

**ASSESSING COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY IN POST CONFLICT SITUATIONS:  
A CASE OF ACHOLI SUB REGION IN UGANDA**

**VIGA EMMANUEL**

**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE,  
GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT OF NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY (NTNU), IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF PHILOSOPHY IN DEVELOPMENT  
STUDIES SPECIALISING IN GEOGRAPHY**

**10.08.2012**

## **DEDICATION**

This piece of work is dedicated to my Late Dad, Alex Alokore, to my wife Achan Hellen Amule and my children; Viga Jonathan, Eric Otema Allimadi and Letasi Nazerene

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The Acholi sub-region in Northern Uganda has suffered from violent conflict since 1986 until 2006 when the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) under Joseph Kony signed Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CHA) which brought relative peace to the region up to the time of this report. To this effect, the people who were settled in Internally Displaced People's Camps (IDPs) during the war were allowed to return to their ancestral places. With complete breakdown in social, environmental and other infrastructure in their ancestral places, the returnees are faced with situations that continually make vulnerable. Despite clear realisation of this, limited research has been conducted to assess these people's vulnerability and resilience in this post conflict situation.

**Objectives:** The purpose of this study is to assess the individual vulnerabilities and their resilience in post conflict situation; identifying individual perceptions to vulnerability, stock taking of individual asset holdings and the individual livelihood strategies to cope with situations of shocks and stresses that they face.

**Methods:** Qualitative research was carried out on a total of 16 respondents and 4 key informants. The 16 individual respondents were chosen from Awachi Sub-county in Gulu District and two key informants from the NGOs working on people's livelihoods and 2 other key informants from the District Headquarters and Awachi Local Government Officials. Secondary literature was reviewed prior to and after the actual field work which forms background to the research given the paucity of research and information of post conflict settlement in the sub-region and primary data was collected using in-depth interviews, participant observation and key informants.

**Results:** Vulnerability to the respondents was found to mean completely a different thing from the academic perspectives, most of the respondents perceive the word in relation to insecurity and war despite the relative peace and most importantly the deprivation to own land that formed their livelihood prior to the war. Definitions and perceptions varied from the state of fear and being captured by the rebels to the risk of exposure to the un-detonated landmines which were planted during the civil war by the rebels. Majority of the respondents attribute the word to their inability to cater for themselves and forced to rely on relief supplies, their exposure to poverty, diseases and the poor sanitation which increases on the mortality rate within the sub county.

On the analysis of the stock of assets that individuals hold; the study revealed that, most of the respondents had plenty of land and on average an individual had about 5 acreage of land though this is mostly customarily owned. However, the study revealed that, issues of contention over the land have arisen of late and this increases the vulnerability of marginalised groups in society such as the widows, the young and the disabled. However, other stocks of assets also featured such as water sources, household tools but human capital was lacking since most of the respondents did not attain any formal education which could allow them seek salaried employment.

In relation to coping strategies, it was discovered that, majority of the respondents rely much on farm income strategies for survival such as food cultivation where techniques such as intercropping are used to maximise output and as well as conserving soil fertility. Prior to the war, social networks formed major sources of reliance in times of hardship but however, in this post conflict situation, the study revealed that social relations have completely lost value and trust and instead new social networks are developing up such as women groups which are more formal than informal. Finally to a lesser extent, some individuals rely on non- farm activities such as thatching for men to get some extra income and braiding of the hair and weaving for women, brick laying, and a new form of income sources are rapidly developing up which include among others bodaboda cycling i.e. a local transport system.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank my Lecturers from the Geography Department of NTNU. I am particularly grateful to my supervisor Associate Prof. Brun Catherine for her enduring patience, insightful comments, honest critiques and dedicated guidance in my academic development through the process of writing this report.

I am also very grateful to the Norwegian Government especially Loanekassen that provided the financial assistance through the Quota Scheme Scholarship for Developing Countries which enabled me to pursue the above course through funding my course work and research as well.

Many thanks to the Cornerstone Development (U) Ltd for having identified me and made me benefit from their programme which has ever since changed my up to date.

To my beloved wife Achan Hellen Amule, thanks alot for the encouragements, love and moral support you accorded to me during the time of my studies

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## ACRONYMS

LRA- Lords Resistant Army

NRM- National Resistant Army

IDP- Internally Displaced People's Camps

GoU- Government of Uganda

UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund

NAADS- National Agricultural Advisory Services

PRDP- Peace Recovery and Development Plan

DFID- UK Department for International Development

CHA- Cessation of Hostilities Agreement

FAO- Food and Agricultural Organisation

U5MR- Under 5 years Mortality Rate

CMR- Crude Mortality Rate

DDMC- District Disaster Management Committee

HIV- Human Immune Virus

AIDS- Acquired Immune Difficency Syndrome

UPDF- Uganda People's Defence Forces

NGO -Nongovernmental Organisation

NUDEIL- Northern Uganda Development of Enhanced Local Governance Infrastructure  
Livelihoods

ALREP- Agricultural Livelihood Recovery Project

UNDP- United Nations Development Programme

DSS- Demographic Surveillance Survey

CDO – Community Development Officer

LC III – Local Counsel III Chairman

IMF – International Monetary Fund

CSOPNU – Civil Society Organisation for Peace in Northern Uganda

NRC – Norwegian Refugee Council

WASH – Water Sanitation and Health Programme

UN – United Nations

USAID – United States Agency for International Development

SL – Sustainable Livelihoods

DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo

CAR – Central African Republic

NDP – National Development Plan

IDMC – Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

UBOS – Uganda Bureau of Statistics

NUREP- Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme

UPE – Universal Primary Education

UNHCR – United Nations High Commission for Refugees

PEAP- Poverty Eradication Action Plan

SDIP – Social Development Sector Strategic Plan

CRS – Catholic Relief Services

DWD – Directorate of Water Department

MoH – Ministry of Health

MIS – Management Information System

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background

Uganda as a country has a scarred history in relation to conflict since it got independence in 1962. These conflicts over the years have drastically affected social indicators of development for decades. Among the many conflicts that have raged the country; the civil war led by rebel leader Joseph Kony of the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) has had far reaching consequences in the Northern Region of Uganda (Acholi Sub-region). For two decades of war there was much destruction, and the displacement of over 1.7 million people who were forced to live in squalid camps and this transformed northern Uganda into a humanitarian disaster. At the height of the conflict, over 90 per cent of the population was displaced in the northern Acholi districts of Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader, and the neighbouring districts were also affected. The conflict started way back in 1986 as a rebellion against President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) and its efforts to consolidate control over northern parts of the country. The conflict was transformed by the emergence of Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement in 1980's, and after her defeat in the late 1980's saw the emergence of Joseph Kony's LRA (Vinck and Pham 2009). This conflict is rooted in several factors including poor governance, lack of dialogue, external influence, poverty, mistrust, increased numbers of small arms and cattle rustling and Northern Uganda has been the most affected of all the regions in the country (IMF 2010). Reporting on the magnitude of the effects of the war, Patrick Vinck & Pham (2009), note that the LRA, a spiritualist rebel group with no clear political agenda, is known for its brutality, having killed and mutilated countless civilians. To fill its ranks, the LRA abducted tens of thousands of civilians, often children, to serve as porters, soldiers, or sexual and domestic servants.

In realisation of the above abuse of human rights and international pressure, the GoU in the late 1990s forced up to 90% of the civilian population of the region into Internally Displaced People's Camps (IDP). In these crowded camps, socio-cultural uprooting, alcoholism, loss of livelihoods were common and these increased people vulnerability to risks and shocks such as food shortages, diseases, death of loved ones, land degradation leading to situations of drought among others.

By July 2006 a ceasefire agreement was signed but during the negotiations to the final agreement the LRA leader Joseph Kony pressed for an amnesty for all committed crimes, which was not accepted by the other stakeholders in the negotiations. This made him to refuse to completely lay down his guns and hence he has continued fight despite being forced out of Uganda and now said to be in Central African Republic (CAR). Though Joseph Kony is absent in Uganda, his continued warfare still poses a security risk and threat to communities despite their repatriations to the villages. The shift in the dynamic of the conflict in late 2005 meant that for the first time in decades, northern Uganda enjoys physical peace – the absence of violence – permitting nearly 1.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Acholi districts to return home. (Patrick Vinck & Pham 2009)

Letting alone the security risk, many other risky situations face individuals in this fragile post conflict Acholi sub-region hence making them vulnerable;- among many others is persistent drought in the region. According to James Magezi of the Uganda Meteorological Department reporting on the drought conditions in Uganda, he says “nearly three quarters of the country [Uganda] was likely to experience abnormal rain pattern with some areas like northern Uganda and Karamoja going without rain the year 2011. He said, sunny and dry conditions characterized by higher than normal daytime temperatures would occur over the entire country during the period, and are likely to continue up to mid of the year. Although some rains are expected in march, there is likely to be insufficient amounts to support agriculture in many areas, especially in the north”(Masaba 2011).

Adding on the drought conditions, Magezi says that; “the dynamic climate change models indicate that much of the northern sector of Uganda (West Nile, Masindi, Lira, Soroti and Karamoja) is expected to experience near normal to below normal rainfall, while the southern sector (areas around Lake Victoria from Busia to Southwestern Uganda) are expected to experience near normal to above normal rainfall; the droughts he adds are also likely to lead to crop failure, causing hunger and famine in some areas”.<sup>1</sup> Cases of drought have re-occurred in the cattle corridor districts of Gulu, Apac, Lira, Moroto, Kotido, Soroti, Kumi. Severe cases were recorded in 1998, 1999, 2002 and 2005 affecting approximately 655,000 people and floods have mainly occurred in Teso District(IMF 2010)

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<sup>1</sup> Masaba, J. (4th March 2011). Water Crisis hits Thirty Six Districts in Uganda. The New Vision, Ugandas Leading Daily. Kampala, The New Vision Publications.



In addition to the drought conditions, floods have also been one of the stresses in the region that increase vulnerability. According to (Musamali 2007) reporting for the New Vision 17<sup>th</sup> October 2007, the UN Children agency, UNICEF reported that;- about 300,000 people were directly affected by the floods in 2007. It added that 100,000 children were by the end of September 2007, still unable to report back to school<sup>2</sup>. With the decline in the literacy levels in the region because of child absenteeism chances of the region falling into crisis were high.

However, the major and the immediate cause of vulnerability is food insecurity. This is specifically a result of low productivity on farms, scandalously high post-harvest losses and the lack of national granaries added to the erratic rainfalls and floods that destroy crops. According to Norbert Mao reporting in the New Vision article for 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009, a report of Rapid Food Security Assessment for Acholi and Teso sub-region from the Uganda Food Security and Agricultural Livelihood Cluster indicates that; in Gulu District [Part of Northern Uganda], the expected and harvested crop is less than 40 per cent of the normal season's harvest except for rice, pigeon peas, maize and simsim. The shortages according to Norbert Mao, were caused by the low food stocks in storage, high market prices, food aid dependency, and low acreage of cultivated land. Other factors include low crop husbandry (untimely ploughing and weeding), obnoxious weeds, hailstorms, harvesting of immature crops and bush-fires in normal situations, a season's crop failure should not lead to an emergency<sup>3</sup>.

Therefore, the post conflict Acholi sub-region (Northern Uganda) situation is prone to risky situations, shocks and stresses. With almost all the infrastructure destroyed during the civil unrest, schools and health centres closed, communication network not functioning at all. It is therefore based on such a background and a realisation that little or no research has specifically focused on vulnerability and resilience in post conflict situation in Acholi sub-region to inform policy and action that I thought it is imperative to conduct this research.

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<sup>2</sup> Musamali, G. (17th Oct 2007). 58% of Flood Victims in Uganda cannot be Reached. The New Vision, Uganda's Leading Daily. Kampala, The New Vision Publications.

<sup>3</sup> Mao, N. (27th July 2009). Famine in Northern Uganda is a Wake Up call for Everybodyibid.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

Vulnerability has been documented as a high degree of exposure to risk, shocks and stresses; and proneness to food security (Chambers 1989). Much of literature on the topic has given a lopsided view of vulnerability on physical weakness, isolation and poverty, and many programmes seek to alleviate them (Kates 1971). However, vulnerability does not only mean lack or want, but defencelessness, insecurity, and exposure to risk, shocks and stress, powerlessness which are crucial but rarely considered for direct action against it to be politically acceptable; and vulnerability therefore has remained curiously neglected in analysis and policy, perhaps because of its confusion with poverty. Yet vulnerability, and its opposite, security, stand out as recurrent concerns of poor people which professional definitions of poverty overlook (Scoones 1998).

In attempt to understand what people perceive vulnerability to mean to them and how they try to make themselves less vulnerable, I choose 16 individuals from Awach Subcounty, Gulu District who have been affected by the 20 year civil war. I purposely choose 8 males and 8 females to have a gender balance in the interviews, and an age bracket of 35 and above on the assumption that, this age group captures individuals who before the war were already adults and therefore have lived to be able to compare the conditions before the war and currently. These are individuals who, before the war had stable livelihoods, established social and kin networks but during the war, they were exposed to different shocks and stresses such as disrupted agricultural and production cycles, dependence on relief aid, congestion in IDP's to mention but a few. However, with the relative peace in the region since 2006, these individuals were resettled back to their villages from the IDPs. In their ancestral places, these individuals, strive to rebuild their livelihoods, in doing so, they are faced with a lot of shocks and stresses such as insecurity, famine, poor sanitation, drought, epidemics like cholera, and hepatitis and cattle diseases among others.

This research therefore attempts to understand individual's perceptions of what vulnerability means to them; what they are vulnerable to; what assets portfolios these individuals hold and finally understanding how they interchange or trade these asset portfolios to derive their livelihoods.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

This study explores the vulnerability and livelihoods of 16 individuals in Awach Sub-county, in Gulu District in Northern Uganda. It attempts to understand what they perceive they are vulnerable to and being vulnerable means to them; it also attempted to understand their assets and how they interchange the assets to make themselves less vulnerable through the different livelihood strategies as are discussed in chapter 8 of this study. It also attempts to understand how the government and the international community intervenes and what policy measures are in place to address individual concerns as they struggle to rebuild their livelihoods in post conflict situations.

#### **1.3.0 General objective**

The major objective of this study is to assess people's vulnerability and resilience in a post conflict situation in Awachi Sub-county, Gulu District Acholi sub-region

#### **1.3.1 Research questions**

The research questions of the study include;

- How do individuals perceive their vulnerability?
- What are the assets available to these individuals in the Acholi sub-region?
- What livelihood strategies do these individuals undertake to minimise vulnerability?

These research questions address central issues in development studies and wider academia on the understandings of vulnerability. They try to find a meaning between scholarly understanding of vulnerability and what individuals perceive of the word. Scholarly and technical understandings of vulnerability often do not reflect what individuals consider as vulnerability.

Secondly, the research questions also attempt to understand the pile of stocks of assets that individuals maintain to overcome shocks and stresses. Important to the research is understanding' how individuals interchange these assets through the different livelihood strategies to derive desired livelihood outcomes. Finally, it explores policy options and best practices during such situations for individuals, which governments and the wider international community can pursue.

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

Acholi sub-region and Awachi sub-county specifically, has suffered from the conflict in Uganda. The region was declared one of the worst humanitarian crises of our times. However from 2006 up to date, there has been relative peace in the region after the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the GoU and the LRA. The Internally Displaced People have therefore been allowed to return back to their ancestral homes. I therefore believe that a study on their vulnerability and coping strategies is important because it will help the government to implement programmes that answer the specific and immediate needs of those who have returned.

Secondly, the GoU and other Development Partners are currently implementing a mix of programmes in these districts but some are not need specific while others answer the demands of the individuals such as the NAADS programme, Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) as are discussed in chapter 4 of this study. I therefore believe that a research on people's vulnerability and coping strategies will help to high lighten the impact of such programmes and how they can be promoted or restructured to improve people's livelihoods.

I believe that, a research on vulnerability in a post conflict situation is important because, it will attempt to understand how vulnerability is perceived by different individuals in the same socio-economic setting, other than basing on academic knowledge and suppositions. Such literature can then be used to support individuals in similar situations the world over.

#### **1.5 The structure of the thesis**

The thesis is divided into nine chapters: - Chapter 1 presents the introduction; under it includes the background to the study, significance of the study, research objectives and research questions as well as the statement of the problem. Chapter 2 has theoretical underpinnings of the research, it discusses the different academic perspectives on vulnerability with much emphasis on political economy which forms the insights to understanding vulnerability and how it is produced and reproduced. I presented the Sustainable Livelihood Approach which I used as my framework of analysis but basically signalling out the vulnerability context of the framework. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology that I adopted during the research process such as the sampling methods, data collection tools and data analysis and presentation. Chapter 4 presents Uganda's country

profile, her geography, economy, population and most importantly the history of war in the country and also discusses when relative peace was achieved and the different government policies in the region. Chapter 5 discusses the study area that is Gulu District and Awachi Sub-county specifically covering the location, geography, and economy, history of conflict, people's livelihoods and the process of resettlement.

In Chapter 6, I presented the research findings on people's perceptions of vulnerability and what they are vulnerable to while in Chapter 7, I present the different findings on people's livelihood assets and the limitations therein to use those livelihood assets to achieve a meaningful life during times of stress and strains, while in Chapter 8, I present the findings on people's strategies to cope up with shocks, stress, strains and trends of life. And finally in Chapter 9 are my conclusions from the field research and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the theoretical and conceptual framework of my thesis. Vulnerability and resilience is a wide topic which has been written over by many scholars from different fields (Zafar Mohammad 2008; Wisner 2004; Pelling and Wisner 2009; Stites Elizabeth et al 2005). However, most important are two major academic inspirations of political economy and constructivism. Discussion on how political economy influences people's vulnerability is central to this research but also insights are drawn from the constructivist's view of how vulnerability is produced and maintained within societies and individuals livelihoods. Based on Ellis (1999), analysis of livelihoods as comprising of the activities, assets and the access that jointly determine the living gained by an individual or household as cited in (Rigg 2007) and DFID Sustainable Livelihood Framework identify the different asset holdings of these individuals. Being a broad framework, I specifically choose to centre on the vulnerability context which addresses shocks, stresses and trends, the livelihood assets and then the livelihood strategies because these are relevant to the research.

#### 2.1 Concepts

In this section, I discuss some of the concepts which underpin this research and these include vulnerability, resilience and livelihoods

##### 2.1.0 Vulnerability

According to FAO (2003), the analysis of vulnerability cannot be easily pinned to one definition or conceptual idea. There are numerous definitions of vulnerability in relation to the equally numerous negative outcomes that are possible. To compound this diversity, vulnerability changes also according to the different sectors it is derived from. As a result, there is no objective or holistic definition of the phenomenon as of yet. Socio-economic vulnerability, more specifically, is the result of the risk exposure of the unit of analysis (e.g. households, individuals or communities), coupled with the unit's socioeconomic characteristics and its ability to adequately respond to shocks so as to avoid declines below a certain benchmark of well-being (FAO 2003).

However, in this study, vulnerability is understood as being connected with social and economic conditions relating to people's livelihoods – conflict and war economies specifically but other aspects such as fewer resources, low caste or class, poor education, lack of savings are also considered since they influence and determine the level of an individual's vulnerability (Pasteur 2011).

With regards to the actual definition of vulnerability, though there are slight variations in terminology (e.g. the USAID approach to food security vulnerability), the core definition of vulnerability tends to converge around the idea that vulnerability is an *ex-ante* condition of uncertainty caused by exogenous and endogenous risk factors. More specifically, it is the combination of level of risk exposure and the risk itself (exogenous) with the unit's ability to mitigate the risk or cope with the shock, which depends both on the available tools as well as the unit's socio-economic characteristics (endogenous) that determines its degree of vulnerability (FAO 2003).

Looking at vulnerability from this perspective means considering aspects of an individual's deprivation from the wider community either because of war, gender, age or economic marginalisation which then incapacitates the ability to live a meaningful life by such an individual as well as the capacity of the individual in terms of the asset stock to live an average life.

According to Cain; Clover et al (2003), armed conflict and civil strife have an impact on people's livelihoods and increases their vulnerability. They note that; the most striking common factor among war-prone countries is their poverty – the poorest one-sixth of humanity endures four-fifths of the world's civil wars. This strong correlation between conflict and poverty includes issues such as deep inequality (one of the foremost causes of violent conflict), expressed in terms both of growth and the distribution of resources. Structurally, this is often related directly to the allocation and distribution of resources, including the scarcity of land and compromising of land tenure rights, because access to, or distribution of, properly managed, protected and controlled natural resources are crucial to livelihood strategies. To capture the above issues in understanding the vulnerabilities of the individuals, I used the Sustainable Livelihood Framework which is discussed later in this Chapter.

It is based on this background that the research used a political economy perspective to analyse the vulnerability of the individuals' because it is the political institutions and structures that shape and determine the level of vulnerability as well as the mechanisms in place which determine the allocation of the resources such as land that can be used to overcome situations of shocks and stresses

### **2.1.1 Resilience**

Resilience refers to patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant risk or adversary. Resilience is an inference about a person's life that requires two fundamental judgements (1) that a person is "doing okay" and (2) that there is now or has been significant risk or adversary to overcome, Masten and Coastworth (1998) as cited in (Suniya 2003). However, according to (Pasteur 2011), resilience refers to the ability of a system, community or society to resist, absorb, cope with and recover from the effects of hazards and to adapt to longer term changes in a timely and efficient manner without undermining food security or wellbeing. To others, resilience can be thought of as the capacity to endure shocks and stresses and bounce back; it is the ability of individuals or communities to ride out the difficulties that life might bring without their overall situation deteriorating (Pasteur 2011).

The concept of resilience is important to this research because it helps to analyse how individuals' cope with and adapt to situations of shocks and stresses as are presented in Chapter 8 of this study as the erosive; non erosive and national and international charity organisations strategies which in most cases are non erosive since they do not erode the resource base of the individuals.

## **2.2 Inspirations**

### **2.2.0 Political economy**

According to DFID (2009), political economy emerged to bridge the traditional concerns of politics and economics, it focuses on how power and resources are distributed and contested in different contexts, and the implications for development outcomes. It gets beneath the formal structures to reveal the underlying interests, incentives and institutions that enable or frustrate change. There is no single conceptual framework for political economy analysis, but the following *OECD-DAC definition* is useful in capturing some of the main elements:



*Political economy analysis is concerned with the interaction of political and economic processes in a society: the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time (DFID 2009).*

Political economy therefore addresses the issues of *interests and incentives* facing different groups in society (and particularly political elites), and how these generate particular policy outcomes that may encourage or hinder development; the role that *formal institutions* (e.g. *rule of law, elections*) and *informal social, political and cultural norms* play in shaping human interaction and political and economic competition. And the impact of *values and ideas*, including political ideologies, religion and cultural beliefs, on political behaviour and public policy (DFID 2009).

Therefore political economists have made a major contribution to vulnerability analysis by repeatedly underscoring the role that inequality and differential political and economic power play in increasing the vulnerability of poor and marginalized groups (Pelling 2001; Wisner 2003), as cited (McLaughlin and Dietz 2008).

In the conflict and post conflict situations, since the 1980's political economy of transforming from conflict to peace building has been predominantly conceptualised in terms of radical socioeconomic change away-away from precapitalist, statist or command economies and towards free markets open to penetration by the global capitalist system through policies enshrined in the Washington Consensus of 1989 developed by Bob Williamson (Pugh Micheal, Cooper Neil et al. 2004)

The growing awareness of the problems of humanitarian aid in situations of conflict and chronic conflict and political instability have led to the emergence of a general consensus that a political economy analysis of conflict is required in order to inform approaches to humanitarian assistance (Buchanan-Smith, 2000: 10; Leader, 2000; Duffield, 1998; Le Billon, 2000; Keen, 1994). In its simplest form, the political economy approach to chronic conflict and political instability attempts to uncover 'who gains and who loses' from the war economy and instability (Le Billon, 2000). Thus, it answers the question of 'who is doing what to whom' and 'why' in a war economy.

In this research, political economy perspective helps in understanding how inequalities are produced and reproduced among individuals and how these inequalities have exposed people to risks, shocks and stresses. It is also important in analysing the role played by politics in producing differential vulnerability among individuals (e.g. the political party to which an individual ascribes to, either the ruling or the opposition) and how these political affiliations and patronage produce differential vulnerability among individuals. The perspective is also important to my research in analysing how the wider global politics has influenced access to some of the basic needs such as provision of food rations and relief aid to certain individuals or groups that are considered vulnerable at the expense of others. Finally the perspective helps in analysing how the wider market forces have produced vulnerability through increased demand in one region making individuals to sell off the available stock of assets thus depriving them of their capacity to cope with eventualities such as drought, floods, pests and diseases.

### **2.2.1 Constructivists**

The constructivist perspective on vulnerability emphasizes the role that culture plays in shaping definitions of and exposure to risk; (Douglas and Wildavsky 1982);(Tansley and O'Riordan 1999). For example, feminist researchers employing a constructivist perspective describe how beliefs about gender structure women's access to and exclusion from certain physical, social and economic spaces. Constructivists through the arguments to include culture in analysis of vulnerability have transformed understandings of the role played by agency and culture in producing differential vulnerability among individuals and groups even when they confront seemingly identical risks. They likewise have demonstrated that so-called disaster victims "are never simply victims, but also survivors and active agents" (Fordham, 1999, p. 20). Constructivists have repeatedly underscored the critical reflexive point that vulnerability researchers do not possess a privileged vantage point (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982). Rather, they are an integral part of the everyday social interactions and experiences that can either contribute to or mitigate vulnerability.

This perspective is important in this research in that, it helps to map-out how culture has produced differential vulnerability among individuals that have been studied. Specific reference are made in cases where, women are deprived of right to own land, differential gender involvement in productive economic activities and how culture through, its institutions has produced and exposed different individuals to risks, shocks and stresses.

