

# The Katine Community Partnerships Project (KCPP)

**First Visit Report, by Rick Davies (M&E Consultant<sup>1</sup>), January 2008**

---

## Summary of recommendations

1. The final objectives of the project need clarification and agreement, by AMREF, its donors and local stakeholders. This agreement should be evident in a smaller set of indicators that show changes in people's lives, which reflect the impact of all five project components, and which can be easily be monitored by community groups.
2. Working with a range of local community groups, who are linked into government structures, is at the core of the KCPP strategy for achieving sustainable improvements to people's lives in Katine. Ways of tracking overall improvements in the performance of these groups need to be developed, in consultation with them.
3. The scale of project investment varies substantially across components, but in at least three components there are not enough resources to provide all villages with at least some minimal level of assistance (however defined). The livelihoods component seems especially under-invested. A strategy needs to be developed to either obtain expanded funding, or to ensure replication of AMREF activities in unassisted villages by other parties.
4. The key to the long term sustainability of the achievements of the project is likely to be the work done on governance, both of the assisted community groups, and how they relate to the wider structures of government in the district. This is the area of the project most in need of technical back up, possibly by a third party, as is the case with Farm Africa and the livelihoods activities.
5. In the longer term, AMREF needs to be able to provide evidence of about two types of change processes, that ideally would then be replicable elsewhere
  - What type of packages of support can best lead to desired improvements<sup>2</sup> in the functioning of particular community groups
  - How the functioning of specific community groups can lead to particular improvements in the quality of peoples lives.
6. Progress has been made with the development of an Open Information Policy but its implementation needs to be accelerated, if it is to be seen as anything more than a gesture. Disclosure of project documents to the external evaluator has improved, but will need to fit *within* the time schedule of future visits to Katine.
7. The Guardian website should refer to AMREF's "Katine Community Partnerships Project" in order to emphasise that it is an AMREF project, not a Guardian project and that the project is working through partnerships with local community organisations, not directly aiding individual households.
8. AMREF's participation in the Guardian website faces challenges. Cut-off time for comments on postings is too short for staff working with limited access to the internet and electrical power. The Guardian needs to adapt its standard procedures. On the other hand, AMREF's policy of having their views expressed via one official spokesperson needs to be relaxed. It appears contrary to their objective in Katine of empowering people to speak up, rather than be spoken for.

---

<sup>1</sup> Webpage: [www.mande.co.uk](http://www.mande.co.uk) Email: [rick.davies@gmail.com](mailto:rick.davies@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> The "desired improvements" would need to be identified via negotiations between relevant stakeholders.

### **Responses to the Farm Africa & Barclays 4<sup>th</sup> February Trip Report**

1. This is a new section, not included in the draft version because the Farm Africa & Barclays report was not yet available. Their report raised a number of issues that relate to my Terms of Reference as the external evaluator.
  2. They noted “a lack of clarity as to the overall goal and purpose of the project”, the reference to multiple types of outcomes but the lack of balance of attention to these within the baseline survey. Similar concerns have been expressed in this report. The problem is most evident when comparing AMREF’s views with Farm, Barclays and the Guardian, and less evident within AMREF.
  3. They “estimated that there are at least a further twenty NGO/CBOs in Soroti and Katine engaged in similar programmes employing a community group approach”. Associated with this is the risk “of placing an unnecessary burden on project beneficiaries to set up different groups to access the benefits of individual components” My next visit will therefore need to pay attention to two questions:
    - How many of the groups being used by AMREF staff are pre-existing, versus newly created? Ideally (but not always) AMREF will be building on existing structures.
    - What do AMREF staff know about past groups that were set up and then failed? Ideally lessons from these local experiences will be feeding into the design of their work with current groups (both new and pre-existing)
  4. Related to this point, their report noted “There are many other agencies working in Soroti District and Katine Village with several years of experience. Some are trying to achieve the same goals as AMREF and FARM-Africa and some have similar approaches. We were concerned that Katine Project staff seem to have made little contact with these agencies to learn from their experience and some staff believed that they must seek formal approval from AMREF before they have dialogue with these agencies.” Relationships with such agencies will be monitored in the July 2008 visit and thereafter.
  5. They noted, “It is not clear how work in the 18 villages covered by the livelihood component relates to the other components and a map showing clearly the villages covered by the different components of the project would be useful”. This is consistent with the discussion in this report about integration, and the potential usefulness of the village profiles database as a means of tracking how this is being realised at the village level.
  6. They noted a difference in approach between the livelihoods and other components, with its less emphasis on quick wins and no use of material aid. These differences have the potential to create conflict and misunderstanding both within the Katine team and with the communities they are working with. They will be the subjects of attention in my next visit, in July 2008.
  7. Related to this are the inherent problems of the livelihoods component being subject to direction both from Farm Africa (technically) and AMREF (managerially). Further negotiations are clearly needed to establish shared expectations. This work also needs ongoing monitoring.
-

