

# K★O★P★E★I★N★

*Kotido Peace Initiative*  
**Quarterly Newsletter**



**April—June 2009**

**Mission Statement:** Promoting community integration and development through dialogue and reconciliation among people living in Kotido District and the neighboring districts.

### **Security Update/Incident Report:**

Insecurity continues to be a problem in Karamoja, and a number of notable raids have taken place this quarter. In the last three months, 18 people have been reported killed in raids, over 9,838 livestock plus 32 herds of cattle have been stolen, and only 250 heads of cattle and one herd have been reported recovered. One raid on June 2<sup>nd</sup> was particularly notable: 67 herd of cattle were stolen (6487 head of cattle), 4 people were killed, and 3 people were injured. The raid took place at midday in the protected kraal of Arukan at Lopeerumuu in Nayangyang, by raiders suspected to be a mix of Turkana and Matheniko. The army has traced the cows to Turkana.



**Children inspect a bullet hole in a house in their village, Lopedur, after a raid on May 4<sup>th</sup>.**

**KOPEIN Update:** KOPEIN has seen some changes this past quarter and is now in the market for a programme coordinator and an office assistant. The job descriptions are currently under way and will be posted this month. Additionally there will be some changes in board members, though some will remain the same.

### **Activities:**

#### **Save the Children**

KOPEIN began a new project with Save the Children in Uganda. The goals of the project include peace building, and harmonization between soldiers and the civilian community. In the three sub-counties of Panyangara, Kacheri, and Nakapelimoru, children will be sensitized on conflict resolutions, peace and reconciliation, as well as being able to articulate their rights. Children will get the opportunity to interact with the UPDF for the purpose of removing stereotypes.

## Sports for Peace

Sports for Peace Groups in Panyangara and Rengen recommenced meeting and the money they won at the cross-border football games in 2002 has now been made available. They are currently making plans for livelihood activities. The group in Panyangara has decided to run a shop, which will generate more revenue for further peace demonstrations and activities. The group in Rengen is starting a village saving and loan association.

## ICCO Evaluation

Due to our current deficit of staff members, the ICCO evaluation due to take place this July as been postponed to next year when KOPEIN will hopefully have a working programme coordinator and administrator to help coordinate the evaluation.

## Living With Shalom Visit

Living with Shalom is a program for S4 and S6 leavers to educate Uganda's youth about the diverse cultures of the country and build peace by helping youth from all over the country to interact and build relationships with each other, while also learning practical skills about peace building and environmental stewardship. As part of the Living with Shalom (LwS) program to which KOPEIN sends youth each year, the youth groups visit each other during school holidays. From May 11-13, the LwS Lango youth came to Kotido to visit our youth. The Lango youth were received very well. Their two day visit was packed with activities, including touring Kotido, playing at sliding rock, shopping at the cattle market, and walking all around town. The group additionally planted 77 trees



in a demonstration garden, which, when finished, will educate people about the uses of agroforestry in providing food for animals and raising the water table. The visit also strengthened cross-cultural relationships, and fought cultural stereotypes. The Lango youth really enjoyed visiting Karamoja, and the Karimojong youth really enjoyed receiving visitors.

**Karamoja Living With Shalom Youth, Owiny David Revelation, plants a tree at the demonstration garden.**

## Peace Meetings

Several important peace meetings have taken place this quarter. Representatives of the Jie and the Matheniko communities met at least three times in May to discuss peace. Those attending the meeting were very enthusiastic about matters pertaining to peace. It was decided that the Jie and Matheniko should graze their kraals together to promote good relationships, equal access to good grazing land, and protection from potential raiders. The communities also encouraged each other to identify peace spoilers and treat them as criminals. Support was given to the idea that alternative livelihoods ought to be explored to supplement the wealth of cows. The suggested alternatives included education, agriculture, and brick making. Culturally, cows are viewed as wealth, raiding is still often glorified, and peace sometimes believed to be impossible. Meetings will continue to take place regularly to promote the good relationships begun between the Jie and the Matheniko, and to foster attitudinal change in the communities about raiding.

## Global Families Ik Education Project

On June 15-16, KOPEIN and representatives from MCC, one of our partners, visited sponsored children and schools in Kaabong, Kamion, Lokwakoromai, and Timu. The new term was paid for, and necessary materials distributed to primary students. We visited village schools at Kamion, Lokwakoromai, and Timu to find out their needs. Later, we discussed with the DEO Kaabong the necessary (and not yet provided) government provisions for the schools. We plan on entering into relationship with the village schools to build their capacity in order to improve the Ik's access to quality education.



MCC Uganda Country Representative, Dale Herman, hands soap and other necessities to sponsored Ik primary students in Kaabong.



Ik students at Lokwakoromai Village Primary School practicing a traditional dance in the shade of a tree.

## Moroto Peace Race

On June 25-27 a peace race took place in Moroto, funded by IKV. KOPEIN brought 15 youth karachunas. The 15 youth from Kotido joined 15 youth from Dodoth, and youth from South Sudan and Turkana attended as well. All groups in Peace for Sports were represented. Among the youth from Dodoth were some of the Ik students that we sponsor in Kaabong, so the race was truly multicultural! The winners were from West Pokot, and one Turkana youth. However, everybody received gifts for participation. The sports were flagged off by the First Lady, the Minister for Karamoja, Janet Museveni. The race was well attended by most members of parliament from Karamoja and three ministers from Kenya.

## Koteen Road

The ongoing project of the Koteen road is moving slowly forward. The road is presently being built up and shaped, but is highly affected by current hostilities. Reports have reached KOPEIN that the Turkana suspect the road, rather than building peace through increased trade and familiarization, as is intended, of facilitating the tracing of stolen cattle into Kenya by the UPDF. Peace dialogues between the affected groups continue.



### Future Plans for this Quarter (July-September)

**NUREP** is beginning a new peace-building project, partnered with **KOPEIN**, this quarter. Funds have been released for specific activities to take place. There will be a Kotido District Problem Solving meeting, which brings together a number of stakeholders: kraal leaders, heads of departments, and the top district security leadership to discuss for one day the issues that are affecting the district. A lot of issues have been raised recently, and the symptoms of the deeper problems have been expressed outwardly by violence. Violence against the Intelligence in the villages has risen lately, a symptom of latent problems. The meeting will give people a forum for open sharing with army and leadership and to come up with a way forward. The meeting details are yet to be scheduled.

Other planned **NUREP-KOPEIN** projects include: 1) The training of reformed youth warriors and women, 90 of them, in 2 sub-counties: Rengen and Panyangara, by the end of July or early August.

2) Radio talk show by elders on Karamoja FM, also by the end of July or early August.

Additionally, **Oxfam** is planning to, through partners **KOPEIN** and **DADO**, support the inter-community peace dialogues between the Jie and Dodoth communities. Local peace committees will be formed as main actors to spearhead the initiative in 6 sub-counties: three from each side bordering each other.

We at **KOPEIN** look forward to this coming quarter and to hearing from you!



Nabul Anna addresses the crowd at a problem-solving meeting in Potongor, funded by **NUREP**.

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