However, for a clear understanding of individual vulnerability and resilience, I used the Sustainable Livelihood Framework. Given the wide nature of the framework, I used the vulnerability context to understand how vulnerability is produced, the shocks and stresses that individuals are exposed to, livelihood assets which act as a stock and define an individual capacity to recover from shocks and stress and then the different livelihood strategies which are interlinked to the assets and stocks that an individual accesses and owns to produce the desired outcomes as illustrated below through an analysis on livelihoods;-

### **2.3 Livelihoods**

According to Chamber & Conway (1992), a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels as cited in (Rigg 2007)

According to Rigg (2007), there has been a tendency to view livelihoods in empirical and largely material terms: a livelihood is the way that an individual 'gets by'. A livelihood is therefore in the wider world and academia is looked at in terms of money, food, labour, employment and assets. Rigg notes that, these views obstruct wider issues such as social and cultural basis of life; the tendency to overlook the dynamisms inherent in patterns of living and their evolution over time and finally the neglect of politics and power relations. Therefore he proposes a livelihood analysis to encompass all these aspect to make it holistic. This is the effort that this research tries to make by relying on the different inspirations as discussed above.

However, before discussing livelihoods in the broad aspects of these individuals that I interviewed, I would like to position livelihoods analysis in the field of development theory and why it became apparent and had to be fragmented from the meta theories of development and all these arguments are discussed in the following paragraphs below;-

#### **2.3.0 Livelihoods and Development Theory**

The concept of livelihoods became prominent in the mid-1980s with work of Robert Chambers and the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. Chambers was critical of the top-down, 'core-periphery' direction of research and practice in

development and proposed a complete reversal of approach to offset outsiders' 'unavoidable paternalism':

*[S]tarting with the priorities and strategies of the rural poor themselves, noting that though some are 'foxes' with a varied repertoire of petty activities and others 'hedgehogs' locked into one relationship, all share the aim of a secure and decent livelihood (1983: 140).*

In this sense, focus on livelihoods can be seen as an 'anti-development' strategy. Development theory as it had evolved in the period after the Second World War until the late 1970s had always been centrally about strategies for economies at the national state level, although there was significant debate about which strategy was appropriate. However by the early 1980s, the idea of a national development strategy itself was challenged in the context of the penetration of borders by international capital that could not be controlled by states (Leys, 1996). Further, many argued that previous national development strategies failed primarily because of inadequacies of the state itself (Schafer 2002).

Chambers was not alone in perceiving a need for an entirely new approach to development. Other theorists detected a serious impasse in critical development theory by the mid-1980 and questioned the entire notion of a universal theory of development (Leys, 1996: 27). The argument followed that a new theory would perhaps arise from the 'micro' and 'meso' levels (Schuurman, 1993). The growing body of field research in development studies as well as in social and economic history in developing countries supported the idea that reality was composed of a great diversity of ways of living, complex and locally specific social relations (Schafer 2002). This growing body of research led to the development of livelihood frameworks.

### **2.3.1 Livelihood Frameworks**

As argued by Schafer (2002), the idea of a livelihoods framework as a tool for analysis is simply to capture the main elements which comprise the complex livelihoods of people at a given point in time, and ideally the trajectory and dynamics of change in livelihoods as well. The basic elements of most livelihoods frameworks are:

1. Livelihood resources: What people have, variously referred to as stocks and stores, assets, and capital (both tangible and intangible);
2. Livelihood strategies: What people do (e.g. agriculture, wage labour, migration);

3. Livelihood outcomes: What goals they are pursuing, the 'living' that results from their activities(Schafer 2002)

To this end a lot of livelihood frameworks have been developed but for the purposes of this research, I centre on the Sustainable Livelihood Framework developed by DFID and which has been applied widely to analyse livelihoods and formulate policies and programmes among rural communities in East Asia and Africa

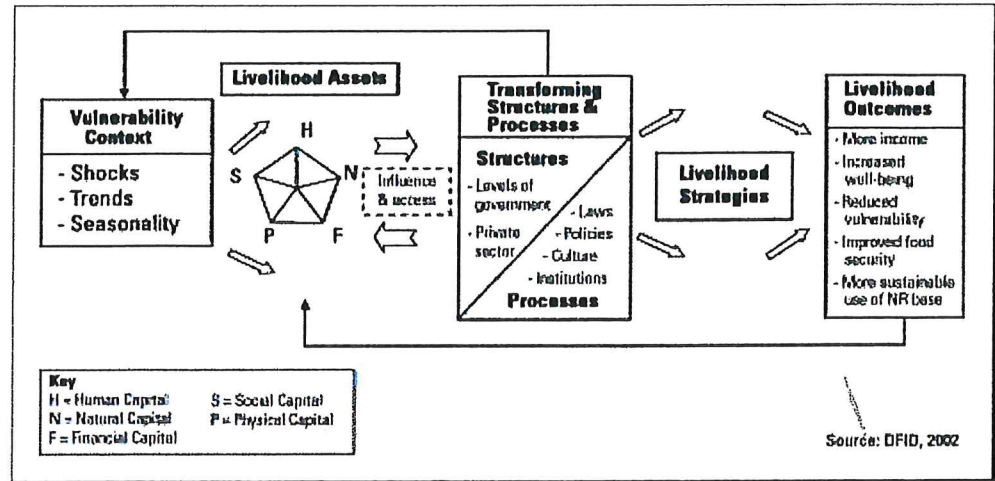
#### **2.3.1.0 Sustainable Livelihood Framework**

The concept of *Sustainable Livelihoods* (SL), first introduced in 1992 at the World Summit on Environment and Development was originally inspired by the food security approach, it is based on the belief that in order to fully understand the degree of sustainability of poor peoples' livelihoods it is no longer sufficient to simply evaluate disposable assets, both at the micro and macro level. Instead, we must analyse the dynamics and characteristics of the population's reaction strategies in various political and socio-economic contexts. In this light, peoples' activities, assets and "entitlements", their ability to make important decisions, their actual access to the opportunities and resources and more importantly, their ability to use the resources in a sustainable manner need to be considered. Vulnerability, in the context of sustainable livelihoods, is understood to be an endemic condition among the poor that severely constrains their livelihood choices and, therefore, limits their opportunities (ODI, 2000). Another fundamental idea on which the SL approach is founded is that development does not occur in a vacuum; rather, it is determined by the socio-political, cultural, ecological and economic contexts within which individuals and communities live (UNDP, 2000b).

The framework is very broad and capturing a lot of issues which makes it very abstract to holistically use it as a bases of analysis. Despite the criticism to the framework however, it is very central in understanding livelihoods. Specifically, of importance to my research in the framework, is the vulnerability context. According to the framework, a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both the material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks [vulnerability context], maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets [resilience], while not undermining the natural resource base (Scoones 1998) pg 5. The vulnerability context helps in trying to analyse; - what people have? (Assets or capitals) [Provides analysis of what people have];- strengths, opportunities, coping strategies and local

initiatives (Altarelli and Carloni 2000)] and what they do? (Livelihood activities) .The generalised sustainable livelihood framework is as presented below;-

**Figure.1 Sustainable Livelihood Framework**



*Adopted from DFID 2002*

However because of the wide and broad nature of the framework, the researcher centred on the vulnerability context which bears direct correlation to the research questions and objectives as is discussed below;-

**a) Vulnerability context**

The concept of vulnerability is used with different connotations. A fundamental difference exists between *vulnerability as defencelessness vis-à-vis a harmful event* (for example, vulnerability to drought) and *vulnerability to a specific negative outcome, following a harmful event*, for example vulnerability to food insecurity (Lovendal and Knowles 2006). However, according to (Ellis 2000), vulnerability has two dimensions as the,- external threats and the internal coping capabilities. He lists adverse climate changes, market failures and sudden disasters as the external threats while internal coping capabilities are categorised by him as assets, food stores and support from kin or the community as are discussed in the later chapters of 6, 7 and 8. To him, the most vulnerable households are those that are both highly prone to adverse external events and lacking in the assets or social support systems that could carry them through periods of adversity.

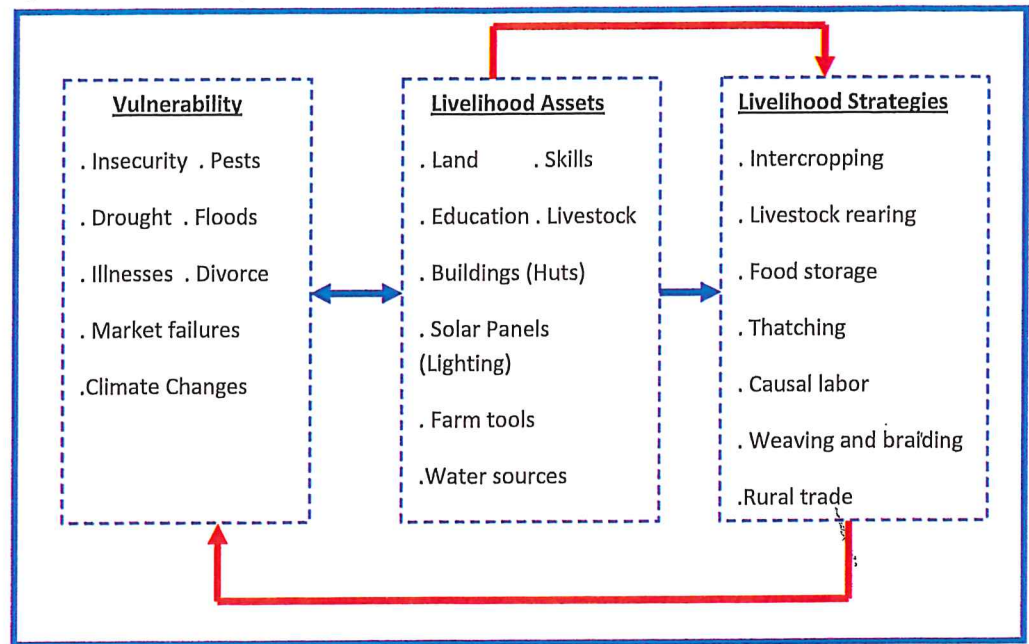
Individuals are vulnerable to many situations and circumstances depending on the political, economic, social placing and geographical location among others. Ellis (2000), mentions a wide range of risky situations that make individuals vulnerable and some of these include; natural and civil disasters, drought, floods, hurricanes, pests, civil wars, sudden shocks, illnesses, divorce, disposessions among others. The degree to which individuals are exposed and become vulnerable to such events depends on a number of factors among which include;- social obligations such as dowry, bride wealth, weddings or funerals which may result in an already precarious ability to cope with adverse events becoming even more worse. Insecurity in land tenure under rentals or crop share tenancy and insecurity of wage employment in agriculture, add to livelihood risks and increase vulnerability (Chambers 1983). Based on the above and the vulnerability context according to the DFID, I try to understand what vulnerability means to the individuals that I studied and what makes them vulnerable relative to others.

Therefore in Chapter 6 of this study, I identified the factors that cause vulnerability among individuals and categorized them into two as risky situations as proposed by Ellis (2000) and factors which make individuals vulnerable as proposed by Chambers (1983). The risky situations are more environmental and hazard oriented while the factors which make the individuals vulnerable are more personal, situational and many are human creation and therefore, the political economy framework plays an important role to analyse such factors. This analysis on vulnerability context directs attention to the contextual and systemic factors that contribute to the occurrence of poverty. It points out the need to seek changes at the organizational, community and policy levels in addition to building the assets of individuals and households as illustrated in the figure below;-<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> M. Kollmair and St. Gamper (Juli 2002), The Sustainable Livelihood Approach. Input Paper for the Integrated Training Course of NCCR North-South. Aeschhiried, Switzerland (9-20. Sept 2002). <http://www.nccr-pakistan.org>

**Figure 2 Vulnerability, Livelihood Assets and Livelihood Strategies**



*Adopted from M. Kollmair and St. Gamper (2002) modified to suit the research*

From the above figure it can be said that, the level of an individual’s vulnerability depends on the stocks of assets he or she holds as shown by the arrow between vulnerability and the assets, i.e. the more assets an individual holds the lesser the vulnerability context and easier for such an individual to recover from shocks and stresses and vice versa. Also illustrated from the above figure is the fact that the stocks of asset holdings also define the livelihood strategies that an individual will adopt and the livelihood strategies will then relate directly to vulnerability and they define the level resilience of such individuals.

**b) Livelihood assets**

I used the asset evaluation side of the framework to assess the individual assets because these determine the degree to which an individual is exposed to risks and shocks. Assets are the building blocks of a sustainable livelihood. By building assets, individuals develop their capacity to cope with the challenges they encounter and to meet their needs on a sustained basis. The framework draws attention to the variety of assets that contribute to making a sustainable livelihood and to ways in which they are interdependent. Within the five broad



categories of assets, it suggests a wide range of subcategories<sup>5</sup>. The wealth of assets vary from individual to individual as are discussed below:-

***i) Human Capital***

Represents skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives (DFID 2000). At individual level, it varies according to skill level, leadership potential, health status etc. And it appears to be a decisive factor-besides being intrinsically valuable-in order to make use of any other type of assets

***ii) Social capital***

This is taken to mean social resources upon which people draw in seeking for their livelihood outcomes, such as networks and connectedness that increase people's trust and ability to cooperate or membership in more formalised groups and their systems of rules, norms and sanctions. Access and amount of resources an individual obtains are determined through birth, age, gender or caste and therefore differs within individuals.

***iii) Natural Capital***

Refers to the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services (such as land, water, forests and rate of exchange etc) useful for desired livelihoods are derived from. Within the framework, a close a relationship exists between natural capital and vulnerability context and many of the devastating shocks for the livelihood are natural processes that destroy natural capital e.g. fires, floods, earthquakes (Chambers and Conway 1991).

***iv) Physical Capital***

Comprises the basic infrastructure and it helps produce goods and services needed to support livelihood, such as affordable energy and access to information. It is represented through the notion of opportunity costs or 'trade-offs' as a poor infrastructure can prelude education, access health services and income generation.

***v) Financial Capital***

Refers to the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives and comprises the availability of cash or equivalent that enables people adopt different livelihood strategies. Two categories are prominent:-

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<sup>5</sup> M. Kollmair and St. Gamper (Juli 2002), The Sustainable Livelihood Approach. Input Paper for the Integrated Training Course of NCCR North-South. Aeschiried, Switzerland (9-20. Sept 2002). <http://www.nccr-pakistan.org>

- Available stocks comprising cash, bank deposits or liquid assets such as livestock and jewellery, not having liabilities attached
- Regular flows of money comprising labour income, pension or other transfers from the state and remittances

Using the above categorisation of assets, I identify the different assets of the individual and these are discussed in Chapter 7 of this study, however mention should also be made here that the presentation of these assets was coined to the current political, social and cultural situation. This was because of the realisation that, the allocation and access to these assets after the post conflict situation are determined by the above factors

### **c) Livelihood strategies**

Livelihood strategies refer to the ways in individuals recover from shocks and stresses and buffer their capacities for such future events. In the framework the tools for analysing the livelihood strategies comprise the range and combination of activities and choices that people undertake in order to achieve their livelihoods. They have to be understood as dynamic processes in which people combine activities to meet their various needs at different times and on different geographical or economical levels whereas they may even differ within a household. Their direct dependence on assets status and transforming structures and processes becomes clear through the position they occupy within the framework. A changing asset status may further or hinder other strategies depending on the policies and institutions at work. It is important to recognise that people compete (for jobs, markets, natural resources etc), which makes it difficult for everyone to achieve simultaneous improvement in their livelihood. The poor are themselves a very heterogeneous group, placing different priorities in a finite and therefore highly disputed environment and therefore compromises are often indispensable (Ellis 2000).

In realisation of the above, an application of the Sustainable Livelihood Approach offers the advantage to be sensitive for such issues in a differentiated manner. Individuals' coping strategies [resilience] are not uni-dimensional, they are a sequence of survival responses to crisis or disaster (Ellis 2000). The range of means which poor rural people use for subsistence, to maintain their livelihoods, and to cope with contingencies is impressive. Some are obvious and well known:- cultivation, herding large and small stock, labouring in agriculture, off-farm economic activities, mortgaging and selling assets including future labour, begging, theft, and the splitting, dispersal and migration of families. Others which are

less visible, less well recognised and less studied; include eating less and worse, deferring medical treatment and expenditure, exploiting common property resources and share-rearing (Chambers 1989). According to de Waal (1989) study in Darfur one of the strategies adopted by the locals was eating less and rationed food. She notes that the behaviour of rural people in Darfur during the 1984–5 famine does not correspond with normal outsiders' expectations. They returned to their villages in order to cultivate, walking away from relief food to re-establish the basis of their livelihoods. This can be interpreted partly in terms of two local conditions: a relative abundance of wild foods; and a low level of past contact with government, including no previous experience with relief food supplies.

Other households (individuals) when faced with stress and shocks, resort to diversification<sup>6</sup> and some of the areas where they diversify income sources include; remittances, non-farm self employment, non-farm wage, farm wage, livestock, crop output and gathering, occupational diversification, migration and supporting social strategies of maintaining an extensive network of kinship ties. According to (Ellis 2000) pg 60, income diversification as a risk strategy is often taken to imply a trade-off between a higher total income involving greater probability of income failure and a lower total involving a smaller probability of income. While farm diversification according to (Walker and Ryan 1990), is the diversification on farm cropping systems such as mixed cropping and field fragmentation taking advantage of complementarities between crops, variations in soil types and differences in micro-climates that ensure risk spreading with little loss in total income.

Considering the human ecology perspective of resilience, one of the ways through which individuals become resilient is adaptation. Adaptation, is both a process and outcome of resilience, livelihood adaptation is the continuous process of 'changes to livelihoods which either enhance existing security and wealth or try to reduce vulnerability and poverty'. In this sense, diversification is one potential outcome of adaptation; new ways of trying to sustain the existing income portfolio are also forms of adaptation (Davis and Hossain 1997). According to (Ellis 2000), adaptation may be positive or negative: positive if it is by choice,

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<sup>6</sup> Rural livelihood diversification is defined as the process by which rural households construct increasingly diverse portfolios of activities and assets in order to survive and to improve their standards of living Ellis, F., Ed. (2000). Rural Livelihoods and Diversity in Developing Countries. New York, Oxford University Press.

reversible, and increases security. Negative adaptation results in the adaptation of more successively more vulnerable livelihoods over time (Davis 1996).

Therefore on the basis of these theoretical and conceptual backgrounds on vulnerability, I first started by looking at the country profile of Uganda and its history of war and then directed my attention to the case study in chapters 4 and Chapter 5. In chapter 6, I used the different inspirations and much emphasis was on political economy on vulnerability to understand individual perceptions on vulnerability and what they consider they are vulnerable to. For clarity, I then used Ellis (2000), grouping of understanding vulnerabilities as related to risky situations and as well as Chambers (1983), proposal to consider factors which make individuals vulnerable. While the former is more environmental, the latter is concerned with individuals situations which are situated with political, social, cultural and economic spheres of life and that is why, a consideration of political economy was important to this research.

While in Chapter 7, using the Sustainable livelihood framework, I identified my respondents stock of assets because these are the building blocks for resilience and I employed political economy because power relations, politics and economics play to influence the allocation of these assets while in Chapter 8 I used the sustainable livelihood framework on strategies to identify the different coping mechanism adapted by these individuals to come out of situations of stress and shocks of life. Specifically, I adapted Pasteur (2011) framework of categorising these strategies in erosive and non erosive and then national and international charity organisations aid programmes. My chapter 9 then concludes the study by reviewing all the perspectives on vulnerability and resilience, stock of assets, livelihood strategies and proposal for meaningful engagement with these individuals to achieve desired livelihood outcomes.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

Research methodology forms a very important part of the research process. Among others things, it discusses the methods which were employed to collect data and normally this reflect the research objectives. In this chapter I will discuss my research design which is qualitative design, study area and its selection, sampling methods, characteristics of the respondents, data collection, interpretation and write up, reflexivity and finally the limitations of the study

#### 3.1 Research design

##### 3.1.0 Choice of research design

A researcher normally has the choice to make between either doing qualitative research or quantitative research. The choice of research design determines the processes of collecting and analysing evidence that will then make it possible for the investigator to answer questions he or she has posed (Ragin and M 2011). Whereas quantitative research uses number and survey methods, qualitative research does not (Bryman 2008) and qualitative approach of research seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of local population. It is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts of particular populations (Walby 2010).

Qualitative research method enables the researcher to collect large amounts of information and in order to understand and get meaning out of the data, there is need for the coding of the information (Newman 2000). Qualitative methodology sees the social world as something that is dynamic and changing, always being constructed through the intersection of cultural, economic, social and political processes and therefore the emphasis of qualitative methodology is to understand lived experiences and to reflect on and interpret the understandings and shared meaning of people's everyday social worlds and realities, it seeks subjective understanding of social reality rather than statistical approach (Melanie Limb and Dwyer 2001)

I employed qualitative research design because the data which I collected and my research objectives and questions were targeted at collecting information relating to people's feelings,

attitudes and perceptions among others on their vulnerability and resilience which cannot be quantified.

### **3.1.1 Qualitative research**

Qualitative approach of research seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population. It is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations (Walby 2010). Qualitative research implies that the data is in form of words as opposed to numbers and are usually reduced to themes or categories and assessed subjectively (Rudestam and Newton 1992). According to (Limb M and Dwyer 2000), qualitative approaches to research explore the feelings, understandings and knowledge of others through interviews, discussions or participant observation.

I relied both on primary data which was got from the field and secondary data which gave me information about the topic in question and the available literature on it. Therefore in this chapter, I will discuss the methods that I employed to collect data, my sampling methods, issues that arose from the field and how, the data which I collected was analysed. Vulnerability is a complex concept which has varied meaning because of its multi-dimensional nature and is affected by factors such as social, political and economic conditions.

### **3.2 Pre-data collection activity**

Pre-data collection is the phase of the research process which involves among others, identification of the research problem, formulation of the possible research objectives and the research questions and then the review of the available information relating to the selected research problem. Therefore, I engaged in the following activities before the actual data collection process.

#### **3.2.0 Documentary review**

I reviewed both government and NGO documents on Awachi and vulnerability majorly for two purposes;- first to position the topic of vulnerability and resilience in the context of post conflict situation and secondly to identify the possible data collection and analysis tools. Given the nature of the research among communities that are just returning from IDP camps, this documentary review was very important as it helped to fill in gaps which could not be identified easily by the researcher in the field.

In consideration to the cross-cutting nature of vulnerability and resilience in relation to academia, I reviewed perspectives of constructivists such as (Douglas M and Wildavsky 1982), which emphasis the role of culture in shaping definitions of and exposure to risk and political economists emphasis on holistically considering the prevailing political and economic environment when analysing vulnerabilities. These perspectives were important because they helped me to identify why certain individuals are vulnerable while others are not and they helped me to position my respondent's perceptions of why they are vulnerable. I then reviewed literature on the sustainable livelihood approach singling out specifically the vulnerability context which discusses, stresses and shocks of life, people's assets and how they interchange these assets to come out of shocks and stresses of life as are discussed in Chapter 2 of this study.

### **3.2.1 Selection of the study area**

I selected the Acholi sub-region because this region of Uganda has been under a civil unrest for two decades until 2006. It was with the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CHA), by the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA, under the command of Joseph Kony) in August 2006 in Juba, South Sudan, and the continued commitment to the peace process that people who have been living in Internally Displaced Peoples Camps (IDP) in this region of Uganda, mastered the courage and confidence to return to their ancestral places.

However, despite their courage to return, it should be remembered that, there was complete breakdown in all spheres of life during the time of the civil unrest; infrastructure was destroyed, homes burnt and farmlands left to grow busy. For two decades these communities relied on relief aid from humanitarian organisations in the IDP's. The return process itself was not properly planned and was sudden to many. It is based on this background that, this area attracted my interest for the research on vulnerability and resilience in a post conflict situation.

I choose Gulu District and Awachi sub-county because, according to (UNDP 2007), comparing the different districts in Acholi sub-region of Uganda. It is in Gulu District where those who say the IDP's are safer are almost equal to those who say the transit sites are safer. This illustrates that most people still stay in the IDP's despite efforts to return them back to the ancestral places. This could either be explained by the level of insecurity or other factors.

I therefore thought it would be of meaning to find out the vulnerabilities of the returnees which impede the rest who are still in the camps to return to their ancestral places

### **3.3 Sampling**

Sampling is a very important aspect when conducting research. This arises because of the realisation that, a researcher cannot conduct a research on a whole population. Part of the population has to be chosen to represent the total population and secondly, given limitations of time and resources available to conduct a specific research, it is good enough to sample. I personally had limited time for the research, a period of two months and the financially available resources were too meagre at my disposal to cover the whole of Awachi sub-county and then get in contact with my key informants from the district headquarters in Gulu.

According to a report by Signe Allimadi (2010), reporting for the Gulu University (ENRECA Project) Demographic Surveillance Survey, Awachi has over 15.000 individuals who have returned from IDP's and this is a large population to research on given the time constraints and finances I was facing. I therefore decided to purposively choose a total of 16 respondents for this research. These are individual who live and stay in the sub-county they are people who have been living there before the war and have returned back to their ancestral places during the repatriation process when the CHA was signed. The four key informants were drawn from the Local Government and the Non-governmental organisations that operate in the region providing food aid and who are directly concerned with people's livelihoods and these four individuals were also purposively chosen given the assumption that they are concerned with people's livelihoods and as well as their vulnerabilities. Of these four key informants; two of the respondents were chosen from the local government and two from the nongovernmental organisations.

Relating to the key informants; two respondents were interviewed from the Local Government and I specifically choose to interview the area Local Council III chairman (LCIII) for the sub-county and the Community Development Officer (CDO). These were chosen because I believed that since they deal directly with the individuals that I interviewed, they could know them better but this does not rule out bias on the information that they provide. To counter check this bias, I compared their information with what the other respondents said and also relied on other sources of data available about the sub-county and returnees from other magazines and news papers.



Finally, of the remaining 2 respondents from the key informants, I got a Non-governmental Organisation (ACDI VOCA) that operates in the sub-county and has a livelihood cluster especially for the disadvantage such as the youth, elderly and those who are affected by HIV and in this organisation, I specifically interviewed the Livelihood Cluster Officer and once again on the assumption that he should be knowledge on people vulnerability in the sub-county and the other key informant was from Gulu University Research Wing (ENREKA), which operates in Awachi and is concerned with Demographic Surveillance Survey (DSS) that majorly carries out mapping of livelihoods and activities in Awachi sub county.

