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IDPs redefined – Participatory Action Research with urban IDPs in Uganda

Photo: Katanga, Kampala, Uganda Source: Hilde Refstie

Master's Thesis for Award of MPhil in Development Studies
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Trondheim, December 2008

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the discourse on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Uganda and how IDPs in urban areas fit in to the discourse on both the theoretical and practical level. The dissertation reveals that although IDPs in urban areas by definition are included in both international and national IDP definitions, urban IDPs are seen as either economic migrants, or as former IDPs who have now reached a durable solution. The consequences of such exclusion from the IDP label are that IDPs outside camps are not considered for assistance or included in the return and resettlement frameworks or information activities.

The formation of the IDP label in Uganda has been influenced by the government's approach of control and military presence aimed at keeping people in camps in the north. Consequently, IDPs are perceived entirely as people residing in camps. The humanitarian community has been complicit with the government's policy of keeping people in camps by limiting assistance to IDPs registered and residing within them. The obvious lack of resources dedicated to protecting IDPs also influences the way the label is shaped. It is challenging to identify IDPs in an urban setting because of lack of registration and information. It is also difficult to determine who are forced migrants, and which of them have reached a durable solution. Consequently, IDPs in Uganda has in practice been redefined to those staying in camps.

Upon acknowledging how the voices of urban IDPs are marginalized within the dominant discourse, phase two of the fieldwork progressed towards influencing this discourse by revealing the political and bureaucratic agency in the processes of labelling creating greater awareness of the processes that serve to exclude urban IDPs from return and resettlement frameworks. By facilitating the mobilization of an urban IDP interest group I together with the community outreach organization Refugee Law Project worked together with urban IDP communities advocating for their rights.

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Acknowledgements

The work with this dissertation and all the people involved has been an encouraging journey. I have always believed that research can contribute to empower people and create social change. The brilliant people involved in this study have convinced me furthermore by letting me in to their daily lives and allowing me to be involved in their struggle for realizing their rights.

I would like to thank all the people who have shared with me their time and knowledge. The welcoming communities in 'Acholi Quarters' and in Jinja have been of fundamental importance for the development of this dissertation. I particularly wish to thank Milly Grace, Alex Olobo, and James Okullo. You have made a lasting impression on me which I will bring with me in my further work. A special thank also goes to my dear friend Betty and her unbounded hospitality.

My supervisor Cathrine Brun can not be thanked enough. Her genuine care and respect for people facing war has been a source of inspiration throughout the fieldwork. I feel privileged to have had such an enthusiastic supervisor.

I can not emphasize enough how impressed I am with the work of the Refugee Law Project in Uganda. Their unwavering engagement with promoting the rights of forced migrants is truly inspiring. I have never met any staff so devoted and full of integrity. I am very grateful to Chris Dolan, Salima Namusobya, Bernadette Iyodu, Patrick Otim, Simon Ndaula, Leah Bellshaw, and everyone else at Refugee Law Project who welcomed me so warmly into the 'RLP family'. A special thank goes to Moses Chrispus Okello whom I know loves these touching acknowledgements; thank you for all the input, discussions, and company. And last from RLP, but not least, I have to thank Paulina Wyrzykowski, my good friend and colleague. Thank you for all your help, our late night talks, and our countless laughs.

My wonderful research assistants Jesca Ntongo and Eva Kadi deserve the deepest thanks for their contribution. I would also like to thank my fellow Mphil colleagues and friends, particularly the group who sat at ‘Asylet’ into the late hours of the evening.

I did not go to Uganda alone. With me, I had four wonderful people from the Mphil programme. I am forever grateful to Irene Nagawa and Eria Serwajja and their families, to Michael Byaruhanga and to Mette Strømsø.

My thanks also go to Bridging the knowledge-action gap project funded by the Research Council of Norway and to the Ugandan National Council of Science.

I would like to thank my family who visited me during my stay in Uganda and thereby got a glimpse of the motivation for my work. Finally, I would like to thank my special guy and life partner who supports my work wherever it brings me, even if it means spending months apart.

Thank you

Acronyms

CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CHA	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
CVGER	Cluster Group on Early Recovery
DPWO	District Probation and Welfare Officer
EHAP	Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan
GoU	Government of Uganda
IASC	Inter Agency Standing Committee
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JMC/EAP	Joint Monitoring Committee and Emergency Action Plan for Humanitarian Interventions
LDU	Local Defence Units
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRA/M	National Resistance Army/Movement
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRDP	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda

RLP	Refugee Law Project
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army
UPPAP	Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Process
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

1 Introduction

"We have the rights as human beings to be free from any danger. That is our request."[1]

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have been forced to flee their homes because of danger. Unlike refugees who are protected through the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol, IDPs are not protected by any international body. Since the IDPs stay within the boarders of their country, their government is responsible for their security. One of the key challenges with regards to the protection of IDPs is that in many cases the government is the perpetrator of the violence that make people flee, and can be unable to or unwilling to fulfil their protection responsibility.

> "Internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border."[2]

The numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) worldwide are staggering. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 26 million IDPs have been displaced by conflict in at least fifty two countries. The share of IDPs in the total population of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reached its highest level in at least a decade. However, while there are almost double as many IDPs as refugees, the level of international attention they attract have not matched their numbers.[3]

As the numbers of IDPs rise, so does the global urban population. For the first time in history the global urban population exceeds the rural with more than 3, 3 billion people living in urban

[1] Group Discussion 04.11.07 Banda 1: Man 45 came from Pader to Kampala in 1992
[2] UNOCHA, 1998: Introduction section 2
[3] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2008b

areas. Numerous challenges are connected to this rapid urbanization with over one billion people currently living in slums.[4]

While the current humanitarian focus on internal displacement evolves around IDPs living in camps, IDPs in urban areas have received far less interest. Throughout the global south the number of urban refugees and IDPs has increased considerably. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees stated in October this year that a large proportion, if not the majority of IDPs stay in urban areas, and that the humanitarian response to their protection concerns has been weak.[5] Continued conflict and increasingly restrictive asylum politics suggest the number of IDPs and thus self-settlers in urban areas will continue to grow. According to IDMC at least half of the countries affected by conflict-induced displacement have displacement from rural to urban areas. These movements involve millions of people.[6] I will in this dissertation use 'urban IDPs' to refer to IDPs who have moved to urban areas.

Freedom of movement for all citizens within their country is enshrined both in international law and in most national constitutions. Accordingly, the international IDP-definition set forth in the UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA's) Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement from 1998 does not hinge on where IDPs choose to settle after they flee their homes.[7] However, most IDPs staying in towns and urban centres outside camps are not given much attention, and assistance is seldom provided for this group. This is also the case for Uganda where the material for this dissertation has been collected. IDPs who stay in urban areas are thus often in practice excluded from the IDP-label. This dissertation examines why urban IDPs are excluded, and the consequences of that exclusion for the urban IDP population, and how pertinent stakeholders can influence the dominant discourse to bring attention to this marginalized group.

[4] UN Habitat, 2007
[5] Guterres, 2008
[6] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2008b
[7] UNOCHA, 1998

The research questions are:

1.) **What is the dominant discourse on IDPs in Uganda, and what is the status of urban IDPs in this discourse?**

Discourses can be understood as statements that structure how we understand the world and how we act based on that understanding.[8] The discourses surrounding IDPs are explored by looking at how the understanding of the definition, policies and practices around IDPs have developed and is operationalized through the concept of labelling. The concept of labelling is then explored by looking at laws, bureaucratic procedures and practices of behaviour in the labelling process.

According to the definition of IDPs that emerges from international principles and policies, the element of *force* is essential. The IDPs own perceptions of force, of motivation for coming to urban areas and of how they perceive their current situation is used to establish whether the participants can be considered as IDPs within the institutional frameworks. The urban IDPs' perception of the IDP-label is also explored through interviews and group discussions. Interviews with actors dealing with IDPs as well as participatory observation in the national community outreach organization Refugee Law Project (RLP), were employed to further explore how the label IDP is operationalized by the government and humanitarian actors.

2.) **What consequences does the dominant discourse on IDPs in Uganda have for urban IDPs?**

In a humanitarian setting a label serves to include or exclude people and defines who is entitled to what. Through participatory observation and interviews with IDPs and other relevant actors I attempt to examine how the IDP-discourse excludes urban IDP's and thus affects their access to rights and assistance.

[8] Rose, 2001 p 136

3.) **How can actors contribute to change discourses by creating awareness of the processes of labelling?**

As the research began to shed light on ways in which the dominant discourse served particular interests while marginalizing others, the research objectives broadened to include changing this discourse through radical action research. We attempted to influence the discourse by revealing the political and bureaucratic agency in the processes of labelling. With greater awareness of the processes that serve to include and exclude people, the gaps between formal humanitarian intentions and humanitarian practice can be narrowed. By facilitating mobilization of existing initiatives in different urban IDP communities, a phase two of the fieldwork sought to promote the voices of urban IDPs in Uganda.

1.1 Methodology – Participatory Action Research

Qualitative methodologies can be a political choice and a strategy that seeks to challenge dominant knowledges and structures. They represent a turn away from dominant western discourses centred on positivist notions of the detached neutral researcher.[9] The researcher can not claim to find one objective truth, or to be neutral towards the research. By acknowledging how the established discourses serve particular interests, and how some voices are not heard, research can become a tool for social change.

The fieldwork was conducted in two phases. Phase one was exploratory and aimed at identifying participants and generating a general overview of the situation. After realizing the gaps in policy and practice concerning urban IDPs in Uganda, the study sought to promote the voices of urban IDPs with the aim of influencing the dominant discourse. Through Refugee Law Project and together with the urban IDP communities we worked actively for the recognition of urban IDPs in return and resettlement frameworks for IDPs in Uganda.

[9] Smith, 2001
Mikkelsen, 2005

The starting point for the dissertation was not to advocate for the use of the IDP label in the urban setting. During the interviews the label IDP was never used. The less political 'people who have moved from the war affected areas' proved instead to define the target group without invoking assumptions regarding entitlement to particular rights or assistance. However, when the participants emphasized their need for recognition and inclusion in the return and resettlement framework, I together with Refugee Law Project chose to contribute to their mobilization through radical action research. By revealing the political and bureaucratic institutional agency in the process of labelling, our goal was to influence the IDP-discourse in Uganda to include urban IDPs.

The study did not have the capacity to probe into all aspects regarding IDPs in urban areas. For instance, further examination of urbanization processes would be a natural continuation to investigate more thoroughly why so many chose to go to urban areas. Another important aspect is the livelihood concerns of urban IDPs and their hosts. The study did not go deep into this and it would have been interesting to see if urban IDPs experienced hardships different than other people living in the same areas.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

The dissertation consists of eight chapters. Chapter 2-4 explain the background in terms of context, theory and methodology. Chapter 5-7 present the main analytical part where each chapter analyses one of the three research questions. Chapter eight highlights some of the findings and concludes.

Chapter two describes the background of the conflict in Northern Uganda and the context of urban IDPs in Kampala and Jinja. It is essential to know the context IDPs are arriving from to understand the way in which the IDP-label has been shaped. In chapter three I present some of the theoretical considerations forming the dissertation with a focus on discourse and labelling, and participatory action research. Chapter four describes the qualitative methodology employed, the fieldwork experience, and the concrete methods applied. Chapter five to seven each analyses one of the research questions. Chapter five examines how the understanding of

the definitions, policies and practices on IDPs has developed and is operationalized through the concept of labelling. Chapter six explores the consequences of this discourse on IDPs in Uganda for urban IDPs. Chapter seven describes phase two of the fieldwork which included facilitating for an interest group to influence the IDP-discourse by creating greater awareness of the processes of labelling. The chapter describes the process of mobilizing, the measures used to influence the discourse, and the results achieved. Included in the chapter are reflections of positionality, power relations, and ethical considerations in participatory action research. Chapter eight summarizes and concludes the dissertation.

2 From Northern Uganda to Kampala and Jinja

Located in the heart of the historically unstable Great Lakes Region, Uganda with its population of 31 367 972 people stretches over 236 040 km2. In addition to its own turbulent history, the country has experienced the complex regional effects of the different conflicts in the area, bordering as it does Kenya in the East, DRC in the West, Rwanda and Tanzania in the South, and Sudan in the North.[10] In this chapter I discuss the background for the conflict in Northern Uganda and present some of the urban areas where IDPs live.

[10] CIA, 2008

Figure 1: Map of Uganda[11]

[11] United Nations, 2003

2.1 History of the present conflict in Northern Uganda

Throughout history one third of Uganda's population have at one time or another been uprooted by conflict, the most encompassing and brutal being the 21 year long conflict in Northern Uganda between the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).[12] At the peak of the conflict 1.8 million people were displaced constituting what Jan Egeland called the 'biggest forgotten, neglected humanitarian emergency in the world today.'[13]

As with most conflicts in Africa, one must also consider Uganda's history during the colonial period. During its colonisation by the United Kingdom a north- south division was created in Uganda. Through administrative manipulation of pre-existing regional differences Uganda was fractured. The northern region acted as labour reserve for southern plantations, and for army recruitment. The southern region was favoured in terms of economic development and investments resulting in the political and economic marginalisation of the North which underlies the present conflict. In 1962 Uganda gained its independence, and a divided state was inherited by the post colonial regime.[14]

After decades of conflict in Uganda, Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M) seized power in 1986. Remnants from the official army lead by Milton Obote and Tito Okello retreated to Northern Uganda and Sudan to regroup as the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA). The NRA followed them into the northern region in 1986 to flush out the Acholi [15] leaders of the opposition forces, creating fear amongst civilians in the North. In the name of crushing the rebellion stemming from the north, the NRA plundered, destroyed, raped, abducted, and killed unarmed civilians. This vindictive behaviour caused distrust to the government and resistance in the North.[16]

While in all 22 groups have taken up armed rebellion against the government of Yoweri Museveni, the conflict with the Lords Resistance Army has been the most encompassing. Tens

[12]Government of Uganda, 2004
[13] Relief Web, 2003: Jan Egeland, at the time UN Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator called the conflict in northern Uganda the "biggest forgotten, neglected humanitarian emergency in the world today"
[14] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) & Refugee Law Project, 2006
[15] The Acholi people are the ethnic tribe residing in northern Uganda and worst affected by the war. Other tribes affected were Madi, Langi and Teso.
[16] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) & Refugee Law Project, 2006

of thousands have been killed, raped, or abducted. In some areas as much as 90 % of the population has been affected. [17]

In 1988 a peace-deal was negotiated between the NRA and the UPDA, and many of the former soldiers came out of the bush and gave up arms. The conflict was however far from over. Gathering those disgruntled with the Museveni regime around the spiritual leader Alice Lakwena, and later around Joseph Kony, the Holy Spirit Movement was formed and gained prominence. Oriented around the beliefs in magic and spiritual power, the resistance continued although its name changed to the Lord's Resistance Army in 1991.[18]

Betty Bigombe, who was minister of state for pacification of North and North-eastern Uganda almost succeeded with peace negotiations in 1994, but a seven-day ultimatum from the government for the rebels to come out of the bush complicated the process and no peace deal was struck. From 1994 to 1999 the conflict escalated and with the support from Sudan, LRA forces continued the rebellion and carried out a multitude of atrocities against the civilian population.[19] However, the largest wave of displacement occurred in 1995/1996, when the government forced the civilians in Northern Uganda into so called "protected villages"[20] using means of mortars and helicopter gun ships in the process. According to the government this was to reduce LRA's mobility and to separate the civilians from the rebels. [21]

> *"In January 1995 we went to the camp. It was government orders. They don't want any civilians in the areas. We were comfortable in our home. In camps there are war attacks. You can't do anything. I stayed for one year from 1995 to 1996. At 8th of March 1996 I left to Kampala because I cannot tolerate the conditions in the camp. In daytime you would go to the village to do cassava. You can be picked by government or rebels. If you don't want to join LDU [local defence units] they say you collaborate."*[22]

[17] Dolan & Hovil, 2006
[18] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2005
[19] Dolan,& Hovil, 2006
[20] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) & Refugee Law Project, 2006: Several of the 'protected villages' were repeatedly attacked by LRA. The government forces and local militias did not effectively protect the IDPs, and frequent human rights violations permitted by the soldiers set to protect the population occurred.
[21] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2007
[22] Interview 23.07.07, Banda 1: Man 30, came from Gulu to Kampala in 1996

Continuing their military approach to the conflict, the government launched the Operation Iron Fist in 2002-2003, aiming to crush LRA. In response, the LRA attacked large sections of Northern Uganda including areas formerly not involved such as the Lango and Teso region. (See Figure 2 p 12)

Despite the gravity of the situation, prior to 2004, humanitarian action was very limited in Northern Uganda. However, Jan Egeland's visit in 2003, and his much quoted statements about the conflict as one of the worst humanitarian emergencies in the world today[23], turned international attention towards the North of Uganda. Humanitarian actors swarmed the place. As a consequence the International Criminal Court (ICC) on the request of the Museveni government issued the much debated warrants in 2005 for five of LRA`s senior commanders, citing allegations of crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in the course of conflict.[24]

With the signing of a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CHA) between the LRA and the Government of Uganda in August 2006 and the continuation of peace talks between the two parties in Juba, Southern Sudan, the situation in the greater Northern Uganda region and to a limited extent in north-eastern Uganda was relatively stable and secure at the time the research was conducted (June 2007 – March 2008). The momentary peace encouraged IDPs mainly in the Lango and Teso sub-region to return. However, the peace talks faltered when the rebel leader Joseph Kony did not turn up to sign the peace-deal, and the future of peace in Uganda remains uncertain. In the meantime people are still returning to their areas of origin. Lack of services together with high levels of criminal activity and a lack of capacity on the part of the police and the judicial system pose a continuing threat to the security of the population. [25]

[23] Reliefweb, 2003
[24] The warrants are by many seen as a barrier to peace giving the LRA commanders less incentives for pursuing a peace deal. For a deeper discussion see: Lanz, 2007
[25] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2008a

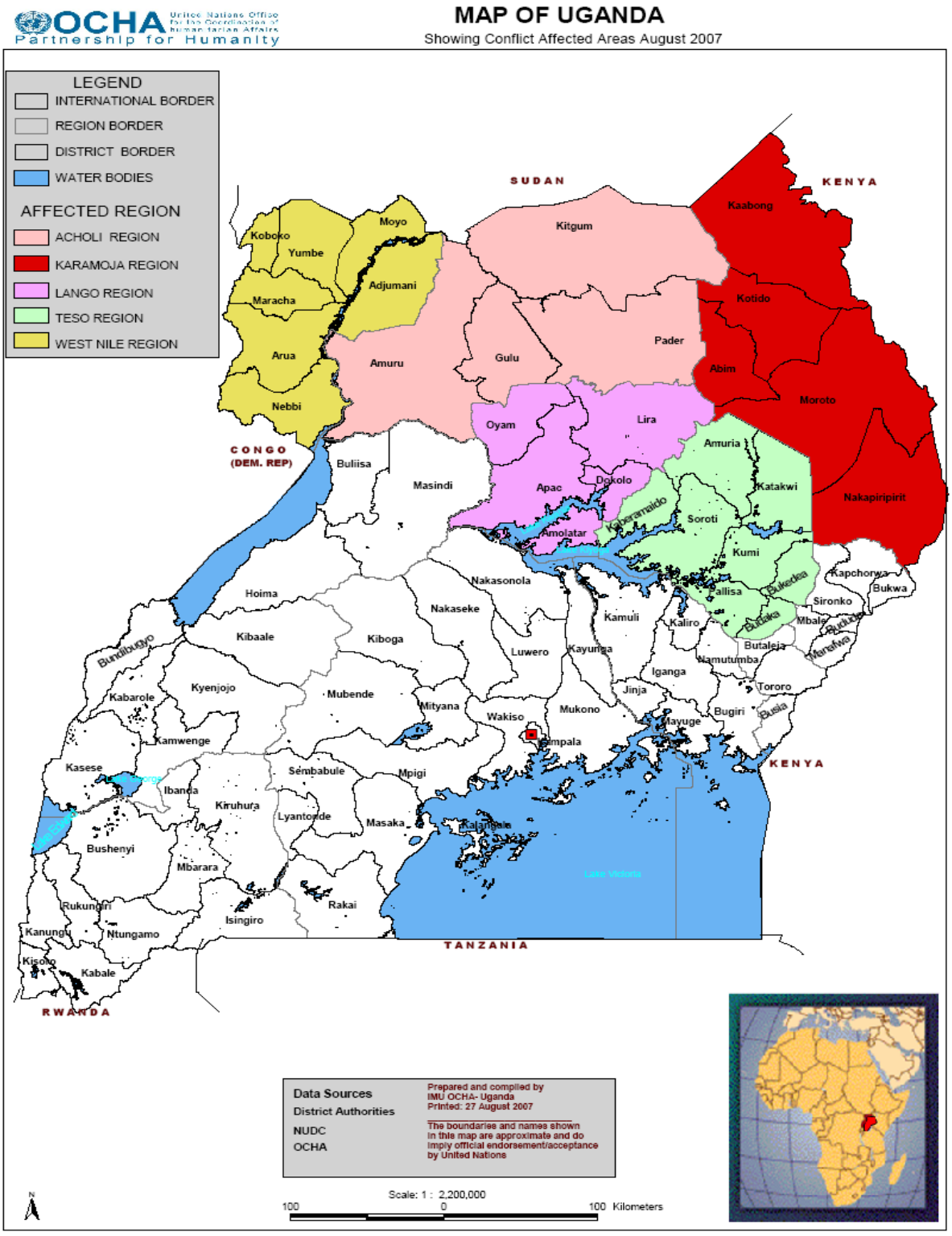


Figure 2: Map of Conflict Affected Areas in Uganda August 2007 [26]

[26] UNOCHA, 2007

While the relatively stabile situation in Northern Uganda gave rise to hope, humanitarian actors turned their attention to the Karamoja region where conflict, lawlessness, and cultural marginalization have worsened since the 1980's.[27] Although the focus of the thesis is on the conflict of Northern Uganda, it is noteworthy that a substantial number of IDPs from Karamoja also find their way to urban centres.

> *"There are people that have come because of the Karamajong rustling, the rebels, and if the government found out that the rebels ate at your house, they would kill you."*[28]

2.1.1 Kampala

> *"It is better here; you don't have to live in fear. To hear gunshots, kids raped. And not being surprised if your daughter gets pregnant."*[29]

People scattered and fled from the war in Northern Uganda to many locations. It is estimated that between 300 000 and 600 000 people went to urban areas. Urban IDPs are not registered so the estimates are merely based on guesses by humanitarian actors. [30] Although several urban areas are known to host IDPs[31], the majority is assumed to stay in the capital Kampala. With a population of 1, 59 million people[32] the city is a beacon of hope and dreams for many migrants, including IDPs of whom many end up in the vast slum areas of the city living under squalid conditions. Over 30 percent of the population in Kampala stay in slums, 29 % live in poverty, and 20 % under the poverty line. [33] [34]

[27] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2007: In North Eastern Uganda Karamojong warfare and forced disarmament programs have led to escalated violence and further displacement
[28] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Male 25, came from Pader to Kampala in 1999
[29] Group Discussion Banda 1 18.10.07: Woman 22 came from Gulu to Kampala in 2005
[30] Grace, 2005 p 8, United Nations Consolidated Appeals Process, 2005 p 2, UNOCHA, 2004 p 1
[31] IOM, 2006 , OPM & IOM 2006, Okello & Joel, 2006: Gulu, Masindi, Jinja, Entebbe, and Adjumani district
[32] UN Habitat, 2008
[33] Kampala City Council Planning Unit (DDP), 2003
[34] In an urban context you have to pay rent and food adding a burden specific for the urban context which is not accounted for in the one dollar a day poverty-line.

Within Kampala, which is the largest city of Uganda, strong economic pull factors and lack of supervision and registration of migrants combined with the opportunities to 'blend in' make it challenging to identify 'genuine' 'forced'[35] migrants.

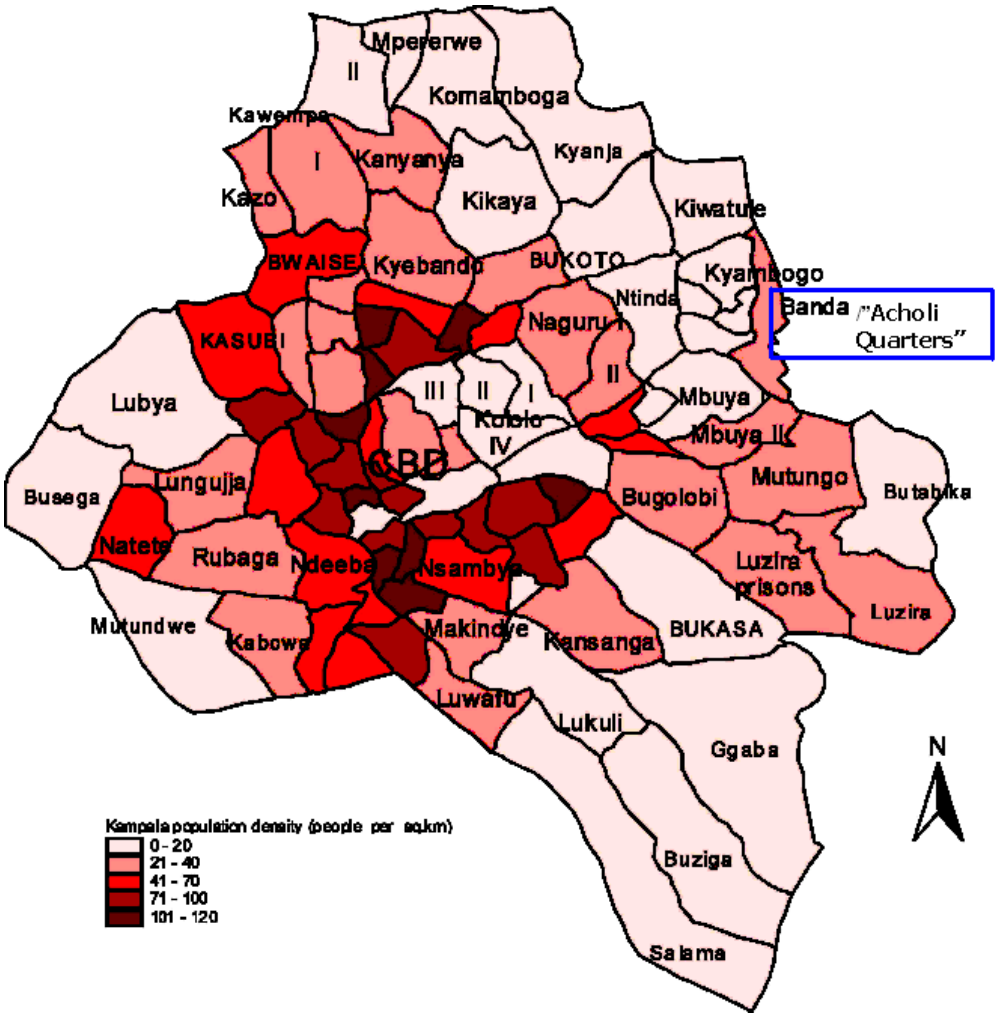


Figure 3: Map over Kampala with Divisions [36]

[35] What constitutes 'forced' migration in this setting is not necessarily very clear and will be investigated later in the thesis

[36] Kampala City Council Planning Unit (DDP), 2003

2.1.1.1 'Acholi Quarters'

> *"There is one good thing about Acholi Quarters. Whether you have gone to school or not, you can go to the stone quarry and pick up a hammer. You can get 500 schillings to get something to eat. Even if you don't know how to write."*[37]

Kampala is characterized by vast slum-areas in the centre and the suburbs. Slums in Kampala include Naguru Go-Down, Wabigalo, Namuwongo, Kibuli, and Kamwyoka[38]. For the purpose of going in-depth, one such area was chosen.

