Using life history research as part of a mixed methods strategy to explore resilience in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Kate Bird

Abstract:
This paper presents the approach taken by an international and interdisciplinary team to research the role of education in supporting livelihood resilience in conflict and insecurity affected northern Uganda. The paper has a methodological focus. It presents an overview of the analytical framework and the qualitative research methods component of the Q-squared approach used in this study, which iteratively combined and sequenced quantitative and qualitative methods. The paper also present illustrative results and discusses the contribution that they made to our understanding of the role that education plays in supporting resilience. It outlines the advantages of using qualitative methods in exploring dynamic changes in well-being. It also discusses the challenges implicit in this type of research. For instance, resilience is complex and multifaceted. Also, while education is important in supporting resilience both during and following conflict and insecurity, this research did not explain as much as we would like about either causality or the counterfactual. Further, economic measures of resilience are difficult to assess due to the outward migration of many of the most educated from the conflict zone; the long-run impacts of asset loss on livelihoods, income and food security; impacts on investments in human capital and cultural norms and the fragmentation of key markets. This may mean that the role of education in supporting resilience is either over- or under-estimated.

Key words:
Life history research; conflict; education; resilience; intergenerationally transmitted poverty.
Introduction

This paper presents the approach taken by an international and interdisciplinary team to research the role of education in supporting livelihood resilience in conflict and insecurity affected northern Uganda in 2008. The paper has a methodological focus. The study employed an iterative q-squared approach (see box 1) and this paper explores the application of the qualitative component of these methods designed and applied qualitative during field work in Northern Uganda in 2008, to explore a complex issue in a difficult research setting.

The conceptual framework: linking conflict and well-being with education as an intervening variable

Conflict and well-being

As a shock or negative trend, conflict and insecurity can affect the well-being of households and individuals. Individuals respond to idiosyncratic and covariant shocks by drawing down sequentially on their assets to develop coping strategies. Their ability to cope is therefore largely dependent on their access to and control of assets, including social networks and their own capabilities and agency. Households may face sequenced and composite shocks where, for example, a cattle raid is followed by the illness of a family member, reduced off-farm income employment and increases in the children’s school fees. Individuals will make decisions relating to investments, consumption, work and leisure, selecting the best possible mix of livelihood options that will maintain current and future well-being for themselves and their households. These decisions will, however, be constrained by imperfect knowledge and may have adverse outcomes.

Chronic poverty, the intergenerational transmission of poverty and conflict

The distinguishing feature of chronic poverty is its extended duration. Chronically poor people are those who experience deprivation over many years, often over their entire lives. Chronic poverty is hard to reverse and sometimes is passed from one generation to the next. This is referred to as the intergenerational transmission of poverty (Bird, 2007).

While there is a growing body of evidence on the relationship between conflict and poverty, much of the literature treats the poor as an undifferentiated category (Goodhand, 2003). Thus, less attention has been paid to the specific relationship between conflict and chronic and intergenerationally transmitted poverty. The Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC) has started addressing this gap and concludes that insecurity is one of five traps that underpin chronic poverty (CPRC, 2008: vii). Conflict can intensify the likelihood of poverty being transmitted intergenerationally either directly through its effect on children or indirectly through its impact on their care-givers, their household and their future livelihood options (Bird, 2007).

Conflict can have negative impacts on non-combatants. The violence of war can result in a layering of negative life events including the loss of loved ones, displacement and drastic changes in daily routine and community values. Violence, sexual abuse, loss and dislocation can have long-run impacts on both parents and children. The fragmentation of social networks and the abrupt change to cultural norms can have a profound impact on the degree to which people feel themselves to be located within a protective and known environment. The disruption to income-generating activities and the loss of productive and household assets can have short-run impacts on consumption and food security and longer-run impacts on livelihood options, well-being and inheritance (ibid).

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1 This section draws strongly on an earlier paper by Kate Bird, Kate Higgins and Andy McKay “Conflict, Education and the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty in Northern Uganda.”
The point at which poverty is experienced during a person’s life can influence the likelihood of that poverty becoming chronic and intergenerationally transmitted. Three crucial periods appear to be foetal development, early childhood and youth. The importance of the third phase, youth, is often overlooked, but it matters because it is during adolescence and early adulthood that individuals develop the majority of their ‘adult functionings’ (Moore, 2005:20). If these periods of children’s lives are negatively affected by conflict and insecurity the future well-being of the individual can be affected, potentially leading to chronic or intergenerationally transmitted poverty.

Resilience and education

Well-being depends on a range of variables. If a person experiences shocks or negative trends, its depth, duration and the damage it induces are important. The degree of resilience an individual commands, defined as ‘the manifestation of positive adaptation despite significant life adversity’ (Luthar, 2003: xxix), will also influence the impact of the shock on well-being. It will determine an individual or household’s ability to ‘bounce back’ from a single shock, measured by bringing income and consumption back to pre-shock levels in a given time period.

A range of attributes are associated with resilience and, as a result, negative events do not necessarily determine outcomes (Table 1). But resilience is not a directly measurable attribute. Instead it is a process or phenomenon that must be inferred from the coexistence of high adversity with relatively positive adaptation (Yaqub, 2002:1082).

Table 1: Attributes associated with resilience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual differences:</th>
<th>Cognitive abilities (IQ scores, attention skills, ability to take appropriate decisions); self-perceptions of competence, worth, confidence (self-efficacy, self-esteem); temperament and personality (adaptability, sociability); ability to moderate behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationships:</td>
<td>Parenting quality (including warmth, structure and monitoring, expectations); close relationships with competent adults (parents, relatives, mentors); benign social connections to rule-abiding peers (among older children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community resources and opportunities:</td>
<td>Good schools; connections to benign social organisations (clubs, religious groups); neighbourhood quality (public safety, collective supervision, libraries, recreation centres); quality of social services and health care</td>
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Education is a key human capital asset. It is important through its ability to increase the labour productivity and wage rate of the individual but also through its impact on cultural identity, human capabilities and agency. Education can play an important role in enabling individuals to adapt to a changed environment, make the most of other assets and negotiate a new and difficult environment. It influences a range of the attributes of resilience listed in Table 1 above. As such, it seems that people with education will be more likely to have (socio-economic) resilience during a conflict – finding new livelihood options, adjusting to social dislocation and displacement and/or finding safety and new livelihood options through migration. Following periods of conflict and insecurity, people with formal education may be more able to use their other assets to rebuild their lives, exiting poverty more rapidly than individuals without education.

2 Yaqub (2002: 1083) suggests that children are most vulnerable to the non-reversible effects of poverty in utero and in early infancy and controlled experiments with animals suggest that some, although not all, aspects of brain development damaged by early malnutrition are irreversible. Harper et al (2002: 543) suggest that nurture can shape brain morphology and functioning and education and care can promote cognitive development and support resilience.
Description of approach

This research was developed collaboratively between two groups of researchers working with the Chronic Poverty Research Centre, those at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI, London) and those at Development Research and Training (DRT, Kampala). Concept notes and literature reviews were shared early on. Two researchers from ODI visited DRT in September 2008 and staff from ODI and DRT conducted a joint training and research design workshop. Results from the initial quantitative analysis of the NUBS dataset were presented, alongside results from a literature review. All members of the research team were trained in Participatory Learning and Analysis and Life History interviewing techniques. Hypotheses and principle research questions were agreed and the research team finalised.

Two hypotheses were established in order to explore the role of education in supporting resilience in conflict affected and insecure environments. Firstly, that conflict and insecurity in Northern Uganda has constrained livelihood options, resulting in chronic and intergenerational poverty; and secondly that education is an asset which serves a protective function, helping people to stay out of poverty during conflict and supporting post-conflict recovery (resilience).

Research instruments were developed and refined during a week-long pilot visit to Kaberamaido and Pader Districts. The team reviewed lessons from the pilot over a two-day debrief and prepared for the full field work. This started two weeks later and lasted for three weeks.

Applying an iterative Q-Squared approach

This research applied an iterative Q-squared approach, combining and sequencing quantitative and qualitative methods. In this, our work builds on methods developed in previous work by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre (Baulch and Davis, 2009; Bird and Shinyekwa, 2005). It combined quantitative analysis of the Northern Uganda Baseline Survey (NUBS) with in-depth qualitative field work.

The NUBS data used in this research were the results of the first round conducted in 2004. This survey was conducted in 12 districts in Northern Uganda and five from more northerly districts in the Eastern region. Two phases of analysis of the NUBS data were undertaken as part of this study. The first was undertaken before the field work and provided the research team with useful contextual information, differentiated by district (differential poverty rates, poverty determinants, education rates and labour market returns to education). The second was undertaken after the in-depth qualitative field research and was used to triangulate and amplify findings.

Qualitative research instruments drew on participatory learning and action (PLA) methods and life-history methods, stakeholder analysis and consultation and key informant interviewing. They were applied in five communities in Kaberamaido and Pader districts of Northern Uganda. On arriving in a new study site we met community leaders at the district, sub-county and village level and then held a village community meeting\(^3\) to explain the purpose of our work. Community histories, PLA exercises, focus group discussions, semi-structured key informant interviews and life histories were conducted in the local language, with translation into English or Luganda\(^4\), with respondents selected purposively.

\(^3\) Attendance rates varied between communities but the majority of adults tended to participate, without any systematic patterns of absence (e.g. women, older people).
\(^4\) In Pader, Acholi was the main language spoken. In Kaberamaido, Ateso, Kumam, Lango and Acholi were spoken.
Site Selection and respondent identification

The research was undertaken in five sites in two Districts in conflict affected Northern Uganda. Pader District, in the Acholi sub-region, was selected because it has been affected by conflict and insecurity over a sustained period of time. It has been profoundly affected by conflict between the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda – a conflict which commenced following Yoweri Museveni’s take-over as President of Uganda in 1986. It has also suffered repeated cattle raids from the Karamojong since the 1970s, which intensified after Museveni’s government disarmed local militias in the late 1980s\(^5\). The impact of this conflict and insecurity on Pader’s population has been significant; at one point over 90 per cent of the population were displaced (International Crisis Group, 2007). At its peak in June 2006, 1.8 million people were displaced and living in internally displaced people’s (IDP) camps across Northern Uganda (IDMC, 2009). However, improvements since the LRA/ Government ceasefire in August 2006 means that some 70 per cent of IDPs had returned to their home villages by May 2009 (IASC, 2009).