### **3.4 Data collection tools**

To gather the available information, I employed both secondary data and primary data before the actual fieldwork.

#### **3.4.0 Secondary sources of data**

Secondary sources of data formed one of the major sources of information for the research because little has been known about the return process and secondly because of the unwillingness of the respondents to fully answer all the questions citing security concerns. Therefore this source of information was very important to the research in my analysis as will be reflected in Chapters 6, 7 and 8

I used a lot of sources of information for the collection of secondary data. I used the Uganda Government 2002 Census and Population Report to map out the population of Gulu and Awachi. I then used other sources such as the UNDP reports on their operations and programmes in Gulu and Acholi sub-region. I also got information from the Gulu district website and relied on news paper articles from the New Vision (Uganda's Leading Daily). I read books and journals that cover the topic of vulnerability on resilience not only borrowing from the social sciences but also from psychological, biological and ecological field among others. These sources of information gave me a background to the research and coverage on the topic. However, these sources were not ultimate enough to provide the required information, given an example of Uganda Population and Census report, it was written some years back and a lot has changed over time and given the situation of Awachi and Acholi sub region, not much literature has been written because of the war situation and it was therefore very difficult to get the much needed information about the study area which necessitated the primary data collection methods as are discussed below.

### **3.4.1 Primary data collection tools**

Primary data collection involves the actual field work, it is practical. Among the many methods that I employed, the major ones included, in-depth interviews, observation and key informants' interview as discussed below;-

#### **3.4.1.0 In-depth interviews**

This method attempts to understand the world from the subject's point of view. It tries to unfold the meaning of their experiences, uncover their lived experiences prior to scientific explanation. Research interview is based on the conversation of daily life of individuals and is a professional conversation; it is an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee. An inter-view is literally an interview, which means an inter change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). An interview according to (Nichols 2000) is a mutual exploration of the issues without the researcher imposing his or her ideas and in the in-depth interview, the researcher has a prepared list of topics and a set list of questions. Prior to the interview, I formulated specific questions relating to the research objective and these guided me during the process of interviewing. This method allowed me to cover the major areas of the research relating to the individuals perceptions of vulnerability, their livelihood assets and how they interchange these livelihood assets to come out of situations of stress, shocks and trends.

During the process of the research, I first made appointments with the sixteen individuals that I was to interview and I went to the sub county headquarters where I was provided more information on such people by the Local Council III Chairman. Each day, I interviewed only one individual, this was to allow me interact with each one of them for some time. The appointments were made to avoid any interference with their daily schedules. I then visited the individuals to their respective homes and these also gave me chance to combine the interview with other methods such as the observation.

My interviews lasted for about an hour with each individual and then I allowed them to ask questions if they wished to. Through this, I gave each individual about half an hour. After the interview, I normally requested to tour the farms, see some of the assets such as the animals and any other activities and through doing this I was able to use the method of observation and cross check the information provided to me during the interview. The interviews were in a friendly way to ease the tension of perceived specific information. Because of language

barriers, I employed the services of an interpreter, for the respondents who did not speak English, and this happened to be mostly the women. I made sure the correct views of the respondents were represented through cross checking the interpretations and clarifying on themes and issues that they did not understand well. I also recorded the interview and also solicited the services of an independent individual to reinterpret those recordings and then I compared with my first interpreter. Through this I believe the views of the respondents were represented.

During the process of the interviews, most of them kept asking me what benefits will the research bring to them, and it occurred to me that from the questioning, they needed immediate assistance in two or three days. I told them that the copy of the thesis will be presented to the sub county headquarter where; the recommendations and proposals will be considered at that level. I made it explicit that, I was not in position to provide the immediate help they expected but can recommend what to be done based on the questions that I ask them and the answers they provide to me.

#### **3.4.1.1 Participant observation**

This method involves the researcher moving between and participating with individuals deliberately immersing themselves into everyday rhythms and routines, developing relationships with people who can show and tell them what is going on within the community. Then writing accounts of how these relationships developed and what was learnt from them-and observing the individuals by sitting back and watching activities which unfold in front of their eyes, recording their impressions of these activities in field notes, tallies, drawings, photographs and other forms of material evidence”(Robin and David 2005).

I got involved in participant observation especially after my interviews as I mentioned above by requesting to take a tour of the environments within which these individuals lived and besides I also got involved in participation because during the research process I stayed in the sub-county for three weeks. During this time of my stay, I was involved in fetching water with the respondents, learning their cultures, sharing experiences during causal times, playing games among others. By living within the surrounding of the individuals, I was able to see the housing and sanitation condition, health care facilities and at one time I had to go for treatment of Malaria in the near health centre and this exposure allowed me observe a lot of things based on vulnerability and how these individual try to cope up with such situations.

During the observation process, I was very keen to be unobtrusive, playing with the respondents' eating food together and sometimes taking causal walks. The methods allowed me to collect information on their assets such as the livestock, land holdings, household surrounding and water sources especially when I got involved in water collection since I was living within the surroundings of the individuals. To me it formed one of the major sources of data because I was able to compare notes of what the respondents said and what I observed.

Future more through the observation, I was able to take some photographs of different water sources available to the individuals, the farm work planting strategies, the types of houses of these individuals and the Local government efforts to avail information to the community through the community information centre. These photos backed up the research findings as are inserted in the different parts of this research.

#### **3.4.1.2 Key informants**

Through indepth interviews, I was able to interview some key informants. According to (Nichols 2000) it is often possible to collect valuable information from a few members of the community who are particularly knowledgeable about certain matters. My key informants were chosen mainly because of their knowledge about livelihood and possible vulnerabilities of individuals in the sub-county and secondly the key informants were selected because of their involvement in the daily activities and livelihoods of individuals in the sub county.

My key informants were drawn from the local government, Non-governmental Organisations directly working with the community and the individuals that I interviewed and Local University Research Organisation operating in the sub-county. I personally interviewed four key informants using unstructured interviews and these include; the Awachi Local Council III Chairman (LC III), Awachi Sub-county Community Development Officer (CDO), a Livelihood Cluster Head ACIDI VOCA a Non-governmental Organisation working in partnership with USAID to help people living with HIV/AIDS and the Lead, ENREKA (Gulu University Awachi Research Branch) that deals with research on Demographic Surveillance Survey for Awachi sub-county. The information got from these key informants was very important to understand what was actually going on during the return process, the weather trends in the sub-county, issues of land and resettlement in the sub-county among others.

#### **3.5 Respondents characteristics**

The following is the characteristics of those who were interviewed for this research

### **3.5.0 Age**

The age group for the individuals who were interviewed as mentioned earlier was 35 year and above and this age group was chosen because it was assumed that, this age group comprises people who have witnessed the pre-war situation, war situation and have after the war settled back in their ancestral places and this was the target of the research

### **3.5.1 Education**

There was no specific consideration for education in the choice of the respondents but however, during the random selection process majority of the respondents lack formal education and those who attained secondary and primary education were evenly distributed while only 2 individuals had vocational education as are presented in Table 7.2

### **3.5.2 Livelihoods**

The individuals were chosen randomly with no attachments to a specific livelihood stream but however, Awachi and Acholi sub-region being predominantly agriculturally based, these individuals are farmers' mainly growing food crops for subsistence such as corn, beans with few crops for commercial purposes such as sisal, cotton and tobacco

## **3.6 Ethical Issues of research**

In any research, there are some ethical guidelines for field researchers, in general; it is anticipated that participants should have full knowledge regarding the research purposes. That any possible physical or psychological harm they may experience should be removed altogether or severely minimised, that participants have the right to leave the study at any stage without promoting adverse effects such as loss of treatment or benefits, and that anonymity and confidentiality of the participants should be maintained at all costs with all data being de-identified and stored safely for any appropriate length of time (Grbich 2004)

The major ethical guidelines of research that I adhered to are, informed consent, confidentiality, consequences and the researcher's role (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). However, I relied on considerations for morals in place which I encountered in the field as most theoretical propositions varied with the field realities. This argument has been reinforced by writers such as (Nussbaum 1986), who argue that; "moral rules should not in themselves be seen as authoritative, but they are 'descriptive summaries of good judgement'...valid only insofar as they transmit in economical form the normative force of good concrete decisions of the wise person". I found this important because, by following what is good like sharing food in the same plate and interacting in friendly way distant me

from the feeling among the individuals that I was a researcher and therefore they consider me to be one of them and therefore I was able to get the real issues facing them and how they solve their today to today hurdles

However, to formally ensure that, I followed the ethical guides, I started by, obtaining an Introduction Letter from the Department of Geography NTNU (See appendix 2) requesting to be given the permission to conduct the research in Uganda. I was then cleared by the Gulu District Officials and given a letter of clearance by the Awachi Local Council III Chairman (See appendix 3), allowing me to conduct the research in the sub-county.

For participants in the nongovernmental and institutional scale, I sought first consent from the superiors who reviewed the objectives of my research and then allowed me to approach my target respondents in their organisations.

For the sixteen individuals that I interviewed, I first introduced myself to each of them before starting the interview and then showed them the letter of clearance from the LC III chairman, allowing me to conduct the research. This ensured that, at all times, before conducting any interview, the overall purposes of my research were communicated to the researched. And it was also important because, since 2006, from the start of the return process many organisations and individual researchers had gone in the sub-county to conduct research. Many have no clear reasons for their interviews and their objectives are normally not communicated to the researched and for this reasons many of the residents in Awachi do not normally allow to participate in any research process either for political or security reasons. After I introduced myself to respective respondents and communicated to them the purposes of my research, I then ask them if they are willing to participate in the research. Through this, I ensured that my respondents fully understood the intentions of my research and participated at free will.

The issues of confidentiality and anonymity were also adhered to. For example, throughout the process of presentation, data identifying participants was not disclosed and their real names not given, at all times and where possible, I have given figures and averages instead of consideration on individual units.

I also made sure that differentials in power between me as the researcher and the researched were minimised through ensure mixing freely with the respondents during my three weeks stay in the sub-county. I adhered to the local norms and values of the society especially in

purchase of local food stuffs, getting involved in community activities like clearing the bushes around the well and through involvement in the daily routines I totally got immersed in the community but this did not completely jeopardise my role as a researcher but instead helps me to create an atmosphere which allowed me collect the information according to the set objectives of my research.

### **3.7 Reflexivity**

According to Denzi (1997, 217-224) as cited in Limb and Dwyer (2001), reflexivity means that the researcher is concerned with the research process as well as with the data collected; he or she asks questions all along the way from creating the research statement to writing up the report. Therefore, I choose qualitative research design because it allowed for reflexivity as noted by Limb and Dwyer (2001), "qualitative methodologies are characterised by a rational construction of knowledge between researcher and the research subjects and emphasis is placed upon both developing empathy between researcher and researched as well as focusing upon the reflexivity of the research".

According to Potter (1996, 188) as cite in Limb and Dwyer (2001), reflexivity can be displayed in three ways:- a) inquiry into and discussion of decisions affecting the research process; how the setting is chosen, how access is achieved, how the researcher presents self to the participants, how data is collected; b) inquiry into and discussion of the methods used, accompanied by the concerns and questions regarding the data collected and interpretation made and finally c) inquiry into and discussion of one's biases and perspectives

I employed reflexivity in the research because during the whole of the data collection process and analysis I constantly reviewed my objectives to ensure that I do not sway away from the objectives. Right from the choice of my study area, it was specifically dictated by research topic and I achieved access to the place through the formal ways of getting cleared by the right authorities and before the actual data collection process, I pre-tested many data collection techniques until I came up with in-depth interviews and my biases and perspectives about the respondents on their educational levels were also contained by the realisation that, my interest was not how educated people were but understanding their experiences and through the hiring of interpreter and services of research assistance, I was able to get confidence in the research process

### **3.8 Data interpretation, analysis and write-up**

#### **3.8.0 Transcription**

During the process of the interviews, I carried with me a recorder, and all the interviews that I conducted were recorded. Right after the field work, I embarked on re-transcribing the data from the interviews that I recorded, this was because some of the information and interview guide were answered in Acholi, a language that I am not familiar with and though I had a translator right from the field who did translate immediately. I had to solicit the help of another interpreter who helped me to translate the interviews into English so that I could compare with the first translation. This was done to ensure that the respondent's views were not misrepresented and that the field interpreter did not provide his own views. On several occasions, at the end of the day, we would review with him some of the answers and recordings of the interview to ensure that the correct information from the respondents was translated. However, this does not rule out the fact that, my translator's interpretations of the views of the respondents totally represent what they said. However, I took caution to ensure that some degree of perfection was achieved by soliciting the services of the second interpreter since all the interviews were recorded.

#### **3.9 Limitations of the study**

During the process of data collection, I encountered the problem of language barrier, due to this I was forced to rely on an interpreter. Based on the fact that it is very hard to translate clearly and accurately what people have said, I believe, the translator might have missed up some points and some expressions that matter much to the research. However to minimise on this I decided to solicit for a second interpreter since my interviews were recorded, I therefore believe, the information presented here is a fair representation of the views of those who were interviewed.

I also faced problems in gathering some of basic facts about the respondents such as their age, income, asset holdings. Some of the individuals do not know when they were born, their monthly or annual income and their major sources of income because they do not keep such records besides the high illiteracy rates among the individuals that I interviewed. Secondly some of the agricultural products were not quantified such as crop harvest. In most cases, these are considered for domestic consumption but during stress and strains, the stock is sold to cater for such problems and such income is not recorded. However, the



information got from them was compared with the National and District statistics to ensure some degree of accuracy in the data presented.

Another major constrain of the field work was respondents demand for money for participation before they can be interviewed. This creates bias in the data collected let on making it hard for me to conduct the research during the times when I do not have money available. This situation has been created as a result of the influx of many researchers both from the academia and Non-governmental organisations working in the region. In most cases these organisations pay money for participants and therefore the general believe has been that, any researcher has to first give money before they can get participants. When I got caught up in this mess, I only however, emphasised that, they give me the correct information and let them know that I am not buying their knowledge and that any source of information is welcome to avoid them from giving me what I ask or what they want to tell me but sticking to the research objectives and questions. I also compared their data with what I observed because most of my Interviews were conducted in their homes and therefore any of the biases were minimised.

Due to the sensitivity of the topic, some of the information that I asked was not disclosed to me, especially when I interviewed the area LC III chairman on the National government participation in the resettlement process and their activities for the improvement of the people's livelihoods. He openly told me that, this was a sensitive question and he was not willing to answer it. It therefore gave me a picture that, the information got from him might be full of biases but however, I did compare his information with other sources from the University Research Organisation to ensure accuracy.

However, despite the above problems, the research process was a very good process that I enjoyed and gave me a lot of insights away from the theoretical classroom knowledge. I also came to realise that a lot of divergences exists between perceived field experience and the real field. It therefore commands a lot of adjustments and flexibility from the part of the researcher.

## CHAPTER 4

### UGANDA, HISTROY OF CONFLICT AND RECONSTRUCTION POLICIES

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter attempts to make known to the reader, the study area. It presents Uganda as a country. It's location, geography, administration system, education and most importantly the geography of civil war in the country. This is in an effort to enlighten the reader of the country and the struggles for peace and to understand the context of the study.

#### 4.1 Location of Uganda

The effort to present the reader here of the location of the country is very important because it will help the reader to understand the geographical coverage of the LRA guerrilla war. This is because of realisation that the war was not only fought in Uganda but also involved the neighbouring countries and location of Uganda as a country in the wider region and this will therefore help to understand the geo-politics involved in the LRA war

Uganda is located in East Africa and lies across the equator, about 800 kilometres inland from the Indian Ocean. It lies between 10 29' South and 40 12' North latitude, 290 34 East and 350 0' East longitude. The country is landlocked, bordered by Kenya in the East; Sudan in the North; Democratic Republic of Congo in the West; Tanzania in the South; and Rwanda in South West. It has an area of 241,038 square kilometres, of which the land area covers 197,323 square kilometres.

The LRA war involved many of these countries, Uganda is where the war was fought and currently the LRA is in the Congo in the west and Sudan government has been blamed by the Ugandan government for supporting and arming the LRA. The struggle for peace and peace negotiations were carried out in the Kenyan Capital Nairobi and final agreement on the CHA was signed in now the South Sudan Capital of Juba

#### 4.2 Geography

The presentation of the geography of Uganda is very important here because there is a general perception that because the country lies astride the equator, then it should have unimodel pattern of rainfall and drought conditions should therefore not occur. However, it will be made clear from the presentation that the country has different rainfall regimes and

different vegetation types: This changes as one advances from the equator towards the higher latitudes and this explains why Awachi located in the northern part of the country experiences drought conditions.

Uganda is a country that enjoys equatorial climate with plenty of rain and sunshine moderated by the relatively high altitude. In most parts of the country, the mean annual temperatures range from 16°C to 30°C. Nevertheless, the Northern and Eastern regions sometimes experience relatively high temperatures exceeding 30°C and the South Western region sometimes has temperatures below 16°C. The Central, Western and Eastern regions have two rainy seasons, from March to May for the first rains, and the second rains from September to November. The Northern region where the study has been conducted receives one rainy season with rains falling erratically bringing conditions of drought especially the months of May to mid July, and the period from November to March has minimal rain making it a drought prone region. Most of the country receives between 750 mm and 2100 mm annually. Uganda has loamy soils with varying proportions of sandy and clay in central, eastern and south-western parts of the country while the northern region has sandy soils. The sandy soils in the north only support annual crops such as beans, corn, finger millet, sorghum among others. During times of drought in the north, the only crop that performs well is the cassava because it is drought resistant.

In addition, it has varying vegetation with tropical rain forest vegetation in the South and savannah woodlands and semi arid vegetation in the North<sup>7</sup>.

#### **4.3 Administration**

Analysing the different administrative units within Uganda helps in understanding how power and policies are distributed in the country and most importantly it helps clearly to understand the administrative unit under which the study area exists which is in the sub-county levels and therefore policies that are enacted from the central government are played at the lower level within the sub-counties, parishes and the villages.

The country is divided into over 107 districts as of now. The districts are sub divided into lower administrative units. These are counties, sub-counties, parishes and villages headed by Local Council Chairmen (LC 1). Overtime, the numbers of districts and lower level

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<sup>7</sup> Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2002), The 2002 Uganda Housing and Population Census, Population Dynamics. October 2006, Kampala Uganda

administrative units have continuously increased with the aim of making administration and delivery of services easier. This however, had a negative element in that most of the districts do not have adequate statistical information and data on people's livelihoods as was found out by this research. In addition, Uganda has a Local Governments System at different levels. These are LC V (District); LC IV (County / Municipality); LC III (Sub – County); LC II (Parish); and LC I (Village). The role of the local governments is to implement and monitor government programmes at the respective levels and administering justice.

#### **4.4 Culture and Religion**

Culture and religion play an important role in the lives of people; they define the norms of the society, the values that judge good from bad within a society and how a society is organised. Presentation of the culture and religion will also help to understand in the later chapters of 6, 7 and 8 how vulnerabilities within the communities is produced and reproduced, allocation of resources such as through the patrilineal family tree and administration of justice within the society through the chiefs and the clan leaders.

Therefore Uganda's population is made up of different ethnic groups with varying customs and norms. These play a major role in shaping the behaviours and ways of life of the people in the country as well as influencing how people manoeuvre during times of hardship. Some of the traditional values have changed due to the integration of the people as a result of migration and/or intermarriages. The cultural groupings, such as, Baganda, Basoga, Batoro, Banyoro, Itesoit etc are headed by traditional kings or chiefs who are not politically elected but have an indirect role in community governance and moral build up.

The Northern region is composed of Acholi and other tribes such as the Alur, Langi, Lugbara and this region being prone to drought, they practice agro pastoralism. These northern tribes are ruled by traditional chiefs who have judicial duties of settling conflicts and are believed to possess spiritual powers to bring rain and mediate between the people and the spiritual world (UBOS 2002).

#### **4.5 Education**

Education whether formal or informal is a very important asset in society, it helps to teach the young survival techniques, helps in eradicating poverty among societies and it is as well very important in understanding differential vulnerability among communities.

Uganda's education system is both formal and informal. Under the formal system, the four – tier educational model is followed i.e. seven years of primary education, four years of ordinary level secondary education, two years of advanced level secondary education and the tertiary level of education. Each level is nationally examined and certificates are awarded. University education is offered by both public and private institutions. In addition to formal education there exists informal education to serve all those persons who did not receive formal education. Under the informal system, a range of practical/hands-on skills are imparted to those who have not gone through or only partially gone through the formal system of education. Under this system of education, proven best practices are passed on to the young and elderly alike such as craftsmanship, carpentry, building and farming so that they can be able to meaningfully engage in societal activities (UBOS 2002).

However, in northern Uganda, the civil war affected the education system greatly and many of the children born during this inter war period did not have the opportunity to study, as more of this is discussed in the sub sections following this in the part of effects of the war.

#### **4.6 Macro economy**

I present the economy to the reader because vulnerability is related to the activities and actions of individual's everyday lives which are played in the economic sphere and this could be in the agricultural sector, trade and industry, local craft among others. Secondly an individual's choice of livelihood strategy is also closely related to the available economic activities and resources.

The economy of Uganda is primarily based on the agricultural sector, with over 70 percent of working population being employed by the sector. Agricultural exports account for over 45 percent of the total export earnings with coffee, tobacco and fish continuing to be the main export commodities that bring in foreign exchange. In the last decade, the telecommunication sector has been the fastest growing sector of the economy, and this is due to the expansion programs and increase in coverage by the major telecommunication companies in the country which have led to increased numbers of subscribers and providers of the services (UBOS 2002).

## **4.7 Civil wars and conflict in Uganda**

### **4.7.0 History of civil wars and conflict**

The years following after when Uganda got independence in 1962 from her former colonial master the British, have never been peaceful with constant wars and rebel activities and rigged elections until 1986 when the National Resistance Movement (NRM), took over power. Prior to the year 1986, it should be noted that, Uganda was to larger extent governed by the Northern tribes, (Langi, one of the Acholi Speaking Clans under the leadership Dr. Milton Obote and the Kakwa, a Nilo Hamite tribe under the Leadership of Idi Amin Dada). When the NRM took over, the Acholi waged guerrilla war fare against the administration of NRM (Vinck Patrick and Phoung 2009).

The conflict between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) began shortly after the Ugandan rebel National Resistance Army (NRA) led by current President Yoweri Museveni seized power in 1986. Defeated soldiers of the deposed government fled to their birthplaces in northern Uganda and in many cases continued to fight the new government; others sought refuge across the border in Sudan. The Acholi leader Alice Lakwena created the Holy Spirit Movement and it fought the NRA's abuses against northerners during this campaign and in its aftermath. She combined Acholi and Christian doctrine to inspire her followers (Marino 2008).

According to Marion (2008), the Holy Spirit Movement advanced south until it was routed by the NRA just one hundred kilometers from Kampala in late 1986. Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army followed quickly on the heels of her movement, incorporating her Holy Spirit followers as well as remnants of the defeated government army. Joseph Kony claimed to have inherited the spirits that possessed Alice Lakwena, who went into exile in Kenya where she remained and died. In the earlier years of the rebellion, Joseph Kony got support from the Acholi people because of the unfair treatment by the administration of NRM where there were cases of arrests, brutal murder of civilians. He was supported by the Khartoum (Sudan) government under the leadership of Omar Bashir.

In the late 1980s the LRA had some popular backing, but its support waned in the early 1990s as it responded to the government's formation of local militias and displaced persons camps by waging a campaign of abducting, killing and mutilating civilians, cutting off their lips,

ears, noses, hands and feet. It considered anyone living in the camps (created in the mid-1990s) a government ally or supporter. This led the UPDF to issue on October 2, 2002 order, transmitted widely over radio only, giving people living in the “abandoned villages” of the three Acholi districts only forty-eight hours to move to government camps (Internally Displaced People’s Camps) (Marino 2008).

In the IDPs the Acholi witnessed worse crimes both from the government and the LRA alike, their livelihoods and survival basis were all destroyed and they were forced to rely on relief aid from the government and other humanitarian organisation until 2006 when CHA was signed and these individuals were allowed to go back to their ancestral homes

#### **4.7.1 Causes of the war**

The long wars fought in Uganda have their primary cause in struggle for power and discontent in the governance. Immediately after the NRM took over power, they failed to organise dialogue with the defeated northern tribes and the lack of dialogue coupled with external support from the then Government of Sudan under Omar Bashir helped fuel the war further.

However, other factors also aggravated the magnitude of the war, some of them among other are the failure to incorporate the defeated parties into the newly formed government, increasing poverty in northern Uganda as a result of the wars which have been fought, increased numbers of small arms made available from Sudan and the cattle rustling which increased vulnerability and instability in the region (IDMC 2012)

#### **4.7.2 Displacement and settlement in Camps**

Large-scale displacement in northern Uganda resulted both from LRA attacks on civilians and government strategy started in 1996, to forcibly relocate civilians into IDP camps, officially described as “protected villages”. By the end of 2005, a total of about 1.8 million people had been moved into IDP camps (UNHCR, 2012). An unknown number fled to urban areas in other parts of Uganda. Clashes between a variety of rebel movements and the government, as well as intertribal violence and general banditry, also caused displacement in the 1990s and early 2000s in other regions of Uganda. No significant conflict induced displacement has been reported since 2006. (GoU 2011; Uganda Cluster 2010) as cited in (IDMC 2012)

#### 4.7.3 Impacts of the conflict

The war in northern Uganda has had far reaching impacts on the population; it led to massive displacement of people, social disintegration, and loss of lives and destruction of property. The war in Northern Uganda has also increased disability of women, men and children in this region. As part of the strategies to maintain their forces, the LRA resorted to abducting school children to boost their numbers and there were cases of killings/maiming/Disabling.

