

Acknowledgment

This work was implemented as part of the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), which is carried out with support from CGIAR Fund Donors and through bilateral funding agreements. For details please visit https://ccafs.cgiar.org/donors. The views expressed in this book cannot be taken to reflect the official opinions of these organizations. We especially want to thank all the farmers featured in this book, for taking the time to capture such intimate moments and for sharing the stories behind the pictures with us. We also thank Tim McDonnell for his support in developing the training guide and in the conceptualization of the project as a whole; Penninah Aryemo, for her invaluable help in the field; and Laura Cramer for her helpful feedback on earlier versions of the book.

Field assistant and translator: Aryemo Irene Penninah **Photo Studio:** Obal Denis. Gulu Photo Art Studio

Book Design: Mango Tree

Photos: Photo credit remains with the farmers who participated in the project. Where

otherwise unspecified, source is Mariola Acosta.

Introduction

All too often, the well-intentioned efforts of journalists and development organizations to raise awareness of pressing humanitarian issues has the unintended effect of reducing its human subjects to little more than hapless victims of the latest calamity. Ugandans are hardly alone in having a portrait - spread through images on television and social media across both the Global North and South - which reflects little other than their suffering and privation: the mothers of children with swollen bellies carry home heavy jerry cans of water from far-off wells while their fathers watch helplessly as the crops wither in the field. While food insecurity and the challenges of coping with a changing climate are, tragically, a very real part of many rural Ugandans daily lives, they are neither the whole of those lives nor are they necessarily perceived and understood in the way an outsider might.

We researchers are not innocent in this affair either. Even though smallholder farmers and an understanding of their constraints, opportunities, experiences and ambitions are placed at the center of our enquiring efforts, such understandings are inherently created by and mediated through our research programs. Even under the best of circumstances, victimizing portrayals of

rural Ugandans can thus inadvertently be perpetuated, for example, by an excessive focus on technical fixes to development challenges or through a clumsy effort to communicate scientific findings to donors and the wider public. With this project we aimed to radically change this by shifting the way in which rural communities' stories are told and received. Our goal was to give farmers full autonomy over the stories they wanted expressed, the places they wanted shown, and the realities they wanted shared.

We believe that most of the lived realities of smallholder farmers remain in the private spheres and that understanding these hidden realities through farmers' own photography can provide invaluable insights for future research programs. We hope that it will help in designing policies and programs that are more targeted to these lived realities and in ensuring that farmers' priorities are at the forefront of research and development efforts.



This book is the result of months of collaboration between researchers from the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and smallholder farmers in Lodi, an Acholi community in Northern Uganda. In the next pages we give you an overview and history of the project and the area where these photos were taken. If you prefer to delve directly into the farmers' pictures feel free to skip this background section.

We hope you enjoy the book as much as we enjoyed interacting with farmers and getting to know them from such an intimate perspective. We now invite you to join us in exploring Acholi society and stepping into the lives of its farmers, one family at a time.

The Project

Project genesis and site selection

For those of us at IITA's office in Kampala, the conversation during coffee breaks would often return to the same perennial question, one no less challenging for its simplicity: How to give farmers a hand in the ways in which the stories and experiences are expressed and understood? Back in the summer of 2016, we attended a conference in Ireland where a participant described their use of "Photo Interviews", a qualitative research method in which participants were given a camera with a list of prompts and instructions. We thought this was a good fit for the endeavor we had at hand and decided to pilot this methodology in two regions of Uganda: Nwoya, in the Northern Region, and Mbale, in the Eastern Region. This book presents a compilation of farmer's photos and stories from the village of Lodi, in Nwoya.

We were conscious from the outset that for this effort in particular, success would depend in no small part on having achieved a certain level of rapport with the community. It was partly for this reason that we decided to implement the Nwoya Photo Project within the framework of a wider

research program on gender, climate change and household decision-making that was ongoing at the time in the Northern Region of Uganda. Following up on three years of previous work in the area, we had the unique opportunity to implement the project in conjunction with a three week ethnographic study scheduled for early 2017. It was indeed the ethnographic research, which facilitated a daily contact with farmers, that gave us the level of rapport needed before introducing the concept of the Photo Project to the chairman of the local village council. After explaining the project to him, he agreed to help us distribute the cameras to the families in Lodi with the one condition that he also be invited to participate in the project.



Acquiring and distributing the cameras

At this point it became immediately apparent that the project would require disposable cameras: even if there had been resources to afford digital cameras to each participant, few in rural Nwoya have reliable enough access to electricity to ensure that such cameras remained charged. It did not take long to discover, however, that disposable cameras are fast becoming a rarity in this rapidly digitizing world. In fact, we were unable

to find even a single store anywhere in the country which sold them and, ultimately, 15 disposable cameras had to be brought in from Europe.

These cameras, each with 39 exposures, were distributed to eight different households purposefully chosen from the list of participants in a previous survey conducted in the area. This was done so that the participants might better reflect the diversity within the community. Thus, five dual-headed households, one single-headed household, and one polygamous household were included, along with the chairman of the village council. In each of the households, cameras were provided to each spouse in order to capture the different roles, challenges and preferences of men and women. In short, every effort was made to enable the project to capture the full breadth of rural life in the village of Lodi, from within individual families and across the community.

Training farmers in basic photography skills

Having chosen the households who would be invited to participate, the chairman helped us arrange appointments with them. Over the following days, we visited each of the households with the village leader, Mr. Kinyera, and our Acholi translator, Penninah. After explaining the aim of the project to them, and asking whether they wished to participate, we gave them a very simple instruction: to take pictures of what inspired them in life. This, we explained, could take any form and include anything from their daily-routines to their favorite spot in the community. We encouraged them to take the camera with them at all times and to try to capture actions and emotions with their pictures, keeping in mind the story they wanted to tell.

Tim McDonnell, a Fulbright journalism scholar and National Geographic Research Fellow who was collaborating with IITA at the time, developed a training guide on basic photography skills. The training included essential notions of how to use a disposable camera and fundamentals of photography such as light and composition. As the trainings went on, farmers took the first pictures in our presence, to make sure they understood the instructions and

to verify that the cameras were working properly. At one point or another during each these trainings, dozens of kids would emerge – seemingly from nowhere – and begin to cluster around those with cameras. It was a joy to watch as excitement about the project grew visible in the children's curiosity and in the smiles and laughter of the farmers' as they took their first shots. Ten days later, we returned to collect the cameras and develop the film.

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Developing the photos

If finding the disposable cameras had been difficult, finding somewhere to develop the photos would prove even trickier. We visited every photo studio in Gulu, the largest city in the Northern Region of Uganda, and with each stop we were greeted with the same strange looks and the remark that "No one uses those things anymore". Luckily, a colleague of ours referred us to Denis Obal, the owner of the oldest photo studio in town: Gulu Real Art Studio. We later learnt that the studio had earned a measure of fame when artist Martina Bacigalupo employed some of Obal's pictures in a photographic art book bearing the studio's name.

We met with Denis in front of the 'studio', which had been reduced to a spot on a street above which "Gulu Real Art Studio" had been painted on the wall.

As we sat on a bench in the street, he explained that while there were no places in Gulu that could develop the pictures, he had a partner in Kampala who could develop the pictures for us. Getting the film to his partner would involve putting the cameras on a night bus to Kampala, and receiving them a few days later. Reluctantly, but with no clear alternative options, we followed Denis' suggestion. Sure enough, six days later he called us saying the pictures had been developed in the capital and returned to Gulu.

Denis explained to us that most of the cameras had lost a number of pictures, which were either completely dark or flashed, and that those were not developed. Denis helped us scan all the remaining photos, so that we could bring the originals to the farmers.

Interviewing the farmers

As time passed by, the expectations about the pictures grew, and while we were in the field many of the farmers approached us at different times inquiring about them. They were worried that we would leave Lodi without bringing the photos back to them.

We started the photo interviews during the last week of April, 2017, and we aimed to interview two households every day. Although the original idea had been to interview the spouses separately, we found this difficult to realize as the couple were together waiting for us, and were eagerly looking forward to seeing each other's pictures.

The photo interviews were of an informal nature, with us asking them in general terms about what they wanted to show in each of the pictures. Depending on the stories that emerged, we would then ask different follow-up questions. The photo interviews had different lengths, depending on the number of pictures they had taken and the stories emerging from them. In general, they lasted from around forty minutes to one hour

and a half. The interviews were conducted in Acholi with the help of our translator, Penninah. While general notes were taken during the interviews, the audio was also recorded and later transcribed verbatim to English.





