



A Time Between

Moving on from internal displacement in northern Uganda



In return areas which have been abandoned, sometimes for decades, returnees such as these in Orom, Kitgum District, often have to travel many kilometers to access basic services such as water, healthcare, and schools.

Preface

Acholiland is a region in northern Uganda that has suffered greatly from a long-running conflict between Government and rebel forces. At a time in which a tenuous peace has taken hold and people are moving home from decades spent in Internally Displaced Peoples' (IDP) Camps, this document examines the current situation through the stories of individuals who have lived through this conflict and displacement. These individuals, representing larger cross-sections of the Acholi population, are moving on in different ways and for different reasons; all share a common thread of hope though - for a better future, and for a return of Acholiland to peace and prosperity.

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Background

The roots of the conflict in Northern Uganda fundamentally date back to 1986, when Ugandan President Tito Okello, an Acholi by tribe, was overthrown by the National Resistance Army (NRA) of Yoweri Museveni. Numerous insurgencies resulted in Acholiland, with the most destructive being a rebel movement called the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony. The LRA has since become notorious for their abductions, murders, and seemingly inane terrorization of Northern Uganda.

The Government of Uganda's policy of "protected villages" began in 1996 as a way to provide better security and a tactical advantage by assigning a military detach to each settlement. These "protected villages", formerly larger towns, trading centers or strategically placed villages, were quickly overwhelmed with IDPs generally coming from a village of origin between 5-20 km away. Due to the short displacement distance and fluctuating security situation, it was nearly impossible to register the almost two million IDPs, or to provide comprehensive humanitarian assistance. Prior to displacement, families were scattered across great distances, relying almost entirely on farming. The confined existence of camp life put pressure on nearly every aspect of Acholi culture, testing greatly the social infrastructure of this largely rural area.

On April 10, 2008 Joseph Kony failed to appear for a signing of the Final Peace Agreement (FPA) between the LRA and the Government of Uganda at the Juba Peace Talks. The military operation "Lightning and Thunder" was launched in December '08 by the Government of Uganda, Southern Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) against the LRA position in Garamba National Park in DRC. The operation weakened the LRA, but failed to capture Kony and dismantle completely the LRA. Although LRA has not carried out any actions in Uganda since the operation in DRC, the LRA is still present and active in DRC, South Sudan and Central African Republic (CAR) having abducted or killed thousands civilians since the onset of Operation Lightning Thunder.



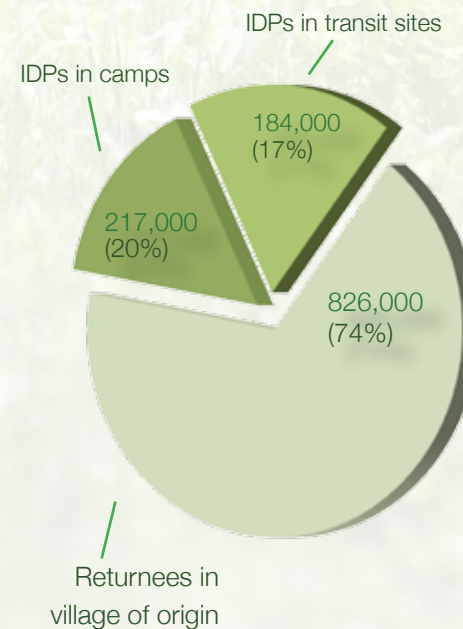
IDP camps, such as this one in Kitgum district in 2004, offered little space for the typically free-roaming displaced population in Acholiland.



A boy in his village in Gulu district aims for a bird as his family walks along the path connecting the homesteads of his family and friends.

