

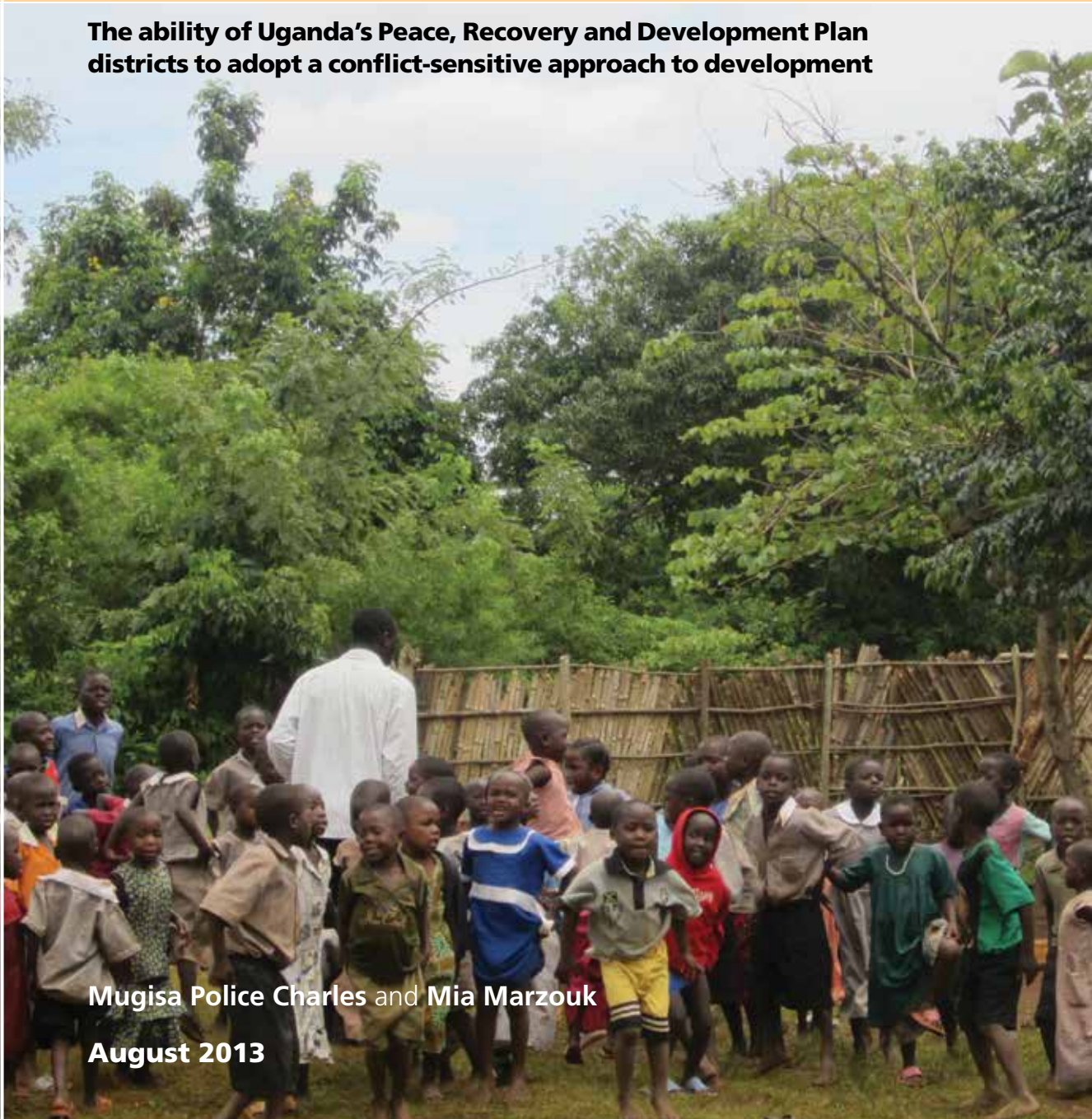


**SAFERWORLD**

PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES

# Embedding conflict sensitivity

**The ability of Uganda's Peace, Recovery and Development Plan districts to adopt a conflict-sensitive approach to development**



Mugisa Police Charles and Mia Marzouk

August 2013



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## Acknowledgements

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Saferworld wishes to thank the UK Government for the support to this project.

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## Acronyms

<b>ACCS</b>	Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity
<b>CSA</b>	Conflict-Sensitive Approach
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (UK)
<b>GoU</b>	Government of Uganda
<b>NAADS</b>	National Agricultural Advisory Services
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>PCDP</b>	Post-Conflict Development Programme
<b>PRA</b>	Participatory Rural Appraisal
<b>PRDP</b>	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan

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# Ugandan districts which are beneficiaries of the PRDP



This map is intended for illustrative purposes only. Saferworld takes no position on whether this representation is legally or politically valid.

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# Executive summary

**SEVEN YEARS ON FROM A 20-YEAR CONFLICT**, Northern Uganda has been edging towards recovery. The Government of Uganda's (GoU) Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) is the overarching framework for addressing Northern Uganda's post-conflict needs. Conflict analysis and monitoring and conflict sensitivity are priorities for the second phase of the PRDP. Identified by the GoU and development partners alike, district officials are the linchpins in regional and local peacebuilding. This research therefore looks at the capacity of district officials in the region to be conflict sensitive in their programming.

## Key findings

### **Knowledge of conflict analysis and conflict sensitivity**

There was a relatively good understanding of the key concepts of 'conflict', 'peace' and 'conflict sensitivity' among district officials who were interviewed. Almost two-fifths of respondents had participated in a conflict analysis, defined as the systematic study of the profile, causes, actors and dynamics of a conflict. Over half of these were familiar with at least three of the four steps. A large majority overall understood that the purpose of a conflict analysis was to look at the causes of a conflict. Perhaps most significantly, understanding of the term 'conflict sensitivity' was relatively high.<sup>1</sup>

There is therefore already some foundation on which to base support for district officials to practically apply the knowledge they already have about conflict-sensitive programming.

### **Types of conflict**

The vast majority of respondents (86 per cent) said that land-related conflicts are the most common or second-most common. A further two-fifths of respondents cited sexual and gender-based violence as the most common or second-most common, a worrying prevalence that requires dedicated resourcing and training for district programmers if they are to begin to tackle it.

### **Relationship between departmental interventions and conflicts**

All the different sectors for which district authorities are responsible experience some level of conflict, according to respondents, and the vast majority see a relationship between their own sector and conflict. Officials are already making efforts to mitigate

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<sup>1</sup> Conflict sensitivity is understanding the context in which you work, the interactions between the context and your interventions/work, and designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating your work to maximise positive impacts and minimise negative ones.

conflicts, with 37 per cent involving stakeholders in their actions and 11 per cent using effective communication to avoid misunderstandings. However, most (60 per cent) recognise that they could be more conflict sensitive.

### **Becoming more conflict sensitive**

Respondents had recommendations for enhancing conflict-sensitive programming in their districts. Over half called for capacity building and half called for more funds or a dedicated budget line, but many other suggestions such as sensitising and mobilising communities, integrating conflict sensitivity into planning or providing some form of monitoring or assessment tool are not necessarily resource-intensive.

Several suggestions related to integrating conflict sensitivity into the planning and assessment cycles, developing guidelines and establishing focal points. The Ministry of Local Government has designed an annual assessment of the performance of local governments to ensure that they perform according to the law, guidelines and good practices. Conflict sensitivity could become part of this assessment.

A significant number of respondents and key informants cited poor leadership or political interference as a challenge to conflict-sensitive programming. These problems could be lessened by defining clearly the roles of each office so that areas of responsibility do not clash or overlap.

### **The effects of conflict insensitivity**

A surprisingly high proportion of respondents could think of instances when their decision had caused conflict. Sixty per cent recognised the impact their own work had had on conflict dynamics, demonstrating a level of honesty and reflection on which to build further conflict sensitivity understanding. Of those who recognised such an effect, the vast majority viewed the effect as negative, mostly causing a delay in their work or an increase in conflicts.

