



AFARD AND POVERTY ERADICATION DILEMMA: THE REVELANCE QUESTION



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July 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Agency For Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) is a local non-governmental organization operating in Nebbi district. For more than 6 years now it has been enabling marginalized 'poor' communities and people attain sustainable livelihoods. However, by so doing, AFARD did not have a clear targeting approach. This created an organizational dilemma within which to understand the relevance of its undertakings in the district. This study, therefore, set to answer this dilemma by asking, 'to what extent is AFARD working with the 'poor' marginalized communities?' answering this questions necessitated answering further sub-questions like, 'what is poverty?' 'Why are the people poor?' And, 'are AFARD's interventions relevant?'

Methodology

To answer these questions, fifteen groups engaged for the last two years in food security promotion project were randomly sampled from different agro-ecological zones. The 338 members of the groups had diverse demographic, economic, political and religious affiliation.

The study started with a participatory and community-led approach of defining and categorizing poverty. This proceeded into identifying the causes and effects of poverty. Because the respondents saw poverty in terms of the wellness of life, similarly their categorization graded what made life bad, intermediate, and better off basing on their local area valued indicators. By using such indicators, a quantitative household survey was conducted in order to operationalize by aggregation the scope (magnitude) of poverty.

Findings

Findings 1 & 2 - The meaning of poverty: The term poverty is not foreign to the local communities. It inheres in human beings and is best described by labels that is primarily judged by the wellness of one's household's lifestyle. Such lifestyles are however considered dynamic meaning that its constituent parts change overtime hence the categorization of badly-off, intermediate, and well-off lifestyle. In all, poverty was described as lack of, inability to, and isolation from the desired well-being.

Finding 3 – Causes and effects of poverty: These deprivations were seen to emanate from individual, household and the broader community capacity and politics. Notable causes identified were: (i) lack of a sizeable and steady income; (ii) inadequate knowledge and skills to live a productive and healthy life; (iii) lack of access to public services; (iv) cultural discrimination; and (v) changes in weather/climate. However, the core areas of well being deprivation in order to strengths were socio-political (6%), financial (12%), knowledge (12%), and bodily (18%) well beings as compared to material well being (53%).

Finding 4 – AFARD’s relevance: By aggregating the well-being status using the various categorization indicators identified by the respondents, it was found out that:

- (i) Most of the people (54%) engaged in the food security programme are those leading the badly-off lifestyle followed by 38% in the intermediate lifestyle category while the well-off (call them the rich) were only 8%. This finding means that the majority of the group members AFARD is working with are the poor (targeting relevance).
- (ii) AFARD’s vision in view of the core areas of deprivation rightly focuses on the beneficiary needs. By addressing income security (financial well-being), health security (bodily well-being), and good governance (socio-political well being), AFARD is empowering its beneficiaries to directly gain increased status on the various facets of well-being.

In conclusion, this study addressed the current gap in poverty definition and measurement. It demonstrated that the age long inclination to income poverty measure is inadequate and can be expanded to take due care of the multi-dimensionality of poverty. In this way, the study provides a basis for conducting organizational relevance test in terms of outreach (category, location, and thematic focus).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study emerged from the spirited questions AFARD staff members raised in respect of 'how do we know we are working with those who should benefit from our services ad sacrifices?' In this vein, I'm grateful to such a thoughtful staff. In particular, I thank the roles played by Khemis O. Pimundu and Atona E. Alex during the rigorous two-rounds of data collection exercises.

However, I take full responsibility for the views and any error of omission or commission expressed herein.

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1.0 POVERTY? UGANDA'S DILEMMA

Despite relentless efforts to bring about development to 'developing' countries from the 1940, the development industry took a new approach code named – the anti-poverty agenda. That poverty reduction is the antidote of underdevelopment has therefore received increasing attention. In Uganda, the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), as part of the globally-driven poverty reduction strategy paper, was formulated in 1997 (and is revised every two years) as an umbrella under which coordinated actions are to be taken to ensure that Uganda, as is with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reduced poverty levels to less than 28% by 2014. In this vein, 5 pillars (see annex 1) namely: (i) economic management; (ii) production, competitiveness and income; (iii) security, conflict resolution and disaster management; (iv) good governance; and (v) human development are identified as the cardinal grounds for guiding government resource mobilization, allocation, and utilization (MoFPEP, 2004: xvi-xxvi). Through the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, Poverty Action Funds are invested by central and local governments, donor communities, the private sector, and civil society organizations.

Supported by policies like decentralization, liberalization and privatization of the economy, and many others, over the years, it is noted that Uganda's poverty trends has tremendously reduced from 56% in 1992 to 37% in 2005 although marked geographical variations exists as is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Percent distribution of poor households by residence¹

	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1999/2000	2002/03
<i>Residential distribution</i>							
Total	55.5	52.2	50.1	48.5	44.0	35.0	37.7
Rural	59.4	56.7	54.0	53.0	48.2	39.0	41.1
Urban	28.2	20.6	22.3	19.5	16.3	10.0	12.4
<i>Regional distribution</i>							
Northern	71.3	69.2	63.5	68.0	58.8	65.0	63.6
Eastern	59.2	58.0	64.9	57.5	54.3	37.0	46.0
Western	52.8	56.0	50.4	46.7	42.0	28.0	31.4
Central	45.5	35.6	30.5	30.1	27.7	20.0	22.3

Source: MoFPEP (2001a & b, 2004).

Table 1 above shows a remarkable performance in the fight against poverty. In a decade Uganda made 18% decline in its poverty levels. Not surprising, Uganda is regarded by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the donor community as an economically

¹It should be noted about table 1 that poverty is measured using an absolute poverty line which reflects the cost of meeting a minimum of food and non-food requirements.

successful country. However, many Ugandans witnessed from the controversies in the daily newspapers and advocacy by civil society attest such romantic figures. The simple observations are that at a 38% poverty level it would mean that only 3 in every 10 people are poor. Yet, the fact that the poverty analysis points out that the poor are largely rural, female headed households, illiterate and are employed in subsistence agricultural sector simply presents a controversy to the point that these categories are the majority of the population. Their livelihoods (both as means of living and enjoying values of their lives) have not changed. To the contrary, these categories are drifting from worse to worst. The Chronic Poverty Report, 2005 exemplifies this fact.

