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## Movement on the Margins: Livelihoods and Security in Kitgum District, Northern Uganda

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***Cover photo: A woman passes through an abandoned village near Agoro trading center as she returns from collecting wood.***

## List of Acronyms

AVSI	Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale
CSB	Corn-soya blend
EVI	Extremely Vulnerable Individual
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GBSV	Gender Based Sexual Violence
GoU	Government of Uganda
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRIN	United Nations Integrated Regional Information Network
LC	Local Council
LDU	Local Defense Unit
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non Governmental Group
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SCiU	Save the Children in Uganda
SPLA	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UPDF	Uganda People's Defense Force
USh	Ugandan Shillings
WFP	World Food Program

## Executive Summary

In the face of armed attacks, insecurity, loss of agrarian livelihood systems, reduced food aid rations, and inadequate health and sanitation conditions, through what means do people in internal displacement camps and semi-settled villages in Kitgum district maintain themselves and their households? As the security situation improves or takes a turn for the worse, how do people adapt their livelihood and protective strategies? What movement patterns based on livelihood and protective strategies exist among people in the camps and the semi-settled villages? Who leaves the camps, why, for how long, and how do they attempt to stay safe? Which protective strategies work and why? Which strategies fail and who is the most exposed to risk in these circumstances? How do factors of gender and age play into all these responses and strategies? These questions are at the heart of research carried out by a team from the Feinstein International Center of Tufts University<sup>1</sup> in Kitgum district, north central Uganda, in March and April 2006. The report presents findings that seek to answer these questions. The report documents and analyzes shifts in livelihood and protective strategies as people attempt to provide for themselves and their households and respond to insecurity and threats.<sup>2</sup>

The findings of this study are particularly timely given the current situation of increased population movement in northern Uganda. These movements are due to a variety of factors, including the current cessation of hostilities between the armed forces of the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA); pressure by the GoU on camp inhabitants to return home; reduction in food assistance to those in the camps; and the desire of some to leave the crowded conditions of the camps. Many people are on the move in northern Uganda, whether moving in and out of camps as part of daily or seasonal livelihood strategies, moving to 'satellite' or 'decongestion' camps, moving between camps and semi-settled villages, or returning home.

The findings of this study provide important insights into what prompts people to stay in camps, leave camps, re-enter villages or re-establish villages. It offers insight into the dynamics of movement among these locations and helps to more clearly identify push and pull factors. Throughout, it provides a careful gender and generational analysis in order to provide a greater understanding of how different categories of people have developed livelihood and protective strategies to meet their needs and the needs of their households. The report puts forward information on the types of risk faced by different groups of people and the protective strategies developed in attempt to mitigate these risks. The report highlights where protective strategies are working and why, where they fail and why, and who is at heightened risk when these strategies fail. The report ends with a forward looking conclusion that underscores the study's main findings and reflects on how these findings can be applied to on-going and future work in northern Uganda.

## Study Methods and Sites

The study was conducted in Kitgum district in April and March 2006. The Tufts team used a combined livelihood and human security framework for data collection and analysis. This combined framework allows for a more complete understanding of the ways in which the intersections between livelihoods and human security may result in increased vulnerability or increased resilience. It is hoped that the findings in this report will assist donors, policy makers and programmers to:

- Better identify the threats and vulnerabilities faced by different populations;
- Better identify the ways in which local strategies are able and unable to fill the gaps in regard to coping and protection;
- Design responses that seek to bolster effective local coping and protective strategies;
- Design responses that seek to fill gaps where local coping and protective strategies are failing.

The Tufts team used qualitative research methods to collect primary data. The team chose qualitative

methods because the study sought not to quantify people's livelihoods but rather to understand the nature of their livelihoods and insecurity, including protective strategies. Qualitative methods included in-depth semi-structured interviews, direct observation and participant observation.

In-depth work was conducted in Kitgum district in areas affected by the conflict between the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda (GoU) as well as in areas affected by armed cattle-raiding. Three geographic locations within Kitgum district were selected as study sites:

- Agoro trading center, internal displacement camp (IDP camp) and semi-settled villages adjacent to the trading center;
- Orom trading center, IDP camp and semi-settled villages in the surrounding parishes;
- Labuje IDP camp and Pager, the semi-settled village bordering Labuje.

The Tufts team selected study sites and populations to demonstrate a range of livelihood strategies, constraints to livelihoods, and protection threats and responses. In each of the three study sites, the Tufts team sought to compare the strategies, constraints, threats and responses among populations based in IDP camps to those in semi-settled villages.

## Executive Findings

### Semi-Settled Villages

**Attacks by Karamojong raiders and the LRA** pose one of the greatest threats to residents in the semi-settled villages studied. Several protective response strategies exist within these villages to prevent attacks. One strategy is the complete or near complete abandonment of the village at night, whereby most of the village population moves into the bush, leaving behind only a small number of armed men and adolescent males. The second strategy is also a collective action by the villagers, and involves the relocation of entire villages to locations with better natural security provided by geological features such as hills or mountains. The third strategy is orchestrated by the Ugandan army (Uganda People's Defense Force, or UPDF) and local defense units (LDUs) in areas where they are present, and involves the evacuation of all inhabitants back into the IDP camps at a set time each evening.

### Internal Displacement Camps

People come to **IDP camps** for a number of security-based reasons, including direct targeting by the LRA, shifts in interactions with the rebels, government pressure to move into camps, or traumatic events experienced at the household level.

The UPDF soldiers and LDU militia are meant to provide protection for the camps. The soldiers maintain a security perimeter around the camps, which extends to approximately two kilometers in the daytime, allowing residents to work the land and collect natural resources in relative safety.<sup>3</sup> All residents must be back inside the camp at the designated curfew or face serious consequences and disciplinary measures.

### Livelihood Assets

Household livelihood strategies and levels of human security are determined by access to and the quality of sources of capital, including natural capital (or resources), financial capital, human capital and social capital. Lack of access to or control over these

sources of capital has a detrimental effect on the ability of households to pursue successful livelihood strategies. The Tufts team found that some of these forms of capital, particularly social capital, were essential to household and individual protective strategies. Social capital is particularly important because it enables people to engage in collective livelihood strategies, which are more productive and allow for spreading of financial risk, and also to participate in group protective strategies, which are shown to be more effective than individual strategies in mitigating physical insecurity.

### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Household land access** is highly desirable and is central to achieving a degree of self-sufficiency. Households that can access land are able to supplement their diet and acquire cash for essential items, but most of these households still rely on WFP food rations for at least half of their monthly food needs. Demand for land is greater than the amount of land available within the security perimeter around Agoro, Orom and Labuje camps and accessing land usually requires social or familial connections to the land owners and/or the ability to pay steep rents. Tenure on rented or borrowed land remains insecure, especially for female-headed households.

Overall, **households in the semi-settled villages** around Orom and Agoro and next to Labuje have better access to land than the residents in the camps. Respondents in the semi-settled villages around Orom explain that their primary motivation for being in the villages, even with high security risks, is their ability to access agricultural land. Food security appears to correlate to land access, with women in semi-settled villages reporting that their children were eating more meals per day than reported by women in the camps.

**Water** is the most critical natural resource for household health and livelihoods. No interviewee in the camps complained about the quality of water, but diarrhea was cited as a common problem in children, which may be related to water quality. No security risks related to collecting water were reported within camps. In contrast, residents of semi-settled villages

located far from camp water sources must travel great distances, sometimes under extreme threat to personal security, in order to access water.

**Other natural resources** are central to livelihood strategies in Kitgum, including wood for firewood and charcoal making, wild greens, seasonal fruits, thatch for roofs and grasses for lighting fires. With the exception of charcoal-making, these natural resources are collected almost exclusively by women and girls, and it is women and girls who take the risks of traveling out from the camp—often far beyond the security perimeter—and outside the semi-settled villages on a regular and sometimes daily basis. The sale of firewood is particularly important for households that do not have access to land and thus must generate income to purchase food and other household necessities.

**Risk of attack** is serious for people made vulnerable by digging in their fields, collecting water and other natural resources, or traveling between the settlements and agricultural or forested areas. Threats from the LRA are greatest in the rainy season when the vegetative cover is most dense. Karamojong threats are most pronounced in the early part of the rainy season as groups move across Acholiland and back to the rainy season pastures of northeastern Uganda.

**Responses of the population to the security risks** inherent in accessing land and other natural resources include traveling in groups, moving behind the UPDF and LDU security forces, using a variety of surveillance methods, and temporarily adjusting livelihood strategies in periods of heightened insecurity. Residents of semi-settled villages around Orom and Agoro farm in collective groups, which allow for better protection as well as more efficient farming. Vigilance and flight are among the two most important aspects of the protective strategies of those engaged in farming in the camps and semi-settled villages.

#### **FINANCIAL CAPITAL**

The overall lack of financial capital is a hindrance to effective livelihood strategies among the study population in Kitgum. Very few households have an economic cushion to allow for consumption smoothing in response to shocks such as drought, illness or death in the family or loss of physical assets. They lack food reserves, cash accounts, and/or livestock to convert to cash or meat in a time of need. The absence of such a safety net results in increased vulnerability of nearly all respondents in the study population.

The collapse of financial resources in the north is apparent through the reported decrease in **credit and transfers**. Few people report that they are able to access credit. The absence of available credit is due to a variety of factors, including the fact that most households are poor credit risks because of the lack of regular employment. **Remittances**, another form of cash transfer, were practically unheard of within the study population. No respondents reported receiving remittances since displacement other than as a once-off gift in cash or clothing from a visiting relative.

**Livestock and food** are financial capital in the form of moveable assets, but these assets are severely depleted from the pre-war and/or pre-displacement period among the study population. The absence of these moveable assets as a form of financial capital limits the ability of households to fall back upon diverse coping strategies in times of hardship. Twenty years of Karamojong raids in the north have decimated the cattle, oxen and goat populations in Kitgum. Karamojong raids continue to be a serious problem in the study sites of Orom and Agoro. Karamojong raiders are heavily armed and often inflict casualties when raiding cattle and goats.

People within camps and semi-settled villages have a number of strategies in place to **protect their animals**. Where possible, cattle owners have gathered their animals in a centralized and relatively protected location. Persons living in semi-settled villages are able to maintain small numbers of cattle, oxen, goats, pigs and poultry, often with greater success than

residents in the camps, and have developed specific protective measures to prevent raids. Disease remains one of the greatest threats to animals in the study sites in Kitgum.

**Market opportunities** for inhabitants of the camps and semi-settled villages are limited and outside traders are often the primary beneficiaries of market transactions. Many households in the study sites engage in petty trade in order to acquire cash to meet basic needs, supplement their diets and at times cover school costs. Firewood and charcoal are the most common items sold in the dry season and wild greens and seasonal fruits are the most common rainy season items.

#### **SOCIAL CAPITAL**

**Social capital** is an important determinant in enabling households and individuals to access livelihood assets and to employ livelihood strategies. Respondents with strong social connections and familial ties are better able to access land and are more likely to receive food from neighbors and relatives, to work in collective groups, to participate in savings associations and to take advantage of opportunities for paid labor. In contrast, individuals or households with a more limited social network have greater difficulty accessing resources such as land and employment opportunities and often have to take greater security risks, such as collecting firewood alone.

The presence or absence of social capital depends in large part on **social status, position and gender**. The people who are reportedly best able to access land are men who have connections to the original land owners. In contrast, female-headed households have a much more difficult time accessing land because they usually lack the connections to the landowners and did not have a male relative to negotiate on their behalf.

The role of social networks in **agricultural labor strategies** has been important throughout the history of the Acholi people. People living in the semi-settled villages work the land in traditional collective systems

and share produce. This system helps to lessen any one household's risk of crop failure and allows for better consumption smoothing. In contrast, people in the camps are usually only able to access very small plots of land and work this land alone or with their household members. Produce and seeds are not shared and tools are only shared after one household has completed the labor required to meet its own needs.

Social capital is the most important factor in **determining the nature and effectiveness of protective strategies**. The most common mechanisms of self-protection employed by the study population are group movement and maintaining close proximity to each other when working outside of the camp or semi-settled village. Women and girls who leave the camps and semi-settled villages to collect firewood or to till land almost always move in groups of between five and twenty females at a time. Men who prepare charcoal also usually move in groups. Working in a group is considered greatly preferable to leaving the camp or semi-settled village alone, but is still not always an effective protective strategy.

**Social stigma** can affect people's ability to tap into the social networks that provide crucial inputs for livelihoods and protective mechanisms. In the study population, two groups emerged as those with the greatest vulnerability to loss of their social capital, formerly abducted young mothers and women abandoned by their husbands. Both of these groups have significantly reduced access to social capital.

#### **HUMAN CAPITAL**

The availability and quality of human capital in the form of labor, health and education has a direct effect on the pursuit of household livelihood strategies. The availability of **labor** and the specificity of labor strategies are particularly important in a society highly dependent upon natural resources. The negative effects of lack of able-bodied labor are frequently apparent in households headed by a widow, child or disabled person or in those households that are very small or have a large number of young children. The absence of available



labor can greatly decrease the self-sufficiency of households and individuals and can ultimately affect survival strategies. A shortage of labor can also mean that a household is unable to pursue its potentially most productive livelihood option.

There are identifiable differences in labor strategies between populations based in the camp and those in semi-settled villages. Most notably, the traditional forms of collective preparing, planting, weeding and harvesting the land is relatively intact in the semi-settled villages. This collective labor enables residents in semi-settled villages to plant more land and potentially harvest more crops, while sharing of harvests helps mitigate the risk of crop failure at the level of individual household. It also allows villagers to increase their security and hence focus and maximize labor outputs during the rainy season. These collective farming practices are not prevalent among camp inhabitants.

**Health** is a critical component of human capital and a number of interviewees stated that good health was their most important asset. The greatest threats to health found among the study population relate to poor water and sanitation (including high rates of diarrhea in children), HIV/AIDS and malaria. The Tufts team frequently encountered individuals who were HIV-positive or households struggling with the effects of AIDS. Relatively few programs focusing on AIDS exist in the camps and there are no programs to address the effects of HIV/AIDS on children.

**Health care facilities** exist in or near to all study sites, but respondents complained about inconsistent availability of trained personnel and medicines. All interviewees criticized routine misdiagnoses by poorly trained health care workers and lack of medicines to treat ailments, particularly at the government clinics. MSF clinics are preferred by all interviewees; at times, however, the MSF clinics were without a primary health care provider on location for extended periods. Distance and mobility emerged as the two primary indicators as to whether or not people in semi-settled villages could access health care.

The lack of **education** and the shortage of skilled individuals in most of the study sites constrain livelihood strategies. Many of the schools in and around the camps are barely functioning as educational institutions. People living in semi-settled villages near to trading centers and functioning schools usually send their children to school alongside the IDP children. In addition, some children remain in the camp with relatives in order to attend school while their parents are in the semi-settled village during the rainy season. Finally, some children are sent out of Kitgum district to neighboring districts within Karamoja to attend school.

Respondents in multiple locations discussed the decline in **informal and inter-generational education**. Semi-settled respondents believe that inter-generational relationships are much more positive in the villages than in the camps. Parents, particularly mothers, seek to live outside of the camps to enhance their children's health, to help counter loss of traditional culture and to preserve social and family knowledge from one generation to the next.

### Domestic Violence

**Domestic violence is widespread** in all IDP camps visited by the Tufts team, but without monitoring and reporting systems in place, actual rates are unknown. The most common form of domestic violence is male heads-of-household beating wives or female domestic partners.

The **most common injuries women sustain from domestic violence** attacks include broken or dislocated arms and legs and cuts to the face, neck and upper body. These injuries are sustained by strikes with bare hands, machetes, firewood, chairs, knives and other sharp objects. Respondents claim that beatings occur frequently in the camps as they hear women being beaten one to ten times each week.

The **reasons for high rates of domestic violence** vary according to interviewees, with women, local council (LC) officials and clan leaders giving substantially different answers. The majority of women interviewees attribute the beatings to high

rates of male drunkenness coupled with strict patriarchal customs imposing subservient behavior upon women. LC officials living in camps agree that male drunkenness plays a role in beatings of women. Other factors cited by LC officials include a breakdown of Acholi culture, the collapse of inter-generational transmission of traditional values to youth, and women increasingly challenging patriarchal household structures. Clan leaders claim that women's indifference towards upholding Acholi traditions and refusal to act as proper Acholi women, combined with the propagation of women's rights, are the primary reasons for high rates of domestic violence. Both LCs and clan leaders attribute women's "un-Acholi" behavior to the promotion of the rights of women and children by NGOs and government officials.

Victims of domestic violence often must work with and through LC courts and clan leaders when **seeking assistance, protection and resolution**. LCs, clan leaders and the police all play a role in responding to domestic violence, although these roles do not necessarily uphold the rights of the victim. Women described a number of different scenarios that determine the ability to access medical assistance after violent attacks occur, some of which block women's access to medical care or put them at risk of further abuse.

### **UPDF and LDUs**

Interviewees reported **few current security problems** with the UPDF or LDUs and most camp interviewees and camp commandants said that relations were cordial among all groups (UPDF, LDUs, armed civilians and unarmed camp residents). These peaceful relations were attributed to strong UPDF commanders who kept tight control over their forces and collective strategies and actions by camp commandants and camp populations to address problems arising between the security forces and civilians. Notably, the study did not examine the mobile units of the UPDF which have a reputation for greater human rights violations.

## I. Introduction

### Study Purpose

The livelihoods and human security of people living in Kitgum district, in north central Uganda, have undergone significant changes due to armed conflict, insecurity, displacement and the subsequent loss of access to an agrarian based livelihood system. The current report by a team from the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University seeks to document and analyze the effects on people's lives and the shifts in their livelihood and protective strategies as they attempt to provide for their households and to respond to threats to their human security.

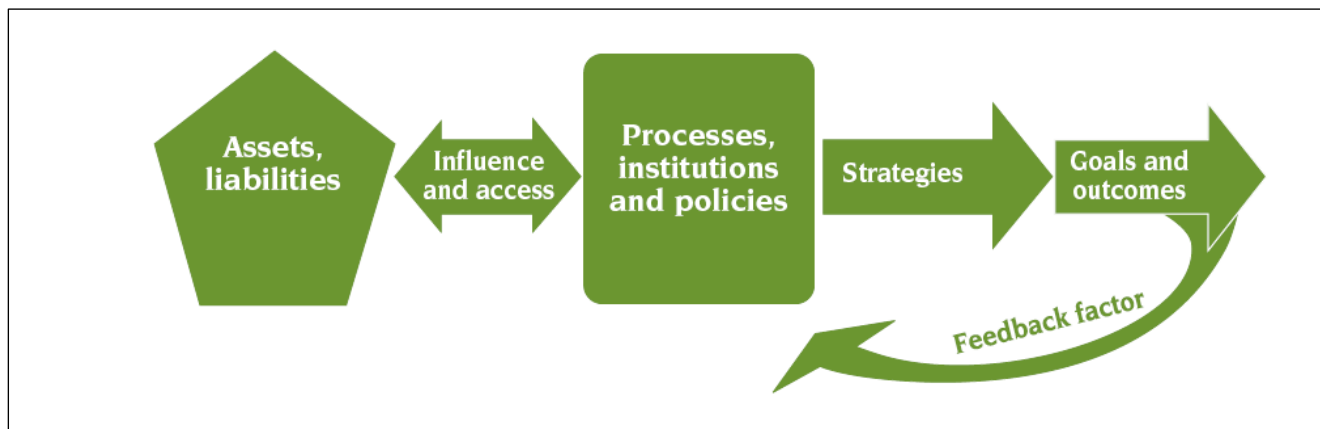
The Tufts team used a combined livelihoods and human security framework for data collection and analysis. Conducting research in areas affected by conflict or crisis requires an adaptive tool that is able to take into account the shifts in risk, resource access and allocation, and environments of political instability. The adapted livelihood framework used by the Feinstein International Center is based on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework<sup>4</sup> of the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and also on the Collinson framework.<sup>5</sup> The figure below illustrates the adapted livelihoods framework.

Livelihoods can be thought of as the sum of the means through which people make a living or survive over time. Livelihood systems are based on the assets and strategies that a household and its members use to manage risk and vulnerability. Households employ

these livelihood strategies in pursuit of desired outcomes, which could include survival, food security, economic security or physical safety and security.

Livelihood assets (or capital or resources) include all that is accessible and available to a household or its individual members in pursuit of livelihood strategies. These assets include natural resources (land, water, collectible natural resources), financial assets (cash flows such as credit, debt and remittances; moveable assets such as livestock and food stores<sup>6</sup>), social capital (social networks and institutions, as well as social exclusions), and human capital (health status, education level, labor availability).<sup>7</sup>

Both internal and external factors influence household livelihood strategies and the realization of livelihood goals. These factors include the policies, institutions and processes that exist at local, regional, national and international levels. These various factors often determine the type of livelihood strategy that may be pursued, by whom, and in what context and under what restrictions. In northern Uganda, for instance, the policies of the Ugandan government and military play a major role in determining livelihood strategies (through forced displacement and regulations on movement) as do the policies of the humanitarian aid community (through provision of certain types of aid, the manner in which aid is allocated, etc). Processes within society such as acceptable and appropriate gender and generational roles and the ways in which households fit into the larger society also have a profound effect on livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes.



The Tufts team also sought to assess the current state of human security broadly defined at the individual, household, and village level. Human security analyses privilege individual or human security over a state-focused assessment of security. The report focuses on the following three key aspects of human security:<sup>8</sup>

- Human rights and personal security
- Economic and resource security
- Societal and community security

The report details and analyzes the links among these dimensions of human security, livelihoods, and Ugandan's perceptions and experiences of security and insecurity. The report then investigates how individuals, households and the larger community populations seek to meet their livelihood and human security needs. Within this documentation and analysis, the report pays close attention to physical threats and how individuals, households and communities seek to protect themselves from these threats to their human security and livelihoods.

Drawing upon a combined livelihoods and human security framework allows for a more complete understanding of the intersection between livelihoods and human security and the ways in which this intersection may result in increased vulnerability or increased resilience. It is hoped that the findings in this report will assist donors, policy makers and programmers to:

- Better identify the threats and vulnerabilities faced by different populations;
- Better identify the ways in which local strategies are both able and unable to fill the gaps in regard to coping and protection;
- Design responses that seek to bolster local effective local coping and protective strategies;
- Design responses that seek to fill gaps where local coping and protective strategies are failing.

By closely examining the livelihood strategies pursued by households and individuals in both camps and

semi-settled villages in Kitgum district, the report attempts to offer a better understanding of livelihood strategies and the constraints and threats to these livelihoods. The report also examines the differences in livelihood strategies afforded by location, gender, generation and access to assets. These gender, generational and geographic factors are then considered in the documentation and analysis of the protective strategies and mechanisms that these populations develop in an attempt to mitigate threats.

