

WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN NORTHERN UGANDA: Toward a Brighter Future

An Assessment Report, May 2006



By Erin Baines, Eric Stover, and Marieke Wierda

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Erin Baines
Eric Stover
Marieke Wierda

For copies of this report, full project proposals, or further information contact:

Mary Page

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

140 South Dearborn Street

Chicago, IL 60603

Tel: 312-917-0303

Email: mpage@macfound.org

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FOREWORD

Northern Uganda's brutal war, now in its twentieth year, has gained world attention in the wake of indictments by the International Criminal Court against Joseph Kony and four of his commanders in the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Bringing these war criminals to justice is an important step toward promoting the rule of law and reconciliation in Uganda. Yet the people of northern Uganda continue to suffer terribly. Over a million and a half now languish in camps for the internally displaced where they live in desperate poverty and despair. International aid agencies and local citizens groups have been providing crucial assistance in a difficult and risky environment. But they would be the first to acknowledge that more must be done to end this war and provide a brighter future for the people of northern Uganda.

Over the past nine months, our two institutions have worked together to explore other opportunities for concrete action in northern Uganda. From July to December 2005, the MacArthur Foundation dispatched assessment teams to Uganda to identify programmatic interventions that would give children and youth the tools to gain better access to income generating activities, schooling, human rights, and justice. Team members traveled extensively in the northern districts, interviewing displaced persons and former child soldiers. They toured reception centers for LRA returnees and visited "night commuter" shelters for children who leave their families at nightfall in search of security and safety in larger towns. They spoke with government officials, representatives of the International Criminal Court and nongovernmental organizations, traditional and religious leaders, and members of the international donor community. The result of this effort is a comprehensive, forward-looking plan that sets out major steps for developing formal and traditional justice mechanisms to deal with past human rights crimes, while recognizing the importance of investing in Uganda's greatest asset: the energy and creativity of its children and youth.

The recommendations set forth in this report provide concrete opportunities for donors to offer support to thousands of children and youth in northern Uganda and to set them on the road to a productive life. Even modest funding now will help local and national institutions provide critical services to those most in need and give young people access to educational scholarships, information technologies, and entrepreneurial programs. Looking to the future, the proposed Trust Fund for War-Affected Children and Youth will create a venue for donors to continue their support over the long term. By helping young people help themselves, the investment will serve current and future generations of northern Ugandans as they rebuild their war-ravaged communities and seek to provide a better life for their children.

We invite you to join us in this effort.

Jonathan Fanton
President
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Allan Rock
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations

March 2006

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**In the face of twenty years
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In the face of twenty years of war and government negligence, northern Uganda is fortunate to have a dynamic and growing network of national and grassroots organizations comprised of community and traditional leaders, activists, humanitarian relief workers, and volunteers. Many of these organizations are working to improve the situation of war-affected children and youth in the region.

Yet they face tremendous obstacles. To begin with, ambushes by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) often makes travel to the internally displaced camps, which are home to over 1.4 million people, difficult and dangerous. Most organizations lack the capacity to collect and integrate evidence-based data into their decision-making activities and to launch and sustain long-term programs. Community-based women's and youth groups play a vital role in sustaining the social and economic fabric

of the camps, but they work virtually on a volunteer basis and lack the capacity to undertake long-term projects. Finally, coordination between national and international agencies, as well as between governmental and nongovernmental institutions, is generally poor and nonexistent in some remote areas.¹

Against this background, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in consultation with the Government of Canada conducted an assessment in northern Uganda between July and November 2005 to identify unique and sustainable programmatic interventions that could potentially improve the livelihoods, human rights, and access to justice of children and youth in the region.² The assessment took place in four stages.³ The first phase commenced in July 2005 and included on-site visits and interviews with staff at seven reception centers for children and youth that had been former abductees of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).⁴ Phase 2 entailed a mapping process to identify the successes, failures, and gaps of local and international initiatives on behalf of children and youth in the north (see Appendix A).⁵ Phase 3 involved the deployment of an assessment team in October and November 2005 to meet with community and traditional leaders, district and national officials, and representatives of local nongovernmental organizations and international aid agencies (See Appendix B). The final phase entailed the formulation of recommendations for action to be taken by the MacArthur Foundation and the Government of Canada.

The assessment team focused on initiatives that could support:

- *Access to education and income-generating activities for children and youth;*
- *Access to traditional and formal forms of justice and truth-seeking;*
- *Capacity building that would enable organizations to launch and sustain long-term projects, facilitate inter-institutional coordination and cooperation; and facilitate community participation, especially in regards to the reintegration of LRA returnees;*
- *Access to services by under-served populations, especially those in remote camps for internally displaced persons; and*
- *The work of talented individuals and enterprising organizations, especially those that encourage entrepreneurship, in northern Uganda.*

The team reached the following conclusions:

- **An ecological paradigm should be applied to the assessment and implementation of funding initiatives in northern Uganda.** An ecological paradigm maintains that strategic interventions or planned change in one part of a system affect all parts in reverberating pathways.⁶ Thus, public health interventions, such as quarantining individuals with a highly contagious disease, have human rights implications; legal interventions have economic consequences; conflict resolution exercises affect the health status of communities; educational reforms have implications for democratic decision-making. Consequently, those who initiate systemic change in war-torn countries, whether it be the introduction of criminal trials of suspected war criminals or the development of programs to support children and youth, must anticipate how each new intervention or policy will affect other parts of the system. An ecological approach also recognizes that communities must be able to define and take ownership of processes of justice and reconciliation.
- **Capacity building and improving inter-organizational coordination is essential.** There is a lack of national commitment to the problems in northern Uganda, making it difficult for nongovernmental and community-based organizations to secure the necessary assistance to implement their programs. Many organizations lack human and financial capital. There is also a lack of inter-organizational coordination, which leads to budget-consuming duplication and a failure to collaborate, if not to compete.
- **Evidence-based data must inform the decision-making processes of national and district authorities and local and international organizations.** Programmatic decisions are made on weak or non-existent data and are often purely responsive in nature. International and local organizations often fail to collect and analyze population-based data before launching projects because they lack the funding or appropriate expertise, or consider data collection too time-consuming. Fortunately, this situation has begun to change. Several empirical studies (many of which are cited in this report) conducted over the past two years have placed relief and development work on a better track and resulted in many of the new policy directions for children and youth described in this report.
- **New approaches must be pursued to meet the needs of vulnerable children.** Years of conflict have severely impacted the lives of children in northern Uganda. Not only do they live in a terribly insecure environment, they also lack access to education, adequate health care, and basic psychosocial services. Reception centers have been created to rehabilitate and reintegrate LRA returnees into their communities. Night shelters have been established to provide shelter to thousands of children, known as “night commuters,” who leave their villages at sunset and walk to larger towns reportedly to find secure places to spend the night. These initiatives have been a tremendous asset for war-affected children and youth. However, many of our informants said the diminishing number of LRA returnees coming to the reception centers and the social dynamics attracting “night commuters” to the shelters suggest the need for new approaches to respond to these recent developments. This finding is supported by the preliminary findings of two recent UNICEF studies of LRA returnees and night commuters.⁷ Finally, most humanitarian initiatives are based in or around town centres and currently fail to reach camps in highly insecure areas. New, more community-based approaches need to be developed to meet the needs of vulnerable children and to address more adequately what may be the symptoms of the profound social disintegration that has gripped northern Uganda.

- ***Investing in youth must be a priority.*** One of the most crucial but underserved sectors of the population in northern Uganda is youth. Entire generations of young people in the northern provinces have known nothing but war. They have lost out on education, employment, the enjoyment of political freedoms and social and cultural rights, and, by implication, the ability to become the policy-leaders of the future. Young people in the camps are restless and idle and thus susceptible to violence and other destructive behaviours. In response, youth organizations and networks, as well as the newly established Gulu University, are playing or could potentially play an increasingly important leadership role. Although their institutional capacity is generally weak, they provide a critical role in the development of young leaders, alternative learning, and participation in public and social life.
- ***Traditional and formal justice mechanisms should be integrated and made accessible to the general population.*** Peace and justice will be achieved in northern Uganda only through an inclusive process that involves both traditional and formal justice mechanisms. A recent population-based survey (N=2,585) in northern Uganda found that sixty-five percent of the respondents supported the amnesty process for LRA returnees. However, only 4 percent said that amnesties should be granted unconditionally, and the vast majority noted that some form of acknowledgement and/or retribution should be required of all those granted amnesty.⁸ These findings suggest that the Amnesty Commission is one of the most legitimate organizations operating in the North and requires support for developing new directions and messages.⁹ To this end, the Commission should seek to develop new policies in this regard. It should also seek closer collaboration with the traditional leaders to foster sustainable re-integration, justice, and reconciliation. In terms of traditional justice, the Liu Institute for Global Issues has conducted extensive research on traditional ceremonies in the war-affected districts.¹⁰ Cleansing ceremonies for LRA returnees are fairly widely practiced among the Acholi, but more elaborate restorative justice practices and reconciliation ceremonies will need to be adapted to the unique circumstances of the war. There is a need for cultural revival, and for women and youth organizations at the community level to become more active in issues of justice and accountability. With the issuing of indictments, the International Criminal Court (ICC) and its operations are now a reality. Yet the international court is poorly understood in the North. An outreach strategy needs to be implemented that fosters greater awareness among Ugandans of the Court's mandate and mode of operations. Such a strategy should seek to manage the expectations of victims, many of whom believe the ICC can deliver more than it is able. Finally, it has been argued that a national approach to truth and reconciliation is required to redress grievances that have fuelled cycles of violence throughout Uganda's modern history. Recently, President Yoweri Museveni made similar statements in the context of the death of former President Milton Obote.¹¹ However, widespread grassroots support for this process remains to be tested and further dialogue is needed at the national level.

The assessment team believes that the organizations and projects described below provide models of work that could and should be supported despite the security environment which can vary from month-to-month. Community-based and non-government organizations have learned how to adapt to the ebb and flow of military activities in innovative ways. Indeed, these organizations play a vital role keeping the fabric of civil society from disintegrating altogether.

The projects described below cover three categories: “Vulnerable Children,” “Investment in Youth,” and “Support for Traditional and Formal Justice Mechanisms.” We have made every effort to fit the projects within an ecological model. Thus, funding for children and youth returnees from the Lord’s Resistance Army is closely related to the capacity of the Amnesty Commission to perform its work. Similarly, support for the development of Information and Communications Technologies at Gulu University could work hand-in-hand with the Gulu Youth Project which seeks to promote entrepreneurship among young people. We believe these projects will send a message of hope to war-affected children and youth in the North and could potentially leverage further funding from other donors. Full proposals are available upon request.

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VULNERABLE CHILDREN

1. ***Support the data management capacity of local organizations in northern Uganda so they can respond to the needs of vulnerable children, including orphans and returnees from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).*** The Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley and the Payson Center for International Development and Technology Transfer at Tulane University have begun a project: (a) to improve the data management capacity of LRA reception centers to track and provide follow-up services to returnees; (b) to improve the reporting capacity of the reception centers and publish a report on the demographics of LRA returnees and their experiences and (c) to assist in the creation of a database for orphans and vulnerable children in northern Uganda in collaboration with UNICEF and the district governments of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, and Lira.

For further information, contact: Eric Stover; Director, Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley, 460 Stephens Hall #2300, Berkeley, CA 94702-2300. Tel: (510) 642-0965; Email: hrc@globetrotter.berkeley.edu

2. ***Support a comprehensive study of “night commuting” so that appropriate programmatic responses can be developed.*** Funding will go directly to UNICEF to hire a technical person to develop a “terms of reference” to put to tender. Community-based programs need to be established to address the root of this problem.

Contact: Michael Copland, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF-Gulu, Kisozi House, P.O. Box 7047, Kampala, Uganda. Tel: 256-77-222-345. Email: mcopland@unicef.org

3. ***Support the construction and activities of an “education and skills training center”*** in Pader district for young mothers and other children that have no or little access to formal schooling. Funding will go to the Christian Counselling Fellowship (CCF Pader) to address the plight of underserved child mothers, their children, and other vulnerable children affected by armed conflict in the district. The center will engage 70 child mothers in income-generating projects in the first year. It will also provide 50 secondary school scholarships per year, as well as serve as center for psychosocial training for social workers and child counsellors from Pader and other districts. The Pader education center will serve as a “blue print” for similar centers throughout northern Uganda.

Contact: Alice Acan, Christian Counselling Fellowship-CCF Pader, Private Bag Pader, Pader, Uganda. Tel: 256-77-551-1430. Email: hcccmothers@mail.com

INVESTING IN YOUTH

1. ***Support the Gulu District NGO Forum through its Youth Advisory Board to strengthen youth leadership and organization.*** Funding will go to the NGO Forum to (a) support 12 youth NGOs and youth-led groups in IDP camps on livelihood, reintegration and social change, including human rights; (b) provide small grants to 30 youth groups based in IDP camps; (c) support two NGOs with expertise in the field of capacity enhancement to provide trainings on management, fundraising, and hands-on mentoring; (d) recruit an international volunteer to provide mentorship in planning and implementation and to support monitoring and report writing; (e) provide 25 university scholarships to support war affected youth in obtaining a degree in the area of development studies or related degree; and (f) publish a year-end report to illustrate the potential of the youth leadership project, to be analysed and developed in consultation with grantees.

