

RESETTLEMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN NORTHERN UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

There were 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in greater northern Uganda at the height of the LRA insurgency, from 1994 to mid-2000.¹ Although the 2006 Juba peace talks were ultimately unsuccessful at bringing about a resolution to the conflict, it did contribute to a semblance of relative calm and peace in the northern, enabling many people to leave the official IDP camps for either their original homes or 'transit' camps.

The government of Uganda and development partners embarked on resettling and rebuilding war ravaged areas of that country through various intervention programmes, including resettlement interventions of internally displaced persons in northern Uganda. Given the spectrum of experiences associated with return, resettlement, and reintegration of displaced persons, it is imperative to ask whether the interventions designed and developed actually address the needs of the displaced persons.

Key words: *Resettlement, internally displaced persons*

¹ Some sources put the number of the displaced at 1.8 million, while others say 1.7 million. See Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 'A profile of the internal displacement situation', Geneva, 28 December 2010.

1. RESETTLEMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN NORTHERN UGANDA

2.1 Understanding Internal Displacement

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) can be defined as 'persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border', as reflected in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.² The principles highlight two crucial elements of IDP status: its coercive or otherwise involuntary nature and its occurring within national borders. Those affected have no choice but to leave their homes and belongings behind while in search of physical security. Doing so deprives them of the most essential protection mechanisms, such as community networks, access to services, resources and livelihoods. Unlike refugees, who have been deprived of the protection of their state of origin, IDPs remain legally under the protection of the national authorities of their country of residence. IDPs should therefore

enjoy the same rights as the rest of the population.³

The IDPs resultant state of instability and insecurity in their immediate physical environment leaves them vulnerable to insecurity and numerous life-threatening measures, including exposure to the elements and hunger and disease, generating feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. These problems are confounded by the loss family members, livelihoods, and properties. The capacity to resist the pressure of real threats and dangers that might lead to the loss of life leads people to flee. Their basic goal is to remain alive.

² A. Mundt and E. Ferris, 'Durable solutions for IDPs in protracted situations: Three case studies', paper for the Arc/Austcare Symposium, Enhancing Protection of Civilians in Protracted Conflicts, Canberra, 28 October 2008; for details, see United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Guiding Principles on internal displacement', UN Publications, Geneva, 1998.

³ Mundt and Ferris, 'Durable solutions for IDPS in protracted situations'.

2.2 Displacement in Uganda

The phenomenon of forced displacement in Uganda is attributable to three fundamental factors: political persecution, ethnic rivalries that manifest in tribal wars, various armed struggles. Uganda has a history of political persecution meted out by the regime of the day. Although in Uganda, there was political persecution under Idi Amin, the resulting population displacements did not involve large-scale migration until the 1978–1979 war of liberation. Most displacement occurred in the central part of the country, and the people who were affected quickly returned to their homes as the war ebbed.

Ethnic rivalries that devolve into tribal warfare typically involve extreme violence and pogroms to annihilate the opponent. In the case of Uganda, people displaced because of them are actually refugees, mainly from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and southern Sudan. The phenomenon of displaced persons originating from ethnic-tribal or communal violence in Uganda has been associated with the cattle rustling by the Karamojong.

Uganda has experienced various armed conflicts, including the 1978–79 war by exiled forces against the Amin government, the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) struggle against the Obote II regime and the short-lived Tito Okello military junta government from 1980/81 to 1986, and armed resistance in the north and West Nile regions following the NRM/A. takeover⁴ The most significant and costly armed conflict in NRM/A Uganda has been the war launched by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda. The largest internal displacements in Uganda have been associated with greater northern Uganda, which includes Karamoja, the Acholi sub region, parts of

the Lango sub region, Teso, and West Nile. . There are three main sources of conflict that have perpetuated insecurity problems in these areas.

First, in the Acholi sub-region, some people who had supported Obote during his two stints in power remained unreconciled to the NRM/A government led by Yoweri Museveni that came to power in 1986 following its overthrow of Tito Okello's regime. Some of these unreconciled elements formed or joined the Holy Spirit Movement led by Alice Lakwena and later the LRA, led by Joseph Kony.⁵ The inability of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) under Museveni to defeat the rebellion of the LRA in the north has left many people bitter toward the government and as well as led to large numbers of IDPs, including some resulting from forced confinement by the government in what are basically IDPs camps for safety reasons. Despite such forced confinement, the LRA war continued into the early 2000s to cause havoc, victimizing the inhabitants of Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader. During this time, a number of atrocities were committed adding to the fear among the population, leading increasing numbers of them to flee into the IDP camps. The LRA also perpetuated displacement outside Uganda through its abductions of people.

