

**INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE
UGANDA PROGRAM**



**NGO INVOLVEMENT IN COTTON PRODUCTION AMONG DISPLACED POPULATIONS IN
NORTHERN UGANDA**

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<p><i>Program Title:</i></p> <p><i>Country/Region:</i></p> <p><i>Period of Activity:</i></p> <p><i>Total No. of Beneficiaries:</i></p> <p><i>Total Affected Population:</i></p> <p><i>Dollar Amount Requested from USAID:</i></p>	<p>NGO Involvement in Cotton Production Among Displaced Populations in Northern Uganda</p> <p>Uganda, Horn of Africa Region, Africa</p> <p>12 months; October 3, 2005 – September 30, 2006</p> <p>Cost Extension until January 31st, 2007</p> <p>4,200 Internally Displaced Persons</p> <p>267,078 IDPs (in Kitgum District)</p> <p>USD 190,776 + 40,029 (Cost extension)</p>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USAID-funded program “*NGO Involvement in Cotton Production Among Displaced Populations in Northern Uganda*” was initially projected as a one-year program (October 2005 – September 2006) and was later extended through January 31, 2007. The goal of the program was: *Improved livelihoods for 600 farmer families in six IDP camps in Kitgum District by the end of September 2006 through increased cotton production and supplemental food security assistance.*

IRC began program implementation by conducting an in-depth survey which focused on evaluating the feasibility of promoting cotton production among IDPs in a post-conflict setting and developing context specific program design. The initial plan was for the survey to be conducted in ten of IRC’s twelve target IDP camps. However, due to travel limitations caused by a rapid deterioration in the security situation during the fall of 2005, only eight of the ten camps selected were surveyed. The final survey report was submitted to USAID in February 2006. The final report was also shared with other relevant agencies in order to alleviate concerns on behalf of many NGOs that this program could undermine food security by utilizing land for a non-consumable crop.

The results of the survey were utilized to determine the program implementation strategy. Most importantly, the selection of the IDP camps where the program was to be implemented. The eight camps surveyed were evaluated based on: availability of land, willingness of community members to participate and commitment of support from the local security apparatus. Based on these criteria, only four of the eight surveyed sites were deemed to be suitable for program implementation (Agoro, Potika, Palabek Kal & Kitgum Matidi). Unfortunately, this resulted in a reduction of the overall beneficiary numbers.

The survey also provided an opportunity for community members and security personnel to make recommendations regarding the program implementation plan, including: beneficiary selection, the current relationship with Dunavant, and security. In order to promote an equitable distribution of participation and to facilitate the transfer of information to each village, especially during return, it was recommended that at least one beneficiary be selected from each village. In the course of these discussions, the farmers also revealed their dissatisfaction with Dunavant’s current system of buying cotton via agents. This realization became a significant factor in the marketing strategy of the cotton. The security personnel provided specific guidance as to how the field layout can contribute to the security of both the farmers and their crops.

The main issue of program implementation was the access to land. Given the communities’ sensitivities regarding land issues, IRC facilitated an in-depth process of program information sharing and community sensitization. IRC also mediated the process of finalizing the land lease agreements. Part of this process was the measuring of the land, which was of crucial importance as it determined the number of beneficiaries per location based on the requirement of two acres per beneficiary. Ultimately, 744 acres of new land were brought into production for a total of 416 beneficiaries (all of the beneficiaries, except for the 116 from Potika, cultivated a minimum of two acres of land each; in Potika they only cultivated one acre each).

Given the subsidies in place and support from IRC and Dunavant, cotton production was quite popular amongst the local farmers. Dunavant proved itself to be a reliable private partner. It fulfilled its commitments during the production phase by providing all the necessary inputs (fertilizer, seeds and pesticides/herbicides), technical trainings and subsidized plowing services. As a result of Dunavant’s provisions, many farmers who were not beneficiaries under the program engaged in cotton production.

The participation of non-beneficiary farmers in cotton production is possibly the most significant success of the program. As word of the program spread throughout the district, farmers became very interested in producing cotton. They took advantage of the security provided for the beneficiaries to travel safely to and from their own fields outside of the block farms set up under the program. Most impressively, these non-beneficiary farmers cleared and plowed their land manually, as they did not

have access to Dunavant's subsidized plowing services. Given that much of this land had not been cultivated for almost ten years, manual clearing and plowing was a formidable task. These farmers demonstrated that if IDPs are provided with access to a stable market, Dunavant in this case, they are more than willing to engage in productive activities.

Despite the farmers' motivation to work, they had deep-rooted concerns about the current marketing structure. Due to previous bad experiences, the farmers had no trust in the Cooperative Societies or Dunavant's local buying agents. While the initial program strategy was to work through the existing Cooperative Society structure, the farmers' negative feelings towards these institutions were so strong that this strategy was deemed to be infeasible. Consultations with the farmers and Dunavant led to the formation of collective marketing committees, which would be farmer-owned/operated and fulfill the role of the Cooperative Societies. One marketing committee was formed in each project site and served as a cotton collection/storage and buying point. Dunavant provided the marketing committees with cash advances such that they were able to pay farmers immediately for their cotton delivery and then later transported the cotton from the marketing point to the ginnery. At the end of the harvest period, the marketing committee will receive a sales commission based on the amount of cotton purchased, which will be used for the development of the marketing point. This is a significant step in the sustainability of the marketing points and their transition to becoming new Cooperative Societies.

The increase in cotton production in Kitgum District was so significant that it led to an overall improvement in the local economy. On average, beneficiary farmers realized earnings of 114,512 Ugandan Shillings from the sale of cotton. The access to a cash income for the farmers in Kitgum District can not be over emphasized. After approximately ten years of mainly subsistence farming while residing in the camps, which resulted in little to no access to cash, the farmers were elated to have this earning opportunity. Due to the significant increase in cotton production the local ginnery, which had been closed for years, was re-opened. The decision to close the ginnery was based on the fact that it was not cost effective to operate the machinery given the low level of cotton production. The re-opening of the ginnery created employment for over 85 people in Kitgum Town. The cotton production also served to stimulate the economy in the transportation sector (Dunavant hired on average eight trucks per day) and a general increase in spending, with people's new found income.

The production of food crops was included into the program plan in order to allay concerns that the production of cotton would undermine the fragile food security situation in Kitgum District. The initial strategy was that participating farmers would cultivate one acre each of food crops and cotton. This strategy was fulfilled in all of the project locations except for Potika where various delays and difficulties clearing/plowing the land resulted in them only planting cotton. Food crop seeds were provided by FAO and technical trainings on food crop production for IRC staff were provided by APEP. Ultimately, 300 acres of new land were brought into food crop cultivation, making a significant positive contribution to food security in Kitgum District. While the overall contribution to food security was unquestionably positive, IRC was unable to track the food crop yields due to farmers' consumption of yields, no uniform structure for the sale of food crops and various production irregularities which made it impossible to project yields based on acreage planted.

All of the participating farmers were encouraged to join VSLA groups as a way of leveraging the benefit of their cotton earnings. Because cotton is considered to be the domain of men by the local culture, efforts to promote equal gender participation were met with resistance, and 64% of the program participants were men. The VSLA methodology is based on principles of group cohesion and weekly savings, which tend to be more acceptable to women. As a result, of the 416 beneficiaries, only 152 of them (37%) have joined VSLA groups; and 60% of these 152 are female. While the participation rate among male beneficiaries was lower than had been expected, their rate of participation is still higher than what has been observed from existing VSLA groups which were open to the general public. There remains hope that more farmers will join VSLA groups as the mobilization/sensitization activities are continuing under this DFID-funded program.

The USAID-funded program, *“NGO Involvement in Cotton Production Among Displaced Populations in Northern Uganda”* served as a critical turning point from relief to recovery for the

people of Kitgum District, northern Uganda. For the first time in almost twenty years, a program was based on the people's capacity, as opposed to their needs. The public – private sector link between Dunavant and the farmers created a sustainable, market based, opportunity for income generation and economic recovery for the farmers of Kitgum District. With the cash earnings and access to financial services farmers realized under this program, they now have the opportunity to invest in other related income generating activities as well as provide the basic necessities for their families.

Accessibility to land is the main constraining factor to any replication or expansion of this program's activities. While there has been much press coverage and evaluation of the land issues in northern Uganda, much of it has ignored the local practical structure which would be the most effective mechanism for land dispute resolution. That local structure is the village chiefs (Rwodi Kweri) and village elders who have the mandate from the community members to adjudicate these disputes. The land used under this program was leased via these village structures. The process was so successful that the farmers and landowners have agreed to increase the acreage of land to be leased for the coming cotton production season, without any external assistance. Resources should be allocated towards the capacity building of these informal leaders and the formalization, and incorporation, of these village structures.

The current situation in Kitgum District, northern Uganda has people balancing between dependence on aid and being able to provide for themselves. This program has demonstrated the untapped capacity of the residents of Kitgum to do more for themselves, given the opportunity. Agencies working in Kitgum District must focus more on the capacities of the local residents than rather than merely on their needs. Up until now, food security has been defined as subsistence living and has been addressed via blanket seed and food distributions, regardless of how the distributions were ultimately utilized. Farmers under this program were most pleased by the fact that food security was re-defined to include their cash needs and addressed their inability to purchase other essentials in order to provide for their families. The private sector engagement demonstrated that if companies have a long-term perspective their profit seeking interests are complimentary to community development, rather than contradictory. The hope is that via expanded engagement with the private sector the people of Kitgum District can be positively incorporated into the economy such that they are able to promote local economic growth through their own active participation.

1.0 SUMMARY

The ongoing conflict in Northern Uganda is not only tragic due to the loss of lives and the inhumanity of the Lord's Resistance Army; it is also the scene of a massive deterioration of Acholi society. To a great extent, this deterioration has been caused by the displacement of the population into IDP camps. The camps are severely overcrowded and underserved. They also have extremely limited land for people to grow subsistence and cash crops, which is devastating for the historically agriculturally-based economy. The displacement has created an alarming level of poverty and dependence upon donor aid. Families are weakened due to their inability to care for one another and are turning towards unhealthy life choices resulting from a lack of productive options. Increased attention to rebuilding the self-reliance of the Acholi population is an immediate need in the North both to improve current living conditions and to prepare for the eventual return to rural villages.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has engaged in an 18-month partnership with USAID, the Agricultural Productivity Enhancement Program (APEP), and Dunavant Uganda, Ltd cotton company to investigate and promote opportunities for increased cash crop production for the Acholi population of Kitgum District. The partnership leveraged the resources of each participating agency through utilizing their comparative advantages in funding, expertise in agronomy, market-driven demand and cotton production expertise, and community engagement and outreach respectively. This partnership created opportunities for the IDP population to begin rebuilding their lives through income generation and provides a clear pathway for how the private sector can increase engagement in the North. The structures and agreements set in place now will assist in private sector development both in the short and long term. All parties will increase their expertise in private sector growth and provide a model applicable even if a reintegration phase is entered.

As with any income generating activity, it is necessary to analyze the benefits of the intervention in light of the broader context and market. In preparation for cash crop promotion, IRC carried out investigative field work to ensure all interventions were appropriately designed for the current context. This field work examined potential crops in terms of their profitability, risk, and cost-benefit (taking the market into strong consideration), at the same time looking at land access and the potential squeezing out of food crops. While IRC looked at several cash crops, a particular focus was on cotton, which is currently the only cash crop with a guaranteed market in Kitgum district. The importance of this line of investigation was particularly acute given that many individuals and agencies have expressed concerns regarding the significance of cash crop cultivation as relates to food crop production. There is particular concern that cotton is not a profitable enterprise and that it provides no substantial benefit to the population. IRC's investigations will help to shed light on the larger picture and increase both agency and community support for cotton cultivation. Field work was thoroughly documented and designed ways forward that would benefit farmers wishing to engage in cotton cultivation. To counter any concerns regarding the vulnerability of farmers who engage only in cotton production, IRC, APEP and Dunavant supported farmers to also set up plots on which to grow food crops and trained them in cultivation techniques. This provided farmers with a buffer should their cotton harvest not be as profitable as expected and also allowed them to diversify their skills.

With guidelines informed by detailed fieldwork, IRC worked with Dunavant and APEP to engage with community leaders and existing farmer's groups to identify appropriately motivated and knowledgeable people to participate in cotton cultivation in four IDP camps in Kitgum District. Once underway, these participants received a package of services that allowed them to reap maximum reward from their engagement. This included training in the production of both cotton and food crops and was provided by Dunavant, APEP and IRC respectively. In addition, participants were linked with IRC's currently-running Savings and Loan Association groups allowing farmers to better manage their earnings. IRC engaged local and district level government structures, the Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF),

local landowners, and cooperating NGOs to ensure the opening of land for increased crop cultivation. IRC encouraged consolidated farming in order to ensure effective utilization of the resources from Dunavant, and to increase the ease of providing security and for monitoring and supervision. This consolidation was based upon APEP's demonstration plot model, which has proven successful in other areas throughout Uganda.

2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

For the last twenty years, northern Uganda has been the scene of a mass population movement out of traditional villages and into cramped, disease-ridden and poorly managed IDP camps. This population movement, prompted by the violent conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF), has left the country-side of northern Uganda barren and resulted in the majority of the population being economically unproductive and dependent upon external assistance. Death, maiming, torture, and abduction are among the most horrific manifestations of the war, but the more insidious impact is on people's daily lives. The movement of the population into IDP camps has resulted in almost complete dependence on food aid, insufficient water and sanitation resources, low quality and limited access to education, declining health of camp residents and reduced access to health care services. The displacement and insecurity has also reduced people's ability to farm or raise cattle due to limited access to farmland. At the same time, overwhelming dependence on donor aid has reduced people's motivation and incentives to be productive. This dependence, combined with the inability of people to care for themselves and their families, is producing a system where planning for the future becomes nearly impossible and depression, alcoholism, engagement in high-risk behaviors, such as prostitution and resentment against targeted groups receiving assistance, are widespread.

IRC has worked in northern Uganda since 1998. Historically IRC has provided support to the population in the areas of water and sanitation, health, HIV/AIDS, education, and psychosocial assistance. IRC's interventions have gradually moved from emergency response towards longer-term recovery and development approaches, such as economic development, gender-based violence (GBV), protection, and child and youth protection and development (CYPD). In late 2004, the decision was made to create an IRC Economic Development Sector based on the goal of addressing the rampant poverty of the northern region. This decision was largely based upon the population's own articulation of their needs and problems. These needs are often described through a poverty lens, such as children not being healthy due to family's inability to feed them enough or provide them with proper medical care due to lack of financial resources.¹

IRC's Economic Development Sector is designed to address the needs of the wider IDP population. This is in contrast to much of the livelihood assistance in Kitgum district, which tends to target vulnerable sub-populations or individuals. IRC's more generalized approach has so far helped to reduce participant stigmatization and boost the overall economy by encouraging productivity in a variety of sectors and industries. In all interventions, participants are supported to increase their technical skills and financial awareness. These activities, combined with access to savings and credit mechanisms, have allowed participants to maximize the effectiveness of their efforts. A typical example is the project entitled "NGO INVOLVEMENT IN COTTON PRODUCTION AMONG DISPLACED POPULATIONS IN NORTHERN UGANDA," for which the final report is hereby compiled. This was a 16-month, USAID-funded program collaboration with Dunavant Uganda Limited (an international cotton trading company), Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Agricultural Productivity Enhancement Project (APEP) to promote improved livelihoods through increased cash crop production and supplemental food security assistance for the Acholi population in IDP camps in Kitgum district. This program provided opportunities for IDPs to start rebuilding their

¹ In interviews carried out by IRC in the IDP camps, many community members articulated their problems in socio-economic terms such as that mentioned above. In addition, Jill Donahue's consultancy report, "The Community Resilience and Dialogue Activity – Mainstreaming Economic Development Interventions" from October 2003 documented community members expressing well-being in economic terms.

lives through income generation, as well as clear examples of how the private sector can support recovery in the war ravaged areas of northern Uganda.

3.0 PROJECT DESIGN

3.1 Beneficiaries

Initially, direct beneficiaries were estimated at approximately 600 farmers (100 farmers per camp in 6 camps). Assuming an average family size of six, excluding the farmer themselves, translated into an estimated 3,600 indirect beneficiaries. The expected total number of project beneficiaries, both direct and indirect, was estimated to be 4,200 people. Gender balance among the direct beneficiaries was sought out and encouraged.

3.1.1 Achievements:

The total number of beneficiaries was reduced in accordance with a reduction in the number of camps in which the program was implemented from six to four. (Please see Result 1.2 for a summary explanation and Annex C for additional details)

The total number of beneficiaries increased from 397 in the first quarter to the final total of 416 (267M: 149F) by the close of the project. A total number of 416 direct beneficiaries, representing 416 households, were registered as detailed in table-1 below:

Table -1: Beneficiaries per location.

Location	# Male	# Female	Total
Agoro	78	39	117
Palabek Kal	67	49	116
Potika	82	34	116
Kitgum Matidi	40	27	67
Total	267	149	416

A recent survey² showed the actual average household population size to be 8.5 members. Using this as an average, the number of indirect beneficiaries reached by the project was 3,120, bringing the total number of beneficiaries, both direct and indirect to 3,536, which is 84% of the initial target of 4,200 beneficiaries.

While participation in the project was voluntary, the total number of beneficiaries registered per location was dependant on the availability of land for the project activities as each direct beneficiary was to have access to two acres of land (one for food crops and one for cash crop – cotton).

Beneficiary selection was community driven with support and facilitation by IRC. Following initial community sensitization meetings, community members produced lists of recommended participants based on the candidates' motivation to participate in the program and the community's assessment of their capacity to manage the field work. IRC required that at least one person from each village within a given parish be selected in order to facilitate an expansion of the outreach of any follow-on programming as decongestion progresses. Ideally, these beneficiaries will become future community focal points.

A participant screening process was conducted where by the candidate lists were compared with the attendance lists from the IRC sponsored program sensitization meetings. It was collectively agreed to

² IRC Economic Development Dept. conducted the third phase of the FAO input distribution survey

remove candidates who had not been attending these meetings. As the program objective of encouraging cash crop production was potentially risky, “early adapter” farmers were targeted. Special attention was also paid to gender balance.

3.1.2 Special characteristics of the household heads

The project beneficiaries were comprised entirely of IDPs from the four camps of Agoro, Potika, Palabek Kal and Kitgum Matidi. The majority of the beneficiaries (63%) were between the ages of 26 and 50, with many of the population’s youth having moved to large towns such as Kitgum, Gulu, and Lira seeking better education and employment opportunities (casual labor and low level/vocational employment). Older residents in the camps tended to be unable to handle the physical rigors involved in cotton farming. (See Annex A: Population Data for details)

3.1.3 Gender considerations

The initial intention was to have equal gender participation and every effort was made to achieve this. However, the cultural traditions of cotton cultivation and inheritance of fixed assets, including land, being the domain of men, combined with the aforementioned two acre participation requirement, led to the participation of more men than women. (See picture-2). For example, in Potika, when land measurement was being conducted by both men and women, the women who participated did not submit their own names to become beneficiaries but rather those of their husbands, who were not present. Similarly in Agoro, a woman was selected by farmers to be a lead farmer, but her husband ultimately did the field work of supervising the other farmers. A woman registered as a beneficiary in Palabek Kal worked together with her husband in the fields, however, all the cotton sales and financial management was done by her husband.

From the beginning of the program, promotion of gender balance was incorporated into all activities. Emphasis was placed on sensitizing participants on women’s role in the household economy and empowering them to manage cotton production and take leadership positions in the farming groups. Throughout the participant selection process, IRC staff continued to repeat these same messages of promoting a gender balance and took tangible steps to try to ensure that all women in the parish were made aware of the program and their opportunity to participate.³ Despite the fact that the majority of participants were men, the women who participated, three of whom were “lead farmers,” were quite active. Some of the highest recorded cotton yields were from women-managed plots. (See pictures 2 & 3). Anecdotal evidence from informal discussions with participants gave the impression that positive changes had been made within participant’s households in regard to gender balance. Given that it is difficult to change traditional cultural attitudes, IRC noted significant cooperation between men and women. The organization is optimistic that there will be more progress on the gender issue this coming season.

While women are in the minority within the farmers’ groups, their rate of participation in the IRC supported Village Savings & Loans Associations (VSLA) is significantly higher than the men’s. While women represented only 36% of the total number of farmers in the program, they comprised 59% of the farmers who joined VSLA groups.

3.2 Assumptions, Risks and Constraints

The following assumptions underlie the program:

- 1) The majority of the population will remain based in IDP camps for the foreseeable future while services will remain inadequate.

