

Gender Dimensions of Conflict:
Strategies for Sustainable Peace

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Table of contents

LIST OF TABLES.....	3
LIST OF FIGURES.....	3
LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	9
1.1 ARMED CONFLICT IN UGANDA	9
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	10
1.3 OBJECTIVES	11
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT	11
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 CAUSES OF CONFLICT: THE GENDER DIMENSIONS.....	12
2.2 GENDER DYNAMICS IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS	14
2.3 WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN CONFLICT	19
2.4 DEVELOPING STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE.....	21
CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	23
3.1 METHODS USED IN DATA COLLECTION	23
3.2 STUDY AREAS -GULU, LIRA AND LUWEERO.....	23
3.3 DATA ANALYSIS	25
CHAPTER FOUR DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	28
4.2 GENDER DIMENSIONS OF PERSISTENT CONFLICT IN NORTHERN UGANDA	28
4.3 EFFECTS OF CONFLICT ON WOMEN AND MEN	29
4.4 REDEFINING PEACE IN NORTHERN UGANDA	38
4.5 WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE BUILDING	40
4.7 COMMUNITY BASED PEACE INITIATIVES.....	47
4.8 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION	50
5.0 LUWEERO AND PEACE BUILDING: LESSONS OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION.....	54
5.1 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT DURING CONFLICT.....	54
5.2 LAYING STRATEGIES FOR PEACE DURING CONFLICT	56
5.3 TRUST AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING.....	57
5.4 MONUMENTS AS A METHOD OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION	57
CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	63
CONCLUSIONS	63
RECOMMENDATIONS:	65
REFERENCES	68
END NOTES.....	71

List of Tables

Table 1	Elements of conflict and possible gender dimensions.....	21
Table 2	Summary of Focus Group Discussions carried out by gender.....	24
Table 3	Respondents by gender.....	25
Table 4	Respondents Level of Education per District.....	25
Table 5	Respondents Marital Status by District.....	25
Table 6	Women and men's different understandings of peace in Gulu and Lira	39
Table 7	Organizations involved in Peace Building Activities.....	50
Table 8	Community involvement in peace building activities	50
Table 9	Reasons for non participation in peace activities	51

List of Figures

Figure 1	Problems encountered in accessing assistance in Gulu and Lira	30
Figure 2	Sources of income by Gender	31
Figure 3	Reported symptoms of trauma in Gulu and Lira	35
Figure 4	Community views on how to end the conflict in Northern Uganda.....	52
Figure 5	Livelihood activities before the conflict	55
Figure 6	Livelihood activities after the conflict	56

List of acronyms

ACCORD	African Centre for Community Research and development
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ARPLI	Acholi Religious Leader's Peace Initiative
CCF	Christian Children Fund
CPAR	Canadian Physician for Aid and Relief
CPC	Community Peace Committees
FAD	Forum for African Development
FRONASA	Front for National Salvation
GUSCO	Gulu Support the Children Organisation
LC	Local Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NRA	National Resistance Army
RC	Resistance Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children Educational Fund
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Uganda People Defence Forces
WNBF	West Nile Bank Front

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With support from Friedrich Ebert Stiftung the Department of Women and Gender Studies and the Faculty of Arts, Peace and Conflict Program of Makerere University carried out a study to ascertain the gender dimensions of conflict and to develop strategies for sustainable peace in Uganda. The study focused on three districts namely: Luweero, which suffered a brutal war for five years (1980-1986), Gulu and Lira which are currently in conflict for nearly 20 years. The study set out to look at gender aspects in political conflict situations. The aim was to come up with strategies for the participation of women and men in peace making processes. It is hoped that these will be presented to relevant authorities and stakeholders for inclusion in the ongoing peace processes. More specifically the objectives of the study were:

- 1) To examine the role played by women and men in the ongoing peace initiatives at the grass roots and community level;
- 2) To identify and examine the role of NGOs and CBOs in conflict situations and peace building processes,
- 3) To draw lessons from post conflict communities such as Luweero to inform current strategies towards peace building and reconstruction.
- 4) To identify the traditional conflict resolution process and the level of women and men participation in them.

Overall the findings of the study show that women and men experience conflict differently due to their gender roles and situation. Women experiences of conflict were analyzed at three levels, that is, the personal sphere-where they experience conflict as individuals, in the private sphere, where they experience conflict as mothers, daughters or wives and in the public sphere where they interface with societal structures that limit their participation in decision making processes and peace activities. Their experiences as mothers, wives and daughters have an impact on the extent to which they participate in peace activities.

Women and men reported an increase in incidents of rape, abduction of young girls, early and forced marriages and unwanted pregnancies. Although the study did not divulge into issue of reproductive health, it is certain that SGBV promotes ill-health and predisposes the victims (women and girls) to sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. The vulnerability of women compounded by the gender roles appeared to make them susceptible to SGBV. Men on the other hand find themselves in a complex situation that does not allow them to be “proper men”. Consequently they are demoralized, and many have turned to alcohol.

Many women interviewed reported signs and symptoms related to psychosocial trauma. Some of these symptoms were: sleeplessness, flashbacks, over sleeping and constant crying episodes. In addition, many women were anxious about their families and extremely worried about being raped, abducted or beaten as they went out to search for food, firewood and water

In Luweero women joined the National Resistance Army as combatants and later started a number of non governmental organizations and initiatives aimed at peace building and reconciliation. Further women and men reported changed gender roles and expectations as a consequence arising out of conflict. A similar trend was observed in Gulu and Lira but it was more pronounced in Luweero whereby women have taken to trading and formal employment which were previously the preserve of men. Changes in gender roles have left men disempowered. Changes in gender /power relations have fueled further domestic conflicts and increased rates of gender based violence. Idle men were known to consume plenty of alcohol that was not good for their health as well as for the stability of homes.

In northern Uganda, women have joined peace building mechanisms albeit at a low scale. Nevertheless, it was also established that the majority of Non Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organizations which focus on peace activities were either founded or led by women or international bodies. These NGOs have attempted to involve women in peace building activities at a grassroots level.

In terms of peace, the men and women in northern Uganda, it peace has acquired a different meaning from the conventional definitions. For instance some had this to say *“Peace is dismantling of camps and letting people go home freely and enjoy traditional music”* *“When there is no money, when you do not run away from your home and the food is available you just have to go to the garden”* Of critical importance was the end of conflict and ability to meet livelihood goals. The majority of women defined peace as ‘as going home’. It is the context of these meanings that communities have devised local strategies towards peace building and conflict resolution. Examples of such strategies include peace committees, prayer and use of the mass media to recall rebels. It was further observed that in order to attain sustainable peace, there is need to address the various levels of conflict (household, community, and national)

Women in Luweero reported being empowered after the conflict since they had to learn how to take care of their families in the absence of their spouses or because of men’s inability to do so. Women reported that although not acknowledged by other people, they negotiating locally for peace and engaged their fellow women on reconciliation and reconstruction of their communities.

Recommendations

- Mainstreaming gender concerns and issues in all peace initiatives and building processes.
- Deliberate effort to involve women as individuals or their organizations in peace building processes.
- Peace building process should aim at effectively engaging men as partners and their groups in peace building initiatives to promote sustainability of the processes
- Government and civil society should aim at mitigate the impact of conflict on men, women and children who have been driven out of the families and communities.
- Government should put in place policies that promote the effective engagement of men and women in peace processes as equal stakeholders

- Support and promote indigenous processes of conflict and reconciliation
- Government address the imbalance in the recognition and reward of women combatants for contribution in the forces

Chapter one

Background to the Study

1.1 Armed Conflict in Uganda

Uganda's history has been characterized by armed conflicts, these include the Kabaka crisis of 1966, the Amin coup of 1971, the 1979 war that saw the removal of the government of Idi Amin; the 1980-1986 National Resistance Army five year guerilla war that took place in Luweero triangle and the current conflict in Northern Uganda waged by the Lord's Resistance Army. Besides these there have been several rebel groups fighting in Uganda at different times such as the FRONASA, FEDEMU, NRA, WNBF, ADF, the Holy Spirit Movement of Alice Lakwena; UPDA and the Lord's Resistance Army of Joseph Kony.

A major conflict that erupted in 1981 after the general elections of 1980 was a five year guerilla war waged by Yoweri Kaguta Museveni the current president of the republic of Uganda. It's worth noting that this conflict brought women on board as combatants and leaders in the Resistance Committees (RCs). This conflict waged in the Luweero triangle¹ from 1980-1986 is also said to have sown seeds for the Lord's Resistance Army rebellion in Northern Uganda (USAID, 2000). Although there were several attempts to broker peace between the NRA and the government of Gen. Tito Okello Lutwa, these efforts bore little fruit. As the peace talks were taking place in Nairobi, the NRA kept advancing towards Kampala. Museveni, commenting on the peace process said

“... even while we signed the agreement, which stipulated that we had 50 per cent of the seats on the ruling ‘Supreme Council,’ we knew that the provisions would not work as long as the Okellos were motivated by power and nobody was in control of the army...”²

This showed that there was limited commitment towards a peaceful settlement. The government was later overrun on the 26th January 1986. Its worth noting that soon after the NRA took power in Kampala, a new armed group, the Uganda Peoples Democratic Army (UPDA) was formed to wage a war against the Museveni government. It was formed by fleeing Uganda National Liberation Army soldiers particularly from Acholi

who feared that the National Resistance Army was going to revenge for the killings of people in Luweero.³

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over three decades, Uganda has experienced armed conflict in different forms and in different parts of the country. The effects and the impact of armed conflicts on the respective communities have been enormous. Of particular significance is the effect of conflict on women who are the most vulnerable. Attempts have been made by various stakeholders to resolve the different conflicts, significant of which have been the government, religious institutions, Non Governmental Organizations, and individuals. However, although women are key stakeholders, the extent to which they have participated is unknown. In this context, the project attempted to provide answers to and interventions towards some pertinent questions such as:

- How has conflict affected women and men?
- What are the existing peace building processes?
- What are the existing skills and capacity of women and men to participate in peace building processes?
- What structures, systems and institutions exercise conflict mitigation, prevention and resolution?
- Are the peace building mechanisms and post conflict reconstruction programs gender sensitive?
- Who are the key players in peace negotiations?
- What levels of peace negotiations have women participated?

The purpose of the project therefore was to examine the role of women and men in the peace building processes and conflict resolution in districts of Gulu, Lira and Luweero in Uganda.

1.3 Objectives

The main objective was to get a detailed understanding of the nature of peace building and conflict resolution processes and the level of women participation in them. The specific objectives were:

1. To examine the role played by women and men in the ongoing peace initiatives at the grass roots and community level;
2. To identify and examine the role of NGOs and CBOs in conflict situations and peace building processes,
3. To draw lessons from post conflict communities such as Luweero to inform current strategies towards peace building and reconstruction.
4. To identify the traditional conflict resolution process and the level of women and men participation in them,

1.4 Significance of the project

The magnitude of the conflicts in the Great Lakes region and the horn of Africa have been documented in general terms (Dolan 2000, Isis/WICCE, 1999).

- The fact that women and children constitute 80% of conflict populations calls for a closer examination of their experiences. Their voices on critical issues thus far have remained unheard. Hence the need for inquiry and documentation of their experiences including their participation and involvement in peace building and conflict resolution.
- The assumption about men being involved in war and therefore away from their families, needs to be revisited to understand their position and changes in gender roles and power relations at a household level. It was envisaged that the short-term research would yield information, which would act as a basis for developing programs to address the gender dimensions of conflict especially in northern Uganda. In addition, it is hoped that the study would act as a link with other conflict and peace building processes in the greater horn of Africa such as Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

Chapter Two Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is a review of literature on selected themes concerning gender dimensions of conflict as well as strategies for sustainable peace. The first section discusses causes of conflict; the second section discusses the gender dimensions of conflict. The third section presents literature reviewed on suggested frameworks for sustainable peace.

2.1 Causes of conflict: the gender dimensions

Several authors have written about causes of conflict in Africa (Kasozi, 1999; Kofi Anan, 2002). Many of the authors suggest that colonial rule bequeathed to Africa not only arbitrary boundaries, which contributed to conflicts between states and made national unity between states more difficult but also left a legacy of authoritarian rule. According to Kofi Anan the newly independent African states pursued a heavy centralization of political and economic power and suppressed political pluralism, which often led to corruption, nepotism, complacency, and the abuse of power.

