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A Disjointed Effort: An Analysis of Government and Non-Governmental Actors' Coordination of Reintegration Programs in Northern Uganda

Nicole Compton
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A Disjointed Effort:

An analysis of government and non-governmental actors' coordination
of reintegration programs in northern Uganda

By: Nicole Compton

Academic Advisor: Paul Omach

Academic Director: Martha Wandera

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Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

CDO: Community Development Officer

CSO: Civil Society Organizations

DDMC: District Disaster Management Committee

DMC: District Management Committee

Ex-combatants: This study defines ex-combatants as those LRA returnees who have participated in military operations

GoU: Government of Uganda

LCV: Lord's Resistance Army

LRA: Lord's Resistance Army

NGO: Non-governmental Organizations

Northern Uganda: Refers to the northern region of Uganda and includes 30 districts including the Acholi sub-region and Gulu District

NUDC: Northern Ugandan Data Center

OPM: Office of the Prime Minister

PMC: PRDP Monitoring Committee

PRDP: Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan

RDC: Resident District Committee

Reporters: As defined by the Amnesty Act, a reporter is someone who takes steps to receive Amnesty

Reintegration: Reintegration refers to the long-term process that involves acceptance of reporters back into the community and regaining productive levels of engagement in the community

LRA Returnees: This study define returnees as all individuals returning from the captivity of Lord's Resistance Army back to their communities

TWG: Technical Working Group

Abstract

This research project was designed to investigate the extent to which the reintegration process for those returning from the LRA has been coordinated and facilitated by the Government of Uganda and NGOs at the present time. This was done through examining current government initiatives, NGO initiatives, and the current coordination between the two sectors. Special emphasis was given to the role of the Government of Uganda specified in the Ugandan Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan. This study discovered that the Government of Uganda has neglected to take a leadership role on the issue of reintegration. Rehabilitation and reintegration of those returning from the LRA has been almost completely left in the hands of development partners including NGOs. It was determined that a partnership between the government and NGOs is necessary in a post-conflict situation, but the Government of Uganda should take a more leading role in facilitating and coordinating reintegration initiatives within the country.

1.0 Introduction

Long lasting peace cannot be achieved in northern Uganda without a strong framework to facilitate the reintegration process of formerly abducted persons (FAPs) and ex-combatants for the Lord's Resistance Army. Although the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has left Uganda for neighboring countries, the Acholi sub-regions still face many post-conflict challenges. One major obstacle to peace in Northern Uganda is the rehabilitation and reintegration of those returning from the hands of the LRA. Proper reintegration of these individuals is important for long-term peace and development in Uganda. Many different initiatives and policies have been written to try to address the proper reintegration of these individuals back into their community. The government has produced the Amnesty Act; the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan; the National Reconciliation Bill and the Transitional Justice Policy, while many NGOs have developed programs at the local level to address rehabilitation and reintegration of this vulnerable population.

Previous research surrounding this topic has focused on the role of NGOs in peace-building, ideal reintegration models, reintegration experiences or challenges of certain populations; this research seeks to analyze the extent the Ugandan government has facilitated the reintegration process and examine current coordination between with NGO reintegration actors. This study will examine government reintegration initiatives, NGO initiatives within Gulu District and the coordination within and between the two sectors.

2.0 Background

In order to appreciate current coordination of reintegration initiatives, it is important to understand a brief background on the history of conflict in northern Uganda, the impact of the conflict, the importance of reintegration, and existing literature surrounding best reintegration practices.

2.1 History of violence in the northern Uganda

The LRA conflict did not begin in a vacuum, but stemmed from years of civil war and strife in Uganda. After independence, Uganda suffered from constant armed conflicts from civil war to insurgencies. The country was plagued by continual struggle for economic and political control. Scholars attribute the stigmatization and inequality of the northern region to the southern region as a major source of this war (Kustenbauder, 2010) (Maina, 2009) (Omach, 2014). During the protectorate, the British favored the south, creating industries, establishing the capital city, and legitimizing its control over the rest of Uganda. The Buganda Agreement, signed in 1900, gave privileges to Buganda under British rule, thus changing the topography and tribal hierarchy of Uganda that led to the inferiority of the northern region (Johannessen, 2005). The inequalities and tensions colonialism created are “woven into the tapestry of Ugandan violence” (Kasozi, 1994). The first two presidents of Uganda, Amin and Obote, were both Acholi and took power through armed struggle. Their violent regimes centralized power and only further stigmatized the northern region and the Acholi people.

In 1986, the National Resistance Army led by Yoweri Museveni overthrew former Acholi president Tito Okello. The NRA argued that Ugandans were “victims of the state” and had a right to overthrow the government to bring democratic change. However, the NRA polarized the country along the North-South divide as pro-government north felt threatened by NRA state power (Omach, 2014) (Muwonge, 2007). Security deteriorated as the relationship between the population and army unraveled. The stigmatization of the north as ‘backward’ and ‘violent’ was used as a political tool to justify the NRM’s abuses and killings of people of northern Uganda. Violence ensued and many rebel groups attempted to challenge the NRM’s power. Most of these groups dissolved or agreed to peace by 1988, except for the Lord Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony.

The LRA was originally made up of aggrieved former soldiers of Tito Okello, but when Kony eventually began to lose support he abducted men, women and children to build his rebel army. Some claim that abductions were part of Kony's strategy to turn people against the government, which only further deepened the north-south divide (Muwonge, 2007). By 1994, the LRA was receiving support from the government of Sudan, as the Ugandan Government was receiving support from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). This dimension expanded the conflict beyond just an "Acholi war." Many debate the motives and purpose of Kony's armed struggle. Some claim that although his tactics were brutal, Kony led a political and rational organization that struggled to articulate their objective (Blattman & Annan, 2008). Others add that the LRA conflict was simply a competition for resources between the North and South (Maina, 2009). And finally some argue, such as the popular media, that the only explanation for the violence is Joseph Kony's insanity (Kustenbauder, 2010).

There were several attempts at peace, but all unsuccessful at achieving long-lasting peace. Violence subsided in 2006 after the Cessation of Hostilities was signed during the Juba Peace Talks in 2006 allowed the LRA to move freely out of Uganda into the DRC. Although, the guns have fallen silent in northern Uganda, the scars of the war are still evident in the Acholi sub-regions as the country faces many challenges to peace in this post-conflict era.

2.2 Impact of the LRA Conflict

The LRA conflict caused displacement on a massive scale. Thousands were abducted by the LRA and millions were forced into internally displaced camps due to the violence. This paper specifically focuses on the displacement of abducted individuals.

Only a small portion of LRA recruits were volunteers, the majority were abducted against their will or born to rebels in the bush. Often, abductees were forced to kill their own family members and commit other terrible atrocities to their home communities (Muwonge, 2007). The majority of those abducted were abducted as a child; youth between the ages of 12 and 14 were highly targeted. Lengths of abductions ranged from a day to 10 years; more than half of abductees were gone for at least four months and 20% were gone for a year or more (Blattman, 2008). Those abducted were physically and psychologically abused, and forced to undertake

new names. Many young girls were raped and forced to marry LRA commanders; over 90% of the girls and young women abducted by the LRA were forced into marriage (Muwonge, 2007).

