

YUMBE

DLG
NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the first edition of Yumbe District Local Government Newsletter. (Vol.1.JUNE.2022). This quarterly edition highlights DINU operations in Yumbe district which is currently supporting 11 sub counties across the district.

KEY ISSUES

- Brief background of Yumbe District and DINU.
- How DINU is improving lives in Yumbe District.
- The community's perspective about the intervention.
- Challenges DINU program beneficiaries have raised.
- DINU and the prospect for urbanisation.

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Yumbe District Local Government Administrative Block

YUMBE

District was created in November 2000 after being carved out of Arua District. It was originally called Aringa County.

The district located in the North-Western region of Uganda is bordered to the North by the Republic of South Sudan, Moyo district to the East and Koboko District to the North West and Terego district to the South. It also borders the districts of Obongi, Madi Okollo and Maracha.

The District is generally flat, although in the eastern part there are several hills. The North has two main hills, Midigo and Kei that boast of several species of natural high-valuable trees and a host of birds and animal species too.

Most parts of the district are agriculturally productive except the

eastern part of Romogi, Kuru and Odravu sub counties. The District has loamy soil, ideal for tropical agriculture. Gravels are evident in some isolated parts of Kuru, Romogi and Odravu sub counties while the eastern part of the district along the Nile basin is sandy.

Economic activities

Like other districts within the region, majority of the people in Yumbe district still practice subsistence agriculture with the main grown crops cultivated being cassava, beans, sorghum, millet, groundnuts and pumpkins among others. Most of these crops do not undergo post-harvest processing but are sold in their natural form.

According to a study carried out by Research World International (2016), Yumbe district like many

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other parts of Northern Uganda remains among the poorest areas in the country with the people mainly housed in grass thatched huts.

The district is a home to over 629,400 nationals (Uganda population and housing census 2014) and 241,000 refugees (OPM 2020) largely from the neighboring South Sudan

A total of nearly 800,000 people representing 94.6% of the population in Yumbe according to the research are living in rural areas while over 40,000 representing only 5.4% dwell in urban areas.

Based on the poverty situation in the district, it's common to sight faces of hunger stricken persons, poor housing and lack of other essential infrastructure on any given day.

DINU projects, the hope for a new beginning

The Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU) program, which was initiated in 2018, is an affirmative action program of the Government of Uganda with the European Union support.

It was purposely designed to consolidate stability in Northern Uganda, eradicate poverty and under-nutrition and strengthen the foundations for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development and ultimately reduce the development gap between Northern Uganda and the rest of the country.

The program set out to support interventions in three specific interlinked sectors of Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods, Infrastructure development (transport, logistics, water, energy), and Good Governance as its key pillars.

Yumbe district just like the other beneficiaries tremendously benefitted as a result of the DINU program working with a range of partners including Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) the overall supervisor of the program. Others including Dan Church Aid (DCA)

Lutheran World Federation, Uganda protestant Medical Bureau and Mukwano Industries partnered with Yumbe local government to change the past narrative of poverty, hunger and disease giving a bright ray of hope to the populace.



The district chairman lauds interventions

The Yumbe district chairman Asiku Abdulmutalib has greatly lauded the DINU intervention as the program draws to a close in the year 2022 promising the district's full commitment to serving the people of the district and closing all leakages that would affect effective delivery of services to the residents both nationals and refugees.

He says over the years, the DINU program has had a lot of bearing in the overall development of Yumbe District covering areas of infrastructure, livelihood, water and sanitation including enhancement of local revenue.

"Under Infrastructure, the program has enabled us successfully build two markets namely; Lobe and Okubani with the third, Kuru market still under construction which am very optimistic will be completed in time to be handed over to the vendors for use" A confident Asiku assures.

He says the establishment of the markets has enhanced the local revenue collections and helped to improve the economy of the local communities with women at the

helm of business operations.

The markets have created self-employment opportunities for about 90% of women and the youth in the district leading to the growth of the informal sector. Ojoatre stated.

In the sector of water and sanitation, Asiku highlights on the construction of the 1.9 billion shillings water project in Arafa sub county (Formerly Drajini) expressing similar hopes that it would be completed within the stipulated time ready for use for the communities.

"The national safe water coverage is over 68% but as Yumbe district, our safe water coverage has been as low as 49%, this implies that we needed the extra support from different donors, government departments, and agencies in order to boost our water and sanitation coverage to a reasonable percentage" he remarks as the project takes shape.

