

RESPONSE OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDP) TO FOOD INSECURITY IN SITUATIONS OF PROLONGED CONFLICT

A Case Study of Lira District, Northern Uganda



(IDP household preparing the days meal from own crop harvest (beans) in Orum IDP camp)

By

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2003/HD14/767U

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
SOCIAL SECTOR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
SEPTEMBER 2008**

Declaration

I here by declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other University.

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This thesis has been submitted for examination with my authority as the Academic Supervisor

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Dedication

This research work is dedicated to my Father Mr. Wilson Drate for his financial support throughout my education and my dear wife Arumadri Stella Acidri for the motivation and inspiration, she offered me during difficult times in the course of the study.

Acknowledgement

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to Save the Children (UK) for having employed me. This enabled me to gain experience and some financial strength to pursue my post graduate studies in Makerere University, Kampala (MUK); Dr Julius Omona and other Faculty of Social Sciences academic staff for their tireless professional guidance to ensure that, the technical quality of this academic work is not compromised; Lira Local District Administration (LLDA) for allowing me to carry out the field work; the research assistants for assisting me with data collection and Save the Children, Lira Field office and Kampala Country office, M/s Erina Kiggundu in particular for providing me with the necessary logistical support to conduct data collection in the field and facilitating the production of the research report. Finally, I offer my gratitude to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), who were interviewed during primary data collection, for their willingness to share so much of their time and information with the research team.

Abstract

Household food insecurity in situations of conflict is a major humanitarian problem, which has increased hunger and starvation among the people who have been affected by the Northern Uganda conflict. Specific reports show that, it has been difficult to appropriately respond to the food needs of the IDPs in Northern Uganda (WFP 2005). Part of the problem has been the lack of in-depth analysis of how the IDPs continued to survive, despite limited humanitarian assistance. Majority of people affected by the Northern conflict developed and adopted specific coping and response strategies in order to achieve the required level of food entitlement in their households. However, there has been very limited understanding and actual quantification of the local people's contribution towards their basic survival needs including food among the IDPs. This caused a significant mismatch between external response and actual level of needs faced by the IDPs.

The study attempts to bring a new breed of evidence on the logical sequence and rational behavior which enabled the IDP households to employ particular coping and response strategies against food insecurity. Overall, the evidence shows that the IDP households had a rational pattern in the development and adoption of coping strategies. The households initially concentrated on extreme austerity measures, followed by depletion of available productive assets, before resorting to strategies likely to have negative impact on future household food security.

Based on the main findings such as loss of household productive assets, failure in crop production and increased levels of vulnerability to food insecurity which triggered the adoption of various coping strategies for survival, the researcher argues that an in-depth understanding of how households allocate their scarce resources to cope in times of crisis is of immense value to a broad array of emergency and development work. He also contends that further research work towards the development of household coping strategy conceptual framework in situations of chronic conflict, will provide an informed approach to the design of emergency and development interventions in conflict situations.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AU	African Union
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
ACAO	Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
CSI	Coping Strategy Index
DDMC	District Disaster Management Committee
DDMCM	District Disaster Management Committee Members
DFID	Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GoU	Government of Uganda
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IDPCs	Internally Displaced Peoples Camps
LRA	Lords Resistance Army
LRM	Lords Resistance Movement
MUK	Makerere University Kampala
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
UNOCHA	United Nations Humanitarian Co-ordination Office
NURP	Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
SWSA	Social Work and Social Administration
ODI	Overseas Development Institute

CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Sub-Saharan Africa faces a precarious food security outlook, as the global cereal supplies tighten and food aid availabilities shrink. Sharp increases in cereal prices on the world market and consequent higher cost of cereal imports, coupled with balance of payment difficulties in conflict affected and other food deficit African countries mean a large proportion of food imports of the region will need to be covered by food aid (FEWSNET 2005). The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) forecasts that the reduced availability and continued stiff competition for food aid from countries of Eastern Europe and the commonwealth of Independent States suggests that Africa's minimum food needs will remain unmet. Unless exceptional food aid allocations are made, malnutrition will rise further from its already high levels at present and many people will be at risk of starvation.

Food insecurity is not an exception in the Great Lakes region where drought and Situations of Political Instability and Chronic Conflict (SCCPI) are a widespread phenomenon and have exacerbated the already alarming socio-economic problems. Poor rainfall in some countries within the Great lakes region such as Kenya and Somalia has resulted into a more precarious food security situation with child malnutrition rates at emergency level of 5-15 percent, global malnutrition rates and severe negative impact on the livelihoods of the pastoral communities, (Acidri and Levine 2003). Meanwhile, countries such as Sudan and Djibouti which had adequate rains at the start of 2005 have improved national food security as the national harvest season reached its peak by September of the same year. Overall, a total population of 12.8 million people is at risk of food insecurity within the Great lakes region of Africa (FEWSNET, 2005). Uganda is an exceptional case, naturally endowed with two to three rainy seasons a year give it great agricultural potential, lakes and rivers provide abundant fish with a range of other natural resources such as timber.

Northern and North Eastern Uganda are not an exception to the resource endowments. Before the prolonged conflict, this region was a fertile agro-pastoral food basket area supplying various parts of the country. However the two-decade conflict has curtailed agriculture, livestock has disappeared through raiding and unintended sales due to hunger and starvation.

Since 1996, nearly 80 percent of the Acholi sub region, Lango and Teso population of 1.6 million people have either been voluntarily displaced into official camps around trading centers and neighboring districts such as Masindi or forced to move in to designated camps by the military in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts, with further displacements in Lira and parts of Apac districts. The situation further worsened, after March 2002, when the government intensified its offensive on the rebels, causing increased influx of people into the Internal Displaced Peoples (IDPs) camps, which were already congested and with little land for production (Acidri and Levine 2003).

The massive displacements of people by the end of 2004, in the camps has resulted into poor living conditions, with frequent human rights abuses such as killing, looting and abduction of mainly children. There is limited access to home fields with renting of land increasingly difficult, forcing most peasant farmers to abandon all crops except vegetables and sweet potatoes cultivated on 0.1-2 acres of land due to their short-term maturity period (2-3) months and high productivity rate of return on a small plot of land. The prolonged conflict has affected the local people's livelihoods through their displacement and concentration in IDP camps, limiting their access to the vital factors of production such as land, livestock, adequate labour as well as other productive economic activities that could sustain their lives.

The prolonged conflict has caused a significant loss of local people's main pillars of capital, namely physical, financial, natural, human and social. An estimated 85-95 percent of the displaced population who owned 3-8 goats and sheep and 5-20 cattle, have lost most of the livestock, as such livestock keeping is no longer common in the IDP camps.

The "poor" generally have no animals, while some of the "middle" wealth households only have 1-2 goats and the relatively "better off" households with 1-2 cattle, although they are few isolated incidences of households owning up to 10 heads of cattle (Acidri and Levine 2003).

Household food insecurity within the Northern Uganda conflict has been exacerbated by limited access to land for agriculture, the main source of livelihoods among the IDPs.

Majority of the lower socio-economic group of people, who used to cultivate 1-3 acres of land can now only afford to cultivate 0-1½ acres of land reducing the quantity of food and income previously derived from own crop and livestock production by at least 70 percent.

This has further led to steady decline in economic productivity, deepening rural poverty, a dysfunctional traditional family system and increased ill health among the displaced population, (Acidri and Levine); (WFP 2005). However despite the continued deterioration in economic conditions among the IDPs in Northern Uganda, people have continued to survive both on local and to some extent external relief aid in form of food and essential non-food items such as utensils and bedding. Most households have developed a lot of coping and response strategies, ranging from adaptive, survival and some accumulative strategies as well.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite a significant decline in basic productive assets resulting into poor socio-economic living conditions, IDPs of Northern Uganda have continued to survive and live on the very scarce and limited resources accessible to them, supplemented by very erratic and unreliable inflow of relief food aid and other essential non-food items. Socio-economic living conditions among IDP households have not declined to the extent of inhibiting human survival and high levels of hunger and starvation as was suggested in many United Nations and Non Governmental Organization (NGO) field assessment reports such as the World Health Organization (WHO, 2005) report, which mentioned that a total of 1,000 people die every week in the IDP camps.

The pathetic living conditions among the IDP households was further echoed by Action Against Hunger in their report (30th June 2004) which indicated high rates of chronic and acute malnutrition of 0.3 and 0.7 percent respectively among children of age 6-59 months. However the UN and NGO assessment reports failed to explain the unknown coping and response strategies the displaced population employed against hunger and starvation to keep them alive at the peak of the conflict in the Lango sub-region, which are worth studying.

Acidri and Levine (2003) showed that although food aid was the single largest source of food for relatively “poor” households contributing 36-60 percent of their annual food entitlement, these households derived between 24-40 percent of the remaining food requirements from other unknown sources in order to meet the required 100 percent annual food entitlement.

Existing documentation only emphasizes the Donor driven external responses to food insecurity mainly in the form of humanitarian relief food aid with little, unsystematic and descriptive documentation of IDPs own local responses to food insecurity at household level. It also fails to define the stages and thresholds (severity and intensity) at which the various responses are adopted and equally ignored which of them may be destructive and likely to affect future food security situation, leaving a lot of unknown issues on how the IDPs have survived over the last three years, particularly during the peak of the conflict. Based on the above background, this study aims to provide a better understanding of the existing local coping strategies, which have seen the IDPs in Northern Uganda, continue to survive and live under appalling human survival conditions.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study is limited to improving the understanding of community responses to food insecurity at household level in Northern Uganda, as a classic example of a SCCPI. It's main focus is on IDPs responses and practices employed to ensure availability and access to food in situations of chronic conflict characterized by high susceptibility to violence, forced displacement causing exclusion of sections of the population from enjoying their basic rights, high vulnerability to external shocks and widespread material poverty due to loss of assets and property.

The main variables to be investigated are the impact of the conflict on food security at household level, various risks associated with household food security, local counter measures employed by households to food insecurity inform of responses, stages and thresholds at which each response is employed and the likely impact of the various responses on future food security and livelihoods patterns as well as the learning, programme and policy issues. Geographically the study will cover Aloi and Orum IDP camps in Lira district. Overall the study will take six and half months period, of which field data collection will be conducted for two weeks and two months of data entry and interpretation.

This will be followed by another two months of data analysis and interpretation and finally two months of initial report writing and editorial work prior to submission.

1.4 Study Objectives

The study is aimed at achieving an overall and some specific objectives described below.

1.4.1 Main Objective

The main objective is to provide a better understanding of IDPs response to household food insecurity in situation of chronic conflict.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the short-term impact of the conflict on household food security in Aloi and Orum IDP camps.
2. Identify and explain the specific responses employed by IDP to cope and respond to household food insecurity in Aloi and Orum IDP camps.
3. Explore the stages through which each response is employed.
4. Identify and analyse responses, which are likely to be “distressful” to future food security and normal livelihoods strategies among the IDP.

1.5 Justification of the Study

The main problem of people living in SCCPI such as Northern Uganda is the struggle for freedom against hunger, since people's livelihoods outcome is uncertain due to the chronic conflict. A lot of household efforts are concentrated on coping, building resilience and trying to decrease vulnerability in the short-term and general development in the long-term period. The overall aim is geared at building resistance or decreasing vulnerability without creating additional risks or exposure to threats.

Unfortunately this is not the case in Northern Uganda, where much of relief aid is aimed at addressing the short-term latent needs, without an in-depth understanding of what kinds of responses and resilience practices people have developed and employed to mitigate household food insecurity in the IDP camps.

It is important to note that a significant proportion of the short and long-term food security programmes in Northern Uganda have no evidence of how they will strengthen and complement the existing local responses to food insecurity among the IDP's.

It is also clear that humanitarian practice in Uganda has not systematically set about "intelligent" programming in terms of addressing specific, contingent and contextual vulnerabilities aimed at developing appropriate strategies to address particular threats and food security needs of susceptible households in the IDP camps. As a result of the unreliable assumptions made about the link between situations of conflicts; food insecurity; other interventions as well as other silent coping and response practices among the target population, most programme responses are inappropriate to the basic needs of the affected population. It's therefore imperative that, this study provides additional information for the ongoing debate, on the most appropriate and suitable approach to tackle the existing household food insecurity issues among the IDPs in Northern Uganda. The study will further provide additional information to improve planning of the ongoing Government led efforts aimed at recovery, rehabilitation and long-term development of Northern Uganda.

1.6 Significance of the Study

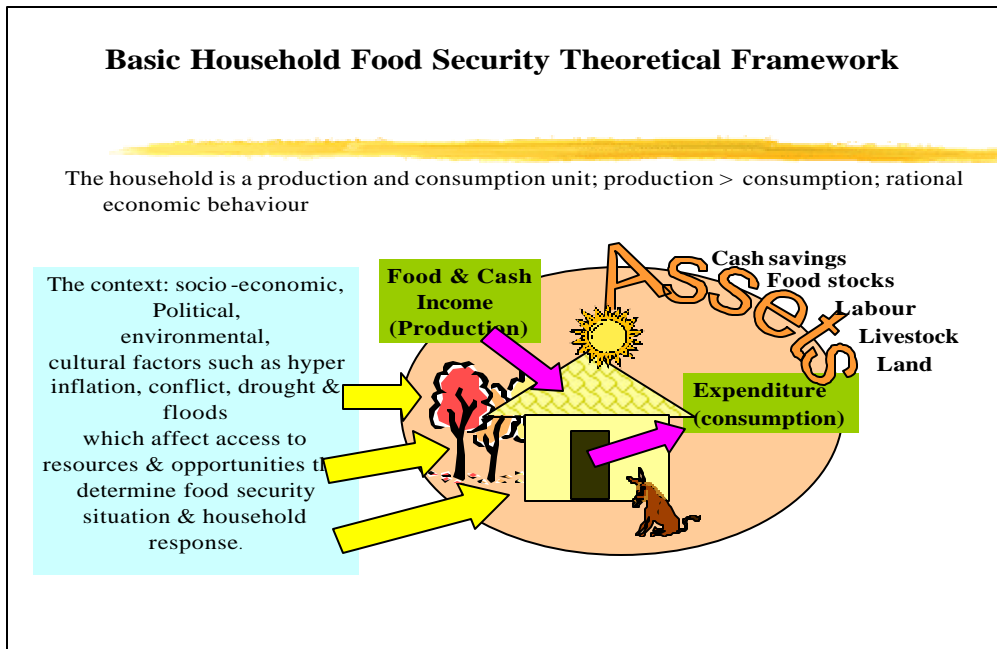
Available literature shows that many, if not most food security related interventions in situations of chronic conflict and political instability are inappropriate and have failed to address the actual food security needs of people affected by conflict. Despite the twenty years of the chronic conflict in Northern Uganda, no systematic study and logical inquiry has been undertaken to provide an in-depth understanding of how and specifically when households employ various response strategies to meet their minimum annual food entitlement in the IDP camps.

As a result, most aid assistance is inadequate and inappropriate and does not adequately meet the local needs of the affected population in a sustainable way.

Evidence available also shows that this is partly caused by the limited information and understanding of how the affected people respond to situations of chronic conflict which limits their access to basic survival needs such as shelter, health, education and most importantly food entitlements.

This study therefore aims to bridge the existing information and knowledge gap by specifically investigating the types of responses households have employed to address food insecurity, when and how they are specifically employed, in order to tackle hunger and starvation and livelihoods recovery programming both in situations of chronic conflict/post conflict era in Northern Uganda in the wake of the planned rehabilitation work to be led by the Government of Uganda and its development partners and elsewhere in developing countries, where similar situations of conflict will emerge.

1.7 Amartya Sen's Food Entitlement Theory



Save the Children (UK) Facilitators' Resource Pack-Household Economy Analysis (2002).

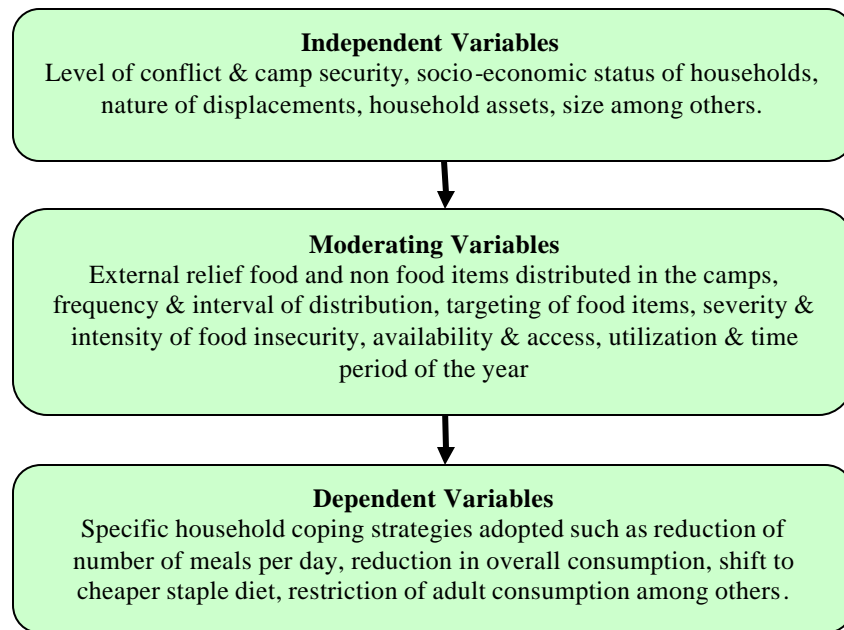
The basic household food security theoretical framework as developed by Amartya Sen (1981) is based on an individual household's exchange "entitlements" namely trade, production, own labour and inheritance/transfer of food through economic ability (effective demand and purchasing power) to acquire food through the legal means available in a society. The theory further suggests that famines occur not from an absolute lack of food, but from people's inability to obtain access to that food. However, this ability is normally eroded by a reduction in productive assets due to various reasons such as prolonged conflicts, which may affect access to resources like land for crop production, livestock, exhaustion of food stocks, and other gainful employment opportunities among others. This normally causes hunger and starvation, if affected households are not protected with some form of social security such as relief food aid, no matter what the overall prevailing food security situation might be. As such, the best unit for food security analysis is not a geographic region, but the household as proved by existing evidence which shows that economic shocks such as conflict, drought, floods and volcanoes among others affect different groups of people in different ways within the same locality.

