

**PROMOTING REINTEGRATION AND BUILDING PEACE?
AN EXAMINATION OF EDUCATION ASSISTANCE FOR
FORMER CHILD SOLDIERS IN NORTHERN UGANDA**

by

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Abstract

A wealth of policy and academic literature recommends education to support the reintegration of former child soldiers. However, very little methodologically rigorous research has examined the relationship between education and reintegration outcomes. This study uses process tracing to examine the impact of education assistance on reintegration while considering political, social, and economic factors and other intervening variables. Four related hypotheses are investigated. H1: Education supports the reintegration of former child soldiers. H2: While ex-combatant girls are more likely to experience stigma and difficulty reintegrating than ex-combatant boys, education supports the reintegration of both girls and boys. H3: Targeted education assistance supports reintegration. H4: Targeted education assistance increases stigma and inhibits reintegration. A single case study of northern Uganda was conducted to examine these hypotheses based on a review of the literature on reintegration and education, field interviews, and the population-based *Surveys of War-Affected Youth* (SWAY I 2006, SWAY II 2008).

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List of Acronyms

BBC – British Broadcasting Company

CIDA – Canadian International Development Agency

CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child

CSUCS – Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

DDR – Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

GUSCO – Gulu Save the Children Organization

HRW – Human Rights Watch

INEE – Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises, and
Early Reconstruction

LRA – Lord’s Resistance Army

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PTA – Parent Teacher Association

PTSD – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

SPLA – Sudan People’s Liberation Army

SWAY – *Survey of War-Affected Youth*

UNDDR – United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource
Centre

UNDPKO – United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

UNOCHA – United Nations Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UN OSRSG / CAAC – United Nations Office of the Special Representative for the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

UPDF – Uganda People’s Defense Force

UPE – Universal Primary Education

USE – Universal Secondary Education

WHO – World Health Organization

Introduction

Building a sustainable peace in the aftermath of conflict is a complex military, political, economic, and social process aimed not only at bringing an end to the fighting, but also at rebuilding war-ravaged communities. In the post-Cold War era, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs have increasingly been employed as a strategy to prevent ex-combatants from “spoiling” peace processes (Klem, Douma, Frerks, Gompelman, & van Laar 2008, p. 8, Newman & Richmond 2006, Spear 2006, Stedman 1997, UNDPKO 2006).¹ Disarmament, the first phase in DDR programs, requires collecting weapons from militants and instituting arms control programs (Brzoska 2006). Demobilization, the second phase, involves releasing soldiers from the command structure of their armed group (Knight & Özerdem 2004). Reintegration, the final phase of a DDR program, is a longer-term project designed to help ex-combatants rejoin their communities and to provide them with an alternative to participating in armed conflict. According to Specht & van Empel (1998), “reintegration of former armed fighters into civilian life is a key element to ensure a lasting peace” (p.1). Reintegration interventions may include family reunification, psychosocial support, economic and livelihood assistance, and education (CSUCS 2009, Spear 2006, UNDPKO 2006).

DDR programs have not only been used for adult soldiers, but also to facilitate the transition of child soldiers into civilian life. Donors, UN Agencies, and NGOs estimate that tens of thousands of children under 18 years of age are recruited, forcibly conscripted, and kidnapped by governments and non-state armed groups to be used as

¹ In their discussion of spoilers, neither Newman & Richmond (2006), Spear (2006), nor Stedman (1997) identify children associated with fighting forces as a potential risk to peace processes.

direct participants in war (Brett & McCallin 1998, CSUCS 2001, UNICEF 2009a, UNICEF 2009d).² Boys and girls serve in fighting forces as front-line combatants, sentries, spies, messengers, porters, cooks, servants, and sexual slaves. For former child soldiers, “the issue of rehabilitation and reintegration is critical so as to ensure that cycles of violence and conflict are not perpetuated” (UN OSRSG/CAAC 2009). Nearly 95,000 children participated in reintegration programs between 2001 and 2007 (UNICEF and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of France 2007, p. 2).

A wealth of policy literature produced by donors, UN Agencies, and NGOs identifies education as a critical factor in preventing re-recruitment and promoting sustainable reintegration of former child soldiers into their communities (CIDA 2000, CSUCS 2009, Machel 1996, *Paris Principles* 2007, UNDPKO 2006, UN OSRSG / CAAC 2009, Verhey 2001). UN Security Resolution 1539 (2004), which aims to “ensure that all children associated with armed forces and groups...are systematically included in every disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process,” also recommends “a particular emphasis on education.” The Security Council “calls upon States and the United Nations system to recognize the important role of education in conflict areas in *halting and preventing recruitment and re-recruitment of children* contrary to the obligations of parties to the conflict” (UNSC 2004, Resolution 1539, articles 8 & 9,

² The global estimate of 300,000 child soldiers first appeared in Rachel Brett and Margaret McCallin’s 1998 report, *Children – the Invisible Soldiers*, published by Save the Children Sweden; this is the estimate which is most often cited (Brett 2004, see also Brett & McCallin 1998, CSUCS 2001, Singer 2001/2002, UNICEF 2009a, UNICEF 2009d). However, the validity and reliability of this figure is questionable. This 300,000 total was initially calculated based on a “minimum number” of children “involved” in “36 current or recent conflicts” (Brett 2004). Moreover, the estimate is based on aggregations of anecdotal evidence and eyewitness accounts. While the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers referenced this figure in the 2001 Global Report, the 2008 Global Report revises this estimate: “although it is impossible to accurately calculate the number of children involved in armed forces and groups, it is clear that there are many tens of thousands of child soldiers.”

emphasis mine). Despite claims that education fosters successful reintegration, there is only one scholarly study that critically examines the relationship between education and the reintegration of former child soldiers (Betancourt, Simmons, Borisova, Brewer, Iweala, & de la Soudiere 2008).

Education assistance and other reintegration interventions for former child soldiers have been developed in an evidence vacuum. The *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups* and other policy documents assert that interim care centres, medical assistance, family tracing services, psychosocial support, traditional healing rituals, community sensitization activities, livelihood support and education assistance promote reintegration; yet, these assertions remain untested (CIDA 2005, *Paris Principles* 2007, Save the Children 2004, Sommers 2002, Specht 2007, Specht & van Empel 1998, UNDPKO 2006, Verhey 2003, Wessells 2006).³ Moreover, no rigorous studies have investigated the impact of targeting reintegration interventions to promote the reintegration of ex-combatant children. While the *Paris Principles and Guidelines* and other policy documents recommend a shift from allocating reintegration resources exclusively to child soldiers to providing reintegration assistance to entire war-affected communities, the evidence for this policy decision is unclear (CIDA 2005, *Paris Principles* 2007, Save the Children 2004, Specht 2007, Specht & van Empel 1998, UNDPKO 2006). Although anecdotal evidence suggests that targeted education assistance may increase stigma and hinder reintegration, no rigorous case studies have been conducted (Sommers 2002, Verhey 2003, Wessells 2006). This thesis will begin to address this evidence gap.

³ Rigorous studies on traditional healing rituals conducted by Boothby, Crawford, and Halperin (2006) and Baines (2007) are exceptions to this rule.

The reintegration of former child soldiers into families and communities is a complex process. The objective of this paper is to explore the relationship between education assistance and the reintegration of ex-combatant children. Previous studies of reintegration concentrate on psychological and social challenges to reintegration faced by former child soldiers who have suffered, witnessed, and perpetrated violence. Other studies have focused on the role of families and communities in the reintegration process. This thesis will attempt to refine the concept of reintegration by considering other factors that affect reintegration outcomes and by offering a model of the *sustainable reintegration continuum*.

Ex-combatant children may have successful reintegration outcomes or unsuccessful reintegration outcomes, or they may fall somewhere in between on the continuum. Individuals, families, and communities are critical factors in the reintegration process. However, reintegration occurs in a particular political, social, and economic context and these contextual factors influence reintegration outcomes. In order to examine the reintegration of children formerly associated with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel forces in northern Uganda, this paper will examine how these contextual factors interact with reintegration interventions, such as education assistance, to affect reintegration. Many different types of interventions are provided to former child soldiers in northern Uganda, particularly to those children who pass through interim care centres. These reintegration interventions include amnesty packages, medical assistance, family tracing services, psychosocial support, traditional healing rituals, community sensitization activities, and livelihood support, as well as education assistance. This paper will use process tracing to investigate the relationship between education assistance and

reintegration of ex-combatant children, taking into account the role of individuals, families, and communities, political, social, and economic factors, and other reintegration interventions.

This study poses 3 related research questions: What is the impact of education assistance on the reintegration of former child soldiers? Does education assistance affect the reintegration of ex-combatant boys and girls differently? And what are the effects of targeted education assistance on the reintegration of former child soldiers? Non-targeted education assistance is defined as education support and programs provided in communities where there are child soldiers; both ex-combatant children and non-combatant children have access to this assistance. Targeted education assistance is defined as tuition fees, other school-related fees, scholastic materials, books, uniforms, transportation, and education programs provided exclusively for former child soldiers. Evidence from the literature review suggests that if other war-affected children in the community lack the resources to pay for school fees, books, uniforms, and examinations, they may feel resentment towards child soldiers for receiving special treatment and stigmatize them. Unequal access to resources between the two groups may hinder the reintegration of child soldiers.

Four related hypotheses were developed based on a review of the literature on the reintegration of former child soldiers and explored in the northern Uganda case. H1: Education supports the reintegration of former child soldiers. H2: While ex-combatant girls are more likely to experience stigma and difficulty reintegrating than ex-combatant boys, education supports the reintegration of both girls and boys. Hypotheses 3 and 4 are competing hypotheses - H3: Targeted education assistance supports the reintegration of

former child soldiers; H4: Targeted education assistance increases stigmatization of former child soldiers and inhibits their reintegration. Data from the literature review, field interviews, and the *Surveys of War-Affected Youth* was used to explore these 4 hypotheses in the northern Uganda case.

This paper has important implications for policy-makers working on peace-building, reintegration, education, and children's rights and protection. This research helps policy-makers to understand key contextual factors that impact reintegration outcomes. Policymakers must take into account the political, social, and economic context and design interventions that address these contextual factors in order to increase the possibility that ex-combatant children will successfully reintegrate.

This research project is particularly relevant to Canadian policy-makers. Canada is one of the top five donors contributing to DDR programmes, investing \$34.6 million in 2006 (Escola de Cultura de Pau 2007, p. 24). From 2004-2007, Canada contributed \$6 million to address the needs of ex-combatant children in the Great Lakes region by providing "trauma counselling for former child soldiers, basic education, skills training, awareness-raising in HIV / AIDS, and training in community peacebuilding and reconciliation" (CIDA 2010b). Canada provided an additional \$24.5 million to the World Bank's Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (2002-2009) which supported the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda (CIDA 2010a, World Bank 2010). This program assisted 15,000 Ugandan ex-combatants to reintegrate and most of these ex-combatants were former child soldiers associated with the LRA (CIDA 2010b).

Canada has made commitments to continue to support reintegration programming for ex-combatant children. In 2007, Canada and 59 other member states signed the *Paris Commitments to Protect Children From Unlawful Recruitment or Use by Armed Forces or Armed Groups*. Canada pledged “[t]o make every effort to uphold and apply the *Paris Principles* [on DDR for children] wherever possible in our political, diplomatic, humanitarian, technical assistance and funding roles and consistent with our international obligations” (*Paris Commitments 2007*). As the *Paris Principles* compel signatories to devote more resources to reintegration and to implement non-targeted reintegration programming to prevent stigma (*Paris Principles 2007*), research on targeting practices and the reintegration of former child soldiers is directly relevant to Canada’s commitments.

While non-targeted reintegration interventions are recommended by the *Paris Principles and Guidelines*, it is unclear whether donor countries are abiding by these guidelines. According to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children in Armed Conflict, a majority of donors surveyed reported that they are “reluctant” to fund non-targeted reintegration interventions (UN OSRSG/CAAC 2009). One possible reason for donor countries’ reluctance to support non-targeted programming is that it is more difficult to demonstrate “results” to the public when reintegration assistance is allocated to entire war-affected communities rather than individual former child soldiers. Scholarly research on the efficacy of reintegration interventions and the targeting of these reintegration interventions may help policymakers to make Canada’s investments in peace-building more effective and demonstrate “results” to the public.

This research project on education interventions for children in conflict-affected northern Uganda is especially relevant to Canadian policymakers following the launch of CIDA's Children and Youth Strategy (CIDA 2009). According to this strategy, the objective of programming is to improve access to quality primary education in conflict-affected countries and to provide child friendly spaces where children can learn in a safe environment (CIDA 2009). The results of this research may provide insight into the types of education assistance that would benefit former child soldiers and other war-affected children.

The chapters of this thesis are organized as follows: Chapter 1 outlines the research design, presents the methodology, explains the choice of the northern Uganda case study, and describes the fieldwork conducted for the project. Chapter 2 provides a critical examination of existing literature on the reintegration and education of former child soldiers. Chapter 3 focuses on the impact of war on civilians in northern Uganda, particularly children. Chapter 4 analyzes evidence from the literature review, field interviews, and the *Surveys of War-Affected Youth* to investigate the relationship between education assistance and the reintegration of ex-combatant children, considering contextual factors and intervening variables. The final chapter presents conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 1: Research Design and Methods

The objective of this thesis is to investigate two related puzzles. The first puzzle is that UN Security Council Resolution 1539 (2004) and a wealth of policy and academic literature state that education facilitates the reintegration of ex-combatant children (CIDA 2000, CSUCS 2009, Machel 1996, *Paris Principles* 2007, UNDPKO 2006, UN OSRSG / CAAC 2009, Verhey 2001). However, this is an untested assumption. The second puzzle is that the *Paris Principles and Guidelines* on DDR for children recommend non-targeted reintegration programming and suggest that targeted reintegration assistance increases stigma and hinders the reintegration of former child soldiers. Yet, the evidence base for this policy is unclear. In order to address this evidence gap in the literature, this thesis will explore three related research questions. First, does education support the reintegration of former child soldiers? Second, does education assistance affect the reintegration of ex-combatant boys and girls differently? And third, what are the effects of targeted education assistance on the reintegration of former child soldiers? To investigate these questions, a review of academic and grey literature was conducted on the reintegration of ex-combatant children.

From this literature review 4 hypotheses were developed and applied to the northern Uganda case. H1) Education supports the reintegration of former child soldiers in northern Uganda. H2) While ex-combatant girls are more likely to experience stigma and difficulty reintegrating than ex-combatant boys, education supports the reintegration of both girls and boys formerly associated with the LRA. Hypotheses 1 and 2 provide baseline information for comparison with hypotheses 3 and 4. In other words, it is necessary to investigate the relationship between education assistance and reintegration in

order to isolate the effects of *targeted* education assistance on reintegration outcomes. Hypotheses 3 and 4 are competing hypotheses: H3) Targeted education assistance supports the reintegration of former LRA child soldiers; and H4) Targeted education assistance increases stigmatization of former LRA child soldiers and inhibits their reintegration. Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 are illustrated in the diagrams below (Figures 1-4).

Operationalization of Variables

Variables were conceptualized in the following manner. For H1 and H2, the independent variable is education - including primary, secondary, vocational, and lifeskills education. For H2, the antecedent variable is gender – whether ex-combatant children are boys or girls. For H3 and H4, the independent variable is targeted education assistance. Targeted education assistance was operationalized as tuition fees, other school-related fees, scholastic materials, books, uniforms, transportation, and education programs provided solely for former child soldiers. Non-targeted education assistance was operationalized as any education assistance provided in communities where there are child soldiers, to which all war-affected children have access.⁴

The dependent variable, reintegration, was more difficult to operationalize. Reintegration has been inadequately theorized in existing academic and policy literature. Reintegration of ex-combatant children into families and communities is a long-term process. While literature on reintegration typically categorizes reintegration outcomes as either successful or unsuccessful, this thesis offers a model of the *sustainable*

⁴ Bragg (2006) coins the term “non-targeted” in her discussion of reintegration programming for Liberian youth. The author does not discuss non-targeted *education* assistance.

reintegration continuum - a more nuanced conceptualization of reintegration. Ex-combatant children may have successful reintegration outcomes or unsuccessful reintegration outcomes, or they may fall somewhere in between on the continuum. This model acknowledges that individuals, families, and communities are critical factors in the reintegration process. However, reintegration occurs in a particular political, social, and economic context and these contextual factors - which influence reintegration outcomes - must be taken into account.

Scholarly literature from the field of psychology on the reintegration of ex-combatant children has typically defined unsuccessful and successful reintegration based on the presence or absence of symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Bayer, Klasen & Adam 2007, Derluyn, Broekaert, Schuyen, & DeTemmerman 2004, Kohrt, Jordans, Tol, Speckman, Maharjan, Worthman & Komproe 2008, Santacruz & Arana 2002). However, this conceptualization of reintegration, based on psychological well-being, does not acknowledge other intervening variables that may affect reintegration. Other academic and policy studies of reintegration implicitly define reintegration as family and community acceptance (Boothby, Crawford, & Halperin 2006, Carpenter 2007a, CSUCS 2009, HRW 2008, Machel 1996, McKay 2005, McKay & Mazurana 2004, Specht & Attree 2006, Thompson 1999, Verhey 2001, Wessells 2000, Wessells & Jonah 2006).

A study by Betancourt, Agnew-Blais, Gilman, Williams, and Ellis (2010), "Past horrors, present struggles: The role of stigma in the association between war experiences and psychosocial adjustment among former child soldiers in Sierra Leone," takes a step toward conceptualizing reintegration by identifying the existence of stigma as an

important indicator of reintegration. The authors claim that stigma is an important factor in predicting unsuccessful reintegration outcomes. Stigmatization was defined as discrimination, avoidance, insults, as well as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse committed by community members against disarmed and demobilized child soldiers (Betancourt et al 2010, p. 18, see also Link & Phelan 2001, 2006). While Betancourt et al's (2010) study makes an important contribution to the conceptualization of reintegration, like other studies on the topic, it does not precisely measure reintegration. Discussions of the length of time former child soldiers must be separated from rebel groups to be considered "reintegrated" are entirely absent from the literature.

For the purposes of this thesis, reintegration will be conceptualized in the following manner. For hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 the dependent variable - successful reintegration - is conceptualized as a smooth transition and sustainable return to civilian life in families and communities. For hypothesis 4, the dependent variable - unsuccessful reintegration - is conceptualized as follows: a) difficulty adjusting to civilian life; b) experiencing stigma and estrangement from families and communities; and / or c) participating in armed violence by returning to the rebel group or joining another rebel group. The variance on the dependent variable for H1, H2, H3, and H4 ranges from successful reintegration to unsuccessful reintegration. In order to conceptualize the variance, this thesis offers a model of the *sustainable reintegration continuum* which is presented in detail in Chapter 4. This thesis problematizes the imprecise measurement of reintegration and identifies this as an area for future research.

Illustrating Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1-4 are illustrated in the following diagrams. Figure 1 clarifies hypothesis 1. Child soldiers are demobilized and return to their families and communities. While some former child soldiers receive education assistance, others do not. Figure 1 suggests that former child soldiers who receive education assistance may be more likely to have successful reintegration outcomes than demobilized former child soldiers who do not receive education assistance.

Figure 1. Hypothesis 1: Education (assistance) supports the reintegration of former child soldiers.

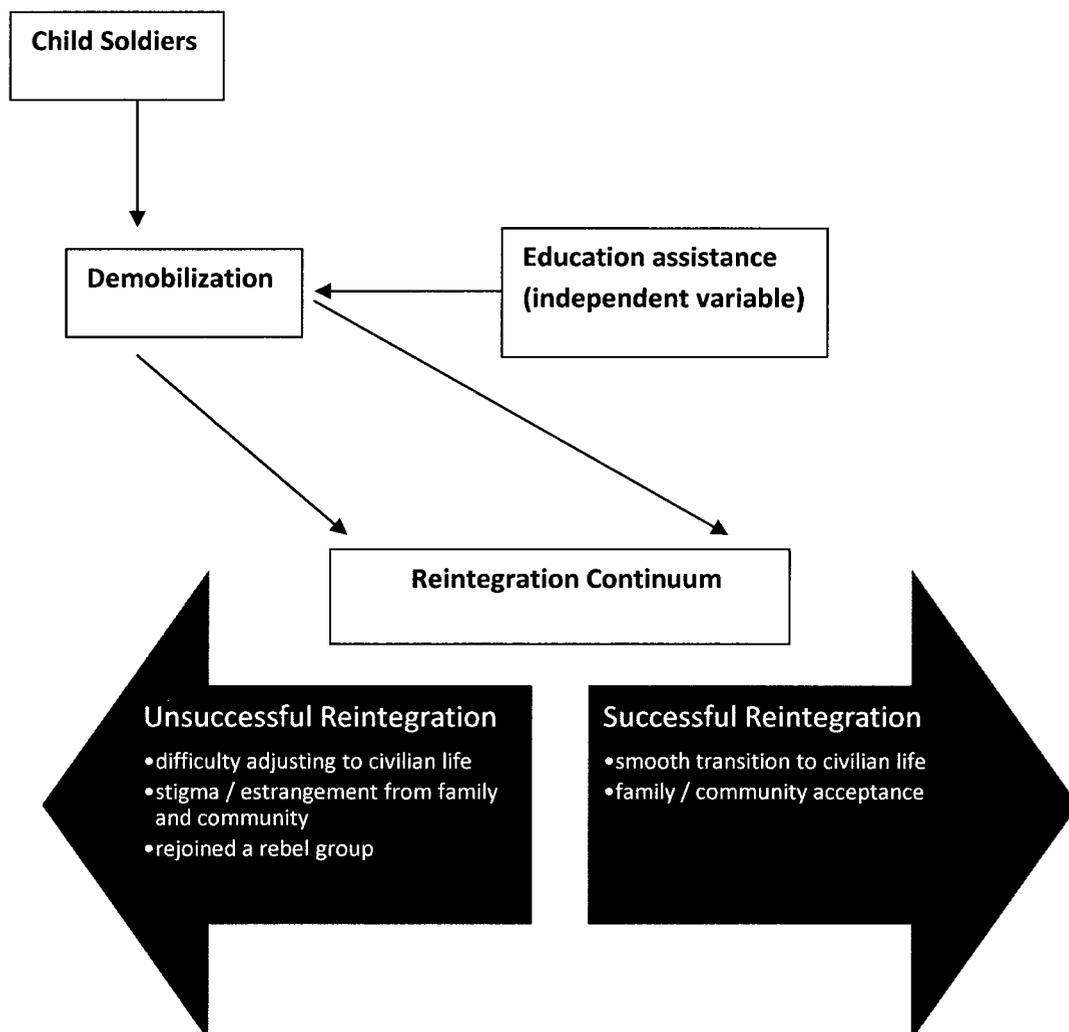


Figure 2 outlines hypothesis 2. The diagram demonstrates that gender may have differential impacts on reintegration outcomes. Ex-combatant girls may be less likely to make a smooth transition to civilian life and to gain family and community acceptance than ex-combatant boys. However, the diagram suggests that education assistance may improve reintegration outcomes for both boys and girls formerly associated with fighting forces.

Figure 2. Hypothesis 2: While ex-combatant girls are more likely to experience stigma and difficulty reintegrating than ex-combatant boys, education supports the reintegration of both girls and boys.

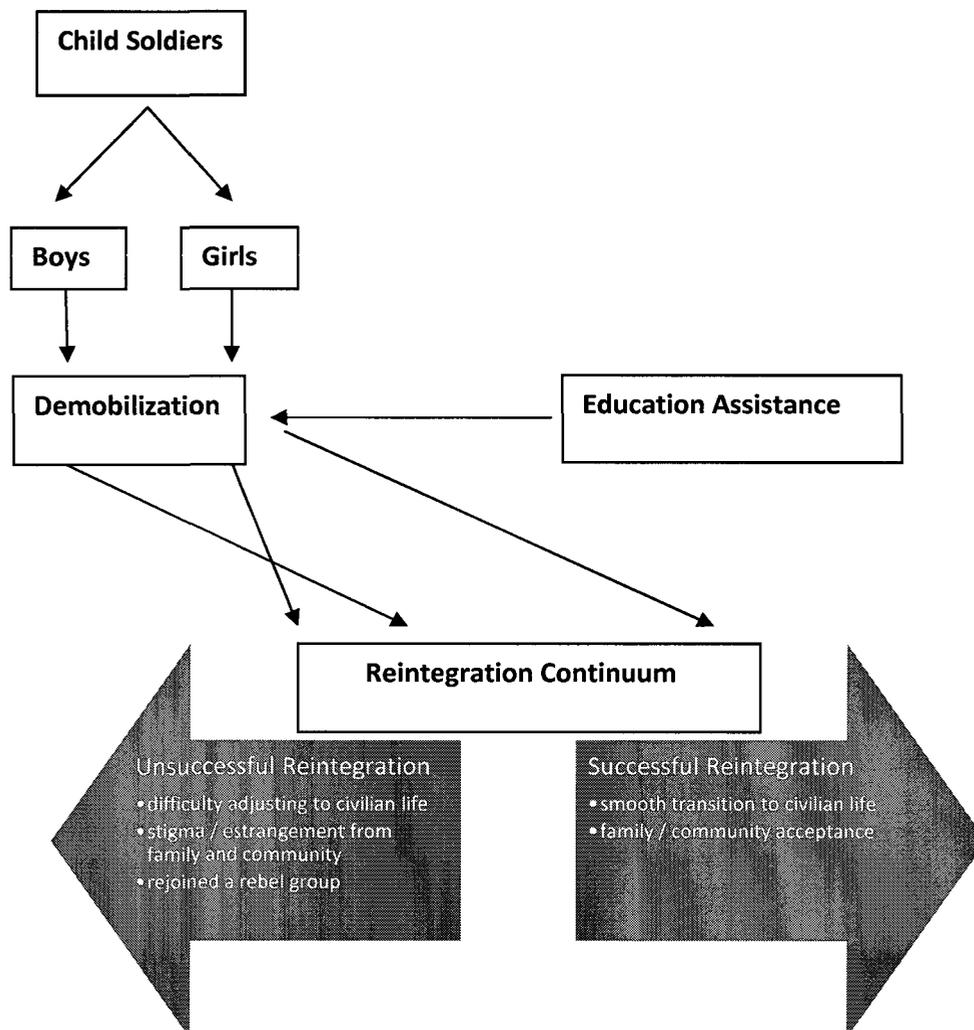


Figure 3 helps to explain hypothesis 3. The diagram shows that ex-combatant children who receive targeted education assistance may be more likely to successfully reintegrate than ex-combatant children who did not receive this type of education support.

Figure 3. Hypothesis 3: Targeted education assistance supports the reintegration of former child soldiers.