The district chairman says the robust Infrastructure face-lift DINU has established in Yumbe has particularly helped to improve maternal and child health through its community centered nutrition model especially in the sub counties where it is being implemented leading to a general improvement in the quality of life among people.

"We therefore so much want to thank the government of Uganda including important stakeholders like European Union, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UN CDF) and Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) among others for enabling us to achieve the above stated key milestones as a district. I implore all stakeholders to continue joining hands with us as we continue to transform the lives of people in Yumbe District" He says.

However, despite the visible positive developments, Asiku says there are a lot of gaps with regards to



LCV Chairman Hon. Asiku Abdulmutalib delivering speech during a recent meeting

infrastructure among other needs. Many of the newly opened town councils are in need of an establishment of new markets in order to enhance their local revenue and create jobs for the youth and the women.

"Therefore, my appeal to the government of Uganda and the donors is to either ensure continuity of DINU or establish a successor project to fix the gaps" He pleads.



How DINU is improving peoples' lives in Yumbe District

The consortium partners under DINU carry out establishment of demonstration gardens, digital financial training, and skilling of farmers on better agronomic practices among others.

Mr. Ojoatre Rashid, the District DINU focal person says the district's high level commitment in providing monitoring and supervision support ensures that the EU funded project continues to achieve its goals.

He points out Markets, sanitary facilities' especially toilets, and farmers' aggregation stores as some of the key projects that were successfully established including a yet to be completed solar powered water plant.

He says under DINU, Sub counties in Yumbe District including Ariwa, Kei, Lobe, and Drajini among others have witnessed robust Infrastructure development making a huge leap from the temporary structures that left traders only at the mercy of nature.

"One time, I was at Lobe market, and suddenly there came a heavy rain accompanied with winds that swept nearly everything that the poor rural traders had brought for sale and were left counting losses because the structures couldn't offer proper protection "Mr. Ojoatre recalls.

However, the story has since changed wherever a market has been established, additionally, a drainable toilet is built to ensure good hygiene and sanitation hence minimizing health risks among members of the community.



Farmers sowing sunflower seeds in Kuru subcounty [photo by DCA]

What is the Community's Perspective on the project?

The communities that have benefitted from the DINU projects have equally been full of praise for the coming of DINU but most importantly the success of the project implementation across the district.

Ms. Ava Kalsum, a market vendor at Lobe market says before the existence of the new market, life was hard, in the event of rainfall, their merchandise was easily washed away; many of their commodities ended up rotting away due to poor storage.

"I have nothing else other than a word of sincere thanks to the government and the donors for prioritizing our needs as rural people" a smiling Ava remarks. Rukia Chandiru operates a small scale business in Lobe Market; she testifies that, now her profit margin has grown as

risks of commodity destruction by rain and theft by unknown people have been minimized.

"If it was not for government and the donors, we would still be transacting business under the scorching sun" Aba Lona, a member of Okubani market management committee explains.

Aba observed that, undertaking businesses under harsh weather condition was particularly unfavorable for some of her colleagues who had health challenges that forbid them to be under strong sun heat for a long time.

Market management committees were formed and trained that transited into establishment of vendors SACCO groups as indicated in the DINU progress report 2022; these developments have promoted savings and improved income levels among the rural business communities.

Maliko Zumura, a mother of five and member of Lemer-AkoAcho group proudly testifies that, she is now able to save between UGX 30,000 and 40,000shs a week which wasn't possible in the past. She uses the proceeds for paying school fees and meeting her other expenses.

Under DINU, 45 village savings groups acquired digital financial skills with the help of a sub contracted private sector company Ensibuuku.

Dudu Alli Zakari, the chairperson of Lemer-AkoAcho-group in Lodonga Sub-county attests that, the trainings on financial management have improved financial discipline among group members.

"As a group, we are now even able to keep all our transaction records very safely using the Smartphone we were offered after



Beneficiaries undergoing training on Digital Finance in Kuru.

Ensibuuku's training to us "Alli narrates.

The group leader further explains that, there is improved income status, strengthened food security and improved health status of the project beneficiaries.

The project also supports community involvement in sunflower production a move DCA's Edon Brahan says has increased household income in the communities.

Edon says through DCA, DINU hires farm tractors for land

opening, provides sun flower seedlings and extension services to the farmer groups in order to boost productivity as well as connecting the farmers to Mukwano industries that buys their sun flower produce at a fair price.