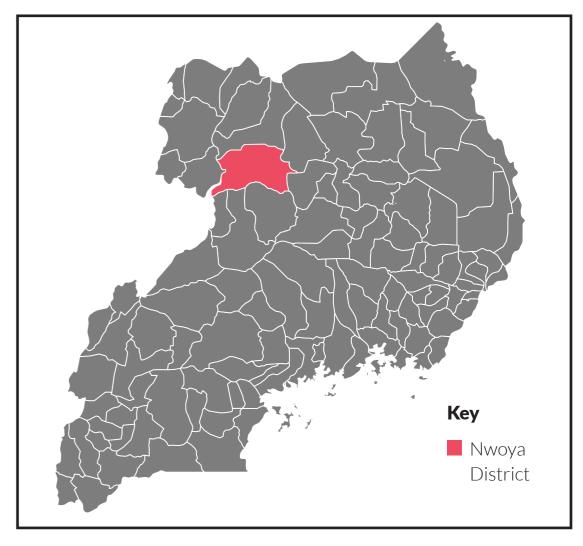
Seeking consent

It was, of course, imperative that farmers agreed not only to participate in the project, but also agree that the interviews be recorded and that their photos be used for this book. An explanation of the project was translated into Acholi and read to them in order to make sure they understood its purpose and the ways in which their pictures and stories would be used. Depending on the participants' level of literacy, the consent forms were either signed or thumb-printed.

The research area

This photo project was conducted in Lodi, a small village in the Purongo sub-county of Nwoya district, in the Northern Region of Uganda. Nwoya is inhabited by Acholi people, a Nilotic Luo tribe of East Africa that extends from Northern Uganda towards the Southern tip of South Sudan. This area is also commonly referred to as Acholiland. People in Nwoya speak Acholi, which is a dialect of the Luo language family.

Acholiland, as is the case in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, is governed through a patriarchal system in which males hold most of the power in family and community affairs. The majority of the land in the region is held under customary land rights and used largely for farming, grazing, hunting and gathering of firewood. Through this customary system, plots of land are allocated to each family through male lines of inheritance. Female members of the family are expected to marry a man from another clan and leave their ancestral home, and little or no land is allocated to them. Similarly,



female spouses always belong to different clans than their counterparts, and they are normally given land access rights, but no rights of ownership.

The Northern Region of Uganda, including the district of Nwoya, witnessed for nearly two decades (1986-2005) a gruesome war between rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda. As the war intensified, inhabitants of the region had no option but to flee their ancestral homes and seek refuge in one of the several camps for Internally Displaced People (IDP) that the government had established in the region.

As a consequence of this war, Acholi people had to rely on food aid from the IDP camps for many years. As the displaced population started returning to their ancestral homes, numerous land ownership conflicts emerged, such as disputes over land boundaries. A decade after the LRA was forced out of Northern Uganda, development programs have progressively shifted their focus from large-scale post-war infrastructure development programs to a focus on improving Acholi people's livelihoods. This focus on livelihoods was paramount as two generations, the ones that moved to IDPs at an early age and those born in the IDP camps, found themselves equipped with limited agricultural skills when they were finally able to leave the camps and return to their communities.

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Lodi

The village of Lodi has around 200 households and around 1,000 inhabitants in total. Most people in Lodi belong to one of three major clans: Pakeyo, Payira or Paromo. Mr. Kinyera, the local government leader, explained to us that the village is named after a type of sedge, similar to papyrus, which once grew in abundance on the marshy edge of the village and which their ancestors used as a source for 'vegetable salts' (ashes obtained from certain plant species which serve as a seasoning for foods in areas where sea salt or mineral salts are rare).

Typically, a family in Lodi has a main hut to sleep in and another, separate hut for cooking. As the family grows, more huts are built to accommodate the new members. In this way, each family has a homestead with several huts in it. Nearby homesteads with more huts will normally belong to close relatives of the male spouse. Huts are typically circular, with a diameter of twelve to fourteen meters, and formed of a low, plastered wall of handmade bricks and a tall, thatched roof supported by a central wooden pillar.





Lodi was heavily affected by the war: everyone had fled the village by the end of 1997. Mr. Kinyera explained that the rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army would abduct children from Lodi and force them to fight as rebel soldiers. Many of these child soldiers later died in combat. The worst attack, he recalls, happened on June 13th, 1991, when the rebels went to Lodi and abducted many people there, including his brother. Three men were killed in the attack and some women had their ears cut off. People only began returning to Lodi in 2007 after 10 or more years in IDP camps. This return marked the beginning of a long period of complete reconstruction, as most of the huts in the village had been burnt to the ground.

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Most people in Lodi make their livelihood through small-scale agriculture. Small plots are normally managed by women producing food for the family, while bigger plots are reserved for the cultivation of cash crops, which are typically controlled by men. The main cash crops in Lodi are groundnuts, rice and soybeans. Crops cultivated for home consumption include

maize, sorghum, millet, cassava, beans, cowpeas, and leafy vegetables. Cattle rearing is also quite common in Lodi, an activity which is largely conducted by men. Women take care of smaller livestock such as poultry.

Left: Atim Sarah experimenting with the disposable camera.

Bottom: Omona Simon & Atim Sarah pose with their son.

Omona Simon Atim Sarah

Tales from the market

Subsistence farmers, Omona and Atim, are part of an ever-growing farming community in Lodi village. Atim sells some of the farm produce at the market and what she experiences there colours her world.

>In Uganda different naming conventions are present and the surname or clan name often precede a person's given name(s).



"I took the photo at the borehole. This kid was pumping water as I waited for my turn."

Atim Sarah



"I was back from getting water at the borehole and was coming home. I get three jerry cans in a day. I go each time for each of the jerry cans but thankfully the borehole is very near. It takes 10 minutes to bring each jerry can so, for the three jerry cans, it may take 30 minutes in a day."

Atim Sarah



"My uncle-in-law is sitting in a traditional Acholi chair. He is holding a stick as he smokes. He found the stick along the way as he was coming to visit us."

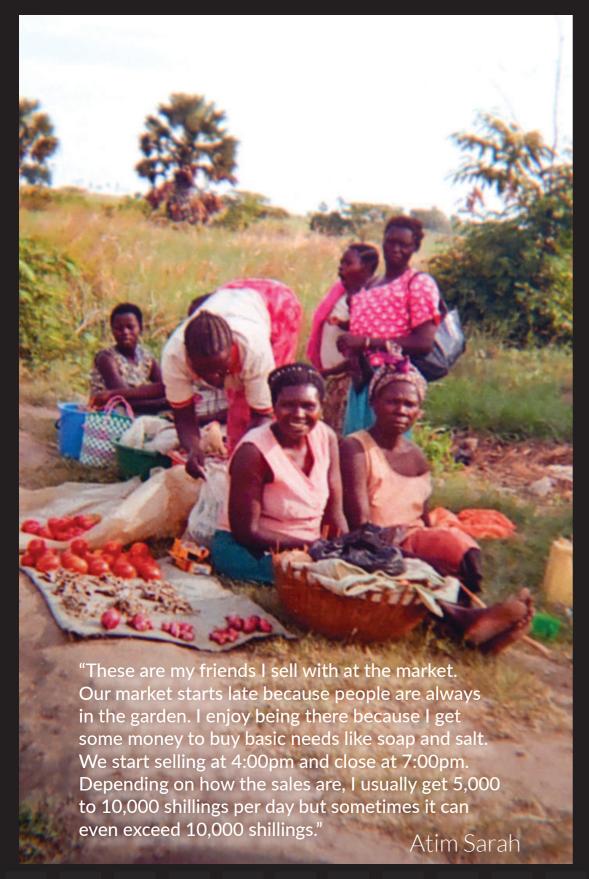
Atim Sarah

"I was washing peeled cassava so that I could dry it and mix it with sorghum then take it to the milling machine for making flour. Beside the tarpaulin, there is silver fish. I put it outside because, even though I buy it already dried, I have to keep putting it in the sun so it does not smell bad."

Atim Sarah



>Lake Albert is located on the border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.





"This kid is the child of one of my market friends. He was just moving around the market naked."

Atim Sarah

> At the time of the interviews, 1,000 Ugandan shillings was equal to approximately \$0.30, €0.27 or £0.21.



"I wanted to take a picture of the things I sell. You can see how I arrange the tomatoes for selling. I also sell onions and cabbages. If prices are good, I even add other stuff to sell, like avocadoes. The silver fish you see on the left I buy from West Nile near Lake Albert past Pakwach. We usually leave at 9:00 am and we reach at 12:00 noon. A basin of silver fish ranges between 20,000 to 30,000 shillings. That determines how many basins I will buy. Sometimes, I buy five to ten basins depending on the money I have."

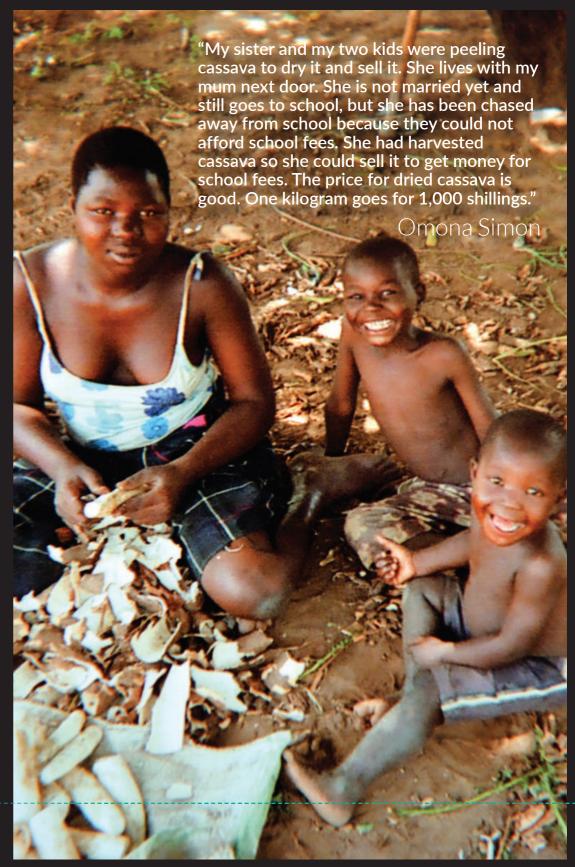
Atim Sarah



"There was a drunkard disturbing us in the market so I decided to take his photo. They just drink in a bar opposite where we sell foodstuff at the market. One of the market ladies was asking him for alcohol and the drunkard was laughing at her, but he didn't give her any. These drunkards usually come to disturb. They like to pick our foodstuff and start eating and cracking jokes but they are not violent. I like to take photos of drunkards because what they do makes me laugh. People usually take local brew made out of cassava, called *Lujuru*, and sachets, *Waragi* gin sachets."

