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## Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development: The PRDP for northern Uganda

Elliot Bertasi

*University of Tennessee - Knoxville*

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Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development:  
The PRDP for northern Uganda

Baker Scholars Thesis

Presented to the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy

Elliot A. Bertasi

College Scholars Program

University of Tennessee Knoxville, USA

Project Advisor: Dr. Tricia Hepner

Project Location: Gulu, Uganda

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## About the Author

Elliot A Bertasi, the primary investigator for this research project is a senior in the College Scholars Program at the University of Tennessee Knoxville, USA. Through this interdisciplinary honors program, Elliot is pursuing a Bachelor of the Arts degree entitled, "Political and Social Post-Conflict Transformation." Elliot's research for his senior thesis project focuses primarily on the implementation of government programs in northern Uganda for post-conflict recovery and reconstruction. He conducted his research under the supervision of the Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies at Gulu University and under the School for International Training. Elliot is a Baker Scholar for the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy, a Boren Scholar alumnus, and a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. After graduation, Elliot plans to pursue work opportunities with USAID, and then attend law school in Washington D.C., where he hopes to specialize in international law.

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## Map of Uganda

## MAP SHOWING THE PRDP COVERAGE



-2007 version (not up to date on current districting)

## **Acronyms**

<b>CSO</b>	<b>Civil Society Organization</b>
<b>DFID</b>	<b>UK Department for International Development</b>
<b>GDLG</b>	<b>Gulu District Local Government</b>
<b>GoU</b>	<b>Government of Uganda</b>
<b>IDP</b>	<b>Internally Displaced Persons</b>
<b>LRA</b>	<b>Lord's Resistance Army</b>
<b>M&amp;E</b>	<b>Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (for PRDP-II)</b>
<b>MTR</b>	<b>Mid-term Review of the PRDP</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-Government Organization</b>
<b>NRM</b>	<b>National Resistance Movement</b>
<b>NURP</b>	<b>Northern Uganda Reconstruction Plan</b>
<b>NUSAF</b>	<b>Northern Uganda Social Action Fund</b>
<b>OPM</b>	<b>Office of the Prime Minister</b>
<b>PEAP</b>	<b>Poverty Eradication and Alleviation Plan</b>
<b>PMC</b>	<b>PRDP Monitoring Committee</b>
<b>PRDP</b>	<b>Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan</b>
<b>SO</b>	<b>Strategic Objective</b>
<b>TWG</b>	<b>Technical Working Group (for PRDP)</b>
<b>UPDF</b>	<b>Ugandan People's Defense Force</b>
<b>USAID</b>	<b>United States Agency for International Development</b>
<b>WUC</b>	<b>Water User Committee</b>

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## Section One: Post-Conflict Reconstruction

*"Go to the people...start with what they know. Build on what they have.  
But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished,  
the people will say, 'We have done it ourselves!'"*

*-Chinese Taoist philosopher*

### 1.1 Introduction

Two decades of conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda in northern Uganda left a devastating impact on the lives, lands, and identities of thousands of innocent civilians. After such a disastrous conflict, many maintain the opinion that the state's role and responsibility is to coordinate recovery, reconstruction, and development for northern Uganda.

This thesis examines the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan (PRDP) for northern Uganda, which is the Comprehensive Development Framework formulated by the Government of Uganda. The PRDP is a development plan aimed to streamline northern Uganda with the Ugandan National Poverty Eradication and Alleviation Plan (PEAP).

This thesis builds upon two major recurring themes that have been demonstrated in northern Uganda by community members and civil servants alike, and can be found in numerous post-conflict reconstruction environments in Africa. These two major findings and arguments, which run throughout this thesis, are: (1) that post-conflict reconstruction strategies often facilitate the empowerment and security of the state rather than the people who were affected by the conflict, and (2) that post-conflict reconstruction projects are too often implemented in insecure environments ultimately making them unsustainable.

The primary goal of this thesis is to analyze the implementation of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for northern Uganda and engage this case study in existing literature on post-conflict reconstruction. This thesis methodically

examines the implementation of the PRDP by scrutinizing the official PRDP documents from phase I to phase II and considering the views of community members, civil servants, and other stakeholders on the actual implementation of the PRDP. This thesis also evaluates, according to my fieldwork, the successes and challenges of PRDP-I, specifically in terms of its ability to meet its stated Strategic Objectives in the official documents. The thesis concludes by providing suggestions and recommendations for phase II of the PRDP framework.

## 1.2 *What is a “Post-Conflict” Region?*

The discourse and subsequent strategies of post-conflict reconstruction and development has emerged in response to the needs of regions, states, and societies who have just recently experienced a termination of violent conflict. It is often used to confront the immediate environment after the ending of violent conflict, and the difficulties and opportunities associated with transforming these armed conflicts into peaceful and sustainable environments where people can feel socially, economically, and politically secure. Post-conflict discourse has also become a common lens through which international intervention and state democratization can be critiqued. The time period in which a country is experiencing post-conflict transformation is delicate; “Ending war, of course, is rarely a quick fix operation. While cease-fires can be declared, negotiations can be complete, and new political structures can be established, wars only truly end when the underlying issues and grievances that led to violence are satisfactorily addressed and human relationships within the conflict zone are transformed” (Cochrane, 2008:150). This distinction between terminating the act of war and terminating the end of conflict requires the development of reconstruction and recovery efforts that help ensure that armed conflict does not re-emerge. This distinction is very important; unfortunately, in many situations it has caused a misconception that the conflict terminates with the end of violence. This misconception can partly be attributed to the fact that we refer to this time period as “post-conflict.”

### *Defining Post-Conflict*

The term “post-conflict” has become a commonly accepted concept in many situations and environments around the world. It appears that any country that has experienced an end to violent conflict is automatically labeled “post-conflict” and becomes subject to regional and global intervention. However, this term can actually be problematic for the recovery, reconstruction, and sustainable development of countries that have experienced short or long-term violent conflict. Moreover, the use of the term “post-conflict” is distinctly misleading because “there are few truly post conflict situations. Conflicts become more or less violent, more or less manifest or latent, but they seldom stop altogether” (Junne, 2005:1). How can such a seemingly benign term and its associated interventions have negative effects on the recovery and reconstruction process? Like most questions, there is no simple answer; however, one common misconception is that “post-conflict” is the equivalence of peace (Berdal, 2009:53). When this assumption is made, friction, instability, and insecurity that still remain in the environment are often overlooked. This can cause unsustainable development, faulty recovery strategies, and even, “50% of the time, cause ‘post-conflict’ countries to revert back to war” (Junne, 2005:1). Despite the problematic nature of the term, “post-conflict” is almost unavoidable when dealing with the subject of societies emerging from war. Consequently, when reading this thesis, it is important to avoid the assumption mentioned above and to keep in mind that “post-conflict” only reflects the absence of open warfare.

### *Post-Conflict Intervention*

The end of the Cold War brought about some major changes in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and development. In these last two decades, the role of international actors, specifically the World Bank, IMF, and other donor countries, has increased in conflict resolution and post-conflict strategies in Africa. The style of international intervention since the end of the Cold War has become one of the major obstacles to holistic post-conflict reconstruction. An article from the Center for Comparative and International Studies in Zurich stated, “In the

1990's, the World Bank and IMF's structural adjustment programs came under rising criticism from civil society for having, in general, negative social and economic impacts on marginalized people and for undermining democracy in recipient countries" (Limpach, 2010: 2). This evidence is important for the present case study because the World Bank was the major supporter of Uganda's first government reconstruction program in 1992, and the World Bank continues to fund reconstruction and recovery in Uganda today. Although aspects of interventionism may have changed since the early 90's, the methodology, strategies, and approaches to post-conflict reconstruction from outside intervention ultimately appear to rely on the interests of the international system and development partners. Ginty and Williams (2009:127) state, "we might therefore suggest that the definition of what exactly 'reconstruction' means changes in line with the state of the international system and the obsessions of the actors that are prominent power holders within it, rather than the objective needs of the populations affected by conflict and war."

Ideas that have been introduced by international actors on what reconstruction is or should be have had a major influence on post-conflict transformation; for example, "Concepts such as collective, regional as well as global security emerged out of concern for the security of states and in defense of states rather than the security of people" (Adetula, 2008:10). This idea of disregarding the affected population while the existing state solidifies itself is a major theme that will be detailed in this study. International and regional organizations dominate collective security, which together make decisions regarding international and national issues for the protection of states and their constituencies. The most negative factor of collective security is that often only a few countries and "power politics" heavily influence the decision-making.<sup>1</sup> Interventionism through collective security escalated with the "defeat of communism" and the transition from Cold War politics to the "politics of democratization" or what is more commonly known as neo-liberalism (Adetula, 2008:11). As a consequence, post-conflict transformation rarely exists without outside intervention. While outside intervention is not in itself

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on collective security see Adetula, 2008:10-12.

objectionable, the post-Cold War era intervention has severely blurred the lines between procedural democratization and substantive democratization. In this context, procedural simply refers to establishing a state that appears to be operating with democratic characteristics; however, there is no accountability for the state's actions and internally it actually operates in an authoritarian manner. Substantive democracy includes states actually fulfilling their obligation to operate democratically. Intervention through collective, democratic security has led intervention to disregard substantive democratic accountability.

In the past two decades there has been a plethora of literature written about post-conflict environments and transformation initiatives. Throughout all of this literature, and also in the findings presented here, one very important recurring theme has been at the forefront of post-conflict intervention. Post-conflict transformation strategies tend to primarily facilitate the rehabilitation of the state's existing political and social institutions rather than ameliorate the marginalization, suffering, or victimization of people who were directly affected by the conflict. This major finding and trend will be further discussed and illustrated through this case study on post-conflict reconstruction in northern Uganda.

### *The Case of northern Uganda*

The political, social, and economic challenges in Uganda, especially northern Uganda, stretch back to the late nineteenth century with the beginning of colonization. Yet, the particular background and time period this research builds upon is the Ugandan civil war, which lasted from 1986 until the cease fire in 2006. My research focuses on the recovery and reconstruction period that followed the conflict in Uganda.

In 1986, the National Resistance Army, led by General Yoweri Museveni took over the Government of Uganda (GoU). Museveni's regime later became known as the National Resistance Movement (NRM). That same year, Joseph Kony organized a rebel movement, known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), against President Museveni. From 1986 until 2006 there was a civil war between the LRA and the GoU. The government army, the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF), and the

LRA both terrorized the people of northern Uganda and both committed human rights abuses. Throughout the civil war, the LRA abducted women and children into the rebel movement, and the war became an impasse, continuing to marginalize and destroy northern Uganda (Komakech D, 2012). In 2003, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Joseph Kony and the top LRA commanders; however, this created bias towards the Ugandan Government. These warrants basically freed the Ugandan Army and Museveni's Regime from any blame of their human rights abuses and criminal activity during the war (Allan & Vlassenroot 2010:15).

As a result of the war and ensuing trauma, northern Uganda has endured many major setbacks. Throughout the civil war, the NRM political regime entrenched its power in Uganda, and the national government of Museveni still remains in power today. Although northern Uganda is currently in a state of relative peace and is actively recovering, the LRA remain at-large in neighboring Congo and has also been operating in the Central African Republic (Komakech D, 2012).

### *1.3 Reconstruction during Conflict*

#### *The Three Dimensional Conflict*

Isaac Albert (2008:31) stated, "Conflicts constitute a major threat to African development in terms of loss of human life, destruction of property, displacement of people, sometimes across international borders, and diversion of resources meant for promoting sustainable development." The conflict between the LRA and the Government of Uganda was certainly no exception. Furthermore, the conflict dynamics in Uganda were even more complicated because the conflict had three dimensions: the NRM, LRA, and the people of northern Uganda who were being brutalized by the LRA and marginalized by the Government of Uganda (GoU). This three dimensional conflict was rooted in the Uganda North-South divide, which developed during the colonial period. The favoritism the British colonialist had for the people in southern Uganda developed a political regional divide between the

North and the South. Every ruling party in Ugandan history has perpetuated the division of these two regions since independence. When Museveni entered into power in 1986, he was actually praised by the international community for his progressive “Movement System,” but in reality, he maintained the divide by marginalizing the north.<sup>2</sup>

### *Financial and Logistical Support for Governance*

When the LRA rebellion began in 1986, the international community immediately legitimized the Government of Uganda, despite the atrocities that the NRA and UPDF committed.<sup>3</sup> The international community saw Uganda as a potential state for democratization, or as Richard Banégas (2008:205) designates it, “The Ugandan Laboratory.” Consequently, the international community became fully supportive to aid the Ugandan government. Banégas (2008:205) states, “From 1990 to 2000, this medium sized country of the Great Lakes region, without strategic resources, received over \$400 million of international aid for governance.” It is necessary to stress the importance that this aid was specifically for “governance.” So why did the international community have such trust in the “Ugandan Laboratory” when the GoU was outwardly marginalizing its own people?

This particular answer is rooted in the argument previously discussed about the failure of proponents of post-conflict intervention to distinguish between procedural and substantive democratic security. Since President Museveni came to power in 1986, the international community has attributed regular praise and congratulations for the economic and political progress the Government of Uganda

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<sup>2</sup> The “Movement System” was Museveni’s model government and progressive movement toward democracy. Richard Banégas (2008:205) described this system as nothing like a “Western” model of democracy, but instead “a populist model of political governance founded on a pyramid of local councils elected through universal suffrage and on the fiction of citizen participation.” For more information see Richard Banégas (2008), “The Recurring Great Lakes Crisis” – “Movement Democracy: The illusion of broad-based politics” (212-219).

<sup>3</sup> The Ugandan People’s Defense Force (UPDF) is the post-1995 successor to the National Resistance Army (NRA). For more information on the armies involved in this conflict please see Branch, 2010:58-80.

has generated. Banégas reports that from the early 1990's to 2007, inflation rates decreased from 200% to 2.9% and that Uganda has experienced average growth rates of approximately 6.5% (2008: 205). Not only did international donors appreciate these numbers more than anything else, but they also seemed mesmerized by Museveni's "Movement System." Although there are obvious indications of authoritarian rule and marginalization of northern Uganda – including the prolonged empowerment of the NRM regime, the perpetuated armed conflict, and the blatant corruption – aid agencies and bilateral donors continue to support and legitimize Museveni's Government of Uganda. Branch (2008:81) states "Uganda's reputation is tied strongly to Museveni himself." Branch (2008:81) goes on to say that President Clinton chose Museveni as one of the "new leaders of Africa" and that Museveni was also singled out as a "beacon of hope." Furthermore, "USAID praised Uganda as a model in the fight against HIV/AIDS, poverty and that Uganda is a strong ally in the war against terrorism" (Branch, 2008:81). This support required no accountability and it led to the implementation of government-fabricated reconstruction and recovery programs in the climax of conflict with the LRA.