Different households have diverse ways of ensuring access to food within a particular community. Some households secure their needs mainly through domestic production; others achieve their needs through wage labour mainly used for purchasing food from the market.

However in all instances the ability of households to mobilize resources for acquisition of food is mediated by an array of factors including their social class, level of education, level of productive assets and access to credit and markets among others. Threats to food insecurity are thus not solely a function of production failure at household level, but also of institutional and policy failure. As such household food insecurity no matter the context is partly an outcome of long-term trends resulting from wider issues such as the political orientation and priorities of the Government in power.

The food entitlement theory provides a suitable framework and the required economic lens for food security situation analysis in different contexts, including situations of prolonged conflict normally characterized by production failure. It also sets the basis for an effective investigation of the rational economic behavior including response strategies employed by households, when ever they are faced with crisis (Sen, 1981).

1.8 The Household Coping Strategy Conceptual Framework in (SCCPI)



Based on the food entitlement theory developed by Amartya Sen (1981), the level of access to food using the four entitlements namely trade, production, own labour and inheritance/transfer is also determined by various independent variables as described in the conceptual framework for this study. These variables include level of conflict situation, socio economic status of the household at the time of displacement, the nature of displacement in terms of closeness to relatives/ people from the same village as well far distant displacement, traditional family systems/safety nets and cultural practices among others. All these independent variables have a direct impact on an individual household's ability to access food using the different entitlements particularly the most relevant in a conflict situation namely trade and household own labour exchange for food.

The independent variables which largely determine level of access to food also directly affect the dependant variables adapted at household level, particularly the type and specific response strategies employed as a result of food insecurity in a situation of prolonged conflict. This explains why different groups of households as stated by Sen (1981) are affected in different ways within the same locality and normally adopt and employ diverse and infinite ways to address the problem of food insecurity.

Some of the different response strategies employed among others may include reduction of number of meals per day, reduction in overall consumption, shift to cheaper staple diet and restriction of adult consumption.

Meanwhile some of the moderating variables described in the conceptual framework and emphasised by Amartya Sen (1981) as a form of social security include the external responses such as relief food and non food aid items. However, the effectiveness of this form of social security is also determined by other variables such as the frequency and interval of food aid distribution, effectiveness of targeting system, severity and intensity of food insecurity at the time of distribution as well as the specific time of the year e.g. peak hunger months of the year among others.

In food security context, responses may be defined as actions that an individual household or population adapts and uses in order to counter initial shock, but eventually long-term abnormal and difficulty situations or hazards such as conflict, drought and earth quakes among others. However, in this particular case it is limited to the impact of conflict on household availability and particularly access to food. Any population directly affected by chronic conflict will try to survive, despite any situation of conflict normally characterized by forced displacement; vulnerability to external shocks and wide spread poverty. However IDP's often find it easier to respond, whenever they have access to resources than when they have lost their entire resource base during situations of chronic conflict.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Since the late 1970s, this area of research has been experiencing a growing rate of information documentation. With recurring conflicts and complex emergency situations, the information needs for appropriate response to disaster became very vital. Much of the information is already available at the global level (Macrea, 1999); Levine and Chastre (2004).

Unfortunately, there has been less documentation within the Sub-Saharan region, specifically in the Great Lakes countries and Uganda in particular. For example, out of seven cases studied with chronic conflict affected emergencies, namely the Bujumbura Rural Province (1999-2001), Gulu district Northern Uganda (2001-2003) and Kasese district Uganda (1996-2000) classified as displacement, Northern Kirundo Province, Northern Burundi (2000-2001), Eastern Masisi, North Kivu, DRC (1999-2003) classified as rural context, Goma town (February –July 2002) and Bunia suburbs, Ituri District, DRC (2003) classified as urban context in the Great Lakes region, all had programming ideas ‘borrowed’ from responses more appropriate for natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions: no response strategy was specifically developed to suit the Great Lakes region situation in particular or a political conflict based crisis in general.

The lack of information is worse in Uganda, (Levine and Chastre, 2004). A case in point for example is the aid response to food insecurity after the 1996 Kasese rebel attack, which was carried out with closer to an average understanding of the constraints, local response strategies and the exact nature and scale of problems including food insecurity at household level. Since then no documentation has also been carried out about the experiences of this specific response in Kasese district.

2.2 Situations of Chronic Conflict

Contrary to popular thinking, states do not fail in times of chronic conflict and political instability. There is only a “governance gap” implying the powerful few operate with impunity over the voiceless governed. However conflict situations such as in Northern Uganda share common characteristics, with what the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) classifies as SCCPI (Schafer, 2002). These situations are characterized by existence of or high susceptibility to violence; forced displacement of people; deliberate exclusion of sections of the population from enjoying their basic rights; high vulnerability to livelihoods and food insecurity due to failure in production and low resilience to external shocks and acute level of poverty.

The characteristics are underpinned by crisis in governance, the centrality of violence and shocks to civilian population. SCCPI are also closely linked to each other and relate to the struggle for power, wealth and authority in an increasingly competitive world. Larger processes such as globalization and marginalization exacerbate such struggles, which actively produce “winners” and “losers”, (Schafer, 2002).

Pain and Lautze (2002) have argued that the need for more understanding of people in situations of chronic conflict is imperative, since the sustainable livelihoods framework of the British Government's Department for International Development (DFID) has inherent conceptual flaws (leading to weaknesses in implementation) in how to address risks and vulnerability. It treats vulnerability as an externality, to which the programming response is to build resilience, denying the relationship between human agency and vulnerability under conditions of political instability (arguably under development contexts as well), where issues of power and violence are central in creating vulnerabilities. It's mainly the poorest people of the poorest countries in the world, who at the moment are described to be those experiencing chronic conflict and political instability. Their poverty is both a cause and effect of political instability. The situation is worsened by regional geo-political machinations and their political landscape is complicated by the mobilization of ethnic or religious differences. However, the provision of aid in the context of chronic conflict and political instability challenges existing aid structures and institutions in a number of significant ways. The chronic nature of contemporary conflict means that conventional relief responses are inadequate.

Relief instruments designed to save lives in the face of temporary threats to livelihoods (Buchanan, 2002:2) are short-term based and yet conflicts continue over the long term, raising major questions as to whether and how external assistance might be used more effectively to enable households to secure their basic needs and to maintain public services, such as health and education. Moreover channels, through which conventional development assistance is delivered, particularly bilateral channels, remain very limited, while the legitimacy of national authority is contested nationally and internationally (Macrea, 1999). As a result, most donors set political conditionality limiting development aid to humanitarian assistance in order to avoid working with national governments that are not internationally recognized as legitimate. This has resulted into a mismatch making donors and operational agencies to struggle between theory and practice. International donor efforts are hampered by a lack of clear conceptual framework and real dilemmas about aid relations in these difficult political settings.

Although various scholars and aid agencies such as (Pain and Lautze, 2002) and WFP (2005) respectively have carried out some documentation about chronic conflict and aid responses, there continues to be a gap in how to effectively address the problems of people suffering from food insecurity in chronic conflict. The above arguments show that aid agencies still lack a detailed understanding of how people survive in situations of chronic conflict, especially, how conflict affected people meet their basic survival needs including access to the required level of individual food entitlement. As a result, most aid assistance does not meet the local needs of the targeted population in a sustainable way. This is partly attributed to the limited information on how local people respond, during difficult situations such as chronic conflict.

New in-depth analysis of the practical issues in situations of chronic conflict is required to identify appropriate interventions to support food insecurity and livelihoods recovery in a sustainable way.

2.3 The Northern Uganda Conflict, Economic Cost and Impact at Household Level

The annual cost of the Northern Conflict every year, over the last twenty years, has been more than US\$ 100 million and at least US\$ 1.33 billion over the last sixteen years, according to research conducted by the Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU), (2005). The conflict has constrained economic and social development across the whole country. The human toll has been profound and yet very difficult to quantify. The impact is not only felt in Northern Uganda, but every where in Uganda, since resources have been diverted from essential social services and support for economic development across Uganda. However the negative impact of the Northern conflict is more severe in Northern Uganda than other parts of the country. The ordinary people have had a devastating impact of the conflict at household level to the extent that hunger and starvation have become part of the normal way of life among IDPs. The people have also experienced very absolute levels of material poverty over the two decades of the conflict.

Socio-economic problems have also become widespread in Uganda and most of the chronic problems have been exacerbated by conflict and political instability. This is particularly so in Northern Uganda, which has experienced conflict for the last two decades. The chronic conflict has significantly affected rural livelihoods and the food security situation due to the massive displacement of the population, loss of household assets and property, human rights abuses such as abduction of women and children; limited or completely no access to land for production as well as other productive assets. The Northern conflict, worsened after March 2002, when the Uganda Government intensified the military offensive on the rebels, causing increased influx of people into the IDP camps, which were already congested and with little land for production, making the conflict the worst man made humanitarian disaster in the Great Lakes region (UNOCHA, 2003). The insecurity has left dysfunctional family life systems that have suffered declines in economic productivity and increased ill health with a projected 2.1 million people likely to be at risk due to food insecurity in the 2006/07 agricultural year (FEWSNET, 2005).

However out of the overall total of 1.4-1.6 million displaced people an estimated 330,440 of the population is from Lira district, currently relying on food aid, some from own crops and market purchases mainly inform of vegetable oil. Purchase is over stretched, leaving very limited expandability options in the case of a more severe vulnerability to insecurity (WFP, 2005). Insecurity in the Northern region has therefore become a cause and consequence of food insecurity and household material poverty.

2.4 Response and Resilience in Situations of Chronic Conflict

Response strategies as earlier defined are the different actions employed by people to initially counter short-term and eventually long-term or prolonged effects of an abnormal and difficulty situation such as the impact of conflict on their way of living. Response strategies are developed over a period of time and become part of the way of life for a particular population especially in areas experiencing high levels of food insecurity. Quite often people affected by conflict will try to cope and survive, despite situations of chronic conflict characterized by forced displacement; high vulnerability to livelihoods due to external shocks, wide spread poverty and threat or risk to peoples resources as a result of inability to counter any external threat. A particular population normally finds it easier to employ resilience, whenever they have access to their own physical, financial, material and social resources (Lautze, 2002).

When a population losses its main productive assets, its vulnerability to specific shocks, tends to increase as a result of more exposure to any risks and hazards including conflict. It's during such situations that people develop and build new response strategies for survival. Some of the survival strategies normally adopted by households in situations of conflict include accumulation strategies which seek to increase income flows and assets, when it is advantageous to do so. For example a household which feels secure applies protection strategies. Adaptive strategies seek to spread the risk by adjusting livelihoods or diversifying income.

These occur as a response to adverse long-term trends or in reaction to sudden shocks that require the immediate abandonment of certain response strategies. For example when encroaching conflict or impending natural disaster forces people to flee their homes (Lautze, 2002).

The survival strategies aim at minimizing the impact of shocks, for example by seeking sources of food, income or protection in the case of conflict or altering the balance of existing assets. The survival strategies mainly constitute actions, which cause the depletion of essential household assets, thus undermine the future viability of households (Lautze, 2002). This strategy has been the most typical coupled with local resilience among the IDPs, who have continued to live for the last twenty years in a situation of chronic conflict and political instability in the Northern part of the country.

The food security situation also worsened, over the past twenty years due to limited humanitarian response by various UN agencies and NGOs as a result of increased insecurity and violence, limiting the provision of basic services to address the various needs such as health, water and sanitation, food security and malnutrition etc among the displaced population (UNOCHA, 2003).

However despite limited access and supply of humanitarian aid in the past five to ten years, the IDPs in Northern Uganda have continued to survive through various strategies built and developed over a long period of time. Unfortunately little is known about these response strategies particularly to food insecurity and local resilience practices among the humanitarian community in Northern Uganda. Yet the response options keep changing with the level of food security and livelihoods strategies, leading to a more non-static, and constantly evolving and changing outcomes, households adapt new combinations of food security and general livelihoods strategies depending on a particular situation. This is mainly dependent on the changes in the stock of household livelihoods assets, which normally produce shifts in livelihoods outcomes. For example, the deterioration of natural resource base reduces reliance on natural resources for livelihoods such as growing of crops, forestry products, fishing among others (Acidri and Levine, 2003).

This shows that food security and livelihoods programming is a very complex issue in situations of chronic conflict and political instability and requires a more detailed understanding for improved response and mitigation of the food related impact.

2.5 Household Responses to Food Insecurity in Situations of Chronic Conflict

Household food security during armed conflict is affected by a combination of factors including decline of agricultural production because of physical insecurity; lack of agricultural inputs and extension services; destruction of food processing, storage and distribution systems as well as roads and markets; and loss of income coupled with rising prices. In rural areas, displacement or death of working family members, loss of animals, lack of food to provide adequate dietary energy for work and increasingly often the threat of land mines can prevent sufficient land from being cultivated and crop harvest. All of these factors affect both the quantity and quality of the food that is available to families (FAO, 1996).

During conflicts the availability of staple foods and the variety of foods grown may be reduced. Families may face a lowering of income, which decreases the possibilities of buying additional food or improving production. In pastoral populations, conflict may lead to loss of access to pastures and water, resulting in loss of livestock, income and access to food. Consequently, children's access to a diversified diet containing adequate levels of energy, protein, vitamins and minerals are seriously diminished (FAO, 1996). City dwellers and large concentrations of displaced persons in camps may also be extremely vulnerable to such disruption in the food system and incomes and may become totally dependent on outside assistance.

To assess the impact of armed conflicts on household food security and nutritional situation of children, an understanding of survival strategies used by households in times of conflict is required. This involves comprehension of the major factors causing households to become vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition in conflict situations as well as of the coping mechanisms employed by people to overcome the crisis and the effects of these mechanisms on their children's lives. When households are in danger of becoming food insecure, they employ various types of coping strategies to maintain their access to food and to protect their livelihoods during the crisis. They may collect wild foods, look for credit, sell their labour or reduce consumption. People's reactions depend mainly on their perception of the severity of the crisis and their economic and social position (Corbett, 1988).

In deciding which options to employ, a household will carefully weigh the economic and social costs of each action, although during conflicts people may be forced to take greater risks more suddenly, since their first goal is to save lives. In addition, freedom of movement is often restricted because of insecurity, which limits access to foods. Collection of unfamiliar wild foods can be risky; many contain natural toxins, and when procedures for their preparation and utilization are unknown, their consumption may lead to toxicity and poisoning. Very often homes and farms are destroyed when people flee their home area, which makes it extremely difficult for them to re-establish normal lives when they are able to return to their home communities. In addition, many of the economic and social networks that households normally employ during times of crisis may be shattered in conflict situations; the community or even the family may no longer be available as a safety net. Thus the range of successful coping strategies is severely limited in conflict situations (Corbett, 1988).

While coping strategies appear to vary in terms of timing, sequence and precise content, certain common guiding principles have been observed. Dreze (1988) points out those households will protect their longer term productive base over their shorter term consumption needs. According to (Corbett, 1988), the first response to crisis is to preserve assets and the second stage is asset depletion while the final stage is destitution. How do these strategies look in practice? Drawing on the researcher's experience in Bangladesh, a first response appears to be increased austerity: cutting down on number of meals a day, postponing expenditures on health, gathering wild foods rather than purchasing the usual dietary items.

Then previously non-earning members (women, children and the old) are drawn into employment. At some stage in the process, households begin to sell off their assets, starting off with consumer inventories, but inevitably productive assets as well. When crises persist, the family unit starts to break down. Able-bodied men are usually the first to go, migrating temporarily to areas with food or employment or else simply abandoning the unit. In extreme destitution, mothers may abandon their children or leave them in orphanages.

Based on these responses, a variety of indicators of food insecurity can be devised. One indicator appropriate in the South Asian context is frequency of meals; food insecurity is the absence of more than one meal a day. Other indicators could be based on the presence of women in non-traditional areas of activity, the fall in the price of assets which are sold by the poor in times of crisis, falling returns to wage labour as more poor people compete in the market. A study of coping strategies can also help to inform interventions based on the cost of gathering wild foods and who bears them within the household. The evidence on who bears the costs varies from one region to another. In South Asia, it appears to be primarily women. In Ethiopia, Rahmato (1988) suggests women, while Susannah Davies' work in Mali notes that gathering wild foods requires traveling long distances and it is primarily done by men. Suggestions here are to apply agricultural research to develop famine and fallback foods; this is already being done to reduce the toxicity of acidic wild foods in the area. Improvement of communications to wild food areas as suggested by Davies (2000) may both reduce time entailed in collection and increase access by women.

According to Corbett (1988) migration data, particularly who migrates, is another important piece of information in designing assistance for vulnerable households. In both Africa and Asia, greater male mobility introduces particular gender dimensions in the experience of vulnerability. It is generally men that migrate, leaving behind women and children. In studies from both regions the presence of women in migration streams, whether in to towns or into other rural areas, for employment generally signals extreme distress.

Finally of course the breakdown of the family unit is also an extreme response to crisis. The growth of poor female-headed households has been "feminization" of poverty. It is important to target such households in poverty alleviation programmes, but it may also be important to devise livelihood strategies which build on the existing skills and capabilities of women before the abandonment of women and children takes place. This may have the effect of making family structures more viable and women less dependent on male provision. However it is also important to note that successful and positive coping strategies towards food insecurity are difficult to adopt and employ in situations of chronic conflict (Corbett, 1988). In a conflict situation one major factor, which can seriously impede useful adoption and usage of coping strategies to food insecurity is the political and military situation.