Today's Movement

After more than a decade of confinement to the crowded IDP camps, in 2006 the Ugandan Government declared the majority of the IDPs free to move out of the camps. The war in Northern Uganda has dragged on for more than two decades though, during which more than 1.1 million people were displaced into more than 150 camps the Acholi Sub-Region alone. As of today, this large displaced population is taking advantage of the new freedom, moving steadily outside the camps toward the areas of their origin. This return pattern is challenged however by the lack of services in the return areas, the difficulties in accessing several sites, the lack of governance at parish level, and by the incapacity of a coordinated approach at parish level by the humanitarian actors.



Of the approximately 1,100,000 people living in camps in Acholiland at the end of 2005, about 184,000 (17%) still remain in camps. Of the roughly 826,000 returnees, about 217,000 are in return areas which are generally close to, but not on, their original land. Numbers remain difficult to quantify due to the transient nature of movement back-and-forth between camps, transit sites, and villages.

In the four-month period from May - September '09 nearly 100,000 people moved out of IDP Camps. With such great numbers of people moving, and with great improvements to return-area services necessary for a safe return, it is urgent now to understand where people are moving, and the service gaps still present.

*All figures are based on IASC Population Movement Estimates.

AVSI and UNHCR in the Return

As an active member of the Protection Cluster lead by UNHCR, AVSI has promoted and advocated the concept of “freedom of movement” of the IDP population. Adopted in late 2006, the concept has focused on allowing IDPs to choose where to stay “in safety and in dignity.” In 2007 the Protection Cluster adopted three “durable solutions” for IDPs in Uganda: Return to their ancestral land in their place of origin; resettlement to a new location outside of the camp but not on their ancestral land; or local integration - remaining in the place of displacement. In 2008, the protection cluster adopted the framework for the achievement of these durable solutions.

AVSI has operated in Northern Uganda since 1984, mainly through development projects in-line with the AVSI strategy of celebrating the individual within his or her community. As the security situation deteriorated in the 1990s, AVSI Uganda’s foundation of education and health projects was broadened to include emergency relief for those suffering from the conflict. To date, AVSI has undertaken operations in the health, education, water and sanitation, mine awareness, food security, and protection sectors with the goal of promoting the dignity of all individuals in the conflict-affected Acholiland.

As both a camp management and return monitoring agency during this period of relative peace, AVSI has worked to support the “parish based approach” advocated by the central government and local communities themselves. The goal has been to integrate a threefold approach to interventions within specific geographic boundaries (traditionally a parish) – intervening in camps, transit sites, and villages of origin. Each type of settlement has its own specific complexities and needs that can be clearly identified by its residents and leaders.

As the global leader in protection, The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) intervened in northern Uganda in the summer of 2006 amid the inception of peace talks in Juba (South Sudan) between the LRA and the Government of Uganda, and a signing of a Cessation of Hostilities agreement between the LRA and the Government of Uganda. Partnering with UNHCR, AVSI has been involved in Camp Management (CCCM) and Return and Protection Monitoring activities in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader.



The daughter of a landowner in Opit Camp, Gulu district. For those whose ancestral home is in the towns and trading centers that became camps, there is little to do but wait for a return to “normalcy.”



Ayoo, sitting in her newly constructed hut in her home village in Gulu district, explains the difficulties people like her have in trying to make such a major shift from the camp to the village.

Ayoo returned to her home in Gulu district in 2009 after a hut constructed for her as part of the UNHCR project implemented by AVSI. Many people such as Ayoo, with few resources and no real external support system, have remained in the camps for lack of another option. In 2009, 260 huts were constructed for “Extremely Vulnerable Individuals” (EVIs) and 14 needy families were provided transport home as part of the AVSI-UNHCR partnership.

Ayoo: Peace of Mind

My name is Ayoo Ghetto. I am 75 years old, and I am at my own home now, where the ruins of my former home are. From 1922, and as far back as I know, all of my ancestors – grandfathers and mothers – they all lived and died here. Now I am here again with my stepchildren. I have no children of my own, as they were all killed by the rebels, or died of HIV. That is why these children around me are orphans.

