



Northern Uganda Early Recovery Project (NUERP)

Annual Progress Report 2012.
(January-December 2012)



SECTION 1: BASIC DATA/SUMMARY

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Benefiting country and location of the project	Uganda (Oyam and Lira including Otuke and Alebtong Districts - Lango Sub - region).
Title of the project:	Northern Uganda Early Recovery Project
Duration of the project:	15 July 2009-30 November 2012
Lead Agency:	UNDP
UN executing partners:	UNDP, WFP and WHO
Non-UN executing partners (if applicable):	N/A
Total project cost (including programme support cost):	\$ 3,807,443 UNDP: \$ 1,826,873, WHO: \$ 664,470 WFP: \$ 1,316,100)
Reporting period:	January - December 2012
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
ALREP	Agricultural Livelihoods Rehabilitation Project
ANC	Ante Natal Clinic
CHW	Community Health Workers
DHMC	District Health Management Committees
DLG	District Local Government
DVO	District Veterinary Officer
EID	Early Infant Diagnosis
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HMIS	Health Management Information Systems
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILF	International Lifeline Fund
LCF	Lango Cultural Foundation
LRLF	Lango Religious Leaders Forum
MFI	Micro Finance Institutions
MOH	Ministry of Health
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NARO	National Agricultural Research Organization
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NUERP	Northern Uganda early recovery Project
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
PDM	Programme Development Management
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission

SACCO	Saving and Credit Cooperative
SG 2000	Sasakawa Global 2000
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
UGX	Uganda Shillings
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
VHT	Village Health Team
UNTFHS	United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security
VSLA	Village Saving and Loan Association
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WV	World Vision
ZARDI	Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Northern Uganda Early Recovery Project (NUERP) was designed and implemented within the framework of the National Development Plan (NDP). The project outputs directly contributed to the Government of Uganda's Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), whose over-arching framework and affirmative action was to address the post-conflict and recovery challenges in Northern Uganda. Project aimed at supporting the rapid and self sustainable recovery of the conflict-affected returning population in Lango sub-region through an integrated service delivery and community based approach. The project was implemented by UNDP, WFP and WHO. World Vision Uganda as an implementing partner for UNDP fast tracked implementation of resettlement, agricultural production enhancement and peace building aspects of the work plan. Meanwhile, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) and International Lifeline Fund (ILF) were the main implementing Partners for WFP, whereas, the District health office and Health center IV implemented the health component for WHO.

In brief, the project intended to foster recovery by enhancing an environment for service delivery by the local authorities, strengthening the livelihoods systems of the returnees, improving health conditions of the target population, and creating an enabling environment for reconciliation. The project beneficiaries were the conflict-affected returning population whose survival, means of livelihood, and dignity was being threatened. The nature of the project addressed a wide range of interconnected issues, specifically poverty, health, nutrition, and livelihood opportunities. It focused on addressing areas of human security that were much neglected and the multi-sectoral and inter-agency integration approach that this project applied helped in bridging transition from crisis to post-crisis recovery and development processes to support human security in Northern Uganda.

The returned populations and their communities in Lira (including Alebtong and Otuke) and Oyam in Lango sub-region, were the intended beneficiaries. The project focused on 16 sub-counties in the two districts selected on the basis of the rapid pace of return and accompanying urgency for social services, livelihoods and human security support. It responded to the needs of approximately 228,190 persons who had re-settled in their areas of origin 'community-based recovery and development approach'.

Among others, the project focused on addressing the areas of human security that were neglected. The project addressed more than one element of the situations that adversely affected human security and paid particular attention to the special needs and vulnerabilities of women and children. The following are some of the strategies the project applied to attain human security:

- Through sustainable community based approaches, the supported former internally displaced persons were empowered to mitigate the socio-economic impact of displacement by engaging in development projects;
- The project enabled a secure environment for the communities and empowered the population to transition from war to peace through the integration of humanitarian and development assistance; reconciliation and coexistence; and other processes. These activities also contributed to prevent the recurrence of conflicts; combat the impact of the conflict that had become visible among the populace such as sexual and Gender based violence and child abuse.
- The project supported communities to realize minimum standards of living, including assisting community-level efforts to establish mechanisms for protecting people who were exposed to extreme poverty, sudden economic downturns and natural disasters.

