

## **The UKaid supported social grant helped Akol to open up her gardens again**



***Mary Nakoru in her garden. (Photo by Clement Okeny)***

Mary Nakoru Akol lives in Sakale parish, Pian county in Nakapiripirit district, eastern Uganda. A 67-year-old widow, Akol was enrolled on the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) Programme in 2013.

SAGE is implemented by the Government of Uganda with support from UKaid and Irish Aid. Under the scheme, older persons of 65 years and above, who have no formal pension- and therefore no income at all- receive Ushs 25,000 (about £6) per month to enhance their incomes and enable them to start small investments where they can.

Akol's first grant was made in April 2013, 10 months after the rest of the beneficiaries in her cohort had got their money. When eventually she received her payments in arrears, she was paid Ushs 286,000 (£60) at once.

With this money, Akol hired labour, paying each individual laborer Ushs 2,000 (£0.5) to open up her land where she planted sorghum and maize.

The harvest ensured that she had enough food for her household, and a bit of surplus to sell to further enhance her income. Without the grant, she could not have been able to open her land, and food insecurity and additional income would not have been possible.

She used part of what remained from her grant to buy two goats. Now she hopes to rear the goats until they reproduce so that she is able to sell them and buy a cow. Coming from an area previously infested with cattle rustling, now that the raiding menace is ended, she has hopes again of keeping some livestock since her last stock was rustled away, after her husband died. With her livestock re-stocked, she will be assured of income to keep her 8-year-old granddaughter at school and improve her own living conditions, a change in her circumstances, from her previous hopeless situation. For this, Akol is grateful to UKaid and Irish Aid for making it possible



***Mary showing her newly born kids from one of her goats. (Photo by Clement Okeny)***