He says the project has created social cohesion between locals in Yumbe and Koboko Districts as the sunflower market center often brings them together during times when Mukwano is on ground to buy.



A woman winnowing her sunflower grain during post-harvest



Vendors at Okubani market under the old structure on the left while on the right is the new structure constructed under DINU.

DINU projects; much more than infrastructure development

The initiative doesn't stop at infrastructure development, cash crop production, and training of communities on digital finance mechanisms, the multi-sectoral development intervention goes beyond; According to the project's recent joint report, behaviour change campaigns with focus on nutrition, hygiene and sanitation reached 18,469 male and 18,858 female beneficiaries.

210 individuals both male and female were initiated into care groups and trained on preparation of nutritious foods through cooking demonstrations.

Ojoatre says those trained on preparation of nutritional foods become trainers in homesteads so as to benefit the entire community. The report findings indicate that this approach of training on nutritional foods has tremendously improved maternal and child health among its beneficiaries.

Yumbe district population is one of the fastest growing in

the region and the country at large as per the 2014 housing population census of 2014. It puts the average household size at 7.6 persons with a total fertility rate of 6.7 children per a woman and more than half of the districts' population are children.

Based on the high fertility and population growth, DINU introduced aspects of family planning knowing that if not addressed, the same factors can severely retard development in the district.

DCA's Edon says the intervention achieved increased access to and utilization of voluntary family planning services among beneficiaries of reproductive age.

"If a man can marry one wife and agree on a number of manageable children, it would be easier undertaking investments and minimizing poverty levels" Edon explains.



A nurse screening a child using a MUAC tape during households' malnutrition assessment in Apo sub county, Yumbe District

DINU and the Prospect for Urbanization

One of the biggest prospects brought about by the DINU program is the growth of urban centers. Mr. Azabo Khelil Rashid an Economist and the district planner says the project has the potential to spur massive economic growth that can lead to expansion of small trading centers into huge towns. He says in areas where market centers have already been built, people travel from neighboring districts to transact business at the established market points. This expansion of small trading centers into big towns has the potential to open the door for other opportunities including job creation and increased market space for locally produced goods.

He therefore encouraged DINU beneficiaries to expand agriculture production in order to boost household incomes and improve quality of life in line with the main DINU objective of consolidating stability in Northern Uganda, eradicating poverty and under-nutrition and strengthening the foundations for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development.

Azabo however explains that, such a development is only achievable through continuity of donor support and strengthening areas where beneficiaries especially farmers still need more assistance. He argues that, much as there is tremendous success in areas of implementation and program goal achievement in Yumbe by 95%, there is still need for continued and expanded donor funding in order to boost chances of long term sustainability.



An aerial photograph of Kuru Regional Referral Hospital Adjacent to Kuru trading Center

The economist also appealed for expansion of the scope of the intervention to include majority of sub counties that are not currently benefiting from it.

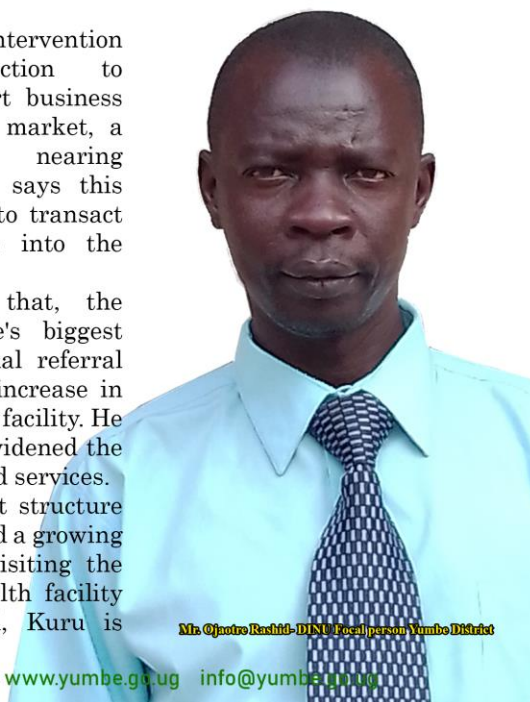
Ojoatre acknowledges the possibility of the initiative's potential to elevate small business centers to upscale urban centers. He says Kuru market center is seen as one of those likely destinations to attain the prestigious status in the near future.