The security risks facing households and individuals in Kitgum district are inextricably linked to the pursuit of livelihood strategies on a daily basis. The vast majority of the rural residents of Kitgum are displaced and cut off from the agrarian base of their pre-war livelihood strategies. Currently, the livelihood strategies of the study population are focused almost entirely on achieving subsistence needs, including food, shelter, water and fuel, with some households seeking to acquire additional income for educational purposes. The pursuit of these livelihood strategies requires exposure to physical insecurity with sometimes extreme risks on a daily basis.

In turn, strategies that prioritize physical safety and minimize exposure to insecurity may require the abandonment of particular livelihood strategies, such as subsistence farming. Some individuals and households have opted to make these shifts in their livelihood strategies in order to mitigate exposure to risk. This livelihood adaptation may decrease risk, but makes the pursuit of livelihood goals of economic and food security more difficult.

Neither the GoU nor the international community have, to date, provided sufficient protection for the war-affected populations in the north, leaving households and communities to develop their own protective strategies. As this report illustrates, most of these protective strategies are designed to enable the pursuit of livelihood strategies that seek to fulfill basic needs.

## Report Overview

This report presents findings of March - April 2006 fieldwork carried out by the Tufts team in Kitgum district. The report is divided into ten sections. Sections I to III provide information on the historical background, a discussion of the shifts in livelihoods and human security in Kitgum district since the mid-1980s, details on the research methods and site selection, and an analysis of the threats experienced and protective responses in semi-settled villages and IDP camps where the study was conducted.

Sections IV through VII document and analyze the main types of capital – natural, financial, social and human—that households and individuals seek to access in their pursuit of livelihood strategies. The inability to harness or access these forms of capital is a constraint to livelihood strategies and may put households or individuals at risk. In contrast, those individuals and households with greater levels of self-sufficiency and the ability to avoid higher-risk behavior were usually utilizing their access to capital to achieve these ends.

Section VIII examines the problem of domestic violence within the study population. It was *domestic* abuse that was found to be the most common form of violence experienced or witnessed by the study population in the camp settings. The role of the local courts, councilors and clan systems in providing a protective response to domestic violence is also examined, as the clan leaders and the local council courts function as the reporting and resolution mechanisms for family, community and clan issues and therefore play the central (but at times contested) role in responding to domestic violence.

Section IX discusses the role of UPDF and local defense units in providing security for the study population. This includes an analysis of the interaction between the security forces and residents of the camps and the ways in camp commandants seek to mitigate potential tensions and problems in this relationship.

The conclusion draws upon the study's findings to highlight the most significant livelihood and human security issues that emerged from the study and looks at the implications for policy and programming.

## Historical Background

The current conflict in northern Uganda began shortly after the acting president, Yoweri Museveni, took power through a military coup in 1986. The take-over by Museveni's forces, the National Resistance Army (NRA), came after years of political, military and social turmoil dating back to the regime of Idi Amin in the 1970s. The NRA took power after battling the national army of the time, the Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA). A large portion of the officer corps of the UNLA was dominated by northerners, and many of these soldiers fled to the north of the country fearing retribution by the NRA forces. Some of these UNLA soldiers demobilized while others crossed the border into Sudan. The NRA did move north and some NRA soldiers engaged in abuses against the northern populations, including pillage, rape, torture, theft of cattle and destruction of infrastructure. These events sowed the seeds of rebellion in the north and the late 1980s saw the emergence of a series of resistance movements with varying degrees of popular support. The longest lasting in the line of resistance leaders was Joseph Kony and his forces, known (after several earlier iterations) as the Lord's Resistance Army or LRA.

With the permission of the Sudanese government, Kony had based the LRA in southern Sudan by the early 1990s and the movement received overt support from the Sudanese government in an effort to counter the activities of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in the same area. The Ugandan government in turn supported the SPLA, creating a proxy war between the two countries. Overt support to the LRA from the Sudanese government dwindled in the late 1990s due to increased international pressure and an agreement between Khartoum and Kampala, but support to Kony from elements within the Sudanese military allegedly continues.

Unlike earlier popular resistance movements in the north, such as the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), the LRA quickly lost popular support among the local population due primarily to the terror the group inflicted against civilians. Attacks upon the populations of Acholiland (Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts) increased and intensified in the 1990s and soon spread to the Lango (Lira and Apac districts) and Teso (Soroti, Kumi, Katakwi, Kaberamaido, Bukedea and Amuria districts) sub-regions. The Ugandan national army, renamed the United People's Defense Force (UPDF), began to forcibly move civilians into camps and 'protected villages' (IDP camps) allegedly to cut the rebels' food supply. Corraling the population was also meant to decrease the abduction and forced recruitment of children and youth into the rebel forces. However, the protection of civilians in the displacement camps has been inconsistent and often ineffective, with many of the most serious massacres and waves of abduction occurring after people were forced into IDP camps. In 2003, the government of Uganda (GoU) encouraged the creation of local defense units (LDUs) to provide protection to the population. These militias are under the control of the UPDF but are often poorly trained and facilitated and lack regular salaries and other support.

The World Food Program (WFP) has been providing food rations to the internally displaced population since the mid-1990s and operates under heavy security provided by the UPDF.<sup>9</sup> The number of national and international NGOs and UN organizations has increased in the north in the last three to four years as the humanitarian situation has worsened and world attention to the conflict has increased. Insecurity and limited humanitarian access often hinder effective programming and monitoring, and many organizations rely on UPDF escorts to travel to most of the camps in Kitgum and Pader districts.

Up to 90% of the population in Acholiland remained displaced during the data collection for this report. The number of attacks upon civilians has decreased over the last year, but national and international NGOs came under direct attack in November 2005

following the International Criminal Court's (ICC) release of indictments for five top LRA officials.

On August 26, 2006, delegates from the GoU and the LRA signed a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement at peace negotiations in Juba brokered by the government of South Sudan. This agreement was designed to help create an environment conducive to peace talks. Both the GoU and the LRA have subsequently violated the Agreement, the GoU by attacking LRA fighters as they move to cantonment camps, and the LRA by staging ambushes on UPDF convoys in southern Sudan. However, peace talks thus far have not been called off and the population lives in hope that the war will finally end.

Although the conflict between the GoU and the LRA has usually been considered the main problem in the north, there are a series of over-lapping issues that affect the humanitarian and political situation. Violent and at times deadly cattle raids by the Karamojong<sup>10</sup> are one of the most pressing security threats for much of the population in the eastern part of Acholiland and Lango and Teso sub-regions. In addition, the economic, political and social marginalization of the northern populations by the GoU underlies all aspects of the conflict, and this is unlikely to be resolved through a military strategy or negotiated peace with the LRA. Some scholars posit that the current GoU intentionally leaves the north central region of Uganda largely unprotected from Karamojong raids in order to mute any political rivalry from the northern groups.<sup>11</sup>

### **Shifts in Livelihoods and Human Security in Kitgum District**

Shifts in security are central to the changes and adaptations in people's lives and livelihoods in Kitgum district. Before the mid-1980s, traditional livelihoods in predominately rural Kitgum district centered on subsistence agriculture, cattle rearing and the sale of some cash crops. The combination of farming and livestock allowed households to smooth consumption in response to shock (such as drought or loss of animals) and to access cash when needed by selling

small amounts of cattle. Land for grazing and farming was plentiful and managed on a communal system.

The structure of livelihoods in the north began to change with the advent of more systematic and violent cattle raids by Karamojong groups from northeast Uganda. Heavily armed Karamojong raiders swept across the northern part of the country, including Acholiland, Teso and Lango sub-regions, beginning in the mid-1980s, looting the vast majority of the cattle in the north over a period of several years. The seizure of cattle coincided with the movement of the NRA troops into the north and accompanying theft of cattle and other livestock. The increased use of tactics of terror by the LRA in the early 1990s and the subsequent up-rooting of the rural population by the GoU security forces further undermined the land-dependent agro-pastoral livelihood system of the population of Kitgum.

Currently, populations in Kitgum district are at risk from three different types of armed groups: Karamojong raiders, the LRA and raiders from south Sudan.<sup>12</sup> Karamojong raiders primarily target cattle, oxen and goats but often loot other material goods during raids. They are known to kill those who try to guard against or interfere with such attacks and sometimes abduct and severely beat people in an effort to learn the location of livestock. Reports indicate that the Karamojong raiders are increasingly targeting civilians not associated with livestock. These attacks have included murder, abduction and rape—including gang rape—of residents of IDP camps and semi-settled villages.<sup>13</sup> Notably, in areas that border Karamoja, nearly all people interviewed for this study consider the Karamojong raiders as dangerous and deadly as the LRA.

The LRA are notorious for their practices of abduction, torture, maiming and killing of civilians and for burning and looting settlements. The LRA typically travel in small armed groups and carry out attacks on civilian targets during the evening or early morning hours. The fighters target villages and IDP camps to abduct recruits and loot food and supplies to meet the groups' provisional needs. Civilians are

targeted for abduction as the LRA is dependent upon captives to act as fighters, carry loot and perform other tasks to maintain the rebel force. Abducted girls and young women are held captive and sometimes forced to serve as wives; these abductions can involve elements of sexual enslavement, forced domestic labor, enforced impregnation and other violations. One of the primary tactics of the LRA in attacking civilian communities is to instill profound fear within these populations; LRA attacks are characterized by extreme brutality with the intention to maim and terrorize any survivors. By conducting attacks in a vicious, calculated manner, the LRA is able to manipulate population movements and discourage resettlement or travel within certain areas.

Another threat to civilian populations in Kitgum district comes from south Sudanese raiders and weapons traders. To date the Tufts research team has collected less information about these groups, but a number of people living within Orom and Agoro sub-counties reported that raiding groups were crossing the Sudanese border and killing civilians and raiding livestock and food stores in Kitgum district. Notably, these populations do not appear to generate the same levels of displacement and terror as do the Karamojong raiders and LRA rebels.

As of early 2006, it was estimated that approximately 90% of the population of Kitgum district was displaced due to insecurity caused by the LRA and Karamojong raiders and the GoU's forced relocation strategies.<sup>14</sup> Raids, attacks and UPDF curfews restrict movement and limit access to certain areas, and most of the region's rich natural resources are inaccessible. Insecurity and limited mobility hamper trade and business and negatively affect farmers, merchants and consumers in the IDP camps and trading centers in Kitgum district.

Households living in or near IDP camps have limited land access for agriculture and grazing and own little if any livestock. Recent studies suggest these conditions have resulted in near total dependence on food aid.<sup>15</sup> However, within the Tufts study population, the displaced populations report that

WFP rations make up one-third to one-half of their food needs.<sup>16</sup> Households supplement WFP rations with wild foods, including famine foods, crops and purchased food items. Those with access to land and the appropriate inputs (land, labor, seeds and tools) continue to try to pursue subsistence agriculture, although insecurity and restricted mobility hamper farming at a self-sufficient level for nearly all households. Recent studies estimate that the majority of IDPs have access to less than 1.5 acres of land.<sup>17</sup>

Land is often rented out at prices that people cannot afford, and many IDPs are unable to access any land at all. There are efforts to expand UPDF and LDU security perimeters around the camp or along roads to allow for increased IDP access to land.

Recent studies indicate that many people have inadequate seed supplies and are thus at least partially dependent on NGOs for seeds.<sup>18</sup> To note, however, within the Tufts study population, many of those who had access to land were multiplying or purchasing part of their own seed needs, as well as using seeds provided by the NGOs, which were generally preferred based on quality and yield.



*A granary with a temporary roof in Orom camp.*



## II. Study Methods and Sites

A Tufts research team and three Ugandan colleagues conducted field-based work in Kitgum district in March and April 2006.<sup>19</sup> The study used qualitative research methods to collect primary data. The team selected qualitative methods over quantitative methods to enable greater depth of information gathering on subjects that were, in a number of areas, sensitive and that had previously not been well documented. The team also chose qualitative methods because the study sought not to quantify people's livelihoods and instances of threat or violence, but rather to understand *the nature* of livelihoods and insecurity, as well as individual and community responses and protective strategies. Qualitative methods included in-depth semi-structured interviews, direct observation and participant observation. Data was recorded using note-taking and interviews were then transcribed. Data was coded using a set of topical codes established prior to the study. Data was analyzed primarily using text analysis through deductive coding. Where new or unexpected trends arose, the team analyzed the data by inductive coding using grounded-theory with an emphasis on memoing. The team then compared the findings of existing literature (published and grey literature) on related issues of livelihoods and human security in northern Uganda, with an emphasis on Kitgum district. This comparison allowed the team to verify findings and to check for possible contradictions or new information arising in the study.

A total of 164 individuals were interviewed for this study. The researchers conducted in-depth, individual interviews with key informants from the following categories:

- Female-headed households (including widows, unmarried women and women abandoned by their husbands or male partners);
- Child-headed households (including households headed by both males and females);

- Households of young mothers formerly abducted by the LRA;
- Households with family members abducted by the LRA;
- Disabled-headed households;
- HIV-affected households;
- Local government officials (including Chief Administrative Officer, sub-county chiefs, and LC I, II, III, V);
- Clan leaders and other elders from the Acholi ethnic groups;
- *Rwodi Kweri* (hoe chiefs);
- Community leaders;
- IDP camp leaders;
- UPDF military officials;
- Local Defense Unit (LDU) members;
- Petty traders;
- Subsistence farmers;
- Ugandan lawyers;
- Staff member of NGOs, UN agencies and international organizations that provide programming on issues of livelihoods and protection in Kitgum district.<sup>20</sup>

With the exception of local officials and staff from aid organizations, all interviewees were recorded as anonymous. All interviewees were informed of the purpose of the study, as well as their rights to voluntarily participate (or not) in the study, ask questions at any time, refuse to answer any questions, and to input information into the study they thought was necessary but which the interviewers had not solicited.<sup>21</sup> Key informants were interviewed in semi-settled villages, trading centers and towns. Interviews took place in a variety of locations inside or near internal displacement camps, including homes, markets and agricultural land outside the camp. The research team resided in Agoro and Orom IDP camps while conducting research, allowing for relevant information to be collected in numerous sites in and around the camp for up to 12 hours a day, including through direct and participant observation.<sup>22</sup> The team also traveled into semi-settled villages to interview residents in these areas.

In-depth work was conducted in Kitgum district in areas affected by the armed conflict between the rebel LRA and the GoU as well as in areas affected by armed cattle-raiding. Three geographic locations within Kitgum district were selected as the study's sites:

- Agoro trading center, IDP camp and semi-settled villages adjacent to the trading center;
- Orom trading center, IDP camp and semi-settled villages in the surrounding parishes;
- Labuje IDP camp and Pager, the semi-settled village bordering Labuje.

Interviews were also conducted in Kitgum town with local government officials and staff from national and international aid organizations. The team also conducted interviews with NGO officers in Gulu town.

The Tufts team selected study sites and populations to demonstrate a range of livelihood strategies, constraints to livelihoods, and human security threats and protective responses. Within these sites, the team paid particular attention to the differences within the livelihood and protective strategies afforded by location, gender, generation and access to assets. In each of the three study sites, the Tufts team sought to compare the strategies, constraints, threats and responses among populations based in IDP camps to those in semi-settled villages.

Agoro was selected because i) it borders South Sudan and is affected by the LRA and raiders from both Sudan and Karamoja; ii) there is a large IDP camp connected to Agoro trading center; iii) there are a number of semi-inhabited villages near Agoro trading center; iv) there is a large monthly auction primarily featuring livestock with traders from Sudan, Lira, Gulu, Kitgum and elsewhere; and v) it is considered to be one of the most fertile agricultural regions in northern Uganda.

Orom was selected because i) it borders Karamoja and is affected by both the LRA and raiders from Karamoja; ii) Karamojong raiding threats to populations in Orom are seasonal; iii) there is a large

IDP camp connected to Orom trading center; iv) a number of villages in the parishes surrounding Orom trading center are semi-inhabited but little is known about the livelihoods and protective strategies of these populations; and v) there is a monthly auction (primarily of clothes and household materials) held in Orom trading center which attracts people from the semi-settled villages as well as traders and travelers from Karamoja.

Labuje camp was selected because i) inhabitants have access to a district center and hence potentially greater market and labor opportunities; ii) it is in close proximity to all major humanitarian agencies and the district government, courts, police and hospitals; iii) the close proximity to settled and semi-settled villages allows for potentially greater market opportunities and greater flux in population movements; and iv) it is an extremely congested camp.

### III. Semi-Settled Villages and Internal Displacement Camps

#### Semi-Settled Villages

The Tufts team worked in two types of semi-settled villages.<sup>23</sup> The first type consists of villages where residents inhabit the area for several months of the year, primarily during the rainy season, in order to grow food on their land. Persons living in these villages include men, women, boys and girls, as well as female-headed households and disabled people. Many residents of these villages move to IDP camps during the dry season. These villages fluctuate between habitation and temporary abandonment depending on levels of insecurity. If conditions are deemed relatively safe, the inhabitants sleep in the villages while guarded by armed sentries from among the population. When conditions are less secure most inhabitants abandon the villages at night and sleep in the bush, leaving behind a small number of armed villagers (reportedly all males) to protect the village from looting and attack by the Karamojong or LRA. In periods of extreme insecurity the entire village population returns to the IDP camp. The Tufts team visited two parishes<sup>24</sup> consisting of roughly 15 villages around Orom trading center and this phenomenon was reported for all 15 of these villages.<sup>25</sup> (The Tufts team could not reach other parishes with semi-settled villages around Orom and Agoro, in which conditions might be different, due to insecurity and poor road conditions).

The second type of semi-settled village in which the Tufts team worked consisted of original villages in close proximity to IDP camps and UPDF detachments. Persons living in these villages include men, women, boys and girls, as well as child and female-headed households and some disabled populations. The inhabitants of this type of semi-settled villages include i) original inhabitants of the village (who made up the majority of the inhabitants in villages we visited); ii) those from other villages who have bought land and built huts in the village for improved security and access to the trading centers; and iii)

persons who are displaced due to insecurity and are renting or borrowing huts and land in the village.

Residents within the second type of semi-settled villages use three movement strategies to manage threats of insecurity. In the first, inhabitants maintain huts inside the nearby IDP camp and use these huts to store food and goods but only stay in the huts at night. The inhabitants spend as much time as possible in the semi-settled villages, arriving early in the morning and departing for the camp at the UPDF-set curfew in the evening. In the second movement strategy, inhabitants also maintain huts in the camp but have negotiated with some members of the UPDF to allow them to stay in the village at night, even though other households nearby must move back into the camp (male-headed households appear better able to negotiate this option than female-headed households). The third strategy is to remain in the settled villages permanently and receive protection from the UPDF. The semi-settled villages around Labuje camp near Kitgum town and Agoro camp and trading center fit this second category of semi-settled villages.<sup>26</sup>

#### ATTACKS BY KARAMOJONG RAIDERS AND LRA: VILLAGE PROTECTION STRATEGIES

Raids or attacks by the Karamojong raiders and the LRA pose one of the greatest threats to residents inside their semi-settled villages. The Karamojong raid villages for animals, but will at times take food and other goods during the attacks. The LRA rebels attack villages for food, captives, loot and to establish temporary bases (as part of efforts to push local populations out of rebel transit corridors). They also attack and may temporarily inhabit villages to meet resource needs such as food and water. Inhabitants in the semi-settled villages have developed a number of protective strategies in an attempt to avoid attack.

#### Abandonment of Villages at Night

One protective strategy is the complete or near complete abandonment of the village at night, though there are at least two variations on this strategy. In the first variation, in which UPDF or LDU protection is unavailable, the entire village population may move

to sleep in the hills or bush, leaving behind only a small number of armed men and adolescent males to guard the villages against Karamojong raiders and LRA rebels. For example, a local leader in Orom explained:

*Between this line of villages maybe 40 men stay behind each night and the rest go up the hills [with the rest of the villagers]. These men rotate this duty. These men guard the villages each night and raise an alarm if help is needed or if people should move farther up the mountain [for safety].<sup>27</sup>*

A number of semi-settled villages in Orom and Agoro have used the steep rocky hills near their villages for sanctuary for decades, if not longer, fleeing to them when they feel insecure. According a group of women in Orom:

*We will stay [overnight] here [in the village]. If we need to we can flee into the bush. If it is really bad we will flee to the hills. We sleep under the trees and hide under the rocks if there is a lot of Karamojong or LRA activity.<sup>28</sup>*

The hills not only provide enhanced vantage points, but also offer improved acoustics so that people hiding in the hills can hear movement on the rocks below. A leader from a semi-settled village explained:

*We can hear people moving up the hills more easily. We cannot hear the LRA or the Karamojong coming if we are sleeping down there [in the flats]. If we are up on the hill and we hear people coming we just move farther up.<sup>29</sup>*

The women are unarmed and largely responsible for the immediate protection of their children, and have developed a number of specific strategies to protect themselves and the children. For instance, the women showed the Tufts team a large hide tanned to look like a stone. When reversed, this hide provides a cover and camouflage for up to one adult and three children. The women also demonstrated a means of blending into the landscape and protecting their children when spending the night on the

mountainside: a woman squats down, holds one child on her lap and encircles two more children in her arms. She then reaches her arms forward around the base of the tree, making her silhouette in the dark appear to be a rock. The women further explained that if the attack comes suddenly or is particularly fierce, they run to pre-selected rocks with crevices in which to hide the small children while the adults advance further up the side of the mountain. A series of caves offer additional refuge.