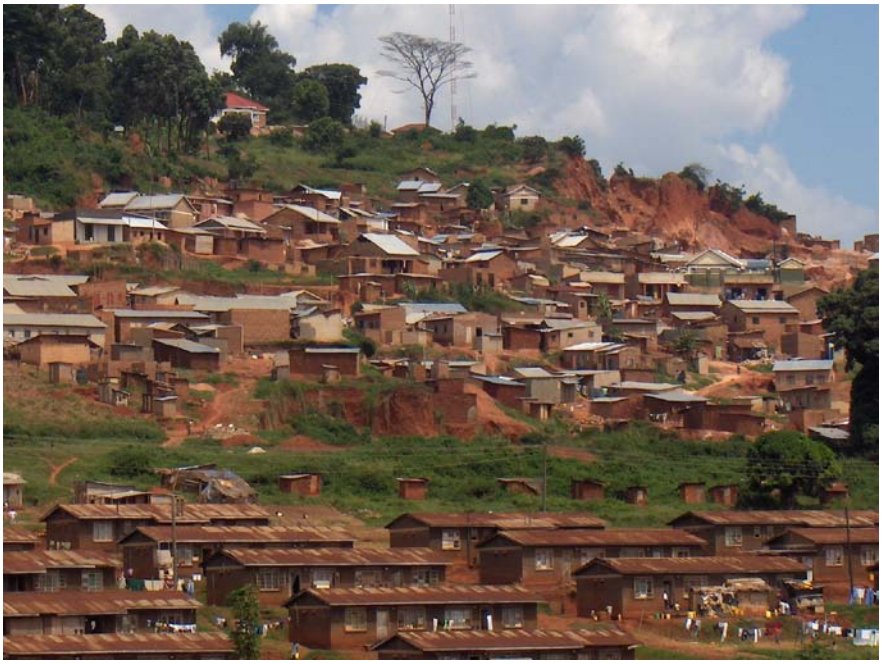


Figure 4: 'Acholi Quarters', Banda 1 zone, Kireka, Kampala, Uganda. Source: Authors own photo

Located in Kireka, Banda 1 zone, the place nicknamed 'Acholi Quarters' is home to many people affected by the conflict in Northern Uganda. Rumours have it the Kabaka[39] gave this land to people fleeing the war, but according to official documents the land is currently leased from a company called Kireka Estates by National Housing & Construction Company

[37] Interview 18.10.07 Woman 33, came from Pader to Kampala in 2000
[38] Letter dated 14 October 2007 from Acholi Local Community Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) temporarily living in Kampala
[39] The 'Kabaka' is the King of Buganda, the largest tribe in Uganda

Limited.[40] People affected by the war in Northern Uganda live there mixed with other migrants. The main source of income for many of its approximately 4000 residents is breaking stone in the stone quarries located in the area, making paper beads and necklaces, or other types of work within security or construction. Some humanitarian organizations are present in the area, but no overall coordination of humanitarian agencies exists. In 1959 a plantation was established and many Sudanese refugees from the first civil war and Acholis from Northern Uganda came to work. The owner who was Indian got evicted under the Idi Amin regime a year later. Banda 1 also had army-barracks where many Acholis from the north resided. When the conflict in Northern Uganda broke out in 1986, several of the people were joined by relatives fleeing the North. By 1990 a large population of people from the North resided in the area, which earned the nickname 'Acholi Quarters'. [41] The area has a characteristic look compared to most other slums in Kampala which are normally heavily congested and located in the valleys. As shown in Figure 4, 'Acholi Quarters' lies on a hill with some space between the houses. The reason behind the special landscape is that in addition to the stone quarries, the hill used to be and still is a graveyard. Because of poverty and lack of alternatives, people have been forced to settle upon the graves. This settlement pattern is particularly poignant considering that burials in Acholi tradition have a distinct importance. It is strongly believed that the deceased should be buried in their ancestors' land. The belief is so strong that over the years many IDPs have dug up the bodies and transported them to the north to re-bury when the conflict has allowed for it. Considering the Acholi traditions of burials it shows the gravity of the housing situation when people in 'Acholi Quarters' now are 'building upon graves'.[42] People affected by the war in Northern Uganda seem present in most slum areas in Kampala.

[40] Meeting with Chief Executive Director National Housing and Construction Company Limited, 14.09.07 National Housing and Construction Company Limited is a public enterprise that was established by the National Housing Corporation Act of 1964, which was repealed by the 1974 Decree to form National Housing and Construction Corporation. In July 2002, the Corporation became a Public Limited liability company known as National Housing and Construction Company Limited (NH &CCL). The Company was set up to increase the housing stock in the country, rehabilitate the housing industry and encourage Ugandans to own homes in organized environment. The Company is jointly owned by the Government of Uganda (51%) and the Government of Great Socialist Peoples' Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah (GGSPLAJ) 49% shares.

[41] Interview with Local Vice Chairman Banda zone 1, 29.08.07

[42] When building houses and during heavy rain, bones and knuckles sometimes emerge. A participant told me about a friends` daughter who came home with her 'new ball' which turned out to be a human scull! To take care of such emerging parts, an open mass common grave is put up in the middle of the area where people can throw the bones.

'Acholi Quarters' however, has a particularly high concentration due to its history and the residents' social networks.

2.1.2 Jinja

> *"Many prefer refuge in Jinja. Because it is an industrial area, because you think it is work. Of course you can't go where there is no help. We thought we could get better living in Jinja. It has failed. Many of us are distilling waragi [booze] or cultivating on the margins of the sugarcane fields. It is hills and swampy wetlands. These places are full of stones. For this reason we feel it is time to reach home with our brothers and sisters."*[43]

With 410, 900 inhabitants, Jinja District is the second largest urban centre in Uganda. Jinja used to be a booming industrial centre, but after Idi Amin expelled Asian entrepreneurs in the 1970`s, the industrial centre has almost collapsed.[44] The main source of livelihood for the poor population in Jinja is the sugar cane plantations and brewing waragi.

Figure 5: Jinja, Mpumudde 21.10.07: My colleagues at Refugee Law Project (RLP) (Two closest) walking around near the brewery

[43] Community meeting 21.10.08, Jinja: Man 48, came from Gulu to Jinja in 1987
[44] Government of Uganda, 2002 b

With Jinja's history as 'the industrial centre' in Uganda, many people have gone to the town looking for work. The rent in Jinja is also much lower than in Kampala which provides additional motivation for poor people to settle. Jinja was included in the study because I got contacted by a representative for urban IDPs in Jinja where they were organized as a community advocating for inclusion in return and resettlement programmes. I will revert to this in chapter four and seven.

3 From Labelling to Acting upon Labels

The following chapter explores some of the concepts and theoretical considerations that have guided the research. The concepts of discourse and labelling are used as a starting point to understand how certain practices and procedures have developed. By looking at laws, bureaucratic procedures and socially accepted practices, I explore how labels are constructed to operationalize definitions and policies. The theoretical considerations embedded in the methodology of participatory action research are also explained to give a better understanding of the framework for the research process.

3.1 Labelling in Discourse

The post-structural view of knowledge as partial and situated rather than objective has heavily influenced the social sciences. Hickey and Lawson describe how feminist arguments about reflexivity and partial perspectives made critical human geographers question the 'natural' and 'objective' basis of knowledge. By recognizing how knowledge is constructed through histories, power relations, places and the act of research, we come to realize that 'facts' do not speak for themselves. Consequently, it becomes the responsibility of researchers not merely to gather 'facts', but to understand how knowledge is constructed and consists of multiple situated truths.[45]

Discourses are sets of statements structuring how we understand the world and how we act based on that understanding.[46] Consequently as our understandings found the basis of our actions, discourses affect the daily lives of all people. Michele Foucault emphasizes the paradox of how discourses affect everything in our society while remaining nearly unobservable.[47] Hence, to shed light on the processes through which discourses are formed and who they serve is of uttermost importance.

[45] Hickey & Lawson, 2005
[46] Rose, 2001, p 136
[47] Focault, 1972

When rejecting neutral objective knowledge, it is important to acknowledge the power-relations within which knowledge is created. Arturo Escobar points out how power does not become entrenched by repression so much as by normalization, controlled knowledge and bureaucratization of social action. He agrees with Focault that the discourse must be seen as a 'strategy without strategists'. Nobody is explicitly masterminding the discourses, rather it is the result of a historical process and society's systematized response to this process. [48] The term 'discourse' is used to describe and analyze the structures of knowledge that shape both the everyday life and more specialized knowledge. Hickey and Lawson describes discourses as 'regimes of truths' describing the world and consisting of ideas, ideals, social conventions, narratives, texts, institutions, individuals and collective practices."[49] Discourses help create the institutions and individuals they describe. Through laws, bureaucratic procedures and socially accepted practices of behaviour, institutions shape everyday life.

The focus in this dissertation is the IDP discourse in Uganda. I attempt to investigate the discourse not by conducting a discourse analysis, but by looking at how the understanding of the definition, policies and practices around the concept of IDPs have developed and is operationalized through the concept of labelling. The concept of labelling is then explored by looking at laws, bureaucratic procedures and practices of behaviour.

Labelling is one element in the construction of political discourse. Cathrine Brun defines labelling as "the process of how we categorize people or things and attribute meanings to them"[50] Already in the 18th Century, labelling of people by public institutions was part of the categorisation, measurement and quantification of perceived problems. The 'official labels' were often portrayed as objective facts, ignoring their roots in complex political processes. For instance, during colonial times, bureaucracies supported social hierarchies by adopting racial labels when estimating taxes, numbers, and labour expenses. In the 1980's both policy and practice were concerned with defining and reaching what was called 'target populations'. The goal was to categorize within 'needy' populations in order to prioritize and provide effective

[48] Escobar, 1995
[49] Hickey & Lawson 2005 p 103
[50] Brun, 2003b

assistance. Constructing categories of people and labelling them was perceived as a way of managing assistance, and measuring how groups of people are benefiting from the process. [51]

The concept of "labels" as opposed to "categories" recognizes the context of political and bureaucratic agency they are constructed within. Roger Zetter describes the theoretical framework for labelling as a way of understanding "How bureaucratic interests and procedures [of humanitarian agencies] …. are themselves crucial determinants in the definition of labels.[52] Labelling is a process of stereotyping and standardising with the formulation of clear-cut categories. A label emphasizes one element which then becomes descriptive of the situation or identity of the concerned.[53] Labels are tools of control, regulation and management often appearing as 'natural', and not necessarily recognized by the actors themselves. By focusing on labelling, processes of control, regulation and management can be revealed. As Zetter argues:

> "There exists the need to establish more precisely the extent to which bureaucratic interests and procedures are themselves crucial determinants in the definition of labels like refugees."[54]

Zetter focuses on three aspects of labelling; Forming, Transforming and Politicizing.[55]

3.1.1 Forming

Labels are created as a means of including and excluding, most often as a reaction to challenges that need to be managed. As described above, by weighing certain characteristics of individuals, one can create more or less homogenized groups that are easier to work with. The formation of the label includes how stereotypical identities are translated into bureaucratically assumed needs. As an inescapable part of public policymaking, labelling will no doubt continue to be employed. However, by observing the way bureaucratic procedures and practices form a label, the politics, power relations and constructiveness of the process can be

[51] Eyben & Moncrieffe, 2006
[52] Zetter, 1991
[53] Wood, 1985
[54] Zetter, 1991 p 41
[55] Zetter, 2007

revealed. By creating awareness of these processes, the view of labels as neutral and fixed entities can be challenged.

3.1.2 Transforming

Labels are not only formed through bureaucratic action, they are also transformed by it. The gap between latent humanitarian intentions, and the ways they manifest in practice is significant. Zetter employs the concept 'institutional agency' and explores how the need to manage and control migration transforms the labels. The public policy practices of governments, NGOs and intergovernmental organizations acting under the banner of humanitarianism influence and transform the labels through institutional action and programme delivery. Such transformations can be very context specific, and in this dissertation I will explore how the label IDP in Uganda has been transformed and in practice redefined, deviating from the international and Ugandan formal definition of IDPs.

3.1.3 Politicizing

The third concept used by Roger Zetter is "Politicizing". Politics is about power, the ability to achieve certain ends, and the forces which influences and reflects its distribution. With access to resources as an important determinant of power, politics is most often connected to distribution of resources.[56] Although the processes of labelling often go unnoticed and unquestioned, bureaucratic procedures, resource distribution and the underlying interests they represent are political. Geoff Wood calls it "The political in the apparently non-political".[57] Zetter argues that for instance the refugee label has become highly politicized and is now more defined by restrictive governments in the North than by the NGOs and intergovernmental organisations which constructed the label originally. Influenced by the negative refugee/migrant discourse in the North, the label 'refugee' has become very narrow. Zetter also emphasizes the non-participatory nature and powerlessness of forced migrants in the context of public policy and bureaucratic practices. He argues that the debate on labelling is about the

[56] Held,1989
[57] Wood, 1985, p 6

participation of people in forming their identity and thereby enabling greater access to and control over decisions regarding their own lives.

Labelling shapes the way we think and act and has real consequences for the people involved. Labels can give the impression of stereotypical, homogenous, universal groups and strip people of their historical, political, and personal context. For instance, labelling people as 'vulnerable' can create the impression of passive helpless people which in turn can make aid administrators ignore the opportunities for making use of people's resilience and resourcefulness.[58] Labelling can also create barriers to integration. As Cathrine Brun describes in the context of researching with northern Muslims displaced by Sri Lanka's civil war in Puttalam, labels reinforces the "IDP" identity for the IDPs as well as for their host community. When competing for scarce resources this division can lead to tensions between those labelled IDPs and their hosts.[59] Labelling is about inclusion and exclusion. Because labelling defines access to many resources and services, people often organise around a perceived common identity and thereby seek to make themselves visible to the state or aid agencies by using a label that fits within a wider pre-established category. In contrast, those with less capacity for collective action may stay invisible, with their claims ignored. [60]

[58] Harrel-Bond, 1986
[59] Brun, 2003a
[60] Eyben & Moncrieffe, 2006

Action Research; intellectuals committed to radical change[61]

> *The sole advantage of power is that you can do more good.*
> **Baltasar Gracian**, *The Art of Worldly Wisdom, 1647*

The choice of methodology is not simply about interpreting the world, but also about how you believe the world should be. Qualitative methods are best suited when one acknowledges how specific discourses serve particular interests, and that some voices are not heard. Adopting qualitative methodologies can thus be a political choice and a strategy that seeks to challenge dominant knowledges and structures. The positivist idea of an objective researcher observing from 'outside' is replaced with social constructivism.[62] Human life is relational, and knowledge is created in a particular context and through interfacing with people. Consequently the researcher cannot claim to find one objective 'truth', or to be neutral towards the research.

> "Action Research is a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview. "[63]

Action research is most often based in the social constructivist rejection of the possibility for neutrality, and is thus concerned with producing research that will promote social justice. Since the possibility exists to act for good through our research, the best interest of others should inspire and guide the project. [64] Action research marks our 'presence in the present'.[65]

> *"I understand that you are a student. But students do not ask questions for nothing. They often hope something comes out of their study. Is there a program to help us or our children so we don't have to sit in the sun all day? Something to help us to get out of the sun and get our children to school?"*[66]

[61] Borda Fals, 2006
[62] Smith, 2001 and Mikkelsen, 2005
[63] Reason & Bradbury 2001, p 1
[64] Hilsen, 2006
[65] Chandler & Torbert, 2003
[66] Interview 29.10.07, Banda 1: Woman 24, came from Pader to Kampala in 2005

The importance of participation and democracy in the process of constructing knowledge has attracted increasing attention in recent years. With the lines between theory and practice, action and reflection becoming less clear, one can seek a more democratic way of engaging with people and their pressing concerns. Research and social action becomes part of the same project to produce knowledge relevant to people in their everyday lives. [67]

Action research is commonly traced back to social psychologist Kurt Lewins's work with social experiments in the 1940s. Lewin constructed training groups where the researchers discussed their findings with the participants to identify motivation and strategies for change. Other pioneers within the field were Tavistock Institute in London which developed several ways of conducting action research. However, the most important influence focusing on development originated in the liberationist movements among underprivileged people of the global South where research and evaluation have been important tools for social change. Authors worth mentioning are Paulo Freire, Camilo Torres, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, G.V.S de Silva, Myles Horton and Marja Liisa Swants. In the 1990s northern authors as Robert Chambers, C. Argyris, Bill Torbert, Alain Touraine, and David Cooperrider also engaged themselves in the field. [68]

At the heart of action research is a belief in increasing peoples` involvement in the creation and application of knowledge about themselves and their world.[69] This co-generation of knowledge is part of democratisation of knowledge and a shift of power from the researcher to the one researched with. Another characteristic of Action Research is its engagement with the past, present, *and* future. Real-time issues, based on context involving the past and aiming at social change for the future are all part of the project.

Although participatory action research has been promoted as a democratic alternative way of doing research, it has been criticized by Robert Chambers, amongst others, for being no more than an externally motivated political act. According to Chambers, at the end of the day, participatory action research is as before throughout history all about an outsider seeking to

[67] McNiff & Whitehead, 2006
[68] Borda Fals, 2006
[69] Reason, 2001

change things. It is effectively the same old discourse with a fancy new name. Consequently the form of participation is the key concern counteracting such a continuation of the dominant Eurocentric discourse.

Amongst today's many categories of action research is Radical action research. Radical action research includes striving for social transformation via an advocacy process designed to strengthen peripheral groups in society.[70] Advocacy seeks to integrate the power of knowledge and the power of networking. It is a process of negotiating with various institutions, including institutions of governance. [71] Advocacy through rights-based approaches seeks to make the governments' and humanitarian actors' responsibilities more explicit, to raise public awareness about their obligations, and to demand responsiveness, accountability, and transparency.

3.1.4 Rights Based Approaches in Action research

Rights and rights-based approaches have been absorbed into mainstream development and have taken on a myriad of meanings in the humanitarian debate. Rights-based approaches are both a means and an end. By securing peoples rights, one can achieve the final goal of ensuring the basic human rights for everyone. Its emphasis on legal rights defined in international conventions, laws, and constitutions, as well as within national frameworks gives opportunities for advocacy and legislative action which again can lead to social change.[72] Rights-based approaches recognise the links between immediate needs and longer term social change, and look at the two as complimentary rather than opposing. Confronting the political and power dimension of issues such as poverty is essential, but so is grounding different rights in the reality of needs for the population. Although rights-based approaches have the potential for creating social change, they can be dominated by top-down approaches focusing on 'professional' knowledge. By disregarding power relations one fails to address issues essential for sustainable social change. Participation by the people concerned is crucial to develop strategies capable of addressing those power relations that prevent legally enshrined rights

[70] Borda Fals, 2006
[71] Samuel, 2002
[72] Pettit & Musyoki, 2004

from being realised. [73] Participation itself is a right, and is the fundamental precondition for claiming and realising other rights.[74]

3.1.5 Participation

"Do not do unto others as you would they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same." - George Bernard Shaw: 1903, Man and Superman

Approaches focusing on participation and social change have existed since the rise of post-colonialism and radicalism in the 1960s. In the 1970's, radicals as Paulo Freire advocated for participatory action research to create spaces for people to express their needs. People should become critical, active and able to act on social policies and practices that keep unequal power relations in place.

Since the 1990s, alternative bottom-up participatory approaches have again gained prominence. The renewed respect and legitimacy of participatory approaches came as a response to criticism of how 'non expert' local people were sidelined as passive recipients of the grandiose development schemes of Eurocentric, top-down western experts. The market oriented Structural Adjustments Programmes implemented in the 1980's in development countries by actors as the World Bank was seen as a failure. Alternative approaches were called for. [75]

[73] ibid.
[74] Cornwall, 2002
[75] Chambers, 1997

At the core of the renewed interest was the emphasis on opinions and knowledge of the people concerned as experts on their own situations. As Roberta Cohen writes in 'Listening to the voices of the displaced:

> "Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are the best placed to articulate their needs and evaluate the national, regional and international responses to those needs, but most decisions on situations of internal displacement do not sufficiently reflect their thinking."[76]

The most widely used methodology developed was Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

> "The essence of PRA is change and reversals – of role, behaviour, relationship and learning. Outsiders do not dominate and lecture; they facilitate, sit down, listen and learn. Outsiders do not transfer technology; they share methods which local people can use for their own appraisal, analysis, planning, action, monitoring and evaluation. Outsiders do not impose their reality; they encourage and enable local people to express their own. "[77]

In the mid-1990's many tried to 'scale up' the participatory approaches. However, these exercises of mass participation were often conducted late in the policy processes, and often involved 'safe' civil society organizations who would not question the established logic. Although PRA was initiated as a challenge to professional western expertise, it has become so routinized that many agencies treat it like an add-on to prove their participation credential.[78] Business can go on as usual with extra justification where actors can claim to speak 'one behalf of'. Participation can also be treated as a technical method of project work rather than as a political methodology of empowerment.[79]

[76] Cohen, 2008
[77] Chambers, 1997, p 103
[78] Mohan, 2008
[79] Cooke & Kothari, 2001

Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari have asked if participation is the new tyranny. If it fails to engage with issues of power and politics, participation depoliticises political processes. The concept of participation is easy to misuse and can lead to unjust and illegitimate use of power by actors justifying their projects under the banner of participation. PRA has also been criticized for being a rigid framework which is based on the values and communication capacities of outsiders.[80] Exploring own participatory methods adapting to each setting can therefore better suit the participants.

Authors like Jethro Pettit and Sammy Musyoki warns us that there is no such thing as a magic formula saying that if you use participatory methods, you will automatically promote positive social change. It is "the particular use of a method for realising rights within a change-oriented strategy and vision."[81] And that is where the participatory approach is so firmly linked with action research. The moral obligations of promoting democracy and social justice underpinning action research presuppose participation of people in the processes affecting their own lives. Based on the reasoning above, the question is not *if* the methods should be participatory, but *how.*[82]

Participation can range from merely answering questions in a passive manner and all the way to becoming co-researchers. Through participatory democratic methods, people's voices should be heard and the participants empowered in the process for social change. When John Friedmann writes about empowerment, he emphasizes empowerment as the expansion of a person's ability to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect his or her life.[83] Participatory mechanisms embedded within a rights-based approach can be used to hold policy implementers to account. You then move from what Giorgia Donà calls programmatic participation to transformative participation.[84] Participation means to be involved, informed, consulted and heard, but it also means taking initiative and lead, particularly if the process is to go on after the researcher has left. Andrea Cornwall argues that full participation entails involvement in defining research problems or generating analysis

[80] Mohan, 2008
[81] Pettit & Musyoki, 2004
[82] Hickey & Mohan, 2004
[83] Friedmann, 1992
[84] Donà, 2007

and representing, owning, and acting on the information that is sought. She argues that 'full participation' is not likely to occur within inevitably unequal power relations and time constraints. Consequently, spending enough time on the issue, and documenting who participates in what and how is essential throughout the research. [85]

Cornwall distinguishes between "invited" and "claimed" spaces of participation. "Invited" spaces are when humanitarian actors create forums for stakeholders where they can contribute and voice their concerns. By contrast "claimed" spaces involve the people themselves taking control over political processes without necessarily being invited. A way of working with people and their "claimed" spaces can be to develop situations where communities set the agenda and agencies become responsive.[86] Mohan argues that by combining the advantages of "invited" and "claimed" spaces, participatory approaches reflect the broader range of socio-political practices and expressions of agency that characterizes active citizenship. Citizenship indicates the rights and duties as well as identity and attachment in the relationship between the person and the state.[87] The whole idea of democracy is based on how citizens are informed, responsible and active.[88] The approach merging "invited" and "claimed" spaces combines the emphasis on formal rights and political channels with the collective engagement of citizens in the determination of their community affairs. Citizenship can be claimed from 'below' through the efforts and struggles of the marginalized rather than waiting for it to be conferred from above. [89]

By facilitating mobilization of existing interest groups, the researcher may help broadening "claimed" spaces. Community mobilizing is a strategy for involving community members in the process of defining and transforming social problems. Mobilizing involves linking awareness of a problem with action in order to bring about change.[90] One of the key issues for facilitating the mobilization of an interest group is to *identify* what constitutes the interest group. It is important to assess the representativeness of representatives or leaders, to take into account the different power relations, and to listen to what people have to say. The best way of

[85] Cornwall, 2002
[86] Ibid.
[87] Brun, 2003a
[88] Przeworski, 1996
[89] Mohan, 2008
[90] Burghard, 1986

doing so is spending time with the people involved, as well as people not that directly involved, at their places of residence and work places. The whole concept of mobilizing an interest group rests on the concept of participation.

The concept of community is problematic in so far as communities are often portrayed as a 'natural social entity' characterized by solidarity. Yet, communities consist of individuals with different, sometimes colliding interests. To talk about a community as a whole can therefore give the false impression of homogeneity and consensus.[91] In this dissertation the 'urban IDP community' refers to the organized group of people in different parts of Kampala and Jinja who have come from the north and have expressed a wish at some point to return.

Participatory approaches are based on recognizing the existing capacities of people as active claims-making agents. It is challenging to facilitate participation when taking into account the competing claims of communities within which, despite their shared histories, values, meanings and priorities might not coincide.[92] To catch the diversity of voices within a community, time and openness to different opinions is of essence. As in all political initiatives, some sort of coordination is necessary when the goal is to re-represent participants by forwarding their views to decision-makers. However, it is important to include differing opinions and views that do not necessarily coincide with those of the majority.

Participation from IDPs in research and formations of strategies, programmes and projects that affect their lives is of uttermost importance both in the moral sense and the practical. However, without recognising the power relations and politics in representation and the agency of the people, participation can strengthen unequal power relations rather than oppose them. Spending a lot of time with the participants and developing well-working partnerships is thus essential when facilitating participatory research and people's mobilization for social change.

Facilitating mobilization for change is transformative participation where the participants are not just consulted, but own the process. The participants set the agenda and strategy and the researcher contributes with knowledge on who to address and how to best address them. I will return to the concept and process of mobilizing for change in chapter six.