## ***Background***

1. This brief report describes the process and findings of my visit to Uganda from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2008.
  - The first section provides a summary of the coverage of the different objectives spelled out in the Terms of Reference for my visit.
  - The second section looks at my interpretation of the project design and some initial views on some of the strengths and weaknesses that are apparent at this stage
2. This report is for the attention of the staff of the Guardian, Barclays, AMREF and Farm Africa. If accepted, it should then become publicly available via my website and links from the Guardian Katine website

## ***A summary of the coverage of the objectives in ToRs***

### **To become familiar with the project design and the roles and responsibilities of the different AMREF staff associated with Katine,**

3. I met with AMREF Uganda And AMREF HQ staff in Kampala at the beginning and end of my visit. The remaining ten days were spent in Soroti, with frequent day trips to Katine sub-county. In Soroti I met all of the KCPP staff, plus other AMREF staff associated with projects elsewhere in Soroti districts. I was able to have one-to-one meetings with the staff working on each of the components, and accompany each component team on their scheduled activities in Katine. At the beginning and end of the visit I had introductory and debriefing meetings with whole team, and during the visit I had repeat meetings with Carol Idusso and Sarah Margiotta, the current co-managers of the project.
4. I also met with senior officials in the Soroti district administration (the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), the District Councillor (LCV), and the Director of the District Health Service (DDHS)). Although these were largely protocol meetings, I did take the opportunity, in the meeting with the DDHS, to learn about the District's annual planning process and how the health sector and Katine sub-country fitted into that process. AMREF's own planning processes connect in with these processes.
5. As part of the process of understanding the project design I developed a short paper summarising my understanding of the project design, which I discussed with staff in Soroti and Kampala. This is the focus of the second part of this paper.

### **Including the geography and economy and how key features of the community (health centres, schools, etc) can be made more visible to Guardian website visitors so they can understand the context in which the project is operating**

6. I visited many locations within Katine, but not did not cover the whole sub-county. I visited the sub-country offices, schools, water points, training events, and village meetings<sup>3</sup>. During these trips I often used a GPS to get location fixes on a number of schools, boreholes, etc, to help locate them on maps that might be useful on the Guardian website, and of use to the AMREF staff, especially the WATSAN team<sup>4</sup>. During these visits I often travelled with the Guardian journalist, Richard Kavuma. I also took the opportunity to interview one of the AMREF drivers about the history of the sub-country, including the insurgency.

---

<sup>3</sup> But no health services, because on this first visit I wanted to accompany staff on their existing work schedules, rather than divert them to locations which were specifically of interest to me (such as health centres)

<sup>4</sup> On return to the UK it appears that GPS fixes do not correspond well with visible landmarks on Google Earth. Possibly because of different systems of coordinates. This needs more investigation.

