



# EKOL!

Issue 3: July 2013  
Elders and Young People  
for Karamoja

*“We are making progress in the research. We are now working with elders and women to widen our networks to get committed to achieving our aim of seeing Karimojong working together to develop Karamoja. The beauty I see in this is the building of relationships and networking of people to share and learn from their experiences” – Naputaria Logira, Research Team Member.*

We see cooperation between us, as young people, and our elders as a way of moving towards our aim. We have asked 12 knowledgeable men and women elders in Kotido and 12 in Moroto/Napak to advise our work and they have agreed. They tell us they will share the knowledge and the wisdom they have, so that their wisdom continues to our generation. We are all pleased with working together as youth and elders to talk about issues, solve problems and think on the future.

In June our whole team met with elders and women in Nakapelimoru. We roasted a goat together and sat and discussed the issues arising from the research and actions that might come from them. The elders talked about how land is used and how it caters for animals.

*“Elders really tackled the issue of pastoralists and cultivators and the opening of tracks.” (Naliana - research team member).*

*“They said the elders have become negligent because their forefathers wouldn’t have ploughed fields in the same way or narrowed trackways reserved for cattle.” (Lokwang, Team member, Moroto)*

The meeting also talked about maintaining peace with Turkana and about the slow progress of peace with Dodoth. Elders said that they would go to the Resident District Commissioner to follow up and agreed they would inform the team of what progress had been made.

*“They asked us to bring some of the elders from Bokora to take part in the Dodoth meeting. I have already spoken to them on the phone.” (Agan - Research team member, just after the meeting.)*



We received such a warm welcome from the elders and women in Nakepilimoru. They hosted us in the traditional way. They said we could do good, as we come from many different Karimojong groups, we work with all the generations and we travel around to many different places. They told us to continue and agreed we should meet again on the following Thursday to follow up. They advised that the best way forward is for us to connect them to government, but they will do the talking.

At the end of the meeting the elders of Nakepilimoru prayed for rain and then the clouds came. When we travelled back to Kotido, the rain started falling.



*“I was amazed at the order and running of affairs and the process of the traditional meeting here with the Vie” Lolepo, Research team member*



## Trackways and Sorghum Fields

In June, we shared with the people of Potongor, Loonei and Kapeilok in Kotido how people in Lobanya manage their land to balance cultivation and herding.

We told the people in Potongor that we have been in Lobanya. There is vast cultivation of a variety of crops and they also have many animals. They do it without conflict. So we made calls to the people of Lobanya with whom we had made friends. We asked them if it was good that the people from Potongor could come to learn from them. They said yes! We all went the next morning. The people in Lobanya hosted us and took us around the settlement and kraals. The elders called an *etem* (community meeting, also called *ekokwa* in Napak, Moroto and Nakapiritpirit) the next day to explain how they are using *etem* to solve land conflicts and manage land use.

One elder said "the cure of all problems which occur is an *etem*. The best way to solve conflicts and taking Karamoja forward is through *etem*. People should stop demanding for food or drinks and attend *etem* with no excuse". Many of the visitors that day said they would go to their communities and organise similar meetings. After two days, one of our friends in Potongor called us to say that the people had organized an *etem* and made decisions to open up tracks for animals. The elders had agreed that the areas cultivated now, which were formerly for grazing, should not be cultivated again after the harvest, because they are causing conflict.

"Lobanya is so organised!  
We must also do this;  
we must place where  
we want a track, and  
where we want grazing  
and we must have *etem*,  
in the same way that  
the people of Lobanya  
are doing." (An elder from  
Potongor after the visit to  
Lobanya, Kotido)



When we started the research we went to a place called Nabwal in Napak and we saw that the people were starting to cultivate from their gates to wherever they get tired. Even the very oxen used for cultivating have nowhere to pass when they are pulling the plough. We were in Nabwal for some time having discussions and then when we went back recently they said that they have now started opening up those trackways. They told us that places that were worse off before, with no ways at all for animals, have opened trackways now. It was a man called Lokawoyan who said this. We the research team did the investigation, and shared with them what had come up and what could be done about that, we raised these things in meetings and then we found when we went back that they had managed it.



In an *ekokwa* at Natirae, in Napak, the elders made the following decisions:

- Cattle should be watered and grazed at designated points
- Pathways for animals would be opened up after harvesting crops
- The herders will maintain vigilance and security
- The cultivators will be hospitable to the herders
- *Ekokwa/etem* should be used to discuss any issues in the future.



"We are cultivating for the purpose of acquiring cows. When we get the cows where shall we graze them?"

