



**EXPANDING  
SOCIAL  
PROTECTION**

## How SAGE addresses specific vulnerability in Karamoja region

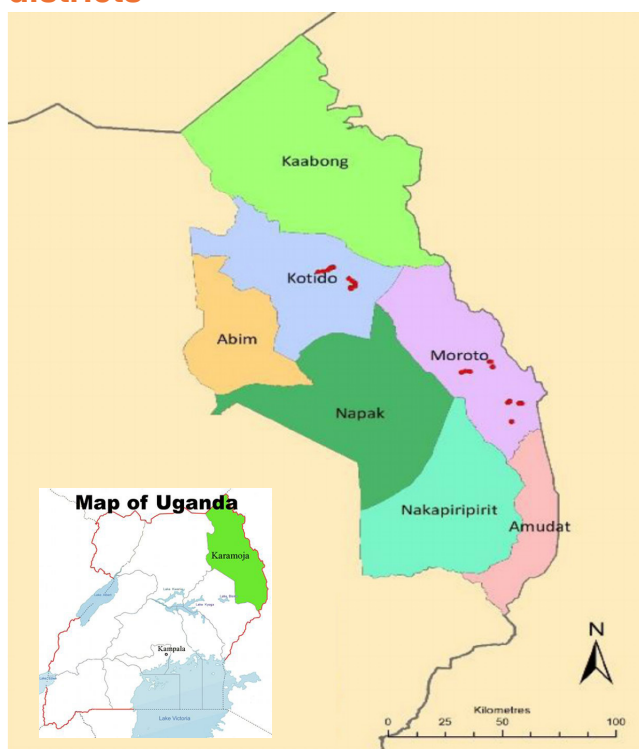


## Karamoja region of Uganda

Karamoja region comprises seven districts on the east and northern eastern part of Uganda, bordering Kenya. The seven districts are Amudat on the extreme south of the region; Nakapiripirit, Moroto, Napak, Abim, Kotido and Kaabong to the extreme north, bordering Kenya and South Sudan. This region has traditionally been a pastoralist area with the population predominantly involved in cattle-keeping. The pastoral lifestyle brought with it conflict occasioned by intra-clan cattle rustling and inter-tribe rustling with neighbouring areas of Teso, Lango, Sebei, Turkana, Pokot in Kenya. The conflict was made worse by acquisition of automatic rifles in the 1970s. This situation brought about a stubborn insecurity in the region and neighbouring areas- which only saw reprieve following disarmament in Karamoja region in the later years of the 2000s.

While security has been restored, the region remains one of the poorest in Uganda, with national statistics showing poverty rates as high as 63.5 per cent of the population. Drought and unreliable rainfall, lack of water for animals, poor farming practices, low literacy rates, poor health indicators and persistent toxic practices like female genital mutilation (in Amudat and Tepeth (in Moroto), being some of the persistent problems in the region, have conspired to make Karamoja one of the poorest regions in the country, with the lowest life expectancy.

## Map of Uganda showing Karamoja, map of Karamoja showing all the 7 districts



About Uganda's Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE)/ Expanding Social Protection Programme / Senior Citizens Grant

SAGE stands for Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment. It is part of the Expanding Social Protection (ESP) Programme implemented by the Government of Uganda under the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development. The Programme is funded by the Government of Uganda, Irish Aid and UK's Department for International Development UKAID/ (DFID).

Under the SAGE scheme, the government provides a monthly direct income support (social grant) of US\$25,000 (about US\$8) per month to enrolled older persons. This money is paid every two months. The idea of the grant is to provide income security through regular and reliable transfers of money to vulnerable or excluded individuals-in this case older persons. These grants support beneficiaries and their households to access basic services such as health, better nutrition, education, etc. They, as experience from the ESP Programme shows, also enable beneficiaries to invest and start income generating activities that provide them more security and sustainable livelihoods that eventually pull them out of poverty.

The Programme started in 2010 as a pilot in 15 districts. Because of its success, impacts and popularity it was rolled out to 40 more districts. In 2018, the Parliament of Uganda resolved that the Programme should be rolled out to the whole country, which will hopefully be done in the Government of Uganda Financial year 2019/2020, finances permitting.