This Annual progress report is compiled as part of the requirements and deliverables stipulated in the NUERP project document. It presents consolidated achievements of the outputs targeted during the January – December 2012, highlights some challenges, impact created and lessons learnt.

1. GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS

The project Goal, Objectives and Expected outputs as stated in the approved project document, against which this project is driven are summarised hereunder:

<p>The main goal of this project is to support the rapid and self-sustainable recovery of at least 30% of 228,190 persons across 16 sub-counties, the conflict-affected returning population and their communities through an integrated delivery and nutritional services within two years.</p> <p>These were implemented through the following three objectives using community-based recovery approach</p>	
2.2. OBJECTIVES	2.3: OUTPUTS
1.0 To facilitate resettlement and recovery among the target population through enhancing the physical and organisational assets in 16 sub counties that are areas of return	1.0 Capacity of two District Local Governments to implement participatory development management strengthened.
2.0 To improve the production capacity and income of 10,000 households (60,00 individuals) through agricultural and non-agricultural activities and access to credit and savings in two (2) years	2.1 Agricultural production and productivity of 8,000 households increased through provision of agricultural inputs and training.
	2.2 Economic opportunities of 2,000 households diversified through provision of non-agricultural skill training and access to savings and financial resources.
3.0 To allow 16 sub-counties where people have returned to engage in peace building and conflict prevention processes involving women, youth, religious, and cultural/local leaders within the project period	3.1 Local communities are made aware of mediation and dialogue in the resolution of conflicts, reconciliation and moral recovery.
	3.2 Mediation services, dialogues, and reconciliation activities involving the youth, women, cultural, religious, and local leaders in 16 sub counties and four districts are strengthened.
	3.3 At least 480 women and youth from 16 Peace rings are engaged in participatory reconciliation and peace building initiatives.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

2.1 Peace Rings: A Model for Peace Building and Conflict Resolution.

A peace ring was normally made up of 30 members at the Sub-county level, and 18 at the parish level. The Peace rings were provided with training in mediation skills; gender equality, conflict resolution, and arbitration of disputes (i.e., mainly land disputes and family conflicts, with some cases of abuse and gender based violence.

Peace rings had a very positive impact on the communities: both on the volunteer members themselves and the communities they served. The concept created a sense of empowerment and ownership especially from conflict and difficult experiences. The project had not only given the Peace Rings a future and a will to live, but also a way to help and empower others. Although, figures do not exactly capture the extent of the benefits on communities of this type of intervention, the NUERP project assisted 480 (F=368, M=112) women and youth peace rings by strengthening their mediation skills, which led to the resolution of 2,288 community conflicts during the thirteen months of the peace ring implementation period in the Lango sub-region. This is an indication that the peace rings have continued to be used as one of the means of resolving conflicts in the community. Peace rings also developed strong linkages with the police and local councils, and they managed to refer 638 cases. This greatly reduced the incidences of conflicts in communities as locals found peace rings more approachable since they understood the local context and their services were free of charge. This feature makes this approach truly innovative and a best practice which could and should be replicated in other post-conflict settings.

The project also enhanced the capacity of 40 local religious and cultural leaders on mediation and settling of land disputes. Following this training, four mediation meetings were conducted during June and July 2012 in the sub-counties of Adwari, Ogur, Abako and Otwal all regarding land conflicts between families and inter clans. The mediation meetings were conducted in partnership with Lango Cultural Foundation-LCF and Lango Religious Leaders Forum-LRLF, Local leaders and the local community. It's important to note that mediation and rebuilding social differences needs time however, , initiation and fact finding meetings were held and the district teams, Cultural and Religious leaders agreed to continue supporting the resolution of those conflicts.