Kaberamaido District, in the Teso sub-region, was selected because it is one of poorest districts in the sub-region and has also been affected by multiple insecurities over an extended period. These have included repeated Karamojong cattle raids; conflict between the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and government forces in the 1980s; and the LRA conflict. Displacement as a result of the LRA conflict and other insecurity was also significant in Kaberamaido: in 2004, it was reported that 79 per cent of Kaberamaido’s population was displaced (USAID, 2004).

Having selected focal districts, the research team undertook extensive meetings with local government officials and staff from non-governmental organisations and international agencies at the district and sub-district level. These provided contextual information and enabled the purposive selection of poor and conflict/ insecurity affected communities. Field work was undertaken in September and October 2008 at five sites. In Pader, we worked in Amyel camp (a main or mother camp), Ongalo (a satellite camp) bordering Karamoja and Lapaya (a return site). In Kaberamaido, we worked in Opunio and Omid Amoru.

Once at the study sites we asked community leaders to mobilise groups for participatory exercises and took their advice to purposively select respondents for in-depth life history interviews.

Qualitative research instruments

The use of qualitative methods was valuable in this research. Qualitative approaches can be useful in exploring dynamic changes in well-being. They can be more amenable to exploration using qualitative than survey-based methods, particularly where panel data is unavailable and also where the changes researchers wish to explore extend over several decades. Qualitative approaches are particularly helpful in examining changes in the well-being of households and individuals in the context of wider events and changes in culture, norms, social relationships, public policy and social provisioning. They are useful in examining decision-making and investments in the context of a complex web of positive and negative shocks and trends and make it possible for the research team to piece together rich evidence about access to and quality of education during and post conflict; attitudes towards education and the apparent returns to education, also during and post conflict.

\(^5\) The Karamojong are a nomadic pastoralist group whose ranges extend through parts of North-Eastern Uganda, Southern Sudan and Kenya. Conflict with sedentary populations is exacerbated by the practice of cattle raiding.
Participatory Learning and Action Tools

A flexible set of PLA tools were used by the research team. See box 1, below, for an indicative list.

Box 1: PLA tools – an indicative list

- Key informant interviews
- Community historical timeline – developed through small focus group discussion and/or semi-structured interview
- Community mapping exercise
- Focus group discussion with separate groups of women and men – mapping livelihood activities; shocks and responses to shocks; drivers and interrupters of poverty; access to education, demand for education and returns to education; government and local government policies and programmes to support agriculture and rural development
- Institutional ranking exercise to identify organisations active in the local area and their relative importance for local people
- Institutional mapping exercise (using Venn Diagram techniques)

In the section below two of these tools, the community historical timeline and the focus group discussion, is discussed in some detail along with illustrative findings from one of our study sites.

Community historical time lines

Obtaining a comprehensive overview of a community’s recent history provided important context for the remainder of the research. We did this by identifying two or more senior members of the community and asking them to talk us through key events in the history of the community. Events were mapped onto a timeline while they talked, enabling us to understand the provision of public services; the sequencing and layering of shocks and trends which have affected the community over the last thirty to forty years; identify population movements and identify changing access to and demand for education services. The series of pictures below (Figures 1-3) shows the historical timeline developed with the LC1 Chairman and his deputy in Ongalo Camp, Pader District. This was first drawn on the ground (Fig 1a), later copied onto flip chart paper (Figs 1b and 1c) for a presentation of initial research findings at Pader District Headquarters (LC5) and summarised in a chart (Fig 1d).

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6 The LC1 Chairman is the head of the lowest level of local government in Uganda, which usually corresponds to a community or village.
Figure 1a: Historical timeline, Ongalo Camp, Pader District (original, extract).

The symbols show that in 1976 there was conflict, which affected the community. This was repeated in 1979, with UNLA\(^7\) forces active in the area. In 1982 there was peace and an election but in 1986 Museveni’s forces, the NRM\(^8\), led a conflict in the area, having won the civil war and taken control of the country. In 1987, Karamojong cattle raiders stormed through the area, violently stealing livestock.

\(^7\) UNLA/ Amin conflict: The Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) was the military wing of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF), a political group formed by exiled Ugandans opposed to the rule of Idi Amin. The UNLA fought alongside Tanzanian forces in the Uganda-Tanzania War (1978/79) that led to the overthrow of Idi Amin’s regime.

\(^8\) The National Resistance Movement, led by Yoweri Museveni, began life as a rebel movement (the NRA – National Resistance Army) fighting to overthrow the Obote regime.
Figure 1b: Historical timeline, Ongalo Camp, Pader District (extract).

This timeline builds on the information provided by local leadership, using information gleaned from PLA exercises, key informant interviews and life history interviews. It shows that between 1985 and 1988 education was unavailable to local children due to conflict and insecurity. In 1985, a Karamojong raid led to deaths. Following the raid, people in the community no longer had ploughing oxen and were forced to rely on hand hoes. In 1986, conflict between the NRM and local forces left people dead. These difficulties were compounded by a further Karamojong raid. Between 1987 and 1988, the UPA were significantly active in the area, leading to several deaths. Further conflict was brought by the Lakwena movement. There was relative stability between 1990 and 1993 but then between 1993 and 1994, famine interrupted education. Teachers and students were hungry and the school day was shortened.

9 UPA (1986/87): The Uganda People’s Army was a rebel group recruited primarily from the Iteso people of Uganda and former soldiers from the special forces of the UNLA. It was active in rebellion against the NRM between 1987 and 1992. Activities reached a height after a widespread cattle raid by Karamojong in 1987 but the Teso Commission mediated an end to the UPA rebellion soon afterwards.

10 Lakwena movement (1986/87): Alice Auma (Lakwena) was an Acholi spirit-medium who established the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM). Alice waged a war against evil, which manifested itself in a number of ways: as an external enemy, represented by the NRA; and as an internal enemy, in the form of witches, sorcerers and impure soldiers. Support for the HSM peaked in 1987 when between seven and ten thousand HSM men and women marched towards Kampala, but were defeated by government troops in November of that year (see Behrend, 1998 and Behrend, 1999).
Again, there was relative stability through until 2003, when significant action by the LRA in the area led to deaths, abductions and rapes. Education was interrupted due to insecurity. Parents were afraid of their children being abducted or raped and kept them at home. Livelihoods were interrupted by the conflict. There were no agricultural activities and the erosion of assets and food security led people in the community to adopt adverse coping strategies, including engagement in commercial sex work until humanitarian relief arrived. Insecurity became so severe that the community had to relocate to Anyara Camp, where they stayed until 2005, when relative peace meant that they could return home. Unfortunately, stability was short-lived and floods in 2007 were sufficiently severe to dampen people’s recovery from the conflict and prevent access to education. This was followed in 2007 by a severe drought. However, the community showed considerable resilience and made plans to build a community school. Children attended the Omid Primary School.
Figure 1d: Summary historical timeline with proportion of children in school, Ongalo, Pader District, 1960 - 2008

Key

= proportion of Ongalo children in school
Focus group discussions

We used focus group discussions (FGDs) to explore particular themes, for example, causes of poverty; livelihood activities and successful strategies for moving out of poverty; education services, demand of education and returns to education. In order to conduct FGDs, community leaders mobilised members of the community and helped the research team to compose relevant groups. We tended to divide people into groups of younger women, younger men, older women and older men. The research team then worked with these groups in pairs.

Figure 2, below, illustrates an focus group discussion with male youth at Ongalo Camp in Pader District, which was mobilised to discuss education. Initially the group were fairly hostile. Some were former combatants, and many had been negatively affected by conflict and insecurity and were wary. The text below summarises the findings that emerged from our discussion.

![Figure 2: FGD on education with male youth, Ongalo Camp, Pader District.](image)

The teenagers and young adults in this focus group explained how conflict had disrupted their education. They told us that people were afraid that they could be attacked and killed at any time, so they preferred not to travel far from their homes. This meant that children would not walk any distance to school. Insecurity meant that children did not start P1 (first grade) until they were eight or ten and were old enough to run away if the LRA attacked. Fear of attack also meant that parents were not able to travel to local markets, so their incomes fell, meaning that they were less able to keep their children in school. Access to education was further limited by community roads becoming overgrown, due to a lack of maintenance. Finally, hunger and exposure to conflict meant that some children dropped out of school to become government or LRA soldiers, partly because the army would feed them.

When the community came to Ongalo camp from the mother camp, returns to agricultural livelihoods was limited by poor soils and an invasive weed, which limited their yields. This made it difficult for parents to afford to send their children to school. Parents are now willing to education their children and the value they place on it has increased since peace talks in 2006. People could travel more widely and they could see that other people were sending their children to school. This encouraged them to educate their own children and many have now returned to school, but still fear being ambushed by the Karamojong or LRA. The majority of children are reported to be traumatised (8 or 9 out of 10 children), which makes it difficult for them to concentrate on their
Many members of the focus group discussion had had their own education disrupted by the conflict and insecurity. They reported feeling really frustrated by their poor education, as it means they are not exposed to information. "We are just here". It also means they do not have the qualifications they need to find work and because they are still living in a camp they do not have access to enough land to cultivate. Unable to work or farm successfully, they are under-employed and poor. This limits their ability to pay (secondary) school fees for their children in the future.

