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# Qualitative Assessment of Resilience to the Effects of Chronic Conflict in Northern Uganda

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## **Qualitative Assessment of Resilience to the Effects of Chronic Conflict in Northern Uganda**

### **Eastern Africa Resilience Innovation Lab**

**Prepared by the Eastern Africa Resilience Innovation Lab, Makerere University, Uganda**

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In collaboration with the ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) Secretariat, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
FGD	Focus group discussion
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
KII	Key informant interview
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RAN	ResilientAfrica Network
SACCO	Savings and credit cooperative



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## SUMMARY

Northern Uganda was devastated by a 20-year armed conflict from 1986 to 2006. The areas most affected were Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts in Acholi Region, with spill over into Lira, Otuke and Aleptong districts in Lango Region. More than two million people were internally displaced. Resettlement of displaced persons, economic recovery projects and cultural and religious coping strategies have helped counteract the vulnerability of people affected by the civil war, but the pace of recovery has been slow.

## OBJECTIVE

The general objective of the qualitative assessment in northern Uganda was to understand the drivers of vulnerability and adaptive capacity of the target communities to conflict. The specific objectives were to identify the effects of priority shocks and stresses that communities face and explore the factors that lead to persistent vulnerability and promote coping and adaptation in order to develop resilience dimensions and propose interventions to strengthen resilience.

## METHODS

The assessment was done in three districts of northern Uganda—Pader, Lamwo and Lira. Three focus group discussions and two key informant interviews were conducted in two sub-counties in each district. Key informants were representatives of government agencies, development agencies operating in the study districts and political/religious/opinion leaders. Focus group discussions included eight participants in each sub-county.

## RESULTS

The main shocks and stresses resulting from floods and landslides in northern Uganda are loss of economic self-determination, a breakdown in social networks and value systems, an increase in sexual and gender-based violence and trauma, suicide, poverty, food insecurity, damaged infrastructure, increased morbidity and mortality, land disputes and a decline in social services. The underlying driver of the slow pace of post-conflict recovery is governance (corruption, land disputes and lack of access to social services). Recommended interventions include diversified wealth creation activities to improve household incomes and investment in infrastructure, especially roads, electricity and housing, and agriculture. These investments can build on existing social networks (such as women's groups, saving groups, cultural institutions and religious institutions) to maximize impact.





## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Resilient Africa Network (RAN) is one of eight university based Development Labs that make up the Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) established by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In Africa, RAN brings together 20 universities in 16 countries, with a secretariat at Makerere University in Uganda. RAN is structured around four Resilience Innovation Labs (RILabs). The Eastern Africa RILab is based in Uganda and hosted by Makerere University. By applying science, technology, innovation and partnerships and using evidence-based approaches, RAN seeks to identify, develop and scale up innovative solutions to strengthen the resilience of African communities afflicted by natural and human-made shocks and stresses.

Over the past few decades, the burden of disasters has been on the increase (ECHO, 2013). Human factors underlie most disaster situations, contributing to either their causes or effects. Disasters often result in sudden shocks that disrupt the livelihoods of communities, infrastructure and institutions (UNISDR, 2009). Even without sudden events, communities face slow-onset and persistent stresses that affect their wellbeing and resilience. Among these stresses are the effects of climate change.

Until recently, the global approach to adverse events, shocks and stresses focused on response, but the need to reduce risk has become increasingly clear. There is therefore an increasing focus on disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness (USAID/OFDA, 2013; UNISDR, 2009; UNESCO, 2013). Disaster risk reduction (DRR) needs to include a strong component of resilience building to help communities overcome their vulnerabilities and cope with shocks and stresses in a way that enhances their wellbeing (World Bank/GFDRR, 2009).

### 1.1. Resilience to the Effects of Chronic Conflict in Northern Uganda

Northern Uganda was devastated by a 20-year armed conflict from 1986 to 2006 (Otunnu, 2002b, OPM, 2007). The areas most affected were Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts in Acholi Region, with spill over into Lira, Otuke and Aleptong districts in Lango Region) (ACF, 2010b, ACF, 2010a, Bozzoli et al., 2012). The conflict led to the loss of tens of thousands of lives (Otunnu, 2002b, OPM, 2007).

Over two million people were internally displaced, a level of displacement reported to be one of the highest in the world (Jens Claussen and Nordby, 2008, UNDP, 2010). Another primary effect of the armed conflict was child abuse and neglect. Over 50% of the insurgents' militia was made





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up of children who had been abducted and forced to commit atrocities. Other children were defiled and forced into marriage to the militiamen (Opprann, 2009, Gagne, 2011, Annan and Brier, 2010, Cecilie Lanken, 2012, UN). The insurgency also led to a phenomenon known as “night commuting,” in which tens of thousands of children had to walk up to 8 km a night for protection in urban areas (OPM, 2007, UNICEF, 2005).

The secondary effects of the civil war included loss of economic self-determination for hundreds of thousands of people, a breakdown in social-cultural networks and value systems, an increase in sexual and gender-based violence and psychological disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicide, poverty, food insecurity, damaged infrastructure, increased prevalence of HIV, morbidity and mortality from epidemics and preventable diseases, land disputes and a decline in health systems and social services (OPM, 2007, ISIS-WICCE, 2001, Otunnu, 2002a, Kinyanda, 2010, Akumu, 2005). The groups most vulnerable to the effects of conflict in Uganda were women and children, who continue to face severe physical and psychological issues as a result (Corbin, 2008). Gender was also an important factor as women were at risk of sexual violence (Kinyanda et al., 2010). Many women were victims of sexual violence, and many already vulnerable children were left orphaned (Kinyanda et al., 2010). The lack of community social safety nets further exposed these groups to inequity and violence (Oleke et al., 2006). Lack of access to medical and psychological services and the breakdown of community social safety nets further increased vulnerability (Kinyanda et al., 2010).

The factors that make people, infrastructure and institutions vulnerable to the effects of civil war include lack of education, which deprives them of the opportunity to build capacity for resilience; lack of livelihood diversification; and loss of socio-cultural controls. Many parents living in camps for internally displaced persons (IDP) relinquished their responsibilities to institutions and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (Angucia et al., 2010). Lack of safe physical space prevented positive interaction and increased individualism (Angucia et al., 2010). Massive overcrowding and appalling sanitation and hygiene conditions in the IDP camps led to a loss of privacy and dignity, as well as disease and malnutrition (UPFI, 2013). Many of these effects have persisted beyond the conflict.

Cattle raiding and delays in detection and containment of such illegal acts led to loss of livelihoods and increased the vulnerability of communities (Angucia et al., 2010, Kinyanda et al., 2010). Another key effect of the civil war was increased reliance on government and donor aid, trapping a large section of the population in victimhood and dependency. The government and development partners inadequately prepared communities affected by the civil war in northern Uganda to move forward after the conflict.