2.2 Livelihoods Enhancement

a) Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)

The Village Savings and Loan Association model is a viable intervention that is likely to have a positive impact on the community beyond the life span of the project. NUERP supported farmers groups identified from the different districts by training on basic book keeping and saving skills. As a result a total of 119 groups were initiated and are now engaged in VSLA activities. These include 92 groups identified during the phase 1 scale up and 20 during the mini scale up who were also provided with VSLA kits and different capacity building initiatives done including mentoring. There is continued linkage to the Micro finance institutions such as Vision Fund for Lira and Alebtong, Iceme SACCO for Oyam district and FINCA for Otuke. To date, 112 VSLA groups have been enrolled and mentored while 663 SMEs established. The mentored groups have already been linked to each of the MFI that carried out the mentoring. NUERP team has followed up with the groups and MFIs. Some of the groups were already engaging with some of the MFIs and this training came handy. The VSLA members were trained on sustainable Village Savings and Loans Associations methodologies and micro finance literacy components. The VSLA has increased house

hold income among the community members. Several VSLA members have indicated that they have started businesses from the savings generated and invested this money in setting up businesses in silver fish trading, produce buying and selling, and brewing and selling of local brew..

The project noted a tremendous improvement in savings following routine field visits and distribution of savings kits. For instance the 92VSLAs once trained and equipped with the savings kits were able to save UGX. 12,972,000 (\$5000) in the months of June and July 2012. The cumulative savings over the thirteen months of VSLA savings from July, 2011 to July 2012 totals to UG X. 106,622,500 (\$41,000). 100% of each of the savings group members are actively contributing to the savings on a weekly basis. With capacity building and back-stopping in Business skills and entrepreneurship development completed, 663 VSLA members from old NUERP supported groups set up small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Incomes realized from the established SMEs enabled households meet their immediate needs and acquisition of assets like construction of houses, buying of additional oxen for ploughing their fields.

Participation of women in the savings has increased the level of production and individual income generating activities since more women are engaged in petty trade. This has also increased and improved the saving culture amongst the members. Both men and women have been able to acquire assets like land in trading centres and bicycles, due to accumulated savings.

b) Increased agricultural production and productivity.

The project distributed an assortment of seeds including: Maize, Beans, Soybeans, Cassava, Sesame, and Groundnuts to 8,000 (M =3,920 & F=4,080) beneficiaries in all the project districts in the main phase of the project that run from January 2011 to June 2012. However, in the mini scale-up phase that ran in the month of November 2012, in addition to the normal quantity of planting materials and training provided to the farmers, World Vision distributed 480 oxen and 240 ox-ploughs to 240 farmers groups (4,757 (M=2,090, F=2,667) beneficiaries) in Lira, Oyam, Otuke and Alebtong districts. The support provided was meant to consolidate the achievements of other NUERP phases. The 4,757 (M=2,090, F=2,667) benefiting households were equitably derived from all sixteen sub-counties in the four districts who had been trained in phase I (2011-2012) and scale up sub project I on basic agronomic and crop management practices in collaboration with Local Government Agriculture Extension Staff and NAADS officers.

As a way of increasing agricultural production and productivity, the project distributed 24,000 Kgs of Simsim (Sesame II) seeds to 8,000 (M= 3920 & F= 4080) beneficiaries in Lira, Oyam, Otuke and Alebtong districts. This is in addition to 20,000 Kgs of Soy beans (Nam Soy II) to 2,000 (F= 1,142 & M= 858) beneficiaries. This increased the availability of improved and quality seeds to the communities; the acreages under production per household has notably increased.