2.6 Why there is Limited Usage of Household Coping Strategy Framework for Humanitarian and Development Planning

All too often, rural development policies and programmes are a hasty response to crisis and political exigency. For instance, when drought or conflict occurs, the large-scale distribution of food aid is a rapid and routine policy reaction. At best, policy and programme responses of this nature are palliative, with only passing attention paid to the issues of differential needs, or the long-term implications.

At worst, they exacerbate inequity and undermine the capacity of rural people to help themselves. Against this experience, however, is a growing realization that development efforts might be more sustainable and constructive if they were sensitive to the origins, dynamics and differential experience of rural adversity, and supportive of what communities and households do themselves to minimize risk and cope with crisis (Seddon, 1997).

Despite its narrow focus on the problems of famine and food insecurity, a substantial and growing literature on 'coping strategies' has contributed to this understanding. A recurrent theme in this literature is that a predictable sequence of coping behavior exists in response to increasing food insecurity, and that the adoption of later or 'last resort' strategies signals impending crisis (Corbett, 1988). Accordingly, certain policymakers and practitioners involved in famine prediction and relief have relied on the presence of 'last resort' strategies as 'early warning' indicators to predict food crises, and to target food aid to those in greatest need.

The narrow focus of research and policy on coping in relation to famine and food relief in situations of conflict, however, has hindered its potential contribution to broader development concerns.

Scant attention has been paid to the variety of other crises that household's experience, such as those provoked by illness (Sauer born, 1988), or to the competing options and objectives that households juggle in the process of coping in situations of conflict. Mainstream analysis has also overlooked intra-household dynamics that critically influence the nature and consequences of coping with crises of varying intensities. There is need for the development of coping strategy framework for evaluating its context and success.

This framework is intended to help policy-makers and practitioners understand and support strategies that strengthen resilience against crises.

From a broader perspective limited socio-economic analysis in viewing existing food insecurity problems, emanating from conflict is a major constraint in humanitarian aid practice. The lack of correlation between actual needs and humanitarian response continues to elude both emergency and development process in conflict-affected areas such as Northern Uganda. This is mainly caused by the supply driven aid response, linked to the nature and pressure for disbursement of aid. Secondly the complexity in trying to link chronic conflict with humanitarian emergency and acute food and livelihoods crisis phases of food insecurity at household food level during conflict situations has also exacerbated the lack of consistent understanding and analysis of how local people construct their livelihoods and respond to changing patterns of life in such situations. Further more lack of proper assessments as a result of inappropriate methodologies and faster response before a proper understanding of the situation continues to affect any efforts to build good understanding aimed at promoting local learning in situations of conflict (Levine and Chastre, 2004).

Finally un-coordinated aid response coupled with limited accountability on the part of humanitarian workers and more needs based and politically driven than human rights based approaches are among the other major reasons for limited objective and in-depth understanding of food insecurity in situations of conflict (Pain, 2002). As such programming and intervention practices are formulaic, delivery driven and with limited understanding of context and unlikely to have the expected impact.

Whether current interventions are harmful or have reinforced exploitative power relations and resource allocation is unknown. Although there is evidence that some interventions have increased vulnerability of particular sections of the community in countries such as Afghanistan (Lautze, 2002).

Further inquiries require to be conducted with a specific focus on how household's response strategies have been developed and when they are employed at household level, so as to develop a food security related coping strategy framework to improve food security programming in situations of chronic conflict such as Northern Uganda.

2.7 Conclusion

The available literature shows that many, if not most food security related interventions in situations of chronic conflict and political instability are inappropriate and have failed to address the actual food security needs of people affected by conflict. Despite the twenty years of the chronic conflict in Northern Uganda, no systematized study and logical inquiry has been undertaken to provide an in-depth understanding of how and specifically, when households employ various response strategies to meet their required annual food entitlement in the IDP camps.

No specific studies have also been carried out to have an in-depth understanding of the local community response strategies to household food insecurity among the IDP's in the region.

Existing literature shows that some level of effort has been made to understand and document the pathetic living conditions of the displaced population in Northern Uganda. However, none of the studies and information presented critically addresses issues of IDP responses to food insecurity and threat to people's livelihoods. It also fails to provide logical evidence on how the IDPs have systematically responded and coped with the situation, so as to inform programme design and more specifically appropriate and relevant interventions. As a result most aid assistance is not only inadequate, but also inappropriate and does not adequately meet the local needs of the affected population in a sustainable way.

Evidence available shows that this is partly caused by the limited information and understanding of how the affected people respond to situations of chronic conflict which limits their access to basic survival needs such as shelter, health, education and most importantly food entitlements.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 Methodology

The methodology covers the research design specifying where and how the data was collected. It specifically covers the study area, sample population, procedure and techniques, size and selection process of respondents, data collection methods including the tools and techniques that were used both for primary data collection and review of secondary sources of information and methods of data analysis focusing on coding, entry, analysis and interpretation prior to compilation of findings.

3.1 Research Design

The research was an explanatory and descriptive study with some cross sectional analysis of issues to strengthen information obtained. It applied both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The qualitative data enabled an in-depth understanding of the various household coping and response strategies to food insecurity in situations of chronic conflict, although the main findings were mainly based on the quantitative data generated through specific questions on the different forms of coping and response strategies adopted by the IDP households. The two sets of data were also triangulated to crosscheck the level of consistency and quality of information obtained in the field.

3.2 Study Area, Sample Population, Procedure and Techniques

Overall sampling of respondents was carried out using simple random sampling procedure to obtain a fairly representative sample for the study.

3.2.1 Study Area

Lira district was formed in 1974 and is inhabited by the Langi as the main ethnic group in the district. It is located in Northern Uganda, 347 kilometers from the capital city Kampala and is bordered by the districts of Pader in the North, Kotido, Moroto and Katakwi in the East, Kabaramaido in the South East, Kamuli and Kayunga in the South, Nakasongola in the South West and Apac in the West.

The annual rainfall is about 1,200 mm, with two main peaks of rainfall and agricultural seasons in the months of April to May and August to October. It has an average temperature of 30 degrees and minimum of 25 degrees Celsius, putting it nationally at 3.1 percent (UCC 2003).

The district has fertile soils and is one of the main oil seed producing areas in the country. In terms of infrastructure development just like other parts of the country, it has a less than 5 percent distribution, while the municipality stands at 60 percent in terms of infrastructure development. The district also has 321 Government aided primary schools compared with 24 Government aided secondary schools, three technical schools and four tertiary institutions. The district has a population of 757,763 persons according to 2002 population census with a total area of 7,251 square kilometers of which 1,100 is mainly wet lands as compared with 6,151 square kilometers of dry, arable land suitable for crop production (UCC 2003).

3.2.2 Sample Population

Unlike other districts such as Gulu, Pader and Kitgum the rural parts of Lira district were largely unaffected by the insurgency until February 2004, when the LRA massacre of civilians in Abia, Abako and Barlonyo sparked a massive wave of displacement into “protected camps” resulting in an initial 212,000 people displaced of which 83,000 were in Lira municipality.

The study population was primarily drawn from internally displaced populations in Aloi and Orum IDP camps of Lira district with a population of 40,210 and 8,750 persons respectively (WFP, 2005). The two camps were selected based on the following reasons :

- I. The two IDP camps had a more significant number of people and households compared with other IDP camps, which had already de-congested due to voluntary return to their villages at the time of the study.
- II. Relatively much higher frequency of WFP relief food aid assistance in more urban located IDP camps such as Aloi compared with IDP camps located in rural parts of the district such as Orum. It is believed that this would allow a comparative analysis of the two Orum IDP camps.
- III. Other factors which also influenced the selection of these tow IDP camps included proximity and accessibility to the IDP camps due to the relatively good feeder road

net work, bearing in mind the logistical issues such as cost of transport and accommodation facilities for the research team.

- IV. Finally my personal experiences during some prior development work in Lira district, also contributed to the selection of the two IDP camps.

3.2.3 Sample Procedure and Techniques

The research team initially visited the district authorities, i.e. Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), who then referred them to the Assistant Chief Administrative Officer (ACAO) in charge of disaster management. Through discussions with the ACAO the research team identified 10 members of the DDMC on the basis of their experience and specific roles in the committee. The 10 members were then interviewed as key informants at district level.

This was followed by identification of the camp leaders, deputy leaders and zone leaders of Aloi main and Orum IDP camps in Lira district and verification of the total number of households and IDPs in the three sub IDP camps within Aloi main and Orum main IDP camps.

This enabled the determination of a sample interval by dividing the total number of households in the camps with the intended sample size of 200 households. The final sample interval obtained and used for selection entailed counting 24 households and selection of the 25th existing household in the four main directions of the IDP camps through the transect walk technique in these highly congested camps. Potential bias which normally arises during the sampling process including the need for a representative sample, were avoided through a combination of simple random sampling procedure based on the agreed sample interval with transect walk across the four main directions of the IDP camps.

3.3 Sample Size and Selection

The sample size had four categories of respondents. The district, Sub County and camp level key informants as well as the primary household level respondents.

3.3.1 Sample Size

The sample size comprised of 10 DDMC members of Lira district, 2 sub county chiefs and 4 groups of camp level key informants composed of a camp leader, deputy leader, zone leaders and two other elderly persons (one man and woman) who were considered as opinion leaders in Aloi and Orum IDP camps.

A total of 200 heads of households with final decision making authority were selected and interviewed among the 1,046, 1,365 and 1,493 households in Aloi Corner, High and Rhino sub camps respectively and 1,053 households in Orum IDP camp as the primary respondents in the two main IDP camps.

It is important to note that at the time of data collection, the number of households in the two IDP camps had reduced by half due to high rate of voluntary IDP return into their villages. Overall 10 DDMC members and 200 heads of households with final decision making authority were interviewed for the study. This sample size was determined on the basis of the level of homogeneity, limited diversity of food security and livelihoods options and similar patterns of coping and response strategies determined by the conflict situation among the IDP households in the two camps as well as the preliminary findings during the pre-testing of tools, geographical coverage, scope, time and resources available for the study.

3.3.2 Sample Selection

The district and sub county level key informant respondents were selected after detailed discussions with the ACAO in charge of disaster preparedness in Lira district. The main criteria for their selection were based on level of experience and active involvement in the humanitarian response in Lira district. This was followed by the identification of the two sub county chiefs and camp leaders in the two main camps, which was equally based on the same criteria mentioned above.

However, the selection of household level respondents was determined by initially calculating the sample interval based on the total number of households divided by the sample size. This resulted into the selection of every 25th head of household with final decision making authority after counting 24 households was selected and the specific location in the camps was established using a transect walk in the four main directions of the IDP camps.

The locations then marked on a camp map to guide the research team during the process of data collection.

The primary respondents were therefore heads of household with final decision making authority and in few cases any knowledgeable adult within the household given mock interview and depending on their level of response to the questions perceived to be capable of answering the research questions, including some child headed households. Mean while specific measures adapted to ensure 100 percent response by interviewing the 200 heads of households with final decision making authority including 2 child headed households included a more perfect timing of the field data collection, which coincided with the monthly relief food distribution cycle for November and December 2006 as well as identifying any immediate knowledgeable adult member of the sampled household.

Other measures included provision of adequate prior information for mobilization through the zone and camp leaders as well as motivation through facilitation of their work. This minimized the possibility of poor rate of response and any bias towards adults than the few child headed households who, provide for themselves in the IDP camps and were within the sample population.

It equally enabled the research team to achieve its 100 percent response rate by reaching by interviewing all the 200 households, although 35 of the interviewed heads of household were not part of the original 200 selected households. This was due to the fact missing heads of households were replaced with every 26th household within the two IDP camps. This decision was based on the absence of the final decision making head of the household/knowledgeable person or non existence of the household as a result of increased voluntary return of IDP to their villages during data collection process.

3.4 Data Collection

The primary data was collected at community key informant and household level and this was triangulated by cross its checking consistency with secondary data derived from district key informants. Data collection was carried out using appropriate participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques such as socio-economic wealth stratification, seasonal calendars, historical profiling and ranking to enhance local peoples participation in the study. The following is a description of how these PRA tools were applied.

- I. The socio-economic wealth stratification, commonly known as a wealth breakdown exercise was conducted using focus group discussions with 4 groups of camp level key informants of 5-6 people each. The discussions initially started by identifying the main determinants of wealth in the IDP camps, followed by grouping of households based on the local determinants of wealth and a proportional piling exercise using 100 maize seeds to obtain the proportion of each wealth group.
- II. Seasonal activity calendars were also derived through the same number of focus group discussions. This was carried out by identifying the major economic activities done by IDP households in the different months of the year, including the hunger peak periods.
- III. Historical profiling was also carried out using the aid of seasonal activity calendars to establish the major events such as when the people were displaced and the months in which they started receiving relief food aid assistance, so as to build the required evidence of time line on adoption of coping strategies.

3.5 Data Collection Methods and Tools

The following methods and tools were used for data collection:

- I. Interview guides: Individual key informant interviews were conducted at district level with the 10 selected members of the DDMC using key informant interview guide. The main data collected at this level focused on the impact of the conflict in the district and level of external response particularly to household food insecurity in the IDP camps. It also covered the types of IDP responses employed and district support to the displaced population.
- II. Focus group discussions (FGDs) using FGD guide: This was used to conduct the camp level key informant interviews using the FGD guide with open ended questions in the two IDP camps. A total of 10 district level key informant interviews with members of DDMC, 2 sub county level and 4 camp level FGDs composed of subcounty officials and camp/zone leaders were conducted during the study. The main data collected was about the general food security situation, socio-economic categories of households, seasonal activity calendar, historical timeline and how households responded to food insecurity in the two IDP camps.
- III. Household interviews using structured questionnaires: Based on the camp level key informant discussions, individual household level interviews were then conducted using structured questionnaires in order to collect the main primary data of the study. Data collected at this level was on the impact of the conflict at individual household level, types of household responses, when the responses were normally adopted and employed and the relative effectiveness of each response in addressing household food security situation.
- IV. Documentary review: Finally documentary review was carried to have a detailed literature review and to identify other un-reviewed reports at district and national level. This was used for triangulation during data analysis, interpretation and the final study report. Main reports reviewed included the general security situation as documented by WFP, household food security and livelihoods reports and some humanitarian emergency relief reports for Lira district.
- V. Observation and photographs: A number of photographs were taken to enrich the information and evidence base, particularly on the various coping and response strategies adopted by IDPs in the Aloi and Orum camps.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out in phases. The first phase entailed editing and coding. This was followed by data entry combined with actual cleaning on an on going basis. A data entry template was developed using Census and Survey Processing System (CSPro) version 3.0. Data interpretation and content analysis was carried out by triangulating the qualitative and quantitative information with reviewed secondary data in order to ensure cross tabulation and analysis. The qualitative data was then analyzed using simple matrix and ordinary excel spread sheets, mean while quantitative data was analyzed using the Coping Strategy Index (CSI), a tool used to determine the severity and intensity of food insecurity and various household responses to hunger and food insecurity in situations of conflict, drought and any other hazards as well as a Statistical Analysis System (SAS) version 9.1 and the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 12. Microsoft Excel (MS) spread sheets was finally used for further analysis, particularly graphing, which was carried out to minimize any errors in the course of data analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

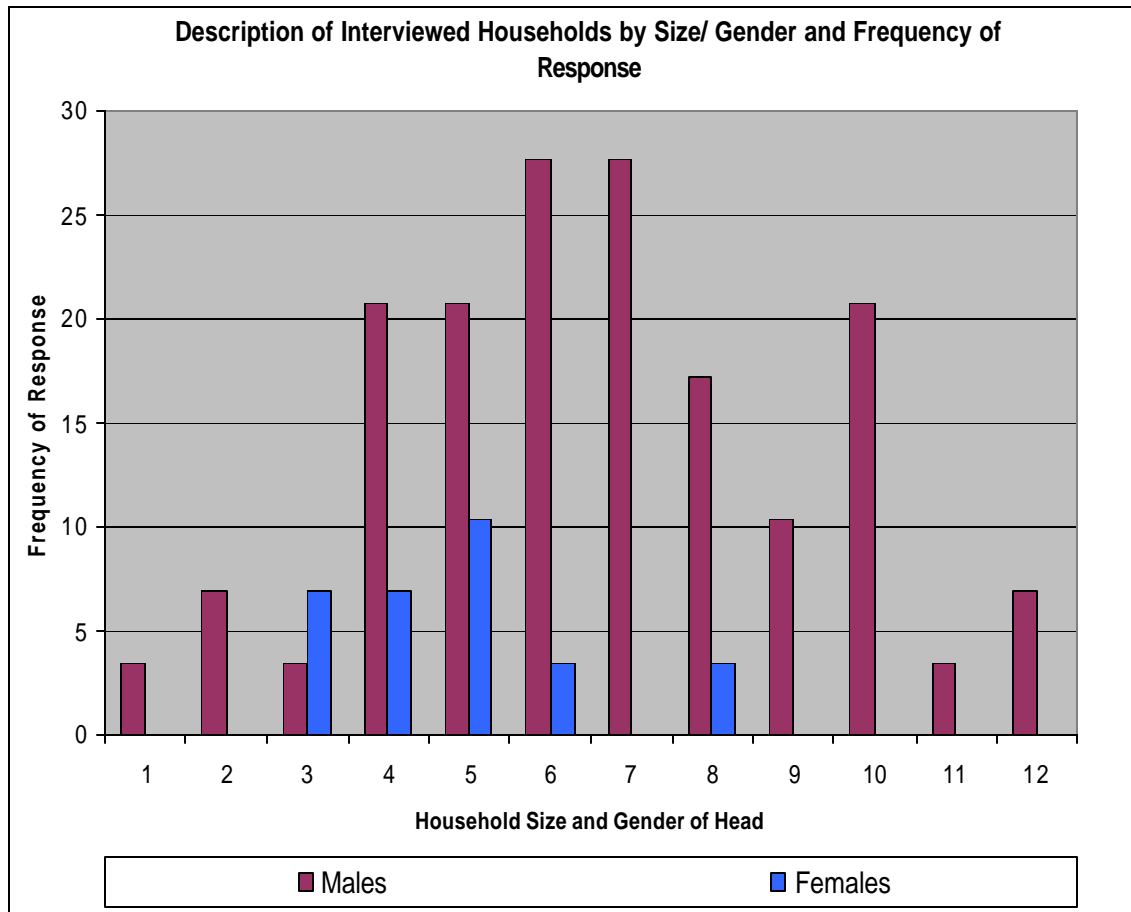
4.0 Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Introduction

The three years (September/November 2003 to 2006) of displacement of rural people into Aloi and Orum camps directly resulted in a very limited availability and access to staple foods at household level among the IDPs. Prior to the conflict the entire rural population in the war affected parts of Lira district were mainly depending on agricultural crop and livestock production. The people also had a very high coping and resilience capacity as well as ability to recover from any natural or man made shocks such as drought, floods and conflict, among others. However, the household level food security situation among the IDPs in Aloi and Orum camps drastically changed from a state of high level food security to what can best be described as transitory food insecurity in the last three years of the peak of Northern conflict in Lira district. Agricultural practices shifted from fairly organized small scale subsistence farming to low input vegetable gardening and production of other short-term maturity crops such as sweet potatoes on less than 0.5 acres of land within 5-20 kilometers distance from the two IDP camps.

