



Introduction

Written by Lindsay McClain Opiyo.

Photograph: Members of the Women's Advocacy Network (WAN) pose in Awach, 2015.

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On 15 September 2015, the Women's Advocacy Network (WAN) at the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) convened a round-table meeting between 24 local government officials and 16 WAN members. The purpose of the meeting was to explore opportunities for war-affected women to benefit from existing and proposed government programmes as an interim avenue for redress for conflict-related wrongs they experienced during northern Uganda's longstanding conflicts. The meeting was attended by sub-county chiefs, community development officers (CDOs), district community development officers (DCDOs), chief administrative officers (CAOs) and district speakers from Adjumani district in the West Nile sub-region; Gulu, Amuru, Pader and Nwoya districts in Acholi sub-region; and Lira district in Lango sub-region.

The meeting was supported with funding from the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), through a grant from the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women as well as the Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE), Kampala. The objectives of the meeting were to share findings of a recent needs assessment survey conducted by JRP; to explore opportunities for war-affected women under current and proposed government programmes; and to facilitate discussion between war-affected women and their leaders on matters of justice, reconciliation and redress.

The following policy brief draws upon the discussions and recommendations that emerged from the meeting and seeks to inform local governments across Uganda on the avenues through which they can work within their existing mandates to better meet the unredressed justice needs of war-affected women through targeted development assistance. It is divided into four sections: **a background on transitional justice (TJ)** including the major development programmes in the country, conflict sexual violence and the advocacy of the WAN at JRP; **the needs and challenges facing war-affected women** in northern Uganda; **gaps, challenges and opportunities for local governments** in meeting these needs and challenges; and **practical recommendations** for local and national government officials, war-affected women and civil society organisations.

Background

Nearly ten years ago, the Government of Uganda (GoU) and Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) signed a cessation of hostilities agreement, ushering in a period of relative peace and security in northern Uganda that continues today. Although the parties never signed the final peace agreement, they did sign several of its constitutive agreements, including the Agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation, which created a blueprint for transitional justice (TJ) in the country.¹

The majority of the more than 1.8 million people who were forcibly displaced and living in internally-displaced persons (IDP) camps have returned to their homes, while most of those who were in the captivity of the rebels have either escaped or were rescued.² At a policy-level, the GoU mandated the Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS) to oversee matters of TJ. Following a series of consultations with victims, affected communities, civil society, other government institutions and international experts, JLOS developed a national TJ policy in 2013, which is currently in its sixth draft and has been awaiting approval by the country's Cabinet for more than a year.³

Due to the delays in the TJ policy and operationalising the majority of mechanisms therein,⁴ there is increasing discussion among civil society and the GoU on how TJ

and development can contribute to redress and recovery in complementary ways, and how existing development programmes can deliver interim, targeted relief to victims of conflict.

Without doubt, the distinction between development and reparations must remain clear--namely that reparations are "redress for systematic violations of human rights,"⁵ whereas development is "the process by which a society increases the general and individual prosperity and welfare of its citizens"⁶--and development can never replace nor substitute victims' rights to reparations. However, "there is growing acknowledgement of the need for development practitioners and transitional justice practitioners to link their efforts if they are to deliver effectively on the twin outcomes of justice and recovery."⁷

Existing and anticipated development programmes

In conflict-affected northern Uganda, the GoU currently implements a number of development programmes which are largely administered through its decentralised structure by district and sub-county officials and institutions. The following table provides a brief overview of the major existing and expected government development programmes in the affected regions of greater northern Uganda.

	Programme name	Description
1	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP)	The PRDP was initiated in 2009 and has consisted of two three-year installments. It aims to "stabilis[e] the northern regions in order to consolidate peace and thereby lay the foundations for recovery and development." [*] A major criticism of the PRDP I and II has been that they have focused on infrastructure development, rather than social repair and recovery. The PRDP III is anticipated to commence by the end of 2015.
2	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF)	Since 2003, NUSAF has sought to "enhanc[e] the capacities of communities in northern Uganda and mak[e] local governments more accountable to community demands." ^{**} It is anticipated that The third phase of the project is expected to commence in December 2015.
3	Operation Wealth Creation (OWC)	OWC is a development programme that seeks to raise household incomes across the country through commercial agricultural production. It commenced in 2013 and is administered by the Ugandan military.
4	Community-Driven Development (CDD)	CDD is an initiative by the Ministry of Local Government that seeks to "develop mechanisms for supporting community level activities that improve governance and investment." ^{***} It provides small grants to community-based groups to implement livelihoods projects.
5	Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP)	YLP is implemented under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and provides loans of up to 12.5 million Ugandan shillings to youth interest groups. It commenced in 2013 and is slated to disperse 265 billion Ugandan shillings in revolving funds over five years.

* <http://opm.go.ug/assets/media/resources/23/Recovery%20and%20Development%20Plan%20for%20Northern%20Uganda.pdf>, p. 1.

