

# CONFLICT WATCH

Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity  
(ACCS)

July Issue # 4



## “CHALLENGES OF POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY!”

*Compiled by Otim Denis Barnabas & Jackson Odong*

### Introduction

The July issue on Conflict Watch represents Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS) – Refugee Law Project (RLP) activity highlights on issues of Peace Recovery Development Plan (PRDP), the status of health, and health service delivery in northern Uganda, the tribal conflict in South Sudan – and its implication on recovery of the West Nile District, and dynamics around youth unemployment. The issue facilitates ACCS ongoing dissemination and advocacy and contributes to national conversations on PRDP and recovery. ACCS concerted effort is towards flagging conflict causes, triggers, actors and dynamics, as well as suggestions on how to respond to conflict challenges. Key titles in the issue include :

- 1) It's not the First Time: Asylum Seekers and Refugees from South Sudan and the Recovery Question
- 2) Nodding Disease: The Potential Threat to Post Conflict Recovery
- 3) Accounting for the Cost of PRDP in Acholi Sub Region: What Next for PRDP2
- 4) Battling Youth Unemployment

### **It's not the First Time: Asylum Seekers and Refugees from South Sudan and the Recovery Question.**

From the 4th to the 13th June, 2012, the Refugee Law Project under the auspice of the Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS), with funding support from UK –Department for International Development (DFID), conducted an assessment surrounding the recent influx of asylum seekers and refugees from South Sudan to Uganda. This assessment which involved various stakeholders was conducted in the

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districts of Adjumani, Yumbe, Arua and Koboko.

The assessment provided an opportunity for in-depth analysis and discussions surrounding intertribal conflict in South Sudan cross border movements and their implication on recovery. Most importantly, through the findings ACCS recommends for the need to integrate conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity programming into various institutional programming process and implementation.

### Key Findings

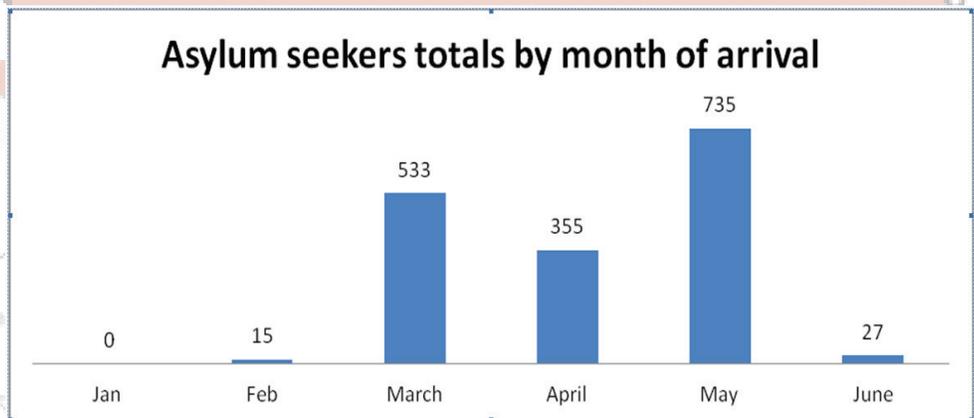
#### Casual Factors

- Key actors involved in the inter-tribal conflict in Southern Sudan are the Luo Nuer, and Dinka fighting against the Murle. The conflict has long historical ties clouded by unique patterns of character, values, norms and identity. The primary fault line of the Luo Nuer, Dinka and Murle conflict is of ethnic distinction and perceived ethnic divide, differences in positions and goal incompatibility, unfair political representation, social inequality and unequal resource allocation and sharing are responsible for inter-tribal conflict.
- Rivalry over control of natural resources stands out as one of the major causes of the conflict in South Sudan. There is also a perception among the minority ethnic groups that they have been marginalised in terms of service delivery, access and control over the nation's wealth with a few dominant ethnic groups able to access social services and economic opportunities.

#### Implications on Host Communities

The South Sudan intertribal conflicts and the resultant influx of Sudanese to the host communities had varied impact on the host communities across the different sectors. Given the weak structures of the interim government to contain and resolve internal conflict among ethnic groups, there is anticipation that the influx of South Sudanese will continue and subsequently impact the recovery process of the host communities. The impact of the South Sudan conflict on the border districts is not uniform and the magnitude was higher for Adjumani compared to the other districts.