Beyond the age-long conceptual disparities in the definition and measurement of poverty (see Lakwo 2006: 117-120), this controversy points at two distinct issues that this study delved into. First, the controversy unearths the unclear definition of poverty. To date, there is no agreed upon definition of poverty (or its antidote development) in Uganda. While government institutions rely on income/consumption status measured by the World Bank's favored US \$ 1 a day poverty line, a number of civil society organizations prefer the subjective approach that anchors poverty in the perception of the individuals or communities experiencing it. In an attempt to heed to this view, the first Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment defined poverty as lack of basic needs and services such as food, clothing, shelter, basic health care, education and powerlessness. The second assessment added to this list issues of social exclusion, governance, conflict/insecurity, ignorance, unemployment, lack of productive assets and lack of knowledge and awareness (MoFPED, 2002: xi).

Surprisingly, although it has been recognized that poverty is multi-dimensional hence the widening of the frontier from which to fight it, there has been no clear merger of the objective and subjective approaches (even in PEAP design beyond mere mention). This omission partly explains why poverty remains blur and anything in between income/consumption, powerlessness, social exclusion, or ignorance and lack of knowledge (MoFPED, 2002: 11-13).

Second and arising from the first is that poverty performance tracking has remained varied despite a monitoring unit set for it. It has continued to remain rather difficult to measure the 'real' accepted poverty status because poverty is in between economics and socio-politics. To date, different monitoring frameworks and indicators are being used (see table 2 below and PEAP document, MoFPED, 2004: 223-239). The indicators reflect the multitudes of poverty embedded in income, public services consumption, and good governance poverty. But, they are disjointed and not aggregated to give one single picture of 'Uganda Poverty Status'. This aggregation failure has led to 'poverty machination' presented by the 'so-called' income/consumption poverty that fully ignores other facets of poverty. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development acknowledged this fact when it notes that, 'the lack of performance indicators and targets for some interventions and the inadequacy of the monitoring and evaluation functions at different levels have aggravated the [poverty tracking] problem further' (MoFPED, nd: 172).

Table 2: Some poverty indicators used in Uganda

<p>Perception of poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of adequate food • Lack of good shelter • Lack of good clothing • Inability to afford medical treatment • Lack of knowledge and information • Inability to afford secondary education • No access to clean drinking water • Inability to access credit facilities • Lack of cash money for investment <p style="text-align: right;">MoFPED (2002: fig.2.2, p.5)</p>	<p>Welfare indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take sugar • Use soap for bathing • Each child has a blanket • Has at least a pair of shoe • Each has at least 2 sets of clothing <p style="text-align: right;">MoFPED (2005: pp.163-165)</p>
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In a nutshell, it can be said that in Uganda poverty is everything. Not surprising, fighting poverty is a catch word in the political pursuit for modernization and industrialization even if it meant forest, schools, and other land give-away to investors. Besides, it is evident that what is considered as Uganda's poverty status is half the truth given that it inclines on only one facet of poverty ignoring what Maxwell (1999: box 1) notes as to consider the multi-dimensionality of poverty it '[poverty] should best be described as income or consumption poverty, human (under)development, social exclusion, ill-being, (lack of) capability and functioning, vulnerability, livelihood unsustainability, lack of basic needs, and relative deprivation'.

Therefore, from development policy perspectives and especially the demand for accountability it becomes irrelevant to commit a nation and its resources (borrowed funds inclusive) to what can not be validated. The irrelevance emanates from the fact that without what poverty is, there will be lack of policy focus (call it national vision) without which any road can lead to Rome so the adage goes. Hence, the inclination to the World Bank 'one-size-fits-all' income poverty measure without questioning its relevance beyond global policy/technical prescription continues to create more dilemmas for poverty reduction (and attaining the MDGs).

2.0 NEBBI DISTRICT'S SKETCHY SOLUTION

Nebbi district is one of the 80 districts in Uganda. It is located in north-western Uganda and is the gateway to the other 6 districts in the West Nile region. As a decentralized local government, Nebbi district is charged with the responsibility of developing its constituency while taking care of central government priorities. In this view, the district has formulated a 3-year development plan that envision, 'wealth and prosperity for all' tied to a mission, 'to serve the community through a coordinated delivery of services which focus on national and local priorities and contribute to the improvement in the quality of life of the people in the district'. As such, the district operational goal is, 'to improve incomes of the poor, improve the quality of life in the district, and promote good governance, harmony and security' (DPU, 2006: vii). Central in all this organizational positioning is the pursuit to fight poverty among its people.

One then asks: 'what is the poverty to be fought? How much of it exist and where?' In an attempt to answer these questions, in 2002, Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CEFORD) was contracted under the Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE) budget support to decentralization process to conduct a Participatory Poverty Assessment. This study was conducted in only four of the nineteen lower local governments. Apart from the methodology being suspect, the study had unclear terms of reference (designed and agreed upon by the District Planning Unit and the Contractor), was conducted without any audit and therefore it lacked the required feedback. The study lacked analytical rigor as is manifested in the disjointed definition, manifestation and indicators of poverty (see annex 2 for an excerpt from the study).

No wonder, it ended up not being harmonized into a District Poverty Assessment report with a Summary Status/Synthesis Report for Nebbi District that would answer questions like, 'what poverty is, how it is felt (by who) and its interlocking cause-effect relations' and in sum how poor/rich the people of Nebbi district are.

Because the study fell into the same trap as the national participatory poverty assessment, Nebbi district (as Uganda) to date can neither present its poverty status beyond the rhetoric of being poor because it is located in northern Uganda. Nor can it show and distinguish between its poorest vis-à-vis well off lower local governments. Likewise, without a clear poverty status, the basis upon which the poverty reduction policy should focus is missing.