#### *Reconstruction Programs During Conflict*

Government-implemented recovery, reconstruction, and development initiatives in northern Uganda began in the early 1990's. Throughout the 1990's and after the cease-fire in 2006, the GoU, with the assistance of relief agencies, developed several recovery and reconstruction plans for northern Uganda. In 2003, according to a discussion paper from the OPM reporting on the challenges of reconstruction in the north, the Executive Summary openly admitted that, "while insecurity (from the LRA) may be the most important phenomenon...the time is also right for looking beyond the ravages of the war and to start thinking about reconstruction and rehabilitation" (PRC, 2003:3). This is a blatant sign of the Government of Uganda practically ignoring the conflict in the north and attempting to gain international support for governance along with reconstruction programs. The World Bank became Uganda's first major supporter of government programs in the early 1990's (Branch, 2011:122).



In 1992, the Northern Uganda Reconstruction Program, phase I, (NURP-I) was launched and lasted for six years. Exhibiting poor government coordination and commitment, the GoU implemented NURP-I in a top-down fashion. As such, the central government did not give much concern to the priorities of the people, especially those directly affected by the ongoing war. Several negative repercussions developed from this program's implementation resulting in "limited impact on the people for which it was intended" (Marino, 2008b: 2). Furthermore, the top-down fashion "did not connect development to peace-building or psychosocial support for war-affected communities. Additionally, the initial NURP-I budget was around USD 600 million, but only USD 93.6 million was actually spent" (Marino, 2008b: 3).

After six years of NURP-I, the GoU had to re-organize its approach due to national and international pressure. In response to the obvious challenges with NURP-I, the program was dissolved, and in 2002, NURP-II was launched "with the stated intention of incorporating a more bottom-up, demand responsive approach" (Marino, 2008b: 3). The most effective and innovative idea that changed between NURP-I and II was the concept of sub-programs that implemented projects directly within communities. Taking into consideration all of these sub-programs under the framework of NURP-II, the most important and residual program was the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) (PRC, 2003: 31). NUSAF-I worked under the NURP-II framework. The bottom-up approach of NURP-II, using sub-programs like NUSAF-I, may have been slightly more productive than NURP-I; however, reports of corruption call into question how much of the funding was actually reaching project beneficiaries, "with at least twenty people having been charged with corruption while implementing NUSAF projects" (Marino, 2008b: 4). Eventually NURP-II was also dissolved and deemed virtually unsuccessful excluding NUSAF, which had minor success and is currently functioning under the PRDP framework as NUSAF-II.

The government reconstruction programs that were implemented pre-ceasefire in northern Uganda basically ignored the ongoing conflict. While some two million Ugandans and 90 percent of the Acholi were displaced (Finnström, 2008: 133) in government instituted Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, "The GoU launched the NURP-I as an effort to address the social and economic problems of the

north” (PCR, 2003: 31).<sup>4</sup> One could possibly argue that by implementing programs to ostensibly address the social and economic problems in the north the GoU was attempting to address the roots of the conflict. While this is exactly what international donors perceived, it was not what was actually happening on the ground. The roots of the conflict came from marginalizing the people of northern Uganda. These IDP camps that the government instituted did exactly that by internally disorganizing and destroying the Acholi region in the north.

Furthermore, major military operations by the UPDF that were supposed to terminate the conflict through military means were organized just before the government recovery and reconstruction programs were implemented. Was this coincidence, or were major military operations intended to wipe out the LRA a purposefully planned attempt to gain more international support for governance and defense spending through programs actually meant to reconstruct and recover northern Uganda? It is most likely the latter. In 1991, Operation North preceded the implementation of NURP-I and Operation Iron Fist in 2002 preceded the implementation of NURP-II. These were two of the three most notable military operations throughout the entire war. In fact, it was almost expected by the international community that these military operations would successfully terminate the existence of the LRA. Branch (2010:124) states, “The fact that the government’s two most significant operations against the LRA occurred right before the inception of the two major World Bank-funded reconstruction projects for northern Uganda raises questions about the possibility that officials within the Bank tacitly premised the provision of reconstruction aid on the Ugandan government’s termination of the conflict through military means.” Because of this knowledge, it appears that the GoU could have deliberately failed the military operations to gain donor funding. According to Branch (2010:123), “It is telling that the World Bank, in its official documents, consistently either termed northern Uganda a post-conflict

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<sup>4</sup> The GoU instituted Internally Displaced Person’s (IDP) camps in the early 1990’s as places of protection for people in war-affected regions. The camps were a result of the government’s inability to offer protection from the LRA in the entire northern region (See also Finnström 2008: 131).

situation or simply ignored the presence of continuing armed conflict.” The World Bank was the major donor for NURP-I and NURP-II. The implementation of major government reconstruction programs along with ignoring the presence of conflict is actually still a major problem today with the beginning of the Peace, Recovery, and Development Framework for northern Uganda. Furthermore, the third most significant military operation was launched only a year before the implementation of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for northern Uganda, currently still being implemented. Three major military operations immediately preceding the three major internationally funded reconstruction projects for northern Uganda is not coincidental.

These purposeful military operations denote the second major recurrent theme in the Ugandan post-conflict reconstruction case study. This theme is that reconstruction and recovery programs are implemented in environments that are insecure and unsustainable. Post-conflict reconstruction programs implemented during conflict are not nearly as beneficial to the affected community as they are meant to be. This second theme will be more fully discussed in context with the current post-conflict reconstruction program for northern Uganda.

### *Conflict Entrepreneurs: State Empowerment and Regime Security*

“Conflict entrepreneurs,” as some Ugandan politicians refer to them, are inherent to war. In the case of the Ugandan civil war, Museveni’s government was undoubtedly a conflict entrepreneur. It is a very common over-generalization that war is a product of state failure or – according to collective democratic security – the result of a rebellious group of armed “terrorists.” However, especially in the case of Uganda, it is more appropriate to consider war as a product of state consolidation and international support for the NRM government. Banégas & Chrétien (2008:11) argue, “the state makes war, but war also makes the state.” Particularly, it seems that in many African conflicts, reinforcing security, administrative functions, and the capacity for mobilization of the national government, facilitates state formation (Banégas & Chrétien, 2008:12).

In one interview in northern Uganda, a community representative in Gulu Town stated, “Let me tell you something about conflict entrepreneurs; actually Museveni has benefited so much from this conflict, because they started using northern Uganda as a fundraising basket, so the central government gets a lot of money from donors, and that money never comes to northern Uganda.”<sup>5</sup> While the Government of Uganda, with major support and funds coming in from international donors, was superficially implementing NURP-I/II, the NRM forced many northern Ugandans into IDP Camps. Arguably, these camps served to further marginalize the people of the north and to facilitate state empowerment and regime security, a significant motive of the NRM. Although the humanitarian crises created by the implementation of these IDP camps were horrific, the camps seemed clearly designed for political purposes. Branch does an excellent job of interpreting the NRM agenda, saying, “The forced mass movement of people to the camps must be understood, then, in terms of a military strategy to marginalize the north...as the high-ranking army officers regard all Acholi as potential rebel supporters who must be controlled and monitored” (Finnström, 2008:142). Furthermore, Finnström (2008:132) describes these camps as a “technology of power that helps to constitute the refugees as an object of knowledge and control.” The implementation of the camps supports the argument that the NRM intended to empower the state and create regime security through conflict. Moreover, it highlights the ironic but purposeful decision to implement NURP-I as a recovery program in order to gain donor support and funding, and at the same time force northerners en masse into IDP camps in order to further marginalize and control them.

Another dimension of the NRM’s conflict entrepreneurship was the manner in which it employed the Ugandan Peoples Defense Force (UPDF) during the LRA insurgency. Paul Omach (2010:433) stated, in his paper on political violence in Uganda, “Weak states lack domestic political and social consensus; the idea and institutions of the state are contested, and governments face challenges to legitimacy. Weak states rely on suppression, use of force, and political cooptation to

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Community Representative in Gulu Town (July 2012)

maintain stability...ruling cliques obscure the distinction between regime security and national security.” The failure of the UPDF and the GoU to provide genuine security to civilians in the north illustrated the conflation between regime security and national security. Leaving the northerners insecure allowed for regime security and a lack of national security. Not only was there no security provided to civilians by the UPDF, but UPDF soldiers deliberately looted northerners’ cattle and sold them, taking away the primary source of Acholi wealth and livelihood. As Finnström (2008: 73) notes, “the mass looting of cattle remains a very painful experience of the war.”

#### *1.4 Juba Peace Talks*

The reason for the LRA’s absence in northern Uganda since 2006 may be attributed to several different explanations, but the basis for the relative peace stems from the Juba peace talks. In 2006, pressure from international donors, NGO’s, civil society organizations, religious leaders from the Acholi Religious leaders Peace Initiative, and some politicians initiated the Juba peace talks between the GoU and the LRA.

All conflicts eventually come to a point where they are no longer profitable for the conflict entrepreneurs (Juune & Verkoren 2009:1-19). However, President Museveni managed to manipulate the international community into continuing to support his governance and regime security agenda. Museveni has managed to maintain negative peace and sense of insecurity in the northern region. This insecurity, inimical to sustainable reconstruction and development, was exacerbated through the failed peace talks and the continuation of marginalization of northern Ugandans. Lyandro Komakech (2012) stated in a lecture, “The Juba peace talks established a foundation for negative peace.” This concept of negative peace is evident in the everyday lives of people in the north. Through personal testimonies, land disputes, lack of infrastructure, post-war trauma, social conflict, disempowerment, and marginalization amid the central government’s recovery and reconstruction programs, it is evident that post-war transformation will not be

sustainable while the northern region remains in a state of negative peace and insecurity (Finnström, 2008). These enduring post-war issues, arguably facilitated by the GoU, will be discussed further in regards to the PRDP and, along with militarization, are the second recurring theme of the implementation of government reconstruction programs in unsustainable environments.

Although the Juba Peace Talks were largely a failure and collapsed in 2008 due to government unwillingness and the LRA's fears of prosecution, "in many respects the Juba negotiations were remarkably successful" (Allen & Vlassenroot, 2010: 14). The Juba peace talks formally began on 14 July 2006 between the GoU and the LRA. It was the first time since the war began that the GoU and the LRA had direct negotiations. However, in 2008, the negotiations abruptly ended with another militarized intervention by the GoU, Operation Lightning Thunder, in which the UPDF attacked LRA camps (Allen & Vlassenroot, 2010: 177). Nevertheless, four main agenda items did develop from the Juba negotiations: (1) Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, (2) Agreement on Comprehensive Solutions, (3) Accountability and Reconciliation, (4) Permanent Cease Fire (Komakech L., 2012). One of the agenda items that the GoU has attempted to keep is that of Comprehensive Solutions to the end of the war. This agenda item is what spawned the Peace Recovery and Development Plan framework for northern Uganda. PRDP phase I began in July 2009 and ended in June 2012 (Komakech L, 2012). PRDP-1 was explicitly intended to fulfill the second agenda item of the Juba negotiations and to streamline northern Uganda to the rest of the country mainly through poverty reduction and infrastructure development. However, it suffered greatly from a lack of commitment from the national government resulting in corruption, state consolidation, and the northern region remaining insecure.

## 1.5 Methodology

### *Methods*

This research study is the culmination of four and a half months of fieldwork primarily in Gulu, Uganda, conducted from September to December 2012. The primary goal of this research was to analyze the implementation of the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan for northern Uganda. This research investigates the government's effort to implement the PRDP effectively by analyzing: (1) official documents on the PRDP; (2) stories and opinions from civil servants and community members; and (3) observations of project monitoring and supervision.

This research project was developed out of personal interest, feasibility, and prevailing issues. The Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan for northern Uganda is a vital component in mainstreaming northern Uganda with the National Development Plan. In this thesis, I would like to contribute to the growing research on post-conflict reconstruction in developing countries by comparing my own empirical findings in northern Uganda with other existing literature on the topic.

This topic of research was chosen for two specific reasons. The first was my prior travel to Uganda and the second was to contribute to the existing literature on post-conflict reconstruction. I first traveled to Gulu, Uganda during the summer of 2011. While I was there, I undertook a placement with an Assistant Chief Administrative Officer (A-CAO) in the Gulu District Local Government (GDLG). During this internship, I traveled to the field with the A-CAO multiple times to supervise and monitor several projects being implemented under the PRDP framework. This experience motivated my interest in Uganda, and more specifically in the Ugandan government programs implemented for the recovery of northern Uganda. The second reason for choosing this topic of research is to provide current empirical research on the implementation of the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan for northern Uganda.

The fieldwork for this research was mainly conducted in Gulu District. Some data was collected in Kampala (the Capital city of Uganda) from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and from individuals personally involved with the PRDP

Technical Working Group (TWG). Data collected in Kampala was purely to understand the internal operational capacity of the PRDP since it is nationally operated within the OPM. Some data was also collected in Kitgum District through one focus group discussion with target community members.

The majority of the fieldwork was conducted in Gulu District for two major reasons. First, Gulu was devastated by the civil war and the PRDP operates all across the district. Within Gulu district, the research focused specifically in three sub-counties: Palaro, Patiko, and Paicho. I chose these sub-counties because of the willingness of civil servants to support my research, and also because of access to sub-county headquarters. The second reason I chose Gulu District is because Gulu is the largest town in northern Uganda and could support my research project objectives.

Data collection for this research project was exclusively qualitative in nature. Fieldwork specifically relied on semi-structured open-ended interviews, focus groups, and participant observations of government monitoring committees within the PRDP. Thirteen interviews were conducted with key informants like civil servants, civil-society leaders, religious leaders, and non-governmental and community based staff and administrators. Three focus groups were conducted with community members who are past or current beneficiaries of government programs under the PRDP framework. Participant observation mainly consisted of field visits to monitoring committees actively supervising or monitoring projects.

Most of the interviews were conducted in English and all of the focus groups were conducted in Acholi, the local language. During interviews or focus groups conducted in Acholi, an interpreter and research assistant traveled to the field as well. These methods were the most effective way to gather the qualitative data this research needed. Data collection also relied heavily on reviewing and analyzing reports on the PRDP, official PRDP documents, national media, and previous research on PRDP.

Ensuring confidentiality was a major component of my research. Participants either signed an informed consent form or, if they were unable, gave a verbal



consent on audio recording. Confidentiality is maintained throughout this report by either omitting the names of the participants or changing their names.

During my research I was also very aware of how my presence, the use of an audio recorder, or the language used during the interview affected the data I received or did not receive from respondents. With this in mind, I realize that the information I received could be biased and not purely objective. I have taken this limitation into consideration in my data analysis. Often, the presence of my research assistant and interpreter helped to bridge any barriers or helped me realize when answers were not purely the respondent's opinion.

There were two other considerable limitations to my research study. One was the confined geographical scope and the other was the limited number of respondents I was able to interview. Compared to the sixty-four districts and municipalities being affected by the PRDP, my research study is fairly confined to representing Gulu District. More research is necessary to test if the findings and conclusions advanced in this study accurately reflect conditions of implementation in all other districts where fieldwork was not conducted.

### *Justification and Rationale*

Although there is prior research on the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan, my current research topic is an important contribution because it illuminates the challenges of PRDP-I.<sup>6</sup> This research has the potential to prevent stakeholders from producing the same disappointing outcomes in PRDP-II that occurred throughout the implementation of PRDP-I. The second phase of PRDP-II is extremely important for the full sustainable recovery of northern Uganda.