During the same phase, a total of 7,269 (M=3,527 & F=3,742) benefiting households from all the four districts were trained on basic agronomic practices and climate sensitive farming in collaboration with Local Government Agriculture Extension Staff and NAADS officers, which represents 91% of total number of households that were targeted by the project. To improve adoption of agronomic techniques learned, 24 maize demonstration gardens were opened at parish level in all the project districts. A total of 800 farmers drawn from 400 farmer groups got exposure visits to Ngetta Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute (ZARDI). This exercise mentored farmers in the areas of crop management practices and protection, animal husbandry and aquaculture. As a result of trainings conducted to the farmers, they are able to comfortably share the acquired knowledge with colleagues as witnessed during the farmer field day- this indicates a resident availability of the skills and knowledge uptake.

2.3. Road construction

The community access roads that connect target population have significantly facilitated the provision of basic services to the communities. Traffic on the roads had increased since the road was opened to use and this has led to opening of market centers like the Acimi market, which had been cut off from the by Abululyec swamp. In addition, the pupils from Acimi Parish who were previously cut off during rainy season by Abululyec swamp were now able to come to school with ease since the road was opened.

This has further facilitated the trade across districts as delivery trucks are now able to drop groceries to the grocery shops along the road, as opposed to when the shopkeepers used to travel to as far as Lira town to buy groceries. Accessibility of the area by produce buyers using trucks had reduced the chances of middlemen exploiting them and increased the market for their produce, without necessarily transporting it to distant market places. Thus a number of people had started building permanent houses and shops, contributing to the development of the area.

Overall, the roads have facilitated the growth of businesses including dealing in manufactured products and produce by the local community, and improved on access to services. It has reduced the time spent on travel and increased the time used for productive activities. According to WFP documents, it has reduced time taken to travel the 10.2 kilometers from 2 hours to 30 minutes. Lastly, the road has contributed to the growth of permanent settlements along it

2.4. Village Health Teams:

Village Health Teams (VHTs) are a basic health delivery structure serving as a Health Centre I. The VHT strategy recommends that there must be at least a VHT for every 25-30 households. The use of VHTs to mobilize communities during campaigns (for example, mass polio immunization) is a success story of NUERP and needs to be highlighted.

The World Health Organization (WHO) provided skills and training to health officials, funding for health surveillance, screening blood for HIV/AIDS, equipping health centers, and training of VHTs. Using local structures and health sector's structure reduces duplication of services and improves sustainability. The VHTs have a better chance of becoming sustainable as the health teams are already integrated in the district/sub-county/parish/village health structure. However, the capacity of local structures needs to be strengthened. There is still a challenge in terms of current capacity and funding as well as support (training, funding) by local authorities to sustain the work being done by the VHTs. The volunteer teams fit in well with the local and community health system and seemed well integrated for the most part. NUERP was especially relevant in its support and training/capacity building of the VHTs—especially in family planning, immunization of children, blood screening for HIV/AIDS and disease surveillance. Disease surveillance was seen by all as a very innovative part of the project, with a high impact and sustainability potential as well.

The 'Primary Health Care principle' recognizes that health services should be accessible, cost-effective, and tailored to local needs; this principle is also part of the 1978 Alma Ata Declaration, and the 2008 Ouagadougou Declaration on Primary Health Care and Health Systems in Africa to which Uganda subscribes. The VHTs responded in part to the key challenge to the health care system to extend basic health care service to the entire population especially in rural areas where access to healthcare was limited. The role out of VHTs was guided by the VHT Strategy and Operational Guidelines of the MOH.

2.5 Training of district leadership in development management skills

This sub component of Objective 1 of NUERP was implemented by World Vision on behalf of UNDP. World Vision project reports indicate that there was a capacity development of 1,190 (M=914 & F=276)

district local government staff, religious, cultural and political leaders undertaken in the districts of Lira, Oyam, Otuke and Alebtong districts. The training focused on participatory development management skills (PDM), human rights and judicial mandates, peace building and conflict resolution, transparency and accountability.

Reports also show that as a result of the trainings, there is increased involvement and participation of local government, cultural and religious leaders in sensitization, mobilization, facilitation, mediation and reconciliation of warring parties and communities and that the trainings had improved quality, timeliness of the planning processes and effective inclusion of the needs of communities. District technical planning committees have continued to mentor the lower planning committees and facilitate backstopping of the formulated plans.