This is exemplified by the 'crude' poverty measure used by the District Planning Unit (a centre for the coordination of the district development processes). While poverty is recognized, in line with the 2002 Participatory Poverty Assessment, as 'the inability to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, basic health care, basic education, lack of information and inadequate household item as paraffin, salt, and soap' (p.12), it is technically operationalize in varied measurement indicators. According to the District Planner these indicators include access to roads, number of schools, number of health units, and the proportion paying the lowest quartile of g-tax (personal communication during a brainstorming meeting held with SNV team). These measures exclude a number of issues raised in the very definition of poverty.

Seen in this way, one continues to wonder what the eventual outcomes from investing in the pillars of PEAP should make Ugandan in the poverty spectrum. Inherently, this poverty dilemma manifest in affecting the operations of development actors who can not aggregate their various inputs into a unitary poverty basket that can ably show the poverty dynamics in Uganda generally and within the various local governments where they are operational specifically. The Agency For Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) is one such development actor entrapped in this poverty dilemma.

3.0 AFARD: CAUGHT IN POVERTY ERADICATION DILEMMA

AFARD, formed in July 2000, is a local professional, not-for-profit, and non-denominational non-governmental organization (NGO) currently operating in Nebbi district.² AFARD's formation was motivated by numerous reasons. **First**, the West Nile region where it is operational is located in the poorest northern region of Uganda where 6 in 10 people live below the daily US\$ 1 standard. **Second**, many development interventions have been 'external to local context' and imposed leaving behind physical structures and dysfunctional committees but a people hardly changed. **Third**, 'democratic centralism and machination' under decentralization has reduced people to subjects and not citizen of the state. **Finally**, the high human resource flight from the region has limited new innovations and enthusiasms to work for self development.

Thus, AFARD's *vision* is, "a prosperous, healthy and informed people of West Nile" and its *mission* is, "to contribute to the moulding of a region in which the local people, including those who are marginalized, are able to participate effectively and sustainably and take a lead in the development of the region".

To achieve the above, AFARD's main activities are embedded in capacity building of 'poor' marginalised communities to realize sustainable livelihood. This is done by engaging in a number of thematic issues/activities namely: well-being security (where HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation, safe water and sanitation promotion, and food security are undertaken); income security (with a focus on community microenterprises development), and good governance (under which gender mainstreaming and advocacy with respect to local government development processes are pursued). For details on these activities see annex 3.

While the thematic focus of AFARD appears straight forward, it still, deriving from the above debate, is unclear who the poor are or what poverty that AFARD is zealously committed in fighting is. This dilemma presented a worry within the organization as to how to account (for public image, investment justification, and winning staff morale) to its stakeholders (donors, government, peer organizations, and the beneficiaries).

The worry stems right from the vision especially the 'prosperity' aspect that focuses on building income adequacy. It is a known fact that money is not an end in itself but rather also a means to other ends (like improved health and voice – the other aspects of the vision). No wonder, money, in Alur society is said to be 'what it does' which undoubtedly includes its contribution to making a living worthwhile. This includes, for instance, social recognition

² AFARD is also a registered member of the National NGO Forum, Uganda National AIDS Services Organizations (UNASO), Participatory Ecological Landuse and Management - Uganda Chapter (PELUM), West Nile Private Sector Development Promotion Center Ltd., Nebbi District NGO Forum (NDNGOF), and Nebbi AIDS Services Organization Network (NASON).

within one's clan and politically.³ Therefore, while acknowledging the role money plays in enabling people come out of poverty, what poverty means ought to be known so that the investments AFARD make together with its support partners can be measured periodically. This study, therefore, aimed at solving this dilemma as well as creating an opening (through adoption or adaptation) for local government to justifiably commit to poverty reduction.

4.0 EXPLORING THE POVERTY FRONTIERS

By working at the micro-level with grassroots communities, AFARD appreciates that the traditional subsistence economy is getting slowly overtaken by a market economy in which the best medium of exchange is money. Yet, money is also scarce to the extent that it has made a majority of the people 'money poor'. Table 1 revealed that in 10 years (1993-2003), northern Uganda where Nebbi lies, made only 7% positive point change in income poverty reduction as compared to 18% nationally. The change is three times less than that made in western and central Uganda and is near half that of eastern Uganda. Simply put, the people in Nebbi district lack adequate incomes and they are unable to meet cash-oriented consumption.

The ambiguity surrounding the poverty debate, thus, warranted asking (from an accountability perspective) a cardinal question, '*to what extent is AFARD working with the 'poor' marginalized communities?*' To answer this question, three sub-questions were also further asked, namely:

- First, *what is poverty?* This question solicited the perception of the manifestation of poverty as the people who live in it experience it. It aimed at breaking the World Bank's technocratic US \$ 1 a day prescription by giving voices to the poor and inner meaning to poverty so that poverty can be seen as a solid unit.
- Second, *why are the people poor?* This question aimed at exploring the causes of poverty where AFARD is working. This would provide an in-depth understanding of factors that inhibit the people from living the life they aspire for. Answers to this question would therefore provide ways of positioning AFARD's intervention focus in perspective so that what are addressed are root causes and not symptoms/effects of poverty.⁴

³ In one of AFARD's business training sessions with Orphans and Vulnerable Children support families, it was pointed that when you are poor your age does not matter. While in Alur society an elder is respected for his/her wisdom and is considered a father/mother, with poverty an elder ends up calling a cash rich boy 'Jadit/Mzee' (meaning an elder). Impliedly, poverty makes people deface their status.

⁴ This view does not negate the fact that there are cyclic cause-effect relationships in poverty dynamics. Rather, it appreciates the importance of dealing with root causes of poverty.

- Finally, *are AFARD's interventions relevant?* The core aspects of this question are, first, to validate whether or not AFARD is working with the 'poor' marginalised categories it is committed to work with. And, it is also to ascertain whether or not AFARD is working with such people in the right areas of their deprivation.