This research study also contributes to the collection of academic papers at the Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies at Gulu University. This is also my

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<sup>6</sup> For prior research on the PRDP, please see Marino, J. (2008) "Analyzing the implementation of the PRDP," Marino, J. (2008) "Is the PRDP Politics as Usual?" Information can also be found online at the "Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity" and "Beyond Juba."

senior thesis for the University of Tennessee Knoxville College Scholars Program and Baker Scholars Program.

### *Ethical Issues*

Practicing ethical research methods was another major component of my fieldwork. During my research and reports, I always considered the post-conflict environment, the vulnerable nature of the people I interviewed, the types of questions I asked, and the confidentiality agreement between the investigator and the respondent.

In order to conduct my research along these ethical guidelines, I performed several tasks. First, a qualified member of the community, experienced in research in the region, reviewed my questions. Before the interview began, I always took the time to build a rapport with my participant by introducing myself and explaining to them that I was a university student conducting research for academic purposes only. I further explained to them informed consent and that there would be strict confidentiality between the research team and the participant. In order to best protect the confidentiality of the participant, I omitted or changed the name of the participant on all of my reports. All audio recordings from participants are loaded onto a password-protected computer, which remains in my possession at all times. I plan on securely storing the data indefinitely for future analysis.

## Section Two: The PRDP Framework

### *2.1 How the PRDP Works*

#### *Process of Planning the PRDP*

During the first few months of the Juba peace process in 2006, a conference was held between major stakeholders for building a consensus on a sustainable peace process for Uganda. During this conference, the Prime Minister, Prof. Apollo Nsibambi (2006) proposed that the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for northern Uganda should be considered a first step in a comprehensive peace and reconciliation strategy.<sup>7</sup> He stressed the importance that it was time to make sustained peace and security a priority in northern Uganda. He reasoned that the PRDP should be considered a first major step for this process because it exhibited the national governments commitment to northern Uganda. Furthermore he said it should be a first step for sustained peace and security because the PRDP “includes peace building and reconciliation as one of its four strategic objectives” (Nsibambi, 2006). At that time, the PRDP framework was well underway in the planning process.

The PRDP drafting process first began in June 2005. The first step for the process was the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Technical Committee who spearheaded the two-year consultative process with all stakeholders at the district and national level (PRDP-I, 2007: 6). A research advocacy officer states, “According to its Terms of Reference, the IMTC’s responsibility was to ‘analyze the magnitude of the development gaps and needs in northern Uganda in comparison with current interventions and prepare a comprehensive post-war recovery plan’” (Marino, 2008b: 3). Two drafts were submitted to the Cabinet before the third and final draft was approved in August 2007. According to Marino (2008b: 3), “During the drafting period, proposed PRDP coverage expanded from the initial eighteen districts to

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<sup>7</sup> For details see, Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for northern Uganda, 2007, Government of Uganda. Available from: [www.internaldisplacement.org/.../\\$file/PRDP+Sep+2007.pdf](http://www.internaldisplacement.org/.../$file/PRDP+Sep+2007.pdf)

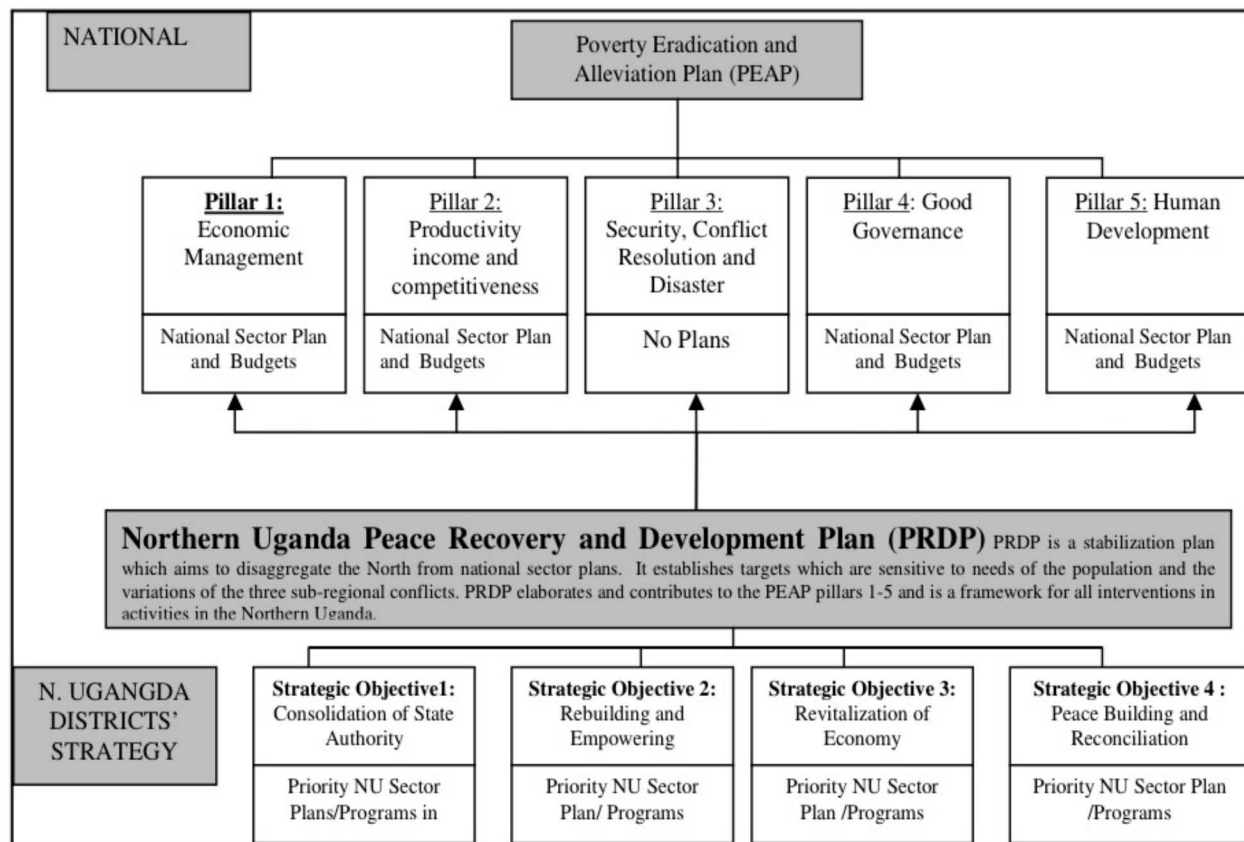
forty.” Allegedly, each draft was based on the priorities of districts being covered and then sent to a wide range of stakeholders for review and feedback. However, according to reports by CSO’s and the list of consultations by the IMTC, the community was largely left out of the planning process as program consultations stopped at the district level. (Marino, 2008b: 3).

According to the final document of the PRDP approved by the cabinet, it states, “PRDP has been prepared on the basis of lessons that have been learnt from implementation of a plethora of programs in the North...the PRDP has been launched to address a number of key issues” (PRDP-I, 2007: 6). The issues developed from the challenges faced by programs like NURP-I, NURP-II, and NUSAF-I, all of which had a similar top-down approach and suffered from disorganization, lack of government commitment, corruption, and conflict. However, as this study will analyze further, PRDP-I did not effectively address or represent a significant break from the issues identified in past government programs.

### *Goals of the PRDP*

The Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) is an affirmative action framework for northern Uganda that is being implemented by the Government of Uganda through the Office of the Prime Minister. Secondly, The PRDP is a comprehensive development framework that has an overall goal of “stabilization in order to regain and consolidate peace in the region and lay the foundations for recovery and development of Northern Uganda” (Bigirimana, 2008). The PRDP aligns with the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), which is part of the National Development Plan (NDP). “At the end of three years the targets of the PRDP will be reviewed and set in line with the national goals of the PEAP. The commitment is to improve socio-economic indicators to be in line with national ones” (PRDP-I, 2007:17). The idea is that this affirmative action program, which aims to bolster the North beyond the national sector plans, can mainstream the northern regions back into the NDP within the three-year program.

Diagram 1: Relationship of PRDP to PEAP



Retrieved from PRDP-I official document (2007)

The PRDP framework has two main goals. First, it is supposed to act as a coordination framework for all development activities in the north. This means that the PRDP is an umbrella under which all donors, government projects, development partners, NGOs, CSOs, can harmonize holistic development. The hope of the overall framework is to improve coordination, accountability, monitoring, and supervision of all projects being implemented for the recovery and reconstruction of northern Uganda. Secondly, it is supposed to bridge the social and economic gap between the north and the south and eventually bring the development of the northern region up to the level of the entire country.

### *Strategic Objectives of the PRDP*

The PRDP framework has four Strategic Objectives (SO) that incorporate 14 sub-objectives for the recovery and reconstruction of northern Uganda. The four SO's are: (1) Consolidation of State Authority, (2) Rebuilding and Empowering Communities, (3) Revitalization of the Economy, and (4) Building and Reconciliation.

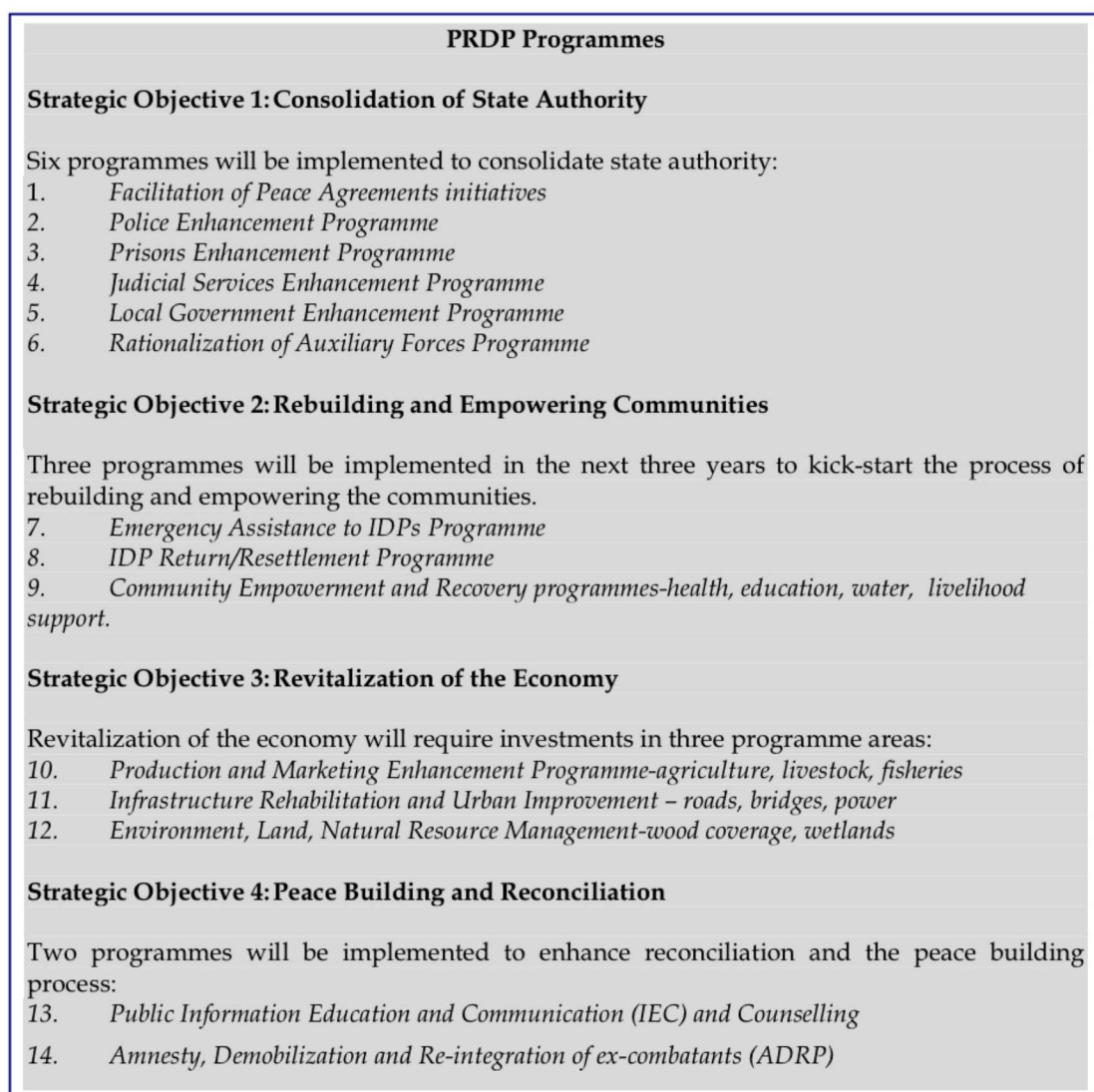
Diagram 2: PRDP Strategic Objectives and Goals



Retrieved from PRDP-I official document (2007)

These strategic objectives (SO) all have different implementation modalities as well as different amounts of funding being attributed to its achievement. Each SO also has certain programs that it will be implementing as seen below.

Diagram 3: 14 Programs of PRDP



Retrieved from PRDP-I official document (2007)

### *Management, Implementation, and Funding Modalities*

The PRDP framework is overseen in the OPM. “The OPM is constitutionally mandated to oversee and coordinate pacification and development in northern Uganda” (OPM 2012a: 2). The OPM ensures management and coordination of the PRDP framework from a bottom-up approach. This office is supposed to manage all implementation, monitoring, reporting, and review. The OPM oversees all of these responsibilities through three integrated channels: the PRDP Monitoring Committee (PMC), the Technical Working Group (TWG), and the regional OPM offices.

The PRDP Monitoring Committee (PMC), which is the highest monitoring organ coordinates and organizes the PRDP implementation. The Prime Minister chairs the PMC meetings, which occur bi-annually. Members of Parliament, development partners, NGO officials, CSO representatives, and members of the Technical Working Group (TWG) attend these meetings. The PMC is mandated to provide overall policy direction and strategic oversight of the PRDP (OPM 2012a: 2). The TWG of the PRDP has two wings, one for northern Uganda and one for Karamoja. These wings meet monthly and are designed to support the PMC in how to best provide effective management and implementation of the PRDP framework. The third channel for effective management and implementation of the PRDP framework is through the OPM regional offices. The two regional offices support the national OPM and act as a liaison for management and implementation between the central and the districts in their region. These offices are supposed to facilitate regional coordination and collaboration among all stakeholders, especially the district local governments, NGOs and Development Partners (OPM 2012a: 3). The sixty-four districts and municipalities that are funded by the PRDP framework conduct project planning and implementation. Districts also work directly with other stakeholders like sector ministries and agencies, NGOs, and Development Partners to implement projects under the PRDP framework.

Funding for the PRDP has three main channels. “The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development manage all on budget funding for PRDP implementation. On-budget funding is one of the three channels funding PRDP implementation. Through this channel, donors pledged to fund 70 percent and the government pledged to fund 30 percent (Bigirimana, 2008). The second funding modality is off-budget funding. This can be accomplished through NGOs and Humanitarian Agencies dealing directly with district governments. The third funding modality is through special projects with CSOs. The diagram below shows the PRDP budget for three years in each of the SOs.