Elder, Potongor, Kotido

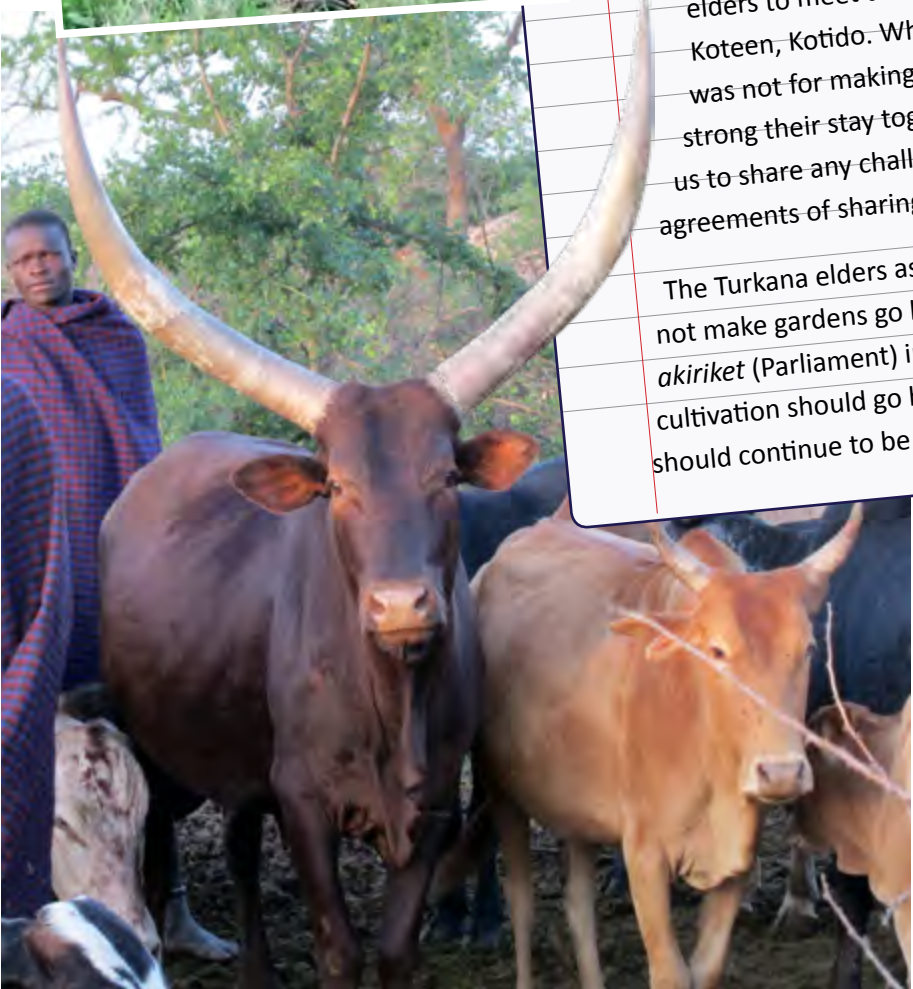


### Keeping the Peace

People in Nakapelimoru Sub County explained to us that kraals are clustering close to cultivated areas in part because of insecurity and uncertainties in the grasslands, which border Dodoth in the north and Turkana in the east.

At the beginning of the raids, Turkana herders asked some Jie elders to meet them, as they would be sharing pastures at Koteen, Kotido. When the meeting started, the elders said it was not for making peace but for strengthening it and making strong their stay together. One Jie elder said "this meeting is for us to share any challenges, find solutions and recommit to our agreements of sharing pastures".

The Turkana elders asked the Jie elders to control cultivation and not make gardens go beyond Nangolol Apolon. Not long after, at an *akiriket* (Parliament) in Nakapelimoru, elders declared that no gardens/cultivation should go beyond Nangolol Apolon. Jie elders said meetings should continue to be held.



"Our backbone is the cow; our bank is the cow as commercial banks belong to government and others. We need to agree to graze together for the good of our cows". Jie elder





**W**e continue to learn about how today's relative security has affected the way land is managed in Karamoja as we travel and talk to people. We continuously share what we are learning with the people we meet. We have found that when young people and elders work together, when communities learn from each other and when we all draw on our tradition, it makes solving problems easier.

In the next few months, we are going to research and communicate the actions that people are taking on peace, land and wildlife.

## About us

**W**e are 24 young men and women from Napak, Nakapiripirit, Kotido and Moroto carrying out research in Moroto, Napak and Kotido. We visit different kraals and communities to study how things work and build relationships with people living across our districts. We are trying to understand what we, Karimojong, can do about our own issues.

**We** are available to use our knowledge, connections/ networks and experience to help communities work



together, and bring government closer to the people and the people closer to government. We also bring Karimojong together to learn from each other.

We are working with elders and older women to increase our understanding. We are easily contactable and very friendly.

We have done this research since 2011. We have published "*Strength, Creativity and Livelihoods of Karimojong Youth*" and our bulletin, "*Eko!*".



We are supported by Restless Development, the Institute of Development Studies, PCI and Irish Aid. If you'd like to know more about our work, please contact us on [youthresearchteam@gmail.com](mailto:youthresearchteam@gmail.com) or +256 (0)776 775775.