[91] Cleaver, 2001
[92] Bhabha, 1994

4 Exploring urban displacement in Kampala

4.1 The Process

This chapter will discuss the choice of methodology and describe the research process. The chapter describes what can be called phase one of the fieldwork, as the fieldwork was conducted in two phases. Phase one was exploratory and aimed to identify participants, to generate a general overview of the situation, and to listen to the displaced. Phase two, which was action oriented will be described in chapter seven and concerns the process of radical action research whereby the knowledge from phase one is used as a basis for collective action. Although the process was continuous and the phases overlap, it can be useful to see phase two of the fieldwork as building upon phase one.

Many of the important decisions and preparations that ultimately influenced the course of this study began as early as autumn of 2006. After considering a range of topics, all from reconstruction after the war in Lebanon to the effects of the fish-breeding industry on local communities in Chile I realized that my heart lay with humanitarian issues and with displacement in particular. Upon reading up on the different aspects of displacement, I decided in consultations with my supervisor to focus on the unexplored area of urban IDPs. Considering different areas, I chose Uganda due to its high number of IDPs, their well developed IDP frameworks, the protractedness of the conflict, and the harsh conditions in the IDP-camps. Making contacts was also easy since four of my colleagues at the programme were from Uganda and proved to be an invaluable resource throughout the process.

4.1.1 Refugee Law Project – an entry for action

Established in 1999 as an autonomous national project under Faculty of Law of Makerere University in Uganda, the Refugee Law Project (RLP) has since been a critical and independent advocate for the rights of displaced people. With a staff of around thirty people, RLP consists of three departments: Legal Aid, Education and Training, and Research and Advocacy. The combination of research and advocacy with a rights-based approach adds elements of action research to the work of RLP.

I initially got to know RLP by reading their many excellent working papers concerning refugees, IDPs and the conflicts of Uganda. When my supervisor got in touch with their director on a conference on forced migration, I followed up by sending in a request to become a research associate with the project. After receiving a positive response, and without much knowledge about what becoming a research associate entailed, I showed up at RLP's office in June 2007 ready to begin fieldwork. As it turns out, the RLP had been thinking of a study on urban IDPs for a while and was pleased I came in and could spend some time on the issue. In the beginning my relationship with the RLP consisted mainly of obtaining their assistance in processing the research licence, advice on how to behave in the field, and feed-back on the interview-guides. However, as time went by and I spent more and more time in and around the office, the study transformed itself into a project. The study *was* initially planned as a project containing elements of action research. However, the original plan was hampered by the lack of knowledge of the opportunities that existed for such an approach. Since no research or registration had been conducted on the topic urban IDPs, phase one of the fieldwork had to be exploratory. Working with the Refugee Law Project made it possible to develop the fieldwork into phase two building on their experience with action research and advocacy.

4.2 Phase one: Identifying participants and generating a general overview of the situation

The most successful people are those who are good at plan B. - James Yorke

While in other situations one might be able to contact the participants directly and involve them fully in the whole design of the research, I did not initially know my participants, where they lived, or even whether they existed. Phase one of the fieldwork therefore consisted of identifying participants and generating a general overview of the situation. To help me I hired a research assistant who had been introduced to me by one of my Ugandan colleagues in Trondheim. Many Ugandans know English, but I was dependent on my research assistant to communicate with those who did not.

One of the main challenges of the study was to locate urban IDPs in Kampala. It is not easy to identify who is from which region by appearance alone, at least not for a foreigner. In addition, you will not know if the person has fled the war unless you talk to them. My research assistant was important in that matter, and we began by randomly searching the streets in the centre of Kampala and talking to people. We also began to interview some organizations and officials in the hopes that they could help us identify people affected by the war who had come to Kampala. However, they were not very helpful in this regard as most organizations and officials we interviewed did not know much about this group, and could not refer to any studies or profiling on urban IDPs.

Through the informal conversations with urban IDPs and others on the streets, we got an idea of where to find concentrations of urban IDPs and some of their common occupations. Several people mentioned 'Acholi Quarters' in the suburb neighbourhood of Kireka, so a Ugandan colleague from the Mphil programme in Norway and myself went there.

Getting off the taxi in Kireka, uncertain of where to go, we hailed two boda bodas (moped taxis) and asked them to take us to 'Acholi Quarters'. They instantly knew where to take us, and we arrived shortly after at a hill with stone quarries populated by large concentrations of Acholis. We started walking up the hill and spoke to the people we met along the way. During this initial encounter we focused primarily on observation and informal conversations. One young woman in particular proved to be an excellent contact and a partner for many later discussions.

At the RLP office, the 'Acholi Quarters' in Kireka was also suggested as a starting point. One of the senior researchers had conducted a study in the area before, and offered to come with me and introduce me to the local chairman LC1.[93] I was introduced to the LC1`s of two different areas and presented my research license from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology. They were very cooperative and interested in the study. We decided to focus mainly on 'Acholi Quarters' in order to obtain more in-depth information in the time available.

[93] A local council is a form of locally elected governance within the districts of Uganda. Five levels of local councils are in use, the lowest, one, is lead by the LC1.

To get some background information my research assistant and I began by interviewing the Vice LC1 in 'Acholi Quarters', and subsequently some of the elders at the office. Having already established contacts on our initial visit, we proceeded to formally interview some of the people we had spoken to on that occasion.

Over the next four months, I frequently visited 'Acholi Quarters' to conduct interviews with urban IDPs, and other people living in the area but not originating from the North. In addition to these inter-active interviews, my research assistant and I also had many informal conversations and opportunities to observe and participate in the urban IDPs daily lives, including cooking, making beads from paper[94], or just visiting the different participants. As will be explained later in the paper, the urban IDPs in 'Acholi Quarters' were also involved in the analysis of the findings.

Concentrating the study on 'Acholi Quarters' likely had an important impact on the findings. Given the high concentration of Acholis in the area, their identity might be stronger than that of other Acholis residing in Kampala, and the study might reflect the views of the people least integrated in the city. With a strong notion of a common 'homelands' the idea of return may have a stronger foothold than in more dispersed communities. However, urban IDP initiatives for return exist in most slums in Kampala. Focusing on slum areas, the level of poverty reflected in the housing and living conditions probably effects how the urban IDPs see themselves. However, it is exactly this group the project seeks to involve, and the areas chosen are thus illustrative.

4.3 The fieldwork

The fieldwork was conducted in two phases over eight months in the capital, Kampala, with some visits to the neighbouring town of Jinja, and to Gulu in the North. The fieldwork began in the beginning of June 2007 and continued until the middle of December. I then spent some time in Norway before I went back for two months, February and March 2008. In phase one, thirty in-depth interviews and five focus group discussions with urban IDP men, women and youth were conducted. In addition I spent much time in the urban IDP communities. I also

[94] Rolling beads of paper and make necklaces to sell is one source of income for many women in 'Acholi Quarters'.

attended three community meetings and had many informal conversations while participating in the daily lives of the people. Ten interviews with other people living in the area were also conducted. To explore the humanitarian discourse and the perceptions of the actors dealing with IDPs, thirty interviews with different actors including local chairmen, city council, the government, and NGOs were conducted. I also worked at the Refugee Law Project (the national community outreach project dealing with IDPs and refugees) during my stay. The first phase of fieldwork consisted of identifying participants, gaining knowledge about their situation, and listening to what they had to say. The second phase of the fieldwork which I will return to in chapter seven, focused on participatory action and mobilization of the communities based on the knowledge created in the first phase.

4.3.1.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative methods are characterized by an in-depth approach with a focus on the relational construction of knowledge between people. All knowledge is situated and partial.[95] When acknowledging the contextual construction of knowledge, qualitative methodology is best suited for exploring the processes of labeling and people's perceptions of their situation.

4.3.1.1.1 Methods

A variety of methods were used in the research. The most important among these were in-depth interviews, participatory observation, group discussions and informal conversations. In addition a myriad of secondary sources were reviewed. The following sections will describe the methods used and explore their strengths, weaknesses, and relevance for answering the research questions.

4.3.1.1.1.1 Interview

The objective of a semi-structured interview is to hold a flexible conversation which presents opportunities to explore and probe into seemingly relevant issues. One of the major strengths of interviewing is that it allows the researcher to learn what is relevant to the participants. [96]

[95] Haraway, 1988
[96] Thagaard, 2003

During the research I adapted the interview guide as some issues stood out as particularly significant to the IDP participants. Issues that came up again and again included the importance of return, which formed the basis for the action oriented phase two of the fieldwork. I was advised by my colleagues at the Refugee Law Project to take notes instead of using a tape recorder since I interviewed most people at their work places outside, and because of the sensitivity of many issues. Although it became more challenging to facilitate the conversation when at the same time taking notes, I felt people spoke very freely to me, both the urban IDPs, and the agencies and officials dealing with them.

The knowledge generated in an interview situation depends on the relationship between the researcher and the participant. My research assistant and I began each interview with a short introduction of ourselves and the explanation that the objective of the study was to gain more knowledge of the situation of the people living in the area. I emphasized that I would not talk to other people about what was said in this interview in ways they could be recognized, and that the participants should feel free not to participate. It was our experience that once our status as students was made clear, the participants' expectations of our ability to assist them did not appear high. At the end of each interview I always asked if the participants had any questions for me. Except for a few people who asked if this research would be followed by any projects, most people said that since I was a student they did not have any requests for me. With little experience in conducting interviews, it was in the beginning quite hard to keep the interviews as rich flowing discussions. However, as time went on I gained more experience and facilitated better interviews.

I used a more active approach when interviewing government officials and humanitarian actors. If allowed to speak freely, I found that the majority simply rattled off information explaining their activities, mandate, and other issues they saw as important. I also found that it was in the process of asking concrete questions using real examples that I got the most relevant answers revealing uncertainties and lack of information around people affected by the war who had moved to urban areas. When talking to people in powerful positions it was sometimes difficult to focus on the relevant topics since many did not want to talk about people affected by the war who came to urban areas. I recall running after the Ag. Deputy Town Clerc in

Kampala through the hallways of the City Council while he lectured me on the more interesting topics within academia such as urban planning and technical solutions to traffic jams. It was difficult to ask a single coherent question under those circumstances. Determined to implement a more active approach with the Minister of Relief and Disaster Preparedness, I later heard that he (in a humorous tone) had felt as if he was being interrogated by the CIA. He did, however, exhibit interest in the topic and later agreed to visit 'Acholi Quarter' and meet with the urban IDP representatives.

4.3.1.1.1.2 Participatory Observation and informal conversations

One of the major advantages of using observation as a method in qualitative research is that it becomes possible to observe actual actions as well as how people relate to each others in social settings.[97] Most importantly, by participating in people's daily lives it is possible to create trust and an understanding which is difficult to achieve unless you spend a lot of time talking to people. Sometimes other foreigners came to 'Acholi Quarters' to buy paper bead necklaces or participate when one of the few organizations working in the neighborhood handed out medicines to people affected by HIV. In relation to this gathering the women in the area typically danced and sang for the foreigners and sold necklaces afterwards. Most visitors coming to 'Acholi Quarters' got a 'tour' in the area often reflecting only a specific segment of the community. After some time I found myself being included in the different gossip about who got what from whom and I gradually moved from being called 'you people', to 'you', to, on some occasions 'we' and 'us'. Without spending so much time with the participants I would not have had the chance to begin to understand how their community was organized. The trust achieved was also essential when doing interviews and later in phase two of the fieldwork when facilitating mobilization of the communities.

[97] Thagaard, 2003

4.3.1.1.1.3 Group Discussions

Group discussions are good for obtaining in-depth information on concepts, perceptions and ideas of the participants. Through discussion the dynamics of the group can be studied, and different understandings elucidated.[98] After most of the in-depth interviews were conducted, my research assistant and I sat down and tried to formulate the initial findings. These were presented to the communities in Jinja and Kampala through local representatives. Most importantly, we returned to 'Acholi Quarters' and held five group discussions with the urban IDPs to analyze the findings. In addition to asking the kind of questions found in the interview guide, we purposely formulated sharpened statements to create debate. These group discussions formed part of a cooperative analysis of the in-depth interviews. By including urban IDPs in the analysis of the initial findings, misunderstandings could be clarified and differing opinions could be expresses and included.

Three discussions were held with women and two with men of different ages and from different layers of society. The discussions with the women were initiated walking around and ask women at work in their household, or at work in the quarry whether they had the opportunity to participate. The discussions with the men were arranged by a women's representative in the Local Council. The reason was that many of the men worked outside 'Acholi Quarters' and only came back late at night. With her assistance we managed to gather a group of men and a group of youth to meet on a Sunday after church when most of the working people were available. We explained to the representative the importance of speaking with people who fell within different ages, occupations, and layers of society. The number of participants in each of the groups varied due to differences in access and interest. For example, the first women's group discussion was scheduled to begin at two o clock. Fearing that too many would show up, we invited only eight people from which five came. The next group discussion was on a Monday. Most of the women who normally work with beads or in the stone quarry go to the market in downtown Kampala on Mondays to get raw materials for their beads or other occupations. Consequently, we were able to gather only six women willing to participate. The third group discussion was made up of eleven women. The men's discussion group situation differed since we had help from the women's representative in organizing the

[98] Mikkelsen, 2005

discussions. Fourteen men ranging from 34 to 73 years old participated. Ten male youths[99] in the age of 20 to 33 formed the last group discussion. All the group discussions were very lively, and at times quite hard to follow for me and the research assistant. While some of the discussions were conducted in English, three of them were conducted in Acholi. When communicating through an interpreter, a lot of important information and nuances can be lost. Luckily, I had a very competent and experienced research assistant which made it easier. However, when together transcribing the group discussions in the evening, we experienced that there were many aspects she had noticed that I had not.

We began the group discussions after introducing ourselves by asking general questions and oriented discussions around the main elements of the initial analysis. Furthermore we came with statements reflecting our initial analysis, or the opposite of our findings. These statements could take the form of quotes from officials and organizations, keeping them anonymous of course, or merely reflect our own opinions. This technique was very successful at creating heated debates, uncovering many strong opinions on the different subjects and generating much useful input on the analysis. My position in the group discussions was mainly as moderator ensuring that everyone was heard. I also got the chance to ask follow-up questions as did the other participants. Group discussions can be hard to manage, and it is sometimes challenging to make sure everyone gets the opportunity to speak and is heard. I found my experience in teaching and leading workshops very helpful when moderating the discussions.

I believe the group discussions were fun for the researchers and participants alike: on several occasions the participants expressed the satisfaction of discussing these important issues, and debate continued long after the meeting was formally ended. The last discussion with the young men lasted well over three hours and only ended because it got too dark to see what we were writing. Even after such an intense debate the last comment from one of the participants was: "*So when are we doing this next time?*"[100]

[99] These were people seen as youths by themselves and the community, mainly because they were not married.
[100] Discussion 04.11.07, Male urban IDP at 'Acholi Quarters'

4.3.2 Position, Power and Reflexivity

We see from where we stand, which makes reflecting around positionality essential in research. The knowledge constructed when meeting participants is inevitably influenced by how the researcher is perceived, and the way the interviews, conversations and observations are conducted. By being aware of one's role and impact on the research as well as of the different power relations at play, the outcome can be made more relevant and better present the voices of the participants.

> "Reflexivity involves reflecting on the way in which research is carried out and understanding how the process of doing research shapes its outcomes."[101]

In the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's, several researchers as for instance Campbell and Stanley[102] advocated for reflexivity as a way to achieve more objectivity in qualitative research. The researchers were responsible for declaring their biases and to attempt to remove them from their work. Over time, however, social scientists came to the conclusion that the values and situatedness of the researcher could never be eradicated from research.[103] Reflexivity thus became less concerned with removing biases rather than with making them visible through personal disclosure so that readers could take them into account. Reflexivity involves reflecting on what role we played in producing certain kinds of knowledges, the choices we made, and how and why we arrived to the conclusions we did.

When you as researcher reflects on your role and impact on the knowledge constructed it is important to consider your situatedness, in other words where you see from. My nationality, age, gender and status are some of the characteristics that form my engagement with the field. As a student from Norway I have few experiences of life in and after conflict which can make it difficult to relate to the context of the participants. The abovementioned characteristics also influenced how I was perceived by others. As an outsider it is difficult to understand the different nuances and complexities in a society. Again, the benefits of spending a lot of time with the participants cannot be overestimated in this context. Although I was always an

[101] Hardy, Nelson & Hegg, 2001
[102] Campbell & Stanley, 1963
[103] Rose, 2001

outsider, the degree of 'outsiderness' changed in the course of the research. Through ongoing interactions, the participants and I understood more about each other and increasingly levelled out the unequal power relations which often characterize the researcher-researched relationship. People seemed to get used to me as I spent much of my time with them, and I also felt included in their everyday lives. My status as a student was very effective for keeping down expectations for assistance and outcome of the research. After people got to know me they understood I was not from the NGO community, and I was not perceived as a potential source of financial support, at least not in the short run. Most people knew I was 'just' a student writing my masters thesis. I did, however, also have the opposite experience. While in 'Acholi Quarters' I was seen as a student with few resources, I experienced to be perceived otherwise in the neighbouring town of Jinja. My position changed as I got more actively involved with the existing urban IDP initiative, which also marked the transition to the action oriented phase two of the fieldwork.

After two months in Kampala I was contacted by a representative coordinator for IDPs in the neighbouring town Jinja, where urban IDPs had for some time tried to advocate for inclusion in the return and resettlement programmes planned for Northern Uganda. The coordinator had heard about the study we were conducting from the Head of Research at RLP. The Acholis in Jinja had been organized for a long time with councils of elders handling issues such as funerals and conflicts within the community. However, it was due to the recent peace-talks that the initiative focusing on return had gained momentum. The coordinator for Jinja had also been in touch with Acholi representatives from some of the slum districts in Kampala. I interviewed the coordinator, and was asked to 'forward their voice' since they lacked resources, information, and contacts.

After RLP received a formal letter from the coordinator of "The Displaced Community Acholi, Lango and Teso in Jinja District" " the head of Legal Aid and the Head of Research at RLP, together with myself and some of the staff from counselling held a meeting with the representative from Jinja, and also with a representative for the incipient coordination of slum districts of Kampala. This meeting resulted in the decision to write a briefing paper based on the findings in Banda 1 'Acholi Quarters' for the aim of advocacy. It was also decided that

some of my colleagues at RLP and I would sit in on one of the initiatives' monthly meetings in Jinja.

Approximately fifty representatives attended the meeting in Jinja which was held under a tree outside the community house in Mpumude. Although we had emphasized that we would only sit in as observers, and would not present anything, our team of four were welcomed as honoured guests when we arrived in Jinja and had to sit in front of all the people alongside the coordinator, chairman, and secretary. Many of the attendees told stories of their hardships, their identity, and their strong wish to return 'home'. The course of the meeting was visibly influenced by our presence, and it was quite difficult to avoid rising expectations. We did, however, do our best by explaining clearly our role concerning research and advocacy. The entire context was very different from conducting the interviews in the 'Acholi Quarters' in Kampala. In Jinja, we were clearly perceived more as representatives of the humanitarian community, with equivalent effect. In the 'Acholi Quarters' I was 'just' a student doing fieldwork and hanging around. In Jinja we were invited to come by representatives who wanted us to assist them in their claims for inclusion in return and resettlement frameworks. I noticed a significant difference in the way people addressed me. Even though I was there with two colleagues from a Ugandan NGO, most of the questions were directed at myself, likely because of my status as a white foreigner. The most extreme example was:

> *"We look as blind that need to be guided. It is God almighty who has led us down to here. To regard our problems because we are blind. To deliver our problems to your kind request."*[104]

> *"As in Matthew chapter 7: You knock and the door will be open. In case you can help us we will be grateful."*[105]

As a white woman in a slum setting in Uganda, I was undoubtedly perceived as a potential source of assistance, and this marked my relations with the participants. This was more the case in Jinja than Kampala. In Kampala I spent a lot of time and got to know people better. I

[104] Acholi woman, old at the meeting in Jinja, 21.10.07
[105] Acholi woman, middle-aged at the meeting in Jinja, 21.10.07

had the opportunity to explain the study thoroughly and people understood my identity as a student well. In Kampala I normally came to the different slum areas alone or with my research assistant using public transportation. I was rarely asked for money and was moving around freely with little fuss around my presence. However, at the meeting in Jinja it was clear that I was perceived as a representative of the NGO community and that this perception rose hopes for assistance. Even though we explained our role and purpose very well it was difficult to assess how much this lingering perception affected the relations with the participants.

After the meeting we drove around with some of the representatives to observe and talk to people. We visited one of the breweries where many of the urban IDPs worked, and also one village. The purpose of the visit was more to get an impression of the representatives` legitimacy than understanding their livelihoods. It soon became clear, however, that our presence affected the meeting to such an extent that it was hard to draw any legitimate conclusions. Since by this point we had the interviews and observations from the study we were conducting backed up by other studies,[106] and considering the gap in the frameworks that needed to be addressed no matter what, we decided to continue with writing the briefing paper.

4.3.3 Participation

As emphasized in chapter three, I argue that participation is essential when researching forced migration. By involving people in the research process, the knowledge constructed becomes more relevant and better represent the experiences of the participants. The participants in this study took an active part in the interviews, and later in the group discussions analysing the initial findings from the interviews. Representatives that knew how to read also got the chance to comment on several drafts throughout the process. These and other aspects of participation will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter seven. It is however important to keep in mind that the analysis in the following chapters is a result of joint efforts by myself and the participants.

[106] Rowley, 2006, Sohne, 2006, Woodburn, 2007

4.4 Analysis

Analysis was a continuous process throughout the fieldwork. All the interviews and meetings were transcribed shortly after they were conducted. By systematically going through the interviews and identifying themes and issues, some initial findings were developed. In the course of this process I also became familiar with and used the software for qualitative analysis *NVivo*. Although the NVivo analysis process was very time-consuming, it was helpful in providing a systematic overview and organizing the texts in relation to categories and quotes. However, since the texts are taken out of their original context when grouping them into categories, I found it useful to go through all the material in its whole several times.

The initial findings were taken back to the urban IDP community in Kampala and we had group discussions where we analysed and discussed the findings. The findings were then (as will be described in chapter seven), summarized in a briefing paper developed at the Refugee Law Project together with the representatives from urban IDP communities in different slum areas in Kampala as well as Jinja. The following three chapters of analysis are based on the collaborative efforts of the participants and myself with important input from the staff at the Refugee Law Project throughout the process.

5 What is the dominant discourse on IDPs in Uganda, and what is the role of urban IDPs in this discourse?

"IDPs are persons that are still in the camps." - UNHCR Protection Officer, Interview Kampala 11.09.07

"They have lost the label of war victim and are now labelled street person. They are scavengers. They are the scavengers in the dustbins." - Ag. Deputy Town Clerc, Interview Kampala 27.08.07

"They are economic migrants, I don't think they are IDPs" - Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Interview Kampala 28.08.07

"You are IDPs, I will help you return" " - Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, speech in Acholi Quarters Kampala 29.02.08

"No, I don't know anything about them." – Uganda Human Rights Commission protection officer, Interview Kampala 10.09.07

In this chapter the discourse on IDPs is explored through interviews with the actors dealing with IDPs and through participatory observation in the national community outreach organisation Refugee Law Project throughout the fieldwork. In addition the most important institutional frameworks are analysed. I first examine how the IDP label in Uganda was formed, and how the definition and policy frameworks are written. I then proceed to explore how the different actors perceive urban IDPs and how the label 'IDP' in Uganda has been transformed and redefined in practice.

The urban IDPs' perception of the category "IDP" is also explored through interviews and group discussions. The element of force is essential in the definition of IDPs in the institutional frameworks. The IDPs' own perceptions of force and motivation for coming to urban areas and how they perceive their current situation is used to establish whether the participants can be considered as IDPs within the institutional frameworks.

5.1 Institutional Frameworks concerning IDPs – Forming the label

A number of frameworks and policies, both international and national have been developed to guide, coordinate and manage the growing issue of internal displacement. The following sections examine some of the most important frameworks influencing the discourse and forming of the label "IDP" in Uganda.

5.1.1 International frameworks

In order to be recognized as a refugee, one must first cross a recognized state border. The concept of mobility is essential to understanding internal displacement and the increasing number of IDPs. In the globalized world of today, only some enjoy the luxury of free movement through state territories. The international community's focus is increasingly on 'preventive protection' with incentives for protecting and assisting people displaced within their own countries rather than receiving them as refugees. However, because of strong respect for state sovereignty, interventions by the humanitarian community in a number of countries often prove complicated. In such situations IDPs get significantly less protection than those who can claim the more exclusive label 'refugee'.[107]

5.1.1.1 The International Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

With the growing number of internal conflicts following the cold war and a stricter regime of migration, internal displacement slowly appeared on the international agenda during the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1992 the UN responded to the increasing numbers of armed conflicts and displaced persons by appointing Francis M. Deng to be the first Representative of the Secretary General on Internally Displaced Persons. His main task was to develop a normative framework for IDPs, and to support the creation of efficient institutional frameworks on the international, regional and national level. [108] Although consensus on a single framework defining internal displacement is yet to be reached, Deng's International Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement from 1998 are widely used.

[107] Brun, 2003 a
[108] Kälin, 2008

The usefulness of an exclusive category for IDPs has been disputed within the field of forced migration. Actors at the Brookings – Bern Project on internal displacement together with the Representative of the Secretary General on the Human Rights of IDPs defend a separate category, arguing that IDPs are a particularly vulnerable group who need to be handled in a framework adapted to their specific protection needs.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), on the other hand, does not distinguish between IDPs and other civilians and has traditionally preferred to use the term 'civilians in armed conflict'.

> "In situations of armed conflict and internal disturbances the ICRC will in fact always try to give priority to those with the most urgent needs. Because of their precarious situation, displaced persons are frequently, although not exclusively, among the main beneficiaries of its work. Moreover, the host populations, which are sometimes minority groups or resident populations that have been unable to move away, often have to face a situation that is just as difficult, if not worse. Instead of developing programmes tailored to the needs of the displaced persons, it will then be necessary to adopt an overall approach and define the appropriate operational modes according to the context.[109] "

ICRC uses International Humanitarian Law as a starting point for the protection of everyone who finds themselves in conflict, displaced, or otherwise. Recently, however, the ICRC has taken a more positive approach to the IDP category. At the ten year anniversary conference of the Guiding Principles in Oslo, which took place in October 2008 the Director General of ICRC argued that the Guiding Principles "are relevant because, in several instances, they provide more specific guidance than International Humanitarian Law." ICRC is also establishing a focal point for IDPs in Geneva. While maintaining the concept of 'civilians in armed conflict', ICRC acknowledges that displacement is "… one of the most serious humanitarian consequences of armed conflict and other situations of violence."[110]

[109] Contat, 2001
[110] Gnaedinger, 2008

The International Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement assert that while the primary responsibility for IDPs rest with the government, the international community play an important role when the government fails to fulfil such responsibilities. In line with changing notions of national sovereignty, governments are increasingly expected not only to protect the welfare of their own citizens, but also to meet their obligations to the wider international community.[111] Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasised that while respect for sovereignty offers vital protection to small and weak states, "it should not be a shield for crimes against humanity."[112] Following this development, UN's role in protecting IDPs has been further reinforced in recent years with the Guiding Principle as an important platform.[113] During the abovementioned meeting in Oslo this autumn, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees went further than ever before in committing himself to the protection of IDPs.[114] Some confusion still remains, however, regarding respective state and international obligations, and the international community is still in the process of defining its roles and responsibility towards IDPs.