** <http://opm.go.ug/projects/northern-uganda-social-action-fund-ii-nusaf-ii1.html>

*** http://citione.net/www/cdd.molg/?page_id=114

Table 1. Major existing and anticipated development programmes in northern Uganda

1 According to ICTJ, "Transitional justice refers to the set of judicial and non-judicial measures that have been implemented by different countries in order to redress the legacies of massive human rights abuses. These measures include criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programs, and various kinds of institutional reforms." (<https://www.ictj.org/about/transitional-justice>)

2 According to the LRA Crisis Tracker, there are approximately 150 combatants in the LRA as of 2014 data. (<http://reports.lracrisistracker.com/en/state-of-the-lra-2015/>)

3 The policy outlines how processes for formal justice, reparations, truth-telling, traditional justice and amnesty will provide holistic redress to conflict victims.

4 Uganda currently has a blanket amnesty in place through the Amnesty Act, and a special division of the High Court, the International Crimes Division (ICD), which can try conflict-related crimes such as crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide.

5 <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2012/10/06A-Development-Gender.pdf>, p. 5.

6 <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Development-Reparations-ResearchBrief-2009-English.pdf>, p. 1.

7 <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2012/10/06A-Development-Gender.pdf>, p. 4.

“I encourage us to go back and do what we have said... I want to thank my sisters. When I met you people in the morning, I was so weak, but now I am strong because you have shown me that even when you walked through fire you can still remain strong.”⁸

During northern Uganda’s longstanding conflicts, state and non-state armed actors committed gross human rights violations against the civilian population, including abduction, killing, torture, and destruction of property and livestock. Many of the violations were gendered, with men and boys, women and girls, being targeted on the basis of their sex and gender. Women and girls disproportionately suffered sexual violations, such as rape, genital mutilation, sexual exploitation and forced marriage and pregnancy. Survivors of such violations continue to face grave consequences, due to the physical, psychological, economic and social repercussions of sexual violence in the setting, to be explored in the subsequent section on needs and challenges facing war-affected women.

In 2012, JRP, a Ugandan non-governmental organisation that works for justice and reconciliation with grassroots communities, launched the WAN with the aim of empowering female survivors to participate in post-conflict policy debates and to engage communities in gendered discussions on reintegration and reconciliation. Today, the WAN is a forum representing nearly 600 women from 16 grassroots women’s groups from across greater northern Uganda who come together to advocate for justice, acknowledgment and accountability for the gender-based violations inflicted upon them during war in northern Uganda. Approximately 69% of WAN members are formerly-abducted, while others experienced other forms of violence from home or during the course of displacement.

From 2013-2014, the WAN drafted and presented a petition to the Parliament of Uganda through the Gulu District Local Government (GDLG), the Acholi Parliamentary Group (APG) and the Uganda Women’s Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), seeking parliamentary intervention in addressing the issues women face as a result of northern Uganda’s longstanding conflicts. This prompted

⁸ Female district official from Pader, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

the tabling of a motion on the plight of those affected, and subsequently the adoption of a resolution by parliament to this effect on 9 April 2014. This parliamentary resolution urges the GoU to address the issues raised by the women, such as the establishment of a gender-sensitive reparations fund; “priority in livelihood, health care, skills training and education for women/children victims;” increased “budgetary provision for free health services;” and integration of stateless children, such as those born in captivity of the LRA.⁹

However, since the passing of the resolution, few concrete steps have been taken by the GoU to implement these recommendations. Therefore, from April to July 2015, JRP conducted a needs assessment with 566 members of the WAN to determine and quantify the current needs and challenges of its members, so as to inform recovery interventions. The following section summarizes these findings.

Needs and challenges of war-affected women

Despite the relative peace and security in northern Uganda following the Juba peace process, war-affected women continue to face a number of challenges today related to their conflict experiences. In a JRP survey administered in 2014, 93% of participating WAN members reported experiencing ongoing revictimisation related to their past.¹⁰ This revictimisation can be classified as follows:

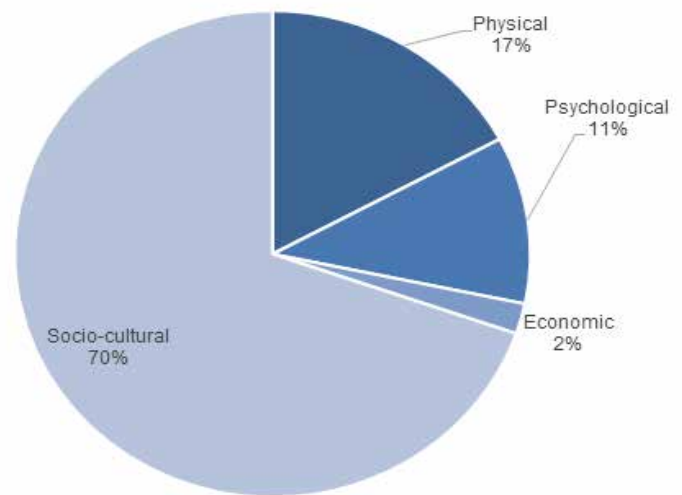


Figure 1. Types of revictimisation experienced by war-affected women in northern Uganda

- Physical revictimisation includes (marital) rape and domestic violence;
- Psychological revictimisation includes fear and trauma;
- Economic revictimisation includes poverty and sexual exploitation;
- Socio-cultural revictimisation includes rejection, stigma, and discrimination from spouses, other relatives and community members.

