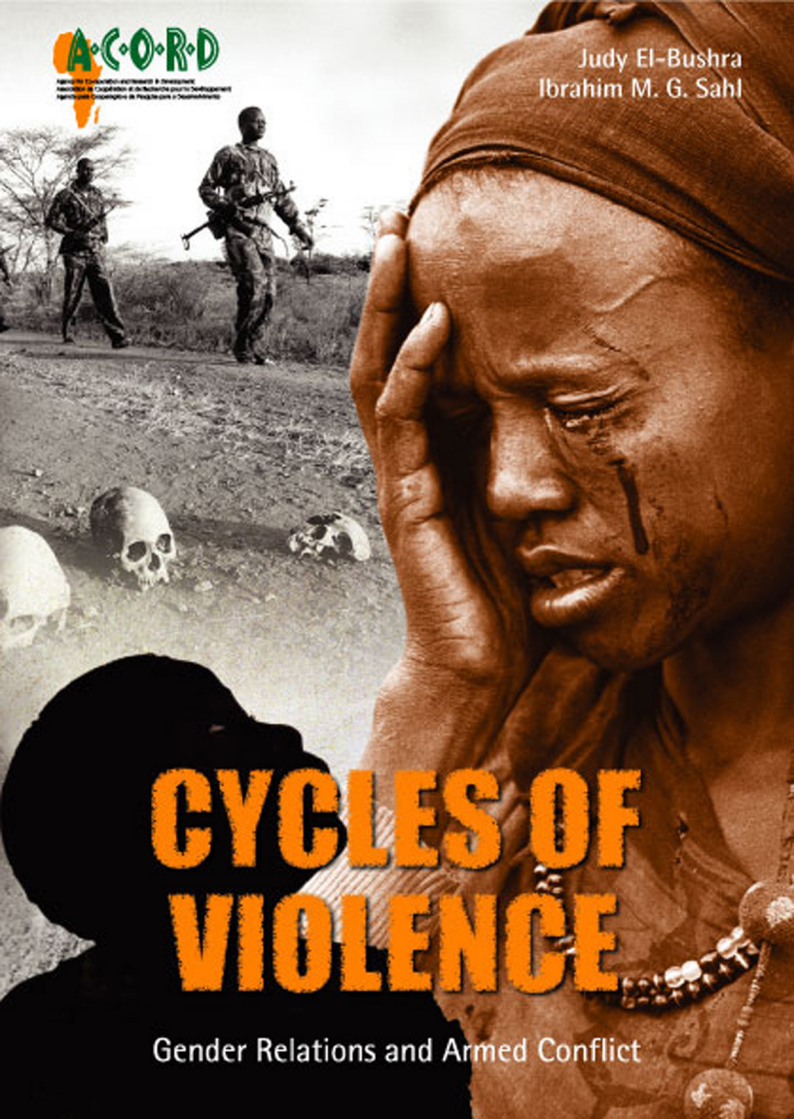
Judy El-Bushra
Ibrahim M. G. Sahl



CYCLES OF VIOLENCE

Gender Relations and Armed Conflict

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GENDER RELATIONS AND
ARMED CONFLICT

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Judy El-Bushra
Ibrahim M. G. Sahl

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ACORD - Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development
ACK Garden House – 1st Ngong Avenue
P. O. Box 61216 – 00200 Nairobi
Tel. +254 20 2721172/85/86 • Fax: +254 20 2721166
Nairobi, Kenya

AND

Construction House
56-64 Leonard Street
London EC2A 4JX
Phone: +44 207.065.0850 • Fax: +44 207.065.0851
London, UK

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This book describes the ACORD research project 'Gender-sensitive programme design and planning in conflict-affected situations' which was conducted in 2000 and 2001. It has been compiled from original contributions from the research team. Principal researchers were Judy El-Bushra, Asha El-Karib, Angela Hadjipateras, and Ibrahim Sahl. Country case studies were contributed by leaders of the country research teams, namely Marianna de Souza and Tyiteta Avelina (Angola), Fadimata Toure (Mali), Ibrahim Nur (Somalia), Norma Fodul (Sudan), and Idah Lumoro (Uganda). Desk studies were prepared by Helen Pankhurst (Eritrea) and Josephine Nyirankundabera (Rwanda). The main languages used in the project were French, Portuguese and English, and the principle translators – Francette Dusserre and Manuel de Araujoa – made an essential contribution to communication between the different teams.

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Introduction

The research project 'Gender-Sensitive Programme Design and Planning in Conflict-Affected Situations' was carried out by ACORD during 2000 and 2001. Its overall aim was to enhance gender-awareness in the design and management of development projects in contexts affected by conflict. The field research was carried out by five community-based programmes, all of which had been operating in an environment of armed and violent conflict for a number of years, and all of which had been employing a strong gender focus in their support to communities living in the shadow of this violence. These were located in Juba (Sudan), Gulu (Uganda), Luanda (Angola), Timbuktu (Mali) and the Lower Shabelle region (Somalia).

The project, which soon became known as the 'gender and conflict research project', was a timely one in terms of the external policy environment. Increasingly, development agencies, conflict analysts, and advocacy campaigners were becoming interested in the subject of 'gender and conflict'. Gender specialists were interested in knowing more about women's experiences in war, and about the impact of such crises on gender relations. Conflict analysts and humanitarian professionals had often been accused of ignoring the gender dimensions of their work and were anxious to rebuff charges of gender-insensitivity. However, there seemed to be little common ground between these two groups, and the project was designed in part to bridge this gap. At the same time, there were few links between the 'front line' workers of development agencies on the one hand, and policy and advocacy workers on the other, with the result that advocacy discussions were not being informed by a 'view from the ground'. ACORD's characteristic position at the margins of the poorest countries in the poorest continent

offered the possibility of providing evidence for this debate from places where few researchers normally reach.

Development agencies at that time were struggling to come to terms with the environment of conflict which was increasingly forming the backdrop to their work. They were also in the process of assessing the lessons learned from, in many cases, a decade or more of gender policy. ACORD, for example, was trying to reconcile the organisational rhetoric of strong support to the policy with the realisation that its impact was uneven. At the same time it was engaged in a critical reflection about the nature of development research and about the part which research should play in programmes. This included the need to develop flexible, sensitive research methods, so that programmes could go beyond information collection and engage in joint reflection with their community partners about the issues that confronted them. Coming as it did at the intersection of these three significant concerns, the project generated considerable interest within the organisation, and represented a rich learning experience for all those who took part in it.

Working 'in' and working 'on' violent conflict

ACORD recognised in the early 1990s that turbulent events (whether economic, political, social or military) were affecting its work in new ways, and that the impact of this turbulence needed to be better understood if the organisation was going to plan and operate effectively (Roche 1996). In particular, programmes would have to become more autonomous, to prepare for possible lapses of communication during crises. Accordingly, decision-making would need to be decentralised, and 'front line' programme staff supported to become self-managing. Reinforcing the 'front line' was particularly important in the case of conflict-affected programmes (Hamid 1993; Adams and Bradbury 1995), and this included building up a strong local knowledge base through research and conflict analysis.

Of the many examples which grew up then of programmes responding to this challenge, one had particularly important lessons for the present study. This was the Gulu programme in Northern Uganda, which took part in a global exercise in oral history carried out by the Panos Institute, documenting women's experiences of war (Bennett and others 1996). The Gulu programme developed the oral testimony method further in several other projects, including one on men's experiences of conflict. It also participated in other conflict-related research projects, including the COPE [1] project which ran from 1998-2000. Fieldwork for COPE culminated in a major international conference hosted by the Gulu programme, bringing peace researchers from northern Uganda together with politicians, researchers and decision-makers from Uganda and elsewhere (Dolan 1999). The COPE fieldwork was carried out by local researchers who documented happenings in the Gulu district from a grass-roots perspective. The conference provided a platform for the expression of many different views on the war -- local, national and international.

The COPE project provided an opportunity to develop this emerging interest in 'gender and conflict' further. A discussion document (El-Bushra 1998) suggested that a gender approach to conflict analysis might lead to a deeper understanding of why people (men or women) support, carry out, or stand against violence. Developing such an understanding would involve, on the one hand, describing the impacts of war on individual men and women and on their communities, and their gendered responses to these effects. On the other, it would mean examining how far their identity as male and female members of a particular group influences their behaviour, and how far this behaviour in turn influences the course of hostilities. The discussion document came too late to influence the design of the research directly, although the ACORD component of the COPE project later addressed this question (Dolan 2002). This gap encouraged ACORD to initiate the 'gender-

[1] The Consortium on Political Emergencies (COPE) brought together three UK universities (Leeds, Bradford, and Sussex) and ACORD in a DFID-funded research project entitled 'Complex political emergencies – from relief to sustainable development?'

sensitive programme design and management' research project, consciously designed as an extension of its COPE contribution.

In brief, the project found that there was indeed a relationship between gender identity on the one hand and continuing cycles of violence on the other. This has implications both for conflict analysis and for designing peace-building strategies, since if gender has been a factor in perpetuating violence, it can also be transformed into a strategy for rebuilding new social relations. Indeed, the testimonies collected during the research project make a very clear statement: that the people with whom ACORD works desperately want peace, and they want help in bringing it about. One of the main impacts of the research on programme thinking was the realisation that a radical change of focus is needed. This means no longer working 'in' armed conflict (doing development work but taking account of insecurity), but instead working 'on' it (seeing development as a process in which communities analyse and address its underlying causes). In this respect, the research adds to the growing movement amongst NGOs to adopt 'conflict-sensitive approaches' (International Alert and others 2004) to development, humanitarian and peace-building work.

Section 3 discusses this debate in more detail, and suggests that development agencies working in conflict-affected environments should contribute to peace-building by supporting public discussion about the values and behaviours that a society emerging from war wants to see put in place.

The evolution of gender policy

Most development agencies understand gender equality to be a critical and central goal of their work.[2] Much investment has been made in terms of

[2] ACORD first developed a gender policy in 1990, and revised it after extensive consultation with programmes in 1999.

financial and human resources, developing gender equality policies and staff development initiatives, and promoting gender-sensitive institutional practice. In ACORD's case, several reviews were carried out during the 1990s which assessed performance towards achieving gender equality goals. These examined programme impacts, as well as the organisation's internal policies and processes (Hadjipateras 1996; ACORD 1998; Underwood 2000). These investigations showed that the transformation of gender relations which ACORD has sought to achieve in its programmes had been elusive. Tangible improvements were noted in women's material welfare and in their social standing. However, their status remained a subordinate one, and their control of resources remained limited.

The concerns which these reviews identified echoed similar investigations in other agencies. For many agencies, gender policy failed to reflect the gender dynamics of the communities in which they worked. This often led to personal tensions for staff, as well as to confusions about the role of outside agencies in bringing about change (El-Bushra 2000). ACORD's review, for example, suggests that staff committed to promoting gender equality believed that change would not happen without resistance from some quarters in the community. However, while some intended to fight for women's rights, others favoured a 'softly-softly' approach. Different interpretations of 'gender' were in evidence. Men were generally not seen as legitimate targets for gender equality support, except where they were particularly vulnerable, or where they needed to be approached as 'gatekeepers' of women's status.

Underlying these debates, then, was unease with the concept of gender itself, and a confusion over how agencies could best engage with the community around its use as a tool for transformation.

Amongst many factors contributing to this state of affairs is a central conceptual problem. This is that 'gender', in its root meaning, is a descriptive

device, a way of analysing one aspect of social relations as people live them in a given community. And yet, as it has been adapted by the development community (as 'gender and development' or GAD), the word represents a global agenda for change. Moreover, gender specialists themselves have not always been in agreement about the nature of this agenda.[3]

By the early 1990s, most of ACORD's programmes operated in war-torn environments. ACORD, with Oxfam, had taken a lead in raising awareness among NGOs of the gender dimensions of conflict (El-Bushra and Piza-Lopez 1993). This work had largely consisted in raising awareness of the impact of war on women, and in suggesting implementation strategies which addressed women's needs. However, there was growing evidence that attempts to link 'gender' and 'conflict' could generate gender stereotypes of women as passive victims, and men as aggressive protectors of territory. It later became clear that women's experience of war, terrible though it is, goes far beyond the victim role: women are also promoters of and participants in war in many instances. Men also suffer gender violence in war, often of horrific proportions (Jacobs, Jacobson et al. 2000; Moser and Clark 2001; Zarkov 2001). Moreover, as awareness of women's particular needs began working its way into the policies and practices of the humanitarian community, it became clear that there might be negative consequences – for both women and men – if gender equality approaches were applied in superficial ways (El-Bushra 2000). If those exploring the gender dimensions of conflict were to gain credibility, they would need to link their analysis to a deeper look into what makes wars happen, and how individuals and groups respond to them.

3 For an account of contending views at the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995, for example, see Baden, S. and A. Goetz (1998). Who needs (sex) when you can have (gender)?; Conflicting discourses on gender at Beijing; Feminist visions of development: gender analysis and policy. C. Jackson and R. Pearson, Routledge, London & New York.

The research findings contribute to this deeper look in two ways. Firstly, they throw light on the processes whereby gender relations change during conflict and other traumatic events. In particular, the research team's analysis led to a clarification of different elements within the overall category of gender relations, and how these elements change in different ways. The framework described in section 2 breaks gender relations down into gender roles (the division of labour), gender identities (expected and valued patterns of behaviour), gendered institutions or power structures (which need to be examined at household, community, national and international levels) and gender ideologies (the system of values and beliefs which underpins the first three elements). Secondly, section 3 suggests ways in which constructions of gender identity (ideal characteristics of men and women) can contribute to the motivations which lead to war and which perpetuate violence once started.

Development research and its place in operational development practice

The third strand of thinking and behind the gender and conflict research project is the debate on development research, and its relationship with other elements of development work such as policy development, training, and advocacy. The COPE conference in Gulu, which was both a forum for sharing research and a contribution towards peace-building, was a milestone in the evolution of ACORD's understanding of the role of research, as well as in its work on development in violent conflict. The conference's success influenced the eventual restructuring of the organisation in 2002. It also raised issues about doing research in violent and insecure environments, which were later taken up by the 'gender and conflict' research project (see section 4).

Key issues in debates about development research are: what different functions does research serve? Who should do it, and how specialised a function is it? How should research be used, and by whom? Most

importantly, who should have 'ownership' of the process? These are not simply technical matters but are bound up in debates about what is development, and about how development agencies should deal with the question of power relations, given that they themselves hold positions in global power structures and are not neutral actors. The social exclusion analysis (SEA) framework which is summarised in annex 1, describes social division in terms of power imbalances which have been enshrined in history and culture, and have become part and parcel of the social fabric. SEA focuses attention not only on the consequences of these power imbalances but also on their underlying causes.[4] Research – especially research which is open-ended and which brings the voices of the powerless to the fore – has the capacity to bring these ingrained imbalances into the open, and lead to public discussion of what sort of society people want to see. Genuinely participatory research provides those living in injustice with a vehicle for self-expression, and a means of imagining and pursuing solutions themselves to problems they have identified. It is not politically neutral: it requires an engagement with issues concerning social relations of power and control over resources which can be seen as too risky to address. In this sense, research and development practice are inseparable.

A survey of development research in ACORD (Capezzuoli 2003) revealed that all programmes were carrying out significant amounts of research, of several different types and functions, and that the research being done was having a significant influence on how programmes evolved. For the most part, this research fitted within the planning cycle, by offering information and insights on which programme planning would be based, and by monitoring progress towards goals which had been identified through planning. The 'gender and conflict' research project offered the opportunity to add to this portfolio an example of open-ended research, designed to offer insights into

[4] SEA has since been adopted by ACORD as a key framework for programme development.

the totality of problems affecting the community. Such an approach would provide a new dimension to ACORD's commitment to 'participation', by promoting a process of open dialogue feeding directly into the design of ACORD's interventions.

The project adopted oral testimony (see section 4 for further discussion of the reasons for this approach) as its main method, triangulated by PRA exercises and secondary data. As indicated above, oral testimony (OT) had earlier been adapted by ACORD's Gulu programme in Uganda from its original introduction through a project of the Panos Institute. Because of the potentially sensitive nature of the testimonies obtained, guidelines for the application of OT developed by ACORD in 2000 as part of the project (see annex 3) stress the need for the approach to be understood and supported by the whole programme team, not just those carrying out the research.

As an approach to development research, the project demonstrated the potential of oral testimony both in terms of its sensitivity to difficult topics, and in terms of its impact on contextual understanding. Researchers were inspired by the insights it gave them, although they also wanted to complement these with less obviously subjective data. They considered it highly enriching when scoping a new issue or for indicating new programming directions, though less useful as a basis of concrete activity planning. Most importantly, the project pointed the way towards research processes which build community 'ownership' of research (though it did not itself fully exploit this opportunity), an idea which formed the basis of a subsequent research project.[5]

[5] 'Participatory Action Research to Strengthen the Capacity of Marginalized People to Resolve Conflict of Interest And Achieve their Rights without Recourse to Violence', which ran from April 2003 till December 2004.

Aims and structure of the present volume

These concerns with conflict responses, gender policy, and the role of research, provided the background to the 'Gender-sensitive programme design and planning in conflict-affected situations' research project. The research aimed to explore the relationship between gender and conflict by examining two main research questions: firstly, what is the impact of war on gender relations, and secondly, can gender relations contribute to conflict? A third set of research questions sought to assess research methods and tools of analysis for their appropriateness to contexts of insecurity.

The following chapters attempt to summarise how far the research outputs have been able to throw light on these concerns. Section 1 consists of case studies from each of the five main research sites, and describes findings in relation to these contexts. Section 2 addresses the first of the project's research questions, assessing the economic and social impacts of war on the communities in which the research was carried out. Section 3 addresses the second research question and examines what light gender analysis can throw on the nature of power, identity and violence and hence on the perpetuation of war. Finally, section 4 reports on the findings as they relate to research methods and tools of analysis, and reflects further on the nature of research as a strategy for social transformation.

Section 1

Experiences of war in five communities

This section summarises the research findings as they relate to the five main study locations, in Uganda, Sudan, Somalia, Angola and Mali.[6] Each section provides a brief background describing the main events and local consequences of the war, viewed largely through the eyes of respondents. While the emphasis is on assessing how gender relations have changed, war has clearly had diverse impacts in the study areas, and changes to gender relations need to be seen in this wider context. The concluding remarks in each section indicate how the research has contributed to the programme's thinking about its role in peace-building.

Uganda

The historical background to the war in Uganda

The war in northern Uganda traces its roots back to the British colonial presence (1894-1962). Colonial rule exacerbated existing divisions between different regions of Uganda, using 'divide-and-rule' tactics such as encouraging different occupational patterns in different regions of the country (Nyeko 1996). Independence in 1962 was followed by increasing violence, and eventually by full-scale civil war. Key events such as the uprising against the Baganda in 1967, the rise of President Idi Amin in 1971, the expulsion of Ugandan Asians in 1972, the atrocities of the Lowero Triangle in

[6] The original case study reports can be found on the ACORD website, <http://www.acord.org.uk>.

the early 1980s and the rise of the National Resistance Army which took over the country in 1986, are well-known beyond Uganda's borders.

The National Resistance Movement (NRM) established a new system of government, based on tiers of elected committees. This generated stability and a positive climate, both for enterprise and for international assistance. In the north however, as well as in other peripheral regions of Uganda such as the north-west and the east, resistance to the current regime continued, accompanied by increasing impoverishment and displacement in those areas (O'Brien 1998). There are still deep cultural and political divisions between the Bantu centre and south-west and the Nilotic and central Sudanic north. There are also political divides between supporters of the one-party Movement system and those in favour of multi-party politics. A number of other issues have proved politically divisive. These include, for example, the government's increasingly uncertain human rights regime. The government has also been criticised for Uganda's military adventures in the Congo and the Sudan, and for attempting to overcome the constitutional bar on a presidential third term.

In the Acholi districts of northern Uganda, a series of rebel groups, most recently the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony, has continued to contest the NRM government's hegemony. However, in practice the LRA's targets have tended to be fellow Acholi. Neither the LRA nor the national army (the Uganda People's Defence Force or UPDF) has shown an inclination for fighting each other. Instead, human rights abuses have been perpetrated against the general population both by the LRA and by government forces. While the LRA has achieved international notoriety for abducting an estimated 12,000 children (as well as adults) to serve as porters and officers' 'wives', the UPDF has also been accused of illegally and forcibly recruiting under-age soldiers into the army and local defence units, some of whom took part in its Congo campaigns.

Government initiatives to end the fighting have included both peace initiatives, including the 1998 amnesty, and military campaigns such as the joint operations against the LRA by Ugandan and Sudanese armies in 2002/3 ('Operation Iron Fist) . All have failed to deliver an end to the condition of extreme insecurity in which the population have been living since 1986. International attention has been slow to focus on northern Uganda, though interest started to grow in the late 1990s. Although humanitarian assistance increased around that time, living standards in the north have been consistently low, and the proportion of the population living in IDP camps has increased, prompting Jan Egeland, United Nations Co-ordinator for Humanitarian Affairs, to declare in 2003 that northern Uganda was 'worse than Iraq'.[7]

A number of civil society groups have also attempted to initiate negotiations between the government and the LRA. These include the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (ARLPI), a Uganda-based group seeking to promote understanding between the parties concerned, and Kakoke Madit, a diaspora group which aims to bring relevant factions together on neutral ground. The Hon. Mrs Betty Bigombe, a former member of parliament, undertook to establish negotiations in 1994. Although the attempt failed, it is widely considered to have come closer than any other initiative, and Mrs Bigombe resumed the attempt in mid-2004.

ACORD's Uganda programme has consistently been at the forefront of innovative research. Two projects which exemplify this are the Panos oral testimony project (Bennett and others 1996) and the COPE project (see Introduction), both of which aimed to understand local experiences of war. The Uganda segment of the gender and conflict research project focused on gender socialisation processes. Specifically, it asked about ethnic and gender

7 'Uganda conflict worse than Iraq', BBC News World Edition 10th November 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3256929.stm accessed 16th November 2004

identity – what do people in northern Uganda understand these identities to be, and how have they been created and sustained? How has conflict impacted on identities, and how have they in turn contributed to the dynamics of the conflict? The research provided an opportunity to encourage community-level analysis and debate on the sort of society Acholi men, women and young people want to see.

Gender and ethnic identity in Acholiland

The erosion of Acholi culture

Acholi society is clan-based. In the immediate pre-colonial and post-colonial periods, land was shared along family and clan lines, and much of it was communally farmed and maintained. People preferred to marry outside their clan, creating links between families from different clans. Marriage was a valued institution because it brought clans together. Each clan had a chief (rwodi mor), who had final say for the clan in initiating wars and taking revenge. The chiefs also represented the clan in the peace negotiations which followed any hostilities between clans. Chiefs regulated social interaction through the 'Acholi code' of behaviour, which prescribed in great detail the responsibilities held by different members of society and sanctions against those who failed to meet these responsibilities. The code regulated relations between husband and wife, and between parent and child, for example.

Respondents believed strongly that the Acholi clan-based culture and Acholi values have declined in the last few decades. One reason they gave for this decline is the suppression of the institution of chiefship by the colonial and post-colonial governments. From the 1930s onwards, the Acholi (like other Ugandan societies) were not allowed to anoint new chiefs. Instead, people were expected to hold allegiance to the Ugandan state and central government. However, in the 1990s, government liberalised its policy towards traditional authorities, and in 2000 the Acholi started to revive the institution by holding anointment ceremonies for chiefs of all the clans. This

was a controversial decision: some people (especially women and young people) felt that it was inappropriate to put the clock back, while others saw the chiefship as an integral part of Acholi identity. The revival of the chiefship was widely viewed as a positive step towards peace. This was partly because the chiefs would be able to carry out conflict resolution within their communities, but also because the anointments would reaffirm Acholi identity after decades of it being devalued, both by the Acholi themselves and by others.

When Acholi elders talked about 'conflict', what they described was Acholi society's relationship with the state from colonial times through to the present day. They described how, after the colonial government abolished the clan chiefship, the post-colonial state marginalised the Acholi still further, by imposing policies which elders considered contrary to Acholi values. Among the impositions they mentioned were the introduction of modern schooling using the English language, Uganda's participation in the Second World War, and - more recently - land privatisation and equal rights legislation. Not only has Acholiland been marginalised by the Ugandan state, they believe, but also by other countries with an interest in the area (including the UK, Sudan, France and USA). By turning a blind eye to the fate of the Acholi, these countries too have played a role in reducing the resilience of the culture.

Acholi values

The primary natural resources of Acholiland were fertile agricultural land, cattle, and bush products to be hunted or gathered. These resources, and household revenue from them, were principally controlled by men, who made all major decisions about family income (including their wives' earnings). Men were responsible for paying taxes and meeting household needs. Public and productive roles were allocated to men and boys, domestic and reproductive roles to women and girls. However, although men enjoyed more advantages than women, women held important decision-making roles

in areas such as the production and control of food crops. Men never had direct access to these crops, and women never sold them for cash, thus ensuring minimum standards of nutrition for the household.

The ideal Acholi man was courageous and strong, providing security and protection to the family. He never gave up, and never accepted defeat. The ideal man was a breadwinner; he was responsible and hard-working, and generous in responding to the material or moral support needs of the community. Being married and begetting legitimate children was part of the masculine ideal, as was being wealthy in livestock and land. Boys were expected to play and excel in games which encouraged strength and resilience, both of which would be required of them in adulthood. Boys were charged with the role of overseeing their sisters, regardless of who was the elder. An ideal boy in Acholi was respectful to elders and chiefs, active, resourceful, energetic and hard-working.

Both women and girls were expected to carry out whatever was agreed upon by the leaders in the society, and never oppose family or clan decisions, whatever the risks to themselves. Elder women had a special function in giving blessings prior to a war. The ideal Acholi woman was humble, gentle and submissive to authority (i.e. her husband, mother-in-law, clan leaders, elderly women), tolerant (especially of her husband) and welcoming to visitors. She accepted the position life bestowed on her, whether as co-wife or as inherited wife. The ideal girl was active, obedient, non-assertive, and respectful to her brothers. She was expected to bring wealth to the family when married, and to bear many children.

For both sexes, respect, humility and acceptance of strict rules were important virtues, especially among the young. Age was an important differentiating factor; young people were not expected to interact with their elders, but to follow the behaviour expected of their peer group. One of the main opportunities for instructing young people in expected behaviour was

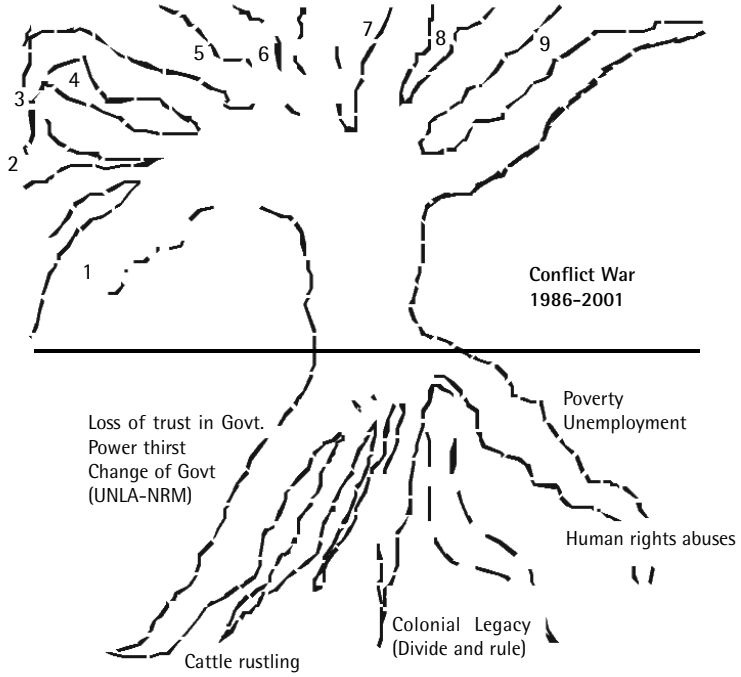
the evening fireside gathering, held after the tasks of the day had been carried out and the evening meal eaten. In these gatherings, questions would be asked and all those with knowledge, whether men or women, would provide answers.

Courtship between young people began with the couple mutually acknowledging their interest in each other. A proposal was expected to come from the boy: a girl should be shy and even find the attention intimidating, unable to look the boy in the eye. Following her acknowledgement, however, a formal path was to be followed which involved informing parents and going through an exhaustive process of enquiry into the background of the intended spouse and their family. Parents' (and especially fathers') approval of the match was critical. The process continued with formalised exchange visits between the families, culminating in the exchange of bridewealth (which took the form in different periods of hoes, beads or cattle), weddings and marriage registration by parish chiefs.