Diagram 4: PRDP Budget for 3 year

Strategic Objective	Total Funding (UGX)	% of Total Budget
Consolidation of state authority	259,805,128,720 (USD 162.4 million)	23.8%
Rebuilding and empowering communities	517,489,619,951 (USD 323.4 million)	47.4%
Revitalization of the economy	253,112,895,260 (USD 158.2 million)	23.2%
Peacebuilding and reconciliation	29,528,991,184 (USD 18.5 million)	2.7%

Retrieved from Marino (2008b)

According to this diagram, the total PRDP budget over three years is approximately USD 625 million. According to the population in the PRDP coverage area, that estimates approximately \$58 per person over three years.

## *2.2 Key Implementation Success for PRDP-I*

In June 2012, the PRDP for northern Uganda ended its first three-year phase. This affirmative action framework with the goals of stabilizing the north, coordinating development activities, eradicating poverty, and bridging the gap between the northern region and the rest of the country is now being questioned for its effectiveness and implementation success. In the last three years, PRDP-I has made some substantial contributions to the recovery and reconstruction of northern Uganda. PRDP-I has been an important tool for stabilizing northern Uganda mobilizing development through donors, development partners, and the government.

Since the implementation of the PRDP, a fair degree of stability, growth, and progress has materialized in northern Uganda. PRDP-I assisted in the return and reintegration of formerly displaced persons, infrastructure development, enhanced police and judicial authority, and slow improvement of economic opportunity. One political head of local government in the Acholi sub-region stated, "The PRDP has definitely created impact. It has made a difference. Now we are able to accommodate many teachers in the schools. Now they are no longer traveling from

town or having to rent” (Interview, Palaro, 27 Aug 2012). While the PRDP has definitely made a difference in the stabilization and development of the northern region, the thesis will reveal below that the key successes have unfortunately been limited and insufficient.

### *Police Enhancement*

The first strategic objective of the PRDP framework is Consolidation of State Authority. According to a report from the Office of the Prime Minister (2012), this SO “aims at ensuring an end to armed hostilities and provides security to the people through reestablishing the rule of law and rebuilding state institutions in the region.” This SO is primarily implemented directly by the central government. It involves building police headquarters, judiciary courts, and strengthening the police force in terms of manpower. Empirical findings reflect that sub-county officials are satisfied with new barracks and police capacity. Both Local Council III officials in Palaro and Patiko sub-counties expressed satisfaction with the new police barracks and the performance of police security in their respective sub-counties.<sup>8</sup> The capacity of the police and overall security have undoubtedly increased throughout the first phase of PRDP, however, some might say it has not improved in a positive sense. Instead of using police enhancement to maintain security for the citizens, several community members have revealed stories and accounts of police brutality.<sup>9</sup> This police enhancement is effectively strengthening the state security and consolidating state power, rather than securing the people of northern Uganda. The success northern Uganda has had with police enhancement represent the major theme mentioned previously that is recurring throughout this thesis. This theme is that post-conflict intervention attempting to secure the affected populations often ends up building the state, rather than creating an environment needed for building sustainable peace and development.

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Government Officials, Palaro and Patiko Sub-Counties, 28 August, 2012

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Community Member, Gulu Town, 23 August 2012

### *Infrastructure Development and Resettlement*

Strategic Objective number two is Rebuilding and Empowering Communities. Under this strategic objective the local government implements most, if not all of the projects.<sup>10</sup> The central government sends on budget funding to the local governments through the PRDP budget grant. When the funding reaches the local governments, the district is allowed to use the money in four sectors: education, health, water and sanitation, and roads. Strong infrastructure development has been apparent in at least Gulu district through participant observation of PRDP and sub-program projects, through interviews with sub-county leaders, and through discussions with community members. “So the impact has been good in the second strategic objective...we have been able to build a number of classrooms, a number of teacher accommodations, open roads, and drill boreholes. Actually, we built about 150 boreholes under PRDP-I” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012).

Official reports on the quantitative impact of PRDP-I are still yet to come. Currently, monitoring officials from the TWG of the OPM are in the process of measuring the number of and quality of all projects implemented during the first phase (Interview, Gulu, 20 Nov 2012). Infrastructure development was the number one response given by respondents when asked about the impact of the PRDP framework. A district official said, “During the insurgency over 80% of our population was living in IDP camps. Schools were destroyed, our health system and buildings were destroyed, and our water system and safe water coverage was dilapidated...so PRDP came timely, when people were returning home, and it has made a remarkable change...building schools, shaping the health system, and increasing the number of boreholes” (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov, 2012). Another local government official stated, “I think PRDP-I has been great...this is in terms of infrastructure...many structures would not be there if it was not for PRDP” (Interview, Gulu, 21 Nov 2012). Community members also talk of infrastructure

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<sup>10</sup> A political head of local government in the Acholi sub-region stated, “Now the impact I am going to talk about is the second SO, community empowerment through the provision of services, this is done by the local government” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012).

when asked about PRDP, “As far as PRDP is concerned, the leaders are doing much because they are facilitating and rebuilding roads, water points, and hospitals, using that money of PRDP [sic]” (Focus Group, Kitgum, 17 Sep, 2012).

Regional officials, local government officials, civil society leaders, and community members all share the same opinion about the positive impact PRDP has had on the war-affected communities. One result of the infrastructure development has been easier access to social services for the communities. Safe water coverage has increased in the north and the number of children in school has improved. These results, although few and insufficient, give the PRDP framework some credibility. A local government PRDP coordinator said, “I think the major objective for the PRDP was to resettle the people and they have now returned to their homes. So the main objective for the PRDP was, as they go back home, we need to provide the necessary infrastructure they need to settle back into their homes. I think this has been achieved” (Interview, Palaro, 22 Nov 2012). The infrastructure development was supposed to be an integral part of the resettlement and recovery process. Infrastructure development, as findings have disclosed, were a major portion of the PRDP framework; however it was not the only key to making the PRDP a success.

### *Off Budget Support*

Off budget funding is one of the three channels where development partners or donors can support the PRDP framework. Through this support, development partners work with district governments directly, bypassing the bureaucracy of dealing with the central government. Typically, development partners who support the PRDP framework through this medium also bring their own staff to help implement the projects in conjunction with the district local governments (Interview with USAID official, Gulu, 16 Nov, 2012). USAID has been a primary supporter of the PRDP framework through off budget funding. A district local government official stated, “There is no money that has been better utilized than the USAID money, in the post-conflict recovery period, right from NUTI to now

NUDEIL.<sup>11</sup> If you want to measure impact, right now we are implementing a 14 billion Ushs (Ugandan Shillings) project. So USAID has given Gulu District 14 billion Ushs in one year, through off budget, but GoU, in three years of PRDP-I, has given only 11 billion Ushs” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012).

Off budget support for PRDP projects has proven to be the most successful implementation process according to many Gulu District officials. Despite a common complaint of lack of accountability by NGO’s or development partners regarding keeping the district informed about project funds and implementation, district officials interviewed expressed sentiments such as, “We feel, to really try and solve some of the problems or challenges of the implementation of PRDP, we ask that donors consider, and [sic] give direct budget support to local governments, rather than via the central government” (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012). If development partners and donors considered off budget funding as a more pertinent option, then districts could work directly with donors, and donors could directly see what the districts want and need to implement. According to a USAID official in Gulu, the districts give donors a work plan and the donor finances as much as it can implement. Funds are released according to work completed, and projects are usually completed and implemented on time (Interview, Gulu, 16 Nov 2012).

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<sup>11</sup> NUTI and NUDEIL are both USAID projects that have supported and are still supporting the PRDP framework initiative. For more information on these projects, see [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov).

## Section Three: Implementing the PRDP for the State

The Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for northern Uganda is, as previously discussed, predominantly implemented through the Government of Uganda. Pius Ojara (2012), a lecturer and research from Makerere University stated, “The role of the government is to coordinate recovery, reconstruction, and development.” However, many people find that government coordination through the implementation of the PRDP is a paradox because the GoU still has its own priorities at heart rather than those of the people, especially war-affected regions in the north. A political official in Gulu District stated, “The government is stronger than the society, and they do not give heed to the priorities of the people...good governance contains accountability and transparency” (Interview, Palaro, 24 Sep 2012). The role of the GoU should be to coordinate recovery and development in the North.

A paradox develops, however, because while there is in fact an operational recovery program for northern Uganda, it is actually consolidating the state rather than ameliorating the war-affected regions. Furthermore, the government has been allegedly called into question for continuing to marginalize the people in the north by perpetuating the war and being uncooperative during peace talks. This created a lot of doubt among community members and local government during the implementation of the PRDP. Additionally, government commitment to the recovery and reconstruction of northern Uganda has undoubtedly faltered. Throughout this section, I explore the recurrent theme and argument that the Peace, Recovery, and Development program is being implemented for building the capacity of the state government rather than ameliorating the suffering of the affected people of northern Uganda.

### *3.1 Building the State*

Although many government officials, development partners, and community members that were interviewed during the research project expressed that the first

phase of the PRDP framework had some success and positive impact, especially in infrastructure development, police enhancement, and off budget support, PRDP-I was fraught with many challenges. In particular, these challenges stemmed from the international donors overwhelming concentration on good governance, and the NRM's use of the PRDP for their own regime security. Banégas (2008:205) states, "Governance, whether qualified as bad or good, is now part and parcel of the language and practices of most international organizations investing in development aid today. Governance has become a veritable international doxa applied to all aspects of development aid; thought to be the necessary condition for durable development..." This international doxa, or unquestioned belief system, has allowed and perpetuated the fabrication of the PRDP by concentrating only on the procedural aspects of good governance in Uganda especially on the national level, rather than demanding accountability and results from the donor funding. From abusing the rule of law, to implementation gaps, allegations of corruption, and the lack of government commitment the first phase of PRDP-I is ultimately unsustainable and its goal of ameliorating the north and bridging the gap between the north and the south was largely a failure.

### *Implementation Gaps*

Through participant observation of PRDP projects, and through focus groups with community members, it was obvious that the PRDP was largely thought of as a program for governance and infrastructural development alone. Other programs of the PRDP framework, as displayed in diagram 3 (page 31), were only conceptual and never actually made it into the implementation stage. Some respondents suggest that SO-I, Consolidation of State Authority and its subsequent programs, were implemented beyond the bounds of the PRDP's mandate. SO-1 states, "The ultimate outcome is to ensure cessation of armed hostilities, providing security, reestablishing the rule of law, enabling the judicial and legal services to become functional, protection of human rights and strengthening local governance through rebuilding state institutions" (PRDP-I, 2007: 8). While on paper this may sound like a desirable step for northern Uganda, Lyandro Komakech (2012), a senior research

officer for Refugee Law Project at Makerere University stated, “The central government continually wants to consolidate state authority by imposing force and power when it should really be legitimizing state authority.” The government has gone beyond the implementation requirements to strengthen the police for its own regime security measures; the government has strengthened police forces and security in order to strengthen the current NRM regime. Banégas & Chrétien (2008:10) reinforce this idea by stating, “In Uganda, for example, the policies used to end political crisis were put in place in the name of good governance and security and have indeed enabled significant progress to be made towards the rule of law; and yet they have also contributed to the consolidation of a regime which can hardly be called democratic, and have indirectly reinforced the militarization of a regime whose principal legitimacy is founded on a ‘bush’ war.” The international funding that is supposed to be directed towards good governance for the rule of law and the benefit of the affected region is being used illegally. The international system, by supporting good governance that is actually undemocratic is actually reconstructing and strengthening the very machine, or regime, that helped foster the conflict in the first place. These solutions to the northern Uganda crisis being proposed and imposed on the national government of Uganda in the name of good governance and reconstruction of the affected region are actually contributing to failing results and need to be reconsidered.

These actions are actually marginalizing the people of the north instead of stabilizing and economically empowering them. Local government officials in the Acholi sub region endorse this idea by stating, “A lot of money is going to the Justice, Law, and Order Sector. A lot of money is going to the police. Actually the money they are using for building police houses and residences in Kampala is PRDP money. They are saying this is purely for the Justice, Law, and Order sector. A lot of armored vehicles and police trucks that are used on the streets in Kampala came from PRDP money” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov, 2012). According to this report, and comments like it from other local government officials, the GoU is really attempting to bolster the strength of the NRM regime using the PRDP money. Ultimately, these actions are decreasing funding for the northern region and marginalizing the people of



northern Uganda. In order to continue this fabrication, a local government official stated, “And to the donors, they [NRM Government] are saying, this is for the Justice, Law, and Order Sector, Strategic Objective number one” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012).

SO-4, Peace Building and Reconciliation is receiving little to no funding. There are two major issues that are resulting from the lack of funding for SO-4: (1) lack of psychosocial support and (2) lack of attention to conflict drivers such as land wrangles. The fourth strategic objective is supposed to be managed by the central government, and outsourced to NGOs and CSOs to reach the grassroots level. Local government officials stated, “Some strategic objective are not being directly implemented by local governments. They are being managed centrally. Like the issue of peace building, I think it was not even well managed under PRDP-I” (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012). This implementation gap is resulting in a lot of challenges for the war-affected regions. Psychosocial challenges due to war and insurgency are increasing in Gulu district and the government is able to offer little to no support. Reports reveal that “There are high increasing cases of suicide, there are internal wrangles, gender based violence in the homes, and the multitude [sic] are increasing by day. We need to have a lot of intervention along those lines if we are to maintain peace and security” (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012). Another official stated, “Domestic violence issues, issues to deal with land, conflict, poverty, etc. People are taking their lives over it. Why? Because SO-4 was not attended to [sic]” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012).

Ultimately, SO-4 has been a complete failure in the first phase of PRDP. Leaving out the components of peace building, reconciliation, and psychosocial support is only proliferating the issues regarding sustainable peace and development for the war-affected regions. Post-conflict societies, especially in the case of northern Uganda, generally have very sensitive and complex needs for psychosocial support among survivors. One pre-requisite to development is peace building (Junne, 2005:3-9). Addressing psychosocial needs are very important in the context of northern Uganda. The two fields of peace building and development must be reconciled so that they can work together. Psychosocial support is

important for peace building because at the basis of peace building is the people, and the people must be in a physical and psychologically secure state to perform such a task. Conflict resolution, psychosocial support, and peace building efforts should permeate all aspects of development projects and policy issues. It should be the basis on which development takes place (Junne, 2005:6). Currently, the PRDP may be strong in infrastructure development, but it lacks in peace building efforts, arguably ignored by the government, causing the affected population to remain in a conflict environment. A statement from a Gulu District Government Official epitomizes the implementation gaps in PRDP-1 and talks about where these peace building efforts are lacking: "I think it is time the GoU begins to invest in its population. The structures are there now, but as long as the people are not productive, they are not going to use these structures" (Interview, Gulu, 13 Nov 2012). He goes on to say that domestic violence, land conflict, poverty, psychosocial support, and reconciliation are not supported or funded and that the Strategic Objective of peace building is basically missing (Interview, Gulu, 13 Nov 2012). These issues are directly related to investing in the population of northern Uganda.

