

## Naitakiru Valley Tank: A Beacon of Hope for the Thirsty Kaileny Community in Drought-Stricken Kotido District

The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) recently travelled to Kotido District to see a satellite valley tank, in a season so dry it had already destroyed crops across the district. The delegation began the day at the Kotido District Local Government offices, where LCV Chairman Mr. Lotee Paul Komol welcomed them and praised the construction under way at Naitakiru valley tank.

From there, they travelled to Kaileny village, Watakau Parish, Nakapelimoru Sub-county, in Kotido District, where PAC members, the Water User Committee, community members, and the project implementation team were joined by four Members of Parliament, representing Jie County in Kotido, Dodoth East County in Kaabong, Upe County in Amudat, and Chekwii East County in Nakapiripirit. Together, they walked the tank's embankment under a cloudless sky and stood at last before the basin they had come to see.



*The delegation composed of PAC members, Karamoja area MPs, water user committee and implementation team.*

### The Long Wait for Water

Ms. Longoli Maria, a Jie and resident of Nakapelimoru Sub-county in Kotido District, has experienced this drought like everyone around her. "We have faced crop failure, loss of livestock, and hunger because of water scarcity, with long distances walked in search of water," she said. "One of the biggest problems that comes with water scarcity here is conflict with our neighbours, like the Turkana, over the little we have." She paused, looking toward the basin. "I hope Naitakiru valley tank and the Nataba-Angikileeth dam will unite us with our neighbours, the Dodoth, the Matheniko, and the Turkana, and that our people and our animals will thrive with enough water and food."

It is not an unreasonable hope. In the wider Nangololapolon cluster that includes her sub-county, a 2025 baseline survey found that just over half of households live one to two kilometres from their water source, and a similar share spend thirty minutes to an hour fetching it, round trip, in the dry season.

### Twenty Thousand Cubic Metres, Taking Shape

What may finally answer that wait is in front of her: a valley tank designed to hold 20,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water, drawing from a 14.5 square-kilometre catchment. It is one of three valley tanks planned for the Nangololapolon cluster, which spans Kotido and Kaabong Districts and also includes the Nataba-Angikileeth Dam.

Ministry of Water and Environment's Assistant Commissioner for Multipurpose Water and Bulk Water Development, Eng. Ronald Kasozi, told the PAC that the Ministry's long-term strategy for

Karamoja rests on large multipurpose dams supplying water year-round, ringed by satellite valley tanks like Naitakiru. The smaller valley tanks act as buffers, dispersing grazing pressure away from the dams they support.

### **What's Built, What's Left**

Naitakiru valley tank's civil works are substantially complete. What remains is the work that protects it: greening the exposed slopes and embankment construction left bare by construction. Handover to the community is expected once that work is finished.



*The delegation inspecting the completed spillway structure, embankments, and dead fence at Naitakiru Valley Tank.*

### **Watching Over It Together**

That handover is already being prepared for. A Water User Committee and a Water Source Protection Committee, each with at least 30% women, are organized at the site and drawn from the same communities the tank will serve. Speaking to the delegation, MWE Permanent Secretary Dr. Alfred Okot Okidi said facilities like Naitakiru valley tank are not hard to maintain, provided the catchment is protected and the community takes charge from day one. Done that way, he said, a valley tank can serve its people for years to come.



*The Permanent Secretary for MWE Dr. Alfred Okot Okidi delivers his remarks during the 4<sup>th</sup> KDR PAC meeting at Strikers Hotel, Moroto.*

## Gratitude Ahead of the Rains

Mr. Lodeny Natilu, a youth leader from Nakapelimoru Sub County, stood further along the embankment from where Maria had spoken. He looked down at the same empty basin. “Civil works at Naitakiru Valley Tank were completed at exactly the right time,” he said. “The drought is at its peak, and our animals have nothing to drink. We are grateful to the German government through KfW, to MWE, and to the implementation team for this valley tank. We hope it will be handed over to the community soon, in time for the rains.”



*Community members dance to welcome the delegation, a gesture of gratitude for Naitakiru Valley Tank.*

## One Piece of a Larger Effort

Naitakiru is one piece of a larger effort. The KDR Project, financed by the Government of Uganda and the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW, is building water and livestock infrastructure across two clusters of Karamoja, Nangololapolon, covering Kotido and Kaabong Districts, and Lemsui, covering Amudat and Nakapiripirit Districts, expected to benefit about 8,600 households, almost 60,000 people. The goal is to ensure communities and their herds travel less far for water, and lose fewer animals to drought, tracked across four outputs: water storage infrastructure, improved livestock services, sustained operation and maintenance, and catchment protection.



*The project implementation team brief the delegation using project maps during the Naitakiru Valley Tank site inspection.*

Water storage infrastructure includes six valley tanks and two earth dams, designed to hold just over 6,000,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water. The valley tanks include Naitakiru in Kotido District, Akore and Atukutan in Amudat District, Chesirero in Nakapiripirit District, and Koteen and Nakutan in Kaabong District. Earth dams cost more to build outright, but last four times as long. The Nataba-Angikileeth Dam, planned for Kotido, will rise 8 metres high and run 1.7 kilometres across, its spillway releasing up to

350 m<sup>3</sup> of water a second. The smaller Lowoyakur Dam, planned for Amudat, will stand 12.5 metres high and 587 metres long, releasing up to 192 m<sup>3</sup> a second. The two dams are designed to feed 78 troughs for cattle, sheep, and goats whereas eight boreholes serve both clusters.

Getting that water to people is only half the effort. Three cattle markets, at Kaileny in Kotido, Kaichom in Amudat, and Naturum in Nakapiripirit, and one cattle crush next to the Nakutan valley tank in Kaabong, are proposed to turn easier access to water into livestock people can sell. Cluster-level rangeland management plans, trained Community Animal Health Workers, and cross-border coordination agreements should keep those herds healthier and better managed in the years ahead. Once built, Water User Committees take on the day-to-day work of managing access, collecting user fees, and keeping the facilities maintained. Water source protection measures, the same greening and erosion-control work now under way at Naitakiru, will help secure the investment already made.

## **What Comes Next**

If the remaining works at Naitakiru are finished before the rains, the basin that stood empty this July could finally hold what this plain has rarely kept for long: water, close enough to walk to.

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*About the project: The Drought Resilience in the Karamoja Sub-region (KDR) Project is co-funded by the Government of Uganda and the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW. It is implemented by the Ministry of Water and Environment, and supported by the Implementation Consultant, GFA Consulting Group in joint venture with BRL Ingénierie and WE Consult.*