The multi sectoral intervention established connection to electricity to support business operations at Kuru market, a venture that is nearing completion. Ojoatre says this has enabled people to transact for extended hours into the night.

He also stresses that, the elevation of Yumbe's biggest hospital to a regional referral hospital has led to increase in numbers flocking the facility. He adds that, this has widened the demand for goods and services. "With such a market structure being put in place and a growing number of people visiting the newly upgraded health facility in its neighborhood, Kuru is

growing very fast ushering a new era which is probably why it acquired a town council status" Ojoatre explains.

He says the pivotal role Yumbe District Local Government is playing in ensuring the success of the various DINU projects, is a manifestation of its commitment towards realizing the success of sustainable development goals.



Mr. Ojoatre Rashid- DINU Focal person Yumbe District



Who we are : Yumbe DLG

VISION

‘ A modern and prosperous District by 2040’

MISSION STATEMENT

‘To serve the District through coordinated delivery of services focused on National and local priorities and contribute to the improvement in the quality of life of the people’.

OUR CORE VALUES

- Transparency and Accountability
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Creativity and Innovativeness
- Gender Responsiveness & Partnership
- Integrity and Honesty



District Officials Monitoring works at Adibo project site

Adibo Water Plant of 150,000 Cubic Liters

The District Water Officer Yumbe District Local Government Mr. Magara Bernard says the mega water facility shall enhance water accessibility to the entire public in Arafa Sub-county and all government facilities in the area.

The multimillion investment is expected to store 150,000 cubic liters each time it is filled with water. Magara reveals.

According to Ojoatre the District DINU focal person, Adibo water facility is the most expensive of all investments under the DINU intervention that is being undertaken in order to boost safe water coverage in Yumbe. If completed, residents won't struggle anymore looking for boreholes and streams within reach for access to water needed for domestic use in their homes. Magara says.

Ukujo Khemis a resident in Arafa conveyed his gratitude to government of Uganda and the donors for what he

referred to as immense support. He adds that inadequate clean water infrastructure in the area has been a long term problem. "As a resident in the area, whenever I pass by the Adibo Water project site, I keep saying to myself that the hurdles we go through in search for clean water shall be history" Ayaka Fatuma, a female resident in Arafa hopefully expressed.

PROFILE OF THE LEADING DINU INVESTMENT

Adibo Water Plant

Program: **DINU**

Implementer: Government of Uganda

Location: Arafa Sub-County

Project Cost-1.972billion shillings

Contractor: AKVO

International Limited

Funder: European Union

Status : in progress

Capacity of water tank: 150,000 cubic liters

Challenges DINU project beneficiaries have raised

Despite the evidence of overwhelming success, beneficiaries outlined a number of challenges that continue to hinder the continued success of the different projects in the district.

In Kuru, beneficiaries identified insufficient access to extension services as one of the key challenges contributing to low productivity and thus appealing for an increase in the number of extension workers.

"My cocoa plants often rot before maturity and I really don't know how best to go about it" Asea John, a cocoa farmer from Drajini Sub county grumbles. Asea also complains of lack of ready access to better market for his cocoa beans, a reason why he always ends up with peanuts.

Some of the beneficiaries have outlined the need for a better pricing for the sun flower complaining that the UGX 1500 per kilogram is too little. Their dream, they say is to be formed into a corporative hoping to reap from its associated benefits.

The DINU project report also identified inadequate storage facilities, high cost of farm inputs and limited access to machinery like tractors for tillage and excavation of valley tanks among key issues retarding progress.



Edoni Bran of DCA (Second right) with Ojoatre Rashid (center) and other members of the DINU program joint monitoring team.

An appeal for continuity

The Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Yumbe Drajiga Rasul during a recent construction site handover meeting appreciated the government of Uganda and the European Union for its funding making a passionate appeal to the community to own the projects.

However, Drajiga says a lot still remains undone because of the thin scope that has left many people in urgent need for more yet it is coming to an end. This he says therefore calls for

a successor project that will give chance to the majority who didn't benefit in the first phase.

He says as the project's implementation goes on in the eleven selected sub counties of Yumbe District, members of the other sixteen sub counties remain watching, a phenomenon that could change with the coming of a successor project.



Asea John a cocoa farmer in Drajini Sub-county displays a rotten cocoa bean suspected to be under attack by unknown disease



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