Land wrangles are rampant in northern Uganda. The PRDP-I official document states that under SO-4 it is supposed to reinforce mechanisms for local intra-inter communal conflicts (2007:33). According to this definition, these PRDP mechanisms should include those addressing land conflicts; however, under the priority programs listed in the PRDP official document for SO-4, land is not mentioned anywhere. Land conflicts developed in the community for several reasons. First, during the war, when IDP camps were instituted by the government and over 90% of local people from the Acholi sub-region were living in the camps, "land grabbing" by government officials left people with no land when they finally returned from the camps. Secondly, many people were in the camps for well over a decade and because land was often communal and passed down through the family, many children or women returning to their homes without their fathers or husbands often lost their land to other family or community members (Komakech D, 2012). Furthermore, there have been many reports of unpopular large land purchases by investors. Many of these land purchases develop into conflict because

local people are then displaced from, or cannot return to, what was once their home (Branch, 2010:159). Land conflict remains a major obstacle to recovery, reconciliation, and peace building in northern Uganda and should have been a major concern of the PRDP, in particular SO-4. However, with the minimal funding, land conflict has been ignored.

There are many stories as to why conflict drivers such as land disputes have been ignored by the PRDP, but it is necessary to connect the disregard to the explanation that the government stands to gain by ignoring these land conflicts. With government involvement in land grabbing cases, and government failure to instruct citizens on their land rights, it seems obvious that the previous idea in section one, which government officials in Gulu referred to as “Conflict Entrepreneurship,” could still be in use.

This analysis of the implementation gaps of PRDP-I reveals some of the challenges of post-conflict reconstruction. More importantly it reveals that post-conflict intervention efforts must go far beyond the common ideals for good governance, economic reform, or rule of law. While good governance is an ideal for post-conflict reconstruction, there must be a distinction between procedural and substantive democratic governance.

### *Lack of Government Commitment*

A regional government official stated, “The capacity of the government at the national level is pretty fine [sic] in terms of their roles...if you look at every ministry it is beautiful; you have rules, standards, and norms...the major challenge comes with real political will” (Interview, Palaro, 20 Nov 2012). This statement is indicative of many post-conflict situations in Africa, where government and citizens are experiencing difficulties in recovery, nation building, legitimacy, and support for sustainable development. According to Paul Omach (2012), a lecturer at Makerere University, “development in third world countries is inherently political.” The lack of government commitment is a major obstacle to the PRDP framework. As many research respondents indicate, the “lack of good political will” by our leaders and government officials is making the PRDP weak and unsustainable. With the lack of

government commitment, the PRDP will not mainstream northern Uganda to the National Development Plan. Hohe (2005:70) says, “the establishment of a central government that is legitimate in the eyes of the population is undoubtedly crucial.” Without this legitimacy and support from the central government, there will be no progress.

The lack of government commitment in Uganda stems from one major problem, the lack of political will or in other terms, corruption. One Gulu District Local Government official said, “First the thieves are finishing us. Then out of annoyance the good intended supporters [international donors] are frustrated and they are pulling everything [funding]” (Interview, Gulu, 17 Nov 2012). Corruption during PRDP-I was evident; however, the beginning of PRDP-II brought much needed pressure on the central GoU and the OPM to clean up their act. Time and time again, throughout the past few months, Ugandan national newspapers including the New Vision, Daily Monitor, and Red Pepper have been inundated with articles regarding the corruption within the OPM and subsequently the PRDP framework. Currently the OPM is under investigation for the disappearance of billions of Ugandan Shillings. A New Vision Article reports, “A draft audit report has revealed more fraud in the OPM. The money was diverted from the PRDP account and shifted to the crisis management account, which is dormant” (Karugaba and Mugisa, 2012: 3). More recently, newspapers are coming out daily with new reports about corruption and collusion in the OPM.

A civil servant in Gulu Town stated, “Museveni has benefited so much from this conflict because they started using northern Uganda as a fundraising basket, so the central government gets a lot of money from donors, and that money never comes to northern Uganda. So, to be very honest, the money that has been stolen in the OPM, the President is aware, the Vice President is aware, the wife is aware, the Prime Minister is aware. The civil servants being arrested right now are working for the guys up [sic]” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012). This type of deliberate collusion displays a serious lack of government commitment. This lack of government commitment is what some people say delayed the cease-fire between the LRA and the GoU. Branch (2010:80) supports this argument saying that the corruption and

lack of government commitment “points to the intricate relationship between the donors and the power of the Museveni regime.” The NRM power is using the PRDP to consolidate its regime.

#### *Lack of and Delay of Funding*

Local government officials are furious about the corruption because it has caused districts to have an extreme lack of funding. A local government official stated, “Government played the donors. Government said we are contributing 30 percent; government lied to the donors. I think the government contributed close to 19 percent” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012). Corruption is causing the districts a lot of difficulty and causing the people to lose trust in not only the central government but also the local level governments trying to implement projects. With little trust in the government, community members attitudes toward these programs and projects is negative, which greatly affects the sustainability and functionality of a project that is completed.

As far as funding challenges are concerned in the implementation of PRDP-I, they hardly compare to the challenges that the first quarter of PRDP phase II has revealed. A GDLG official stated, “we have had serious cuts in the budget, and this has affected the district in very many ways. Projects have been stalled, construction has stalled, the contractors do not have money, and we believe, if we do not get the proper funding without delay, the district might be taken to court by the contractors, because now we have not received disbursements for the second quarter” (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012). If funding for PRDP-II remains with such minimal funding, and accountability and transparency within the central government does not develop, then PRDP-II will be even less successful than the first phase.

#### *Monitoring and Evaluation*

The first phase of the PRDP framework has a major challenge with monitoring projects and evaluating the impact or success of completed projects. To date, there is still no official report from the OPM effectively evaluating PRDP-I.

Both the district government officials and central OPM officials conduct monitoring for the PRDP framework. A regional OPM official stated, “Though PRDP-I had a monitoring framework, it had weaknesses...it tried to cover too many variables and did not have the appropriate amount of facilitation to do so” (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012). A member of the PRDP technical working group stated, “The results framework was not robust enough...funding for supervision was not allocated” (Interview, Kampala, 10 Nov 2012). With no funding for monitoring and evaluation, district officials were unable perform their job properly. Furthermore, local district officials emphasize the issue of central government monitoring officials not doing their job. One sub-county official stated, “many of their priorities only go to buying new vehicles, misusing the government money...and the vehicles are not used for monitoring...and they feed the Office of the Prime Minister with wrong information” (Interview, Palaro, 21 Aug 2012). Furthermore, a district local official stated, “you can still have the monitoring and evaluation aspect, but as long as you don’t take it seriously then it doesn’t matter. I have seen many government officials and instead of going to do monitoring and supervision, they sit in their hotel rooms, and they are coming up with good reports [for OPM]. So there is a lot of laxity” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012). Without government commitment to monitor programs, the community commitment to assist in the monitoring and supervision of programs will be minimal. Furthermore, with the lack of funding for sensitization and monitoring, district and sub-county officials are experiencing difficulties in sensitizing the community to assist in the monitoring of projects.

### *The War Continues*

Although the Juba peace talks marked the end of violent conflict in northern Uganda, unfortunately, it certainly did not mark the end of the north-south divide. In sum, the implementation gaps, the lack of government commitment through lack of political will and corruption, and the failure of appropriate funding and monitoring have all exhibited the fabrication of the PRDP by the Government of Uganda. The NRM regime has used the post-conflict reconstruction program to bolster their own state dominance and failed to help foster the needs of the affected

population. In the 'Peace building Environment', Berdal (2009:53) notes, "The formal end of armed conflict rarely entails a clean break from past patterns of violence. This is especially the case in situations where civil or intra-state wars have been brought to an end through negotiated settlement." Political violence always seems to continue into the post-conflict phase. Using the PRDP for state enhancement and regime security, rather than for the amelioration of northern Ugandans challenges, is political inspired violence. This concept is actually perpetuating an insecure and conflicted environment for the north, aimed at advancing the political ends and objectives of the NRM regime.

### *3.2 The Bottom-up Approach*

The bottom up approach is a very important aspect in recovery and reconstruction programs. The bottom up approach refers to programs that take the most vulnerable people, or the people that the program is targeting, into consideration for planning, procurement, implementation, and functionality. Not only consideration, but the projects implemented through a recovery and reconstruction program should come directly from the priorities of the targeted community. One major realization became apparent in the PRDP drafting process; all of the previous government programs implemented in northern Uganda have taken more of a top down approach. This approach is not effective for sustainability and functionality because the community will not feel attached to the program or have a sense of ownership of the projects being implemented. Consequently, it became a goal for the GoU to implement the PRDP framework through a bottom up approach. However, the success of the bottom up approach taking the victims into consideration throughout the implementation of PRDP-I has failed. This shortfall will be discussed in more detail in the next section, which considers the importance of an included and involved community.

The populations targeted and affected by the conflict, which are supposed to be the beneficiaries of recovery and reconstruction, are often forgotten in the planning process due to lack of political will. Paul Omach (2012) again says, "State

led intervention programs have never been implemented well...these government programs are not sustainable because of a lack of political will.” The ulterior or differing interests of international, state, and non-governmental actors can have a major effect on many post-conflict recovery and reconstruction issues in Africa. The population affected by the conflict and war is often sidelined for the well-being of “state-building.” There is a requisite need for a bottom up approach in post-conflict recovery and reconstruction programs.

### *3.3 District Coverage*

There are two major challenges with districts in regards to the PRDP framework. First is district multiplication, which entails the national government creating many new districts around the country. When the NRM came into power in 1986, there were 35 districts in Uganda. Currently, there are over 130 districts in Uganda with just over 30 million people. This drastic district multiplication is causing the PRDP framework to have certain challenges. Furthermore, due to district multiplication, the PRDP has expanded the number of districts that the framework is supposed to support. This expansion has also caused further challenges to the effectiveness of the PRDP framework.

*“The President wakes up one morning and says,  
‘Divide Gulu into two...let Palaro be its own district.’  
And then it’s done.”*

*- Community Member from Gulu Town*

#### *Multiplication*

Conceptually, creating new districts makes sense because, as the central government claims, it takes services closer to the people. In the words of a regional OPM official, “When you talk about PRDP you are talking about people; the real central objective is the individual person, the vulnerable” (Interview, Paicho, 23 Nov 2012). In theory, districts would be better equipped to serve their people and



implement more effective projects if service delivery was closer to the community. However, this concept of multiplication is only advantageous if conducted properly, and that is not what is occurring. Instead, the central government appears to be implementing the practice of 'divide and rule.' Members of the Ugandan Parliament and local leaders quoted in the *New Vision* national newspaper argue, "the new districts do not have the capacity to generate their own revenue and their creation is a mere political tool by the NRM government" (Mugasha, 2012: 6). Furthermore, a local government official stated, "The creation of new districts has a lot of financial implications. Unfortunately these creations are not linked to any financial undertakings or analysis. Unfortunately, central government doesn't care how we are doing economically. It is purely politically motivated" (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012). So through multiplication of districts without any concern for financial analysis, politics and economics are found to be at war. Total funding from the central government to districts remains static while the numbers of districts multiply and the cost of services increase. The minimal resources districts receive are now being divided among more districts, leaving each district with even less funding to implement projects. "The formation of new districts in this way is not effective" (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012). This multiplication of districts without concern for financial implications is a major challenge.

### *Expansion*

When the PRDP was first going through consultations with the IMTC, it was supposed to cover 18 districts. During the first year of the two-year drafting process, 11 new districts were created within the territory of the original 18. These new districts further scattered the already scarce resources from the PRDP framework. During the second year of the drafting two more districts were added in the north-central region due to "spill over," and nine more districts were added in the eastern region for the same reason (Marino, 2008a).<sup>12</sup> Before the PRDP

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<sup>12</sup> Spill Over became one of the criteria for categorizing districts. Spill over referred to Internally Displaced Persons relocating to that district. For more details on the criteria see the official PRDP document, Government of Uganda, 2007.

framework was first implemented in 2009, the number of districts being covered expanded from the original 18 to 40 causing the PRDP resources to be scarcely scattered among war-affected regions. One sub-county official stated, “PRDP is covering so many districts that it makes the framework lose its original meaning. This program was supposed to benefit districts that have been affected by the war, but many districts that have never experienced war are receiving benefits from the PRDP. Many who are taking the lion’s share (the biggest portion) have never suffered because of the war” (Interview, Palaro, 21 Aug, 2012). Currently the PRDP framework is covering 64 districts and municipalities.

### *Tools for the State*

Multiplication and expansion appear to be tools for the state rather than services for the people. These are strategies by the NRM to bring their own ‘political structures’ closer to the people and to use the PRDP as an excuse for state governance development. The new districts are seen as a political tool; one community member (2012) said, “When they started giving new district, it was a tactic to weaken the people up here, ruling by dividing the people. These are some of the disadvantages I see. The political way the central government is dividing the districts creates conflict. These districts are created politically and motivated by politicians” (Interview, Gulu, 22 Aug 2012). Politics and patronage has become the main factor in making these tools work properly and efficiently. With the NRM planting political elites that are bound to the “Movement system” through patronage, the current regime is able to maintain close control over the people throughout the country. Fortunately, international agencies, local civil servants, and community members are becoming more cynical about these strategies by the NRM for implementing support and “broad-based governance” for the people. However, they are probably not skeptical enough. Junne (2009:246) states, “Certainly, they [aid agencies and international donors] need to be suspicious of patronage that taxes scarce resources, fuels corruption, weakens institutions, aims at reinforcing political factions, benefits individuals, or inflates bureaucratic empires.” These

tactics by the NRM regime in Uganda need to be attended to through strict accountability of aid and the support of local governance and community capacity.

### *Conclusion: Why Infrastructural Development is Not Enough*

Throughout this section, evidence for the argument that the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan for northern Uganda is being used for empowerment of the state and regime security rather than for ameliorating the affected population has been revealed through the implementation gaps, lack of government commitment and political will, corruption, and most importantly, failing to address the importance of a victim-centered approach. Instead of combining peace and development, and implementing a holistic transformation the government has concentrated on infrastructure development and consolidation of state authority for its own security measures. Juune & Verkoren (2005:307) warn stakeholders against this type of post-conflict reconstruction by examining “why rebuilding is not enough,” and it in fact has great potential to perpetuate conflict and reinforce the very roots that led to the conflict. She states, “Thus, the primordial task of post-conflict development is not just rebuilding or reconstruction, because this may lead to the rebuilding of the very structures that have given rise to the devastating conflict” (Juune & Verkoren, 2009: 6). Terminating state consolidation and regime security during post-conflict reconstruction in northern Uganda is an important strategy for making holistic transformation and outside intervention more beneficial for communities that need support.

