

**LOCAL PEACE-BUILDING INITIATIVES: A CASE STUDY OF CONCERNED
PARENTS' ASSOCIATION IN LIRA MUNICIPALITY.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, **Idraku Charles**, hereby declare that this study is my original work and has, to the best of my knowledge, never been submitted for the award of a degree or any other award in a University or other institutions of higher learning.

Signature.....

Idraku Charles

Date.....

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this study has been carried out under my supervision, was submitted for examination, and duly corrected after defense with my full knowledge and approval.

Signature.....

Supervisor: Dr. Dominic Dipio

Date.....

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, and the Missionaries of Jesus the Divine Master (MIDM).

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ABBREVIATIONS

APC	Armored Personnel Carriers
BOT	Board of Trustees
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CCYA	Concerned Children and Youth Association
CPA-U	Concerned Parents' Association-Uganda
DBC	District Branch Committee
FAC	Formerly Abducted Children
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCO	Inter-Church Council for Development Organization
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IGA	Income Generating Activities
KIH	Kampala International Hospital
LRA	Lords' Resistance Army
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MSF	Medicines sans Frontiers
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
No.	Number
NRA	National Resistance Army
"O" Level	Ordinary Level
PPT	Presidential Peace Team
PSG	Parents' Support Group
Reg.	Registration
SciU	Save the Children in Uganda

SCU	Sponsoring Children in Uganda
SPLA	Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army
TOT	Trainer of Trainees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UPDF	Uganda Peoples' Defense Force

ABSTRACT

The overall objective of this study was to assess the contribution of, and challenges faced by, CPA-U in its peace-building efforts in Lira Municipality as a case study. In so doing, it concentrated on the organizations' programs of rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, psychosocial support of war-affected families and communities, and community reconciliation.

The study revealed that according to the majority of the respondents, the work being done by CPA-U has a positive impact on the lives of the beneficiaries. The general implication of this is that the beneficiaries are appreciative of the efforts of CPA-U towards peace-building within Lira Municipality. However, despite the above fact, the majority still rated its work in relation to the above programs as only fairly successful. This implies that they believe the organization has not achieved its optimum performance level and can still do better with a little more effort and commitment.

According to the research, the impact of CPA-U on peace-building has been compromised by a number of factors which are individual related in respect to the returnees, community related, organizational related in respect to CPA-U itself, and government related.

In view of the above findings, the study proposes that for CPA-U to have a positive impact on peace-building within Lira Municipality, it must make appropriate adjustments in relation to the funding of its activities, personnel capacity development and job description especially with regard to the role of the BOT. In addition, the study recommended the need for teamwork and networking among all the stakeholders in the peace-building process within the conflict zone. This requires the active involvement of both the core parties and the other external players in the conflict situation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction.

Local Peace-building initiatives have always been a major conflict resolution strategy in different parts of the world. This is particularly true and of paramount importance in areas and cases where conflicts have degenerated into gross violations and abuse of human rights, thus, causing immense suffering to innocent people and destruction of property.

One such peace-building initiative is the effort being made by Concerned Parents' Association-Uganda (CPA-U) in the northern Uganda conflict between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). This study presents research findings on the contribution of, and challenges faced by, CPA-U in its peace-building efforts in Lira Municipality. Lira Municipality was specifically chosen because it is where both the head office and Lira branch office of CPA-U are located and therefore could easily be accessed for information needed for the research.

The Thesis is divided into six chapters with each having sub-titles derived from the major themes of the research investigation. The study assessed the impact of CPA-U on the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees into their communities, psychosocial support of the war affected families and communities, and community reconciliation. The study findings are presented mostly in narrative and table form with a few pictures depicting some of the activities of CPA-U in relation to the major themes of study.

1.1 Background.

CPA-U is a child-focused organization spontaneously formed in 1996 by a group of parents affected by the abduction of their children by the LRA in northern Uganda. One

hundred and thirty-nine secondary schoolgirls of St. Mary's College-Aboke were abducted on the night of the 34th Independence Anniversary of the Republic of Uganda in October 1996. CPA-U is registered with the National NGO Board (Reg. No. S.5914/2417) as a local NGO. The organization has its head office in Lira town with district branches in Kitgum, Pader, Gulu, Apac, Lira and a liaison office in Kampala (CPA Brochure).

The war in northern Uganda between the government and the LRA led by Joseph Kony had raged on for the last two decades now and it has had a devastating effect on the local community and the parties involved. It has caused untold suffering, with hundreds killed and maimed, children abducted and made into child soldiers and sex slaves, while the majority of the people live in deplorable conditions in Internally Displaced Peoples' (IDP) camps. Highlighting on the insurgency in northern Uganda, the Amnesty International Report (2004, p.88) details the effect of the then seventeen-year-old conflict. The report notes that little progress had been made, despite attempted peace talks initiated between the Presidential Peace Team (PPT) and the LRA, with the involvement of religious leaders. Instead the scale of the insurgency increased and with it was the spread of the humanitarian crisis in the region. This forced bands of vigilante youths like the "Arrow Boys" in Teso, and the "Rhino Boys" in Lira to organize and arm themselves in support of the Uganda Peoples' Defense Forces (UPDF) to hunt down the LRA fighters. The failure of the UPDF to repel the rebels has created skepticism in as far as the political will of the government in ending the conflict is concerned.

In its report on the same, the Human Rights Watch World Report (2004, p.219) stated that the success in the global campaign against the use of child soldiers seems to take a slow pace. The report mentions the abduction rates in northern Uganda as having

reached record level in late 2002 and 2003. During this period alone, eight thousand boys and girls were forced by the LRA to become soldiers, laborers, and sex slaves.

According to Temmerman, D.E (2001, p. vii), “The roots of the conflict go back to the period of colonial rule: the British administration recruited most of its civil servants from the south and most of its soldiers from the north. The people of the northern region (the Acholi and Langi) were made into the country’s military elite.” This initial mistake, although it set a bad precedence that continues to haunt the political landscape of the country, cannot be a justification for the political and economic decadence of the country as presented by the author. If people are aware that the attitude tribes and regions have towards each other was the making of the British to maintain their grip on power, how does four decades of “independence” failed to transform such an attitude? Therefore, although the British rule contributed to the lack of sense of nationalism and patriotism, it would be naive to assert that it is the only factor in play to date. Several other factors such as religion, political parties and associations with varying ideologies, as well as other external economic and political alliances have influenced and shaped the history of the country.

In fact, Kasozi, L.B.A (1994, pp.128-144), believes that it is a question of weak governments that created social chaos in the country. In his own words, “Between April 1979 and January 1986, Ugandans were subjected to the inept rule of five separate governments. Unfortunately however, none of the five governments that succeeded Amin was elected by the people; hence none had political legitimacy.” Contrary to the view that it is the political legacy of the colonial master (divide and rule policy) that has played a major role in plunging the country into the socio-economic and political chaos that haunts it today; the post colonial leaders too carry a share of the blame.

Will, Kaberuka (1990, pp.60-65 & 175-177), argues that the reasons for the acquisition of colonies by the imperial powers are a subject of controversy among scholars. He asserts that both philanthropic and humanitarian concerns have been advanced, while on the other hand, commercial considerations have been the motive. He goes on to assert that in some cases a combination of all the motives have been at play as was the case with Britain in Uganda. The attainment of such objectives according to Kaberuka either required the destruction or adaptation of indigenous institutions. This brought resistance but to suit the requirements of Britain, the rebellious African rulers were either killed or forced to become executioners of colonial policies or exiled. In this regard, the Baganda were the first to be used by the British in 1895 to crush the resistance of the Omukama of Bunyoro. This is contrary to popular belief that it was the north that the British predominantly used as a military reservoir.

On the economic scene, Mamdani Mahmood (1999, p.133-134) asserts that Uganda was divided into two by the colonial administration. As cash crop production was encouraged in the south and parts of the east, the north and parts of the west were turned into labor reservoir for the agriculturally rich south. Although this changed with time, it partly contributed to the economic imbalance in the country and therefore harboring a potential for future conflict over equitable sharing of the country's resources.

According to Kaberuka (ibid, 1990), due to the colonial policy of "divide and rule," the struggle tended to be waged on a tribal and sectarian basis, and it was not until the late 1950s that the struggle began to assume a national character. Instead of ruling Uganda as a united protectorate, the colonial administration fragmented it into regions and districts, based mainly on tribal groups, in order to facilitate the administration of the country and hence the exploitation of its economic potential. Even economically, the country was divided into two; that is, the export-commodity producing areas of Buganda and eastern

regions, and the labor reserve areas of the north and southwest. This created a bad precedence and a potential for future antagonism that was later exploited by some political leaders to attain their selfish ends. The indigenous leaders therefore aggravated the exploitation of the fragile political and economic situation left by the colonial masters.

It is in this context that Odoki, J.B (2005, p.177) argued that the varying ideologies espoused by the various political parties and organizations in the history of Uganda were not conducive to building a national consensus on constitutional issues. According to him, it was therefore not surprising that some of the socio-economic and political diversities generated controversy and disagreement in some of the issues raised for discussion in the 1995 constitution making process. It is clear that affiliation to any organization is prompted or motivated by a certain level of self-interest. However, it is important to note that whatever the ideology of an organization, it must respect the rights and freedoms of other organizations as well as of individuals. The sense of unity in diversity in a country can only be built and sustained when different economic, political and social organizations are able to recognize that all are stakeholders and need the support of each other.

When the National Resistance Army (NRA) took over power in 1986 from the short-lived government of General Tito Okello that lasted only for six months, there was hope that things would change for the better. The beginning of the NRA government with the promise of a “Fundamental Change,” that is, a transformation of the political and socio-economic situation of the country for the better gave most of the population a sense of hope. However, just as it happened with most of the previous governments, this did not end the cycle of violence in parts of the country.

As Temmerman, D.E. rightly puts it, for the majority of the population, the long road to rehabilitation then begun. But in the north, a new circle of violence started (Ibid,

p. viii). Therefore, as governments changed hands, hope came for one part of the country or region while on the other; insurgency also changed loci thus forming a vicious cycle. More so, many people now question the meaning of the so-called “fundamental change” and the difference it had from the previous leaderships in the country. Many people have blamed the present government for favoring the ethnic Banyankole, a similar situation for which previous governments were blamed. Successive governments promoted their people, region or allies of those in leadership positions, while any opposition from political foes is brutally dealt with.

Allen, Tim (2006, pp.25-71), in a similar manner gives an elaborate background to the roots of the cycle of violence in the country, from the time Kampala fell into the hands of the NRA to date. He also asserts that the Sudan government supported the LRA in retaliation to the Uganda government’s barely disguised support for the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). Therefore, with Sudanese support, the LRA was able to launch some of its most ferocious attacks on the UPDF and unsupportive civilian population. These attacks however with time became too harsh on the innocent population with the consequence that several people were killed, maimed, abducted, raped and displaced from their homes. This made the LRA to be feared, hated and very unpopular with the local civilian population.

The Sudan factor made the LRA conflict very hard to handle and in effect became what Pugh, M. and Cooper N. (2004, pp.24-25) refers to as “Regional Conflict Complexes” – a situation in which the eruption of an initially localized hostility is aggravated by other regional and interstate factors and players. Chalabal, P. and Doloz Jean-Pascal (1999, p.88) even go further when they assert that, one striking feature about Africa today is the extent to which violence crosses borders and armed opposition to regimes in place operates covertly or overtly from neighboring countries. This kind of

violence is often directed against a particular ethnic group or professionals as an expression of suppressed deprivation from participation in the politics of a country or sharing in the resources of a country. According to them, as economic and social problems become more acute, there is a strong tendency in many African countries to find foreign or allegedly foreign scapegoats.

Despite its unpopularity however, the LRA has successfully challenged the Ugandan government, running rings around army units sent to quell it and halting development in the region (Wrong, Michael 2000, p.85). According to him, its success can partly be attributed to the particularly unpleasant technique used to recruit new members. An LRA unit will target a school and force its pupils to march with its fighters, and in the process forcing them to commit scores of atrocities on the local population including their own families and relations. The abductees are then ordered to kill anyone among them who might have shown signs of resistance or escape using very crude methods like clubbing, stoning or cutting with a machete. Once the crime has been committed, the abductees have blood on their hands and are traumatized to the point of feeling disgusted with themselves. Above all, the fear of facing the wrath of their village mates and families against whom they were forced to commit horrible atrocities prevent them from returning to normal civilian life. It is guilt by association, and it is a terribly effective method of extracting loyalty from even the most reluctant.

It is in this context that CPA-U; a child-focused organization was spontaneously formed in 1996. Since then, it has been operating in northern Uganda, trying to give hope to communities and abductees, who managed to escape, got released or rescued from the LRA. The efforts of the organization in this regard has however had a lot of challenges and it is in this context that this research has been designed to evaluate the contribution of, and challenges faced by CPA-U in the implementation of the above task.

1.2 Statement of the Problem.

The LRA rebellion in northern Uganda between the government of Uganda and the LRA led by Joseph Kony which had raged on for the last two decades had a devastating effect on the local population in and around the war zone, as well as on the conflicting parties. Hundreds have been killed and maimed; children have been abducted and made into child soldiers and sex slaves, while the majority of the population lives in deplorable conditions in IDP camps deprived of their normal social, economic and political way of life. The conflict situation created an attitude of outrage, anger, suspicion and despair for both the government and the LRA. The situation very much affected the relationship between communities that once lived in harmony and peace causing suspicion, fear and prejudice. It has also caused traumatic experiences to many, either directly as victims or as witnesses to atrocities and human rights violations. The government is blamed by the local community for its failure to quell down the LRA insurgency despite its insistent promise to wipe them out soon. In reaction, the local community formed militias of vigilante youths, for example, the 'Arrow Boys' in Teso and the 'Rhino Boys' in Lango sub-region who organized and armed themselves in support of the UPDF to hunt the LRA fighters.

This move was a desperate effort on the part of the local community owing to the fact that the UPDF who should protect them in the face of such dangers had failed to do so. This created skepticism in as far as the political will of the government in ending the war is concerned. To highlight on the gravity of the conflict and its effect on the local community; the Human Rights Watch Report (2004, p. 219) put the abduction rate in northern Uganda as having reached a record level in late 2002 and 2003 to eight thousand boys and girls forced by the LRA to become soldiers, laborers and sex slaves. Despite its

unpopularity, the LRA continued to inflict untold suffering on the local innocent population.

Unfortunately still with the LRA conflict, even the international community was slow in responding to alleviate the situation. It is to this effect that the degeneration of the situation was described by the former UN Under secretary for Humanitarian Affairs Egeland Jean as, ‘the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.’

It is in this context that CPA-U an NGO was formed as a child focused organization in 1996 by a group of parents affected by the abduction of their children by the LRA. Since its inception as a local peace-building initiative, the organization has sought for the immediate and unconditional release of all LRA abducted children, their rehabilitation and reintegration into their communities with emphasis on education and health, and building a sustainable peace in Uganda. The organization has done this through advocacy, bringing to the limelight the plight of the people, especially of children in the conflict zone, psychosocial support of war-affected families and communities, and helping to rebuild trust among affected communities by encouraging forgiveness and reconciliation.

Despite such efforts by CPA-U and other organizations working for a similar goal, the suffering of the local population in and around the war zone continued. This prompted this research to investigate the impact of CPA-U as a local initiative on peace-building in the conflict area. It is against this background that the research sought to establish the contribution of CPA-U to peace-building in the region and specifically within Lira Municipality as a case study.

1.3 Scope of the Study.

Geographically, the study was conducted in Lira municipality, consisting of Adyel, Lira Central, Ojwina and Railways sub-counties (Uganda Districts Information Handbook, 2005, p.28). The Municipality was chosen as a case study specifically because it houses both the Head office and the Lira Branch office of CPA-U, therefore providing easy access to respondents and office data needed for the research. A total of one hundred respondents participated in the study. Sixteen key informants were individually interviewed, while focused group discussions were conducted with the other categories of the respondents. From each of the four sub-counties, one Parent Support Group (PSG) was chosen with fifteen members selected for the focused group discussion, thus making a total of sixty people. This was specifically meant to enhance a good representation of the respondents from the different parts of the Municipality.

The study focused on the assessment of the organization's programs on the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees into their communities, psychosocial support of war-affected families and communities, and community reconciliation between the year 2000 and 2006. It concentrated on the contribution of, and challenges faced by CPA-U and other interested parties in relation to peace-building in the conflict area. The study also made appropriate suggestions for CPA-U and other interested parties working in the conflict zone on how they could work as a team in alleviating the suffering of the local population. The timeframe was chosen because it is the period when most people were forcefully displaced from their villages and sought refuge within the Municipality due to the increasing intensity of the insurgency.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms.

The definitions of the key terms in this study have been adopted from the generally accepted definitions to suit the specific needs of this study. The following are some of the terms that the researcher felt needed to be defined for the purpose of this study:

Peace-building: Refers to all the activities directed towards achieving a long-lasting and sustainable peace in a situation that has been marked by armed conflict, war or insurgency. It therefore includes but is not limited to reintegrating former combatants or the returnees into civilian society, strengthening the rule of law, improving respect for human rights through monitoring, education and investigation of past and existing abuses, providing technical assistance for democratic development; and promoting conflict resolution and reconciliation techniques.

Initiative: Is used to refer to the power or ability to begin or to follow through energetically and with determination a task or an enterprise.

Reconciliation: Refers to the process of overcoming hostility and mistrust between divided persons or communities in order to re-establish friendship, harmony and the need for a peaceful coexistence.

Returnees: In this study refers to people who were abducted by the LRA but have either been rescued, escaped or got voluntarily released after their abduction by the LRA. This same category is also referred to in the study as abductees.

Rehabilitation: The processes undergone by former abductees as a means of trying to restore them to, or at least near to, their original state before they were abducted. This involves counseling as well as other assistance in form of material support or start up capital for business or beginning a post-conflict life.

Reintegration: Is the process of taking back former abductees to their places of origin and ensuring that they are fully reunited and accepted by their families and local

communities without being discriminated against or stigmatized for what they have undergone while in captivity or in the bush.

1.5 General Objective of the Study.

The overall objective of this study was to assess the contribution of, and challenges faced by, CPA-U in its peace-building effort in Lira Municipality as a case study. In so doing, it concentrated on the organizations' program on the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, the psychosocial support to war-affected families and communities, and community reconciliation.

1.5.1 Specific Objectives

1. To assess the impact of CPA-U on peace-building through rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees.
2. To assess the impact of CPA-U on peace-building through the psychosocial support to war affected families and communities.
3. To assess the impact of CPA-U on peace-building through community reconciliation.

1.6 Research Hypotheses.

1. CPA-U has had a positive impact on the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees in Lira Municipality.
2. The psychosocial support program carried out by CPA-U has been very helpful to war-affected families and communities within Lira Municipality.
3. CPA-U has been successful in its program on community reconciliation in Lira Municipality.

1.7 Significance of the Study.

This study is expected to help CPA-U as an organization to evaluate its contribution to peace-building within Lira Municipality, thus, leading to a more effective and efficient service delivery to the returnees, and war-affected communities.

Local and homegrown solutions are an essential component of peace-building. This study is therefore expected to highlight on the importance of the local population as a crucial factor in the peace-building process. When the local communities face the challenge and complexities of the peace-building process by directly participating in it, they will appreciate it more and own the process.

The assessment of this study can be a good signpost for other organizations working in the conflict area. The study results should be able to help them compare and contrast their own work and activities in relation to the success made, and challenges faced by CPA-U. In so doing, they should be able to evaluate their activities and make appropriate adjustments where necessary. Furthermore, study results are expected to help the government to appreciate local peace-building efforts, and to be able to support such initiatives as compliment to what they are doing to bring the conflict to an end.

1.8 Theoretical Framework.

Several theories have been advanced about conflict and the need for conflict resolution strategies or peace-building. Mullins, J.L (1999, pp.816-821) makes an analysis of different perspectives of conflict as described by different theorists. For the purpose of this study, we shall use the Human Relations theory which holds that conflict is natural and an inevitable feature of society (Furnhan, N. 1999). According to this theory, conflicts develop in a group out of relationship and interaction with one another, that is, where two or more individuals interact with one another or are physically together. This is because different individuals or groups, even within the same organization may

have diverse points of views when it comes to decision making and the process of executing such decisions.

The author points to five basic types of group interaction, that is, competition, conflict, cooperation, accommodation and assimilation. However, of interest to this study are the group interactions of competition, conflict and cooperation that are closely related.

Competition:

Competition occurs when two or more persons or groups oppose each other to achieve a goal that only one can attain or maintain. For example, playing a game with a rival team in which one must be a winner. By way of analogy, this can be applied to the northern Uganda conflict in which both the government and the LRA are competing for the leadership of this country. The government wants to maintain and consolidate its position in power while the LRA on its part is struggling to displace the government that it blames of being illegitimate.