Furthermore in some regions such as Central Africa, conflict has been exacerbated by competition for scarce land, and water resources with differentiated gender impacts. Moreover, there are many who profit from chaos and have an interest in prolonging conflict, as has been the case in Liberia, in Angola's lucrative diamond fields and in eastern DRC during the last decade (De Waal, 1989; UN, 2002). It has also been argued that external interest in precious stones and oil could be fuelling conflict in Africa. In the words of the Secretary General, "in the competition for oil and other precious resources in Africa interests external to Africa continue to play a large and sometimes decisive role both in suppressing conflict and in sustaining it" (UN, 2002:2). International arms merchants are on the list of those who profit from conflict although not all interventions come from outside Africa. However, it can also be argued that the international arms merchants stand to gain especially when there is an already market such as the one in conflict ridden countries of Africa. Kofi Annan (2002) reiterates that the role that African governments play in supporting sometimes even in instigating conflicts in neighbouring countries must be candidly acknowledged.

It has been documented that many conflicts have their origin in an unaddressed 'grievance', such as for example, ethnic or religious discrimination. Inequality and discrimination are also linked to conflict. However the mention of grievance, inequality and discrimination is made in general terms without paying special attention to the impact such ills are likely to have on men and women who are caught up in conflict

There is a wide spread assumption that poverty is a source of violence, despite there being no direct causal relationship between the two. Although today most violent conflicts take place in poor countries, they do not necessarily occur in the poorest of them nor are all poor countries involved in conflict. But even if this were the case that poverty is a source of conflict, there is now what is perceived as feminisation of poverty, meaning that women are more to be found in poverty stricken situations than men and that generally women are poorer than men. Research has shown that poverty and particularly extreme inequalities between rich and poor become sources of conflict where they are linked to the real or perceived oppression of a certain group (for example, social, religious, and ethnic) (Zuckerman and Greenberg, 2004). The state can be an instrument of discrimination and private enrichment in the hands of a powerful elite and its followers. It can mediate between different interest groups through inclusive political processes and the redistribution of resources.

Whereas the impact of external assistance on poverty cannot be underestimated, it has been argued that development assistance can contribute to stability when states use it to address human security needs, the political economy of conflict and inequality and discrimination and also for debt servicing as well as paying the state bureaucracy. However, it can also exacerbate conflict for example through supporting corruption or helping to perpetuate an unjust status quo or by putting too much emphasis on debt servicing. In addition, conditionalities attached to development assistance for example structural adjustment policies (SAPs), can increase tensions particularly where with out compensatory measures they require lay-offs in the public sector (Moser and Clark, 2002).

Humanitarian assistance is at risk of becoming an instrument of war at the local level through the manipulation of aid resources by warlords, at the global level through its instrumentalisation for partisan political interests (BBC). Many of the serious problems that have been associated with the negative distribution of relief commodities, food in particular, relate to gender relations and inequalities. According to Eade and William (1995) although males are malnourished as a result of disaster or population displacement the incidence of malnutrition tends to be higher amongst women.

2.2 Gender Dynamics in Conflict Situations

During armed conflict, there is always increased mobilisation of soldiers and belligerents. Zuckerman and Greenberg (2004) note how UN peacekeepers in Somalia were allegedly involved in gender crimes during the missions there from 1993 to 1995. In addition, the international media has unearthed how the UN peacekeepers in eastern Congo are sexually abusing women and girls. Peacekeepers are significant transmitters of HIV/AIDS to prostitutes and the innocent women and girls caught up in armed conflict. Infected warriors returning home then introduce HIV/AIDS to their spouses and communities.

During armed conflict, women's rights are not always recognized as human rights. Gender based violence has increased in many conflicts in Africa. In the Democratic Republic of Congo a women's organization in South Kivu Province (Women and Children's Peace Association Centre) alleged that some 2300 internally displaced women in the Shabunda area had been raped at the hands of Rwandan Interahamwe militia and Congolese Mayi Mayi since the beginning of 2005 (New Routes: A Journal of Peace Research and Action). Byrne (1996) reiterates that rape and violence are an increasingly universal and widespread characteristic of warfare. Sexual violence is not just a result of the general breakdown of law and order but there is evidence from many conflicts that systematic rape and sexual abuse has been used as a part of strategy to demoralize the community under threat. The use of rape as a systematic weapon of war against women as a social group has only recently been recognized as a war crime, although it is still

extremely difficult for gender-specific violence to be used as a ground for seeking refugee status. Despite the UN Resolution 1325, it is not clear how those who rape women in war have been treated.

According to Greenberg (2001b) following the war that won independence for Eritrea from Ethiopia, conservative families and wider communities spurned some women fighters who had had sexual relationships with male fighters in the bush when they tried to return home. Abandoned and rejected, many single mothers settled in Asmara needing homes, jobs and community support. Similarly in Korea, during World War II between 100,000 and 200,000 women (the so-called comfort women) were abducted to camps and raped or sexually tortured by the Japanese. A large number of them died as a result of this (Seifert, 1994). When women are taken on in rebel and guerrilla wars, they are expected to perform “non military ” service such as carriers, cooks, sex slaves, and ‘forced wifery’ (De Temmerman, 2001.) The very few women who indulge in combat activities are discarded as soon as the war is over.

During conflict, the social networks are disrupted and destroyed. There are changes in family structures and composition (El Jack, 2002). Gender relations can be subject to change. The traditional division of labour within a family may be under pressure. War disrupts and can even contribute to a complete breakdown of production — agricultural and industrial —, which adversely affects the country's economic output, exports and general viability. Many of the Third World countries emerging out of conflict are, therefore, compelled to adopt stabilization and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). This economic situation contributes to high levels of unemployment and underemployment. Individuals' access to essential productive resources is reduced. In most third world countries, agriculture is perceived to be the main area for labour absorption. However, in war-torn situations the labour absorption capacity of agriculture is greatly reduced. For example, livestock, seeds, crop varieties and other resources for farming are often looted or destroyed. The remaining resources may be over exploited and farming patterns may also change for example from planting long to planting short-cycle crops. Agricultural cultivation and animal grazing are seriously impeded by fear of

land mines. The socio-economic costs include reduced food output, increased food prices and food insecurity and the general undermining of people's capacity to meet their basic needs and to return to normal life after war. The impact this has on the population is gendered. For women, they languish as they watch their malnourished children die. Men would most likely move to town in search of employment.

In Cambodia, for example, it is reported (Anderson, 1996) that income-generating activities and other efforts by women in agriculture are “sabotaged by deadly killer land-mines”. By creating fear in the general environment and constraining people's mobility especially that of women who are the main food cultivators and providers, land-mines kill indirectly through preventing fertile land from being cultivated and thus contribute to an increase in hunger and poverty. Many famines in Africa have had war as one of their major contributing factors. Roberts and Williams (1995:6) also point out that market systems are seriously affected since farmers and others are “unable to move over mined roads and footpaths to bring their produce to market. Such disruption has a direct impact on employment, rising prices for goods...” Many people, therefore, move from rural agriculture to urban areas to seek urban informal sector work. Land mines in general hold back post war reconstruction, especially in the rural areas. This can also affect the locations of technical assistance projects to assist the rural people.⁴

People caught up in situations of armed conflict suffer from psychological trauma, physical violence, casualties and death. Men tend to be the primary soldiers/combatants. Yet, in various conflicts women have made up significant numbers of combatants.

The limbs of about 300 Cambodians — mostly civilian women and children — are blown off by land mines every month. Similar trends have also been noted in Afghanistan, Angola, Honduras, Mozambique, and Uganda. The Guardian (22 April, 1996) reported that worldwide, about 2,000 people are maimed or killed every month. The large numbers of disabled persons and the disruption of health infrastructure and the provision of essential services increase women's social responsibilities and care burden. A large part of the blame for such human suffering is due to the extensive use of land-mines which

not only leave their mark today but guarantee continued suffering in areas where removal of such devices will take generations, and where the poor are often forced to seek water, fuel wood and farm produce despite the heavy mining of the land. According to Roberts and Williams, a total of about 250,000 people are already land-mine-disabled in the world (Roberts and Williams, 1995:3).

Large numbers of people including a high proportion of women and children are dislocated internally or externally (i.e. across borders as refugees). It has been argued that women and children constitute majority of fleeing populations (Crisp, 1999: Cohen, 2003) For example, in Africa about 35 million people have been displaced during the past ten years; in East Asia and the Pacific over 10 million; in Europe and Central Asia, about 9 million; in Latin America and the Caribbean over 9 million; in the Middle East and North Africa almost 4 million; and in South Asia, about 3.5 million. The recent conflicts in some of the former Soviet States have already displaced about 2 million. In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and also Cambodia about 1.2 million and 520 people respectively were displaced. The impacts of current wars are, therefore, no longer contained within a restricted area. Large areas are affected. All the displaced people have to be reintegrated after the conclusion of the peace accord.

The wars contribute to considerable deterioration of quality of life and an increase in general impoverishment.⁵ Many of the war-affected countries in the developing world already had low levels of economic development even before the war. Furthermore, the conflicts result in the reduction of human resources; fragility and political instability of governments; reduced government revenue such as from taxes; weakening of public support and extension services; deforestation and other damage to the environment; financial deficit⁶ and general underdevelopment of countries;⁷ reduced observance of the rule of law; increase in domestic and other forms of violence. Protracted conflict tends to produce a culture of violence that “fosters tolerance of violence” (International Peace Bureau, 1996).

The divisions of labour within the household mean that women are more likely to suffer as a result of deterioration in health service provision during war. This is so because women are often responsible for the health and hygiene of the household for example they will be more vulnerable to water borne diseases as a result of having to use poor water sources during a crisis. Reproductive health services in particular are likely to be the first affected during conflict and the last to be provided by aid agencies responding to health needs with a result in unwanted pregnancies and the associated increases in maternal mortality. This is often combined with pressures on women to increase their fertility. Deterioration in education services can also impact disproportionately on women in times of a crisis for a number of reasons: girl children receiving a formal education are more likely to be removed from school as the economic situation of the household deteriorates. In addition, during processes of retrenchment during or after conflict, women can suffer disproportionately as they tend to hold the lowest status positions and are the first to go; the growth in the formal sector often benefits women because of the traditional involvement in petty trade, or because of greater freedom of movement that women have.

At the level of the household conflicts directly destroy or damage the way in which households earn a living. Gender differences in the effects of household level crises are highly context specific but key issues include: the tendency for men to have larger range of coping mechanisms available to them; the breakdown of 'moral' economy for example in times of crisis, abandonment of less favoured wives in polygamous societies is common; the division of productive labour within the household is likely to be less affected by general economic collapse.

Studies demonstrate that women bear the brunt of painful SAPs, which have been integral to many post conflict reconstruction frameworks (Elson, 1991, Vladisavljevic and Zuckerman, 2004; 2000). For example a typical example of SAP is that of Serbia and Montenegro, which requires: state owned enterprises to be closed, restructured and /privatised; cut backs to be made in public expenditure including employment in the civil service and in the provision of social services; and the liberalisation and

commercialisation of a financial sector which is reduced in size. The design and implementation of such programmes neglect to take into account the different impacts they have on women and men. Cutbacks in health spending mean that women have to spend more time caring for sick household members reducing time for paid work. Cutbacks in the civil service and other formal sector jobs result in women –who are more likely to have junior level posts –being shed first and rehired last. This process also in part is attributable to the fact that there is still a wide spread assumption on the part of employers that women are secondary breadwinners, and hence that household livelihoods do not depend on their earnings. In reality, increasing numbers of house holds are female headed and changing patterns of economic development are also leading to job losses among unskilled or low skilled male headed house holds are now dependent on women’s earnings (Greenberg et al, 1997; Greenberg, 2000c).

Prior to Uganda’s decades of violence it was common for men to control livestock and manage household cash crops, whilst women had sole access to certain patches of land for subsistence purposes. Male labour migration during war and pressures on household income changed all this: women have a greater share responsibility for livestock and cash crops. Correspondingly, in some cases men have moved into women’s activities where profits are available. However, although women have greater responsibility within the household, their control of key resources remain minimal, and arguably they have fewer enabling rights, since the traditional framework of norms and values upheld by clan and communities have been eroded by the dislocation of the war (El Bushra and Lopez, 1993).

2.3 Women participation in conflict

Women’s participation and experiences in and of conflict can be analysed at three levels. That is, in the personal sphere where they experience and participate in conflict as individuals, in the private sphere where they experience conflict as mothers and wives and in the public sphere where they interface with societal structures that limit their participation in decision making processes and peace building mechanisms. It is

important to note that women have been active combatants in armed conflict. For instance, war was one activity in which women of pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabia participated fully. They were present on the battlefield principally to tend the wounded and to encourage the men, often with song and verse... Some women also fought. In the Muslim battles of Muhammad's lifetime, women functioned in all three roles, on both sides -- even Muhammad's wives.