## Section Four: Implementing the PRDP in “Bad Surroundings”

The current environment in northern Uganda, which Finnström (2008) refers to as “Bad Surroundings,” is a major concern among research and experts in the region. Finnström (2008:12) states, “The alleged absence of war and military violence does not equal peace.” Furthermore, as discussed above, the failure of the Juba negotiations and the subsequent UPDF 2008 military advance on the LRA after the cease-fire brought about an environment of negative peace in northern Uganda. The Implementation of a recovery and reconstruction program in northern Uganda needs to take into consideration the environment of a vulnerable war-affected region. Unfortunately, the planning of PRDP did not take this into account. Subsequently, when the PRDP was first initiated it was already crippled. This can be seen directly by looking at the budget in diagram 4 on pg. 33. Strategic Objective 4, Peace Building and Reconciliation, was only promised 2.7% of the PRDP total budget. With this minimal amount of funding, peace building, reconciliation, psychosocial support, and other post-conflict trauma, were not attended to by the recovery program. Ignoring these needs of the vulnerable community only perpetuates an insecure environment of negative peace, which diminishes the capacity of the local government and community, and harms sustainable recovery and reconstruction. Throughout this chapter, the second major recurrent theme in post-conflict reconstruction is revealed. The argument is that post-conflict reconstruction programs are too often implemented in environments that do not allow for sustainable recovery and development.

### *4.1 Negative Peace and the Security Dilemma*

One issue disabling sustainable post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa is the understanding of peace. Isaac Albert (2008:33) states, “Peace is a universal concept. Every society desires it; none can exist without it...the troubling paradox, however, is that there is no consensus in the world today on what constitutes peace.” This paradox is rooted in the complex concepts of positive

and negative peace. Furthermore he writes, “The most simplistic but popular understanding of peace is that it is the opposite of conflict or violence” (Albert, 2008: 33). This globally popular definition of peace is one major inhibiting factor to sustainable post-conflict reconstruction programs in many part of the world. Albert (2008:33) demonstrates this idea particularly well by pointing out, “A major shortcoming of this understanding of the concept is that it lays exclusive emphasis on overt violence; it is silent on how to contend with psychological and structural violence.”

Post-conflict reconstruction attempting to take place in an environment of negative peace is likely unsustainable. An environment full of bad surroundings and negative peace cannot rectify or liberate the loss of identity, psychological effects, economic disempowerment, social trauma, cultural disunity, and loss of livelihoods that linger in the aftermath of war. Albert (2008:34) describes positive peace as the “integration of human society,” that it “considers the prevention of violence,” and that it is a “sustainable peace that requires egalitarian distribution of resources and fighting against anything that compromises basic human existence and survival.” Such societies that are exploited by corrupt elites, ruled by dictators, and authoritatively marginalize their own people cannot experience positive peace and cannot experience sustainable post-conflict recovery and reconstruction.

When a region such as northern Uganda is just emerging from a violent conflict, security for the citizens is a major factor for sustainable reconstruction, recovery and development. Unfortunately, the PRDP has been implemented in an environment where the people do not feel secure. Junne (2009:19) enforces this idea stating, “ Security – that is, freedom from violence and coercion – is the one absolute prerequisite to any effective recovery process after the intensity of armed conflict subsides.” This lingering negative peace or insecure environment can stem from multiple sources. In the case of northern Uganda, insecurity is coming from sources such as weak local governance, lack of trust in the government, rogue police forces, and a lack of sensitization to the community about post-conflict recovery and reconstruction. The following sections discuss these sources of negative peace and insecurity in northern Uganda in more detail.

## *4.2 Capacity of the Local Government*

A regional OPM official stated, “The issue of capacity is more of a challenge within local governments” (Interview, Gulu, 10 Nov 2012). However, the capacity of the local government largely depends on what the central government allows the districts to do. The capacity of the local government in Uganda does not always depend on what the local government wants or needs, but it is contingent upon what the central government mandates. This system is often frustrating for local government officials for several reasons including decisions regarding staffing, funding, and funding allocation, all of which will be discussed in more detail below. Furthermore, international actors’ concentration on state governance has resulted in abandoning local governments’ need for capacity. Berdal (2009:121) states, “While strengthening governance capacity and administrative structures is widely recognized as key to attaining stability and reducing insecurity in post-conflict societies, it has proved one of the most difficult of the challenges facing outsiders in the early phase of interventions.” Not only is this a difficult task, especially with the Government of Uganda’s lack of commitment, corruption, and failure to fulfill its duties, but “the attention of external actors has often been misdirected, with the principal focus being on systems of central government and political life in the capital rather than on local, municipal and regional governance” (Berdal, 2009: 121).

This is not to assume that national governments do not also need support, but in cases like Uganda, the international system is ignoring the local governments that have suffered because of the war, and propping up the very state government that destroyed all lower level governance operations in the north mainly through the enforcement of IDP camps. Serious attention needs to be given to local government in Uganda; “a strong local governance system that is within reach of the population and is acknowledged by it, is of great relevance to overcome a vast number of problematic issues in post-conflict reconstruction” (Hohe, 2005: 70). Strengthening local governance is not only important for the balance of state and local governance in Uganda, but concentrating on the lower levels, closer to the

affected people, may offer a much more promising route to sustainable reconstruction and development.

### *Poorly facilitated staffing*

The first reason for low staffing in district and sub-county governments is that “some local governments have been just recently formed, they have been divided away...according to local government performance some districts have as low as 7% staffing” (Interview, Gulu, 20 Nov 2012). The central government’s decision to create new districts without concern to financial or economic capacity is irresponsible and deliberate. It is a contradiction, splitting already scarce resources and increasing the cost of administration.

A Gulu District official stated, “The staffing level of the district is at 68 percent. The hands of the district are tied, they are not allowed to recruit beyond that” (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012). Gulu District has most of its staffing issues, in regards to the PRDP framework, within the district engineering office. “We are understaffed with only 4 engineers to implement some 100 projects at a time” (Interview, Gulu, 22 Nov 2012). This understaffing of engineers, as the project-supervising department, results in projects to be poorly implemented due to shoddy and corrupt contractors. When you look at the capacity of the district local government, it is also very low in terms of equipment. “Gulu district and many other district that are worse off do not have the equipment necessary” (Interview, Gulu, 22 Nov 2012). Districts are lacking vehicles to monitor and sensitize projects and the communities respectively. This results in further challenges with shoddy contractors and dependent communities.

Poorly staffed local governments basically become puppets of the state government. With little resources and little decision-making power, these local governments are often governed by the state government instead of governed by their constituents like a democratic system would presuppose. Tanja Hohe (2005:59) points out that the international system stresses the importance and involvement of national leaders in state building exercises, but they are leaving the local population and local governance out of the equation. State building needs to

start from the grassroots level. In order to properly maintain the level of accountability needed by your constituencies, it is necessary to have local governments that are fully facilitated and not under the control of the state government.

### *Funding*

Besides the lack of and delay of funding from the central government to the local government, the central government further dictates the districts. The central government dictates how much funding is to be used in each sector leaving districts without flexibility for any individual priorities they might have. A key informant from the Gulu District Local Government stated, “They [central government] just tell you [district government], by the way, it’s purely conditional. Out of the 4 billion, use 1.5 for health, 1.5 for education, .5 for water, and .5 for roads” (Interview, Gulu, 17 Nov 2012). This leaves district governments yearning for flexibility to develop their own priorities so they can implement projects that the community needs.

Another issue is the capacity of the government to build its own revenue base. Currently, Gulu District has an extremely low revenue base. According to the political head of Gulu District, only 9 percent of funding for the district comes from the district itself. Obviously, the war and subsequent resettlement process had a major effect on the revenue base in many districts in northern Uganda. Furthermore, “Much to the demise of the local government, the central government has removed the graduated (income) tax from many districts in the north. This removed a crucial part of the economic activity of the local government and removed what little ability the local government had to implement their own projects and to stimulate their own local economy” (Interview, Gulu, 14 Nov 2012). Gulu District, in response to the removal of this tax by the central government, has designed a Revenue Enhancement Plan to identify other avenues to generate revenue; however, this is a slow process. The funding dilemma is just another example of how the state government is maintaining control on the local government, resulting in insecurity for the local population.



### *4.3 Capacity of the Community*

The community is indeed the most important factor to sustainable development and institutional change. What the community can and cannot do is often times contingent upon the government using the right approach in the development process and implementation. The capacity of the community can be increased with appropriate reconstruction and development strategies. The capacity of the community in northern Uganda is extremely integral to the PRDP; the PRDP needs the community as much as the community needs the benefits it offers. Brown, in his chapter on “Reconstructing Infrastructure” in “Postconflict Development”, describes Goulet’s thoughts on participation stating, “participation [from the community] performs three vital functions: It instills dignity, mobilizes people as problem solvers in their own social environments, and facilitates access to higher arenas of decisionmaking” (Brown 2005:107). These three ideas about the benefit of community participation in development will be described in the Ugandan context in the following sub-sections. One regional official in Gulu Town expressed his thoughts on the issue saying, “I think the capacity of the community can be adequately built and it depends on us, the districts. How can we, the districts, tap that potential?” (Interview, Gulu, 13 Nov 2012). Tapping the potential within the community is accomplished by the bottom-up approach; unfortunately, in Uganda that technique is being sabotaged by state consolidation. If the government was properly engaging the community in PRDP projects, stories like the following, would occur more frequently:

I [government official] worked with a project, funded by the EU, where we built the capacity of the communities by taking them through some training for construction during projects. It is amazing what communities can do when you just show them a few things about the construction of a project and what to look for and do. You would be amazed how they can pick things that are not normally in their capacity to do. Our engineer, [sic] he would get phone calls from community members...and the engineer would go there quietly, and the contractor would be amazed...the engineer would discover that the contractor was actually doing the wrong thing. That way people were on their toes to do quality work. More importantly, is that

when the project ended, the community remained with that knowledge (Interview, Gulu, 22 Nov 2012).

This particular story demonstrates several key ideas that portray the benefits of increased community participation and capacity. It also shows how the capacity of the community will only increase by demonstrating need and respect of the local people.

### *Mobilization*

A common complaint from local government officials is the failure of community members to mobilize and participate in the implementation of PRDP projects, starting from the planning process, through construction, and onto maintenance. This is one cause of the lack of a sense of ownership. Lack of community mobilization stems from several issues. First, often times the community is not sensitized by the government properly. This issue will be further discussed in the following section. Secondly, is the fact that the community has developed a type of dependency and does not fully appreciate projects that do not benefit them directly. A local leader in Gulu district stated, “The dependency on government programs is very high” (Interview, Palaro, 27 Aug 2012). For example, a district government official told a story about a big population in his village that had no access to a primary school because there was no bridge over the river. The district official told NUTI (USAID project) about the issue, and NUTI requested that the community mobilize to slash the roads so USAID could get the equipment to the construction site. The district official stated, “The community said ‘no, you people (NUTI) have come from the U.S., you raise money on our name, we are not going to slash,’ so our people have their own issues” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012).

The people carry with them certain expectations for government programs. For two decades the people lived in IDP camps experiencing complete vulnerability and dependency upon humanitarian relief and NGO’s. Subsequently, humanitarian relief pulled out of northern Uganda at an extremely fast rate, crippling any sustainable elements the community might have otherwise gained. On top of that, “handouts” from NGOs have conditioned the community to have certain

expectations. When these expectations are not met, the community simply fails to mobilize. A community representative expressed resentment for this by saying, “NGOs have spoiled mobilization here.” Furthermore he stated, “mobilization is not easy, and it all depends on the type of activity that you are mobilizing them for. For example, sports, galas, and competitions always have a lot of participation, but if you want to mobilize for other activities, it is often a challenge. They always expect some money if they attend a meeting, they expect direct benefit” (Interview, Palaro, 27 Aug 2012).

Specifically, in regard to the PRDP people had a different expectation at the beginning of the program, and due to lack of sensitization, the people continue to hold the wrong expectations. The implementation of the PRDP collided with a resettlement program in South Sudan where the United Nations was giving direct cash benefits to every household in South Sudan. Consequently, community members in war-affected regions of northern Uganda assumed that PRDP was going to give money to every household and “they prepared for it, they prepared for it mentally, they said, ‘okay, we are going to get out money for reparations and resettlement.’ People waited for it for PRDP to come and send them home from the camps with money” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012). This attitude has had a major negative affect on the implementation of the PRDP framework. The community opinion of the framework is extremely low and ignorant due to lack of government sensitization. Furthermore, communities do not understand that these projects are not long-term and that it is seriously up to the community members to make the impact long term and sustainable. Community members from Palaro and Paicho sub-county were documented making statements about how they think these projects will continue for 10 to 20 more years. However, they did specify that if the corruption in the central government continues then these programs might be cut short because donors will cut funding (Focus Groups, Paicho/Palaro, 28/30 Nov 2012).

The question then is, why is there a lack of mobilization from the community to really become “problem solvers in their own social environments?” What is causing the community to live in such a dependent environment? Why is the

community not mobilizing and taking advantage of a program that is supposed to bring them out of the poverty trap? Brown declares, “to achieve this, a change of culture from central dependency to community responsibility will be necessary by establishing local organizational structures, a pool of local expertise, and appropriate charging mechanisms.” Furthermore, he states that part of this process “involves understanding changes to the capacities and vulnerabilities of each community” (Brown 2005:106). The latter part of Brown’s statement points to the need for psychosocial support, conflict resolution, and reconciliation, SO-4 goals that were discussed in the previous section. In analyzing my research in northern Uganda, I developed two main answers to these questions that both stem from the failing bottom-up approach that is acutely essential to the growth of the community. These two ideas are ownership by the community and sensitization of the community.

#### *A Sense of Ownership*

Brown describes securing ownership from the community as “the pivotal factor that will transform infrastructure from being a short-term to long-term utility” (Brown 2005:106). Unfortunately, in Uganda employing the community through the bottom-up approach is failing; the local people are not receiving projects that are among their priorities, wants, or needs. When an extremely vulnerably community receives a project grant for a structure they did not request, or a commodity that is not among their top priorities, it does not give the community a feeling of ownership over the project. The community, however, is very vital to the completion of projects within their village or parish. Without a sense of ownership, many problems with the implementation of a project become apparent.

A regional OPM official stated, “Their [the community] input is critical in parts of this process [implementation], especially the identification of the project. The community must identify the project because that is the beginning of ownership, and when something is owned, there is a likelihood that it will be there for a long time, and that is an element of sustainability” (Interview, Gulu, 22 Nov

2012). With a sense of ownership from the community, they recognize the project as their own and infrastructure becomes sustainable development. “The pivotal factor that will transform infrastructure from being a short-term to long-term utility is securing ownership by the community” (Brown, 2005: 106). When this happens, the community takes extra care in watching the project develop. The community monitors projects very closely in this instance and is able to minimize corruption from the bottom-up, starting with shoddy contractors attempting to perform minimalist work. However, if the community does not recognize the project as their own, and it was dumped on their community without a request, then people will neglect to monitor and maintain it. This is a big challenge among the projects implemented by the PRDP framework. A technical official of the GDLG stated, “Often times the community feels no responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the newly implemented projects. The program leaders must sensitize the community to have a feeling of duty and responsibility to upkeep these projects and to make reports to the government about them” (Interview, Gulu, 25 Aug 2012).