When this war started, after the overthrow of Tito’s government by a group called Ci-lil, I thought they were only a gang of thieves who would disappear quickly. When we were forced to go to the camps I thought we were going to stay for only two months. But it all kept on... There were terrible diseases and food shortages in the camp. Apart from WFP and a few NGOs there was no assistance the camp; the people in the camps were helpless since they had, like me, left everything to go to the camps. At home one has their relatives close to them, but in the camp people were put together irrespective of whether they are relatives or not. At home relatives are there; your mother’s children are your sisters and brothers – they can’t disown or neglect you. At home we could share everything, but in the camps there was nothing to share.

When I heard I was going to be able to return here all I had was joy for the gift of my hut. I’m on my land now. There are still food shortages, and I have no clothes or money... but I manage here better than while I was in the camp. Every morning I wake up and begin to sweep the hut and the compound, then I make a fire to cook porridge – we are now able to obtain our traditional foods like millet and peas; my neighbors bring me food to cook at dinner. One is so free at home, and able to do more than what we could in the camp. God should help us to continue like this forever. I have this house now, and there isn’t any more danger really. I am able to sleep and wake well again.



Owiny examines one of the many beehives he has placed on his land. Income generating activities such as beekeeping were a prime piece of his motivation to return home as soon as possible.

Owiny was one of the first people to return to his home following the onset of the Juba Peace Talks between the Government of Uganda and the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army. Living entirely off the land, the traditional life lived by Owiny and others like him requires little more than access to land and sheer determination.

Owiny: On His Own Terms Again

It's been more than two years since I returned home on April the 11th, 2007. As soon as the rebels began gathering for the peace talks in Sudan I decided to come home to get access to my land. With the food shortages it was very difficult to provide for my large family in the camps. I have 4 wives and 32 children. My eldest sons who had families were abducted and died in Sudan. Their children are also here with me now.

On July 2nd, 1998 I went to the Camp. Before then life was quite easy. We had all we wanted. I had 28 head of cattle and 41 goats. There were so many chickens...

I had to escape to the camp after Lakwená's people captured me, beat me, and took my cattle and goats. At the time I was an LCIII Chairperson, so after this happened to me the Army Commander ordered everyone to start leaving their homes for the Camp.

When I first moved to the camp I had nothing. I relied on food from relatives until the potatoes I planted on borrowed land began to come up. After 2 or three months I had potatoes and cabbages, but life was still extremely difficult. You needed money for renting land, and the rebels were still around so you couldn't go out to dig freely. You had to dig in the mid-day heat because of the curfew. If you were out after curfew you were assumed to be a rebel.

Now that I'm back here life is again becoming easier. I find it difficult to clear the trees from the land again, and there is lack of access to water, but I've been able to start again projects of my own. I'm a beekeeper; I've planted oranges and groundnuts. Surely life is no longer the same. We don't have as much wealth as we used to have, and now my family lives in a scattered manner, unlike the way we were settled in the village before. Still, this is the way we began here - making our own life - and this is much better than struggling for the little possibilities we've had during the conflict.

The Remaining Uncertainty

Camp phase-out guidelines have been drafted by the Government of Uganda, but with many families still reluctant to entirely abandon their huts in the camps, the “voluntary return” of IDPs has provoked much debate. Today, 135 of the camps have been officially closed/decommissioned. Needless to say, this technical classification is not a large factor in people’s decision as to whether or not to remain in a camp/trading center.

Motivated by factors such as the camp’s schools, health systems, water sources, and various food and material distributions, it has been common for families to maintain a home in both the village and in the camp. Referred to as having “one foot in the camp, and one in the village” many families maintained the links to their home in a camp as a way to ensure safety in case of renewed hostilities, to take advantage of the existing services, or not be excluded from future distributions. The security as it relates to the peace process, and the availability of services are all major factors which must be weighed by the individuals involved in the return.