If an attack occurs, the group will stay in the hills for several days to gauge the likelihood of additional attacks before moving back down to their villages. A local male councilor explained:

*If there are reports that the LRA or the Karamojong are in the area then we go up the hills, but if there are no such reports then we are able to stay in our huts at night. When we go up to the hills we go between one-half to three miles up, depending on the threat. Everyone goes together and finds a place that seems safe. We will maybe stay in the hills for three days after there has been an attack. During this time the men will come down to get more food and take it up to the women and children.<sup>30</sup>*

The second variation on abandonment of villages occurs in areas where the UPDF or LDUs are present. In these cases the soldiers order the evacuation of village residents into the IDP camps at a set time each evening. The soldiers then either leave the village unguarded or, if the village is close to an IDP camp, the soldiers will post sentries in the village. The soldiers only guard areas that fall within the nighttime security perimeter around the camps (roughly 500 meters in the camps surveyed), and any residents living beyond this perimeter must evacuate. This variation of complete or partial nighttime evacuation is seen in semi-settled villages near Agoro and Labuje camps. Failure to leave when ordered to do so results in a series of actions by the UPDF and/or LDU soldiers. According to a group of women in such a village near Agoro:

*We all sleep in the camp. In the evening the soldiers come here and tell us to leave everything and go to the camp, the soldiers stay here in the evenings.*

*Tufts researcher: What if people don't leave?*

*Women: When the soldiers are on patrol, they will sit in front of your hut and they will tell you to leave, even if you are cooking. Sometimes they tell people to leave and they have to abandon their cooking and the soldiers eat the food. Now that the rains are coming, it is more insecure, so we are going to shift our firewood into the camp and start cooking our evening meals there. We do this because the grasses grow high and the rebels may come to this village.<sup>31</sup>*

In other cases, the UPDF and LDUs use threat, humiliation and force to remove villagers who refuse to leave their semi-settled village after curfew. According to a 14 year-old girl who heads her own household in a semi-settled village near Labuje camp:

*No one is allowed to sleep here. We sleep in the school at night. By 6pm everyone has to leave here. If the soldiers catch you, you will be detained if you are a man and given up to 40 strokes in the morning. If you are a woman and if you come too early back here to fetch water, they will make you pump the water really fast and then they pour it all over your head and then they give you the empty jerry can and make you walk back wet to the school or clinic. You are not to come back here [to the semi-settled village] or go to fetch water here until 8am, but then lines are long and it can take until 1-2pm to get the water so some women try to sneak and do it earlier.<sup>32</sup>*

### **Movement of Entire Village to New Location**

The second protective strategy for semi-settled villages documented by the Tufts team involves the relocation

of entire villages to locations with better natural security, such as areas adjacent to hills or mountains. In Orom, the Tufts team documented that up to nine villages previously located near a main road have moved in entirety to the base of a mountain, where residents reestablished the villages in areas that had previously consisted of fields and elephant grass. These villagers initially abandoned their villages for IDP camps in 2002 due to intense LRA attacks, but two years later they left the camps and reestablished villages at the new location closer to the base of the mountains. (It was in these new locations that the Tufts team met and interviewed the villagers.) In addition to the security provided by the geological features, armed members of the village also provided defense. Even with the improved security, villagers in this area occasionally move up into the hills overnight and return to the camp for extended periods when insecurity is particularly high.



***Villagers from Katakwa rebuilt their village closer to the mountains for additional protection.***

### **Internal Displacement Camps**

The Tufts team worked in IDP camps in Agoro, Labuje and Orom. The IDP camp in Agoro was established in 1999 with the arrival of residents from seven villages in Agoro sub-county. In 2004, residents of an additional 21 villages arrived abruptly and settled among those already present in the camp. There are

between 7,000-12,000 people within Agoro IDP camp, with population estimates varying greatly depending on the source.

Labuje IDP camp was established in 2003 and is located a few kilometers outside Kitgum town. Labuje consists of people from 19 villages representing different sub-counties. There are between 13,500-17,650 people in Labuje camp, again depending on the source.

Orom IDP camp was established in 2002 and consists of all villages from one parish, while the other parishes within the sub-county maintain some of their original populations. There are between 19,000-20,650 people in Orom camp.

#### **REASONS POPULATIONS MOVE INTO CAMPS AT STUDY SITES**

People come to the IDP camps for a number of security-based reasons. In some instances, the entire population of a village may move into a camp because of direct targeting by the LRA. For example, in 1995, a young girl was abducted by the LRA and later became one of the favorite captive wives of Vincent Otti, one of the LRA's top commanders. Her escape in 2003 led to threats upon her village and surrounding area by Otti himself, who promised to kill everyone in the area if she was not returned to him. Upon receiving the message, the local resident district commissioner (RDC) of the area went to the villages and told everyone to move at once. Many people fled and initially slept in a teachers' training college before moving into Labuje camp. Otti and the LRA did attack the girl's village and abducted two of her uncles (both later rescued by the UPDF).<sup>33</sup> To date, the population of the area remains in Labuje camp.

Changes in interactions between communities and the rebels, including increases in violence against civilians, also result in movement into the IDP camps. The LRA does not always use violence against civilian populations it encounters. For instance, the LRA may use certain routes only for transit and not attack people in the area. In other cases, the rebels may occupy an area, but only at certain times of the day or

in certain seasons. It is when these interactions and dynamics change that violence is likely to increase, causing people to leave their villages. To illustrate, residents of a village at the base of a hill in Agoro reported that beginning in 2003 the LRA took over their village as a barracks each night. The civilian population fled roughly a mile into the bush every evening, bringing only enough food for their children, and returning after the LRA left in the morning. The villagers' calculated strategy entailed leaving the village and granaries opened to provide easy access for the rebels, yet it allowed the villagers to remain in their homes during the day and access their fields. The rebels used their huts for shelter and ate as much food as they needed. This arrangement continued for two years until 2005, when the LRA killed three people from the village. This sudden shift in established interaction with the rebels and the unpredicted use of violence led the entire village population to decide to move into the camp.<sup>34</sup>

In other instances, the GoU has declared areas unsafe and told populations to move into camps. Populations are given a time period ranging from a matter of days to several months in which they must leave the villages. In some cases, the populations are given an armed escort by the UPDF and LDUs into the camp, while in other cases they are told to come in on their own.

Another reason for moving into camps occurs at the household level. Individual households may reach a breaking point at which they feel they can no longer stay in the village. Events such as the murder of a spouse or abduction of a child may be the catalyst for such a decision. Often, these individuals will make periodic visits to their villages to access their land and other natural resources in the area. Such visits are usually gauged based on perceived levels of security in a given area.

#### **UPDF, LDUS AND SECURITY PERIMETERS**

Once inside the camps, inhabitants are meant to be protected by UPDF soldiers and LDU militia. In the three camps where the Tufts team worked, the majority of soldiers providing protection are LDUs

under the command of UPDF officers. The soldiers maintain a security perimeter around the camps. During the day, the security perimeter is extended to two kilometers as soldiers move out into the bush. Within these two kilometers camp residents are able to work in fields and collect some natural resources in relative safety. This security perimeter is in effect beginning at 8am and lasts until 2pm to 4pm, depending on the resident UPDF commander. All residents must be back inside the camp at the designated curfew. Persons returning late face serious consequences, such as being mistaken for rebels and shot. Those who have mistakenly missed the curfew reported that at times they will sleep in the bush rather than risk being caught arriving late. At night, the security perimeter constricts to more tightly encircle the camp and the soldiers, again primarily the LDUs, are stationed around the edges of the camp.

## IV. Natural Resources

Natural resources (or capital) include the assets used by individuals and households in pursuit of livelihood strategies. Land for farming and grazing is central to the agriculturally-based livelihood strategies pursued by the majority of the population in northern Uganda, but displacement and insecurity have radically altered the ability to access land. Rental prices increase as land becomes scarcer. Tenure insecurity is increasing, especially for female-headed households, and individuals report taking greater security risks to access land farther from the protected perimeter around the camps. Other natural resources such as fuel and water are necessary on an almost daily basis for household survival. The collection and sale of wood, wild foods and grasses for thatch and kindling serve as an important means of income generation. These resources are becoming increasingly difficult to find around the camp and individuals—usually women and young girls—expose themselves to attack as they move farther afield to collect these essential livelihood and survival items.

### Land Access

Nearly all of the respondents in the study population view land access as highly desirable and central to achieving a degree of self-sufficiency. Households that can access land are able to supplement their diet and sell small amounts of produce for cash to buy salt, soap and school supplies, but most still rely on WFP food distributions for at least half of their monthly food needs. In contrast, households that are unable to access land rely more heavily on gathering other natural resources (particularly firewood and seasonal wild foods for consumption and sale), sporadic paid labor and WFP food rations. No household encountered by the Tufts team was totally reliant on WFP food distributions to meet their food needs, including households headed by children, HIV positive people, widows and the disabled.<sup>35</sup>

Demand for land is greater than the amount of land available within a marginally safe area around Agoro, Orom and Labuje camps.<sup>36</sup> Households able to access land either have social or familial connections to the

land owners or are able to pay rents of between 5,000 and 40,000 USh (USD 2.75 to USD 22) per season, depending on the size of the plot of land and the specific location. Some households displaced from villages near a camp may be able to access some or all of their original farm land, but access can be inconsistent from one season or year to the next. To illustrate, a woman in Labuje camp explained that she farmed on her original plot (about four miles from the camp) in the first year that she was displaced, but that rebel activity made the daily trips too dangerous in the ensuing years. Now she returns to her land only to gather wood and to harvest calabashes, which require little attention during the growing season.<sup>37</sup> People who own land that is accessible from the camps may face pressure from other camp dwellers seeking land access. Some owners may be able to make money from renting this land, but few respondents in the study population admitted to taking money for land. Most claimed that they simply allowed other people to use select parcels without a fee.

Overall, households in the semi-settled villages around Orom and Agoro and next to Labuje had better access to land than the residents in the camps. Respondents in the semi-settled villages around Orom explained that their primary motivation for being in the villages, even with high security risks, is their ability to access agricultural land. These villagers are able to grow a more diverse set of crops on larger parcels of land than the camp residents, including simsim (sesame), sorghum, maize, millet, ground nuts, beans and peas. Like respondents in Orom, a primary reason displaced people have settled in the village of Pager near Labuje is that they are able to access and farm land in small plots near their rented huts and at the edge of the village.

Unsurprisingly, the food security of the semi-settled villagers around Agoro, Orom and Labuje is better than that of the residents of the camps. For instance, most women interviewed in the semi-settled villages, including those in female-headed households, reported being able to feed their children breakfast, something that was rarely encountered in the camps,



except when WFP had delivered corn-soya blend (CSB). Residents of the parishes around Orom were also able to sell surplus produce in the camps and to provide food for family members living in the camp.

While working in Agoro the Tufts team was told of people living in villages in the hills above the camp. Like the residents of the parishes around Orom, these people reportedly went to the villages during the rainy season in order to access land. A woman who lived in a semi-settled village adjacent to Agoro trading center explained:

*There are still people living up in the hills who can plant wheat because their land is so fertile. These people also have huts in the camp and stay in the camp when it is unsafe. They just use these small homes up in the hills when it is time to harvest and during the growing season, but they are disturbed often by the rebels.<sup>38</sup>*

The reports of people farming living in the hills were confirmed by several different sources, but the Tufts team was not able to visit these communities due to LRA activity in the area. If accurate, it appears that these residents are engaging in a semi-settled seasonal arrangement at great risk to personal security, like the people in the parishes outside of Orom, in order to be able to access agricultural land.

#### **RISKS AND THREATS IN ACCESSING LAND**

Access to agricultural land is highly desirable but not without risks. The physical risks of insecurity are the most apparent, but potential problems also include economic risk and problems realizing food security in the event of poor harvests. Households seeking to farm land take these risks into account and weigh the livelihood strategy of own food production against other possible options, such as occasional paid labor and sale and collection of natural resources. For many households, however, a combination of all of these factors is required in order to meet subsistence thresholds, and the vast majority of households who have the option of planting land choose to do so.

Renting land and planting crops does not guarantee a return on the investment, and many households lost their entire harvest in the 2005 drought. Access to rented or borrowed land is at times only for one season and many respondents, particularly female-headed households in Orom, reported that owners took back the land after the first season. In many cases these plots had not been farmed in decades and the women spent the bulk of the first season clearing the land, only to be forced to return the land to the owner the following year. The uncertainty of land tenure means that farmers on rented or borrowed land cannot plant multiple season crops such as cassava.

Theft from fields—reported to be by LRA rebels, the Lotuko (from Sudan) and the Karamojong—can have a substantial impact on subsistence level harvests. Members of the LDU are also accused of stealing crops in some areas. LRA rebels are known to both steal crops for food and also to destroy crops left lying in the field. The amount of crops lost through theft can be high, as a farmer in Agoro camp explains:

*The LRA steal groundnuts, simsim, and maize from the fields... If you harvest one sack full of maize the rebels might steal two times that amount. This is about the same amount that is stolen every year.<sup>39</sup>*

Residents of semi-settled villages reported similar problems of theft and destruction. Even in the areas outside of Orom in which armed villagers protect food stores and livestock, the security risks of guarding the open land at night is considered too high, and the protected areas include only the villages and animal kraals.

Risk of attack is a major threat for people digging in their fields or traveling back and forth from the camps or semi-settled villages to their land. The threat of attack is greatest during the rainy season, which corresponds to the period for planting and harvesting. Karamojong tribesmen move back to eastern Uganda in the beginning of the rainy season and raids are most common at this time (in Orom and Agoro). LRA attacks also are most prevalent in the rainy season,

as the tall grasses and bush provide cover for rebel movements. So great is the danger to those who work the land that some people who do *not* have land access explained that this is their preference due to safety concerns. Demand for land is high, but having access to land is recognized as a liability which results in increased levels of vulnerability. For instance, two young women explained that they felt safer making charcoal than farming:

*Yes, because we do not make charcoal at the height of the rainy season because it is too dangerous then. But if you are a farmer this is the time period in which you have to work.*<sup>40</sup>

The threat of attack is particularly pronounced for those who maintain fields outside the UPDF security perimeter. Farming beyond the security perimeter is officially prohibited by the UPDF, but some households maintain fields at a great distance from the camps. For example, a formerly abducted young mother (now 19 years old) in Orom camp farms on land six miles outside the camp. She also brews maize beer but found that she was unable to provide for her family from the income from the beer and WFP food alone, and asked relatives for a piece of land. She explained:

*I do not own the land. This is the first year that I have had land to dig...after one year I will have to return the land to the owner. It is free for me, but I had to beg for it. It is six miles from the camp. I travel with others when I go out to dig. I dig two or three times a week.*<sup>41</sup>

The young woman has access to land, but has very insecure tenure (a one year lease) and takes great security risks to access her plot. Similar high-risk strategies were employed in Agoro camp, where many of the people interviewed, including female-headed households, were working land in their original villages, often well beyond the security perimeters of the camp. In one instance a woman worked the land in her home village, although her husband had been killed by the LRA in 2004 while working on the same plot (thus causing the family to flee into Agoro IDP

camp). The land, about an hour's walk from the camp, was too far away to be protected by the UPDF or LDU, but the woman went out to the land with other former residents of her village on a regular basis to farm.<sup>42</sup> The ability to farm land at such a distance from the camps is entirely dependent on security, which itself can shift on a daily basis, and fields that are labored over throughout the rainy season may no longer be accessible at harvest time. The extent of the risks taken to access land—even land with insecure tenure—indicates the importance of land access in livelihood strategies.

#### RESPONSES TO RISKS AND THREATS

Responses of the camp population to the security threats inherent in accessing land include traveling in groups, moving behind the security forces as they go out in the mornings, using a variety of surveillance methods, and temporarily adjusting livelihood strategies in periods of heightened insecurity. As discussed in more detail in the section on social capital, people move outside the camps in groups whenever possible. Although most of the actual farming around the camps is done on an individual or household basis, groups often leave the camp together and then disperse to their separate plots once they reach the fields. (As discussed below, people from the camps are more likely to work in groups when collecting natural resources than when farming land.)

When going out to farm in the morning people try to move behind the security forces and to stay in areas that have been checked. This is not possible for those traveling far beyond the security perimeter, which is why this strategy of land access entails increased risk. Some respondents reported asking the UPDF or LDUs if they are aware of any security threats in the area, but the information received from soldiers is often considered unreliable by civilians.

Vigilance and flight are the two most important aspects of the protective strategies of those engaged in farming in the camps and semi-settled villages. While walking to their fields, farmers watch for any unknown persons that fit the visual characteristics of

LRA or Karamojong raiders. The LRA are often identified by their unkempt appearance (particularly their hair), gumboots, partial military uniforms (e.g., military pants or a military shirt but not a complete uniform), and the practice of moving in dispersed and erratic formations. The Karamojong raiders, particularly the Jie, can be identified by their traditional clothing, use of walking sticks, and the tendency to move in larger groups. In addition, farmers check for footprints in the soil as they travel to their fields, noting that gumboot tracks past the security perimeter may signal LRA activity, while a large number of footprints from shoes with soles made from tires may indicate movement of Karamojong raiders. Sightings of these signs can cause farmers to return to more secure locations.

Once working their fields, people from both camps and semi-settled villages report that they constantly monitor the whereabouts and behavior of those digging around them. They also post sentries when possible. Any sudden movement by their neighbors, sighting of unknown persons that fit the characteristics of the LRA or Karamojong or Sudanese raiders, or signal of alarm would cause all those in the vicinity to drop their tools and quickly and quietly flee the area. As most farmers are armed only with pangas, the best protective strategy is always one of evasion and escape.

Respondents explained that when there is an attack or a sighting of rebels or Karamojong they will wait for up to three or four days before returning to their fields. A woman in Orom camp, who felt that the Karamojong were the greatest threat to her security at present, explained this method of self-protection:

*If I hear that the Karamojong are in the area, I do not go into the fields until others tell me that they went and it is now safe to go.<sup>43</sup>*

All interviewees reported that insecurity increases in the period directly prior to and during harvest, as this is when the LRA are most likely to loot crops from the fields. As a result, farmers often harvest their fields early to mitigate the risk of attack or the loss of crops.

#### **VARIATIONS IN RISK AND RESPONSE AMONG SEMI-SETTLED VILLAGES**

The populations in the semi-settled villages around Agoro trading center and in Pager village adopt protective strategies similar to those of the camp populations when accessing agricultural land. Residents of the semi-settled villages around Orom, however, are entirely self-reliant for their own security and do not benefit from the presence of LDU or UPDF soldiers. Accordingly, these villagers employ more complex and varied protective mechanisms and strategies than their counterparts in the other study sites.

The villagers work their fields in collective groups in which both men and women labor in the fields while some men and adolescent males watch for any movement or activity in the bush. Where possible, these sentries climb trees for enhanced views, while others patrol the perimeters of the fields. Importantly, a number of the men and adolescent males serving as sentries as well as those in the fields carry weapons. To differentiate the armed male villagers from the LRA or Karamojong, the armed villagers have a signal to indicate to those working in the field that they are a friend and will not harm them.

Sentries also have a signal system they use to alert others of rebel or Karamojong activity in the area. The sentries mimic bird cries or call out, signaling for unarmed farmers, inhabitants and children to retreat to a safer area and the armed males to gather and respond. Residents of the semi-settled villages work collectively to bring in the harvest as quickly as possible, using the sentry system to enhance their security.

#### **Wood and Wild Foods**

Natural resources other than land are central to livelihood strategies in Kitgum. These resources include wood for firewood and charcoal making, wild greens, seasonal fruits, thatch for roofs and grasses for lighting fires. These resources may be sold to other residents of the camp or village, taken into town where possible, sold at a market day or to businesses preparing for market days (such as restaurants and

lodges in the trading centers), or consumed by the household. As such, these consumable goods form a critical aspect of strategies for cash-generation and basic survival. With the exception of charcoal, these natural resources are collected almost exclusively by women and girls, and it is women and girls (ages eight and above) who take the security risks of traveling out from the camp—often far beyond the security perimeter—and outside the semi-settled villages on a regular and sometimes daily basis.

#### FIREWOOD AND CHARCOAL

The collection and sale of firewood is a very common livelihood strategy for women and girls in both camp and semi-settled locations and often requires long and arduous journeys through insecure areas on a near daily basis. The sale of firewood is particularly important for households that do not have access to land and thus must generate income to purchase food and other household necessities. This activity is also important for more economically vulnerable households such as those headed by children. However, women and girls from nearly all households engage in wood collection even if only for their own cooking needs. Many individuals, including women, girls and heads of child-headed households, report traveling an average of five kilometers from their homes to collect firewood, with some going as far as 10 kilometers.

Most women reported that firewood collection is primarily a dry season activity due to the need for dry wood and security concerns (the high grasses in the rainy season increase risk of rebel attack). Taking both livelihood needs and security into account, women use dry-season collection to stock wood for sale and use throughout the year. The Tufts team interviewed a woman who was trying to stock as much wood as possible before the onset of the heavy rains:

*We go 10 times a week now [to collect firewood]... Sometimes we can make three trips before 11 am... In the rainy season the bush is too thick and it makes it nearly impossible to go out. So now is the time we collect firewood and hold it in stock. We*

*always go out in groups. If you are alone it is very insecure, as the LRA or Karamojong can easily grab you.*<sup>44</sup>

Some women in Labuje and Pager are able to collect wood throughout the year, which may be a factor of the greater security around Kitgum town.

Charcoal making is primarily a male activity but is also pursued by some women. Most respondents who report making charcoal chop the wood and burn the charcoal at the same location. Charcoal fires must be maintained for one to two weeks, and ideally should be checked every day to ensure a consistent temperature. This requires regular trips through often insecure areas, and spending an extended period of time in one location. Sentries are at times posted to help alert the charcoal makers to any danger. A man who makes charcoal outside of Orom camp explained the job of a sentry:

*One person acts as a lookout. They try to watch how people are moving. The rebels do not move in a straight line but rather sneak around. So by watching for movement you can see if something looks suspicious.*<sup>45</sup>

Where possible, charcoal makers work in small teams. A female head of household in Orom explained that her adolescent son and a male neighbor have worked out a system to monitor the charcoal fires throughout the process:

*One of the older neighbors got [my son] to help. The old man would sneak out at night and tend the charcoal while the boy went in the day. It was very far away, like eight kilometers one way.*<sup>46</sup>

Charcoal making can entail a high degree of risk but respondents in the camps where the Tufts team worked felt that this was a good livelihood strategy. To note, these interviewees all have market opportunities to sell their charcoal in Kitgum town or to the hoteliers and restaurateurs prior to the monthly auctions in Agoro and Orom. The reliability of the local market may help in making the trade-off

between this livelihood strategy and the security risks entailed. Research in camps where charcoal makers have a less consistent market may show that fewer households are willing to engage in this activity.

#### WILD FOODS

The collection of wild greens and other seasonal fruits for consumption or sale is a common activity for residents in the camps and semi-settled villages. Many respondents said that wild greens can make up to half of their household food needs in the rainy season.



**Woman displays variety of wild greens collected that morning from the bush.**

Most households interviewed are collecting a combination of traditional greens (such as *boo*) and greens that are specifically famine foods (such as *ocuga*, *alima*, *animjak*, *arwtiga* and *anyjm-jolo*). Wild foods form an important part of the diet when in season, but at times demand exceeds supply,

especially as the rainy season (when most of the greens are available) progresses. Collecting these food items can involve traveling long distances at considerable security risks. Children, primarily young girls, are often sent out to collect the greens and seasonal fruits. For instance, in Agoro a group of twenty or more children and youth climb to the top of one of the high mountain peaks several times per week during the rainy season to collect *ocuga*. The children leave in the morning but are sometimes unable to reach the top of the peak and gather the greens before nightfall. In this case they will stay on the mountain overnight, hiding from LRA rebels and raiders from Sudan. The greens sell out in one to two days in the market, and the children must then repeat the journey to collect more greens.<sup>47</sup>

Respondents reported that greens within five kilometers of the IDP camps are quickly depleted by the many women and children looking for supplemental food or a source of cash income. Some interviewees travel as far as 14 kilometers roundtrip to find wild greens. These are often the most vulnerable households who have few other food or income sources, including child- and female-headed households. Respondents from such households in both Agoro and Labuje explained that it was often difficult to find others to accompany them on such a journey, and as a result they have to go alone or only with family members. A female child head of household talked about how she and her siblings collect the firewood and wild greens for sale and their own use:

*We collect firewood from our village but there are rebels there so it is risky as they could come in at any time. My [extended family member who lives far from the village] found out we were doing this, and then some children who were also collecting firewood were abducted near there, so she bought us some charcoal so we don't go out for a few weeks now. We also collect wild foods in the bush, but we feel very unsafe out there.*<sup>48</sup>

#### VARIATIONS IN ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSES IN SEMI-SETTLED VILLAGES

People in both the camps and semi-settled villages rely on movement in groups when collecting natural resources as a protective strategy. Women and girls, the main collectors of natural resources, are the most likely to engage in these protective networks. In the semi-settled villages in the parishes in Orom, however, these groups often include men, thereby decreasing the threat in an otherwise high-risk and gender-specific activity.