Interestingly, although many of the young men were already married adults, with their own children, they expressed a desire to go back to school. Many told us that they would go to primary school to complete their primary education, if they were able to. Because some have children in the local primary school, they would prefer to go to another school. Even better, would be the opportunity to have some adult education, if that was available (covering the same curriculum as primary school). Some would prefer to go to technical school over going to primary school or adult education, while others reported that they had completed their primary education and would prefer to have the chance to finish secondary school. Unfortunately, they would need sponsorship to cover the fees, uniforms and books.

The young men were very aware of the benefits of education and explained how they differed by the level of education completed.

**Table 2: Returns to education during and immediately post-conflict**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>During conflict/ insecurity</th>
<th>Post conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Grade 2</td>
<td>Might be expected to work as a casual labourer during the conflict, because they were not able to work for themselves.</td>
<td>Is likely to face a difficult life. They will struggle to get money. The will depend completely on farming as a livelihood or they might diversify into charcoal burning. Alternatively they might join the NRM army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Grade 7</td>
<td>Might have been employed by an NGO in the IDP camp to build and maintain latrines.</td>
<td>Will live the same life as someone with P2 education or someone who has not gone to school at all. They will be farmers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical College</td>
<td>Could make furniture in the camps or get building contracts.</td>
<td>Can construct secondary schools or more vocational schools. This will give them an easy life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Grade 4</td>
<td>Might have paid employment with an NGO recording names. Their salary will mean that they can get food for their families.</td>
<td>Will have an easy life - similar to someone with S6, but with less knowledge. They might work in a village health clinic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Grade 6</td>
<td>Might have been in boarding school during the conflict, so they might have avoided being directly affected by the conflict. Once they left school and went to live in the IDP camps they would have been able to get paid work. Not an easy life, but at least an income.</td>
<td>Has a different life to everyone else in the community. He will have a good future. For example he might work as a community nurse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Focus group discussion with young men, Ongalo camp, Pader District*
Key informant interviews

Key informants were interviewed using semi-structured interview checklists both during the design phase of the research and in the field. During the design phase we spoke to staff in relevant government ministries in Kampala as well as to the staff of a number international development agencies and international non-governmental organisations, obtaining their comments on our research design. Later, during the research we conducted semi-structured interviews with a number of district officials, representatives of humanitarian agencies and local civil society organisations. These provided us with a good overview of population movements (District Planning Officer), education service provision and results (Education Officer) and humanitarian provision (UN OCHA) in the study areas and enabled us to test out our theories and triangulate initial empirical evidences.

Life history interviews

Researchers working with the Chronic Poverty Research Centre have used life history methods extensively (see Bird et al., 2004; Bird and Shinyekwa, 2005; Davis, 2006; Davis and Baulch 2009 and 2010; Hulme and Kothari, 2003 and du Toit and Neves 2007, amongst others). We chose to use this technique as part of this study because of its strength in identifying key events in a person’s life course and their effect on well-being. We anticipated that, in combination with other methods, this technique would enable us to explore whether there were patterns in experiences during and following periods of conflict and insecurity that could be at least partially explained by exposure to education.

We worked in teams of two (lead researcher and translator), with the lead researcher initiating questions, probing and taking comprehensive notes. Interviews were conducted at the interviewee’s home, as this enabled the researchers to form a view of the household’s physical surroundings and standard of living. Interviews were semi-structured and were designed to lead respondents comfortably through describing the major events of their lives from childhood to the present day, to describe asset holdings at different points in the life course, to describe access to and attitudes towards education, and to assess their absolute and relative level of well-being at different stages in their lives (compared to others in their community). The interviews took around two hours and ended with the lead researcher drawing an annotated chart with the interviewee, which represented changes in well-being experienced by the respondent during their life (after Davis, 2006).

Below a selection of extracts from life history interviews are presented, along with the corresponding well-being chart. These have been chosen to represent contrasting experiences. Some respondents have been educated through to the end of primary school. One older man and one younger man have some secondary school education. Some have no education at all and others had to drop out early, for one reason or another. Below each life history is a short commentary on the extent to which education appears to have supported resilience in the respondent’s narrative.

Box 2: Okidi Matthew

Matthew is a well educated older man from Omid Amoru in Kaberamaido District. He is 68 and was in education until he was 19, when he completed what was then called Junior 3. Sadly he had to leave school at that point because his father died, leaving two wives and six children. His father had been a successful farmer with many cattle. He drew on this wealth to educate his children. Unfortunately the man who inherited these cattle when Matthew’s father died managed the inheritance poorly, selling off the cows. This meant that there was nothing left to pay for school fees.

Matthew’s education has meant that he has been able to take on some interesting formal roles. In the 1960s, he worked as a polling assistant. He was one of the founders of Anyara Primary School, becoming a teacher and later headmaster. In 1978 he went to bible school and in 1980 became a lay leader in Kaberamaido. Between 1981 and 1985 he was parish chief at Adia for four years and then was transferred to Omid Amoru and was parish chief for two years (1985-87).
After this the Karamajong raided, killing lots of people. People were impoverished and life became miserable. Because of this people rebelled against the government. Life became harder, as the UPLA rebels came and would force people to work as porters. Also, because people had lost their cattle they had to cultivate their land using only hand-hoes. Food was scarce and between 1993 and 1994 there was a severe famine, with people being forced to eat wild fruits. The UPLA took all the remaining cattle that the Karamajong had left but in 1995 the rebels began to surrender, life started to go back to normal and people started farming again.

In 2003 the LRA rebels arrived in the area. Life became very hard. Conflict led to over 130 deaths in the area and people had to move into a camp. Matthew found life very hard in Anyara camp. There was very little food and many people got sick with diarrhoea and other illnesses. Some people used to try to travel home from the camp to find food in their fields and would be killed. The conflict interrupted some of his children’s education and they never returned to school, even though they had been doing well.

He left the camp and returned home in 2005 and started growing new crops. Life began to get better but in 2007 serious floods affected his cassava, potatoes and ground nuts. Some of his neighbours were driven out of their homes and went to stay in town. Some churches came to provide help but did not spread their assistance evenly throughout communities, instead selecting just their followers. Problems have continued, with people affected by kidney problems (perhaps from bad cooking oil distributed in camps) and Tsetse flies and pests destroying crops.

Summary of life history interview with Okidi Matthew from Omid Amoru, Kaberamaido District.

Box 2, above, shows that education gave Matthew status and access to leadership roles. It illustrates how waves of insecurity affected Matthew’s home area, making life hard for everyone and interrupting the education of some of his children. Matthew’s story also illustrates vividly how conflict and insecurity are only some of the sources of hardship that have faced his community. Floods and pests have destroyed crops, bringing food insecurity. Widespread kidney problems and sleeping sickness (caused by Tsetse flies) have further challenged the community. The chart below shows that Matthew believes that his well-being has improved since the low point he reached while living in the camp, but that he still feels life is pretty tough.
A good childhood. Father wealthy with many cows; school enjoyable.

Father dies and has to leave school in junior 3 when 19 years old. Has first child.

Works as a polling assistant in 1962 and then becomes a teacher at Anyara Primary School. Life is good in the 1960s.

Attends bible college in 1978 and becomes a lay preacher in Kaberamaido.

1981-85 works as a parish chief, who are 'kings of the village'.

Severe famine in 1993-94.

Karamajong come and raid cattle and make life really hard.

Marry and pays bride price of 20 cows and 7 goats.


Severe famine in 1993-94.

LRA rebels come and life is difficult; move to camp.

Flood in 2007


Move back to village in 2005 and life starts to improve.
**Box 3: Okello Janet**

Okello Janet is an uneducated 40 year old widow from Ongalo Camp Pader District, with four children. She has had a difficult life and suffers from depression. Because her mother died when she was born, she was brought up by her father’s uncle and aunt. They were one of the poorest families in their village.

She had a difficult childhood. Her cousins treated her badly, beating her and forcing her to cook for them when her uncle and aunt were not there to protect her. Although one of her cousins was sent to school, she never was and she was not bought clothes or looked after properly. Not only that but her uncle started to drink heavily when she was four or five. He would sell things belonging to the household so that he could buy alcohol. Her aunt was hard working and used to cultivate their land. They had good land and lots of it but it was not well cultivated, because of her uncle’s drinking. When she was 9 or 10 chased her away while he was drunk and told her to find somewhere else to live. She did not have anywhere else to go, so she waited until he was sober and went home again. Because of this difficult situation, Janet married very young, aged only 12.

Life improved for a while after her marriage and she and her husband, Charles, had a lot of food to eat. Charles had a lot of land and they planted a lot of crops. Unfortunately, her husband’s brother Simeon got jealous of their success and he made things difficult for them. He wanted to divide the land between the two brothers, but with him taking the larger share. This resulted in a serious conflict and Simeon would not listen to the clan leaders, when they tried to resolve it. This meant that she and Charles were not able to cultivate their land anymore they had to go hungry.

Charles was shot dead, Janet was injured and nine of their ten cows were stolen during a Karimojong raid in 1998. Life was very difficult after this. She had no one to help her cultivate the land or pay school fees. She formed a relationship with a man and had a child with him, but the relationship did not work out.

She and her children were forced from their homes by an LRA raid in 2003 and took refuge in an internally displaced people’s camp in Kalongo. They slept in the open for two months until a kind person gave them a blanket and eventually they were given a tent by an NGO. Life in the camp was alright but they needed money all the time to buy water and charcoal and food was limited (They had a good neighbour, who was well off and had food in his house. He used to give to her children when they needed it. Later the WFP gave her and her children food.)

They stayed in Kalongo mother camp for 3 years, but in 2006 government officials were keen that they returned to their home areas and they moved to Ongalo satellite camp. Life in Ongalo is easier - not so expensive because she does not have to pay for water, and firewood can be collected from the surrounding countryside. Her injury from during the Karamajong raids (a twisted knee) means that she cannot do heavy manual work and cannot collect water or firewood. This means that she needs to rely on other people. She is now married to her husband’s brother Andrew. He has two other wives and does not look after her or her children, although he promised that he would. Her brother gives her food and her nephew helps her, too.