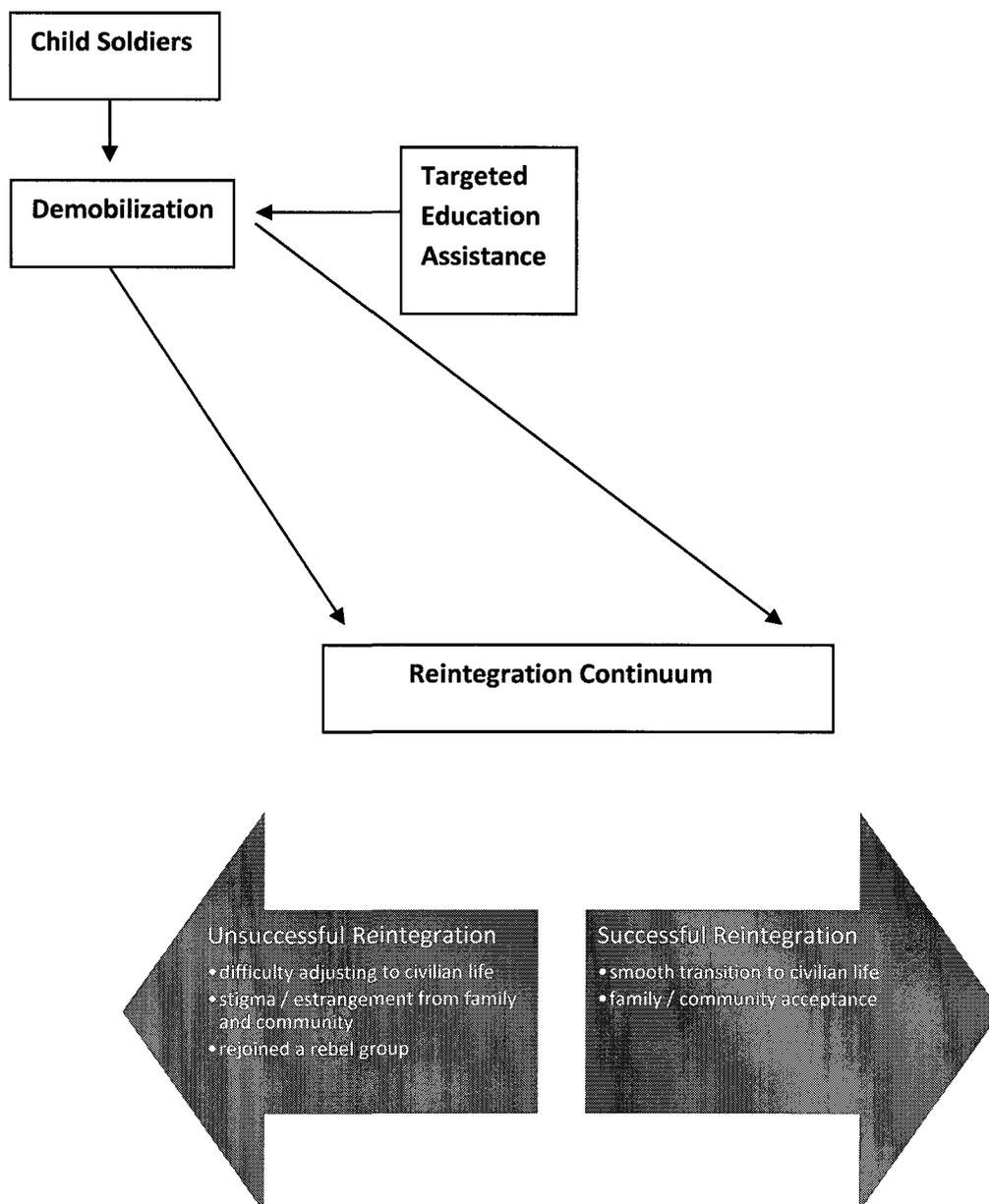
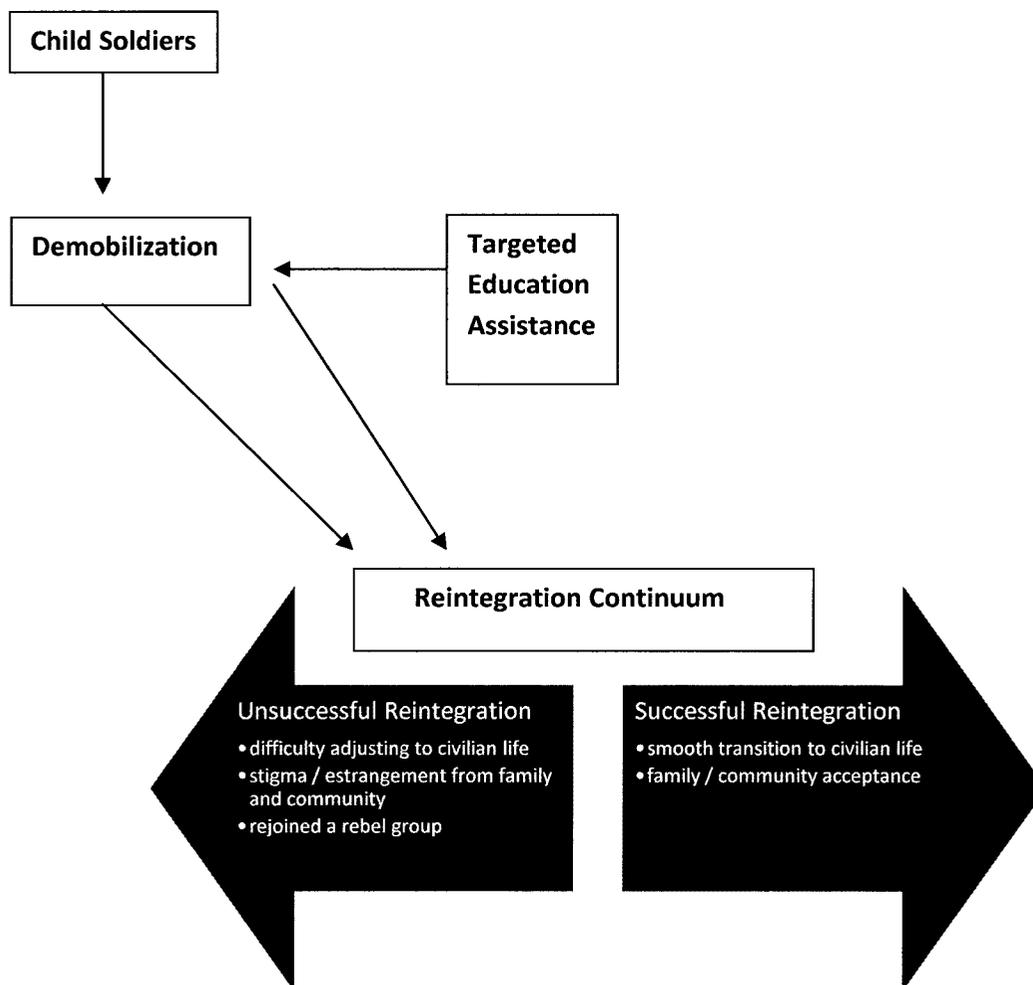


Figure 4 illustrates competing hypothesis 4. The diagram suggests that targeted education assistance does not support reintegration. On the contrary, targeted education assistance may increase stigmatization of ex-combatant children and prevent them from reintegrating.

Figure 4. Hypothesis 4: Targeted education assistance increases stigmatization of former child soldiers and inhibits their reintegration.



Case Study Methodology

A single case study was chosen as the most appropriate method to explore these four related hypotheses and to examine the causal mechanisms of reintegration in order to contribute to theory-building. George and Bennett (2005) demonstrate that a detailed examination of a single-case study is the best method for carrying out exploratory research:

We identify four strong advantages of case study methods that make them valuable in testing hypotheses and particularly useful for theory development: their potential for achieving high conceptual validity; their strong procedures for fostering new hypotheses; their value as a useful means to closely examine the hypothesized role of causal mechanisms in the context of individual cases; and their capacity for addressing causal complexity (p. 19).

This study began as a plausibility probe. “Plausibility probes are preliminary studies on relatively untested theories and hypotheses to determine whether more intensive and laborious testing is warranted” (George & Bennett 2005, p. 74). Hypotheses 1-4 are relatively untested as there is only one rigorous study which examines the relationship between education and the reintegration of former child soldiers (Betancourt et al 2008). No rigorous studies investigate the impact of targeted education assistance on reintegration outcomes.

Case Selection

In order to select a single case study, the universe of cases was identified based on a typology. According to the Uppsala Conflict Database, war and minor conflict with more than 25 battle-related deaths occurred in 36 countries during the period of 2004-

2007.⁵ Conflicts occurring before 2004 were eliminated from the universe of cases in order to avoid the problem of maturation effects; in post-conflict cases such as Sierra Leone and Mozambique, child soldiers may have reintegrated into their communities over time.

According to the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (2008) Global Report, during this period children were participants in non-state armed groups in 24 countries.⁶ The majority of child soldiers around the globe are associated with non-state armed groups rather than government forces (CSUCS 2008). Therefore, this exploratory study will focus on non-state armed groups. Two of the countries where children are associated with rebel groups – Liberia and Bhutan – were eliminated as these countries were not experiencing war or minor armed conflict during the period of 2004-2007 according to the Uppsala Conflict Database.

The universe of cases was further limited to Africa as it is reputed to be the continent with the highest incidence of child soldiering (Achvarina & Reich 2006, p. 163, CSUCS 2009, Singer 2001/2002, p. 43). The U.S. Department of State identifies the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Uganda as countries with the highest numbers of child soldiers on the African continent (2008, p. 1). The Democratic Republic

⁵ 36 countries: In Africa – Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda; in Asia – Afghanistan, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel / Palestine, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, and Uzbekistan; in Oceania – Indonesia and Philippines; in the Americas – Colombia, Haiti, Peru, and the United States; and in Eastern Europe: Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Russia (Uppsala Conflict Database).

⁶ 24 countries: In Africa - Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda; in Asia – Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Iraq, Israel / Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand; in Oceania – Indonesia and Philippines; and in the Americas – Colombia (CSUCS 2008).

of Congo was eliminated as translation costs exceeded the proposed fieldwork budget. The remaining two countries, Sudan and Uganda, are both high intensity cases for child soldiering. UNICEF (2006) estimates that more than 25,000 children in northern Uganda have been abducted by the LRA and used as child soldiers since the conflict began in 1986.⁷ In Sudan, 19,000 children are estimated to have been recruited by government forces and 22,000 by the opposition Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) during the 22 year war between the north and the south which ended in 2005 (CSUCS 2008, see also BBC 2010b). In order to focus on the reintegration of child soldiers associated with *rebel* groups, Uganda was selected as the case study for this thesis.

Northern Uganda is an important exploratory case for a number of reasons. First, it is a high intensity case for child soldiering, as more than 25,000 children have been kidnapped and forced to join the rebel ranks (UNICEF 2006). Second, the conflict in northern Uganda is an important case for examining the reintegration of girls associated with fighting forces. McKay and Mazurana (2004) note that more than one quarter of the child soldiers in the LRA are girls. Third, major donors, international organizations, and NGOs have significant reintegration programming for ex-combatant children in northern Uganda (CIDA 2010a, CIDA 2010b, Save the Children 2010, World Bank 2010, World Vision 2004, World Vision, 2010).

Within-Case Comparison

The Northern Uganda case is also an important exploratory case as it has within-case variation in the delivery of education assistance. NGOs such as World Vision and

⁷ Estimates range from 18,000-44,000. For a detailed discussion of children in the LRA, see Chapter 3: Northern Uganda Case Study.

Gulu Support the Children Organization (GUSCO) take a targeted approach to education assistance for child soldiers by providing tuition fees, other school-related fees, scholastic materials, books, uniforms, transportation and programs specifically for child soldiers.⁸

UNICEF and the Ugandan government officially take a non-targeted approach to education in the North.⁹ Child soldiers receive no specialized assistance from Kampala and are eligible to attend government schools like all war-affected children, although structural barriers such as fees and lack of support services for children with mental health problems and disabilities may prevent them from accessing education.¹⁰

Process Tracing

This thesis used “process tracing” – a within-case study method “which attempts to trace the links between possible causes and observed outcomes” (George & Bennett 2005, p.6, see also Tansey 2007, p. 765-768). As reintegration has been inadequately conceptualized and measured in existing scholarly and policy literature, process-tracing was used to identify possible antecedent and intervening variables in the reintegration causal chain and their relationship to successful reintegration outcomes. Antecedent variables are factors that precede the independent variable in the causal chain and

⁸Dale 2008, Lydia 2009, McGrath 2009, Samuel 2009. Future references to field interview data will be footnoted while literature review data will be referenced in parentheses in the text.

⁹ Thakur 2008.

¹⁰ There is one exception to the Ugandan government’s non-targeted approach to education for former child soldiers. There is one school in northern Uganda, Laroo Body Primary School, which is devoted to educating children “who have failed to recover from trauma as a result of war” (Onan Richard 2009). In April 2009, there were approximately 250 children attending this school and the majority of these children were former child soldiers (Onan Richard 2009). However, given that the estimates of the number of former child soldiers in northern Uganda are between 25,000 (UNICEF 2006) and 44,000 (SWAY I 2006, p. 55, 59), the majority of former child soldiers who return to government schools are educated in the regular education system without supports (Onan Richard 2009).

influence the dependent variable (George & Bennett 2005). For example, in hypothesis 2, gender is an antecedent variable - it is suggested that gender may have differential impacts on reintegration outcomes. Because children are classified by gender from the time they are born, this variable precedes any other variables that may influence reintegration.

Intervening variables are factors that mediate the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. A process tracing analysis of the complex reintegration process seeks to identify potential factors in the causal chain that lead to outcome X (successful reintegration outcomes) and outcome Y (unsuccessful reintegration outcomes). One advantage of the process tracing method is that it offers strong procedures to identify omitted variables.

It is unclear *if* education assistance is necessary or sufficient to produce successful reintegration outcomes, and *how* education would contribute to reintegration. While process tracing could answer the *if* question in later stages of research, process tracing is more useful at this stage of preliminary research for answering the *how* question. While this case study cannot test whether or not education causes reintegration, it is useful for developing theories and refining concepts. George and Bennett (2005) note that “process tracing is an indispensable tool for...theory development” (p. 207). For this reason, it is an appropriate method for plausibility probes and heuristic case studies.

Sources of Data: Strengths and Limitations

Three sources of data were used for this exploratory case study of education and the reintegration of ex-combatant children: literature review data, field interview data, and

data from the *Surveys of War-Affected Youth*. The following sections will explain how these sources were used and assess the strengths and limitations of the data.

1. Literature Review

A survey of the literature on education and reintegration was conducted to identify research gaps. The strength of the literature review is that it includes both peer-reviewed literature and grey literature produced by donors, UN Agencies, and NGOs. The weakness of this literature is that many studies of child soldier reintegration were conducted in reception centres, which may have a higher concentration of children with reintegration difficulties. There is a small risk of systematic bias due to sampling error. To avoid systematic bias, triangulation of sources was used to verify findings.

2. Field Interviews

The second source of data was gathered from field interviews conducted in northern Uganda. From mid-March to mid-May 2009, interviews were conducted in Gulu and Kitgum districts investigating education, reintegration, targeting, and former child soldiers' experiences of stigmatization. Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader in the Acholi sub-region are the districts most affected by the war (SWAY I 2006, p. 6).¹¹ While researchers had limited access to areas outside Gulu town during the height of the conflict, the security situation has greatly improved since 2006 when the LRA moved its bases to Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic Congo and ceased carrying out attacks on northern Uganda (BBC 2006, Martell 2009).

¹¹ See also Thakur (2008). The Acholi sub-region, consisting of the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader is the area of northern Uganda traditionally inhabited by people of Acholi ethnicity who migrated from southern Sudan in the seventeenth century. This sub-region is also referred to as Acholiland. The Acholi speak Luo-Acholi, a Western Nilotic language.

In addition to the field interviews conducted in Uganda, interviews were conducted in Ottawa with CIDA's education specialist for East Africa and the executive director of Children / Youth as Peacebuilders – an international NGO with projects in Gulu. These interviews were carried out in November 2008 for an earlier research project in accordance with Carleton University Research Board's ethics guidelines. Interview respondents granted permission to use these interviews for this master's research project.

Forty-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with donor education specialists, directors and program officers from NGOs and international organizations, district education officials, teachers, counselors and two former child soldiers who are in their 20s and currently working with Children / Youth as Peacebuilders.¹² Two interviews were excluded: one interview was excluded because the respondent had difficulties conducting the interview in English and no translator was available; the other interview was excluded because the program officer revealed that he did not have experience working with former child soldiers in the area of reintegration or education. Of the included interviews, 2 interviews were conducted in Ottawa, 5 interviews were conducted in Kitgum, and the remaining 32 interviews were conducted in Gulu. While the imbalance in the number of interviews conducted in Gulu and Kitgum may make it difficult to draw conclusions about particular districts in northern Uganda, this case study does not aim to produce statistically significant results but to gather rich qualitative information about the reintegration of ex-combatant children in order to refine concepts and develop hypotheses for testing on other cases.

¹² See Appendix 2 for a complete list of interview participants.

Interview questions were derived from a single interview questionnaire; however, certain topics were explored in more detail with some participants.¹³ Questions were organized thematically and designed to explore the hypotheses developed from the literature review. Open-ended questions were asked about the relationship between education assistance and reintegration, the role of individuals, families, and communities, as well as reintegration interventions that impact ex-combatant children's return to civilian life. Questions were designed to gain information about ex-combatant boys and girls, as research indicates that girls often have a more difficult time reintegrating – especially girls who return with babies born of war-time rape (Carpenter 2007a, McKay & Mazurana 2004, Specht & Attree 2006).

Respondents were asked to give free and informed consent and their responses were tape-recorded.¹⁴ All participants included in the study were literate in English and signed written consent forms. For a list of interview participants and the dates and locations of these interviews, please see Appendix 2. All interviews were transcribed in May-June 2009.

Interview Sampling

Multiple-entry point snowball sampling was used to identify information-rich key informants on the topic of education and reintegration. “Key informants are people who are particularly knowledgeable about the inquiry setting and articulate about their knowledge – people whose insights can prove particularly useful in helping an observer understand what is happening and why” (Patton 2002, p. 321). These stakeholders

¹³ See Appendix 4 for the interview questionnaire.

¹⁴ See Appendix 5 for letter of information and consent form.

included donor education specialists, directors and program officers from NGOs and international organizations, district education officials, teachers, and counselors who work with ex-combatant children. Contacts at Children / Youth as Peacebuilders, World Vision, UNICEF, Awere Secondary School, Gulu Community Vocational School and all interview participants were asked to refer potential interview subjects of these types. While key informants may have an interest in education programs being supported, they are critical sources of information for understanding the process through which education influences reintegration. While they may be inclined to uncritically support the role of education in the reintegration process, interviewing these key informants was essential for understanding *how* education contributes to reintegration.

The snowball sampling technique is best suited to research on sensitive issues where members of the study population are difficult to locate (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981-1982; Babbie and Benaquisto 2002, p.166). While donor education specialists, directors and program officers from NGOs and international organizations, district education officials, teachers, and counselors are “high-visibility” individuals, they were asked to speak about child soldiers and reintegration – a sensitive subject – which may have made them reluctant to speak freely.

For ethical reasons, no former child soldiers under the age of 18 were interviewed. I wished to examine and refine the thesis hypotheses before interviewing children in future projects.¹⁵ The initial project design identified caregivers of child soldiers and other war-affected children as participants. However, they were excluded

¹⁵ See Appendix 1 for ethics approval.

from the study for two reasons. First, transportation problems made interviewing caregivers impractical. Many children who attend school in Gulu town live in reception centres or boarding schools while their caregivers live in camps and villages located as far as three hours away by car. Second, many caregivers do not speak English and the budget for translation was limited.

The snowball sampling technique used for this research project is a non-probability method of sampling that is most useful for exploratory research (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981-1982; Babbie and Benaquisto 2002, p.166). According to Patton (2002), “Purposive sampling involves studying information-rich cases in depth and detail to understand and illuminate important cases rather than generalizing from a sample to a population” (p.563). Key education stakeholders were interviewed to gather rich detail on *if* and *how* education contributes to reintegration for process tracing. The goal of process tracing is to discover information about education and reintegration and these education stakeholders are most intimately familiar with the delivery of education and reintegration interventions.

The findings from these purposively sampled interviews cannot be generalized to the wider population. However, as this case study was designed as a plausibility probe, the inability to generalize results to the wider population is not problematic (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981-1982, Babbie and Benaquisto 2002, p.166, George & Bennett 2005). As Tansey notes (2007), “non-probability sampling is particularly well-suited to the process tracing method, where the aim is not to generalize to a wider population from a smaller sample” (p. 770).

Strengths and Limitations of Interview Data

Field interviews were conducted to verify findings from the literature review. As Tansey (2007) notes,

One of the strongest advantages of... interviews is that researchers can interview first-hand participants of the processes they are investigating and obtain accounts from direct witnesses to the events in question. While documents and other sources may provide detailed accounts, there is often no substitute for talking directly with those involved and gaining insights from key participants (p. 767).

Another advantage of field interview data is that I was able to ask questions to gain rich information on targeted education assistance which was not discussed in the sources analyzed for the literature review. However, one disadvantage of field interview data is the possibility of motivated bias. As Tansey (2007) notes, “While in many circumstances interviews can compensate for the distortions that exist in written sources, it is also sometimes the case that interviewees misrepresent their own positions in ways that raise questions over the reliability of their statements” (p. 767). Key informants working for NGOs in the education field may be motivated to overstate the benefits of education for the reintegration of former child soldiers. Cooley and Ron (2002) assert that competition for donor resources has led some NGOs to prolong inappropriate aid projects. Although possible, motivated bias does not invalidate the results of the field interviews conducted for this thesis for two reasons. First, the interviews were not discussing specific education programs that these key informants were involved in – the interviews asked *if* and *how* education contributed to reintegration, and if education assistance specifically targeted for former child soldiers impacted reintegration. Second, interview responses were evaluated to assess if the position of the key informant unduly influenced the answers. If so, the interview was discarded.

3. The Surveys of War-Affected Youth

Published by researchers at NYU, Yale, and Tufts University, the *Surveys of War-Affected Youth* (*SWAY I* 2006, *SWAY II* 2008) offer an exciting new quantitative and qualitative data source on education, reintegration, livelihoods, psychosocial well-being, war violence, and abduction of youth in northern Uganda. The advantage of *SWAY* is that it is a mixed-methods population-based survey: the results can be generalized to the population of northern Uganda. *SWAY I* interviewed 750 young men and boys between September 2005 and March 2006 and *SWAY II* interviewed 619 young women and girls between October 2006 and August 2007 with the objective of enhancing targeting and delivery of services for conflict-affected youth in northern Uganda (*SWAY I* 2006, p. vii, *SWAY II* 2008, p.v).¹⁶

Households were randomly drawn from World Food Program camp distribution lists. These households were asked to create a “retrospective household roster” of all persons living in the household in 1996, the year of Museveni’s first election (*SWAY I*, 2006, p. v-vii). This retrospective sampling method was used to capture the experiences of youth who migrated, died, or were abducted by rebels in order to avoid bias in the data (*SWAY I*, 2006, p. v-vii, *SWAY I*, 2008, p. 4). The survey administrators tracked youth that migrated throughout the entire country with an 85% tracking success rate for males and a 70% tracking success rate for females (*SWAY I* 2006, p. iv, *SWAY II* 2008, p. v). Although the survey was conducted in the districts of Kitgum and Pader, the authors state that their results are relevant to the entire Acholi sub-region of northern Uganda – including Gulu district (*SWAY I* 2006, p. iv). Survey respondents ranged in age from 14-

¹⁶ “Gender comparisons [between the two surveys] must be made with caution since male and female youth were interviewed in different years” (*SWAY I* 2006, 13).

35, the traditional Acholi definition of youth (*SWAY I* 2006, p. 4, *SWAY II*, 2008, p.4).¹⁷ Although this paper focuses on the reintegration of former child soldiers, the surveys interview formerly abducted youth and war-affected youth. As there is no existing population-based survey administered exclusively to children, the *Surveys of War-Affected Youth* are used to triangulate qualitative interview findings.

While *SWAY I* and *II* offer an important new quantitative and qualitative data source based on rigorous research, the survey reports - which analyzed the data - have a number of limitations. First, these reports discuss factors that contribute to reintegration, but they do not critically examine the concept of reintegration - like most other studies on this topic. Second, as a population-based survey, *SWAY* downplays the reintegration difficulties of former child soldiers, as children with unsuccessful reintegration outcomes are reported as a minority of the total population of youth in northern Uganda (*SWAY I* 2006, p. 11-12, 66; *SWAY II* 2008 p. ix, 49, 66, 71-72). However, even a small minority of unsuccessfully reintegrated former child soldiers could destabilize the relative peace and security that northern Uganda currently enjoys while the LRA is actively operating outside Uganda's territory.

The limitations of *SWAY*, the interview data, and the literature review do not negate the value of the data gathered from these sources for process tracing. Even the best quality data has limitations. For this reason, triangulation was used to reduce the risk of systematic bias and distortion.

Triangulation

Triangulation of literature review, field interview, and *SWAY* data was used to test

¹⁷ *SWAY I* interviews male youth ages 14-30. *SWAY II* interviews female youth ages 14-35. However, data is disaggregated into females ages 14-30 to facilitate comparison with *SWAY I* (*SWAY II*, 2008, p.4).

for consistency and to increase the accuracy of findings (Patton 2002, p. 93). Tansey (2007) defines triangulation as the “cross-checking” of collected data “through multiple sources to increase the findings robustness” (p.766). According to Patton (2002), “Studies that only use one method are more vulnerable to errors in that particular method than studies that use multiple methods in which different types of data provide cross-data validity checks” (p. 247). Two types of triangulation were used in this thesis: 1) data triangulation (3 sources) and 2) methodological triangulation (qualitative and quantitative data) (Patton 2002, p. 247). Inconsistencies in the findings do not mean that the findings are erroneous. As Patton (2002) notes, “Areas of convergence increase confidence in findings. Areas of divergence open windows to better understanding the multifaceted complex nature of a phenomenon” (p.559). The convergence and divergence of the sources will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Coding and Data Analysis

In the first phase of coding, qualitative and quantitative interview data from the literature review, field interviews, and *SWAY* was organized according to the following codes: 1) Education; 2) Reintegration; 3) Targeting. However, data analysis and process tracing revealed that other factors contribute to reintegration outcomes. The second phase of coding was much more inductive. The following coding categories emerged from the data: 1) Education – primary, secondary, vocational and lifeskills; 2) Education for former child soldiers; 3) Targeting of assistance; 4) Political Context ; 5) Social Context ; 6) Economic Context ; 7) Reintegration into Families and Communities: Acceptance and Social Stigma; 8) Gender; 9) War-Affected Children.¹⁸ Cross-examining literature

¹⁸ See Appendix 3: Summary of Interview Findings.

review, field interview, and *SWAY* data for patterns, similarities and differences improved the credibility of overall findings.

From Plausibility Probe to Heuristic Case Study: Deductive & Inductive Phases

According to Babbie and Benaquisto (2002), “In actual practice, theory and research interact through a never ending alternation of deduction and induction” (p. 49). This study began as a plausibility probe in the initial deductive phase of the research. Four hypotheses were developed based on a literature review and the research objective was to establish whether these relatively untested hypotheses merited further testing in other cases. However, the project evolved into a heuristic case study.

“Heuristic case studies inductively identify new variables, hypotheses, causal mechanisms, and causal paths” (George & Bennett 2005, p. 75). During the first round of coding, it was clear that other variables intervened in the process from education to reintegration. These variables had not yet been identified or examined by the literature on education influencing reintegration. This was the turning point that led to the second, more inductive phase of the research. The objective of this second phase was broader – to discover under what conditions outcome X (successful reintegration) occurs and under what conditions outcome Y (unsuccessful reintegration) occurs.

Generalizability

While it is difficult to draw conclusions about the wider universe of cases from this single heuristic case, this exploratory research provides insight into the reintegration process that is important for refining concepts and forming arguments and hypotheses for exploration in other cases. The results of this study are important for theory development

and creating a typology of cases that will be useful for hypothesis testing in future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In order to explore the research questions that have been put forward regarding the relationship between education and the reintegration of former child soldiers, it was necessary to survey existing scholarly and grey literature on the subject to develop hypotheses. This literature review examines findings from academic and policy research on education and the reintegration of former child soldiers. The survey of the literature scrutinizes existing theories, evaluates methodological strengths and weaknesses, and identifies gaps that must be addressed in future research.

There is a striking neglect of the roles and needs of children in the academic literature on peace-building (McEvoy-Levy 2006, p.2). While there is an emerging body of work on child soldiers and peace-building, most of this work is grey literature produced by NGOs, international organizations, and think tanks that offers anecdotal evidence and commonsense policy prescriptions. The bulk of existing scholarly literature on child soldiers comes from the field of psychology;¹ very little has been published on the subject in the field of international relations. A search conducted in September 2009 of the top 20 journals in International Relations listed by the Journal Citation Reports index found only one article on child soldiers.² While the reintegration of ex-combatant children is critical to breaking the cycle of armed conflict and ensuring sustainable peace

¹ The majority of studies on child soldiers investigate rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders among these children (Bayer et al 2007, Derluyn et al 2004, Kohrt et al. 2008, Santacruz & Arana 2002). These studies are methodologically rigorous and published in reputable journals such as the *Lancet* and the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. However, Boyden and De Berry (2004), Machel (1996), Kostelny (2006) and others have critiqued the trauma model.

² "No Place to Hide: Refugees, Displaced Persons and the Recruitment of Child Soldiers" by Vera Achvarina and Simon Reich appeared in *International Security* in 2006.

in many war-affected countries, scholars working in the area of international relations have devoted little attention to their reintegration.

Former Child Soldiers: The Scope of the Problem

Donors, international organizations, and NGOs report that tens of thousands of children are recruited, forcibly conscripted, and abducted by governments and non-state groups to be used as direct participants in war (Brett & McCallin 1998, CSUCS 2001, UNICEF 2009a, UNICEF 2009d). UNICEF defines a child soldier as:

any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms (UNICEF 2009d).

