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Key points

- Conflict has long-term and intergenerational impacts on well-being and livelihoods
- Education supports resilience and helps prevent declines into chronic poverty during and following conflict
- Universal policies are not enough to address regional imbalances post-conflict

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Conflict, education and the intergenerational transmission of poverty in Northern Uganda

Kate Bird and Kate Higgins

There is growing interest in fragile states and contexts in development policy, and a growing literature on the impact of conflict and instability on development and poverty reduction. Much of the focus is on the immediate impact of conflict on people's safety and livelihoods. But what about the long-run, or intergenerational, impact of conflict?

A research project conducted recently by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC), titled *Conflict, Education and the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty in Northern Uganda*, explores the role of education in supporting resilience and, in turn, poverty trajectories. The aim is to understand the long-run impact of conflict on the intergenerational transmission (IGT) of poverty.

This brief synthesises the progress of the study to date, the conceptual framework, the methodology adopted and preliminary findings and recommendations. We hope to generate discussion, debate and interest in the work and in the long-term impact of conflict more broadly in Northern Uganda and other fragile contexts.

Conceptual framework

IGT poverty is the transmission of poverty from one generation to another. Such poverty is not transferred as a 'package', but as a complex set of positive and negative factors that affect an individual's chances of experiencing poverty, either in the present or at some point in their lives. These include both 'private' transmission of capital and 'public' transfer of resources from one generation to the next (e.g. through taxing the income of older generations to pay for the primary education system). These can be positive (cash, assets, positive aspirations) or negative (bonded labour, poor nutrition, gender discrimination) (Moore, 2005).

Evidence shows that certain household,

and extra-household, factors can increase or decrease the risk of IGT poverty. Household factors include: household characteristics; access to productive assets; quality of parenting and socialisation; early exposure to violence; fostering, adoption and orphanhood; child-headed households; role of older people; early child-bearing; education and skills acquisition; and child labour. Extra-household factors include: conflict; cultural and psychological factors; class and caste; religion; ethnicity; economic and political structures; institutions and opportunities (Bird, 2007).

Resilience is critical to preventing the IGT of poverty. Resilience refers to a household's ability to 'bounce back' from shocks, measured by bringing income and consumption back to pre-shock levels in a given time period, without seriously compromising well-being or using adverse forms of coping. Households' ability to cope depends largely on access to and control of assets, including social networks; their own capabilities; and also the economic, political and social context and policy environment (ibid). The extent to which household and extra-household factors affect the poverty status of a household will be determined largely by its level of resilience.

This study links conflict (an extra-household factor), education (spanning the household and extra-household realms) and IGT poverty, with a particular focus on the extent to which education supports resilience.

Conflict and insecurity in Northern Uganda

Uganda has made significant development progress over the past two decades. The national poverty rate declined to 31% for 2005/06, from 56% in 1992/93 and 38% in 2002/03. Adult prevalence of HIV/AIDS has

Table 1: Welfare and education indicators by region in Uganda

	Welfare indicators				Education quality indicators			
	Poverty 2005/06 (%)	Annual average population growth (1991-2006) (%)	Fertility (births per woman, 2000)	Dwelling type – hut (2005-2006) (%)	Pupil: teacher ratio (2004)	Pupil: classroom ratio (2004)	Schooling status – no formal schools (15+ years) (%) (2005-2006)	Literacy (18+ years) (%) (2005-2006)
Central	16.4	2.6	5.7	3	43	63	13	80
East	35.9	3.5	7.4	31	55	90	20	61
North	60.7	4.2	7.9	68	58	92	27	59
West	20.5	2.8	6.9	3	49	73	26	66
National	31.1	3.2	–	22	50	79	20	69

Source: Regional Forecasts (2007).

declined significantly, from around 18% in the early 1990s to 6.4% in 2005, and primary net enrolment rates increased from 62.3% in 1992 to 92% for girls and 94% for boys in 2006 (World Bank, 2007).