**Summary of life history interview with Okello Janet at Ongalo camp, Pader District.**

Box 3 shows that Okello Janet’s life has been marred not just by cattle raids and conflict but also by being raised in a household damaged by alcohol dependence. She sought to escape her difficult childhood by marrying at just 12. Life improved temporarily but an inheritance dispute led to food insecurity. Later her husband was killed, she was injured and livestock were stolen during a Karimojong raid. Her unhealed injury from this time means that she cannot do the kind of heavy labour expected of poor rural women - cultivating land, gathering firewood and water. By marrying again she might have hoped for support for herself and her children, but she is unsupported by her second husband and dependent on others. It is possible that education would have transformed Janet’s life – certainly, without it, she has few livelihood options and her resilience has been limited.
Well-being

Uncle starts to drink

Karimojong raid

Gets married, well-being improves

Husband’s brother becomes jealous of their success. Dispute starts over land. Life becomes difficult, emotionally. He stops them digging their land. Unable to grow food.

Karimojong raid. Husband shot dead. She falls down hillside and injures her leg, which never fully recovers. Without her husband to help her, life becomes very difficult.

LRA raid. Moved to Kalongo camp

Moved to Ongalo camp

Figure 4: Okello Janet. Well-being map
Box 4: Ethel Eloja

Ethel Eloja is a young woman (28) from Omid Amoru in Kaberamaido. She is the daughter of uneducated farmers and describes life being very hard as a child because the Karamojong took all their cattle in 1986/87, when she was eight. They raided cattle, took goats, killed people, raped women and girls and education came to a standstill. As education came to a standstill (1985-88), parents married off their daughters. This was to get rid of the extra mouths to feed and to gain brideprice. They also married off their sons. They did not have cattle for brideprice, so people would accept goats and pigs instead of cattle. The recipients would just eat the animals. If the girl was rich the parents would ask for Ush.5-10,000. People went hungry at this time and some suffered from Kwashiorkor. After her family lost their cattle in the Karamojong raid, they had to use hand hoes to cultivate their land.

The rebels killed her father’s brother (1987) and her father brought his wife to live with them and had two children with her (she had no children when she arrived). Ethel’s mother got on well with her co-wife. They understood each other although the husband used to divide them. He used to say that he loved the step mother (2nd wife) more than her mother (1st wife). He tried to chase Ethel’s mother away, but she came back.

Another problems she remembers from her childhood was when she was 12 and her parents were ill, first with gonorrhoea and then with syphilis. They spent a lot of money on treatment and could not take care of the children properly. But most of the time that Ethel was growing up, they ate well - meat, beans, peas. They were bought clothes at Christmas and between Christmases they received clothes from friends.

Her family was very poor. They grew crops and kept chickens, which they sometimes sold. Also, her father would buy calves and raise them and then slaughter them in the trading centres. He would use the money for the family and for alcohol. He used to struggle to find money to buy another calf. He got the start up capital to buy them from an uncle on his mother’s side. When there was a famine, her parents would do casual work, clearing land for richer farmers.

Her father was a heavy drinker and when he drank he ‘became very rude’ and did not want people near him. He would chase his wife and children away. He drank every day from morning until sunset, only not drinking perhaps once a week. If really affected the family because it meant that there was no money available for medical treatment and education. It was also very hard on her mother, because the family depending on her to cultivate their fields.

Despite these difficulties, Ethel and her siblings went to primary school and one of her sisters went to secondary school. This sister was brought up by an aunt, who registered her as an orphan, and she received Church sponsorship. (She was another man’s child and was born while Ethel’s father was in prison for a year, following a bar brawl in which another man died).

Ethel enjoyed school and wanted to become a nurse. She explained that teaching in her school was good when the teachers were not drunk but some were drunk twice a week and they drank more if they had enough money. Alcohol was easily available because people brewed it near to the school and since even the headmaster used to drink, he did not discipline the other teachers.

Unfortunately Ethel’s parents did not have money for school fees and she had to drop out. Her father claimed that he did not even have the money to buy a pencil and if she asked for a pencil he would ask her what had happened to the one he bought her the previous term. He wanted his daughters to get married so that he could get the brideprice. She married one of her former teachers in the December of the year that she finished P7 when she was 14. There was no choice. She could not continue with her education.

She and her husband have been together for 13 years and he treats her well. Her life changed when she got married. He gives her money. He doesn’t beat her. Her husband takes her for treatment when she is sick. He buys her things and cheers her up when things were not going well. He helps cultivate their land, when he is home and helps look after the animals. He takes care of the children, when they are sick, when she is not around. (This was said shyly, as though it was a great source of pleasure for her that she has such a harmonious marriage. It was also clear that none of the things that she mentioned can be assumed by wives and in fact they are all quite unusual). They have 5 children so far. The ones who are old enough are
in school. Two of the children are in Busoga, where her husband works as a teacher, so that they can go to a better school, the others are with her in Omid Amoru.

Because her husband works in Busoga, she only sees him in the school holidays and during visits twice during each term, which means that she has to take responsibility for cultivating their land and for the children.

Her husband was the only son in his family and so inherited a lot of land. The amount of land that she is able to cultivate depends on the amount of money she has. If she as a lot of money she will cultivate more, as she can afford the inputs and pay casual labourers to help her (three times a year, weeding, harvest, weeding other crops plus the team that comes to plough). But sometimes she needs to use the money to buy food for the family.

During the worst of the conflict her husband was in Busoga, teaching. Ethel could not join him there immediately, because of the danger of ambush on the roads. She had to stay in a camp from August to November 2003 with her children. Life was difficult in the camp. They had to leave their crops to rot in the fields and they did not have enough food to eat in the camp and the children became ill. They had swollen stomachs and also got diarrhoea and vomiting. All her animals (3 bulls, 5 sheep) died because there was no grazing in the camp. The Arrow Boys were keeping peace in the camp, but some began to rape women. Also some women saw that life in the camp was hard and left their husbands for one of the Arrow Boys. They wanted food to eat and nice clothes. Ethel joined her husband later in 2003, when there was a lull in the fighting. She stayed in Busoga for a year, then she came back to the village. Life was very difficult in Busoga. Her husband had little money and there was little food (the family was used to depending on food from their own farm, supplemented by his wages, rather than depending fully on his wages). It meant that they only had 1kg of maize per day for the whole family (husband, wife, children and wife’s younger sister). They used to go to bed hungry.

When Ethel returned to the village from Busoga in November 2005, she had to rebuild everything. Life was hard at first due to famine caused by drought but settled down in early 2006. Her husband gave her money and she employed others to help her. Life improved as she could plant her own food. She planted cassava and how she can have food whenever she needs it. She no longer has to buy food.

Conflict caused famine and even when there was rain, they did not cultivate their fields because of fear. The conflict no longer affects her family. They are alright, although other families in the community are still negatively affected – especially widows and other people who lost loved ones.


The experiences of Ethel, the wife of a primary school teacher, illustrate two ways in which education has supported resilience. It made it more possible for people to leave the conflict zone and post conflict provided a steady income, enabling the rebuilding of farm-based livelihoods. During the worst of the conflict Ethel’s husband was safe in Busoga. She and the children travelled to join him there when there was a lull in the fighting in 2003, and stayed in Busoga for over a year, before returning to her village. This meant that their stay in the IDP camp was short, unlike others from her community. Also, once back home money from her husband’s salary meant that she was able to hire labourers to help her to rebuild her house and farm and they are now able to grow enough to eat. Ethel describes her situation as fair but she knows that the damage done by the conflict is still affecting other families in her community more profoundly.
Well-being

Karimojong raid. K'jong took the few cattle they had.

Got married

Famine.

Moved to Busoga

Moved to camp

Returned to village, February 2008

Figure 5: Eyatu Ethel. Well-being map
Box 5: Odyek Charles

Charles comes from a rich family. There were 4 other households who were as rich. His father had 3 wives and 12 children. They had a large compound with a good space between the houses. The compound was about an acre in size. It had one house with an iron sheet roof. It was square and had a wood frame, filled with mud. There were 10 huts in addition. They needed so many because they were a large household. An indication of their wealth and status is that when Charles was a child, their family compound was used as the venue for community events and traditional dancing and visitors to the village used to come and stay with them.

His father had a lot of land – 50 acres and when Charles was a young boy of four or five his family had around 40 cattle and so many goats and sheep they did not know the number. They also had lots of chickens – around 10 cocks and 50 hens and chicks at any time. His parents were mainly farmers, producing food for home consumption (they did not sell the surplus). His mother also used to brew cassava waragi which she sold to pay for school fees. They also sold cattle if they needed money.

As an example of how pleasant life was, Charles explains that he used to drink milk and after lunch he would take the livestock for grazing. He says that he had no problems at that time. They had a very good diet. Life was easy and simple. He never felt sick or had to go to hospital. That did not happen until later.

Charles’ father was literate and had completed at least P5 at school. He was a catechist. This meant that he had a community leadership role. His mother had no education.

Charles started school in 1969 and continued until he had to drop out of P6 in 1978 due to heart pain.

His father gave him some land to cultivate when he got married in 1980. In 1983 he took a second wife. Sadly she died in 1996, when she stepped on a landmine, leaving four children. He and his first wife are raising these four children along with their seven. They live as one harmonious family. Now his father has died he has inherited all 50 acres that his father owned because he was the only son who lived. (He has now passed some of this land on to the his sons who have married. He cultivates only some of the remaining land).

When Charles married his first wife, life was good. They worked together on their land. They did not have to do casual labour. Life was very easy. “If someone does not have a wife, life is hard. If you have a wife you bring your ideas together.” He bought cattle and started breeding them. He had 5 cattle, 10 goats and 20 chickens. before the Karimojong came and raided their village. They were then displaced by conflict and had to live in a camp from 1997-1998. When they were in the camp, life was really bad. When they had run they had had to leave all their food at home. In 1999 he went to his brother who gave him land near the camp to cultivate. On this land he was able to grow groundnuts, beans and cassava and his children started eating well. Also, his children had only just started at school when they were displaced in 1997 and their education was seriously interrupted.