The changes in agricultural practices were directly attributed to the high levels of civil insecurity in Aloi and Orum IDP camps in the three year period reviewed by the study. Majority of the displaced population also lost their productive assets, particularly livestock in the course of displacement. Meanwhile the remaining productive assets were preserved for sometime, before being sold to purchase staple foods from the local markets within the IDP camps. The above patterns have similarity with what Dreze (1988) described as the typical rational household behavior of preserving productive assets over short-term consumption needs, particularly in situations of food security crisis. The rational economic behavior was equally evident in the allocation of the limited resources among the displaced population in the two IDP camps. The main coping strategies adopted in response to food insecurity ranged from austerity measures to asset depletion with elements of destitution among specific households towards the end of their displacement in September 2006, as suggested by Corbett (1988).

4.2 Graph 1: Description of Interviewed Households by Size and Gender



A total of 200 households were randomly selected and interviewed in Aloi and Orum IDP camps. Graph 1 shows the size and gender composition of the 200 heads of households with final decision making authority interviewed during the study. Overall there were more male headed households interviewed compared with female headed households. The majority of respondents had household sizes of 4-8 people per household as indicated by the high frequency of response, with less than 30 percent in the range of households with size of 1-3 and 9-12 people as household members. There were only 2 child headed households, which was negligible when presented as overall percentage of interviewed households of the study.

4.3 Description of the Household Food Insecurity Situation in the IDP Camps

Table 1: Typical characteristics of food insecurity in the two IDP camps, by the District, Sub-County and Community leaders of Lira district.

Description of the level of food insecurity	The main characteristics of household food insecurity as described by the respondents at community & household level is presented below:
Most IDP households faced acute food shortages and livelihoods crisis due to depletion of productive assets such as livestock.	<p><i>The respondents rated crude mortality at 1-2/10,000/ day due to poor living conditions including limited access to food.</i></p> <p><i>Wasting among 10-15 percent of the children in the IDP camps.</i></p> <p><i>The main disease at epidemic level was mainly cholera due to limited safe water and poor sanitation in the camps.</i></p> <p><i>Food access/availability was characterized by the lack of entitlement; as such most households only derived the minimum 2,100 per day through food aid and coping strategies.</i></p> <p><i>Limited dietary diversity with acute diet deficits, especially proteins.</i></p> <p><i>An estimated 80 percent of IDP households had limited access and availability of water with a maximum of 15 litres per person per day, obtained through extreme difficulties and unsafe sources of water.</i></p> <p><i>Specific signs of destitution were believed to be emerging among some individuals, although it was diffused among the entire population.</i></p> <p><i>Wide spread civil insecurity, particularly in the former villages of displacement.</i></p> <p><i>There was also a mixture of both positive/constructive coping strategies characterized by an accelerated use of livelihoods assets and negative/distressful strategies among the population. This resulted in to rapid asset depletion and deepened poverty.</i></p>

In order to understand any changes in levels of household wealth, detailed community led wealth breakdown interviews were conducted, with the following descriptive characteristics obtained.

Table 2: Summary of the main findings of the community led wealth breakdown interviews conducted to establish the socio-economic groups and characteristics of households in Aloi and Orum IDP camps.

Wealth Groups	“Very Poor”	“Poor”	“Middle-Poor”	“Better-Off ”
Local (Langi) wealth term	“Acan-Adot”	“Acan”	“Acan- Abeber”	“Alonyo”
% of IDP households by wealth category	44%	34%	12%	10%
IDP land accessed & cultivated	<i>0-½ acre (mainly accessed freely)</i>	<i>½-1 Acre (mainly accessed freely, rented & share cropping agreement)</i>	<i>1-3 Acres (mainly accessed through rent & sharecropping agreement)</i>	<i>3-6 Acres (mainly rented & owned land by the host community)</i>
IDP food crops grown	<i>Vegetables</i>	<i>Vegetables & sweet potatoes</i>	<i>Vegetables, sweet potatoes & short variety cassava</i>	<i>Vegetables, sweet potatoes & short variety cassava</i>
IDP number of livestock owned	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>Cattle : 1-2 Goats: 1-4</i>	<i>Cattle: 8-10 Goats: 5-10</i>
IDP sources of food	<i>Relief food aid Purchase from the Market. Labour exchange</i>	<i>Own crop production Relief food aid. Market purchase Labour exchange</i>	<i>Own crop production Relief food aid. Market purchase</i>	<i>Own crop production Relief food aid. Market purchase</i>
Typical IDP sources of cash income mainly for purchasing staple food items	<i>Sale of firewood, water Off farm casual labor such as sweeping of the market among others.</i>	<i>Sale of charcoal, local crafts such pots, winnowers, pounding mortar, vegetables & carpentry products</i>	<i>Local commercial bicycle transport services Petty/retail trade in staple food items Vegetable sales Formal employment such as teaching & hotels.</i>	<i>Large scale trade, retail shops, Large scale cultivation, Butchery among some households and house rental in some cases.</i>
IDP productive assets	<i>Non</i>	<i>Non</i>	<i>Bicycle, Radio.</i>	<i>Bicycle, Radio, Vehicle, semi permanent & some permanent house in trading centers, grinding mills.</i>

A total of four wealth groups were derived through participatory rural appraisal techniques such as wealth ranking and proportional piling. The highest number of households lies in the “very poor” group as represented by 44 percent of the total number of households compared with 34 percent “poor”, 12 percent “middle” and 10 percent “better-off” households. The main factors which determined the way of living among the four groups of households were the following:

Land Ownership and Access:

Unlike pre-displacement period, there was no land ownership among 95 percent of the IDPs with exception of 5 percent who were the host community. However over 90 percent of the IDP households had access to land as compared to actual ownership. This trends are not similar to what FAO (1996), suggested about restricted access to land, due to insecurity and threat of land mines in conflict situations.

The majority of “very poor” households completely had no access to land, except very few who had up to ½ an acre compared with “poor” households who were the main beneficiaries’ of improved access to land through negotiations by the district, sub county and camp leaders with the host community. Other “poor” households either rented or entered into sharecropping agreement such as exchange of land for labour and sharing of harvest. The main reason why typical “very poor” households had no access to land, apart from the insecurity was the day to day living requirements which forced them to sale their labour for food and cash income than concentrating on agricultural crop production. The “middle” households mainly accessed land through some sharecropping and rent as compared with actual ownership from the “better-off” households , composed of mainly the host community.

Overall, all interviewed key informants at district, sub county and camp level and households including the host community indicated that land access and ownership was a major problem for agricultural production, despite the relative advantage they had compared with distantly displaced people settled in Aloi and Orum IDP camps. It is also important to note that most of the IDPs secured land through protracted negotiations between districts, sub county and camp leaders with the host community. However, the crops grown on the limited pieces of land were only limited to short-term variety crops such as vegetables, sweet potatoes and in some cases short-term variety cassava which was distributed by humanitarian organisations such as WFP and World Vision. This was attributed to the need to get food within a short time and the terms and conditions agreed for usage of the land with the host community.

Livestock Ownership:

Traditionally the areas surrounding the two camps were suitable for livestock such as cattle, goats, sheep, pigs and poultry. However, livestock ownership at household level has significantly reduced due to the conflict and widespread insecurity over the last three years in the two IDP camps.

Most displaced people, including the host community, hardly own any livestock, apart from the 10 percent better-off households indicated in table 2. These households own between 1-2 goats, with some exceptional cases of households who own 1-2 cows and in some very few cases specific households who owned up to 10 heads of cattle.

The main causes of reduction in numbers of livestock mentioned by the district, sub-county and camp leader key informants and interviewed households were rapid sale of the livestock towards the end of the first year of displacement and settlement in IDP camps, frequent cattle raids by the Karamojong warriors, livestock diseases and prohibition in keeping of some animals such as pigs by the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) rebels.

Household Sources of Food:

The main sources of household food for the “very poor” households were relief food aid, market purchase and labour exchange for food as compared with own crop production, relief food aid and market purchase among the “poor”, “middle” and some “better-off” households in the IDP camps. The relief food provided a form of social security and safety net as described in the food entitlement theory (Sen 1981).

Productive Assets:

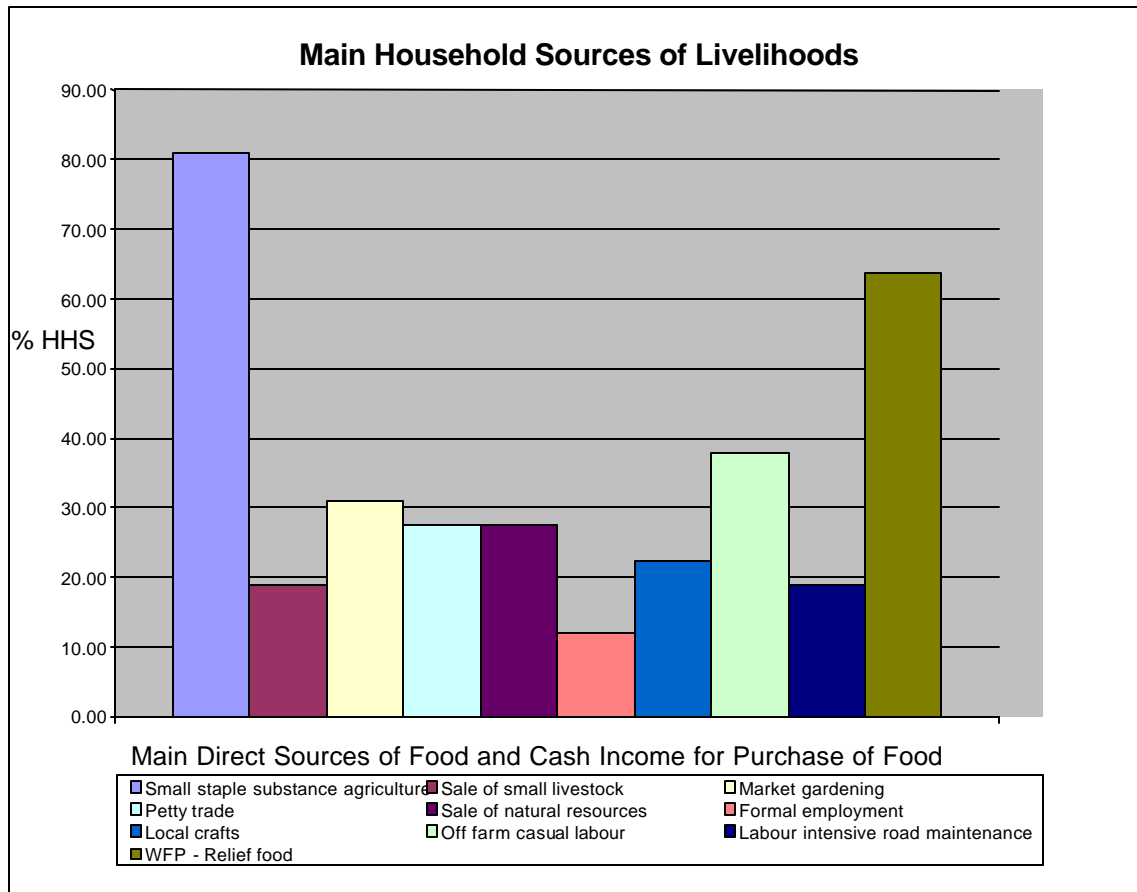
Overall, the “very poor” and “poor” households either lost or sold their productive assets such as radios and bicycles in order to purchase food. However, some “middle” and “better-off” households owned radios and bicycles in the IDP camps.

Conclusion:

The main factor which caused high levels of household food insecurity among the IDPs in Lira district, Aloi and Orum IDP camps in particular was the continuation of the civil war. The situation was exacerbated by Government inability to guarantee civil security for the displaced population and lack of interim solution from September 2003 to guarantee the IDP adequate and secure access to land, while the war was being prosecuted.

¹4.3.1 Main Household Sources of Livelihoods (Food and Cash Income for Purchasing Food) Among IDPs from September 2003 to 2006.

Graph 2: The main sources of household food and cash income used for food purchase among IDPs in Aloi and Orum camps.



Graph 2, shows that 81 percent of the interviewed households indicated small scale subsistence agriculture as the main source of food.

The continued reliance on small scale subsistence agriculture such as vegetable production was mainly due to the relatively good security situation within 5-20 kilometer radius of the two IDP camps, due to permanent presence of the military and para military groups such as “Amuka” especially in Aloi IDP camp. This was enhanced by efforts of the district, sub county and camp authorities, which enabled most distantly displaced households to at least access 0.5-1 acre of land.

¹ The host communities are the local people in whose land the IDP camps were established. They relatively had more land compared with the displaced population.

This land was mainly used for the production of short-term variety crops such as sweet potatoes and vegetables using seeds provided by various Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as World Vision, Care International and WFP.

In addition some IDP households also entered into share cropping agreements with the host community. These households provided labour and half (50 percent) of the crop harvest in return for land during a particular agricultural season.

Access to food through small scale subsistence agriculture was followed by WFP relief food aid assistance as indicated by 64 percent of interviewed households. The main relief food aid items distributed were cereals, pulses, cooking oil and some Soya blend meal (CSB) mainly



for under weight and below five years of age children. Relief food aid assistance was a major source of food, particularly at the peak of the conflict in Lira district.

(Photograph 1: IDP households awaiting relief

food aid distribution in Aloi IDP camp). The provision of relief food aid was based on the findings of periodic humanitarian assessments, which informed when, where and how much food was to be provided for

the IDPs. As such much of the food was distributed after six months of displacement and during the peak of the conflict, when the IDPs had very limited access to other sources of food, particularly in Orum IDP camp.

The vital role relief food aid played in addressing hunger and starvation, explains why the IDPs rated it as the second most important source of food between the September-November 2003 to September 2006 period of displacement. The provision of relief food aid matches with the argument presented in the food entitlement theory, Amartya Sen (1981). It is extremely difficult, if not impossible for an individual household to survive and achieve the required level of food entitlement without some form of social security, when its economic ability to access food through effective demand is eroded, just like the case of the IDPs in Aloi and Orum camps.

However Sen's argument has more strength from food access perspective as compared with food availability, which was equally a major problem in the IDP camps.

The contribution of food aid was further highly rated because the camp leaders sub county and district authorities ensured that all displaced households were not only registered for relief food, but were able to receive the standard ration of food from WFP, even if they had lost their registration cards. This significantly reduced the number of households who would have missed food aid during a particular distribution cycle.

The third ranked household source of livelihoods was cash income derived from off farm casual labour such as construction of huts and digging of pit latrines in the IDP camps as indicated by 38 percent of the interviewed households.

This was a more regular source of cash income mainly used to purchase staple foods such as cassava flour, millet and sorghum grain. It was also a major source of cash income due to the increased demand for shelter and sanitation caused by further displacement of people from more insecure neighboring IDP camps in other rural parts of Lira district.

The fourth major livelihoods activity which was directly used to obtain cash income for the purchase of staple foods such as cassava flour and sorghum grain was marketing gardening through production of vegetables. This was indicated by 31 percent of the interviewed households. Cash income derived from the sale of vegetables was also a regular source of income, due to the IDPs access to land through the support of district, sub county and camp leaders and seeds provided by NGOs. It also had a reliable market particularly in Aloi IDP camp due to its closeness (30 Kilometers) to Lira district central market. This enabled the IDP to sell their vegetables to traders from Lira town and enhanced their purchasing power to buy staple foods.

Market gardening through sale of vegetables as a main source of livelihoods was closely rated to petty trade such as sale of local brew and other household items such as soap, salt and sugar particularly among the "middle" and "better off" households as indicated by 28 percent of interviewed households. Petty trade was rated as an important source of livelihoods; because of the relatively good profits it provided, increasing the household purchasing power for staple foods in the IDP camps. This activity was only highly rated by 28 percent of the interviewed households, due to the lack of initial capital for petty trade among majority of IDP households.

Another source of livelihoods equally rated like market gardening was the exploitation of natural resources. The main types of natural resources sold by the IDPs were charcoal, firewood and local brooms. This was also indicated by 28 percent of interviewed households mainly from the “very poor” and “poor” household’s wealth bracket without any productive assets such as small livestock, with exception of limited productive household labour capacity.

These households expressed that they had to take extra security risks in order to obtain the natural resources from the bush. This argument is similar to what Corbett (1988) described as restricted freedom of movement due to insecurity, affecting access to some of the natural resources vital for human survival. However, the extra security provided through the deployment of “Amuka” Militia by the district and sub county authorities enabled a continued access to the vital natural resources, the IDPs required for their survival.