### *Sensitization of the Community*

A local government official from Palaro sub-county stated, “The community does not know what the PRDP is all about” (Interview, Palaro, 15 Aug 2012). When the community is asked about the PRDP framework, the average person in the village does not know anything about the program. This is obviously a major problem. Furthermore, the PRDP framework and sub-programs are supposed to be a stepping-stone to sustainability. A sub-county official said, “If you go to the sub-county and you ask them (the community), ‘do you know about PRDP?’ Most of them will say they don’t know, and yet some are benefiting from the program every financial year” (Interview, Gulu, 27 Aug 2012). Community members do not understand what the PRDP framework is supposed to do. Even community members benefitting from projects do not know that the program is supposed to be dissolved within three years. When community members of beneficiary groups were asked what they knew about the program, responses varied, but none could be said to be knowledgeable about the PRDP framework. Some responses given by

community members in Palaro Sub County said, “I think it would be best if PRDP benefitted individuals directly instead of in beneficiary groups. That way individuals could take the money and help themselves.” Furthermore, others said, “As I see it PRDP may take another twenty years to come...unless people that are managing these programs have corruption [sic], then the programs may not take long to finish because the donors will stop funds” (Interview, Palaro, 30 Nov 2012). These comments from the community clearly display the lack of sensitization among community members. To expect a program that is set up for only three years to last twenty years will greatly affect the sustainability and functionality of projects. An article compiled by Refugee Law Project at Makerere University (2012:2) epitomized the sensitization issue stating, “the lack of simple and clear information and limited sensitization of the community on PRDP-I. This has affected the implementation and realization of the objectives articulated in the PRDP framework.”

### *Trust in the government*

The lack of government commitment, the lack of sensitization, monitoring, and evaluation, and the collusion and corruption in the OPM have greatly curtailed the community’s trust in their government. The community has simply lost all hope in the government. Despite unreasonable or ignorant expectations, the community’s priorities have not been taken into proper consideration and this alone has exacerbated their lack of trust in the government. At this point, it is important to reiterate Hohe’s idea that a central government must be legitimate in the eyes of the local community for post-conflict reconstruction to develop properly (2005:70). However, one local government official talked about how the district is receiving the brunt of the communities distrust because the district is the one implementing projects. If the central government cuts funding, then it is the responsibility of the districts and other local governments to cut the projects the community was previously promised. A government local official stated, “The challenge definitely is our community tells us that we are not trustful, we don’t tell the truth” (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012). Projects sent to the district by the community are approved

and then later cut out by the district because of a lack of funding from central. “So after they have cut the project out of the budget, the community does not trust us” (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012). Consequently, if the community does not trust their local government, then the community will not acknowledge the importance of their local governance. However, the local government is extremely important in post-conflict reconstruction, as they are heavily involved in the conflict resolution and recovery processes. This environment causes insecurity in the local population and therefore inhibits holistic and sustainable reconstruction and development.

#### *4.4 Sustainability*

One of the major goals of the implementation of the PRDP framework was to stabilize northern Uganda and mainstream the war-affected regions to the level of the National Development Plan. This means that the PRDP was meant to be a stepping-stone to sustainability for northern Uganda. Obviously, it cannot be the role of a recovery and reconstruction program, like PRDP, to continue funding the sustainability and functionality of completed projects. It should be the job of local governments with local revenues to maintain sustainability along with the assistance of community members. However, there must be sensitization of the community for this to occur, and there must be funding to assist in this sensitization. The answer to making projects sustainable and functional is to institute major software development in the community. Software development refers to hands-on training of community members about how to manage, maintain, and properly use the resources they have been given through the PRDP. However, due to lack of funding, sensitization and mobilization, the software development using for sustainability has collapsed.

Sustainability, through the PRDP, has collapsed because there was no software development. Software development refers to building the capacity of the community through mobilization, sensitization, and training. The goal of software development is to educate communities on how to maintain and sustain the projects they have been given. However, “PRDP-I was just infrastructure, and it left elements

of the economy out. You could see that if you measured poverty, if you measured helplessness, and if you measured unemployment, you would see that it is still high despite big spending on infrastructure...so this is not a good sign for the end of PRDP-I" (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012). Software development is a critical aspect of sustainability and functionality so the question is now, "How do you marry infrastructure development with software development so that you have holistic recovery? That is the challenge" (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012).

This question can be answered by enhancing the capacity of the community, or what Juune & Verkoren (2009) refer to as "community enablement." "These difficulties indicate that much attention needs to be given to making participation effective. The key to bridging the gap between effective community participation (part of the empowerment process) and sustainable development is the much underrated and understated concept of 'community enablement'" (Brown, 2005: 107). Software development and mobilization both refer to what Goulet (1995) describes as participations from the community. Participation from the community or community enablement involves putting into practice what PRDP SO-4 is supposed to be doing, but is not receiving any funding or support to perform the programs. Goulet's description of participation in the following excerpt appropriately describes the issue of mobilization and software development that the PRDP is experiencing currently:

The most difficult form of participation to elicit and sustain is also the most indispensable to genuine [sustainable] development. This is participation [mobilization/software development] that starts at the bottom and reaches progressively upward into ever-widening arenas of decision-making. It matures into a social force which may form a critical mass of participating communities progressively empowered to enter into spheres of decision or action beyond their immediate problem-solving arenas (Goulet 1995: 96).

One of the ways that the PRDP framework is attempting to enhance the capacity of the community is the use of User Beneficiary Committees. The role of User Beneficiary Committees is pertinent for the sustainability and functionality of PRDP projects. User Beneficiary Committees are elected members of the community that are supposed to help train the entire community about a certain project and



also lead the maintenance on project. Construction projects for infrastructure in the community provide a lot more than just structures. They provide the communities future and sustainability. The site, type of project, maintenance, and knowledge about the project is important for the community to know. A regional OPM official stated, “Now for sustainability, in PRDP-I, it was noted that the role of the User Beneficiary Committees seemed to be a bit low...their role was not so institutionalized so that they would participate, right from the time of identification, planning, and implementation of projects, and be part of the project cycle management” (Interview, 16 Nov 2012). Furthermore, the Mid-Term Report by the OPM revealed, “only 36% of interventions had sufficiently trained user groups” (2012:22). This calls for major concern in terms of the sustainability of the PRDP. One Water User Committee, which is a User Beneficiary Committee for community boreholes, from Paicho sub-county in Gulu District expressed unity among the members of the community. However, they also expressed a lot of distress about how other community members disrespect their authority and training regarding the use and maintenance of the borehole (Focus Group, Paicho, 28 Nov 2012). The challenge here expresses a lack of community engagement and a need for even greater sensitization from community services. Community members must become aware through these User Beneficiary Committees that when the PRDP is completed, they must take care of these projects on their own.

### *Conclusion*

Sustainability is a major factor in post-conflict recovery programs. However, sustainability cannot occur without positive surroundings, a fully capacitated local government, an enabled community that trusts in its government, and other pivotal factors including sensitization and mobilization. With all of these concepts begin delivered through a post-conflict reconstruction program, sustainable development could be attainable for the war-affect people. Northern Uganda just ended its first three-year phase of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan. However, at this point, northern Uganda is not experiencing sustainable development or a positive environment for post-conflict reconstruction and recovery to materialize.

## Section Five: PRDP Phase II

*“One key role we played was to push for the extension of PRDP,  
which everyone agreed that it was very necessary”*

*- Gulu District Local Official*

At the end of the first phase of the PRDP framework, the Office of the Prime Minister developed a Mid-term Review “to assess progress made to date towards the achievement of PRDP objectives, identify and document lessons learned and make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the PRDP” (MTR, 2011:ii).<sup>13</sup> The report by the OPM revealed many things about the first phase that the central government attempted to change in the drafting of PRDP II. There were several major items the OPM report revealed that the following sections will discuss including: the need for a more robust framework for monitoring and evaluation, increased capacity at the district level, completion of infrastructure projects and their sustainability through increased software development, funding flexibility and additional sector involvement, and mechanisms to address conflict drivers.

### *5.1 The Continuation of PRDP-II: More Challenges to Come?*

The PRDP-II for northern Uganda will be effective July 2012 to June 2015.<sup>14</sup> A report from the OPM, in June 2012, made several superficial and exaggerated statements about the success of PRDP-I and the continuation of PRDP-II. For example, it states, “fundamental challenges of insecurity and displacement in northern Uganda have now been addressed. Emergency and recovery efforts

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<sup>13</sup> For details see, Mid Term Review of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for northern Uganda, Office of the Prime Minister, Final, June 2011. Available from: <http://www.opm.go.ug/resource-center/special-programmes-publications/northern-uganda1.html>

<sup>14</sup> For details see, Peace, Recovery and Development Plan II for northern Uganda, June 2012, Government of Uganda. Available from: <http://www.prdp.org.ug/>

successfully managed. What remains is for PRDP phase two to translate all the existing investments into fully functional facilities to spur development” (OPM 2012b). This statement displays the OPM’s simplistic view of a complex recovery situation for northern Uganda. Furthermore, Mr. Bigirimana, the Permanent Secretary now under criminal investigation, “pledged to work tirelessly to ensure that the next three years bring more glory to northern Uganda” (OPM 2012b). Unfortunately, if commitment from the central government follows in line with these statements, PRDP-II has many challenges to come. Somewhat contradictory to these statements, the Mid-Term Report from the OPM stated, “Overall, the findings from the MTR indicate that affirmative action for the north will remain relevant in the coming decade...it is not realistic to expect to bring the social and economic condition in the North into line with the rest of the country in just three years” (MTR PRDP: 2012:v).

#### *Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework*

One major complaint from PRDP-I was its inability to monitor and evaluate projects effectively. There are several issues regarding M&E that stem from the overall capacity constraints in the local governments. The Mid-Term Reports states, “Inadequate capacity in terms of staffing and skills at District level has led in some cases to inadequate planning, procurement delays, inadequate procurement processes and weak and inadequate supervision of projects” (2012:iv). The two main problems that have led to inadequacy in these areas were discussed in a previous section and have also been mentioned in the Mid-Term Report of the PRDP: poorly facilitated staffing and no funding for M&E. The Mid-Term Report states, “When asked about their biggest constraints to delivering services effectively, most districts (53%) cited inadequate staffing as one of their biggest constraints for effective service delivery” (2012:14). Furthermore, the report states, “Consideration should be given to providing funds for capacity and enhancement of local government under the PRDP grant...for the supervision and monitoring of PRDP infrastructure investments” (2012:iv). Consequently, PRDP-II developed a separate M&E framework to guide supervision for the second phase. However,

many local government officials are skeptical of the seriousness of implementing this framework. One government official in Gulu stated, “I don’t think this framework will make any difference. It should not be about capturing all the projects; it should be about ensuring value for money, about strengthening the aspect of accountability, about coordinating, about involvement and participation by different people, about quality. It should not just be about counting the number of structures and putting the figures together. I think the monitoring and evaluation tool is very shallow. I have the copy, it is very shallow” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012). It is too soon to tell if the new M&E framework will actually be effective, but with the allocation of money from the PRDP grant specifically for M&E, it is hoped that it will at least have some increased success.

The major issue that is still inhibiting M&E and has hardly been addressed in the PRDP-II document is staffing. The official PRDP document states, “On staffing issues, Local Governments are advised to consult with the sector line ministries to see if provisions have been made in the wage bill to cater for new staff to run the new facilities” (PRDP-II 2012:5). The new facilities being referred to here are M&E offices that are supposed to bring the A-CAO’s closer to the people and the current projects. A local government official stated, “In PRDP-II now, our department has been given some funding for two motorcycles, two laptops for reports, and to renovate our county HQ where we can sit and be closer to the projects” (Interview, Gulu, 21 Nov 2012). However, this is not happening in all districts and the PRDP-II is not demanding funding for M&E but instead only suggesting it in this one part of the document. With this type of planning for M&E of PRDP-II, it seems that more challenges await the local governments and the communities.

### *Funding Flexibility*

Within the new framework for PRDP-II, district local governments now have the flexibility to allocate any amount of funding to any sector they prefer. However, One local government official expressed resentment in the government for the way PRDP-II is beginning in the first quarter. He said, “It is actually total mockery, because how do you expect us to choose where to put funds when the funding has

been drastically reduced. It is like saying, okay, I have been giving you 10,000 shilling and telling you what to do with the money, now I am going to give you 5,000; do anything you want with it” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012). Having flexibility in the allocation of funding toward different sectors means very little when the funds have been drastically reduced. On paper, the central government is giving the district local governments a chance to set their own priorities, but in practice, the districts are just being further limited and mocked by the cut in funding. The district local governments, no matter how much funding flexibility there is, cannot perform well with funding reduced by 50%.

### *Conflict Drivers*

The implementation gaps in PRDP-I discussed in section three regarding SO-4 have been further confirmed by the Mid-Term Reports from the OPM. The report states, “More progress has been made under the first two Strategic Objectives [Consolidation of State Authority and Infrastructural Development], than under the third and fourth.” Furthermore the report states that for SO-4, “Interventions have, on the whole, been weak. Conflict drivers such as land, youth unemployment, and inadequate reintegration of ex-combatants have not been adequately assessed or addressed” (MTR PRDP 2012:ii). As discussed previously, land conflict and psychosocial support is key to mobilization and software development and ultimately sustainability. However, although the Mid-Term Report strongly recommended addressing key conflict drivers like land disputes, reintegration of ex-combatants, women’s rights, and gender issues, the official PRDP-II document hardly makes mention of these issues. Regarding land issues, the PRDP-II document has one section on the land sector, and only two of the “eligible PRDP interventions” in this sector actually have anything to do with land conflict. These are “awareness programs” (land rights information training and “training of land management institutions” (land committees) (PRDP-II 2012:13). Furthermore, the District Land Board is handling these land intervention programs under SO-1, indicating the detachment PRDP-II is bringing between land and the real issues on the ground in northern Uganda.

Regarding reintegration, it is only listed as a part of SO-4 along with resettlement. The intervention is gender based and is supposed to be “providing psychosocial support and counseling to traumatized community members, abductees, and vulnerable ex-combatants” (PRDP-II 2012:21). This is basically the same information about reintegration that was mentioned in PRDP-I; however, if SO-4 receives adequate funding in phase II, then the PRDP framework as a whole could have a great deal more success. On the other hand, if SO-4 does not receive adequate funding in phase-II, the same dilemma that occurred in PRDP-I regarding the link between psychosocial support, peace building, and development could arise in phase-II. There is a considerable percentage of people in northern Uganda who fall into the categories of “traumatized community members, abductees, and vulnerable ex-combatants.” Without the necessary support for these groups, peace building efforts, as well as sustainable development, will not be genuinely successful.

Women’s rights and gender issues are discussed in much greater detail in the PRDP-II document. PRDP-II has mainstreamed gender issues across all four of its Strategic Objectives prioritizing women in many of the interventions and programs (PRDP-II 2012:21). The PRDP-II document states, “Gender mainstreaming is a strategy to ensure women’s as well as men’s concerns are taken into account in the analysis, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of PRDP programs and projects so they benefit equally and inequality is no perpetuated” (2012:18). Unfortunately, gender-based violence, land conflict, and reintegration are not specifically talked about in reference to women. These three issues pose major problems for many women in northern Uganda and should be included if SO-4 is to succeed. (Branch 2010:140, 172-175).