The Framework for Durable Solution states “Displacement ends when one of the durable solutions occurs and IDPs no longer have needs specifically related to their displacement. This does not mean that they may not continue to have a need for protection and assistance, but their needs would be no different from other similarly situated citizens. Having found a durable solution, formerly displaced persons continue to be protected by human rights law.”

AVSI and UNHCR have been closely working with the Local Authorities, the IDPs in the camps and the returning communities to facilitate the achievement of these solutions. The progress of the return offers a measure of evaluation of the impact of these actions, however many individuals, especially the most vulnerable, still strive to put an end to their displacement. Moreover, the situation in the return areas and the lack of services, does not favor the presence of people with specific needs.



In villages such as this one in Kitgum district, daily activities like washing can be done without the struggle of crowds.



Emilia is a person who, for lack of the physical or financial ability to move, has been forced to remain in the camp. She, and many others like her, are for one reason or another relegated to remaining in the camps - sometimes forced to move into abandoned huts within the camps. Often without a support system of family or friends, the negative aspects of displacement are magnified in the case of someone who is left on their own to rely on small handouts in an area where there is little excess.

Emilia: Displacement Continued

My name is Emilia, and my place is towards Ato Hills, at the foot of those mountains. I'm 88 years old. I came here when people were escaping the fighting – I don't remember which year – maybe about 1997. My husband and I had taken good care of each other, but he was killed in the fighting, and I was left to come here alone. I came here because it was a policy that people should leave their homes and start to live in the camps. Everything was done in such a hurry that there was no time to collect ones' possessions. At the time I could still walk, so I came walking with everybody else. When I arrived here my legs started aching, and then after about one year I was paralyzed.

As you can see I have to crawl around. I don't have any strength left to organize myself to leave for home. Here I'm using some huts of others who have already left, so long as it is not leaking. When one begins to leak or it is scheduled to be demolished, I shift my things to another. Last month I was in that hut you see across there, but it began leaking.

I won't return home, as far as I can tell. There is a small girl who is helping me to cook, so I can get by. Still, there is no firewood to be found, and no kind neighbors to help in any other way.

Life in the camp is now coming to an end and people whose conditions are not very bad are going home. But I haven't been able to provide the supplementary things while I was here, and now I can't manage to provide the things I need to get home. It is just of late that people started to access their land, and return to work, but people with disabilities like me are still suffering because they can't help themselves. This way of transferring from one home to another is not good, but I don't have any other options. I have an interest to move, but this interest alone is not enough.



Sylvester is a landowner in Opit, a camp in Gulu district that was home to more than 257,000 (WFP) IDPs at the peak of displacement. Allowing people to live on his land since 2003, Sylvester has lost the opportunity to use his own land. While not bitter towards those on his land, Sylvester, like many of the landowners in the camps, wonders when he will be free again to use his land as he sees fit. While not displaced physically, he will remain feeling the effects of displacement until the IDPs return.

Sylvester: Rights and Wrongs.

In 2003 people first began to come to my land and ask if it was possible for them to stay for a while. This was just after the government had announced, and I accepted without any problems. I thought that this would be for a short time, and that eventually I'd be compensated by the government. My plot of land here is about 40-by-40 meters, and by 2004 I was housing 80 households here. There were no problems.

The problem now is that it's difficult for me to move on myself, even though there's so many that have been able to go home themselves. We're all brothers and sisters of God, and I have no problem helping in what ways I can; the difficult part is not knowing how to plan for my future and the future of my family. Many of those who have stayed on my land have even been so respectful as to offer me a plot of land to dig on, but my wish is to be able to tend to this building I have, and to build my future in this.

I've sat here and watched as my people have changed in ways that I didn't expect when this whole issue first came up. People used to dance to say goodbye to those who died, but at a certain point this all-but stopped. People just began dancing to this new dancehall music. I suppose it was because people were confined, and also because they didn't know if they would die soon, so they stopped practicing these things. They say now that they are too modernized to do such things.