⁹ Motion for a Resolution of Parliament on the Plight of Persons Affected by the Lord’s Resistance Army Resolution, 2014.
¹⁰ <http://justiceandreconciliation.com/publications/reports/2014/establishing-the-extent-of-sgbv-revictimsation-among-female-survivors-of-conflict-sgbv-in-northern-uganda/>, p. 3

During the aforementioned round-table meeting with local government officials, WAN members narrated the challenges they are facing, placing particular emphasis on the compounding consequences of bearing and caring for children conceived as a result of conflict sexual violence by state or non-state armed actors, what JRP has termed “children born of war” (CBW). They face difficulties meeting their, and their children’s, basic needs, including education, food and medical care. Ongoing stigma and rejection stemming from incomplete (re)integration are widely reported, with one WAN member from Amuru saying, “*In the community, sometimes, they don’t value your views. They see as if you have nothing in your mind.*”¹¹

For those with children born in captivity of the LRA (CBC), the children’s paternal identity is of major concern, given the patriarchal structure of society in which a child inherits land and other resources from his or her paternal clan. Some WAN members have received support from JRP for family-tracing and reunification.

In JRP’s recent needs assessment survey with WAN members, livelihoods projects ranked as the most widely-held need at 87%, followed by animal restocking and bursaries for CBW at 84% and 75%, respectively. In response, one sub-county official said, “*That makes me think that the immediate response is to strengthen such a mother economically to increase the household income to give her the ability to take care of the children.*”¹² Medical

care for HIV/AIDS, bullet and shrapnel removal and fistula were the least widely-held needs at 11%, 10% and 5%, but is no doubt very pressing for those suffering from them. It is important to note that these needs were identified by individual participating WAN members, including those with children born of conflict sexual violence and those without.

When providing services and support, one must consider individuals’ needs, as war-affected women broadly, and WAN members in particular, comprise of persons with distinct experiences and consequences, and overlapping, but not identical, interests and needs.

Gaps in meeting the needs of war-affected women

From the round-table discussion between WAN members and local government officials, a number of gaps emerged, providing insight into why the redress needs of war-affected women are not being better met by existing government programmes and services. They are as follows:

