



# Policy Report on Agriculture in Uganda

A cultural anthropological perspective

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# 1 The Territory and People

## 1.1 The Territory

The political entity now known as Uganda, as it is defined by its current geographic boundaries, according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) (2010) covers a total of 241,551 square kilometres. Tumusiime (2011) in his book *“Peoples and Cultures of Uganda”* documents that the geographic territory, Uganda, as it is known now, came into being between 1890 and 1926. The English who colonised the territory established Uganda as a political entity; it is they who named the territory Uganda. The English colonialists formed Uganda in line with the colonialist principal of effective occupation (Original People 2016). Uganda thus resulted from negotiations at the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 - the English colonialists, armed with treaties which they had apparently hoodwinked ‘leaders’ of ‘African-Ugandans’ to enter into, claimed territorial control.

## 1.2 The People

Peoples who at different times have claimed and occupied the territory are categorised for the purpose of this report, as follows:

**‘Khosian-Ugandans’:** **Khoisan People**, also referred to as **Stone-Age people**, are believed to have been the indigenous peoples of the territory. Briggs and Roberts (2010), in their book: *“Uganda”*, confirm that Khosian people widely populated the territory. The oldest sites in the territory believed to have been occupied by ‘Khosian-Ugandans’ hundreds of thousands of years ago are Nsongezi on Kigezi River and Sango Bay on Lake Victoria. Rock paintings characteristic of Khosian people can be found in caves or shelters in the Eastern part of the territory. According to historians, these are a confirmation that at some point in time the territory was populated by ‘Khosian-Ugandans’. Few descendants of ‘Khosian-Ugandans’, such as the Batwa, remain in the territory and in few numbers. They are sadly among those that are considered vulnerable and marginalised peoples of the world.

**‘African-Ugandans’:** Other **people of African descent** occupied the territory during the first millennium A.D, as Tumusiime (2011), has documented. ‘African-Ugandans’ are believed to have been all immigrants who migrated into the territory from other parts of the African continent. As ‘African-Ugandans’ migrated into the territory they undoubtedly absorbed or pushed out and replaced ‘Khosian-Ugandans’. A near complete ethnocide of ‘Khosian-Ugandans’ occurred to the extent that presently there are hardly any descendants of ‘Khosian-Ugandans’ living in the bulk of the territory. African-Ugandans are the ancestors of the peoples recognised as citizens, by birth, by the Constitution (1995) of the Republic of Uganda (Republic). The Constitution recognises 65 different cultural groupings; making the Republic the most ethnically diverse nation-state in the world (Blake 2013).

The Republic's citizens, according to UBOS (2016), currently number 33.6 million people as counted during its most recent population census that was conducted in 2014.

**'The English':**

**The English** colonised the territory.

**'Westernised-Ugandans':**

'Westernised-Ugandans' are a product of the interaction of the cultures of the global-west, primarily the English and 'African-Ugandans'. 'Westernised-Ugandans' are of two kinds – '**Westernised-Africanists**' and '**Westernised-Recaptives**'. A good representation of the two kinds is the renowned scholar and writer, Okot p'Bitek, as a person; and one of the characters, Ocol, in p'Bitek's famous literary work: "*Song of Lawino*" (p'Bitek 1972):

p'Bitek epitomises the 'Westernised-Africanist' - received high level formal global-western education; an intellectual, who while accepting and practising aspects of global-western culture, uses the central logic of global-western culture to mock it: and defends 'African-Ugandan' culture, using research and documentation of 'facts' to rebut the global-image of Africa as the 'Dark Continent'.

On the opposite extreme is Ocol. He has acquired some formal global-western education, which, in his view, makes him the civilised and superior one amongst his people, the Acholi; an 'African-Ugandan' culture. Ocol's mentality is similar to that of 'rescued' and 'freed' slaves that Davidson (1992) in his book "*The Black Man's Burden*" describes as "*recaptives*", hence the categorisation: 'Westernised-Recaptives'.

As embodied by Ocol, 'Westernised-Recaptives' tend to hold a passionate belief in the superiority of global-western cultures and in the inferiority of 'African-Ugandan' cultures. They believe it their duty to 'educate' their people, the descendants of 'African-Ugandans', to abandon what in their view are the backward ways of their ancestors' culture.

**'Traditionalist-Ugandans':**

'Traditionalist-Ugandans' are descendants of 'African-Ugandans' who '**resist**' **global-westernisation**. p'Bitek, in "*Song of Lawino*", effectively demonstrates them through Lawino, the main protagonist – they have had no formal global-western education; are not intellectuals in the global-western sense; but are very intelligent. They hold a passionate belief in the central logic of the culture of their ancestors; and, as does Lawino, they question global-westernisation, in general, and the cultural imperialism which elevates global-western culture as rationally superior to 'African-Ugandan' culture, in particular. They strive to point out irrationalities in the traditions of global-western culture; and they find it more rational to practice the traditions of their ancestors.

## 2 The Voices in the Report

The voices of the different peoples that have claimed and occupied the territory, as described in the previous section, are included and discussed in the report in two major categories: Endogenous Knowledge (of indigenous origin from within the African Continent) and Exogenous Knowledge (of origin from without the African Continent). Discussions in the report are informed by learning from:

- A comprehensive literature review which analysed policy documents, implementation plans and implementation reports by the current Administration of the Republic, that is led by the National Resistance Movement Organisation, henceforth to be referred to as the NRMO Administration; similar documents of institutions that the NRMO Administration categorises as the Republic's 'development partners'; and similar documents of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), sometimes also broadly referred to as civil society organisations (CSOs). The review covered publications of major media houses - both endogenously and exogenously owned. Also covered by the review were peer reviewed articles that are published in academic and professional journals and in books authored by academics and scholars of African descent and other non-African scholars of Africa.
- The proceedings and discussions of the Joint Agriculture Sector Annual Review Workshop 2016 organised and hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF); henceforth to be referred to as JASAR.
- Key Informant Interviews with subject specific experts - practitioners within the NRMO Administration, in CSOs; and private for-profit businesses; who in the report are referred to as "the Expert" or "an Expert", so as they remain anonymous.
- Two focus group discussions – one with women of Teso who are residents of Serere District (Teso focus group); and another with women of Karamoja who are working and living in Moroto District (Karamoja focus group); both located in North-Eastern region.

### 2.1 Endogenous Knowledge

'Khosian-Ugandan' and 'African-Ugandan' cultures are the endogenous knowledge of Uganda. This report, however, does not pretend expertise in the original culture of 'Khosian-Ugandans' nor of 'African-Ugandans' - the first emphasis of the report is simply to insist that they existed, as evidenced, for example, by the fact that they were referenced in speeches during celebrations to mark the Republic's change of guards. The first 'Westernised-Ugandan' Prime Minister of the Republic, Apollo Milton Obote (2013), in his inaugural speech on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1962, referenced them – he said:

*“In the days before this part of the African continent was known to the western world, we became known as a group of people who welcomed the traveller, the missionary and the explorer. As the years passed, we reaped the benefit of this friendly nature of ours.”*

To this day, the descendants of 'African-Ugandans' are considered among the most friendly peoples of the world. An InterNations' survey (2016) of expats living and working abroad, for example, ranked the population as the second friendliest group of people after the Taiwanese. The InterNations' survey quoted an expat as having said:

***“I love the lifestyle and the flexibility in the working hours in Uganda! The culture and people are great as well.”***

According to the survey results, furthermore, 94 percent of expats consider the general friendliness of the population in a positive light, 57 percent said it was very good and no one had anything negative to say about it.

The extract from Obote's speech reveals the typical attitude of 'Westernised-Recaptives', particularly so in his words: ***“we reaped the benefit of this friendly nature of ours.”*** It is the tendency of 'Westernised-Recaptives' to perceive and adduce benefits from global-western cultures; while at the same time they underplay or remain blind to the negative impact on 'African-Ugandans' of colonisation by the global-west. The typical 'Westernised-Recaptive' attitude explains the part of Obote's inaugural speech when he said:

***“The technical progress of the last half-century has transformed our country in countless ways. But, fortunately, we have continued to keep our own customs and culture.”***

Obote distinguished ***“technical progress”*** which in the context of his speech he adduced to the culture of the traveller, the missionary, the explorer, basically exogenous culture; from that of ***“our own customs and culture”***, which in the context of his speech is 'African-Ugandan' culture. He effectively ranked 'African-Ugandan' culture as inferior to exogenous culture of the global-west; as is typical of 'Westernised-Recaptives'.

'Khosian-Ugandan' and 'African-Ugandan' civilisations existed prior to colonisation of the territory by the English. Whereas, 'Khosian-Ugandan' culture is likely extinct within the territory, 'African-Ugandan' culture did survive the colonial period and sustains to date; however acculturised. Through the attitudes, beliefs and practices of the descendants of 'African-Ugandans' – both 'Westernised-Ugandans' and 'Traditionalist-Ugandans' - it is possible to deduce aspects of 'African-Ugandan' culture, as demonstrated prior in this report by the brief discourse analysis of Obote's inaugural speech and of p'Bitek's ***“Song of Lawino.”***

It is those aspects of 'African-Ugandan' culture, as deduced from the attitudes, beliefs and practices of the descendants of 'African-Ugandans' that this report primarily relies on as endogenous knowledge. However modified and bastardised the prevailing 'African-Ugandan' culture may be, it does at least give insight into the original endogenous knowledge. 'African-Ugandan' cultures are diverse, but are mostly similar for they are all from within the African continent. A detailed case study of a group that is part of 'African-Ugandan' culture is thus representative of the whole. On the basis of that reasoning, this report relies on two case studies as representative of 'African-Ugandan' culture:

### **2.1.1 The Iteso**

As documented by Tumusiime (2011), the Iteso are believed to have originated from present day Ethiopia, formerly known as Abyssinia, and settled in North-Eastern region – that part of the territory currently assigned to nine districts of the Republic: Amuria, Katakwi, Kaberamaido, Soroti, Ngora, Kumi, Bukedea, Serere and Pallisa; an area which the Iteso claim as their land. UBOS(2016) found the Iteso to be the fifth largest group among current 'African-Ugandans' - they constitute 6.3 percent (nearly 2.4 million people) of the population.

History has it that the Iteso were formerly hunter gatherers, then they became semi-nomadic agro-pastoralists and then, as they are now, they became predominantly sedentary farmers – growing crops and rearing animals. This report, thus, considers the Iteso as representative of all other groups of ‘African-Ugandans’ who are sedentary farmers. The crops that each of the groups grow may vary; the animals that they each rear may vary; but their experience within the policy framework of the Republic is likely very similar.

### 2.1.2 The Karimojong

Endowed with similar ancestry as the Iteso, as they migrated into the territory, the Karimojong stopped and still predominantly reside in seven districts of the Republic: Kaabong, Moroto, Amudat, Kotido, Napak, Nakapiripirit and Abim that are located in the North-Eastern Region; sharing a border with the Iteso lands on the one side and on the other side with the Republic of Kenya. The Karimojong, according to UBOS(2016), number nearly 372,000 people. It is believed the Karimojong have significantly retained their original culture and have remained predominantly hunter-gatherer-semi-nomadic-pastoralists with a food system that is centred on free range animal rearing, with their preferred animals being cattle; goats and sheep are less preferred by them. Tumusiime (2011), indeed, is among those who assert that:

*“Karimojong still stand as a distinct group with some elements of their cultural heritage still intact.”*

There are other ‘African-Ugandans’ in whose food systems cattle are significant, as noted by the World Resources Institute (2010) such as those in the cattle corridor. They include, for example, the people of Kiboga, Kiruhura and Rakai; areas in which the density of cattle is high. The predominant species of cattle reared differ between cultural groups - the pastoralists of Kiruhura, for example, favour the Ankole cattle (Naude 2016); while, in comparison the Karimojong favour Karimojong Zebu cattle (International Livestock Research Institute 2007). Within the agriculture policy of the Republic, however, they are likely all similarly treated as pastoralists. An analysis of the Karimojong experience, therefore, is representative of other ‘African-Ugandan’ pastoralists.

The two focus groups - Teso and Karamoja - were strategic, not only for the purpose of strengthening the voices of women in the report, but also for strengthening the voices of ‘African-Ugandan’ culture as represented by the Iteso and the Karimojong. The need to strengthen the voice of women through their participation in the focus group discussions was occasioned by strong indications that those who participate in the design and implementation of the Republic’s national policies are male dominated. The Teso focus group was strategically located in close proximity to the National Semi-Arid Resources Research Institute (NaSARRI) in order to derive from it the interaction between those whose attitude leans closer to that of ‘Traditionalist-Ugandans’ on the one hand, and the so-called ‘scientific knowledge’ that is generated from research centres on the other hand; the latter generally considered of exogenous origin.

Teso focus group discussions were conducted in Ateso, the language of the Iteso; while in contrast, Karamoja focus group discussions were in English. The Karamoja focus group participants were strategically Karimojong women who have attained a high level of global-western formal education, so as to enrich the report with a point of view of their interaction with the Republic’s national policies as viewed from within the central logic of Karimojong culture.

## 2.2 Exogenous Knowledge

The knowledge systems of the English colonialists were overtly enforced in the territory during the colonial period. The older generations of the descendants of 'African-Ugandans', for example, will recall how severely they were forced to learn English at school and to abandon speaking their own 'African-Ugandan' languages. Evidence of success in enforcing the English language is apparent in the territory. Mwesigire (2014), as recent as 2014, penned a critique titled: *"Why are schools punishing children for speaking African languages?"* in which he criticised schools that still punish pupils for speaking 'African-Ugandan' languages. According to the schools, the pupils have committed the offence of 'speaking vernacular'. The English ceded physical governance of the territory, but exogenous knowledge covertly continues to influence the 'independent' territory.

'Westernised-Recaptives' who are persuaded of the need to ethnocide 'African-Ugandan' culture clearly remain significantly present in the territory. No wonder, the Republic came into being in a process similar to that described by Davidson (1992) in which African nation-states were formed and governed on European models. The Republic as it was formed at 'independence', after physical colonisation, did not restore the territory to pre-colonial 'African-Ugandan' culture, but rather it was modelled on English culture. It was done so covertly with the population hoodwinked into believing that the 'new' nation-state would be constituted of a positive fusion of exogenous and endogenous knowledge. Such deception is deducible from Obote's inaugural speech – when he said:

*"It is up to us now, more than ever, in shaping our new country to achieve a consolidation in which neither the rapid progress of recent years nor the age old customs of our forefathers are lost or diminished, but rather fused onto a new national characteristic in which the best is preserved, while the worst may be thrown away."*

The Republic as it is currently constituted did not fuse into its design the best of the *"age-old customs of our forefathers"*. The Obote led Administration of 'Westernised-Recaptives' did not ensure that the best of the *"rapid progress"* and the best of the *"age old customs of our forefathers"* were preserved and factored into the design of the 'new country'. In failing to fuse the two sets of knowledge into the character of the 'new country', right from day one, the Republic, is structurally designed to sustain cultural imperialism; the kind that equates progress or being progressive to exogenous knowledge.

Not only did the Obote led Administration base the design of the Republic on exogenous knowledge, it did not sort through in order to take only that which was the best and throw away that which was the worst. The best and the worst of exogenous knowledge were equally accommodated - 'Westernised-Recaptives', after all, associate exogenous knowledge from the global-west as being inherently the best. Consequently, within the formal context of the Republic, the age old customs of 'African-Ugandan' culture of the pre-colonial period are diminished and subjugated, at best, or completely disregarded, at worst. While the colonialists physically left the territory, their knowledge de facto remains and continues to wield significant influence over the Republic's policy framework.

The comprehensive literature review done for this report was effective in providing learning from which the voice of exogenous knowledge was discerned and captured. The Republic is influenced by exogenous knowledge that is wider than English culture. It is influenced by exogenous knowledge from the wider global-west as the NRMO Administration, for example, interacts with those it considers 'development partners'.

The NRMO administration considers as development partners inter-governmental bi-lateral aid agencies, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); multilateral government agencies, such as the European Commission (EC) and United Nations (UN) agencies; and private foundations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Gates Foundation).

Influence of exogenous knowledge on agriculture policy is apparent from the proceedings of the JASAR which brought together representatives of the NRMO Administration, their 'development partners', members of parliament, farmer organisations, CSOs, and the private sector. The JASAR reviewed the agriculture sector performance for the Republic's financial year July 2015 to June 2016 and the sector plans and budgets for the financial year July 2016 to June 2017. Proceedings of the JASAR, as did the key informant interviews, provided for this report the strong voice of exogenous knowledge as it is applied and perpetuated by 'Westernised-Recaptives'.

### 3 English the Official Language

English, the official language, is not indigenous. It is not an 'African-Ugandan' language. It is the language of those who colonised the territory; a clear testament of sustaining neo-colonialism. English as the official language de facto means that all important policy is written in English. It is rare, if at all, for policy documents to be translated into 'African-Ugandan' languages. The first National Development Policy (2010) and the second National Development Policy (2015), for example, are not translated into 'African-Ugandan' languages; and are available online only in English. These two policies are among the key ones in which the NRMO Administration articulates its vision and aspirations for the Republic. Such policies contain the structure which shapes all other policy, as it is defined by the NRMO Administration.

Policy documents not being translated into 'African-Ugandan' languages would ideally not be a problem; the formal education system, after all, is conducted in English. Nevertheless, according to UBOS (2016), a significant proportion, nearly 30 percent, of the population aged 10 years and more are unable to *“read with understanding and write a simple sentence meaningfully in any language”*, let alone in English. Illiteracy levels among women, according to UBOS, are higher at a rate of 32.4 percent, as compared to among men at the rate of 22.6 percent. The varying abilities to read and write, may explain why there is male dominance in policy development and implementation arena.

Ability to read and write does not necessarily translate into one's abilities of conceptual understanding as was beautifully captured by p'Bitek in the *“Song of Lawino”*. The main protagonist, Lawino, the “Traditionalist-Ugandan”, is not able to read and write, but is highly intelligent in her mockery of global-western culture; in comparison to the reasoning abilities of her husband, Ocol, the “Westernised-Recaptive”. It is Lawino who has the presence of mind to caution Ocol that: *“the pumpkin in the old homestead must not be uprooted.”*

Heron (2011), a literary analyst, explains this Acholi proverb to mean:

*“pumpkins are a luxury food. They grow wild throughout Acholiland. To uproot pumpkins, even when you are moving to a new homestead is simple wanton destruction. In this proverb, then, Lawino is not asking Ocol to cling to everything in his past, but rather not to destroy things for the sake of destroying them.”*

Slavishly accepting, as a given, global-western coined concepts and enforcing their implementation without question has caused significant uprooting of proverbial pumpkins in the old 'African-Ugandan' homestead. Wanton destruction of 'African-Ugandan' culture by 'Westernised-Recaptives' is perpetuated due to insufficient understanding of English - the proportion of the population unable to understand English is significant if measured in their ability to understand and to correctly interpret conceptual underpinnings behind words in English.

Those competent to internalise and to deduce the conceptual underpinnings behind words such as: "progress", "development", "modern", or "modernisation", for example, are few. Insufficient understanding of English is a reason why civil servants and politicians get away with blatantly making pronouncements and including in policy documents statements of questionable logic. Take for instance the vision statements of the national development plans – second plan (2015) for 2015/16 – 2019/20 and first plan (2010) for 2010/11 – 2014/15 - which the National Planning Authority reportedly authored after wide consultation with stakeholders. The identical vision statements read:

***“A transformed Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years”***

The Authority's use of the word "*peasant*" raises questions. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2016), peasant in British English means:

***“A person who owns or rents a small piece of land and grows crops, keeps animals, etc. on it, especially one who has a low income, very little education, and a low social position. This is usually used of someone who lived in the past or of someone in a poor country.”***

How is it that the majority of whom the Authority characterises as peasants with low incomes and very little education are the major actors in the agriculture sector; a sector that the Authority (2015) considers the backbone of the economy? If the Authority accepts the characterisation "peasant country" why is it necessary to transform, instead of planning within a peasant economy or more accurately within the logic of an economy for smallholder farmers? How has owning or renting small pieces of land on which they are growing crops and keeping animals been of negative effect to the extent that their way of life must be transformed – changed to another one, a 'modern' one? What is the root cause of them being of low income, of very little education, and of low social status? If the label "peasant country" is accepted, why is it so in the first place?

In choosing the word "peasant" did the Authority ask and answer questions such as these and determine that "peasant" was the best word to use? If the Authority made an informed decision in its choice of the word "peasant", then the Authority is composed of 'Westernised-Recaptives' who think of themselves and of their fellow 'African-Ugandans' in a seriously derogatory manner. Alternatively, those within the Authority may have an insufficient command of English – they are able to speak, read and write it, but have insufficient intelligent capacity to deduce conceptual underpinnings behind English words. It is important to note that the Authority was established by an Act of Parliament (2013) for the purpose of:

***“Building the national capacity for visionary and long term planning. The Authority would establish a framework that enables the short and medium term national priorities to be derived from and guided by agreed strategic objectives, long term development goals and perspective vision aspirations.”***

The immediate quote prior is extracted verbatim from the Authority's website. It is difficult to understand what these two sentences mean exactly, especially the second one - what are "*perspective vision aspirations*"?

The proceedings of the JASAR, expectedly, were in English and during the CSOs presentation, in fact, the disconnections between workshops in which policy is determined in English and the realities of smallholder farmers living in the rural areas were alluded to by Kirabo (2016), who was delegated by her colleagues to deliver the CSO's presentation, when she said:

***"In terms of production practices, Mr. Chair, we wish to draw your attention to this kind of woman (image of smallholder farmer) and others that are on the farm while we are here speaking English."***

Kirabo nicely demonstrates and confirms the position of English within policy - while the elite speak English in air conditioned rooms in five star hotels, smallholder farmers are on the farm producing the food that feeds the nation and that generates a significant proportion of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP).

There is a tendency to equate one's ability to read, write and speak English to intelligence. The power of English, as analysed by the Teso focus group (2016), is that many poor rural smallholder farmers believe that it is a must for them to ensure their children are able to read, write and speak English; and so they sacrifice a lot in order to ensure this. The Teso focus group surmised that:

***"People sell food in order to get money for school fees. Moreover, there are these schools that have come – the private schools – you do not have an alternative source of income but from farming. So, you end up selling food in order to pay school fees for your child, what else can you do? Even UPE (government sponsored Universal Primary Education) schools require money, even though it is not the same as in private schools. People want amusugun (English) from the private schools. In UPE schools a child reaches Primary Seven when they don't know how to even write their own name. That is what has caused people to sacrifice to sell food to raise money to pay the costs of private schools so that their child may get at least acoa adio (a little education or wisdom or knowledge or skills)."***

The Teso focus group clearly equates ability to read and write English to being educated, wise, intelligent, knowledgeable or skilled. They sacrifice and sell food in order to afford high school fees in private schools so that their children will get *amusugun* and *acoa adio*. The Teso focus group have internalised a factoid that ability to read and write English equals wisdom. A factoid, as it is defined by Oxford Living Dictionaries (2016), is:

***"An item of unreliable information that is reported and repeated so often that it becomes accepted as fact."***

The 'English-equals-wisdom' misconception is heightened in the Republic during campaigns for political office; swearing in ceremonies for politicians; vetting and approving of presidential nominees; and during political debates in parliament; all spaces in which policy is determined and applied. Persons otherwise highly competent, but unable to read, write and speak English, are disqualified on grounds that their insufficient mastery of English renders them incompetent to hold office. Case in point is Haji Nasser Ntege Sebaggala, a highly competent leader, if judged on the basis of his business acumen (Wikipedia 2016).

On grounds of his insufficient mastery of English, the Parliament of the Republic denied Haji Sebagala the chance to be part of the NRM Administration as a Minister. It should be noted that before Parliament denied him the space to serve as Minister he had previously been elected by popular vote as the Mayor of the capital, Kampala. Misconceived superiority prevails and allows elitist 'Westernised-Recaptives' to get away with actions such as those of the National Planning Authority and that allows for the discrimination against a significant proportion of the population.

Negative attitudes towards those with no or insufficient English language skills is widespread and it is accepted as the norm, as exemplified by Twinamatsiko's (2015) analysis titled: "*Sebagala broken English is his best political card*", published in the media, in which he reported that:

*"Makerere University students drowned his voice (that of Haji Sebagala) in boos and jeers as he struggled to share his political vision at the Freedom Square. The students couldn't bear the prospect of a mayor who couldn't construct a decent English sentence."*

Haji Sebagala went on to win the mayoral race, but the students' conduct points to institutionalised discrimination and human rights abuse - the few who are able to read, write and speak English drown the voices of those not able to do so. A significant portion of the population is denied direct access to spaces in which policy debates occur and in which policies that bring significant impact on their lives are determined. Logically, policies that result do not truly reflect the views of the majority, but rather those of a few - the 'Westernised-Recaptives'. Their inability to read, write and speak English is used against them and the silence of their voices within national policies is conspicuously loud. Sedentary smallholder farmers and pastoralists who live in the rural area cannot possibly buy into the visions of the national development plans and of the land policies - they cannot subscribe to being "modern" through the loss of their homesteads.

That English is used as the official language is an example of the ways in which exogenous knowledge is prioritised and privileged over and above endogenous knowledge. The incidence between the university students and Haji Sebagla, furthermore, is a good example of Falola's (2003) conclusion, in his book "*The Power of African Culture*", that:

*"If (African) traditional cultures privilege the wisdom of elders, modern cultures favour the skills of a Western-educated elite ... Western education is a marker of success, while ethnicity ('Traditionalist-Ugandan') is the boundary of operation to exclude others from power and resources of the nation."*

Ordinarily when Haji Sebagala articulates his views in the 'African-Ugandan' language of his ancestors, Luganda, his wisdom is unmistakable; wisdom that has the potential to significantly enhance policy. University students, nevertheless, had the audacity to disrespect an elder and to dismiss his wisdom, for he couldn't articulate his views in English. This is the norm in the prevailing 'modernisation rhetoric' - that which is considered taboo - disrespecting and dismissing views of elders - within 'African-Ugandan' culture is the norm in being "modern."

## 4 Factoids and Inconsistencies in Policy

### 4.1 Peasant Farmers

The nature of the Republic's economy, consisting of smallholder farmers, is a known reality and it has its own distinct nature. According to UBOS (2016), in fact, close to 80 percent of households in the country are involved in agriculture. UBOS defines an agricultural household as:

*“An economic unit of agricultural production under single management comprising of all livestock kept and all land used wholly or partly for agricultural production purposes.”*

An Expert (2016), indeed, observed that:

*“Traditionally the country's economy has been small scale ... The colonialists actually tried to make the country's economy large scale, like in Kenya, but it proved costly and so the colonialists preferred the model of small scale.”*

It should be noted that in the case of Kenya in order that large scale farms were established by outsiders, indigenous Kenyans were forcefully removed and alienated from their lands, as Githinji (2016), for example, documented in his analysis titled: *“Land injustices in Kenya: impact of colonial land polices.”*

When the NRM Administration claims its intention to transform to a *“modern and prosperous country within 30 years”*, does it mean that within 30 years Uganda will be like Kenya or better still like Britain, in which large scale economy dominates? Will the NRM Administration succeed in such a costly venture within three decades while the colonialists did not in nearly seven decades? What are the implications for sedentary farmers and pastoralists becoming “modern” as espoused by the national development plans? Does the NRM Administration expect that the majority who live in rural areas will gladly move from their homelands to make way for the establishment of large scale farms by outsiders? Is it the plan of the NRM Administration to cause the removal or the movement of sedentary smallholder farmers and pastoralist out of the rural areas, away from their homelands? Is it the case that the NRM Administration plans to modernise within small scale economy paradigms?

Uganda's smallholder economy, moreover, is an interesting one, because it is multidimensional, as an Expert (2016) explained:

*“The gender dynamic in relation to the country's small scale economy gives money crops to the man of the home, so coffee, cotton, tea these essentially belong to the man. The man goes to the cooperative and picks the cheque. The cheque is in his pocket he negotiates with his family over how to spend the cheque. But the woman of a household plays a very significant role. She grows food that is consumed by the household. The woman's contribution helps exploitation. Because there is food in the home, it is then possible for the government of the day to underpay the product of cash crop. So, coffee can be cheap, cotton can be cheap, tea can be cheap because the woman has provided food for the household. The man does not have to buy food from the money from cotton, tea and coffee. So, cheap raw material production at small scale was viable in the colonial and post-colonial economies.”*

Becoming “modern” could be the bettering of terms of trade to the advantage of smallholder farmers and pastoralists who are currently the major contributors to agriculture being the backbone of the economy. “Modern” could mean that the role of women in the economy will be recognised through increased farm-gate prices so that farming households become “prosperous.” “Modern” could mean ameliorating the imbalance in which cash crops are for men and food crops for domestic consumption are for women. There are many alternatives for modernising without ethnocide of smallholder farmers, but these alternatives are not within the NRMO Administration’s aspiration for “modernising” – the attitude to modernise to become like Kenya or like Britain is apparent in policy.

The Uganda National Land Policy (2013), for example, is premised on a vision of:

*“A transformed Ugandan society through optimal use and management of land resources for a prosperous and industrialised economy with a developed service sector.”*

The implications of an industrialised economy with a developed service sector as espoused in that vision imply that smallholder farmers and pastoralists who live in rural areas necessarily have to cede ownership of their land to others better positioned to use it in “optimal” ways; those currently mal-described as “peasants” are required to transform into landless labourers and service providers - to be like the majority of British.

## 4.2 Subsistence Farmers

This, here below, is an extract from the “*Situation Analysis*” on which the Uganda Food and Nutrition Policy (2003) is premised:

*“The country produces a wide range of crops, including cereals such as maize, millet and sorghum; root crops such as cassava, sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes, bananas and pulses like beans and peas. It also produces animal products from dairy and beef animals, poultry, sheep, goats, pigs, rabbits and edible insects. The inland fresh water bodies provide large quantities of fish. The available foodstuffs of both plant and animal origin potentially offer a balanced diet. Subsistence farmers produce most of the food. Wider use of modern technology could undoubtedly boost production.”*

“*Subsistence farmers produce most of the food*” and the knowledge, ‘African-Ugandan’, with which they produce is dismissed and the ‘Western-Recaptives’ who authored the policy advocate “*wider use of modern technology.*” Characterisation of smallholder farmers as “subsistence farmers” is a factoid. How is it that those who are characterised “subsistence farmers” are producing most of the food that is consumed in the country – particularly, those “subsistence farmers” as defined by the NRMO Administration(2013) as those engaged in:

*“A type of farming in which most of the produce is consumed by the farmer and his or her household, rather than being produced for sale?”*

The results of the 2014 population census (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2016) show that:

*“Nearly two thirds (64 percent) of the working population was engaged in subsistence agriculture.”*

Assuming the label “subsistence agriculture” or “subsistence farmer” is correct and 64 percent of the country’s populations are producing for own consumption, rather than for sale, where does the food that is sold in the many farmers’ markets in the country come from? It is certainly not imported, who grows it? How is it that the agriculture sector, in which smallholder farmers dominate, is a significant contributor to the country’s GDP? The only way agriculture is a significant contributor to the GDP is if the produce of its smallholder farmers is sold and bought in an economic exchange – money changes hands.

Findings of a study (2012) conducted in Teso, in fact, indicate that smallholder farmers of Teso who live in the rural areas are net buyers of food – in monetary terms they buy more food than they sell – meaning that they produce and sell and then buy to eat. The Teso focus group (2016) confirmed the net buyer status of Iteso smallholder farmers. According to them, they do not only need to have cash for paying school fees, but they also need to have cash in order to access other necessities such as health care services and also to buy food. They explained:

*“In the past people farmed ecoroko (peas) and imare (cowpeas) which would last for years, but now people no longer farm ecoroko and imare in those volumes for home consumption. Now people farm, harvest and sell and then they go and buy things like cabbage. But old women of the past, their imare were kept in the granary, their ecoroko was kept in the granary; but these days, as soon as problems come, people are in a hurry to sell imare and ecoroko quickly in order to get help. So hunger from having no food stored causes one to buy cabbage for food. Imare and ecoroko are like pocket money these days. People can sell them anytime in order to get money - money for school fees, change of diet, illness – medical bills. Milk is also just sold these days – where is it in the individual homes these days, some of us even spend a year without tasting milk. Even sour milk you just have to buy at 300 shillings.”*

Sometimes, due to adverse weather conditions their normal food system is disrupted – they are unable to grow food and they must buy food. When this happens, smallholder farmers offer their labour to the rich. In the case of the Teso focus group (2016), they labour for cash at NaSARRI; which cash they use to buy imported food, as they explained:

*“We buy cabbage because the Bagisu bring it and sell it to us, we don’t grow it. They bring it from Mbale. We just buy it. Hunger has caused us to eat cabbage. When we experience long dry spells we cannot grow food, so we find some money to buy cabbage. When there is a long dry spell cowpea leaves disappear. We also eat tomatoes that are imported, we just buy them. Even though we have been mostly eating imported eggplants from Bugisu we have also started growing eggplants. Those who grow eggplants now also sell to us in addition to the bulk of eggplants that we buy that are imported from Bugisu.”*

Smallholder farmers are engaged in commercial agriculture – growing and selling food. They grow and sell food intra-community and they do so inter-community. Bugisu is in the Eastern Region. From the East to the North-East and throughout the country, smallholder farmers are producing for the market – the local, the regional and also for the global-west. It is the NRMO Administration’s policy, in fact, to promote food crops as cash crops – commercialisation of food crops.

The UN World Food Programme (WFP), ironically, is one of the major buyers of maize that is produced in Uganda (ACTED 2016); which maize it reportedly then distributes as relief food aid, to parts of Uganda, like Karamoja and to other countries such as: South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Country Director of WFP (Ouane 2012) in an article published in the media titled: *“WFP to buy all quality maize”* shared:

*“In 2010, for example, WFP purchased 3.2 million metric tonnes of food worth \$1.25b from 96 countries. Uganda contributed 153,000 tonnes worth \$43m. Given the massive needs in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya and Uganda, WFP is capable of absorbing all quality maize grown in Uganda. Indeed we are looking to increase our purchases to meet these needs without upsetting the local market – if we can find more high quality (Grade 1) grain.”*

The intension of not *“upsetting the local”* market is naive. With such a lucrative money offer, production resources – such as land – will naturally be diverted from producing food crops for home consumption to producing food crops for the market. With such a lucrative money offer from a UN agency, no wonder, maize is considered the most important cereal crop in Uganda (Ebiyau and Oryokot 2001). As with the commercialisation of maize diverting production resources from producing food crops for the home, this was the case with *Epuripur* sorghum in Teso; with oil palm in Kalangala; and the promotion of crop farming in Karamoja. There are other examples. The vanilla saga (Nzinjah 2004) and the *Moringa* saga (2009) are some of the many such cases.

### 4.3 Handheld Hoes Inferior

If “subsistence farmers” are producing most of the food not using “modern technology”, which technology are they using to produce the food? Those categorised “subsistence farmers” are actually smallholder farmers who are using technology that is derived from ‘African-Ugandan’ culture. If “subsistence farmers” are producing most of the food already, why is it necessary to completely change the manner in which they produce, which is primarily the handheld hoe? Why does the NRMO Administration not focus on improving those technologies that are already in use; those that are derived from ‘African-Ugandan’ culture, such as the handheld hoe, so that such technologies can be even more efficient?

The NRMO Administration, actually, knows the importance of the handheld hoe and so it distributed handheld hoes for free close to the presidential and parliamentary elections for 2016; a Machiavellian use of the handheld hoe indeed. The presidential candidate for the main opposition party, the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), during the presidential campaign, offered the alternative of supporting farmers with tractors instead of handheld hoes, the latter of which he referred to as a backward technology. Thus the handheld hoe versus the tractor debate dominated the presidential election campaigns (2016). It, in fact, featured during the JASAR as well. On behalf of CSOs, Kirabo (2016), directed advocacy to the NRMO Administration to take action to rid the country of the handheld hoe:

*Mr. Chair and this house, we, as a government and as a country, joined other countries and we committed ourselves to reduce the use of the handheld hoe. We all know how much money we have given to the handheld hoe this particular financial year. We are saying, can we walk the talk to this declaration – collectively and individually and see ourselves slowly, slowly taking the handheld hoe to Kitante Road, because the last time I read that is where the Uganda Museum was.”*

Kirabo's advocacy to rid the country of the handheld hoe generated loud laughter and applause at the JASAR, as expected. As 'Westernised-Recaptives' laugh at practical and positive 'African-Ugandan' knowledge, while in the comfort of workshop settings, they also propose highly impractical and inappropriate 'modernisation' interventions, such as replacement of handheld hoes with tractors. Among the Iteso, moreover, another study (2016) found that the handheld hoe is the most important preferred farming tool:

*“Emeleku (hoe), first in a wooden form and later in a metal form, plays a significant role within our food system – it is the most important farming tool in Teso. Emeleku of the metal form was imported into Teso through barter trade with the Banyoro and the Lango (two other ‘African-Ugandan’ peoples). Emeleku of the metal form, in the past, was scarce in Teso and those who could not access it used emeleku of the wooden form or akuta (pointed sticks). It is unlikely that there are still Iteso who use akuta. The trade of akuta making is likely since extinct among our people; and if not, there are very, very few of the older generation who possess such knowledge.*

*In 1909, ox-plough (emeleku lo imogin – hoe of bulls) was introduced to Teso and found favour among our ancestors. It is documented that by the 1950s there were 40 thousand ox-ploughs in Teso that were used by their owners and that were also hired by others who did not have their own. Among the Iteso, farming roles are typically allocated on the basis of gender. Breaking new ground, for example, was strictly a task of men folk. Consequently, the operation of ox-ploughs (aswam imogin – working bulls) became majorly the role of men – it is they who had the duty to break new ground.*

*The more mechanised methods of cultivation – such as tractors – did not find favour among our ancestors. In the mid-1950s, when such mechanised methods were introduced, only a few Iteso were prepared to pay economic rates for hire of such machinery as tractors. This attitude sustains to date among the Iteso. There were and continue to be inherent practical difficulties that do not allow the popularisation of highly mechanised farming methods in Teso. The Iteso land tenure, for example, presents one such difficulty.”*

The Teso experience with the handheld hoe, ox-plough and tractors clearly reveals that there are rational and logical explanations as to why the handheld hoe is resilient and how the tractor is inappropriate, in the context of Teso.

#### **4.4 ‘African-Ugandan’ Knowledge Inferior**

In practice, at the grassroots level, 'African-Ugandan' knowledge is the dominant one that is in use. Broadcasting millet as opposed to line planting it, for example, as an Expert (2016) confirmed:

*“When experts go out with technologies, the farmers will listen, but then not practice what experts have told them; which means farmers have their own technology which they prefer. Research is often short-term and with no dissemination channels - famers are reluctant to practice the new technologies on their own.”*

Smallholder farmers' resistance to 'new knowledge' may simply be because the 'new knowledge' is inappropriate, as an Expert (2016) explained:

*Right now, for example, if you tell a farmer to do row-cropping (planting in rows) of millet he cannot do it. The farmer will continue to utilise broadcasting and scattering millet on the field. The farmer will not waste his time with row-cropping. First of all there are no mechanisation tools to do that which can facilitate a farmer to do that very fast. A farmer would prefer to save time – broadcast and go away and do other work.”*

Smallholder farmers often push back in non-confrontational ways and in covert ways, similar to those that Scott (1985) described as “*weapons of the weak – everyday forms of peasant resistance.*” An Expert (2016), indeed, shared a first-hand experience with community resistance:

*“In most cases we were fighting with farmers about line planting versus broadcasting. In your trainings you would already have resistance. The farmers would already automatically ask, is this possible? If you look at simsim (sesame), for example, you have so many seeds and you have to do this in line. It is not possible. So in most cases the farmers resisted it. In extension service training you would already expect resistance and you would imagine that if I demonstrated this by doing this in a demo plot, somehow we would have the farmers taking it up. So, you would have some cases of forced demonstration – practically force the farmers to do as you are doing it because you were there. The funds for the project would provide extra time for the farmers to be in the field to do line planting and you would do it. But that is just the demonstration. You have 30 farmers on one acre of land doing that. But then when it comes to adoption I would say 10 percent adoption was the highest percentage of adoption.”*

There are no machines for use in the production, harvesting and post-harvest handling of millet and according to an Expert (2016) it is not a mistake, because:

*“Certain crops do not have technologies to process them, simply because they are not of the global-western world. The four grains that are promoted – maize, wheat, rice and sorghum - there is machinery to process them. At the world market you do not get machines for millet.”*

And in Uganda as well there are no major 'new' or 'improved' technologies specifically for easing the production, harvesting and post-harvest handling of millet. Scientific findings Oryokot's (2001) moreover show that:

*“Finger millet (*Eleusinecoracana* (L.) Gaertn) is the second most important cereal crop in Uganda. (It) probably originated in Uganda or Ethiopia and has been cultivated in Uganda for a long time.”*

Millet is a highly nutritious crop that is uniquely constituted with nutrients that are good for human growth, which makes millet far superior than maize. In the NRMO Administration's presentation (2016) at the JASAR, only two cereal crops are among its focus crops – maize and rice. The other focus crops include other edible ones: coffee, vegetable oil, tea, cocoa, beans, bananas and cassava; and non-edible ones: cotton.

The focus crops are dominated by edible ones, but the manner in which the crops were discussed at the JASAR was as cash crops; fitting well within the neo-liberal narrative of **“grow maize and make millions that will move Uganda to middle-income status”**, kind of talk. Maize, a less nutritious cereal crop than millet, is among the NRM Administration's focus crops; and millet is not. The NRM Administration obviously ranks food crops not by their nutrient content, but by the ability of the crops to bring in hard cash and to contribute to the country's GDP. The NRM Administration, it seems, does not favour 'African-Ugandan' crops as it should - its JASAR presentation also revealed:

***“33 percent of children under five years are stunted; 36 percent of stunting is in the rural areas and 19 percent is in Urban areas; Karamoja with a percentage of 44 percent and Western Uganda with 42 percent have the highest stunting levels; while Kampala with a percentage of 13 percent has the lowest stunting levels ... MAAIF is leading a multi-sector food and nutrition project initiative being implemented in 15 districts including: Bushenyi, Isingiro, Kabale, Ntungamo, Namutumba, Bugiri, Iganga, Nebbi, Maracha, Yumbe, Arua, Kabarole, Kiryandongo, Kyenjojo and Kasese. The project is supported by the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP)”***

Districts of Karamoja sub-region, with the highest stunting level of 44 percent, do not appear among those that are 'benefiting' from the multi-sector food and nutrition project initiative. The likely reason is cultural imperialism. According to the GAFSP website (2014), the project is intended to:

***“Support the government's efforts to explicitly link agriculture, nutrition, health and education through school-based demonstration gardens.”***

The intention of the GAFSP is a clear indication that the project is targeted towards sedentary farmers, and mostly crop farmers. The project, according to its website, is a:

***“Multilateral mechanism to assist in the implementation of pledges made by the G20 in Pittsburg in September 2009 ... implemented as a financial intermediary fund for which the World Bank serves as Trustee.”***

It follows therefore that the crops and animals that will be included in the GAFSP project are those of exogenous origin; those that are considered “modern”; and those with attributes that suit the interests of the G20 and the World Bank.

The imagery in the NRM Administration's **“Food and Nutrition Handbook”**(2016), one of its interventions against food and nutrition insecurity is of exotic mangoes, exotic tomatoes and exotic fish varieties; not the indigenous local breeds. The images on the handbook are not an isolated case. The imagery used in the NRM Administration's presentation at the JASAR (2016) was exotic breeds of goats, pigs, birds and bulls. An image in the presentation of a Belgium Blue animal – with its beef laden buttocks – was captioned **“Where we need to go!!!”**

Ugandan Zebu animals did not feature in the major highlights of the NRM Administration's presentation, except when the JASAR participants, seemingly mostly 'Westernised-Recaptives', denigrated them as backward and not economically viable. Ugandan Zebu animals did not make it onto the cover of the NRM Administration's most recent annual performance report of the agriculture sector (2015); but the exotic looking animals made it. Not even Ankole long-horned cattle, with all their majesty, made it onto the cover of that report.

A high level officer (2016) in the NRMO Administration in his submission at the JASAR, for example, praised exotic animals and denigrated indigenous breeds:

*“A person from an abattoir told me once that I have seen many animals but I have not seen the meat (this was during a field visit). Then I asked him what do you mean? And he said I don’t see the meat. The whole issue being that the people who are running abattoirs look at what they call the bone to meat ratio. If the animal that they are taking is 80 percent bones and 20 percent meat they have nothing to sell, because they don’t take the bones out anyway. So where do we want to go (asks the official)? We are going there (official points at an image of a Belgium Blue animal). You want an animal whose bones are 10 percent and the rest is all meat. This is the animal they call the Belgian Blue. If we can learn from these lessons, we can do very well.”*

Throughout its presentation at the JASAR the NRMO Administration rarely mentioned indigenous breeds or what interventions it had engaged in; or was planning to implement for the betterment and promotion of these breeds. The only intervention it mentioned which can be deduced to be relevant to Zebu animals was the Tsetse eradication and trypanosomiasis elimination comprehensive survey that was undertaken in the highly infested districts of Kabong and Kotido. Zebu and Ankole long-horned animals are truly the ones that are feeding the nation and that are providing livelihoods for millions. The reason that Uganda’s own animals are marginalised by the NRMO Administration is because of neo-liberalism and commerce.

#### **4.5 Global-Western Knowledge Superior**

The performance targets of the NRMO Administration in the agriculture sector, especially in matters to do with animals, centre on the acquisition and promotion of exotic breeds. The interventions as it reported in its presentation(2016) at the JASAR include:

- Provision of improved genetic material – 800 thousand Kuroiler day old chicks, semen from high yielding breeds of cattle, 450 quality genetic piglets (Camborough), and a thousand purebred and crossbred goats.
- Provision of quality animal feeds, pastures and water – produce 300 tons of quality feeds and 24 thousand bales of hay. Complete the animal feeds bill; the construction of 120 valley tanks; and identify 200 sites for future construction of valley tanks.

In reviewing its performance for the year 2015/16, during the JASAR (2016) the NRMO Administration assessed its performance as follows:

- Underperformed in producing Kuroilers due to a delay in replacement of parent stock.
- Over achieved and produced 500 tons of maize silage as animal feeds.
- Provision of semen from high yielding breeds of cattle contributed to improved breeds.
- Underperformed in producing piglets. Nevertheless, the piglets produced were taken by farmers and are reaching market weight faster than local pigs.

- Procured and distributed goats; the breed “pure Boer” was mentioned.

It is difficult to say with absolute authority what the performance targets of CSOs for the financial year 2015-2016 were. At the JASAR, CSOs did not use the opportunity to enlighten the public on the agricultural interventions that they had supported and implemented. CSOs, however, may not differ much in attitude with regards to modernisation being equated to exotic breeds. Statements made by Kirabo (2016), while presenting the CSOs' JASAR presentation, confirm similarity between CSOs and the NRMO Administration:

*“That woman (points to image of ‘African-Ugandan smallholder farmer’) might have been coming from the regional JASAR and she passed by where she had left her cow (Zebu small bodied cow). Now there is this one, this whole flock of cows (a herd of Ankole long-horned cattle). Now there is this one (Belgium Blue bull), all these pictures are just representative. If you look at this one (Belgium Blue bull), which has caused smiles to you; and then eventually this (image of factory) – this particular factory took four to five years in the offing. I wish to know, on behalf of the sector I am representing, when they were planning to build this factory, where are these beef animals that are going to be slaughtered? I talked to an animal breeder and he told me that three to four years are enough to have stock. Now this factory took four to five years being put together. We are interested in knowing whether we did the breeding or we were calculating the feasibility study on this factory was dependent on the other woman’s cow or on the other flock (herd) of cows that we saw, which are largely not for slaughtering – they are for prestige?”*

An attitude prevails among ‘Westernised-Recaptives’ that exotic = modern, better and good. It is deducible from Kirabo’s statements, which falsely insinuate the implausibility that indigenous breeds can be bred in sufficient volumes in order to supply them to the meat factory. Karimojong pastoralists and all other pastoralists in the cattle corridor, moreover, can increase their production and productivity in order to supply beef animals to the state of the art meat factory; albeit the fact that the factory is not located in Karamoja, a region that hosts the greatest percentage of livestock. The tendency for ‘Western-Recaptives’ to denigrate ‘African-Ugandan’ culture and to consider ‘African-Ugandan’ knowledge as inferior, is a structural one. It is inbuilt within the global-western formal education system, as the Karamoja focus group (2016) described:

*“Most of us go through the system of education which has nothing to do with indigenous knowledge. So basically, by the time I come back to work, which knowledge am I bringing to the people? Am obviously bringing all what I learnt everywhere else, but not here (Karamoja). Right now we are not so much into the traditional lifestyle that our people have used for so long. Like I finish my formal education and I come and live in Moroto Town. Maybe once in a year I go to my village; I stay for like a week, or something. And for so many years I have been a bit detached because I have to go to school somewhere else. It is even so difficult for me to say that I know a lot of that indigenous knowledge that is applied by our people every single day of their lives. So, when I am training them, seriously, what am I giving them? We train, but we come from our perspective and we insist that you have to do it like this – so I insist that people have to adapt to what am saying. Then, because it is not sufficient enough, we end up making a million mistakes while we are implementing.”*

Smallholder farmers in the rural areas are increasingly realising that the promotion of exotic 'modern' crops and animals is not necessarily in their best interest. Their experience with 'modern crops', such as oil palm and *Epuripur* sorghum that have had huge negative consequences on indigenous food systems is a growing concern. Another major food crop that the Iteso require for making their staple food *atap*, cassava, has been negatively affected by 'modern varieties' on which the NRM Administration spent considerable resources researching, as the Teso focus group (2016) explained:

*“Cassava from the research centre (NaSARRI) is not suitable for eating as atap. In fact, that cassava is the one which brought us hunger. People planted the cassava cuttings from the research centre. Now when you use that cassava variety to mix in your atap and you mingle it, as soon as you put it on the plate it becomes liquid on the plate. That cassava from the research, even though you tried to better the atap with apedur (tamarind), still it did not improve. In fact, the only way to consume that atap is to eat it immediately after you mingled it and poured it on the plate. The one who is not around and they reserve for them atap of that research cassava, they will find when their share has become liquid like water. That cassava which they brought was bad. Even up to now, we don't know why that cassava makes atap become liquid on the plate. The research people don't care to explain it to us. For them they just sold us the cuttings, and that is it. I was told that that cassava variety was brought for boiling fresh from the garden and to be consumed as an accompaniment for tea. For us Iteso that is not how we consume cassava – okwe! (please! in form of an interjection of shock or entreaty - Ongodia and Ejiet (2008) translation). It is because that cassava variety from the research had a high yield and that is why people switched to growing it. Its yield was really high, but it was useless for atap.*

The cassava from the national research institute was a destructive crop that caused havoc within the food system of Iteso, as the Teso focus group (2016) explained further:

*“It is that cassava (research cassava) which has given us poverty. Other times when some planted the cassava variety from the research, the cassava tubers just rotted in-field. That is when the troubles of hunger started. When the cassava rotted in-field, people now tried to look for the non-improved good cassava cuttings – the old cassava varieties – it was really hard to find them. That is where the troubles started. That cassava from the research is the one which has brought us edokolet (monkey – used as euphemism for hunger). We never used to have edokolet.”*

Apparently, however, NaSARRI never intentionally released that cassava variety to the communities. NaSARRI, furthermore, did not develop that variety that turns liquid when made into *atap*; it was developed by National Crops Research Institute (NaCRRI), as an Expert (2016) explained:

*“The challenge NaSARRI has with cassava is that it is not mandated to carryout research on cassava. Cassava research is the mandate of NaCRRI. You know the National Agriculture Research Organisation (NARO) is a big organisation, having so many sister institutes. NaCRRI is the one that is mandated to do research on cassava. What NaSARRI does is to do seed multiplication and also act as the centre to host some of the trials.*

*NaSARRI then, basically, on matters cassava, becomes a seed multiplication centre and a centre for testing new materials, which are not yet released. Researchers at NaSARRI do not do the actual research on cassava – the cassava material comes from Namulonge. But what you find at NaSARRI is that the experiment is running.*

*When the researchers harvest the material to go and do the final analysis, the casual labourers, the community members that they (the researchers) use to harvest the test crop, run away with the material. They (community members) think they (the researchers) have brought a new thing, but they (community members) don't even know what it is. So it goes out there without the knowledge of the researcher. You find the farmers crying, these cuttings we got from NaSARRI, but the researchers don't know how they got it. Just because they are part of the labourers harvesting the demonstration crop that is supposed to be subjected to further testing, for them because they see good yield, they take it. But they do so without actually knowing what it contains. They see big tubers and they say: "let me also take and plant in my garden." Another person will find it in your compound and then they say: "let me also take some cuttings from you and it spreads like that."*

The 'accidental' release of cassava that is bad for *atap* shows that the researchers failed to factor into their experiment security checks that would have made sure that the community members that they used as labourers did not "run away" with cuttings, especially so since the researchers are already aware of the 'education' levels of those that they use as labourers. The researchers connected with NaSARRI and likely also those from NaCRRI knew the calibre of the persons whom they used as labourers and who had access to the cuttings of the cassava under experimentation, as an Expert (2016) explained:

*For the majority of the community, the highest level of education (formal global-western education) can be Primary Seven. Those that reach Senior Four are very few in numbers. So you find that most of them, even after Primary Seven, they run to the farm, because they know that they can get some little money. This is really a family issue researchers cannot do much about it; however, NaSARRI is aware of child labour. When they (community members) go to labour on NaSARRI farms, they get to know what is happening at NaSARRI, but they cannot practice it in their own homes. At NaSARRI they are purely labourers, who want cash."*

Negligence and poor extension provision are reasons why Iteso were oblivious to the inherent dangers of "running away" with research cassava cuttings, planting them and spreading the crop that caused destruction in their food system. When researchers found out that the research cassava under experiment had been "accidentally" released into the community and was spreading wide, they did not do anything to stem its spread; neither did the NRMO Administration. If researchers genuinely did not realise "accidental" release of research cassava still under experiment until way after their innovation had caused huge damage, it confirms that there is a significant de-linking of experts, researchers and scientists, from the real world of the communities who they are mandated to serve. As with the issue of the use of child labour in public research institutions, which researchers ignored, they similarly did nothing about the spread of the 'accidentally' released research cassava - they and the NRMO Administration acted in a criminal manner by allowing a weapon of mass destruction to multiply and to cause huge damage to the Teso food system.

#### 4.6 Agricultural Extension

The NRMO Administration (2015) appreciates that “*in anyone year, over 80 percent of the population is food secure.*” In analysing “*limiting factors and underlying factors affecting food security*” it divided the country into nine sub-regions and assessed as follows:

- Central 1: Is on the whole food secure.
- Central 2: Food utilization is a minor limiting factor. Does experience food insecurity and the underlying causes are: high prevalence of pests and diseases; low incomes; urbanization; **poor extension**; lack of bylaws on food production and storage.
- Northern: Food utilization is a minor limiting factor. Does experience food insecurity and the underlying causes are: **Poor extension**; depletion of natural resources; lack of post-harvest facilities; poor road infrastructure; weak enforcement of policies and legislation.
- South-Western: Food access and food utilization are minor limiting factors. Does experience food insecurity and the underlying causes are: **Poor extension**; depletion of natural resources; lack of post-harvest facilities; poor road infrastructure; weak enforcement of policies and legislation.
- Western: Food access is a minor limiting factor and food utilization is a major limiting factor. Does experience food insecurity and the underlying causes are: **Poor extension**; depletion of natural resources; lack of post-harvest facilities; poor road infrastructure; weak enforcement of policies and legislation.
- Eastern: Food access is a minor limiting factor and food utilization is a major limiting factor. Does experience food insecurity and the underlying causes are: **Poor extension**; depletion of natural resources; lack of post-harvest facilities; poor road infrastructure; weak enforcement of policies and legislation.
- East Central: Food availability, food access and food utilization are minor limiting factors to food security. Does experience food insecurity and the underlying causes are: **Poor extension**; depletion of natural resources; lack of post-harvest facilities; poor road infrastructure; weak enforcement of policies and legislation.
- West Nile: Food availability and food access are minor limiting factors to food security; and food utilization is a major limiting factor. Does experience food insecurity and the underlying causes are: **Poor extension**; depletion of natural resources; lack of post-harvest facilities; poor road infrastructure; weak enforcement of policies and legislation.
- Karamoja: Food availability is a minor limiting factor to food security, but food access and food utilization are major factors. Does experience food insecurity and the underlying causes are: poverty; illiteracy; inadequate health, sanitation and water facilities; poor road and market infrastructure; frequent droughts and dry spells; **unstable and low value livelihood strategies**; low production and productivity.

In all but one of the sub-regions, poor extension is clearly indicated as the underlying cause of food insecurity. Even for the one, Karamoja, some of the factors listed are aspects which could be ameliorated by good agricultural extension. Low production and productivity are potentially increased or decreased depending on the quality of agricultural extension. Frequent droughts and dry spells can be better managed with appropriate agricultural extension that focuses on appropriate technologies for semi-arid environments. Other underlying causes of food insecurity - high prevalence of pests and diseases; low incomes; lack of bylaws on food production and storage; lack of post-harvest facilities; and even urbanization - are potentially extinguishable with good agricultural extension.

The NRM Administration blames Karamoja for “*unstable and low value livelihood strategies*” as an underlying cause of food insecurity. This is a veiled attack on the way of life of Karimojong – pastoralism. Such negative attitudes by the NRM Administration towards pastoralism are a likely influence leading to its insufficient and inappropriate extension services provision for Karamoja. Indeed, these negative attitudes were alluded to by the Karamoja focus group (2016):

*I heard comments from some people in government, that pastoralism is a primitive life style; while they emphasized agriculture (crop farming). Not knowing it is doing a disservice to Karamoja. Agriculture (crop farming) itself is not bad. But let us redirect it to places where we know we can harvest. There are places within Karamoja which if you supported those communities they can harvest. There are greenbelts in Karamoja. There are also places, like Rupa, sincerely, even if you opened 1,000 acres, you cannot harvest. There is need for these policies to be redirected. Where we know we can harvest, support those communities. Where we cannot, we see what we can do for those particular communities.*

*Additionally, we know that the soil in Karamoja is not really barren. Karamoja is a very productive region. Even this Rupa that is dry, if we spent a little more time to invest in the required technology, may be water, may be irrigation, even Rupa can produce (may be). The challenge we have is that most of the projects are very short and time bound. You find that within two years, you should have converted Rupa into a food basket, how is that possible? With very little money and even without enough knowledge of what kind of technology might really be useful for such an environment.*

*Pastoralism is considered primitive just because many people who are pushing for things like crop farming don't even want to learn more about pastoralism. They say: “people move from one location to another that is not good – they have to be sedentary, they have to sit like everybody else. Why do they want to roam around? They have to sit and dig.” But, they do not want to learn the science inside that process, why these pastoralists move from this location to the other. Why would they preserve a certain area? Why would they want to do this and the other? It is a whole lot of science that our sedentary-focused systems don't want to learn.”*

#### 4.6.1 Changes

Within the last 20 years, the NRM Administration has made four major changes in its agricultural extension policy:

- 1996 to 2001 **District Agriculture Extension (DAE)** prevailed. Extension workers were based at district level. DAE was supply driven - top down extension services. DAE was assessed a failure for it was allegedly too rigid to adapt to changing environments in the sector and to be relevant for commercialisation of agriculture.
- 2001 to 2013 **National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS)** was established by an Act of Parliament (2016). Unlike DAE, NAADS was designed to run parallel and outside of the fold of district local governments. When NAADS was established DAE was disbanded. NAADS was considered different from DAE, because it was touted as based on the principle of demand driven extension services provision. It initially focused on giving only advice and so a significant proportion of its budget was on human resources, workshops and conferences. Its expenditure on human resources, workshops and conferences was criticised as money squandering. The NRMO Administration determined that those resources utilised by NAADS on human resources, workshops and conferences would be better utilised in providing inputs to farmers.
- The NRMO Administration subsequently required NAADS to abandon its original purpose and to transform itself into an agricultural input procurement and distribution agency. The NAADS secretariat was re-organised and a significant number of technical persons, extension service providers, in multiple thousands, over 4,200, lost their employment. NAADS, an organisation which was originally set up as an advisory unit, turned into a procurement and distribution agency and it failed at executing both roles. The failure of NAADS, however, was credited by the NRMO Administration to corrupt officials – civil servants without good work ethic.
- 2013 to Date **Operation Wealth Creation (OWC)** took over from NAADS the role of seed distribution. NAADS continues with the role of procurement and extension services. The Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF), the army, is deployed to do the distribution. Prior to taking on their new assignment, Makerere University Kampala trained soldiers in agriculture – a two-week course. The dual system of NAADS procures and UPDF distributes did not work out. NAADS district structures have since been disbanded, coordinators let go and a soldier per constituency is deployed to monitor government programmes, especially the four-acre model. The NRMO Administration justified using soldiers to do input distribution on grounds that the army follows orders and once a soldier is given an order the soldier executes it corruption free.
- 2015 to date **Single Spine Agricultural Extension (SSAE)** is being established. SSAE incorporates elements of the prior systems: OWC, NAADS, and DAE. SSAE is being established under the newly created MAAIF Directorate of Agricultural Extension Services. SSAE is re-incorporating extension services provision back within district local government structures. SSAE and OWC are both still operating, the former under MAAIF and the later under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

#### 4.6.2 Service Provision

Smallholder farmers in rural areas are dumbfounded and confused about the frequent changes in public extension services provision that have come in short intervals. The frequent changes in the public extension services provision have not always met approval from smallholder farmers in the rural areas. The Teso focus group (2016), for example, does not welcome the recent changes:

*“We preferred NAADS. It was much better. NAADS used to give us knowledge and they used to come and follow us up. They would come and visit you in your homestead. Planting materials and inputs should come together with the knowhow – none should come alone; not knowhow alone and not planting materials alone. During NAADS, people were systematically selected and there were also trainings. But these days it is not the case, especially when the soldiers came. Things are brought to the sub-county and people go there and fight for them. You hear that today they have brought cassava cuttings, for example, those who hear of the distribution are the ones who get. But it would be good if LCIs (village councillors) were used like they used to when it was NAADS. LCIs should come round informing us – “the group that wanted groundnuts the seeds have been delivered”; that is what was done in NAADS. We don’t know if the soldiers go to LCIs and inform them of the delivery and distribution of seeds. But it must be the case, because I have observed some of them telling and mobilising people, telling them go for seeds. But by the time you get there at 08:00 a.m. the things are finished. You meet people just passing you by carrying what they have got. There is chaos at distribution points – people change, they grab and fight for the things – push and shove. It is mostly the youth who are strong enough to push and shove that end up getting the things. Physical strength to push and shove is what talks. If you go there your hand will just be broken by male youth. They will just push you twel ngina (thump there).”*

The views of the Teso focus group are validated by findings of the Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit (BMAU) of the Republic’s Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) - the BMAU’s review of the performance of OWC for the financial year 2015/16, which BMAU (2016) presented during the JASAR. The BMAU, while praising OWC for *“doing extremely well”* and confirming that the *“impact is enormous”* of OWC, also found that the glowing performance of OWC was the case, *“irrespective of the fact that the extension service provision is not good.”*

The BMAU’s praise of the enormous impact of OWC is suspect. This is because the premise of its praise is on the basis of seed and materials distribution. The BMAU used ‘output indicators’ and not ‘impact indicators’ in order to deduce impact. This is a bit deceiving. It is in the realm of factoids. Delivery and distribution of seeds to farmers does not necessarily signal that the farmers planted the seeds, nurtured the crops in-the-field, harvested, and consumed or sold the harvest.

There are indications, moreover, that the inputs that are delivered by OWC are sometimes not wanted by recipients. When asked how they would like to be assisted on matters concerning extension services, the responses of the Teso focus group, for example, reveal the enormity of the challenge which comes with input-oriented interventions that are premised on helping ‘the poor’ by giving them free inputs, as is the case with OWC. While OWC is focused mainly on giving out orange seedlings, for example, the Teso focus group (2016) shared the list of inputs that they wish to be given free:

*“I would rather the government gave us seed animals for rearing – goats, pigs. They can bring us the other exotic goats because they are bigger; it is easier to make profit quickly. Pigs are profitable moneywise – it (a pig) litters multiple piglets. Even me my thoughts are on pigs – a short time it can litter many piglets and gives you money, which money you can use for farming. Pigs are easier to rear. You can just tie it on the tree and it stays there in the compound. Me chickens. If they could come to a women group and choose a home of a member and build for us a house there in which we can rear things like chickens, or turkeys, for example; doing so as a group. We also want those chickens and turkeys reared indoors so that we can also sell eggs. Me, on my side I would want our local chickens – those amusugun chickens (exotic chickens – Kuroilers) are tasteless and they easily die, they need a lot of drugs, more than ours. Then they require special feeds, but ours just wander about and feed in the wild and in the evening come home into the house. Me I would want groundnuts seed. It is often the case you do not make 100 percent loss when you grow groundnuts. Me, maize seed – you grow for three months and harvest. Me I would want cassava cuttings. For me, sorghum seed – like Epuripur. For me, I would want sorghum seed, but not of Epuripur.*

In some cases, in addition, recipients have been known to divert the seeds that they received to other uses. Such realities at the grassroots were shared by the Karamoja focus group (2016):

*“Last planting season, last year, we gave to our communities in one of the sub-counties about 21,000 kilos of maize seeds, and we also gave beans. We gave almost each and every household 10 kilos of maize seed and then 10 kilos of bean seed. But we did not have any harvest, completely. Some families just washed the maize and just boiled it for eating. And then some families tried to cultivate, but because of the long dry spell that we had, we did not have any harvest completely. After that, we did not even learn from that. OWC brought more seeds in many kilos which were also given. Some officers refused to give out the seeds, telling them (OWC) that they gave seeds a few months ago and nothing has germinated. “Let us first wait”, the officers pleaded. We don’t time the rains. We bring these seeds when the rains have already gone and then people are told, you know the orders of the army, you plant. You give these seeds; if you do not give these seeds you will lose your job. You are threatened and told you are sabotaging government programmes if you refuse to distribute the seed.*

So, when the BMAU accords OWC praise on grounds that seeds and other inputs were distributed, the BMAU’s accolades to OWC are logically inaccurate. Yes, the farmers received the seeds, and, as can be deduced from the extract above, some washed and ate them as food. How is that enormous impact when the seeds did not even enter the ground in order to produce more grain? How has wealth been created when seeds have not been multiplied, but have been consumed as food? And how is it that the farmers were able to wash the seed and consume it as food? What kind of quality were those seeds?

BMAU’s finding that *“extension service provision is not good”* is already indicative of the questionable accuracy of their finding that OWC has made enormous impact at the grassroots. Common knowledge, generally, considers it oxymoronic for an agricultural intervention to have enormous positive impact without good agricultural extension.

### 4.6.3 Workers

OWC has no agricultural extension and therefore it does not have agricultural extension workers as part of its workforce, as noted by the Teso Focus Group(2016):

*“When you are given an orange seedling, you go with it to your home. You are the one who knows how you will plant it. They don’t demonstrate to you how and no one follows you to your home to show you how. You just forge around, dig holes and plant your seedling. You use your own common knowledge. You know that if they dig a hole, that is when a seedling is planted – like in the same way as you plant cassava – yes, commonsense that you were born with. I was given orange seedlings a long time ago and I planted them, up to now no one has ever come to my home to check on me and the seedlings. My orange trees fruit, but no one has ever come to see how I planted and maintained them. The same is with cassava or other crops. We plant them using the knowledge that we were born with – dig the hole, plant and after a month or so, go and see if they have germinated. Once you see that it has germinated you begin to weed. No one guides us. Even the ones from the research (NaSARRI) do not come to us.”*

Experts, indeed, confirm insufficient extension service provision that has resulted from the many changes in the manner that the NRMO Administration has handled public extension services provision during the last 20 years or so. An Expert (2016) explained:

*“The problem is that the research institutions’ extension arms have gotten weakened. Research institutions really do not have enough resources to reach wider at the grassroots. When research institutions release a crop, they are also supposed to have demos with the farmers, but their funding is low. When we had the NAADS programme, the research institutions lost control of the extension services and the extension was taken over by NAADS. NAADS was a weak programme. Much as there was that extension arm in the programme, it did not properly implement it. Even now with OWC, research institutions are not getting their extension arm back to its original form. Actually, researchers are also worried about OWC, because it has come and they do not see the extension arm in it. It is basically giving seeds and other planting material to the farmer – “farmers have this and you can get rich.” If I give you, Farmer X, seed, I should be able to follow you, have you grow the crop, and see how you are progressing. The big problem is this business of just giving without following up is the biggest challenge that we have.”*

It is interesting to note that while the Teso focus group found satisfaction with extension workers under NAADS, experts assessed NAADS to have been a *“weak programme,”* during which it did not *“properly implement”* its agricultural extension component. A significant number of farmers are not in contact with extension workers. The Teso focus group confirmed so - oranges were planted, fruited and the farmer has not had a visit from an extension worker. The experience of the Teso focus group is also validated by media reports. Kigambo (2016), for example, in his article titled: *“Uganda’s plan to support its agriculture”*, reported how the ratio for agriculture extension workers to the population was 1:5,000, however, media reports also reveal that the NRMO Administration is working towards reducing the ratio to 1:1,000. One extension worker per thousands of farmers, means that a significant portion of farmers have no contact with extension workers.

Ratios of 1:5,000 or even 1:1,000, however, also mean that some farmers are in contact with extension workers, however few they may be. *“Extensions workers are there in Karamoja”*, for example, confirmed the Karamoja Focus Group (2016):

*“Government has been going through restructuring at local government level. Karamoja local governments are even receiving extension workers for fisheries per sub-county. The central government wanted to give local governments two fisheries extension workers – fisheries officer and fisheries assistant – per sub-county. Some of us were like, where are the fish? What are those people coming to do? The restructuring was scrapping the Assistant Community Development Officers (ACDOs). Karimojong officers insisted that no, we need the ACDOs. Some of them pushed back until central government accepted to put back the position of ACDO and to remove Assistant Fisheries Officer.”*

The Karamoja focus group gives good insight into provisions in policy that result in inappropriate deployment of extension workers - workers with inappropriate knowledge and skill sets for the communities and geographies that they are deployed to serve. The deployment of fisheries extension workers to some sub-counties in Karamoja, for example, renders them non-functional on grounds that they hold inappropriate knowledge for the context that they are deployed. They are deployed to a semi-arid environment in which water bodies are scarce; how are they going to promote fish-farming? Fisheries extension workers are not necessarily skilled on matters concerning semi-nomadic pastoralism; hence their deployment to parts of Karamoja that are in the dry belt likely renders them non-functional – they are knowledgeable, but the knowledge they possess is mismatched with the environment or the way of life of the communities to which they are deployed to serve. They possess knowledge that is irrelevant within the locale in which they are deployed to work.

Even in cases where extension workers, ideally, possess the requisite knowledge, their conceptual understanding has the power to render the extension worker non-functional – their interpretations are mismatched with the interpretations of the communities that they are deployed to serve. For example, a mismatch in interpretation may occur in the extension workers' perception of their role and the communities' perception of the role of the extension workers. The Karamoja focus group (2016), for example, observed that:

*“On the side of government they provide according to the policy. You find that the government will release a policy on the animal side and they just impose. Officially, you find the community has to dance according to it – what the government has said. They (extension workers) will come and command: “it is now animal vaccination.” You will find that all animals will get affected – sick or not sick. You find that at that moment (mandatory mass vaccination), that is when you find even animals are affected badly – there is rampant death. You find the cows complaining. They (extension workers) come with their pre-set minds that they come and impose on the community. And you find that those extension services are not even sustainable because the community keeps on identifying the extension workers with those services. Such that when they (extension workers) pull out it is like everything is gone. They (extension workers) come to do it as the policy stipulates or as they understand. So, there is that pressure on the local person – you must do it our way.”*

Experts also pointed out the tendency of extension workers to reference or to privilege exogenous knowledge systems, while undermining 'African-Ugandan' knowledge. An Expert (2016), for example, testified that during the course of their work they observed:

*“Government deployed agricultural extension workers were using ‘book knowledge’ to provide services to farmers. That means, nothing was from “this is from my experience as a farmer myself;” or “this is what I am telling you that I have experienced myself;” or this is what I do when I am in my field.” It is mostly “this is what the book says how things happen.” Even in cases where they would say “this works like this,” it is basically because they have read it in a book. Using ‘book knowledge’ extension workers tell farmers “this is the time that you plant your crop; this is the time that you have to weed - four days later you have to weed sunflower,” for example. “This is when you have to do this.” If you are running a business, it is very difficult after planting, and then four days later you are back in the field again. Typically in the book it says four days, but in practical sense it does not work that way.”*

There is a general perception that extension workers deployed by CSOs are less impractical as compared to government deployed extension workers. An example of how so was given by the Karamoja focus group (2016):

*“You find that when these NGOs come in, they have already created these people who are already on the ground, who know the environment – even like: “in this period of time, this is the time of these kind of diseases for animals; and this kind of time it is a, b, c, d.” When you look at the NGOs, they tend to come and like, you know, get to the community, learn how people do it, and use the very indigenous owners of the knowledge to do the work. All they have to do is like, train up – give a push to the already existing knowledge and try to do better.”*

Another aspect that renders deployed extension workers non-functional is that they are not 'facilitated' to do the work they are deployed to do, as the Karamoja focus group (2016), noted:

*“Government has given staff, but there is no specific fund to help these people to implement whatever work plans, whatever activities that they had thought of implementing for the communities. You talk of mass vaccination of animals, in most cases it is FAO (UN Food and Agriculture Organisation), it is the ‘development partners’ who help us do that. But government staff members that are deployed are redundant in most cases.”*

Other experts agree with the assessment of the Karamoja focus group. An Expert (2016), for example, assessed how the pastoralist way of life is marginalised in terms of budgetary allocations:

*“Karamoja is getting a raw deal. Let me give you an example on extension. A district like Kotido in Karamoja has one veterinary doctor with a livestock population of more than 300 thousand heads of cattle. So, if you are committed to supporting agriculture, of which livestock rearing is a part, you need extension and you only have one veterinary doctor for a whole district! In fact the whole of Karamoja has only five veterinary doctors.”*

It is not always the case that the agriculture sector is not receiving financing, but it is the purpose for which the finances are released that is of concern, as an Expert (2016) explained:

***“The limited budget support that goes to Karamoja goes to non-sector priorities. It goes to crop enterprise. NAADS for example which has been getting substantial amounts of money from the government, 60 to 70 percent of those interventions under NAADS go to agro-inputs. Research, for example, the whole of Karamoja region does not have any research station. Nabwin which is supposed to be a research station dealing with that zone is 75 percent doing its research on crop enterprise.”***

Within the NGO sector as well, employed extension workers are often answerable to NGO administrators and expatriates. NGO expatriate administrators have been known to make illogical decisions that impact on the delivery of genuine appropriate extension services. NGO employees, including extension workers, often find no choice, but to do as they are told, however meaningless and illogical the instructions are. The Karamoja focus group (2016), for example, explained why one of their own may continue working for an organisation that they see is clearly doing the wrong thing by their people:

***“I need the job. How would I really refuse to work in such an organisation, if I also have to put food on my table?”***

The need to earn a living forces them to sing or dance to the tune that their employer has chosen. The Karamoja focus group (2016) in explaining how NGO deployed extension workers are similarly constrained as those that are deployed by the NRMO Administration explained:

***I think in 2013, I interacted with some of the staff members of a certain organisation (NGO) working here in Karamoja. At that period of time it was not like the cultivation season. It was a dry season, I think it was in October, September/October, and they were distributing seeds for planting. Then I was like, at this point of time, why are you distributing seeds? They were like, you know the donors are coming and we want to beat the deadline.***

Agricultural interventions in a territory where the predominant practice is rain-fed agriculture are always time bound. Planting has to occur when the rains come; but the power of “donors are coming” and “we want to beat the deadline” is instead the primary determinant of the timing of agricultural interventions. Success for the service providers is measured on whether they beat the deadline; whatever follows, is of no consequence – and the vicious cycle continues, sustaining factoids that make false diagnosis and inappropriate interventions for the agriculture sector.

#### **4.7 Commercialisation of Food**

The most recent agriculture sector development and investment strategy (2010), for which its implementation cycle concluded in June 2015, was titled:

***“Agriculture for Food and Income Security - Agriculture Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan: 2010/11-2014/15.”***

Ironically, however, that strategy revealed the insignificant attention that the NRMO Administration gives to genuinely ensuring food and nutrition security at the grassroots at the household level.

The strategy was likely premised on the NRMO Administration's commitment to the Maputo Declaration on the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) that it would adhere to the *"principle of agriculture-led growth"*; growth in terms of GDP. The commitment of the NRMO Administration to the CAADP predisposed it to perceive people as the problem or the stumbling block to the achievement of its commitment. In the strategy the NRMO Administration lamented:

***"With 73 percent of all households and the majority of the poor in Uganda depending directly on agriculture for their primary livelihoods, this is a serious challenge in the drive to eradicate poverty."***

Depending directly on agriculture, as eloquently articulated by Sen (1999), is one of the ways in which people can *"establish ownership over an adequate amount of food"* for themselves. It explains why transnational corporations invest in agriculture for the livelihoods of their owners - Wilmer International and Bidco invested in oil palm; Nile Breweries in *Epuripur* sorghum; and Madhavani in sugarcane; all for profit and for the livelihoods of their owners. The NRMO Administration instead blames its own citizens, the majority who depend directly on agriculture, for the existence of poverty in the country. Within the Strategy, the NRMO Administration further laments:

***"The number of people who are food insecure has increased from 12 million in 1992 to 17.7 million in 2007, an obvious consequence of high population growth rate."***

It insinuates that increase in population growth is as a result of high fertility levels of those who depend directly on agriculture. Whereas, high population growth may intensify food insecurity; it is not necessarily the obvious main trigger of food insecurity. It is the finding of the NRMO Administration (2015), after all, that:

***"Food availability is generally not a limiting factor (to food security) in most regions of Uganda but it is food access and utilization (that) are the major limiting factors."***

In effect, the NRMO Administration acknowledges that agricultural production for food within the country, ideally, produces sufficient food to feed all; but it is the manner in which food is distributed and shared post-harvest that causes millions to be food insecure. One of the major ways in which food produce is distributed post-harvest is through trade. In line with the NRMO Administration's commitment to the CAADP the country produces and exports food - among its performance success indicators (2015) is their assessment that:

***"Agricultural exports have also significantly increased in scope and scale, particularly when informal cross border trade is taken into account."***

The country's agricultural exports include food produce. During the financial year 2013/2014, for example, official records (2015) show that Uganda exported over 180 thousand metric tons of maize and nearly 32 thousand metric tons of beans; figures which are likely much higher considering that a significant amount of cross border trade through porous borders is often not captured in official figures.

The logic which allows for food exports, while millions of citizens are food insecure, is obviously flawed. Even though FAO (2016) found the country's food exports are "*smaller than its imports.*" A closer scrutiny of FAO's findings reveals that the country's food imports are not the basic staple foods that provide sustenance for its population. According to FAO (2016):

***"Food imports constituted 77-87 percent of the total agricultural imports over the years 1985-2000. This high proportion of food imports is attributed to the increased investment in food processing industries that use refined sugar and the rising urban population that mainly consumes wheat and rice."***

The basic diets of the country's rural dwellers – over 73 percent whose livelihoods are directly dependent on agriculture – do not consist of wheat and rice. *Atap*, for example, is the preferred staple food of the Iteso. The composition of *atap* has changed over the years. It has changed from being composed of only highly nutritious millet flour; to millet and cassava flour; to millet and sweet potato flour; to millet, sorghum and cassava flour; to millet, sorghum and sweet potato flour; to sorghum and cassava flour; to sorghum and sweet potato flour; and now to only the not so nutritious cassava flour.

The changes that eliminated millet from being the only and main ingredient of *atap* are related to commercialisation<sup>1</sup> of millet. Millet makes very good *ajon* – the beer from Teso that is popular not only among the Iteso, but also among other peoples of 'African-Ugandan' descent. *Ajon* was formerly consumed at home, but is now mostly consumed in 'bars' or 'drinking joints' in urban slums and in slummy trading centres that have mushroomed throughout the rural areas. The change in behaviour of consuming *ajon* in 'bars' or 'drinking joints' sustains the demand for millet; the commercial brewers of *ajon* buy millet in bulk.

The reduction of or the elimination of sorghum from *atap* is mostly due to commercialisation of sorghum as well. Of particular note is the introduction of *Epuripur* sorghum that was purely a commercial crop, best suited for brewing bottled beer and that could not be consumed as *atap*. Many homesteads in Teso confirmed this the hard way; as shared by the Teso focus group (2016):

***"Epuripur is not good for atap, it is only good for bottled beer. We have tried to eat it in atap, but it is not good for atap. And also, Epuripur spoilt our gardens. No other crops grow well after you have grown Epuripur. Yields of other food crops are so low afterwards."***

There is a scientific explanation for why *Epuripur* sorghum was not good for *atap* and why the soil on which it was grown deteriorated; as explained by an Expert (2016):

***"Epuripur was not meant for atap, it was for brewing, that was the intention for Epuripur. It is good for porridge and it is good for baking but not good for atap. You know the current situation of land fragmentation is high. You find that a family maybe has one or two acres of land to crop every season, so the rotation is actually not followed. One of the conditions of Epuripur is that it is a high feeder. For you to get a good yield it must be grown on a high fertile soil. So you find that when they grow Epuripur in the first season, maybe they got good yields and then in the next season, because you got good yields, you get encouraged to grow the***

<sup>1</sup> This refers to placing a price tag on food items that were previously produced mainly for subsistence (own consumption and trading them for cash).

*same crop over and over. So when you grow Epuripur over and over, depleting the soil without replenishing it, then it causes some losses, then you think that it is the crop that has caused the losses and yet actually it is you who is not rotating the soil. You are not adding any nutrients into the soil.*

Clearly, the Teso farmers were given inadequate extension services pre-adoption of the 'modern crop', for the time it was in-field, and for its post-harvest handling. The farmers did not know from the very beginning, that *Epuripur* sorghum was a high feeder and that it had the potential of damaging their lands. The farmers seemingly did not make an informed decision to adopt growing of *Epuripur* sorghum, for they did not farm *Epuripur* responsibly, in a manner that did not degrade the nutrients in the soil of their land to the detriment of their food and nutrition security. *Epuripur* was sold to them as a business – make more money. Commercialisation of food indeed has huge negative consequences that are often not consciously and formally taken note of by the NRM Administration, as an Expert (2016), for example, explained:

*“Today, with the fall of cash crops, like cotton, coffee and tea, it is now our food that is wanted for the global market. Now, this whole idea of maize, just observe any part of this country (Uganda) which grows maize. People even plant their whole land with maize. The woman now is, in fact, unemployed completely, because the maize belongs to the market. Unless the woman fights it out with her husband and they decide to use that money on the household. But in many cases where the woman cannot succeed, the whole land is planted with maize and all the maize is sold on the market and people are going back to hunting and gathering. People look for ffene (jackfruit) in Buganda region. One month after selling your maize you are poor. So, people go scavenging for ffene and mangoes in those abandoned banana plantations of the 1960s. They go to the bushes to find what to eat. There is permanent starvation. People have already lost land to the market. You see, what is marketable is what people produce. And the market is not neutral as they used to say. You hear serious campaigns like during (President) Museveni's time. People have been called to grow soya bean, clonal coffee, vanilla, and aloe vera. And now people are being called upon to grow maize. So the market is engineered politically. There is money for maize and so people go ahead and plant only maize. I have seen many areas where people grow only maize. But that maize is not for them to eat. Food is interesting. Food crops now have characteristics of cotton. You can't eat cotton. You can't cook and eat cotton. You can have maize, you grow it and you sell it and you don't eat it.”*

Commercialisation of food and engineering of the market, moreover, are oiled by funds that come from 'back-donors'. Those funds are conditioned on the recipients of those funds accepting to promote the interests of the 'back-donors', as an Expert (2016) explained:

*“Actually, money that is invested in agriculture by foreigners comes from the World Bank - huge money, such as, World Bank loans, to come and grow rice, maize, in Uganda. Do a study (the expert challenged), Bidco, where do they get their money from to dig the whole of Kalangala and plant palm oil? They get it from IFAD (UN International Fund for Agricultural Development) and the World Bank.”*

The expert's assertion is confirmed by Bidco, which has published on its website (2011), that its Kalangala Oil Palm Project is in partnership with government and that the project is supported financially and technically by IFAD and the World Bank.

For the Bidco Kalangala project to come into being, significant portions of natural rain forests were permanently destroyed to make way for oil palm trees; the waters of Lake Victoria were polluted by the chemicals required for oil palm plantations; and hundreds of smallholder farmers were dispossessed of their lands. In the guise of 'development aid', IFAD together with the World Bank (both the 'back-donors') gave finance to 'investors' of exogenous origin (Wilmar International Limited n.d.). The 'back-donors' required the NRMO Administration to ensure that the 'investors' of exogenous origin – Wilmer International Limited and Bidco – have access to the necessary factors for production. This meant huge chunks of land that the foreign 'investors' wanted on which to grow oil palm.

The signing of the Bidco Kalangala project agreement by the NRMO Administration provided cover for the foreigners (Wilmer International Limited, Bidco, UN, IFAD and World Bank) from the immediate global public scrutiny that they should otherwise get. The agreement shields the foreigners from being immediately seen as land grabbers; moreover, land grabbers they are, at least from the perspective of the smallholder farmers who were dispossessed of their land. In order for the Bidco Kalangala project to be established, Milieudefensi (2013) reports that as part of the tripartite agreement for the project, the NRMO Administration committed to acquire tens of thousands of hectares of land for the project, ***“free of encumbrances and under a 99 year lease.”*** Free of encumbrance in this case meant free of the human inhabitants on the land – smallholder farmers, fishing communities, likely *bibanja* holders (tenants) that had likely rented land from a few rich landlords.

The kind of land that the NRMO administration committed to provide ***“free of encumbrance”*** is similar to that which the colonialists ensured for the foreign 'investors' that are the large scale farmers in Kenya. Which means, essentially, that the NRMO Administration committed to ensure that the smallholder farmers and fishing communities that were resident on the land that it offered the foreign 'investors' were removed from the land in order to make way for Bidco & co to plant it with palm oil trees. The NRMO Administration, through a press release that was signed by the MAAIF Permanent Secretary at the time, V.R. Rubarema(2015), claims to have paid the legitimate owners of the land. It may have paid the legitimate land owners, likely a few landlords, but seemingly it did violate the rights of the tenants, whom it seems to have considered as 'illegitimately' occupying the land. At least 100 Kalangala farmers, as was reported by Waswa (2016) in his article titled: ***“Kalangala farmers petition UN over land grabbing”***, petitioned the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) claiming that they were not duly compensated.

While overt land dispossession, such as was the case with the Bidco Kalangala project, is easily noticed, covert land dispossession that results from global commercialisation of food often goes unnoticed, but is likely more wide spread than overt land dispossession. In the case of the Bidco Kalangala project, in addition to people being moved off their land, they were denied access to other natural resources that were fenced off. Resources, according to the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (2012), such as building materials and grazing lands that people used to freely access from the forest reserves which were part of the commons, before they were fenced off and or replaced with palm oil trees. Denying people access to lands in the commons is covert dispossession.

Covert land dispossession is also when people are actually not moved off their land, but are conned into offering their land rent free, in order to grow a particular crop, in order to supply the harvest from the crop to 'investors'. Smallholder farmers, de facto, become labourers on their own land and who at the same time take the burden of the risks of crop failure, due to inappropriate weather, among others.

The Bidco Kalangala project, for example, reportedly manipulated smallholder farmers to think that they would become rich by becoming out-growers of oil palm trees. Things did not turn out as shiny for some smallholder farmers who allocated their land to palm oil growing. The National Association of Professional Environmentalists (2012), for example, quoted one such farmer as having said:

***“I had a big piece of land of about eight acres. When Bidco came with the programme on planting oil palm, I was given agro-inputs for which I failed to pay for. I later lacked food to eat because I had planted oil palm on the only piece of land I had. I later sold the land cheaply after failing to get food to feed my children. I am now landless!”***

The case of the Bidco Kalangala project in the Central Region is not an isolated one. State-sanctioned land grabbing is happening in other regions with other actors of ‘big money’. In Amuru in Northern Uganda it is the Madhavanis and their sugar plantations (Daily Monitor 2012); in Karamoja it is a wave of ‘investors’ in crop farming; and in Teso it is Nile Breweries and their *Epuripur* sorghum (Nakawesi 2014). Even though Nile Breweries in Teso does not require farmers to move off the land, but it manipulates them to divert their land to grow *Epuripur* sorghum. They do so through information adverts or promotions, such as popularised by FAO (2016), which speak positively of the ‘modern crop’. One such promotion information advert persuaded:

***“In an attempt to improve food security and incomes among the rural poor households, SAARI (Serere Agricultural and Animal Research Institute, which is NaSAARI) has generated a number of technologies among which are Sekedo and Epuripur improved sorghum varieties released in 1995.”***

Teso smallholder farmers were manipulated into diverting their land to grow *Epuripur* sorghum under the pretext that it was for their own good. The main real objective for *Epuripur* sorghum was so that Nile Breweries would have access to cheap raw materials for brewing beer. The role of smallholder farmers was to use their land rent free (as in Nile Breweries did not rent the land) and to grow *Epuripur* sorghum, in order to supply it to Nile Breweries. As was the case in Kalangala where Bidco’s oil palm enslaved smallholder farmers, so was the case in Teso with Nile Breweries *Epuripur* - farmers planted a ‘modern non-food crop’ on their land; could not cut it down because they were indebted to the ‘investor’ who had loaned them seeds and inputs; and so had to nurture the crop to maturity, until it was harvested and supplied cheaply to the ‘investor’.

Covert land grabbing, in addition, is in the form of that which re-defines land uses intra-homestead. This means that the more powerful members of a homestead, likely the men, may grab land off of other members of their homestead and re-allocate it to the production of a ‘modern crop’. There are indications that this form of land grabbing was indeed triggered in Teso by Nile Breweries’ *Epuripur* sorghum, as an Expert (2016) explained:

***“I can say that Epuripur had a 70 percent effect of destabilising the balance – causing disruption of social systems in Teso. Because, at that time when Epuripur was released, Nile Breweries took over and it was paying very well, so people kind of targeted Epuripur with little attention paid to the other kinds of sorghum that are more suitable for atap (millet or sorghum bread or better still millet or sorghum ugali). It should be noted that even though there is currently a high demand for sorghum that is suitable for atap, it is mostly as a cash crop. The demand comes more from the men.***

*The experience of Epuripur between men and women differs. For the men they are happy because it brought cash; for the women they are not happy for it brought the trouble of not being able to eat it as atap.”*

The ‘modernisation narrative’ which promotes globalised commercialisation of food, as it is particularly promoted by the NRMO Administration, provides the necessary smokescreen for ‘modern crops’ to be introduced without appropriate extension services and for smallholder farmers to be pushed off their land. The NRMO Administration presents itself to be in a hurry to bring people out of poverty and so any ‘delays’ in introducing ‘modern crops’ it perceives as sabotage. It suppresses informed scientific knowledge by starving scientists of funding; it neglects its responsibility to protect citizens from harmful ‘modern crops’; and it cedes space to ‘big-money’ corporations such as Nile Breweries to extract as much profit as they can. An Expert (2016) explained:

*“Research funding (to public institutions) is limited. You know when Epuripur was introduced it was mainly taken up by the Nile Breweries who contracted farmers to grow the crop; farmers from whom they (Nile Breweries) directly bought Epuripur. So, research was basically providing seed.”*

By touting ‘modern crops’ as the solution to poverty and by remaining silent about the negative consequences of those ‘modern crops’, the NRMO Administration, its ‘development partners’ and CSOs are complicit in popularising factoids which are used to push smallholder farmers deeper into food insecurity and poverty.

#### **4.8 Economic Neo-Colonialism**

In addition to globalised commercialisation of food, economic neo-colonialism is perpetuated not only by the NRMO Administration, but also by other politicians considered as members of ‘the opposition’. Land dispossession of smallholder farmers, for example, has support from among members of parliament of ‘the opposition’ as well. Among the most vocal ‘opposition’ politicians that advocate for land grabs is Professor Ogenga Latigo, who is of the view that the people who elected him to represent them in the Parliament, his constituents, need to be removed from their land so that more ‘intelligent’ people should come and farm the land. During the JASAR, for example, Latigo (2016) made a spirited ‘scientific’ argument for state sanctioned land grabs:

*“Some years ago Prof. Rubahayo taught us plant breeding and told us that when the Americans wanted to mechanise, when slavery was banned, and they wanted to mechanise cotton production, they designed a machine and they also designed the crop. Too many times we talk, we focus on the land and we do not redesign ourselves. You try all your skills to fit the challenge into who we are, without re-designing ourselves. Can we redesign ourselves? What do we want to be? If we want to remain as we are, obviously we are heading for chaos. All those countries that re-designed themselves, they never increased their land holdings, but they decided that the land that we have, few people will use it to give us the food we need and then we re-direct the rest of the population to something else. As long as we remain peasants, what option do we have other than to go and fight for that land? We may have to invest more on quality education so that we can have people who can competently use their brains rather than the hoes.”*

The media is complicit in justifying economic neo-colonialism of the type that Latigo advocates for; this they do by eliminating the dark side of covert land dispossession from their coverage of 'modern crops'. The narrative that dominates in the media is that of smallholder farmers who have allegedly become millionaires due to embracing the 'new' and 'modern' technologies. Meanwhile, those farmers who refused to adopt 'new' crops and 'new' technologies are depicted as sorry about it and envious of the successful ones who had the 'wisdom' to adopt the new.

Kato's (2015) story on Tugume that was published in "***Harvest Money***," which is the New Vision's "***guide to successful farming***" is one such story. Tugume's story was published with exotic imagery of coffee, cattle, tractors, sprinklers; and a picture of Tugume fuelling a car at a fuelling station that she reportedly owns - a very sexy presentation of a successful 'modern farmer'. The Daily Monitor's "***Seeds of Gold***" section which features stories of successful 'modern farmers' prints similar stories as in the New Vision's "***Harvest Money***" - for example, Lunghabo's (2014) opinion titled: "***Why you need to formalise your business***" published with imagery of exotic cows in a barn and with a caption: "***In addition to having a well organised farm like this one ...***"

Such was the case with *Epuripur* sorghum as well. Levitt (2016) touted it as one of those 'development interventions' of positive impact with the intention to greatly enrich the quality of life of poor smallholder farmers; by earning them millions of shillings supplying it to Nile Breweries. Levitt's misrepresentation of *Epuripur* sorghum was backed by Nakawesi's (2014) report with the heading: "***Sorghum farmers receive Shs 12 billion boost***"; a sub-heading: "***Sorghum farmers have bagged the largest slice of the investment, taking Shs 7.2 billion***"; and a photograph of a woman in an *Epuripur* sorghum field captioned: "***A woman in a sorghum garden. The crop is one of Uganda's staple cereal food crops.***"

The colourful stories about *Epuripur* sorghum turned out riddled with factoids. Nakawesi's report that "***the crop is one of Uganda's staple cereal food crops,***" is not exactly true. *Epuripur* is not a good food crop; it is a cash crop, whose farming actually had negative impact on the food security of homesteads in Teso, as is discussed in other sections of this report. A fact check of Nakawesi's statement: "***Sorghum farmers receive Shs 12 billion boost,***" renders it not necessarily accurate as well. The price that Nile Breweries paid to smallholder farmers was exploitatively low.

The price that Nile Breweries paid its *Epuripur* farmers, for example, does not factor in the cost of the land on which *Epuripur* sorghum was grown, if it had had to rent the land at market prices. According to Teso smallholder farmers, in fact, the commercial benefits from *Epuripur* sorghum are questionable in the longer-term. At some point in time, as is characteristic with exploitative cash crops, the supply of *Epuripur* sorghum outstripped demand and the prices fell drastically. The Teso focus group (2016) explained that:

***"When Epuripur had just come out – had just been introduced – that is when the price was high. The first set of farmers who grew Epuripur, are the ones who made money. But then the price dropped drastically."***

Elunya (2005), among the few journalists who reported the dark side of Nile Breweries' *Epuripur* sorghum, in an article titled: "***Low prices affect sorghum production in Soroti***", confirms the assessment of the Teso focus group. Apparently, at some point, Nile Breweries was buying a kilogram of *Epuripur* sorghum at only 300 shillings (about US\$ 0.08) per kilogram and the farmers were agitating to be paid nearly double that, 500 shillings (about US\$ 0.14) per kilogram. In comparison with the price of a bottle of Nile Breweries beer from *Epuripur* – the Eagle Lager - the farm-gate price paid to farmers was exploitative.

Economic neo-colonialism is perpetuated by the myth of development which seduces “Westernised-Recaptives” to believe that to be like the global-west is to be developed and to be endorsed by the global-west is to be ‘progressive’. The fact that the country is importing significant quantities of wheat is an example of the myth of development and it does shed light on why the factoids in branding ‘Rolex’ (egg omelette wrapped in chapati) as a Ugandan food. Parke (2016), for example, in a story titled: *“Delicious African foods you should try”* and was published by CNN, claimed ‘Rolex’ as an *“African food”* that is prepared by *“Ugandan men all over Uganda”* and that it can be *“found on almost every street”* in Uganda.

“Ugandan men all over Uganda” cooking Rolex is a half truth - there are men cooking Rolex, but certainly not all over Uganda and certainly not “on almost every street”. Ugandan men cooking on almost every street, is inconsistent with ‘African-Ugandan’ culture. A cultural study (2013) conducted in Toronto in Canada, for example, confirmed the hold of ‘African-Ugandan’ culture over men of ‘African-Ugandan’ descent on matters relating to cooking food. The study confirmed:

***“There are several derogatory ways used in Uganda to describe a man seen cooking food in his home. The Iteso people, for example, refer to such a man with variations of the word ebwacit, which, according to the Ateso English Dictionary (Ongodia and Ejiet 2008), means either a transvestite or a man dressing and behaving like a woman. The connotation is that, according to the culture-normal criteria of the Iteso, cooking food at home should normally be a role for women.”***

The derogatory perceptions of a man cooking at home make it difficult for them to embrace cooking in the public arena. Those few men cooking ‘Rolex’ on the street are the abnormal. The ‘Rolex’ cooks, within the central logic of the culture-normal criteria of ‘African-Ugandan’ cultures, are those men who are either culturally dislocated, they are confused or without pride, going onto the streets to cook; or they are those who are forced to become ‘Rolex’ cooks as a negative consequence of “modernisation” – like the so-called ‘poverty eradication’ efforts, such as the Bidco Kalangala project, that make many landless. Cooking ‘Rolex’, certainly, is not among those livelihood options that the majority of men go into easily.

In Teso, derogatory remarks made of men who cook ‘Rolex’ or roast cassava or roast maize, in farmers’ markets and on ‘the streets’ are often pre-fixed by the sentiment *“edokolet (monkey – euphemism for poverty) struck him”*; *“he has no land to farm”*; *“he is just there”*; so he has resorted to *“awowa echapati o’town (fry chapati in town)”* or *“aipe emwongo o’gudo (roast cassava on the road).”* It is ironic, that the survival of ‘Rolex’ cooks, likely depends on Bidco cooking oil. Bidco, which impoverished many, continues to make a killing (pun intended) from the profits it makes selling cooking oil. The logic of pushing people off their land; forcing them into urban centres; and making their livelihoods dependent on the products of those who pushed them off their land in the first place is irrational.

Ordinarily, it is inconsistent and self-defeating for a government that works for its people to fight poverty by pushing citizens into weaker positions in which their entitlements are weakened. One does not have to be an economist to predict how easy it would be for the businesses of ‘Rolex’ cooks to go bust due to changes in wheat prices in places far away such as the United States of America and in whose economy the NRMO Administration, let alone the ‘Rolex’ cooks have absolutely zero influence. The ‘Rolex’ saga is a powerful example of the disconnection between ‘Westernised-Recaptives’ and the majority, especially those who live in the rural areas and within the wisdom of ‘African-Ugandan’ culture.

'Westernised-Recaptives' - including government ministers, members of parliament and the media - are keen to promote the consumption of food items, such as wheat, that are produced by farmers of the global-west. The consumption of 'Rolex' benefits the exogenous wheat producers – the farmers of the global west; and the exogenous transnational corporations that deal in the trade of food produce. Whereas many perceive 'Rolex' cooks as *ebwacit* or as a product of an abnormality, 'Westernised-Recaptives' have ensured that 'Rolex' has a state-sanctioned carnival to promote it as a Ugandan food.

Media reports celebrating 'Rolex', surely, can only be explained within the logic of 'the-piper-was-called-to-play-and-dance-to-the-tune', within the ethos of the proverb "***he who pays the piper calls the tune***" (Cambridge Dictionary 2016). He who is perceived as *ebwacit* by a significant section of the population, had to be presented as a successful entrepreneur; but who, in reality, is simply an enabler of the global-west's wheat value chain. So, in his article titled: "***Rolex is Uganda's new tourism product***", Kwesiga (2016) sang:

***"Draped in a cloth bearing Uganda flag colours, the state minister for tourism, wildlife and antiquities, Godfrey Kiwanda, announced yesterday that a carnival will take place on Sunday to promote 'Rolex' as Uganda's new tourism product. Before the minister arrived at Uganda media centre in Kampala to make the announcement, an oven containing 'Rolex' was placed on a table in the press conference room. A Makerere University based Kansel Enterprises Company, was hired to provide 'Rolex'. Kiwanda delivered his statement swiftly, saying he could not wait to start eating 'his Rolex'.***

The 'Rolex' saga indeed highlights the dimension of the myth of development which quantifies development only in money terms - how much money or how much cash profit one has made – as long as you are making money, the indignities that you go through to make that money are irrelevant. The myth of development is glorified, moreover, while glossing over or covering up the dark side of so-called 'development interventions', for example, as was explained by the Karamoja focus group (2016):

***"I attribute disappearance of trees to agriculture of crop farming - cutting of trees. You find now there are advocates for 'modern agriculture' who want to grow more food in Karamoja and so people are encouraged to open up large chunks of land for cultivation. When you open up large chunks of land, it means that you are also cutting huge trees. Government policy for Karamoja is pushing so much into agriculture of crop farming. And most organisations that come are coming to support the government idea of what they think Karamoja should be. With government agriculture policy, since they know that agriculture contributes a percentage of the GDP, so they set a blanket policy: "let us do it for the whole of Uganda;" not considering that Karamoja is specific, in its own way. I think, in 2010, we had what they called Karamoja Food Security Policy. The emphasis of that policy was only crop farming. It left out the most resilient livelihood option like livestock for Karamoja. That is why you saw the First Lady, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), opening up big chunks of land. The tractor scheme, you remember? The money that went there - remember the OPM saga. They said they were ploughing one acre at five hundred thousand shillings; one acre! But, what was produced, nobody knows about it. Ordinarily, ploughing one acre of land in Karamoja is just forty thousand shillings.***

*A group in Lotome had opened about 1,000 acres of land, but what was harvested from it, no body accounted. Because, if you go between Lotome and Kangole, between Morulinga, there were a block of farms opened there, but I bet you not even one bag was harvested. Now you go to the sub-county, like Rupa, honestly speaking that one you cannot harvest anything. Rupa is in the dry belt. There is a lot of mining in Rupa. When it comes to farming, it is a loss, it is a dry belt. Then when you go to Nadunget, if you open a farm of cassava plantation and all that, it is the same thing. It is a dry belt.*

*When they come to Karamoja, the NGOs also come with the same idea. We have a number of 'development partners' also working in the agricultural sector. Usually they open very big chunks of land for groups, maybe community groups. And when they are going to dig, they are going to use tractors. So, they cut down the trees in the process. That time when I was in Kotido, there were these organisations that opened farms, something of the kind, and they planted cassava, so many crops and all that. They put up signposts. But, up to date if you went there, you only see the signposts, but believe you me they did not harvest anything. In the past Karimojong used to dig small gardens. But now people have opened huge chunks of land and so in that process a lot of cutting of trees has taken place. People have gone to cut trees because they have gone to farm.*

The way of life of the Karimojong, from whence they derive their sustenance, is dependent on there being green vegetation – grass and shrubs – for their animals to feed. However, the myth of development is causing the permanent destruction of pasture lands; often misjudged as 'underdeveloped'. The 'modernisation narrative' promotes sedentary life styles in which people settle permanently in one area and construct permanent houses or homesteads as is the case in Teso. The consequences for Karamoja are destruction of pasture lands and pushing many in to poverty; as further explained by the Karamoja focus group (2016):

*“Over time, land ownership has changed. Those days, very many people could stay together (in a kraal village setting). Land was communally owned, so the rest of the place would allow for trees growing, because people would be living together. But now land ownership is changing – there is this sale of land – where people are now opening up individual plots. People are now living in families – maybe because the value of land has changed or people are changing their manners. There are also very many people coming from outside to buy land, so everyone wants to go to their land to protect it, in order to be able to go and sell it a little later. Outsiders have come and what has motivated more cutting of trees and charcoal burning is because charcoal burning has become a commercial activity that generates money for the population. In the past, Karimojong would just burn charcoal – small charcoal – that can be used domestically in the family or in the local market. But now charcoal is being transported to Mbale and other big towns. There is another silent killer that is actually destroying the environment. There is currently a project on mining. Mining companies have actually cut down trees; trees that cannot be replaced. Local communities that are also doing local mining are also of necessity cutting down trees.”*

The myth of development is perpetuated and sustained because of dependence on 'back donors', as the Karamoja focus group (2016) explained:

*“At the end of the day when ‘development partners’ write their end of project reports there is a lot of forging around. If I can use this example, one of the organisations here (in Karamoja), I think they had this project of economic empowerment - gender and economic empowerment – something of the kind. The people implementing this project are the Karimojong – us who really do not know much about our cultures, but am a gender person (gender issues expert/officer) working with this project and they expect me to be at the top of everything. We want to see men and women sharing roles, blah, blah. The best way the project thinks they can succeed is by swapping gender roles – where they say: “men we open for you the farms; and then for the women we give you the goats.” So, we believe we are economically empowering the women and the men we are taking them to the gardens to do the work that used to be for the ladies. As time goes by, we go back to the community to check how they are doing with their roles swapped. We go to the ladies and ask: “how are the goats?” And the ladies tell you “aah my husband took the goats.” You go to the men: “where are the gardens?” The gardens have been abandoned. The men have taken charge of the goats and the women cannot pick up from where the men left the gardens. You see these things of forcing things to change. That is not the right approach. Definitely you are going to cook your report.*

*Almost 80 percent of the people use their local indigenous knowledge. The local indigenous knowledge is not expensive. You can practise it wherever you are. For example, an extension service provider is coming and saying you need to de-worm your animals, where am I going to buy the de-wormer and how much is the de-wormer? How much does it cost me as opposed to me going to pick the ticks off my animals? I just enter into my kraal; I see a tick on my cow, pick it and just throw it away. And probably get some of these herbs – abalang (ash salt) and administer on the animals.*

*Sometimes, people come to attend these trainings because there was an allowance, but when they go back they fall back to their original practices. Also the reason that they fall back to their traditional practices is because they have not picked anything from the training. The training manuals are in English. I come and I get one of the people who studied up to Primary Three, to translate for me – that is the person who knows English. Then as a trainer I am speaking English, then the person who stopped in Primary Three is translating, I don't even know Karimojong, how will I explain that that is not what I said. Do you see the knowledge that the person (attending the training) gets, it is only three percent.*

*Most projects, first of all, in the way that they are designed, do not consider the indigenous knowledge. If ‘development partners’ could consider building on the already existing knowledge that they want to diversify, I think maybe we can achieve something. Most times, I used to be mad when I think of that project by the First Lady – modern villages. And then people tell me: “but you Karimojong, they build for you a house for free and you complain.” Then I ask them, but why did she not first find out why Karimojong live in huts? In other parts of Uganda you pay a lot of money to sleep in a cottage with a grass roof – you spend millions to sleep in huts. You don't know why Karimojong build huts.”*

NGOs, in fact, these days are financially close to the governments of their respective countries of origin and in some cases with the governments of the 'aid recipient' countries that they proclaim to 'assist'. NGOs, for example, have become conduits through which global-western government bodies channel 'development interventions'. Global-western government bodies include bilateral bodies, such as: the Department for International Development (DFID) of the government of the United Kingdom and USAID. They include multilateral bodies, such as the EC. Those government bodies, while mostly referred to by the NRMO Administration as 'development partners', in 'NGO-speak', they are more often referred to as 'back-donors'. Within 'NGO-speak', international NGOs (INGOs) mostly like to be described as the 'development partners' of the Ugandan NGOs (UNGOs) and of the constituencies which they claim to serve in 'partnership' with UNGOs.

It is usually the case that the 'back-donors' channel 'development aid' through INGOs to UNGOs. Consequently, because of their financial closeness to government as described above, however well-intentioned they may claim to be, at the end of the day, just as is the case with the NRMO Administration, NGOs are directed by rigid donor conditions from 'back-donors', which they must comply with. It is the 'back-donors' who are calling the tune which NGOs and other recipients of 'development assistance' must sing or dance to. Similar to Dembowski's (2005) observations in relation to the World Bank's inability to make genuine institutional changes because it has to prioritise the interests of its donors':

***“Of course, the governments of the donor countries are used to pursuing their interests and are keenly aware of their power. It is unrealistic to expect them to simply stop calling the tune.”***

In this regard, 'Westernised-Recaptives' do things which they know bring harm to their fellow countrymen, as they strive to dance to and or sing to the tune that the 'donors' call. An Expert (2016), for example, noted how this affects researchers:

***“If one has written one's proposal one must see that one gets 'good results'; results of which the donor should be pleased. I can give an example of aflatoxins in groundnuts, the research ideas often come from the global-west. Even if I am studying aflatoxins and I have given the farmer the way to control them, the farmer may not be able to afford that system of controlling, because I may not be able to facilitate him to get those structures that will help him to process the food without contamination. So I do my research based on what I have seen in the global-western culture and actually try to impose it onto the Ugandan situation. I am trying to please the donor who has given me the money and I'm not really addressing the situation on the ground.”***

Coincidentally, the issue of aflatoxins is a current pet issue among NGOs - Kirabo (2016) highlighted it as an issue of concern to NGOs as part of the CSOs presentation at the JASAR; she lamented:

***“Those are the figures of aflatoxins. Trust me, there is going to be a forum that is going to condemn us for feeding this population on poison. And when we are trying as civil society to understand who is responsible for this particular function; then they say: “there is the food and nutrition department”; then you go to the food and nutrition department, then they say: “we are only two and don't know where we belong.” We wait for that day and we shall discuss the repercussions.”***

'Westernised-Recaptives' perceive aflatoxins as a huge danger, but it seems that their concern is mostly important in order to ensure access to international markets – meet the standards of the United States government or those of the EC, for export of groundnuts and groundnut paste or peanut butter – after all as the Expert noted: ***“aflatoxins in groundnuts, the research ideas often come from the global-west.”*** It is not farfetched for one to infer that on the matter of aflatoxins, the lamentations of NGOs are mostly about them singing the tune of the piper that pays them – the 'back donors' – paving the way for the importation of 'aflatoxin management equipment', of sorts. Another expert, in fact, also explained the drivers of the phenomenon that gives significant power to the global-west to influence policy to the disadvantage of smallholder farmers (2016):

***“The problem is that the private sector is the one that drives policy and that private sector is not necessarily Ugandan. Actually, the Ugandan aspect of the private sector is very miserable – they don't drive any agenda. It is the global actors, big multinational food and agricultural corporations that determine how much land; and that determine the technologies for agriculture – which include genetically modified organisms (GMOs), machinery, fertilisers and irrigation.”***

Increasingly, funding for research is provided by the private sector. The members of the global-private-sector, such as the Gates Foundation, are significant players in shaping policy and practice in the agriculture sector of the so-called third world countries. According to Ndlovu (2013), the Gates Foundation:

***“In the field of agriculture, has been criticised for funding Monsanto, a biotechnology corporation that is seen by the anti-GM lobby as pushing genetically modified crops onto African markets.”***

Within the context of ***“he who pays the piper calls the tune”***, if the donor is The Gates Foundation, which has interests in Monsanto, it is logical to surmise that some of the researchers who receive funding from The Gates Foundation may be nudged to disregard others, such as Vidal (2010), who know Monsanto for its aggression against the wellbeing of smallholder farmers. The negative consequences of the global-private-sector driving policy are unmistakable. They are manifest in the Bidco Kalangala project, the Nile Breweries *Epuripur* sorghum project, crop farming in Karamoja, and in researchers being irresponsible with aflatoxins and 'research-cassava' in Teso.