Residents of the semi-settled villages are more likely to have land access than people in the camps and therefore rely less upon the sale of natural resources such as wood as an essential livelihood strategy. Firewood collection is still, of course, necessary for household food preparation.

Residents of semi-settled villages around Orom have a slightly easier time accessing wild greens than inhabitants of the camps and the neighboring villages. This is primarily because the Orom parishes are more remote and the insecurity in the area prevents the residents of the camp from venturing as far as the villages. Wild greens are therefore depleted less rapidly. As a result, the sale of wild greens in the camp is a main source of income for the residents of the semi-settled villages. Women and girls in a semi-settled village reported spending an average of six hours to collect the wild greens and then an additional two hours to walk to the camps to sell these items.<sup>49</sup> They most commonly buy salt and soap with the money that they earn.

#### Water

Water is the most critical natural resource for household health and livelihoods, and it is common in displaced situations for women and girls to spend a large portion of their day collecting water. In the Tufts study population, residents of displaced camps had few complaints about the availability or quality of water, although did say that the queues at the pumps can be long in the early morning and evening and the wait for water increases in some areas in the dry season. No camp respondent complained about the

quality of water, but diarrhea was cited as a common problem in children, which may be related to water quality. Most people in the camps access water from protected sources within or directly adjacent to the camp, including boreholes drilled by international NGOs. There were no reported security risks associated with collecting water for camp residents and most camp populations spent minimal time collecting water.

#### VARIATIONS IN RISK AND RESPONSE IN SEMI-SETTLED VILLAGES

People living in semi-settled villages were much more likely to experience problems with their water supply and/or source. Households in the parishes outside of Orom have the most difficulty collecting water, as they are too far from the IDP camp to use the boreholes and protected wells.<sup>50</sup> Women and girls from these villages travel between three and 10 hours per day to collect water, with time variations depending on the village. The females from these villages take turns collecting water and all water is shared among all the villagers. They collect water from rivers, small pools of water that collects in stone formations in the mountains, and seeps.

Fetching water is a significant security risk for the populations in the semi-settled villages in Orom. At times they have to cross through areas where Karamojong raiding parties and LRA are known to be active. Women in some villages are accompanied by armed men at all times when collecting water, whereas in other villages the men only provide protection during periods of heightened insecurity. In an interview with the Tufts team, a group of women in one of the parishes explained the security risks and responses inherent in collecting water:

*We climb the hill and then walk the ridge lines looking for water in [natural] stones tanks... This area is highly insecure, there is a lot of Karamojong and LRA activity. We move everywhere with our men. We go with our men to look for water, we go in large groups. When we collect water we have some places near the edge of the mountains that we leave the children and the old women and some men to protect*

*them. Then the young people comb the hills to look for water.... It takes us about 10 hours a day to get water. Sometimes we have to wait for the seep to recharge so we can fill our water jugs full.*<sup>51</sup>

Waiting for the seeps to recharge can require a great deal of time and increase the risk of attack. The entire group waits for the seeps to refill so that everyone in the group can collect water and move back to the villages together.

Water quality from these sources may be poor. Residents of another semi-settled village in Orom complained that the water is often dirty and that the sediment does not settle. Men only provide occasional protection for women collecting water in this village. As recounted by a woman who collects water from the seeps:

*The water is not good, it stinks; it really smells bad. Sometimes we filter it but it still is very gritty... We use our clothes as a filter. It is four kilometers roundtrip to get the water and it takes about three hours, because we have to wait for it to recharge and then it is slower coming back. Also, it can take five hours if there are a lot of people and if the recharge of the seep is slow. We do the water collection – only women, no men go with us. Sometimes the LRA or Karamojong disturb us and we have to run and we lose our jerry cans. If this happens, the men will go out with us for a few days until we are sure it is safe again.*<sup>52</sup>

Some residents in semi-settled villages in Orom have worked with other people living in the area to dig wells. These wells, however, are still situated several kilometers distance from their villages. In one example, Acholi villagers dug a well with help from members of the neighboring Karamojong tribal group. The Acholi use the well for human consumption and the Karamojong use the well to water their cattle when in the area. (No one mentioned health problems arising from the dual-use of this water source.)

Residents of semi-settled areas around Agoro do not face the same problems with water as those in Orom.

The villages studied in Agoro are close to the camp and trading center and are able to access centralized water sources. If, as recounted by local residents, there are people living in the mountains above Agoro, these communities may have less reliable access to water. Residents of Pager village next to Labuje camp also have a nearby and reliable water supply from boreholes drilled in Pager after the neighboring camp was established.

## V. Financial Capital

Financial capital includes income streams and savings as well as moveable assets with financial value, such as livestock and food stores. Food is often part of a household income stream when people receive payment for labor in food and use food as a medium for barter and trade. The overall lack of financial capital is a hindrance to effective livelihood strategies among the study population in Kitgum. Very few households have an economic cushion to allow for consumption smoothing in response to shocks such as drought, illness or death in the family or loss of physical assets. They lack food reserves, cash accounts, or livestock to convert to cash or meat in a time of need. The absence of such a safety net results in increased vulnerability of nearly all respondents in the study population.

### Income Streams

Financial capital in monetary form is essential in establishing businesses or trading ventures, but such capital is rarely accessible for households within the study population. Several respondents who had been able to acquire start-up capital were working to build their businesses, including a liquor store in Orom, a sorghum trading business in Agoro and a kiosk in Labuje. In contrast, a young woman in Orom who received training as a tailor but lacks the funds to purchase a sewing machine is not able to use her skills.<sup>53</sup>

### ACCESS TO CREDIT

The collapse of financial resources in the north of Uganda is apparent through the reported decrease in credit and transfers between households and individuals.<sup>54</sup> Few people in the study population reporting being able to access credit, either as part of a formal loan such as through an agricultural cooperative or as an informal transfer from a shopkeeper, neighbor or relative. Although the agricultural cooperative system has been defunct in Uganda for a number of years,<sup>55</sup> respondents did report that informal types of credit (such as from friends and family) was more readily available prior to the escalation of conflict and subsequent

displacement. Very few members of the study population reported being able to access credit at the current time.

The absence of available credit is due to a variety of factors, including the fact that few households are good credit risks because of the lack of regular employment. Furthermore, displacement has separated villages and families, disrupting the social ties and systems of trust that underpin financial transfers and loans.<sup>56</sup> Two decades of conflict have depressed the economic situation of the majority of the population in north and there are fewer people in a position to provide loans to those in need. This is particularly the case in the rural and often isolated environments of the camps, where economic activity and cash flow is minimal. The Tufts team hypothesizes that residents of northern Uganda who might have been in an economic position to provide informal credit to others are more likely to be living in the more urban district centers or to have left the region entirely. The shift in the north is evident in the explanation of a woman in Agoro camp, who explains that credit was more readily available in the past:

*Yes, we could get food on credit from the shops and you would just pay it back later. You just repaid it when your money came in, there was no interest.<sup>57</sup>*

A widow in Agoro laughs when asked if she can get credit in the camp, and explains:

*I have no access to credit; everyone needs to sell what they have for money, so no one extends credit. I don't know anyone who gets credit or gives credit.<sup>58</sup>*

In a notable exception, a few female interviewees who brew beer and liquor are currently able to access small amounts of credit prior to brewing, as their creditors know they will have income shortly. The availability of credit to beer brewers underscores the importance of small-scale brewing in the camp economy, but is also indicative of the problems arising at the household level from the presence of cheap alcohol.



Credit in the form of goods (as opposed to cash) is also rare. Only a few people were able to access goods on credit. For example, two women in Orom said that they sometimes receive credit from local shopkeepers in the form of goods:

*Yes...we can sometimes get soap on credit. They [shopkeepers] don't charge any interest. We borrow on credit and then go and get some work somewhere and in this way are able to pay the merchants back.*<sup>59</sup>

The exchange of food between friends and neighbors was the most common form of loan mentioned among respondents in the study population. For example, an elderly woman in Labuje explained that she receives credit in the form of loans of food from people that she knows well in her neighborhood. She returns the food to her friends at a later date.<sup>60</sup>

#### REMITTANCES

Remittances, another form of cash transfer, were practically unheard of within our study population. No respondents reported receiving remittances since displacement other than as a once-off gift in cash or clothing from a visiting relative. Gathering accurate information on remittances is frequently difficult, but when asked if “any other households in your community receive remittances” almost none say this is the case. As in the case of credit, the systematic impoverishment of the society makes the transfer of funds from one part of a family to the next more difficult and less common.

Some respondents did report receiving remittances prior to displacement.<sup>61</sup> An older woman in Agoro said that prior to displacement, her two sons:

*were out in the towns working. They would send back clothes, food stuff and money... They would tell me to use [the money] for the education of the children still living with me, and this is what I spent it on.*<sup>62</sup>

Her two sons have since died of AIDS and she has taken their young children into her household in an

IDP camp. The loss of able-bodied adults due to disease (usually reported as AIDS) or conflict-related death has made such inter-generational transfers more unusual and has placed a greater burden on older generations. Many of the older women in the study are taking care of numerous grandchildren who have lost their parents to death or abandonment upon remarriage. For example, a 65 year-old widow living on the edge of Orom camp provides for her three young grandchildren after their mother remarried:

*The grandchildren are all from different husbands but the same daughter. My daughter now has another child from a different man and he does not accept these other ones. The children live with me because in Acholi culture if the man does not marry the mother he does not have responsibility for the children and a man does not take in the children born by other men. If you are a woman, you don't bring your other children into the new house.*<sup>63</sup>

The grandmother did not receive any financial support from the fathers of these children and only sporadic support in terms of small amounts of cash from the children's mother. This and similar shifts in the composition of households and the relations between generations has had an impact upon financial transfers as well as responsibilities for raising and providing for families.

#### SAVINGS ASSOCIATIONS

One of the most common means of coping with financial risk and limited economic opportunities in developing countries is the establishment of rotating savings and loan associations. This type of association, called *kalulu* groups in northern Uganda, proliferated in Uganda starting in the mid-1980s.<sup>64</sup> Within the Tufts study population these groups were most often mentioned by women engaged in a similar business venture.<sup>65</sup> For example, ten female petty traders in the IDP market in Orom camp each contribute approximately 500 USh (USD 0.27) per day to a group savings fund. If one woman has a day of poor sales she contributes a smaller amount to the kitty, such as 200 USh (USD 0.11) or less, but may

give up to 1000 US\$ (USD 0.55) on a particularly successful day.<sup>66</sup> Each Sunday a different member of the group receives all the money collected over the previous week. This rotating system allows group members to restock their supplies and to meet household obligations on a predictable cycle, allowing for better consumption smoothing. Most importantly, financial risk is dispersed among all group members, which helps to protect against shock at the household level.

### Moveable Assets

The primary moveable assets held by households in the study population in Kitgum are livestock and food. These assets are severely depleted from their pre-war and/or pre-displacement levels. When readily available, these moveable assets function as a form of cushion that allows households to fall back upon more diverse coping strategies in times of hardship. For instance, livestock could be sold or slaughtered for food in the event of a sudden shock such as a severe illness or death in the family, or could be used to balance more regular and predictable needs such as school fees. Surplus food could be sold or stored as insurance against future shortages or problems. When speaking of the pre-war period, many respondents explained that the dual strategies of livestock holdings and own-production of food allowed for a careful balance in food security and household coping strategies. Accordingly, the dearth of these convertible assets in the current environment in northern Uganda negatively affects overall food security and household coping strategies.

### LIVESTOCK

The shortage of livestock holdings among displaced populations in Kitgum is particularly apparent when comparing the period before displacement to the present. Livestock across the Acholi, Lango and Teso regions of Uganda have been decimated due to a variety of factors, including several decades of armed raids by Karamojong;<sup>67</sup> widespread population displacement, which often resulted in the loss, abandonment or death of animals; and economic hardship leading to the sale or slaughter of herds.

When comparing the past to the present, many interviewees spoke of the importance of having even a few goats and chickens, which enabled them to improve dietary diversity or to sell off a few animals in the event of a poor harvest. These assets allowed households to maintain a relatively stable if small financial base. A 75 year-old woman in Labuje camp referenced her better life in the past by describing her livestock holdings and subsequent losses thereof:

*In the village I had cows, goats, sheep, chickens. I had a lot of goats, I used the goats for food and the chickens I would sell for money or I would use to pay people to dig in my gardens for me. Then the Karamojong took them away. Once we fled the village, everything in the village was taken and looted by the Karamojong and the LRA. The entire village is displaced here and the village is completely burned down. No one is left there.<sup>68</sup>*

Widespread looting of livestock by Karamojong raiders over the past 20 years has decimated cattle, oxen and goat populations in Kitgum district and across northern Uganda. The threat is seasonal, corresponding with the beginning of the rainy season when the Karamojong move their animals from the dry season pastures of Acholiland and Lango back to the rainy season grasslands in Karamoja. Respondents in areas affected by the Karamojong raids in Kitgum stated that among the tribes that comprise the Karamojong, the Jie were the most dangerous of the different Karamojong groups that traversed the area.

Karamojong raiders are heavily armed and often inflict casualties when raiding.<sup>69</sup> Household livelihood strategies and labor roles based on gender and generation result in greater exposure of certain demographic groups to Karamojong raiders. For instance, Acholi boys and adolescents are often left in charge of grazing animals and are therefore the most often injured or killed during attacks. In an incident coinciding with Tufts fieldwork in the area, Karamojong raiders attacked a semi-settled village in Orom and blinded a young boy after he was shot in the eye while trying to defend his livestock.

Furthermore, Karamojong raiders are increasingly reported to be attacking people who are not with or near to livestock, including capture and gang rape of women.<sup>70</sup> Girls and women are primarily responsible for collection of natural resources and water, often far from their homes, and they are therefore at heightened risk of attack by Karamojong raiding parties. This threat increases greatly during the start of the rainy season when the Karamojong are moving back to their traditional territory. Historically and today, there appears to be no prohibition among the Karamojong against attacking or killing women or children in raids or during warfare.<sup>71</sup>

instance, is next to the military barracks and between the camp and the trading center. The fence of this kraal consists of thickets of thorny acacia branches. Cattle and oxen belonging to residents of both the camp and semi-settled villages are placed into the kraal at the end of the day. The UPDF has agreed to provide soldiers to protect the animals, and a recent raid on the enclosure by Karamojong resulted in the death of two raiders after being shot by the UPDF.

In Orom, camp residents and villagers of adjacent semi-settled villages have also moved their cattle and oxen inside the IDP camp. The UPDF does not protect



***A fence made of acacia forms a kraal to protect cattle between Agoro trading center and IDP camp.***

#### MEASURES TO PROTECT LIVESTOCK

As livestock represents a significant economic asset, people within camps and semi-settled villages have a number of strategies to try to protect their animals. Protective strategies vary according to the threat and the type of animal.

Where possible, cattle owners have sought to gather their animals in a centralized and relatively secure and defensible location. The large kraal in Agoro, for

the animals in Orom and men from the camp take turns guarding the livestock enclosures at night.

The Karamojong threat to livestock is less in the Labuje/Pager area, but Karamojong raiders have been seen in the vicinity and animal owners said they were fearful and remain vigilant. One resident of Pager who is a member of a group that has received NUSAF cattle explained that his group has considered selling their cattle in order to prevent catastrophic financial loss in the event of a Karamojong raid.<sup>72</sup> He says:

*People are worried about the Karamojong. Some in my group want to sell the group's cattle, but we*

*haven't yet reached a decision....Other groups who have cattle are also worried, but none has yet sold.*

*The RDC suggested that soldiers watch over the cattle stock, but this is not possible because it would require putting all the cattle in one place and they would need too many soldiers.<sup>73</sup>*

In this instance, the cattle—usually considered valuable livelihood assets—are increasingly being thought of as a *liability* by the NUSAF group. Holding onto such liabilities increases not only the risk of financial loss if they are stolen, but also heightens the physical threat for those involved in herding, caring for or keeping the animals.

Pigs were not traditionally kept by Acholi households but have been incorporated into the livelihoods of people living in semi-settled villages and, to a lesser extent, camps. Pigs are preferable to goats as a small animal for a number of reasons, including security concerns. Pigs are rarely targeted during raids, as the Karamojong do not raid for pigs and the leader of the LRA forbids members to eat pork. Unlike goats, pigs do not require large areas to graze and can be kept inside the village, minimizing the risk of sending young boys outside the village. Pigs provide protein for children who otherwise lack access to any form of meat due to the loss of goats and cattle. Finally, pigs will eat nearly anything and can be used to help dispose of unwanted food scraps and garbage within the camps and semi-settled villages. The relatively recent incorporation of pigs into Acholi holdings represents a livelihood adaptation in response to security threats, changes in availability of fodder and the loss of preferred varieties of livestock.

One of the greatest threats to animals in the study sites in Kitgum is disease. Respondents in all camps spoke of the loss of goats, chickens and ducks to disease since displacement. Community-based veterinarians do exist but people complain that they rarely have medicine available and that their

primary job is to treat cattle as opposed to smaller livestock.

#### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CAMP AND SEMI-SETTLED VILLAGES REGARDING LIVESTOCK PROTECTION STRATEGIES**

Persons interviewed by the Tufts team living in semi-settled villages are able to maintain small numbers of cattle, oxen, goats, pigs and poultry, often with greater success than residents in the camps. Even so, the livestock numbers in the villages are significantly reduced from previous levels due to Karamojong raiding and sale in response to increased insecurity. For example, men in a semi-settled village in Orom reported 18 households owned cattle five years ago but that today only four households have cattle. The rest were looted by Karamojong raiders or sold when the owners permanently left the villages due to insecurity.

Although many of the challenges to keeping livestock are the same for populations across Kitgum, there are some important differences for residents of semi-settled villages. These variations depend on the proximity of the village to the nearest camp and the migration strategy of the residents. In villages in the parishes outside of Orom, for instance, respondents are without a protected centralized location in which to gather their animals overnight and do not benefit from the protection of the security forces. In response to these vulnerabilities, villagers secure their cattle and oxen with heavy chains with four-inch metal links. A local councilor of one of the villages explains:

*The Karamojong try to steal even the little cattle that we do have...We have left the NUSAF cattle in the camp where they are safer, and we only bring the ones here that we need for plowing. We tie the cattle with chains so that the Karamojong are not able to cut the rope to steal them. Even so, the Karamojong will keep trying to come back to get them.<sup>74</sup>*

Strategies for goats vary by location. Some villagers in semi-settled locations leave their goats with relatives in the camps while others keep them in the village. Residents of at least one village built an elevated,

fortress-like wooden structure at the center of the villages for safe-keeping the goats at night. This structure is then guarded by armed villagers.

Ducks and chickens are kept by a number of households within semi-settled villages. Their rearing and upkeep is largely done by women and girls. Their eggs are usually not consumed but are sold or traded by women for food and household necessities. Notably, because of widespread disease in the camps, villagers use a reverse strategy in which they try to keep their poultry *out* of the camps. Outside Agoro trading center, for instance, the chickens and ducks run loose in the semi-settled villages in the day and stay in coops in the villages at night when the people return to the camp. Even though there is no one present to guard the birds at night, villagers feel that this option is safer than exposure to the disease within the camps.

#### FOOD STORES

Residents of camps and semi-settled villages store any excess food, and food stores thus become an important livelihood asset that allows for consumption smoothing over time. However, the majority of households interviewed in the camps had no food stores three weeks after the monthly WFP distribution. The majority of households in the camps supplement between one-third and one-half of their diets through the collection of wild foods, including famine foods, and by purchasing food (with cash most often generated by the sale of firewood, grass, charcoal and alcohol and by engaging in paid labor). Few mothers in households in the camps are able to feed breakfast to their children, except when WFP delivers corn-soya blend for use as porridge. The majority of households interviewed eat one or two small meals a day, but all lament the lack of dietary diversity and their poor nutrition.

In contrast, interviewees in semi-settled villages report regularly feeding their children breakfast and having larger food stores. Some people within semi-settled villages receive food from WFP (often because they have huts within the camps that they occupy in the evenings or during in the dry season), as in Agoro and Orom. In Agoro and Orom, interviewees reported

that wild foods, food from their own gardens, and purchased foods comprise one-half to two-thirds of their diet. In other cases, inhabitants of semi-settled villages, including those who are displaced (i.e., not original inhabitants of the villages), do not receive any food from WFP, as was the case in Pager. For these households, their own production, purchased food and wild foods accounted for all of their diet. These populations varied in their ability to generate food stores. In Agoro, Orom and Pager, those able to generate food stores reported drawing on these stores to assist family members or sometimes neighbors, to sell to generate cash for other purchases (e.g. salt, soap and dried fish), or, more rarely, to help pay for clothes for their children or school supplies.

Protective strategies around food stores vary between the camp and semi-settled populations. For instance, residents of semi-settled villages who maintain a residence in the camps are likely to store surplus food in their huts in the camp, either in their own homes or in the huts of relatives or neighbors. These populations carry only small amounts of food to the villages at any one time, leaving the remainder in the relative safety of the camp. A local leader of a semi-settled village explains:

*When we get the food from the UN we leave some of it in the camp and only bring small amounts at a time out here. Also, a few people do stay in the village each night and they raise the alarm if there is any problem down here.<sup>75</sup>*

Where food stores are left in villages that are vacated at night, such as in the settlements outside Orom where most inhabitants sleep on the hillside at night, armed men and adolescent males remain in the villages to guard the remaining stores, household garden plots, small livestock and poultry.

#### Market Opportunities

Market opportunities for inhabitants in the camps and semi-settled villages are limited and outside traders are often the primary beneficiaries of market transactions. As discussed above, many households in the study sites engage in petty trade in order to

acquire cash to meet basic needs, cover school fees and supplement their diets. Firewood and charcoal are the most commonly sold dry-season items and wild greens and seasonal fruits are the most common in the rainy season. Typical non-food items purchased are soap and salt and the most frequently mentioned food items include dried fish, greens, simsim and ingredients for brewing liquor. Outside traders (cited as coming from Kitgum town, Gulu and Lira) bring in supplies to sell to the local shopkeepers or kiosk owners. At times the local traders travel to the district centers themselves to purchase their goods. Insecurity on the roads has increased the risk of travel, driving up prices in the more remote camps in particular.