Contact: Michael Otim, Program Coordinator, Gulu District NGO Forum, Plot 5 Jivan Abdji Road, P.O. Box 1, Gulu, Uganda. Tel: 256-77-62-63-82. Email: mikeotim@yahoo.com or gnf@otlonline.co.ug

2. ***Support an Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) program at Gulu University.*** At present, there are no projects in northern Uganda that seek to strengthen the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the access of youth to such programs in northern Uganda. Funding will go to the Payson Center for Technology Transfer and International Development of Tulane University to initiate ICT development for youth in Northern Uganda. The project will seek to (a) provide youth groups with greater access and training in ICT; (b) provide ICT university scholarships to youth; (c) build Gulu University's overall ICT capacity; and (d) create a digital library and electronic course on human rights and transitional justice for the benefit of community-based and nongovernmental organizations. All projects will be based at Gulu University under the direction of Chris Mafabi, Head of the Department of Computer Sciences.

Contacts: Phuong Pham and Patrick Vinck, Payson Center for International Development and Technology Transfer, Tulane University. Tel: 504-388-1676. Email: drph2@yahoo.com. Also, Deputy Vice Chancellor Mary Okwakol, Gulu University, Gulu, Kampala.

TRADITIONAL AND FORMAL JUSTICE MECHANISMS

1. ***Support an integrated approach to transitional justice in Uganda through national and local institutions.*** The Amnesty Commission with other national institutions, with outside consultation, will seek achieve this goal through four interrelated elements: (a) capacity-building and development of technical expertise on transitional justice among major justice stakeholders in northern Uganda, with an early emphasis on the Amnesty Commission; (b) increased dialogue towards achieving an integrated approach to transitional justice in northern Uganda, through a national stakeholders meeting, to be organized in March 2006 (already funded); (c) narrowing expectation and information gaps between national stakeholders and the International Criminal Court; and (d) exploring the need for a truth and reconciliation commission at a national level.

Contacts: Justice P.K.K.Onega, Chairman, Amnesty Commission, Plot 97, Bubanda Road, P.O Box 33956, Kampala, Uganda. Tel. 256-77-509-381. Email: amnestycom@africaonline.co.ug; Zachary Lomo, Director, Refugee Law Project, Plot 9 Perryman Gardens, P.O Box 33902, Kampala, Uganda. Tel: 077-659-731. Email: director@refugeelawproject.org

2. ***Support the creation and operation of a Center for Justice and Reconciliation in Gulu.*** The center would be autonomous and independent to act as a) a forum for a range of academic and peace stakeholders to exchange lessons learned and develop complimentary approaches; b) generate new research and documentation on a wide range of justice and human rights issues and house existing studies; c) provide outreach to community-based initiatives on justice and reconciliation in northern Uganda; and d) liaise with national initiatives to stimulate debate on national reconciliation.

Contact: Fabius Okumu, Director, Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies, Gulu University, P.O. Box 166, Gulu, Uganda. Tel: 256-77-344-772. Email: fabokumu@yahoo.co.uk

TRUST FUND FOR WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN NORTHERN UGANDA

1. ***A Trust Fund should be established to ensure a sustained response over a number of years to projects such as those described above. The Fund should help meet the future needs of children and youth as they recover from a destructive war and rebuild their country.*** The Fund will be structured to make resources available to individuals and/or organizations that have difficulty accessing funding because of limited capacity to apply for and manage grants from foreign sources. The Board of the Fund would be comprised of local, national, and international stakeholders from a variety of sectors who would oversee the selection and disbursement of grants. A small local staff would represent the Fund in Northern Uganda. Additional background information is found in Appendix C. A Trust Fund term sheet is available upon request.

Contact: Mary Page, MacArthur Foundation, 140 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60603, USA, Tel: 1-312-726-8000. Email: mpage@macfound.org

II. INTRODUCTION

The projects described in this assessment must be understood within the context of the high level of violence that has displaced and claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in northern Uganda over the past two decades. One of the principal offenders has been the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a spiritualist rebel group with no clear political agenda that is known for its extreme brutality. To fill its ranks, the LRA has abducted tens of thousands of children and adults to serve as porters and soldiers. Rebel commanders have forced girls, some as young as 12 years old, into what amounts to sexual slavery and forced their fighters to inflict horrific injuries by cutting off the ears, noses, lips, and limbs of defenceless civilians. Of the 2,585 peoples interviewed in a recent survey in four districts of northern Uganda, 31 percent said they had had a child that was abducted, 23 percent said their children had been mutilated, and 45 percent said they had witnessed the killing of a family member.¹²

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Since 1986, the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) has undertaken at least six military operations of varying success against the LRA. The latest offensive, called "Operation Iron Fist" commenced in spring 2002 and sought to put an end to the conflict. But a rebel counter offensive only escalated the war and caused a drastic increase in the number of displaced. The UPDF responded by moving 1.6 million people, approximately 80 percent of the population of the most conflicted districts in northern Uganda, into largely unprepared camps.

Since late 1994, the Uganda government has pursued formal peace talks with LRA leader Joseph Kony through its mediator Betty Bigombe. In December 2003, President Museveni referred the situation in northern Uganda to the International Criminal Court (ICC), sparking an intense, and often acrimonious, debate within Ugandan civil society and the international community. Some have argued that the ICC's intervention would undermine peace negotiations and an amnesty process, launched in 2000, which has lured over 6,000 LRA fighters out of the bush. Meanwhile, ICC supporters have maintained that the court's intervention would draw greater international attention to the war and pressure conflicting parties to resolve it.

On 13 October 2005, the ICC unsealed arrest warrants and indictments against five senior leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) for crimes against humanity and war crimes.¹³ The five leaders are Joseph Kony, Vincent Otti, Okot Odhiambo, Raska Lukwiya and Dominic Ongwen. (Ongwen had previously died in a gun battle with the Ugandan army.) While it is too early to tell what affect the ICC indictments will have on the peace talks, relief agencies in northern Uganda fear the LRA will increase attacks on humanitarian aid workers in retaliation for the court's action.

Nearly twenty years of war have turned northern Uganda into a humanitarian catastrophe. Hundreds of thousand of people now languish in over 150 camps for the internally displaced where they are dependent on handouts from the World Food Programme to survive. Eighty-four percent of women are illiterate. One-third of all children above the age of ten have lost a parent and 9 percent of children in the camps are orphans. Each night, in a phenomenon that has taken on a life-of-its-own, thousands of children, known as “night commuters,” leave their villages at sunset and walk to larger towns for security and companionship where they seek shelter for the night in humanitarian shelters and on the streets, bus stations, hospitals, and schools.¹⁴ Clean water and medical care are scarce in the camps. Malnutrition and such diseases as malaria, scabies, and tuberculosis are rampant. Most camp residents live in fear and despair and simply want the war to end.

The Assessment

Against this background, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in consultation with the Government of Canada conducted an assessment in Northern Uganda from July to November 2005 to identify unique and sustainable programmatic interventions that could potentially improve the livelihoods, human rights, and access to justice of children and youth in the region. Members of the assessment team were Erin Baines, Director, Conflict and Development, The Liu Institute for Global Issues, University of British Columbia; Eric Stover, Director of the Human Rights Center and Adjunct Professor of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley; and Marieke Wierda, Senior Associate, International Center for Transitional Justice. They were accompanied on the mission by Mary Page from the MacArthur Foundation.

Planning for the assessment began in June 2005, when the MacArthur Foundation and Canadian government initiated a series of meetings in New York. Ambassador Allan Rock, Canada’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Chair of the Friends of Northern Uganda Group at the United Nations, and Jonathan Fanton, President of the MacArthur Foundation, facilitated these discussions. In February 2005, Ambassador Rock went to northern Uganda where he witnessed the situation first-hand. Meanwhile, Mr. Fanton, a strong advocate for the International Criminal Court (ICC), believed that the first trials before the international court would be critical and that many factors, including the way in which the court was viewed by northern Ugandans, would be crucial to its success.¹⁵ Those attending the meetings concluded that the overwhelming scale of the humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda meant that justice interventions should be complemented with initiatives that sought to ameliorate the situation of children and youth who had been uniquely affected by the violence.¹⁶

The assessment took place in four stages:

Phase 1 (July 2005): Eric Stover and Marieke Wierda conducted a pre-assessment trip to northern Uganda where they visited six receptions centers for LRA returnees (one was closed) in the districts of Gulu, Lira, Pader, and Soroti. They met with the government’s chief peace negotiator, Betty Bigombe, and the chairman of the Amnesty Commission, Justice P.K.K. Onega, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations and district government officials.

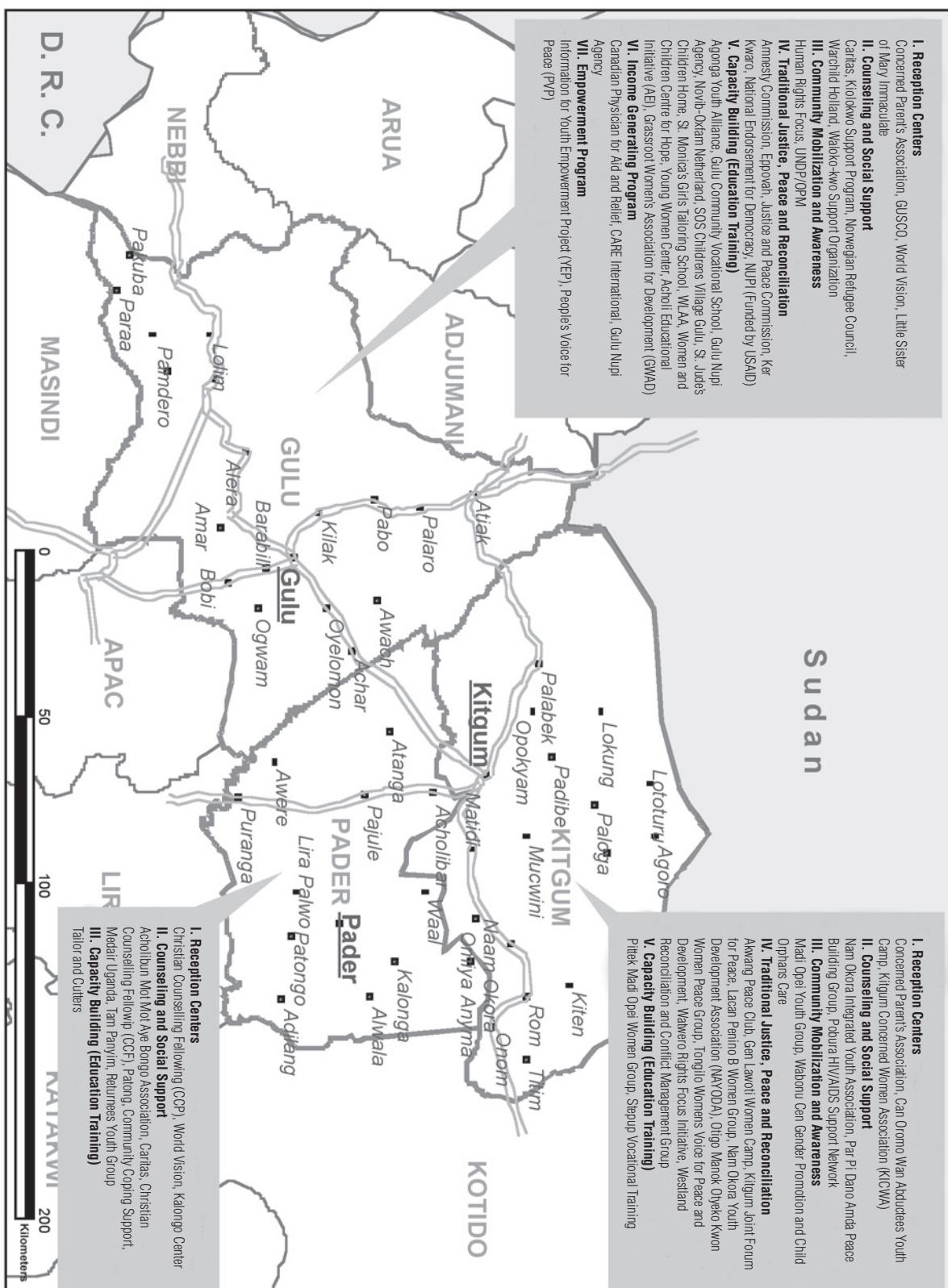
Phase 2 (September 2005): Sandrine Perrot used a standardized questionnaire to survey 72 community-based organizations oriented toward children and youth in towns and internally displaced camps in northern Uganda. Meanwhile, Peter Hoffman worked in New York gathering U.N. and NGO assessments of programs targeting war-affected children in northern Uganda. Perrot's report identifies several gaps in programmatic coverage and helped to ensure the best use of time by the assessment team in October.

Phase 3 (October and November 2005): The assessment team—comprised of Erin Baines, Eric Stover, and Marieke Wierda—travelled to northern Uganda. Mary Page and Phuong Pham accompanied the team, and Patrick Vinck provided advice and assistance in Kampala. Michael Otim, Project Coordinator, Gulu District NGO Forum, also accompanied the team for part of the trip. The assessment team met with community and traditional leaders, district and national officials, and representatives of local nongovernmental organizations and international aid agencies, including a representative of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (see APPENDIX B). Stover and Pham visited the office of all of the reception centers for LRA returnees and attend a 2-day meeting, sponsored by UNICEF, on the future role of the centers. Erin Baines and Michael Otim continued the mission until November 12, travelling to meet youth groups in Kitgum and Pader, and returning to Kampala to meet with representatives of the Amnesty Commission, Ker Kwaro Acholi and District Peace Teams.

Phase 4 (December 2005 and January 2006): The final assessment report is hereby submitted to the MacArthur Foundation and the Canadian government with recommendations to fund several “stand alone” projects and the establishment of a local trust fund for war-affected children and youth in northern Uganda.

The remainder of this report contains five chapters and several appendices. Chapter III provides an update on the current situation in northern Uganda. Chapter IV examines the plight of vulnerable children. Chapter V describes the activities of youth groups, especially in the internally displaced camps. Chapter VI traces the development of traditional and formal justice mechanisms in northern Uganda. Finally, Chapter VII lays out a vision for a local trust fund that, after the initiation of the “stand alone projects,” could continue to provide funds to a wide range of organizations in the northern districts and projects aimed at youth and children in the North.