Although not all abductions were recorded, the highest number of abductions registered were east of Gulu and south and Kitgum. Furthermore, fourteen sub-counties had 500 or more registered former abductees, all were located in Acholi districts (Pham, Vinck, & Stover, 2008). The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) reported that at least 2,611 civilians were abducted in 2002 from Kitgum and Pader, of whom three-quarters were children (Human Rights Watch, 2003).

Throughout the LRA insurgency and after its exit from Uganda, many formerly abducted persons (FAPs) and those born in the bush have managed to defect and escape from the rebels. This population is often referred to as returnees. These individuals are often pardoned by the government through the Amnesty Act and face the obstacle of reintegrating back into their communities. Those that take the necessary steps to apply for amnesty are considered reporters (Government of Uganda, 2009).

Returnees face many challenges when returning to 'normal life.' Each experience and level of trauma varies depending on each individual, but negative obstacles often include, psychological trauma, lack of livelihood, interrupted education, and stigmatization by their home communities. Former combatants also have difficulties coming to terms with the atrocities they committed. Some literature highlights the extraordinary measures of forgiveness and support shown by families of reporters (Blattman & Annan, 2008) (Finn, 2012). However, other scholars point out the stigmatization that does exist. "While some people choose to forgive out of a sense of moral duty, they may distrust returnees on suspicion of past crimes and/or perceived spiritual corruption," states the Justice and Reconciliation Project. For example, females with children born while in captivity experience in particular extreme stigmatization (Finn, 2012) (Gulu Support the Children Organization, 2010) (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). These females experience rejection, physical and psychological violence. The child is often denied basic support and separated from the mother. In addition to mothers, others who faced difficulties did so in the "context of economic stigma" (Finn, 2012). Reporters perceived economic burden creates stigma and rejection by home community.

2.3 Reintegration

Across countries facing insurgencies, reintegration of ex-combatants is often referred to as DDR process, Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration policy (Maina, 2009) (Finn, 2012). DDR of ex-combatants is a necessary part of peace building in post-conflict settings (Maina, 2009). Reintegration refers to the long-term process of accepting reporters back into the community and regaining productive levels of engagement in the community (Allen & Schomerus, 2006) (Finn, 2012) (Maina, 2009).

Reintegration is a form of peace-building and necessary process for the post-conflict development of Northern Uganda. “The challenges of peace-building include creating a conducive environment for the integration and rehabilitation of formerly abducted children,” says (Heeren, 2006). There is fear that this highly militarized population, if alienated, could remobilize or return to the bush. Many argue that the reintegration of reporters is necessary for national security reasons. Even if not for security reasons, the levels of poverty and inequality that arise when formerly abducted persons return home increases the risk for future conflict (Blattman & Annan, 2008). The government failed to protect its citizens, however, this population did not choose a life in the bush has a right to be protected and supported upon return.

Finn describes successful reintegration as the ability of an individual to resume his/her life trajectory, while Maina claims economic independence and psychological health defines success of a reintegration process. Returning to this trajectory is driven by a number of factors: kinship networks (family acceptance upon return), social and economic reintegration, education training, diversification of livelihood, reinsertion packages, vocational training, and psychosocial support. Existing literature on reintegration argues that community participation a key aspect of the process (Gulu Support the Children Organization, 2010) (Finn, 2012) (Muwonge , 2007) (Maina, 2009) (Pham, Vinck, & Stover, 2008). “Psychologically, it is impossible to reintegrate an ex-combatant into civilian life by first separating him/her,” says Specht and Van Empel (1998, 13). Community based initiatives that focus on self-help and public engagement are important for promoting sustainable livelihood systems for those returning from the LRA (Muwonge , 2007). Diversification of livelihood training is important for successful economic reintegration (Finn, 2012) (Maina, 2009). Likewise, it is important to match for reintegration supporters to provide training in skills that match the local market. It is impossible to have a uniform program for all because every reporter had a different experience with the LRA.

In addition, traditional Acholi leaders have advocated for traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. In this process, an offender must admit to a wrong they have committed for the conflict management system to be triggered (Rose & Ssekandi, 2007). Clans cleanse the “kir”, or the taboo behaviors committed, through various traditional rituals (Rose & Ssekandi, 2007). Three common ceremonies include “the stepping on the egg ceremony,” mato oput, and “the bending of the spears” ceremony.

2.4 Actors

As stated before, reintegration efforts are part of larger peace-building efforts in Uganda. Conflict transformation involves local, regional, central, and international, actors. Boex argues that in “an absence of an effective central government, decentralized local government can play important role.” Decentralization is important because local governments are more effective in reconstruction and recovery efforts, such as public service delivery and centralized delivery of non-governmental organization (NGO) activities (Boex, Kimble, & Pigey, 2010). However, countries like Uganda tend to increase centralization to consolidate power. CSOs often fill the gap where the state has failed in peace-building efforts. International donors view CSO and NGOs as “alternatives to the state” (Omach, 2014). Ideally, CSOs and the government would work in partnership but often this is not the case. CSOs are reliant on donor ideology and often are motivated by geopolitical interests rather than humanitarian. Finally, there is criticism of CSOs serving as substitute to the responsibilities of the state, generating aid dependency and threatening long-term sustainability of programs (Omach, 2014) (McGinty & Williams, 2009).

In the context of northern Uganda, many actors from all sectors have been involved. Reintegration challenges often stem from a lack of coordinated strategy by from the many various actors at play. Often, the most prevalent projects address reinsertion and short-term rehabilitation projects because long-term rehabilitation requires a framework that involves the coordination of many actors. The long-term sustainability of reintegration programs in Uganda is a huge challenge for the DDR process. Coordinating reintegration services is vital to the peace-building process in a post-conflict Uganda.

3.0 Justification

Just as the LRA conflict was deemed the world's most forgotten humanitarian crisis by the United Nations, the reintegration process of those defecting from the LRA has been equally forgotten. I became passionate about the issue of child soldiers after watching a documentary by Invisible Children when I was thirteen and have wanted to come to Gulu ever since. It frustrated me that this issue went unnoticed by the international community for so long and through my studies I have become passionate about child soldiers and the reintegration of ex-combatants as a means to peace building.

The rehabilitation of this region is vital order to have long-lasting peace; the reintegration of former LRA members must be a top priority in the recovery of post-conflict Uganda. Proper reintegration and rehabilitation of returnees is important for economic, social, and security development. Supporting this highly vulnerable population is not only a humanitarian obligation but should also be a national security obligation. Those escaping from the LRA include men, women, and children; most have high levels of trauma and are highly militarized. In addition, this vulnerable population is often stigmatized by their community and rejected upon return. These factors lead to high probabilities of remobilization among this vulnerable group. A number of actors have been involved in the reintegration process, but often these actors have different strategies. Coordination is important when many actors are at stake in order to avoid contradiction and maximize effectiveness. Most research in the past tends to look generally on the services that need to be provided to returnees and although that is important this study seeks address the actors at play. This research is important to identify the current capacity of the Ugandan Government and examine its coordination with civil society organizations. Examining the actors at play and their coordination is important to assess the long-term sustainability of the reintegration services in Uganda.