Out of the 28 percent of interviewed households more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of households indicated that, they mostly collected firewood as compared with burning of charcoal due to the security risks associated with smoke from preparation of charcoal. *(Photograph 2: An elderly woman carries raw material for making local broom for sale in Orum IDP camp).*



They also mentioned that the smoke from charcoal burning easily led to the identification of their location by the LRA rebels. Most of the firewood and charcoal was sold to the humanitarian community, particularly drivers who delivered relief items in to the two IDP camps.

It is also important to note that local crafts such as pounding pots had a significant



contribution to livelihoods of 22 percent of interviewed households. It provided a reliable source of income among households, who were able to afford the basic hand tools for shaping the wood. (*Photograph 3: IDPs making local crafts for sale in Aloi camp*). Most households engaged in this activity were among those who lacked other productive assets. The households expressed that it was one of the most suitable economic activities,

due to both local market and low raw material requirement for making the product.

Other reasons included less frequent movement into the bush which reduced the risk of being attacked by rebels, while obtaining the raw materials and the readily available market in Lira town.

Other sources of livelihoods which complemented the household sources of cash, particularly for purchase of staple foods were sale of small livestock such as goats and chicken and labour intensive road maintenance through Government public works programmes in Aloi IDP camp as well as salaried formal employment such as teaching, health and community work, rated by 19 and 12 percent of the total number of households interviewed in Aloi and Orum IDP camps respectively. The lower ranking of these sources of livelihoods was probably due to the initial loss of livestock by majority of the interviewed households during the displacement period. The majority of the households were also mainly within the “very poor” and “poor” household wealth bracket.

Among the other reasons for low ranking of these sources of livelihoods could also have probably been the limited employment opportunities within the public works scheme and very few formally employed household heads among the IDPs.

4.3.2 The Short term impact of the Northern Conflict on Household Food Security.

Over the last three years of the local people's displacement from September 2003 to September 2006, the IDPs in Aloi and Orum camps experienced a significant decrease in availability, access and utilisation of particularly staple foods at household level in the camps. 95 percent of the 200 interviewed households with exception of 5 percent of the host community, mentioned that availability and access of staple foods changed both in quantity and the sources from which the food was obtained. For example there was a significant change from reliance on normal sources of staple foods from own crop production such as sorghum, millet and cassava and livestock production to reliance on non formal markets in the IDP camps.

This suggests that the IDPs adopted similar strategies to what Lautze (2002) described as adaptive strategies aimed at spreading risks, while coping with difficult situations such as staple crop failure in a particular year. However it was only the 5 percent of the host community in the two IDP camps, who had relatively more ownership and access to land for agricultural production. It' was also this category of people who experienced less change in availability and access to food.

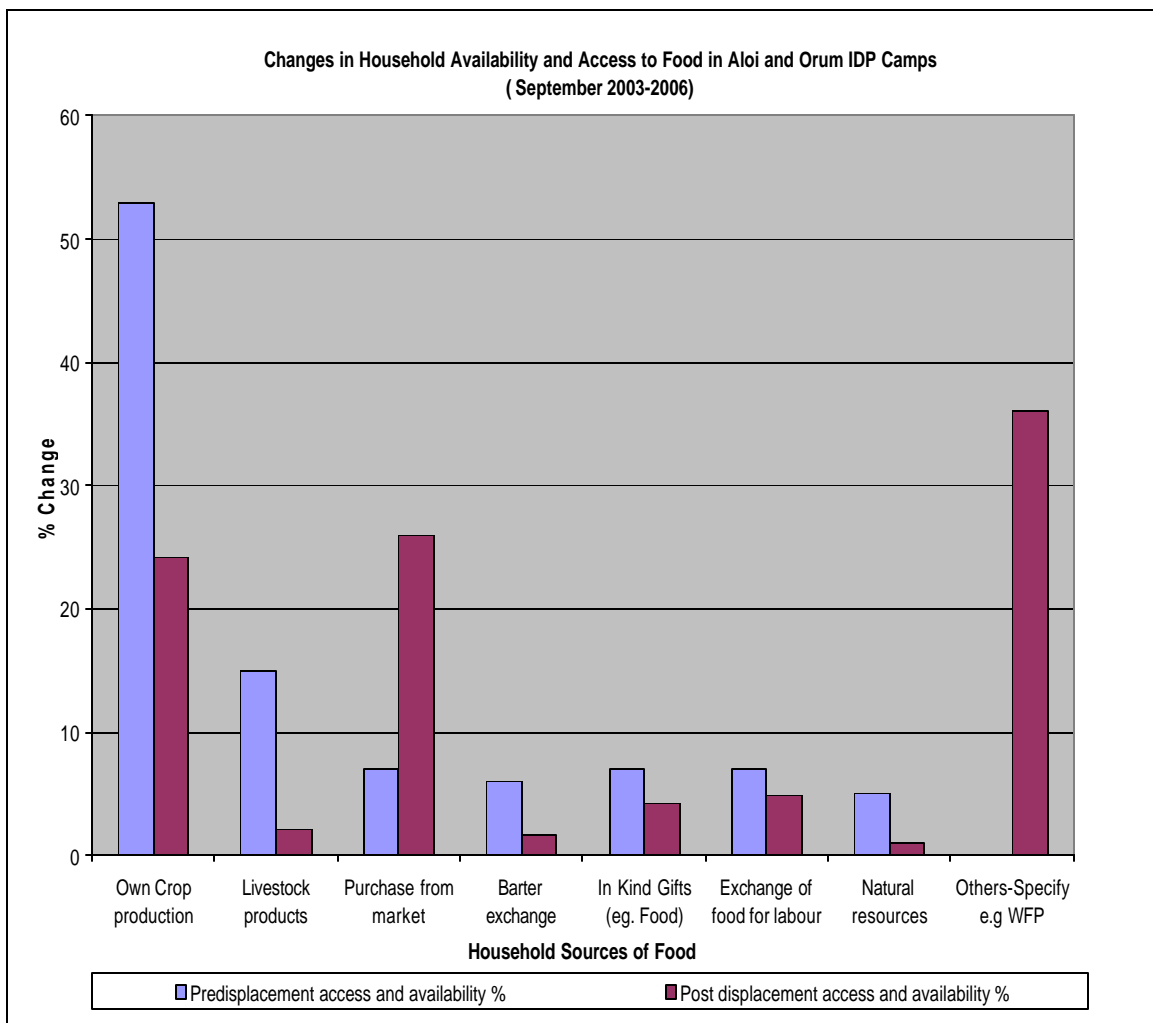
The main household sources of food prior to September 2003 displacement were own crop production, livestock products, market purchase, barter exchange, social capital or gifts and exchange of food for labour.

Meanwhile the most affected sources of household food were own crop production, which reduced by 29 percent as compared with 19 percent increment of direct market purchase mainly attributed to limited sources of food from own crop production. *(Photograph 4: IDPs selling charcoal in Orum IDP camp).*



The food was mainly purchased using cash income derived from the various sources of cash income such as disposal of small stock like poultry, goats, sheep and pigs; local brewing, sale of charcoal and firewood. Other activities included growing of short term variety crops such as vegetables, increased petty trade such as brewing, remittances and salary/wages from both formal and non formal employment including joining of the local Amuka militia group. Meanwhile some “very poor” and “poor” households borrowed cash credit particularly from the upper socio-economic groups. Other exceptional cases included adoption of very distressful and negative response strategies such as early/forced marriage in order to obtain some dowry. However these were not typical and ranked among the most intensively employed strategies by the IDPs.

Graph 3: Summarizes the percentage change in the different sources of food during pre and post displacement periods among IDPs in Aloi and Orum camps



Other major changes in access to food included livestock products reduced by 13 percent as compared with 4 percent for natural resources such as firewood, charcoal and wild foods like leaves, fruits like share butter nuts, tubers and honey among others and barter trade.

The lowest percentage changes were noted in some of the supplementary sources of food such as gifts through social networks including household relationships and direct labour exchange for food as shown by 3 and 2 percent respectively. This was probably due to lack of extra food as gifts and limited agricultural labour employment opportunities within the IDP camps.

Overall there was some percentage change in availability and access to food from all the main sources of food over the September 2003-2006 period of review by the study. The above changes are similar to arguments presented by FAO (1996), that agricultural production because of physical insecurity; lack of agricultural inputs and extension services; destruction of food processing, storage and distribution systems will significantly reduce during times of conflict.

In conclusion, six of the eight main pre-displacement sources of food and livelihoods were negatively affected by the conflict causing food shortages at household level. The displaced population were able to bridge the food gap through increased purchase of staple foods from the market. This was heavily supplemented by WFP through the distribution of relief food aid items as the main external response. The relief food aid became an effective option for mitigation of the negative impact of the conflict on household food security situation. However when relief food aid assistance became inadequate and only provided 40 percent of the required annual food entitlements, the majority of IDP developed and adopted other coping strategies so as to meet their annual food entitlements. It is these additional coping and response strategies, which probably explains how the displaced population survived the extreme hunger and starvation normally experienced in situations of conflict.

4.3.3 Specific Responses Employed by IDPs to Cope with Household Food Insecurity in Aloi and Orum Camps.

Table 3: The various coping and response strategies adopted and employed by IDPs against food insecurity in Aloi and Orum camps

Household Response Strategies	All the time-12 months	Pretty often 6/12 months	Once in a while 4/12 months	Hardly at all 2/12 months	Never 0/12 month	Cumulative Total
% of Respondents	%	%	%	%	%	%
Change in cropping patterns/ sharecropping	45	14	34	21	31	145
Sale of small livestock	0	0	17	14	86	117
Changes in diet (switch to cheaper food items)	90	59	14	10	14	186
Use of inter-household transfers/loans/borrowing	10	3	38	17	52	121
Sale of household possession	3	0	7	14	79	103
Increased commodity production petty trade	10	34	17	3	59	124
Increased consumption of normal wild foods	3	7	45	62	34	152
Sale of core herd/livestock e.g. oxen	0	0	3	10	83	97
Sale of agriculture tools	0	0	0	7	86	93
Sale or mortgaging of land	0	0	0	0	90	90
Credit from local traders or money lenders	7	10	10	10	69	107
Reduction of current consumption	103	41	21	7	7	179
Consumption of immature crops	7	31	34	24	34	131
Reduction of quantity of food per meal in a day	93	55	14	10	10	183
Restricting adult consumption	0	14	24	55	55	148
Feeding working members only	10	0	0	0	93	103
Consumption of unusual/poisonous foods	3	0	0	7	83	93
Eating local and treated seed stocks	3	17	28	14	52	114
Withdrawing children from school	24	24	34	21	45	148
Engaging in degrading jobs/stealing of food	21	7	10	7	59	103
Sale of farm implements	0	0	3	7	83	93
Abandoning some family members/forced early marriage for dowry/reduction of number of people per household	3	3	0	0	86	93

Overall the 200 interviewed heads of IDP households with final decision making authority adopted and employed different coping and response strategies in order to ensure some availability and access of staple food items such as cassava flour, sorghum, millet grain and beans.

The coping and response strategies employed were mainly to ensure survival amidst extreme food insecurity and hunger situations as described by Lautze (2002). Generally these strategies were not different from those applied during other situations of food insecurity such as drought and floods among others, however the main difference was the intensity and frequency of usage of each strategy as compared with non conflict situations, due to the limited options and geographical confinement dictated by insecurity in the IDP camps. The adoption and usage of a particular coping and response strategy was determined by the level of hunger and access to basic productive assets such as livestock, tools and other equipments to do some productive work as described by Corbett (1988). Household's react depending on perception of severity of the situation. It is the perceptions and conditions which mainly determined the timing and sequence of the adoption and usage of a particular coping or response strategy. A clear trend of how most households protected their existing stock of food, over their shorter term consumption needs was equally observed during the study as described by Dreze (1988). This was seen in the preservation of existing stock of food, followed by depletion of the existing assets particularly in the case of "middle" and "better-off" households and finally some cases of distressful/ destitution related strategies such as abandoning family members including early/forced marriages. This was mainly carried out in order to obtain some dowry for survival and in some cases to reduce the number of people feeding on the limited stock of food in the household.

According to the interviewed heads of households, the specific situations and factors which determined the timing and sequence of adoption and usage of the coping and response strategies listed in table 3 were the following factors:

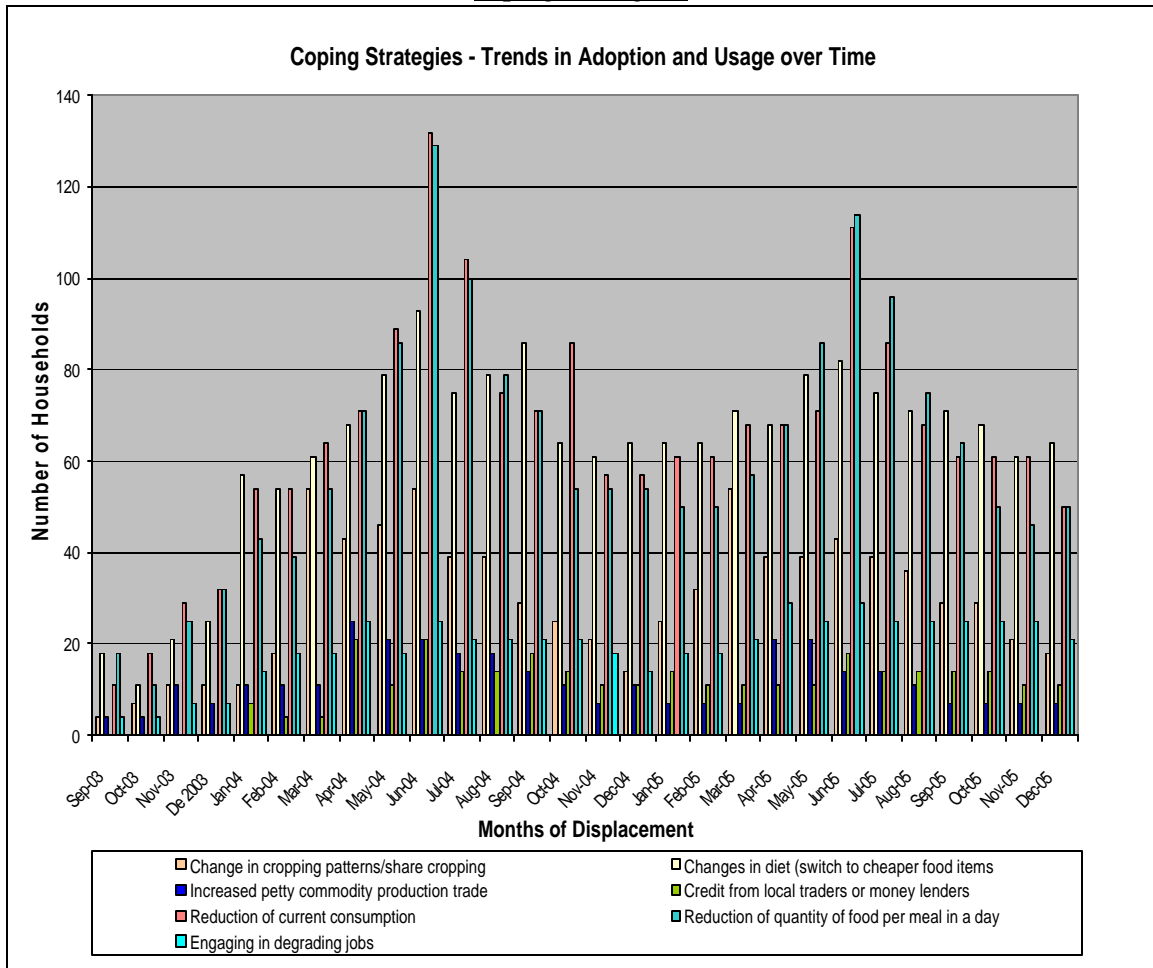
- i) Level of access to various productive assets such as livestock, land and household labour.
- ii) Level of household food stock at the time of displacement. For example households initially displaced with relatively large food stocks adopted different response strategies from those, which had no food stocks at the time of displacement.

- iii) Households with villages closer to settlement also had different response strategies from those far distant from the villages of displacement.
- iv) Households settled in Aloi IDP camp with less rebel attacks adopted and frequently used specific response strategies as compared with households in Orum IDP camp which relatively had more frequent rebel attacks.
- v) Households with better means of mobility had different response strategies from those without any means of mobility.
- vi) Relatively “poorer” households also adopted different response strategies from the “middle” and “better off” households including the host community the camps.
- vii) Households externally supported equally had different response strategies as compared with households without any external support.
- viii) Households which were jointly displaced with their closer relatives also adopted different strategies from households were completely separated with their relatives as a result of the displacement.

In conclusions despite all the above differences as a result of the specific situations faced by individual households, the overall picture shows that interviewed households had similar patterns of coping and response strategies to food insecurity in terms of timing and sequence of usage of a particular strategy. It was also evident that all interviewed household heads initially opted for increased austerity measures in utilisation of their food stocks, followed by disposal of the remaining productive assets before engaging in some distressful/destitute options for survival.

4.3.4 Trends in Adoption and Usage of Particular Coping and Response Strategies.

Graph 4: The time line for the seven most frequently and intensively adopted and used coping strategies.



The overall trends (timing and sequence) in the adoption and usage of coping and response strategies was also analysed using a time line.

The findings showed that, the majority of interviewed households employed specific coping strategies over the different periods and months of the year between September-November 2003 to September 2006. Austerity related specific coping and response strategies were adopted during the peak hunger months as compared to months with moderate and low levels of hunger in the three years of the people’s displacement in Aloi and Orum IDP camps. This is similar to what Corbett (1988) described as weighing economic and social costs of each action in order to save lives in situations of limited resources and crisis.

Graph 4 presents the frequency and intensity of adoption and usage of the seven most employed coping and response strategies to address food insecurity and hunger among IDP households in the two camps.