Further to that, women face various impacts of conflict . It is because of these impacts that resolution 1325 of the United nations was passed to address the particular problems women face in conflict zones. The significance of the resolution is captured well by Forman Gayle⁸ (2005) who reported that

“United Nations resolutions don't usually warrant birthday commemorations, but on October 30, women from three war-torn regions--Afghanistan, Kosovo and East Timor--honored the first anniversary of Resolution 1325, by testifying before the Security Council. Their stories, which were imbued with new urgency by the current crisis in Afghanistan, described a variety of abuses they and their countrywomen suffer on a daily basis. Sexual exploitation, in the form of rape, trafficking, forced prostitution and early marriage, has become as commonplace in modern conflicts as mines and sniper fire, as Haxhere Veseili, a 21-year-old from Kosovo, attested. "Thousands of children have been born of rape. I have friends who were raped," she said. "I know other girls who have relations with peacekeepers just so they can have some safety. Other young women exchange sex for money.”

While entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism , women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex. Parties to conflict often rape women with impunity, sometimes using systematic rape as a tactic of war and terrorism. The impact of the violence against women and violation of the human rights of women in such situations is experienced by women of all ages, who suffer displacement, loss of home and property, loss or involuntary disappearances of close relatives, poverty and family separation and disintegration, and who are victims of

acts of murder, terrorism, torture, involuntary disappearance, sexual slavery, rape, sexual abuse and forced pregnancy in situations of armed conflict, especially as a result of policies of ethnic cleansing and other new and emerging forms of violence. This is coupled by the life-long social, economic and psychologically traumatic consequences of armed conflict and foreign occupation and alien domination (FWCW Platform for Action: Women and Armed Conflict, paragraph 135)

2.4 Developing strategies for sustainable peace

The Canadian International Development Agency in their “ *Gender Equality and Peace building: An Operational Framework*” note that gender is a relevant dimension in peace building. Conflict is a gendered activity. There is a strong gender division of labour; women and men have differential access to resources (including power and decision making) during conflicts, and men and women experience conflict differently. This was recognized by the international community and highlighted in the final document of the Fourth World Conference on Women (UN, 1995). While entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society as well as their sex. Therefore understanding the gender dimensions of armed conflict is an important dimension of understanding the overall situation.

Each conflict/peace building situation is different and there is always a need for specific analysis. Table below shows elements of conflict situations and possible Gender Dimensions and what needs to be taken into account during reconstruction and rehabilitation

Table 1 Elements of conflict and possible gender dimensions

Elements of Conflict Situations	Possible Gender Dimensions
Political negotiations and planning to implement peace accords	Men’s and women’s participation in these processes tends to vary, with women often playing only minor roles in formal negotiations or policy making.
Media used to communicate messages (peace accords, etc.)	Women’s unequal access to media may mean that their interests, needs, and perspectives are not represented and discussed
Use of outside investigators, peacekeepers, etc,	Officials are not generally trained in gender equality issues (women’s rights as human rights, how to recognize an deal with gender-specific

	violence). Women and girls have been harassed and sexually assaulted by peacekeepers.
Holding of elections	Women face specific obstacles in voting, in standing for election and in having gender equality issues discussed as election issues.
International investment in employment creation, health care, etc.	Reconstruction programmes may not recognize or give priority to supporting women's and girls health needs, domestic responsibilities or need for skills and credit.

Chapter Three Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This was a predominantly a qualitative and a cross-sectional research with limited quantitative data on the socio demographic factors. The methods included in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews. These were supplemented with photographs and observations. Key Informant interviews were conducted at district headquarters.

3.1 Methods used in data collection

Sampling procedures:

The three districts included in the study were purposively selected to include two that are currently experiencing conflict and one that was in a post conflict situation. Within these districts, three sub counties were randomly selected as centres for the study. Respondents were also randomly selected from those living within the villages using Local Council lists or the Internally Displaced People's camps using food lists.

Data collection

Data collection⁹ was carried out utilising survey questionnaires, Focus group discussions, informant interviews, observations and document review were recorded and later transcribed .

3.2 Study areas -Gulu, Lira and Luweero

Gulu District

Field work was carried out in three sub counties, that is, Bungatira (Choope camp), Paicho (Unyama camp) and Awer (Pagak and Awer camps) where 75 survey questionnaires were administered. A total of six focus group discussions were also carried out (see table 3 for details). Key Informants were purposively selected from those

organizations that have programs on Peace Building and Conflict Resolution, elders and leaders within the IDP camps. Non Governmental Organisations and Civil Society Organisations included in the study included: Gulu Support the Children Organisation (GUSCO), Concerned Parents Association (CPA), ACCORD and the Acholi Religious Leaders Initiative (ARLI).

b) Lira District

Fieldwork was carried out in three sub counties: Lira Municipality, Amarch and Barr. Two IDP camps were included in the survey and one sub-county that is Internally Displaced Peoples camps of Barr and Bala Stock Farm. 76 respondents were interviewed in the sub-counties. Focus group discussions were also carried out (see table 3 for details). Key Informant interviews were undertaken with elders and leaders within the IDP camps. These included women leaders, and staff of organizations that work with the IDPs such as Christian Children Fund (CCF), Canadian Physician for Aid and Relief (CPAR), Rachele Rehabilitation Center and Concerned Parents Association (CPA).

c) Luweero District

The study was carried out in the Sub Counties of Nakaseke, Butuntumula and Kiwoko. A total of 50 survey questionnaires were administered and 3 Focus Group Discussions were held (see Table 2). Key informants included elders and Local Council chairmen who were purposively selected basing on their knowledge of the conflict.

Table 2 Summary of Focus Group Discussions carried out by gender

District	Sub-County/IDP Camp	No. of people in Focus Group Discussions	
		Women	Men
Luweero	Nakaseke	11	16
	Butuntumula	10	13
	Kiwoko	8	11
Gulu	Bungatira-Choope camp	20	12
	Awere / Pagak camp	31	10
	Paicho-Unyama camp	39	11
Lira	Amach	11	18
	Barr - Barr camp	25	9
	Lira municipality-Bala stock farm	11	11
Total		166	111

3.3 Data analysis

Data from the FGDs and Key Informant Interviews were analyzed thematically. Data from the FGDs was first transcribed by research assistants and later entered into a computer before being analyzed. Quantitative data was analysed using Stata a statistical package.

3.3.1 Descriptive tables of the survey population

Table 3 Respondents by gender

District	Gulu		Lira		Luweero	
Sex	Freq.	Percentage	Freq.	Percentage	Freq.	Percentage
Female	44	58.67	35	466.67	45	59.21
Male	31	41.33	40	53.33	31	40.79
	75	100	75	100	76	100

Table 4 Respondents Level of Education per District

District	Gulu		Lira		Luweero	
Level of Education	Freq.	Percentage	Freq.	Percentage	Freq.	Percentage
Never went to school	28	36.84	0	0	14	18.67
Primary School	35	46.06	46	75.41	44	58.67
Secondary	10	13.16	11	18.03	16	21.33
Tertiary	3	3.95	4	6.56	1	1.33
Total	76	100	61	100	75	100

Table 5 Respondents Marital Status by District

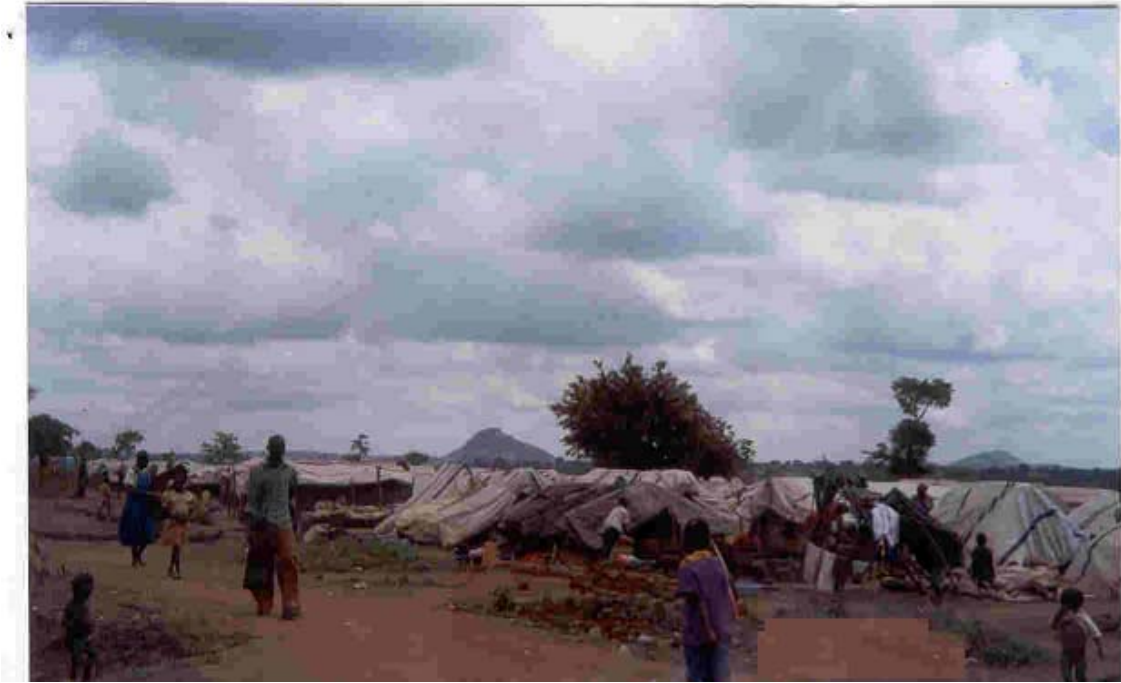
District	Gulu		Lira		Luweero	
Marital Status	Freq.	Percentage	Freq.	Percentage	Freq.	Percentage
Cohabiting	12	15.79	3	4.00	0	0
Divorced	1	1.32	4	5.33	7	9.21
Married	56	73.68	62	82.67	46	60.53
Separated	1	1.32	1	1.33	4	5.26
Single	2	2.63	4	5.33	4	1.32
Widow(er)	4	5.26	1	1.33	18	23.63
	76	100	75	100	76	



Pagak IDP camp, Gulu District



Class in session under a Mango tree, Lira District



Erute camp in Lira District

Chapter Four

Discussion of findings

4.1 Introduction

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study that study to ascertain the gender dimensions of conflict and to develop strategies for sustainable peace in Uganda.. In particular, it examines the factors that affect women and men's participation peace processes and initiatives. It also analyses the various attempts towards peace in conflict (Gulu and Lira) and post conflict (Luweero) situations taking note of the communities understanding of peace, their involvement in the peace process by gender.

4.2 Gender Dimensions of Persistent Conflict in Northern Uganda

The study was conducted in Gulu and Lira districts to capture the effects of the conflict on livelihoods and also ascertain the role of women, men and organization in peace initiatives. Gulu district is part of Acholi region. It shares borders with Adjumani, Sudan, Kitgum, Apac, Masindi and Nebbi districts. The district is made up of the 4 counties: Aswa, Kilak, Nwoya, Omoro and Gulu municipality. It has been the epicenter of the northern conflict which begun in 1986. The armed conflict has also spread to other districts of Apach , Kitgum, Lira, Pader and Teso. For the last 20 years Gulu district has been embroiled in armed conflict by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) against the government of Uganda. This protracted war has caused much untold suffering. Thousands of people have been killed, many have been maimed and the violence therein has seen many women and girls and boys abducted and raped. In addition, the war has led to the displacement of into camps of more than 2 million people. It is also believed that the levels of HIV/AIDs are high in northern Uganda because of the war.

The main economic activity is agriculture with an emphasis on food crops such as finger millet, maize, sweet potatoes, ground nuts, cow peas bananas and cassava, cash crops grown include tobacco, sugar cane, cotton and sim sim. Others activities include cattle rearing and fishing on the western end of river Nile.

Lira District one of the other study areas was selected by virtue of its proximity to Acholi land, and has experienced armed conflict that has led to displacement, deaths and destruction of property. Lira district borders the districts of Apac in the west, Soroti in the south east, Kitgum in the north and Masindi in the south.

The main economic activity in Lira is agriculture with an emphasis on food crops such as cassava, finger millet, maize, sorghum, simsim, groundnuts and sun flower. Cash crops include cotton, coffee, sugarcane. Other economic activities include cattle rearing and fishing in Lake Kyoga.

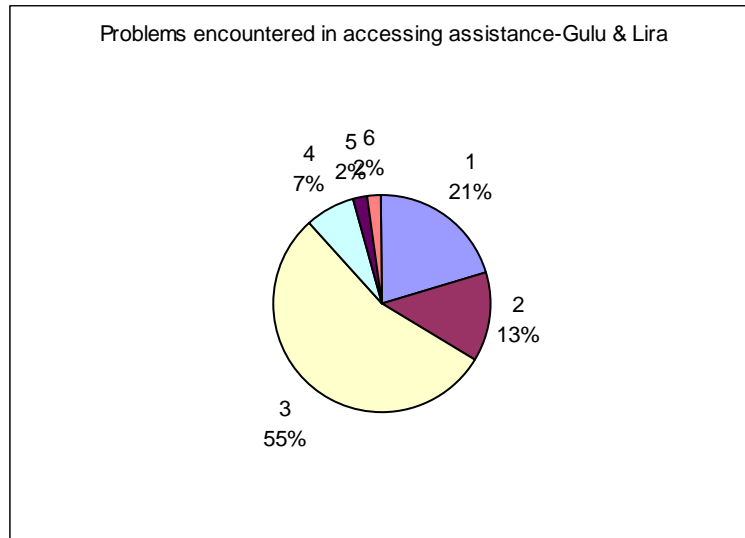
4.3 Effects of Conflict on Women and Men

The findings of this study reveal that the effects of conflict are gender differentiated and have serious implications on attaining sustainable peace. Such impacts include: changing gender roles, economic hardships, increase in Sexual and Gender Based Violence; psychological trauma and mental health problems and unwanted pregnancies; maiming and death; changes in gender roles within the households and the communities; loss of livelihood means such as gardens.