2.6 Environmental protection

Activities planned for the restoration of the environment were jointly implemented by International Lifeline Fund (ILF) and WFP. While WFP focused on tree seed multiplication and distribution, ILF mainly focused on promotion of domestic and institutional energy efficient/saving stoves, community sensitization using radio talk shows, and training and sensitization of school children on environmental conservation. In total 48 communities were reached in 10 Sub-Counties and 10 School Days for training on the environment and sensitization using reading materials were conducted. A total of 4,712 targeted households were reached who have appreciated the energy efficient technology. The adoption rate for the energy-saving technologies has been reportedly high, particularly for the domestic energy-savings stoves. Several households in the target areas are now using the stoves which are more energy efficient than traditional ones. Furthermore, smoke discharge from the technology is less than that from the traditional stoves. The use of magic bricks as the main heating component of the stove during cooking means that the need to keep stocking fire is reduced. Likewise, institutional stoves in schools have significantly cut costs related to food by nearly half. Likewise, four tree nurseries were established, one in each of the four districts and a number of woodlots have been established using the seedlings from these nurseries, ranging from private to institutional woodlots. For example, one private woodlot (pine plantation) of about 1.5 years old in Alebtong is very promising. In addition, a number of seedlings have been distributed to schools.

These interventions have greatly contributed to environmental protection and with continuous awareness creation, it is expected that other communities will be able adopt the new technology.

2.7 NUERP end of project evaluation

Two independent consultants comprising of an international and national were recruited to conduct an end of projects evaluation of NUERP in December 2012. The field work was completed by December 2012. Some of the highlights of the report will be captured in the end of project report.

2.0 ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTPUTS

Objective 1 : To facilitate resettlement and recovery among the target population through enhancing the physical and organizational assets in 16 sub-counties that are areas of return.

Following outputs were delivered:

- Community access roads that connect target population to basic services were opened and serviceable. These include;

- ✓ 12 Km community access road connecting Ajaga and Acimi parishes in Minakulu sub-county, Oyam district has been opened up rehabilitated and is in use by the community,
- ✓ Additional 13 kms of road in Lira, 14kms in Aleptong and 19.5 kms in Otuke has equally been rehabilitated hence increasing access to essential services and market access for the farmers
- Furthermore, Land at selected de-gazetted IDP camps and areas of return restored and sustainably managed;
 - ✓ At least about 100 acres of land at former IDP camps in each of the 16 sub-counties have been identified for woodlot establishment at community and institutional levels.
 - ✓ Communities have been identified to establish own woodlots at household and institutional levels.

Objective 2 : To improve the production capacity and income of 10,000 households (60,000 individuals) through agricultural and non-agricultural activities and access to credit and savings in two (2) years

Following outputs were delivered:

- ✓ Capacity of 8,000 farming households enhanced in climate sensitive crop production management practices
- ✓ Economic opportunities of 2,000 households diversified through provision of non-agriculture skill training and access to savings and financial resources;
- ✓ Annual per capita increase in marketable surplus of staple foods (maize, beans) sold through farmer association members (disaggregated by gender and commodity type);
- ✓ Alternative sources of income of 2,000 farmer households increased through community based integrated fish farming.

This particular intervention resulted into the following immediate results;