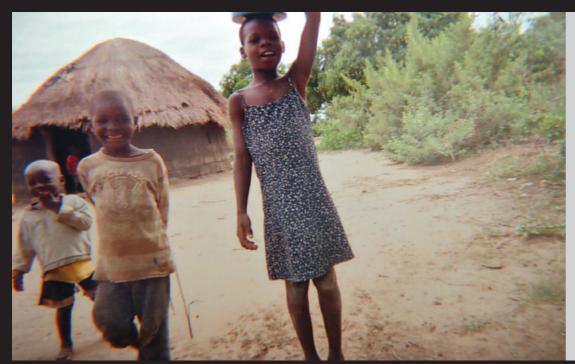
Atim Sarah

>Cassava is native to South America. It was introduced in Uganda between 1862 - 1875 and is currently a major staple food crop in the country.





"My wife and children were coming back home from uprooting cassava in the garden. They normally uproot around ten kilograms of cassava every day because we have many people to feed at home."



"My niece, my son Gadaffi, and my nephew were back from milling millet flour. My niece was carrying the bucket of flour on her head. Milling a kilogram of sorghum is 100 shillings and milling a kilo of maize is 150 shillings. For maize, it is more expensive because milling maize flour consumes more fuel."

Omona Simon

"I was eating dinner with the boys who were just back from school. Two of the boys are my sister's children and one of them is my brother's child. We always eat outside, under this tree. Women eat together and men eat together. We do it for respect. If a female visitor comes, she has to eat with the women. It does not look proper for her to eat with men, she would feel shy. It is the same for a male visitor as well."





"My wife is a business woman and she sells foodstuff. Two tomatoes are 500 shillings. She buys the tomatoes from Anaka and comes back to Lodi and sells them. In the photo, someone had come to buy tomatoes from her and they were struggling over one tomato so I decided to take her picture. The buyer wanted more tomatoes and my wife said the woman wanted to cheat her."

Omona Simon



"I love dogs. I use them to protect our home and to go hunting. I hunt for edible rats and guinea fowls. This one is called Gwok-lebi, which means 'watch your tongue' since many people have sharp tongues."



"These are my sister's kids. My wife and I take care of them.

The lady in the picture is Florence, my brother's wife. She was going to the borehole to fetch water and she always passes through here. I took the picture for memory."

Omona Simon



"I was fixing the hoe since the handle had come off. After every year, you have to fix it, especially in the dry season when the soils are very hard. It easily comes off so you have to fix it. But during the wet season, it's easy to dig. However, when you are farming in a field that has short tree stumps, the hoe gets loose faster so you have to fix it every six months. But that day the hoe just broke because the kids were harvesting cassava but they were not holding it well."

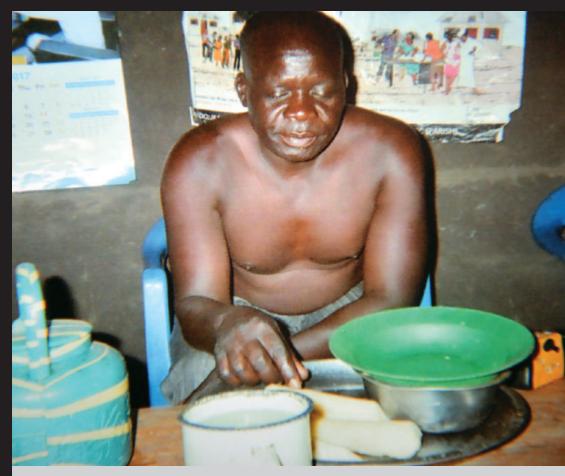
Okwonga Samuel Lamara Christine Akello Stella

A polygamous Acholi family

The Acholi take pride in large families and polygamous families are not uncommon. Okwonga Samuel has two wives and it is not always easy catering to their needs.

Bottom: Lamara Christine and Akello Stella with their husband, Okwonga Samuel.





"We were praying before eating. We usually have dinner at 8:00pm when I'm back from work. That day we were eating cassava and boo (cowpea leaves). Every day when I come back from work, I eat in both wives' houses. If I enter one house first, I eat from there and then I also go eat from my other wife's place. However, I eat small portions of food from each house."



"They were getting ready to go to the garden. This one with the blue bucket is carrying water. We always carry water to drink when we go to the field since some of our fields are three kilometers away from home." "These people were planting groundnuts. The plot in the picture is the acre of land for my younger wife. In the picture, you can also see my first wife and other people who have come to help through the communal farming. I have planted one acre of groundnuts for each wife. For myself I have planted four acres. For the wives, the one acre is for home consumption and my four acres are for sale. When I make sales, I give each wife some money to buy basic needs like salt and sometimes, if they ask for more money, I give it to them when I have it. I distribute the money as I see the need for it."

Okwonga Samuel





"I was planting groundnuts with my first wife. Those groundnuts are not doing well. The sun heat is too much. It should be raining by now. If the groundnuts end up drying up there is nothing we can do; we just have to wait for the next season. We have hope in maize, millet and sorghum. They seem to be doing better so we hope to harvest something and that will be what we shall eat.

Okwonga Samuel

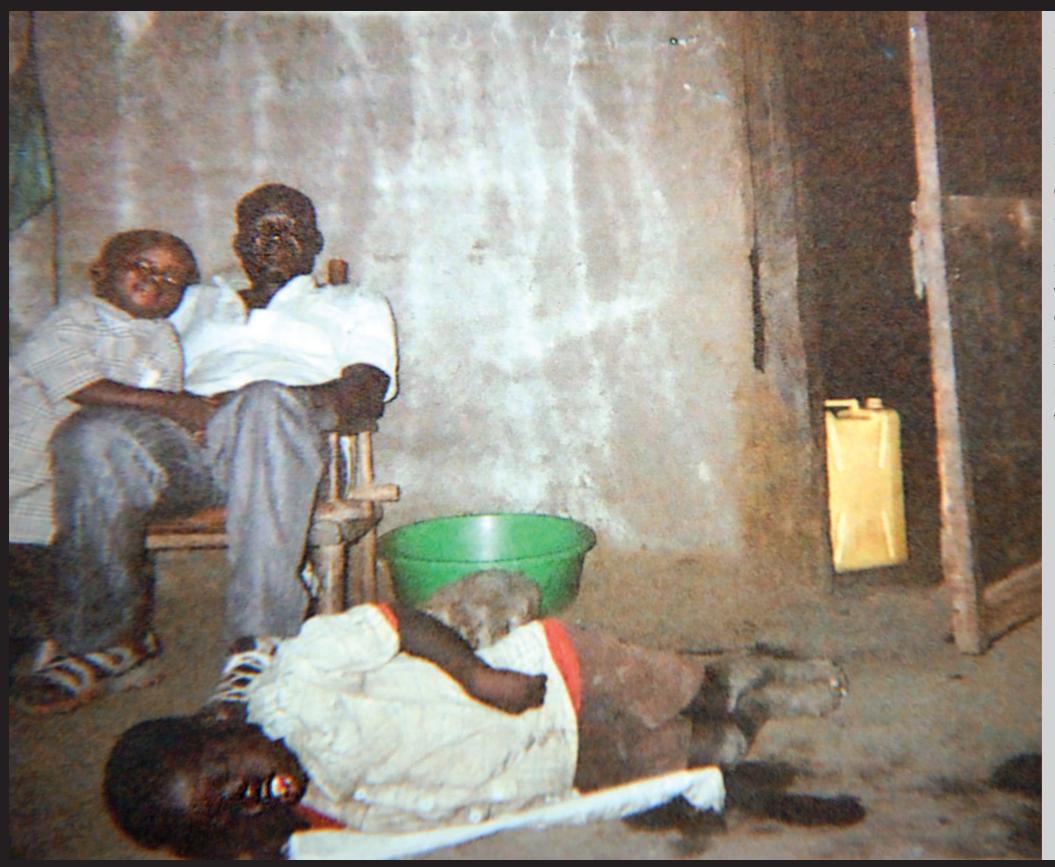


"I make bricks at home with the help of my children. I gather sand together and water is poured on the sand as people mix it with their legs to soften it. Then I cover it for a few days to make good mud. To make the rectangular shape, we use a wooden block. We put the mud in it and we set it to dry. Then the bricks are still half baked. They need to be burnt to make fully baked bricks. For this, they are piled up and smeared with sand and firewood is put down and lit to burn the bricks, which normally takes two days. In a day, we can make 1000 bricks. For the past years, I have been selling them all. Each brick is 200 shillings. But this year, I have plans to use them to build a house. However, it may not be possible since I expected to harvest and sell the crops to get money for the building but the harvest may not be good.