“Within Lapoya village, people with an education do not exist.” If he looks at the neighbouring areas he sees that people with an education have been able to move to nearby towns and get into petty trade. “It has lifted them up.” But he things are changing locally with education. Because of UPE most children are going to school. More children are completing primary school and getting certificates. Some, who have done well, are being sponsored by NGOs. Also, their woman MP came to their area to give support to children who had done well.

Charles says that his education has helped him and it still helps him. He was elected chairman of an adjacent village – Kibega - in 1986 (when the Museveni government first came in) as a result of his education. He has stayed the LC (village chairman) ever since then. Now that they have come back to their home village “there is nothing oppressing him”. He and his family has been able to recover better from the conflict than other families in the community. They have done this through small scale farming - growing sim sim (sesame) and beans as cash crops. He thinks that he has done better than others because he sits down and thinks about the future. He plans to make sure that his children can eat and live well in the future. For example, he has vegetables planted around his house, because he cares about what they eat. He feels that planning is the key to his success, rather than having a lot of land or having good social networks.
Planning enables him to make good use of his other assets. Another example is that he uses planning to coordinate with his friends. He gets them to come and help him in his garden and when they have finished their work they will sit and drink the waragi together that his wife has distilled.

On the other hand, Charles feels that during the conflict it was worst for those with an education. If the rebels caught you and knew that you were educated, they would kill you. They thought that if you were bright, you might influence government policy against the LRA. It was also worst for children. The rebels would find out who was educated amongst the children and kill them. Some of the lucky ones with education who were abducted were not killed. But if the LRA did not kill you, they would not release you. They would make you work for them. For example, work as a field doctor. So, it was better not to have an education at that time.

More recently the family has been affected by ill-health. One of his sons from his second wife has gone blind. His blindness is caused by a fly (known locally as Ajonga Mye). Charles says that if it bites you around the eye or in the eye and something goes into the blood and you go blind, although it takes many years before the blindness develops (River Blindness). The boy started going blind in February 2007 and now can only read by using Braille. He is now going to the special school in Kitgum.

Charles sees this as his families biggest problem but it is not the only one. Another problem is that one of his children has been hospitalised for two months and his wife has been having to stay with the child. His wife was making cassava chips in the hut and the baby was crawling on the floor and fell over into the cooking pot, burning the back of his head.

Other problems concern education. One of his children was supposed to be in S5 this year, but he has had to stay back. The reason is that he got a girl pregnant. She was under 18, so he was charged with defilement. He was taken to prison and Charles had to pay money to get him out (a fine? A bribe?). After he had paid that money there was no money left for school fees. By the time the case was over it was too late for that boy to start the academic year, so he will have to wait until 2009. Another boy sat the PLE (end of P7 exam) and was supposed to start S1 this year, but he is resitting P7 because his father has no money for his school fees. He is making him re-sit P7 because he is worried that if he sits at home he will be influenced by his friends who have dropped out of school. He will be affected by 'V Culture' (video culture – the worst of the West) and he will forget about studying.

Life at home would be good if it wasn’t for these problems. He has had a good life with his children. He has a good relationship with his children. He does not beat his children or his wife. They all get on well.

Looking to the future, he wants to see his children healthy and living a better standard of living than the rest of the community. Although he stopped school at a lower level, he wants his children to continue. He wants them to study and to know about the world because “in the current situation people need information”. He wants his children to “get better jobs than at the LC3 level” (in other words, he wants them to have jobs that are not confined to the local area and that have some status). He dreams that his children will stay well and go to University. He wants his girls to go to University. Unfortunately, one of his daughters was poisoned by her sister’s husband and died, leaving a baby of only four months. He is raising the child, who is now walking.

Summary of life history interview with Odyek Charles, Lapaya, Pucoda Parish, Atanga sub-county, Pader District

Although Charles and his family face a number of problems, they are doing much better than many other families in their community. He explains that the time he invests in planning enables him to make good use of his social networks and other assets. His ability to plan could be linked to the education that he received. Although Charles dropped out of school in P6, he had more education than many others in the area. This probably combined with his high social status to help him get elected as village chairman. His experience during the conflict was that education was a source of risk. This is at odds with many of the comments by other respondents and provides an interesting insight.
Well-being

Married


Wife died

Sent to camp. Had to do casual work to survive.

Brother gave him some land near the camp to cultivate. Food security improved.

Conflict. Would run with children into the bush. The rain beat them. People died. Government beat people seriously and killed people as collaborators. There was nothing to eat.

Returned to village, February 2008

Returned to village, February 2008

Figure 6: Odyek Charles. Well-being map
Box 6: Onyuila Gloria

Gloria is a young mother of 22. She is heavily pregnant and her baby is due any day. She plans to give birth at the local clinic, 1-2 hours walk away. It is her fourth pregnancy but she has only one living child. Her first baby was a girl and died weeks after birth. Her second pregnancy was also a girl but ended in miscarriage. Her third child was a boy. He was born prematurely and has had chest problems since he was a baby. He is now two years old. She is also responsible for educating her husband’s brother. She took on responsibility for him when she got married. He has completed P7 and passed his exams but there was not enough money to pay to send him to secondary school, so he has gone to a technical college instead.

Growing up, Gloria was one of three daughters in a fairly average family. Her family had a nice compound, with flowers and fruit trees. They did not own any cattle but had 4 goats, 3 sheep, 2 pigs and lots of chickens. During the conflict, the LRA army took the goats, sheep and chickens during a raid and they killed the pigs but just left them there, because they do not eat pork.

Her parents were farmers but her mother left when Gloria was six, after a quarrel. After this, life became difficult. They used to have abundant food all the year round and were able to sell the surplus to buy other necessities, but after she left, there was no-one to cook for them. The children used to wake up in the morning and have to go and find the food that they were going to eat that day. Gloria was responsible for cooking and was so young that she could only manage to cook once a day.

Her father remarried and rather than getting better, life became even more difficult. Their new step mother used to beat them severely. She also gave them a lot of work to do. More and harder work than was appropriate for children of their age. Also she used to send them to collect firewood from risky places which exposed them to abduction from the LRA. The children wanted to go to school but their step mother prevented them. Their father used to step in and try to protect them but when he did she would threaten to leave him.

Her sisters both went to school but she was not able to go to school regularly, partly because of the conflict but also because their father did not encourage them and used to tell them to go and cultivate their farm or find food. Gloria’s education was also blocked by her older sister, who was already married when their step-mother left (in 2001, while they were living in an IDP camp) and told her that it was Gloria’s responsibility to cook for the family and look after her younger sister and her step-mother’s children.

Gloria explained that her generation has been badly affected by the conflict. It has been going on for the whole time that they have been alive. Some of her age-mates were abducted. Some were killed. Very few of her age-mates went to school. Her younger sister went to school in 2001 and 2002 but then she was abducted by the LRA, when she was 11. She stayed in the bush for a year. Koni gave her to one of his soldiers, as a ‘wife’. She was also told to kill friends that she had been abducted with. She was freed and World Vision looked after her for a month and then she came back to the community and was welcomed back. Unfortunately, her experiences traumatised her. ‘An evil spirit overwhelmed her.’ The evil spirit used to bother her constantly. She would ‘become possessed’ and would rush into the bush. Her family would have to rush after her and they would try to subdue her and tie her up to bring her home. Gradually she recovered. She went back to school from 2004-05 but these problems led to her dropping out of school.

During the conflict, living in the IDP camp was difficult. Educated people were at an advantage. Their ability to read helped them to earn a living. Because they could read sign posts they could travel outside the camp to buy things for resale within the camp. Also NGOs sometimes sent letters to camp residents to inform them about food distribution or other benefits. People who were illiterate had to find someone else to read the letter for them. By the time they had done this, they might have missed the benefits. Gloria was responsible for feeding several children and she had to rely on casual work, which was sometimes difficult to complete, because of raids.

Gloria got married in 2005 and she passed over responsibility for the children to her father. Her husband was hardworking and life got easier. She became a mother and had a better life. They were able to eat twice a day.

Now that they are living back in her husband’s village, life is more comfortable than it was in the camp.
They grow crops and do casual work. Gloria makes waragi from time to time and her husband makes charcoal. They do not have any livestock (they had one chicken, but it was stolen). Unfortunately the conflict means that they are not able to access all of her husband’s land, but they can access some of it (2 acres) and they do not have to rent land to cultivate, as they did when they were staying in the IDP camp. Also they can also access firewood easily, rather than having to buy it. She does miss having a health unit and market close by. Now they have to walk to the nearest trading centre to go to the clinic or buy soap or salt, which is 1-2 hours walk. Literacy does not make much difference now that they are back in the village. Everyone is living the same life. But over time, people with an education may see their lives improve. They might do this by investing profits from agricultural sales in petty trade. People without an education would struggle to run a kiosk because their illiteracy would mean that they would not know what to buy.

Summary of life history interview with Onyula Gloria, Lapaya, Pader District.

Gloria is another woman we interviewed who had had an exceptionally tough childhood. As a result, she had little education and married young. The challenges she faced during her early childhood were fundamentally driven by marital conflict, the absence of her mother and inappropriate parenting. These were compounded by the effects of conflict and insecurity (loss of livestock, displacement, sister’s abduction). Education clearly mattered during the conflict – and Gloria gives a couple of vivid examples of how educated people were at an advantage in the camps. But despite having almost no education, Gloria has seen her life improve post-conflict. Food security has improved and life is happier. To achieve this, she and her husband must supplement the food they can grow on just 2 acres of land by drudgery-intensive livelihoods – charcoal making and distilling, and they have not yet been able to accumulate any livestock at all. Despite this hand-to-mouth existence, Gloria has funded her young brother-in-law’s education and he is now at technical college.