Looking back on this period I can't really see anything else that could have been done. The displacement was necessary, in my opinion... maybe more police could have been provided to for better social order of the large crowds that were here, but really, I don't resent having to provide my land. I've heard that we landowners were going to be compensated somehow, but I'm beginning to think this will not happen. Even so, if we were only able to move on...



Jenaro explains the newfound opportunities that have motivated him to remain in the camp. Gulu district.

While entirely capable of returning home to the village, Jenaro has decided to remain in the camp. Business opportunities that arose during his time in the camp now factor into his decision to remain in this new reality. During the time spent in displacement people such as Jenaro developed new means with which to provide for their families.

Jenaro: New Foundations

When we first reached the camp life wasn't very easy because we were anxious about our security here. This went on for some time until we realized that we were going to stay long, and something needed to be done beyond only our survival. That is when the idea of starting a business came up.

The conflict has been terrible and I would suggest that the world tries to avoid this situation by all means... but in a small way it has brought some good. People have learned the importance of investing in things like business and education. In the past, people may have had many cattle, but had roofs full of holes - the cattle were only a sign of prestige. After the cattle were taken away during the conflict though, people now understand that it's not necessary to have so many cattle and then just stop there.

I would like to suggest that if the world has decided to give help to those suffering in a particular situation then they should endeavor to come physically to assess the needs rather than using a middleman. These middlemen can decide things that are not very important – for example, who decides to give those who have escaped rebel's captivity sewing machines? If their products can not reach the market place because they are not very skilled, then I think the most important piece would be to give them education and training rather than just a machine. In order for us to progress we must do what really needs to be done... not just what sounds nice.

I'm very optimistic about the future since the war is over. I'm going to remain here in the camp now, by choice. I have a business here now, and much hope for the future. The hope lies in the fact that I have a business here selling produce. From a small piece of land on which I've planted crops such as bananas and oranges on this should be a good business into the future. With the new technology in farming I plan on using I could be able to plough one field in a day rather than it taking two weeks. The hand hoe has nothing to compare to this. The future here will depend on us advancing using the new ways that are available.

Moving Back to What Was

Prolonged displacement has inevitably affected Acholi culture. Many youth, for example, may forsake the rural, agricultural way of life and instead seek more familiar opportunities in towns. Many returnees have elected to move to return sites in which they are near their land, but not completely back to the solitude of their village. Infrastructure lost takes decades to fully recover. Regardless of the direction the return takes, the emphasis should be to engage all communities in a dialogue in order to assess the real needs, the effects of displacement, the imprints of the war, and peoples' ideas on how to best move forward.

Among the individuals still remaining in the camps, many are vulnerable. These individual, in most cases, are unable to build their own hut or to provide for their return in the village of return. In this initial stage of the return, vulnerable individuals are often considered to be a burden to their families; they are often left behind in the camps where it is easier to access services.

AVSI, in agreement with UNHCR, started a program in 2008 for the provision of shelter in the areas of return to these vulnerable individuals present in the camps and willing but unable to return. Through a Community Based Approach and Focus Group Discussions, AVSI identified in the camps those most in need of shelter support. This identification is done following the National Criteria of vulnerability.

The aim of the program is to maximize the involvement of the returning community in order to facilitate the reintegration of the vulnerable individual within the community. Beside the provision of shelter, the program intends to identify the caregivers of the assisted Persons with Specific Needs (PSN) in order to provide them the needed support also in the villages of origin where external assistance may be nonexistent. One thing is clear: the difficult process of re-composition of the social structure has begun now with the returns in Acholiland.



A mother of four and grandmother of five prepares boo, a local green, for her family in Gulu district.



Okwonga is a man living with paralysis in a camp in Gulu district. He's about to return home now after the AVSI/UNHCR hut construction. The problems faced by able-bodied individuals in the camps are magnified in the case of someone with any disabilities. Access to basic facilities and livelihoods can be challenging, to say the least.