Conflict:

Unlike in competition in which the emphasis is achieving a goal, in conflict, there is a deliberate attempt to coerce, oppose, harm, or resist the will of another person or persons. Conflict may range from the extreme of killing an enemy to the deliberate slighting of another person. These conflicts may be personal, which exist between individuals, corporate, which are between groups in a society or else between societies. The most common example of corporate conflict is war, in which each nation is attempting to coerce, oppose, harm or resist the other nation or nations. This unfortunately is the level at which the conflict between the government and the LRA has reached.

Sometimes conflicts begin as competition, for example, rivals in business organizations may first have an intense competition for customers. This may become

more and more intense, until the goal of winning more customers is lost and the emphasis shifts to harming the other business or party in the competition. One business may sell merchandise below cost to try to force the other business into bankruptcy. This means that the competition has reached a level where the ordinarily acceptable business ethics no longer has meaning to the business parties. Their focus or center of interest is no longer a healthy business competition but the harming or destruction of each other's business progress.

According to this theory therefore, there are three major distinctions between competition and conflict and these are:

1. In competition, one may not know who the opponent is; for example, one may not know who else applied for a particular job. But in conflict, you always know who the opponent is, for example, one will for sure know which nation is invading its borders.
2. In conflict, there are few formal norms, and they are often ignored, for example, there are few formal international rules for conducting wars.
3. In competition, the intent is to win, while in conflict the intent is to harm or destroy the opponent.

Cooperation:

This occurs when two or more persons or groups work together to achieve a goal that will benefit many. Cooperation is a social process that gets things done, not for an individual motive but for the good of the group. No group can achieve its goals without the cooperation from the other members of the group, that is, there must be team spirit and team work to ensure success that benefits all the group members.

It is however very important to note that competition may be used along with cooperation to motivate members to work harder for the group. It is therefore incumbent on the leadership of groups and organizations to creatively use and harmonize the diverse

points of views for the good and development of the organization. This means carefully listening to the views of the others and together with them, looking for the most appropriate and suitable way forward, which is generally acceptable and beneficial for all the members. It is in this context that this theory was chosen as a guiding principle in this study. Social interaction between humans in one way or the other is bound to cause conflict since people vary in opinion, belief and ways of doing things. Most central therefore is not how to eliminate conflict but how to manage and transform them into positive social change. As a guiding principle, this theory is suggested as the most suitable for the core parties as they seek a lasting and sustainable solution to the northern Uganda conflict that has raged on for the last two decades. This view is also strongly reiterated by Mitchelle, R.C (1981, p.7), Nkurunziza, D. (2004, p.36), Thomas, W.L and Robert, J.A (1982, p.140).

1.9 Conclusion.

The chapter has been a general introduction to the study in which the researcher tried to give a general background to the study, statement of the problem, scope of the study, definition of key terms, objectives of the study, research hypothesis, significance of the study and the theoretical framework of the study. The researcher particularly chose the 'Human Relations' theory as a guiding theme for the study. Proponents of this theory hold that conflict is natural and an inevitable feature of society. Indeed, relationship among people is bound in one way or the other to lead to conflict. This is because individuals or groups even within the same organization may vary in opinion in as far as decision making is concerned. Therefore, most critical to note is not how to eliminate conflict but how to manage and transform them into a positive social change. Core parties in an organization must therefore be able to recognize that despite their divergent points of views, each one of them has a stake in as far as the development of the organization is

concerned. They should thus work for the common good in a more cooperative and acceptable way.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction.

This chapter presents the review of related literature based on the sub-topics outlined in the objectives of study, which are: - The impact of CPA-U on peace-building through the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees into their communities, the impact of CPA-U on peace-building through the psychosocial support of war affected families and communities, and the impact of CPA-U on peace-building through community reconciliation.

2.1 Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returnees as a means to Peace-building.

Rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants or abductees is a key aspect in the peace-building process. This is a process of trying to re-orient such people to deal positively with their past, present and look forward to the future despite what they have experienced in their lives.

In its 1998 conference held in London (17-19 July), the Acholi in the Diaspora under the umbrella of Kacoke Madit (KM, “big meeting” or “big conference”), emphasized the fact that the conflict in northern Uganda “can only be successfully resolved if there is a comprehensive negotiation process resulting in a peaceful settlement. This, according to the resolutions of KM, includes resettlement and reintegration program, and an environment in which reconciliation can take place.” The rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees and ex-combatants is therefore a component of peace-building that cannot and must not be ignored if sustainable peace is to be achieved (Tongerren van Paul, et al ed., 2005, pp.348-353). This is in line with the emphasis given to rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees by CPA-U as a local peace-building initiative.

According to Okello, L. (2002, p.13), the rebels subject the children they abduct to cruel punishments including forcing them to kill some of their friends who attempt to escape. This is a form of indoctrination aimed at instilling fear and terror into the children in order to keep them in the bush. The girls are distributed to the commanders who turn them into concubines and effectively keep them as sex slaves. The author however, does not expound on the psychosocial implications of such acts in case such abducted children return to their communities. This is what this study seeks to explore, that is, how these children are rehabilitated and helped to cope when they return to their communities. It is in fact a particularly critical factor for those forced into participating in armed conflict against their will. The case becomes even more serious when minors are used as child soldiers and are turned into killer machines. The trauma they undergo if untreated or not properly treated may affect them for the rest of their lives, and may have a long-term effect on the lives of their children, families and community

In the above context, Mugumya, G.A (2006) described the experience of an LRA victim and how difficult it was for her to come to terms with what happened to her especially when she witnessed the return of the rebel commander who ordered her to be tortured and mutilated. This may only be the tip of the iceberg of what the returnees undergo as they try to cope with life after abduction and torture in its various forms. The complexity and uniqueness of each case makes this task of rehabilitation and reintegration even more challenging and demanding. Despite such challenges and complexity however, some positive action must be taken to alleviate the situation of the victims. This is the reason why a local initiative like CPA-U was conceived to help such vulnerable conflict victims.

Stubbs, P. (in Taipel et al. ed., 2001, p.269) emphasizes the importance of treating the psychological impact of conflict on children with utmost care. He holds that a number

of other health related factors should be noted in terms of the increased risk faced by children and young people in frontline areas. These according to him includes the presence of landmines and other unexpected devices and weapons in the home, a rise in self-harm and attempted suicide; a rise in child violence and child abuse, as well as other factors. Children are the most vulnerable in war and post war situations, thus, need a lot of attention particularly in relation to both their physical and psychological health. The above explanation of the effects of health and other war-related complications on victims, especially the young require a concerted effort on the part of all stakeholders. This is what is crucial in the conflict in northern Uganda owing to the fact that the LRA to a certain extent target the young directly. Therefore faced with such a challenge and the fact that the international community was slow in recognizing the gravity and the effects of the conflict on the local communities, local initiatives like CPA-U are handy.

Seen from the above perspective, it can be noted that it takes the effort of individuals, organizations and governments to secure the release, rehabilitation and reintegration of people caught up in conflict situations. A case in point is the tireless search made by the deputy headmistress of St. Mary's College-Aboke (Sister Rachele) for her missing students who were abducted by the LRA. Her determination earned the release of some of the girls and brought her face to face with LRA commanders and the plight of other abducted children living in southern Sudan (Temmerman D.E., 2001). However, in as much as such efforts are commendable, the release of such abductees is just the beginning of the help such people need. Since many more abducted children have been rescued, escaped or got released from LRA captivity, the gravity of the task of rehabilitation and reintegration grew by the day. This therefore calls for a concerted effort on the part of all stakeholders in seeking for a remedy to the situation.

In an article analyzing the political economy of conflict and peace-building in Kosovo, Yannis Alexander (2003) noted that the crisis in Kosovo intensified due to the inability and unwillingness of the local actors and the failure of the international actors in the region to peacefully manage the situation in time. This is more or less a similar situation in which the LRA conflict has developed. According to him therefore, the consequence of such a failure is that the process of rehabilitation and reconciliation in such situations will require a sustained commitment by both the local actors and the international community. Although he agrees that international intervention has been relatively successful in bringing peace to Kosovo, he strongly holds that the long-term stability remains elusive. The Kosovo case and other similar situations could be an eye opener in dealing with the LRA conflict situation in northern Uganda. Unfortunately with the LRA conflict, the international community has been slow in responding to alleviate the situation. Therefore, as time went by, the whole situation degenerated to a level of what has been described by the former UN Under Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs Egeland J. as “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.” (Tongerren van Paul, et al., ed., 2005).

2.2 Psychosocial Support of War-affected Families and Communities.

The need for the psychosocial support of war-affected families and communities is a very vital component of peace-building. War breaks the normal social fiber of families and communities, let alone the psychological pressure and trauma of having directly experienced human rights violation. This has both physical and psychological implications for the victims and witnesses of such atrocities that need to be addressed.

Tongerren (ibid. p.351), report that KM underpinned the importance of the involvement of victims of the conflict who have suffered the brunt of the war in their 1998 meeting held in London. According to the meeting, this brought home the message to

those who were still sympathetic to the LRA rebels' activities. The involvement of such people who have undergone extreme physical and psychological torture is a very essential part of the peace process. Unless they are both physically and psychologically healed and their attitudes transformed to embrace forgiveness and reconciliation, their despair may still in future lead to a desire for revenge.

Leaderach, P. (in Herr and Herr, et al. ed. 1998, pp.188-189), argues that, the socio-psychological dimensions of conflict are a different set of concerns that must be aimed more at transformation and reconciliation. Here, persons who have been actively involved in the conflict are to be seen as people dealing with accumulated emotions and intense trauma. For them, there are significant personal questions of identity and self-worth. It involves the transformation of persons and the social networks in which they live. This means that the attentions such people require should be one that should help them build self confidence and trust in others, trust that has been destroyed by the experience they have undergone. Although the study was conducted in a different setting, it still gives a general overview of the social and psychological effects of war, which such communities undergo. The issue at hand is not only the effect of such a situation on the individual, but its impact on the lives of the immediate family and community if it is not well treated.

On a similar note, Lutz, L.E (2006, pp.28-30) holds that most human rights abuse cause victims to suffer some form of psychological trauma. According to her, deliberate human-induced suffering rattles the foundations of the victim's worldview and transforms his or her experience of trusting others into a situation of distrust. They find it very difficult to comprehend why a neighbor or even any other human being should do such a thing to them or any other human being for that matter. The internalization of this trauma leads to a range of psychological and psychosomatic responses, which if untreated, may last a lifetime. More so, some aspects may be passed onto others in the victim's

immediate environment, particularly their children. A lesson learnt from the analysis of social reconstruction in countries emerging from war is that peace must be secured before any other activity or process may be successfully undertaken. In the words of Nelson Mandela, “As countries recover from trauma and wounds of the past, they have to devise mechanisms not only for handling past human rights violations, but also to ensure that the dignity of victims, survivors, and relatives is restored.” (in Neil J. Kritz 1995, p. 192). This certainly makes the peace-building process quite a complicated task and so the need for a concerted effort on the part of all stakeholders. It is in this respect that this research will evaluate the efforts of CPA-U to peace-building in Lira municipality.

A statement by Mrs. Angelina Atyam, Co-founder and chairperson of CPA-U and parent to one of the “Aboke Girls” while addressing the United Nations Security Council, clearly illustrates the pain and loss such families and communities feel. She expresses a very shocking and painful overview of the suffering experienced by the abducted children, their families and communities because of the conflict in northern Uganda. She appeals to the international community and the United Nations Security Council in particular to “critically create a process of dialogue,” which is key to the beginning of a satisfactory end of the suffering of the people in northern Uganda (UNSC ‘Arria Formula’ on the implementation of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security held in October 2002). It is thus the responsibility of local peace-building initiatives such as CPA-U to give a sense of hope to such people especially where other responsible organs like the government have failed to achieve it. This research will thus assess and investigate the success and challenges faced by CPA-U in this task (CPA-U file records).

In a newspaper article, Komakech Jimmy. gives an insight into how Acholi students studying outside their homeland face grave stigmatization because of the 20-year-long insurgency. If even those who have never been directly involved in the conflict

face such stigmatization, it should even be tougher for those who have been directly involved. It is incumbent therefore on local peace-building initiatives like CPA-U to work hard and try to transform people's attitudes towards such people since such prejudiced attitudes can develop into latent conflicts and when not properly addressed, may with time escalate into violent conflicts. This exposure of prejudiced stigmatization of innocent people by Komakech J. is an early warning against the possibility of escalation of such conflicts. He however does not give suggestions on what could be done to mitigate on such negative attitudes. The interest of this study is to know the achievements of CPA-U on improving such hostile attitudes among communities.

2.3 Community Reconciliation as a means of Peace-building.

Reconciliation in war-affected communities is a challenging task for peace-builders. It is quite a difficult task to forgive and bury the past especially when the affected communities freshly live with the painful effects and experiences of conflict. The conflict in the north has often been blamed on the Acholi as a people and in many instances made them be stigmatized as a "war-like" ethnic group (Bainomugisha, A. & Tumushabe G. 2005, p.54). This has affected the relationship between the Acholi and other neighboring communities who feel the Acholi are making them suffer the effects of a rebellion in which they have no part. This kind of attitude can in the long-run cause a rift, which if not controlled in time, may cause ethnic animosity and can be used by opportunists to fuel violent conflicts. It is therefore worth that reconciliatory efforts be initiated by way of sensitization and advocacy for peace.

According to the duo (ibid. 2005, pp.55-60), most Ugandans consider the LRA rebellion to be an Acholi war, localized and therefore an Acholi affair. It is seen as a tribal war aimed at advancing narrow ethnic interests of the Acholi. In addition, as long as it remained contained in the Acholi sub-region, the rest of the country may not bother.

Such an attitude is not healthy for social relationships and needs to be addressed since not all the Acholi belong to, or are, LRA sympathizers. Although their study recommends the need to make the LRA rebellion an issue of national and international concern through awareness creation, they do not get into the details of how the task has to be accomplished. It is therefore the interest of this study to bring to the fore the efforts being made by CPA-U as a local peace-building initiative in trying to advocate for community reconciliation both locally and internationally.

Leaderach, P. (1997), a renowned peace-building scholar argues that dealing with contemporary armed conflict requires a new approach in addition to traditional diplomacy. For him, peace-building in today's conflicts calls for long-term commitment to establishing an infrastructure across the levels of society, an infrastructure that strengthens the local resources for reconciliation from within the society and maximizes the contribution from outside. His argument is valid due to the fact that each conflict situation is completely different and unique and has its own background and context. There can therefore be no single formulae for solving all conflict situations. Although the experience gained in the handling of one conflict situation may be of help on how another conflict situation could be resolved, there is no magic key that unlocks the mystery of all conflict situations.

It is in the above context, that Leaderach clearly suggests that there are no quick fixes or magic wands we can have that will make everything better instantly in conflict situations. Solutions cannot be imported from outside but have to emerge from the soil where the conflict is rooted (Leaderach, P. in Herr and Herr, *ibid.* 1998, pp177-178). It is in this respect of the need for homegrown solutions that this research concerns itself.

For such local initiatives to emerge and take center stage in the process of community reconciliation, awareness and mobilization is crucial. This is so because

people tend to be more concerned on developing survival techniques to cope within the conflict situation than thinking of a long-term solution. As described by Taylor, R. (2002), in apartheid South Africa, anti-apartheid activists had a very narrow space in which to pursue peaceful and progressive change. Just about the only option available at their disposal was expressing their views through non-governmental organizations (NGO). Such intervention is aimed at specifically promoting grass root contact and facilitating dialogue between actors in the conflict.

Local initiatives may have the advantage of being able to understand the core issues and the course of development of the conflict better because they have lived in and faced the challenges of the same. On this note, Waligo, J.M. (1994) believes that serious account must be taken to understand both the philosophical and religious worldview of the conflict parties. How they think of themselves, and how they relate to one another and outsiders will help a lot in seeking a common ground. This essentially means that any other third party intervening in a conflict situation must have the knowledge of the conflict issues and other influencing factors at play. Waligo insists that methods of conflict resolution should be drawn from the traditional culture with the guidance of traditional leaders. According to him, the underlying structure of traditional institutions and the principles guiding interaction must be understood. It is only then that the process of confessions, forgiveness and reconciliation will carry meaning for the local population. This is because it is impossible to forget the loss, trauma and the deep pain inflicted as a consequence of the war or conflict. One can therefore only come to terms with his or her situation by accepting it for what it is and letting go through forgiving the perpetrators or taking the course of legal justice that may simply aggravate an attitude of hate. In all however, no level of justice can restore the harm done to an individual. The study is thus,

a move to evaluate how CPA-U is trying to promote this spirit of forgiveness, which is a prerequisite for reconciliation.

Community reconciliation is a very challenging process especially when looked at from the perspective of the victims of direct torture. This is what Lutz, L.E. (2006) describes as “victims perspective on human rights.” According to her, when other human beings deliberately inflict human rights abuses on them or their loved ones, victims feel aggrieved. In this context, the most ordinary human reaction is to stop such an act of aggression and make sure it never happens to any other person. The next step is to seek for justice, that is, the restoration of the dignity of the victim and retribution from the hurt resulting from the abuse. She however underlines the fact that when justice or any other form of help seems not forthcoming, there may develop a sense of helplessness that may lead to despair and depression. Once such a level is reached, then there may most probably develop the desire for revenge. This is a critical threshold point that may lead to a vicious cycle of revenge and counter revenge if not handled with care and in time. The role of organizations such as CPA-U is therefore very vital in enhancing community reconciliation.

A research report, by Jamii Ya Kupatanisha (2004) revealed that among the Acholi of northern Uganda, people returning home from abduction or exile are reintegrated into the community by performing rituals that are intended to cleanse them. The most common being “Nyono Tongweno” – (stepping on fowl eggs). This is done at the entrance of the homestead to purify such a person before he or she reunites with the rest of the community. The egg symbolizes purity and therefore marking a new beginning in the life of such an individual. In as much as such traditional methods of forgiveness and reconciliation are important, their acceptability may not be universal since each community may have its own.

However, the value of using such traditional mechanisms in conflict resolution and reconciliation processes is that the local populations get fully involved and understand the significance of it. This makes them own the whole process, thus avoiding a feeling that it is a foreign thing simply imposed on them from outside. It is in relation to similar sentiments that Mbiti, J.S. (1969, pp.107-109) underscores the importance of coexistence in African traditional societies. According to him, in traditional African life, the individual does not exist and cannot exist alone but corporately. Each individual is part of the whole and owes his or her existence to other people including those of past generations and his contemporaries. Communalism was emphasized as a way of fostering solidarity and instilling a sense of brotherhood. Whenever there is any issue that affected an individual, it was taken as a social problem and solved in that perspective. These traditional values kept the moral fiber between individuals as well as societies to a mutually beneficial one for all and avoided unnecessary conflicts.

Contrary to the traditional African attitude of coexistence and brotherhood as expressed above by Mbiti J. (1969), both colonial and post-independence Africa has seen the scale of conflict grow over the years. Put in the words of Brett, A.E (1998, pp.78-79) about Uganda, “the gun rather than the vote has dominated political change in Uganda since independence.” Despite the truth in such an assertion, peaceful settlement rather than confrontation have worked in many places as a means of averting conflict situations. This gives hope that there is possibility that the two decade old LRA conflict could still be solved in a peaceful way. More so, that there will be reconciliation between affected communities that will enhance the spirit of coexistence.

On the international level, Tongeren, et.al (ed., 2005) reports that KM has tried to lobby and create awareness for peace and reconciliation in the war torn northern part of the country. KM was created as an initiative of the Acholi in Diaspora but its objectives

transcends political, religious, gender and other boundaries as a means of searching for sustainable peace. Since its inception in 1996 in Canada, KM continues to lobby the Ugandan government, the government of Sudan, the rebels and the international community to accept dialogue to end the violence. This is what both local and international peace-building initiatives should concentrate on in order to create peace in the war torn region of northern Uganda.

One of the outcomes of KM was the contact with the community of Sant' Egidio, a Rome based Catholic organization with vast experience in conflict resolution and mediation in several African countries especially in Algeria and Mozambique (Bainomugisha and Tumushabe, pp.36-37). Despite the success and experience of Sant' Egidio in peace-building, it made no breakthrough with regard to the LRA conflict in northern Uganda. This is a clear indication of the complexity of the peace-building process and the fact that each conflict situation is unique and there are no magic formulae that fit all. The challenges faced by KM in trying to bring peace and reconciliation to the conflict area of northern Uganda is most similar in nature to those faced by other organizations working in the area. However, the fact that the last ten years of their effort has yielded little success should not be a point of discouragement because experiences in peace-building show that it is a slow process and solutions vary from one conflict to the other.

2.4 Conclusion.

The review of literature related to the study indicate that peace-building is not an easy task, especially where relationships have been broken and people have had traumatic experiences with severe human rights violations either directly as victims or as witnesses to the same. The process can even be slower when it comes to the aspect of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reintegration of those affected by the conflict. The review indicated that

the effect of conflict is even worst when children are directly targeted and used as child soldiers, laborers and sex slaves. The physical and psychological effect of conflict on these children if not well treated has a social effect on both their immediate family and the community at large. This is the scenario in the two-decade conflict in northern Uganda in which a whole generation has grown knowing conflict.

Despite cases of the inability and unwillingness of local actors and failure of international actors to peacefully manage conflict situations in time, there is still hope for there are success cases in resolution of such conflicts worldwide. Even situations that had degenerated into what can be termed as a humanitarian crisis like the apartheid system in South Africa can still have a successfully negotiated solution although some people had to sacrifice their lives for such a cause. This can either be in form of a local or an international peace-building initiative. It was also noted that in as much as solutions from one conflict situation can be of help in another situation, there is no formula that suits all conflicts. Each conflict has therefore to be understood in its context and background in order to find meaningful and peaceful solutions. This is the perspective from which the role of local peace-building initiatives such as CPA-U becomes crucial. These local initiatives do understand the background and context of the conflict better because they live within and have experienced it.

Despite this understanding, it must be noted that often such initiatives lack the knowledge and experience which some of the international peace-building initiatives have. It is therefore important that both the local and international initiatives work hand in hand and complement each other in the peace-building process. This must be done with the full involvement of the affected individuals and communities since this will guarantee the sustainability of such an initiative because they will feel part of the whole process and therefore own it.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction.

This section presents the methodology that was used to execute the study. It describes the research design, the study population and how the respondents were selected, the methods and tools used for data collection, challenges faced during the course of the research, and how the data was processed and analyzed.

3.1 Research Design.

The study used a descriptive survey design with mostly qualitative approach blended with some aspect of quantitative approach. The researcher preferred the descriptive qualitative survey design because the study would involve the soliciting of the experiences of respondents in relation to the war and their evaluation of the work of CPA-U as a local peace-building initiative. This required detailed description of the opinion of the respondents. This is in line with the view of Amin, M.E. (2005), who contends that research design is a significant step in the qualitative research process and therefore needs careful consideration. The use of quantitative method was chosen as a compliment because the research was envisaged to involve some figures in data collection and analysis.

3.2 Study Population and Categories of Respondents.

The study population composed of four Board of Trustee (BOT) members, nine District Branch Committees (DBC), four office staff of CPA-U (two from the head office and two from the District branch office), two technical advisors at the head office, sixty Parent Support Group (PSG) members from four PSGs, four teachers at the Rachele Comprehensive School, seventeen formerly abducted children (FAC) being helped by

CPA-U within Lira Municipality. The total study population was therefore one hundred people. The original study population should have been ninety five people but the DBC members were for their general meeting when the interview was scheduled and all were willing to be interviewed.

The research was conducted within the four sub-counties of Lira Municipality that is, Adyel, Lira Central, Ojwina and Railways. The study area was specifically chosen because it houses both the Head and Lira Branch offices of CPA-U, therefore making access to key informants and other necessary office data easy for the researcher. More so, the Municipality is where most of the people took refuge during the height of the insurgency, therefore several people still had vivid memory of the whole situation.

Two categories of returnees were selected for the research purpose. The first category comprised of seven returnees who were abducted from St. Mary's College – Aboke. These were chosen for individual interviews because it was the event of their abduction that led to the formation of CPA-U; thus, their views had special significance for this research. Their choice was also influenced by their availability since some had gone for holidays outside the district.

The second category comprising of ten returnees were randomly chosen from the Rachele Rehabilitation Center and Comprehensive Secondary School for a focused group discussion. These were chosen first and foremost to complement the interview findings that would be got from the first category. Secondly, this category was chosen because it was easy to access them in one block at school since they came from different places and it would be costly to trace them both in terms of time and financially.

For the teachers at the Rachele Rehabilitation Center and Comprehensive School, their selection was intended to gather the general view of the staff in relation to dealing with the returnees.

One PSG each was chosen at random to represent each of the four sub-counties that form the Municipality. This was meant to collect the general opinion of the different parts of the Municipality so as to have a balanced research view. The number chosen for the Focused Group Discussion, fifteen was determined by the researcher to make the group discussion easy to handle, otherwise, the average number of members in a PSG according to CPA-U office records is forty people.

The remaining categories of respondents were purposively selected because they formed the elite team that deals with policy issues with regard to the operation of CPA-U. The researcher therefore envisaged that their knowledge and experience would provide key data and information that would be of value to this research.

3.3 Sample Selection.

Purposive sampling was used to select the BOT members, DBC, CPA-U office staff, the technical advisors, and the seven returnees abducted from St. Mary's College. These were purposively selected because they were fewer and formed the expert team of the organization and had special bearing on the organization like the returnees abducted from St. Mary's College. Their technical input and experience in working with CPA-U and direct interaction with the beneficiaries of CPA-U activities was seen as a very important source of data for this study.

For the remaining categories of the study population, random sampling was used to select respondents. The reason for this selection was based on the need to have a wide range of respondents that would generate a more balanced outcome of the research findings. Also random sampling was used in the study as a complement to the purposive selection of the respondents since using only one method of sample selection could bias the results of the research findings

3.4 Data Collection Instruments.

The researcher used four data collection instruments: Observation, in-depth interviews, focused group discussions, analysis of documentation/archival materials.

Observation – This was selected as one of the data collection instruments by the researcher because there are reactions and other non-verbal cues which add meaning to the other conventional methods of data collection. Non-verbal cues such as crying, an emotional outburst, not answering a question but simply staring into the horizon etc may add meaning and supplement the ordinary verbal communication by a respondent.

Interviews – An in-depth interview was carried out with the key respondents to solicit the impact of CPA-U on peace-building within Lira Municipality. This allowed a critical pursuance of the objectives of the research and even to probe more on other related issues of interest that developed during the course of the interview. Interview guides that were prepared in advance for the purpose of the research directed the interview.

Focused Group Discussions – This was used by the researcher to solicit information from the PSGs, DBC members, the teachers and returnees at the Rachele Rehabilitation Center and Comprehensive School. The researcher preferred this method for these categories first of all because it is analytical in that the participants can challenge each other's views. Secondly, it makes the soliciting of the views of a large group easy and less costly both in terms of time and other resources.

Analysis of documentation/archival materials – Written information from both the Head and Lira Branch offices were used to supplement results obtained from interviews and the focused group discussions. These included file records of meetings, workshops, training manuals, and correspondences etc, which were found useful to the study.

3.5: Reliability of Instruments.

To ensure consistency and dependability of the research instruments and ability to tap data, the instruments were pre-tested before full-scale use in the study. The researcher selected one PSG (twenty members participated), one BOT member, and two returnees for pilot testing of the research instruments. The results indicated that the interview and the focused group discussion question guides were able to elicit the data necessary for the research purpose. Although the researcher realized that a few of the guiding questions were repetitive while others were not able to tap the needed information as expected by the researcher. These were then either adjusted or reformulated to suit the research purpose.

3.6 Constraints Encountered during the Study.

The researcher found it difficult to access information from some respondents particularly those directly affected by the conflict, especially the returnees. Two cases emerged out as being the most painful for the returnees to talk about. One is the case of five returnees who confessed that they were forced by the rebels on different occasions to beat either their colleagues or other innocent people to death. The second is the case of girls, the majority of whom reported being raped and forced to live with men much older than themselves. This is evidenced by the fact that out of the seven female FAC interviewed, six (94.1%) had a child born in captivity. The fear of the girls was understandable because they had a bad experience with an international journalist who once interviewed some of them on condition of anonymity but later exposed the details with their pictures attached to the stories. However, the researcher as much as possible tried to develop good rapport with the respondents in order to obtain the information needed.

The researcher found difficulty in arranging appointment with the key respondents since they are busy persons. More so, there was the challenge of organizing the focused group discussions especially for the PSGs since the participants had different schedules. In one case, the respondent had to wait for four hours before half the number expected for the focused group discussion could arrive. The period in which the research was conducted also made organizing people quite difficult since most people had gone for or were preparing for Christmas and the New Year. All in all, the interviews had to be rescheduled and alternative interviewees had to be fielded by the researcher with the help of the Coordinator of CPA-U and some local authorities.

Some of the respondents, especially the PSGs had expectation that the researcher would give them some money in exchange for information. Some were even bold enough to ask for it directly, expressing the fact that several people used them to write projects soliciting for financial assistance which they never benefited from. The researcher had therefore to explain to them the purpose of the research and assure them that it was intended for academic purposes and not for any other motive.

The attitude to blame, and in some cases outright prejudice against the Acholi and the government was so strong among some of the respondents that it made it very difficult for them to give an objective answer to the research questions. One respondent for example kept referring throughout the interview that the LRA conflict is a sinister plan by the government and the Acholi to punish the Langi and other neighboring tribes. Although this was not held by a minority and therefore could not influence the research results much, it still made the interview process difficult to manage and control.

In the focused group discussions, the researcher noted that some few respondents seemed to dominate the discussions with their opinions even when the other members were encouraged to give their opinion freely. Thus, the researcher had to seek the

individual views of other respondents who seemed passive during the research process. This in some cases even involved stopping some of the respondents from intervening before another finishes his or her point. This was very helpful in that it allowed others to open up to the discussion knowing that their views are also respected.

3.7 Data Processing and Analysis.

The raw data collected from both the interviews and focused group discussions were edited and cross-checked to ensure accuracy and consistency and that they satisfy the intended aim of the research. The guiding questions for both the interview and focused group discussions were coded for easy identification, entry and analysis. Using the Scientific Program for Social Research (SPSS), the raw data collected were tabulated into frequency counts and converted into percentages especially for the quantitative data. The qualitative data were categorized using the codes assigned from which a comprehensive descriptive summary of the views of the different categories of respondents was obtained

CHAPTER FOUR

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON RETURNEES

4.0 Introduction.

This chapter presents the background information on the returnees who are the focus of CPA-U as a local Peace-building initiative. The background information focused on general information about the returnees and such included their village of origin, age, gender, marital status, level of education, place of abduction and period spent in captivity. The researcher focused on the background information because it provided basic data pertinent to the study. The background information on the other category of respondents was only collected for purposes of record of interview and focused group discussions.

A total of seventeen returnees were selected for the study out of which seven were interviewed individually while focused group discussion was held with the remaining category. The seven returnees selected for interview were chosen because of their special link with the history of CPA-U. They are part of the one hundred and thirty nine students abducted from St. Mary's College, Aboke; and it was their abduction that sparked the foundation of CPA-U as a local peace-building initiative.

4.1 Village Information of the Returnees.

The research findings reveal that all the returnees interviewed came from different villages although the majority came from within Lira District itself. This is a clear manifestation of the fact that the LRA targeted any village indiscriminately in search for people they could forcefully conscript into their army ranks, as well as for food and other basic necessities they required for their sustenance in the bush. It is also clear from the findings that the LRA concentrated their activities in the northern and northeastern

regions of the country. The majority of the returnees were from Lira District simply because the research was conducted as a case study within Lira Municipality.

4.2 Distribution of Returnees According to Age.

The majority of the returnees, that is, fourteen out of seventeen (82.4%) are in the age range of 16 to 26 while the remaining three (17.6%) were below 16 years of age. This shows that the LRA targeted mostly the young as possible and better candidates to be forcefully recruited into their army ranks. The reason behind this could be that the LRA first and foremost preferred those who are energetic and can persevere with the harsh bush conditions. Secondly, they preferred the young and youthful because these can easily be indoctrinated and brainwashed to adhere to and believe the doctrines and philosophy behind the rebellion. More so, this category is more susceptible to being forced into doing what they are ordered to do than the adults who may resist and the children who may not cope at all.

4.3 Distribution of Returnees According to Gender and Marital Status.

Results show that 58.8% of returnee respondents were males as opposed to 41.2% females. These results are supported by the general observation made by the researcher while conducting the focused group discussion at Rachele Rehabilitation Center. Further, the teachers at the Rachele center also confirmed that the majority of the returnees at the school are males. This is most probably because the intention of the LRA is to capture people who are strong and faster to cope with the bush struggle, a quality few women are generally presumed to have. Even in history of major international conflicts, war and military activities has generally been considered a preserve of men with only a few women to work as nurses and cater for other household duties such as cooking. Although

with time, there has been a dramatic change/increment in the number of women serving in the armed forces or who are directly involved in conflict as combatants internationally.

Study findings show that all the returnees who participated in the study were single. The most probable reason for this scenario is the fact that they were at their primary or early stages of secondary education when they were abducted therefore were too young for marriage. Alternatively, it could be due to the lifestyle in the bush that never allowed them to think about or develop a stable marriage relationship. However, out of the seven female returnees abducted from St. Mary's College, Aboke, six (85.7%) were with a child or two, while only one (14.3%) out of the whole group had no child. They also confirmed that this is true of most of their colleagues with whom they were abducted and other girls abducted by the LRA. This confirms the general assertion that the LRA abducts girls to be used as household servants, concubines or sex slaves.

The challenge posed by the situation in which these child mothers and their children find themselves is immense and needs urgent attention. They are not only worried about their own situation, but the future of their children born in captivity. How will such children cope when they later discover the circumstances in which they were born? At the moment, they may be too young to question such but with time, they will want to know who their true parents are. The implication of this shall be discussed in a little more detail in the course of this chapter.

4.4 Educational Level and Abduction Period of the Returnees.

The highest educational level attained by the returnees interviewed is that of secondary school ("O" Level). Out of the 17 returnee respondents, sixteen (94.1 %) were in secondary school when they were abducted and only one, making a total of 5.9% was in primary school. This could be explained by the fact that the LRA targeted youthful adolescents and where such would be found easily and in large numbers is at school.

On the other hand, the returnee respondents found it very difficult to get integrated into the school system with the ordinary students due to stigmatization. This made their progress in academics difficult as compared to the other students at the beginning. Most of them in one way or the other felt they were adults and could take charge of their lives thus making them undisciplined and so not disposed to learning. As the teachers at the Rachele comprehensive secondary school and rehabilitation center attest to, most of them found it very difficult to adjust to school programs. According to the teachers, the returnees are generally nagging, do not easily accept correction, like forming cliques, are very secretive, and are aggressive on trivial issues. This forced many to opt to drop out of school despite the school sponsorship that they are given. Contrary to the above however, the teachers also acknowledged that the majority of them after a while were able to cope and even do better than the ordinary students.

Findings reveal that the returnees interviewed were abducted in the period between 1986 and 2003. This is indicative of the period in which the Holy Spirit Movement led by the self-styled prophetess Alice Auma Lakwena started its rebellion against the then NRA military government. It was the remnants of this same group that transformed itself into the LRA in 1987 after the disintegration and self exile of their leader Alice Auma Lakwena to Kenya. The LRA as a rebel group however intensified its operations in 2000-2003 and this is the period in which most of these children were abducted. In such operations, the LRA targeted villages, schools, hospitals, other social institutions and infrastructure. This they did in search of people to abduct, as well as to raid for food and medicine to use in their bush bases. On the other hand, this is also the best means they could use to discredit the government as unable to protect its civilian population. The abductees were also used to carry their loot and later to be conscripted into the rebel ranks. Apart from the above, the LRA also targeted government, public and private

transport systems in search of the same things mentioned above. This forced certain roads in the conflict zone to be either completely blocked or be used under heavy military convoy making movement very difficult and causing a lot of inconvenience.

4.5 Period Spent by Returnees in Captivity.

The returnees who took part in the study spent a time period ranging from one year to nine years. Despite the length of time spent with the LRA, they were still not convinced of the cause of the struggle let alone the fact that they were forcefully conscripted into the rebel ranks. The lost educational and social time spent in captivity never deterred them from returning to the missed and cherished love and sense of social security of their communities.

Table 1: Background Information on the Returnees.

Village	No. of respondents	Percentage
Abala-Lira	1	5.9
Obanga Pe-Wany –Lira	1	5.9
Abuto Adi – Lira	1	5.9
African quarters – Lira	1	5.9
Ajuri (Abako – Lira)	1	5.9
Alokelum - Pader	1	5.9
Amitomot – Lira	1	5.9
Amuria – Katakwi	1	5.9
Wanglango – Kitgum	1	5.9
Atorobongo – Pader	1	5.9
Bar – Lira	2	11.8
Baronger – Lira	1	5.9
Lemo – Kitgum	1	5.9
Railways– Lira	1	5.9
Starch Factory ‘A’ – Lira	1	5.9
Wornguu – Pader	1	5.9
Total	17	100.0
Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
Less than 16 yeas	3	17.6
16-20 years	7	41.2
Over 20 to 26 years	7	41.2
Total	17	100.0
Gender		
Male	10	58.8
Female	7	41.2
Total	17	100.0
Marital status	No. of respondents	Percentage
Single	17	100.0
Level of education	No. of respondents	Percentage

Primary	1	5.9
Secondary	16	94.1
Total	17	100.0
Period of abduction	No. of respondents	Percentage
1986	1	5.9
1996	4	23.5
1998	3	17.6
1999	3	17.6
2002	1	5.9
2003	5	29.4
Total	17	100.0
Place of abduction	No. of respondents	Percentage
At home in the morning	1	5.9
From school	5	29.5
Rounded up from the village	5	29.5
In the field digging	1	5.9
LRA ambush	1	5.9
When looking after cattle	1	5.9
While basing in the stream	1	5.9
While sleeping	2	11.8
Total	17	100.0
Period spent in abduction/years	No. of respondents	Percentage
1 year	4	23.5
2 years	2	11.8
3 years	2	11.8
4 years	2	11.8
7 years	3	17.6
8 years	3	17.6
9 years	1	5.9
Total	17	100.0

4.6 Views of Returnees on their Bush Experience.

The returnees expressed very painful and negative views about their experiences during their time in captivity with the LRA. It was a time in their lives, which if possible they would rather not remember or relate to in any way. Unfortunately however, it has become a part of their life history that though painful, they have to live with.

Interview results with the seven returnees abducted from St. Mary's Secondary School (Aboke) reveal that they still feel traumatized and dehumanized about the whole experience. It was one of the hardest parts of the interview to which the respondents had difficulty in answering. It is in this regard that the findings are referred to only in general terms without specific details relating to the respondents' reply. The basis of the

skepticism and fear of the respondents in replying had its background on their experience with similar interview processes. The returnees regretted the fact that an international journalist who once interviewed them violated their confidentiality. He did publish a magazine article in which he exposed all their confidential details with their pictures attached besides them. This made their lives both at school and in the community very hard and uncomfortable. In this context, the researcher had to understand them and assure them that the interview confidentiality would be maintained. More so, the researcher made it a point to interview the respondents with the consent of their parents or guardians.

It is with this assurance that the respondents opened up to the researcher and were convinced that the interview results will not be used to blackmail them or that their names will be attached to their individual interview details. They expressed with deep pain and emotion the fact that they were raped and forced to cohabit with rebel leaders as their concubines or “wives.” This fact is more disheartening knowing that these were minors and were not sexually mature let alone the fact that rape in itself is a fundamental violation of their human rights and privacy. As a consequence, they were exposed to the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases especially HIV/AIDS. One of the respondents reported an incidence in which resistance to the sexual advance of an LRA commander made by a girl made him to order four of his body guards to rape her while all the others watched on. According to her, this incidence has made her to develop hatred for men as such and whenever she sees a male person, she immediately sees an aggressor, and she does not envisage a situation in which she will get married.

Some of the returnees reported being forced to participate in the killing of their fellow abductees by beating them to death with clubs, burying them alive, and chopping them to pieces with a machete, as well as using other cruel and inhumane ways of killing.

They were forced into being child soldiers and to indulge in combat activities, which put their lives in danger for a cause they never consented to. As they narrated these experiences, many broke into tears and were overwhelmed by emotion that the interview had to be suspended for a while.

All the above experiences made them feel hate and anger about themselves, the world and in many instances contemplated suicide since they no longer saw any meaning in life. Having been abused, exploited, dehumanized, and their productive life time wasted in terms of education and other life opportunities, they are filled with hate, anger and feelings of revenge. Some even went to the extent of saying that at times they feel those who caused them such pain and suffering should be killed. Although with counseling and the support of their families, communities and CPA-U they are trying to cope and come to terms with what happened to them, it still continues to haunt them.

The returnees at the Rachele Rehabilitation Center also reiterated similar views on the above bush experiences. One of them was even bold enough to mention that if he had not been abducted, he would probably not be living with HIV/AIDS. According to him, he was forced to cohabit with a female rebel commander from whom he believes to have contracted HIV. Another of the FAC at the center also said in his camp while in captivity, he knew of fellow male abductees who were sexually abused by the rebels. These findings illustrate some of the issues that CPA-U focuses on in its peace-building effort in Lira Municipality and the region as a whole. The study therefore is meant to evaluate the impact of CPA-U on peace-building through the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, the psychosocial support of war affected families and communities, and community reconciliation.

Table 2: Summary of Experience of Students Abducted from St. Mary's College.

Feelings about the Experience.	No. of respondents	Percentage
Anger, wasted time, & abused	1	14.3
Angry, hated the world, felt I was not human	1	14.3
Bitter at first. Now I have accepted it.	1	14.3
Disheartened & traumatized	1	14.3
Exploited, hatred, wasted time	1	14.3
Hated my stay there, feel whoever did it should be killed	1	14.3
Hatred, helpless, thank God am alive	1	14.3
Total	7	100.0

4.7 How the Returnees Escaped or got Released from the LRA (Table 3)

The circumstances under which the returnees escaped or were released from LRA captivity vary considerably. However, one striking point that can be deduced from the returnee respondents is that they were happy to be out of LRA captivity. This means that the majority of those forced to join the LRA by way of abduction never became converted to fully embrace the rebellion philosophy. All were happy and excited to be with their families, friends and communities whose cherished love and protection they missed while in LRA captivity.

Although the returnees got their way out of captivity at different moments, the majority (35.3%) found their way to freedom either during a UPDF helicopter raid or ambush attack. Despite the danger of being caught up in cross fire or being misunderstood by the UPDF for a rebel and therefore risk being shot, the abductees preferred to risk their lives than remain with the LRA. Their freedom was more important to them than remaining with the LRA under difficult conditions in the bush.

The second category (11.7%) comprises those who surrendered to the UPDF in the company of an LRA officer/commander. It is very interesting that even those who have been for a long time with the LRA and had gained their confidence still decide to defect and join the group they have been waging war against and considered as enemies. More

surprising even is the fact that they decide not to defect alone but with a group entrusted by the LRA high command to their care. One of the respondents in this category said in their group alone, they were fifteen who surrendered with their commander to a UPDF detach at Lacekocot in Gulu.

The remaining category of the returnees found their way out of LRA captivity in various circumstances. These included during a heavy and stormy rain in the middle of the night, some simply hid themselves in a thicket/bush while raiding for food in the villages, and some took advantage of night movements as they changed base or camps. Others were beaten and left to die only to be later rescued by villagers or the UPDF in their routine patrols. Some were on humanitarian grounds deliberately released by LRA commanders to accompany children, those wounded in battle, the sick and widows on orders from the LRA high command.

Whether they escaped or were released, the returnees expressed that they were overwhelmed with joy and felt a sense of relief when they realized that they were truly free. Although most of them were and still are scared in case they get re-abducted by the LRA since they have witnessed or were even forced to kill those who escaped and were re-arrested. They therefore hope and pray that such a thing never happen to them and that peace comes to the region soon with the on-going Juba Peace process. Others said they were even not sure whether they would find their family members alive since while in the bush, the propaganda the rebels presented to them was that the government soldiers had killed all their family members.

Table 3: How the Returnees Escaped or got Released from the LRA.

Response	No of respondents	Percentage
After a UPDF helicopter attack/ambush.	6	35.3
During a heavy stormy rain in the middle of the night.	1	5.9

Beaten and let to die with a mutilated limb after an escape attempt. He was rescued by a UPDF patrol	1	5.9
Released by an LRA commander (children, the sick)	2	11.7
Shot at by UPDF in an ambush and later found by civilians in the bush with septic wound on the leg.	1	5.9
Surrendered to UPDF in company of an LRA officer.	2	11.7
When traveling at night.	1	5.9
When traveling to Soroti.	1	5.9
While taking food to guards.	1	5.9
While raiding food in the villages.	1	5.9
Total	17	100.0

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.0 Introduction.

The overall objective of this study was to assess the contribution of, and challenges faced by CPA-U in its peace-building efforts in Lira Municipality as a case study. In so doing, the study was aimed at making a generalization on the impact of CPA-U as an organization in the conflict area in northern Uganda where it is working. Relating to CPA-U as a local initiative, the study was also intended to create awareness on the importance of the local community in contributing to peace-building as a complement to government and international interventions in conflict situations.

Lira Municipality comprises of four sub-counties, that is, Lira central, Adyel, Ojwina and Railways. It is from the above area of study that the one hundred respondents were selected. Seventy-four respondents were randomly selected for both interviews and focused group discussions, while the remaining twenty-six were purposively selected for elite interview. The second category was purposively selected because they formed the core group of CPA-U and were believed to have an in-depth knowledge and work experience or relation with the same.

5.1 Categories of respondents selected.

- Seven returnees picked from among the students abducted from St. Mary's Secondary School (Aboke).
- Ten returnees at the Rachele Rehabilitation Center and Secondary School in Lira
- Two Technical advisers based at CPA-U Head office in Lira
- Four out of the thirteen Board of Trustee (BOT) members.
- One office assistant and parent to an abducted child at CPA-U Head office in Lira

- CPA-U program manager at the Head office in Lira
- CPA-U District Branch Coordinator – Lira
- One volunteer at the District Branch office – Lira
- Four Parent Support Groups (PSGs) with 15 members selected from each.
- Nine District Branch Committees (DBC - Lira Branch).
- Four teachers at Rachele Comprehensive Secondary School and Rehabilitation Center.

Findings are presented both in tables and in narrative form with a few pictures highlighting the activities of CPA-U based on the research questions investigated. The presentation first gives the background information on the respondents ranging from their age, gender, level of education etc. After the background information on the respondents follows the impact of CPA-U on peace-building through the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, psychosocial support of war affected families and communities, and community reconciliation among the war-affected.

5.2 The Impact of CPA-U on the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returnees.

According to the findings, CPA-U is fairly successful in its peace-building effort through rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees. This process starts right from the moment of the reception of returnees till they are taken back to their families after rehabilitation and are reunited with their families and communities. Even when already reintegrated, the returnees still need some follow-up to make sure they are coping well within the community. This is quite essential because some of them are still traumatized and haunted despite undergoing counseling therapy. Soon after reception, which is a preliminary stage, both the physical and psychological condition of the FAC is assessed.

Physically, the majority of the FAC on their return were discovered to have developed health complications that required close medical attention. The lack of proper

healthcare services in the bush and the harsh living conditions are a major contributing factor in the deterioration of the health status of the FAC. Most of them came back with septic wounds from gunshots, skin diseases, pneumonia, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases etc. It is because of such and other complications that CPA-U reached a memorandum of understanding with some doctors and clinics to attend to the needs of the FAC. Depending on the health need of each individual FAC; they are referred for such attention to specialist accordingly. In Lira, the FAC are referred to Ayia Nursing Home and St. Martin clinic respectively, while in Kampala they are referred for such attention to Kampala International Hospital (KIH).

Secondly, assessment was also made concerning the gravity of the psychological impact and its effect on the lives of the FAC. This is considered a necessity because most of those who returned from LRA captivity had stories of being forced to kill, being gang raped or participating in inhuman acts against their will. CPA-U therefore recognizing that some of these cases needed specialized attention would refer them to their rehabilitation center. In cases where the situation demands further attention, such persons are then referred where appropriate help can be sought.

At the rehabilitation center, the FAC take between three weeks to one month depending on their psychological state. During this time, they undergo a series of guidance and counseling therapy and are involved in a lot of group activities such as sharing their experiences with others, playing, and singing together etc. They are also exposed to spiritual counseling from priests, pastors and imams depending on their religion.

During this process, the FAC are interviewed about their home background and this information is later used to trace their families in case their parents or guardians are not aware that they are back. The rehabilitation centers with the help of the PSG from the

village of the returnee then work hand in hand with the local leaders to prepare the family and community for the reintegration of the returnee.

When the authorities at the center judge the returnee ready for integration, they are given a rehabilitation kit (comprising of a mattress, blanket, some clothes etc) depending on what is available and they are officially escorted to their respective families. A welcome ceremony is normally organized with prayers, speeches and a small reception as a sign that the returnee is once again part of the community. Later, follow-up visits to monitor the progress of the returnee are made to find out how they are coping. According to the CPA-U program coordinator, the follow-up is normally done twice or thrice by a CPA-U reintegration monitor. This is very important since there have been cases in which the returnees relapsed and had to be returned to the rehabilitation center for attention.



Reunion scenes after rehabilitation (Source: Rachele Center files).

As part of the follow-up support, CPA-U organizes support for scholarship for the returnees. This support to the FAC and their families does not end with the reunion day but goes on since the PSGs are part of the community and are mandated to continue the process. It is through such support of the PSGs, family, community and friends that the FAC have managed to cope with the reality of what they have undergone. Other organizations from which the returnees got both material and psychological help include

Emmaus Catholic Charismatic Spiritual Center (spiritual counseling), school sponsorship by Rachele Rehabilitation Center, scholastic materials from friends and individuals, World Vision Rehabilitation Center in Gulu, and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Prayer Group at Lira Cathedral Parish.

5.2.1 Current Fears of the Returnees (Table 4).

Study results revealed a range of fears that the returnees have as individuals but which may also have an impact on the efforts being made by CPA-U towards peace-building through their rehabilitation and reintegration. Outstanding for the returnees abducted from St. Mary's Secondary School is the issue of school sponsorship. The majority of them expressed the fear of having difficulty of continuing with their studies in case their sponsorship is withdrawn or comes to an end. This is a genuine fear because some of them are orphans, while others come from poor families. On the other hand, some of their parents now seem to have forgotten their parental responsibility since the returnees are being sponsored.

Another fear of this category of returnees pertains to the future of their children. As noted in the background on the returnees, six out of the seven interviewed had a child or two born in captivity and all these children have grown knowing either their mother only or their grandparents as their biological parents. However, as they grow up, these children will demand to know their biological parents, as is the case with one of them already. The mother confessed that the boy has for the last one year been demanding to know who and where the father is. As the truth will certainly with time come to their knowledge, it may be a traumatic experience for them to know the reality. This is a big challenge for the child mothers, their families and communities that call for a very careful consideration. It is therefore a genuine fear for especially the child-mothers since this could trigger their own traumatic experiences as well.

The relative peace that has come with the onset of the Juba Peace Process has given a lot of hope for the people in the conflict zone. However, the uncertainty about insecurity returning in case the peace process fails is a possibility they live with on a daily basis. For the returnees, the fear is even much more since they have come face to face and were forced to participate in LRA incursions against their will. More so is the fear of being re-abducted by the LRA; the most common penalty of which is being killed as they witnessed during their time in captivity. These are similar fears expressed by the returnees at the Rachele Comprehensive Secondary School.

Despite the rehabilitation through counseling therapy received by the returnees, they still live with the trauma in relation to their bush experiences. Several of them said that at certain moments, the whole experience still unfolds in their mind as if it were real. Some reported cases of nightmares where they would be shouting till their parents or guardians calm them down. Others have even reported developing unnecessary phobia for guns, machete, axes and clubs. These were the weapons they used in the bush; therefore whenever they see someone holding one, it arouses suppressed memories. These and other challenges have made the process of the rehabilitation and reintegration quite an uphill task for CPA-U.

Table 4: Summary of Fears of Returnees Abducted from St. Mary’s College.

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Failure of peace talks and return of instability, re-abduction, and psychological torture in the bush life experience.	1	14.3
Fear of school sponsorship ending, the future of my child, and the fear of re-abduction.	1	14.3
Future of my sponsorship, re-abduction, failure of the peace talks, stigmatization, future traumatic experience	1	14.3
Phobia of guns, machetes, axes, clubs when I recall what took place in the bush	1	14.3
Psychological trauma, future of my children (when they learn of my captivity & their true father), future of my sponsorship	1	14.3
Re-abduction, future of my education, not sure of the attitude of people about me (stigmatization)	1	14.3
Re-abduction and the future of my child	1	14.3

Total	7	100.0
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Despite the above fears expressed by the returnees, they also have dreams of what they would like to be in future. They mentioned professions such as becoming a counselor, an evangelist, a politician, a lawyer, or a medical practitioner. The reason they gave for such aspirations are interesting because it related to the experiences they have undergone. Unlike many secondary school students who looked at professions in terms of making a living or money, the returnees looked at it in terms of service to the people. According to them, they have aspirations for such professions in order to help people in similar situations like them, advocate for peace, preach God’s message of peace, fight for people’s rights and defend the marginalized.

The research established that part of the rehabilitation at the Rachele Center involved counseling therapy. The counseling process is according to the returnees divided into two parts; that is, the individual and the communal sessions. In the individual session, the counselor took time to listen to their individual stories in order to establish the gravity of their trauma. They were asked about their fears and the difficult areas that they feel hard or threatened to talk about. This according to the returnees was a very difficult moment for them because they found it very hard to share some of their traumatic experiences with another person freely. The fear is based on the fact that some of them were forced to kill their own colleagues or to commit other atrocities against people whose families they knew. They therefore had fear of possible hatred or retaliation from the families of such people in case counseling confidence was broken. Several reported having broken down emotionally and in some cases even becoming violent with the counselor during the counseling sessions; although with time, they realized the fact that talking about their problems with someone and particularly a counselor was part of the healing process. The returnees appreciated that the counselors had time for them and

assured them of confidentiality and the fact that it was not their will or fault but they were forced to do what they did. This for them was a very good beginning and a moment of building confidence not only in themselves but in the fact that they still had people who cared for and loved them despite what has happened to them. This gave them a sense of relief, confidence, security and trust in other people that they had lost.

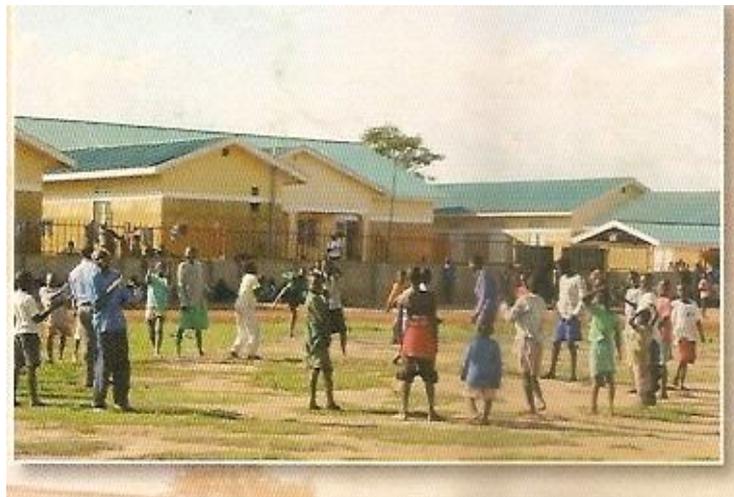
The second part of the counseling process was the communal session in which the FAC are brought together and given the chance to freely share their experiences. This is a free session in which each one at will and without coercion is free to share his or her experiences with the other returnees. The counselor makes it clear that in case one does not feel free to share, then one is not obliged to do so. However, the returnees reported that it was amazing how others talked freely about their situations, what they did and what happened to them. More so, some of these were people with whom they were in the same LRA camp and therefore knew what happened to them too. This became an impetus for many of them to open up and share their situations as well though it was very hard at the beginning. In the long run, such sessions became a community healing forum since one realized that he or she is not suffering alone and that some even had worst experiences than their own.

The returnees at the center are also encouraged to get involved as much as possible in other social activities such as sports, music, dance and drama. These are meant to enhance interaction and build a spirit of brotherhood among the returnees. It also enhances the spirit of free interaction among individual returnees and encourages those afraid of sharing in the community to identify friends in whom they can confide. The traditional music, dance and drama are tailored in such a way that they portray messages of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation. The returnees are also encouraged to develop

their own drama and other presentations in which they participate as actors to highlight on the dangers of war.

Speakers are invited by the center to give talks on different subjects to the returnees in as far as the need for reconciliation and forgiveness, health and hygiene etc. are concerned. The speakers include specialists in such disciplines or people who have faced the brunt of the war, for example, those who have lost friends, family members or have directly suffered in the hands of the LRA. They come to share with the returnees their own personal experiences and how they have come to cope with their situation. Time was also given for spiritual exercises and spiritual counseling to the returnees depending on their faith affiliation and what they chose as good for them.

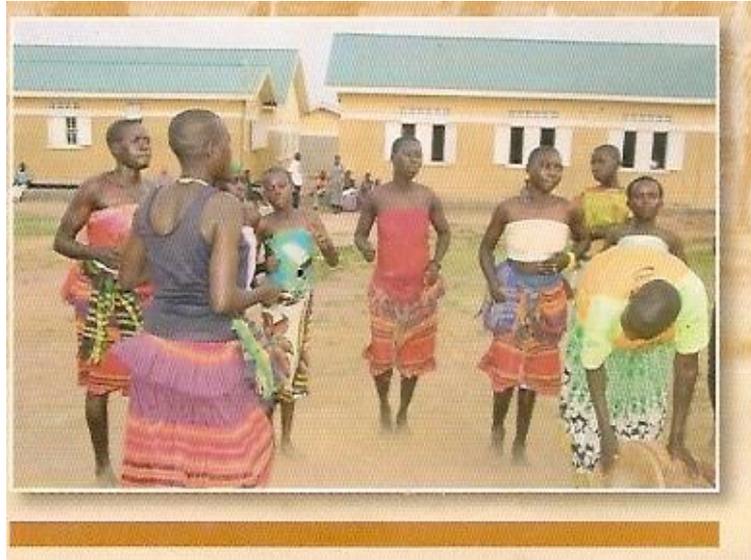
The above programs progressively led to some form of healing for the returnees and consequently their rehabilitation and reintegration. The healing process however has been gradual and depended on the state of each returnee and how he or she is able to adapt to the healing process. It should be noted here also that this is a life long process and that it is the general attitude of the victim that will help him or her to get better.



Sports is encouraged to enhance interaction at Rachele Center
(Source: Rachele Center files)



Some FAC enacting their abduction through drama.
(Source: Rachele Center files).



Traditional dances are part of the activities at the Rachele Center.
(Source: Rachele Center).

5.2.2 Returnees' Rating of the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program.

This sub-section presents the success rating by the returnees of the rehabilitation and reintegration program by CPA-U. The findings show that the returnees abducted from St. Mary's College acknowledged that the program is helpful. They however regretted the fact that apart from a one-week spiritual counseling at Emmaus Center –Katikamu, they never benefited from any official counseling at the CPA-U rehabilitation center. According to them, even subsequent promises by CPA-U to organize for them more of such activities never materialized. Therefore, to them, in as much as they rate the program in itself as helpful, the management of the program by CPA-U has been poor. This is because without any proper explanation, CPA-U denied them the chance of benefiting

fully from the program despite the fact that it was their abduction that gave ground for the foundation of CPA-U.

As shown in table 6 below, the rating by returnees at the Rachele Rehabilitation Center ranged between good and fairly good. This is a clear indication that the training program is helpful to the returnees, although they expressed that the time allocated for it at the center is too short. They also recommended that it would be very helpful if some form of follow-up of the program were made, clearly indicating that feedback is a lacking component or given little room in the activities of CPA-U.

Table 5: Rating by Returnees Abducted from St. Mary’s College.

Respond	No of respondents	Percentage
Very helpful	0	0.0
Helpful	4	57.2
Fairly helpful	3	42.8
Not helpful	0	0.0
Total	7	100.0

Table 6: Rating by Returnees at the Rachele Rehabilitation Center.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	0	0.0
Good	6	60.0
Fairly good	4	40.0
Poor	0	0.0
Total	10	100.0

The findings concurred with those obtained through interviews and focused group discussions with the other respondents. All the categories gave their assessment of the program as ranging between successful and fairly successful, with the majority saying it is fairly successful.

5.2.3 Utility of the Program for the Returnees.

In as far as the utility of the rehabilitation program is for their future, the returnees unanimously agreed that it would make them better persons. They particularly singled out and appreciated the fact that the education they are getting will go a long way in shaping their future. In addition, they acknowledged that their outlook to life is now different from the time they first came to the center. The hatred, fear and suspicion about each other at the center and for other people are slowly being transformed into a position of trust and confidence. According to them, despite the difference in tribe or region, they have learnt to live as brothers and sisters at the center. Furthermore, they observed that they are in a better position to forgive those who caused their suffering now than before they came to the center. The center, through the guidance and counseling sessions, organizing talks by external speakers and individual sharing of experiences has been very instrumental in this process of transformation and change of attitude. As already noted in the previous sub-section, the center organizes all the above for the returnees to facilitate their rehabilitation and reintegration. All these are very instrumental in the healing process and the transformation of the attitude of the returnees. Although the returnees also confessed that the feelings of anger, hate and revenge still sometimes come to mind but the intensity is much lessened. This is most probably due to the fact that recovery from intense traumatic experiences is a slow process that cannot be overcome in a short time.

5.2.4 Challenges of the Reintegration Process.

According to the respondents, there are several challenges that are encountered with the process of the reintegration of the returnees. Some of these challenges include the following:

Some parents of the FAC are reported to be treating them harshly and this in some cases exacerbates their trauma situation. For example, some take away the little

rehabilitation kit from the returnees since they themselves have nothing to use. The study established that some of the FAC come from extremely poor families who preferred to sell off items like the mattress given to the FAC to buy other basic necessities for the family than for the FAC to use it. Some of the parents are reported to argue on the basis that it is unfair for them as parents to be sleeping on a mat while their child uses a mattress.

The study established that in some instances, it was very difficult for CPA-U to run its rehabilitation and reintegration program due to lack of funds. It was established that this was because CPA-U to a large extent depended on donor funding that fluctuates with the willingness, interest and the capacity of the donor. Therefore any delay in remitting the funds or withdrawal would have an adverse effect on the success of the program.

Note was also taken of the fact that most of the families of the returnees have little experience on how to handle trauma cases. This made continuity of the healing process of the returnees that started at the rehabilitation center very difficult.

Study results revealed that there is still some level of stigmatization of the returnees by some members of their families and the community. Some of the returnees themselves reported that they or their children born in captivity are sometimes referred to as rebels, wife of Kony etc. Such forms of treatment have forced some of the returnees to repeatedly escape from their families and return to the rehabilitation center where they feel welcome and accepted as they are.

Parents of some of the returnees who have not benefited from the school sponsorship program organized by CPA-U think that the organization is deliberately denying them what is rightfully theirs. This has created unnecessary friction between CPA-U staff who implement the programs and these parents.

Insecurity in the conflict zone has made it very hard to reintegrate the returnees into their communities since most people were displaced from their homes. The situations in the IDP camps does not offer a good environment for proper reintegration and settlement of the returnees since people in the camps have more urgent and pressing needs such as the need for food, shelter and day to day survival than to concentrate on the reintegration of the returnees.

Some of the families of the returnees have found it very difficult to accept and incorporate the children born in captivity as part of their families. This has made the integration of the returnees who came back with children born in captivity very difficult.

5.2.5 Suggestions for Improvement.

A). Views of Returnees.

According to the returnees at the Rachele center, there is need for follow-up especially of the counseling sessions they had at the center. This is because the program has been helpful for them in their healing process although according to them, the time allocated for it at the center is rather short. According to them, it would even be more beneficial if the ordinary students were integrated in some of the sessions since this may go a long way in reducing stigmatization. They also appealed for the need to train their teachers in some basic counseling skills and how to handle victims of trauma. This according to them will go a long way in helping the teachers to understand them and their situations better.

B). Views of PSGs.

Participants in discussions held with the PSGs on their part reiterated the need for capacity building of the PSGs through workshops and seminars. This according to them will empower and strengthen the grass root standing of CPA-U that very much depends on the PSGs as its operational unit.

CPA-U should not only focus on the children (FAC) but also on their families since they live with them and thus need to know how to handle them better. The PSGs believe that the parents and families of the FAC have also undergone a lot of traumatic experiences that call for attention in terms of counseling and other related therapy. It would be of great value if they also get some basic knowledge and information in how to deal with such cases.

The need for better coordination of activities and information flow between PSGs and CPA-U offices was also emphasized. According to the PSGs, there has been a communication gap in the above regard that needs to be bridged. For example, members of *Yesu En Yo* PSG complained that CPA-U Lira District Branch promised them IGA support that has never been fulfilled. Efforts made to follow-up the promised oxen and ox-ploughs have for a year now since the time of research not born any fruit. This has discouraged some of the members who had willingly offered land to be used by the PSG to locally generate income.

Networking and teamwork with other stakeholders such as NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBO), churches and civil leaders is encouraged in the rehabilitation and reintegration process of the returnees. This will enhance the optimum use of the scarce human and material resources.

Exchange visits between PSG from different areas have been hailed as a success in trying to transform the attitude of people and communities in the region. It has encouraged and facilitated the process of forgiveness and reconciliation among communities. The PSGs therefore strongly suggested that this program be strengthened and encouraged.

Listening to the opinion of victims was recommended for CPA-U since knowing their needs would help those making decision and the implementers know what the beneficiaries consider as priority.

Some PSG members expressed concern in relation to the hierarchy and administrative structure of CPA-U. According to them, the founder members, particularly the Board of Trustees (BOT) monopolize decision-making and administration of CPA-U. These respondents argue that the BOT take CPA-U as their personal property and therefore regard the other members simply as partners who have to follow their directives. Such an attitude can be dangerous in organizational management and can create conflict. It is with such background that these respondents questioned why in ten years the leadership of CPA-U has not changed especially with regard to the BOT and the executive. To them there is need to restructure CPA-U so that it is not too dependent on the founder members and the BOT if it is to transform itself into a professionally run organization in which leadership is merited and team work counts.

C). Other Respondents.

The views of the other respondents also concurred with most of those expressed by the returnees and the PSGs. They however underscored the need for CPA-U to develop its own local income generating capacity instead of depending more on donor funding that may not be sustainable. Secondly, they felt the importance of sensitizing the local community through the PSGs since their participation is very crucial in the rehabilitation and reintegration process.

5.2.6 Problems Faced by Returnees at the Rachele center.

The returnees at the center reported that the other students who are not FAC fear to interact freely with them. According to them the other students are very cautious and sometimes refer to them as rebels or killers. This has made the returnees to keep their

interaction among themselves. This concurs with the description of the returnees given by the teachers at the center who said the returnees are very secretive and keep to themselves.

The FAC also revealed that the teachers at the school use vulgar language towards them and sometimes treat them harshly even to the extent of using corporal punishment. This they said makes them loose interest in participating actively in class and in education as such. Such treatment has forced many of them to drop out of school in preference to being at home with their families where they feel accepted. They reasoned that they would rather go home to be with their children, friends, family or relatives than be harassed and stigmatized against at school. However, they observed that the situation has dramatically improved especially when the matter was reported to the school authorities for attention.

5.2.7 General Assessment of the Center by the Returnees.

Asked to make a general assessment of the treatment at the center, eight out of the ten returnees interviewed at the center rated it as good, while the remaining 2 said it is fairly good. To corroborate their point, those who said it is good observed that there is much improvement in their personal life and attitude towards others. Their worldview and sense of trust in other people that had to a great extent been eroded has improved and the rehabilitation program at the center has been instrumental in transforming this attitude for the better.

In addition, they observed that the educational sponsorship, scholastic materials and other items such as clothes, blankets and mattresses etc. have been of great help to them. Most of them indeed confessed that their parents would not have easily afforded to acquire all their basic necessities.

Those who said that it is fairly good observed that there is still some level of stigmatization at the center. Fellow students still call them names and some of the teachers still use vulgar language towards them or treat them harshly. This however is not widespread as it used to be, although, it is still humiliating to be referred to as a rebel or a killer by fellow students and worst by a teacher.

5.3 Impact of CPA-U on Psychosocial Support of War-affected Families and Communities

The findings of the study revealed that the impact of CPA-U in as far as the psychosocial support of war affected families and communities are concerned is fair. A number of factors, according to the respondents contributed to this rating. The reasons given for such a rating hinged on the role of the returnees themselves, the community, CPA-U, and the government.

In relation to the government, the respondents clearly brought out the fact that the government has failed in its responsibility to protect its citizens and ensure that their rights and freedoms are respected. Despite claims by the government over the years that the rebels are being wiped out, the gravity of the attacks and atrocities inflicted against the civilian population has grown. The military option taken by the UPDF to quell the twenty-year-old insurgency has only increased the wrath of the rebels on the local population as a means of discrediting the government and showing that it is incapable of protecting the citizens.

Since its inception, CPA-U has been and continues to be involved in several psychosocial activities to help the victims and vulnerable members of communities directly affected by the war. Some of the psychosocial activities that CPA-U offers include the rehabilitation and reintegration of the returnees, educational sponsorship, health support, start up capital for small-scale business etc.

The conflict situation has greatly affected the healthcare infrastructure with a number of hospitals, health centers, and dispensaries either destroyed or completely looted by the rebels as they raided for medicine. The local population are therefore left very vulnerable and without any medical attention. Most of the FAC also returned with both physical and psychological health complications that needed medical attention. Diseases that could easily be handled in local health centers in the villages could no longer get attention due to the insecurity and thus developed into complications. This is because people could not afford to travel long distances in search of treatment, or the cost of medication is beyond their means. More so, the situation in the camps which are in most cases overcrowded increases the chance of contracting communicable diseases.

This challenged CPA-U as an organization to get more involved in providing basic health care and hygiene sensitization. Put in the words of Atyam Angelina (CPA-U national chairperson), “As a founder member of CPA-U and a nurse by profession, I felt the urge to go out and help people who are suffering out there due to the effects of the war just like my abducted daughter suffered.” This according to her was very essential because she witnessed people being extorted by non-medical personnel posing to be professionals. It is in this perspective that CPA-U is involved in training people in basic health care and hygiene. In more complex cases especially regarding the health of the returnees, CPA-U refers them for specialized attention to other clinics and hospitals. In line with the above, CPA-U program officer informed the researcher that they have a special memorandum of understanding with Ayia Nursing Home and St. Martin clinic (both in Lira town), and Kampala International Hospital (KIH) to treat the returnees.



Angelina Atyam treats a tortured FAC (Source: CPA Brochure).

Another aspect of healthcare that has been very important in the work of CPA-U is the psychological support of the FAC, their families and communities. In the case of the returnees, most of them are traumatized by their bush experiences and therefore need psychotherapy. Some were tortured, sexually abused, or their human rights violated in various ways. Such experiences have left deep psychological wounds in them that need healing. As revealed by research findings with the teachers at the Rachele Comprehensive School, some of them are withdrawn from people, do not want to be corrected, become aggressive and violent on simple matters etc. The researcher himself witnessed during the interviews that some of the returnees still have deep-rooted pain with regard to what happened to them. This was evidenced by the fact that some simply broke into tears in the course of explaining their experiences or just stopped in the middle of a sentence during the interview session.

Members of PSGs as the operational unit of CPA-U are very instrumental in the psychosocial support of war-affected families and communities. Since they are part of the community, they are more disposed to helping the returnees and their families cope with their situation. The basic workshops and seminars they receive on community counseling have been of a great help to their communities. Members of *Ogen Rwot* PSG, for example, reported that they have allocated the first Friday of each month as a day of

helping the FAC and other vulnerable in their village. The supports they give include counseling, praying with them, digging for them, and doing other household work for them.



Some FAC and other vulnerable children helped by *Ogen Rwot* PSG.
(Source: Photo by researcher during interview with *Ogen Rwot* PSG members).

According to Mr. Orongo E. (50years), it was the psychological support and encouragement of members of CPA-U that helped him to accept the fact that his daughter died in captivity. According to him, he had reached the level of hate and bitterness against any returnee with the assumption that probably they participated in killing his daughter. He even reached the level of contemplating suicide because of the rift the death of his daughter had created between him and his family. However the support given to him through counseling, prayer and involvement in other activities of CPA-U greatly transformed his attitude to life. He came to accept the fact that his daughter was truly dead and there is nothing he can do to reverse the situation than to positively accept it for what it is.

CPA-U is also active in the aspect of school sponsorship support for the FAC and other vulnerable children in need of education. The organization does this through lobbying for funding from donor agencies and individuals that directly choose to sponsor particular children in their education. The school sponsorship is in terms of school

fees/tuition, scholastic materials as well as some other basic needs of the pupils or students. Apart from individual sponsors, some of the institutions that support the returnees through CPA-U include, a Belgian association, 'Sponsoring Children in Uganda' (SCU), Save the Children in Uganda (SCiU), UNICEF, Inter-Church Council for Development Organization (ICCO), Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) etc. The school sponsorship program had by the time of the research helped about ninety-four school going children within Lira municipality alone. These are in various primary, secondary and other tertiary institutions within the country according to the CPA-U Lira branch coordinator. Two among the above have completed university level while several others are at their different levels of primary and secondary education.

The organization has also taken a keen interest in supporting the affected families and communities by providing them with initial capital for small-scale businesses. One example of such a support was the provision of a revolving fund to the PSGs who had to identify and implement a viable self-sustaining project. The proceeds from such a project would then be used to support the vulnerable in their communities as well as run the activities of the PSG. Unfortunately however, there was no proper follow-up, therefore the revolving fund was misused and never recovered from the PSGs.

The researcher also personally witnessed CPA-U Lira Branch office hand over an assortment of items to PSGs and Concerned Children and Youth Association (CCYA) members from different locations within Lira district on 12.01.2007. The items handed over included a new grinding mill, six oxen and ox-ploughs, bicycles, seeds for planting, wheelbarrows, hoes, machetes, spades and fertilizers. The tools and equipment was a grant from SCiU meant as an initial capital for these groups so that they can become self-reliant and be able to run their activities.

CPA-U also supports FAC who opt not to go back to school with sewing machines and other forms of capital to make them have a start in life. This has been very instrumental in resettling the FAC who almost had nothing to start from after returning from the bush.



Some of the FAC learning tailoring at the Rachele Center.
(Source: Rachele center files)

CPA-U encourages the PSGs to start or initiate their own income generating projects that can help them as a group to run their activities and as individuals to gain skills that they can use to support their own families. Some of the activities that the PSGs are involved in include, poultry farming, arable farming, brick making, produce buying and selling etc. However, the shortcoming noticed by the researcher regarding these projects is that most of them have been short lived. At the beginning, there is a lot of enthusiasm and cooperation among the PSG members but with time, they begin to lose interest and concentrate more on personal business. The probable reason is that some of the members joined the PSGs with the view that they would have a lot of personal material gain. However, with the project proceeds not benefiting them directly but directed to help the vulnerable amidst them, they easily gave up since their expectations are not being fulfilled.

Advocacy and sensitization has been one of the major contributions of CPA-U towards the peace-building process in the war-affected region of northern Uganda. Rallying both the local community and seeking for international intervention is a key goal in the effort of CPA-U towards achieving a sustainable peace in the war-affected region. Internationally, file records show that CPA-U has participated actively in sensitizing the world community on the plight of the innocent victims of the northern Uganda conflict. Some of the presentations in the international fora include:

- The 1329 symposium of the Harvard Watchlist Child Soldiers Coalition, held in November 2002. In her presentation, the chairperson of CPA-U Mrs. Angelina Atyam highlighted the atrocities committed by the LRA as well as the UPDF with impunity against women and children, especially on the girl-child. She pointed out lack of protection as being a key problem in northern Uganda. This situation led to abductions and mass displacement of people in IDP camps, which according to her is a breeding ground for gender-based violence, especially rape, torture, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and most of all HIV/AIDS. She gave her own experience as a mother whose daughter was abducted by the rebels in 1996 and what the children who manage to escape report about the situations in the bush. She concluded by ardently appealing to the international community especially the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to put pressure on the warring parties (CPA-U file records).
- On behalf of CPA-U, the chairperson of the organization also addressed similar sentiments to the UNSC ‘Arria Formula’ on the implementation of resolution 1325 on women, peace and security held in October 2002.’ She reported that by then, over 14,000 children had been abducted in the then 17-year-old conflict. According to her, the abducted children are turned into rebel fighters and they formed over 80% of the

rebel fighting force. Apart from being conscripted as fighters into the rebel ranks, the girls are forced to become sex slaves by the rebels. She gave very painful and moving incidences of the atrocities being committed against the local population by the rebels. One such case was on 13.10.2002 when the rebels attacked Ngai village in Apach district, slit open abdomens of cows, packed babies inside and sewed them back. As the children suffocated to death, the older people were tied on tree branches with heads down, and were clubbed to death with stomach contents oozing out. She also reported a case of a lady in Kamdini in Apach District where the rebels forced her to stir beans boiling on fire with her bare hands instead of using a ladle (CPA-U file records)

- CPA-U also participated in a conference organized by Jamii Ya Kupatanisha (JYAK) on ‘Healing from War’ a discussion and exchange on post conflict healing methodology in July 2006 (CPA-U file records)

Locally, CPA-U has organized and participated in several mobilization activities as a way of sensitizing the local population on the dangers of conflict and the need for forgiveness and reconciliation. Some of the locally organized activities include the following:

- A peace walk organized by the CCYA in Lira town on 10/08/2002, calling for a peaceful solution to the northern Uganda conflict (CPA-U file records).
- A meeting organized by CPA-U with the traditional leader of Lango ‘Rwot Nyaci’ on security held on 5th March 2002 (CPA-U file records).
- A workshop organized for CPA-U chairpersons on Advocacy strategy development held at Lira Hotel from 25th -28th August 2002 (CPA-U file records).
- Interdenominational prayers for children in LRA captivity held at Akii Bua stadium in Lira on 27th April 2004 (CPA-U file records)

- Program for the sensitization of returnee child mothers on Human/Children's rights and legal issues conducted in three phases at Lira Hotel from 7th – 9th September, 26th -29th October 2003, 3rd -4th November 2003 (CPA-U file records).
- Youth meeting with president Museveni on the plight of children abducted and suffering due to the LRA conflict organized by CPA-U held at Lira Hotel on 21st March 2004 (CPA-U file records)

These and many others are fora through which CPA-U brought to light the intensity of the war situation in northern Uganda to the attention of both the local and international community. It has also won CPA-U as a local peace-building initiative several honorary awards such as,

- The 'Human Rights Monitor' award from the Human Rights Watch (CPA-U file records)
- A Heroine in the fight against modern-day slavery in the 2005 *Trafficking in Persons Report* issued by the U.S. Department of State to CPA-U chairperson on 20th June 2005 (CPA-U file records)
- A UN prize in the field of Human Rights presented by Hillary R. Clinton on behalf of the U.S government on 10th December 1998 (CPA-U file records).

5.3.1: Community Involvement in the Psychosocial Activities of CPA-U.

The community is directly involved in the psychosocial activities of CPA-U through the PSGs. The PSGs are the most active unit of CPA-U and are directly in touch with the community because they are indeed members of the community. This explains why CPA-U encourages the formation of PSGs in the whole region affected by the war. Lira district alone has 60 PSGs and the highest concentration of that number is within the municipality with 20 PSGs. This is so because the war displaced most of the people from their homes and they took refuge within the municipality.

In line with the above, the PSGs members revealed that they provide counseling on domestic violence and support the traumatized, especially those who have newly returned. Due to the conflict situation, the level of domestic violence has risen, especially against women and children. Finding themselves redundant in the camps, many people, particularly the men resorted to drinking due to frustration and this has brought along with it family quarrels and violence mostly directed on women and children. CPA-U through the PSGs has taken up the task of supporting each other as families by way of community counseling. The PSGs have also made it their responsibility to identify and refer returnees who have just come back into their communities without rehabilitation for specialized attention to CPA-U centers.

The PSGs help other vulnerable people in society, for example, the old, the sick, orphans and widows. This has greatly enhanced the spirit of concern for each other among the people. In relation to the FAC, the PSGs prepare the communities to receive and help them after their rehabilitation and reintegration. This has made most of the returnees feel accepted and loved, consequently fastening their healing process.

The community through the PSGs have taken it upon themselves to monitor the recovery progress of the returnees in their villages and if need be, refer them back to the rehabilitation centers for better attention.

The other respondents confirmed the fact that the community is closely involved in the psychosocial support of the affected through the PSGs, which is the basic unit of operation of CPA-U. The fact that they live with and are part of the community brings them face to face with the concerns and problems of the community.

Another aspect of community involvement is through the CCYA who regularly have competitions in music, dance and drama with messages of peace, forgiveness and

reconciliation. This has been very effective because the messages are presented in a way that is attractive and appealing to the sentiments of the local community.

It was also observed that as a way of community involvement, CPA-U conducts community needs assessment to seek their views and involve them in activities of the organization. More to that, some members of the PSGs are given Trainer of Trainer (TOT) teaching and this helps make a multiplier effect to benefit the whole community. The findings revealed that the PSGs and the CCYA reflect the true image of CPA-U at the grass root level and that membership is open to anyone.

5.3.2 How the Communities Coped with the Conflict Situation.

PSG discussions indicated that the war-affected communities were able to cope with the conflict situation in different ways. Others were able to adopt positive coping mechanisms such as seeking the support of other individuals and organizations. CPA-U is one such organization that has been carrying out community guidance and counseling, as a means of helping people to cope with the situation.

Workshops on psychosocial trauma management have been organized by CPA-U to help the affected individuals and communities. Exchange visits organized for PSGs from different parts of the conflict zone have been very instrumental in bridging the gap created by prejudice among the war-affected neighboring communities.

Advocacy and sensitization on the need to respect fundamental human rights, especially of the vulnerable such as the elderly, the sick, women, child mothers and children by NGOs have greatly helped the local communities to cope. According to the respondents, CPA-U has been very instrumental in this aspect of advocacy and sensitization.

It was established that religious bodies helped a lot through spiritual counseling of the affected communities. An example is the spiritual counseling organized by CPA-U for

the FAC at Emmaus Center-Katikamu. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Group at Lira Cathedral Parish has also been of great help to the FAC and their families in terms of praying with and counseling them.

The findings reveal that the setting up of PSGs makes the work of CPA-U community based. Further, it shows that CPA-U head office or branch office empowers the people through basic TOT training and IGA but leaves the PSGs to manage themselves, though with close monitoring by CPA-U office staff. Worth noting is the contribution of generous individuals and families who went a long way in their charity to offer feeding and accommodation to some of the displaced persons.

Negatively however, desperation pushed some people into extreme actions as a means of trying to cope with the situation in which they found themselves. Some, particularly the men took to irresponsible drinking as a means of escape. This has consequences such as domestic violence and family separation.