Early research on child soldiers either failed to document the existence of girls in fighting forces or emphasized girls' roles as "camp followers" and sexual slaves. However, McKay and Mazurana's landmark study (2004) which aimed to investigate the role of girls in front-line combat in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Mozambique exposed the implicit gender-bias of previous research. Global estimates on the number of girls in fighting forces range from 10-40% of child soldiers (Fox 2004, p. 465, Francis 2007, p. 314, McKay 2005, McKay & Mazurana 2004, p.15).

The recruitment and use of children in fighting forces is often hailed as a "new" and "alarming trend" (Boothby, Crawford & Halperin 2006, p. 2, Machel 1996). Achvarina and Reich (2006) allege that there are "rapidly increasing numbers of child soldiers across the globe" (p. 127). Singer (2001/2002) states that in the "past,"

²⁰ "No Place to Hide: Refugees, Displaced Persons and the Recruitment of Child Soldiers" by Vera Achvarina and Simon Reich appeared in *International Security* in 2006.

“[w]arfare has been almost exclusively an adult domain” (p. 41). While these claims are inadequately substantiated, they are widely cited by academics and practitioners.²¹

According to Singer, two factors have created a demand for child combatants, leading to an alleged increase in numbers: 1) the proliferation of small arms and light weapons that children can easily operate, and 2) weak and unpopular organizations fighting civil wars that require a low-cost supply of recruits (p. 44).²² Children are sought for combat as they are believed to be easily intimidated and manipulated by commanders, more obedient than adults, less fearful of dangerous missions, and less likely to demand pay or promised rewards (Geske & Ensalaco 2005, p. 112-113; HRW 2008; Wessells & Jonah 2006, p. 31-32).

For those children who are not abducted or forcibly recruited, key motivations are reported to be poverty, exclusion, difficult family circumstances, desire for revenge, and lack of employment opportunities and education. Displaced children, separated children, and orphans are identified as particularly vulnerable (Achvarina & Reich 2006, Brett & Specht 2004, Cohn 1994; CSUCS 2009, Dumas & de Cock 2003, HRW 2008, Peters & Richards 1998, Singer 2001/2002, UNICEF 2009a, UNICEF 2009d). Girls join for the same reasons as boys, but they also take up arms to escape sexual violence in the home, flee forced marriages, and to seek revenge against men who have raped them (Brett &

²¹ For an analysis of the validity and reliability of the existing data on child soldiers, see Introduction, footnote 2.

²² There are three major problems with Singer’s theory of child soldier recruitment. First, he does not test his hypotheses. Second, the causes of child soldiering he proposes are over-determined (globalization, war, disease, poverty, orphan rates, small arms and light weapons). Third, he fails to explain the variation in child soldiering across conflict cases.

Specht 2004, p. 13, McCallin 1998, p. 6, Specht & Attree 2006, p. 220; Wessells 2005, p. 364).²³

The Challenges of Reintegrating Former Child Soldiers: Individual Factors

Boys and girls associated with fighting forces suffer, witness, and perpetrate physical, psychological, emotional and sexual violence. They are instructed to commit atrocities on and off the battlefield. Children are forced by their commanders to injure, rape, and kill relatives, friends, and community members. By carrying out these violent acts, child soldiers sever their civilian ties; for this reason they may experience difficulties reintegrating into their communities (CSUCS 2009, HRW 2008, Machel 1996, Plan International 2008, UNICEF 2009a, UNICEF 2009d).

As a consequence, ex-combatant children have complex medical, psychological, emotional, social, economic, and educational needs that must be met in order to successfully reintegrate (Brett & Specht 2004, CSUCS 2009, HRW 2008, Machel 1996, McKay & Mazurana 2004, UNICEF 2009a, UNICEF 2009d). Children return from the bush with injuries that may require immediate medical attention and disabilities that may prevent them from attending school (Machel 1996). They may find it difficult to adjust to the norms and culture of civilian society after leaving armed groups which demanded that they perpetrate violence and blindly obey authorities (CSUCS 2009, Machel 1996, HRW 2008). Children may be haunted by traumatic memories of abduction, beatings, rape, and

²³ While the literature on child soldier recruitment makes an important contribution by outlining causal mechanisms, these hypotheses must be refined and subjected to rigorous testing. Of this body of research, only Achvarina and Reich's 2006 study is methodologically rigorous. The authors find no relationship between poverty rates and child soldiering or orphan rates and child soldiering. They do, however, find robust support for their third hypothesis, that access to refugees and internally displaced persons explains variations in levels of child soldier recruitment.

killing and they may be tormented by guilt and shame for their actions (CSUCS 2009, HRW 2008, Machel 1996). Former child soldiers may believe that they are spiritually polluted because they have been exposed to violence and death (Baines 2007, Betancourt et. al 2008, Boothby, Crawford and Halperin 2006, Honwana 2006).

The Challenges of Reintegrating Former Child Soldiers into Families and Communities: Stigma or Acceptance?

Ex-combatant children who return home may be stigmatized, tortured, or killed by family and community members who desire revenge (CSUCS 2009, HRW 2008, Kohrt et. al 2008, McKay & Mazurana 2004, Specht & Attree 2006, Wessells & Jonah 2006). As Betancourt et. al (2010) note, “[u]pon returning to their communities, former child soldiers may face significant stigma due to community perceptions that these youth are immoral or dangerous” (p.18). The authors observe that “[s]tigma exists when an individual is labeled, negatively stereotyped, categorized as separate, and experiences discrimination by someone who is in a position of relative power” (Betancourt et al. 2010, p.18, see also Link & Phelan 2001, 2006). Betancourt et. al (2010) conducted a study of 260 male and female child soldiers associated with the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone in order to explore the role of stigma in the relationship between psychosocial adjustment and community reintegration. The authors report the following findings:

Discrimination was inversely associated with family and community acceptance. Additionally, higher levels of family acceptance were associated with adaptive attitudes and behaviors...[P]ost-conflict-experiences of discrimination largely explained the relationship between past involvement in wounding / killing others and subsequent increases in hostility. Stigma similarly mediated the relationship between surviving rape and depression. However, surviving rape continued to demonstrate independent effects on increases in anxiety, hostility, and adaptive/prosocial behaviors after adjusting for other variables. These

findings point to the complexity of psychosocial adjustment and community reintegration in these youth... (Betancourt et al, 2010, p.17).

Betancourt et al.'s (2010) study demonstrates that family and community acceptance is associated with successful reintegration outcomes while discrimination is associated with unsuccessful reintegration outcomes. Child soldiers who have harmed loved ones, perpetrated violence against community members or experienced rape are more likely to experience stigma when they return home.

According to Machel (1996) and Verhey (2001), family reunification is a key factor in the successful reintegration of ex-combatant children. However, returning to the family unit is not always possible for these children. Family members may have been killed or displaced during the conflict. Those who survived may be unwilling or unable to accept another mouth to feed (Wessells 2005, Wessells 2006, Wessells & Jonah 2006). Children who have been forced to rape, wound, and kill family members may find it impossible to return home (Wessells 2005, Verhey 2001). Family members may refuse to allow former child combatants to live with them for fear that rebels will return to collect them, putting the entire family at risk of attack (Verhey 2001, p. 13). Others may fear that returning child soldiers will invoke evil spirits that bring misfortune and disease (Honwana 2006, Wessells 2000). Despite these findings, Boothby, Crawford, and Halperin's longitudinal study of 39 child soldiers in Mozambique suggests that parents are more likely to welcome their children back than reject them (2006, p. 6). However, it is unclear whether the majority of ex-combatant children return to their families in other conflict-affected regions.

According to Boothby, Crawford & Halperin (2006), McCallin (1998), and Verhey (2001), communities also play a critical role in the reintegration process, but are not always willing to receive former child soldiers. Dumas and de Cock (2003) found that 80% of parents interviewed in Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda believed that ex-combatant children are a danger to the population (p. ix). Betancourt et. al (2010) and others have demonstrated that returning former child soldiers face stigmatization from community members who fear them and seek revenge; this social stigma prevents child soldiers from reintegrating (Betancourt et. al 2010, CSUCS 2009, Mazurana & McKay 2004, Specht & Attree 2006, Wessells & Jonah 2006). However, no scholarly studies have been published to date that investigate the incidence of stigmatization or the prevalence rates of successful reintegration among former child soldier populations.

Reintegration Challenges for Ex-Combatant Girls

Girls are reported to find it especially difficult to reintegrate into their families. Girls who have been raped may be stigmatized as “promiscuous” or “defiled” and considered unmarriageable - especially if they return to their families with children fathered by “rebels” (Betancourt et. al 2010, p. 18, Kostelny 2006, p. 24, McKay 2005, p. 338, McKay and Mazurana 2004, p.447, Thompson 1999, p. 201, Wessells 2000, p. 413). These babies born of wartime rape face a high risk of rejection by their families, communities, and even their mothers (Carpenter 2007a, McKay 2005). Girls who are rejected by their families may have little choice but to reenlist or resort to crime, sex work, and relationships with abusive men for survival (Specht & Attree 2006, p. 222, Thompson 1999, p. 201). For girls who are accepted by their families, reintegration may

not be advisable: the literature on the recruitment of girls shows that many join fighting forces to escape sexual violence and domestic slavery in their homes (Specht & Attree 2006, p. 220-224, Wessells 2005, p. 364).

Reintegration Interventions: Fostering Successful Outcomes?

While disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating children is urgent from a security perspective, it is also a legal obligation. The CRC (1989) and its Optional Protocol (2000) prohibit under-age recruitment and call on states to reintegrate children. Under international law, *states* have a responsibility to “support measures to promote the physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of armed conflicts” (Snyder 2001, UN 1989, UNDPKO 2006, p. 22); however, in practice this burden has fallen to NGOs that have been subcontracted by international organizations and bilateral aid agencies. Whether DDR programs are implemented by state governments or by UN peacekeepers, reintegration activities are largely carried out by NGOs (Klem et al. 2008, p. 27, Specker 2008, p. vii).

Although the reintegration phase is the most crucial part of the DDR process for creating sustainable peace (UNDPKO 2006), reintegration interventions are both under-funded and under-researched: reintegration “is not strictly a ‘military’ activity *per se* [which] accounts for its relative neglect...[it is] left to a changing roster of international actors to pull the funding together” (Spear 2006, p. 68). While reintegration interventions for children are a priority for NGOs in conflict-affected countries, little research has been conducted on these interventions to determine whether they improve reintegration

outcomes (Annan, Brier, Aryemo 2009, p. 638).²⁴ NGOs may engage in community sensitization activities to prepare communities to receive ex-combatant children and youth (Betancourt et. al 2008, Boothby, Crawford & Halperin 2006, *Paris Principles and Guidelines* 2007, UNDPKO 2006).²⁵ NGOs also typically provide reintegration interventions such as access to interim care centres, medical care (Boothby, Crawford, and Halperin 2006, Hill & Langholtz 2003, Petty & Jareg 1998), family tracing and reunification (Boothby, Crawford & Halperin 2006), psycho-social support (Verhey 2001),²⁶ traditional healing rituals (Baines 2007, Boothby, Crawford & Halperin 2006, Thompson 1999), economic and livelihood assistance (Wessells 2006), and education.

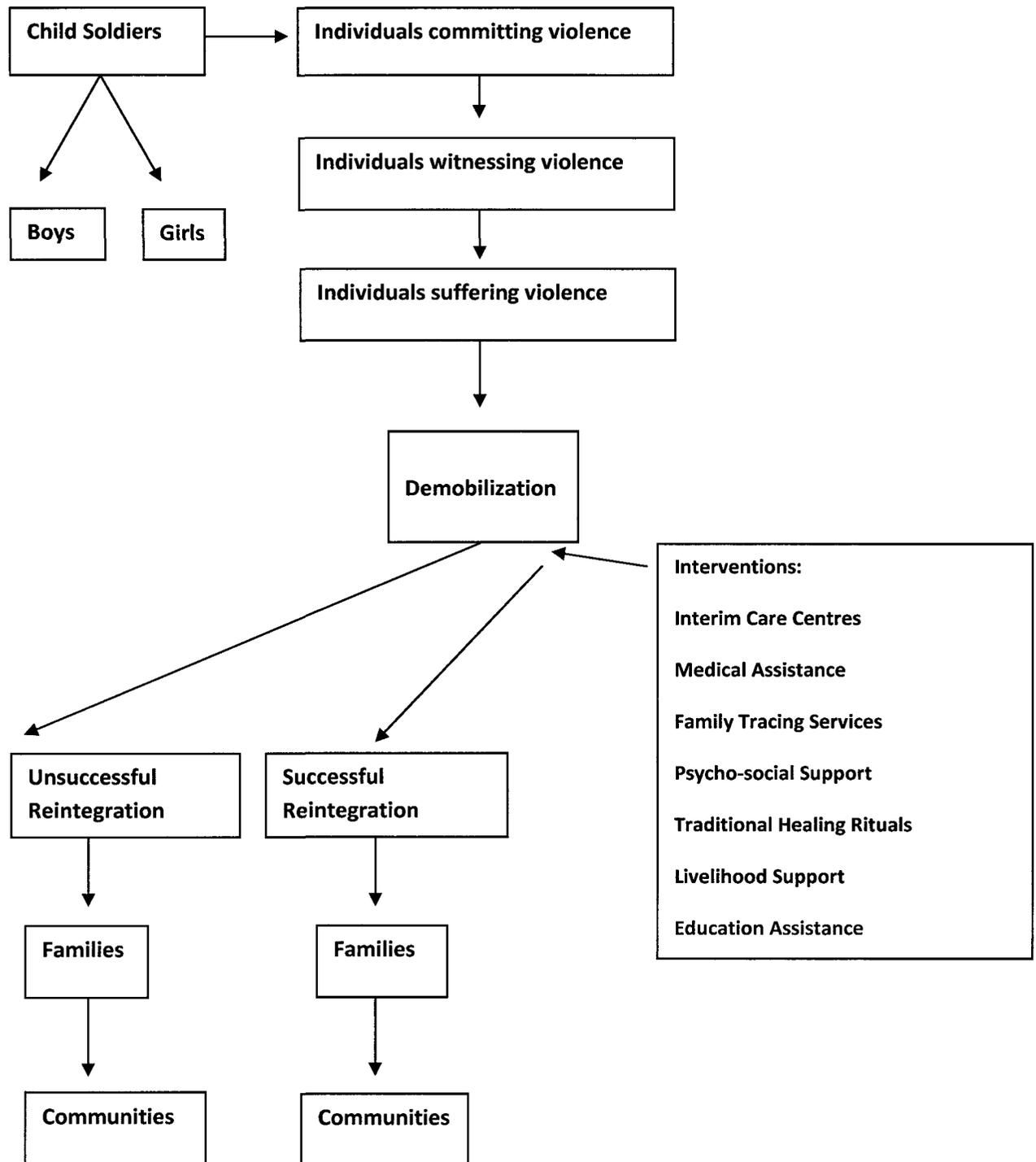
Figure 5 summarizes the literature review findings on the challenges of reintegrating former child soldiers. According to the literature review, gender influences reintegration outcomes. Ex-combatant girls may have more difficulty reintegrating into their families and communities. Individual factors, such as exposure to violence, may also affect the reintegration outcomes of former child soldiers. Figure 5 also indicates that reintegration interventions, such as education assistance, provided to demobilized former child soldiers may contribute to successful reintegration outcomes.

²⁴ Humphreys and Weinstein (2007) question the utility of DDR programs as a peacebuilding tool altogether. In their study of 1000 ex-combatants in Sierra Leone, the authors compare the reintegration success of ex-combatants who did and did not participate in demobilization and reintegration programs; they find “little evidence at the micro level that internationally funded programs facilitate demobilization and reintegration” (p. 531). However, the authors do not investigate reintegration interventions for children.

²⁵ Many children who were recruited, forcibly conscripted, or kidnapped and used in fighting forces return to their communities as youth. Many of these youth participate in NGO programming designed for ex-combatant children; as they are over the age of 18, states are not legally obligated to reintegrate them (UNDPKO 2006).

²⁶ The psycho-social approach to healing entails a wide range of activities for children and youth such as group counselling, art projects, drama, story-telling, music and dance (Verhey 2001).

Figure 5: The Challenges of Reintegrating Former Child Soldiers



Education for Reintegration

In 1996, Graca Machel wrote a groundbreaking report for the United Nations on the impact of armed conflict on children that identified education as a critical component of successful reintegration programs for child soldiers.

54. Education and especially the completion of primary schooling, must be a high priority. For a former child soldier, education is more than a route to employment. It also helps to normalize life and to develop an identity separate from that of the soldier...

56. For older children especially, effective education will require strong components of training in lifeskills and vocational opportunities. Preparing older children to find employment will not only help them survive, but may also facilitate their acceptance at home and provide them with a sense of meaning and identity (Machel 1996, p. 14-15).

According to Machel, education promotes economic reintegration by providing ex-combatant children with the knowledge and skills to obtain employment without resorting to soldiering in the future; education also aids psychosocial reintegration by restoring a sense of normalcy, fostering a civilian identity, and encouraging family and community acceptance. A wealth of policy, NGO, and academic literature recommends education to facilitate the reintegration of former child soldiers (Betancourt 2008 et al., CIDA 2000, CSUCS 2009, Machel 1996, *Paris Principles* 2007, UNDPKO 2006, UN OSRSG / CAAC 2009, Verhey 2001).

Types of Education Recommended to Foster Reintegration

The Machel Report (1996) recommends a variety of types of education for former child soldiers, including primary and secondary schooling, vocational training, lifeskills classes, and accelerated learning programs. Hill and Langholtz (2003), Verhey (2001), and Wessells (2006) agree with Machel (1996) that accelerated learning programs should

be created for ex-combatant children, as many do not return to school because they are embarrassed to attend classes with much younger children.

Machel (1996) also advocates for the introduction of peace education into schools in order to promote unity and respect for human rights, as well as to develop negotiation, problem solving, critical thinking, and communication skills. However, Cairns (1996), Sommers (2002), and Bush and Saltarelli (2000) cast doubt on the value of peace education. Cairns (1996) asserts that “[a]t present there appears to be virtually no empirical evidence to substantiate the claim that peace education is at all effective” (p.184). The author argues that peace education addresses inter-personal conflict rather than macro-level social and political conflicts. Sommers (2002) argues that peace education programs created by educators in developed countries may be culturally inappropriate to conflict-affected developing countries. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) note that peace education programs are not delivered in a vacuum; they assert that these programs cannot be expected to demilitarize the minds of children who live in a militarized environment. None of these studies investigate how peace education or other types of education programs and curricula impact reintegration outcomes for former child soldiers.

The Positive and Negative Faces of Education for Ex-Combatant Children

The literature on war-affected children suggests that education improves the mental health of children dealing with the trauma and stress of war (Barenbaum, Ruchkin, & Schwab-Stone 2004). Nicolai & Tripplehorn (2003) and Sommers (2002) report that school helps build self-esteem, encourages goal-setting, and inspires hope for the future (INEE 2008, Nicolai & Tripplehorn 2003, Sommers 2002). In addition,

Buckland (2005) argues that education gives children the skills to improve their access to economic opportunities in the future. While these studies suggest that education promotes positive outcomes for war-affected children, they do not investigate whether education improves the reintegration of ex-combatant children.

The idea that education universally leads to positive outcomes for children is rarely challenged. However, in *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict* (2000), Bush and Saltarelli contest this notion by demonstrating the constructive and *destructive* impacts of schooling:

Education is often used as a panacea for a broad spectrum of social ills, from racism to misogyny. While the impact of such initiatives has been mixed, their starting premise is the same: that formal education can shape the understandings, attitudes, and ultimately, the behavior of individuals. If it is true that education can have a socially constructive impact on intergroup relations, then it is equally evident that it can have a socially destructive impact. Because more energy tends to be expended on the examination of the positive face, rather than the negative face of education, it is useful to begin by considering some of the ways in which education has exacerbated intergroup hostility under conditions of ethnic tension (p. 9).

Bush and Saltarelli's incisive explanation of the positive and negative faces of education in conflict leads us to question whether education inevitably produces positive reintegration outcomes.

In order to achieve sustainable reintegration, ex-combatant children must not be re-recruited, forcibly conscripted, or abducted a second time. UN Security Resolution 1539 (2004) states that education is a key factor in counteracting the recruitment and re-recruitment of children. The Security Council "calls upon States and the United Nations system to recognize the important role of education in conflict areas in *halting and preventing recruitment and re-recruitment of children* contrary to the obligations of

parties to the conflict” (articles 8 & 9, emphasis mine). However, no studies published to date have investigated the claim that education decreases the likelihood of re-recruitment.

In their study of 50 ex-combatants in rehabilitation centres in Sierra Leone, Peters and Richards (1998) find that the “loss of education [is] a major factor in the decision to fight” (p. 4-5). However, it is unclear whether returning to education safeguards ex-combatant children from returning to soldiering. In fact, there appears to be some evidence to the contrary. Specht (2007) suggests “that schools may be used to encourage students to join the ‘armed struggle’ whether in the name of liberation, religion, ethnicity or other causes...The schooling system...may thus in itself become a cause of conflict or fertile breeding ground of resistance” (p. 196-197). While Specht offers an untested hypothesis, case studies of school systems in Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Turkey, and Northern Ireland could be used to illustrate this point. Schools may not only be sites of voluntary recruitment and re-recruitment, they may also be sites of forcible conscription or kidnapping. As Bush and Saltarelli (2000) note, “[i]n extreme, and not uncommon cases of violent conflict, schools have been used as sites for press-ganging child soldiers...” (p. 10). Scholarly research must be conducted to investigate the relationship between education, recruitment, re-recruitment, and reintegration outcomes.

Only one scholarly study critically examines the impact of education programs on reintegration: Betancourt et al.’s 2008 study “High Hopes, Grim Reality: Reintegration and the Education for Former Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone.” This article examines the role of education in the reintegration of former child soldiers and investigates the barriers to accessing educational opportunities. It presents findings from a large mixed methods

study on reintegration conducted by the first author in partnership with the International Rescue Committee in three waves of data collection over the period of 2002-2008.²⁷

Betancourt et al's (2008) study suggests that education supports positive reintegration outcomes. The authors observe that "one of the strongest areas of agreement among young people and caregivers was the importance of education in reintegration and psychosocial adjustment of former child soldiers" (p. 575). Communities were more likely to welcome ex-combatant children who were participating in productive activities such as schooling (p. 575). School provided opportunities for former child soldiers to socialize with peers and develop new friendships outside armed groups (p. 575-576). However, the transition from the battlefield to the playground was not always easy: the authors found that "schools...were a source of stress for young people encountering stigma" and that "young people frequently mentioned stigma as a problem upon their return" (p. 576). In some cases, teachers played an instrumental role in helping former child soldiers deal with stigma (p. 576).

Structural Barriers to Accessing Quality Education for Ex-Combatant Boys and Girls

Although the overwhelming majority of former child soldiers interviewed in Sierra Leone wished to pursue their studies, they faced a number of structural barriers (Betancourt et. al 2008, p. 576). The high cost of schooling, crowded classrooms, shortage of basic materials, and lack of trained, motivated teachers kept many ex-

²⁷ In the first wave of the study, purposive sampling was used to select 260 former RUF youth for the survey. Results were compared to a randomly selected sample of 135 youth; in the second wave, follow-up interviews were conducted with 31 key informant former child soldiers and their respective caregivers. In the third wave 19 focus groups were conducted with caregivers and community members. The study is exceptionally rigorous in its methodology.

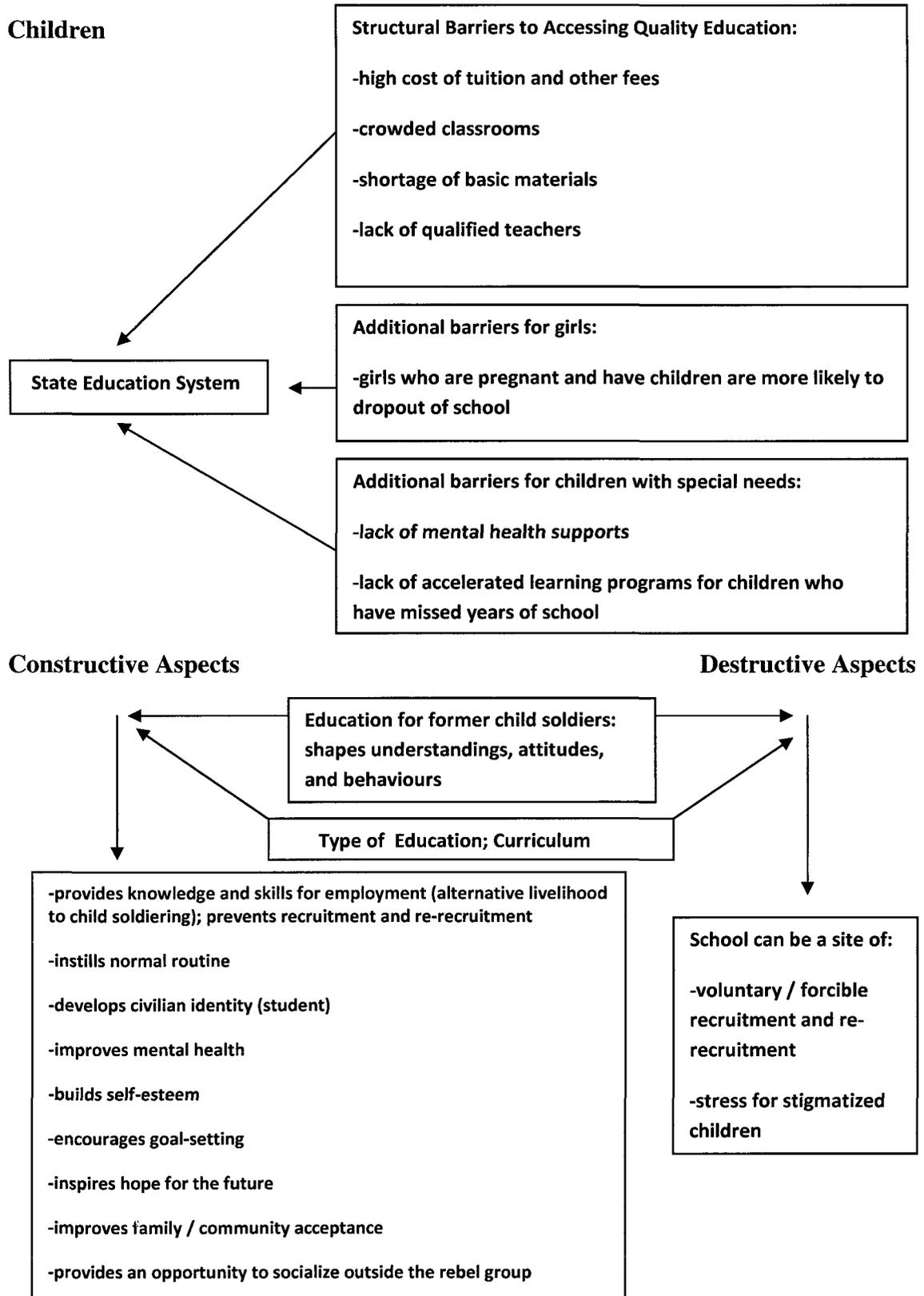
combatant children from returning to school (p. 566-577). Girl soldiers who wished to return to school faced additional barriers to obtaining an education (p. 588). Pregnant girls and girls who had children were likely to drop out of school (p. 578). The authors also found that ex-combatant children suffered from mental health problems that made it difficult for them to concentrate in the classroom (p. 579). Betancourt et. al (2008) recommend that psychosocial support services be made available in the school to promote educational progress and reintegration (p. 581). In addition, the authors call on donors to make education a funding priority, to create accelerated education programs to address the gaps in schooling, and to tackle the barriers to access facing all war-affected youth - whether they participated in armed conflict or not (p. 583).

Betancourt et al's work on Sierra Leone (2008) is the only rigorous study to examine the relationship between education and the reintegration of ex-combatant children. To begin to address this gap in the literature, this thesis will investigate the following hypotheses. H1: Education supports the reintegration of former child soldiers. H2: While ex-combatant girls are more likely to experience stigma and difficulty reintegrating than ex-combatant boys, education supports the reintegration of both girls and boys. In order to explore these hypotheses, this paper will consider both the "positive and negative faces of education" for ex-combatant children in northern Uganda.

Figure 6 summarizes the literature review findings on these constructive and destructive aspects of education for ex-combatant children. The diagram illustrates that structural barriers may prevent former child soldiers, especially girls and those with special needs, from accessing quality education in the state education system. The type of education program and curriculum may affect ex-combatant children's development in

positive or negative ways. These factors, which are identified in the literature review on education and conflict, are considered in the investigation of hypotheses 1 and 2.