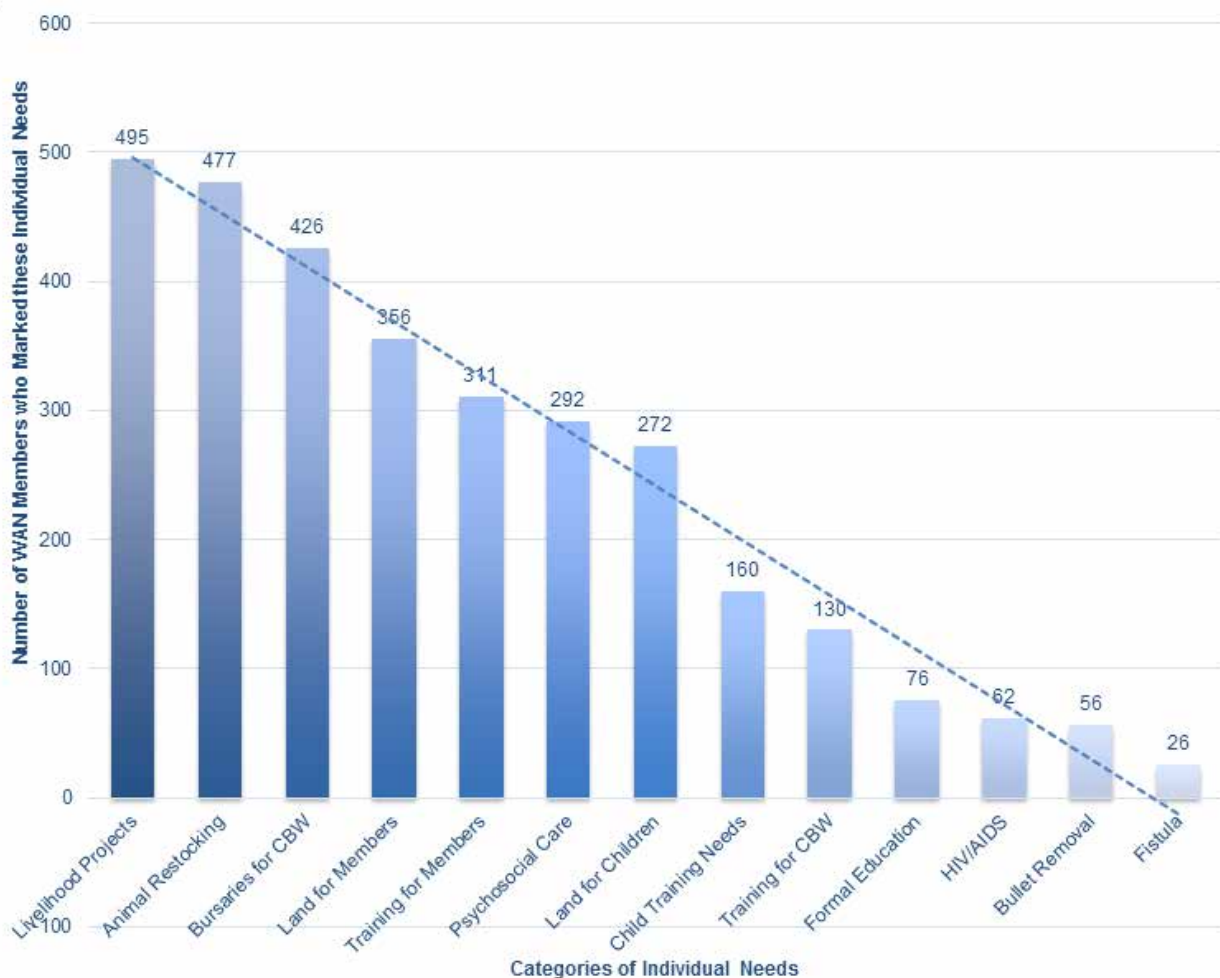


Figure 2. Redress needs of WAN members.

11 WAN member from Amuru, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

12 Male sub-county official from Atanga in Pader, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

Lack of knowledge

In one of the most poignant statements of the meeting, made after the WAN women shared their challenges, a sub-county official stated: *“I work with the community and I want to say the issues that they are raising today made me to feel as if I am not in the community because it’s like, we are not even being made to know what is happening.”*¹³

One of the biggest gaps in meeting the redress needs of war-affected women is not knowing what those needs are, especially at district levels. *“They have not been drawn to the attention of the district,”* said one official from Amuru.¹⁴ While all of the WAN groups have registered as community-based organisations (CBOs) at the sub-county level, it is only the WAN umbrella structure which has been registered with the GLDG. Oftentimes, the war-affected women are known to some extent in the sub-counties, through the WAN and other platforms, but their existence is not known at the district level. Until there is greater knowledge of challenges faced by women it shall be difficult for local governments to respond adequately by incorporating the women in their planning and budgeting.

Missing data

In addition to lack of general knowledge of the conditions in which war-affected women live, there is little-to-no data on their numbers and the numbers of their CBW. According to a sub-county official from Nwoya, *“What we are missing is documentation. We should really validate, so we know how many are...in our sub-county, then we bring them on board.”*¹⁵ Although recent exercises like the national ID project and the 2014 census have collected unprecedented amounts of data on Ugandans, they did not capture details on victims of conflict. As such, there is a major gap in accurate, up-to-date data on war-affected women and their children, which would assist with government planning and prioritisation. According to a sub-county official from Adjumani, *“We needed to have up-to-date data so... we [can] do proper planning.”*¹⁶

Low capacity

Capturing such data is hindered by a low capacity in northern districts, both in terms of human and financial resources. The needs and demands are great, and yet the resources are too small. According to a sub-county official from Atanga in Pader, *“The budgetary allocations to some programmes may not be enough.”*¹⁷ The officials admitted that there are critical gaps. Some districts are understaffed, whereas others do not have support for the staff they have. According to a district official from Amuru, *“The revenue of government has reduced substantially. We cannot meet some of these challenges at our level. There are no functional structures at the local level.”*¹⁸ The community-based services sector--which employs gender

13 Male sub-county official, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

14 Male government official from Amuru, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

15 Male sub-county official from Alero in Nwoya, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

16 Male sub-county official from Arinyapi in Adjumani, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

17 Male sub-county official from Atanga in Pader, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

18 Male government official from Amuru, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

officers, probation officers and community development officers, all of whom are often best placed to interact with and support war-affected women--often takes the hardest hit, and receives minimal budgetary allocations.

It is not only the local governments with low capacity. War-affected women, and the groups of which they are members, often face challenges taking advantage of programmes and services that do exist due to low capacities in record-keeping, literacy, management and leadership, among others. For instance, those who were abducted and spent long periods in captivity often had their education disrupted and may face difficulties today filling out registration forms or demonstrating how they meet the requirements set forth by the government for beneficiaries.

Poor networking and coordination

Another gap hindering redress is poor networking and coordination among and between government structures and civil society partners. When districts develop their plans, they rely on the input and resources of other stakeholders. However, government officials often lament that there is lack of cooperation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), who often decline to provide local governments with their work plans so they can be harmonized with the activities and priorities of the districts. Similarly, JRP has faced difficulties accessing district development plans in the past. As a result, local governments often do not know many details of the NGOs operating in their districts, nor do NGOs know how they can fit into district development plans. This makes building networks for referrals very difficult. According to a district official from Nwoya, a *“challenge on the ground...has been networking.”*