Okwonga Samuel



"I hire the tractor to clear and turn the land before planting. It is 80,000 shillings per acre and it takes one day to fully turn it. If we use people to plough an acre of land manually, it will take a lot of time and I don't have time. When I get the money, I can use it to hire a tractor since it is faster. When we hire the tractor, normally two to four people come. They come with excess people to repair the tractor if it's faulty. That is what happened in this picture. They were putting grease."



"These are my sons Jokene (lying down) and Brian, the one next to me. I was just seated with them, resting after eating dinner. We always sit and rest for a while before we go to sleep. I sleep in both wives' houses equally on a weekly basis. I sleep with one wife for one week and the next week, I sleep with the other wife."

> Okwonga Samuel



"My wife Christine and the kids are having dinner. I have eight children; four with my first wife and four with my second wife, Christine. In Acholiland, we like to produce many children. The advantage of having two wives is that you can produce many children. When you have many children, people see and say 'you have a big home with a large compound and many children' and that makes me happy."

Okwonga Samuel



"Kids start help with planting groundnuts at 6 or 7 years. They start with putting the seeds in the hole and later progress to digging the holes."

Okwonga Samuel





"The tractor was turning the field. I had planted maize but it was not doing well. The middle leaves were yellow, they were drying. I was clearing it so I could plant another crop. We are having too much sun heat and no rain."

Lamara Christine



"Jokene Solomon was sweeping the compound. In my house, it is the responsibility of the children to sweep the compound."

Lamara Christine



"My small girl, Akello Geralde, was holding the winnower. The other kids were looking at how the photo was being taken. They were curious to see how I was taking the photo."

> Lamara Christine



"When you are starting to mix to make millet bread it is easy but it gets hard as the mixture gets more consistent. The blue bucket is full of millet flour, which is white when it is dried but when you put in hot water, it changes to brown due to the heat. The millet cover is brown so the brown color overpowers the white."

Lamara Christine



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"We were inside the kitchen hut. Sarah was going to prepare dinner. The big container on the back I use it for brewing local waragi (gin) from cassava. I sell it in bottles directly to men. A liter is 2,000 shillings. They drink from here. Sometimes they annoy me. Some of them drink and don't want to pay and others get drunk and start disturbing me. For the ones that don't pay, I keep asking until they give me the money, but it irritates me. Men get money in many different ways. For example, when they sell their vegetables near the swamps during the dry season, they use the money to drink."

Lamara Christine



"We were planting groundnuts for my sister-in-law; she is the one on the left. She picked the son of Stella and other nephews and nieces to help her with planting. The baby was just playing with the spear. Luckily he didn't injure himself."

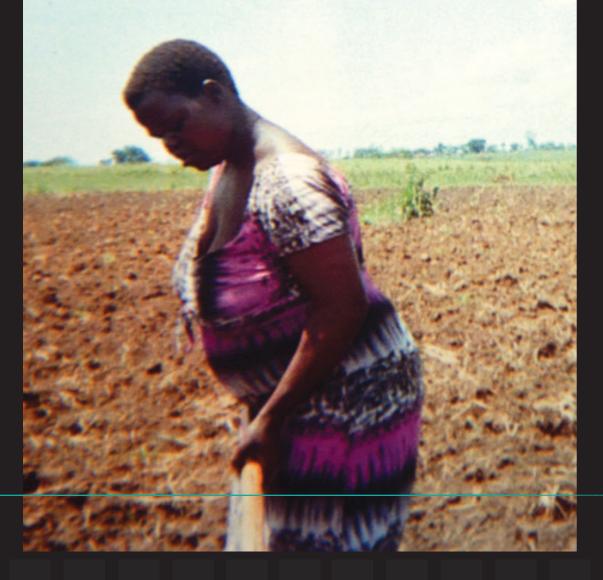
Lamara Christine

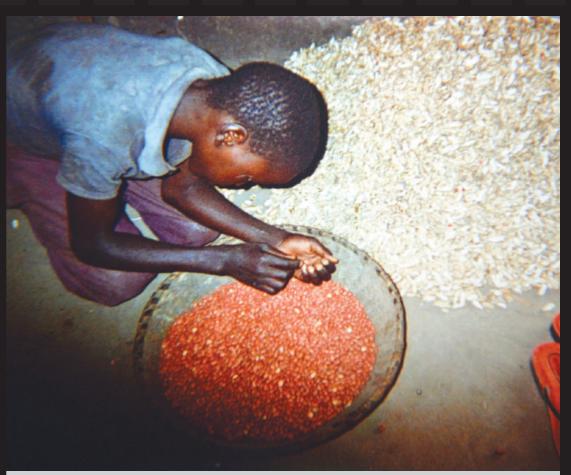


"Harriet had come back from school and was telling people that they had been trained in school on how to spear.
She was making a demonstration for her cousins."

Lamara Christine "Being a co-wife is not easy. The first wife did not receive me well when I first came. It was very difficult. I had a hard time. She was not happy with me and she used to complain a lot. When a man brings a second wife, the first wife is never happy. But since our husband is tough, he cooled her down and we started staying well together. Now, we normally stay well if our husband is behaving well. But if he is not, we co-wives may quarrel. For example, if he is favoring only one side by buying clothes while ignoring the other; that brings chaos."

Akello Stella





"We were sorting the groundnuts seeds to be planted. I had shelled the groundnuts and we were selecting the good seeds, the ones that are big, for planting. We shelled about 12 kilograms that day. It took us around 3 hours. These groundnuts were from the first season of last year. We harvested them in July 2016."

Akello Stella

>The Constitution of Uganda recognizes polygamy in the form of Islamic and customary marriages.



"I had gone to uproot cassava for eating. Depending on the size, I uproot like three stems a day. If they are small, I have to uproot about six to seven stems, that's about 4 to 6 kilograms. I put them in a sack and then carry it on my head. Cassava is very important for our diets, together with beans. If you have them, then you cannot go hungry."

Akello Stella



"We were in the garden and we had been planting but we were tired so we decided to sit, rest, and eat some cassava to regain energy. We always carry food to the garden. The food is from the previous day so, in the morning, we just carry it and go with it to the field."



"Our fields are quite far. The nearest field may take you 30 minutes to get there. The far off fields may take you one hour to reach them and another one hour to come back home."

Akello Stella



"Balancing things on the head is very easy. I am used to it now. I learnt balancing things on my head when I was young."



"I bring about six jerry cans in a day.
Each one is 18 liters.
I need a lot of water for bathing, cooking, and washing. I was wearing a t-shirt from Museveni, our president. They just gave it to us. Some people support him, others do not, but we just wear it."



"The hut in the back had just caught fire. The child of Samuel's brother had accidentally set the hut on fire and we ran to remove some things from the burning hut. Many things got burnt, like money, clothes and crops like millet. It happens often because kids are careless and may easily set the house on fire. Sometimes it burns everything in the house if it is not rescued fast enough."

Kinyera Sam

Chairman of the local village council

Animal rearing is a large part of Acholi culture and Kinyera does not take it lightly. As the LC 1 chairman he uses his position to encourage his community to adopt better ways of farming.

Bottom: Kinyera Sam poses in front of Lodi trading center.





"This is the pig sty. I took the picture of the pig sty because when people visit, I can show them how pigs can be kept in restrained places so that they don't go to destroy other people's crops. Pigs are important to me. They help me with paying school fees. A big, one-year old pig costs 250,000. In total I pay over 200,000 shillings per school term. With this current wife, three children go to school. I had another wife who had six children but I chased her away to go back to her home because she was not a good person. However, I am the one who pays their school fees."

Kinyera Sam



"This is my only bull and I love it so much. I love it because it helps me with ploughing other people's fields. I normally ox-plough together with my brother-in-law and I enjoy it a lot. It makes me so happy because it solves many issues for me. I love things that bring me money. So the bull brings me money when I plough. I named it Anyim, which means future. I gave it that name to mean that problems are in the future, so I need to prepare for them. If I call my bull now, he will come to me. He recognizes my body smell. If the wind blows my body odor towards Anyim now, he will raise his head showing he recognizes that smell. He was born in 2007, so he is now 10 years old."

Kinyera Sam



"This is the cattle crush that we use for spraying the cattle. It makes spraying easy since the cattle are restrained. The Government of Uganda constructed it two years ago and anyone in the community can use it. Before, we used to spray using local structures, like tree logs, but they were weak and cows would destroy them. In our kraal there are around 80 to 90 cattle. Everyone sprays his own cattle but on the same day, with everyone else. You come with your own acaricide and spray your cows. It is not right to spray on different days because the ticks all need to be removed at once on one day. If it is not done like that, the ticks will spread among the cattle."