³ Facilitating the involvement of women in such strategic leadership positions in the community (like marketing committees, lead farmers etc) needs to be done with caution. It works better when sensitizations on the importance and/or roles of women’s participation are conducted close to election periods so that the community democratically elects women with outstanding personalities. Imposing leadership roles on the community may be unpopular.

- 2) Local and district level leaders will be willing to engage in dialogue on expanding cotton production through sensitization meetings and information exchange. This dialogue will result in action taken to ensure farmers secure access to land.
- 3) Cotton production remains attractive and profitable for farmers.
- 4) Farmers will remain interested in planting cotton and research shows farmers will benefit from cotton cultivation.
- 5) The security situation in the target areas continues to permit at least the minimum level of IRC operations necessary for program implementation.
- 6) APEP and Dunavant will commit throughout the life of the project to living up to the spirit of the proposal and their responsibilities as outlined in Annex 1.

Comments on the program assumptions:

- 1) A number of decongestion sites were set up and there was a government policy to have all the IDPs relocated to the new sites by December 31st 2006. However, movement to the new sites is voluntary; therefore, while a significant number of IDPs have begun constructing houses in the new sites, by the end of 2006, the majority of the IDPs remained in the central camps.
- 2) Local government leaders and sub-county based government extension agencies have pledged to continue support for the farmers' groups. During the Program Review Seminar⁴, district officials and a representative of Dunavant committed themselves to continuing to support farmers via trainings, input supplies and follow-up. Farmers were also encouraged to participate in the parish coordination committee (parish level branch of the National Agricultural Advisory Services {NAADS}) in order to acquire more resources for crop development from NAADS and other NGOs.
- 3) Despite the fact that cotton is considered to be a labor intensive crop, due to all of the subsidies currently involved in its production, combined with the guaranteed market, it is considered to be a profitable and attractive endeavor. Farmers were very encouraged by the fact that the marketing committees were providing immediate cash payment to farmers upon the delivery of their cotton to the collection point at a fixed minimum price. Over the course of the program not one participating farmer withdrew from the program. The highest yield recorded was 667 kilograms per acre in Palabek Kal. This far exceeded the initial projection of 400 kilograms per acre.
- 4) All of the farmers who participated in the program remain interested in cotton production. They have committed themselves to continue working directly with Dunavant, without IRC's involvement, and are concentrated on continuing block farming and collective marketing of cotton based on the parishes where IDPs are due to be decongested. Another positive aspect of cotton production is that it has motivated farmers to continue opening/clearing additional land. In cooperation with the landowners and farmers, plans have already been developed to identify and clear new land for the cultivation of cotton while the fields cultivated under this program will be used for food crops.

Initial research concluded that cotton cultivation benefits farmers for several reasons. Most significantly, given the existing cotton market (Dunavant), farmers feel that cultivating cotton offers more of a guaranteed return on investment compared to other crops. Additionally, given the current subsidies involved with growing cotton, the profit margin is very high. Given the fluid security situation, cotton is preferred over food crops because food crops are more likely to be stolen from the fields. Cotton also serves to prepare the land for the cultivation of millet. The combination of cotton then millet results in good millet yields which can be sold at local markets or consumed. The farmers' long-term interest in producing cotton will depend

⁴ IRC hosted a one-day end of project review seminar in Kitgum Town on 23 January 2007. It was attended by: Chairpersons of the marketing committees, LC-IIIs, DAO, NAADS coordinators (District and sub-county levels), Representatives from FAO and Dunavant

on the future of the current subsidies in the cotton industry, as well as other agricultural production, compared with the relevant demand.

- 5) During the initial research phase of the program the security situation was a limiting factor. Field movements strictly required military escorts, which limited visits to the IDP camps. Movement restrictions resulted in the number of camps surveyed to be reduced from ten to eight. Security constraints also affected program activities. IRC's security policy prevented staff from traveling to fields which were located beyond the UPDF-determined 'safe radius.' As a result, farmers' initial activities in the fields were conducted without IRC monitoring/supervision, including: land measurement, plot allocation, clearing, plowing and planting. This security situation began to improve in August 2006. IRC's security policies changed accordingly, allowing staff to travel outside the former 'safe radius' (August 2006), stay overnight in the camps (September 2006) and travel without military escorts (January 2007). This made it possible for IRC staff to access the fields and provide additional on-site trainings and technical support to farmers.

There has been relative peace over the last three quarters of the program. Thus, at the time of harvest for food crops, patrols were only necessary to prevent theft from the fields by other inhabitants of the IDP camps, not the LRA. As cotton is not a consumable crop, it was not necessary to patrol the cotton fields.

- 6) Dunavant fulfilled its commitments to support the clearing/plowing of land, provide inputs, and conduct farmer group trainings. With support from IRC, Dunavant was able to address most of the challenges related to their working relationship with the farmers. This earned Dunavant the farmers' trust and cooperation. The price floor of 400 shillings per kilogram of cotton that Dunavant committed to was maintained until the national cotton price was announced by the Cotton Development Organization (CDO) to be 450 shillings per kilogram, at which time Dunavant paid the additional 50 shillings per kilogram to all the farmers who had initially received the minimum rate. This was an additional incentive for farmers to sell to the collection points, as Dunavant's commission-based agents did not offer this additional 50 shillings per kilogram to their customers from whom they had made early purchases⁵.

Dunavant did deal with miscommunications between the farmers and its staff when necessary. At one point, a miscommunication on the side of Dunavant's field officers regarding the use of pesticides in Kitgum Matidi resulted in low yields. IRC reported this issue to the Dunavant Officer, who then organized a joint meeting with the two relevant Dunavant field officers, witnessed by Dunavant's Kitgum District Branch Manager, to ensure that farmers in other locations do not receive the same misleading instructions.

APEP provided trainings focusing on agronomic best practices for three crops (barley, cotton and rice). Although barely was not a target crop of this program the cotton and rice trainings were considered to be quite useful by the program assistants who attended the training.

The following risks and constraints were factored into program design:

1. The LRA is an unreliable actor to build programs around. They could decide to burn fields, for example, to reduce the ability of the population to earn money. This has not been their approach so far, but they have attacked vehicles carrying cotton in the past.
2. The concerns expressed by many NGOs and government officials regarding cotton production will need to be addressed in order to have the support necessary to implement. Through coordination meetings and sharing information on research results IRC believes that these NGOs will eventually come to support this program. However, this remains an area of risk.

⁵ In the absence of functioning cooperative societies or other established structure for collecting cotton from the community, Dunavant opted to contract private individuals to work as buying agents in the community. Dunavant provides the agents with a cash advance to buy cotton from farmers and deliver it to Dunavant's storage facility. At the end of the season, the agents are paid a commission based on the amount of cotton they have delivered to Dunavant.

3. Dunavant will mitigate risks of price fluctuations by guaranteeing a price floor of 400 UGX/kg.

Comments on the program risks and constraints:

1. Throughout the program implementation period there were no cases of LRA attacks on the farmers participating in this program or their fields. Although the security situation was not favourable in the first two quarters of the program, it improved significantly in the third and fourth quarters. Over this second half of the program there has been progressively free movement of the population in and around the IDP camps. From January 2007, almost all IRC field activities were implemented without military escorts. This policy is constantly being reviewed given the uncertain nature of the peace talks and unpredictability of the LRA.
2. Substantial progress has been made with regard to allaying the concerns of other NGOs over the promotion of cotton production. This was achieved via the dissemination of program updates in the production sector meetings and other relevant forums with various partners. IRC made a point of highlighting the institutional development of the farmers' groups, the empowerment of the participants, and the financial gains realized by the participating farmers. Recent meetings held with the land owners, representatives from the District Agriculture Office (DAO) and NAADS offices, local leaders at sub-county levels, farmer representatives (from the marketing committee and lead farmers) revealed that the various actors all had initial concerns regarding cotton production; now, however, they unanimously support this initiative. By including the government extension staff (under NAADS), the success of the project has drawn the interest and support of the local government. Many NGOs are now advocating for an extension or replication of the same model in other locations. Other agencies such as the World Food Program and NAADS are adopting this methodology of communal block farming to achieve increased production of other selected crops.
3. Dunavant adhered to its stated minimum buying price of 400 UGX/kg and then increased it 450 UGX/kg when the national price was announced by the CDO. Dunavant paid the additional 50 UGX/kg to all the farmers who had initially received only the minimum rate. While the price agreement was honored, Dunavant had a problem with its storage capacity. At one point during the program, Dunavant's storage became full of cotton resulting in a temporary stoppage of its cotton buying. This risk factor is discussed in more detail in Result 2.3 below.

4.0 PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Project Goal

Improved livelihoods for 600 farmer families in six IDP camps in Kitgum District by the end of January 2007 through increased cotton production and supplemental food security assistance.

OBJECTIVE 1

Context specific program design developed for implementation of increased cotton production in six IDP camps based upon investigatory fieldwork results.

Result 1.1: Investigate and produce a report documenting issues concerning risks, benefits, opportunities, challenges, implications, and best practices of encouraging increased cotton production among displaced farmers by sampling activities in 10 IDP camps in Kitgum District.

Achievements:

The initial plan was to conduct the survey in ten camps (Akwang, Palabek Gem, Palabek Kal, Potika, Agoro, Mucwini, Padibe, Kitgum Matidi, Paloga and Ogili). However, due to the security situation at that time, IRC Kitgum staff's field movements were limited, which led to the exclusion of Ogili and Paloga. Paloga was removed from the survey because there was already significant cotton production taking place there and Ogili had to be excluded because of its geographic location, which made it very

difficult to access given the security situation/IRC travel policy which was present at the time of surveying.

Thus, surveying was conducted in eight IDP camps in Kitgum district. The final report, submitted to USAID in February 2006, outlined a strategy for increasing production of cotton and food crops in Kitgum District based on answering five main issues (*See Annex C for more details*):

- 1) What are the financial benefits farmers receive for engaging in the production of cash crops, as compared to food crops?
- 2) What actors and institutions are involved in food and cash crop production and what are their interests, including cooperative societies, suppliers, middlemen, district and camp officials?
- 3) What is the role and current effectiveness of cooperative societies and farmer groups?
- 4) How does the security situation affect production?
- 5) What is the land tenant system and how does it affect production decisions?

The research activities were conducted by a team of six research assistants, two program assistants, one program officer and the economic development manager, with continuous support from the program coordinator. By the 20th of January 2006, IRC completed its research activities in all eight IDP camps. At the local level the research activities included: community mapping, livelihood matrices, and focus group discussions/interviews with farmers, community leaders, Cooperative Society members, land owners, local government officials, cotton buying agents and representatives from various local security apparatus. Relevant agencies/institutions at the district and national level were also included in the assessment.

Setbacks:

- The limitation on field movements in November and December 2005, caused by the security situation, reduced the number of camps to be surveyed from ten to eight and delayed the final report, which was planned for December 2005 but not completed until February 2006.
- The reduction in the number of camps surveyed was also a factor in reducing the final number of camps in which the program was implemented, which also reduced the total number of beneficiaries. (*See Result 2.1 for details*)
- IRC encountered significant difficulties in recruiting the two Program Assistants as well as the Program Officer. This was largely due to the salary expectations of the top candidates, being beyond what was budgeted. As a result, IRC had to conduct the recruitment twice before hiring the necessary staff. This long recruitment process delayed the start of the research activities.
- It was initially planned that IRC staff would conduct the field research themselves. However, due to the delayed start, IRC decided to hire a team of temporary Research Assistants to assist with the field research. While this reduced the visibility of IRC staff in the field, and slightly compromised the quality of the research, it greatly increased the speed and coverage of the research activities. Every effort was made to offset any quality concerns by thoroughly reviewing all reports immediately as they came in from the field.
- The local leaders were not easily accessible during the research phase since most of them were involved in political campaigns for the 2006 elections for their respective candidates or themselves.

Key Indicators and Targets:

- One report produced by IRC staff.
 - The research was completed by the 20th of January 2006 and the final report was submitted to USAID in February 2006.

- The recommendations which came from this research were used to develop the implementation strategy of the current program.
- Two meetings held locally to publicize the results of the report
 - A presentation of the report was made at the Kitgum District Production Sector Working Group meeting which was held on the 13th of February 2006 at UNOCHA in Kitgum with NGOs involved in livelihoods and food security (ICRC, AVSI, Oxfam, etc.) as well as representatives from the District Production Department⁶. IRC presented and discussed the results of its research at this meeting.
 - A second presentation was made by the IRC Economic Development Sector staff to the Food Security Coordination Group in Kampala on March 28th, 2006.

Result 1.2

Investigatory fieldwork data reviewed and analyzed to determine practicalities of implementing a cotton and food crop cultivation intervention on 1,200 acres around 6 target IDP camps in Kitgum District.

Achievements:

The research findings were documented in a 74-page report, and were analyzed to determine the appropriate implementation strategy. The research helped to address several issues, including site selection, location of block farms, appropriate security arrangements, preferred crops and their values.

Site selection

Five criteria were determined as a framework for site evaluation/selection for the implementation of the program:

- Farmers' willingness to grow cotton (based on their perception of its profitability)
- Commitment on behalf of the local security apparatus to provide the necessary security services
- State of the Cooperative Societies
- Availability of land for block farming
- Cotton production will not interfere with current production of food crops

According to the aforementioned criteria, four sites were determined to have favourable conditions for implementing the program: Agoro, Potika, Palabek Kal and Kitgum Matidi. (*See Annex C for details*). The remaining four sites were determined to be unsuitable for implementation of the program.

Padibe

- **Availability of Land:** There are several clans which own large portions of land relatively close to the camp but they were not willing to allow farmers from other clans to use their land. Some land owners, who had only small plots of land (10 – 15 acres on average), were willing to allow farmers to use their land for a cash rental payment. In both cases, IRC was not interested, as the program was not meant for only one clan in a given location nor were there any plans to pay cash for land.

Palabek Gem

- **Willingness to Grow Cotton:** Despite having been informed of the many existing subsidies and committed buyer (Dunavant) local farmers were not motivated to engage

⁶ There is a district Production Coordination Officer in the local government. This office deals with production and marketing, and all agencies, including the DAO, participate in a monthly meeting to plan/coordinate their respective activities.

in cotton production. Due to the intensive labor required many farmers considered other crops to be a better investment. Some farmers recommended tobacco as a substitute cash crop for cotton.

- **Cooperative Societies:** The relationship between Dunavant, the Cooperative Society and the community was very negative. While IRC considered it feasible to try to mend strained relationships in other locations, the depth of the hostility in Palabek Gem was deemed insurmountable, given the short time frame.
- **Land Availability & Security Commitment:** All of the landowners, with the exception of one, said they are renting plots of land out to farmers in exchange for either money or yield. Landowners were skeptical of allowing people to use their land under any circumstances. The community leaders identified potentially available land approximately 5-6km away from the camp. However, IRC was unable to obtain more specific details regarding the exact location of the land or ascertain its utilization at that time. Regardless, this land was particularly further from the camp than the local UPDF were willing to travel to provide the necessary security.
- **Decongestion Plans:** The residents in Palabek Gem believed that they would be moving in the near future to the satellite camps. Therefore, it was not feasible to start a block farm outside the current camp.

Mucwini

- **Availability of Land:** In this camp, most farmers are either cultivating their own land or renting land at a rate of 10,000 UGX per acre per season. The landowners agreed that there is no communal land in the camp. Therefore, there was no possibility of securing access to land in this camp without fee.
- **Security Commitment:** Security officials interviewed indicated that they would only be able to provide security for farmers within the existing safe radius. It was clear that the security officials were not willing to exert themselves in order to provide the farmers secure access to the fields.

Akwang

- **Willingness to Grow Cotton:** Despite having been informed of the many existing subsidies and committed buyer (Dunavant) local farmers were not motivated to engage in cotton production. Due to the intensive labor required for cotton production, many farmers considered other crops to be a better investment. Given that the farmers are located close to Kitgum town, many of the farmers were already satisfied with their access to local markets for other locally produced food crops.
- **Availability of Land:** Unlike in any other location, except for the landowners themselves, all the farmers interviewed were renting land. There was no communal land around the camp. In addition, leaders indicated that there are land disputes around the camp which have affected cultivation. Leaders also warned that local politicians may oppose the idea of block farming, no specific details regarding, “How?” or “Why?” were given.

Other Significant Research Findings

- **Block farms**

Based on the survey findings, IRC was able to identify land owners with whom land usage could be negotiated. The research also provided mapping of topographic features: rocky/mountainous areas, water bodies, the road network, thick bush and other features that could influence/hinder crop production. These features were taken into consideration when selecting block farm locations.

- ***Security Commitment***

Discussions with security officials provided IRC with guidelines as to how the field layouts could contribute to security. This included the strategy of planting food crops closer to the camp in order to make it easier to protect them from the LRA and other looters. Conversely, the LRA and looters are not interested in cotton, which should therefore be planted further from the camp. It was also decided that no farmer should leave the camp to go to the field before the UPDF foot patrols have gone. (These rules were relaxed over the course of the program, as the security situation improved during 2006.)

- ***Preferred Crops***

According to the research, in general, the preferred crops were groundnuts, millet, sesame, cassava, maize, beans, rice, cotton and tobacco. Vegetables, such as cabbage, onions and tomatoes were also highly regarded, though there was only a limited amount of land which was suitable for its production. Priorities for food crops differed slightly between camps, and these preferences were reflected in IRC's requests for food crop seeds to FAO; however, FAO's actual distribution was based on their inventory, not specific requests.

- ***Beneficiary Selection***

It was the intention of the program to have as wide of a geographic coverage as implementation would allow. During community meetings, it was agreed that there should be at least one participant per village in order to ensure that the technical skills gained during the program could be transferred to each village during return.

- ***Working with Dunavant***

Several issues concerning the communities' relationship with Dunavant arose during the community discussions. One major issue was the relationship between farmers and Dunavant's buying agents. The farmers expressed a high degree of mistrust towards the buying agents. As Dunavant did not communicate directly with the farmers, many felt that the agents were manipulating information to the detriment of the farmers. There was also distrust of the cooperative societies, which had previously bought cotton from farmers for the East Acholi Cooperative Union. The community discussions led to an alternative solution for purchasing cotton, through farmer-owned marketing committees. The farmers and Dunavant agreed to work through these committees, which IRC committed to supporting with capacity-building. (*See Result 2.3 for more detail regarding the marketing committees.*)

Setbacks:

- Limitations on field movements, caused by the security situation, resulted in a delay in the final submission of the Phase One report, and the subsequent decision regarding the selection of the camps in which the program was to be implemented, and thus, the start of Phase Two. The delay in the start up of activities had a bearing on all subsequent project activities which ultimately resulted in decreased quality and quantity of the food crops yield.
- After Phase 2 of the program implementation had begun, representatives from Mucwini and Padibe came to the IRC Kitgum office pleading on behalf of their camps to be included in the program. At that point it became known that the two camps in fact had suitable conditions for program implementation. However, the residents of these sites were initially suspicious of the program's objectives, and thus, withheld information regarding land availability during the research and planning phases. Better communication and confidence-building with these communities early on may have prevented this situation.
- The research was conducted during election time, and thus, many key sub-county officials were not available for interviews. In some cases, officials' assistants were interviewed, however, there was a concern regarding the accuracy of the information they provided.

Key Indicators and Targets:

- Documentation collected and organized regarding contextual information on six IDP camps related to security, land ownership, leadership buy-in, and food security
 - The research conducted under Result 1.2 above was analyzed to answer questions of site selection, security arrangements, block farm locations, crop selection, and participant selection. Of the eight camps surveyed, IRC found that it was only appropriate to implement the cotton and food crops cultivation intervention in four camps: Palabek Kal, Agoro, Kitgum Matidi and Potika.
- Six selected camps fit in with broader IRC programming in Kitgum district.
 - IRC programs in Kitgum District are being implemented in twelve specific locations (Agoro, Potika A & B, Palabek Gem, Palabek Kal, Kitgum Matidi, Pajimo, Padibe, Mucwini, Labuje, Paloga, Ogili and Amida); IRC intends to maximize the effectiveness of its programs by leveraging the complementary nature of its programmatic activities. With regards to this program, all ten camps initially selected for surveying were from this list of twelve; and there are several other IRC programs currently being implemented in the four camps which were selected for implementation, helping to ensure that the community receives the maximum benefit possible.

