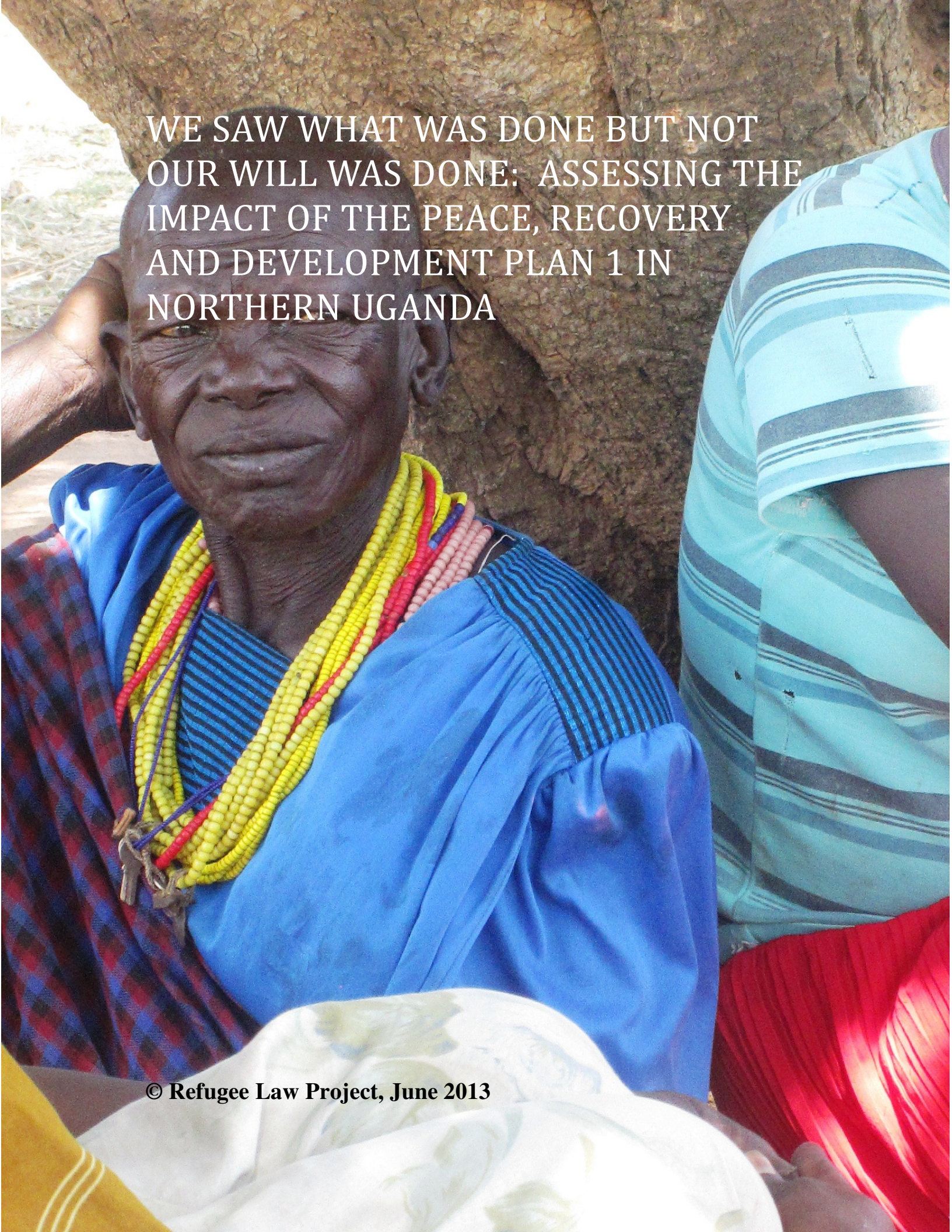

WE SAW WHAT WAS DONE BUT NOT OUR WILL WAS DONE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE PEACE, RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN 1 IN NORTHERN UGANDA

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The Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS)

This report is a product of the Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS), a three member partnership between International Alert, Refugee Law Project and Saferworld. The overall aim of ACCS is to assist the British Department for International Development (DfID) and partners in strengthening the potential of the PRDP to address the causes of conflict in a way that is itself conflict sensitive, and which can contribute to sustainable peace and stability.

ACCS has three major objectives: monitoring of the extent to which interventions under the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), particularly those funded under DFID's Post-Conflict Development Programme (PCDP), succeed or fail in achieving peacebuilding aims (International Alert); contextual analysis of the overall recovery process (conflict indicators, issues and dynamics) and to provide early warning as and when necessary (RLP); and evidence-based advocacy, targeted recommendations, and technical support to improve the recovery and peacebuilding impact of OPM and other PRDP stakeholders (Saferworld). Each consortium agency leads on one output, supported by the other partners.

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Executive Summary

The Peace Recovery Development Plan (PRDP) was launched in 2009 after an elongated planning process which began in 2007. It was designed to address the needs of Northern Uganda as it emerged from two decades of conflict. The multi-donor framework, focused on four areas: consolidation of state authority, rebuilding and empowering communities, economic revitalisation and peacebuilding and reconciliation. However, the document has struggled to achieve its stated ambitions. This baseline study addresses the impact of PRDP I as a way of providing a baseline for the second phase, which began in July 2012. The study was done under the auspices of the Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS). This looks to deliver contextual analysis of the overall recovery process focusing on conflict indicators, actors and dynamics, identifying early warning messages for advocacy purposes.

A Refugee Law Project (RLP) research team visited 10 districts across the 5 most conflict-affected sub regions between 3 February and 7 March 2013. By visiting project sites, holding interviews with key stakeholders and in discussion with members of the community qualitative and quantitative data was gathered to shape the findings of this report. The purpose was to identify how PRDP I had succeeded in its aims and to bring out the challenges faced. The research focused on technical implementation, community understanding and ownership, levels of service delivery, political and financial support, corrupt practices, peacebuilding, reconciliation and economic development.

The report found that PRDP I delivered some benefits to the people of Northern Uganda in the construction of health, roads, education and water facilities. However it was beset by challenges that have limited impact and made the goal of Northern Uganda 'catching up' with the rest of the country idealistic at best. In fact the idea that parity could be achieved in such a short timeframe is itself, flawed.

Key issues identified included a lack of financial support to match the political promises made, overlooking the functionality of structures, a failure to address peacebuilding and reconciliation, a lack of community involvement and awareness, the absence of compensation and a failure to tackle underlying social problems. This includes the absence of state legitimacy and rising youth unemployment. The report offers recommendations for how these pitfalls can be avoided in PRDP II. It focuses particularly on increased community engagement, tackling the issue of peace and ensuring that structures are not only in place, but functional.

Glossary of Acronyms

ACCS	Advisory Consortium for Conflict Sensitivity
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CAIP	Community Action Initiative Program
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CAR	Central African Republic
CDO	Community Development Officer
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DDP	District Development Plan
DfID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Financial Year
GoU	Government of Uganda
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IPFs	Indicative Planning Figures
JLOS	Justice Law and Order Sector
KALIP	Karamoja Livelihoods Programme
LCs	Local Councillors
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NUREP	Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Program
NUSAF I/II	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund I and II
NUYDC	Northern Uganda Youth Development Centre
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PLE	Primary Leaving Examinations
PRDP I/II	Peace Recovery and Development Plan I and II
RLP	Refugee Law Project
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SO	Strategic Objective
SMC	School Management Committee
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UGX	Uganda Shillings
UN	United Nations
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
WUC	Water User Committee

Key Findings

- **Community awareness and ownership** is lacking and this has impacted on levels of local ownership. Communities were aware of the structures built but they were not able to identify them as PRDP or in some cases, to fully appreciate the benefits a school, for example, could offer. This has negatively impacted on sustainability.
- **Implementation challenges** have limited impact. This includes unexplained budget cuts, late release of funds, the rigidity of the guidelines, a lack of monitoring and evaluation and the capacity of contractors.
- The focus on **hardware over software** in rehabilitating infrastructure has resulted in functionality being overlooked. Good structures do not automatically equate to improved performance.
- **State presence** has been significantly enhanced but progress is undermined by the underlying, and unaddressed, issue of the states legitimacy not being established.
- **Peacebuilding** was not given enough attention under PRDP I and secondary conflicts have emerged over land and at the household level as a result. In fact it has been more of a conflict driver than a tool for peacebuilding and reconciliation.
- PRDP is perceived as a **political favour** not a rightful entitlement. It lacked the much needed reparation and transitional justice component.
- **Corruption** at the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) has limited the impact PRDP I could have delivered. Many respondents observed that PRDP I got stolen along the way.
- The failure to deliver adequate **compensation** for the suffering endured during the conflict remains an outstanding issue for many communities in Northern Uganda
- The **timeframe for recovery** laid out by PRDP is insufficient. The idea that Northern Uganda can catch up in six years, when the war lasted over twenty, is inconceivable.

Introduction

The Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP I) for Northern Uganda[1], was a three-year stabilisation framework initiated by the Government of Uganda (GoU) which ran from 2009-2012. It was an effort to eradicate poverty and improve the welfare of those communities affected by a number of armed conflicts. In the foreword President Yoweri Museveni noted that Northern Uganda had consistently fallen behind the rest of the country within the realm of human development:

PRDP is a commitment by government to stabilise and recover the North over the next three years through a set of coherent programmes in one organising paradigm that all stakeholders will adopt when implementing their programmes in the region[2]

It was designed to encompass a number of existing interventions such as the Northern Ugandan Reconstruction Plan (NUREP) and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF I and II). The plan was coordinated through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and other relevant sector ministries, departments and agencies. The framework has an off budget funding modality where donors, and other development partners, are mandated to implement projects directly through Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Funding is split between the GoU (30%) and international partners (70%) and supports four strategic objectives that are mutually reinforcing:

Strategic Objective 1 (SO1) – Consolidation of State Authority
Strategic Objective 2 (SO2) – Rebuilding and Empowering Communities
Strategic Objective 3 (SO3) – Revitalisation of the Economy
Strategic Objective 4 (SO4) – Peacebuilding and Reconciliation

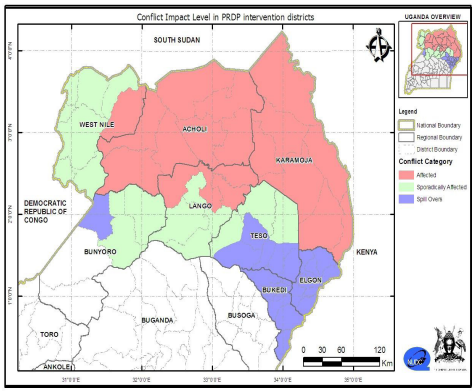

Figure 1 – Map detailing levels of conflict impact in the PRDP sub-regions © GoU

The objectives are admirable and address the core areas of development that are essential for socio-economic enhancement. However, implementation of PRDP I has been beset by challenges which have prevented it from significantly impacting in the 14 key areas[3]. Despite a visible reduction in national poverty levels, indicators continue to show a significant divide between Northern Uganda and the rest of the country. In those districts directly affected by armed conflict economic growth has been uneven and access to basic

[1] For the purpose of this study Northern Uganda is defined as encompassing the five most-affected PRDP sub-regions of Acholi, Lango, Teso, Karamoja and West Nile
[2] President Yoweri Museveni in the foreword to, *The Peace Recovery and Development Plan*, 2007, p. iii
[3] The 14 areas are: peace implementation; police enhancement; prisons and community service; rationalisation of auxiliary forces; judicial services enhancement; enhancing local government; emergency assistance; return & resettlement of IDPs; community empowerment and recovery; production and marketing; infrastructure rehabilitation; environment and natural resource management; reconciliation; amnesty and integration

services has remained poor[4].