Although the Mid-Term Report and the PRDP-II planning process made some commendable strides to find solutions for the challenges in the first phase of PRDP, it seems that there are more challenges to come. Furthermore, at the beginning of PRDP-II, donor pullouts began exacerbating the challenges even more.

## 5.2 Donor Pullouts

*“I think the solution should not be pulling out;  
the solution should now be moving closer to the affected people”*

*-Gulu District Local Government Official*

### *Implications for Northern Uganda*

The beginning of the second phase of PRDP brought even more challenges to the people of northern Uganda. The corruption scandals in the Office of the Prime Minister have brought about a major reduction in donor funding to the GoU. An article in the *Daily Monitor* comments, “Key Western donors have suspended aid to Uganda over alleged corruption in the Office of the Prime Minister that is feared to have led to a loss of more than 150 billion Ushs...this will be a big blow to the people of northern Uganda, who have been benefiting from the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan” (Lule, 2012: 4). More recently, an article in the *Daily Monitor* stated, “Pressure is mounting on the government to suspend the Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, Mr. Pius Bigirimana, who is among the top officials named over the loss of billions in donor funds meant for the reconstruction of northern Uganda and Karamoja sub-region” (Mugerwa, 2012: 4). Many more reports than these are questioning the legitimacy of the GoU and their ability to properly coordinate recovery and reconstruction for the northern region and ultimately Uganda as a whole. With such ulterior motives in mind, the GoU will not adequately assist the north through government programs.

Consequently, donors continue to withdraw funding, and the GoU, particularly the Office of the Prime Minister, continue to ignore and respond inadequately to the issue. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, the UKAID Department for International Development (DFID) temporarily suspended all financial aid to the GoU. According to the notice presented to the Office of the Prime Minister, this decision was made for three major reasons: (1) findings from a forensic audit of funds managed by the OPM indicate a misuse of aid, (2) the credibility of the public

financial management system in Uganda has been undermined by the widespread network of corruption and collusion within the OPM, Ministry of Finance, and the Bank of Uganda, and (3) the OPM has failed to respond adequately to the issues and it has failed to return unspent monies to UKAID (Interview, Gulu, 16 Nov 2012). Furthermore, the aid will be temporarily suspended until the GoU and the OPM recover all funds and adequately respond to the corruption and collusion.

Unfortunately, results of donor pullouts are more serious than donors seem to realize. Those who have embezzled money in the OPM will hopefully be adequately apprehended and put to justice; however, local governments and vulnerable communities who need the assistance will ultimately suffer more. Local Government Officials are requesting that donors find an alternate channel to assist in the recovery and reconstruction of northern Uganda. One Gulu official stated, “I think it is better now to deal directly with the district governments, and set an example. I don’t agree with the donors who are cutting their aid sources because it is a double punishment” (Interview, Gulu, 19 Nov 2012). If donors continue to suspend funding to recovery and reconstruction programs in northern Uganda, and fail to find an alternate route for aiding projects, northern Uganda will almost certainly regress in recovery.

### *Implications for Uganda*

Furthermore, donor pullouts are affecting more than just northern Uganda. The implications of donor’s decisions regarding the collusion and corruption in the OPM will affect the ministry of health, ministry of education, and many other ministries that are important for development of the country as a whole. The National Development Plan will suffer from this temporary suspension of donor funds. Furthermore, the suspension of donor funding will inhibit NGOs, CSOs, and other development partners from implementing more projects. Currently, Uganda and the international community is anxiously waiting to see the GoU make an adequate response toward the collusion and corruption, however, the coming months will reveal the implications more clearly.



## Section Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

### *6.1 Do the Key Successes Outweigh the Challenges of PRDP?*

Determining the success of a government program such as this is a very difficult proposition to make. It is dependent upon so many variables and questions. Is the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan a success if it helped only one person? Is it a failure because of how much money was embezzled by the government or is it a success because at least some of the money reached the people of northern Uganda? Is it a failure because the Museveni regime has consolidated all the state power or is it a success because it seems that the people in northern Uganda are at least less marginalized than before? I find, according to the data received from government officials and beneficiaries, that success regarding the PRDP is measured not by its ability to complete the set goals, but instead by measuring whether or not it has helped the people at all. The positives and negatives of this will be further discussed below.

Throughout this research process a common question that participants were asked was if the region would have been any different without the PRDP framework. Despite the major challenges experienced throughout the implementation, do the few successes make the PRDP framework valuable and worth continuing? An overwhelming majority answered positively to this question. However, those interviewed only attribute the success to infrastructural development. Many local government officials said things like, “Although there were many challenges with PRDP-I, a lot of infrastructure projects have been done during PRDP-I, which would not have been done without PRDP special support...a number of resettlement initiatives have taken place as a result of this infrastructure growth” (Interview, Gulu, 22 Nov 2012). Furthermore, if the PRDP framework did not exist, then war-affected regions would not receive any extra assistance from the GoU. This would mean that the local governments who are lagging so far behind the rest of the country’s development would only receive the normal funding amount from central, which is very little and certainly not enough for a region struggling to recover,

reconstruct, and rehabilitate after an enduring conflict. An OPM regional official stated, “If you saw the figures, you would appreciate the amount of PRDP grant is at least getting to them [districts] is sometimes one and a half times, or at least more than the normal allotted money to local governments from national” (Interview, Gulu, 23 Nov 2012). Community members also agree that the PRDP has made a positive impact on their communities and they are appreciative of the programs despite their prevailing distrust in the government.

However, when synthesizing the successes and challenges of the PRDP, there is more to consider than just the fact that the PRDP has increased infrastructure growth, consolidated the state, and enhanced the police through the Justice, Law and Order Sector. Things that must be assessed through these findings include: is the PRDP continuing to perpetuate a lack of political will from the government? Is it continuing to act as a façade for the government to obtain donor funding and then use the money for state consolidation? Is the PRDP framework actually further marginalizing the people of the north because it is being implemented in “bad surroundings?” Are donors who support the PRDP and the GoU indirectly perpetuating marginalization of the North? Beyond simply looking at the successes and looking at the challenges, these questions need to be considered to truly assess whether the key successes of the PRDP outweigh the challenges.

First, donor pullouts can be considered to delve deeper into this synthesis. It is quite obvious that donors must have considered the implications of the suspension of funding to the GoU. Donors knew that this would be a double punishment for the war-affected communities of northern Uganda. However, they may also be considering that the funding is perpetuating the marginalization of people in the north. Because of the lack of accountability between donors and many countries in Africa, Branch (2010:240-252) argues for an agenda of constructive disintervention and that donors take responsibility for how their money is being used. However, the way in which the donors pulled out of Uganda was not constructive intervention. Many government officials and community members in the north are disappointed with the decisions of the donor community and only hope that they decide to intervene in a different way.

Furthermore, when considering the key successes of the PRDP, the majority of the infrastructure growth that PRDP-I implemented is not even sustainable or functional. Consequently, it is necessary to reconsider the success of the infrastructural development discussed in section two. The infrastructural development is not currently sustainable and is in critical danger of major challenges without drastic changes in mobilization and software development. Brown (2005:102-103) states, “Care must be taken to ensure that in the rush to reconstruct after conflict, long term sustainability is not compromised...The importance of getting it right the first time cannot be overstated.” Unfortunately, the first time is almost over, and PRDP-II is not promising sustainability. Ultimately, this is a result of the lack of funding given to local government for mobilization and sensitization, and poorly facilitated staffing.

Another important question to ask when synthesizing the challenges in implementation of PRDP is whether or not challenges from previous programs were repeated in this framework. Calling to mind the background section of this report, the major issues with NURP was implementation in a top down fashion, only spending USD 94 million out of the USD 600 million promise, and implementing the program within bad surroundings. Again, calling to mind the challenges of PRDP, the implementation of both projects is strikingly similar. This further calls into question the commitment of the government to implement a strong recovery and reconstruction program that can produce quality results.

With all this taken into consideration, it is certainly arguable that in regard to of long-term sustainability, the key successes do not outweigh the challenges of the PRDP framework, and that the North may have been better off without the PRDP framework. However, PRDP-II and the current donor situation will definitely reveal many answers to the questions stated throughout this section.

## *6.2 Conclusion*

The development of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for northern Uganda was an important step for the GoU. It was a commendable step. It was, then,

what seemed to be a genuine attempt to uphold the Juba negotiations and to launch recovery and reconstruction for northern Uganda. However, as this report has revealed, the sheer number of challenges casts serious doubt on the abilities of the PRDP framework to assist northern Uganda. Nonetheless, when considering the success of the PRDP, it must be noted that the challenges this thesis has revealed and discussed are not all related to the GoU.<sup>15</sup>

The PRDP has had success in infrastructural growth, but it has also had a plethora of challenges including insufficient funding, lack of government commitment, serious collusion and corruption, poor facilitation of local governments, lack of monitoring and evaluation, lack of sensitization and mobilization, and lack of sustainability and functionality. Consequently, the PRDP framework has been no different than past government programs and there has been little sustainable success. This lack of genuine political will to implement sustainable recovery and reconstruction in northern Uganda is clearly evident in these challenges. Unfortunately, the PRDP has followed the path of NURP and NUSAF, which both ended in failure to achieve its intended objectives. Ultimately, research and investigation into the implementation of the PRDP framework has revealed that some sectors of the GoU are not sincerely interested in addressing the post-conflict situation in northern Uganda. Furthermore, it seems these sectors are not interested in addressing the various social, economic, and more importantly political factors that have fueled the cycle of poor governance and conflict in Uganda since independence.

The primary goal of this thesis was to examine the implementation of the PRDP and to analyze how its implementation has helped, or in this case, curtailed

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<sup>15</sup> I believe it is important to note here that when considering the success of the PRDP, it must not be assumed that all the challenges discussed and revealed within this thesis are related to the GoU. Although this thesis is concentrating on the implementation of the PRDP, concerning the capabilities and performance of the government, many of the challenges mentioned are related to the results of donor funding, international intervention, NGO disorganization, NGO emergency relief during the war, and community issues. Most of these challenges were mentioned throughout the thesis, but this note is to insist that there are sectors of the GoU that are not involved in criminal allegations and misuse of PRDP funding.

the success of the PRDP framework. This thesis set forth two main arguments at the beginning of this thesis: (1) post-conflict reconstruction strategies often facilitate the empowerment and security of the state rather than the people who were affected by the conflict, and (2) post-conflict reconstruction projects are too often implemented in insecure environments ultimately making them unsustainable. The first argument has been well detailed through the lack of a bottom up approach, lack of political will, and most importantly the continuation of “conflict entrepreneurship” through state consolidation, police enhancement, and ignoring SO-4. The second argument, generated from Finnström’s (2008) idea of “bad surroundings,” has been properly illustrated through disregard for SO-4, the capacity of the community, negative peace, and the security dilemma. Both of these arguments have been illustrated in interviews by civil servants, community members, NGO officials, and CSO leaders. Furthermore, examining the PRDP in Uganda in relation to post-conflict reconstruction and development as a whole illustrates that the PRDP is not separate from many other post-conflict situations, and it is experiencing many of the same challenges described in post-conflict discourse.

The PRDP has become “typical” of recovery and reconstruction programs in Africa. Ultimately, the PRDP has become “typical” of development and peace building in many post-conflict situations. “Peace building is not new in Africa. History tells us that Africa is the cradle of humanity, an assertion that suggests the existence of rich and diverse indigenous resources and institutions of conflict resolution and peace building dating back for centuries” (Karbo, 2008: 113). The PRDP framework is not one of these institutions of conflict resolution. Instead, it is rooted in the ideas of peace building and development interventions based on current liberal peace projects. “This view reflects the notion that war-torn societies can and should be rebuilt through the utilization of a number of interrelated, connected, harmonious strategies for transformation. This emphasis is on conflict prevention, resolution, institution building, and strengthening civil society organizations” (Karbo, 2008: 113). The current implementation of the PRDP framework, however, is not fulfilling the goals of the liberal peace project. The

PRDP framework has failed to perform these tasks in an effective bottom-up fashion and instead the PRDP is being used to bolster the state. Furthermore, because the PRDP has been implemented in an environment of negative peace, and has ignored the strategic objective of peace building, the overall sustainability of the framework is tremendously compromised.

### *6.3 Recommendations for PRDP-II*

#### *The Way Forward: Central Government*

- Office of the Prime Minister should address the corruption in the OPM and execute the appropriate actions to correct the issue.
- Office of the Prime Minister must take the necessary actions to fulfill PRDP funding commitments originally promised to local governments.
- Office of the Prime Minister must increase government commitment to the PRDP framework by ensuring that the new Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for PRDP-II will be efficiently used.
- Government of Uganda must increase oversight activities to decrease possible collusion and corruption.

#### *The Way Forward: Local Governments*

- Districts must demand that more funding be given to newly created districts and that funding be given to facilitate full staffing.
- Districts must demand from the central government that funding originally promised be allocated to local governments.
- Districts should attempt to facilitate more community sensitization and look for more avenues to sensitize the community through software development.

#### *The Way Forward: The Community*

- The community must make an attempt to reduce dependency and unrealistic expectations about the government
- When sensitized the community must mobilize themselves without always expecting facilitation (compensation) from the government.
- The community must develop a sense of ownership over projects that do not necessarily benefit them directly

*The Way Forward: International Donors*

- Organize a donor conference immediately to discuss the situation in the Office of the Prime Minister and try to find alternate routes to continue recovery in northern Uganda so as to avoid double punishment of vulnerable communities.
- Improve oversight activities of funding so to inhibit possible collusion and corruption.
- Demand transparency and accountability with donor funding from the national government

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## Appendix

### Research Interview Guides:

#### *For Government Officials:*

- 1) What is your name, job, education level, party affiliation and length of employment?
- 2) What are your particular roles and responsibilities as a civil servant?
- 3) What is your opinion on the PRDP framework?
- 4) In what capacity do you work with the PRDP framework?
- 5) What is your local governments capacity to implement PRDP projects?
- 6) What are the key successes of the PRDP framework in your local government?
- 7) What are the challenges of the PRDP framework in your local government?
- 8) How is the community engagement / participation in your district or sub-county?
- 9) Can you talk about sensitization of the community?
- 10) Can you talk about the implementation of PRDP projects in your local government?
- 11) Can you talk about monitoring and evaluation of PRDP projects?
- 12) Can you talk about sustainability and functionality of PRDP projects?
- 13) Can you talk about coordination and cooperation between the central and local governments?
- 14) Can you talk about the continuation of PRDP-II and what your expectations or fears are? What could make PRDP-II more effective than the first phase?
- 15) What are your suggestions or recommendations for PRDP-II?

#### *For Community Members:*

- 1) Have you heard about the Peace, Recovery, and Development Plan?
- 2) If yes, what do you think it does and what do you think it does?
- 3) Are you a beneficiary of any government programs? Do you think these government programs have benefited you or your community?
- 4) Have you been sensitized about government projects? If so, how?
- 5) Are you a member of a User Beneficiary Committee? Do you know what they are? Can you discuss your roles?
- 6) How do you view the government? Do you trust the government or have faith in it?
- 7) What are your expectations for government programs?