Progress Towards Objective One:

Albeit with some challenges, objective one was successfully accomplished. The main challenge faced was related to the security situation, which was an accepted risk factor from the onset of the program. While the security situation improved over the course of the program, initially it resulted in limited movements which caused a reduction in the total number of camps surveyed. Tangible steps, such as hiring Research Assistants, were taken in order to make up for this delay and the final deliverable of the research report was successfully completed. The findings from the research were instrumental in honing the program implementation strategy, specifically including, but not limited to: site selection, location of block farms, appropriate security arrangements, preferred crops and their values. Given that it was disappointing that the final site selection resulted in four camps, as opposed to the initial target of six, however, as this reduction in the program outreach was based on the research findings it was a justified decision.

OBJECTIVE 2

Cotton grown on at least 600 acres of land surrounding six IDP camps in Kitgum District benefiting 600 farmers and their families with an additional 600 acres opened for optional cotton or food crop planting.

Result 2.1

One-hundred informed farmers in each of six targeted IDP camps choose and are selected to take advantage of opportunities of cotton cultivation.

Achievements:

While the original target number of beneficiaries per location was 100 farmers per camp, in actuality for the four locations selected, the average number of beneficiaries per location was 104 farmers. The farmers were selected by the communities based on their interest, willingness and ability to engage in cotton production and the criteria of one participant per village.

The process of informing farmers began by disseminating the research findings to the camp residents in each location where the research was conducted. In the communities which were not selected special consideration was given at these community meetings to ensure that residents understood the

selection process and rationale behind the decision.

Following the presentation of the research, the sites selected for participation in the program were presented with the principles of its implementation, which included (*See Annex D for more details of the meetings*):

- All participating farmers would farm one acre of cotton and one of food crops
- Description of the inputs that would be provided
- Willingness to make a contribution toward the cost of inputs
- Minimum price guarantee for cotton by Dunavant
- Plans for marketing of the cotton
- Information was also provided on the various production options available in their location and the marketability of each crop (crops and their values per acre) so that farmers could make informed decisions on whether growing cotton was beneficial for them or not.

Guidelines for beneficiary selection were developed in cooperation with community members. According to these guidelines, it was agreed that the selection process would be conducted at the parish and village levels with clear responsibilities assigned to the camp commandants, block leaders and specific community members who were identified as being resourceful and responsible. Lists of potential beneficiaries were provided to IRC, detailing each individual's name, age, sex, household size, village and parish of origin. As discussed in Section 3.1.3 above, IRC encouraged the inclusion of women on the participant lists; however, the decision was the communities'. Follow-up field visits were conducted in order to confirm the appropriateness of the candidates. Some candidates were replaced because they had not been attending the program meetings; others had lost interest and willingly forfeited their place. At the initial registration there were 397 participants, however, over the course of the program implementation period, this number increased to a final 416 farmer participants. (*See Table-1 under section 3.1.1 for details*)

After some initial difficulties (*See Setbacks below*), local leaders, councilors and the sub-county based agricultural extension staff actively supported the program activities. Their engagement ranged from mobilizing participants to conducting field visits. This helped to strengthen IRC's working relationship with the community and the communities' understanding of how the local government, NGOs and private companies (like Dunavant) can work together to implement community development projects.

This program helped reduce social tensions between the villages of Potika A and B. The occupants of these two camps used to have significant difficulties cooperating under any community development program. This tension stemmed from a social difference based on the fact that most of the residents in Potika B are immigrants from Sudan. During the participant selection process, IRC worked hard with the leaders of these two camps to make sure there was equal representation and they were prepared to cooperatively participate in the program. Over the course of the program implementation this social animosity was greatly reduced as residents worked closely together on the block farms.

Setbacks:

- The main setback was the aforementioned reduction in the number of selected camps from six to four, which resulted in 416 participants instead of the projected 600.
- Initially, beneficiary selection was delayed due to limited support from the local leaders with regards to community mobilization. As it was an election season, the local leaders were already being paid by political candidates for mobilization activities, and thus, were unwilling to conduct similar mobilizing for IRC free of charge. IRC made every effort to mobilize community members itself and to quickly recruit camp representatives for additional support. Once the election finished, the local leaders became quite interested in the program and gave it their full support, without compensation. However, this did cause a delay in the implementation.
- In Agoro and Potika, a significant portion of the land was used by the land owners themselves and their immediate relatives. This was a result of the fact that IRC had agreed to let landowners include five family members in the program, as in-kind compensation for letting farmers use the

land, and that these two sites had many landowners for the area selected for block farms. This created a perception among some community members, especially those not selected for participation, that the program was catering specifically to landowners and their families. Through continuous information sharing by IRC, and open meetings with the beneficiaries and the other community members, it became accepted that the land owners deserved such a privilege given the contribution they had made to the program.

- The survey in Kitgum Matidi initially indicated a positive assessment of land availability, however once implementation began it became apparent that the actual access to land would be only 138 acres. After setting aside land for demonstration plots, there was only enough land left for 66 participants, despite significant interest.

Key Indicators and Targets:

- One meeting per camp held with local leaders and representatives of cooperative societies.
 - IRC held one meeting in each of the selected camps for community leaders, Cooperative Society representatives and security personnel. In all of these meetings, the implementation plan was discussed and the respective roles of IRC, APEP, Dunavant, security personnel and the program beneficiaries were defined.
- One meeting per camp held with interested community members for information sharing.
 - IRC held one information sharing meeting in each of the selected camps with interested community members. See detailed breakdown of participants' gender per camp below.

Table – 2: Participant Breakdown at Camp Meetings

Location	# Male	# Female	Total
Agoro	73	8	81
Palabek Kal	70	64	134
Potika	40	47	87
Kitgum Matidi	83	25	108
Total	266	144	410

- One-hundred farmers per camp choose to engage in cotton cultivation.
 - The total number of participants was 397 in the second quarter, and increased to 416 in the fourth quarter. This change in the number of participants was a result of an increase in land available in Palabek Kal due to a second lease agreement. Most sites had enough land to accommodate more than 100 farmers, although Kitgum Matidi was only able to accommodate 66. (See Table 1, Section 3.1.1 for a detailed breakdown of participants by site)

Result 2.2: Security apparatus and land tenure system in six selected IDP camps provides farmers with secure access to two-hundred acres per IDP camp.

Fifth Quarter Achievements:

Program Extension 4.1.1: Protection and Efficiency Activities

- Liaise with the UPDF to ensure continuation of appropriate security patrols, whether people remain in camps, move to decongestion sites or return to villages.
- From the start of the fifth quarter, UPDF officers determined that the security situation had improved significantly, such that the farmers no longer required military escorts to access their

fields. At the same time, UPDF officers continued their routine patrolling of the area and their function of disseminating security information.

- IRC held meetings with the security personnel (UPDF commanders and local security organs within the camps) to ascertain their views of the project and seek opinions on plans for continuation with such arrangement in the future. The general response was positive and the UPDF expressed willingness to continue providing similar support even when farmers move to the decongestion sites, as long as the block farming arrangement will still be maintained.
- IRC will work together with the District Land Office to create future strategies for strengthening Parish Land Committees. As part of this, IRC will continue to engage current landowners to ensure uninterrupted access to fields even in the event of a decongestion or return.
- IRC held two meetings with the land owners from each site to develop strategies for ensuring more sustainable access to land for farmers in the future. The land owners from Agoro, Potika and Kitgum Matidi expressed willingness to continue supporting farmers to use their current land while exploring opportunities to clear new land within the same area of the block farm. In Palabek Kal, land owners indicated that they would encourage land owners from the other neighboring parishes to also avail land such that block farming activities and beneficiaries can be divided up per parish, which would facilitate decongestion as the satellite camps are located at the parish level. IRC is committed to following these beneficiaries to their new settlements and providing the necessary support as appropriate.
- IRC held two meetings with the District Land Officer and one meeting with the local leaders (LC-II and III, sub-county and parish chiefs) of each of the four locations to ascertain the existence of structures that have the capacity to address land disputes. Particular focus was given to the Area Land Committees and village chiefs, and their linkages with the district local government. The District Land Officer informed IRC staff that the Area Land Committees, which used to be at the parish level, have been shifted to the sub-county level due to recent constitutional changes. This change, made nation-wide, moves the decision making body further away from the actual location of the dispute. Specifically in northern Uganda, this policy is controversial due to the high number of land disputes expected as people return home.
- At the same meetings, community members and land owners, proposed developing the capacity of the village chiefs (known as *Rwodi Kweri*) and Local Councilors Two (LC –IIs) to ensure that land disputes or any land requests for development programs are addressed at the village and parish levels before they reach the Area Land Committee, which is still not operational. IRC is currently exploring this approach in other programs, particularly with respect to decongestion.

Fifth Quarter Setbacks

- With regards to creating future strategies for strengthening Area Land Committees, the District Land Office does not have the necessary capacity and support from the District Land Board to function as a dispute resolution and land usage planning body. According to the District Land Officer, the members of the District Land Board are political appointees, appointed by the District Chairperson (LC – V) regardless of their capacity or knowledge of land issues. As a result, they do not effectively support the District Land Office or establish systems which serve their communities. However, there needs to be a commitment from the district administrators to allocate the time and resources necessary to build the capacity of the Area Land Committees. Therefore, IRC recommends supporting the local village chiefs and the LC – IIs through appropriate training and capacity building.

Overall Progress toward Result:

Achievements:

- UPDF provided patrols around the communal block farms in all four program location areas, in addition to escorts, for the farmers when traveling to/from the farms. As the security situation improved progressively from June 2006, IRC staff were able to make visits to the fields with UPDF escorts as per the IRC security protocols. This was another benefit of the strong relationship fostered between the UPDF, camp security committees and the farmers by the IRC.

Throughout the course of conducting the field based activities IRC helped to facilitate strong relationships among the UPDF, camp security committee (camp commandant and the team) and the farmers. As a result, a clear channel for reporting security issues and response was established. With security being such a serious concern, this tri-lateral relationship was a key to program implementation.

- The land utilized under this program was done so with the full consent and involvement of the land owners and beneficiaries. This was absolutely necessary as the population in northern Uganda have a deep-rooted fear of their land being stolen by government agencies under the auspices of private investment while they are in the camps.

IRC facilitated the process of farmers leasing land from its owners. IRC utilized a strategy of land negotiation which focused on involving local traditional structures and community members. This process began during the initial community meetings and was followed up on with meetings specifically focused on identifying potential land plots and their owners.

At the first meetings held with the landowners, under Phase 2, they were provided with information regarding the program and the usage of the land. In many cases, the landowners requested time to consult with their clan or family members. Initially, many landowners were reticent and suspicious; however, as their understanding of the program increased so did their acceptance. In the cases where they agreed to offer their land, the next step was to determine the actual size of the land using a local survey method. The terms and conditions of the final agreements were negotiated collectively and signed as legal contracts.

There were several incentives for the landowners built in to the lease agreement:

- Landowners were allowed to select five family members as program participants as a token of compensation for the usage of their land. Naturally, this allowed the family to realized significant revenues from the production/sale of the cotton.
- In many cases, the land had not been cultivated for as much as twenty years. Therefore, the landowners benefited by having this very difficult initial clearing/plowing work done for them.
- Cotton plays a positive role in land preparation for millet to be grown in the second planting season. Thus, the landowners were able to easily step in and plant millet after the cotton harvest
- As access to land was a pre-requisite for participation in the program, the landowners, who also tended to be community leaders, were helping to address the needs of their community.

This land lease method was implemented without corruption and can be easily adopted by other agencies wishing to invest in agricultural production in the sub-region. However, care must be taken so as to not politicize the land lease or else the system can easily break down and become a potential source of animosity toward the agency or individuals in charge.

- In total, 860 acres of land were made available via lease agreements between IRC and landowners in the four program locations, with farmers being the primary beneficiaries and witnesses in the agreement. As the program was a pilot, and land leasing was one of the pre-

determined risk factors, it was decided that IRC should be one of the signatories on the agreement in order to be in a position to protect the interests of both the landowners and farmers. Other witnesses included sub-county officials (LC-III and or sub-county chief) and, in some cases, where there are many land owners, members of the land committee formed by the landowners⁷. Five separate agreements were completed with the land owners from the four locations guaranteeing the use of the land for one-year. (See Table-3 below for details of land agreements by location).

- The land plots were measured using a local survey method conducted by the community members in the presence of the land owners. These measurements were recorded in the lease agreements and used to determine the number of beneficiary farmers that could be accommodated on a given plot of land (*on the basis of 2 acres per farmer*).

Table – 3: Land Lease Agreements

No	Location (Camps)	Name(s) of Land Owner(s)	# of Acres Leased	# of Agreements
1	Kitgum Matidi	Mr. NYEKO George	138	1
2	Palabek Kal	Mr. OKECH Stephen and Mr. OLWENY Sisto	245*	2
3	Potika IDP Camp ⁷	Mr. OBOL Joseph, Mr. APIRE Aldo, Mr. PARO Francis Agire, Mr. OCHOLA Martine and Mr. OKENY Eric; All represented by Mr. OKWERA Seberino (Chairman land Committee)	235	1
4	Agoro IDP Camp	Mr. OKWANY Michael, Mr. OBWONA Galdino, Mrs. ONGEE Tereza, Mr. OCITTI Micheal and MR. OKURUT Julius Peter; All represented by Mr. ODONG Albert (Chairman)	232**	1
TOTAL			850	5

**Palabek Kal: Not all of the leased land was arable due to rocky terrain*

***Agoro: The agreement states 232 acres, however, it does not include 10 acres which were later added for demonstration plots (5 for food, 5 for cotton crops) giving a total of 242 acres.*

- Compared to the first planting season (February/March 2006), the farmers in the project expressed that the total acreage under crop production in the second season (July/August 2006) increased two-fold. According to a sample survey carried out with 83 beneficiaries (proportionally selected from all four sites), the average amount of land under crop production per household, both from within the block farm and outside of it, exceeded the target of two acres. The variance between locations is attributable to a combination of the community's available land and motivation/support of the program. (See Table 4 below)

Table – 4: Land Access to Beneficiary Farmers

⁷ In Potika, there were many landowners; in order to avoid having IRC complete many agreements for small plots of land, they had to form a land committee to sign the agreement on behalf of all the landowners.

Food & Cash Crops (Including: Land Both On & Off the Block Farm)

No	Location	Average acreage under crop production per beneficiary household
1	Agoro	3.8
2	Kitgum Matidi	5.8
3	Palabek Kal	2.9
4	Potika	2.3
Total Avg		3.7

Setbacks:

- The issue of accessing land was quite challenging and time intensive, causing significant delays in program implementation. The main constraint to the program from the beginning has been access to arable land. The land within the safe radius around the IDP camps has been rendered unproductive due to over settlement. Outside the safe radius there are large contiguous areas of land, however much of this land has not been cultivated for twenty years due to the insurgency. Prior to the insurgency, some of the land was used communally for grazing livestock, however, it has since then been apportioned to individual households or clans.

Therefore, the challenge of accessing land was two-fold. First, IRC had to facilitate the process of the farmers negotiating a lease agreement with the owners of the land. Once this was accomplished, it was necessary to arrange for security services to protect the farmers while they worked the land.

- The landowners were initially suspicious of the program and reticent to avail their land for use, therefore, it was agreed that IRC would sign on behalf of the farmers in order to help alleviate the landowners' concerns. As IRC then became a party within the agreement it was able to protect the interests of the farmers and landowners. Given that this was a pilot project, considered this a learning opportunity for all parties involved such that they would be able to negotiate directly in the future, without IRC's mediation. There are encouraging signs that this will happen for the coming planting season.
- In Potika, during the initial stages of land clearing, UPDF soldiers were unwilling to travel to the fields early in the morning and stay late. This seriously limited the amount of work the farmers could do in a given day. IRC was able to intervene and the situation improved during the planting season. As the security situation continuously improved throughout the remainder of the agriculture season farmers were able to access their fields without UPDF escorts.
- In Palabek Kal, a portion (approximately 20 acres) of the total land plot allocated for the program could not be used for cultivation because the soil was too rocky. Fortunately, another land owner was identified and agreed to lease 80 acres of land to the program farmers. Due to the rocky terrain, the full land acreage could not be cultivated, which is why in Palabek Kal the land area is 245 acres, but the number of farmers is only 117.
- In Palabek Kal, on more than one occasion, the number of soldiers provided was quite insufficient. This resulted in some farmers becoming reluctant to go to their fields, which then affected the timeliness of land clearing/plowing. IRC raised this issue to the local UPDF commander and it was subsequently resolved.
- The land owner from Kitgum Matidi, with whom IRC initially signed an agreement for 115 acres, had a serious misunderstanding with his brother about the land leased and ultimately had to rescind the agreement and withdraw his land from the program. Fortunately, IRC was able to finalize an agreement for 138 acres with another land owner. However, this resulted in a significant delay.

Key Indicators and Targets:

- Landowners in six IDP camps express willingness to allow access to their land for cotton and food crop cultivation through meetings with IRC and local leaders.
 - Several meetings (at least six per camp) were held with local leaders and land owners from the four selected camps resulting in the land owners' willingness to lease their land to the program participants (*See Table – 1 above*).

- Agreements signed between farmers and landowners for provision of land-use.
 - Five land lease agreements were signed for a total of 860 acres of land
- Security personnel provided to ensure safe access for farmers.
 - In general, the UPDF have consistently provided adequate security for the farmers traveling to/from the fields. There were no reported security incidents involving participating farmers over the course of the program.

Result 2.3 One-hundred farmers in each of the six selected IDP camps have two acres of land plowed each, and are provided with technical training and inputs for cotton cultivation.

Fifth Quarter Achievements

Program Extension 4.1.1: Protection and Efficiency Activities

- Conduct training on group dynamics for all farmer groups
 - Given the limited time available and purpose of the group dynamic training, it was decided that this training was more applicable to the marketing committee members than to the farmer groups. Therefore, a separate training for only marketing committee members was conducted, focusing on group dynamics and management, record keeping, principles of collective marketing and bulking and commission transactions. *(See Table-6 below for details)*
- Conduct trainings on how farmer groups can increase efficiency through combined bulking and marketing of products
 - IRC and Dunavant conducted Trainings 3 & 4 on post-harvest management and marketing of cotton for the farmers and marketing committee members, which focused on: bulking, collective marketing, sorting, picking and bagging. *(See Table-6 below for details)*

Program Extension: 4.2.1 Economic Support Activities

- Re-establish the primary Cooperative Societies⁸ that previously existed by ensuring that members are registered and executives elected
 - The plans to revitalize the Cooperative Societies became less feasible in the fifth quarter as the farmers' revealed their distrust for the Cooperative Societies at the post-harvest management and marketing training. However, the farmers still appreciated the importance of working through an organized collective structure. Therefore, the decision was made to maintain the principle of collective marketing/bulking through a farmer-owned/controlled collective marketing committee, consisting of nine members (chairperson, vice-chairperson, treasurer, secretary and five other committee members). The strategy of the collective marketing committees is to revitalize the functions of the Cooperative Societies, but under a new name, which separates them from the past difficulties, allowing time for confidence-building with the farmers. Eventually, if the UCU resumes its function of supporting Cooperative Societies in northern Uganda, these collective marketing committees can then be incorporated into the government system.
- Mediate pre-harvest meetings to be convened by Primary Societies together with farmers and Dunavant to negotiate the selling process

⁸ Note: As discussed, the collective marketing committees were substituted for the Cooperative Societies. Therefore, throughout the remainder of this report, "collective marketing committees" will be referred to instead of Cooperative Societies.