5.1.1.2 UNHCR, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Cluster Approach

With the world's increasing number of humanitarian actors and interventions, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator launched an independent Humanitarian Response Review of the global humanitarian system in 2005. This review assessed the response capacities of the key humanitarian actors in order to identify critical gaps and make recommendations geared at addressing them. A "cluster approach" defining the roles and responsibilities in the humanitarian community was suggested in order to strengthen accountability, predictability, and effectiveness of international responses to humanitarian emergencies.[115] UNHCR was appointed the lead of the global protection cluster working group and thus expanded its role with regards to IDPs. UNHCR now leads the global protection cluster and co-leads the

[111] United Nations, 2005, paras. 92-3, p 170
[112] Annan, 2000
[113] United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), 2000
[114] Guterres, 2008
[115] UNOCHA, 2008

emergency shelter and camp coordination/camp management clusters under the overall co-ordination of UNOCHA. UNHCR works in 23 countries alongside governments and humanitarian agencies.[116] The International Guiding Principles for Internal Displacement is considered to be the main platform for UNHCRs' involvement of IDPs. Although not a legally binding document, the Guiding Principles have gained considerable recognition. In addition to frameworks for organizations and the UN, a small but growing numbers of governments have incorporated the principles into their national policies as for example in Uganda.

5.1.2 Frameworks dealing with IDPs in Uganda

As mentioned in chapter two the Government of Uganda forced civilians in Northern Uganda to relocate to what they called 'protected villages' in 1995 to 1996, where some agencies began to deliver aid. No specific frameworks dealing with IDPs existed, however, prior to 2004. In that year, following a visit by former Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs Francis Deng, Uganda established a National Policy for IDPs. This policy reflects the International Guiding Principles and commits the government to protect its citizens from arbitrary displacement, guarantee the rights of the displaced, and promote durable solutions. Although this development was a positive one, Walter Kälin, Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs , reminded the different actors during his visit in 2006 that while the National Policy is a major improvement, the political will to set priorities, cooperate, and coordinate ultimately determines its impact. [117]

[116] Guterres, 2008
[117] Kälin, 2006

5.1.2.1 The National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons (2004)

Uganda is one of the first countries with a National Policy for IDPs reflecting international guidelines. Following the text of the International Guiding Principles, the Uganda National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons states:

> "Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human induced[118] disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border "[119]

This definition makes no reference to location of the IDPs after flight. On the contrary, the National Policy on IDPs as reflecting the Constitution of Uganda *ensures* the freedom of movement and free choice of residence[120]. Consequently, IDPs should be able to choose a residence in any part of the country.

> "Freedom of movement is a fundamental human right for all Ugandans including internally displaced persons. Strategies shall ensure that all IDPs (men and women) freely choose their places of residence and to ensure that IDPs move freely in and out of camps, other settlements, or other parts of the country."[121]

Reflecting the Constitution of Uganda[122], the National IDP Policy emphasizes freedom of movement as an essential principle. In practice, however, priorities regarding security and state control have taken precedence over freedom of movement, resulting in the forcible encampment of the IDPs into the so-called 'protected villages' (later called Internally Displaced Person's camps). The government forces and local militias failed repeatedly in protecting the 'Protected Villages' from attacks by LRA, and IDPs found outside the camp

[118] The only variance from the International Guiding Principles is the use of the word human *induced* instead of human *made*
[119] Government of Uganda, 2004
[120] Government of Uganda 2004, Chapter 3.2 , Government of Uganda, 1995
[121] Government of Uganda, 2004, Principle 3.2 and strategies 2 and 3
[122] Government of Uganda, 1995

risked being killed by the government soldiers set to protect them.[123] In recent years an increased emphasis on the implementation of the national policy, has resulted in these restrictions on movement being lessened.

Covering all phases of the displacement, the policy states that "The Government commits itself to promote the right of IDPs to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country."[124] In addition to the right to return, GoU is to "establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow internally displaced persons to return voluntarily in safety and with dignity to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to settle voluntarily in another part of the country."[125] That includes the obligation "to assist IDPs to return, resettle and reintegrate, by acquiring or recovering their land in accordance with the provisions of the Land Act of 1998. Where the recovery of land is not possible, Local Governments shall endeavour to acquire and allocate land to the displaced families."[126]

5.1.2.2 Joint Monitoring Committee for emergency action plan for humanitarian interventions

After international pressure signified by the resolutions of the UN Security Council, the Joint Monitoring Committee and Emergency Action Plan (JMC/EAP) were created to coordinate humanitarian interventions in the conflict affected areas in 2006.[127] Subsequently, in October 2007, the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP) were introduced to replace the JMC/EAP and facilitate the rehabilitation of people and communities affected by conflict in the north. The JMC was created as a temporary measure for coordinating humanitarian affairs in the conflict affected districts in Northern Uganda. With limited financial commitment by the government, the JMC had to rely heavily on existing

[123] Internally Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) & Refugee Law Project, 2006
[124] Government of Uganda, 2004, Article 3.4
[125] UNOCHA, 1998, Guiding Principle 28.1
[126] Government of Uganda, 2004, Article 3.6
[127] United Nations Security Council, 2005: At this point two Security Council Resolutions had already been passed (1653 and 1663), and a third resolution was on the horizon. This prompted the Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations to address a letter to the President of the Security Council

institutions such as the Amnesty Commission and the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) for implementing the Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan (EHAP) in Northern Uganda. In October 2007 the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP) was introduced to replace the JMC/EAP and facilitate the rehabilitation of people and communities affected by conflict in the north.

5.1.2.3 UNHCR in Uganda

With its booming NGO-sector, Northern Uganda was elected to be one of the first countries to implement the new model of humanitarian coordination called 'the cluster approach'. The cluster approach was adopted in Uganda in January 2006 and formalized UNHCR`s involvement with internally displaced persons.[128] The four established clusters were: Early Recovery led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Health and Nutrition under the World Health Organization (WHO), Water and Sanitation led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Protection under UNHCR. Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) started out as a sub-cluster of the Protection Cluster, but became a cluster in their own right, also under UNHCR leadership. [129] UNHCR in Uganda was hesitant to suddenly take responsibility for 1.8 million IDPs in addition to the refugees already under their protection in the country. Without funding to match this new responsibility the cluster approach was by many seen as a top-down non-consultative process. Such resistance from the implementing agency made the roll-out of the cluster approach difficult and UNHCR in Uganda still struggles with clear lines of responsibility and coordination with regards to IDP issues.[130]

[128] Claire, Wright & Crisp, 2007: UNHCR's IDP policy framework and corporate strategy states that "UNHCR is fully supportive of the humanitarian reform process, is firmly committed to the task of establishing an enhanced inter-agency response to the protection of internally displaced persons, and is determined to exercise in full the new responsibilities which it has assumed in relation to such populations."
[129] For an internal evaluation of the Cluster Approach in Uganda, see Borgeouis, Claire, Wright & Crisp 2007
[130] Ibid.

5.1.2.4 The Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (2007)

In October 2007 the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP) succeeded the EHAP, and the JMC was dissolved. The focus of the PRDP is cessation of hostilities, enhanced protection of the civilian population, increased humanitarian assistance to IDPs, peace building, and reconciliation. In the context of possible return the PRDP guarantees a number of rights important for IDPs. "The [Office of the Prime Minister/Department for Disaster Preparedness], Local Governments and humanitarian and development partners shall provide resettlement inputs and tools to returned and resettled families, as well as tool kits to support construction and self-employment. Displaced persons shall be consulted on the most appropriate inputs to meet their food security needs under prevailing conditions."[131] The PRDP also includes "building confidence and understanding of the IDPs about the necessary peace and security conditions and processes for return and resettlement".[132]

While the PRDP is a comprehensive framework, actors have expressed concern about the financial commitment to the plan following the lack of implementation of its predecessors.[133] Despite the comprehensive institutional frameworks designed to manage displacement in Uganda, the situation remains unbearable for the majority of the IDPs. Poor health and sanitation conditions in camps, lack of access to schools and availability of teachers, and high levels of sexual and gender-based violence are some of the challenges faced by the IDPs. In addition, reports of abuse by soldiers from the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) who are ostensibly meant to protect the IDPs are frequent. As discussed in one of the group discussions:

> *"It is the killings, and taking people's property. Sometimes your relatives get killed, and they have maybe children you have to take care of. Another reason is the camps. Too many people are at the same place. There are cases of abuse, rape, and rape of the children, defilement."*[134]

[131] Government of Uganda, 2004, Article 3.14
[132] Government of Uganda, 2007, Article 4.2.2
[133] Dolan, 2008
[134] Group Discussion 18.10.07, Banda 1: Woman 30, came from Kitgum to Kampala in 1998

The rights secured through both international and national frameworks apply to *all* IDPs, independent of location. Urban IDPs are thus implicitly included. However, officials often do not take notice of IDPs who have chosen to move to urban areas and consequently fail to incorporate such IDPs into assistance programs. With the ongoing peace-talks, and the return of a number of IDPs in the Lango and Teso sub-region, there is increasing concern expressed by many urban IDPs on where, and whether, they fit into the current frameworks.[135] While JMC`s Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan and the PRDP are both based on the same definition of IDPs as that contained in the national policy, they both fail to mention urban IDPs explicitly. Although the PRDP clearly stipulates government assistance throughout the return and resettlement process, IDPs living in urban areas have implicitly been left out of these plans. Indeed, although urban IDPs are not overtly excluded, the language of the PRDP frequently indicates that the drafters had encamped IDPs in mind when forming the plans, making its applicability to urban IDPs unclear. The PRDP clearly specifies that the objective of its return and resettlement program is "to facilitate the voluntary return of IDPs *from camps* to their places of origin and/or any other location of their preference as peace returns."[136] In effect, the PRDP redefines IDPs as people displaced by the conflict in Northern Uganda and residing in camps in the North.

5.1.3 Transforming the label – politicizing

When issues of protection and assistance to IDPs are determined by political considerations of power and resource availability instead of according to their rights, the process of labelling becomes politicized. As discussed in chapter three, labels determine who will have access to different rights and assistance and are thus important in determining access to control and resources.

[135] Representatives for urban IDPs in Kampala and Jinja have requested to be registered and considered IDPs on the same basis as IDPs in camps: Letter from Acholi Local Community Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) temporarily living in Kampala received by Refugee Law Project 14.10.07, and letter from The Displaced Community Acholi, Lango and Teso Jinja District received by Refugee Law Project 16.09.07
[136] Government of Uganda, 2007 (Article 4.2.2, emphasis added)

When the government forcibly established the 'protected villages' in Northern Uganda, the aim was to separate civilians from the LRA rebels. By controlling the movement of civilians the government attempted to 'flush' out the rebels and assumed everyone outside the 'protected villages' belonged to or sympathized with the rebel forces. Removing people's access to agriculture in the region further weakened LRA which was dependent on the resources they were able to access from the general population. The 'protected villages' received little assistance from the government and there were few NGOs present. The government discourse on IDPs was characterized more by a rhetoric of control rather than assistance to the displaced population.[137]

Dolan and Hovil conclude in their paper that Humanitarian presence in the camps prior to 2004 was lacking, and there were few protection activities.[138] In the 1990s, however, the UN was present in some camps with its World Food Programme (WFP) implemented by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). Authors like Chris Dolan and Lucy Hovil argue that such technical food distribution 'effectively enabled the government's policy of forcible encampment to continue long after it would otherwise have become untenable.'[139]

As one UN official who was quoted in their paper said:

> *"I think the previous approach by WFP in judging success by how much food it has managed to drop off in the camps has caused part of the problem of dependency and let the government see their enforced camp strategy as a success. There needs to be a constant review of the camps … but that discussion didn't take place for ten years'."*[140]

The creation of the 'protected villages' in Uganda has influenced the discourse on IDPs so that it continues to be more focused on state control rather than assistance to the displaced. While UN agencies and NGOs has been accused of contributing to the prolonging of the GoU`s military approach to solving the conflict, there have recently been clear improvements in the institutional frameworks relevant to IDPs. However, while people now move quite freely in

[137] Dolan, & Hovil, 2006, p 6
[138] Dolan, & Hovil, 2006
[139] Dolan, 2002
[140] Dolan, & Hovil, 2006

and out of camps, assistance is only offered to IDPs residing in the IDP-camps making other livelihood strategies difficult to pursue.

5.1.3.1 Rights-based on paper, needs-based in practice – financial constraints and the politics of selection

One point eight million people were displaced at the peak of the conflict in Northern Uganda. With ongoing peace-talks these numbers are changing, but the costs of assisting the displaced are not decreasing. People do not cease to be IDPs simply by virtue of returning, they require assistance to rebuild their lives and to reintegrate. Although this reality is difficult to convey to donors, the costs of assisting people in their return and reintegration are often higher than assisting them in camps. The food and items needed to rebuild lives have to be transported over longer distances and distributed on sites closer to the homes of the displaced. [141]

Even after redefining IDPs as people fleeing the conflict in Northern Uganda and residing in official camps in the area, the resources are not sufficient to meet the demand for assistance. Consequently, most agencies in charge of assistance have channelled much of their direct assistance to 'especially vulnerable groups'. Such groups normally consist of unaccompanied children, widows, persons with disabilities, HIV-infected persons or elders.[142]

Considering the limited availability of resources it is not surprising that utterances such as '*No, not another vulnerable group.*'[143] are elicited when government officials and humanitarian workers are confronted with an estimated number of 300 000 to 600 000 additional urban IDPs.

> *"Ideally they should receive assistance to return. But it is not possible. At the peak there have been 1.8 million displaced people. It is almost impossible to assist them all."*[144]

[141] Interview Programme Director Norwegian Refugee Council, Gulu, 17.11.07
[142] Interview Norwegian Refugee Council Camp management Officer Gulu, 17.11.07
[143] Interview information officer UNOCHA, Gulu, 16.11.07
[144] Interview 11.10.07, Kampala: UNHCR protection officer

While many agencies have adopted a rights-based approach on paper, financial constraints often lead to needs-based strategies in practice. When unable to cater for everyone covered by the label "IDP", selections must be made. With little or no information regarding urban IDPs, selections excluding them are based on either ignorance or assumptions.

> *"Most likely they have reached a durable solution. I have not seen any study on it though. There is no monitoring, no surveys or anything."*[145]

With the exclusive focus of assistance for IDPs being the camps in Northern Uganda, the label IDP in Uganda has been transformed and redefined according to geographic location (in the North), settlement structure (in camps) and conflict (the conflict of Northern Uganda). Consequently, urban IDPs are in practice not included in protection and assistance frameworks. Why have IDPs been redefined this way?

In addition to the government's historical focus on control rather than rights and the financial constraints described above, the gap in different policies and practices stems from challenges on three levels. On the practical level is the difficulty of identifying IDPs in an urban setting, which is exacerbated by a lack of registration and information. On a more conceptual level, the neglect of urban IDPs can be explained through two on-going debates within the field of migration; the constructed dichotomy of voluntary versus forced migration and the discussion on when displacement ends. On a more ethical level, there are also concerns connected to singling out IDPs from other people experiencing similar hardship.

[145] Interview 11.10.07, Kampala: UNHCR protection officer

5.1.3.2 Invisibility

> *"We should be considered on the same basis as the IDPs in the camps. It is difficult to know who are IDPs here for NGOs, for them we are as invisible. They never come here. But we are organized. We know. The elders could identify who need help to return, widows, children and old persons"*[146]

In part, the exclusion of urban IDPs from assistance stems from their low visibility and varied settlement strategies. IDPs that live outside of camps are not registered, and there is not much information available concerning them. Very little research has been conducted regarding urban IDPs. Such challenges in identifying them makes it difficult for the government and the humanitarian actors to address the needs of urban IDPs. A fundamental obstacle to assisting IDPs who do not live in or around camps in Uganda is that the official process through which they may be identified and registered is not always used by the officials responsible.[147] Whereas IDPs in camps have at times had ration cards which indicates their entitlement to assistance, urban IDPs have no corresponding form of documentation with which to "prove" their displacement. Therefore, they often disappear into the larger population of rural-urban migrants.

As discussed in one of the group discussions:

> Researcher: *Is there any way to know who is who? [Those who come because they were forced and others]*
>
> *"It is not possible to know, because when we come here, we all try to make a livelihood.* [148]

For an outsider coming to the largest city of Uganda with its many unregulated slums, the task of tracking down people with a specific background seemed overwhelming. Neither

[146] Meeting 26.09.08 with representatives from urban IDP communities in Jinja and Kampala at RLP Office, project coordinator for Jinja
[147] Government of Uganda, 2004: Section 2.4.in the National IDP Policy stipulates that 'The CAO of the District and the District Probation and Welfare Officer (DPWO) shall at the District level, be responsible for the day to day protection and ensuring the welfare of Internally Displaced Persons, managing and creating conditions conducive to their return, and managing their resettlement and reintegration'
[148] Group Discussion 18.10.07, Banda 1: Woman 38, came from Kitgum to Kampala in 1996

government agencies nor NGOs could pinpoint places where people from the war-affected areas in the North resided. At first I took it as a sign the population was well integrated and therefore hard to single out. However, further research showed that few agencies are familiar with anything that takes place in the slums of Kampala.

> *"There are mostly general reports with the organizations in the centre. Not someone coming to the grassroots where the people are. In the town they don't see. If they tell you anything it will only be what they have from the papers."*[149]

As mentioned in Chapter two, there are quarters of the city called "Acholi Quarters" because of their high concentrations of Acholis. In such locations urban IDPs are visible. In other slum areas where people live more integrated, identifying IDPs can be even more difficult. In addition to the challenges facing outsiders wishing to identify urban IDPs, the urban IDPs themselves also encounter challenges in making themselves visible to the relevant authorities. Sometimes such attention is also clearly unwanted. Most slum-dwellers, including IDPs, live illegally on other people's property. Attracting attention can lead to action being taken against the slum-dwellers. Constantly facing the threat of eviction while needing to focus all one's energy on survival makes people living in the slums less able to make their voices heard.

Despite this some of the urban IDP representatives have pointed out that the urban IDPs in some slum areas have managed to organize themselves either through councils of elders or through initiatives advocating for inclusion in return and resettlement frameworks. Accordingly they have extensive knowledge about their people and could be important partners in the process of identifying members of the communities and gaining relevant information. The agency and motivation of both representatives and urban IDPs in general must of course be considered. With hopes for assistance, people can paint a picture not correlating to their situation. This is a problem in most situations of IDP profiling and registering, urban or otherwise, and may be overcome through careful planning and solid methodology.

[149] Interview 23.07.07, Banda 1: Representative International Meeting Point (Small NGO working with HIV/AIDs and education in Banda 1 ' Acholi Quarters'.

The invisibility and hence anonymity of urban areas can also be a protection strategy for people confronted with persecution. I interviewed several former child-soldiers who had run away to Kampala instead of returning to their communities.

> *"I came from Kitgum to Masindi district and then decided to come this way. They insulted me. I came here because I may adopt new life skills. In Masindi they used to abuse me. They said 'Kony'. 'You know Kony.' They said 'You used to be with him'."*[150]

5.1.3.3 The dichotomy Voluntary versus Forced and Rural to urban migration

Another challenge in identifying urban IDPs is related to people's mixed motivation for moving to urban areas. The formal IDP definition separates clearly between forced and voluntary migrants. In reality though, the distinction is quite blurred.

As mentioned earlier, the global urban population exceeds the rural for the first time in history with more than 3.3 billion people living in urban areas. Numerous challenges stem from this rapid urbanization with over one billion people living in slums.[151] In the "State of African Cities 2008", UN Habitat concludes that African urbanization is a poverty driven process and not the industrialized-induced socio-economic transition that has been typical of other major regions. Urbanization in Africa will therefore continue to be strongly associated with slum formation. In Uganda, it is believed that 66, 7 % of the urban population live in slums. [152] UN Habitat define people as living in slums when they lack one of the following elements: Access to sufficient water, sanitation, security of tenure (the rights of a tenant to hold property), and housing in a permanent and adequate structure in a non-hazardous location.[153]

> *"The city promises hope to the poor and those in distress. It might not be real, but in their minds."*[154]

[150] Interview 16.10.07 Banda 1: Man 19, came from Kitgum via Masindi to Kampala in 2005
[151] UN Habitat, 2007
[152] UN Habitat, 2008
[153] ibid.
[154] Interview 28.08.07, Kampala: Minister of State of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees

Although many people move to urban areas to look for a better life, the increasing number of people living in urban areas stems first and foremost from natural increases in the population. However, for those who do migrate from rural areas, a combination of pull and push factors is traditionally used to explain the reasons behind migration.[155] For example, an urban IDP family might leave their place of origin because they feel insecure, or because the family is not able to access markets to sell their products anymore (push factors). They can then go to a city because it is safer, and offers more job opportunities (pull factors).

Conflict has influenced urban growth in a number of other countries in Africa. Luanda and other important provincial centres of Angola experienced an influx of more than 2 million people in only two years (1992-1994) as a consequence of armed conflict. Conflict also drove the population of Khartoum, Sudan up from 2.3 million in 1990 to 3.9 million in 2000, and Monrovia, the capital of Liberia grew from 535 000 to 776 000 inhabitants in the same period. The population in DRC, Kinshasa, also grew from 3.6 million to 5 million from 1990 to 2000.[156]

Those who migrate are subject to different degrees and types of force. The ability to choose among options in these contexts differs between individuals. All this suggests the need for use of migration theories and a nuanced approach necessary to capture the complexities of forced migration. IDPs search for both protection and livelihood opportunities. [157] Many countries, including Uganda face a failing rural economy and rapid population growth. In such a context, people may have mixed reasons for migrating to urban areas.[158]

Forced migration is traditionally seen as involuntary population movement caused by conflict and war.[159] The dichotomy between voluntary and forced migration has been used to make a distinction in the causes of migration and has laid the basis for the different definitions of internal displacement. As explained above, however, the distinction is quite blurred in the real world. Van Hear discusses the increased difficulty of drawing a straight line between voluntary and involuntary migration. He distinguishes between ‘outward movement’, (departure) and

[155] Lee, 1966
[156] UN Habitat, 2008
[157] Van Hear, 1998
[158] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2007
[159] Lund, 2003

'inward movement'. Departure may be forced because of persecution, conflict and war. 'Inward movement' to the place you move to, includes on the other hand some choice of destination. This may be shaped by economic or life-chance considerations. The mix of force and choice makes it difficult to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary migrants. According to Van Hear both 'migrants' and 'refugees' seem to be motivated by a mixture of fears, hopes and inspirations. He therefore advocates for a more nuanced definition of forced migration, stating that forced migration is individuals or communities compelled, obliged or induced to move when they would otherwise stay put, with the force involved being direct, covert, or diffuse.

A useful method for obtaining a deeper understanding of the elements of force influencing individual's decision to move is by exploring the person's own perceptions. As mentioned before, I used 'people affected by war who have moved to urban areas' instead of the label 'urban IDPs' when interviewing the research participants. The participants' understanding of the label "IDP" was similar to the one expressed by the government and humanitarian actors. IDPs were people in camps, and you became an IDP if you lived in a camp. They did however see their own movement as forced, and it was often emphasized during discussions how they had fled, and how they were experiencing similar hardships as the people in camps.

The participants interviewed in the course of this study offered several reasons for leaving the north.

> *"In 1987 and 1988 during Kony, I ran from my place to here, I came to Kampala as a city. I don't have a job, I don't have expectations. In Kampala I am just staying as refugees."*[160]

[160] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 28, came from Gulu to Kampala in 1990

The so called 'Protected Villages" were not established until 1995/1996. People who fled before this either went to stay with relatives in rural areas or in the urban centres. Some who left later faced problems with registration in the camps:

> *"They were registering peoples names for food, and my name didn't come on the list. So I had nowhere to go for food. Many ran to Bweyale, me I ran to Kampala. If you have relatives you go where they are. My uncle was here, but because of HIV he is now dead."*[161]

For most of the participants, however, the element of force was evident in connection to earning a livelihood. Security is a concept encompassing more than merely not being physically attacked. As one of the participants put it in one of the group discussions:

> *"Access to means of life is interacted with displacement. It is not for money, but to protect your life. After that you must look for something to do. Because of no papers, you end up in dirty jobs. For me I came to Kampala to keep my life. I escaped and came here to hide. If you say people come to Kampala to earn money. There is money in every part of the country. If there is peace we can dig."*[162]

The reasons for migrating are intertwined, and there is little research on the immediate triggers of flight and how different causes converge to make people move. Nina Birkeland concludes that much of the displacement in Huambo in Angola was triggered by the deterioration of land and by the shortage of food caused by the war, rather than the direct violence.[163] As illustrated by a participant in one of the group discussions:

> *"Because of insecurity yes, and also sometimes because children are abducted. And for example me, my husband got killed before me. Also you are not able to rear chickens, someone will come and take them."*[164]

[161] Interview 04.10.07, Banda 1: Woman 23, came from Kitgum to Kampala in 2003
[162] Group discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 20, came from Gulu in 2004
[163] Birkeland, 2003a
[164] Group Discussion 18.10.07, Banda 1: Woman 33, came from Pader to Kampala in 2005

When I asked the participants why they came to the urban areas, I was usually told it was due to insecurity, and/or the opportunities to get a job. However, when I followed up with the question 'Why did you leave at that exact time, and not earlier or later?', I got a much more nuanced answer. One of the participants who told me she came to Kampala to get work then explained that her husband was killed by the rebels and her son abducted. She was not able to fend for herself in the camp and feared for her life. This was the reason she went to Kampala to find a job.

Normally when discussing IDPs outside camps, a 'host population' or a 'receiving population' is identified. In Banda 1, 'Acholi Quarters', none of the participants were originally from that area (except for some of the children). All the participants were migrants from different parts of Uganda. Those migrants whose relocation to Kampala was unrelated to conflict expressed concerns similar to those of the urban IDPs regarding their future in Kampala. Most referred to their places of origin as home and felt that they had been forced to leave because of livelihood concerns.

> *"One time when I came back to Mukono, my coffee field had dried up. I tried then to grow vanilla, but I couldn't get the crop fast enough. So I came to Kampala in 2003."*[165]

The notion of displacement and being forced to leave one's home was thus expressed also by people who today fall under the label of "voluntary" or "economic" migrant'. As previously stated, the voluntariness of such movements is debatable. If a person moves because they and their family would otherwise starve, such movements can hardly be called voluntary.