IDPs have been created as a result of violent conflicts associated with cattle rustling in the northeast by the Karamojong, a pastoralist and nomadic ethnic group, against neighboring communities. During the raids, the rustlers employ a level of armed violence that has led to the loss of life and destruction of property and livelihoods. Persistent cattle rustling raids on vulnerable communities with high levels of destruction promote high rates of migration even in areas far from the actual theaters of conflict.

⁴ Robert Gersony, 'The anguish of northern Uganda: Results of a field-based assessment of the civil conflicts in northern Uganda,' report submitted to the USAID Mission, Kampala, 1977.

⁵ Lakwena's forces were decimated in 1987, in Jinja, 80 kilometers from Kampala. She fled and later died in Kenya.

3. Frameworks for Action

Uganda has an elaborate policy framework for responding to internal displacement.⁶ In fact, it was one of the first countries to develop a formal policy on IDPs. Uganda's National Policy on Internally Displaced Person, adopted in 2004, guarantees (in section 3.4) the right of IDPs to freely choose between return, local integration, or settlement elsewhere in the country.⁷ In May 2008 the government issued the Camp Phase-Out Guidelines for All Districts That Have IDP Camps, followed in June that same year by Guidelines for the Demolition of Abandoned Structures. In January 2010 Uganda became the first country to ratify the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa, also known as the Kampala Convention.

In 2006 Uganda also ratified the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, including the agreement's IDP Protocol and the Protocol on the Property Rights of Returning Persons. On 15 October 2007 the Ugandan government, launched the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), a master plan set up by the government and its development partners for the reconstruction of northern Uganda. It identified forty districts to benefit from the effort, including Acholi, Elgon, Karamoja, Lango, Teso, and West Nile.⁸ As a comprehensive development framework, the PRDP aims to improve the socioeconomic indicators in the areas affected by conflict and a breakdown in law and order and bring them into line with national standards. It replaced the Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan and its Joint Monitoring Committee. The targets and objectives in the PRDP were expected to contribute to achieving the national goals of Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan of 2004.

⁶ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 'A profile of the internal displacement situation'.

⁷ Republic of Uganda, National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons, Office of the Prime Minister, Kampala, 2004.

⁸ Peace, Recovery and Development Plan, <http://www.prdp.org.ug>.

The PRDP has four strategic objectives: consolidating state authority, rebuilding and empowering communities, revitalizing the economy, and peace building and reconciliation. The estimated cost was \$606 million over three years. It was hoped that in this short period, empowerment and development in terms of restored law and order, sustainable livelihoods, and reconstruction in line with national standards would be achieved.

Although Uganda's responses to addressing the needs of former IDPs is based on two major initiatives—the National Policy and the PRDP—they have been limited in their successes in a number of ways. There has been failure to maintain services in abandoned camps and to provide basic services in returnee areas as dictated by the pace of return and resettlement. The national policy urges action to enable IDPs to be able to attain the same educational standards as other Ugandans, and there have been efforts by the government and its development partners to bring services to villages, especially regarding education, health, water and sanitation, and housing. According to a 2008 Oxfam Briefing Paper, however, 'recovery actors have not been able to keep up with the pace of return, meaning that conditions in return areas are often worse than in the camps.'⁹ In fact, according to an internal UN document, recent mapping assessments 'show an appalling lack of basic services in transit sites and return areas'.¹⁰ In many villages, for example, schools have not been rehabilitated and classes are taught under mango trees.¹¹

Also there has been inadequate protection for those who have managed to return home and those still living in the camps. The National Policy urges action to enable the IDPs' right to request and receive protection and humanitarian assistance from national and district authorities. In this respect, the most critical issue is protection for the most

⁹ M. Mailer, 'From Emergency to Recovery', Oxfam Briefing Paper 118, Oxfam International, Oxford, September 2008.

¹⁰ 'Uganda Consolidated Appeal process, mid-year review', unpublished report, 2008, 4.

¹¹ Mailer, 8.

vulnerable. These include, among others, the elderly, the sick, the blind, the lame and people with other disabilities that make it difficult for them to return to their former homes. For such people, the breakdown in social services delivery and provision increases the likelihood of further victimization and exposure to life-threatening situations. Moreover, the National Policy and PRDP framework did not address the protection issue of the most vulnerable even after they became the majority in the camps.