These questions were asked because first, the national quantitative studies are not district specific but are regional based. Even if they were from the discussion above they would be stating half-the-poverty fact. Second, the national participatory poverty assessments have not been conducted in Nebbi in order to draw valid adopted viewpoints from. Even if they were so, in the manner they are done, the assessments only provide a policy coherence to the PEAP process because the World Bank wants them so let alone presenting 'window dressing' views of poverty that remain challenged for lack of objectivity. Finally, for AFARD that is working in the district with a population that have diverse ethnicity and experiences of poverty, answering these question would provide a basis for attempting to aggregate the existing poverty status amongst its 'clients'.

4.1 Methodological orientation

Aware of the diversity of poverty studies, this study took a merger between the qualitative and quantitative approaches. It started with a participatory approach in order to be able to define poverty and categorize the poor on the one hand.⁵ It ended with a quantitative method in order to aggregate poverty and the poor. The draft study report, before this final one was produced, was discussed in a feedback meeting that involved participants from local governments and other civil society organizations.

Below, I present the findings to the three sub-questions asked and analyzed their implications for AFARD. For each question, a brief on the methodology used is also provided. Finally, concluding remarks are provided in view of the way forward for poverty reduction especially at local government levels.

4.2 Finding 1: The meanings of poverty

To explore the meaning of poverty, half-day group meetings were held. Of the thirty community-based organizations engaged with AFARD in food security project⁶ fifteen were

⁵ As Narayan, *et al.* (2000) work with the poor ably distinguished between wealth (that income poverty measures) from well-being that refers to a good life (p.21-43), they dimensioned well-being as material well-being seen as having enough; bodily well-being as being and appearing well; social well-being as being able to care for, bring up, marry and settle children, self respect and dignity, peace, harmony and good relations in the family and the community; and security as civil peace, a physically safe and secure environment, personal physical security, lawfulness and access to justice, security at old age, confidence in the future; freedom of choice and action.

⁶ These groups are those funded by Tudor Trust (UK) under the 'Food Security Promotion Through Improved Breed Multiplication Project.

randomly sampled. These partner community based groups are composed of different members (men only, women only, and mixed). They are located in different agro-ecological settings (farming and trade communities). Besides, the members have different demographic characteristics, economic statuses and political and religious affiliations. Thus, the respondents represented a heterogeneous category that reflects as much the diversity in the local communities as possible.

During the group meetings, facilitated by AFARD team, group members were introduced to the study objective, that is, understanding what poverty is, who are the poor, and why they are poor as per their community lens. This objective was linked to the food security project that is aimed at ameliorating the conditions of poverty they (as beneficiaries) were living in. This explanation was done by presenting as honest as possible AFARD's existing dilemma in understanding the above poverty issues. The honesty was meant to stir the group members to, once feel taking the drivers' seat to stir AFARD's thinking as one participant pointed, '*we thought you knew it all yet now it is clear that we know it better than you do*'.

It was also emphasized that the team would expect honest responses while every view would be respected. Thus, the discussion that followed, in which room was given to all group members to air out their views so as to avoid leadership, gender, age, physical ability, and educational biases, first focussed on the definition of poverty.

What came out from all the discussions were that:

- The term poverty is not foreign to the local communities. The local Alur/Jonam dialects refer to poverty as '*can*' while the opposite of poverty, riches/wealth is termed as '*lonyo*'.
- Both poverty and riches inhere in human beings as in the local adage it is said, '*can mako dbano gwok ungo*' (literally meaning poverty inheres in human beings and not dogs).
- For both poverty and riches to occur, there are labels that best describe them. A person living in poverty or riches is known as '*jacan*' and '*jalonyo*' respectively.
- The labels are ascribed to a person depending on his/her lifestyle (often households). This lifestyle is judged by its wellness (what can be known as well-being) and is termed locally as '*kwo pa dbano*'. While '*can*' means leading a miserable or bad life ('*kwo matek, kwo marac*'), the opposite riches is '*kwo maber*' that means a 'good life'. Those who live in between these two categories are referred to as leading an intermediate life termed as '*kwo ma nya ber ber*'.
- The wellness of one's life is dynamic. While at one stage a person may be living a bad life at another point s/he may lead a good or intermediate life. This dynamism reflects that people move in and out of poverty and are therefore not always static in a state of bad life.⁷ The variation however comes about because of the different components of life (what makes living good or bad).

⁷ This view also cautions the chronic poverty focus on intergenerational poverty as well as the sinking deeper into the so-called lowest poverty quartiles. It points to the fact that although one may be taken to be chronically poor, s/he is in a continuous move within the various facets of the socially accepted bad life.

- Given the dynamism and its associated components, the wellness of life makes categorizing people in the groups (communities) possible. The people were then categorized as those living a badly-off, intermediate, and well-off lifestyle. This can then be construed to mean the poor, near-poor, and rich.⁸
- Finally and interesting is that one does not need to be rich to lead a well-off life nor poor to lead a bad life. While this contradicts the categorization above, it deepens the fact that it is what determines the wellness of life that matters. Cases of rich people living miserably and those who are the poor living with pride were pointed. For instance, a shopkeeper who has money but does not buy for his family fish on the weekly market day was ridiculed by the known as poor who have to sell part of their farm produce to at least afford fish.

Along this line of thought, poverty was described as lack of, inability to, and isolation from the desired well-being. These deprivations were seen to emanate from individual, household and the broader community capacity and politics. An elderly woman argued that, 'I'm leading a miserable life because at my age, I no longer have the ability to engage in hard work both on-farm or in the market in order to have adequate food from the garden or income to buy whatever I need.' Another teenage mother reiterated the fact that, 'at least we are better off because we still have few dependants as compared to what our energies on the farm can produce for us'. Yet, a male youth said, 'if the government had created for us the jobs we qualified for our families would not be suffering'.

Apart from the old woman's concern for food, the remarks of the teenage mother and the male youth still leaves a lot to be desired. Up to this point it is still unclear what the better-off or suffering (read badly-off) lives is. But, what is clear is that all these three people strive for a life other than that of badly. The issues of a good life are, therefore, addressed below so as to make it clear what the ingredients upon which judgements are made as to whether or not one is leading a badly-off, intermediate and well-off?

