



Researching livelihoods and services affected by conflict

# Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium Uganda Research Programme

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# About us

SLRC is a six year global research programme exploring livelihoods, basic services and social protection in conflict situations. Funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), Irish Aid and EC, SLRC was established in 2011 with the aim of strengthening the evidence base and informing policy and practice around livelihoods and services in conflict.

SLRC is undertaking research in eight countries, including Uganda, South Sudan, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The Uganda research programme is led by [Feinstein International Center](#), based at Tufts University, USA, in collaboration with ODI and two Ugandan organizations, the African Youth Initiative Network ([AYINET](#)) and the Women's Rural Development Network ([WORUDET](#)).

## What is the focus of SLRC's Uganda research programme?

The Greater North of Uganda is home to millions of conflict-affected individuals who have suffered serious crimes and resulting harms as a result of the protracted conflict between the Government of Uganda (GoU) and several armed opposition groups, most notably the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Under international and Ugandan law, people who have suffered serious crimes have a right to remedy and reparation, and recent studies find that their priorities cover a range of issues, including: accountability; physical and mental health services; education; housing recovery; land; public acknowledgement of harm and apologies; information on the 'disappeared'; and proper treatment of the dead. The legitimacy of the state, in terms of both its acknowledgment of responsibility

(commission or omission) for harms suffered and its efforts to address survivors' needs and priorities, is a central concern for current and future recovery.

Yet how are households in northern Uganda recovering from years of armed conflict and its effects, and what does that recovery look like? How are they rebuilding their lives and livelihoods; what enables and constrains recovery? Do households that have suffered serious crimes and harms face additional challenges to their recovery? If so, what are those challenges, and how can they be overcome? What services best enable households, including those who have suffered serious crimes and harms, to recover their lives and livelihoods? These are the key questions driving our research agenda in Uganda.

The SLRC Uganda research programme will focus on both: a) persons, households and communities who have suffered serious violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law; and b) broader conflict-affected households and communities, through the following three core research themes:

- 1 (Re)Building state-society relations through effective programming: How do war victims experience and perceive the Ugandan state?**

Looking at individuals and households that have experienced serious crimes as well as the broader conflict-affected population, research will focus on people's expectations and experiences of the state, both in terms of legitimacy and capacity to provide access to services and of which services they prioritize for the rebuilding of their lives and livelihoods.

- What are the serious crimes that people

have suffered and what are the effects of the resulting harms on the victims and their families? What are the significant differences among people who have suffered different forms of serious crimes and harms?

- Is there overlap between a) the priorities and actual programmes of the GoU in rebuilding the war-affected areas of the Greater North of Uganda, and b) the priorities and needs of conflict-affected populations in general and the citizens who suffered serious crimes and violations in particular?
- How does this overlap, or lack thereof, affect the citizen/state relationship and citizens' views of the capacity and intentions of the state?

## 2 Informing engagement: Mechanisms and arrangements for better service delivery in Northern Uganda

Victims of serious crimes' access to services to address the effects of those crimes is a right under both international and Ugandan law. Our research seeks to document and analyse the extent to which persons who have suffered serious crimes have access to the necessary services; if not, why; if so, who provides them? We will compare their priorities and access to other conflict-affected populations that have not been subjected to serious crimes.

- Are the services that are prioritised by households that have experienced serious crimes available and accessible to them? What key factors influence access to services? How do ethnicity, gender and generation affect access?
- How do the experiences of broader war-affected populations around these questions compare with those of community members who have suffered serious crimes?

- If services are not available and/or accessible, how does this affect these households' ability to recover, their relationship with the state, and their views of its capacity and intentions?
  - If services are available, who provides them? How effective are local, national, and international aid actors at working with the government to provide services? How is the citizen-state relationship affected if the service provider is a non-state or international actor?
- ## 3 Tracking changes: What are the enabling and constraining factors that determine livelihood change over time?

Although there have been large-scale projects designed to aid recovery in northern Uganda, these tend to emphasise infrastructure reconstruction rather than people's livelihoods and physical and psychosocial wellbeing. Many indicators suggest that people in Acholi and Lango subregions are still badly affected by the consequences of the war. Our research aims to carefully document the trajectory of livelihoods change at the local level, by both analysing enabling and constraining factors and highlighting 'what works.'

- What was the extent of asset loss from a period before, during, and after displacement, up to the present?
- How are people rebuilding their livelihoods in the aftermath of the war?
- What are the major institutional enablers and constraints, and how do they affect



people at the local level?

- How are livelihoods changing over time in Acholi and Lango, in terms of assets, strategies, and outcomes?
- To what degree do externally funded programmes assist households, how are they targeted, and what do they emphasize?
- How does the trajectory of livelihoods recovery among those who suffered serious crimes and violations compare with other groups?

### How will we carry out the research?

A quantitative and longitudinal survey will be carried out in 2012 and again in 2015, while more in-depth qualitative work will be the focus in 2013 and 2014. We will work in the Acholi and Lango subregions.

### What will be done with the research?

At the national level, this study aims to help bring about positive changes in peoples' lives and livelihoods by documenting the trajectory of livelihoods change at the local level, analysing enabling and constraining factors, understanding 'what works,' and effectively communicating our findings for uptake at the policy level. The team will cultivate partnerships with the GoU, donors, and agencies working in Uganda to understand their constraints and needs for information, and ensuring that information generated by the study quickly finds practical application. We also aim to contribute to sustained local research capacity by maximising collaboration with local institutions. We ultimately hope to see the provision of services that meet the needs and

priorities of the war-affected north, and in particular persons and households that have suffered serious crimes.

At the international level, we hope to see our research, in conjunction with the larger SLRC project, make a significant contribution to knowledge about how people recover after conflict and how they survive and move beyond seemingly impossible situations. We also intend to make a major contribution to understanding how serious crimes and resulting harms affect people's ability to rebuild their lives and livelihoods, and the kinds of services necessary to support such recovery. Finally, we plan to contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of how the state fails or makes strides forward in rebuilding the citizen/state relationship that is often badly damaged during wartime.



To find out more...

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