5.3.1 Changes in Gender Division of Labour

The findings of the study revealed that there were significant changes in gender roles and the sex division of labour. The conflict in Northern Uganda has destroyed the ways in which families earn their income and feed themselves. One of the reasons for this is that agriculture, the most dominant economic activity prior to the war is no longer a viable option for many. This has left majority of those that leave in the IDP camps dependant on humanitarian assistance from the government and various NGOs. It is important to note as shown in figure 1 that there are several challenges in accessing humanitarian assistance such as the distribution methods, favouritism and inadequacy of food supplies.

Figure 1 **Problems encountered in accessing assistance in Gulu and Lira**



- 1 Bad methods of distribution are bad (abrupt, long lines and favoring people)
- 2 Registration by different organizations and missing of assistance.
- 3 The food, items and supplies are inadequate
- 4 Congestion in the camp , leading to fighting for assistance¹⁰
- 5 Missing of food because of being absent
- 6 Others such as security requirements for loans.

Further to that, those that live within the Internally Displaced People’s camps have also lost access to their land, animals and property. Even where limited access is available, majority of the respondents noted that it is not sufficient for them to earn a viable living. For instance, it was found out that residents of IDP camps that wish to access their gardens can only do so after 9 am in the morning and have to return to the camps before 4pm in the evening. Access to the gardens is further limited by distance from the camp and also age of household members. In Unyama camp in Gulu and Barr camp in Lira, young women or girls who dared to go to the gardens often faced abduction since they are considered to be free of HIV/AIDS. As a result, they resort to brewing alcohol and or selling snacks within the camps. (see figure 2)

Figure 2 Sources of income by gender



1 Farming; 2 Small businesses; 3 Begging; 4 Sale of food rations; 5 Casual labour
 6 Brewing and selling alcohol; 7 Selling cooked foods and snacks; 8 Keeping livestock
 9 Nothing

The findings further reveal that the changes in gender roles have left the men disempowered and women empowered within the communities. In Luweero, the findings reveal that men have taken over previously female roles such as domestic work and subsistence agriculture as women go out to work in other sectors such as the ‘free markets’ and businesses. This has also changed power relations within ,as women take on an important decision making role. This can be summarized in the words of one of one of Local Council leader thus:

Ever since the end of the conflict, women are very powerful. They make important decision in the house and in most cases, when they decide on something, we men have little to say.

On the other hand, in Gulu and Lira, the study established that besides their domestic activities, women also played a major role in finding food and other household requirements for their families. In cases of female headed households, they experience difficulty in accessing productive resources such as agricultural land, employment and limited access to other livelihood necessities like clothes, soap and salt. In Awere camp in Gulu, the research team came across some women that had only one dress, and for some

this was torn. Salt and soap, daily necessities are also very rare. Quite often, the displaced people are forced to sell part of their food rations so as to buy the other necessities in life.

Case study 1

Grace, Unyama camp, Gulu

Since I came to the camp here life has changed so badly, there is no food to eat, no good place to sleep in, we have children who are not going to school, AIDS is going to kill us all. There are some women here in the camp who know that they are sick already and they keep giving our young children money so that they sleep with them. We have no hope for peace, even if we leave the camp tomorrow, we shall all die at the same time from the village, unless the government can listen to our cry and talk peace with Kony, we may survive. Our husbands have left all the burden of keeping the home, looking for food on us, we risk going to the bush to look for firewood and some wild edible greens to cook, yesterday one of the girls came back crying when she had gone to look for firewood and she said some man forced her to have sex with him, she had a lot of scratches on her neck.

Women trading in Barr Camp, Lira district



4.3.2 Impact on skill acquisition

Conflict has also had a negative impact on women and men's ability to acquire life skills (human capital) for their survival. Human capital represents the skills, knowledge ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood

strategies. Labour is a critical asset linked to the investment in capital, health status and determines people's capacity to work; and education and skill determine their returns on labour. The findings of these research reveal that in a conflict situation, majority of the people miss an opportunity to go to school. For instance, it was found out of all the respondents, only 22% had gone to secondary school, 59% had attended primary school and 19% had never gone to school. In Gulu, 37% had never gone to school, 45% ofand the others had at least a Secondary education.. This affected the means of livelihoods of the people, and affected access to alternative means of income through the selling of their labour. Others it was revealed were, maimed or became disabled an unable to engage in farming the main income generating activity in the area. 35 year old Jessica woman told us her story about how conflict affected her livelihood goals.

Case study 2

Jessica, Luweero

During the conflict in Luweero, our father was killed when he was trying to prevent the soldiers from raping my mother and me. After killing him and my mother, we ran away together with my brothers. Our lives were reduced to that of paupers and right now we are just struggling to survive. We used to be fairly well off. For instance we had 180 hybrid animals; hens and goats and a coffee plantation. We lived in a decent house and also owned a car. Because of the conflict, we lost all. I was unable to complete my primary education and my brothers only managed to complete A Level. My uncle chose to pay school fees for the boys leaving me out saying that I could get married and survive with limited education which the boys could not do. Surviving on my own has been difficult since I was raped by a group of soldiers and almost everyone in the village has heard my story. This greatly limited my chances of finding a partner. Even if there was one who was interested in me, I do not think I would have married him. I hate men!"

4.3.3 Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

It was established that there was an increase in Sexual and Gender Based Violence in northern Uganda as a result of the conflict. Gender-based violence, according to the CEDAW Committee, is defined as violence that is directed at a person on the basis of

gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threat of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty¹¹. Sex has been used as a weapon of war and majority of women are susceptible to rape and other forms of sexual violence within the IDP camps. In northern Uganda, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Many women in Gulu for instance reported being the target of attacks as they went about their daily activities such as fetching water, collecting firewood or in search of food from their gardens. In Unyama camp, Jessica, a widow with three children reported that girls are abducted by the rebels as they go out into the gardens to dig and or fetch water.

“Rebels have a preference for young girls since they consider them not to have HIV Aids like the old ones.”¹²

It was also found out that because of their daily domestic activities, women were unable to avoid danger from abduction, sexual violence harassment or even death. During a focus group discussion in Baar camp in Lira district, women observed that,

“Despite the war, we are still expected to provide for the daily needs of our households. This brings us into constant danger.”

The findings reveal that SGBV takes place at various levels within the IDP camps, for instance, at camp level and household. SGBV is partly perpetrated by idle men who spend majority of their time drinking or loitering around the camps; by soldiers within the camps who at times go unpunished; and also by the rebels who abduct and attack women as they go about their day today duties. The following case studies attests to the violence which women face .

Case study 3

Agnes, Bar camp Lira

“One thing that I can never fail to forget in my life is what rebels did to my two daughters, they had just come back from school like yesterday and at night rebels came, picked them at night together with me, took us for some distance where their friends were, on reaching one of their leaders said he wants these girls, I stood firm and told them to first kill me before doing anything onto my daughters, they tied me and called for a Panga so that they cut my neck, but something changed their mind and said since am resisting they will sleep with my daughters while am seeing so that they see what I can do, and they did it, and now I don't know whether they are not sick already with AIDS, the only thing I can now say is that God should forgive them because they are even our children who were also abducted, and they were even speaking pure Lango”.

Case study 4

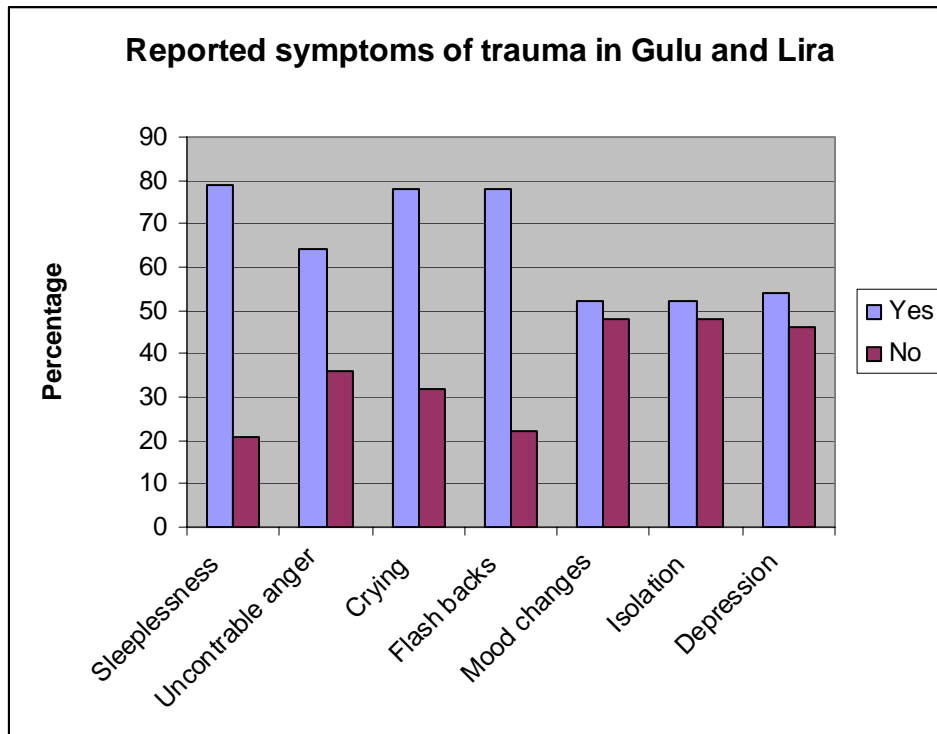
Santa, Awer camp, Gulu

“I don’t even know where to begin from, this war has brought me to a level I feel God should only take away my life. I can not hide this from you my son. I have been forced into sex two times. The worst happened in front of my children by rebels, that was when we were not yet told to come to the camp from Amuru village where my home was. The second time it happened, I never told my husband because I knew it would make him weaker and abandon me, the only thing I know now is that, we in the camp are all going to die of the diseases, so my plea is that, the government should talk peace with Kony and he comes out so that we go back to our villages and wait for our death.”

4.3.4 Psychosocial well being of Women

Armed conflict has also had a negative impact on the health and psychosocial well being of the people of northern Uganda. On a question concerning symptoms of trauma were experienced, it was found out that 79% experienced sleeplessness, while 78% experienced cried a lot and experienced flash backs.

Figure 3 Reported symptoms of trauma in Gulu and Lira



Women on the other hand, face the brunt of these effects since they also have to emotionally support their husbands and children. It was observed that quite often women hide their need for emotional support under the guise of looking for a livelihood for their families. The psychological impact of the conflict has led to several women taking it upon themselves to create mechanisms of addressing the impact of conflict on fellow women and also on the children. It reveals a resolve among women for survival and to do something about their suffering in the face of limited government and male support. It was also established that whereas women coped faster to incidences of trauma, men found it more difficult to cope with trauma and disempowerment.

In Paichyo the research team was confronted with a case of a man who poured rat poison in the drinking water of the wife's family hoping to kill the wife and others in the household. Probing further, it was found out that the wife had left him because he was unable to support her and the children. It has been suggested that situations in which men and women find themselves unable to cope with traumatic events lead to stress and stress related illnesses such as depression, aggressiveness, suicide, alcoholism and other forms of social harm.¹³ Moreover, the findings from Luweero revealed that these symptoms persist in a post conflict situation.

Case study 3

Dorcus, Barr Stock Farm, Lira

I was abducted when I had gone to visit my uncle in Okwang, we had been hearing rumors that rebels are coming from Kitgum side and heading towards Soroti, so we thought they would pass from a different direction but at night they came up to the village where I was, they abducted 17 people from that place, we went but on our way they kept on cutting people who mention that they are already tired, they killed three people and we all got scared and started fearing, we continued going, when we reached some where inside Kitgum, all the men were released, telling us that Kony wants young girls only this time so there is no need of taking men, they then divided all of us among themselves as wives, we were now only six girls, I fell sick and at that time I was already pregnant then my baby came out prematurely and died, I was then released when I was very weak, I walked up to Kitgum town, my sister was killed on the way when we had yet walked for less than twenty miles, it still disturbs me so much when I remember how she was crying calling my name to help her stop the rebels not to cut her neck, at times I don't sleep when I remember, I just feel like killing myself

4.3.5 Loss of Social Capital

Social capital refers to the rules, norms, obligations, reciprocity, and trust embedded in social relations, social structures and a society's institutional arrangements that enable its members to achieve their individual and community objectives. Social capital is vital as a means of survival in situations of conflict and also in the peace building process. This is because embedded within it are the notions of trust and reciprocity. In northern Uganda it was found out that people fear to take on responsibility for spearheading the peace process even where they are able to. For instance during the focus group discussion in Lira and Gulu, some people feared to come out to spearhead the peace process in their communities for fear of being targets to the rebels.