- ✓ Following the identification of 240 groups together with the sub county and parish technical and political leaders, 400 NUERP farmers groups received 480 oxen and 240 ox ploughs.
- ✓ The project also facilitated the sub county leaders to sensitize the beneficiaries on ownership, maintenance and growth of the support being given to them. These sensitizations provided linkage of the farmer groups to the sub counties with leaders pledging to support the groups with Agricultural extensions services. This has greatly enhanced cooperation between the sub county and district leaders and community especially the benefiting Farmers groups.
- ✓ The 20 VSLA groups selected received assortment of kits including metallic cash boxes for safe custody of members savings not loaned out, padlocks passbooks for records, counter books and other stationeries.
- ✓ 324 (F=126, M=198) new group members attended one day mentorship session conducted by selected Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) Vision Fund for Lira and Alebtong, FINCA for Otuke and Iceme SACCO for Oyam).
- ✓ A total of six satellite collection stores, each of 120 Metric Tons capacity was constructed to improve on the farmer post harvest handling and storage. 4 stores have been constructed in Loro, Aber, Aleka and Abok sub counties in Oyam district; 1 store constructed in Barr sub-county in Lira and another 1 store completed in Aleptong district. Altogether these are expected to increase the marketability of the farmers produce.
- ✓ The call for tendering for renovation of the fish hatchery in Anai in Lira district has been concluded and the ongoing renovation works expected to be completed within the first quarter of 2013.

Objective 3 : To improve the health, nutritional, and HIV/AIDS status of at least 30% of the 228,190 persons in 16 sub-counties and uphold their right to health through improved accessed to quality health and nutritional services within two years

The objective targeted orphans and vulnerable individuals focusing on three key outputs during the implementation period.

a) Access to basic medical services at health facility and at community level.

As a result of outreaches to the communities basic medical services were improved through:

- ✓ Ensuring availability of essential drugs at health facility and community levels
- ✓ Providing outreach services to areas without health facilities
- ✓ Conducting bi-monthly support supervision
- ✓ Conducting VCT, PMTCT and ANC outreaches to hard-to-reach areas which has enabled to diagnosis patients with HIV and refer them for treatment.

b) *Early detection and prompt response to epidemic outbreaks through strengthening of the HMIS and surveillance system and stockpiling of drugs and medical supplies.*

This resulted into;

- ✓ Early detection and prompt response to epidemic outbreaks
- ✓ Strengthening of the HMIS and surveillance system using Village health teams (VHTs)
- ✓ Stockpiling of drugs and medical supplies.
- ✓ The project supported to establish a community based diseases surveillance after the training of the VHTs
- ✓ Provided reporting tools, 4 motor cycles and supplied 3415 tsetse fly trap nets including orientation of communities on trypanosomiasis.
- ✓ In addition, no cases of epidemics were reported during the period of reporting. There was a 95% completeness and > 80% timeliness and completeness.
- ✓ The incidences of malaria cases for districts have remained lower than the previous years in the region.
- ✓ Supported monthly collection of Dry Blood Samples for Early Infant Diagnosis (EID) and orientation of sub- county and district EPR task force was conducted in all districts. This significantly improved the health status of the beneficiaries.

c) *Access to essential life saving preventive interventions assured.* This targeted all eligible children in the project areas. This resulted into;

- ✓ All districts implementing preventive interventions and emphasis was given to the new districts. In Otuke district, the health office identified 45 outreaches based on the reaching every child approach and 45 pulsed immunization outreaches were conducted in all the six sub counties. In addition, community sensitizations meetings were conducted in all the sub counties in the district reaching a total of 26,312 people with health messages during the outreach programmes and sensitization meeting at sub counties on NUERP programmes.
- ✓ Integrated HCT, PMTCT outreaches recorded 23,186 thousand children being immunized during the outreaches.
- ✓ Radio talk were carried out to sensitize the community on diseases and preventive measures.
- ✓ Orientation of community leaders on NTDs was also carried out in Aleptong district. This in effect led to achievement of over 90% DPT3 immunization coverage.

d) *Humanitarian response, return and early recovery activities are well coordinated and duplication prevented*

- ✓ Coordination meetings with DHMC were held in each district to map health service availability. This was carried out in Aleptong and Otuke districts. The findings were disseminated and are now being used to facilitate evidence based planning targeting the Cluster coordination activities.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES.