Kinyera Sam

Ongom Michael Auma Florence

Tales from a young couple

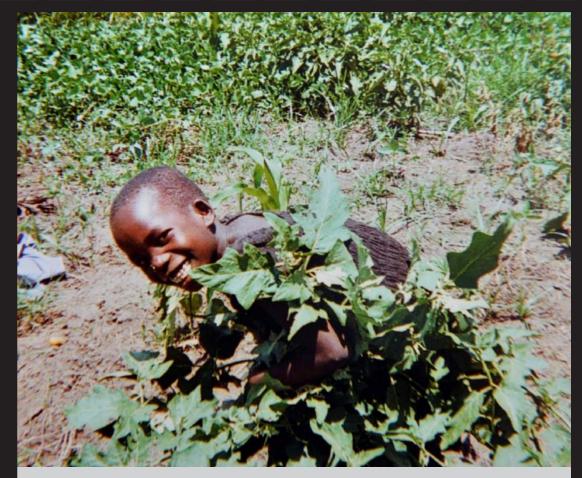
With young love, anything experienced together feels charmed. Ongom and Auma are living a simple life in Lodi village with moments that are more than ordinary.

Bottom: Ongom Michael and Auma Florence at their homestead receiving training on the disposable cameras.

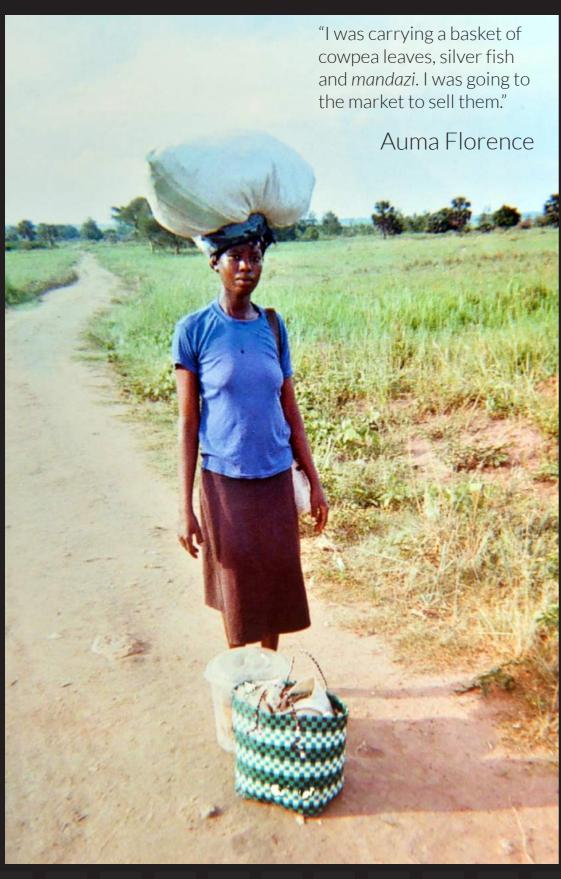




"We were peeling and cutting cassava so that I can dry it and sell it. The last time I dried and sold, it was 70kgs. The price is not bad, a kilogram is 1000 shillings. The customers come and buy from home. These customers usually buy and re-sell the cassava in far off markets."



Brenda was harvesting Ntula (bitter berries). She really helps me a lot in the field. We normally just use the Ntula for home consumption, but if we harvest a lot, I sell some."

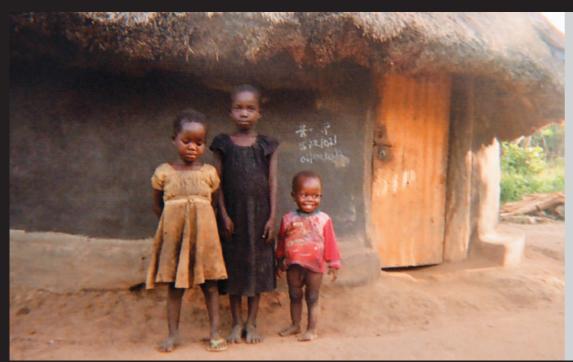




"My husband was picking one mango and I took the picture. Mangoes are very important in our diets. They are healthy to eat and in those days when food is not yet ready, kids eat them as they wait for food."

Auma Florence

> *Mandazi* is a locally made pastry, a fried shortbread commonly eaten in Uganda. Its basic ingredients include milk, yeast, sugar, flour and water.



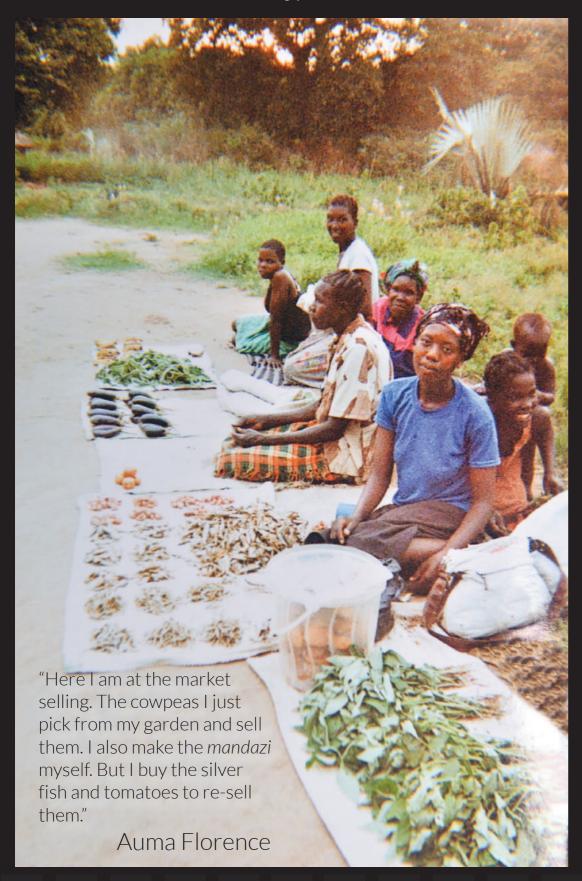
"These are some of my kids. What is written on the wall is a mark so that they know when they sprayed to kill mosquitoes to prevent malaria. After spraying, the health teams write on the wall as a sign that they have sprayed that particular house. They used to spray after every six months but now they are using a new drug and they will be spraying after every nine months. The most recent spraying was done by the government but it used to be NGOs who did it."

Auma Florence



"In this picture we are eating. The ladies in this homestead eat together. My sister was washing her hands to eat, my motherin-law had finished eating, and I was still eating. My sister-in-law had finished eating already; that is why she got up and was just standing."

Auma Florence





"Florence had brought food and she wanted to serve me dinner at around 8:00 pm. You can see the lamp over there. These are the small lamps that people use here. The lamp is made of a metallic container where you put a wick and paraffin."



"The tractor ploughed my field but it was done poorly so I was very hurt and I didn't want to pay them. All the grass was supposed to be removed but they left a lot of grass and skipped some parts of the field. I took the photo so that next time, I can show them how terrible the field they ploughed was. But people told me to let it go and to just pay them, because it would bring disunity in the community.

Ongom Michael

"This is my home compound. I wanted to capture how this forested area looks like. Our elders here had the habit of planting trees like fruit trees and other tree types that help with the construction of the huts. We are continuing to plant even now. We have planted some tree seedlings already. Fruit trees help when we are back from the garden. We eat fruit while relaxing as the women are still preparing food. People also buy the fruits so it gives us money to buy things like salt and soap."

Ongom Michael







"This is our groundnut field. The groundnuts are drying because the rains have not come on time. It is already too late to replant groundnuts again, so we shall plant something else like cassava. This is a big economic loss. All the money we used in planting is now lost."

Ongom Michael

> In Uganda groundnuts are usually planted between mid February and mid April (first season) and early August (second season).



"I took this picture from the church as people were coming to pray. It was Palm Sunday and people were holding palms. For us Pentecostals, we don't carry palms but these were Catholics who were coming to pray and were holding palms. Our church is by the roadside so sometimes if the Catholics finish their prayers, and for us we have delayed, they come to see what we are doing."

Ongom Michael

Ojera Alfred Ayet Grace

Tales from the kraal

Animals can give a farmer multiple income streams besides that of selling meat. Ojera and Ayet know this well, and are making the most out of this opportunity.

> Rwot Kweri means 'Chief of the hoe'. It was introduced under the British colonial administration and this leader is elected by the community to coordinate agricultural activities and resolve disputes.

Bottom: Ojera Alfred and Ayet Grace trying the disposable cameras in the training.





"We were about to milk the cows. I was tying them so that the cows were ready to milk. During milking, I chase the flies away from the cows while my husband milks the cows."

Ayet Grace



"Here he was milking and I was chasing the flies. The cows give us five liters of milk in a day. We sell the milk within the village but other customers come to buy from the kraal where we milk from. I also move around selling the milk. One mini-mug (cup) of milk (about 300mls) costs 600 shillings. We sell all the milk we have milked in a day except on Sunday when we take some milk at home as well."

Ayet Grace





"I was winnowing beans so that I could put them on the fire to cook."

Ayet Grace



"We have a total of 8 goats now. Here I was going to tie them. I normally tie them at 10 am when I am back from the garden and untie them at around 6 pm. Then I bring them back home. I always tie the goats to graze."