This study was designed to measure the challenges and successes of PRDP I in the five most conflict affected sub-regions[5] of Northern Uganda and to provide a baseline from which the second phase can be judged. The 2011 mid-term review (MTR) found that additional funding will continue to remain relevant in the coming decade. Using the same strategic objective framework, with a slight shift in emphasis and focus, from hardware to software, PRDP II began in July 2012 and will run for a further three years. The PRDP II document makes the bold claim that 'it is designed to complete the post-conflict recovery process in Northern Uganda'[6]. However, it will require a radical transformation in almost all key sector areas for this to be realised.

A Background to the Conflict

Uganda has been afflicted by conflict since it was granted independence from British colonial rule in 1962. Despite its international status as a democracy it has never witnessed a peaceful transfer of power. There has, to a degree, been an 'ethnisication of politics' where a leader from a certain tribe or region delivers preferential treatment to 'his' people at the expense of other social groups. The armed conflict between the GoU and the Joseph Kony led Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) spanned two decades (1986-2006) and forced 1.8 million people in Northern Uganda into living in Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps[7]. It was described in 2003 by Jan Egeland, the UN Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs as 'the worst forgotten humanitarian crisis in the world'[8].

The LRA and the Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF) have been accused by victims of committing crimes and violations which include torture, abduction, enforced disappearance, slavery, mutilation, forced recruitment, sexual violence and destruction of property[9]. In 2006 GoU signed a cessation of hostilities which pre-dated the Juba Peace Talks. However, the failure to sign the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) at those talks means that peace was never formally achieved. The LRA continues to exist operating mainly in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic (CAR) but as a greatly reduced threat[10].

Insecurity in Karamoja was different. Characterised by cattle raiding which has existed in the region for centuries. It is regarded as a sociocultural as well as an economic institution, with a variety of underlying motives[11]. It is done to replenish herds of cattle lost to famine,

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[4] Saferworld, *Perception Survey of Northern Uganda Youth Development Centre*, 2012, p. 1
[5] Acholi, Teso, Lango, Karamoja and West Nile
[6] Government of Uganda, *Peace, Recovery and Development Plan II*, 2012, p. i
[7] Feinstein International Centre, *Livelihoods, Basic Services and Social Protection in Northern Uganda and Karamoja*, Working Paper 4, 2012, p. 3
[8] Quoted in NORAD, *Appraisal of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda*, 2008, p. 15
[9] *Ibid.,* p.16
[10] BBC News, *Uganda Captures Senior LRA Commander*, 12 May 2012, Available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18051522, Accessed on 2 April 2013
[11] Knighton in Feinstein International Centre, *Livelihoods, Basic Services and Social Protection in Northern Uganda and Karamoja*, Working Paper 4, 2012, p. 3

disease and raiding but also to acquire the assets needed to pay bride wealth and gain social status[12]. Relatively unaffected by the LRA, armed conflict had become an endemic feature of life in Karamoja and there was a need to regenerate and rebuild.

The Situation in Northern Uganda – Some Facts and Figures

The situation facing Northern Uganda in 2007 was bleak. Twenty years of conflict had decimated infrastructure. On all major social indicators it scored well below the national average. The 2005/2006 National Household Survey found that poverty rates in the region were between 61-70% compared with a national average of 31%[13]. There has been a 5% improvement since the end of the conflict, but in 2011 there was still a 21 % divide between the North and the rest. Absolute poverty was also an issue at the end of the conflict. 44.3% of the bottom 20% in society lived in Northern Uganda[14]. Even in 2011 the poverty situation remains acute. A 2011 Ugandan Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) report found that the percentage of the population who are in the lowest percentage quartile of the wealth index was at 79.2% in Karamoja, 40.7% in West Nile and 41.2% in the North (Acholi and Lango). This is compared with the national average of 24.1%[15].

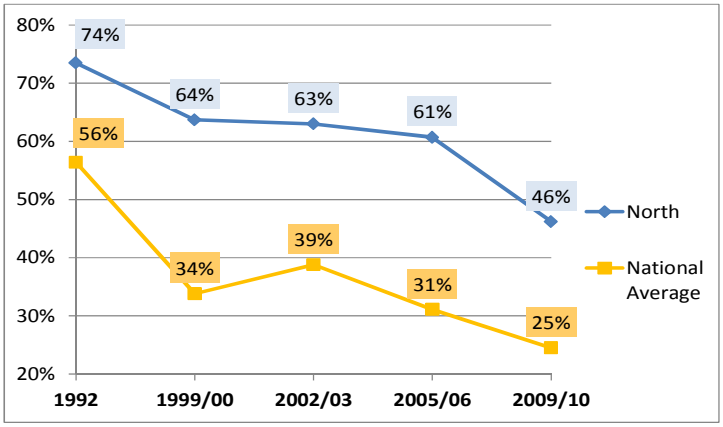

Figure 2 – Indicates the declining poverty levels across Uganda since 1992. © National Household Survey 2005/06

Methodology and Rationale

This study was undertaken as part of the Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS). The major objective of the research is to deliver a baseline for PRDP II by assessing the impact of PRDP I and uncovering where it has delivered success and encountered challenges.

Fieldwork was undertaken between 3 February 2013 and 7 March 2013 across 10 districts in the 5 most-affected sub-regions of Northern Uganda. They were selected to provide an accurate snapshot of the situation. Gulu, Lira and Arua were selected because of the high allocation of funds received. Nwoya and Zombo were chosen as samples of how new districts[16] had coped with implementation. Kotido and Soroti were selected because of the significant funding reductions they experienced between 2009 and 2012. Kaberamaido was

[12] Akabawi & Ateyo, *The Scramble for Cattle, Power and Guns in Karamoja*, 2007
[13] Cited in NORAD, *Appraisal of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda*, 2008, p. 15
[14] *Ibid.,* p. 15
[15] UBOS, *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey*, 2011, p. 17
[16] Both districts were created in 2010

chosen because it received a very small allocation of funds. Finally, Dokolo and Kaabong were chosen as districts that had benefited annually, from funding increases.

The data collection comprised three core components. In each district semi-structured interviews with local government officials, contractors, CSOs, the police and judiciary were arranged. Site visits were also a crucial component of the research methodology. During these visits, researchers documented findings and engaged in discussions with the community. Finally in each district a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was held involving at least 10 members of the community and facilitated in the local language. An effort was sought to achieve gender parity. They were given the chance to discuss PRDPs impact and asked to complete a short questionnaire designed to establish and quantify levels of community awareness about PRDP I using an ascending ranking scale. The report delivers its findings under thematic headings, which emerged as key trends and issues during the process of conducting this research.

Limitations and Challenges

The report acknowledges that there were limitations and challenges. In assessing only 10 districts out of 55 it may be the case that some nuances are missed or not given sufficient weighting. The timeframe of the report also meant that in some districts it was not possible to meet with all the key stakeholders. In these cases an attempt was made to arrange for the interview to take place over the phone or by email. Finally obtaining statistics, particularly from the security services, proved to be a challenge, due to a combination of a lack of digitalised records and directives from Kampala that prevented them from doing so.

PRDP: The Document and its Implementation

Document

The PRDP I document is generally perceived as having held good intentions for the development of Northern Uganda; it was the first time it was being taken seriously[17]. Previously the government had employed a scattergun approach to the North[18]. In theory at least, it addressed all of the key areas and appeared to offer a comprehensive recovery programme. It was regarded as 'a blessing which went over and above previous initiatives'[19]. Yet the implementation was characterised by challenges, not least because of a lack of understanding about what PRDP was: a framework not a programme.

Clarity of information has been a major issue. A uniform understanding that transcends all levels of society from central government to the community was never established[20]. The framework was never translated into local or indigenous languages, resulting in low conceptualisation of the programmes overall goals at the community level[21]. The issue of a lack of clarity meant that there was no clear communication strategy of what PRDP I should be interpreted as, even within OPM[22]. A common misconception, at the community level, was that it was a compensation fund to help the people of Northern Uganda recovers from two decades of conflict. Understood in this context, communities feel it has not delivered on its primary objective.

Guidelines

PRDP I implementation guidelines differed from those of the line ministries in water, roads, education and health. This meant that two identical boreholes, one constructed under PRDP and the other under local government projects, were implemented differently. This was an unnecessary bureaucratic obstacle for overstretched local governments.

The rigidity of the guidelines has also caused problems in failing to accommodate regional peculiarities. They allowed for the provision of classroom blocks, teachers houses and latrines but in Kaabong and Kotido the pressing need was for the construction of a boarding school facility. Without these facilities, retention of school pupils is difficult. Greater flexibility in the guidelines would allow for these regional specifics to be recognised and acted upon. There is a need to separate policy and planning allocation criteria into urban and rural sectors as there are different dynamics at play in these areas which PRDP does not account for[23].

[17] Interview with civil society activist, Gulu, 24 February 2013
[18] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 8 February 2013
[19] Interview with local government official, Soroti, 6 March 2013
[20] Interview with representative of Gulu NGO District Forum, Gulu, 25 February 2013
[21] Interview with representative of Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment, Arua, 4 February 2013
[22] Interview with civil society activist, Gulu, 24 February 2013
[23] Interview with local government official, Zombo, 6 February 2013

Finally tensions have emerged between CSOs and local governments over who is responsible for implementation. Local government holds responsibility for SO2 and SO3, whilst CSOs are leading implementation of SO4, but there is an extremely poor working relationship between the two. In Arua, for example, the two do not look at each other as playing complementary roles, 'the government initiates and implements projects but does not create working relationships with civil society'[24]. This contradicts the view at OPM which suggested that PRDP has facilitated a strong and harmonised working relationship. Initially, key players in the development process used to act separately but now 'actors are acting as one'[25]. However, whilst this might be true at the central government level, this was not reflected in discussions with district officials.

Planning and Coordination

The planning and coordination of PRDP projects came under scrutiny for failing to effectively undertake, complicated, cross-sector projects. In Kaabong district, planning was described as 'extremely missing'[26]. An example of this poor coordination in Zombo district meant a school was constructed that could not be reached during the rainy season, without taking a route that tripled the journey time. Constructing a bridge to connect the community with the structure would have averted this problem but coordination was absent. A resident queried, 'what is the point in building a new school structure if it can't be accessed by those who need to do so? [27]

In Nwoya it was suggested that PRDP should develop better comprehensive planning. Instead of one community having a classroom block, another a borehole and the third a health centre it was recommended that one community should be provided with all the basic services - roads, health, water and education – to facilitate faster and greater recovery[28]. Idealistically this suggestion has merit but because PRDP has limited funds it needs to spread the development across sub-counties or face accusations of neglect or favouritism.

Funding

The allocation of funds was the defining challenge of PRDP I implementation. Figure 3 indicates that 80% of districts visited by this study have experienced a drop in central allocations from the first year of implementation – Financial Year (FY) 2009/10. Key stakeholders interviewed were frustrated by the funding reductions. They believed that had the financial commitment match the political commitment Northern Uganda would be much farther down the road to recovery:

> *If the budget was not cut PRDP would have done a very big job, there was no initiative that has ever invested so much money in Northern Uganda*[29]

[24] Interview with representative of Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment, Arua, 4 February 2013
[25] Interview with central government official, Kampala, 22 February 2013
[26] Interview with representative of Mercy Corps, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[27] Interview with local police official, Zombo, 6 February 2013
[28] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 7 February 2013
[29] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013

If the plans had been fully implemented then PRDP II would have merely been about touching up small areas such as fences and software components[30]

Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs)

DISTRICT	FY 2009/2010			FY 2011/2012		
	IPF	Release	% Difference	IPF	Release	% Difference
Arua	2,527,514	2,537,052	**0.39**	5,073,821	3,837,129	**-24.37**
Zombo				1,156,251	914,121	**-20.94**
Gulu	4,748,210	4,795,460	**1**	5,947,773	4,296,962	**-27.76**
Nwoya				574,833	461,727	**-19.68**
Kaabong	2,731,229	2,737,909	**0.24**	3,306,281	2,506,524	**-24.19**
Kotido	2,875,498	2,929,082	**1.86**	3,404,180	2,282,600	**-32.95**
Kaberamaido	651,776	653,382	**0.25**	1,054,033	851,160	**-19.25**
Soroti	1,665,199	1,668,627	**0.21**	169,017	150,850	**-10.75**
Dokolo	2,810,953	2,452,842	**-12.74**	2,933,555	2,290,461	**-21.92**
Lira	3,745,672	3,753,516	**0.21**	3,801,733	2,828,860	**-25.60**
Overall[31]	79,970,152	79,879,575	**-0.11**	93,871,043	71,388,883	**-23.95**

Figure 3 compares IPFs[32] with actually releases in the 10 districts visited by this study

Soroti experienced a dramatic drop of 87% in centrally allocated funding from FYs 2010/11 to 2011/2012. This was confirmed by one local government official who acknowledged that they were only able to construct one set of staff houses as a result. He remarked that 'if we had continued at the pace of 2010/11 Soroti would have caught up in 10 years, but the support is dwindling'[33].