These perceptions are important as they demonstrate how managers and trainers can gain buy-in from staff for the need for incorporating conflict sensitivity into programme design and implementation. In particular, the perception that interventions can be delayed due to decisions causing conflict provides a strong argument for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity to make programming more efficient in the medium term.

Uganda's local governments can play an essential role in mitigating conflict and in identifying possible conflicts at a stage early enough to prevent them escalating to unmanageable levels. The PRDP process, designed to end in 2015 when Northern Uganda's development planning needs should be integrated into the planning process for the whole country, provides an opportunity to make conflict sensitivity a long-term outcome for all the region's districts.

## **Recommendations**

**Build capacity of district officials** in conflict-sensitive programming, in particular members of the District Technical Planning Committees, to enable the committees to integrate conflict sensitivity fully into their annual development plans. Input from officials in the districts will be important in designing appropriate training and accompaniment processes.

**Develop guidelines on integrating conflict sensitivity** in the planning, budgeting and implementation processes at district level in consultation with the Ministry of Local Government and National Planning Authority. There should be room for flexibility in these guidelines to take account of changing circumstances and local specificities.

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**Consider creating focal point officers or committees** to encourage the systematic uptake of conflict analysis and conflict-sensitising programmes by organising trainings, offering advice and monitoring implementation of conflict sensitivity. Conflict-sensitive programming could then be made an area of annual national assessment.

**Improve understanding of land-related conflict and gender-based violence** so that ways to mitigate these conflicts can be developed and shared throughout the PRDP region.

**Use existing opportunities to be more conflict sensitive**, especially by taking advantage of the presence of various development partners, the existence of the integrated planning frameworks and the presence of the FM radio stations.



# 1

## Introduction

**SEVEN YEARS ON FROM A 20-YEAR CONFLICT**, Northern Uganda has been edging towards recovery. The main protagonist of the violence, the Lord's Resistance Army, has been displaced to neighbouring countries, the local economy is picking up, and people who had fled the violence have returned to their villages or to new settlements. However, poverty remains widespread and economic growth below the national average, and much of the population is vulnerable, especially the large proportion of young people, many of whom have been traumatised by the war and find it difficult to get work. Distrust of the government by local communities is impeding efforts to rejuvenate the local economy.

### **The Government of Uganda's response**

The Government of Uganda's (GoU) Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), which covers eight sub-regions, encompassing 55 districts in the northern half of the country, is the overarching framework for addressing the region's post-conflict needs. The first PRDP ran from 2009 to 2012; its successor, PRDP 2, is running from 2012 until 2015.

Planning and implementation of the PRDP takes place mostly at district level.<sup>2</sup> The GoU provides PRDP grant funding through the budget as a top-up to the regular budget allocations of the benefitting districts and central government agencies involved in its implementation.<sup>3</sup> During the preparation for PRDP-2, a review of the District Development Plans revealed that youth unemployment, land conflicts, cattle rustling, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) remain major conflict drivers across the PRDP region, and that economic revitalisation, especially improving roads, is a high priority.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, conflict analysis and monitoring and conflict sensitivity were identified in the mid-term review as key priorities.<sup>5</sup>

### **Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity**

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) supports the PRDP through its five-year Post-Conflict Development Programme (PCDP) in Northern

<sup>2</sup> Some central-level agencies and municipalities are also involved. Strategic Objective 1 of the PRDP, Consolidating State Authority, aims explicitly to enhance local government.

<sup>3</sup> *Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda – Phase 2* (Office of the Prime Minister, Republic of Uganda, November 2011) (available at: [www.prdp.org.ug/templates/codebliss/uploads/PRDP2%20Document.pdf](http://www.prdp.org.ug/templates/codebliss/uploads/PRDP2%20Document.pdf), accessed 15 June 2013), p 3

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p 6

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p 9. "The [Mid-Term Review] found that the PRDP had not adequately addressed a number of potential conflict drivers in the North including: land disputes, youth unemployment and reintegration of ex-combatants. PRDP 2 programming will explicitly seek to address and mitigate these conflict drivers."

Uganda, running to 2015.<sup>6</sup> As part of the overall PCDP, DFID supports the Advisory Consortium on Conflict Sensitivity (ACCS), consisting of International Alert, Refugee Law Project and Saferworld. The overall purpose of ACCS is to reinforce the ability of key stakeholders in the PCDP to address effectively the causes and catalysts of conflict and contribute to building peace through their interventions. As a member of the ACCS, Saferworld is responsible for conducting evidence-based advocacy and providing technical support and accompaniment to improve the recovery and peacebuilding impact of the PCDP initiative.

The threat and fear of conflict remain in much of Northern Uganda. For example, discussions with Amuru district officials and members of the Area Land Committee in early 2013 revealed a deep-seated fear of widespread violence. A lack of sustainable mechanisms for conflict resolution, the continued arming of some communities in Amuru with bows and arrows for protecting their land, and increased unemployment have been leading to discontent and hindering the effectiveness of recovery processes in the area. This is exacerbated by costly land-related disputes, using money which could otherwise be spent on community services. If these issues are unresolved, they have the potential to trigger violence.<sup>7</sup>

Identified by the GoU and donors alike, district officials are the linchpins in regional and local peacebuilding.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Saferworld developed a capacity assessment tool designed to inform its capacity building of district officials and evidence-gathering activities and subsequently form a basis for developing an accompaniment work plan for District Technical Planning Committees. Saferworld used this tool in selected districts within the PRDP region to examine the district implementing officers' understanding of conflict sensitivity and training needs.

## 1.1 Methodology

Saferworld undertook to examine district officials' level of understanding of the concepts of conflict and peace in the process of implementing district programmes; the challenges the districts face; and what could be the best way forward to implement programmes in a conflict-sensitive manner. This research was a qualitative study, in the sense that open-ended questions were asked, although data was analysed and presented quantitatively. It began with a literature review, drawing lessons from Saferworld's own capacity-building accompaniment processes in the districts of Gulu and Lira.

Overall, 17 out of 56 – just under a third – PRDP districts were selected for this study. (See Annex 1 for a full description of the methodology used and Annex 2 for the full rankings used to select the districts.) Table 1 shows the regions and districts where the study was conducted.

### Research tools

The research used two different questionnaires, a principal questionnaire for members of the District Technical Planning Committees, as officers directly involved in implementation of the districts' programmes, and another for key informants, who closely watch or network with district officials in the process of implementing district programmes.

<sup>6</sup> PCDP runs formally from 1 September 2009 until 31 March 2015, with a budget of £100,515,548 (see <http://projects.dfid.gov.uk/project.aspx?Project=200250>, accessed 15 June 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Between December 2012 and January 2013, Saferworld organised a series of training sessions on conflict-sensitive approaches to development with the Area Land Committee and District Technical Planning Committee in Amuru. See 'Promoting Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development in Amuru District, Northern Uganda' (Saferworld, 22 March 2013), available at [www.saferworld.org.uk/news-and-views/case-study/40](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/news-and-views/case-study/40)

<sup>8</sup> PRDP 2 envisages Sh. 175bn of the Sh. 200bn annual PRDP budget being allocated directly to districts and municipalities; *Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda – Phase 2, op. cit.*, p 45.

**Table 1: Regions and districts where the study was conducted**

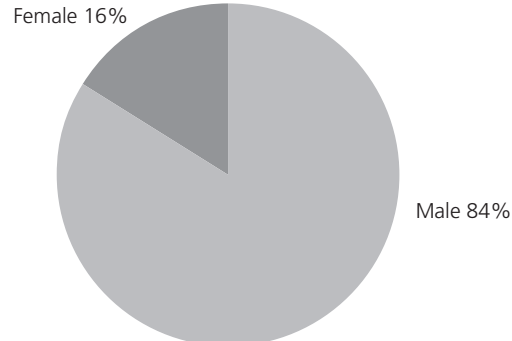
Region	District
Acholi	Agago, Gulu
Bukedi	Pallisa, Tororo
Bunyoro	Masindi
Elgon	Bududa, Manafwa, Sironko
Karamoja	Kaabong, Nakapiripirit
Lango	Alebtong, Lira, Oyam
Teso	Amuria, Kaberamaido
West Nile	Adjumani, Arua

The principal questionnaire sought to investigate the respondents' understanding of the concepts of conflict and peace, their application, associated challenges, and proposals for the future from an implementer's perspective. To supplement this, the key informant questionnaire sought views from observers rather than implementers. In total, 290 respondents were interviewed, of whom 210 were implementers and 80 observers.