Data on market opportunities illustrate variations from one study site to the next. Both Agoro and Orom trading centers host large monthly auctions supplied by traders from across the north. In Orom the monthly auction is visited by the residents of the outlying parishes as well as the Karamojong. Villagers who come in from the parishes usually include armed men who provide protection along the route. The monthly auction in Agoro attracts a large number of traders from Sudan, many of whom bring their cattle to trade. (The caravans from Sudan are heavily armed and the Tufts team has been informed by a range of sources that these armaments are stored at the UPDF barracks while the Sudanese visit the auction. The UPDF officers and the camp commandant, however, deny this claim.)

Both the Agoro and Orom auctions bring business to the trading centers and adjacent camps for local business owners, particularly hoteliers and restaurateurs. Although these auctions are a boost for some sectors of the economy, local residents and IDPs report very limited economic opportunities from the presence of the auction. For instance, sales of firewood and charcoal are more consistent directly prior to auction day as business owners in the trading centers stock up. Women report greater reliability of alcohol sales during auction days, but sellers do not increase the sale price for firewood, charcoal or alcohol during the auctions.

Some petty traders are not able to risk the extra economic expense that would be required to sell wares at the auction, even though the market may be better. To illustrate, two female charcoal makers in Orom explained that they are only able to sell charcoal during auction days if they are able to first find a potential buyer and direct him or her to the supply of charcoal kept at their huts, roughly 500 meters from the area of the trading center where the auction is held:

*If someone from the auction wants [the charcoal] they just come here and buy it. We don't take it to the auction to sell it because we would have to pay someone to carry it, and then if it was not sold we would have to pay someone again to carry it back.<sup>76</sup>*

The few respondents who reported engaging in livelihood activities unique to the auction sell specific wares. For instance, an old man in Agoro camp said that his sons and their families harvest onions and store them for sale at the monthly auction:

*The onions are sold at the monthly Agoro auction. They price goes up throughout the season. At harvest time the onions are sold for 3000 to 5000 USh [USD 1.65 to 2.75]. If you bargain well you can get 5000 USh per basin but later in the season you can sell them for 8,000 to 10,000 [USD 4.40 to 5.50] per basin.<sup>77</sup>*

The presence of prostitutes at a makeshift brothel in Agoro trading center indicate that those in the sex trade also benefit from extra business at the time of the monthly market. This was confirmed through interviews with local health workers in Agoro. The prostitutes are young women who appear to come from outside Agoro to work within the brothel/nightclub.

Respondents in Agoro and Orom report buying goods at the monthly auctions, primarily second-hand clothing, dried fish and soap. These items are slightly cheaper when purchased at the monthly auction than from the local shopkeepers or kiosk owners.

Labuje camp and the neighboring village of Pager enjoy better market access and economic opportunities than the other study sites due to their proximity to Kitgum town. Interviewees in Pager said that local residents hold jobs in both skilled and unskilled sectors in Kitgum, but as an old man who has lived in Pager since 1955 explains:

*These jobs are few and far between. Fewer people have jobs now than in the 1960s and 1970s. People are facing much greater difficulties than in the past.<sup>78</sup>*

Unlike the populations in Agoro and Orom, residents of Pager and Labuje have a more consistent and dynamic market for the sale of goods and natural resources. A man in Labuje explains that his wife sells her firewood in Kitgum town as opposed to within the camp:

*She sells the wood for 800 USh [USD 0.44] a bundle and sells it in Kitgum town because the price is much better there and most people here [in Labuje camp] cannot afford to buy wood and would just try to get it on credit. In town people can pay and they will give you the cash up front. She doesn't have a regular customer but moves through town until someone indicates that they want to buy the wood.<sup>79</sup>*

This is in contrast to the wood and charcoal sellers in Agoro and Orom camp, who could sometimes wait a week to sell a bundle of wood or a bag of charcoal.

The populations of Labuje and Pager also have the option of purchasing food and other items in Kitgum town as opposed to the more expensive camp and village markets. A woman living in Labuje explains that although she is weak due to HIV, she goes into Kitgum town two to three times per week to buy food:

*I go into town as there are many people there who sell things. In the evenings the prices fall and that is the time to go. The prices in the camp are very high because of the extra transportation costs and because some people do not want to go to the town so [the traders] raise the price [in the camp]. There is*

*not enough food in the camp for the people to buy. In the camp, they sell smaller portions of food items at the same prices that you can buy larger portions of the same item in town.<sup>80</sup>*

The differences in market access and opportunities in the various locations and between the semi-settled villages and the camps are largely a function of geographic location (i.e., proximity to town) and protective strategies (i.e., people from remote villages outside Orom are able to travel to the monthly auction with armed men, whereas those equidistant from Kitgum town or another trading center may not be able to make such a trip). These differences affect the livelihood strategies of households, determining where items are best purchased or sold, how much basic necessities will cost, what can be stored and sold for different prices in different periods and the reliability of the flow of cash for different goods and services provided.

## VI. Social Capital

Social capital is an important determinant in enabling households and individuals to access livelihood assets and to employ livelihood strategies. Respondents with strong social connections and familial ties are better able to access land, receive food from neighbors and relatives, work in collective groups, participate in savings associations and take advantage of opportunities for paid labor. Social capital is particularly important in providing individuals and households with access to networks that serve a protective function. In contrast, individuals or households with a more limited social network have greater difficulty accessing resources such as land and employment opportunities and often have to take greater security risks, such as collecting natural resources alone.

### Land Access

The presence or absence of social capital depends in large part on social status and position. For instance, the people who are reportedly best able to access land in Orom camp are men who have connections to the original land owners. In contrast, female-headed households have a much more difficult time accessing land because they usually lack the connections to the landowners and do not have a male relative to negotiate on their behalf. A widow who lived in Orom trading center prior to the establishment of the camp explains the problem of widowhood in accessing officials:

*I had five acres, including three cassava plantations, but the IDPs moved onto it. I tried to go to the LCIII to sue for damages but because I am a woman I had no one to stand up for me so my suit did not go anywhere and I was never paid out.<sup>81</sup>*

The female camp leader in Agoro camp explains the nuances in the ability of female-headed households to access land:

*There are two kinds of female-headed households here. The first is displaced [i.e. widowed before displacement] and very often they are not able to*

*access any land. The other female-headed households are from this area whose husbands have died... and they are able to access [their husbands'] land here.<sup>82</sup>*

In other words, women whose husbands were able to make the social connections and access land in or around Agoro prior to their death are able to access land, whereas those who arrived in Agoro as widows have a more difficult time tapping into the existing social network through which land access is possible.

The right connections can also make accessible assets more affordable. For example, a farmer in Labuje camp explained that he is renting land from the uncle of his deceased wife for 5,000 USh (USD 2.75) per season in comparison to the normal rate of 20,000 Ush (USD 11).<sup>83</sup>

As discussed in the example of the *kalulu* group of women traders, social capital enables people to partake in associations and to minimize financial risks. Similarly, the few people in the study population able to receive loans or assistance of food receive this help from relatives or close neighbors.

### Employment and Labor

Individuals and households with positive social networks are often better positioned to find paid employment. For instance, a child head of household in Orom finds regular work digging other people's gardens through the help of another member of his clan (who does not take a commission).<sup>84</sup> A man making charcoal in the same camp explained that securing the relatively good jobs making bricks requires a connection to the owners of the brick factories.<sup>85</sup> Having relatives in the brick business was also important in Agoro, as the female camp leader explains:

*Some people collect bricks and transport them on bicycles to construction sites, but those jobs are very hard to get because they pay well so it is usually only through relatives you can get those jobs.<sup>86</sup>*



The role of social networks in carrying out agricultural labor strategies has been important throughout the history of the Acholi people. Among our study population, people living in the semi-settled villages are able to work the land in the traditional collective system whereby groups work in rotation from one plot to the next.<sup>87</sup> This system serves a variety of purposes. People can work more land more quickly and are able to plant and harvest more labor intensive crops and a greater diversity of crops. Households also share the produce from the communal land, which helps to lessen any one household's risk of crop failure and allows for better consumption smoothing. Seeds are shared among the members of the group. Households usually also have their own garden plot, as was common prior to displacement. As one woman in a semi-settled village explains:

*We share everything. We go in different groups every day and then we share with everyone... We dig our own gardens near our households.*<sup>88</sup>

In contrast, people in the camps are usually only able to access very small plots of land and work this land alone or with their household members. Produce and seeds are not shared and tools are only shared after one household has completed the labor required to meet its own needs.

The Tufts team interviewed a number of the traditional community land managers, called *rwodi kweri* or 'hoe chiefs', who are now living in the camps. In the villages the *rwodi kweri* are responsible for organizing the rotation of labor parties on the collective land. None of these men has a land-related role now that they live in the camps.<sup>89</sup> This transformation of traditional land management and collective labor practices following displacement illustrates the way in which shifts in livelihood strategies affect social networks and vice versa. Groups who once worked the land together and shared food and drink at the end of each day of labor are now dispersed, often in huge camps, all struggling to subsist on small plots of land.

## Protective Strategies

Social capital is important in determining the nature and effectiveness of protective strategies. The most common means of self-protection among the study population is to move and work in groups when outside of the camp or semi-settled village. Women who leave the camps and semi-settled villages to collect firewood or to till land almost always move in groups of between five to twenty women and girls at a time. Men who prepare charcoal in the forest also usually move in groups. Working in a group is considered preferable to leaving the camp alone, but is still not always an effective protection strategy. For example, two young women who make charcoal five miles outside of Orom camp explained that they always travel and work in a group of five. However, one explained that last year:

*one of the women was captured by the rebels. The rest of us managed to escape and make it back to the camp. They took her away and then killed her on a nearby hill.*<sup>90</sup>

These women have a degree of social capital through their group of five female charcoal makers, but their network is not sufficient to include men, even their husbands. This is the case even when the security threats are high. Men will only go with them to the bush if paid, as one of the women explains:

*The men only go with us when we have money to pay them to come along. We will do this after we have sold some charcoal and then we can afford it. We pay 2000 US\$ [USD 1.10] per man, so if we take five men with us it costs us 10,000 US\$ [USD 5.40]. The money is for them to help us work and also to provide protection. Some of the men will stay at a distance and watch for the rebels.*<sup>91</sup>

These five charcoal makers are more fortunate than others who are unable to tap into any form of reliable and regular social network. For instance, a returnee mother in Orom explained that she often has to collect firewood alone because other women are afraid to accompany her to the bush due to her former association with the LRA. She says:

*Sometimes it is difficult to find people to go get firewood with me. I go to ask people but they tell me that I will 'turn on them in the bush and harm them – I will do rebel things to them.' I collect firewood with older women because they will go with me. The young girls and young women will not. Sometimes I cannot go out to collect firewood because I cannot find anyone to go with me and others refuse to go with me. This sometimes means that I must pay for firewood because I don't want to go alone and I need the wood for cooking.<sup>92</sup>*

The social networks in the semi-settled villages are much stronger than those in the camps and the benefits of these networks extend to protection strategies. In some cases the responses to insecurity appear to have broken down the traditional gendered labor roles. For instance, women in a semi-settled village in an insecure area in Orom reported that they never leave their village without their men, even when engaging in strictly female roles such as gathering water. A woman recounts one occasion in which the women went out alone:

*Four months ago we fought with our men so we went out without them. We were captured by the Karamojong. While the Karamojong were deciding what to do with us, we escaped. Now we never go anywhere without our men.<sup>93</sup>*

The men will either act as sentries or assist in the labor to allow the women to work more rapidly, thus minimizing exposure time in the bush. A woman in a different parish outside of Orom explained the system that the villagers have developed for cutting firewood:

*The men first go out and cut down the trees and let them fall and dry. Later, we go out and collect the wood. We can sometimes make three trips by 11am. We leave the children here in the camp with some people to care for them, we can then move faster without them. When we go out, we always go out with our men. So we collect the firewood while the men scale the nearby trees and keep watch for any Karamojong or LRA. We always have to move with our men, this is a very insecure zone.<sup>94</sup>*

The active social networks and traditional farming methods that still operate in the semi-settled villages also allow people to work quickly in their fields. Other practices help to offset the security risks when working the land. For instance, the group plants crops that have a rapid yield, particularly millet, ground-nuts and green vegetables. Men act as sentries while the women perform the traditionally female aspects of agricultural labor, such as weeding. This system is possible due to the advanced social networks still functioning in the semi-settled village, and it is necessary if people are to continue living in these areas and accessing their land. As one woman explains:

*If you go out too far the LRA will abduct you. We continue the digging while the men do surveillance.<sup>95</sup>*

The social networks that exist in the semi-settled villages can also extend to the camp population. Camp residents with ties to the villages may experience improved food security, while the population of the semi-settled villages are able to store part of their food supply in the camp and have a ready market for their surplus produce.

In an example of the ties between the villages and the camp, an elderly disabled woman who lives in the camp maintains close connections to her son and his wife in one of the semi-settled villages outside Orom. Two of her grandsons, ages 8 and 11, live in the camp to assist their grandmother and also to access the school. These boys travel between the camp and the village regularly to bring food to the camp. The grandmother explains:

*The boys run twelve kilometers back and forth to the parish village to get food for us here in the camp. I will tell my grandsons what we need and what to get from the village. Sometimes my children come in from the village and give me food. One of my grandsons is always with me, if one goes to the village to get things, the other is with me and helps me collect water and so on. Most of our food comes from the parish; I only receive WFP rations for me and one boy, so that is not enough for all of us in this hut. My*

*son is the one who gives me most of our food; it comes from the greens he collects and those in his gardens.*<sup>96</sup>

While this tie to the village increases the food security of her household, the boys are exposed to a number of security risks when traveling alone between the camp and the village. On the day of the interview with the Tufts team the younger boy was sent out to the village, a distance of 12 kilometers, just before the UPDF-imposed curfew and in a period when the Karamojong were known to be particularly active.

### Threats to Social Capital

Social stigma can also affect people's ability to tap into social networks. In the study population, two groups emerged as those with the greatest threats to their social capital, formerly abducted young mothers and women abandoned by their husbands. Both of these groups have significantly reduced access to social capital.

Formerly abducted young mothers face the stigma not only of having been abducted, but also of returning with children born due to rape and captivity by the LRA. Because of their former association with the LRA rebels they are often viewed as untrustworthy or dangerous by their neighbors. Their children are often thought to be "wicked like their fathers" and are stigmatized and physically mistreated by extended family members and neighbors.<sup>97</sup> Many of the young mothers report high levels of sexual harassment from males in the camps, and they have few prospects for marriage or economic assistance from potential partners. Some of the young mothers also state that they have lost former friends, who now call them names and do not associate with them. These factors combine to reduce the social capital of these young mothers.

To illustrate, the Tufts team interviewed a young woman who had been abducted by the LRA and given birth to a child in captivity. After returning from the bush she used her amnesty package (200,000 US\$ or USD 110) to start a successful business in Orom camp, but she is not included on the WFP

distribution list for monthly food deliveries. She believes that her village local councilor is keeping her off the list because of her former associations with the rebels. In addition, she and her child are regularly harassed by camp residents, including her former friends, and accused of having rebel sympathies. In addition she reports she is continually sexually harassed by males who consider her sexually 'used' and thus available.<sup>98</sup>

Women abandoned by their husbands experience social stigma and isolation and were found to be among the most vulnerable of all the female-headed households, including widows.<sup>99</sup> Notably, widows are often older than abandoned women, and are more likely to have older children to assist in providing for them. Widowed women also have legal and moral claims to their former husband's land and property, and few felt that these could be successfully challenged by in-laws. Furthermore, widowhood is a recognized and accepted social category within Acholi culture. Abandoned females, however, often bear full responsibility for very young children, lack legal and moral claims to the man's land or property, receive little or no assistance from their husband's clan, and occupy a stigmatized social category. One woman, a 32 year-old mother whose husband left her and took all of her possessions, including her clothes, explains that women such as herself lose their place in society:

*We who have husbands who abandoned us, we have lost the respect and dignity of the society. The society, the men and the women, want to see us lowered. They undermine us and they contribute to our suffering. They continually do things to push us down and punish us and make an example of us to others.*<sup>100</sup>

The abandoned women interviewed in Orom have been cut off from their husbands' clans (which become their clans upon marriage) and have little to no recourse to assistance using traditional justice systems. As a result, they occupy a vulnerable position in which they have little recourse for assistance or for wrongs perpetrated against them. For example, the abandoned women respondents

interviewed in Orom all had access to land for one season, but this access was later terminated when the owners wanted the (now cleared) land back or doubled the rent for the next season. The women have looked for land access elsewhere but find that few land owners were willing to give land to women who had been abandoned, in some cases responding to their requests with a curt question, “where are your husbands?”<sup>101</sup>

The Tufts team hypothesized that child-headed households would be particularly vulnerable to social exclusion and would therefore experience unique challenges. However, analysis shows that there are networks through which child-headed households are able to establish social capital that helps—at least to some extent—these households mitigate and cope with threats to their physical security and food security. An instance of this was found in Agoro, where a 13 year-old head of household caring for two younger siblings could rely upon neighbors and fellow clan members for assistance when her household could not adequately meet its needs. Over the last year, for example, the children in the household missed three WFP food distributions because they were digging in gardens to generate food and financial income. Unrelated neighbors and clan members came to the assistance of the household and provided supplemental food and firewood.<sup>102</sup> However, the fact that this household was unaware of three different WFP deliveries could be indicative of poor social networking whereby the children remain uninformed due to a marginalized social position.

An adolescent male heading a household in Orom complained that while the daily challenges of maintaining the household were great, non-relatives occasionally helped the household to meet its daily needs. While some people helped the household members find work, other neighbors provided supplemental support, such as salt or small loans which the boy would try to repay within four days. This 13-year old head of household explained that the most challenging issues concerning physical safety involve drunken men harassing the young household members in the evenings.<sup>103</sup>

Importantly, although not all child-headed households were found to lack social capital within the camps, all did express concern for their own physical safety. Programming for such groups will need to have a clear idea of child-headed households’ social capital, social networks, livelihoods strategies and protection threats, as these are determinant factors of their well-being.

## VII. Human Capital

The availability and quality of human capital, as quantified in labor availability, health, education and skill levels, capital has a direct effect on the pursuit of household livelihood strategies. Human capital is an important asset for households, but the supply of human capital can be unpredictable and often hinges upon intra-household dynamics. Aspects of human capital can take a great deal of time to establish (such as education and skill levels), and yet can easily be lost to a household when someone out-migrates or marries out of the household, dies or becomes ill, or simply stops making a productive contribution to the household. Human capital is highly influenced by gender and age, with certain occupations pursued only by specific household members determined by gender and generation.

### Labor

The availability of labor has a direct impact on the livelihood strategies of households, particularly in a society highly dependent upon natural resources. The negative effects of the lack of human capital in the form of able-bodied labor are often most apparent in households headed by a widow, child or disabled person or in those households that are very small or have a large number of young children. The absence of available labor can greatly decrease the self-sufficiency of households and individuals and can ultimately affect their survival strategies. For example, a disabled woman in Orom camp is the only person in her household and is unable to fetch water, firewood or food. She relies on charity from passers-by or help from her disabled neighbor's grandchildren.<sup>104</sup> She acknowledges that she would be unable to escape if the LRA or Karamojong raiders were to attack her hut, which is located in a highly exposed position on the very edge of the camp.

A shortage of labor can also mean that a household is unable to pursue its potentially most productive

livelihood option. In Orom, for instance, a 13 year-old head of household has access to two acres of land but rarely digs in his fields because he must work for pay in other people's gardens in order to provide food and pay school fees for his younger siblings.<sup>105</sup> A female head of household in Agoro takes great risks to travel back to her home village to work on her land. She has five acres of land there but can only work half an acre, as she explains:

*I have a lot of land but I don't have the energy to dig it all. If I had some money I would hire people to dig in the garden for me.*<sup>106</sup>

In some instances the shortage of labor is based on factors other than household demographics. Many respondents cited the negative effects of alcohol in this regard. For instance, an older woman in Labuje camp sells firewood and mangoes to support her family of eight, but she is the only working member of the household due to her husband's drinking and her children's fear of abduction if they leave the camp.<sup>107</sup>



***Women preparing grain harvested from their fields.***

### VARIATIONS IN SEMI-SETTLED VILLAGES

There are identifiable differences within labor strategies between populations based in the camp and those in semi-settled villages. Most notably, the Acholi's traditional forms of collectively preparing, planting, weeding and harvesting the land is relatively intact among those members of the semi-settled

villages, even though there have been shifts in gendered divisions of labor due to increased insecurity. This collective labor enables residents in semi-settled villages to plant more land and potentially harvest more crops, while sharing of harvests helps mitigate individual risk of crop failure. It also allows villagers to increase their security and hence focus and maximize labor outputs during the rainy season.

In contrast, the traditional practices of collective farming are all but absent among camp-based inhabitants. In camps the Tufts team repeatedly saw individual households clinging to the small amounts of land they are able to access, or, in households without land, begging for land access. The collective enterprise of group agricultural labor is fragmented as each household in the camp tries to survive. Available land is usually in small and scattered plots. Camp-based inhabitants are largely working their small plots individually, which limits their outputs and the kinds of crops they are able to grow, and increases their risks if crops fail.

## Health

Human capital is also defined by the health and well-being of individuals and households. Those households that are healthy and active are better able to work, to partake in market activities, to provide a supportive environment for children, and to engage in active social networks. Recognizing this, a number of interviewees responded that their good health was their most important asset. According to this female head of household who is supporting four young children:

*In the past, my most important assets were my land, cash and food. Cows, if anyone had them anymore, used to be the most important asset. Now, my most important asset is my health because when I am well I can work and get money and food for my children.*<sup>108</sup>

### COMMON HEALTH CONCERNS

Knowledge about hygiene and proper nutrition as a means of limiting disease appears widespread but is

difficult to put into practice. Nearly all female interviewees stressed the need for better access to soap to improve the health and hygiene in their households. Interviewees considered soap as basic a necessity as salt and food but the lack of cash made soap difficult to acquire.