Another striking observation that can be made from the IPFs is the difference between the planned release and the actual amount received. In 2011/2012 the percentage drop in the ten districts ranged between 10.75% and 32.95%. Problems caused by IPF reductions were recorded in all the districts visited. In Arua no PRDP II projects had commenced because they were still completing outstanding PRDP I projects. Similarly in Gulu around 60% of allocated funds received for PRDP II had been used to pay off contractors for work done under PRDP I[34].

In 2011/12, Nwoya completed 97% of planned projects but centrally allocated funds were not released as committed. The district had to offset this 43 million Uganda shillings (UGX) shortfall using money from its local government budget. These challenges were exacerbated by poor communication of these cuts from the centre. This untimely release of funds meant that the planning and implementation process descended into 'chaos'[35].

[30] Interview with local government official, Gulu, 25 February 2013
[31] Inclusive of all 55 figures
[32] The data used can be found at www.prdp.org.ug. Accessed on 21 March 2013
[33] Interview with local government official, Soroti, 6 March 2013
[34] Interview with local government official, Gulu, 26 February 2013
[35] Interview with local government official, Gulu, 25 February 2013

Furthermore, our research found that funds, especially in the last two quarters of the financial year, were often released within the last month of that quarter causing projects to be delayed. In the fourth quarter there is a rush to spend the money before it is sent back to the central government to await reallocation. In Gulu they received 1 billion UGX on 20 June 2012 which all had to be spent within 10 days otherwise it would be returned[36]. It would seem to be an impossible task but OPM officials believed that late releases could be better absorbed if the local governments delivered improved comprehensive planning. This was communicated in a letter sent to all districts in January 2013 which stated that 'this Ministry will not be in position to issue a supplementary in lieu of the funds returned to the Consolidated Fund…..this trend (of returning funds) points to lack of capacity or proficiency in utilisation of funds on the side of Local Governments'[37].

In the central governments' view, district officials are to blame for not taking a pro-active planning approach. They only begin the procurement process once the money has been deposited in the account. 'If they were better prepared the money could be spent quicker'[38]. This failing was acknowledged by an official in Kaabong. He noted that funds were delayed but that problems also existed with the local governments capacity to implement effectively. However in Dokolo and Soroti, where contractors were asked to begin work before the money was remitted problems emerged when IPFs were unexpectedly cut. The local government was forced to find alternative funds to foot the bill or face the threat of a legal challenge. This explains why districts have delayed their procurement process until the funds have been dispersed. They too have experienced problems when funds have been delayed or not fully deposited.

OPMs decision that unspent balances should be returned at the end of each financial year were criticised by implementers. The more we rollover from FY to FY the less impact PRDP will have as part of the money will be needed to offset deficits[39]. More pessimistic respondents even went as far as to suggest that this may be a deliberate ploy by the government, especially in light of the current scandal at OPM. Undeniably, there is a lack of clarity and transparency about where unspent balances go or why they cannot be rolled over for use in the following year.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Under PRDP I guidelines, no funding provision was made for the monitoring or evaluating of projects. It was presumed that local governments would incorporate PRDP I monitoring into district monitoring, but this did not occur. The decision to include a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) budget of 2% as standard in PRDP II projects is a good development but several respondents wanted a further increase to 5%. It was remarked that 'it is baffling that you could spend 2 billion UGX without any accountability of where it is going or if it is

[36] Interview with local government official, Gulu, 26 February 2013
[37] Letter written by Government of Uganda on 24 January 2013, obtained by Refugee Law Project on 25 February 2013
[38] Interview with OPM official, Kampala, 22 February 2013
[39] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 8 February 2013

delivering what it should'[40]. PRDP is an investment and you can't continue investing money where you see no returns[41]. The lack of proper supervision has affected implementation.

The Procurement Process and Contractors Capacity

The procurement procedure under PRDP gave a degree of autonomy to local governments to award contracts. Only when a project is budgeted at more than 50 million UGX does the bidding process have to comprise national advertising and central government approval. Generally the framework put in place has functioned effectively, although a small percentage of respondents lamented challenges.

In several districts, contractors were known to have lied about their capacity to carry out the work; this extended to forging bank statements or certification documents[42]. The overview of applications lacks thoroughness and the contractor bidding process was described by an official in Gulu as 'like allowing someone who cheats an exam to proceed to the next class'[43]. Local governments lack the capacity to verify contractor credentials and this is a major problem inhibiting the implementation of PRDP projects. Furthermore it is difficult to implement blacklisting of contractors because some firms have a multitude of guises[44]. There is not a centralised database that seeks to detail contractors who fail to deliver on promises. This would be a useful mechanism to clamp down on rogue builders and shoddy work.

In the majority of districts visited, the procurement process generally resulted in the selection of contractors from outside the district where the work was to take place. In some cases this was due to a lack of technical and financial capacity amongst local contractors. Problems of poor quality work and a lack of community engagement were caused by outside contractors when they brought low-cost labour and materials from outside. This prevented a significant boost to the local economy and did not contribute to community empowerment[45]. However, even when the community is engaged problems were reported. Cases of local workers being paid at a lesser rate to do the same work and being treated poorly were heard[46].

In Karamoja however, the situation was different and around 80% of contracts were awarded to local contractors[47]. The reason given was that contractors feared the uncertainty of the security situation[48]. The challenge facing local governments in Kaabong and Kotido was that local contractors lacked technical, and often financial, capacity to implement large-scale projects[49]. In Kaabong, an operating theatre for a Health Centre IV was constructed using PRDP I funds but it was not functional because the specifications for the door used to seal the

[40] Interview with local government official, Zombo, 6 February 2013
[41] Interview with representative of Mercy Corps, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[42] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 27 February 2013
[43] Interview with local government official, Gulu, 26 February 2013
[44] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[45] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 7 February 2013
[46] Interview with civil society activist, Gulu, 24 February 2013
[47] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[48] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[49] Interview with local government official, Kotido, 1 March 2013

theatre room had not been met. It took several months to find a contractor with the capacity to deliver the changes and ensure the structure's functionality[50].

To improve the contractor bidding and contract awarding process, PRDP II should seek greater community engagement at all phases. It was proposed by a district official in Dokolo that phase two should look more to the NUSAF II model which was the 'best designed programme for the poor; incorruptible and with a better bidding process '[51]. The official described the process as incorruptible because the bidding process is done in secret and the contract awarded to the lowest bidder. This has the dual benefit of preventing contractors from overcharging for their services and, in theory, prevents favourable treatment being offered to certain contractors.

[50] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[51] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013

Community Awareness and Ownership

SO2 clearly states the desire of the framework is to rehabilitate and empower communities. Engaging in community dialogues respondents were asked 'How aware are you of what PRDP is?' They were asked to rank their responses a scale of 1 to 5; with 1 being very low and 5 very high[52].

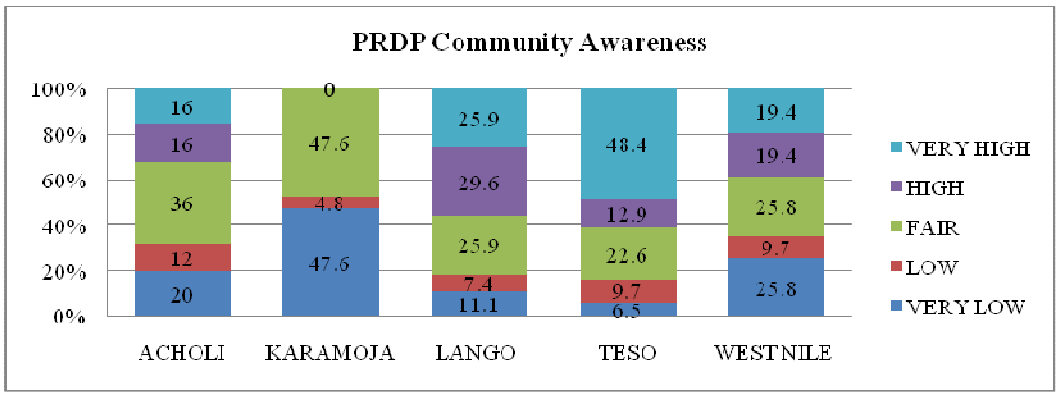

Figure 4 – Details levels of community awareness about PRDP; its objectives and impacts[53]

Figure 4 shows that in Karamoja community awareness is extremely poor. Even in Acholi and West Nile, over 60% of FGD respondents possess a very restricted understanding. Similar trends across the five sub-regions emerge when looking at levels of perceived community impact and empowerment[54].

Awareness

'Community involvement in PRDP was more accidental than intended'[55]. Of the 10 districts visited, only in Nwoya, had efforts been made to generate awareness through the holding of radio debates. However, in their efforts to try and explain what PRDP is and what it seeks to achieve, even some of the politicians did not understand fully, the frameworks goals[56]. Community members in Zombo had received even less information. A FGD respondent noted that 'we are more aware of NUSAF I and II because there was more sensitisation about the programme……I work on radio but no programme has ever mentioned PRDP'[57].

The lack of engagement with the community has detrimentally impacted on the sustainability and functionality of PRDP initiatives. In Kaabong the community development officer (CDO) admitted to knowing almost nothing about the projects in the district. He agreed that

[52] The data covers the responses of 135 community members across the five PRDP sub-regions
[53] Information gathered during fieldwork for this study
[54] See figures 5 and 6
[55] Interview with civil society activist, Gulu, 24 February 2013
[56] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 7 February 2013
[57] Participant in focus group discussion at Paidha sub-county, Zombo, 6 February 2013

community outreach would not occur if the CDO could not explain PRDPs rationale and viability[58].

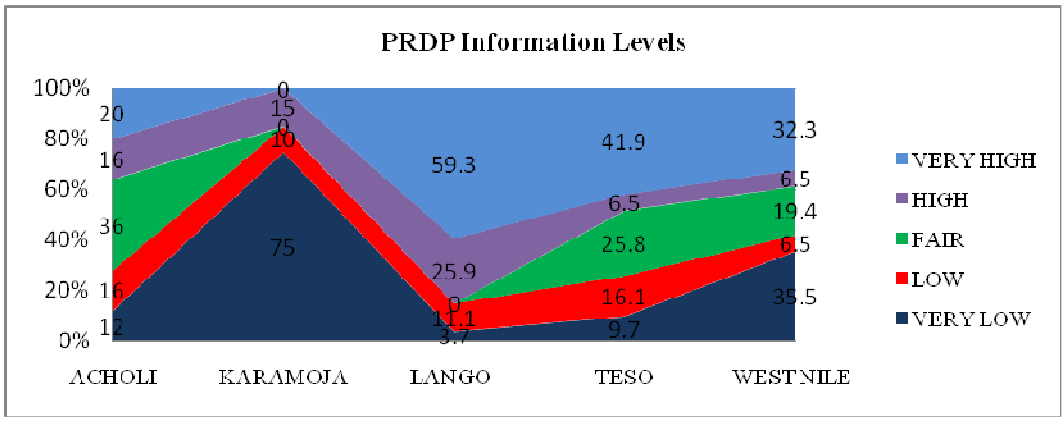

Figure 5 – Details the level of information that had been given to communities about PRDP[59]

This lack of information about PRDP was reflected in the FGDs. What emerged was that community members were aware that a new classroom block or staff house had been constructed, but they were not aware that it was funded by PRDP. 'An acronym that lacked a human face' was how one respondent put it[60]. 'Currently all I know about PRDP is Kazinda and the scandal in OPM'[61].