The impact of the war on the Acholi community

During the 18 years of civil war in northern Uganda, individuals have been exposed to a huge variety of abuses including intimidation, torture, harassment, killings, captivity, inhumane displaced living conditions, sexual abuse of different kinds, and duress in captivity or in hiding. The Ugandan state has failed to provide protection or resolve the conflict; indeed, the state (or its agents) has itself committed abuses against civilians with apparent impunity.

Figure 1: roots and impacts of conflict in Acholiland



KEY:-

1. Rape, sex slavery & abductions
2. Killings, torture & looting people's properties, food
3. Cultural loss and breakdown, loss of respect to elders
4. Moral degradation – IDP scenario – migration (exile)
5. Abject poverty – dependence on relief
6. Mutilation, maiming, disability
7. Men's disempowerment; change in gender roles and responsibility; separation
8. Diseases, death, orphans
9. Infrastructure destruction (road, schools, health) – poor & low education and illiteracy

Displacement and its consequences

The main social impact of the war in Acholiland has been displacement within and outside Acholiland. At the time when the research was under way, nearly one million people -- well over half the Acholi population, were believed to reside in displaced camps or 'protected villages'.[8] Displacement has itself resulted in material impoverishment, social dislocation, and the further erosion of the clan system and the values and practices associated with it. These factors combine to create what most Acholis consider to be a massive breakdown of social relationships.

Displacement began in 1996-7. Some people moved voluntarily in search of safer places to live, while others were forced to move by government. Displaced people mainly live in 'protected villages' -- trading centres, camps and villages with nearby military detaches. Civilian populations in camps are not well protected, however: indeed, military personnel in army detaches have committed human rights abuses (including rape and murder) with impunity (Dolan 2000) against these civilian populations. Displacement into 'protected villages' has had destructive consequences. Firstly, it has thrown people together in unfamiliar overcrowding, resulting in increased risks of disease and accidental fire, lack of privacy, idleness due to lack of economic opportunities, and high levels of alcoholism and suicide.[9]

Secondly, it has also reduced access to agricultural production, thereby increasing levels of hunger and malnutrition and increasing people's dependence on relief supplies provided by non-governmental agencies. These supplies are unreliable in both quantity and regularity.[10] Both men and women have become more dependent on casual employment, for example in shops and bars, or on self-employment in petty trade and services such as bicycle-taxiing and commercial sex work. Since this provides new earning

[8] By 2004 this had increased to an estimated 1.4 million
[9] Unpublished data from COPE project
[10] Unpublished data from COPE project

opportunities for women and for young people, the latter have gained a certain degree of economic power. On the other hand, men, elders and cultural leaders have lost theirs because of the loss of land and cattle, and hence lost some of their authority.

Survival strategies

Women often resort to petty trade in order to generate money for family survival. Many have divorced their husbands or moved in with 'responsible' men in cases where the husband was absent or incapable of supporting a family. Likewise, some men set up home with economically active women for reasons of economic security. Elopement is a strategy for some young girls, and sometimes their parents encourage them. Parents have been known to set their daughters up with soldiers, in the mistaken belief that they will be protected and provided for.[11] Young men apply artisanal skills such as woodwork to make goods such as stools and chairs for sale in town. Some young men form armed gangs, terrorising people and robbing shops disguised as rebels. Other young girls and boys join fighting forces to have access to essential goods and services -- food, money, and medical care -- and some parents encourage their children to stay there, since these children become a source of livelihood for the family.

The decline of clan institutions and values

Impoverishment and displacement have contributed to a further erosion of Acholi institutions, most particularly the clan and the family. Chiefs have lost respect, both because of the formal abolition of chiefship, and because of the general loss of Acholi cattle, which provided the 'currency' of inter-clan relations (including peace negotiations). Worship of clan gods is now rare, partly because Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit movement (a precursor to the LRA) imposed the death penalty on abila or worship at shrines. Failure to tend

[11] The use of sexual relations as a survival strategy has encouraged the spread of the HIV virus, as has the presence of military mixed in with civilian populations. Military personnel and their 'wives' are among those least reached by AIDS prevention activities (ACORD, 1999)

shrines has resulted in environmental degradation. Rituals and rules of engagement in warfare have been abandoned; people no longer carry out the cleansing and unifying rituals which were once done before fighting, leading to unjustified, unsanctioned and unregulated violence.

Fireside instruction sessions and traditional children's games have died out, because in the displaced camps people no longer have the time or the space to perform them. The same is true of other cultural and communal activities such as funeral dances, which are nowadays not performed as often as in the past. In the past, people travelled long distances to perform dances: now travel is restricted, and many types of dancing are hardly seen or have died out altogether. People have abandoned the distinctive clothing associated with particular dances, in favour of everyday dress.

Changes in marriage practices

In the perception of respondents, legal marriage according to the Acholi code is now rarer than in the past. This is partly because the cattle and other resources needed to provide bridewealth and fund the marriage ceremony are in short supply. (Indeed, even if a person is able to provide bridewealth, he or she may fear it being looted.) However it is also because civil registration has taken the place of traditional registration, although it has little meaning in people's eyes.

Many practices relating to the formalisation of marriage (such as researching the prospective spouses' family backgrounds, exchange of gifts between the families) are dying out. This is both for economic reasons and because young people are rejecting marriages arranged by their parents. Separation and divorce are believed to be more frequent, especially in displaced camps. Increasing numbers of women remain single: they are able to support themselves and their children because of their access to education and economic opportunities. Girls are marrying at younger ages, and in consequence the number of child-mothers is increasing. Parents say that

girls and boys have abandoned the courtship practices of the past and nowadays do what they like, including picking up partners through casual acquaintance. Girls no longer behave demurely in front of boys. Indeed, girls often initiate relationships or propose marriage themselves.

The sense coming through the testimonies is that people feel the institution of marriage is breaking down. They suggest that this breakdown is related to the erosion of traditional values, as well as to practical restrictions resulting from the war and from displacement. People believe that Acholi society is in the throes of moral degeneration. They point to the rapid increase in the prevalence of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.[12] Forms of economic support based on sexual relationships (such as 'sugar daddies' and 'sugar mummies') also fuel this belief.

Relations between men and women

At first sight it appears that the previous balance between male and female interests at the level of the household and the clan has been overturned. The war has created new responsibilities for women, and many have become breadwinners and household heads. This economic empowerment has led to women taking on stronger decision-making roles within the household, and they are no longer inclined to accept their previous subordinate status. Moreover, women have become more assertive and more visibly active in public life (including politics).

Men, on the other hand, have been grossly disempowered by the war. The war has restricted access to the factors of production which men previously controlled -- land and cattle – and which were the source of their wealth and power. They have few other skills or resources with which they can re-establish themselves. Life in camps reduces the control and authority men

[12] at a time when HIV infection was being brought under control in the rest of Uganda

once had over their children and wives. Because many families have broken up, children are often in the care of women alone, and fathers no longer act as authority figures and educators as they did in the past. Moreover, both sides in the war associate men with wealth and power, and this encourages them to characterise men as 'the enemy'. Men are therefore vulnerable to attack and imprisonment by both army and rebels.

The direct and indirect effects of the war, then, include a significant change in gender roles and norms, in which women appear to have gained and men to have lost. However, two qualifications are necessary. Firstly, while the war has provided new opportunities for many women, for others it has brought personal anguish and disablement. Many women have suffered rape, torture and mutilation, and the loss of self-worth which follows. This is especially difficult to cope with in the case of women who have been disabled by these attacks, since their husbands often show little sympathy for their disability.[13]

Secondly, the fact that everyday behaviour has changed does not necessarily mean that attitudes and values have changed. Indeed, the changes in gender roles described by respondents seem to indicate a reinforcement of gender ideologies, rather than fundamental shifts. For example a number of respondents (mostly older men) complained that new Ugandan laws establishing the rights of women and children are contrary to the Acholi code. For both men and women, the ideals of the Acholi cultural code do not seem to have changed as a result of war, but have simply become harder to put into practice.

[13] This was demonstrated by the photographic exhibition made by People's Voice for Peace at the Gulu conference in 1999. In addition, a group of war-disabled women supported by PVP (Nyere Tan, or 'You laugh at disability but it could be you') devised a play depicting the problems faced by disabled women which they performed outside churches with the aim of impressing their message on Acholi men (El-Bushra, J. and C. Dolan (2002) 'Don't touch, just listen! Popular performance from Uganda' in Review of African Political Economy 29).

Relations between generations

As has become widely known, the Lord's Resistance Army has abducted several thousand children since it began its operations, of which a large proportion has returned, either voluntarily through escaping, or as a result of assisted return programmes. The abduction of children has become a major focus of humanitarian and peace-building efforts, for two main reasons. On the one hand, most of the abducted children have suffered appalling abuses, including physical and sexual violence, enforced marriage, and enforced acts of violence against other Acholi, including against other abducted children. On the other hand, those children who have been forced to commit crimes against other Acholis (such as stealing or physical attacks) may be reluctant to return, for fear of reprisals, and may therefore feel they have no choice but to continue fighting. One of the main reasons for reviving the institution of the chiefship was to attract abductees back. The thinking was that properly anointed chiefs would be able to perform reconciliation rituals, thus guaranteeing a relatively smooth reintegration process for ex-combatants, especially those that had been taken into the LRA against their will.

However, the intense media focus on abducted children sometimes obscures the difficulties faced by the rest of the youth population of Acholiland. This group has suffered from years of poverty, fear of abduction, landmine accidents, and neglect from state service providers. Education facilities in northern Uganda – especially post-primary facilities – are limited because of displacement into camps and because insecurity leads to frequent school closures.[14] A study of young people's problems carried out by ACORD Uganda in 2000 found that lack of access to economically productive resources (in the case of camps, land, and in towns, access to finance) was a problem for all those questioned, resulting in inadequate incomes, poor nutrition and poor clothing. Almost half those covered in the survey were living with

14 Unpublished data from COPE research

widowed parents, and many had parents, grandparents and younger siblings dependent on them. Some girls had children of their own. Most of those surveyed had dropped out of primary school, either through lack of finance or, in the case of girls, because of underage pregnancy.

With restricted facilities for schooling, and an economy which does not have the capacity to absorb large numbers of landless and unskilled youth, many grow up with inadequate skills and limited hopes for the future. They are discriminated against in employment and when seeking access to resources such as loans or restocking projects. They are vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous adult men and women for sexual gratification and may be encouraged into thieving, drug abuse and prostitution.

Most of the respondents in the present study – both younger and older people - believe that relations between parents and children, and between older and younger generations, have deteriorated. In the opinion of the younger respondents, the Acholi value system in the past offered support to children and youth, whereas nowadays parents have no time for their children. Parents, on the other hand, see their children as rebellious and violent, out of control, and unwilling to listen. Some young men have access to guns, and use them.

Moreover, the mechanisms and structures with which parents used to educate children are also breaking down. Parents have less opportunity to inculcate Acholi values in their children through informal education; they have less free time, as a result of the need to work for an income, and families are more likely to be split up. In the overcrowded situation of displaced camps, children become aware of adult behaviour at a young age, because of the lack of privacy. Being thrown together in proximity with strangers means that young people can easily come into contact with corrupting influences. A respondent quoted an Acholi proverb to describe how camp life corrupts children: *Bedo inget bye oweko kom pura kwa*,

'Staying near the anthill turned the antelope brown' (meaning bad company can corrupt good behaviour).

Ethnic and gender norms as contributory factors in the dynamics of conflict

Causes of the northern Uganda conflict are complex. Some of the factors involved are external to the Acholi people. For example, the governments of Sudan and Uganda for a long time failed to control their proxy militia. Northern Uganda suffers from neglect by central government, which has been unwilling to seek an end to the conflict, and has also failed to invest in infrastructure and services (O'Brien, 1998). Testimonies also suggest that internal factors have contributed to the perpetuation of the war. For example the LRA has abducted Acholi children and inducted them into the militia. Some respondents believe that Acholi cultural disunity is a contributory factor. By this they mean that if the chiefs implemented the Acholi code, the LRA would return and give themselves up under the amnesty law, without fearing revenge for the atrocities they have committed.

It is difficult to identify with certainty what factors caused the war, or what has enabled it to carry on for almost 20 years. It is even more difficult to see clearly how gender differences or gender identities have had an impact. Certainly the testimonies do not throw light directly on this issue. However, some general conclusions can be drawn, based on the analysis of the testimonies and the supporting material. What follows is the analysis which the Uganda research team arrived at through discussion of the evidence.[15]

[15] This analysis, though derived from testimonies and focus group discussions, bears out conclusions already reached by the COPE project, summarised in Dolan, C. (2002) 'Collapsing masculinities and weak states - a case study of Northern Uganda' in F. Cleaver (ed) Masculinities matter! Men, gender and development. London, New York, Zed Books.

How gender identity fuels the war...

The clan system was the main mechanism in the past for regulating social tension within Acholi society. It was able to do this because of the negotiating power of the clan leaders, a power which they held through consensus and because people respected clan institutions. This respect has been eroded, largely as a result of colonial and post-colonial political processes. The loss of respect for the chiefship has weakened internal mechanisms for conflict resolution, and has resulted in repeated failure to right internal wrongs. The consequence is that people no longer feel able to depend on each other or on their community for support. People continue to believe in Acholi cultural values, including the values attached to manhood and womanhood. However, in practical terms they are unable to live up to these values.

The notion of the ideal man as a strong fighter and protector, never defeated and never giving up, a provider and controller, a figure of authority and leadership, is impossible to realise in the present circumstances. The current conflict disempowers men as breadwinners and providers. In the internally displaced camps, where men have few opportunities for obtaining an income, many are unable to provide for and protect the family, while some have lost the power to exercise authority, leadership, or control over resources (including wives and children). Men are no longer in a position to pay bridewealth, because of the absence of cattle, and this restricts their opportunities to marry and have children -- both key components of the Acholi ideal. As a result many men now join the army so that they can have access to unattached women or earn money to pay dowry.

There are similar frustrations for women. Unable to depend on their families or their husbands to provide for them or their children, they are obliged to adopt livelihoods which take them away from Acholi ideals of submissive womanhood. In distancing themselves from the ideal, they cut themselves

off even more from those sources of support. Women have recently begun to join armed forces (both army and rebel), sometimes for economic reasons but often also because of a desire for revenge at the abuses they have suffered by the other side.

Young people, oppressed by the lack of opportunity and lack of hope, have grown up in a permanently militarised environment. It is hardly surprising that some are attracted to join the military (army or LRA). Ideals of masculinity and femininity no longer play a role in children's education, leading to poor relations between parents and children and to children being seen as unruly delinquents.

The resultant frustrations may be channelled into aggressivity – by both men and women, young and old - in various highly destructive forms, including alcoholism, suicide, domestic violence, abandonment of spouse and children, and resort to multiple sexual relationships, all of which contribute to further family breakdown and further violent reactions.

The various processes of social and cultural upheaval described above have eroded Acholi ethnic identity, which is itself composed of a range of masculine and feminine identities. Aggressive behaviour, resort to violence and self-harm, and militarisation represent dominant strategies for reclaiming and restoring a vision of ethnic and gender identity which has been lost. In this way, ethnic and gender identity plays a role in perpetuating the vicious cycle of conflict.

...and how it can point to new directions

However, other strategies are also possible, and the testimonies show how keen people are to find pathways to peace. Many of these pathways involve going back to the old values of solidarity and mutual support, honesty and altruism, respect for others and for the environment. Education is seen as a

key tool for peace-building – education which provides Acholi youth with knowledge of their own culture, and at the same time offers them the skills needed to contribute to national life. Other respondents considered dialogue to be critical, and dialogue which acknowledges the contribution of both men and women. As one woman respondent put it,

'What I can say is that the Acholi should sit down and get a solution to the war. In the past women were not involved in such a meeting. Now we too can be invited when the elders come up with some ideas and suggestions...What we want is peace to return, so that we can develop. War has brought poverty and disorganised all the plans we had to develop our home. Living like this does not yield anything good at all.'

Conclusions

The testimonies and focus group discussions paint an alarming picture of everyday violence, forming the context in which today's children are growing up. While the greatest concern may be reserved for the children born in the 'bush' battlefields, all children in northern Uganda are growing up in deprivation, with blighted hopes for the future. Formal end to the war will not be sufficient on its own to put an end to this. Real peace will come only when all the human, social and environmental resources of Acholiland can be fully put to use in a context free from fear and exploitation. The Government of Uganda and other interested parties must invest in strategies which will make this peace a reality.

The research illustrates the controversial nature of rights issues in the current context. Women's equality and children's rights, for example, are poorly understood by the general population Older men are especially likely to see the rights agenda as being at best an example of interference by an uncomprehending international community, and at worst a deliberate attempt by the mainstream Ugandan political culture to undermine the

fabric and cohesion of Acholi society. The research suggests the need for a widespread discussion about women's rights. Likewise, the testimonies provide evidence that youth are consistently marginalised by discriminatory practices. This discrimination should be discouraged, for example by enhancing the active involvement of youth in peace and other initiatives.

The research confirmed that there is a need for a platform for discussion on the social and cultural change which is currently taking place. People feel strongly that Acholi culture is suffering from moral degeneration, and that there is an urgent need to restore it. This desire is, to various extents, shared by both men and women, old and young. However, it is clearly unrealistic to expect to turn back the clock to an idealised past. The potential for melding the best elements of the past and the present is something which needs to be negotiated at family and community level.

SUDAN

The historical background to the war in the Sudan

The Sudan has been subjected to devastating civil war for most of the last 50 years. Factors contributing to it at various times have included the artificiality of colonial boundaries, which shackled together in one state a number of huge and culturally diverse regions; conflict over natural resources (most particularly oil and water) and territory; issues of governance in a state whose structure has been built on the exclusion of peripheral and marginal groups; a socio-political structure in which ethnocentrism and elitism figure highly, and the interference of regional and global powers, anxious to retain access to the Sudan's strategic location and critical cultural alliances. These factors have aggravated a religious and cultural dimension which overlays existing tensions and which has come increasingly to the fore since the present government took power in 1986.

The first phase of the war, beginning in 1955 (one year before Independence in 1956) ended with the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972. A relatively peaceful and stable period of rehabilitation and development in the south followed. In 1983, the then President Numeiri divided the south into three separate states and declared *sharia* law in the Sudan, ushering in the resumption of the war. This second phase was more brutal and bitter than the first, and has entrenched pre-existing divisions not only between north and south but also between different factions within the south and within the north. After numerous failed peace initiatives, a series of protocols covering different aspects of a settlement were agreed upon between 2003 and 2004. At the time of writing this report a concluding peace agreement remained outstanding.

No accurate figures exist for the number of people to have died as a result of war and starvation in the Sudan, but it is widely assumed to be not less than two million, the majority being southerners. The situation of insecurity has undermined the subsistence economy, based on agriculture and livestock, on which most southerners depended, and there has been immense destruction and plundering of infrastructure and natural resources. This was aggravated by outbreaks of famine in Bahr el Jebel state in 1988 and Bahr el Ghazal state in 1998. A further major result of the conflict has been massive displacement, from south to north (Khartoum and other cities), to secured towns within the south, or to neighbouring countries. The war demonstrates the historical marginalisation of the south, politically and economically. This marginalisation has also been intensified by the war, since it has worsened the already unequal distribution of resources between north and south, and undermined what little efforts have been made to invest in the development of the south.

Although the north-south axis of the conflict has consistently been the most destructive one during almost 50 years of war, it is also a reflection of wider issues of governance. Political tensions, sometimes erupting into armed

conflict, also exist in the west, east and centre of the country. The growth of a national opposition movement, centred mainly on the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) reflects these long-standing tensions. One manifestation of the increasing fragmentation of the state is the crisis in Darfur, which broke out dramatically in mid-2004.

Juba, capital of Bahr el Jebel State, is the main administrative centre of the government-held southern Sudan, and as such plays host to state governments from other southern states as well as being the headquarters of the Co-ordinating Council for the Southern Sudan. Being a centre for government troops, it houses soldiers from the north deployed into Juba and its outskirts. For several decades it has received internally displaced persons (IDPs) in mass exoduses from other parts of the southern region, as well as refugees from neighbouring countries. It is a cosmopolitan town, with more than forty ethnic groups, subsumed under the major groupings of Nilo-Hamites, Nilotics and Bantus, although the Bari make up the majority of the population.

ACORD has worked in Juba since the inception of the organisation in 1974. In carrying out this study, the programme aimed to improve its understanding of the livelihoods and survival strategies of conflict-affected groups in Bahr el Jebel State, and of the impact of these on gender roles and relations. It focused particularly on displacement, viewed from the point of view both of the displaced and of their hosts and those in positions of responsibility for them. For this reason the study area was extended to those settlements in Khartoum to which people from Bahr el Jebel had migrated, in order to provide points of comparison.

Impact of conflict on Juba and the surrounding area

At present, vast areas of fertile arable and grazing land, suitable for food production, are underutilised because of insecurity. Farmers cultivate

available land repeatedly, leading to low productivity. More fertile land is often the subject of tenure disputes, especially between indigenous and incoming ethnic groups. Cross-border barter trade between communities in the region used to be a great source of income to Juba citizens: this is no longer possible as most communities have been cut off from their traditional production areas, which have now become battle zones, littered with landmines and anti-personnel mines in addition to the ever-present danger of unruly combatants. All these factors have rendered communities reliant on the scarce resources around Juba town, and this has further resulted in the depletion of certain species of wild animals and trees.

Though there is no direct armed conflict within Juba itself, insecurity in the surrounding countryside has had a considerable impact on the town. Juba is the only secure town within Bahr el Jebel state, making it a permanent reception area for displaced persons. Because large numbers have been displaced into Juba, the town has become overcrowded, creating problems of poor sanitation and poor environmental health, and leading humanitarian agencies to concentrate on relief activities. The government's policy of keeping internally displaced people in camps threatens their economic survival and leaves them at the mercy of the informal sector.

Increased population numbers generate acute shortages of basic commodities, as well as high prices. Traders often have to airlift market commodities from Khartoum, making them scarce and expensive. Traders are mostly northern merchants who set costs of food randomly, without a standardised price. The civil service is the main employer, yet salaries are paid irregularly. Both in Juba and in Khartoum, but especially in Khartoum, the need for cash is acute, and, for families displaced from rural areas, an unaccustomed constraint. Irregular salary payments increases violence between wives and husbands as often the wives do not believe the husbands' claims of salary delays or loan deductions.

Displacement and impoverishment have given rise to a number of social problems, including family disintegration and separation, an increase in single-headed households (especially female-headed), increasing numbers of orphans, polarisation between displaced and host communities, and reduced opportunities for education, training and jobs for young people, many of whom join the army or take refuge in other countries as a result. Overcrowding and poverty contribute to an increase in the spread of HIV. Many men and youth join the army (women have also been trained in popular defence), both for protection and as a career, since it is one of the few opportunities for employment. Availability of small arms contributes to increasing violence, commonly in the form of violent robbery, rape and forced marriage. Those who have access to guns can take the law into their own hands, using weapons as a source of power with which to intimidate people.

Politically, a major change has been that poverty and political pressure have reduced the traditional role of the chief, who in the past was supposed to mobilise labour and maintain contacts through generosity and hospitality. The politicisation of traditional leadership is reflected in the appointment of chiefs or sultans by government, whereas they were previously chosen by their respective communities. Sultans can now be easily exploited by government as channels for the dissemination of its policies. This is a major and long-term change which is already leading to the sultans loosing respect and the capacity to represent their people, and which may ultimately lead to traditional leadership loosing its momentum and continuity.

Impacts on individual men and women

The war in the Sudan has had serious impacts on both men and women as individuals, ranging from loss of life and property, separation of families, physical assault, rape, imprisonment, detention, disability, hunger and poor health. Respondents in both Juba and Khartoum almost all referred to some

sort of family separation and disintegration, most commonly the result of death, displacement, or divorce. People died directly by the gun, others because of hunger and some as a result of lack of health care facilities.

The war has demoralised those who have pursued a vision of developing and improving their livelihoods. In general, the main economic survival strategy is small-scale income-generating activities like brewing alcohol, petty trade, and collecting and selling firewood and charcoal. Some people, especially women who have acquired skills training, have engaged in tailoring, carpentry, brick-laying and house-painting in order to generate income for their families. The depressed state of the Juba economy restricts people's economic horizons to bare survival.

Forced marriages have recently begun to appear. Some girls accept such marriages in order to protect their families, with or without their families' consent, because of poverty. Domestic violence in the form of beating, killing, harassment, psychological stress and suicide has become a common problem.[16] Men's position as heads of households, acquired through the payment of bride-wealth, is considered to confer on them the right to control the labour and productivity of women and children. Soldiers have been known to kill their wives if they return from the front line and find they have taken up with another man: some have killed both the wife and the new partner, while others killed the wives and themselves, leaving their children orphans.

It has become common for relationships to be contracted under duress. For men, especially young men, joining the army is an economic survival measure. Being equipped with guns, many armed men feel able to take the law into their own hands, and this includes taking young girls by force. A woman in Juba observed that:

16 Research carried out by ACORD in preparation for a study of violence against women indicates that 28% of cases of domestic violence cases coming before the courts involved men beating their wives, often under the influence of alcohol.

'There are a lot of cases where men go with young girls because they have money. They deceive the girls and because the girls are poor due to this present situation, they give in, thinking that the men will marry them and they will have a good life. In most cases when the girls get pregnant the men reject them... All these things contribute to difficulties in delivery and poor up-bringing of children. In reality if you are a girl you should wait until you reach the right age for marriage before you take a husband. Some girls give in to men at an early stage because of threats by soldiers: "if you refuse me I will finish you off". Therefore you either submit or wait and take the consequences later.'

Poverty and the need for protection and security force people – especially women and girls – into survival strategies which increase their exposure to STDs and HIV/AIDS. The involvement of women and young girls in small-scale businesses and other income-generating activities exposes them to sexual exploitation by clients. The same is true for young girls doing domestic work, especially those working in single households. Deploying sexuality as a survival tactic has been evidenced in several testimonies. As well as any impacts this may have on individuals, it also has long-term social consequences, which include the breakdown of families and the spread of diseases. Separation and loss of partners has encouraged women to remarry, sometimes several times, and often as a matter of economic security. A woman who had been married 6 times and who was HIV positive described her situation with a proverb: *'Nan a yutu nagwon a yikakindya mokot i lopototo loki - I have stepped on ashes without knowing that there was fire beneath'*. Other ways in which sexuality can be used for survival include sex work (for women), and polygamy (for men).

Testimonies collected in Khartoum confirmed that in the north, young southerners also stay home for fear of being picked up and detained, and forcibly recruited into the army. Some men join militias or the army through fear, in order to protect themselves and their families. A Juba schoolboy,

already the head of a family composed of his siblings, explained that he was torn between providing for them (by joining the army, which would probably send him elsewhere) on the one hand, and staying at home to protect them on the other.

Widespread insecurity and violence have cut down the incidence of social gatherings and the time spent on them. People attend only those outdoor activities which are within reach of their homes, or travel together in order to minimise physical assault, especially to women.

Many people suffer psychological trauma, and the more serious incidences have resulted in mental disorder. Many people have turned to religion to help them, while others find their faith shaken. Respondents say they feel values have changed; in particular, they feel that children no longer behave respectfully towards their elders, and no longer take their schooling seriously. They tend to attribute this to the mixing of different cultures because of displacement, and the consequent loss of tradition. They also see the violence of their surroundings as encouraging cynicism and detachment among the youth. However, it is also the case that many displaced communities have benefited from this mixing of different cultures. For example, in displaced communities in Khartoum, different tribes from other parts of Sudan (including those of Arab origin) co-exist, with tribal leaders learning from each other and exchanging models of conflict resolution acquired from back home.

Impact of the war on gender relations

Conflict has affected the gender roles of all (men, women, elders, youth and children). In particular, productive roles within the household have changed, with women assuming what were once typical men's roles as well as their own. Men, on the other hand, are losing their roles since they have lost access to the resources (land and animals) which enabled them to fulfil these roles. As a woman in Juba explained:

'In the past there was a clear line between the roles played by a man and a woman. For instance, men in the countryside were responsible for digging, women used to fetch water and cook. They also collected the produce and stored it, while men built houses, brought meat into the house, paid school fees for the children, provided all other things that a woman could not afford. Men in towns provided feeding money, bought clothes for both wife and children...Today women are becoming more responsible. Living is expensive, men alone cannot afford managing a family especially with children and dependants. Some men resort to drinking too much beer, leaving the entire responsibility of the family to women. As such you get women doing any sort of work to help them manage the family. Women are almost competing with men. This war is an advantage to women in some ways because they have learnt a lot about business.'