Graph 1: Number of Asylum Seekers from South Sudan in Uganda from January to Mid June 2012



Source: UNHCR, 2012. Field Office, Adjumani – Pakelle & Field Unit Arua

- The divergence in culture and language as a practice and value between the host communities and the South Sudanese nationals tended to provide a repertoire (?) through which each group responded or acted against each other. To a great extent this had a huge implication on relationship building. Culture though not being static, played a critical role in the interaction and perception formulation against the South Sudanese asylum seekers. Host community configuration of South Sudanese norms and practices deeply depended on culture whether perceived or real.

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- With the dynamic of cross border movements lies the question of identity, nationality, international relations, citizens’ relationships and boundary disputes. These issues have been a source of discontent which informs perception towards asylum seekers and refugees by the host communities. It was noticeable that the broad understanding of identity is contextually informed. Across borders, the identity issue strongly influences social interactions and integration due to some practices being associated or prejudiced against certain identities. For instance, act of threat, torture, physical assault, killings of Ugandans is prejudiced against the South Sudan nationals.

- With the high influx of the South Sudanese, the health sector has been undesirably impacted. The existing health infrastructure, human, financial resources and supplies for the host districts are inadequate to cater for the growing health needs of the asylum seekers and refugees. Some of the asylum seekers have never been subjected to proper health screening processes, vaccination and immunization posing a threat of breakout of new diseases.

- The impact on the education service delivery is not felt but it is anticipated to be experienced and with time might cause strain on the existing education infrastructures. The existing education structures are dilapidated and refugee children have nowhere to study. It is anticipated that those who will be integrated into the education system, the existing resources and infrastructure including teachers will be overstretched.

- The impact of influx on natural resources and environment degradation for the host communities is twofold, namely climate change and low productivity subsequently affect the poor people who struggle at the edge of subsistence levels of

production and consumption. It was noted that the practices by the South Sudan asylum seekers and refugees including cutting down trees for erecting temporary shelter, cooking, and cultivation and increasing demand for firewood significantly degrade the environment. Although there are efforts by UNHCR including wide-scale planting of woodlots, UNHCR environmental efforts are not proportional to the high magnitude of the environmental degradation.

- The experiences of post conflict recovery in West Nile have great lineage to the historical legacy to the LRA war, the asylum seekers and refugees from South Sudan. Closer analysis demonstrates that the LRA war effected differently on West Nile districts. Consequently, this determined the level of response on post conflict recovery and NGO intervention. In Yumbe, findings indicates that the overall goal of post conflict recovery has not yet “kick started”, though they can identify and recognize that PRDP was initiated to help the greater north recover from the shocks of the LRA conflict. However, geographical location and accessibility of the district, functionality of the districts – technically and human resources did also affect the rate and level of absorption of recovery resources.

### Conclusion

To the people of West Nile and northern Uganda, the war in South Sudan is extremely undesirable and threatens not only the fragile peace in the region and that of northern Uganda which is just recovering from the two decades of armed LRA conflict, but also the booming trade opportunities enjoyed between Uganda and South Sudan, disruption of the peace and recovery programs, and other unintended negative consequences of

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conflict and cross-border movements.

### Nodding Disease: the Potential Threat to Post Conflict Recovery

Despite the accruing benefits since the commencement of Peace Recovery Development Plan (PRDP) and other development programmes, there are still a lot of challenges facing the health sector and the health of the people in northern Uganda. The region has been ‘cursed’ by serious, life-threatening diseases and epidemics, from HIV/AIDS, to cholera, Ebola and now the Nodding Disease Syndrome.

The disease has put the people of northern Uganda in a dangerous situation – depriving families of living healthy and peaceful lives, and individual productivity as they spend most of their time attending to the sick. There is widespread cynicism and despondency as the public continues to lament the slow response from the government, particularly as the disease continues to spread to other districts. Many people feel the government is not doing enough to arrest the situation, rather than directing efforts and scarce resources towards improving health, locals of Kitgum, Pader, Lamwo and Gulu feel the resources are being mis-directed or wasted on wrong activities.

Recent stories surrounding the “nodding” disease highlight the severity of the threat to human life in Acholi Sub Region. The “nodding” disease has increasingly become a threat to the post conflict recovery of the region. On the other hand, the nexus between ‘good health service provision and having a healthy population’ is critical to the post conflict recovery. But due to structural injustices at the national and local levels, there has been continued threat of poor health due to poor health

service provision in Acholi Sub region. Rather, won’t “nodding” disease delay or derail efforts towards the successful recovery of the north? If so as it is being presented, what is being done to respond to the situation? Has the government done enough?