Many young girls have been forced either by lack of individual basic needs or their parents into prostitution or early marriage to get money to sustain their families. Some respondents pointed to the fact that some teenage girls prefer to indulge in sex for a sum of money as low as five hundred shillings rather than starve.

Generally however, the respondents agree that the role of the local communities have not been fully exploited by CPA-U. It was their belief that if a little more effort was put and follow-up made, the communities would be more actively involved in CPA-U activities. When asked what could be done to improve the role of the communities, the following were mentioned:

5.3.3 Suggestions for Enhancement of Community Participation.

Networking with other stakeholders (religious leaders, local government and NGOs) to harmonize efforts towards peace-building in the region was considered a crucial factor. Since there are several players in the peace-building process, roles and works can easily be duplicated. Therefore to avoid such a situation, the different players in collaboration with the local community need to map out in advance what their contribution to the process would be.

It was recommended that there is need for CPA-U to support activities that can magnetize the local communities such as involving them in IGA from which the community can benefit directly in the long run.

The use of traditional music, dance and drama that has shown success in passing the peace message should be encouraged. This should be expanded to involve other neighboring communities affected by the conflict as well. Intercultural festivals could be organized as a way of bringing the different communities together and enhancing a spirit of coexistence.

There is the need to get feedback from the children, families and communities instead of planning for them. In as much as what CPA-U does for the community may be very good and essential, it is better for the beneficiaries to feel part of it and own the process.

Capacity building of staff, as resource persons to do the right job professionally should be encouraged. Once the capacity of the staff is well built, they will in turn transfer skills gained to the community. It is therefore incumbent upon CPA-U to develop the skills of its personnel through courses and workshops.

Advocacy and sensitization of the populace about the needs of the vulnerable in their societies should be intensified. It is important for the general population to know that it is their responsibility to support those in need even without external help.

Need to facilitate members of PSGs in their work since they do voluntary work without remuneration. Motivation in terms of transportation, allowance for leaders of the PSGs would encourage them to work even more.

5.3.4 Assistance Given to the Returnees by CPA-U.

All the returnees interviewed acknowledged that they received some form of support from CPA-U. They mentioned items such as a blanket, mattress, soap, basin, clothes and other basic items depending on what is available. This is what they receive during and at the end of their stay at the rehabilitation center or on arrival from the bush for those who go to their homes directly. Other forms of support include:

- Medical attention, both physical and psychological.
- School sponsorship in terms of fees and scholastic materials, transport to and from school.
- Some who opted not to continue with school education were given short training in practical skills such as tailoring and given a sewing machine as a start up capital.

Most important in the priority list of the assistance provided by CPA-U to the returnees is their rehabilitation. Having undergone a lot of traumatic experiences while in the bush, several of the FAC, if not all, needed guidance and counseling. It is in this respect that they were taken to rehabilitation centers for close and specific attention. Worth noting however is that CPA-U as an organization lacked the qualified personnel to deal with critical cases in this regard, let alone the fact that they were overwhelmed by the influx of returnees between 2002 and 2003. Although the majority of the returnees said that the assistance was not enough, they nevertheless appreciated what they received.

According to them, the little they got has made their life much better than the miserable situation they had in the bush. At least 50% of the returnees at the center rated the quality of the material help they get as being very good, while 30% rated it as good and 20% as fairly good.

Table 7: Rating of Material Assistance Received by Returnees at Rachele Center.

Respond	No of respondents	Percent
Very good	5	50.0
Good	3	30.0
Fairly good	2	20.0
Poor/Not good	0	0.0
Total	10	100.0

5.3.5 Utility of the Psychosocial Activities to the War-affected Communities.

The majority of the respondents described the activities of CPA-U in relation to the psychosocial support of the war-affected communities as helpful. According to them, there have been testimonies from individuals, families and groups on how the program has helped them in coping with stress, and how to handle returnees. The guidance and counseling support offered by the PSG members has had a positive behavior change in the lives of many.

The IGA support given to the individual FAC and the PSGs have helped those who have used the knowledge productively. In fact, some of the returnees are said to be earning their living from the start up capital they got in form of IGA from CPA-U. Even some of the PSGs have gone a long way in sponsoring vulnerable children in their communities with proceeds from their IGA.

Security in terms of crime rate is said to have improved with the campaigns against abuse of human rights conducted by CPA-U throughout the conflict zone. A report from Bala Stock Farm Police Post indicates that since CPA-U started its activities in the area, the level of crime has dramatically dropped. Apart from one respondent, who gave the

general rating of the psychosocial activities carried out by CPA-U as very successful, the others said it is fairly successful.

Mr. Kerwegi Anthony (30years, interviewed 25.01.2007) attributed the fast spread of CPA-U in the conflict zone to the utility of the psychosocial support program activities. According to him, even the other organizations working in the region are using the CPA-U structure of network in the communities. The other categories of respondents however say that these activities are compromised by lack of expertise and limited funds that reduces the effectiveness of CPA-U in running these activities.

5.3.6 Follow-up of Returnee Progress in their Communities by CPA-U.

The seven returnees abducted from St. Mary's Secondary School confirmed that CPA-U still supported them in one way or the other. According to them they are still being supported in terms of transport to and from school, scholastic materials, pocket money, encouragement to work hard in school and medical attention. This category of returnees was however disappointed that CPA-U has made them miss out in terms of counseling support. Apart from one (14.3%) out of the seven (85.7%) who said she was referred to Teboke Rehabilitation Center for one week, the others never had a chance to be in a rehabilitation center. It was only in August 2006 that a one-week spiritual counseling was organized for them by CPA-U at Emmaus Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center. For them, it was a very enriching and healing experience that they would love to have again if they had the chance. According to them, it is painful to miss out on such an important program when it was the incidence of their abduction that gave birth to CPA-U as an organization. In the words of one of them, "I expected more than a blanket, mattress, or what they termed as rehabilitation kit since CPA-U was formed in our name and continues to lobby for funds in our name."

5.3.7 Suggestions for Improvement.

The returnees offered a range of suggestions that could help improve the organization's service delivery in the above respect. Some of the suggestions directly focused on the activities of CPA-U, while the others spelt out some unethical behavior within CPA-U. Suggestions focusing on activities carried out by CPA-U include:

- Concentrating on the development of personnel through staff capacity building. This will help the organization to do its work in a more professional way.
- Lobbying for more support and funding from donor agencies and people of good will; and strengthening the internal fund generating activities to make the organization self-sufficient.
- Seeking the opinion of returnees in decision making and involving them more in the activities of the organization.
- Some of the respondents recommended that there should be a special committee to monitor the allocation of school scholarship to ensure transparency and accountability of the funds. This was particularly emphasized because they believed there was some level of nepotism in as far as the awarding of the same is concerned. Children and relatives of the BOT and some staff who are not FAC seem to be benefiting from the scholarship at the expense of the FAC who should be the rightful beneficiaries. A call was also made by some of the respondents to help the beneficiaries equally with the available resources.

Table 8: Suggestions on how CPA-U can Improve on its Service Delivery.

Response	No of respondents	Percent
Give support evenly to all, lobby for more support, develop expertise in counseling	1	14.3
Help children from the bush cope with trauma experience	1	14.3
I know very little about the organization	1	14.3
Improve the helping scheme, avoid nepotism (children of officials benefiting more yet some are not even abductees)	1	14.3

Lobby more, advertise CPA more, seek opinion of victims, develop expertise in counseling	1	14.3
Should be transparent by helping people equally	1	14.3
Solicit for more support to help many more	1	14.3
Total	7	100.0

5.4 The Impact of CPA-U on Peace-building Through Community Reconciliation.

This sub-section is a presentation of the effects of the government/LRA war on the community within the conflict area and the consequences it has had on their relationship with their neighbors. The sub-section also assesses the impact of CPA-U on peace-building through community reconciliation.

Conflict in any form, whether between individuals, a group of individuals or between communities, always affects the relationship between people. It is a situation where people's interests, values and attitudes are affected, thus touching the core of their being. When not mitigated and a win-win solution arrived at in time, conflicts which have been latent or dormant can escalate into active, and in some cases, violent confrontation. The consequence of violent conflicts is the destruction of property, and injury or even loss of human life.

The conflict between the government and the LRA has reached the unfortunate level of destruction of human life and property as well as other gross violations of fundamental human rights. It has therefore affected the relationship between individuals and communities who have been directly or indirectly victims and those they consider as aggressors. At times however, this attitude is directed towards those who are not direct aggressors but are considered linked to the aggressors in one way or the other. It is in this context that this research investigated the effects of the government/LRA conflict on the relationship between communities in the conflict zone.

5.4.1 Effects of the War on the Relationship between Communities.

a) Returnees.

The results show that 82.4% of returnee respondents confirmed that the war situation affected their relationship with communities around them while only 17.6% said their relationship with neighboring communities have not changed. When those who answered in the affirmative were asked to name the communities with which the war has affected their relationship, all named the Acholi community. This clearly shows how people can build prejudices without evaluating facts objectively. The 17.6% who answered that their relationship has not been affected with any community around them said that they are only bitter with the LRA high command. They hold that it is this category that is responsible for the suffering they have undergone. This is a much more reasonable and realistic attitude that is able to at least avoid a prejudiced generalization. The researcher found out that those who had this attitude were from the Acholi sub-region while those that blamed the Acholi were from the Lango and Teso sub-regions respectively.

It is however, worth noting here that the views of the majority are slowly changing for the better after campaigns by CPA-U and other peace-building initiatives about the need for forgiveness and reconciliation. They are coming to realize the fact that not all the Acholi support LRA activities or are part of the LRA. They also appreciate that a number of the Acholi were abducted by the LRA just like them. Because of this, some now look forward to a better future and hope that peace comes to the region soon.

Table 9: Effects of the War on the Relationship of Returnees and other Communities.

Response	No of respondents	Percent
Yes	14	82.4
No	3	17.6
Total	17	100.0

b): Views of PSGs on the Effects of the War.

All the four PSG members expressed the opinion that the war situation directly affected their families and community. They enumerated several reasons for this assertion among which the most prominent ones include the following:

The war has displaced several people from their homes, and in so doing, has made them destitute and unable to support themselves. They live in IDP camps in appalling conditions with little if any social amenities. They cannot decide their destiny since their major source of survival is to depend on handouts from humanitarian agencies, NGOs and people of good will. Their economic means of livelihood and what they have struggled to build for years to support their families and dependants were either looted or destroyed by the rebels or has been wasted since they had to flee for their lives.

The war has destroyed social infrastructure such as schools, health facilities etc. thus depriving people of their basic human rights. As a consequence, children have been forced out of school, and many people have died due to preventable diseases such as malaria, cholera etc which could otherwise have been treated.

Several people have lost their lives, been abducted and maimed, traumatized and psychologically tortured as a result of the conflict. As such, in some places, a whole generation has grown in the last twenty years in camps knowing little else apart from insecurity. This is evident in the play style of children in the conflict zone where many simulate combat situations since that is what they actively experience in their day to day living. Children have self-made toys modeled in terms of guns, and armored personnel carriers (APC) commonly known as mamba. The post conflict rehabilitation and settlement in the war area will therefore be an immense task, which will call for a concerted effort of all stakeholders and people of good will.

In addition, the PSG discussions revealed that many people, especially the youth have become prone to sexually transmitted disease such as HIV/AIDS because prostitution has become one of the easiest means for them to survive in Lira town. As such, a street in Lira town (Inomo Road) has become nicknamed “take away” street. This is because in the night, there are several young girls and boys just loitering in wait for sex in exchange for money. It is disheartening to see the youth, especially girls as young as fourteen years old roaming up and down along this street late in the night. A casual talk with Mr. Tony Atara (50years) who runs a restaurant and a lodge on this street confirmed this. According to him, respectable people such as civil servants, businessmen/women and army officers participate in the sex trade. Most of them book rooms and later use street children to bring these girls to their rooms late in the night. In order to verify this, the researcher went to one of the spots on Inomo road at mid night and saw for himself the sex related activities on this street. Bars around were full of people with music playing at high volume. As soon as the car stopped, four girls of probably between fourteen and sixteen came over and one of them asked, “Where are you taking us today.”? When the man at the wheel showed indifference, the girls simply went away laughing and jeering.

According to discussions with the PSGs, some parents indirectly encourage their children into such activities by asking them to contribute to the welfare of the family. On the other hand, with the lifestyle in the overcrowded camps and peer influence, some of them have just simply outgrown the authority of their parents. As expressed by members of *Ogen Rwot* PSG, the parents of such children cannot have any moral authority since they have failed to provide for their basic needs.

The war has also caused high separation and divorce rates because in some cases, usual breadwinners find themselves unable to provide for their families. The men in particular have become very redundant since the main work they used to do, that is,

farming could no longer be practiced within the town environment or in camps due to lack of land. This forced many into doing petty work and unfortunately the little they get from it ended up being used for drinking. The women who are more creative in starting small businesses such as brewing and selling of local beer, buying and selling of foodstuff in the local markets and within the camps found that they were the sole breadwinners for their families. Realizing this, some of the women preferred to be independent and take care of their children than live with a man who has become more of a burden than a family head. Soon, quarrels and domestic violence develop, which with time lead to family breakage and separation. Some of the women left their husbands who could no longer support their family needs for other men within the town who were better off. The conflict situation has therefore put the family institution under a serious threat in these areas.

Overcrowding and poor hygiene in the camps has also exacerbated the outbreak of epidemics such as cholera and other communicable diseases, thus, increasing the death rate. Further, with a rise in the population within the Municipality due to the influx of IDP, the main hospital and public health centers could not cope with the number of patients. On the other hand, the private clinics are too expensive for the IDP to afford. The only rescue to those living in the IDP camps is the help of NGOs such as Medicines sans Frontier (MSF) whose services have also been overwhelmed by the number of patients in need of medical attention.

Furthermore, PSG discussions noted that the war created the problem of street children, which was unheard of within Lira Municipality, and promoted hatred among tribes such as between the Acholi and Langi, once good allies. Children run away from their parents in the camps due to hard conditions and prefer to be on their own. This has created a sense of insecurity within the town since hardship has forced most of these

children to become thieves. People who park their cars on the streets in town at night have been victims in that many lost their driving mirrors, tires, car radios and batteries. It is believed that some hard-core thieves have taken advantage of the situation and are mentoring these vulnerable children into the art of stealing.

The PSG discussions also noted with concern that the cultural fiber that kept people together such as the authority of the clan and cultural leaders are being eroded and that frustration has driven people into drug abuse and crime. This is due to the fact that people got mixed up in different camps irrespective of where they came from. The authority of the clan leaders could therefore not be applicable in such circumstances. The PSG also noted that NGOs helping these people choose camp leaders basing on the level of literacy, thus most of the camp leaders are young people as opposed to village level leaders who are mostly elders chosen on the basis of their seniority and wisdom.

The number of school dropout is on the increase in the region as a result of the war. Many parents cannot afford to support their children in school since the war has displaced them and deprived them of farming which is their main source of income. The consequence of this has been that parents force their children into early marriage especially the girls as a way of getting wealth to support the family and reducing on the weight of their parental responsibility.

Another social effect and menace that has come along with the conflict situation is the increase in the number of able-bodied beggars within the town. Apart from every Friday which people within Lira town have known for decades as a special day for helping the physically handicapped, one now finds all categories of beggars everyday in the town. The humiliating scene of elderly women moving in groups of four or five begging from shop to shop and from person to person has become a common occurrence within Lira town.

The above are some of the effects of the war on the local population, which can be categorized into health, social and economic problems. These calls for a range of intervention mechanisms such as peace-building through the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, psychosocial support of war affected families and communities, and community reconciliation.

There were similarities in the views of the remaining category of respondents in as far as the effects of the war on their families and communities are concerned. The majority of the respondents also agreed that the war is generally blamed on the Acholi. Let us now turn to these reasons.

5.4.2 General Reasons Given for Blaming the Acholi.

Several reasons were given by the respondents for blaming the northern Uganda conflict on the Acholi. However, the view that cut across with the majority of the respondents is that the Acholi started the conflict out of their self-centered interest and when they failed to achieve their goal, they started dragging others into the situation by force. However, the other reasons include the following:

The Acholi betrayed a legitimate government (the Obote II government) and because of this, innocent people, especially women and children have been abducted, raped, maimed and killed. According to those who hold this view, if the short-lived Tito Okello government had not overthrown the Obote II government in a military coup in 1985, the people in the region would not be suffering. These sentiments are most probably strong because Obote hailed from this area and therefore had many loyalists among his own people. Further, some seem to believe that the Obote II government was on the verge of bringing the NRA rebellion in Luwero to an end but it was the selfish motive of the Acholi military elite that assisted the NRA in coming to power.

The others do not blame the Acholi directly but hold that the government simply lacks the political will to end the LRA conflict. To this category, the government is simply indifferent towards ending the war and it is using the situation as a way of avenging the NRA bush struggle in Luwero. This view was expressed on the basis that the government was quick in quelling other conflicts e.g. that of the Allied Democratic Force (ADF), which started in western Uganda. But for the last twenty years, it has failed to solve the LRA conflict that started as soon as the government itself came to power. These are arguments that are very difficult to accept or deny since there is lack of hard evidence. However, the fact that the war has taken long and has caused immense suffering and loss of property as well as human lives is regrettable. What the war torn region needs is to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. Apportioning blame will only drag the process of bringing peace to those who have faced the brunt of the conflict for the last twenty years and are both physically and emotionally torn apart.

The senseless war has halted the development of the region and destroyed existing infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and other social facilities. Some respondents contend that the war continues because the Acholi people support it and do not want to cooperate with the government and others in ending the conflict. In so doing, they want to force others who have nothing to do with the conflict to support their cause.

The LRA conflict has had other side effects on neighboring communities such as, displacing thousands of people and making them refugees in their own land (IDP). Others include the rise in the number of street children, child mothers, prostitution as a means of survival, and family breakage as a consequence of the war started and maintained by the Acholi. All the above reasons call for dialogue and reconciliation among the affected communities. The following sub-section therefore presents the impact of CPA-U on community reconciliation in relation to the above.

5.4.3 The Impact of CPA-U on Community Reconciliation.

Research results revealed that CPA-U has been fairly successful in its peace-building effort through community reconciliation. This impact was compromised by a number of factors that are,

- Individual related in respect to the returnees
- Community related in respect to where the returnees are staying
- Organizational related in respect to CPA-U itself; and
- Government related given its mandate to protect its citizens and ensure that their rights and freedoms are respected.

These findings show areas in the relationships among communities that CPA-U should concentrate its peace-building efforts on through community reconciliation. It shows that for CPA-U to have a positive impact, it should concentrate its effort on peace-building through community reconciliation and on improving the attitude of neighboring communities especially of those that have been directly affected by the conflict.

5.4.4 Views of Returnees.

The returnees were all in agreement that the work being done by CPA-U does enhance the spirit of reconciliation among the communities whose relationships have been affected by the conflict situation. They observed that CPA helps people all through the conflict zone without segregation by advocating for peace and reconciliation. The advocacy and sensitization about the dangers of war both locally and internationally brought to the fore the plight of the local population. For a long time, the LRA insurgency was ignored or has not been taken seriously especially by the international community. However with the efforts of organizations such as CPA-U and many others highlighting its negative impact, due attention has now been given to the conflict both locally and by the international community. Formed as a small group of concerned parents who wanted

collectively to voice their pain at the abduction of their children by the LRA, the organization has grown and now works in most of the districts affected by the war.

Through advocacy and awareness creation, CPA-U endeavors to bring to the national and international limelight the plight of abduction of children in northern Uganda and the need for peace. It tries to rally up people's resistance against the use of child soldiers and violation of fundamental human rights in Uganda. This is done in a way that promotes forgiveness and reconciliation rather than using violence as a means of solving political differences. The objective is to inform, create awareness, and influence policy makers both locally and internationally to take actions, which can have a positive effect on the war-affected children and prevent further abuse of children's rights.

The returnees appreciated the usefulness of the workshops on forgiveness and reconciliation conducted by CPA-U. Put in the words of Akello Janet (Female – 26years, interviewed 28.01.2007), "I had intense bitterness against the people who abducted me and developed prejudice against Acholi people in general". According to her, she never thought she could be able to forgive and overcome such bitterness but the counseling therapy received through CPA-U has been of a great help in transforming my attitude against my abductors and prejudice against the Acholi people for the better.

5.4.5 General Views of the BOT, DBC and Teachers at Rachele Center.

Interview findings with the above were supportive of those of the returnees and in more detail. They were generally affirmative of the fact that the work being done by CPA-U has a positive impact on community reconciliation. As members and collaborators in this work, they feel proud to be contributing to this process of community reconciliation. The following are some of the activities that they are involved in as a means of enhancing community reconciliation:

Through the PSGs, CPA-U prepares the families and communities of the returnees in view of their return. This is seen as essential on the basis that some of the returnees were being stigmatized. A case in point is that of a parent who rejected a grandson born in captivity saying he cannot keep the offspring of “killers” in his family. It was only with the intervention of CPA-U in collaboration with other local authorities that he was convinced to take his daughter and the grandson as part of the family.