Displacement has contributed to changes in the gendered division of labour. On the one hand, the move to cash economies means that all household labour must be directed towards generating an income as far as possible. On the other hand, displacement into towns provides women with opportunities for acquiring new skills through exposure and interaction. As a Khartoum respondent expressed it: *'This is one benefit of war, if wars have benefits. All family members have to work, both women and men. We cannot maintain the division of labour because there is no room for that.'* This change in economic roles has to some extent brought about changes in relationships between husbands and wives, with many women making decisions independently about their own earnings. However, in some areas women still have no right to sell their assets without the consent of their menfolk, and in these cases women hand their earnings to men, who control them without being accountable.

Increased economic and productive roles for women have had limited impact on prevailing ideologies, and indeed seem to strengthen, rather than

challenge them. For example, in the following quotation, a woman respondent explains women's role in maintaining stability in the home, even in the face of alcoholism and violence:

'Violence usually comes because women expect feeding money from their husbands, but salaries are usually delayed, and since there is nothing to give to their wives, men decide to leave their houses to go and drink. They come home very late at night. So as a wife you run and borrow wheat flour and cooking oil, you make buns, you sell them and with the profit you buy greens and flour and cook food...When he sees a tray of food coming before him, he will forget anything bad which he might have planned to do. If you see him arrive and you beat the kids, quarrel, and ask "How much up-keep money do you give to feed the family?" you are provoking the situation. That is why women are the walls of the house and men are the roofs. If women understand all this, families will stay well.'

Polarisation by age has also increased as a result of the same factors which have given rise to changes in gender roles. The influence of elders is decreasing; youth are assuming new roles and their practices have been greatly influenced by the militarisation process. Traditionally people used to respect elders, especially male elders, but now nobody respects them (particularly the youth). Children are also assuming the roles of heads of households in some cases, often becoming responsible at an early age for their sisters and brothers, with little support from the community or from the state. Much of the burden of the war falls on the shoulders of women and youth, while adult men, many of whom have retreated into passivity, still retain their de jure status as decision-makers as in the past.

Gender identity and its contribution to conflict

Respondents analysed ethnic and gender identity as being a potential contributor to conflict, both at the individual and at the societal level. They argued that the war had been perpetuated by politicians of both sides, through greed and through their unwillingness to represent their people's hopes for peace. A woman in Juba explained:

> *'Men on both sides say this conflict will not stop because of religion. Everybody wants to be the leader, but if they agreed to the other's opinion peace would prevail in the Sudan. We as women talked a lot about this and we said that everyone has a right to worship in his own religion, either Islam or Christianity…Nobody should force a person, we say we should agree on this issue of peace.'*

Poverty distorts gender identity, and among the displaced populations of Juba and Khartoum poverty favours a type of masculine identity in which frustration and deprivation can easily spill over into violence. The most pressing issue for IDPs in both Juba and Khartoum is the cash economy. Everything is to be bought from the market, and there are new forms of expenditure required such as rent, school fees and medicines. Whereas in their homeland people used to grow their own food, now, cut off from the means of subsistence, they are dependent on insecure self-employment and on the support of outsiders. In the case of the non-displaced population of Juba, salaried work and self-employment are both highly unreliable. Men once had access to and controlled land, animals, jobs – the economic resources which formed the source of their position and power. But now these resources are no longer available. Men are expected to fulfil the role of provider and protector of the household, but their inability to meet these expectations can result in violence as a means of maintaining control and power. Moreover, violence fuelled by access to weapons is a tool for acquiring economic goods, which young men in particular increasingly resort to, in the absence of alternative sources of income.

The situation described by the Juba and Khartoum testimonies is one in which violence perpetuates itself. The violence of the war is mirrored by the violence of interpersonal relationships at the local level. Cycles of violence are fuelled by humiliation, frustration, and the denial of rights, dignity and voice, and by poverty, loss of livelihoods, the failure of governance, political manipulation, and the breakdown of social structures. In the context of a displaced, dispossessed and disenfranchised community, alternative and destructive forms of masculinity and femininity can emerge, in which aggressiveness and revenge come to the fore, perpetuated over generations.

However, more affirming approaches can also be seen, sand can encourage actions which lead away from conflict. Such values include, for example, respect, honour, dignity and a search for collective rather than individual power. It should be recognised that women often uphold these values, and that by doing so they contribute to conflict transformation and reconciliation. While they are largely excluded from high level negotiations and the decision-making process, their enhanced involvement could lead to peace.

Conclusions

War has not led to fundamental change in gender relations in Juba. Patriarchal relations are still dominant, though rearranged and adapted. However, the war has provided space in which a redefinition of social relations is possible.

Many agencies working in Juba have previously adopted 'welfarist' gender strategies, in which women have been assumed to be primarily care-givers. Our research indicates that interventions need to take account of the new gender roles assumed by men and women in this context. Assistance providers should capitalise on the new-found strengths that some women have acquired in terms of rights awareness, familiarity with markets, business

management and skill acquisition. Development partners and government can together contribute to the design of gender guidelines for the state, and investigate the role of state and other institutions in shaping attitudes towards women's rights and political participation.

Displacement is a complex process, and IDPs are not a homogenous category. Displaced communities have their own profiles, each having come from a particular environment. Each has experienced different pressures during their movement, retains particular links with the home areas, and develops different survival strategies in the new situation. This is seen clearly in the different profiles of Juba and Khartoum displaced communities, each of which requires a different intervention strategy.

The need for peace-building exists at all levels, national, local and international: in Juba, there are potential conflicts within the town which are, directly or indirectly, linked to the national-level civil war. Whether the national peace agreement is signed or not, these local tensions will continue to threaten stability, unless conflict can be transformed into co-operation. Agencies which have a presence at different levels should focus sharper attention on promoting conditions conducive to peace, in alliance with other partners and in support of those who would otherwise be without a voice, especially the displaced and other, such as people with HIV/AIDS, who have been left most vulnerable by the war.

SOMALIA

The historical background to the conflict in Somalia

President Siad Bare, who came to power in a coup in 1969, was deposed in 1991. His rule had been characterised initially by social and economic progress, and later by repression and nepotism. The three years' war with Ethiopia over the disputed territory of Ogaden, a war which ended in defeat for Somalia in 1979, heralded the beginning of revolution against Siad Bare's regime. To suppress growing insurgency, Bare employed divide and rule tactics, creating hostilities and mistrust between the different Somali clans. Brutal security organs, corruption in high echelons of government, declining foreign aid and diplomatic isolation devastated the country's economy and weakened Bare's grip on power.

Civil war started in 1988 in the north-west, which declared independence as Somaliland in 1991. In the rest of the country, unrest grew until in 1990 a group of businessmen, religious leaders and former politicians in Mogadishu signed a manifesto calling for dialogue and political reform. The government responded by arresting signatories of the manifesto, which triggered armed confrontation by the United Somali Congress (USC). Heavy fighting in Mogadishu resulted, in early 1991, in the overthrow of Bare's government, and some months later in his departure from the country. However, differences then emerged within the USC, a grouping based on the Hawiye clan which then divided along lines of two sub-clans, the Habar Gidir and the Abgaal. Fighting between the two sub-clans broke out in November1991. This split is widely understood to have triggered further splits in other clan units, splintering the fragile structure of clan relationships throughout the whole clan system.

At the national level for Somalia, a succession of peace initiatives, brokered by the international community, failed to break the deadlock of clan

politics. However, the Arte conference of August 2000 led to the establishment of Somalia's Transitional National Government (TNG), which obtained recognition by European Union and Arab countries, and which maintained a hold, albeit tenuous, on security. The TNG was replaced by a national parliament in August 2004. In the fourteen years of war, Somalia has been without an effective or uncontested government. The Somali people and their social institutions have maintained some level of stability during this period, often using informal mechanisms such as informal money transfer arrangements based entirely on trust. This has been a remarkable achievement, even though at the same time Somalia has also been targeted by the international community accused of sheltering 'international terrorists'.

ACORD had been working in the Lower Shabelle since 1983. Like many development agencies working in Somalia, it had addressed women's need for improved incomes but had failed to capitalise on the wider changes which resulted from the war. Its aim in participating in the research was to deepen its understanding of gender roles and patterns of discrimination in the Lower Shabelle region, looking particularly at how these have changed as a result of war and at how the changes have impacted on different groups. In carrying out a joint analysis with the community, ACORD also aimed to contribute towards local initiatives to end the war. While at the national level numerous efforts have been made to bring warlords to the negotiating table, the wider community has remained divorced from the peace process. This is to be contrasted to Somaliland, where local populations have taken the lead in peace-building and where a significant level of regional administration and law and order has been achieved. ACORD believed that national level initiatives must move hand in hand with local efforts if genuine peace is to be achieved in Somalia.

The impact of the war on the Lower Shabelle region

The Lower Shabelle Region, being bounded by Somalia's two major rivers, the Juba and the Shabelle, has a varied environment which supports both agriculture and transhumance pastoralism and combinations of these. It is home to a variety of clans from the Digil and Mirifle and Rahanweyn groupings, who are described as 'minority clans', having little political power in national terms. Immigrants from the dominant northern clans such as the Isaaq and the Darood settled here during the 1970s in response to a series of droughts in the northern and central regions of Somalia. These groups have since tended to occupy prime agricultural land and control administrative institutions.

After the fall of Mogadishu in early 1991, fighting between the USC (Hawiye) and the Somali Patriotic Movement (Darood) spread into the Lower Shabelle and Juba regions. These changed hands more than once, with the SPM occupying Brava and Sablaale districts for nine months during 1991-2 before they were expelled completely from the country. Between 1992 and the establishment of the TNG in 2000, the area has been largely in the hands of the Habar Gidir sub-clan of the Hawiye clan, and its leaders Mohammed and Hussein Aideed. In 1992 at the height of the fighting, Somalia experienced a devastating drought that, together with the impacts of the war, resulted in widespread famine and the death of thousands of people, attracting the ill-fated US and United Nations intervention (Operation Restore Hope). Sablaale, at the furthest point on the relief distribution route from Mogidishu, was one of the last places to receive relief support. Insecurity continued throughout the Lower Shabelle Region from 1991 up to the research period in 2000, as local conflicts erupted sporadically in response to national political developments.

The major impact of the war in economic terms has been the destruction of the agricultural and pastoralist resource base. The government-run irrigated

agricultural schemes of the Lower Shabelle and Lower Juba areas were previously the mainstay of the local economy, alongside extensive rain-fed agriculture. However, these schemes stopped working because the government agency which managed them stopped functioning, with the result that the facilities were not maintained and machinery was looted. When people were displaced out of the area, they left substantial acreages of land fallow. Many of those who stayed were unwilling to invest in farming, for fear of looting, or decided to reduce acreage to subsistence proportions. In terms of the pastoral economy, insecurity severely restricted animal mobility. This led to a reduction in the numbers of livestock being produced and marketed. Both agricultural and pastoral economies have suffered from the loss of labour as young men have been killed, emigrated or joined militias. Lack of effective government has reduced controls over environmental resources, leading to increased sand-dune encroachment and to unregulated charcoal-making.

Institutions offering basic essential services such as health, education and water supply, collapsed when their buildings were looted, and those who worked in these services escaped for personal safety. Communicable diseases such as TB increased, encouraged in part by poor nutrition as households faced a food deficiency.

In common with most of the rest of Somalia, the Lower Shabelle region has become a highly militarised society, in which young men have few employment opportunities other than carrying arms for the clan militias and in which administrative decisions are implemented under threat of force. During the transitional period, the existence of a *de facto* administration helped to ensure basic security, but was constantly under challenge from other militias.

The impact on individual men and women

Interviewees divided the period of conflict into two phases. The first was the first two years (1991-1992) of severe Darood/Hawiye clan confrontation, characterised by displacement, indiscriminate killings of people mostly due to their clan identity, wanton looting of property and widespread sexual abuse of women. In the second phase clan fighting gave way to factional politics. Though levels of violence were significantly reduced in this second phase, sporadic clashes still often occurred.

In the first period, hundreds of thousands of people were displaced and fled to their clan homelands, to refugee camps in neighbouring countries, or to urban environments where casual work and support from kin was available. As a result of these movements, families were separated and lost contact. Many people lost assets and wealth through looting by clan-based militias. In many cases, men fled or were killed, leaving responsibility for the family's survival to their women, who were often obliged to undertake unfamiliar activities such as market trading or casual agricultural labour. Men and women were forced to gather wild fruits to survive after their livestock, often their only means of survival, were looted.

During attacks on villages, men often fled, leaving women and children behind. Although people believe that in traditional Somali warfare women and children were spared from violence, in the current conflict these values have commonly been violated. Women of all ages have been subjected to violent rape, looting and assault. Few narrators were willing to admit directly that they had been raped; interviewers believed they concealed their experiences by describing them as happening to others, due to the stigma they suffered. Incidences of women being raped because of their clan identity became common, and sexual abuse of a rival clan's women was used as a humiliation. In a traditional Somali setting, rape of a girl could trigger inter-clan conflict if the offending party did not contain the situation fast

enough. But during the current conflict it became an act of revenge, with rival militias trying to outdo each other whenever one of them gained control of a region. Rape within the clan also took place, yet victims continued to suffer silently as little effort was made, either by the local or by the international community, to address the issue.

The nature of their work puts many women at risk of rape. In their struggle to survive, most poor women go out into the bush daily to collect firewood, cut grass for sale, or fetch water, often miles away from the homesteads. But such work increases the risk of rape, and women fall easy prey to militias who lie in wait for them in the bush. Most are unable to do without this work, since their children's lives depend on the income they obtain.

Rape victims suffer great stigma and psychological stress, and often it limits their chances of marriage. It is commonly said nowadays that where people are taking each others' lives, rape is insignificant, a petty offence which can be solved by small fines. Virgin girls who had undergone female genital mutilation and who were raped during the war were taken to midwives to be re-infibulated, to reduce the chances of rejection by their male counterparts.

The conflict has rendered a large number of women widows, and many children orphans, after thousands of men were killed. Traditionally their husband's brothers or close kin were expected to take care of orphaned children and inherit widows, but the war has dismantled this practice and has denied them this traditional community support. Instead widows are struggling without resources to support their children in increasing vulnerability.

Widows and separated women experienced great emotional suffering. For widows, having children limits their prospects for remarrying, as men, they claim, avoid taking on the burden of their children. Separated women are at liberty to seek divorce when their husbands abandon them; however, it is

generally not encouraged by the community except for younger women. This contrasts with the ease with which men have fled to neighbouring countries and married other women, while their wives continue to suffer an isolated life back home. Widows or separated women who gave testimonies talked of feelings of isolation, loss of memory and loss of understanding as some of the effects of the war on them.

The collapse of the state and the subsequent inter-clan war had a dramatic impact on men, who found it difficult to adjust to the changes caused by the war. But unlike women and children, who in most cases are portrayed as victims of conflict, the impact of the conflict on men has received little attention. Besides wanton killing in clan cleansing and widespread looting of property, the collapse of the state rendered many of them jobless. Selective clan displacement denied them their sources of income and reduced them to destitution either in foreign countries or within the country. Ongoing conflict and lack of opportunities have further curtailed their resilience and confined them to their houses; idle, frustrated and unable to provide for their families.

Acts such as rape, killing and looting were never acceptable even during periods of inter-clan warfare. But the current conflict violated every Somali norm and left individuals feeling insecure. Women, religious and elderly men have lost the respect traditionally due to them. Compensation *(diya)* payment, once 100 camels for men and 50 for women, has been abandoned and instead communities pay burial expenses of a few million shillings. When two clans are in conflict, *diya* does not arise; each clan just records its dead in anticipation of one day sitting down and reconciling their records.

Impact on different clan groups

The fortunes of the different clans in the area depended partly on their pre-war status and partly on the way they positioned themselves during the conflict.

How the war increased the exclusion of the Bantus and the Gibilcaad

Example 1: 'We are still struggling with the impacts of the war now; there is no farming, no employment and the only thing that is there is to cultivate a jibaal.[17] *When the Daarood were here, even when you cultivated a jibaal and earned a little, somebody would come to you and say: "Bring what you have earned today from the jibaal." Those people you worked for were the ones who took it again from you and you could not say no. What became a normal practice for us then was, the money we earn from causal labour we gave out half to them and used half. If you didn't do this, then your life was in danger.'*

Example 2: 'Everything is based on clanism. If relief food is brought then it is based on clanism. When it comes to cultivation of the farm, again, it's a clanism factor. Whatever comes up it's clanism. If we are the Jareer,[18] *we are not allowed anything. If a woman works, she works for them. The man works for them.'*

Example 3: 'The looting of our properties was done repeatedly... First, the Darood came to us, they were not looting, and they did not disturb us. ...The problem started when the USC came. They started to loot property and rape women. The USC was ousted and the Darood came back again. The problem worsened. The Darood started killing people. ...When they came back the second time, if they entered a house and found nothing (cash or gold), they either killed or raped women. They stayed for almost one year and left. After the Hawiye, the Girgir came, a conglomerate of many clans. They entered the town; they did not even leave the porridge we were drinking. They were many clans, one group would come and go and another group would enter. After the Girgir, the Hawadle clan came. We got some peace. We also received some support in terms of food aid from the ICRC.[19] *... They left and the Habar Gidir came who are here up to now. We got some peace. We have no problem except the lack of work and food.'*

17 16 jibaal = 1 ha. Working on the jibaal means working as farm labourer for landowners.
18 Derogatory term for the Bantu.
19 International Committee of the Red Cross.

The majority population of the three districts is the Digil group, composed of Tunni pastoralists and Jiddo agro-pastoralists. This group was bitterly split during the worst periods of fighting because the Tunni and Jiddo were allied with the Darood and Hawiye respectively. While the Tunni initially held the ascendancy during a period of around 9 months in 1991 when the Darood occupied the area, they later faced the consequences of this collaboration, and when the Darood were expelled by the Hawiye, smaller local clans took revenge on the Tunni, who were reduced to destitution. Today the Tunni are the most economically vulnerable group in the region since their livelihoods have been completely dismantled.

The Bantus are a non-Somali group who have been settled and cultivating in the riverine areas for centuries, and who have been consistently despised and discriminated against. Although during the war they were allied to the Hawiye, few took up arms, and their villages were largely defenceless against widespread looting, humiliation, sexual abuse of women, killing and assault by all warring parties. Their underground grain stores looted, and substantially displaced from their villages and farms, the Bantus were reduced from seasoned farmers to farm labourers on daily wages. In the emergency period, the Bantus tended to work for the leaders of the dominant clans and were often forced to pay half of their produce in exchange for their protection, a strategy which was only partially successful and did not prevent looting and rape. Bantu informants also talk of being discriminated against in access to humanitarian assistance.

The Gibilcaad are of mixed origins, being the descendants of settlers from the Arabian Peninsula, Iran, India, China and Portugal. Gibilcaad settlement is mostly confined to the coastal towns (such as Brava in the programme area), where their civilisation is evident from their architecture and other ancient urban skills such as tanning, weaving, shoe-making, pottery and sea-fishing. Known as entrepreneurs, they enjoyed a relatively good living standard before the war. However, the impact of the war on them has been

dramatic, and they fell victim to looting, rape, killing and intimidation from various militia groups during the emergency period of the war. Their means of production (stocks, machines) were looted or destroyed. Men fled the country, leaving women and children who were forced to struggle alone for survival, though they had not previously engaged in work outside the household.

The Hawiye, Issaq and Darood settled from northern and central regions in 1975. When the war broke out they became bitter rivals, killing, looting and raping. The few ties that had developed between them since then evaporated (though in some isolated cases, individuals protected their friends from rival clans). Eventually the Hawiye and their allies defeated the Darood, humiliating Darood civilians and driving their militias out of the region. The Habar Gidir gained a political foothold in Lower Shabelle; with superior weaponry and factional leadership they were able to suppress resistance to their rule. Today they control security, head all the district councils, and provide security facilities to international NGOs and UN agencies.

Impact on gender relations

In the pre-war period, gender roles varied between urban/rural, and pastoral/agricultural households. In pastoral households, men owned animals and took responsibility for them. Women also had productive roles in relation to animals, such as care and feeding of calves, kids and ewes, selling milk, and even herding livestock in some communities. In agricultural communities like the Bantu, both men and women engaged in agricultural work. In both cases, men controlled income from the sale of animals or crops. In urban households, men were either in salaried employment or in commerce, while women were predominantly housewives, depending on their husbands as breadwinners, and sometimes supplementing men's income through petty trade.

Male control over resources and decision-making was backed up by assumptions and attitudes, held by both men and women, about women's weakness and relative lack of intelligence and capacity: as the proverb says, *dumarka waa caruur saan weyn* ('women are just children with big feet'). Men, as heads of households and breadwinners, did not involve their wives in household decision-making for fear of being perceived as weak. At household and community level women had little say as to how surplus resources were to be utilised, even though they had access to land and livestock, and contributed significantly to family incomes through their productive roles in agriculture, livestock rearing or commerce.

The main research finding in the Somalia case study is that armed conflict dismantled the gender division of labour in the programme area. According to interviewees and focus group discussions, an estimated 70-80 per cent of households in the region now depend on women's incomes. Of these, some women lost their husbands during the war, were abandoned by them, or became separated from them through displacement (the men fleeing for their safety or leaving for economic reasons). In other households, mostly in urban centres, men are present but unable to cope; having lost their wealth and employment, they find it difficult to do casual work for fear of loosing their status, and have instead opted to remain idle at home. While some men have taken up household duties left by their working women, the majority still shun traditional female roles.

However, there are variations between clans, between rural and urban communities, and between economic classes. Changes in gender roles are more distinct in households which were well-off before the conflict and in urban centres. In pastoral and agricultural households, women previously played significant roles in activities like farming and livestock herding and in so doing contributed to the well-being of their families. Moreover, while previously well-off men shunned casual work for fear of loosing their status, poor men had always depended on it.

Many women have forged trade relations independently of their husbands, often with other men, and this is now a commonly accepted practice. This is a result of the shift of power from men to women at household level. Somali society accepts women owning wealth from their work and defends their interests in trade relations. Some women *qaad* [20] traders have taken up weapons to defend their interests particularly when dealing with male customers. Nevertheless, women breadwinners are struggling to work and survive under conditions of insecurity, lack of government structures to provide basic services and unfavourable environments for commerce (where the majority are involved) or for agricultural production. Besides this, women lack capital and experience in the activities they are undertaking and as a result many female-headed households remain food-insecure, barely managing a meal a day.

A focus group discussion held in Brava divided households where women are sole breadwinners, in spite of the presence of their husbands, into two categories. In one, women are breadwinners but their husbands contribute financially. In these households, there is sharing of decision-making while the woman takes the lead. The second category is where the man makes no economic contribution. In such households, the man has completely ceded household decision-making power to the woman.[21]

Increased economic roles for women, then, have had some impact on the power dynamics at household level. At community level, decision-making powers are generally denied to both men and women. After the collapse of state institutions, most communities reverted to clan structures which were less accommodating towards women. Men are generally expected to contribute to the financing of clan activities. But in the present

20 A narcotic herb widely consumed in Somalia, mostly by men. The wholesale trade in qaad is controlled by men and is closely linked to the activities of warlords, while women engage in its retail.

21 For an account of the changing economic roles of women in Somaliland, see Warsame, A. (2004) 'Responding to crises and economic opportunities: the case of Somali women traders' in Gardner, J. and El-Bushra, J. (eds) Somali conflict and peace: the perspectives of Somali women London, ICD/CIIR

circumstances, they are increasingly dependent on women to raise such funds, so must consult women on financial matters. The focus group found that men who have lost decision-making powers at household level are also excluded from community decision-making processes. In most cases they complained that they are not invited to community meetings, increasing their frustrations.

One woman's struggle to make ends meet

'I maintain my husband plus his father in Mogadishu. He is unemployed. What else can he do if government employment is not available? He has retreated to the house and the mosque, he doesn't come out. He and his father sat and waited for me just like my children for the 10 years of the civil war.

'I engaged in farming and made good money from the farm. I then ventured into business. I collected US$ from Mogadishu and brought them to Kismayo. I bought 100 US$ at 630,000 shillings in Mogadishu and sold at 880,000-900,000 shillings in Kismayo. My capital was then between US$ 600-900. After some time in this trade my capital rose to 21 million shillings. It was then that I thought of buying a shipload of dates together with seven men. I gave the money to the men who had a new station wagon land rover. I told them that I would proceed to Mogadishu and make arrangements for the stores. But some people got information and waylaid the men, killing two and injuring the third, who later died in Nairobi. The money was taken. I was left with only 50,000 shillings out of my capital of 21 million.'

The involvement of women in political counsels in Somalia has long been a contested issue. While women have often been influential in moves towards both war and peace, their participation in such initiatives has generally been behind the scenes. In local authority structures in the region, women are

distinctly absent. This can be attributed to three factors. First, most educated and economically independent women have fled the country, leaving behind illiterate women with no experience in public life. Second, women in the region are poor, and so preoccupied with the exigencies of survival that they have little time to campaign for representation. Lastly, the district authorities are drawn from the clan hierarchies, where women are subordinate to men.

At national level there has been some movement, however. Women successfully pushed for representation in the TNG at the Arte conference, and were allocated 20 parliamentary seats independently of the clans. The women declared that they had formed a 'sixth clan', i.e. unlike men, who were firmly associated with one or other of the five major clan groupings, they saw their role as being to represent all clans and none. In the new national parliament, 33 out of 275 seats – 12% -- were reserved for women, although this was later reduced to 21.[22] Opinion is divided on how far the inclusion of women in parliament represents a genuine change of heart by male politicians: for some commentators, it will be hard for men to accept women as true actors in the political arena.[23]

At the ideological level, there has been little change. Understandings of what are the rightful roles and functions of men and women continue to emphasise men's status as decision-makers, providers, and protectors, in theory if not in practice. This is seen, for example, in the fact that many men, though idle at home, have failed to take over women's household roles for fear of loosing their standing and respect in society.

22 'We've been cheated, say Somalia women' The Nation 13th September 2004, Nairobi

23 For a fuller description of women's involvement in national political processes in Somaliland and Somalia, see Gardner, J. and El-Bushra, J. (eds) Somali conflict and peace: the perspectives of Somali women. London, ICD/CIIR

Conclusions

The research shows that both ethnic and gender discrimination has been common in Somali society. Discrimination involves a web of relationships of inequality which are deeply rooted in culture and society, and which the war has not significantly undermined. Indeed, in many respects it has exacerbated these relationships. In particular the conditions of so-called minority groups such as the coastal townsfolk, low-caste groups like the Bantu, and militarily weak groups like the Tunni, have deteriorated both in absolute and in relative terms. Men, women and children from these communities have all suffered disproportionate hardship and have had their livelihoods dismantled and their opportunities restricted.

Across these clan divisions, there has generally been a significant alteration in gender roles, with women taking the lead in providing for families even where men are present. There are examples of women taking on roles previously reserved for men. However, the basic values attached to gender identities have remained unchanged. Outside the household, there has been little change to the gendered dynamics of social institutions. Despite their increased economic role and contributions to clan activities, women have not gained membership of community or clan institutions. They are distinctly absent from local authorities, community and clan meetings where major decisions are taken.

These observations have implications for development initiatives in the Lower Shabelle Region. On the one hand, hostilities and hatreds between clans continue to impede collaboration between them, for example through joint participation in project management. This calls for agencies working in the area to engage in peace-building initiatives, at least at local level. Moreover, the unequal status of different groups has in the past led to development projects adding to the disadvantage of the 'minority clans' by failing to recognise their needs and contributions. For example, food security

projects have discriminated against pastoralists by supporting irrigated agriculture. Agencies need to develop a deeper and more detailed knowledge base about the changing economic and political dynamics in the region and how the war has impacted on this.

Secondly, simply targeting women as a disadvantaged social group might help to increase their incomes but will do little to improve overall gender relations. Overcoming gender and ethnic discrimination requires agencies to go beyond targeting women in project activities and encourage men and women, young and old, to challenge their own attitudes and actions and those of others. This local level work should be complemented by work investigating women's position at the institutional and policy levels, and particularly the national level. The key question is: how can those changes in gender roles which are currently taking place be consolidated and built on, in order to further empower women and reshape gender ideologies towards a more gender-equitable society?

As Somalia moves towards the establishment of a permanent governmental structure, this question takes on greater urgency. There is a danger that the state structures which emerge will reinforce gender ideologies still further, if they simply create opportunities for the now idle men, who tend to be more educated and experienced than women. Instead they should be pro-active in enabling women to widen their influence and opportunities for action, building on their increased economic roles.