Ayet Grace

"I was giving water to the goats to drink. I take the water where the goats are tied to eat grass, normally once a day, around 1 pm."

Ayet Grace





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"We were back from the field and were resting. We normally go to plough at 5 am and we come back by 9 am. We are able to see the field at 5 am because the moonlight is there. If the moonlight is very bright, we can even start ploughing at 4 am since our bulls are already used to it."



"We had just tied the cattle in the kraal. We take the cattle to the swamp to drink water from there. The cattle are taken once a day in the wet season but during the dry season, the cattle are taken twice to drink water. My husband is the one who does the grazing. He does it rotationally with everyone who owns cows in the kraal. Each person grazes the cattle for two days and another grazes for two days and it goes on rotationally, like that. Today, he was supposed to go grazing but he paid someone to do it for him."



"I like this palm tree because it gives me shade and we also eat its fruits. Here you can see my chickens. We have ten chickens now, but here there are only five. Some chickens were resting in other parts of the compound and the other chickens were drinking water. I love my chickens so much. I don't sell them. When the chickens are big, I cook and eat them with my family. I cook the chickens on any day, it doesn't even have to be a special occasion."

Ayet Grace



"I was spraying acaricides on the cattle, to remove the ticks from them. I do this two times a month."

Ojera Alfred



"I enjoy spraying the cattle and ploughing with the bulls. I have eight bulls and six cows. I use all the bulls I have for ox-ploughs. Four bulls are used on each ox-plough. For ploughing an acre of land, I charge 95,000 shillings. With two ox-ploughs I reach many people. I have three workers who assist me with ploughing. For payment I allow them to plough two or three of their fields in a year. Additionally, when we plough people's fields, I pay each of them some money, like 10,000 shillings each, to buy basic needs."

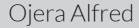
Ojera Alfred



"My ox-plough had broken, so I looked for something to repair it with. It often breaks. The metals we use are weak and it is hard to get strong metal to use. The chains are weaker these days compared to the chains of back then. Here I was working on the hook, which is weak. I got a better metal to use as a hook so I bent it for it to be able to work well. The hook connects to the chain which connects the cattle to the ox-plough."

Ojera Alfred

"My wife was sweeping the compound. She sweeps the compound twice a day: in the morning and in the evening."





Okello Alipayo Achiro Marget

Tales from the church

Spirituality is an important part of the cultural history in Lodi. To Okello and Achiro it comes in the form of Christianity and is deeply interwoven with other activities in their daily lives.

Bottom: Okello Alipayo and Achiro Marget.





"It was Palm Sunday and he had gone to pick palm leaves from the swamp to take them to church."

Achiro Marget

"We were working together in the garden, weeding maize and cutting shrubs. Back then, women used to weed alone since people used to plough small plots. These days, people plant bigger plots so weeding requires both men and women. We now plant not only for subsistence but also commercially so that we get money to pay for things like school fees."

Achiro Marget





"When I come back from the field, the birds crowd around me, wanting me to give them some grains. Here I was going to give the chickens and pigeons maize. The pigeons stay in the small house on the left. They have a small door there. They stand on the step and then enter their house. Samuel, our son, is the owner of the pigeons. He sells them and uses the money to buy books. They are sold in pairs. A pair goes for 5,000 shillings. We eat pigeon in this region. It is cooked like chicken. It is very nice."



"Alipayo was catching the goats and taking them to tether and graze in the bush. We normally do this when we are back from the field. We do it later in the day, when the morning dew is off the grass. The morning dew has some parasites which are not good for the goats."

Achiro Marget

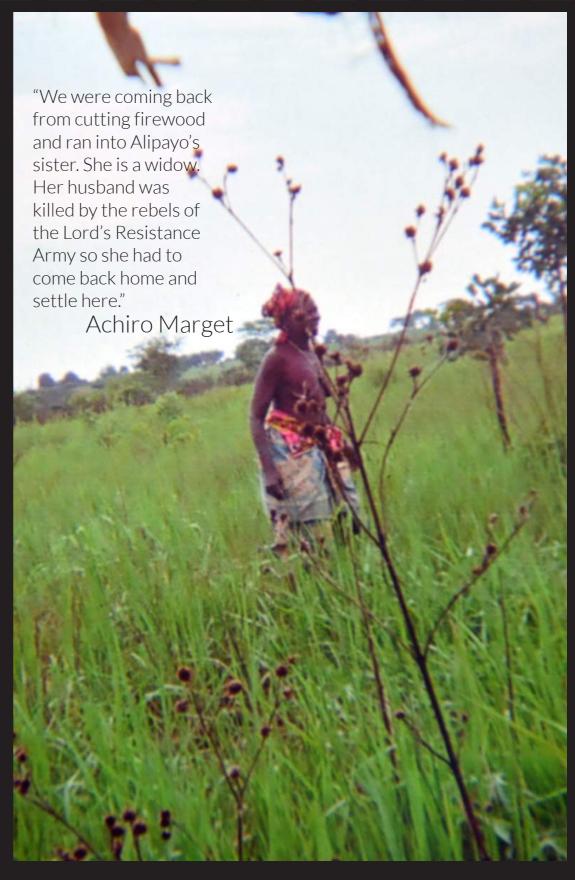
Achiro Marget



"He had just come from a journey. He really enjoys riding. He normally goes to prayer meetings in Purongo and Anaka. He can sometimes work in other areas of the Anglican church but he mainly works in Lodi."

Achiro Marget

> Christianity and Islam are the most widely practiced religions in Uganda, representing over 84% and 14% of the population, respectively.





"We use the solar panel to light the house in the night.
We also have a small CD reader from where we can watch movies. We charge it using the solar power too."

Achiro Marget



"I am a catechist for the Anglican Church of Uganda. I heard the call of God to become a catechist during the war. I left my policeman job and went to the catechist centre in the Northern Diocese in Gulu to study catechism. It was God's gift. I had the call in my heart so I decided to go for it. The war was very hard. There was nobody left here in Lodi, everybody was displaced to the Anaka, Gulu, Karuma, and Pakwach camps. We went to the camps in 1998 and had to stay there for about 9 years. The war was hard but we survived and came back home in 2007. We established the school in 2008, which also serves as our church."

Okello Alipayo

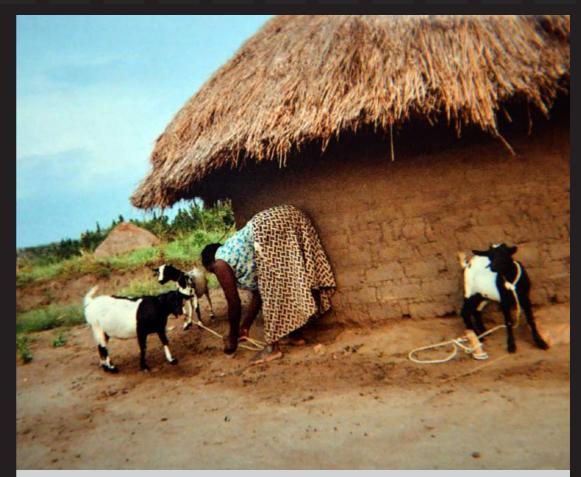


"Marget was playing with our cat. We only have one cat, so we just call it 'cat."

Okello Alipayo

> The war between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the government of Uganda (1986-2005) forced many people from their ancestral homes and into camps for Internally Displaced People (IDP), where they had to live for several years.





"In the wet season, if we don't tie the goats, they will move around and destroys people's crops. In the dry season when there are no crops in the field, we can leave them to roam around. If your goat destroys someone's crop, you pay a fine.

The neighbors know one another's goats. Sometimes, they capture the goat and the owner will look for it and then he will have to pay. For example, this goat tied here is not ours. We tied it so that the owner can come for it. We tied this goat because it was disturbing our goats so, in this case, we will not ask for a fine."

Okello Alipayo



"On Palm Sunday we go with the palms to church to celebrate the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem. We just hold and shake the palms to celebrate Jesus as he entered Jerusalem. Most people in Lodi are Catholics, Anglicans, or Pentecostals."

Okello Alipayo

"Margret was cutting the tree branches for firewood using the *panga* in her hand. She cuts and collects the dry branches together every two days."

Okello Alipayo





"She collected the branches together and was tying the firewood, after having arranged it in a good order. She ties the firewood using spear grass."

Okello Alipayo

"You cannot carry the firewood on your bare head. A comfortable roll is made and put on the head first. The firewood she carries can reach about eight kilograms."

Okello Alipayo





"We were watching a Nigerian film that has been translated to Acholi. We watch some every evening. We get the movies from Anaka town. It was my son Godfrey who brought the CD reader for me from the South Sudan border."