This illustrates that fit, healthy young couples can recover from destitution, post-conflict, through farming and agro-processing activities, but that this does not enable them to accumulate capital and move out of poverty.
Well-being

Mother left

Father remarries. Step mother overworks them, beats them. Other children in the village have a better life.

Went to the camp. Step-mother left

Had food to eat, but life did not improve, because of fear of conflict. How to get medical care, how to feed the children.

Got married. Life improved.

Moved back to village


Figure 7: Onyuia Gloria. Well-being map

Moved back to village
Box 7: Aryenyo Robert

Robert came from an average family. It was neither rich nor poor. His parents were farmers. They had 4-5 cattle that they used for ploughing and they were able to raise a fair amount of food. If they were ill, his father was able to pay for medical treatment. Their compound contained about ten huts and there were goats, chickens and sheep as well as the cattle. He had a happy childhood and was sent to school when he was 11. He had 8 brothers and sisters (4 boys and 4 girls), who also went to school. Sadly Robert had to drop out in P7 because his father did not have enough money to enable him to continue. He told us that only those from wealthy families, or those with assistance from outside the family, were able to continue.

When he left school, Robert went home and started planning to marry. He got married in 1986 and set up his own compound, with two houses. He and his wife had three children together. Sadly she died in 1996 of a disease that made her stomach, arms and legs swell. When she died, he had to sell his goats to pay for the funeral. After his wife died, he endured seriously difficult times. Their youngest child was still a baby and he had to look after her as well as working. This limited the farming he could do and so they were hungry at home. He had to work as a casual labourer in other peoples’ gardens to feed his children. When the baby was old enough, he left his children with his mother and migrated to Kakira (near Jinja) to find work on the sugar plantation. He was there between 1997 and 2000. He married again in 1998 and brought his new wife home with him when he returned. They have had five children together (including twins, a boy and a girl), so he now has 8 children in total.

In 2003, Kony’s army (LRA) came and they had to seek refuge in the camps. They left in a hurry, leaving their animals behind and the food to rot in their fields. Life in the camp was miserable. They had to sleep outside for safety, and there was no food.

He returned to his village again in late 2004 and since then his biggest challenge has been to get a good yield from his farm. The weather has been unpredictable and pests are causing problems. The family have also had health problems. He and his wife get stomach pains and the children get malaria. They are living crowded together into one small hut. If he compares his level of well-being with others in the village, he thinks he is quite poor now. This is because there is little food at home. He and his wife have been sick and their yields have been poor. Also, paying for his son to go to secondary school has drained his resources. He has one cow, which has had a calf. He was given the cow and eight goats by an old man in the village in return for looking after his animals. He has chickens too (but he is not certain of the number).

His dreams that his children will have a better life and that they will be in a position to work in the future. He really hopes his children go to secondary school, but this depends on the yields of his crops and so on the availability of rain. He does not have any social networks that he can rely on – he can only depend on himself.

His thinks that his education has helped him during his life. Although he left school in P7, he can write and speak English. This meant that he could migrate to Kakira to earn money. Old school friends who continued with their education have formal sector jobs. One went on to be an agricultural extension officer; another went to be a fisheries officer, and others are politicians (e.g, an LC3 in Anyara).

During the conflict education helped him. He was camp security officer and had to keep order and ensure that when there was a visitor things were done in an orderly way. He also knew to follow advice and stay in the camp. Others, who were not educated, insisted on returning to their farms, even when they were told things were insecure. On returning to his village, his education has also helped him. It makes him popular. It has also enabled him to get elected positions. For example, he zone chairman for his clan; LC1 secretary of defence; head of the Church of Uganda in the village and chairman of a local self-help group (20 local people share the returns from 4 bulls, 3 milking cows, 8 goats and 1 billy-goat, given to them by Temedo). His education helps him with his farming, helping him to plan well and plant his crops using perfect ‘line work’. ‘My education gives me the courage to try new crops’.


Robert had a fairly comfortable start in life. Although his family was not rich, they had some assets and could afford primary education and medical treatment. Having some education meant that
Robert could escape the drudgery and low status of casual labour to migrate for work on sugar plantations. His family were displaced by war, and spent some time in a camp – where Robert’s education helped him to get an official position. Now that they are back home they are taking time to recover, with the whole family squeezed into just one hut. But he clearly values what education can achieve as he is ‘draining his resources’ to send his son to secondary school.
Figure 8: Aryenyo Robert. Well-being map

- Good childhood
- Starts school
- Leaves school at P7; no money for school fees
- Comes home when he leaves school and starts farming
- Gets married
- Famine and a decline in well-being
- Life improves with marriage
- Life gets worse with insecurities in the late 1980s and early 1990s
- Marries again
- Wife dies
- Well being declines after wife’s death; baby to care for
- Moves to Kakira to work on sugar plantation
- Moves back to village with new wife
- Life in camps is miserable
- Kony comes; they move to camps
- Flood and drought
- Move back to village
Daniel married in 1991, when he was 19 and joined a farmers’ collective, which worked in groups of five to help each other cultivate their land. Things got a little better during this time. In 1993, he and his wife had their first-born (they now have 5 children). After this, he decided to migrate to Kakira to work on a sugar plantation. He was one of quite a number of people from his village to go to Kakira. He worked there for three years then went to Jinja to work as a security guard for just under two years. Life was ‘fair’ working on the sugar plantation. He was able to save money to buy ploughing bulls. This was important as he had not been able to accumulate much through hand-hoe cultivation. As a security guard, life was really good, but life at home was difficult for his wife and a neighbour had started to encroach onto his land so he decided it was time to go home (2001). His time away had enabled him to build a new house and buy mattresses, a radio, a bicycle and goats. When he returned home he sold the goats and bought a bull, which he then sold and bought two bulls. He also felt that going to Kakira and Jinja was worthwhile because he met so many different people and was able to gain new knowledge on life and how to plan for life.

Then Kony’s rebels attacked his village in 2003. They raided his home, while he and his family were sleeping nearby, and took mattresses, clothing, goats and chickens. The rebels pointed a gun at him and chased him and abducted his wife and one of his children. He ran to one of the camps and mobilised soldiers, who found is wife and child. After this, Daniel joined the Arrow Boys out of frustration. This armed group (drawn from across the Teso region) were mobilised to try to protect the local population from the LRA. They were made up of ex-NRA soldiers and others and would identify where the LRA rebels were and go and fight them with guns (despite their name). The Arrow Boys protected the camp from LRA attack and accompanied people to their homes if they need to go back to their fields to harvest food. Daniel was involved with three different confrontations with the LRA. He lived in the camp with his family, but would go out with Arrow Boys as part of the camp battalion.

Daniel complains that “in the camp, there was no life.” There were no latrines in the camp and there were faeces all over the place. It was really smelly and dirty. The roads were “infested with LRA” and humanitarian relief could not get through. There was no food and the camp was really crowded. Life was very difficult but if you tried to go home “you were met by rebels”. Later, humanitarian relief arrived, “after the roads were quite safe again”. When the situation normalised a bit, people in the camps formed groups according to villages and would organise and go to cultivate their fields, with a gun. They would dig in the morning and move to and from the village together as a group.

His family was one of the first to move back to the village in 2004, because of the awfulness of camp life. Others returned later in 2005 or 2006. Life has been alright since he returned to the village, but last year (2007) they had floods and food rotted in the fields. This means that their granaries are empty this year but he is a good farmer and he knows that farming is the only way to make a living “if you refuse to dig, you have no way to survive”.

He has two bulls that he uses for ploughing, one sheep, one pig and chickens. When he looks at his lifestyle, he thinks he is poor compared to others in the village. He has gained some things through luck, but others who have relatives in town have more than him and those who did not have their property taken during the conflict are lucky.
Turning to education, he tells us that educated people had an easier time during the conflict and in the camps. Educated people who had work could hire vehicles in town and pick up their property and family and drive somewhere safe. Educated people in the camp, such as teachers and the chiefs, were still paid their salaries so they were able to get food. They also had the money to rent permanent houses.

He wants to educate his children “so they don’t have to inherit poverty that my grandfather passed on. They can have a better life in the future.” He wants his daughter to go to secondary school but for this to happen he will need to find someone to share the cost of her fees. He cannot see any other way that she will be able to continue with school because the output from his farming is too little to meet all the demands of the households (school fees, changes in diet, clothes and soap).


Daniel’s education was cut short by insecurity – he had to drop out of school following a Karimojong raid. Joining a farmers’ group made crop cultivation easier and later migrating to work on a sugar plantation and then as a security guard enabled Daniel to accumulate assets. Much of this improvement was destroyed when assets were stolen by LRA soldiers and the family had to seek shelter at an IDP camp. He fought to defend his community and left the camp as soon as he could to try to rebuild his life at home. Floods have made recovery difficult but the family have been able to recover sufficiently to own livestock.

Robert values education highly and believes that by educating his children he will enable them to escape inherited poverty.
Figure 9: Edopu Daniel. Well-being map.

- '72: Poor as a child
- '80: Father dies and has to return home
- '87: Life improves when he moves in with his sister
- '91: The Karamojong come and raid everything
- '92: Life is bad but slowly improves
- '96: Father gets sick and medicine costs a lot of money
- '01: Life is good as a security guard in Jinja
- '02: Has first child
- '07: Father dies
- '08: LRA come and Daniel moves to camp
- '09: Life in camp is miserable
- '10: Moves back to village
- '11: Floods come in 2007 and ruins gardens, so little food
- '12: Moves back to village

Legend:
- Blue arrows indicate significant events in Daniel's life.
Williams is a 28 year old health worker at the health clinic in Ongalo, in Pader District. He had a difficult childhood because of the cattle raids in 1982 and 1989 and his father’s death in 1987. His family lost everything in the raids.