Figure 6: Constructive and Destructive Aspects of Education for Ex-Combatant Children



Targeting Education Assistance for Sustainable Reintegration

NGOs are largely responsible for delivering targeted and non-targeted reintegration interventions, including education assistance for children in conflict-affected states (Klem et al. 2008, p. 27; Specker 2008, p. vii;). Targeting is a term used by policymakers to refer to allocating resources to individuals and groups based on “specific criteria, needs, and opportunities” to achieve maximum impact (Knight & Özerdem 2004, p. 507-508). The objective of targeting is to solve a problem more quickly and efficiently. By the late 1990s, international NGOs working on issues related to children and armed conflict had focused the global agenda on a subset of issues affecting child soldiers and resources were channeled into disarmament, demobilization and reintegration interventions targeted specifically for this group (Bragg 2006, p. 15-16, Carpenter 2007b, Heckel 2005, *SWAY I*, p. iii, 62).

Today, child soldiering has become the most prominent issue on a laundry list decried by a transnational network of activists and organizations working on the issue domain of children and armed conflict. However, the network around children and armed conflict (CaAC) does not lobby for all categories of children affected by war. Until very recently the particular needs of girls and HIV/AIDS orphans were invisible on this agenda, and issues still absent from the laundry list include children born as a result of wartime rape... (Carpenter 2007 b, p. 643).

While refugees and internally displaced children, sexually exploited children, children affected by gender-based violence and other war-affected children have complex medical, psychological, emotional, social, economic, and educational needs, child soldiers benefit from a disproportionate share of international assistance. But, what are the consequences of targeting education interventions to former child soldiers in communities where other war-affected children face barriers to accessing education?

How do community members react to special treatment for children who took up arms?

Does an inclusive model of non-targeted assistance promote reintegration in practice?

In the late 1990s, policy documents on DDR for adult ex-combatants began recommending a shift away from targeted reintegration interventions to a model of reintegration that is variously termed “inclusive,” “enlarged,” “community-based” and “non-targeted.” According to an ILO policy paper entitled “Enlargement: A challenge for social and economic reintegration: Targeting ex-combatants or all war-affected people?”:

With the large number of armed conflicts in the world today, reintegration of the many conflict-affected groups has been the focus of a number of local and international efforts as an integral part of the peace-building process. There has tended to be a bias in favour of ex-combatants in these efforts, owing to the threats they could pose in terms of a resumption of fighting. Increasingly, a number of local and international development agencies have been advocating enlarging reintegration projects and programmes for ex-combatants to also include and benefit other conflict-affected groups (Specht & van Empel 1998, p. i).

The evidence base for this shift in reintegration policy is unclear; it is also unclear whether this reintegration model is being implemented in practice. Specht & van Empel (1998) investigate the arguments for and against enlarging the group of reintegration intervention beneficiaries to include all war-affected people: “It is recognized that it is in some cases appropriate to target ex-combatants as a separate group in the emergency phase. However, this approach can also stigmatize and hamper a smooth reintegration of this group into civil society” (p.12-13). Specht and van Empel’s argument is supported by a study conducted by Jennings (2007) with adult ex-combatants in Liberia. Jennings (2007) found that targeting reintegration assistance exclusively to ex-combatant adults hindered reintegration: “[i]n segregating and creating a market for ex-combatants, [a

DDR] programme may cement the division between ex-combatants and civil society, undermining its own rationale” (p. 211). Similarly, targeting reintegration assistance specifically to ex-combatant children may entrench militarized identities and isolate them from other children, interfering with the reintegration process.

Policy documents on DDR for ex-combatant children also recommend a shift from targeted reintegration interventions to non-targeted assistance. Save the Children (2004) indicates that “[t]argeted support to [child soldiers] only is likely to cause resentment within the affected communities and have a negative impact on reintegration” (p. 43). Likewise, CIDA’s *Support to Former Child Soldiers: Programming and Proposal Evaluation Guide* (2005) advises that “[p]erceptions, well-founded or not, that the reintegrating CS [child soldier] is privileged creates strong jealousy, resentment, and rejection among the peer groups” (p. 12). Moreover, Specht (2007) argues that targeting resources specifically to former child soldiers gives children the message that “violence pays” (p. 199).

The UNDPKO *Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards* (2006) and the *Paris Principles and Guidelines* (2007) for improving disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs for children associated with armed groups draw attention to the dangers of targeting education assistance exclusively to former child soldiers and recommend an alternative “inclusive approach to reintegration.”

7.33 Assistance at the release or reintegration stages should aim to enable children leaving an armed force or armed group to assume a place within their community and standard of living comparable to that of other children of the same age. Circumstances vary and it should not be assumed that all children who have been

associated with an armed force or armed group require direct material assistance in order to reintegrate. While material assistance and particular attention may well be necessary, for instance, for children with disabilities or girl mothers, *inappropriate assistance can impede reintegration, particularly if it's perceived to be rewarding children who have committed acts harmful to their community.* Benefits in terms of services should be structured and provided in a manner that does not either stigmatize or inappropriately privilege children or place them at risk (p. 31-32, emphasis mine; see also UNDPKO 2006).

The *Principles and Guidelines* draw attention to the importance of equity and community context in the reintegration process. However, it is unclear whether they have been implemented in practice. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children in Armed Conflict (2009) reports that “[i]n a recent survey, 67 per cent of donors stated that they were reluctant to support such programmes [recommended by the *Paris Principles and Guidelines*] that rest on the development of the community” (UN OSRSG/CAAC 2009).

There are no studies that focus specifically on the targeting of reintegration interventions to child soldiers. In order to begin to address this gap in the literature, this thesis will explore two competing hypotheses: H3: Targeted education assistance supports the reintegration of former child soldiers and H4: Targeted education assistance increases stigma and inhibits the reintegration of former child soldiers.

While there are no studies that examine the impact of targeted and non-targeted education assistance on the reintegration of ex-combatant children, a number of studies on related topics provide evidence that education assistance targeted specifically to child soldiers has a negative effect on their reintegration. A World Bank study of reintegration programs in the Democratic Republic of Congo found that “some were upset that the building [a transit care centre for child soldiers] was not used as a school to benefit the

community” (Verhey 2003, p. 41). A life outcome study of child soldiers in Mozambique reported that educational stipends for former child soldiers “did not lead to the expected outcome and caused tension in the former child soldiers’ families as it singled-out one sibling over another” (Boothby, Crawford & Halperin 2006, p. 13). In Sierra Leone, a skills training program targeted to child soldiers also caused tension:

[The program] sparked considerable jealousy, with local people referring to the stipends for former youth soldiers as ‘blood money.’ Some former youth soldiers said they suffered reverse stigmatization because they were better off than the village youth whom they had attacked during the war (Wessells 2006, p. 188).

Sommers (2002) observes that former child soldiers often have access to better quality education:

Child soldiers commonly comprise a small proportion of the child and youth population in war-affected areas. When it exists, programming for child soldiers tends to vastly outshine anything available to children and youth who were not officially engaged in soldiering. This discrepancy may compound feelings of alienation that other children and youth already feel, and make them even more dangerous and self-destructive than before (p. 16).

These findings suggest that more research must be conducted on the potentially adverse consequences of targeting education assistance for reintegration.

Based on this literature review four hypotheses were developed. H1: Education supports reintegration of former child soldiers. H2: While ex-combatant girls are more likely to experience stigma and difficulty reintegrating than ex-combatant boys, education supports the reintegration of both girls and boys. H3: Targeted education assistance supports reintegration. H4) Targeted education assistance increases stigmatization and inhibits reintegration. These hypotheses will be examined in the northern Uganda case in the following chapters.

Chapter 3: Northern Uganda Case Study

In order to investigate the relationship between education and the reintegration of former child soldiers into their communities in Northern Uganda, it is important to understand the impact of the war on civilians in these communities. This chapter will examine the socioeconomic effects of insecurity, forced displacement, and war violence on civilians living in Acholiland, particularly children.

Insecurity and Forced Displacement in Acholiland

The 23-year conflict between the LRA and the government of Uganda has gained notoriety as one of Africa's longest running and most brutal wars. LRA rebels attack villages, abduct children to fill their ranks, enslave girls, and mutilate suspected government informants under the direction of Joseph Kony, a spiritual leader who claims to fight on behalf of the Acholi people for a new Uganda founded on the 10 Commandments (Allen 2006, Dunn 2004, Finnstrom 2003, Furley 2006, HRW 2003, Martell 2009, Mawson 2004). While President Museveni publicly states his commitment to protect the Acholi people from attacks by the LRA, government soldiers in the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) have committed human rights violations in the North, including the "murder and rape of civilians, the recruitment of children, and the looting of property" (HRW 2003, p. 5).

In 1996, the government instituted its encampment policy to prevent LRA rebels from stealing food and cattle, gathering intelligence, and hiding in northern Ugandan villages (Borzello 2007, p. 408). Nearly 2 million people (80-95% of the Northern population) were forcibly displaced into more than 200 camps (Allen 2006, Cosmas

2008, Dunn 2004, Economist 2004b, Refugee Law Project 2005, *SWAY I* 2006, p. 2-3). While the government claimed these camps were “protected villages” (*SWAY I* 2006, p. 2), Northern Ugandans accused the government of failing to provide security: “The Acholi Leaders Peace Initiative reports that between June and December 2002, the LRA carried out at least 456 attacks in Kitgum and Pader districts, but...the UPDF intervened in only thirty-three of these instances” (HRW 2003, p. 7). While UPDF detachments were assigned to each camp, when rebels attacked “soldiers notoriously failed to respond and ran away” (Allen 2006, p. 54-55, see also Economist 2004a). The encampment policy escalated the conflict and intensified its impact on civilians (Allen 2006, Cosmas 2008, Dunn 2004, Economist 2004b, Refugee Law Project 2005, Shaw 2006). With civilians concentrated in camps, the LRA were able to raid homes and abduct children more efficiently than when civilians were living in small villages dispersed throughout the North. While some Northern Ugandans returned to their villages in late 2006 as the intensity of the conflict diminished, UNOCHA (2010) reports that 445,145 northern Ugandans remain in camps and transit sites (p.6).

At the height of the conflict, from 2002-2005, mortality and morbidity rates in the camps were extremely high due to insecurity and inadequate food, shelter, water, and sanitation. According to the *SWAY I* report, 40% of youth in the camps ate only once a day (2006, p. 48). Without access to adequate health services in overcrowded camps, the civilian population was ravaged by cholera, malaria, and HIV / AIDS (Allen 2006, Cosmas 2008, WHO & Uganda Ministry of Public Health 2005). In 2003, Jan Egeland, then UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs was compelled to call northern Uganda the worst humanitarian situation in the world (BBC 2003). A World

Health Organization survey conducted in 2005 estimated that 1000 people died each week in the camps (WHO & Uganda Ministry of Public Health 2005). According to the *SWAY I* report, “[w]ith mortality, morbidity and poverty rates as high as they are in the camps, it seems reasonable to say that the rebels pose less of a threat to life and liberty than camp life itself” (2006, p. 75).

The forcible displacement of the northern Ugandan population had a devastating economic impact on civilians. As traditional agricultural and cattle-herding livelihoods were no longer sustainable in the camps, the population was forced to rely on food aid from international donors (Allen 2006, *SWAY I* 2006, p. 48). Few alternative livelihoods were available in the camp environment. According to the *SWAY I* report, “[i]t is far from clear that camp economies can support more kiosks, more tailors, more charcoal production or more bicycle taxis. The economics is simple: as these services increase, prices will fall, making such activities unprofitable for all” (2006, p. 75). With few economic options for northern Ugandans, education offers the promise of NGO jobs and other professional opportunities for children in this region.

The War on Children and Youth

Much of the literature on the impact of the northern Uganda conflict on civilians has focused on the suffering of children and youth. According to the *SWAY I* report, “youth are simultaneously the primary victims and primary actors in the 2 decade long war in northern Uganda” (2006, p. iii). UNICEF estimates that more than 25,000 children have been abducted, forcibly conscripted, tortured, raped, and enslaved by the LRA, based on reception centre data (UNICEF 2006, see also Apio 2007, BBC 2010a, Borzello

2007, Chrobok & Akutu 2008, Corbin 2008, Cosmas 2008, Mawsom 2004, Refugee Law Project 2005, World Vision 2004). The population-based *Survey of War-Affected Youth* calculates that this figure is much higher: 66,000 youth between the ages of 14-30 have been kidnapped by the rebel army and 2/3 of these were abducted under the age of 18 (SWAY I 2006, p. 55, 59). The highest number of child kidnappings occurred during the period of 2002-2004 when the LRA brutalized not only Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader, but also Lira, Soroti, Apac, and Katakwi districts (Chrobok & Akutu 2008, Dunn 2004). It is estimated that 80%-90% of the rebels are abducted children (Amnesty 2009, Economist 2004b, SWAY I 2006, p. 29, Veale & Stavrou 2007).²⁸

The literature on the impact of the war on children and youth in Northern Uganda suggests that virtually all of the children and youth associated with the LRA were taken against their will, although “some of these forcible recruits become willing fighters” (SWAY I, 2006, p. 57). According to SWAY II (2008),

[t]he average age for females at first abduction is approximately 16 years of age, with the majority of females experiencing abduction between the ages of 10 to 18 years of age...For males the average age for first abduction is 15 years of age... (p. 33).

While LRA fighters are usually abducted as children, many are over 18 when they return to their communities. While there is no legal obligation to reintegrate adult ex-combatants, NGOs “have stretched their reintegration funding to include young adults in their early 20s” because most of these youth were abducted as children (SWAY I 2006, p. 73).

²⁸ Allen (2006) takes exception to these figures: the author refutes the popular claim that this is “a conflict predominantly waged by children” and argues that “emphasis on child soldiers allows for demonizing of the LRA and deflects attention from the fact that Museveni’s government has recruited child soldiers” (p. 113).

The Ugandan government and the UPDF failed to protect children from rebel attacks, which were frequently carried out at night at the height of the conflict (Chrobok & Akutu 2008, Dunn 2004, HRW 2003, Refugee Law Project 2005, World Vision 2004). During the period of 2002-2005, an estimated 1,000-50,000 children known as “night commuters” left the camps each evening to seek refuge in the main towns (Chrobok & Akutu 2008, p. 5, Dunn 2004, p. 131, Economist 2004b, HRW 2003, Refugee Law Project 2005, World Vision 2004, p.19). Children slept in schools, hospitals, and bus parks, and on church grounds and storefront verandas to avoid being kidnapped. While parents remained in the camps to protect their personal property, children were unsupervised. These children were vulnerable to physical and sexual attacks during their commute and in the supposedly safer areas of towns.

Many children kidnapped by the LRA were forced to carry out brutal murders, massacres, human sacrifices, amputations, mutilations, torture, rape, abductions of other children, and the looting and burning of villages (Apio 2007, Branch 2005, CSUCS 2008, HRW 2003, Machel 1996, McKay 2005, UNICEF 2007, UNICEF 2008). Under threat of torture and death, children marched long distances carrying heavy loads. Those who collapsed under the weight, resisted or tried to escape were executed (Akhavan 2005, p. 408, HRW 2003). In some cases, children were commanded to rape and kill members of their family and community, cutting out the tongue and lips of those who remained behind so they could not tell their stories and act as government informants (Branch 2007, p. 13, HRW 2003).²⁹ Girls were given to commanders as wives to perform sexual

²⁹ According to SWAYI (2006), “It is tragically common to hear a story of a former abductee being forced to kill a family member or friend to ‘bind them to the group’. Yet we have had little sense so far whether

services and domestic labour; they were also forced to bear children in the bush to create a new generation of “purified Acholi” (Apio 2007, p. 95, Pham, Vinck & Stover 2008, World Vision 2004, p. 31). While the LRA is no longer actively operating in Uganda, Human Rights Watch reports that these atrocities continue to be committed against children in the rebel ranks in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic (HRW 2010).

Current estimates suggest that 1,000 – 3,000 Ugandan children remain in the LRA ranks (Borzello 2007, p. 411). Now that the LRA has been driven out of northern Uganda by military campaigns and International Criminal Court indictments, abductions have ceased in the region (Dunn 2004, p. 136; Economist 2008a, Economist 2008b, Martell 2009). However, peace agreements have not been signed and the rebel army continues to kidnap children in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, southern Sudan, and southern Central African Republic to sustain the war (BBC 2006, Dunn 2004, Economist 2008a, Economist 2008b, Lanz 2008, Martell 2009).

While children who have been abducted and forced to fight with the LRA have witnessed and committed harrowing acts of war violence, civilian children living in northern Uganda have also suffered traumatic war experiences. *SWAY I* (2006) reports:

Violence experienced is tremendous. On average, the youth in our sample reported experiencing nine of the 31 traumatic events about which we asked. Only three youth experienced none of these traumatic events at all...

While the abducted experience the most violence overall, the violence experienced by the non-abducted is still tremendously grave (p. 51).

such experiences are the norm or the exception. Our survey suggests that the truth is somewhat closer to the latter” (p.53).

Of the civilian male and female war-affected youth in the *SWAY* survey, 40% experienced the violent death or murder of a parent or family member; 14% suffered the loss of a parent who disappeared or was abducted by rebels; 33% witnessed a killing, and 74% heard gun fire regularly (*SWAY II* 2008, p. 27).³⁰ The severity of violence experienced by civilian war-affected youth indicates that former child soldiers may not be the only children who suffer from psychological disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety.³¹

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Interventions for War-Affected Children and Youth

International resources in northern Uganda devoted to addressing the needs of children have largely been channeled into disarmament, demobilization and reintegration interventions for former child soldiers, such as education assistance (Bragg 2006, p. 15-16, Carpenter 2007b, Heckel 2005, *SWAY I* 2006, p. iii, 62). DDR interventions are designed to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of child soldiers formerly associated with the LRA into their host communities and to offer them an alternative to participating in armed conflict.³² The following chapter will investigate the impact of education

³⁰ *SWAY II* provides gender disaggregated data for war violence witnessed and experienced by abducted and non-abducted male youth (2008, p. 27). To calculate violent incidents witnessed and experienced by war-affected civilian youth as a group, an average of the figures for male and female non-abductees was taken.

³¹ Much of the psychology literature on child soldiers suggests that ex-combatant children suffer post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of witnessing, suffering, and perpetrating war violence (Bayer et al 2007, Derluyn et al 2004, Kohrt et al. 2008, Santacruz & Arana 2002). For a discussion of war trauma and psychosocial reintegration, see chapter 4.

³² There is no formal DDR program specifically for former child soldiers in northern Uganda; children who escape from the LRA or are captured by the UPDF are eligible to participate in the formal DDR program for adult ex-combatants sponsored by the government of Uganda and donors such as the World Bank (Borzello 2007, UNDDR 2006).

assistance on the reintegration of former child soldiers associated with LRA fighting forces.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The reintegration of ex-combatant children into their families and communities is a complex process. Previous studies on reintegration focus on psychological and social challenges to reintegration faced by ex-combatant children who have suffered, witnessed, and perpetrated violence. Other studies examine the role of families and communities in the reintegration process. The objective of this thesis is to explore the relationship between education assistance and the reintegration of former child soldiers. Process tracing of reintegration causal mechanisms and outcomes suggest that individual, family, and community factors are not the only factors that contribute to reintegration outcomes. Political, social, and economic factors also impact reintegration. In order to examine the reintegration of children formerly associated with LRA fighting forces, this chapter considers political, social, and economic factors that interact with reintegration interventions, such as education assistance, to influence reintegration outcomes in northern Uganda.

Education assistance is not provided to former child soldiers in a vacuum. This chapter situates education assistance with other reintegration interventions designed for ex-combatant children in northern Uganda, such as amnesty packages, interim care centres, medical assistance, family tracing services, psychosocial support, traditional healing rituals, community sensitization activities, and livelihood support. In order to analyze the relationship between education assistance and reintegration outcomes, it is important to consider all of the factors that interact to contribute to reintegration outcomes: individual exposure to violence, levels of family and community acceptance, political, social, and economic context, and reintegration interventions provided to ex-

combatant children. This thesis contributes to the literature on reintegration by offering a model of the *sustainable reintegration continuum* that takes into account all of these factors.

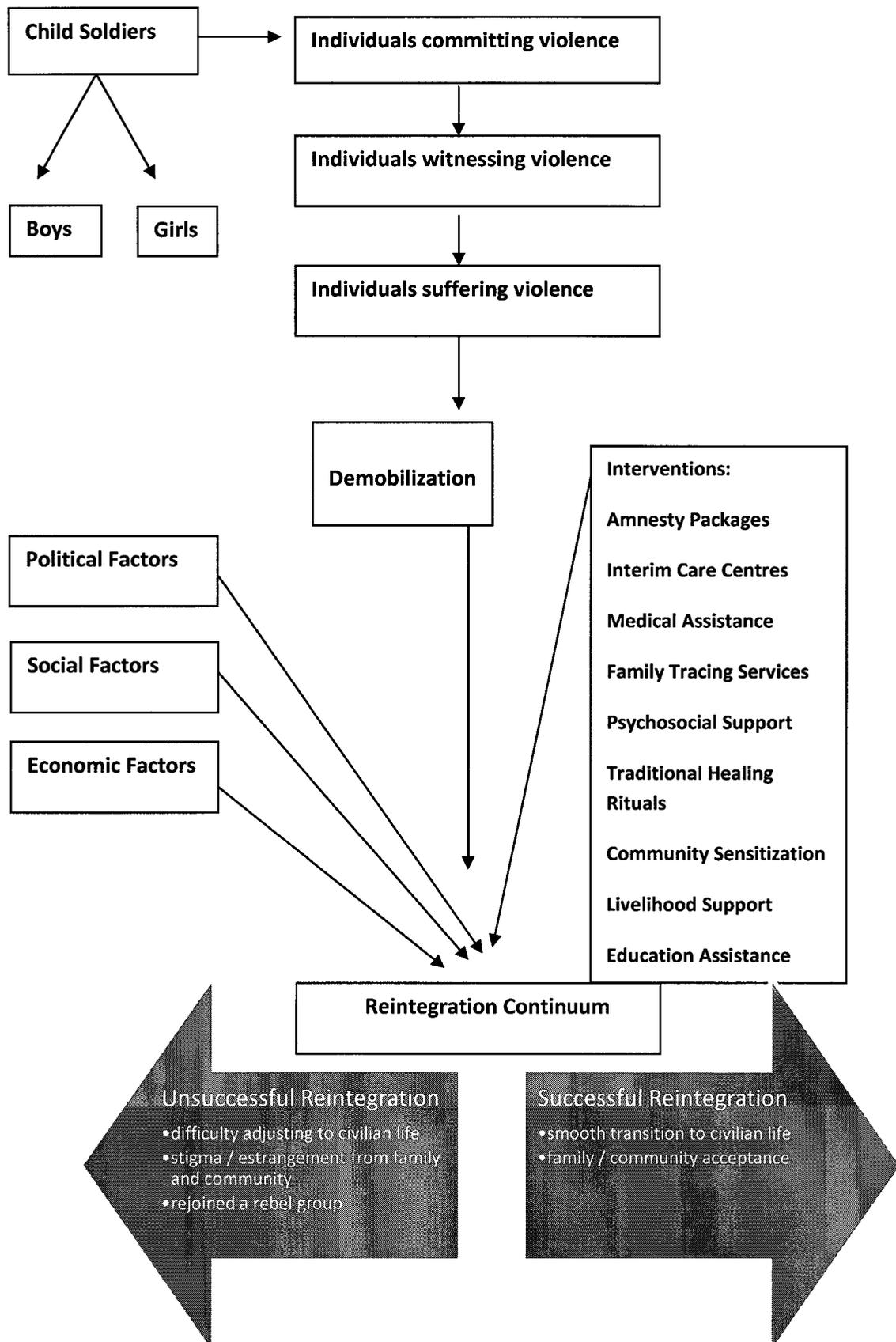
This chapter begins by introducing the *sustainable reintegration continuum* and the various factors that interact to produce differential reintegration outcomes on this continuum. First, the psychological and social challenges faced by children formerly associated with the LRA are explored. Second, family and community acceptance of these children is examined. Third, the political, social, and economic context of reintegration in northern Uganda is analyzed. Fourth, the interaction between education assistance and other reintegration interventions is investigated. Finally, the four hypotheses developed from the literature review are explored in the northern Uganda case. H1: Education supports reintegration of former child soldiers in northern Uganda. H2: While ex-combatant girls are more likely to experience stigma and difficulty reintegrating than ex-combatant boys, education supports the reintegration of both girls and boys formerly associated with the LRA. H3: Targeted education assistance supports the reintegration of former LRA child soldiers. H4: Targeted education assistance increases stigma and inhibits the reintegration of former LRA child soldiers.

Findings from the literature review, field interviews, and the *Surveys of War-Affected Youth* are analyzed to trace the causal mechanisms of reintegration in the northern Uganda context and to explore the hypotheses identified in the literature review. In each section of this chapter, relevant literature review findings are presented first, followed by the results of field interviews conducted for this thesis, and finally, data from the *Surveys of War-Affected Youth*, where available.

The Sustainable Reintegration Continuum

This thesis refines the concept of reintegration by offering a model to explain this process. This model of the *sustainable reintegration continuum*, which ranges from unsuccessful to successful reintegration, is shown in Figure 7. Former child soldiers with unsuccessful reintegration outcomes may find it difficult to adjust to civilian life, experience stigma and estrangement from their families and communities, and in some cases may rejoin a rebel group. Former child soldiers with successful reintegration outcomes make a smooth transition to civilian life and find family and community acceptance. Individuals, families, and communities are not the only factors that impact reintegration outcomes. This model also suggests that political, social, and economic factors and reintegration interventions, such as education assistance, also contribute to reintegration outcomes. These factors are investigated in the following sections.

Figure 7: The Sustainable Reintegration Continuum



Individual Factors: Ex-Combatant Children's Psychological and Social Challenges to Reintegration

Ex-combatant children who have suffered, witnessed, and perpetrated violence face a number of psychological and social challenges to reintegration. MacMullin & Loughry (2004) report that former child soldiers were more anxious, hostile, and depressed than children who had not been abducted by the LRA; they were also less confident and less likely to exhibit positive social behaviours than their civilian counterparts. Ex-combatant children may also experience PTSD. Derluyn et al. (2004) report that 97% of Ugandan child soldiers demonstrated symptoms of PTSD which were "of clinical importance"; children experienced an average of 6 traumatic events, with 77% witnessing a killing and 39% forced to kill another person (p. 861). There is considerable variation in the prevalence rates of PTSD in this body of research. According to Bayer et al. (2007), only 34.9% of children at interim care centres in Uganda met the symptom score for PTSD (p. 555). However, the 34.9% of former child soldiers who have PTSD were reported to be less open to reconciliation and more open to seeking revenge against persons who harmed them (Bayer et. al 2007, p. 555).³³ Ex-combatant children who suffer from mental health and behavioural problems as a result of their violent war-time experiences may have unsuccessful reintegration outcomes.

Field interview data supports the literature review findings that children associated with the LRA suffer from mental health and behavioral problems which make it difficult to adjust to civilian life and to gain the acceptance of their families and

³³ For a critique of the trauma model as applied to child soldiers and other war-affected children, see Boyden and De Berry (2004), Machel (1996), and Kostelny (2006).

communities. Former child soldiers are reported to experience trauma, anxiety, depression, nightmares, and flashbacks.³⁴ They are also reported to display aggressive, chaotic behavior, use abusive language and socially isolate themselves.³⁵ One counselor noted that they have “cravings to kill.”³⁶ However, not all former child soldiers behave inappropriately. Some are reported to make a smooth transition to civilian life.³⁷ Individual factors such as exposure to violence may account for some of the variance in reintegration outcomes among former child soldiers.

In contrast to findings from the literature review and field interviews, the population-based *SWAY* surveys report that only a small percentage of former child soldiers in northern Uganda experience mental health and social difficulties that pose an obstacle for reintegration.

While the majority of male youth – both abducted and non-abducted – have relatively low levels of emotional distress, one quarter of youth suffer from fairly high levels of symptoms (*SWAY I* 2006, p. 12).

A small percentage of females experience disabling symptoms of emotional distress (*SWAY II* 2008, 49);

most abducted youth, including young mothers...exhibit little evidence of emotional distress. Resilience is the norm. Rejection and psychological trauma are the exceptions (*SWAY II* 2008, p. 66).

The surveys also note that only a minority of former child soldiers behave violently when they rejoin their families and communities.