Map - Assessed Organizations Active in Northern Uganda



III. CURRENT SITUATION IN NORTHERN UGANDA

In the words of the UN Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland: “Northern Uganda is the biggest neglected humanitarian crisis in the world.”¹⁷ More than 80 percent of the people of Kitgum and Pader—roughly 1.5 million people—live in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Often just a few miles from their original homes and farms, families are denied access by the threat of rebel attacks, and by government restrictions on movement outside of the camp perimeter.

The Ugandan government began moving people in the North into what it called “protected villages” in the mid-1990s. From 2002, larger numbers of people were forced into these camps both by an upsurge in rebel activity and by government decree. These camps, however, did not assure protection, and lack of adequate deployments have left the camps vulnerable to rebel attacks and abductions. Families with fields within a mile or two of the camp generally feel secure enough to tend to their land, but others must farm small plots along the army-patrolled roadside. This is particularly true as some of the camps contain tens of thousands of people, so a few plots of land are by no means sufficient to feed them.

More than 80 percent of the people of Kitgum and Pader—roughly 1.5 million people—live in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Often just a few miles from their original homes and farms, families are denied access by the threat of rebel attacks, and by government restrictions on movement outside of the camp perimeter.

In their recent study¹⁸ the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies interviewed 2,300 households in 67 internally displaced camps. Their findings underscore how grave the situation is in northern Uganda:

- One-third of all children above 10 years old have lost a parent and 9 percent of children in the camps are orphans;
- Illiteracy is very high, particularly among women (84 percent);
- Only 9 percent of men and 1 percent of women have completed secondary school;
- Most people in the camps have very few possessions, and no longer have animals or access to land;
- Eighty-five percent of all households receive food aid;
- Youth idleness and unemployment are rife;
- Crime rates are extraordinarily high in the camps, with up to 14 percent of respondents claiming that a crime had been committed against a member of their household in the last month; and
- One third heard a gunshot daily, or several times a week, contributing to insecurity.

Moreover, a health and mortality survey conducted during the first six months of 2005 among IDPs in Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader districts found that both “the crude mortality rate (CMR) and under five mortality rate (U5MR) were well above respective emergency thresholds (1 per 10,000 per day and 2 per 10,000 per day)...and were four times higher than non-crisis levels in Kitgum and Pader districts.”¹⁹

Extreme poverty is pervasive in northern Uganda. In Gulu district alone, 65 percent of the population live below the national poverty line (less than \$US 1 a day) compared to 35 percent for the rest of the country. According to a three-year development plan, Gulu district, like most northern districts suffers from “low productivity; limited business expansion and investment in rural areas; environmental degradation and mismanagement in around the IDP camps; high levels of gender-based violence; and gender disparity in terms of access to education, productive resources and benefits...and participation in development activities.”²⁰

Despite this dire situation, the Ugandan government has done little to ease the suffering of the people in the North, leaving the response to the crisis largely in the hands of UN agencies, international humanitarian organizations, and local nongovernmental organizations.

Despite this dire situation, the Ugandan government has done little to ease the suffering of the people in the North, leaving the response to the crisis largely in the hands of UN agencies, international humanitarian organizations, and local nongovernmental organizations.²¹

Many traditional and religious leaders and humanitarian workers in northern Uganda have long argued that the only way to give IDPs confidence to return to their homes and villages is a negotiated peace settlement with the Lord’s Resistance Army. Various mechanisms have been put forward to advance this goal. Some have argued that inducements, such as a complete amnesty for the LRA and the provision of “reintegration packages,” would greatly diminish the number of rebel combatants and undermine the group’s central command. Others believe the UN should intervene through the deployment of peacekeeping forces and human rights monitors. While the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has now deployed human rights monitors in the North, it is unlikely the UN will deploy peacekeeping forces in the foreseeable future.

At present, government officials state the LRA has been seriously weakened and that the war is virtually over. Grace Okello, the Minister for Rehabilitation of the North in the Office of the Prime Minister’s Office told the assessment team that the government is shifting from an emergency response into a Recovery and Development Plan for the North.

Security Situation

The government's position that the war is winding down seems questionable in the absence of a major shift in the military situation and with the senior LRA leadership at large. Low intensity warfare continues to persist in the North. During our visit in October 2005 the LRA carried out three ambushes on NGO vehicles with several fatalities. These attacks were followed by an ambush on an international de-mining group in southern Sudan and an assault, in the town of Gulu, against a British aid worker. Weeks later, the LRA massacred 23 civilians in two separate ambushes in Pader District. At the same time, the LRA made its first known movement into the Democratic Republic of Congo.

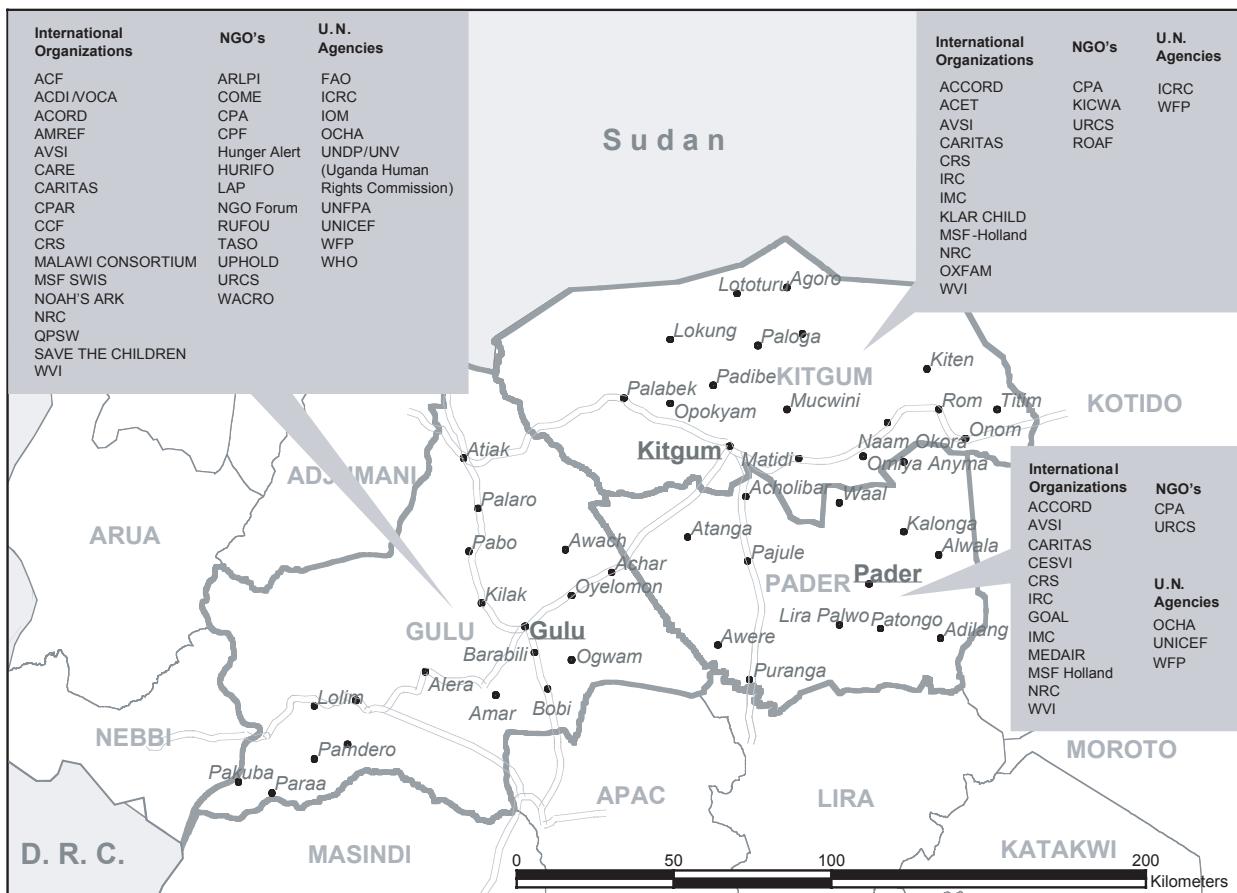
Humanitarian aid workers now speculate that the LRA is targeting the international community. Several people told us of the existence of a letter or "directive" by a LRA commander stating that NGOs were targets because "the ICC comes in the form of NGOs." However, we were unable to verify the existence or authenticity of the letter. These developments have given ICC opponents ammunition to argue that the court should not have become involved in northern Uganda, particularly as it has so far been unable to carry out arrests.

Provision of Aid

Foreign donors contribute about \$150 million in aid to the North through the Consolidated Appeals Process.²² Food aid is in kind (food delivered in the North is bought in the South). While most households in the internally displaced camps receive food aid in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader, 30 percent either do not receive it or only receive it irregularly.²³

Sadly, the war in the North has led to competition between donors who often avoid coordinating their activities because, as one donor put it, "everyone wants to score." While several coordination groups of donors exist in Kampala, including the Donor Technical Group for Northern Uganda, they tend to be venues for the presentation of report or sharing of information, and rarely set out cooperative approaches that donors can rally behind. In the meantime, Gulu, the largest town in the North, is bristling with international organizations. Among them are the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the recently established field branch of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), OCHA, UNDP, and many nongovernmental organizations. Local District government offices attempt to coordinate the work of local NGOs and register their activities, but are themselves under-resourced and weak (particularly in Kitgum and Pader). In essence, a lack of coordination and overlap in programmes remains a major problem throughout the northern districts.

Map -Major Organizations active in Northern Uganda (Source: OCHA, 2004)



Capacity building is practically nonexistent among local nongovernmental groups and community-based organizations, commonly referred to as CBOs. Resources and technical skills remain low: representatives of 12 local groups in Gulu told us that 7 of these organizations had a computer and only 3 had access to the Internet. These organizations readily admit that they lack the ability to take on large, long-term projects but express a keen interest in doing so. The problem, a UN official said, is not the lack of funding but the general lack of capacity to implement programs. He warned that it would be irresponsible to fund organizations without first building up their capacity to operate programs in an often dangerous and uncertain environment.

IV. VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Children in northern Uganda—and especially those living in IDP camps—have suffered terribly over the past two decades of war and can be seen as the main victims of this conflict. Some observers estimate that the LRA has abducted at least 20,000 children and youth, although others claim that the figure is far higher. Of these, 46 percent are believed to be children below 15 years. Children living in the camps have limited access to adequate health care. Researchers recently noted that among children under five, 62 percent had reported being ill in the two weeks preceding the survey. Ailments included malaria (55 percent), cough or difficulty breathing (17 percent), and diarrhoea more than three times a day (15 percent).²⁴ Extremely poor children in some Pader camps have gone to school dressed in WFP food and seed sacks.

Children in northern Uganda—and especially those living in IDP camps—have suffered terribly over the past two decades of war and can be seen as the main victims of this conflict.

This grim situation is compounded by the rise in the number of children aged 15 years or less in northern Uganda. The World Food Programme estimates that 66 percent of the population in the predominantly Acholi districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader is under the age of 15, compared to 50 percent for Uganda as a whole. Moreover, the World Bank reports that Uganda, unlike other Sub-Saharan countries, is experiencing a rapid increase in young children.²⁵

For the purposes of this assessment, we chose to focus on three categories of vulnerable children:

- Former LRA abductees;
- Night commuters; and
- Children living in underserved IDP camps.

All of these children have been affected in some way by the violence, including displacement, loss of family members and friends, witnessing horrific events, and lack of access to health care, education and other services.

Until recently, several programs in northern Uganda have focused primarily on children who were LRA returnees, working on the assumption that this group constituted the most vulnerable. However, that picture has begun to change as the conflict drags on and as its profoundly negative impact becomes more apparent. District governments, NGOs, and UN agencies like UNICEF are now expanding their activities to encompass a larger group of children at risk. They have also opened discussions with the reception centers to broaden their focus to include other categories of vulnerable children and community-based responses.

This trend is also reflected in our findings. In an earlier report, two of the authors (Stover and Wierda) assessed the general situation of war-affected children in the North with particular attention to LRA returnees. Similarly, the MacArthur Foundation consultant, Sandrine Perrot, surveyed 73 nongovernmental organizations that provide services to children and youth in the northern districts (see Appendix A). Stover

and Wierda recommended that programs directed at supporting war-affected children and youth should not be limited to LRA returnees but target those most in need, especially those in underserved IDP camps. Perrot recommended, among other things, that capacity building and improving the coordination of activities between the reception centers and other NGOs and CBOs should be improved. Her report also emphasized the need to increase community-involvement in programs for war-affected children and youth.

New Policy Directions

Several factors have prompted the LRA reception centers and local and international organizations to rethink their strategies *vis a vis* LRA returnees and vulnerable children in general. First, the number of returnees has declined significantly over the past 18 months. This diminution was noted during our visit to the centers in October 2005. One center, in Pajule, had closed, and the majority of centers reported a decrease of 30 to 50 percent in the number of incoming returnees over the past year.

Second, humanitarian organizations and some of the reception centers recognize that the disproportionate attention paid to returnees in the form of media attention, “resettlement packages,” and direct cash aid to returnees and their families has caused jealousy and resentment in some communities.²⁶

Third, recent studies, though preliminary, suggest that many LRA returnees do not pass through the reception centers²⁷ and that far too much attention has been spent on LRA returnees and not on vulnerable children in general. Again, the factors which lead to vulnerability are now recognized as being more complex and in need of more holistic approaches. As a result of these factors, many reception centers have expressed a willingness to broaden the scope of their work. This is an important step as the centers have trained and dedicated staff and, in comparison to other local nongovernmental organizations, have greater access to resources. Thus, it is believed these centers could play a critical role in expanding services to more categories of vulnerable children in the war-affected districts in the North.

