights
  - 120 direct beneficiary families have been trained in sustainable farming techniques and given seeds and seedlings of cabbages, tomatoes and eggplant, improved sunflower, maize and soya seeds. Over 900 other families in the project area are also benefiting from the training. In addition 3,000 avocado, 6,000 pines, 10,000 passion fruits, 4,500 mangoes stems, 7,000 malina and 8,000 tangerine seedlings – all revenue producing - are being brought on in nurseries for eventual distribution
  - 120 goat pens constructed; 360 goats provided; and bulls for animal traction purchased - some 500 beneficiaries trained in family and public hygiene - 80 of the direct beneficiary families have already constructed their own pit latrines
  - leaflets on succession and inheritance produced in English and Luo (the local language)
    - radio stations have carried interviews on these and related subjects resulting in a near doubling of enquiries for further information
  - 30 local community leaders trained to help spread the word.
- 3 Overhead costs are kept to a minimum: extension workers use motorcycles and bicycles (not 4-wheel drives) and their mobile phones are charged by solar power.
- 4 At the November 2008 meeting with TAO, Lango region Paramount Chief and Chairman of the Land Cultural Foundation confirmed:
  - a woman has the right to cultivate the land where she is living, as had previously been defined by the clan
  - on the death of her husband she has the right to continue farming that land
  - if she remarries outside the clan she loses that right, but the children can continue farming

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- clans own the freehold of the land and the sale of its use must be agreed by the clan leaders.
- 5 Parish leaders, the clan and the churches all endorse the TAO project, enabling it to be self-sustaining and helping build capacity in the community.
  - 6 Once the first cash crops have been harvested they will benefit from co-operative marketing to get a better price for the farmers. Sunflower will be the main cash crop.

*See also Factsheet 1: HOW WE WORK*

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