[165] Interview 14.09.07, Banda 1: Man 60, came from Mukono district to Kampala in 2003

5.2 Conclusion: What is the dominant discourse on IDPs in Uganda, and what is the status of urban IDPs in this discourse

The formation of the IDP label in Uganda has been influenced by the government's approach of control over the civilian population, and the emphasis on a military presence keeping people in camps in the areas of conflict. With the humanitarian influx in 2004, the notion of IDPs as people in camps was reinforced through the organizations' policy of mainly assisting IDPs in camps. Although IDPs according to the frameworks in place can stay outside camps in any part of the country, IDPs are in practice redefined as people residing in camps. In addition to the politization of the label for purposes of control, the questions surrounding urban IDPs in Uganda are a manifestation of the difficult debates on forced versus voluntary migration. Because of lack of registration, urban IDPs are hard to identify and single out in an urban setting. It is difficult to distinguish between 'economic' migrants and 'forced' migrants. Reasons for migrating are often intertwined, and the clear cut separation between forced and voluntary migration in the IDP definition does not capture the complex motivation and reality of war affected individuals and communities. A small percentage of IDPs residing outside camps, but still in the North, (for instance in Masindi) has received some assistance and has been profiled. It would appear, however, that migrating away from the North is equivalent to surrendering one's IDP status. Consequently, urban IDPs are in practice not included in protection and assistance frameworks. Even those few actors who recognize all people coming from the war affected areas as IDPs consider them to have reached a durable solution once they arrive in Kampala and assume that those individuals would not want to return if peace came.

Faced with financial constraints and overwhelming protection rights and needs, assistance and attention is focused on areas where IDPs are most visible and most clearly separated from the rest of the population. There are many challenges connected to recognizing IDPs in urban areas. However, as the study points out, the urban IDPs have the same rights as IDPs in camps and elsewhere both according to the International Guiding Principles and Uganda's national policy for IDPs. Exclusion from the IDP label means exclusion from being considered for the assistance following the label. The next chapter will explore these consequences of the discourse on IDPs in Uganda for urban IDPs

6 What consequences does the dominant discourse on IDPs in Uganda have for urban IDPs?

Labels can be created as tools to operationalize responses to, for instance, humanitarian crises. In a humanitarian setting, a label defines who is entitled to what. This chapter explores how the discourse on IDPs in Uganda affects the urban IDPs' access to rights and assistance.

The government and humanitarian actors often consider urban IDPs to have reached a durable solution, and therefore to no longer be IDPs. The concept of durable solutions was developed with regards to refugees meaning an end to refugees' suffering and their need for international protection and dependence on humanitarian assistance. The solutions were repatriation, integration in the country of first asylum, or resettlement in a third country. In recent years the concept of durable solutions has also been adopted into IDP frameworks as return, integration at the place of displacement, or integration in another part of the country.

When humanitarian actors and the government in Uganda assume that urban IDPs have reached a durable solution, it is based on mere assumptions. Few studies have been conducted regarding urban IDPs, and information is scarce. The following section investigates how the urban IDP participants perceives their integration and whether they can be considered to have reached durable solution.

6.1 Durable solutions – End of Displacement

Until recently, displacement was mainly considered to have ended when the forced migrant had returned to his or her place of origin. Reflecting the closing of borders after the Cold War, return was seen as the most desirable solution. This is closely connected to the preventive approach which focused on solving the root causes of conflict in the relevant countries and thereby facilitating return of the displaced people. Given the nature of many protracted conflicts of today, however' return for many displaced persons is not feasible in the near

future. Consequently, alternative durable solutions have gained prominence as the alternative choice for humanitarian actors and governments alike.

There is currently no international consensus on when displacement can be considered to have ended, so decisions in different contexts have been ad hoc and widely varied. Decisions on when displacement ends have serious consequences for IDPs. When an IDP is considered to have reached a durable solution, it can mark the stop of assistance and attention. To address the need for a coherent procedure, the UN Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin, together with the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement and the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University, defined what may be considered "durable solutions" to internal displacement.[166]

Three approaches to determining when displacement ends were adopted. The cause-based approach focused on change in the circumstances that caused the flight, drawing on the frameworks in place for refugees. If it becomes safe to return to the area of origin and the refugee have the opportunity to return, his or her refugee status ceases. Similarly, if it is safe and the IDPs have the opportunity to return, their displacement could be considered to have ended. The category "IDP" is not a legal status as the status "refugee". It is rather descriptive and describes the needs specific for people who have fled their homes. The needs - based approach placed emphasis on whether IDPs continues to have needs linked to their displacement. If you do not have needs connected to your displacement you are then considered as integrated and not longer displaced. The last one, a solution-based approach asked whether an IDP had returned or integrated at the new place of displacement or in another part of the country. As none of the three approaches alone was able to adequately address the complex issues involved, the solution-based approach, with a needs-based focus of integration was most agreed upon. Accordingly an IDP is considered to have reached a durable solution when he or she no longer has displacement-specific needs and has either returned to his or her

[166] Kälin, 2007

place of origin, has locally integrated in the areas in which he or she initially took refuge, or has settled and integrated in another part of the country. [167]

6.1.1 Return

The prospects of return in foreseeable future are slim in many of the world's protracted conflicts. Although this is the desired solution for most displaced populations, maintaining a status and identity as IDPs hoping to return can hamper integration into the communities they are displaced into.[168] Their identity as displaced persons can even be transmitted through generations.[169] However, if participation of IDPs in decisions affecting their own lives is to be valued, their own preferences in the matter must be taken into consideration. I do not know how many IDPs participated in developing durable solutions frameworks or how well represented they were through the studies discussed. Their presence or absence in these discussions will undoubtedly have impacted on the final outcome, and it is important to remember that IDPs, like everyone else, have the right to be included in decisions affecting their own lives. I therefore consider the views of participants in this study regarding their preferred durable solution as essential.

Most of the research participants expressed a strong wish to return to their land in the North. As discussed in a group discussion.

> ***Q: What do you think will happen if there is peace in the North?***
>
> *We want to go back home. If there is transport we would go home.*[170]
>
> ***Q: Why?*** *This is not our home, so why stay?*[171]

As a consequence of the participants' focus on return, the focus of the study also shifted to address this issue. In the period the research was conducted there was some optimism arising

[167] Brookings Institution, 2007
[168] For discussion on the impact of labels on integration, see for example: Brun, 2003b
[169] Dawn, 2002: In for example Palestine, identities as displaced have been transferred through generations. I also found examples with urban IDPs in Kampala
[170] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 21, came from Kitgum to Kampala in 2000
[171] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 28, came from Pader to Kampala in 1998

out of the peace process, and some IDPs from the camps had started to return while many more travelled to their places of origin temporarily to prepare the land for return. The IDPs in Acholi Quarters faces different challenges which were discussed in the group discussions:

> *We are ready to go home, but you cannot start to plan. We want to know if people in the camps are going back. In Kampala we are a bit far, so we can't go back and forth to build as those in the camps.*[172]

As well as information on what to expect upon return and the security circumstances, resources to return and to re-cultivate the land are also necessary for the solution of return to be durable. As one of the participants said:

> *"I came in 1987. There is now 20 years. Even my own home, if I go now, there is bush. I need to get tools as slashes, pangas, and hoes. I need all those things to survive when I go there. When there is no food, there is no energy, when there is no energy, there will be no work. Right now we are refugees, although we sleep in houses. When we go to the bush we need mosquito nets, blankets and other things on top. Immediate changes in the environment may also make me ill. I will need medical help. If I am deep in the village, where would I go with my children? I go as an elderly person. What would it be there for elderly persons?"*[173]

The issue of transport was also brought up by the participants in several of the group discussions:

> *"If peace comes early, if there is no transport, some of us may remain in Kampala if not assisted. Most of us will then be staying here. Some of us have been here 20 years without going home, even to attend burials. You cannot have 30 000 to use for transport home and back. You have children and family and cant pay. Most of us even if peace comes will remain here because of transport."* [174]

[172] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Male 38, came from Kitgum to Kampala in 1998
[173] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Male 59, came from Kitgum to Kampala in 1987
[174] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Male 38, came from Kitgum to Kampala in 1999

To leave everything and spend all your resources on returning poses risks both in terms of security (the violence has recurred in waves before), and on what supports will be available to them in the future. The urban IDPs do not know whether they will be included in the return and resettlement frameworks if they show up in Northern Uganda. Some told stories of being rejected when trying to register in the camps.

> *"Really, when going back to camp, we could go. But what got us here is insecurity. And second, feeding. Now people have cards. We living in Kampala don't have them. So we won't receive. Sometimes you are as from New Taxi Park, let's say that is home. Then here is as the camps. We don't have land. How would you go the long distance from Kampala to home? All of us I believe are willing. It is our motherland."*[175]

Although almost all participants involved in the study said they wished to return; many were nostalgic about the beautiful 'village life' before the conflict. The participants recognized however that not everyone would go back:

> *"Some people would not go back. For example if you don't have siblings and your father got killed."*[176]

Those participants living in Banda 1 who did not come to Kampala because of the conflict tended to assume the urban IDPs would remain even if peace came.

> *"I do not think the Acholis that are here will go back. Here their children are sent to school. And they make the beads and get money. They will not go back."*[177]

Many of the families interviewed planned on splitting up; leaving most of the family in Kampala while some members went up north to prepare the land. Some suggested continuing this arrangement even after the land 'back home' was ready. The quality of education in the capital as well as the many opportunities for generating income were cited as the main reasons

[175] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 28 came from Pader to Kampala in 2002
[176] Group Discussion 18.10.07, Banda 1: Woman 18, came from Pader to Kampala in 2006
[177] Interview 01.08.07, Banda 1: Woman 30, came from Mbale to Kampala in 1998.

for leaving some of the family behind. This could indicate a change in the future pattern of post-conflict migration, with increased linkages emerging between rural and urban areas.

> *"Now if we go back, in case of insecurity, all of us will be dead. If we are not sure you can risk the whole family to be dead. Then it is better to stay here until an NGO or someone says it is ok. If peace is here, if anything I would go alone first."*[178]

When considering the urban-rural networks in Central Peru, Stepputat and Sørensen argued that "Non-recognition of mobile livelihoods may work against the attempts to move beyond emergency relief and assist longer-term development."[179] Planning for longer-term development has to take into consideration how people plan to travel back and forth between different places if it is to be effective. Furthermore, Stepputat argued that it is important to recognize the possibility and indeed the tendency for displaced families to separate and send family members ahead to explore conditions, establish entitlements, and rebuild their base in the area of origin. [180]

The three durable solutions, return, integration at place of displacement, or integration in another part of the country are most often managed by the agencies at a household level. The assumption is that people stay together in households, and that households stay in one place. If someone moves continuously between for example the return area and a new place of settlement they would have a hard time registering either place, and their right to assistance might be questioned. Assistance frameworks must take into account new circumstances and family constellations in post conflict situations. In the camps of Northern Uganda many families stay in the camps while venturing out to prepare their land for return in daytime. In a post-conflict setting, the camps might become semi-urban centres (if permitted to by the government), with some family members engaging in work or trade while others work the land.

Many of the urban IDPs interviewed stated that given the means and opportunity to return, they would probably divide the family with the men going ahead to prepare the land and see if it is

[178] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 42, came from Pader to Kampala in 1992
[179] Stepputat & Sørensen, 2001 p 770
[180] Stepputat, 2004

secure. After some time some of the women would follow while the children would stay behind and complete their education. As concluded in one of the group discussions:

> *"It depends, if they study, we parents can go home and they can stay here. It is not as all our children must go home."*[181]

Given this context, it could be problematic to base nearly all assistance on the presumption that households stay together and remain in one place.

> *"You cannot pick your family right now to go back. We need a place to be and something to eat. What would you eat? Our house got burnt; we need shelter and what to eat."*[182]

However, return in itself is not sufficient to declare the end of displacement. It can take years for IDPs to rebuild their houses, re-cultivate their land, and create viable livelihoods. Integration as when the IDP does not have needs linked to his or her displacement is a prerequisite for a durable solution whether it is in the IDPs' are of origin, their 'new' communities, or in other parts of the country.

6.1.2 Integration

Integration is the common denominator of the durable solutions. Yet, just as with the discourse surrounding IDPs in Uganda focuses on IDPs in camps, the Framework for Durable Solutions also appears to neglect the specific context for urban IDPs with regards to integration in their "host society."[183]

To be considered as fully integrated in a society one is expected to participate fully in its economic, social, political and cultural life and to enjoy basic standards of living. Integration is defined as a lack of discrimination within the host community with equal access to goods and national protection mechanisms. In short, IDP's are considered to be fully integrated when no

[181] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 49, came from Pader to Kampala in 1998
[182] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Male 49, came from Pader to Kampala in 1998
[183] Brookings Institution, 2007

more vulnerabilities related to their displacement exist. [184] Who constitutes 'the rest of the society', however, is not always clear. Should IDP living conditions be compared with the standards set forth in the human rights frameworks, those enjoyed by the 'average citizen', or by the community the IDPs stays in, often called the 'host community'? Ideally all people should enjoy a sufficient standard of living. However, as we know, in many countries large portions of the population live below the poverty line. Consequently, the assessment of the IDPs' situation is most often done through comparing their situation with that of their 'host community'. Such a comparison can often reflect the IDPs' level of integration, and be more realistic than the human right standards on adequate livelihoods which the non-displaced population also struggles with. Favouring IDPs over people living in the same communities can create jealousy and impede integration. Looking at the community as a whole is therefore preferred. However, the urban context is special. In an urban context people settle according to their income, effectively reflecting the status of people around them. What are not taken into account are the reasons they ended up there, and their own perceptions of displacement.

> *"We used to have cows, but during the time of war, cattle were taken by Rebels and the Karamojong warriors. According to our culture we depend on hard work and keeping animals. Here there are no proper food, no employment. Here we have to stay in others houses."*[185]

We also know very little about the specific vulnerabilities of urban IDPs. The IDPs own perceptions are rarely emphasized, but are essential when establishing whether force played a part in their decision to leave and whether they have in fact achieved a durable solution. Almost all the urban IDPs in the study saw themselves as displaced and felt they were forced to leave the north because of fear, insecurity, and the difficulties of making a living. They had a shared notion of their identity as Acholi and the North as their 'home'. Nearly all participants uttered a strong wish to return. This wish is reflected in the return-initiatives started in different communities of urban IDPs in both Kampala and the neighbouring town Jinja.

[184] Ibid.
[185] Group Discussion 04.11.07: Man 45 came from Pader to Kampala in 1992

As one of the urban IDPs put it when explaining his view to the other IDPs in the group discussion:

> *"Right now it is raining. No one can walk in the rain. When it stops we can go home. We are seeking shelter as it is raining; when it stops we will go out. When security comes we will go back to our motherland."*[186]

6.1.2.1 Is being part of the poor urban population a durable solution?

A minimum integration standard as described above, whereby IDPs' socioeconomic status is measured against that of their neighbour's, can be particularly problematic since one in urban areas typically settles according to one's socioeconomic status. Consequently, the standards of living will at most times reflect the level of other non-displaced people around them. Finn Stepputat argues how local integration can simply mean 'shared poverty' with the rest of the people living in the area.[187] This raises the question: Can being part of the urban poor population be considered a durable solution for IDPs? Does the reason for ending up as slum dwellers matter when durable solutions are considered? Should it?

> *"At home I was not a person who looked like this. We had fertile land. We could grow 50 sacks of rice, and 50 sacks of g-nuts. The government and the rebels came and took this thing. When I came here I became someone who doesn't have any place to cultivate. I have no voice now. It is like in jail. I have no voice to talk."*[188]

6.1.2.2 Vulnerability/Less Resilience

Regardless of how one responds to the questions above, little is known about the particular vulnerabilities of the urban IDPs overall. Urban IDPs might experience greater hardships than the surrounding population as a result of their forced displacement. Their support networks, as well as their urban livelihood skills might be less developed than people growing up in the towns and cities. A study from the Feinstein International Centre at Tufts University and the

[186] Group discussion 04.11.07 Banda 1: Male 42, came from Amuro to Kampala in 1987
[187] Stepputat, 2004
[188] Interview 23.07.07, Banda 1: Man 30, came from Gulu to Kampala in 1996

Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre[189] suggests that in some contexts urban IDPs face different challenges than non-IDPs. The study concludes that in Khartoum, Sudan, there were clear differences between IDPs and non-IDPs spanning a number of dimensions. IDPs were more likely to live concentrated in the poorer localities of the city and in temporary structures or mud houses. They were also less educated than non-IDPs around them and more likely to be evicted because they could not pay the rent or the owner did not want them to be in the dwelling. The IDPs in the city also expressed a much higher desire to go "back home" than the non-IDPs. The survey did not explore the different occupations and income amongst the participants, and important indicators could therefore be lost. Income was emphasized by the participants in Kampala as the main factor determining access to food, education and health services.

> *"If somebody is not employed, you do not earn any money. And one must buy from the same market as those who have."*[190]

Fluctuations in food prices strike the poorest in urban areas the hardest. While in rural areas most people can grow some of their food, those in urban areas rely solely on the cash economy. Some participants in the study when discussing in the group discussions described access to food as being better in the camps.

> *"People in Kampala live a different life than in camp. Here, if you can't get money, you don't eat for a week. You must steal or kill to survive. In camps the government cares. You are grouped up, but still, you get something to eat. "*[191]

> *"Rebels attack people here and there. The government is not protecting them [in camps]. But they all provide them with food. For us here, we don't have enough money to get food."* [192]

[189] Jacobsen, 2008
[190] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 45, came from Pader to Kampala in 1992
[191] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 33, came from Pader to Kampala in 1999
[192] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 45, came from Pader to Kampala in 1992

The Feinstein /IDMC study recommends that future profiling studies should explore employment more extensively and probe deeper into the different problems mentioned by the participants. It also acknowledges that qualitative research is more likely to be able to probe into these "thorny" issues. The study concludes that although everyone in poor communities faces similar difficulties, based on the example of Khartoum in Sudan it appears that IDPs tend to be worse off than their co-residents. Other studies, as for example the one's based in Abidjan Côte d`Ivoire and Santa Marte Colombia find less difference between the IDPs and non-IDPs in urban areas.[193]

6.1.2.3 Dependants and Social Networks

Many of the participants in the study sought out relatives before leaving, or on arrival in Kampala. These social networks were important when deciding on where to go.

> *"They come here following relatives. It is because of the relatives they are here. These days you know the phones are everywhere so there is communication."*[194]

Relatives often help by taking care of children (dependants) when their parents die, or by helping the newly arrived with shelter, food, and sometimes employment. However, several participants in the study complained of the strain this could place on an already tight budget. Others told stories of being rejected by relatives when they had failed to find employment within the first week.

> *"You can come and live with a person for one to three days, and then you have to make it on your own. They do not have the means to take care of you. You can't stay long."*[195]

Strain that emerges from housing relatives and taking care of dependants is difficult to measure or register, but its existence could point to the relative vulnerability of urban IDPs in comparison with non-IDPs. The participants in the study experienced the social environment of

[193] Jacobsen, 2008
[194] Interview 23.07.07, Banda 1: Representative International Meeting point (Organization working with HIV/AIDs and education in Banda 1 'Acholi Quarters'
[195] Group Discussion 29.10.07, Banda 1: Woman 19, came from Pader to Kampala in 2003

Kampala as differing vastly from the social networks they were familiar with back home. As put by the Deputy Town Clerk in Kampala:

> *"There are no social safety networks here. In the village, if you pass at lunchtime you sit and eat. People will take care of you if you are staggering along the roadside. Here you would get run down by a car."*[196]

6.1.3 Singling out IDPs - The specific need for return

Favouring IDPs over the local host population can lead to friction between the two groups. In urban settings the people living side by side with IDPs are experiencing similar hardships. Consequently a more integrated approach of development that includes both the IDPs and the host population should be promoted.

However, as an IDP one may also have the displacement-specific needs connected to return which do not arise in the case of the non-IDP neighbours. This is not in conflict with the remaining population. Assistance in connection with return initiatives is likely to be less problematic because it can be recognized as legitimate by the non-IDP community. At the same time it is important to balance such initiatives with other forms of assistance so as to not create disproportionately strong incentives for individuals to go back, a situation which would interfere with the principle of voluntary return. If support for return is only offered during a limited time-period, for instance, people can feel pressured to go, and may return before they feel it is really safe.

[196] Interview 27.08.07, Kampala: Ag. Deputy Town Clerc City Council of Kampala

6.2 Conclusion; What Consequences does the dominant discourse on IDPs in Uganda have for Urban IDPs?

When the government and other actors assume that IDPs in urban areas have found a durable solution, the urban IDPs in Uganda are excluded from the return and resettlement frameworks. The protection needs of urban IDPs are unknown. There can be no doubt, however, that several urban IDPs live in conditions that are similar to, or worse than those in the camps. In an urban setting people settle according to their level of income. Urban IDPs therefore often end up in slum areas amongst the poorest. Using integration with the nearest population as a benchmark for durable solutions is therefore problematic. Providing assistance to IDPs without including the people they live with is problematic and unethical when everyone struggle with poverty. It can also impede integration by creating jealousy and divisions. However, many of the urban IDPs interviewed see themselves as displaced and wish to access resources that would make it possible for them to return 'home'. Assistance covering return only does not interfere with the 'host population' the same way assistance for IDPs at their place of displacement does.

By not recognizing IDPs in urban areas one can also overlook potential methods for finding durable solutions for IDPs in Uganda. If the IDPs were registered properly both in the camps and the cities, they could get an "urban starting package" to go to the urban areas to find employment. If she had some money to start out with when she reached Kampala, the situation of this woman could maybe have turned out differently:

> *"Me I was reaching here in Jinja in 1990 when they killed my husband. I ran in Soroti. Those one who had been there chased us. When it rained, we would stay under sheds. A friend of mine asked me if I knew some work. I said yes. So some people gave me 6000 schilling to go to Kampala and look for my husband. I came to the bus-park and slept 2 months there and begged at the Owino market. I was there with the children. I was happy because through God, time came and a woman gave me money and said "here, buy milk, make tea and sell at the hospital." So I started. But here I am not working. I need to go home."*[197]

[197] Community meeting Jinja, 21.10.07, Woman 43, came from Soroti to Jinja in 1990

With a starting package and better knowledge on their status when peace comes, it might be possible IDPs in a less degree end up in the vast slum areas and can contribute even more to the “host society”. Such a solution must of course be clearly voluntary. Since the IDP would be registered, assistance and claims for property and restitution could be handled properly if the context made return possible. Not recognizing that IDPs go to urban areas and are in need of assistance can at worst deprive the IDPs of an alternative durable solution.

Ignoring groups such as the urban IDPs is not just problematic in the moral sense; it can also impede sustainable peace and development efforts. Excluding large groups in decision-making and assistance frameworks is contrary to the development of a democratic and sustainable civil community representing all parts of society. Urban IDPs need to be included and involved in the initiatives for reconciliation and peace as well as for the development of their ‘home’ area.

Even if the money is not there, simple measures such as increased participation and sharing of information can include urban IDPs and make it easier for them to make decisions concerning their future. Assessing and considering the needs of urban IDPs on the equal basis as with IDPs elsewhere can give urban IDPs access to the assistance and follow-up described in the guiding principles and IDP-policies. Many urban IDPs are not in need of assistance in the form of money, food, medicines or education. There is however no doubt that some are. Further research, both qualitative and quantitative is needed to assess the specific needs of urban IDPs. All such assessments and activities must however be prepared to go in-depth and not fall prey to the same assumptions about urban IDPs as those being made by relevant actors today. That urban IDPs are not as visible as ones in camps does not mean they are not there.

It must be recognized that the bureaucratic interests, and procedures of humanitarian practices have up till now excluded urban IDPs from the IDP label and the rights connected with it. Examining how and why this may have happened is important if the IDPs are to find a space in which they can effectively voice their concerns. The second part of the fieldwork for this dissertation attempted to create such a space by actively working together with the participants in pushing for change.

7 Mobilizing for Change – Phase 2

7.1 How can actors contribute to change discourses by creating awareness of the processes of labelling?

Recent improvements in the security situation in Northern Uganda have allowed for over half of the 1.8 million IDPs to return to their villages. The increased interest in return by urban IDPs also reflects this development. Many urban IDPs do not have the means to return and rebuild their lives; hence, many urban IDPs view their inclusion in the IDP label as crucial. Having acknowledged that the existing discourse serves to exclude urban IDPs from being considered in protection and assistance frameworks for IDPs in Uganda, one important objective in the second phase of the study was to influence this discourse through participatory action research.

How do you influence a discourse?
In his article "The Making and Unmaking of the Third World through Development", Arturo Escobar shows us how the development apparatus generated categories powerful enough to shape they way we are thinking. Through deconstructing the discourse on development he reveals the processes whereby the Western world put themselves as models and facilitators for 'modernizing the developing world'. Escobar argues that understanding the history and formation of the discourse is a way to shift the ground.[198] One way of influencing a discourse can therefore be to reveal the processes of labelling to create awareness of how bureaucratic interests and procedures of humanitarian agencies are themselves crucial determinants in the definition of labels.[199]

Participatory approaches are based on recognizing the existing capacities of people as active claims-making agents. By facilitating mobilization of existing interest groups as discussed in chapter three, people can actively advocate for their rights. As a phase two of the research, we

[198] Escobar, 1995
[199] Zetter, 1991

(Refugee Law Project and myself) worked together with existing initiatives from different urban IDP communities to create awareness of the processes of labelling that have served to exclude urban IDPs from the return and resettlement frameworks.

7.1.1 Initiatives from urban IDP Communities

In Jinja, many of the urban IDPs arrived in 1986, and have since organized themselves into a community. In keeping with Acholi tradition, they had maintained a community council of elders who met and assisted in conflict resolutions, with organizing of funerals, or resolving other problems in the community. In 2006 and 2007, with the increased hopes for peace in Northern Uganda, return and resettlement had become an important issue for the urban IDPs in Jinja. On this basis the 'The Displaced Community Acholi, Lango and Teso in Jinja District' was formed. In August 2007 I was contacted by their coordinator who had heard about my research in Kampala. He asked me to help forward their voices to the government, NGOs, and other agencies concerned, and to advocate for the inclusion of urban IDPs in the return and resettlement frameworks planned for Northern Uganda. To follow up, they wrote a letter to Refugee Law Project requesting the RLP's assistance in being registered as IDPs.

> "We are the displaced people from Northern and North Eastern Uganda from the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Amuru, Oyam, part of Lira, Apac, Soroti, Katakwi and Amuria. …. We are temporarily living in Jinja district while others are in districts like Kampala, Masindi, Entebbe and Mukono/Lugazi. … We therefore request assistance for registering, which would enable us to resettle in our ancestral villages according to the current government plan."[200]

At the next meeting between the Head of Research at RLP, the urban IDP coordinator from Jinja, and myself, we explained how Refugee Law Project is not the agency which determines or registers IDPs for assistance. What we could do was to forward these concerns to people in charge and advocate for the recognition of urban IDPs in the current return and resettlement

[200] Letter from The Displaced Community Acholi, Lango and Teso Jinja District received at Refugee Law Project 16th September 2007

frameworks. We emphasized that such a process would be slow and that we might not succeed in influencing the decision-makers. In order to convey this message, we (me and tree colleagues from RLP) agreed to visit an urban IDP community meeting in Jinja. As described in chapter four, the people at the meeting told their personal stories and emphasized the need for assistance so they could return to what they considered their 'home areas'.

In Kampala, urban IDPs in some of the slum areas had also started to organize themselves. The organizing was mainly based on existing structures of community leaders or elders. After being contacted by the group from Jinja, these Kampala representatives sent us a similar letter as the Jinja group had done for us to forward to the relevant authorities.

> "We are the displaced Acholi Community from Northern Uganda living in Kampala district. Locations as Banda known as "Acholi Quarters", Naguru Go-down, Klabigalo and Namuwongo, Kibuli "Acholi Quarters" and Kamyokya are slum areas where Acholi people affected by war are living temporarily in Kampala District. In conclusion we IDPs living in Kampala District want assistance and to be registered as IDPs before we shall be allowed to go to our districts, so that we are uniform with those who are in camps of Acholi sub-regions to our respective districts. "[201]

Phase one of the fieldwork identified a gap in the IDP frameworks that needed to be addressed. Pointing out these gaps concerning urban IDPs during interviews with organizations and officials sometimes prompted reactions such as the following:

> "*We try to identify vulnerable people in camps but not in Kampala. Maybe we should start thinking about that..*"[202] or *"You have really opened my eyes"*[203]

It was clear that many IDPs in Kampala and Jinja had not reached a durable solution, and that very many wanted to return if peace came, but were not able to do so on their own. Based on these conclusions together with the requests from the representatives for the urban IDP

[201] Letter from Acholi Local Community Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) temporarily living in Kampala
[202] UNHCR Uganda, Protection officer, interview 11.10.07, Kampala
[203] UNDP Program manager Northern Uganda, Interview 17.11.07 in Gulu town

Community initiative, and in consultation with the urban IDP representatives, RLP decided to write a briefing paper presenting an overall view of the situation. During the following months, we at the RLP had several meetings with representatives from Kampala and Jinja.

Exclusive assistance to urban IDPs at their places of displacement in Kampala and Jinja was neither feasible nor desirable since most people living there struggled in the same situation of poverty regardless of whether or not they were IDPs. The focus therefore remained on assistance for return and inclusion in the return and resettlement frameworks. As concluded in one of the group discussions:

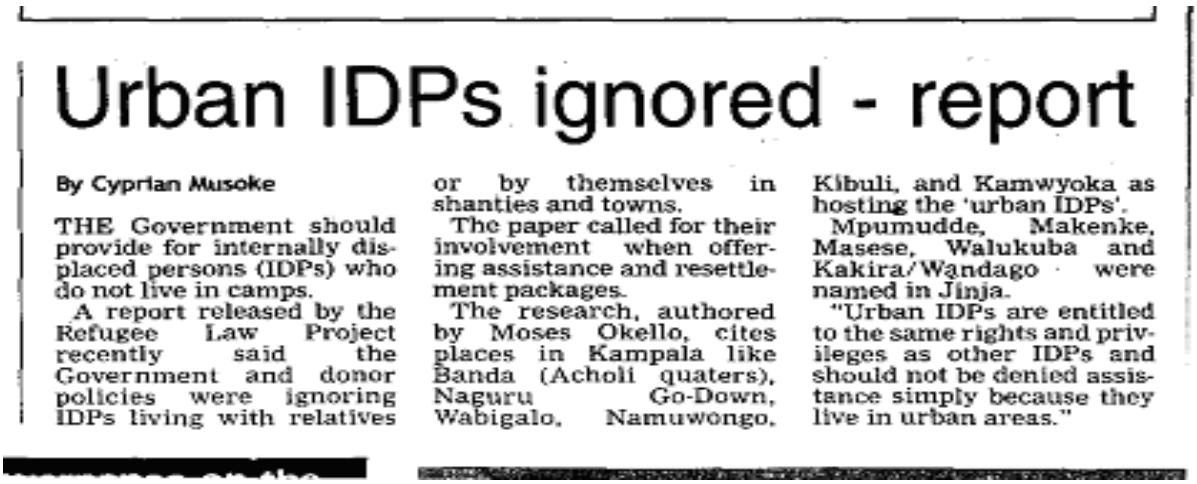
> '*We live here together* [Urban IDPs and other migrants], *everyone struggles.'* [204]

During the process of writing the briefing paper, the urban IDP representatives commented on the drafts several times and contributed significantly to the discussion.

[204] Group Discussion 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 45, came from Pader to Kampala in 1992

7.1.1.1 Urban IDPs ignored - Report

When the briefing paper: "What About Us? The Exclusion of Urban IDPs From Uganda's IDP Related Policies and Interventions"[205] was completed; it was published by RLP, distributed amongst the representatives for the urban IDPs, and sent to most humanitarian actors in Uganda in addition to a number of international actors.



Urban IDPs ignored - report

By Cyprian Musoke

THE Government should provide for internally displaced persons (IDPs) who do not live in camps.

A report released by the Refugee Law Project recently said the Government and donor policies were ignoring IDPs living with relatives or by themselves in shanties and towns.

The paper called for their involvement when offering assistance and resettlement packages.

The research, authored by Moses Okello, cites places in Kampala like Banda (Acholi quaters), Naguru Go-Down, Wabigalo, Namuwongo, Kibuli, and Kamwyoka as hosting the 'urban IDPs'.

Mpumudde, Makenke, Masese, Walukuba and Kakira/Wandago were named in Jinja.

"Urban IDPs are entitled to the same rights and privileges as other IDPs and should not be denied assistance simply because they live in urban areas."

Figure 6: Urban IDPs ignored [206]

Reactions were immediate. As National Coordinator of the Commonwealth Education Fund under Action-Aid wrote when forwarding the paper to his network:

> "*I write to share with you a very critical policy publication on urban IDPs by Refugee Law Project. The briefing paper gives a plausible contextual appraisal, raises very critical concerns and provides practicable recommendations in addressing Urban IDP issues in Uganda. … Finally, I would like to thank Refugee Law Project for publishing the Briefing Paper on Urban IDPs.*"[207]

Following this letter was a list of recommendations discussing integration of urban IDPs into the programmes.

[205] Appendix: 9
[206] New Vision, 2007: At Moses Okello's irritation, the journalist assumed he was the main author. The paper was created together with many of the staff at RLP and the urban IDP initiative representatives and was thus published without a specific author.
[207] Action-Aid, National Coordinator- Commonwealth Education Fund, E-mail received 03.12.07

In addition to direct responses both written and oral, three articles in the largest newspapers in Uganda were printed based on the briefing paper, pressing UNHCR to state their position on the issue. [208] Subsequently the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC)[209] Cluster Group on Early Recovery (CVGER) included the briefing-paper in their News Update for December 2007.[210] A reporter from BBC Africa radio also covered the story, including comments from the urban IDPs in 'Acholi Quarters'.

Following the briefing paper, we wrote together with the representatives from the urban IDP initiative a letter to the Minister of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees and other relevant actors urging them to include urban IDPs in their frameworks. [211]

In January a seminar was organized by Refugee Law Project with the Minister of State for Relief and Disaster Preparedness, representatives for UNHCR, and representatives from the urban IDP initiative as the main speakers. Unfortunately I was not able to participate since I was in Norway at that point. Both the minister and the representative from UNHCR were negative to including urban IDPs in return and resettlement frameworks as they considered urban IDPs to be better off than IDPs in camps.

7.1.1.2 Registration

At one point the Acholis in, both Jinja and Kampala decided to register themselves to collect more information about the urban IDPs in order to make a stronger case for arguing they should be included in the IDP frameworks. In Jinja which is much smaller than Kampala, they went from door to door registering people in individual households. Since the IDPs in Jinja had been organized for a long time, this proved to be feasible. In Kampala, the representatives announced at community meetings in each slum area containing concentrations of Acholis that there was to be a registration and its purpose. The representatives then got people from each of the districts in the north to sit and receive people who wanted to register while verifying that

[208] Appendix: 7: The Monitor: *The Forgotten urban IDPs*, 12.12.07, and 8: *Rural IDPs priority for refugee body*, 17.12.07
[209] IASC is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance involving key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners
[210] UNDP, 2007
[211] Appendix: 6

they were in fact from the areas they claimed. My only role in the registration was some help in setting up the form where individuals were to register names, ages, households, district of origin, year they came to Kampala, and whether they had resided anywhere in between. The registration process proved somewhat problematic in Kampala. Since the registration began at different times in the different slum communities, some people from the neighbouring communities went to get registered at the registrations starting first, then proceeded to register again at the ones that began later. The potential for double registration is limited, however, since all names were taken down and can be cross-checked against each other. Another potential issue with the registration is that it relies entirely on people being truthful, and that it was likely incomplete - only those who knew about it, wished to register, and had the time to do so were included. I know for example that some individuals were sceptical of the registration fearing that the government was somehow involved and would use the information to evict people from the land and actuate a premature return to Northern Uganda regardless of what the IDPs themselves wanted. The registration could also be perceived solely as an opportunity for accessing assistance in connection with return, whether such assistance was needed or not. In the end, however, the registration does express an interest in registering for return among the urban IDPs.

In February 2008 I had the opportunity to return to Uganda for two months and continue parts of the fieldwork. It was very useful to be able to follow up on the questions and issues that arose during the last part of the analysis process in Norway. I continued to meet with the urban IDP community initiative to lay the strategy for the way forward. The next section shows the minutes from the last meeting with the urban IDP representatives which I participated in, and gives an impression on how decisions on the way forward were arrived at:

“Minutes meeting with representatives from the Acholi Local IDP Community temporarily living in Kampala and Jinja”

Thursday 21.02.08 at Resource Centre Refugee Law Project 2.00 pm

Attendants:

1.) Eng. Okullo James – Chairman
2.) Milly Grace – Vice Chairman
3.) Oryemomony Alfred – Coordinator Kampala
4.) Okot Odinga – Assistant Coordinator
5.) Matthew Okot – Kawempe zone leader
6.) Opira Labongo Peter – Kamwokya zone leader
7.) Onoo Largo- Wabigalo zone leader
8.) Ogwang Amose – Naguru/Nakawa zone leader
9.) Betty Aryemu - Nsambya/Kamwenyi zone leader
10.) Komakech Quinto - Banda/Lede zone leader
11.) Owiny Everest – Namuwongo
12.) Hilde Refstie – RLP
13.) Simon Ndaula – RLP
14.) Salima Namusobya – RLP
15.) Malcolm Webbs – Freelance Journalist

1.0 Presentation

Malcolm Webbs presented himself as a freelance journalist who wants to make a TV-piece about the plight of urban IDPs. He wishes to follow a small number of families over four or five weeks to tell their story. He will also attend a meeting in Naguru Saturday 22.02.08.

One of the members raised that Malcolm should visit all the communities to get a broader picture. However, because of the nature of the filming, Malcolm will visit as many places as he has time for, but go in-depth at Acholi Quarters in Banda.

Hilde Refstie, the RLP coordinator of the urban IDP project went through what have been done since the project started. As a research associate at RLP she did research with urban IDPs in Banda Lede. As a consequence she got contacted by a representative from the urban IDP community in Jinja, Alex Olobo who raised concerns about the return and resettlement process in particular. He put her in touch with James Okullo from Kampala, and meetings were held regularly.

In December 2007 RLP released the briefing paper: “What About Us? The Exclusion of Urban IDPs From Uganda's IDP Related Policies and Interventions”. The briefing paper created some attention both in the media and amongst some NGOs. Furthermore the briefing paper was presented at a seminar organised by RLP at Makerere University and included speakers as Director of RLP Dr. Chris Dolan, Minister of Disaster Preparedness Musa Echweru, Deputy Representative Protection UNHCR Bayisa Wakwaya, and representative of the urban IDPs Mr. Nelson Odong. Following up on the seminar, the minister has agreed to go and visit one urban IDP community and to meet with the representatives.

2.0 Meeting with the minister

The RLP coordinator had put up a suggestion for issues to bring up with the minister based on the suggestions received from IDPs in Kampala initiative and earlier meetings. The members agreed very much with the agenda and added the issue of individual documentation of IDP status to the list and also to request a document where the government through Minister Echweru formally acknowledges the

urban IDPs. The issues were to be further discussed amongst the representatives and their communities and coordinated with the urban IDPs in Jinja.

A discussion was raised regarding assistance needed for IDPs while they are residing in Kampala or Jinja considering peace might not be secured. However, as a member pointed out, since the people IDPs are living together with in the slums also struggle, assistance directed particularly to IDPs are not realistically achieved nor wished for. The Head of Legal Aid at RLP advised the members to first concentrate on being recognized as well as the issue of return and resettlement. Then possibly later one can push for better conditions for *all* residents in slums.

It was agreed that 5 representatives would be representing at the meeting with the minister, three from Kampala, and two from Jinja and that it should be gender balance.

The issues to bring up with the minister agreed upon goes as follows:

Information
- Where can you receive information about the return and resettlement processes?
- Which areas are considered safe now?
- Where have people returned?
- What kind of assistance is in place for people who are returning now?
- How does one register if one is returning by oneself now?

Transportation
- Transportation to go and check out the land and back
- Transportation to bring oneself, equipment and relatives

Return and Resettlement – Kits
- Who is receiving kits now?
- Who is planned to receive kits?
- Who is providing the kits?
- How can one register for them and what are the requirements?

Encouraging of NGOs to include urban IDPs
- Include urban IDPs specifically when talking about IDPs and in current frameworks
- Encourage profiling studies of urban IDPs

Registration
- How can you register as an IDP in an urban area?
- Can the Minister issue a document showing the status as IDPs?
- Can the minister come up with a document specifically acknowledging urban IDPs?
- The self registration , reliability

How about the people that do not want to return?
- No strict time limit on when to return
- Have to be informed choice

3.0 The minister visiting a community

Ideally the Minister should visit at least two communities. Banda-Lede Acholi Quarters and Namuwongo were suggested. However, because of time constraints the Minister would probably be able to visit only one. It was agreed that Banda-Lede Acholi Quarters would take priority. The Vice chairman Mrs. Milly Grace will be the one to show the Minister around.

The chairman encouraged the meeting with the minister as soon as possible, and the RLP coordinator will be in touch with the minister on Monday to find a day. The RLP coordinator however emphasized the importance of finding a day when the minister has time to discuss the issues thoroughly.

4.0 The way forward

A member raised the concern that even if the government acknowledged the plight of the urban IDPs, assistance would depend heavily on large NGOs as well. It was suggested that a similar meeting as with the minister was held with the UNHCR also including a visit to one of the communities.

The RLP coordinator informed the members that they were punching in the registration numbers to the computer, but it would take time. The chairman informed the RLP that the people registered in those forms were only non-civil servants.

5.0 Any other business

A member brought up the registration of families with head of households, but further registration was decided to be put on hold.

The chairman received a copy of the speech held by minister Echweru at the seminar.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.30. The Acholi Community IDPs temporarily living in Kampala continued with an internal meeting further discussing the issues."

7.1.1.3 Influencing the government: Minister visiting 'Acholi Quarters'

At the joint meetings with the urban IDPs initiative for return, described above, it was decided to try to get the minister of Relief, Refugees and Disaster Management to go and visit Acholi Quarters with national and international press present.[212] Having earlier proclaimed that "There are no urban IDPs.", he changed his mind when facing the community, and upon receiving a letter from the urban IDP initiative giving their background and recommendations on the issue of urban IDPs.[213] After walking around with the local representatives and talking to people working in the stone quarries, the minister promised to forward the voices of urban IDPs and include them in the future government policy. He also wanted fifteen elders to be appointed to go up north to assess the situation and to facilitate for sharing information regarding the current situation and existing opportunities for return. In a more political and less useful vein, the Minister handed out money at the scene, and sent 50 bags of maize flour, which could lead to deepening the divisions between the Acholis living in the area and other migrants.

[212] See Refugee Law Project, 2008, and Appendix 8
[213] Appendix: 6

Figure 7: State Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Musa Francis Ecweru visiting Acholi Quarters February 29th 2008.

After I left Uganda, the urban IDP Community initiative continued to advocate for their rights in concert with the Refugee Law Project.

7.1.1.4 Influencing the Humanitarian Actors

While it can be said that one of the main objectives of the study (, - influencing the discourse on IDPs by creating awareness of the processes of labelling) has been reached, the results of this attention are yet to be assessed. UNHCR together with the International Organization of Migration (IOM) prepared in August for initial profiling of Urban IDPs.

> "With the achievement of freedom of movement in all parts of Northern Uganda, the process to achieve a durable solution is steadily progressing and many IDPs have become or are in the process of becoming self reliant. Considering the improved situation in the northern regions, it was decided that time has come to start analysing which are the needs of urban IDPs. The purpose of the meeting was to asses a set of strategy and methodology which can be used in the profiling of urban IDPs."[214]
>
> "The profiling will aim to identify the needs and intention of urban IDPs towards the achievement of durable solution. The result of the profiling will form an intervention aimed at appealing for resources for the CAP 2009."[215]

However, the government recently halted the process arguing they needed more time to develop their position on urban IDPs and how to deal with them in the return and resettlement frameworks.[216]

How effective the continued attempt to change the discourse on IDPs in Uganda will ultimately be, remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that with the briefing paper, the urban IDPs have a better tool than before in their struggle for recognition. With the increased involvement from UNHCR on the issue, the urban IDP initiative together with RLP might have triggered a snowball effect. [217] What is important now is that the urban IDPs continue to be directly involved in the process to avoid a non-participatory, top-down approach that ignore the voices of the people concerned.

[214] Minutes Meeting on Profiling of Urban IDPs 19.08.08, Kampala
[215] Minutes Meeting on Profiling of Urban IDPs 26.08.08, Kampala
[216] Refugee Law Project, 2008
[217] When a snowball starts rolling it absorbs more snow and becomes bigger and bigger as it roles

7.2 Ethical Challenges

7.2.1 'The dual imperative' in studies on forced migration

Karen Jacobsen and Loren B. Landau write about the 'dual imperative' when researching forced migrants. Research should be both academically sound and policy relevant. We as researchers want to contribute to the theoretical understanding of the world as well as helping the people who are experiencing conflict and displacement. Consequently most studies aim at influencing policymakers to develop more effective responses. Seeking such influence, researchers often adapt to the language and categories used by the decision makers. A more academic approach can be perceived as removed from the reality on 'the ground' and less useful for reaching out to the actors involved. Jacobsen and Landau argue that academic rigorous and policy-relevant research is not mutually exclusive. Indeed, policies should be based on solid methodological critical research which again should be relevant, effective, and ethical.[218]

However, close ties between practitioners, policymakers and researchers can lead to unwillingness to question established practices, patterns and categories and bringing up difficult questions. Such conformity can prioritize short term considerations at the cost of longer term perspectives. The researcher's dilemma then becomes whether you do more harm by questioning the systems in place for assisting your participants or by re-producing and validating the same system with its many challenges.

7.2.1.1 The bigger picture – destabilizing the IDP label

One faces several challenges when doing field-work in the manner described as radical action research. One of the overarching questions addressed throughout the research is that of the consequences of the study. Researchers should always consider the consequences of their research according to the principles of "Do no harm"[219]. When actively intending to "do good" as in radical action research, considering the consequences is particularly vital. Highlighting

[218] Jacobsen & Landau, 2003
[219] Anderson, 1999

the many complexities and the blurriness in the IDP definition could contribute to watering down the whole concept. People opposed to the IDP-concept – for instance governments violating their own citizens, parties to a conflict, or hesitant donors could use the critique of the IDP label to support their case. By diffusing the label, the protection available to IDPs currently recognized could be weakened.

One of the objectives of the study was to investigate the discourse on IDPs in Uganda. I also examined how the current discourse affected the access to rights and assistance for IDPs living in urban areas. Described as phase two in the fieldwork, the final objective was to work together with the participants to influence the discourse and include the urban IDPs in the planned return and resettlement frameworks. As mentioned previously, an important tool for advocacy was the report "What about us?- The exclusion of urban IDPs from Uganda's IDP related policies and interventions"[220] which revealed some of the processes of labelling that have lead to the exclusion of urban IDPs from the "IDP" label. The briefing paper created a lot of attention. While most of the feedback evolved around the obvious gaps that needed to be addressed, the director of Refugee Law Project got several comments regarding the harmful effects of questioning the system. He was gently reminded by representatives of the leading agency on assisting forced migrants that The RLP's briefing paper on urban IDPs threatened to open a 'Pandora's box', and should have been discussed within the NGO sector more thoroughly first rather than going public. They feared that broadening the label and introducing more 'vulnerable' groups when the resources were so limited could divert assistance from those who needed it the most. The director's response was that he was disappointed to come across defensiveness and a fear of raising difficult but real issues. Such practices, he argued are contrary to the development of critical capacity in civil society.[221]

[220] Refugee Law Project, 2007
[221] Dolan, 2008

7.2.1.2 What kind of participation?

With true participatory action research the researcher gives away much power and control over the research process. What is important and should be given weight is to a large degree decided by the participants. The rationale behind is to democratize research in a way that can influence in unequal power relations between the researcher and the researched as well as facilitating a space of influence for people not heard.

As discussed in Chapter three, participation can have a myriad of meanings, ranging from simply answering questions to becoming co-researchers. Documenting how the participants participated in the research is therefore of importance. As described in chapter four, the participants in this study took the opportunity to focus on what they saw as important through inter-active interviews. Their views and priorities guided the further research. When I was contacted by representatives from different communities with urban IDPs, we developed together a strategy to influence decision-makers. Throughout the research process, the participants have been involved in the analysis through group discussions. Through interviews, meetings, and discussions of drafts, the participants became co-producers of a briefing paper and letters. As a result, the urban IDPs had gained advocacy tools that can be used to further the argument for their inclusion in return and resettlement frameworks. By coordinating and supporting the urban IDPs' initiative and promoting the voices of the research participants, the research contributed to urban IDPs gaining some more influence in the matters regarding their own lives. But who are 'they', and who represents 'them'? When working closely with communities, who participates and who represents become crucial questions. One of the potential dangers of action research is that a relatively large initiative could be based on a relatively weak base of representation, knowledge, and popular support.

7.2.1.3 ‘Participation by whom?’

Without recognising the important power-relations in each community, the popular concept of participation can work against its purpose and serve only the particular interests of the few instead of the broader voices of the many. Coming in as an outsider the danger is especially present, since comprehensive acquaintance with the communities and societies involved is crucial for understanding who is participating and why. Spending much time with different groups in ‘Acholi Quarters’ while interviewing, participating in their daily activities, or just visiting over the eight months of field-work contributed to my broader understanding of the relations between the different participants. Focusing on diversity, participants from different occupations, ages, representing different lengths of displacement, areas of origin and genders participated in the study. The main basis of the analysis was the urban IDPs residing in ‘Acholi Quarters’. In addition, local officials in other slum areas, community representatives, members of the council of elders, and from the initiative for inclusion in the return and resettlement frameworks were also interviewed and consulted. With regards to organizations and national officials, they were selected by the urban IDPs, in consultations with RLP, and according to how relevant they were to the study. Access and opportunities for appointments affected to a certain degree who we spoke to, but overall most of the interviews planned were conducted. In addition to interviewing organisations and officials in Kampala, I travelled to Gulu in Northern Uganda to interview Gulu district officials and some organisations (for example the Norwegian Refugee Council) that did not have an office in the capital. I also made use of this opportunity to talk to urban IDPs in Gulu town.

The urban IDPs initiative of claiming their rights to inclusion in the existing frameworks was already under way before my arrival, and was merely brought forward and facilitated during the project. Accordingly, the advocacy component was rooted in the mobilisation of a large number of urban IDPs based on their knowledge, needs and experiences. The study, both in the form of the initial briefing paper, and this dissertation was and will be mere tools in the wider project of promoting the voices of the urban IDPs to influence the policy makers and implementers in Uganda.

7.2.1.4 The label urban IDPs – Constructing an identity?

The label "urban IDP" was never used in the interviews and was replaced by the less categorizing 'people affected by war who have moved to urban areas". In the process of advocacy, on the other hand, the concept of 'urban IDPs' was used. Although the 'urban' designator was intended to point out their location only, singling out 'urban' IDPs already suggests urban IDPs are different than 'regular' IDPs, and can be used to support their exclusion from the IDP label and all its accompanying rights. Another concern is that after 21 years of conflict and displacement many may wish to consider their present location as 'home'. The labelling of people as IDPs can have negative consequences for their integration at their new places of residence.[222] In addition, if assistance is provided exclusively to IDPs, and not to people in similar conditions around them, it can create jealousy and divide communities, setting up further barriers to integration. The motivation for mobilizing and advocating for inclusion in the IDP label is related to the rights and assistance connected to the label. Consequently, people might give up some of their opportunities for integration in the hopes of receiving assistance as IDPs. It is important to note, however, that in addition to expressing a desire for assistance, many participants expressed their feelings of being displaced from home, thus giving some legitimacy to using displacement as a marker for their common identity.

Labelling people affected by war who have moved to Kampala as "IDPs" can also create pressure for them to return if peace proves permanent. I came for instance to know that the National Housing & Construction Company Ltd has plans to put up houses targeting the lower middle class in 'Acholi Quarters' and the surrounding area. It is not clear how the corporation will deal with the people already living on the land.[223] Some of the participants were worried that the government might use the window of opportunity with the ongoing peace-talks to push the urban IDPs to go 'home' so that the land could be cleared. Others confided they had experienced pressure from people claiming to own the land to move because of the peace talks.

[222] Brun, 2003 b
[223] Interview Chief Executive officer in National Housing & Construction Company Ltd 28.08.07

> "*These people* [owners of the land] *are now asking, that now if it is peace, why not go? We must give money to them to stay. If they say you must go, we are forced.*"[224]

Departure under such circumstances, whereby urban IDPs lose their current homes and are pressured to return to Northern Uganda would be at odds with the principle of voluntariness which is a key criterion for any durable solution.

The study with its elements of action research and participation from the people concerned may have had an impact on the labelling of people affected by war who had moved to urban areas. While the humanitarian discourse in Uganda previously did not recognize people affected by war and living outside of camps and official settlements, a consciousness is now emerging regarding the way the IDP label has been redefined. The IDP discourse had influenced the urban IDPs to not consider themselves as IDPs: now that it is being challenged, initiatives emphasizing their displacement may change not only the way humanitarian actors, but also the IDPs themselves think. The consequences of such a labelling of a new group are largely determined by the way the issue is handled by the government, humanitarian actors, and the urban IDPs themselves. Profiling of the urban IDPs was the first step to gaining more knowledge about the situation of urban IDPs. Unfortunately, with the government stalling the profiling, decisions made by the government and humanitarian actors regarding urban IDPs in Uganda will likely continue to be based on assumptions for some more time to come.

7.3 Conclusion; How can actors contribute to changing the discourses by facilitating mobilization of an interest group?

When establishing the need to change the existing discourse, facilitating mobilization of an interest group is consistent with promoting the right of people's involvement in the decisions affecting their own lives. With a bottom-up approach, the voices of the displaced can be promoted to the different actors, hopefully influencing the way such actors think about the issue. Through the co-production of the briefing paper "What about us? The exclusion of urban IDPs from Uganda's IDP Related Policies and Interventions", we created greater awareness of

[224] Group Discussion, 04.11.07, Banda 1: Man 53, came from Pader to Kampala in 1988

the processes of labelling that had served to exclude urban IDPs from inclusion in the IDP label.

As described, participation can take place in many ways at several levels. Facilitating 'claimed' spaces requires participation at the highest level, whereby the topic of relevance, process, and strategies are decided by the interest group themselves. In the case of the present study, this was accomplished by producing a briefing paper as a base for future advocacy. The briefing paper was based on the research, group discussions on the initial findings, as well as input from the representatives from the different IDP communities in Kampala and Jinja. RLP then distributed the paper which was used as basis for seminars and meetings between urban IDPs and the policymakers. For instance, the minister of Relief and Disaster Preparedness and journalists came and visited one of the communities.

In a humanitarian melting pot as in Uganda, there are many actors to consider. As previously mentioned, some humanitarian actors complained they had not been sufficiently involved in the process. They argued that input on the issue should have come from them rather than as an initiative from the urban IDPs themselves. The ethical dilemma still remains of how the initiative may water down the IDP label and make it more difficult for actors to advocate for IDPs as a whole. However, according to the International Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as well as the Uganda National IDP Policy, urban IDPs have the right to be considered for assistance and to be included in return and resettlement frameworks. Silencing an initiative from the people concerned is certainly not the way to go about solving this dilemma if the objective of our work is 'real' empowerment and sustainable development. While most actors praise participatory methods in research and humanitarian work, it still seems difficult for actors to give up the control that 'real' participation requires.

8 Conclusion

The research for this dissertation was motivated by a wish to conduct democratic participatory research that was relevant for the participants. A further objective was to contribute to positive social change.

By employing the concepts of discourse and labelling, I have examined how the label "IDP" in Uganda has been transformed from its original form through political considerations and institutional practice. Although IDPs in urban areas are by definition IDPs (according to both the international guiding principles and the national IDP policy), urban IDPs in Uganda are seen as either economic migrants, or as former IDPs who have now reached a durable solution. The formation of the IDP label in Uganda has been influenced by the government's approach to control and military presence aimed at keeping people in camps in the north. Consequently, IDPs are perceived entirely as people residing in camps. The humanitarian community has been complicit with the government's policy of keeping people in camps by limiting assistance to IDPs registered and residing within them. The obvious lack of resources dedicated to protecting IDPs also influences the way the label is shaped. It is challenging to identify IDPs in an urban setting because of lack of registration and information. It is also difficult to determine who are forced migrants, and which of them have reached a durable solution. Since resources are limited, assistance is directed to the more visible groups as in camps.

Where IDPs go after they have fled from their places of origin is often shaped by livelihood considerations. According to the formal IDP definition in Uganda, this shall not affect their status. In Uganda, no research on the integration of urban IDPs into their new communities has been conducted. I argue that many IDPs have not reached a durable solution, and that the initiatives for return in different slums in Kampala and Jinja are an indicator of their identity as displaced. Labels are tools created by policymakers and practitioners to identify who is entitled to what. By being excluded from the IDP label, urban IDPs are not considered for assistance or included in the return and resettlement frameworks in Uganda.

Phase one of the fieldwork was exploratory and concentrated on identifying participants and generating a general overview of the urban IDPs' situation. As described, gaps in practices regarding urban IDPs' access to rights and assistance were identified. The next step of the fieldwork was concerned with contributing to positive change based on the linking of action research with rights-based approaches and participation. The emphasis on return put forth by the participants guided the second phase of the fieldwork. Working together with existing initiatives for return, we (representatives from different urban IDP communities, RLP and myself) began advocating for the inclusion of urban IDPs in return and resettlement frameworks in Uganda. By facilitating meetings with different urban IDP representatives and writing a briefing paper which revealed the processes of labeling excluding urban IDPs, we attempted to influence the IDP discourse. By using media, writing letters and inviting politicians to the urban IDP communities, we contributed to the emergence of a new consciousness regarding urban IDPs. How this will affect the situation of urban IDPs is hard to predict at this point. The government seems uncertain on their position, and the large humanitarian actors seem hesitant to take up new challenges. However, it is still too early to tell, and the advocacy efforts continue by the urban IDPs themselves and through the continuing advocacy of the Refugee Law Project.

The starting point for the dissertation was not to advocate for the use of the IDP label in the urban setting. During the interviews the label IDP was never used. The less political 'people who have moved from the war affected areas' proved instead to define the target group without invoking assumptions regarding entitlement to particular rights or assistance. However, when the participants emphasized their need for recognition and inclusion in the return and resettlement framework, I together with the Refugee Law Project decided to work together with the urban IDPs for their inclusion in the IDP label. This line of working reflects Jacobsen's and Landau's 'dual imperative' when researching forced migration discussed in last chapter. On the one hand is the demand for research to be relevant and useful for the humanitarian work and the forced migrants. On the other hand are the difficulties of relating to the often too narrow categories and taken-for-granted concepts of the policymakers. Adapting the label used by the practitioners and the policymakers in research can be like trying to make better moves within the rules of the game rather than reflecting on the nature of those rules, or

the nature of the game itself. As examples of people fleeing their homes for mixed reasons (including climate change, slow onset disasters, or the general level of poverty) multiply, it becomes increasingly clear that it might be time for a more nuanced approach to understanding and defining forced migration. At the same time one has to relate to the IDPs and the people managing their assistance here and now. This may require adopting some labels and concepts to have an impact 'within the system'.

Urban IDPs are one example of the challenges inherent in operationalizing the IDP definition. The clear-cut separation of voluntary versus forced migrants, the means of determining whether displacement has ended, and the tools for assessing integration are all problematic when discussing where urban IDPs fit in the current frameworks. In the politics of selection it is easier to concentrate on what is placed before you. Probing further when there is not enough to go around can seem meaningless, and questioning categories that to some extent are functional can seem destructive in the short run. However, in the long run, frameworks and policies which better capture and reflect the realities of forced migrants are necessary. Frameworks shaped and influenced by the people concerned may contribute to a better life for the 26 millions IDPs worldwide. If such is to be achieved, difficult questions, and exceptional cases must not be avoided.

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Appendices

1.0: Interview and meeting log

Date	Type	Origin	Venue
Urban IDPs			
24.06.07	IDP Woman 43	Gulu	Nakasero Road
24.06.07	IDP Man 29	Lira	Nakasero Road
24.06.07	IDP Man 17	Gulu	Lumumba Avenue
25.06.07	IDP Woman 39	Kitgum	New Buspark
25.06.07	IDP Man 48	Pader	Arua Park
25.06.07	IDP Woman 38	Lira	New Taxi Park
25.06.07	IDP Man 38	Gulu	Arua Park
25.06.07	IDP Woman 42	Kitgum	Arua Park
10.07.07	IDP Man 24	Kitgum	Banda 1
23.07.07	IDP Woman 30	Gulu	Banda 1
23.07.07	IDP Man 30	Gulu	Banda 1
01.08.07	IDP Woman 30	Gulu	Banda 1
01.08.07	IDP Woman 53	Gulu	Banda 1
01.08.07	IDP Woman, too old to remember	Kitgum	Banda 1
23.08.07	IDP Man 20	Pader	Banda 1
23.08.07	IDP Man 30	Gulu	Banda 1
28.08.07	IDP Man 40	Kitgum	Banda 1
28.08.07	IDP Man 28	Kitgum	Banda 1
28.08.07	IDP Man 40	Gulu	Banda 1
14.09.07	IDP Man 29	Pader	Banda 1
14.09.07	IDP Man 58	Kitgum	Banda 1
04.10.07	IDP Woman 31	Pader	Banda 1
04.10.07	IDP Woman 30	Gulu	Banda 1
04.10.07	IDP Woman 23	Kitgum	Banda 1
04.10.07	IDP Woman 33	Gulu	Banda 1
16.10.07	IDP Man 19	Kitgum	Banda 1
18.10.07	IDP Woman 33	Pader	Banda 1
29.10.07	IDP Woman 24	Pader	Banda 1
16.11.07	IDP Man 26	Gulu	Gulu
16.11.07	IDP Man 22	Gulu	Gulu
18.11.07	IDP Man 32	Gulu	Gulu
18.11.07	IDP Woman 67	Gulu	Gulu
Group Discussions			
14.09.07	Group Discussion Women		Banda 1
18.10.07	Group Discussion Women		Banda 1
20.10.07	Group Discussion Women		Banda 1
04.11.07	Group Discussion Men		Banda 1
04.11.07	Group discussion Youth		Banda 1

Hosts			
23.07.07	**Host Woman 30**	**Mbale**	**Banda 1**
23.07.07	**Host Man 20**	**Busya**	**Banda 1**
01.08.07	**Host Woman 30**	**Mbale**	**Banda 1**
23.08.07	**Host Woman 37**	**Tororo**	**Banda 1**
14.09.07	**Host Man 35**	**Mbale**	**Banda 1**
14.09.07	**Host Man 60**	**Mukono**	**Banda 1**
14.09.07	**Host Man 18**	**Mukono**	**Banda 1**
16.10.07	**Host Woman 22**	**Sudan**	**Banda 1**
16.10.07	**Host Man 70**	**Mukono**	**Banda 1**
16.10.07	**Host Woman 19**	**Kabale**	**Banda 1**
Meetings			
26.09.07	**Project coordinator Jinja and chairman urban IDP initiative in Kampala**		**Refugee Law Project**
21.10.07	**Community Meeting**		**Jinja**
24.10.07	**Representatives Kampala and Jinja**		**Makerere University**
26.11.07	**Representatives Kampala and Jinja**		
21.02.07	**Representatives Kampala**		**Refugee Law Project**
24.02.08	**Community Meeting**		**Jinja**
29. 02.08	**Community Meeting with minister**		**Banda 1**
29.02.08	**Representatives Kampala and Jinja**		
Key actors or organisations			
25.06.07	**Muslim Student Association**		**Makerere University**
26.06.07	**Full Gospel Church**		**Kampala**
26.06.07	**Omega Church**		**Kampala**
20.07.07	**UNOCHA**		**Kampala**
23.07.08	**International Meeting Point**		**Banda**
30.07.07	**Project Coordinator urban IDP initiative Jinja, Alex Olobo**		**Makerere University**
27.08.07	**Kabaka Royal Guard**		**Mengo**
27.08.07	**Kabaka Royal Guard**		**Kireka**
27.08.07	**Ag. Deputy Town Clerc Kampala**		**Kampala City Council**
27.08.07	**Urban Planning Unit**		**Kampala City Council**
27.08.07	**World Vision**		
28.08.07	**Lawyer Justice and Rights Associates**		**Kampala**
28.08.07	**LC 2 Kireka**		**Kireka**
28.08.07	**Minister of State of Relief and Disaster Preparedness**		**OPM**
28.08.07	**Parish Chief**		**Kireka**
29.08.07	**Vice LC1 Banda 1**		**Banda 1**
29.08.07	**UNICEF**		**Kampala**

30.08.07	**Buganda Land Board**		**Kampala**
30.08.07	**Chairperson urban IDP initiative Kampala James Okullo**		**Makerere University**
04.09.07	**UNHCR**		**Kampala**
10.09.07	**Uganda Human Rights Commission**		**Kampala**
14.09.07	**National Housing and Construction Company**		**Kampala**
11.10.07	**UNHCR**		**Kampala**
16.11.07	**UNOCHA**		**Gulu**
16.11.07	**UNDP**		**Gulu**
16.11.07	**Gulu District Council**		
17.11.07	**NRC**		**Gulu**
17.11.07	**NRC**		**Gulu**
18.11.07	**World Food Programme**		**Gulu**

2.0: Interview Fact Sheet urban IDPs

Most of the information was filled out during the interview, and only added questions if I lacked some information.

Date: Place Contact/Introduced by

Hello, my name is Hilde, I am a student associated with the faculty of law at Makerere University. My topic is people affected by the war in Northern Uganda that has moved to Kampala. I want to ask you questions about your life here in Kampala. I am a student with no funding and have nothing to offer you whatsoever. So I do understand if you are busy and can not help me.

You can at any time withdraw, and do not feel obliged to answer to any questions. Please let me know if a question is inappropriate. I ensure your anonymity and confidentiality. That means nobody will be able to recognize you in the paper, and what we say here in this room, I will never talk to anyone about it.

Name:
Sex:
Age:
Residence:
Marital status:
Children:
Residence of children:
Education (Subject, level, place):
Profession/Occupation/ Income generating activity:

Place of birth:
Languages:
Mother tongue:
Tribe:

Year of arrival in Kampala:
Coming from where:
Other places you went before Kampala:
Most important reasons for flight:
Are you planning to return?

3.0: Interview Guide IDPs

The highlighted questions were the main questions and the others were only used if the participant did not mention the topics in the conversation.

Migration History

How did you come to be here?
When did you come to Kampala?
Did you go any other places first? Have you moved several times?
Can you tell me about when you left from ..... ?
Did the family leave together? Why, why not?
Did all the family-members leave at the same time?

Motivation

What was the most important reason that made you leave?
(What made you leave exactly then and not earlier or later?)
Have you ever been in a camp? If so when? Where? And for how long?
How did you get there?
Why did you come to Kampala?
Did you know anyone in Kampala before you came?
Was Kampala as you expected? If not, how?

Identity

Who do you live with? How do you know them?
Where is your home? Do you feel Kampala is your home?
What is home for you?
How do you live here in Kampala? Can you describe it?
What are the main differences between the life you had before you left and the life you have here in Kampala?

Do you have friends and colleagues that are from Kampala?
Do you speak Luganda?
Is it differences between you and the people that have lived here all their lives?
Is it differences between you and the people living in camps?

Location
Did you register in any ways when arriving here in Kampala?
If so, how was it? What did they tell you? Or was it a reason you chose not to register?
Is there a place you can register if you want to?
Would it be better to live in a camp? If yes, can you explain more, if no, can you explain more?
What do you do if anyone gets sick?
(Clinic, hospital, other)
Are your children at school? Why, why not?

Do you get any assistance from the government? Why, why not. How?
Do you get any assistance from organizations? Why, why not. How?
Do people in the camps get assistance from organizations or authorities?
Would you get assistance if you went to a camp? Why, why not. How?

Livelihood

How do you manage?
Do you have relatives living elsewhere?
Do you have many relatives here in Kampala?
Do you receive money or other things from those relatives?

Return Intentions – future aspirations

What do you think of the future?
If peace comes will you go back? (Why, why not?)
Who do you think will return? Who do you think will not return? (Why, why not?)
Have you gone back and visited?
If peace came tomorrow, would you be able to return?
What will you do when you return?

Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you so much for talking to me. I am sorry I have nothing to offer you.

4.0: Interview Guide Officials and NGOs

Date: **Place:** **Contact/introduced by:**

Name:
Institution:
Sex:
Age:
Position:

Hello, my name is Hilde, I am a student associated with the faculty of law at Makerere University. I am interested in understanding the experiences of people affected by the war in Northern Uganda who are currently living in urban areas.

War affected people
Have some people affected by the war come to urban areas like Kampala?
Where do they live?
Are they registered in any way?
Are they organized in some way?
Is it anything else you can tell me about them?

IDPs
Are the people affected by war that has come to urban areas as Kampala IDPs? (Why, why not?)

I know this woman. She left Gulu district as her son got abducted and her husband killed. She went to Kampala with her two daughters. She works in the stone quarry in Kireka and earns 1000 sch a day. She wish to return if peace comes, but do not have any money for transportation, tools etc. Would you consider her an IDP? (Why, why not?)
Should she be considered an IDP? (Why, why not?)

Responsibility
Is there any instances dealing with these people?
Do they receive any assistance?
Should they receive any assistance?
Are there any organisations you know about that work with these people?

Perception
Now that there might be peace, what do you think would happen with these people?
Will they go back?
Do you think some would stay?
If they stay, do you think they will stay in the areas they are now?

Secondary information:
Do you have or know about any statistics or literature on people affected by the war moving to urban areas?

5.0: Letter to Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees

Refugee Law Project

Faculty of Law, Makerere University

The Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees

Office of the Prime Minister
KAMPALA

Hon. Minister,
RE: URBAN IDPs

The Refugee Law Project wishes to commend the Government of Uganda for demonstrating its commitment to the protection of IDPs in Uganda, reflected in the National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons and the more recent Peace Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda.

As you prepare for the implementation of the PRDP, we would like to draw your attention to the issue of an estimated 300,000 - 600,000 IDPs living in urban areas. The attached document details a variety of potential challenges related to this urban IDP population that demand immediate attention. We hope that you consider our comments and recommendations.

We shall be glad to be availed an opportunity of discussing the issue with you and other relevant actors.

Thanks for your continued cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

……

Salima Namusobya,

Senior Legal Officer

Encl: What About Us? The Exclusion of Urban IDPs from Uganda`s IDP Related Policies and Interventions

c.c Commissioner for Refugees, OPM

c.c. Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR

c.c Senior Protection Officer, OPM

c.c. Chairperson, Uganda Law Reform Commission

c.c. First Parliamentary Counsel

c.c. Director Amnesty International

c.c. Parliamentary Committee on Presidential and Foreign Affairs

c.c. Dean, Faculty of Law Makerere University

c.c. Uganda Human Rights Commission.

c.c. Uganda Law Society.

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www.refugeelawproject.org

6.0: Letter given to the minister when he visited 'Acholi Quarters' Kireka

Hon. Ecweru Musa Francis (MP)
Office of the Prime Minister,
Minister of State for Relief &
Disaster Preparedness and Refugees

26th February 2008

Dear Sir

RE: Recognition of and Return Assistance to Urban IDPs comprising Acholi, Lango and Teso, living in Jinja, Kampala and other urban areas of Uganda

We urban internally displaced persons wish to express our gratitude to your office for supporting people in need. We also wish to express our appreciation to you for agreeing to comment on our plight and to visit our areas of aboard during a seminar organised the Refugee Law Project on the 24th January 2008. In the same light, we also thank Refugee Law Project who, having been contacted (through letters written on the 16th of September and 14h October 2007 by the Jinja and Kampala Community respectively) agreed to bring our concerns to your attention by organising the above public seminar.

Honourable Minister, when faced with the dire need to go back home to the districts from which we came, we decided to advocate for our rights as forgotten IDPs. In order to realise our goals, we organised ourselves into Committees which regularly visited areas inhabited by war affected people, first in Jinja, and later in Kampala. During our Committee meetings attended by many community members, we as the leaders conducted some preliminary assessments to determine the degree and nature of their need. We also consulted the local leaders of the areas where urban IDPs live and by registration obtained some details as to numbers and the dates of their arrival (now deposited by at the Refugee Law Project for presentation in a digital format). We also enquired from the neighbours and local leaders the type of lifestyles the persons were leading.

Before registering a person, we endeavoured to confirm that he or she was deserving of registration by visiting his or her home and asked questions around how they came to the urban areas and what their return aspirations were should security improve and return is facilitated. The people registered are not civil servants nor are they gainfully employed: most represent a very poor state of life and simply want to return to their areas of origin.

Honourable Minister, since the process of registration has taken a lot of time and effort, the representatives could not tally everyone that lives in the urban areas in Kampala and Jinja or elsewhere. We therefore advocate that IDPs living in all urban areas around the country be documented and included in any registration for return, resettlement and reintegration assistance.

We thank you so much and wish you and your Ministry glorious days as we look forward to your response. On behalf of the IDPs living in Kampala and Jinja District invite you to refer to the attached annex, which details some of the reasons for the flight of IDPs to urban areas.

Yours Sincerely,

Chairman Kampala District: Eng Okullo James

……

Coordinator Jinja District: Alex Olobo

……..

Cc: Director Refugee Law Project, Chris Dolan

……..

Annex: URBAN IDPs

This document is based on meetings between representatives of urban IDPs in Kampala on 21th February 08 and in Jinja on the 24 February 08, and Refugee Law Project.

<u>Location of Urban IDPs</u>

The urban IDPs are mainly found in the following areas:

Kampala: Banda (Acholi Quarters), Naguru Go-Down, Wabigalo, Namwongo, Kibuli and Kamwokya.

Jinja: Mpumudde, Makeke, Masese, Walukaba, and Kakira/Wandago slums.

Entebbe

Masindi: Bweyale and other townships and villages in the district.

The communities both in and outside the above defined IDP settlement areas consists of many groups including workers who earn less than 2000 Ug Shillings a day, non-working groups (dependants), elders, widows and orphans. Most of them are poor and struggles to afford town-life. They do not have the money for transport back to their home areas, nor the resources to rebuild their lives. The difference between the urban IDPs and other slum dwellers is that the IDPs came to stay in the slums unwillingly, and would now want to go back home soon.

Reasons for the IDPs migration

The conflict of north and north-eastern Uganda has, as we know, brought a number of problems into the lives of the internally displaced people. Some of the problems include:

- **Killings:** Massive killings of civilians in and around the camps forced us out of the affected region.

- **Abductions:** Abductions of children was so common that even from within the camps this could happen. From time to time, rebels could come and abduct children. We decided to protect our children by moving out of the camps and into safer places further away.

- **Rape:** Rape of women by some gangs was another serious concern that made us migrate from the camps

- **Lack of food stuff:** This came to the extent whereby a family of ten people could be given only one mug/cup of beans and two cups of posho to last for a week. Living on that amount was impossible. Since very many people died of hunger, many IDPs moved out of those camps into the slums of different urban areas.

- **Education and employment:** The closing of schools and markets as a consequence of the conflict was another terrible blow that made life a lot more difficult. Worst still was the curfews on movement of people given the security situation which also led to the close down of markets.

- **Current situation:**
- The reasons above and many other reasons led to the massive exodus of very many IDPs from different camps in the region. For those of us who have moved into the urban areas life did not change that much. We are still faced with the following problems:

- **Health:** Due to lack of money resulting from little income amongst the urban IDPs, it has all along been very difficult for us to treat our children attacked by diseases as for example malaria.

- **Food:** In an urban setting any form of survival is monetarised, thus urban IDPs with our little income find it very hard to feed our family members. One adequate meal a day is the only affordable feeding mode for many, leading to malnourishment of children in particular with the rampant related dietry diseases as Kwashiokor and many others.

- **Employment:** Despite some members having good qualifications in certain fields, they fail to get employment because of corruption, nepotism, or lack of advancement in their qualifications. Failing to get employment makes it impossible to cater for the essential needs of their families. Many women are struggling with stone-crushing in places like Kireka-Lede community known as Acholi Quarters for 1000 – 2000 schillings a day.

Others sell stuff at the streets where authorities harass them because they sell illegally, the reason being they can not afford to pay for trading documents. The businesses earn very little income a day, thus rendering children to go to the streets begging because their guardians can not support themselves fully. Some women work as house girls where they are badly exploited by their employers. Many women have also resorted into making the local drink commonly known as Waragi to supplement the efforts of their men. The men that have work are mainly employed as private security guards, or at building sites with very little payment.

- These are some of the plights of our people living in urban areas.

Recommendations from the Urban Internally Displaced People to the Government

- **Recognition:** Include urban IDPs in all return and resettlement assistance frameworks and encourage NGOs to include urban IDPs in their programs. Also encourage IDP profiling studies to further map our needs and challenges.

- **Representation:** The National IDP-Policy stipulates that each IDP camp is to be represented by a man and a woman in district meetings concerning the internally displaced people. We would like IDP representatives from urban areas to be included in this committee so that we are bridged to our home districts. In addition we would like our representatives to liaison with each of the affected districts to monitor the progress of resettlement exercises and report to their people the progress.

- **Identification cards:** Be registered and issued with identification cards that signify the status as IDPs both to be able to receive assistance and to show the numbers of IDPs.

- **Resettlement assistance:** Equal access to resettlement assistance and kits as IDPs in camps.

- **Return:** Provision of information regarding security, level of assistance, return process and the way forward. An important aspect of this process is opportunities to go back and forth to see and check up on the land. Then, when we can make informed decisions regarding return, transportation with the family and assets to actually start rebuilding our lives is needed.

7.0: The forgotten urban IDPs – News Article

TRUTH EVERY DAY
Daily MONITOR

MAKING ENDs MEET: Abalo and her mother Ms Akello in Banda. Photo by Christopher Mason

NEWS | December 12, 2007
The forgotten urban IDPs

CHRISTOPHER MASON

Kireka

Under the heat of the mid-day sun, the hills that surround Banda, a Kampala suburb, ring with the distinct chink-chink-chink of metal hitting rock.

Following the sound along winding paths that descend into a massive rock quarry, reveals groups of women and girls, each wielding an engine gear fixed to a wooden stick,

Many, like 11-year old Irene Abalo who is a three-year veteran of life in the quarry, came here to escape violence in the north. Now, with tentative peace between the government and the Lords Resistance Army (LRA), a massive effort has begun to help the millions who fled to IDP camps in the north during the 20-year conflict.

But those who fled to urban areas in the south instead of the camps, estimated to number between 300,000 - 600,000, have so far been left out of the resettlement process and so continue to live a subsistence life as though the conflict never ended.

Abalo and her mother, 25-year old Paska Akello, work side-by-side in the quarry in the hopes of filling enough 20-litre jerry cans with crushed stones to make Shs2,000 between them.

"We came here to escape the LRA," Ms Akello says. Asked whether she would like to return home to Pader, she nodded yes.
Abalo and Ms Akello are among about 10,000 Ugandans who live in an area that has come to be known as the Acholi Quarters.

Unlike most in the north, they did not flee to IDP camps, but instead sought refuge in Uganda's urban areas.
Though they put distance between themselves and the violence, these urban IDPs are difficult to distinguish from the broader urban population even though they often have the same resettlement needs as those living in camps.

"The manner in which IDPs are identified tends to exclude urban populations, most of whom have the same needs as those in the camps," said Mr Moses Okello, the head of research at the Refugee Law Project (RLP), which recently released a report calling on the government and international organizations to include urban IDPs in the resettlement process.

As hundreds leave the camps for home, many like Ms Akello and Abalo continue with subsistence living, unable to afford the costs of transport back home and the start-up costs of rebuilding homes, replanting crops and waiting for the first harvest to come in.

This has angered organisations such as the RLP who say the government's own definition of an IDP, as established by the National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons, focuses on anyone who has fled their homes due to conflict, regardless of whether or not they fled to a camp.

"The fact that urban IDPs have been left out of the resettlement process is contrary to the government's own definition of an IDP," Mr Okello said.

Repeated phone calls to both the Minister for Relief and Disaster Preparedness Tarsis Kabwegyere and State Minister for Northern Uganda David Wakikona were not answered.

Strict roles define life in the quarries. Men cut the rock with hammers and chisels and transport the large chunks to open areas where women and girls use their metal-topped sticks to crush them into small pieces. There is a stark difference between life here and life in downtown Kampala, only eight kilometres away. George Lajul, 57, is among the men chiselling rocks out of the high walls of the quarry. He fled Pader in 1993 because of LRA fighting. He once went back home but fled again because of the instability. "If I could go home, I would," he says. "But there is not enough money."

The area around the stone quarry, part of Banda village, has become known as the Acholi Quarter because of the high Acholi population.
It became a magnet for people from the region because many lived here working for the Kireka Tea Estate. But the estate was closed in the early 1970s when Idi Amin expelled Asians.

Many Acholi stayed in the area and began extracting rock. When violence broke out in the north, many there fled to areas where they had relatives. In this case, thousands eventually came here.Today, those Acholi continue to work in the quarry, where many have died from falling rocks or floods. Many of the workers have cracked and dry hands with broken fingernails from the work. They talk of those who have died in the quarry, most recently a woman who was crushed by a rock.

"The people in the IDP camps left their homes, but so did those in the urban IDPs," Ms Milly Grace Akena, 47 said.
She is the chair person of the committee that looks after the concerns of Acholi living in Kampala. After working in the quarry for sometime, she turned to alternative work and today makes paper bead necklaces.

"The government has ignored the urban displaced people," Ms Akena says while standing in the quarry. "But we are all displaced."

8.0: Rural IDPs priority for refugee body – News Article
NEWS | December 17, 2007

Rural IDPs priority for refugee body
Kampala

A lack of resources has forced the United Nations to prioritise its resettlement efforts on camps in the north over those who sought refuge in urban areas during the Lords Resistance Army conflict, according to a spokesperson for the international agency.
"The reason our focus is not on urban IDPs is strictly a priority issue," said Roberta Russo, spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)."We have limited funds so we focus on where the highest needs are." Most of the 4.5 million people living in northern Uganda were displaced during the conflict. The majority went to camps that were established to provide security and allow aid organisations to access those in need. But estimates say anywhere between 300,000 and 600,000 fled to urban areas, like Kampala, to escape instability.

Now that the conflict has ended and the resettlement process is underway, it is becoming increasingly apparent that most of those going home are from camps and not the urban areas where so many fled.

On Wednesday, Daily Monitor published an article detailing life in Kireka on the eastern outskirts of Kampala where some 10,000 urban IDPS, mostly Acholi, live. Many work in a nearby stone quarry for as little as Shs1,000 per day. All those interviewed said they would like to return to their homes, but said they have not received any support from the government or international organisations that would help them do so.A 2006 report by the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the United States illustrates how many people in the north, especially Acholi, fled to urban areas rather than camps. That report found that 33 per cent of Acholi displaced between 1988-1996 came to Kampala. The report found that 75 per cent of Acholi IDPs in Kampala ate only one meal per day and that 44 per cent could not afford to eat meat.Many of those conditions continue to persist today. Recently, an NGO, Kids Inspiring Kids, organized a Christmas party for children living in the Acholi section of Kireka (often called Acholi Quarter). At the party, a cow was slaughtered and cooked for the children, marking the first time many of them had eaten meat in months and in some cases years.

Ms Russo, in outlining the UN's strategy for resettlement, said IDP camps had been prioritised over urban IDPs in part because security concerns in the camps are motivating officials to evacuate the camps as quickly and safely as possible. "Most of the protection concerns are in the camps," Ms Russo said. The high mortality rates and documented assault cases in many of the camps illustrate those concerns.

But urban IDPs say they should get greater support in their efforts to rebuild their lives back home. Ms Russo said no IDP, whether in camps or in urban settings, would receive money for transport back home. Instead, the support is focused on the areas to which people are returning.

CHRISTOPHER MASON

Refugee Law Project
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SPECIAL BULLETIN MARCH 2008

Uganda's Urban IDPs Risk Being Left Out Of Government's Return Plans

Expectations for peace are high in northern Uganda with positive news coming out of the Juba peace talks and thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have already left the protected camps for their homes. But many IDPs wishing to go home could slip through the cracks in the government's return and intervention policies because they have settled in towns and cities.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), a half million people in the north have returned to their homes—mainly in the Lango and Teso regions—and at least another 1.2 million people remain in rural IDP camps, while an unknown number are still in Uganda's urban centres, and quite possibly will be unable to return without assistance.

The conflict in the north created one of the biggest humanitarian situations in the world and at least two million Ugandans were forcefully displaced at its peak. Over the years, a steady stream of people have fled to urban centres in northern Uganda, as well as to more distant places like Masindi, Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe rather than live in notoriously unsafe and inhumane IDP camps in their home areas.

The exclusion of urban IDPs from government and NGO assistance programmes stems from their low visibility. They scatter throughout urban areas and often blend into slums. Officials may conclude that they have integrated into the local communities and are no longer need help. Contrary to what one may think, urban IDPs often enjoy a lower standard of basic services such as healthcare and schooling than their counterparts in the camps since they are seldom targeted by humanitarian campaigns.

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Hon. Musa Ecweru, Minister of State for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, meets quarry workers at 'Acholi Quarters' IDP site in Kampala

Relief Minister Tours 'Acholi Quarters' IDP Site

The Ugandan Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Musa Ecweru, toured the IDP site nicknamed 'Acholi Quarters' in Kireka-Banda on the eastern edge of Kampala on February 29 and met with local leaders—an experience he later referred to as "eye-opening". He had vowed to visit the site after he attended an RLP-hosted seminar on urban IDPs at Makerere University in January.

'Acholi Quarters' is one of the most well known IDP sites in Kampala and gets its name from its predominately Acholi population, who have been steadily migrating to this place since conflict and forced displacement began in northern Uganda in the mid 1980s. Many claim they were given this land on a hillside by the *Kabaka* of Buganda. Today, this IDP site is seen as a slum.

Cont'd on page 3

'Acholi Quarters' IDP site in Kireka-Banda, Kampala

'Urban IDPs' cont'd from page 1

To some, urban IDPs are sometimes grouped with 'economic' migrants—those that have willingly left their homes in hopes of better opportunities in the cities. In fact, they have taken refuge in towns and cities for a variety of reasons, including: lack of security in the camps, reluctance to be dependant of food rations, inability to establish new livelihoods or a wish to reunite with family members.

The main obstacle to assisting IDPs who live outside protected camps is that they are not officially registered in the ordinary fashion. Rural IDPs are often issued food-ration cards which indicate their residence in IDP camps. Urban IDPs have no such documents to signify their displacement.

Regardless of where they live, IDPs are entitled to the same legal rights. In 2004, Uganda became one of the first countries in the world to establish a national policy for IDPs in line with the United Nation's Guiding Principles on International Displacement.

The Ugandan Government further proposed a Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for rebuilding northern Uganda, which was eventually launched in late 2007.

Both the IDP policy and the PRDP guarantee a number of protections to IDPs, including freedom of movement, throughout all phases of displacement.

However, both the national IDP policy and PRDP were primarily geared towards rural IDPs by their drafters. The PRDP clearly states that the objective of its return programme is "to facilitate the voluntary return of IDPs *from camps* to their places of origin and/or any other location of their preference as peace returns."

Many IDPs in long-established sites around Kampala and Jinja that the Refugee Law Project has researched have expressed desires to return to the north. Their need for assistance, however, is substantial, especially for payment of transportation costs and other expenses.

The challenges that have come up in distinguishing urban IDPs from other urban migrants appear to have resulted in their exclusion from formal support. In practice, IDPs have been defined as those people who were displaced into rural IDP camps, a definition that undermines the protection and assistance they all need.

Recommendations on Urban IDPs

To the Government:

→Make explicit the inclusion of urban IDPs in Uganda's related polices and interventions

→Address the gap between policy and practice regarding urban IDPs

→Involve urban IDP community groups in developing assistance and return or resettlement programmes

To Humanitarian Agencies:

→Conduct IDP profiling in urban areas such as Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe in addition to urban centres in northern Uganda to assess numbers, living conditions and aspirations

→Introduce the issues of urban IDPs to all clusters

→Create assistance programmes that are sensitive to the relationship between 'hosts' and IDPs in urban areas

An alcohol distillery in the Mpumudde IDP site near Jinja

'Acholi Quarters' cont'd from page 1

One of the main livelihoods found in 'Acholi Quarters' is selling crushed rock from a local quarry. Women and children sit in the sun throughout the day pulverizing rock with small hammers. A jerry can full of crushed rock can expect to bring in 100 Uganda Shillings.

Ecweru, upon meeting some of the women and children working in the quarry that day, pulled a 50,000-Shilling note from his pocket and presented it to a woman, requesting that they divide the money as a group and rest for the day.

Later, Ecweru addressed an assembly of IDPs and media that had gathered in an open area in 'Acholi Quarters'.

"We all know that home is a lot better than this place," Ecweru said to the crowd of mainly women and small children.

"You can be assured that I will be your voice in the government," he said.

Ecweru further promised 50 bags of maize flour for the residents and advised representatives from 'Acholi Quarters', as well as those that had come from IDP sites in Naguru, Luzira and Jinja, to organize teams of elders to travel to northern Uganda and begin planning for return.

Ecweru explained in interviews with the media that resettlement to northern Uganda would be strictly voluntary and he maintained that the government would facilitate the urban IDPs in their move.

Since the minister's visit, IDP representatives around Kampala have been swift to organize themselves, confirming a collective identity of displacement in IDP sites in and around Kampala. Many young people born in the IDP sites that the Refugee Law Project has spoken with have even expressed a desire to return to the homeland they have never known.

Refugee Law Project Takes On Urban IDP Research

The low visibility of urban IDPs in Uganda has not only made them vulnerable to neglect by government and humanitarian intervention efforts, but it has also made urban IDPs as a group difficult to research.

Hilde Refstie, a research associate with the Refugee Law Project, recounts walking the streets of Kampala talking randomly with people she suspected of being IDPs from northern Uganda.

"We also started interviewing some organizations and officials. When it came to identifying urban IDPs, we did not get much help," Refstie said. "Most of the organizations and officials we interviewed did not know much about this group, neither could they refer to any studies or profiling on urban IDPs."

The Refugee Law Project initially put out a working paper in 2005 titled, *'A Drop in the Ocean': Assistance and Protection for Forced Migrants in Kampala*, which examined the social, economic and political situation of urban refugees in Kampala. But research specifically into urban IDPs did not come until later.

"Urban displacement is something that we've been keenly aware of for a long time," said Moses Chrispus Okello, head of research and advocacy at the Refugee Law Project.

While carrying out its initial research, the

Cont'd on next page

A boy plays in the Mpumudde IDP site near Jinja

'Refugee Law Project' cont'd from page 3

Refugee Law Project was contacted in September 2007 by representatives from IDP settlements in Jinja and Kampala. In their letters they raised concerns about how urban IDPs fit into the government's IDP framework.

"When faced with the dire need to go back home to the districts from which we came, we decided to advocate for our rights as forgotten IDPs," the letter states. "In order to realise our goals, we organised ourselves into committees which regularly visited areas inhabited by war-affected people."

In late 2007, to address the issue, the Refugee Law Project released the briefing paper *'What About Us?' The Exclusion of Urban IDPs from Uganda's IDP Related Policies and Interventions*. The paper spurred substantial interest in the plight of urban IDPs from the media and different agencies.

In January, the briefing paper was presented at a seminar at Makerere University that included speakers such as Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees Musa Ecweru, Deputy Representative for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Bayisa Wakwaya, a representative of urban IDPs Nelson Odong and Refugee Law Project Director Dr Chris Dolan.

Established in 1999 as an autonomous national project under Faculty of Law of Makerere University in Uganda, the **Refugee Law Project** (RLP) has since been a critical and independent voice on the rights of displaced people. RLP consists of three departments: legal aid, education and training, and research and advocacy.

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Refugee Law Project
A SPECIAL BULLETIN ON URBAN IDPs

July 2008

Resettlement Assistance Too Little, Urban IDPs Say

Despite the stalled peace talks in Juba, many internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in Uganda's cities and towns have begun to plan for an end to their displacement. But many more could remain displaced indefinitely, as many of the urban IDPs the Refugee Law Project has spoken with say the government's return and resettlement assistance has so far been too little.

In February, Hon. Musa Ecweru, Ugandan Minister of State for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, met with a group of urban IDPs living within a slum dubbed "Acholi Quarters" in the Kireka-Banda neighbourhood of Kampala. Ecweru offered to facilitate elders representing the different IDP groups in Kampala, Entebbe and Jinja to travel to their home districts to assess the feasibility of return to northern Uganda. He also promised lorry trucks for those willing to make the move, as well as offering some food assistance.

While elders from Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe have taken the opportunity of a "go and see" visit [see below], none of the urban IDPs we have spoken with have so far opted for the proffered lorries, as they feel it's a one-way trip north—and not necessarily to their home villages—where no further facilitation would be waiting for them. Return and or resettlement is however a complex process requiring several back and forth trips before a decision to settle can be made. Many of IDPs say they would have to rebuild their homes, clear their fields and begin acquiring food supplies.

The Ugandan government and humanitarian assistance organization are tasked with supporting IDPs in the north as they move from the camps to their homes, and urban IDPs are now asking the government for recognition of their status and to guarantee them the same assistance upon return.

Legal Recognition of Urban IDPs

Urban IDPs want recognition of their status in a fashion similar to that of camp-based IDPs in northern Uganda. Returning home with this formal recognition, they will be able to avail themselves of structures and frameworks for post-conflict reconstruction, such as the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan, and other transitional mechanisms that may be put in place for returning IDPs.

The government is hesitant to make such a formal commitment for a variety of reasons. First, if urban IDPs are able to access assistance outside the camps (i.e., in Kampala),

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An Acholi woman making *waragi* at the Mpumudde IDP site in Jinja

From the National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons

Chapter 3.5 Legal status, identification and registration

Local Governments shall issue to IDPs all necessary documents to enable them to realize full enjoyment and exercise of their rights….

…Women and men shall have equal rights to obtain identification documents and shall have the right to have such documentation issued in their own names.

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this might create pull factors for other IDPs to come and live in cities, resulting in increased pressure on already overburdened public services, as well as other problems associated with urbanization. Also, in consideration of the fact that Ugandan citizens are not issued any form of national identification, there is reluctance to provide such a benefit to IDPs, whose legal status is technically no different from any other citizen. The government is also concerned that if it formally recognises urban IDPs, this large population may start making demands for assistance beyond what the government can provide.

Providing identification cards to all urban IDPs will also be problematic because no one knows the exact size or location of this population. Registration and profiling exercises requires time and resources. It is also difficult to differentiate between people who were actually forced to flee their homes, meeting the international definition of an IDP, and those who willingly migrated to the city for other reasons. Registration of IDPs is however an obligation of the government, clearly provided for in the national IDP policy.

From the National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons

Chapter 3.14 Resettlement Kits

The OPM/DDP, Local Governments and humanitarian and development partners shall provide resettlement inputs and tools to returned and resettled families, as well as tool kits to support construction and self-employment. Displaced persons shall be consulted on the most appropriate inputs to meet their food security needs under prevailing conditions....

Mpumudde IDP site, Jinja

Elders Assess Return to North

Elders representing IDP communities in Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe recently returned from "go and see" visit to northern Uganda, where they also held meetings with Local Government officials in their areas of former origin.

Their mission—organized by the Ministry of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees—was to assess the conditions relevant to possible return for urban IDPs and then to report back their findings to their respective communities.

They visited Amuria, Katakwi, Kaberamaido, Soroti, Amuru and Kitgum districts. From their assessment, the security situation was deemed acceptable in regard to armed conflict in all districts with the exception of Katakwi, where Karamojong raiders pose a risk. They however caution that the suspension of the Juba peace talks may jeopardize any prospects for actual return.

In Teso, most people have left the camps, however, the elders said many homes are no longer suitable places for dwelling.

Food insecurity continues to be a major problem throughout the north. Despite the numerous assistance projects and actual improvements in the amount of food available to people, many people are still only able to eat once a day. The elders attribute the low agricultural activities to lack of tools and seeds. Therefore, many people are considering waiting for the next growing season before undertaking return.

A *waragi* distillery at the Mpumudde IDP site, Jinja

Assistance So Far:

The Government of Uganda acknowdeged the plight of urban IDP earlier this year when Minister of Disaster Preparedness Hon. Musa Ecweru toured the "Acholi Quarters" IDP site in Kireka-Banda. He promised the IDPs:

– Lorry trucks to haul their possessions to their home districts
– Facilitation in organizing "go and see" visits up-country for elders from the urban IDP communities
– Meetings between LCVs in northern districts and IDP representatives
– 50 bags of maize flour for IDPs in Kireka-Banda

Very few humanitarian agencies have yet programmed for urban IDPs. A few small organization target displaced youth in Kampala.

Urban IDPs: A 'Pandora's Box' for Aid Agencies?

A complicating factor for humanitarian agencies assisting IDPs in northern Uganda are the unknown numbers of people returning home from urban areas in other parts of the country and the various patterns they are employing to return.

At the height of the war between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda, there were nearly two million northerners displaced. Due to a number of reasons, including high exposure to violence, a number of IDPs opted out of encampment and fled to urban centres across the country, most notably Masindi, Kampala, Entebbe and Jinja. It is unknown now how many of these people have or are actively trying to return to the north.

This is an important demographic to understand, if government and humanitarian organizations hope to fulfil their obligations towards achieving durable solutions to IDPs. Currently, neither the government nor agencies fully understand the various patterns of population movement. While some clarity exists regarding IDPs who move from camps to intermediary sites or to their homes, the total numbers of people moving remains quite unclear. Possible explanations include double registration of those moving from one location to another, IDPs moving between districts, and more significantly, returning urban IDPs.

Capturing the movement patterns of this urban population is undoubtedly daunting. However, this phenomenon has developed as a result of the failure of the government and humanitarian agencies to recognise and to programme for IDP populations outside northern Uganda. This is ostensibly because recognising and extending assistance to displaced persons in areas other than northern Uganda is, according to some humanitarians we have spoken to, akin to "opening a Pandora's Box". While it may well be a complicated enterprise to pursue, their protection needs and vulnerabilities should be the justification to extending the legally prescribed assistance.

The Refugee Law Project has been led to understand that dealing with this population would create a host of new logistical problems for agencies. For instance, it is difficult to identify and channel assistance to IDPs who are living side-by-side with other slum dwellers. Also, the phenomenon of return is easier to deal with at an advanced stage of return, as is the case in northern Uganda. And lastly, some believe isolating urban IDPs from slum dwellers may be illegal, potentially equating to a form of discrimination. All of these excuses are veiled attempts not to recognise and extend assistance to what is already a long neglected group. In addition, these justifications have no legal basis, as the definition of internal displacement does not make a distinction between a displaced person's location and delivery of assistance.

Thus far, humanitarian organization in Uganda have resisted acknowledging urban IDPs. It is a policy we hope will not go unchanged.

The Refugee Law Project is a community-outreach project by the Faculty of Law at Makerere University that promotes the rights of forced migrants in Uganda

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Refugee Law Project
A SPECIAL BULLETIN ON URBAN IDPs
October 2008

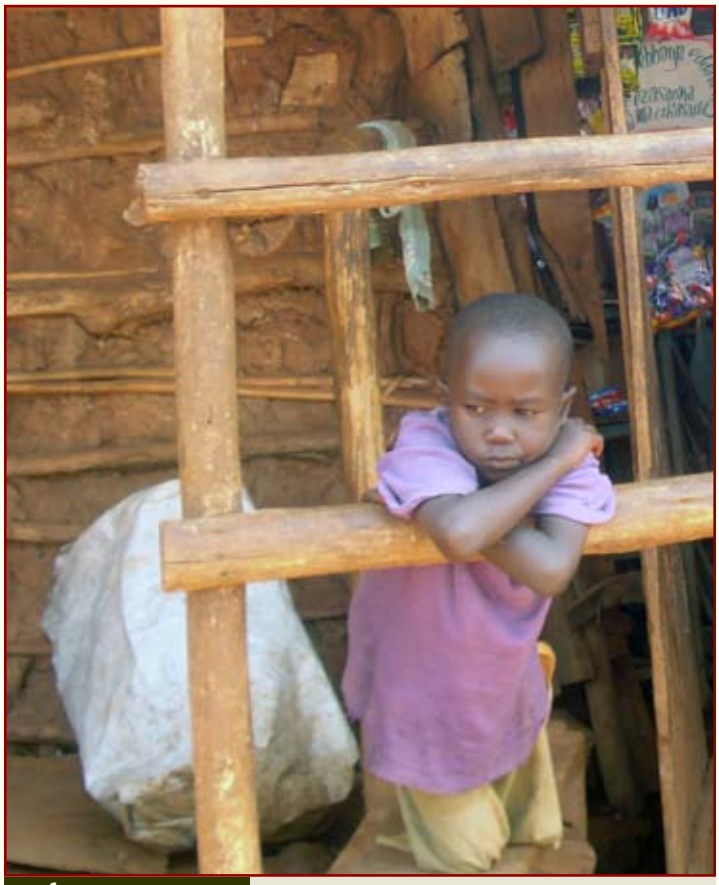
Gov't Stalls Urban IDP Profiling

Perhaps because many urban-based IDPs settle in slum areas, where they tend to blend in with the existing population, they are often perceived, even by some officials in humanitarian agencies, as a population less deserving of serious attention than their fellow citizens living in camps. Some humanitarian workers even claim that these people are nothing more than economic migrants, despite their unique history and circumstances.

Such claims in some instances offer an excuse for inaction; there is no doubt that dispersed urban IDPs pose far greater challenges to effective intervention than do rurally encamped ones. However, as populations generally become more and more urbanized, it will become ever harder for agencies to avoid confronting such challenges, and indeed, in some countries, including neighbouring Sudan, displacement to urban areas is being given considerable attention.

Discussions with local government officials in Gulu suggest that if urban IDPs do manage to return to their areas of former domicile they will benefit from assistance just like their rurally-based counterparts. However, the dynamics of return are not the same for both categories and without a doubt, urban IDPs' needs and protection concerns are different: their return demands should accommodate this distinction. For example, many urban IDPs have noted that they are unable to return because they do not wish to interrupt the education of their children.

When, in August this year, UNHCR started to host ad hoc meetings for organizations working with urban IDPs, it was therefore a welcome development. The aim of the meetings, which involved members of the existing protection cluster, including ASB, IOM, RLP, UNICEF, and WFP, was to plan profiling exercises which could begin to fill a critical information gap and lay the groundwork for assistance to this long-overlooked population. Although some profiling was done in Masindi, Teso, Lango, and Adjumani in 2006, little is known about IDPs displaced to larger urban centres, notably Kampala, Jinja and Entebbe. Moreover, the little that is now known demonstrates a critical gap in knowledge and information on this category of people.



Left Hanging...

Hopes were high for many IDPs in 'Acholi Quarters' in Kireka in February of this year when Hon. Musa Ecweru, the minister of relief, disaster preparedness and refugees, visited the slum. "We all know that home is a lot better than here," he said then to the IDPs, many of them seeking assistance to return to northern Uganda. But now the government has suspended profiling of urban IDPs, a starting point in understanding the needs of this long-neglected group. Since his visit, the IDPs in Kireka have faced an outbreak of cholera and some of their homes have been demolished at the demand of neighboring landowners who want them out.

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Timeline of Interventions

DEC — RLP releases Briefing Paper "What About Us? The Exclusion of Urban IDPs From Uganda's IDP Related Policies and Interventions"

JAN — RLP hosts public seminar on urban IDPs at Makerere University. Attendees include representatives from OPM, UNHCR and IDP community groups around Kampala.

FEB — Hon. Musa Ecweru meets IDPs in the 'Acholi Quarters' slum in Kireka. He promises the IDPs some food assistance, lorry trucks to transport willing families to northern Uganda and facilitation for elders to travel to their home districts to assess the feasibility of return.

MARCH — Fifty bags of maize flour are dispersed to IDP families in Kireka. Portioned out, many households recieved only one cup.

APR

MAY — Some IDP elders residing in Kampala and Jinja traveled to northern Uganda to meet with LCVs in their home districts.

JUNE

JULY

AUG — UNHCR puts urban IDPs on the agenda for protection cluster programming for 2009, coordinating with OPM to execute profiling and needs-assessment activities.

SEPT — OPM forestalls urban IDP profiling.

Continued from previous page

At the meeting, it was agreed to conduct a rapid population assessment and profiling exercise, beginning in the first week of September. This would have given time to identify urban IDPs' protection needs and concerns and to use such information for fundraising under the Consolidted Appeals Process for Uganda for 2009.

Unfortunately, the whole enterprise was stalled as a result of a request from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), a move which calls into question the government's commitment to honoring its obligations under the national IDP policy and the Constitution of Uganda. Sources suggest that the OPM has yet to finalise a position on urban IDPs, which seems to confirm our earlier observations that the National IDP Policy was drafted with displacement to rural areas in mind exclusively, and should perhaps have been called the 'Rural IDP Policy'. When the RLP contacted OPM to confirm its position, we were told by a senior officer that he was "too busy to comment". In a separate interview, another high-up OPM official however suggested that lack of information regarding the situation and concerns of urban IDPs is a major impediment to the identification of this population and provision of assistance. This suggests a lack of communication and coordination within OPM to seriously address this issue.

Given the limited time-frame in which the previously mentioned profiling exercise had to take place, the delay effectively precluded the possibility of fundraising for assistance to a population in an already dire situation. Despite the efforts of some humanitarian actors, and despite the fact that ignoring the problems associated with displacement to urban areas is clearly in breach of national obligations, the future welfare of urban IDPs, remains as uncertain as ever.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Urban IDPs must be recognised by Government as a constituency within the larger body of internally displaced persons in Uganda.
- Now that the UNHCR-led protection cluster has begun to act on the situation of urban IDPs, the government should establish clear guidelines for managing displacement to urban areas and in particular streamline communication within the OPM as well between the central government and the local governments. In particular, it should negotiate with the protection cluster for the postponed profiling exercise to be undertaken.
- District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs) across northern Uganda, including Teso, should include returning urban IDPs on to their agenda.
- Both government and humanitarian agencies need to establish a clear mechanism for collaborating on the protection and assistance of urban IDPs including establishing whether urban IDPs qualify to be included under the category "uniquely vulnerable groups/individuals". If they do, programming for this population is a matter of urgency.