Life in IDP camps is not conducive to healthy and disease-free living, and respondents in the study population made this point repeatedly. Mothers spoke often about their concerns for their children's health and reported that diarrhea is extremely common in children in the camps. Respondents in all locations discussed malaria, meningitis and their fears of a cholera outbreak.<sup>109</sup>

### HIV/AIDS

The widespread prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Uganda has a profound impact on the human security and livelihoods of households and individuals. The Tufts team frequently encountered individuals who were HIV-positive or households struggling with the effects of AIDS. Many interviewees were aware that HIV/AIDS is a serious threat, but were unclear how it was transmitted or how to protect themselves against it. In particular, disabled people restricted in their mobility were unaware of the disease and had been unaware of trainings that were given in the camp (Orom). Currently, the response of the GoU and national and international aid agencies to HIV/AIDS in the camps is woefully inadequate.<sup>110</sup> For example, outside of Kitgum town, there are almost no programs designed to address the needs of children with HIV/AIDS. A better assessment of the actual rate of HIV infection in the north and coordinated, multi-sector programs to respond are absolutely imperative.

HIV infection affects the ability of households to engage in the manual labor necessary for most of the survival and livelihood strategies practiced by members of the study population. An HIV-positive woman in Labuje camp with seven children explained that she consistently over-exerts herself although she knows that this exacerbates her condition. Selling firewood is her most important livelihood activity, but she tires easily and has to rest often when collecting

wood. She feels that this increases her chance of attack by rebels and means that few women are willing to accompany her to gather wood, further increasing her vulnerability to attack.<sup>111</sup>

Many of the HIV-positive women interviewed by the Tufts team had been infected by their original husbands or by male in-laws after being 'inherited' following the death of their husband. The majority of these women had young children for whom they were the only caregiver and provider. Several elderly widows were also now caring for young children orphaned by their sons and daughters-in-law who had died from HIV/AIDS. The primary concerns of these women was the eventual orphaning of these children, the inability of the extended families to adequately care for the children and the current lack of government and international response to meet the needs of such children.

#### HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND QUALITY

Health care facilities exist in or near to all study sites, but respondents complained about inconsistent availability of trained personnel and medicines. All interviewees criticized routine misdiagnoses by poorly trained health care workers and lack of medicines to treat ailments, particularly at the government clinics. Interviewees reported that health care workers in government clinics were often drunk and/or did not show up for work, sometimes for days at a time. MSF clinics are preferred by all interviewees, who also reported that MSF staff members treat patients well and respectfully. However, at times the MSF clinics are without a primary health care provider on location for extended periods (i.e., several months), leaving people with no option except the government clinics. Respondents said that MSF clinics also run short of medicines. Nearly all interviewees, especially the women, said that instructions on the use of the medicines (as supplied by both the government and MSF clinics) were unclear and they often did not understand dosages or how to administer the medicines to sick family members.

#### VARIATIONS IN RISK AND RESPONSE BETWEEN SEMI-SETTLED AND CAMP POPULATIONS

Conditions in the semi-settled villages are much less congested than in the camps but the populations still experience significant health problems and risk of disease. Nearly all interviewees in semi-settled villages mentioned disease and illness as significant threats to their households' well-being and security. Distance and mobility emerged as the two primary indicators as to whether or not people in semi-settled villages could access health care. For instance, the semi-settled villages in the parish around Orom are a minimum of several kilometers from the camp and trading center where the government and MSF clinics are located. In the absence of any mechanized public transport, respondents living in these areas explained that it is extremely difficult to make this journey with sick individuals. The danger of LRA or Karamojong attack along the roads or footpaths makes the trip even more arduous.

Villagers, even those in areas closer to health services, explained that the location-related health risks are greatest for adolescents and the elderly. Young children can easily be carried to the clinic and most adults can help to move themselves the distance necessary to reach clinics, even when ill. However, seriously ill adolescents and the elderly are often too heavy for adults to carry and often due to illness-induced confusion, may be unable to help move themselves. As described by a woman who lives in a semi-settled village more than thirty kilometers from the nearest health clinic:

*It is very hilly and if you are on a bike and the Karamojong catch you they will steal your bike. So we walk and that takes about seven hours one way. The problem we have here is the youth and elderly who get sick. We can carry the small children, but the youth are too big to carry and yet if they are sick we cannot get them to move on their own, so often they stay in the village and either they get better or they die.<sup>112</sup>*

Indeed, this village of only a few hundred people reported that five adolescents had died in the last two months.<sup>113</sup>

Interviewees from semi-settled villages outside of Orom complained that they might travel long distances when ill or with an ill family member, only to be told upon arrival at the clinic that no doctor or nurse would be available for several days and to return at a later date. This is a serious hindrance for people traveling many hours through insecure areas.

Traditional birth attendants are present in the more distant semi-settled villages visited by the Tufts team. A number of these TBAs were trained, but they reported that their only equipment is a pair of rubber gloves and none had even a basic safe-birthing kit. The result is that the TBAs improvise with local materials to cut the umbilical cord, such as the sharp edge of dried grass more commonly used to build roofs for huts.

Although residents lack ready access to clinics, the population is aware of the health risks of living in the camps and recognizes that poor sanitation contributes to the spread of communicable disease. This awareness contributes to the desire to be out of the camps and to move to the semi-settled villages. Respondents in these villages said that they spend as much time as possible outside the camps to guard against exposure to disease, particularly diseases that affect children. According to one mother in a semi-settled village:

*When the children are in the camps, there is a lot of disease, lots of diarrhea... The camp is squeezed and we come here to avoid the filth and those people in the camps and all the quarrels that go on there. It is difficult, especially with children. If your child defecates in your neighbors' hut this often starts a fight but what can you do because the latrines are locked and the child could not get in. Also, then you have to go and get the feces, but where do you throw it when the latrines are locked or full? This causes all kinds of quarrels. So, it is better to be here, in the open ground, where we have our own toilet. It is*

*much easier to raise children in this wide compound, the air is fresh; they can use their own latrine.*<sup>114</sup>

Life in the semi-settled villages carries many risks for people in the study population. Intimidation or lack of protection by the security forces means that people must return to the camps each night in some area. In others, the frequency of Karamojong raids and LRA attack compels people to migrate up the mountainside and sleep in the open air. The populations in the semi-settled villages were willing to take such risks for many reasons, including the desire to keep their children disease free, and thereby protect the asset of good health. As a woman in another semi-settled village near to Agoro explained:

*In the camp you can see how squashed everything is, how filthy. There is no space for the children to play; sanitation is poor; there are too few latrines; no shade for the women and the elderly to sit in. The children in the camp are wild and dirty. People are very congested and there is a lot of noise and disagreement in the camp. We try to avoid all that and avoid the noise by coming here.*<sup>115</sup>

## Education

The lack of education and the shortage of skilled individuals in most of the study sites constrain livelihood strategies, as few livelihood options are available for people beyond school-going age. Only a handful of respondents interviewed for this project (except for those working for humanitarian aid agencies) had held a position of skilled labor at any time in their lives. Many interviewees, especially women, were illiterate and/or had never been to school. A large number of people with skills and education have left the most heavily war-affected areas of the north for jobs and opportunities elsewhere. As a result, there are few trained teachers in the schools, most of which are extremely overcrowded, for example, the Tufts team was told that there were 80 students per teacher in a P1 class in Agoro camp.<sup>116</sup> Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports data from 2003 shows the pupil-to-teacher ratio in Kitgum district to be 71:1 and the pupil-classroom ratio at 124:1 (compared to the national



average of 52:1 and 87:1 respectively).<sup>117</sup> The schools in and around camps are barely functioning as educational institutions. Interviews with parents and care-givers indicate that while some were unsure of the quality of education currently received by their children, many stressed the importance of education in their children's future.

Respondents in multiple locations also discussed the decline in informal and inter-generational education. They explained that the congested urban environment in the camps is negatively influencing the behavior of children and youth, at the same time that respect for the elders and Acholi traditions wanes. One mother explains:

*The reason the children are so bad [in the camps] is that there are a lack of parenting skills and a lack of parental oversight of what the children are doing. The children see lots of parents drinking and being drunkards and beating each other so this is what they learn. They lack respect for their elders who are their guides, they even abuse their elders. It is so disrespectful.*<sup>118</sup>

Interviewees explained that people are no longer able to sit together in the evenings to exchange information and ideas; children are difficult to control and no longer working beside their parents in the fields; the elderly are dying and there will be no one who remembers the traditional way of life, boundaries of the land or the ways of traditional farming.

#### **VARIATIONS IN EDUCATION ACCESS AND QUALITY IN SEMI-SETTLED VILLAGES**

People living in semi-settled villages near to trading centers and functioning schools continue to send their children to school alongside the IDP children. There are at least two strategies used by people within semi-settled villages regarding the education of their children. First, as reported in Orom and Agoro, some children are left in the camps to continue attending school while the parents are in the semi-settled village during the rainy season. These children regularly move back and forth between the camp and the semi-settled village to pass information (including the WFP

food distribution schedule) and to receive food from their families. They may also live with and help provide for old or disabled family members that live in the camp for security reasons, as survival in the semi-settled villages requires a high degree of mobility. These children extend from age eight to adolescence.

A second strategy is for children in Orom, especially those in secondary school, to be sent out of Kitgum district to neighboring districts within Karamoja to attend schools there. Because so few Karamojong are interested in having their children attend secondary school, these schools are usually filled with non-Karamojong students,<sup>119</sup> including those from semi-settled Acholi villages. Respondents did not report any security problems for their children in the schools and they perceive the Karamojong schools to have higher educational standards and better security than those in Kitgum district.

Semi-settled respondents believe that inter-generational relationships are much more positive in the villages than in the camps. Mothers explained that they want to move their children out of the camps in order to engage in proper parenting and upbringing of the children. Indeed, the Tufts team saw marked differences in parenting methods in the semi-settled villages, including mothers mediating in small disputes that arose among the children and washing children's faces after meals or play. Such hands-on parenting was rarely witnessed in the chaos and congestion of the camps. In another example, a mother in one semi-settled village was accompanied by her young child who carried a small hoe and watering can to assist in small jobs. Such sights were rare to nonexistent in the camp settings. Thus parents, particularly mothers, seek to live outside of the camps to enhance their children's health, to help counter loss of traditional culture and to preserve social and family knowledge from one generation to the next.

## VIII. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is the most frequently reported form of violence against women inside IDP camps. Domestic violence is widespread in all IDP camps visited by the Tufts team, but without monitoring and reporting systems in place, actual rates are unknown. Current responses at the local level appear to inhibit reporting of domestic and sexual violence. Some women describe how clan leaders discourage women from reporting incidents of domestic violence; other women do not report domestic violence fearing punishment by local councilors (LCs) and clan leaders if they are found “guilty” and hence the violence justified; others are uncertain as to whom they should report. Among camp and community leaders and local officials, discrepancies exist in defining thresholds of what constitutes violations on the one hand and “Acholi household discipline” on the other.

### Frequency and Injuries Sustained by Victims of Domestic Violence

The most common form of domestic violence is male heads-of-household beating wives or female domestic partners. The most common injuries women sustain from domestic violence attacks include broken or dislocated arms and legs and cuts to the face, neck and upper body.<sup>120</sup> These injuries are sustained by strikes with bare hands, machetes, firewood, chairs, knives and other sharp objects.<sup>121</sup> Respondents claim that beatings occur frequently in the camps as they hear women being beaten one to ten times each week.<sup>122</sup> Notably, the beating of children was less frequently reported in all camps with children sustaining fewer injuries than women.<sup>123</sup> The most serious injuries to children, including death, are reported to occur when children try to protect their mothers from domestic abuse.

### Causes of Domestic Violence

The reasons for high rates of domestic violence vary according to interviewees, with women, LC officials and clan leaders giving substantially different answers. The majority of women interviewees attribute the beatings to high rates of male drunkenness coupled with strict patriarchal customs

imposing subservient behavior upon women. A woman in Agoro said:

*Drunkards beat their wives. Also, if they don't find their food ready or if a woman talks or responds while a man is talking they can be badly beaten. If a man is talking they think that you should never answer them.*<sup>124</sup>

Interviews with LC officials living in camps confirm that male drunkenness plays a role in beatings of women. Higher rates of male drunkenness were attributed to the stresses of losing their roles as male providers, stress and frustration from living in the camps, and the fact that drinking places are among the only social spaces in the camp.<sup>125</sup>

Other factors cited in the beating of women include a breakdown of Acholi culture and the collapse of inter-generational transmission of traditional values to youth. Clan leaders claim that women's indifference towards upholding Acholi traditions and refusal to act as proper Acholi women, combined with the propagation of women's rights, are the primary reasons for high rates of domestic violence. Beatings are said to be a result of women increasingly challenging patriarchal household structures, such as “no longer acting as housewives should.”<sup>126</sup> This “un-Acholi” behavior is attributed to the promotion of the rights of women and children by NGOs and government officials.<sup>127</sup>

Many clan leaders and LC officials interviewed condone and even justify the beating of women. Some beatings are justified by the explanation of “poor work ethic” on the part of women to maintain the household. Such transgressions can include the failure to cook food on time, do laundry, fetch water, collect firewood, garden, or discipline children properly, leaving the house without the husband's permission, coming home late, sleeping in the daytime or being drunk. Clan leaders and LC officials say beatings are also justified when a woman's behavior toward her husband is offensive. Women confirmed that men felt the aforementioned actions justified beating them. In addition, women reported

being beaten for refusing to have sex. The majority of women felt that men had no right to beat them, regardless of the grounds.

Clan leaders, in particular, advocate for adherence by women to strict codes of behavior based on traditional, patriarchal values and practices. Women violating these codes within their households are seen as threatening the patriarchal and traditional power relations within a clan and the larger “Acholi culture” as a whole. The assertion by clan leaders that unruly women are a threat to cultural norms is more than a desire to control female behavior in the household. Clan leaders are relatively marginalized within camps, and are resigned to focus primarily on preserving cultural norms and to serve as advisors and advocates for traditional Acholi custom. They are threatened by outside influences, in particular by the Ugandan government and international organizations that challenge the foundations of patriarchal authority and power at the clan level. As one clan leader described the reasons for women’s “un-Acholi behavior”:

*[The government] is coming in and telling women they have rights, and that they can do what they want and not do things when their men tell them to be done.<sup>128</sup>*

Another clan leader explained that the behavior of women results not only in domestic violence but also in the separation of households. Men leave their wives because the women are “unruly,” hence creating female-headed or single households:

*Because of the big-headed women there are female-headed households within the camp. This is unusual for us and our culture. The men tell them to take their rights and leave and so they end up living alone in their own households. These rights are something coming from parliament. The LCV [district official] talks about these rights for women. The women can do what they want and not do things when others tell them that they need to be done. Now the women are staying out late, they come home late, they don’t tell their husbands where they are going, and when*

*the husband asks where they are going they say that it is their right to go where they want and they don’t have to tell the husband where they have been. This is not the way we live.<sup>129</sup>*

## Seeking Assistance, Protection and Redress: Local Responses to Domestic Violence

Victims of domestic violence often must work with and through LC courts and clan leaders when seeking assistance, protection and resolution. LCs, clan leaders and the police all play a role in responding to domestic violence, although these roles do not necessarily uphold the rights of the victim.

LCs are present within IDP camps and can represent a village, parish or sub-county and are linked into the national justice network.<sup>130</sup> Within the camps, an LC has jurisdiction over only those people originally from the LC’s pre-displacement area or region. Where serious injury is involved, the LCs should refer cases to local police. The LC system can handle cases that do not include serious injury (including domestic violence cases) and make rulings. Sometimes these rulings involve beatings and or fines as punishments against the party deemed responsible for the initial dispute.<sup>131</sup>

In addition to the LC system, victims of domestic violence may seek help from the clan system and clan leaders.<sup>132</sup> Concerning intra-clan affairs, clan leaders traditionally hear disputes regarding domestic violence or killings, and may call for compensation to be paid to the aggrieved party or punishments for offenders. These clan-based reconciliatory methods operate outside formal legal systems, and perpetrators avoid penalties such as jail sentences or capital punishment.

When a woman brings a case of domestic violence to clan leaders or LCs, these leaders determine (through witness testimony or otherwise) which party instigated the violence and whether the woman committed offenses warranting domestic abuse (such as “un-Acholi” behavior). If the woman is found to be at fault she may be punished and beaten. To

illustrate, a woman in Labuje camp who was beaten by her husband was found to be guilty of instigating the domestic quarrel; her beating was thus justified. The LC furthermore ruled that she had lied about the incident, and she was subsequently beaten by the LC as punishment both for instigating the quarrel and for lying to the LC.<sup>133</sup>

Within many areas in Kitgum, it is necessary to provide payment, or compensation, to LC officials to sit and hear disputes. Often this payment is made in alcohol. An LC in Pager has gone so far as to enact by-laws requiring anyone who wishes an audience with the LC to first produce a jerry can of local *waragi* (distilled liquor). “It is in this way that we resolve cases involving drunkenness,” said an LC representative from Pager. He continued:

*The waragi [local liquor] is beneficial for everyone—it helps us think more clearly and gives us more ideas....Besides, it is necessary for [litigants] to give us alcohol so we have something to do while wasting our time.*<sup>134</sup>

Notably, clan leaders and LCs elsewhere in Kitgum have similar rules and require compensation to hear cases, including cases regarding domestic violence.<sup>135</sup> Thus, it is possible that a woman beaten by a drunk husband will have to engage in dangerous livelihood activities (e.g., collect natural resources in areas frequented by armed rebels) in order to generate income to buy or brew alcohol to “pay” the LCs or clan leaders, who will in turn drink the alcohol while hearing her case against a drunken and abusive husband.

LCs and clan leaders also set punishments for the man if he is found guilty of domestic violence. In Labuje and Agoro, guilty men are beaten by the LCs, clan leaders or police.<sup>136</sup> Interviewees reported that the officially-sanctioned punishment for men for domestic violence was at times effective and described some of the steps taken to deal with the problem. For example, a woman in Labuje explained that perpetrators are dealt with harshly, decreasing the number of incidents:

*The government representatives told people that wife beating is illegal. If the person is identified he is arrested and taken to the police. They beat him at the police station and teach him the law. The man comes back reformed. I have not seen any man come back from the police station and beat his wife or children again.*<sup>137</sup>

Notably, the use of corporal punishment by LCs, clan leaders and/or the police is illegal under national Ugandan law in Uganda.

Some respondents explained that the reporting of cases by women and the ensuing punishments levied on perpetrators by officials have brought negative consequences for the women. “There are indications that cases that are referred to the LCs, the police or to the clans result in more beatings from the husband,” one LC said.<sup>138</sup> The threat of greater violence has created reluctance in some women to bring cases forward. To illustrate, a woman in Pager explained:

*At times if a woman is beaten, you can forward the case to the elders who summon the husbands.... Sometimes if [the husbands] are found guilty they are told to lie down and they are canned. Sometimes they refuse [to be canned] and go back and really beat the wives. So, because this happens a lot, most of us have stopped reporting.... Because once this happens the leaders just give up and nothing more is done so the men are even worse.*<sup>139</sup>

Some instances of domestic violence lead to police and LC involvement, as described above. Yet clan leaders in Agoro and Labuje express frustration that women are going to LC officials to file claims of abuse, thereby sidestepping the clan leadership in the process. One clan leader expressed his irritation and said that the “moral authority has been taken away from the clans.”<sup>140</sup>

To address this perceived loss of authority, clan leaders have come to an agreement with LCs within Labuje camp to refer reports of domestic violence to clan leaders. These clan leaders believe that the LCs should not interfere with family matters, including

domestic violence.<sup>141</sup> In Labuje, clan leaders explain that when a woman comes to them with reports of domestic violence they will often lecture the woman about the “appropriate behavior” of Acholi women and encourage the complainant to reconcile with her abuser. Clan leaders also chastise women for taking cases to the LCs or police where they will have to pay for investigation and litigation costs, hence “wasting money that could otherwise be spent on their families.”<sup>142</sup>

Although less likely to be affected by domestic violence, heads of female-headed households are less likely to seek assistance from clan leaders due to the loss of males in their families who would usually take matters to the clan leaders. To illustrate, one woman living in Labuje with four children and three grandchildren does not associate with her clan, saying:

*I do not seek assistance from them because all the elder male members of the family are dead and we no longer have access to [the clan] because of this. I feel a distance (between) myself and the other people of the clan.*<sup>143</sup>

### Domestic Violence Injuries and Medical Assistance

Women described a number of different factors that affect their ability to access medical assistance after violent attacks. In Agoro, the best option for women is the MSF clinic, where the staff is well trained in responding to domestic and sexual violence. MSF outreach workers are seeking to raise awareness in the community on gender based and sexual violence, but admit that they lack adequate resources to address the scale of the problem.<sup>144</sup> If injuries are serious, MSF staff transport victims to the government hospital in Kitgum town.<sup>145</sup>

In contrast, in Orom it is necessary for victims to report violent incidents to an LC official or camp leader prior to receiving medical treatment for injuries sustained from domestic abuse. This LC or camp official then produces a letter, which the injured person must present to the medical staff in order to

receive medical assistance. If a letter is not obtained, the victim must be accompanied *by* her attacker to the government or MSF clinic to verify the source of the injuries.<sup>146</sup> A woman with life-threatening injuries without an official letter or her abuser to collaborate her testimony might only be asked where she would like to be buried if she succumbs to her injuries.<sup>147</sup>

Despite the obvious constraints the process in Orom places on female victims of domestic abuse, some women interviewed in Orom felt that it was a good system, “because if you have your abuser traveling with you he can maybe help you make it to the clinic if in other cases you would die.”<sup>148</sup> These women felt that although the current system led to fewer reported incidents, other options did exist, such as pressuring the man’s clan to pay for medical costs.<sup>149</sup>

The prospect of receiving assistance from an abuser’s clan seems remote since many clan elders and leaders do little to discourage physical beatings of female partners. However, it is claimed in Orom that if a woman is beaten badly enough, then her natal clan members (i.e., pre-marriage) may carry her to the abuser’s clan and insist on medical treatment. If the abuser’s clan refuses, she will be left there by her clan, giving the abuser’s clan the choice of assisting her or letting her suffer further and possibly die. If she dies, there is possibility for her relatives to engage revenge killings and demand monetary compensation.<sup>150</sup>

In Labuje, there is confusion as to whom women should go to for assistance in cases of domestic violence. Some women were under the impression that clan leaders refer people to the LCs for assistance in cases of domestic violence. One woman said that:

*When a woman is beaten she can go to the clan leaders. They [clan leaders] tell her to go to the LCs for assistance and the LCs can refer the case to the police. It is necessary to go to the LCs before the police. But the money is difficult to pay the LCs to get reconciliation, but since it is important to respect this institution [LCs] then it is okay to pay them for the cases.*<sup>151</sup>

However, contrary to this statement, all clan leaders interviewed in Labuje and Pager were upset that LCs were concerning themselves in “domestic issues” and believed the LCs should not interfere with family matters, including domestic violence.<sup>152</sup> In Pager village, near Labuje, one elder felt that the LCs, in combination with the camp commander and block leaders, have stripped the clan leaders of representative authority, saying that people within the camps have become dependent upon the camp executive structure (as opposed to the clan system) for guidance and conflict resolution.<sup>153</sup>

## IX. UPDF and LDUs

### Frequency of Problems Related to Forces

Interviewees reported few current security problems with the UPDF or LDUs. Notably, the mobile units of the UPDF, which are reportedly involved in greater numbers of human rights violations, were not involved in this study. The camp population primarily interacts with UPDF and LDUs along the security perimeter and in the trading centers where the soldiers come for food, alcohol and social exchanges. In some instances, the semi-settled villages were well beyond the purview of the UPDF and LDUs and thus the inhabitants of the villages have limited interaction with the security forces for the portion of the year that they are in the villages.

