

**SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
NAIROBI CAMPUS**

**CHRIST THE TEACHER INSTITUTE FOR
EDUCATION**

**THE IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT ON PRIMARY
EDUCATION AMONG THE ACHOLI OF NORTHERN
UGANDA SINCE 1990**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO CHRIST THE
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BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this research work is my original work achieved through personal reading, scientific research, and critical reflections. It has never been submitted to any university or institution of learning for academic grading. All sources used have been duly cited and acknowledged.

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29-4-23
Date

This study has been submitted for examination with my full approval as the course lecturer and supervisor.

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I have finally approved this research project as the Director and Associate Dean of School for Education of St. Mary's University of Minnesota.

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DEDICATION

This work is gratefully dedicated to my late sister **Lanyero Helen**, a primary school teacher killed by the LRA rebels. Her dedication to education inspired me in this study. Even in your absence **Helen**, you are always present.

And to all the children and teachers abducted or killed by the LRA rebels in Acholiland, your pain is mine.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to all those who have helped me at different levels of the study through their advice, encouragement, and supportive prayers. I would also like to thank in a special way the students with whom I shared the course, for their encouragement and support.

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Finally, a special thanks to my parents who taught me how to read and write, and whose profound love and support have inspired this study.

ABSTRACT

This research focused on the impact of armed conflict on primary education among the Acholi of northern Uganda since 1990.

The researchers used survey and case study designs. The study was carried out in nine schools in Gulu and Kitgum Districts. The sample groups were the headteachers, teachers, pupils, and parents. The instruments used to elicit the data were questionnaires and an interview guide.

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the impact of armed conflict on primary education in Acholiland on enrolment and performance since 1990?
- ii. What has been the contribution of the government, the Church, the NGOs and the Acholi community towards primary education since 1990?

The results of the research show that thousands of primary children were affected by the conflict situation. Some of these children are out of school either because of abduction, destruction of schools, domestic responsibilities, displacement, or because they could not meet the cost of some scholastic materials. The children abducted were traumatized because of the experiences they have had with the rebels. Most of them were forced into brutal killing of innocent people including their parents. Some of them especially the girls had been sexually abused and infected with diseases. Those enrolled in schools were faced with overcrowding in classes, few teachers, and inadequate facilities. Meanwhile, the school dropouts especially the adolescents were involved in petty businesses, alcoholism, family responsibilities, and early marriages.

In order to improve primary education in Acholiland, the government should do the following. First, the government should find ways of ending the war through a peaceful resolution by engaging in constructive dialogue with the LRA. Secondly, the

government should work in close collaboration with the stakeholders in order to promote peace and to create an environment that can enhance effective learning. Thirdly, the government through the Ministry of Education and Sports needs to incorporate some conflict resolution and peace education programs in the primary school curriculum. This would be vital in the preparation of children on how to be involved in peace resolution. The government should protect the rights of all children in the Acholi conflict zone by protecting them from abduction and forceful recruitment in the army. These will improve the standards of primary education in Acholiland.

The LRA should end all forceful abduction, cruel and degrading punishments, and deliberate and arbitrary killings of innocent children.

The Church through the ARLPI should continue to support reconciliation and peace building. She should continue to be involved as a mediator for peace negotiation between the rebels and the LRA. Finally, the Acholi community should be committed to seek ways to end the war through peaceful negotiation. Their quest and commitment to bring peace in Acholiland can be a powerful voice to the government, LRA and the international bodies.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARLPI	Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative
CRE	Christian Religious Education
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GUSCO	Gulu Support the Children Organization
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
HURIFO	Human Rights Focus
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LA	Lord's Army
LDU	Local Defence Units
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugees Council
NRA/M	National Resistance Army/Movement
PLE	Primary Leaving Education
PTA	Parents Teachers' Association
PTC	Primary Teachers' College
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
UPE	Universal Primary education
WFP	World Food Programme

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Armed conflicts are devastating the lives of hundreds of millions of people throughout the world (Williams et al., 2001). Globally both the frequency and destructiveness of armed conflicts are increasing. Villages, crops, schools and clinics are purposely destroyed in most of the armed conflicts. Death, injury, separation from family and displacement from home are some of the outcome in armed conflict situations. In addition, torture, arrests and detention, sexual and physical abuse and missed schooling are some of the impacts of armed conflicts (Ressler et al., 1993). Therefore armed conflict is one of the major threats towards realizing development in any country.

In Africa, one of the major setbacks in realizing economic as well as educational development is armed conflict. The African child today needs education, which as a tool for empowerment is very crucial for his/her survival.