**To clarify and agree on the role of the external evaluator, and the suggested evaluation criteria to be used (OECD 5 plus 2), and the M&E responsibilities of AMREF, Barclays and other stakeholders**

7. Throughout the visit I encouraged AMREF staff at all levels to participate in the online survey re the role of the external evaluator, using printed out forms, if internet access was not available. However, up to now there have been no additional participants in the survey. Only two AMREF Africa staff members have participated in total. This is disappointing. I have queried whether staff may feel that they are not allowed to take part, but AMREF Uganda staff were adamant that this was not the case.
8. I have discussed the seven proposed evaluation criteria<sup>5</sup> with AMREF staff in Kampala and Soroti. Including the importance of identifying which of these should be a priority at different stages of the KCPP. In column two of the table in Annex 1 of this report I have also made some suggestions about where in the project design each criterion may be most relevant.
9. Discussion of the M&E responsibilities of AMREF, Barclays and other stakeholders was more limited. The focus was on which local stakeholders might be expected to know about what kinds of developments in different components and stages of the project. This discussion was with AMREF only, in Soroti and Kampala.

**To review progress with design and implementation of the M and E plan, including: (a) The baseline survey and community needs assessments, (b) The identification of appropriate indicators of the combined impact of different parts of the integrated program (c) How AMREF will be storing survey information and it's wider knowledge management strategy**

10. I had extensive discussions about the baseline survey in Kampala and Soroti with the responsible AMREF staff, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS) team and the survey enumerators. My main concerns were
  - The survey results will only allow comparisons between the six parishes, not smaller units such as villages (66 in all). However other surveys, especially the Village Profiles, may be able to provide a more detailed and more frequently updated view<sup>6</sup>.
  - The length of the survey and the possible implications for loss of quality towards the end of the interviews survey. UBoS were adamant that this was not a problem.
  - The need for an analysis plan that will spell out what frequency distributions and cross-tabulations will be produced. I will be seeking further information on progress in this area.
11. I have commented on the summary report of the needs assessment, but have not received any response to those comments from AMREF. My comments should now go into the public domain. I have requested, and now received, a copy of the full report of the needs assessment. This lists priority needs in each of the five sectors that the project will be addressing. My main concern is that the list of priorities is not disaggregated by kind of group, community (e.g. their location) or

---

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.mande.co.uk/uganda/Katine%20M&E%20FAQs.htm> | Relevance | Efficiency | Effectiveness | Impact | Sustainability | Equity | Transparency | Glossary

<sup>6</sup> An AMREF HQ staff member has subsequently made the important point that “I think this is very crucial issue we must resolve. If the parish provided the unit of measure for the baseline (supposedly the benchmarks), should we then expect change at this level or indeed at the village level? In my view, the level at which opportunities for community empowerment (participation, voice, organisation and governance) exist/are maximised (such as planning and resource allocation within the national decentralisation framework) is also the most important level at which to measure change.”

gender. This weakness needs to be addressed, as early as possible during project implementation.

12. I met with each component team to discuss the indicators that had been identified for their work. I have tabulated information about these (Annex 3), for discussion with AMREF staff. My main points of concern were:

- The limited number of impact indicators for education and governance, showing how people's lives had changed in these areas. By impact indicator I means indicators of change in people's lives.
- The large number of indicators of improvements in the health services, making it difficult to come to a summary judgement about the progress made. The use of checklists (with weighted items) to produce summary performance scores, was suggested.
- The absence of governance performance indicators for the community groups that AMREF will be working with

13. I discussed with four members of the project team the issue of how to ensure the project was an integrated one, rather than five separate streams of activity (health, education, etc). The main means of addressing this issue could be:

- Seeing governance as the pre-eminent development issue, that must be addressed by all other components, in order for their achievements to be sustained in the longer term
  - Seeing simple M&E capacity building as an integral element in the governance work undertaken with local organisations
- Finding impact indicators that would summarise / reflect the cumulative and combined impact of AMREF's work in all five areas. For example, primary school completion rates could reflect the impact of increased household incomes, improved health and improved water supply and sanitation<sup>7</sup>.

