

Voices



Justice and
Reconciliation
Project

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Sharing victim-centered views on
justice and reconciliation

Issue 10, November 2015

SPECIAL ISSUE

**10 years of *justice*
and *reconciliation***

Voices

Sharing victim-centered views on
justice and reconciliation

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Voices: Sharing victim-centered views on justice and reconciliation.

A publication of the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP)

Layout and design by Oryem Nyeko

Cover Photography: A woman in Atiak participates in a play in a JRP event as part of the ‘Bearing Witness’ project on 16 October 2014. Oryem Nyeko/Claudia Navas

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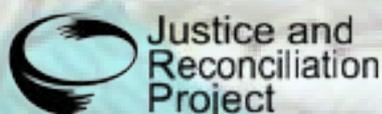
The Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) has played a key role in transitional justice (TJ) in Uganda since 2005 through seeking to understand and explain the interests, needs, concerns and views of communities affected by conflict. JRP promotes locally-sensitive and sustainable peace in Africa’s Great Lakes region by focusing on the active involvement of grassroots communities in local-level transitional justice.

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A decade ago, a series of pivotal events took place that would change the course of life for many people affected by the conflict in northern Uganda. Peace talks between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Ugandan government approached, while the International Criminal Court sought the arrest of alleged LRA commanders. At the same time, communities in the region grappled with questions of how to address the decades of violence while living in the inhospitable conditions of IDP camps. While the future was unclear, the violence needed to come to an end.

It was in this context that the Justice and Reconciliation Project was born. Recognising the complexities of dealing with the legacy of Uganda's conflict, JRP began by exploring an often discussed dimension – what role justice in the form of traditional and customary norms could play in answering some of these questions. A report ('Roco Wat I Acoli' or 'reconciliation in Acholi') was written and so began a journey of working with communities to achieve justice, healing and reconciliation (read an interview with one of JRP's founders, Erin Baines, on page 8).

This year is a special year for JRP, not only is it the tenth year of its existence, it also marks the first year of the implementation of a new strategic plan complete with new objectives tied to a longstanding vision towards a just and peaceful society. It is a period of transition and growth as we adapt to the changing needs of victims and communities as they transition and move forward. This special issue of Voices is dedicated to exploring how far northern Uganda has come in addressing the questions that were being asked a decade ago.

We asked a wide range of stakeholders, including community group members, civil society, government, and others in and outside of Uganda to share their views on past efforts and the future of justice and reconciliation in Uganda. In this issue, Vincent Oyet, a member of the Lukodi CORE team and the Lukodi Memorial Massacre Association writes about what is needed to support victims of conflict in an article on page 6. Similarly, Aluga Grace writes about effect war has in a creatively written piece under a section contributed by the Mukura Memorial Development Association from Teso on page 15.

In 'Storytelling for Justice', Nancy Apiyo explores the methodology which was used in JRP's Ododo Wa (our stories) project that eventually led to the formation of the Women's Advocacy Network (page 22). On page 33, we have news and updates from the different areas in which we work including the Peace and Conflict calendar upcoming dates of conflict memorial events. Find the lyrics to a song written by a group of relatives of people missing as a result of conflict called 'Anino Ku (I Don't Sleep)' on page 13.

As always, thank you for reading this issue of Voices. As always, your "voice" is welcome – remember to share your opinions on this and future issues of the magazine by writing to voices@justiceandreconciliation.com or Justice and Reconciliation Project, P.O. Box 1216, Gulu, Uganda. -- Oryem Nyeko



Oketa K. Lit, jo Lukodi odi cwinywu owek Lubanga aye ocul wu, kica, kica obed icwinywu.

Alex K. The massacre at Mucwini started by killing my father, mother and brother and went on to my relatives plus many more adding up to 56. I still not don't know who killed my people.

Harriet A. I like this surprise from Karamoja. It is a good sign of a road to reconciliation, peace and accountability among northern people. Please, the people of northern Uganda, let us learn this lessons and take the same steps our brothers in Karamoja have taken for peace in our region.

Join the conversation

Share your voice on JRP's Facebook page [facebook.com/Justice-and-Reconciliation-Project](https://www.facebook.com/Justice-and-Reconciliation-Project)
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10 years of the Justice and Reconciliation Project

By CALVINE KILAMA

2015 marks ten years since the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) began working towards victim-centred transitional justice in northern Uganda. As we celebrate this landmark, JRP brings to you this magazine *Voices*.

Nearly 10 years ago, the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) signed a cessation of hostilities agreement, the implication of which is the relative peace in northern Uganda which exists today. An Agreement on Accountability and Reconciliation, negotiated during peace talks in Juba, ignited a transitional justice process meant to address the country's legacy of conflict. JRP was then founded and began operating in 2005 to deal with issues such as amnesty, reparations, truth-telling, accountability and sexual- and gender-based violence. Since then, the organisation worked work under thematic areas such as the documentation of conflict related experiences to acknowledge loss and promote healing and reconciliation, the engagement of communities to identify what needs to be done to promote justice and reconciliation through community mobilisation, and the focus of special attention on the transitional justice needs of the most vulnerable groups and individuals.

Over the years JRP has worked to prevent atrocities from happening again, by working towards victim-centred processes such as accountability, reparations, truth-telling and transitional justice. From supporting informal truth-telling mechanisms to providing capacity building to victims' groups to providing platforms to war-affected women to advocate for their justice needs - one thing has remained constant: the inclusion of the voices people affected by conflict. These pictures show some of the work that JRP has done over the years with northern Ugandan communities. □



In November 2013, JRP launched the Community-Led Documentation project. Here family life at the fireplace before war is depicted in a mural at the Memorial House at Lukodi Primary School.





Women perform during the post-participation event for JRP's Bearing Witness project in Atiak sub-county, Amuru district. As part of this project, community-led truth-telling and dialogues were used to ensure the participation of conflict-affected communities in processes of redress, healing and reconciliation.



JRP has worked to ensure that female victims of sexual and gender-based violence in northern Uganda have increased redress through a project that provides economic empowerment and livelihoods. Here members of Women's Advocacy Network group Amandrea Women's Group in Dzaipi participate in a training on financial management on 21 July 2015.



On 20 August 2013, community members in Lukodi participated in a reburial ceremony for relatives killed during the war. On the day, cultural and local leaders, media, and CSO representatives participated in the events.



When will we see justice done?

What needs to be done to quicken recovery, healing and reconciliation for war victims

BY OYET VINCENT

There were many conflicts and change of governments in Uganda because of many reasons since 1962. The most recent one was Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) conflict with the Ugandan Peoples Defense Force (UPDF) which concentrated in the greater north of Uganda (Acholi, Lango, Teso and West Nile sub-regions).

The conflict took more than 20 years which led the population of civilians into Internally Displaced Person's Camps (IDP) my village Lukodi inclusive to seek protection by the UPDF. There were several atrocities committed by the LRA rebels and UPDF soldiers.

Among others there were abductions, forceful recruitment into armed forces, looting of civilian properties, rape, destruction of social services, and massive killing of people in the camps.

All these atrocities have had a lot of negative effects on war victims and survivors such as poverty, famine, trauma, spread of sexually transmitted infections, orphans,

The silence of the guns in the greater north does not mean there is peace.



widows, depopulation, fear to tell what had happened among others.

As a measure for intervention, many international NGOs like WFP, UNICEF, World Vision and UNDP came in to help the civilian while many local NGOs and community based organisations were created to help in various forms; like relief organisations which provided food, safe water, education, guidance and counseling and rehabilitation and many more.

War victims still need a lot to rehabilitate them in order for them to recover from the effects of the conflict. There were some peace concepts that were agreed upon by both parties from within, locally and internationally even though the final Juba peace talk's agreement in South Sudan was not signed. For the rehabilitation of the regions, there was special government programs set to equalise the region with those that did not experience conflict. Among others were the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, (NUSAF) 1-2 and the Peace Recovery Development Program (PRDP) 1-2.

These programs targeted social services like education services, health centers, and household livelihood project. The scope was wide, and it was interfered with by politics and most of the fund was corrupted by government leaders and those in charge, and few victims benefited. As war victims we appreciate the effort being made by Uganda government and CSOs for the recovery of the region. However, there are so many gaps among other transitional justice policy, specific projects and programs that target economic livelihood of the victims, the missing

person unaccounted for and memorialisation which I feel war victims should be put at the front and be consulted in terms of decision and policy making.

Many of my colleagues have died before achieving the implementation of the Juba peace talk agenda and justice. When are we to see the justice being done? For a bright future for me and my children, justice needs to come alone our way so that we all can live in peace again with one another in the communities. It is overdue, and for how long should we continue waiting for justice? As such, I make the following recommendations to stakeholders

For a bright future for me and my children, justice needs to come alone our way so that we all can live in peace again with one another in the communities. It is overdue, and for how long should we continue waiting for justice?

ers to help achieve justice for victims of war in northern Uganda:

- Continuous advocacy for victims of war in the greater north for justice until a transitional justice policy is put in place fully.
- Link groups of victims to economic empowerment projects for many victims who are unable to get their basic needs.
- Continuous exposure of memorial sites to Uganda and the outside world through web-sites.
- Capacity building on proposal, article writing, resource mobilisation and saving so as to help victims sustain any project or little income they get to own it. A proverb says that "better to give a hook rather than a fish." Hence victims shall own it forever once they are mandated and given the right. □

Oyet Vincent is the secretary for the Lukodi Memorial Massacre Association.



Vincent Oyet speaks during the launch of JRP's Community-Led Documentation project in Lukodi on 20 November 2013. JRP/Oryem Nyeko.



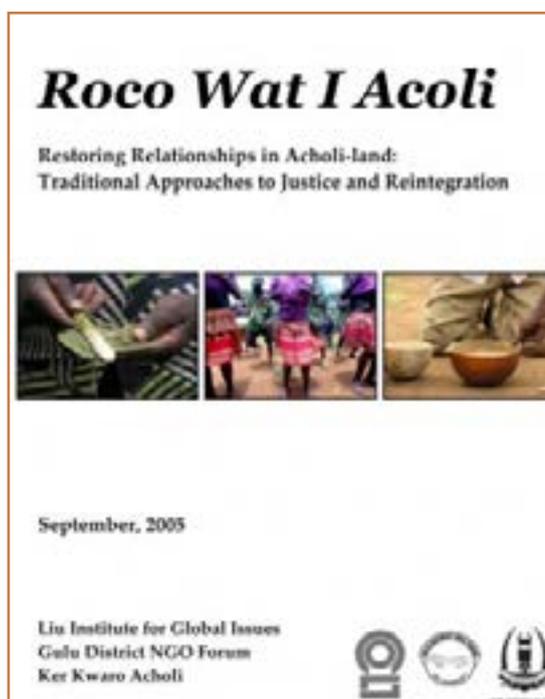
A formerly-abducted person is reunited with his family in Gulu, 2014.
JRP/Oryem Nyeko

Creating space to work for a better future

AN INTERVIEW WITH ERIN BAINES

In 2005, warrants were issued for the arrest of five alleged Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) commanders by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes committed during the two-decade long war between the LRA and the Ugandan government. In the midst of these indictments, the conflict raged as the northern Ugandan population suffered the blunt of bloody massacres and the complexities of living in the numerous internally displaced persons' camps that existed. At the time, discussion centred around what was framed as a debate between whether 'peace', in the form of peace talks and amnesty, should take precedence over 'justice', represented by the ICC and other prosecutorial models.

The Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) was formed as a joint project between the Gulu District NGO Forum and the Liu Institute for Global Studies at the University of British Columbia. At this time, JRP was started by founders Mr. Michael Otim and Dr. Erin Baines to explore approaches to justice and reconciliation for communities affected by the war. A study was carried out beginning in 2004 and resulted in a report entitled 'Roco Wat I Acoli - Restoring Relationships in Acholi-land: Traditional Approaches to Justice and Reintegration' in 2005. Roco Wat I Acoli speaks to the meaning and relevance of spiritual dimensions of justice for Acholi people, including traditional justice mechanisms such as mato oput. From then JRP participated in the 2006-2007 Juba Peace Talks between the LRA and the Ugandan government, published numerous field notes documenting the conflict experiences of northern Ugandans, and explored storytelling as a means of engaging and mobilising victims to advocate for their



justice needs.

I spoke with one of the founders of JRP, and writers of Roco Wat I Acoli, Erin Baines, about how JRP was formed about and the future of justice and reconciliation for northern Uganda. - Oryem Nyeko

People often talk about the ‘Peace versus Justice’ debate that was happening in the mid 2000s when JRP was formed. What was your stance at the time? Has it changed over the years?

The debate was driven by different interests and stakeholders in the conflict. Local leaders emphasised peaceful resolution, because they had spent years trying to build up trust with the rebels and Ugandan Government to negotiate their return. Many had sacrificed their entire lives to this process. When Operation Iron Fist was launched in 2002, they saw the devastation of the war grow tenfold - literally as many children were abducted in the first few years post-Iron Fist as had been in the ten years proceeding.

While the rebels were being diminished, it was hard to distinguish a rebel from a newly abducted child on the battlefield. There was a photo circulating at the time, of a boy of seven or eight, lying in an LRA uniform, holding a rosary. It was this that fueled the concern [about] military action, backed up by what was perceived of as a powerful international community symbolised by the ICC, that drove people to seek amnesty and forgiveness as an alternative. It was not that anyone was 'against justice', but they were pro-saving the lives of those children, and the civilians being slaughtered daily. It was also the case that too many different parties had vested interests in one side or another of the debate. We tried to address what seemed like a polarised debate by issuing a report ('Accountability and Reconciliation at the Juba Peace Talks: Beyond the Impasse', JRP Field Note No. III, 2006) that moved beyond the politicisation of the issue and argue both were possible.

By then JRP was becoming involved in the peace talks and seeking to input what we could on alternatives to judicial prosecution as a complementary approach.

‘Roco Wat I Acoli’ was JRP’s flagship report. Can you tell us about the process of conceptualising this study? Why was it important to explore ‘traditional approaches to justice and reintegration’ in Acholi-land at that time? How did this report set the tone for JRP as it is today?

At the time, 'traditional justice' was being presented as an alternative to the ICC by local cultural and religious leaders. JRP worked with them closely to access remote camps, and to document what people understood by 'traditional justice' and the challenges and opportunities these presented. The report took more than a year in the

“There was a photo circulating at the time, of a boy of 7 or 8, lying in an LRA uniform, holding a rosary. It was this that fueled the concern about military action, backed up by what was perceived of as a powerful international community symbolised by the ICC, that drove people to seek amnesty and forgiveness as an alternative.”

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making, working closely with young people and elders in camps to generate dialogue across generations and through a gender lens. It led to a deep commitment on behalf of the original research team, all young graduates from the north, to continue working with communities affected

by violence.

[What] they witnessed in the early days of researching Roco Wat [was] so many communities that had suffered tremendously, with no acknowledgment. So they began to work together to document specific violations and try to generate community and national dialogue around it.

‘Roco Wat’ explores reintegration issues for returning combatants and challenges facing life in the IDP camps that existed at the time. The living conditions for many northern Ugandans has changed over the years. What do you think the role and relevance of organisations like JRP is for places where there is no overt conflict? What contribution do you think JRP, specifically, makes to post-conflict northern Uganda?

Recently, two researchers (Hollander and Gill 2014) published an article 'Everyday the War Continues in My Body: Examining the Marked Body in Post conflict Northern Uganda'. It is a brilliant piece that illustrates how violence does not cease with the end of a war, but continues on in the body. I would add to this, violence folds itself into the landscape. It changes fundamentally one's sense of self and relations to others. So after the violence ends, it is still doing its work. But violence also does not determine. It can and is resisted, and life goes on.

It is important to document and acknowledge what happened, and how this continues to unfold; but it is also important to document the many ways people have creatively begun again, including through everyday practices of returning to the land and farming, but extending to initiatives to remember lost loved ones through memorials, song, dance and to work for a better future in Uganda through becoming active in their communities.

JRP among many other organisations can help create spaces in which this can happen, and act in solidarity to these efforts.

In what direction are justice and reconciliation questions heading towards? What strides and goals

need to be achieved? What should JRP be doing in this respect in the future?

It's always foolhardy to predict the future, but important to hope. JRP should continue to deepen its commitment to working with communities, supporting their efforts, and creating space. It should also work towards celebrating the resilience of survivors and address the complexity of it. There is still much to work through in terms of responsibility and seeking justice. □



Members of the Families of the Missing group, August 2013. JRP/Melissa McCauley.

From a capacity building training to an advocacy campaign on missing persons, JRP’s Right to Know campaign has allowed victims groups to mobilise and prioritise their demands for accountability for their loved ones that disappeared during the armed conflict in northern Uganda. The campaign has grown into a regional initiative with the target of achieving a national consortium to address issues of missing persons in Uganda. This article highlights this evolution, the concerns of families of the missing persons and makes recommendations to respond to issues of the missing persons in Uganda,

How an advocacy training workshop evolved into a campaign for action to address the rights of the disappeared and their families

BY OKWIR ISAAC ODIYA

In April 2012, JRP’s Community Mobilisation department conducted an advocacy training workshop in Lira town with representatives of victims of armed conflict from victims groups that were formed in 2011 and 2012 in Acholi, Lango, Teso and West Nile sub-regions to facilitate the process of promoting reconciliation, justice and accountability for atrocities committed during war. The workshop was attended by at least ten victims’ representatives from each sub-region. The advocacy training workshop was meant to build their capacity in understanding human rights abuse, their transition challenges and how to package and table their concerns in demanding for justice. During the training, participants explored many transition gaps such as a delayed reparation program, the first phase of amnesty that was by then ending in May 2012, and lack of accountability for the people that went missing during conflict in northern Uganda.

In developing advocacy action points, the participants identified the issue of enforced disappearance during war as their priority advocacy issue

saying it was not in the national agenda and it's not being talked about more formally. "How will the reparations program that the government plans to enroll give me answer about the fate of my son that went missing during the LRA war with government of Uganda? All I want is information on the whereabouts of my loved one," said a participant. This phrase formed the title of the campaign on missing persons – the Right to Know Campaign. In moving forward, victims' representatives formed an advocacy network across the region to demand for justice over issues of disappearance in northern Uganda.

In implementing the action points developed during the training workshop in July and August 2012 four community outreaches were facilitated by JRP in Acholi, Lango, Teso and West Nile sub regions to create awareness on issues of disappearance, determine circumstances and

magnitude of disappearance and to mobilise for everyone's involvement in the campaign. A stakeholders' dialogue discussion was held on 30 August in Gulu town during which the Right to Know campaign was officially launched by His highness Rwot David Onen Acana II, the paramount chief of Acholi. In his remarks, Rwot Acana condemned forceful disappearance as a human right violation and urged stakeholders to join hands to account for those who disappeared during war. He also urged the Government of Uganda and international organisations to bring an end of disappearance.

In 2013, JRP formed the Families of the Missing Persons (FoM) group in Gulu district. This is a group of over 50 parents and close relatives of the people who went missing during LRA war hailing from Pece and Laroo divisions in Gulu Municipality. JRP formed this group to pilot grassroots advocacy on the issue of missing persons but also to begin responding to psychosocial challenges related to losing their loved ones.

In July of that year, JRP facilitated research on disappearances in Palabek sub-county in Lamwo district that led to the development of policy recommendations on missing persons and action to resolve issues of disappearance in Uganda. The policy brief recommends for consideration of disappearance as a human rights violation, the formation of a commission of inquiry on issues of disappearance, research beyond Palabek, support for the economic needs of families of the missing and acknowledgement of disappearance as an impediment to social repair in northern Uganda.

To create more awareness and involvement of wider stakeholders in the campaign, civil society and local

government officials joined hands with families of the missing in 2013 to commemorate the International Day of Enforced Disappearances on the 30th August. On the day, a procession in the streets of Gulu was followed by a dialogue discussion on mechanisms to deal with the legacy of disappearances in Uganda.

In 2014, JRP facilitated an advocacy music project for the FoM group to provide a community friendly tool for continuous advocacy on issues of disappearance to a wider audience. In collaboration with a renowned local music artist – John Oweka - the FoM composed and recorded a song and video with a title 'Aninu Ku (I Don't Sleep)'. The song was to be used as educational and advocacy tool on issues of disappearance and carries a message of anguish of families and relatives of the missing and what ought to be done to address the situation. It is

It is hoped that through this music project, the various needs of the families of the missing - from the need to acquire information about their missing loved ones, to the need to receive aid to overcome the economic, psychological, legal, social and administrative challenges of a missing relative that have remained a key impediment to long-term stability and peace in northern Uganda - will be addressed.

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This song was officially launched by Gulu district Speaker – Hon. Okello Douglas Peter Okao in August 2014 during a week long community outreach on missing persons with performance from the FoM. In our evaluation meeting with group of families of the missing on the process they expressed satisfaction with what they did and that their plight has gone public.

Our goal in facilitating the Right to Know campaign is to hold a national dialogue to synthesise the campaign and to develop a way forward to deal with legacy of disappearance in Uganda.

Our goal in facilitating the Right to Know campaign is to hold a national dialogue to synthesise the campaign and to develop a way forward to deal with legacy of disappearance in Uganda. Aiming at a national dialogue, this year JRP and eight other civil society organisations (CSOs) in northern Uganda formed a consortium to heighten the campaign. The CSOs joint campaign involved a dialogue that was

hosted in Lira Town on 28th August and was attended by government officials, CSO members, victims of war, religious and traditional leaders coming from the four sub-regions of northern Uganda. During the dialogue, a team of families of the missing persons representatives across the greater north and a team of experts in transitional justice had a panel discussion on how to deal with the legacy of disappearance.

In starting to deal with social challenges related to disappearance, we introduced in 2014 a social support safety net to FoM members to respond to some of their

'All I want is information...'

social challenges. We also introduced story sharing circles, a forum of interaction between FoM with those that have returned from captivity to get a glimpse of what might have happened to their loved ones and to prepare them to accept it. In 2015, we introduced psychologists to speak to the relatives of missing people so that they could find solutions to move on with their lives in the absence of accountability for their missing loved ones. Community leaders applauded JRP for the social support provided by psychologists and urged that such one on one interaction with psychologists should be continued and expanded to other communities with similar experiences.

With the above achievements, we envision continuous collaboration on the Right to Know campaign to widen the psychosocial support to families of the missing, to influence development of implementation mechanism of the accountability section of draft TJ policy to include accountability for the missing and to address anguish of families of the missing. We envision a national dialogue to discuss issues of disappearance and its inclusion in the national agenda.

Therefore, a holistic program to address violations committed during war in order for justice, reconciliation and peace to prevail in Uganda is needed but these efforts call for good political will which is lacking to heighten the campaign and to address issues of disappearance. The overdue Transitional Justice policy which could, for instance, guide the search for accountability for the missing and address social and economic needs of their families. However, the issue of disappearance is not being looked at as compendium of issues that should form part of reconstruction process but rather as a minority's interest. I urge stakeholders to join hands in finding solution to issue of disappearance in Uganda and while we await reparation program, local governments in their respective peace building and recovery program should consider supporting families of the missing persons. □

Okwir Isaac Odiya is the Team Leader for JRP's Community Mobilisation department. Read more about the Right to Know campaign at www.justiceandreconciliation.com/initiatives/the-right-to-know/.



Photographs courtesy of Melissa McCauley

Anino Ku (I Don't Sleep)

*Ilobo Acoli onongo angeyo ni koko dong pe
Ka koko pud tye
Ikin gang kuja onongo angeyo ni koko dong
pe
Ka koko pud tye
Ilobo wa onongo angeyo ni koko dong pe
Ka koko pud tye
Ilobo wa kulu onongo angeyo ni koko dong pe
Ka koko pud tye*

*In Acholiland I thought there was no more
mourning*

But there is still mourning

*In the villages I thought there was no more
mourning*

But there is still mourning

*In our country I thought there was no more
mourning*

But there is still mourning

*Pol pa mego kok ni kinino ku
Oweko dong an tin a penyo gi
Ngo kara ma oweko wun unino ku?*

Many mothers cry that they don't sleep at night

*This makes me ask them, "Why don't you
sleep?"*

*Anino ku, anino ku
Loka Kony wek anino ku*

I don't sleep, I don't sleep

This 'Kony issue' makes me not sleep

*Kony omako latina woko
Aparo pi Opici wek anino ku
Kony omako latin acel
Aparo pi Opici wek anino ku
Kony omako latin cwinya
Aparo pi Alany wek anino ku*

Kony took my child away

Worrying about Opici makes me not sleep

Kony took my only child

Worrying about Opici makes me not sleep

Kony took my beloved child

Worrying about Alany makes me not sleep

*Anino ku, anino ku
Loka Kony wek anino ku*

I don't sleep, I don't sleep

This 'Kony issue' makes me not sleep

*Kony omako daktar na woko
Konya omako lapurra woko
Kony omako larego na woko
Kony omako lapal cwinya*

Kony took my doctor away

Kony took my gardener away

Kony took my miller away

Kony took my best friend away

Spoken (English):

*I don't sleep because of the pain of losing my son, my daughter, my sister,
my brother and my spouse*

*I leave my door open at night hoping that my loved ones will one day walk
through back into my arms*

*They disappeared during the decades of armed conflict in northern
Uganda*

Day and night I'm waiting, searching for answers

Who will give me answers?

Who will tell me where my loved ones are?

Who can give me information about their fate?

*Government of Uganda, international organisations, NGOs, cultural and
religious leaders*

Wake up!

Listen to our cry, join us

The families of the missing

Recorded in 2014, *Anino Ku* speaks to the challenges families of persons missing as a result of conflict face in northern Uganda. The Families of the Missing group was formed with the support of JRP in 2013 to create awareness about the issue of missing persons as part of the Right to Know campaign. Listen to *Anino Ku* on JRP's SoundCloud page soundcloud.com/justiceandreconciliation

The journey of the Mukura Memorial Development Initiative

JRP, an organisation that works with war victims, moved to Kumi all the way from Gulu in search of information about what happened in Mukura. They met with Kumi Network Development Organisation (KUNEDO) staff, but were directed to a former KUNEDO chairperson, Mzee Martin Ononge who was tasked to mobilise victims, families and survivors for a meeting.

The first meeting was held in early January 2011 at Ngora Lukiko Hall and the election of the interim committee was done under the leadership of Mr. Omwala James as chairperson and Mzee Ononge as coordinators. A second meeting was organised at Bishop Kiching College to kickstart the documentation process.

As a way to reconstruct an account of what happened using narratives from survivors and to bring the concerns of victims to the attention of the Ugandan government and other, JRP launched its field note at Mukura Memorial Secondary School. This report aimed at improving implementation of future post conflict transitional justice initiatives in Uganda through analysis and recommendations on victims' involvement in the process. This awakened Mukura wagon victims, widows and orphans to ask JRP to carry out capacity building. There was also the need to carry out memorialisation as a way to advocate for reparations, remember the beloved people who perished, acknowledge, and heal broken hearts to avoid reoccurrence.

JRP funded and participated in the first memorial prayers conducted on the 11th of July in 2011 and conducted evaluation meetings which gave birth to the Mukura Memorial Development Initiative (MUMEDI). MUMEDI was formed to bind all Mukura wagon victims to speak with one voice to in order to be heard by the government and to sustain its existence. On 30 August 2011, MUMEDI held its first Annual General Meeting and during this meeting agreed on savings and credit being done every fortnight, advocacy being done through community theatre, doing guidance and counseling and lobbying for

victims who need health rehabilitation.

JRP trained community theatre group members and launched a drama project at the monument structure in Mukura in 2011. They also gave T-shirts to disseminate information and create awareness about what had happened. In 2012, they supported memorial prayers, continued to build the capacity of members, and took some MUMEDI members to an exposure and experience sharing meeting in Yumbe.

MUMEDI was formed to bind all Mukura wagon victims to speak with one voice to in order to be heard by the government and to sustain its existence.

The challenges we've faced in the years have included the fact that the monument is still incomplete, power is not installed at the public library, reparations were not done and were not clear because no policy exists. There are also inadequate skills to document events, fundraise and conduct financial manage-

ment. Also, there is a lack of logistical support. Management of the monument is not defined and memorialisation is left to only members of the group.

As a way forward, we propose that the government should finance the construction, install electricity and replenish the public library. Government should also come up with a reparations policy and declare its stance on the monument. In order to ensure the monument's sustainability and management, government should come in full support to annual memorialisation days. There is also a need for training on documentation to keep a record of what happened, as well as on financial management and fundraising activities, and there should be support for logistics. □

Courtesy of Ms. Alugat Grace, Facilitator, Mr. Ononge Martin (Coordinator), Mr. Okwi Isidoro Jose Dominic (Gen. Secretary), Mr. Obaet John, Mr. Opolot Edmond, Mrs. Ongole Rose, Ms. Akello Angella Rose and Mr. Omoda James (Chairperson).

Remembering the Mukura Massacre of 1989

After the overthrow of General Tito Okello Lutwa by the National Resistance Army

(NRA) led by Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, eastern Uganda, like most of northern Uganda at the time, was largely loyal to the Uganda People's Congress under the leadership of Dr. Apolo Milton Obote. So when the NRA took over power, the region simply went up in rebellion in 1986. In response to the uprising, the NRA mounted operations in the different villages of Teso sub-region. The 105th battalion operated in Kumi district and Ngora County and was locally nicknamed *pilipili* (chili).

The NRA's operation culminated into what is known as the Mukura massacre – an event that took place when NRA civilian captives from across the area were led to Okungulo railway station and were herded into a shed, tortured and left without food or water. On Tuesday, 11 July 1989, a selection of the captives were led out of the shed under the guise of being led to water and pushed into a train wagon which was shut behind them. Packed tightly in the wagon, an estimated 120 men struggled to breathe and were forced to drink urine. By the time the door was opened five hours later, 69 of the 120 were dead.

According to witnesses, President Museveni visited Mukura a few months after the massacre and addressed a crowd. He apologised for what happened and promised decent burials for the dead as well as compensation to the families of the people who had died. He also promised to construct a secondary school in memory of the victims and promised to ensure accountability for what happened. Shortly after this visit, the bodies of the dead were exhumed for burial in a mass grave which had been constructed by the government. The building of a public library and Mukura Memorial Senior Secondary school was started. A military commission of enquiry was established by the Ugandan army to establish the facts of what happened, the findings of which were never released to the public. In May 1994, the government began to make payments of compensation to families of the victims of the massacre. □

Based on excerpts of 'The Mukura Massacre of 1989, Field Note XII, March 2011', available on www.justiceandreconciliation.com

The Scars of War

BY ALUGA GRACE

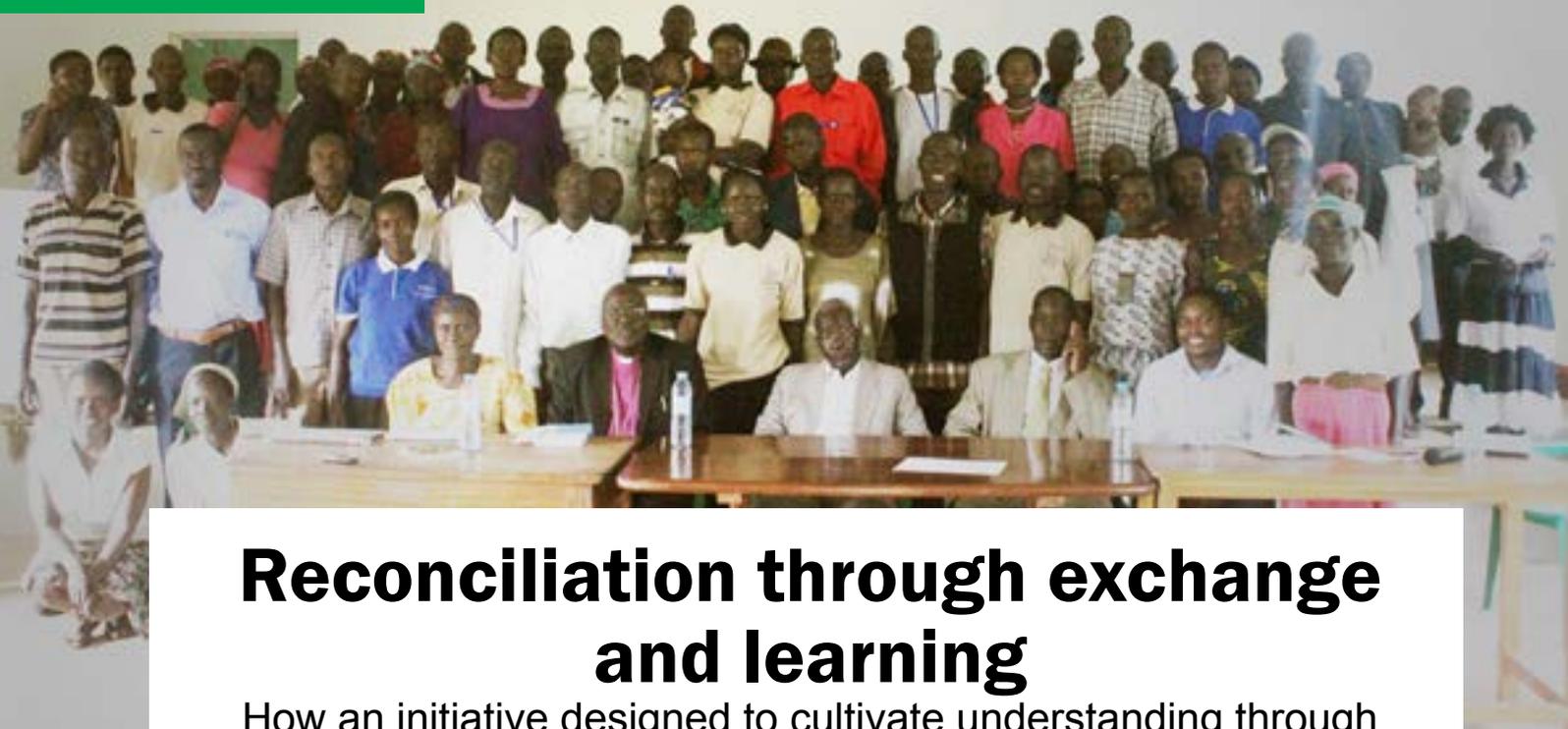
Everyone is born with a right to live in peace with a thinking belief and knowledge of freedom to exercise whatever is necessarily found good. Little did I know that changes in the moments on the earth do prevail.

The categories of persons with various beliefs, thoughts, expectations, who want things of preference, the worst of them, are the disgruntled and conceited. Their test is always negative to the majority's feelings and expectations. They want to be exalted, feared and are rebellious with their joyous moments celebrated in others misery and pain. Now where do broken hearts go?

The innocent persons are always inflicted, abused, tortured. Dear ones are lost to unknown destinies, lose body parts and die in cold for the joy of the disgruntled persons.

Teso people have suffered serious war tragedies of Saba Saba, Karamojong raids, insurgencies and Kony's atrocities. Victims have remained desperate with Kony's social torture. When your loved ones disappears, property destroyed, women raped in public before their children and husband, being infected with HIV, deformation, and needing social support while perpetrators are at large and deserve penalties, tears of pain and surrounding memories hurt us.

We need a healing moment from whoever has a feeling for that particular person in front. It could be the government partners who love peace. □



Reconciliation through exchange and learning

How an initiative designed to cultivate understanding through dialogue and memorialisation is contributing to regional reconciliation in northern Uganda

In the post-war context of Uganda, as the shaping of the Transitional Justice (TJ) policy has been a slow, faltering national process, dragging on indefinitely, victims of war continue to suffer without redress.

JRP is seeking to inspire momentum at the community-level to recover agency and initiate community-led processes of healing, advocacy and reconciliation by encouraging collaborations between victims and local leaders to effectively seek redress for victims' needs in the recovery process.

Through several exchange and learning visits, victims of armed conflict have connected and explored each other's role in effectively supporting victims' recovery processes.

By SHILPI SHABDITA

“Examining the painful past, acknowledging it and understanding it, and above all transcending it together, is the best way to guarantee that it does not – and cannot – happen again.”

- Desmond Tutu

Spanning over two decades, the protracted armed conflict in northern Uganda witnessed massive violations of human rights, economic decay, social disintegration, and national and regional insecurity. As the war-ravaged society transitions amidst post-war recovery and reconciliation efforts, a strong sense of trust-deficit, prejudices and fractured social relationships among different communities and sub-regions emerge as key challenges to lasting peace in the region. One sees evidence of this phenomenon in the context of deeply strained relations between Acholi and Lango sub-regions where communities remain suspicious, accusatory and disconnected from the trauma and upheaval experienced by ‘the other’ side during the armed conflict.

Amidst widespread perceptions of the LRA-led war in northern Uganda to be an ethnic strife systematically furthering Acholi nationalism, deep-rooted grievances and hostilities against the Acholi sub-region continue to strain relationships and perceptions with the neighbouring Lango sub-region, often blocking channels of communication and interaction. In

particular, severed business and trade ties and a decline in inter-marriages between the two sub-regions, coupled with the perceptions of unequal distribution of post-war recovery and development assistance, have fomented hostility and fractured relationships between communities of Acholi and Lango sub-regions.

As inter-community identities get polarized and hostilities deepen, there is a pressing need to 'replace the atmosphere of fear of the 'other' with nonviolent coexistence' (Luc Huyse, "The Process of Reconciliation", in *Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A Handbook*. Bulls Tryckeri AB Halmstad, Sweden, 2003.)—the first step in the journey towards reconciliation. To this end, the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) opened channels of inter-regional communication and understanding through two exchange, learning and solidarity visits held in Acholi and Lango sub-regions respectively.

This initiative witnessed the participation of over 100 representatives of victims and survivors of the armed conflict hailing from seven sub-counties across Acholi and Lango sub-regions, and was also attended by traditional leaders, religious heads, civil servants, elected government officials, along with civil society organisations. The purpose of the visits was to sensitise the different communities to each other's conflict experiences, share diverse coping mechanisms and synergise energies with local leaders to build collaborative cross-regional alliances that address transition challenges and regional reconciliation in northern Uganda.

Held in Gulu on the 29th and 30th of July, 2015, the first exchange visit initiated with a panel discussion and dialogue, thematically designed to understand what justice for international crimes means for northern Uganda, how the community perceptions on the case of Dominic Ongwen either converge or differ in the Acholi and Lango sub-regions, and what role could a trial play in upholding the justice needs of the communities and fostering reconciliation in the region. Embodying diversity and richness of experiences, the panel was constituted by a traditional leader, a religious head, prominent CSO representative, and an ICC Outreach Team Member.

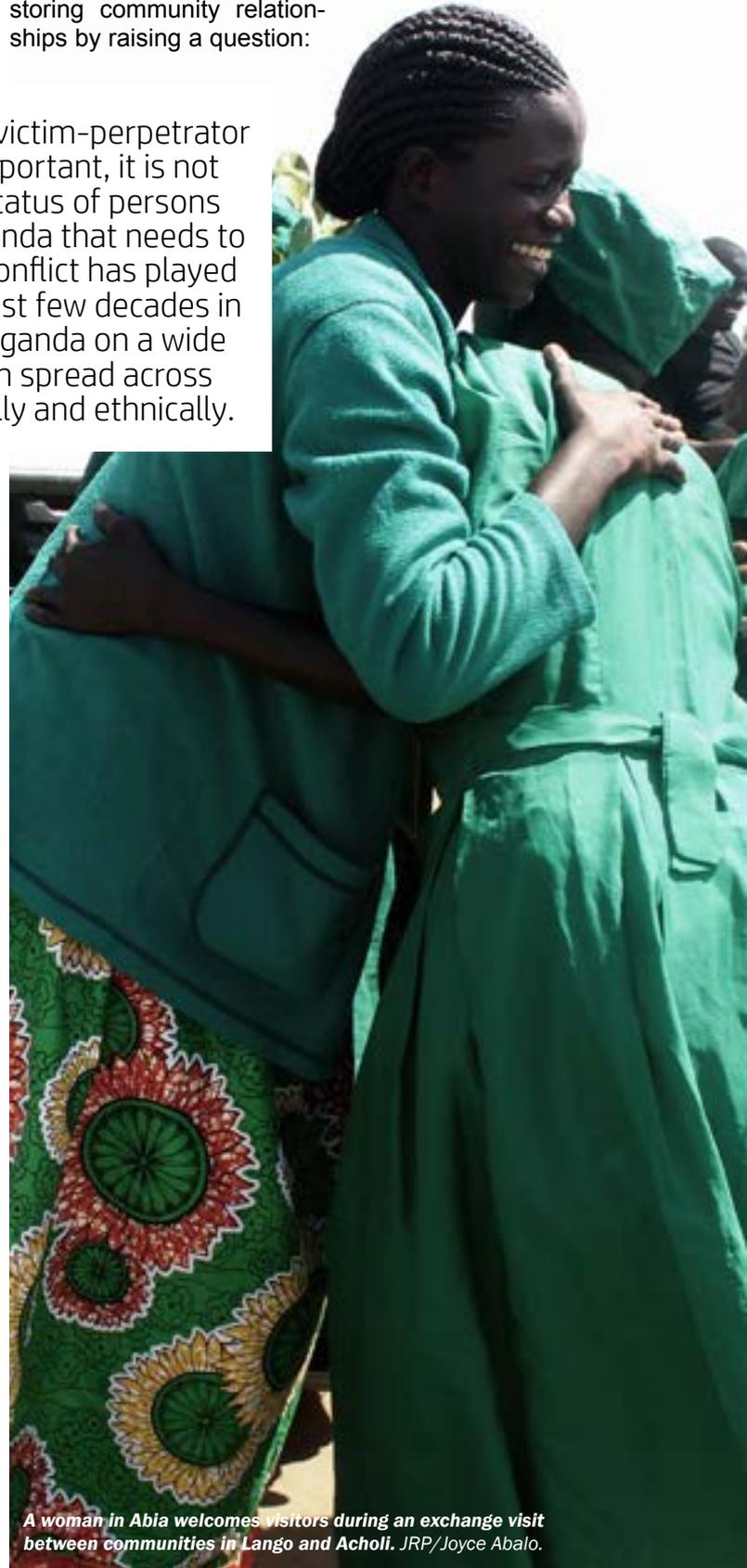
Tracing the trajectory of myriad violent conflicts that have fomented misunderstandings among different communities in northern Uganda, the panel discussion opened with a critical question, "Is this how we should be living or is there need for reconciliation among communities?"

In response, denouncing the violence and disruption in unity that armed conflicts cause one of the traditional leaders, Rwot Yusuf Adek of Pageya, foregrounded the need for reconciliation and encouraged inter-community dialogue and understanding through exchange visits in the post-war society of northern Uganda. In reference to Ongwen's case, he also condemned criminal prosecution

to be retributive in nature, and as failing to align with Acholi traditions of community-led reconciliation and restoration of relationships.

Upholding the need to "mend broken hearts", Bishop Onono Onweng called upon the divided communities in Acholi and Lango regions to "forgive, reconcile and avoid rumours that incite hatred towards each other", and underscored the value of restoring community relationships by raising a question:

Although recognising the victim-perpetrator dynamic in conflict is important, it is not the only aspect of the status of persons affected by conflict in Uganda that needs to be addressed. Because conflict has played a significant role in the past few decades in the northern region of Uganda on a wide scale, victims have been spread across region both geographically and ethnically.



A woman in Abia welcomes visitors during an exchange visit between communities in Lango and Acholi. JRP/Joyce Abalo.

'Reconciliation through exchange and learning.'

"If Ongwen is back after serving 30 years, what will his relationship with his community be and how will he feel about being imprisoned by his own people?"

Over the next one and a half days, all the participants visited five different communities, in Acholi, namely Atiak, Burcoro, Lukodi, Odek and Parabongo. This exchange visit was facilitated for the communities to learn about each other's conflict experiences and challenge their misconceptions of the 'other', share coping mechanisms and develop peer support, and to learn from the challenges and best practices of memorialisation processes adopted by different communities as a means to fostering community healing and reconciliation across different regions.

The visit to Odek highlighted the abject poverty, social ostracisation and unequal distribution of post-war recovery assistance that marked the community to the association with Joseph Kony. Several participants who previously held the belief that all community members of Odek bore the responsibility of perpetuating violence across northern Uganda during the LRA-led war, now expressed empathy with the sufferings

of the people.

In Burcoro, community members shared their struggles around failing to commemorate conflict memories due to constant threats by government officials attempting to mask state-led massacres and atrocities committed during the armed conflict in the region. Learning about their plight, fellow participants showed support and encouraged them to feel empowered, reclaim the power of the ballot and refrain from electing such local leaders in the future.

"We should collaborate and form a regional task force of victims to demand for justice across northern Uganda."

Subsequent visits to Lukodi, Parabongo and Atiak were very fruitful in fostering a deeper and empathetic understanding of the commonalities in conflict experiences shared by community members across different sub-regions of northern Uganda. A willingness to embrace the painful stories of others, offer compassionate support, and resolve to collectively envision the way forward towards reconciliation was witnessed during these visits. A participant from Lango sub-region shared:

It is an ancient saying – 'Travel to different places to open your mind and know more.' I learned a lot about atrocities committed in Acholi-land which I didn't know about before. I feel relieved from my anger and depression. Now it is important to stop complaining and blaming each other and to start acting together.

Participants also shared feeling inspired by the ongoing community-led memorialisation processes (such as construction of memorial monuments) in different villages and felt motivated to establish cross-community alliances for advocacy around common needs and interests. A participant voiced this sentiment by saying, "We should collaborate and form a regional task force of victims to demand for justice across northern Uganda."

The second exchange visit was held in Lira, Lango sub-region, from 30th September to 1st October, 2015, and attended by myriad key actors such as Community Development Officers (CDOs), Local Council-III and Local Council-V, from different districts of Lango sub-region, along with the Community Development Officer of Amuru district in Acholi sub-region, who moderated the dia-



Victims in Barlonyo give a delegation of victims from communities in Acholi and Lango a warm welcome during an exchange visit there on 30 September 2015. JRP/Joyce Abalo.

logue sessions during the visit.

Creating an immensely engaging and fruitful space for dialogue and understanding, the visits were successful in sensitising the leaders to the transition challenges faced by victims, while also allowing local leaders to share information on various existing government programs specially designed for victims of armed conflict and effective ways to access them. It was noted that although some programs existed for victims, they failed to address their special needs as victims. Addressing this challenge, the CDO of Amuru District encouraged the participants to emphasise their identity as 'victims' at community meetings and voice their unique needs as victims, which were distinct from those of regular community members:

Know who you are. Take your agenda as a victim of war, and not only as a community member, to these community dialogues which help shape programs for your special needs.

The visits also made great leaps forward with the Vice Chairman LC-V of Lira district, acknowledging the need for affirmative action for the disadvantaged sections of the society. He noted, "I will consider victims' groups as a special interest group in the local government development plan." This was a positive step in ensuring victims have greater support from local leaders, coupled with access to beneficial projects in the recovery process.

Following the dialogue with local leaders in Lira, participants visited the communities of Barlonyo and Abia in Lango sub-region. These visits were facilitated for communities to develop a common understanding of each other's conflict experiences and post-war transition challenges, along with presenting the opportunity to share their community memory projects, foregrounding the importance of memorialisation as a vital tool for healing, redress and reconciliation. Participants from Acholi sub-region, many of whom were visiting communities in Lango sub-region for the first time, asked several rounds of questions to deepen their understanding of the challenges and realities of 'the other side', and deeply appreciated the opportunity.

The visit to Lango concluded with an interaction with Mr. Opio Rashid George, the Minister of Transport and Tourism at the Lango cultural institution, who gave them an overview of the culture in Lango sub-region, and

The visits also made great leaps forward with the Vice Chairman LC-V of Lira district, acknowledging the need for affirmative action for the disadvantaged sections of the society. He noted, "I will consider victims' groups as a special interest group in the local government development plan."



L-R Vincent Oyet, Opira Opobo, and Cayamoi Kennedy of the Lukodi CORE team of Acholi, JRP intern Shilpi Shabdita, Odiya Ray and Ocak Tom from the Abia CORE team of Lango pose at the Memorial House at Lukodi Primary School displaying conflict memories through art and narratives on 30 July 2015. JRP/Joyce Abalo.

also underscored the need to work tirelessly towards supporting victims of war and deepening efforts towards regional reconciliation in northern Uganda.

It is noteworthy that both visits in Acholi and Lango sub-regions culminated in a marked positive shift in attitudes and perceptions toward 'the other' in the victims' representatives hailing from both regions, while succeeding in eliciting support for local leaders. Participants began

observing similarities in the cultures between Acholi and Lango sub-regions, along with noticing convergences in their practices of healing and reconciliation. Misconceptions were challenged and interrogated, as they saw a deeper picture of the war experiences, and post-war challenges and realities experienced by 'the other side', paving the path for cultivation of empathy, solidarity, and a motivation to work collaboratively towards goals of justice and reconciliation in northern Uganda. This sentiment was best captured in the words of a participant from Lukodi at the first exchange visit:

We have all experienced pain. So let us unite and fight for peace and justice with one common voice. Let us not see pain and conflict in fragmented ways, rather let us focus together on regional reconciliation. □

Shilpi Shabdita is an intern with the Justice and Reconciliation Project's Community Mobilisation team. She is pursuing a Masters' degree in International Peace Studies with a specialization in Grassroots-level Conflict Analysis and Transformation at the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, USA.



Providing a *platform* to share experiences

Despite a lack of formal transitional justice process on the part of the Ugandan government, JRP has established a unique way of identifying the transitional justice needs of war-affected communities and providing them the platform to express their concerns and demand accountability. By engaging these communities, especially women who were disproportionately affected by the conflict, community-based memory and reconciliation activities have challenged societal norms and demanded justice.

By KASIVA MULLI

The impact of conflict on any given community is manifold: livelihoods are disrupted, social cohesion is shattered, infrastructure is destroyed and people agonise from bodily injuries. Gross human rights violations suffered necessitate that there be established mechanisms that are able to restore such communities and provide remedies for victims of such gross violations. Despite Uganda enjoying relative peace since 2006 and despite the government committing to adopt and implement a transitional justice policy, nothing has been done to respond to the continued suffering of victims.

Recent developments such as the arrest of Dominic Ongwen by the International Criminal Court or the continuing trial of Thomas Kwoyelo at the International Crimes Division are just a drop in the ocean as regards to the transitional justice measures that the war-affected communities need in order to restore their lives. Demands for reparations, truth-telling processes, support for traditional justice mechanisms as well as memorialisation initiatives have continued to be ignored.

When I joined the Justice and Reconciliation Project, I often wondered how to engage survivors of conflict outside any formal transitional justice process. I came to learn that, actually, a lot can be achieved if you engage, empower and facilitate the survivors to bring their ideas to life. This is the approach JRP has applied and continues to apply in its work. Through its mission, JRP has worked to reach out to war-affected communities that are not only ignored by government but also those that continue to suffer from the attendant effects of war. JRP has visited those communities, helped them to

document their experiences and joined them together to establish ways of dealing with their experiences. These ways have included mobilising themselves to build community memorials, seek community reconciliation and cohesion as well as begin to demand accountability from the government.

The conflict in northern Uganda affected women disproportionately. Women were abducted, forced into marriages by rebels and forced to bear children as well as displaced into poorly secured camps where they were sexually violated. The patriarchal nature of the society, high illiteracy levels among women as well as poverty have meant that the effect of the conflict on women is worse. While realising the importance of women to participate in post-conflict reconstruction but still acknowledging the obstacles they were facing to make this possible, JRP through its Gender Justice program came up with the concept of “Ododo Wa”. This concept involved bringing women together informally to share their experiences, mostly under a tree or around a fire.

Through this platform and with the help of theatre and props, JRP helped these women understand the concept of transitional justice and articulate their justice needs.

When the women felt they needed a platform to share their experiences with the world and demand accountability from their leaders, JRP helped them establish the Women’s Advocacy Network (WAN). JRP continuously helps WAN by building their capacity and facilitating them to engage with political leaders. Last year, the group was able to present a petition in the Parliament of Uganda demanding for accountability for gender-related crimes committed during the conflict.

A lot can be achieved if you engage, empower and facilitate the survivors to bring their ideas to life.

In 2013, JRP facilitated the Atiak community to engage in an informal truth-telling process. Atiak is a community that has suffered several massacres. Through theatre, storytelling, documentation and memorialisation, the Atiak community participated in a community-based truth-telling process that saw perpetrators and victims find a platform to share their experiences of the war and make recommendations to how the Atiak community can move forward. Through this, the community has begun a conversation about how they would engage with a formal truth-telling process if it is established. They were also able to articulate the justice and accountability needs of their community.

Thus JRP has established in a unique way how to identify the transitional justice needs of war-affected communities and provide them with not only a voice but a platform to demand accountability. JRP's work made me learn that the success of any formal transitional justice process is determinant on how the victims are willing to engage in it. Victims are willing to engage fully if they know what the process is about and if their voices matter. I noticed how victims find importance in taking charge of documenting their experiences and establishing community cohesion as a result of their engagement. If Uganda ever adopts its transitional justice policy and implements a range of mechanisms related to it, they will be engaging with communities that, although having experienced a myriad of challenges including high levels of poverty and illiteracy, are aware of these processes and are able to not only engage with them but also clearly articulate their needs.

Additionally, the justice needs of communities are not always factored in the formal accountability processes so engaging with such communities beforehand helps reconcile these gaps and establish a balance that is acceptable to the community. An example is that the need for social cohesion has led to the demand for traditional justice which seeks to cleanse the perpetrator and welcome him back to the community. But sometimes the victims of such a perpetrator may not always be comfortable with such an arrangement and depending on crimes committed, traditional justice may not be adequate to address the issue at hand.

For me, the greatest lesson I learnt from JRP is that the absence of a formal transitional justice process in a country should not spell doom for communities affected by conflict. Instead, engaging communities and providing them with a platform to document their experiences, engage in community-based memory and reconciliation activities, as well as empowering women affected by conflict to challenge societal norms and actively demand gender justice prepares such communities to demand accountability and consciously engage with those processes. □

Reparations are needed now more than ever

By LUKE MOFFETT

Reparations are financial and symbolic measures to repair the harm, as far as possible, caused by human rights and humanitarian law violations. Under international law reparations include compensation, restitution, rehabilitation, measures of satisfaction (such as apologies and memorials) and guarantees of non-repetition (e.g. human rights training for state forces). Reparations are also intended to be victim-centred, in that they are meant to respond to the needs of victims, who have a role in the design of reparation programmes and to shape appropriate measures. Importantly reparations have been defined as a right of individuals to claim for redress where they have suffered harm as a result of human rights violations or international crimes by state or non-state armed groups, such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Even though non-state armed groups may be responsible for international crimes, the state is responsible for ensuring a reparation programme is in place for all victims, no matter if the perpetrator is not identified, apprehended or convicted.

Despite years of claiming reparations needs to be delivered in Uganda, the coming year is important year to mark reparations as a goal for northern Ugandan victims. 2016 is thirty years since the start of the northern Ugandan conflict, trials will begin for Dominic Ongwen and Thomas Kwoyelo as well as presidential elections, which all may put international attention on the continuing plight of northern Ugandan victims and pressure on the Ugandan government to implement a comprehensive reparations programme as part of its pending Transitional Justice policy.

Reparations in Uganda

Historically the Ugandan government has politically used reparations in Uganda. When the Ugandan government has provided reparations to victims on the run up to elections, such as the Shs200 million provided to victims of the Mukura massacre in June 2010, victims were not consulted on appropriate reparations and it neglected victims of similar atrocities. Again this year President Museveni promised compensation to victims of the Mukura massacre again (Shilpi Shabdita and Christine Sumog-Oy, "We Need Sincere Memorial Prayers"- Mukura Massacre Victims and Survivors Commemorate The 1989 NRA Massacre, Justice and Reconciliation Project: *Voices*, 30 July 2015). The Ugandan government was quick to deliver redress for victims of the high profile World Cup bombing in Kampala in 2010 that killed 86 people, providing in 2011 Shs5m for those who died or Shs3m for those injured, which 138 families benefited.

Similar reparations have not been paid to northern Ugandan victims or as quickly. The Ugandan government has instead couched reparations for northern Uganda in terms of development, such as Northern Ugandan Social Action Fund (NUSAF), and the Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), but these do not specifically redress the harm suffered by individual victims, but instead try to alleviate the development needs of society.

Victims have turned to the courts to seek compensation, but this is limited to those few who have the money and lawyers able to bring such cases. There have only been a handful of cases against the UPDF for abuses. The Acholi War Debt Claimants Association was successful in obtaining a court order for compensation to Shs2 billion for their 14,000 claimants for livestock

Continued on page 34.



In this article Nancy Apiyo shares about storytelling, a simple but effective method that has for used by JRP to document violations that occurred during the conflict. Through storytelling JRP has been able to compile rich narratives that have served to bring out new information and issues related to the conflict in northern Uganda. These stories have shaped transitional justice discussions in Uganda and have contributed towards having victim centered polices and laws in the country.

Storytelling for justice

BY NANCY APIYO

The Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) began to work with communities affected by war in 2005. Many of the children who had been abducted were returning home, the peace talks were ongoing and communities were still in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. And those who were returning and those who had remained home had stories to tell about the conflict. This was an important resource that could not be neglected. It was important for these stories to be reflected

Humans are memorials by virtue of the fact that they carry stories in their hearts and share them with others.

by laws and policies in the ongoing justice processes. Without these narratives there would be a vacuum in transitional justice.

Narratives from communities serve as evidence for what and absence of it leads to lack of justice.

Humans are memorials by virtue of the fact that they carry stories in their hearts and share them with others. Documenting of stories is also an acknowledgment of suffering.

The Ododo Wa ('our stories' in Acholi) project was created by JRP in 2007 to provide space for women to share their memories and acknowledge their suffering. Using storytelling as a documentation method, the project provided an avenue for survivors of war to comfortably talk about the violations that were inflicted on them. Storytelling is a culturally familiar and comfortable environment for the women to talk.

As JRP continued to use storytelling, it was observed that besides collecting information storytelling also strengthens survivors and promotes healing. The same method used for documentation is also important in enabling individuals come to terms with what happened. Healing took place when traumatic events of the past were discussed, acknowledged, and mourned among survivors. Also, during the storytelling survivors gave each other peer and moral support by enabling them to understand and support each other. Challenges such as social stigma that survivors of sexual and gender-based violence usually face can be addressed through sharing experiences.

Several methods have been used alongside storytelling to enable survivors freely express themselves such as 'body maps'. These methods such as the drawings have served to express what could have otherwise been difficult to express.

Body maps

Body maps entail drawing the outline of one's body and marking the inside of the picture of the body to represent the physical or emotional wounds one faced as a result of the war. For example, if there was an event or circumstance that disturbed one's mind by creating flashbacks or triggering unpleasant memories, a mark is made on the paper near the image of the head to represent pain. After marking the picture the survivor reflects on the mark they put and shares what they experienced. Body maps help women to focus on what happen to them as woman. It is common for women to usually talk about violations that occurred to others and not focus on what happened to them.

The body map helps the women to focus on what specifically happened to them.

Life maps

Another method to facilitate sharing is life maps. On a piece of paper, survivors are asked to identify events that changed their lives for better or worse. They draw symbols on paper to represent that event and then draw a line to map out what happened chronologically. They later on share what they drew. The purpose of this exercise is to help answer questions about the past, recognise the impact on their present-day life, and examine what is possible in the future.

Place maps

Another method is women draw places that they have ever stayed in and then share experiences of what happened to them in these places. This triggers some memories of events that took place in these places that are later on shared.

Memory quilts

Memory quilts entail a survivor drawing a picture that symbolised his/her experience. Oftentimes, they draw a picture of different symbols, including a soldier, a tree, a thatched grass hut, a small child, or any other object and afterwards explain represented in the object. Memory quilts are helpful because they help women to use imagery to represent their experiences, which can be used to facilitate sharing.

They draw symbols on paper to represent that event and then draw a line to map out what happened chronologically. They later on share what they drew. The purpose of this exercise is to help answer questions about the past, recognise the impact on their present-day life, and examine what is possible in the future.



Above: A place map Below: A body map.



Theatre

Drama and theatrical activities can also be utilised to act out whatever one went through. Theatre is not only about performances, stories or song but also a way of expression. It is positive tool to help women reenact their experience. The games involved in theatre create an atmosphere of joy and trust. Whether a person

'Storytelling for justice.'

is educated or not, theatre gives them space to reflect themselves in a way that is accessible.

Coloured quilts

Survivors can also use fabric to share their stories. Each colour of the fabric illustrates a certain event in their life. The various color of fabric is knitted to together to illustrate the journey in some one's life. For instance a woman can use a white cloth to show how life was before abduction, black to represent abduction, blue to illustrate that life was fair, yellow to display times of happiness, and other bright or dark colors illustrate their experiences during conflict. When the pieces of cloth are tied together then the person can share about their experiences, explaining why they chose a certain color and how it represents their life.

Music

Songs can be composed and recorded about important issues in the life of survivors such as children born in captivity, ending social stigma, experience as an abductee and so on. The songs help to understand what survivors experienced before, during and after conflict.

Sharing stories of the past a helps in creating a sense of unity, solidarity and understanding between survivors.

Timelines

Timelines are a chronology of events that someone experienced. These chronological timelines help survivors recall their experiences and make sharing easier. For example someone might share that she was born in 1980, abducted in 1995, forced to marry a commander in 1996, gave birth to a child in 1998, returned from captivity in 2004, and explain her present-day circumstances.

Sharing stories among survivors also helps to have a reflective process needed to help people to understand their collective wounds, the negative and positive changes that have occurred. This can foster the shaping of personal stories and help survivors see larger trends that relate to their own experiences they went through that can be difficult to discern. Survivors can begin to identify collective wounds that they have to address. Sharing stories of the past a helps in creating a sense of unity, solidarity and understanding between survivors.

When survivors collectively acknowledge violations it becomes easy for them to organise as agents of change around an issue. This eventually leads to victim mobilisation where victim come together to advocate for a certain cause. An example is the Women's Advocacy Network (WAN) that was formed in 2011, four years after women began to share their experiences. This was after the women realised that it was important to not only share their stories among each other but stand up to advocate for justice, reconciliation and accountability for the violations that were afflicted on them. The WAN has given them a platform to fight for justice.

With the lessons learnt from the Ododo Wa project JRP began to use storytelling as a documentation method, a way of building confidence among survivors and as a process of victim mobilisation. □

Nancy Apiyo is a project officer with JRP's Gender Justice department.



The Women's Advocacy Network and Engendering TJ

The current toolbox for transitional justice focuses only on individual harm and is inadequate to address structural violence but it should consider local approaches and emphasise local agency and resources to achieve real transformative gender justice. The Women's Advocacy Network (WAN) at the Justice and Reconciliation Project is a viable grassroots model for transformation as their experience has relevance for structural change at community level as well as contributing to engendering the TJ process in Uganda. This article explores how local processes present the silver bullet for achieving transformative justice in northern Uganda.

By SYLVIA OPINIA

Transformative justice is a 'transformative change that emphasises local agency and resources', the prioritisation of processes rather than preconceived outcomes and challenging of unequal and intersection of power relationships and structures of exclusion at both local and global level' (Gready and Robins, 2014:340). Transformation is seen as changes that occur at societal levels (Erin Daly, 2002) including those addressing structural and socioeconomic inequalities (Evans, 2015) and an increasing appreciation for justice processes that are rooted at community levels (Boesten and Wilding, 2015). The notion of transformative gender justice therefore explores the possibilities for justice mechanisms to have broader outcomes that transform gender relations and positions of women in society.

Post conflict reconstruction is an opportunity to undo past harms and steer change with building blocks for the resolution of future problems without resorting to violence and war (Schirch, 2012). In practice however, Transitional Justice's (TJ) – (mechanisms to address the legacy of mass human rights abuse) - focus is narrow, leaning towards civil and political rights that pays attention to individual harm while being disconnected from structural inequalities within which violence thrives. Issues such as inequalities, social injustice and poverty are outside of its scope, lending itself to the conclusion that the TJ toolbox (criminal processes, reparations, truth telling and various kinds of institutional reforms) is inadequate to address structural violence, inequalities and violations of socioeconomic rights (Evans, 2015). Yet in situations of post conflict, women are affected in diverse ways and their ability to seek justice is impacted by existing structural vulnerabilities. Hence 'at the heart of calls for transformative measures for gender justice lies the analysis that gendered violence is not limited to, nor particularly characteristic of conflict' (Boesten and Wilding, 2015:78) and the realisation that, norms and practices that



govern patriarchy are closely intertwined with institutions that reinforce violence.

There is growing debate for TJ mechanisms to consider local approaches that lend themselves to cultural relevance as an opportunity to contest the exclusions of marginalised groups. It is a good example of how TJ processes can utilise the concept of participation through exploring the local realities in a process designed and led by the locals (Lundy and McGovern, 2008).

This article argues that the Women's Advocacy Network (WAN) at the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) is a viable grassroots model for transformation as their experience has relevance for structural change at community level as well as contributing to engendering the TJ process in Uganda.

In 2009, 27 formerly abducted women were gathered under a mango tree in the outskirts of Gulu town in storytelling circles. On average, they had spent eight years in the bush and returned with between one and five children. Meeting every month, the mothers discussed a range of topics such as justice, children, and marriage (Baines and Stewart, 2011). With severe deprivation and stigma from their own communities, the women used these storytelling forums to gain acceptance so that they move beyond memories of the past.

To JRP, these storytelling sessions were a tool for documentation of life stories in order to understand the roles the women played within LRA and their experiences upon returning home (Baines and Stewart, 2011) and an opportunity for advocacy for the justice needs of women in Uganda. Through storytelling the women were able to find a safe space, one that is culturally understood by women to talk freely about their experiences with peers. Later in 2011, WAN was formed by JRP to help marginalised women gain a platform where they can advocate for their justice needs. Under this umbrella the network has since grown to over 600 grassroots women in northern Uganda, whose lives have been changed through the power of storytelling.

The women began by first acknowledging that they have rights and these rights have been violated, and then documenting these violations to make them known. They worked with local leaders to establish their claims as women, moving from a position of powerlessness to a position of power, where they felt that they could be able to have influence to challenge stereotypes that enhance re-victimisation of women. Since its inception, WAN has carried out several activities that have helped the women gain a better understanding of their rights and encouraged women to form their opinions on how TJ in Uganda should take shape, providing them with a voice.

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Through this process, they began to share the truth about their experiences with their families and members of the community, through talk shows, community outreach sessions, and personal interactions through exchange visits to other communities. More importantly, WAN has made the public to understand the violations that women went through during the conflict and continue to undergo as a result of their experiences.

WAN is also credited for their contribution towards engendering the ongoing TJ process in Uganda. The terribly slow process of the national TJ policy framework is concentrated at the central with very minimal involvement of grassroots stakeholders (Otim and Kihika, 2015). Though commitment to mainstreaming gender has been confirmed, Uganda's TJ process lacks a clear analysis on gender justice and how they are incorporated into the accountability mechanisms, risking the opportunity to redress deep rooted gendered structural injustices. However, WAN has managed to achieve political recognition by acquiring a seat at the consultations for the on-going processes. They periodically participate in consultations organised by the Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS), as well as challenging programmes that do not respond to the needs of women affected by conflict. While their presence may not automatically turn into substantive representation, it can be argued that they have managed to provide visibility for women's physical presence as well as their voice in a traditionally male dominated terrain.

A focus on local processes, that enhance local agency and ownership, offer the silver bullet to compliment the overly prescribed and externally driven processes for TJ

By illuminating storytelling to address concerns affecting women, it is here seen as a form of justice making, one in which women seek to make sense of their experience, cope with what has happened and work towards positioning themselves in a community and

country from which they have been excluded. By articulating a specific set of points for justice, they begin to make justice as they see it, not as predetermined by a set of institutions. They have seen their role as critical in the formulation of post conflict justice needs and realise that they cannot be left out of TJ discourse that affect women, as realisation of their right is critical step towards sustainable peace building. As Baines and Stewart (2011) argue, stories told in the local setting provide an opportunity for survivors especially women to question their discrimination and therefore an important locally relevant process of justice seeking.

The policy implication for Uganda's TJ process therefore is the adoption of transformative lenses with a realisation and understanding that women face multiple forms of oppression that limit their dignity, rights and agency. A transformative approach to justice provides an analytical framework to assess the extent to which existing gendered socioeconomic injustices are rooted in structural inequalities (Evans 2015) as well as provid-

ing a tool to evaluate whether interventions are geared towards achieving socio-economic transformation.

This is possible with criteria that focus on empowerment through local participation, ensuring that mechanisms are not reinforcing institutionalised inequalities and do not take women back to the condition they were in before, giving them an opportunity to get out of the cycle of re-victimisation. Evidence from the WAN suggests that a focus on local processes, that enhance local agency and ownership, offer the silver bullet to compliment the overly prescribed and externally driven processes for TJ.

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The importance of victim-centric research on transitional justice

By PHILIPP SCHULZ

Victim oriented and victim centric processes are essential approach in transitional justice which compels victim's participation for justice. This means victims have to be consulted broadly to provide their perspective, view and needs toward justice. The article describes the role of JRP as platform to enhance participation of victims by breaking silence of victims and empowering them to speak up for themselves in justice needs and initiatives that concern them following the northern Ugandan conflict.

In many ways, the burgeoning field of transitional justice (TJ) within post-authoritarian and post-conflict contexts has developed from its rather exceptionalist origins towards a standardised, normalised, internationalised and mainstreamed concept. Different transitional justice mechanisms and processes, from judicial accountability and prosecutions, to truth-seeking initiatives and reparation and memorialisation efforts are being applied throughout various conflicts globally. This is far from an exhaustive list, however, and transitional justice encompasses a range of different instruments, which often are very contextual and cultural-specific. In addition to the above mentioned processes, for example, prominent transitional justice instruments and mechanisms in post-conflict northern Uganda include traditional and indigenous justice ceremonies, such as *mato oput*.

Initially, accompanying the emergence and the development of the field of transitional justice, the vast majority of these mechanisms were primarily state-centric, and driven by national governments. During the last couple of years, however, we have been witnessing a growing trend of localising transitional justice processes, towards more regional and local ownership over these processes by the commu-

nities affected by the violence and conflicts that the TJ mechanisms are designed to respond to. The field of transitional justice is under-going a shift to the local as a level

Consulting with victims has only recently begun to emerge as an international practice, Its importance has still not been fully recognised by everyone engaged in the field of transitional justice.



JRP's Documentation team conducts research for 'The Day They Came: Recounting the LRA's invasion of Teso sub-region through Obalanga sub-county in 2003, FN XIV' with survivors in Obalanga, Amuria district in 2011. Photograph courtesy of Philipp Schulz.

'The importance of victim-centric research.'

of intervention for TJ processes, while at the same time, local justice ideas are receiving increasing attention as an alternative or addition to more formalised transitional justice mechanisms.

These efforts of enhancing local agency and ownership of TJ processes are accompanied by increasing attention to victim-oriented transitional justice practices and victim-centric research. Despite recent developments, most transitional justice processes globally are still rarely driven by the needs of those most affected by conflict. Even though more attention is being paid to local justice initiatives, the decisions over which mechanisms

exactly to apply and how to do so are mostly taken by national or international elites, rather than by local conflict-affected populations. By seeking

to speak on behalf of local communities, such approaches are silencing victims and survivors, thereby doing them a great disservice through disempowering conflict-affected communities. Early transitional justice processes have been characterised by an absence or insufficient attention to the perspectives and immediate needs of victim communities.

Consulting with victims about their perspectives and needs has only recently begun to emerge as an international practice, and admittedly, its importance has still not been fully recognised by everyone engaged in the field of transitional justice.

To avoid largely patronising practices of implementing post-conflict transitional justice in a top-down approach, the last couple of years have seen an increase in what can be called victim-centric transitional justice approaches and research.

According to research by Simon Robins, for example, the term victim-centric can be used "to define a transitional justice process or mechanism that arises as a response to the explicit needs of victims, as defined by the victims themselves."

In many ways, such a victim-centric approach stands in stark contrast to elite-controlled transitional justice agendas, and optimises the addressing of and accounting for victims' and survivors' needs. To achieve such victim-oriented and victim-centric processes, broad and inclusive consultations with victim communities are required, to capture their

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At an international level, throughout the past few years, comprehensive national consultations with those affected by violence and conflict are increasingly becoming recognised as critical elements of holistic transitional justice processes. Studies and reports by the United Nations, for example, emphasise that it is important that victims are consulted effectively regarding their experiences and regarding their perspectives on transitional justice. Such approaches are necessary to ensure that these processes sufficiently respond to victims' harms and reflect their needs and viewpoints. It is being recognised that victim-centric consultations with survivors are necessary to mandate and design transitional justice

processes that are sensitive and responsive to victims' needs and to their priorities.

At the local level, in northern Uganda, since its establishment in 2005, the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) has been at the forefront of implementing victim-centric research on transitional justice. JRP's work aims to ensure victim-oriented justice and reconciliation instruments and mechanisms which put conflict-affected communities at the heart of the process. Through participatory and action-oriented research methodologies and approaches, JRP's work aims to capture the experiences, stories and views of victims and survivors. At the same time, this enhances local ownership of conflict-affected communities over these processes.

Throughout the past ten years, JRP has prioritised local victims' needs in relation to on-going transitional justice processes in northern Uganda. Specifically, JRP's regular situational briefs, such as for example the recent community perceptions on Dominic Ongwen, or previous assessments of local perceptions on truth-telling efforts in northern Uganda or on grassroots views on Uganda's amnesty act are illustrative examples of victim-centric research as carried out by JRP.

As an immediate result of these empowering and victim-oriented efforts, local conflict-affected communities across northern Uganda are now having their voices heard and their stories shared. For example, catalysed through the victim-lead work by JRP, communities of survivors and victims are now implementing their own documentation initiatives. Furthermore, supported through JRP's victim-centric approach, the Women's Advocacy Network (WAN) in 2014 has been able to advocate for a resolution on reparations for conflict-affected women in northern Uganda by the Ugandan parliament. Such victim and survivor-led campaigns are an immediate outcome of the empowering effects of victims' consultation and victim-centric research and work, as carried out by JRP.

Through this focus on victim-centric research on transitional justice process, JRP's work not only has an impact on developments locally, such as for example the development of the Women's Advocacy Network (WAN) or the growth of community-led memorialisation projects and initiatives, to name just a few recent examples. Furthermore, JRP's activities contribute to international best practices in this regard, as evidenced by the growing emergence of more victims' consultations globally, both within academia and on a policy-level. Indeed, much scholarship and many

practices globally are paying close attention to how JRP places victims at the centre of transitional justice processes, and how the organisation conducts victim-centric research on issues relating to justice and reconciliation. □

Philipp Schulz is a PhD candidate at the Transitional Justice Institute (TJI) at Ulster University in Northern Ireland. His research explores the nexus between post-conflict transitional justice and conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against males in Northern Uganda, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Northern Ireland. Throughout his research, Philipp applies participatory methodologies and a victim-centric approach. Between 2011 and 2012, Philipp interned with JRP's Documentation Department.



Field Note

My Body, A Battlefield: Documenting Survivors' Experiences Of Conflict Sexual Violence in Koch Ongako

In January 2013, the Gender Justice Unit (GJU) at JRP embarked on a process to document, through storytelling and other participatory methods, the experiences of conflict sexual violence that occurred during more than two decades of conflict between the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Koch Ongako, a community in Gulu district.

Encouraged by the fact that sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV), in the context of protracted conflict, continues to be one of the least accounted for crimes in Uganda and the world, the purpose of the exercise was to document and acknowledge these violations and their long-term consequences on the lives of male and female victims and the community in which they live, to help survivors come to terms with the past and to inform policies and processes to provide redress and accountability.

This forthcoming field note resulting from this process provides first-person accounts of sexual violence at the hands of state and non-state armed actors and civilians from the perspectives of male and female survivors in Koch Ongako. It concludes with an exploration of outcomes from the documentation process and recommendations for the GoU, civil society and the community.

It is envisaged that this document shall inform and feed into national processes for transitional justice, both in terms substance and the participatory process used to engage victims. □

This section of *Voices* highlights on-going transitional justice research in transitional justice and provide a forum for sharing knowledge in this area. It provides an opportunity for researchers to share lessons and insight from the research process, as well as share upcoming research projects.
To contribute email voices@justiceandreconciliation.com.

Emerging Technologies: Cultural concepts in ICT design for conflict contexts

By GWYNETH SUTHERLIN, Ph.D.

Information and communication technology (ICT) applications are increasingly being used to collect data for policy makers indicating hotspots of electoral violence, post-conflict unrest, economic need, or even health crises. However, these technologies have been primarily designed in the US and Europe so they tend to exhibit those cultural communication norms, particularly surrounding how we recall information—the narrative structure of memory. These technologies are playing a growing role in transitional justice programs, a field that has struggled with the challenge of integrating multiple concepts of justice and reconciliation into coherent policy.¹ The transitional justice context is a prime example of how communication challenges can be amplified by the limitations of technology design, but also where focus on cultural variation will be fruitful. This is a brief summary of the doctoral research project² in which I explored how cultural concepts such as justice and culpability intersect with ICT, and the potential to design technologies that foreground voice over data. Combined with the emphasis in reconciliation on narrative gathering, this study examined the narrative constraints imposed by the ICT itself – embedded cultural constructs.

The current design of ICTs anticipates how users answer questions or conceptualise information from a single cultural perspective. For example, a human rights abuse report requires the same basic narrative elements of a paragraph in English: who, what, when, where, why. Conceptualisation often requires intricate relational understandings of objects, persons, time,

1 Avruch, K., 2010. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: Problems in Transitional Justice and the Reconstruction of Identity. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 47: 33 (online) <http://center.theparent-scircle.org/images/d3823b51caa84332b100f1478f0e3ebd.pdf>
2 Sutherland, G. (2014). Myth of the Universal User-- Pursuing a Cultural Variable in ICT Design for Conflict Management through Quantitative Analysis: Implications from a Ugandan Case Study. Ph.D. Thesis. University of Bradford, UK.

space, and events especially when describing or recalling a memory relating to justice, human rights, or conflict. These are vital elements that vary widely across cultures but such variation is not considered in ICT design beyond interface language.

My hypothesis was that the technologies were, in fact, not only less useful outside of the cultures that created them, but that they also distorted the information they collected. I wanted to demonstrate with clear experimental data how this distortion occurred, the vital impact it could have on policy-making in contexts of post-conflict reconciliation, and potential avenues for improving the technology to be more responsive to the needs of users in cultures such as the Acholi.

In 2013, I conducted a three-part experiment in Gulu town, Uganda with 29 bilingual Acholi-English volunteers. Participants were asked to watch a short video on a laptop from YouTube titled, 'Crazy Nigerians'. They were asked to describe what they had seen in Acholi, 'Lok ma ineno/*Tell me what you saw*,' then they were handed a mobile phone to answer question(s) about the video in Acholi, and finally they described the scene again in English. Some participants provided their answers in the form of an unstructured SMS while others answered 13 open and closed questions in the form of a smartphone app (in Acholi).

Using participants' first oral Acholi version as a baseline, the analysis focused on comparing fundamental elements called *frames*. Take for example the statements *he was fighting* and *I saw two men fighting* each made up of two frames. They match on the type of event occurring (a fight), but do not match on who the main actor is (he vs. they). To count as a 'match' between the Acholi recall and the ICT recall, the narratives had to match on three fundamental frames: main actors (who was doing the action), overall event concept (what kind of event was happening), and doubt (how certain was the participant about what s/ he saw).

The idea behind this method was to focus on concepts underpinning the words. This method has value not only in exploring the intersection of technology and narrative but also for engaging with the complexities inherent in building and evaluating transitional justice programs.

Strikingly, the results showed that ¾ of the recalls did not match. That means that the information collected by the technology did not give the same fundamental account as the initial oral Acholi recall. Because the participants were recalling a video of a street brawl, their narratives described potential rea-

sons for the brawl. Crucially, several participants claimed that one specific individual was to blame for the incident in their ICT recall while they had described a group having possibly been involved in something during their initial Acholi oral recall. This may be due to cultural variations in the conceptualisation of culpability (shared vs. individual). Current technology is not adept at parsing collective elements, for example, the concept of individual personhood drives individual login design. In addition to the shift in the main actors, several participants changed the very nature of the event between these two recalls shifting between describing it as a fight or a theft. If we imagine these reports as part of a police investigation or a policy action about community violence, the initial set of oral reports seemed to indicate no action was needed while the ICT reports pointed the finger at one man. Critically, the elements that shifted or were most affected by recall via ICT were concepts that are key to peace, justice, and reconciliation work. This finding points toward the value of pursuing further software development to address cultural variation.

One reason for the distortion may be the technology's focus on text-based communication. Among the nearly 7000 languages only around 100 have developed a literature, but these text-based languages dictate information and communication technology development. Predominately based on the narrative structure of English—*who, what, where, when, why* (and *how*)—these points have become the tick boxes, categories, and logical links between information in current ICT design. Acholi does not share this narrative structure. In fact, many languages do not. The differences often revolve around categorisation and can affect time, spatial reference, actors/agents, and concepts of causality. When the narrative structures of Acholi are crammed into an ICT format, the narrative unravels and loses meaning. The same could be said with the sound or tonal qualities essential for meaning in Acholi.

A participant from a micro-finance organisation described why he used English to text:

We wish to text in Luo, wish to maybe send voice mails in Luo, but [the mobile phone] has been invented in another country, so in English we have to now do that. [researcher: Why couldn't you text in Luo?] In Luo? It is not easy. You know our language is very short. *chuch chuch chuch* [noise of texting action]. So to formulate is not easy. Participant 29, male age 25-35

Acholi speech relies on tonal cues for meaning. It combines intonation with repetition in the narrative structure, and it is through these elements that doubt is constructed. Current ICT is not able to detect this construction and relies most often on direct questions such as, *how sure are you?* Tone and narrative repetition patterns are the kind of linguistic elements that have

The context of conflict resolution, peace, and reconciliation demands nuanced communication and relies on detailed information gathering to make sound policy judgments; if technology plays an increasing role in this arena, it must be able to contend with cultural variation in key concepts such as justice or culpability.

not been readily adaptable to mobile applications where the design focus is on minimalism and streamlining of interface text, so they are potential avenues for improvement.

The engineers Odejobi and Adegbola of the African Languages Technology Initiative (ALT-I) in Nigeria have written:

The development of a computer-mediated communication technology must therefore be based on a systematic, retrospective and reflective review of African language. Such systematic study should look in to the past, i.e., in to the people's culture, with the aim of identifying the burial cites [sic] of knowledge so that they could be exhumed to develop technologies that will not only be useful technologically, but will help to reinforce and support the people's culture through their

use in CMC based discourse.³

Their work is a point of departure and a call to examine how these technological tools can continue to be developed and improved to do what any tool should—make our tasks easier. The context of conflict resolution, peace, and reconciliation demands nuanced communication and relies on detailed information gathering to make sound policy judgments; if technology plays an increasing role in this arena, it must be able to contend with cultural variation in key concepts such as justice or culpability. There is enormous potential to imagine new design avenues that incorporate more cultural concepts to empower communities working in conflict contexts. Particularly because the sense of right and wrong is very much connected to culture, and the current ICT tools reflect the conceptualisation of the culture where the tools

were designed rather than the post-conflict cultures where they are deployed, future designs could imagine how to collect narratives from multiple cultural perspectives.

Beyond suggesting that ICT tools could be culturally adapted at a conceptual level, utilisation of this concept-centered methodology provides a promising new means to

evaluate reconciliation programs on their potential to be accepted and succeed. □

Gwyneth Sutherland, Ph.D. speaks and publishes frequently on emerging technology's intersection with governance, intercultural communication, and political enfranchisement. Her work emphasises the role of technology in shaping political voice in the context of conflict, in particular, in the MENA and Sub-Saharan regions of Africa drawing on a decade of expertise facilitating intercultural dialogue that has garnered UN recognition.

3 Odejobi, T. & Adegbola, T. (2010). Computational and engineering issues in human computer interaction systems for supporting communication in African languages. In O.A. Taiwo (Ed.), *Handbook of research on discourse behavior and digital communication: language structures and social interaction*. (p7-9). [ebook]. ISBN: 9781615207732

Community reconciliation and development is essential for former child soldiers

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programs are important components of post-conflict development and establishment of peace, and have been featured prominently in peacekeeping operations over the last twenty years. However, community development and reconciliation have been historically overlooked in the reintegration process. Children, especially girls, were often not even recognised in DDR programs until recently. There also remains the significant challenge of overcoming the assumptions that former child soldiers return to peaceful well-functioning communities and that simply reinserting them back into such communities is enough.

By STEPHANIE SCOTT

I wrote my Master's thesis on the reintegration efforts for former child soldiers in northern Uganda. In it I touched upon the importance of transitional justice and truth-telling in helping aid community reconciliation and acceptance of former child soldiers. Justice and reconciliation help reduce further isolation and stigmatization, both of which may act as a hindrance to successful reintegration. I found that the literature paid little attention to the long-term goals and outcomes of the reintegration process in northern Uganda or the complex relationships between DDR and community development. Instead, there seemed to be an emphasis on establishing peace and security as the main priority. My concern is that DDR is being regarded as a short-term approach when it really needs to be integrated into the entire long-term development initiative. DDR helps establish security and stability so that recovery and development can begin during the transition period from conflict to peace. The ultimate object of any reintegration effort should be the welfare of the people.

I found that the common criticism of DDR in the literature was in fact the lack of community reconciliation in current reintegration efforts, especially for former child soldiers. DDR is often based on Western assumptions of trauma and healing the symptoms of an individual versus a community. A community-based model of DDR is based on the assumption that psychological trauma

has a social and cultural dimension. There is a need for community reconciliation within DDR that is not just directed at individual ex-combatants but targets the entire community affected by conflict. The most successful examples of reintegration I found in the literature, and from non-government organizations (NGOs) that I interviewed, included the involvement of the entire community. There was also a focus on integrating all aspects of reintegration, rehabilitation, reconciliation, peace-building, capacity-building and post-conflict development into one comprehensive framework.

The Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP) believes that transitional justice and truth telling are important in reconciliation ceremonies and help aid in the healing process. It is essential to increase community mobilization, build capacity and provide support for victims. Two of the NGOs I interviewed, ChildVoice International and Grassroots Reconciliation Group, are strong advocates for community reconciliation being recognised at the forefront of reintegration efforts. ChildVoice uses a residential program for women and girls in northern Uganda. They live together and work with community members who were not former combatants. Grassroots Reconciliation Group uses mixed groups of victims and community members centred on completing various projects, often establishing businesses. In many cases, there is a desire for traditional justice and reconciliation among the majority of community members. DDR and long-term development need to focus on including the entire community.

Furthermore, the United Nations definition of DDR often considers child soldiers as a homogenous group who share the same experiences and have the same needs upon their return. There cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to DDR. Some of the children and youth face multiple challenges when they return, including a lack of education and employment opportunities, poverty, political tensions and ongoing security issues. Insecurity is not only an issue in itself after conflict, but it becomes a development challenge because the environment may not be suitable for sustaining long-term initiatives. Reintegration needs to take place in a secure environment and be incorporated within both development and security agendas. There exists the assumption that reintegration is complete when an individual is simply placed back into a community; ignoring the importance of post-conflict development and forgiveness but children cannot simply be reintegrated into an environment that offers little to no alternative options to involvement in war. Reintegration itself is not all that is needed to achieve a child's social and economic reinsertion into normal community life.

One of the most significant quotes I got from my interviews (which I even used in the title of my thesis) was from Kasper Agger, co-founder of Grassroots Reconciliation Group, who said that "...you need to rebuild communities so there is something to be reintegrated into." This idea seems so simple yet it remains a challenge for DDR to this day. When Kasper Agger talked about rebuilding communities, he mentioned not only the physical infrastructure, economic recovery and na-

tional security, but the needs of both ex-combatants and the community through reconciliation and acceptance. DDR, specifically reintegration, is not as straightforward as simply providing the support, skills and resources; it requires that the proper environment and rights co-exist. The African proverb “it takes a village” rings very true in the case of successful reintegration and post-conflict development in northern Uganda. □

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Victims of conflict need the government and civil society to work together

Over years, the relationship between the Ugandan government and civil society has been tested, especially in light of the controversial NGO Bill. In this article, Mugeru Jesse argues that the government and civil society need each other to ensure that justice is brought to victims of war especially in realisation of the right to reparations.

BY MUGERU JESSE

Professor Makau Mutua states that transitional justice involves a two-step process of change. The first seeks to stabilise a post-conflict society through temporary measures that signal a commitment to addressing abuses of the past. The second component concerns the ethics and appearances of the processes and outcomes. I submit that the future of transitional justice in Uganda lies in the enforcement of economic, social and cultural rights. Of relevance to this article is the right to reparations for victims of war. This is part of that second process. And one key challenge to the functioning and success of the civil society organisations (CSOs) is the lack of response by the Government to the demands of CSOs. It is not possible today to imagine a vibrant, democratic and modern society in which the state is not policed by an active, independent and effective civil society.

The Transitional Justice movement in Uganda has seen CSOs taking the lead role as the government is yet to implement a transitional justice policy and thus the needs of victims have yet to be met. Some of the initiatives done by the CSOs include memorialisation activities and documentation of massacres, economic empowerment of victims and provision of medical assistance and psychological support.

CSOs can therefore be seen as a support for the government but also as a safeguard against government power. There is need to examine the traditional

relationship between the two in terms of the mutual benefit that accrues to each. First, the government has the primary duty to protect and promote human freedoms and is mandated to do so under international treaties and national law. However, CSOs need that civic space within which to operate. The existence of a sympathetic government is central to the existence and effectiveness of CSOs. Without such space, then CSOs are unlikely to exist. Therefore, although CSOs are viewed as separate from the government and often in opposition to it, they rely on the government for its existence as a focus for its activities. Secondly, the Government is an important precondition for CSOs. The delivery of social services and development in general is facilitated by the government. The economic, social and political infrastructure that CSOs need in order to function are provided by the government. If the government denies CSOs the infrastructure for their activities, they (CSOs) would be disabled and pushed to extinction.

The relationship between the Ugandan government and civil society has not been smooth in wake of the recent NGO Bill which is still being debated in Parliament. The Bill is meant to curtail on activities of NGOs and there is a genuine concern that it is targeting NGOs thought to be against the government. A good working relationship between the government and CSOs would be beneficial to victims of war. The government ought to view CSOs as partners in bringing justice to victims. There are various opportunities for synergy. For example, some CSOs have already established trustworthy relationships with communities. There could be an opportunity for them to share information with the government that would help to ensure that the needs of victims are taken care of.

It is interesting to note that the Government through the Justice, Law and Order Sector (JLOS) is just now planning to document human rights abuses committed in northern Uganda during the two-decade Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) war. The planned expanded programme is to include a record of other forms of violations that happened in the rest of the country from 1987 to 2007 (as reported in the Sunday Monitor 4th October 2015). The human rights documentation programme will also be a follow-up to the Justice Arthur Oder-led Commission of Inquiry into violations of human rights covering a 24-year period from 1962 to 1986. The documentation will run for a five-year period but with a time frame of two years dedicated to recording atrocities in northern Uganda during fighting between LRA and Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF).

There is need to examine the traditional relationship between the two in terms of the mutual benefit that accrues to each

'Reparations are needed now more than ever.' From page 21.

and agriculture equipment taken during the conflict, a tiny fraction of their original Shs45 trillion claim. Yet the Association has been wracked with allegations of corruption and slow payment by the government. Other claimant associations are also pursuing compensation claims, but it is a slow process.

Ideally, however, it is the government that is responsible for establishing a reparations programme for all victims, rather than those who can claim for it before a court, so as to take the burden off victims in seeking redress.

The Juba Peace Agreement between the LRA and the Ugandan government agreed to formulate reparations to victims that would include 'rehabilitation; restitution; compensation; guarantees of non-recurrence and other symbolic measures [satisfaction], such as apologies, memorials and commemorations'. The Ugandan government would establish 'a special fund for victims, out of which reparations shall be paid', similar to the Trust Fund for Victims before the International Criminal Court (ICC). However, since the breakdown in talks in 2008, the govern-

When the government provided Shs200 million to victims of the Mukura massacre in June 2010, victims were not consulted on appropriate reparations and it neglected victims of similar atrocities. Again this year President Museveni promised compensation to victims of the Mukura massacre again

ment has spent more attention to the International Crimes Division (ICD) to investigate and prosecute international crimes, such as the trial against former LRA commander Thomas Kwoyelo. However the ICD has no provision for reparation. Moreover, the current amnesty law prevents claims against LRA commanders.

Currently the Ugandan government's draft Transitional Justice policy recognises the lack of comprehensive reparations for the northern Ugandan conflict and the need for a well-developed reparations programme to deliver justice to affected communities. Yet outstanding issues of land disputes, identifying who should benefit and corruption remain.

Reparations at the ICC

The ICC may be an avenue for reparations for some victims in northern Uganda. However, reparations at the ICC can only be ordered when a defendant is convicted. In the case of Dominic Ongwen this will likely to be years away. Only victims who have suffered crimes Ongwen is convicted of committing will be eligible for reparations. This is likely to be a small number as the current charges only apply to attacks on displaced persons camps in Lukodi, Pajule, Odek and Abok in 2004, as well as added crimes conscription of child soldiers and sexual violence, which potentially could allow victims from other places to participate before the Court.

The ICC Trust Fund for Victims has been operating in Uganda since 2007 funding assistance to victims, such as reconstructive surgery and peace building. If Ongwen or any other LRA commander is convicted before the ICC, they will be unlikely to have any personal fortune, and so only a small amount of reparations will be available, given

'Victims of conflict need the government...'

The Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) will conduct the documentation. However, it is hoped that a comprehensive report will be released sometime around in 2019 or 2020. This is still a long time since victims have dire needs that need to be addressed. It is hoped that the government will use this opportunity to work with CSOs as partners to bring justice to victims. □

the limited funds of the Trust Fund and the likely large number of victims. In the Congolese case of Thomas Lubanga reparations ordered through the Trust Fund were ordered for groups of victims, such as child soldiers, rather than individuals. With the limited resources of the ICC, reparations need to come from within countries and governments.

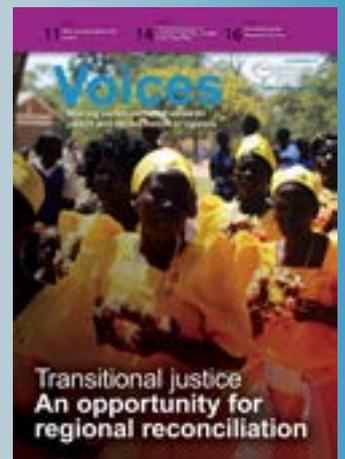
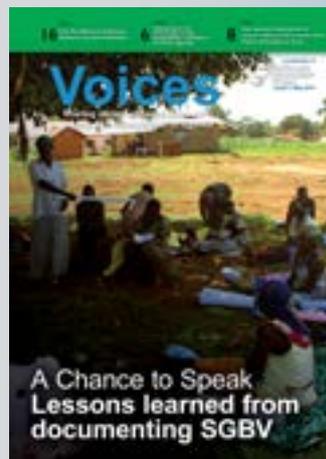
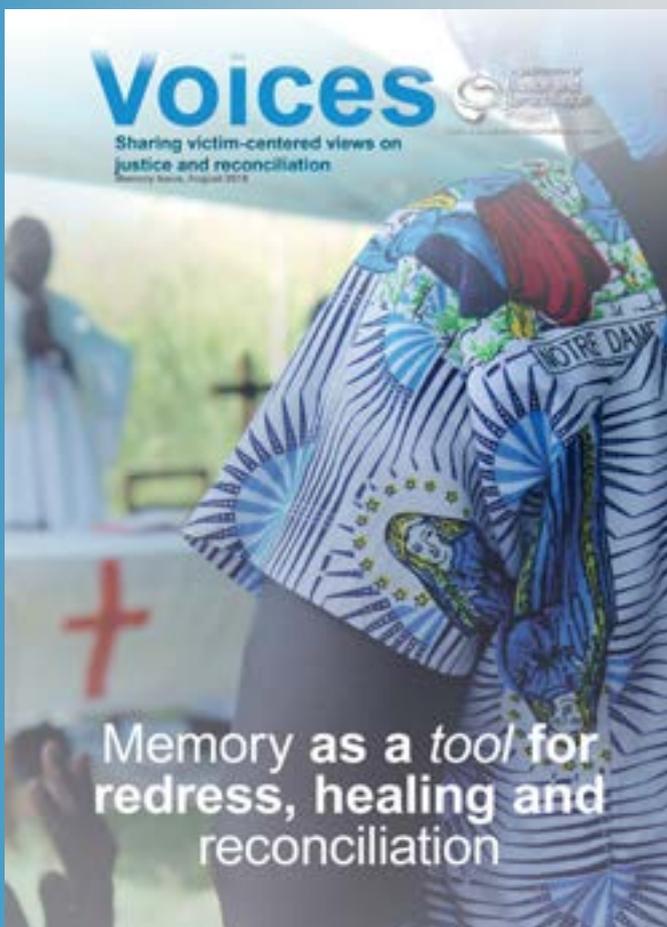
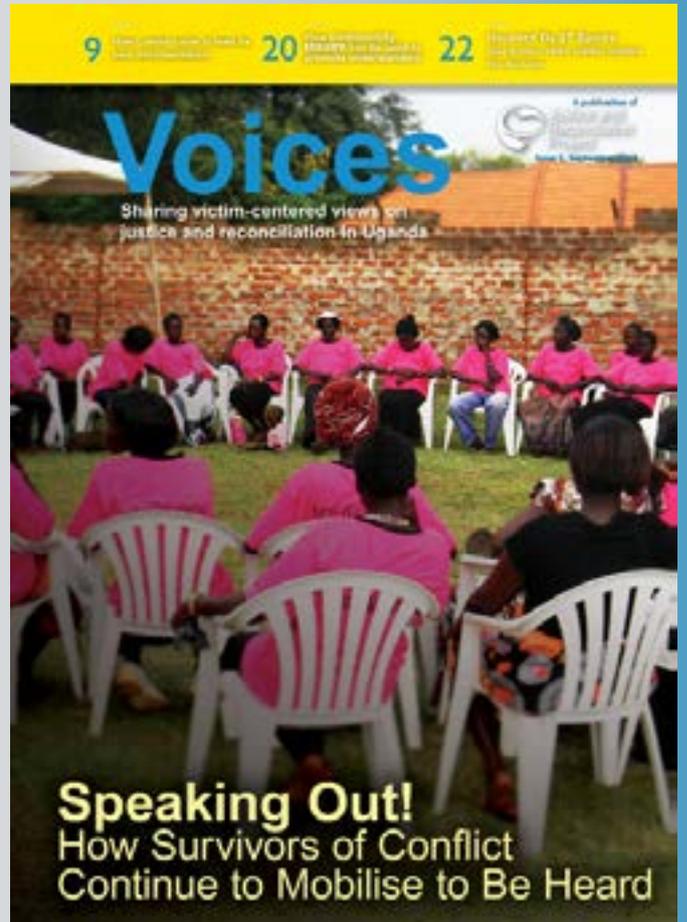
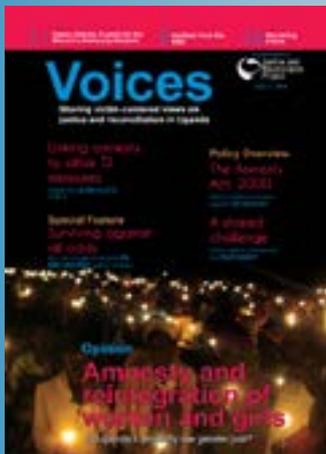
Learning from other contexts

Other countries have faced similar challenges as Uganda, such as corruption, identifying beneficiaries, funding, large victim populations, land restitution and forms of reparation. In Colombia, it is currently providing a raft of reparations worth \$23 billion to over 7.6 million victims with funding support from the World Bank. Reparations include measures against non-state armed groups and complicated restitution of land. In the Ivory Coast a compensation programme has been established by the government for some 74,000 victims worth \$17 million for those who suffered during the political violence in 2010-2011. The ability to fund reparation programmes comes down to more political willingness than a country's GDP, as funding can be sought from institutions such as the World Bank or technical capacity from the UN and international experts, as is the case at the ICC.

For the moment at least the Ugandan government has included reparations in its draft Transitional Justice policy as a key way to deliver justice to victims. There are reports that the Ugandan Law Reform Commission is looking into drafting a reparations law. Such a reparations programme should ensure victims are consulted and participate in the developments of appropriate remedial measures, information is provided to victims of their rights to reparations, flexible evidential standards for those who lost their identification documents balanced against preventing corruption, ensure that money reaches the victims' hands, and measures tackle the diverse forms of atrocities committed by the LRA and government forces including sexual violence, abductions, missing persons, massacres and displacement.

Some nearly thirty years since the beginning of the conflict in northern Uganda, victims continue to wait on redress. As victims are now becoming older with their health failing or pain becoming more acute, the Ugandan government should as a matter of urgency develop and implement a comprehensive reparation programme for all victims in northern Uganda. □

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