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A number of programs focusing on recovery from the chronic conflict were initiated to strengthen the adaptive capacity of the communities. However, these programs have not been sustainable and consequently have not strengthened resilience of communities in Northern Uganda. Civil society organizations and international agencies have been at the forefront of these programs, which have included resettlement of formerly displaced persons back to their homes, economic recovery programs (including promotion of farming and agri-business, restocking and other economic incentives), revamping of social services (water, health and education) and restoration of community social cohesion and cultural controls. Communities have sought physical and emotional support from family, friends, social groups and humanitarian organizations and have shared their experience through therapeutic photography, storytelling, chanting, dance, songs, theatre and writing (Mark Sommer, 2011, Edmondson, 2005). Cultural and religious coping strategies have also helped counteract the vulnerability of people affected by the civil war (Murthy and Lakshminarayana, 2006).

However, despite these efforts at reconstruction since the end of the war in 2004, the pace of recovery has remained slow. Data from serial Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) (UDHS 2001, 2005 and 2011), as well as AIDS Indicator Surveys (AIS 2004 and 2012), show that the Northern Region has the lowest socio-economic indicators of all regions of Uganda. There is a need to explore further the factors that have kept this region trapped in slow recovery and the effect of the conflict on the resilience of communities to various livelihood variables.

## 1.2. Background of the Rapid Assessment

RAN held a consultative partners' meeting in April 2013 in Kampala, Uganda, involving representatives of all four RILabs. To further focus their approach to resilience programming, the RILabs were involved in guided group discussions to select priority thematic areas of focus for their regional programming. The regional teams also proposed geographical areas of focus for targeted intervention. For each of these geographical areas, the teams highlighted a preliminary list of vulnerability factors and adaptive capacities for the target populations, as well as possible ways in which RAN can contribute to mitigating the vulnerability factors.

The next step in RAN's strategy is to develop and validate a framework for understanding, measuring and monitoring resilience in vulnerable communities in sub-Saharan Africa and translating resilience challenges into an innovations agenda. This required a thorough understanding of the dimensions of resilience in the geographical areas of focus.





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## CHAPTER TWO: PROBLEM STATEMENT, RATIONAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Problem Statement

While many frameworks have been used to assess resilience, there is no unifying framework for understanding resilience in sub-Saharan Africa specifically for Northern Uganda. The ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) will develop a framework for understanding, measuring and monitoring resilience in vulnerable communities in target communities in sub-Saharan Africa. However, to do this requires a thorough understanding of the dimensions of resilience in the Northern Uganda region.

Although RAN’s Eastern Resilience Innovation Lab (EA RILab) has proposed priority themes and geographical areas of focus for resilience interventions, there is an insufficient understanding of the range of vulnerability factors and underlying drivers of vulnerability and adaptive capacities of the target communities. Factors in the two dimensions are crucial to understanding the drivers of resilience in these communities. A lack of information of the variability of these factors renders it difficult to develop a framework for measurement of resilience in the specific contexts. Qualitative data is necessary to develop the dimensions of resilience, which will inform the process of developing quantitative tools to measure resilience in target communities.

There is therefore urgent need to conduct a more in-depth understanding of the drivers of vulnerability and adaptive capacities in the target communities, to enable a better understanding of resilience variables in the priority themes and sub-themes. The Eastern Africa RILabs will therefore conduct a qualitative assessment of the ecology of resilience in seven target communities in three countries.

### 2.2 Rationale for the assessment

The rapid assessment has fostered a better understanding of the resilience dimensions, especially the underlying factors that trap people in vulnerability as well as the factors that promote adaptation.



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## 2.3 Theoretical Framework for assessment of resilience factors in Northern Uganda communities

### RAN's definition of resilience

RAN defines resilience as ‘the capacity of people and systems to mitigate, adapt to, recover and learn from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces vulnerability and increases well-being.’

### RAN's Theory of Change

The resilience of people and systems in Africa will be strengthened by leveraging the knowledge, scholarship and creativity that exists across the ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) to incubate, test and scale innovations that target capabilities and reduce vulnerabilities identified by a scientific, data-driven and evidenced-based resilience framework for Sub-Saharan Africa. RAN defines resilience as the capacity of people and systems to mitigate, adapt to, recover and learn from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces vulnerability and increases wellbeing.

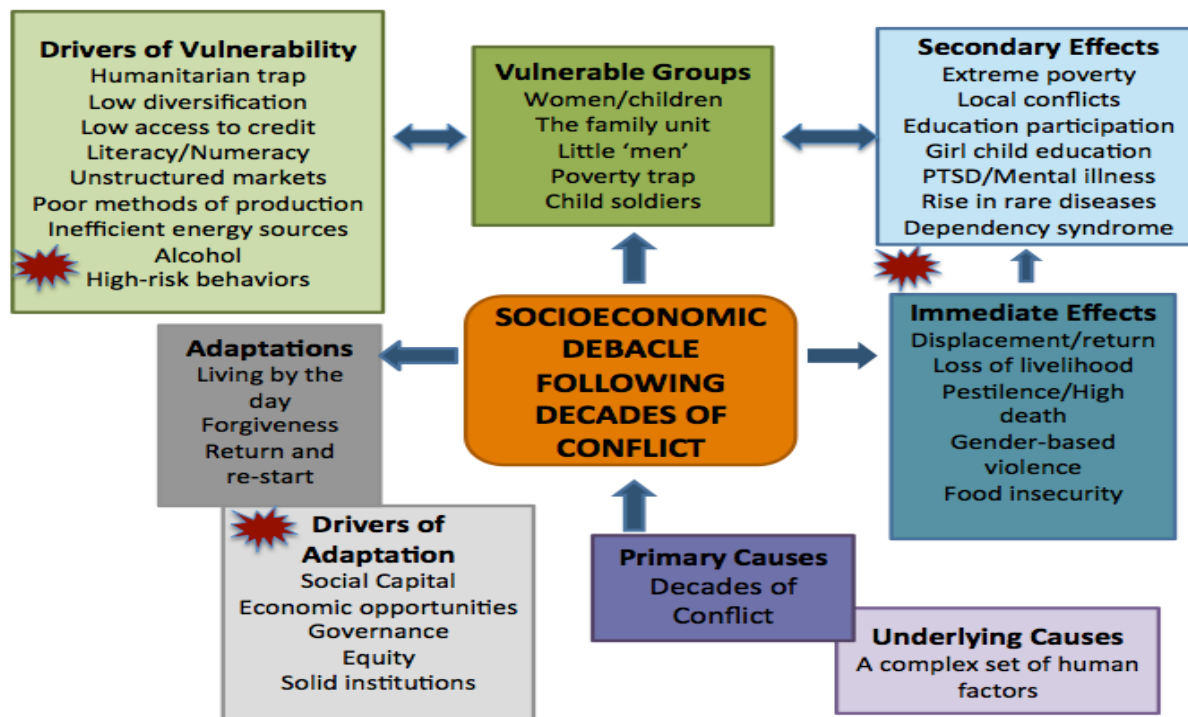
### Theoretical Framework

The goal of strengthening systems' resilience is to ultimately improve their well-being. This necessitates an understanding of contextual factors, resilience dimensions and protective strategies, how to design interventions which build on systems' capabilities to strengthen their resilience; all of which results in improved wellbeing.