The first most frequently and intensively employed coping strategy was reduction in quantity of food per meal. This strategy was immediately employed after the September-November 2003 displacement, when majority of the population was displaced and were not sure of when they would return in to their former homes as a classical austerity measure. The use of this strategy increased as the security situation worsened, limiting displaced peoples access to the villages in order to collect the second seasons harvest between October-December 2003. This forced majority of the households to frequently reduce the quantity of food eaten per meal, in order to ensure that available food stocks lasted longer than expected period. The use of this coping strategy lasted for at least nine to eleven months with a high level of frequency and intensity of usage between the months of June and July 2004. These months are annually, well known for extreme hunger even during the pre-displacement period among the IDP population. During these months most IDP households tried to employ other strategies to complement the reduction in quantity of food per meal, so as to survive the very acute shortages of staple food items.

The second strategy concurrently used by the interviewed IDP households was reduction in current consumption. This was mainly in the form of reduction in number of meals from three to one meal per day. It was indicated by 60 percent of the interviewed households. This strategy complemented the first strategy, implying that whereas some households preferred to reduce quantity of food per meal, 60 percent of those interviewed opted for the reduction in number of meals per day. The main argument for preference of this strategy was reduction in risk of rebel attacks due to smoke from frequent cooking, which normally prompted their attack while in search of food. It was equally a cost effective strategy due to reduced usage of wood fuel and time for food preparation. Other reasons advanced for this strategy also included reduction of the chances of non members (visitors) sharing the little food with household members during day time.

The third most important coping strategy adopted and used to address household food insecurity was negative change in balanced diet by switching to staple foods items with cheaper market value and affordable at household level. This strategy was mainly used during the months of April to August over the three years of displacement. It was a cost effective strategy bearing in mind the reduced household purchasing power. Most households had extreme difficulties to obtain cash income for the purchase of non staple foods such as sugar, cooking oil, meat and fish among others. As such these household resorted to mainly buying relatively cheap staple foods such as cassava flour, sorghum and millet. This enabled them to sustain their lives, during the peak hunger months as well as during months of increased insecurity due to conflict. It also created flexibility in expenditure to pay for some health care costs.

The fourth coping strategy adopted in order of frequency and intensity as well as timing and sequence was change in household cropping pattern/sharecropping. This strategy was adopted after six to nine months of the local people's displacement in to the IDP camps. The success of this strategy was also facilitated by the district, sub county and camp leaders, who held discussions with the host community on the need to enable the IDP population access their land for agricultural production. As a result some of the host community households provided ¼-1 acre of land per household, particularly among the “very poor” and “poor households”. Mean while some entered in to sharecropping agreement of labour in return for land and crop harvest. Other households rented their land among the “middle” and “better-off” IDP households who could afford to pay for 1-3 acres of land for a 2-3 year period. However the conditions attached to access land caused most IDP households to change their cropping patterns from production of long-term to short-term maturity crops such as sweet potatoes and green vegetables. These households were also supported with seeds by the humanitarian community.

The fifth important coping strategy was what the respondents and IDP leaders perceived to be engagement in very low paying jobs such as sweeping of the local markets, carrying of rubbish for disposal and in some cases stealing of food items and property. These strategies were probably perceived as degrading by some respondents within the “middle” and “better-off” wealth bracket in the IDP camps because of their high economic status as compared with people who were engaged in the activities.

The sixth most frequently and intensively adopted and used strategy was borrowing of cash credit from local traders within the IDP camps especially in Aloi camp due to the predominantly peri-urban influence from Lira town. This was probably due to the risks associated with borrowing of cash.

The seventh most frequently and intensively adopted and used strategy was increased petty trade particularly among some “middle” and “better-off” wealth bracket, who had initial capital for investment. These households traded in household items on retail basis as a way of increasing their cash income to purchase staple foods. This is also similar to the adaptive strategies suggested by Lautze (2002), aimed at reducing risks through investment of productive assets to earn extra cash for survival in situations of crisis.

4.3.5 Household Coping Strategies to Food Insecurity in Al oi and Orum IDP camps

Table 4: The percentage of households which indicated the most frequently adopted and used coping strategies, based on three levels of food insecurity as described by IDPs.

Frequently Adopted and Used Coping and Response Strategies	Levels of Food Insecurity		
	Low (Percentage)	Medium (Percentage)	High (Percentage)
Changes in cropping patterns	4	28	4
Changes in diet (switch to cheaper food items)	19	21	21
Increased consumption of normal wild foods	23	6	2
Reduction of current consumption	15	15	34
Consumption of immature crops	8	2	11
Reduction of quantity of food per meal in a day	19	22	24
Withdrawal of children from school	12	6	4
Percentage total	100	100	100

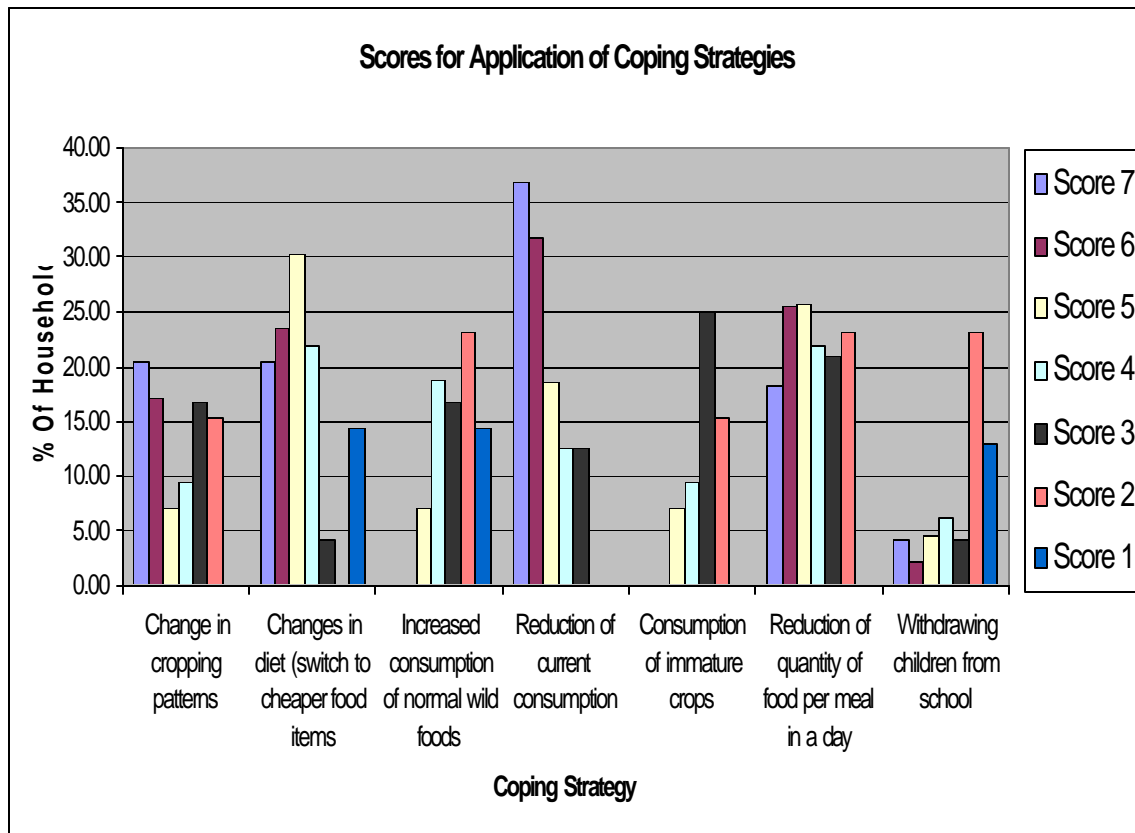
Overall, 34 percent of interviewed households indicated that they mostly used reduction of current consumption during periods with high levels of hunger and food insecurity, compared with 15 percent who used the same strategy during periods with medium and low levels of hunger and food insecurity.

This was followed by 25 percent of households who used reduction of quantity of food per meal compared with 22 and 19 percent, who adopted the strategy during medium and low levels of food insecurity. The only coping strategy adopted by majority of households during all the three levels of food insecurity was change in diet through switching from purchase of non staple to cheaper staple food items such as cereals, root tubers and some pulses. This was the most preferred strategy during the different levels of food insecurity probably because it increased the quantity of staple foods with high calorific value at a low cost, which enhanced the IDPs ability to survive in any situation of hunger.

Other coping strategies which were mostly adopted and used during medium and low levels of food insecurity as compared to high level of food insecurity were change in cropping patterns, consumption of immature crops and withdrawal of children from school.

It is important to note that, the above strategies are those which were frequently used by the IDPs and do not include some of the destitute strategies adopted during the same period of displacement.

Graph 5: Overall scores for seven of the most frequently and intensively used coping strategies by interviewed households.



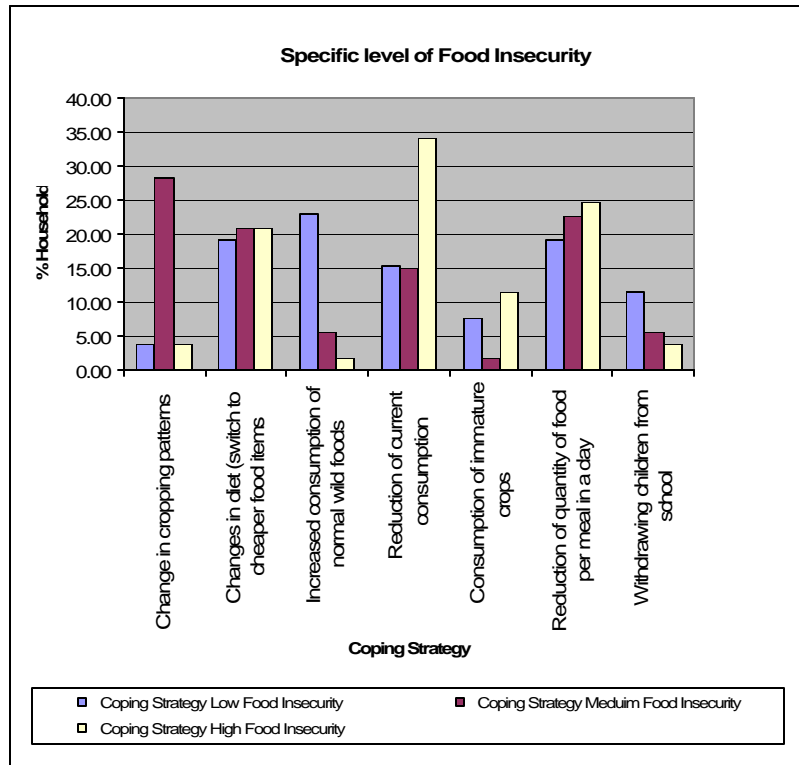
Score 7 was used to indicate the most highly rated coping strategy and score 1 shows the least rated coping strategy. The highest scores ranged from 5 to 7.

Graph 5, shows that, the highest cumulative scores were mainly on reduction of current consumption strategy at household level, followed by change in diet by switching to cheaper foods such as cassava and sorghum grain and reduction of quantity of food per meal.

The lower three scores were mainly concentrated on coping and response strategies such as changes in cropping patterns including sharecropping probably due to limited land for agricultural crop production, increased consumption of wild foods which was limited by civil insecurity, consumption of immature crops and the least of all scores for withdrawal of children from school.

The main reason for low rating of withdrawal of children from school was probably the benefits that most households derived from the school feeding programme, which was part of the relief food aid assistance in Aloi and Orum IDP camps.

Graph 6: Adoption and usage rate of coping strategies according to perceived levels of food insecurity.



The most frequently adopted and used coping strategies during high levels of food insecurity were the austerity related strategies such as reduction in current consumption and reduction in quantity of food per meal in a day. These were followed by change to cheaper diet by switching to the purchase of staple foods compared with other high protein,

non staple foods.

The less frequently adopted and used strategies during the various levels of food insecurity were changes in cropping patterns, followed by increased consumption of wild foods and immature crops with the least of all been withdrawal of children out of school.

Table 5: Adoption and usage rate of coping strategies by household heads disaggregated by gender among the IDPs among interviewed households

Coping / Response Strategy	Male Headed	Female Headed
Change in cropping patterns/share cropping	10	12
Sale of small livestock	1	3
Changes in diet (switch to cheaper food items)	16	14
Use of inter -household transfers/loans/borrowing	2	2
Sale of household possession	0.5	0
Increased petty commodity production trade	4	3
Increased consumption of normal wild foods	6	8
Sale of core herd/livestock e.g. oxen	1	0
Sale of agriculture tools	1	0
Sale or mortgaging of land	0	2
Credit from local traders or money lenders	3	2
Reduction of current consumption	17	17
Consumption of immature crops	6	5
Reduction of quantity of food per meal in a day	17	15
restricting adult consumption	4	3
Feeding working members only	1	2
Consumed unusual/poisonous foods	0.5	0
Eating local and treated seed stocks	1	0
Withdrawing children from school	5	7
Engaging in degrading jobs/stealing of food	3	5
Abandoning some family members/forced early marriage for dowry/ reduction of number of people per household	1	0
Total	100	100

The most commonly used strategies to tackle hunger and household food insecurity by both interviewed male and female heads of households taking the final decisions of food utilisation at household level in Aloi and Orum IDP camps were the following:

The three most equally adopted and used coping strategies by both male and female headed households and most frequently and intensively used strategies were reduction in quantity of food per meal, reduction of current consumption and changes in diet through switching to cheaper diet.

This suggests that, these strategies could be those which do not require additional resources and yet ensuring that most interviewed households could utilise existing food stocks for a longer period of time amidst the civil insecurity.

The findings also suggest that the gender of the household head making the key decisions about food utilisation in the household was not a major determinant of which coping and response strategies to adopt and use during the three years of the IDPs displacement in Aloi and Orum IDP camps.

However, the only slight variations were noticed in decisions made in the employment of less frequently and intensively adopted and used coping and response strategies such as change in cropping patterns, sale of agricultural tools and engagement in low paying (degrading) jobs. This suggests that gender was a main factor, which to some extent influenced the decisions made in the use of the less adopted and intensively used coping strategies. Another probable explanation for the above observation could have been the fact that these strategies were adopted in periods with less food insecurity and didn't require urgent decisions to be made.

Table 6: Coping strategies adopted and used by households based on the cumulative number of economically active and productive people in a particular household.

Coping and Response Strategies	Cumulative Number of Active persons by Coping Strategy
Change in cropping patterns	318
Sale of small livestock	264
Changes in diet (switch to cheaper food items)	421
Use of inter -household transfers/loans/borrowing	264
Sale of household possession	236
Increased petty commodity production trade	279
Increased consumption of normal wild foods	336
Sale of core herd/livestock e.g. oxen	214
Sale of agriculture tools	211
Sale or mortgaging of land	204
Credit from local traders or money lenders	254
Reduction of current consumption	396
Consumption of immature crops	289
Reduction of quantity of food per meal in a day	407
Restricting adult consumption	329
Feeding working members only	229
Consumed unusual/poisonous foods	207
Eating local and treated seed stocks	257
Withdrawing children from school	336
Engaging in low paying (degrading) jobs such as sweeping of the market, cleaning public toilets, theft among others.	232
Sale of farm implements	214
Abandoning some family members including early/forced marriage	207

Table 6 shows the 7 most frequently used coping and response strategies, which had the highest cumulative number of economically active households.

The seven most frequently adopted coping strategies by households with the highest cumulative number of economically productive people were the following:

The first coping strategy adopted by households with the highest cumulative number of economically productive people was change in diet by switching to cheaper staple foods such as cereals and root tubers.

This was followed by reduction in number of meals with a cumulative number of 407. This was probably due to the fact that households with high number of economically productive people were consuming more food and had no option except to employ austerity measures in order for their food stock to last longer than expected.

The above strategy was complemented by the reduction in current consumption with a cumulative number of 396. This was also a strategy employed to enable the available stock of household food to last for a longer period than expected. It was probably also the only viable austerity measure, which could be adopted by the economically active households in the IDP camps.

The fourth coping strategies with the same cumulative number of economically active people were increased collection of wild foods and withdrawal of children from school with a cumulative number of 336. The increase in frequency of collection of wild foods matched the surplus productive labour in households with economically active people. It enabled the households in this category to bridge the food gap within their households. Mean while the withdrawal of children from school was also adopted particularly during specific months, when WFP failed to provide school feeding. This probably enabled the households to increase their productive labour to do other types of casual work for generation of cash income.

The fifth coping strategy adopted by the households with high cumulative number of economically productive households was restriction of adult consumption with a cumulative number of 329. This was probably an austerity measure adopted to ensure that children were not starved within the household.

The sixth coping strategy with high cumulative number of economically productive people was change in cropping patterns including share cropping with cumulative number of 318. This suggests that the available labour for agricultural work was used to access small plots of land.

The seventh most adopted coping strategy by households with a cumulatively high number of economically productive people was consumption of immature crops with a cumulative number of 289. The main reason could have probably been exhaustion of existing food stocks and increased demand of food by the economically active members of the household.

Meanwhile the coping strategies with least cumulative number of economically productive people included the sale or mortgaging of land, abandoning family members including early/forced marriage, consumption of poisonous wild foods, sale of agricultural tools and livestock with cumulative numbers of 204, 207, 211 and 214 respectively. The overall reasons for the above patterns could have probably been the scarcity of land, lack of ownership to allow sale or mortgage of the land, difficulties in decisions on which family members to be abandoned and the high sense of respect and dignity for human life among people in North Uganda and IDPs in particular. Other reasons could have probably been lack of resources to pay any gainful bride wealth within the camps, due to loss of productive assets such as livestock and agricultural tools during the course of their displacement.

Table 7: Reasons for adoption and usage of a particular coping and response strategy among the IDPs in Aloi and Orum camps.