## 1.2 Profile of the respondents

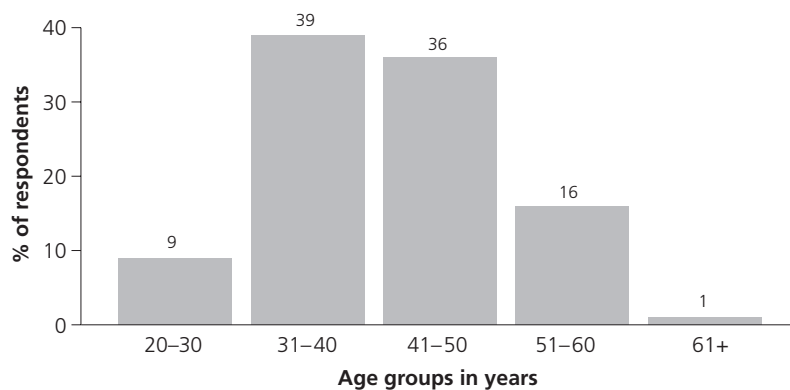
### Respondents by gender

Eighty-four per cent of respondents were male and 16 per cent were female. The imbalance reflects the fact that the majority of district officials are men. (See figure 1 for the respondents by gender.)

**Figure 1: Respondents by gender**

### Respondents by age group

The respondents in the survey covered the age groups 20–30, 31–40, 41–50, 51–60 and 61+ years. Figure 2 shows the distribution of respondents by age group.

**Figure 2: Respondents by age**

Three-quarters of respondents were aged between 31 and 50 years old. Only one per cent of respondents were above 61 years of age. It is surprising that there were some people of this age bracket employed in the civil service of Uganda. Uganda's law requires civil servants to retire at the age of 55.

# 2

## Survey findings

**THIS RESEARCH AIMED TO INVESTIGATE** district officials' understanding of the relationship between their work and the conflict context in which they operate. The findings are elaborated below, beginning with an exposition of district officials' understanding of the key concepts of conflict and peace. The officials' appreciation of the conflict context is then investigated, followed by their understanding of conflict sensitivity-related issues. Lastly, the research details officials' recommendations and opportunities for further conflict-sensitising their work.

### 2.1 Knowledge of the terms 'conflict' and 'peace'

#### The term 'conflict'

In a conflict analysis context, conflict is the result of parties disagreeing, for example, about the distribution of material or symbolic resources and acting on the basis of these perceived incompatibilities.<sup>9</sup>

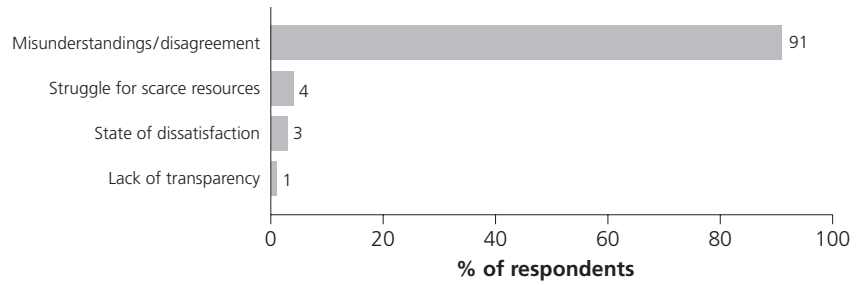
Disagreements – or conflict – are natural social phenomena and are not necessarily negative or violent. Conflict occurs when two or more parties believe that their interests are incompatible, express hostile attitudes or take action that damages other parties' ability to pursue their interests. It becomes violent when parties no longer seek to attain their goals peacefully, but resort instead to violence in one form or another.<sup>10</sup>

This research investigated respondents' understanding of conflict in so far as it underpins conflict-sensitive approaches (CSA) to programming, aiming to establish how far the subtleties of CSA practitioners' meaning of conflict are understood.

Asked to describe what they understand by conflict, the vast majority of respondents (91 per cent) described a situation of misunderstandings or disagreements; the remainder described conflict as a situation where people struggle for scarce resources (4 per cent), a state of dissatisfaction (3 per cent) or lack of transparency (1 per cent) (see figure 3). The words used by respondents were usually negative, but many respondents acknowledged that conflict need not be violent.

<sup>9</sup> *Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peace building – A resource pack* (APFO, CECORE, CHA, FEWER, International Alert and Saferworld, 2004), Chapter 1, available at [www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/148](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/148)

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

**Figure 3: Understanding of the term 'conflict'****Table 2: Some of the respondents' descriptions of 'conflict'**

- A situation where two parties are in disagreement and fail to agree on a common stand
- Undesired outcome of differences between two parties which is usually negative
- Departure from the normal state of togetherness between one or two people or more and many people
- Where people do not have a common understanding
- An engagement between two or more persons which is always negative and over a disagreement
- Two parties acting contrary to each other on issues pertaining to their relationships in terms of beliefs, e.g. ideology, verbal and physical
- A kind of psychological, economic, environmental discomfort that a person encounters
- Having an antagonistic reaction towards one another; having different interests
- A misunderstanding generated by a number of causes and leading to negative consequences

Respondents tended to use the term conflict in its simplest, almost colloquial meaning when questioned for this research. Interestingly, in Ugandan English, as well as in several of the languages of the sub-regions studied, conflict connotes both disagreement and misunderstanding.<sup>11</sup> However, respondents' understanding of the practice of conflict analysis (see section 2.2) suggests that there is a much greater level of understanding of the nuances of conflict than initially apparent in the colloquial usage of conflict.

It will be essential when designing appropriate trainings for district officials throughout the PRDP region to tailor the jargon used so that real misunderstandings do not occur. Input from district officials in the design of these trainings will therefore be important.

### The term 'peace'

Community is involved in rebuilding a community school in Bibia, northern Uganda. Residents provided the grass for the roof.

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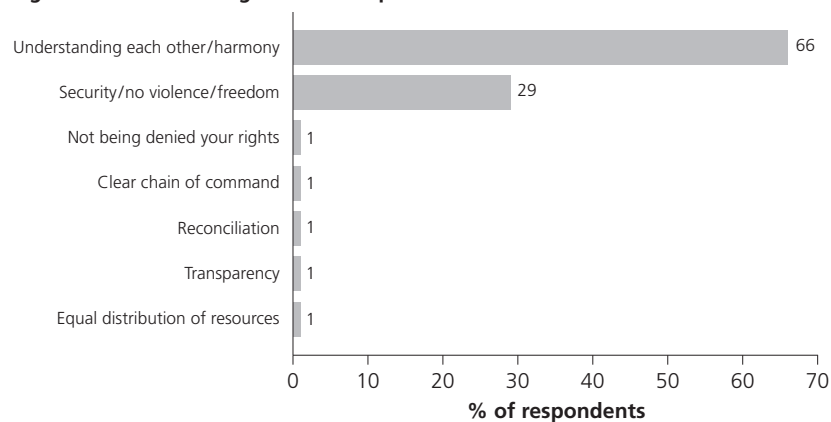
<sup>11</sup> For example, in the Ateso language, '*amamus acamanar*' (failure to understand and agree with each other) is used to mean both disagreement and misunderstanding. It is stronger than the alternative, '*amamus apuonor*' which connotes failure to listen to each other. In the Luo language, especially Lango, '*pe winyere*' means both lack of understanding (out of failure to listen) and lack of agreement.

'Peace' is another important concept in understanding conflict-sensitive programming. Peace in this context is a situation where there is no violence *and* there is justice and equity [emphasis added].<sup>12</sup> The vast majority of respondents conceived of peace either as a state of justice and equity or as an absence of violence.

Respondents were asked for their understanding of the term peace, again using open-ended questioning. Two-thirds (66 per cent) described peace as a state of harmony or a situation where there is understanding. Another 29 per cent defined peace as a state of security or non-violence and freedom (see figure 4).