The figure below illustrates the main problem as socio economic debacle following decades of conflict with the primary cause being prolonged conflict with the immediate effects being displacement/return, death, loss of livelihood, gender based violence and food insecurity among others. In the event of such disasters, the most vulnerable groups are usually women and children who usually end up becoming child soldiers. Consequently, many in these affected communities have devised means of adaptation like living by the day, forgoing and returning to the war affected land. However, this study is assessed the underlying drivers of vulnerability, drivers of adaptation and the secondary effects of the problem of socio economic debacle following two decades of conflict in the Northern Uganda.



**Figure 1: Theoretical framework for resilience factors associated with the socio-economic devastation following decades of conflict in Northern Uganda**





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## CHAPTER THREE: STUDY OBJECTIVES

### 3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the qualitative assessment in northern Uganda was to gain a deeper understanding of the drivers of vulnerability and adaptive capacity of the target communities to priority shocks or stresses. The results were meant to inform resilience dimensions and metrics that would be used to develop innovations that will result in improved resilience of target communities. The specific objectives of this assessment were:

### 3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To identify the primary and secondary effects of priority shocks and stresses that communities face.
2. To explore the latent factors that lead to persistent vulnerability as a basis for developing resilience dimensions (mitigating, adapting, recovering and learning) and metrics.
3. To explore the latent factors that promote strategies to cope with, mitigate and adapt to priority shocks and stresses as a basis for developing resilience dimensions and metrics.



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## CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Study Setting and Population

This study was conducted in three districts (Lira, Pader and Lamwo) in northern Uganda that had been affected by conflict. In each district, two sub-counties were selected for the study (Table 1).

**Table 1. Study area: Chronic Conflict**

Region	Administrative units (districts)	Study areas (sub-counties)
Northern Uganda	Pader	Pader TC and Coner Kilak
	Lira	Ogur and Aromo
	Lamwo	Padibe West and Agoro

### 4.2. Study Design

This was a qualitative assessment that used Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant interviews. The purpose of this design was to get to the root of the underlying drivers of vulnerability in each sub-population. A grounded theory approach was used to guide the development of qualitative dimensions from which a theoretical derivative for understanding resilience in this region.

### 4.3. Sample Size

Six focus group discussions (FGDs) and nine key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted in the study areas (Table 2).

**Table 2. FGDs and KIIs**

Region	District	Sub-county	FGDs	KIIs
Northern Uganda	Pader	Pader TC/Corner and Kilak	2	3
	Lamwo	Padibe West and Agoro	2	3
	Lira	Ogur and Aromo	2	3
<b>Total</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>



## 4.4. Data Collection Procedures

### Key informant interviews

For each geographical area we conducted field visits to the selected administrative districts at the epicenter of the shock/stress and interview a minimum of nine key informants. These included representatives of government agencies in the target areas, representatives of non-governmental organizations and development agencies operating in the affected districts and political/opinion leaders of affected communities. The actual key Informants will be identified during micro-planning sessions at the district level. Respondents were people knowledgeable about post-conflict peace and recovery in northern Uganda. The nine KIIs were conducted; audio recorded, and transcribed by a team of trained research assistants. The team took notes during the interviews to supplement the recordings.

### Focus Group Discussions

FGDs were conducted in each targeted sub-country in the local language. FGD participants were selected from the most affected parishes and mobilized by sub-county focal persons (Community Development Officers). The participants included two youths (male and female), one women's group representative, one local opinion leader, one local cultural leader, one local political leader and two other community members affected by the conflict in northern Uganda.

Data from the FGDs and KIIs were recorded using digital voice recorders, transcribed and then translated into English.

## 4.5. Data Management Analysis

The FGD and KII transcripts were read through several times by selected teams, which extracted verbatim statements about participants' experiences and combined then into one Excel file for each region (unit of analysis). The text was divided into meaning units that were condensed. The condensed meaning units were abstracted, and the whole context was considered when condensing and labelling meaning units with sub-dimensions. The various sub-dimensions were discussed and agreed on by a team of researchers (Graneheim and Lundman, 2004). Finally, the sub-dimensions that were related to each other were merged to constitute the resilience dimensions. The qualitative data were analyzed using ATLAS Ti software to further elucidate the linkages between the identified dimensions of resilience.





## 4.6 Ethical Issues

The assessment had limited inquiry into individual experiences and was therefore not inherently designed to measure attributes of individuals. Issues were discussed with the community as the reference. Questions that were asked to key informants were in reference to the geographical area and population as a whole, and not to individuals, and therefore did not carry any invasiveness to human subjects. It is an initial appraisal which was used to develop a more detailed study protocol. The following ethical issues were considered:

**Ethical Approval:** This study was approved by Makerere University School of public Health Institutional review (IRB00011353) board and Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (UNCST) (Ref SS 3357).

**Informed consent:** All participants received full informed consent at the time of recruitment as FGD participants or Key Informants. All FGD and KIIs participants signed consent forms and FGD participants signed as a group.

**Privacy and confidentiality:** The assessment team ensured privacy and confidentiality. For the FGDs, participants' names were not taken, but rather, anonymous identifiers were used, and referred to during the discussions, so that no names are tagged to particular responses. However, it was not possible to keep key informants anonymous because their status is part of why they are selected as key informants.





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## CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS; DIMENSIONS OF RESILIENCE

This chapter discusses the findings of the qualitative assessment in northern Uganda. The research team analyzed the FGDs and KIIs to derive dimensions of resilience to chronic conflict in three districts that were identified by this study.

Data analysis identified eight dimensions of resilience for the study districts: *Wealth, Agriculture, Health, Governance, Human Capital, Infrastructure, Psychosocial Wellbeing, Natural Resources/Environment and Social Environment/Social Networks*. To assess the capacity of communities in three districts to adapt to the stresses of chronic conflict, the study explored the following areas for each dimension:

1. **Adaptive strategies:** Factors that empower the communities to resist the effects of chronic conflict
2. **Coping strategies:** Behaviors to mitigate and absorb the impacts of chronic conflict; their effect on individuals, households and communities; and their sustainability
3. **Vulnerability factors:** Characteristics that make individuals, households and communities more susceptible to the negative impacts of chronic conflict and groups that are especially vulnerable
4. **Causes and effects** of each stress factor and the interrelationship among dimensions

### 5.1 Wealth

This dimension describes both financial and non-financial assets and access to credit and goes beyond what is normally defined as wealth to include elements of livelihoods and food security. Livelihoods include activities required to make a living and have a good quality of life. They touch on forms of (formal and informal) employment and sources of incomes, as well as activities and choices within households and local populations that provide food, health, income, shelter and other tangible and intangible benefits, such as comfort, safety, respect and fulfillment. In northern Uganda, cattle ownership is considered a major indicator of wealth.