Two recent initiatives reflect the desire to formulate new policy directions on behalf of war-affected children and youth in northern Uganda. The first of these took place in October 2005 when the Gulu district government and eleven Gulu-based local and international organizations, including the two largest reception centers World Vision and GUSCO, signed a “Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)” to “work together to develop mechanisms to identify the most vulnerable children [in the district of Gulu] and to address the factors that increase vulnerability of children in IDP settings.”²⁸

According to the MOU, the Gulu district government and other MOU signatories will establish Child Protection Committees (CPCs) in IDP camps in 9 sub-districts and potentially expand to include all Gulu sub-districts and the districts of Kitgum, Pader, and Lira. In effect, the CPCs will act as child advocates in the camps by identifying vulnerable children and referring them to the appropriate agencies and district authorities. The anticipated outcomes are:

- To enroll more children, especially girls and the most vulnerable, into the education system, recognizing education is a fundamental child protection tool;

- To address issues of sexual gender-based violence through prevention measures of awareness raising and advocacy; response through provision of medical services; psychosocial support and counselling; and working with key stakeholders including the police and UPDF;
- To link vulnerable children to vocational and skills training and youth to apprenticeships to offer viable alternatives to the lures of underage recruitment, street hawking, and the commercial sex industry;
- To prevent HIV/AIDS and respond to the impact of HIV/AIDS;
- To provide support to youth groups, clubs, recreational and sports activities;
- To provide health services, including reproductive health services; and
- To increase access to appropriate legal services/remedies to a greater number of children in contact with the law.

An integral part of the interagency child protection strategy will be the creation of a database on vulnerable children that come into contact with community-based groups. The information generated through the database will be used for the following purposes:

- To map incidences of child rights violations and abuse, including: types of incidence, those groups most vulnerable, and geographic locations;
- To inform programming through information gleaning, including: identification of those most vulnerable or at risk, effectiveness of programme response; geographic comparisons, and gaps in programming;
- To support and inform advocacy initiatives; and
- To monitor the situation on the ground including night commuting.

The second initiative comprised a two-day workshop, attended by representatives of the reception centers and district governments under the auspices of the Amnesty Commission and UNICEF, held in Lira in October 2005. The principal objectives of the workshop were “to review good practice principles and mechanisms for improved collaboration and coordination, including harmonization of reunification packages, strengthening follow up methodologies, and improving data collection management; and to reach practical agreement on how to integrate follow up with community-based children protection.” During the workshop, Stover and Pham presented their proposal, already shared in separate meetings with all the reception centers, to improve the capacity of the centers to collect and analyze data on LRA returnees. The workshop participants agreed to implement the database proposal and, over time, to expand their activities to include more categories of vulnerable children. These decisions were critical as they set the groundwork for the implementation of an “Interagency Child Protection Strategy” that could eventually encompass all of the war-affected districts in northern Uganda.

We recommend that the MacArthur Foundation, the Government of Canada, and other donors fund the following projects to support vulnerable children in northern Uganda:

PROJECTS TO PROTECT AND SUPPORT VULNERABLE CHILDREN

1. ***Support the data management capacity of local organizations in northern Uganda so they can respond to the needs of vulnerable children, including orphans and returnees from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).*** The Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley and the Payson Center for International Development and Technology Transfer at Tulane University have begun a project: (a) to improve the data management capacity of LRA reception centers to track and provide follow-up services to returnees; (b) to improve the reporting capacity of the reception centers and publish a report on the demographics of LRA returnees and their experiences and (c) to assist in the creation of a database for orphans and vulnerable children in northern Uganda in collaboration with UNICEF and the district governments of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, and Lira. This effort will include a meeting of stakeholders in Gulu in early 2006.

Contact: Eric Stover, Director, Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley, 460 Stephens Hall #2300, Berkeley, CA 94702-2300. Tel: (510) 642-0965; Email: hrc@globetrotter.berkeley.edu

2. ***Support UNICEF to conduct a comprehensive study of night commuting and develop appropriate programs through the hiring of a technical person to develop a "terms of reference" to put to tender.*** The “push-pull factor” of night commuting appears to have changed over the past two years. It appears that children and youth are still continuing to commute for reasons other than avoiding abduction. In a recent study of one night commuting shelter run by Médecins sans Frontiers in Gulu it was found that a significant number of children were going to the shelter for reasons other than security. If this is the case in the majority of the shelters, then new programme interventions are urgently required to address the main causes of night commuting. In order to determine an approach, further study will be needed to create programs for community-based approaches that address the root of this problem.

Contact: Michael Copland, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF-Gulu, Kisozi House, P.O. Box 7047, Kampala, Uganda. Tel: 256-77-222-345. Email: mcopland@unicef.org

3. ***Support the construction and activities of an “education and skills training center” in Pader district for young mothers and other children that have no or little access to formal schooling*** The initiative is the creation of Alice Acan, a visionary leader and the director of the LRA reception center in Pader operated by Christian Counselling Fellowship (CCF Pader). Acan is in the process of transforming the reception center, which is essentially a compound of tents and huts, into an education and skills training center for young mothers and vulnerable children in the Pader camp. Pader is the least accessible district with high insecurity: cases of continuous abductions of children and youth; attacks in the camps; and ambushing of vehicles. The land is already acquired, construction plans have been developed, and a land survey will take place in early 2006. The center will engage 70 child mothers in different income generating projects in the first year. Such projects take on added significance as a recent Fafo survey found that 26 percent of households in the IDP camps are female headed. The new center will provide 50 secondary school scholarships per year, as well as serve as a center for psychosocial training for social workers and child counsellors from Pader and other districts. This initiative could also serve as a pilot project for a different approach to be taken by the reception centers. The reception centers are well placed to assist children and youth who want to make a better life, since they will know both the individuals involved and their circumstances. The new center has the potential of being replicated in other isolated and underserved camps with modest amounts of funding.

Contact: Alice Acan, Christian Counselling Fellowship-CCF Pader, Private Bag Pader, Pader, Uganda. Tel: 256-77-551-1430. Email: hcccmothers@mail.com

V. INVESTING IN YOUTH

Opportunities for the young people in northern Uganda are very few. Apart from municipalities, there are virtually no secondary and tertiary schools in camps where the majority of youth live. Even where there is access, youth are often consumed with meeting their basic needs for daily survival. Seventy percent of camp residents above the age of ten told Fafo researchers that they had no income in the previous month.²⁹ In another survey of youth in camps, 75 percent argued food security was one of the most pressing needs they faced on a daily basis.³⁰ Youth are so pre-occupied with daily struggle and survival that they are not able to develop the skills necessary to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Youth are so pre-occupied with daily struggle and survival that they are not able to develop the skills necessary to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Research has shown that youth are the most likely targets of LRA attacks and abduction, but also of UPDF abuses based on suspected collaboration with rebels. Overburdened with responsibilities of domestic or agricultural labour for their families, youth are forced to work in areas (gardens, trips to water bore holes, collection of firewood) where LRA attacks are most frequent.³¹

Not surprisingly, many youth succumb to hopelessness, giving into drinking and other negative coping mechanisms. In search of economic alternatives, male youth often ‘volunteer’ to join home guard units (local defence forces) or the UPDF, including boys under the legal age of 18.³² Girls between 13 and 17 years of age are very likely to drop out of school; some elope with men in the hope of a better life. Others engage in prostitution, particularly with the UPDF, who are among the only ones to have a regular income.³³ Sexual and gender based violence is also very high in the camps, but when a girl is raped, unsatisfactory follow-up occurs by authorities, deterring reporting of abuses.³⁴ Out of economic desperation, parents will frequently try to negotiate a settlement of money rather than press charges.

Youth returning from the LRA have to slot into these desperate circumstances, and many return to find their parents or relatives now living in squalid camps, or to learn their parents have since died. Stigma and discrimination mean that many formerly abducted youth lack parental or community support, and must learn to fend for themselves. Due to psychological trauma, many find it impossible to return to school or to integrate among the local population in camps. For these reasons, many LRA returnees prefer to stay in the towns or even join the UPDF.³⁵ For those who do return to camps, the humanitarian and psychological support they received at reception centres does not continue in the camps, where little to no follow-up has been conducted. In Anaka camp, only 3 of the more than 50 formerly abducted youth we interviewed had received a reinsertion package from the Amnesty Commission.

Youth are rarely, if ever, taught leadership skills. Nor do they have many opportunities to participate in the political life of their communities. Several entities, including the World Bank, the Acholi Program, and Northern Ugandan Peace Initiative, have sponsored community development projects, but young people have usually not been a target beneficiary of these programmes. A handful of organizations, such as War Child Holland, focus on extra-curricular activities for youth. War Child Canada has recently opened an office, with intentions to increase legal services and advocacy for youth in the region, although it is too early to tell if it has had any significant impact.³⁶

Given the grave physical, psychological and social toll of the conflict on youth, it is surprising more organizations have not devoted resources or designed strategies specific to their particular needs. In the study *A Generation at Risk*, only 2 out of 22 humanitarian agencies had youth specific policies, and only 5 had general programmes that extended to include youth as a beneficiary (namely returnees or orphans).³⁷ Without youth specific interventions, war affected youth tend to fall through the cracks of humanitarian or development designed programmes.

Promoting Youth Organizations

Despite the challenges faced by youth, there are a number of very promising examples of youth choosing to organize themselves. In Gulu, at least 10 youth associations have formally registered for NGO status and are currently receiving modest funds.

One example is a group of female LRA returnees called “Empowering Hands.” These women use some of the skills that they acquired in the bush—such as midwifery and leadership—to develop income-generating activities. Many of the women have an intimate knowledge of the conflict and thus can play a unique role in peace building. Empowering Hands seeks to (1) establish peer support groups in certain camps in Gulu, which has been very successful; and (2) carry out other community activities. A similar group exists for young men, called “Information for Youth Empowerment Programme,” although Empowering Hands is better known and seemingly has more momentum.

The majority of youth NGOs are composed of war-affected youth. Gulu Youth for Action (GYFA) has a volunteer membership with an office, programme director and support staff. The focus is on providing human rights training, psychosocial support and income generating activities to other youth based in camps in and around Gulu town centre. Associations with similar mandates, such as WATWERO Youth Association, exist in Kitgum, and to a lesser extent, in Pader.

In the IDP camps, youth groups have proliferated, with many forming around livelihood alternatives (such as brick making, horticulture or livestock) and social activities. In Anaka, a Northern Uganda Peace Initiative (NUPI) project combines livelihood projects for youth with the need to promote reintegration by forming ‘mixed’ groups of LRA returnees and other youth that work together making bricks. The group has helped soften negative attitudes in the camp towards LRA returnees.

In the Kitgum Matidi camp, youth (both returnee and internally displaced youth) have formed a cultural dance group. They are self-taught and have carved their own instruments out of wood. Such cultural youth groups are found throughout many camps in northern Uganda, and were described by members as a constructive way of dealing with some of the traumatic experiences of life in the camp and/or stemming from their experiences in the bush.

Camp-based youth groups and associations (with membership anywhere between 10-50) show enormous leadership potential, with individuals often emerging as mentors among their peers. In Lira-Paluo camp, Pader District, young female and male leaders illustrated resilience and aptitude in their roles as community leaders among their peers. Given the opportunity, both individuals and groups potentially

can form the next generation of civil society. For instance, in Agoro camp, youth formed an association after a large massacre in order to provide coffins and funeral services to affected families. Today, the group has legally formed an organization, Agoro Community Development Association (ACDA) that provides educational and vocational training to youth from different camps, opening a small office in Kitgum with the support of RESPECT Canada.

Groups in camps are often loose associations, unable to absorb grants because they have neither official legal status nor access to bank accounts. To realize their full potential, the groups need constant mentoring and creative ways of delivering monetary support. In some cases, more formal and legally organized youth groups in town centres provide this role. For instance, Empowering Hands, GYFA, WATWERO and others support the work of sister groups in nearly a dozen camps in Gulu District. ACDA in Kitgum has registered over 600 grass-roots youth groups in Kitgum District alone, although it lacks the capacity to support them as yet. Similar lists exist in Gulu District, housed at the Gulu District NGO Forum. The youth NGOs based in town centres may be well-placed to identify and support youth in camps.

Town-based youth groups also need to develop their capacity to launch and maintain long-term programs. Quaker Peace and Social Witness has provided critical mentoring and skills building to Empowering Hands. In addition, the American Jewish World Service funds six youth groups; their project officer, Matthew Emory, frequently travels to Uganda to assess their activities and to help build their capacity. In a meeting at the Gulu NGO Forum, youth groups that we met with were very positive about the role that the Forum had played. Youth groups described the Forum as “parental” in its guidance, and many looked to it as a valuable source of information, including on where to apply for funding.

Linking Youth to Information and Communication Technologies

For two decades, young people in northern Uganda have been denied the opportunity of attending a university. According to a recent survey, less than 1 percent of the population in northern Uganda has a university education.³⁸ In order for future leaders to achieve their inspired goals, they will need university training in economics, medicine, public health, political science, and the social sciences. Moreover, few projects in the North seek to provide youth with access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Yet bridging the technological gap is increasingly recognized as an important step toward sustainable human development. Increased access to ICT can empower youth, strengthen civil society, and open doors to the outside world. While northern Ugandans struggle to obtain essential needs like food and adequate health care, it is equally important that they invest in long-term human capacity building of their youth.

There is a recognized need for a university-based center to initiate the development of ICT in northern Uganda. Such a center could serve as a regional leader in the diffusion of innovation and technologies as well as a hub for scientific and technological references. The University of Gulu is uniquely placed to play that role. Now in its fourth year of operations, Gulu University has placed ICT at the core of its mission to bring about social transformation and conservation of biodiversity in the northern districts of Uganda.