There has been no explicit way geared towards rebuilding eroded community support networks that in the traditional rural setting helped to ensure that the most vulnerable were cared for. Displacement and camp life have eroded community support networks that in the traditional rural setting helped to ensure that the most vulnerable were cared for. Moreover, many of the protection mechanisms that existed in camps, where NGO-trained community groups which were active were being disrupted as return intensified. These have left the abandoned camps given the small numbers of people to attend to. Yet, the National IDP Policy and PRDP did not take into consideration an opportunity like how to utilize NGOs that have been caring for the people during camp life when the situation reverts to fewer people left in the camps. For the NGOs, if they stay, their operations are being disrupted as the process of returnees reverses back into the camps with intensity amidst a situation of no support from the government.

In order to facilitate a sustainable and improved food production and security, there have been efforts geared towards ensuring that food produced at subsistence level does not become an avenue of developing the local subsistence commercialized economy. This is so because it could deny people the opportunity of affording enough food to eat and to keep. Alternative livelihoods for household income generation have been the measure to mitigate the temptation to sell food in search of household income which is a serious factor potential to undermine food security at household subsistence food needs level. The diverse income household

needs have been addressed by diverse livelihood needs where alternative livelihoods options of household income generation and wealth creation support initiatives have been introduced. These interventions have targeted the more vulnerable members of the community including women, the elderly and the youth. Many households were supported with various income generating activities including bee keeping, tree nursery businesses, Small-to-Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and other non-traditional agricultural activities. Support activities have also taken income generation activities based on appropriate technologies to enhance sustainable household income generation. These have focused on activities such as small scale retail businesses for produce selling, fish mongering, poultry selling pan cake baking, apiary, and local goats. This support has not only tried to increase the household expenditure of the beneficiary households but also provided a foundation for self sustenance of the vulnerable households¹².

Despite the above efforts, the pace of household income generation compared to the increasing household income needs is slow. There is increasing pressure to turn to food reserves as a source of income especially to the people who do not have the food but have some money to buy some food. Also, it should be noted that the core foundation of recovery and development of the returnees in terms of household incomes, assets holding capacities and wealth creation remains the revamping of commercialized agriculture premised on small holder commercialized crop husbandry and animal husbandry. However, this is limited by the lack of a consistent programme for developing agricultural cooperatives and the challenges of existing land conflicts in the communities¹³. As

¹² United Nations Development Programme, 'ER livelihoods interventions in Uganda: Briefing for UNDP BCPR Mission in Uganda', UNDP, CCF and CPAR, 2010.

¹³ J. Vaughan and T. Stewart, 'Uganda Conflict and Market Assessment—Acholiland', Mercy Corps, June, 2011, available online at www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/mercy_corps_acholilandconflictmarketassessment_aug_2011.pdf.

northern Ugandans return home, land is becoming a major source of tension, and it is the most vulnerable members of society women, children, former abductees who are suffering the most as they do not own land for themselves. In essence, the existing land conflicts are limiting the pace of growth in acreage under cultivation hence limiting the overall food production at the end of the season. Moreover, the PRDP does not come out to address adequately the issue of land ownership and the kind of agricultural production that would best drive the need for food security.

The focus on achieving peace building and reconciliation is another important part of the PRDP. In this the quest to bring about national reconciliation is well founded. An important concern raised about the PRDP is that its focus on technical solutions like building infrastructures for examples schools, roads, etc at the expense of the underlying political dynamics of the conflict erodes the chance for achieving national reconciliation. Reconciliation is not a matter of bringing together the combatants and the people who were the majority of the victims to the insurgency, but reconciliation is characterized by national issues which if not addressed, the chances for sustainable peace is slim. The government has not come out to openly admit it is part of the crimes as believed by the people apart from placing blame only on the LRA. Government does even accept any degree of responsibility for the marginalisation of the North, yet, the people feel they have been deliberately left out from mainstream development. Basically, in all these years of insurgency in Northern Uganda, the government forces have been accused of committing atrocities on the civilians just like the rebels. It is also the people's feeling that government could have done more to stop the insurgency from bringing about the enormous suffering on the people. The peace building and reconciliation efforts are perceived to be neglected both in terms of funding and analysis in the PRDP document. The PRDP also defines the North¹⁴ as 40 districts almost half the

country rather than focusing on LRA-affected regions, which raises concerns about how the recovery effort will address the specific needs and grievances of the Acholi people. If there is to be lasting peace in northern Uganda, the government and its partners must pay greater attention to the imperative of country-wide reconciliation which does not seem to be the case. This would look like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission similar to that which took place in South Africa, aimed at addressing the political mistrust which has developed over years.