#### Adaptive Strategies

- Introduction of government programs such as the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) to deal with poverty eradication.



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## Coping Strategies

- Some communities are renting land for agriculture. However, the unfertile land produces persistent low yields.
- Government programs such as NAADS and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) reportedly have limited impact on the communities because of corruption, selective identification of beneficiaries and poor-quality agricultural inputs.
- Alcohol brewing as an alternative source of income to farming in the face of drought has led to increased drunkenness, thus affecting productivity.

*For us mothers who came back home from the camps, we started to make local brew (waragi) for survival, but this did not work out very well. We tried to plant crops, but the sun's heat killed the crops, so we have now come back and started brewing waragi. That is why they say there is a high rate of drunkenness in Agoro, but it is the sun, which makes our crops die, that has pushed us back to brewing.* (Female focus group participant, Agoro Sub-county, Lamwo District)

- Resettlement and integration of people after the war led to increased land disputes that resulted in death, imprisonment, hatred, property loss and corruption.

*The biggest shock/stress to me is land wrangles when people started resettling back home from the camps, in 2003. Wrangles are still occurring and are leading to death due to fights.* (Focus group participant, Padibe West Sub-county, Lamwo District)

- NGOs provided training in the IDP camps to build community capacity, but this had a limited significant effect on people's livelihoods after encampment because of a negative attitude to work and lack of productivity among youth. During FGDs, this negative attitude was reported as one of the factors that keep communities vulnerable.

*Some people sit and relax and assume they cannot do certain things; therefore, this makes them more vulnerable to problems. There is also an issue of poverty because we can no longer receive help, so you sit and wait for the problem.* (Focus group participant, Aromo Sub-county, Lira District)

- Humanitarian aid, including supplies and legal services provided by NGOs and international agencies, helped people during the war but was unsustainable when agencies pulled out of the region afterwards.

*There was the problem of famine. While in the camps, food relief was distributed, but when we were resettled back home from the camps, they sent us without anything to eat. This started mostly in 2009, when people were resettling back home from the camps.* (Focus group participant, Agoro Sub-county, Lamwo District)





## Vulnerability Factors

- While in the camps, communities relied on humanitarian aid for survival. Dependency on aid created a negative attitude, especially among youth, toward on certain jobs that were considered inferior, such as farming. This attitude traps communities in a vicious cycle of poverty.
- Corruption led to the limited success of programs, mainly government programs such as NAADS, in the community because of embezzlement of funds and seizing of benefits by officials and their relatives. It has also hindered settlement of land disputes in the region, which promotes land grabbing, thus affecting wealth and land ownership. Corruption has also undermined efforts to resolve land disputes.
- Catastrophic out-of-pocket medical expenses because of frequent stock-outs of medicines at public health facilities have forced households into poverty.
- Property has been lost as a result of mainly Sudanese and Karimojong cattle raids.
- There are few alternative livelihood sources.
- Poverty has a crosscutting effect on other resilience dimensions (e.g., *Agriculture, Health, Psychosocial Wellbeing* and *Social Environment/Social Networks*).
- Price fluctuation of agricultural produce coupled with exploitative middlemen leads to lower incomes, which subsequently hinders agricultural productivity.

*... and even if they produced enough, the middlemen, when they are buying this produce, they buy at a very low cost. Actually, they rob the community because they buy at very cheap prices and they get super profits from the communities, yet these are the producers. They should be given priority.* (KII with a Community Development Officer, Lira District)

## Causes and Effects

- Insurgencies such as the Kony war and Karimojong cattle raids have affected community sources of income and led to property/animal loss.
- Shocks such as hailstorms, pests and diseases have led to crop destruction, affecting income sources.
- Persistent poverty is a result of the conflict.

## 5.2 Agriculture

Most of the rural communities in Uganda are highly dependent on subsistence agriculture. They depend on a narrow range of crops that they use both for household subsistence and income generation from the sale of part of the produce. In northern Uganda, the main crops are cereals





(millet, sorghum, maize and sesame), beans and groundnuts. The population mainly herds cattle and raises poultry (chicken).

### Adaptive Strategies

- Government programs like NAADS and NUSAF provide modified agricultural inputs such as fast-yielding and drought-resistant seeds. Through sensitization, communities have adopted indigenous and drought-resistant crops such as millet, sorghum, maize and cassava in addition to better farming methods such as mixed farming.
- Locally available methods of food storage and preservation are common in the community as a result of community sensitization in preparation for prolonged dry spells. Communities have often stored dried cassava and potato chips (*amukeke*).
- Communities rent land for agriculture from other people (land owners) that own large pieces of land.

### Coping Strategies

- Some communities are renting land for agriculture. However, poor soil results in persistent low yields.

### Vulnerability Factors

- Inadequate land for agriculture leads to over-cultivation. This causes soil infertility, resulting into poor agricultural yields that affect income.
- Environmental degradation through human activities such as deforestation for timber and charcoal production has led to a change in weather patterns that affects planting seasons and agricultural yields. This has been aggravated by the lack of a reliable early warning system to help predict weather changes/patterns.
- A poor road network limits farmers' physical access to markets.
- Farmers lack access to market information, leading to exploitation by middlemen.
- Education levels are low, and people, particularly youth, do not want to engage in certain activities such as agriculture, which they consider inferior. This has created a negative attitude to work. This could be attributed to limited employment opportunities, which force people into agriculture as the alternative source of income.
- Limited viable livelihood opportunities mean that most communities engage in subsistence farming (surviving hand to mouth). The food is mainly grown for home consumption, and only the excess yield is sold for income. This reliance on subsistence farming leaves most families with meager incomes and threats of food insecurity.





## Causes and Effects

- Rampant food insecurity results from a lack of viable economic opportunities, with aid and relief by NGOs and international agencies often the only option during encampment.
- Rebels commonly looted harvested food during the dry season, affecting community sources of livelihood.
- The insurgency was also characterized by abduction of people, mostly women, who provided manpower for agricultural production, leading to food insecurity.
- Poor methods of farming such as over-cultivation have led to soil/land exhaustion, which affects agricultural production.
- Destruction of crops by pests and diseases affects agricultural production, leading to income loss.
- Weather patterns characterized by destructive rains, hailstones and lightning affect agriculture and are unpredictable, given the lack of early warning systems.
- Human activities such as deforestation affect rainfall formation, leading to drought and a change in weather and planting seasons.
- Price fluctuation of agricultural produce and exploitative middlemen affect farmer incomes, hindering agricultural productivity thus affecting livelihoods.