The costs of the conflict in the Acholi region has been highest in terms of human lives lost, and able bodies maimed, mutilated and disabled as compared to destruction of property and social disintegration. Some well known cases are the following:- (i) Atiak massacre of April, 1995 where over 300 civilians including 43 students and 5 teachers of Atiak Technical school perished in the hands of LRA forces. (ii) Killing of GPTC students on 29th July, 1996 when 3 students and a baby minder were killed by LRA fighters, the war has also increased the number of orphans/destitute; the killing of adult members of the family (parents) have left many widows and orphans (Ochol 2012). The extended family roles of adults has been over stretched and overwhelmed given that the AIDS epidemic has also taken its toll. So far 12,752 orphans have been recorded and at the moment not enough provisions for education can be made for all the orphans except under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme and destruction of schools and turning them as camping compounds<sup>8</sup>

Apart from the above, a population of almost 2 million people has been in the 200 camps where they lived in abominable conditions, defined by staggering levels of squalor, disease and death, humiliation and despair, appalling sanitation and hygiene, and massive overcrowding and malnutrition. There has also been death of culture and values systems. Previously Acholi society has been renowned for its deep-rooted and rich culture, values system and family structure -- all these have been destroyed under the living conditions imposed and prevailing over the last 10 years in the camps. This loss is colossal and virtually irreparable; it signals the death of a people and their civilization, and these are coupled with rampant rape and sexual abuse and finally and most important to this research is the loss of livelihoods<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> George Ochol - Onono - DEO - Gulu District and Augustus A. Oryem – Principal –Gulu PTC: The Effects of the War in Northern Uganda on Education in Gulu District.

<http://www.km-net.org.uk/conferences/KM98/deo.htm>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ugandapeacefoundation.org/content/view/7/>.



Decades of war have substantially eroded the traditional Acholi commitment and capacity to care for vulnerable and elderly family members. With many additional burdens, especially tilling new land to re-establish livelihoods, many returnee families cannot offer shelter. Today the majority of the 30,000 IDPs remaining in camps - most of which have been officially closed - either cannot manage the return process on their own (due to their age, illness or disability) or have no land to go back to (UNHCR, December 2011; Government of Uganda, 26 December 2011).

#### **4.8 Uganda government frameworks in post conflict Northern Uganda**

##### **4.8.0 Uganda National Policy on IDPs**

Uganda's National Policy for IDPs was adopted in 2004, following a visit by Francis Deng, former Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs. It draws on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and commits the government to protect its citizens against arbitrary displacement, guarantee their rights during displacement and promote durable solutions by facilitating voluntary return, resettlement, integration and re-integration.

According to (Miller 2007) in a report by Brookings Institute on Uganda's IDP Policy, he says 90% of the population of northern Uganda have been uprooted as a result of conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the government. Considerable additional displacement has been caused by armed cattle raiders from the north eastern Karamoja region. The majority of IDPs have been living in squalid camps—some for 10 years since they were forced to stay in IDPs from 1997 up to 2006—where they were vulnerable to human rights abuse, disease and deprivation.

In response to the growing risk associated in the IDPs and returnees policy among others the government was forced to help help in the formation of an inter-agency forum for peace building and conflict resolution; standardisation of information and humanitarian issues; settlement of Internally Displaced persons in Camps during the war and their resettlement after the peace process; there was also the integration of disaster management in National, Local Government Plans and finally the establishment of seven regional disaster coordination offices (IMF 2010). However, prior to the formulation of the above policy, there were other efforts and programmes implemented as presented below;

#### **4.8.2 Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP)**

Since 1997, the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) has been the main framework guiding national budgeting and planning processes in Uganda as a whole with the purpose to eradicate poverty, defined as low incomes, limited human development and powerlessness. Over the ten years of the PEAP public policy has prioritized economic stability and increased service provision. The recognition that security is a precondition for achieving all PEAP goals and that persistent insecurity has been the underlying factor of widening inequality and increased poverty in the North and East, led to a stronger GoU focus on ending the conflict in the North, addressing patterns of cattle rustling in the East, and improving the living conditions and reintegration support for the displaced through the development of a specific GoU recovery plan and a special programme for Karamoja (UNPRAP 2009).

#### **4.8.3 National Development Plan (NDP) 2009-2014**

In succession to the PEAP, the Government developed a new National Development Plan (NDP) 2009-2014 with a focus on 'growth, employment and prosperity for all'. The NDP is expected to pursue six strategic objectives: (1) uplift household standards of living; (2) enhance the quality and availability of gainful employment; (3) improve social, economic and trade infrastructure nationwide; (4) develop efficient, innovative and internationally competitive industries; (5) develop and optimally exploit the national resource base and ensure environmental and economic sustainability; and 6) strengthen good governance and improve human security (UNPRAP 2009).

#### **4.8.4 Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme (NUREP)**

Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme (NURP-1), which began in 1992 and lasted for six years, was implemented in a top-down fashion by central government and did not connect development to peace-building or psycho-social support for war affected communities. Additionally, the initial NURPI budget was around USD 600 million, but only USD 93.6 million was actually spent. In response to some of these shortcomings, NURP-1 was reorganised as NURP-II in 1999 with the stated intention of incorporating a more bottom-up, demand-responsive approach. The most significant initiative of NURP-II was the World Bank-funded Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), which provides grants directly to community groups that apply with project ideas of their own design. Eighteen months passed before NUSAF recruited a technical staff and the first project disbursements were not made until 2004. At the time of writing, NUSAF has funded 9,065 of the 69,000 proposals received, translating into a total annual expenditure of about USD 100 million. However,

reports of corruption call into question how much of this funding is actually reaching project beneficiaries, with at least twenty people having been charged with corruption while implementing NUSAF projects. The shortcomings of these previous efforts must be recognised in order to help ensure that they are not repeated in the PRDP (Marino 2008)

#### **4.8.5 PRDP (Post Recovery and Development Plan**

On October 15, 2007 the Government of Uganda (GoU) launched the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) to help greater Northern Uganda transition from war to peace. The Government of Uganda has formulated a Comprehensive Development Framework, the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP), as a strategy to eradicate poverty and improve the welfare of the populace in Northern Uganda.

Northern Uganda has consistently fallen behind the rest of the country within the realm of human development. For example, access to basic services such as water and sanitation, as well as health facilities is poor by national standards (GoU 2007). Among many others policies under the framework include the following:-

- Support to ongoing political dialogue and existing commitments;
- Conflict, growth and prosperity: an extraordinary effort to reverse decline in welfare and growth by achieving peace and stability;
- Organising framework: adapted to the conflict contexts in the North which will ensure better coordination, supervision and monitoring of ongoing interventions;
- Political, Security and Development Links: by adopting a conflict framework it is expected that socio-economic investments will be better linked to changes in security approaches;
- Mobilising of resources to address gaps: analysis of current international and national interventions suggests that there are gaps in responses to the conflict.

The overall goal of the PRDP is to consolidate peace and security and lay foundation for recovery and development. This is to be achieved through four core strategic objectives that are mutually reinforcing, Consolidation of state authority; Rebuilding and empowering communities, Revitalization of the economy and finally Peace building and reconciliation

The most important aspect of the PRDP is the Livelihood support and social protection, under the Uganda Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Vulnerability is defined under this in its Social Development Sector Strategic Investment Plan (SDIP) and identifies

the categories of the Communities that are vulnerable in Northern Uganda. Vulnerability according to SDIP is 'the condition of people being at risk of becoming poor, or of other misfortunes such as violence or natural hazard' For the purpose of the PRDP the vulnerable categories of people targeted in Northern Uganda includes orphans, the widowed, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and the IDPs.

Vulnerability in the PRDP is primarily defined in line with conflict mapping. In the North West and North East sub-regions, all the categories that are specified above apply. In the sub-region, because of the great intensity in displacement, IDPs form the core target group among the vulnerable categories. Similarly, because of the spill over effects from the North Central and people displaced by cattle rustling from Karamoja, the core target group is the IDPs. Yet, it should be noted that 'weighting' of vulnerability (to determine %ages of target populations for costing purposes) has included poverty indicators where a large %age of the district population is below the poverty line – and so vulnerability in certain districts includes a %age of the 'poorest-of-the-poor'(GoU 2007).

#### **4.9 Uganda Government approaches in conflict and post conflict situation**

##### **4.9.0 National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS)**

According to GoU (2007) paper, the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) program started in 2001 on a pilot basis in 24 sub-counties, with support from the World Bank and other donor agencies. By 2009, the program had reached national coverage, including the Northern region. NAADS aimed to fundamentally reform the agricultural extension system in the country by introducing a system of contracting out the provision of extension services to private extension providers or NGOs. Originally, the program did not provide agricultural inputs, but this design was changed in 2005. NAADS now also provides agricultural inputs, using the procurement mechanism that was originally developed to contract the service providers.

##### **4.9.1 Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF)**

NUSAF is a community-driven development program for Northern Uganda financed by the World Bank. The research focused on the implementation mechanisms used in the first phase of the project (NUSAF I), since the second phase project (NUSAF II) had not been implemented at the time when the research was conducted. NUSAF I had a total volume of US\$100 million. It was originally designed to operate in 18 districts, some of which were

divided, resulting in a total number of 25 districts. By the end of the project, more than one million households in Northern Uganda were reported to have participated in some form in the project (World Bank 2009a) as cited in (Birner Regina, Cohen Marc et al. 2011).

NUSAF I had three components: (1) Community Development Initiatives; (2) Vulnerable Groups Support; and (3) Community Reconciliation and Conflict Management. The project followed a typical community-driven approach, in which community groups decide on the activities for which they want to receive funding. The first project component focused on community-based infrastructure, such as school buildings or water facilities. Community groups could access agricultural assets under project components (2) and (3). Agricultural assets were apparently high in demand. According to the Implementation Completion and Results Report, 32 percent of the funding for NUSAF I went to the agricultural sector, even though the original target in the Project Appraisal Document was only 10 percent (World Bank 2009a: ii) cited in (Birner Regina, Cohen Marc et al. 2011).

#### **4.9.2 Caritas Seed Fair Program – A voucher-based approach**

The Caritas organization of the Gulu Archdiocese in Northern Uganda started its Seed Fair program in 2000 in partnership with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the international relief and development agency of the US Catholic Bishops, under an agricultural project funded by USAID. Caritas then continued this approach in partnership with European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department and Food and Agriculture Organization. Under the Seed Fair program, the implementing agency (in this case Caritas) issues vouchers to the beneficiaries, who can then use the vouchers to buy seeds at a local seed fair that is specifically organized for this purpose. The sellers of the seeds then redeem the vouchers with the implementing agency. Caritas has used this approach in more than 60 IDP camps in Acholi sub-region.

**Table 1: Showing the Northern Uganda Sub-region Performance in welfare**

**Northern Uganda welfare indices**

Most welfare indices are poor in the North largely because of the presence of conflict and weak state institutions.

- **Income poverty:** income poverty has not declined as compared to other regions of the country. The proportion of poor people who are unable to meet their basic needs declined modestly from 72% in 1992 to 60% in 1997 and has since stayed high at 64% in 2002.
- **Literacy:** there are wide regional disparities in literacy rates: the central region - 80 %; western region -74 %; eastern region - 63 %; and Northern region - 56 %. Gender disparities also exist: males - 72 % and females - 42 %.
- **Primary education:** the majority of districts are lagging behind in terms of pupils' ability to complete primary education and service provision is the worst in the Karamoja sub-region.
- **Water and sanitation:** based on the 2004 Directorate of Water Department (DWD) Management Information System (MIS), Kotido, Pader, Yumbe have an estimated coverage of 20% - 40% of clean water supplies while the majority of the other districts have an estimated coverage of 40% - 60% which is close to the national average.
- **Health:** infant, child and maternal mortality remain high nationally having increased between 1995 and 2000. Disaggregated by region, the mortality rates were much worse off in the North. The rates for Gulu, Kitgum, Pader are Child Mortality Rates (CMR) of 1.54/10000 and Under 5 Mortality Rates 3.18/10000 (July 2005 MoH) and CMR for Karamoja is 3.9/10,000 (MoH August 2004). One of the factors affecting poor health and income indicators is the increase in female fertility rates
- **HIV/AIDS:** although Uganda has seen HIV prevalence fall from an average of 18% in 1992 to 6.4% in 2005, HIV/AIDS prevalence in conflict-affected areas of Northern Uganda is still high: North central 8.2%; North east 3.5%; North west 2.3%. Prevalence among women is higher than men, 9% and 7.1%, respectively in North central, 3.6 respectively in North East, and 2.7% and 1.9% respectively in North west.

*Northern Uganda, Welfare Indices; Adapted from Peace Recovery and Development Plan(GoU 2007)*

## CHAPTER 5

### GULU DISTRICT (AWACHI SUB-COUNTY)

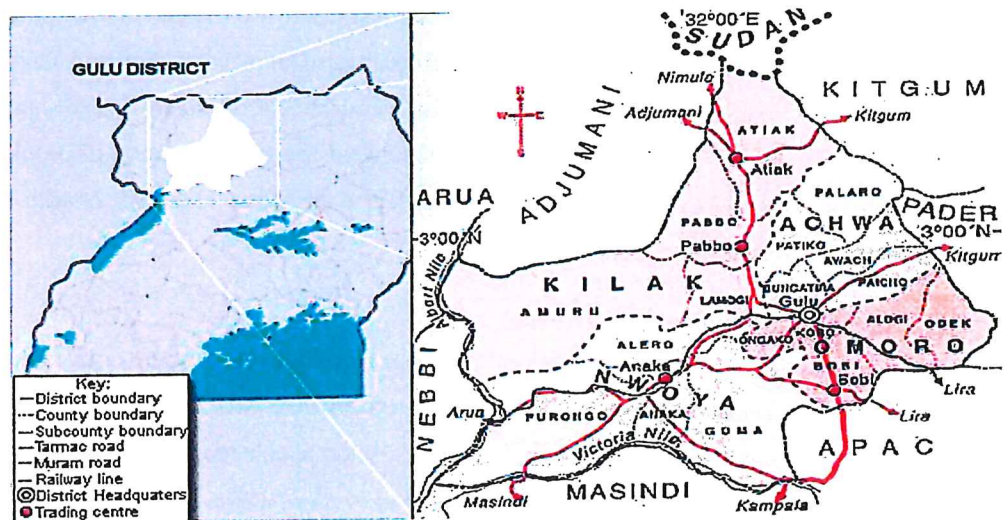
#### 5.0 Introduction

This Chapter intends to introduce the reader to the situation in Gulu District where the research was conducted and Awachi sub-county in particular. Among other things, the major themes in this chapter will include locating Gulu, giving insights into the Acholi People's lives because this will influence their vulnerabilities and how they cope with them, the economy, the period before the war, the war situation, impacts of the war and the return.

#### 5.1 Location and Geography

Gulu District is located in the central part of the Northern Region of Uganda and comprises 3 counties, 15 sub-counties and 1 municipal council. It has a population of 374,700. The district is in Northern Uganda. Gulu District is bordered by Lamwo District to the north, Pader District to the east, Oyam District to the south, Nwoya District to the southwest and Amuru District to the west. The district headquarters is at Gulu town which is located approximately 340 kilometres (210 mi), by road, north of Uganda's capital city, Kampala.

Figure 3: Location of Gulu District and Awachi Sub-county



Adopted from:- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulu\\_District](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulu_District)

Gulu district is accessible by four roads – Kampala-Gulu-Adjumani road which is paved to Gulu Town and graded to Adjumani; Karuma- Arua/Democratic Republic of Congo which is graded and in poor to fair condition; Gulu-Pader road is ungraded and in poor to fair condition. Gulu Town is 350km North of Kampala and approximately 4 hours by car.

### **5.2 Awachi Sub-county**

According to Signe Allimadi, 31/08/2010, reporting for the ENRECA, DSS survey<sup>10</sup>, has a total population of 15.000 individual. According to the report the data show that more than 50% of the population are young people below the age of 20 years, which represents its own sets of strategic needs, challenges and opportunities in respect to improving human security in a post-conflict situation

### **5.2 Economy**

The major economic activity in the sub-county is agriculture and the most common crops grown are groundnuts, simsim, corn, beans, finger millet, sorghum and these are for domestic consumption however, some are also sold in the local markets to get extra money. Commercial agriculture is practiced mainly through the planting of cotton, sisal and tobacco. Trade in groceries and produce is also common among the community.

### **5.3 Administration**

Gulu District is one of the seven districts that constitute the Acholi sub-region, the historical homeland of the Acholi ethnic group, also known as Acholiland. Gulu District consists of two counties: Achwa and Omoro. The counties are further divided into sub-counties which are further split into parishes and villages. The real population of people in Gulu District is not known, but, it is estimated that, there are around 298.500. Awachi sub-county is located in Achwa County.

### **5.4 The Acholi People**

Currently, the people of Northern Uganda have not only been forced to abandon their land and have lost most of their livestock; their social institutions are also endangered, if not diminished. Prior to the war, the Acholi people were organised in chiefdoms. A chief, called *Rwot*, headed each chiefdom. The *Rwot* was the *won lobo*, the 'father of the land' in its territorial aspect, co-existing with the *won ngom*, the 'father of the soil'. The meaning of the 'soil' is here first and foremost as a source of food, but connected to it is also a series of rites,

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<sup>10</sup> Signe Allimadi, ENRECA, Demographic Surveillance Survey



both concerning passage and healing (Girling and Frank 1996). The *Rwot* and *Ngom*, therefore, had important social duties. They were responsible for the welfare of people and nature, for the fertility of the land and, above all, for rain. Together they formed a ritual wholeness. They guaranteed the fertility and well-being of their area, and in doing so they also purified the chiefdom of witchcraft and sorcery.

This took place within the institution of what in Acholi language is known as the *jok*. This concept can be translated as spirit, force, or power. It is neither solely religious nor political, but rather incorporates both. In traditional Acholi belief, the *jok* can take possession of people, animals, and things, and the various *jogi* (plural) live in the wilderness, near rivers, lakes and on mountains and hills. The shrine of the chiefdom's *jogi* was, therefore, the ritual centre of the chiefdom. Here the *won ngom* performed sacrifices and offered prayers, watching over the moral order of the community. Clans also had a person in the role of *tipu*, who watched over the moral order of these groups of patrilineal descent. The *tipu* also had its shrines in the wilderness. These two institutions were very much the foundation and essence of Acholi society. They ordered and brought meaning to life and death (Behrend and Heike 1999). During the long period of civil war, these shrines have been off-limits to their respective populations, a circumstance which has both prevented religious practices and undermined the position of those who gained authority from mastering these institutions – namely the traditional leaders, the *rwot* and in particular the *won ngom*.

This setup of institution in the Acholiland guaranteed the wellbeing of the society and through it morals were passed. Good practices were also encouraged and justice was therefore administered. However, during the civil war, this institution completely collapsed and many who have returned have lost hope in it altogether.

## **5.5 Livelihoods, Population and Displacement**

### **5.5.0 Acholi livelihood before the war**

Prior to the insurgency Acholiland was characterized by highly diversified farming systems (Girling and Frank 1996). Households produced a wide variety of products and services with virtually all needs met by these products. The Acholi were agropastoralists with their wealth based in their cattle. Animal husbandry had plummeted in the region, however, due to cattle raiding in the 1980's and the continued insurgency. Traditional farming methods dominated Acholi up to the 1980's, but ox and tractor use were strong practices in certain parts of Gulu such as Aswa and Omoro sub-counties. Cash crops such as tobacco and cotton were also

commonly planted by the Acholi. Agricultural duties were done as a labor exchange on communal level. Division of labor was strong with men's duties focusing on greater decision making, hunting, land clearing, larger-scale marketing, and commercial transport of items. Women worked largely in the remaining agricultural duties, in addition to food processing, storage and preparation (Girling and Frank 1996).

In the pre-war situation, the population was predominantly rural, and farming was the primary source of livelihood. There is abundant fertile land in the region, and substantial markets for local produce in Gulu, the region's main city, and increasingly in Juba, the capital city of South Sudan (Birner Regina, Cohen Marc et al. 2011). However, this trade with Juba in the after war period has altered the supply of food in the region leading to situation of hunger and food shortages amongst the households

#### **5.5.1 Impact of the war on people's lives and livelihoods**

The long period of conflict in Northern Uganda, beginning in the mid-1980s, led to the displacement of virtually the entire local population. Some households were displaced due to fighting between the Ugandan People's Defense Forces and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and direct attacks on civilians who became internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a result of the government's 2002 relocation order. Improved security since 2006 has encouraged spontaneous return by IDPs from domicile camps to satellite camps closer to their locations of origin, as well as the reconstruction of homesteads in those locations (Martin, Petty, and Acridi 2009). Two decades of war have caused overall development to lag well behind the rest of Uganda (Zhang 2004). However, as the security situation continues to improve, it is widely believed that agriculture will lead local economic recovery (Bidwell et al. 2008) as cited in (Birner Regina, Cohen Marc et al. 2011).

#### **5.6 Return to the villages**

The signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement by Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army in August 2006 marked the beginning of freedom of movement by both the IDPs and humanitarian actors operating in the district. Some IDPs started relocating to transit sites in search of more cultivable land, while very few went straight home. Official voluntary return in the district was declared on 10th November 2006 after a thorough security analysis by Government and other stakeholders.

At the peak of displacement in 1995, Gulu hosted approximately 500,000 IDPs in 65 Gazetted IDP camps. When the present day Amuru district was carved out of Gulu in 2006 only 31 camps remained in Gulu with 320,232 IDPs. In November 2006, Gulu District declared and supported the voluntary return process of IDPs initially to decongestion/return sites. In 2007, this resulted in a shift in humanitarian programming with emphasis on recovery activities within the framework of the parish approach guided by the district authorities. By March 2009, nearly 80% of the IDPs had moved out of the original camps either to return sites within parishes or directly to villages of origin. The camp phase out process was declared by the DDMC and a committee. DCPC formed with mandates to assess the camps and return status with recommendations to the DDMC for either decommissioning or other appropriate course of action (DDMC June 2008).

Throughout conflict-affected northern Uganda, there has been a significant improvement in security over the past two years, prompting large-scale movement of the internally displaced population out of the camps. As of February 2009, only 23 percent of the 1.8 million people displaced at the start of 2006 remained in camps across the region, with 61 percent of former IDPs returned to their villages of origin and approximately 16 percent living close to home in transit areas. With the support of the international community, the GoU has developed a national policy on durable solutions for internally displaced persons, which recognizes three alternatives for the end to displacement: 1) voluntary return to place of habitual residence; 2) voluntary relocation in another part of the country; and 3) local integration in areas in which IDPs took refuge (UNPRAP 2009).

In the *Acholi sub-region*, where the impact of the LRA has been of the longest duration, the population movement has been uneven across the districts but is proceeding. Agencies and the Government are taking steps to restore basic services and improve infrastructure although, overall, such services remain out of reach for residents in the majority of return areas. In particular, extremely poor sanitation throughout return areas has exposed the population to epidemiological hazards (UNPRAP 2009).

## CHAPTER 6

### PERCEPTIONS/CAUSES OF VULNERABILITY

#### 6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the different understandings of what causes vulnerability and what vulnerability means to the individuals who were interviewed. Based on Ellis (2000); and Chambers (1983) as discussed in Chapter 2, I will identify the risky situations as proposed by the former that cause vulnerability and considering factors which make individuals vulnerable as proposed by the latter to form my categorisations. The basis of analysing these factors will be political economy and thus consideration will be made of the political and economic environment within which these individuals are exposed to as well as looking at the constructivist point of view of looking at how culture of the Acholi has also helped to produce and reproduce vulnerability.

#### 6.2 Risky situations

In analysing vulnerability, Frank Ellis (2000), proposes that, vulnerability is as a result of exposure to risky situations and some of these include food insecurity, drought, diseases and health risks and poor sanitation as are presented below:-

##### *Food insecurity*

Food shortages have been a major cause of fear and vulnerability. In addition to exposure to violence and lack of security, displacement greatly affected the population's livelihood and social situations through food insecurity. According to Candia (2009) reporting for the new Vision on food insecurity in Uganda and Northern Uganda, he states that in 2005, it was estimated that 85 per cent of all households in the IDP camps were dependent on food aid. This was then aggravated by the pressure from the government to return to the villages however the fear was that the individuals have long depended on food aid and when the resettlement programme was implemented, there was no room for provision of more food aid, and this created a feeling of uncertainty and fear among individuals. A critical analysis of this from the lens of political economy, it can be said that the political pressure from the government to force the people from the IDP camps to return to their ancestral homes and the political failure of the government to guarantee continued and sustained food aid to returnees is one of the factors which causes vulnerability among the individuals since these individuals do not have what to rely on upon their return.

The above risk and uncertainty for the returnees was supported by Steven Candia's report in the new Vision of 15/10/2009, which says "the number of hungry people in Uganda had risen sharply in the last 15 years, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) announced in a statement ahead of World Food Day and specifically considering the Acholi sub-region, the report says that the number of extremely vulnerable individuals supported by the humanitarian community increased from 21,000 to 76.000" from 2005 to 2009.

Food insecurity and dependence on food ratios has adverse impacts on individual's health and immune system. Reduced food ratios mean reduced calorie intake by individual and thus reduce energy and such individuals cannot engage in productive activities.

#### ***Drought conditions***

The major issue of food insecurity as discussed above in the Acholi sub-region has been partly attributed to the decline in the agricultural production during the war period making people to depend on food ratios from the humanitarian organisation and secondly the persistence drought that has ravaged the region as discussed earlier in Chapter 1 of this study also had its negative impacts on food insecurity.

Drought is a major single cause of crop failure in the region, the changes in the rain patterns and growing seasons and the erratic nature of the rain do not support crop production and thus failed crops translate into minimal yields to feed the family and thus making individuals vulnerable.