Okwonga: The Time In Between

I've not returned because of two problems. First, if I go I will be alone because my wife has left, and I have these children to look after. The only family who has returned there is my father and the son of my sister, whom I call my son. My father is too old to work, and my son is not old enough to contribute greatly. Second, I can't travel without assistance because I can only crawl. My legs have become paralyzed from the waist down since I was 25 years old. I got sick and just felt my legs becoming paralyzed. This was 15 years ago.

In the camp one of the biggest issues is that of a latrine. For someone who is paralyzed there is no way to use the latrine other than to crawl. At the moment my sister is helping, but she is soon to go back and then everything will be upon me. One good thing about the camp is that I have access to the health center. When I return it will be difficult to access medical services.

I am very grateful to AVSI for giving me the possibility to go home. What I am going through here in the camp is a lot of problems. The worst is the lack of latrines... most of them have collapsed now, and the ones remaining are in very poor condition. It would be good if I could move away from here to a place of my own. The idea of moving home is really a delight; I will be free from any negative forces or from any restrictions. The landowners here are the very people giving me a hard time. They have given warnings on a number of occasions saying people should go now to their own places and leave the landowners free. I feel like the land owners are right, because it is time for people to go home, but it's not that I want to be here either.

I have to say that it wasn't really good in the camp as a disabled person. If one couldn't rely on oneself then you suffered greatly. Each person in the camp was only for themselves. At home relatives are there and your brothers and sisters can't neglect you. Without some sort of assistance I feel as if I might have perished here in the camp.



The greatest motivation for many to return home has been the chance to return to a traditional life away from the lure of perceived immorality within the camp setting. Women like Oroma are returning to being the teachers and caretakers of their homes in villages across the north. While not satisfied to consider the return finished, she recognizes that the past couple years have brought about great changes.

Oroma: Home for the Harvest

As you can see now, there is plenty of space for the children and there is much time for the parents to be available to the children for teaching. There are local wild fruits available for the children. The best thing though is that morality has improved in the ways men and women behave. We are not in a situation where the rich and the poor live side by side as it was in the camps. This caused some problems in the camp between husbands and wives; there was stiff competition in the way people lived. Women can now respect their husband, whatever their financial situation may be.

Older people can teach the children about traditional values, and children are more obedient and respectful. I have five children, and my co-wife also has five. She died in the camp, and her children are my responsibility now. In the camp they would dare tell me I wasn't their mother! They were incited by others in the camp and were completely disobedient. Now they are quite okay, and I am very happy about this.

In terms of problems there is of course the water issue. There is no reliable water source here. And health centers in Gulu are too far to access in case of any emergency cases. There is still a fear of landmines for my family also. We don't dare in certain places where people have told us there are strange objects. And schools, and roads... there are so many challenges still. All-in-all life is far better here, except that this long spell of sunshine has caused famine.

If this situation happens somewhere else where people have to move to camps, I would suggest that the people be well sensitized on how to relate to each other. The camps were not a good idea, but we needed to move there to avoid being killed. If it has to happen again, there are ways like this that could make it better. For us at least, we are finished with one part of this struggle, thanks to the peace talks, but we still have very far to go...