Lack of participation in planning

It is not only civil society that fails to participate in district planning, war-affected women are largely absent from the process, as well. Within districts, there are a number of avenues through which they could be engaged, from parish-level community meetings, to sub-county and district technical committee meetings. However, participating officials declared that such women rarely attend, due in part to domestic responsibilities and lack of information on when the meetings take place. These meetings are, however, crucial in setting community priorities and demanding for community-driven programmes and services, and could be one avenue through which the women and their issues could be made aware to government officials. According to a sub-county official from Atanga in Pader: *“It’s been top-bottom planning. It looks like many of these women have not been participating in planning. It would be important to involve them in the area of selection when it comes to government programmes.”*¹⁹

Lack of access

When the aforementioned gaps converge, war-affected women rarely access government services, especially development programmes. According to a WAN member, *“Most of these women don’t get access to government services.”*²⁰ One member recalled, *“I’ve not even [identified]*

19 Male sub-county official from Atanga in Pader, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

20 WAN member from Gulu town, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15

one person who we were with in the bush getting those things...There are so many programmes given by the government, but we always don't get it. You find a list being given there. The guidelines are given, but in the end, you find other people getting it."²¹

Although formerly-abducted persons (FAPs) are special interest groups to benefit from some government development programmes, like animal restocking under the PRDP, WAN members have rarely, if ever, been beneficiaries. This leads to suspicions among the women that corruption and discrimination among local government officials is at play. During the meeting, one WAN member from Awach, whose group has recently been awarded the CDD grant after months of advocacy, explained how a sub-county official has seemingly blocked the funds transfer at the final stage. She expressed concerns that the official's own biases and resentments against FAPs is the cause. She further recounted how on another occasion, she and her group went to Gulu district to clean the compound as part of their commitment to social responsibility, and they were told that they were just there to look for men to "help them with their problems."²²

Opportunities for affirmative action

Although there are undoubtedly gaps in districts and sub-counties making it difficult for war-affected women to access government services and programmes, there are a number of opportunities, too, especially for affirmative action, which can be defined as "any measure, beyond simple termination of a discriminatory practice, adopted to correct or compensate for past or present discrimination or to prevent discrimination from recurring in the future."²³ The following outlines the key opportunities that emerged from the round-table meeting.

Through new programmes

In the coming months, a number of new development programmes shall be launched, including the PRDP III and NUSAF III. According to a district official from Adjumani, "We're aware PRDP III is coming on board, and this is where we should take advantage and put our claim very clear that there's a special interest group being led by the WAN... It's not too late. This is the time we really engage all of the WAN groups and their children."²⁴ There is also speculation that a new women's livelihood programme is coming, similar to that of the YLP. As a Gulu district official stated, "Government recently communicated to all districts to identify women's groups and youth groups who should be supported to generate means for improved livelihoods. In Gulu, we have been able to identify about 100 women's groups to benefit from them. I hope the sub-counties have been communicated to, so government gives them this

September 2015.

21 WAN member from Amuru, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

22 WAN member from Awach, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

23 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Statement on Affirmative Action, October 1977.

24 Male district official from Adjumani, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

support."²⁵

These new programmes provide an opportunity for war-affected women to benefit from the beginning, and to be explicitly integrated into its implementation plan by local and national government.

Through existing guidelines

Even for those programmes already in existence, like the CDD and animal restocking, local governments have the power to select and prioritise who should benefit from the area, due to broad central government guidelines. According to a sub-county official from Atanga in Pader, "The offices at the sub-county level mobilise them and ensure that they select the most vulnerable persons within the communities."²⁶ For instance, as aforementioned, many programme guidelines contain instructions on categories of target beneficiaries like persons living with HIV/AIDS, widows and even FAPs. Others require that a certain percentage of beneficiaries are women. Decisions can be made within districts and sub-counties that war-affected women, such as WAN members, are selected to fulfil such categories. As a district official from Adjumani stated, "If we know these existing groups at our local level, it's now our mandate to identify and give them priority when it comes to distributing the programmes to the beneficiaries."²⁷ Some suggested this power has led to abuse of office and selecting the same beneficiaries to benefit for every programme. In order to mitigate this, it was suggested there be "a deliberate policy provision" to this effect, and that decisions are not left to the sub-county alone.²⁸

Through district development plans

Such policy provisions could come in part through inclusion of war-affected women in district development plans. Although five-year plans were recently developed in all districts in line with the national development plan for 2015-2020, local government officials in attendance noted that there are opportunities for annual reviews and edits, during which time war-affected women and their children could be included. As one district official urged, "Integrate them into our district development plans and have a responsive budget."²⁹ According to another sub-county official from Atanga in Pader, "They have the right to all services that are being offered. They should be planned for."³⁰ In doing so, the women and their children could be taken up as a cross-cutting issue in the districts for advocacy, much like has been done for HIV/AIDS and the environment. As a sub-county official from Agweng in Lira advised, "It is high time that we, the local government, mainstream them the way gender has been mainstreamed."³¹