Interestingly, all of those who had participated in a conflict analysis themselves considered conflict to be a situation of misunderstandings or disagreements; similarly, they all considered peace to be a secure or non-violent situation. It is clear that the process of undertaking a conflict analysis has aided these particular respondents to draw out and make explicit their understanding of peace and conflict.

**Figure 4: Understanding of the term 'peace'**



**Table 3: Some of the respondents' descriptions of 'peace'**

- A situation where there is coexistence among individuals and they are living harmoniously
- Where everybody freely enjoys their rights and freedoms
- A situation of harmony, coexistence, mutual respect and appreciation of each other's contributions
- An environment where all aspects of livelihoods are not threatened
- A state of stability, food security and household incomes
- A state describes a favourable and conducive environment where somebody feels secure and protected

To clarify whether respondents differentiate consciously between the positive and negative aspects of peace, they were further asked if peace was simply the absence of conflict<sup>13</sup>. Fifty-eight per cent agreed, but a substantial 41 per cent said that this was not necessarily true, and that isolated conflicts could occur during times of peace.

## 2.2 Participation in conflict analysis

The research then looked more closely at respondents' experience of the conflict analysis process.

Conflict analysis is the systematic study of the profile, causes, actors and dynamics of a conflict, i.e. a four-step analytical process.<sup>14</sup> Almost two-fifths of respondents (39 per cent) said that they had participated in a conflict analysis, while a large majority

<sup>12</sup> Galtung J, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (International Peace Research Institute, 1996)

<sup>13</sup> The precise wording of the question was: "In your view, is peace the absence of conflict?"

<sup>14</sup> *Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, op. cit.*, Chapter 2

(90 per cent) understood that the purpose of a conflict analysis was to look at the causes of a conflict. (A further five per cent described conflict analysis as a study of how people relate *vis-à-vis* resources and four per cent defined conflict analysis as when you are establishing the magnitude of a conflict. See table 4.)

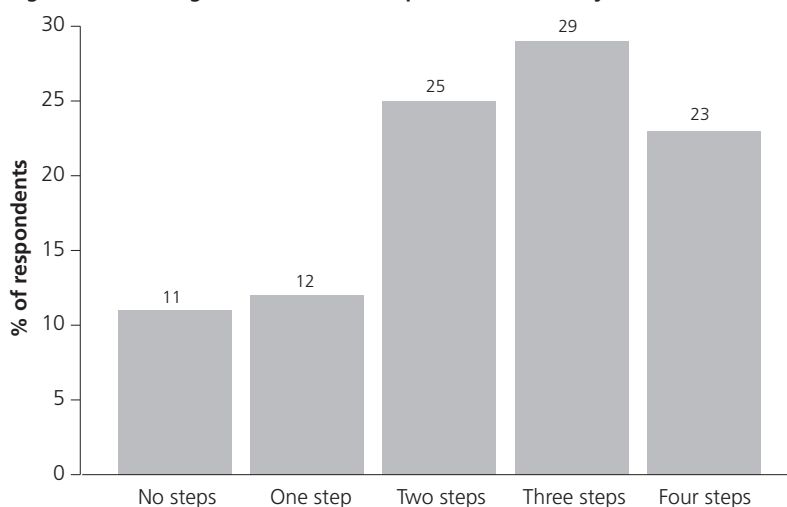
**Table 4: Some of the respondents' descriptions of 'conflict analysis'**

- A systematic study of a given situation or state where individuals or groups seem not to agree, with the purpose of establishing the root cause and suggesting solutions
- The way causes of conflict and identification of characteristics of conflict are put in place
- Looking at the causes and actors of a disagreement to guide solutions or resolutions to a given disagreement
- The in-depth assessment of people's views, understanding agreements and disagreements and the impact they have
- Situation of scanning through the causes, effects and mitigation measures on how to deal with the conflict. Conflict can only be minimised, not completely eradicated
- A circumstance in which the root cause of conflict is identified and how conflict manifests itself and what options to mitigate conflicts there are
- Looking deeply at causes, actors / drivers and what solution can be got starting with local interventions
- A process where you look into the details, different types of conflict, causes, who is affected and what could be the result of this conflict
- Aims to get the facts that could lead to conflicts and being able to analyse the stronger factors that would lead to conflict

The above examples demonstrate that while respondents might understand 'conflict' and 'peace' in a colloquial sense, many display a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of these concepts in the context of conflict analysis. There is already some foundation on which to base work-oriented trainings to assist district officials in applying the knowledge they already have about conflict-sensitive programming.

Moreover, of the respondents who have participated in a conflict analysis, there already is a solid level of knowledge and understanding: nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of these respondents was familiar with all four steps to be taken during a conflict analysis process, and a further 29 per cent knew three of the four steps. Only 11 per cent could not remember any of the steps (see figure 5).

**Figure 5: Knowledge of the different steps in a conflict analysis**



While numbers in the sample are too small to give definitive answers,<sup>15</sup> it seems that those districts which have received training on conflict analysis<sup>16</sup> have a more profound understanding of the process. Respondents from Lira district in particular

<sup>15</sup> Therefore, exact numbers of participants rather than proportions have been provided here.

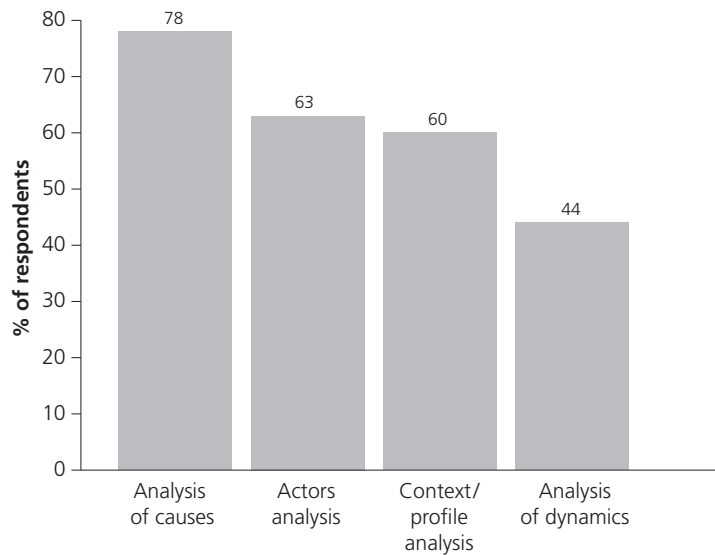
<sup>16</sup> Saferworld has been providing capacity-building support to district officials in Gulu and Lira since 2010.



showed a good knowledge of the conflict analysis process. All respondents said they knew conflict analysis, and 11 out of 15 had participated in one. Moreover, their understanding from this participation was good, with seven of them remembering at least three of the four steps. All respondents from Gulu similarly knew about conflict analysis, but only 5 of 12 had participated in one. Nevertheless, among these five, understanding was very good, with four of them remembering at least three steps.

Figure 6 shows in more detail the percentage of respondents who have an understanding of the specific components of conflict analysis.

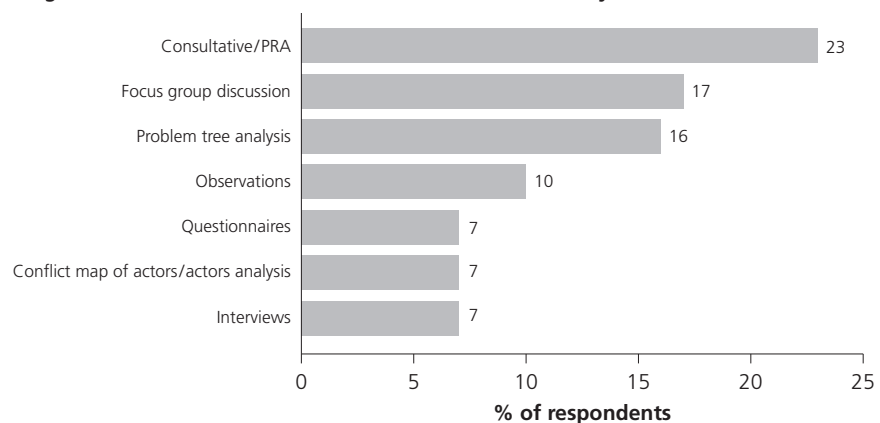
**Figure 6: Knowledge of the specific steps taken during a conflict analysis**



### Methods used in doing a conflict analysis

Those respondents who had taken part in a conflict analysis had used a variety of conflict analysis tools in their analytical process. Participants acquired knowledge of these tools from various conflict analysis trainings, including those offered by Saferworld. Almost a quarter (23 per cent) used participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools. PRA is closely related to the participatory planning process, a common exercise used by districts in developing the District Development Plan. A further 17 per cent use focus group discussions and 16 per cent use the problem tree analysis tool. Figure 7 presents the most common methods used in the conflict analysis.