³⁴ Agula 2009, Asutai 2009, Julius 2009, Kevin 2009, Lukungu 2009, McGrath 2009, McKinney 2009, Okwa 2009, Onan Richard 2009, Thakur 2008.

³⁵ Bruno 2009, Julius 2009, McGrath 2009, Okwa 2009, Onan Richard 2009, Samuel 2009, Thakur 2008, William 2009.

³⁶ Samuel 2009.

³⁷ Loyola Richard 2009, Oboe 2009, Okwa 2009, Samuel 2009, Tonny 2009.

Aggression is...remarkably low among these [war-affected] youth exposed to high levels of violence, with just 7% having been involved in a physical fight in the past month. Social workers in the reception centres, teachers, and community leaders explained that there are few incidents of aggression among the youth and that violence among [child soldier] returnees is rarely a problem (SWAY I 2006, p. 11).

Evidence from *SWAY* suggests that stereotypes of former child soldiers as traumatized, violent troublemakers may be unfounded.

The discrepancy between the findings from the literature review and field interviews on reintegration and the *Surveys of War-Affected Youth* is striking. While the literature and field interviews suggest that the majority of child soldiers experience mental health difficulties and behavioural problems, the surveys report that only a minority of returning ex-combatant children experience these reintegration problems. One reason for this discrepancy may be differences in the sampled populations. While *SWAY* is a population-based survey of youth, most of the studies on the reintegration process in northern Uganda presented in the literature review are based on interviews conducted with children at NGO reception centres designed to rehabilitate traumatized children. Primary data was also gathered from field interviews conducted largely with NGO education program officers who offer education assistance to children who passed through these interim care centres. As children who do not have mental health difficulties and behavioural problems may be more likely to return directly home without going to a reception centre, former child soldiers who experience these problems may be overrepresented in these literature review and field interview samples.

Another reason for this discrepancy may be that NGO staff over-emphasize mental health difficulties and behavioural problems of ex-combatant children in

interviews in order to help secure more funding for programming and projects. Cooley and Ron (2002) argue that fierce competition for lucrative short-term contracts and pressure to capture a larger “market share” of donor funding has led some NGOs to extend aid projects that are inappropriate. If only a minority of child soldiers have mental health and behavioural problems that prevent them from successfully reintegrating into their families and communities, perhaps existing reception centre interventions are not the most effective use of scarce resources. On the other hand, even if a minority of ex-combatant children experience these problems, these unsuccessfully reintegrated ex-combatants may destabilize northern Uganda.

Reintegration into Families and Communities: Stigmatization or Acceptance?

The literature review suggests that families and communities also play a role in influencing the reintegration outcomes of ex-combatant children. According to the literature on the reintegration of former child soldiers in northern Uganda, children returning from the LRA are not welcomed back into families and communities. Veale & Stavrou (2007) found that many families of former child soldiers in northern Uganda were reluctant to reunite with their children because they were concerned that the children would be “ill-tempered,” “rude,” “not settled in their mind,” and prone to fighting; they also feared that rebels would recapture the children (p. 286-287, see also Akello, Richters & Reis 2006). Some family members and community members refuse to allow their ex-combatant children to return home, believing they are possessed by *cen* (Akello, Richters & Reis 2006, Corbin 2008, p. 324). A study of 183 former LRA fighters found that 63% were verbally abused, shunned, segregated, or threatened by

family and community members (Roderiguez et al. as cited in Veale & Stavrou 2007, p. 287-288). According to Akello, Richters & Reis (2006),

In numerous focus group discussions, displaced children described how in the community or in camps where the *latin lum* (child from the bush) is reintegrated, there is frequent harassment, verbal abuse and *bolo doge kum dano mo oo I lum* (wherever that person passes and whatever he or she is doing, people keep on criticizing and talking against him or her).S/he is called names such as murderer, killer, and thief (p. 234).

Ex-combatant boys and girls who are stigmatized may have unsuccessful reintegration outcomes. Girls associated with LRA forces and children born in the bush are reported to be especially stigmatized (Akello, Richters & Reis 2006, p. 235, Chrobok & Akutu 2008, Corbin 2008). According to Cheney (2007), more than 90% of the girls who return from the bush have STDs including syphilis and HIV (p. 182). These girls are viewed as unsuitable marriage partners (Cheney 2007, p. 182). If ex-combatant girls and boys are unable to adjust to civilian life, they may return to participating in armed conflict.

Evidence from field interviews substantiates findings from the literature review that children who return from the LRA rebels are stigmatized by their families and communities.³⁸ Family and community members are reported to believe that ex-combatant children are rude and arrogant, having developed the “mentality of the bush.”³⁹ Former child soldiers who have injured or killed relatives and neighbours are reported to be ostracized.⁴⁰ Girls who have been taken as forced wives and bore children

³⁸ Asutai 2009, Cliff 2009, Gie 2009, Kitara 2009, Lydia 2009, Okwokene 2009, Oruk 2009, Samuel 2009, Thakur 2008, Tonny 2009.

³⁹ Kitara 2009.

⁴⁰ Gie 2009

are thought to be especially vulnerable to rejection.⁴¹ Families and communities may be unwilling to accept former child soldiers out of fear that rebels will return to their village to re-abduct them.

The *SWAY* survey report diverges from findings from the literature review and field interviews, stating that family acceptance of former child soldiers is the norm.

Most returnees (95%) report that they returned home after abduction with only five percent going to settle elsewhere upon their return. This runs counter to what many in reception centres and programs expected (see Allen & Schomerus, 2006 in *SWAY I* 2006, p. 66).

Family acceptance is remarkably high. Only 1% of [ex-combatant] youth report that their family was unhappy or unwelcoming upon their return. Over 94% of the youth report being accepted by their families without insult, blame or physical aggression (*SWAY I* 2006, p. 66).

SWAY II (2008) indicates that family acceptance is also high for girls who fought with the LRA, including those who return from the bush with children. “Serious emotional distress and family estrangement are the exception rather than the norm among formerly abducted women, including long-term abductees, forced wives, and forced mothers” (*SWAY II* 2008, p. ix).

On the other hand, *SWAY* reports that lack of *community* acceptance of children associated with the LRA forces may pose an obstacle to successful reintegration. According to *SWAY I* (2006), “more than a quarter of [child soldier] returnees said that they were insulted by community members upon return, or that community members were afraid of them” (p. 65). However, community acceptance was reported to increase over time: “94% reported that they felt ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ accepted by their community at the time [of the survey]” (*SWAY I* 2006, p. 66). Female former child

⁴¹ Asutai 2009, Gie 2009, Okwokene 2009, Samuel 2009.

soldiers were observed to experience similar difficulties gaining community acceptance when they returned, but these difficulties improved over time. According to *SWAY II*, “39% of females reported that they were called names by the community when they returned, 35 percent said they felt the community was afraid of them...current reports by females of such experiences were dramatically lower” (*SWAY II* 2008, p. 71-72).

While *SWAY I* and *II* report that community stigmatization is a problem for only a minority of ex-combatant children in northern Uganda, nonetheless the reintegration problems of this minority should not be dismissed.

The fraction of youth who are insulted or blamed often state that this is an extremely painful experience for them. Those who were insulted by the community were 3 times more likely to have negative social behaviours and high emotional distress even when the insulting had ceased (*SWAY I* 2006, p. 68).

Former child soldiers who experience stigma and are estranged from communities may have few alternatives but to rejoin a rebel group.

According to *SWAY*, there are a number of commonly reported patterns of community stigmatization of former child soldiers. First, parents who suffered the loss of their own children to rebel army kidnappers were angered by the presence of ex-combatant children in the community and stigmatized them. Second, former child soldiers who were known to have participated in abductions and massacres in the community were particularly stigmatized by community members. Third, recent rebel attacks on the community increased community tensions and children associated with LRA forces were harassed as scapegoats. Fourth, community members insulted, harassed, and attacked ex-combatant children when they had been drinking alcohol. Fifth, child soldiers who were involved in disagreements with community members over material

goods were especially stigmatized (Annan, Brier & Aryemo 2009 – publication of *SWAY* findings; see also *SWAY I* 2006, p. 66-67). Clearly, multiple factors contribute to stigmatization of former child soldiers. The fifth pattern of stigmatization is most relevant to hypotheses 3 and 4: if disputes between child soldiers and community members are likely to arise over allocation of goods and resources, then education assistance targeted disproportionately to former child soldiers in a community where many children lack access to education could provoke stigma.

There is a remarkable divergence in the findings from the literature review and the field interviews on reintegration and the *Surveys of War-Affected Youth*. While the literature and field interviews indicate that the majority of ex-combatant children are stigmatized by their families and communities, the surveys report that only a minority of children formerly associated with the LRA experience these reintegration problems. As noted before, this discrepancy may be due to differences in the sampled populations or over-emphasis of reintegration difficulties by reception centre staff.

Political, Social, and Economic Contextual Factors

In addition to the role of individuals, families, and communities in the reintegration process, political, social, and economic contextual factors also contribute to reintegration outcomes. The following section will investigate how these factors impact reintegration in the northern Ugandan context.

Reintegration and the Political Context in northern Uganda

In order to successfully reintegrate, former child soldiers must be disarmed and demobilized from the command structure of their rebel group. For this reason, the

presence or absence of a rebel group in the region may be a key political factor impacting reintegration outcomes. Despite the absence of a signed peace agreement, northern Uganda enjoys relative peace as the LRA rebels have not actively operated on this territory since 2006. The LRA is currently conducting raids in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, southern Sudan, and Central African Republic where the Ugandan army is undertaking a major military operation against them (BBC 2009). As the rebel group is no longer operating in northern Uganda, it is less likely that former child soldiers living in this region would rejoin the LRA than it was before 2007. However, northern Ugandans still have political grievances against Museveni's government in Kampala and it is possible that former child soldiers could take up arms and form another rebel group to redress these grievances if they are not reintegrated into their families and communities.

Ongoing group grievances are another political factor influencing reintegration outcomes. The Acholi have suffered under Museveni's government (Mawson 2004, 133).⁴² While Museveni has garnered praise from Western donors for adopting structural adjustment policies that kick-started the Ugandan economy, southern Uganda has prospered from aid investments while northern Uganda has been "neglected" (Borzello 2007, p. 410, Finnström 2003, p. 125, Furley 2006, p.127, Muggah and Baaré 2009). Uneven development has created "two Ugandas," provoking resentment among Acholi Northerners (Shaw 2006). The President also exacerbated ethnic tensions by exacting revenge against the Acholi for abuses committed under previous regimes and

⁴² The central government has also committed human rights abuses against members of the Lango, Madi, and other northern tribes. This paper will focus specifically on the Acholi as fieldwork was conducted in Gulu and Kitgum districts where the overwhelming majority of the population is Acholi.

implementing discriminatory policies. The UPDF's counter-insurgency strategy of rounding up Acholi into camps was perceived in northern Uganda as vengeance for atrocities committed in the Luwero Triangle and as an attempt by the government to grab land. Tribal lands in northern Uganda are communally owned and untitled (Borzello 2007, p.409).

Museveni has also incited anger among the Acholi in his dealings with Heritage Oil and Gas Company, which discovered large oilfields in northern Uganda in January 2009. According to an article in the Ugandan *Monitor*, “[t]he government has however refused to disclose the production sharing agreements that it has signed with the oil companies” (Biryabarema 2009). In February 2010, Heritage Oil sold its investments in northern Uganda to Tullow Oil, but this deal was also secret (BBC 2010a). Unless the government comes to an agreement with Northerners that distributes oil revenues equitably and redresses long-standing grievances it is unlikely that the conflict will end (International Crisis Group 2008). Government soldiers have blocked off the road from Gulu district to the area of Amuru district where Heritage struck oil and displaced persons who are returning to their original villages fear they will be dispossessed.⁴³ One professional interviewed in Gulu in May 2009 who wished to remain anonymous stated that Acholis will take up arms to defend their land and their share of oil profits.

The precedent has been set. In this country and this region, if you are disgruntled, if you are marginalized, pick up arms. That is very fresh in the memories of these young people. I think it is a possible recipe for another conflict...I think focusing on the LRA is just a symptom of the problem here. We have many Joseph Kony's in this region...The real problems behind the conflict have not been addressed in this region...What about the young people that [the LRA] abducted, and took to captivity, and when they return they are given 80,000 shillings, a basin, mattress,

⁴³ Anonymous Interview 2009.

jerry can, as a resettlement package? What is the future for that kind of person? ... We try to be optimistic, but there is that dark side.⁴⁴

This field interview implies that former LRA child soldiers who are not provided with sufficient reintegration assistance and an alternative to armed conflict may join another rebel group to settle scores.

Reintegration and the Social Context in northern Uganda

The social context in northern Uganda also affects the reintegration of ex-combatant children. The level of community displacement in areas where ex-combatant children are attempting to reintegrate may impact reintegration outcomes. Former child soldiers are not the only people in northern Uganda who are reintegrating into families and communities. Nearly two million northern Ugandans who were forcibly displaced into more than 200 camps are also beginning the process of return to their original homes and reintegration into their communities, while some remain in camps and transition camps (Allen 2006, Amnesty 2009, Borzello 2007, p. 405, Cosmas 2008, Dunn 2004, Economist 2004b, Refugee Law Project 2005, *SWAY I* 2006, p. 2-3).⁴⁵ Social service delivery in the camps is not on par with other regions of the country.⁴⁶ Many former child soldiers and displaced civilians are returning to villages that have been abandoned for years and lack hospitals and schools.

Reintegration and the Economic Context in northern Uganda

The economic context in northern Uganda also affects the reintegration of

⁴⁴ Anonymous Interview 2009.

⁴⁵ Thakur 2008.

⁴⁶ Thakur 2008, Toolit 2009.

children formerly associated with LRA fighting forces. Stripped of their lands, northern Ugandans living in displacement camps cannot practice agriculture and cattle-herding - their traditional livelihoods. During the period of displacement, child labour,⁴⁷ commercialized sex, and early marriage of girls were reported to increase.⁴⁸ With northern Ugandans living in poverty in camps, many families may be “reluctant to accept another mouth to feed” when former child soldiers return from the bush.⁴⁹

Reintegration Interventions

Interventions are another factor that contributes to the reintegration outcomes of ex-combatant children. Amnesty packages, interim care centres, medical assistance, family tracing services, psychosocial support, traditional healing rituals, community sensitization activities, livelihood support, and education assistance are among the interventions provided to ex-combatant children in northern Uganda to facilitate successful reintegration. While this thesis focuses on the role of education assistance in supporting reintegration outcomes, it is important to consider how education assistance interacts with other interventions as many of these interventions are provided concurrently.

Amnesty Packages

Since the institution of the Amnesty Act in Uganda in 2000, ex-combatant children over 12 are entitled to receive an amnesty card and a reintegration package

⁴⁷ Catherine 2009, George 2009, Obot 2009, Odong 2009.

⁴⁸ Asutai 2009.

⁴⁹ Samuel 2009.

including bedding, agricultural tools, seeds, and cash grant equivalent to C\$125 (UN DDR 2006). This Amnesty Package was designed to provide former child soldiers with basic necessities to rebuild their lives outside the rebel group.⁵⁰ However, some argue that reintegration packages do not provide ex-combatant youth with a viable alternative to taking up arms.⁵¹

The reaction of northern Ugandans to the Amnesty Commission's decision to give reintegration packages to ex-combatant children suggests that targeted education assistance may provoke a community backlash. According to *SWAY I*,

[F]ollowing several LRA attacks in Pader County, our field team sat with some community members listening to a radio discussion about the Amnesty Commission and packages given to former LRA combatants. Those listening at the time insisted that if the Amnesty Commission opened an office in their sub-county, they would “burn it down”. They then continued to discuss how unfair it was that the [former child soldier] returnees—abducted or not—benefited from services while those who are merely victims were left with nothing. Similar sentiments were echoed in meetings in several communities, arousing by far the more intense emotions and discussion of any issue in the meeting (2006, p. 80).

Based on community members' violent reactions to the perceived injustice of reintegration packages for children associated with LRA rebels, it is possible that targeted education assistance would elicit a similar response.

Reintegration Interventions Provided at Interim Care Centres

Interim care centres are another reintegration intervention created to facilitate the reintegration of children formerly associated with the LRA. Former child soldiers are disarmed and demobilized by the UPDF before they are transported to reception centres,

⁵⁰ Okwokene 2009, Samuel 2009.

⁵¹ Anonymous Interview 2009.

such as GUSCO and World Vision Children of War Centre in Gulu, and Kicwa in Kitgum. Children remain in these centres from three weeks to a year, depending on the needs of the child.⁵² In the reception centres, former child soldiers are offered medical treatment, group counselling, psychosocial support, and vocational training while family tracing and community sensitization activities are carried out. According to *SWAY*, two thirds of male child soldiers who spent more than 3 months with the rebels passed through an interim care centre before going home while only half of female child soldiers passed through these centres (*SWAY II 2008*, p. 73). Children who do not enter reception centres may have difficulty gaining access to education assistance and other benefits (McKay and Mazurana 2004).⁵³ NGOs often require a letter from a reception centre verifying that the child seeking benefits is a former child soldier before they will provide education assistance.⁵⁴

Scholarly opinion on the question of institutionalizing children in interim care centres until they are reunited with their families is mixed. According to psychologists Hill and Langholtz (2003),

Interim care centers are a good first step in the reintegration process. They provide a safe place for children to stay during the demobilization process so that military authorities cannot re-recruit the children...

Interim care centers are also a good transition from military life to civilian life. They offer a place removed from both military and community life where former child soldiers can begin to readapt to their identity as children or adolescents. The process of healing from trauma can begin in the centers through trauma

⁵² Lydia 2009, Samuel 2009.

⁵³ Okwa 2009. Since the LRA moved its bases out of Ugandan territory in late 2005, fewer children are returning to reception centres (Dale 2008).

⁵⁴ Howard 2009.

counseling, non-formal and formal educational, and recreational activities (p. 281-282).

Boothby, Crawford, and Halperin (2006) agree that the concentration of resources in interim care centres improves the delivery of educational, counselling, and mentorship services; however, they note that these services are often discontinued before the reintegration process is complete when centres close due to lack of funding (p. 6). Petty and Jareg (1998) are more critical. They argue that interim care centres may be located too far away for family members to visit and institutionalized children are at risk of suffering emotional, physical, and sexual abuse or ill-treatment. Some counsellors from GUSCO and World Vision in Gulu claim that children who pass through reception centres in northern Uganda have less difficulty reintegrating than those who return directly to their families and communities.⁵⁵ However, no rigorous comparative studies of these two groups have been conducted to substantiate their claim.

The Psychosocial Approach to Health and Healing

Interim care centres provide psychosocial support to former child soldiers to foster successful reintegration outcomes.⁵⁶ In an attempt to move away from a Western model of trauma therapy which recommends individual counselling for former child soldiers, the UN and international NGOs developed a “psychosocial approach” to healing in order to facilitate reintegration (Verhey 2001). According to Verhey (2001),

Experience shows that psychosocial approaches are more beneficial than Western-derived trauma assistance. The very definition of psychosocial emphasizes that the psychological process takes place in a social context, with

⁵⁵ Lydia 2009, Samuel 2009.

⁵⁶ Some psychosocial interventions are provided to former child soldiers outside reception centres. However, these are exceptional.

family and community. In many cultures, child development is more socio-centric than egocentric (p. 17).

The psychosocial approach entails a wide range of activities for children and youth such as group counselling, art projects, drama, story-telling, music, and dance. Education, training, and income-generating activities are considered to be separate from psychosocial activities, but complementary to the psychosocial healing process. Field interviews suggest that psychosocial interventions promote reintegration.⁵⁷ One project officer argues that psychosocial support programs “encourage [former child soldiers] to feel that they are still worth something...and that they are capable of doing something good”.⁵⁸

While many international NGOs such as World Vision devote the bulk of their reintegration resources to psychosocial programming, little research has been conducted on the relationship between psychosocial activities and reintegration. In recent years reintegration assistance has also supported traditional approaches to healing.

An Alternative Approach: Traditional Healing Rituals

In many traditional African belief systems, a child who has suffered and perpetrated violence is considered to be contaminated by evil spirits which can cause misfortune for the child, their family, and community (Baines 2007, Boothby, Crawford & Halperin 2006, Wessells 2000, p. 412). Anthropologist Alcinda Honwana (2006) explains that ancestral spirits are believed to “maintain peaceful relations among members of the group. They protect people against misfortune, disease, ecological

⁵⁷ Brenda, 2009, Lydia 2009, Okwa 2009, Oruk 2009, Onan Richard 2009, Samuel 2009, Thakur 2008, Toolit 2009.

⁵⁸ Toolit 2009.

dangers, and evil, especially witchcraft and sorcery which can cause illness. In short, spirits care for the well-being of families and communities” (p. 121-122). Honwana (2006) describes how local healers in Mozambique perform cleansing rituals involving the sacrifice of a goat, the burning of military clothes, herbal remedies, and ritual meals, to reestablish communication with the ancestors and channel their power to help placate angry spirits of people the child may have killed (p.104-134). In contrast to psychotherapeutic approaches, children and youth are not encouraged to talk about their war experiences, as it may summon evil spirits (Kostelny 2006, p. 25), but to put the past behind them by participating in rituals.

Healing is achieved through nonverbal, symbolic procedures that are understood by those participating in them. Clothes and other objects brought from or symbolizing the past are burned or washed away, impressing on the individual and the group a complete break from wartime experience and the beginning of a new life. Recounting and remembering the experience would be like opening a door, inviting the harmful spirits to enter families and communities (Honwana 2006, p. 121-122).

According to Thompson (1999), a healing ceremony which reestablishes a connection with ancestors is “the first step in acceptance back into the community” (p. 281).

GUSCO is a local NGO in Gulu which advocates traditional Acholi healing rituals to facilitate reintegration. At the GUSCO reception centre, children are encouraged to participate in cleansing rituals such as *nyono tong gweno* (stepping on an egg) to exorcise *cen* (evil spirits of people who have died violently) (Akello, Richters & Reis 2006, Allen & Schomerus 2006, Baines 2007, Behrend 1999, Borzello 2007, Corbin 2008, p. 324, Refugee Law Project 2005).⁵⁹ While Baines (2007) suggests that traditional

⁵⁹ Baines (2007) asserts that traditional cleansing ceremonies have a positive effect on the social reintegration of former child soldiers in northern Uganda.

cleansing ceremonies have a positive effect on the social reintegration of former child soldiers in northern Uganda, *SWAY II* warns that these rituals may be “unwelcome” and “unhelpful” in the reintegration process (*SWAY II* 2008, p. 92). For example, ex-combatant girls who have been raped must return to the place where they were assaulted in order for clan elders to perform the healing ritual (*SWAY II* 2008, p. 45). Returning to this site may be too difficult or traumatic for these girls. The ceremony may also be insufficient to address their psychological and physical needs (*SWAY II*, 2008, p. 45).

Community Sensitization

In order to prepare families and communities for the return of former child soldiers, NGOs and faith-based groups undertake community sensitization activities. These community sensitization interventions often take the form of debates and dramatic performances which send the message that children did not willingly join the rebels and commit atrocities and the government should have protected them.⁶⁰ These organizations also stress that ex-combatant children are not contaminated by *cen*.⁶¹ Evidence from field interviews conducted for this thesis suggests that these community sensitization activities have been helpful in reducing stigma and supporting reintegration.⁶² *SWAY I* indicates “that large-scale community sensitizations have been successful, at least on the surface level (although we have no direct data to support this)” (*SWAY I* 2006, 77).

Livelihood Assistance

Another intervention that some ex-combatant children in northern Uganda receive

⁶⁰ Cliff 2009, McGrath 2009, Okwokene 2009, Samuel 2009, Thakur 2008.

⁶¹ Samuel 2009.

⁶² Cliff 2009, McGrath 2009, Okwokene 2009, Samuel 2009, Thakur 2008.

is livelihood assistance. Evidence from field interviews suggests that this assistance fosters sustainable reintegration by giving former child soldiers an opportunity to make a living without returning to fighting.⁶³ This field interview evidence is substantiated by the *SWAY* surveys (*SWAY I*, p. vii).

The economic options open to youth in and out of the camps are, in a word abysmal. Few youth have access to land, and the principal form of economic activity are *leje leje*, essentially casual labour and small projects. Such work is generally sporadic and unprofitable, and at the median youth have just 7 days of work per month at wages of 55 cents per day (*SWAY I* 2006, p. v).

While former child soldiers face the challenge of trying to make a living in the depressed northern Ugandan economy like their civilian counterparts, surprisingly, they are reported to be no less likely to be employed than youth who did not fight with the rebels (*SWAY I* 2006, p. 45). The reasons for this are unclear; it is possible that livelihood assistance for former child soldiers has improved their employment rates and put them on par with other war-affected youth. According to *SWAY*, ex-combatant male youth, however, are half as likely to be engaged in higher-paying skilled work as youth who were not involved with the LRA; they also are reported to earn one third less wages than their civilian counterparts (*SWAY I* 2006, p. 43, *SWAY II* 2008, p.10). The reason for this gap in wages is unclear. However, this disparity could be due to the fact that male ex-combatant youth missed more years of school than their non-abducted peers (*SWAY I* 2006, p. v). Another possible reason for this disparity could be that abducted child soldiers were more likely to have had their family savings and cattle raided by the LRA, impacting the resources available to them to invest in livelihoods vis-à-vis their non-abducted counterparts (*SWAY I* 2006, p. v, 23).

⁶³ Asutai 2009, Okwa 2009, Onyut 2009.

Employment among female former child soldiers is only “moderately lower” than employment for non-abducted females and wages are similar (*SWAY II* 2008, p. vi). One possible explanation for this finding is that abducted and non-abducted females have similar levels of education; according to *SWAY*, more than half of females were abducted at age 15 or older and by this age most girls had already dropped out of school (*SWAY II* 2008, p. 23). *SWAY II* reports that, “[f]or the majority of formerly-abducted youth, education, and livelihoods support are the most pressing needs” (2006, p. 69). A second possible explanation for this finding is that the level of employment among female youth in northern Uganda is very low.

Education Assistance

While all interventions for former child soldiers influence reintegration outcomes, this thesis focuses on the role of education assistance in the reintegration process. Children associated with LRA fighting forces have significantly less education than other war-affected children who did not fight with LRA rebels. According to *SWAY I* (2006), ex-combatant male children on average attain one half year less schooling than civilian children for each year of abduction (p.31).

[F]ormerly abducted [child soldiers] are also half as likely to be currently enrolled in school, they are a third less likely to make the transition from primary to secondary school, and are twice as likely as a non-abducted youth to be fully illiterate. Given the near random manner in which abduction occurred, these effects can be interpreted as causal impacts (*SWAY I* 2006, p.30).

While female ex-combatant children were reported to have comparable levels of schooling, enrollment, and literacy to female children who had not been a part of the rebel group, girls who fought with the LRA for long periods and girls who returned home

with children were reported to have significantly less years of schooling and were reported to be less likely to return to the classroom (*SWAY II* 2008, p. 17-24).

Roughly 41 percent of former abductees returned to school following abduction, including 28 percent of long-term abductees (those held captive for eight months or more). The likelihood of returning to school following return is reduced to nearly zero, however, for women returning from the bush with children (*SWAY II* 2008, p. 24).

SWAY's report on the gap in educational attainment between children associated with LRA rebels and their civilian counterparts is important for establishing a baseline level of education in order to assess the impact of education interventions. The literature review suggests that education assistance supports the reintegration of ex-combatant boys and girls. However, there is very little research on this topic. The following section will examine these hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Education supports the reintegration of former child soldiers in northern Uganda.

Hypothesis 2: While ex-combatant girls are more likely to experience stigma and difficulty reintegrating than ex-combatant boys, education supports the reintegration of both girls and boys formerly associated with the LRA.

Field interview respondents unanimously emphasized the benefits of education for ex-combatant children in northern Uganda. However, fewer respondents were able to describe how education fostered reintegration.⁶⁴ The range of these responses is documented below. Education was reported to reduce trauma for children who have

⁶⁴ Arach 2009, Asutai 2009, Kitara 2009, Okwokene 2009, Oruk 2009, Onan Richard 2009, Samuel 2009, Toolit 2009.

witnessed and perpetrated war violence with the rebels.⁶⁵ Schooling was believed to build self-esteem and confidence in ex-combatant children.⁶⁶ Interview respondents also observed that education helps children formerly associated with the LRA to adjust to civilian life and behave in ways that encourage community acceptance.⁶⁷

Respondents indicated that education promotes reintegration by giving former child soldiers the opportunity to socialize with other war-affected children and to develop a peer network outside the LRA.⁶⁸ Evidence from *SWAY* supports this finding: “More than half of youth stated that spending time with friends was their way of coping when feeling distressed” (*SWAY I 2006*, p. 20). While *SWAY* does not explicitly identify the school as a forum for developing these friend networks, the survey results suggest that returning to school can increase the likelihood of reintegration by fashioning former child soldiers a meaningful identity as a “student” rather than simply a “returned rebel” (Annan, Brier, and Aryemo 2009, p. 647 – publication of *SWAY* findings).