25 Male district official from Gulu, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

26 Male sub-county official from Atanga in Pader, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

27 Male district official from Adjumani, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

28 Male district official from Pader, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

29 Female district official from Pader, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

30 Male sub-county official from Pader, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

31 Female sub-county official from Agweng in Lira, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

Through referrals

Without doubt, meeting the full spectrum of redress needs of war-affected women and their children shall extend beyond the mandates and resources of local governments. As such, local governments have another tool at their disposal: referrals. By referring war-affected women and their children to civil society partners operating in their districts, key needs like medical care, education, and even livelihoods can be fulfilled. When they learn of such cases, they could write letters and help them to make connections with these service providers. According to an official from Adjumani, local governments have opportunities to “*build synergy for networking*.”³²

Through local meetings

War-affected women should not sit back and wait for local governments to serve them. They also have unique opportunities to better ensure that their needs are known, and that they are selected to benefit from government programmes and services. One such opportunity is through their full and active participation in local meetings, both public meetings at the community level and local government planning meetings. As noted in the previous section, the women’s involvement in planning is often limited due to their limited participation in such local community forums. This opportunity was highly supported by local government officials, with them saying, “*let the women also participate in government meetings*,”³³ and “*women need to participate highly during the planning process*.”³⁴

Through social responsibility activities

War-affected women have opportunities to further increase their visibility and build a positive image in districts and sub-counties through social responsibility activities. For instance, a representative from the WAN group in Alero reported how they clean the compound of their sub-county headquarters. She added, “*The sub-county really liked our work and appreciated it much ... Whenever there was an activity at the sub-county, we would be invited to participate in it [as music, dance and drama performers]*.”³⁵

By being active and engaged in the community, there is a greater likelihood that war-affected women and their children born of war will be recognised by local decision-makers and selected for affirmative action through government services and programmes.

Recommendations

From these insights into needs, gaps and opportunities come a number of practical recommendations for local and national governments, war-affected women and CSOs. They are as follows:

³² Male sub-county official from Adjumani, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

³³ Male government official, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

³⁴ Male sub-county official from Atanga in Pader, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

³⁵ WAN member from Alero in Nwoya, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

For local governments

Collect data on war-affected women and their children to aid planning and prioritisation. CAOs should write to the sub-county CDOs and local councillors (LCs) with instructions and a deadline for when the data is needed. These persons could then move around the villages to identify and register the affected persons in their area. It was further suggested that WAN members could aid in this process, since they oftentimes know the identities of others with similar experiences. Their involvement could serve to validate and verify that the rightful persons are registered.

Develop deliberate affirmative action policies for war-affected women. Districts and sub-counties must come up with deliberate policies, so that war-affected women, and children of war-affected women, benefit from government programmes and services. Such a policy could dictate that these individuals must be among the beneficiaries of all programmes. For instance, for a programme that requires FAPs to benefit according to national guidelines, the district policy could further elaborate that among the FAPs, a certain percentage must be formerly-abducted women with children born in captivity. Such a policy would serve to guide the sub-counties in their selection process, and ensure that the programmes do not benefit the same people time and time again as has been alleged.

Advocate for war-affected women and children born of war. District and sub-county officials interact with a number of influential stakeholders on a daily basis, including donors and national government representatives. In these meetings, they must advocate for programmes and services to be made available for war-affected women and the children of war-affected women. “We can be the advocates for this group of people, so they can be part of programmes,” said one official.³⁶ This could start by updating district and sub-county technical planning committees of the information obtained in the round-table meeting and this document. According to a district official from Adjumani: “*The information we get here, we should take it to our districts and sub-counties, so these issues can be discussed and so every member at the district is aware of the information that was brought here*.”³⁷

Further, districts and sub-counties must advocate for war-affected women to be defined as a special interest group with national programme guidelines; this should include war-affected women, war-affected women with children, and the children themselves. According to one official, children of the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) and the police have been identified as a special group to benefit from the YLP. Further lobbying could expand this to include children born of war, such as children born in LRA captivity. As another practical example, the GLDG has written to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in charge of the PRDP to request that the WAN receive a special allocation of animals under restocking. Such targeted advocacy can be replicated by other districts to send a stronger message to the decision-makers at the national

³⁶ Male government official, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

³⁷ Male district official from Adjumani, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

level.

Integrate war-affected women into planning processes and district development plans. War-affected women must be involved in the planning process and integrated into district development plans if their needs and challenges are to be captured and met. There was overwhelming consensus and enthusiasm for this recommendation during the round-table meeting. According to a sub-county official from Alero in Nwoya district: *“Integrate them in planning at the parish level, so their views are captured.”*³⁸ Another urged, *“Involve WAN in the consultative meetings that we usually have at the sub-county. If we are having a meeting, we can also invite them to come and be part of us if possible.”*³⁹

Further, officials must ensure that the issues of war-affected women are mainstreamed in all district and sub-county programmes. A senior-level official from Gulu district said, *“The question of mainstreaming war-affected women is not a matter of choice. It must be done.”*⁴⁰ When making adjustments to the district development plans, they must be included and prioritised in the planning for next year.