- Once it was agreed upon to create the collective marketing committees, IRC in cooperation with Dunavant, defined the structure and roles/responsibilities of the relevant positions on the committee. In a subsequent meeting, this structure was explained to the farmers and IRC guided them through the process of selecting appropriate people to fill the positions on the committee. IRC also facilitated discussions between Dunavant and the farmers regarding the cash advance system. Initially, Dunavant wanted to require some form of collateral on the part of the marketing committee in order to receive the cash advances. However, the marketing committee members did not have any acceptable collateral. Ultimately, Dunavant was willing to waive the collateral requirement; however, this was in large part due to Dunavant's trust in IRC's involvement and monitoring of the committees.
- Together with Dunavant, IRC will conduct trainings on post-harvest management, specifically including Cooperative Society members and government extension workers (NAADS)
 - IRC and Dunavant conducted Trainings 3 & 4 on post-harvest management and marketing of cotton for the farmers and marketing committee members. Due to scheduling constraints on behalf of the government extension workers, it proved to be very difficult to have them attend the trainings; however, they did attend field visits with IRC staff.
- Training of Society Executive Committees on group dynamics, marketing, constitution creation, hosting general assemblies and other areas as determined by focused needs assessments.
 - A separate training for only marketing committee members was conducted, focusing on: group dynamics and management, record keeping, principles of collective marketing and bulking and commission transactions. (*See Table-6 below for details*)
- Set appropriate strategies to assist Societies to be able to re-establish stores in the respective locations
 - Once the marketing committees were formed, they were responsible for identifying and negotiating for the rental of a local storage facility. The first cash advance Dunavant provided to each of the marketing committees covered the cost of renting the storage facility as well as the initial cotton purchases. The marketing committee members agreed that they would ultimately repay Dunavant the cost of the storage rental from their commission revenues. The total cotton purchased (*See Table-8*) by the marketing committee, from the beneficiary farmers is 106,785 Kg. Based on a commission rate of 20 UGX per Kg, each marketing committee will receive an average commission of 533,925 UGX, which should adequately cover the rental cost of the storage facility (*approximately 25 – 30,000 UGX/month for 4 months = 100 – 120,000 UGX; 19% - 23% of revenue*) with a significant balance remaining to be used to develop the committee's capacity for the next planting season and provide inputs to the farmers within the same farming groups.
- Host meetings with Dunavant and Society leaders to foster relationship and confidence building
 - The confidence building process between Dunavant and the marketing committees was continuous and not confined to specific meetings. Dunavant's participation throughout the process of forming and training the marketing committees served to foster confidence and promote a productive working relationship. The relationship between the two bodies continued to strengthen, as evidenced by the fact that from the second cash advance onward, all of the marketing committees went to Dunavant directly, as opposed to through IRC as was the case for the first cash advance.
- Monitor purchasing period in cooperation with Dunavant and Primary Societies
 - Continuous monitoring and support were provided to the marketing committees to ensure that any record keeping mistakes were corrected immediately and any problems regarding purchasing cotton from farmers and delivering it to the ginnery were immediately resolved. Other support included facilitating the process of accessing cash advances from Dunavant for

the purchase of cotton and providing guidance to the marketing committees regarding how to manage the storage of the cotton, including prevention of fire and theft.

- Document during selling period, any concerns of farmers and Dunavant for future planning
 - The collective marketing system worked well for farmers and they are very motivated to use a system that is self-owned. According to the information obtained from a one-day program review seminar, the collective marketing system is a potential step towards reviving the Cooperative Society structure if the government provides more support to the Cooperative Union.
 - The sudden increase in cotton production ultimately overwhelmed the ginnery's capacity to gin and Dunavant's storage capacity. While the ginning machines are operating, due to inconsistent electricity caused by power load shedding, the rate of ginning can not keep up with the inflow of cotton. Some cotton was stored on Dunavant's compound, which eventually degraded the quality of the lint. Dunavant also tried to rent other storage facilities, however, they were unable to find sufficient space. At one point during the harvest period, Dunavant stopped sending trucks to the collective marketing points, to collect cotton, due to the storage problems. This also meant that the collective marketing points had to temporarily stop purchasing cotton from farmers. This caused much disappointment on the side of the farmers who had come to count on the reliability of the marketing point to make immediate purchase for cash. It was also risky for the farmers to store cotton in their small huts in the camp as it created a fire hazard.
- Follow-up meetings with Primary Cooperative Societies in respective camps
 - Continuous field visits were conducted at which IRC staff followed-up on the activities of the marketing committees, ensuring the proper functioning of the committee as well as addressing any issues raised by the committee members.

Fifth Quarter Setbacks:

- IRC had initially envisioned reviving the Primary Cooperative Societies that previously existed⁹. Thus, why the state of the Cooperative Societies was one of the initial criteria for site selection. However, it became apparent that the communities' perception of the Primary Cooperative Societies was so negative that it was pointless to try to revive them. Some farmers produced receipts from their last sales made to the Cooperative Societies, in the 90's, for which they were never paid. While farmers acknowledge that the Cooperative Societies did serve them well up until the start of the LRA insurgency, they still feel that their current capacity is insufficient to resume their role in the local cotton market. The Cooperative Society members themselves acknowledged that they were not receiving the necessary support from the Uganda Cooperative Union (UCU) to resume their previous operations. It appears that the structural link between the UCU and the Cooperative Societies has been severely weakened and would be difficult to rebuild. Therefore, IRC and Dunavant, following the concerns and recommendations from the beneficiary farmers and local government, initiated a plan to establish farmer-operated collective marketing committees.
- Decongestion of the IDP camps was a big challenge towards the end of the program. Many farmers became so excited about the prospect of moving closer to their homes they spent much of their time acquiring plots for new home construction. As a result, some farmers began to neglect their fields during harvest season. This had a negative affect on the quantity and quality of the harvest, and thus, financial implications for many farmers. However, the

⁹ One finding from the research phase was that many farmers felt the Society Executive Committees were made up of "old men" who do not necessarily understand new methods of farming or marketing. Increasing confidence in the Executive Committee will be essential and therefore holding elections is necessary.

decongestion has also increased the potential for future access to land as farmers move closer to their villages. IRC staff visited at least one site each in Palabek Kal and Kitgum Matidi; the beneficiaries from these sites are interested in continuing with the block farming approach to ensure their own safety and for that of their crops.

Overall Achievements Toward Result

A) Land Access:

Achievements:

- Of the total of 416 farmers, 300 of them had access to, a minimum, of two acres of land. This is excepting the 116 farmers from Potika who only had access to approximately one acre of land each. However, of the 860 acres of total available land for the program, only 744 acres (87%) were plowed and cultivated. In all of the locations, with the exception of Potika, the planting ratio of cotton/food crops was 50%/50%. (See Table 4 below for land usage per location).

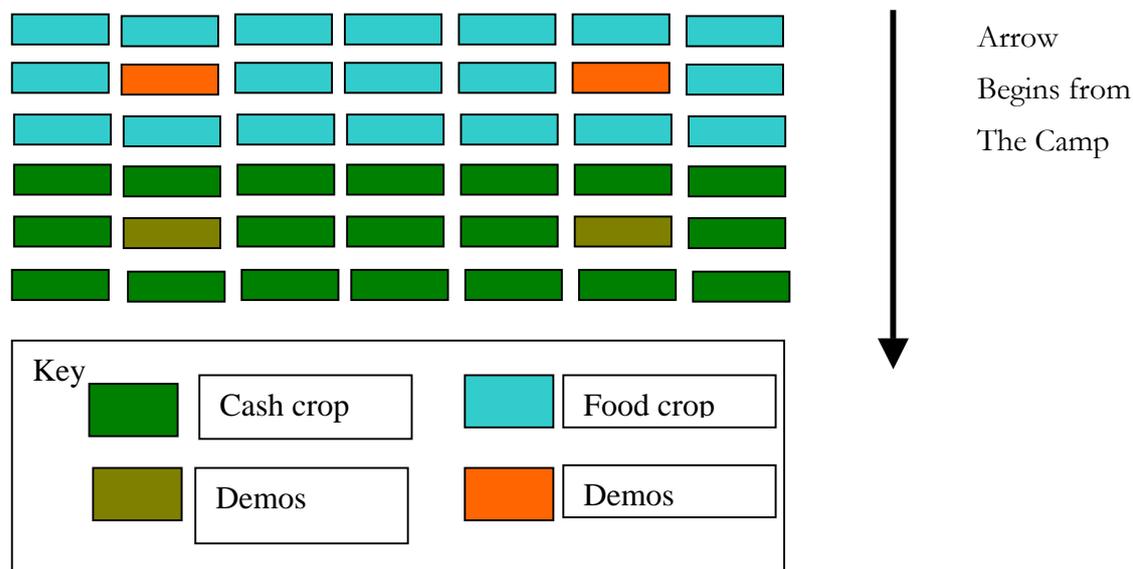
Table – 5 Land Plowing and Planting (On the Block Farm)

Camp	Acreage Leased per camp	Total Land Plowed	Plowed Land Planted with Cotton	Plowed Land Planted with Food Crops
Agoro	242	242	121	121
Potika	235	122	122	0
Kitgum Matidi	138	138	69	69
Palabek Kal	245	242	121	121
Total	860	744	433	311
Percentage		87%	58%	42%

- As much of the land had not been plowed in almost twenty years, there was an excessive amount of growth to be cleared. Naturally, manual land clearing would have been extremely difficult; and even mechanized plowing alone would not have been able to accomplish the task. The IRC - Dunavant agreement was that farmers would first uproot the tree stumps from their land manually and then a Dunavant provided tractor would plow. IRC provided each farmer with a tool pack (consisting of, one of each: hoe, machete and axe) to facilitate the manual land clearing process.
- Dunavant provided one tractor per camp for plowing services at a subsidized cost of 15,000 UGX/acre, which was due to be paid only after the harvest. The availability of access to the tractor service was a key to ensuring that the land was prepared in time for the planting season.
- Contrary to what the majority of other NGOs expected, farmers were more interested in the cash crop than the food crops. The farmers' motivation to plant cotton was stimulated by the subsidized tractor plowing services provided by Dunavant and guaranteed sale of the cotton at a minimum price of 400 UGX/kg. This access to cash was something special for Kitgum farmers after so many years of mainly subsistence farming.

- Each individual farmer was availed two acres of land for production with one acre allocated for cotton production and the other for food crops. The layout of the plots was consolidated into separate blocks of cash and food crops. This design provided for ease of plowing and agronomic trainings on the production of the various crops. From the security perspective it also allowed for the food crops to be placed closer to the camp, helping to ensure their safety from looting, with the cotton fields being placed further away.

Fig – 2: The design of block farm layouts



Setbacks:

- In Potika, only 52% (122 acres out of 235 acres) of the land that was leased was actually plowed, and none of the plowed land was used for food crops. Cultivation in Potika was significantly delayed due to the difficulty in clearing the heavy vegetation growth from the land. The manual clearing of tree stumps and bush took much more time in Potika than the other sites. As a result, the start of the tractor plowing was delayed. Once the plowing began, the tractor broke down often due to tree stumps and bush having not been sufficiently removed. The first result of this was that not all of the land leased was able to be plowed in time for planting season. With only half of the planned acreage plowed, the farmers decided that they preferred to plant only cotton on the available land. (See Result 2.4 (B) for more details)
- In Palabek Kal, they failed to plow three acres of land because the tractor which had been allocated to that camp was sent to Potika to try and help them to catch up on their plowing, as they were significantly behind schedule.
- In Kitgum Matidi, it was particularly difficult to mobilize land owners, who had a significant amount of land, to lease it for the program. The land owners generally tended to be more skeptical of program participation in Kitgum Matidi than in the other locations. The land owners who were willing to lease their land could only provide 138 acres.

B) Technical support

Achievements:

- Dunavant committed to supporting farmers in cotton production and provided all the necessary inputs for cotton production, as well as technical trainings and assistance with the collective marketing of cotton. Production trainings were conducted at three critical stages of plant growth and focused on: plant establishment, integrated pest and disease management,

post harvest handling management and collective marketing. The trainings, combined with the supply of inputs, increased farmers' motivation for cotton production and trust in Dunavant as a company which is willing to work with farmers in a fair and mutually beneficial relationship.

Table 6: Farmer Group Training Attendance

Camp	Training 1: Agronomic Best Practices (food & cotton crops)		Training 2: Integrated pest and disease management (food & cotton crops)		Trainings 3 & 4: Post-harvest Handling and Marketing (only cotton)		Collective Marketing Committee Members' Training	
	Total Males	Total Females	Total Males	Total Females	Total Males	Total Females	Total Males	Total Females
Agoro	78	30	55	40	69	45	6	3
Potika	34	56	60	59	55	50	7	2
Kitgum Matidi	40	26	30	20	32	20	8	1
Palabek Kal	78	85	50	43	55	80	7	2
Total	230	197	195	162	211	195	28	8
Total Participants	427 ¹⁰		357		406		36	
Avg Attendance	397							

- The training program consisted of two general sessions “Agronomic Best Practices” and “Integrated Pest & Disease Management,” which covered both food and cotton crops.¹¹ The Agronomic Best Practices Training focused on: planting site selection, variety selection, time of planting, planting and spacing and herbicide/pesticide use. The Integrated Pest and Diseases Management Training focused on: pest identification, pest incidence assessment and control. (*See Table-6 for attendance details*)
- Given the humid tropical conditions, insect/pest multiplication rates were very high. Thus, one of the biggest issues regarding cotton production was pest management. An integrated pest and disease management system was designed and farmers were provided with various pesticides and training on their usage by Dunavant.
- Trainings 3 and 4 covered “Post-harvest Handling & Marketing” specifically for cotton. These final training focused on: proper picking techniques, timeliness of picking, sorting, bagging and the strategy/functioning of the collective marketing committees.
- In addition to farmer group trainings, lead farmers continued to conduct field visits to the members of their groups to offer one on one technical support to the farmers. These individual visits/trainings were particularly helpful to farmers who were not present for a certain portion of the training struggled with the information due to illiteracy or other learning difficulty.

¹⁰ In Training 1, the total attendance is higher than the number of beneficiaries by 11. In actuality, there were 47 non-beneficiaries from Palabek Kal who attended the training. This was because the training was conducted in a public place, and thus, was open to all interested community members. Cotton farmers who were working directly with Dunavant were particularly interested in the training.

¹¹ All food crop related topics were conducted by IRC staff, while all cotton related topics were conducted by Dunavant staff

Table 7: Distribution of Inputs per Location

Camp	<u>IRC Provided</u> Tool Kits – 1 per Farmer (comprised of 1 of each: hoe, machete & axe)	<u>Dunavant Provided</u> Cotton Kits – 1 per Farmer (comprised of: 3 kg of cotton seeds, herbicides, pesticides & planting line)
Agoro	117	117
Potika	116	116
Kitgum Matidi	66	66
Palabek Kal	117	117
TOTAL	416	416

- Input distributions were spread out over the course of the program, such that participants were provided with the necessary inputs at the time of actual need.

Setbacks:

- Due to the initial security situation, which limited IRC staff from accessing the fields located outside the safe radius, there was no direct supervision of the farmers during the field preparation and planting stages. All technical support was provided through the camp representatives and lead farmers, who transferred the information to the best of their ability, but not without some distortion and loss. As a result, some of the farmers groups did not lay out their demonstration plots properly, which diminished their usability as a training tool for the other farmers. Ultimately, the farmers' final harvest was also negatively affected by this. Once the travel restrictions were eased, IRC staff visited the fields regularly and provided strong technical support, however, it was too late to wholly correct for the previous mistakes.

C) Harvesting and Marketing**Achievements:**

- IRC assisted in the establishment of a farmer operated collective marketing committee in each camp to provide collective marketing for the cotton harvest. The collective marketing points served as Dunavant's local buyer representative and collection point; the marketing points were used extensively by cotton growers, including both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of the program. The marketing points received cash advances from Dunavant such that they could purchase cotton from farmers and pay them in cash immediately. These marketing points served as the key linking mechanism between Dunavant and the farmers. *(See Setbacks in this section for more background information)* IRC's specific tasks and level of accomplishment under this activity were:
 - Mediated the agreement between farmers and Dunavant and acted as a third-party witness to ensure against any breaches of the agreement
 - Ensured that the marketing committee members were selected democratically, had a full understanding of their role and provided them with the necessary materials to be able to operate effectively

- Conducted trainings with Dunavant (for both farmers and marketing committees): post harvest management of cotton, group management, record keeping, principles of collective marketing and bulking, commission transactions
- Continuous monitoring and support were given to the marketing committees to ensure that any mistakes made in the ledger were immediately corrected, or to resolve any problems with regards to buying cotton from farmers and delivering it to the ginnery. Dunavant provided the collective marketing committees with receipt books and IRC provided additional record books and other stationeries. These were used to track both the quality and quantity of the cotton sold by each farmer to Dunavant via the collective marketing point.
- IRC mediated the agreement between farmers and Dunavant to provide the marketing committees with the cash advance necessary to be able to pay the farmers immediately for their cotton upon delivery to the collection points. This system of immediate cash payment was a key motivation for the farmers and it attracted other farmers from outside the program to come and sell their cotton through the collection point as well, as opposed to via an agent.
- The working relationship between the collective marketing committees and Dunavant has become quite strong. By the close of the marketing season, the committees were already able to communicate and negotiate directly with Dunavant, including: obtaining cash advances directly, carrying out cotton purchases and clearing the cash advance.
- A commission of 20 UGX/kg collected at the respective collective marketing point will be paid to the marketing committee at the end of the purchasing season. The marketing committee members, with their contributing farmers, will collectively decide the appropriate use of the commission for the development of the collection point. As of the time of this writing, none of the marketing committees have received the commission as the purchasing of cotton is still being finalized. However, IRC will continue to follow up with Dunavant and the marketing committees to ensure that the commissions are received and properly utilized to the benefit the farmers and the collection point.
- Dunavant fulfilled its commitment to a minimum price floor, while still recognizing the final price set by the CDO if it turned out to be higher than the minimum. (See section 3.2 #6 Assumptions, Risks & Constraints for details). Table - 8 below shows the average earnings from cotton sales per beneficiary farmer (includes land both on and off the block farm). Farmers expressed that this years' earning marked a significant improvement over the average income previously earned by residents in the camp.

Table – 8: Cotton Purchased by the Collection Point per Location

Location	Cotton From Beneficiary Farmers		Earnings per Farmer/HH (UGX)
	Quantity (Kg)	Value (UGX)	
Kitgum Matidi	48,130	21,658,500	323,261
Palabek Kal	22,775	10,248,750	88,351
Agoro	24,125	10,856,250	92,788

Potika	11,755	5,289,750	45,601
TOTAL	106,785	48,053,250	114,512

Source: Dunavant (U) Ltd. Record in Kitgum as of February 16th 2007

- Variations between earnings per farmer per location can be attributed to three factors:
 - Experience growing cotton which translated into better agronomic practices, and thus, yields
 - Kitgum Matidi had never stopped growing cotton throughout the conflict. Their vast experience/knowledge was evident in their superior yield.
 - Potika was the least experienced and slow to adopt/implement instructions
 - Availability of Land
 - Due to significant differences in land availability, as per Table-4 above, there were variations in the amount of land cultivated per farmer (Kitgum Matidi had the highest average acreage per farmer and Potika the lowest)
 - Arability of Land:
 - As previously mentioned:
 - In Potika, the land was of low quality and had been very difficult to clear
 - In Palabek Kal, the terrain was very rocky and not entirely arable
- Over the last few years, the Kitgum ginnery remained closed and all of the cotton produced locally was sent to Lira for ginning. Due to the low quantity produced in Kitgum it was not cost effective to operate the cotton gin there. The increase in cotton production realized this year justified the long anticipated re-opening of the Kitgum ginnery. Since reopening, the ginnery employs over 85 people (80+ casual laborers and 5 administrative staff). Local businesses have also realized increased sales vis-à-vis the additional revenue in the local economy. The transportation sector has also benefited as Dunavant is hiring at least eight trucks per day to transport cotton from the field to the ginnery and from the balled ginnery to Lira for exporting.

Setbacks:

- Unexpected rainfall during the cotton harvest put considerable pressure on the farmers to harvest their cotton quickly as soon as there was sunshine in order to pick the bulbs when they were open. Those who were not able to pick their cotton at the right moment realized a significant loss in quality and quantity.
- The results of the participants' long stay in the IDP camps became evident mid-way into the harvest. Despite the participants' initially high motivation for cotton production, as the field work intensified they became discouraged and began to neglect their fields (weeding, pest and

disease controls – spraying timely, harvesting timely, sorting and bagging). As a result of the improper field management the cotton yield per acre was lower than expected.

Key Indicators and Targets:

- 1,200 acres of land plowed in six IDP camps in Kitgum district.
 - 744 acres of land were plowed, representing 62% of the initial target, in 4 out of the targeted 6 IDP camps
- 30 demonstration plots established in six IDP camps in Kitgum District.

Table – 9: Cotton Demonstration Plots per Location

No.	Name of IDP Camp	Number of Cotton Demo Plots
1	Potika	5
2	Agoro	6
3	Palabek Kal	5
4	Kitgum Matidi	3
Total		19

- The initial target of thirty cotton demonstration plots was based on the premise that there were going to be thirty farmers groups (five from each of the six camps). Due to the reduced number of beneficiaries, ultimately, there were only nineteen groups. Thus, the nineteen cotton demonstration plots established, meet the initial target ratio of one demonstration plot per farmer group.
- 600 farmers receive quality training in modern farming techniques for cotton cultivation.
 - On average, 397 farmers attended four different trainings. As per Table-6 above, there were four different training modules, conducted in three days (Trainings 3 & 4 were combined into one day). The trainings were scheduled according to the agricultural schedule so as to correspond with the needs in the fields. The average number of 397 participants represents 66% of the initial target of training participants. However, it also represents 95% of the participating farmers.
- 600 farmers are provided with inputs to grow cotton (seeds, fertilizer, and pesticide).
 - 416 farmers received cotton kits (containing: seeds, herbicides, insecticides and fertilizer) which provided sufficient inputs for planting and managing one acre of land.
- 30 ULVA pumps provided to farmer groups in six IDP camps in Kitgum District
 - Dunavant provided nineteen ULVA pumps to the nineteen farmers groups (Agoro-6; Kitgum Matidi-3; Palabek Kal-5 and Potika-5). In Potika, an additional four pumps were borrowed from Dunavant and to repel a massive pest infestation.