“Our main purpose,” the dean of the business school at Gulu University told us, “is to bring the community to the university and to take the university to the community.” In fulfilling this mission, the medical school provides its students with bicycles so they can provide medical services to three local hospitals. The School of Agriculture has an active outreach program to train local farmers in new agro-technologies. And the university has invested in ICT, building a unit dedicated to computer literacy and requiring all its students—numbering around 800—to take at least one computer class.

At present, there are some 50 computers for the entire campus and only 10 of these computers are connected to the Internet. Such progress notwithstanding, the university could be doing more to provide its students and youth and their organizations with greater access to ICT. Global trends in the application of information and communication technologies demonstrate that they can transform the several interconnected functions of a university. These technologies offer the potential to strengthen conventional education while rapidly transforming distance education. They not only expand the research and development opportunities but also strengthen libraries with access to an unlimited body of digital information globally, and bring considerable efficiency and effectiveness to university management.

Gulu University should adopt a program that first builds its internal ICT capacity and then extends its outreach to nongovernmental and community organizations. The Payson Center for International Development and Technology Transfer has successfully implemented similar programs at universities in the Congo and Rwanda in a fairly short period of time. The approach aims (1) to use ICT to improve instructional design and practices; (2) to increase access to the Internet in order to facilitate student and faculty access to e-resources and research materials through the installation of a Local Area Network and increased Internet bandwidth; and (3) to provide reliable power supply to computer laboratories and to internet connections through the installation of solar panels.

Once these institutional needs have been addressed, the program can extend ICT services to the larger community. First, it can provide ICT training to young leaders and entrepreneurs. The training would introduce selected youth to the fundamental skills and competencies for word processing software, worksheet, PowerPoint, email exchange, and internet browsing. In addition, the youth will also be exposed to university setting and it is hoped that it will later inspire them to seek post-secondary schooling. Second, it can provide university scholarships to youth that emphasize the application of ICT into the student’s chosen field of study. Finally, the program can create a human rights digital library and electronic courses on human rights and transitional justice for the benefit of community-based and nongovernmental organizations.

INVESTING IN YOUTH

1. ***Support the Gulu District NGO Forum through its Youth Advisory Board to strengthen youth leadership and organization.*** Funding will go to the NGO Forum to (a) support 12 youth NGOs and youth-led groups in IDP camps on livelihood, reintegration and social change, including human rights; (b) provide small grants to up to 30 youth groups based in IDP camps; (c) support two NGOs with expertise in the field of capacity enhancement to provide trainings on management and fundraising and hands on mentoring; (d) recruit an international volunteer to provide mentorship in planning and implementation and to support monitoring and report writing; (e) provide 25 university scholarships to support war affected youth in obtaining a degree in the area of development studies or related degree; and (f) publish a year-end report to illustrate the potential of the youth leadership project, to be analysed and developed in consultation with grantees. The Gulu District NGO Forum should also be encouraged to expand its activities to other districts.

Contact: Michael Otim, program Coordinator, Gulu District NGO Forum, Plat 5 Jivan Abdji Road, P.O. Box 1, Gulu, Uganda. Tel: 256-77-62-63-82. Email: mikeotim@yahoo.com or gnf@otlonline.co.ug

2. ***Support an Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) program at Gulu University*** The Payson Center for International Development and Technology Transfer of Tulane University proposes to initiate ICT development in northern Uganda. The project will seek to (a) provide youth groups with greater access and training in ICT; (b) provide ICT university scholarships to youth; (c) build Gulu University's overall ICT capacity; and (d) create a digital library and electronic course on human rights and transitional justice for the benefit of community-based and nongovernmental organizations. All projects will be based at Gulu University under the direction of Chris Mafabi, Head of the Department of Computer Sciences.

Contact: Phuong Pham and Patrick Vinck, Payson Center for International Development and Technology Transfer, Tulane University. Tel: 504-388-1676. Email: drph2@yahoo.com Also, Deputy Vice Chancellor Mary Okwakol, Gulu University, Gulu, Kampala.

VI. TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

[T]he Amnesty Commission is still an institution that appears to be trusted and respected on the local level and could play a significant role in the conceptualization and implementation of new transitional justice mechanisms.

It might have been expected that the justice versus peace debate in northern Uganda would have settled down after the International Criminal Court (ICC) made public its indictments against top leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in October 2005. But this is not the case. The ICC continues to suffer from negative perceptions and has few supporters in the North. A population-based survey conducted in May 2005 found that the majority of respondents (73 percent) knew nothing or very little about the ICC's existence and work.³⁹

The overriding complaint against the ICC is that it lacks transparency and has failed to engage the public. Although the ICC prosecutor has met on several occasions with Acholi traditional and religious leaders, a number of people told us that the process was futile in the light of the indictments, and that the court, in the final analysis, had been insensitive to local concerns and "did not have a listening ear." Even though the indictments were issued at a time when the peace process itself was in considerable trouble, there is a perception that the ICC "with one simple act, shattered local processes".

Although the Ugandan government's chief peace negotiator, Betty Bigombe, has said she will continue to use incentives to entice rank and file LRA out of the bush, several informants told us that the ICC indictments will undermine this effort. Some of these negative perceptions could probably be overcome if the ICC were to increase its outreach activities and/or establish a permanent presence in the North.

In recent years, an alternative vision has emerged to end the conflict in northern Uganda, mainly inspired by the religious and traditional Acholi leaders. The approach involves pursuing peace talks while simultaneously offering amnesty to LRA rebels and reintegrating them into their communities. To this end, the Ugandan parliament passed the Amnesty Act of 2000 and created an Amnesty Commission to oversee the process of reintegrating former rebel combatants into their communities.

The reputation of the Amnesty Commission is strong among those northern Ugandans who are aware of its work. Yet it lacks the expertise and resources to capitalize on this good will by initiating discussions aimed at implementing new programs. The Amnesty Commission displayed considerable demoralization and disorientation following the ICC indictments (as demonstrated by the comments of the Head of the AC, Justice Onega, to the press in the days following the indictments). It is also unclear what the implications are for the Amnesty Act if the ICC Bill is passed into law. On the other hand, the Amnesty Commission is still an institution that appears to be trusted and respected on the local level and could play a significant role in the conceptualization and implementation of new transitional justice mechanisms.

On this basis, we recommend that the Amnesty Commission expand its mandate to include a broader range of transitional justice issues. For example, consideration should be given to reforming the amnesty process so that it is more inclusive and better meets the expectations of victims of LRA crimes. A recent population-based survey in northern Uganda found that a majority of respondents (65 percent) expressed a level of support for the work of the Amnesty Commission, but they also said some form of acknowledgement and/or retribution—confessing wrong-doing; apologizing to the victims and community; punishment; and/or compensation to victims—should be required of those granted amnesty. These elements are key to successfully reintegrating former LRA members into the community. The amnesty process could be expanded to include truth-telling mechanisms, measures for commemoration of victims, and reparations for harm suffered.⁴⁰ Such initiatives could also play a much-needed complementary role to the ICC. Although the question of whether the Amnesty Commission is the best-suited mechanism for this remains to be resolved, there is clearly a need for victims of this conflict to have access to forms of justice beyond what is currently available.

Amnesty commissioners Justice Peter Onega and Sister Mary Okee also have expressed the desire to ‘shift directions’ and begin working more closely with traditional leaders. In addition to exploring programme alternatives to reinsertion packages (such as education and community income generation), they would like to explore ways of promoting reconciliation through restorative justice initiatives, such as community-based cleansing ceremonies for LRA returnees.

The role of traditional justice mechanisms remains far from clear. The traditional leadership is still in the process of establishing itself and has undergone a tumultuous time over the last six months, with a number of leadership challenges resulting in the Paraa conference where everyone was asked to rally behind the Paramount Chief for the Acholi, Rwot David Arcana II. However, many challenges remain. The traditional leadership is weakened by the fact that it is unrepresentative (in terms of excluding women and youth) and still needs to establish its legitimacy, particularly among young people. Traditional ceremonies have now been documented, most notably through the extensive research conducted by the Liu Institute.⁴¹ Some practices, such as cleansing ceremonies, are widely practiced among the Acholi, but more elaborate restorative justice practices and reconciliation ceremonies are considered by many unsuitable in their form and will need adapting to the unique circumstances of the war. Common elements such as truth-telling and compensation may be distilled from these practices and implemented in other forms. These are clearly concepts that resonate at the local level and should be explored further.

In short, what is needed are additional discussions on how these various mechanisms best relate to each other, to build towards a comprehensive and integrated strategy for justice in the North, where the ICC, the Amnesty Commission and traditional justice are seen to be synchronized rather than as contradictory. In this regard, ICTJ is planning to hold a national stakeholders meeting on transitional justice in the North in early March 2006. We recommend that limited funding be provided to allow for optimum participation by groups in the North in the meeting.

Consolidating the Debate on Peace, Justice, Reconciliation, and Human Rights

A national debate has recently started to gather momentum around whether there is a need for a truth and reconciliation process in Uganda. President Museveni mentioned it in a speech immediately after the death of former President Obote, but his reasons for doing so may have been political. However, a number of Kampala-based actors think a truth commission for Uganda is necessary, particularly because Uganda has violent incidents in its past that continue to be shrouded in mystery, and that are exploited for political purposes. A recent initiative to address the historical roots of conflict in Uganda was spearheaded by the Ugandan Historical Memory and Reconciliation Council, consisting of academics and retired civil servants. In its initial phases, participatory research into the roots of conflict was conducted in Luwero Triangle and northern Uganda, with the desire to expand to neighbouring regions.

The Refugee Law Project, which is affiliated with Makerere University, has called for increased and co-ordinated efforts to stimulate a national debate on reconciliation.⁴² Similarly, The Afrika Studies Centre (Mbale University) Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies (Gulu University), the Human Rights and Peace Centre (Faculty of Law, Makerere University) and the Liu Institute for Global Issues (University of British Columbia, Canada) have collaborated to produce an extensive study on the conflict. *Hidden War/Forgotten People* recommends truth and reconciliation as one of the most vital means of moving beyond the current cycle of violence.⁴³

Much remains to be done to determine whether the idea of a truth commission for Uganda has grass-roots appeal and if so, what exactly it should cover. It is also not immediately apparent whether a national truth-seeking exercise would impact positively upon the conflict in the North. There may also be doubts that a full and independent inquiry into the past would really be allowed within the current political climate in Uganda. Nonetheless, additional debate on transitional justice and the need for a truth and reconciliation commission in Uganda is clearly needed at the national level.

In terms of reconciliation, several initiatives are already underway at the grass-roots level. The Northern Ugandan Peace Initiative through the Acholi Peace Forum, Justice and Peace Commission, Conciliation Resources, Acholi Religious Peace Leaders Initiative and have initiated several reconciliation based studies and dialogues in camps in Northern Uganda. The Justice and Reconciliation Project at the Liu Institute for Global Issues and CARITAS psychosocial support programme have been actively documenting grass-roots approaches to traditional justice and healing.

These various research and grass-roots led initiatives lack an overall coordinating mechanism. The Amnesty Commission, religious and traditional leaders, local government officials and academics from across Uganda often act in isolation from each other, and lack a space in which to engage each other in debate, knowledge production and policy making.

The creation of a research centre and forum on Justice, Peace, Reconciliation, and Human Rights, may lead to a consolidation of many of the lessons learned from past attempts of various actors to realize peace through traditional justice/conflict resolution, strengthening a strategic approach and furthering progress. This was recognized as early as 2000 in a Canadian assessment led by now Minister Stephen Owen, which recommended the creation of an indigenous and autonomous Centre for peace and justice research to be created in Gulu.⁴⁴ In an interview with Betty Bigombe in November 2005, she expressed interest in establishing an institution to house documentation about peace initiatives, human rights, transitional justice, and reconciliation mechanisms and begin to develop joint strategic approaches based on research, an idea she reportedly raised in a meeting with President Museveni in October 2005.

Cultural Revitalization

Traditional and religious leaders and parents complain that over-crowding in the camps, as well as extreme poverty and unemployment, has led to a breakdown of social mores among children and youth. The displacement and subsequent breakdown of familial relations means traditional transmission of culture have been disrupted. Youth have less opportunity to learn about their culture, causing tension between generations, whereas the youth regard Elders as having less relevance in their lives, and youth are regarded as disobedient, amoral and lazy among Elders. Alarmingly, some of the more positive aspects of traditional approaches may be lost, such as conflict resolution alternatives. This is particularly true in town centres. NUPI has tried to bridge this gap by bringing youth and traditional leaders together in a two-day workshop, and others such as Quaker Peace Social Witness have focused on bringing female returnees together with Elders and Rwodi. However, a more sustained approach is warranted.

The creation of a research centre and forum on Justice, Peace, Reconciliation, and Human Rights, may lead to a consolidation of many of the lessons learned from past attempts of various actors to realize peace through traditional justice/conflict resolution, strengthening a strategic approach and furthering progress.

TRADITIONAL AND FORMAL JUSTICE MECHANISMS

Support an integrated approach to transitional justice in Uganda through national and local institutions. The Amnesty Commission with other national institutions, with outside consultation, will seek to achieve this goal through four interrelated elements: a) capacity-building and development of technical expertise on transitional justice among major justice stakeholders in northern Uganda, with an early emphasis on the Amnesty Commission; b) increased dialogue towards achieving an integrated approach to transitional justice in northern Uganda, through a national stakeholders meeting, to be organized in March 2006 (already funded); c) narrowing expectation and information gaps between national stakeholders and the International Criminal Court; and d) exploring the need for a truth and reconciliation commission at a national level.