## 5.3 Health

Aspects of health as a dimension include physical health (illness/disease, epidemics, injuries, physical and financial access to health services, quality of health services and human resources for health) and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) (functioning of water and sanitation services, water and sanitation-related factors and behaviors that drive illness and disease and hygiene-related illness).

### Adaptive Strategies

- The communities have made attempts to be tested and counseled for HIV in order to curb the spread of HIV and AIDS.  
*We also tried voluntary counseling and testing. However, after testing HIV positive, some people engage in reckless behaviors such as heavy drinking and intentional spread of HIV out of frustration.* (Focus group participant, Ogur Sub-county, Lira District)
- Some NGOs have established community-based peer education systems to provide sensitization on HIV and other health services.

*To begin with HIV/AIDS, for us, we are establishing the system of peer educators to provide peer education services in the communities.* (Key informant, Lamwo District)





## Coping Strategies

- Some people reported prostitution in return for material gains, including food as a coping strategy for survival after the conflict, a practice that is likely to increase the spread of HIV.

*Another method used is that women are exchanging sex for things, like someone has a sack of beans and she will give him sex in exchange for the beans, which is not good.* (Focus group participant, Aromo Sub-county, Lira District)

## Vulnerability

- The catastrophic out-of-pocket medical expenses resulting from frequent stock-outs of medicines at public health facilities have led households into poverty.

*Another problem is that there are not enough drugs at the health facility. They can bring only one tin of drugs, so all the time we are buying drugs from private drug shops.* (Focus group participant, Aromo Sub-county, Lira District)

- The social environment created during encampment led to increased high-risk sexual behaviors such as prostitution, rape and early marriages, along with a fear of rapid spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as HIV.

*When we went to the camps, we experienced a lot of hardships. The spread of HIV increased, and we also experienced a problem of early marriage amongst our children. Women also started snatching other women's men and also their relatives' men.* (Focus group participant, Aromo Sub-county, Lira District)

- The conduct of health workers (e.g., absenteeism, rudeness, leakage, corruption) affects community health-seeking behaviors. The community reported that increasing corruption hinders service delivery.

*The health workers steal drugs [and] use bad language with patients; hence people stay away from hospitals.* (Focus group participant, Ogur Sub-county, Lira District)

## Causes and Effects

- Inadequate medical supplies because of poor drug delivery systems has led to catastrophic out-of-pocket expenses that affect health-seeking behaviors. Poor people cannot afford services even when they know they may risk death without treatment.
- Ignorance and the deep-rooted cultural beliefs and practices in terms of hygiene and sanitation threaten community health with disease outbreaks. Some community members still use bushes as human waste disposal areas even after sensitization on latrine usage.
- Physical access to health facilities is another challenge. Most of this is attributed to poor road infrastructure coupled with long distances to health facilities.





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- Negative health-seeking behaviors such as self-medication, consultation of traditional providers as the first choice of treatment and seeking treatment when diseases are at an advanced stage affect health outcomes.
- Inadequate human resources in public health facilities affect service delivery, leading to poor quality care.
- Inadequate sensitization on HIV counseling and testing (HCT) and health in general during encampment led to a high incidence of HIV, malaria, hepatitis E and nodding syndrome.

## 5.4 Governance

The governance dimension involves activities, processes and frameworks within which political, economic and administrative authority is exercised to manage the affairs of a country or administrative unit. It incorporates formal and informal mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. This can be from the household and local levels to provincial, national and international levels, e.g., the judiciary and private sector. This dimension includes information on the role of the government, external organizations and institutions in responding to the concerns of the population faced by the effects of chronic conflict and climate variability. This information may be transmitted through sensitization campaigns, humanitarian assistance and poverty eradication programs, as well as community perception of the effectiveness, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and responsiveness of these programs. Governance also includes advocacy—raising awareness of issues in an effort to influence people, policies, structures and systems to bring about positive change—and establishing dialogue with civil society, communities and the media. Governance is a critical dimension, and abuse of authority has widespread effects on all other dimensions (e.g., Health, Infrastructure, Natural Resources/Environment).

### Adaptive Strategies

- The Government of Uganda has implemented a Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) with programs such as NUSAF and NAADS to alleviate poverty. These programs support communities by providing agricultural inputs such as goats, cattle and seeds.
- The government and NGOs have implemented sensitization campaigns on health, agriculture, human rights, early marriages and social-cultural values.
- People were resettled and integrated after the war.



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- Community involvement and participation in development programs help them recover through rehabilitation of community facilities such as water sources, schools and markets.

*Community members contribute money to maintain infrastructure. For instance, ... people collect money on a monthly basis and use it to repair the borehole in case it breaks down. When schools get dilapidated, parents gather and plan to make bricks for rehabilitation of the schools. When it comes to roads, we as the community also sacrifice ourselves to maintain the roads by coming together and digging the roads.*

(Focus group participant, Ogur Sub-county, Lira District)

- Community sensitization on health and livelihoods by NGOs and the government have been frustrated by communities' expectations of monetary reimbursement for attendance at meetings.

### Coping Strategies

- NGOs provided humanitarian assistance including relief supplies such as blankets, soap and food, as well as services such as counseling and rehabilitation of affected people.
- Settlement of land disputes through multiple means such as land committees and involvement of traditional leaders and other stakeholders has been instituted but is not yet effective in solving these disputes.

### Vulnerability Factors

- Corruption has led to poor service delivery, including the reported failure of government programs such as NAADS and NUSAF that do not reach the appropriate beneficiaries. Corruption has also affected settlement of land disputes.

*I ... see that the government is also a problem for us. First of all, programs like NAADS, which are supposed to help us at the grassroots don't reach us. Only a few particular people benefit instead of liaising directly with u. Only a few people connected at times to the government benefit. This very same person can be benefitting always, so this makes me see that the government is not transparent. When items from NAADS come, they should be evenly distributed. They don't even want us to complain. When we complain, there is no one to take our complaint to the people at the top. All these things add stress to the people at the grassroots, just like the Kony war did. Government should see to it that we all benefit.* (FGD participant, Aromo Sub-county, Lira District)



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- Illegal possession of arms left behind during the war has led to deaths, especially during disputes.
- Delayed government response to disasters because of corruption and inadequate resources has affected service delivery.

*I also want to add that when an outbreak has occurred, resources for intervention could have been allocated, but the responsible persons also first want to take their share, which delays service delivery. In summary, corruption is there.* (Focus group participant, Agoro Sub-county, Lamwo District)

- There is a lack of proper monitoring and evaluation of government programs to effect and plan and to avoid misuse of resources.
- Effective community structures are lacking to help resolve disputes (e.g., over land) at community level.