Result 2.4: One-hundred farmers in each of the six selected IDP camps are provided with technical training and inputs for food cultivation.

A) Technical Trainings

Achievements:

As per Result 2.3 (B) and Table-6, Dunavant and IRC staff provided technical trainings for the farmers. With regards to the food crops, Training Three covered Post-harvest handling, focusing on: harvesting techniques for various food crops, including timeliness, drying and storage. (See Table-10 for Attendance Details)

Table – 10: Farmers’ Attendance at Food Crops Training

Camp	Training 3: Post-harvest Handling	
	Total Males	Total Females
Agoro	75	31
Potika	68	29
Kitgum Matidi	40	26
Palabek Kal	40	60
Total	223	146
TOTAL	369	

- IRC Program Assistants received APEP training in May 2006. This training helped to improve the capacity of the Assistants to train the camp representatives, lead farmers and the farmers themselves.

Setbacks:

- The initial limited field movements, due to the security situation, made it very difficult for the IRC staff to effectively supervise the establishment of the demonstration plots and planting of food crops in the farmers’ gardens. Therefore, the food crops seeds provided to the farmers were not planted in according to best practices. Most farmers intercropped their gardens as per their interest at that time, with very little adoption of the techniques used at the demonstration plots, which themselves were not established completely correctly.
- Only 300, of the 416, beneficiary households benefited from the technical support and actual planting of the food crop inputs. This is because none of the 116 farmers in Potika planted the food crops. As previously discussed, the plowing in Potika was significantly delayed. With only half of the planned acreage plowed, and the time for planting nearing an end, the farmers decided that they preferred to plant only cotton on the available land. This was decided for two reasons. Firstly, that the food crop seeds came late for planting, especially given the earlier rain cycle in Potika compared with other sites. Secondly, the residents had already planted food crops on other land and felt that it was enough to meet their needs. Using the average of 8.5 people per household (See Annex-A population data), the total number of beneficiaries, both direct and indirect, who benefited from produced food crops was 2,541.
- As the original end date of the program was September 30th 2005, post harvest trainings for food crops had to be conducted prior to harvest in order to be prepared for the possibility that there would not be an extension of the program. These trainings were thus less effective as there were no mature plants available for the demonstration of key post harvest handling principles. Additionally, the farmers’ ability to correctly implement techniques covered at the training diminishes the longer the gap is between learning and implementing.

- Food crop yields were further negatively impacted by many farmers' insistence, particularly in Agoro, to over plant. They were skeptical of the spacing techniques taught at the trainings, as they were contradictory to the traditional practice of broadcast planting. The seed varieties provided by FAO had certain minimum spacing requirements which were not met. This resulted in a less than optimum yield.

B) Provision of Inputs

Achievements:

- Many agencies in Kitgum District are conducting widespread “blanket” seed distributions¹². However, given the IDPs lack of other necessary inputs, and access to land, these seeds often were not planted and many ended up either being sold in local markets or consumed. This program demonstrated that provided the necessary inputs and access to land, farmers are motivated to plant all the food crop seeds they are provided.
- IRC entered into an agreement with FAO whereby FAO agreed to provide IRC food crop/vegetable seeds which IRC would then distribute to its beneficiary farmers. At the time of the agreement there were 415 registered beneficiary farmers. FAO's provision of seeds fell just barely short of what was needed. However, the farmers agreed to share the seeds such that all the beneficiaries would receive them. The inputs were provided under projects: OSRO/UGA/601/EC – “Improved Livelihood and Income Diversification Among Conflict Affected Households in Northern and North-eastern Uganda” and OSRO/UGA/406/BEL – “Emergency Provision of Essential Agricultural Inputs to Conflict-affected Households, in Northern and North-eastern Uganda” respectively.
- IRC conducted monitoring and evaluation of the food crop inputs distribution in accordance with FAO's reporting requirements, using their survey tools:
 - Phase – I: Post seed distribution evaluation (Conducted two weeks after the distribution)
 - Beneficiary analysis
 - Selection process
 - Geographic distribution
 - Household types
 - What other inputs are provided and by who?
 - Plans for planting (land preparation)
 - Crop performance (germination levels)
 - Phase – II : Crop development monitoring (Conducted 5 weeks after distribution, during the growing period)
 - Proportion of seeds planted
 - Crop performance (resistance to pests, drought & diseases)
 - Phase – III: - Harvest - Crop performance and impact evaluation (Conducted 16 weeks after distribution)
 - The food crops yields
 - Quantity consumed
 - Quantity sold
 - Harvest: Local vs. Improved varieties

¹² Blanket inputs Distribution is a general terms used by agencies working in food security to denote distribution of specific uniform quantity and quality of inputs to the entire population without targeting any specific category.

Table 11: Distribution of Inputs per Location

Camp	FAO Provided Vegetable Seed kits – 1 per Farmer (comprised of: tomatoes, eggplant, onions, okra & cabbage)	FAO Provided Food Crops Seed Kits –Avg of 3 seed kits ¹³ per farmer (comprised of: Set1: 3 kg ground nuts, 4kg maize & 4 kg beans; Set 2: 3 kg ground nuts, 4kg rice & 4 kg beans)
Agoro	116	348
Potika	116	348
Kitgum Matidi	66	195
Palabek Kal	116	348
TOTAL	414	1,239

Setbacks:

- Delayed delivery of food crop seed kits led to late planting, which had a significant impact on the final yield. The late delivery was due to technicalities in the procurement and delivery on the side of FAO.
- The groundnut seeds, which were in high demand among the farmers were of low quality, resulting in low rates of germination and increased rot.
- In Potika, as discussed under Result 2.3 (A), late delivery of food crop seed kits contributed to the decision to stop clearing/plowing and leave the 116 acres initially planned for the food crops untouched.

C) Harvest & Marketing**Achievements:**

- At the beginning of the program concerns were raised by the NGO community, that the promotion of cotton production would undermine food security in Kitgum District. However, in actuality, this program served to enhance food security by promoting the cultivation of food crops on 300 acres of land, which otherwise would not have been in production. Testimonies from beneficiary farmers indicate that food crop harvests helped to supplement their household food and cash requirements.
- The total grain production from the 83 households surveyed during the phase – III FAO survey was 217,210 kg (an average of 2,617 Kg per Household)¹⁴. Using this average projected out for

¹³ Food crop seeds provided to farmers included; Beans [K132], Maize [Longe IV], Rice [Nerica III] and Ground nuts [Serenut II]. Seeds were provided by FAO and each farmer received three seed kits. There were two categories of kits, the first category, which was only distributed in Agoro, was comprised of: Beans (4 Kg), Maize (4 Kg) and Groundnut (3 Kg); while the second category, which was distributed in the other locations of Potika, Kitgum Matidi and Palabek Kal, had the same component except Maize (4 Kg) replaced with Rice (4 Kg).

¹⁴ Grains here refer to the sum of all seeded crop harvest and seeded harvest used here includes beans, maize, sorghum, sesame and groundnuts. Though respondents planted not more than four types each of the grains, the largest contribution was from Simsim and groundnuts.

the total 300 households (116 farmers in Potika did not grow food crops), would give an estimate of 785,100 kg of grain. The actual grain total is likely to be less, as some beneficiaries from Agoro planted other food crops.

- Anecdotal evidence from farmers in Kitgum Matidi, Palabek Kal and Agoro indicated that farmers were very happy with the food crop yields. For example in Palabek Kal, farmers realized an average ground nut (Serenut – II) yield of three bags, which is a significant positive contribution to their dietary needs. In Kitgum Matidi, one farmer testified the joy she got in harvesting and managing her own grains, which she had not done in ten years. Most farmers expressed that they are very happy to be able to produce their own food crops; and that even a small supplement is very helpful to them.

Setbacks:

- IRC was not able to accurately track food crop yields for several reasons:
 - Improper field layout and inconsistent planting proportionality made it impossible to establish a standard land unit as a basis of measurement
 - Consumption of food crops by the farmers, as soon as a given crop was mature enough to be edible, made it impossible to quantify yields
 - The farmers had no interest in tracking their food crop yields
 - Field visit limitations caused by the security situation made it impossible for the IRC staff to visit the food crop fields and take measures themselves
- While the overall impact of the food crops was a positive effect on food security, the yields per acre were less than expected due to several factors:
 - Late planting due to delayed provision of seeds
 - Inadequate field management on behalf of the farmers (weeding, spacing and mixed cropping)
 - Unfavorable weather patterns (inconsistent rains)

Key Indicators and Targets:

- 30 demonstration plots established in six IDP camps in Kitgum District and lead farmers provided with inputs.

Table-12 Food Crop Demonstration Plots

No.	Name of IDP Camp	Number of Food Crops Demo Plots
1	Potika	0
2	Agoro	6
3	Palabek Kal	5
4	Kitgum Matidi	3
Total		14

- Fourteen food crop demonstration plots have established. Only in Potika, as previously discussed, no food crops were planted. The initial target of thirty food crop demonstration

plots was based on the premise that there were going to be thirty farmers groups (five from each of the six camps). Due to the reduced number of beneficiaries, ultimately, there were only nineteen groups. Less the five groups from Potika, which did not produce food crops, and the remaining number of groups is fourteen. Thus, each of the farmers groups that produced food crops also established a demonstration plot, as per the initial target ratio of one demonstration plot per farmer group.

- IRC Camp Representatives and IRC Program Assistants receive 3-4 trainings in food production by APEP. The two IRC Program Assistants participated in a two-week introductory training in May 2006 focusing on the production of selected food crops and extension methods. APEP did not conduct trainings directly for the camp representatives. However, the Program Assistants conducted trainings for the camp representatives, teaching the same information which had been covered by APEP, plus additional ones which were deemed necessary by the IRC agronomy team. Due to the fact that Kitgum District is not part of the geographical coverage of APEP's activities, it proved infeasible to schedule trainings in the camps. Camp representatives, along with other farmers, received three trainings (*See Tables 6 & 10 for attendance details and themes*).
- IRC Program Assistants receive one-month introductory training on modern farming techniques and training methodologies from APEP.
 - Two IRC program assistants participated in a two weeks training in May 2006, focusing on the production of selected food crops and extension methods conducted by APEP.
- 600 farmers receive quality training in modern farming techniques for food cultivation.
 - The average number of farmers that participated in the three trainings focusing on the production of food crops was 385, which represents 64% of the initial target of 600, however, it also represents 93% of the total (416) program beneficiaries. Additionally, advisory services were offered to the farmers throughout the program by IRC technical staff on every field visit. (*See Tables 6 & 10 for attendance details and themes*)

Progress Toward Objective Two:

Accepting the reduced outreach of the program, as mentioned under objective one, objective two was mainly accomplished. Based on a pro-ration of the targets (6 camps \approx 4 camps; thus, cotton grown on 600 acres \approx 400 acres; 600 farmers and their families \approx 400) the program exceeded the pro-rated targets for both acres of land producing cotton and the total number of beneficiary farmers. The pro-rated target of '400 additional acres opened for optional cotton or food crop planting,' was 86% achieved. This was mainly due to difficulties clearing the land in Potika which resulted in a significant amount of leased land (113 acres) not being opened.

The main achievement under objective two is that the program demonstrated that the IDP farmers are motivated to engage in productive activities given the opportunity and are not satisfied with only subsistence farming. Contrary to what the majority of other NGOs expected, farmers were more interested in the cash crop than the food crops. The farmers' motivation to plant cotton was stimulated by the provision of free inputs/trainings, subsidized tractor plowing services provided by Dunavant and guaranteed sale of the cotton at a minimum price of 400 UGX/kg. This access to cash was something special for Kitgum farmers after so many years of mainly subsistence farming.

Objective Three

Farmers in six selected IDP camps are better able to save and manage incomes received from harvest.

Background Brief

IRC's Economic Development Sector is also currently implementing a Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) program with the goal of improving access to reliable financial services (credit and savings) for individuals affected by violent conflict in Kitgum District. Through close collaboration between the agronomy and VSLA staff, every effort was made to ensure that farmers under the cotton project had access to the VSLA groups. According to the VSLA methodology, group members are self-selected into groups of 15 - 30 members and agree upon their own internal regulations. Weekly saving amounts are set by the group members depending on their ability to save. This includes setting minimum and maximum (*always five times the minimum*) weekly savings amounts, which hedges against the richer members from dominating the group. The practice of self-selection enables beneficiaries to form groups which are based on mutual trust and social cohesion which facilitates adherence to, and enforcement of, the group's internal regulations.

Result 3.1: 600 farming families participate in Savings and Loans Associations in six IDP camps.

Fifth Quarter Achievements

4.1.1 Protection and Efficiency Activities

- Continue to provide support to farmers in savings and loan associations (funded under another IRC project)
 - The VSLA program of the IRC Economic Development Sector continued supporting farmers to form and or join VSLA groups. The technical support provided included: training in VSLA best practices, record keeping and the management and usage of loan funds. Specific follow up visits were conducted for farmers participating in VSLA activities. These activities will continue, minimally, until the end of the funding (September 15) for the VSLA program.
 - IRC's Economic Development Sector is also currently implementing a Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) program with the goal of improving access to reliable financial services (credit and savings) for individuals affected by violent conflict in Kitgum District. Through close collaboration between the agronomy and VSLA staff, every effort was made to ensure that farmers under the cotton project had access to the VSLA groups. According to the VSLA methodology, group members are self-selected into groups of 15 - 30 members and agree upon their own internal regulations. Weekly saving amounts are set by the group members depending on their ability to save. This includes setting minimum and maximum (*always five times the minimum*) weekly savings amounts, which hedges against the richer members from dominating the group. The practice of self-selection enables beneficiaries to form groups which are based on mutual trust and social cohesion which facilitates adherence to, and enforcement of, the group's internal regulations.

Overall Achievements Toward Result:

- The VSLA and agronomy programs of the Economic Development Sector conducted information sharing sessions with beneficiary farmers and other interested community members to introduce the VSLA program, its principles and best practices, and how community members can benefit from participation. This was also an opportunity to introduce the community members to their respective, currently active, VSLA community based facilitators for subsequent follow up. Following the self-selection methodology, farmers organized themselves into groups, not necessarily only including farmers, and made arrangements to receive training from their local facilitator on the principles of VSLA.
- Out of the 416 participating farmers/households, 152 are currently registered and actively participating in VSLA activities. This represents 37% of the program beneficiaries. (*See Table-13 for participation details*)

Table – 13: Farmers Participating in VLSA

Locations	Number of Farmers Participating in VSLA per Location			Participating Farmers as a % of the Total		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Palabek Kal	28	47	75	42%	96%	65%
Kitgum Matidi	2	7	9	5%	26%	13%
Potika	12	18	30	15%	53%	26%
Agoro	13	17	38	17%	44%	32%
Totals	55	89	152	21%	60%	37%

- While women represented only 36% of the total number of farmers in the program, they comprised 60% of the farmers who joined VSLA groups. This higher participation rate among women can be attributed to Ugandan females having more of a propensity to save, engage in small income generating activities and join/remain a member of a group.
- In Palabek Kal, the interest in VSLA participation was quite high even prior to this program, because of its close proximity to Palabek Gem where IRC has been implementing its VSLA program since March 2005.
- In Kitgum Matidi, the VSLA program is currently being implemented by IRC's local partner Christian HIV/AIDS Prevention & Support (CHAPS). Unfortunately, the CHAPS VSLA staff did not provide sufficient mobilization and information to the farmers, following the general information sharing session conducted by IRC. Therefore, despite interest in VSLA on behalf of the farmers, the participation rate was quite low.
- Given that women are generally more predisposed to be members of a VSLA group than men, the male farmers under the cotton program had a higher rate of participation than the general male population (21% of male farmers participated vs. only 17% male participation under the current VSLA program which is open to the public). This is due to two factors: increased awareness among the male farmers of the benefits of savings due to sensitization meetings and that the cotton production provided them with the income necessary to save.
- The IRC VLSA facilitators in the four locations are mobilized and have organized training sessions for the farmers. Farmers' participation remains voluntary based upon the core principles of the VSLA methodology.
- 20 tool kits have been procured and distributed to the newly formed groups, which include farmers from this program. More tool kits will be purchased, under the VSLA program as more groups are formed. The community based facilitators continue to provide trainings, monitoring and technical support to the groups and will continue to do so until the VSLA program ends in September 2007.

Setbacks:

- Many of the participating farmers expressed that the main barrier to participating in a VSLA group, is their lack of income until after harvest. It was anticipated that once the farmers received cash from the sale of their cotton, by the end of the fourth quarter, that many more of them would join VSLA groups. While the level of participation increased from 23% of participants reported in the fourth quarter to 37% by the end of January 2007, is still fell below the indicator target of 90%. Thus it became clear that access to savings was not the only barrier to entry for the farmers, there was also a lack of understanding of the VSLA principles and benefits, particularly among men. Given that the men comprise the majority within the farmers

groups, their low participation in VSLA significantly reduces the participation rate as a percentage. IRC is continuing to mobilize and monitor the participation of farmers in VSLA activities through the existing VSLA program

- Another hindrance to farmers joining VSLA groups was their lack of patience for the system, which requires a methodical process of selection and weekly savings. Immediately following cotton sales, the farmers wanted to be able to quickly join a group and save a large lump sum of money. With follow-up guidance and mobilization from the VSLA staff, some farmers were able to overcome this barrier, however, this contributed to the farmers' low rate of participation.
- Given that the farmers' savings needs differed from those of the other community members, they were unable to form their own VSLA groups due to the limited number of farmers from a given parish of origin. VSLA methodology requires that group members be from the same parish in order to be prepared for decongestion. This way, the members can continue their VSLA group after return.
- The twenty VSLA toolkits procured under this program were intended to support the farmers' VSLA groups. However, as a result of the group self-selection process, none of the groups formed were comprised solely of farmers from the cotton program. However, as some of the farmers from the cotton program benefited from joining existing VSLA groups, which already had toolkits, the cost-benefit analysis for farmers under the cotton program generally equaled out in the end.

Key Indicators and Targets:

- One sensitization meeting held on VSLAs per farmer group
 - The IRC Economic Development Sector staff conducted three information sharing sessions in each location, except for in Potika, where there was only one. The multiple sessions in one location afforded different community members the opportunity to attend and time for news of the meetings to spread throughout the community. In Potika, after the first information sharing session was conducted, it was determined that these sessions were not the best way to promote VSLA. This was due to the fact that community members in Potika, generally, were not very interested in VSLA, and thus, turn out for VSLA specific meetings was low. Therefore, the approach used in Potika was that of incorporating VSLA promotional information into every agronomy activity conducted in the camp.
 - The farmers groups from each location were gathered together for the sessions, thus, all nineteen farmers groups had access to the VSLA information. These sessions focused on introducing and disseminating the principles of VLSA, including self selection, saving, internal regulations, trainings, VSLA cycles and the action audit.
- 90% of participating farmers or their families join VSLA groups
 - As of the time of writing this report, only 37% of farmers were registered and actively participating in a VLSA group. *(See Table– 13 for details)* The farmers' low participation rate can be attributed to the fact that many farmers still did not understand the principals, and benefits, of the VSLA program. However, given the gender composition of the farming groups (64% Male: 36% Female) and the fact that male participation in VSLA has always been low it should come as no surprise that the final participation rate of farmers is also low.
 - The 152 farmers participating in VSLA are members in twenty two different groups, which are randomly distributed among the four project locations. All of the groups have received VSLA-tool kits and are being supported by community based trainers. Following the

principle of self-selection under VSLA, none of these groups are composed of 100% farmers but rather a combination of farmers and other community members.

- Farmers increase their savings and improve their family spending patterns
 - The lowest savings rate of a VSLA group which has a farmer member is approximately 2,000 UGX per week. Using that basis, projected over a twelve month period, the minimum savings amount per participating farmer is expected to be 96,000 UGX.

Due to the fact that the harvest period (family revenue) occurred at the end of the program, there was insufficient time to evaluate if the farmers' family spending patterns had changed. Given that the main impetus for change is membership in a VSLA group, it can be assumed that ultimately, family spending patterns have the greatest chance to improve for only the participating farmers. Based on the behavioral change observed among members of IRC's other, longer existing, VSLA groups, it is probable that the majority of participants will realize some form of improvement in their family spending patterns.