Interviewees reported that problems had existed previously in the relations among the UPDF, LDUs and other armed civilian protection forces (in Orom). These problems involved issues of response to LRA or Karamojong activity. Reportedly, the LDUs and armed civilian forces were angry that for the last several years the UPDF forces had refused to take the lead in responding to upon the camps. Instead, the UPDF would send the LDUs and armed civilians to respond to attacks and pursue attackers while the UPDF forces remained safely in the rear. These incidents led to a number of fights between the various security and civilian forces, with some injuries and death. Currently (in the few months prior to fieldwork), most camp interviewees and camp commandants reported cordial relations among the UPDF, LDUs, armed civilians and unarmed camp dwellers. Notably, these peaceful relations are attributed to strong UPDF commanders who kept tight control over their forces.

### Common Problems

For those interviewees who interacted with the UPDF and LDUs, most noted that the commanders keep the soldiers in check and were quick to punish violators. The most common complaint in semi-settled villages is that of soldiers eating the food of people who had not finished preparing their meals before the curfew to return to the camp. In a few instances, respondents also reported that drunk soldiers make

villagers either give them food or alcohol or do work for them, although such cases were the exception and not the norm. Other complaints include LDUs allegedly taking crops from the gardens of villagers and camp residents, although most respondents attributed this pattern to the soldiers being hungry and unable to buy their own food because the government and army had not paid them on time.

In fewer instances, as discussed in previous sections, the UPDF and LDUs would threaten, humiliate or abuse those who did not leave their semi-settled villages at the UPDF curfew or those who would try to return too early back into the villages in the morning. Notably, the use of corporal punishment by the UPDF and LDUs against civilians is illegal. This includes the caning of men and adolescent males who do not leave the semi-settled villages at the proper time, as reported in Pager.

### Local Responses to Problems with UPDF and LDUs

Attempts by individual camp or village inhabitants to address problems with the UPDF and LDUs are rarely successful. Some individuals reported they requested increased protection from the UPDF and LDUs, especially along the more exposed edges of the camps or near semi-settled villages. Their requests are rarely granted, and at times the soldiers used the opportunity to encourage the recruitment of the males in their families into the LDUs, saying this was the best way for civilians to guarantee their own safety.

Collective attempts to address problems between the security forces and civilians are more successful. In one camp, nearly all inhabitants interviewed gave glowing praise to their camp commandant, who they said was honest, cared about the people, addressed their concerns, and successfully curbed violations and harmful actions by the UPDF and LDUs. Problems with UPDF and LDUs in this camp are minimal. When interviewed, the camp commandant said he prioritizes unity between the soldiers and the camp inhabitants. He explained that his strategy is to befriend each senior level UPDF commander stationed at the barracks near the camp. This level of friendship

enables the camp commandant to walk into the barracks and speak with the commanders at nearly any time. He said that he focuses on the humanity and role of the soldiers as protectors and addresses any problems as deviations from this norm. In this way, he is able to work together with the UPDF commanders to curb any violations by the soldiers, including excessive drinking and fighting with civilians (which is often linked to violations). For example, if camp inhabitants report an intoxicated soldier to the camp commandant, the commandant will then remove the gun from the soldier and take the weapon to the UPDF commanding officer. The camp commandant has also developed a system through which camp residents turn any UPDF weapons found in the camp to the commandant and he then turns them over to the UPDF. (This occasionally occurs when drunken soldiers misplace their weapons.) This prevents any accusations regarding theft of weapons by camp inhabitants and the subsequent hut-to-hut searches by the UPDF and LDUs.

When there are violations by soldiers, the camp commandant in this camp calls a mandatory all-camp meeting. The soldier responsible for the alleged violations, the victim or victims of misconduct, and the UPDF commanding officer are all asked to attend. The problem is aired at these meetings and the alleged involvement of the soldier(s) made public. At this point, the camp commandant and the people in the camp call upon the UPDF commander to show leniency in punishing the soldier, reiterating that they are certain that this is an isolated instance of misbehavior in what is otherwise a good soldier. These actions help to build goodwill among the soldiers toward the camp dwellers.

The camp commandant also stressed that it is important that the barracks be located some distance from the camp inhabitants so that there is minimal, un-supervised interaction between the soldiers and the camp population.



## X. Conclusion

This study gives insight into the range of livelihood and human security issues, risks and strategies of people in both semi-settled villages and IDP camps in Kitgum district. We end this report with a series of reflective conclusions on the main themes that emerged from the study. These conclusions build on the findings presented and provide guidance for governmental, United Nations and nongovernmental agencies working in the dynamic situation currently unfolding in northern Uganda.

### Movement

The findings regarding livelihoods, protective strategies and movements between established camps and semi-settled villages are particularly relevant given the increase in movement in the north since this fieldwork was conducted in March and April 2006. The 'decongestion' process in the Acholi sub-region has greatly increased in pace, and large portions of the population have started to return home in Teso and Lango. Many of the individuals, households and communities that are on the move are likely to move in stages, and may continue—like the study population discussed in this report—to move between camps and villages (or between two camps) whenever possible.

The comparative analysis of semi-settled villages and IDP camps illustrates a number of reasons behind the motivation for population movements in Kitgum district, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of movement strategies. The analysis of the livelihood and protective strategies of the population in the semi-settled villages provides a better understanding of what prompts people to leave the camps, what areas people return to and why, and how people organize their assets and resources in order to meet both survival and protection needs.

People move between camps and semi-settled villages for three main reasons. The most commonly cited reason is better access to land to grow crops, collect natural resources and raise livestock. Second, people move out of the camps in search of better living

conditions, particularly for their children, and to escape high rates of human and animal disease, overcrowding and violence. Third, people seek to exit the camps in order to have greater independence and self-reliance. At the same time, leaving the camp means giving up all or part of the nominal protection provided by the government army and the local militia. Households and communities outside of the camps thus must substitute their own protective measures in place of this external security. This said, they are then somewhat less exposed to the military's regulations and occasional abuse.

Moving out of (or into) camps requires making a series of calculated trade-offs involving access to livelihood assets and human security. Security is an overarching livelihood goal, but leaving the camps can sometimes result in pronounced and increased security risks, as well as decreased access to water, health care and schools. Households and communities living outside of the camps organize their resources and livelihood strategies – of which protective strategies are an inherent part—in an effort to achieve a combination of these livelihood objectives. For example, a household may prioritize access to land over access to a reliable source of drinking water, and may have the appropriate protective strategies (such as participation in collective labor and sentry systems) to enable farming in a relatively insecure area such as a semi-settled village. Choices and trade-offs are made regarding the various assets and resources available and the desired livelihood outcomes for a given household.

Although there are some negative aspects of leaving the camps, there do appear to be livelihood gains for those who settle, even temporarily, in the semi-settled villages. The Tufts team found that households in semi-settled villages are, overall, better able to achieve their livelihood objectives than those based entirely in the camps. Establishing or maintaining a presence outside of the camps, even when this is only on a daily basis, affords better land access in most cases. Land tenure is more secure, people are able to access larger plots, and collective farming is the norm. These aspects translate into improved food security,

indicated in part by the ability to feed children breakfast and the availability of surplus food for sale in the camps or transfer to camp-based relatives. An important question for future research is the extent to which these livelihood gains are occurring for all populations leaving the established camps, or if these livelihood improvements are more isolated in nature.

In our analysis of the semi-settled villages, the movements between camps and these locations is calculated and often undertaken as a collective action by people in order to maximize the success of their livelihood strategies, improve their human security and take more control of their own physical security. This type of movement by segments of the population has probably been happening for many years, particularly as settled populations sought means of protection from rebel and Karamojong attacks. As security risks decrease, more people will likely adopt similar strategies of moving between camps and villages, including returning to home areas. The current decongestion process most likely involves aspects of these calculated movement strategies, but more information is needed on the push and pull factors experienced by the populations that are moving into the new camps.

### Land Access

Access to agricultural land is prioritized by male and female respondents in the study population and is often the key determinant in household livelihood strategies. Demand for land around the camps remains high. Households that are not able to access agricultural land must engage in more intense collection of natural resources, almost always in insecure areas, and it is most often women, girls and child-headed households who engage in these activities. At the same time, this study indicates that having access to agricultural land does not mean that a household will be able to meet its basic needs. In fact, even households within camps that had access to agricultural land were relying on WFP rations for up to half of their food needs. Thus, access to land alone is not enough to create self-sufficiency for households. Equally important is access to the social, human and financial capital that allows households

to make the most efficient use of the land that they do have.

Although there are inherent security risks and human security trade-offs to life in settled or semi-settled villages, we believe that there are lessons to be learned from these semi-settled villages that may be applied to long-standing camps, newer decongestion camps and to areas of return. In particular, the fractured system of farm land around the camps is one of inadequate and unequal land access, insecure tenure and high levels of personal or household financial risk when crops fail. Within these fractured systems, female, disabled and child-headed households often fare the worst. In contrast, people in semi-settled villages, even in some of the villages immediately adjacent to camps, use collective labor strategies to work both communal and individually-held land. These strategies allow for better crop diversity, sharing of tools and produce, better security, faster and more efficient harvesting, and a distribution of financial risk. Interviews with *rwodi kweri*, inhabitants of camps and residents of semi-settled villages indicate that the collective work groups usually include the more vulnerable members of society who are often unable to access land in camp settings, such as female-headed households and the disabled.

Consequently, a priority would be to determine how best to encourage and support more collective labor strategies for camp populations as well as for those returning to villages. Some projects, notably IRC's cotton farming project in Kitgum, are attempting to do this. One challenge is the need for social capital as an integral part of any collective action. The residents in the semi-settled villages have the advantage of stronger and more intact social networks, which enables them to create and function efficiently in collective groups. This social capital results in better human capital as available labor is equalized across all participants in a group. Financial capital in the form of draft animals, farm tools and seeds also become shared assets. Evaluation of on-going projects that include collective farming or support of existing community groups may indicate some of the possible

avenues for encouraging more collective labor and land tenure strategies in camp settings. In contrast to the collective model, most land around the camp is farmed with the more limited financial and labor inputs that are available to an individual household or farmer. More vulnerable households, including those headed by women and children, are likely to have the lowest levels of financial and labor inputs and thus would benefit more from being part of collective systems..

The current decongestion of camps, which appears to be orchestrated in some places and spontaneous in others, may alleviate some of the pressure on available land in the short term, but the problem of limited land access will continue for as long as a camp-based solution is viewed as a primary response to the humanitarian and political crisis in the north. With this in mind, the key stakeholders (GoU, donors, policy makers, programmers) need to address the land issue directly. This will require a shift from a system in which camp-based farmers try to eke out an existence on small portions of land and in which a large portion of households are unable to access land due to financial, social or human constraints. Programs that seek to improve agricultural livelihoods will need to do at least three things: 1) increase the overall land available to populations living in camps; 2) ensure that households are able to access larger plots, either individually or collectively, by expanding security cordons, providing more effective protection and increasing freedom of movement; and 3) seek to reactivate traditional collective farming practices on the larger plots of land. With some variations, these three factors are applicable for both camp- and village-based programs.

Although some people are currently leaving the camps, it is very likely that a good portion of the population will remain camp-based in the short-term. The outcome of the current peace process will ultimately determine the stability of the return process. If the conflict resumes, we can assume people will move back into camps in search of protection. Hence, until a stable and sustainable peace is realized in the north it is important that

policy makers and programmers continue to plan for camp, semi-settled village and village based realities.

Improving the lives of people in camps or in camp-like settings depends heavily upon increasing access to agricultural land, which could occur through several means, all of which are already being discussed or considered by members of the humanitarian community and government officials in the north. Most of these measures require adjusting the protective role played currently by the security forces. For instance, the security perimeter around the camps could be expanded. If the perimeter cannot be expanded around the entire camp, then an area along the road where people are able to farm could be extended. Soldiers (UPDF and LDU) could protect large portions of land set aside for collective agricultural purposes (this is similar to what is being piloted by IRC at present). The security forces could seek to provide more accurate information on security threats to the camp population, thereby allowing people to make their own decisions about when to farm or where to collect natural resources. These security-related adjustments would require more flexible management on the part of the security forces of the camp perimeter and curfew. Some of these security measures, such as greater protection along roads where people are farming, could be applicable for camp-based populations as well as for people living in trading centers and other settlements close to army detachments.

### **Food Security**

The study shows that most households continue to rely on WFP rations for a significant portion of their monthly food needs. Households with land are able to grow some of their own crops; many women and girls collect wild greens (both traditional and famine foods) for consumption; and most households in the study population were buying food with the small amounts of cash acquired by selling wood, charcoal, greens or labor. In all cases, however, these food sources are purely supplemental and—in the case of own-production and collection of wild foods—are also seasonal.

The current and on-going reduction of WFP rations runs counter to the apparent situation in many of the households in the study population, whereby the food aid coming from WFP formed the bulk of the household diet and was supplemented by own-production and purchase. However, WFP must rely on the overall trends throughout a district in setting food rations. WFP has pointed out that decisions to reduce rations are not made unilaterally, but involve deliberation with the broader humanitarian community.<sup>154</sup> The plan to reduce general rations includes a mechanism to increase food aid for extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIs). In theory, responses aimed at EVI will be comprehensive and will involve multiple humanitarian stakeholders to provide assistance to these particularly vulnerable segments of the population. Although this research study did not evaluate in depth the humanitarian response of any particular actors, it is difficult to see how agencies other than WFP (and its implementing partners) will be able to play major roles due to the fact that most humanitarian agencies are absent in many of the chronically underserved locations across Kitgum.

This study shows that greater self-sufficiency is possible through better land access, particularly when coupled with improved social capital. Until increased land access is realized, however, there is little chance that the population will be able to become more self-sufficient and accordingly decrease reliance on food aid and other humanitarian inputs. In other words, reductions in food rations will not bring a higher degree of self-sufficiency unless this reduction is part of a larger comprehensive strategy to ensure greater land access (whether around camps or at transitional or return locations), provision of necessary agricultural inputs, and programs geared specifically at increasing social capital within communities that are likely to have experienced separation and disintegration of some social ties. Land access is thought to be improving, both around camps and in the newly settled areas, and this will hopefully enable communities to increase the extent to which they are able to rely on own-production.

## Protective Strategies

In the face of insecurity, individuals, households and communities have developed a series of protective strategies in attempt to mitigate risk. These measures seek to ensure physical safety and security while allowing for the pursuit of livelihood strategies which are often geared towards basic survival (e.g., collecting water, natural resources or wild foods, traveling to agricultural areas, working on the land). People organize their resources and assets in such a way so as to obtain both their livelihood and security goals.

This report documents a number of these protective strategies and finds they are well-orchestrated and at times quite sophisticated given the resources available. Men and women have developed both similar and gender-specific strategies. Because these protective strategies are closely tied to people's livelihoods, they also correlate closely to the gender and generational divisions of labor. Consequently, actors looking to enhance protection strategies for these communities must pay close attention to people's livelihoods, gender, age and geographic location in order to build on (and not undermine) constructive strategies that are already in place. This report also shows where protection strategies are failing, for whom these strategies fail, and identifies gaps that protection interventions should seek to fill.

At the community level, some local leaders have devised camp-wide strategies that have successfully reduced the number of security incidents between camp inhabitants and government soldiers. In these instances, the entire camp community can be mobilized to participate in protective strategies to help minimize tension in relations with government forces. Professionalism by UPDF commanders in keeping their troops under control and in maintaining an open dialogue with local leaders also greatly contributes to reduced security incidents. Such initiatives could serve as models to increase protection for camp or village inhabitants in other locations.

Finally, this study finds that social capital is the critical determinant in meeting livelihoods and

human security goals. Polices and programs should seek to bolster social capital wherever possible and must ensure that they do not inadvertently increase the stigma of already stigmatized and marginalized categories of people, such as formerly abducted young mothers or abandoned women, as this further erodes their social capital. Further reduction of the social capital of these groups puts these women and their children at even greater risk.

### **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence is widespread and represents a significant threat to the rights and human security of women and girls. This problem should be more vigorously and systematically addressed by local and national authorities, civil society organizations, NGOs and UN agencies and the international donor community. Currently, effective governmental and international responses to domestic violence are seriously lacking.

In the realm of domestic violence, clan systems and LCs are operating in ignorance of and disregard to Ugandan constitutional and national law. Current response mechanisms to domestic violence are almost entirely at the local level, and many of these avenues discourage reporting and at times exacerbate rights violations (i.e., where women are denied medical assistance or beaten a second time by LCs, clan leaders or male partners).

Efforts should focus on a combination of bringing LCs and clan leaders up to speed on constitutional and national laws regarding the rights of women and girls, their entitlement to be free from violence and to have uninhibited access to support, including medical and legal assistance. The State of Uganda must respect its obligations to promote and protect the rights of women and girls as a State party to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), the Additional Protocol to the ACHPR on the Rights of Women, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Medical staff and international NGOs are also obligated to report rights abuses including domestic violence and to treat

any person with injury sustained from domestic violence.

It is equally important for women to have access to information about their rights under Ugandan national law, including the right to remain free from violence, as well as how to put their rights into practice. Due to the challenges presented to women during the war, they have taken on numerous roles that previously they had not undertaken. At the same time, there has been a growth and influx of civil society organizations, NGOs and international agencies that promote the rights of women and children. Within this mix, women are experiencing an increased awakening to their rights and an expansion of their capacity and responsibilities. This awakening and expansion is being met at times by a violent backlash by patriarchal structures.

Threats and challenges by females to Acholi patriarchal structures are often met with physical violence. Within crowded IDP camps, domestic violence rarely goes unnoticed given the close proximity of people's homes. Because of this close proximity, there is greater chance of intervention by neighbors and hence rates of domestic violence are said to be less than or equal to pre-displacement levels. As people return to villages where homes are traditionally at a greater distance from each other, responses to preventing and addressing domestic violence will face greater challenges in reporting, monitoring and response. In addition, as people continue to leave camps and reestablish themselves in villages, the process of influencing patriarchal norms to stop domestic violence will become more difficult. Consequently, strategies of advocacy to stop violence against women and to implement women's rights need to consider both the camp and village environments to help foster shifts in attitudes towards domestic violence. Establishing meaningful and respectful dialogue with clan and traditional leaders is an important starting point in changing the mindset that has allowed for years of high levels of domestic violence that carried over from the village to the camp.

## Health

Households outside of the district centers continue to struggle to access adequate health care. Local government and the humanitarian community are aware that adequate health care for civilian populations outside the city centers is seriously lacking. Increased efforts and resources are needed to meet the gaps to provide people with the regular services of qualified health professionals, care in a timely manner, access to the proper medication and clear instructions on the use of medications. Because injury from domestic violence appears to be widespread, there is a clear need for medical personnel to have the necessary skills to treat survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence. In addition, the current response by both government and the international community to HIV/AIDS in Kitgum is inadequate. The problems experienced by HIV/AIDS-affected households must be addressed head-on, with specific attention to the needs of children affected with HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS orphans.

## Returning Home

People in northern Uganda are on the move, whether to decongestion camps, between semi-settled villages and camps, or to original villages or nearby locales. Much of this movement is voluntary and is part of adaptive livelihood strategies aimed at balancing livelihood objectives with security. At present, the main challenge for policy makers and programmers is the lack of information on local perspectives regarding the process of decongestion and the range of push and pull factors that cause people to move from an established camp. An analysis of these aspects and a better understanding of the potential roles of incentives, coercion and decreases/increases in humanitarian assistance and promises of protection are needed before an accurate analysis can be made regarding the decongestion and return processes. Once this information is gathered (through objective field work in camps and villages), organizations should follow the lead of the communities themselves and seek to support those systems that facilitate improved livelihoods and better security and which, ultimately, are geared towards enabling people to

return to their homes. These systems may include voluntary movement, division of households, reestablishing collective labor systems and communal land holdings, maintaining links to established camps, and innovative protective strategies.

When asked about their hopes for the future, people overwhelming said that they want to go home. However, most respondents stated that they were extremely reluctant to return home on a permanent basis until the LRA commanders surrendered and, for the populations of Orom and Agoro, until the Karamojong disarm or cease their attacks. Until these conditions are met, at least in part, people will likely continue to test the security by leaving the camps for greater periods, establishing semi-settled residences outside the camps, or returning in small numbers or for a short period to their home areas. Most people expressed a great deal of confidence about being able to restart their lives and return to a level of self-sufficiency with limited external support. The desire to return home is great and people are very ready for the insecurity to come to an end. An elderly woman interviewed late in the day in Labuje camp put it best: *"If the war ends this afternoon I would be home before the sun sets."*<sup>155</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Authors of this report are Elizabeth Stites, Senior Researcher, Dyan Mazurana, Research Director, and Khristopher Carlson, Senior Researcher at the Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, Medford, MA, USA.

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<sup>3</sup> The security perimeter was two kilometers in the camps where the Tufts team collected data. There have been on-going efforts to expand the security perimeter around camps in certain areas, and these figures should not necessarily be taken as applicable to all camps at the current time.

<sup>4</sup> DFID, "Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets" (London: Department for International Development, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> S.E. Collinson, "Power, Livelihoods and Conflict: Case Studies in Political Economy Analysis for Humanitarian Action," HPG Report 13 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Moveable assets can also be broken out as physical assets or capital. For the purpose of this analysis they are combined with financial assets, as livestock and food availability form the basis of a household's economic base.

<sup>7</sup> Political capital is also often included as a livelihood asset, and includes the political networks, status, exclusions or inclusions of groups or individuals. This research does not examine political capital as a discrete part of the asset pentagon, but does look at the role of and access to political and power structures through an analysis of the local council and clan systems.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Newman and Oliver Richmond editors, *The United Nations and Human Security*, (Palgrave: New York, 2001): 15-30.

<sup>9</sup> WFP rations were at 75% of total food needs until 2006 when they dropped to 60% for most recipients in Kitgum and Pader and to 40-50% in Gulu district and Lango sub-region (Apac and Lira districts). Ration levels are set to decrease further in the second half of 2006, but extremely vulnerable individuals (EVIs) will be provided with 100% rations. This category currently includes widow-headed households, child-headed households, disabled-headed households and households affected by HIV.