### Causes and Effects

- Communities noted unequal distribution of power, prolonged stays in power and lack of peaceful transition of power as the main causes of insurgencies and power struggles.
- Decision making without community consultation has made programs unpopular and unsustainable.
- Poverty leads to diversion of development resources meant to benefit the community.
- Unemployment and therefore limited engagement in productive ventures mainly among youth has lured people some into the rebel groups and others into prostitution as ways of looking for survival.

*I see that the kind of leaders we have does not make sure that the youths are employed. That is why they join rebellious activities. It is mostly them who die in battle, just because they are not employed.* (Focus group participant, Aromo Sub-county, Lira District)

*We also have few jobs here, so due to unemployment, there is poverty, making the few rich people lure young girls into sex, hence the spread of HIV.* (Focus group participant, Ogur Sub-county, Lira District)

- The failure of leaders to ensure just settlement of land disputes or better social services such as health and access to clean water has bred mistrust and resentment.
- Selective identification of NAADS beneficiaries benefited only a few people, leaving many still trapped in poverty.



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## 5.5 Human Capital

Aspects of this dimension include skills, knowledge and labor that together enable people to pursue different strategies to achieve their livelihood outcomes and meet their needs. *Human Capital* includes employment, labor, the labor force and characteristics such as education, skills and knowledge that directly or indirectly affect employment. Effects of chronic conflict and natural disasters that directly affect human capital include death leading to loss of labor force and skills. RAN and the EA RILab consider the *Human Capital* dimension to include indicators of access to quality education such as:

- Access to and quality of formal schooling, including technical or vocational training.
- Mentoring of children and youth by family members and community elders (informal education).
- Educational infrastructure and materials/resources such as classrooms, textbooks and teachers.
- The influence of systems such as leadership, community involvement in education and food supply on educational outcomes.

### Adaptive Strategies

- Communities were involved in agricultural production, mainly after encampment, as an alternative source of income.
- Cultural leaders/elders are involved in settlement and reconciliation of conflicts through a cultural practice known as *mato oput*. This traditional practice has helped reduce suicide attempts in response to injustice, although it is at times hindered by corruption.

*When a crime has been committed, the cultural leaders read the offense to the offender and reconcile the aggrieved parties through what is called mato oput.*  
(Focus group participant, Agoro Sub-county, Lamwo District.)

- Communities have co-funded development programs such as micro-financing (savings and credit cooperatives, or SACCOs) and rehabilitation or communal water and road infrastructure. The community initiatives usually involve group formation.
- Communities have worked with support from development partners such as NGOs to educate orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), provide sensitization on human rights and learn alternative vocational skills (carpentry, cosmetology, building and masonry).





## Vulnerability Factors:

- Insurgencies caused massive loss of life, leading to loss of a critical labor force.
- Lack of start-up capital coupled with crop pests and diseases has discouraged youth from engaging in productive agriculture.
- Education and productivity are affected by poverty and a negative attitude toward girls' education, which have led to early and child marriages, as parents consider daughters a means of earning a living through bride price.
- Low levels of education combined with limited employment opportunities for youth have led many to engage in gambling (sports betting), drug abuse and theft.

*Most of the youth are not educated and are hesitant to carry out farming, so they are just gambling such as playing cards. (Focus group participant, Agoro Sub-county, Lamwo District)*

- Delayed remuneration and irregular inspection of teachers and health workers results in system-wide effects such as absenteeism and low standard of services that affect education and health.
- A low teacher/student ratio because of understaffing affects the quality of education in schools, leading to poor performance.
- Corruption involving embezzlement of funds meant to benefit communities leaves them trapped in poverty, affecting productivity.
- High levels of unemployment result in destitution and low school enrollment.
- A lack of secondary schools and long distances to schools affects schooling. Parents' lack of have money to educate their children in boarding schools has contributed to school dropouts, especially girls.
- Prolonged drought has led to a lack of income for school fees in communities that rely solely on agriculture for income.

## Causes and Effects

- War led to abduction and death of men, women and youth, leading loss of a critical workforce that affected productivity.
- Lack of start-up capital coupled with crop pests and diseases have discouraged people from engaging in productive agriculture.
- Destruction of schools and encampment and as a result of the war affected education and livelihood sources.
- Disease has made caretakers unable to raise funds for school materials, leading to dropouts.





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- Poor road networks and the limited number of schools in the area affect access to school.
- The lack of visible educated role models in these communities discourages young people from going to school.
- Inadequate manpower to provide security to the communities threatens their peaceful existence.

## 5.6 Infrastructure

This dimension includes the basic infrastructure, physical community or societal assets (roads, bridges, railways, housing, bore holes, markets and telecommunications) that people use to function more productively. It includes aspects that relate to accessibility, functionality and linkages of infrastructural aspects to productivity in the communities. The dimension also includes the effects of infrastructure-related aspects on livelihoods.

### Adaptive Strategies

- Some community members can afford to build strong permanent houses made of burnt bricks and cement to avoid destruction by heavy rain, fire or lightening.
- Government involvement in construction and relocation of community infrastructure (schools, health centers, markets and roads) from camps to villages strengthened service delivery.

### Coping Strategies

- Community co-funding of rehabilitation and maintenance of community structures such as schools, boreholes and roads through SACCOs may not be sustainable.

### Vulnerability Factors

- The war led to destruction of infrastructure, especially bridges, schools and health facilities, and abandonment of homes.
- Corruption, complex and prolonged procurement processes, awarding of contracts to incompetent personnel and use of sub-standard materials have resulted in shoddy construction vulnerable to heavy rain and other weather conditions.
- Houses built of indigenous materials such as grass, banana fibers, mud and wattle on bare land are prone to destruction by heavy rain, winds and hailstones.
- Population pressure on existing infrastructure such as health facilities and schools leads to fast wear and tear of these infrastructures and hence destruction.



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- Irregular maintenance and rehabilitation by local governments has led to dilapidated roads, health centers and schools, hindering access to markets, health facilities and schools.

### Causes and Effects

- Delayed government rehabilitation of roads and schools has led to collapse of infrastructure, affecting access to education, health and markets.
- During the war, bridges, schools and health facilities were destroyed and houses were abandoned.
- Communities lack a sense of ownership of infrastructure and thus do not take the initiative to repair and maintain it.
- Corruption and the award of contracts to incompetent personnel results in shoddy construction.

### 5.7 Psychosocial Wellbeing

Psychological status and well-being of household heads is a dimension of resilience often adversely affected in the short term, and potentially in the long term, depending in part on the nature and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. This dimension includes the ability to resume normal life after a shock such as chronic conflict, people's participation in their convalescence and the pathological consequences of traumatic events.

### Adaptive Strategies

- The government, with the help of NGOs, has provided counseling and rehabilitation services to people affected by the war.
- Acceptance of and adaptation to camp life required a change in mindset.
- Traditional leaders have practiced *mato oput* presided over by traditional leaders to bring about reconciliation, justice and social harmony.
- Community-led groups counseled and consoled war-affected people.
- People have sometimes forgiveness offenders and people who have committed gross atrocities against them through songs, drama and prayer.
- It is easier for community groups to access support such as microcredit and rehabilitation services than for individuals.
- Sharing experience in a group may facilitate rehabilitation from chronic conflict.
- Communities receive continual counseling to deal with the traumatic effects of the war.