CPA-Uganda carries out sensitization programs/workshops for members of PSGs with themes focusing on community reconciliation. The researcher was privileged to participate in the evaluation of one such Trainer of Trainer (TOT) pilot project organized at Pan Afric Hotel in Lira (4.12.2006).

Project goal: That members of PSGs, their families and neighbors in war affected Gulu and Lira districts shall live together peacefully, will resolve conflicts without violence, will be resilient in managing trauma in their lives, and will be able to reintegrate their returned children into their communities.

Project objectives: To effectively transfer relevant skills and knowledge from the expert trainers to the multipliers through whom the chain process goes to representatives of PSGs, and then the families of the PSGs.

The project apart from encouraging community reconciliation and forgiveness also gives basic trainings in counseling, trauma counseling and crisis intervention, sexual and gender-based violence, stress management, and conflict resolution and mediation. Each TOT training consists of ten training modules, each of which takes eight weeks to implement. According to the beneficiaries, the TOT pilot project has been an overwhelming success and was very effective in reaching the local population.

The PSGs in their membership of 30-40 people also organize activities in support of the general plan of action of CPA-U. In fact, it is within and with the PSGs that CPA-U

as an organization is able to disseminate its programs effectively. As an implementing arm of CPA-U, the PSGs are involved in several activities such as:

Having group discussion and meetings in which they analyze the war situation and plan local strategies of using their local resources to contribute to peace-building in the region. The PSGs are therefore a think tank for generating ideas for CPA-U which ideas are later further discussed and synthesized into policies for the smooth running of the organization. The full participation of the PSG members in such discussions and meetings makes them own the whole process and feel fully integrated into CPA-U.

In carrying out their activities in relation to advocacy for peace and reconciliation the PSGs use both modern and local media so as to reach as many people as possible. Among others, they use radio talk shows, music, dance and drama. This has proved to be very effective and appealing to the people because the message is presented in form of play or entertainment. Direct talks or workshops in some cases become boring especially when there are several speakers and each is stressing on the same point or taking long.

5.5 Success Rating of CPA-U on Community Reconciliation.

5.5.1 Rating by Returnees.

A four level evaluative rating scale was given to the different categories of respondents during both the interviews and group discussions to find their opinion on how much they thought CPA-U was successful in community reconciliation. The rating scale ranged from very successful, successful, fairly successful and not successful.

Thirteen out of seventeen returnee respondents rated the work being done by CPA-U in enhancing community reconciliation as fairly successful. This comprises a total of 76.5% of the returnees who participated in the study. The remaining four (23.5%) rated the work as successful, thus none of the returnees thought CPA-U was very successful or that it was not successful at all. The implication is that although CPA-U has not been

ranked highly in as far as the reconciliation of affected communities is concerned; the little being done by the organization is appreciated. Mention is made of tangible results such as a reduction in the level of attacks directed towards the Acholi community within Lira municipality. The exchange visits organized for the returnees and the PSGs have also helped a lot in bridging the rift between the Langi and Acholi thus, changing the negative attitude each had of the other. The returnees acknowledged that the rehabilitation they received has had positive impact on their attitude towards other people. They have come to understand that it is not a problem of a particular tribe or community but of some few individuals, therefore, it is not worth making generalizations.

The above positive outcome of the efforts of CPA-U has however been compromised by other factors making it be rated by 76.5% of the returnees as only fairly successful. According to them, the organization has not fully used them as resource persons in the process of sensitization and community reconciliation. This opinion was much more pronounced with the returnees who were abducted from St. Mary's College Aboke. According to them, they were informed that by virtue of the fact that it was their abduction that led to the formation of CPA-U, they are incorporated members of the organization. However, apart from knowing that, they have almost no knowledge about the internal organization and administration of CPA-U. This makes them bitter in that their situation has simply been used for the benefit of others. Added to the above is the view that the organization does not seek the advice and opinion of those they try to help in relation to what they would like to do. It simply decides that one goes to such a school or the other without knowing what could be the interest and capability of the person.

One of the returnees mentioned that there seems to be an aspect of corruption and favoritism within the organization. This view was supported by interview results from other returnees who participated in the study. The explanation behind this assertion is that

some of the projects of CPA-U, specifically that of the revolving fund was misappropriated by the PSGs. It was meant to help PSGs build their capacity to support the FAC and other vulnerable people in their society. Each PSG was to identify and implement a sustainable project to be funded by CPA-U office. When the project is well-established and generating income to run PSG activities, the borrowed capital was then to be refunded to help another PSG. Findings with the PSG and CPA-U Lira branch office coordinator show that none of the PSG that got the funding has brought back the original capital. More discouraging however is the fact that on the ground, none of the PSG that got the funding has any project to that effect.

Another reason given for this claim is that the relatives and friends of some specific CPA-U staff are benefiting from the school sponsorship program at the expense of those to be real beneficiaries.

Some of the returnees noted that the work seems to be beyond the capacity of CPA-U as an organization to handle. With the number of returnees growing on a daily basis, it is becoming more and more difficult for the organization to reach all those affected by the conflict. This is even made worst by the fact that the PSGs are not adequately facilitated in doing their work. As such, some of the PSG members prefer to remain as nominal members of the group while working for other organizations who do similar work in the region.

Also noted with concern is the indifferent attitude of some of the organization staff, PSG members, as well as volunteers about the peace process. Some of them seem to value the organization only in terms of their earnings but not as a service to the vulnerable and suffering in their society. A former employee of CPA-U was for example quoted as saying, “if the war ends then we shall loose our jobs because there will be no returnees for us to handle.”

Table 10: Success Rating of CPA-U on Community Reconciliation by Returnees.

Rating	No of respondents	Percent
Very successful	0	0
Successful	2	76.5
Fairly successful	5	23.5
Not successful	0	0
Total	7	100.0

5.5.2 Success Rating of CPA-U on Community Reconciliation by other Respondents.

Apart from the returnees, the other respondents also generally rated the impact of CPA-U on community reconciliation as fairly successful. This included the views of the program officer at the Head-office, Lira Branch office coordinator, Technical advisors, Office Assistant (Head-office), BOT members, DBC members, and a volunteer at Lira Branch Office. A summary of the reasons they gave for such a rating include those listed below:

- CPA-U has a low capacity in terms of funding, expertise and the level of victim trauma counseling as opposed to the number of those who need such attention. It is therefore very difficult for the organization to effectively and efficiently handle such cases, thus, lowering its impact on community reconciliation. Despite this however, there is a positive feedback from the beneficiaries on the impact of the program.
- The issue at hand is more complex than it seemingly looks at face value. There are factors at play such as the colonial legacy (the divide and rule policy where differences among kingdoms and tribes was used by the colonial masters as a means to extend their territorial influence), inequitable distribution of national resources, lack of nationalism created by the history of bad political leadership etc. that need to be squarely addressed.
- Strong complaints also emerged about the role founder members play with regard to allocation of funding and decision-making. The founder members of CPA-U especially the BOT are said to wield so much power that it makes it hard for the other staff and

organization members to creatively contribute to the organization. This makes the organization more of personal enterprise of a few individuals than a professionally managed institution, therefore putting its reputation at stake.

- Although the level of negative attitude and violence has improved among the affected communities, there are still deep-rooted conflicts that need to be addressed. A complete change of attitude is a long and slow process especially where people have suffered much and have been traumatized. In such cases, conflict fatigue takes its toll on people who may sacrifice anything for peace. However, as situations normalize, people begin to seek for justice and if this is not well handled, it may rekindle old conflicts.

PSG discussions also had similar opinions as those expressed above. Group members agreed that the activities they carry out in enhancing the spirit of reconciliation within their communities have been helpful. This is because there is relative peace and people's attitude and hostility against each other, particularly with the Acholi community within the municipality has greatly improved. Generally, the group members rated the reconciliation activities they carry out as ranging from fairly successful to successful, with the majority rating it as fairly successful. The following reasons were forwarded in support of this rating:

- The PSG expressed that they lack the skill and expertise, financial and logistical facilitation to work effectively.
- Some PSG members are most of the time too preoccupied with their own daily activities making it difficult to convene meetings to discuss issues related to peace-building.
- It is also not very easy to change people's attitude and prejudices especially where they have been traumatized and suffered for long. According to the technical advisors, there are still misgivings and prejudice about the conflict situation even among the peace

workers of CPA-U. It is a contradiction for one to claim to be a peace worker and still harbor attitudes that do not promote peace.

However, despite these, there are positive testimonies from beneficiaries of the program on how the activities have transformed their lives. The fact that CPA-U has spread so fast and taken root in the conflict region with PSGs all over the villages is itself a clear indication that it is doing a commendable work. The level of stigmatization of the FAC has considerably reduced with intense campaign by CPA-U staff and PSG members. In addition, most of the members have sacrificed to help the victims of the conflict despite low motivation or remuneration.

On the average, the respondents agree that CPA-U has so far been fairly successful in its impact on community reconciliation. This implies that in as much as the efforts of the organization are appreciated both from within and without, there is a general feeling that it could do better.

5.6 Constraints Faced in Executing CPA-U Activities.

The respondents expressed several challenges that make the work of CPA-U as a local peace-building initiative difficult. Major among the constraints include the lack of funding, lack of expertise (capacity building), and communication gap between PSG officials and CPA-U officials. Put in a more elaborate way, these constraints include:

Funding of the activities of the organization has been and remains a critical constraint. This is specifically due to the fact that the organization to a great extent depends on donor funding. Internally, the organization depends on registration fees and small income generating activities (IGA) such as brick making, poultry keeping and others done by the PSGs. These have however proved to be unsustainable due to the lack of commitment of the members. The implication of this is that without the external donor

funding, the activities of the organization could come to a stand still since there is very little generation of internal revenue.

Community acceptance of reconciliation and forgiveness has been a slow process because it is hard to change people's deep-rooted attitudes and prejudices. This has been worsened by the fact that some of the victims expressed that it would be hard for them to share and live with those who caused their suffering.

Some of the victims of the conflict have developed serious traumatic complications that need special attention and treatment. Unfortunately however, CPA-U does not have the expertise to handle such cases professionally. More so, it is hard for the organization to refer such victims for specialized treatment since such attention involves a lot of money that the organization does not have.

There is lack of organizational clarity regarding the role of the founder members, the BOT and the other staff. Job description is a necessity if CPA-U is to be run professionally and in a technical way. This calls for a restructuring of the organization and a development of clear policies with regards to who does what and who qualifies to do what job professionally.

The organization has faced a set back in as far as employment of qualified personnel is concerned. It is hard to get, hire and retain qualified staff owing to the fact that the organization lacks funding for both internal administration and for outreach community mobilization. Most of those employed soon leave to join other international organizations working in the conflict zone with better remuneration.

Another constraint in the work of the organization is the issue of insecurity that made it very difficult to reach some of the affected areas. In as much as the organization has the good will, it has been very hard to get people who could risk their lives having known how brutal the LRA can be.

A critical point in the reconciliation and forgiveness process has been the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant for the top most wanted commanders of LRA. This according to some respondents raises questions and skepticism among other junior commanders with regard to the amnesty offer by the government of Uganda. They are not sure what legal implications it will have for them since they have been part of the LRA system and worked hand in hand with the wanted commanders.

Another aspect that has made the work of CPA-U difficult is the settling and concentration of people in IDP camps. The situation in the camps makes it very hard for the local population to concentrate on reconciliation when they have other pressing issues to address. How can one talk of forgiveness and reconciliation when he or she has a hungry family to feed?

There is still some level of stigmatization of the returnees and their families. The returnees particularly expressed difficulty in finding people to associate with apart from their family members. According to them, some people still remotely refer to them as rebels or wives of Kony etc.

Logistical support and the number of staff is not enough compared to the number of those who need the help of CPA-U. This has even become more acute with the number of returnees steadily increasing in recent times.

Initially the founder members of the organization were misunderstood by government officials. They were taken to be rebel collaborators since they opposed the military option taken by the government in preference to a peaceful negotiated option. Some of them even reported receiving anonymous threat telephone calls and therefore strongly believed that their telephones were bugged.

The international community has been slow in reacting to the plight of the people in the northern Uganda conflict. This has made the work of CPA-U in this respect very

difficult and seemingly fruitless. Even locally, some people still consider the war as an Acholi problem, making it very hard for the peace workers to argue that reconciliation and forgiveness is necessary.

5.7 Remedies Proposed to Control the above Challenges.

The office staff both at the Head office and Lira District branch, the BOT and DBC gave their opinions in relation to remedies for the above constraints. The following is a summary collection of their views on what could be done to make CPA-U more effective in its effort towards community reconciliation.

They suggested the need for networking among all the stakeholders and players in the conflict and peace process to work together in order to reach an acceptable solution for all. They explained that it makes little meaning for the government, religious leaders, NGOs etc to design reconciliation programs for those directly affected by the conflict without involving them. This calls for proper planning in order to avoid duplication of work and wastage of resources that could help in other areas. All should strive to use the available and existing structures such as schools, traditional leaders and systems, church structures etc. other than creating parallel structures.

Since it has been noted that CPA-U as an organization lacks the qualified personnel to handle certain peace-building issues effectively, there is need for it to put some effort on capacity building of its personnel. Capacity building of personnel and proper personnel management is a crucial factor to the effectiveness and efficiency of any organization.

There is need for advocacy and lobbying with both local and international agencies to put pressure on the conflicting parties to stick to the peace process. Unless pressure is put on both the internal and external key players, they will continue to give support to the conflicting parties, leading to the continuation of the crisis.

The administrative and organizational policy of CPA-U has to be streamlined to avoid interference in each other's job specification. This will go a long way to transform CPA-U into a professionally managed institution.

Funding is a very critical aspect of the functioning of any organization. It is therefore imperative that CPA-U develops some local means of raising funds other than depending to a great extent on donor funding which is limited. More so, there is need for transparency and accountability for donor money in order to avoid any misappropriation.

There is need for the government to show more interest in the peace process and avoid extreme military option. With the blanket amnesty offered by the government, opting for a military offensive against the rebels sends a wrong signal that may scare them off from the peace talks.

The solutions given by the PSG to the challenges above also echo similar ideas. Added to this, they also recommend the strengthening of exchange visits for members of PSG from different regions in order to enhance the process of community reconciliation.

5.8 Reactions of Returnees, their Families and Communities upon their Return.

All the returnees expressed the general view that the reaction of their families and communities upon their return was positive and very encouraging to them. They explained that their families and communities were happy to receive them back and empathized with them. On their reunion day, the atmosphere was in most instances filled with joy and excitement although there was also some outburst of anger against those who did such a thing to them.

According to the returnees, they were overwhelmed with joy to meet their families again and the feeling that they were safe. One of the returnees, Akello Janet (26, interviewed 28.01.2007), narrated that when she first heard the voice of her father calling her name, she simply fainted and collapsed from the steps of the helicopter that had

brought them from Juba to Gulu. When she gained consciousness, she was in the company of her parents and relatives in the hospital.

Most of the returnees said they could hardly believe what was happening to them and felt confused. Their world seemed to have turned upside down since their abduction, but here they are among their loved ones with an experience they would not want to remember haunting them. It is in this perspective that 94% of the returnees said they are satisfied with what their families and communities have done for them since their return.

5.9 Conclusion.

The chapter has presented the results of the study in relation to the impact of CPA-U on the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, the psychosocial support of war affected families and communities, and community reconciliation. The overall objective of the study was to assess the contribution of, and challenges faced by CPA-U in its peace-building efforts in Lira Municipality as a case study.

Study findings reveal that according to the majority of the respondents, the work being done by CPA-U has a positive impact on the lives of the beneficiaries. The general implication of this is that the beneficiaries are appreciative of the efforts of CPA-U towards peace building within Lira Municipality and the conflict region as a whole. However, despite the respondents' appreciation of the efforts of CPA-U, they rated its performance only as fairly successful. Therefore, in as much as the respondents value the work being done by CPA-U, they are inclined to believe that the organization has the capacity and can do better with a little more effort and commitment.

The overall implication of the above results is that CPA-U as an organization has an impact on the peace-building process within Lira Municipality. But this impact has been compromised by several factors that are individual related, community related, procedural and government related as discussed in the study. It is therefore incumbent

upon CPA-U to use the study results to identify its areas of strength and weaknesses and make necessary adjustments to fill in the gaps with regard to their organizational activities.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction.

This chapter presents the general conclusions and recommendations to the study. It is divided into two sections. The first presents the conclusions, while the second part presents the recommendations to the study. The recommendations are also divided into two sections; first are the recommendations drawn from or are related to the conclusions of the study, and secondly, recommendations for further areas of research.

6.1 Conclusions.

Findings revealed that CPA-U is fairly successful in its peace-building effort in Lira Municipality through the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees, psychosocial support of war-affected families and communities, and community reconciliation. This according to the study is because CPA-U has only partially managed to achieve its mission of being “A child focused organization devoted to the promotion of peace and social stability of children affected by war in northern Uganda through advocacy and psychosocial support.” This consequently implies that CPA-U has also only partially achieved its objectives, which include:

- 1) To advocate for the immediate and unconditional release of all abducted children in LRA captivity and halt further abduction of children,
- 2) To rehabilitate and integrate all the returnees into the community with emphasis on education and health, and
- 3) To contribute towards building a sustainable peace for all Ugandans.

However, the fact that the respondents acknowledge and appreciate these efforts as having an impact on peace-building in Lira Municipality is in itself a good indicator.

Positively, it can be concluded that CPA-U has to a certain extent contributed towards peace-building in the conflict zone and the areas of its success include:

- Linking up PSG from the different sub-regions within the conflict zone by organizing exchange visits as a means of enhancing community reconciliation. This has brought aggrieved communities face to face with each other in order to dialogue and chart a common way out of the conflict situation. Through this exchange visits, unfounded prejudices and attitudes especially against the Acholi has been to a great extent reduced. The PSG members came to realize that other communities have suffered the brunt of the conflict just in the same way as themselves.
- CPA-U has been instrumental in trying to offer counseling and other related material support to the returnees and other war-affected communities. This has been of a great help especially as a way of rehabilitating the returnees who had just returned after having undergone traumatic experiences while in LRA captivity
- Through advocacy and sensitization, CPA-U has brought to the attention of both the local and the international community the plight of the innocent people especially of children caught up in the northern Uganda conflict. This has in one way or the other put pressure on the conflict parties and other players to seek for better solutions to mitigate the situation.
- By lobbying for school sponsorship for the returnees from donors, CPA-U is contributing to the building of a better future for the returnees who would have no hope of accessing the benefit of education.

These and other activities carried out by CPA-U show that the organization has positively impacted on peace-building in Lira Municipality. It is in this respect that the respondents in this research are convinced that CPA-U has the capacity to do better in its peace-building efforts in the war torn area of northern Uganda. However, as shown by the

study results, the impact of CPA-U has been compromised by a number of factors. The factors are individual related in respect to the returnees, community related in respect to their relationship with the returnees, organizational related in respect to CPA-U and government related in as far as its mandate to protect the rights and freedoms of its citizens is concerned. From the above factors that compromise the success of CPA-U in implementing its programs and activities, the following general conclusions can be drawn:

- a) That CPA-U as an organization has not developed its internal income generating capacity and that this fact greatly affects its efficiency in fulfilling its planned programs and activities. As the study findings revealed, the organization to a large extent depends on donor funding to implement its programs. The implication of this scenario is that the success of its programs therefore depends on and is controlled by the availability of donor funds and their willingness to donate the funds. In addition to this is the fact that the donors may give conditions with regard to the use of the funds in such a way that it satisfies their interests and intentions. The consequence of this is that CPA-U will end up fulfilling the programs of the donor other than its own program. Further, it can be concluded from the above that in case the donors withdraw support, the activities of CPA-U could easily come to a stand still since it does not have its own internal income generating capacity to sustain these activities.
- b) Related to the above, study findings revealed that CPA-U lacks qualified personnel especially with regard to expertise in terms of guidance and counseling. This has been a set back for CPA-U in its effort to rehabilitate the returnees. It was also confirmed that it has been difficult for CPA-U to find, hire and maintain qualified personnel. From the above, it can be deduced that the quality of the service and attention offered by CPA-U toward the rehabilitation of the returnees has been poor since it has to

depend mostly on unqualified or semi-qualified workforce. This however does not mean that their efforts are not appreciated especially in relation to the returnees who desperately required such attention.