4.3 Finding 2: Components of a good life

To explore the different aspects of the wellness of life, the group meetings were asked to list what makes their life badly-off, intermediate, or well-off. A long list was drawn as members mentioned what to them best described the wellness of their lives.

This list was later clustered according to the various well-being categories (some of which are already mentioned in the study of Narayan *et al*). Interestingly, in the indicator identification, the people debated and agreed (for those with contention) on what the best measure of such

⁸ However, there was a polarized category of the identified 3 groups. Like the poor were divided into two - extremely poor and just poor and the rich into stinking rich and just rich. I opted not to use this sub-division in the analysis because they were identified in only 6 of the 15 groups.

wellness would be. For instance (see table 3 below), number of countable assets like livestock, radios and amount of money were agreed upon.

Besides, reasons for identifying a given variable were also given. For instance, land was seen as a productive asset from which one can produce own food or even rent part of it out should it be in large size for immediate cash. Livestock were rated for the social status they confer on their owners. An elderly woman pointed out that, without cattle either you die an unmarried person or you engage in non-traditionally accepted marriage. And, both situations are a source of shame to the affected person either directly or indirectly. Should a parent fail to marry for their children, she narrated, their family will be disrespected to the point that the man may be denied position among his clans mate. Meanwhile, for the boy, he will fail to fit among his peers because no one would wish to confide in him given that he is not married (simply because married persons consider that they must discuss with those who are of their status).

Table 3: Components and categorization of well being

Cluster	Indicators	Reasons	Categorization of well-being		
			Badly-off	Intermediate	Well-off
Material well-being	• Living in a good housing unit	Having a descent home without trouble of routine building	Temporary	Semi permanent	Permanent
	• Ownership of farm land (acres)	Ability to produce own food or rent part of it for money	<1	1-3	>3
	• Owning livestock (#) - Have cattle - Have goats - Have poultry	Ability to marry for oneself and children/dependants and to perform social norms	None None None	1-2 1-5 1-10	>2 >5 >10
	• Ownership of modern house wares (chairs with cushions on them)	Receiving visitors without shame	No	Partly	Yes
	• Access to information - Have radio -Have mobile phones	Being in contact with the world and knowing what is going on around us	No No	1 Borrow	>1 Yes
	• Access to local means of transport (a bicycle)	Being able to reach out to far off places without difficulty	None	1	>1
Bodily well-being	• Eating nutritious foods	Living a healthy life without frequent sicknesses	No	Sometimes	Yes
	• Sleeping on good facilities(beds with mattresses and blankets/bed sheets)	Having a sound rest after a long arduous days' work	No	Partly	Yes
	• Dressing well (Sunday special with shoes)	Fitting well in one's community	No	Partly	Yes
Socio-political well-being	• Belonging to a bigger community group	Having a collective voice to bring change to community members	No	Partly	Yes
Financial well-being	• Having profitable enterprise	Ability to earn money on a daily basis	No	Partially	Yes
	• Having cash money (savings)	Ability to afford dire needs as and when they come up	No	Up to 100,000	>100,000
Knowledge well-being	• Having sound education	Ability to secure a formal white-collar job	None	Primary	Post-primary
	• Supporting children/dependants in post-primary education	Ability to leave children who can fend for them selves	No	Partially	All

4.4 Finding 3: The causes of poverty

In order to understand why deprivation occurs in the first place and secondly how it translates into the different (none or more) variables as well as the social categorization stated in table 3, the causes of poverty were analyzed. Generally, it was pointed that such deprivation are due to:

- Lack of a sizeable and steady income. A majority of the people indicated their lifestyle was curtailed by lack of money which ideally results from: (i) over-reliance on subsistence-oriented and indigenous technology-driven agriculture which in turn has marginally low yields for both food and sales; (ii) their inability to diversify their livelihood activities because they lack loans with which to start-up or build upon their businesses.
- Inadequate knowledge and skills to live a productive and healthy life. A female youth said, 'how would I know what is and the value of good food when I'm not schooled?' Another elderly man remarked, 'by what means other than education can I make a successful business?' This means that for any venture to be productive basic education (of whatever nature) was considered important and its absence a setback to leading the desired lifestyle.
- Lack of access to public services. It was noted that although government should have ideally been providing the villages with services that can increase the people's productivity like extension services, quality health care, and road networks among others, in most of these (AFARD project) areas, the communities were isolated from getting government services either because of distance to services centres, neglect by government officials, or simply being sidelined as unworthy of services. A respondent echoed the fact that, 'political leaders' simply do not hear to our needs. Instead, they provide what they deem fit for us without consultation. Sometimes, they even shamelessly want us to contribute funds towards projects we did not need. Another one reiterated the fact that government has failed to create jobs for its citizens yet it expects the people to grow rich without telling them how to do so.
- Cultural discrimination was yet another setback. While the men noted that culture has now put too much burden on them to win bread for the ever increasing family sizes due to the rising number of deaths, the youths looked at it from cultural roadblocks which inhibit them from trying our new things given that the conservative elders are the ones considered to have wisdom monopoly. To women, such views of the youth were elaborated in view of ownership of assets (including cash) and eating some food types.
- Changes in weather also featured as an impediment to better life. Many people pointed to the fact that, current weather changes have made life very unpredictable. Apart from reducing productivity in terms of what one can produce from his/her land, it has forced many households to deplete their savings (food, livestock, and even money) in order to continue surviving. As such, many people are changing many facets of their well being status because they are unable to cope with life.

4.5 Finding 4: Aggregating well being status

That the different definitions of poverty were finally exemplified by the variables for the wellness of life on the one hand and social categorization of who lives according to what wellness was done, it became important to ascertain the extent to which the members of partner groups were living in what well-being status.

To do so entailed undertaking a rapid quantitative household assessment/survey. The use of the household as the unit of analysis at this point was based on the fact that despite the heterogeneity of the members, each lived according to a given wellness that is defined by their household status. For instance, all the prioritized indicators although belong to individuals are held for and on behalf of their households.