4.0 Objectives

- a) To analyze the current government initiatives that address the reintegration process of those returning from the LRA
- b) To examine the current role of international and local NGOs within the reintegration process
- c) To examine the current coordination between government and NGO reintegration actors

5.0 Methods and Ethical Consideration

5.1 Overview

This study utilized qualitative research through analysis of 13 semi-structured individual interviews as well as primary and secondary documents. Interviews were conducted in Gulu and Kampala at the place of employment for each respondent or at a third party location. Research was conducted over the course of one month. In order to complete this research in the limited time I had, I divided my research into two parts. First, I analyzed government policies and initiatives that refer to reintegration of ex-combatants and FAPs. These interviews included representatives from the central government and Gulu District local government. Respondents included members of Parliament, a representative from Amnesty Commission, and both elected and appointed local government officials. Second, I assessed the implementation of government policies through analyzing the current CSOs that are supporting reintegration in northern Uganda. I interviewed representatives from the two active reception centers, GUSCO and World Vision, and two organizations supporting reporters once they have left the centers or those who never entered centers.

5.2 Reasoning and Effectiveness

I chose interviews as my method of data collection because I felt it was the best way to collect raw opinion and perspectives. Respondents were chosen due to their expertise and involvement in the reintegration process. The four NGOs that were interviewed were chosen because they represent different stages of the reintegration process. In addition, these NGOs represent the mix of local and international actors that are involved with reintegration in Northern Uganda. Although primary sources served as the main information source, secondary sources were utilized to provide background to my research and supplement the information obtained during interviews. This method of data collection served to be the most useful for the reasons predicted. Respondents were able to elaborate and provide personal anecdotes. I also found that respondents were more willing to share critical opinions in private interviews. In addition, this structure served useful in tailoring each interview to each respondent. I was able to use information I learned from previous interviews during interviews and build on my knowledge to fit all the moving pieces together. I recognize that interviewing reporters would have added depth to this research, but this was a hard choice I made in order to narrow my scope and keep the main focus of this study on the capacity/collaboration of actors. Although some informants were former child soldiers, they were not interviewed under that context.

5.3 Challenges

Challenges in conducting this research included logistical problems with setting up interviews, lack of availability of desired respondents, limiting the scope of respondents and overwhelming variables, limited knowledge of some respondents. Often I wanted to plan my week ahead, but many respondents would want to meet the same day I called and others would wait a week to call back with no day or time confirmed. This made preparing for interviews and organizing my work plan very difficult. I had to adopt a high level of flexibility in my schedule to and be prepared for an interview at any moment. Some desired respondents were unable to be reached or were unable to meet during the research period. These respondents included the Minister of State for Northern Uganda and the Resident District Commissioner (RDC). In an attempt to overcome this obstacle, I attempted to reach out to the Undersecretary of the Minister of State but she was also unavailable. Due to the many components and factors of this topic I

had to compartmentalize by strictly adhering to my outlined objectives. There were many people I could have interviewed do to the many topics this research covers, but I had to limit my scope. I also often found myself in a position where I was receiving similar information from each respondent, preventing me from being able to dig deeper and build on my existing knowledge. Although at first I felt discouraged, I was able to use this observation in my findings to highlight the lack of coordination and information sharing among the actors at play surrounding reintegration. I struggled with organizing all the variables and many components of my paper. Many respondents answered with similar themes, but often I received contradictory information that I had to sift through.

5.4 Ethical Considerations

The nature of this topic and the area in which I conducted my research required a high level of sensitivity. The majority of the population in Northern Uganda experienced the war in some capacity and thus had personal accounts to share. I provided a consent form to every person I interviewed, in order to be able to use their testimony in my research. I also was careful not to further stigmatize certain populations in the way I portray them in my writing. The North-South divide in Uganda is a sensitive topic that I attempted to navigate carefully as I spoke with government officials in Kampala. Crafting questions that did not offend and did not accuse was extremely important. It was also important to recognize my position as an outsider looking in and recognized the limitations this puts on the judgment I can pass and the conclusions I can draw from my research.

6.0 Findings

6.1 Government Initiatives

The cardinal mandate of any government is to protect its citizens. It is the duty of any government to provide for the needs of all. The Government of Uganda has spearheaded two programs that attempt to address the protection of reporters and their reintegration. These programs include, the Amnesty Act and the Peace, Recovery, and Development Program (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011). Both have attempted to address the issues of reintegration and the protection of those returning from the LRA. The Amnesty Commission now serves as an implementing partner of the PRDP. Although much criticism exists, the Amnesty Act has proven to be a vital component of the peace process and resettlement of returnees. On the other hand, like many government programs, the PRDP has received praise for its principles, but criticism for its implementation.

6.1.1 Amnesty

The main government program addressing ex-combatants and formerly abducted persons is the Amnesty Act, however, this Act, only addressing only reinsertion, the predecessor to reintegration. Amnesty is the first step of the reintegration process and cornerstone of the Uganda transitional justice. The Amnesty Act was put into law in January of 2000 and provides the opportunity for those returning from the LRA to apply for a pardon, exemption or discharge from criminal prosecution. Amnesty was enacted not only as a way to end the war, but also as formal recognition that many ex-combatants are former abductees (Quinn, 2009). Those abducted did not choose a life of a soldier and thus amnesty prevents punishment for crimes they did not voluntarily commit. Through the Amnesty Act, the Ugandan Government intended to show that it is committed to reconciliation and peace (Amnesty Commission, 2009). Since its enactment, over 13,000 former LRA ex-combatants have been pardoned (Olanya, 2013).

Any Ugandan who has been involved in insurgency after January 26th, 1986 can seek amnesty. Amnesty is extended to those who participated in combat, collaborated with insurgents, committed crimes to support insurgents, or in any way assisted others involved in insurgency. However, only those who were abducted and remained in captivity for more than four months qualify. Those that take the steps to receive amnesty are considered reporters. A

reporter must renounce involvement in the armed rebellion and surrender any weapons in his/her possession. The Act mandates that any authorized person who receives a reporter must hand he or she over to the sub-county chief of the area (Amnesty Commission, 2009).

Under the Amnesty Act, an Amnesty Commission and a Demobilization And Resettlement Team (DRT) were established. The DRT serves to draw programs for de-commissioning of arms, demobilization, re-settlement, and reintegration of reporters. The Amnesty Commission is the main body overseeing amnesty and receives funding from the Ugandan Government. The Commission serves several functions including, demobilization, resettlement, reintegration, and information and referral services (Amnesty Commission official, personal communication November 13, 2014). It has the responsibility to monitor programs for demobilization, reintegration, and re-settlement of reporters. Amnesty has community focal points that represent each sub-county. Returnees can report to these offices to apply for amnesty or after their certificate is certified can consult the Amnesty Commission if issues arise.

In 2005, the Amnesty Commission began a program to support former combatants restarting their lives. The programs resettlement packages that included one mattress, cups, blankets, basins, jerry cans, plates, 3 hoes, beans, maize, and 263,000 ugsh (Amnesty Commission Official, personal communication, November 13, 2014). Although these packages are not intended to support reintegration, reinsertion and resettlement are necessary predecessors to the reintegration process.

Amnesty has been extremely successful in encouraging defections from the LRA and is an integral part of peace process. Amnesty fulfills the moral obligation of protecting the Ugandan people that the government had originally failed to fulfill (Opio, Sept. 24). Amnesty is the first step in the reconciliation process between ex-combatants and their communities. Nevertheless, many believe Amnesty needs immense improvements due to mismanagement (Betty Ocan, personal communication, November 5, 2014). Alone, it is not enough to convince those still in the bush that life outside of the bush can be promising (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). Amnesty is simply good in principle, but lacks a serious action plan (David Tshimba, personal communication, November 4, 2014) and has suffered from poor implementation (Olanya, 2013). Criticism of Amnesty also includes its limited efforts to rehabilitate and take a leading role in the reintegration process (Martin Mapenduzi, personal communication, October 27, 2014). However, according to an official from Amnesty Commission, Amnesty does not claim to be

facilitating reintegration, but rather simply reinsertion (Amnesty Commission official, personal communication, November 13, 2014). An independent study done for USAID confirms this affirmation, as Amnesty informants used in that study admitted that the Amnesty Commission needed to do a better job communicating to the government and donor community about general problems with Amnesty, but were not responsible solving them. Another limitation described in this study references the lack of any viable method by Amnesty to assess those returning from the LRA who did not pass through a reception center (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). In addition, many view the reparations as a reward and sign of neglect of the victims. This debate highlights key areas transitional justice (described later) tries to amend.

6.1.2 Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan

The Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan came out of a need to rebuild Northern Uganda after the immediate violence of the LRA conflict left the region. This concept came out of the peace talks at Juba between the LRA and the GoU in 2006. Agenda item Number Two of the peace talks that was signed refers to a comprehensive peace solution. It speaks to the challenges Northern Uganda went through, the factors that contributed to the war, the magnitude of atrocities, and ways to rebuild. (Martin Mapenduzi, personal communication, October 27, 2014). Before PRDP, the government implemented the Emergency Resettlement Program in 2007. Shortly after the end of this program, which was poorly managed, the GoU and development partners started to develop the PRDP. The aim was to have a more integrated approach to peace, recovery, and development. PRDP 1 began full implementation in 2009 and was programmed through 2012. PRDP 2, or phase two, which this paper focuses on, began in July 2012 and is programmed through 2015. PRDP currently covers 55 districts and 9 municipalities in the Greater North.

The PRDP consists of four strategic objectives. These objectives include, 1)Consolidation of State Authority, 2)Rebuilding and empowering communities, 3)Revitalization of the economy, 4) Peace building and Reconciliation. This study analyzes the implementation of objective four, peace building and reconciliation.

The Office of the Prime Minister coordinates the implementation of PRDP 2 and oversight is conducted by the PRDP monitoring Committee (PMC). The total budget was about 1 trillion shilling (Martin Mapenduzi, personal communication, October 27, 2014). There are

three funding streams for implementation: PRDP budget grant, On-budget special projects, Off-budget projects (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011). Projects can be funded directly by the government through the fund basket under the OPM. Donors can give money to this funding stream or can fund special projects that are then monitored by the government through special implementation units in the OPM. The third option is for projects to be implemented directly by development partners. For example, the United States does not give money directly to the Ugandan Government, but through implementing agencies shilling (Martin Mapenduzi, personal communication, October 27, 2014). It was anticipated that 46% of PRDP 2 funding will be spent on Strategic Objective 3, 37% on Strategic Objective 2, 12% on Strategic Objective 1 and 3% on Strategic Objective 4 (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011).

Strategic Objective 4 (SO4), which addresses reintegration activities, falls under the third funding stream of off-budget projects, with the exception of Amnesty. This means that development partners implement all initiatives supporting this objective of the PRDP, while the government fills a coordinating and oversight role (this relationship is discussed in section 6.3). The aim of SO4 is “to address the specific peace building and reconciliation needs of the most conflict affected regions. Failure to identify and mitigate conflict drivers could weaken the long-term sustainability of recovery.” Two program areas fall under this objective: ‘Reintegration and Resettlement’ and ‘Community Dispute Resolution and Reconciliation’. The first reads:

Reintegration and Resettlement: Referral of reporters for skills and enterprise development training, support to community based reintegration activities, dialogue with host communities and reporters to promote effective reintegration, sensitization of Amnesty Law process to enhance community unity, strengthening systems to monitor where ex-combatants have been successfully reintegrated, providing psychosocial support and counseling to traumatized community members, abductees and vulnerable ex-combatants and addressing related mental health issues where appropriate, and analyzing and addressing causes of community level conflict and promote reconciliation.

The Amnesty Commission serves as an implementing partner and is the only section of SO4 that receives direct government funding. Although most projects have off-budget support as well, SO4 is the only objective that relies almost entirely on this funding stream (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011)

Criticism of the PRDP includes poor implementation, coordination, and neglect of SO4. “Since its launch, however, the PRDP has achieved little because of insufficient funding,

corruption, incoherent project selection and widespread confusion across sectors, districts and local communities about how implementation is supposed to proceed,” stated an article in the *Journal of Development Studies* (Olanya, 2013). First, for many objective four has been pushed to the peripheral of discussion (David Tshimba, personal communication, November 4, 2014). Direct government funding has been given to roads, school, water, training police, and the judicial system law (Betty Ocan, personal communication, November 5, 2014) (Martin Mapenduzi, personal communication, October 27, 2014). The government chose to wrap its program and budget around what the development partners were doing. It appears that instead of development partners filling in the gaps of what the government was doing, it has become the reverse. However, the head of the Democratic Party, Norbert Mao, claims that government priorities would not have changed if development partners had chosen to fund other projects. “There are certain things the government is just not interested in, like psychosocial therapy,” says Mao (personal communication, November 5, 2014). The government is just interested in hardware programs, tangible things that guarantee votes (Betty Ocan, personal communication, November 5, 2014) (Martin Mapenduzi, personal communication, October 27, 2014).

Second, rampant corruption and mismanagement of funds has negatively affected the impact of all PRDP programs and caused international donors to pull of funding. For example, PRDP money was used to buy the Prime Minister a limousine worth \$200,000. According to Norbert Mao, this mismanagement is due to a lack of transparency, lack of accountability, and lack of oversight. Money is mismanaged because the OPM has too much discretion (Norbert Mao, personal communication, October 27, 2014). In addition, many were frustrated that the PRDP extended assistance across 54 districts, rather than just focusing on just the sub-regions that were impacted the most, which included, Lango, Teso, and Acholi sub regions. Many of the other regions never were even visited by the LRA, but lobbied the government claiming they had residents who were impacted by the conflict. The PRDP would not have been passed if Parliament hadn’t agreed to include all 54 districts, which was undeniably motivated by politics (Betty Ocan, personal communication, November 5, 2014).

6.1.3 National Reconciliation Bill and Transitional Justice Policy

The Government of Uganda has drafted two policies that address issues surrounding reintegration; The National Reconciliation Bill and the National Transitional Justice both address

national peace building and reconciliation through accountability, justice, dialogue, and development activities. These policies overlap in principle, yet neither has been passed or implemented.

The National Reconciliation Bill recognizes the need to address underlying historical causes of the conflict in northern Uganda through a reconciliation process (Government of Uganda, 2009). The bill aims to establish a National Reconciliation Forum that will examine human rights violations in Uganda after 1962. The Forum will have several bodies with the authority to; “recommend/award reparations for victims of human rights violations, hold perpetrators accountable, recommend measures to prevent the future violations of human rights, design and conduct nation-wide reconciliation activities,” (Government of Uganda, 2009). Professionals will be employed to ensure that proper judicial and protection mechanisms are in place to protect vulnerable individuals who wish to provide testimony. Although not mentioned directly, the reintegration of reporters back into that community directly relates to this national reconciliation process. Perpetrators need to reconcile with their victims while communities need to recognize that in the case of the LRA conflict, perpetrators are often victims themselves.

The Transitional Justice Policy is an “overreaching framework of the government of Uganda, designed to address justice, accountability and reconciliation needs of post conflict Uganda” (Government of Uganda, 2013). Transitional justice refers to an approach to justice in post-conflict climates. According to the International Center, “Transitional justice refers to the set of judicial and non-judicial measures that have been implemented by different countries in order to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses” (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2014). Similar to the National Reconciliation Bill, this policy strives to deliver justice to victims of mass atrocities and assist societies devastated by conflict to achieve sustainable peace and reconciliation. The Uganda Transitional Justice Policy derived from the Juba Peace Agreement and is part of overall policies on national development. This policy would include five commitments: witness protection, traditional justice, truth telling, reparations, and amnesty. It would also be victim driven and an affirmation of government commitment to national reconciliation (Government of Uganda, 2013).

6.2 Civil Society Initiatives

As mentioned in the fourth objective of the PRDP, reintegration services have also been undertaken by civil society organizations. According to a report done by International Alert, 80% of youth in Uganda felt the government was not responding to their needs, but donors and NGOs were the most effective (International Alert, 2013). From reception centers, to providing livelihood services and assistance once reporters return, NGOs within Gulu have been the most involved actor at play in the reintegration process.

Reception centers, short-term rehabilitation centers for reporters when they first return from the bush, have been the most active. Although many get lost in the system and often never go through the formal channels, reporters are supposed to be taken to the UPDF for intelligence and security screening. Once released from the UPDF, they are taken to a reception center. Services at reception centers are short-term and assistance is often needed once reporters return home. According to NGO Forum's Senior Program Coordinator, reintegration actually begins after the reception center and for many reasons NGOs are not focused directly on reporters once they leave the reception center (Eric Odong, personal communication, November 3, 2014).

Many reception centers have opened and closed throughout the conflict, but currently only two are in operation, World Vision and GUSCO. World Vision is an international Christian organization that has many development programs operating in Uganda, one of which is a reception center for those returning from the LRA. This reception center offers medical support, psychotherapy, family tracing, community reintegration, and follow-up visits. After a short time with the UPDF, World Vision receives the reporters and duration of stay depends on the needs of the individual reporters. Once reporters leave the center, they are guided to other resources and World Vision programs within the community. In the opinion of a World Vision employee, deliberate efforts to guide reporters and consciousness of their vulnerabilities is needed but programs shouldn't single them out (World Vision Official, personal communication, November 20, 2014). This perspective is in line with the popular belief now that reintegration, post-reception centers, should be implemented through a holistic approach to avoid isolation and stigmatization of reporters. In addition, World Vision offers a 2-3 month follow-up process after reporters leave the center. Reporters are always free to come back to the center if they need guidance or additional services. Due to its large international funding base and financial support

from another organization, Invisible Children (highlighted later), World Vision has not run into major funding constraints. However, the relative peace in northern Uganda has made it difficult to convince donors that the service the reception center provides is still necessary (World Vision Official, personal communication, November 20, 2014).

Once individuals leave the center there are various organizations that are attempting to fill in the service gap that exists at this stage in the reintegration process. PRDP monitoring framework for phase one found that, “less than half of the sub counties state that there were counseling services available for community members and ex-combatants. The majority of these services appear to be provided by NGOS and community leaders but from the information gathered non of these seem to explicitly target ex-combatants” (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011). That is because, currently, are approaching reintegration through a holistic approach, focusing on education, livelihood, and health concerns in general for the community as a whole (Eric Odong, personal communication, 2014). This paper will highlight just a few of the non-governmental actors within Gulu facilitating reintegration at different stages.

The organization GUSCO, also located in Gulu, runs the second reception center in operation in Northern Uganda. In addition to private donors, UNICEF serves as the main funder. Due to its affiliation with UNICEF, GUSCO’s reception center focuses on women and children. The center provides for the basic needs of women and children reporters such as food, shelter, and medical assistance. Similar to World Vision, GUSCO performs family tracing, counseling, and follow-up visits. According to a GUSCO employee, counseling has been haphazard due to the recent high number of women and children who have returned from the bush. GUSCO has found it difficult to organize counseling for this reason. Counseling currently consists of talking through experiences in order to relieve the past. An official at GUSCO, explained that the sustainability of programs relies on the quality of services provided because individuals that pass through the reception centers need to be self-sufficient for when the NGOs are no longer in operation (GUSCO official, personal communication, November 19, 2014).

Invisible children is an advocacy and program oriented non-profit with an international headquarters in San Diego California. Invisible Children operates in Uganda out of Gulu and Pader Districts. The organization has been very successful with reinsertion and defection as they have facilitated a radio networked system and defection flyers that help communicate with people in the bush that it is safe to come home. Their reintegration programs include a merit

based scholarships for secondary and university level students, school construction and renovation, Village saving and Loan association, water sanitation, woman's social enterprise, and adult literacy. Invisible Children believes in a community approach because they believe for successful reintegration communities need to be prepared to receive those returning home. However many of these programs, such as the scholarship program, are having to be scaled down do to funding constraints. The organization also partly funds the World Vision reception center. In 2012 most reception centers had closed, but due to defection and feedback from former ex-combatants, Invisible children decided to help World Vision reopen its doors (Okot Geoffrey Howard, personal communication, November 11, 2014).

Thrive Gulu is a non-profit based in Gulu that addresses reintegration indirectly through its trauma and livelihood programs. The founders identified a gap in trauma treatment within northern Uganda, so they established Thrive Gulu to address trauma through holistic and non-medical means (personal communication, Patrick). Thrive Gulu is privately funded and donor dependent. Current programs include, woman empowerment, computer literacy program, and trauma counseling. The woman's empowerment program trains women on leadership through dialogue with local leaders, hygiene and family planning classes, village saving and loan association, and exposure to advocacy work. No program specifically targets returnees, but women who have been in captivity are encouraged to form their own empowerment group to obtain the services described above. As part of its holistic approach, Patrick explains that Thrive Gulu does have isolated programs for reporters in order to limit stigmatization. "We look at a broad definition of poverty and we take poverty in a relative definition," says Patrick. The organization aims to heal the community and reporters are part of that community. Patrick believes that Thrive Gulu and the reception centers are "partners in development" and that organizations such as Thrive pick up from where the reception centers leave off. "Reception centers are still necessary as long as Kony is still in the bush [...] The services that are offered at the reception centers – the counseling, the family tracing, health rehabilitation services—are all very important things.

Pathways to Peace is a brand new organization in the early stages of development. The founders saw a gap in reintegration services beyond the rehabilitation stage at the reception centers. According to one co-founder, rehabilitation has been rather inadequate, but reception centers have been doing the only consistent work. Pathways to Peace aims to take a

decentralized, non-center approach in order to be able to work with existing organizations and help facilitate coordination of information and resources. We hope to “smooth out the process,” says one co-founder. The organization’s goal is to connect reporters leaving reception centers with other organizations on the ground and report back to stakeholders in defection, currently operating in the DRC and CAR about the progress of individuals. This information is vital to relay to others still in the bush to encourage further defection. Although Pathways to Peace is in its beginning stages, depending on funding constraints, it plans to provide services such as livelihood training, sensitization training, follow-up visits, community involvement activities, and education assistance. Currently, private donors are funding Pathways to Peace and the staff is looking for long-term financial partnership with larger organizations.

NGOs have done significant work in northern Uganda, but they can’t act alone. Due to donor dependency, NGOs’ activities are directed by the donor and limited in many ways. “They will concentrate around where there is funding for survival [...] they will focus on a very small part just for visibility with the hope that maybe in the future they will get another source of funding later to do more,” says NGO Forum coordinator (Eric Odong, personal communication, November 3, 2014).

6.3 Coordination

Coordination of reintegration programs in Northern Uganda is important in order to streamline the process, maximize resources, and monitor effectiveness of programs. Although there are mechanisms in place and valid attempts have been made, overall, this research found that coordination of reintegration services is currently extremely poor due to a lack of government leadership on the issue. Coordination of reintegration services can be analyzed at three levels, central government, local government, and by NGOs themselves.

6.3.1 Government Coordination at National Level

The government’s current role in coordination can be reviewed by looking at the responsibilities laid out in the PRDP and the extent to which it has carried out these duties. This study concluded that, in addition to the lack of funding allocated to the peace-building objective

of the PRDP, the Government of Uganda has failed to monitor and coordinate the off-budget projects as stated in the policy language of the PRDP.

As stated before, PRDP 2 implementation is coordinated by the OPM and the PRDP Monitoring Committee (PMC) undertakes oversight. The PMC is chaired by the Prime Minister while PRDP stakeholders serve as representatives including: other central government agencies, development partners, Members of Parliament, Local Council V chairpersons from the eight PRDP sub-regions, NGOs, and community representatives. In addition, two PRDP technical working groups (TWG) were put in place to assist the OPM in managing and coordinating the PRDP activities. These working groups set the agenda for the bi-annual PMC meetings. The national TWG includes representatives from the OPM, sectors, development partners, Special Project implementation units, and NGOs. The TWG at the regional level includes representatives from the OPM regional office in Gulu, local government, development partners operating in the North, and NGOs (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011).

A mid-term review of PRDP1 revealed weaknesses in the current monitoring framework of inputs and outputs of PRDP programs. The report stated that conflict drivers such as land, youth unemployment, and reintegration of ex-combatants had not been adequately assessed. Specifically it was found that under PRDP1 it was difficult to track outputs of donor off-budget funding in support of the PRDP. Due to these findings, PRDP2 was supposed to establish a more effective way to monitor and evaluate all three PRDP funding streams, evolving needs, progress in achieving PRDP goals and alignment to The Ugandan National Development Plan (Office of the Prime Minister, 2012).

. In its report of PRDP1, the MTR described specifically the weakness in the coordination of off-budget projects, which includes most reintegration services with the exclusion of Amnesty. The Monitoring Framework of PRDP2 attempted to address this weakness through requiring donors of off-budget projects to submit their planned PRDP support to the OPM and provide updates to the PMC. Then, through the Northern Uganda Data Centre (NUDC), the OPM is supposed to perform spot monitoring of off-budget activities and then raise findings to PMC (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011).

According to Honorable Betty Ocan, Woman Representative of Gulu District in Parliament, representatives from the sub-regions are no longer invited to the PMC meetings under the current Parliament (9th). Honorable Betty Ocan, claims that she doesn't know who

speaks for her district anymore in the PMC. Under the 8th Parliament, the PMC involved all sub-regions under the PRDP through inviting two representatives, one male and one female, to represent each region. These representatives would look at the impact of the PRDP and then come to the meeting where the chairman and Resident District Commissioner were present. Hon. Betty Ocan previously represented the Acholi sub-region at the PMC, but for unknown reasons to her she is no longer invited; currently, only executives from the private sector are invited (Hon. Betty Ocan, personal communication, November 5, 2014). An assistant of the Chief Administrator Officer of Gulu's local government, speculated that this change may be due to the fact that reports from the local government are now supposed to be shared for review at the PMC, suggesting it unnecessary for representatives to physically travel to Kampala (Assistant to CAO, personal communication, November 20, 2014). It is also important to note that the PRDP headquarters was originally suppose to be in Gulu under a special secretariat, but these plans never came to fruition (Eric Odong, personal communication, November 3, 2014).

This change to the PMC representation supports the widely shared opinion that the development process of the PRDP has not been consultative (Eric Odong, personal communication, November 3, 2014). "This whole idea of folks in Kampala having round table discussions about how to fix northern Uganda is a screwed approach to the noble objective of recovery and development," says David from International Alert (David Tshimba, personal communication, November 4, 2014). The OPM is too far removed from the affected areas and the impact of the PRDP has been reduced because the implementation is too centralized (Nobert Mao, personal communication, November 5, 2014).

Next, as stated before, the OPM is supposed to perform spot-monitoring of off-budget projects through the Northern Uganda Data Centre (NUDC). The NUDC is supposed to "record local government's quarterly expenditures and progress in implementation by program area in its PRDP output monitoring system" (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011). However, the OPM has not been successful in monitoring. The impact has been reduced because the implementation is too centralized. The OPM is too far removed from the effected areas to have clear oversight (Norbert Mao, personal communication, November 5, 2014) and in reality the OPM does not have time to be on the ground which highlights a major gap in the implementation of the PRDP (Betty Ocan, personal communication, November 5, 2014). As stated before, "The government isn't interested in software programs, like psychosocial support," says Norbert Mao (Norbert

Mao, personal communication, November 5, 2014). Although the language of the PRDP sounds good in principle, the government cannot coordinate effectively programs they first of all don't even run themselves and second of all aren't interested in the first place. Government will only intervene in off-budget projects regarding reintegration if the law is compromised; otherwise, oversight is non-existent (David Tshimba, personal communication, November 4, 2014).

In addition, the NUDC has not been as effective as it appears on paper. In the opinion of Norbert Mao, the NUDC has been completely unhelpful, "It is a big name for an organization that does nothing," he says. A lot depends on the maturity of the district to feed the database (Norbert Mao, personal communication, November 5, 2014). The OPM is reliant on the local government to give reports on activities within the districts, but reporting on off-budget projects is new for districts and not yet fully in place. Many respondents interviewed complained about the lack of a database to track government spending and programs. A study done on the LRA acknowledged the importance of such a database, "A standardized database will help centers and DDR programs track former child soldiers who have returned to their families and provide follow up services" (Pham, Vinck, & Stover, 2008). The government's biggest weakness is corruption and there is no database to monitor where money is being spent (Norbert Mao, personal communication, November 5, 2014). Corruption limits the government's capacity to implement its on-budget projects, let alone monitor off-budget projects such as reintegration. According to Norbert Mao, this mismanagement is due to a lack of transparency, lack of accountability, and lack of oversight. The reason the money is mismanaged is because the OPM has too much discretion (Norbert Mao, personal communication, November 5, 2014). The lack of a database can be attributed to the lack of input; due to poor information sharing, the NUDC isn't receiving the necessary reports it needs from the local government. Oversight and coordination at the national level has been unsuccessful because monitoring is reliant on organizations within the district to report updates to the local government. The responsibility to gather information is not in the hands of the government.

As the only implementing actor funded directly by the Ugandan government and due to its proximity to the local communities, Amnesty Commission seems to be in a prime position to lead the coordinating and oversight efforts. Amnesty has close relationship with the reception centers: GUSCO and World Vision. For example, when World Vision determines someone is ready to go home they request certificates from Amnesty Commission and signature from the

Resident District Commissioner (World Vision official, personal communication, November 20, 2014). Amnesty Commission complains that some organizations like Invisible Children do not report to Amnesty Commission like they are suppose to and take people home themselves. After someone returns home, according to an Amnesty official, either Amnesty Commission or other stakeholders can assist in reintegration (Amnesty Commission Official, personal communication, November 12, 2014). This statement shows the lack of responsibility Amnesty takes in leading reintegration. Amnesty will take responsibility if there is an issue after an individual is granted Amnesty and will guide them to the appropriate resources, sometimes even sending them back to the reception centers (World Vision official, personal communication, November 20, 2014). However, due to the confidentiality of the Amnesty Commission due to sensitivity of information they collect from reporters, many are unaware of what else the Amnesty Commission does besides granting certificates. Amnesty claims to do follow-up visits and monitor the movement of all reporters, but reception centers are unaware of this practice (GUSCO official, personal communication, November 19, 2014) (World Vision official, personal communication, November 20, 2014). Amnesty is not answerable to anyone but Parliament, so information sharing between Amnesty and development partners regarding reporters is limited in the name of national intelligence. This has been the status quo for awhile, and the new PRDP2 monitoring framework has not helped. It was reported in 2006, that coordination between the UPDF, Amnesty Commission, and reception centers was found to be poor (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). This seems to hold true today. As stated before, Amnesty claims that people don't always see them working. Although this may be true, it highlights the lack of coordination between Amnesty of the off-budget reintegration projects.

6.3.2 Government Coordination at Local level

The centralization of the PRDP in the OPM has limited its impact because of how removed the office is from the activities on the ground. The local government does the real work of supporting NGOS due to their proximity, but due to decentralization of the government as a whole, local government has more power than before. In addition, decentralization has given the local government more power. (Dorothy Ajwang, personal communication, November 20, 2014) The only real coordination over reintegration is done at the district level, but it is still weak and often inadequate.

There are two branches within local governments in Uganda, the elected leadership and appointed leadership (Patrick Lumumba, personal communication, November 13, 2014). The Honorable Chairman of the Local Council V leads the elected branch and the Chief Administrative Officer oversees the appointed branch. The office of the CAO serves as the government's civil servants and provides technical support to the elected leadership. These two offices work together as a team. Collaboration is facilitated through the Executive Cabinet, which is made up of a mix of elected and appointed officers (Dorothy Ajwang, personal communication, November 20, 2014). Under the office of the CAO, there are sector ministries that oversee programs within a certain sector such as health, education, etc. Then finally, there is the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) who represents the Office of the President and Central Government within the District. The RDC is suppose to monitor government programs within the district and can intervene at any time (Okech Goretti, personal communication, November 11, 2014).

According the PRDP2, development partners are required to sign an MOU with the local government and OPM. By signing the MOU, the NGO is declaring who they are, what they do, where they want to do it, who the targeted beneficiaries are, and what they want the local government to do (Martin Mapenduzi, personal communication, October 27, 2014). For example, Thrive Gulu has an MOU with the district where they send in their work plan and similarly World Vision, Invisible Children and the local government have a tripartite agreement. Last year, World Vision had phased out its reception center, when there was an influx of reporters, but they didn't have the money to re-open. The facility was property of the local government, so, the local government at the discretion of the LCV Chairman, the facility was given to World Vision for further use. Invisible Children helped fund the center and World Vision used their expertise and human resources to run the center (Martin Mapenduzi, personal communication, October 27, 2014). NGO work plans are suppose to be incorporated in the district development plan, including the budget being reflected as an income in the district budget (Dorothy Ajwang, personal communication, November 20, 2014). An MOU is necessary in order to avoid duplication of services and measure the kind of impact the NGO and the community are creating. Local government uses the MOUs as a monitoring tool or services functioning within the district. The LCV of Gulu stated that, "As the local government it is our

responsibility to monitor all programs by government and non-government operating in the district” (Martin Mapenduzi, personal communication, October 27, 2014).

NGOs operating within Gulu report to their corresponding sector head for approval, but the CAO and the Resident District Commission, who works for the Office of the President, gives the ultimate signature of approval (Okech Goretti, personal communication, November 11, 2014). However, according to Patrick Lumumba of Thrive Gulu, the two deputies of the appointed branch, Office of the CAO, and the political branch, Office of the LCV, are the ones that monitor the work of NGOs closely. Pathways to Peace just went through this process recently and the founders had to first consult with the Community Development Officers, a sector head under the Office of the CAO, then they met with the LCV and the RDC. In the case of Pathways to Peace, all levels of the local government were consulted and made aware of the new organization (Erica Shay, personal communication, 2014). For the same reasoning on the national level, effective local oversight is difficult when information sharing only goes in one direction. For example, Thrive Gulu sends in their work plan and budget to the district, but the district has never done an independent evaluation of the organization. The only evaluation was conducted when the organization originally signed its MOU (Patrick Lumumba, personal communication, November 13, 2014).

The CAO is supposed to understand and integrate NGO plans into local government to avoid duplication (Dorothy Ajwang, personal communication, November 20, 2014). According to the LCV, The Community Development Officer’s, one of the sector heads under the CAO, work is to follow up with those that have returned and make sure they are included in community programs. However, after speaking with the CDO, she explained that she is only one person and does not have the capacity to keep track of all those that return. Her office is currently receiving no funding and her capacity has been severely limited. The CDO explained that her involvement with the PRDP was much more vibrant during the insurgency. However, the CDO serves as the secretary of the Gulu District Reconciliation and Peace Team, which the LCV chairs. This council was created to coordinate activities of all the peace actors in the district and work with them to solve post-conflict interests. The team meets with GUSCO and World Vision regarding their services and challenges (Martin Mapenduzi, personal communication, October 27, 2014).