Encourage (re)integration of war-affected women and their children born of war. In planning and prioritising for affirmative action and targeted development assistance for war-affected women, their full (re)integration into society must also remain a priority. In the words of one official, *“If we are fighting for integration and then we isolate these people, what are we talking about? We need to reinforce reintegration.”*⁴¹ To do so, district and sub-county officials must ensure there is understanding and acceptance among the community of programmes targeted at the WAN. This can be done through transparency and community sensitisation, such as radio programmes and community dialogues and meetings. Without this approach, there is a risk that the women will face greater stigmatisation and rejection within the communities, which could affect the impact of the assistance they receive.

Provide technical assistance to war-affected women. In order for war-affected women to benefit from government programmes and services, they need technical support from their local leaders to understand the guidelines and application process, and to complete and submit paperwork. Sometimes, they need further assistance selecting and implementing their projects. According to one official from Amuru: *“These people need to be mentored and followed up, so whatever help they have access to will be sustainable.”*⁴²

Throughout the round-table meeting, WAN members urged local government officials to provide this assistance when war-affected women come knocking on their doors. The WAN chairperson: *“I am requesting local leaders to be near*

*these people and advise them.”*⁴³ In the words of another WAN member from Awach: *“It’s only the local leaders that are supposed to help us with some of the problems we’re facing. Offer to help us when we come to ask because we don’t have anywhere else to go.”*⁴⁴ CDOs and parish chiefs are often the best placed to do so, given their proximity to the communities and mandates. For instance, CDOs should make the women aware of the qualifications needed to access programmes, and follow-up with them throughout the life of the projects once they are selected as recipients. They can also provide important training in vocational and management skills, like record-keeping. According to one sub-county official, *“Let them take the office of the local government as being their office, where they can share ideas with leadership in those offices.”*⁴⁵

For the national government, including the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

Amend government programme guidelines to target war-affected women and children born of war as special interest groups. Although local governments have the authority to tailor existing programmes and services to better meet the needs of war-affected women and children born of war within their jurisdictions, it is only the national government with the power to ensure this is done country- and programme-wide. The national government—through the implementing agencies such as the OPM and Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development—must amend programme guidelines to acknowledge and target these women and children. This could be done by identifying war-affected women as a special interest group, as has been done for people living with disabilities and HIV/AIDs and formerly-abducted persons. This would include war-affected women who have children and those who do not, as not all their needs are the same.

Similarly, not all war-affected women fall within the existing categories, for instance a woman raped by armed forces in the IDP camps, and may face difficulties accessing programmes under the current guidelines. Further, creating explicit categories sends a strong message of acknowledgment and recognition of these individuals’ vulnerabilities and right to remedy, which contributes greatly to their redress.

Create a special interim programme for war-affected women and children born of war. In anticipation of a gender-sensitive reparations fund for victims of conflict as mandated by the national TJ policy, the government must create an interim special fund to meet the urgent health, education, livelihoods and land needs of these women, including war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence. According to a district official from Adjumani, *“A special programme should be given to the children and women of this category, such that they’re settled like any other community being settled.”*⁴⁶ Data

38 Male sub-county official from Alero in Nwoya district, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

39 Female government official, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

40 Male district official from Gulu, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

41 Male government official, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

42 Male government official from Amuru, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

43 WAN member from Gulu, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

44 WAN member from Awach, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

45 Male sub-county official, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

46 Male district official from Adjumani, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

collected by the districts and sub-counties could inform the planning and budgeting of this special programme.

Increase budgetary allocations to the community-based services sector. As aforementioned, much of the interaction in districts and sub-counties with war-affected women and children fall to the community-based services sector, which is severely under-resourced and underfunded. In order to ensure that programmes and services intended for the women and children are adequately implemented, the sector must have increased budgetary allocations to carry out the necessary planning, implementation and monitoring. According to a sub-county official from Atanga in Pader, *“The stakeholders have to come together to ensure more budget allocations are given.”*⁴⁷

For war-affected women

Maintain regular communication with local leaders. As aforementioned, local government officials cannot assist war-affected women if they do not know their challenges or involve them in planning. According to one sub-county official, *“If it’s brought to our attention, we’re able to do something about it.”*⁴⁸ As such, the women must stay close to their local leaders and maintain regular communication with them. When they face challenges, they must report them to their local leaders, so that necessary action can be taken.

Participate in registered and functional groups. Most development assistance in Uganda is only available to groups, not individuals. As such, if war-affected women, and their children, wish to receive support, they must be involved in registered and functional community groups. *“We must take that economic empowerment not done on individual basis, but must be through functional groups.”*⁴⁹ At the advice of one local government official, the women should *“try to integrate [themselves] into programmes that are not only for ex-combatants.”*⁵⁰ Group information must be on file with the CDOs and DCDOs, and include constitutions, lists of members, contact details and CBO certificates. Group CBO certificates are renewed annually with the sub-county and district.

Demand for programmes and services. In Uganda, *“most government programmes are community-driven, and [community members] must show interest.”*⁵¹ War-affected women must therefore attend local meetings and show sustained interest in programmes and services that are relevant to them. According to a sub-county official from Palaro, *“I think these people’s capacity should be built so they can demand for services. The way I am looking at these people is that they just sit and wait for services to be taken to them, but this time, we are all aware that we have bottom-up planning processes, not top-bottom. This time we have to ask for what we want and then these things are being given.”*⁵² A senior district official advised the

women to continue telling leaders what they need, as per community-driven development principles, and tell them the number of people involved and the impact that the project will create in their lives and in the community.