The spiral-armed conflicts in Uganda have left permanent scars in every aspect of life. The armed conflicts have affected the socio-economic and educational development in the country and the cost in terms of human lives is very high. Thousands of people are in exile living under difficult conditions. Violence, dishonesty, corruption and moral degeneration have permeated the whole social system. Persons can easily be killed without the intervention of the government. The continuous armed conflicts have led to the breakdown of the country's infrastructure and to the destruction of schools and health centers among others. Finally, the collapse of good governance has had a devastating impact of the environment where greedy deviants have grabbed land and are destroying the environment.

well informed. Education reduces fear and improves self-confidence, creativity and healthy behavior among pupils. Therefore, the disrupted education service during times of armed conflict affects quality education for the children.

1.2 Acholi Territory and People

The Acholi are a Nilotic people living in northern Uganda, related to many other groups not only in adjacent areas of Uganda, but also in the Sudan and Kenya. They occupy

most of northern Uganda, from Karamoja in the east to the bank of the Albert Nile in the west (Marchetti, 1999). According to Lucima (2001), the Acholi district of northern Uganda was divided into Gulu and Kitgum districts in the 1970s. In 2001, Kitgum was sub-divided to create a third district of Pader. The three districts constitute an area commonly referred to as Acholiland with a total population of about 700,000, of almost exclusively Acholi speakers.

The land rises 1,500 meters above sea level in the extreme east and north. It is relatively flat and covered with savannah grassland and interspersed with umbrella trees, hills and rocky outcrops and inselbergs (Ociti, 1973). The physical feature is a contributory factor to the prevailing rebel activities such as ambushing vehicles and burning houses, schools and clinics. The rebels from time to time withdraw into the hills and hide in order to carry on with their atrocities. One long rainy and one dry season characterize the climatic conditions throughout the year.

The main occupations of the Acholi people are subsistence farming and animal husbandry although some of the neighboring Karamojong sub-tribes have stolen most of the animals. In addition, the armed conflict has changed everything. Farms have been destroyed and abandoned. Consequently, agricultural activity has seriously been disrupted leaving Acholi people poor, with very little income from agriculture.

The Acholi have a unique place in the history of Uganda. They have a strong character, are straightforward, determined as well as fearless fighters. To trace the roots of the current armed conflict in Acholi land is to work through a tangle of economic, social and cultural pieces of Ugandan history. According to Lucima (2002), from the beginning of Idi Amin's rule in 1971, control of the government was gained and maintained through the use of violence against the opponents. Idi Amin's government used massacres and "disappearances" to create a reign of terror where many Acholi and Langi soldiers were among those slaughtered. In 1980, the new government's Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), which was mainly from the Acholi and Langi communities of the north,

took reprisals against the civilians in Amin's area of the West Nile. Research by Kasozi (1999) revealed that the UNLA killed hundreds of thousands of people in West Nile, Busenyi, Mpigi and Luwero. These were the areas where the government of Milton Obote faced armed opposition.

It is against this background that the National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M) government on assuming power in 1986 treated the Acholi people as bandits, with vengeful attitudes and this led to acts of brutality such as unnecessary arrest, killing of unarmed civilians, raping and arson (Lucima, 2002). This violence created mistrust among the Acholi people towards the new government. As a consequence a number of different insurgent groups were formed. These include the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA), Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), Severino Lokoya's Lord's Army (LR), and finally Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The only current movement fighting the Uganda government in Acholiland is the LRA under the leadership of an Acholi called Joseph Kony as mentioned above?

The prolonged armed conflict in Acholiland is due to a number of interrelated factors. Lucima (2002) indicates that the armed conflict in Acholiland is an extension of regional and international power struggles. On the regional front, Uganda provided military hardware and sanctuary to the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). In retaliation, the Sudan government provided sanctuary and military hardware to the LRA. On the international front, both the Uganda government and SPLA received military and political support from the United States, in part to curtail the influence of the Islamic government in Khartoum.

This armed conflict has devastated Acholiland affecting all sorts of development. The schools have been the main target and this has disrupted primary education. On the one hand, thousands of primary school age going children have been killed, abducted and trained by the LRA as soldiers. On the other hand, the abducted returnees have been forcefully recruited into the army by the NRA/M forces. In addition, many schools have

been destroyed, abandoned or closed as a result of the insecurity. This has greatly affected education as most of the children have either been displaced or abducted. According to ARLPI (2001, July), Pajule Displaced primary school had an average of three hundred pupils in the primary one class (P1) and in Pabo Displaced camp the average size of a primary one class (P1) was about five hundred pupils. Given these circumstances, going to secondary schools is just an unattainable dream for most young people in Acholiland.