4.1 Implementation Constraints and way forward.

During the period of reporting, the project faced some implementation constraints specific to the agencies and are summarized below:

UNDP

Implementation constraints

- **Risk of poor quality and less healthy oxen delivered to the project beneficiaries**

- **Way forward.**
- Prior to delivery of the oxen, the project facilitated a visit of the District Veterinary Officer (DVO) to the districts of Soroti, Kumi and Palisa for a joint inspection of the 480 oxen at the separate holding grounds. During distributions the project facilitated the participation of leaders and more sensitization by the Veterinary officials from Local government. This entailed mentorship of group leaders on management of these livestock and convey to rural community avenues where they can access Veterinary services within the framework of government. This approach promoted ownership and sustainable use of the Oxen. The 480 oxen distributed in November 2012 were treated by each DVO and this was an opportunity for more Extension education for the beneficiaries on animal traction technology.
- **The project duration was quite short and this created huge pressure on the project implementation team.**
 - **Way forward.**
 - There has been more coordination and participation of the sub-county and district leadership in the implementation of the project. The sub-county chiefs, parish chiefs together with the volunteers have eased mobilization and identification of the beneficiaries. In some districts, like Alebtong and Lira, access to district leaders have been possible but it was quite challenging to involve some key district personnel.
 - The district officials also followed one on one in their offices to share and update them with the project progress and their feedback used to inform implementation
- **More interest for support from beneficiaries in VSLA and farmers groups.**
 - **Way forward**
 - To avoid more beneficiary complaints, beneficiary selection criteria was developed. The selection and screening of the beneficiaries was done with the recommendation of the local leaders and the volunteers who have been part of the The sub-county leaders played a key role in the identification and registration of the beneficiaries.
- **Poorly managed and bad feeder roads. Distant localities like Otuke and eastern parts of Alebtong districts suffer more from bad roads and farmer access to markets are often constrained.**
 - **Way forward**
 - The project continued to encourage VSLA members to venture into SMEs and benefit from collective marketing at existing community stores. More so their linkages to MFIs which are already supporting them to access more credit and open their accounts. The project still envisages that future intervention into road construction and maintenance in partnership with the government will improve infrastructures and market accessibility by rural farmers.

WHO

- The district is still facing inadequate human resource. Allocation of financial resource remains weak
- The functionality of the VHTs trained will depend on the continuous supervision, on the job mentoring and additional training to replace those leaving the service for various reasons as volunteers are expected to effectively service for a limited period of time. However the limited resource available may compromise on the functionality and quality of service by the VHTS.
 - **Way forward**
 - High level advocacy is being made by WHO and partners

WFP

- The delays in the process of tendering some of the components of the project have contributed to delays. Equally there has been some delays associated with the contractors making variations in the ongoing construction works which has contributed to delays in the completion of the projects on agreed time.
 - **Way forward**

- - Working with the District Engineering department to support the supervision of the ongoing works and certifying completed works has enable early detection of variations and enable to the contractors to keep the schedule of delivery of the contracted services

4.1. Key Issues and Lessons Learnt:

This section presents lessons learnt in regard to working with partners, good practice/innovation, the application of human security concepts and; project management for the period under review. These lessons should inform future human security programming by the various agencies

Working with partners.

• **Lessons**

- ✓ Collaboration with partners in joint planning, reviews and monitoring continued to achieve better response to the multi-sectoral needs of the community by harmonizing expertise and comparative advantage of the participating agencies.
- ✓ Engagement of local government district officials facilitates collaboration in project implementation especially in the integration with other government programs like NUSAF II, NAADS under the PRDP framework. A number of meetings were conducted with leaders at district and sub county levels. The project technical officers provided support to the beneficiaries
- ✓ Openness and transparency in dealing with partners is critical in enhancing effective partnership and information sharing. The project continued to communicate and share information with leaders. The roles of the sub-county and district leaders and WV have been well appreciated with all partners sharing information on project progress and charting way forward key hiccups.
- ✓ The village savings and loans association components of the project when monitored and supported with the planned linkages to Microfinance Institutions will continue to improve overall livelihoods and self-reliance of the communities.
- ✓ Competitive selection of implementing partners resulted in the identification of competent NGOs with good management and reporting systems, working knowledge and relationships with the districts which was instrumental for project success.