Therefore, a quantitative household questionnaire that focused at rapidly finding the status of every household vis-à-vis the indicators of life's wellness was designed and pre-tested. With the questions' consistency ascertained, the final data collection was conducted among 23 randomly sampled members of the 15 partner groups involved in the group meetings. Two people (the agronomist and animal husbandry experts) collected the data, under my supervision, on the dates that were agreed upon with the group members. However, while the field data collection was on-going, data entry was equally being done and the analysis was easy to complete timely.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

This study was conducted among community based organization members with whom AFARD was undertaking a 2-year food security promotion project. A total of 338 people (with an average household number of 6 people) were interviewed.⁹ This population was composed of 61% women (because AFARD gives priority to women in its programmes). About 13% were those aged 14-24 years (although the mean age was 39 years)¹⁰, and 86% were married (57% women) and 16% had no formal education (15% women compared to about 1% men) compared to only 14% with post primary education (only 3% women).

5.0 WHO AFARD IS WORKING WITH

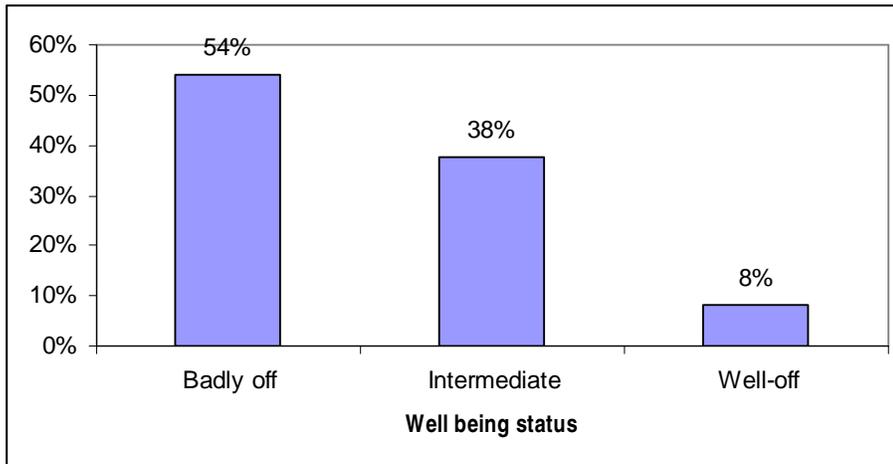
Basing on the rating criteria set by the groups, it was found that most of the people engaged in the food security programme are those leading the badly-off lifestyle. Figure 1 below shows that those with a badly-off lifestyle account for 54% of the entire group

⁹ Two things need to be noted here. First, the community based groups have an average of 25 people and therefore targeting 23 of the 25 members was near conducting a census. And, second, with 338 responses scored, it represents a 2% non-response rate from the expected 345 people which occurred because the identified respondents were engaged in other activities like attending to the sick or even funerals of relatives.

¹⁰ This signifies the low age at marriage that the people engage in which for those already married was high for women (7%) compared to men (3%).

members interviewed. Meanwhile, those in the intermediate lifestyle category are 38%. Compared to the well-off (call them the rich) who are a negligible 8%, this finding means that the majority of the group members AFARD is working with are the poor.

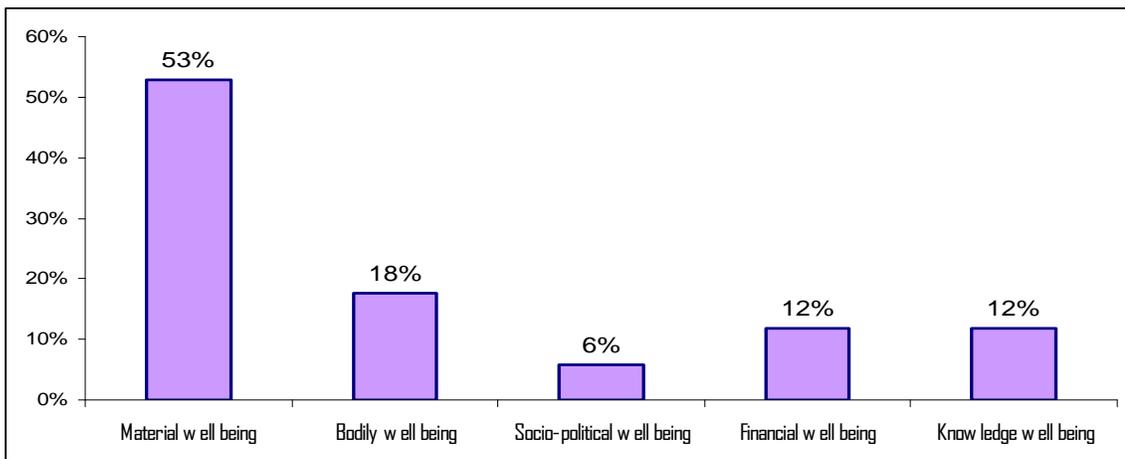
Figure 1: Well-being status of respondents



Source: Household data.

6.0 MANIFESTATION OF DEPRIVATIONS

Figure 2: Respondent's well being categories



Source: Household data.

From figure 2 above, it is evident that although most of the people are poor (fig.1) a majority have a fair status in terms of material well being (53%). The core areas of well being deprivation are socio-political well being, financial and knowledge well beings and bodily well being. Of importance is the fact that both those leading badly-off and the well-off lifestyles lack socio-political identification with bigger community groups where they

can echo their voices and secure better services. This however affects those with badly-off lifestyle more than those with well-off lifestyle because, first, the latter have the ability to afford the required services and second, they have the potential of ‘governance capture’ a scenario where they win favors from those in position (government and NGO officials alike).