Field interview respondents claimed that returning to school supports successful reintegration by encouraging children to set goals for the future.⁶⁹ Education was also reported to help former child soldiers understand the root causes and consequences of conflict, so that they may play a role in conflict prevention.⁷⁰ Finally, interview

⁶⁵ Onan Richard 2009, Samuel 2009.

⁶⁶ Asutai 2009.

⁶⁷ Asutai 2009, Toolit 2009.

⁶⁸ Asutai 2009, Oruk 2009.

⁶⁹ Asutai 2009.

⁷⁰ Toolit 2009.

respondents claimed that education provides ex-combatant children with the knowledge and skills to gain employment without returning to soldiering.⁷¹ The *Survey of War-Affected Youth* appears to corroborate this finding as education is associated with increased labour market success for both male and female war-affected youth (SWAY I 2006, p. v, SWAY II 2008, p. vi). However, disaggregated data for former child soldiers is not available.

While these interview findings support the hypothesis that education fosters successful reintegration of child soldiers into their communities, they must be interpreted with caution. Few organizations operating in northern Uganda have the capacity to track returned child soldiers in any systematic way once they leave the reception centre (Akello, Richters & Reis 2006, p. 233, McKay and Mazurana 2004, SWAY I 2006, p. 70, 83).⁷² According to the SWAY I report,

Extensive and effective follow-up is hindered by several constraints. Primary among these, we feel, is the centralization of aid services in towns, combined with the decentralization of the vulnerable into dozens of scattered camps.

Historically, the principal limitation to improved support and follow-up was the continuing insecurity throughout much of northern Uganda, compounded by the failure of the UPDF to adequately protect those living and working in the camps. As a result, aid organizations based themselves in the district capitals. Since many of these offices ran programs in as many as 20 different camps, each camp was reached by the agency perhaps once every two weeks (2006, p.83).

For these reasons, many interview respondents who worked for NGOs and UN Agencies did not have information on the number of former child soldiers who were currently enrolled in school or information about former child soldiers' experiences of returning to school and rejoining their communities. Similarly, most teachers simply had too many

⁷¹ Arach 2009, Kitara 2009, Owokene 2009, Toolit 2009.

⁷² Thakur 2008.

students in their classes to pay attention to the reintegration experiences of former child soldiers and comment on whether education contributed to successful reintegration.

Education and Structural Barriers Faced by Former Child Soldiers

While interview respondents agreed that education supports reintegration, they drew attention to the structural barriers that prevent ex-combatant children from gaining access to quality education. Some evidence from field interviews suggests that former child soldiers have trouble adjusting to school: ex-combatant children may experience trauma, PTSD, depression, anxiety, nightmares, and flashbacks that interfere with learning.⁷³ Other field interview respondents note that former child soldiers disrupt the classroom with aggressive, destructive behavior. However, a number of respondents argued that in some cases former child soldiers behave and perform well in school,⁷⁴ particularly if they are accepted by their families and communities.⁷⁵ Findings from the population-based surveys concur that child soldiers in northern Uganda are generally able to learn and behave appropriately in school (SWAY I, 2006):

on average, psychosocial wellbeing is not linked to educational or occupational functioning...

This means that, despite their higher level of symptoms, youth with lower psychosocial well-being are able to function in day-to-day activities in the same way as their peers (p. 14).

One possible reason for the discrepancy in the findings between the field interviews and SWAY is that respondents who reported that former child soldiers had difficulty

⁷³ Agula 2009, Asutai 2009, George 2009, Julius 2009, Kevin 2009, McGrath 2009, Oboe 2009, Onan Richard 2009, Thakur 2008.

⁷⁴ Oboe 2009, Loyola Richard 2009, Tonny 2009.

⁷⁵ Samuel 2009.

functioning in school based their opinion on their experience in interim care centres which may have a higher concentration of children with mental health and behavioural problems.

Support services for ex-combatant children who have difficulty behaving and learning in school are extremely limited in the government education system in northern Uganda. Counselling services are unavailable.⁷⁶ There are no accelerated learning programs. Former child soldiers who have missed years of schooling are often too embarrassed to sit in classrooms with much younger children.⁷⁷ There are no services for children with disabilities.⁷⁸ In addition, corporal punishment – which has been officially abolished – continues to be used in the classroom and it may exacerbate trauma for former child soldiers who have had violent experiences with the rebels.⁷⁹ Interview respondents call attention to the lack of services that prevent many child soldiers from reaping the benefits of education and recommend interventions to support child soldiers to return to school.

Education Access in northern Uganda

In order to investigate whether education assistance supports the reintegration of former child soldiers it is important to examine the levels of access to quality education in northern Uganda. Enrollment rates were very low in northern Uganda from 2000-2005 as the LRA targeted schools, forcing many children to stay at home to avoid being

⁷⁶ Onyut 2009, Thakur 2008.

⁷⁷ Kitara 2009, Onyut 2009.

⁷⁸ Thakur 2008.

⁷⁹ Asutai 2009, Bruno 2009.

kidnapped, raped, tortured, or killed.⁸⁰ Teachers fled to safer regions of the country. Since the security situation improved in 2007, more children are attending school in northern Uganda.⁸¹ However, there are no accelerated education programs to improve access for northern Ugandan children who have missed years of school (SWAY I, 2006, p. 25, 73).

While Uganda is often held up as a success story by international donors concerned with education (UNESCO 2009a, UNESCO 2009b), access to schooling remains a problem in the war-affected North. Universal Primary Education (UPE) was instituted in 1997 and Universal Secondary Education (USE) followed in 2007.⁸² The country has ostensibly achieved MDG 2 - universal primary education and MDG 3 - gender parity in primary according to official enrollment rates (UNESCO 2003/2004, UNESCO 2008, UNESCO 2009a, UNESCO 2009b, p.9).⁸³ However these aggregate figures obscure the lack of access to education in the North. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (2005) reports that 60% of primary schools had been moved to temporary structures in displacement camps and an estimated 25% of primary school age children were not attending classes in these camps. The District Education Inspector for Gulu reported in April 2009 that these numbers had improved ;⁸⁴ however, while official figures state that 92% percent of Ugandan children are enrolled in primary school, less

⁸⁰ Thakur 2008.

⁸¹ Obot, 2009, Thakur 2008.

⁸² Thakur 2008.

⁸³ Millennium Development Goal 2 – universal primary education seeks to “ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling” (UNICEF 2009b). Millennium Development Goal 3 – gender equality aims to “eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015” (UNICEF 2009c).

⁸⁴ Obot 2009.

than half of them complete a full cycle of primary education.⁸⁵ Numbers for the Northern districts were unavailable, but they were estimated to be much lower than national statistics due to insecurity and inability to pay fees *SWAY I* 2006, p. v; *SWAY II* 2008, p. vi).⁸⁶ According to *SWAY I* (2006),

while primary school completion is relatively high, few youth make the transition from primary to secondary school, principally it seems because they cannot afford school fees... The struggle to pay school and exam fees has led to a widespread pattern of episodic schooling, where enrolment and exam-taking are interrupted frequently by periods of idleness, typically when a student's financial support disappears or dries up (p. v; see also *SWAY II*, p. 28-29).

While school fees have been officially abolished for primary and secondary education, many northern Ugandan families cannot afford to pay for their children's uniforms, lunches, school supplies, and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) fees which cover the costs of constructing classrooms, furnishing desks, and paying teachers who are not on the government payroll.⁸⁷

The opportunity cost of education also prevents war-affected children in northern Uganda from completing primary and secondary school. Many children are forced to work to supplement the family income, and therefore cannot attend school (Cheney 2007, p. 83,99).⁸⁸ Girls are reported to be much more likely to dropout of school than boys:⁸⁹ "young women have had only 4.9 years of schooling on average compared to 7.0 for young men" (*SWAY II* 2008, p. v, 19). Girls are often forced to stay at home to perform

⁸⁵ Abraham 2009, Asutai 2009.

⁸⁶ Abraham 2009; Asutai 2009.

⁸⁷ Abraham 2009, Agula 2009, Jennifer 2009; Kevin 2009, Kitara 2009, McKinney 2009, Obot 2009, Odong 2009, Poro 2009, Loyola Richard 2009, Samuel 2009, Tonny 2009, Toolit 2009.

⁸⁸ George 2009, Oboe 2009, Okello 2009, Odong 2009.

⁸⁹ Jasper 2009, Oboe 2009, Obot 2009, Onyut 2009, Thakur 2008, Toolit 2009.

domestic chores and babysit younger siblings.⁹⁰ Others are pressured into early marriages as impoverished families need their bride price to support the remaining family members.⁹¹ Pregnant girls may be expelled from school. According to an article in Uganda's *New Vision* (2008),

Education minister Namirembe Bitamazire recently announced plans to stop pregnant students from sitting examinations: "The school is meant for studying and not producing children. If we allow this trend to continue, we may have to train teachers as midwives. And this is not possible" (Nabusoba & Waiswa 2008).

If girls are able to attend school, they face the risk of gender-based violence in and around schools.⁹² As a large number of girls associated with LRA forces are reported to return from the bush with children, it is critically important for them to return to school to develop employable skills so they can earn an income to support their dependents (McKay & Mazurana 2004).⁹³ However, civilian girls who have children without the support of a partner or family also need education to improve their job prospects. The barriers to access to education for children living in poverty, working children, and girls demonstrate that former child soldiers are not the only children in northern Uganda that have difficulties obtaining an education.

Education Quality in northern Uganda

The quality of education offered in government schools and private technical vocational institutions in the North is poor (*SWAY I* 2006, p. 73, 80-81). Government

⁹⁰ Howard 2009, Obot 2009, Odong 2009.

⁹¹ Toolit 2009.

⁹² Asutai 2009, McKinney 2009, Thakur 2008. According to Toolit (2009), recent Ugandan legal reforms have reduced the incidence of gender-based violence in and around schools.

⁹³ Dale 2008.

investments in infrastructure, furniture, textbooks, materials, and teachers have not kept pace with increases in enrollment associated with UPE and USE. School infrastructure is in ruins after decades of conflict.⁹⁴ Classrooms are congested with the influx of displaced children; overcrowding is exacerbated by large numbers of children who have entered primary and secondary school under the UPE and USE policies (SWAY I 2006, p. 24).⁹⁵ Desks are limited and many students are forced to sit on dirt floors during classes.⁹⁶ Government schools lack a sufficient supply of textbooks; the district education inspector reports that there is only 1 textbook for every six learners.⁹⁷

Teachers in government schools are overworked, underpaid, and responsible for instructing 80-200 students in a class.⁹⁸ Teachers may lack sufficient training to teach the material, speak fluently in the language of instruction, and deal with the psychosocial needs of war-affected children.⁹⁹ Reference materials, teaching aids, and basic classroom supplies such as chalk are scarce (SWAY I 2006, p. 24).¹⁰⁰ Low teacher motivation and

⁹⁴ Kitara 2009, Poro 2009, Loyola Richard 2009, Thakur 2008.

⁹⁵ George 2009, Howard 2009, Jasper 2009, Jennifer 2009, Onyut 2009, Thakur 2008.

⁹⁶ Abraham 2009, Obot 2009.

⁹⁷ Obot 2009; see also Abraham 2009, Asutai 2009, Howard 2009, Oboe 2009, Loyola Richard 2009, Tonny 2009.

⁹⁸ Agula 2009, Asutai 2009, George 2009, Kevin 2009, Obot 2009, Okello 2009, Poro 2009, Loyola Richard 2009, Tonny 2009. The average pupil teacher ratio in Gulu district is 1:80, although some classes may be as large as 200. The government target is 1:55 (Jasper 2009, Poro 2009).

⁹⁹ Abraham 2009.

¹⁰⁰ Abraham 2009, Howard 2009, Kevin 2009, Kitara 2009, Oboe 2009, Okello 2009, Poro 2009, Loyola Richard 2009, Tonny 2009.

high teacher absenteeism is reported to have a negative impact on the quality of education in government schools in the North.¹⁰¹

Private technical vocational schools in the North face similar challenges that prevent the delivery of quality education (Eilor 2008). These schools are privately run and do not receive government funding. Necessary materials and equipment for hands-on learning are in short-supply.¹⁰² For example, one vocational school in Unyama camp offered several computer courses without a single working computer. Many teachers do not have formal training.¹⁰³ While education assistance may support successful reintegration outcomes, it is clear that high quality education is more likely to provide former child soldiers with the knowledge and skills to gain an alternative livelihood to child soldiering.

Summary of Results: Hypotheses 1 and 2

Findings from the literature review, field interviews, and the *Surveys of War-Affected Youth* provide evidence to support hypotheses 1 and 2.¹⁰⁴ Although girls associated with fighting forces may be more likely to experience stigma and difficulty reintegrating than boys, the evidence suggests that education assistance facilitates the reintegration of both girls and boys. Ex-combatant girls are also reported to be less likely to return to school than ex-combatant boys without the help of education assistance.

While education appears to contribute to successful reintegration outcomes for ex-

¹⁰¹ Abraham 2009, Obot 2009.

¹⁰² Julius 2009.

¹⁰³ Julius 2009.

¹⁰⁴ H1: Education supports the reintegration of former child soldiers in northern Uganda. H2: While ex-combatant girls are more likely to experience stigma and difficulty reintegrating than ex-combatant boys, education supports the reintegration of both girls and boys formerly associated with the LRA.

combatant boys and girls, the evidence suggests that lack of services in the schools such as counseling services, accelerated learning programs, and supports for children with disabilities may prevent them from reaping the benefits of their education. The quality of education provided to former child soldiers – measured here in terms of infrastructure, textbooks, materials, and trained teachers – may also impact reintegration outcomes. High quality education is more likely to furnish former child soldiers with the knowledge and skills to gain employment.

Competing Hypotheses

The following section will explore competing hypotheses 3 and 4 that deal with the relationship between targeted education assistance and reintegration outcomes.

Hypothesis 3: Targeted education assistance supports the reintegration of former LRA child soldiers.

Hypothesis 4: Targeted education assistance increases stigmatization and hinders the reintegration of former LRA child soldiers.

Based on field interviews, the majority of NGOs devoted to addressing the needs of children in armed conflict in northern Uganda that provide education assistance offer targeted education assistance to former child soldiers.¹⁰⁵ Targeted education assistance may include tuition fees, other school-related fees, scholastic materials, uniforms, and

¹⁰⁵ These organizations include Acholi Education Initiative, Child Voice International, Concerned Parents Association, Echo Bravo, GUSCO, Oasis, and World Vision to name a few (Brenda 2009, Gie 2009, Lydia 2009, McGrath 2009, Samuel 2009, Tonny 2009, Toolit 2009). Windle Trust, Invisible Children, and Norwegian Refugee Council are notable exceptions. Windle Trust provides education assistance to the following target groups: orphans and vulnerable children, formerly abducted child soldiers, disabled children, child mothers, children with chronic illness, children with HIV/AIDS, severely impoverished children, and disadvantaged girls (McKinney 2009). Invisible Children's two target groups are orphans and formerly abducted child soldiers (Howard 2009). Norwegian Refugee Council offers a Youth Education Pack program for youth who have not attended school (Odong 2009, Onyut 2009). Organizations such as UNICEF and Save the Children which are Cluster leads for education globally do not provide education assistance for children affected by conflict; they provide technical support to the local Ministry of Education (Delaney 2009, Jasper 2009, Poro 2009).

programs expressly for former child soldiers. As the quality of education offered in government schools and private technical / vocational institutions in the North is poor (SWAY I 2006, p. 73, 80-81),¹⁰⁶ high quality education programs targeted to former child soldiers may spark community resentment. Specialized NGO education programs targeted to former child soldiers boast trained teachers, small class sizes, and a relative abundance of resources, materials, and classroom supplies.¹⁰⁷ As the previous section on education access and quality have demonstrated, former child soldiers are not the only children in northern Uganda who have missed years of education during the conflict. Children living in poverty, working children, and girls also have difficulty gaining access to quality education. For this reason, education assistance targeted overwhelmingly to ex-combatant children may provoke resentment from community members who do not have access to education of comparable quality.

SWAY I and II do not provide information to support or negate competing hypotheses 3 and 4. While *SWAY* provides useful information on reintegration and education, it does not disaggregate the reintegration outcomes of former child soldiers who receive targeted education assistance to return to school and those who do not.

There is some evidence from field interviews to suggest that targeted education assistance exacerbates stigmatization and impedes reintegration for former child soldiers in northern Uganda. These field interview findings must be interpreted with caution as the snowball sampling procedure does not allow generalization to the wider population;

¹⁰⁶ See also Abraham 2009, Agula 2009, Asutai 2009, George 2009, Howard 2009, Jasper 2009, Kevin 2009, Kitara 2009, Obot 2009, Okello 2009, Poro 2009, Loyola Richard 2009, Tonny 2009.

¹⁰⁷ McGrath 2009.

however, this method of sampling was appropriate for a heuristic case study designed to gather rich data for refining reintegration concepts and theory-building.

Of the 26 respondents who were asked if targeting education assistance increased stigmatization of ex-combatant children and hindered reintegration, 42% agreed that targeting education assistance in this manner interfered with reintegration and 12% indicated that targeting education assistance specifically to children formerly associated with the LRA had caused reintegration problems in the past. A number of NGOs, including World Vision, Concerned Parents Association, and Save the Children, broadened their target group to include other war-affected children to avoid provoking negative reactions from the community and increasing stigmatization of former child soldiers (Akol 2009).¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, 35% of respondents disagreed that targeted education assistance increased stigmatization and hindered reintegration, arguing on the contrary that targeted education assistance supports reintegration. Eleven percent of respondents said that targeted education assistance generally supports reintegration, although it has increased stigmatization and hindered reintegration in a few cases.

While the majority of respondents (42%) stated that targeted education assistance increased stigmatization and hindered reintegration, a strong minority (35%) expressed the opposite view – that targeted education assistance supported reintegration. Why is there a discrepancy? One possible reason is that interview respondents from NGOs managing education projects in northern Uganda may be reluctant to admit any negative consequences of targeting education assistance to former child soldiers out of concern that donors may cancel these projects if they receive this feedback. A second possible

¹⁰⁸ Brenda 2009, Jasper 2009, Kitara 2009, McGrath 2009, Samuel 2009.

reason that the results of the field interviews are mixed is that program officers, district education officials, teachers, and counselors are not aware of the reintegration difficulties faced by ex-combatant children because they do not have the resources to track their reintegration progress after they leave the reception centre.

A third possible reason that the results of the field interviews are varied is that targeted education assistance may increase stigmatization and hinder reintegration in some contexts and not in others. The political context may interact with targeted education assistance and impact reintegration outcomes. For example, community members may be more likely to stigmatize child soldiers who have received targeted education assistance if they have experienced recent rebel attacks (Annan, Brier & Aryemo 2009 – publication of *SWAY* findings; see also *SWAY I* 2006, p. 66-67). The social context may also interact with targeted education assistance and affect reintegration. Targeted education assistance may be more likely to provoke resentment in displaced communities where non-combatant returnees do not receive reintegration assistance. Furthermore, the economic context may interact with targeted education assistance to influence reintegration outcomes. Community members may be less likely to stigmatize former child soldiers who receive targeted education assistance if their own children have reasonable educational and economic prospects.

It is intriguing that 12% percent of respondents indicate that targeted education assistance exacerbated stigmatization and impeded reintegration *in the past*. One reason for this finding may be that community resentment and stigmatization of former child soldiers diminishes as the conflict wanes. In other words, child soldiers may be more likely to progress along the reintegration continuum from unsuccessful to successful

reintegration as rebel attacks on the community decrease. Since 2007, the LRA has been operating in the Democratic Republic of Congo, southern Sudan, and Central African Republic (BBC 2006, Dunn 2004, Economist 2008a, Economist 2008b, Martell 2009). Rebel attacks are no longer carried out on camps and villages in northern Uganda and fewer child soldiers are returning home. Conceivably, during the emergency phase of the conflict when thousands of child soldiers were returning and taking advantage of targeted interventions such as education assistance, community resentment and stigmatization of former child soldiers was more widespread. Evidence from *SWAY* supports this explanation, as rebel attacks were found to precipitate community stigmatization of ex-combatant children (Annan, Brier, and Aryemo 2009 – publication of *SWAY* findings).

A second possible reason that targeted education assistance appears to have negatively impacted reintegration in the past is that NGOs such as World Vision, Save the Children, and Concerned Parents Association have changed their targeting practices to avoid provoking community resistance and increasing stigmatization of ex-combatant children. These NGOs have broadened their target groups to include other war-affected children. The *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated With Armed Forces and Armed Groups* (2007) focus on moving from targeting reintegration assistance narrowly to former child soldiers to a more inclusive, community-based approach to reintegration programming in order to prevent stigmatization of these children. It is unclear whether organizations in northern Uganda are implementing the *Paris Principles and Guidelines*, but the shift of major international NGOs such as World Vision and Save the Children and national NGOs such as Concerned Parents Association may indicate a trend toward non-targeted education assistance.

Summary of Results: Hypotheses 3 and 4

The majority of respondents (42%) provide evidence to support hypothesis 4 – targeted education assistance increases stigma and hinders reintegration of former LRA child soldiers. However, a strong minority (35%) provide evidence to support competing hypothesis 3 - targeted education assistance supports reintegration of former LRA child soldiers. As donors, UN agencies, and NGOs devote considerable resources to reintegration interventions for ex-combatant children, it is important to conduct rigorous studies on targeting to design interventions that contribute to successful, sustainable reintegration outcomes.

This chapter triangulated findings from the literature review, field interviews, and the *Surveys of War-Affected Youth* to explore the relationship between education assistance and the reintegration of ex-combatant children, considering contextual factors and intervening variables. As this is a heuristic case study of northern Uganda, these findings cannot be generalized to the wider universe of cases in which former child soldiers receive reintegration interventions. The following chapter will offer suggestions for further research on reintegration causal mechanisms and outcomes.

Conclusion

A wealth of policy, NGO, and academic literature recommends education to facilitate the reintegration of former child soldiers (Betancourt 2008 et al., CIDA 2000, CSUCS 2009, Machel 1996, *Paris Principles* 2007, UNDPKO 2006, UN OSRSG / CAAC 2009, Verhey 2001). Donors, international organizations, and NGOs have invested considerable resources in reintegration interventions, such as education assistance, for ex-combatant children (CIDA 2010a, CIDA 2010b, Save the Children 2010, World Bank 2010, World Vision 2004, World Vision, 2010). However, very little methodologically rigorous research has been published to date on the relationship between education and reintegration outcomes (Betancourt et. al 2008). In order to address this gap in the literature, this study was designed to investigate three related research questions: 1) Does education support the reintegration of former child soldiers?; 2) Does education assistance affect the reintegration of ex-combatant boys and girls differently? 3) Does targeted education assistance facilitate the reintegration of former child soldiers? A single heuristic case study of northern Uganda was conducted to explore these questions.

Previous studies on reintegration have focused on the psychological and social challenges faced by former child soldiers and the role of families and communities in the reintegration process. These studies report that former child soldiers who have suffered, witnessed, and perpetrated violence may experience mental health and behavioural problems that make it difficult to adapt to civilian life. Other studies indicate that ex-combatant children who return to families and communities that believe they are responsible for violent crimes and contaminated by *cen* may also have difficulty

reintegrating. However, this thesis suggests that individuals, families, and communities are not the only factors that affect reintegration outcomes.

Reintegration is a complex process that has been inadequately theorized in previous studies. This thesis offers a model of the *sustainable reintegration continuum*. Ex-combatant children who find it difficult to adjust to civilian life, experience stigma and estrangement from families and communities, and those who rejoin a rebel group are considered to have unsuccessful reintegration outcomes. Former child soldiers who make a smooth transition to civilian life and those who find family and community acceptance are considered to have successful reintegration outcomes. While acknowledging the role of individuals, families, and communities in influencing reintegration outcomes, this model also suggests that political, social, and economic contextual factors, as well as reintegration interventions contribute to reintegration outcomes. In order to examine the role of education assistance in the reintegration process, it is necessary to account for other intervening variables.

The political situation in northern Uganda has important implications for reintegration outcomes. Children formerly associated with the LRA may be unlikely to rejoin the LRA as it is no longer operating in Ugandan territory. However, they may take up arms to address ongoing Acholi grievances aggravated by decades of conflict, displacement, and uneven development. As Uganda prepares for elections in 2011, the presence of unsuccessfully reintegrated former child combatants may prove to be destabilizing. An article in the Guardian (2010) questions Uganda's capacity to hold a credible, free, and fair election in 2011. Museveni changed the Ugandan constitution in order to run in the presidential election for a third time and there were "serious

irregularities and significant shortcomings” in this 1996 election (Guardian 2010).

Museveni has been put forward as the National Resistance Movement’s candidate for the upcoming election. Given Museveni’s record in Acholiland, this election could become a conflict flashpoint.

The social context in northern Uganda also affects reintegration outcomes.

UNOCHA (2010) reports that, as of April 2010, more than 85% of internally displaced persons in northern Uganda have returned to their original villages; only 72 camps remain with approximately 445,145 people. UNHCR is working with partner organizations to find durable solutions for these internally displaced persons and to dismantle the camps (UNOCHA 2010). Returning to their original villages, former child soldiers may not have access to social services such as health, education, and counselling which may facilitate their reintegration. As well, conflicts over land tenure may become an issue as displaced northern Ugandans return to their original villages.

The economic context in northern Uganda also influences reintegration. Families who have not been able to practice agriculture or rear cattle in the displacement camps may not have the resources to economically support returning child soldiers. In the depressed economy of northern Uganda, former child soldiers may not find an alternative livelihood to participating in armed conflict. It is important to consider these political, social, and economic factors when designing reintegration interventions for ex-combatant children.

The humanitarian assistance and international aid architecture in northern Uganda is also changing with important implications for the reintegration of ex-combatant

children. Humanitarian emergency funding for northern Uganda finished at the end of 2009.¹⁰⁹ Many NGOs that provided reintegration interventions for former child soldiers are moving their operations to the Democratic Republic of Congo.¹¹⁰ Any forthcoming development money must be dispersed in accordance with the following principles outlined in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008):

Ownership – Developing countries set up their own strategy for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption...

Alignment – Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems...

Country Systems – partner country systems will be used to deliver aid as the first option, rather than donor systems.

Conditionality – donors will switch from reliance on prescriptive conditions about how and when aid money is spent based on the developing country's own development objectives (OECD 2010).

Therefore, development money for Uganda must be spent based on decisions made in Kampala. Given current development spending patterns and the political marginalization of Acholi Northerners, there is a risk that this funding will not be used to benefit ex-combatant children associated with the LRA.

Northern Uganda is currently experiencing a situation where political grievances, ethnic cleavages, lack of social services, land tenure disputes, a weak economy, few livelihood opportunities, and an evaporation of humanitarian funding could escalate into open conflict between the Northern Acholi and the National Resistance Movement government in Kampala. The upcoming 2011 election could be a conflict flashpoint. If

¹⁰⁹ McKinney 2009.

¹¹⁰ Dale 2008, McKinney 2009.

former child soldiers are unsuccessfully reintegrated there is a possibility that they may form a new rebel group to address Northern grievances. The successful reintegration of ex-combatant boys and girls in northern Uganda is critical to the security of southern Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Central African Republic. It is crucial to design interventions that foster successful reintegration outcomes in the interest of building peace in the region.

This thesis argues that reintegration interventions such as medical assistance, family tracing services, psychosocial support, traditional healing rituals, community sensitization activities, livelihood support, and education assistance have been designed based on common-sense assumptions rather than evidence-based policy decisions. In order to ensure that reintegration programming funds are contributing to successful reintegration outcomes, rigorous research must be undertaken to evaluate the utility of these interventions. Reintegration interventions must be designed to take into account political, social, and economic contextual factors. Ex-combatant girls may require different forms of reintegration assistance than ex-combatant boys as they are reported to experience more difficulty gaining family and community acceptance. Targeted reintegration assistance may facilitate successful reintegration in some cases and increase stigma in other cases. More research must be conducted on targeting practices to ensure that reintegration interventions, such as education assistance, are promoting reintegration rather than exacerbating cleavages between ex-combatants and civilian members of the community.