Progress Towards Objective Three:

Taking into account the reduced program outreach, as aforementioned, objective three was satisfactorily achieved. In retrospect, the target of 90% participation in VSLA groups among beneficiary farmers was unrealistic and unachievable in a one-year program. Acknowledging the realities that, in the local context, cotton production tends to be male oriented and VSLA groups tend to be female oriented, there were inherent cultural norms which were directly contradictory to this objective. Thus, the fact that only 37% of the program beneficiaries are actively participating in VSLA activities should not be a surprise. However, with that said, it is important to note that the rate of participation in VSLA groups among male beneficiaries is higher than that of males from the general population. Demonstrating that via in-depth sensitization and information dissemination men will participate in VSLA groups.

5.0 Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Fifth Quarter Achievements:

- IRC organized a one-day program review seminar in Kitgum Town to document lessons learned and obtain feedback from the program beneficiaries and other stakeholders who were closely involved in the implementation. In attendance were:
 - The nineteen "lead farmers"
 - Chairpersons and treasurers from the four marketing committees
 - Three Sub-county level NAADS coordinators (one each from: Agoro, Palabek Kal and Kitgum Matidi)
 - District NAADS coordinator
 - District Agricultural Officer (DAO)
 - Two Dunavant field officers (one each from Lamwo and Chua Counties)
 - Representative from Dunavant's Kitgum Office
 - Representative from FAO's Kitgum office

The results of the program review seminar are incorporated into the overall achievements detailed below:

IRC also organized a follow up meeting with only the land owners from the four project sites. The meeting focused on sharing experiences and obtaining feedback from the landowners. This included specific discussions on the landowners' perspective regarding the benefit to them of leasing their

land and that of to the community members. The meeting also focused on discussing potential areas of improvement, best practices to be replicated in other locations, as well as plans for the continuation of block farming, without support from IRC or other agency. The results of the meeting are also factored into the lessons learned detailed below:

The lessons learned from the program are broadly divided into six major sections:

- Land Access and Usage in Northern Uganda
- Involvement of Security Personnel in NGO Programs in Northern Uganda
- Promotion of Agricultural Productivity
- Marketing in Agricultural Production
- Private – Public sector engagement

1) Land Access and Usage in Northern Uganda

- In general the people of northern Uganda have a very strong fear of their land being stolen while they remain in the camps. Specifically, people believe that the government might sell their land to private investors as the land is currently vacant; community members often suspect any development program that involves the usage of land as being part of the government conspiracy to seize their land.
 - This sensitivity regarding the land has to be taken seriously and factored into any development program that involves land issues in northern Uganda. Implementers need to communicate clearly the program goals and objectives and begin the information sharing process at the sub-county level. Through in-depth information sharing and community sensitization meetings, the community members' fears can be allayed. IRC also found it helpful to include the land owners as program beneficiaries in order to ensure their "buy-in" into the program. If the wrong impression is given at the beginning, it could be impossible to overcome.
- Camp residents in Kitgum District are very excited about the prospect of returning home. So much so that it is difficult to anticipate the timing and rate of decongestion. Given the unpredictability of return, development programs need to be prepared and incorporate this into their program plans.
 - Programs in Kitgum District which are implementing via community groups should form community groups based on people's parish of origin, such that, when people return, their group remains intact. Further, people from the same parish tend to trust each other and are more willing to share resources. This is particularly relevant if the program involves land usage.
- Community members prefer, and trust in, the traditional systems for land dispute resolution. The land owners that IRC worked with expressed their belief that no significant land disputes will arise during returns as long as nobody from outside the community tries to seize land. The land owners were confident that they know the boundaries of their land and that no one from the community would intentionally seize somebody else's land. The land owners also expressed that traditional village chiefs (*Rwodi Kweri*) and village elders are still the best mechanism for resolving land disputes or other land related issues, as they are part of the community and know the village context.
 - Given the village level support for these traditional structures, and the current lack of capacity in the Area Land Committees, it is recommended that any program focusing on land issues at the village level work with the village chiefs and elders. The focus should be on formalizing the current structure (i.e. facilitating the election of community leaders who would form a committee which is responsible for land issues) and then building the capacity of the village chiefs and committee members, to not only mediate land disputes but also regarding how they can use their land strategically to promote community

development. This village-level structure then needs to be linked to the Area Land Committees as its capacity improves.

- There is a serious concern regarding the current capacity and functionality of the Area Land Committees. It appears that they are presently not functioning beyond the LC-II level. The village structures can refer disputes which prove to be beyond their means to the next higher level (LC-II), however beyond that there is no further connection. As a result many cases which are unresolved at the LC-II level, are going directly to the courts which can be expensive and often leaves both parties with deep negative feelings.
- There is an immediate need for the government of Uganda, particularly at the district level, and international agencies, to focus on the development of the government bodies and system which is responsible for resolving land related issues. The development of the relevant bodies (Area Land Committees, District Land Tribunal, District Land Office, and District Land Board) must include: organizational structure, training, defining of roles and responsibilities and establishing a clear system of referrals from the village-level upwards. Lastly, the district government would need to share this information with the community members such that people know how to utilize the system.

2) Involvement of Security Personnel in NGO Programs in Northern Uganda

- The UPDF is committed to work with humanitarian agencies to support the implementation of relief and development programs. Under this program, though their capacity at times was limited due to an insufficient number of troops for a given area and lack of equipment, they were generally very consistent and dependable. However, there does need to be clearly established and effectively communicated principles of operation and expectations on behalf of all the parties involved (beneficiaries, NGO, camp commanders, other security personnel and the UPDF).
- If a program requires a provision of security from the UPDF it is recommended that they should be involved from the start of the program, incorporating their security recommendations into the program plan. Continuous communication and feedback from all parties involved helps to foster a positive/productive relationship and allows issues to be properly addressed before they become exacerbated. It is important that the NGO staff and community members respect the hierarchy of the military and address any issues to the commander not to the relevant soldier(s) directly. Particularly with regards to programs which involve food crops, it is necessary to ensure that the soldiers are being properly fed or they will steal from the very crops they are protecting.

3) Promotion of Agricultural Productivity

- Despite initial concerns on the behalf of many international NGO representatives in Kitgum that the promotion of cotton production would undermine food security, in the end, this program contributed to food security in Kitgum District, by bringing an additional 300 acres of land into food production. The program demonstrated that provided the necessary inputs and access to land, that IDPs are willing to invest their labor to produce food crops.
- Programs which are involved in providing seeds should expand their focus to include the timely provision of other necessary agricultural inputs and ensuring sufficient access to land, based on the amount of seeds provided. Additionally, they should focus on building the capacity of community members to be able to produce their own seeds and foster the development of a seed market. At present, there are many subsidies and market distortions in the agriculture sector in northern Uganda. The government and supporting agencies should work to facilitate a smooth transition away from these subsidies and distortions, before they abruptly end themselves.

- There are very specific local cultural gender roles in agricultural production. In general, almost all of the field work is delegated to the women and children, especially following planting through to the harvest. However, it became apparent under this program that women and children alone can not handle sizeable portions of land, and they need assistance from the males in their family.
- Agriculture programs should heavily encourage men to look beyond the cultural norms and participate in all field activities from plowing through harvesting. This not only serves to improve yields, but also reduces gender imbalances within the family, thus, promoting a healthier family dynamic.
- The block farming approach serves to promote collaboration among farmers. By working together the farmers can help to protect each other (i.e. women traveling in groups to/from the fields) and their crops. This also allows for easier accessing, and cost effectiveness, of mechanized plowing, when the fields are adjacent to each other.
- It is recommended that agencies involved in agricultural production promote the utilization of the block farming approach.

4) Marketing in Agricultural Production

- This program demonstrated that there is limited access to market information and that provided with accurate and timely market information, farmers will make market based decisions regarding their production. Prior to this program, cotton production was not a priority for most farmers in Kitgum District because of uncertainty regarding the selling price and the intensive labor investment required. However, once farmers understood the fixed price minimum from Dunavant and the other input subsidies, they were very willing to produce cotton. Conversely, for most other crops, access to market information is poor, and thus, farmers only produce food crops for consumption.
- Programs focusing on agriculture need to place an emphasis on improving farmers' access to market information. This is a key component of any agriculture program so as to allow farmers to make informed production decisions. Market information should not be confined to local markets, but also exploring unmet demand in the private agriculture sector which farmers in northern Uganda could help meet if they had the necessary information. The relationship between Dunavant and the cotton farmers demonstrated this dynamic.
- As discussed previously, while farmers recognize the importance of working in a group and collective marketing, their confidence and trust for the Cooperative Societies has been ruined by the bad experiences they had prior to moving to the camp. Additionally, due to the collapse of the link between the UCU and the Cooperative Societies, at present, the Societies are not functioning and have little prospect for revitalization.
- There is a need for the government of Uganda, particularly at the district level, and international agencies, to focus on the revitalization of the northern Uganda branch of the UCU. It is up to the UCU to rebuild the Cooperative Societies and its supporting structure. In order to do so, the UCU requires capacity building, organizational development, training and the clear defining of roles and responsibilities at all levels. From the village-level, it is necessary to regain the community members' trust and confidence by forming farmer-operated marketing committees, which could later transform themselves into Cooperative Societies under a revitalized system. The formation of collective marketing committees also promotes the capacity building of its members and enables them to communicate/negotiate with private companies directly, from a position of equality. This also allows marketing committees to negotiate sales based on a realistic

production projection, establishing production and purchasing commitments for both sides.

5) Private – Public sector engagement

- There is much potential for further positive cooperation between the private and public sectors, which can serve to benefit communities. This program has demonstrated that private sector interests are not wholly contradictory with the interests of NGOs and the community members as a whole. Given the differing comparative advantages of the private and public sectors, if their interests are similar, there is potential to leverage the impact of their complimentary activities.
- NGOs should explore possibilities of collaboration with the private sector based on their understanding of the communities' potential and the private sector interests.
- Often the private sector's approach to working with community members is based solely on profit seeking and lacks sensitivity. This serves to undermine the creation of a long-term productive relationship; it also feeds the community members' distrust of outside private sector entities.
- NGOs can play an integral role in fostering this relationship. As a mutually trusted third-party, the NGO can provide capacity building to both the private sector entity, regarding community relations, and to the community members, regarding how to work with private sector entities. This type of relationship can serve to improve production at the community level, serving the interests of all parties.
- From the private sector side, it needs to be very conscientious of what it promises to community members, due to the fragility of the relationship. Companies must fulfill their commitments to the community members and maintain constant communication flows or the relationship will collapse completely.

6.0 Conclusion

The USAID-funded program *“NGO Involvement in Cotton Production Among Displaced Populations in Northern Uganda”* served as a critical turning point, from relief to recovery, for the people of Kitgum District, northern Uganda. For the first time in almost twenty years, a program was based on the people's capacity, as opposed to their needs. The public – private sector link between Dunavant and the farmers created a sustainable market based, opportunity for income generation and economic recovery for the farmers of Kitgum District. With the cash earnings and access to financial services farmers realized under this program, they now have the opportunity to invest in other agriculture, and non-agriculture, related income generating activities as well as provide the basic necessities for their families.

Accessibility to land is the main constraining factor to any replication or expansion of this program's activities. While there has been much press coverage and evaluation of the land issues in northern Uganda, much of it has ignored the local practical structure which would be the most effective mechanism for land dispute resolution. In Kitgum that local structure is the village chiefs (Rwodi Kweri) and village elders who have the mandate from the community members to adjudicate these disputes. The land used under this program was leased via these village structures. The process was so successful that the farmers and landowners have agreed to increase the acreage of land to be leased for the coming cotton production season, without any external assistance. Resources should be allocated towards the capacity building of these informal leaders and the formalization, and incorporation, of these village structures.

The current situation in Kitgum District, northern Uganda is that the people are balancing between dependence on aid and being able to provide for themselves. This program has demonstrated that

there is untapped capacity on the part of the residents of Kitgum to do more for themselves, given the opportunity. It is time for agencies working in Kitgum District to focus more on the capacities of the local residents than their needs. Up until now, food security has been defined as subsistence living and has been addressed via blanket seed, and food, distributions, regardless of how the distributions were ultimately utilized. Farmers under this program were most pleased by the fact that food security was re-defined to include their cash needs and addressed their inability to purchase other essentials in order to provide for their families. The private sector engagement demonstrated that if companies have a long-term perspective their profit seeking interests are complimentary to community development, rather than contradictory. The hope is that via expanded engagement with the private sector the people of Kitgum District can be positively incorporated into the economy such that they are able to promote local economic growth through their own active participation.

Annex – A: Beneficiaries Analysis

IRC had a sub agreement with FAO under which seed inputs were provided to the 416 farmers under this cotton program. IRC's agronomy team provided tools (axe, machete and hoe) and extension services to the beneficiaries under this project to ensure all the other inputs are put into good use. The internal monitoring and evaluation of the program, particularly for food crops, was carried out by IRC agronomy staff and was scheduled in three phases as per FAO's reporting requirement:

- Phase – I: *Post seed distribution evaluation* (Conducted two weeks after the distribution)
 - Beneficiary analysis
 - Selection process
 - Geographic distribution
 - Household types
 - What other inputs are provided and by who?
 - Plans for planting (land preparation)
 - Crop performance (germination levels)
- Phase – II : *Crop development monitoring* (Conducted 5 weeks after distribution, during the growing period)
 - Proportion of seeds planted
 - Crop performance (resistance to pests, drought & diseases)
- Phase – III: - *Harvest - Crop performance and impact evaluation* (Conducted 16 weeks after distribution)
 - The food crops yields
 - Quantity consumed
 - Quantity sold
 - Harvest: Local vs. Improved varieties

A.1 Population data

The total number of beneficiaries, including both direct and indirect, from the 83 households surveyed was 709 (162 Men; 83 Women; 262 Boys and 202 Girls). This implies that there is an average of more than eight people (8.54) per household and the percentage proportion is generally 60% M: 40% F. Given that each of the 416 participating farmers represented a household, with a similar household average, the total number of beneficiaries reached under this project can be estimated to be 3,552 IDPs, representing 84.5% of the initial target of 4,200 beneficiaries.

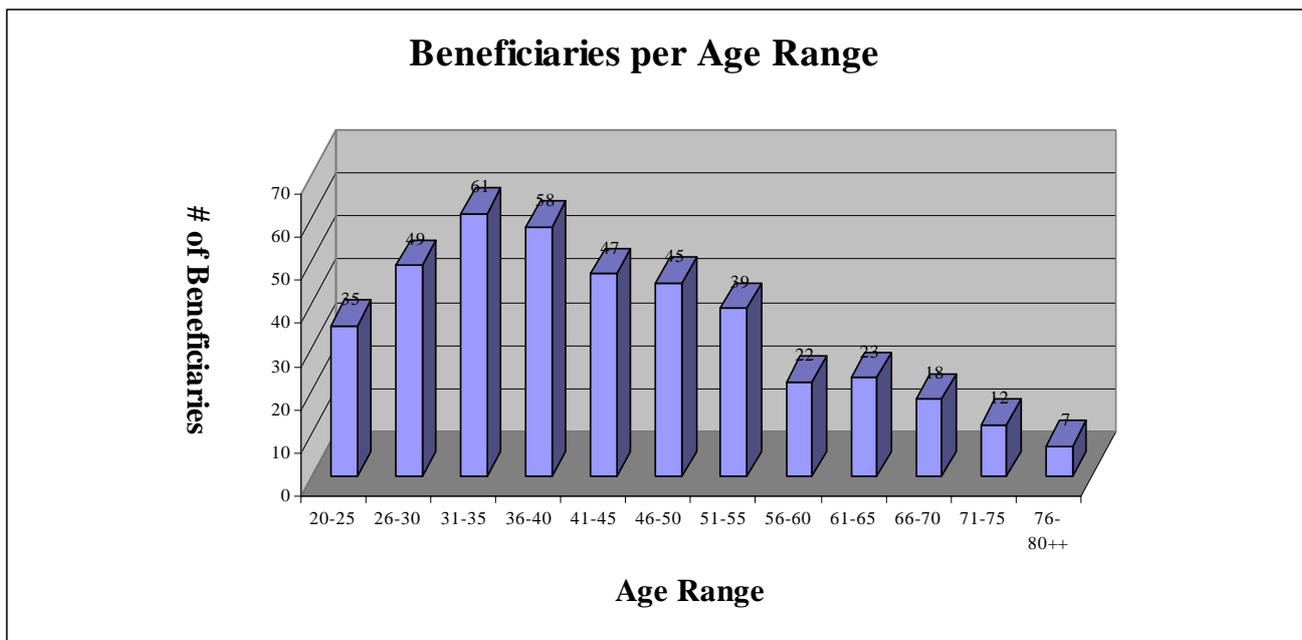
The average number of boys to girls per household is almost the same in all locations, with the exception of Palabek Kal where there were considerably more boys than girls. In general, the number of men was more than women in all the locations except in Potika. On the whole, there were more male per household than female¹⁵.

A1.2 Beneficiaries Age range

The project beneficiaries were comprised entirely of IDPs from the four camps of Agoro, Potika, Palabek Kal and Kitgum Matidi. The majority of the beneficiaries (63%) were between the ages of 26 and 50 years. Much of the youth are moving to large towns such as Kitgum, Gulu, and Lira, seeking better education and employment opportunities (casual labor and low level/vocational employment). Older residents in the camps tended to be unable to handle the physical rigors involved in cotton farming. (See Annex A: Population Data for details)

Graph – 1:

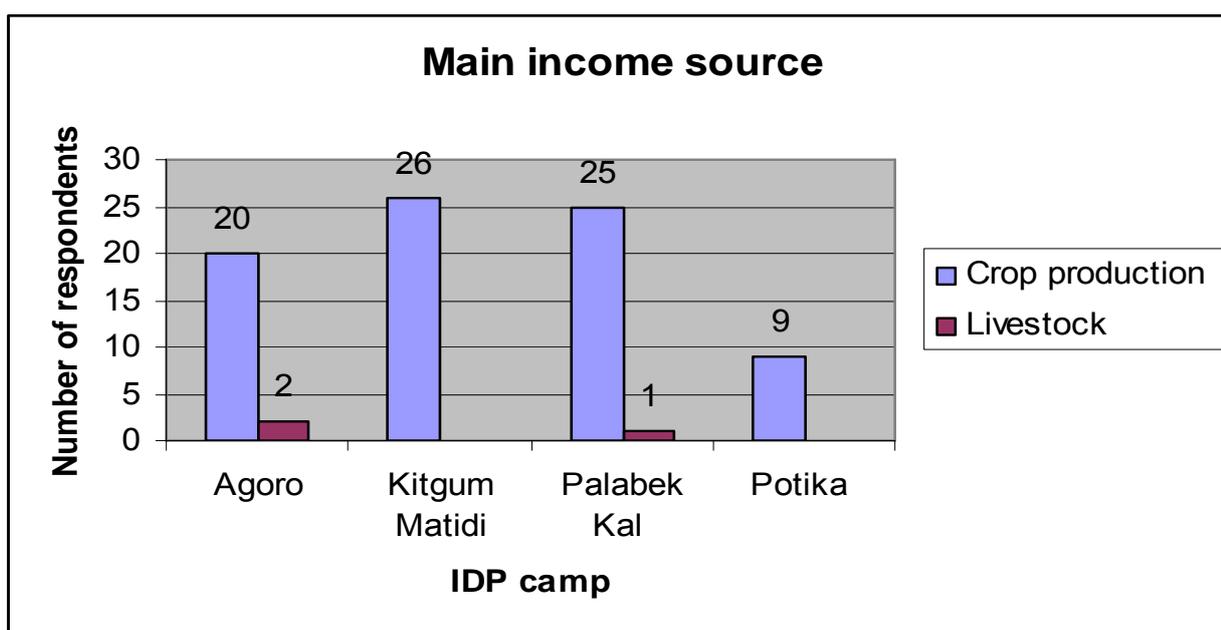
¹⁵ The male and female considered per household in this survey included the young and grown up children plus other dependant adults for that particular household, as long as they still stay together and share the same resources from that particular household.