While this observation presents the general picture of well being deprivation, more specifically as can be seen from table 4 below is the fact that there are variations in the different facets of deprivation amongst the different social categories. For instance, those in badly off lifestyle suffer most (in order of score severity) from social-political (1%) and knowledge well-being (8%) while those well-off are deprived of socio-political (2%) and financial well being (8%). To those at the intermediate category it is financial (9%) and socio-political well being (14%) deprivation.

Table 4: Well being status by social category

Categories	Badly off	Intermediate	Well-off	Total
Material well being	68%	34%	42%	53%
Bodily well being	10%	27%	27%	18%
Socio-political well being	1%	14%	2%	6%
Financial well being	14%	9%	8%	12%
Knowledge well being	8%	15%	21%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Household data.

7.0 INTERVENTION RELEVANCE

The finding that only 8% of those engaged in the food security project are the well-off portrays that in deed AFARD is working with the ‘poor’ marginalized people in the community. This means that AFARD has the right targeting relevance which ensures that those in dire needs are enabled to enjoy their lives.

Further by looking at the manifestation of deprivation vis-à-vis AFARD’s vision and thematic programmes it can be said that AFARD’s vision-driven interventions rightly addresses the areas of core needs. By focusing on income security (financial well-being), health security (bodily well-being), and good governance (socio-political well being), AFARD is empowering its beneficiaries to directly gain increased status on the various facets of well-being and indirectly to translate these gains into material well being.

However, the exclusion of knowledge well being (considered as a non-niche focus) is known to have impacted negatively on AFARD’s programmes. For instance, in a review of the food security project, it is reported that illiteracy is an impediment to record keeping, profit calculations, and group growth in terms of minute taking and keeping, among others. It is also known as a constraint to the adoption of rotational leadership as well as taking independent linkage and lobbying roles by group members.

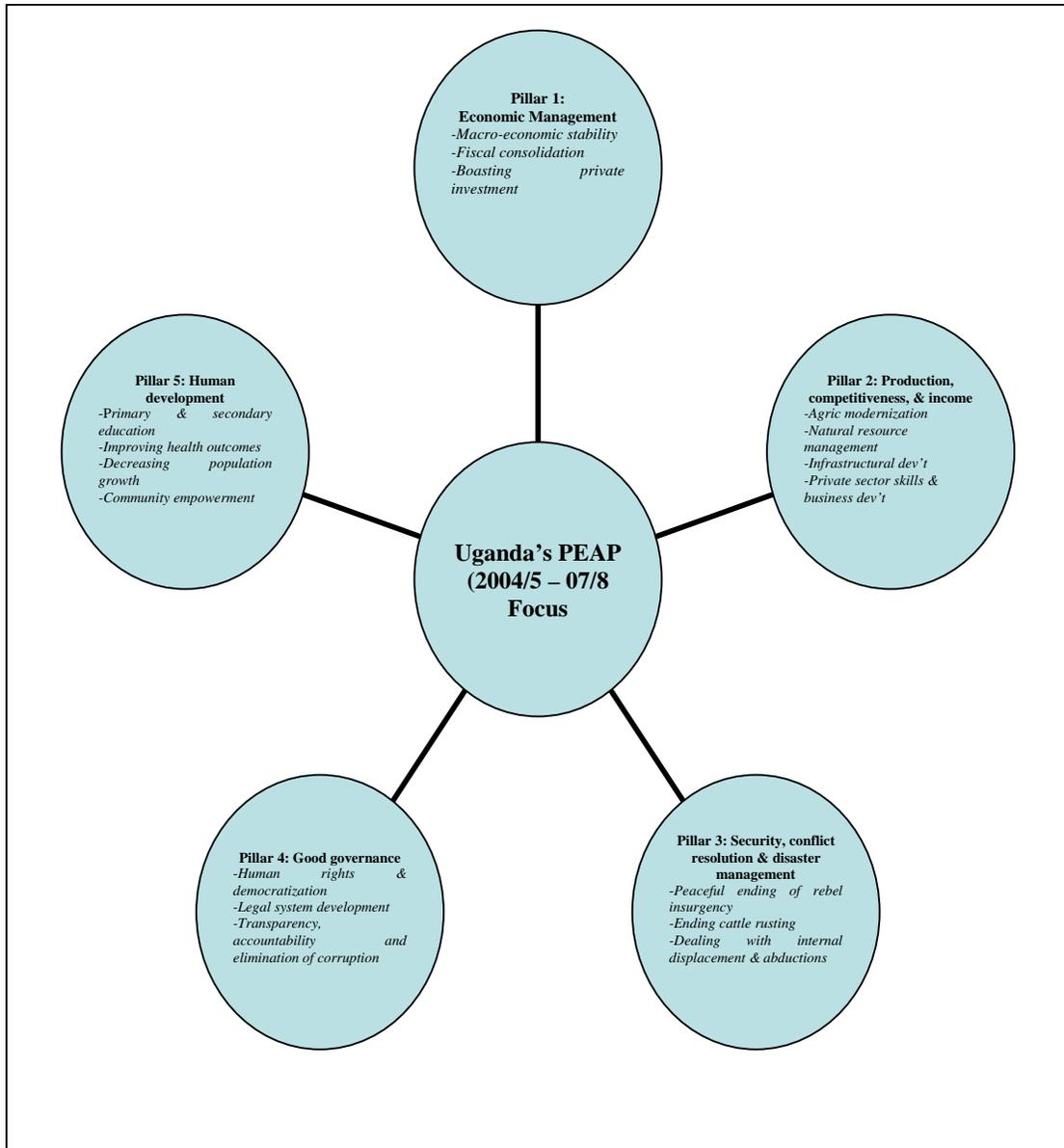
8.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study addressed the current gap in the global anti-poverty agenda which focuses on income/consumption poverty on the one hand yet on another it tactically proposes the recognition of a multi-dimensional poverty to which it pays no attention. Taking an organizational accountability focus, the study presented first, the need to accept that poverty is heterogeneous hence endogenic to the people who face it. In this way, the inclination to the global harmonization in income poverty measure provides no real change from pursuing the failed dictated development to yet another dictated poverty reduction. For the recognition of a multi-faceted poverty to take roots a global orientation is imperative because it will provide voice for the 'so-called' poor to echo not only their voice but also to let their aspirations take roots within the anti-poverty policy debate.