ANGOLA

Historical background to the conflict in Angola

Angola has been divided by conflict since Independence in 1975. Superpowers waging a proxy war over Angola's rich mineral resources have

prolonged and intensified struggles for political control between Angolan groups. Fighting has been bitter and has resulted in massive displacement as well as loss of life and resources. Agricultural production has suffered significantly and the informal sector in towns is the economic mainstay for a largely uprooted population, of whom an estimated 80 per cent are not formally employed.

Angola's experience as a Portuguese colony for almost five centuries was characterised by slavery, exploitation of natural resources, and cultural division. The sudden departure of colonial personnel in the mid-1970s left Angola with no substantial class of skilled or managerial labour to run the vacated enterprises, and many fell into disuse and disarray. Competition between anti-colonial liberation movements was exacerbated by the USA, South Africa, Zaire, the USSR, and Cuba, all offering financial and military backing to their proxies in the hope of gaining access to Angola's mineral wealth and its position as a strategic political and military foothold. Thus began a devastating cycle of conflict, fuelled by the involvement of outside interests.

After the Portuguese withdrawal, the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) took the military advantage and established itself as the single governing party. The war raged for the best part of the following 20 years, and ended formally in 1991 with the Bicesse Accord. Elections saw the victory of MPLA. UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), however, failed to observe the agreement, and in 1993 re-started hostilities. A stalemate continued until early 2002, when UNITA occupied sufficient proportions of the diamond-rich enclave of Kabinda to finance its increasingly isolated resistance. The death in battle of Jonas Savimbi, leader of UNITA, paved the way for a peace agreement signed in April 2002.

The period following the Bicesse Accord in 1991 was characterised by the establishment of multi-party elections and a transition to a market-oriented

economy. This has paved the way for a freer civil society and a more open and accountable bureaucracy. However, the country has continued to be weakened by insecurity, high military expenditure, high inflation, and massive internal displacement and rural-urban migration. Levels of poverty in Angola are amongst the highest in the world. Agriculture has declined because of insecurity, soil exhaustion, and the collapse of internal distribution networks. The largely proletarianised population now depends mainly on informal sector employment (Vines, 2000). In 1999, 82.5 per cent of the population lived in poverty; 59 per cent survived without access to drinking water; 60 per cent had no access to sanitation; 76 per cent had no access to health care; 3.2 million people required food aid; 13 per cent of the population were severely malnourished; between 1.7 and 2 million people were internally displaced; and unemployment stood at 80 per cent (Global Witness, 1999).

A sketch of the research area

The research was carried out in Kilometer 9, a quarter of Viana, some 10 kms from Luanda proper, where ACORD has been working since 1990. Viana, with a population of around 400,000, is extremely overcrowded and suffers from poor environmental sanitation. Before 1985, the Km 9 area was virtually uninhabited countryside, with a few farms. Since then it has attracted a steady and growing influx of people, displaced by the effects of the war and by the deterioration of socio-economic conditions. The population of the neighbourhood, currently estimated at 45,000, includes both 'displaced' and 'affected' families.[24] Amongst these, some have been forced to flee a number of times. Those who have travelled farthest are most likely to have arrived alone or with members of the immediate household, without their leaders and other members of their group (Robson and Roque, 2001).

24 'Displaced' refers to people obliged to flee from their area of origin for a safer one due to conflict, principally the outbreak of renewed hostilities in 1992 and subsequently. 'Affected' describes people who moved into the research location during the relatively peaceable period prior to 1992. They differ from the 'displaced' in that they have been indirectly, rather than directly, affected by the war.

Economic activities include small shops, restaurants, workshops, informal markets and stalls. The large Estalagem market a few kilometres away is mainly frequented by displaced persons. Some residents are employed by the public sector, the police and the army. The social infrastructure includes a Residents' Commission, a state primary school and 8 private schools, most belonging to local churches. It has one state health centre and 7 private ones, as well as several churches. The rapid growth of population has led to disorganised construction of housing and to deterioration in sanitation and environmental conditions. There is no piped drinking water or electricity.

Prior to the influx of the 'displaced' following the intensification of conflict in 1992, gender relations between the few inhabitants of the neighbourhood were mainly of a patriarchal type, as was the case with other neighbourhoods in the environs of Luanda. Women were responsible for all household chores and for the care of children, and they were expected to be submissive and to remain silent in the presence of men. Women were largely excluded from public life, and all leadership positions were held by men. With the renewed outbreak of war, displaced persons arriving in the neighbourhood brought their traditional cultural values, imbued with some elements of Western and/or other cultures they had encountered. Those displaced from the interior are from peasant communities, where both men and women worked in agriculture. Their work consisted of cultivating the land and raising small animals and livestock, while men also hunted.

The specific purpose of the research in Angola was to provide insights into ordinary people's experiences of war and its effects on their personal and emotional lives, as a basis for assessing the impact of the war on gender relations and on social and economic life generally. The research team wanted to identify the sources and forms of discrimination which exist between different groups at community level in order to inform programming strategies and ways of working with communities.

The impact of the war on Km 9

Few people interviewed had escaped the damaging consequences of war: the brutalising experiences, the deaths of spouses, parents and children, and loss of material goods. These events have led to other changes, and the imposition of new and difficult ways of life, such as migrations, separation of families and the degradation of family life. One woman, for example, described how she had *'...got through a first, second, third, fourth husband, just because of the way life is here.'*

While everyone suffered, the testimonies suggest that the emotional disturbances suffered by displaced people are greater than in the case of those indirectly affected, whose main concern is with the deterioration of their living conditions and the decline in their socio-economic status. The displaced also experience higher levels of poverty than the 'affected', although most people live on the breadline and lack access to basic social services. On the whole, on account of their responsibilities as wives and mothers, women seem to cope better on a day-to-day basis compared to men, many of whom experience extreme anguish.

Due to the diversity of ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups from the various regions of the country, the habits and customs of previous generations are falling into disuse. For example, eating habits have changed, many children no longer speak their mother tongues, and Portuguese is the language most commonly used. Kinship and solidarity networks have declined, and people have become more individualistic and self-centred. For example, a displaced woman commented:

'There (in Malange) *there was support. In the case of illness, we had support...in the case of death, there was support...but now, here, nothing...I think that now the family doesn't exist...families only help in difficult times, in the case of death. If there is health, it's every man for himself.'*

Case study 1: a woman's experience of the war

'I was nine months' pregnant with my third child. The war started on the morning of the 5th January, 1993, and I gave birth on the 17th in the middle of the war, in a cellar of the Hotel Kuito. Even under the bombardment I managed to give birth, although I'd left my two-year old daughter at home with her father. After I had the baby, we went home and spent the night there. The next day, UNITA was supposed to be moving from the airport to the suburb where we lived, which is in Catraoi. So I had to pick up the small baby who was only 3 days old and put her on my back even with an exposed navel, and go with a suitcase on my head, with her father who had a baby on his shoulders and another in his lap, and his relatives, and we had to leave the suburb where we lived for the Hotel Kuito. During the war, everyone took refuge there because it was high up, although we had to stay in its cellar. In order to survive, we had to take off our clothes and exchange them for food with women from UNITA who came from the Municipality and infiltrated into the city without the government troops noticing. So how did we manage to get a kilo of maize meal? Well, we had to exchange our best clothes, but we had to camouflage them or the government troops got them, because they would rather survive themselves, and leave us to starve.'

In some ways, war has created new tensions which did not exist before or which have been exacerbated by events and trends in the wider Angolan community. For example, the Km 9 community has been incorporated into local and national government structures, and this has led to traditional forms of power and authority being undermined. The testimonies also reveal tensions between people in the community on the basis of their political affiliation (for example, pro-government versus UNITA supporters).

However, the testimonies also produced examples of reconciliation, such as inter-ethnic marriages and more mixing between ethnic groups, with many people learning their neighbours' languages. The adoption of a common

language (Portuguese) can be seen as a unifying factor. The research also revealed that some traditional forms of mutual support, such as the *kixikila* savings system,[25] have been revived. Such systems help women survive under harsh economic conditions, and bring together women from different ethnic backgrounds. Most people interviewed hoped for peace and wanted to leave the past behind them. For example, a displaced man explained how:

'The same people that treated us so badly are here in Luanda. But if we hung on to bitterness against them on the grounds of what they did to us, we would have to kill a lot of people. We don't have that kind of bad feeling any more.'

The impact of the conflict on gender relations in Km 9

Changes in gender relations have taken place both among the displaced and the 'affected' populations. Most significantly, changing economic opportunities have led to many women becoming breadwinners, while men often remain at home and carry out domestic chores. Women are bearing the main financial burden of providing for the family, and have learned new skills in order to do this. They often spend all day in petty trade in markets and streets, even though these trading activities barely bring in enough money to cover basic needs. Additional security is provided by the *kixikila* women's saving groups. Men, on the other hand, have lost their former jobs (teaching, the military, etc) and most are reluctant to take up other lower status jobs, such as peddling, portering, or digging holes. Without new skills to cope with the new situation, many men are forced to take responsibility for children and domestic chores while their wives work.

25 In the kixikila savings scheme, members deposit an agreed daily amount with the group leader. Every day, or at the end of the week, all contributions are given to one member. Each member benefits in turn until all members have taken their share, then the scheme starts over again.

However, this gender role reversal has not been accompanied by an ideological shift and for the most part, women's status outside and even, in many cases, within the household remains subordinate to that of men. Despite women's family maintenance roles, they do not assume the status of household head, which is retained by the husband. The research revealed a number of examples of discrimination against women, both in the public sphere and within households. For example, testimonies mention public services or companies that refuse to employ women who are pregnant or breast-feeding and men who abandon their wives because they *'can't stand the inversion of values'* when women take on men's responsibilities.

Even more so than women, men appear to be experiencing considerable difficulty adjusting to this situation and need emotional, as well as practical support in facing up to these changes and finding their own niche. Patriarchal norms underpinning gender identity are at the heart of the problem, aggravating men's sense of failure and frustration.

Case study 2: the impact on men

'I used to be a teacher in Kalumbo, 100 km from the provincial capital. We ate, we drank. We had no problems. Life was rich, comfortable…for 7 years…I educated and inspired young people, who are now adults…then, I went to the war and travelled to far away places…to Asia…fought many enemies…Then in 1992, I left the army and came home and up to today, I'm here with no work. Now I feel negated (he starts to cry)….I have not been able to fulfil my dreams…because the fact is that if I had been able to get a job, I could at least have fulfilled 50 per cent of them…now I have no dreams at all. No dreams at all. That's why I nearly killed myself…I can't take it, honestly…she is the lady, she married to eat and to drink, not to work for me…I am just awaiting death…. look at the clothes I'm wearing…I have no other clothes…so my dreams have been extinguished. That's the truth.

'…She (his wife) goes to the market at 6.00 am and comes back at 7.00 pm…I look after the children. I have to clean the house (he starts to cry again), I have to scrub the floor, I have to prepare the rice…I have to wash the baby's nappies…I have to look after the baby…The wife gets home late…I get the children to school. Honestly speaking, I can say that I am the housewife…my wife does not demand it, but I feel I have an obligation to do it.'

Interviewer: How are your finances managed between you and your wife? 'In poor households, it works like this: what is his, is his; what is hers is hers. But in our case, it's not like that. My wife is responsible for what is mine…my wife is the one who goes and comes…I feel that I don't have a cent. She knows I smoke. If she can buy me a pack of cigarettes, I take it gladly, if not, I do without. What can I do? If I make demands, it would be poking my nose into her affairs. I have no business knowing what she owns.'

Interviewer: How would you compare your current life with the previous one? 'If I could turn the clock back, I would go back, not forward…I'm here, with my hands in my pockets… is that a life? I'm worse than poor, worse than poor, because I have nothing'

Gender identity and its contributions to the conflict situation

Secondary sources consulted for the study provide examples of gender identities and ideology being manipulated to advance the interests of parties to the conflict. For example, there is evidence that liberation movements exploited women's social reproductive functions in society by assigning them traditional functions, such as cooking and tending the sick and wounded. They also exploited women's bodies for the advancement of political aims. In the case of UNITA, it has been claimed that that attitudes towards women were strongly related to UNITA's political strategy of enhancing ethnic conscience as a means of mobilising support (Negrao, 2001). Political movements have been inclined to view women primarily 'as biological reproducers of the ethnic collectivities; reproducers of the boundaries of national groups (through restrictions on sexual and marital relations); and as sexual transmitters and producers of the national culture' (Campbell, 1999). These claims are supported by one of the testimonies, provided by a young woman who describes the beating she was given at the hands of UNITA when she refused to take the partner selected for her by the party:

'I got such a thrashing…They tied me up with ropes…they gave me 45 lashes, which corresponds to 90 because there are two of them lashing you simultaneously. So, two lashes of the whip count as one blow…you can't refuse (the 'husband' chosen for you) or, if you do, you'll be killed.'

Rape is another way in which women were used to further UNITA's political aims. It is claimed by some that higher officials in territories dominated by UNITA were granted unlimited access to women's bodies and sexual abuse and violence was common, especially among younger women (Campbell, 1999). These claims too are supported by some of the testimonies. For example, one woman describing her treatment at the hands of UNITA says:

'I was tied up with ropes. My salvation was that I was going with the general. At the time, I was going with that general from Uige, then I went with General Chimuco, then, after Chimuco, I went with General Kapata... We went to Bailundo, – Undas -- the only province we did not go to was Bie and Huambo -- Kalussinga, Andulo, Bnailundo, Luessendi Negage ...Camabatela... I got to know all these places...on account of these people that I was going with.'

The research also provides evidence of links between gender identity and conflict, at the community and/or inter-personal levels. Male unemployment in the aftermath of conflict and demobilisation has created a situation in which men have been deprived of their former status. Women have taken over their roles as breadwinners and providers for the family. Many men prefer to remain idle and powerless, rather than undergo the ignominy of taking on menial employment. In many cases, this has led to marital tensions, alcoholism, family separation and breakdown.

Thus there is a two-way relationship between patriarchy and violence. On the one hand, the war bolsters patriarchal values used for political ends (e.g. control over marriage and reproduction) and on the other hand, patriarchal values, such as the ideal of the male breadwinner, generate conflict and breakdown of the very system they are intended to uphold.

Conclusions

Carrying out this research project has provided opportunities to develop an advocacy platform with the hitherto 'voiceless' communities of Viana. The research has reinforced ACORD Angola's existing strategy of gender awareness-raising involving both men and women, both separately and together, in the context of an overall programme strategy of giving gender equality a central place among the programme's objectives. It has underlined the need for gender awareness activities to provide the space for pervasive

and potentially destructive gender norms and values to be challenged, and more constructive alternatives sought through open dialogue involving men and women at all levels of the social hierarchy.

The research further highlights the need to develop clear strategies for supporting men, thereby also indirectly supporting women and their families. The programme has concluded that gender is not simply about liberating women, but also about seeking more balanced gender relations.

MALI

Historical background to the rebellion in northern Mali

The northern regions of Mali are home to several different ethnic groups, each occupying a particular environmental niche. These include the Songhoïs (sedentary agriculturalists), Tamasheqs, Maures, Arabs and Peulhs (transhumant, settled or semi-settled pastoralists) and Bozos (fisher-people). Each of these social systems is structured around strong hierarchies in which certain categories – women, former slaves, outcasts and the landless – are endowed with a very low social status and are the objects of marginalisation and oppression. Within each ethnic group, a number of distinct layers are found: for example the Tamasheq comprise at least four strata – nobles, marabouts, vassals and former slaves. Although slaves were formally freed at the beginning of the 20th century, the process whereby ex-slaves detach themselves from their ex-masters has been a gradual one. Some ex-slave families have been living independently for several generations, while others are still in relationships of servitude. Indeed, some ex-slaves have acquired (often through education) considerable wealth and political influence, which in part compensates for the social discrimination which they still suffer from. The main consequences of marginalisation for these low-status groups are: lack of access to means of production, lack of participation in decision-

making, and a social and sexual division of labour which exploits them and overloads them with work, increasing their vulnerability. In addition, they experience day-to-day discrimination based on stereotypes and prejudices which tend to discredit or denigrate them.

In addition to distinctions of ethnicity and class, a further level of differentiation is that between 'reds' and 'blacks', the 'reds' being the light-skinned groups (noble, maraboutic and vassal Tamasheq and Maures) while the 'blacks' comprise the Songhoïs, Peulh and dark-skinned Tamasheq from the ex-slave class.

Over the last few decades, environmental degradation and labour migration from northern Mali to neighbouring countries, notably Algeria, Niger and Burkina Faso, have combined to increase levels of poverty and urbanisation. Paradoxically, these trends have also hastened processes of social change in which ethnic, class and gender differences have become less marked. The rebellion has made a further contribution to these change processes.

The conflict in northern Mali began in 1990 and initially involved Maure and Tamasheq rebels against the State. Attacks were targeted initially at military forces and administrative authorities but later turned into raids against civilians and NGOs. In January 1991 the government signed agreements with two of the emerging rebel movements. However because of dissidence among rebel groups, these agreements were not conclusive and tension increased, drawing sedentary and urban groups into the violence.

As time went on, the conflict in northern Mali increasingly evolved into a racial conflict. In this second phase, the rebels – consisting almost entirely of Tamasheqs and Maures – targeted 'black' populations. These 'black' populations had long held a stereotyped view of 'reds' as *réguéibats*, i.e. those who kidnap children and turn them into slaves, and they now concluded that the Tamasheqs and Maures were aiming to regain control of

the North and to turn all 'blacks' into slaves. This aggravated tension between 'red' and 'black'. The *ganda koye* movement ('masters of the land' in Songhoï) then came into being – an entirely 'black' movement which set itself up in opposition to the rebels. This led to a situation of open or covert war between 'black' and 'red' groups, in which being different was enough to engender suspicion and hatred on either side. The army, into which few 'reds' had been recruited, was itself eventually considered by the 'reds' as siding with its own kind, i.e. other 'blacks', rather than being neutral defenders of all citizens.

Local communities took the initiative to develop a peace process, under which respected local resource people came forward to act as mediators. Local authorities and development agencies helped organise meetings involving the conflicting parties and civil society organisations. Fighting gradually subsided and several projects emerged, in line with the National Pact, which facilitated the repatriation of refugees and the return of displaced populations to their home sites. The willingness of the various factions to disarm was symbolised in the 'Flame for Peace' celebrations, when a significant number of weapons were recovered and burnt in Timbuktu, in March 1996.

ACORD has worked in northern Mali since the earliest days of the organisation in the mid-1970s, and continued to maintain a presence there throughout the uprising. ACORD Mali's aim in taking part in this research project was to understand how people's lives had changed as a result of the rebellion. The research focused particularly on identifying coping mechanisms, looking at changes in production patterns, residence patterns, and the division of labour, and on understanding how the rebellion had impacted on the relationships between and within different social groups.

Impact of conflict on the Timbuktu area [26]

In general terms, the most salient impacts on communities in the area were impoverishment and displacement. Most communities lost their livelihoods, assets and resources (land, animals, equipment, etc.). The conflict also resulted in massive population displacement, the creation of slums on the outskirts of urban centres, and flows of refugees to neighbouring countries. These factors led in turn to family breakdown, changing or disappearing sites of residence, and changes in the settlement patterns of nomads. Those who took refuge in other countries -- women and young people in particular -- had their way of life influenced by other cultures. Changes which had already started in the relationships between sedentary communities and nomadic groups, and between 'red' and 'black' populations, were accelerated as a result of the rebellion.

The Songhoïs, predominantly sedentary agriculturalists, mainly inhabit the valley of the River Niger and the area to the south (an area known as the Gourma). They tended to be victims of attacks and looting by rebels. Sedentary communities for the most part remained where they were, though some migrated locally within the Gourma or further south. They tended to organise self-defence either in local brigades or, later, through membership of the *ganda koye* movement. Sedentary communities who stayed in their villages continued to carry out agricultural work, but tended to do so at night, not moving about or lighting fires during daytime. They occasionally travelled to the nearest markets for their supplies, but in general had to make do with the resources they had conserved. Those who left survived off food that had been hidden away in river islands or was sent by those who had stayed behind, or else they gathered wild fruits or survived by doing paid work. All in all, people only managed to scrape a living.

[26] The Mali programme summarised the impact of the rebellion in a table, presented as annex 2.

In sedentary communities, young people tended to stay at home to protect their families rather than emigrating. Collaboration between neighbours (age mates, for example) sometimes had to be suspended at the height of the tension as people were too frightened to attend to anything other than their own security. At an inter-community level, people exchanged information and news about security whenever they could. All Songhoï villages in the area built links of solidarity to support the *ganda koye*, sending their young men to join it. The young men who joined the *ganda koye* were usually given the responsibility of watching the area, patrolling all villages at night.

Tamasheq and Maure communities were pastoral nomads, living mostly in the desert area north of the River Niger (known as the Houssa), though some are to be found along the river valley and in the Gourma. They followed a transhumance pattern in which women and children generally stayed put in residential sites while men and boys undertook various forms of migration with their animals. The pastoralist sites where the research was carried out were mainly the victims of army reprisals. Most fled to the far north of the country, or to bordering countries (Mauritania, Algeria, or Burkina Faso) to seek refuge. After their return from exile, many of these communities disbanded or else moved to other sites because of the fearsome associations of the old site.

Amongst these communities, people helped each other in their flight, offering food, water and transport. Those who went to hide in the bush within Mali lived off the cereals which they were able to take with them, off animal produce and from gathering wild fruit. They travelled stealthily at night to obtain fresh supplies in some villages, or accompanied smugglers in the desert. Some of these groups were supported by relatives who lived in Mauritania or elsewhere and were sending them food.

Many pastoralist communities were, if not directly attacked, accused of belonging to rebel movements, and as a result had their movements severely

restricted. Those of the pastoralist communities who stayed behind were often former slaves, although some moved south into the Gourma, in some cases settling close to the Songhoï and joining up with the ganda koye. They survived by gathering wild fruit and doing paid work in fields or elsewhere. However, in some communities, attacks by the army or the ganda koye were made indiscriminately on both the ex-slaves and the ex-masters. In these cases, both groups took flight and returned together.

For many communities, the activities which had previously provided their subsistence (agriculture and/or animal herding) became unviable, and now cannot be restarted without considerable investment, which a grossly impoverished community does not have. People adapted to the loss of resources by converting their assets into cash, adopting new livelihoods and learning new economic activities. Some agro-pastoralists have become herders or farmers, while many herders have become charcoal-makers. Others have gone into paid work or become traders. Some people found themselves completely dispossessed of all their belongings. Dependence on petty trade and wage employment in urban centres, and on violent crime as a means of livelihood, has therefore increased.

Former masters, who were living a fairly comfortable life before the conflict, found themselves seriously impoverished. Though they are now enjoying a similar social status as before, their economic status has dropped to or below the level of former slaves. The division of labour between ex-slaves and ex-masters changed, with the former now mostly living independently and the latter doing work considered as lower-status tasks previously undertaken by former slaves. Levels of dependence among both women and former slaves have lessened. Women are more independent economically, are able to travel alone to go about their business and contribute more actively to the family economy. Women and young people are becoming more involved in resource management at community level. These changes are especially marked in the 'red' groups.

Those who sought refuge abroad (mainly Tamasheks and Maures) were usually looked after in refugee camps by international organisations such as UNHCR. They were provided with relief supplies and other forms of support such as training in nutrition and income-generating skills. Refuge brought them into contact with other ethnic groups, and with others of their own group but from different environments. These contacts brought about considerable changes in terms of attitude and behaviour, which found expression in changes in clothing, food and other habits. Change is most visible among women and the youth, many of whom have found the return to their former way of living difficult to accept. Many women preferred divorce to a return to the old ways; even in families where husband and wife returned together, husbands were often more enthusiastic about going home than their wives.

Education has taken on a new importance in the expectations of almost all respondents. This is particularly marked in the case of those 'red' groups who migrated abroad and were exposed to other ways of living. These tend to view their old life as having been characterised by cultural isolation and ignorance, to which they do not wish their children to return. Education is seen by many as being a long-term solution to the problem of inter-communal tension which generated the conflict. These positive expectations of the benefits of education are partly a result of the skills training to which those in exile were exposed, organised by refugee support projects, and partly because of the increased importance of wage employment in the current economy. People see education as being a critically important resource if their children are to take their place in a dynamic, peaceful and modernised Malian state.

Before the war, there was a degree of mutual dependence between nomadic and sedentary communities, who operated time-honoured local agreements about access to water and pasture, and who were linked by ties of neighbourliness and friendship. In some localities, these agreements were maintained, though in many places they broke down completely.

What people said about their neighbours?

Example 1: 'In this area, sedentary villages like Chambou... canvassed the people about the need to keep up the age-old links which always united the 'red skins' and the 'black skins'. These villages in turn benefited from the protection of these 'reds' from later rebel attacks...We were able to survive during the conflict and stay in Chambou because of the fact that we were in contact with our 'red skins' in the Gourma.'

Example 2: '...we have stopped cultivating the field we shared with our Songhoï neighbours for fear of giving rise to more problems between us and our neighbours.'

Example 3: '...I no longer have friends, I don't like anyone and no-one likes me. I have no faith in anyone. I only have heartbreak, worries and bad intentions. There is no trust between people.'

Example 4: 'The biggest lessons I've learned? The crumbling of the age-old very solid links which used to unite the red skins and the black skins: the fragility of the confidence between them, because even today when there is calm, we still don't have confidence in each other. So it's necessary to organise inter-communal meetings in order to renew the good harmony which prevailed in the past between these two ethnic groups.'

Example 5: 'In spite of the fact that the conflict has abated, we no longer have confidence in the 'red skins' because, as we say in Songhoï: "He whose father was killed by a crocodile cannot trust the salamander."[27]

27 Meaning that even though individual 'reds' might not have done any harm, others showed themselves to be untrustworthy and this raises questions about the trustworthiness of the whole group.

The impact of the rebellion on gender relations

In both sedentary and pastoralist communities there have been considerable changes in gender roles,[28] but this change has been for different reasons and has taken different forms. In sedentary communities, both men and women have less to do: this is because the availability of productive resources has diminished, and this has rendered many of the previous activities unviable. Disequilibrium in the gender division of labour, in which women take on more roles while men become passive following the loss of their resources, does not seem to have been markedly evident in the Songhoï communities in Mali, and both men and women report no change in the basic pattern of household management.

These changes have been much more marked in the pastoralist communities, however. In Tamasheq and Maure communities, gender roles vary considerably between social classes. In the past, noble and middle class women did not expect to work, while women of the slave class carried out all their household tasks for them. In families of high status and wealth, women took no part in household management or domestic work, and had no responsibility for decision-making in the home. High status women did no physical exertion at all and were expected to eat especially rich food supplements which greatly increased their weight. This sometimes amounted to force-feeding of women and led to considerable health problems, both for the individual women concerned, and for their children, whose care was generally left to ex-slaves. The impact of the rebellion was to hasten a process, under way for some decades now, by which this association of women's indolence with high status has been breaking down.[29] The reduced

28 For definitions of terms including 'gender relations' and 'gender roles', please see section 2.

29 Randall suggests that the practice of force-feeding women has been virtually stopped as a result of the flight into exile and new ways of living learned there, but that otherwise gender relations (for example, the value placed on monogamy) remain largely unchanged (Randall, S. (2001) Demographic consequence of being refugees: Malian Kel Tamasheq. Paper presented to the IUSSP General Conference, Brazil, August 2001)

economic circumstances which have resulted from the war have made the past indolence unsustainable, since men are generally no longer able to fulfil their providing roles on their own.

Exile abroad had a substantial impact on attitudes, opening people's (and especially women's) eyes to different ways of living. While both men and women recognise the enormity of the changes in both practice and attitude, they do not always interpret these changes in the same way. For women, the changes they have encountered have been liberating, while men tend either to view them negatively or to be dismissive of women's aspirations.

In summary, while some changes have taken place in gender roles, the degree and nature of these changes vary from one ethnic group to another, and, within these, from one class to another. Gender relations cannot be disassociated from other forms of social relations, and changes in gender relations are part and parcel of social change generally. In many ways, the changes in economic and social relations between the different groups has proved more significant than changes in gender relations by themselves, and respondents seemed more concerned by the economic and social impact of conflict than by the effects of conflict on gender relations.

Positive or negative? How Tamashek women of different classes see the change in their status?

Example 1: 'Before the conflict, most of the work was carried out by slaves. They helped my husband to prepare the fields and crops whilst women slaves were doing the housework. Now, it's my husband who leads the animal and we both do work which we never used to do in the past. Myself, I have learnt to crochet and to use a sewing machine. All in all, our life has changed a lot. It was the first time in my life that I lived away from my parents. Now, I have learnt to live without them.'

Example 2: '...my mother, who was middle class, began to loose her value. She had done no physical movement for forty years. As a result of that damned war, and my father's extra family responsibilities, she was obliged to help him out in running the family.'