The findings of the study reveal that, to an extent, conflict has led to the erosion of social capital. Relations of trust have turned into suspicion and fear. It was noted that Luweero Triangle and the advise to their people of northern Uganda to reveal rebels, comes from a deep seated consequence of trying to maintain their social capital in a conflict situation even when the people they were protecting were the cause of conflict. The extent of the mistrust was evidenced in the case of one family that refused to return to its land holdings because their neighbour had taken part in the death of some family members. Without trust, it can be very difficult to rebuild post war communities. It is therefore important to take note of the social capital dynamics in a conflict zones and how these affect the peace process.

Loss of trust

One effect of conflict was erosion of trust among the people and also in the peace process. Trust in human relations is vital in the building up of social capital. The loss of trust has led to a disintegration of kinship ties, family ties and social class. Subsequently this has also led to increased individualism, and a change in identity. At a household level, the findings reveal that in Luweero there was an erosion of the concept of good neighborliness as neighbors became informants for either the rebels or the UNLA, as the following statement states:

“Ever since the war ended, we have not gone back to reclaim our land. This is because our neighbor participated in the killing of my husband and children. Now how can I live next to him?” (Luweero respondent)

At national level, the people in northern Uganda have lost trust in government’s ability to bring about an end to the conflict. Majority of women interviewed supported peace talks with the rebels, a change of government, and invitation of International Peace Keepers. Furthermore, there has been reduction/ wavering in trust at all levels, that is the household, the community and national levels. For instance, on a question of women participation in Peace Building Processes, some of the respondents said that they could not join the peace process because it would make them visible and susceptible to attack by the Lord’s Army.

4.4 Redefining Peace in Northern Uganda

The study revealed that communities have derived their own understanding of peace. With a conflict that has lasted for 19 years with no near end envisages, the concept of peace has lost meaning. The communities’ views of peace were influenced by the lived realities of men and women in northern Uganda. For the majority of the people the word peace no longer holds meaning. What is peace? They would ask. We have lived in a war situation and peace has lost meaning for us!¹⁴ The following are some of the understanding and definitions of peace in the communities:

“Peace means having situation of no war, poverty, having understanding in a home, children should be at school” (Woman leader, Barr Stock Farm Lira).

“Peace is when we stay without anything like poverty like in camp, family, congestion, oppression and do not allow us to go digging food to survive” (Elder, Barr Camp Lira)

“Sleeping comfortably, freedom of speech, being able to earn a living”. (Female respondent in Luweero)

Peace is dismantling of camps and letting people go home freely and enjoy traditional music (Women’s Leader, Awer Camp, Gulu).

Peace means a situation of being healthy, having enough food, having money and have no restriction on an individual (Camp leader Paicho)

“Peace means going back home!” (Female respondent Unyama camp, Gulu)

It was established that “peace” is defined according to the prevailing circumstances in an area. Majority of the female respondents looked at peace as an opportunity to return to their homes and living a normal life. This is partly because of their roles in the domestic sphere. Peace was also understood not as absence of war, but also as freedom to engage in livelihood activities; freedom of movement (within the camp structures, there are limitations on the freedom of movement); living in harmony with neighbours; Others saw peace in the context of the life they lived prior to the conflict.

Table 6 Women and men’s different understandings of peace in Gulu and Lira

Kuc obede ka ama dano weng tye a bedo paco gi ame cuny gi yom, ame kwo odok kit acon.	When people are settled and people are happy, life has gone back to normal.
Kuc obedo gin ame noto lwak, ka kuc tye, nwongo myero wan pe obed ikema.	It is what brings people in harmony, if there is harmony, there would be no need for us to stay in this camp.
Kuc obedo keto Kema (camp) me wek dano odok gang ka myelo myel kwaro.	Peace is dismantling of camps and letting people go home freely and enjoy traditional music
Kuc obedo yot kom, ka komi yot nwongo cwinyi yom en kuc enoni.	Peace is health. Once you are healthy, you have peace.
Iyi Gulu kan kuc pe, ento kuc obedo ka kwo yot ma dano weng maro owote mere, ki yom cwiny abongo apoka poka.	Here in the camp in Gulu there is no peace. However it is when there is good life sand harmony in the community
kuc obedo ka ping okwe abongo adui moro atwal ikin paco.	When everything has settled and we are free to go back home. No rebels at home.
Kuc tye ka dano tye abedo ture abongo Nek atata, onyo bedo ikema.	People are staying in their homes, or are not being killed and are not in camps. Peace is in some areas not here.
Kuc obedo ka dano tye kede twero me wot kanoro keken ame cunye mit abongo bura ibot amony, abongo winyo tim aranyi atata.	Peace means when one is free to move any where, not forced by soldiers, don’t hear of atrocities committed.
Kuc obedo ka dano tye abongo lworu, abongo cwer cwiny, abongo dic me wowota atata.	Peace means a state of having no fear, unhappiness, restriction on movement on an individual.
Kuc obedo ka dano puru cem oromo te wot cato en okene icuk me nwongo cente.	Peace means a situation where there is enough freedom, food, under standing in a family.
kuc obedo ka jami ducu ama imito tye acalo cem oromo kede cente.	When there is everything in the home. When they are missing in the home, then there is no peace.
kuc obedo ka lweny pe, yom cwiny tye, daa pe iyi ot, cwer cwiny atata pe.	Peace means a situation without war, having happiness with family, no quarrels in the family, no over thinking or worrying about death.
kuc obedo ka lim tye icingi kede cem me poto tye oromo ame pe dok iwilo awila kun itye ibedo turi.	<i>“When there is no money, when you do not run away from your home and the food is available you just have to go to the garden”</i>
kuc obedo kare ame dano room tiyo ginoro keken ame cunye mito abongo dic.	Periods when we do things that suit our interests. Freedom to do whatever we want to do without any restrictions.
Kuc obedo, bedo aber kun itiyu tic ame dongo lobo acalo cwalo lutino ikwan,	Staying well when doing things leading to development without wars that wars that have disrupted our children from studying and keeping us in the camp.

4.5 Women's Participation in Peace Building

The study reveal that women have played a role in peace building processes at various levels including household level where they participate in activities that promote peace; community level where they participate in organizations as heads or members; and as individuals such as Betty Bigombe; Sister Mary and Atyam founders of Concerned Parents Association (CPA) and Gulu Support the Children Organisation (GUSCO) respectively. Generally, peace building includes the practice of non violence; the recognition and respect for Human Rights; the promotion of intercultural tolerance and understanding; and women's empowerment in economic, social, cultural and political spheres.

It was found that women are quite often compelled into brokering peace because of an attack on their core livelihood goals and their families that leaves them no option but to do something about the circumstances they face. For instance, an evaluation of the founding of peace organizations or individual involvement in peace reveals that all the women involved had a turning point in their lives that forced them to participate and not to just sit back. For instance, the following women got involved in the conflict and peace building as a result of various events:

Betty Bigombe

Former minister for the pacification of the north, Betty Bigombe has been actively involved in the peace brokerage first as Minister and later as an appointed envoy to spearhead the peace building processes in northern Uganda. Although the war still continues, Betty Bigombe's efforts have resulted in several fighters within the LRA ranks to surrender. Some if these include Banya and Brigadier Sam Kolo. At the writing of this report, Betty Bigombe was involved in peace talks with the LRA.

Rev

Sr

Rachelle

Fasserar

She was deputy headmistress of St Mary's College, Aboke in Lira district became involved in the conflict when the LRA abducted 139 girls. In June 1997, some members of the Concerned Parents Association, a local Community Based Organisation led by Sr. Rachelle met with the LRA's commanders in Juba to seek the release of the girls. It is

also join record that Sr. Rachelle traveled to Khartoum with David Pulkol, a government official then in charge of external intelligence in an effort to secure the girl's release. The negotiations, resulted into the release of some of the girls.

Sister Mary Oker,

She was one of the co-founders of the Gulu Support the Children Organisation (GUSCO) together with Hon. Betty Akech Okullu and the late Geradine Ogutti. In her testimony¹⁵ she got involved with the conflict as a result of her work with Hon. Betty Bigombe, Minister of State for Pacification of the North, in 1988.

Angelina Atyam of Concerned Parents Association Lira whose daughter was abducted and saved after two years in captivity; in the ministry for the pacification of the north of organizations or within On a whole women in Uganda have played a key role in the conflicts. Not only as victims of conflict but also as combatants and peace makers. Conflict in Uganda has affected women in several ways including physical and mental health.

The above mentioned women are only a small fraction of those that have been involved in various peace related activities. Women play different roles in peace building and were essential participants in preventing armed conflict and violence, brokering peace and restructuring post conflict societies. The findings reveal that most of the organizations that came up to address peace building and alleviate the suffering of people in conflict situations were founded by women. Some of these include ,Gulu Support the Children Organisation, Concerned Parents Association; Rachelle Center.

4.6 Women organizations involved in peace building

Gulu Support the Children Organisation (GUSCO)

GUSCO founded in 1994 is an indigenous NGO that promotes the well being of war affected children in Northern Uganda through Psychosocial Support, peace building, advocacy and capacity building of communities. Specifically the organization is involved in psycho social programs for the rehabilitation of formerly abducted children;

resettlement of formally abducted children and reintegration into communities; addressing stigma and discrimination of child mothers. GUSCO's vision A harmonious and prosperous society that respects and protects the rights of children and ensures equitable access to basic needs.

Concerned Parents Association (CPA)

It is a child focused organization devoted to promotion of peace and social stability of children affected by war in Uganda through advocacy and psychological support". Its main objectives include: to advocate for the immediate and unconditional release of all the abducted children in LRA captivity and halt further abduction of children; to rehabilitate and reintegrate all the returnee children in the community with emphasis on education and health; and to contribute towards building of sustainable peace for all Ugandans. Its program areas include advocacy, networking with other organizations, psychosocial support for war affected families with a special emphasis on formerly abducted children; documentation and research and peace building work and community reconciliation in northern Uganda.

It was found out that women participate in the CPA activities at various levels such as community structures of the CPA; as sub counties /IDP representatives and through the parents support groups (PSG) at the parish levels. Through parent's supported groups (PSG), CPA does initiate and funds peace building activities like acting drama and community meeting/ sensitization seminars in the IDP camps.

Despite their activities, the organization faces several challenges such as supporting parents who have already lost their children in captivity or do not know / not sure whether their children are still alive/dead in the bush; insecurity within the IDP camps; and also the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court that are likely to jeopardize the peace talks with the rebels.

Rachelle Rehabilitation Centre (Lira)

The Centre is involved in Psycho-Social Counseling especially of formerly abducted Children. Women play a leading role in the work of the organization such as : women are involved in follow-up of children; family tracing of families in the community in northern Uganda; even up to Kitgum, Pader, Soroti; counseling of young mothers. Concerning peace building, the Centre is involved in several activities such as

- a. Talking to community members in the plight of formerly abducted children
- b. Sensitization meeting led by women from the organization
- c. Community counseling/ individual counseling done by the workers and that the children cannot come back all at once hence need to prepare them for the come backs
- d. Community follow-up and family tracing
- e. Identify vulnerable families and provide them with the income generating activities
- f. Sponsoring of formerly abducted children in school.
- g. Advocacy programs especially for abducted children through use of the mass media both locally and Internationally.

It is also important to note that following the aftermath of the Luweero Triangle conflict several women came together to form associations to advocate for peace and to address the various impacts of conflict especially women. For instance Mulumba (2002) cites several examples of women's involvement in peace related activities such as the national council of women which organized over 2000 women to demonstrate on Kampala's streets for peace and against the mistreatment of women by the military (Tripp, 2000:51); Women in Gulu in April 1989 marched through the streets of Gulu for peace. Their demonstration was the most dramatic since they wore their mourning dresses chanted funeral songs and lifted up their breasts to demonstrate a curse on the wrong doers¹⁶ Organizations that were formed following the Luweero Conflict included:

ISIS-WICCE

Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) is a global action oriented women's resource centre that that promotes justice, equality and mutual relationship between women and men. Isis-WICCE was founded in 1974, in Geneva,

Switzerland, with the aim of promoting justice and women's human rights through documentation of women's realities and sharing of information and ideas in order to improve women's status and overcome gender inequality. In Uganda, Isis-wicce was established in 1993, with the objective of tapping the voices of African women and integrating them into the global women's knowledge base. Since the relocation Isis-WICCE has focused on building women's capacity in documentation, peace building and conflict resolution, the use of information and communication technologies for networking, lobbying and advocacy. The core purpose and mission of the organization are to promote cross-cultural exchange of information and skills for women and to strengthen the voice, capacities and visibility of African women towards the promotion of global justice and the empowerment of women, through action oriented documentation and cross-cultural exchange of information and skills to increase women's ability to make presentation of their issues at national, regional and international levels. It envisions an informed society that values and ensures women's rights, in order to realize their capacities and potential.