Ownership

Water projects across the sub-regions have best engaged communities through the creation of Water User Committees (WUCs). Comprised of seven members of the community, they are responsible for assisting with the identification of sites, contributing to a maintenance fund[62] and signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the community and the contractor. This has contributed to greater community ownership. However in Gulu it was noted that a 'high rate of water pump vandalism is an indication that the WUCs were not well orientated on their roles'[63].

Similar committees have been created in the education sector. In Nwoya, members began to demand for an improvement in the quality of educational services after forming a School Management Committee (SMC) comprising key stakeholders; parents, teachers and students[64]. In Kaabong, before the SMCs were oriented on their roles, the community thought that schools belonged to the government and teachers. This misconception has now been reversed; communities own schools and maintain them[65]. This community committee

[58] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[59] Information gathered during the fieldwork of this study
[60] Interview with representative of Gulu District NGO Forum, Gulu, 25 February 2013
[61] Participant in focus group discussion at Dokolo sub-county, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[62] This fund is normally around 200,000 UGX
[63] Interview with local government official, Gulu, 25 February 2013
[64] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 8 February 2013
[65] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013

approach has been an important way of ensuring the functionality of the structures constructed under PRDP.

However, in Gulu, Kotido and Dokolo, where there has been an absence of community sensitisation, cases of community members destroying PRDP structures had been observed. They merely saw the short-term reward from the sale or use of the building materials and failed to appreciate that 'they are destroying the future for their children by destroying a school'[66]. This question of ownership was challenged, 'it is the same communities who are supposed to benefit from a project who are often the first ones to loot it. Is there ownership? I don't think so'[67].

Finally, there is a lack of financial transparency at the community level which prevents a sense of ownership being developed. A visit to Alwa Primary School in Kaberamaido district exemplified the problem. Two new classroom blocks had been constructed but no-one, including the head teacher, were aware of the cost or had any documentation that detailed it. It was suggested that this kind of secrecy was a deliberate ploy by central government technocrats to facilitate corruption as 'it is easier to steal money if the people don't know that it is meant for them'[68]. Certainly an absence of transparency and a failure to engage the community reduces ownership.

Empowerment

A lack of community awareness and ownership does not increase the likelihood of communities feeling engaged in PRDP projects. One FGD participant in Koro sub-county, Gulu captured the sense of disempowerment in saying 'we see what is done but not our will is done'[69]. Certainly the idea that the local government is looking for, thinking for and planning for the community[70] was expressed in the community dialogues. 'They call them government projects not their (the communities) projects'[71].

[66] Interview with representative of the Justice and Peace Commission, Gulu, 9 February 2013
[67] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[68] Interview with civil society activist, Gulu, 8 February 2013
[69] Participant in focus group discussion Koro-sub county, Gulu, 9 February 2013
[70] Interview with representative of Gulu District NGO Forum, Gulu, 25 February 2013
[71] Interview with representative of Lira District NGO Forum, Lira, 7 March 2013

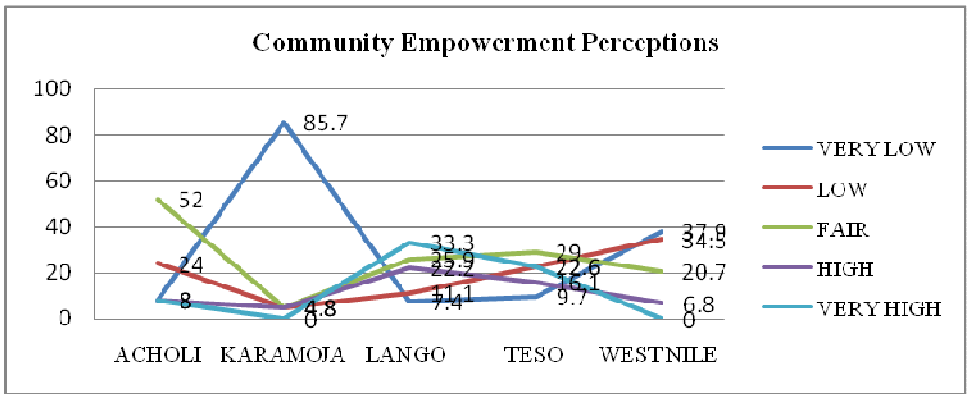

Figure 6 – Illustrates whether community members feel more empowered since the end of the conflict and the beginning of the recovery in 2007[72]

Community perceptions of empowerment levels were quite high in Lango, Teso and Acholi but in Karamoja and West Nile a very high percentage of respondents (85.7 % in Karamoja and 37.9% in West Nile) ranked it at the lowest possible level. Even in the cases where a level of community interaction was facilitated women still felt as those they were excluded from the discussion process. One female participant demanded that they were 'engaged on a whole range of issues; programmes that look specifically at improving our situation'[73].

[72] Information gathered during the fieldwork of this study
[73] Participant in focus group discussion at Manibe sub-county, Arua, 4 February 2013

District Dynamics

The scope and coverage of PRDP I was admirable but there are those who felt that it tried to take on too much and this only served to dilute its impact- 'it is overstretched in its scope focusing of too many regions not affected by the war'[74]. Tension has also been created by the formation of new districts as part of GoUs decentralisation project. There is broad agreement that the emergence of many new districts has exacerbated the challenges of limited resources and lack of accountability in the short-term. It has delayed and derailed public service delivery in locations where new district administrative units are struggling to become operational[75]. Zombo district headquarters, for example, operates with 9% staff capacity, sporadic electricity and a severe lack of transport.

The size of some of the districts, Kaabong is 370km^2, and their unique features were ignored. In Karamoja this includes an armed civilian population, high levels of poverty, its geographical size and the army being responsible for overall law and order[76]. PRDP needs to be less centre-controlled and targeted more to resolve the specific needs of the different districts. It is unrealistic to think that 55 districts will have uniform needs and priorities[77]. This was a sentiment echoed by a local government official in Arua who noted that with 25 sub-counties and a fluctuating day-night population there are nuanced challenges which are not give enough recognition. He urged PRDP II to adopt a more flexible approach[78].

Finally tensions have emerged between PRDP sub-regions. The idea that Acholi is favoured was heard in both Lango and West Nile. In Dokolo people wanted to know why in Gulu district houses were being built for clan leaders and local chiefs under PRDP I when no similar projects were implemented in Lango. 'Preferential treatment has been given to the Acholi people despite the Lango suffering just as much because of the conflict…..they build houses for traditional clan leaders, whereas nothing of a similar vein has been done in Lango[79]'.

Contradicting these claims both West Nile and Lango received greater central budget support in FY 2011/2012. The reason for the perception of preferential treatment stems from the Acholi benefiting enormously from off-budget support. Gulu, especially at the outset of PRDP, had an enormous number of CSOs that enabled development to occur more rapidly, visibly and comprehensively. The Acholi sub-region benefited more than the other sub-regions under PRDP but there is no evidence to suggest that this was a deliberate ploy. However, the contest between districts for resources is a challenge that PRDP II will have to address as there are 'more hungry mouths but less money'[80].

[74] Interview with religious leader, Gulu, 9 February 2013
[75] Feinstein International Centre, *Livelihoods, Basic Services and Social Protection in Northern Uganda and Karamoja*, Working Paper 4, 2012, p. 20
[76] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 27 February 2013
[77] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[78] Interview with local government official, Arua, 5 February 2013
[79] Participant in focus group discussion Dokolo sub-county, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[80] Interview with local government official, Soroti, 6 March 2013

Recovery Timeframes

PRDP II proclaims that by 2015, the end of the second cycle, Northern Uganda will be at a level where it can be assimilated in the National Development Plan (NDP). The document talks about an exit strategy. But is it the case that PRDP will have fully achieved its objectives in just six years of implementation? As one respondent put it 'much has been done but there remains much still to do - the pit is so deep and PRDP is just a drop in the ocean'[81]. A point that was raised on numerous occasions was that for all the positive achievements, you cannot recover the losses suffered during twenty to thirty years of incessant conflict in three or even six years:

> *There will be a need for PRDP III and IV if the disparities are to be bridged. War which took 30 years; how can the rehabilitation take only 6? That mathematics is wrong.'*[82]

> *PRDP should continue for many years to come as it could potentially have a life-changing impact but only if it lasts long enough to reach the household level*[83]

Catching up?

Northern Uganda continues to lag behind the rest of the country in terms of basic services, infrastructure and poverty levels[84]. PRDP has played a crucial role in enhancing the situation but there was a lot of catching up to do and the rest of the country is not sitting around waiting. It is also true that Karamoja remains behind the North. An official in Kaabong, when asked about the situation, felt that 'on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the rest of the country) I would rank Karamoja 0.5'[85]. PRDP has undoubtedly improved the lives of many Ugandans living in conflict-affected areas. Yet if thought of in terms of an examination 'it is failing….something has been done but a lot could have been achieved which hasn't'[86].

Recovery and Renewal

In 1980 Uganda's population was 12. 6 million but in 2011 UBOS estimates it at 33 million[87]. Uganda has the world's third fastest growing population with an annual increase of 3.5%[88]. PRDP needs to do more than just rehabilitate. It needs to build new infrastructure to accommodate this enormous population growth[89]. However in Nwoya, the LC V remarked that 'the districts get very little money because the government is still considering the

[81] Interview with local government official, Kaberamaido, 4 March 2013
[82] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[83] Interview with representative of KALIP, Kotido, 1 March 2013
[84] See introduction to this report
[85] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[86] Interview with representative of Mercy Corps, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[87] UBOS, *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey*, 2011, p. 18
[88] Saferworld, *Perception survey of Northern Uganda Youth Development Centre*, 2012, p. 1
[89] Interview with local government official, Soroti, 6 March 2013

population projection of 2002 which puts Nwoya at only 53,000 people and yet currently, the district is actually populated by about 130,000 people[90].

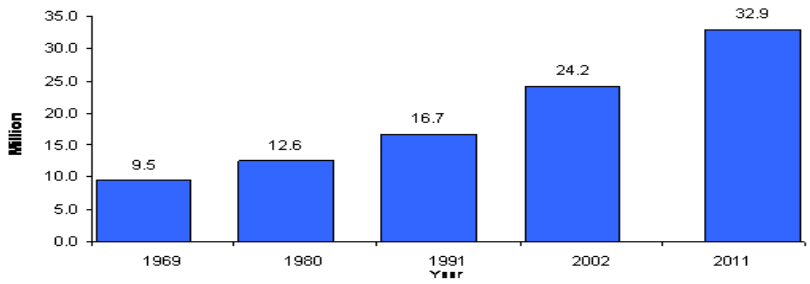

Figure 7- A graph depicting the rapid increase of the Ugandan population from 1969-2011 © UBOS 2011

The increased population needs to be reflected in the planning for provision of basic services like health and education. The number of 5-14 year olds has increased from 8.4 million to 10.1 million between 2008 and 2012[91]. If the government wants to achieve its nationally stated pupil to classroom and teacher to pupil ratios then rebuilding the exact number of schools that were in existence before the conflict will not be sufficient. A local government official in Dokolo noted that 'PRDP failed to take into account population increases when constructing classrooms and targeted ratios are worsening as a result'[92]. This is an issue that extends to other basic services of health, water and even roads, yet phase two of the framework is shifting focus away from construction. 'There has been a huge population outburst that has exerted a lot of pressure on the few available infrastructures like schools and health centres'[93]. The issue of a rapidly growing population seems to have been overlooked as a factor that will alter the course of recovery.