These improvements have not been experienced uniformly across the country. Table 1 shows how the Northern region has lagged behind, particularly on education. Lacklustre progress in the North stems from a vicious cycle of conflict and massive displacement, which has thwarted economic activity and undermined service delivery. Conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) displaced up to 1.8 million people in the 1990s and early 2000s, in some places for several years. The Karamojong cattle raids, which began in the late 1960s, continue to cause insecurity.

Research hypotheses and methodology

This study was structured around three hypotheses:

- Conflict and insecurity in Northern Uganda have resulted in limited livelihood options and deep income poverty.
- Education is a 'portable' asset that helps people stay out of poverty during conflict and supports 'bounce-back' post-conflict (resilience).
- Government and non-government education policies and programmes fail to address the education needs of conflict- and insecurity-affected populations.

The study was based on an iterative Q-squared (combined quantitative and qualitative) approach. The qualitative component draws on fieldwork in communities in Pader and Kaberamaido districts, where conflict and insecurity have displaced many people and forced a significant proportion into poverty. The quantitative component draws on the Northern Uganda Baseline Survey.

Pader has been badly affected by the conflict between the government and the LRA over an extended period, as well as Karamojong raids. At one

point, over 90% of the population was displaced, and many still live in internally displaced person (IDP) camps, illustrating slower resettlements than in other districts in Northern Uganda. Here, qualitative research was conducted in two sites: Ongalo satellite camp, a community of approximately 1,555 people, made up of seven villages displaced through the LRA insurgency; and Lapaya satellite camp, comprising approximately 217 people, most of whom had moved from the 'mother camp' in Atanga in early 2008.

Kaberamaido is one of the poorest districts in Teso sub-region and has been affected by multiple insecurities since Independence in 1962. Qualitative research was conducted in Omid Amoru village in Anyara sub-county, which comprised 240 households (approximately 635 people). Most households returned from IDP camps in 2006.

In all sites, life history methods, participatory learning and action (PLA) methods and focus group discussions were used to explore long-term impact of conflict on poverty and the role that education had played in supporting resilience. Life history interviews ensured that the research revealed changes in poverty status over time. These were complemented by stakeholder consultation, and key informant interviews with government, donor and civil society representatives at district level and in the capital, Kampala.

Preliminary findings

Hypothesis 1: Conflict and insecurity in Northern Uganda have resulted in limited livelihood options and deep income poverty.

Populations at the study sites experienced repeated conflict- and insecurity-related shocks that overlaid 'conventional' shocks, such as health shocks (i.e. injury and illness) and climatic shocks (i.e. floods, drought and famine). These led to internal displacement, death, rape, injury and hunger. They also drove people deep into poverty, limited livelihood options, stripped people of assets (i.e. cattle) and resulted