Since 1996, ISIS-WICCE's role has been that of documenting women's realities in armed conflict and peace situations from a human rights perspective. Documentation, which is done at the national, regional and international levels, has helped highlight the situation of women in conflict areas and raised questions of their involvement in peace activities. In Uganda, documentation has focused on women's human rights, social and economic factors, health and gender relationships in situations of armed conflict. Some of their publications include:

- Women's Experiences of Armed conflict in Uganda: Luweero district
- Women's Experiences of Armed Conflict: Gulu District
- Teso Women's Experiences of Armed Conflict.
- Medical Intervention Reports for Luweero and Gulu districts, and Teso sub-region.
- Women, Conflict and Food Security: A Study of Four Districts of Uganda.

Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE)

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE) was founded in 1995 by a number of Ugandans aspiring to promote alternative and creative means of preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Above all, CECORE seeks to empower individual women and men, communities, and organisations to transform conflict and to establish a culture of active tolerance and peace. Overall, its purpose and mission are to have a society where peace, tolerance, and human dignity prevail and to promote a culture of peace

In Uganda, the organization has been at the forefront of negotiating with rebels such as the Bamuze and

Uganda Women Network (UWONET)

Uganda Women's Network in conjunction with Agency for Cooperation and Research ACORD coordinated a peace conference in 1999; National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda (NAWOU); Uganda Women's Efforts to Save Orphans (UWESO);

Women organizations have had a major emphasis on addressing the impacts of conflict a role that is rarely recognized. According to Mazurana and Mckay 1999, women peace activities within the various organization have has a special focus on building a culture of peace. A culture of peace consists of values, attitudes and modes of behaviour based on non violence and respect for the fundamental rights and freedom of all people. In building the culture of peace, the full empowerment of women is crucial. Involving women in peace building ideally involves identifying women's specific concerns, approaching peace building from a perspective of a woman and welcoming a pluralist voice and diverse methods and strategies. According to Graca Machel (UN 1999), women have been active agents of peace building and conflict resolution at the local level and their participation at the national, regional and international levels needs to be increased. Women are resource managers, advocated for other women in crisis situations, leaders in political processes and influence the community in various ways. Women form

informal and informal groups and various processes that are vital for peace building and construction of democratic processes.

Other organizations¹⁷

Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative

Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative is an Interfaith Organization that works for peace and development by transforming violent conflict through dialogue, negotiation and reconciliation in order to promote sustainable peace building and development in Northern Uganda. The main objectives of the ARLPI include: to unite as believers in God almighty in order to mobilize the people of Acholi for peace and development; to advocate for social justice and human rights; to train in conflict analysis, conflict transformation and undertake community peace building; to foster the spirit of peaceful co-existence among different communities in Acholi land and with the neighbors; to collaborate with the local leaders, Members of Parliament, local and international NGOs and all CBOs / stakeholders to promote the culture of dialogue as a basis for resolving and transforming conflict with communities.

4) ARLPI as an religious organization, it has the following main programme activities in summary are

- Enhancing the capacity of the community through training and sensitization on peace building
- Mediation between community groups where violence is taking such as place e.g. Acholi-Jie, Lango-Acholi and Teso-Lango-Acholi, Teso-Karimojong
- Advocacy, documentation, research and information gathering. The organization has already made several publications such as, Let my people go; Seventy times seven, War of Words and presented several position papers
- Giving support to war affected individual in order to enhance their reintegration in the community
- Building and strengthening capacity in peace work through trainings, networking with other organizations in the peace process

It was found out that women are not only in leadership positions within the organization, but they are also a special area of focus for its programmatic activities. For instance, at the secretariat there are three women and four men and in the core team, there are six women and seven men. The women in the core team do carry out activities of sensitization other women on how they can be more involved in the peace building process. For instance in peace prayers that are organized, in the sub counties/ IDP camps, women in the core team represent fellow women and raise issues concerning their problems in peace building process.

Besides the secretariat and core teams, the ARLPI has also established Peace Committees at sub county level to solve conflicts within the community through non violent means and to help to organize trainings/meeting in the IDPs incase the organization (ARLPI) is to have training in the fields/camps.

Generally peace building processes should, according to the Mazurana and Mckay (1999), take into account several factors such as: the gender impacts of and incorporation of women in peace policies and projects; the psycho social, relational and spiritual peace building processes; a recognition of cultural processes in peace building which can be built upon especially the women centered local groups; peace building projects should be documented and evaluated; improved communication and cooperation among all key stake holders is vital; the cultural dimensions of peace building processes.

4.7 Community Based Peace Initiatives

The findings revealed that there were several peace related initiatives at a community level although majority of the people did not participate in them. The activities include but not limited to prayer as a conflict resolution strategy, reconciliation /forgiveness, use of the mass media, cultural forms of conflict resolution and community peace committees To an extent these activities are supported by the Non Governmental Organizations which focus on peace building.

Prayer as a conflict resolution strategy

Praying for the end of conflict is one of the strategies used to find a lasting solution to the conflict. Prayer as a strategy was best summarized by the women's leader in Palenga Camp in Gulu who said,

“One of our contribution to the peace process is to fast and pray for the end of the conflict. Whenever we hear that there is going to be a peace meeting between the government (Bigombe) and the rebels, we take no food and water and ask God to make the negotiations fruitful. However, when there are not, it makes us feel bad and at times we wonder whether among us there are those who did not participate with us in the praying”

Reconciliation /forgiveness

Reconciliation and forgiveness were also cited as main peace building strategies. Non Governmental Organisations have been very instrumental in Northern Uganda in urging reconciliation and forgiveness. Organisations such as Gulu Support the Children Organisation which works with formally abducted children and seeks for their reintegration into society, World Vision Uganda, Acholi Religious Peace Initiatives; Concerned Parents, Rachele Centre in Lira and Canadian Physicians for Peace (CPAR) have played a major role in raising awareness of the devastating impacts of conflicts and bridging the gap between the surrendering rebels and the communities. It was established that GUSCO works with formally abducted children and even follows them up once they have been discharged from the centre and living in their communities¹⁸. On a question of what they saw as their achievements one of the respondents a community peace trainer who helps formally abducted children re integrate into the community said that

“We find the children who have returned socializing and playing with other children. We have also helped the community to live with them. For us this is a great achievement.”

Use of the mass media as a peace building strategy

FM stations in Gulu and Lira are widely used to convey information to the rebels and to ask them to give up rebellion. Former rebels are used to give their testimonies of the advantages of taking on the Amnesty provided by the government and also the forgiveness provided by the communities. Innovatively the use of the FM radio stations

in Gulu, use of drama and songs to dramatize their suffering and to plead with the rebels to end rebellion and return home. Another strategy peace building strategy used by FM radio stations such as Gulu FM has been to convey peace messages to the rebels; to highlight the advantages of giving up rebellion; where to report in case they decide to give up rebellion and also having testimony of former combatants and how they are living after denouncing rebellion. They often conclude their testimony by calling on their colleagues still fighting to denounce rebellion and return.

Cultural form of conflict resolution-

The Acholi traditional way of resolving conflict was by performing a cultural practice called “Mato Oput” (In case a person or someone from another clan kills/causes death to another person/ people). The clan elders/leaders from both sides including the elderly women would convene a meeting and discuss the cause of fighting, death etc and then they evaluate the damages caused and appropriate compensation would be given to the person/ party that caused death/ conflict. The compensation were in form of domestic animals like cows, goats. After the compensation has been agreed upon and paid in terms of specific animals say 15 cows then a day is agreed upon both parties as to when they would come with a sheep each and exchange them, they then would slaughter it and eat the sheep from the opposite group and later drink herb from a tree called “OPUT” The two worrying / angered parties then disperse in happiness and harmony as they would have already solved their differences that is ‘mato oput’

Community Peace Committees (CPC)

The study established that within the camps, there have been several attempts to come up with peace committees. One of the roles of the peace committees is to help in the reintegration of formally abducted children into the communities; participate in conflict resolution within the camps; and to act as focal point persons in peace related initiatives in the communities. It was also found out that several Non Governmental Organisations have trained community peace committees. However, it was observed that there is a lot of duplication of work. For instance it was found out that several of the people who reported receiving training in peace building cited more than one organization.

Table 7: Organizations involved in Peace Building Activities

Gulu/ Lira	Luweero
1. Gulu Support the Children Organisation (GUSCO)	1. Police
2. World Vision	2. New Hope
3. AMREF	3. Plan International
4. Acholi Religious Peace Initiative (ARLPI)	4. AMREF
5. Amnesty Commission	5. Compassion
6. Care International	6. Red Cross
7. Concerned parents	7. Government
8. Canadian Physician for Aid and Relief (CPAR)	8. Mayumba Kkumi
9. Christian Children Fund (CCF)	9. LCs
10. Forum for African Development	10. World Vision
11. UNICEF	11. VEDCO
12. Save the Children, Denmark	12. Biddabuggya
13. Redeemed Bible way	
14. African Centre for Community Research and development (ACCORD)	

4.8 Challenges and Opportunities of Women’s Participation

Whereas there have been several peace initiatives, few people at the grass root levels have been involved in the peace process. Only 21 percent of those interviewed in Lira and Gulu reported to have been involved in any peace activity.

It was also established that although there were several peace related activities at a community level, few people participated in them.

Table 8 Community involvement in peace building activities

Whole Sample			Disaggregated by gender			
Status	Number	Percentage	Number (F)	Percentage	Number (M)	Percentage
No	120	79	63	80	57	80
Yes	31	21	16	20	14	20

On a question of what hinders their involvement in peace activities, it was found that majority of the people did not have information about the peace activities; 18% of the women said they were ignored by the government in the peace making processes and 22 % of them said that there were no peace activities in the camps while others had no

information on peace activities in camps. Women also pointed out a lack of time. Table 9 summarises the responses on why women and men do not participate in peace activities:

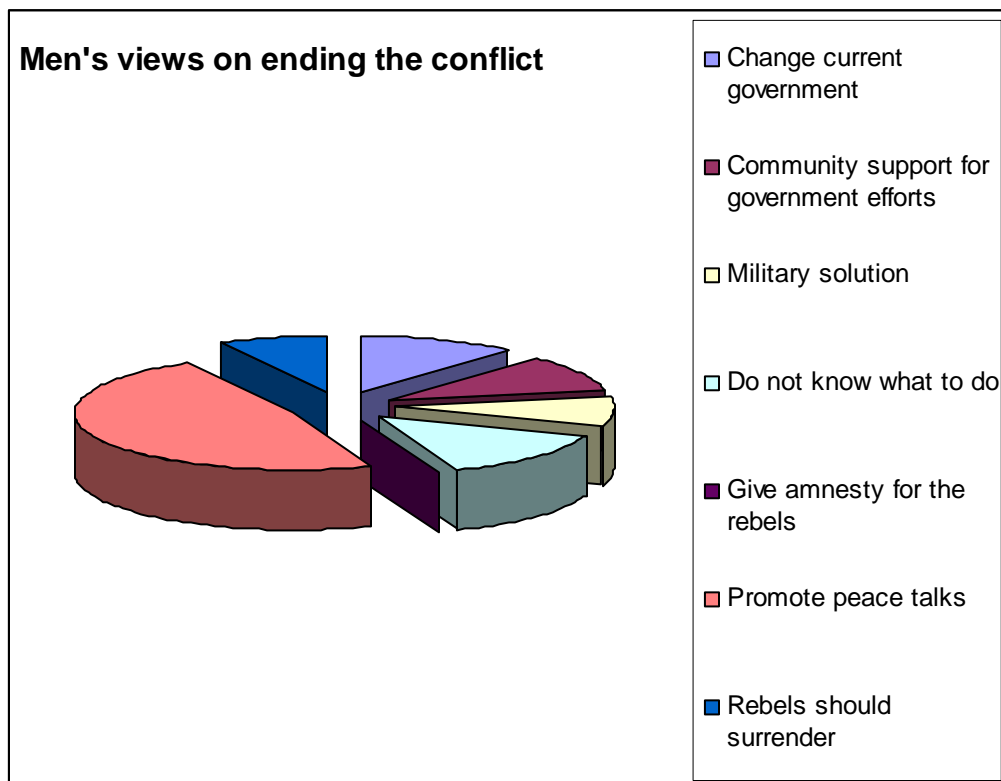
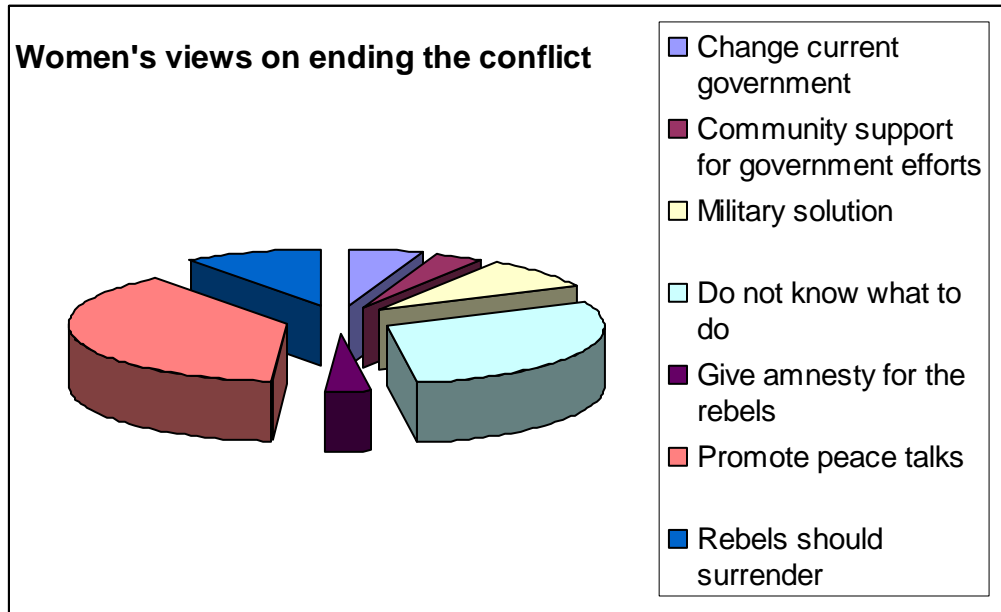
Table 9 Reasons for non participation in peace activities