Williams got ill in 1992 and had to spend two years in hospital. He almost became lame. This made things very hard for his family because their mother was bringing them up alone and had to spend a lot of her time at the hospital with him. So, she had limited time left to work, meaning there was little food for the other children in the family. When Williams health improved in 1994 and he was able to return home, things got better for the family because his mother could now cultivate their land.

World Vision decided to sponsor Williams, and in 2000 they sent him to Kotido Secondary School to start S1. He then transferred to Patonga Secondary school for S2 to S4. Even though this was the time of the LRA insurgency, his time at school was very happy and his well-being was very good. World Vision sponsored him because of the time he spent in hospital and because his mother was an elderly widow. However, in 2005, when he was in S4, World Vision moved to Gulu and the sponsorship programme in their area was stopped.

Williams really enjoyed school and was disappointed when he had to leave. (His sisters and brothers went to school but were not sponsored to continue and had to drop out at the primary level.) When he had to leave school, he came home and his mother found him a wife. He now works at the health centre in Ongalo as a volunteer with another local boy who has secondary education. He was trained by Medair as a Community Health Worker and Vaccinator.

He feels that being educated through to S4 has made him different to other people around him. All the same, it is not enough education for him to get a paid formal sector job. (He needed 2 more years of education to finish). But he has benefited from his education. He thinks life becomes easier when you have an education and he has medical knowledge from his training. He feels that his is “beyond others in the community”.

Williams would love to get more training as a health worker, so he could do more in the health clinic. He wanted to go to the Primary Teachers’ College but there was not enough money to pay for fees so he had to stay at home. Also as the last-born in the family, he has responsibilities – to his mother, his wife and now his two children, who are 1 and 4 years old now.

Summary of life history interview with Arac Williams, Ongalo Camp, Pader District.

Williams is one of the very few villagers we interviewed with more than secondary school education. His education gives him high status in his community and his work is very much appreciated. He describes himself as being beyond others in the community, but in concrete terms he relies on agriculture as his source of livelihood, as do those around him.
Figure 10: Arac Williams. Well-being map

- 1979: Karamajong raid cattle
- 1982: Father dies
- 1987: Falls sick and is admitted to hospital
- 1989: Well-being of family declined as mother was with Williams in hospital so could not provide food
- 2000: Health improves so leaves hospital
- 2004: Working as volunteer at health centre; responsibilities to wife, children and mother
- 2005: LRA insurgency heightens; sponsored by World Vision and attends Patongo Secondary School
- 2008: Well-being very good at secondary school

Well-being of family improved as mother could dig and provide food for family

Time

Well-being
Research Findings

This research generated a rich array of findings. Qualitative findings and analysis of the NUBS data found that communities across the study sites had experienced repeated shocks which significantly constrained livelihood opportunities, resulting in chronic and intergenerational poverty.

Repeated conflict-related shocks

The populations of our study sites had experienced community level, sequenced and compound shocks related to conflict and insecurity over an extended period. These overlaid ‘conventional’ life-cycle, livelihood and other shocks.

Repeated periods of insecurity due to cattle raids by the Karamojong (accompanied by burning, looting, rape and murder) in both Pader and Kaberamaido were found to have had a far more pronounced and long-run impact than we had anticipated. This was due to the depth of the impoverishment and displacement they caused, as well as in some cases the injury, death and trauma.

Shocks, livelihoods and chronic and intergenerational poverty

The impact of conflict and insecurity on civilians in Northern Uganda has been catastrophic. It has been described as ‘one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world’ (Jan Egeland, UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs in UNOCHA, 2003). We know that income poverty is severe across in the north, and welfare disparities between the north and the rest of Uganda are stark. For example, while the national poverty headcount in Uganda has declined – from 55.7 per cent in 1992/93 to 31.1 per cent in 2005/06, the poverty headcount in the north has remained high at 60.7 per cent in 2005/06, a decrease from 72.2 per cent in 1992/93 (UNDP, 2007:12).

The series of conflicts and insecurity led to a loss of assets and livelihoods. The loss of cattle was significant. Prior to the period of conflict cattle-keeping was an important component of people’s livelihoods and could be sold to pay for contingencies (for example, school fees, health care costs, funerals, bride-price and celebrations). Findings from qualitative research in all our study sites show that households experienced repeated loss of livestock through Karamojong cattle raids (from the mid-1970s) but also theft by both rebels and government soldiers. The loss of cattle impoverished the region, making aggregate and household-level recovery difficult, particularly following the escalation of subsequent insecurity (e.g. the LRA conflict). In addition, without ploughing oxen, farmers adopted hand cultivation, with implications for productivity, food security, income and well-being.

Coping strategies throughout periods of insecurity were reported to have included running into the bush to avoid attack, working as casual labourers for other households, moving to IDP camps, brewing waragi (a distilled spirit), cultivating with hand hoes, reducing meals (eating only once a day), burning charcoal, eating wild foods, early marriage of both sons and daughters and withdrawing children from school. As Margaret reported in a life history interview in Omid Amoru:

When the Karimojong came, they raided cattle, took goats, killed people, raped women and girls and education came to a standstill.... parents married off their daughters..... to get rid of the extra mouths to feed and to gain brideprice. They also married off their sons. They did not have cattle for brideprice, so people would accept goats and pigs instead of cattle.

11 This section draws strongly on an earlier paper by Kate Bird, Kate Higgins and Andy McKay “Conflict, Education and the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty in Northern Uganda.”
12 The poverty headcount in other regions in 2005/06 was 16.4 per cent in the central region, 35.9 in the eastern region and 20.5 per cent in the western region.
13 People in Kaberamaido reported boiling mangoes and squeezing out the water to make sauce and collecting leaves from trees to eat, along with a wild fruit, edulo. They also ate a plant called ebyong, which was quite dangerous and would weaken and sometimes kill people who ate it. They also ate aboche, which caused joint pain, but helped them to avoid death from starvation. Malnutrition resulted in some children developing kwashiorkor and other children dying, reportedly of anaemia.
Displacement and the move to IDP camps had negative consequences for livelihoods and well-being. The delayed distribution of humanitarian provisions when camps were first established led to some leaving the relative safety of the camps to cultivate their fields or collect food stores, leading to casualties and deaths. Poor living conditions contributed to crude and under-five mortality rates greatly in excess of anticipated emergency thresholds (Boas and Hatloy, 2006: 22).

Conflict and insecurity also led to high levels of disability (due to amputation, torture and mutilation). The LRA conflict in particular has been characterised by the brutality of the violence, which included killings, maimings and rape and a UN report which recounts the atrocities in northern Uganda concludes ‘few conflicts rival it for sheer brutality’ (IRIN/UNOCHA, 2005: 7). This has had a powerful impact of people’s psychological well-being and some are still affected by trauma or depression, with negative implications for well-being and productivity. Abductions were common, and children were disproportionately targeted. Some were turned into child soldiers and others into ‘wives’ for the combatants. Some did not return. While many of former abductees have readjusted well to civilian life, others struggle to fit back into society. The conflict also drove some youth and able-bodied men away, leaving the area with low levels of productive labour and high dependency ratios.

Faced with sequential and composite shocks, households were unsurprisingly found to have drawn down on their assets, progressing over time from preferred modes of adaptive behaviour through to sustainable coping and eventually to adverse coping. This saw households and individuals reach and pass crucial ‘tipping points’ as households liquidated productive assets, over-exploited social and political capital and reduced food security and investments in human capital to the point that individual and household capitals and capabilities were so low that recovery to previous levels of well-being will be slow and difficult or even impossible.

Post-conflict, the population is wary. While the LRA has been pushed west into the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the majority of IDPs have returned home or to ‘transit sites’ closer to their land, people are still concerned about security. This was aptly captured through one focus group discussion: ‘The rebels are in the bush and the Karamojong still have guns.’ As a result many are reluctant to invest or to accumulate assets.

With the NUSB data, we compared livelihood activities in six districts (Gulu, Kaberamaido, Katakwi, Kitgum, Kodido and Pader) where at least half the households reported shocks related to rebels since 1992 with others less affected by such shocks. A significant difference is that in the substantially affected districts household members were much more likely to be not-working, working as domestics or as agricultural labourers compared to less affected districts. In the conflict affected districts they were less likely to work in own-account agriculture or in non-farm wage work. In other words, supporting the above findings, their livelihood options were substantially constrained. The same point applies if one focuses specifically on those households affected by rebel activity since 1992. Households affected by rebel activity were also more likely to be in lower consumption quintiles compared to those that were not affected. This does not say anything about causality (whether rebel activity made them poorer or whether rebel activity affected poorer households to start with), but it does show a strong association between poverty and being affected by rebel activity.

In sum, the disruption of livelihoods and the erosion of capital, productive, human and social assets was evident across all research sites. This disruption and erosion was over a long period of time – from the mid-1970s through to the mid-2000s. Throughout this period, recovery to previous levels of well-being was slow and difficult. This remains the case today. The length of time over which many people in these communities experienced conflict and resulting livelihood disruptions demonstrates that conflict and insecurity have indeed led to chronic poverty in Northern Uganda. In addition, because of the prolonged nature of such poverty, and the implications of this for household investments in nutrition, health and education and the development and options available to children and young people, it appears that poverty has indeed been intergenerationally transmitted. The persistence poverty in Northern Uganda at a regional level supports these observations.
Moving now to our second hypothesis was that education is an asset which serves a protective function, helping people to stay out of poverty during conflict and supporting post-conflict recovery (resilience). There has been much recent work on conflict and education, but little of this focuses on the role education plays in supporting resilience (see for example Buckland (2005); Davies and Talbot (2008); and Johnson and Stewart (2007)). Teasing out the importance of education in supporting resilience during and post conflict was sometimes quite difficult as there were so many other factors influencing well-being. However, we find that education contributes to resilience both during and following conflict.