Drought conditions though are purely environmental and climatic however, such conditions could not singularly cause individuals to be vulnerable if the right policies are in place. Averting drought conditions through early warning systems could reduce the level of risk and exposure risk to individuals and then secondly after the occurrence of such drought conditions, the response from the governments to avert such situations either reduces or further aggravates the vulnerability of communities and for the case of the Acholi sub-region, government response has been minimal if not completely absent as laments one of the respondents

*"You don't know when the dry season or drought sets in, we plant crops when the rains start but all of a sudden, there is no rain and crops burn in the field, you cannot harvest anything, you have lost all your inputs and the government does not support us. We end up collecting wild vegetables and fruits for survival" (Interview with Johan, July 2011)*

Therefore the occurrence of drought is a natural phenomenon but its impacts can be minimised if the correct policies and responses are undertaken and that is why it is important to consider political economy when analysing vulnerabilities. For this case, drought causes risky situation but failure to appropriately respond to the drought condition worsen risk exposure

#### ***Diseases and Health risk***

Multiplicity of diseases and health risk also increases on people's vulnerability. These reduce the ability of an individual to engage in productive activities since they are always weak and sickly. The most commonly mentioned sickness in the study was HIV/AIDS which reduces the immune system and exposes individuals to opportune sicknesses such as malaria, tuberculosis. The incidences of sicknesses have been compounded by occurrence of malaria among the returnees. According to The Uganda Poverty Status Report 2003, it underlines malaria as a major health problem experienced by most people in northern Uganda. Increased morbidity from this disease has a major impact on productivity, as indicated in the study by Gallup and Sachs (2001) that revealed a significant impact of malaria on per capita income. Poor health affects one's productivity and to an extent one's ability to fend for oneself. In addition there are many indirect costs associated with sickness and subsequent absence from work, which include statutory sick payments, and costs of staff replacement<sup>11</sup>.

The occurrence of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria are normally common in the developing countries and the tropics, however policies by the government further reduce or increase on the level of risk exposure to such diseases which can either make individuals more vulnerable or reduce on their vulnerability. The research revealed that, in the government dispensaries and hospitals in Awachi there are not enough drugs since these facilities are underfunded and the staff to patient ratio is so high that to be attended to in times of emergencies might take hours and explained one of the respondents;

*"First of all, in the government hospital we don't have enough nurses that can attend to all the patients, you go for treatment but you have to line up for long hours and sometimes the whole day without being attended to only to be told at the end of the day that your booked for tomorrow and besides this, if your already attended to, the hospital does not even have drugs*

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<sup>11</sup> Uganda Bureau of Statistics, Northern Uganda Baseline Survey 2004

*that can be given to you and all the nurses tell us is to go and buy drugs from the pharmacies and clinics which in most times are owned by them” (Interview with Mini Ocen July 2011)*

Therefore vulnerability to diseases and health risk is related to political economy in that the lack of proper staffing and funding of the hospitals by the government to take care of the returnees in Awachi has exposed them to risk and increased their vulnerability and besides, medication and medical treatment are economically attached in the region in that if one does not have the money then accessing the prescribed drugs becomes very difficult as illustrated by the above statement of Mini Ocen

***Poor sanitation***

In relation to food insecurity, drought and diseases and health risks, the greater majority of the respondents also considered poor sanitation as a major cause of vulnerability. The current scenario of inadequate access to safe water supply and poor sanitation facilities, combined with poor hygiene practices are the main causes of the most prevalent water borne diseases, such as the recurring cholera epidemics and the Hepatitis E outbreaks in northern Uganda. Household sanitation conditions of the returnees are appalling as illustrated in the photo below;

**Figure 4: A typical household surrounding environs and sanitation**



*Source: Field work 2011, Awachi sub-county*

A report by UNPRAP on northern Uganda states that, the limited access to safe water and sanitation facilities and poor hygiene practices further pose enormous challenges towards reduction of diarrhoea, tackling malnutrition, and improving school attendance and completion particularly for girls. There are a combination of immediate, underlying and root causes for the shortcomings in the water and sanitation sector including: destruction of infrastructure, lack of community involvement and ownership in community water maintenance, limited government capacities in terms of technical and human resources due to lack of special incentives for qualified government staff to work in the North, and an inability to absorb allocated funds to meet set targets and respond timely to the immediate needs of the population in the North. An additional challenge is the financing, operation and maintenance of the large number of motorised schemes in former IDP camps which are increasingly being handed over to local government by humanitarian partners winding down their programmes (UNPRAP 2009).

In assessing the community sanitation programme for Awachi through the interviews; it was discovered that the sub-county only had two latrines. The available latrines are concentrated in the main camps in the two sub-counties. Inhabitants of returned areas use predominantly bushes for defecation. The communities ranked latrine construction last after the construction of shelter and cultivation. Lack of latrine digging tools is reported as the main constraint to construction of household latrines. Solid waste disposal is not considered as an issue of concern in the return areas. However, it should be remembered that the lack of proper sanitation leads to contraction of diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera among others (DDMC June 2008).

Secondly poor sanitation is the single cause of high mortality rates both among the infants and the adults alike. According to a study conducted by (Vinck and Pham 2009), they reported that, in 2005, poor sanitary conditions and insecurity resulted in a crude mortality rate (CMR) and an under-five mortality rate (U5MR) well above respective emergency thresholds (1 per 10,000 per day and 2 per 10,000 per day respectively) in Northern Uganda, Acholi sub-region.

However, sanitation and poor hygiene are issues though at individual level have a wider bearing, the returnee policy by the government to provide iron sheets to construct semi permanent structures which can improve sanitation have not been properly implemented. The



individuals do not have the money to invest in building semi permanent houses and that explains the existence of the makeshifts as illustrated in the Plate 6.1 above and therefore, poor sanitation and hygiene though are personal, they have political and economic attachments and added to the above is the cultural attribute of constructing makeshifts which all amounts to explaining the current level of vulnerability among the individuals interviewed.

### **6.3 Factors that make individuals vulnerable**

According to Chambers (1983) as presented in Chapter 2, vulnerability is caused by factors which are external and these expose individuals to risks and stresses. Chambers identified many of these factors but for this research, the following were the external factors revealed by the findings through the in-depth interviews and these are closely related to the prevailing political, economic and cultural environment within which these individuals live as discussed below;

#### **6.3.1 Vulnerability as a result of the war**

This explores how the conflict created situations which make individuals vulnerable as well as the post conflict situations that continue to make the individuals vulnerable and these include:-

##### ***a) Fear and continued attacks by the LRA***

Fear of continued attacks by the rebels was revealed by the research as one of the causes of vulnerability. Since the signing of the CHA up to the time of this writing, the LRA has not completely surrendered or laid down their arms. Though they are physically absent in northern Uganda, they still continue with their operations in Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the South Sudan. Therefore their continued operations in these countries continue to create a state of fear among the returnees that the LRA will come back one time in future.

To fully understand how this has created a state of vulnerability among the individuals, I asked the individuals through the in-depth-interviews what they consider themselves vulnerable and some of the following were the responses recorded; -

*“State in my mind of fear and being captured by rebels” (Min Ocira).*

From the above quotation, it is clear that the conflict has had immense impact on the physical and mental state of many of the returnees, though the rebels are physically absent in the region, the wider population still has fear that one day they will be back and such state of the mind does not allow for engagement in permanent livelihood strategies. Her statement is expounded by the report from Human Rights Watch<sup>12</sup>

*“The LRA regularly has conducted devastating attacks in Northern Uganda. One of the worst attacks ever on displaced persons camps occurred on February 21, 2004, when the LRA massacred 330 people at the Barlonyo camp in Lira district to the south of Gulu. Many victims were burned alive inside their huts. One witness, fleeing the camp, saw the rebels setting “the huts on fire. Children ran out and they threw them back into the fire”.*

To many of the returnees who witnessed such events, the physical absence of the LRA does not guarantee peace in its totality because they believe that peace can only return when there is complete peace talks and peace agreements have been signed but with the continued operations of the LRA in DRC, CAR and the Sudan, the fear still exists.

The continued operations of the LRA in the neighbouring countries coupled to the fluid and precarious nature of the peace agreements signed has created tension among those who were interviewed. Therefore the power politics played out in the region through the arm of the military in the face of unfulfilled peace agreement has resulted vulnerability in the region

***b) Human Rights abuses by the LRA***

Human rights abuses and wide spread killings and massacres have also impacted greatly in creating vulnerability among the individuals. During the war, the LRA and the government soldiers alike indulged in impunity. Elaborating on the Human Rights abuses;-

*“The LRA is responsible for years of wilful killings, beatings, large-scale abductions, forced recruitment of adults and children, sexual violence against girls whom it assigns as “wives” or sex slaves to commanders, large-scale looting and destruction of civilian property, forcing the displacement of hundreds of thousands” (Human Rights Watch September 2005)*

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<sup>12</sup> Jemera Rone, “Uprooted and Forgotten, Impunity and Human Rights Abuses in Northern Uganda”. Human Rights Watch Report, September 2005, Vol 17, No 12(A) Page 10

It should be noted that though, this was way back during the time of the war in 2005, such actions are still very fresh in the minds of the returnee as they have traumatising impacts and the lack of complete signing of the peace talks aggravates the situation and does not guarantee safety for the individuals.

**c) Human Rights abuses by the government soldiers (UPDF)**

Human rights abuses have not been exclusive to the LRA during the time of the war, the UPDF also got themselves involved in some of the abuses as elaborated by the report below from Human Rights Watch 2005;-

*"The UPDF has unlawfully killed a number of civilians in northern Uganda in recent years. People found outside the camps are commonly assumed by the army to be rebels or "rebel collaborators" and frequently find themselves being shot at by the army. But several victims have been shot inside the camps. Many shootings occur at night at close range, and are deliberate and not merely cases of mistaken identity as the army often asserts in its defense.<sup>63</sup> Other deaths are the result of beatings so severe the victim dies" (Jemera 2005)*

These incidences have increased the vulnerability of the returnees because they are not sure of their safety. Currently the GoU through the PRDP is recruiting and deploying the army in the returnee sites but the returnees fear the UPDF because they believe that these soldiers might indulge in impunity as they did before. Expressing the fear and lack of safety because of the presence of both the LRA and the UPDF Walter from Awachi who was asked why he escaped from the camp had this to say;-

*"The reason I ran was because I know how soldiers are in the bush. It is best to run from them, unless they catch you red-handed. You can't separate between LRA and UPDF so you must just run" (Walter K, Awach camp, Gulu, February 28, 2005) as cited in Jemera (2005).*

The current fear of the UPDF has increased the vulnerability of the individuals since deliberate punishment of the perpetrators has not yield any satisfaction among the individuals and actually their presence in the return sites is traumatising than averting the long wounds of torture. Therefore the government failure to discipline the military has increased people's vulnerability as these arm of the government continue to commit crimes with impunity.

*d) Landmines and associated health risks*

Landmines and unexploded ordinance have been a major security threat to both the returnees and those in the camps alike and they increase on the level of vulnerability of the returnees, causing both deaths and threats to livelihoods as people fear to venture into the bushes to till the land for farming and derive other sources of livelihoods. The return to normality of the IDP has been obstructed by the landmines the LRA rebels planted over the years of conflict, to prevent the army from pursuing them after their attacks. As people repopulate the villages and start working the surrounding lands, they risk setting off a mine planted there deliberately, or some other live explosive weapon left behind from the war (Oketch 2008). Elaborating on the gravity of the problem, Omara Patrick who lives in Pader, one of the neighbouring districts to Gulu had this to say;-

*"The biggest problem as we prepare to recover from war is the abundance of unexploded ordinance, many people now fear to go back to their villages because of this problem" said Patrick Omara as cited in (Oketch 2008)*

To Okeny Alex, who is 38 years of age, married and having 8 dependants one of the respondents, he says;-

*"Landmines are big problem to us especially when one steps on them and the mine explodes. These were planted by the rebels during the war and these cripple people and make people fail to do useful work such as digging and such people become beggars in the community while others in the process die".*

To Opio Bonny, whose children fall victim to the landmines and died, he vows not to go back to the village and ancestral home

*"I'm going nowhere, even though our [refugee] camp has been dismantled by the government," said Bonny Opio, who lost four children in the blast"*

It is therefore apparent that landmines and the unexploded ordinance have threatened the smooth return process, threatened livelihoods as people fear to venture into the field to cultivate and derive other sources of livelihoods. In realisation of the above problem, the government has had minimal intervention measures to deal with these unexploded ordinances and instead it is the UNDP that is strongly involved in their removal.

### 6.3.2 Situational factors at individual level

This examines the factors that cause vulnerability at an individual level as opposed to the wider community or societal level. These are circumstances and situations at interpersonal level and include among other the following as found out by the research

#### *Poverty*

Poverty is a broad word used here and with different dimensions to consider however, I use the term here to refer to the inability or incapacity of one to fend for herself or himself. Poverty in this case increases one's vulnerability at times such as sicknesses, famine, and failure to provide school fee for the children among others. Such individuals normally are lacking in assets and do not have adequate food stores neither do they have enough support from the kin or the community. In such circumstances the continuous process of changes to livelihoods which enhance existing security and wealth or try to reduce vulnerability are lacking (Davis S and Hossain 1997)

According to Anyeko Josephine one of the respondents' vulnerability means; - "Ngat macok nongo peko", translated as;- *"failure of a person to feed himself or herself because of inability or disability (Anyeko Josephine, Interview contacted on 16.07.2011).*

Poverty has far reaching impacts on the society and the community at large. According to IRIN (2004) reporting on insecurity and widespread poverty in northern Uganda, the report asserts that; "insecurity and widespread poverty caused by the 18-year warfare putting government forces against insurgents in northern Uganda has made desperate children vulnerable to recruitment as rebel fighters, the United Nations children's Fund (UNICEF) said. The report continues to say that "the poverty and insecurity in northern Uganda could make children vulnerable to recruitment into the armed forces. Many of the children see fighting as a form of employment and see the carrying of arms as the only way to protect themselves and others says UNICEF's protection officer in Gulu, Rebecca Symington (IRIN 2004).

To the returnees, poverty exposes them to famine, illnesses and lack of access to the basic services for life support. The government efforts to eradicate poverty in northern Uganda through programmes such as NUREP, NUSAF and NAADS as discussed in Chapter 5 earlier have had little successes in eradicating poverty as these programmes are marked with high level corruption.

### *b) Education*

When I conducted the interview, the research discovered that most of the respondents only completed the primary school which is very elementary and in some schools, the graduates of this level do not write and read properly let alone speaking English which is the universal language in the country. The lack of education therefore has aggravated the plight of the returnee and made them more vulnerable as they cannot seek further employment opportunities; do not have the confidence as do the educated among others

According to Nannyonjo (2005), writing on the impacts of the war on education in northern Uganda, Nannyonjo (2005), asserts that, “with the destruction of schools, looting of supplies and shortage of teachers, education in northern Uganda has been severely affected by conflict. Schools have been closed or relocated, and those still operating have been forced to limit their teaching times to those considered to be safe for children to attend (10 am to 3 pm). Many children are not attending school for fear of LRA killings and abductions while others, teachers included, have moved to more secure districts where they add to the congestion of the towns. This has created shortages of shelter for teachers and students, scholastic materials, classrooms, drugs, water and sanitation, and recreation facilities. In addition, the learning and effective participation of children in the classroom is affected by their traumatic experiences. Moreover, universal primary education is not matched to the curriculum needs of traumatized or displaced children. The skills of teachers in particular are limited for coping with these children”.

Education is a very important ‘portable’ asset which helps people stay out of poverty during conflict supports bounce-back post conflict (resilience). People with education have enhanced livelihood options can diversify livelihoods – confidence to travel, trade (numeracy) and take on leadership roles (e.g. mobiliser for NGOs, LC etc.), reduced risk aversion, greater confidence, higher incomes and saving, increased resilience, more able to interact with authorities (write letters) and can draw on social networks(Kate Bird, Kate Higgins et al. 2009).

The Uganda government policy on education have not helped the situation either, the government has embarked on UPE and the graduates cannot be employed in the formal sector

as this level is basically to read and write English and this is worsened by the cultural informal education which teaches basic survival techniques for individuals and this has therefore increased on the level of vulnerability of the individuals since these individuals cannot have confidence to travel, trade appropriately (numeracy), interact with authorities through letters as put forward by Kate Bird, Higgins et al (2009) of the educated elite

*c) Decline in the social and cultural structure of society*

The decline in the social and culture of the society in Acholi during the war has also increased the vulnerability of certain individuals in society. The cumulative impact of such a societal breakdown is seen in the wide spread gender based violence among the returnees making the women to feel insecure and also lack of trust and respect for the traditional institutions that administer justice.

The conflict situation has led to a breakdown of social and cultural values in northern Uganda. Displacement and resettlement in camps caused degeneration in social values and order, resulting in such behavioural changes as neglected responsibilities, increased crime rates, high rates of alcohol and drug consumption, and lack of respect for traditional values. Separation, orphanhood and increased domestic violence have disrupted the family structure UN (1999) as cited by (Nannyonjo 2005)

Due to the above factors such as alcoholism, women who are the weak in society have often been abused and made vulnerable and the burden on them has increased from bearing children and caring for the home as the traditional Acholi custom, to taking whole responsibility of the home. The cultural values of respect for women have died altogether and thus sexual abuse of the women is common place among the returnee.

The government policies of reinstating the traditional leaders has helped but it is not adequate enough which explains the current abuse of women and children and the emergency of the money economy and livelihoods through the empowerment of women by NGO's has further resulted into broken families thus increasing levels of vulnerability among the individuals

### **6.2.3 Institutional factors**

Institutional factors are very paramount in determining people's lives and livelihoods because these determine the policies, power and access to resources. According to Rigg (2007), "even if one were to gain full understanding of the material and non-material bases of livelihoods, and the full range of assets and endowments that an individual or household could-in theory-access, it is often the case that there is a gap or disjuncture between endowments' and the assets (capitals), and entitlements, and between entitlements and capabilities. This is because assets and endowments are not there for the taking, but are selectively accessed or awarded according to prevailing systems of political and social relations"

According to Kate Bird, Kate Higgins et al (2009), Policies affect access to resources and in conflict and post conflict setting particularly citing the case of northern Uganda, they assert that there is incapability to pay for livelihoods disrupted, livestock stolen, assets destroyed. There is slow rebuilding of public infrastructure, inadequate provision of pre-school/ nursery education and importance of self provisioning and NGO/ UN interventions among others and to them they question how the GoU PRDP tries to change this situation.

#### ***a) Universal Primary Education***

Elaborating on the power and access of resources as determined by policies Kate Bird, Kate Higgins et al (2009), try to analyse GoU Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme and found out that, on quality, the UPE is appreciated by poor parents – but quality and funding problems affect its quality and therefore making it very challenging to recruit and retain staff (particularly women) and this has led to undesirable outcomes such as inadequate provision of scholastic material, high school drop-out ( which to them leads to poverty, poor quality education, interruption), food insecurity and ill health and finally compromising learning outcomes and such conditions increase on people's vulnerability

#### ***b) Abrupt transition policies***

Abrupt transition from relief to 'sustainable development' has also increased people's vulnerability and accentuated by low levels of government capacity (and reach) in conflict-affected communities and humanitarian 'pull-out'e.g. the humanitarian focus on extremely vulnerable in post conflict transition with little funding for education and early recovery activities(Kate Bird, Kate Higgins et al. 2009) has left many people vulnerable

#### ***c) Marginalisation within the society and national level***

Within any community there are likely to be groups who are marginalized or disadvantaged in some way and who may require particular attention to ensure that they are included.



Groups are often excluded from participating on the basis of age, race, caste, gender, religion or other ethnic grounds. Sometimes people are unable to participate such as the disabled, the aged, the young or the very poor who may have other priorities and cannot prioritise participating in meetings over their immediate needs. These groups must be considered and specific actions taken to ensure that their views are incorporated in any analysis activities which take place in the community. These groups are often particularly vulnerable as a direct result of their limited voice in decision-making which could affect them.

In chapter 2 of this study, vulnerability in conflict and post conflict situations, looks at livelihoods being threatened as a result of destruction to agricultural production. However, the findings reveal that; at the moment the respondents major concerns of vulnerability is related to insecurity, major themes mentioned include, being capture, the fear of another outbreak of civil strife since the final peace talks have not been signed and the increased cases of being blown by the undetonated landmines planted during the war. Defining vulnerability is relation to lack of access to land though comes out clearly but was not mentioned by most respondents and this will be elaborated more in the forthcoming chapter.

It is therefore important to note that definition of the term vulnerability and its cause to the individuals according to these findings is security related and rebuilding agricultural livelihoods is of paramount importance. This translates to the policy in that; governmental and non-governmental organisation should first and foremost ensure sustainable peace for these individuals to meaningfully engage in rebuilding their agriculturally based livelihoods. It is therefore important to look at the different livelihoods asset that these individuals have before looking at their livelihood strategies and proposing the possible intervention measures

## CHAPTER 7

### LIVELIHOOD ASSETS

#### 7.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to define the resources on which households derive their livelihoods and how they manoeuvre and interchange these resources (assets) to cope with shocks and stresses in life. As explained in Chapter 2, livelihood comprises the resources (including skills, technologies and organizations) and activities required to make a living and have a good quality of life. The activities in which people engage to derive meaningful livelihoods are based on the wealth of assets that the individuals have such as human capital, physical capital, social capital, natural capital and financial capital. To understand an individual's level of vulnerability as presented in Chapter 6, then it is therefore important to look at the stock of these assets because these have correlation to the level of vulnerability as well as determining the livelihood strategies that these individuals engage in to achieve desired livelihood outcomes which are discussed in Chapter 8.

However as noted by Rigg (2007), "even if one is to gain a full understanding of the material and non-material bases of livelihoods, and the full range of assets and endowments that an individual or household could-in theory-access, it is often the case that there is a gap or disjuncture between endowments and assets (capitals), and entitlements, and between entitlements and capabilities. This is because assets and endowments are not there for the taking, but are selectively accessed or awarded according to prevailing systems of political and social relations". Therefore based on the above statement, as I discuss the different assets of these individuals in this Chapter, I will discuss how the prevailing political and economic forces influence the allocation of these resources and as I noted earlier in Chapter 6, land being the major asset base of these individuals, it will then be very central in this chapter efforts have been made to show how the allocation of land has been done here and how power, economy and agency play out in defining the livelihood opportunities for these individuals. However, though land is central to this discussion, other assets revealed by the research will also be considered.

In Chapter 5, I noted that the Acholi are agro-pastoralists and livelihood activities based on agricultural production may include among others (crops, vegetables, livestock, fish) for

home consumption or for sale; non agricultural home production such as tailoring, pottery, food processing, and so on; wage employment locally or migrating to another area to work; or harvesting forest products. Activities such as caring for children and the elderly should also be recognized as important roles often played by women. The livelihood options available to individuals and households depend on the diversity of resources, skills and technologies they are able to access.

In relation to the above, the security of an individual's livelihood also depends on the security of their available resources (Pasteur 2011). Assets determine the degree of risk exposure and coping capabilities of an individual and they are the building blocks of a livelihood. Basing on DFID's Sustainable livelihoods framework, I present my findings on the different assets of these individuals

### **7.1 Natural Capital**

Natural capital means the resources that are used by people to derive livelihoods and are solely provided for by nature. Natural capital encompasses the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services (such as land, water, forests and rate of exchange etc) useful for livelihoods are derived from. During the research process, the individuals were asked about three major aspects of the natural capital, namely land, water and the practice of hunting and the following responses were recorded during the interviews;

#### **7.1.0 Land**

Stating on the importance of land in post conflict development, Magel and Wehrmann (2006) as cited in (Mabikke 2011) argue that it's all about land rights, restrictions and responsibility. The full scope of land management needs to be clarified how land resources are to be opened and developed, to whom the land belongs and who else may still make valid claims. Therefore, the success of post conflict development programs in many developing countries primarily depends on resources available. Access to such resources is very crucial for empowering vulnerable groups like widows, orphans, disabled and elderly to recover from the effects of armed conflicts in the society.

Land both as property and a resource has by far been the most important asset in Africa. It occupies a central place in the cultural, political, economic and social organisation of many nations. In Uganda, land is the single greatest resource for which a large majority of the population derives its livelihoods – because of the importance attached to land in all

communities, conflicting interests in are unavoidable Mabikke, (2010). Therefore, the sustainability of peace and post conflict recovery programs cannot be successfully implemented unless the land question-that affects everyone in northern Uganda is properly addressed (Mabikke 2011).

In order to understand the complexity of land issue Okoth-Ogendo (2006) tries to explain how land in Africa still remains a multiplex phenomenon. He points out that as an economic resource land is central to the organisation of sustainable livelihood. Land is a social, cultural and ontological resource; it is an important factor in the construction of social identity, the organisation of religious life and the production and reproduction of culture. From an ecological perspective, land supports more than just human livelihoods; on it depends all biotic matter, hence the sustenance of terrestrial life as we know it. From a political perspective, Okoth-Ogendo describes land as a political resource which defines power relations between and among individuals, families and communities under established systems of governance. Governance in this case must provide new answers to how social interrelationships can be conducted and how formal and informal regulations can be brought together (Magel and Silke, 2007). Absence of good land governance therefore gives rise to social evils like land grabbing to persist in societies. The increasing scarcity of land among the *returnees* in northern Uganda is becoming a major source of tension that urgently requires good governance solutions to avoid reoccurrence of another war based on land (Mabikke 2011).

During the research process, I focused my in-depth interviews in finding out the available land that the respondents owned and under what arrangements such land is owned. Majority acknowledged that, they own a lot of land but under the customary system. However, the land ownership according to the finding has been a contentious issue, reports of land grabbing are common among others as discussed below;-

#### **7.1.0.1 Land acquisition and ownership before the war**

Previously, in the Acholiland, most land was held under customary tenure. People typically owned land by virtue of the fact that they and their families always lived on it, and therefore were regarded as the 'owners' of the land. Most had no official papers or titles proving they own the land, and many of the vernacular rules governing land were not written down, and/or were constantly changing to adapt to new circumstances Mabikke (2011). As stated in Chapter 2, this illustrates how constructivism as pointed out in Chapter 2 plays a role in explaining how land was being allocated, simply by the virtue of being born in the society,

one had the right to own land and the rules were set by the traditional Acholi institutions as discussed in Chapter 5. The values and the norms that govern land ownership were set out by mutual trust and rules though were informal but were widely recognised and this ensured that every member of the society and community had access to land especially the vulnerable such as the widows and the orphaned in society

#### *Customary land ownership in Uganda and Acholiland*

According to Mabikke S.B (2011), following the enactment of the 1998 Land Act, customary ownership became legally equal to having title, although land held under customary tenure is subject to any local customary rules of ownership (e.g. rules on inheritance or various rights to use land which other members of the family may have). The system does not rely on the exercise of force, nor on the evidence of rights guaranteed by statute, but on the fact that they are recognised as legitimate by the community, enforced in the customary courts, or even merely by social pressure and generally known though not normally documented.