This exploratory study attempts to address a gap in the research on reintegration by focusing on the relationship between education assistance and the reintegration of ex-

combatant children. The study suggests that education supports the reintegration of former child soldiers in northern Uganda. Interview respondents reported that education reduces trauma and increases ex-combatant children's self-esteem and confidence. Education was reported to help children formerly associated with the LRA to adjust to civilian life and behave in ways that encouraged community acceptance. Interview respondents stated that school offers former child soldiers opportunities to socialize with other war-affected youth and develop a peer network outside the armed group. Respondents also indicated that education motivates ex-combatant children to set goals for the future, helps these children understand the root causes and consequences of the conflict, and provides the knowledge and skills to gain employment without returning to soldiering.

This study suggests that education assistance supports the reintegration of both ex-combatant boys and girls formerly associated with the LRA. Ex-combatant girls are reported to be more likely to face barriers to reintegration than boys as many of them return from the bush with sexually transmitted infections and children fathered by their rebel captors. Findings suggest that ex-combatant girls in northern Uganda are also less likely to return to school than ex-combatant boys without the help of education assistance. Like their civilian counterparts, girls formerly associated with the LRA may be unable to return to school because they are pregnant or forced to stay home to babysit children. They also face gender-based violence in the school environment. More research must be conducted on education interventions for girls as they may require different forms of assistance.

While evidence from the literature and field interviews suggests that education assistance supports reintegration in northern Uganda, structural barriers may prevent former child soldiers reaping the benefits of their education. Some ex-combatant children have psychological and behavioural difficulties that hinder them from learning and behaving in school. Support services for former child soldiers who have difficulty adjusting to civilian life are extremely limited in government schools. Interview respondents suggested that counselling services, accelerated learning programs, services for children with disabilities, and an elimination of corporal punishment could support former child soldiers' return to school. Improvements in the quality of the northern Ugandan education system, in terms of better infrastructure, appropriate student teacher ratios, adequate supplies of textbooks and materials, and trained teachers may increase the likelihood that former child soldiers and civilian war-affected children alike obtain the knowledge and skills to gain employment without resorting to participating in armed groups.

Further studies must be carried out on targeted and non-targeted education interventions in order to ensure that these interventions are contributing to successful reintegration outcomes. The results of this study are mixed. While a 42% majority of interview respondents provide evidence to suggest that targeted education assistance increases stigma and hinders reintegration, a 35% minority of interview respondents take the opposite position – that targeted education assistance does support reintegration. In addition, 12% percent of interview respondents indicate that targeted education assistance exacerbated stigmatization and impeded reintegration *in the past* and three major NGOs - World Vision, Save the Children and Concerned Parents Association - were reported to

have broadened their target group to avoid provoking a community backlash and increasing the stigmatization of ex-combatant children. Very little research has investigated targeting practices and their impact on reintegration outcomes. More research is needed to ascertain the precise needs of demobilized child soldiers and to design interventions that address these needs and contribute to sustainable reintegration.

Areas for Future Research

As this thesis presents a heuristic case study of northern Uganda, the results of the research cannot be generalized to the wider universe of cases in which former child soldiers receive reintegration interventions. While the evidence suggests that education supports reintegration in northern Uganda, it has not been conclusively demonstrated that education is necessary or sufficient to produce successful reintegration outcomes. However, this case study does show *how* education interacts with other variables in the northern Ugandan context to influence reintegration. The four hypotheses developed from the literature review warrant testing in future research.

This heuristic case study identifies a host of antecedent and intervening variables that may impact reintegration outcomes. The *sustainable reintegration continuum* may be useful for future application to other cases. Future research could also explore the impact of political, social, and economic factors on the reintegration process in more depth by examining the historical roots of conflict – in this case the conflict between the LRA and Museveni's National Resistance Movement. As George & Bennett (2005) note, "Process-tracing provides a common middle ground for historians interested in historical explanation and political scientists and other social scientists who are sensitive to the

complexities of historical events but are more interested in theorizing about categories of cases as well as explaining individual cases” (p. 223). This method of process tracing could be productive for identifying most likely and least likely cases for reintegration.

Policy Implications

Canada and other donors have signed the Paris Principles and pledged to fund non-targeted reintegration programming, although the evidence base for this policy decision is unclear. It is more difficult to demonstrate the “results” of this reintegration assistance when it is dispersed to entire war-affected communities rather than targeted to individual ex-combatant children. Therefore, in order to ensure that donors are implementing evidence-based reintegration policies and demonstrating successful reintegration results, it is essential that more research be carried out to evaluate targeted and non-targeted interventions.

Canada and other signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol have a legal obligation to successfully reintegrate ex-combatant children and have made significant investments in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in conflict-affected countries (UN 1989). Consequently, more research must be conducted to explore the relationship between education and reintegration to ensure that donors and other international actors contribute to positive reintegration and peace-building outcomes.

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Appendix 1: Ethics Approval

Ethics Approval to conduct research on human subjects was received from Leslie J. MacDonald-Hicks, the Coordinator of Carleton Research Ethics Board, in March 2009. Ethics clearance expired on May 31, 2010.

Appendix 2: List of Interview Respondents

Name Organization Title	Key Informant Group	Location	Date of Interview
1. Abraham, Were Grace Gulu Primary Teachers College Principal / Teacher	Teacher	Gulu	May 4, 2009
2. Agula, Acire Geoffrey Children / Youth as Peacebuilders Youth Director	Local NGO	Gulu	April 9, 2009
3. Arach, Grace Children / Youth as Peacebuilders Deputy Youth Director	Local NGO / Ex-Combatant Youth	Gulu	April 9, 2009
4. Asutai, Joseph Anthony Echo Bravo Education Project Officer	Regional NGO	Gulu	May 5, 2009
5. Augustus, Oryem & Charles, Okwi Simon Kitgum Primary Teacher's College Principal and Deputy Principal	Teachers	Kitgum	April 29, 2009
6. Brenda, Odokorach Caroline Concerned Parents Association Psychosocial Program Officer	National NGO	Gulu	April 14, 2009
7. Bruno, Opiro Joseph St. Monica's Tailoring School for Girls Teacher	Teacher	Gulu	April 25, 2009
8. Catherine, Oloya International Rescue Committee Livelihoods and Education Project Officer	International NGO	Kitgum	April 29, 2009
9. Cliff, Ocitti Richard Concerned Parents Association Livelihoods Program Officer	National NGO	Kitgum	April 27, 2009
10. Dale, Linda Children / Youth as Peacebuilders International Executive Director	International NGO	Ottawa	November 21, 2008
11. Delaney, Hugh UNICEF Education Programme Officer	UN Agency	Gulu	April 15, 2009
12. Gie, Lowna Child Voice International Livelihoods Program Officer	International NGO	Gulu	April 19, 2009
13. Howard, Okot Geoffrey Invisible Children Education Scholarship Programme Officer	International NGO	Gulu	April 23, 2009
14. Jasper, Okodi Save the Children Project Manager Education	International NGO	Gulu	April 24, 2009
15. Jennifer, Labuke Invisible Children Schools for Schools - Education Program Officer	International NGO	Gulu	April 23, 2009
16. Julius, Ochola Gulu Community Vocational School Teacher	Teacher	Gulu	April 8, 2009

Gulu Community Vocational School Teacher			
17. Kevin, Olweny Awere Secondary School – Teacher Gulu Primary Teacher’s College – Teacher	Teacher	Gulu	April 15, 2009
18. Kitara, Odhiambo Samuel Children / Youth as Peacebuilders - founding member, peace facilitator, counsellor, child protection officer, teacher	Local NGO Teacher	Gulu	April 5, 2009
19. Lydia, Anena Rosaline GUSCO Centre Administrator; former Education & Training officer	Local NGO	Gulu	May 8, 2009
20. McGrath, Megan Oasis – Volunteer teacher; Former World Vision Australia employee	International NGO	Gulu	March 31, 2009
21. McKinney, Phoebe Windle Trust Education Programme Officer	International NGO	Gulu	May 7, 2009
22. Oboe, Ottober Matthew Awere Secondary School Principal / Teacher	Teacher	Gulu	April 24, 2009
23. Obot, Robinson Gulu Ministry of Education District Education Officer	District Education Officer	Gulu	May 7, 2009
24. Odong, Lawrence Norwegian Refugee Council Education Project Officer – Youth Education Pack	International NGO	Gulu	April 21, 2009
25. Okello, Denis Godwin Gulu Primary Teacher’s College - Teacher Children / Youth as Peacebuilders – Volunteer	Teacher / Local NGO	Gulu	May 4, 2008
26. Okidi, George Awere Secondary School Teacher	Teacher	Gulu	April 9, 2009
27. Okwa, Kitega Samuel Kicwa Reception Centre Livelihoods and Education Project Officer	Local NGO	Kitgum	April 29, 2009
28. Okwokene, Paul Children / Youth as Peacebuilders – volunteer Ex-combatant youth	Local NGO Ex-combatant youth	Gulu	April 16, 2009
29. Olal Atima Collins Kitgum Public Primary School Teacher	Teacher	Kitgum	April 28, 2009
30. Onyut, Mercie Norwegian Refugee Council Education Project Officer	International NGO	Gulu	April 23, 2009
31. Oruk, Denis Children / Youth as Peacebuilders - Chairman of the Board of Trustees; former World Vision counselor, outreach coordinator, and former World Vision	Local NGO / International NGO	Gulu	April 21, 2009

Children of War Reception Centre Administrator			
32. Poro, Sammy UNICEF Education Programme Officer	UN Agency	Gulu	May 4, 2009
33. Richard, Loyola Teacher UNIFAT Primary School	Teacher	Gulu	April 23, 2009
34. Richard, Onan Laroo Body Primary School Deputy Principal / counsellor Psycho- social Department / Teacher	Teacher / Counsellor	Gulu	April 22, 2009
35. Samuel, Lukungu World Vision Psychosocial Counsellor – Children of War Reception Centre	Counsellor / International NGO	Gulu	April 9, 2009
36. Thakur, Dr. Dan CIDA Education Specialist	Donor	Ottawa	November 17, 2008
37. Tonny, Onanchen Simon Echo Bravo – teacher Children / Youth as Peacebuilders – volunteer	Teacher Regional NGO Local NGO	Gulu	May 5, 2009
38. Toolit, Olobo Susan Acholi Education Initiative Education Project Coordinator – Education Scholarships	Local NGO	Gulu	May 7, 2009
39. William, Atube George Laroo Body Primary School Teacher	Teacher	Gulu	April 22, 2009

Appendix 3 : Summary of Interview Findings

Code 1: Education

<p>Acire Geoffrey Agula, Oryem Augustus & Okwi Simon Charles, Olal Atima Collins, Opiro Joseph Bruno, Okidi George, Okodi Jasper, Olweny Kevin, Labuke Jennifer, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard, Onanchen Simon Tonny</p>	<p>UPE policy - increasing access, equity (participation of girls and impoverished children), eradicating illiteracy, improving the standard of living of people in northern Uganda</p>
<p>Were Grace Abraham, Acire Geoffrey Agula, Grace Arach, Oryem Augustus and Okwi Simon Charles, Odokorach Caroline Brenda, Olal Atima Collins, Okidi George, Okodi Jasper, Olweny Kevin, Labuke Jennifer, Anena Rosaline Lydia, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard, Lukungu Samuel, Onanchen Simon Tonny</p>	<p>Problems with the implementation of UPE - not enough government funding, government grant for UPE is not paid on time</p>
<p>Were Grace Abraham, Acire Geoffrey Agula, Grace Arach, Oryem Augustus and Okwi Simon Charles – note: magnitude of challenges not as great as with USE, Okidi George, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Olweny Kevin, Labuke Jennifer, Phoebe McKinney, Robinson Obot - note magnitude of challenges with UPE not as great as USE, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Olobo Susan Toolit,</p>	<p>USE policy - problems with implementation of USE - not enough government funding, fees not paid on time</p>
<p>Were Grace Abraham, Acire Geoffrey Agula, Grace Arach, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Odokorach Caroline Brenda, Oloya Catherine – note: WFP stopped, child labour preventing children from going to school, Ocitti Richard Cliff, Olal Atima Collins, Linda Dale, Okidi George, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Okodi Jasper, Olweny Kevin, Odhambo Samuel Kitara, Jennifer Labuke, Anena Rosaline Lydia, Phoebe McKinney, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong - note: opportunity cost of education, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Paul Okwokene, Mercie Onyut, Denis Oruk, Loyola Richard – note: school feeding not provided, Onan Richard, Lukungu Samuel, Dan Thakur, Onanchen Simon Tonny, Olobo Susan Toolit</p>	<p>Despite UPE, gaps in access</p>
<p>Were Grace Abraham, Acire Geoffrey Agula, Grace Arach,</p>	<p>Education is still not free, children pay PTA fees, cost of uniforms, books,</p>

<p>Odokorach Caroline Brenda, Oloya Catherine – note: WFP stopped school feeding, child labour preventing children from going to school), Ocitti Richard Cliff, Olal Atima Collins, Hugh Delaney, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Okodi Jasper, Olweny Kevin, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Labuke Jennifer, Anena Rosaline Lydia, Phoebe McKinney, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong - note: opportunity cost of education, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Paul Okwokene, Denis Oruk, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard – note: school feeding not provided, Onan Richard, Lukungu Samuel, Onanchen Simon Tonny, Olobo Susan Toolit</p> <p>While school fees have been officially abolished for primary and secondary, many northern Ugandan families cannot afford to pay for their children’s uniforms, lunches, school supplies, and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) fees which cover the costs of constructing classrooms, furnishing desks, and paying teachers who are not on the government payroll (Were Grace Abraham, Acire Geoffrey Agula, Labuke Jennifer, Olweny Kevin, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Phoebe McKinney, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard, Lukungu Samuel, Onanchen Simon Tonny, Olobo Susan Toolit.</p>	<p>materials, pens, exercises, feeding. Costs are prohibitive for some children.</p>
<p>The opportunity cost of education also prevents war-affected children in northern Uganda from obtaining an education. Many children are forced to work to supplement the family income, and therefore cannot attend school (Okidi George, Denis Godwin Okello, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Lawrence Odong).</p>	<p>Opportunity Costs prohibitive.</p>
<p>Were Grace Abraham, Acire Geoffrey Agula, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Oloya Catherine, Okidi George, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Anena Rosaline Lydia, Phoebe McKinney, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Paul Okwokene, Denis Oruk, Onan Richard, Olobo Susan Toolit</p>	<p>High dropout rates, low retention</p>
<p>Acire Geoffrey Agula, Oryem Augustus and Okwi Simon Charles - note: lack of female teachers problem for girls enrollment & retention , Joseph Anthony Asutai, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Okodi</p>	<p>Girls dropout in the higher primary grades, P5, P6, P7. This is not addressed by the UPE policy.</p>

Jasper, Olweny Kevin, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Robinson Obot – note: early marriage affects dropout rate for girls , Lawrence Odong, Kitega Samuel Okwa - note: child mothers have particular problems returning to school , Dan Thakur, Olobo Susan Toolit	
Olweny Kevin, Dan Thakur	No services or support systems in schools for children with special needs
Linda Dale, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, , Olweny Kevin, Mercie Onyut, Loyola Richard, Onan Richard note: no accelerated learning programs in regular government schools , Dan Thakur	No accelerated learning programs for children who have missed school in UPE schools.
Odokorach Caroline Brenda, Onan Richard - note no psychosocial support in regular schools , Dan Thakur, Olobo Susan Toolit	No psychosocial support or counselling services for children in UPE schools.
Phoebe McKinney	No conflict resolution training / peace education.
Acire, Geoffrey Agula, Grace Arach, Oryem Augustus & Okwi Simon Charles, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Odokorach Carol Brenda, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Okodi Jasper, Olweny Kevin – pregnant girls are not allowed in school , Phoebe McKinney, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Paul Okwokene, Mercie Onyut, Dan Thakur, Olobo Susan Toolit - note gender based violence has been dealt with through changes in the law Girls are much more likely to dropout of school than boys: “young women have had only 4.9 years of schooling on average compared to 7.0 for young men” (SWAY II 2008, p. v, 19, see also Okodi Jasper, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Robinson Obot, Mercie Onyut, Dan Thakur, Olobo Susan Toolit). Girls are often forced to stay at home to perform domestic chores and babysit younger siblings (Okot Geoffrey Howard, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong). Others are pressured into early marriages as impoverished families need their bride price to support the remaining family members (Olobo Susan Toolit). Pregnant girls may be expelled from school. If girls are able to attend school, they face the risk of gender-based violence in and around	Dropout due to pregnancy / cultural values. Pregnant girls prevented from attending school. Gender-based violence prevents access for girls.

schools (Joseph Anthony Asutai, Phoebe McKinney, Dan Thakur).	
Mercie Onyut	No special needs education.
<p>Were Grace Abraham, Grace Arach, Oryem Augustus & Okwi Simon Charles, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Odokorach Caroline Brenda, Opiro Joseph Bruno, Olal Atima Collins, Hugh Delaney, Okidi George, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Okodi Jasper, Labuke Jennifer, Olweny Kevin, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Megan McGrath, Phoebe McKinney, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Lawrence Odong, Dennis Godwin Okello, Mercie Onyut, Denis Oruk, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard, Dan Thakur, Onanchen Simon Tonny, Atube George William</p>	Gaps in Quality
<p>Were Grace Abraham, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Hugh Delaney, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Phoebe McKinney, Robinson Obot, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard, Dan Thakur</p> <p>Government investments in infrastructure, furniture, textbooks, materials, and teachers have not kept pace with increases in enrollment associated with UPE and USE. School infrastructure is in ruins after decades of conflict (Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard, Dan Thakur).</p>	Expenditure has not kept pace with increases in enrollment.
<p>Were Grace Abraham, Oryem Augustus & Okwi Simon Charles, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Oloya Catherine, Olal Atima Collins, Hugh Delaney, Okidi George, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Okodi Jasper, Labuke Jennifer, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Phoebe McKinney, Robinson Obot, Mercie Onyut, Denis Oruk, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard, Dan Thakur, Onanchen Simon Tonny.</p> <p>Classrooms are congested with the influx of displaced children; overcrowding is exacerbated by large numbers of children who have entered primary and secondary school under the UPE and USE policies (Okidi George, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Okodi Jasper, Labuke Jennifer, Mercie Onyut, Dan Thakur). Desks are limited and students are often forced to sit on dirt floors during classes (Were Grace</p>	Inadequate infrastructure / furniture

Abraham, Robinson Obot).	
<p>Were Grace Abraham, Oryem Augustus & Okwi Simon Charles, Oloya Catherine, Olal Atima Collins, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Okodi Jasper, Labuke Jennifer, Olweny Kevin, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Megan McGrath, Phoebe McKinney, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong, Mercie Onyut, Denis Oruk, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard, Onanchen Simon Tonny, Atube George William.</p> <p>Teachers in government schools are overworked, underpaid, and responsible for instructing 80-200 students in a class (Acire Geoffrey Agula, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Okidi George, Olweny Kevin, Robinson Obot, Denis Godwin Okello, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard, Onanchen Simon Tonny). Teachers may lack sufficient training to teach the material, speak fluently, in the language of instruction, and deal with the psycho-social needs of war-affected children (Were Grace Abraham).</p> <p>The average pupil teacher ratio in Gulu district is 1:80, although some classes may be as large as 200. The government target is 1:55 (Okodi Jasper, Sammy Poro).</p>	Not enough teachers. High student-teacher ratios. Teachers are overworked and underpaid. Teachers do not have sufficient training.
Were Grace Abraham, Odokorach Carol Brenda, Oloya Catherine, Olal Atima Collins, Robinson Obot, Denis Godwin Okello, Low teacher motivation and high absenteeism has a negative impact on the quality of education in government schools in the North (Were Grace Abraham, Robinson Obot).	Low teacher motivation.
Were Grace Abraham, Okidi George, Okodi Jasper, Denis Godwin Okello, Sammy Poro	Performance dropped.

<p>Were Grace Abraham, Oryem Augustus & Okwi Simon Charles, Grace Arach, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Olal Atima Collins, Okidi George, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Okodi Jasper, Labuke Jennifer, Olweny Kevin, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Megan McGrath, Phoebe McKinney, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Robinson Obot, Denis Godwin Okello, Denis Oruk, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard, Onan Richard, Onanachen Simon Tonny,</p> <p><i>Government schools lack a sufficient supply of textbooks; the district education inspector reports that there is only 1 textbook for every six learners (Robinson Obot; see also Were Grace Abraham, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Loyola Richard, Onanachen Simon Tonny).</i></p> <p>Reference materials, teaching aids, and basic classroom supplies such as chalk are scarce (Were Grace Abraham, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Olweny Kevin, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Denis Godwin Okello, Sammy Poro, Loyola Richard, Onanachen Simon Tonny).</p>	<p>Not enough textbooks, materials and equipment</p>
<p>Acire Geoffrey Agula, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Oryem Augustus & Okwi Simon Charles, Opiro Joseph Bruno, Oloya Catherine, Okodi Jasper, Olweny Kevin, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong, Mercie Onyut, Lukungu Samuel, Dan Thakur- note: there is a need for a comprehensive strategy to tackle education in northern Uganda, Onanachen Simon Tonny, Olobo Susan Toolit, Atube George William</p> <p>Enrollment rates were very low in northern Uganda from 2000-2005 as the LRA targeted schools, forcing many children to stay at home to avoid being kidnapped, raped, tortured, or killed (Dan Thakur). Teachers fled to safer regions of the country. Since the security situation improved in 2007, more children are attending school in school in northern Uganda (Robinson Obot, Dan Thakur).</p>	<p>Effects of Conflict on Access and Quality Education in the North</p>

<p>Were Grace Abraham, Acire Geoffrey Agula, Oryem Augustus and Okwi Simon Charles, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Opiro Joseph Bruno - note: despite what UNICEF says new schools are not being built in the villages. People are returning to the original schools which need to be refurbished, Odokorach Caroline Brenda, Oloya Catherine, Hugh Delaney - note: 5/113 schools still displaced at the time of the interview, Okodi Jasper, Lawrence Odong, Mercie Onyut, Denis Oruk - note: camps schools offer particularly poor quality education, Robinson Obot - note: “20 years of war has not been easy for our children; for our teachers; for our parents. People tried not to give up on education during the war, but it has not been easy because all of our schools or most of them were displaced. And so there was no proper teaching and learning going on. Most of our learners were all like living in fears, going to school was like you have to find out whether things are safe today or not. A lot of interruptions even when children are in the school. If fighting starts you have to run for your life.”, Dan Thakur, Olobo Susan Toolit</p> <p>The District Education Inspector for Gulu reported in April 2009 that these numbers had improved (Robinson Obot); however, while official figures state that 92% percent of Ugandan children are enrolled in primary school, less than half of them complete a full cycle of primary education (Were Grace Abraham, Joseph Anthony Asutai). Numbers for the Northern districts were unavailable, but they were estimated to be much lower than national statistics due to insecurity and inability to pay fees (Were Grace Abraham, Joseph Anthony Asutai).</p>	<p>Effects of Displacement on Access and Quality Education in the North.</p>
<p>Acire Geoffrey Agula, Opiro Joseph Bruno, Oryem Augustus and Okwi Simon Charles, Oloya Catherine, Hugh Delaney, Okodi Jasper, Robinson Obot, Dan Thakur</p>	<p>Displaced people moving back to the villages. Need to refurbish and build new schools in the villages.</p>
<p>Were Grace Abraham, Acire Geoffrey Agula, Oryem Augustus and Okwi Simon Charles, Denis Oruk</p>	<p>Parents returning to original villages and leaving their children in the camps where there are schools. Raises child protection issues.</p>
<p>Lukungu Samuel, Acire Geoffrey Agula, Lukungu Samuel, Olobo</p>	<p>Parents have no income - no access to traditional agricultural and cattle-</p>

Susan Toolit	rearing livelihoods to pay school fees.
Grace Arach, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Odokorach Caroline Brenda, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Labuke Jennifer, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Labuke Jennifer, Anena Rosaline Lydia, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Megan McGrath, Phoebe McKinney, Loyola Richard, Dan Thakur – note: NGOs are not coordinating with the national plan - very weak link with the national plan , Onanchen Simon Tonny, Olobo Susan Toolit	NGOs addressing gaps in education in the North.
Okot Geoffrey Howard, Phoebe McKinney, Olobo Susan Toolit	NGOs are overwhelmingly focused on primary education and not secondary education.
Ocitti Richard Cliff	Ugandan government is now against the sponsorship of children because they say they are providing FREE education. Does not include PTA and hidden fees. Political.
Grace Arach, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Ochola Julius, Megan McGrath, Phoebe McKinney, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Necessary materials and equipment for hands-on learning are in short-supply (Ochola Julius). One vocational school in Unyama camp offered a number of computer courses without a single working computer. In contrast, specialized NGO education programs targeted to former child soldiers boast trained teachers, small class sizes, and a relative abundance of resources, materials, and classroom supplies (Megan McGrath).	Technical vocational education poor quality. Teachers are overworked and poorly paid. Teachers are untrained. Schools needs equipment, books, and materials. Technical Vocational Education is not market relevant.

Code 2 Education for former child soldiers

Joseph Anthony Asutai - note: education provides a routine, an opportunity for recreation, opportunities for former child soldiers to become articulate, and places for them to socialize,	Education fosters the reintegration of former child soldiers.
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<p>Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Anena Rosaline Lydia, Phoebe McKinney, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Kitega Samuel Okwa – note: unless former child soldiers receive an education we are promoting idleness and insecurity, Paul Okwokene, Onan Richard, Lukungu Samuel, Dan Thakur, Onanchen Simon Tonny - note: education restores hope and confidence, Olobo Susan Toolit - note: former child soldiers can be manipulated and become involved in bad activities if they do not receive an education</p>	
<p>Joseph Anthony Asutai, Opiro Joseph Bruno, Ochola Julius, Megan McGrath, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Loyola Richard, Onan Richard, Lukungu Samuel, Dan Thakur, Onanchen Simon Tonny, Atube George William.</p>	<p>Former child soldiers have difficulty coping in school for the following reasons:</p>
<p>Acire Geoffrey Agula, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Okidi George, Ochola Julius, Olweny Kevin, Megan McGrath, Phoebe McKinney, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Onan Richard, Dan Thakur</p>	<p>Code 2a: Former child soldiers suffer from trauma, PTSD, nightmares, and flashbacks that interfere with learning.</p>
<p>Opiro Joseph Bruno, Ochola Julius – note: fighting, Megan McGrath, Kitega Samuel Okwa – note: violent, chaotic behaviour, Onan Richard, Dan Thakur, Atube George William - note: destructive, arrogant</p>	<p>Former child soldiers have behavioural problems and disrupt the classroom (aggression, arrogance, abusive language, "mentality of the bush" etc.)</p>
<p>Ochola Julius, Megan McGrath, Kitega Samuel Okwa - note: especially child mothers, Lukungu Samuel</p>	<p>Former child soldiers are socially isolated.</p>
<p>Ottober Matthew Oboe, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Lukungu Samuel - note: if former child soldiers are accepted and loved they will cope well,</p>	<p>However, some former child soldiers cope well in school.</p>

Loyola Richard – note: a few former child soldiers have done very well in school , Onanchen Simon Tonny - note: some of the former child soldiers are very disciplined	
Joseph Anthony Asutai, Opiro Joseph Bruno, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Dan Thakur, Atube George William	Recommended interventions for former child soldiers attending school:
Mercie Onyut, Dan Thakur	Counselling services available in the school.
Atube George William	Special curriculum for former child soldiers.
Joseph Anthony Asutai, Opiro Joseph Bruno	No corporal punishment. Corporal punishment exacerbates trauma.
Odhiambo Samuel Kitara	Accelerated learning programs. This would reduce dropout as many child soldiers do not want to join classes with much younger children.
Ottober Matthew Oboe	Peace education.
Dan Thakur	Special needs services. Currently, no special needs services for disabled former child soldiers.

Code 3 Targeting of Education Assistance

Hypothesis 1: Education supports the reintegration of former child soldiers.	Unanimous.
How?	Fewer respondents were able to demonstrate how education supported reintegration: Grace Arach, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Paul Okwokene, Denis Oruk, Onan Richard, Lukungu Samuel, Olobo Susan Toolit.