Reasons for not participating in peace building	Female	Male
Lack of information on peace activities	26	30
Attending school	2	7
Lack of understanding of the concept of peace	8	16
Lack of time	14	6
Lack of interest in peace activities	10	8
Fear of being involved		7
Absence of peace building activities in the camps.	22	16
Feeling of being left out in peace negotiations	18	10

Number=93 (total), 50 (Female) 43(Male)

Quite often, communities have varied views of how conflicts can be peacefully resolved. Unfortunately, in many peace building processes, the affected communities are rarely called upon to participate nor their specific needs taken into consideration. Whereas there has been a preference for the military option as a means of bringing about peace, the findings of this study reveal that majority of the people preferred peace talks as the mechanism to bring about peace. However, others the majority of women did not know what to do. This partly arises from the fact that the conflict in northern Uganda has been going on for a long time with no near end in sight. In majority of the camps visited, Peace had lost meaning. From the focus group discussion other views such as the need for communal co existence; addressing national imbalances in development and calling in peace keepers to solved the conflicts were also cited.

Figure 4 Community views on how to end the conflict in Northern Uganda



There are several challenges facing the attainment of sustainable peace in northern Uganda. One of such challenges is the failure to reintegrate the formally abducted people into the communities; or giving them a sustainable source of livelihood. It was established that some of the people that have denounced rebellion at times prefer to return or even some have returned to rebellion because of a lack of livelihoods. Some have even commented that the life they led while in the Sudan was much better than the one they are leading now. There is a complaint that the only people that have benefited from the denunciation of rebellion are the commanders who are treated very well¹⁹. For instance within camps, there are no community vocational centres and income generating activities into which the former rebels could be absorbed. This in a way serves as a disincentive for some that would have wanted to end the rebellion.

Further to that, individuals living in the communities fear to spearhead the peace process because this exposes them to the rebels as people that do not want rebellion. According to the women's leader in Gulu,

“The local population fear coming out boldly to spearhead the peace process because the rebels can penetrate the camp and kill that them any time.” In 1998 one elder called “Ogoni” was killed in his efforts to broker peace between the government and the rebels. This created fear among people who wanted to talk peace with the rebels. Moreover, there is no direct link between the camp leaders and rebels who want to return to rejoin their families. Those who attempt to establish contact with the rebels are instead referred to as rebel collaborators by the government.”

There is a growing mistrust of government's ability to bring about peace in the region on one hand and the rebel's willingness to talk peace on the other. According to some of the respondents, there are categories of people who benefit from the war who may not want the war to end soon. One of the widely held view among the respondents was that it is difficult to approach and convince the rebel leaders to denounce rebellion even the ones that return from captivity.

5.0 Luweero and Peace building: lessons of conflict transformation

Luweero district is part of the infamous Luweero Triangle (Mubende, Kiboga, Nakasongola, part of Wakiso, Luweero) which in 1981-1985 was the base of National Resistance Army/ Movement rebel activities against the Uganda Government.

Luweero district is located in Central Uganda boarded by the districts of Mpigi in the South, Mukono in the East, Nakasongola and Masindi in the North and Kiboga in the West. With an area of approximately 8,485 square kilometers, Luweero district has a population of 449,691 giving a population density of 53 persons per sq. km.

Despite reports that men and boys died during the war, the ratio of male to female is almost 1:1. The age structure is comparable to that nation-wide. Fifty nine percent of the population falls between the age group 0- 19; 30 percent is in the 20- 49 age group and 11 percent is 50 years and above. The proportion of people in the productive labour force (20-49 years) is relatively lower compared to the national figure.

Economic situation in Luweero: Agriculture is the mainstay. It is the source of food as well as income. Perennial crops include bananas, coffee and fruit trees such as mangoes and jack fruit; and seasonal crops such as maize, beans, potatoes and cassava. Other activities include animal poultry rearing, bee keeping and fishing.

5.1 Women Empowerment during Conflict

The findings reveal that the war in Luweero tremendously changed the roles of women and men in the households and communities. In a bid to survive, women took on predominantly male roles such as brick making, trading that takes them far from home at times, business owners such as shops, saloons and restaurants. One male respondent put this succinctly when they said that

"Ennaku zinno abakyal balinya ku motoka ne bava awaka ate ffe abaami ate ffe tutuula awaka!" (These days women board vehicles to go and work and leave us men at home").

Because of this, there has been empowerment of women as resource owners, and key players in decision making processes. Women empowerment has also been brought about

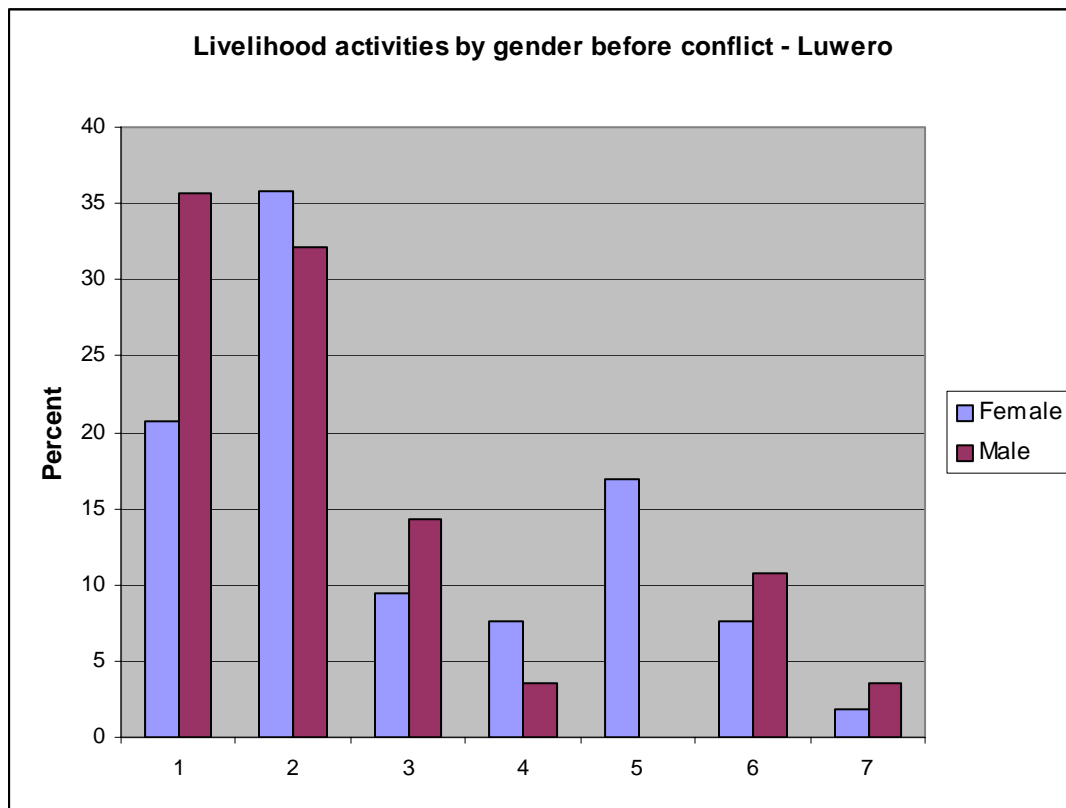
by a special focus given to women by the Micro Finance institutions. Over 80% of the women interviewed joined business after the death of their husbands. Amina said that,

“After the conflict and our father died, our mother had to engage in farming more extensively and aggressively to ensure that she could feed us. She also took all the decisions within the household.

The conflict forced women to raise their children without fathers and at times with no support from the extended family support structure. It also forced them to be innovative so as to support their families.

There was also a strengthening of women’s decision making from the household to the community levels. This partly arose from government policy of involving women in leadership positions from the community level to the National level.

Figure 6 Livelihood activities before the conflict



- 1 I was at school at that time
- 2 Growing and selling of crops (coffee, beans, cassava, cabbages etc)
- 3 Rearing and selling of livestock (cattle, goats, chicken and pigs)

- 4 Brewing and selling alcohol
- 5 Weaving mats and baskets for sale
- 6 Operating retail shop business
- 7 Buying and selling of food crops

Figure 7 Livelihood activities after the conflict

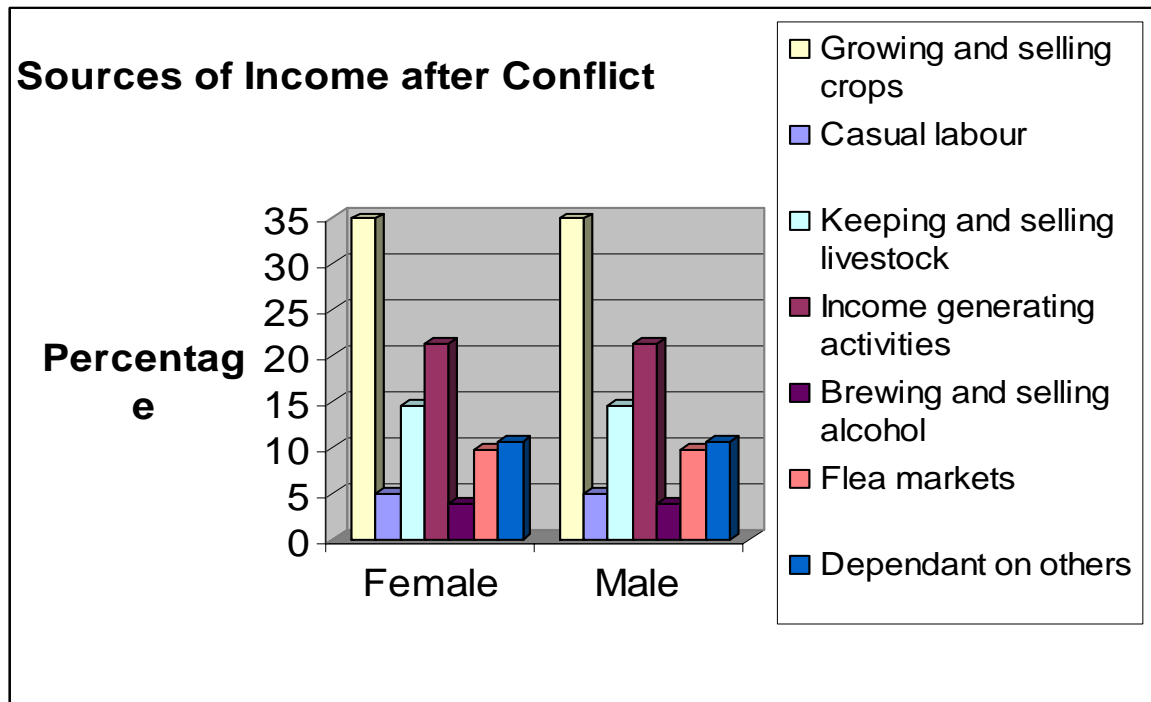


Figure 7 reveals that women engage in similar activities like their male counterparts in meeting livelihood goals. This evidently shows an empowerment after conflict that was not present prior to conflict.