**Figure 7: Common methods and tools used in conflict analyses**

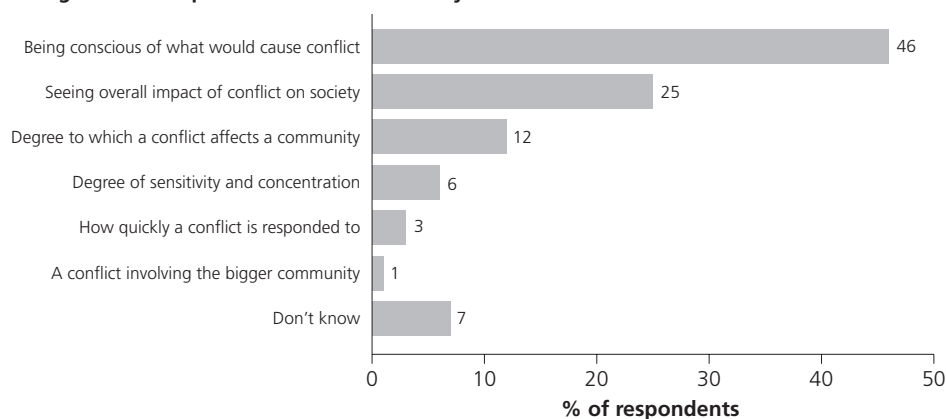


## 2.3 Understanding of the term 'conflict sensitivity'

Conflict sensitivity is understanding the context in which you work, the interactions between the context and your interventions/work, and designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating your work to maximise positive impacts and minimise negative ones.<sup>17</sup>

Understanding of the term 'conflict sensitivity' was relatively high. When the respondents were asked to describe what they understand by conflict sensitivity, almost half (46 per cent) said that conflict sensitivity is being conscious of conflicts and how to mitigate those conflicts, i.e. referring to the practitioners' definition rather than a common understanding of English. Among those from Lira district, this rose to two-thirds, perhaps demonstrating the impact of their training in this field.<sup>18</sup> Another quarter of overall respondents (25 per cent) said that conflict sensitivity is being able to foresee the impact of conflict on society. Other responses include the degree to which a conflict affects a community, the degree of concentration on resolving conflicts, and how quickly a conflict is responded to.

**Figure 8: Descriptions of conflict sensitivity**



## 2.4 Conflicts in the PRDP region

The PRDP region has experienced many different forms and intensities of conflict, and individuals will all have their own experience informing their analysis and decision-making. However, this research was interested in how much officials appreciate the conflict contexts in which they work from a professional perspective, and the extent to which they appreciate the impact of their work on the conflict context.

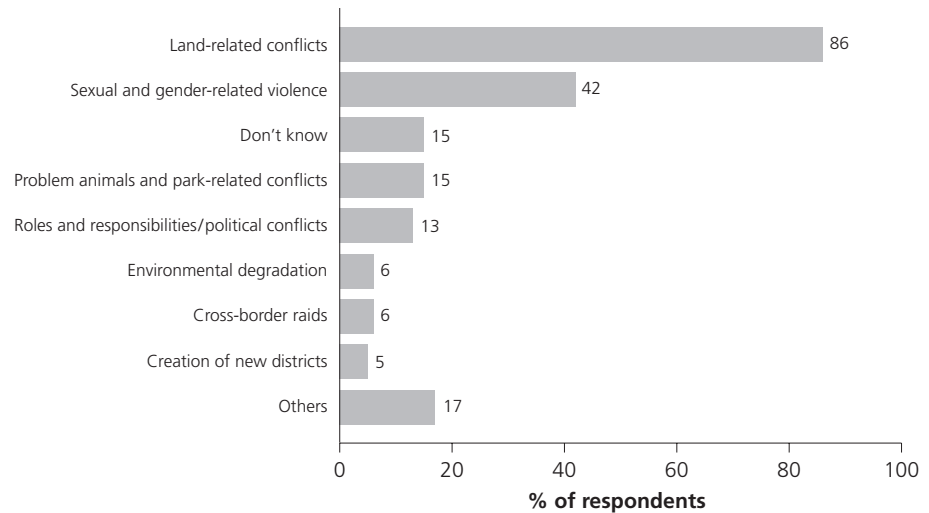
Therefore, respondents were asked what they considered to be the major conflicts in the districts as a whole, and then conflicts in specific sectors. The vast majority of respondents (86 per cent) said that land-related conflicts are the most common or second-most common.<sup>19</sup> The land problem manifests itself in terms of land ownership issues, boundary issues, inheritance, evictions and 'land grabbing'. A further two-fifths of respondents (42 per cent) cited SGBV as the most common or second-most common. Figure 9 presents the common conflicts in the PRDP districts.

When the same question was put to the key informants, the majority (41 per cent) also put land-related conflicts top, followed by SGBV (19 per cent), and political conflicts or divisions (16 per cent).

<sup>17</sup> *Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, op. cit.*, Introduction

<sup>18</sup> In Gulu district, where training was also undertaken but with a smaller proportion of the respondents, understanding of conflict sensitivity was still above average, with half of these respondents (6 out of 12) defining conflict sensitivity as practitioners do.

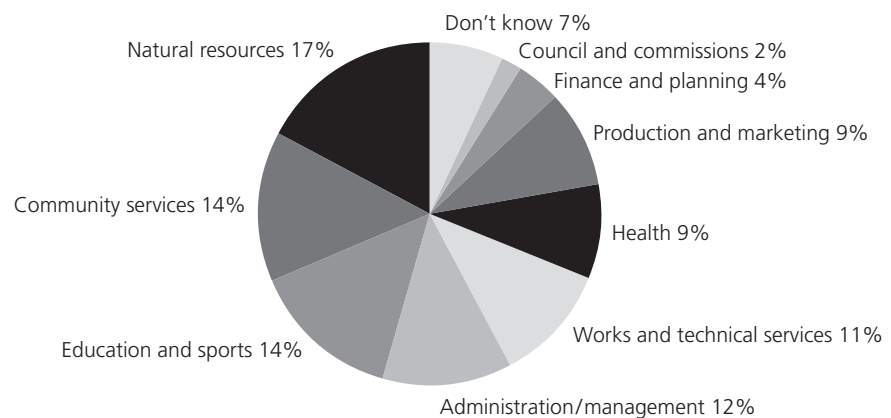
<sup>19</sup> Respondents were asked what conflicts were present at district level, and then asked to rank the top five in terms of the most pressing. The data provided here combines the first and second most pressing answers, with no weighting. 168 respondents put land-related conflicts first and a further 13 put them second; 3 put SGBV first and a further 86 put it second.

**Figure 9: Conflicts in the PRDP districts**

A cross-tabulation analysis was done to establish whether the kind of conflicts differed according to the specific districts, age groups or gender. It was still maintained that across all the districts, age groups and gender groups, land-related conflicts followed by gender and sexual-based violence featured as the most dominant.

In Adjumani, Lira, Oyam and Gulu districts, over 80 per cent of respondents listed SGBV as among the top four types of conflict. This, according to the respondents, raises a serious concern, and requires specific skills and adequate resources to effectively tackle it.

There are some conflicts peculiar to specific districts, for example, oil-related conflicts in Masindi district, insecurity and inadequate demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration in Amuria and Kaberamaido, and creation of new districts of Butaleja and Budaka in Tororo and Pallisa districts respectively. Nevertheless, all these specific conflicts were considered less pressing than those already listed.