In interviews, educated respondents, who had completed primary school, reported that ‘their lives were easier’ than those without formal education. When they lost their livestock through cattle raids in the late 1970s and 1980s, educated people adjusted more easily. Levi, a man from Omid Amoru with no formal education, said:

*The educated lead an easier life because they were able to cope with the loss of livestock by opting for other businesses as well as adjusting to use of the hand-hoes for cultivation from the oxen. While others found it hard to cope without their animals with some resorting to committing suicide by taking poison or hanging themselves, the educated easily coped.*

Education also gave people a greater ability to plan and interact with authorities (for example, writing letters). They were also more able to draw on social networks, adopt new crop varieties and diversify their livelihood strategies. It gave them the confidence to travel, trade (because of their numeracy) and take on paid leadership roles (for example as an NGO camp mobiliser in an IDP camp or a local government representative). Edward from Omid Amoru said:

*When you are educated you can learn ways to improve your standard of living by having more projects such as buying livestock, easily adopting to new crop varieties, harvesting and marketing produce in Soroti – where you increase your profits by reducing middle men, unlike the uneducated who fear to explore most things.*

Male community leaders from Ongalo in Pader concurred:

*Education is more important in protecting you from bad events than land, cattle, good connections or relatives working in town. It provides you with a salary and good connections and networks outside the community...People who are educated have an easy life. They are employed and can save money in the bank.*

The ability to migrate and escape danger was also highlighted by an elderly man from Opuno in Kaberamaido:

*The LRA war clearly showed the difference between the educated and the uneducated. During the conflict, most of the educated who were already living and working outside the district remained safe. Those who were educated and were within [the district] quickly ran away and sought refuge with someone living outside Uganda while others went to other districts and to the city. It’s mainly the uneducated who stayed behind to suffer the consequences of the conflict and the floods that followed the conflict.*

People with even two years education were described as being more likely to educate their children and to take their children to the local clinic when they were sick. Educated respondents reported that they see the value of education and are more likely to strive to educate their own children - there is significant evidence of intergenerational transmission of educational attainments from adults to the children in their care.

The experience of Matthew from Omid Amoru in Kaberamaido supported these statements. He was educated through to Primary Grade 7 and knows that he has benefited from this. He can write and speak English and his education enabled him to migrate to look for work in 1996 (at a sugar plantation). During the conflict, Matthew lived in a camp. His education meant that he was employed as a security officer, keeping order in the camp. When the conflict ended his education continued to help him: it has made him popular and has enabled

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14 There has been much recent work on conflict and education, but little of this focuses on the role education plays in supporting resilience. See for example Buckland (2005); Davies and Talbot (2008); and Johnson and Stewart (2007).
him to get elected positions in local government, the church and the local farmers’ club. He also thinks that his education has helped him plan and improve his farming ‘making my farming organised and giving me the courage to try new crops’.

Gloria, from Lapaya in Pader, told us that educated people were at an advantage in the IDP camps. Their ability to read signposts meant that they could travel outside the camp to buy things to sell within the camp. As well, NGOs sometimes sent letters to camp residents to inform them about food distribution or other benefits. People who were illiterate had to find someone else to read the letter for them.

The returns to education during and immediately post-conflict were described by young men in Ongalo. See Table 2, Figure 2, above.

Analysis of the NUBS data supports and amplifies these qualitative findings. Across the NUBS sample, level of education is strongly associated with household income quintile, with links to the type of economic activity. Three quarters of households in the sample work in agriculture, with the vast majority of this being farming for home consumption (or being a family worker); those engaged in this activity are fairly uniformly distributed across the first four quintiles. But it is by being able to work in non-farm activities, in particular non-farm wage activities, that households are able to be better-off. Non-farm activities are disproportionately represented in the highest quintile. The most common forms of non-farm wage activities are in public administration and education, which are well-paid compared to alternatives. Within non-farm self employment, wholesale and retail trade and manufacturing predominate. These are less concentrated in the top quintile than the non-farm wage activities, but they are still overrepresented there.

What is particularly striking is the role of education in relation to this (see Table 3). Looking at the distribution of jobs by education level, it is apparent that having some post-secondary education is pretty much a requirement for accessing a non-farm wage job, the single most effective route out of poverty. Education also helps significantly in enabling people to work in non-farm self-employed activities, though is a bit less critical here. Those with lower levels of education seem to be largely restricted to working in agriculture, where poverty levels are significantly higher. Thus it seems that without completed secondary education it was very hard for people in the region to access the types of economic activities most likely to enable them to move out of poverty.

Using the NUBS data we also looked at the relationship between households living in a conflict-affected district, or being individually affected by conflict, and education. Among those that are currently aged 18 and below, more had never attended school in the more conflict affected districts compared to less conflict affected districts, and fewer were at secondary school, and this is the case even if in some locations the conflict may have been many years before. Among adults the effects are even more striking; in the more conflict affected districts many more had lower levels of educational attainment (many with no education or incomplete primary) and many fewer had attended secondary level or higher compared to non-conflict affected districts.
Table 3: Occupation type of household head, by education level, Northern Uganda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Incomplete primary</th>
<th>Complete primary</th>
<th>Post primary</th>
<th>Complete secondary</th>
<th>Post secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture: own account</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non agriculture: own account</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural employee</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non agricultural employee</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural family worker</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non agricultural family worker</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not working</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4 indicates the intergenerational dimension of education acquisition, also supporting qualitative findings from the field.

Table 4: Percentage of children attaining a given level of education, by education level of household head

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household head's education (%)</th>
<th>Child's education (%)</th>
<th>No qualification</th>
<th>Primary school completed</th>
<th>Secondary school completed</th>
<th>Post-secondary education completed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No qualification</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school completed</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school completed</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post secondary education completed</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implications for research design

This study faced a number of challenges. In an ideal world we would have had large sample panel data, providing three waves of data: pre-conflict, mid-conflict and post-conflict. This data would have provided household well-being data (assets, consumption), data on household livelihood portfolios, data on shocks faced by households and data on education and skills. From this we would have constructed a transition matrix, showing which households declined in well-being throughout the three waves, which remained the same (still poor, still rich, still mid-group) and which either dipped into poverty and then recovered (indicating resilience) or declined into poverty and remained there. Initial quantitative analysis could then have been followed up by identifying and interviewing a sample from each main cluster. However, this ideal-world data did not exist.

The design of the life-history interview attempted to build a fairly robust understanding of which wealth group a person belonged to, pre-conflict and which group they belonged to now. Other questions sought to understand the changes in well-being that the individual and their household had experienced and their relationship to both conflict and education. And although it does not entirely meet the ideal-world standard outlined above, we have found the Northern Uganda Baseline Survey (NUBS) extremely useful. We were able to analyse two waves of the NUBS data to explore issues at two points in this research – prior to the field work, to help identify ideal study sites and identify key issues and following field work, when we were able to triangulate key findings.

It would have been useful to have had a third round of field work to enable the team to conduct follow-up interviews with life history respondents. This would have allowed further probing of the degree to which education protected individuals and their families and later enabled recovery. However, it is unclear whether – even with this further round of interviews – we would have obtained a clearer picture. People are rarely able to comment objectively what their lives would have been like if a single variable had changed, but all others had stayed the same. Analysis of panel data can help answer this kind of ‘what if’ question.

Our findings suggest that people who were educated in the 1960s and 1970s gained higher returns from their education than people educated in the 1990s and 2000s. Some respondents suggested that the quality of the education they received in the earlier period was higher. Education was also more scarce at that time, and those with even just a couple of years of education were at a greater advantage. They gained social status and the respect of their community and they were able to access better jobs. What we see now is that younger people who have only primary education experience little economic benefit, even if they have completed all seven years.

We faced other challenges with our work. Resilience is complex and multifaceted. Education was found to be important in supporting resilience both during and following conflict and insecurity but we do not know as much as we would like about either causality or the counterfactual. In other words, we are not able to say with confidence that it was education that supported resilience rather than people (and families) exhibiting resilience had a range of characteristics, amongst which was education. We also cannot say what outcomes our respondents would have experienced if they had had more or less education.

Economic measures of resilience are difficult to assess for a number of reasons. Resilience is not a directly measurable attribute. Instead it is a process or phenomenon that must be inferred from the coexistence of high adversity with relatively positive adaptation. This poses challenges in attempting to assess what supports resilience. Further, the outward migration of many of the most educated from the conflict zone. In addition, people’s ability to bounce back were negatively affected both by the loss of productive assets and by the long-run impact of the conflict on local market functioning.

The majority of people in the study areas had lost a significant proportion of their (non-land) productive and household assets during the sequential waves of conflict and insecurity. This had a long-run impact on livelihoods, food security and well-being, as rebuilding assets required households to generate savings for reinvestment. The vast majority of households did not have a household member in paid employment. So,
amassing savings required the household to generate savings though agriculture, through firstly producing a marketed surplus and then secondly selling that surplus into a functioning market. Observation of markets in both Pader and Kaberamaido suggested that they were both extraordinarily thin and fragmented. Surrounded by such poor markets, people’s options were dampened by the ‘bad neighbourhood effect’ – jobs were scarce, returns on investment were poor - further curtailing post-conflict recovery. In other words, education might have enabled a much greater degree of resilience if people had other assets to work with, and if local markets had functioned better.

By focusing on the impact that education does or does not have on supporting resilience, this research focuses on assets, livelihoods, income and well-being. As such it has an implicit economic bias. It does not explore the impact that education can have on promoting or undermining cultural norms or on the role it can play in nation building. Combined, these limitations may mean that the role of education in supporting resilience is either over- or under-estimated by this study.

Having explored these limitations we feel that this research nevertheless provides an interesting example of q-squared work. It identified an interesting and under-researched issue and provided compelling results to contribute to programme design and budget allocations by government departments and humanitarian agencies working in areas affected by conflict and insecurity. Education matters. It supports resilience both during and following conflict and is an important ingredient into both peace-building and economic recovery, in addition to helping to meet the needs and wants of conflict affected populations.
References


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UNDP (2007) – not in JID paper!