Coping/Response Strategies	Main Reasons for Use of the Different Coping/Response Strategy					
	Lack of Food	Health Reasons	Purchase of Food	Cash Income	For the Children	Lack of Land
Change in cropping patterns/share cropping	7	0	0	0	1	45
Sale of small livestock	0	7	2	1	0	0
Changes in diet (switch to cheaper food items)	5	63	40	4	9	2
Use of inter -household transfers/loans/borrowing	1	0	0	0	1	0
Sale of household possession	0	4	0	0	0	0
Increased petty commodity production trade	0	0	16	0	0	0
Increased consumption of normal wild foods	1	4	4	0	4	6
Sale of core herd/livestock e.g. oxen	0	0	3	0	0	0
Sale of agriculture tools	0	0	4	0	0	0
Credit from local traders or money lenders	0	0	1	41	6	0
Reduction of current consumption	34	8	0	0	28	11
Consumption of immature crops	5	4	3	0	3	0
Reduction of quantity of food per meal in a day	33	10	0	6	32	6
Restricting adult consumption	5	0	0	0	5	0
Feeding working members only	0	0	0	23	4	0
Eating local and treated seed stocks	5	0	0	0	0	29
Withdrawing children from school	5	0	7	0	5	0
Engaging in degrading jobs/stealing	0	0	21	25	3	0
Abandoning some family members, early/forced marriage for dowry/ reduction of number of people per household	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cumulative Totals	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 7, shows the range of coping and response strategies and the reasons for application of each strategy. Most of the strategies were primarily developed and adopted to prevent hunger and starvation.

However among the seven most frequently employed strategies, the only strategy that was primarily employed to meet the basic health care and food needs of the interviewed households was change of diet by switching to cheaper staple foods as shown by 63 and 40 percent of the respondents respectively.

This was probably because it enabled the households to create flexibility in disposable income for payment of basic health care costs and address the issue of hunger through purchase of larger quantities of cheaper foods such as cereals and root tubers with high calorific value.

The second coping strategy primarily used because of shortage of land for agricultural production and lack of food was change in cropping pattern/share cropping as shown by 45 and 7 percent of the interviewed households respectively. This is probably because of the difficulties involved in access to land and effectiveness of the short maturity crops such as vegetables and sweet potatoes, which enabled the interviewed households to effectively reduce hunger and starvation.

The main coping strategy which was adopted because of lack of cash income and some extent for meeting some of the needs of the children was borrowing of credit from local traders or money lenders within the camp as shown by 41 and 6 percent of the interviewed households respectively. This suggests that most people who borrowed cash could have been using it for some profitable economic activities and because of extreme difficulties including children's specific requirement such as sickness.

Table 7 also shows that the main reason for reduction of current consumption was not only lack of food stocks, but it was also equally because of the consideration given for children's special needs such as protein rich foods as shown by 34 and 28 percent of respondents respectively. This could have probably been so, because of the need to at least ensure some food in the household, particularly for children.

The reasons advanced for reduction of quantity of food per meal in a day are similar to those indicated for reduction of current consumption as shown by 33 and 32 percent of respondents. This suggests that the two coping strategies have the same level of usage and purpose in the view of the respondents.

Another unique coping strategy in terms of the main reason for adoption was feeding working members only.

This was overwhelmingly accepted by 23 percent of the respondents, who indicated the main reason for adoption to be the need for cash income in the household followed by 4 percent of respondents who thought it had something to do with working hard for the children.

Overall it suggests that the respondents felt it was more important to raise cash income in the household, than to feed every one in the household and risk having no cash at all.

Finally interviewed households indicated that adoption of coping strategies such as engagement in degrading jobs including stealing of food items among others, were mainly due to the need to raise cash to be used for purchasing staple foods as shown by 25 and 21 percent of the respondents. This suggests that the drive to earn cash income among other reasons could have primarily been the lack of food among IDP households.

Generally the main reasons for adoption of the main coping strategies were directly related to tackling food insecurity with a special consideration of children's needs as compared with other household needs within the two IDP camps.

4.3.6 Distressful Strategies Likely to Affect Future Food Security and Livelihoods Patterns among IDPs in Aloi and Orum camps

Some of the coping and response strategies used by the various households were perceived to be “distressful” to future household food security and livelihoods patterns. These were particularly linked to coping and response strategies adopted and used during the acute crisis months and to some extent towards the end of the displacement, when most households had already exhausted their productive assets. These strategies were believed to have some irreversible impact and likely to threaten future survival options including limited chances of long-term sustainability of the people's livelihoods.

Table 8: Percentage scores of most “distressful” coping strategies according to the Respondents in Aloi and Orum IDP camps.

Coping and Response Strategies	Percentage of respondents indicating which strategies are likely to affect future food security and livelihoods patterns
Change in cropping patterns/Share cropping	2
Changes in diet (switch to cheaper food items)	6
Use of inter –household transfers/loans/borrowing	0
Credit from local traders or money lenders	2
Reduction of current consumption	5
Consumption of immature crops	0
Reduction of quantity of food per meal in a day	23
Restricting adult consumption	5
Eating local and treated seed stocks	10
Withdrawing children from school	10
Engaging in degrading jobs/ stealing	37
Total percentage	100%

According to interviewed households, the most “distressful” coping and response strategy was engagement in low paying (degrading) jobs such as digging and construction of pit latrines, sweeping of market venues, disposal of rubbish and in some cases stealing as ranked by 37 percent of the respondents. This could have probably been because of the risks associated with these types of work such as potential disease infections coupled with a very low pay.

This was followed by reduction in quantity of food per meal and this could have probably been perceived as a “destructive strategy” due to its effect on IDPs health conditions due to insufficient food for a normal and active life and its direct impact on individual household member’s productivity rate of return.

The third equally rated “distressful” coping strategies were eating of NGO distributed treated seeds and withdrawal of children from school indicated by 10 percent of the respondents.

This suggests that the IDP's might have understood the risk associated with eating treated seeds, such as poisonous substances as well as the long-term negative impact of ruining the children's future by withdrawing them from school.

The fourth rated coping strategy was changes in diet by switching to cheaper food items. This was indicated by 6 percent of the respondents.

This could have probably been due to the opportunity cost of mainly purchasing cheaper foods, which is a non balanced and poor diet in the household.

Other coping strategies rated as "distressful" by the respondent were restricting adult and current consumption levels as shown by 5 percent of the respondents. This also suggests that the interviewed household's were forced to adopt the starvation strategies due to scarcity of resources and extreme living conditions in the camps amidst a will and determination to survive.

The least rated "distressful" coping strategies were change in cropping patterns/share cropping and credit from local traders or money lenders. It was indicated by 2 percent of the interviewed households, which suggests that they could have realised the long-term effect of consuming crops prematurely as well as the unfair terms of sharecropping and risks associated with cash borrowing.

CHAPTER 5

5.0 Discussion of Results/Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the discussion of results and findings by each specific objective of the study. It provides a detailed analysis of overall findings and the implications for learning, programme and policy work.

5.2 The Short Term Impact of the Conflict on Household Level Food Security

Household food insecurity and hunger are problems persistently faced by displaced populations as a result of conflict or any other man made and natural hazards. It is a situation characterized by short and medium term shortage of food items, mainly as a result of limited availability due to reduction in production, access problems created by non-functional markets and to some extent lack of proper utilization of food at household level. Most households respond to such a situation through various coping strategies, most of which are insurance related with reversible consequences (Lautze, 2002). These are often aimed at the preservation of productive assets, despite reduction in household food intake per day.

Evidence derived from 95 percent of the interviewed household's showed that majority of the IDPs in Aloi and Orum camps faced real hunger and starvation due to acute shortage of food during certain months of the year, over the last three years of their displacement. However, the 5 percent mainly composed of the host community were relatively better because they owned the land surrounding the IDP camps. This was mainly caused by civil insecurity that restricted availability, access and utilization of food within IDP households. It also caused acute shortages of staple food items such as cassava, sorghum and millet flours and beans, which resulted in to hunger and starvation in the IDP camps.

The IDP in turn adopted and used some coping strategies, so as to reduce the level of starvation during periods of acute crisis. However some of the strategies had irreversible impact and overall have threatened the long-term sustainability of livelihoods in Lira district.

One specific short-term impact of the conflict was a 25-30 percent decrease of reliance on household own crop and livestock production. This was caused by a drastic reduction of agricultural production mainly attributed to civil insecurity, which restricted access to land, seeds and productive labour for agriculture work among the IDPs. However unlike the reduction in dependency on own crop and livestock production, most IDPs increased their reliance on direct market purchase of food items by 12-15 percent over the last three years of displacement. Other short term impacts of the conflict on household food security included adverse negative response strategies such as withdrawal or drop out of children from school and consumption of immature crops, which exacerbated the medium term food insecurity situation among the population.

5.3 Specific Responses Employed by IDPs to Cope with Household Food Insecurity in Aloi and Orum Camps.

Household food insecurity and hunger were the major problems among IDPs in Aloi and Orum IDP camps over the last three years of displacement, since September 2003. The situation worsened as most households exhausted their food reserves without any end to the civil insecurity. The main problem was limited access to former villages to enable the IDPs harvest the second season's crops in November and December 2003. The household food insecurity situation further deteriorated as the security situation worsened in 2004, due to very limited access to humanitarian assistance. The majority of IDP households had to survive on the remaining food stock without any replenishment for over six to nine months. However as the security situation gradually improved, IDP households adopted the following coping and response strategies presented below:

A total of 22 coping and response strategies were adopted and used by IDP in Aloi and Orum camps. However some of the strategies were more frequently used compared to others as a result of their suitability and effectiveness during a particular period. The most frequently used coping strategies were consumption related as compared to accumulative and insurance strategies. This suggests that most IDPs were mainly focused on survival as compared to medium and long-term investment in preparation for their return home in the villages.

Households normally anticipate problems and adopt insurance strategies, which are planned in advance to minimize the likely effects of any food shortages, enhance productive capacity and preserve their productive assets (Lautze 2002). People's responses are characterized by diversification of activities, longer work hours with a focus to increase cash income and limit expenditures. Most households also reduce their food intake, since there is normally not much immediate threat to health. This may result in to an increased level of moderate malnutrition among children less than five years of age. However due to the nature of the Northern conflict, most households interviewed were forced to adopt and use non insurance related strategies over the last three years of displacement.

Overall the most frequently and intensively employed coping and response strategies were change in diet through switching to staple foods as mentioned by 186 households out of the total number of interviewed households. This created some flexibility in income and savings in the short-term period. It was equally the most frequently adopted strategy by household with more economically active people. This was probably due to the high levels of energy required by this category of household amidst a very unpredictable food security situation. It also suggests that these households could have been forced by extreme difficulties to opt for cheaper staple foods, if they were to have enough food of a sufficient quantity and quality to ensure an active healthy life (World Bank 2000).

This was followed by reduction in quantity of food per meal as mentioned by a cumulative number of 183 households and reduction of current consumption mentioned by 179 households out of the interviewed households. The above two consumption coping strategies were both adopted and used by male and female headed decision making households, due to the urgent need to plan for future consumption amidst a limited food stock and increasing civil insecurity in Lira district. These strategies were also much easier to employ due to the lack of additional resource requirements as well as uncertainty of when the conflict was likely to end.

The following were some of the reasons for which the above two consumption strategies were rated among the most suitable and effective among the interviewed households :

- i. In Orum the two consumption strategies were rated the best due to unreliability of WFP food aid distribution, as such most households were forced to plan in advance to avoid any consumption gap due to likely delays in WFP food aid distribution.

- ii. The two consumption strategies also reduced the number of meals prepared per day, which in turn significantly reduced the chances of any rebel attack during meal preparation and potential loss of food.
- iii. These strategies were also cost effective, particularly in terms of fuel (charcoal and firewood) required for preparation of meals.

However the above coping strategies were followed by increased restriction of adult consumption in preference for children's consumption of the little stock of food. This was meant to ensure that children do not suffer from extreme severe malnutrition. The withdrawal of children from school was mentioned by 148 of the total number of interviewed households. Withdrawal of children was mainly due to lack of cash income to buy scholastic materials and payment of Ugandan Shillings (Ush) 500 for the WFP supported school feeding programme and in some cases due to the need for additional labour in the household. These strategies were particularly employed during periods of acute shortages of food such as the hunger months of June to July over the last three years of displacement. These strategies to some extent prevented the cases of malnutrition from increasing at the recorded rate 0.3 percent and 0.7 percent of chronic and acute malnutrition, Action Against Hunger (2004).

Adoption of the restriction of adult consumption was followed by consumption of normal wild foods, whenever there was access to the bushes particularly in Aloi IDP camp. It was ranked by 145 households out the interviewed households.

Other medium term survival strategies adopted and used by the IDPs included change in cropping patterns by 145 households, consumption of immature crops by 131 households, use of inter household borrowing of food and other loans ranked by 121 households, sale of small livestock by 117 households particularly during the first 12 months of their displacement, borrowing of cash credit from local traders by 107 households compared with sale of local crafts and other household items by 103 households.

The minor unintended and more distressful strategies adopted and used by interviewed households were mortgaging of land, sale of farm implements and core animal herds especially oxen as well as abandoning of some family members as mentioned by 93 to 97 households out of the 200 interviewed households in the two IDP camps.

Conclusion

Overall trends suggest that some coping and response strategies were more frequently and intensively used as compared with others. However despite the low usage of specific coping and distressful strategies with a likely long-term negative impact, the strategies still made a significant contribution towards the survival of the IDP in Aloi and Orum camps.

This is evidenced by their adoption and usage by 50 percent of interviewed households, implying that each coping and response strategy had an appropriate time and situation of usage in the last three years of their displacement. The adoption and usage of the coping strategies also followed a logical sequence from increased austerity strategies to depletion of productive livelihoods assets such as livestock and some distressful strategies towards the end of displacement period.

5.4 Stages at Which Each Coping and Response Strategy Was Adopted and Used.

Different households employed different coping and response strategies, according to their socio-economic status, level of access to some productive assets and particular periods of the year. This enabled different households to cope with the multiple effects of the conflict on availability, access and utilization of food at household level in Aloi and Orum IDP camps.

Graph 4 presented in Chapter 4 of this report shows the time line, which explains the logical sequence that IDPs applied to adopt and use seven (7) of the most frequent and intensively employed coping and response strategies in Aloi and Orum camps.

As shown in graph 4, the first most frequently used coping strategy was reduction in current consumption levels. This was due to the uncertainty of when the conflict and subsequent effects such as displacement were likely to end. As a result most households continued to preserve their food stocks in preparation for a much worse food insecurity and hunger situation.

The above coping strategy was concurrently used with another strategy of reduction in quantity of food per meal in a day. This implies that, whereas some households reduced their current consumption, others preferred to reduce the quantity of food per meal. These strategies were adopted and used by both male and female headed households.

The third coping strategy which followed the logical sequence of adoption and usage was change of diet by switching to cheaper staple food items. This strategy was employed due to the reduction in IDPs household purchasing power caused by limited cash income options in the IDP camps and the need to create flexibility for other expenditures such as health care costs. This strategy was also highly rated due to its effectiveness, particularly among households which had a high cumulative number of economically active people to purchase large quantities of staple foods with the little cash income.

The fourth most frequently adopted and used coping strategy, based on the time line was change in cropping patterns including share cropping agreements of land for labour and crop harvest. This strategy was increasingly adopted and used, when the IDP's failed to predict the end of their displacement in Aloi and Orum IDP camps (*Photograph 5: IDP selling her sweet potato harvest in Orum IDP camp*). The strategy was also easier to adopt and use due to some facilitation provided by the district and camp leadership for acquisition of land.



Access to small plots of land enhanced the IDPs capacity to address problems of food insecurity and hunger especially, during the second year of displacement. It also enabled IDP households to work in small farmer groups to increase access to food from small plots of land using the new short-term variety crops introduced by various humanitarian agencies such as WFP.

The fifth major coping and response strategy adopted and used was engagement in the lowest paying jobs such as digging of pit latrines, sweeping of market venue, local transportation of commodities and in some cases theft of food and other property within the IDP camps. Whereas these were low skill requirement and readily available jobs for purposes of generating cash income to purchase staple food items, it was a less effective coping strategy due to the high labour supply compared with demand in the IDP camps. This forced the labour rates to drop, reducing the cash income derived from these jobs in the two IDP camps.

As a result it became very difficult for people engaged in the lowest paying jobs to survive without diversifying their sources of cash income.

Finally the last two adopted and used coping strategies according to the time line were petty commodity trade and borrowing of cash credit especially by “very poor” and “poor” households who lacked any productive assets from some entrepreneurial “middle” and “better-off” households.

These strategies were mainly adopted and used by households, which experienced very acute shortages of food. *(Photograph 6: IDP selling small fish in the local market in Aloi IDP camp).*



However these coping strategies were not among those frequently adopted and intensively used due to lack of initial capital required for trade. In order to borrow cash income, an individual also required a good and stable social network and equilateral security. These requirements also limited the number of people who were able to borrow cash income for petty trade in Aloi IDP camp. It was further difficult due to engage in petty trade, due to the lack of entrepreneurial skills among the majority of IDPs in Aloi and Orum IDP camps.

5.5 Coping and Response Strategies likely to be “Distressful” to Future Food Security and Livelihoods among the IDPs.

The “distressful” strategies as earlier mentioned are coping and response strategies with a long term negative impact both at households and community level. These strategies were mainly adopted during extreme food insecurity and hunger periods such as the months of June to July as shown in graph 4 of this report. However the description of “distressful strategies” in this report was based on the respondent’s views and perceptions of certain strategies adopted and used by them during the period of displacement.

According to household ranking the most “distressful” coping and response strategy were engagement in the lowest paying jobs such as digging of pit latrines and cleaning of market venues and public toilets as the most destructive coping strategies.

This was probably due to the health related hazards of the work coupled with the very low payment rates and cash income derived from the same in the IDP camps. This was ranked by 37 percent of the total number of interviewed households.

This was followed by reduction of food per meal in a day, which was probably because most interviewed households felt it had partly contributed to their poor health especially among children less than five years of age and some of the HIV and AIDS affected households. This argument is confirmed by the 0.3 and 0.7 percent of chronic and acute malnutrition rates in the IDP camps, Action against Hunger (30th June 2004). It was ranked by 23 percent of the total number of interviewed households.