[90] Oketch. B, *Critical PRDP Component Disregarded*, Daily Monitor, 18 August 2012, Available at http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Critical-PRDP-component-disregarded/-/688334/1481740/-/b29fdx/-/index.html, Accessed on 28 March 2013
[91] UBOS, *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey*, 2011, p. 18
[92] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[93] Interview with representative of Lira District NGO Forum, Lira, 7 March 2013

Developing the State

Consolidation of state authority was the PRDP frameworks first SO and was to be implemented by the Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS). It was to be implemented across four main sub-sectors; prisons, police, judiciary and local government. There have been significant developments in this area and the community respondents generally reflected that positive steps been taken, with Karamoja again proving to be an exception.

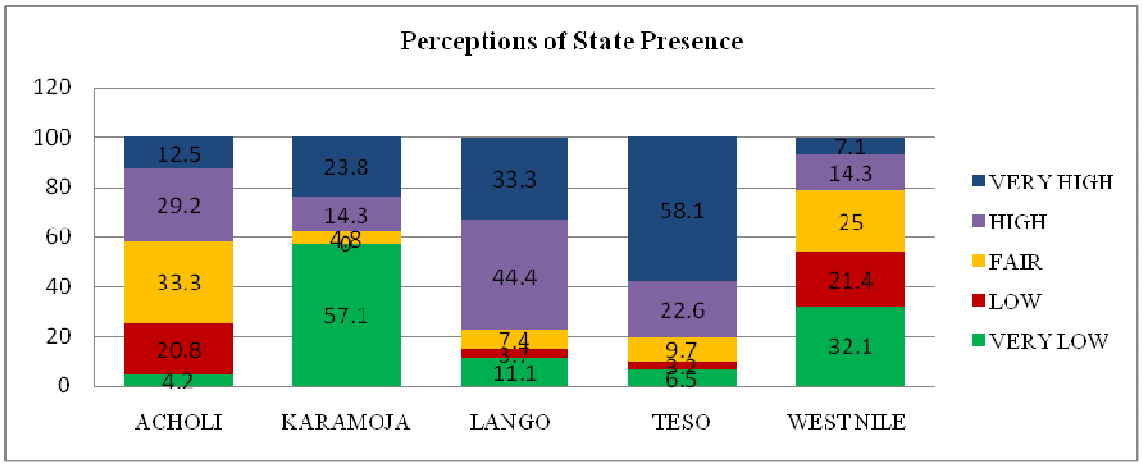

Figure 8 – Community Perceptions on the increasing presence of the state since the cessation of hostilities[94]

The state is being felt more strongly at the community level in Lango, Teso and Acholi although in Karamoja it remains, to an extent, irrelevant. In addition to this quantitative data, what emerged from the dialogues was that, whilst state presence may be growing, trust in the system and its level of competency, is not.

Police

Police have generally benefited through hardware items such as vehicles, uniports to house police officers and the construction of police posts or stations. In Soroti 5 motorcycles were received and 35 uniports were constructed across 5 sub-counties[95]. Likewise in Kaabong where police received 21 uniports and a motorcycle, state presence was amplified. It was remarked that in some remote sub-counties, made accessible because of the provision of a motorcycle, 'these people had never seen the police'[96]. However there have been challenges associated with functionality.

Vehicles, both patrol cars and motorcycles, had been supplied to all the districts we visited to assist the police in carrying out investigations and community policing. The major challenge noted was the lack of funding for fuel and periodic maintenance. PRDP has given vehicles to the police force in Arua but they do not supply money for fuel and obtaining this can be

[94] Information gathered during the fieldwork of this study
[95] Interview with regional police official, Soroti, 6 March 2013
[96] Interview with local police official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013

difficult[97]. Communities regularly discussed that in order for police to investigate a crime or to arrest a suspect you first have to facilitate them with money for fuel. It is not only a lack of mobility that prevents police carrying out their work effectively. In Gulu, it was acknowledged that police officers often lacked the capacity to carry out their duties to the professional standards expected in gathering evidence for more complex crimes, such as corruption[98].

Underpinning many of the challenges facing the police is a lack of community trust. It was noted that there was a cycle of violence in society that was proving very difficult to stop as no-one wants to talk to the police. People seem to prefer traditional methods for dispute resolution[99]. In Kaabong the claim was even made that 'if the Karamajong had not embraced the peace, the police efforts would have been irrelevant'[100]. Community policing is viewed as crucial to developing better relations but in Alwa sub-county, Kaberamaido district, the community remarked, 'we haven't seen community policing for two years'[101]. The more rural the location the less state presence was felt. One thing that could be done to consolidate state authority in these areas would be to improve the salary and conditions of police officers[102].

Crime Statistics

Crime statistics collected in Zombo, Soroti and Lira show an overall increase in the number of crimes reported. Between 2009 and 2012 Zombo saw a 47% rise in criminal convictions[103] whilst in the Mid-Eastern region[104] the number of reported cases rose from 11,063 in 2011 to 17,869 in 2012[105]. This conflicts with national figures which saw a 3.8% drop in crime from 2010 to 2011[106]. However, the 2011 Annual Police Report detailed rises in significant areas with domestic violence growing by 14% and mob justice by 7%[107].

The increased levels of criminal activity in Northern Uganda could indicate a more coherent police force and stronger state presence that has greater capacity to catch criminals and hold them accountable. It could also indicate a growing state of lawlessness in existence amongst the communities of Northern Uganda. Analysis of the statistics together with the qualitative discussions held suggests that increasing crimes figures reflect a combination of the two factors. There is a growing police presence, which has a greater capacity to implement the law and act as a deterrent, but at the same time lawlessness amongst the population is increasing. This is a result of poverty, the absence of state legitimacy and a lack of trust in

[97] Interview with local police official, Arua, 4 February 2013
[98] Interview with representative of the judiciary, Gulu, 8 February 2013
[99] Interview with local police official, Kaberamaido, 4 March 2013
[100] Interview with local councillor, Kotido, 1 March 2013
[101] Participant in focus group discussion at Alwa sub-county, Kaberamaido, 4 March 2013
[102] Interview with cultural leader, Soroti, 6 March 2013
[103] Interview with local police official, Zombo, 6 February 2013
[104] Mid-Eastern comprises of Kumi, Amuria, Serere, Soroti, Katakwi, Bukeda and Kaberamaido
[105] Interview with regional police official, Soroti, 6 March 2013
[106] Uganda Police, *Annual Crime and Traffic/Road Safety Report 2011*, (Kampala, 2012), p. iii
[107] Nakabugo, Z. *Crime declined in 2011 – report,* The Observer, 31 May 2012, Available at http://www.observer.ug/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19035&Itemid=114, Accessed on 3 April 2013

the police. One FGD respondent in Kotido noted 'we have more trust in the UPDF than the police because of this thing of *kitu kidogo* (corruption)'[108].

Prisons

Prisons have benefited very little under the PRDP framework. Zombo, Nwoya, Kaabong and Kaberamaido do not have facilities to keep criminals, relying instead on already overcrowded prisons in the neighbouring or mother districts. A local government official in Nwoya believed that PRDP should fund a prison in the district under SO1[109]. Even in districts where prisons do exist there are a number of challenges; a lack of latrines, overcrowding and a lack of separate male and female facilities. An example of the neglect of the prison service was exemplified by a visit to Kotido prison which was built in 1939 and last significantly renovated in 1950.

Judiciary

The judiciary was one of the institutions strengthened to increase state presence. This was done by the construction of facilities such as court premises – Dokolo benefited from the construction of a Magistrates court - and the appointment of magistrates to handle case backlogs. In Nwoya the judiciary, or lack of, was described as 'a sticky problem'. A court had recently opened, but the magistrate comes only once a week and this meant that police have to hold suspects for longer than the 48 hour legal limit. They asked, 'what should we do? Let a murderer go free because we do not have the remand facilities to bring him to justice?'[110]

A sign in Kaabong District where, ironically, there is no functioning court

Uganda's formal justice system suffers from a massive backlog of cases. This explains why many are beginning to use informal structures or alternative dispute resolutions (ADRs). The State Attorney in Gulu recognised the role that more informal mechanisms could play especially on the issues of land disputes. 'The revival of the LC systems will go a long way to end the land wrangle in Uganda'[111]. The courts have gradually improved but the work is taking a long time and costing a lot of money; they cannot meet the demands placed upon them[112].

Local Government Capacity

PRDP cannot succeed unless there is capacity at the local government level to ensure effective implementation of 'mega projects'. Under consolidation of state authority, projects have been implemented to enhance local government capacity. This includes constructing

[108] Participant in focus group discussion held in Panyangara sub-county, Kotido, 2 March 2013
[109] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 7 February 2013
[110] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 7 February 2013
[111] Interview with representative of the judiciary, Gulu, 8 February 2013
[112] Interview with representative of Justice and Peace Commission, Gulu, 9 February 2013

offices and supplying vehicles, particularly in newly created districts such as Nwoya and Dokolo.

The major challenge facing local governments is a lack of human capacity to carry out the work expected. This overlooking of the software component is a recurring theme that has blighted PRDP's impact. How can one engineer be expected to effectively monitor 100 projects? Not only is technical capacity absent. Employed staffs operate above their levels of experience and are expected to do the work of 3 or 4 people[113]. An example of the type of problems that overstretching can cause was outlined in Kotido. A bridge constructed using 87 million UGX of PRDP funds was washed away with the first rains because of serious miscalculations made by the temporary district engineer, who was under qualified[114].

The need to build the capacity of local government staff was continuously reiterated. A district official in Nwoya raised the question, 'how do you serve the community if you first cannot serve yourself'[115]. The catch 22 situation was neatly captured by an official in Gulu 'central government wants the local government to build the capacity of the community but it cannot do so until the central government builds the capacity of local government'[116].

Overall, the underlying challenge for achieving SO1 is the unaddressed structural problem that state legitimacy does not exist in districts of Northern Uganda. State legitimacy rests on the premise of mutual respect not fear[117] and until this underlying concern is addressed PRDP will struggle to fully achieve its objectives. In Karamoja for example, people don't see the state as relevant; it doesn't offer them services it should and they don't trust it to do so. Until this change takes place, consolidating state authority will be an impossible task.

[113] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[114] Interview with local government official, Kotido, 1 March 2013
[115] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 7 February 2013
[116] Interview with local government official, Gulu, 26 February 2013
[117] Dolan, C. *Is the PRDP a three-legged table?,* Keynote speech given at NGO conference for Scandinavian NGOs working in Northern Uganda, Kampala 8 April 2008

Providing Basic Services for Citizens

Health

In the health sector, PRDP I has made significant strides in reconstructing facilities that were destroyed during the conflict. Key focus areas have been ensuring that Health Centre IVs are fully functional, that maternity wards are rehabilitated, latrines built and staff houses put in place. Still they remain overburdened, under-equipped and understaffed. The GoU wants each sub-county to have a health centre IV but out of the 14 sub-counties in Kaabong only 5 have health centre III's, an indication of how much more work is still to be done[118]. A 2011 UBOS study looked at healthcare access for women across Uganda. In Karamoja 87% of women had experienced challenges accessing health facilities, compared with 87.6% in the North, 76.4% in West Nile. This is in contrast to a national average of 66.75%[119]. Reasons for inaccessibility included a lack of money, being unable to secure permission from spouses, the distance to be covered and not wanting to go alone.

In some cases ambulances have been provided which has helped improve access but a lack of fuel is a major obstacle. Infrastructures may have been built and equipped but transporting people to maternity wards is still a huge challenge. Poor quality roads and no ambulances mean that expectant mothers are sometimes transported in wheelbarrows[120]. Health remains high on the list of community priorities. Significant progress has been made but further development is required.