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## Vulnerability Factors

- Inadequate counseling and rehabilitation of war victims led to persistent psychological effects such as trauma.
- Insurgencies led to loss of life and an increase in the number of orphans and child-headed homes.
- Alcoholism fuels sexual and gender-based violence.
- Extreme poverty during resettlement has led to hopelessness and suicide attempts.

## Causes and Effects

- Insurgencies resulted in displacement, encampment and erosion of social institutions such as marriage and the safety net system.
- Elders lost their power and authority during and after encampment, as they were forced to depend on handouts. This led to loss of respect of cultural leaders and usurping of their power by youth who want to be clan leaders.
- Alcoholism as a result of unemployment and extreme poverty has had a sustained effect on the lives of the community members, resulting in home and child abandonment, rape and domestic violence.

*Another thing is domestic violence in the home brought about by alcoholism, where both parents drink and the children face problems. They end up selling some of the property in the home and use the money to buy alcohol. (Focus group participant, Pader Sub-county, Pader District).*

- The lack of an adequate sensitization and resettlement plan to help monitor people settling in their communities resulted in persistent psychological trauma.

*The biggest stress is, people have not yet forgotten or recovered from what happened here. We had many organizations that came to help people here, but they did not help much. For instance, here in just one parish, 50 people had their lips mutilated. Not much effort was made to counsel the community and help them recover from the shock. The rebels had their camp nearby, so that they would come and attack us quiet often and go back. Even now, if anybody sees unidentified people, the community would be so terrified and start running for refuge. So some people are still living in fear, which according to me is because the approach adopted to get people out of that fear and assimilate them into life after the war was not effective. (Focus group participant, Agoro Sub-county, Lamwo District)*



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## 5.8 Social Environment/Social Networks

The social environment encompasses the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and interact. It is a broader concept than social class or social circle, as people and institutions that interact in person or through communication media may not be equal in social status. Components of the social environment include built-in infrastructure, industrial and occupational structure, labor markets, social and economic processes, wealth, social and health services, power relations, cultural practices, religious institutions, beliefs and practices. Social environments are dynamic and change over time as a result of both internal and external factors. People in the same social environment often develop a sense of social solidarity, have social cohesion and congregate in social groups in which they help one another create economic benefits/value (social capital). They often think in similar styles and patterns even when their conclusions differ. The social environment subsumes many aspects of the physical environment, given that landscapes, water resources and other natural resources have been at least partially configured by human social processes. Historical social and power relations that have become institutionalized over time are embedded in social environments, which can be experienced in households, neighborhoods and in the context of chronic conflict, IDP camps.

### Adaptive Strategies

- Communities that formed groups had easier access to services such as credit than individuals. This social capital also enabled them to set up small microfinance businesses such as SACCOs.

*What I see as a good practice is that people were sensitized to form groups so that if there is any assistance, they would give it to the groups, since it is very hard to give it to individuals.* (Focus group participant, Agoro Sub-county, Lamwo District)

*We have formed village savings and credit (Boli cup).* (Focus group participant, Ogor sub-county, Lira District)

*The most used one is called a village savings and loan association. Those who are committed to join a group use it.* (Key informant, Pader Sub-county, Pader District)

### Coping Strategies

- Acceptance of the camp life required a change in mind set and eventual adaptation.

*I was in the camp, left the camp and came home. One thing is that people accepted the situation and lived with it because in the Acholi culture, people used not to live in camps.* (Focus group participant, Agoro Sub-county, Lamwo District)



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- People who returned from the camps faced increased poverty. Most people have not yet gone back to the situations they lived in before they lived in the camps.
- Some people reported prostitution in return for material gains including food as a coping strategy for survival after the conflict, a practice that is likely to increase the spread of HIV.

*Another method used is that women are exchanging sex for things, like someone has a sack of beans and she will give him sex in exchange for the beans, which is not good.*  
(Focus group participant, Aromo sub-county, Lira District)

### Vulnerability Factors

- The social environment created during encampment has led to increased high-risk sexual behaviors such as prostitution, rape and early marriages, along with the spread of STDS including HIV.

*People are now promiscuous and are getting drunk.* (Focus group participant, Aromo Sub-county, Lira District)

*What happened severely during the war was the spread of HIV/AIDS. When people were brought to the camp, they mixed, and HIV started spreading at a very high rate and is still continuing among the youth and married as well.* (Focus group participant, Agoro Sub-county, Lamwo District)

### Causes and Effects

- Insurgencies resulted in displacement, encampment of people and erosion of social institutions such as traditional marriage customs, disruption of marriages and increased family separations.

*The conflict is the biggest shock we have experienced. It has led to so many women separating from their men because of the living conditions in the camp.* (Female focus group participant, Aromo sub-county, Lira District)

*In Lango previously marriage was consented and asked for from the girl's home, but when we were in the camps, girls would just elope without the parents consenting.*  
(Focus group participant Aromo Sub-county, Lira District)

- Usurping of cultural leaders' power resulted in disempowered elders incapable of bringing unity and social cohesion to the community.

*If you are to compare life before, during and after encampment, there is so much difference. During the war, our elders lost their property, and when they came to the camps they became dependents due to handouts they were receiving. So now properties are mostly in the hands of the youth, to the extent that they now even elect*



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*a youth to be the clan leader. So now it is the contrary where the elders now have to respect the young people. (Focus group participant, Agoro Sub-county, Lamwo District)*

*Even respect has gone down. The Acholi culture has deteriorated so badly that the young people do not respect the elders and vice versa. As soon as people went to camp, people's life changed. The young people do not want to get advice from the elders. (FGD participant, Agoro Sub-county, Lamwo District)*



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## CHAPTER SIX: CONTEXT-SPECIFIC RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the findings of the qualitative resilience assessment conducted in northern Uganda.

### 6.1 Inter-dimensional Concurrence

We determined the dimensional concurrences to explain inter-dimensional concurrences among each dimension and which dimensions relate with most other dimensions. The respective code concurrences are presented in the table below:

**Table 3. Dimension by dimension code concurrence**

Resilience dimension	Wealth	Agriculture	Health	Governance	Human Capital	Infrastructure	Psychosocial Wellbeing	Social Environment /Social Networks	Total
Wealth		13	20	13	17	15	21	6	108
Agriculture	13		7	7	3	8	7	5	52
Health	20	7		9	12	17	18	7	93
Governance	13	7	9		5	14	18	8	76
Human Capital	17	3	12	5		9	17	9	72
Infrastructure	15	8	17	14	9		15	7	87
Psychosocial Wellbeing	21	7	18	18	17	15		14	116
Social Environment /Social Networks	6	5	7	8	9	7	14		59



The table above shows the number of quotes from the transcripts coded under different dimensions. The total represents a sum of all occurrences that a quote is shared between different dimensions. The number in each cell shows the total quotes that are shared between two dimensions. For instance, in this context, Psychosocial, Wealth and Health recorded the highest code co-occurrences with 116, 108 and 93 respectively. Social networks and Agriculture recorded the lowest code concurrences with 59 and 52 respectively.