Okello Alipayo

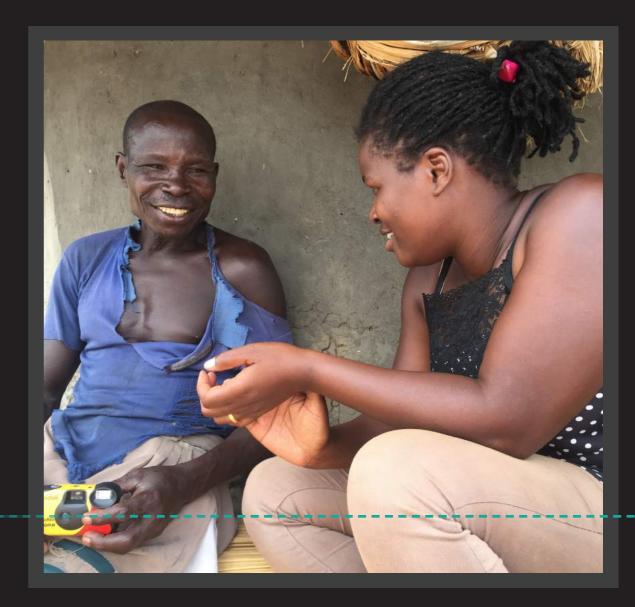
> Video jockeys translate movies into local dialects like Luganda and Acholi with a touch of humor.

Aciba John

Tales from a businessman

Trade is what grows a community. Aciba has discovered a growing demand for goods in the Lodi market and is trying to fill the supply gap.

Bottom: Aciba John receiving the disposable camera.





"This is my child. He stays with his mother the other side. I have taken three years without talking to or seeing my ex-wife, but my children often come to see me. My ex-wife was terrible. She abused me and said terrible things about me so I don't miss women at all for now. To clean my house, I pay someone to help me and I cook for myself."

Aciba John



"I want to stay single for five years before I get another wife. I want to rest my head; women are very stubborn and disturbing. After the five years elapse, then I will bring a woman, but HIV is rampant so I will have to be careful. I am now 64 years old and all my colleagues have died from HIV. So for me, I don't want people with HIV. I can tell if someone is positive. I am old enough to know a sick person."

Aciba John



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"This is my garden. That day I was spraying some vegetables. I have planted tobacco, bitter berries, cabbages and tomatoes. I sell my vegetables to women and then they re-sell them. I am a business man. I also sell small basic items such as soap and salt."

Aciba John



"This is my *boda-boda* pilot. He takes me to Olwiyo when I'm going to visit my son and to buy groceries for re-sale. I go often. In a month, I can go two or three times."

Aciba John



"I took the photo from Olwiyo where I had gone to see my son. He has a bar and shop there. The bar itself is not clearly seen in the picture."

Aciba John

"This is a guy in Olwiyo who roasts pork *muchomo* but I don't eat pork. I am a Muslim."





>Uganda has the highest rate of pork consumption in Sub Saharan Africa, with an estimated 3.43kg per capita consumption per year.



"These are boda-boda men from
Olwiyo. Their stage
is near my son's shop.
In Lodi there are also
some boda-bodas few - but they are
there. I think there
must be around ten
bodas."

Aciba John

Bottom: Oceng Constable and Adong Stella

with two of their kids.

Oceng Constable Adong Stella

Tales from traditional Acholi cuisine

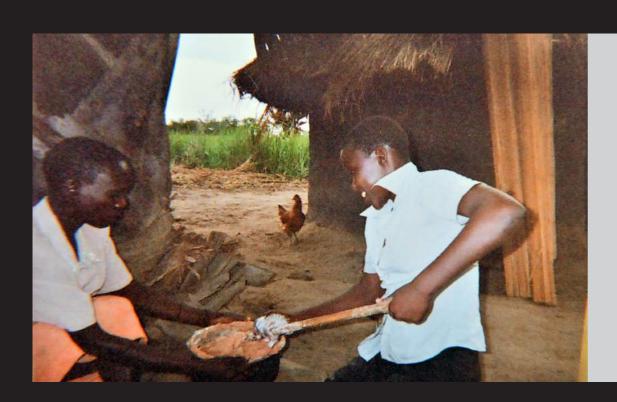
Food can be used to map who we are, from our geographical region to our cultural identity. The crops found in Oceng and Adong's farm can be found in most districts of Uganda, but the food cooking on their kitchen fire reveals the distinctive culinary traditions of the region.





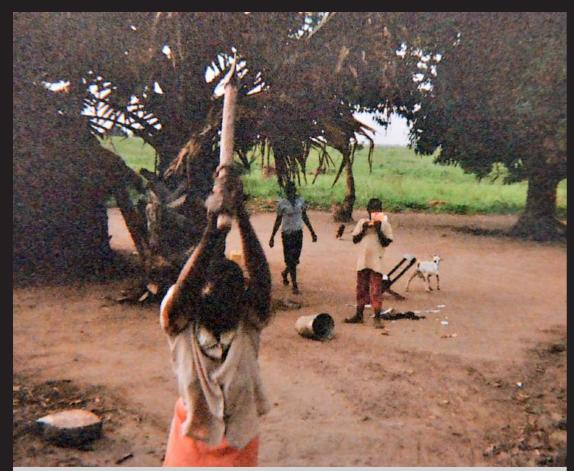
"They were holding and playing with our goats. The goats are twins."

Adong Stella



"My daughter was mixing millet bread and I was holding the saucepan for her because when stirring, the saucepan is never stable. You need a lot of energy to make the bread fine, otherwise it will have millet flour in between. The tool we use is called *Olutu Kwon* meaning mingling stick."

Adong Stella



"I was cutting firewood using an axe to make fire for cooking. Sometimes it's quite difficult work because the firewood is very dry and hard."

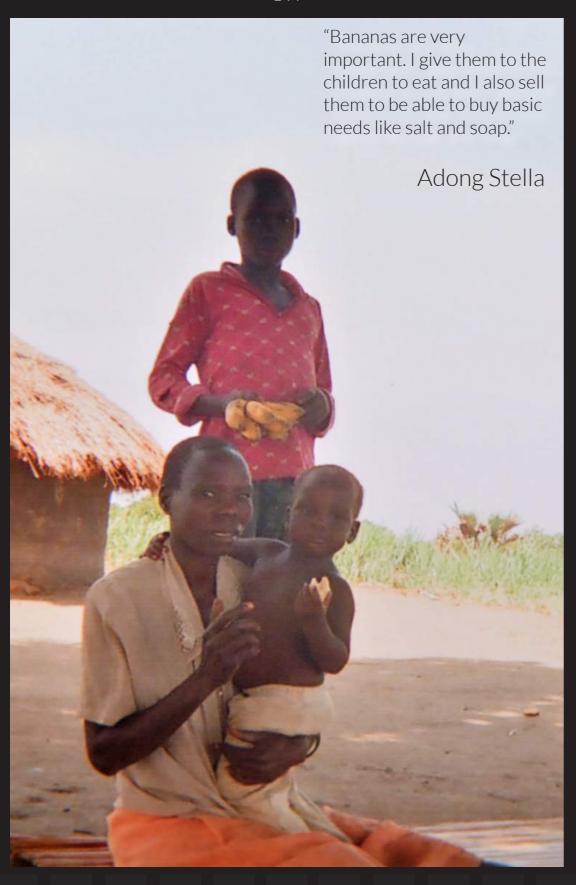
Adong Stella



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"We were peeling cassava to dry and sell. My son Lubangakene is holding cassava in the picture. He was helping us. At the back you can see our goat and chicken."

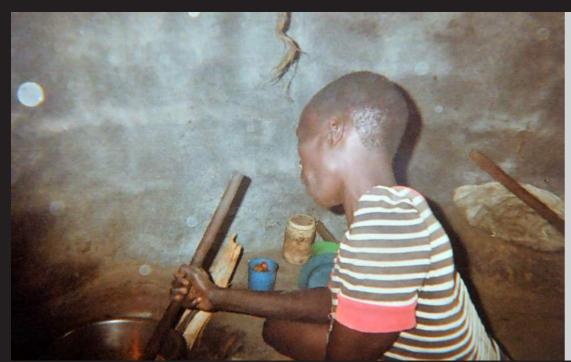
Adong Stella





"She was climbing the tree to pick mangoes. We eat many mangoes, especially children as they wait for food. The shade that the tree gives is also very helpful, especially during the dry season when it gets very hot."

Adong Stella



"I was roasting sesame to make paste for pasting the cowpea leaves."

Adong Stella

"My husband was clearing the grass in front of our house so I wanted to take a picture of him. We clear the grass quite often to keep the area clean and to prevent snakes from entering the house."

Adong Stella



>Sesame paste is an important part of Acholi cuisine. It is made by grinding roasted sesame into a paste, which is then boiled with salt and water to make a thick stew.



"We had gone to the field and my wife uprooted, cut and was drying some cassava. The dried cassava has a good price now. A kilogram goes for 1000 shillings."



"Here, the soil is hard so you can't use two bulls. You need four bulls to clear the field well. I was the one holding the ox-plough in the picture. These are all my bulls. I name them based on their skin colors. The white bull is called Ayella, the cream bull is called Fungaroo, the black bull is called Abac, and the brown bull is called Lakica. I gave the name Abac to the black bull because it is spotted black and white. Abac, in Acholi, means spotted."