Second, the study provides a basis for conducting a relevance test in terms of outreach (category, location, and thematic focus). This begs the question of whether or not there is public resource management effectiveness. From a management perspective, it presents a way of asking whether we are reaching out to those in need and addressing their core areas of deprivations. This appears not the case in many organizations (government and civil society like) because resource allocation decisions are based on 'leaders' intuition (also inherent from their interests).

For AFARD, this study provides a critical answer to the organizational dilemmas. It found out that AFARD is cardinally targeting poor people with badly-off or intermediate well-being status. It also found out that AFARD's vision is relevant in its area of operation. With these positive results, AFARD can justifiably account for its existence and show cause why its resource mobilization drive is necessary. Finally, these findings mean that over time AFARD, together with its beneficiaries, can monitor how far they have moved in enabling the 'poor' marginalized people realize the lifestyles they aspire for.

Annex 1: PEAP pillars



Annex 2: Perceptions and indicators of poverty

Area	Perceptions of poverty	Indicators
Parombo SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of basic necessities like food, clothes and shelter • Spending sleepless nights due to too many disturbing thoughts • Body weakness due to old age and/or poor health • Lack of education, knowledge and skills • Missing what one panned to acquire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body appearance • Dressing • Sanitation • Housing structure • Access to infrastructures like roads, schools, and health units
Pakwach TC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited land for farming • Inadequate clean water • Restrictions to fishing ground • Low/unreliable income • Poor asset base • Lack of basic household facilities • Poor quality of services like water and health • Displacement as a result of war • Food insecurity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of education • Rampant theft and idleness • Risk taking in acquiring resources across the Nile • Having one meal a day • Ill health and constant unhappiness • Poor shelter • Lack of land • Unemployment and odd jobs • Dependence on friends and relative • Poor dressing
Nebbi TC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to have basic needs at home and within the community • Having no support from government and remittance from relative • Inability to do gainful activities like petty trade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor health • Poor dressing • Malnutrition • Low level of education • Inaccessibility to services
Zeu SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack f basic needs • Inability to have good livelihoods • Lack of food • Lack of scholastic materials • Lack of good clothing and shoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor dressing • Ill health • Illiteracy • Isolation • Poor housing and utensils • Famine • Lack of social infrastructures like schools, health units and roads • Inadequate community services like agricultural extension.

Source: NDLG (2002)

Annex 3: AFARD's intervention focus

Theme 1 Community health	
<p><i>HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation</i> AFARD delved into behavior change communication in fishing villages (for prevention) and family and community centered approach for support to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) and Person Living with AIDS (for mitigation). Awareness creation, psychosocial support, direct support for OVCs in schools and the enhancement of family and community ability to provide basic services and care are the core activities.</p>	<p><i>Safe water and sanitation promotion</i> In promoting Safe Water and Sanitation AFARD provides access to safe water points and toilet facilities at community points and for vulnerable families who are helpless. It also provides safe sanitation and hygiene education through trained voluntary village health committees. These are followed by a community bye-law formulation, approval, launch, and enforcement by local courts.</p>
Theme 2 Income security	
<p><i>Sustainable agriculture enhancement</i> AFARD focuses at increasing household food production and purchasing power so that food is available, adequate, affordable, and acceptable throughout the year for all people for a healthy living. High-value (market and food) crops and livestock are multiplied for on-lending using group-based approach. Field-based extension services are routinely provided in conjunction with agri-business and nutrition education.</p>	<p><i>Community microenterprise development</i> To promote activity diversification with prudent business practices and self-funding, AFARD integrates the promotion of group savings and credit schemes with income generation skills improvement. Management training for savings mobilization and credit management are provided to all group members. Entrepreneurship skills training focusing on the selection, planning and management of small businesses are also provided.</p>
Theme 3 Community empowerment	
<p><i>Institutional development</i> AFARD mainly work with community based organizations (CBOs). This ensures cost effectiveness and facilitates a 'do-it-yourself' drive for self-reliant development. To enable groups to be competent enough to operate on their own, a facilitation process that starts with the identification of groups is done. This is followed by a participatory capacity self-assessment where each group identifies its organizational strengths and weaknesses. It is the weaknesses that are used in designing a capacity building plan with the groups. The groups' capacity building takes the form of training, retraining, networking and linkages, resource mobilization, and advocacy and lobbying. Through periodic review groups ably chart their growth paths and identify their areas of persistent weaknesses.</p>	<p><i>Good governance</i> The drive to promote gender equality compelled AFARD to undertake to facilitate a process to engender services delivery in lower local governments. This initiative focuses at widening political space for, and entitlements of, women by increasing women's participation and voice in decision-making in local government by promoting the engagement of women and local government leaders (and technical staffs). The intervention includes skills training in gender-responsive planning and budgeting, participatory gender monitoring and evaluation and advocacy and lobbying skills side by facilitation of and technical backstopping to women to participate in planning processes and monitoring of budgets.</p>

Annex 4: Well being score by lifestyle category

Well-being indicators	Badly off	Intermediate	Well off	Total
Nature of housing	82%	15%	3%	100%
Land size	56%	18%	26%	100%
Have cattle	85%	14%	1%	100%
Have goats	37%	56%	7%	100%
Have poultry	25%	59%	16%	100%
House wares	88%	9%	4%	100%
Have a radio	89%	10%	1%	100%
Have mobile phones	95%	4%	1%	100%
Have a bicycle	65%	34%	1%	100%
Eat nutritious foods	17%	73%	9%	100%
Have good beddings	37%	58%	5%	100%
Dresses well	35%	43%	22%	100%
Belong to a bigger community group	5%	92%	2%	100%
Have a business	59%	29%	11%	100%
Have cash savings	72%	28%	0%	100%
Have sound education	16%	70%	14%	100%
Support post-primary education	55%	29%	16%	100%
Total	54%	38%	8%	100%

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