Contacts: Justice P.K.K. Onega, Chairman, Amnesty Commission, Plot 97, Bubanda Road, P.O. Box 33956, Kampala, Uganda. Tel. 256-77-509-381. Email: amnestycom@africaonline.co.ug; Zachary Lomo, Director, Refugee Law Project, Plot 9 Perryman Gardens, P.O. Box 33902. Kampala, Uganda. Tel: 077-659-731. Email: director@refugeelawproject.org

Support the creation and operation of a Centre for Justice and Reconciliation in Gulu. The center would be autonomous and independent to act as a) a forum for a range of academic and peace stakeholders to exchange lessons learned and develop complementary approaches; b) generate new research and documentation and house existing studies; c) provide outreach to community based initiatives on justice and reconciliation in northern Uganda; and d) liaise with national initiatives to stimulate debate on national reconciliation.

Contact: Fabius Okumu, Director, Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies, Gulu University, P.O. Box 166, Gulu, Uganda. Tel: 256-77-344-772. Email: fabokumu@yahoo.co.uk

VII. TRUST FUND FOR WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Informants we spoke to identified education and the creation of income-generating activities for war-affected children and youth as urgent needs in northern Uganda.⁴⁵ “At the end of the day, education is the best re-integration tool we have for children who are LRA returnees,” said Daniel Okello, Director of the Rachele Reception Center. Geoffrey Oyat of Save the Children Uganda told us: “If you don’t put [education] high on the agenda, you are going to end up with a lost generation [in northern Uganda].”

Education and income-generating activities are “equalizers” that can lower the vulnerability of disadvantaged children by giving them concrete opportunities for the future. They can also provide an important protective function for children. The normality and stability provided by daily schooling and skills training is psychologically important. Schools and training centers are places not only for the teaching of traditional academic subjects and trades, but can also serve as places for the dissemination of information about human rights, proper nutrition, and health, especially HIV/AIDS awareness. Children and youth learn quickly and can impart their knowledge to other members of the household.

National policy makers have not made education a priority in the North. Seventeen percent of school-age children do not attend primary schools in Gulu district, and it is likely that figure is much higher in other northern districts like Kitgum and Pader. (The Fafo study found that among the total adult camp population above six years of age, 75 percent reported having attended school but that only 9 percent of men and 1 percent of women reported having attended secondary school.⁴⁶) In Gulu district, the classroom to pupils ratio is 1:264 and teacher to pupils ratio is 1:69 against the recommended national ratio of 1:52. Moreover, if a family can afford to send only one child to school, it will usually be a boy. As a result, women, who comprise a large proportion of the productive labor force, suffer from high rates of illiteracy.⁴⁷

Primary education is free in northern Uganda but often there are costs imposed by parent-teacher associations to pay for teachers or basic things like firewood and salt to prepare school lunches from WFP food parcels. Even small term fees (such as 500 shillings, the equivalent of a US quarter, per term) can be prohibitive for some families in the camps. This situation is further compounded by the fact that children spend less time in school because of curfews and poor supervision by teachers. Informants reported that primary schools in the IDP camps have a difficult time recruiting teachers who would rather stay in the relative security of towns.

Secondary education is an even bigger problem in the northern districts. In Kitgum and Gulu, secondary education is only available in the towns (with the exception of Pabbo and Anaka camp). In Pader, there are some secondary schools in camps simply because they could not get into town. Seventy-seven percent of rural schools in Gulu district have been displaced, leaving over 98 percent classrooms in disuse. Most of these schools are secondary schools that have relocated to towns, which means many older children in the camps have no access to a secondary education.

Education and income-generating activities are “equalizers” that can lower the vulnerability of disadvantaged children by giving them concrete opportunities for the future.

Parents who wish to send their children to secondary schools must pay fees for boarding schools (100,000 or 150,000 Shillings per term—roughly \$US 65 to 90). This means to send one child to a secondary school, a family may have to spend as much as \$US 280 per year. (SCIU has undertaken assessment of educational needs that they may be willing to share. Other organizations like DANIDA are also active in this area through the Acholi Education Initiative. In addition, the Irish government provides a limited number of secondary school scholarships. Donors are also providing the Amnesty Commission with 1 million US dollars to implement an Education Trust.)

While we recognize that children and youth in northern Uganda need to be provided with greater access to education, it is clear that such an undertaking was far too large for the immediate objectives of this assessment. However, we believe the establishment of a Trust Fund in northern Uganda with an emphasis on education and income-generating activities for children and youth would be an important and worthwhile initiative. Such a fund could continue to support many of the projects described in this report.

TRUST FUND FOR WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN NORTHERN UGANDA

1. *A Trust Fund should be established to ensure a sustained response over a number of years to projects such as those described above. The Fund should help meet the future needs of children and youth as they recover from a destructive war and rebuild their country.* The Fund would be structured to make resources available to initiatives and/or organizations that may have difficulty accessing funding because of limited capacity to apply for and manage grants from foreign sources. The Board of the Fund would be comprised of local, national, and international stakeholders from a variety of sectors who would oversee the selection and disbursement of grants. A small local staff would represent the Fund in Northern Uganda. Additional background information is found in Appendix C. A trust fund term sheet is available upon request.

Contact: Mary Page, MacArthur Foundation, 140 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60603, USA, Tel: 1-312-726-8000. Email: mpage@macfound.org

APPENDIX A

AN ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMS FOR THE REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEES FROM THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY IN NORTHERN UGANDA

By Sandrine Perrot⁴⁸

December 2005

Executive Summary

The conflict in northern Uganda has had a dramatic and deleterious effect on the northern part of the country. Over the course of the war, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has abducted 25,000 children to serve as soldiers, porters, slaves and "wives" of the commanders. A number of those abducted have now returned from the bush, albeit to communities and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps that are in shambles. This report maps out some of the existing reintegration programs and highlights gaps in those programs' provision of reintegration services. Additionally, this report notes some of the broader challenges United Nations (UN) agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community based organizations (CBOs) have had in establishing and implementing comprehensive reintegration schemes.

Field research in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader was conducted in October 2005. That research involved interviewing individuals and focus groups, including ex-abductees, field practitioners working with various UN agencies, NGOs and CBOs, traditional and religious leaders and local authorities. In addition, research teams completed 73 questionnaires with representatives of organizations working with children and youth in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader, including in IDP camps in those districts. Finally, researchers participated in and observed sensitization and counselling programs in the camps.

The research identified different operational types of reintegration programs, each of which has its own strengths and liabilities:

- **Reception Centers for LRA Returnees:** There are currently 13 reception centers in northern Uganda that are, in large measure, efficient in operation.
- **Counselling:** The number of organizations providing counselling services has increased vastly since 2003, although there are still some areas where there are no counselling programs (Alero). Interviewees expressed three primary criticisms of current counselling programs: (1) they are too short; (2) they are insufficiently diversified to meet the needs of the returnees; and (3) the counsellors are inadequately trained.
- **Sensitization Programs:** There is no official or national sensitization campaign to help communities accept LRA returnees. Mega FM has conducted radio broadcasts to encourage combatants to come out of the bush, although the impact of those broadcasts has been hampered by the close relationship between Mega FM and military officials.

- **Traditional and Religious Ceremonies:** Interviewees had mixed feelings about traditional and religious ceremonies: While some promoted them as a means of reconciliation, others found that they conflicted with their Christian values. The major liability of these programs is the limited number of them in operation.
- **Education:** There are a number of formal educational and vocational programs in northern Uganda. Interviewees expressed frustration with the failure of these programs to account for the diverse needs of returnees and provide marketable skills. Current educational programs focus largely on children, offering few services to adult returnees. Vocational training is almost exclusively in carpentry and tailoring, despite there being no market for either in northern Uganda. Neither educational nor vocational programs seem to have made accommodations for the special needs of returning child mothers, who often require nursery care in order to attend classes.
- **Income Generating Activities:** There was a large demand among interviews for opportunities for income generating activities. Labora Farm is one of the more prominent, albeit controversial, programs meeting this need.
- **Empowerment:** Interviewees also expressed a desire not to be treated as traumatized. At present, there are only a few empowerment programs: International Youth Empowerment Program (IYEP), Empowering Hands and the Grassroots Reconciliation Program. While these programs have had early success in their operations, they operate on too small of a scale and with too small of a budget to alone be sufficient service providers.
- **Military Reintegration:** Over 1200 LRA returnees have been reintegrated into the military, specifically into 105th Battalion and a newly-created 106th Battalion. The military program is controversial: While some see it as providing ex-abductees with a job for which they have experience and training and thereby an incentive to reintegrate peaceably, others feel that integrating ex-abductees, particularly ex-commanders, into the nation's military is a prescription for future problems. While each of these reintegration programs is unique, the impact of all of the programs seems to be impeded by certain universal problems in northern Uganda:
- **Geographic Gaps:** Due to the insecurity of certain areas and the fact that many NGOs operate on a small-scale, certain parts of northern Uganda, such as parts of Pader, have no reintegration programs whatsoever.
- **Lack of Capacity:** The implementation of reintegration programs is hindered by NGOs lack of human and financial capital. For example, many counselors are untrained and most NGOs and CBOs lack the financial wherewithal to purchase the computers and office space necessary to carry out their operations.

- **Lack of Funding:** Similarly, NGOs and CBOs also lack direct funding for many of their operations. This problem does not result from a lack of overall funding for reintegration efforts in northern Uganda, but from the difficulty of agencies with funding to find reliable implementing partners among the NGOs and CBOs.
- **Data Gap:** There is a dearth of accurate information on the number of combatants who have returned and the number who remain in the bush. As a result, UN agencies, NGOs and CBOs are forced to plan on unreliable and controversial estimates of these numbers given by the Ugandan military.
- **Serving a Diverse Community:** Returnees are not a monolithic group, but have varying needs depending on a host of factors, including their sex, when they were abducted and when they returned and whether they were born or had a child born to them while in the bush. At present, many programs fail to recognize the diverse needs of these groups, and focus primarily on the needs of child returnees.
- **Coordination:** There is a lack of coordination among NGOs and CBOs and between these organizations and district governments, which leads to budget-consuming duplication and a failure to collaborate.
- **Lack of National Ownership:** There is a lack of national commitment to the problems in northern Uganda, making it difficult for NGOs and CBOs to secure the necessary assistance to implement their programs.
- **Integrating Justice:** Finally, reintegration programs have yet to integrate into a larger peace building operation.

Table - Organizations' Main Activities

ORGANIZATION	ACTIVITIES									
	Reception and care of returnees	Housing of returnees	Follow-up/monitoring on reintegration	Psychological support/counselling	Legal counselling	Education	Support traditional healing / reconciliation	Reception and care of night commuters	Cultural activities (dance, music, etc.)	Sports
AGONGA YOUTH ALLIANCE										
YOUNG WOMEN CENTER										
WALOKO-KWO SUPPORT ORGANIZATION										
CANADIAN PHYSICIAN FOR AID AND RELIEF										
PEOPLE'S VOICE FOR PEACE (PVP)										
CONCERNED PARENT'S ASSOCIATION - UGANDA										
ST. MONICA'S GIRLS TAILORING SCHOOL										
SOS CHILDRENS VILLAGE GULU										
WORLD VISION										
UNDP/OPM										
GUSCO										
NOVIB-OXFAM NETHERLAND										
AMNESTY COMMISSION										
ACHOLI EDUCATION INTIATIVE (AEI)										
HUMAN RIGHTS FOCUS										
KER KWARO										
WORLD VISION - CHILDREN OF WAR										
HUMAN RIGHTS FOCUS										
ST JUDE'S CHILDREN HOME										
JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION										
CARITAS										
CARITAS GULU AWARNES										
DIOCESE OF NORTHERN UGANDA										
GRASSROOT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (GWAD)										
WARCHILD HOLLAND										
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE										
NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL										
NUPI (FUNDED BY USAID)										
INFORMATION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT (IYEP)										
WOMEN AND CHILDREN CENTRE FOR HOPE ORGANIZATION										
EPOVAH										
KIOLOKWO SUPPORT PROGRAM										
LITTLE SISTER OF MARY IMMACULATE										

ORGANIZATION	ACTIVITIES											
	Reception and care of returnees	Housing of returnees	Follow-up/monitoring on reintegration	Psychological support/counselling	Legal counselling	Education	Support traditional healing / reconciliation	Reception and care of night commuters	Cultural activities (dance, music, etc.)	Sports	Discussion groups	Awareness raising/communication
GULU DUPI AGENCY												
NATIONAL FOR DEMOCRACY												
GULU COMMUNITY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL												
AKWANG PEACE CLUB												
CAN OROMO WAN ABDUCTEES YOUTH CAMP												
GEN LAWOTI WOMEN CAMP												
OTIGO MANOK OTYEKO KWON WOMEN PEACE GROUP												
WATWERO RIGHTS FOCUS INITIATIVE												
TONGILO WOMENS VOICE FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT												
NAM OKORA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (NAYODA)												
PAR PI DANO AMDA PEACE BUILDING GROUP												
WABONU CEN GENDER PROMOTION AND CHILD ORPHANS CARE												
NAM OKORA INTEGRATED YOUTH ASSOCIATION												
POBURA HIV/AIDS SUPPORT NETWORK												
MADI OPEI YOUTH FOCUS GROUP												
LACAN PENINO B WOMEN GROUP												
PITTEK MADI OPEI WOMEN GROUP												
KITGUM CONCERNED WOMEN ASSOCIATION (KICWA)												
CONCERNED PARENT'S ASSOCIATION - UGANDA												
WESTLAND RECONCILIATION AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT GROUP												
KITGUM JOINT FORUM FOR PEACE												
STEPUP VOCATIONAL TRAINING												
WORLD VISION KALONGO CENTER												
MEDAIR UGANDA												
CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING FELLOWSHIP (CCF) PATONG												
ALHOLIBUN MOT MOT AYE BONGO ASSOCIATION												
TAM P ANYIM RETURNEES YOUTH GROUP												
CARITAS												
COMMUNITY COPING SUPPORT ORGANIZATION												
CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING FELLOWSHIP (CCF)												

