

The level of inclusivity (women, men, PWDs, youth, elderly) in market operations is high and evident. Routine meetings with stakeholders (middlemen, local farmers, restaurant operators and buyers) are consistently carried out to evaluate daily operations and devise means for working better the next market day. The good market design has also contributed to the market's success. The market has an office, a reliable water supply, accommodation for the market master, a digital weighing scale and two sheds where the market master keeps the unsold livestock.

Areas for improvement.

The infrastructure of the restaurants outside the market where the women operate needs a facelift to facilitate efficiency and scaling. Drainage of the market needs to be improved to protect it from floods during the rainy seasons. The market also needs additional marram and filling to reduce the mud when it rains.



Livestock being loaded using a ramp in Loro Livestock Market, and photo 2 (right) – livestock being sold in the Market Kraals

For further information please contact:

The Chief Administrative Officer Amudat District OR The Programme Manager, DINU/UNCDF
United Nations Capital Development Fund



DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
FOR NORTHERN UGANDA



Echoes of Resilience: The Loro Livestock Market of Amudat

Loro Livestock Market located in Loro Subcounty, .



Background and Context

In the heart of Karamoja, a rugged and arid region in North-Eastern Uganda, lies Amudat District, a land of endless horizons and formidable challenges. This is a story of how the Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU) transformed adversity into strength, showcasing how the Pokot – the indigenous ethnic group in Amudat, have utilised the livestock market to create resilience and determination in the face of adversity.

In the arid landscapes of Amudat District in Karamoja, where the rhythm of life is set by the cycles of drought and resilience, the Loro Livestock Market stands as a testament to the unbreakable bond between the Pokot people and their animals. This story unveils how the Loro Livestock Market symbolized survival and strength.

Amudat District, known for its rugged terrain and challenging climate, had long relied on livestock as a primary source of sustenance and wealth. The Loro Livestock Market, held beneath the vast Karamoja skies, is the heart of this relationship between people and animals. Every week, villagers from far and wide gather to trade their livestock—goats, sheep, and cattle—in a lively display of tradition and community.

At the heart of this bustling market is a seasoned young man named Imaam – the market master. With eyes that had seen troubles at the makeshift and a heart as steadfast as the mountains, Imaam is a respected figure at the market -known for his wisdom and compassion. He was very active when the construction ensued, a witness to its success.

There was once a raid in Loro and the local cattle herders took their cows to the market even before it was opened, broke the gates and entered. They said they would defend their cows from there. So the people in Loro greatly needed the market.

Loro livestock Market is becoming the second biggest livestock market in Amudat after Karita Cross border livestock market. Previously, close to 80% of the livestock sold in Loro was reportedly taken across the border into Kenya, with the balance to Karita market. Kenyan and Ugandan currencies are used in Loro market, and transactions are conducted either in Pokot or Swahili languages. Loro market was not just a place of trade, but a beacon of progress in Amudat. The market was a stimulant for establishing Loro Town council.

The traders and customers in Loro market no longer had to endure unsanitary conditions, and the market began to thrive once more. The toilets not only improved the overall hygiene of the area but also made the customers visiting Loro Market comfortable. While the toilets were a remarkable achievement, there was still another issue that needed attention. The market, situated in a vast and open plain, lacked proper security measures.

With the support of DINU, Loro market vision became a reality. They erected a simple yet effective wire fence that encircled the market. It was a clear boundary that marked the market's territory, and it served as a deterrent to potential thieves. However, it was designed to be low enough to maintain a sense of openness, allowing the natural beauty of Karamoja to shine through. The fence, like the toilets, had a transformative effect on the market. Traders felt more secure, and the market became a welcoming hub for commerce and social interaction. The wire fence not only protected the market physically but also symbolized the unity and determination of the Karamoja people to overcome challenges together.