Other coping strategies ranked as very “distressful” included eating of treated seeds. This could have probably been due to the long term impact of lack of seed for agricultural crop production as well as the fear of toxic and poisonous chemicals used for preservation of the seeds.

The withdrawal of children from school due to hunger, abrupt stopping of the school feeding programme by WFP due to shortages in food pipeline, lack of scholastic materials and in some cases the need for parents contribution of Ush 500 for school feeding programme, was also rated as a very “distressful” strategy. This could have probably been because of the long term effect of ruining the future of the children as a result of failure to attend school.

Meanwhile the reduction of current consumption and restriction of adult consumption were rated as “distressful” by some interviewed households. This was probably because of the negative effects of starvation, which they believed would reduce the life expectancy among the population.

Finally change in cropping patterns including share cropping and borrowing of cash credit from local traders were rated as the least “distressful” coping strategies by interviewed households.

However other negative cultural practices mentioned by both camp level key informants and interviewed households as “distressful strategies” for future livelihoods included family separations as a result of the conflict and domestic violence, increased HIV and AIDs infection rates due to early/forced marriages and prostitution, unknown causes of burning of huts (*Photograph 7: Burnt huts due to unknown causes in Orum IDP*)



and perceived rampant witchcraft practices that have caused a lot uncertainty about the general safety of local people and their property within the IDP camps.

CHAPTER 6

6.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Summary

In summary the Northern Uganda conflict had a significant level of negative impact on the availability, access and utilisation of food among households in Aloi and Orum IDP camps in the last three years of their displacement. The overall cause of the limited availability, access and effective utilisation of food at household level was civil insecurity as a result of the prolonged Northern conflict. Civil insecurity limited the local people's access and ownership of land, one of the main factors of production among the rural population.

The civil insecurity also caused massive displacement which resulted into loss of other productive household assets such as livestock, garden tools and seeds among the displaced population. This directly curtailed the agricultural production capacity of most displaced households. It equally increased their vulnerability to food insecurity and completely destroyed the resilience most households had built over time to wards hunger and food insecurity in general. As a result the IDP population faced acute food shortages, despite provision of relief food aid by WFP. Over 95 percent of the interviewed IDPs with exception of the host community were forced to develop, adopt and use various coping and response strategies to ensure availability and access to food in Aloi and Orum IDP camps. It is these various coping and response strategies, which enabled the IDPs to reduce starvation by providing some of their minimum annual food entitlement during the period of displacement (September 2003-2006).

Based on the main findings, it is imperative that the current and planned rehabilitation and development programmes aimed at improving food security and livelihoods in Northern Uganda tries to strengthen the already weakened household capacity and build some of the successful household responses in order to promote sustainability of livelihoods in the long-term period.

6.2 Conclusion

In conclusion the Northern conflict had a very devastating impact on the food security and livelihoods patterns of the IDPs in Aloi and Orum camps. It resulted in various negative livelihoods related consequences ranging from acute shortages of staple food items, hunger and starvation, depletion of most productive household assets, deepening poverty levels and the adoption and usage of various coping and destitute strategies, including those with negative impact on the future food security and livelihoods of some households. Although some of the coping strategies contributed much towards the survival of the IDPs, some of the adopted strategies may equally have long-term negative impact on the sustainability of the local people's livelihoods.

This study has therefore attempted to provide some vital evidence on the contribution of local coping and response strategies towards survival of the IDPs in Aloi and Orum camps in the last three years of their displacement. Generally the findings are contrary to existing documentation, which had down played the role of household responses towards food insecurity and exaggerated the contribution of external humanitarian assistance in form of relief food aid assistance for the survival of IDPs in Lira district.

Based on the research findings, the researcher thinks the overall objectives and the specific research questions have to some extent been achieved. This in the researchers view has been shown by the level of evidence the study has provided on the short term impact of the conflict on household food insecurity, identification and explanation of the specific response strategies employed by the IDPs over the last three years and most importantly the available information on the rational economic behaviour demonstrated by IDPs in the adoption and usage of the various coping and response strategies. However, the researcher thinks that objective four was not sufficiently achieved and may require further research work to improve the level of understanding of the direct impact of identified "distressful" coping strategies as well a wider analysis of their environmental impact in Lira district.

6.3 Limitations and Challenges for Future Studies

The main limitations of the study mainly centred on resource constraints. However if it were not for the relatively bad civil security and limited resources, both in terms of time and manpower the following aspects of the research study could have been considered for improvement:

- i. A much wider geographical sample could have been conducted taking into consideration the most rural IDP camps, which had more irregular access to humanitarian assistance such as relief food aid distribution. This would have enabled the study to obtain more information on some of the unique coping and response strategies adopted by IDPs with much limited relief food aid distribution.
- ii. A larger sample size than the 200 interviewed households, could have been carried out in order to widen the technical scope of the study. It is believed that this would have improved the quantity and quality of information obtained for a more in-depth statistical analysis and further convergence of evidence.
- iii. Furthermore from a statistical perspective; the study could also have undertaken in-depth analysis of the correlation between the various independent, dependent and moderating variables in the conceptual framework.
- iv. Negative and destitute/distressful response strategies such as early marriage and large scale theft of food and productive assets by both the IDPs and Karamojong are some of the issues which may require more in-depth analysis in the future.
- v. A more independent and detailed understanding of the boarder contextual issues such as livelihoods zones, functionality of food markets, land access and ownership, cash income and expenditure patterns as well as a longitudinal study of the poverty trends visa via coping strategies are some of the issues which require to be considered in the future.
- vi. Finally more in-depth understanding of the intra household dynamics within the IDP households could also have been considered to inform the ongoing efforts to develop a household coping strategy conceptual frame work for people in situations of chronic conflict.

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the analysis and findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to address the short-term, medium and long-term food security and livelihoods needs of the IDPs:

Emergency Resettlement and Rehabilitation Support to IDPs

1. Over the last three years, most IDPs were only able to meet their minimum annual food entitlements through specific coping strategies. It is imperative for WFP and other humanitarian agencies to continue providing relief food aid assistance for the next six-nine months after the stabilisation of civil security in Lira district. This will enable IDPs to survive on relief food aid as they try to increase their agricultural food production through the first agricultural season of the year. Thereafter it is also recommended that WFP continues with more targeted food aid distribution for the demographically vulnerable households such as the disabled, elderly, chronically ill and labour poor households, who may require more time to stabilise their agricultural production in the long run period.
2. Current plans to phase out emergency related interventions for medium-term rehabilitation and development work may still require a continuation of short-term assistance among the IDPs. This will strengthen the already weakened coping capacity of the IDP households. It is therefore recommended that, the Directorate for Production of Lira district in collaboration with FAO, WFP and other humanitarian agencies provide more short-term maturity crops such as cassava, sweet potatoes and beans to enhance household level agricultural production and recovery in the long-term period. This will improve availability and access to food in the short-term and strengthen IDP household's capacity to face challenges of long-term development work.
3. Different households in the IDP camps had different levels of productive assets and household labour capacity to engage in labour intensive agricultural and other productive activities. The Government of Uganda (GoU) in collaboration with its development partners such as United Nations and other international agencies should try to support IDP households with lack of draught power through provision of livestock in order to plough larger acreage of land and other garden tools lost during the conflict.

4. The continuation of community based therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes targeting children less than five year of age children is also crucial to maintain acute malnutrition below the recommended 7 percent Global malnutrition rates. This should be co-ordinated by Lira District Directorate of Health Services so as to avoid duplication of resources among humanitarian agencies and strengthen the already weakened, coping and response capacity of the poorest households in the district.
5. The creation of transit camps has also reduced the IDPs access to basic social services such as education, health care and water and sanitation in Lira district. There is need for the DDMC to lobby and co-ordinate current humanitarian assistance by the international humanitarian agencies working in the district. This will enable the various stakeholders to match the camp decongestion plans with delivery of basic social services in the district. It will equally enable the district to prepare the required infrastructure for the anticipated long-term rehabilitation and development work about to be initiated in the entire Northern region.
6. The lack of confidence among the real victims of the Northern conflict on the current efforts to resolve the conflict in Northern Uganda has also created fear and doubt about the on going voluntary return of IDPs to their villages. This has slowed down the decongestion and resettlement plans in Northern Uganda. It is therefore important for the (GoU) and Lord Resistance Movement (LRM) through the trusted leadership of the UN special envoy for the peace process to fast track the peace process, so as to guarantee civil security. This will allow better access and ownership of land and other factors of production required by the IDPs to start rehabilitating their shattered livelihoods in Northern Uganda.

Long term Development Interventions for the IDPs

1. In the last three years the IDPs depended on the existing natural resources such as forest products for their livelihoods. This already has a significant negative impact on their environment. It is important for the GoU and humanitarian agencies to concentrate their development efforts on preventing further environmental degradation through large scale agro-forestry programmes and passing of by laws to preserve endangered trees such the share butter nut tree in this part of the country.
2. As a result of the conflict, the required infrastructure for delivery of social services was either destroyed or not maintained in rural parts of Lira district. The basic infrastructure includes inaccessible feeder roads, safe water, health centres and school facilities. It is important for the GoU and its development partners to urgently rehabilitate the basic infrastructure required for the resettlement of the IDPs.
3. The Northern conflict has been very costly for the region and Uganda in general. It is therefore crucial for the GoU to try to genuinely address the underlying structural causes of the conflict and ensure that any future conflicts are effectively prevented from occurring. It is also important for the GoU and all development partners to focus on the continued mitigation of the socio-economic impact of the conflict through the intensification of existing development programmes such as the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF). However the current modalities of implementation need to be changed, so as to ensure improved trickle down of benefits at household level, through proper utilisation of funds.
4. There is need for the GoU and its development partners to conduct detailed livelihoods baseline studies in the region. This should be carried out through a collaborative effort of the different stakeholders led by the Government with assistance of the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies. The baselines should then be used to set up a regional data base for Northern Uganda aimed at enhancing monitoring of the impact of rehabilitation and development work and establishment of a food security early warning system for the region.

5. Based on the Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme (NURP) and NUSAF experiences, the GoU and its development partners have a lot of practical challenges to address before any meaningful development in the region. This includes the need for promotion of zero tolerance to corruption through improved transparency and accountability of funds already committed for the rehabilitation and development of Northern Uganda. It is also important for all project stakeholders to focus on deliberate community beneficiary empowerment, so as to hold all development practitioners accountable in the use of funds. This can be achieved through the formation and training of community groups on monitoring of development funds as well as their active involvement in the management of formal and informal micro finance grants.

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APPENDICES

1. Interview Guide for Key Informants
2. Specific questions
3. Department for Social work and Administration (SWSA) – Introduction Letter

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Individual and Focus Groups (FGD) Interviews Guide (1 Hour)

- ? Key informant interviews with District Disaster Management Committee members.
- ? FGD with Sub County Chiefs of Aloi and Orum Sub Counties.
- ? FGD with Camp leaders of Aloi and Orum Sub Counties.
- ? FGD Ward leaders of Aloi and Orum Sub Counties.
- ? FGD with Opinion leaders and Elders in Aloi and Orum Sub Counties.

Introduction:

This research is being carried out to assess the community response strategies in regard to food insecurity and livelihoods in general in the context of chronic civil conflict among internally displaced people. It aims at making a contribution towards improved understanding of when, how and why communities adopt and employ different response strategies to food insecurity at household level so as to derive learning, appropriate policy and programme recommendations for action.

Name: -----

Sex: -----

Title: -----

District/Sub county and camp: -----

Community Wealth Break Down-Table

Name of Wealth Group					
% of Hhs in the wealth group					
Land Owned					
Land Accessed					
Food Crops					
Cash crops					
Animals Cattle Goats/sheep Pigs Chicken					
Other Productive Assets					
Main Sources of livelihoods					

General questions:

1. How do you think the last three years of the conflict has affected the local people's socio-economic living conditions in the IDP camps?

2. What about the specific short-term impact of this conflict on local people's household availability and access to food.

3. What types of activities have you seen IDPs doing now and were not done before the conflict or local people's displacement?

4. Which of these activities would you classify to be destructive (distressful and destitute) and likely to affect future household food security and normal livelihoods strategies?

5. What factors do you think have enhanced the IDPs access to food?

6. As a leader how have you enhanced the local people's response to food insecurity in the IDP camps?

7. What programme and policy recommendations would you suggest to improve availability to food in the future?

8. What programme and policy recommendations would you suggest to improve access and availability to food in the future?

a) Short term

b) Medium and Long term

Thank you for providing your valuable time for this interview.

Appendix 2: Specific Questions

Household Interview Questionnaire

Community Response to Food Insecurity in the Context of Chronic Conflict

Time: (1 hour and 45 minutes)

- 1. Female or Male House head**
- 2. Any other knowledgeable adult in the household**
- 3. Child headed households.**

1. Questionnaire No-----	4. District-----
2. Name of IDP camp or Resettlement area ----- -----	5. Sub County -----
3. Name of Zone or Village -----	6. Date of interview -----
	7. Type of Household (Male headed, female headed or child headed) ----- -----

Hh Demographics Details**Household Size :**

No.	Relationship to Hh head.	Date of Birth	Sex	School grade, level of Skills and Education	Any Household members lost due to the conflict	If not able to work why
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						

Household's Main Source of Food and Livelihoods: (Circle all that apply)

13 = Small Staple Substance Agriculture	16 = Petty Trade (Specify-----)	19 = Formal Employment, e.g. Teaching/ Health/ Community Workers or other (Specify -----)
14 = Small livestock	17 = Sale of Natural Resources e.g. firewood, Charcoal etc. (specify-----)	20 = Local crafts etc (specify-----)
15= Market Gardening	18 = Fishing	21 = Casual Labor –Specify ----- -----)
22 = Public works programme, specify (-----), 23= Other (Specify -----)		

24. When where you displaced (Year and month) -----?

25. How has the conflict affected your access to productive assets after the displacement? (Refer to table below).

Household Productive Assets			
Types of Capital/Assets	Pre- Displacement Period	Post Displacement	Reasons for Change in asset holding e.g. conflict, sold, exchanged etc.
26. Human capital. (Hh members health and level of education)			
27. Natural capital e.g. (Ownership and access to land, water, forest products etc).			
28. Social capital (Norms, values, social networks, local gifts, relief aid etc)			
29. Financial capital (Livestock Owned, cash income,credit,debts etc)			
30. Physical capital (Equipments such as bicycles, sewing machine, brewing equipments and other infrastructure such as transport, roads, markets,communicaiton)			
31. Any other productive assets			

32. If estimated what is the percentage change in availability of food from the different sources of food in your household (Use proportional piling).

Changes in Household Access and Availability to food			
Household Sources of food.	Pre-displacement access & availability (Percentage-%)	Post displacement access & availability (Percentage-%)	Reasons for change in access & availability. e.g. restricted access to land, seeds, labour or other capital etc.
33. Own crop production			
34. Livestock products			
35. Purchase from market			
36. Barter exchange			
37. Social capital inform gifts			
38. Exchange of food for labour			
39. Natural sources e.g. fishing, wild foods			
40. Others-Specify			

41. Which of the following response strategies did you mostly employ to ensure access and availability to food in your household? (Refer to the table below).

In the past 12 months, how did you ensure sufficient availability and access to food?	All the time - 12 months	Pretty often 6/12 months	Once in a while 4/12months	Hardly at all 2/12 months	Never 0/12 months	Reason
42. Change in cropping patterns/share cropping						
43. Sale of small livestock						
44. Changes in diet (switch to cheaper food items)						
45. Use of inter-household transfers/loans/ borrowing						

In the past 12 months, how did you ensure sufficient availability and access to food?	All the time - 12 months	Pretty often 6/12 months	Once in a while 4/12months	Hardly at all 2/12 months	Never 0/12 months	Reason
46. Sale of household possession e.g. jewelry						
47. Increased petty commodity production						
48. Increased consumption of normal wild foods						
49. Sale of core herd/livestock e.g. Oxen						
50. Sale of agricultural tools						
51. Sale or mortgaging of land						
52. Credit from local traders or money lenders						
53. Reduction of current consumption levels						
54. Consumption of immature crops						
55. Reduction of quantity of food per meal in a day						
56. Restricting adult consumption						
57. Feeding working members only						
58. Consumed un usual/poisonous wild foods						
59. Eating local and treated seed stocks						
60. Withdrawing children from school						
61. Engaging in degrading jobs including stealing						
62. Sale of farm implements						

In the past 12 months, how did you ensure sufficient availability and access to food?	All the time - 12 months	Pretty often 6/12 months	Once in a while 4/12months	Hardly at all 2/12 months	Never 0/12 months	Reason
63. Abandoning some family members including early/ forced marriage						

64. Rank the first five most common and effective response strategies you employed in your household and give reasons for the ranking.

Response (Coping) Strategy Index – Intensity and Severity for the most Common Response Strategy						
Response strategy employed	Score the first seven different strategies and give the reason	Reasons for scoring	Mostly carried out by Women	Mostly carried out by Men	Mostly carried out by Children	Specific level of food insecurity (low, medium or high) at which response is applied

65. What is the specific sequence and stages at which you employed the first five important response strategies to food insecurity at household level in the IDP camps?

No.	Response strategies	Stage at which response strategy was employed	Reasons for employing the specific strategy
66.			
67.			
68.			
69.			
70.			

71. Which response strategies did you frequently employ during less severe periods of food shortage in your household?

72. Which response strategies have you frequently employed during more adverse periods of food shortage in you household?

73. What situations made it suitable for you to employ the first five response strategies in the IDP camps?

74. What forms of activities have you initiated in order to generate cash income at household level in the IDP camps?

75. What aspects of traditional cultural practices, do you think have enhanced your ability to cope with food insecurity at household level?

76. What aspects of traditional cultural practices, do you think are complementing your future food security and livelihoods strategies?

77. What aspects of traditional cultural practices, do you think are destructive and hindering food security and livelihoods strategies (non-sustainable) for the future?

78. How do you think the current response strategies could be strengthened to address food insecurity among the IDPs?

Thank you for providing your time and responding to these questions.