Before the conflict customary system ensured that land was usually allocated and managed by the family patriarch (often the grandfather), who provided plots to each male family member according to their needs and perceived ability to use the land. Men controlled the land, but women also had certain rights. A woman had rights to use her parents' land prior to marriage, and her husband's land afterwards. No husband was supposed to prevent his wife from using his land, and if he predeceased her she still had user rights; she could use the land as she saw fit and pass it on to her children but could not sell it. If somebody tried to take this right from her, she could appeal to the elders who would then intervene on her behalf. Such a system therefore ensured that land was equitably distributed (Girling and Frank 1996).

The above statement illustrates how political economy ensured amicable land allocation within the society of Acholi before the war, political institutions such as the chiefs had the powers to rule over land disputes and people agency through the recognition of the rights of the widows was observed and patrilineal land access as well was recognised and this is backed by the constructivists view of considering the role culture plays in every society because the pre war Acholi observed strict cultural values and norms that ensured land allocation, land rights, restrictions on the use of land and land responsibility as spelled out by Magel and Wehrmann (2006)

### **7.1.0.2 Changes in institutional settings and structures during the war**

#### ***Undermining dispute resolution mechanisms***

During the war effective dispute resolutions mechanisms were hampered and are now almost non-existent. Though to a small extent, clan leaders still exercise some judiciary powers today, it is important to note that they have been overloaded with cases. An increased land shortage as a result of commercial farming has strongly limited the traditional capacity of the clan leaders to issue new plots of land to those in need. Displacement and the war also weakened elders' authority: traditions and customs are less known and adhered to. In addition, the state court system intended to mediate disputes is underfunded and overwhelmed by a backlog of cases (UN HABITAT, December 2007). Many IDPs cannot afford the fees charged for official assistance in settling land disputes (Brookings/IDMC, June 2011). Some of those returnees who have managed to regain their land have been secondarily displaced by incorporation of their land within national parks. This was the fate of returnees living in a village of Amuru District who were left with no choice other than to return to their former IDP camp (IRIN, February 2012) as cited in (IDMC 2012).

#### ***Commercial farming***

Plantations and interests for the expansion of plantations in Acholiland have affected land allocation. This is seen through the interests expressed by Madhvani Group of companies to acquire land for the expansion of sugarcane plantation. According to Mabikke (2011), the interest in commercial agriculture and thus the need for land has also implications for the land allocation in post conflict Acholi. Not only did commercial agriculture changed but the generation gap has also implications on land allocation for especially the youth. A report by (IDMC 2008) noted that the majority of the population in northern Uganda is extraordinarily young; with a median age of 14 for females and 13 for males. This desperately youthful population that has grown up in the camps has little or no knowledge of their customary land rights. Land being the only capital *returnees* possess has therefore become the source of conflicts.

Commercial agriculture clearly illustrates how political economy as discussed in Chapter 2 determines allocation of resources and assets. The high interest in farming for commerce therefore has deprived the returnees of their land and source of livelihood. Land is being given to the wealthy and the youthful population and the vulnerable in society such as the widows have been denied access to their ancestral land. Commercial agriculture is packed with power of the wealthy over the poor, political influence and pressure from the

government to allocate the so called 'free land' for commercial farming and the economic rationale of farming for commerce thus therefore determines land allocation and deprivation of the returnees of their ancestral land

#### ***Changes in government policies***

The changes in the political and governmental policies have also affected land allocation, in 2004, a report by a coalition of Civil Society Organisations for Peace in northern Uganda (CSOPNU) revealed that individuals who hold their land by customary tenure and have no other legal documentation - a description that fits most of the displaced population - risk losing their land, for a number of reasons. These include Government-mandated development, leases given to investors, land grabbed by relatives and neighbours or through fraud. Such customary lands have many squatters and landmines which are a big threat to *returnees*. These lands are surrounded with several conflicts between customary and state legal systems that exist in northern Uganda (CSOPNU, 2004:13). The plans made by the government to promote development through mechanised farming and the creation of functioning land markets have further exacerbated fears of land grabbing and alienated people from the government.

This shifts in rules governing land during the conflict years and post conflict times illustrates how political economy through its power politics and political forces through policies determines land allocation and access as put forward by Rigg (2007)

#### ***Land transactions (economics of land)***

According to Mabikke S.B (2011), informal land transactions are rapidly increasing especially in urban centers of northern Uganda like in Gulu and Lira towns. Unfortunately the dysfunctional and unregulated nature of land markets puts at risk all parties involved in informal land transactions. Available information in Acholi shows that youth with legitimate access and rights to land are selling plots of lands for cash without the consent or engagement of traditional authorities. Hetz and Myers (2007) as cited in (Mabikke 2011), confirm that these transactions have caused anxiety and conflicts within clans and traditional leadership in Acholi. The high unemployment rate in the region drives youth into a state of desperation resorting to selling family property like land (usually without consent of the elders) to raise quick capital to finance their daily income generating activities.

Land economics through the lens of political economy thus influences the access to land and land allocation and this explains simply why the value attached to land in economic terms derives the youthful population in Acholi to sell land and disrespecting the traditional

institutions of the elders, chiefs and clan leaders who previously were responsible for the allocation of land in the region

### **7.1.0.3 Land ownership and allocation in post-conflict situation**

After the return process and as at the time of writing this report, land has become a major contentious issue and cases of land grabbing are common and some vulnerable groups have been neglected and.

#### ***Changes in institutional setup and rules governing land allocation***

The previous traditional rules and institutions of land allocation and ownership have totally changed and now being influenced as noted earlier in Chapter 2 by political economy. Due to land pressure and the formalization of property relations (exacerbated by the conflict), the traditional tactic of claiming virgin land is much less available today (UNDP 2007). This is because of the realisation in the economic value of land, and this economic value attached to land has led to changes in the rules and policies that govern land allocation as noted by Rigg (2007). Traditional rules have now been neglected and customary ownership of land has disappeared and instead, many are advocating for property rights which leaves many of the returnees' landless because, acquisition of property right or the land title is a process which they cannot afford because it involves paying for a lawyer to represent such an individual let alone the long procedures which take months and sometimes years to acquire such land titles.

#### ***Marginalisation of the vulnerable from their land***

The decline in traditional institutions and rules that previously govern land allocation in Acholi have had negative effects on the vulnerable in society such as the widows and the women who were taken care of under the traditional systems. Elaborating on the magnitude of the land issue in Acholi sub-region, Chris Ocowun, reporting for the New Vision of 07/08/2010, Uganda's Leading daily Newspaper says that; "WHEREAS most former internally displaced persons in northern Uganda have returned to their villages following the end of the war, 76,386 are still stranded in camps because of land disputes. The former IDPs are occupying camps in Gulu, Amuru, Pader, Kitgum, Lamwo, Agago and Nwoya districts. And further a report by UNHCR reveals that there are over 13,000 extremely vulnerable individuals who do not have caretakers who are in the middle of land wrangles in post conflict Acholi region and because of this some of the groups such as the widows, single mothers and orphans have not returned home because they were denied access to their land by the wealthy and powerful in society.



During the interviews Odong John , 43 years old and a father of 4 had this to say on the impact of current land wrangles and how it affects the youth and people who have returned,

*“The young and the youth have lost the most, before the war, it was customary for the father to transfer and share the piece of land he owns among his children, but now such customs don't exist anymore, rich people come and want to buy land from us and besides most of the elders were abducted during the war and the children who have been born in the IDP Camps have not known where their ancestral places are. They now don't have land and have nowhere to stay;- they try to settle with friends and that is what brings the issues of land disputes” (In-depth interview with Odong John 2011)*

Therefore, from the above discussion it is clear that land allocation has changed in post conflict Acholi as well as the policies and economic value of land. These changes have had adverse impacts on the return process making other to opt not to return while the economic hardships has forced many to sell off their land and opt for other avenues to derive livelihoods.

#### **7.1.1 Water**

Water forms a major connect in life of an individual, water is drunk, used for watering crops, livestock relies much on water. Therefore, much of our life revolves on the availability and the quality of water around us. On interviewing people on the availability of water; the research found that people do not own individual sources of water although some of the streams that they draw water from pass their land but these streams are owned by the community. Secondly as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 earlier, because of the constant draughts that have hit the area for the last five years most of the streams have dried up.

Much of the water sources available for the individuals to use are owned by the local government such as the boreholes or community owned as constructed by the local community through the help of the nongovernmental organisations to support and provide for clean water for the communities

Based on the report conducted by the Gulu District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC), the four parishes of Awachi sub-county had water sources such as deep borehole, shallow well, spring water, motorized and in total they formed about 26 water sources. However, their distribution within the sub-counties was not even. In Awachi especially, the 25 protected water sources were located in one IDP Camp meaning one protected water

source was outside of the IDP Camp, as illustrated in the Table 7.1 below. This has negative implications for the returnees because they cannot access clean water and this increases the risk of exposure to diseases as many are forced to rely on water drawn from dirty wells and streams

**Table 2: Water Sources and Latrine Stances in Awachi sub-county**

Parish	Deep Borehole	Shallow well	Spring water	Motorized water	Total water sources	Latrine stances
Gwengdiya	3				3	
Paduny	8	7	2	2	19	
Paibona	3	1			4	
Pukony	1				1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>				<b>26</b>	<b>572</b>

*Modified from DDMC, Report of durable solutions assessment of the three sub-counties, Bobi, Bungatira and Awachi, June 2008*

However, through the efforts of the local government and the nongovernmental organisations such as AVSI, and Italian based organisation that has Water and Sanitation programme in the sub-county and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) through their WASH programme, deep boreholes and streams have been constructed in the community to provide for clean water as illustrated in Plate 7.1 below;

**Figure 5: Borehole water and well water sources in Awachi sub-county**

Plate 7.1: Water sources in Awachi Sub-county



*Field work July 2012*

The current designation of the water sources are influenced purely by policies beyond the reach of the returnee, it is the nongovernmental organisations that designate where clean water source should be availed among the communities and also people's agency is seen through the community mobilisation efforts to dig up well and such efforts are then complimented by the wider international and governmental efforts. Therefore, in considering the above, it is important to say that the political economists view of looking at policies, institutions, power and agency in resource allocation is very important since it influences the current water access in the sub-county of Awachi

The lack of enough and adequate water however has a lot of implications for livelihoods, first and foremost, it cause health risks as people are forced to drink from streams because of lack of clean water source. Secondly, it negatively impacts on the women and girls who spent a lot of time looking for water since fetching water is customarily considered the responsibility of women in this society. In the process of looking for clean water for the family, they are often raped, harassed by men who take advantage of them thus increasing on their vulnerability.

Also of great importance to note is the struggle involved in lobbying for the construction of water sources for the community. If the Local leaders are in the Opposition party (not the National Resistance Movement (NRM), the ruling party) normally the central government does not allocate funds for such sub-county for the construction of such water sources and even the access of the clean water sources demands that, individuals have to be near the town centres since most of these facilities are only first constructed in the sub-county headquarters and not in the villages where people have settled.

### **7.3 Physical Capital**

Physical assets are the basic infrastructure such as the agricultural equipments, sewing machines, transport, livestock, and shelter among others (John Nigel 2009). Through a combination of data collection methods such as the in-depth interviews, observation the researcher sought to find out the attributes of physical capital that the interviewed had and what trade-off's they make of these assets. However, according to a report by (UNDP 2007), those who have returned do not own much assets but possess furniture: tables, beds, and chairs. Households with these items nevertheless remain a minority. My field findings revealed the following assets among the individuals

### 7.3.1 Buildings

According to the findings, less than half of those who were interviewed accepted that they own building in the form of huts or makeshifts, although before the war these were the structures built but all that which was there was destroyed during the war and therefore the returnees are forced to construct them anew. On average among the individuals interviewed, an individual owns about three huts depending on the number of dependants within the given household and a hut is valued at 70.000 Ugsh which is about 28 US dollars at the time of the research taking the exchange rate of 2500 Ugsh per dollar. The huts are made of mud, grass, shrubs, trees and other crippling plants and fibres. During the repatriation process, all returnees are suppose to get Iron Sheets from the government for resettlement to construct semi permanent structures but however, as noted earlier, such benefits are only accorded to those higher in societal ranks thus depriving the vulnerable and most of those who got the iron sheets were forced to sell them off for money as food shortages were hitting them hard in the initial resettlement stages and some sold them to buy seeds with the hope of harvesting crops for reconstructing their livelihoods and that is why it is important to consider economic forces and power as advocated by political economists when considering access and allocation of resources.

These huts however are not durable enough and the grass has to be changed if not annually then after every two years. At times especially during the dry season from the months of December to March, these makeshifts are normally attacked by termites, then the individual is faced with a leaking roof during the rainy season, this further exposes them to sicknesses such as malaria, pneumonia and cold. Around the huts, the sanitation is very poor as shown in the Plate 6.1 above, the surrounding are normally not best for human habitation, the shelter and toilets are normally near the huts where these individuals sleep. This exacerbates the cases of dysentery and cholera among the returnees.

To further expose them to risk, such structures and make up of such building expose individuals to natural and man-made disasters. During the dry season, when the savannah bush fires are lit which is a common practice in the region from the months of December to March some of the houses get caught up in the busy fires and this normally leads to loss of property and sometimes lives of especially the young children. Besides the above, these are not permanent structures and can easily be blown by the whirl winds and during the rainy seasons the roofs of the houses leak, exposing the individuals to contracting further illnesses

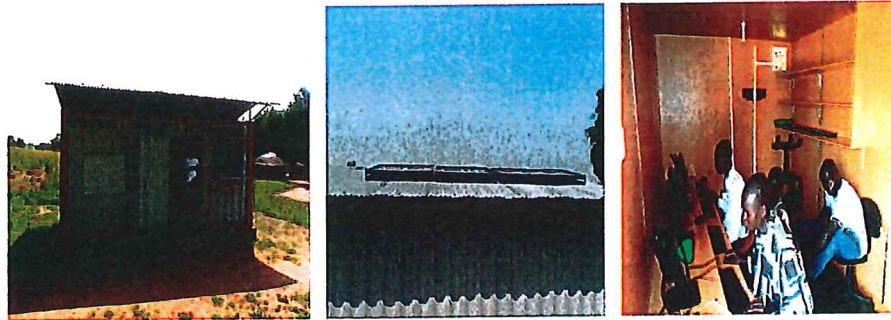
### 7.3.2 Solar panels

Solar energy is a good source of energy for lightening houses, cooking and running other equipments when well developed especially in the sunny tropics where there is abundant sunshine. Not much solar energy has been tapped by the individuals owing to the fact that these solar panels cost a lot of money and therefore most consider them as luxury, however most of the respondents acknowledged that they use kerosene lamps to light the room at night.

When interviewed on the energy sources available for the communities, the Local Council III Chairman, reported that through funding from the NGO's and government sources of funds they are in the process of introducing solar energy to the community, he further commented that;

*"We have drafted a plan and sent a project proposal for the introduction of solar energy in the sub county. At the moment we are piloting one in the our sub county headquarters (see plate 7.3 below) here to run an information centre where the community members can have access to the internet and connect with the world and through this we intend to extend it to the individual houses and that will be at a subsidised rate. The current project that we have will further help to provide for a weather monitoring scheme where we intend to forecast weather conditions so that information on weather changes can be availed to the local communities" (Interview with Local Council III Chairman, July 2011).*

**Figure 6: Awachi Community Knowledge Centre powered by solar energy**



#### *Field work July 2011*

The introduction of the knowledge centre has helped a lot of the individuals to the have access to markets and news of the events taking place within and without the sub county.

However, its usage has been limited to those who are computer literate while many argue that the centre does not provide for any practical solutions for their current state as noted Okeny

*'Yes we have a community knowledge centre but I normally wonder of what use it is to us when you see young boys going to watch movies in the centre and play games, it is a project I think the community does not need at this stage, what we need is support for seeds, farming, veterinary personal but not a knowledge centre for watching movies' (Interview with Okeny one of the respondents 2011)*

This also illustrates how political economy determines which resources flow within the community, the knowledge centre is an idea of the international community but a project with minimal benefits to community and yet constructed at a very high costs. Politics and policies to construct them are not community driven but driven at international levels that supercede the confines of the beneficiaries.

### **7.3.3 Farm tools**

Farm tools are an important asset to the individuals because they allow them to cultivate and till the land for the planting of the crops. The research revealed that, most people own farm tools and most common tools mentioned by the respondents included pangas, axes, hoes among other which allow them to do subsistence farming. However, these tools are basic tools which allow for subsistence farming and do not allow for extensive agriculture. It is therefore suggested that, deliberate steps needs to be put in place to introduce tools that will allow for commercial farming such as the ox-ploughs, tractors.

### **7.4 Human Capital**

Human capital covers the skills, knowledge, health, psychological reactions which are important to the ability to pursue different livelihood strategies as discussed in Chapter 2. However, the finding from the field work revealed that most of the respondents had no formal education and the majority only completed the primary level as illustrated in the Table 7.2 below. However, much of the other human capital attributes have been presented earlier in Chapter 6 and how they expose the individuals to vulnerable situations and how unfair government policies and local structures have maintained this standard of education for decades and that is why it is important to use an analysis based on power politics, economics, agency as presented by political economists in analysing what people have and why they have what they have at the moment.

**Table 3: Respondents Educational Attainment and Skills**

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>No formal education</b>	<b>Primary education</b>	<b>Secondary education</b>	<b>College and Vocational Skills</b>
<b>Numbers</b>	8	3	3	2

*Field Work July 2011*

From the table above, it can be clearly seen that, most of the respondents lack the required formal education skills to actively engage in meaningful development. The highest number attained primary education which is basically to read and write in English. This could also be explained by the fact that the age group chosen for the research, was during the times when UPE was not yet introduced and formal education as a factor of production was not embraced much but most relied on informal education.

### **7.5 Financial capital**

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this study, financial capital is the variety of the resources such as wages, access to credit, savings and regular remittances. It also involves, available stocks comprising cash, bank deposits or liquid assets such as livestock and jewellery, not having liabilities attached and regular flows of money comprising labour income, pension or other transfers from the state and remittances. In relation to the interviews conducted the following were the available sources of financial capital for the individuals

#### **7.5.1 Access to loans**

##### **7.5.1.0 Banks**

Through the interviews, when respondents were asked, regarding access to loans, majority of them reported that they can easily access loans in times of need for such financial resources and minimum amount that can be accessed is (100.000 Ugsh), that is about 25 dollars for a period of six months but said the interest rates are very high on the loan borrowed and the grace period given is very small to realise maximum returns. The most commonly mentioned bank that lends loans to the individuals is the Centenary Rural Development Banks which is a catholic based banking institution. However, many voiced the concern that, they normally use their customary land title as a collateral security and in many times when one fails to pay back the loan within the specified period of time, they loose their land to the bank and this is their major worry with borrowing from such banks

### 7.5.1.1 SACCO's

However, SACCO's which are local money lending and collection institutions provide good financial services and at a lower interest rate. Majority of those interviewed acknowledged that they belong to such a group where they have monthly contributions and in times of financial need they can borrow from the organisation at an interest rate lower than the one offered by the banks

### 7.5.2 Selling livestock

Through the interviews, it was discovered that the most common source of finance for the individuals was sell of livestock. The common livestock that were reported as being sold are chicken and goats and of the individuals who reported they had livestock the following numbers were got from them.

**Table 4: Individual Livestock holdings for 9 respondents**

	Individual Household								
Livestock	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Chicken	10	50	24	25	20	6	16	10	7
Goats	6	8	10	5	10	5	5	4	-

*Field work July 2011*

This table is generated from the information obtained from 9 households based on the livestock they hold and from the above table, it can be concluded that; the most commonly owned livestock for sale is the chicken and on average a chicken was sold at around (10.000 Ugs) about 4 US dollars while a cock is sold at around (15.000 Ugsh) about 6 US dollars. From the figures an average individual owns about 16 Chicken, 6 goats and each goat was sold at (54.000 Ugsh), about 21.6 US dollars

The above market prices are determined in a free market; however, if one opted for other regional sources of market, such as the South Sudan, the prices for such livestock can go higher and thus increase on the income.

### 7.5.3 Sale of Koaline

Another source of income for the individuals was the sale of sand gravels and maramu (Koaline) which are used for construction of permanent building. Though not a common practice in the sub county, at least two respondents reported, that, they dig and sell gravels



and said that their monthly average income is about (80.000 Ugsh), which is approximately 32 US dollars.

The sale of Koaline however also depends on the availability of land where the mining can be done and therefore not everybody can get involved in the activity. It is those who have the land where the mineral is available who can either dig it for sale or they can lease it to an individual who has the capacity to do so.

Therefore basing on the above presentation of the different assets of the individuals interviewed, it can be concluded that, majority of the respondents have land their livelihood strategies are therefore land based. The following Chapter analysis land based livelihood strategies into depth though not in isolation; other aspects of livelihood are also discussed as revealed by the research

## CHAPTER 8

### LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES

#### 8.0 Introduction

According to Rigg (2007), the propelling forces in livelihood transitions often embody a cocktail of local, national and international factors that extent from the environmental to the economic, political and social. Scholars tend to privilege one or other set of factors according to disciplinary persuasion and the need to bring analytical bite to their work. The focus of this chapter therefore is to explore the different livelihood strategies undertaken by individuals in relation to their assets. As discussed earlier in Chapter 7, the main asset available to these individuals is the land and it will therefore follow that much of the analysis of this chapter will be based on the strategies that use land to minimise shocks, stresses and trends in post conflict Acholi sub-region but not explicitly. Illustrating on the impact of conflicts on agricultural livelihoods; Birner & Cohen (2011), note that conflicts disrupt agricultural livelihoods and an emphasis of rebuilding the agricultural base is very crucial for the sustainability of such rural livelihoods. In relation to this, the chapter will also examine the different national and humanitarian actions undertaken to minimise vulnerability in this region using both the agricultural and humanitarian livelihoods approaches as are discussed in Chapter 2.

Prior to the conflict, as noted by Girling and Frank (1996), the Acholi were characterised by a highly diversified farming system and practiced agro-pastoralism. However, during the war, these individuals and the household were displaced into IDP camps, they lost complete access to their land and the once farmlands grew busy. In the IDP camps, the only means of livelihoods was reliance on hand outs and relief aid. It is also important to note that, before the war, the Acholi were highly organised socially where resource allocation mechanisms were based on the household head, who then passes on the land to his or her children in that order. This mechanism insured that; the land as the major livelihood asset was equitably allocated in the society.

However, with the complete social break down during the war and emergency of new social networks after the war, land distribution has been a major source of conflict as discussed in Chapter 7 earlier and this translates into restricted livelihoods and minimum livelihood

expansion options. In this situation, people have derived new different livelihood strategies, although majority are based on the land through forging new contracts such as lease holds, clientalism. The major purpose of this chapter therefore is to identify the land based livelihood strategies as well as the new emerging strategies.

These new livelihood strategies are however, not explicit, they are affected by the inter-web of factors, such as the political, social and economic. It is based on the realisation of this that, I choose to use the political economy approach for the analysis of this research. It helps in looking at the power politics of resource allocation; the institutions that govern resource allocation and resource management both at the local level to the national and then international levels and also important is the values, beliefs and customs that shape and direct people's choices and course of action.

In this chapter, I have decided to categorise these strategies into erosive and non erosive strategies based on Pasteur (2011) analysis as presented in Table 8.1 below. The major purpose of this categorisation was to illustrate that not all coping strategies are positive or negative. However, despite the distinction it should also be noted that, it is not very easy to draw a clear line between the erosive and non erosive because these can easily cross into each other depending on the time and availability of resources and how each individual perceive of the other.

After considering the above categorisation, I then analysed other livelihood strategies which are implemented by the government and international community through the programmes of agricultural expansion opportunities and as well as through humanitarian aid provision such as in the form of health care for the marginalised in society.

**Table 5: Livelihood strategies of individuals in Awachi sub-county in post conflict**

<b><u>Erosive strategies</u></b>	
Farm based erosive strategies	- Food cultivation (mono cropping and inter-cropping) - Non-food crop cultivation - Sale of livestock
Brick lying	
Eating less	
Gathering wild fruits	
<b><u>Non Erosive Strategies</u></b>	
Food storage systems	
Non farm income	- Thatching - Casual labour
Non farm self employment	- Weaving and braiding - Rural petty trade - Boda boda cyclists
Social capital	- Reliance on kin - Associations and clubs
Drawing on savings	
<b><u>National and international charity organisations</u></b>	
Agricultural promotion	
Humanitarian aid	
Resettlement compensation	

*Modified and adapted from (Pasteur 2011)*

### **8.2 Erosive strategies**

According to Pasteur (2011), vulnerable people are often forced to draw on strategies which erode their productive assets (for example selling them off or consuming them) and ultimately undermining their livelihoods in the long run. Some erosive coping strategies are not easily detected, such as eating less and eating food of lower nutritional value, foregoing medical treatment or other such expenditures, and overexploiting natural resources (Pasteur 2011).

### **8.2.1 Farm based erosive livelihood strategies**

In trying to understand the individuals' livelihood strategies through the interviews, my study revealed that the major source of income and individual livelihood is farming. This involves the cultivation of crops for survival both for the domestic market and local consumption. However, it was discovered that this source of livelihood is at risk especially in the current post conflict situation. The respondents mentioned a lot of factors which range from political to economic factors that are central to depriving them of this livelihood opportunity.