**Table - Organizations' Beneficiaries,
Staff and Beneficiaries' Need**

ORGANIZATION	TOTAL NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES	NUMBER OF STAFF	BENEFICIARY PRIMARY IDENTIFIED NEED
AGONGA YOUTH ALLIANCE	400	14	-
YOUNG WOMEN CENTER	28	6	Vocational training
WALOKO-KWO SUPPORT ORGANIZATION	9	9	-
CANADIAN PHYSICIAN FOR AID AND RELIEF	0	10	-
PEOPLE'S VOICE FOR PEACE (PVP)	-	10	Psychological support
CONCERNED PARENT'S ASSOCIATION - UGANDA	70	11	-
ST. MONICA'S GIRLS TAILORING SCHOOL	500	-	-
SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE GULU	104	-	-
CARE INTERNATIONAL	325,000	-	Financial support
WORLD VISION	-	-	-
UNDP/OPM	-	2	-
GUSCO	7,854	36	Security
NOVIB-OXFAM NETHERLAND	800,000	43	-
AMNESTY COMMISSION	9	6	Education
ACHOLI EDUCATION INITIATIVE (AEI)	655	5	-
HUMAN RIGHTS FOCUS	482	14	Security
KER KWARO	-	3	Other
WORLD VISION - CHILDREN OF WAR	13,500	9	-
HUMAN RIGHTS FOCUS	-	14	-
ST JUDE'S CHILDREN HOME	500	13	-
JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION	9	11	Psychological support
CARITAS	-	50	-
CARITAS GULU AWARENESS	-	20	-
DIOCESE OF NORTHERN UGANDA	-	-	Security
GRASSROOT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (GWAD)	-	2	Education
COMMUNITY WELFARE INITIATIVE (COWI)	9	4	Food
WARCHILD HOLLAND	-	52	-
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE	9	15	Financial support
NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL	-	-	-
NUPI (FUNDED BY USAID)	-	3	Other
INFORMATION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROJECT (IYEP)	-	16	-
WOMEN AND CHILDREN CENTRE FOR HOPE ORGANIZATION	154	6	-
EPPOVAH	1,500	4	-
KILOKWO SUPPORT PROGRAM	-	11	Financial support
LITTLE SISTER OF MARY IMMACULATE	256	12	-
GULU DUPI AGENCY	540	7	Vocational training
GULU DUPI AGENCY	900	7	Financial support
WLAA	-	4	-
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY	-	3	-

ORGANIZATION	TOTAL NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES	NUMBER OF STAFF	BENEFICIARY PRIMARY IDENTIFIED NEED
GULU COMMUNITY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL	500	24	Security
AKWANG PEACE CLUB	500	-	Education
CAN OROMO WAN ABDUCTEES YOUTH CAMP	8	18	Education
GEN LAWOTI WOMEN CAMP	4,000	30	Education
OTIGO MANOK OTYEKO KWON WOMEN PEACE GROUP	2,000	60	Education
WATWERO RIGHTS FOCUS INITIATIVE	20,000	20	Financial support
TONGILO WOMENS VOICE FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT	100	20	Reconciliation
NAM OKORA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (NAYODA)	5,000	15	Education
PAR PI DANO AMDA PEACE BUILDING GROUP	22	-	Psychological support
WABONU CEN GENDER PROMOTION AND CHILD ORPHANS CARE	4	10	Other
NAM OKORA INTEGRATED YOUTH ASSOCIATION	254	-	-
POBURA HIV/AIDS SUPPORT NETWORK	9	19	-
MADI OPEI YOUTH FOCUS GROUP	6,000	60	Education
LACAN PENINO B WOMEN GROUP	50	29	Reconciliation
PITTEK MADI OPEI WOMEN GROUP	36	36	Education
KITGUM CONCERNED WOMEN ASSOCIATION (KICWA)	4,879	18	Vocational training
CONCERNED PARENT'S ASSOCIATION - UGANDA	10,000	55	-
WESTLAND RECONCILIATION AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT GROUP	9	9	Other
KITGUM JOINT FORUM FOR PEACE	-	-	-
STEPUP VOCATIONAL TRAINING	40	19	-
WORLD VISION KALONGO CENTER	9	3	-
MEDAIR UGANDA	9	26	Education
CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING FELLOWSHIP (CCF) PATONG	7,000	4	Psychological support
ALHOLIBUN MOT MOT AYE BONGO ASSOCIATION	180	-	Food
TAM P ANYIM RETURNEES YOUTH GROUP	9	-	Financial support
CARITAS	-	-	Financial support
COMMUNITY COPING SUPPORT ORGANIZATION	100	2	Financial support
TAILOR AND CUTTERS	-	-	Education
CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING FELLOWSHIP (CCF)	400	14	-

This report provides a number of preliminary recommendations following from the gaps in and broader factors affecting the development of reintegration programs that the research uncovered.

Recommendations

Albeit only preliminary, the following recommendations are drawn from our research:

- **Capacity-Building:** The NGOs need to build their financial and human capital while funding agencies need to loosen their criteria for choosing implementing partners in order to better service the returnees.
- **Funding:** Funding is currently too slow and the mechanisms for disbursement are too difficult to meet. UN Agencies should reform and streamline their funding criteria. For example, following the model of the American Jewish Service, UN agencies should require only that NGOs and CBOs (1) have a bank account (2) an ongoing project (3) be registered with the local or the central government and (4) be known within the community.
- **Data:** There needs to be a centralized database with information on LRA returnees in order to better assess their needs and to provide them with services.
- **Diversified Programming:** There is a need to improve the access to and options offered by educational programs. In particular, it would be beneficial to combine education and counselling programs. An Education Trust Fund could work as an intermediary between UN funding agencies and CBOs for this purpose.
- **Coordination:** In order to make NGOs more efficient, there needs to be a systematic means by which NGOs can share information.
- **Community Involvement and Local Ownership:** There is a need to pay more attention to community-based approaches, particularly in localities that are not serviced by international and large NGOs (that operate primarily in urban centers). The local CBOs and NGOs constitute a large network that operates within the camps, not from the towns.
- **Justice:** On a long-term basis, there is a need to pressure the government to place the conflict in northern Uganda on the national agenda and think about the possibility of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Such a commission would give returnees and community members an opportunity to voice their experiences and express their concerns, particularly about the difficulty of reintegration. At the same time, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission would open up a national dialogue about the conflict. Additionally, radio programs could help broadly raise awareness about peace and reintegration.

APPENDIX B

ASSESSMENT MISSION (OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2005) LIST OF MEETINGS

This list does not include those individuals and organizations surveyed during the mapping exercise in October 2005 (see Appendix A).

KAMPALA	INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
■ Honorable Jacob Olanya, Chairman, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, Omoro County, Gulu District (077 735 805)	■ Stig Marker Hansen, Northern Uganda Peace Initiative
■ John Museda, Ministry of Local Government, Legal Officer (077 502 874)	■ Michael Copeland, Head of UNICEF Gulu (077 222 351)
■ Olero Omara, Commissioner, Ugandan Human Rights Commission (077 377173)	■ Chris Mburu, OHCHR Gulu Field Coordinator (077 775 781)
■ Saleem Saleh, Senior Presidential Advisor on Reconstruction of North (contact Dora at 077 648079)	■ David R. Okello, Programme Officer, Acholi DANIDA (077 749 320)
■ Honorable Justice Onega, Head of Amnesty Commission (077 509 381)	■ Emma Naylor, Oxfam / CSOPNU (077 710017)
■ Grace Okello, Minister for Rehabilitation for the North, Prime Ministers Office (contact Dora at 077 646079 or call 041 230 411)	■ Warner ten Kate, First Secretary, NL Embassy (041 34 60 00 ext. 224)
	■ Bruno Otto, Programme Officer, UNDP Gulu (077 448 038)
	■ Kevin Fitzcharles, CARE (041 258 568)
	■ Fiona MacKay, Paolina Massidda, ICC
	■ Lars Erik Skaansar, Humanitarian Access Advisor
	■ Andrew Mawson, Head of UNICEF in Uganda
	■ Susanne Adelhardt Jensen, Asst. Project Officer, Child Protection
	■ Maddalena Bearzotti, Country Representative Assistant, COOPI
	■ Tim Allen, London School of Economics
LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS / INDIVIDUALS	
■ Institute for War and Peace Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sam Gummah, Country Director (077 774 888) - Rachel Mugarura Mutana, Editor in Chief (077 740 001) 	
■ Joyce Opon-Acak, Lira Women Peace Initiative (077 581760)	
■ Justice Resources, Barney Afako (077 722 733)	
■ HURINET (Ugandan Coalition for the ICC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abraham Mwansa, Interim Project Coordinator, UCICC (078 652 060) - Ndifuna Mohammed, National Coordinator (077 419 289) 	
■ Tumwine Patrick, Networking and Advocacy Officer (077 315 896)	

GULU	GULU (con't)
■ Betty Bigombe, Chief Mediator	■ HURIFO, James Otto, Director (071-49-0100)
■ Visit with camp leaders, youth groups, women groups, and others at Anaka Camp, Gulu District	■ Ker Kwaro Acholi
■ Lacor Hospital Night Commuter Center (run by MSF- Fran at 078 75 30 31)	■ Rwot David Acana II, Lawi Rwoodi (077 572 306)
■ Matthew Emory, American Jewish World Service (based in New York)	■ Latim Gerrison, Personal Secretary to KKA
■ Gulu District NGO Forum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michael Otim, Programme Coordinator (077 626382) - Geoffrey Okello, Programme Officer (071 379820) 	■ Rwot Edward Picho, Information Officer
■ Quaker Peace and Social Witness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - David Newton, Representative (077 78 88 45) 	■ Meeting with local NGOs
■ Chris Blattman and Jeanie Annan, SWAY	■ Jimmy Ouruat, District Community Services
■ IYEP Youth Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moses Rubangangyeo, Chair (071 588 443) - Jimmy Akena Yanzi, Secretary 	■ Chief Administrative Officer, Gulu District
■ Amnesty Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Esther Atim (077 543 733) - Sister Mary Okee 	■ David Okiti, MegaFM
■ Former ACORD, Rosalba Oywa, (077 586779)	■ Gulu University <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fabius Okumu-Alya, Director, Center for Conflict and Peace Studies (077-344772) - Chris Mafabi, Director Comp. Sciences
■ Meeting with Youth Advisory Board to the YSSP (Gulu)	■ Lt. Deo Akiiki, Public Relations Officer, 5th Division, UPDF (071-663154)
■ Concerned Parents Association <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Akongo Immaculate, Programme Officer (077 423 093) - Philip Lutasa (077-655614) 	■ Medicines Sans Frontiers, Lacor Night Commuting Centre
■ World Vision Reception Center, David Orone and Richard Kinyera (071 366 667)	
■ GUSCO Reception Center	
■ Norwegian Refugee Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caroline Ort, Legal Officer (077 711 745) - Magnhild Vasset, Resident Representative (077 711 747) 	

KITGUM	PADER
■ Concerned Parents Association - Andrew Oryen (071-64654) - Francis Okot Odwong, Coordinator (077-682499)	■ Alice Acan, Christian Counselling reception center, Pader Town Council
■ KWICA reception center - Christopher Arwai, Director (arwaichris@yahoo.com)	■ COOPI
■ Visit to night commuters at St. Joesph's Hospital	■ Camp visit, Lira Paluo (meetings with Elders, returnee groups, social worker)
■ Jeannie Annan, SWAY Uganda	■ Camp visit, Pajule (Meeting with Elders, Chiefs)
■ AVSI	
■ Agoro Community Development Association (Youth)	
■ WATWERO Youth Association, Ronald Opira (RIP) warifoin@yahoo.com	
LIRA	
	■ Rev. Robert Omara, Joyce Atuoko, Agnes Apio, and Joseph Onuk, CARITAS reception center
	■ Rachele reception center Attended 2-day Workshop on Reception Centers, Lira Hotel, sponsored by the Amnesty Commission and UNICEF

APPENDIX C

TRUST FUND FOR WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN NORTHERN UGANDA

The analysis of the findings of the assessment of the reintegration of the LRA ex-combatant programs in northern Uganda leads to the following 7 themes:

1. The conflict in northern Uganda dramatically exacerbated pre-existing poverty and poor socio-economic performances prevailing elsewhere in Uganda. Those underlying structural problems need to be addressed as part of any response to the current situation.
2. The needs of the ex-LRA combatants are only partially understood and satisfied, especially with regards to long term social rehabilitation.
3. Many studies and research exist but they are rarely translated into concrete actions. This is caused first by the lack of diffusion of information and second by the lack of capacity to integrate evidence base in the decision making process.
4. The amnesty process and reception/reintegration are conceived as part of a pull-out process for the LRA combatants and a response to the emergency. They are not part of a long term peace building and sustainable development plan. In particular there is no systematic monitoring and evaluation of the well being of the returnees.
5. Negative and positive stigmatizations of the LRA ex-combatants threaten long term reinsertion and reintegration of the returnees. There is a risk to further isolate the already traumatized children and young adults by designing systems that address only their needs and are not integrated in the local social context.
6. Many organizations seek to contribute to improve the well being of war affected children in Northern Uganda. However the majority remain relatively informal in their way of functioning. Practices of transparency and accountability are lacking, as well as the ability to plan strategically current and future activities.
7. NGOs and community level initiatives are uniquely qualified to address the needs of war affected children and youth in northern Uganda, including the returnees. First because for their close contact and understanding of the communities and second for their ability to rapidly address changing needs and priorities.

The aim is to create a Trust Fund which will provide modest grants to support community-based projects initiated by local communities and organizations. The Trust Fund will give preference to proposals that prioritize aimed capacity building, education and vocational training, coordination, and the under-served.

Specific fields of activities for the Trust Fund are (not exhaustive):

1. Support activities of capacity building to organizations providing education or related services to children and youth in northern Uganda including services to returnees, including evidence base decision making.
2. Support the design and implementation of alternative education and training program tailored to address the educational needs and rights of the disadvantaged children and young adults in northern Uganda⁵¹, including vocational training and training toward income generating activities
3. Support community based initiatives to develop infrastructure and services (classrooms, libraries...) to benefit all the IDPs and returnees.
4. Support activities oriented toward better access to information, including information and communication technologies where possible
5. Support activities to increase access to psycho-social services and long term counseling associated with education structure.
6. Provide support to individuals to access secondary and higher education levels (fellowships) for example to study at Gulu University
7. Support the creation of a central database on orphans and vulnerable children in northern Uganda.

Funds: Start-up funds totaling approximately \$3 million, with a goal of \$25 million.

A preliminary terms sheet is available upon request. For more information, please contact Mary Page, MacArthur Foundation, 140 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60603, USA, Tel: 1-312-726-8000. Email: mpage@macfound.org

ENDNOTES

- ¹ See Sandrine Perrot, *Assessment of the Reintegration of LRA Ex-Combatants Programs in Northern Uganda, Preliminary Findings*, October 2005. Appendix A of this assessment report contains the “Executive Summary.”
- ² Members of the assessment team were Erin Baines, Director, Conflict and Development, The Lui Institute for Global Studies, University of British Columbia; Eric Stover, Director of the Human Rights Center and Adjunct Professor of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley; and Marieke Wierda, Senior Associate, International Center for Transitional Justice.
- ³ The authors wish to thank Phuong Pham and Patrick Vinck of the Payson Center for International Development and Technology Transfer who provided invaluable advice and assistance throughout the assessment. They also designed the layout of the assessment report and developed the survey questionnaire and analysed the data collected from the nongovernmental—and community-based organizations in the northern districts. We also wish to thank Michael Otim of the Gulu District NGO Forum and Mary Page of the MacArthur Foundation who accompanied us on our trip to Uganda. We are deeply indebted to Page for her support and supervision of the assessment. Finally, we thank Rachel Shigekane of the UC-Berkeley Human Rights Center for copyediting the report.
- ⁴ Eric Stover and Marieke Wierda, “War-Affected Children and Reintegration in Northern Uganda: A Preliminary Assessment,” August 2005.
- ⁵ Sandrine Perrot conducted the mapping process in northern Uganda by Sandrine Perrot with the assistance of Peter Hoffman in New York. Sandrine Perrot, *Assessment of the Reintegration of LRA Ex-Combatants Programs in Northern Uganda, Preliminary Findings*, October 2005.
- ⁶ This paradigm emerges from the studies of developmental psychologist Uriel Bronfenbrenner and community psychologists Seymour Sarason and James Kelly, among others. It was also one of the main conclusions of a four-year study of justice and social reconstruction in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia conducted by the Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley in the late 1990s. See Uriel Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Seymour B. Sarason, “The Ecological Approach.” In Seymour B. Sarason, “*The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change*” (New York: Teachers College Press, 1974); James G. Kelly, “Toward an Ecological Conception of Preventive Interventions.” In Jerry W. Carter, Jr., ed. *Research Contributions from Psychology to Community Mental Health* (New York: Behavioural Publications, 1968), 75-99; and Eric Stover and Harvey M. Weinstein, eds, *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- ⁷ Tim Allen, *A Review of Lessons Learned by Reception Centers on Effective Interventions for former Abductees in Northern Uganda, A Preliminary Study*, UNICEF and USAID, October 2005 and interviews with UNICEF and MSF staff in Gulu, October 2005.
- ⁸ Phuong Pham, Patrick Vinck, Marieke Wierda, Eric Stover, and Adrian di Giovanni, *Forgotten Voices: A Population-Based Survey of Attitudes about Peace and Justice in Northern Uganda*, International Center for Transitional Justice and the Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley, July 2005, pp. 28-29. The MacArthur Foundation funded the survey.
- ⁹ Numerous informants, including government officials and Acholi leaders, expressed this view during our interviews in October and November 2005.
- ¹⁰ See Liu Institute for Global Issues, Gulu District NGO Forum, and Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Roco Wat I Acholi: Restoring Relationships in Acholi-land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration*, September 2005. The MacArthur Foundation funded the study.
- ¹¹ Joyce Namutebi, “Mamdani urges reconciliation,” *The New Vision*, 5 December 2005; Felix Osike, Milton Oluopot and John Odyek, Museveni Mourns Dr. Milton Obote, *The New Vision*, 21 October 2005.
- ¹² Phuong Pham et al., *Forgotten Voices*, pp. 20-22.
- ¹³ “Warrant of Arrest unsealed against five LRA Commanders press release,” *ICC Press Release*, 14 October 2005, The Hague (available at <http://www.icc-cpi.int/press/pressreleases/114.html>, last visited December 2005).
- ¹⁴ See Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, “No Safe Place to Call Home: Child and Adolescent Night Commuters in Northern Uganda,” July 2004.
- ¹⁵ The MacArthur Foundation has a history of work in Uganda, mainly in the area of biodiversity conservation. The Foundation has also sponsored a number of initiatives in northern Uganda focused on human rights and justice including several reports *Abducted and Abused* (Human Rights Watch, 2003), and *Hidden War; Forgotten People* (HURIPEC, 2003). More recently, the Foundation has funded the research of the Liu Institute for Global Studies, including its report on traditional justice, *Roco Wat I Acoli* (2005), and the joint population-based study on attitudes about peace and justice in northern Uganda by the Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley and the International Center for Transitional Justice entitled *Forgotten Voices* (2005).

¹⁶ The following individuals participated in the discussions in New York in June 2005, and later in September and October (at various times): Ambassador Allan Rock, Permanent Representative to the United Nations for Canada; Jonathan Fanton, President of the MacArthur Foundation; Mary Page, Director of Human Rights and International Justice, MacArthur Foundation; Eric Stover, Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley; Erin Baines, Liu Institute for Global Studies, University of British Columbia; Steve O'Malley and Chris Hyslop, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Spyros Demetriou, United Nations Development Programme; Marieke Wierda, International Center for Transitional Justice; Emily McLaughlin, Canadian Mission; Peter Hoffman and Sandrine Perrot, consultants to the MacArthur Foundation. The conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are strictly those of the authors.

¹⁷ "UN urges end to Ugandan horror," *BBC News* (22 October 2004). Egeland repeated this pronouncement on 11 November 2004: "Top UN relief official spotlights crisis in northern Uganda," *UN News Service* (11 November 2004).

¹⁸ Morten Boas and Anne Hatloy, Fafo, *The Northern Uganda IDP Profiling Study*, Department of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees of the Office of the Prime Minister and United Nations Development Programme, Vol. 1, September 2005.

¹⁹ See the Ministry of Health of Uganda, UNICEF, and World Health Organization, *Health and Mortality Survey among Internally Displaced Persons in Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader Districts, Northern Uganda*, July 2005, pp. 29-32.

²⁰ See Gulu District Local Government, "Revised District Three-Year Development Plan 2005/06 - 2007/08," June 2005.

²¹ The Ugandan government has a Policy on Displacement but in reality, it provides, mostly with the help of foreign aid, very limited services, such as primary schools, health clinics, and a few police stations.

²² In addition, the Northern Ugandan Social Action Fund (NUSAf) has an annual budget of \$50 million, delivering small-scale grants for community projects; the Northern Ugandan Peace Initiative, a USAID initiative, contributes \$10 million annually to work on strengthening local government and NGOs working on peace and reconciliation.

²³ Morten Boas and Anne Hatloy, Fafo, *Northern Uganda Internally Displaced Persons Profiling Study*, p. 30.

²⁴ See the Ministry of Health of Uganda, UNICEF, and World Health Organization, *Health and Mortality Survey among Internally Displaced Persons in Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader Districts, Northern Uganda*, pp. iii-iv.

²⁵ Patrick Vinck, personal communication, 22 January 2006. In December 2005, Vinck completed a survey on food security in Uganda and southern Sudan for the World Food Programme. The report will be published later this year. Fafo found that more than 50 percent of the population of the predominantly Acholi districts was below 15 years of age. It also found that "the age group 0-4 is smaller than the age group 5-9, which indicates increased child mortality, or decreased fertility. Probably both are true. The age pyramid also shows a huge gap of young men in the age group 20-29. This is probably a direct effect of the war." See Morten Boas and Anne Hatloy, Fafo, *The Northern Uganda IDP Profiling Study*, p. 11.

²⁶ This situation is not particular to northern Uganda. Studies and assessments of DDR programs in other war-torn countries have reached similar conclusions. See Dyan Mazurana and Khristopher Carlson, "From Combat to Community: Women and Girls of Sierra Leone," Hunt Alternatives Fund, January 2004; Christian Children's Fund, "Final Report: Project of Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Angola," and Save the Children, "No Place Like Home? Children's experience of reintegration in the Kailahun District of Sierra Leone," 2004.

²⁷ Tim Allen, *A Review of Lessons Learned by Reception Centers on Effective Interventions for former Abductees in Northern Uganda, A Preliminary Study*, UNICEF and USAID, October 2005.

²⁸ The "Memorandum of Understanding" and "The Inter-agency Child Protection Strategy for Gulu District" was signed on 19 October 2005 by Gulu District CSD, World Vision, GUSCO, War Child Holland, War Child Canada, Caritas Gulu, AVSI Gulu, TASO Gulu, AFCIC Gulu, CPA Gulu, SCiUG Gulu, and UNICEF Gulu.

²⁹ Morten Boas and Anne Hatloy, Fafo, *Northern Uganda Internally Displaced Persons Profiling Study*, p. 17.

³⁰ Suarez C. and E. St. Jean, *A Generation at Risk: Acholi Youth in Northern Uganda*. Liu Institute for Global Issues and Gulu District NGO Forum, October 2005, p. 18.

³¹ Suarez C. and E. St. Jean, *A Generation at Risk: Acholi Youth in Northern Uganda*, pp. 16-30.

³² HURIFO. *Between two Fires, The Plight of IDPs in Northern Uganda*, 2003, pp. 50-51.

³³ Human Rights Watch et al. *Abducted and Abused: Renewed Conflict in Northern Uganda*. 2003, 15 (12) A, pp. 70-71. Local actors refer to the phenomenon of exchanging sex for protection or basic human needs as ‘survival sex’.

³⁴ Human Rights Watch et al. *Abducted and Abused: Renewed Conflict in Northern Uganda*, p. 45. See also Human Rights Watch, *Uprooted and Forgotten: Impunity and Human Rights Abuses in Northern Uganda*, September 2005, 17 (12) A, pp. 32-35.

³⁵ Liu Institute for Global Issues, Gulu District NGO Forum, and Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Roco Wat I Acholi: Restoring Relationships in Acholi-land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration*, pp. 35-39.

³⁶ A DANIDA project sponsors a Youth Strengthening Strategy Programme (YSSP) in every district. We met with the advisory board of YSSP in Gulu. In principle this struck us as a good initiative, but the program is still quite young and in need of capacity building. A youth officer sits within the Gulu District NGO Forum and helps to coordinate and facilitate the activities of youth groups (many of which center around agriculture, HIV-AIDS, and revival of cultural practices). DANIDA supports similar programmes in Kitgum and Pader, but these areas are more underdeveloped due to insecurity.

³⁷ Suarez C. and E. St. Jean, *A Generation at Risk: Acholi Youth in Northern Uganda*. p. 50.

³⁸ Phuong Pham et al., *Forgotten Voices*.

³⁹ Phuong Pham et al., *Forgotten Voices*, pp. 32-33.

⁴⁰ Phuong Pham et al., *Forgotten Voices*, pp. 28-32.

⁴¹ See the Liu Institute for Global Issues, Gulu District NGO Forum, and Ker Kwaro Acholi, *Roco Wat I Acholi: Restoring Relationships in Acholi-land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration*.

⁴² Refugee Law Project. *Peace First, Justice Later: Traditional Justice in Northern Uganda*. Working Paper 17, July 2005; and *Whose Justice? Perceptions of Uganda's Amnesty Act 2000*. Working Paper 15, February 2005.

⁴³ *Hidden War, Forgotten People*. 2004. The MacArthur Foundation supported this study.

⁴⁴ Stephen Owen, War Affected Children in Northern Uganda: Assessment of Canadian Programming Opportunities. 21 July, 2000. The report recommended two other interventions: support of landmine awareness and action through the Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief and, support to the Amnesty Commission by means of an independent observer mission.

⁴⁵ Also, see Regional Select Committee comprised of the District Inspector of Schools and Action Aid Uganda, “The Status of Education for Internally Displaced Children in Northern Uganda,” 16 April 2003.

⁴⁶ However, the study found a large difference in school attendance both between age groups and gender. Men, for example, have had a much higher school attendance than women. Eighty-four percent of women, 15 years of age and above, have not finished primary school, or have never attended school, while one percent has finished secondary school. See Morten Boas and Anne Hatloy, Fafo, *Northern Uganda Internally Displaced Persons Profiling Study*, pp. 18-20.

⁴⁷ Gulu District Local Government, “Revised District Three-Year Development Plan 2005/06 - 2007/08,” June 2005, pp. 10-17.

⁴⁸ Post-doctoral Fellow, CERIUM, Montreal. Peter Hoffman, Research Associate at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, compiled background research for the survey. Also helpful were : Lam Jordan Kenneth (he worked in Gulu and Kitgum DC), Onen Christine Harriet (Gulu), Opira Ronald (Kitgum), Aciro Kevin (Gulu), Pajul Susan (Pader) and Okello Peter (Pader).