Example 3: 'My husband is dead. I became the head of the household. I work night and day like a donkey. My children are very young, they can't do anything. Today it's me who goes to the shop to get our staples. I used to have a maid -- now it's me who does the cooking and the washing.'

Example 4: 'In the mornings, we (former slave) women would be occupied with household tasks, meaning we would grind millet, cook, etc. Our men would get up then take the animals to pasture and to the wells, and bring us water. In the afternoons the women in the nomadic camp would work together on making tents, then if someone was ill we would go and visit them... Frankly, since these events we women are no longer ashamed, we are no longer cold in the presence of men. I'm aware that the men are not all that happy about this, it makes them nervous, furious, and none of that was done in the past...We understood there is a better life than ours... And we came back because we were promised consideration and respect. The most notable impact for me was that I learned to read, cook well, that wasn't possible (before).'

Conclusions

The rebellion in northern Mali is one of a number of factors (others include drought and the impact of labour migration) which have had considerable impact on communities in the area. In the economic sphere, many communities found themselves impoverished after losing their livelihoods, assets and resources (land, animals, equipment, etc.) although some people managed to learn and practise new activities. The conflict has also impacted on people's ways of life and systems of production, with the result that some communities have changed to different means of livelihood.

Conflict has affected the quality of relationships between sedentary communities and nomadic groups, resulting in massive population displacement, the creation of slums on the outskirts of urban centres and flows of refugees to neighbouring countries. These displacements have also led to family breakdown, changing or disappearing sites, and changes in community structures (settlement of nomads on sites growing into villages). Refugees, women and young people in particular, had their way of life influenced by other cultures.

The rebellion has aggravated the erosion of traditional ways of life. Amongst the changes involved here have been changes in relations between former masters and former slaves and between men and women. Many former slaves have become completely independent from their former masters. Nomadic women have become less subdued and more involved in activity-management and decision-making at household and community levels. However, communities seem more concerned by the economic and social impact of conflict than by the effects of conflict on gender relations.

The testimonies give clear evidence of a huge desire for peace among all respondents, although many express a continuing mistrust of other groups. People have seen the destructive impact of war, and fervently wish never to

return to it. Some respondents suggested that ACORD and other development agencies should take up conflict-prevention, for example by promoting interaction between communities, raising general awareness of the impact of war so that people do not slip back into violence, and facilitating education services. Others, however, felt that promoting greater interaction between the formerly opposing groups would be counter-productive, and that other ways needed to be found to enhance trust between them.

Postscript

By 2001 when the research was conducted, the rebellion was considered to be effectively over. There were, however, sporadic outbreaks of violence. Some of these were the result of 'banditry', i.e. violent criminal acts committed as a result of economic pressure rather than to express a political grievance. Other incidences reflected divisions between the 'red' groups themselves, including between different Tamasheq clans. Even these were expected to subside as life improved as a result of the considerably external investment in the North and of the continued positive political climate in the country as a whole. However, at the time of writing this report (October 2004) there were signs of new outbreaks of fighting, this time among ethnic groups of Arab descent.[30]

[30] IRIN bulletin September 16th 2004 Mali: 13 killed in fresh violence between Kountas and Arabs in East

Section 2

The Economic and social impacts of war on poor communities: a gendered view

As the case studies in section 1 illustrate, war had a devastating impact on the communities in question. Human suffering was intense, and the physical and social infrastructure suffered considerable destruction. The research project, however, focused on the link between war and social change, and in particular change in gender relations. It aimed to explore the relationship between gender and war by posing two key questions. The first was: do gender relations change as a result of conflict? Secondly, do gender identities themselves contribute to conflict? Section 2 examines the findings related to the first of these questions, while section 3 addresses the second.

We understand gender to refer to those attributes of men and women which are shaped by society's expectations of them, rather than determined by biology. Although this definition is a broadly accepted one, in practice people use the term in different ways. Reviewing the testimonies, the research team was able to draw several conclusions about how the term 'gender' should be interpreted and used. The first relates to the question of gender and men. Both men and women live 'gendered' lives, i.e. their life experiences, behaviour and values are to a large extent conditioned by the expectations that society places on them. Yet the discourse of 'gender and development' tends to stress women as a priority. The research suggested strongly that gender analysis and policy should apply to men and women in equal measure.

Secondly, gender is one among several factors of difference; the others might include, for example, class, ethnicity, age and religion. Gender as a factor of difference is linked to these other factors; indeed, it cannot be separated from them. Although men and women may experience war in different ways, it is also true that different clans, age categories, or occupational groups experience it differently, and that these differences may in some cases be more important than the differences between men and women.

Thirdly, the research team found difficulty in addressing the first research question: 'do gender relations change as a result of war?' because of ambiguities in the term 'gender relations'. The team found that 'gender relations' comprise a number of different elements that need to be examined separately. These elements are gender roles (or the everyday tasks expected of men and women in the division of labour); gender identities (the ideal behaviour expected of men and women); gendered institutions (such as the household, the army, the school, all of which help to condition gender identities); and gender ideologies, or the deeply-rooted values which underpin the other elements. Change takes place in different rates in these different elements. 'Gender relations' remains a valid term when used in a broad, general sense. However, analysing social change requires more specific categories. This is discussed in more detail later in this section.

We will first examine the economic and social impact of war, and then explore how far the different elements (under the general heading of gender relations) have changed.

Economic impacts: livelihoods and the division of labour

The case studies in section 1 provide evidence of the impact of war on the natural environment from which poor communities draw their livelihoods. This impact is both severe and extensive. There are few aspects of economic survival which have not been undermined or destroyed by war in the

locations studied. Natural resources (land, animals, water, labour), supplies, markets, trading links, skills and knowledge, services, ties of neighbourhood and interaction, have all been lost, become inaccessible or, even when available, become difficult to obtain.

Maintaining agricultural and pastoral production systems requires a complex mix of material resources, skilled labour and social and economic organisation which, once lost, can only be regained with massive investment. The Somalia case study, for example, shows how far the pastoral resource base has been eroded -- grazing land and its resources of forage and water have become inaccessible; labour has been reduced through death and displacement; insecurity has led to restricted livestock movements and marketing; the lack of effective government has reduced environmental controls. In northern Mali, another pastoralist context, insecurity has forced people to move away from their previous places of residence. Many have moved to towns and have become dependent on the urban informal economy. For similar reasons, established patterns of land use – including local agreements between farmers and pastoralists about access to natural resources - have also broken down.

In northern Uganda and southern Sudan, agricultural systems suffered in similar ways. Fields were abandoned as a result of displacement into camps and 'protected villages', leaving people with limited cultivable land – sometimes with none at all. The Somalia and Uganda case studies suggest that in the past, communities managed their environmental resources in a sustainable way. In the case of Uganda, testimonies describe how conservation measures had once been upheld by religious belief and practice. However, these cultural and social practices have now been eroded, as families have adapted to an economy which is increasingly dominated by cash. This element of 'social capital' is often one of the losses occasioned through war.

People have made various adaptations in response to the erosion of their environmental resource base. In Mali, for example, respondents described having to learn new skills and take up new ways of earning a living, often in new and unaccustomed settings; some refugees acquired new skills as a result of observing other communities, or through training provided by refugee assistance programmes. Two major, overarching livelihoods-related adaptations appear clearly from the research and are closely linked to each other. These are displacement and entry into the cash economy, on the one hand, and changes in the gender division of labour, on the other.

First, the cash economy has vastly increased in importance, mainly -- but not only -- as a result of displacement. For example, in Juba and in northern Uganda, insecurity deprives displaced persons of access to farming land, and with it of the possibility of providing for themselves. Although some displaced people receive food aid, this tends to be irregular and insufficient. Most displaced people are therefore dependent on finding casual work, on the informal sector, and on a variety of risky survival strategies such as transactional sex.[31] Moreover, displacement into crowded camps generates a semi-urbanised lifestyle. Here, people need not only food but also other basic items such as medicines and school fees, which have to be purchased with cash.

As the Angola example shows, the displaced are at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing the resources needed in the new context – employment, housing, contacts and networks, for example. However, it is not only the displaced whose livelihoods are threatened. We see a similar threat in the declining status of the Brawani craftsmen in Somalia, or in that of the 'affected' residents of Viana in Angola, concerned about the erosion of their living standards. On the one hand, people who were previously outside the

31 Transactional sex refers to sexual services provided in exchange for economic advantage or security. It does not necessarily involve money.

urban cash economy tend to be drawn into it. On the other hand, for those who are already in the cash economy, the effect of war is to restrict their options and markets, and to increase their economic burdens.

The second adaptation, which was also found consistently across the case studies, was that both men and women have made adjustments in their economic roles at the household level. On the one hand, the resources from which men once drew their power and status (e.g. land, animals, the labour power of women, youth and children) have now been denied them. The options which remain require them to accept menial employment, or worse still to accept dependence on their womenfolk. The result is that many men (seen most markedly in the cases of Angola and Somalia) experience deep psychological distress at this threat to their masculinity, so much so that the research team was taken by surprise at the depth of their distress. While some men reluctantly – tearfully, even- accepted the role of house-husbands, taking on child care and other domestic tasks while their wives work, others could not bring themselves to do this, preferring idleness to this emasculation.

On the other hand, women have tended to respond positively to the demands imposed by the new urban and semi-urban lifestyle that displacement may generate. Commonly around 30% of households in conflict-affected societies are headed by women. In these households, women have no choice other than to take up the role of breadwinner. However, the testimonies show that the changing division of labour affects all women, not just women who head households. Time and again, women become the new breadwinners – for example, by entering petty trade, or by taking up menial work or agricultural labouring - even when men are present.

For a few women, war provides opportunities to enter lucrative occupations that were previously reserved for men. An example of how women can take advantage of such opportunities is the woman respondent from Somalia who became a currency speculator and long-distance commodity trader. This

contrasted with her husband, an ex-civil servant, who had retired to the mosque in despair at the loss of his masculine role and status. However, such examples are the exception: more common is the experience of the respondent from Juba whose options had extended from selling mangoes to brewing beer and selling tea, still being beaten by her alcoholic husband. Where women do take up new opportunities and learn new skills, displacement often provides the impetus for this change, because contact with other societies leads to exposure to different ways of living. This exposure can be seen most notably in the Angola and Mali studies.

The research found that insecurity reduces men's economic roles, while propelling women into greater economic activity. This finding is consistent across the five case studies. However, some exceptions and qualifications are in order. In settled communities in Mali, the old balance in the division of labour has been largely retained; the main impact of the war has been that neither men nor women are able to maintain their previous roles owing to the impoverishment of the agricultural resource base. The Somalia study points out that the extent of the change in roles varies between rural and urban, and between poorer and wealthier, households. The change is less marked in rural and poor urban households, because women were already playing a substantial role in production and income-generation before the war in these households. These examples suggest that the economic context of the household is an important factor in determining economic roles within it.

Two types of debate emerge from the above observations. Firstly, how radical are these changes in the economic activities of men and women? Do they reflect fundamental changes in gender roles, or a continuation of existing roles, but in a different form? Do men and women have innate characteristics which predispose them to psychological collapse and resilience respectively? Or is each of them merely conforming to the pattern of responsibilities into which they have been socialised? The findings suggest

that, important though these changes are, they remain at the level of everyday practice and do not imply radical shifts of values. Men are still expected to use their power and resources to protect and provide for their families, and women are still expected to ensure care and provisioning - through long hours of hard and unfamiliar work if necessary. What has changed is only the ways in which these aspirations can be fulfilled, given the circumstances of war.

Secondly, should these changes, limited as they are, be seen as negative or positive? Male respondents viewed women's increasing power within the household, and their own parallel disempowerment, in various ways. Male respondents in Somalia and Angola, for example, accepted their dependence on women passively, acknowledging that women's resourcefulness and industry pulled them through crises. In some cases, notably in Sudan and Uganda, this shift in roles has contributed to increased alcoholism and domestic violence. The Uganda case in particular underlines the existence of a 'backlash' against new freedoms for women – expressed mostly by older men but also by some women. In Mali, sedentary communities, exceptionally, saw no change in household decision-making, while with some exceptions the previously pastoralist Tamasheq men viewed women's increased responsibility for family affairs positively.

Women also held a wide variety of views. Many were excited about new possibilities opening up for them, the Tamasheq women in Mali being a particularly strong example of this. However, some women saw numerous disadvantages too – they were overburdened with work, health and education services had been destroyed, and new livelihoods often increased the risks to women's health and security. Few women, however, wanted to go back to pre-war days when their contribution and their voice went unrecognised.

The personal dimensions of social change in war: marriage and sexuality

When economic roles change, this can have further impacts, especially when new roles challenge established norms of behaviour. Young girls working as domestic servants, men staying at home minding their children, and mothers sitting in marketplaces selling handfuls of tomatoes while their children run round uncontrolled – these are not the conventional images of idealised manhood and womanhood. They show how far both men and women feel they have had to depart from their expected roles in order to cope with the consequences of conflict.

The biggest challenge to conventional norms is posed when men and women resort to using their sexuality as a survival strategy. The testimonies in all five cases include references to commercial sex work, and also to practices such as frequent re-marriage, sexual partnerships entered into through force or as a protection mechanism, 'marrying up' into higher income-brackets, and other arrangements where sexual favours are provided in return for physical and economic survival. While some people regard these trends as aberrations and deplore them as leading to social and moral degeneration, others may accept them as necessary adaptations to difficult circumstances.

Respondents often observed how marriage practices were changing, although there was no consistent pattern across the case studies. In Uganda and Rwanda, the general trend was for greater freedom of decision-making for women about marriage partners, and stronger legal rights to property. In Rwanda, researchers noted a connection between marital status and openness to notions of women's autonomy - married women and their husbands are generally more 'traditional' in their outlook.

In Uganda, some women had greater freedom, but were criticised – by men and women – for exercising it. Indeed, some older men complained bitterly about the legislation about women's and children's rights introduced by the

current government. In their view, children and women have become uncontrollable as a result of rights and equality policies. For example, a chief said: *'What makes most women not submissive to their husband is the issue of gender equality or women's rights... after a woman gets pregnant, she throws out the man.* She has enough money to look after herself.' They often blamed the bad influence of 'the West' or 'television' or 'education', and saw the trend as evidence of the ongoing conflict between Acholi culture and the state. Moreover, the elaborate courtship which took place in the past, through which parents controlled their children's marriages, no longer happens, according to older informants. Young people contract sexual relations more casually, they said, believing this to be one of the most destructive consequences of war.

The spread of HIV

The research did not deliberately set out to address issues related to HIV/AIDS. However, it did provide evidence for the view that war provides a context in which the virus can flourish. The research suggests that displacement, violence and poverty are important contributory factors.

Displacement involves movement of populations and mixing with others (often in situations of overcrowding), poor public health standards, and lack of privacy. Respondents in northern Uganda, for example, were categorical in their view that displacement - and the sort of life people are obliged to lead in protected villages or camps - contributed to the deterioration of behaviour standards. As they explained it, conditions in camps have suppressed socialisation practices. These include childhood games, and the 'firesides' - the evening instruction sessions in which elders taught Acholi values to children and young people through stories and discussions. This is one reason why young people are said to have abandoned traditional courtship practices in which modesty and responsibility were highly valued. Moreover, adultery and repeated marriage are said to be on the increase, as

overcrowded conditions throw people together in unaccustomed ways. Young people are obliged, through lack of economic opportunities, to depend on the financial support of 'sugar-daddies' and 'sugar-mummies'. Similar comments emerged from the case studies from Juba and Angola.

There is known to be a connection between the *violence* of war and the increased occurrence of rape, and this violence adds another layer of causal factors to the transmission of the HIV virus. This may result from militia (who often suffer from unusually high sero-positivity) raping women of the opposing side or forcing them into 'marriage'. Earlier research in Gulu had identified the military as a major vector for the transmission of the virus, and noted that little action was being taken by military authorities to break this link through education or service projects.[32] In Angola and Juba, many women believed that associating with the military would guarantee their physical security. However, the problem of violence is not limited to the military: the case studies also suggest that war is accompanied by an increase in violence generally, and in particular increases in domestic and sexual violence. This was particularly noted in Juba, where respondents claimed that armed young men now often rape women at gunpoint.

We saw above that the resources necessary for livelihoods, as well as the social networks needed to maintain the resource base, have been eroded as a result of war. The resulting *impoverishment* provides a fertile context for the spread of HIV. This is clear from the extent and variety of strategies evidenced in the testimonies, in which people use sexuality for their economic and physical survival. These are all extremely high-risk behaviours, adopted by people among whom they were not previously typical. In the words of an HIV-positive respondent in Juba who had married six times: *'I have stepped on ashes without knowing there was fire beneath'.*

[32] Unpublished data from the COPE project

Discussion on war and the nature of social change: do gender relations change

The main research question addressed by the project was: do gender relations (using the term in its broad meaning) change as a result of conflict? If this was found to be the case, it would support the idea that gender relations are not fixed, but can adapt to fit new circumstances. Moreover, to the extent that such changes are in the direction of greater equality, it would imply that people might draw something positive out of the violence and destructiveness of war. The question was of practical importance, since ACORD, like many agencies, was undertaking activities in conflict-affected areas which help women to improve their condition and position, yet this was being done without a well-grounded sense of the social processes involved. Unpacking the term 'gender relations', the research team concluded that it is too broad a term to describe the different processes of social change which the testimonies reveal. Gender relations are actually composed of four linked but separate elements, each of which changes in a different way. These elements were defined as roles, identities, institutions, and ideologies.

Gender roles

These are the activities which men and women are expected to carry out on a daily basis within their households or communities, varying according to socio-cultural context; they are often referred to as the gender division of labour. The main findings of the research in relation to gender roles are described above. In summary, war leads women to take on heavier responsibilities, while men's responsibilities tend to reduce. This is partly because many men are absent fighting or are killed or abducted. But it is also

often because the resources which men used to control are no longer available, and because the economic opportunities available in the new situation (for example, petty trade or agricultural labour) are often more acceptable to women than to men. Women, therefore, have a broader range of options through which they can fulfil their domestic responsibilities, while for men the range of options is narrowed.

Gender identities

Gender identities are the expected or idealised characteristics and behaviour of men and women. They are inculcated through socialisation processes as they are practised in each socio-cultural setting. Parents and grandparents 'teach' children how they should ideally behave, by telling stories and teaching games which emphasise the values of the society. People's sense of the right way to behave is also shaped by other institutions including the school, religious institutions, the military, or the state. These institutions usually help to reinforce values that are common in society at large. The research findings suggest that armed conflict does not impact significantly on these idealised 'masculinities' and 'femininities', although it may tip the balance of values towards some aspects rather than others.

This came out particularly in the Uganda study. The old ways of teaching children how to behave are lost, because families break up and because people no longer have the time or the opportunity to devote to this activity. At the same time, other familiar institutions which have a socialising role have fallen into disuse. The institution of clan chiefship, which regulated the behaviour of men and women in the past, has been eroded as a result of historical trends. Institutions such as the chiefship have little application in the mixed and overcrowded conditions of displaced camps. In these circumstances, behaviour, especially of the younger generation, is likely to fall below the expectations of those in authority. The failure of these socialisation mechanisms leads to a perceived lack of balance between the

values of aggressiveness on the one hand, and honour and valour, on the other. Acholi respondents, especially older men, complained that nowadays younger people are acquisitive, individualistic, lacking in respect for religion and for the environment, and have abandoned the rules of engagement in war. The Rwanda case provides a similar example: here, the gender imbalance in the population, resulting from the genocide, leaves many women without prospect of finding a marriage partner. Yet high status continues to be associated with marriage. Many women feel they have lost this status, and with it their sense of a respected identity as a woman. In this respect, it is not the images of manhood or womanhood which change, but rather the possibilities of living them.[33]

Gender institutions/power structures

These include social institutions which control resources (in the community or at national level) such as the household, the army, schools, and local and national government. The importance of institutions is that it is through them that men and women receive or are denied support, status, resources or protection. The way men and women gain access to or membership of them, the way they contribute to them, and the way they are supported and protected by them, helps to shape attitudes and behaviours. Institutions are therefore important in establishing gender identities (Kabeer 1994).

The evidence from the case studies is that in conflict situations, and in the communities addressed by the research, the practices of social institutions may change, but only to a limited degree. Women do sometimes gain decision-making power within the family when they become the main breadwinners. For example, in Somalia, many women had indeed gained economic power within the household. They were seen both by themselves and by their menfolk as the breadwinners, whose decisions had to be

33 <http://www.acord.org.uk/Publications/G&CResearch/annex6rwandaeng.pdf>

respected. Where change takes place within the household, there is a limited possibility that this could increase women's scope for influence and action within the wider community. Examples exist of women taking political roles at community and national levels (Sudan, Uganda), becoming involved in trade (Angola), and entering previously unacceptable areas of economic activity such as currency speculation or the arms trade (Somalia).

However, the evidence is not consistent, and there are many examples in which changes within the household have not worked their way through to broader community structures. In other words, changes in gender roles have not been institutionalised. For example, local authorities and councils still tend to be dominated by men. These councils represent the community and control community functions such as food distribution. Although changes taking place within the household can sometimes influence other institutions, we have to conclude that this influence can be slow in taking effect.

Eritrea provides an example of change being spearheaded within one institution -- in this case the army -- but not being echoed in society at large. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) adopted radical approaches to women's emancipation while the 30-year struggle for independence from Ethiopia continued, encouraging women and men to share both military and support tasks. However, demobilisation and reinsertion into civilian life had very different consequences for male and for female ex-combatants, since corresponding changes have not taken place in society at large. While male ex-combatants were hailed as heroes and targeted for government sponsored assistance schemes, attitudes to female demobilised soldiers were often hostile, especially in their rural home towns. The experience of women ex-fighters had virtually no influence on gender ideologies at household level – indeed, conventional views on women's dress and behaviour appeared to be reinforced after the war, leaving the more vulnerable women ex-combatants isolated, impoverished and unsupported.

The literature on women in war documents many examples in which their experiences encourage them to organise in groups (Cockburn 1998; El-Bushra 2003; UNIFEM 2003). The growth of women's organisations is a marked feature of many post-conflict societies. The purpose of these groups might be to provide services to each other and to the community, to claim women's rights, or to lobby for their inclusion in political life. Women's organisations do exist in the study areas – indeed, in both Uganda and Rwanda women's organisations were instrumental in carrying out the research. However, few had deep roots in the marginalised communities where the research took place; where such rooted organisations existed, they had little profile or power.

In general, in the case study areas, even where women have gained authority and influence within the household, these changes have not been accompanied by corresponding changes in their political or organisational influence outside the household. Women have taken on additional responsibility, without gaining increased power or status.

Gender ideologies

Gender ideologies form part of the value system which supports a given set of gender roles, identities, and power structures. These values are often hard to observe in concrete ways. However, their outward manifestations can be seen in poetry, religious practice and beliefs, proverbs and songs, dress styles or the media.

The general impression reflected in the testimonies is that gender ideologies have changed little. Even where women have taken on greater responsibilities, this is usually in line with previous expectations of their role, which in many cases is to provide what the family needs, at whatever sacrifice it takes. As a Juba respondent described it, *'...women are the walls of the house and men are the roofs. If women understand all this, families*

will stay well.' At the same time, where men have given up trying to be providers, it does not follow that they have given up the ideology of male power over key resources, but simply that those resources have been placed beyond their control. Expectations of the 'right' way to live stay the same.

Indeed, the Uganda research team explained that men have largely lost their authority over women and children, and their control over material resources, and that this has resulted in frustration which has been 'channelled into aggressivity in various highly destructive forms' (see section 1). This supports the analysis, drawn from COPE research material, of the relationship between masculinity, armed conflict and the state in Uganda (Dolan 2002). In this analysis, the increase in harmful behaviour among men (domestic violence, alcoholism, suicide, for example) has to be understood in the context of the national political framework in which the north of the country has been excluded and marginalised from colonial times onwards.

Women's direct involvement in armed struggle was largely limited to Eritrea, where both women and men joined armed forces as fighters, as well as support personnel. Women were also involved in the Rwanda genocide (African Rights 1995). These examples challenge stereotypes of women as natural nurturers and peacemakers. However, they do not appear to have had a significant impact on attitudes generally, nor have they led to long-term changes. The Eritrea case study, indeed, shows just how vulnerable female ex-fighters were to poverty and isolation in the post-war period, as a result of their failure to conform to perceptions of how women should live.

Analysing gender relations: a framework

The following table summarises how the research team defined the elements of gender relations. It also shows how they change as a result of war, and suggests some of the implications of these changes for programming and development interventions.

Elements of gender relations	Definition	How they change as a result of conflict	Implications
Gender roles	Everyday activities of women and men: the division of labour	Women take on more responsibility for providing for the family, men's work is reduced	Women gain confidence in their ability to take responsibility, while men feel 'lost', with their masculinity undermined
Gender identities	Expected characteristics and behaviours of men ('masculinities' and 'femininities')	Survival strategies or exposure to new ways of living may lead to change, but values change, but values	Gap between expected behaviours and ability to meet expectations
Gendered institutions	Institutions (household, community, state, etc.) which shape attitudes and behaviours and which control resources	Women gain some new decision-making power within household as a result of increased economic responsibility, but structures at community, local government and national level remain male-dominated.	Women have responsibility but limited power. Their experiences may lead them to organise, work towards establishing their rights, but the project found few examples in the marginalised communities typical of ACORD's programme areas
Gender ideologies	Culturally determined attitudes and values (including those manifested in religion, language, the media) established over a long time and woven into the fabric of society, which provide justification for the prevailing gender roles, identities and structures	Attitudes and values change very slowly. In some cases they may become more hard-line and more oriented towards male control over women.	The tenacity of patriarchal ideologies may lead to the gains women make being abandoned after the war is over. In some cases there may be a 'backlash' against women's empowerment, resulting in their increased vulnerability.

In summary, violent conflict may create opportunities for redefining social relations, but in so doing it rearranges, adapts or reinforces patriarchal ideologies, rather than fundamentally changing them. This finding has important implications for peace processes and for post-conflict reconstruction generally: as the Somalia case study comments, for example, it remains to be seen whether women's new-found power at the household level will be reflected in the new government structures, or whether men will continue to exclude women effectively from political life.

However, it cannot be concluded that there is no scope for lasting change, as changes in consciousness among women and men are in evidence, and can be built on. Many respondents declared that things will never be the same again. They believe that gender ideologies are beginning to change, because poverty and deprivation are obliging both men and women to share responsibility. A displaced woman in Khartoum expressed a widespread optimism that the old gender order has passed when she declared:

'I think people's thinking has changed. We came to Khartoum with different perceptions and traditions. Our old customs and traditions prohibited men from entering certain places such as the kitchen. Men also thought that women could never think, they are useless and have no right to raise their voices. All these are things of the past, they have changed. This is one benefit of the war, if wars have benefits. All family members have to work, both women and men. We cannot maintain the division of labour because there is no room for that.'

Lessons and challenges

The picture that emerges from the case studies shows that the interplay between gender and conflict dynamics is a complex one. It underlines the danger of forming simplistic conclusions. In fact, the research raises as many questions as it answers. These can be broadly grouped under those relating

to livelihoods issues, those relating more broadly to the relationship between gender and social justice, and those relating to institutional change and reconstruction in post-war environments.

Livelihoods, vulnerability and autonomy

If women are to meet the responsibilities which war imposes on them, it needs to be acknowledged that they contribute significantly to the economy, and should share decision-making on an equal footing with men. They need, in effect, power as well as responsibility. However, such a strategy is not enough on its own: for women's status to change, men's roles too would have to be re-envisioned. The issue is not simply one of the division of labour between men and women. Instead, there is a need to initiate community-level dialogue on economic relations generally within the society, and on ways of redefining rights and responsibilities.

We understand 'vulnerability' to mean a depletion of a community's capital (social, physical, political and psycho-social). The result of this vulnerability is reduced resilience to external shocks. The case studies illustrate how the impacts of war vary for men and women, for young and old, for displaced and hosts, and for different ethnicities or clans. The overall level of vulnerability of a particular community may disguise differences between its constituent groups. Indeed, a community that is surviving may be doing so at the cost of the health and security of one section within it. Looking at the gender variable, the issue is not so much that women bear the consequences of war, but rather that men and women have different vulnerabilities, and that these are intertwined: men's vulnerabilities have negative consequences for women, and vice-versa.

Vulnerability also involves connections between different levels of analysis. For example, many women have acquired greater economic independence at the household level, but they have made relatively few inroads into power

structures at the community level, and this is restricting their ability to fulfil the breadwinning roles they have taken up. Women's livelihoods vulnerability, then, is a social and cultural, as much as an economic issue. It is influenced by the overall cultural climate, as well as by relations within the household.