Therefore, the disruption of primary education during times of war inconveniences, disappoints, and robs the children of many life's opportunities that helps one to develop his/her own potential, creativity and critical mind. This is a common phenomenon among most of the primary school age going children in Acholiland. The choice of the Acholi for research does not mean that Acholiland is the only region of the country worst hit by armed conflict, but rather the researcher has more knowledge of the area as compared to other places. The prolonged armed conflict in Acholiland and its impact on primary education have also contributed to the choice of the study.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

It is sometimes argued that conflict is the normal state of human interaction. This argument is valid since the grounds for conflict exist in normal human relations because in any human society, the interaction between individuals, groups, organizations, government and any possible party are inevitable. Conflicts take various forms. They could be social conflicts, religious conflicts, domestic conflicts, ethnic conflicts and armed conflicts among others. All these forms of conflicts affect the socio-economic as well as educational development of any country including human beings who also become its victims. Armed conflict has a negative impact on primary education. In Acholiland since 1990, there has been an armed conflict and this has had some negative impact on primary education. The problem this research seeks to study is the nature of this negative impact, which has led to destruction of schools, abduction of both pupils

and teachers and high level of school dropouts in Acholiland. An end to the armed conflict is one of the ways of resolving this negative impact.

1.4 Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

- i. What is the impact of armed conflict on primary education in Acholiland on enrolment and performance since 1990?
- ii. What has been the contribution of the government, NGOs, the Church and the Acholi community towards primary education since 1990?
- iii. What has been the response of the ministry of education towards the needs of teachers in Acholiland?
- iv. What are some of the possible concrete suggestions that can help to improve the conditions of primary education in Acholiland?

1.5 The Significance of the Study

Research on armed conflict among the Acholi in northern Uganda has been carried out on various topics including education. However, this study as far as I know, is the first in regard to the direct impact of armed conflict on primary education in Acholiland since 1990. The findings will contribute to furthering the knowledge of all those involved in armed conflict resolution in order to improve primary education in Acholiland. It will also give information to those who are interested in understanding the impact of armed conflict on education in Acholiland, especially primary education.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

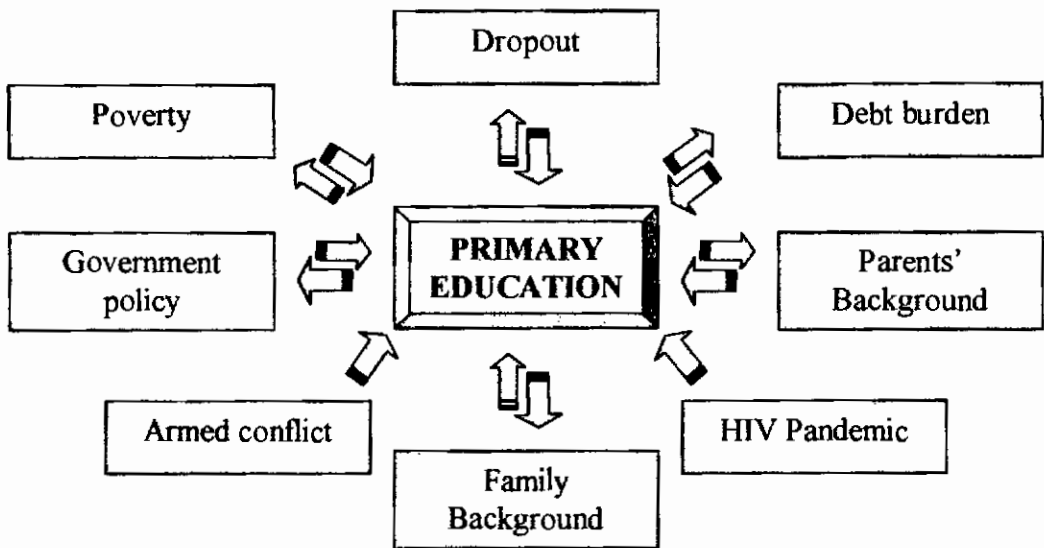
Although armed conflict has affected other regions of the country especially the Western region, this study concentrated only on the Acholi people of northern Uganda. The study was mainly to analyze the impact of armed conflict on primary education and the contribution of the government, NGOs, the Church and the Acholi community to primary education. The study was carried out in nine primary schools in Gulu and Kitgum districts. The respondents in the two districts were the headteachers, teachers,

parents and pupils. However, due to the intensified insecurity by LRA group in Acholiland the researcher could not have access to the schools in Pader district, which was the third district occupied by the Acholi.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

Education is the best preparation for life and a key to an individual's development and that of the nation. Therefore, for the empowerment and survival of the African child, education is crucial. The disruption of children's education due to armed conflict does not only inconvenience and disappoint them but also robs them of many of life's opportunities. Since education aims at preparing the young to be useful citizens of their societies, it is the constitutional responsibility of the Ugandan government to ensure that children in Acholiland are protected and given their rights to education, especially primary education. This preparation will help the young people to grow and live with hope and confidence in the future and in themselves.