**Figure 10: Sectors most and second-most affected by conflict (according to district officials)**

### Conflicts in different sectors

When respondents were asked about which sector experiences more conflicts, the responses were fairly evenly spread over the six main sectors. 17 per cent considered the natural resources sector to be the most or the second-most affected by conflict<sup>20</sup>; 14 per cent considered community services or education and sports as the most or

<sup>20</sup> Respondents were asked for the five sectors most affected by conflict. The results in figure 10 represent the sum of the responses for most and second-most affected sectors, without any weighting. The responses for second-most affected sectors broadly reflect those for the most affected sector, with one exception: only 9 per cent of respondents considered education and sports to be the most affected sector, while 20 per cent considered it to be the second-most affected sector – the highest figure. Overall, the highest proportion of respondents (22 per cent) cited natural resources as the sector most affected by conflict.

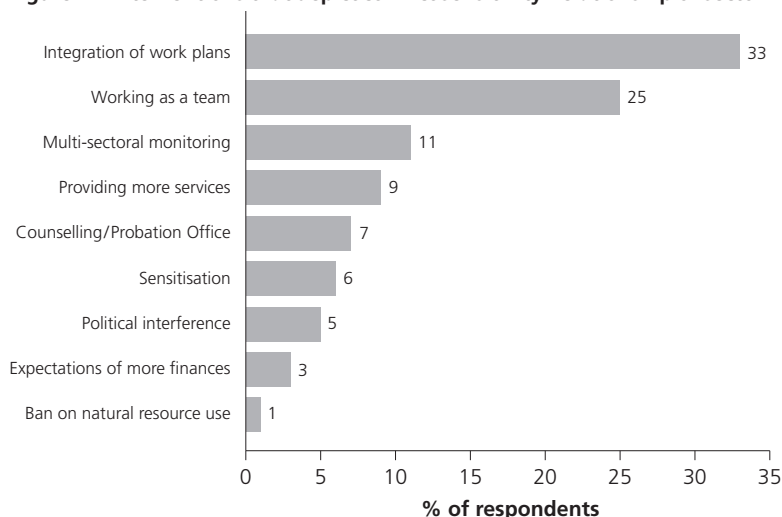
second-most affected; and 12 per cent and 11 per cent respectively considered administration/management and works and technical services to be the most or second-most affected. Key informants' views broadly support this, with a fifth saying the natural resources sector is most affected by conflict, although unlike district officials, another fifth considered production and marketing to be most affected by conflict.

## 2.5 Relationship between departmental interventions and conflicts

The vast majority (90 per cent) of respondents identified a relationship between their own sector and the major conflicts in their district,<sup>21</sup> regardless of whether they had participated in a conflict analysis or not. Most of the examples of positive relationship given by respondents were around sector work plans (33 per cent), team work (25 per cent) and monitoring (10 per cent). Negative impacts on conflict cited by respondents include political interference (cited by 5 per cent of respondents) and expectations of more finances (3 per cent).

Figure 11 below provides the summary of responses. The first six categories show how sectors influenced the conflict more positively, while the last three categories indicate the negative impacts sectoral activity had on the conflicts in the district.

**Figure 11: Interventions that depict conflict sensitivity: relationship of sector with conflict**



Asked about what is currently being done in their departments that could mitigate or cause conflict, 37 per cent of respondents said that they have been involving stakeholders in their actions to help mitigate conflicts (see figure 12). This is because the concerns of the communities are listened to during the participatory planning process and interventions that are directly relevant to the affected communities are agreed upon at the outset. Another 11 per cent of respondents use effective communication in their actions, which has helped avoid potential misunderstandings. Another seven per cent each said that following the law/guidelines, increasing service delivery or integrating planning have helped to mitigate conflicts.

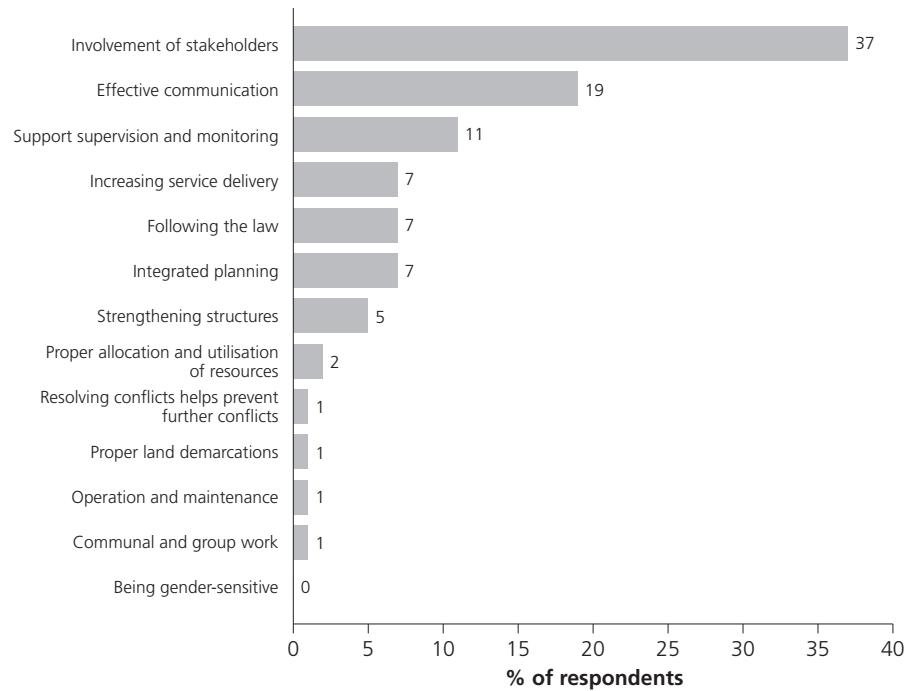
## 2.6 Becoming more conflict sensitive

While district officials have a degree of understanding about conflict sensitivity and are making efforts to take account of conflict and even mitigate it in their work, most (60 per cent) recognise that there are further opportunities for them to become more conflict sensitive. Some of their suggestions require more resources but many also

<sup>21</sup> The question was worded neutrally: "Is there a relationship between your departmental/sector interventions and the broad district conflicts (either causing or solving)?"

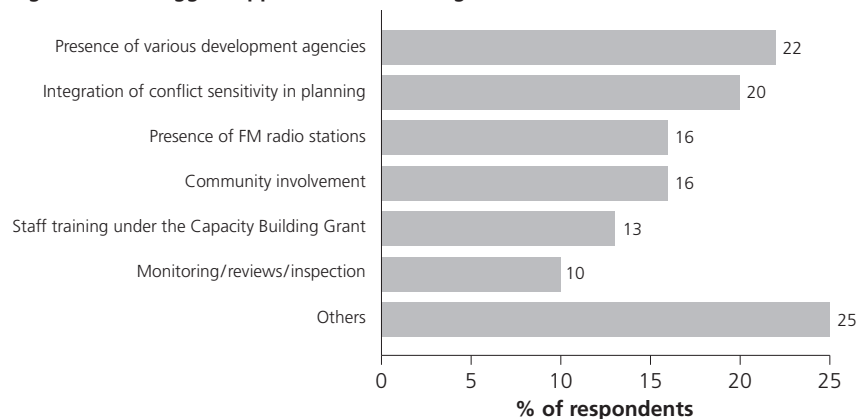
make constructive suggestions that require little or no funding, and lie within the mandate of local government.