A Path Ahead

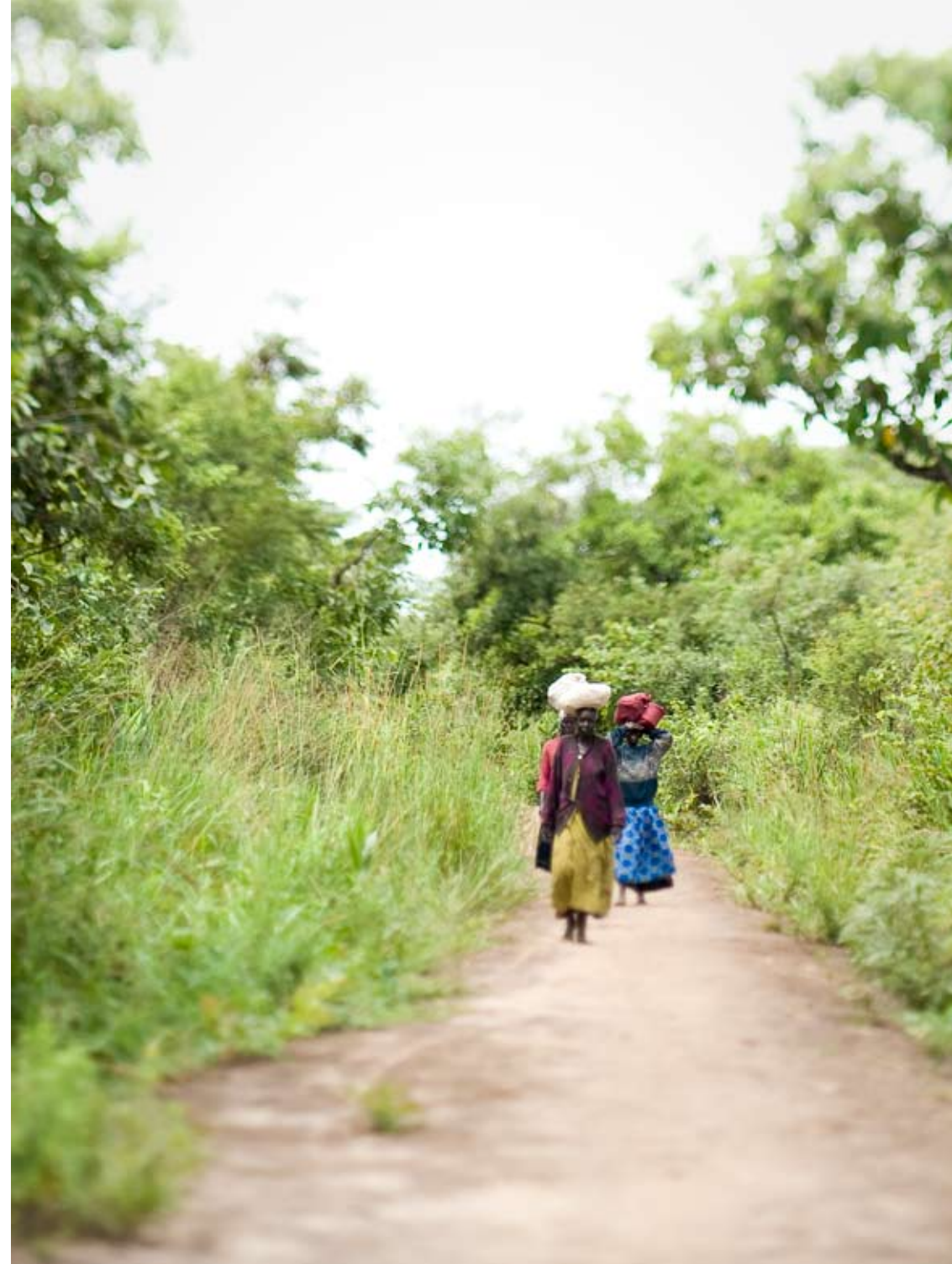
In 2006 the Survey of War Affected Youth, or SWAY project, set out to try to answer some of the unanswered questions of the conflict in Acholiland. In an attempt to determine who was suffering in which ways, and to what degree they suffered, more than 1,300 youth were surveyed during 2006 and 2007. The evidence led to a need for humanitarian interventions to adopt a “delicate balance between emergency services and a long-term development program.”

“Such a hybrid response is,” SWAY concluded, “the only effective response to what is essentially a hybrid problem... The contradiction in terms is obvious most of all to those living it—an emergency situation stretched over years or even decades, where inattention to schooling and economic activity risks losing a whole generation to poverty, while inattention to food and sanitation risks losing their lives.”