Following the above failures, the PRDP and National IDPs Policy in addressing the needs of the returnees and the resettled, it is important to point out the conditions for failure:

Firstly, there is the lack of adequate, timely and sustained funding for the activities drawn out of the National IDPs Policy and the PRDP. These inadequacies have perpetuated oversight mechanisms to delay the implementation of the PRDP as planned until the fiscal year that began in July 2009. This meant that the PRDP implementation started behind schedule. This premise of take-off provided an input into the limitations that would later be associated by the two responses to IDPs return and resettlement needs especially the PRDP. Although by late 2010, the design of monitoring mechanisms was being completed, and the PRDP was expected to run until at least mid-2012 with a total budget of around \$600 million¹⁵. Likewise, at the time of its launch the PRDP did not contain a clear funding mechanism; hence affecting official implementation until July 2009.

According to Oxfam¹⁶, there was further uncertainty as to whether the PRDP represented additional funds to the North on top of existing central government transfers, or the total cost of recovery in the North. Before committing funds to

Geneva, 2010, [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/%28httpInfoFiles%29/AA7A8CB8B06E752DC12578070057B4C6/\\$file/Uganda%20-%20December%202010.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/%28httpInfoFiles%29/AA7A8CB8B06E752DC12578070057B4C6/$file/Uganda%20-%20December%202010.pdf).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Mailer, 'From Emergency to recovery'.

¹⁴ See Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Uganda: Difficulties Continue for Returnees and Remaining IDPs as Development Phase Begins*,

the PRDP, donors, who already provide substantial budgetary support, wanted an indication of the central government's own financial commitment and preparedness to increase transfers to the districts. For its part, the government first wanted to know how much the donors were considering giving, before putting a number on its own planned contributions. A painful waiting game thus ensued. The funding relationship between the PRDP and the UN's Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) was also initially ambiguous, giving rise to the perception that the PRDP and the CAP were competitors. Donors were left unsure as to whether, where, or how to channel money.

Also the PRDP seems to be an overloaded policy framework that gives little room for internal linkages to develop in addressing the plight of the former IDPs and those still living in the camps. In this, the PRDP encompasses four core strategic objectives: consolidation of state authority; rebuilding and empowering communities under which return and resettlement of IDPs is included; revitalization of the northern economy; and peace building and reconciliation. These are very broad areas of focus which cannot be adequately managed under a single framework that has been rolled out at ago. Perhaps there was need to draw out the PRDP as packages that would be rolled out in phases. It was not even clear if the PRDP was meant to be a new initiative that would create parallel implementation structures, a prioritised list of objectives already contained in Uganda's national Poverty Eradication Action Plan, or a co-coordinating framework¹⁷.

Moreover, the government and its development partners have so far only focused on "visible" recovery and development activities in northern Uganda, including rebuilding of infrastructure and consolidation of state authority¹⁸. But there is increasing recognition of the need to foster peace building activities between communities and between northern Ugandans and the rest of the country if "visible" recovery and development

activities in northern Uganda are to become gainful. For instance, communities in northern Uganda have expressed great need for reparations and reconciliation, yet, government seems to ignore fulfillment of the promises during the Juba Peace Talks in 2006 about reparations it made to the people. Communities feel that while they have borne the brunt of the effects of the conflict, they are still marginalized compared to other regions in Uganda. Only links between essential service provision and the consolidation of state authority and peace building would help to address strong perceptions of marginalization and lack of government responsiveness¹⁹.

In addition to the PRDP, two government programmes of importance to the recovery of northern Uganda are the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF)²⁰. These programmes are meant to relate intricately to the objectives of the PRDP and the National IDP Policy, however, in their operation in the region, they seem to operate on different levels thus bringing about duplication and waste of funds. The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) programme is managed by the World Bank and was expected to enter its second phase in January 2011 with a \$100 million budget over three years (IDMC / UNDP, 2010). The government holds the primary responsibility for recovery efforts in northern Uganda; this is realised through the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) at central level and the district administrations locally. The creation of new districts has continued across Uganda, and the original four Acholi districts have been sub-divided into seven over the past three years with the intentions of bringing the services closer to the people in a decentralised Uganda²¹.