Figure 1: Life history map of man from Lapaya, Pader

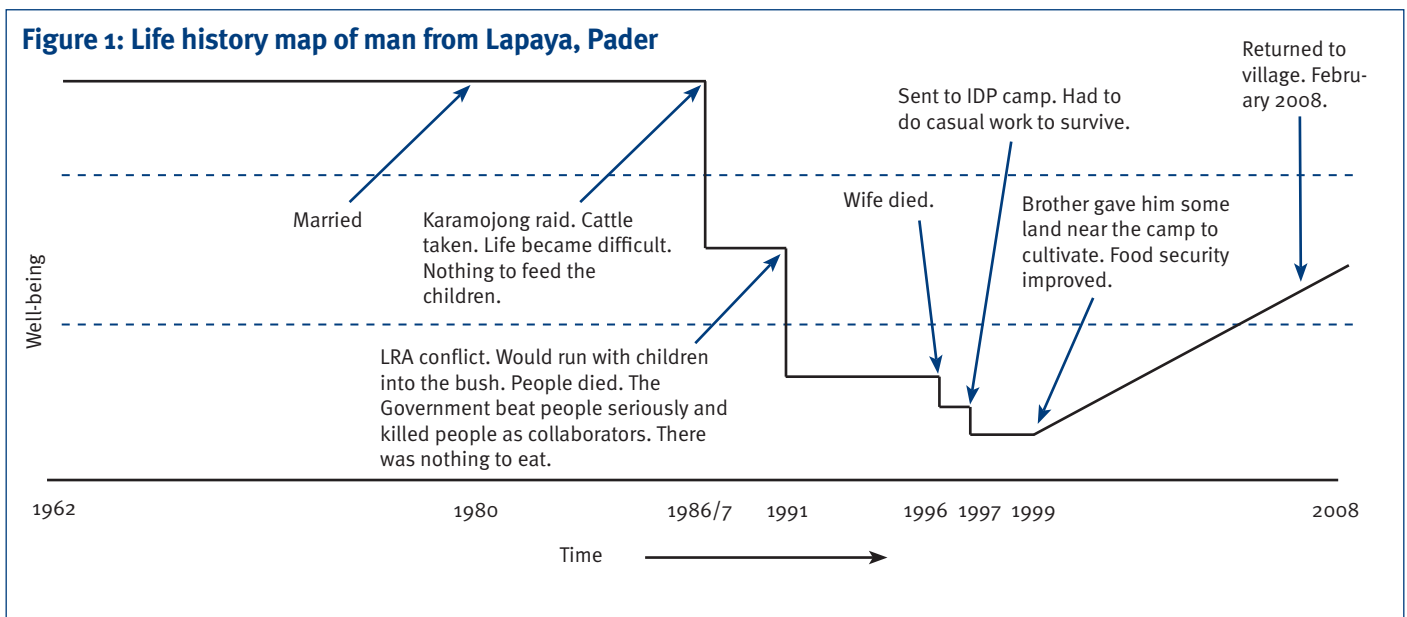


Table 2: Most serious shocks experienced by households in Northern Uganda

Shock	%
Conflict shocks	44.19
Drought and other adverse weather conditions	27.94
Other shock	9.38
High unplanned expenses	6.55
No shock experienced	5.22
Loss of cash income	4.6
Other harvest losses	1.43
Loss of livestock, food stocks, house or household assets	0.68
Total	100

Source: Northern Uganda Baseline Survey (2004).

in poor levels of service delivery. Table 2 shows the shocks experienced by households in Northern Uganda. Figure 1 shows the life of one man from Lapaya, in Pader. Note the downward trajectory of his well-being since the first cattle raid in 1986/87.

Hypothesis 2: Education is a ‘portable’ asset.

The research found that education is an asset that supports resilience. Educated respondents reported that their lives were ‘easier’ than for those without education, because education gave them an ability to plan and interact with authorities more easily (e.g. write letters). They were also more able to draw on social networks; diversify their livelihood strategies; and travel, trade (using their numeracy) and take on leadership roles. They gained greater returns from both labour and agricultural livelihoods. Their exposure to education and its benefits meant that they

saw the value of education and were more likely to strive to educate their own children. The qualitative research indicated a strong demand for education from both parents and youth, based on their observation of people who had had education as ‘winners’ – people who had an easier life and who were more able to escape poverty. One community member from Omid Amoru said:

‘When you’re educated, you can learn ways to improve your standard of living by having more projects such as buying livestock ... unlike the uneducated, who fear to explore most of the things’.

Another community member said:

‘The educated lead an easier life because they are able to cope with the loss of livestock by opting for other businesses ... Others find it hard to cope without their animals, with some resorting to committing suicide, but the educated coped easily.’

Interestingly, our respondents were very clear that people who stopped school at the end of their primary education did not necessarily gain better employment opportunities than those who did not go to school at all, or who had only one or two years of schooling. There was consensus that paid employment depended on individuals having a minimum of four years of secondary education. However, parents in conflict-affected communities have limited capability to pay for secondary education because of disrupted livelihoods, reduced livestock holdings (through cattle raiding) and destruction of assets.