A1.3 Main income sources

The majority of the respondents are involved in crop production as economic activity for income source. Overall, 80 out of the 83 respondents (96.4%) were found to be engaged in crop production as the main source of income as shown in the graph below. Various crops are grown for cash, including cotton and tobacco, the latter being the most popular cash crop in the region. Many crops traditionally classified as food crops are also being grown for cash. These include maize, groundnuts and sesame among others. Root crops such as cassava and potatoes are becoming equally important for cash. Thus 96.39% of the respondents surveyed are engaged in crop production for incomes and domestic consumption while only 3.61% are engaged in livestock rearing as their main economic activity. See graphical representation below

Graph – 2:



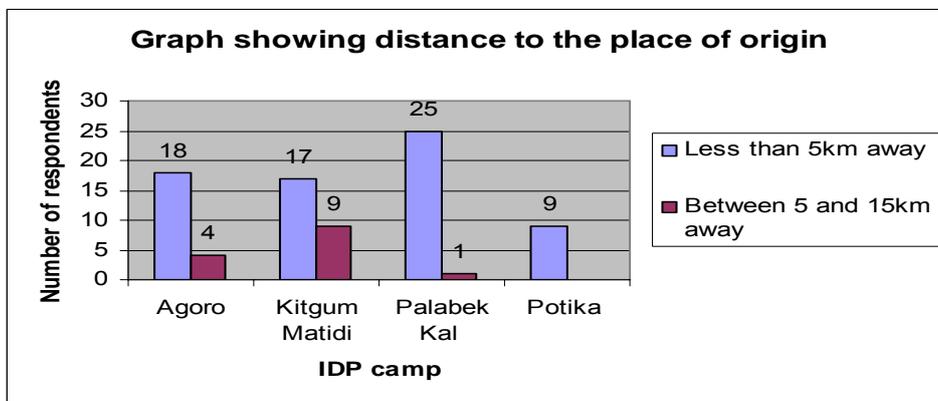
A1.4 Household types

Of the 83 respondents surveyed, only nine were returnees plus one resident¹⁶, which represent 10.94% and 1.20% respectively. A total of 87.95% of the respondents were internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in the camps. Whereas decongestion of IDPs is ongoing, not many have moved to the new satellite camps, although the new camps are much closer to their village of origin.

A1.5 Distance to the place of origin

There were no people whose place of origin is more than 30km away from the current IDP camps surveyed (Potika, Kal, Agoro and Kitgum Matidi). The majority of the camp dwellers came from less than 5km away. The proportion of the IDPs varied from one IDP camp to another with regards to the distance of the original place. Whereas in Potika, of the nine respondents, none came from further than 5km, in Palabek Kal only one person out of the 26 respondents came from a village over 5km away from the camp locations. The proportions for Kitgum Matidi and Agoro were nine out of 26 and four out of 18 respectively. These can be interpolated to mean that 83.1% of the IDPs come from less than 5 Km away from the current camps in which they are settled while only 16.9% come from further than 5 Km. See graphical representations below.

Graph – 3:



A1.6 Household head types

1.20% of the households were child headed. The percentage of women headed households was 10.84% while 87.96% of the households were normal (men) headed.

¹⁶ Residents refer to original inhabitants of the IDP camp locations that became registered as IDPs and thus got into the beneficiaries list.

Annex – B: GENERAL INFORMATION PACKAGE ON POPULATION MOVEMENT

Kitgum District Local Government (KDGL) is committed to keeping Kitgum residents informed about government programmes. We are also seeking citizen participation in decision-making. Comments and questions about this programme can be directed to KDLG through LCs, Sub-County Chiefs, Community Development Officers, and NGO field workers.

The following information is a general announcement about movement out of the camps. There will be specific information about each sub-county.

1. VOLUNTARINESS:

- The movement of people from camps is voluntary. The decision to move should be made solely by the person/ family moving.
- Any person who wishes to move out of a camp is entitled to have information from the Government on the situation in the identified areas for settlements. It is only with such information that a person will be considered to be in a position to make an informed decision.
- No one should be forced to make a decision or be forced to move contrary to her/his own will.
- Everyone has options. People can choose to remain in the camps, or move to any settlement they choose, or return to their original homes.

2. CHARGES:

- Moving out of the camps is free of charge. There are no fees or any other charges imposed on people who choose to move out of the camps.
- Any registration or other procedures for moving in and out of the camps and in the new settlements are free. Any charges imposed for such procedures are illegal and should be immediately reported to the authorities. Humanitarian agencies can receive such information but any action against these illegal activities will be taken by the Government.

3. BENEFITS

If you are registered to receive distribution of food, seeds and tools, or Non Food Items, you will not lose that benefit if you choose to move out of the camp.

4. BASIC SERVICES and INFRASTRUCTURE:

The Kitgum District Local Government, the Security Forces, and local leaders are discussing what sub-counties are safe for return home to original villages. The Government is committed to informing communities as soon as this list is complete.

There are some parishes that have been identified for settlements where people can choose to move before moving to their original homes. Locations on this list of parishes could be declared safe for return in the near future.

Some parishes have security, passable roads, water, a school building, and a health centre building within 5 kilometres. But these schools and health centers are not yet functioning and they will need rehabilitation and staff. And there are also other proposed parishes that do not have one or two of the above mentioned basic services.

5. ACCESS TO LAND:

People moving to the parishes will have unrestricted access to their original land. However, insecurity could affect access to land.

6. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT:

People moving to the parishes will have freedom of moving in and out of the parishes. However, insecurity could affect the freedom of movement.

7. CIVIL ADMINISTRATION

Local councillors will be restored at the Parish levels while camp and block leadership structures which will only exist in the existing camps

8. SECURITY

Security at the parishes which people moves to will be provided by the UPDF Military detachments stationed at each location. The government is considering areas that are safe and secure for people to return home to their original villages. The government is committed to inform the community about the list of areas as the decision is made

Summary of movement sites:

Origin		New site	Approved by Dist. Security Com'tee for Occupation?	Status*	Protection Concerns summary	Recommended follow-up action	Est. Pop.
<u>Agoro</u>		<u>Apwoyo</u> (Rudi)	✗	Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of 'registration fees' by camp commandants and/or LCs • Fear of cattle rustling and landmines (in mountains) • No building materials. • No security detachments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued monitoring to see whether people begin to resettle. • Referral to UNOCHA for action on landmines issue • Continue monitoring for any signs of more durable habitation 	2044 expected (UNOCHA) None currently residing
		<u>Lorunya</u> (Lopulingi)	✗	Clearing, Farming & Constructing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clean water or sanitary facilities • Lack of health services • No security detachments present and widespread security concerns. • Fear of food insecurity in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep apprised of the situation for signs of more permanent occupation and/or security risks. 	2725 expected (UNOCHA) Unknown #s of commtrs.
		<u>Ngacino</u> (Ngacino)	✗	Communiting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of health services or sanitation • No security detachments & general sense of insecurity • Poor access to the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay apprised of any changes in habitation status at this site. 	1377 expected (UNOCHA)

		<u>Lorombenge (Pobar)</u>	✓	Communiting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of health services or sanitation No security detach & general sense of insecurity Poor access to the site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay apprised of any changes in habitation status at this site. 	3244 expected (UNOCHA)
		Oboko (Oboko)	✓	Not yet monitored by IRC			209 expected (UNOCHA)
See also <u>Pawac P7 School Site</u> (Located in Potika sub-parish; with possible movement from Agoro camp as well)							
<u>Kitgum Matidi</u>		<u>Lanyambira village (Lumule)</u>	✓	Clearing, Building & Residing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two functioning boreholes, but low output Fear of insufficient thatch for building huts due to excessive grass-burning Fear of landmines No health center Primary school structure; not operational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to IRC Health for analysis of health service delivery options. Refer to IRC E.H. for verification of claims that water supply is insufficient. Follow-up on landmine issue: is there a landmine clearance team expected? 	5061 expected (UNOCHA) Approx. 40 HHs residing
		<u>Obyen (Paibony)</u>	✓	Clearing, Building & Residing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only one broken down borehole, insufficient output. Health center present, but not operational. Poor sanitation, efforts being made to correct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral to IRC Health for analysis of whether there is no one to staff the health center. Referral to IRC E.H. for analysis of whether health inspector's visit was successful, and whether borehole needs to be improved. 	4261 expected (UNOCHA) Approx. 40 HHs residing
		<u>Aparo Hilltop (Orbyang B)</u>	✗	Constructing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only one low-yield borehole, w/ low water table. No health center Schoolhouse not operational. Poor sanitation, but improvements planned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral to IRC Health for analysis of whether health services can be provided. Referral to IRC E.H. for analysis of whether sanitary planning was successful, and whether water provision needs to be improved. 	855 expected (UNOCHA) Some perm. residence
		<u>Pawidi (Lagoro Sub County)</u>	✗	Clearing, Building & Residing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only two boreholes. No security detach 	Not yet monitored by IRC	???
		<u>Laber Buluji (Laber - Lagoro Sub County)</u>	✓	Not yet monitored by IRC			???
		Lakwor	✗				???
<u>Palabek Kal</u>	See also <u>Liki Liki</u> (Located in Palabek Gem sub-parish, but primary movement flows coming from Palabek Kal)						

		<u>Ayu Alali</u>	✘	Farming, Constructing. & residing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No health infrastructure. Children left in Palabek Kal. Complaints that NGO programming focuses only on Palabek Kal, diminishing the flow of persons to Ayu Alali, since they will be foregoing services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wat/San intervention with LCs and Block commandants about latrine locations. Protection monitoring of "push" factors in Palabek Kal, in particular private action by landowners. Follow-up on registration fee issue with UNOCHA. 	30-40 residing, 200 HHs expected.	
		<u>Gogo (Lamwo)</u>	✓	Farming & residing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gogo is the 'official' new site for Lamwo parish, Gogo has a security detach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send IRC staff for follow-up to determine level of basic services at Gogo. 	Some residing; unclear how many	
		<u>Kapeta (Lamwo)</u>	✘	Farming & residing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kapeta is not an officially designated 'new site,' so there is less confidence about this site, despite the better infrastructure here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send IRC staff for follow-up to determine level of basic services at Kapeta Inquire with RDC whether Kapeta might not be a better site for a military detach than Gogo, or whether there might be two designated sites for Lamwo Parish. 	Some residing; unclear how many	
<u>Potika</u>		Aweno Olwiyo	✘	Temp. structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints of lack of access to water, health facilities, sanitation, or schools. Security concerns 	Not yet monitored by IRC	Approx. 500 persons moving	
		<u>Pawac P7 school (Pawac)</u>	✘	Farming only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of all basic services, except for school infrastructure. Ongoing security concerns. Indefinitely abandoned settlement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep apprised to see whether settlement resumes 	3529 expected (UNOCHA) Unknown #s of commtrs.	
		<u>Palacam P7 school</u>	✘	Farming only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of all basic services No security detach present No construction planned pending improved security. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep apprised to see whether settlement begins. 	Unknown #s of commtrs.	
		Lamwoka	✘	Not yet monitored by IRC				Unknown
		Kempolo	✘					Unknown
		Polovogoniv	✘					Unknown

Annex – C: Research Questions, Results, Key Recommendations and Findings per camp.

Research Questions:

- 1) What are the financial benefits farmers receive for engaging in the production of a variety of cash crops, including cotton? Do cash crops compete with food crops in negative ways? What mechanisms can be supported to protect farmers against price fluctuations in cotton and open markets in other goods? How are inputs for cash crops sourced and how are crops marketed?
- 2) What actors and institutions are involved in food and cash crop production and what are their interests? How does the involvement of these actors impact assumptions regarding cultivation? The role of cooperative societies, suppliers, middlemen, the district and camp officials will be explored.
- 3) What is the role and current effectiveness of cooperative societies and farmer groups? Historically these societies have delivered services such as storage facilities, seeds, insecticides, sprayers, and other requirements. Their current roles and responsibilities are unclear, however, particularly in terms of the benefits they provide to the farmers. Potential strengthening of these societies to push for farmer concerns and rights may be a result determined by the findings of the evaluation.
- 4) What security factors are involved in the production of cash crops? What form of security assistance do farmers need to access their land? How will the UPDF be able to accommodate such needs? Under this question the reality of the 2km safe radius will be investigated. Land access along roads or outside the safe radius will also be looked at.
- 5) How will the issue of land tenure impact farmer's ability to plant in areas surrounding IDP camps? How can landowners be incorporated in an equitable fashion that allows farmers to utilize land without losing substantial profits to rental fees? Where is land most accessible and can land accommodate a consolidated farming system?

Results Summary:

Question (1) Results

- Average earnings for the same crop differ greatly depending on location. This is related to market accessibility.
- On average cotton is competitive with a variety of other crops, particularly when using modern farming techniques. At the same time, there are crops consistently valued above cotton: cassava, g-nuts, onion, cabbage, sugar-cane, and tomatoes.
- People need both food and cash crops. Food security remains tenuous, however, and IRC retains the position that cash crops cannot be planted on land currently under cultivation for food crops.
- People fear purchasing inputs because of low prices.
- Major drawback of cotton: People have no recourse if prices fall; they can't consume and have no representation with buyers.
- Major benefit of cotton: Money comes in one bulk sum and the market is guaranteed

Question (2) Results

- LRA: Kills, steals, blocks movement.
- UPDF/LDU: Both protective and destructive.
- Government: Limits movement.
- Thieves: Steal from gardens.
- Landowners: Varies depending on location and cohesiveness of community. Landowners exploit farmers by renting land and taking food.

- Dunavant: Not trusted by the community. Sets low prices. Has contributed to weakening of traditional cooperative societies.
- Cotton Buying Agents: Undetermined. Where not previously a member of the Cooperative Society, resentment increased. Agents are not trusted to give fair prices.
- Middle men: Take advantage of farmers through low prices.
- NGOs/Government Agencies: Efforts are appreciated. Seeds come too late and at times are not the right seeds for the area.

Question (3) Results

- Former functions include: distributing seeds, providing instruction and training to farmers, providing loans, and purchasing cotton.
- Currently, societies have become redundant, while leadership structures remain relatively intact. Members are still in the thousands.
- Half of cooperatives did not support Dunavant. Half were more optimistic about the company and its benefits to the community.
- Farmers prefer the cooperative societies. Relates to higher prices, but also more representation and community based ownership over production. Now feel they are being exploited by outside actors. Without societies, they feel disenfranchised

Question (4) Results

- People are not well informed of safe hours of movement or safe radius.
- Food crops should be planted close to the camps to prevent fields being looted. Cash crops should be further away.
- Security precautions are used as an excuse for soldiers to loot fields.
- Farming in groups will make providing security easier.
- More planting could take place around detachments.
- Security forces appreciated being recognized.
- Soldiers expressed interest in participation in the program.

Question (5) Results

- Landowners benefit from being able to cultivate on their own land and renting land for income. Also more likely to grow cash crops.
- Landowners suffer as land is overused and fear they will lose land rights.
- Most land owned at family and household level. Some are clan land. Not a lot of communal land identified.
- System of land ownership is not clear. Acholiland is under customary tenure, recognized in 1998 Land Act. Implementation of act has been difficult; law needs modern institutions (Certificates of Customary Ownership).
- Many landowners willing to work with NGOs to provide land for free. Some place caveat that only clan member's benefit and need guarantees of receiving land back the next year.
- Importance of involving local leaders and traditional land boards in any negotiations (*Rwot Kweri*).

Key Recommendations:

a) General Recommendations

- It is possible to expand cotton if done carefully.
- Cotton should not displace food crops.
- Cotton production in Agoro, Potika, Padibe, Kitgum Matidi, and Palabek Kal sub counties could be increased. However, this must be done cautiously to protect farmers and not threaten food availability and must take into account the additional recommendations below.

b) Recommendations for Dunavant

- Provide supplemental inputs to farmers to encourage crop cultivation and improve yields. This will also show a commitment on behalf of the company, which is essential.
- Work with the cooperative societies. Consider purchasing from cooperative societies instead of agents.
- Involve cooperative societies in trainings and demonstration plots.
- Encourage transparency, particularly regarding pricing. Dunavant Management should conduct meetings in the sub-counties to announce cotton prices. This will protect farmers from exploitation by middle men.
- Work with cooperative societies to ensure that farmers are receiving the correct prices for their cotton.

c) Recommendations for the Government (local, district and national)

- Support efforts to increase the land available for IDPs to cultivate, particularly along the roadsides.
- Address the problem of UPDF and LDU soldiers stealing civilian food crops.
- Camp management structures should take on a mediatory role regarding land access to ensure that available land is utilized to the advantage of everyone.
- Camp security structures should be clearer about movement restrictions including curfews and the exact boundaries of the safe radius around the camps.
- Camp security structures should develop procedures for escorting farmers to gardens in groups.

d) Recommendations for NGOs, including IRC

- Seeds and tools distributions for food crops must continue.
- Location specific analysis of food and cash crop preferences and profits must be done.
- Involve families growing cash crops in savings schemes. This will improve families' ability to plan for expenses and ensure more responsible spending.
- Provide additional storage space for cash crops. This will protect farmers from low prices and reduce reliance upon middle men.
- Support collective marketing strategies to help farmers improve the prices they can receive.
- Engage landowners in agricultural programming and show respect for their land.
- Families lack access to cash for school fees, medical bills, etc. Programming should be done to increase access to cash.
- Conduct information sharing with community members regarding the Land Act and the implications on land tenure in Acholiland, specifically as regards customary tenure and certificates of customary ownership.

Specific findings per camps Selected

Out of the 8 IDP camps which IRC carried out research in Kitgum District, only four were selected and a brief synopsis of the results of these investigations that led to their selection are here below:

Agoro

Cotton Profitability

The crop valuation table for Agoro clearly shows that there are a variety of options that yield more profit than cotton. Even if one considers the estimated price provided by Dunavant, cotton earnings only range from an estimated UGX 90,000 – 234,000 per acre. This does not compare with profit estimates for sugar cane, cabbage or potatoes that are estimated as earning farmers over UGX 1,000,000 per acre. The dilemma with Agoro was natural that if IRC was to go by what the market pressure provides, then any concentration of additional security was to be provided to support the growth of crops that can yield the highest maximum income as per the local market¹⁷. On the other hand, those crops only grow in the wetland areas, which is a relatively small piece of land owned by a specific number of individuals. Under this analysis, only those people with access can actually benefit from the high earning potential in Agoro, while other people are left out. This being said, additional security alone would not be enough to ensure that people were able to grow such high earning crops, land ownership was also a major factor and many people were excluded from the opportunity. Thus the high need for access to land outside the safe radius to provide other opportunities (cash & food crops production) to farmers who can not access the wetland.

Cooperative Societies

There existed 416 registered members of the cotton Cooperative Society, representing four parishes. Though it was not clear how many acres were under cultivation for cotton by the society members, some farmers in *Pubar* Parish were identified as planting cotton. The landowner gave his land for free, but other farmers had been discouraged due to the limited land and displacement. The Cooperative Society members still hold meetings twice a year, but most of their traditional activities were being conducted by Dunavant's site coordinator. It was noted that Dunavant did consult with the Cooperative Society when they wanted to select an agent and the existing agent was a former secretary of the Cooperative Society. The relationship between the Dunavant and the Cooperative Society and the community in general in Agoro appeared relatively good as compared with other locations.

Security Factors

The security personnel were very supportive of the idea of promoting group production of cash and food crops, in particular of getting people to do farming on consolidated land. They said they could provide additional security outside the safe radius if people are more organized in the respective locations where they will do their gardening. There are two detachments near the camp and security officials suggested that land near these detachments would be easier to protect if the landowners could accept. They also provided guidelines to IRC that food crops should be planted closer to the camp and cotton should be planted further from the camp because the LRA and other looters will not be interested in stealing cotton. They indicated that with the food crops near to the camp, it is easier for them to provide security for the crops by guarding in the night.

¹⁷ The crops of high values in Agoro are: Onions, Irish Potatoes, Cabbages, Tomatoes, Carrots, Rice, Wheat, and Sugarcane.

Land use and Tenure Issues

As in other locations, there were complaints that landowners take crops from their land, even when they have rented it to someone else. Whereas the landowners complain that sometimes they give their land free of charge to people for one season and then come to find other people cultivating the land the following season without their authority. Generally, the land owners expressed willingness to provide land for the block farming and were very willing to have other farmers from other parishes use the same land. They only requested for clear documentation to indicate the land use duration and other terms to protect their land from potentials of being grabbed.

Kitgum Matidi

Cotton Profitability

According to the crop valuations done by farmers, cotton ranks lower than five other crops in terms of profitability. These crops are millet, groundnuts, Simsim, cassava, and cow peas. While IRC was unable to get information on the marketability of these other crops, research in other sub counties shows that, with the exception of cassava, these crops have unreliable market. In addition, the earnings estimate from the community was based upon a yield of 400-450 kilos per acre. For an acre that is being cultivated using modern farming techniques, the yield should be at least 500 kilos per acre no matter the location. In addition, as in other locations it was made clear to IRC that crops such as cotton were necessary to pay for larger expenses such as school fees. Farmers also said they like cotton because they do not fear that it will be stolen from their fields, either by LRA, UPDF, or random looters.