¹⁹ James Ojera Latigo, 'Elucidation of the challenges of return in Acholiland: Learning across lived realities', Human Rights Focus, Gulu, 2008.

²⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Uganda: Difficulties Continue for Returnees and Remaining IDPs*.

²¹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁷ Ibid,17

¹⁸ Ibid,18

The main weakness of PRDP relates to its overlapping, which seems to be duplication with existing programmes like NUSAF. Within the reconstruction component, many critics, especially the politicians from North and the returnees believe that what have been put in the PRDP document is not any different with what is in NUSAF. The fact that PRDP depends heavily on donor funding as it is the case with most reconstruction programmes in northern Uganda, undermines its ownership and implementation as its success will largely depend on donors' commitment and the government will to implement PRDP.

It is widely acclaimed in the Discussion Paper 8 (Republic of Uganda, 2004) by IDMC that PRDP 2007-2010 document, strategic objective 2: rebuilding and empowering communities, was billed as a major objective that aimed at providing social services and livelihood support to assist households achieve a level of normalization beyond mere survival levels. This provision would vary according to the respective sub-regional circumstances purportedly determined by 'conflict framework' defined to mean that interventions were aligned according to development needs rather than conflict needs and were sector based not appropriated for conflict setting. According to a Human Rights Focus Report, (2008) a research carried out in Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader districts or a section classified as the North Central Sub-Region in the PRDP document, the focus of intervention was projected to take a twofold approach: the implementation of Emergency Action Plan under JMC, and the return and resettlement plans of the large IDP population. The fear by many returnees and the critics of PRDP is that the empowerment has not taken place instead people are trying to adopt other coping mechanisms.

According to IDMC (2008)²², the PRDP concurs that the decongestion policy faces challenges of inadequate services in the newly created as well as the old camps and inadequacy of security organs to

²² Latigo, 'Elucidation of the challenges of return in Acholiland'.

protect people. The official document asserts "as the process of return/resettlement continues, the IDPs must be supported before departure and on arrival so that they can properly settle in the communities and maintain household income during a transitional period²³." The objective being to facilitate the voluntary return of IDPs from camps to their places of origin and/or any other location of their preference as peace returns. A number of strategies are then presented to realize this objective that was costed at an amount of 70.1 billion shillings (\$39 million US Dollars) to implement²⁴.

Whereas most of the camps were decongested, there is little evidence on the ground to prove that these returnees were given any form of support apart from seeds and farming implements which turned out to be poor quality. The seeds could not germinate while the farm implements like pangas and hoes were considered to be of poor standards and were rejected by those who had been given²⁵.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The weakness of law enforcement mechanisms in the North makes comprehensive police reform an urgent priority that requires financial and technical support from donors because they have been a key player in the reconstruction process in northern Uganda. At a minimum, adequate training for all police officers and the timely payment of their salaries should be guaranteed. In view of the high levels of violence against women²⁶, the police

²³ Ibid., 27.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The former Gulu district chairman, Norbert Mao, accused the Disaster Preparedness Ministry of supplying seeds that failed to germinate and said that Professor Tarsis Kabwegyere and his team should be held responsible for failing to follow the right procurement procedures; see 'Kabwegyere accuses Mao of sabotage', Uganda Radio Network, 25 June 2007,

<http://ugandaradionetwork.com/a/story.php?s=12042>.

²⁶ R. Saile, F. Neuner, V. Ertl, and C. Catani C., 'Prevalence and predictors of partner violence against women in the aftermath of war: A survey among couples in Northern Uganda', *Soc Sci Med*, 86

must be equipped to deal sensitively with cases of gender-based violence, and the recruitment of female officers should be encouraged. If the trust of citizens in the North in state law enforcement is to be restored, improving the quality as well as increasing the numbers of security personnel is critical.

The problem of IDPs in Uganda has existed since the 1980's and persists today. Although the majority of the people have returned home, some active camps such as: Corner Agula in Gulu District, Lira Kato, Omiya Pacwa, Paimol and Arum in Agago District, Akilok, Orom and Mucwini in Kitigum, and Ngomoromo, Aweno Olwiyo, and Potika A & B in Lamwo District still operate. This is a testament that the IDPs situation is yet to be resolved. In fact, it is a point of reference to remind the planning authorities that in addressing the IDPs situation in Uganda, it is imperative to recall that designing and developing interventions to address the IDPs situation requires a consideration of two categories of people with need, i.e., the IDPs (those still living in the active camps) and the returnees (those who have decided to leave the camps and return home or relocate and settle around former camps), in the former camp neighborhood or somewhere else other than home.