The concept of 'livelihoods vulnerability' is closely connected to changing power balances. Groups which were vulnerable in the past may gain advantage as a result of war (such as the Hawiye clan in the Lower Shebelle, now directly connected to the current authority) while others (such as the Tunni, Bantu and Brawani) loose power and become more vulnerable.

Is 'vulnerability' the same as 'powerlessness'? The case studies raise the issue of how, and at what cost, 'livelihoods vulnerability' can be transformed into sustainable 'livelihoods security'. Testimonies describe several ways in which war creates the dilemma of security versus emancipation. For the Tamashek ex-slaves, for example, the rebellion in Mali provided an opportunity to de-link from their former masters, but this opportunity has brought with it the loss of the economic protection which the ex-masters used to offer. In the case studies generally, many women find it impossible to gain an income to support their family, except by carrying out activities which infringe gender norms, and hence by risking the support of family and neighbours. At the same time, in acquiring economic independence, women accept the consequences of men's inability to cope with these same changes – an inability that may take highly destructive forms such as alcoholism, domestic violence, and suicide. Would women be better protected if men were empowered to uphold their existing role as protectors and providers? Or would that represent a return to an old life which women would prefer to move on from? And what implications does this have for development policy? Is there a trade-off between short-term protection needs and longer-term strategies for redistributing power?

Gender and social justice

The research raises a number of questions concerning men, and where they fit in a gender approach to analysing conflict. (This point will be taken up again in section 3.) As the Angola case study puts it, 'The research has concluded that gender is not simply about liberating women, but also about seeking more balanced gender relations' (see section 1 on Angola, above). As far as the impact of war is concerned, it is clear that focusing exclusively on women would be unjust, since men also suffer, both directly and indirectly, from the impacts of war. It would also be counterproductive for women, since ignoring men's needs may simply add to women's burdens. The observation that women gain economic responsibility while men loose it, seems to suggest that the relationship between women and men is one of complementarity, and that masculinities and femininities are defined in relation to each other. Mainstream conflict assessment has been slow in recognising that the gendered impacts of conflict impinge on both men and women, and the association of 'gender' with 'women' is still very pervasive. Men and conflict is a challenge which those concerned with issues of gender and social justice must take up, for women's sake as much as for men's.

A second conclusion, linked to the above, is that gender should always be seen in conjunction with other possible factors of social differentiation: it cuts across these and cannot be understood in isolation from them. For the research team, membership of a particular clan or ethnicity was often just as important a factor in determining the impacts of war as gender was. The Somalia case study, for example, suggests that women from the 'minority clans' have suffered most in terms of sexual violence, family disintegration, labour exploitation and loss of assets. Those women who have managed their new responsibilities most successfully tend to be from the more powerful clans, and therefore have a less limited set of opportunities.

The testimonies also illustrate how war impacts on relations between ethnic or clan groups. This might have a liberating effect in some contexts; in Mali, for example, the rebellion hastened the process of restructuring relations of slavery. In general, however, the effect of violence is to increase the powerlessness and marginalisation of discriminated groups, and to widen the gap between them and more powerful interests. Women and men in these groups responded in different ways; however, gender differences did not appear to be a more significant factor of vulnerability than other forms of power imbalance.

Rebuilding institutions

Finally, the research raises cautions about assuming that war provides opportunities for women to carve out a more favourable status, and about the possibility of NGOs supporting this process of change. It suggests that even though the lives of individual women and men may be changed significantly, changes in terms of broader institutional practice, or changes at the fundamental level of ideology, are extremely slow.

Projects designed to capitalise on the potential for change in post-conflict situations cannot realistically be expected to achieve fundamental change in attitudes in the short term. They may not work in women's favour at all, if they are based on policy formulas alone, rather than on deep analysis of the context. However, agencies working in post-conflict situations do need to take account of the changing division of labour between men and women, and provide assistance to women in using their new-found economic strengths. This assistance could include both technical support in terms of business resources (information, credit, for example) and information about rights and opportunities. It might also include support with the longer-term project of changing institutional rules and functions, so that women's new responsibilities can be translated into more equal power relations.

Whether this strategy of capitalising on changes in gender roles is practicable depends partly on the overall national and international political context. If governments exert political will, this may tip the balance. For example, evidence from other studies suggests that in Rwanda attitudes and values are beginning to change, largely because a coalition of women's organisations has levered high-level political will to reform policy (UNIFEM 2003). However, this is not always the case. In Uganda and Eritrea, government's policy commitment to women's rights resulted in a backlash, when the rights framework was seen to conflict with existing norms. Sustaining a desired change will not happen as a natural outcome of armed conflict. Nor can it be imposed by central government. Although it certainly requires strong policy leadership by those in positions of authority and influence, it also needs to be accompanied by widespread grass-roots debate.

Conclusions

The research team had expected to find, firstly, that war would have different impacts on men and women, and secondly that one of the impacts would consist of changes to relationships between men and women. These expected research outcomes were broadly confirmed, but with important reservations. The impacts on men and women did differ, but they differed because their starting points (in terms of their social position) were different. There was little evidence that either men or women suffered significantly greater physical, psychological or economic harm, although the harm they suffered did in some respects take different forms. Those who had been politically marginalised before, continued to be so, and for the most part their deprivation deepened; this was the case for both men and women.

In relation to the impact of war on gender relations, here too the evidence is ambiguous. Change took place consistently, as far as everyday responses to crisis was concerned. However change took place to varying degrees in institutions, and hardly at all at the ideological level. This suggests that

some current policy and advocacy concerns may be misplaced. For example, the research raises doubts about the often-stated assumption that women are the principle victims of conflict. Similarly, it questions whether interventions in post-conflict reconstruction can redress unequal gender relations simply by prioritising women as beneficiaries and participants in assistance programmes.

However, the testimonies do suggest that war may have positive impacts, and open up opportunities for positive change, especially where it exposes men and women to new ideas and new skills. These opportunities can be most effectively exploited when there is public debate between all sections of a community – and all levels of a nation – about what sort of new society is most valued. The hope of using the destructive power of war as a jumping-off point for social transformation is not likely to be achieved, unless a number of conditions are met. These include an in-depth understanding of the complex factors involved, a strong methodology of development based firmly on dialogue and shared analysis, and political commitment at all levels – including the highest levels of the state - towards overcoming the barriers to ideological and institutional change.

Finally, the research team returned to the project's origins in ACORD's gender policy (see Introduction). ACORD's experience (along with many other development agencies) had been that 'gender equality' as described in policy statements seems very different from the way gender works in real life. What solutions did the project offer for this problem? In many ways it opened up more questions than answers. However, it did suggest that a new consensus needs to evolve on *men* in the framework of gender equality approaches. How should development programmes work with men? Should they consider men as gatekeepers of women's rights, or as victims of gender and other inequalities themselves? Are men also disadvantaged? Which should be given greater priority - addressing women's and men's practical needs, or working at deeper levels of ideological discrimination?

Section 3

Men and women, war and peace - do citizens hold the balance?

Section 2 addressed the first research question, namely, what is the impact of armed conflict on gender relations in the study areas? As we have seen, simplistic understandings of these processes are inadequate. In particular, social change takes place in different ways at different levels, with the ideological level being the least susceptible to change. The research further suggests that strategies to support those most directly affected should be inclusive ones. This would mean addressing the situation of both men and women, and addressing differences of gender alongside differences of ethnicity, class and age.

This section (Section 3) describes the results of the project's second research question, namely, whether gender might itself be a contributory factor in armed conflict or organised violence. This part of the analysis was more difficult than the first, since it is largely interpretive, and not all of the researchers felt they had grounds for reaching confident conclusions. Section 3 first considers the theoretical background to this question, and then assesses the evidence provided by the case studies. Thirdly, it suggests some possible directions for peace-building strategies arising from the research.

Power and patriarchy: conceptual resources for conflict analysis

Posing this second research question was a logical outcome of three different, but related, strands of thinking in ACORD's policy and research

work. These were: firstly, finding appropriate models for understanding turbulence and conflict; secondly, looking for ways in which gender analysis can help explain violence; and thirdly, developing frameworks for understanding the systemic nature of power relations. These strands together suggested that a model of violent conflict needed to be developed which took account of complexity, turbulent change, and social relations of power at different levels.

Complexity and conflict

Development agencies began to pay serious attention to armed conflict as a policy issue in the early 1990s, after the end of the cold war and the consequent increase in the number and intensity of wars. This period saw the rise of the humanitarian response to war, and the intensification of pressure for accountability among humanitarian agencies.[34] For ACORD, much of the early policy debates appeared to bear little relation to the conditions it was experiencing in its programme areas, and some of the assumptions on which humanitarian approaches were based came under scrutiny.

'Operationality in turbulence' (Roche 1996), for example, argued that if development agencies were to respond appropriately to turbulent conditions, they would need to develop ways of thinking that were complex and fluid, rather than literal and linear. An example of a linear model was the 'relief-rehabilitation-development continuum' used by humanitarian agencies to define the goals of their work. According to this model, the work of humanitarian agencies progresses from one of these categories to the next. However, comparing this model to real life, it is clear that most situations in which humanitarian agencies work contain elements of short-, medium- and long-term needs mixed together, in varying proportions.

[34] For example, the Sphere Project aimed to bring agencies together to agree minimum standards for humanitarian projects – see <http://www.sphereproject.org>.

Moreover, commonly used concepts such as the 'root causes' of war and the distinction between 'interstate' and 'intra-state' wars gave the impression that wars could be explained by simple factors and fitted into neat typologies. ACORD believed that work on conflict needed to capture the complexity of the web of factors facing the communities affected by it.[35]

Gender, power, identity and violence

Bringing together 'gender' and 'conflict' as disciplines had two implications. On the one hand, it meant that analysis needed to focus more on the lives of ordinary people, and the ways in which they contribute to the course of conflict through their everyday behaviour. On the other hand, the debate about conflict and development needed to draw much more on disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and psychology, which had developed their own approaches to the study of violence and conflict. COPE's initial work on gender questions in conflict analysis [36] raised issues such as violence, identity and power and how these ideas might contribute to explaining wars. The project described in this book was designed in part to explore the relevance of these concepts in the concrete context of development agency programmes. A brief description of these concepts follows.

Power: is often defined by sociologists as a conflict between two parties in which one is obliged, by the threat of sanctions, to submit to the other's will. However, others have recognised that power can be exercised in many ways, which do not always involve a conscious exercise of will. Indeed, the most effective forms of power may be those which are exercised unconsciously, because the relationships involved have been internalised by both parties (Lukes, 1974). The power of parents over their children, or of husbands over wives, is often of this nature.

35 As a founding member of CODEP, the UK Network on Conflict, Development and Peace, ACORD was committed to deepening understanding of conflict and sharing information and analysis.

36 El-Bushra, J. (1998) 'Gendered interpretations of conflict: research issues for COPE' COPE Working Paper no. 5 COPE.

It would be a mistake to imagine that power is necessarily a force for bad. Rowlands, for example, discussing the way development agencies adopted strategies of 'empowerment' (Rowlands 1997), identifies different sorts of power, namely:

- power as domination, or 'power over'
- leadership which helps people achieve goals, or 'power to'
- 'power with', achieved by collective action to tackle problems
- 'power from within', which equates with spiritual strength.

'Power over' is thought of as being in finite supply and a 'zero-sum game', i.e. it always needs both winners and losers. If women, for example, are to gain power, men will necessarily loose it. When power is conceived in this way, those whose power is under threat are bound to respond by resisting attempts to erode it. However, seeing power as a creative and productive process, and one which everyone can share in, may result in different outcomes. Those who are marginalised through 'power over' can find a different sort of strength to make changes to their situation, by drawing on their own resources and on resources which derive from solidarity with others.

Identity: Ethnic, class or gender identities are important components in power relations, since these identities shape people's view of themselves and their relationship with others. Identity encourages some people to see themselves as having a natural right to hold power over others, or conversely to accept the oppression they suffer from others as part of the natural order of things.

Opinions differ as to how far gender identities are fundamental and unchangeable. The 'essentialist' view considers the distinction between men and women to be the most basic division within humanity. In this view, women are essentially nurturing and creative, a feature which is derived from their capacity to give birth, while men are essentially aggressive and

territorial, as befits their origins as hunters and protectors. These characteristics are thought to be part and parcel of being a man or a woman: the fact that not all men and women follow these patterns of behaviour all the time is a testament to the power of social control.

The second view [37] is that gender differences are 'performed', i.e. they are not an intrinsic part of human nature. Far from being natural and immutable, they are socially constructed and therefore can be changed. However, here too there are different interpretations. Some consider that, although gender identities are socially constructed, the social construction is everywhere the same, i.e. one in which women are oppressed. For holders of this view, it is only the details of this oppression which differ from place to place. For others, gender differences are embedded within other factors of difference such as age, ethnicity or class. In this view, gender both *constitutes* other factors of difference and is *constituted* by them. Accordingly, it cannot be taken for granted that women are always and everywhere disadvantaged in relation to men; the opposite may be true in some cases. The nature of men's and women's disadvantage will be so inconsistent from one place to another that gender relations must always be understood in context (Kabeer 1994; Jackson and Pearson 1998).

A range of 'masculinities' and 'femininities' (different masculine and feminine identities) may be produced through the intersection of different social and historical factors. These may help to decide what claims individuals can make on the support of their family and friends. Men and women who offend against the commonly accepted norms for their gender and class run the risk of losing support. For example, in a culture where men are expected to serve in the national army, men who desert, or lodge conscientious objection, can suffer various forms of abuse ranging from

37 Following the 'social relations framework' developed by the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, and the Development Studies Centre at the University of East Anglia, as outlined in the works referred to below.

humiliation to imprisonment or death. In this sense, 'gender' is not so much about differences between men and women but about the divergence between the ideals which men and women are expected to live up to (identities) and the realities which individual men and women actually live. Understanding these differences (between different masculine identities, and between different feminine identities) helps to understand power dynamics within a society, because cultural values prioritise some identities over others, giving rise to a hierarchy of dominant and non-dominant identities.

Violence: The notion of identity has been used in various attempts to explain violence and war. Firstly, some cultures give strong value to agrressiveness (for example, by encouraging children to enjoy games of physical prowess). This has led some commentators to suggest that it is the *distortion* of masculine identities which leads to male violence and war, rather than violence being an inherent masculine trait. For example, evidence from Sierra Leone (Richards 1996) suggests that warlords deliberately played on young men's sense of self, combining enforced violence with exposure to violent films and to drugs.

Secondly, one way in which violence has been explained, at the level of interpersonal relations at least, is the notion of 'thwarting' – the idea that when people are prevented from living their identities in a satisfactory way because of circumstances they cannot control, they are more likely to resort to violence because of the frustrations this generates. ACORD's work on northern Uganda for the COPE project (Dolan 2002a) had already provided an analysis based on the idea or 'thwarting'.[38] This analysis suggested that the conditions of war restrict the range of 'masculinities' that are available for men in northern Uganda to adopt. Dolan suggests that institutions such as the state and the national army have a duty to provide the conditions and

38 A preliminary version of this analysis was presented to the gender and conflict London workshop, and was highly influential in shaping its analysis of the testimony material.

the means whereby men and women can effectively perform the roles expected of them. Yet the reality is that these institutions have failed to provide these conditions, and so, given the hopelessness of their situation, men resort to various forms of abuse and self-harm (including alcoholism, domestic violence, and suicide). Dolan observes that the war has seen:

'...a growing polarisation between those who are able to attain the markers of masculinity and exercise the power which these bring, and those who are unable to fulfil expectations and are thus deeply disempowered.' (ibid. p. 78).

Looking at gender identities and how they relate to violence has also meant considering the varied ways in which women too encourage or perpetrate violence. Women are often in the forefront of demands for aggression in defence of their own interests and their group's interests; they may also be instrumental in perpetuating inter-communal mistrust through their role as educators of new generations (Jacobs, Jacobson et al. 2000; Moser and Clark 2001). They have taken active roles in many armed nationalist movements, and are often more vicious fighters than men (Bennett and others 1996). Indeed, where they achieve political power at a global level, women may be as ardent as men in promoting the global hegemonies that underpin wars.

Men and women living under the shadow of war respond to the pressures it places on them in various ways. This response is due, at least in part, to their sense of what is the right way to behave, their sense of belonging to a community and the rights and obligations that imposes on them, and on the possibilities for action which their position in social hierarchies confers on them. In some respects, however, their response is in defiance of the restrictions which their social position places on them. Men and women, no matter how oppressed their situations may make them, struggle to carve out the most satisfactory niche they can for themselves and their families in the most difficult of circumstances. Their everyday lives require them to make a series of decisions which have consequences both for themselves, and for the

course of the war – which market they will choose to buy and sell at, what stories they will tell their children at bedtime, whether or not they will heed their neighbours' disapproval of their income-generating strategies, whether they will encourage their adolescent children to join the rebels or not. In this way they are 'exercising agency', or exercising what little areas of power are open to them to influence their situations. 'Ordinary' civilians, then, are active contributors to the course of war, and may be in a position to tip the balance between war and peace.

Patriarchy and the structures of oppressive power

The third strand of thinking which influenced the formulation of the 'gender and conflict' research project was social exclusion analysis. Social exclusion analysis focuses on the 'power to act' as the critical factor in enabling and perpetuating systemic discrimination. It identifies the deep roots of this 'power to act' in history and culture, and in the political and economic relationships which reinforce it. Examining the roots of oppression in their different contexts, members of the research team realised that patriarchal gender ideologies contributed powerfully. The value placed by the Acholi in Uganda on men's qualities as warriors, or the ways in which Sudanese or Somali women poets encouraged men to perform feats of bravery in war, were examples of this. Social exclusion analysis encourages researchers to reflect on the way in which different exclusions support each other – for example, girl children are deprived of their right to schooling by parents who are themselves deprived of their rights to livelihoods - so that the world is linked by interlocking power relations, each of which needs to be systematically challenged if justice is to be achieved.

The original formulation of patriarchy as a feminist concept is one in which the power of male elders subordinates women and younger men (Millett 1977). [39] This power may be wielded overtly or tacitly. Many men and women

[39] However, her subsequent analysis focused on gender, not age, relationships.

accept women's subordination as natural, and this may explain why patriarchal systems are so powerful and deeply rooted. Millet goes on to suggest how patriarchy is constructed through the process of socialisation within the family, reinforced by other cultural institutions such as education, religion and literature, and further maintained by economic exploitation and the threat of force.

'Patriarchy' is used to describe systems where the principle of male power is dominant. It does not necessarily describe the domination of men over women. Whether powerful or not, all men gain some benefit from the 'patriarchal dividend'. However, those at the bottom of the pile ' bank more of it than others' (Cockburn 2004). Connell, exploring the position of men in patriarchal systems, developed the concept of 'hegemonic masculinities', in which particular groups of men come to dominate over other men as well as over women through a combination of cultural and historical factors (Connell 1995). Connell talks about 'masculinities' rather than 'masculinity', emphasising the idea that there are many different ways of being a man. These differences are not haphazard but structured into a hierarchical arrangement. Different masculinities have evolved alongside a comparable range of 'femininities', so that both are constructed in relation to each other in a particular historical context. 'Hegemonic masculinities' can be a useful way of understanding the power struggles that give rise to violent conflict.

Evidence from the case studies

What light do the testimonies cast on the concepts of power, identity and violence? The research sought to establish whether the social, political and psycho-social processes which make mass organised violence possible are shaped by men's and women's sense of their identities, and if so, in what way gender identity figures in this process.

Patriarchy and violent struggles for identity and control

Patriarchal struggles for power and control of resources are integral to an understanding of war in the five case study areas. Sudan respondents, for example, despaired at what they saw as the causes of the war: intolerance, greed, and intransigence over religion, traits which they observed on both sides -- *'gender-based violence -- man against man fighting for position'* as one respondent described it (see section 1). The Somalia study brought out clearly the way in which national level struggles for armed supremacy between the 'big' clans impacted on relations between clans at the local level. The Angola team talked about the 'two-way relationship between patriarchy and violence' when they described how political groups had manipulated issues of women's sexuality. The Sudan study brought to the fore the connection between the increased availability of small arms and violent robbery, rape, and forced marriage. The Somalia report particularly (though this is echoed in all the other reports) underlined the use of rape as a weapon of war, deployed as a strategy for the humiliation of rivals. [40]

Respondents describe war as a violent struggle for resources (land, trade, women, children, labour, natural resources, cultural identity and access to state power). Narrators of the testimonies envisage war as a conflict between established, patriarchal, power interests, and make it clear that those wishing to hold onto power will mobilise whatever resources they can to acquire or maintain an advantage, with no one factor appearing as a dominant cause. There are few gains for the men and women of the grass-roots and marginalised communities where ACORD works. For them, the impact of these power struggles has generally meant the destruction of their physical resource base and the degradation of their social networks and cultural dynamism.

[40] See also accounts of rapes in Somali refugee camps in Kenya, in Musse, F. (2004) 'War crimes against women and girls' in Somalia, the untold story: the war through the eyes of women. J. Gardner and J. El-Bushra. London, Pluto Press.

In the case study areas, war has hastened and intensified processes of breakdown which had already begun before the war. The factors which gave rise to these processes of breakdown are complex. As power relations at the macro level unravel and re-form under the impact of war, power relations within and between sub-groups also change. At the same time, the changing relations between groups also influence the progress of the war at the macro level. An example is the relationship between Songhoi agriculturalists and Tamasheq pastoralists in northern Mali, where the two phases of the rebellion involved different antagonists linked in different alliances.

Gender identity and its impact on cycles of violence

Testimonies suggest that gender identities can contribute to violent conflict. War is made possible -- and, once initiated, is perpetuated -- by the existence of certain social and psychosocial conditions. The way people involved in the war (whether directly or indirectly) perceive their duties and allegiances contributes to those conditions. These perceptions are influenced by their ethnic and gender identities – and the two are closely linked, because belonging to a social group inevitably means belonging to it either as a man or as a woman, with all the values and expectations attaching to that identity.

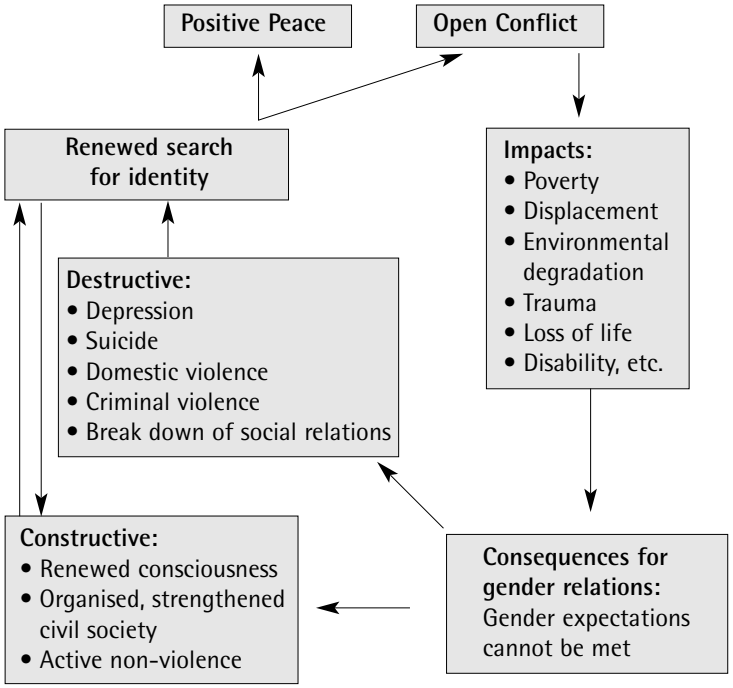
From the Uganda case study (see section 1) it is clear that under the circumstances of war, neither men nor women are able to fulfil their responsibilities in the way they would like. Men are unable to protect and feed their families, women are unable to offer support and care; neither can live up to the ideals of Acholi manhood and womanhood. As a result, they either abandon these ideals, adopt more and more individualistic life-goals or seek to fulfil their obligations in whatever way they can, even if this includes resorting to violent crime, prostitution or other unacceptable livelihoods. Many engage in violence in their personal and domestic relations and in self-harm through alcoholism or suicide. Many young men and

women have joined the rebels as a survival strategy, often encouraged by their families, in the expectation that they will at least be fed.

However, the causal relationships are circular. Acholi respondents strongly equated 'war' not just with the preceding years of rebellion, but with the whole history of colonial and post-colonial relations between the Acholi and the other constituents of the state. In other words, 'war', to them, meant the collapse of Acholi cultural values in the face of their undermining by external forces. At the same time, this cultural collapse has fuelled the war further by forcing men into violent and militarist responses, to which they consider they have no alternative. Violence and cultural erosion are seen, then, as being mutually interrelated in a circular fashion.

Both the Uganda and the Sudan research teams, in their analysis, concluded that there is a link between violence, aggression and identity: '... aggressivity and militarisation represent both a vision and strategy to restore the possibilities of ethnic and gender identity' (see section 1). Violence leads to, and is generated by, poverty, humiliation, frustration, loss of livelihood, failures of governance, political manipulation, and breakdown of inter-communal relations (in the form of trade links, shared labour/production arrangements, and intermarriage, for example). Gender identity is integral to the various elements of this process.

Gender impact flowchart:
'How gender identity can contribute to cycles of violence'



The complexity of conflict causes and impacts

In attempting to summarise the impacts of conflict, the research team confronted the problem that impacts and causes appear impossible to disentangle. The direct consequences of war include personal injury and death, impoverishment and loss of property and other resources,

environmental destruction, displacement, and psychological loss. These have a direct effect on gender identities – not so much on the values which they are based on, but rather on the possibilities of living up to these values. The frustration and desperation which result lead individuals to practise various forms of harm to others and to themselves, including domestic violence, alcoholism, suicide, undesired means of livelihood such as prostitution, violent crime, conscription into militias, and entering into sexual relationships which enhance the possibility of HIV transmission. These in turn aggravate levels of violence and frustration and feed directly into ongoing cycles of violence. Out of this can be constructed a flow-chart illustrating the complexity with which impacts and causes merge into each other.

The testimonies also suggest other dimensions of this complexity. An important one is the link between local and national/international dynamics. Local dynamics co-exist with and interact with macro-level factors in various ways. Discriminated and alienated ethnicities occupy marginal positions in relation to the state, and correspondingly the state resists their claims for greater national prominence. This forms a theme running through the case studies, especially the Uganda and Mali studies.[41] In both these cases, rebel movements were able to exploit people's discontent at what they saw as unequal access to state resources and influence. As a result, no-one from the discriminated groups could detach themselves entirely from the rebel movements, even those who had no wish to engage in violent confrontation. Similarly, where local-level inter-communal relations were good, they were often eroded by war which was taking place at national level. Mali is a case in point, where inter-communal differences which were previously under control erupted into outright mistrust when the macro-actors decided on war. In the Somalia case too, previous power hierarchies between the

[41] In the case of Mali, the rebellion in the north helped trigger national political change, and the altered strategy towards the north of the incoming government was a significant factor in the ending of the insurgency.

leading clans have been rearranged according to the fortunes of the war nationally, while discrimination against the 'minority' clans has been accentuated further.

The research did not look systematically at the impact of conflict on intergenerational relations: however, it became clear from the Uganda and Sudan case studies that this was a significant feature of those wars. Cycles of violence perpetuate themselves over generations: the impact of war on future generations, with the vision of a permanently militarised society as children grow up in violence, is a massive challenge. This prospect emerged clearly as one of the major concerns expressed by informants. Respondents believed that elders' influence is declining; in some cases youth are assuming new roles; in others, their lack of opportunities and prospects has a deeply depressive effect on them. War may also contribute further to intergenerational splits by forcing distortions in gender identities among the young, paving the way for socially unacceptable and destructive behaviour on their part. Institutionalised socialisation processes fall into disuse, partly as a result of parents' inability to fulfil their gender roles, contributing further to intergenerational tension.

War also influenced evolving relations between ethnic or clan groups. While this might have had a liberating effect in some contexts in general the effect of violence was to reduce the powerlessness and marginalisation of discriminated groups even further, and to widen the gap between them and more powerful interests. Women and men in these groups responded in different ways; however, gender differences did not appear to be a more significant factor of vulnerability than other forms of power imbalance. War impacts on the poor and marginalised, whether they are men or women.

The processes by which conflict (a normal and natural social function) turns into violence and war are therefore complex and multi-layered. Causes become effects, effects generate further causes, individuals and groups are

caught up in cycles of violence from one generation to the next and contribute to them by their decisions and behaviours, and renewed conflicts emerge out of old ones.