5.2 Laying strategies for peace during conflict

Another important lesson from the Luweero was that strategies can be devised for a peaceful transition during the conflict depending on how the situation is handled. For instance after the conflict, there was limited revenge killings and there was a return of the people to their homes and lands peacefully. As compared to the aftermath of the 1979 war and 1985 military coup that were followed by massive looting of property, in the 1986 take over such incidents were limited. Peace building mechanisms set up during the conflict can enable sustainable peace.

5.3 Trust and confidence building

Lessons from Luweero also point to the importance of building trust and confidence among the people about government initiatives and also the work of the non governmental organizations. It also entails honouring promises made to the people. For instance, in a focus group discussion in Nakaseke, the respondents were of the view that

If NGOs, CBOs and Government pledge to do something for the people let them make sure they fulfill their promises. They promised money for widows whose husbands died in the war, How come it has never been brought to us? We are hard pressed because leaders lied to us; we were given empty promises and as youths who were involved in that conflict we are not happy. FGD Nakaseke

5.4 Monuments as a method of conflict transformation

The findings of the study revealed that monuments in commemoration of armed conflict can be a major aspect in peace building. According to a women's focus group in Nakaseke, they said that,

There are skeletons in Butuntumula and a cemetery in Nakaseke. Now if a reasonable person sees such things, he cannot push for war at all'

The National Resistance Movement Government constructed mass graves in various areas such as Luweero, Nakasongola, Kiboga, Lwamata, Muduma and Kilengete, Mubende in Kikandwa and Kyamusisi²⁰ after the Luweero Triangle conflict

Monuments act as a constant reminder of the effects of conflict and play a role in preventing involvement in war. These constant reminders are also used in the socialization of children on the impact of war on the communities.

The organization of the camps and the response meted out to the people can have far reaching impacts on sustainable peace. In Luweero for example, both the NRA and the UNLA set up camps for the protection of the civilian population. In the camps run by the UNLA displaced people received humanitarian assistance from AID agencies such as the

International Committee of the Red Cross. Unfortunately, many that lived in these camps ended up being murdered by UNLA soldiers before retreating from the Triangle.²¹ On the other hand, in camps controlled by the NRA, displaced people were encouraged to organize themselves for various tasks, including defense; procurement of food and water; and political education. It was also in these camps that the population was first organized into Resistance Councils (RCs). Organisation of the communities into Resistance Councils was later to prove useful in consolidating peace and stability at the end of the Luweero Triangle. One of the key lessons from Luweero is that involvement of people in the peace building processes is vital to attain sustainable peace is vital.

The research in Luweero drew up several lessons learned during the conflict. The respondents had several suggestions on how the war in the north could be resolved and sustainable peace gained. Drawing on their experience of Luweero conflict the people advised that in order to end conflict and bring about sustainable peace in Northern Uganda the people had to desist from participating in the conflict. On a question how the experiences of war in the Luweero triangle could be used to help others experiencing conflict, the people of Luweero were of the view that:

- a. Local people should not participate in wars and they should not hide traitors or rebels.
- b. The army should give women (such as those in the IDP camps) more protection
- c. Youth in conflict areas should get involved in fighting against rebels
- d. Camps should be availed to help people in need of shelter
- e. Corruption tendencies should be minimized especially on the part of leaders who embezzled aid
- f. People should forgive each other
- g. People should be united and work for peace
- h. Dialogue should be maintained as the best practice for peace, not war

The above sentiments represent people's views of how conflict should be addressed and what role the civilians should play in the conflict process. It was also established that the

people of Luweero looking back at the five year bush war, said that it would have been better if the local community was involved in ending the conflict by reporting to the authorities all rebel activities; actively been involved in the peace negotiations; they should never have helped the soldiers kill innocent civilians; there should have been forgiveness among the people. Some noted that although these would have been ideal, there was no way the people could have fulfilled them since they were running for their lives. Basing on the experiences in the Luweero triangle war, respondents thought the war in Northern Uganda could be solved in the through several ways such as the president working with the local people to attain peace, peace negotiations and also through foreign intervention.

War memorial in Nakaseke, Luweero District





War memorial, Nakaseke, Luweero District



Monument erected in Nakaseke (Kiwoko) in memory of people killed during the Luweero Triangle war (1980-1986)

Chapter Six

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusions

In conclusion, the following should be noted:

a) Changes in Gender Roles: The study has showed changes in gender roles and expectations in both northern Uganda and Luweero district . Changes were more pronounced in Luweero whereby women have taken to trading and formal employment which were previously the preserve of men. Changes in gender roles have left men disempowered. Changes in gender /power relations have fueled further domestic conflicts which in turn has affected gender based violence. Idle men were known to consume plenty of alcohol that was not good for their health as well as for the stability of homes.

b) Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV): There was an increase in incidents of rape, abduction of young girls, early and forced marriages and unwanted pregnancies. Although the study did not divulge into issue of reproductive health, it is certain that SGBV promotes ill-health and predisposes the victims (women and girls) to sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. The vulnerability of women compounded by the gender roles appeared to make them susceptible to SGBV. It was further observed that in order to attain sustainable peace, there is need to address the various levels of SGBV (household, community, addressing the over drinking by men, etc)

c) Psychosocial Well-being: Many women interviewed reported signs and symptoms related to psychosocial trauma. Some of these symptoms were: sleeplessness, flashbacks, over sleeping and constant crying episodes. In addition, many women were anxious about their families and extremely worried about being raped, abducted or beaten as they went out to search for food, firewood and water. The constant fear reduced the

women's ability to engage in livelihood options. This fear constrained women and girl's mobility.

d) Lack of Skills: Lack of skills were a gender dimension in a sense that possession of skills dictated the nature of employment and income. Overall, women had far fewer skills than their counterparts, the men. This affected the means and nature of livelihoods as well as access to incomes.

e) Definition of peace: the men and women in northern Uganda, it peace has acquired a different meaning from the conventional definitions. For instance some had this to say "*Peace is dismantling of camps and letting people go home freely and enjoy traditional music*" "*When there is no money, when you do not run away from your home and the food is available you just have to go to the garden*" Of critical importance was the end of conflict and ability to meet livelihood goals. The majority of women defined peace as 'as going home'. It is the context of these meanings that communities have devised local strategies towards peace building and conflict resolution. Examples of such strategies include peace committees, prayer and use of the mass media to recall rebels. It was further observed that in order to attain sustainable peace, there is need to address the various levels of conflict (household, community, and national)

f) Women Participation in Peace Building Processes: Women perceived peace building to refer to "Peace Talks" only, negating several other activities such as counseling, and income generating activities. A few formidable women have been singled out and these include (but not limited) Betty Bigombe, Sr. Rachel Fassera and Mary Atyam. In northern Uganda, women have joined peace building mechanisms albeit at a low scale. Nevertheless, it was also established that the majority of Non Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organizations which focus on peace activities were either founded or led by women or international bodies. These NGOs have attempted to involve women in peace building activities at a grassroots level.

Recommendations:

From the above findings and conclusions, the following are recommended for action:

1. Encourage participation of women and men in peace building processes

It was established that the communities understand peace building in terms of negotiations with the rebels. Moreover, it was also found out that few individuals (women and men) participate in the peace building processes at all levels. For participation to be effective, there is need for dissemination of accurate information to stake holders and use of gender sensitive language; demand driven participation; and by enabling women and men to understand and accept changing gender roles. It is therefore recommended that government and civil society organizations encourage participation through socialization norms such as dances, folklore, drama and story telling and also by providing equal opportunities for women and men to take part in decision making processes.

2. Address Household Gender Relations

This study illustrated that in situations of conflict, there are changes in gender roles. It was also found out that the changes in gender roles especially the empowerment of women cannot be reversed in a post conflict situation. It is therefore recommended that government and other stake holders come up with strategies to address the changed roles of women and men. Such strategies can include:

- Inclusion of gender and conflict studies in school curriculum from primary to tertiary institutions.
- Adult education that targets household relations.
- Design, implement and mainstream male specific empowerment programs to equip them to deal with changing gender roles.
- Development, by government and NGOs of gender specific interventions that address the reproductive health needs of women and men.
- Promotion of programs that disaggregate the specific needs of categories of people such as the disabled, unaccompanied, orphans and formally abducted children.

3. Mitigate the effects of psychosocial trauma

The findings revealed that women and men have to deal with the effects of psycho social trauma such as sleeplessness, flashbacks, over sleeping and constant crying episodes. Further to that, many women were anxious about their families and extremely worried about being raped, abducted or beaten as they went out to search for food, firewood and water. Such fear has reduced women's ability to engage in livelihood options. It is therefore recommended that government and NGO interventions: take seriously the need for properly and quality trained counselors to handle psychosocial issues during conflict and in post conflict areas; integrate psychosocial interventions into all peace building programs; and take a keen interest in supporting and funding psychosocial programs.

4. Addressing the impact of conflict on Women and men.

It was established that conflict affects women and men differently. Among the impacts conflict are the changes in gender roles, decision making processes and the impact of Sexual and Gender Based Violence. It is therefore recommended that government and other stakeholders address these impacts through:

- Creation of awareness of the negative effects of gender based violence in the communities.
- Encouraging open discussions of the ills of gender based violence at all levels of the community
- Providing and strengthening coping mechanisms to deal with the effects of gender based violence.
- Applying and promoting proactive cultural values to mitigate SGBV.
- Providing equal and accessible legal services to those affected by Gender Based Violence.

5. Mainstream Gender Concerns and Issues in all Peace Initiatives

The findings revealed that on a whole, women's participation in peace building processes is limited. They face several hindrances such as lack of information on

peace building activities and time. It is therefore recommended that deliberate efforts be taken to address factors that limit women's involvement in peace processes; encourage their involvement at all levels; and involve their organizations in peace building processes. This to an extent will ensure sustainable peace in conflict affected areas.

6. Promotion of holistic peace building initiatives

The findings of the study revealed that women and men perceived peace building to refer to "Peace Talks" only, negating several other activities such as counseling, and income generating activities. It is therefore recommended that Government and NGOs sensitise the population that peace building is not only about peace talks but also involves other activities such as income generation and psychosocial counseling that are vital for sustainable peace.

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End notes

¹ Luweero triangle, was made up of districts of Mubende, Luweero, Nakasongola and Kiboga.

² Museveni Yoweri 1997; *Sowing the mustard seed: the struggle for freedom and democracy in Uganda*, Macmillan publishers, United Kingdom.

³ Ibid. Gersony 1999, RLP, 2004.

⁴ Adams (1995) reports that to visit some of their projects in the rural districts, the women's association called Women in Development Cambodia (WIDC) sometimes has to seek to be accompanied by government troops because of the poor security situation.

⁵ In Mozambique, for example between 60 and 70 per cent of rural and 50 per cent of urban households are reported to be living in absolute poverty (UNICEF, undated).

⁶ After war, most countries rely on donor financial support to meet basic services and recurrent expenditure. Holtzman (1995, p. 26), for example mentions the case of Mozambique where international aid is estimated to form 75 per cent of the country's GNP.

⁷ Holtzman, for example, reports that more than 50 per cent of the low-income countries in the world have gone through conflict during the past ten years (Holtzman, 1995 p. 3).

⁸ <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20011126/forman20011115>

⁹ Data collection was done with the help of seven research assistants four of whom worked in Gulu and Lira districts. These were purposively selected from people that come from the areas of study and could speak and understand the local language.

¹⁰ This mainly affects the elderly, weak and disabled.

¹¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2003), *Sexual and gender Based Violence against refugees, returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, guidelines for prevention and response*, UNHCR Geneva.

¹² Interview Unyama camp, July 2005

¹³ El Bushra 2003, *Women building peace: Sharing know how*, International Alert, USA.

¹⁴ Focus group discussion Barr camp Lira and Awer camp in Gulu, July 2005

¹⁵ Daily Monitor, 24th October 2005.

¹⁶ Mulumba Deborah 2002, *The women's movement and conflict resolution*, in Tripp and Kwesiga, *The women's movement in Uganda: History, challenges and prospects*, Fountain Publishers, Kampala Uganda.

¹⁷ It is important to note that there are several organizations who have integrated peace building or conflict resolution into their activities in northern Uganda, such as World Vision, MSF Holland, UNICEF, and Human Rights Information (HURIFO).

¹⁸ Interview staff of GUSCO, July 2005.

¹⁹ Interview former LRA rebel, Awer Camp, Gulu district

²⁰ Ministerial statement on Luweero triangle May 2005, by Minister of State for Luweero Triangle M Zirraaba Muzaale, in www.parliament.go.ug/hansard1 accessed October 2005.

²¹ Ibid.