Through sector meetings, the local government has tried to share information across organizations and collaborate. Each sector ministry has cluster meetings, which are headed by

each respective sector head. For example, Thrive Gulu meets with community services sector cluster. Due to the holistic approach to reintegration undertaken by many NGOs, not including reception centers, there is very little dialogue between organizations focused directly on reintegration (Eric Odong, personal communication, November 3, 2014). Issues are addressed in sectors, such as education, health, livelihood etc. All of these services are important for social and economic reintegration of reporters, but are also important for community members at large. During the height of the insurgency, there was a District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC), led by the local government, that addressed reintegration issues directly. The rehabilitation officer, who oversees all programs addressing disabilities and senior citizens within the district, claimed that DMC meetings were more active in the early 2000s when the crisis was at its peak (Parry Jawoko, personal communication, November 20, 2014). Currently there are District Management Committees (DMC) led by the local government, but these meetings are conducted within each sector unlike previously done with the DDMC meetings. Besides the Gulu Peace Team, there are no district level meetings that addresses the reintegration project directly (Eric Odong, personal communication, November 3, 2014)

6.3.3 NGO Coordination

In order to maximize resources, organizations often partner together on projects and share information to a degree with each other, independent of government intervention. From the respondents interviewed, it was found that organizations like Thrive Gulu collaborate with Save the Children, World Vision, UNICEF, GWEDG, and refugee law project (Patrick Lumumba, personal communication, November 13, 2014). However, competition is often a problem between organizations that offer similar services because they frequently are fighting for donors. GUSCO and World Vision attempted to address this issue. World Vision used to take all reporters, but in order to harmonize services and maximize available funding WV agreed to GUSCO to take care of women and children since they were receiving funding from UNICEF. World Vision also works with other child protection organizations within Gulu (World Vision official, personal communication, November 20, 2014).

Finally, many NGOs do not consult the SO4 of the PRDP2 as a programming tool. The founders drafted the proposal for Pathways to Peace without consulting the policy or considering its objectives, but rather did their own baseline assessment of needs. (Erica Shay, personal

communication, November 28, 2014). The PRDP states that, “To ensure that information provided supports PRDP co-ordination, it should only cover donor off-budget activities in Northern Uganda that are directly in support of the PRDP, as per the interventions identified in the PRDP 2 framework, rather than all donor activities in the North” (Office of the Prime Minister, 2011). The establishment of an NGO as a direct off-budget project of the PRDP is unclear.

The NGO Forum is non-profit started in 2001 in order to facilitate coordination to increase the capacity of other NGOs and policy advocacy (Eric Odong, personal communication, November 3, 2014). At the time, government’s ability to disseminate information was crippled, so NGO forum aimed to keep the NGOs in touch with the community and increase their capacity to serve. On a monthly basis the different sectors have their own meeting to share updates and map where services are being distributed throughout the district. Then every three months a District Management committee meeting is held, with the department head of sector from the government and an NGO appointed representative for each sector serves as the co-chair. NGO forum monitors that in fact these meetings are taking place and all parties are present. For example, in the past, these meetings helped to identify that most NGOs were operating within the municipality. As a result of these findings, more organizations started to move out to areas that were not previously being served (Eric Odong, personal communication, November 3, 2014). In the MTR of PRDP1, it was found that many organizations did not use or attempt to use the PRDP as a programming tool, such as Pathways to Peace, described above. NGO forum is one of the few NGOs spoken with for this research that claimed to understand the document. NGO Forum even held two-day training for representatives of CSOs and NGOs to walk them through the PRDP. It was the hope of NGO forum that these representatives would then train the rest of their staff and then these organizations would begin to use the PRDP as a programming tool. The effects have yet to be concluded (Eric Odong, personal communication, November 3, 2014).

7.0 Conclusion

Although decentralization is important to ensure resources reach the grassroots level, the support of a central government is necessary for long-term sustainability of national initiatives. In the case of reintegration in Uganda, this research concluded that a lack of central government leadership threatens the long-term sustainability and strength of services provided to formerly abducted persons.

This research sought to uncover current government initiatives addressing reintegration, current NGO initiatives within Gulu District, the current status of coordination between the government and development partners and the ideal partnership between the two sectors on the issue of reintegration. Three key conclusions were made as a result of this project. First, there are only two government initiatives, the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan (PRDP) and the Amnesty Act, that address the issue of reintegration of ex-combatants and formerly abducted persons. The PRDP sounds good in theory, but in reality the government has not prioritized the reintegration initiatives mentioned in the plan. The Amnesty Act is integral in encouraging defection from the LRA and providing government protection to those citizens it previously failed. It provides the first step in returning to home communities, but has not addressed true reintegration. Second, NGOs are the main implementing actors of reinsertion, rehabilitation, and reintegration services in Gulu. The only organizations that address returnees specifically are the reception centers, while other NGOs in the district fear stigmatizing returnees through isolated programs so instead focus on community rehabilitation as a whole. Finally, coordination has been extremely poor between the government and NGOs due to a lack of oversight by the Government of Uganda. Information sharing is absent and there has been no attempt to streamline the process. In addition, the tendency for organizations to gear their programs toward the whole community, although effective, makes monitoring reintegration services difficult.

It is in the interest of the Government of Uganda to take this issue seriously as reintegration of ex-combatants is integral to long-term peace in Uganda. The lack of long-term sustainability and a clear national framework for reintegration programs in Uganda threatens peace.

8.0 Recommendations for Ideal Coordination

Twelve out of thirteen respondents expressed their belief that the PRDP2 was good in principle but poor in implementation and coordination. The overall recommendation was for the government to take more ownership over the reintegration process through stronger coordination and oversight of services. In addition, the government must prioritize reintegration for it to perform effective oversight.

First, government should take a leading role in Strategic Objective 4 of the PRDP2 rather than leaving it up to development partners. NGOs should only add value to government programs rather than the reverse. NGOs are donor dependent, thus they are often short term and inconsistent (Eric Odongy, November 3, 2014). According to Gulu's Rehabilitation Officer, the government should have taken the "upper hand" and funded directly objective 4. The government did not predict a withdrawal of NGOs immediately following the return of relative peace (Aperry Jawoko, personal communication, November 20, 2014). "Constitutionally, the government has the responsibility to take care of the needs of everyone. So by leaving that one (reintegration of reporters) out, is like the government is running away from its responsibility," says Eric Odongy (personal communication, November 3, 2014).

Sustainability requires key stakeholders to play the lead role and supplementary actors to play the supporting role. According to David Tshimba, "If we can agree in principle that the government is the key stakeholder for the situation in northern Uganda and then we go ahead and have the government play a subsidiary role, and we then leave the subsidiary stakeholder to play the key role is conceptually flawed." As the owner of the document, the government should have stepped up as the chief strategist and implementer. David also claims that, "It is very important that the NGOs do the implementation, precisely because of what we have experienced with the government. We know what the government is capable of and not capable of. But that precedence should not be the cornerstone of the conversation moving forward," (David Tshimba, personal communication, November 4, 2014).

A common solution proposed includes having Amnesty get more involved and support all aspects of reintegration. Amnesty should receive a budget line to support reception centers and deal with all aspects of reintegration, both social and economic (Norbert Mao, personal communication, October 27, 2014). In addition, there should be a law or piece of legislation that looks at reparation entirely (Martin Mapenduzi, personal communication, October 27, 2014).

According to Honorable Norbert Mao, “The ideal situation is for the government and the international partners to sit around the table and everyone put their cards on the table.” Mao compared the relationship between development partners and the government like a patient recovering from a coma. When a patient is in a coma, they are at the complete mercy of the doctors, but when the patient is recovering there is a partnership between the patient and the doctor. Once the patient is sent home, they are in control and only consult the doctors. Mao compares this to the emergency, reconstruction, and development periods in post-conflict settings. Uganda is currently in its reconstruction phase, thus there should be a partnership between the government and development actors, not reliance on the latter (Norbert Mao, personal communication, October 27, 2014).

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