Ways out: strategies for conflict transformation

Possibly the most striking finding for the researchers was also the most obvious one, though one that can hardly be repeated often enough: that war has a devastating impact on individuals and communities, most of whom have played little direct part in initiating or encouraging it. The case studies, describing the experiences of ordinary citizens in armed conflict, reveal appalling human suffering, loss of livelihoods, erosion of social relations, and loss of faith in the future. Testimonies from all the case studies call overwhelmingly for peace, as this quotation from a displaced community leader in Khartoum reveals:

If all the people in the camp were out in this big yard, and you asked them what they need, they would all say 'PEACE'. But who listens?

Researchers realised just how devastating and widespread the physical, psychological and social consequences of war have been for the communities ACORD works with, and how far programmes have to go to address the need for sustainable peace. Indeed, ACORD learned that some of its actions had had unintentionally negative effects, as in Somalia for example, where respondents from excluded clans described how ACORD had, like most other intervening agencies, unconsciously privileged other already better-off groups with assistance.

Wanting peace, however, is not necessarily the same as wanting reconciliation. The testimonies from Mali for example show that the same people who want peace also harbour feelings of mistrust towards the other side, even (or perhaps more) after hostilities have subsided. Respondents

were generally not confident that major stumbling blocks (such as differences of religion, in the case of the Sudan) could be overcome. Respondents also despaired of the stubbornness and self-interest of their leaders and saw no way of overcoming this or of calling the elites to account.

One of the main lessons from this research was the need for development agencies working in conflict-affected contexts to contribute actively to the reduction of armed and violent conflict, rather than merely adapting to it and responding to its consequences. This will require them to draw on the experience of those engaged in peace-building and conflict resolution. However, this experience has been mixed. John Paul Lederach, a foremost exponent of Mennonite peace-building practice, hints at radical differences of approach in the conflict resolution profession when he describes his experience of 25 years as a conflict resolution trainer. This experience led him to critique the approaches in which he had originally been trained in North America. He described these as 'too narrow, often out of context, and presumptuous', i.e. based on a presumption of superiority on the part of the trained specialists (Lederach 2000 p. 46). He suggests that conflict resolution, as commonly taught, exhibits a *'rhetoric* of cultural sensitivity' (emphasis added). In contrast, his own experience led him to 'an orientation rooted in the centrality of context, culture and empowerment' (ibid p. 47). People confronting violent conflict need the opportunity to work out their own problems (context), building on their own social and personal mechanisms (culture) in their own way (empowerment).

Lederach's insistence on a 'bottom-up' approach to peace-building based on 'context, culture and empowerment' finds support from the case studies presented here. The importance of understanding the dynamics of conflict within specific historical and cultural contexts, and avoiding 'one-size-fits-all' solutions, is clearly borne out. Different cultural elements – gender and other identities, political relationships, economic systems for example – interlock. Complex issues of cultural identity and cultural change – such as

the role of traditional elders in conflict resolution for example, a hot issue in northern Uganda – are critical to the identification of ways out of conflict impasses. Conflict resolution specialists impose pre-defined solutions on such situations at their peril.

Lederach's third element of 'empowerment' is the most critical of all for development workers, since this engagement with issues of power in all their complexity is what provides them with much of their raison d'etre. Looking again at the different types of power identified by Rowlands (see page 64) suggests that the challenge of post-war transition is to develop a new consensus on how different kinds of power in society are to be valued. Conflict in and of itself is a natural expression of social difference and of humanity's perpetual struggle for justice and self-determination. The challenge of conflict transformation is not to abolish conflict, but rather to put a stop to the cyclical nature of violent conflict by acknowledging and channelling this struggle into constructive directions. The case studies suggest there may be groups of citizens – generally women and young people, but sometimes categories peculiar to the context such as Malian ex-slaves – who appear at the cutting edge of social change, and who therefore hold in their hands the potential to tip the balance between positive and negative change.

Perhaps the flow-chart depicted above could become an important tool in this process, since it suggests that the vicious cycle of cause and effect may be turned round, and that dialogue on a new consensus about values and identities could succeed in breaking the circle. Could that lead to a *reduction* in violence, economic vulnerability, inequalities and HIV transmission, rather than exacerbating them? This might mean thinking about a new regime of gender relations, building on notions of 'power with' or social capital. It would mean establishing how commonalities and solidarity might turn the tide against violence, in preference to 'power over' and the sexual politics of domination.

To achieve this, we would need to recognise the capacity of ordinary citizens – men and women, young and old – to become actors in conflict transformation. Individuals attempt to create a viable and satisfying life for themselves, in spite of the limitations their social context imposes on them. All individuals exercise agency in this way, whether or not they have power. Rather than focusing attention on the larger-than-life figures of history – the warlords, politicians and bankers for example – the concept of 'agency' encourages us to recognise how the 'ordinary' man and woman influences the course of war through everyday choices. Lack of formal power does not deprive people of resilience or of capacity to resist what they consider to be unwanted pressures. The real work of development agencies may be to identify and support this resilience by initiating debate and dialogue about what sort of society people want to see.

Conclusions

ACORD has not been unique in reaching the conclusion that development agencies should change their approach to peace-building. Development agencies generally have tended to move towards the adoption of 'conflict-sensitive approaches to development'. [42] Much progress has been made in adapting the processes of development agencies (programme design, monitoring and evaluation, for example) to this new approach. However, a deep focus on contextual understanding has been less in evidence, and there has been little work on building up a gendered perspective on conflict-sensitive development.

In terms of the strategic implications of the research for development agency policy and directions, the conclusion that the research teams drew is

[42] Anderson, M. (1999) Do no harm: how aid can support peace – or war. Lynne Reinner, Boulder & London first coined the phrase 'conflict-senstive approaches'. See also the Conflict-sensitive approaches to development, humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding – a resource pack prepared by International Alert and five other agencies in 2004.

that agencies must now address conflict issues directly, rather than struggling to carry out 'traditional' development work in difficult surroundings. This would mean a change of mind-set at many levels – working 'in' rather than 'on' conflict, addressing the psycho-social and political dimensions of conflict impacts rather than just the material deprivations, for example. The focus on gender identity has led to a further conclusion: that agencies should see themselves less as purveyors of services and material assistance but more as supports to communities in creating the conditions for the emergence of new identities and social values.

Section 4

Methods and tools for research in turbulent contexts

Methodologically, the research addressed four challenges: firstly, what methods are appropriate for understanding the experiences of ordinary citizens in conflict, given the sensitive nature of these experiences and the possible consequences to informants of disclosure? Secondly, what methods enable non-academic researchers, namely staff of development and humanitarian agencies, to acquire insights into the complexity of social change in conflict, given their pressures of time and other responsibilities? Thirdly, how can such agencies combine the need to 'extract' research findings for planning purposes with the need to afford dignity and 'ownership' to the informants, given that the nature of the subject under study is potentially deeply personal or politically risky? Finally, given the concerns described in section 3 about investigating the personal, social and ideological dimensions of conflict, what methods would be appropriate to such a broad framework?

Drawing on the experience of its Gulu programme in Uganda, which had considerable experience of oral testimony research methods (see Introduction), the research team decided to adopt oral testimony [43] as its main research method, complemented as appropriate by PRA and standard survey methods, and by data from secondary and official sources. The project

43 The Panos Institute describes oral testimony as '... the result of free-ranging, open ended interviews around a series of issues, drawing on direct personal memory and experience.' (Panos (2001) Giving voice: a practical guide to implementing oral testimony projects. London, Panos Institute, Panos Oral Testimony Programme).

collected 136 testimonies from the five locations. In addition, a desk analysis was carried out of testimonies already taken for other purposes in Rwanda. PRA exercises included focus group discussions, some structured around social exclusion analysis, and transect walks. Research teams in each of the localities analysed the testimonies and other material. The whole study was synthesised at a joint analysis workshop involving all five of the main case studies.

The project adopted oral testimony (OT) as its core methodological tool because it has potential to address some of the practical difficulties of carrying out in-depth research at community level in situations of insecurity. As indicated in section 3 above, one of the concerns which gave rise to the project was that conflict analysis generally tended to focus attention on the 'big players' – the politicians and the warlords – rather than on the 'ordinary' citizens who nevertheless influence the course of wars through their everyday behaviour. The project understood war to be a 'process' rather than an 'incident', and a process whose impact extends well beyond the immediate, material domain to affect social relationships and identities. However, people living in conflict-affected areas are understandably reluctant to talk freely about their experiences and views because of fears about security, or because they are not willing to share personal and painful experiences in public. It was hoped that the choice of OT as a method would:

- enable respondents to share their experiences without fear of exposure or intimidation
- reflect the realities of people's everyday lives and personal experiences
- illustrate how people interpret events, and bring to the fore their priorities and values
- give a voice to the powerless and those who are too often ignored or spoken for
- generate information for dialogue and sharing of experience
- reflect conflict as a dynamic process, rather than merely describe a current situation

Assessment of the methodological implications (the potentials, constraints and lessons learned about the OT method) was the third main research question. This section describes how the research was conducted, and comments on the suitability of oral testimony as a research method in the circumstances of the participating programmes.

The research process [44]

Stage one: preparation

Planning for the research project was carried out at two workshops, in Timbuktu (May, 2000) and in Nairobi (September, 2000). The Timbuktu workshop discussed the methods to be used in the research and it was here that the oral testimony approach was adopted. This resulted in the Timbuktu Guidelines, intended to provide an overview of the OT process for the benefit of programme teams (ACORD 2000). The Nairobi workshop finalised the overall research questions, and identified the specific objectives and schedules for each of the country case studies. These workshops, and the London analysis and dissemination workshop which followed the fieldwork, proved to be invaluable in terms of exchanging information between the programme research teams, sharing insights, and developing the direction of the project as a whole.

Following the Nairobi workshop, each programme identified a programme researcher, who was assigned responsibility for managing the case study fieldwork in collaboration with the principal researchers of the project. Each of these programme researchers was responsible, firstly, for introducing the proposed project and its implications to the programme staff as a whole.

[44] Fuller information can be found in Sahl, I. (2002). Methodology report. Gender-sensitive programme design and planning in conflict-affected areas, ACORD and El-Bushra, J. (2003). 'Fused in combat: gender relations and armed conflict' Development in Practice 13(1&2). Also, see annex 3 for details on the oral testimony guidelines developed by ACORD - known as Timbuktu Guidelines.

They then had to decide on the composition of the team that would carry out the fieldwork and contribute to the programme-level analysis. While some programme researchers decided to use an entirely internal team, others recruited external persons on a temporary basis during the fieldwork. In one case (Uganda), the researcher contracted a local NGO to carry out the fieldwork: this NGO had been created as a result of the original Panos oral testimony project and was closely linked to Gulu programme. Programme researchers then trained the teams, following the Timbuktu Guidelines.

Programmes then drew up a community profile from available secondary data and PRA exercises, and made plans for identifying respondents. Respondents were grouped around factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, mode of living (rural, urban, migrant, displaced), marital status, or occupation (farmers, pastoralists, ex-fighters, etc.), with the categories varying from one case study to the other in accordance with the specific research interests of each. The aim was not to draw up representative samples, but to include both male and female individuals from all relevant groups. In seeking individuals from these categories who were willing to be interviewed, researchers first started with ACORD programme beneficiaries. In addition, elders, community leaders, or neighbourhood authorities suggested names of potential interviewees. Of the 136 interviews conducted, 72 were with women and 65 with men. Alongside the oral testimonies, some programmes also organised focus group discussions. For example, in Gulu there were 8 such sessions, with older men, older women, young men, single mothers, displaced men, non-displaced men, non-displaced women, and children.

Organisational support and back-up was established during this phase. Research teams were provided with fieldwork equipment: laptop computers, tape recorders, video cameras, still cameras and stationery. (Use of this equipment for the purpose of recording interviews was conditional on the consent of the respondents.) Authorities were approached in order to obtain official support for the work, an important step given the sensitivity of the

issues to be raised. This helped in obtaining the required permits and endorsement letters, and paved the way for contacting local leaders and other key contact persons, as well as the intended respondents. Contacting the authorities involved clarifying for them the research objectives and the eventual use of findings, in order to create transparency and build trust at an early stage.

Stage two: conducting the research

The local consultation which took place prior to the fieldwork was important in generating the trust of authorities and narrators and their communities. Particular attention was given to security issues: it was emphasised that security of staff, anonymity of respondents, confidential storage and use of data, and security of testimonies would be maintained. Most of the testimonies were collected through one-to-one interviews in the respondents' homes. Some interviewees (notably in Somalia) expressed willingness to be interviewed but only in the more neutral space of the ACORD office rather than in their homes. In the teams' observation, respondents tended to start with some reluctance but ended up more confidently, giving their stories with little or no reservation. Some requested research teams to ensure that their stories were told as widely as possible so that the truth as they saw it would be known.

Researchers used different methods of data recording but the most common was tape recording backed up by written notes. Video recordings were made in some cases. Consent was always obtained for audio or video recording; indeed, some narrators welcomed the documentation process and were interested to see their pictures and listen to their voices after they were documented. All testimonies were originally recorded and transcribed in the local language of each group, and then translated into a *lingua franca* if necessary, and from there into English. For example, interviews in Mali were carried out in whichever local language was applicable (Songhoi, Kel-

Tamashek, or Maure) and translated -- first into French, and then from French to English. After transcription and translation, the transcript was filed in a secure place with relevant information about the respondent attached. Each project designed its own system of notation for transcriptions, for ease of later reference and in order to protect the identity of informants. However, in the planning stage the researchers had neglected to draw up guidelines for notation systems, with the result that the systems used by the different programmes were not uniform.

Stage three: analysis

Initial analysis of the testimonies, focus group discussions, PRA material and secondary data was done jointly by the research teams. Some teams arranged regular review meetings in which team members shared transcripts, identified commonalities, differences and gaps, cross-comparisons, supporting information required, and so on. It was decided during the early stages of the research that whatever analytical methods were used, they must involve all members of the research team in a participatory fashion. Besides the research team, the analysis included external resource persons where possible as a quality safeguard, to minimise the subjectivity of individual interpretation.

The process of analysis (assisted by guidelines drawn up by the principal researchers) started by comparing and drawing conclusions from a thorough reading of the testimonies. Tentative conclusions were triangulated with secondary data drawn from other sources and from participants' own knowledge of the context. This was then linked to the two main research questions: the impact of conflict on gender relations, and the contribution of gender identities to conflict.

In relation to the first question, the guidelines proposed a matrix catering for the socio-cultural, psychological, economic, political and human dimensions

of conflict at the individual, household, community, national or regional, and international levels. This sort of analysis was thought to broaden understanding of causes and consequences, as well as providing a detailed understanding at each level of analysis of the impact on gender relations, generally from the viewpoint of the respondents themselves. An example of the impact matrix developed in Mali can be found in annex 2. This attempt to draw out common patterns brought to the fore certain commonly recurring phenomena, such as the increase in domestic violence, and the fact of women taking new roles, while men are surrendering some of their roles to women. It also enabled researchers to look beyond the mere occurrence of violent conflict to issues of displacement, refugees and diasporas, and how these population dynamics and interactions have brought about new cultures that have impacted on the original communities, both positively and negatively.

However, the matrix was only partially successful. The subject-matter of this research project is an extremely complex one and involves a whole series of intertwined cause and effect relationships for which few analytical templates are available or could be imagined. Impacts revealed by the research were numerous, contradictory and subject to varied interpretation. In Uganda, this led the research team to feel that the matrix was too unwieldy a tool to describe the complexity of the cause and effect relationships, and it was abandoned, putting its use as a vehicle for summarising the overall findings into question. The Uganda study developed an impact flow diagram in the form of a 'conflict tree' (see Uganda case study section 1), and this idea was later developed further as the flowchart presented in section 3.

The second research question, namely the contribution of gender identity to conflict, proved virtually impossible to answer directly from the research data, and some teams abandoned the attempt to address it. They felt that the methods they had used did not enable them to draw any but the most

tentative conclusions on that question. Others did develop a response, drawn indirectly from the research data and based on the researchers' own further analysis. Discussion at the London workshop was especially important for the second research question, and further discussion there did result in some broad indications being agreed upon. In this the team was assisted by researchers who had been involved in related projects.[45] One presented perspectives on masculinity and violence based on the COPE Uganda study (Dolan 2002a), the other made critical observations on the basis of social exclusion analysis. Both these challenging inputs focused minds on the link between patriarchy and violence, and helped the group to see new connections and contradictions and hence to extend the analysis to more abstract levels.

Stage four: writing up and dissemination

After fieldwork and programme-level analysis, the five teams met in London (October, 2001) to share their findings, develop joint conclusions, and explore dissemination strategies. They presented the findings to a Round Table attended by other interested researchers and relevant NGOs. The workshop was partly an opportunity for training in dissemination methods, and sessions were held on identifying advocacy strategies, on the use of the internet for data collection and research dissemination, and on theatre and video for development. These helped participants to see their material from new perspectives and refine their analysis, as well as enabling them to plan ways of presenting it. The lesson learned was that research processes -- planning, data collection, analysis and dissemination -- should be seen as an iterative process of deepening understanding, rather than as a set of separate steps.

45 Chris Dolan, international researcher for the COPE project, and Niki Kandirikirira, previously Programme Co-ordinator of the Namibia programme where the social exclusion analysis had been developed.

After the London workshop, programme researchers finalised their reports. In doing this, they used excerpts from the testimonies to illustrate the general conclusions of the study. These excerpts present an impression of the material on which the conclusions were based. However, they do not do justice to the richness or significance of the individual testimonies in their full versions. Presenting excerpts also falls short of responding to the desire of many narrators to have their story told. Such a goal could only be reached if the testimonies were eventually published in their full form.

Programmes made use of the findings of the research in a number of ways. In the Sudan, for example, the experience led to programmes linking gender differences more closely to differences of ethnicity, age, class, etc. They have also made more use of OT methods, social exclusion analysis and research in general. This has enabled them to take a stronger and more credible role in conflict transformation work. The Angola programme diversified its gender equality strategies. In Uganda the research contributed towards an expanding peace-building programme and to an increased focus on working with youth. ACORD took many of the ideas which came out of the project into another research project aiming to strengthen local peace-building capacities. [46]

Practical problems affecting the research process

Although all five programmes broadly followed the same process, practical constraints disrupted timing in Mali, Uganda and Angola. In all three cases, the main impact was to reduce the time available for analysis.

In Mali, the project first collected a large number of testimonies in the preparation stage before the Timbuktu guidelines had been developed. Many of these took the form of structured interviews rather than open-ended

46 'Participatory Action Research to Strengthen the Capacity of Marginalized People to Resolve Conflict of Interest And Achieve their Rights Without Recourse to Violence' involved community based organisations in Uganda, Sudan, Angola and Mali in identifying and monitoring community peace-building indicators.

ones. Plans were re-formulated as a result of the Timbuktu and Nairobi workshops. However, the project researcher became seriously ill, and work stopped during her absence for several months. On her return a new, but smaller, set of interviews was carried out adhering more closely to the Timbuktu Guidelines, and complementary PRA research was carried out to amplify the findings.

The participation of the Gulu programme in Uganda was disrupted during the project period by two events. Firstly, the outbreak of ebola fever in Gulu between November 2000 and February 2001 effectively closed the whole programme down during that period. All programme activities had to be rescheduled. Secondly, the programme began restructuring in April 2000, and this continued in one form or another throughout the project.

The Rwanda programmes reviewed their participation in the project in mid 2000 after the project researcher left ACORD. Given the number of testimony projects which had been carried out in the country, the Rwanda programme decided to consolidate a selected group of these rather than conduct new fieldwork. The Angola programme then agreed to take the place of Rwanda in the project, following the participation of its main researcher in the Nairobi meeting. This meant that the Angola programme began its initial research planning only at the beginning of 2001.

The main priorities in managing the project were co-ordinating the different case studies, and developing cohesion across the team as a whole. All programme research teams received at least one visit from one of the principal researchers: Sudan and Somalia received more than one, while in the case of Mali there was a series of consultations rather than one in-depth visit. Apart from this provision, teams were expected to be relatively autonomous during the fieldwork and initial analysis phases. In practice this provision was not really adequate: some researchers felt the need for more intensive interaction with an 'external sounding-board', including more

frequent visits. This was especially important during the setting up and analysis phases.

The strengths and weaknesses of oral testimony as a research method

Oral testimony proved its worth as a means of communication in turbulent contexts. Respondents, whatever their personal histories, welcomed the opportunity to talk, and wanted their voice to be heard. The information they presented enormously enriched the understanding of conflict as a dynamic process, and of the involvement of ordinary citizens in the social change that accompanies it. As a qualitative research method, the added value of OT is that it provides first-hand and open-ended access to the values and feelings of informants, which are the elements normally missing in most quantitative surveys. Unanimously, project researchers valued OT as an intensive learning experience. They particularly valued its capacity to provide in-depth knowledge of realities as seen by the grass roots. The information it potentially offers covers a wide range (socio-cultural, economic, political, environmental, etc.). It often offers surprises because it is spontaneous and not focused on pre-arranged subjects. Much of the information it reveals is highly sensitive and not normally talked about.

Interviewees viewed the method as an opportunity for their voices to be heard and their stories to reach a wide audience. It therefore provides a seed for self-advocacy. This was especially important for discriminated and intimidated groups who dare not voice their opinions in community meetings or public gatherings.[47] Because OT permits anonymity, it gives respondents the courage to tell their stories openly and with confidence. In that respect, OT is a tool for empowerment. OT proved especially useful for women, who often face social pressure to avoid active participation in group

[47] For example, a testimony from Somalia declared: "our hands and legs are tied, and our mouths are shut"

discussions or gatherings that bring them together with men. OT was found to be especially useful in the context of oral communities. A specific example is Somalia, where systems for communicating and exchanging information are highly dependent on story-telling, poems, songs, proverbs, and sayings, which are usually memorised.

Other sources or methods add value to testimonial data. Used in conjunction with oral history, PRA techniques were found particularly useful because they provide a range of other views on the same issue, confirming, amplifying or challenging information provided in the testimonies. Focus group discussions were found particularly useful in Uganda (perhaps as a contrast to the many OT projects already carried out there). Bringing together a number of people of a particular category, focus groups enable the particular perspective of that group to come to the fore. Views expressed in focus group discussions may be more grounded than those of individual interviewees, since mutual interrogation is possible. However, participants may be less willing to speak their minds in public than in a one-to-one interview.

Members of the research teams perceived a number of disadvantages with the method, however. Practical problems include technical problems with equipment. If, for example, damage occurs to a tape recorder during an interview, that may lead to the collapse of that testimony unless alternative methods of recording are in place. Another practical constraint is the problem of translating bulky texts from the local language into English or other *lingua franca*. This is not only time-consuming, but also requires in-depth language knowledge – both of the language spoken and also of locally specific dialects, phraseology or contextual references. This is not only a practical problem but also poses methodological problems since translation is inevitably a personalised and inexact process, never capable of completely representing the original speaker's words. The role of the researcher in transcribing, translating and selecting testimony material has long been the subject of debate among oral history specialists (Bornat and Russell 2004).

OT is highly dependent on the willingness of the narrators to give their testimonies, and hence on the skills of the interviewers in building trust and rapport. These skills include listening, grasping ideas even if implicit, communicating, and breaking down blockages. Interviewers must appreciate the value of gradual and open-ended processes of communication. If they fail to do this the process runs a number or risks: for example that the interviewer may (perhaps inadvertently) exert pressure on the narrator to talk, or to talk about a particular subject area, or that the interviewer will suggest particular opinions or interpretations, or that the respondent will find the interviewer's behaviour intimidating. Some (a small minority) of the ACORD interview transcripts provide evidence of this behaviour.

Some of the practical problems that arose in the conduct of the interviews could be regarded either as strengths or as weaknesses. Most of the researchers, for example, considered interruptions and divergences as weaknesses of the method. The narrator can simply leave the interviewer to entertain guests, converse with family members, or deal with animals. This distraction affects the testimony, especially if it involves narration of an event that occurred over time and depends on the person's memory. Narrators may deviate in telling their stories or take a long time. For the oral historian, however, the deviations and distractions are an integral part of the process of communication, on a par with information supplied verbally.

Information that comes from OT is difficult to handle and to analyse, with interpretation depending heavily on the researcher's own opinions and subjectivity. Researchers are influenced by their personal stand in relation to the informants, regarding them perhaps as unimpeachable witnesses, perhaps on the contrary as being over-influenced by emotion. For example, in this research, narrators' statements often assert that children respected their parents more in the past. Is this a true statement? Without corroborative evidence, researchers cannot be sure whether it reflects a verifiable change, or whether it reflects negativist interpretations of the

present, or both. Conversely, if a woman narrator describes how a party of girls was raped, researchers may be right to wonder if the woman was indirectly alluding to her own experience of being raped. However, they do not have the right to assume so, unless this conclusion is supported by other information. There are therefore risks, both in taking the content of the testimonies entirely at face value, and in assuming that they are 'not true'.

Generally, researchers felt that this approach would be particularly useful in identifying the scope of an issue about which little is known already. It might point to areas needing further investigation through other, more quantitative, research methods. However, as a means of collecting purposive information, they viewed OT as an incomplete method, needing to be triangulated with data from other sources. This was very clear in its failure to answer the question about the impact of gender identity on conflict.

The efficacy of oral testimony for research in contexts requiring sensitivity to personal feelings and security has been validated. However, its use in this project has not provided the programmes which undertook it with neat answers; rather, it has illustrated the breadth and variety of people's perceptions of change. In relation to gender relations, there is no doubt that change is happening, but how should this be interpreted? Are we seeing fundamental or superficial change? Do people see their lives as being better or worse than before, and how far is their interpretation of this question coloured by their gendered experiences? How far are the interventions of development agencies coloured by *their* perceptions and values? In exploring these questions, the project has reflected both the complexities and the dynamic nature of the conflict-affected situations it sought to understand.

Open-ended and participatory research as a tool for development

The oral testimony method proved beneficial to development programme staff because it exposed them to the first-hand accounts and perceptions of

people who have lived through exceptionally traumatic times. The research team welcomed the unique insights which they were able to gain from the research process. However, the exercise raised a number of questions about how research is being used within development agencies, and about how it could be used in future.

The principle difficulty in applying open-ended methods in the context of development projects is that they can seem inconsistent with the organisational culture of development agencies. Providing timely management information, which feeds into established monitoring frameworks and reporting deadlines, will not be well served by OT or similarly open-ended methods. OT requires a different style of analysis, one which seeks out connections and contradictions, and which regards ambiguities and inconsistencies as intellectual resources rather than flaws to be ironed out. For development workers who are used to seeing research as a supporting function in project management, juggling with these two quite distinct intellectual styles may be an unfamiliar and not necessarily productive exercise.

OT is time-consuming, not only in the actual interviews but also in the long and tedious process of transcription and translation, and in analysis, which is done in teams and needs to be repeated at different stages. Research projects carried out by development agencies may not always have the luxury of unlimited time, so hard decisions may need to be made between depth of analysis on the one hand and getting the project finished on the other. Time is often in short supply in development agencies, especially when working to funders' deadlines and management demands.

NGO staffing structures may also constrain the effectiveness of open-ended methods. A review of the transcripts suggests that the most successful interviewing techniques were demonstrated by senior staff, who combined a clear understanding of the goals of the research with long experience of

community-level interactions. Inevitably, such individuals tend to have multiple demands on their time. In practice, widening the scope of interviewers to include less experienced people was necessary, partly to avoid reliance on a small number of over-pressured staff, partly to fill language gaps, and partly to ensure breadth of interpretation, but this may have sometimes happened at the expense of quality interviewing. Again, this raises the question of why a programme feels the need to conduct research in this style, and whether its focus is on information gathering or on process.

There are compelling reasons for a development agency to overcome these difficulties. Developing a sturdy analysis is particularly necessary in a study such as this where understanding the context involves complex links between causes and effects. Moreover, where programming decisions may be based on the conclusions of the study, programme designers need to know not only that social change is -- or is not -- happening, but also how to interpret it, i.e. whether it is 'real' change or just an adaptation to new conditions, whether it should be understood as positive or negative, and what the short- and long-term consequences of programming decisions might be. [48]

More fundamentally, the use to which OT and similar methods is put depends in part on what the development agency sees as its main function, and in particular on the place of 'dialogue' in its methodology. Like any other data collection method, oral testimony represents one version of the 'truth', presented through the prism of an individual's own personality, history, memory, interests, and purposes, and has to be interpreted in this light. Even when researchers consider statements made by narrators to be historically inaccurate or based on wrong interpretation, the testimonies still represent the 'truth', in that they are what the narrator believes to be the case. The

[48] See Forced Migration Review issue no. 9 on gender and displacement for examples of projects aiming to reinforce women's status in post-conflict situations, but failing to do so because of insufficiently deep analysis.

purpose of oral testimony is not to discover representative information about a specific subject, nor to produce generalisable results -- hence the lack of necessity to adopt rigid sampling techniques. Rather, it is an open-ended process of communication between different actors, with the goal of deeper and more widely shared knowledge.