	Education was reported to reduce trauma for children who have witnessed and perpetrated war violence with the rebels (Onan Richard, Lukungu Samuel).
	Schooling was believed to build self-esteem and confidence in ex-combatant children (Joseph Anthony Asutai).
	Interview respondents also observed that education helps children formerly associated with the LRA to adjust to civilian life and behave in ways that encourage community acceptance (Joseph Anthony Asutai, Olobo Susan Toolit).
	Respondents indicated that education promotes reintegration by giving former child soldiers the opportunity to socialize with other war-affected children and to develop a peer network outside the LRA (Joseph Anthony Asutai, Denis Oruk).
	Interview respondents claimed that returning to school supports successful reintegration by encouraging children to set goals for the future (Joseph Anthony Asutai).
	Education was also reported to help former child soldiers understand the root causes and consequences of conflict, so that they may play a role in conflict prevention (Olobo Susan Toolit).
	Finally, interview respondents claimed that education provides ex-combatant children with the knowledge and skills to gain employment without returning to soldiering (Grace Arach, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Paul Okwokene, Olobo Susan Toolit).
Hypotheses 3 and 4: 26 respondents	
Hypothesis 3: Targeted education assistance supports the reintegration of former child soldiers. (9/26 = 35%)	Grace Arach, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Opiro Joseph Bruno, Lowna Gie, Ochola Julius, Phoebe McKinney, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Lawrence Odong, Olobo Susan Toolit.

Olobo Susan Toolit	The community's reaction to educational support for returnees is that they are very happy. Everyone has realized that without education they will not go far. And they do everything possible to make sure that these children go to school
3/26=12%	Targeted education assistance supports the reintegration of former child soldiers. Stigmatization hindering reintegration only occurred in a few cases (Denis Oruk, Okidi George, Dan Thakur).
Dan Thakur	According to Dan, the reasons why there is not much tension over the targeting of education resources to child soldiers are as follows: 1) The community feels sympathy for former child soldiers because they were abducted. The conflict in northern Uganda is an Acholi conflict. Joseph Kony himself is from that area. He's inflicting this problem on his own people so there is a lot of sympathy for the children. 2) The number of children who are returning is very small and doesn't provoke jealousy. About 100, 200 a year. 3) Community sensitization helped reduce stigma. 4) The children deserted the LRA and want to reintegrate for the most part. 5) Child soldiers don't get much in terms of assistance.
Hypothesis 4: Targeted education assistance increases stigmatization of former child soldiers and hinders reintegration. (11/26 = 42%)	Acire Geoffrey Agula, Ocitti Richard Cliff, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Olweny Kevin, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Anena Rosaline Lydia, Paul Okwokene, Loyola Richard, Onan Richard, Lukungu Samuel, Onanchen Simon Tonny
Ocitti Richard Cliff	Communities felt angry... jealous – support for returnees – this happened in Kitgum and all war-affected areas of northern Uganda. Because you go to the community and then you say I want a group of formerly abducted children could they meet here? And then it's like they say: every NGO that is coming here is coming for these people. So you find more than NGO giving same support to the same group each time each year. So “what about us? What about us? Who will take care of these people?.” There was a lot of stigmatization of the former child soldier returnees.
Odhiambo Samuel Kitara	Others have suffered besides those who have gone to the bush...They best way to avoid stigma is to give support to “war-affected children”. Not just former child soldiers. This also includes those whose parents died. And when we talk about war-affected children - some of the children - their fathers don't die like killed by the rebels but by the diseases which are being caused because of the war. Like a number of people are put in camps and in the camps the diseases were easily breaking up...you talk of cholera. And spread of HIV / AIDS. It became so rampant, number 1 died of HIV /AIDS...So all those children who are left out, automatically

	became war-affected children. Now the best which is being done now is not to target a particular group, but at least to look at all the vulnerable children, who have been affected by the war.
Anena Rosaline Lydia	Former child soldiers have more access to education than other children because so many NGOs are focusing on former child soldiers. Community members feel jealous that former child soldiers are getting education sponsorship and they are being ignored. They are not being taken care of and NGOs are taking care of those who did a lot of atrocities. The community stigmatizes these child soldiers because they are angry when they see child soldiers being supported and yet they also suffered! Some of them even lost limbs. Some of them lost their parents
Paul Okwokene	Most of the education support goes to former child soldier returnees. Other people in the community feel jealous of the education support I got.
Loyola Richard	Students feel angry or jealous that returnees are receiving sponsorship for their education, especially those who come from poor families. Especially an orphan who is suffering because his parents were killed by the rebels and sees these children being paid for. And yet these child soldiers killed their parents.
Onan Richard	Some community members feel jealous that former child soldiers are getting to go to Laroo Body and receiving sponsorship. Sometimes they say: "Why did the government build this beautiful school for the formerly abducted children?" So that attitude, I think the jealousy is still there, because they look at the children who are like those who are not getting support because they have caused atrocities...a number of atrocities and so the community attitude toward the school there because they want their normal children to come here. But there is a restriction of formerly abducted children. We don't admit any child who has never gone to the bush.
Onanchen Simon Tonny	There is a lot of jealousy that child soldiers are receiving support to go to school. Special education programs like those offered by Echo Bravo are of much higher quality than the education offered in the government system.
Increased stigmatization and hindered reintegration IN THE PAST 3/26 = 12%)	Odokorach Carol Brenda, Okodi Jasper, Megan McGrath

Odokorach Carol Brenda	There are some community members who think its unfair that NGOs are supporting returnees as they attacked the community. The conflict has played a very big role. If you go to the community now and say we have a new project and we are looking for vulnerable people, they say "all of us are vulnerable!" It is stigmatizing to the returnee if you restrict your support only to the returnee. The negative reaction is very stigmatizing. Now NGOs mix their targeting so its not only returnees. CPA did this. The project was designed for returnees, but CPA decided to mix the youth to avoid the incidence of stigmatization and discrimination. CPA has been mixing beneficiaries for about 5 years.
Megan McGrath	For years, in Gulu, when organizations targeted returnees exclusively, the community perceived the returnees as getting more and stigmatized them. Only within the last 2 or 3 years that's changed because organizations realize that this is actually putting more negative stigma on them, so they changed their targeting practices. I think it's changing – less and less the community is perceiving returnees as receiving more resources than your average war-affected child. 5 years ago it was a big problem. The community definitely perceived that these were the people that put us in the camps; these are the people that killed our families; these are the people that caused all the problems to Northern Uganda, and yet, they're being helped. It's almost like they are benefiting from what they've done. But now I think it's made a huge turnaround and people are slowly starting to realize that, okay, no, organizations are helping everyone. But I suppose there are still the few who will still point the finger and say they're being helped when they are the ones that disorganized this community.

Code 4 Political Context

Museveni's "neglect" of the North:

Museveni's government in Kampala is not focused on improving education service delivery in the region (Dan Thakur). Statistics relating to poverty, water coverage, roads, HIV / AIDS, and education are worse in northern Uganda than in the rest of the country due to government neglect of the region (Joseph Anthony Asutai).

NGOs are contributing more to service delivery in northern Uganda than the Kampala government. (Dan Thakur)

The LRA doesn't want to make peace with the government in Kampala. They have political goals (Paul Okwokene).

Some people, including the government in Kampala and military actors, have benefitted from the war. Some of the commanders in the North are responsible for the prolonged conflict. There has been so much destruction from the war. There has also been benefit from the war. Ghost soldiers

have been kept on the government payroll. There are actually small numbers of troops on the ground fighting the LRA. The government / army is profiting from the LRA war. Businesses benefit (food, fuel, transportation). The president's brother profited from the war - junk helicopters scandal. The Commander of Operation Iron Fist owns Acholi Inn. The report on the investigation into the junk helicopters scandal was never published. The intelligence department has not been audited. It is criminal to be identified with the opposition in Uganda. Even when they say it's freedom of the press and freedom of association, it's in name only. (Anonymous Interview).

The LRA is only a symptom of problems in northern Uganda. Young people may return to conflict. An Amnesty package does not provide a future for former child soldiers (Anonymous Interview).

Northern Uganda is marginalized politically (Joseph Anthony Asutai).

Conflict:

Museveni took a military approach to the conflict with the LRA (Dan Thakur).

Due to the deteriorating security situation, the World Vision Children of War reception centre was moved from Gulu to Masindi in 1996-2001 (Denis Oruk).

The conflict was concentrated in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader (Dan Thakur). In 2002-2003 the conflict spilled over into Lira and Masindi (Dan Thakur).

The intensity of the conflict has reduced significantly since 2005 (Dan Thakur).

Since the security situation has improved, there have been no night commuters - since 2007 (Dan Thakur).

The LRA is still present in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic. For this reason, less former child soldiers are returning to northern Uganda as it is difficult for them to escape and return home (Anena Rosaline Lydia). Few former child soldiers have been returning since 2006 (Ocitti Richard Cliff, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Lukungu Samuel).

Oil:

There is oil in the region. The positive side of oil is that the government is going to fight "tooth and nail" to keep Kony from invading northern Uganda again because the government wants to tap into this wealth. The oil reserves in Amuru have been rated world class. The government has a vested interest in providing security in the region. The negative side of oil is that in most of the countries in Africa where you have oil there is a big mess. (Division of wealth). The government blocked off the road to this oil field in Amuru. It's now guarded by Saracen guards, the company belonging to the president (Anonymous Interview.)

LRA

Brutal record with children (Thakur). 10-20,000 children abducted (Thakur) – (note these are different figures from the literature review).

LRA take the stand that they fight for the Acholi people (Joseph Anthony Asutai).

Children fear abduction by the LRA (Lukungu Samuel).

LRA cult – believe in demons (Lukungu Samuel). LRA brainwashes children (Ottober Matthew Oboe).

End of Emergency Phase:

NGOs are leaving northern Uganda as emergency funding is ending. The development money northern Uganda expected has not been forthcoming. (Phoebe McKinney, Ottober Matthew Oboe).

Code 5 Social Context

Social Service Delivery

Social service delivery in northern Uganda needs to be improved to come on par with the rest of the country. The Human Development Index is the lowest in this region compared to other regions. The delivery of education and health has been neglected for years due to the conflict (Dan Thakur). Poverty, cholera, meningitis in the camps(Olobo Susan Toolit).

Camp Leadership

Local leadership in the camp must play a role in reintegration (Joseph Anthony Asutai).

Reintegration of the displaced

Child soldiers are not the only people in northern Uganda who are reintegrating. People are leaving the camps and returning to their villages. However, they will stay in transit camps for a number of years. This is because negotiation with the LRA is not very solid (Dan Thakur).

Sexual abuse, Child Marriage, and Commercialized Sex in the Region

Northern Uganda has high rates of sexual abuse and commercialized sex due to the conflict. Sexual abuse, child marriage, and commercialized sex interferes with girls education (Joseph Anthony Asutai).

Code 6 Economic Context

Poverty

Northern Ugandans are living in poverty (Joseph Anthony Asutai, Lukungu Samuel, Olobo Susan Toolit).

<p>Northern Uganda is marginalized economically (Joseph Anthony Asutai).</p>
<p>Agriculture</p> <p>Northern Uganda was a food basket, but agriculture has been disrupted by displacement and conflict. People have been in displacement camps for so long that they no longer know how to farm (Joseph Anthony Asutai, Ocitti Richard Cliff, Mercie Onyut).</p>
<p>Displacement</p> <p>It is estimated that more than 30% of the IDP population will not return to their homes. They saw their relatives being killed and will not return. Many youth have grown up in displacement camps because the conflict has been ongoing for 20 years. Produced in the camp, bred in the camp, married in the camp, they have their families in the camps. They have no relationship with a remote village. Also, they do not know agriculture (Joseph Anthony Asutai).</p>
<p>Oil:</p> <p>There is oil in the region. The positive side of oil is that the government is going to fight “tooth and nail” to keep Kony from invading northern Uganda again because the government wants to tap into this wealth. The oil reserves in Amuru have been rated world class. The government has a vested interest in providing security in the region. The negative side of oil is that in most of the countries in Africa where you have oil there is a big mess. (Division of wealth). The government blocked off the road to this oil field in Amuru. It’s now guarded by Saracen guards, the company belonging to the president (Anonymous Interview.)</p>
<p>Sexual Abuse, Child marriage, and Commercialized Sex in the Region</p> <p>Northern Uganda has high rates of sexual abuse and prostitution due to the conflict. Sexual abuse, child marriage and commercialized sex interferes with girls education (Joseph Anthony Asutai).</p>
<p>Child Labour</p> <p>Many children are unable to attend school as they must contribute to the family income (Oloya Catherine, Okidi George, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong). Girls babysit, cook and do household chores (Lawrence Odong).</p>
<p>Intersection between Education and the Economic Context:</p> <p>Northern Ugandans need education to get jobs and access the "national cake" (Joseph Anthony Asutai, Denis Oruk, Mercie Onyut, Olobo Susan Toolit).</p>

Code 7 Reintegration into Families and Communities: Acceptance or Stigma?

Families

Some former child soldiers are stigmatized / abandoned by their families (Joseph Anthony Asutai, Anena Rosaline Lydia, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Paul Okwokene, Dan Thakur, Onanchen Simon Tonny). Their families consider them to be rude and arrogant with the "mentality of the bush" (Odhiambo Samuel Kitara). Girls are especially ostracized by their families (Lowna Gie, Paul Okwokene, Lukungu Samuel).

Former child soldiers fear their families may kill them (Paul Okwokene).

Families may not be able to accept another mouth to feed (Lukungu Samuel).
Child soldiers may be forced by the LRA to kill / injure family members (Lowna Gie).

Communities

Communities do not accept former child soldiers. They are stigmatized by their communities (Joseph Anthony Asutai, Ocitti Richard Cliff, Lowna Gie, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Anena Rosaline Lydia, Paul Okwokene, Denis Oruk, Lukungu Samuel, Onanchen Simon Tonny).

Girls are especially ostracized by their communities (Joseph Anthony Asutai, Lowna Gie, Paul Okwokene, Lukungu Samuel).

Child Soldiers may be forced by the LRA to kill / injure community members (Lowna Gie).

Community Sensitization

Community Sensitization facilitates reintegration by helping community members understand why former child soldiers are receiving specialized assistance. Performance, dramas - to show that it was not the children's decision to join the LRA (Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Paul Okwokene, Lukungu Samuel).

Community sensitization carried out by faith communities / NGOs (Paul Okwokene, Dan Thakur).

Community members are being sensitized that these children were abducted against their will – community sensitization is reported to promote reintegration (Ocitti Richard Cliff, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Megan McGrath, Lukungu Samuel). One of the messages is that the community and government should have protected these children (Lukungu Samuel). Another message is that these children are not associated

with <i>cen</i> (Lukungu Samuel).
<p>Coping with Stigma</p> <p>Some former child soldiers cope with stigma by ignoring insults and abuse from the community (Paul Okwokene).</p>
<p>Stigma and Returning to school</p> <p>Going back to school was reported to reduce stigma for former child soldiers. They get an opportunity to socialize with other children and this socialization is carried on outside the school. This helps them gain acceptance (Joseph Anthony Asutai).</p> <p>Child mothers are stigmatized at school (Joseph Anthony Asutai).</p> <p>Contrary to other respondents, Ottober Matthew Oboe reports that former child soldiers are not stigmatized at school (Ottobor Matthew Oboe).</p>

Code 8: Gender

	<p>Gender Roles</p> <p>Male children taken to fight and carry items. Female children taken as forced wives of commanders. Forced motherhood (Lowna Gie, Dan Thakur).</p> <p>Female former child soldiers fear their bush husbands will come to reabduct them (Onan Richard).</p> <p>Female former child soldiers suffer additional stigma because of rape / forced marriage / forced motherhood (Lowna Gie, Megan McGrath, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Paul Okwokene, Olobo Susan Toolit). Girls find it more difficult to reintegrate (Lowna Gie, Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Olobo Susan Toolit).</p>
	<p>Education for Girls</p>
Acire Geoffrey Agula, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Oryem Augustus and Okwi Simon Charles - note: lack of female teachers	Girls dropout in the higher primary grades, P5, P6, P7. This is not addressed by the UPE policy.

<p>problem for girls enrollment & retention, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Okodi Jasper, Olweny Kevin, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Robinson Obot – note: girls dropout due to early marriage, Lawrence Odong, Kitega Samuel Okwa - note: child mothers have particular problems returning to school, Dan Thakur, Olobo Susan Toolit</p>	
<p>Acire Geoffrey Agula, Grace Arach, Oryem Augustus & Okwi Simon Charles, Joseph Anthony Asutai, Odokorach Carol Brenda, Okot Geoffrey Howard, Okodi Jasper, Olweny Kevin – note: pregnant girls not allowed in school , Phoebe McKinney, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong, Kitega Samuel Okwa, Paul Okwokene, Mercie Onyut, Dan Thakur, Olobo Susan Toolit – note: gender based violence has been dealt with through legal reform</p>	<p>Dropout due to pregnancy / cultural values. Pregnant girls prevented from attending school. Gender based violence prevents access for girls. Sexual abuse, child marriage and commercialized sex interferes with girls education (Joseph Anthony Asutai).</p>
<p>Girls are much more likely to dropout of school than boys: “young women have had only 4.9 years of schooling on average compared to 7.0 for young men” (SWAY II 2008, p. v, 19, see also Okodi Jasper, Ottober Matthew Oboe, Robinson Obot, Mercie Onyut, Dan Thakur, Olobo Susan Toolit). Girls are often forced to stay at home to perform domestic chores and babysit younger siblings (Okot Geoffrey Howard, Robinson Obot, Lawrence Odong). Others are pressured into early marriages as impoverished families need their bride price to support the remaining family members (Olobo Susan Toolit). Pregnant girls may be expelled from school. If girls are able to attend school, they face the</p>	

risk of gender-based violence in and around schools (Joseph Anthony Asutai, Phoebe McKinney, Dan Thakur).	
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Code 9: War-Affected Children

There is a need for a comprehensive education program for northern Uganda - not just for child soldiers, but all war-affected children (Dan Thakur).

Child soldiers receive a disproportionate share of assistance compared with other war-affected children. Even those who are not formerly abducted child soldiers also have problems. They were displaced from their homes. They are living in camps. They are left out... segregated. It is difficult for them to get education assistance. Because in most cases NGOs, when you want to get a scholarship or sponsorship you have to bear this Amnesty Certificate. You have to get a letter that at least shows that you were abducted. Or, if you were in the centre, then go and get the letter that shows that you were in that centre. But for that, you will not be given that opportunity or sponsorship (Anena Rosaline Lydia).

War-affected children have psychological problems and need psychosocial support (Mercie Onyut).

War-affected children also need support. Children living in the camps need therapy or psychosocial support. Because they went through so many traumatic events in the IDP camps such as ambushes and attacks by the LRA. The LRA set fire to camps that almost burned all the huts in the camps (Odokorach Caroline Brenda). Some of the children in the community were shot in the cross-fire, others lost their parents in the war, others were affected by HIV / AIDS which spread in the camps during the war. Children were raped and defiled in the camps. Other children were disabled by war and are vulnerable (Ocitti Richard Cliff, Olobo Susan Toolit). Children are living in poverty (Lukungu Samuel).

Appendix 4: Interview Questionnaire

A. Participant's Background:

- What is your background?
- What is your education, training and experience related to your position in this organization?
- What role do you play in this organization?

B. Organization's Role

- What sort of work does your organization do for war-affected children?
Specifically in education?

C. Education – Access and Quality

Universal Primary Education was introduced in Uganda in 1997 and Universal Secondary Education was instituted in 2007.

- Have these education reforms been implemented in practice in northern Uganda?
- What are the educational opportunities available in northern Uganda?
 - In terms of primary education?
 - In terms of secondary education?
 - In terms of vocational education?
 - In terms of lifeskills education?
- What are the gaps and challenges to delivering education in northern Uganda?
 - What are the gaps in access?
 - What are the gaps in quality?
(quality education – questions related to teacher training, classroom discipline, teacher-pupil ratio, # female teachers, achievement levels of boys and girls, relevance of education, school feeding)
- What are some of the challenges that teachers face?

D. Targeting of Resources

Do you offer targeted educational support?

If so:

- What are the target groups?
- How are children selected?
- Do child soldiers receive assistance to go to school?
- What form of education assistance do they receive? (tuition vouchers, books, etc.)

Do you offer non-targeted educational support?

E. Reintegration of former child soldiers

- Do former child soldiers choose whether they attend a government school or a non-government school?
- Do former child soldiers attend school with other non-combatant children?
- Do former child soldiers have trouble learning?
- Do former child soldiers have behavioural problems?

Does education facilitate successful reintegration outcomes for former child soldiers?

The international community seems to be focusing its attention on targeting resources in northern Uganda to former child soldiers.

What are some of the problems and challenges that former child soldiers face when they return?

-to their families?

-to their communities?

-to their schools?

Are they stigmatized in the communities?

Do former child soldiers have more access, the same access, or less access to education than other war-affected children?

Is there a sense of tension between child soldiers and other war-affected children?

Do war-affected children feel that child soldiers are getting more assistance to go to school from the international community?

Does targeted education assistance provoke community resentment of child soldiers?

Does targeted education assistance increase stigmatization of child soldiers and hinder reintegration?

F. Reintegration of Girls

What are some of the problems and challenges that former girl child soldiers face when they return?

-to their families?

-to their communities?

-to their schools? (ie. gender-based violence)

G. Interventions Tailored to the Specific Needs of War-Affected Children

-What interventions do former child soldiers receive?

-Do these interventions foster reintegration?

-Are there accelerated learning programs in northern Uganda for children who have missed school?

-Are there peace education programs?

H. Recommendations:

In your opinion:

How do you think educational assistance should be targeted?

Should former child soldiers attend school with other war-affected children?

What would improve access to education?

What would improve the quality of education?

What materials, equipment and teaching aids might be helpful for teaching war-affected children?

I. Snowball Sampling

Do you have any suggestions for other people or NGOs I should contact for my research on education programs for war-affected children?

Appendix 5: Letter of Information and Consent Form

LETTER OF INFORMATION & CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

An Examination of Targeted and Non-Targeted Education Assistance for War-Affected Children in Northern Uganda

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Jessica Oliver, a master's student in International Affairs from Carleton University. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact me

Jessica Oliver, MA Candidate	Jessica Oliver, MA Candidate
Norman Paterson School of International Affairs	Hotel Roma
1125 Colonel By Drive Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6 Canada	16 Coronation Road Gulu, Gulu district Uganda
joliver3@connect.carleton.ca	joliver3@connect.carleton.ca
	Local telephone:

The PURPOSE OF THE STUDY is to help answer these questions:

1. Does targeted education assistance to former child soldiers promote reintegration into their community? Targeted education programs include tuition vouchers, books, school supplies, examination fees provided exclusively for former child soldiers and programs provided exclusively for returnees.
2. Are targeted education programs for former child soldiers effective or not effective?
3. What measures can be taken to improve access and quality of education for war-affected children?

PROCEDURES:

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to answer a number of interview questions in person or over the phone. The interview will take 30-45 minutes to complete and include:

- a short screening questionnaire on your demographic information including age, occupation, level of education
- a semi-structured questionnaire about access and quality of education for war-affected children, targeted education assistance, and reintegration of former child soldiers into their communities

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

You may feel worried or upset about talking about the reintegration of former child soldiers into their communities. The following is a list of free local services that provide counselling:

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

- Results will give us a better sense of how to improve targeting of education assistance to provide access to quality education for war-affected children. Results will also give us a better sense of how to improve reintegration programs for former child soldiers.
- Participation in this study will not give any advantage or disadvantage with regard to access to education services.
- Participation in this study is voluntary and does not involve payment of any kind.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw your information from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. In this case, your information will be destroyed.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. **If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Professor Antonio Gualtieri, Chair Carleton University Research Ethics Committee, 613-520-2517 ethics@carleton.ca. This information will be left with Denis at Children/Youth as Peacebuilders Uganda should you wish to have assistance in contacting the committee.**

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in a study being conducted by Jessica Oliver, MA Candidate at the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University. I have made this decision based on the information Information- Consent Letter and have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time by telling the researcher without penalty.

I also understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Research Ethics Board at Carleton University and that I may contact this office if I have any concerns or comments resulting from my involvement in the study.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 6 : Targeted and non-Targeted Education Assistance by Organization

Organization	Targeted Education Assistance	Non-Targeted Education Assistance	Target Groups
1.Acholi Education Initiative	SPONSORSHIP: school fees, transport money, stationary, other basic materials		Formerly abducted child soldiers and formerly abducted child mothers - nearly 70% of beneficiaries; other vulnerable children
2.Child Voice International	SPECIAL PROGRAM: basic literacy, numeracy, adult education, vocational training: tailoring, bakery, catering		Initially – ex-combatant girls with children; addition – other child mothers
3.Children / Youth as Peacebuilders	SPONSORSHIP (vocational training): tuition, scholastic materials, tools, sewing machines; currently no funding for secondary education due to expense		Disadvantaged youth - mostly former child soldiers and formerly abducted child mothers. Most beneficiaries are former child soldiers, but there are exceptions (Okwokene 2009).
4.Concerned Parents Association	SPONSORSHIP (secondary and vocational training): pay for school fees and scholastic materials		ex-combatant boys and ex-combatant girls, ex-combatant child mothers; orphans and other vulnerable children
5.Echo Bravo	SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (Catch-up Education Programme): tuition, pressure lamps, materials, stationary, textbooks. Echo Bravo provides access to library and sports equipment.		Most beneficiaries are formerly abducted child soldiers and formerly abducted child mothers (Tonny 2009). Also orphans, vulnerable children and children affected by HIV / AIDS.
6.GUSCO	SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (Vocational Education/skill training for former child soldiers on site - no longer offered. Vocational education / skill training offered in community with local artisans.) Currently education SPONSORSHIP - scholastic materials		Formerly abducted child soldiers
7.Invisible Children	SPONSORSHIP (Secondary education sponsorship, University education		700 orphans; 50 former child soldiers

	sponsorship): tuition fees, other fees		
8.Norwegian Refugee Council		NON-TARGETED: (Youth Education Pack focuses on providing lifeskills education, addressing psychosocial needs. Mainstreams gender, conflict resolution, HIV / AIDS awareness. Also provides training in agriculture. Acholi culture component. Also vocational training to youth ages 14-24 who are functionally illiterate. In addition, focuses on improving literacy.	
9.Oasis	SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM: lifeskills, computer classes		Mostly former child soldiers; other war-affected children
10.Save the Children		NON-TARGETED: As the Education Cluster Lead in Gulu district, Save the Children works with district education authorities to provide technical support and build capacity. Save the Children operates according to the principle of "inclusive education." No specialized education programs or sponsorship is provided for former child soldiers or any other target group. Save the Children focuses exclusively on primary education.	
11.Windle Trust	SPONSORSHIP: (secondary and vocational education): fees, scholastic materials, trauma counselling, free access to medical care, workshops on conflict resolution.		Formerly abducted child soldiers, orphans, disabled children, child mothers, children with chronic illness, children with HIV/AIDS, severely impoverished children, girls

<p>12. World Vision</p>	<p>SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (vocational skills training onsite - no longer operating). Currently SPONSORSHIP (primary, vocational)</p>		<p>formerly abducted child soldiers, specifically those who attended the World Vision Children of War reception centre</p>
<p>13. UN Organization: UNICEF</p>		<p>NON-TARGETED: UNICEF works with district education authorities to provide technical support and build capacity in the district education system. Works on improving the capacity of teachers in the field. UNICEF operates according to a policy of non-discrimination. Focus on primary education.</p>	<p>NON-TARGETED: As the Education Cluster Lead in Amuru district (formerly part of Gulu district), UNICEF works with district education authorities to provide technical support and build capacity. UNICEF operates according to the principle of "inclusive education." No specialized education programs or sponsorship is provided for former child soldiers or any other target group. Save the Children focuses exclusively on primary education.</p>
<p>14. Government: Ministry of Education</p>		<p>NON-TARGETED: no specialized education programs or sponsorship for former child soldiers in government primary or secondary schools. There is 1 exception: Laroo Body Primary Boarding School which offers a SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (accelerated learning, formal education, vocational skill training, psychosocial support, peace education): fees, uniforms, medical care, feeding, mattresses, scholastic materials are provided. The school was built jointly by the Royal Kingdom of Belgium and the government of Uganda in 2006 for the target</p>	<p>Mostly formerly abducted child soldiers, formerly abducted child mothers, children born in captivity. Few war-affected children who "failed to recover from the trauma of war" (Onan Richard 2009).</p>

		group of formerly abducted child soldiers, formerly abducted child mothers, and babies born of war-time rape in the bush. The school currently has 250 students and serves the districts of Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Amuru, Apach, Awata, Unyama, and Dokolo.	
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