Accordingly, it is imperative that recovery and reconstruction efforts attempt to bring some degree of justice in order to ease social tension and reduce regional gaps. In essence, the commitment to post conflict recovery and development of Northern Uganda, advocacy for justice, improved health service delivery and lasting peace therefore becomes inextricably linked. Implying that peace and recovery is not only threatened by war and violent land conflicts or gun battles, but also social and structural injustices.

To the majority of the locals that Refugee Law Project interacted with on the relationship between the “nodding” disease and post conflict recovery, it was pointed out that what will constitute the success of recovery of the northern region was not just merely the PRDP, but improved effort of the Government of Uganda to respond to threatening situations, in this case relating to the “nodding” disease.

Within a conflict sensitive context, it therefore becomes imperative that the politics and social discussions surrounding the “nodding” disease be treated as matters of national concern. This must call for a new wave of interventionism – in some cases within the humanitarian setting to promote the right to health. The general public understanding of peace, recovery, development and security should be geared towards detecting threats, and possible response strategies towards abating the threat which should take centre stage and become a reality in the minds of decision makers in Uganda.

**Accounting for the Cost of PRDP in Acholi Sub Region**

This brief is a product of an analysis of data gathered and presented by the Northern Uganda Data centre (NUDC) on the infrastructural achievement of Peace Recovery Development Plan (PRDP) projects and implementation from the financial year 2010 -2011 to 2011 – 2012 in the districts of Acholi Sub – region. The brief presents an analysis of the reasons why some districts performed better than the others, and also points to why district priorities vary in regards to PRDP implementation. Within the contextual representation and using the map list and data set presented , it is clear that there is improvement on the ‘hard ware’ component of infrastructural development in the entire Acholi – Sub Region.

The divergence in gaps and PRDP implementation performance was distinctively determined by “oldness” and / or “newness” of a district. However, the “soft ware” component – that is to say things relating to improving quality of services like education, staffing of schools, health centres, and availability of drugs still remains a huge challenge. In most cases, despite the infrastructural improvements, quality of services delivered in most of the stated sectors is still questionable. Education, health, roads, and water are some of the key sectoral developments being funded and supported under the PRDP and UK -PCDP.

**Gulu and Kitgum Performs Better in PRDP Implementation**

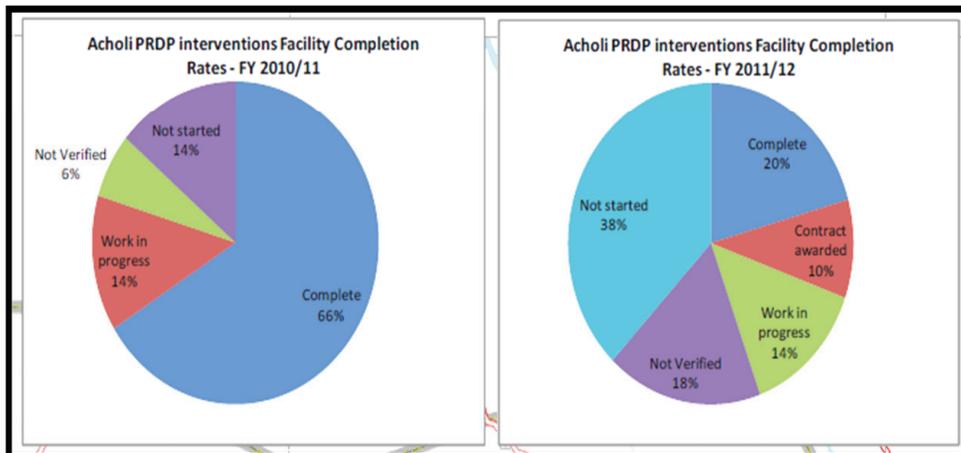
Mother districts like Gulu and Kitgum performed relatively better in most of the sectors (education, health and water) as compared to the newly created districts of Amuru, Nwoya, Agago, Lamwo and Pader. Discussions reveals that Gulu and Kitgum had better chances of performing in the implementation of PRDP because of the added advantages of being longer established. Referring to previous literature and baseline conducted by RLP under the ACCS in 2010, there was a strong nexus between district performance and absorption capacity– financially and human resource wise in the successful implementation of PRDP projects. It was established that districts that were institutionally independent and organized were capable of delivering better than the newly created districts that still relied on the mother districts. The technical capacities of the districts have greatly affected the completion rates of PRDP facility implementation. Other general challenges include; corruption, delay in procurement and divergence in interests amongst technocrats. These challenges have resulted in delayed, verification, start and completion of projects under PRDP.