In conclusion, for all the strength that oral testimony and other 'participatory' methods have demonstrated, this project has been in essence an extractive process. It stands or falls, in most people's eyes, on its ability to contribute to a knowledge base accessible to development programmes and similar operational and policy-oriented bodies. Does the need to achieve this increase in knowledge obscure the potential of oral testimony for giving voice to the voiceless? If the latter had been the main objective of the research, would its conduct have been different? How could the process have been appropriated by the communities and individuals which generated the information? In focusing analysis on our research questions, and in preparing reports which discarded extraneous material and quoted selectively, have we distorted the voices of the respondents? The methodology of OT as developmental tool is still in need of elaboration.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Social exclusion analysis

The idea of social exclusion originally evolved in Europe and the USA as a framework for identifying the social barriers to economic opportunity amongst marginalized groups within wealthy societies. The approach was later adapted by those seeking a comprehensive understanding of the causes and manifestations of racism and other forms of systemic discrimination.

The social exclusion framework takes as its starting point the idea that all forms of systemic discrimination have similar roots and function in similar ways, so that understanding the mechanisms of, say, racism will help us to understand other 'isms' such as sexism or ageism. Indeed, these may combine with each other and with different social contexts to produce a wide range of forms of discrimination -- against pastoralists, single mothers, youth, or the mentally ill, as random examples, all operating according to similar principles. This means that there are large numbers of people in the world who suffer multiple and mutually reinforcing discriminations: at the same time, there are few people in the world who are completely free from targeting by one 'ideology of superiority' or another.

These different exclusions add up to a systemic pattern which links groups and communities all over the world. It is difficult to understand, say, ethnic tension in former Yugoslavia, without also understanding the broader context (for example, how this problem links with the dynamics of the cold war and its aftermath) as well as the internal dynamics of how ethnic tension plays out within the different ethnicities concerned, for example in gender relations.

The framework rests on the view that these systems of exclusion are composed of four elements: firstly, discriminatory attitudes and values, and secondly, historical and cultural circumstances which empower the dominant groups. Thirdly, in combination, these values and sources of power create conditions in which discriminatory actions against subordinate groups become not only permitted but even expected. Fourthly, over time these actions build up into a systematic pattern of denial of rights and opportunities (an 'ideology of superiority'). The targets of discrimination respond variously, either resisting, accepting, denying or actively buying in, and in the process often helping to perpetuate the system. The notion of power having both overt and unexpressed forms permeates the model.

Discriminatory values are hard to identify, but can often be seen in people's everyday behaviour, or by statements which reflect the assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices they hold. To use a couple of UK examples, one could point to the commonly-held assumptions that young black men are disruptive and violent, or that homeless people are schizophrenics. These value judgements tend to vary from culture to culture and are often reflected in language, religion, or the media. They are part of everyone's group identity, and there can be few individuals who are immune to the influence of such pressures. Holding prejudices does not in itself constitute discrimination: it becomes discrimination only when translated into an action which deprives someone of their rights and opportunities or of self-respect. For example, a girl who is discouraged from studying science, because her teachers assume girls are more suited to studying arts subjects, is denied opportunities for professional advancement, and at the same time may feel undermined because her aspirations have been devalued.

In this case the teachers are not only exhibiting prejudice, but also exercising the 'power to act' derived from their authority as teachers; it is the combination of the two which leads to the denial of opportunities. People acquire the 'power to act' by virtue of a variety of attributes, including,

wealth, decision-making authority, physical strength, established consensus (for example, if there is common acceptance that a parent has the right to chastise their children), or, in extreme cases, superior weaponry. The 'power to act' includes the power to avoid action, i.e. to inflict injustice by turning a blind eye when it happens, and by failing to challenge the oppressive behaviour of others. Inaction may indeed be as devastatingly discriminatory as overt actions.

Discrimination becomes an 'ideology of superiority' when it is embedded in society in such a way that people can imagine no alternative to it, or see it as natural and unchangeable, or divinely ordained. This embedding takes place through a long process in which relationships between different groups evolve in response to economic and political factors. The power relationships involved are built up over a long period of time and are usually based on unequal economic relationships. Both the exploited and the exploiters come to accept the situation. Indeed the relationship is often structured in such a way that both appear to gain some advantage from it, or at least so that the exploited would lose stability and security if they overthrew it. Hence, for example, ex-slaves in Northern Mali who continued to act as slaves, providing labour for their ex-masters in return for food, shelter and security, long after the formal abolition of slavery. The dismantling of these embedded unequal relationships cannot be accomplished quickly or painlessly.

Excluded groups respond in a variety of ways. While some respond with aggressiveness and possibly violence, others may move away, adopt a separatist way of life, or compensate, for example by acquiring specialist occupational skills, influential political positions, or superior wealth. Those who develop an acceptance of their subordinate status often find themselves accepting the value systems that go with it: thus in societies where women are perceived as 'the weaker sex', they may grow up believing that they are indeed in need of male protection, since that is how things have always been to their knowledge. In this way, patriarchy is supported by the ideologies of

gender identity, reproduced through the family and other social institutions which offer encouragement to the maintenance of those identities in the form that benefits the most powerful. If this is indeed the case, there is a lesson for the structuring of democracy: namely that the demands of justice may not be well or exclusively served by addressing the needs of those who protest their exclusion most openly.

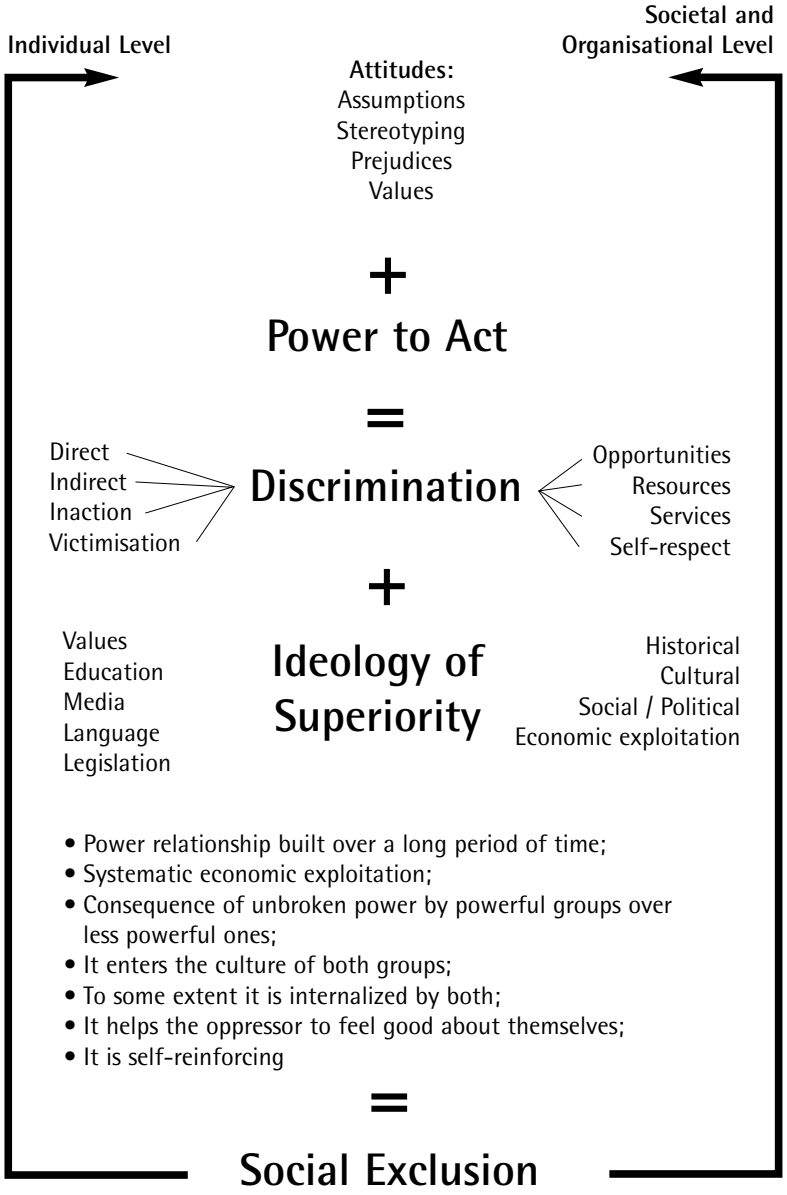
The framework described here is useful for two reasons. Firstly, it describes a system in which interlocking elements can be analysed in relation to each other. In describing discrimination against, say, the Roma in Europe, the framework would ask questions about the cultural, legal, political and economic underpinnings of discrimination, as well as about the forms of discrimination experienced by the Roma and the consequences in terms of rights denied and psychological impacts. It would facilitate a review of the sorts of behaviours and attitudes evidenced by the discriminators and by the Roma themselves. It would then permit an informed consideration of where in the system effort should be focused in order to work towards its transformation – on the discriminators? On reducing the harm suffered? On 'integrating' the discriminated? On their 'empowerment'? ACORD's own use of the framework, for example, convinced it to move away from actions which merely sought to alleviate the consequences of discrimination, towards actions which addressed the political and economic factors that provide the discriminators with the 'power to act'. Dismantling the 'power to act' in a discriminatory way is the essential element which post-conflict transition interventions must deal with.

The second reason for using the framework is its emphasis on rights, and on the responsibility of institutions to work towards establishing the legitimacy of rights in principle and in practice. Individuals have many reasons for denying the rights of others: they may accept the value system which legitimises such behaviour, they may fear disruption if they behave differently, or they may be acting out of necessity, since they themselves may

be suffering from discrimination from elsewhere. For example, parents who fail to send their daughters to school may believe this to be the right course of action since it protects the girls from nefarious influences, they may fear their daughters will be ostracised if they are the only ones going to school, or they may simply be too poor to be able to afford to forego their domestic labour. Nevertheless, this does not negate the existence of the girls' right to schooling, nor the obligation of the state and other official institutions to ensure that they are able to claim that right – if necessary by working to relieve the parents' poverty. Organisations working with children need to understand – and proactively deal with - the whole complex of factors which contribute to rights to schooling being denied, if they are to stand a chance of seeing change happen.

The emphasis, then, is not on policing people's attitudes and beliefs, nor on apportioning blame to the discriminators. Rather, it is on establishing the principle that other ways of living are possible, but require systemic change in order to transform exclusion into inclusion.

Social exclution analysis: the model



Annex 2: Summary of conflict impacts in northern Mali

Levels / Spheres	Economic	Political/ social/ institutional	Emotional/ psychological	Ideological
Individual	- Some poor individuals managed to ensure their livelihoods by acquiring resources or means of production or by joining the army or civil service	- Certain individuals, by integrating the army or civil service, found ways to protect themselves and become independent	- Greater awareness of nomadic women about their own situation - Greater awareness of some communities about their own isolation	- Nomadic women aspire to better conditions
Household	- Most men have lost their economic roles and means of production - Women have become more active and have started to take on the role of breadwinner within the family	- Women are becoming more involved in resource-management and are increasingly consulted in decision-making - Children no longer obey their parents	- Maure women no longer feel inferior to their husbands - Women become increasingly more self-confident and aware of their own capacities - Maure men feel frustrated vis-à-vis their wives	- The ideology of male superiority is challenged among the Maures - Certain Maure men, refugees in particular, accept to carry out tasks traditionally reserved for women
Community	- In many cases, former slaves continue to act as servants but they are now paid for their services - Many former masters are now involved in activities which were formerly reserved for slaves - The economic status of former masters has dropped to or even below the level of former slaves	- Former masters have lost their credibility - Many former Tamasheq slaves have left their former masters and are now living a completely independent life - Women and young people are becoming more involved in resource-management at community level	- Persisting and mutual mistrust between sedentary communities and nomadic groups - Former slaves become more aware of their capacities and their rights	- Former Tamasheq slaves no longer feel so inferior and devoted to their former masters

Summary of conflict impacts in northern Mali *(Cont.)*

Levels / Spheres	Economic	Political/ social/ institutional	Emotional/ psychological	Ideological
Clan/ethnic/ cultural identity	- Control or taking over resources by certain clans or ethnic groups - The Tamasheq economy, already affected by droughts, has become quasi non-existent - In contrast, that of the Maure is thriving ; it now holds the monopoly of commerce - Some Tamasheq agro-pastoralists have changed their trade and become full-time herders	- Erosion of cultures and traditional ways of life - Stronger ethnic and clan identity and more cases of ethnic or racial discrimination - Increased Tamasheq representation in fora at local, regional and national levels - Changing way of life within some Tamasheq and Maure communities who had become sedentarised and returned to a nomadic way of life	- Persisting mistrust between Songhoïs and Maures and Tamasheqs - Mistrust and suspicion of other ethnic groups towards the Red (Tamasheqs and Maures)	- Revival of ideology which establishes the Songhoïs as the land owners - Emergence of ideology for an 'Azawad' state among Tamasheqs and Maures - Any 'red' is considered as a rebel
National	- Improved access of Northern communities to means of production and social services	- National Pact and Particular Status in the North - The event 'Flame for Peace' is institutionalised	- Mistrust and suspicion of other communities towards Tamasheqs and Maures	- Other communities consider the Tamasheq and Maures as rebels and dangerous people

Annex 3: Timbuktu Guidelines on Oral Testimony, Developed in Timbuktou, Mali, 7-11 May 2000, ACORD

Introduction

Oral testimony is a powerful tool for gaining an insight into people's personal experiences and perceptions. It often uncovers aspects of people's lives which otherwise remain hidden, and allows us to understand subjective positions. If done well it can help us to cut across barriers such as wealth, gender, class, ethnicity etc. People's perceptions (even if we disagree with them) help us to understand the situation and their actions better.

Oral testimony is also a useful tool for addressing politically and socially sensitive topics, which are difficult to enquire into using other methods. As a method it is *complementary* to other research methods such as PRA and quantitative surveys, and the findings from oral testimony are often made more powerful if combined with results from other methods.

The following guidelines are based on the experiences of ACORD staff who came together in a workshop in Timbuktu from 7-11 May 2000. All had used oral testimony in their research work, often to address politically sensitive topics. [49] The guidelines are in three main sections: preparation, conduct of research, analysis and usage of research. They were drawn up on the basis of discussions about the use of oral testimony to research issues relating to Gender and Conflict, but they are applicable to the use of oral testimony more generally.

49 Alpha Toure (Mali), Angela Hadjipateras (England), Asha Al Karim (Sudan), Aloys Sirabeneda (Burundi), Catherine Uwamariya (Rwanda), Chris Dolan (England), Fahdi Toure (Mali), Faisa Loyaan (Somalia), Fatimata Cisse (Mali), France Dusserre (England), Ibrahim Sahl (Sudan), Issouf Ag Alkhalifa (Mali), Judy El Bushra (England), Komakech Charles (Uganda), Niki Kandirikirira (Namibia), Norma Fodul (Sudan), Sidiki Toure (Mali), Rosalba Oywa (Uganda)

STAGE 1: PREPARATION

1.1. Team Composition

It is generally easier and more desirable to do research as a team rather than as a single individual. It broadens the range of skills and personal qualities available, reduces the pressures on any particular individual, and strengthens all aspects of the design, implementation and analysis of the research. With this in mind, a research team should preferably:

- Be multidisciplinary
- Have a range of language skills
- Take into account cultural and gender aspects as well as context. It is useful to have a range of different types of people represented on the team and to establish which specific characteristics are most appropriate for interviewing particular categories of interviewees. However, it is also important not to make too many assumptions based on stereotypes about who will talk to whom; the individual's character and personal qualities can be as or more important than their social identity in determining their success as an interviewer.

1.2. Qualities of the team

Most importantly, whatever their social identity, whether in terms of disciplinary background, gender, age, race, ethnicity, etc. researchers need to:

- Be able to listen without making preconceived assumptions and without passing judgement on the respondent
- Be patient, sympathetic and a good listener

- Be willing to give their own oral testimonies
- Be able to understand and extract ideas, even if they are implicit rather than stated explicitly by the respondent
- Be good communicators who can overcome communication blocks
- Have knowledge of the local context/situation and to respect other peoples' cultures
- Be willing to learn

1.3. Organisational support, training and identification of broad issues

The first stage in developing an oral testimony project on sensitive issues is to ensure that the programme team, as a whole, supports the project and is prepared to provide back-up where necessary. Those responsible for the programme should be actively involved in the research process.

The team should be trained in oral testimony methods before conducting fieldwork, and should cover all the guidelines set out in this document. Training is necessary to ensure that interviewers have the necessary degree of professionalism to work on sensitive issues.

The training process also goes hand in hand with identifying the broad issues to be covered in collecting oral testimonies. It should involve developing the team's understanding of the nature of the community, the nature of the problems or situation, the team's own engagement in the community and the language spoken.

- The nature of the community, or community profile, can be understood through examining secondary data, drama, local songs, etc., or through conducting PRA exercises

- The team can carry out preliminary oral testimonies with each other and other staff members, possibly starting with the team leader. This helps to:
    - Develop an understanding of what it is like to give an oral testimony
    - Develop listening skills
    - Understand an individual staff member's involvement in the issues being addressed in the research. These may be analysed jointly by the team members (which requires a serious commitment to confidentiality)
    - Identify particular phrases, expressions and words that are used to discuss certain issues. This is particularly important where the research theme touches on sensitive or taboo topics. Asking the questions in the right way is as important as asking the right questions
- All members of the team should be involved in the formulation/ identification of objectives, issues and methods. As they work through the issues that are being researched (e.g. gender and conflict), they need to challenge their own assumptions and have a common understanding of the concepts and aims of the project. The outcome of this joint preparatory work should be a set of themes and reference questions that the team should focus on (not to be taken out as a questionnaire but as a conceptual guide). In the preparatory phase, the whole team should try to identify which methods will be most appropriate for the different types of information.
- An important part of the training process is to understand that men, women and different cultures often express emotions in different ways, and to identify some of the norms of expression in the field sites.

- People very often mask their real emotions and present them indirectly. It is important to learn how to 'decode' these indirect forms of expression. Members of a particular community are sometimes, but not always, the best people to do this. Again, working in a team helps to overcome these issues.
- Training must be ongoing. A very useful tool is to ensure that interviews are transcribed rapidly and systematically and then shared with fellow team-members that can comment on the interview and suggest further questions that could have been asked.
- It may be useful to develop specific interviewing skills for specific categories of people. For example, in some places, it may be more difficult to interview men about their personal experiences because they have been socialised not to express their emotions

1.4. Planning

- Some flexibility should be built into an oral testimony research timetable. For example, a person may not always be available for interview at the scheduled time. It is also very useful to make several visits to collect one person's testimony. People are often much more open in a second or third discussion than in the first. In oral testimony, QUALITY is more important than QUANTITY.
- It may be useful to think of the research in phases and to use different methods. For example, oral testimonies could be used to develop a more qualitative survey or to get a more in-depth illumination of quantitative survey findings.
- It is usually important that the team carries out preparatory consultation with the authorities and with ordinary members of the community in the

area where it wishes to carry out its work. This would usually cover the objectives, areas of interest and possible uses of the materials. In some places it is essential to obtain a letter of authorisation from the local authorities who wish to have a clear understanding of what the researchers are trying to achieve and how the results will be used.

- It is important to plan from the beginning how the testimonies and the other forms of data will be stored. Particularly in the case of testimonies which may contain very personal and sensitive information, DATA MUST BE STORED IN A SECURE WAY, and only the researchers should have access to it.

- As a broad guideline, whichever method is used, allow equal time for the preparation phase, the data collection phase, the analysis and writing up phase and the feedback, dialogue and dissemination phase.

1.5. Targeting/sampling

- Consider whether particular categories need to be identified. Sometimes it is sufficient to identify people involved in a particular type of activity, e.g. ex-combatants, prostitutes, prisoner. Often though, it is important to narrow the focus to other criteria such as age, gender, economic status, and ethnicity e.g. young male prostitute, middle-aged female ex-combatant.

- Try to collect testimonies from all actors who are known to be relevant to the issues being researched.

- People's experiences are often significantly different from one area to another. Discuss whether it is important to have respondents from a range of different locations.

- A key criterion is people's willingness to participate. Always try to start interviewing people with whom there is a relationship of trust. This may include people who already have close relationships with ACORD and its staff.

- Sample size is dependent on how many different categories are seen as being directly relevant to the research issue, and on the overall budget and timescale of the project. A sample of ten people per category may be the minimum necessary to ensure representativity.

1.6. Potential pitfalls of using oral testimonies

- The method does not automatically allow taboo topics to be uncovered - success depends on all the skills and qualities outlined above.

- It is very difficult to record oral testimonies if the respondent does not allow the use of tape recorders or note-taking.

- Because only a small number of interviews are likely to be conducted in any given place, the respondents may become the objects of unwelcome attention. Other people may suspect that the respondents have benefited directly in some way or that they have given away secret information which could be used against them.

- It may be difficult for ACORD to address the issues which emerge from oral testimony work.

- As in all research work, people may have raised expectations of some concrete benefit, even if it is made clear that nothing is being offered in that regard.

- Some findings may be too sensitive for public dissemination.

- If used alone, oral testimony findings may not be seen as representative.

STAGE 2: CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

2.1. Risk/security

In many of the situations where ACORD does research, it is essential to be aware of the security situation both physical and political security is important. When planning and carrying out such research, it is important to ensure that:

- Testimonies and related documents/data are kept in secure places.
- Administrative, moral and political protection is obtained from the organisation and from relevant leadership figures in the area.
- Anonymity of respondents is maintained, and data is used with great discretion.
- ACORD is prepared to meet legal defence costs.
- ACORD furnishes interviewers with letters of identification and a statement of support. This can normally be drawn up at programme level, but in some instances it could come from the country office or the secretariat.
- If computers are being used to type up and store transcriptions, there should be good computer security e.g. password systems to access the data.

2.2. Access

- Where necessary and possible, authorities should be informed about what is being done -- if necessary an authorisation letter can be obtained from

them. In some field situations, it may be useful to start doing oral testimonies with local leaders, though in other situations, it may be a poor strategy. Sometimes, the main issue is to get local leaders to commit themselves to supporting and protecting interviewees, rather than having them interviewed.

- As stated above, interviews should only be done with willing respondents -- there is no value in trying to pressurise somebody.
- If it makes it easier to gain access, build oral testimony collection into other work.
- In strict security areas consider using local partner organisations to do the oral testimony (train them). However, there are also risks: do you know where they stand politically? Who they network with? Are they stronger or more vulnerable than ACORD? All of these are context specific.

2.3. Trust and confidentiality

Once access has been established:

- Establish a relationship (if not already existing) with the respondent and organise an interview time and place that suits them.
- Assure interviewees that their testimonies are confidential. The interview team must maintain confidentiality at all times – not tell people who, where, when, etc. This is essential to the integrity and credibility of the team. If testimonies are disseminated, the interviewee's identity should remains anonymous.
- Consider showing a letter of support from ACORD if it helps to gain the respondents' confidence.

- Explain the purpose and use of the oral testimonies. Explain sharing risk and explore some of the possible benefits to the respondent. These might include giving a voice to the interviewee, solidarity, opportunity to express difficult issues and experiences, more appropriate interventions (ACORD). NEVER try to persuade a potential respondent to give an oral testimony by making false promises for what they will receive in return.

- Explain why you would prefer to make a tape recording i.e. writing reduces listening, things might be missed, needs full attention etc. but respect the interviewee's wishes if they do not want their testimony to be taped or written down. Don't be rigid in insisting on using tape-recorders -- it is not always appropriate. It may be useful to tell people that the tape-recorder can be switched off at any point and that recording limits the possibility of distorting what they say.

- Establish common ground; it often helps to share experiences at initial and subsequent meetings. When interviewees express strong emotions, do not be embarrassed to share them. However, do not continue to do so if the interviewee's emotions or environment are not conducive. Sympathise and share experiences, if it is appropriate, and arrange to continue with the oral testimony at another time.

- Dress appropriately for the interview environment and in a way that puts you and your respondent at ease; being over- or under-dressed can make you or your respondent (or both) quite uncomfortable and create a barrier to communication.

- Be aware of body language. In some areas, respondents are more at ease if they are sitting close to the interviewer and sharing food and drink, while in other areas, respondents prefer to sit far apart. In other words, 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do'.

- Recognise cultures and traditions that help integration. For example, in certain places, offering a coffee or buying a beer are normal forms of hospitality and bringing a small gift of sugar or salt is the normal behaviour for a guest.

- Sometimes, it is easier for two members of the research team to interview a respondent together. In other instances, it is easier to interview two respondents together rather than individually.

Once the discussion has started, it is important to:

- Ask open-ended questions and allow people to follow their own train of thought rather than trying to direct them. If what the respondent is saying is irrelevant, do not try to stop them. Try to use questions later on in the interview to bring them back to the relevant issue. This allows new and important issues to be discovered which might not have been thought about when planning the research.

- Avoid feeding assumptions into the discussion -- try to only play a catalytic role and avoid, at all cost, passing judgements on the interviewee. Also be careful about revealing personal political views which could influence the testimony.

- Follow through statements. Probe the interviewee and try to get details.

- Respond to indications that something may be a perception – probe to understand why the respondent has that perception.

- Allow silences, but don't let them be too long.

- After finishing the interview, make notes about the interview itself -- the person's behaviour, events, feelings, reactions, interruptions. Attach these notes to the transcription.

STAGE 3: AFTER THE FIELDWORK

3.1. Analysis

Throughout the data collection phase, try to have regular reviews with the teams. These would include brainstorming issues that have arisen from the testimonies, and training which has arisen from the review of the testimonies. The reviews should also consider whether the categories of respondent should be revised in the light of the findings.

Once the testimony collection is completed, the team should work to identify:

- Common features.
- Differences between, and within, the categories of respondents.
- Surprises and major problems.
- Quantitative data.
- Supporting data.
- Timelines.
- Comparisons of oral testimonies across the programmes.

- Preliminary results can be discussed with the relevant groups and further analysed with them. Where possible, the interviewer should give feedback to the interviewee, seek confirmation of the findings, give copies of any photos taken etc.

- Testimonies which are not immediately relevant can be filed for future reference, bearing in mind the Tamashek motto: 'everything you keep, you will need one day, except bitterness'.

- It is inevitable that what the interviewer remembers and how she or he interprets it, will involve a degree of subjectivity.

- If the interviewers are disturbed by the material covered in the testimonies, it may be necessary to provide them with counselling.

3.2. Utilisation

- Advocacy (consensus on use). If you cannot risk using oral testimonies for advocacy locally or internationally, consider linking human rights organisations directly to the respondents.

- Influence on programming; develop projects to address issues raised and reorganise what you are already doing to respond to the real needs.

- Publication and dissemination.

- Promoting dialogue within and between groups and institutions in the community as well as at national/international levels. This may help in catalysing community-led initiatives. In Gulu, for example, the use of oral testimony led to the creation of a local NGO which has been active in a number of peace initiatives at different levels.

CYCLES OF VIOLENCE: GENDER RELATIONS AND ARMED CONFLICT

This book describes ACORD's research 'Gender-sensitive Design and Planning in Conflict-Affected Situations', carried out during 2000 and 2001 in five communities living in the shadow of violent conflict in Juba (Sudan), Gulu (Uganda), Luanda (Angola), Timbuktu (Mali) and the Lower Shabelle region (Somaila). It also includes analysis of data collected earlier in Eritrea and Rwanda. Two main questions are examined in this book: What is the impact of war on gender relations? And can gender relations contribute to conflict?

The analysis in this book explores the term 'gender relations' and unravels it into: gender 'roles', 'identities', 'ideologies' and 'institutions/power structures', examining how each of these changes as a result of war. It finds that, while gender is a factor in perpetuating violence, it is also a factor in rebuilding social relations and peace.

This book also addresses the challenges in methodologies and tools for research in turbulence. The aim is to develop flexible and sensitive research methods that go beyond information collection into engaging in joint reflection with communities about issues confronting them. Agencies should no longer continue to work only 'in' conflict rendering practical services, but also jointly work 'on' it with communities to analyse and address the factors which perpetuate it.

Judy El-Bushra has been working in and on African development issues for 35 years, mostly in the fields of education and community development. She worked with ACORD from 1983-2002, particularly on the Sudan and Somalia desks and on policy, research and training in the areas of gender and development and conflict, and now works in a freelance capacity on issues of conflict and peace-building.

Ibrahim M. G. Sahl has 11 years of experience with research institutions, universities, UN and NGOs. His main areas of research focus are poverty, sustainable human development, conflict analysis, rights issues, and social exclusion analysis. He is currently the Programme Development Advisor for Research at ACORD International with which he has been working since 1999.

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