Education

The education sector has also benefited enormously from PRDP projects. In the rehabilitation of classroom blocks, the construction of teachers houses and latrine stances. An example of a school transformed by PRDP was Got Ngur Primary School, Nwoya district.

Got Ngur Primary School before and after PRDP renovations

It has seen enrolment increase by 200% after it benefited from the construction of a new classroom block and staff housing[121]. Overall, enrolment has increased since PRDP commenced work in 2009 but in Kaabong it was noted that this was linked to school feeding

[118] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[119] UBOS, *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey*, 2011, p. 119
[120] Interview with civil society organisation, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[121] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 8 February 2013

programmes; 'when the food is being offered attendance is much higher to when it is not'[122]. This reflects a lack of understanding about the benefits of education amongst parents.

Performance in Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) has also been improved because of PRDP I interventions. In Alwa Primary School, where a classroom block was constructed for P7 pupils in 2010, its performance has improved significantly and this was a generally trend observed across the districts visited.

Figure 9 – PLE Results for Alwa Primary School, Kaberamaido District

Year	PLE Results				
	Division 1	Division 2	Division 3	Division 4	Division 5/6
2012	4	40	7	3	0
2009	0	29	15	2	0

However, ensuring that government ratios are met is a challenge. In Zombo improvements have been noted with pupil: classroom ratios declining from 100:1 to 80:1 and pupil: desk ratios also declining from 7:1 to 6:1[123]. However in Kaabong it was noted that 'in the last 9 years there has been a failure to employ the number of teachers required and in this regard PRDP has done nothing to address pupil: teacher ratios'[124]. This challenge was acknowledged at the national level. Officials at OPM were in favour of introducing hard to reach allowances as a strategy of attracting more professionals to work in remote districts'[125].

Construction of staff houses has been a major focus of PRDP in both the health and education sector. It is regarded as a crucial way of improving a school facility as it ensures that teachers are more punctual. At the same time it gives them a greater sense of worth which translates into better quality teaching. 'It is not the building that makes a school perform it is the motivation of the teachers'[126] and staff houses have gone some way to creating this motivation.

In the construction of classroom blocks there was a lack of equipment, mainly desks, in some districts which impacted on functionality. 'If you construct me a classroom and you have no equipment what is the difference?'[127] Similarly usage of the structure cannot be presumed and there is a need to encourage parents to spend money on education. Unless they are assisted or have their capacity built, this appears unlikely.

A classroom constructed under PRDP in Zombo district

In Zombo the plight of the girl-child was highlighted. She is expected to carry out domestic

[122] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 27 February 2013
[123] Figures obtained from Zombo District Development Plan 2010-2015
[124] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[125] Interview with OPM official, Kampala, 22 February 2013
[126] Interview with representative of Gulu University, Gulu, 25 February 2013
[127] Participant in focus group discussion held in Paidha sub-county, Zombo, 6 February 2013

chores before and after school hours and will be withdrawn when she is deemed old enough to marry or work full-time. By implication the benefits of newly constructed classrooms were not extended to the 'girl-child'. Unless you can instigate an appreciation of the value of education among parents, the structures become irrelevant[128]. In Gulu it was neatly encapsulated - 'you can't have a beautiful structure when there is no-one using it'[129]. In Kotido an analogy was used to underscore the importance of community sensitisation on the value of education; 'you can take a cow to the well but you cannot force it to drink the water'[130].

Water and Sanitation

Access to safe water has been enhanced through the construction of boreholes and sanitation levels have been improved by the construction of latrine stances at schools and hospitals. Functionality of these structures has been better than in other sectors; a fact that can be ascribed to the better levels of community engagement developed through the WUCs. The water sector is an area where PRDP has made significant strides to catch up. National safe water coverage is at 64% but Soroti (67%), Kaberamaido (67.8%), Arua (71.9%) and Lira (90%)[131] are all performing above average. In these districts the national target of 70% is being, or is close to being, met. However in Nwoya there is still work to be done. It recorded an improvement from 27% to 44% between 2010 and 2012 but this is still not good enough[132].

A dysfunctional water pump in Dokolo Town

In Karamoja, water is a critical source of livelihoods and a source of conflict. Attention was given to the issue of safe, accessible water for both livestock production and human consumption. 100 micro-dams have been constructed under Karamoja Livelihoods Programme (KALIP) and play a part in reducing the likelihood of conflict and securing access to water for the Karamajong. Greater access to safer water benefits communities and facilitates economic and healthcare development by reducing the risk of disease and increasing levels of agricultural production. It is a crucial component for development and PRDP I has made inroads in this sector.

Roads and Bridges

Roads and bridges play an integral part in connecting people to trading centres and to ensuring access to critical social infrastructures such as markets, health centres, water sources, schools and formal or informal courts. Good quality roads are lacking in Uganda but the problems are more acute in the North. Across the country around 3,500km of the

[128] Interview with representative of Life Concern, Zombo, 5 February 2013
[129] Interview with representative of Gulu University, Gulu, 25 February 2013
[130] Interview with local government official, Kotido, 1 March 2013
[131] Information obtained from relevant District Development Plans
[132] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 8 February 2013

estimated 20,000km of roads are tarmacked, just 17.5%[133]. Areas in the north-east become impassable during the rainy season. Bridges are incredibly important in Zombo district where rivers are a dominant feature of the topography. In this district there is a need to form better coordination to ensure that when new facilities open up they can be easily accessed by the community they are designed to serve. This is also the case across the 5 PRDP I sub-regions.

An Overview: Hardware vs. Software

Functionality was not given enough consideration, or more practically a budget line, and this has limited the impact of PRDP I's ability to provide basic services for the community. As one respondent noted 'it is one thing to build the structure it is another to make them work'[134]. The tendency to focus on hardware over software can perhaps be explained, though not justified, by the notion that 'you can see the impact of a road more than a desk[135]'. It is simply more quantifiable.

The over-focus on infrastructure rehabilitation and development ignored the human element and the need to sensitise 'the person' in war affected communities. It was noted that 'unless a community is helped with proper preparation of the mindset then no amount of material support can change their life'[136]. Insecurity did impact on structures, and numerous buildings were destroyed, but what was most affected was the 'person' in the community and PRDP really has not done anything to address this[137]. As a local government official in Zombo noted 'access not only involves constructing infrastructure for the people but also winning their will to use it'[138].

A Health Centre II in Manibe sub-county, Arua. Built in 2010 it is still non-functional because of a lack of drugs

[133] New Vision, *Seeta-Namugongo Road will be Tarmacked,* 14 June 2011, available at http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/21/757546, accessed on 20 March 2013
[134] Interview with local government official, Soroti, 6 March 2013
[135] Participant in focus group discussion held in Alwa sub-county, Kaberamaido, 4 March 2013
[136] Interview with representative of HURIFO, Gulu, 10 February 2013
[137] Participant in focus group discussion held in Adekokwok sub-county, Lira, 7 March 2013
[138] Interview with local government official, Zombo, 6 February 2013

Corruption

Corruption is an inescapable feature of life in Uganda. The 2012 Transparency International Corruption Index placed Uganda 133 out of 177 countries, criticising, in particular, the lack of transparency in dealings between the State and military[139]. In the World Bank 'Doing Business Report' for 2013 Uganda also scores poorly, coming in 120 out of 185 with specific challenges identified in areas of securing and enforcing contracts[140].

An abandoned latrine stance in Kaabong District

Massive corruption in the political sphere emerged at the end of 2012 with the uncovering of systematic stealing, in OPM, of funds designated towards the recovery and development of the North. According to an Irish Aid Audit Review it was a very sophisticated and elaborate scheme with collusion at senior levels and across three key agencies[141]. The Daily Monitor ran an editorial describing 2012 as a year engulfed by corruption and commented on the sandal in OPM by saying 'Corruption has for long been a constant narrative in Uganda's political sphere but as the curtains roll down on 2012, society will bemoan the new and worrying state that the Pearl of Africa finds itself mired in'[142].

Engaging in discussions at the community level it is clear they are exasperated of hearing about corruption. 'People are embezzling money meant for community development and then they expect the community to monitor projects that do arrive'[143]. Essentially 'the people of Northern Uganda are very bitter', they think that the scandal in OPM is a further example of a hidden agenda that they believe the government has for neglecting the north[144].

One immediate detrimental impact, other than the revelations of how much money had been stolen, was that OPM scandal brought PRDP projects to a standstill - further reducing its impact'[145]. In Zombo it affected district operations, 'this year money was withdrawn at the last minute when the scandal emerged and this prevented a school and a health centre from being constructed'[146]. One respondent captured the mood of many when he said that 'the scandals in OPM explained to us the reason for budget cuts which was because the money

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[139] Transparency International, *Corruption Index*, 2012, Available at http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2012/results/, accessed on 28 March 2013
[140] World Bank, *Ease of Doing Business in Uganda*, 2013, available at http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/uganda/, accessed on 2 April 2013
[141] Irish Aid, *Interim Report by Evaluation and Audit Unit Technical Team on Misappropriation of funds in the Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda*, 2012, p. 5
[142] Arinaitwe, S, *2012: A Year Engulfed by Corruption Scandals,* Daily Monitor, 27 December 2012. Available at http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/2012--A-year-engulfed-by-corruption-scams/-/688334/1651852/-/8bxxhsz/-/index.html, accessed on 28 March 2013
[143] Participant in focus group discussion held at Koro sub-county, Gulu, 9 February 2013
[144] Interview with representative of HURIFO, Gulu, 10 February 2013
[145] Interview with representative of Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, Gulu, 25 February 2013
[146] Interview with local government official, Zombo, 6 February 2013

was used for other, personal reasons'[147]. It was a double blow; money was stolen and projects put on hold.

Shoddy Work

Corruption does not only take place at the very top, 'it is at all levels; from OPM right down to the work being done by contractors'[148]. Delays in the construction of buildings are not uncommon. In Zombo Health Centre III the in-charge detailed how a project that was planned to take 90 days ended up taking almost one year to complete without any explanation as to why[149]. In Kaabong it was noted contractors are always looking to cut corners and compromise on quality to maximise profits. It was estimated that between 30% and 40% of PRDP I projects had been affected by shoddy work in the district[150]. Overpricing was also mentioned, both by the community and those involved with the procurement process. In Koro sub-county the community remarked on the construction of chiefs houses;

A PRDP funded chief's house in Koro sub-county, Gulu District

'there are chiefs houses which were constructed at a cost of 200 million each but when you look at them and their size 200 million could have constructed three'[151]

Tractor hire for a day, which is normally around 70,000 UGX cost 540,000 UGX under PRDP. But because there was no transparency in how the money was being spent communities were not aware it was being eaten[152]. This tendency to overprice the work being done under PRDP led to one respondent joking that 'it must have been expensive air they were supplying'[153].

Tackling Corrupt Practice

In looking ahead to the possible role that OPM can continue to play in PRDP, in light of the revelations, one key trend emerged. Releases should no longer be channelled through the hands of its officials and that funds would be better utilised if directed straight to local governments. The decision of international donors to withdraw support was bemoaned as it would only be the impoverished who suffer and alternatives should first have been sought. A participant at a PRDP stakeholders meeting in Lira noted 'if the doors are closed why don't the donors open the windows?'[154] Yet almost uniform agreement was reached on one thing, '**you cannot even think of keeping channelling funds through OPM. Our people are dying of poverty and the centre doesn't care- it just gets fat'**[155].

[147] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[148] Interview with representative of Justice and Peace Commission, Gulu, 9 February 2013
[149] Visit Zombo Health Centre III, Zombo, 6 February 2013
[150] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[151] Participant in focus group discussion held at Koro sub-county, Gulu, 9 February 2013
[152] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[153] Interview with local police official, Kotido, 1 March 2013
[154] Refugee Law Project, *PRDP Stakeholder Workshop Report: Lira*, 2012, p. 6
[155] Interview with anti-corruption organisation, Lira, 7 March 2013

Peace: The Missing and Broken Leg of PRDP[156]

The failure of PRDP to adequately address the issue of peacebuilding and reconciliation has been a major issue. It stems from the fact that it was not given enough importance or financial support[157] from the outset. Conflict sensitivity should have been mainstreamed into the implementation of PRDP as peace is the foundations on which all its objectives are premised. The 'do no harm principle' is used to ensure that conflict sensitivity is a feature of all the projects being undertaken by Mercy Corps in Karamoja. Such an approach should be a feature of PRDP II if it is to generate 'sustainable peace and development'[158]. The idea being that while you cannot eat peace, you cannot eat without peace[159]. Socio-economic development goes hand in hand with peacebuilding.

Unquestionably Northern Uganda is a more peaceful environment now that the guns have gone silent. The cessation of hostilities should have marked the beginning of the peacebuilding and reconciliation process. Instead it was presumed that developments would occur naturally and did not need to be forged. There also remains a fear that Joseph Kony could still come back. The CPA was never officially signed, and communities expressed fear that conflict could return to destroy all the work that PRDP has so far achieved. The peace was viewed as fragile[160].

Despite this notion of a fragile peace SO4 has, to a large extent, been ignored, 'the P in PRDP is completely dormant'[161]. Secondary conflicts have emerged and nothing, or very little, is being done to address them. 'Northern Uganda still looks like a conflict zone'[162].

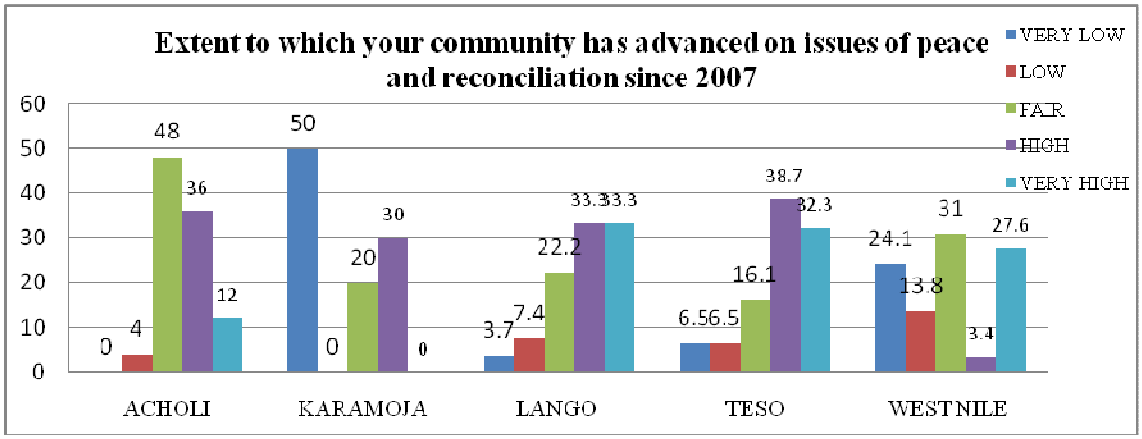

Figure 10 – Community perceptions on the advancement of peace and reconciliation[163]

[156] Dolan, C. *Is the PRDP a three-legged table?,* Keynote speech given at NGO conference for Scandinavian NGOs working in Northern Uganda, Kampala 8 April 2008
[157] Just 2.5% of the overall budget was allocated to SO4
[158] Interview with representative of Mercy Corps, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[159] Interview with representative of Life Concern, Zombo, 6 February 2013
[160] Participant in focus group discussion held at Dokolo sub-county, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[161] Interview with representative of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, 25 February 2013
[162] Interview with representative of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, 25 February 2013
[163] Information gathered during the fieldwork of this study

Community perceptions of the peace and reconciliation situation are, in the main, quite positive. This has a lot to do with the absence of peace between 1986 and 2006 which means that communities have seen big developments in their personal security. In Acholi, Teso and Lango around 90% of respondents rated the situation as either ok, good or very good and felt that because fighting had stopped reconciliation was occurring. In Karamoja and West Nile the community reflected a continued sense of insecurity. This is attributed to the notion that they never directly suffered the blunt of LRA war, and therefore experienced less efforts geared towards promotion of peacebuilding and reconciliation by the GoU and CSOs.

Secondary Conflicts

Conflict did not end with the cessation of LRA insurgency, secondary conflicts over land, natural resources, erosion of cultural values and between districts are now emerging as threats to peace and stability[164]. A failure to address these issues means that PRDP has been more of a conflict driver than a tool for peace and reconciliation. Land remains the outstanding source of conflict, with the PRDP II document estimating that it is a conflict driver in 69% of districts in the North[165]. In addition, a study in Acholi sub-region found that 18,000 households are affected by land disputes[166]. It was a regular feature of community discussions. They noted that as people began resettling at the end of the insurgency disputes emerged over land boundaries, which are proving difficult to resolve amicably.

Conflicts are even emerging between families over land. 'The population is growing but the land isn't'[167] was a popular refrain heard in several sub-counties. PRDP II needs to acknowledge the big problem of land and address it before real development can take place[168]. Local and traditional leaders have a role to play in dispute resolution but it is not always possible to find an amicable solution because 'the wound is still there, it is not completely healed'[169]. It was noted that a loss of land equates to a loss of hope and contributes to unaddressed psycho-social trauma. This explains why Northern Uganda has experienced a rising number of suicides in recent years[170] Peacebuilding efforts need to be directed, first and foremost, at the household level. Only on these foundations can peace be built.

Peacebuilding and Civil Society

CSOs were mandated with the implementation of SO4 and some advances have been made in reconciling previously warring communities. In Karamoja this has taken place through meetings and dialogues which involves traditional and cultural leaders, civil society, government CDOs, and the community and conflict participants. Opening avenues for dialogue is a good way of pre-empting potential violent attacks. As a result, over the last

[164] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[165] Government of Uganda, *PRDP II Document,* 2012, p. 19
[166] Interview with representative of HURIFO, Gulu, 10 February 2013
[167] Participant in focus group discussion held at Gweri sub-county, Soroti, 3 March 2013
[168] Interview with representative of Land and Equity Movement Uganda, Soroti, 5 March 2013
[169] Participant in focus group discussion held at Dokolo sub-county, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[170] Okuni, S. *Causes and Possible Preventative Measures to Suicide*, Lecture given at Bomah Hotel on 25 February 2013, Gulu

year, the security situation has improved dramatically[171]. Karamoja also has a need for cross-border reconciliation as cattle-raiding extended to include tribes in South Sudan and Kenya and similar projects aimed at fostering dialogue have been undertaken[172].

Both civil society organisations and, to an extent local government, have recognised the importance of traditional leaders and mechanisms to peace and reconciliation. Peace cleansing ceremonies were described in several districts. In Kaabong, *akisil* was a ceremony that brought together the two warring ethnic factions i.e. the Jie and Dodoth, over a three day period. A bull is slaughtered on either side, roasted and then a bone is broken signalling the breaking of hostilities. *Aipuc*, practised amongst the Iteso, is a similar ceremony aimed at fostering peace, although it does not include breaking of bones. During discussions with the community *akisil* was cited as a way that disputes had been resolved for years previous and which could have a key role in ensuring peace once again[173].

Constructing Peace

Improved infrastructure will naturally assist with the peacebuilding project by generating engagement between previously conflicting factions. 'Something that helps people meet is very key for peace….therefore the opening up of community access roads and schools can be a key player in institutionalising peace'[174]. There was also a thought expressed that 'with the rehabilitation of structures there is peace of mind'[175]. However infrastructure alone cannot create a peaceful environment. It can help, but those who grew up in conflict or experienced its intensity, need to be sensitised about how to live in a peaceful society and not take others for granted[176] .

National Peacebuilding

On the theme of dialogue to ensure peace a number of respondents felt that a better environment would be created if a national dialogue was instigated. 'The time has come to give SO4 greater attention but there is a need to ensure that the clarity of the message is consistent and that there is community consultation of who the peace is for and who defines justice'[177]. Conflicts exist across the country, so much so, that Uganda would really benefit from a discussion on the kind of transitional justice needed and what peace means to ordinary citizens. However in Gulu the question was posed as to whether this was a dialogue GoU was able to justifiable lead given its disruptive, non-inclusive approach to politics. 'It is setting a very poor example of how to build peace and reconcile communities to the extent that the government of Museveni is opposed to the unity of the people'[178].

[171] Interview with community based organisation, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[172] Interview with representative of Dodoth Agro-Pastoralist Development Organisation (DADO), Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[173] Interview with representative of DADO, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[174] Interview with local government official, Kaabong, 27 February 2013
[175] Participant in focus group discussion held at Purongo sub-county, Nwoya, 8 February 2013
[176] Interview with local government official, Arua, 5 February 2013
[177] Interview with representative of the Gulu District NGO Forum, Gulu, 25 February 2013
[178] Interview with representative of HURIFO, Gulu, 10 February 2013

Vulnerable Groups

Youth

The issue of a disengaged youth - a legacy of the conflict and a childhood spent in IDP camps - has not been directly targeted enough under PRDP I. Initiatives like the Northern Uganda Youth Development Centre (NUYDC) in Gulu are positive measures. It equips young men and women with skills and opportunities that will benefit society as a whole. Current estimates suggest that youth unemployment increased nationally from 44% to 48% between 2005 and 2010. In Northern Uganda, the figure stood at 80% in 2011[179]. It was remarked that not enough was being or had been done. 'A youth unemployment programme under PRDP would be a great intervention and one which is very much needed'[180].

One suggestion put forward in Gulu was to support the use of youth as local based labourers in the construction of PRDP works projects. This would have the dual benefit of contributing to local economic development and addressing the issue of underemployed youth[181]. In Karamoja the disarmament programme was applauded for the increased sense of security it has brought to communities. However, respondents felt that it had failed to provide an alternative way of living for former fighters. Some sort of livelihood package is required if a return to violence is to be avoided:

> *'I would rather die committing crimes than of hunger'*[182]
>
> *'Disarmed youth depend on rats'*[183]
>
> *'Without support they have been too quick to turn to sports betting as a career'*[184].

PRDP II cannot ignore the issue of unemployed youth as 'it can be a fertile recruiting ground for anybody harbouring evil thoughts of destabilising the region or the country since they are disgruntled and frustrated'[185]. Technical skills alone are not sufficient as northern youths would not be competitive in future policy arena and other lucrative skills-based industry like oil and gas. There is need for tailored made scholarship to access high quality education, empower and mentor brilliant young people to provide leadership and engage in lucrative service delivery industry in the region in future.

Women

Women were also not specifically targeted under PRDP I. A gynaecology clinic was set up in Lira but problems have emerged because of a lack of equipment, the absence of a qualified gynaecologist and because of a failure to sensitise the community, particularly men, about women's health issues. This has meant that some women who utilised the facility to treat

[179] USAID, *Youth Map Uganda: Navigating Challenges, Charting Hope*, 2011, p. 43
[180] Interview with local government official, Lira, 7 March 2013
[181] Interview with civil society activist, Gulu, 24 February 2013
[182] Participant in focus group discussion held at Koro sub-county, Gulu, 9 February 2013
[183] Participant in focus group discussion held at Kaabong sub-county, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[184] Interview with representative of Acholi Religious Leaders for Peace Initiative, Gulu, 25 February 2013
[185] Interview with representative of Lira District NGO Forum, Lira, 7 March 2013

injuries suffered during the conflict, have been attacked and beaten by their husbands for bringing shame on their family[186]. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) remains a problem, not just in Northern Uganda, but throughout the country. Data gathered by UBOS in 2011 exemplifies this point[187].