**Figure 12: Interventions that mitigate conflict**

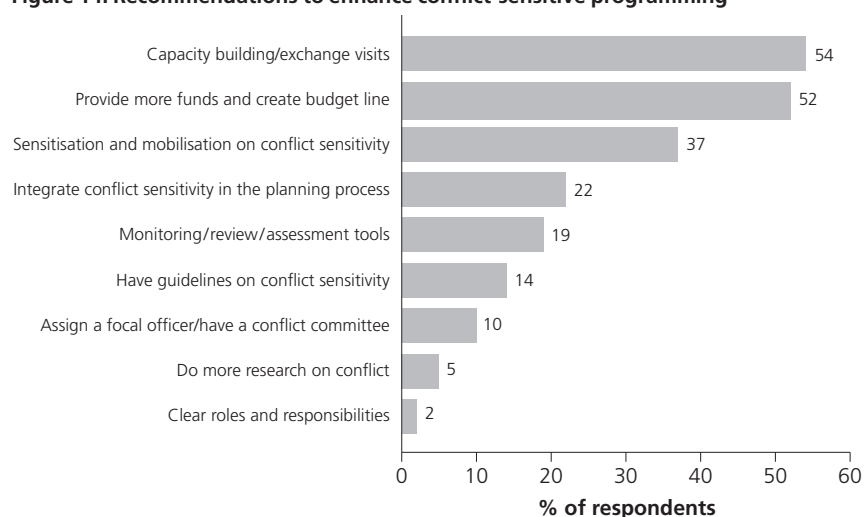


Respondents (supported by key informants) view the presence of many development partners in the districts who are willing to be conflict sensitive as an opportunity, as well as integrating conflict sensitivity into the overall planning process (see figure 13). The widespread presence of FM radio stations in the districts is also viewed by respondents as an opportunity to enhance conflict sensitivity, presumably as a means of improving communication and enhancing dialogue between districts and communities, not least to avoid potential misunderstandings about district-level work.

**Figure 13: The biggest opportunities for being more conflict sensitive**



Respondents also had broader recommendations for enhancing conflict-sensitive programming in their districts. These are explained in full in figure 14. Over half (54 per cent) called for capacity building and over half (52 per cent) called for more funds or a dedicated budget line, but many other suggestions such as sensitising and mobilising communities (37 per cent), integrating conflict sensitivity into planning (22 per cent) or providing some form of monitoring or assessment tool (19 per cent) are not necessarily resource-intensive.

**Figure 14: Recommendations to enhance conflict-sensitive programming**

## Respondents' ideas for enhancing conflict-sensitive programming

### Resource issues

**Capacity building** – The largest proportion of respondents (54 per cent) said that there should be efforts to build the capacity of all district officials to conduct conflict-sensitive programming. This would be comprehensive including things such as an accompaniment process. Key informants agreed, with 34 per cent putting building capacity as their priority area for intervention. Lack of knowledge of conflict sensitivity was viewed by respondents and key informants alike as one of the main challenges to being fully conflict sensitive.

**Provision of additional funds** – 52 per cent of respondents suggested providing additional funds and creating a budget for enhancing conflict sensitivity. The respondents however appreciate that not all conflict-sensitive interventions would require additional funding.

### Planning issues

Several suggestions by respondents related to the planning and assessment cycles, and how conflict sensitivity could be integrated, using planning and assessment processes which are already in place, developing guidelines and establishing focal points.

**Integrate conflict sensitivity in the planning process** – The recommendation here is that the tools and processes used to formulate the district and sub-county development plans incorporate conflict-sensitive programming. Conflict sensitivity would be handled in a similar way to any other cross-cutting issues such as gender, HIV/AIDS and the environment. Being part of the plan would make it more likely that provisions relating to conflict sensitivity would be implemented, and would ensure that it was considered at every stage in the planning process.

**Assessment tools and monitoring** – The Ministry of Local Government with support from various development partners has designed an annual assessment of the performance of local governments to ensure that they perform according to the law, guidelines and good practices. Conflict sensitivity could become part of this assessment.

**Guidelines on conflict-sensitive programming** – Organisations with expertise in conflict-sensitive programming should develop guidelines or manuals on specific thematic areas that could guide district implementing staff and other stakeholders on how to be conflict sensitive in their specific interventions.

**Focal point/conflict-sensitive committee** – There could be a focal point officer on conflict-sensitive programming, as is the case with other cross-cutting issues such as gender, HIV/AIDS and the environment. This person would advise on the development plan and the assessment.

### Support issues

**Sensitisation and mobilisation** – 18 per cent of respondents gave lack of cooperation from communities as one of the main challenges to being conflict sensitive in their work; separately, 37 per cent say that it is important to sensitise and mobilise communities and stakeholders about being conflict sensitive in programming, a figure which rises to 44 per cent among officials from Lira and Gulu districts. This could take advantage of the availability of FM radio stations as mentioned by respondents.

**Defining roles and responsibilities** – A handful of respondents suggested that roles and responsibilities needed to be defined in order to enhance conflict-sensitive programming. However, separately, a significant number of respondents (13 per cent) cited poor leadership or political interference as a challenge to conflict-sensitive programming, while 23 per cent of key informants gave partisan leadership or conflict of interest as challenges. These problems could be lessened by defining clearly the roles of each office so that areas of responsibility do not clash or overlap. This is a common phenomenon between technical and political officers. (These are already defined in the Local Government Acts and other laws but need to be emphasised often.) Perhaps enactment of a legal framework for checking and/or sanctioning divisive tendencies would suffice to strengthen implementation of the Local Government Act.

## 2.7 The effects of conflict insensitivity

A surprisingly high proportion of respondents could think of instances when their decision had caused conflict. Sixty per cent recognised the impact their own work had had on conflict dynamics, demonstrating a level of honesty and reflection on which to build further conflict sensitivity understanding. Of those who recognised such an effect, the vast majority viewed the effect as negative. The largest proportion said that the effect was a delay in their work (25 per cent) or an increase in conflicts (22 per cent). However, a significant 13 per cent<sup>22</sup> felt that the effect was positive in that they had therefore learnt how to manage different people. Figure 15 below shows the most common effects cited by respondents.

**Figure 15: Effects of conflict on programming**



These perceptions are important as they demonstrate how managers and trainers can gain buy-in from staff for the need to incorporate conflict sensitivity into programme design and implementation. In particular, the perception that interventions can be delayed due to decisions causing conflict provides a strong argument for mainstreaming conflict sensitivity to make programming more efficient in the medium term.

<sup>22</sup> That is, 17 of the 126 respondents who recognised that their work affected conflict dynamics.

# 3

## Recommendations

### ■ **Build capacity of district officials**

There should be a comprehensive effort to build the capacity of all district officials in conflict-sensitive programming, in particular members of the District Technical Planning Committees, to enable the committees to integrate conflict sensitivity fully into their annual development plans. Other district officials should also be included, notably members of the Area Land Committees because land-related conflicts are particularly widespread and have destabilising potential.

This capacity-building could initially take the form of standardised training for the various committees. This could then be followed by an accompaniment and mentoring process that provides them with further technical support on designing, implementing and monitoring development plans from a conflict-sensitive perspective.

District officials should also be supported in identifying creative ways to apply the knowledge of conflict sensitivity (which they may already have) to their own sectors in their daily work.

It will be essential when designing this support to tailor the technical language used so that real misunderstandings do not occur. Input from stakeholders on the ground in the design of such support will be important.

### ■ **Develop guidelines on integrating conflict sensitivity**

Guidelines on how to integrate conflict-sensitive programming in the planning, budgeting and implementation processes should be developed and made available to the districts. These guidelines should be developed in consultation with the Ministry of Local Government and National Planning Authority, and should enable a degree of standardisation throughout the PRDP regions, which would assist in the monitoring and reviewing process of the GoU.

There should be room for flexibility in these guidelines to take account of changing circumstances and local specificities. At the same time, participatory rural appraisal tools used for drawing up District Development Plans can be adapted so that district officials can undertake conflict analysis using tools they are already familiar with.

### ■ **Consider creating focal point officers or committees**

One way of encouraging the systematic uptake of conflict analysis and conflict-sensitising programmes would be to establish focal point officers or committees which organise trainings, offer advice and monitor implementation of conflict sensitivity.



These officers or committees could also be responsible for alerting central-level agencies where specific conflict-related needs arise and for reporting annually on the success or otherwise of conflict-sensitivity programming. There could also be a role for these officers to share lessons with their counterparts in other districts.

Conflict-sensitive programming could then be made an area of national assessment under the national assessment exercises undertaken by the Ministry of Local Government every financial year.

■ **Improve understanding of land-related conflict and sexual and gender-based violence**

Some of the most widespread types of conflict, notably those related to land and to sexual and gender-based violence, could benefit from further analysis so that ways to mitigate these conflicts can be developed and shared throughout the PRDP region. It would be particularly important to use participatory methods in such research in order to begin the conflict-mitigation process and involve communities in understanding the conflicts which most affect them.