## 6.2 Concurrence by relationship hierarchy (Analysis framework points)

After determining the dimensional concurrences, we determined the concurrence of codes within different dimensions appearing as causes, effects, suggested solutions, vulnerabilities or adaptation in the analysis framework as illustrated below.

**Table 4. Relationship hierarchy concurrence**

Resilience dimension	Causes	Effects	Suggested solutions	Vulnerabilities	Adaptation	Total
Wealth	10	74	8	27	20	149
Agriculture	0	9	8	32	6	55
Health	2	90	19	7	13	131
Governance	12	61	21	0	8	102
Human Capital	6	3	19	28	8	64
Infrastructure	0	18	2	31	2	210
Psychosocial Wellbeing	6	72	8	39	24	149
Social Environment/Social Networks	3	22	11	31	51	118

In this context, participants identified Psychosocial, Wealth and Health as the ultimate outcomes with Psychosocial, wealth and health registering 72, 74 and 90 code concurrences as effects respectively. Similarly, participants highlighted governance as the underlying cause of

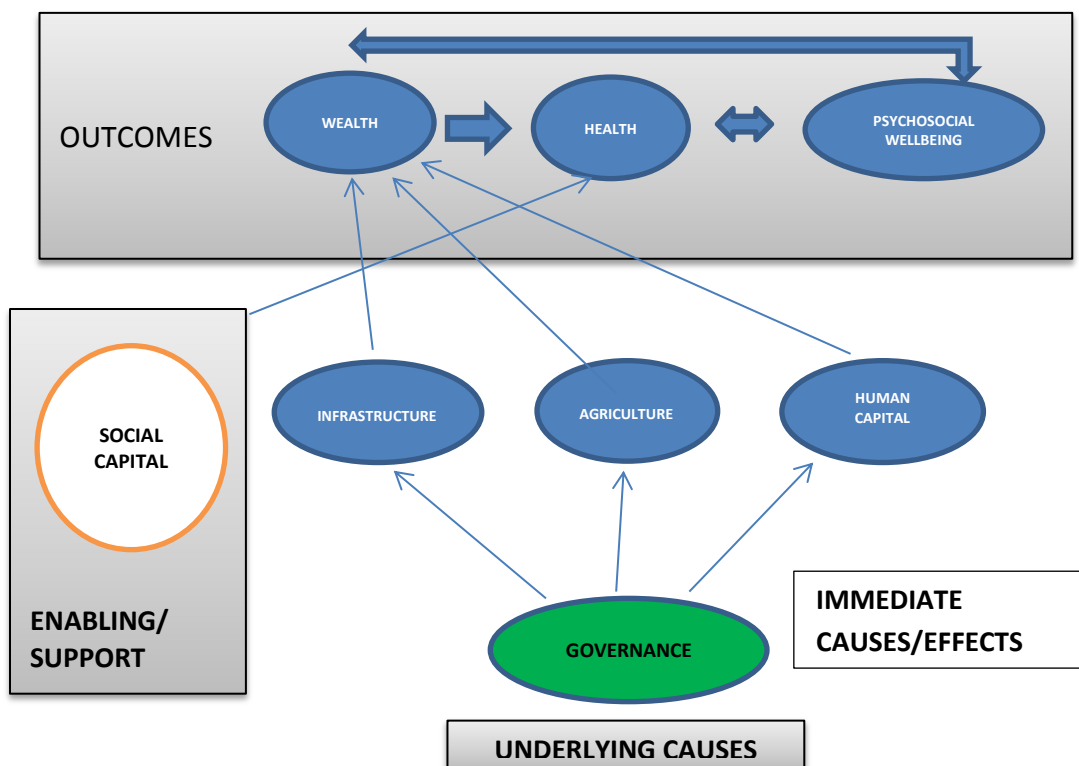


vulnerability with 12 code concurrences as indicated in the above table. Social networks were identified as drivers of adaptation in the region with 51 code concurrences.

### 6.3 Relationships among Resilience Dimensions and Probable Entry Points

Based on the relationships on code concurrences described above, the relationships emerge as in Figure 1.

**Figure 2. Resilience framework for chronic conflict in Pader, Lamwo and Lira districts, northern Uganda**





## 6.4 Description of relationships and Probable Intervention Entry Points

The framework highlights that three key dimensions (Psychosocial Wellbeing, Wealth and Health) appeared to be at the outcome level. This is not surprising for a community that had been hit by a long-standing conflict. In this context, alternative livelihoods, psychosocial support and improved health services were identified as important parameters to achieve fast recovery after conflict. In order for this community to realize the desired outcomes, there is a need to invest in infrastructure, improve the agricultural sector and invest in human capital, as shown by the linkages in the framework. The key enabling factor in this context appears to be Social Networks/Social Capital and establishing a social environment characterized by sharing experience with trusted friends, forming support groups, harnessing cultural practices and actively engaging religious institutions in promoting reconciliation.

In the context of northern Uganda, the conflict had severe impacts on socio-economic and livelihoods resilience and resulted in a breakdown in social-cultural networks and value systems; an increase in sexual and gender-based violence; an increase in psychological disorders including PTSD, suicide and despair; poverty; food insecurity; breakdown in infrastructure; health effects such as increased prevalence of HIV and a decline of health systems; limited engagement in productive agriculture and other social services; and land disputes.

Because this community currently depends on subsistence agriculture for survival, with limited diversification, strengthening resilience requires 1) diversified wealth creation activities to improve household incomes, 2) investment in infrastructure, especially roads, electricity and housing and 3) high-level investment in agriculture with an emphasis on value addition, increased yields and markets for agricultural produce. Investment in these three areas (infrastructure, agriculture and wealth) can build on existing social networks (such as women's groups, saving groups, cultural institutions and religious institutions) to maximize impact. Designing interventions at these entry points not only helps to achieve the outcome of Wealth but also builds resilience to the effects of the chronic conflict.

The data from this assessment show that the underlying driver of the slow pace of post-conflict recovery in northern Uganda is Governance. The governance-related issues cited in this community were corruption, land disputes and lack of access to social services. Communities reported that a high level of corruption at all levels of government, especially in settling land disputes, caused divisions among the local people. This has exacerbated the community's capacity to recover after the conflict and has had a direct bearing on wealth and livelihood. The





communities surveyed are dependent on agriculture and therefore any loss of land can be devastating.





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