<sup>10</sup> The term "Karamojong" is a name used to reference what are actually three rival ethnic groups that live in the eastern part of Uganda called Karamoja: the Jie, the Dodoso, and the Karimojong (which is comprised of 11 different sub-tribes).

<sup>11</sup> Some respondents and authors believe that the government supports Karamojong raids on neighboring ethnic groups and districts. The fact that the Karamojong have never opted to voluntarily join the state of Uganda, even at independence, is one of the many facts cited by those who argue that the Karamojong are not interested any state power or control. If they have in the past aligned with or taken advantage of conditions created by the Government of Uganda it comes from no allegiance to the government but rather because of the benefits they could gain for themselves, including revenge killings and cattle looting. Likewise, it is well documented that the Karamojong have a long and troubled history of violence and abuse at the hands of state forces, including the current government (see Ben Knighton, *The Vitality of Karamojong Religion: Dying Tradition or Living Faith?* (Ashgate: England) 2005).

<sup>12</sup> During interviews informants most often named the Lotuko from south Sudan as the raiders. In other cases, they referred to the raiders as "the Lango of Sudan", because of similarity in language between the Langi and the raiders.

<sup>13</sup> Among the Karamojong themselves, rape is absolutely taboo, and incurs the same fines as murder. If the elders decide to turn the rapist over to the family of the victim, he may well be killed, as is the victim's family right under traditional practices. Raping, including gang-raping, of women and girls by Karamojong raiders outside the Karamojong tribal groups has been recently reported in the districts bordering Karamoja and is a more recent development as in the past raids were largely hit-and-run affairs. See Knighton, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> The UN reported more than 310,000 people displaced in twenty-one camps in Kitgum district, as of April 2006, or approximately 90 percent of the population of Kitgum. See IRIN, "Uganda: Time to go home?" (21 April 2006) available at

[http://www.irinnews.org/S\\_report.asp?ReportID=52900&SelectRegion=East\\_Africa](http://www.irinnews.org/S_report.asp?ReportID=52900&SelectRegion=East_Africa). As data in this report indicate, the estimates for the numbers of IDPs often vary widely for a given camp, depending on the source of the information.

<sup>15</sup> See for example IRC, *NGO Involvement in Cotton Production among Displaced Populations in northern Uganda*, February 2006 (IRC: New York). The World Food Program's Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CSFVA) on Uganda categorizes the livelihood strategies of the population of the Acholi district as "food aid dependent". World Food Programme, *Republic of Uganda: Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA)* (Rome: World Food Programme, Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Branch (ODAV), January 2006).

<sup>16</sup> In comments provided for this report, WFP pointed out that these proportions may be related to different levels of benchmarks regarding daily consumption: "Ordinarily consumption in the Acholi region provides above the minimum 2,100 Kcal that WFP provide. It may be in the region of over 2,500 Kcal per person per day." This would imply that the ratio of WFP food in daily needs as reported by households is based on pre-displacement diets. Email communication, Ernest Mutanga, World Food Program, Kampala, 27 June 2006. Food consumption is also ad libitum - a lot more food is cooked at a time so that the individuals can have a cold snack as and when they need it.

<sup>17</sup> See for example IRC, February 2006.

<sup>18</sup> See for example IRC, February 2006 (IRC: New York); Matthias Mollet, *Results of the impact evaluation on the food security part of the project entitled: 'Continued emergency assistance to war-affected population in northern Uganda' and how to go forward*, AVSI-commissioned DRAFT report, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Teams combining Tufts faculty and staff and Ugandan, Sudanese and Kenyan partners have been working since January 2005 in northern Uganda, Karamoja, and South Sudan on a series of projects involving the regional dimensions of the conflicts affecting these areas.

<sup>20</sup> Program officers from the following organizations were interviewed for this study: AVSI, FAO, ICRC, IRC, UNICEF, MSF, NRC, SCiU, WFP, and World Vision.

<sup>21</sup> The only children (people under 18 years of age) interviewed for the study were child heads of households. These children were interviewed by Tufts faculty who have worked with high risk, war-affected children in northern Uganda for a number of years and who have training in working with such populations. Requests or observations for needed assistance and intervention from child-headed households were referred to the appropriate NGO or UN agency.

<sup>22</sup> The Tufts team referred cases to the appropriate NGO or UN agency regarding any interviewee who was clearly in need of and requested assistance, including HIV positive adults and children, children currently being physically abused by neighbors or family members, and severely disabled people. The team also referred cases to appropriate NGO, UN, and local and district GoU offices regarding suspected disease outbreaks and problems with access to water for people living in more distant semi-settled villages.

<sup>23</sup> For the purpose of this study, semi-settled villages are defined as villages that are inhabited on a temporary or partial basis. The period of habitation differs across the various study sites and may change on a daily or seasonal basis or may be determined in an ad hoc fashion based on security considerations. This term refers specifically to villages and does not refer to the decongestion camps that are becoming increasingly common in



the war-affected districts, although there likely to be similarities between the motives for moving to decongestion camps and for moving to the semi-settled villages.

<sup>24</sup> Administratively, populations in Uganda are organized hierarchically beginning at the village, then moving up through the parish, sub-county, county and district.

<sup>25</sup> Because these semi-settled villages are in constant flux, it was not possible to determine population size.

<sup>26</sup> Because the semi-settled villages are in constant flux, it was not possible to determine population size.

<sup>27</sup> Interview, village leader in semi-settled village, Orom, 27 March 2006.

<sup>28</sup> Interview, women focus group, semi-settled village, Orom, 28 March 2006.

<sup>29</sup> Local leader, semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 27 March 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Village leader, semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 28 March 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Interview, women focus group, semi-settled village, Agoro, 3 April 2006.

<sup>32</sup> Interview, female child-headed household, near Labuje, 3 April 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Interview, camp commandant, Labuje camp, 30 March, 2006; interview, father of the girl under discussion, location withheld, March 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Interview, male resident, Agoro camp, 4 April, 2006.

<sup>35</sup> This is in contrast to widely stated claims by the UN and several NGOs that these highly vulnerable displaced populations of northern Uganda are nearly entirely reliant on WFP food.

<sup>36</sup> This includes land beyond the UPDF-demarcated security perimeter as some households were farming land at a greater distance than others. 'Marginally safe,' while clearly a subjective term, reflects the willingness of households or individuals to risk accessing the land in question.

<sup>37</sup> Woman, interview, Labuje camp, 30 March 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Women living in semi-settled village, interview, Agoro, 3 April 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Man, interview, Agoro camp, 2 April 2006.

<sup>40</sup> Two young women charcoal makers, interview, Orom camp, 26 March 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Formerly abducted young mother, interview, Orom camp, 27 March 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Woman, interview, Agoro camp, 2 April 2006.

<sup>43</sup> Woman, interview, Orom camp, 24 March 2006.

<sup>44</sup> Woman in semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 28 March 2006.

<sup>45</sup> Male charcoal maker, interview, Orom camp, 26 March 2006.

<sup>46</sup> Woman, interview, Orom camp, 24 March 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Woman selling wild greens at market, interview, Agoro camp, 4 April 2006.

<sup>48</sup> Child-headed household in semi-settled village, interview, Pager, 5 April 2006.

<sup>49</sup> Women in semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 27 March 2006

<sup>50</sup> While lack of adequate water supply is a long-standing problem in Orom sub-county and surrounding area, the increased security risks due to the war and armed Karamojong raiders make the collection of water more precarious.

<sup>51</sup> Woman from semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 26 March 2006.

<sup>52</sup> Woman from semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 28 March 2006.

<sup>53</sup> Woman, interview, Orom camp, 27 March 2006.

<sup>54</sup> More research is needed on shifts in cash transfers over time in order to better understand this change and the effects of the war.

<sup>55</sup> Email communication, Ernest Mutanga, World Food Program, Kampala, 27 June 2006.

<sup>56</sup> A staff member of an NGO in Kitgum explained that in some camps it is difficult to find existing savings associations, particularly if the camp is relatively new or disorganized, because people have not established the levels of trust that existed in the villages. Lynda Attias, interview, NRC, 31 March 2006.

<sup>57</sup> Woman, interview, Agoro camp, 2 April 2006.

<sup>58</sup> Widow, interview, Agoro camp, 2 April 2006.

<sup>59</sup> Woman, interview, Orom camp, 26 March 2006.

<sup>60</sup> Woman, interview, Labuje camp, 30 March 2006.

<sup>61</sup> Further information is needed on the prevalence and role of remittances for these communities prior to conflict and displacement. Anecdotal evidence from the study population indicates that remittances were much more common in the past, but baseline data is not available.

<sup>62</sup> Female head of household, interview, Agoro camp, 2 April 2006.

<sup>63</sup> Female head of household, interview, Orom camp, 24 March 2006.

<sup>64</sup> Research on rotating savings groups in urban areas in Tanzania and Uganda found that the group members tended to have more stable businesses. Aili Mari Tripp, "Gender, political participation and the transformation of associational life in Uganda and Tanzania," *African Studies Review*, vol. 37, no. 1. (April 1994), pp. 107-131.

<sup>65</sup> A further area of research in northern Uganda would be the ways in which the existence and success of these associations has changed since the conflict and displacement.

<sup>66</sup> Women petty traders, interview, Orom camp, 26 March 2006.

<sup>67</sup> Robert Gersony's review of veterinary data showed that the cattle population of Gulu and Kitgum was about 285,000 head of cattle in 1985. Raids by armed Karamojong removed almost the entire herd. In 1997 there were an estimated 5,000 head of cattle in Kitgum and Gulu, less than 2% of the number 12 years earlier. Robert Gersony, "Results of a field-based assessment of the civil conflicts in Northern Uganda," Report submitted to the United States Embassy, USAID Mission, Kampala, August 1997.

<sup>68</sup> Woman, interview, Labuje camp, 30 March 2006.

<sup>69</sup> Goats are less desirable targets of the Karamojong but as few people in Kitgum have cattle goats are increasingly stolen.

<sup>70</sup> Women in the study population in Kitgum reported that gang rape by Karamojong raiding parties was becoming an increasing threat. Key informants (such as elders, government officials, NGO workers) believe that the practice of gang rape by the Karamojong is new, and it has only become a major security issue for women since the mid 1980s. To note, unlike the casualties caused during Karamojong raids aimed at securing livestock (which are therefore related to the livelihood strategy of acquiring animals), many women are being attacked when performing tasks completely unrelated to animal care. This trend therefore seems to point towards increasingly opportunistic violence on the part of the Karamojong warriors, which we believe is connected to a corresponding increase in commercial raiding.

<sup>71</sup> See Ben Knighton, *The Vitality of Karamojong Religion: Dying Tradition or Living Faith?* (Ashgate: England) 2005.

<sup>72</sup> The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) is a five year project worth roughly USD 115 million and is largely funded by international donors, with some support from the GoU. The project is implemented in the districts of Teso, Karamoja, Acholi, and West Nile sub-regions. According to the official website ([www.nusaf.go.ug](http://www.nusaf.go.ug)) , "NUSAF overall goal [sic] is to use targeted investments in a participatory, equitable and sustainable manner to promote reconciliation and contribute to poverty reduction in the region. This is achieved through empowering communities by enhancing through capacities to systematically identify, prioritize, and plan for their needs, and implement sustainable development initiatives that improve socio-economic services and opportunities." In the areas where the Tufts team worked, the most common NUSAF projects were ones in which a local group formed, identified their needs, and applied to NUSAF for funding. While some groups were successful in their applications, many others complained of a lack of transparency, favoritism towards the more elite and better education groups in the district centers, and complete lack of follow-up on project applications. Several respondents alleged fraud in the application process, which requires a processing fee from applying groups.

<sup>73</sup> Man in semi-settled village, interview, Pager village, 31 March 2006.

<sup>74</sup> Local councilor in semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 27 March 2006.

<sup>75</sup> Male village leader in semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 27 March 2006.

- 76 Women charcoal makers, interview, Orom camp, 26 March 2006.
- 77 Elderly man, interview, Agoro camp, 2 April 2006.
- 78 Elderly man, interview, Pager village, 5 April 2006.
- 79 Man, interview, Labuje camp, 30 March 2006.
- 80 HIV-positive woman, interview, Labuje camp, 30 March 2006.
- 81 Widow, interview, Orom camp, 26 March 2006. Later in the interview this woman explained that she has since decided not to pursue her compensation claim because she realized the extent of the poverty and desperation of the IDPs who were living on her land.
- 82 Female camp leader, interview, Agoro camp, 2 April 2006.
- 83 Male farmer, interview, Labuje camp, 30 March 2006.
- 84 Adolescent head of household, interview, Orom camp, 26 March 2006.
- 85 Male camp dweller, interview, Orom camp, 26 March 2006.
- 86 Woman camp leader, interview, Agoro camp, 2 April 2006.
- 87 Currently we do not have enough data about the agricultural practices in these semi-settled areas to know the extent to which the current agricultural practices differ from the pre-conflict farming system.
- 88 Woman, interview, semi-settled village outside Orom, 26 March 2006.
- 89 The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has started cotton projects in four camps in Kitgums and the management of the land in these areas includes a role and position for several *rwodi kweri*.
- 90 Woman from camp, interview, Orom camp, 26 March 2006.
- 91 Woman from camp, interview, Orom camp, 26 March 2006.
- 92 Returnee girl mother, interview, Orom camp, 27 March 2006.
- 93 Woman from semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 26 March 2006.
- 94 Woman in semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 28 March 2006, emphasis by speaker.
- 95 Woman from semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 26 March 2006.
- 96 Disabled female-head-of-household, interview, Orom camp, 25 March 2006.
- 97 For more information on livelihood, human security and protection issues surrounding formerly abducted young mothers in northern Uganda see Khristopher Carlson, Dyan Mazurana, Elizabeth Stites and Godfrey Orach Otobi, "Young mothers, forced marriage, and children born in captivity within the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda" *Disasters: Journal of Disaster Studies, Policy and Management* (forthcoming).
- 98 Formerly abducted young mother, interview, Orom camp, 27 March 2006.
- 99 The research team was alerted to the presence of these women by a female camp leader, who felt that the situation of these women was one of the main problems faced by women in the camp. Most of the abandoned women in the study population were in their 20s or 30s and had been left by husbands who moved to the district centers and cut all contact with the women and children. These women had no recourse to their former husbands clans, as in almost all cases the clans had also cut ties to the abandoned women.
- 100 Abandoned woman, interview, Orom camp, 25 March 2006.
- 101 Three abandoned women, interview, Orom camp, 25 March 2006.
- 102 Child-headed household, Agoro, 2 April 2006.
- 103 Child-headed household, Orom, 26 March 2006.
- 104 Disabled women, interview, Orom camp, 25 March 2006.
- 105 Male child headed household, interview, Orom camp, 26 March 2006.
- 106 Female headed household, interview, Agoro camp, 2 April 2006.
- 107 Woman, interview, Labuje camp, 30 March 2006.
- 108 Female head of household, interview, Orom camp, 24 April 2006.
- 109 Cholera did break out in Kitgum in mid-April, believed to have been brought into Agoro by cattle traders from Sudan coming down to the monthly auction. Roughly 600 cases had been reported by early June, including at least eight deaths, with Agoro and Kitgum town two of the most seriously affected areas.

<sup>110</sup> This point is recognized by a number of UN agencies and NGOs operating in Kitgum who said they were making efforts to increase their response in this area.

<sup>111</sup> HIV-positive woman, interview, Labuje camp, 30 March 2006.

<sup>112</sup> Women living in semi-settled village, interview, Orom, 27 March 2006.

<sup>113</sup> The villagers believed some of the deaths were due to meningitis. The Tufts research team reported the health concerns and the deaths of the children to Unicef, MSF and IRC upon return to Kitgum town and a medical team led by IRC went out to the village within two days of receiving the report. No cases of meningitis were confirmed.

<sup>114</sup> Woman from semi-settled village, interview, Agoro, 3 April 2006.

<sup>115</sup> Woman from semi-settled village, interview, Agoro, 3 April 2006.

<sup>116</sup> Woman from semi-settled village, interview, Agoro, 3 April 2006.

<sup>117</sup> Cited in Justine Nannyonjo, *Conflicts, poverty and human development in northern Uganda* (UNU-Wider, research paper no. 2005/47, August 2005), p. 6.

<sup>118</sup> Woman from semi-settled village, interview Agoro, 3 April 2006.

<sup>119</sup> Ben Knighton, *The Vitality of Karamojong Religion: Dying Tradition or Living Faith?* (Ashgate: England) 2005.

<sup>120</sup> Three Female-heads of household, Interview, Orom Camp, 25 March 06.

<sup>121</sup> MSF officers, Interview, Agoro Camp, 3 April 2006; Female headed household, Interview, Orom Camp, 25 March 06; Female headed household, Interview, Agoro Camp, 2 April 2006; Female headed household, Interview, Labuje Camp, 30 March 2006; Focus group with 11 women, Interview, Pager village, 5 April 2006.

<sup>122</sup> For analysis of heightened male violence including domestic violence in northern Uganda, see Chris Dolan's "Collapsing Masculinities and Weak States – a Case study of Northern Uganda," available from <http://www.acord.org.uk/r-pubs-CollapsingMasculinities.doc>.

<sup>123</sup> Most children reportedly are beaten by their mothers, although this study did not gather sufficient information to further expand on these claims.

<sup>124</sup> Female headed-household, Interview, Agoro Camp, 2 April 06.

<sup>125</sup> Eight LC officials, Interview, Agoro Camp, 2 April 2006.

<sup>126</sup> Clan leaders, Interview, Labuje camp, 31 March 2006.

<sup>127</sup> Eight LC officials, Interview, Agoro Camp, 2 April 2006.

<sup>128</sup> Clan leaders, Interview, Labuje camp, 31 March 2006.

<sup>129</sup> Clan leader, Interview, Labuje camp, 31 March 2006.

<sup>130</sup> In the camps these LC systems have jurisdiction over people who are originally from the area where the LC would operate under normal conditions (i.e. pre-displacement locations). The LCI operates at the village level and receives a majority of the cases brought before the LC system. This local council court has the ability to hear cases concerning issues of assault/battery, marital disputes, debt, trespassing, property damage, defilement and other matters concerning the breach of LC by-laws enacted by respective LCs under the Local Government Act.<sup>130</sup> The LCIs have the same authority to pass judgments in the court in the camps as they would have within the villages. Rulings by the LCI can include awards of compensation, restitution and/or apology to be delivered to the victim. However, the LCI does not have the ability to rule on cases concerning damages exceeding 5,000 US\$.

<sup>131</sup> On issues of fighting and domestic violence, the LCs are suppose to work with local police when such cases warrant their involvement. The LCs typically either forward a case to the police through the submission of an official letter requesting an investigation or handle the case on their own. Where a case is directed depends on the amount of damage and the parties involved. In situations of domestic abuse, cases involving blatant injury, such as cuts or broken bones, are to be forwarded to the police. Otherwise, the LC may handle the case and make its own rulings. Sometimes these rulings involve beatings and or fines as punishments against the party deemed responsible for the initial dispute. Victims who file domestic violence cases with the LC are questioned by the LC members. Neighbors can serve as witnesses and can offer the LC verbal testimony. Likewise, the

defendant is also questioned. A party found guilty by the court is subsequently required to pay all court costs as well as accept any penalties handed down.

<sup>132</sup> Briefly, the ethnic groups of northern Uganda are organized along clan lines. These clans provide people with protection and traditional means to resolve disputes. Every clan and sub-clan has a male leader, with chiefs comprising the top level of the clan leadership hierarchy. Clan leaders address issues of both intra- and inter-clan relevance. For issues of intra-clan concern, clan leaders may handle complaints from fellow clan members, settle disputes concerning water or private property, give advice on personal behavior or conduct, or perform rituals and ceremonies. For issues concerning inter-clan affairs, such as land or livestock disputes, it is the duty of clan leaders to meet and reach settlement to reestablish harmony between or among clans. Clan leaders may also oversee marriages and negotiate the exchange of dowries payable to the clan and family of the bride. In regard to conflict, part of the settlement process resolving conflict involves compensation. Compensations are an integral part of maintaining both intra- and inter-clan harmony. Where compensations are due for violations against customary law, the clan leaders meet and negotiate what compensations are to be paid in accordance with the customary laws of the victims' clan. For example, acts of thievery, property damage or personal injury including murder are reconciled through the issuance of compensation, traditionally paid in livestock or other material goods. Clan leaders hear disputes regarding intra-household matters as well, including domestic violence, and may call for compensation to be paid to the aggrieved party or clan. These clan-based reconciliatory methods are done outside of local or national legal systems.

<sup>133</sup> LC1 official, Labuje camp, Interview, 31 March 2006.

<sup>134</sup> Local Council 1 official, Interview, Pager, 5 April 2006.

<sup>135</sup> Clan leaders, Interviews, Agoro camp, 3 April 06.

<sup>136</sup> Female headed household, Interview, Labuje Camp, 30 March 2006.

<sup>137</sup> Female headed household, Interview, Labuje Camp, 30 March 2006.

<sup>138</sup> Eight Local Council officials, Interview, Agoro, 2 April 2006.

<sup>139</sup> Female, Interview, Pager Village, 5 April 2006.

<sup>140</sup> Clan leader, Interview, Labuje camp, 31 March 2006.

<sup>141</sup> Clan leaders, Interview, Labuje Camp, 31 March 2006.

<sup>142</sup> Clan leaders, Interview, Labuje Camp, 31 March 2006.

<sup>143</sup> Female-headed household, Interview, Labuja IDP Camp, 30 March 2006.

<sup>144</sup> MSF officers, Interview, Agoro Camp, 3 April 2006

<sup>145</sup> Female headed households, Interview, Orom Camp, 25 March 2006.

<sup>146</sup> Camp commandant, Interview, Orom Camp, 28 March 2006; Three female-heads of household, Interview, Orom Camp, 25 March 2006

<sup>147</sup> Three female-heads of household, Interview, Orom Camp, 25 March 2006.

<sup>148</sup> Three female-heads of household, Interview, Orom Camp, 25 March 2006.

<sup>149</sup> Three female-heads of household, Interview, Orom Camp, 25 March 2006.

<sup>150</sup> Three female-heads of household, Interview, Orom Camp, 25 March 2006.

<sup>151</sup> Female headed household, Interview, Labuje Camp, 30 March 2006.

<sup>152</sup> Clan leaders, Interview, Labuje Camp, 31 March 2006.

<sup>153</sup> However, in an interview with nine LC representatives in Agoro, remarks were openly made against the camp leadership, accusing the camp commander of deception and fraud. Nine LC officials, Interview, Agoro Camp, 2 April 2006.

<sup>154</sup> Such dialogue between stakeholders led to a delay in ration reductions initially scheduled for June 2005. Email communication, Ernest Mutanga, World Food Program, Kampala, 27 June 2006.

<sup>155</sup> Elderly woman, interview, Labuje camp, 30 March 2006.