A close observation of the IDP Policy of Uganda and the PRDP framework reveals that there has been inadequacy in planning for the people who still live in the camps as IDPs. These IDPs reveal higher levels of vulnerability given the changing environment of humanitarian assistance. At some point assistance are rendered to those in the camps and then at others it shifts from camps to communities, where the people are now living as returnees. In fact the PRDP, which acts as the core framework for addressing the development of the Greater Northern Uganda, appears to favor addressing the needs of those who are called returnees while neglecting the needs of those who chose to remain in the camps. This inherent loophole from the very design stage affected the focus of implementation, by facilitating the needs of one

category of people (IDPs), the returnees and neglecting the needs of those who chose to stay in the camps.

4.1 Recommendations

Government of Uganda (GoU) must devise more strategies to ensure that IDPs who are still living in some active camps are able to return to their former areas of habitual residence so as to enable them enjoy their fundamental right of returning home. It is therefore incumbent on government to address the structural environmental factors that inhibit the people from returning back home. Land ownership is the main factor here. According to News reports²⁷ there are reports of land disputes among the returnees with cases of murders taking place in these areas. Among the affected in this category are the orphans, elderly, and widows are the most affected. The right to return is a birth right of a people's social system and not just a physical movement. From the field observations, most of these people believe that they have lived in these areas since time immemorial from their ancestors, and as such their return should be taken as a right but not a favour by the government. It can only happen if people return to their own land in their own ways. However, any coercive tactics employed to compel people to return may not work as they can only settle or resettle once they are confident that the security is upheld and perhaps guaranteed.

There needs to be more input in the revamping of agriculture especially for food security purposes first and later a gradual process of commercialised agriculture to enhance the potential of agriculture being an engine of gainful employment. Targeting support for the modernization of agriculture is vital, but should be done in support of people working on their own land, in particular through the return to the traditional cash cropping. This should also emphasize the facilitation of the use of easy, affordable and appropriate technologies that

(2013), 17–25,
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23608090>.

²⁷ For details, see Monitor Team, 'Madhvani wins Amuru land case', *Daily Monitor*, 5 February 2012, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/1320030/-/b0vn0kz/-/index.html>.

are friendly to the people's situation as returnees in transition from dependency on relief to self-help initiatives of empowerment and self-sufficiency. In this, the employment of the ox and its associated technology that can help the people build a farming system that can easily address their productivity and production needs.

Given the inherent disputes that have characterized the process of resettlement by the returnees, it is important that a mixed system of conflict resolution and management characterized by the formal processes and informal processes should be supported and allowed to further to develop. In this, support to customary legal structures for solving, for instance land disputes be promoted rather than the employment of the modern legal structures which do not augur well with people who are still mentally affected by their experience of war and difficulties experienced while in confinement. Customary institutions need to work together with state structures to strike a balance between what is formally acceptable and locally acceptable given the context. For instance, boundary disputes can be reduced by marking boundaries officially, but within people's own social system, through planting of specific trees called *iligu*. Clans can be supported to record all rights to land under their jurisdiction, for future registration with the sub county, county and district land boards.

It is important to recognize the role and function of the traditional structures and institutions of community mobilization and society management especially in an environment where the local people continue to harbor certain level of suspicions against the government. Although support to the local administration is urgently needed, in the areas of land disputes, it is better for communities to form their own committees consisting of both the elders and technocrats, using the current customary structures as much as possible, in order to reduce conflicts that feed on already suspicious minds. This has not been happening due to financial constraints.

Particular attention should be paid to the needs of women and children, with adequate funding

and resources devoted to maternal care. That Uganda has one of the highest fertility rates in Africa, with an average of seven births for each rural woman²⁸, makes the focus on women's health all the more important. Together with the priority objective of providing service delivery in return areas, efforts should be made to sensitise communities about the level of services they are likely to find in their home villages and future development plans. It is important that NGOs continue to involve communities in the provision of services with the goal of creating sustainable, locally-run facilities.

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²⁸ See Uganda Bureau of Statistics and ICF

International, *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2011*, Preliminary Report, Kampala, 2012.

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