Project Management

• **Lessons**

- ✓ Engagement of Local government and beneficiaries in monitoring and actual implementation has long-lasting impact on project sustainability especially in the integration with other government programs like NUSAF II, NAADS under the PRDP framework. A number of meetings were conducted with those leaders at district and sub county levels.
- ✓ Project limited scope; especially the peace interventions required more geographical coverage yet this was not targeted. Demands continued to arise from both within the NUERP sub counties and outside the targeted project sub-counties.

Good practice / Innovation

• **Lessons**

- ✓ Coordination meetings at department and district level with the Project Coordination Committee. meetings have helped improve the working relationship of the participating agencies and the districts.
- ✓ Engaging the communities at grassroots in decision making, peace building and mediation has everlasting and sustainable impact on communities.

Application of human security concept

• **Lessons**

- ✓ Improved agricultural production will improve Food Security and Livelihoods.
- ✓ Diversification of opportunities into non-agricultural enterprises through trainings and VSLAs will improve people's welfare especially incomes at household level.

- ✓ Reduced cases of land wrangles and domestic violence offers improved production capacity. The peace rings have been instrumental in creating harmony in the target communities. They have also been able to support the farmer and VSLA groups to mediate and solve key cases of conflicts that would otherwise stagnate group progress.
- ✓ Reduced disease incidence due to improved food security and better nutrition practices.

4.2. Percentage of budgeted funds spent

Overall budget utilization was 91% reflecting an expenditure of **\$2,035,783** out of a total budget **\$2,234,057**

The details budget execution per participating agency is shown below:
Percentage of budgeted funds spent

Agency	Total funds available in year 2012	Total Expenditure in 2012	% expenditure
WFP	\$ 946,950	\$ 946,950	100%
WHO	\$304,593	\$304,593	100%
UNDP	\$982,514	\$784,240	80%

5.0 CONCLUSION.

This project was delivered at a critical time when the IDPs were trying to establish themselves in their own villages after being displaced for more than a decade. The health infrastructure and other services were in a sorry state and services not available. The project has supported the health sector basic health services to the returning community. It has enabled the district train Village Health Teams (VHT's) to fill some of the critical gaps at community level. Strengthening disease surveillance and pulse immunization were crucial to identify disease outbreaks and boost immunity against the major communicable diseases. The VHTs were instrumental in improving the immunization coverage. The comprehensive approach with the other partners has enabled to bring critical services and complement for a better result. The holistic and inter-sectoral feature of the project is especially relevant and commendable. Several best practices, particularly in connection with the peace rings, the general improvement in livelihoods especially increase in agricultural productivity and VSLAs have the potential of being scaled up and replicated in other regions of Uganda, East Africa and globally—in post-conflict and post-disaster contexts with recent returnees and high vulnerability of the population. The infrastructure development especially roads, construction of storage facilities and support to farmer groups through Ox ploughs has greatly enhanced the capacity of the beneficiaries to address some of the immediate and medium term challenges faced by vulnerable communities.

However, the gaps and weaknesses identified during the implementation of the project could be addressed through increased coordination at all levels, increased capacity building of local authorities and further training and support to volunteer groups and communities during any follow-up phase. The crucial issue and biggest challenge is the sustainability of NUERP. This comes as a result of the great needs of the returning communities in the Lango sub-region, the low local government capacity and the short duration of the intervention.

Improving coordination at local government level in all districts, strengthening synergy and inter-sector links with other programmes i.e. PRDP and NAADS and within NUERP as well as the inter-sector and holistic approach makes NUERP a good practice for early recovery interventions. Some of the best practices and lessons learnt are well documented in the end of project evaluation some of which highlights will be captured in the end of project report. We will also be sharing the end of project report.

Appendix 1: The Project Area of Coverage