14. Some time was spent discussing how information was being stored and made accessible within the project. Work had begun on two potentially very useful databases, concerning community structures and the membership of those structures. The Village Profiles were also identified as a potentially very useful database that: (a) could easily be updated every quarter by project staff; (b) be of use and interest to the villages themselves, the sub-country administration, and to other NGOs; and (c) useful to AMREF for tracking the geographical distribution of its investments, and the results in terms of the development of community groups, and changes in the incidence of poor households.

**To review progress with project implementation against work plans, for the first quarter (October – December 2007), in the light of agreed evaluation criteria**

15. Discussions were held with staff from each component on progress they had made relative to their workplans. With all components progress was not as rapid as expected in the original workplans. Progress was more noticeable in the health, water and education components and least so in the area of livelihoods and governances. However, it should be noted that the staff have been working within the constraints of very limited office space and limited availability of transport.

16. A copy of the KCPP activity report for the first quarter has been requested, but not yet received. Advice has been given on:

- The possible use of simple visual coding of workplans to show at a glance where progress was being made and not made.

---

<sup>7</sup> This indicator is included in the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2008 revision of the M&E Plan

- The need to ensure that activities involving staff time, but no extra budget costs, are included in workplans, to ensure that the full range of work being undertaken is given adequate recognition.

**Monitor the impact of the Guardian & Barclays partnership with AMREF, including: The flow of external visitors to Katine; The need for a flow of current news on Katine on the programming of project activities**

17. A number of potential impacts were identified, and need to be monitored:

- Reduced levels of field activity because of diversion of staff time into facilitation of field visits
- A continuing flow of foreign visitors to villages in Katine sub-county may raise community expectations well beyond those that AMREF could address.
- Pressure to deliver observable improvements in people's lives might lead to community development activities being "sped up", routinised, and ritualised and this being much less effective. For example the development of village water committees in 32 villages prior to boreholes being developed in those villages
- Reduced willingness by staff to take risks in their field work because of concern that any mistakes/failures will become the subject of media attention
- More positively, the presence of watchful public comments on the Katine website may help ensure that the external evaluator does not lose his independence of views. It would be useful if a session of each visit was devoted specifically to seeking staff responses to the contents of the website

**To agree on procedures for making Katine documents publicly available**

18. Limited progress has been made here. While in Soroti I was notified that the Open Information policy was now available on the AMREF UK website<sup>8</sup>. Two concerns remain. The implementation guidelines will not be available until mid-2008, and full implementation is not expected until the end of 2008, one third the way through the Katine project. I have requested AMREF to speed up the achievement of these milestones specifically for the Katine project.

**To identify a range of local stakeholders in Katine who could be contacted and consulted during each six monthly visit**

19. This was done through discussions primarily with the Governance project officer, who has compiled a community structures database. A sub-set of these groups is at the centre of the project strategy. It is likely that members of these groups will form part of a set of local stakeholders who I will make contact with each visit<sup>9</sup>. During this visit I made contact with three groups, in the course of accompanying project staff in their daily work (Health Unit Management Committees, Village Water Committees, and primary school teachers).

**To provide M&E capacity building assistance to AMREF, where requested**

20. In each of the meetings with project staff I was able to provide some advisory support on appropriate M&E methods. In addition, and at staff request, I provided an after-hours introductory session on the use of the Most Significant Changes (MSC) technique.

---

<sup>8</sup> Available via a key word search at <http://uk.amref.org/silo/files/amref-open-information-policy.doc> But not visible via other navigation means.

<sup>9</sup> Possibly on a rolling sample basis, to allow some continuity, but to reduce the possibility of side effects of focusing only on a known sample of groups

## ***An interpretation of the project design***

21. All projects have theories-of-change (ToC), but these are not always that visible, or completely agreed upon. A ToC is a view of how a project is expected to work, how the various activities will help achieve changes in people's lives. Clarifying a project's ToC makes it easier to plan activities, to M&E achievements and to communicate what the project is all about. Clarifying the ToC for multi-sectoral projects can be a special challenge. How do all the bits fit together? Is the theory-of-change here anything more than "more of everything will be more effective than a bit of something" That is one of the challenges facing the KCPP.
22. The table in Annex1 is a type of Logical Framework<sup>10</sup>, a summary statement of what the project is all about, as seen by myself at this stage. The left column provides a very simplified story about how AMREF expects project Activities to lead to Outputs to lead to Outcomes (Purpose level) to lead to Impact (at Goal level).
23. A more complex perspective becomes available when the Purpose level events are described in more detail, through the use of a network diagram (in Annex 2). This view will become even more complex still when different groups of households within Katine (referred to at the Goal level), are disaggregated by type (e.g. the 66 villages). At present the network view shows all households as one group.
24. Looking at the network of actors involved at the Purpose level helps emphasise the importance of two questions of about the KCPP strategy:
- What groups / organisations should AMREF work with, and how?
  - Who else matters, who could affect their work with these groups / organisations?
25. AMREF staff already have views in this area, but they need communicating to the Guardian and its readers. Many readers will not realise how critical the actors at the Purpose level are to AMREF's whole strategy.
26. Stepping back to look at the wider picture, via the Logical Framework , there are two big hypotheses (i.e. expectations) that AMREF's M&E activities need to pay attention to:
- If AMREF delivers these goods and services then these groups will function better (the Output to Purpose hypothesis)
  - If these groups function better, then peoples lives will improve (the Purpose to Goal hypothesis)
27. To test these hypotheses, AMREF will need to make two types of internal comparisons, using all available data at hand:
- Between different groups to see if differences in their performance are related to differences in the type and scale of assistance they have received from AMREF
  - Between different communities to see if changes in their lives are related to changes in the performance of groups that assist their communities.

### **Changes in people lives (Goal level)**

28. AMREF HQ's view is that the KCPP is essentially a health program with additional components involving other sectors than health. However, I suspect the Guardian and its readers may see the KCPP as more of a poverty reduction program, within which there are necessarily health components. In terms of actual indicators of change in people lives, there are 33 in all (13 water, 10 health, 7 livelihoods, 2 education and 1 governance). Assuming data will be available on these indicators,

---

<sup>10</sup> For background on the Logical Framework, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logical\\_framework\\_approach](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logical_framework_approach)

summarising them into a conclusive statement about impact achieved will be a challenge, for AMREF, district administrators and the Guardian and its readers.

29. My recommendation is that this list needs some rationalisation though discussion of the interests of at least three different groups of stakeholders
- AMREF, whose project activities may be more likely to influence some of these changes than others
  - The Guardian, and its readers, who may be interested in some changes more than others
  - The village, sub-country and district administration, who will have more interest in some outcomes than others, and who might be expected to be monitoring these changes (even though some capacity building may be necessary here)
30. Some attention will also need to be given by project staff to other developments in people's lives that have not arisen from project interventions. These are likely to have consequences that the project will need to pay attention to; Two very noticeable developments are the spread in ownership of mobile phones, and the tarmac'ing of the main road leading north through the centre of Katine sub-country. Both could have a big impact on people's livelihoods, but the latter could also negatively affect people's health through the spread of HIV/AIDs and increased risk of car accidents. Ideally, AMREF's quarterly activity reports should give such space to the reporting and analysis of such developments.

#### **Changes in the functioning of community organisations (Purpose)**

31. The project M&E plan contains some extremes, in terms of ability to monitor changes at this level. The health component has 38 indicators at this level, concerning Health Centres and Village Health Teams. The alternative is to develop, in consultation with the District Health Service and other stakeholders, a performance checklist for each type of body, which could be used to produce aggregate performance scores. Ideally these scores will increase over time.
32. At the other extreme is the governance component, with only one indicator at this level, to assess the governance performance of local groups and organisations. Much more work is needed here.
33. It is essential the measures used to assess the performance of community organisations are seen as appropriate and relevant by members / staff of the organisations concerned. And realistically collectable by those organisations
34. It is also important to identify any assumptions that AMREF may be making about the functioning of organisations at this level, and how their work will affect people's lives. For example, is AMREF assuming that they will treat all households equally, regardless of wealth or gender? If not, then how is AMREF's work at the Output level (capacity building of these organisations) being designed to help improve the way local organisations address these issues?
35. There may be other assumptions also needing examination. For example, that various other structures will be available to help sustain their functioning. E.g. though appropriate supervision and control, or provision of relevant funding and supplies.

#### **AMREF support to community organisations (Outputs)**

36. AMREF's support to local organisations is being intensively monitored through the requirement for workplans and the production of quarterly activity reports. I have not recommended any changes here, except some means of making it easier to visualise progress using the existing Gantt chart format.

37. One concern I have expressed to the AMREF team is for the need for some balance in the assessment at this level, by engaging community groups in the monitoring and assessment of the assistance AMREF provides. There is already, I think, a plan for quarterly stakeholders meeting to do a project wide assessment. It would be good to also see some smaller scale efforts built into the program of each component. Both of these processes will be more effective if AMREF can ensure sufficient transparency about the way it works, what its plans were and what it has done so far. This may be possible through the use of the proposed public resources centre in the new office AMREF office in Katine sub-country.
38. The level of investment in the different components varies substantially. The livelihoods component seems especially under-invested, if poverty alleviation is an objective of the project. At present the livelihoods team can afford to only work in 18 of the 66 villages. They cannot afford to become involved in livestock replacement programme, though absence of oxen seems to a major reason why land remains uncultivated. Similarly the water and education programs are not being able to provide full coverage of all the needs already identified, because of resource constraints. My recommendation to AMREF is that they need to either:
- Develop supplementary budgets for a second phase of KCPP where villages with identified by unmet needs are attended to, and/or
  - Develop a replication strategy whereby government bodies or other NGOs take on responsibility for completing the coverage of the current level of assistance.
39. Other areas where there seems to have been under-budgeting are staff needs for transport (ideally one motorbike per component staff member), and computers (ideally one per component staff member), and possibly power supply in the new office. Shortages in these areas could have across-the-board consequences in terms of speed of implementation.
40. Some risks have been identified at this level. Haste to deliver observable impacts, could mean inadequate preparatory work with community organisations. Firstly, the need to ensure coverage of a large number of groups, e.g. all the Village Health Teams, could be at the cost of customisation of AMREFs responses in a way that recognised local differences in needs. Secondly, it is possible that the reasons for the non-functioning of previous/existing groups are not being taken into account when providing training and material support to those groups. It may be easier to simply take existing training packages “off the shelf”. This may be especially the case where the reasons for non-functioning of groups is more political than technical

#### **AMREF’s management processes (Activities)**

41. It may be useful for AMREF to develop some internal performance measures, especially relating to the timeliness of processes, such as the approval of workplans and budgets.
42. AMREF staff in Katine were reluctant to share documents with me without approval of the Head of Programmes in Kampala. Staff in Kampala explained their reticence and caution in terms of the need to build trust. Since then some progress has been made, with a large proportion of requested documents now being made available. Ideally, in future a mechanism will be in place to ensure that requested documents are available, before or during the field visit, not afterwards.
43. All the component staff need access to technical back up, to sources of expertise in their field that they can turn to for advice and assistance. AMREF and its donors need to be able to counter criticisms of NGOs as amateurs. In the health and education areas technical back up seems available in-house, within AMREF. Farm

Africa should be the source for the Livelihoods component<sup>11</sup>. The Governance component does not seem to have this sort of support, yet it could be argued, as above, that governance is the key to the project, in terms of its day to day integration and the longer term sustainability of achievements.

---

---

<sup>11</sup> Farm Africa have since pointed out that George Odhiambo, based in FARM-Africa's Regional Office in Nairobi, is the person responsible for providing support and guidance to the two FARM-Africa staff implementing the Livelihood Component; Venancio Tumuhaise and Julius Barigye.