Oceng Constable

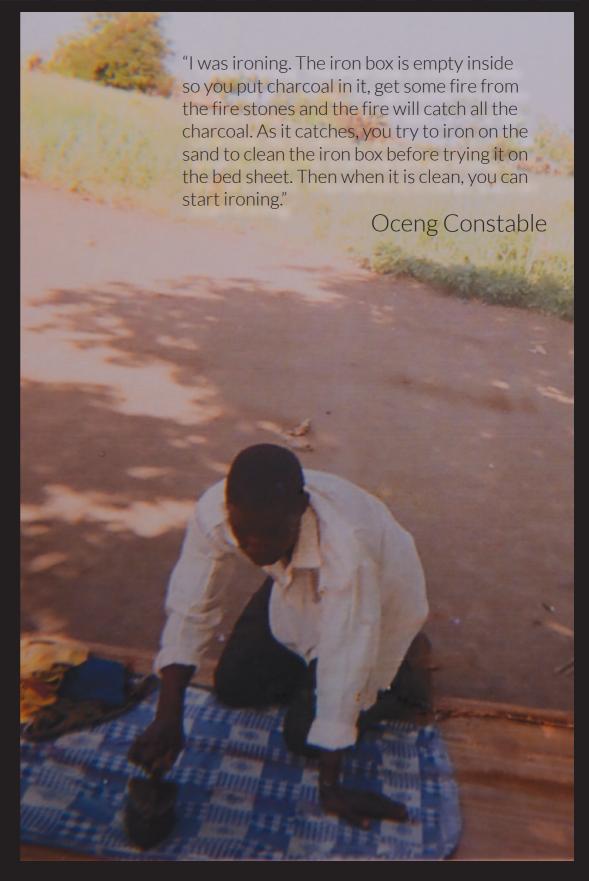




"These are our children. The two on the left are identical twins. One is called Ocen and the other is Opio. Opio came out before Ocen. The other child is called Odoch. He was also a twin but the other twin passed away. Having twins is seen as a blessing here."



"This is the old pit latrine we were using. The wind had blown off the roof so I wanted to take the picture. Now that I have worked on the latrine already, it will only take me two days to work on the roof."





"I had gone to my banana plantation which is on half an acre behind the bush. I went to check if there were some banana bunches that were ready and ripe. The plantation has three varieties: sweet bananas, Jamaica, and *matooke*."

Oceng Constable



"It was a Friday and I had gone to our savings group meeting. The amount I save varies from year to year. Last year, I managed to save 205,000 shillings. I joined the group because I was looking for a way of saving money and I saw that I can best save the money in the group. When you have any problem, you can easily borrow money and pay it back. When we open the savings accounts, once per year, I can use the money to pay school fees.

I am the secretary of the savings group. My work as a secretary is to keep records of attendance, how much each person brings, lists of people who want to borrow money and lists of late comers to pay fines. Being a secretary is a difficult job but I chose the task because I left school a long time ago so this job makes me keep practicing writing. In this savings group, there are only 4 men and 25 women. Women are more in the group because they love group activities and love to save money. The name of the group is *can ki ryemo ki tic* meaning 'poverty is kicked out by hard work'.

Oceng Constable

> Matooke is a Luganda word that refers to a green starchy variety of bananas. It is commonly eaten in Uganda as a mashed meal, after the bananas have been steamed.



"We had finished the savings group meeting so people were dispersing. We start the meeting at 3pm and stop at 5pm. If someone does not pay back the loan, we have a set of rules that we apply. If you don't pay on time, we go to your home and pick any of your belongings or assets so that we can sell them and get back our money. For example, if you have a goat, we sell the goat and if you owe us 50,000 and we have sold the goat for 80,000, we pick our 50,000 and give you back your 30,000."

Oceng Constable

> A savings group is a local social organization where members can save money and take loans from the group. It helps members in transforming their livelihoods by reducing pressure on cash flow bottlenecks and by enabling them to access funds for large purchases or unexpected expenses.



"This is inside the kitchen hut. You can see the drinking water pot and on top of it is a cup we use for drinking water. In the tray there are African yams and next to them is a bottle of cooking oil we wanted to use to fry the yams. Near there is a basket which we use to keep foodstuff and we also use it to carry produce when we go to the market as well."



"This one is my sister-in-law, the wife of my brother. She was back from the borehole getting water and she was passing in front of our home so I decided to take her picture. Her home is just nearby."

Oceng Constable

"Our eldest daughter Kevin, who is in Primary Seven, was picking cassava to throw to the chickens. She was running to give the chickens the feed. It is usually women and children who are in charge of distributing the feeds."





>The education system in Uganda, in place since the early 1960s, provides for seven years of primary education.

Photo Interviews: beyond storytelling

Photo interview, also known as photo elicitation, is a qualitative research method which, in contrast to more formal approaches which use predefined questions, involves providing participants with a camera and a prompt (determined by the specific focus of the research topic), followed by a discussion between the researcher and the interviewee on the resulting photos. In this way, the photos are used to facilitate a conversation between the researcher and interviewee, with the ultimate goal of allowing interviewees to develop their own storylines around the images.

Putting the cameras in the hands of the participants always requires "letting go" to certain degree, in the sense that the researcher loses control of what will be photographed and of the stories that will be told through them. This feature is unique from other participatory methodologies, in which even if views and opinions from rural communities are sought, the researchers are





always present through the process and with this, exerting a passive or active influence on it. To us, it is precisely this feature of the method which makes photo elicitation so interesting.

Photo elicitation allows us to capture participants' day-to-day life in their own private spheres, giving researchers the opportunity to access realities that would otherwise remain hidden and largely inaccessible to outsiders. More importantly, giving participants full authority over what to photograph and what stories to tell puts them at the center of research and development efforts, empowering them to speak up and share their struggles, their passions and their priorities. Furthermore, by selecting people from different genders,

ages, tribes and other socio-economic divides, this methodology has the potential to be fully inclusive. This is paramount, as different types of people have different types of knowledge, priorities and worldviews.

The methodology also has the potential to create a direct link between project participants and development partners, aid donors and the wider public. This direct line of communication provides key decision-makers - who may live hundreds or thousands of kilometers away from these realities - an intimate view of the people living in these communities and a better understanding of local development needs and priorities, including those which might have been overlooked through traditional methods of data collection. Equally important is the link which these pictures and stories offer to create between these rural communities and the wider public. Taken as a whole, the many different perspectives, activities and experiences reflected in the photo stories provide a far more intimate and nuanced portrait of their realities than would likely be available otherwise.

Seeing through farmer 's eyes

The photos in each of these cameras provided us with an intimate, if narrow, glimpse into the lives of the project's participants: their life histories and their daily experiences, their fears and ambitions, their values and priorities, their friends and families. This alone is valuable, in that it allows us to view another culture, another community, another person in very human terms and thereby to pierce the objectifying narratives of dependence, privation and tragedy which too often permeate media accounts, policy documents and, at times, even academic writing.

Taken together, however, these photos are even more than the sum of their parts: they offer a nuanced portrait of a landscape, an economy, a culture, and a community that allow us to perceive far more than individual conversations, let alone statistics, could ever provide.







Portrait of a landscape: through these stories and photos we see a seasonality defined by the cycle of the rains which underlies the region's farming systems. We see a mosaic of arable fields planted with annual food and cash crops, groves of perennial species, grazing land for livestock, forests providing firewood, charcoal and building materials, and marshlands that serve both crop and animal production. Arrayed around, among and through this patchwork of land uses are the homesteads, markets. churches and public spaces that knit the community together, and the roads which serve as arteries of commerce.

Portrait of an economy: contrasting with the ubiquitousness of agricultural production is a diversity of other activities including manufacture (bricks, alcohol), service provision (plowing, transport), and trade (retail and wholesale). We see a remote, rural community that is nevertheless anything but insular, tied by a hundred invisible threads to the broader economy of the nation and the world. We see a formal economy, an informal economy, and above all the many the shades between them.

Portrait of a community: Acholi cultural norms, customs, gender roles, and dietary habits are all reflected in the myriad of daily activities captured in these photos. While the enduring challenges born of war and displacement, the HIV epidemic, food insecurity, malaria and child mortality are never far from the surface, far more prominent in these stories are the daily pursuits of plowing the land and tending the crops, caring for the livestock, acquiring water and fuel, cooking, cleaning, and caring for children, along with prayer, recreation, and social gatherings. We see people's struggles, both to overcome external challenges and to realize their own ambitions; we can feel that these struggles are both individual and collective.

Through each of these portraits we see two recurrent themes in particular: the contrasts of commonality and diversity and of tradition and dynamism. Both within and among households we see a diversity that betrays the village's seeming homogeneity: young and old; wealthy and poor; single,

married, divorced, widowed and polygamous; Catholic, Muslim, Pentecostal and Anglican. Perhaps more subtly, we see a community as it is and also how it is changing. Both continuity and change are evident in the production and marketing systems, material culture, and cuisine, including increasing electrification and the switch from animal to mechanical traction. We see gender dynamics both ingrained and in flux, and a reliance on climatic patterns already changed from what they once were and the active efforts to adapt.

These are, of course, only a sampling of the countless themes and issues which readers may find in the photos and stories collected through this project, whose privilege it has been for us to assemble and present here. It is our hope in the preparation of this work and in sharing it with a broader public, that others are afforded as much enjoyment from reading it as we have been from putting it together.



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Transforming African Agriculture



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security CCAFS