- c) From the study findings, it is clear that the reintegration process of the returnees into their communities faced a lot of challenges. The returnees reported being stigmatized and the fact that some of them were deprived of their rehabilitation kit by their parents. It is the conclusion of this study that this is the case because CPA-U concentrated its rehabilitation and reintegration efforts on the returnees forgetting the role of the parents in this process. The preparation of the parents in relation to their own traumatic experiences and how to handle their returned children would have gone a long way in alleviating the situation.
- d) According to some respondents, the role of the BOT that is essentially composed of CPA-U founder members needs to be clearly defined. According to them, the BOT has too much power and control over the organization. Some respondents went a step further by pointing to the fact that since the inception of CPA-U, the persons in the BOT have remained more or less the same. The inference that can be drawn from the above position is that CPA-U has some administrative structural problem that has so far not found an outlet. This may still be a latent conflict but with time, it could escalate and be detrimental to the wellbeing of the organization.
- e) The northern Uganda conflict has had an adverse effect on the lives of the local population with several innocent lives lost, property and means of livelihood destroyed, and deep-rooted hatred created among people in the conflict region. This certainly makes peace-building a slow and complicated process. The involvement of both internal and external actors has even made the situation more complex. The position and role played by the government of Sudan and the arrest warrant for the top

LRA commanders by the International Criminal Court (ICC) have contributed to the delay in finding a negotiated solution to the conflict situation. The whole scenario is even compounded by the level of atrocities and human rights violations committed with impunity. This overtime has created deep-rooted hatred and with time, may lead to a feeling of revenge should the opportunity avail itself.

- f) The position of both the government of Uganda and the LRA in the conflict has been ambiguous and leaves a lot to be desired. Both have been resistant to attempts at peace initiatives and violated cease-fires organized for such purposes. For example, the double-edged military offensive and peace talk option held concurrently by the government sends mixed feelings to the rebels in as far as its commitment to the blanket amnesty is concerned.

6.2 Recommendations to the Study.

It was noted that the activities and programs of CPA-U to a large extent depend on external donor funding. This, the study revealed, may fluctuate depending on the interest, good will and capacity of the donors or partner organizations. Therefore, as a guard against over dependence on external funding, the study proposes that CPA-U develop its own local internal financial capacity. This can be done through initiating viable IGA to supplement the donor funding for example, through strengthening and closely monitoring the IGA initiatives of the PSG that are the operational units of CPA-U.

Personnel development as a way of increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization should be taken as a serious priority. CPA-U should strive to build the capacity of its staff and other organs like the PSGs who are on the ground at the grass root level in order to strengthen their capacity to handle the challenging task of peace-building more professionally. The study suggests that this could be done by sending two or three CPA-U staff for professional training and from these; multiplier training could be given

to the other personnel. On the other hand, CPA-U could enlist the help of partner organizations with qualified personnel to carry out short refresher courses or workshops for its personnel.

Since the family and community of the returnees is where they are to be reintegrated after their rehabilitation, it is important they be properly prepared for this challenging task. More so, the families and communities have also been traumatized by the conflict situation and therefore need psychosocial support. This study therefore encourages CPA-U to strengthen their commitment in counseling and preparing the families and communities of the returnees through the PSG. In this way, stigmatization and unnecessary harsh treatment of the returnees will be avoided or minimized since the returnees will be understood better.

CPA-U needs to revisit its administrative structure and clearly define the role of the founder members, the BOT, the DBC, the staff, PSGs and all the other organs of the organization so as to avoid misunderstandings. This will help transform the organization into a professionally run institution and go a long way in giving a sense of focus and teamwork in the activities of the organization.

NGOs and other interested actors in the peace-building process need to network among themselves at grass root level in order to avoid duplication of work, creation of parallel structures instead of using existing ones, thereby avoiding wastage of resources. There is need to have a framework provided by the local authorities in which a forum is created for all the actors to make a general strategic plan on how to intervene as a unit. Added to this is the fact that the northern Uganda conflict has attracted several other players such as the government of Sudan and the ICC, which further complicates the peace process. It is therefore important that the international community tries to

harmonize the positions of these parties as a means of seeking for a lasting solution to the conflict situation.

The field of operation of CPA-U has steadily grown over the years from focusing on the war-affected children to other vulnerable people in society. This is a noble task, however, it's quite a broad objective to achieve in the short term; and owing to the fact that the organization does not have a solid financial base, and qualified personnel, it may be difficult to implement. The study thus recommends that CPA-U should re-evaluate its mission, vision and objectives and transform them to suit its capability in terms of available funding and personnel.

The government on its part should show more interest and commitment to the peace process as much as possible and avoid the extreme military option. The dragging on of the war in northern Uganda has made many people to question the political will of the government in ending it. Many people have even come to the conclusion that the government is taking advantage of the LRA conflict to deliberately punish the north and keep it underdeveloped, or as a calculated plan to remain in power. It is therefore proper that the government takes the situation seriously to avoid a reoccurrence of the bad political history of the country.

The study recommends that the government introduce peace study curriculum at all levels of the education system. This will help both the teachers and students build a culture of peace and understand better the situation of those who have undergone traumatic experiences due to conflict and other related problems.

6.2.1 Recommendations for Further Research.

This sub-section is a presentation of some of the issues which arose during the course of this research and the researcher feels they could be of interest for further study

in relation to the conflict situation in Northern Uganda. Some of the emerging issues include the following:

During the course of the research, the researcher noticed that the family as an institution has suffered a great deal as a consequence of the war. There has been separation and marriage breakages, families have lost loved ones, parents have lost their authority over their children since they could no longer offer them basic needs etc. All the above and many more have negatively impacted on marriage and the family as an institution. A research on the effects of the conflict in Northern Uganda on the family as an institution would be a great contribution in the field of research and probably offer some suggestions on how this important human institution could benefit from its results.

The government/LRA conflict which has lasted for two decades now has kept some people for all this time in IDP camps without any source of livelihood apart from depending on handouts from both local and international humanitarian agencies. This has created a dependency syndrome in some people in that they now find it very difficult to work for themselves. As such, despite the relative peace, some people have preferred to remain within the town begging and doing some petty work than return home.

The post-abduction challenge of child-mothers and their children who were born during their captivity poses a big challenge to peace-building and post-conflict rehabilitation of such people. Most of the children have grown knowing either their mothers only or grand parents as their biological parents. What would be the reaction of these children when they come to know the circumstances in which they were born? The other aspect of this is the challenge of the post-abduction life for child-mothers after reintegration into their communities.

In some areas within the conflict zone, children have been born and grew up during the heights of the war in Northern Uganda. This means whole generations of children

think and behave in a militarized way since war has been the most influencing activity known to them. The researcher recommends that such children be studied in order to find out their outlook to life and to find a way of helping them to overcome their situation before it is too late.

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APPENDICES.

Appendix 1 Interview Guide for BOT, DBC, CPA-U office staff, Technical Advisors, and Teachers at Rachele Rehabilitation Center).

Background information.

Name of respondent

Age

Gender

Marital status

Academic qualification

What work do you do with CPA? (e.g. manager, secretary etc)

How long have you worked with CPA?

A: Rehabilitation and Reintegration.

What activities are carried out in the process of the rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees to their communities?

What rating do you give this program?

- a) Very successful b) Successful
c) Fairly successful d) Not successful

What challenges have you encountered with the communities of these returnees in the reintegration process?

How does CPA handle such challenges?

What suggestions do you give as a person to help CPA as an Organization improve on its service delivery in relation to the reintegration of returnees in their communities?

B. Psychosocial Support Activities

What Psychosocial support activities does CPA offer to families and communities affected by the war Lira municipality?

How have the local communities involved in this process?

Do you think that the role of the local communities could play has been fully exploited?

What could be done to improve on the role of the local community?

Has this program been of any help to families and communities affected by the war?

Why do you think so?

How would you rate these psychosocial support activities?

- a) Very successful b) Successful
c) Fairly successful d) Not successful

How does CPA deal with such psychosocial problems faced by the families and communities affected by the war? Explain

What constraints do you as members of CPA face in the delivery of such services?

What suggestions can you give to improve on the delivery of such services?

C: Community Reconciliation

Do you think the northern Uganda conflict has polarized communities?

If yes, which communities are polarized?

What underlying factors have caused the polarization?

What kind reconciliatory activities does CPA indulge in?

How are the local communities involved in these activities?

Does the Organization use some local traditional reconciliation mechanisms?

If yes, which are they and how are they performed?

Do you think the above reconciliatory activities are of any help in reconciling these communities?

How successful has the above program been to peace-building?

- a) Very successful b) Successful
c) Fairly successful d) Not successful

May you elaborate on your answer?

What are some of the constraints you have faced in carrying out the above activities?

May you elaborate on your answers?

What would you suggest to help improve on the above?

Are there other organizations with whom you collaborate in carrying out these activities?

Which are these Organizations?

In what fields do you work hand in hand with them?

Appendix 2 Interview Guide for returnees abducted from St. Mary's College.

Background information

Name of respondent

Village

Age

Gender

Marital status

Level of education (e.g. Primary, Secondary etc)

When were you abducted?

How did you get abducted? Explain

How long were you in the bush?

Bush Experience and Relationship with CPA-U.

How do you feel about your experience in the bush with the LRA?

Has the war affected your relationship with other communities around you?

Which are these communities and why has your relationship changed.

How did you get released or how did you escape?

How did you feel after being released or when you escaped?

Did you get any assistance from CPA after you got released or when you escaped?

What kind of assistance did you get from CPA?

Was the assistance you got enough?

Explain why

Does CPA still give you any support (e.g. material, social or psychological)?

What kind of support does it continue to give you?

Is the support enough?

Explain your answer

What do you think could make CPA help people like you better?

Do you think the work being done by CPA-Uganda can enhance reconciliation among the polarized communities?

Why do you think so?

How would you rate the success of the above program?

a) Very successful b) Successful

c) Fairly successful d) Not successful

What do you think the Organization could do to make the program better?

What was the reaction of your family and community when you came back?

Positive Negative

Explain

How did you feel about their reaction?

Do you feel there is something your family and community could have done or should do to make your stay or life easier, which they should have done?

If yes, what are they?

How have you managed to cope in such a situation?

Did you get any external help from other people or Organization in order to cope?

What fears, if any do you have at the moment?

What are your future dreams in life (expectations or what you would like to do)?

Did you receive any training from CPA when you returned?

If yes what kind of training did you receive?

How would you rate the success of the training?

a) Very helpful b) Helpful

c) Fairly helpful d) Not helpful

Appendix 3 Focused Group Discussion Question Guide for returnees at the Rachele Rehabilitation Center.

Background information

Name of respondent

Village

Age

Gender

Level of education (e.g. primary, secondary etc.)

When were you abducted (Year)?

Experience in Captivity and at Rachele Center

How did you get abducted?

How long were you in the bush (weeks, months, years etc.)?

How did you get released or escape?

How do you feel about your experience in the bush?

What assistance did you get and from whom after being released or when you escaped?

What kind of assistance do you get here at the center?

How would you rate the quality of the material help you get at the center?

a) Very good b) Good

a) Fairly good d) Not good

Why do you say so?

What kind of training do you get here?

How would you rate the training you receive here?

a) Very good b) Good

b) Fairly good d) Not good

After this training what do you feel about those who abducted you and have refused to come back from the bush?

What do you think about neighboring communities or tribes after your experience?

Do you think the training you are receiving here will help you to be a better person after you leave the center?

May you explain how?

What do you think could be included in the training that would be of help to you and your colleagues at the center?

Are there some problems that you and your colleagues do face at the center?

If yes, what sort of problems do you face?

Did you present the problems to the center authorities?

Were the authorities helpful in any way?

Explain your answer.

Given option, would you prefer to remain at the center or you would rather go home?

Why?

Are there any fears you have in case you return home?

What are these fears?

What was the reaction of your family and those who met you after you escaped or got released?

How did you feel about their reaction?

Do you feel your family and community will accept you when you return home?

Explain your answer...

What do you expect from your family and community when you return home?

In general, how would you rate the treatment you are receiving at the center?

- a) Very good b) Good
c) Fairly good d) Not good

Explain why you rate it so.

Appendix 4 Question guide for Focused Group Discussions with PSG.

Background information

Name of respondent

Village

Age

Gender

Marital status

Academic qualification (e.g. S4, S6 etc.)

How long have you been a member of CPA?

A: Rehabilitation and Reintegration.

What activities are involved in the reintegration of returnees into their communities?

What success rating would you give to those activities?

a) Very successful b) Successful

c) Fairly successful d) Not successful

What are the major challenges faced by the communities in the process of rehabilitation and reintegrating returnees?

What are the major challenges faced by the returnees in the process of their rehabilitation and reintegration?

How did you help such communities handle such challenges?

What challenges have you faced as a person in the process of rehabilitation and reintegrating returnees in their communities?

How did you handle such challenges?

What measures do you think could help improve on the service delivery of CPA in its strive to reintegrate returnees into their communities?

B: Psychosocial Support Activities.

What psychosocial support activities do you as a member of CPA give to families and the communities affected by war?

Do you feel these activities are helpful to war affected families and communities?

a) Yes b) No

What would be your rating for the above program?

a) Very successful b) Successful

c) Fairly successful d) Not successful

How do you deal with such psychosocial problems faced by the families and communities affected by war?

What constraints do you face in the delivery of such psychosocial services?

What suggestions can you give to improve on such constraints?

C: Community Reconciliation.

Has the LRA war directly affected your family and community?

a) Yes b) No

In what way has it affected your family and community?

How were you able to cope with these effects?

Has the war situation affected the relationship between your family and community with other neighboring communities?

a) Yes b) No

How and with which communities in particular?

Do you think there is need for reconciliation with these communities?

Why do you think this is necessary?

As members of parents' support groups, what activities are you carry out to enhance reconciliation?

Do you think these activities help towards reconciliation?

a) Yes b) No

How do you rate these activities?

a) Very successful b) Successful

c) Fairly successful d) Poor

Explain why you rate it so?

What constrains do you face in carrying out this program?

What measures would you suggest to improve on these activities?

Appendix 5. List of key Respondents.

a). Board of Trustee Members:

Mr. Mark Odongo (58 years old), from Ireda in Lira Central Division. Director Lay Apostolate, Lira Diocese. Treasurer of CPA-U (Interviewed on 14th Dec. 2006, 10am to 12pm at Apostolic Book Center – Lay Apostolate office, Tel. 0772499128)

Mr. F.K. Olyet (65 years old), a retired Veterinary Doctor from Adyel Division, now Vice Chairperson of CPA-U (Interviewed at his home in Kirombe East on 17th Jan. 2007, 08:25am to 11:00am, Tel. 0782999363).

Mrs. Angelina Atyam (58 years old), a retired nurse, from Bursar Wad – Lira Town. National Chairperson CPA-U (Interviewed at her home in Lira Town, on 17th Jan. 2007, 05:00pm to 07:30pm, Tel. 0772621834)

Mr. Jackson Atwi (52 years old), Self employed from Apac District. CPA-U Executive Secretary (Interviewed in Lira Town on 18th Jan 2007, 03pm to 04:52pm, Tel. 0772347069)

b). CPA-U Office Staff:

Mr. Godfrey Okello (35years old), from Akite Nino in Omito Parish – Adyel Division - Lira. CPA-U Program Manager at the Head Office (Interviewed at his office on 25th Jan. 2007, from 03:00pm to 05:00pm, Tel. 0772537302/0712537302).

Mr. Anthony Kerwegi (30 years old), from African Quarters – Lira. Lira District Branch Office Coordinator CPA-U (Interviewed on 25th Jan. 2007 at Office, from 08:10am to 10:30am, Tel. 0782717610/0712879179).

Mr. Emmanuel Orongo (50 years old), a retired Banker from Akite Nino in Adyel Division – Lira. Office Assistant at CPA-U Head Office (Interviewed at CPA-U Head Office on 20th Jan. 2007, from 03:00pm to 05:00pm).

Roy Nassiwa (26 years old), a Volunteer with CPA-U District Branch Office living in Junior Quarters (Interviewed on 25th Jan. 2007, 12:00pm to 01:30pm at the office).

c). District Branch Committees

Mr. Kalyegira Sam, (44 years old), from Awiny village in Lira, Vice chairperson of DBC (Focused Group Discussion held on 15th Dec. 2006, 01:45pm to 04:00pm).

Mr. Opio Peter, (32 years old), from Bar village in Lira, Board member of CPA-U Focused Group Discussion held on 15th Dec 2006, 01:30pm to 04:00pm).

Mr. Okulu Valence, (53 years old), from Oyam village in Lira, CPA-U Board member and representative Otuke community (Focused Group Discussion held on 15th Dec 2006, 01:30pm to 04:00pm).

Mrs. Mary Awio Elem, (67 years old), from Ngetta village in Lira, member DBC (Focused Group Discussion held on 15th Dec 2006, 01:30pm to 04:00pm).

Mrs. Margaret Obote, (45 years old), from Boke Agali village in Lira, Executive in the DBC (Focused Group Discussion held on 15th Dec 2006, 01:00pm to 04:00pm).

Omara Simon – Opio, (62 years old), from Ayitunga-Apuce village in Lira, member of DBC and representative of CPA-U Erute North (Focused Group Discussion held on 15th Dec 2006, 01:00pm to 04:00pm).

Ojwang George Opota, Blue Corner-Ojwina village in Lira, Chairperson Lira DBC (Focused Group Discussion held on 15th Dec. 2006, 01:30pm to 04:00pm).

Miss. Etap Jane, (29 years old), from African Quarters in Lira, co-opted member and Program Officer CPA-U Lira District Branch Office (Focused Group Discussion held on 15th Dec 2006, 01:00pm to 04:00pm, Tel. 0712210955).

Mr. Anthony Kerwegi (30 years old), from African Quarters – Lira. Advisor to DBC and Lira District Branch Office Coordinator CPA-U (Focused Group Discussion held on 15th Dec. 2006 at Office, from 08:10am to 10:30am, Tel. 0782717610/0712879179).

d). Returnees. *NB. These requested for limited personal details*

Miss Akello Janet, (26 years old), a child mother from Obanga Pe-wany, S.4

Miss Anyango Caroline (24 years old), from Starch Factory ‘A’, S. 4

Miss Wasega Jackline, (23 years old), a child mother from Baronger, S. 4.

Miss Acan Grace, (26 years old), a child mother from African Quarters, S.4

Miss Abalo Betty, (18 years old), from Wanglango in Kitgum, S.2

Miss Among Evaline, (16 years old), from Lemo in Kitgum, S.1

Miss Alum Charlotte, (24 years old), a child mother from Bar, S.4

Mr. Oryem Bosco Kwoyelo, (18 years old), from wornguu in Pader, S.2

Mr. Komakech Peter, (18 years old), from Alokelum in Pader, S.1

Mr. Odich Calvin, (15 years old), from Amitomot in Lira, S.1

Mr. Olabor Joseph, (14 years old), from Amuria in Katakwi, S.1

Mr. Otim Joseph Oyul, (19 years old), from Atorobongo in Pader, S.1

Mr. Okello Bosco, (17 years old), from Abala village in Lira, S.1

Mr. Obonyo Justine, (16 years old), from Abako in Lira, S.1

Mr. Okello Marcob, (15 years old), from Railways in Lira, P.7

Mr. Ogwang Tonny, (26 years old), from Bar in Lira, S.3

Mr. Okello Robert, (25 years old), from Abutoadii in Lira, S.3

d). Technical Advisors

Mr. Benjamin Porter (28years old), from Colorado USA, Counselor/Psychotherapist. Technical Advisor on Psychosocial issues for CPA-U (Interviewed on 5th Dec. 2006, 03:10pm to 04:45pm at CPA-U Head Office, Tel. 0782737526).

Mrs. Holly Elizabeth Porter (26 years old) from Colorado USA, M.A in International Studies with focus on Conflict Resolution and Community Development. Technical Advisor for community Reconciliation and Peace-building with CPA-U Head Office (Interviewed 5th Dec. 2006, 05:00pm to 06:50pm at CPA-U Head Office Tel. 0782288962).

e). Teachers at Rachele Center and Comprehensive School.

Miss. Akello Anna (32 years old), from Starch Factory - Lira, Secondary School Teacher (Focused Group Discussion held on 1st Dec. 2006, 09:20am to 11:11am at the Center).

Mr. Obong J. Lawrence (33 years old), from Camp David - Lira, Secondary School Teacher (Focused Group Discussion held on 1st Dec. 2006, 09:20am to 11:11am at the Center).

Mr. Toli James (25 years old), from Kakoge B - Lira, Secondary school Teacher (Focused Group Discussion held on 1st Dec. 2006, 09:20am to 11:11am at the center).

Mrs. Atala Grace Obot (29 years old), from Oyite Ojok Lane – Lira, Secondary school Teacher (Focused Group discussion held on 1st Dec. 2006 at the Center).

f). Parents' Support Groups (PSG)

Focused Group discussion held with 15 members of Alito Camp PSG on 21st Jan. 2007, 01:30pm to 03:20pm.

Focused Group discussion held with 15 members or Railways PSG on 21st Jan. 2007, 03:50pm to 05:15pm.

Focused Group Discussion held with 15 members of Kirombe East PSG o 22nd Jan. 2007, 10:30am to 01:30pm

Focused group Discussion held with 15 members of Ogen Rwot A PSG on 27th Jan. 2007, 11:30am to 02:53pm.