The median age of the population in Acholiland is only 14 years; the culture depends heavily on the education of the youth.

The areas to which people are returning are extremely poor and remote. Many villages have no access to a clean source of water, no schools or health centers. Food production is still inadequate and relies heavily on seasonal rains. After so many years of war, the re-composition of the society and Acholi culture will take years. The situation in the north is still weak, but also very lively. People are willing to work again to build their future. Human and structural developments must walk hand in hand to keep their roots in the communities that can ultimately bring sustainability.

It is not possible to recreate the society present prior to the war; and this should not be the aim of development workers. The new society that will emerge will maintain its roots of the prewar years but will have the strength and willingness of a society that is struggling to restart from zero.



Women make their way home from washing clothes at a stream outside of Acet camp, Gulu district.



AVSI Foundation is an international not-for-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in Italy in 1972. AVSI promotes cultural, social and economical development according to the Catholic Social Teaching, especially among the most disadvantaged in the developing nations and countries.

AVSI has been active in Uganda since 1984, maintaining a constant presence in the northern regions even during periods of high insecurity. This history and relationship with local communities has allowed AVSI to establish well-equipped and versatile field offices, with experienced staff who have in-depth knowledge of the area, the population and the local leadership.

AVSI's holistic approach includes strong partnerships with local organizations, smooth cooperation with district authorities and government ministries. AVSI's comprehensive approach aims to improve access to quality health and education services, the food security status, and the hygiene conditions in the communities it serves. Additionally, AVSI's programs raise awareness on protection issues, facilitate the return of formerly abducted persons, and support the most vulnerable individuals, including people with disabilities (PWD).

In order to avoid unnecessary overlapping of activities, coordination of the various stakeholders has become crucial. AVSI participates regularly at the various coordination meetings both at national and field level, e.g. with district authorities, UN agencies, ICRC, other NGOs and CBOs. AVSI is a member of the IASC, was the INGO representative at the JMC, and is actively participating in various UN cluster/sector meetings and working groups at the national and district level.



Joakim sits outside the home constructed for him in Gulu district as part of the AVSI/UNHCR hut construction.



UNHCR's Representation in Uganda pursues the attainment of durable solutions for refugees and sustainable returns for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). It involves the communities in income generating activities and livelihood opportunities such as road clearing, construction work, micro-credit schemes, agro-forestry schemes and animal husbandry. UNHCR further advocates for community-based approaches in areas including support to vulnerable persons, road maintenance and construction of community buildings.

The Refugee Agency leads the Protection, Camp Management and Camp Coordination clusters as part of an inter-agency collaborative humanitarian response to the IDP situation in northern Uganda. . Prior to its involvement, the population had been confined in camps resulting in further violation of human rights. Effective mechanisms were put in place and these interventions led to improved freedom of movement and choice of one of the three lasting solutions (return, resettlement in a new area or integration in the current community). Assistance included camp transformation phased out activities, shelter construction, rehabilitation of community infrastructure, support to law enforcement institutions and Protection monitoring among others. Linked to the return process is the need to facilitate reintegration by ensuring access to basic services and livelihood support.

At present more than 85% of the formerly displaced population have achieved durable solutions, although a good number of Persons with Specific Needs and Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (PSN/EVI) still remain in camps. Despite continuous efforts to facilitate the attainment of sustainable solutions for this category, continuous assistance for livelihood remains critical to enable their effective reintegration.

Since the physical return of formerly displaced populations does not in itself equate an end to displacement, recovery and re-integration efforts continue in an effort to eradicate challenges associated with displacement and thereby bridge the gap between northern Uganda and the rest of the country. Commitment from the Government of Uganda via the framework of the Peace Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP), to stabilize and rebuild Northern Uganda with a 2008 - 2010 timeline it is hoped that displacement and all associated ills will be put to rest.



Paicho Camp, Gulu district.



Photographs and Design by B. Morton/AVSI
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UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency