

War and Child Mothers in Northern Uganda: The Forgotten Legacy of the Civil War'

Participants:

Dr. Norman Mukasa.

Prof. Dr. Ingvill C. Mochmann has been highly supportive through comments and briefings.

Abstract:

The study is based on the fieldwork I did in three districts of northern Uganda—Lira, Gulu and Pader districts. In Gulu and Pader, about 90 percent of the population lived in Internally Displaced Camps for more than five years during the two decades of the Lord's Resistance Army protracted conflict. The conflict left over 66,000 children missing due to rebel abduction and about 35,000 children exposed to rape and sexual violence during night commuting. These insecure environments increased the occurrence of forced marriages and sex slavery by not only rebel forces, but also government forces and state or non-state armed actors. For the abducted girls, many of them returned to their communities on their own and did not benefit from DDR; some returned with children while others returned with forced pregnancies.

I conducted 13 face-to-face interviews with mothers of children born of war and eight discussions with key experts in northern Uganda. I did not have the opportunity to interview children born of war because they were minors (majority of them were below 10 years).

The experiences of the participants demonstrated that child mothers and their children born of war are stigmatised and discriminated; they live at the margins of society. Additionally, the study distinctively analysed three support mechanisms available to mothers of children born of war. It found out that intervention mechanisms that focus on both child mothers and their children born of war are few (one example is the Pader girls's Academy, which is a school for child mothers with daycare services for their children), yet these kinds of mechanisms have a high potential of offering effective integration, empowerment as well as skills and psychosocial support to war-mothers and their children.

Related articles /books/ conferences:

Mukasa, N. (2014) "Moving On: War Child-mothers in Acholi." In *El empoderamiento de las mujeres como estrategia de intervención social*, eds., María Silvestre, Raquel Royo, Ester Escudero, Conference papers. Deusto University Publications

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