## **5 Resilient 'African-Ugandan' Food Systems**

Agricultural extension is the major link which ensures the interface of farmers with knowledge systems - education and research. Through agricultural extension, farmers access 'new knowledge'; and influence the production of 'new knowledge'. 'African-Ugandan' smallholder farmers are the custodians of 'African-Ugandan' agricultural knowledge systems; while the 'educated' extension workers, generally, promote global-western knowledge systems. The degree to which smallholder farmers are in contact with extension workers determines the degree to which farmers, in practice, are influenced or not by global-western knowledge.

Since smallholder farmers are mostly not in contact with 'educated' extension workers, it is logical to assert that 'African-Ugandan' agricultural knowledge is widely in use at the grassroots. This is the case, even though exogenous knowledge of the global-west is dominant within policy of the NRMO Administration - the real positive influence of exogenous knowledge at the grassroots level is overrated.

To a great extent, in fact, exogenous and endogenous knowledge at the grassroots run parallel, with meaningful indications that a significant proportion of 'African-Ugandan' smallholder farmers on multiple fronts reject exogenous knowledge and prefer to use endogenous knowledge. 'African-Ugandan' crops and animals determine the food on the plate in the majority of households. The NRMO Administration, its 'development partners' and NGOs are not necessarily the ones that deserve credit for the sustenance of the over 70 percent of Uganda's population who live in the rural areas and depend directly on agriculture for their livelihoods. Those that the NRNO Administration considers as 'investors' in the agriculture sector – such as: Wilmer International, Bidco, Nile Breweries, Madhavani, and Sudhir, are not the ones who provide sustenance for the majority of Ugandans. The majority of the citizens of Uganda are actually the ones providing for their own sustenance, as an Expert (2016) explained:

*“I am tired of Sudhir being given awards as the investor of the year in Uganda; that is rubbish. Sudhir does not feed us. We are (nearly) 40 million people. We have all invested in order to stay alive, only that our staying alive is not valued, that is the difference. Sudhir makes money for himself and for the banks in Europe and he is called the investor for Uganda. We need to know our priorities. We need to prioritise our existence and communicate that to the other guy across (in the global-west). And communicate to the political system there (the global-west) that the only way that you can survive is if we survive. If you destroy us you destroy yourselves as well. We need the guts as well. We don't only need the language we need the guts as well.”*

Of note, Sudhir has even made it onto the front cover of Forbes (2014), as among the richest men in Africa and de facto in Uganda.

## 5.1 Karamoja Food System

*“Among pastoralists in Uganda, Karimojong are the ones who are more resilient. They are really so much attached to the cow. The cow is the way of life. Agriculture, crop farming, came in later, but the cow was everything, it was the existence of the people of Karamoja. They use the cow as a means for food. The way in which they (Karimojong) prepare and preserve their foods is so different. It is so peculiar, as compared to the rest of Uganda. We have, for example, what we call Akuring – fried dried meat, it is roasted in its own oil, without any additives – no onions, no tomatoes. The meat has to be a little bit fatty. That oil that comes from the fat of the meat itself is a preservative. When the meat dries, they keep it in a gourd. They have special gourds which can keep the dried meat for even over a year. So long as no one tampers with it by touching it with fingers. So when they scoop it, they scoop it with a wooden spoon. The own oil from the cow fat preserves the meat. The meat is fried until it is dry and then it is kept in its own oil fat – that is how it is preserved.*

*We have what we call emuna – sun dried meat mixed with cucumber seeds, groundnuts and mixed in honey. The meat is boiled and then after it is dried. After boiling then you pound and then let it dry again. Then they get the seeds of the cucumber that they roast, pound and mix with the meat. Then they get honey and use it, honey is a preservative. Then they add groundnuts, roasted and pounded; may be sesame. Honey is a preservative and it can keep emuna for three to five years. Emuna is also kept in special gourds.*

*Then we have what we call angodich - sorghum meal in ghee – ground sorghum without mixing it with cassava. Or for us now, the ‘modern’ ones, we go for maize ugali. Cook it nicely, it doesn’t have to be hard, it should be a little soft. Then you get the fresh ghee, which has just been boiled, and then you pour it in. And then that is what you eat. I am telling you if you eat that food you don’t have to eat again the whole day. You only need water. Those are beautiful foods.”*

This description of the beautiful foods of Karamoja was given by an expert (2016); a description that does not fit within the imagery of Karamoja that dominates the media, such as that of a BBC Report which Jones (2011) noted:

*“Ended with an image of children (Karimojong children) eating goat skin as a way to survive; a practice Hawksley (the reports narrator) described as “chilling”.”*

Jones is an academic with years of experience researching on Karimojong and Karamoja and he clarifies the BBC report to be based on factoids. He critiqued:

*“Oh, and the bit about eating goat skin, it is probably more of a myth than a reality. When there is hunger in Karamoja people eat the residue from the local sorghum beer ebutia, after it has been brewed.”*

Jones’ observations were confirmed by the Karamoja focus group (2016) who explained how some Karimojong:

*“Bring firewood (to urban centres) and they exchange it to get adakai – residue (of sorghum or maize brew - the left over after the brew is distilled) - that is what people eat.”*

The majority of the people of Karamoja, those whose way of life is pastoralism, who live in rural kraal-settings, derive their sustenance from such cuisine as the expert described as the beautiful foods of Karamoja. They eat *akuring* – fried dried meat preserved in own cow fat. They eat *emuna* – sun dried meat mixed with cucumber seeds and groundnut paste, and preserved in honey. They eat *angodich* – the sorghum and fresh ghee speciality. *“Those are beautiful foods”* of Karamoja, which the Karamoja focus group (2016) confirmed to also include leafy vegetables, cereals, tubers, and cow products:

*“Cow products, like meat, ghee, for those that have; especially when they move to the kraals, there is plenty of that. That is if a cow dies anyway – maybe during the bleeding. (Karimojong bleed cows in order to get blood to drink; often mixed with fresh milk; or sometimes the blood is cooked). Foods like agondich, emuna, are now more like a reserve for ceremonies. Back then they used to be like normal food. It is now a luxury to eat agondich and also emuna. For the side of agondich, that time when the animals were many, it was a welcome food. When you go as a visitor that is the food that they use for welcoming you – they prepare ghee, and then they prepare sorghum meal or maize meal and then they make it into angondich; they pour ghee in it. Then they top the sour milk when you (the visitor) are unable to complete it (by drinking it all at once). The sour milk was to give you appetite at that time. Sour milk was used for eating on a daily basis, but that is not the case now.*

*Now days, if someone has animals, those lactating cows, the milk is reserved for small children or for the shepherds. (This is) because they (shepherds) go very far. The women do without. But, before, there was milk for everybody in the evening. The balance of milk in the evening, they churn it in the evening for morning use and also for the boys to use when they are going to the kraal. And then in the morning also more milk is churned for use during the day and up to evening. There was no scarcity.*

*We eat ngakolil - the cucumber that is very common across the region – we eat both the seeds and the flesh. We also have the local water melon – ngadekela. One thing that I saw from Kapedo side, in a place called Lokial, was when people were gathering these fruits, ecoke, and drying it; mixing it with adakai; and then they grind and they make porridge out of it. So, the ecoke was to make it (the porridge) somehow sweet like sugar and they take it. In the whole Lokial there are about six big trees along the riverside. Maybe, they are not cutting those particular trees because of traditional attachment that they are not supposed to touch those trees, unless otherwise.*

*There are areas where food is not in plenty; there are food constrained areas, like Moroto, where the food people eat is what they buy. They work and they are paid one thousand shillings a day or two thousand shillings a day. With two thousand shillings you feed the entire family.*

Imagery of the “beautiful foods” of Karamoja never makes it to the pages of the dominant media; nor on the front covers of reports by the so-called development actors in Karamoja – the NRM Administration, their ‘development partners’ and CSOs. Rarely, if at all, does the media feature stories which educate readers or viewers of the genuine Karimojong cuisine. Why aren’t *akuring* and *emuna* receiving publicity as Uganda’s unique foods that are a must taste by tourists? Unlike ‘Rolex’, these are genuine indigenous foods of Uganda, for which the Karimojong have the expertise and the comparative advantage.

Why aren’t *akuring* and *emuna*, “those beautiful foods” of Karamoja, produced and packaged to international standards; and marketed in a similar manner as the NRM Administration markets coffee and tea? Why is Karamoja and Uganda as a whole not known for its *akuring* and *emuna* in a similar way as South Africa is known for its Biltong – “*a form of dried cured meat* (Wikipedia 2016)?” The NRM Administration, instead, plans to import semen of the Belgian Blue animals, for the purpose of breeding them for beef for export. How is this more efficient than providing the relevant extension services for the Karimojong Zebu animals so that Uganda can produce, consume and export tons of *akuring* and *emuna*?

According to experts (2016):

*“There is no cattle breeding programme in Karamoja ... Animal research work for Karamoja, in the past, was done at NaSARRI (in Serere in Teso). When NARO restructured in 1995/1996, the animal research was taken to NaLIRRI (National Livestock Resources Research Institute), which is an institution that is based in Tororo (in Eastern Uganda), but they (NaLIRRI) also have a satellite office within NaSARRI. (In addition, NaLIRRI has two other satellite stations in Nakyesa in Wakiso and Lugala in Namayingo; both in central Uganda).”*

Karamoja hosts the highest proportion of livestock in comparison to other regions. How is Karamoja not the location that hosts NaLIRRI? How is it that Karamoja does not even host a satellite station of NaLIRRI? This status quo appears to fit within the general logic in which pastoralism, as a way of life, is systematically marginalised by the NRMO Administration, their 'development partners' and CSOs. Pastoralism is the most viable way of life, moreover, that is currently sustaining the people of Karamoja and has the potential to do even better if it were to receive the requisite support. With appropriate extension services and less neoliberal type 'development interventions', pastoralism in Karamoja has the potential to contribute even more to Uganda's GDP as well, and in a more sustainable and climate friendly manner – cultural tourism.

At the JASAR, the NRMO Administration, through Uganda Coffee Development Authority, instead marketed a fully mimicked coffee culture of the global-west – complete with coffee served in imported plastic or paper cups. Even with coffee, the NRMO Administration does not have confidence in itself to innovate and to develop Uganda's own unique coffee culture. For example, as Ethiopia has done to the extent that *“the coffee ceremony is one of the most recognisable parts of Ethiopian culture* (Wikipedia 2016).” Coffee has cultural and historical significance among peoples of Uganda, including it being a colonial cash crop and therefore, there is plenty from its history for Uganda to craft its own coffee ceremony, instead of mimicking the global-west.

At the JASAR there was no mention of *akuring*, *emuna*, *angodich*, or *sour milk*, as the “beautiful foods” of Karamoja. Nor was there any mention of Karamoja as the home of bees that are producing honey that can preserve meat for years. Nor was there any mention of the fact that, traditionally, Karamoja is gifted with fruit trees such as *ngakolil*, *ngadekela* and *ecoke*; unique fruits whose consumption can significantly contribute to the fight against malnutrition. The NRMO Administration, through OWC is instead focused on 'improved' oranges. An analysis of the cost of procurement and countrywide distribution of orange seedlings by OWC would likely reveal that it would be more efficient for the NRMO Administration to focus on preservation and popularisation of 'wild fruits', such as *ngakolil*, *ngadekela* and *ecoke*, at least in the case of Karamoja. These 'wild fruits' are in addition potentially highly viable economically - Karamoja and Uganda as a whole have comparative advantage for producing these 'wild fruits'.

The NRMO Administration, its 'development partners' and CSOS are generally blind to the enormous unexploited potential of the endogenous food systems of the Karimojong. They are blind to the destruction that their 'development interventions' are causing to the Karimojong food system – pastoralism that is the most viable for Karamoja, as was articulated by the Karamoja focus group:

*Things like wild fruits are no longer that common. Things (fruits) like ngapedur (tamarind), they are not so common. And I think because of deforestation, because of a lot of human activity on the vegetation, it has made all those trees to disappear. People light charcoal from ekorete, that it produces the best charcoal. And also these other fruits like ngapedur, the tamarind trees; they have been cutting them down a lot for charcoal, for wood and for building. So, it has made those foods to completely disappear from where people are settled. And now, basically, they (Karimojong people) have come back to eat the same food that we buy from the market. They (the women) have to come to the market to sell firewood or to sell charcoal or to work in somebody's home. After she is paid then she buys some food, which she goes and cooks for the rest of the household. That is the current practice. Sometimes if you don't have the capacity you end up eating the residue (adakai).*

It is apparent that the Karimojong do not mostly derive their sustenance from food aid that is distributed by WFP and other aid agencies as is popularly perceived. Karimojong people fend for themselves and are investing in order to stay alive. According to an expert (2016) the image of the Karimojong as poor street beggars is exaggerated on the basis of the few Karimojong who due to 'modernisation interventions' have lost their *“freedom to establish ownership over an adequate amount of food”*; a status quo which Sen (1999) advanced as among the causes of food insecurity. The expert assessed:

*“The highest numbers of street children (Karimojong) are those who have migrated from Napak. Currently, statistics show that in Karamoja there is a correlation between districts with low number of livestock and with highest number of street children. Since, Karamoja’s livelihoods are anchored mostly on livestock, those who do not have livestock have no choice; they migrate. Because, this sector (livestock) is not supported, districts that don’t have that asset (livestock) are suffering from the highest level of migration out of the region. Napak, compared to Kotido, has the least number of livestock. If you go to Karamoja, Kotido has the highest number of livestock. If you compare Napak, Kotido, Kaabong, and Moroto, Napak is with the least number of cattle. In fact, some districts in Teso now have more cattle than there are in Napak. Napak borders on Katakwi and Amuria (which are in Teso); it is now common to see people from Karamoja coming to Teso to buy cattle. This is okay but it used to be the other way round. It is very clear that lack of support to this sector (livestock) has fundamentally contributed to immigration out of Karamoja in general and specific districts, in particular. There are statistics to prove that. There is evidence to prove that.*

*Go and sample people in Mbale, in Iganga, in Kisenyi, who are from Karamoja; 70 percent of them come from Napak district. Napak has the highest migration from livestock keeping to crop farming, compared to other districts. Even within the farming systems, regions from which people moved within Karamoja from livestock to crops, in line with government priorities, people suffer from the highest level of malnutrition, of poverty, of insecurity. That is why Amudat is part of Karamoja, but you can’t see a Pokot among the street children. This is because they have cattle compared to Napak. It is clear that migrating out of the livestock systems within Karamoja is causing more threat to livelihoods. It is causing more poverty, more street children coming out. There is a direct linkage. It is rare that you will find children from Kaabong in Kampala. The social structures in those regions have continued to provide even when government is not giving public support. Those regions continue to hinge on the livestock sector. The migration that is happening in Karamoja is not desirable – it is happening because the people’s livelihood has been undermined. If the sector (livestock) was allocated resources, some of those constraints would be addressed. People would have more settled lives. People migrate for various reasons and in this case they are migrating because their livelihood options have collapsed.”*

A decolonised mind that views through lenses other than the dominant ones that dehumanise the Karimojong will undoubtedly appreciate the fact that it is “the beautiful foods” of Karamoja, derived from the pastoralist way of life, from whence Karimojong derive sustenance. Karimojong culture – its food system – is de facto the more resilient in comparison to the exogenous ones currently being imposed on Karamoja, coated in a smoke screen of factoids - negative images of the Karimojong and the pastoralist way of life.