Cooperative Societies

There were 250 registered members in the Cooperative Society, which was started in the late 1940s. Cooperative Society members estimated about 240 acres under cotton cultivation, mainly within the safe radius. Traditionally the society encouraged farmers to grow cotton, linked farmers to the Union, and encouraged them through competitions, and organized meetings and other events. By the research time and even currently the society is not active. There was a Dunavant's agent who was a member of the society. His main role was buying cotton for Dunavant, but otherwise there has almost been no other engagement with the society member and no meetings. The relationships seemed easier to restore as compared to other locations where there were no trace of existence of the society.

Security Factors

The security officials were positive about the idea of group farming on blocks of land. They complained about how difficult it had been for them in trying to provide security for individuals moving and farming on their own outside the safe radius. Their preference would be to provide security to groups of people who could be organized according to particular days and areas of cultivation. IRC was also told that people are encouraged to plant along roadsides. However, security officials also confessed that there has been a problem with road patrols looting fields along the roads. Leaders made a plea that the land within the 2km safe radius is not enough and that NGOs should lobby with security officials and land owners to extend the radius to 4km.

Land Use and Tenure

Leaders indicated that often landowners offer land for free, but then take some of the food being grown without an agreement between them and the farmer. If the agreement is for the land to be used for free, there should be no hidden costs, such as portioning out some of the yield to the landowner. There was commitment from the land owners to offer land for the lock farming and for free. It was clear that the land being offered was outside the safe radius and there was need for security personnel to be involved to ensure safe access..

Palabek Kal

Pre-existing farming activities

In Palabek Kal, before people were displaced into the IDP camps, farmers used to cultivate in organized groups, which were managed by group's leaders at village levels. They were also selling crops to other districts, specifically in Lira. Neither of these is currently possible given their displacement in the camp. However, Palabek Kal IDP Camp is divided according to the Parishes of origin, just like most camps. Community members indicated that each parish has their gardens behind the camps and they also cultivate along the roadsides for about 3-4 km (the safe radius in Kal was recorded as 3km, according to the security officials). This was a very good ground onto which IRC considered to build the program of block farming in the IDP context.

Cotton Profitability

According to the crop valuation table completed by community members, cotton did not rank particularly high. Similar to Palabek Gem, farmers ranked cotton as earning only between UGX 80,000 – 105,000 based on yields of 270-350 kg per acre. This meant that many other crops appeared to have higher value than cotton. At the same time, some of these higher ranked crops, such as maize and sweet potatoes were not good income earners, meaning that while someone *may* be able to make more on them than off cotton, the market may be weak or people may prioritize them for subsistence.

Farmers expressed that with the current camp situation, prices are very high for all food items and poor people cannot afford to get food. Whereas prior to displacement they had good storage facilities where they could keep their crops in case the price fell, now they must accept low prices or eat their crops (if food crops) in case of price fall. Farmers indicated an interest in both cash and food crops as necessary to sustain their lives to take care of such fluctuation in market prices and also to be able to meet their cash obligations, such as sending children to school, paying medical bills etc.

Cooperative Societies

Originally there were four cooperative societies, which encompassed Palabek Gem, Kal and Ogili. During the research time, there was only one society functioning with 140 registered members from all the six Parishes of Palabek (including Gem and Ogili). The estimated number of acreages under cotton cultivation was 39 acres. Traditionally the society distributed sacks to members, trained farmers on the benefits of spraying cotton, and held regular meetings with members. The society, as at time of research, was and is still very redundant given that the agent has taken up all of their work. The one positive note was that the secretary manager of this society has, through an agreement with Dunavant and the society, become the agent and site coordinator. This shows some level of coordination and compromise between Dunavant and the society.

Security Factors

The security officials IRC met with were very encouraging in regards to the program. They indicated that they have had several requests to provide security for farmers and the soldiers try to do so whenever possible, which is easier when activities are coordinated and farmers organized in groups.

Community leaders indicated that while there is not much land right around the camp, there is some land about 3km from the camp, which could be used as long as security is provided. Security personnel also indicated their awareness of some fertile land some 4-5km away from the camp that could be used. However, they were skeptical as to whether it would be possible to find 200 continuous acres and thought

that instead land might need to be broken up into 50 acres pieces. They further indicated that they would be able to provide security to farmers on different days throughout the week.

Land Tenure Issues

IRC interviewed several landowners with small pieces of land surrounding the camps (mainly within 2 Km of the camp). Most of this land was being used by the landowners and their families, although some said they let others use the land for free. The landowners were generally open about allowing people and NGOs to use their land. They did, however, express some concern that in the past the government has tried to take their land bit by bit and they are therefore afraid of this prospect if no proper assurance and documentation done on the process.

Potika

Cotton Profitability

Potika is a relatively fertile area with a constant water source. Farmers indicated that the following crops do well in their area: beans, g-nuts, cassava, sunflower, cotton, green grams, and Soya beans. According to the crop valuation table that IRC completed it was clear that farmers in Potika, similar to Agoro, have many alternatives for producing high earning crops that benefit from the area's topography. At the same time, people in Agoro were very optimistic in regard to the yield per acre they thought could be harvested (between 700-1,200 kg). Also, similar to Agoro, areas that are particularly strong for crops that can earn more money, such as onion, rice and cabbages, are limited and only some landowners and farmers have the ability to make use of this land. This then required increased access to land outside the safe radius to provide opportunities to other farmers who can not access the wetland to also engage in the production of other crops.

Cooperative Societies

The Cooperative Society in Potika was started in 1952 and registered in 1968. During the research time, there were 8 villages in the society, although only 7 were functioning, with a total of 298 registered members (only 15 of which were women). The Cooperative Society used to be responsible for distributing seeds, buying harvested cotton, providing instruction and training to farmers, and providing pesticides through loans. Currently, however, the society is almost not functioning. In Potika society members indicated that they still have annual meetings and have some interaction with Dunavant. However, the displacement has meant that people have no longer been concentrating so much on cotton. This was considered by IRC as a good ground to build on.

Security Factors

Most community members in both Potika A and B indicated that a good deal of farming takes place outside of the safe radius, particularly around the river Aringa (non-seasonal). According to security personnel, the safe radius is 1km around the camp. It is mainly vegetables that people are planting within the safe radius, while other crops are planted further outside. The immediate vicinity around the camp land is kept relatively clean without any planting as a security precaution.

Security personnel indicated their willingness to provide security to farmers, but only where land is consolidated. They indicated that some people want security provided for even small plots of land, which is not possible. At the same time, one of the main fears of farmers for planting cotton is that it needs a lot of land, which means more time in the fields and more risk from the LRA. IRC considered Potika and committed to be sure to address these issues in order for people to feel comfortable in accessing such large plots of land.

Land Tenure Issues

There were some positive indications that landowners in Potika are more willing to provide land as compared with other locations, although issues of stealing back land and high rent of course existed. Farmers also indicated that the land in Potika is very fertile and available for cultivation, but the distance can be too far for them to access safely. IRC was also warned of on-going land disputes around the swampy and low land areas, more so than in the up-land areas.

Landowners who IRC spoke with indicated that they were generally using their land for farming or were otherwise lending it to other farmers to use. Landowners expressed their willingness to help farmers, as long as IRC ensured that all appropriate leaders (LCs, *Rwot Kweri*) are involved. There was also need for IRC to ensure that farmers and leaders in Potika A and B are consulted to come to a common understanding of which land is to be used and how.

Specific findings per camp not Selected

IRC carried out research in 8 IDP camps in Kitgum District. Below is a brief synopsis of the results of these investigations. Results been divided into themes relating to the main research questions under investigation. Camps listed below are the once not selected.

Padibe

Land Use & Tenure Issues

At first, leaders in Padibe felt as though landowners would be willing to provide land for the project as long as they were well consulted and, if possible, included as beneficiaries. IRC found that there were several clans owning large portions of land relatively close to the camp and that this land was being used mainly by members of that specific clan, while others do not benefit. However, when asked during follow up meetings with land owners, those representing the clans with large pieces of land made their position very clear that it would not be possible to allow farmers from other clans to use their land as it is becoming too exhausted. They were willing to have only their clan members benefiting from the program while using their land. Those with small pieces of land (10 – 15 acres on average) accepted farmers to use their land on condition that it is being rented. In either case, IRC was not interested in taking such offers since the project was not meant for only one clan, nor were there plans to pay landowners cash for the leasing of their land.

In addition, the security personnel IRC met with indicated several areas that should be investigated for planting, but cautioned IRC to ensure that the locations are near army detaches for ease of security provision. On an additional note of caution, the security personnel warned IRC not to get involved in any political wrangles relating to land, which they felt there is a strong potential in Padibe.

Palabek Gem

Cotton Profitability

In Palabek Gem, according to the estimates of potential income earned, cotton scored lower than almost all other crops. Farmers estimated that the average income earned from cotton is only between UGX 90,000 – 150,000, which is extremely low especially if farmers are introduced to modern farming techniques. However, these farmer opinions are clearly that cotton is not a profitable crop. At the same time, some community members stated clearly that tobacco is a much more profitable crop than cotton, and is better to concentrate on. When asked whether they are more in need of food or cash crops, farmers

indicated that they are in need of both. They specifically mentioned millet, g-nuts, maize, potatoes, tomatoes, sesame, beans, tobacco, and lastly cotton.

Cooperative Societies

The relationship between Dunavant, the Cooperative Society and the community in general in Palabek Gem has been so ruined that substantial effort needed to be placed on fixing it. While IRC considered it much easy to play some of those roles in mending such conflicts in other locations, the extent of the hostility was so great in Palabek Gem that it was deemed too insurmountable in the short time frame we had to begin program activities.

Land Use & Tenure Issues

IRC interviewed many landowners with land ranging from 5-50 acres. This land was all within 1-2km of the camp and was mainly being used for growing food crops. All of the landowners with the exception of one said they are renting plots of land out to farmers in exchange either for money or for a portion of the produce. Landowners expressed some reserved acceptance of allowing people to use their land under an NGO program, but complained about farmers contributing to the growth of weeds and stealing crops from the landowners. While farmers complained that when renting land they are often only able to do so for one planting season. There were also indications that because the land has been so over-used, landowners only allow farmers to use small portions of their land, which is not large enough for them to do sufficient production.

Although the leaders indicated that there were possibilities of some communal land about 5-6km away from the camp, but IRC was unable to get more specific details regarding its exact location or use as at that time. Besides, these were particularly far from the camp and the UPDF were a little reluctant to reach out that far.

Decongestion Plans

Generally, there was not a great degree of enthusiasm for the program in Palabek Gem. In addition to which, the issue of decongestion was envisioned as potential cause of complications mid-way through the program if such a movement were actually to take place. And while some land was mentioned as possible sites by various actors, none of it seemed very promising. Therefore IRC did not consider working in Palabek Gem last year.

Mucwini

Land Use & Tenure Issues

Community members indicated that they do most farming within the safe radius, although there are some that move out. Most farmers rent land at a rate of 10,000 UGX per acre per season. In fact, in Mucwini it was clear people either rented or owned their land, but that almost no-one was using someone else's land free of charge. People also complained that due to the shortage of land, they are forced to grow only food crops for survival, while landowners have the ability to also grow cash crops. This means that landowners had the ability to get even more money, while the rest of the community suffers from insufficient land.

The landowners that we spoke with said there is no communal land that they are aware of and that land currently being used is mainly for the families of the landowners and some others who are allowed to borrow, contradicting what community members said about most people being forced to rent. Even land that other NGOs have used has had to be rented because there is such a shortage. At the same time, some leaders indicated that there may be land available a few kilometers from the camp, but it was not clear

whether this land was already under cultivation. Otherwise, they indicated there may be some small tracts of land that was not being used at that time.

Security Factors

Security officials interviewed indicated that they would be able to provide security for farmers up to 3km away from the camp, which represents the existing safe radius. The officials indicated that in Mucwini no-one cultivates outside of the safe radius, and that if people try they are always stopped by the soldiers. Of course, like in all locations, people do move beyond the safe radius, and this was confirmed to IRC by farmers. However, the language with which security officials spoke of limiting movement to the safe radius was stricter than in any other location investigated. The army in Mucwini was thus not ready to provide additional security outside of what is already deemed their area of protection (the so called safe radius).

Leaders related stories of one person killed on the way to his garden in 2005 and another abducted, but later returned. Interestingly, UN security reports show many more LRA incidents in Mucwini than were mentioned by either security officials or the community. This included two attacks on the camp, three abduction incidents and one looting, in addition to sightings and other more minor events. Generally, Mucwini was expressly insecure at that time and with the reluctance of the UPDF in providing safety outside the safe radius, it was not possible for IRC to decide to implement this program in Mucwini.

Akwang

Cotton Profitability

Estimates on the total cotton revenue one could earn from an acre of cotton in Akwang ranged between UGX 120,000 – 200,000. This was lower than many other crops commonly grown in Akwang, particularly cassava and tomatoes, which seemed to gross more money if the entire yield is sold. Leaders indicated that food crops are the priority in the area and sighted groundnuts and cassava specifically. Farmers, however, indicated their preference for cash crops but there was every indication that they had much better opportunities and options given that they were very near town. Many of them had easy access to market for most of their small quantity of produce, thus the added benefit of cotton having ready market with Dunavant could not compare any higher.

Land Use and Tenure Issues

In Akwang, unlike in any other location, all farmers interviewed were renting land; none were using their own land or other people's land free of charge. This was an indication that landowners in Akwang were more protective of their assets than in other locations. Apparently there was no communal land around the camp. In addition, leaders in Akwang indicated that there are land disputes around the camp that have been affecting cultivation. Leaders also warned that local politicians may spoil the idea of block farming, no more specific details on how or why were given.

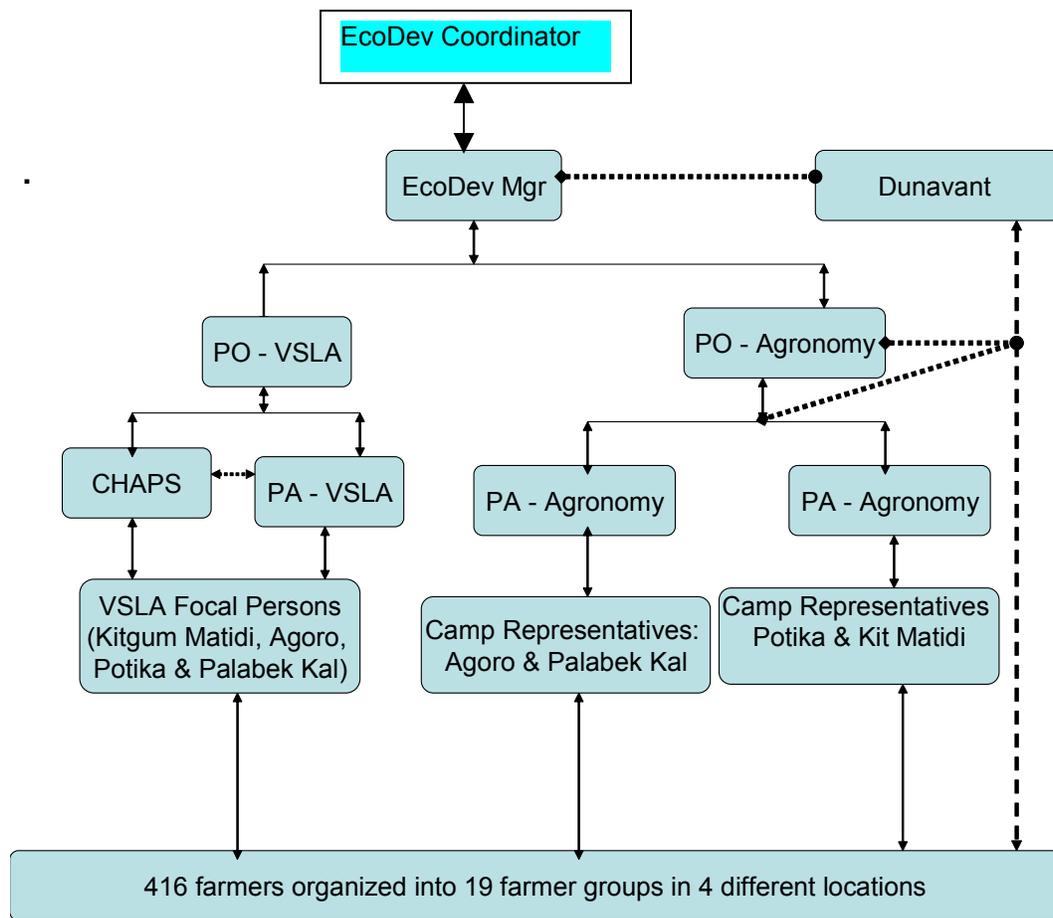
Annex – D: Summarizing information sharing meetings held in the camps

Date	Camp	Attendance	Purpose of meeting	Finding/ recommendation of farmers
14/3/2006	Agoro	Male: 73 Female: 08 Total: 81	Information sharing meeting on the finding of the research carried out. Ways program activities are to be implemented. Inform communities about other partners in the implementation i.e. APEP, Dunavant and FAO.	Tools are provided to farmers earlier so as to begin land clearing for tractor ploughing and to realize a better yield. Farmers requested pesticides for cotton. Farmers recommended that land ploughing be done only once. Farmers recommended that ploughing be done in dry season because of clay loamy soil. Only okra is suitable in block farm, the rest of the seeds are suitable along the stream or near any good water source. Some selected beneficiaries have land along the stream and accepted to give the land to others that do not have land along the stream.
16/3/2006	Potika	Male: 40 Female: 47 Total: 87	Information sharing meeting on the finding of the research carried out. Ways program activities are to be implemented. Inform communities about other partners in the implementation i.e. APEP, Dunavant and FAO.	Farmers are interested in vegetable growing especially Onions (<i>red chariots</i>). Farmers interested in type of food crops going to be distributed. Some farmers who are not beneficiaries wanted to get cotton seeds and plant else where.
17/3/2006	Kitgum Matidi	Male: 83 Female: 25 Total: 108	To carryout information sharing, check on the progress of land measurement and the list of beneficiaries.	Farmers recommended land for food crops be ploughed only once and the part for cotton twice. Farmers wanted all the five vegetable seeds (egg plant, tomatoes, cabbages, okra, and onions) and cow pea seeds. Farmers also wanted tools to be provided to them.
15/3/2006	Palabek Kal	Male: 70 Female: 64 Total: 134	Give back the information about the project research to the farmers. share information with members of the community	Farmers wanted their land ploughed twice with tractor but feared the cost sharing would be too high for them. Farmers are interested in vegetable seeds. one farmer said he has land in a swampy area and can donate to other members of the project

<u>ANNEX – E: Overall cotton purchases per location</u>					Quantity from IRC block farm	
DISTRICT	COUNTY	SUB COUNTY	AR kg	BR kg	AR	
Kitgum	Chwa	Akwang				
		Kitgum Matidi	186,075		48,130	
		Omia Anyima	149,325			
		Namukora	82,010			
		Orom	300,045			
		Akilok	122,915			
		Mucwini	26,780			
	Lamwo	Palabek Kal	37,210		22,775	
		Palabek Gem	24,385			
		Lokung	21,790			
		Padibe E	102,440			
		Padibe W	98,825			
		Paloga	124,025			
		Agoro	24,125		24,125	
		Potika	11,755		11,755	
	Madi Opei	20,968				
	Kitgum Sub-total			1,332,673		106,785
	Pader	Aruu	Pajule	201,830		
			Pader	53,330		
Puranga			2,935			
Acholi Bur			101,040			
Laguti			4,635			
Kilak			4,335			
Lapul						
Awere						
Agago		Patongo	152,010			
		Kalongo	33,935			
		Wol	70,209			
		Lira Palwo	44,700			

		Paimol	82,915		
		Lapono	5,150		
		Adilang	23,285		
		Lukole	66,920		
		Omot	65,130		
Pader Sub-total			912,359		
Kabong	Karenga	Lobalangit	124,240		
Total			2,369,272	-	106,785
Local purchase at the Ginnery			21,013		
Grand total			2,390,285	-	106,785
Source: Dunavant (U) Ltd Record in Kitgum as at 16th Feb 2007					

Annex – F: Program Implementation Structure



Economic Development Coordinator
 Economic Development Program Manager
 Economic Development Program Officer - 2
 Economic Development Program Assistants - 3