First and foremost mentioned in the research by the respondents was that; farm based livelihood has been affected by the practice of land grabbing which refers to the practice where the wealthy evict the poor from their customary land on claims of lack of property rights. However, it should be remembered that before the war these individuals owned the land through customary arrangement as mentioned by Girling and Frank (1996) and therefore it should have followed that upon their return from the IDPS they should have ownership of the land. However, because these wealthy individuals have the money and political support, they evict these individuals from their land on claims of lack of land titles and ownership deeds. Therefore as mentioned in Chapter 2, this illustrates how political economy through power politics (power through the political support and economics through the wealth of money) determines land allocation in post conflict Acholi region and consequently undermining livelihoods opportunities for the returnees in Acholiland

Added to the above, the research revealed that, land based livelihood strategies are also been threatened through the rampant land wrangles among the returnees. A Land wrangle is used here to refer to the disagreements which arise about ownership of land among close relatives usually among children and their uncles and cousins. The issue of the land wrangles is as a result of the collapse in the traditional institutional framework during the war. Prior to the war traditional institutions through the core values of maintaining land allocation through household head as mentioned by Girling and Frank (1996) in Chapter 2 ensured that land was passed on to the children by the father. However, many of the young who currently form the largest proportion of the population lost their parents to the war and they do not know where their ancestral land. Such youth are left to disagree on land ownership since the tradition has died out. In most cases, such land normally goes to those members who are very influential in society or who have the power to influence the political and cultural setting to favour them and in most cases the victims are the vulnerable who lose their land to wealthy. This also

plays clearly to illustrate how political economy determine allocation of resources and choice of livelihoods among the individuals

The research revealed that land allocation and subsequently deriving livelihoods out of it is also influenced by the wider market forces within and without Uganda. Through commercial farming and quest to get money through the sale of land by the youth has influenced land allocation as lamented one of the respondents;-

*“We have a big problem in the community now, these young boys are now selling land to the rich for money and they use this money on useless things and thus they in the long run become landless” (Interview with Okot, July 2011)*

Apart from the above is commercial agriculture; though this was not widely practiced in Acholi before the war, currently a lot of companies are showing interests in the purchase of land. Using the arm of the government through changing the land tenure system and land ownership they gazette large tracks of land that belonged to the returnee thus depriving them of their ancestral land. A major case in point is the Madhvani Group of Companies in sugarcane plantation as mentioned earlier in Chapter 7 of this study. Commercial agriculture and the power politics and economics therein have influenced land allocation and therefore determined the livelihood strategies that individuals can get engaged.

However, having discussed how political economy influences land allocation below are the different forms of erosive farming livelihood strategies that the respondents perform especially those who still own land or get land through other arrangement such as clientalism and patronism and these include either mono-cropping or inter-cropping

#### **8.2.1.0 Mono-cropping**

Monoculture is the practice of growing one crop in the field over long periods of time with the sole aim of minimising on the tillage thus saving labor cost and increasing on crop output since there is not much competition from other crops as is in the practice with inter-cropping. Although sometimes very beneficial, mono-cropping has erosive impacts on both the soil and the economy as observed by (Amol 2005), With the benefits of mono-cropping came also a series of disadvantages related primarily to the concentration of agronomic and economic risks. Under a single cropping system, market prices and weather conditions may have drastic impacts on the overall performance of a system, because success can be greatly affected by the level of production and the effective marketing of a commodity. Adverse

conditions can have devastating effects. As such, a mono-cropping system may be much less resilient compared to more diversified cropping systems. The mono-cropping system concentrates the labor demand in short time periods during the year and may have greater negative impacts on long-term productivity due to decreasing soil quality (erosion, loss of organic matter and soil structure). Mono-crops are typically more vulnerable to chronic weed and insect problems. For example, selection for herbicide-resistant weeds is much more likely to occur in mono-cropping systems where only one or two herbicide chemistries are relied upon repeatedly over time for management of weeds.

The study revealed that some of the farmers practice mono cropping especially for the cereal crops such as sorghum, millet and this over the time has reduced fertility of their land and yields as well. With less yields then the output cannot match domestic consumption and this exposes them to famine in the future although in the short run it is beneficial.

#### **8.2.1.1 Inter-cropping**

Intercropping is considered as the practical application of ecological principles such as diversity, crop interaction and other natural regulation mechanisms. Intercropping is defined as the growth of two or more crops in proximity in the same field during a growing season to promote interaction between them. Available growth resources, such as light, water and nutrients are more completely absorbed and converted to crop biomass by the intercrop as a result of differences in competitive ability for growth factors between intercrop components. The more efficient utilization of growth resources leads to yield advantages and increased stability compared to sole cropping<sup>13</sup>. However, despite its advantages, intercropping has negative impacts on the soil and also the crops as well, first and foremost, the crops compete for sunlight and available nutrients among themselves and there are high chances of spread of diseases and pest infections which can ultimately affect crop yields in the long run. Secondly the rate at which the soil loses its fertility is very high compared to when mono cropping.

#### **8.2.1.3 Non-food crop cultivation**

Non food crops are grown in Awachi purely for the income purposes and the most common of these include sisal, cotton and tobacco. These crops are erosive in the nature because most

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.intercrop.dk/General.htm> intercropping of cereals and grain legumes for increased production, weed control, improved product quality and prevention of N-losses in European organic farming systems, downloaded on 25.06.2012

of them have high nutrient demands especially tobacco when planted for one year requires that the land be left to fallow for a minimum of three years to regain its fertility and besides the curing and processing of the tobacco is very demanding in fuelwood and thus is blamed for deforestation and cotton requires to be planted annually and is labour demanding besides its low market prices. Sissal which is a perennial crop requires that it be left to grow for a minimum of three years in the field before its harvest thus rendering the land unavailable for other crops.

These crops are not widely planted as sources of livelihoods and this is because of the low returns got from the and their demands on the soil and secondly, the failure of the government to promote the cultivation of these crops through setting minimum prices for their purchase, formation of cooperative union to support the farmers and deliberate government failure to market the crops in the international market has discouraged many from planting them. This therefore illustrates how politics, market prices as spelt out in political economy earlier have dictated on the livelihood options available to individuals interviewed.

#### **8.2.1.4 Sale of livestock**

The sale of livestock as source of income is a common practice that the individuals mentioned and this caters for the monetary demands of the family. As illustrated in Table 8.2, the most common livestock reared by the individuals is chicken and followed by goats. However, livestock rearing is purely influenced by the availability of land as and as mentioned earlier, access to land is influenced by the prevailing political and economic situation and those who do not have the power and money normally lose out and that explains why not many of the households rear animal. But those who do so acknowledge that, during times of hardship and financial need they sell some of the stock of livestock. This is an erosive strategy because it depletes that resource base of these individuals and if there are no mechanisms to replace what has been sold then the individuals risk losing their asset altogether and therefore in future eventualities may find it hard to cope with. Common in the region is the sale of birds and especially the chicken. According to the finding, a cock is sold at the local market is around 15.000Ugsh which is about 6 USD and a hen is sold around 10.000 Ugsh which is around 4 USD using the exchange rate 2500 Ugsh for a dollar at the time of the research while a hi goat is sold around 65.000 which is about 28 USD while in the regional market like the neighbouring Southern Sudan the prices are much more higher than



in the local market and most of the individuals who were interviewed thus opt to sell in neighbouring country other than the local market as emphasized by Vikky.

*Those who sale their animal here actually lose a lot because they get little money but when one goes and sale in Sudan you get twice as much. I only sale here when I really have an urgent emergency to attend to immediately otherwise I cannot waste my time selling my animal in this local markets (Interview with Vikky, July 2011)*

Thus once again, this illustrates how political economy through differential markets prices allocates resource flows within the country and in the regional market. Whereas the local market will have few of these livestock available for sale, the regional market will benefit more because of price differences and this has been clearly seen in Awachi where it is very rare to access goats' meat which is more nutritious because most of the goats are taken and sold in the markets in Southern Sudan

### **8.2.2 Brick laying**

Brick laying as is also a source of income for some of the respondents. Though not commonly reported it is normally done during the dry season from the months of December to March where the rains are not ample enough for agricultural production. Of the total number of respondents interviewed, only one acknowledged that bricklaying forms a major source of livelihood for him while the rest reported that it is not a practice they get involved in because of heavy demands of labour and besides the market is not readily available since people prefer to build houses using mud as opposite to the use of bricks. Brick laying is an erosive livelihood strategy because first and foremost, it degrades the soil since the top soil which supports plant growth is completely lost during the process of brick laying and secondly burning the bricks to make them ready for use require a lot of fuelwood and therefore the practice is blamed for the current trend of deforestation in the region.

Besides, brick laying as a livelihood strategy is influenced by the availability of land labor since it is labour intensive. Therefore those who practice it as a source of livelihood are those who own land and can afford to hire extra labour to supplement their own. It is therefore a livelihood option which is available to many since many cannot afford to pay for the extra cost of hiring labor thus illustrating how political economy determines livelihood options available for individuals.

### **8.2.3 Eating less**

In extreme cases, livelihood and survival strategies for individuals can be very devastating. According to the findings of the research, one of the strategies to save food during times of hunger is eating less. This is practice which is common among the widows who do not have any social support especially from the clan or the kin. According to Abongo, one of the respondents, who lost the husband and children during the war but now has returned and staying alone she says;

*I normally get food from ACDI VOCA ( one of the NGO's that deal in livelihoods of the vulnerable) and so I have to budget how I use the rationed food, instead of having two meals a day, I normally have one meal in the evenings (dinner) and for lunch I take tea. This is because if I eat twice a day, my food ratio will not take me up to the next time when they will supply more food (Interview with Abongo July 2011 Awachi)*

This habit of rationing food or eating less is erosive to the individuals and the disadvantage is that the individuals' body's ability to resist diseases is reduced besides the individual experiencing weakness as the body will lack enough energy and these make someone vulnerable to illness and such individuals cannot get involved in any productive activities. However, it should be noted that, this choice of strategy is not making of the individuals but the circumstances and environment with them dictates such strategies. The failure to have structures and institutions to cater for the poor, widows and the vulnerable in society determines and dictates such livelihood strategies

### **8.2.4 Harvesting wild fruits**

The research also revealed that one of the livelihood strategies is harvest of wild fruits and hunting for wild animals. The wild foods which are commonly hunted include –wilds greens, cassava leaves, and yams are normally consumed during the hunger gap (this is the period between the months of May, June and July in Gulu District Uganda where access to food is the most hardest because of the constant drought and famine in the region) in the region and Awachi sub-county particularly. The consumption of these wild fruits is erosive because it reduces on the natural resource base and some of these are environmentally unsustainable such as the harvest in the wetlands destroy the ecosystems of these environments and the hunting for the wild animals destabilises the ecosystem.

Harvest of wild fruits and hunting wild animals is culturally entrenched practice among the Acholi. As noted earlier, the Acholi are agro-pastoralists Girling and Frank (1996) who

depend on farming and hunting as well as keeping of animals. This practice of deriving livelihoods through hunting and gathering is purely cultural to the Acholi and it emphasizes how culture through its values and norms influences an individual's livelihood strategies as proposed by Tansley and O'Rordan (1999) discussed earlier in Chapter 2, to understand the role culture plays in shaping the way people behave and the activities they get involved in

### **8.3 Non erosive livelihoods strategies**

Non erosive livelihood strategies are those that do not have deplete the resource base of individuals and such strategies borrow from the saving or excess resources. According to Pasteur (2011), resilient households or communities pursue coping strategies which draw on excess, or liquid assets which have been stored up or saved for just such an eventuality (for example additional livestock, food stores or cash savings). Although this may diminish the total stock of assets, it will not undermine the future continuation of their livelihood. Therefore, once the period of exposure to stress or experience of disaster has passed and normal life has resumed, these assets can be rebuilt, replenished or repaid with relative ease. According to the findings of the research on non erosive livelihood strategies, the following were identified and these are as well influenced by the local customs, politics, institutions and the market as presented below:-

#### **8.3.1 Farm based non erosive livelihood strategies**

Farm based livelihood strategies are those that rely much on cultivation and livestock rearing. These form the major source of income and livelihood strategy as well as a strategy to cope with eventual shocks and stresses of life. Farm income as put forward by (Frank 2007), includes livestock as well as crop income and comprises both consumption-in-kind of own farm output and cash income from output sold. However, the availability of these farm income sources is influenced by the availability of land and the ability of an individual in monetary terms to use the land productively as well as the societal norms that guide resource allocation and wealth accumulation. Of the many, farm coping strategies identified by the research the following were the most commonly mentioned by the respondent which are non erosive according to the above categorisation. As mentioned earlier, some of these strategies are both erosive and non erosive depending on the context in which they are viewed and there is no clear cut distinction between erosive and non erosive especially for the farm based livelihood strategies

### 8.3.1.0 Inter-cropping

Throughout time and around the world, intercropping have been used to better match crop demands to available sunlight, water, nutrients, and labor. The advantage of intercropping over sole cropping (growing a single crop in a field) is that competition for resources between species is less than exists within the same species. Intercropping has a long history, and is employed in many regions. In tropical agriculture, for example, tall and short crops are grown together to maximize production. In arid regions, intercropping improves the conservation of water. According to (Walker and Ryan 1990), that diverse on farm cropping systems such as mixed cropping and field fragmentation takes advantage of complementarities between crops, variations in soil types and differences in micro-climates that ensure risk spreading with little loss in total income.

Inter-cropping should be noted here that it is a cultural practice among the Acholi, they have used the practice for many years to achieve benefits such as maximising output and benefits such as reducing labor costs as opposed to mono cropping. This practice therefore is an illustration of how culture as advocated by the constructivists has influenced the choice of livelihood strategies available to the Acholi and Awachi sub-county specifically

The field research revealed that, the individuals have used the practice of inter-cropping successfully for the maximisation of their outputs. A farmer has a choice between making mono-cropping and intercropping as illustrated in the Plate 8.1 below. In the right the farmer has opted for intercropping (cassava and maize), while in the left, the farmer opts for mono-cropping finger millet and according to Odong John, one of the respondents he had this to say about intercropping;-

*“When you plant different crops in the same field, you get a lot of yield from different crops. I normally intercrop cassava and maize, first the maize grows and within four months you are able to harvest it and while the cassava remains in the field for at least one more year, depending on the breed of the cassava planted. This allows and minimises my labour demands since the field will never require ploughing again apart from the weeding and weeding is not labour demanding. Secondly the cassava provides for cover and this reduces the water lost from the soil besides the fact that these crops take nutrients from the soil at different levels and therefore they do not compete with each other for the same nutrients”*  
(Interview with Odong John 2011)

However, in a way to Latace a mother of 5, she says; intercropping cassava has a different role that it plays especially during the times when she has not had enough harvest for the whole year,

*“In case of little or no produce especially during the times of drought, I rely heavily on cassava which is drought resistant crop. We feed on it and sell some to pay for the daily expenses such school as fees and for the cases of emergency such as medical bills” (Interview with Latace, July 2011)*

Therefore, in such cases intercropping cassava with other crops such as the beans, groundnuts and millet has the advantage in that you do not lose completely in harvest during times of drought and poor harvest since the cassava is drought resistant and therefore if one of the crops failed then the cassava compensates for the loss.

**Figure 7:Farming mechanisms, mono-cropping and intercropping**



*Field of Cassava intercropped with maize*



*Field of Finger Millet*

The above photo was taken from the field of Odong John one of the respondents and this illustrates how the practice of intercropping has helped to maximise yields and save labour demands on the individual's that have been interviewed. The crops stay for a long time period and cases of re-tilling the land are minimised as compared to the mono-cropping where after every harvest, there is need for re-tilling of the land as well as allowing the land for fallow since these farmers do not use fertilizers for the soil to boost the crop output

#### **8.3.1.1 Livestock keeping**

Livestock keeping forms one of the major sources of income for the communities and also supplements on income when they are sold and the common animals that are kept include; goats, cows and sheep at household levels while rearing of chicken is mostly for commercial

purposes especially through the improved breeds of chicken. Based on the interviews that were administered to the respondents, the following statistics was generated on the common livestock that is being reared by the farmers.

**Table 6: Individual Livestock holdings for 9 respondents**

	Individual Respondents								
Livestock	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Chicken	10	50	24	25	20	6	16	10	7
Goats	6	8	10	5	10	5	5	4	-

*Field work July 2011*

From the above table, it can be seen that, the most common bird reared is the chicken; this provides the extra diet for the individual household as well as selling some of it to get the extra source of income needed for the household.

Livestock rearing is a non erosive to the individuals' because it adds to the stock of wealth they have. These then can be used in cases of future eventualities, prior to the war, animal rearing and agropastoralism was the mainstay of the individuals, although it has completely reduced after the post war situation. Therefore agropastoralism is a culturally entrenched practice among the Acholi and it is thus true to assert that culture as advocated for by the constructivist has a defining role to play in choice of an individual's livelihood

However, livestock rearing is influenced by the availability of land that an individual has because the animals need enough grazing land and pasture. As stated earlier in Chapter 5, before the war, the Acholi communally owned land but not land has become a contentious issue where politics of power and accessibility are determined by market forces through the sale of available land for commercial farming or to the wealthy and local politics to the detriment of the most vulnerable in society and this politics has been manifested through the changing of land ownership rights and titles from customary to more formal titles which deprives and disadvantages the poor and the marginalised in society thus limiting their livelihood options and opportunities.

#### **8.3.1.1 Food storage system**

Culturally and traditionally, the Acholi normally store food in granaries during the times of harvest to carter for future eventualities in cases of drought and famine. However, due to the insurgency and the displacement, this trend changed. However, this cultural practice has not

died out completely, the research found out that, food is still being stored in bags on the floor or just in exposed piles on the floor. A third of these foods are got from relief aid, and part of it from production, and a few acknowledged to have purchased some of the stock of food. The most common items found in stock were maize which forms majority of the stock followed by beans and cassava. Emphasizing on the benefit of food storage, Okwera had this to say;-

*“When I harvest a lot of food at one given time or season, I normally don’t consume all of the food. I store some of the food in shacks and granaries to cater for the future when harvest is not good enough. The most common crops that I store include the finger millet, beans and groundnuts which can stay in the storage facility for three to four years. To make sure, your produce does not go bad, we normally use soda ash as a preservative” (Interview with Okwera July 2011)*

Food storage as a livelihood strategy has also been influenced by the fact that culturally it was a practice that existed among the Acholi for long periods of time because the norms and values that guide the society catered for storage. However, with the post conflict situation, though storage is still practiced, methods of storage have shifted from the traditional granaries to use of shacks and bags and purposes of the storage of food are more economic oriented in the form of speculating rise in prices of food stuffs in the future so that excess profits can be got during this time of scarcity when the stockpile can be sold.

However, caution has to be taken when considering this aspect of accumulation, although the research did not much focus on this, it is important to note that this accumulation and storage is purely an example of diversification for survival as opposed to diversification for accumulation of wealth

#### **8.3.1.2 Non food crop cultivation**

Though to a lesser extent some of the respondents reported that non food crops are also planted to supplement on their income since most of the food crops are grown purely for subsistence use. Therefore non food crops are grown to get an extra income that can cater for school fees for children, medical bills and other petty expenses at home. The research revealed that, the most common non food crops that are grown and which can be supported by the soil include among others sisal which is grown for its fibre and the cotton grown for the lint that is used for the manufacture of clothes. However, these have not been widely practiced owing to the fact that they have low market and low prices. This therefore

discourages most of the farmers from getting involved in their growing, albeit some of the farmers have effectively used the practice to supplement their income. Although this practice can erode the agricultural land base it however does not erode the resource and survival base of the individuals'.

The production of these crops therefore is purely determined by political economy as discussed earlier in Chapter 7, failure by the government to deliberately market this crops as a source of income and promoting their growth through policies such as subsidies, formation of farmers marketing boards among others limit their production and secondly the prices in the market place limits the involvement in production of these crops as a source of livelihood because they are extremely very low and thus discouraging many from venturing in these activities as a source of livelihood.

#### **8.4 Non-farm income and sources of livelihoods**

Rural wage employment or income refers to the income generated from involvement in activities other than the own farm and maybe in other people's farms or others forms of rural labour demands where the person involved is paid a sum of money for the service provided. Rural wage employment is non erosive because, it does not deplete on the available resource or the wealth base of the individual but instead acts a supplement.

According to Ellis (2007), non-farm or off-farm income typically refers to wage or exchange of labour on other farms (i.e. within agriculture). It also includes labour payments in cash such as the harvest share system and other non wage labour contracts that remain prevalent in many parts of the developing world. Several secondary sources of non farm income are commonly identified and these include;- nonfarm rural wage employment, nonfarm self employment, property income rents, urban rural remittances arising from within national boundaries and international remittances arising from cross-border and overseas migration. Though Ellis (2007), mentioned the above, the research findings revealed the following sources of income and livelihoods

##### **8.4.1 Thatching**

As discussed earlier in Chapter 4, Girling and Frank (1996), noted that the Acholi do not have permanent building being agropastoralists and living mostly in the savannahs and therefore, their houses are built using mud and grass and tree branches which has cultural roots. Thatching which is one of the processes in the construction of makeshifts involves tying of grass on the roof of the makeshifts to avoid the roof from licking during rainy season and to



provide shade during the dry season. Thatching which is a very popular activity among men because traditionally and culturally the women do not construct houses because it is the duty of the men. The cultural role of men and duty of constructing houses limits this source of income for the men and it illustrates how constructivists advocating for the consideration of culture in determining livelihoods as discussed in Chapter 2 plays a major role here

However, because of the current resettlement process, the activity is very popular now since people who are being resettled need makeshifts as shelter and the services of men who have the skills and time are hired to perform this activity especially during the evening hours after the completion of farm work. Thatching a house costs around Ugsh 50.000 (which is about 25 dollars). It takes an individual approximately 3 to 5 days to completely roof a house. This activity is non erosive because it is done on free time and does not deplete on one's own resource base.

#### **8.4.2 Causal labour in the farms**

Causal labour in other people's farms either than ones own in return for a pay is one of the most common ways of earning daily income when faced with shocks and stress among the Acholi as identified by the research. It has the advantage of getting an immediate income in times of hardship when all their options have failed as one of the respondents had this to say about the practice

*"I sometimes offer causal labour in other peoples farms in case I need money urgently and I can't raise it quick" (Interview with John, July 2011)*

This is also a way of settling disputes when an individual fails to pay back money borrowed from the colleagues. The borrower then offers his/her labour to work in the farm of the person who owes money to so that they can settle the debt.

Again this is purely a cultural practice among the Acholi which in not common in most societies and in case of using the practice for the administration of justice and settling of disputes, it is purely the chiefs role to rule it out as discussed in Chapter 4 of this study and this practice has worked well for the harmonious living among the societies and as a source of income it is also widely practiced and helps in provision of immediate source of income in times of hardships.

This practice therefore is culturally entrenched and it is the norms and values that guide its practice since therefore definite amounts for a size of farm activity in comparison to the

amount of money to be paid. It does not follow the forces of supply and demand as in other more formal markets but more with values and beliefs and therefore constructivist view of considering culture in analysing people's livelihoods plays a very imperative role here as discussed in Chapter 2 earlier

#### **8.4.3 Weaving and braiding**

Weaving and braiding the hair, is one of the traditional ways of maintaining beauty among women. Hair is either weaved or braided and in different designs and styles, it is mostly the youthful girls who braid the hair though the elderly also practice it at minimal levels and this activity is performed by women after their domestic work. However, the research revealed that the activity is not popular among those who were interviewed. However those who acknowledged getting involved in weaving and braiding hair says this is a good and major source of income after crop cultivation as reported by Grace;-

*"After my farm work, I normally come here in the trading center to look out to women who want to braid their hair. I rent this room so that they can come and I braid their hair. Braiding women hair helps me to get the extra income to supplement what I get from agriculture. Normally my agricultural produce is basically for feeding and the braiding helps me to buy some of the necessities such as paraffin (Kerosine), pay for medical bills, paying school fee for my children and I like it and do it when i have the available time" (Interview with Grace, July 2011)*

Braiding and weaving is both a culturally practice among the Acholi and therefore the activity is only limited to the women however, the men get involved in hair shave. It is normally unusual to find men braid hair and secondly, getting involved is also value packed, as reported by Grace above she normally does the activity when she has the free time after house work but most women in society during the evening hours are suppose to prepare dinner and do not therefore have that 'free time' to get involved in such activities as sources of livelihood and also the cultural belief that it is suppose to be the women to braid the hair limits the involvement of men in this activity as source of income and a livelihood strategy.