The demonization of Karimojong culture, the most resilient 'African-Ugandan' culture, is likely rooted in the views of those whom Jones (2016) observed as exogenous *“pseudo-scientists and anthropologists (who) developed theories of Africans being innately inferior to people of European origin.”*

It is the role of the NRMO Administration to be the champion of endogenous food systems - to promote *akuring* and *emuna*; to research, to patent and to ensure that the country profits from endogenous foods such as Zebu cow oil fat as a preservative and the use of Karimojong honey as a preservative. It is the NRMO Administration's role to look inward and appreciate the logic of the Karimojong mothers who ensure the nutrition of their shepherd boys with sour milk and 'wild fruit'. What are the nutrients in sour milk, in *ngadekela* fruits and in *ecoke* fruits? These are the questions that public research institutions should investigate and then popularise their findings. It is the role of the NRMO administration to ensure that negative globalisation phenomena do not take root in the country, as is seemingly the case, in relation to Karamoja, in particular, but also in other regions of Uganda, as well. Such phenomena Rivero (2001), an economist asserts do harm:

*“The globalisation and liberalisation of agricultural trade have granted a great power for penetrating the market to the transnational enterprises that produce food. Their very competitive prices eliminate from the competition the farmers from poor countries and erode their national food security policies. This transnational power, moreover, is blessed by the new liberalising rules for agricultural trade promoted by the WTO (World Trade Organisation). These tend to penalise any state intervention to help local farmers and assure the supply of food. To replace food security policies, then, foreign programmes for food aid are promoted, making the poor countries even less able to produce their own food.”*

How is it conceivable that a country that is gifted by nature, which nature allows it to derive sustenance from pastoralism and from 'wild fruits', comes to depend on multinational corporations of the global-west for Plumpy Nut, moreover, as Natukunda and others (2016) reported, that it gets as 'donations'? Plumpy Nut, according to Mobonye (2015), is *“a ready-to-use therapeutic food with extra nutrients for malnourished children.”* It is indeed inconsistent of the NRMO Administration to beg for donations of Plumpy nut while at the same time it is championing 'modernisation interventions' that are destroying fruit trees in Karamoja; a region that has a high incidence of malnutrition in children. Moreover, the NRMO is championing such 'modernisation interventions' under the false assumption that the pastoralist way of life is backward, which is not the case, as the Karamoja focus group explained:

*“I wouldn't attribute the disappearance of trees to pastoralism. Nomads, people who migrate with their animals, like they go to a specific area where there is pasture and water. They stay in that area for less than two months and then they move to another area. They wouldn't come back to this area until the trees and other vegetation has rejuvenated. Pastoralists, naturally, are good environmental people. They are very good conservationists. That is why, those days, even right now, a pastoralist will graze his animals in this area for a restricted period of time and then shifts to another location – just to allow this area to rejuvenate. And remember that our cows don't eat trees - they only entirely depend on grass plus a few shrubs. So pastoralists don't get the motivation to cut trees, just purposely that they want to destroy. They make sure they maintain vegetation.”*

*When you go to those cultural sites where they have akiriket, trees are kept there. The purpose is one: to preserve those trees. Even if a major purpose is also for the trees to be used for cultural functions. It is to keep those trees to allow them have shade, probably provide also some herbs. The ability of our elders to hold the cultural values as before is washed down by the poverty levels. They have left the trees to be cut, yet those days they would protect a large area of trees, by saying that this is a shrine. Those trees would help a lot in terms of food, in terms of wild vegetables. Under nomadic pastoralism, cutting of trees was not cutting of big, big, big trees. They would just cut small trees or branches for fencing. People would not build permanent houses in those kraals. They just put something small like etogo (hut), for mainly lactating mothers, and maybe for some small calves, or very old women who have no one to take care of them at home.*

Karamoja contributes a significant proportion of the malnourished children in Uganda. All because, as a country, we have failed to better appreciate “the beautiful foods” of Karamoja that are derived from the pastoralist way of life; a way of life for which the NRM Administration is attempting to ethnocide. Instead of providing appropriate support to Karamoja, the NRM Administration further damages their way of life through ‘relief food aid’ and celebrates its ‘development partner’, the UN World Food Programme. The ‘recipients of food aid’, interestingly, however, are not always as welcoming of this food aid, especially not as it is often reported by the UN World Food Programme (2016). In some cases, the ‘recipients of food aid’ consider food aid to be among the drivers of food insecurity within their communities. This sentiment was, indeed, expressed by the Karamoja focus group (2016):

*“Those called ‘development partners’, to a greater extent, they are not. They are just the agencies of the donors. They try to work according to the donor regulations – according to the demands of the donors. But little do they pay attention to the critical issues that come from the ground. Like now, the climate pattern of Karamoja has really changed. If, for example, (UN) World Food Programme, that started distributing food in Karamoja over 50 years ago, we can calculate all that money invested in food distribution. If that money was to have been re-directed to irrigation schemes in Karamoja, I think by now these things of hunger, famine in Karamoja would be history. It is a wild idea, damming (putting a dam on), for example, Lopeei River (Lopeei is actually a swamp or water catchment). If Lopeei River (swamp) is dammed (a dam is put on Lopeei) it can create a lake – a large manmade lake that can irrigate Moroto, Kotido and Napak. Even the fish can come and the fisheries officers can get work. We are tired of food aid of (UN) World Food Programme; but (UN) World Food Programme is not paying attention to that – for them they do their work. At the end of the year, they need to write their reports and account to their donors. That is not the way of life we want to continue in Karamoja.”*

## 5.2 Teso Food System

The Teso food system is adversely affected by ‘modernisation initiatives’, by the introduction of ‘modern crops’ and by the promotion of the neoliberal narrative. The *Epuripur* sorghum saga and ‘research-cassava’ saga are clear examples of how Teso food systems are adversely affected. Sorghum and cassava are major staple foods for the Iteso, which they need for preparing *atap*. Without millet, sorghum and cassava, they consider themselves food insecure.

The experience of the Iteso with *Epuripur* sorghum is, indeed, an example that supports the conclusion of Pottier (1999), an anthropologist, that:

***“Higher incomes as a result of cash cropping do not necessarily lead to nutritional benefits for the small-scale producers involved.”***

The switch to *Epuripur* sorghum growing downgraded the nutritional value of *atap*. Teso lands were diverted to produce a sorghum variety that the Iteso could not eat as *atap*. The bulk of the cash incomes from the sale of *Epuripur* sorghum most likely did not get used for ensuring the purchase of nutritious food to be consumed at home; food, in particular, that has similar or better nutritional value as sorghum varieties that can be eaten as *atap*.

The ‘accidental release’ of ‘research-cassava’, within the same period as the negative impact of *Epuripur* sorghum was beginning to be felt in Teso, made the food security situation in Teso worse. The manner in which the Iteso living in Teso are responding to the catastrophic impacts of *Epuripur* sorghum and ‘research-cassava’, however, confirms resilience of the Teso food system. The ‘research-cassava’ saga clearly demonstrates the resilience of ‘African-Ugandan’ style seed systems - the practice of saving seed from the harvest for planting during the next season; and sharing seed with other fellow community members – often free of charge – still persist.

It is through the practice of ‘African-Ugandan’ style food systems that ‘research-cassava’ stems spread fast and wide, as an expert (2016) explained:

***“The community got a hold of it and it spread wide. They see big tubers and they say: “let me also take and plant in my garden.” Another person will find it in your compound and then they say: “let me also take some cuttings from you”, and it spreads like that.”***

It is also within the same logic that the Iteso are now trying to repair the damage, as explained by the Teso focus group (2016):

***“When the cassava rotted in-field, people now tried to look for the non-improved good cassava cuttings – the old cassava varieties. It was really hard to find them.”***

There is every indication that the Iteso succeeded in finding and planting the good varieties of cassava, which they were used to prior to the introduction of ‘research cassava’. The good cassava varieties, according to Otim-Nape and other scientists (2001), that the Iteso had long abandoned growing in the early 1990s - varieties which are good for food that were mostly grown in Teso – Kumi and Soroti, such as *Ebwanateraka*, *Alado*, *Bao*, *Migyera*, *Nase 1*, *Adipu* and *Ochole*. Ordinarily, the good cassava varieties of the past take one year and a half (18 months) before they are ready for harvest. This means that the food insecurity situation in Teso currently remains dire and will probably continue to be so for a while longer, as the Iteso wait for the good cassava that they have now planted to mature.

Some Iteso, who may have planted cassava in the fields from which they had immediately before harvested *Epuripur* sorghum, sadly, may get poor harvests a year and a half later. The poor harvest may come because the soils of their land had probably been depleted by the high feeder that is *Epuripur* sorghum. How ironic it is that ‘modern crops’ – *Epuripur* sorghum and ‘research-cassava’ - are at the epicentre of the root causes of prevailing food insecurity in Teso.

How fascinating it is that 'African-Uganda' culture – seed sharing practices - unintentionally caused the exposure to and accelerated the dark side of 'modern crops'. One of the reasons that 'research-cassava' rotted in-field, it is rumoured, is that it was apparently faster maturing than the traditional cassava varieties that the Iteso are familiar with. 'Research-cassava' apparently matured during a period of less than one year; and as soon as it matured it was important that it was harvested and utilised shortly after.

In the absence of good agricultural extension to accompany 'research-cassava' - after all its release to the community was 'accidental' – the Iteso fell back to 'African-Ugandan' knowledge. They utilised agronomic practises for the good cassava varieties that they are familiar with, those which take eighteen months to mature, and applied them with a cassava variety that matures in less than a year. No wonder, 'research-cassava' rotted in-field - by the time they went to harvest it, eighteen months later, they found that its harvest time was way overdue and it had rotted. The 'research-cassava' saga confirms that at the grassroots level it is the endogenous knowledge that is practised the more.

'Research-cassava' would have disrupted the Teso food system even though it had been good to eat as *atap*. Its ability to mature fast and to produce 'big long' tubers are highly appreciated. Its qualities, however, which demand that it should all be harvested a short while after it has matured posed a serious challenge to the Teso food system. In as far as cassava is concerned, within the Teso food system, the field is the store where it is kept and from whence it is harvested in small quantities for immediate use only. That is to say, the cassava remains in-field over a long period of time as the families harvest only the quantities that they require for food over short periods – a week or so. The old cassava varieties had the ability to remain 'fresh' in-field for long periods of time and therefore allowed families to have access to 'fresh' cassava at intervals and throughout the year. In this regard, therefore, 'research-cassava' that came from 'modern science' was truly inferior.

'Research-cassava' caused the Iteso to abandon the growing of the good cassava that they are used to; they were most likely seduced by the neoliberal narrative which touts 'modern food crops' as good income earners as well as good food security crops. The factoids within the neoliberal narrative are often easy to miss until one has experienced their negative consequences, as did the Iteso with *Epuripur* sorghum and 'research-cassava'. When they realised that the 'modern crop' was bad and they wanted to revert back to the good varieties that they were previously familiar with, the Iteso experienced hardship - "it *was really hard to find them (the cuttings for the good cassava varieties.*" Such is the dark side of 'modern crops'. The Iteso had to go through hardship to find cuttings for good cassava varieties, while existing within Teso Region is a public agricultural research centre, NaSARRI that could not help them, because as an expert (2016) explained:

***Originally, cassava research was the mandate of NaSARRI, but then when NARO re-structured its programmes it was allocated to NaCRRI. There is a need to take back cassava to NaSARRI because the area NaSARRI is mandated to do research on is a cassava feeding area – that is mainly the staple food. NaSARRI covers Eastern and Northern Uganda. NaCRRI is located in Central Region of Uganda."***

The NRMO Administration's insufficient concern for the food security of Iteso is a logical explanation as to why it removed the mandate to research on cassava from NaSARRI and allocated it to NaCRRI. An Administration that is sufficiently concerned for the food security of the citizens of the country it governs, on the matter of the 'research-cassava' saga in Teso, should have returned the mandate to research on cassava for food to NaSARRI; while it left NaCRRI with the mandate to continue researching on cassava for cash, as an expert (2016) explained:

***“There is a need to take back cassava (research) to NaSARRI because the area NaSARRI is mandated to do research on is a cassava feeding area – that is mainly the staple food. NaSARRI covers Eastern and Northern Uganda. NaCRRI is located in Central Region of Uganda, in Wakiso.*”**

There are indications, moreover, that the decision of the NRMO Administration to remove the mandate of researching on cassava from NaSARRI to NaCRRI may have been because cassava is now among the **“new cash crops”** that the Administration and its ‘development partners’ are popularising for the market. Cassava is now one of the crops that the NRMO Administration perceives as among those that will help it to meet its commitment to the CAADP. According to its Namulonge Agricultural and Animal Production Research Institute (2006):

***“Future strategies for cassava development will rest on government policies and infrastructures that will be supportive of cassava research and development, increased funding and human resource deployment and motivation, improved processing, storage, commercialization and marketing of the crop.”***

Blinded by its commitment to the CAADP, the NRMO Administration undermines the food security of millions of citizens of the country that it governs, who depend on cassava as a staple food. Some may wonder why cassava, a non-indigenous food that is not high in nutrients, found favour among the Iteso and became among their major staple food. According to Otim-Nape and others (2001):

***“Cassava was introduced to Uganda through Tanzania by Arab traders between 1862 and 1875. Following its initial introduction, cassava quickly spread to other areas of Uganda, where it is currently one of the most important food crops ... Cassava was quickly adopted and integrated into the traditional food systems of many tropical areas. Some of the main reasons for this are: the adaptability of the crop; the ease of cultivation and processing; an ability to grow despite environmental stress; and the limited inputs required. Cassava accounts for approximately a third of the total staple food produced in sub-Saharan Africa and it is grown almost exclusively as human food in 39 African countries. Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Uganda, Ghana and Angola are the largest producers.”***

There is clearly a sound logical reason as to why cassava has found favour among the Iteso and why it became a major staple food in the Teso region. Teso region is generally of semi-arid climatic conditions and, therefore, it makes sense for the Iteso to favour a food crop with **“an ability to grow despite environmental stress.”** A crop, moreover, that is easy to cultivate and to process – produce it using the handheld hoe; and process it by sun-drying and grinding or milling into flour. Importantly, also, as Morgan and Choct (2016) established **“cassava roots can be left in the ground for over a year, requiring very little input”**, thus solving the challenge of storage.

The importance of cassava within the Teso food systems is confirmed by findings of another study (2012) with 276 Iteso respondents, each representing a household located in one of six villages in five districts of Teso - 97 percent of the respondents consider cassava as among Iteso proper foods. Morgan and Choct (2016) established that:

***“Compared with cereal grains, cassava is low in protein and the protein it has is of poor quality with very low essential amino acid contents.”***

Within the Iteso food system, the manner in which cassava is consumed as *“an additive to either millet or sorghum to make atap to accompany sauces”* (Otim-Nape, et al. 2001), ensures that millet and sorghum compensate for the nutrition insufficiency in cassava and it enhances the nutritional value of cassava. The Teso focus group (2016) also confirmed the importance of cassava within the Teso food system and how it is consumed as *“a mix of cassava and sorghum to make atap; and as atap of cassava only because now sorghum is scarce.”*

The nutritional value of cassava, as established by scientists (Salvador, Steenkamp and McCrindle 2014), being composed of carbohydrates and is therefore mainly a source of energy, is most certainly the reason that cassava holds a central position within Teso food systems. According to the Iteso, respondents to another study (2012), *atap*, no doubt consisting of cassava as an additive, is their favourite food; and keeping one strong was the main reason that the Iteso cited as to why *atap* was their favourite. Cassava being a major staple food within the Teso food system is clearly not by accident. It is so by sound reason and logic. It exemplifies the age-old wisdom that Hoebel (1958) bequeathed humanity:

*“Food getting is a physical imperative; subsistence, a fundamental interest; and hunger a diffuse primary drive. Any society which fails to develop at least minimal subsistence techniques is doomed. The ghost of Malthus haunts all mankind. In the ghastly light of the twentieth-century population explosion, the ghost becomes ever more restless. The subsistence resources available to a people depend upon three factors: natural environment, population and culture.”*

Within the context of the semi-arid climatic conditions of Teso, cassava is a good choice as a food crop. In terms of meeting the nutritional needs of the growing population of Teso and in a manner that is culturally acceptable to them, cassava is a good choice as a food. Food security, after all, is also about having access to food that is culturally preferred; at least within the framework of the meaning of food security as is defined by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (2013) as:

*“A situation that exists when all people, at all times have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”*

There is every indication, that despite the onslaught against their way of life and their food systems, the Iteso will most likely continue to consume cassava and regard it as a central staple food crop for many more years to come. The hardship that the Iteso went through in order to find the good cassava cuttings demonstrates the resilience of cassava and the Teso food system. When faced with the disaster of ‘research-cassava’, the Iteso looked inwards to the cassava varieties that they are familiar with and made the necessary efforts to re-establish the growing of those varieties. The hardship that the Iteso went through to find the good cassava cuttings also demonstrates the insufficient concern of the NRMO Administration for the food security of citizens at the grassroots level. The NRMO Administration clearly abandoned the Iteso and let them fend for themselves, using ‘African-Ugandan’ knowledge.

In many ways, however, ‘modernisation interventions’ are succeeding in causing the disappearance of Teso foods, ways of food preparation and consumption, as the Teso focus group (2016) explained:

*“Some people you find them that they no longer want to eat emagira (sauce made out of cowpeas). Emagira used to be cooked really well in the past and people would eat and be happy that they have eaten. But now, these days, people are like “I don’t*

*eat emagira, I have wounds in the stomach.” There was a way in the past that amakio (elderly women) used to cook – you find that they used to add ghee or groundnuts paste into emagira (to make a rich sauce). We in this generation have now forgotten those ways of preparing food. Those days, people would eat that emagira which is cooked with ghee and groundnuts, and they would be happy and, their lives were flourishing.*

*Even in ecadoi (green vegetable) they would put ghee and groundnut paste, and people would eat it with happiness. Now, these days, our generation we slice ecadoi, cook it and eat it right away on the same day. But those days preparation of ecadoi could go over a period of a week or even a month. In fact, in those days, people would even refuse to eat ecadoi which had only been prepared for three days. Ecadoi was very useful for us, especially the one cooked with groundnut paste – you would eat it with extreme happiness. Now these days, they slice it that very day and cook it and it is bitter. It is not good to eat ecadoi straight away on the first day of preparation. It needs to overnight for days – for at least a week. Then you can add groundnut paste or sour milk and it is very nice to eat with atap. You get satisfied really well – it is heavy food. You sleep well and you wake up in the morning still satisfied.*

*Even the special gourds for churning sour milk are scarce these days. For me an old woman, I still have those gourds. I still have mine up to today. I churn sour milk in my gourd – I tie it on the house pole and I push it back and forth and it is really nice to hear the sound of the milk being churned. I even make my own ghee here at my home. For me the old woman I have one akiteng na ikyiri (lactating cow), but I also buy milk. When I buy milk, I drink some fresh and put the rest in the special gourd for churning sour milk and making ghee. I accumulate my little ghee and the next day I have some to add into my sauces. For me I have seen that even that sour milk when it is added to sauces it was like medicine – when people eat those sauces they rarely fell sick – there were few ailments. Elderly women of those days I can see rarely got ill. But these things we fry, even tomorrow qua, qua, qua, every day, they have brought problems. Even the oil that we use for frying we buy that which is imported - from Mukwano – Fortune. Now most people, even us, we are now used to fried food. But those fried foods have brought disease or sicknesses. There are now many diseases because of eating fried food.”*

The older generation of the Iteso perceive traditional Teso foods as being far superior. This is a powerful confirmation of the resilience of the Teso food system. In spite of the attack that they are now experiencing, Teso foods will continue to be consumed by the Iteso for many more years to come, until, at least, when the current ‘older’ generation has passed on. Teso foods will remain resilient because the Iteso will probably realise the economic sense of consuming their traditional foods and, moreover, that are prepared in the traditional ways of the Iteso. In the longer-term, Teso foods will prevail, especially so, when the Iteso genuinely appreciate that consuming *atap* of plain cassava accompanied with fried cabbage is not as nutritious as consuming *atap* of plain cassava accompanied with *emagira*, with groundnuts and or with sour milk. It is not value for money to buy and consume the less nutritious plain cassava *atap* with fried cabbage; in comparison to growing and consuming the traditional *atap* of sorghum-cassava accompanied with rich sauces, such as, *emagira*, and *ecadoi*. The younger generation will come to appreciate the wisdom of treating cassava purely as an additive food to sorghum and or millet to make *atap* more nutritious, as opposed to eating *atap* of plain cassava.

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