Loro market wire fence

Much has changed in Loro. The role of women in the livestock value chain is visible in the market. The women own the restaurants outside Loro Livestock market that came as an economic spillover after the construction of the market. Whereas there was a standard design to include gender enabling facilities such as breast feeding shed, child play center, it wasn't the case with Loro and therefore women are operating restaurants outside the market/fence.



Some makeshift structures that women use as restaurants for food and drinks

It was a common practice to sell stolen cows and get away with it, and the prices of the livestock were unimaginably low, mainly because the traders dictated the prices.

Loro Livestock Market is an offshoot of Karita Livestock Market, set up with the hope that the youth would tap into employment opportunities or engage in livestock trade to cause a positive change in their livelihood.

Theory of change

Loro livestock market is expected to reduce trade barriers and improve business competitiveness in an organized environment where traders [livestock farmers, middlemen and buyers] meet to transact. The market improved livestock prices, create employment, and expand livestock trade beyond Karamoja to expand local fiscal space in Amudat.

The success of Loro Market is extended far beyond the Loro sub county. The TpC demonstrated that even in small, rural communities, positive change was possible through collective effort and a commitment to establishing local infrastructure for trade. The people of Loro not only secured the future of their market but had also have set an example for others to follow, reminding everyone community participation in decision making is key in establish local government trade infrastructure.

What changed?

The construction of the market has increased local revenue through market dues and receipts from water usage. The market remits 25 million in revenue quarterly, more than 20 times what was collected before construction.

Trade and Income to the local population. The market construction created an organized medium for interaction between livestock farmers, middlemen, and businessmen, contrary to what was there before. With a boom in trade, businessmen from as far as Kampala and Kenya have been attracted to this market, making livestock prices competitive to the advantage of the local livestock farmers, who now can double their earnings.

Gender inclusiveness.

The newly constructed market has benefited women by creating an opportunity for them to set up restaurants outside the market to serve the big masses on market days. More than 30 women have benefited from this venture, and they have their representative on the market committee.

The youth have equally benefited through employment opportunities that help them generate income. They are employed as middlemen loaders and also clean the market itself at a cost. The market management committee plans to improve the infrastructure for the restaurants operated by women outside the market.

Stability: The local community has embraced trading at Loro livestock market, where it is no longer easy to stolen animals. This was not the case before, thereby bringing harmony in the community.

Evidence of the change:

With the construction of Loro market, there was tremendous improved in performance of livestock Markets. The information we gathered from the district official revealed that the number of livestock trade has grown by 500% and the Lorries ferrying cows from Loro Market increased from five to fifteen Lorries weekly, the prices of cattle are now stable and competitive. Over 30 women are self-employed at the market, mainly selling soft drinks and food.

Beneficiaries.

After the construction of Loro livestock market, business in Amudat started picking up following an increased influx of livestock traders from Kenya, Kampala, Mbale and Soroti. Livestock farmers have been motivated to sell more animals than before since the prices are now competitive. Women started operating restaurants outside the market due to booming business on market days. The youth have also been employed as middlemen. The market provided new jobs for car loaders and cleaners at the market.

Allies/Partnerships

Unlike other big market such as Karita market, many people and civil society organizations did not see much potential in Loro market. As a results, the biggest allies of the Local Government in constructing the Loro market were the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the European Union (EU).

Sustainability

Loro market transformed into a thriving, sustainable hub where people from all around came not only for goods but also for responsible commerce. The market committee retains UGX 150,000 weekly from the revenue generated by the market for its maintenance.

The market master collects about 20% of the revenue from selling clean drinking water weekly. This amount of money comfortably maintains the market and its operations. By constructing Loro livestock market, DINU has challenged Amudat district local government leadership about setting up similar projects that generate local revenue. The district is preparing to set up a slaughterhouse next to the market as another revenue-generating venture for the local government.



The piped water supply system at Loro livestock market which generates revenue that contributes to maintenance of the market.

Best practices.

This market is booming because of the stakeholders' involvement right from inception. The community was engaged right away to choose a location and has input in the design. This bonds the community to the market as their participation in the planning phase increased their sense of belonging.