#### **8.4.4 Rural trade**

Rural trade is one of the ways of income diversification; it involves the resale of groceries, food stuffs in shops or in the local market. Most of those interviewed says they do not practice trade since it requires a start up capital while only one person says he does trade where he sells groceries to the community and this increases and offsets some of his expenses

However, for Min Ocira, an elderly lady who deals in food stuffs acknowledges that she earns pretty from the business, according to her;-

*“This is a very important source of livelihood for me because I get involved in buying produce during the harvest and which produce I sell during the times of scarcity. Through this I have been able to expand my business and pay schools fees for my children and some of the money I take into the bank as saving” (Interview with Min Ocira July 2011)*

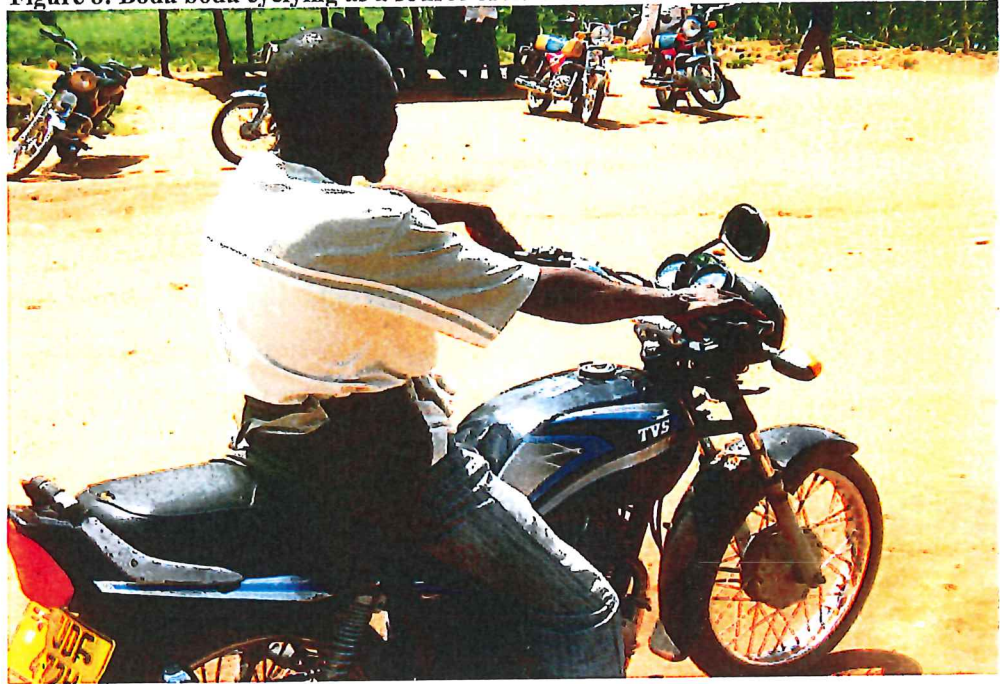
Rural trade as source of livelihood is economically constrained to those who have the start up capital. The initial capital is lacking for most of those who were interviewed though many expressed interest to practice it and there are high risks involved in this source of livelihoods such as theft which many fear. This once again illustrates how political economy as discussed earlier in Chapter 2 dictates on which livelihoods these individuals can pursue because this is specifically for those who can afford to have the initial capital

#### **8.4.5 Boda Boda Cyclists (Provision of local transport using motor bikes)**

Boda boda as shown in Plate 8.2 below is a local word meaning use of motorbikes for provision of local transport between the trading centre and Gulu District Headquarters and other destinations within. It is a very popular activity among the men and young youthful population and according to the findings most of those interviewed own motor bikes which they use themselves to transport people to their required destination or they contract someone to do the business on agreed contract to pay them either weekly or daily. This forms a big source of income for the individuals since it raises money quickly and besides the motor bike can be used to borrow money from the bank when it is offered as security. As Raymond one of the respondents reports;-

*“I earn about 500.000Ugsh (about 200 US dollars) annually and half of this income goes to education for the children and the rest of the money is for domestic use and some part I save it for cases of emergency such as sickness and death. To me this is my major source of income; because I have daily income and can be able to meet eventualities and the save some money to buy the spare parts in case the motorbike breaks down” (Interview with Raymond July 2011)*

**Figure 8: Boda boda cycling as a source of livelihood**



*Field research July 2011*

### **8.5 Social capital as a coping strategy**

Conflicts destroy social capital particularly elements such as bonds of trust within communities, relations of reciprocity, shared social norms and rules, and social networks. Cliffe and Luckham (2000), refer to the 'subtle and corrosive impact of conflicts on societies, the rules and practices of politics and upon institutions, or what others term social capital. Azarya claims that the 'moral economy of exchange' breaks down during long periods of stress and scarcity (cited in Harvey, 1997: 17), as do Frankenberger and Garrett (1998: 6). Carbonnier writes

*The social and cultural disintegration of war-torn societies has a dramatic impact on the economy. In the absence of minimal political stability, mutual trust, and respect for property and the rule of law, economic relations break down. This in turn may have multiplier effects on the fall of domestic production and income (1998: 14) as cited in (Schafer 2002).*

History has shown us that societies are always fragile processes changing from time to time and for almost two decades, the society – or more accurately, societies – in Northern Uganda

have suffered displacement, dislocation, and the fear and terror brought about by a long and brutal civil war, Nordstrom (2006). Illustrating on the same, Putnam & Frank (1993), note that circumstances of fear and destruction necessarily impact on family structures, social networks, and the social capital in the community. However, they also noted that, social capital is a multidimensional term encompassing features of social organisation (such as trust, norms, and networks) that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions.

From the above points of view, it is important to note that, the existence and durability of social capital is therefore crucial to a successful, equitable and sustainable return process. Before the war as noted Finnstrom & Sverker (2003), the Acholi and the other ethnic groups of Northern Uganda were organised in chiefdoms and clans and oriented towards patrilineal descent. This organisation ensured the smooth running of the society and that all the vulnerable were taken care of in the society. The lack of a clear and strong social order may also influence the degree to which youth will settle down in rural communities in the event of a comprehensive peace agreement for Northern Uganda. Many youths in northern Uganda grew up in the camps and know little about traditional rural life. Without a legitimate social order kept in place by well-respected traditional leaders, one could easily imagine a situation with an alienated segment of youth. It cannot be overstated that the population emerging out of the IDP camps is significantly different from the one that went into them (Oxfam 2007).

As stated above the social fabrics in the Acholi sub region have collapsed altogether but some new forms of social organisations which are formal are cropping while other groups and societal members still rely on the old social order for support. The following are the social coping mechanisms which were identified by the research and some can be erosive while others are not and these social formations are political and economically oriented as presented below:-

#### **8.5.1 Reliance on kin**

Relying on the kin is common in most African societies, during times of stress and shocks, the victims normally look to close relatives, friends and family members for support. The Acholi tribe as discussed in chapter 5 of this study, are people who believe in communalism. The society is embedded and intertwined within and without. The closest social networks are the family and then this extends to the uncles and distant cousins. This social system is based on mutual trust and helps in dealing with issues of vulnerabilities in cases of stress and shocks. Although the reliance on kin and family members is fading in the post conflict

Acholi, some individuals still rely heavily on it as found out by the research and the following statement illustrates its importance in among the individuals interviewed.

*"I personally feel close to my family members and in times of problems, I first contact them before I can approach other people because I know, my family members are more than willing to help me than outside people and this has been there among us before the war and I believe this is how things are suppose to run now that the war has ended and we need each even more than we needed before"* (Interview with Okwera Lawit 2011)

This clearly illustrates how culture and political economy as discussed earlier in Chapter 2 defines social support among the individuals through the shared norms of communalism and common values of the family as a unit of support and mutual trust. However, not every individual in the society, shares the closeness of the family members as Okwera Lawit

*"Because of the war, some of them (the youths) have lost their close relatives and family members during the war. To them, the society is completely broken down and they cannot rely on any member of the society but instead they turn to other social networks in bids of building new trusts in the post conflict situation"* (Interview with John July 2011)

The above quotation however, shows how dynamic societies as are, they keep on changing depending on the political, economic and social setting, the formation of new social networks by the youths is just an illustration of one and shows how political economy plays role in post conflict strategies of coming out of stress and shocks

To illustrate how the formation of new social networks which might be more formal than informal as was in the pre-war situation in Acholi are important in situation of shocks and trends and stresses, Joyce says:-

*"For me, I lost all my kin during the war, and when faced with problems, I prefer to turn to group support especially the women group since they understand my situation better as being a member of the organisation. I do not trust other people because when you normally tell people your problems, they tend to laugh at you and go spreading it to other people and then the whole village will know what happens with you. I do not like that and that is why I only contact the group members"* (Interview with Joyce July 2011)

The two contrasts above have clearly showed how the war, has disrupted the previously socially embebbed society to one that is disintegrating. To Okwera, he has the social support

from the family and can easily rely on the kin but to Joyce, the war has had its impacts where she has lost all the kin and left to rely on social networks and build new ones for survival and to maintain sustainable livelihood.

It also illustrates that, social networks and support are circumstantial and situational, relying on shared values, morals and cultural values, while Okwera still believes and acknowledges the role of cultural Acholi values of mutual support for each other during the times of war, to Joyce, she has opted for the formation and reliance on new social networks which are cropping up and the values are group support and trust for each other.

### **8.5.2 Patronism and clientalism**

This is an arrangement where an individual borrows land for cultivation for a specific period of time and make appreciations through kind and it is common among the Acholi owing to the communal and patrilineal nature of the society where the right to own land is transferred from the father to the children. Despite the above arrangement some people do not have land and therefore, they rely on patronism. Through this practice, those who do not have land for cultivation are able to plant some crops for their subsistence production. This was a common practice during the times before the war, however, from the finding of the research this practice has faded although some people practice it.

To Oyaka Raymond, his patron has been very good to him providing him a piece of land for cultivation as well as financial support and counsel of what crops can grow well at a given seasons

*“My landlord from whom I rent land for the cultivation of my crops helps me a lot especially in educating me what crops to plant in a given season and how I can use the land productively for better yields. At times of hardship, he also gives me financial support to buy seeds and counsels me a lot” (Interview with Oyaka Raymond, July 2011)*

Patronism and clientalism are practices which are entrenched and founded on specific beliefs of mutual trust and social embeddedness and this are values which are normally culturally attached to a specific society. Therefore in the post conflict Acholi, the cultural believe in social support have seen these practices thrive even in the post conflict Acholi sub region as found out by the research and therefore form a major livelihood stream in times of stress and shocks

### **8.5.2 Reliance on chiefs**

Apart from the reliance of clients and the land for livelihood support and social networks, the research found out that most of the respondents also relied on the chiefs for various reasons. To many, Chiefs have been there before the war providing mediations, advice, justice and link to the wider government society as discussed earlier in Chapter 5. Although, the role that these chiefs played is diminishing, they are still central to the individuals' because they provide social support for the members as reported by Otto Vikky;

*"The chiefs have been very instrumental to us especially during the early days of our resettlement because they helped to settle land disputes and also mobilising labour among the community for the construction of roads" (Interview with Vikky, July 2011)*

However, many do not share the views of Vikky, they accuse the chiefs of being biased and failing to mediate well as lamented Kidega Francis based on the land dispute that was settled by the chiefs where, he lost the case

*"I do not turn to the chiefs for any help any more during the times of hardship because the chiefs themselves are corrupt and they care for the people who are close to them not us who are not related to them. They are easily bribed by money to rule cases in favour of those who give them money".*

The lack of trust among the chiefs for social support and mediation purposes could be as a result of changing nature of the economy. As lamented above by Kidega Francis, they easily be bribed for rule cases in favour of those who have the money illustrates how power politics is played out in justice among societies and how the money influences affairs in society.

### **8.5.3 Associations and clubs**

Apart from the above coping strategies for livelihoods, is the existence of associations and clubs, before the war these were based on the social networks and family lineage where, members of the same family tree would organise themselves and have turns to dig for each other at turns during the times of ploughing, planting, and harvesting and though this still exists, as found by the research, it is not common as it used to be before the war; However, Mini Oceni mother of four had this to say;

*"We have a local close family association and during ploughing season, we organise to go and dig in one person farm and the following day, we go to another person farm and through this I was able to increase the acerage of my planted farm since I could not manage to do it*



*alone. In this group one can also be able to borrow money from the neighbour since we feel close to each other and we share our problems together” (Interview with Mini Ocenti July 2011)*

This illustrates how the role politics lays in the society, starting with the family unit as a way of survival during hardship and this is as well guided by the shared common norms and values of the society

However, as clearly pointed out such social networks are dying out because of the complete breakdown in the social structure during the war and now there are new faces of social associations. Most of these are now being formed by the local NGO's and the government, with the efforts of bringing societies together to solve their issues during times of hardship. Atim Latace, a mother of four says

*“I belong to an association called the single mothers club and through this association it is easy for us to get help from the NGO's and the government. They provide us with seeds, distribute food ratios, help treat our children and teach us to start small scale businesses through provision of start-up capital”*

To Mini Ocira, she says, clubs have also been a good way of coming out of cases of hardship, although she is not actively involved in them, she acknowledges that her daughter belongs to such clubs,

*“Yes I have a daughter, who stays with me and she belongs to a club called Child mothers club. Through this club, she gets benefits both emotional and financial that helps us. They provide counselling services to her and help to teach her tailoring skills and she also belongs to another club called 'Boi cup'. A local Credit and Saving Club, in this club they collect saving which help members during times of hardship especially funerals” Field research 201.*

The emergency of the new associations and clubs as discussed earlier are economically oriented such as the Credit and saving club to which Mini Ocira's daughter belongs, it is informed by the current economic benefits since each member borrows from the scheme at a profit though at reduced interest and these are as well relied on values and shared as advocated by political economists

## **8.6 Humanitarian and relief aid as a livelihood strategy**

Humanitarian aid has been the main stay for these individual for long periods of time and it is one of the non erosive livelihood strategies as it does not deplete their asset base and some of these aid comes in the following ways;-

### **8.6.1 Humanitarian aid and return package**

Humanitarian aid and relief forms one of the basic survival livelihood strategies, during the war, the Acholi relied a lot in food ratios from the NGO's and the government alike. These food aids is distributed in the form of food stuffs, provision of medical services, security to mention but a few. During the post conflict situation, the government and relief agencies however have continued to provide for relief assistance as discussed in Chapter 4 and 5. This food aid is seen in the form of humanitarian relief, seed fair and provision of advice and counselling services to these returnee. During the research process, I asked the Local Council III chairman about the governments and NGOs role in the return process and he noted that;-

*'the government has provided great support for the returnees, normally during the repatriation from the camps, these individuals are provided with iron sheets, food ratio and some cash which can make them kick start life in their ancestral places. They just don't bring them and leave them with nothing. However the problem is that, these individuals normally sell off such stuff for cheap money which they use for drinking alcholo and in few days they have nothing to rely on to start life' (Interview with LC III Chariman Awachi Sub-county 2011).*

However, after the initial return package, there is continues support from the NGO's and this is normally directed to those most vulnerable in society such the HIV/AIDS victims in the form of food ratio to boost their immune system to the disease as illustrated in the plate 8.3 below;-

**Figure 9: Food aid distribution to vulnerable in Awachi sub-county**



*Source: Field research July 2011*

### **8.6.2 Agricultural promotion for sustainable livelihoods**

As discussed earlier in Chapter 4 and 5, agricultural promotion has been one of the ways the government has adopted to promote sustainable livelihoods in Awachi and this is through the two government programmes promoting recovery in northern Uganda namely:- National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF). The latter is managed by the World Bank and entered its second three-year phase in 2011 with an annual budget of \$100 million. Other programmes include USAID's Northern Uganda Development of Enhanced Local Governance Infrastructure and Livelihoods (NUDEIL), a \$30 million three-year programme operating in three districts and the European Union's \$20 million Agricultural Livelihood Recovery Project (ALREP), a two-year programme in ten districts. The African Development Bank is contributing to rural infrastructure. The Japanese government is working with the Ugandan government to improve infrastructure, while Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Ireland are giving direct budget support to the government in addition to supporting NGOs (IDMC interview with UNDP, November 2010) (IDMC 2012).

From the above discussions and presentation, I then present the conclusions and recommendations from the research in the following chapter

## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

#### **9.0 Introduction**

The Chapter discusses the finding and the suggested solutions of the research on vulnerability and resilience in Awachi Sub County. It discusses the relationship between theoretical and conceptual approaches and the study; conclusions from the study and finally the recommendations

#### **9.1 Relationship between the theoretical approaches and the study**

Two major academic inspirations were used for this research and these are political economy and constructivism. These perspectives helped in understanding the causes of vulnerability and how it is produced and reproduced. Political economy which formed the basic inspiration for this research helped to explain vulnerability of the individuals in relation to the wider political and economic structure and how markets produce and reproduce vulnerability and how the institutions that govern society cause differential vulnerability while constructivists view try to explain how culture produces vulnerability and specifically, the writings of Waldavsky and Douglas were very instrumental in this research in trying to understand vulnerability. The study revealed that, culture has been very central in producing and reproducing vulnerability in this post conflict situation through the practice of 'land grabbing' where the vulnerable such as the widows and the young are denied access to their ancestral land. While lack of adequate government initiative to provide security for the people has exposed them to situations such exposure to landmines.

Through an analysis based on political economy and constructivism, it was revealed by the research that, the individuals have tried to cope with stress and shocks through political, economical and cultural adjustments as discussed in Chapter 8. This has been further illustrated by the writings of Kates' who acknowledges that; social systems adjust to changes and she gives examples in cropping patterns and food storage techniques. The findings of the research revealed that, the individuals have adapted to shocks and trends through majorly relying on cultivation and farm based techniques. Findings on this relate to how individuals do intercropping as opposed to mono-cropping to maximise out, collection of wild fruits and

vegetables, forging new social networks in the face of collapse of the old networks and deriving new nonfarm techniques of survival such as 'bodaboda' transport provision for earn extra money to carter for eventualities.

Apart from the above academic perspectives on vulnerability, the study also employed the livelihood framework to analyse the data and specifically, of importance to the research in the framework was the vulnerability context of the framework, which puts emphasis on what makes people vulnerable, the stock of their assets and how they interchange those assets to gain meaningful livelihoods. Findings on this revealed that, vulnerability in the area is closely defined and looked at in terms of the conflicts because it has had far reaching consequences for on livelihoods. Most respondents interviewed, defined and perceive of vulnerability in relation to security threats and other factors such as poor sanitation, poverty, disability were also considered though considered secondary when talking about vulnerability in the sub-county. On assessing the livelihood assets, the findings revealed that, majority of the respondents had enough land but while they lacked in other aspects of the assets portfolio. Social capital was completely lacking especially the traditional practice of relying on kin during times of hardship had died out altogether and people were trying to forge new forms of social networks which are more formal than informal. Finally, because of the much reliance on the land most of the livelihood strategies available to the respondents were land based and with little financial capital because borrowing schemes and money lending institutions were still missing in this post conflict situation though a few existed.

## **9.2 Conclusion of the study**

The study was focused on vulnerability in post conflict situation. The major emphasis was on Awachi Sub County in Gulu district which is a site where a greater percentage of the people who have been living in IDP have returned to their ancestral places after the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in 2006 with the then Lords Resistant Army rebels under the command of Joseph Kony and the Government of Uganda.

### **9.2.1 Understanding vulnerability**

In contrast to the perceived academic underpinnings on vulnerability, this study reveals that; time and place influences how different people explain events around them. To the respondents in Awachi, vulnerability is more related to insecurity than the other parameters such poverty, lack of formal education, gender, age among others. It is because the civil war created state of fear among the respondents. Other natural events do play a central role in

incapacitating individuals but do weigh much as the impact of civil though are very central in understanding the cumulative impact of individual vulnerability and these included disability because of the chronic poverty created by the war, diseases both for the humans and the animal leading to high mortality rates.

Finally, the research revealed that, the war has marginalised the region as a whole and Awachi sub county in particular, the government and politicians have not contributed a lot for the communities, most of the respondents claim that the war was orchestrated by the government to fight the Acholi and therefore since the start of the war up to date, there has been deliberate neglect by the government

### **9.2.2 Individual stock of assets**

The study revealed that, there is no proper balance in the stock of assets that individual interviewed have, most had enough land for cultivation while lacking in other assets, social capital which formed the major survival strategy prior to the war has completely been eroded and much reliance is now based on the development aid and forging new alliance and social networks. Because of the availability of land, most of the survival strategies are based on land. Physical assets have been completely destroyed and though efforts are being made to reconstruct them through government policies such as PRDP, and agricultural livelihood reconstruction through NAAD and NUSAF, the pace has not been an impressive with a lot of mismanagement of funds. In relation to the land, the rudimentary and traditional agricultural farming methods are still widely practiced and hunting for wild fruits and vegetable as means to survive especially when faced with situations of hunger and drought are common strategies and choices available to these individuals

### **9.2.3 Livelihood strategies**

Most of the livelihood techniques have been influenced by the possession of land and land therefore forms the major survival strategy. Traditional food storage mechanisms have been displaced altogether and there is much reliance on relief food which even aggravates the hunger crisis in the region.

Most of the livelihood strategies are very erosive and this could result into severe consequences in the future if better livelihood options are not opened up for these individuals

### **9.3 Recommendations**

Based on the field findings and discussions, the researcher has proposed the following recommendations

### **9.3.0 Land tenure designation and registration**

The findings revealed that, land is the major asset base for these individuals but however, this stream of deriving livelihood has been threatened by the practice of land grabbing most by the wealthy and rich as well as multinational companies. I therefore propose that land ownership which is a contentious issue in the region at the moment should be dealt with by the government through strengthening the capacity of the local clan leaders who are the immediate administrators of justice in this region. There should also be deliberate steps to harmonise between the different land ownership schemes in Uganda since this has been the major cause of land ownership in the region. Customary land ownership should be acknowledged and land titles issued to this individual in the legal system.

### **9.3.1 Planning for programmes**

According to the research, it was revealed that, most of the programmes implemented were either designed without the consultation of the individuals or the returnees which explains the failure or minimal success of such programmes such as PRDP, NAADS and NUSAF and therefore, the researcher recommends that;- in designing projects and programmes aimed at building people's capacity to sustainable livelihoods, there is need to build the capacity of community members and institutions to analyse their situation and to plan and implement relevant activities to strengthen them. It is important for external stakeholders to build local capacity at all stages so that processes of analysis, planning and implementation can be community led and can be sustained and repeated without external support in the future.

### **9.3.2 Return package**

The findings revealed that the returnee package was in the form of iron sheets and food stuffs, cash payments were not considered and this made most of the returnees to sell these items for cash; and therefore the research recommends that, advantage should be taken of giving one or more cash payments to returnees as part of resettlement packages, in lieu of other items, so that they can spend the money according to their own priorities, needs, and interests. Meanwhile the government and donors should focus on building or rehabilitating institutions for basic social service delivery and key infrastructure in return areas, since this is clearly of concern to returnees.



### **9.3.3 Restoration of human rights**

Restoration of human rights, including property and identity, there has been complete breakdown in the security situation and this leads to abuse of human rights. Many men have raped women in the villages and go unpunished as the women try involve in livelihood streams such as fetching water, collecting fuel wood and if human rights is restored and security situation improved, it will allow for proper and meaningful engagement in livelihood strategies.

### **9.3.4 Infrastructure recovery**

During the war, there has been complete breakdown in the infrastructure in the region and as people are returning, this has had negative impact on livelihood as there are no roads, health centres, and market structure among other. Therefore, deliberate steps have to be taken to the path of infrastructure recovery by the government and other leading organisation. Major areas which need immediate attention in the sub-county include;- clean water provision preferably piped water, sanitation through sensitisation in primary health care to avert obvious diseases such as cholera which are as a result of poor sanitation, issues of proper shelter for the returnee has to be implemented and this could be through a loan scheme and contracting constructors and finally transportation in the form of provision of better access paths such as roads to allow these returnees and individuals market their produce;

### **9.3.3 Agricultural rehabilitation**

People's livelihoods in this areas are agricultural based and mostly on farming as revealed by the research. Therefore deliberate steps should be taken to improve on this rural environment to enhanced and promote systems and technologies to improve agricultural production. The current programmes though are helpful but have not been need specific and design based on perceptions of academia. Deliberate integration efforts should be implemented; I will propose participatory approach especially in designing agricultural programmes to include the individuals and the returnee since through their involvement support for such programmes and their monitoring can be ensured

In relation to the above, livelihoods should also be diversified; over-reliance on agriculture may place livelihoods at risk in the event of a shock. Possible areas for diversification could include aquaculture farming, forestry through the planting of pin trees which has flourished in most parts of Uganda and other income-generating activities such as the bodaboda should be promoted by the government through the provision of loan schemes for those who would like to get involved in the business since the initial start up capital cannot be afforded by many.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Interview guide to respondents

#### Basic Information

Age

Sex

Education level

Occupation

#### Perceptions of vulnerability and its causes

What do you consider vulnerability to mean?

What exposes you to risky situations?

What environmental vulgarises do you normally encounter

How do government policies expose you to risky situation?

What economic hardships do you normally encounter in your life?

How has the war affected you and increased your level of vulnerability?

#### Asset portfolios

What assets or resources do you have as an individual?

How did you acquire these resources?

What role does the traditional institutions play in allocating resources?

How are the vulnerable such as the widows the young taken care to ensure that they have access to resources?

What social claims do you make during the times of hardships?

Whom do you immediately ran to in times of hardship which is beyond your capacity to handle?

Do you get and benefits from outside other than your own?

If yes, could you spell out some of them?

#### Livelihood strategies

How do you use your land as a resource to derive livelihood?



Do you involve yourself in any other activities apart from farming?

If yes, what are these activities?

What food storage mechanisms do you use?

How useful are these in helping you during the times of hardship?

Do you belong to any associations or organisation from whom you can ask for help when faced with problems?

## Appendix 2

### Interview guide to the key respondents

#### **Basic information**

Organisation

Role in the organisation

Programmes the organisation is involved in within the communities

Areas and locations of operation within the district

#### **Vulnerability**

What are the immediate factors that make individuals vulnerable?

How are you helping communities and individuals come out of situations of shocks and stresses in life?

What constrains your operations?

Are there any political and economic factors that influence vulnerability of individuals within communities where you operate?

If yes, what are they?

How do you try to overcome them?

#### **Assets**

What are the most common assets among communities where your organisation has operations?

How is your organisation helping communities to build on their asset base?

What problems do individuals face in accessing assets to derive livelihoods?

#### **Livelihood strategies**

What livelihood programmes do you implement among communities?

How successful are these programmes?

Appendix 3

Introduction Letter from NTNU

NTNU  
Norwegian University of  
Science and Technology

Faculty of Social Science  
and Technology Management  
Department of Geography



To whom it may concern

Our consultant: Geir Sund Fossum  
Telephone no.: +47 7359 79 48  
E-mail: geir.fossum@st.ntnu.no

Date: 6/18/2011

Our ref:

Your letter ref:

Your ref:

Letter of introduction

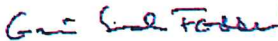
We hereby confirm that Eimmanuel Viga is a student on the programme *Mphil in Development Studies specialising in Geography* at the Department of Geography, Norwegian University of Science and Technology.

He will undertake his fieldwork and data collection during June - August of 2011 in Uganda, on the topic:

*Vulnerability and resilience of communities to natural disasters in a post conflict situation; a case of Acholi sub-region in Uganda*

We would be grateful for any assistance given to him during this process. This includes granting interviews, assisting him in making appointments, handing out materials and making information accessible to him.

Yours sincerely,

  
Geir Sund Fossum  
Higher Executive Officer/ Student adviser  
Department of Geography



Address  
N 7481 Trondheim  
Norway

Location  
NTNU, Høgskol  
bygg 7, 2304

Tel: +47 73 59 18 10  
Fis: +47 73 59 18 28  
Dep. W: NO271 767 9311

Appendix 4

Letter of Introduction from LC III Chairman, Awachi Subcounty



AWACHI SUB-COUNTY  
P.O. Box 81 Gulu  
21-07-2011

RE: UGA KAMUKUN

This is to certify that the above mentioned named person is a student in Norwegian University of Science and Technology. He approached my office (LC III) to conduct a research on the vulnerability and Resilience of community to natural disaster in post-conflict situation - Acholi Sub-region. When he appears your office, please give him a full support in especially areas of interest for his research.

I would be grateful when you cooperate with him until the end of his research.

Thanks

in witness

~~Handwritten signature~~  
DIKA SIMON MUKUN  
LC III chairman  
TEL 074 - 756699