**Table 1: PRDP Facilities by Sectors in Acholi Sub Region 2010 - 2012**

ACHOLI SUB-REGION PRDP FACILITIES BY SECTOR						
District	Education	Health	Roads	Water	Grand total	
AGAGO	89	43	11	55	198	
AMURU	86	35	4	7	132	
GULU	360	206	9	156	731	
GULU MUNICIPALITY	13	16	13		42	
KITGUM	149	17	15	29	210	
LAMWO	38	12	8	27	85	
NWOYA	43	14	4	3	64	
PADER	62	21	3	34	120	
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>1582</b>	

Source: Northern Uganda Data Centre – 2012.

**Chart 1 & 2: Acholi PRDP interventions Facility Completion (2010 – 2012)**



Source: NUDC, 2012.

For instance, only 66% of facility interventions were completed in the financial year 2010 -2011, though it looked meager, comparatively there was better achievement to the completion rate of 20% as of 2011 – 2012 financial years. 38% of works under PRDP interventions for the financial year 2011 – 2012 have not been started, 18% not verified, 14% work in progress and 10% as work in progress in Acholi sub region. The challenges in capacity and technical realities that characterize most of the districts in Acholi sub region, present the reason behind the huge gap between the “hard – soft ware” components of recovery. Rather, there is a recognizable improvement in infrastructural developments, but this does not relay to improved education and health care or reduction in maternal mortality rates. This raises a number of questions about the sustainability and success of recovery in the region. Acholi sub region still ranks lowest in primary education and health – with poor grades and health standards – the current nodding disease is a case in point. The genesis of such poor performance has been the legacy left by the LRA war which has made it difficult to find ways acting substantially to make difference.

**Who is responsible for Operationalising the PRDP Infrastructural Developments?**

PRDP as a frame work represents additionality funding to the districts, however, many locals “believe” that it is a full package that should take care of everything – de-bunking this myth shall require massive sensitization of the locals and

their leaders to understand that there is limitation and role sharing. Each sector within the districts, local governments and the central government must engage to enhance service delivery and address gaps. Accordingly, it should be the role of the education or health sector to ensure that there are staff posted to various schools and health centres and that drug are supplied. In absence of such efforts to operationalise the education and health infrastructures under PRDP, the relevance and impact of such projects will be minimal, and the potential improvement of health and education services in the region will still remain poor.

**Priority Setting: Education and Health Highly Ranked in Acholi Sub – Region.**

Rating the implication and effects of the LRA war in Acholi region leaves behind a strong legacy of destruction and interruption of the functioning of the education and health sector. During the war, school and health facilities were destroyed, many children and youth were deprived of the right to education and good health – this was worsened by the demise of staying in congested Internally Displaced Camps. With return and recovery, the region has embarked on strategies to revitalize education and health

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sector, despite poor performance; these sectors are highly ranked and prioritized in the region. As intended, it is true that education can redress regional imbalances. The statistical updates (Table 1) illustrates that education and health have been major priority areas for the past two years under PRDP programming. However, the list map indicates that there is a huge difference in priority ranking from urban and rural areas. Roads have been on priority list of most municipalities, whereas water and health for rural areas, are priorities that varied from district to districts.

In essence, post conflict reconstruction and recovery must be a combination of physical and social aspects of human being aimed at addressing the causes of violent conflicts. The experiences on the ground indicates that donors and the Government of Uganda are committed to recreating order out of destruction, but this should be treated as a process. A process that requires the creation of just and durable structures for the future, based on the needs of the affected population. Importantly, the principles that underpin programme implementations should acknowledge proper planning, participation and expertise that will create new forms of development.

### Battling Youth Unemployment

The Refugee Law Project, under the auspices of the Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity - with funding support from the UK Department for International Development - facilitated a public dialogue on youth unemployment to ascertain a better understanding of the unemployment question. Much as youth are considered the productive force of every society, not all societies have tapped their potential. Comparatively, this has been more evident in post conflict northern Uganda,

than other parts of the country.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) war contributed nothing positive to the local economy and the physical, economic, and social effects have been horribly destructive in the Acholi Sub Region. The unemployment facing many youth in the north has a strong historical link to the LRA war that destroyed the human resources and economic fabric of the north. According to the World Bank Report of 2008, 83% of the youth remain unemployed. The report further warns that unless Uganda scales up her efforts to create jobs, the youth are more likely to be involved in crime and armed conflicts. What are the implications of this for Northern Uganda, where many formerly abducted and returnee unemployed youth have not been fully reintegrated and empowered?

