

Engaging Male Youth in Karamoja, Uganda

An examination of the factors driving the perpetration of violence and crime by young men in Karamoja and the applicability of a communications and relationships program to address related behavior

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Elizabeth Stites
Anastasia Marshak
Emily Nohner
Simon Richards
Darlington Akabwai



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Executive Summary

Engaging Male Youth in Karamoja: An examination of the factors driving the perpetration of violence and crime by young men in Karamoja and the applicability of a communications and relationships program to address related behavior

Overview

This report concludes the Engaging Male Youth in Karamoja project funded by the Learning on Gender and Conflict in Africa (LOGiCA) Trust Fund of the World Bank.¹ The study focused on the role of male youth and violence in southern Karamoja and tested the impact of an adapted communication and relationships intervention on violence and criminal activities. Multiple aspects relating to security and the identity of male youth, including interpersonal and domestic violence, criminal behavior, attitudes and perceptions, livelihood adaptations, and the status of male youth within their communities, were examined.

This project entailed collaboration between three main stakeholders: the Feinstein International Center (FIC) of Tufts University (USA), the Network for Stepping Stones Approaches (NESSA), and Concern Worldwide. FIC carried out the research and evaluation components. NESSA adapted a proven behavior change program to address some of the underlying causes of violence in the Karamoja region. Concern Worldwide volunteered to have Stepping Stones join forces with an existing vocational skills training (VST) program. The research, intervention and evaluation took place over a nine-month period in 2013.

¹ Insight was provided on this report by Munyes Joyfree and Kidon Joshua

Stepping Stones Intervention

The Stepping Stones intervention led by NESSA was developed in Uganda in the mid-1990s with the aim of reducing HIV transmission through participatory approaches. The success of Stepping Stones led to adaptations of the model for multiple diverse contexts in order to improve communication and relationship skills. For the Karamoja project, NESSA (with input from FIC) adapted their existing behavior change model to target violence around cattle theft and other criminal behaviors perpetrated by male youth. Implementation of the Stepping Stones program took place over a ten week period in each of seven locations, and sessions consisted of a mix of facilitated group discussions, role plays, demonstrations, and guided self-reflection. Peer educations led the sessions with support from NESSA trainers, and participant groups were arranged by gender and age.

Methods

FIC used a mixed-methods approach in 10 parishes in Moroto, Napak, and Nakapiripirit Districts. For the quantitative analysis, the team used a stepped wedge evaluation in which seven parishes received the Stepping Stones intervention at different (randomized) time periods, and three parishes served as zero-intervention sites. Each male youth survey participant was interviewed four times—at the baseline, midterm 1, midterm 2, and endline. The total survey sample resulted in 1,556 interviews. The qualitative

component of the research entailed 195 interviews collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) with males and females, semi-structured, open-ended individual interviews with male youth, direct observation of Stepping Stones activities, and key informant interviews.

To note, both the intervention and the evaluation took place over a very short time period. Considering both the historical context and the magnitude of the problem being addressed—violence as committed by male youth in a pastoral and agro-pastoral region—we would not necessarily expect widespread behavior change immediately. While broad change is not apparent in the findings to date, there are indications of promising trends in attitudes that might develop into positive impacts given a longer intervention and accompanying evaluation period.

Findings

Lonetia

This study is unique in that it looks at the continuing and pervasive insecurity in Karamoja largely from the perspective of the *lonetia*, who are the perpetrators. The term *lonetia* is used by local populations to describe the cohort of exclusively male individuals who steal and/or cause physical violence within or outside their community. *Lonetia* activities are listed by respondents as the main type of insecurity in much of Karamoja today, in contrast to the widespread and large-scale cattle raiding that occurred prior to the 2006 disarmament campaign. This study sought to better understand who these individuals are, the factors behind their use of crime and violence, and how these activities might be reduced. Within our study population, we found that the *lonetia* are young (between 20–25 years old), with the majority made up of the Pian (61 percent), followed by the Tepeth (25 percent) and Bokora (14 percent).²

While we can only speak about the study population

in this report, we know that the *lonetia* phenomenon is widespread across all of Karamoja, and hence it is strongly felt that the findings have applicability for the broader geographic region. Furthermore, the findings presented here support trends on male youth, violence, and unfulfilled livelihoods elsewhere, particularly in pastoral and agro-pastoral regions of Eastern Africa.

The *lonetia* were more likely than the rest of the sample population to have disposable income (possibly as a result of theft activities) as evidenced in their being significantly³ more likely to say they planned to marry in the next year (as compared to the rest of the sample, which showed a decrease in the expression of the likelihood of marriage over time). In addition, *lonetia* were more likely to provide clothing for their households. While the population as a whole bought fewer heads of livestock, guns or spears, and beads or other items of jewelry over time, the *lonetia* purchased more of these over the same time period.

The *lonetia* category proved to be very fluid, with individuals moving in and out of it over the course of the study. Overall, the majority of *lonetia* (60 percent) were one-time offenders, meaning that they engaged in theft or self-identified as *lonetia* one time over the course of the four data collection periods. In contrast, only 7 percent qualified as *lonetia* all four times. Over the course of the survey, for all locations, the frequency of *lonetia* activity decreased; this was primarily driven by a decline in one-time offenders.

We found a number of potentially important variations based on frequency of theft in the characteristics of individuals classified as *lonetia*. First, those who stole more often were more willing to take (hypothetical) economic risks. Second, the more times a man stole, the less optimistically he viewed his future. Third, those engaged in more frequent *lonetia* activities were more likely to feel it was morally acceptable to steal to support hungry or ill family members. Fourth, those who stole more often were more likely to do so from their own com-

2 The *lonetia* phenomenon is widespread across Karamoja; these three groups were the only ones represented within our sample population.

3 All findings in this executive summary are statistically significant; for the sake of readability we will not use “significantly” hereafter.

munities. Fifth, interpersonal physical violence was reported at a higher rate amongst those *lonetia* who engaged more frequently in theft. Last, those who reported stealing four times were more likely to exchange the loot for money than to use it to acquire food or other household essentials.

The *lonetia* were more violent in their daily interactions than non-*lonetia*, felt more powerful now and in thinking about their future compared to non-*lonetia*, and had decreasing rates of trust for other villagers and for young men in other villages. They were more likely to have had a physical altercation with a woman in their household, an elder, a man, or a child. *Lonetia* also were more likely to believe it was acceptable to hit a child if he/she misbehaves.

Security

Overall, respondents (in all locations) felt more secure over the course of the study. More respondents felt safe at night (48 percent in baseline, up to 68 percent in endline) and experienced a security-related increase in mobility, which in turn led to better access to natural resources and markets. However, the improvements in perceived security did not mean an actual decline in experiences of theft, which increased (all locations) from 14 percent to 22 percent over the study. Interestingly, there was an increase in the theft of small livestock as reported by the victims (all locations), but a decrease in the overall rate of respondents who reported stealing livestock. This decrease is likely due to new punitive policies introduced by local military commanders. Self-reported theft of food, livestock, and assets consistently followed the seasonal patterns, with the highest rate recorded at the hunger gap.

The findings on the impact of the Stepping Stones intervention on theft are mixed and complex. Data from qualitative interviews with young men, male elders, and women show marked improvement in the behavior of male youth, including a reduction in their engagement in crime and violence. In addition, relations between male elders and male youth are reportedly improving, which has increased the elders' ability to both control and discipline the youth, thereby potentially decreasing incidents of theft and violence. However, the quantitative survey

data show that following the intervention, respondents were more likely to report that they would steal to feed themselves or their families, but this only applied to certain types of theft (i.e., assets from outside their community, livestock from inside their community). Direct participants in Stepping Stones were also more likely to report stealing after the intervention, compared to the rest of the sample. In addition, theft of assets as reported by perpetrators was higher when breaking out the intervention parishes from control sites. This surprising finding may be due to a variety of factors, including a possible short-term increase in negative self-esteem due to the self-reflective element of the Stepping Stones program.

Livelihoods

The notion of an ideal man is closely associated with economic status; young men are under pressure to achieve economic sustainability but are unable to do so. One objective of the research was to examine the nexus between livelihoods and the potential for violence perpetrated by male youth. It was thus critical to understand the various nuances around income-generating activities and socio-economic identities for males in Karamoja. Over time, we saw a shift from agriculture to the collection of building poles as the most important activity for survival. We found that the notion of an "ideal man" was closely associated with economic status, and that there is significant pressure to acquire wealth (in livestock, wives, and children) for young men. However, the idealized routes to economic sustainability were not in line with what men were actually doing. In other words, men feel tremendous pressure to accumulate assets but find the means through which to do so largely unsatisfactory and insufficient.

Interpersonal Relations

Respondents of both genders reported a decrease in domestic violence as well as improved relations at the household level. They attributed this change directly to the Stepping Stones program. The quantitative results support this finding: 43 percent of respondents at the baseline felt it was acceptable to hit a woman, compared to 23 percent at the endline in intervention locations. Views on

the acceptability of violence against children also decreased in the intervention sites, but only when we remove the *lonetia* from the sample (thus highlighting both the greater propensity for violence by the *lonetia* and the greater challenge in changing attitudes among this group). The quantitative results indicate that changing the perceptions around violence may be easier than influencing actions; in the quantitative data we see that the intervention had no impact on self-reported rates of violence by young men.

Men and women credited the Stepping Stones intervention with better behavior management. These improvements applied to both men and women, and, importantly, included after the consumption of alcohol, and were cited as contributing to the reduction of disputes at both the household and community levels.

The qualitative data also show some cases of increased sharing of domestic chores following the Stepping Stones intervention, with men actively participating in activities normally falling exclusively within the female domain, including childcare and food preparation.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study includes new and important information on the continuing transformation of livelihoods and security in southern Karamoja. In particular, it provides insight into the self-identity of male youth and how this influences the perpetration of crime and violence. The evaluation component of the study points to several recommendations that have the potential to solidify into lasting change if implemented (and evaluated) over a longer time period:

Tailor programs and objectives in peacebuilding, livelihoods, and behavior change based on variations among male youth. Programs aimed at male livelihoods or violence should recognize the variations among male youth in Karamoja in terms of propensity for crime and violence. The most persistent *lonetia* are the most violent, the most entrenched in their ways, and the most difficult to reach. This group, however, is the most in need of interventions

to reduce violence. In contrast, many young men engage in *lonetia* activities only occasionally and in order to make ends meet; these men may be easier to turn away from this lifestyle through the introduction of viable, sustainable, and market-driven livelihood alternatives. Lastly, the majority of young men are not engaging in crime or violence but are struggling to support themselves and their families. Programs should aim to help this at-risk group avoid turning to *lonetia* activities as a coping strategy.

Harness the enthusiasm and eagerness for new opportunities generated by Stepping Stones into viable and sustainable livelihood programs. The qualitative data indicate that Stepping Stones participants were extremely enthusiastic following the completion of the program and were eager for opportunities for real change in their lives. Lessons from this study imply that Stepping Stones would be an ideal precursor to a livelihoods program. For programmers considering this approach, the Stepping Stones and livelihoods components should be designed in conjunction at the onset; this fully integrated approach would allow for the greatest complementarity and optimal measuring of outcomes.

Build on positive results around gender-based violence. The overwhelmingly positive reports from female and male respondents regarding domestic violence point to the potential value of Stepping Stones in bringing sustained change, though a longer evaluation period would allow for greater certainty in this regard. Reduction of gender-based violence is something the Stepping Stones program appears to do very well. Building on the lessons from this study, we recommend that future programs incorporate a similar community-focused approach to this widespread problem.

Continue to focus on gender relations of all types. The qualitative findings indicate that the Stepping Stones program improved respect and communication across multiple relationships. The cross-gender impact was apparent in shifts in gendered roles within households and in better conflict resolution at the household level. These changes, and the reported improvements in domestic violence, should be built upon and strengthened in future Stepping Stones programs. In addition, the program appeared to

strengthen communication between generations of men. These relationships are critical to effective customary authority systems, which in turn may help to mitigate violence and crime by reinvigorating these traditional systems.

Implications for Further Research/Next Steps

Implement and evaluate over a longer time period. The *lonetia* phenomenon is common to the Karamoja region generally and thus findings are likely to be relevant to informing interventions across a broader geographic area. While promising trends have emerged from the research, this intervention was a short-term pilot program, which has raised further questions on how to work effectively

with this target group of at-risk male youth. In particular, it is not known if some of the promising trends around domestic violence and interpersonal relations would stand up over time, or if the negative theft behavior would taper off. How much the findings were influenced by external factors, including the poor harvest and the shift in military security policy, remains unclear. It is clear, however, that establishing evidence-based approaches to working effectively with male youth is critical to addressing pervasive insecurity in the Karamoja region and beyond. In view of the potential presented by the Stepping Stones Program, a stand-alone behavior change program or a combined behavior change and livelihoods approach should be implemented over a longer time period, with a corresponding evaluation component to strengthen this evidence-base.

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Introduction

The Karamoja region of northeastern Uganda is a semi-arid zone home to approximately 1.2 million residents who traditionally practiced pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods. Violence associated with cattle raiding has been an entrenched part of social, cultural, and economic patterns in the region for generations, but recent improvements in the security situation have allowed access for international and national actors. This study sought to gather evidence to improve program design around the violence, committed primarily by young men, that continues in the region.

This report comes at the conclusion of a pilot project, *Engaging Male Youth in Karamoja*. The project was implemented by the Network for Stepping Stones Approaches (NESSA) in collaboration with Concern Worldwide and evaluated and managed by the Feinstein International Center (FIC) of Tufts University (USA). Funding and support come from the World Bank's Learning on Gender and Conflict in Africa (LOGiCA) Program.⁴

The objective of the project was to both gather additional knowledge on the factors of male youth violence and to adapt and test the applicability of a communication and relationships program (Stepping Stones) to influence the perpetration of violence by male youth in Karamoja.⁵ The *Engaging Male Youth* project combined an adapted Stepping Stones program⁶ on communication and relationship skills with an existing livelihoods program implemented by Concern Worldwide. The goal was to evaluate the extent to which the adapted commu-

nications and relationships program could reduce the propensity for violence as committed by male youth in Karamoja. The timeframe for this project (design, adaptation, intervention, and evaluation) was sixteen months, with an additional two months for analysis and reporting.

This report begins with a brief overview of the stakeholders and objectives and then moves to an explanation of the methodology. The central section on findings covers the research and evaluation findings on the *lonetia*⁷ phenomenon, security, livelihoods and perceptions of identity, and gender-based violence and interpersonal relationships. The final section includes recommendations and points for further consideration. The annexes provide more information on the Stepping Stones and livelihood interventions, the quantitative methods and associated challenges, the qualitative sample, constraints and limitations, and the historical context of violence and livelihoods in the region.

Stakeholders

LOGiCA selected NESSA to lead the behavior change component of the intervention in Karamoja. Developed in Uganda from 1993 to 1995 with the aim of reducing the spread of HIV by engaging communities in participatory training sessions, the initial success of Stepping Stones led to its adaptation in multiple contexts to promote positive life choices and address risky or negative behavior. NESSA proved successful in modifying behavior in populations at risk of contracting HIV in a variety of contexts. Beyond HIV, Stepping Stones has also shown positive results in creating change around behaviors

4 LOGiCA is a Multi Donor Trust Fund supported by the Governments of Canada, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

5 The founder of *Stepping Stones*, Alice Welbourn, describes the program as “designed to build bridges of mutual understanding, respect and appreciation, within and across genders and generations.” For the purpose of this report, we will refer to the program as a communication and relationships program.

6 The original manual reference is Welbourn, Alice. 1995. *Stepping Stones. Strategies for Hope*, Oxford.

7 The phrase *lonetia* refers to male thieves and appears to have emerged following the start of the 2006 disarmament campaign. For further information, see Carlson, K., K. Proctor, E. Stites, and D. Akabwai. 2012. *Tradition in Transition: Customary Authority in Karamoja, Uganda*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

such as gender-based violence (GBV),⁸ household relationships and communication, interpersonal trust and honesty, life-cycles of violence,⁹ awareness of criminal behavior and building a more positive future,¹⁰ and livelihoods.¹¹ NESSA conducts Stepping Stones programs in Uganda and operates an office with full-time staff in Kampala, Uganda.

For the Karamoja project, NESSA customized their existing behavior change model to specifically target violence around cattle theft and other criminal behaviors perpetrated by male youth. FIC provided the context for this process based on prior research experience in the region. Implementation of the Stepping Stones program took place over a ten week period in each of seven locations, and sessions consisted of a mix of facilitated group discussions, role plays, demonstrations, and guided self-reflection. Peer educations led the sessions with support from NESSA trainers, and participant groups were arranged by gender and age.

Concern Worldwide worked for five years on a livelihoods program in Karamoja funded by the European Commission. Their vocational skills training (VST) program aimed to support new livelihood strategies through the provision of trainings and supplies delivered by four partner community-based organizations: Matheniko Development Forum (MADEFO), Karamoja Women Umbrella Organisation (KAWUO), Action for Poverty Reduction and Livestock Modernisation in Karamoja (ARELIMOK), and Happy Cow. The livelihood

programs targeted those assumed to be the most vulnerable, including pregnant women, women with young children, and unemployed male youth. For the purposes of this project, Concern's VST program served as the entry point into communities, and the Stepping Stones program was introduced as a related but optional additional component to the VST intervention, and one that was open to any member of the community.

The Feinstein International Center of Tufts University, a research and policy organization with a focus on marginalized communities, carried out mixed-methods research to a) build operational knowledge on male youth in the region and b) evaluate the impact of the Stepping Stones intervention on male youth. In addition, the FIC team managed the grant, ensured a phased research approach, and served as a liaison between the partners and stakeholders.

Objectives

This project arose from the LOGiCA Program's aim to generate operational knowledge on male youth at-risk, livelihood, and conflict¹² by testing a method of addressing the pervasive and protracted violence committed by male youth in the Karamoja region. This report aims to illustrate some of the factors driving violent behaviors and to make linkages between the social and economic dimensions of violence for male youth in Karamoja. While the findings are specific to the study population, it is strongly felt that these findings are likely applicable to other parts of Karamoja and very possibly to pastoral and agropastoral populations elsewhere in East Africa.

The project sought to understand if and how an adapted Stepping Stones program could positively influence and engage male youth, turning them away from violence and towards economic sustainability. As such, the intervention aimed to influence

8 Gender-based violence is now widely recognized as both a cause and consequence of HIV; see Watts, Charlotte. 2012. "Gender Inequality and Violence as Critical Enablers in the HIV Response," PowerPoint presented at the World AIDS Day at the Commonwealth Secretariat. London.

9 See for example Salamander Trust. 2011–2013. "Stepping Stones Training Package on Gender Communication and HIV: What Issues Does It Address?" http://www.stepsstonesfeedback.org/index.php/About/What_issues_does_it_address/gb.

10 Refer to Borhade, Anjali. "Adaptation of Stepping Stones Manual for Purposes of a Health, Education and Awareness Program with Adolescents and Adults in Prison," Disha Foundation.

11 An example of a livelihoods intervention can be found in Jewkes, Rachel, and Andrew Gibbs. 2013. "Stepping Stones and Creating Futures: Preliminary Outcomes of a Behavioural and Structural Pilot Intervention for Young People in Urban Informal Settlements in South Africa."

12 The linkages of economic opportunities and social dimension of peacebuilding remain largely unexplored in research and programming. For reference, see Amarasuriya, H., C. Gunduz, and M. Mayer. 2009. "Rethinking the Nexus between Youth, Unemployment and Conflict—Perspectives from Sri Lanka." Strengthening the Economic Dimensions of Peacebuilding Case Study Series. International Alert. See also Walton, O. 2010. "Youth, Armed Violence and Job Creation Programmes: A Rapid Mapping Study." Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre.

the propensity to commit violence, perceptions regarding the acceptability of violence on the part of male youth, and their livelihood decisions. We piggy-backed the Stepping Stones intervention onto Concern's VST program for practical and logistical reasons, but did not seek to evaluate the impacts of the VST program. The piggy-backed approach allowed for a) the recognition of the linkages between

livelihoods and violence in the region, b) the belief that participants would more readily sign up for a communication and relationship skills program in conjunction with a more tangible deliverable (i.e., the VST component), and c) the potential for livelihoods programmers to replicate the combined approach if it proved successful.

Methodology

Research Overview

This study used qualitative and quantitative methods to a) examine, document, and analyze the key factors influencing male youth violence in Karamoja and b) test the impact of the adapted Stepping Stones intervention approach on this violence. The FIC team collected longitudinal data across four time periods using a stepped wedge design. We worked in seven locations that crossed over from control to intervention at randomized time periods (intervention parishes) and three control (or zero-intervention) locations, for a total of over 1,500 surveys. Qualitative data from 195 interviews complement the quantitative data set.

Communication and Relationship Skills: Network for Stepping Stones Approaches

Following NESSA's adaptation of the Stepping Stones model for the Karamoja context, the program took place in three phases from April–October 2013 in the seven¹³ intervention parishes.¹⁴ The model takes a community-based approach to changing behavior, and the program is open to all members of a community. Each intervention site had separate peer groups for older men, younger men, older women, and younger women. Male and female participants attended sessions twice a week for ten weeks in each location. Overall, Stepping Stones reached a total of 2,362 direct participants in the duration of the project (See Table 2 in Annex A).

The livelihoods programs were underway when the Stepping Stones intervention began, and therefore the Stepping Stones component was introduced to

the beneficiaries as an optional addition. Unlike the VST programs, which had a select target group, enrolment in the Stepping Stones program was open to all community groups.¹⁵

Research Methods

FIC used a mixed-methods approach in order to best capture program impact and generate operational knowledge. A reliance on both quantitative and qualitative methods allowed the study to look more in depth at questions of perceptions and relationships and the nuanced ways in which these did or did not change over time. In an effort to reduce potential interviewer bias, the eight local members of the research team were men and women from Karamoja and fluent in the local language.¹⁶ The research team collected qualitative and quantitative data in 10 parishes with respondents from 18 separate villages across the Pian, Tepeth, and Bokora populations of southern Karamoja. In this section we review the site selection and the quantitative and qualitative design. Annex C, D, E, and F contain more details on the sites and methods.

Project Site Selection

Two primary factors influenced site selection for the Stepping Stones component of the project. First, because the program was to combine Stepping Stones

13 Seven parishes were used in the intervention portion of the study; two intervention arms had two parishes each, and one intervention arm had three parishes.

14 Parishes are an administrative comprised of a number of villages. In order of population, from largest to smallest, Karamoja is divided into regions, districts, sub-counties, parishes, and villages.

15 Concern Worldwide and implementing local partners offered a range of vocational options for the VST programs aimed primarily at unemployed male youth and women (see Annex B for details). Participants had some ability to choose which skills they wanted to learn, though with variations based on the local partner and market conditions. The nature and scale of the VST programs varied from one location to the next. In 2013, there were 506 women and male youth enrolled in the VST programs in Moroto, Napak, and Nakapiripirit Districts, up from 417 participants in 2012 (Concern 2013a).

16 The selection process for local researchers included a pre-test and a week-long training followed by a post-test; we offered positions to those who scored highest on the post-test. One-day refresher trainings took place after both the baseline and first midterm survey. Separate trainings were held for the qualitative component.

with the existing livelihoods intervention, the chosen sites had to be already established VST locations, thus limiting the possible locations to specific sub-counties in Moroto, Nakapiripirit, and Napak Districts. Second, to ensure that sites were part of an existing contiguous conflict system, the team looked for similarities in experiences of violence. Third, we sought representation across the territorial or sub-groups in the region, resulting in a balance across Tepeth, Bokora, and Pian communities.¹⁷ It was not possible, however, to meet all of these criteria while also working in established VST locations.¹⁸

Quantitative Design

The project utilizes a stepped wedge design, which is a type of cross-over design in which different clusters, in our case parishes,¹⁹ cross over from control to intervention at different points of the research timeframe. This approach allows the implementation of an intervention on a smaller fraction of clusters and increases the statistical power of the impact evaluation without having to increase the number of clusters (i.e., parishes). All parishes eventually receive the intervention, and thus randomization does not determine whether the parish is a control or intervention parish but rather the time of the introduction of the intervention. At subsequent time points, parishes initiate the intervention of interest, and the response to the intervention is measured.

Using the stepped wedge design, seven parishes (all of which had participants in the VST program) were randomized to receive the Stepping Stones in-

tervention at different times. Three parishes were also selected to function as a control group that did not receive either the Stepping Stones or livelihood program (see Annex F). The addition of the zero-intervention group allowed the study to parse out potential seasonal trends from the impact of the intervention; these groups never received the intervention.

The survey team collected baseline data in advance of the Stepping Stones intervention in the seven intervention parishes and the three zero-intervention (or control) parishes. Midterm one and two and the endline were carried out following each of the three phases of the Stepping Stones program. By collecting data from the same male individuals during all four sets of surveys, each parish and respondent served as its own control in the analysis, thus increasing the power of the sample.

The final number of respondents for whom data was collected in all four rounds was 384, all of whom had signed up to participate in Stepping Stones. Attrition from the baseline to the endline was small, with a loss of only 17 respondents. At the time of the endline data collection, and in line with the stepped wedge design, almost three-quarters of the survey respondents resided in parishes that had gone through the Stepping Stones program (Table 1).

Qualitative Data Collection

The FIC team collected qualitative data at multiple times through the study period. Methods included focus group discussion (FGDs), direct observation,

¹⁷ A more natural and obvious choice would have been balance across the three territorial groups of the formerly unified Karimojong, i.e., the Bokora, Pian, and Matheniko. However, Concern Worldwide was not working in any Matheniko communities, and (as our locations adhered to the VST site selection) we were therefore unable to include the Matheniko in the program.

¹⁸ The VST component did not (and was not intended to) cover the conflict system; instead VST selected its sites based on a needs-based and economic assessment.

¹⁹ Parishes are a geographic unit, commonly delineated by the government administration as a means of making new areas for political purposes. In order of population, from largest to smallest, Uganda is divided into regions, districts, counties, sub-counties, parishes, and villages.

Table 1. Number of Survey Respondents

	Control	Intervention	Total
Baseline	401	0	401
Midterm 1	289	98	387
Midterm 2	199	185	384
Endline	117	267	384
Total	1,006	550	1,556

semi-structured open-ended individual interviews, and key informant interviews. These interviews took place with various groups depending on the timeframe and the specific purpose of the data collection. FIC conducted focus groups in all locations with young men in Stepping Stones, young men not in Stepping Stones, male elders, and women

of mixed ages. Interviews were conducted in either English or Ngakaramojong, transcribed, and coded using NVivo9 software for qualitative analysis. Annex D includes a list of the time period and details of the qualitative interviews, which totaled 195 coded FGDs and individual interviews.

Overall Results and Impact

This study includes some of the first research specifically on the *lonetia* criminal element and, most notably, the analysis is based primarily on the experiences of these young men themselves. These findings have important implications for a wide variety of programming in Karamoja. While this study was limited to a specific geographic area and population, we know that the *lonetia* phenomenon is widespread throughout the region, and we feel confident that many of the findings from this study would also apply to these areas.

The evaluation component of this study shows some clear and positive impacts of Stepping Stones, although establishing clear causality is difficult and variations exist when comparing the qualitative and quantitative data. While keeping the limited time-frame of the intervention in mind, however, we believe that there are promising trends in key areas. In particular, male and female informants in qualitative interviews overwhelmingly cited positive changes in domestic relations and a reduction in domestic violence. The quantitative data show positive change in perceptions on the acceptability of domestic violence and also demonstrate positive externality as these views appear to spread across community members, including to those who did not participate directly in the program. (Self-reported acts of domestic violence remain unchanged; this may be

the result of a lag effect between perceptions and action.) Qualitative findings also indicate better relations throughout the community and increased respect on the part of young men for the male elders, with potentially important implications for the efficacy of customary authority systems. The data also indicate improved trust in government officials (including the military).

There were also some negative trends which are difficult to explain. For instance, respondents in intervention villages were more likely to say they would steal after the completion of the Stepping Stones program, discussed later in the findings on security. Overall, however, we saw improved security at the community level. Based on the qualitative data, the respondents attributed these improvements to the interventions, but the quantitative data show parallel changes in both intervention and control locations.

The Stepping Stones intervention was widely and resoundingly applauded and appreciated by the respondents (young men, older men, and women of mixed ages) and also by local and district officials. The program generated excitement and enthusiasm among participants, nearly all of whom requested its continuation in existing communities and expansion to new areas, particularly to those locations still seen as contributing to instability in the region.

External Factors of Potential Relevance

This section touches briefly on three external factors with implications for the outcome of the intervention: recent changes to the security policy, the 2013 harvest, and the existence of other programs in the area. Annex G provides a more detailed contextual overview of livelihoods and violence in the region.

The research for this project indicates that security in the study sites has markedly improved in the past few years. *Lonetia* attacks appear fewer in number, and male and female respondents feel able to engage in livelihood activities such as gathering firewood, going to market, and herding livestock with relative security—a marked change from 2009–2010 in the same area (Stites and Fries 2010). These improvements have been gradual and continuing throughout the course of the intervention and data collection, and hence likely contribute to the impressions of improved security.

An important policy shift occurred over the course of the study, with clear impacts on security as well as on customary authority systems. In response to continuing theft of cattle, in July 2013 the local commander of the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) instituted a policy whereby two heads of cattle had to be repaid for every one stolen (hereafter called the UPDF 2:1 cattle policy). Once the community of the alleged perpetrator is identified (by tracking the animal or animals), the community must either turn over the suspect (who is then forced to forfeit twice the number of cattle) or suffer the punishment collectively. If the community does not willingly release twice the number of stolen cattle, then the UPDF forcefully take cattle at random. Respondents widely cited this policy as having a strong deterrent effect on cattle theft from July 2013 onward.

In addition and perhaps more importantly, numerous respondents (young men, older men, and women of mixed ages) reported in qualitative interviews that the new military policy instigated a shift in the relationship between the male elders and male youth.

Previously, and as documented elsewhere, customary systems as controlled by the elders have eroded in recent decades; this is often cited as a factor in the violence perpetrated by male youth (Carlson et al. 2012; Stites 2013b). Interestingly, the new UPDF policy seemed to catalyze the authority of the elders, who were loath to see their communities lose animals. Instead, respondents speak of the return and enforcement of ameto against alleged perpetrators, a system of collective physical punishment against the youth. Ameto for young men requires a man's peers to beat him upon instructions from the elders; this brings shame (and physical pain) upon the youth and annoyance among his peers, and hence the re-institution of this penalty may have served as an effective deterrent.

Harvest in 2013

Unlike the rest of Uganda, which experiences two harvests, Karamoja follows a unimodal cropping pattern. This translates to one harvest per year for staple foods and cereals and a longer hunger gap (the period between food reserves running out and the new harvest coming in, also called the lean season). A poor yield in 2012 led to low stocks and seed reserves for 2013. Communities had high hopes for the 2013 season and were further encouraged by what started as a decent rainy season. Unfortunately, total rainfall was low and a drought from May to August damaged crops in the critical flowering stage. As a result, Karamoja endured a seven-month lean season instead of the typical five-month period (FEWS NET 2013). By December 2013, food aid organizations were discussing large plans to scale up and pre-position food supports for 2014. The movement of a growing number of people out of pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods (due in part to government pressure) and into agriculture has increased vulnerability to drought and heightened the impacts of the poor harvests that are typical for the region (see Annex G).²⁰

20 The FAO *Karamoja Food Security Assessment 2012* stated that more

Other Programs in Area

A few other programs operated in or near the study sites for this project and may have influenced the evaluation findings. In particular, a peacebuilding

than 30 percent of people in the region were depending on crop production as a source of food as compared to the 10 percent in 2008 (FEWS NET 2013).

program, run by the Danish Deming Group/Danish Refugee Council (DDG/DRC), involved small and light arms weapons sensitization, peace meetings, community safety planning, and conflict management education in many locations near to the Stepping Stones sites. Respondents in the study population mentioned the DDG/DRC programs as having similar objectives to Stepping Stones.

Findings: Lonetia, Security, Livelihoods, and Interpersonal Relationships

This section contains the key findings emerging from the qualitative and quantitative research and discusses the impact of the Stepping Stones program.

Lonetia: Overview

In the post-disarmament era, the *lonetia* pose the main security threat to the population in the study sites. We studied the patterns and motivations of *lonetia* criminal activity, and the impacts, if any, of the intervention upon the *lonetia* population as a subset of the larger study population.

The term *lonetia* arose following the 2006 disarmament to describe young men who continued to wreak havoc on local communities. Some men were able to retain guns for at least a period, but even in the absence of weapons the *lonetia* or—in the words of many respondents, the “stubborn youth”—used a variety of scare tactics to steal food, assets, or livestock from households. These attacks normally occurred at night and were usually perpetrated by those from other areas, although at times were reportedly done by youth upon their own village. By the time research for this study began in early 2013, respondents attributed every type of violence other than domestic abuse to the *lonetia*. This is clearly impossible to verify, but it is worth noting the pervasiveness of *lonetia* activity on local perspectives. In addition, this is a marked change from the previous insecurity, which was characterized by large-scale cattle raids on grazing areas and cattle camps (discussed in more depth in Annex G).

Youth differed in their willingness to self-identify as *lonetia* in the quantitative surveys, and hence we constructed variables to measure and record *lonetia* activity in the quantitative data, shown below.

1. Respondent reported having stolen livestock in the past two months and/or,

2. Respondent reported having stolen assets in the past two months and/or,
3. Respondent identified *lonetia* as the most important livelihood for their or their family’s survival.²¹

Based on the above variables, Table 2 illustrates the frequency and percentage of *lonetia* who appeared in the sample across the data collection periods.

As discussed in more detail later, the data illustrate that the category of *lonetia* is very fluid: most of the respondents categorized as *lonetia* through the quantitative variables do not steal across all periods. In other words, the numbers “defined as *lonetia*” in the table above are not necessarily the same respondents across the four surveys. This is backed up by the qualitative data, in which many young men talk about engaging in *lonetia* activity in previous periods but not at present.

Who Are the Lonetia?

Approximately 14 percent of the quantitative sample of male youth qualified as *lonetia* over the course of the study. In other words, 55 different men identified as *lonetia* at some point across the four rounds of data collection, measured based on the three variables listed above. The *lonetia* in the study population were slightly younger (20 to 25 years) than the overall respondents (26 to 30 years). Of the three main groups in the sample (Bokora, Pian, and Tepeth), the highest proportion of *lonetia* came from the Pian (61 percent), followed by the Tepeth (25 percent), and lastly the Bokora (14 percent).²² Edu-

21 All respondents that reported *lonetia* as the most important livelihood for their or their families’ survival also reported having stolen either assets or livestock during that phase of data collection.

22 Given the important role that ethnicity plays in many of the

Table 2: Respondent Reported Stealing Livestock, Assets, and/or Identified Their Main Livelihood as *Lonetia* in the Past Two Months, by Percent and Frequency

	Baseline (n=401)		Midterm 1 (n=386)		Midterm 2 (n=383)		Endline (n=384)		Total (n=1,554)	
	Perc	Freq	Perc	Freq	Perc	Freq	Perc	Freq	Perc	Freq
Steal livestock	5%	20	4%	16	4%	16	2%	9	4%	61
Steal assets	3%	13	2%	9	3%	13	3%	12	3%	47
Main livelihood <i>lonetia</i>	<1%	2	<1%	2	<1%	2	<1%	2	<1%	9
Defined as <i>lonetia</i>	7%	30	5%	21	6%	23	5%	18	6%	92

cation levels of *lonetia* were not statistically significant but still interesting: the *lonetia* were more likely to have had some primary education (33 percent) compared to the rest of the population (23 percent). They were less likely, however, to have continued their education beyond the primary level (9 percent of *lonetia* versus 15 percent of non-*lonetia*).

The qualitative data introduces interesting and varied descriptors of the *lonetia*. For instance, the notes from one focus group discussion with young men state:

*The youths said lonetia are youths whose families are very poor and would want to help their parents but have no option but to steal. They steal because they don't want their children and parents to starve to death. These are youths whose children cry for food and milk.*²³

Many male and female respondents of various ages confirmed that hunger and poverty are important

outcome variables and the uneven distribution of *lonetia* across the three groups, we controlled for ethnicity throughout the analysis. Unless otherwise stated, all significant relationships for the *lonetia* or intervention variables are both significant with and without controlling for ethnicity.

23 Interview with male youth group, Stepping Stones [P1], Nathinyonoit Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, April 13, 2013. All qualitative interviews referenced in footnotes are in the following format: Type of interview, age and sex of interviewee(s), if they are in Stepping Stones, Stepping Stones Phase 1, 2, or 3 as [P1, P2, or P3], Parish, Sub-county, and date of interview.

motivating factors in the perpetration of theft. Young men themselves confirmed this, and often described engaging in crime out of desperation to provide for themselves or their families. Reasons for theft are, of course, diverse and complex and vary both among individuals and across time. More research would be required to parse out the relationship between theft and violence and what combination of factors results in more violent criminal acts.

Livelihoods of *Lonetia*

We examined differences across all variables for the *lonetia* versus the non-*lonetia* population, and identified a series of variations between young men who qualified as *lonetia* and those who did not; these are discussed in this section.

Lonetia were more likely to have disposable income than the non-*lonetia* population. This is evidenced in several variables, including their greater likelihood to be married or to plan to marry in the near future and the purchases they made for their households.

Marriage is a central component of personal identity as well as household livelihood strategies, but tradi-

tional marriage in the Karamoja context requires the transfer of a large number of animals in bridewealth.²⁴ We examined marriage patterns among the study population in order to understand economic and social differences, with associated implications for livelihood strategies. All respondents said that the prospect of marriage is an economic stress that contributes to a young man's desire for income. While *lonetia* were no more or less likely to be officially or unofficially married than the study population as a whole, *lonetia* respondents (in all locations) were significantly more likely to say they planned on getting married in the next year. When examined over time, the rate of planned marriages stayed steady for the *lonetia* sub-set while significantly declining for the overall sample.²⁵

Those categorized as *lonetia* may be more likely to expect to marry for any number of reasons, including that they are more traditional in their viewpoints, that they are already in a better financial position (possibly through *lonetia* activities), or that they assume that they can acquire assets relatively easily through theft. As discussed further below, *lonetia* felt significantly more powerful (present and future expectations) than the population as a whole. This sense of power may contribute to their optimistic expectations for marriage. The combination of their expected economic needs and their perceptions of their power may be driving the involvement of the *lonetia* in (at times violent) crime.

We analyzed the extent to which respondents provided for their households. The data show that while respondents in general were more likely to provide food, medicine and medical care for humans, medicine for animals, and clothing as the year progressed, *lonetia* were significantly more likely than the gener-

al population, no matter the time period, to provide clothing to the household. In addition, *lonetia* (or someone in their household) were significantly more likely than non-*lonetia* to purchase livestock, guns or spears, and beads or jewelry: this variable decreased for the population as a whole but remained steady for *lonetia*. These findings are relevant because they demonstrate that *lonetia* have more ready and regular access to cash than the general study population.

Lonetia: Fluidity and Differentiation

As discussed in more depth in the security section below, the proportion of the population that reported experiencing *lonetia* theft of assets, food, and/or livestock in the two months prior to a given survey ranged from a low of 7 percent (baseline) to a high of 22 percent (midterm 2). Our analysis of *lonetia* examines theft from the perspective of the perpetrator as opposed to the victim in order to better understand the factors that define and influence male youth, as well as the potential impact from interventions such as Stepping Stones and the VST program.

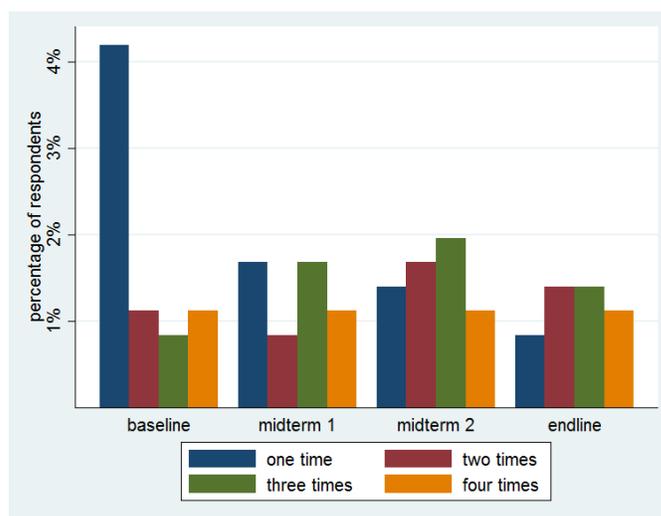
This study found a high degree of fluidity in the category of *lonetia*, which has implications for both the success of Stepping Stones and for future programming. This fluidity is apparent in the frequency with which a given individual in the study sample was categorized as *lonetia* across the four surveys (based on the three variables listed above). There were 92 observations of *lonetia* across the four data collection periods. Most of the men (60 percent) who were identified as *lonetia* only met the criteria once. The data on repeat offenders (those who qualified as *lonetia* more than once) are as follows: 20 percent were identified as *lonetia* twice, 13 percent were identified as *lonetia* three times, and 7 percent were identified as *lonetia* four times.

Overall, *lonetia* activity significantly declined in the sample over time for both intervention and control locations. This decline of *lonetia* activity was primarily (and significantly) driven by a decrease in theft by those who were identified as *lonetia* only once during the research. For the repeat offenders, their rate of theft followed the hunger season pattern—with an increase during the hunger gap and a small decline after harvest (Table 3).

24 Under the traditional bridewealth model, men would provide large amounts of cattle (sometimes over 100 heads of cattle) to the extended family and clan of the bride. Livestock losses, widespread impoverishment, and livelihood change have made such transfers very rare in the present day, and many families now accept an unofficial version of marriage—i.e., marriage without the transfer of bridewealth—for their children (Sütes 2013a).

25 *Lonetia* were also more likely than the general population to say that they expected to pay two other marriage-related transfers of assets to the bride's family: the pregnancy price (*ekicul*) and the surety payment (*akirop*) to demonstrate the seriousness of the man's intentions.

Table 3: Frequency of *Lonetia* Activity



We examined the differences between *lonetia* and non-*lonetia* in order to understand the various factors that contributed to *lonetia* behavior. Interestingly, the data indicate that the one-time *lonetia* offenders in some instances had more in common with the repeat offenders than with those who never engaged in *lonetia* behavior. However, there are still important differences between the one-time offenders and the repeat offenders, with potentially meaningful implications both for understanding the Stepping Stones results and also for the design and targeting of future programs aimed at male youth in the region. These differences are discussed below.

First, there was a positive correlation between frequent theft and economic choices—the repeat offenders were significantly more likely to be willing to take economic risks in hypothetical situations, particularly around business ventures.²⁶

Second, the frequency of *lonetia* activity correlated with perceptions of the future. The more times an individual reported stealing, the less likely he was to envision a successful future. This finding could

²⁶ For instance, while repeat offender *lonetia* were no less or more likely to say they would take a goat or money now compared to later, they were significantly more likely to go into a business with potential for large profit but higher probability of loss, compared to a business with low profits but greater security.

be understood in a number of ways. Someone who stole regularly might expect to eventually be caught, which may contribute to a more pessimistic outlook. Conversely, a pessimistic personality may contribute to a greater predilection to engage in *lonetia* activities.

Third and not surprisingly, *lonetia* opinions on the morality of theft corresponded to how often they stole over the course of the study. The more an individual engaged in *lonetia* activity, the more likely he was to believe it was acceptable to steal when hungry (from either his community or another community) or if his child needed medical care. Fourth, those who stole more often were more likely to report that they stole from their own communities.

This shift to internal theft is a marked and important change from the pre-disarmament era and may illustrate the breakdown of the systems of customary authority, as previously there was generally adherence to the strict prohibitions against internal theft (Carlson et al. 2012).

Fifth, while Table 4 below shows that *lonetia* overall were significantly more likely to physically assault others than non-*lonetia*, the repeat offenders were significantly more likely than the one-timers to report that they had assaulted a man, woman, and/or elder in the two months prior to the data collection. This demonstrates a clear correlation between propensity for theft and propensity for violence.

Table 4: The *Lonetia* and Propensity for Violence

In the past two months, physically assaulted the following:	<i>Lonetia</i>	Non- <i>lonetia</i>
Another man	28%	7%
A woman in the household	25%	5%
An elder	9%	<1%
A child	37%	12%

Table 5: Number of Times Identified as *lonetia* and What They Reported Stealing

Livestock	Assets	Livestock and assets	Non- <i>lonetia</i>
One time	52%	49%	6%
Two times	68%	41%	14%
Three times	76%	48%	24%
Four times	81%	75%	56%

Last, significant correlations existed between the frequency of theft and the items that *lonetia* stole, as shown in Table 5. The more frequently a respondent reported carrying out *lonetia* activity, the significantly more likely they were to have reported stealing both assets and livestock in the past two months or just livestock, compared to the one-time *lonetia*.

For the small group of *lonetia* in our sample who reported stealing livestock and assets four times during the study, theft appears to be an integral component of their livelihood. Of these respondents, 75 percent of them also self-reported that being a *lonetia* was their most important livelihood activity. This is further supported by the fact that frequent *lonetia* were significantly less likely to report using the stolen assets for food, but rather for money, compared to more infrequent *lonetia*. Hunger appears to drive occasional theft, while monetary gain (and associated benefits) drives repeat offenses. These important differences in motivation between these groups—as well as the relative difficulty in recruiting the persistent *lonetia* into such programs—need to be taken into account when designing any programming with the goal of impacting *lonetia* behavior.

Several characteristics of *lonetia* overall (regardless of how often they stole or whether they were in control or treatment locations) are worth noting. The *lonetia* felt more powerful—both now and in their expected future—than the non-*lonetia* population. This is not particularly surprising considering their ability and willingness to use force to achieve desired ends, but may have consequences if programs aim to attract downtrodden male youth: these particular youth clearly do not feel downtrodden, and hence are less likely to volunteer for participation. In addition, the *lonetia* were significantly less likely to

trust people from neighboring villages, and, in particular, their trust in young men from another village declined over time. This is in marked contrast to the steady increase in trust for the study population as a whole. Again, this is not surprising when we consider that it is the male youth who likely have the greatest knowledge—and hence suspicion—regarding the tendencies of other males.

Security

We analyzed security from the perspective of both victims and perpetrators and considered a combination of variables in the quantitative survey and the qualitative interviews.²⁷ In the larger context, it is clear that security has improved markedly when compared to the period prior to the 2006 disarmament campaign. In addition, respondents in all locations reported an improved sense of security over the course of the study in the qualitative data. The quantitative findings generally support this perception; for instance, while 48 percent of respondents (in both intervention and control sites) reported feeling safe where they slept at night at the baseline, this rose to 68 percent by the endline. The same trend was apparent for sense of safety of money, food, and small livestock over the course of the study, with dips during the least food-secure period, most visible when looking at the safety of small livestock (Table 6). While perceptions of safety around small livestock rebounded and essentially increased from the baseline to the endline, the *lonetia* cohort felt that their small livestock was significantly less safe over time (from 67 percent to 44 percent from baseline to endline). In all locations, respondents reported that the better security has brought livelihood improvements, such as increased mobility in both bush areas (for resource collection or herding) and between villages.

Perceptions of security may have improved over the course of the study, but this did not translate into an actual decline in the experience of theft, at times accompanied by violence. Interestingly, although more people reported feeling safe by the end of the study,

²⁷ These variables included whether or not someone felt safe at night, how frequently thefts and/or attacks occurred, what items were stolen, and the perceived safety of household assets (food, money, and livestock) overnight.

Table 6: Perceptions of Safety Over Time

	Baseline	Midterm 1	Midterm 2	Endline
Physically safe at the place where you sleep	48%	53%	57%	68%
Can keep money overnight if not at home	81%	88%	84%	88%
Can keep food overnight if not at home	87%	94%	92%	94%
Chickens and goats are safe at night	51%	48%	47%	54%

the reports of theft of food or assets perpetrated by people from other villages increased significantly from 14 percent to 22 percent over the course of the study (with spikes of 25 percent and 28 percent at the two midterms, corresponding to the hunger season).

As discussed earlier, the data indicate that the UPDF 2:1 cattle repayment policy was a deterrent to cattle theft, with an associated positive effect on security. However, there was a significant increase over the course of the study in all sites in reported incidents of small livestock theft. One hypothesis is that because large livestock carried a harsh punishment due to the new policy, thieves went for an easier target—small livestock. Another hypothesis is that small livestock are quickly and easily consumable, and were hence attractive as hunger spiked. In addition, small livestock are less likely to be tracked and are more easily sold in the markets or integrated into a perpetrator’s herd than a larger animal.

As with the theft of food and assets, the pattern for theft of livestock was consistent with seasonal change, with rates of reported theft increasing during the hunger gap. This finding is supported by respondents in all sites feeling safer about their small livestock at the baseline and endline than at either midterm (Table 6 above).

Impact of the Intervention on Security-Related Variables

The impact of the intervention on overall behavior

and perceptions of male youth is central to understanding the overall outcome of the Stepping Stones program. The final picture, however, looks very different when we factor in or remove the *lonetia* from the sample. Ultimately, this illustrates the complexity of seeking to promote behavior change when the behavior is embedded in livelihood strategies and self-identity. The clear message from the quantitative data is the extent to which the *lonetia* are comfortable with their lives and resistant to change. We return to the implications of

these differences for the design and targeting of future programs in the conclusion section.

Impact on Participation Rates in Theft and Types of Goods Stolen

Young men who participated in Stepping Stones and those who lived in Stepping Stones parishes were significantly more likely than non-participants to say they would steal assets from someone outside the community if they were hungry. In addition, they were significantly more likely to say they would steal livestock from someone inside the community.²⁸ Both of these variables were highest during the midterms, thereby corresponding to the hunger gap. Individuals might be more hesitant to steal livestock from other communities due to a greater likelihood of being reported to the police (13 percent of respondents would report to the police if someone from their own village stole from them compared to 19 percent if someone from another village stole from them). Similarly, theft of assets (utensils, tools, clothing, etc.) from your own community is likely to result in rapid identification of the items, whereas livestock can normally be sold very quickly, hence hiding the evidence.

The picture is also not particularly rosy when we consider actual theft. While self-reported theft of assets and food remained steady at 3 percent through-

28 These are both *perceptions* in response to “would you steal if...” questions. Actual theft is covered in the next paragraph.

out the course of the entire study across both control and intervention sites, there was a significant difference between parishes that had received the intervention and those that did not (Table 7). The difference was even greater if only comparing those respondents who attended the Stepping Stones program versus those who lived in a Stepping Stones parish. This pattern is further corroborated by the significantly higher rate of respondents reporting being victims of *lonetia* activity in the intervention parishes. Not surprisingly, the theft of both livestock and food/assets was highest during the height of the hunger gap, corresponding with the second midterm. This rate fell slightly by the harvest, though the rate of food/asset theft was still higher at the endline than in the baseline or first midterm in the intervention villages. To note, we do not know if this increase in theft behavior is a short-term reaction to the self-reflection aspects of the intervention; this possibility is discussed in the more depth in the next section and additional analysis is included in the conclusion section.

In addition, although livestock rates decreased over time, we saw no correlation with the Stepping Stones intervention and decreasing rates of livestock theft. Rather, this decrease was likely driven by the stricter and more aggressive government policy against cattle theft.

The qualitative data show a markedly different perception of the acceptability of crime from the quantitative data. The overwhelming majority of re-

spondents (including young men who were also in the quantitative sample and older men and women of mixed ages) discuss a decrease in such activities. These changes are not attributed solely to Stepping Stones, but rather to a combination of disarmament, the UPDF's 2:1 policy, and the behavior changes brought by involvement in Stepping Stones and other programs, as explained by a young man:

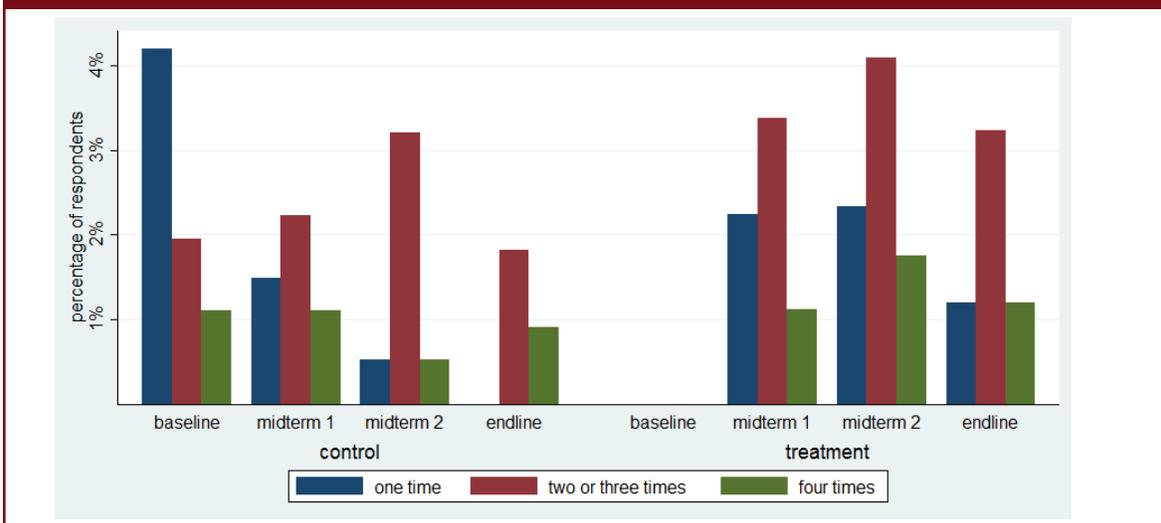
The entire community has changed, fights have reduced, theft, killings that used to be so rampant with a lot of envy in people all are disappearing; peace is prevailing now unlike in the past. To me three bodies played a role in causing these changes, the government that took away the gun, DDG in its messages of peaceful living, and Stepping Stones in its teachings and advice to the community.²⁹

Of particular interest is the number of young men who said that they had given up *lonetia* activity:

My peers too have changed, especially those who attend the Stepping Stones program and also those in the VST program. They do not regard lonetia activities as a source of livelihood like the way they used

²⁹ Interview with male youth [LA], Stepping Stones [P1] and VST Participant, Nathinyonoit Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, September 13, 2013.

Table 7: Frequency of Lonetia Activity by Intervention Parish



*to before. Instead they see it as a criminal act and as an activity which brings disharmony in the community. Instead we go for firewood, charcoal and mostly hunting for survival.*³⁰

The ability of Stepping Stones to “soften hearts” was repeated by numerous respondents who ascribed this impact of the program to the reduction in crime and violence and to a general change in their behavior. As one Stepping Stones participant said:

Right now as I speak, Stepping Stones teaching has softened my heart such that I consult others in the family before I make a decision. Opinions of people in the community matter to me now for our family instead of like it used to be. Because of Stepping Stones I am now perceived as a gentle and humble man, members in the community have started to respect me unlike before when I used to disrespect others.

Impact on Trust and Self-Reflection

We collected data on trust as a component of security in order to gauge levels of trust in other communities, in specific community groups, and in officials. Trust levels increased significantly over time for nearly all categories across the duration of the study in both control and intervention locations. A greater percentage of respondents reported the following categories to be worthy of their trust: male youth, male elders, people in the community, neighboring villages, male youth in other communities, district officials, police, UPDF, and a range of local government officials. Of note, trust was very high at the beginning of the study, with more than 90 percent of respondents reporting having trust in all categories except for the UPDF. Interestingly, the one group of respondents who did not report feeling increased trust in others over the course of the study was the *lonetia*.

Given that the Stepping Stones intervention was designed to bolster levels of trust and improve rela-

tions, it is at first surprising that trust levels increased at the same rate for all groups, regardless of whether they had gone through the Stepping Stones intervention. This starts to make more sense, however, when we think about the gradual improvements over time in security. Trust is both a key component of security—you do not feel secure if you cannot trust those around you—and, as such, is also a proxy for security. We hypothesize that although the two variables of trust and security are normally directly related—i.e., when security goes up, trust goes up; when security goes down, trust goes down—increased trust likely lags behind increases in security. During the baseline, we saw already high levels of trust, but these only went up as people felt increasingly positive about their security environment. Trust among the general population does not go down even during the hunger season when reported thefts increase. This implies a general trend towards improved security even with spikes in theft, and this trend is naturally experienced equally in both control and intervention locations. In addition, the qualitative data show widespread comprehension of the factors that motivate theft, particularly the types of theft (such as small livestock theft, discussed above) that correlate most closely with the lean season. For example, a group of elder men explained why male youth steal:

*[The young men] steal because of hunger. They fear that if they don't steal, their families, children, and parents will starve to death. Some are very poor; they have no animals to herd or sell for food. They are idle and what their idle minds do is to plan of evil. Some have guns so they use them to get what they want.*³¹

As illustrated by the reference to “plan[s] of evil,” to understand the causes of theft is not to condone such acts, and a victim of a crime suffers to the same degree regardless of the motivation. These largely explainable and seasonally-linked thefts, however, do not cause a drop in trust, and hence we argue that this type of theft has become normalized and has only minimal impact on the views of the general population.

30 Interview with male youth [CL], Stepping Stones [P3] and VST participant, Narisae Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, November 25, 2014.

31 Interview with male elders, Nathinyonoit Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, April 13, 2013.

Returning to Stepping Stones, we posit that the intervention did have a positive impact on trust levels within and across communities, but that these specific impacts are difficult to see in the quantitative data because a) the impacts of the improved security are greater than the impact of the intervention, and b) trust levels were already high to begin with, making it difficult to find significance in the relatively small changes. However, we can see this impact where initial levels of trust were at their lowest in the baseline—i.e., regarding the UPDF, which was 65 percent at the baseline and 83 percent at the endline. In this case, a robust and significant relationship was observed with the Stepping Stones program.

The argument that Stepping Stones has had a positive impact on trust is strongly supported by the qualitative data. One of the clearest positive outcomes from Stepping Stones is its contribution to conflict resolution and problem solving within communities. For instance, a Stepping Stones participant spoke of how he had worked with a neighbor to avoid conflict:

My peers also respect and now listen to my advice. I relate well with my neighbors. For instance when my neighbor's animal went to my garden and ate my crops, I talked to him and we both called our boys [sons] and instructed them on how to care for the animals instead of letting them go astray to people's gardens. This is all because of the teachings from Stepping Stones.³²

A young man from a different location said:

When my peers are angry or when I am angry with them, I tend to keep away, and solve the problem later when I am calm. I don't rush into a problem because sometimes I can mistake someone who is innocent. All this is because of the conflict-resolution skills.³³

Respondents also spoke of improved trust and better relations with those from outside of their com-

munities, including from other groups. A man explained that incidents of group-based name calling in his village had decreased as a result of Stepping Stones: “We no longer call [a person] by his place name or ‘from Lorengedwat’ because these were avenues for ganging [up] and later conflicts and raids would emerge.”³⁴ Another young man said that he had “learned to stay in harmony with the rest of his ethnic neighbors, like the Pokot” and that the community effectively intervened to prevent retaliatory raiding:

If someone wants to spoil [the peace] by stealing, the rest of the people have to track footmarks and find [the animals]. All of the community will follow and be concerned because they don't want the peaceful co-existence to break; [thus they] need to be sure all animals are returned.³⁵

As much of the violence was between and among groups, these sentiments of improved relations are extremely important if they lead to longer term behavior change and conflict reduction.

While trust levels increased for the population in all locations, the *lonetia* were significantly less likely to say they trusted residents of the neighboring village, but more likely to say they trusted male youth from another community. However, trust in male youth from another community by the *lonetia* not only significantly decreased over time, it also became even lower once their parish had received the Stepping Stones intervention. This is perhaps not surprising when we consider that the male youth who make up *lonetia* are likely well aware of each other's tendencies, and it is possible that the Stepping Stones program—and in particular the difference between those who have experienced the program and those who have not—may further highlight the deleterious effects of these actions.

The self-reflection resulting from the program did specifically impact the *lonetia*. The *lonetia* who participated in Stepping Stones or lived in a Stepping

32 Interview with male youth [AL], Stepping Stones [P2] and VST Participant, Kamaturu Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, November 27, 2013.

33 Interview with male youth [CL], Stepping Stones [P3] and VST Participant, Narisae Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, November 25, 2013.

34 Interview with male youth [IP], Stepping Stones [P1] and VST Participant, Nariameregae Parish, Lotome Sub-county, August 24, 2013.

35 Interview with male youth [AT], Stepping Stones [P2] and VST Participant, Kamaturu Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, September 9, 2013.

Stones parish reported that they felt less optimistic about the future following the intervention. *Lonetia* who participated in Stepping Stones, when compared to those who did not attend, also reported they felt they were living their worst life and felt less powerful within their community.

These last points regarding the *lonetia*—the shifts in trust among male youth and the decrease in optimism, satisfaction, and sense of power—are promising, if subtle, indications of the intervention’s potential if tested over a longer time period. While seemingly all negative (i.e., *lonetia* trusted less and felt worse), we posit that these shifts may point to greater awareness of the harmful impacts of *lonetia* activity and may be the first signs of possible behavior change. We would not necessarily expect to see such results in a short pilot project, but such changes (in either a positive or negative direction) would perhaps be visible given a longer implementation and evaluation period.

Livelihoods

The study sought to understand current and evolving livelihood strategies as well as people’s perceptions of the desirability and sustainability of these strategies. Our focus on livelihoods was driven by the integral links between livelihoods and violence in the Karamoja region, particularly for male youth. We argue that, in order to understand shifts in violent behavior, propensity for violence, or perceptions around the acceptability of violence, we must also understand the ways in which livelihoods are (or are not) shifting and how people feel about these changes. As such, we examined change over time in both the livelihoods actually pursued by respondents and those that they most wished to pursue, i.e., actual versus ideal livelihoods. We also sought to examine some of the more psycho-social variables associated with livelihoods and personal identity, particularly around masculinity. We asked respondents how much satisfaction they felt in their present lives and how they predicted they would feel in the future given their current plans and expectations. In addition, we examined perceptions of power and respect in regard to the individual’s perceived position in the larger community.

Actual and Ideal Livelihoods

We saw shifts over time in the actual livelihoods pursued by male youth respondents in all locations,

with a significant decrease in the proportion of respondents reporting agriculture as the most important livelihood for their survival. Over the same time period, the proportion of respondents that reported collecting building poles significantly increased. The shift away from agriculture is not surprising given the poor harvest in 2013; as it became apparent that the rains were not sufficient, people shifted their efforts to cash-based activities. The young and mostly able-bodied men who made up our quantitative sample are well suited for the collection and carrying of the heavy poles, and the development of Moroto town creates a ready market. We knew from previous research that women adapted their livelihood strategies in the face of food insecurity by intensifying natural resource exploitation, primarily through firewood collection and charcoal production and sale (the latter also sometimes done by men) (Stites and Fries 2010; Stites and Mitchard 2011). The findings from the current research indicate that increased reliance on natural resources is also the most common course of action for men within the study population, as opposed, for instance, to seeking casual labor in town, engaging in cross-border trade, or mining.

Manhood in Karamoja is bound to social hierarchy and economic status, which in turn is linked to one’s ability to marry, procreate, and provide for a family.³⁶ Having a family is part of social status as well as key to a successful livelihood: a broad base of human capital and gendered household divisions of labor help to mitigate risk through the diversification of livelihood strategies. In qualitative interviews, respondents distinguished between “traditional” male youth and those who had opted to move away from the traditional rural, pastoral ways. A “traditional” male youth was less likely to have any schooling, would marry young and ideally have more than one wife, and would produce many children. In contrast, the “non-traditional” male youth had attended school and was more likely to be living outside the

36 Rites of initiation are critical for male youth; the uninitiated have a status akin to women and no formal voice in society. As discussed elsewhere, these important rites of passage have largely stagnated in Karamoja over the past few decades for a variety of reasons, resulting in the gradual erosion of customary authority and a concurrent rise in violence by male youth no longer bound by social and political norms (Stites 2013b). A steady increase in initiations in the past several years—including in some of the study sites—may have started to reverse this trend.

village, with (perceived) access to formal employment. Many interviewees felt that it was the “traditional” youth who were the most likely to engage in raids or thefts as part of their livelihoods, and that this was integrally linked to the need to bolster pride, as explained by a young man who participated in both the Stepping Stones and the VST program:

What [leads] traditional male youth to be thieves is they need pride, because being rich, being with animals in community, gives you pride. If your animals have been stolen, you need to retaliate, that's when your heart will feel good. Also, marriage, you need to officially marry. A woman is unique. A woman won't marry someone poor. If a man has all his teeth in his mouth, it means he has money, but when they say this man has no teeth, then he has no money and they won't want to marry you.³⁷

Findings from the quantitative data supported the concept that an ideal man has both wealth and cattle. However, men's actual livelihoods and the livelihoods they said characterized an ideal man did not keep pace, as is evident in Table 8. Over time, respondents in all locations were significantly more likely to say that ideal livelihoods included a herder, trader, or engaging in agriculture. They were significantly less likely to list hunting, burning charcoal, building fences, engaging in petty trade, undertaking casual labor, or being idle. The largest disconnect, as Table 8 illustrates, is in herding and business. These are the activities that men in the study population most wish to be doing, but very few of them are able to achieve this reality.

In seeking to examine possible discrepancies between men's reality and their social expectations, we collected information on the qualities and characteristics of an ideal man. The top two responses for survey respondents in both intervention and control sites (multiple responses allowed) were “protector of family” (21 percent, no change over time) and “protector of cattle” (13 percent, significantly increased over time). In other words, men should ideally engage in herding and agriculture or possibly business

in order to accrue wealth. Men have little desire to be doing casual or menial work, particularly types of activities more commonly in the female domain, such as gathering natural resources.

Impacts of Intervention on Actual and Ideal Livelihoods

The findings discussed above are from both intervention and control sites. We see no differences in views as to what defines an ideal man in respondents who either lived in a parish that received Stepping Stones programming or directly participated in Stepping Stones. The same holds true for participants in the VST program. There were, however, a few differences for those who were in both VST and Stepping Stones; these respondents were significantly more likely to say that an ideal man “provides for his family by any means” and is “a good father,” and less likely to say that an ideal man is a “protector of cattle.” The same respondents were significantly more likely to list ideal livelihoods as either casual labor or petty trade, and significantly less likely to say herder. As participation in both the Stepping Stones and the VST program was entirely voluntary, it is highly likely that these findings are less about change and more about the type of individual with the interest and motivation to attend both the programs. In other words, these men are less attached to cattle-based livelihoods, eager to find alternative means of providing for their families, and willing to engage in more town-based labor. As with the earlier point, these characteristics are important when thinking about how to best identify participants for livelihood interventions.

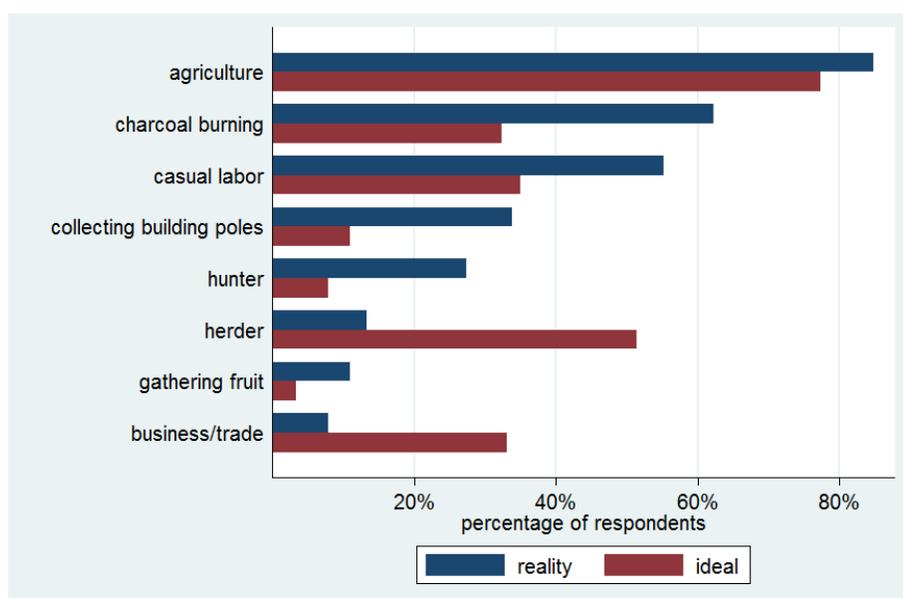
Satisfaction, Respect, and Power

We examined the degree to which respondents felt satisfied with their current life and livelihoods as well as the degree of respect and power that they felt they had within their communities.³⁸ In each of these areas, we also asked how they expected to feel

37 Interview with male youth [AT], Stepping Stones [P2] and VST Participant, Kamaturu Parish, Lorengedwat sub-county, September 9, 2013.

38 The questions on satisfaction with current versus future lives and on relative perceptions of power and respect entailed indicating one's position on a visual representation of a mountain, i.e., “Imagine a five-step mountain [picture displayed] where, on the bottom, stand the least respected people in your community, and on the top stand the most respected people in your village. On which step are you today?” We then asked, “On which step do you expect to find yourself in x years from now?”

Table 8: Real versus Ideal Occupation



in one year’s time. We found that feelings of relative respect within a community, perceptions of one’s power within a community, and expectations for future satisfaction all significantly decline over time for all respondents in the intervention and control locations. More specifically, at the time of the baseline data collection, the majority of male respondents said they were in the lowest possible relative position within their communities regarding degree of afforded respect. The percentage of men at this tier had increased by the endline. (In comparison, only 4 percent of the sample placed themselves in the “most respected” position, in comparison to 1 percent at the endline.) Similarly, the majority of respondents said they had the least possible amount of power in their community³⁹ at the baseline, and the percentage had again increased at the endline. By the endline, 14 percent more of the respondents felt they had the “worst possible life” (satisfaction) in the present day since the baseline (Table 9). In short, the male youth who made up the sample population for this study have negative views on their position within their communities; this was consis-

tent in both control and intervention locations and is thus not related to the programs.

Further analysis indicated consistent commonalities in the characteristics of respondents who rated themselves higher up in regards to respect, power, and satisfaction. Respondents who were older, had some education, were officially married, and were employed either in the formal sector or in business were significantly more likely to feel that they were more respected, powerful, and had a better life. This applied to both their current situation and how they imagined themselves in one year’s time. This is not surprising and indicates, in short, that men who were wealthier and had more livelihood options felt they had better standing in their communities and had a more positive outlook regarding their current and future situation.

This is one of several instances in which we found identity by group to be a significant variable. The Tepeth were significantly more likely to say that they felt respected and powerful and had a better life when compared to the other two groups. The Bokora consistently felt the worst off, with the Pian in the middle. On the variable for respect, for instance, only 49 percent of the Tepeth placed themselves on the lowest level (through the five-step mountain vi-

³⁹ Although not specified, we can assume they were only comparing themselves to other men.

Table 9: Perceptions of Respect, Power, and Quality of Life at Present

	Baseline	Midterm 1	Midterm 2	Endline
Lowest level of respect	66%	57%	65%	71%
Highest level of respect	4%	3%	3%	1%
Lowest level of power	64%	56%	69%	70%
Highest level of power	3%	3%	1%	1%
Worst possible life	62%	58%	71%	78%
Best possible life	3%	2%	1%	1%

sualization exercise), compared to 74 percent of the Bokora and 65 percent of the Pian. These differences held true when participants were asked the levels of respect they expected to feel in the future. This study did not seek to investigate the reasons behind these differences in great depth, but it is worth noting that the Tepeth have been more successful at retaining traditional agro-pastoral livelihoods than the Bokora, and have also generally experienced less conflict and insecurity due to their location high on the slopes of Mount Moroto. Similarly, they have generally had a less harsh experience with disarmament. In contrast, the Bokora bore the brunt of internal insecurity among the Karimojong in the 1980s and 1990s and were further weakened by the uneven disarmament campaign in 2001, which left them highly vulnerable to attacks from stronger armed neighbors (particularly the Jie and Matheniko).⁴⁰ The Pian have some of the best access to good agrarian land in southern Karamoja and have also (largely) maintained more positive ties with their Teso neighbors, meaning they are generally better able to access dry-season pasture and water sources in Teso and are somewhat less susceptible to poor harvests than their neighbors living in more arid ecological zones in the region.

⁴⁰ Interviews with Jeremy England, Regional Manager for Karamoja, UNICEF, June 2006, December 2006, and March 2007.

Impact of Intervention on Satisfaction, Respect, and Power

The quantitative data showed no significant impact of the program intervention on feelings of status, respect, and satisfaction except in the case of the *lonetia*, discussed in more detail in the *lonetia* section.

Interpersonal Relationships

The Stepping Stones program for Karamoja was designed to reduce both male participation in and propensity for violent be-

havior. Part of this entails improving interpersonal relationships, both within and outside of the home. This section discusses findings related to domestic violence and relationships more broadly. To note, in individual, open-ended interviews, male youth respondents consistently reported that the most positive aspect of Stepping Stones was ensuing improvements to peace within the home and the reduction in violence and disputes. In addition, focus group discussions with male elders and women of all ages confirmed the positive impacts of Stepping Stones in reducing domestic violence and improving relationships in general.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence within the home (by men against women and by women and men against children) is widely accepted in Karamoja. At the time of the baseline, 43 percent of the overall study population agreed with the statement, “It is acceptable to beat your wife if she misbehaves.” This “misbehavior” comprised actions such as failing to have dinner ready, allowing children to cry, or refusing sex. Female respondents gave additional reasons for domestic disputes, including drunken behavior by a male partner, spending money on alcohol as opposed to the family’s needs, or taking a new wife. Data from multiple respondents indicate that the consumption of alcohol by both men and women

Table 10: Perceptions on Domestic and Child Violence by Intervention Parish

	Does a married man have the right to beat his wife if she misbehaves?				If a child misbehaves, is it alright for the father to beat him or her?*			
	yes		no		yes		no	
	SS	non-SS	SS	non-SS	SS	non-SS	SS	non-SS
Baseline	43%	57%	57%	43%	4%	16	2%	9
Endline	23%	43%	77%	57%	35%	39%	65%	61%

* Child violence sample does not include lonetia.

plays a major role in domestic disputes, and hence we discuss alcohol at the end of this section.

Some women reported that the increasing idleness of men due to the loss of pastoral livelihoods had disrupted the household order. Men, they said, were not used to being in the village all day with little to do and were interfering in what used to be strictly the household duties of a female. For instance, a woman in Tapac stated:

We no longer respect our men in the family because of how often the man drives us women crazy. Now they crowd over us at the stove where in the past the men would be off with the cattle.⁴¹

Violence is also commonly used to discipline children. At the time of the baseline, 57 percent of the respondents (all male) said it was acceptable to beat a child if they misbehaved.

Impact of the Intervention on Domestic Violence

There were significant and positive changes around domestic violence following the Stepping Stones intervention. At the time of the endline, only 23 percent of respondents in Stepping Stones locations agreed that it was acceptable to beat a wife if she misbehaved (down from 43 percent at the baseline)

(Table 10). This was true both for direct participants and those who simply lived in an intervention parish, with no significant differences between these two groups. In contrast, there was no change in this perception in the control locations (43 percent at endline). This finding demonstrates not only an important positive impact from the Stepping Stones program on perceptions around domestic violence, but also a positive externality for the broader community. The data also indicate a change in perception on the acceptability of using violence against children; importantly, this trend only holds true when removing the *lonetia* from the sample.

Perhaps even more significantly, we found that the positive results regarding perceptions around domestic violence against both women and children (though taking the *lonetia* caveat into account for this latter variable) were even stronger the greater the time period since the Stepping Stones intervention. In other words, this impact seems to solidify as opposed to wane over time, even several months after the intervention (ideally, of course, we would also be testing a year or more after the program's conclusion). These qualitative data offer a possible explanation for these positive results over time, as evidenced by the quotes below. Many women commented on the improved domestic relations and decrease in violence, and some also said that there was

41 Interview with group of women, Stepping Stones [P3], Kalo-kengel West Parish, Lotome Sub-county, April 15, 2013.

an increase in the willingness of neighbors to intervene in domestic disputes. A young man explained:

*Existence of domestic violence still exists in the community although this is not so often like it used to be. When there is a case of domestic violence in the village, every responsible person goes to that household to ask what the problem is.*⁴²

Similarly, a group of male youth reported that “the people in the village keep reminding each other about what they learnt in the Stepping Stones training if they find them shouting, quarrelling, or wanting to fight.”⁴³

The above discussion is about *perceptions* regarding domestic violence; we also asked about action, i.e., if respondents had physically assaulted anyone in the previous two months. Not surprisingly, the data imply that changing actual behavior is more difficult than adjusting perceptions. The quantitative data show no effect of the Stepping Stones intervention on the percentage of respondents who admitted to beating either a child or a woman in their household. The qualitative data, however, strongly counter the survey findings. Both men and women report a decrease in domestic violence and improved peace in their homes. This was due both to the improvement in intangible qualities, such as respect, and to the acquisition of specific skills, such as communication, as highlighted below:

*Because of the teaching of Stepping Stones, the issues to do with domestic violence have changed and are no longer common. We learnt that talking and agreeing is better than engaging in domestic violence.*⁴⁴

Impact of the Intervention on Broader Interpersonal Relations

The qualitative data indicate that Stepping Stones

had an important and at times profound effect on the way in which young men interact with others. Although we do not know if these positive changes will be sustained over time, the importance of this finding should not be overlooked in a culture in which violence is deeply embedded not only in livelihood strategies but also in interpersonal relationships. The following comment on respect is indicative of the positive change we see in this regard:

*The most useful aspect of their teachings to me is my role as a father and a parent. [The Stepping Stones facilitators] demonstrated this as a tree that shows that me as a parent is a tree with roots to support the branches and then the branches are my children and family. So I have to be the main provider and also teach them how to grow well and how to behave in the community.*⁴⁵

These improved relations also extended to relations with the elders, with potentially important implications for the resurrection of customary systems that help to mitigate violence. One youth group in Lotome reported that “the Stepping Stones training has made the youth calm down, and they now respect their village elders, listen to their advice, and have accepted to make peace.”⁴⁶ Similar sentiments are apparent from interviews with male youth in other locations,⁴⁷ and confirmed by male elders in at least some areas. These changes might also apply to relations with female elders, as indicated by a young man in Lorengedwat: “I have learnt to respect others especially my mother. I also know that I have to work hard and contribute to the family.”⁴⁸

Interestingly, a number of men in Stepping Stones locations reported that they were now assisting with

42 Interview with male youth [CL], Stepping Stones [P3] and VST participant, Narisae Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, November 25, 2013.

43 Interview with male youth group, Stepping Stones [P3], Muruogor Parish, Lotome sub-county, November 7, 2013.

44 Interview with male youth [LD], Stepping Stones [P3], Narisae Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, November 25, 2013.

45 Interview with male youth [AL], Stepping Stones [P2], Kamaturu Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, November 27, 2013.

46 Interview with male youth group, Stepping Stones [P3], Muruogor Parish, Lotome Sub-county, November 7, 2013.

47 Interview with male youth [LL], Stepping Stones [P2] and VST Participant, Kamaturu Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, November 4, 2013.

48 Interview with male youth [CL], Stepping Stones [P3] and VST Participant, Narisae Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, November 25, 2013.

household tasks that were previously strictly within the female domain, including preparing meals, fetching water, and caring for children. One young man said:

[There are] changes realized in that they share their views, and if I go home drunk I don't harass [my wife] or if there's no food I don't mind. I can cook, and when my woman comes home she is happy! I even get water to bathe kids and can dress them if it hasn't been done.⁴⁹

These perceptions were not limited to young men. When asked if there were changes in domestic relations brought by Stepping Stones, a group of women said:

[The program] changed attitudes completely, [things are] totally different since the coming of Stepping Stones. It has brought cooperation within family members like mothers and fathers. The man used to be lying under the tree, today they share ideas together. If it's cultivating—they all go together; if it's looking for survival, they share together.⁵⁰

These changes are remarkable in a society with clearly defined gender roles and norms, and say a great deal about at least the short- to medium-term impacts of Stepping Stones. Respondents overwhelmingly requested that the program run for a longer duration and be expanded to other areas. If we weigh the findings from both the qualitative and quantitative data, we feel that Stepping Stones has a clear and positive impact on interpersonal relationships, including violence as perpetrated by men against women and children within the home. The extension of the positive effects over time is also very encouraging, and, were we to either extend Stepping Stones over a longer period or to assess the impacts down the road, we might see the positive changes reflected in both the qualitative and quantitative data.

Impact on Alcohol Consumption

49 Interview with male youth [LM], Stepping Stones [P1] and VST Participant, Nariameregae Parish, Lotome Sub-county, September 10, 2013.

50 Interview with group of women, Stepping Stones [P1], Nariameregae Parish, Lotome Sub-county, August 30, 2013.

Nearly all respondents in the study population reported regular consumption of alcohol (over 90 percent), and this rate stayed consistent over time. Consumption of alcohol by both men and women is a largely social behavior. Although we might expect to see an increase in drinking as a means to cope with hunger during the hunger season, there were no significant increases in alcohol consumption over the study. A change was apparent—if slight—when we asked people what they had purchased in the previous two months, with a rise in reported purchases of alcohol from 89 percent of respondents in the baseline to 94 percent in the endline. However, when we asked about average consumption (drinks on average), intake significantly dropped over the course of the study, with a small increase after the harvest (endline).

Many people stated that Stepping Stones transformed their drinking habits. For instance, people would explain that although they still drank alcohol, they were less likely to fight when drunk after they had gone through the Stepping Stones program. People also reminded each other of the teachings in this regard:

Old men, old women, younger men, and younger girls who were taught [by Stepping Stones] remind each other not to commit mistakes. If a man or wife is drunk the other reminds them of what to do.⁵¹

People across the intervention sites said that the alcohol-related quarrels within the villages had declined on the whole as a result of the Stepping Stones trainings. A male participant commented on general drinking behaviors:

My peers have also changed due to the teaching from the Stepping Stones program. This is especially seen on the way they behave when drunk. Instead of disturbing people, whoever gets drunk just goes to sleep.⁵²

51 Interview with group of men, Stepping Stones [P2], Kamaturu Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, September 7, 2013.

52 Interview with a male youth [AL], Stepping Stones [P2] and VST participant, Kamaturu Parish, Lorengedwat Sub-county, November 27, 2013.

In addition, participants noted that they dealt with intoxicated people differently. They often chose to ignore people who were drunk and bothersome instead of confronting the person.

Respondents in intervention parishes were significantly more likely to consume alcohol and consume it more frequently than respondents in the control sites. This relationship remains significant even when controlling for age and ethnicity. The increase

in alcohol consumption occurs primarily (and is significantly more likely) in the period immediately following the intervention. A possible explanation is that participants, upon receiving the small group stipend for participation in the Stepping Stones program,⁵³ return to their village and drink with

53 The Stepping Stones local trainers and peer educators made the decision, in line with some other programs in the region, to give par-

non-participant friends from the same parish. Respondents who did not attend Stepping Stones, but lived in a Stepping Stones parish were significantly more likely to say that someone else bought them their alcohol (as opposed to self-purchase with cash or credit).

Conclusions

The research findings of this study reflect a deep, complex, and sometimes contradictory picture of what is happening in Karamoja with respect to a rapidly changing social and livelihoods environment and the part that violence plays within this landscape—both as violence is shaping the landscape and is simultaneously shaped by it. Importantly, this study significantly deepens our understanding of the nature of the ongoing violence and insecurity in Karamoja. It generates evidence of key characteristics of the male youth involved in *lonetia* activities and provides insights into nuanced entry points that could inform program design to address violence or support livelihoods.

The research findings confirm and refine existing understandings of the livelihoods context in the region, with households engaging in a range of diverse activities to meet daily needs, manage risk, and cope with potential adversity. For some households, this set of activities includes the continuation of violent asset stripping; for other households, this practice has decreased. As has always been the case in the region, this diversified livelihoods approach is reflected in the shifting importance of different activities based on the seasonal and agricultural calendar. There is, however, a widening divide between the reality of existing daily livelihood activities and prospects of achieving livelihood aspirations and perceived ide-

als. We posit that this is particularly pronounced for male youth. Study findings point to the divide between what young men are actually doing and what they would ideally like to be doing as their primary livelihood activity.

The evaluation component of the work indicates certain promising trends resulting from the Stepping Stones intervention, particularly around male youth behavior as perceived by the wider community, perceptions around domestic violence, and improvements in interpersonal relationships on multiple levels. Perhaps not surprisingly given the short implementation and evaluation period and the pilot nature of this project, the results are not always uniform, and we see discrepancies in attitude and action (for instance in regard to perceptions around domestic violence and actual self-reported incidents of domestic violence) and across the qualitative and quantitative data.

One of the starkest discrepancies in the data is around crime and violence. The qualitative data point to improved security and decreased crime and violence on the part of male youth in intervention sites, but the quantitative data indicate an increase in criminal activity following the intervention. The variability of findings is a consequence of a combination of factors. First, there is inherent complexity in the multi-causal and multifaceted behaviors associated with violence. Second, the study took place over only one agricultural cycle, and we are thus unable to assess the degree to which the poor harvest influenced the results. Third, given the limited timeframe and pilot nature of this project, we cannot ascertain how some of the early indications of changes in attitudes and perceptions may ultimately play out in actual behavior change. In other words, would some of the promising trends in perceptions around domestic violence be solidified into sustained change, or will the situation revert to pre-intervention levels? Is the increase in theft perpetrated by male youth following the program a spike in this behavior in reaction to feelings of poor self-esteem that may taper off given a longer evaluation period,

participants a token amount after their participation. Each peer group received 10,000 UGX (approximately 4 USD) after each session. With often 25 people per peer group, this worked out to approximately 16 US cents per person.

or is this a more unintended (and difficult-to-explain) consequence of participation in the program? Would the widely reported improvements in interpersonal relations, respect, and communal harmony visible in the qualitative data become apparent in the quantitative assessment given more time? While it is impossible to answer these and other questions following this short pilot study, we believe that the promising trends that are apparent warrant the further implementation and testing of this sort of behavior change model in Karamoja or similar regions. We briefly revisit some of these aspects before turning to programmatic recommendations.

Male Youth and Violence

Although the overall picture is mixed, attitudes held by male youth in a number of areas have changed over the course of this study. We know that Stepping Stones has had a constructive impact on male respondents' attitudes on the acceptability of violence against women and children (with the exception of the *lonetia*) and on improving peace within the home. Equally encouraging and even remarkable in such a short space of time are the positive changes in attitudes and relations emerging between genders and between the generations of men. This is an area in which Stepping Stones has also had success in other contexts and settings.⁵⁴ Male and female respondents consistently reported improvements in family dynamics and interactions between husbands and wives, as well as improved respect for elders. It is possible that this latter aspect may also positively affect the declining customary systems for managing conflict.

This positive impact on perceptions around violence in the home appears to increase as time goes on, even after the program has finished (although this needs

further testing to see whether or not these positive changes will be maintained over time). However, while attitudes towards domestic violence generally improved, actual reported incidents of domestic abuse (self-reported by the male perpetrators) did not change. Furthermore, while the evidence points to a reduction in the acceptability of violence in the domestic sphere, there is no evidence that these changes in attitude influenced livelihood decisions or attitudes around the acceptability of engaging in the often violent *lonetia* criminal activity. That said, such pronounced impact would be unlikely given the short and limited scope of the implementation and intervention.

One particularly interesting finding is the changes manifested in the attitudes and feelings of the *lonetia* in the Stepping Stones program. *Lonetia* who either lived in a Stepping Stones parish or directly participated in Stepping Stones had a less optimistic view of their future following the intervention. In addition, *lonetia* who were direct participants, compared to the *lonetia* who had not gone through Stepping Stones, also reported feeling worse about their current life, and they felt less powerful within their community.

The study provides a mixed picture regarding any positive influence on the actual use of crime and violence by *lonetia*. This is disappointing but not unexpected given the nature of the pilot project and the pervasiveness of violent insecurity in the region. In addition, the Stepping Stones approach is based on the assumption that an empowerment model will enable people to make choices regarding whether or not they engage in violence or criminal behavior. But the drivers for at least some of the *lonetia* behavior—namely hunger, poverty, and lack of viable alternatives—are not addressed through an empowerment approach. In other words, the drive for survival (of oneself and one's family) is so basic and powerful that even if someone would like to change the way in which he copes with this pressure, circumstances may prevent this from being a realistic choice, at least in the short term. Lastly, we are not able to comment on whether young men who continue to engage in theft may use less violence as part of these criminal acts. This important and potentially significant aspect requires further research and investigation, but could be central to explaining

54 Stepping Stones in Malawi focused on intimate partner violence and improved relations at home; see Gwazayani, Peter. 2013. *Traditional Leaders Spearheading Prevention and Redress of GBV*. UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS. In Fiji, Stepping Stones brought improvement in gender equity and gender norms, see Evaluation of the Pilot Stepping Stones Program, Fiji. 2007. Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Project. In South Africa, an evaluation 12 months after the program found “men reported more gender-equitable attitudes with their partners,” and women reported lower rates of intimate partner violence (Jewkes and Gibbs 2013).

contradictions such as why self-reported theft has increased in intervention sites at the same time that security seems to have improved.

The *Lonetia*

This study confirms the link between crime and violence as committed by the *lonetia*. The *lonetia* are significantly more likely than the overall population to physically abuse other males, women in their households, children, and elders. The more frequently respondents self-reported theft, the more likely they were to report the use of physical violence.

The *lonetia* category is highly fluid and changes over time; young men are sometimes engaging in theft (possibly with violence) and sometimes they are not. The study concludes that there are nuanced differences in the profile and behaviors of those who fall into this category depending on whether they are occasional or persistent *lonetia*. An understanding of these differences will contribute to the success of programs aimed at managing insecurity and violence in Karamoja.⁵⁵ In this regard, the study provides a wealth of new information to improve and inform program design.

Through a better understanding of the nuance in the characteristics of the *lonetia*, we also have a much clearer picture of the relative importance of the drivers of behavior. Respondents in both the qualitative and quantitative portions of the study describe a critical element driving crime as the need to survive, address hunger, and provide for the family. These social characteristics of being a provider and protector are closely linked to masculine self-identity, respect, and worth. Respondents identify additional social drivers also associated with manhood in the

Karamoja context; the need for status, pride, and associated prestige and respect within the community from being able to marry, and of being wealthy with many cattle. The increased inequality within and among communities in the region and the erosion of cattle-based livelihood roles for many young men have acted as negative forces on the self-worth and status of young men; these may also be important drivers of violence and crime (Stites 2013a; Stites and Akabwai 2010).

The relationship between the drivers of survival and status may change and fluctuate. The study was not designed to capture or determine how these relative variations influence each other, but one interpretation would suggest that the relative importance of the driver depends on a number of variables such as seasonality (e.g., during the hunger gap it could be posited that survival is the over-riding driver, while status and accumulating assets takes a back seat), the socioeconomic conditions in a given community, and recent changes to or challenges upon an individual's standing within his household or community.

Understanding the relationship among the factors motivating *lonetia* behavior may lead to interventions better suited to build peace and reduce violence; failure to take into account this nuance may lead to overly simplistic programs. For instance, if we assume that survival is the primary motivation, then we might design economic development and alternative livelihood approaches to counter criminal activity; such an approach would leave out the more persistent *lonetia* who are less motivated by hunger. Furthermore, it appears that the more persistent *lonetia* are more traditional and more resistant to change; their behavior is more likely to be self-reinforcing as it offers power, status, and loot. By understanding these and other differences, we see the need not only for different targeting strategies in existing programs, but also possibly for different programs, with distinct objectives based on desired target groups.

55 Similar analyses of violence from the perspective of the perpetrators could also contribute to improved targeting and programming in other contexts.

Recommendations

The study findings and conclusions point to a range of recommendations for utilizing this information in practical programming to address the social and economic issues of the Karamoja and, with adjustment, possibly other similar pastoralist contexts.

Target Programs and Tailor Objectives Based on *Lonetia* Findings

This study found important differences in the motivations and behavior patterns of young men involved in *lonetia* behavior depending on the extent to which they engage in criminal acts. This finding leads to several considerations for programmers.

First, we posit that it is difficult for programs to attract the most persistent troublemakers (i.e., those who qualified as *lonetia* multiple times across the four survey periods). We know that members of this group feel more powerful in the present and when they imagine their future. They are more traditional than their peers (less secondary education and more likely to be officially married through an exchange of bridewealth). These young men are also the most likely to have violent altercations and the least likely to report any moral qualms around theft. In addition, these young men are stealing for money; theft is allowing them to acquire wealth and, most likely, to increase their status through further acquisition of women, children, and cattle. These young men feel relatively satisfied with their current position in life. They are likely to participate in programs only when they stand to gain more profit or status than through their existing (and successful) livelihood activities.

Second, we argue that there is more potential in targeting those *lonetia* who steal out of desperation and who have more in common with the non-*lonetia*. Young men who only reported stealing in one of four survey periods made up 60 percent of the total *lonetia* category, and the decrease in *lonetia* activity over the course of the study was due to the cessation of crime by this group. These young men were pri-

marily motivated by hunger, were less likely to find it morally acceptable to steal, were less likely to steal from within their own communities, and were less likely to be involved in violent altercations with another man, woman, or child when compared to the most persistent *lonetia*. In short, these men are overall less violent and are engaged in occasional criminal acts to make ends meet and to provide for their families. We believe that this group may be both easier to reach and more receptive to opportunities for alternative livelihood programs, literacy programs, and general education.

Third, 85 percent of the young men in the sample did not report engaging in *lonetia* activities (though we should assume widespread underreporting in this regard). We know that there is a great deal of fluidity in and out of the *lonetia* category, particularly during the lean season and to support hungry or ill family members. This tells us that many men (and perhaps their households) view *lonetia* activity as a possible adaptation within a diversified livelihood strategy. As such, those who do not report *lonetia* activities should be seen as very much at-risk of engaging in *lonetia* activities at any time, and it would seem that this group would be critical to target with interventions that help to mitigate against such behavior through support to existing sustainable livelihood strategies, the introduction of robust livelihood alternatives, or programs such as Stepping Stones that assist young men to realize their potential and to come up with plans for achieving their goals.

Taking the above considerations into account, programmers will need to tailor objectives and program design accordingly. Although purely speculative, a project that specifically aims to reduce conflict may ultimately have less traction than one that aims to support market sectors and introduce diversified livelihoods, because those young men most deeply entrenched in violence⁵⁶ have little motivation to cease their actions. On the other hand, those young

56 We know that *lonetia* activity is currently the main form of insecurity across much of Karamoja.

men who are engaged in violence and theft only occasionally or not at all are eager for new opportunities and alternatives. The participation of this group in a market-based program may ultimately, therefore, have a greater and more sustained impact on both conflict reduction and livelihoods support.

Integrate Livelihoods and Behavior Change Programming

One of the most discernible impacts of the Stepping Stones program was the enthusiasm and excitement it generated in participants. The guided discussions gave men and women a safe space in which to discuss their ideal futures and how they would optimally like to transform these aspirations into reality on both personal (such as being a better husband or father) and practical (such as starting a boda business in Tapac⁵⁷) levels. At the completion of the program, male and female participants were eager for opportunities through which to realize these goals. The evaluation component of this study did not aim to assess the VST livelihoods portion of the combined intervention; nonetheless, the findings and observations from this study and the experiences of Stepping Stones in other contexts (such as recent work in South Africa; see Jewkes and Gibbs 2013) allow us to feel confident in recommending future interventions that include both a Stepping Stones and a livelihoods component.

A combined program should integrate the livelihoods and behavior change components from the onset in a sequential approach, with Stepping Stones introduced prior to the start of the livelihood programming. The livelihoods portion would begin either shortly before the conclusion of Stepping Stones or immediately following its completion. A successfully integrated program would need to have cohesive overall objectives, theories of change, and targeting approaches. Such a program would also need a monitoring and evaluation element, with the option for real-time feedback and adjustments, in part because of the difficulties in achieving dual ob-

jectives of improved economic status and decreased violence.⁵⁸ An ideal program would include flexibility to respond to the participants' livelihood aspirations that emerge from the Stepping Stones component while also taking into account market realities. Self-selected livelihood strategies are more likely to have local buy-in and to be tailored appropriately by age, gender, and geographic realities.

In order to be successful, a combined model would require thoughtful and thorough design and planning well in advance of the start of any portion of the program. Operating in an environment such as Karamoja is extremely challenging due to problems of infrastructure, logistical support, local capacity, access to remote areas, and skewed market systems. Implementing a combined program in such a context brings a host of additional challenges and would require continuous oversight and support. Even with these obstacles, we feel that there is strong potential for a combined approach in Karamoja or similar areas.

Recognize the Challenges of Operating in an Insecure Environment

As this study demonstrates, violent insecurity continues in Karamoja. Assets are looted with regularity, and theft is often accompanied by violence. These assets include the resources provided through humanitarian and development programs, such as livestock, farming implements, food, seeds, etc. Overall, the security environment does show signs of continued (if gradual) improvement. Organizations cannot and should not stop distributions because of theft or violence, but should be cognizant of these threats and work with communities to minimize risk to beneficiaries. Programmers may benefit from following the lead of the beneficiaries as to the best design for the timing, location, and nature of distributions, as the local people know the patterns of insecurity and are already taking steps to mitigate their vulnerability to the extent possible.

57 A *boda* refers to a motorcycle taxi. Tapac is isolated from market centers, and there is little reliable or affordable transport to this area.

58 For instance, the USAID/Kenya and Mercy Corps' LEAP II program in Kenya aimed to combine peacebuilding with economic empowerment. The evaluation of the program found that efforts to achieve both these objectives potentially compromised the success of the businesses being set up (McCallum 2013).

Build on Positive Results around Gender-Based Violence

The Stepping Stones intervention had a clear and positive impact on improving perceptions regarding gender-based violence. Changing behavior around this type of violence can be extremely difficult, particularly in a society such as Karamoja with high levels of violence, clear gendered divisions of labor, and strict cultural expectations of feminine and masculine ideals. Globally, many GBV-reduction programs focus on sensitizing women to their rights, providing services for victims, and working with legal and justice systems to improve access and results for women. The root causes of the problem, including male aggression exacerbated by unemployment, inequality, shame, and the inability of men to realize their socially mandated roles as providers and protectors, rarely receive the same attention (Lwambo 2013). Focusing on both men and women, Stepping Stones offers a uniquely divergent design from the usual GBV program models. Given the success of Stepping Stones in this regard and the extent of this problem in areas such as Karamoja, we strongly recommended that the Stepping Stones program be further adapted and strengthened in this area and implemented over an extended time period.

Continue to Focus on Gender Relations of All Types

Respondents of all ages and both genders reported that the Stepping Stones intervention had brought improved respect, communication, and overall interaction across multiple forms of relationships. The cross-gender impact was visible in shifts in gendered divisions of labor within households and in conflict resolution at the family level. These changes clearly link to the reported decrease in domestic violence and should be built upon and strengthened in any further Stepping Stones program.

Stepping Stones also appeared to improve the important but often overlooked relationships and communications between generations of men in the study population. These relationships are of particular relevance when considering the critical role of customary authority systems in managing security and justice in areas beyond the reach of most state functions. Scholars and residents of many pastoralist populations across the Horn of Africa believe that

an erosion of the power of customary authorities contributes to insecurity in these areas (Odhiambo 2012). Peacebuilding programs often target customary authorities in an attempt to reinvigorate traditional justice systems, but little is understood about the success and sustainability of these approaches. The qualitative data from this study indicate a link between the Stepping Stones intervention and improved relations in this regard, but external factors (including the restarting of traditional initiation rituals for young men in some areas) may be as much or more responsible. Given the potential for Stepping Stones to have influence in this area, it is recommended that stakeholders consider revising and expanding the Stepping Stones program in an effort to foster further respect among generations of men.

Implications for Further Research/Next Steps

Implement and Evaluate over a Longer Time Period

This was a pilot study of limited duration, and hence we are left with a number of unanswered questions. Given some of the promising trends, however, we feel that an extended and revised version of the program would be a worthwhile investment, assuming that longer implementation and evaluation periods were possible. In particular, any evaluation should track whether the potentially positive changes regarding interpersonal violence can be sustained over time and if there are any impacts on other forms of violence associated with a longer-running program.

Several questions arising from this pilot project should be taken into account in the design of any revised model or research objective. This study took place over one agricultural cycle and one that saw a very poor harvest. The coincidence of a short timeframe and a poor year make it difficult to know the extent to which household and individual adaptations to food insecurity may have outweighed positive impacts of the interventions. For instance, was the increase in theft by Stepping Stones participants over the course of the study a result of the program, food insecurity, or dynamics that were external to

the intervention but linked to its implementation?⁵⁹ In addition, we do not know if the apparent positive changes will be sustained after the intervention ends, if the examples of positive externalities (such as around perceptions on domestic violence) will continue, or if the increases in negative behavior (such as increased theft) are spikes in reaction to low self-esteem that will taper with either a longer evaluation or a longer intervention.⁶⁰

59 For instance, did the Stepping Stones meetings provide opportunities for young men to gather, plan, and discuss possible criminal expeditions? Anecdotal reports regarding peace dialogues held in northern Kenya imply that young men may have used such meetings to identify raiding opportunities.

60 For instance, a longer evaluation period would allow us to ex-

amine whether there could be a S- or J-shaped curve for impact that emerges after the study period and is sometimes apparent for some behavior change models or participatory development programs; at present we saw no evidence of such a result (see Annex C and Woolcock 2009).

It is clear, however, that establishing evidence-based approaches to working effectively with male youth is critical to addressing pervasive insecurity in the Karamoja region and beyond. In view of the potential presented by the Stepping Stones program, a stand-alone behavior change program or a combined behavior change and livelihoods approach should be implemented over a longer time period, with a corresponding research and evaluation component to strengthen this evidence-base.

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ANNEXES

Overview of Annexes:

Annex A: Stepping Stones

Annex B: Vocational Skills Training (VST)

Annex C: Quantitative Analysis and Challenges

Annex D: Qualitative Interviews by Location and Type

Annex E: Combined Program Constraints and Limitations

Annex F: Study Locations

Annex G: Livelihoods and Violence in Context

ANNEX A

Stepping Stones

The Stepping Stones program provides a series of workshops with a participatory approach to non-formal learning in which the participants are the primary actors. Stepping Stones works from the idea that no individual is alone; everyone is connected to various parts of their community, with variables of context and time. With this interconnectedness in mind, Stepping Stones guides individuals through a self-education process that teaches the participants how their peers, family, community, and sometimes school shape their identity (Welbourn 2010). Stepping Stones then can achieve results by helping participants to understand their behavior

around the issues they face, and to conceptualize and rehearse future decisions and actions. This process is described in part by educational psychologist Bloom's pedagogy of higher learning. Figure 1 details the "Bloom Taxonomy of Learning Objectives," from the beginning of the learning process (base) to the final result (peak).

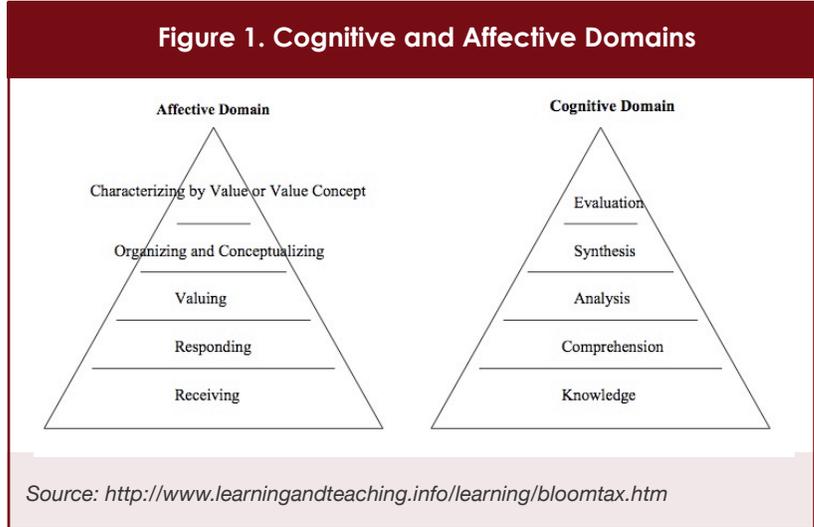
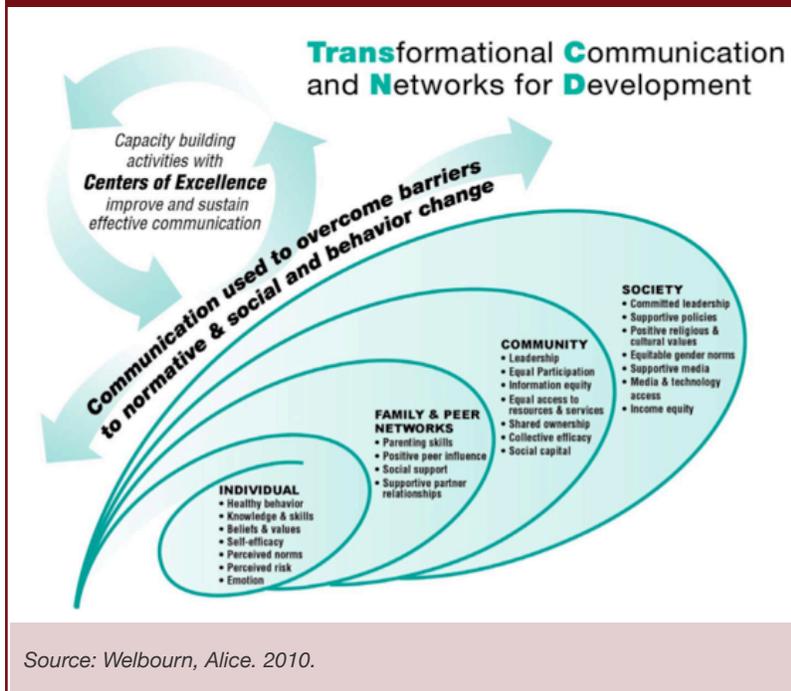


Figure 2. Socio-Ecological Model of Behavior Change



Stepping Stones aims to achieve societal change by first changing an individual's behaviors and attitudes. Known as the "Socio-Ecological Model of Behavior Change" (Figure 2), the Stepping Stones model aims to assist, educate, and empower participants, working through four modalities of communication beginning with the individual, then moving to the social network, and finally to community and society (Welbourn 2010).

The process shown in Figure 2 is implemented through role plays, demonstrations, group discussions, and guided self-reflections as means for drawing out individual experiences and lessons for the group to learn from, individually and together. Sessions follow what Stepping Stones refers to as a "fission and fusion" model, meaning the workshops begin with a general public meeting and then separate into four peer groups of older

men, younger men, older women, and younger women (Welbourn and Bollinger 2014). After a series of about seven peer group sessions, the groups reconvene to share their findings in a plenary session with all four peer groups. This pattern repeats itself throughout the 17 sessions. In total, each location holds an opening and closing meeting for the general public and then 14 or 15 peer group sessions with two plenary sessions for the participants. At the closing public meeting, local officials and the rest of the community are invited to hear from the participants about what they have learned.

The first phase of this project in Karamoja entailed the adaptation of the Stepping Stones manual into a curriculum aimed at addressing the specific situation of the region: pervasive problems of violence and communication barriers within households, families, and the community. The result was a manual of sessions laid out in alignment with the Stepping Stones “fission and fusion” methodology so that each peer group session and full community meeting built from the previous sessions. See Table 1.

Four facilitators from the local area, known as peer educators (PEs), led the activities in each area with support from Moroto-based trainers.

There was a great deal of enthusiasm at the parish level for Stepping Stones participation. Table 2 outlines the overall attendance numbers, for all four peer groups at each intervention location and the phase at which they received the program.

Table 1: Adapted Stepping Stones Manual Sessions for Karamoja	
Stepping Stones Session Titles for Karamoja	
1. Let's Communicate	9. Let's Look Deeper (Part 1)
2. Our Perceptions	10. Let's Look Deeper (Part 2)
3. What is Love?	11. Let's Support Ourselves
4. Our Assumptions About Others	12. Let's Assert Ourselves
5. From Conflict and Violence to Peace and Prosperity in Our Homes	13. Let's Change Ourselves
6. Human Rights	14. (Second Full Community Meeting)
7. Weaving Our Futures	15. Mapping Our Peace Together
8. (First Full Community Meeting)	16. Let's Map the Future
	17. (Final Open Community Meeting)

Source: Oron et al. 2012

Table 2: Table of Phases and Numbers of Participants			
Stepping Stones parishes	Stepping Stones villages	Number of participants (combined for all 4 peer groups)	SS phase of implementation (Phase 1, 2, or 3)
Nariameregae	Longaroi and Nakaale	280	1
	Lolet	185	1
Moruongor	Naronit	230	3
Kalokengel West	Loroo and Lominit	220	3
Nathinyonoit	Nadukae	340	1
	Lonangat	125	1
Kamaturu	Lorukumo	230	2
	Lokwakwa	290	2
Tapac	Napakakimol, Timingorok, and Lomodita	220	2
	Lonylik	125	2
Narisae	Naoi	117	3
TOTAL		2,362	

ANNEX B

Vocational Skills Training (VST)

Concern Worldwide designed the VST livelihood program to address key challenges in the region, including high levels of illiteracy, low levels of education, and obstacles for women in accessing economic opportunities. Concern also targeted male youth who “face challenges in adapting to changing livelihood patterns in Karamoja and are at risk of engaging in conflict” (Concern 2013b, 5). Implicit in the design of the livelihood project was the theory that through increased economic opportunities (alternative livelihoods) for both genders, positive gains could be made towards sustainable livelihoods, improved overall economic stability, and decreased violence.

Concern, along with the local four partner organizations, selected intervention villages based on areas that were the least served by other organizations (as reported by local officials). Recruitment efforts included discussions with local officials and community leaders to identify unemployed male and female youth and disadvantaged households for participation.

Table 1: VST Skill Area and Implementing Partner for 2012 and 2013

VST skill area	Partner	2012	2013	Total
Block-making	ARELIMOK	56	36	92
Carpentry	ARELIMOK	23	25	48
Leather tanning	ARELIMOK	0	31	31
Animal health	Happy Cow	150	150	300
Handcrafts	KAWUO	20	22	42
Tailoring	KAWUO	20	25	45
Community kiosk	KAWUO	0	24	24
Apiculture	Madefo	45	45	90
Crop husbandry/ agroforestry	Madefo	103	148	251
Totals		417	506	923

Participant selection varied by location based on the local partner and the market assessments.⁶¹ At times, Concern or the local partners encouraged participants to select a specific program in order to ensure gender balance or even numbers across programs. Participants could only register for one VST program. The local partners determined how many participants they could reach and what livelihoods alternatives they wanted to offer based on their organization’s budget, staff, and technical expertise. Table 1 depicts the total numbers of participants for each VST skill area in 2012 and 2013.

⁶¹ The same VST programs were not offered in every location. Based on input from local authorities, market assessments, previously existing programs in the area, and feedback from community members, VST and its local partners decided which trainings would occur in which sites. Some of the communities had multiple VST local partners operating in the area, with a variety of skills offered to the participants. Other villages had only one partner and one skill set.

ANNEX C

Quantitative Analysis and Challenges

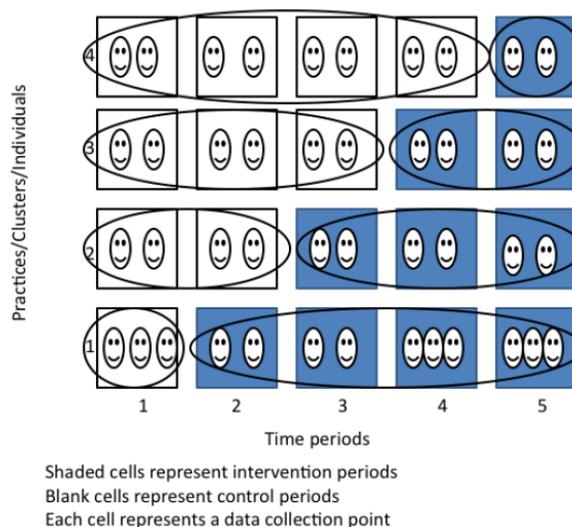
Quantitative Analysis

This report analyzed data using a mixed effects model to best capture both change over time and incorporate the design effect. A mixed-methods model is particularly well suited for data with repeated measurements (baseline, midterms 1 and 2, and endline) made on the same units (in this case youth respondents), and where measurements are made on clustered units (in this case the parish). Given the stepped wedge design of the impact evaluation, and hence multiple correlated measurements on the same respondent, this model is ideal for analyzing change over time and illustrates how the treatment program gradually covers a greater portion of the population (Figure 1).

Due to the voluntary nature of the Stepping Stones program as well as the necessity to register all Stepping Stones male participants (including those who would only take part in the program in October) at the beginning of the survey (in March), there were issues of non-compliance to the initial randomization.⁶² To reduce the potential bias that this introduces and because Stepping Stones is a parish-level intervention, the impact evaluation relies on an Intent-to-Treat (ITT) approach to evaluate program impacts.

ITT analyzes participants as if they received the treatment to which they were assigned (Begg 2000). This approach yields an unbiased estimate of being assigned to a treatment area and not for actually receiving the treatment. Hence, ITT analysis allows for an estimation of the impact of living in a treatment parish on an individual, regardless of their participation in Stepping Stones. We were aware that bias could be a problem if the surveys only compared respondents in the Stepping Stones program versus those not in the Stepping Stones, as individuals who chose to participate in the Stepping Stones program may be distinctly different from individuals who chose not to participate when given the option.⁶³ Treatment status was assigned randomly to the parishes rather than to individual participants. Therefore, parish

Figure 1. Stepped Wedge Design for Time and Practices/Clusters/Individuals



Source: Zhou, Chuan. 2012. "Analysis of Stepped Wedge Cluster Randomized Trials for QI Research." PowerPoint.

62 All of the male youth survey respondents we interviewed came from the registration lists of Stepping Stones. Because we wanted to study the potential impact of Stepping Stones and VST, the selection of survey respondents necessitated that the respondents be registered for Stepping Stones. This meant that before we could begin the baseline (March), we needed all of the Stepping Stones sites to finish recruitment. Because VST already had its participants registered, FIC's field team worked to try to recruit as many of the male youth VST participants into Stepping Stones as possible. In addition, due to the phased stepped wedge design, two of the three locations experienced a delay between the time they signed up for participation (March) and the start of Stepping Stones if they were in Phase two or three (June or September respectively). This meant that although all of the treatment-site survey respondents had originally registered for Stepping Stones, many opted to not participate when the program began in their parishes.

63 An example of sample bias would be that youth who are sitting under the tree or closer to town may be more likely to register and attend Stepping Stones

characteristics are uncorrelated with uptake of the program, while respondent characteristics might be. Because participation in Stepping Stones and living in an intervention villages were strongly correlated (at 78%), ITT analysis is a valid and unbiased treatment instrument.⁶⁴

In order to verify the ITT approach to the analysis, both direct participation in Stepping Stones (taken from the Stepping Stones roster) and the ITT variable were used throughout the analysis. In most instances, the relationships between living in a Stepping Stones parish and actually participating in the Stepping Stones program were the same for both Stepping Stones variables.

Challenges to the Quantitative Model

A purely linear impact trajectory of the program cannot be assumed given that the majority of our outcome indicators dealt with levels of behavior change. It is possible that the shape of the project's functional form resembles a J or S curve (with either an initial period of stasis or even a deterioration of circumstances before the positive behavior change becomes apparent) (Woolcock 2009). It therefore could be argued that the duration of the study (eight months) would potentially only capture that initial dip or the dormant period of impact. While the research design would have benefited from a longer duration to address this issue, two precautions were taken from the start: 1) a mixed methods approach utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools; and 2) a stepped wedge approach tried to isolate the possible trajectory of the intervention. The latter allowed the researchers to track the impact of the program on four cohorts with varying degrees of time after the intervention: one month, three months, and five months. However, if the program required more than five months for positive results to be observed, then this research design would be unable to capture that change.

Another possible limitation of the methodology is the reliance on respondent self-reporting of sensitive questions regarding their perceptions and history of possible theft and violence. One may argue that, as a result of Stepping Stones, the sometimes significant relationship between the intervention variables (direct participation and living in a Stepping Stones parish) and the outcome variables (theft and violence) are based on improved communication and trust in discussing these activities openly in the SS program and therefore greater honesty in reporting these activities to the enumerators during the data collection.⁶⁵ If this was the case, then the interpretation of the findings would be a reflection of a positive attitudinal shift due to the Stepping Stones intervention rather than increased negative behavior.

There are several factors why the above interpretation of the data is not likely to be the case and that reports of activities are proxies for actual proportions of theft and violence and not simply a reflection of more honest and open dialogue. If honesty were driving the higher proportions in the Stepping Stones parishes, then this should be reflected in all, if not most, of the outcome variables. However, for 11 out of 17 of the sensitive outcome variables, Stepping Stones is not significant.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the variables that are significant are not a random assortment, but rather represent consistent relationships as the study moves from perceptions around theft and violence to reports of those activities in the past two

than youth who were herding animals or out in the bush collecting building poles or burning charcoal.

⁶⁴ It is important to note that we are referring here to correlation (degree to which variables move together) of the two variables—living in an intervention parish and attending Stepping Stones—and not direct attendance rates. Individual attendance rates for each phase decline over the course of the study. In the first round of Stepping Stones intervention, the participation rate was extremely high at 95% (92 out of 97 people attended), in the second round the participation level dropped to 48% (43 out of 89 people attended), and by the endline the participation rate dropped to 39% (33 out of 85 people attended), for a total attendance rate of 62% (168 out of 271 people).

⁶⁵ Given that all respondents, both those living in parishes that received the intervention and those that did not, were primarily interviewed by the same enumerator for all four surveys, we cannot associate the correlation between the outcome variables and the intervention as a result of increased trust and familiarity with the enumerators.

⁶⁶ The outcome indicators referred to here are perception questions around: beating one's wife or child; perception on whether stealing if hungry is wrong; whether the respondent would personally steal assets or livestock from their or another community if they were hungry or their child were in need of medicine; stealing livestock or assets over past two months; having assaulted a man, women, elder, child; or two women having had a dispute in the past two months.

months. The program impact on theft is consistently negative, while showing a positive impact in regards to respondent perceptions around domestic violence. This relationship with Stepping Stones is also supported by answers from respondents about whether they personally have been victims of *lonetia* activity and hence is a triangulation on the variable of theft. Here, the question is neither sensitive nor would one expect respondents to minimize their impact from the *lonetia* due to dishonesty. However, we still find, in line with the other correlations, that the respondents living in Stepping Stones parishes are significantly more likely to report increased activity.

ANNEX D

Qualitative Interviews by Location and Type

Qualitative theme	Type(s) of interview	Dates	Locations	Categories of interviewees	Total number of interviews
Baseline	FGDs	April 4–12, 2013	Controls and treatment	Male youth, elder men, women	33
Behavior change	FGDs	August–September 2013	Treatment	1. Male youth who have been in the Stepping Stones (SS) program 2. Male youth who have NOT been in the SS program 3. Women (mixed ages) who have been in the SS program 4. Male elders who have been in the SS program	46
Security, disarmament	FGDs and semi-structured, open-ended individual interviews	October–November 2013	Controls and treatment	1. Local Councilors (LC1) 2. Older men 3. Younger men	50
Male youth participants in both VST/SS	Semi-structured, open-ended individual interviews	August–November 2013	Treatment	Male youth in both VST and SS (not necessarily participants in quantitative survey)	56
Stepping Stones PE training, community training sessions, and community workshops	Direct observation	May–October 2013	Treatment	All peer groups in Stepping Stones	N/A
Stepping Stones implementation review with Trainers	Open-ended individual interviews	May–October 2013	Moroto	All Trainers of Stepping Stones	10
Baseline assessment and analysis, identification of stakeholders, information on region, security, livelihood, gender, and matters of initiation	Key informant interviews	Rolling	Multiple locations within Napak, Nakapiripirit, and Tapac Districts	Local officials in Napak, Nakapiripirit, and Tapac District, Concern Worldwide, NGOs and CBOs in Moroto, key elders	N/A
Total					195

ANNEX E

Combined Program Constraints and Limitations

This section touches on constraints and limitations arising from the timeframe and design of the broader program.

Program Design

This study sought to test a behavior change model that piggy-backed onto a livelihoods model, but the two components were not designed in conjunction with each other. The VST program had already started (and had been running for over a year in some locations) when the Stepping Stones model was introduced. The Stepping Stones intervention was therefore limited to the sites in which Concern and local partners were already implementing their program. One of the main drawbacks in this regard for the Stepping Stones model was the incomplete inclusion of actors contributing to regional tensions; i.e., one the main parties to violent conflict in southern Karamoja (the Matheniko sub-group) was not included in the VST beneficiary population. This was due to different program objectives: the VST program was not aimed at conflict resolution or reduction. A second challenge with overlapping the separate programs was the geographic spread of beneficiaries, whereby there were many more VST individual participants in some locations than others. The contrasting community-focused model of Stepping Stones meant that there were many participants in every location where Stepping Stones operated.

Voluntary Nature of the Stepping Stones Program and Evaluation

The voluntary nature of the intervention and participation in the FIC longitudinal study was a constraint.⁶⁷ The young men who agreed to participate understood that they would be interviewed at least four times (more for the qualitative component) over the duration of the study and that they would not be receiving compensation other than the small facilitation fund. The stepped wedge design meant that the Stepping Stones intervention took place in three phases over the study. In order to collect longitudinal data on the respondents, however, we had to register all the 400 individuals for the survey at the beginning of the research. The young men in some of these locations started the Stepping Stones workshop right away, whereas in other locations the workshops did not begin for either two or five months. While this did not significantly reduce the number of respondents surveyed throughout the study (the attrition rate was approximately four percent from the baseline to the endline), the delays associated with this staggered design meant that some of the young men who agreed to participate in the longitudinal study did not, ultimately, attend the Stepping Stones program.

Timeframe and Duration of the Overall Program

An additional constraint with likely implications for the findings of the evaluation component of this research is the timeframe and duration of the intervention. The Stepping Stones model normally lasts for 18 weeks; due to the short duration of the program because of donor constraints, each Stepping Stones intervention was shortened to 10 weeks per site and the number of sessions per week increased. However, considering the nature of the change required—i.e., making adjustments to social, cultural, and economic determinants regarding the acceptability of violence as part of a

⁶⁷ All research conducted by FIC adheres to standards mandated by the United States government for research on human subjects. This is ensured through an internal review of all research documents and consent forms by the Social, Behavioral, and Educational Research Institutional Review Board of Tufts University and is based on voluntary and informed consent.

livelihood strategy pursued by young men—even a full 18-week program may have struggled to bring about change. The extensive research on peacebuilding and conflict resolution, for instance, indicates that at least five years is normally required to see any real change in attitudes on violent conflict, and decades can be required to realize sustainable peace.⁶⁸

As touched on more fully in Annex C, there is no way to know the nature of any possible sustained impact brought by the program. Positive impacts may be more visible at 12 or 24 months or, in contrast, positive outcomes may start to decrease over time. These aspects would only be visible through an extended evaluation model.

The Nature of the Change Required

A last point on constraints is the nature of the change required to influence male involvement in violence in Karamoja. Violence associated with cattle raiding and other related forms of crime have long defined the cultural, social, and economic fabric of Karamoja (and various other pastoral and agro-pastoral regions in the Greater Horn). This violence is deeply embedded in livelihood strategies, systems, and adaptations. As such, interventions aimed at influencing this violence must go to the root causes and drivers of this violence and be widespread, systematic, and sustained. Such interventions would need to take place at a period of policy support, economic growth and prosperity, and hope. Furthermore, and clearly indicated by the seasonal variations evident in the findings for this study, much of the crime and associated violence in southern Karamoja in 2013 directly correlated to food insecurity and the absence of viable alternative economic options at the household level.

68 For instance, as John Paul Lederach explains in *Preparing for Peace, Conflict Transformations Across Cultures*, the approach to peacebuilding is akin to nesting eggs, wherein the first phase is crisis intervention (2–6 months), then preparation and training (1–2 years), followed by the third stage, design of social change (5–10 years); the final phase is the desired future, which can take decades (Lederach 1995).

ANNEX F

Study Locations

Table 1: Study Locations by Parish, Village, Sub-county, District, Sub-group, and research status

Parish	Village	Sub-county	District	Sub-group	Control or intervention
1. Kalokengel West	Loroo	Lotome	Napak	Bokora	Intervention Phase 3
	Lominit				
2. Kamaturu	Lokwakwa	Lorengedwat	Nakapiripirit	Pian	Intervention Phase 2
	Lorukumo				
3. Kosike	Nayonaiangikalio	Nabilatuk	Nakapiripirit	Pian	Control
4. Lomuno	Nakaromwae	Lotome	Napak	Bokora	Control
5. Moruongor	Naronit	Lotome	Napak	Bokora	Intervention Phase 3
6. Musas	Kariamongole	Tapac	Moroto	Tepeth	Control
7. Nariameregae	Lolet	Lotome	Napak	Bokora	Intervention Phase 1
	Nakaale				
	Longaroi				
8. Narisae	Naoi	Lorengedwat	Nakapiripirit	Pian	Intervention Phase 3
9. Nathinyonoit	Lonangat	Lorengedwat	Nakapiripirit	Pian	Intervention Phase 1
	Nadukae				
10. Tapac	Lonyilik	Tapac	Moroto	Tepeth	Intervention Phase 2
	Lomudita				
	Napakakimol				
	Timingorok				

ANNEX G

Livelihoods and Violence in Context

Livelihoods

The population of Karamoja has traditionally practiced a combination of pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods, balancing animal and crop-based assets through a diversified livelihood system. The region is part of the larger Karamoja Cluster, which extends into parts of western Kenya, southern Sudan, and southern Ethiopia, as well as Uganda. Karamoja is less arid than neighboring regions; however, the climate fluctuates widely and its erratic variability in rainfall makes agriculture unsuitable as a subsistence livelihood (Ellis and Swift 1988; Markakis 2004; Otim 2002). Although failed harvests today are often blamed on climate change, droughts were a regular event even half a century ago, with crop yields poor or failing completely in approximately one out of every three years (Dyson-Hudson 1966). Given these unpredictable conditions, a system of semi-nomadic animal husbandry emerged as the best suited livelihood system in the region characterized by high rainfall variability and ecological uncertainty (Gray, Leslie, and Akol 2002). Cattle were historically the preferred animal for most of the population groups, with small ruminants supplementing cattle herds. Livestock ownership—especially of cattle—remains a prime determinant of both social and economic status (Gray, Leslie, and Akol 2002), and livestock remain central to the collective consciousness and identity, even for those who have diversified their livelihood activities away from strict animal husbandry.

Livelihood roles within households and communities are differentiated by age and gender (Hodgson 2000), with young men playing a central role in herd management, including animal mobility and security. Young men in pastoral and agro-pastoral households would normally spend a substantial portion of the dry season in mobile cattle camps known as *ngawiyoi* (singular, *awi*) or *kraals*, returning only as needed to the semi-permanent *ngirerya* (singular, *ere*) or *manyattas*. Decision-making took place in conjunction with the *kraal* leader and other elders, but young men bore a great deal of responsibility for household well-being and food security through their management of the most valuable assets (livestock).

The last several decades have brought many changes in livelihoods for communities that traditionally relied heavily on livestock. Rampant internal insecurity and the breakdown of traditional allegiances severely curtailed semi-nomadic livelihood strategies. The growth of neighboring agrarian populations, the tightening of national and international borders, and government policies of land management and preservation all severely limited the mobility that is central to sustainable and productive pastoralism. Animal ownership became less equitable and less communal (a trend that started with the massive raids in the 1980s; see Ocan 1992), with a growing divide between those households that were able to retain herds and those that were not. The Government of Uganda's most recent disarmament campaign (2006 to the present) fundamentally altered the ways in which communities managed and protected animals (Stites and Akabwai 2010).

Overall, the erosion of the broad livestock base and associated livelihood system has left households and communities increasingly impoverished and more vulnerable to food insecurity brought on by failed harvests and other shocks that are common to the region. On the individual level, these livelihood changes have brought particular challenges for young men. As herds have dwindled or disappeared, many young men have lost their predominant and essential role as providers for their households and as protectors of their families and assets. When combined with the rampant violence inherent in the region—violence that was deeply imbedded in the livelihood strategies of these men, as discussed below—a situation is created whereby young men are at high risk for engagement in crime and violence. In addition, FIC research over the last three to five years indicates that young men who had lost their cattle-based livelihoods were increasingly described by other groups and by their peers as “idle” and “without purpose.” This set the stage for the introduction of the combined communications and relationship skills program with a livelihood intervention in an attempt to thwart violence as an option for young men.

Violence and Security

Violence is not new to Karamoja. Cattle raiding has long been a part of pastoral livelihoods systems in eastern Africa. Raids fulfilled important social, political, and economic functions within the pastoral system, as evidenced in the following quotation from a Karimojong elder:

Raiding was not just a means of restocking, but it was also an ancient form of wealth redistribution among the Karimojong. It is a traditional and central form of restocking. Young warriors were compelled to accumulate cows in order to gain status. Their respect depended on the number of successful raids. (Mkutu 2008, 17)

Prior to the widespread availability of firearms, young men fought with spears and bows and arrows in carefully planned and orchestrated raids, the extent and intensity of which were regulated by the elders (Dyson-Hudson 1966; Gulliver 1953). Casualties occurred but were kept to a minimum through a ritualized fighting process that included advance warning of the attack and prohibitions on harming women, children, or the elderly (Mkutu 2008; Akabwai and Ateyo 2007; Lamphear 1998).

Historically, large-scale raids most commonly occurred among “traditional enemies”—i.e., the Karimojong of southern Karamoja were most commonly in conflict with the Jie, Turkana, and Pokot. The national and political upheaval of the 1980s led to a period of pronounced pillage by raiders from Karamoja of the neighboring districts of north central Uganda. The several years of raiding in the late 1980s resulted in the decimation of livestock herds for the Teso, Langi, and Acholi populations and the collapse of the important cross-ethnic relationships that had allowed pastoralists from Karamoja to access dry-season pasture in the adjacent districts. In addition, the influx of raided cattle into Karamoja introduced new strains of tick-borne disease to which the local herds had no resistance; large numbers of animals subsequently died. The tensions and upheavals of the 1980s also brought the start of conflict among groups within Karamoja that had previously experienced only small-scale thefts and problems that could largely be addressed by negotiation among the elders. The most notable disintegration of relations was in southern Karamoja within the Karimojong ethnic group; by the 1990s violence among the Bokora, Matheniko, and Pian was pronounced, with implications for the neighboring Tepeth.

Violence associated with cattle raiding or defending against raids was almost exclusively practiced by male youth. Violence practiced by young men became increasingly widespread and destructive in the 1990s and 2000s for a number of (largely cyclical and reinforcing) reasons: traditional institutions that had once mitigated violence were weakened (Stites 2013a); weapons flowed into the region from neighboring states (Mkutu 2008); and acquisition and defense of livestock became more critical, charged, and violent as the assets became increasingly scarce. In the words of a Sandra Gray, a cultural anthropologist who was one of the few scholars conducting fieldwork during the extreme insecurity of the 1990s:

“[I]t is clear that AK-47 raiding seriously constrained the bio-behavioral adaptability of the Karimojong in the last decades of the 20th century. Through its effects on seasonal migrations, subsistence activity, the structure of marriage, and the stability of social networks of the Karimojong, as well as on the operation of trade routes in and out of the district and on health care delivery, armed cattle raiding emerges as the critical factor in recurring famines and epidemics in Karamoja since the 1970s (2003, S21).”

Research conducted by FIC and supported by the work of other scholars indicates that violence over the past three decades in Karamoja has changed in several key ways, all with important implications for the combined Stepping Stones and livelihood program. These changes include a shift from a large to small group or individual being involved in raiding; the loss of sanction from the elders and corresponding decrease in involvement by the wider community in the planning and execution of raids; a decline in the ritualized aspects of raiding; a change in who accrues the bounty from the raid; a shift from incorporation of raided animals into the family herd to a quick sale; an increase in the range of victims by age and gender; a shift in communities that are targeted by raiders; and a shift in the location of violence.

Until very recently, the Ugandan government’s most consistent policy towards Karamoja has been disarmament, fol-

lowed by attempts to limit cross-border movement.⁶⁹ Policies in both the colonial and post-colonial periods aimed to minimize negative spill-over effects of violence in Karamoja on surrounding areas considered to be more stable or politically relevant. Although disarmament has been a consistent and relatively regular effort from 1911 until the present, the campaign that began in 2006 is the most relevant for discussion purposes. This disarmament involved greater stakeholder consultation and an overt effort to protect assets of those communities that had been disarmed (a main complaint of previous efforts) (Bevan 2008). This resulted in the emergence of the so-called protected kraals, whereby herds were (and in many places still are) kept in often extremely large kraals adjacent or near to military barracks. While limiting losses from raids, the protected kraal system has brought a decline in animal health and an increase in mortality due to overcrowding and limited access to appropriate dry-season grazing and/or water sources. Of particular relevance, young men saw their roles as protectors and managers of the herds be supplanted by soldiers (protectors) and the small boys who were allowed access to the herds for daily grazing (the older youth had mutually suspicious relations with the military) (Stites and Akabwai 2010).

Importantly, research from 2006 to 2012 by FIC indicated a general rise in insecurity as a direct consequence of the disarmament campaign. This trend was due to the uneven nature of the disarmament, which left some communities unprotected.⁷⁰ In addition, this time period saw the rise in small-scale but often still violent criminal behavior, a phenomenon that respondents attributed to *lonetia*. This term refers to the (exclusively male) thieves who steal small-scale livelihoods and productive assets from homesteads, normally at night and through forced entry. Violence often but not always accompanies the theft; a rise in sexual violence against women and girls does appear to correlate with the rise of *lonetia* attacks. Crimes by *lonetia* emerged subsequent to the start of the 2006 disarmament and in response to the known absence of weapons for self-defense. Although very difficult to quantify, crimes by *lonetia* appeared to increase in the years immediately following the start of disarmament. Large-scale raids of cattle appeared to decrease in the same time period, due both to the progression of disarmament in both geographic coverage and depth⁷¹ and to the steady loss of animals to disease or distress sales. In other words, having fewer guns with which to raid and fewer cattle to target ultimately led to a decrease in raiding behavior.⁷² (This is a relative change. As is apparent in the discussion of findings, theft of cattle, livestock, and all other assets has continued, but at a decreased rate.) In the research for this study, all of the crime and violence was described as being committed by the *lonetia*. Put another way, respondents no longer talked about “raids” or “raiders” and blamed all acts on the *lonetia* or “thugs.”⁷³

69 A more recent variation of these selective (by ethnicity) restrictions on movement continue today and are apparent in efforts to prevent migration from Karamoja to southern cities such as Kampala and Jinja; individuals found in these areas are rounded up and bussed back to Karamoja, at times against their will and without family members.

70 The UPDF provided protection for livestock from disarmed communities, but did not protect those communities themselves.

71 Here “depth” is in reference to the number of times that communities were targeted for disarmament. Although there were many complaints about the repeated nature of the exercises and the associated brutality and human rights abuses (Human Rights Watch 2007; Stites and Akabwai 2009), these repeat visits may have ultimately resulted in a greater turnover of weapons. The lack of transparency regarding the disarmament campaign makes an accurate evaluation of impact difficult.

72 The actual number of raids is difficult to measure as many raids are not reported and, even if they are reported, the monitoring and sharing of these numbers goes against the state narrative of improved peace and security. This reference to decreased raiding is based on FIC research, reports from other development and humanitarian actors, and anecdotal information.

73 It is of course important to note that this trend may not be applicable for locations beyond these particular study sites and would require further investigation in other areas.



Feinstein
InternationalCenter

THE WORLD BANK
1818 H, Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20433

www.logica-wb.org
www.fic.tufts.edu