■ **Use existing opportunities to be more conflict sensitive**

Respondents in this research identified several areas where with little or no funding, district officials can become more conflict sensitive in their programming. These opportunities include the presence of the various development partners, the existence of the integrated planning frameworks and the presence of the FM radio stations.

# 4

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## Conclusion

**WHILE NORTHERN UGANDA** is moving slowly away from widespread organised conflict, many localised threats of conflict remain. Moreover, the high proportion of young unemployed people, unresolved disputes over land ownership, and distrust of authorities make more widespread conflict possible in the future if conflict resolution efforts are sporadic, under-resourced or short-term.

Uganda's district governments can play an essential role in mitigating conflict and identifying possible conflicts at a stage early enough to prevent them escalating into violence. District officials are broadly aware of the impact they can potentially have on reducing conflict, but there is little systematic knowledge of how their own programmes can be more conflict-sensitive. Perhaps also there is a tendency to underestimate their own sector's conflict-creating impact and to overestimate the resource requirements to become more conflict-sensitive.

Nevertheless, there is a degree of sophistication in the understanding of many district officials regarding opportunities to work differently and thus reduce conflict, and any support provided in the form of training or accompaniment would need to take account of this.

The PRDP process, designed to end in 2015 when Northern Uganda's development planning needs should be integrated into the planning process for the whole country, provides an opportunity to make conflict sensitivity a long-term outcome for all the region's districts. Such a result would be an enormous contribution to a reduction in violent conflict and the threat thereof, reaffirming Uganda's path towards peace.

## ANNEX 1: Methodology

### Selection of participating districts

All the eight sub-regions in the PRDP area were considered. From each, one out of every three districts was selected. From those districts, a district with the highest indicative planning budget using the PRDP allocations for the financial year of 2013–14 (see Annex 2) was selected for the study.<sup>23</sup> A mix of the old and the new districts was also ensured. Overall, 17 out of 56 – just under a third – PRDP districts were selected for this study.

### Research tools

The research used two different questionnaires. The principal questionnaire was for the members of the District Technical Planning Committees, as officers directly involved in implementation of the districts' programmes. The other questionnaire was for key informants, who closely watch or network with district officials in the process of implementing district programmes.

The principal questionnaire sought to investigate the respondents' understanding of the concepts of conflict and peace, their application, associated challenges, and proposals for the future from an implementer's perspective. To supplement this, the key informant questionnaire sought views from observers rather than implementers.

Because this study aimed to research respondents' precise understanding of the concepts of conflict and peace in the context of programme implementation, most of the questions in the questionnaire were open-ended, with very few pre-coded, to avoid biasing or limiting the possible answers.

After gathering the raw data from the field, the responses were coded and analysed using SPSS Statistics software<sup>24</sup> to generate frequencies and give the findings presented in this report. The findings of the implementing district officials' responses form the core of the report, while the responses of observer key informants are used for validation and to provide alternative opinions.

### Respondents

In each district, the target was twenty respondents, or 340 overall. Of these respondents, 70 per cent should have been implementing officials, and 30 per cent should have been observer key informants. In the event, there were 290 respondents, of whom 72 per cent (210) were district officials involved in implementation and the remainder were observer key informants. The target number of respondents was not met because several officials had either travelled out of their locations, or had other commitments they were engaged in.

The technical officers involved in direct implementation of the district interventions were purposefully selected using the experiences from Saferworld's accompaniment exercise in the two districts of Gulu and Lira. These officers are the decisionmakers in the district and they compose the District Technical Planning Committee. They include: community-based services coordinators, NAADS coordinators, district engineers, district water officers, chief finance officers, district planners (or PRDP focal officers), district education officers, production coordinators, heads of environment and natural resources departments, land officers, procurement officers, heads

<sup>23</sup> The PRDP budget uses a weighting system to allocate more funds to the most conflict-affected areas. Districts that are severely conflict- or cattle-rustling affected are allocated 50 points, while districts sporadically conflict- and/or cattle-rustling affected get 25 points and conflict spillover districts get 12.5 points. Performance and population are also considered. *Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda – Phase 2, op. cit.*, p 45

<sup>24</sup> Originally, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, later modified to read Statistical Product and Service Solutions.

of human resources departments, district health officers and clerks to council. Where a sector or departmental head was absent, another officer from the same department was instead interviewed.

The key informants were people outside the direct implementation process but who observe implementation or network with local governments on development initiatives in the district. These key informants comprised the district chairpersons, resident district commissioners, chief administration officers, coordinators of the district NGO Forum, religious leaders and cultural leaders. The aim of involving these key informants was to get an outside opinion about the capacity of district officials, mindful that key informants themselves are not necessarily experts on conflict-sensitive programming.

### **Researchers**

The research assistants were initially selected from among people who had received conflict-sensitive analysis training from Saferworld; a selection of others was also necessary, who then needed training to aid their understanding.

The content of the two questionnaires was explained to the research assistants in detail to ensure that they were understood in a uniform way. Research officers supervised studies in each district, supported by research assistants. A daily review of field experiences was made by the team to ensure consistency and quality control among all the members.

### **Research period**

The survey was conducted from 25 February 2013 to 1 March 2013, with data coding, entry, analysis and the initial report produced immediately afterwards.

**ANNEX 2:****List of the PRDP regions, districts/municipalities and the Indicative Planning Figures (IPF), 2013/14**

<b>Region</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>IPF 2013/14</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
Acholi	Agogo	2,257,131,290	2
	Amuru	1,980,245,812	
	Gulu	2,414,767,006	1
	Kitgum	2,124,046,996	
	Lamwo	1,997,003,131	
	Nwoya	1,729,860,280	
	Pader	2,111,771,285	
	Gulu Municipal	574,282,637	
Lango	Alebtong	2,010,253,105	3
	Amolatar	1,249,786,340	
	Apac	1,604,417,987	
	Dokolo	1,959,981,146	
	Kole	1,415,800,716	
	Lira	2,438,928,722	1
	Otuke	1,767,271,971	
	Oyam	2,276,226,840	2
	Lira Municipal	574,282,637	
Teso	Amuria	1,841,748,397	1
	Kaberamaido	1,389,885,326	2
	Katakwi	1,354,617,014	
	Kumi	1,188,526,588	
	Ngora	988,997,573	
	Serere	1,289,849,916	
	Soroti	1641245120	
	Soroti Municipal	374641318	
Bukedi	Budaka	1,063,820,954	
	Busia	1,221,846,374	
	Butalega	1,111,754,682	
	Kibuku	1,037,126,154	
	Pallisa	1,718,991,289	1
	Tororo	1,647,794,056	2
	Busia Municipal	274,820,659	
	Tororo Municipal	274,820,659	
Elgon	Bududa	1,056,026,851	3
	Bukedea	1,017,446,046	
	Bukwo	837,986,844	
	Bulambali	941,063,845	
	Kapchorwa	902,483,039	
	Kween	879,763,232	
	Manafwa	1,412,217,319	2
	Mbale	1,23,672,980	
	Sironko	1,424,374,228	1
	Mbale Municipal	274,820,659	
Bunyoro	Buliisa	1,144,955,666	
	Kiryandongo	1,636,568,659	
	Masindi	1,708,469,251	1
	Masindi Municipal	374,641,318	

<b>Region</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>IPF 2013/14</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
West Nile	Adjuman	2,403,036,882	2
	Arua	2,559,195,499	1
	Koboko	1,459,252,835	
	Maracha	1,406,447,793	
	Moyo	1,856,362,339	
	Nebbi	1,599,156,968	
	Yumbe	2,137,924,278	
	Zombo	1,368,256,693	
	Arua Municipal	374,641,318	
Karamoja	Abim	1,812,867,468	
	Amudat	1,856,709,293	
	Kaabong	2,476,145,560	1
	Kotido	2,120,29,355	
	Moroto	1,893,146,720	
	Nakapiripirit	1,992,521,522	2
	Napak	1,939,131,923	
	Moroto Municipal	574,282,637	

**Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work with local people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe that everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from insecurity and violent conflict.**

**COVER PHOTO:** A teacher happily engages his class in an outdoor activity in Bukedi, eastern Uganda.

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