## Special consideration for Karamoja region

Under the SAGE scheme, the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development has given special consideration to Karamoja, taking into account the area's history of conflict, climate unpredictability and vulnerability. These considerations were in three ways:

Karamoja is the only region in the country where all districts are covered by the Senior Citizens Grants. The Programme (even before the national rollout resolution) has a footprint in all the districts of Karamoja region namely, Amudat, Nakapiripirit, Moroto, Napak, Abim, Kotido and Kaabong.

During the pilot phase of the Programme (2010-15), Karamoja was given special age consideration in that



while the age threshold for older persons to access the Senior Citizens Grants in other districts in the rest of the country was 65 years and above, in Karamoja this was lowered to 60 years and above. The Karamoja districts of Amudat, Nakapiripirit, Moroto and Napak that were covered under the pilot phase, benefited from this provision.

Under the roll out/second phase of the Programme (2016-2020), all the districts of Karamoja coming on board, namely Abim, Kotido, Kaabong, are designated for implementation of the deepening of the Senior Citizens Grants. This means that under the roll out plan, in the rest of the country only 100 oldest persons per Sub County are targeted and reached by the Grants. However, in the three Karamoja districts above, deepening (i.e. adding 100 oldest beneficiaries) is planned annually. This therefore means that 100 older persons from each sub county in the three districts in Karamoja will be added on the Programme every year, when deepening is rolled out.

For these reasons, Karamoja is the only region in the country that is covered in greater breadth and depth by the Senior Citizens Grant.

## Progress of implementation in Karamoja region

Total number of SAGE beneficiaries in Karamoja, by district, by gender as at February 2019

#	District	Male	Female	Total no. of beneficiaries
1	Amudat	1,546	2,627	4,173
2	Moroto	1,849	2,976	4,825
3	Nakapiripirit	2,182	4,483	6,665
4	Napak	2,375	4,832	7,207
5	Abim	111	142	253
6	Kaabong	276	298	574
7	Kotido	114	114	228
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,453</b>	<b>15,472</b>	<b>23,925</b>

\*64% of beneficiaries are female, while 36 % are male

*Source: ESP Programme Management Information System*

Total number of beneficiaries expected to be reached by 2020 in Karamoja region

This number includes those registered under the pilot (60 years and above), those registered under the roll out (initially 100 older persons per sub county) and those

who will be enrolled during the deepening (i.e. an additional 100 beneficiaries per sub county, every year in the three districts of Abim, Kotido and Kaabong)

District	Number Of Beneficiaries After Initial Rollout In New Districts	Deepening	Total
Abim	600	1,800	2,400
Kaabong	1,371	1,262	2,633
Kotido	600	1,800	2,400
Amudat	4,173		4,173
Moroto	4,825		4,825
Nakapiripirit	6,665		6,665
Napak	7,207		7,207
Sub Total	25,441	4,862	30,303

*Source: ESP Programme Management Information System*

## Recorded impacts of the SCG in Karamoja

Evidence from various DFID/Irish Aid and Government of Uganda independent reviews and evaluation of the Programme, shows that the impacts of the Senior Citizens Grants are tremendous and cutting across social, economic and even political benefits. Livelihoods are changing because of the income security that beneficiaries have received-in Karamoja there is emerging evidence that because of the grant older women who previously practiced female genital mutilation as a trade for income are abandoning it because they have an alternative income source. Beneficiaries have invested in livestock, farming, and other projects all of which have led to improved food security, production and improved incomes for the individuals and the communities. Older persons have been empowered and made independent because they have been enabled to take charge of their own lives and take decisions of their lives because of their new security of income. Older persons feel useful and relevant to the communities again. Children-especially girls under the care of older persons are now able to go and stay at school because their guardians (older persons) who could not afford basic scholastic materials have been enabled to afford them. Staying at school for girls in Karamoja means they are saved from early/child marriages and female genital mutilation. People's nutrition is improving, all leading to better human development. Businesses in the communities are doing well because of the cash in circulation in the local economy.

**Note:** COMBATs is a village level initiative of community mobilisers against FGM in the Karamoja region in eastern Uganda. COMBATs was initiated by the National Association of Women Organisations of Uganda (NAWOU)- a women NGO network, with funding from the Government of Ireland. The Senior Citizens Grants is a social grant programme implemented by Uganda's Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development under its Expanding Social Protection Programme. Under this scheme, older persons receive a monthly grant of US\$ 25,000 (US\$8). The social protection programme is funded by the Government of Uganda, Irish Aid and UKAid.



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