The Government of Uganda recognizes that youth unemployment represents a huge cost and a problem to the growth and development of its economy as well as the reconstruction of northern Uganda. In trying to address this, the Peace Recovery Development Plan (PRDP) and other post-conflict development initiatives such as Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF I and II) have been introduced to revitalize the economic status of the youth. The most recent of such initiatives has been the 25 billion shillings Youth Venture Capital Fund, to finance viable projects proposed by young Ugandan entrepreneurs. Many commentators have argued that some commendable progress has been made in many areas while in others; it's still a work in progress.

Despite the good programmes and projects in place, many youth during the public dialogue expressed concerns about a lack of access to these opportunities. This was creating some serious

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frustration which has the potential to flare up if left unaddressed. One major source of frustration amongst the youth in northern Uganda and Uganda at large are the limited employment opportunities and difficulties in accessing financial credit. It was felt strongly that the Youth Venture Capital Fund was inaccessible. Of all the participants present at the public dialogue, only one youth from Gulu Municipality has benefitted.

Frustration and anger over unemployment and, more specifically, the structural barriers to entrepreneurship and employment is creating serious discontent which may well be linked to conflict and crime in the region – both now and in the future. The nexus between unemployment, conflict, peace and sustainable recovery of the north needs to be better understood.

Through a collaborative problem solving discussion, the youth presented key recommendations to help address the unemployment question.

- The need to revise the requirements of the Youth Venture Capital Fund. The youth suggested that eligibility criteria and in particular requirement (b) of having eligible enterprises in operation for a minimum period of three (3) months be relaxed.

- The youth recognizes and appreciates the need of being informed and innovative. They call upon all the Banks and financial institutions to be transparent and avail the required information to ease the difficulties in accessing financial assistance.

- There is need for the youth to be innovative. The attitude, cultural and behavioral challenge is affecting the youth reception of government programs.

- Productive utilisation of land was identified as key to house hold financial revitalization that can easily translate to addressing the unemployment problem. In this circumstance, "Tractor – Plough Programme" was recommended to help open up agricultural plots for organized youth.

- Government together with the different stakeholders should consider training and equipping the youth with vocational and agricultural skills, and provision of commercial seeds

All in all, understanding the impact and dynamics around youth unemployment and the related conflict risk factors in the north remains a continuous exercise that has to be undertaken from the local to the national context. Focus, should also be geared at addressing the structural problems that deny the youth the opportunity to engage productively.

### Key Past & Upcoming Events:

- **International Scientific Meeting on Nodding Syndrome. Kampala, Uganda, 30 July - 2 August 2012**

- **Great Lakes Summit on Congo Conflict, Kampala, Uganda, 7 - 8 August 2012**

- **International Youth Day, Kabaale, Uganda, 12 August 2012. Theme: 'Entrepreneurship skills a cornerstone for youth employment creation'**

- **Residents of Lakang Village, Amuru district met and declared war on government over land, Amuru Uganda, 22 July 2012**

- **Leaders of Nwoya district met residents of Purongo over the status of Amida Ranch establishment, 6 August 2012**

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### **About Refugee Law Project (RLP)**

The Refugee Law Project (RLP) seeks to ensure fundamental human rights for all, including; asylum seekers, refugees, and internally displaced persons within Uganda. RLP envision a country that treats all people within its borders with the same standards of respect and social justice.

### **About Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS)**

The Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS) is a three member consortium that brings together, Refugee Law Project, International Alert and Saferworld. The overall aim of ACCS is assisting DFID and partners in strengthening the potential of the PCDP and recovery process to address the causes of conflict and contribute to sustainable peace and stability. Under ACCS, RLP is leading on contextual analysis of the overall recovery process (focusing on conflict indicators, issues and dynamics), and early warning as and when necessary.

### **Acknowledgement:**

This Briefing Note is authored for early warning purposes. The report was written by Barnabas Otim (Project Officer) for 1, 2 & 3rd Piece, Jackson Odong (Research & Advocacy Officer) for the 4th piece with valuable input from Dr. Chris Dolan (Director), Stephen Oola (ACCS Coordinator), Anna Macdonald (Research Associate). The conflict analysis and early warning was made possible by UK–DFID financial support.

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