For CSOs

Build the capacity of war-affected women and their children. For CSOs and other non-governmental stakeholders who directly work with war-affected women and their children, they must build the capacity of such persons through life and vocational skills training. Such trainings will complement the programmes and services being offered by the government and ensure that beneficiaries succeed and achieve the change desired.

Assist in the mapping of war-affected women and children. CSOs with research experience must assist local governments in the mapping of war-affected women and children. This assistance should be identified and provided in close consultation with the districts and can vary based on the gaps identified. For instance, critical areas for CSO input include tool and methodology development, such that the mapping does not further compound the vulnerability of the target population.

Coordinate with local governments when implementing programmes in their jurisdictions. CSOs must implement community-based programmes with the full knowledge of the local authorities where they operate. This requires coordination and communication between the two parties, such as through the sharing of work plans by both the district and sub-county department and the CSOs. To ease this coordination, CSOs should avail both districts and sub-counties with files containing information on their activities.

47 Male sub-county official from Atanga in Pader, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

48 Male sub-county official, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

49 Female district official from Pader, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

50 Male sub-county official, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

51 Female government official from Lira, round-table meeting, Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

52 Male sub-county official from Palaro in Gulu, round-table meeting,

Gulu town, 15 September 2015.

Annex 1: Pledges and commitments by participating officials according to district

At the end of the round-table meeting, participating local government officials were requested to state their pledges and commitments to advancing the resolutions and recommendations that emerged. The following provides a list of pledges by district. These commitments shall be followed up and monitored by JRP and the WAN in the coming months.

Adjumani district, including Dzaipi and Arinyapi sub-counties

- Share the information from the round-table meeting with others in the district and sub-county;
- Collect and compile data on war-affected women and children born conflict;
- Ensure groups with war-affected women are registered;
- Share information with war-affected women on opportunities; and,
- Involve war-affected women in trainings to build their capacities.

Amuru district, including Atiak and Pabbo sub-counties

- Ensure sub-county official include formerly-abducted women in their programmes;
- Invite war-affected women to become members of parish development committees;
- Collect data on war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence;
- Improve coordination and communication between the sub-counties and war-affected women;
- Amend the district development plan and budget to include war-affected women and their children;
- Refer war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence to service providers; and,
- Monitor and follow-up with war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence.

Gulu district, including Ongako, Palaro and Awach sub-counties

- Collect data on war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence;
- Carry out affirmative action at the sub-county level to enable war-affected women to benefit from government programmes and services;
- Provide war-affected women with information;
- Link war-affected women with development partners; and,
- Provide war-affected women with life skills.

Lira district, including Agweng and Aromo sub-counties

- Collect data on war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence;
- Develop a database on statistics of war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence;
- Select one group of war-affected women to benefit from each government programme;
- Integrate war-affected women and their children into parish, sub-county and district development plans;
- Budget for war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence;
- Discuss the issues of war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence with the district community development office, local council committee, executive committee and district council;
- Formulate a by-law or ordinance related to war-affected women and their children; and,
- Advocate for war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence with development partners.

Nwoya district, including Alero sub-county

- Provide war-affected women and their children with information on relevant opportunities;
- Train war-affected women in group management skills; and,
- Discuss the issues of war-affected women at the sub-county and district levels.

Pader district, including Atanga and Acholibur sub-counties

- Collect information on war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence through CDOs, parish chiefs and LC I chairpersons;

- Disseminate the collected information to stakeholders;
- Involve war-affected women in planning;
- Lobby partners to fund activities involving war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence;
- Advocate for greater access to land for war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence;
- Support war-affected women in family-tracing for their children born of conflict sexual violence; and,
- Monitor and evaluate progress in meeting the needs of war-affected women and children born of conflict sexual violence.

Annex 2: List of WAN Groups and Locations

	Name	Sub-County	District
1	Amandrea Women's Group	Dzaipi	Adjumani
2	Ampara Women's Group	Arinyapi	Adjumani
3	Dii Cwinyi Child Mothers' Group	Pabbo	Amuru
4	Lacan Pe Nino Women's Group	Atiak	Amuru
5	Rwot Lakica Women's Group	Municipality	Gulu
6	Awach Tailoring Group	Awach	Gulu
7	Rubanga Ma Twero Women's Group	Palaro	Gulu
8	Can Rwede Pe Women's Group	Municipality	Gulu
9	Bed Kic Tek Abducted Child Mothers' Group	Ongako	Gulu
10	Kica Pa Rwot Women's Group	Municipality	Gulu
11	Kuc Odwogo Women's Group	Agweng	Lira
12	Aywe Ki Koko Group	Aromo	Lira
13	Tam Pi Anyim Women's Group	Alero	Nwoya
14	Okony Wa Women's Group	Municipality	Pader
15	Rwot Okonya Women's Group	Atanga	Pader
16	Yap Wangi Group	Acholibur	Pader