Hypothesis 3: Government and non-government education policies and programmes fail to address the education needs of conflict- and insecurity-affected populations.

The study found high levels of school enrolment, thanks to Uganda’s Universal Primary Education (UPE), but low education quality and primary school

completion rates. For example, 47 of 238 primary schools in Pader are still under trees, and there is limited teacher accommodation (resulting in high levels of teacher absenteeism). In Ongalo, only one person had completed secondary school over the past 30 years. In Kaberamaido, the average primary school teacher to student ratio is 1:200.

Education service provision, and education retention, is poor for a range of reasons. Funding is inadequate and unpredictable. Service providers are struggling with the slow rebuilding of public infrastructure following the long conflict. It is hard to recruit and retain staff, particularly women, in conflict-affected districts. In Anyara sub-county in Kaberamaido, only 12 of 70 teachers are female. Learning outcomes are further compromised by household challenges faced by students and their families – income constraints, farming demands, childcare needs and ill health, for example. In addition, schools have not responded adequately to the ‘missing generation’ of children and youth, who missed months or years of school as a result of conflict and insecurity.

Preliminary policy implications

Some preliminary policy implications emerge:

- **Conflict has long-term impacts on well-being and livelihoods.** In protracted crisis, humanitarian support needs to be complemented by efforts to maintain and build assets and capabilities to prevent long-term, intergenerational slides into chronic poverty.
- **Policy and programmatic responses to conflict may need to use decades, rather than months or years, as their historical unit of analysis.** The findings indicate that the impacts of the Karamojong raids are still being felt, and the LRA insurgency was just another conflict – among a series of conflicts/insecurities – experienced by households. So policies and programmes need to consider history and context, not only responding to current or recent conflicts but also thinking in terms of the series of conflicts and insecurities that have affected communities.
- **Education is a ‘portable’ asset that supports**

resilience and helps prevent declines into chronic poverty during and following conflict. Education therefore needs to be delivered effectively in insecure, conflict and post-conflict contexts.

- **The transition from humanitarian relief to ‘sustainable development’ is difficult.** Low levels of government capacity and reach in conflict-affected communities makes it difficult to transfer service delivery responsibility from humanitarian agencies to local government. Government and donors need to support capacity building and strengthening of local government. The transition needs to be closely monitored to limit gaps in service provision and resulting falls in well-being.
- **Universality of service provision will not address interregional imbalances.** In primary education, for example, conflict-affected communities in Uganda need more than UPE to catch up with their counterparts elsewhere in the country. Tailored programmes that could help to ‘level the playing field’ in education could include:
 - **Conditional cash transfers** and the maintenance of **school feeding programmes** to help parents keep children at school.
 - **Improved infrastructure** (school facilities, school materials and teacher accommodation) to improve teacher retention and teaching quality.
 - The rapid roll out of **Universal Secondary Education**, and accompanying merit-based bursaries, so that children from poor households can continue their education.
 - **Demand-led technical training, basic and non-formal education**, particularly for the ‘missing generation’ of children and youth, based on existing good models (e.g. Norwegian Refugee Council).
- **Support security and peace building.** There is a high perception of ongoing risk. As one respondent said, ‘the LRA are still in the bush and the Karamojong still have guns’.
- **The window of opportunity is now.** If it is missed and the North remains politically, economically and socially marginalised, conflict could re-emerge. Uganda’s Peace Recovery and Development Plan has a critical role to play and needs to be effectively designed and implemented.



Overseas Development
Institute

111 Westminster Bridge
Road, London SE1 7JD

Tel +44 (0)20 7922 0300

Fax +44 (0)20 7922 0399

Email
publications@odi.org.uk

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For information: Kate Bird, ODI Research Fellow (k.bird@odi.org.uk) and Kate Higgins, ODI Research Officer (k.higgins@odi.org.uk).