Figure 11 – Sexual and Gender Based Violence Statistics for Uganda © UBOS 2011

Region	Type of GBV (%) Domestic	Sexual (%)
North	60.6	24.6
West Nile	56.4	23.5
Karamoja	47.3	17.2
National Average	55.3	26.7

Some forms of SGBV particularly those against women pose huge social issue in Uganda and needs targeting if attitudes are to be changed and women's rights are to be more respected. In Northern Uganda high levels of domestic violence is related to the changing of social roles that was instigated by prolonged periods in IDP camps. Men could not be breadwinners in the camps because everyone received handouts individually. In fact, it was the women who collected water and engage in other small economic activities. Reverting back to old roles has not happened as people have returned from camps. 'Men like to drink too much and women are the victims'[188]. In Kotido it was remarked that 'domestic violence is still as natural as it was, if not more so'[189].

The Disabled and Ex-Combatants

Specific facilities have, not systematically but sporadically, been put in place to assist persons with disabilities. In Kaberamaido there was a specially constructed school and the health centres have been built to meet the needs of the physically disabled children[190]. However not enough has been done to address the physical and mental scars left behind by the war. The rhetorical question posed by a respondent in Gulu was 'for a man with one leg; what good is a road to him?'[191]

PRDP II needs to address this shortfall in tackling vulnerable groups. The community perception is that the only specific group PRDP has targeted is ex-combatants. The question was raised as to why they are receiving preferential treatment whilst the victims of the conflict are again left to suffer[192]. A FGD respondent in Zombo wanted 'a deliberate effort to support HIV-AIDS sufferers, orphans, widows and young people because they are a vulnerable lot that needs special attention'[193]. So far not enough attention has been given under PRDP I.

[186] Interview with representative of Women's Peace Initiatives, Lira, 7 March 2013
[187] UBOS, *Uganda: Demographic and Health Survey*, 2011, p. 256
[188] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[189] Interview with representative of Kotido Peace Initiatives, Kotido, 1 March 2013
[190] Interview with local government official, Kaberamaido, 4 March 2013
[191] Interview with representative of HURIFO, Gulu, 10 February 2013
[192] Participant in focus group discussion held at Koro sub-county, Gulu, 9 February 2013
[193] Participant in focus group discussion held at Paidha sub-county, Zombo, 6 February 2013

PRDP as Politics

Entitlement or Favour

Politicians are trying to make PRDP appear as a favour they are giving to the people of Northern Uganda, when the reality is, it is their entitlement. One community member demanded that they 'stop politicising government programmes by making them look like favours from the government, yet they are what people are entitled to'[194]. This sentiment was echoed by a district government official in Nwoya who believed that the funding should be mainstreamed into local government allocations. 'Up to now, PRDP has been utilised for political means to show they are responsive to their constituents needs. It is just a label that has political connotations and for that reason I don't want to hear PRDP III'[195].

The culture of favour is one that has become integrated into politics in Uganda. According to a respondent in Dokolo, prior to the war, each community had a segment of the road that they were responsible for maintaining and they did so voluntarily[196]. This attitude has shifted because of the approach being used by the country's politicians. The idea of 'you vote for us, we do something for you'[197] has become the status quo. This supports the claim of one respondent who regarded PRDP as a National Resistance Movement (NRM) project, 'NRM representatives are selective and coordinate mainly with the centre'[198].

Local Government Politics

Political factions are a natural feature of local government structures. However, in Dokolo, a district official noted that in some areas contests between LC V, RDCs and CAOs are slowing down PRDP implementation. He noted that 'it is not just the capacity of the people (contractors) but the attitude of the leaders (CAO, LCV, and RDC)'[199] which is causing delays. The sentiments expressed when PRDP was introduced about national unity have been supplanted and the programme has been politicised[200]. Subsequently, PRDP has become characterised as 'more politics than development or recovery programmes'[201].

[194] Participant in focus group discussion held at Paidha sub-county, Zombo, 6 February 2013
[195] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 8 February 2013
[196] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[197] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[198] Interview with local government official, Kaberamaido, 4 March 2013
[199] Interview with local government official, Dokolo, 5 March 2013
[200] Interview with representative of Wide Rights Uganda, Arua, 4 February 2013
[201] Interview with representative of Great Lakes Centre, Gulu, 9 February 2013

Economic Development and Compensation

Economic Revitalisation

Economic revitalisation was the stated ambition of SO3. There have been improvements, engineered by a combination of NUSAF II, PRDP I and off budget initiatives such as KALIP and CAIP. The opening up of community access roads has made trading and rural growth centres more accessible, facilitating local economic development. NUSAF II has also strongly contributed with more practical initiatives such as hiring tractors to allow communities to develop land, provision of seeds and, to a small extent, restocking of livestock. However a recent survey found that 63% of Ugandans think that there is more economic investment in the South than the North[202]. Our own community data shows a disparity between sub-regions with 66.6% of respondents in Lango marking levels of economic improvement high or very high compared to just 13% in West Nile.

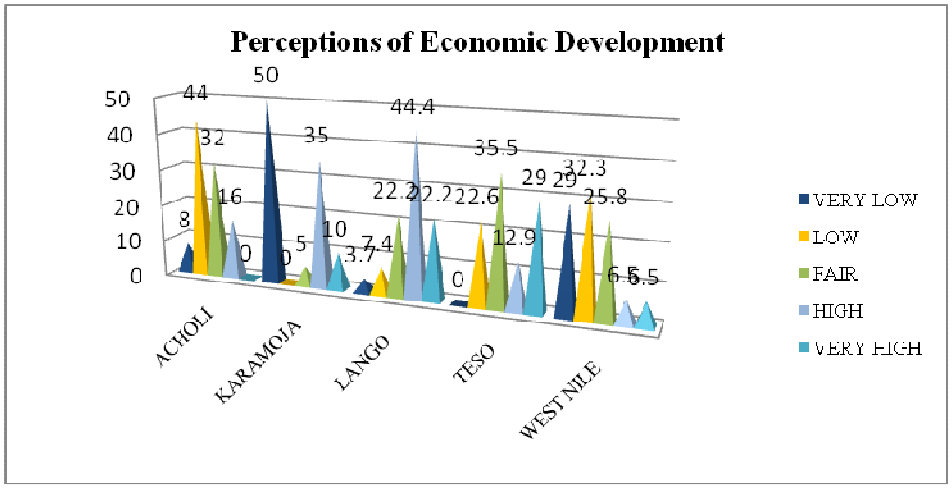

Figure 12 – Outlines community perceptions of post-conflict economic recovery[203]

In order to assist economic development, loans or small business initiatives are needed to enable communities to empower themselves[204]. GoU needs to offer greater agricultural support to the community in terms of seedlings and equipment. A microfinance scheme would also be extremely beneficial in order to help facilitate this type of economic development. Currently, the only tax benefits offered are to the rich despite 80% of Uganda's population relying on subsistence agriculture[205].

Economic revitalisation also needs to consider the software element if the impact is going to be sustainable. 'We need to prepare the mindset of people to change. After 20 years of handouts very few have the capacity or the mindset to grow rather than to just survive'[206].

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[202] Refugee Law Project, *Conflict Analysis of Northern Uganda*, (Forthcoming, 2013)
[203] This information was gathered during the fieldwork of this study
[204] Participant in focus group discussion held at Manibe sub-county, Arua, 4 February 2013
[205] Interview with representative of HURIFO, Gulu, 10 February 2013
[206] Interview with local government official, Kotido, 1 March 2013

An example of this short-term thinking came from a district official in Nwoya who noted that 'goats given for start-up livelihood projects are often sacrificed for funerals and weddings as poorly educated persons fail to properly understand their value'[207]. There is a need to switch from a culture of domestic consumption towards a culture of market production. Cultivation techniques and irrigation projects could support this development[208]. Extending electricity, and sensitising the community on its economic value, would also be a positive step. Currently it is viewed as a privilege for the rich, not something that the ordinary person can use to change their lives. It can be a tool used for business development and economic growth, but only if it is more affordable and reliable[209].

Compensation

The issue of restocking came out strongly in Teso and Lango. This was seen as a tangible way that communities could be helped to generate income and receive a return on what they had lost. The idea that the community had never been compensated for what was lost emerged in Alwa sub-county, Kaberamaido district. The community detailed a NUSAF II project which tried to supply livestock. It often gave just one or two animals to a group of people with the idea of sharing its offspring but this process was lamented for its gradualist approach that means that 'the restocking process will extend beyond our lifetimes, if we are to get back what we owned'[210]. In Adekokwok sub-county, Lira, one community member had received compensation at 300,000 UGX for 90 cows. Yet the community priced one cow at around 500,000 UGX so the valuation fell well short[211]. Through restocking, PRDP II would be giving a nod to culture as well as an economic boost to the community[212].

Ultimately improving people's welfare and empowering them economically will do a lot in helping them attain peace with themselves and their neighbours. This highlights the interconnected nature of development in Northern Uganda and how the four strategic objectives will only be achieved if they work in harmony to mutually reinforce one and other.

[207] Interview with local government official, Nwoya, 7 February 2013
[208] Interview with community based organisation, Kaabong, 28 February 2013
[209] Interview with local government official, Kaberamaido, 4 March 2013
[210] Participant in focus group discussion held at Alwa sub-county, Kaberamaido, 4 March 2013
[211] Participant in focus group discussion held at Adekokwok sub-county, Lira, 7 March 2013
[212] Interview with civil society activist, Gulu, 8 February 2013

Conclusion

In conclusion, this report acknowledges the lukewarm developments that PRDP I has been able to deliver to enhance the lives of Ugandans living in the north as they emerged from over 20 years of conflict. Rehabilitating the North was an enormous project and immediate impacts and quick fix solutions cannot be expected. Nonetheless, PRDP I could have impacted on a much greater level had it focused more on the software element, on peacebuilding and reparations and by ensuring that the promises laid out in the document transferred into tangible realities. It is crucial that the same mistakes are not made again in PRDP II. The recommendations laid out in this report suggest ways in which improvements can be made in developing Northern Uganda under the four strategic objectives. It acknowledges that the ideals set forth in the document are generally good but that transforming them into reality is where the challenge remains.

Recommendations

1. A designated PRDP Focal Person should be employed in each district government. It requires a full-time commitment to ensure effective reporting, implementation and supervision.
2. The budget for monitoring and evaluation should be increased from 2% to 5%. Secondly community monitors should be better equipped with the information needed to carry out the work.
3. A conflict sensitive approach, using the principle of 'do no harm', should be applied to all projects under the PRDP framework. Direct individual repair and social healing should be mainstreamed into the peacebuilding objective.
4. Contractors should be mandated to employ a percentage of local labourers to work on PRDP projects and to source materials for the construction from within the local community, where it is possible to do so.
5. Greater focus needs to be placed on the software component; human resources improvement, equipping classrooms with scholastic materials or health centres with drugs. Functionality should be the priority.
6. PRDP needs to address youth unemployment through the construction of youth learning centres, tailor-made scholarships, mentorship and projects targeting their economic engagement.
7. Address the land issue using both formal and informal mechanisms. Until conflicts are resolved, development will struggle to become sustainable.
8. To ensure the functionality of the state in the North it first needs to re-establish its legitimacy. Embarking on a national reconciliation and peacebuilding project would be a positive step.
9. Introduce hard to reach allowances and incentives for postings in rural and remote areas to tackle the problem of staff attraction and retention.

10. Recognise the peculiarities of Karamoja and give greater financial support to help it 'catch up'. Currently it lags behind the rest of PRDP sub-regions on most development indicators.
11. The PRDP document should be translated into local languages so that communities can access it.
12. Directly involving the communities at all stages of the project cycle. Equipping them with M&E and management skills would develop a greater sense of ownership.
13. To reduce corruption and misappropriation of PRDP money, new funding arrangement is needed to ensure funds are disbursed directly to the local government and civil society, not through intermediaries like OPM.

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The basis of this report is the information gathered from 112 interviews conducted with key stakeholders in 10 districts of Northern Uganda between 3 February and 7 March 2013.

The report is also heavily reliant on the input of 135 community members who completed questionnaires and who participated in the focus group discussions.

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