Figure 1. The Relationship among Variables



1.8 Definition of Terms

- Armed conflict:** A situation of interaction involving two or more parties in which actions in pursuit of incompatible objectives or interests result in varying degrees of discord.
- Conflicts:** Refers to the state of contention or disagreement between interested parties in a given issue.
- Impact:** A powerful effect that something, especially something new, has on a situation or person.
- Insecurity:** Not feeling safe or protected.
- Primary education:** Level of foundation or basic education that lasts seven years (Primary 1-7).
- Violence:** The use of force, whether overt or covert, in order to wrest from individuals or groups something they do not want to give of their own free will.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters.

Chapter one provides the background information to the study, Acholi territory and people, statement of the problem, research questions, the significance of the study, the scope and delimitation, conceptual framework and definition of key terms.

Chapter two deals with the literature review. It is divided in two parts. The first part deals with the understanding of conflict, intra-state conflicts and inter-state conflicts. The second part focuses on the global phenomenon of armed conflict in the world, armed conflict in Africa, armed conflict in Uganda and the emergency of armed conflict in Acholiland.

Chapter three is about the research design and methodology. It includes the research design, the target population, description of the sample and sampling procedures, description of instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis.

Chapter four presents the results of the collected data. The data are analyzed and arranged in tables, frequencies, and percentages. The data presentation and discussion are based on the main research questions of the study. The chapter is divided into three parts. First, it analyses the teachers' responses, second the pupils' responses and finally the parents responses based on the interviews.

Chapter five presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with literature review in two parts. The first part describes the nature of conflict, which includes intra-state and inter-state conflicts. The second part is about the global phenomenon of armed conflict, armed conflict in Africa, armed conflict in Uganda and the emergency of armed conflict in Acholiland.

2.1 The Nature of Conflict

Much research on armed conflicts has been carried out in different parts of the world. These include: *The Problems of Refugees in Africa* by Blavo (1999), *Children Separated by War: Family Tracing and Reunification* by Brown et al. (1995), *Between Development and Destruction: An Enquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post-Colonial States* by Goor et al. (1995) and *Resilience in Conflict: A Community Based Approach to Psychosocial Support in Northern Uganda* by Williams et al. (2001).

The term “conflict” can be defined as a situation of interaction involving two or more parties in which actions in pursuit of incompatible objectives or interests result in varying degrees of discord. The principal dichotomy is normally between harmonious and cooperative relations and a disruptive adverse confrontation culminating at its worst in high intensity violence (Goor et al., 1996).

2.2 Intra-state Conflicts

According to Goor et al. (1996), intra-state conflicts are defined as those conflicts that occur within the boundaries of a state. They manifest themselves first between government forces and secessionist groups seeking either political autonomy with the state or a separate state. Second, conflict with regard to the composition and involvement of civilian groups. For instance, different ethnic groups, culture, languages and religion may constitute a source of potential conflicts within a state as it has

happened and is still happening in countries like Sudan, Angola, Columbia, India and Rwanda.

2.3 Inter-state Conflicts

Goor et al. (1996) define inter-state conflicts as conflicts between nations states. In other words, if countries share a common border, then disputes may escalate into inter-state conflicts. For example, the border conflicts between Ethiopia and Eritrea that claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

2.4 Global Phenomenon of Armed Conflict

In the research *Between Development and Destruction: An Enquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post-Colonial States* carried out by Goor et al., (1996), the twentieth century has been the bloodiest in all human history. Two world wars incurred the toll of many millions deaths and immeasurable human suffering. The data on armed conflicts showed an upward trend following the Second World War.

Wallensteen and Axell (1994) confirmed that the total number of armed conflicts during the periods 1989-1993 amounted to ninety. These conflicts took place in sixty-one locations around the world. Therefore, about one-third of United Nation's (UN) member states were involved in the armed conflicts. Although, between 1988-1993 the duo noted only four inter state armed conflicts, a considerable number of sub-state groups were active in armed conflicts. From then on, the total number of armed conflicts continued to rise gradually and remained high. Acts of armed conflicts have been perpetuated in places such as Angola, Sudan, Rwanda, Afghanistan, the Gulf (when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait) and the current Middle East crisis between Palestine and Israel.

According to Goor et al. (1996), an average of 50% armed conflict in developing countries takes place in a given year. The study further recognized that 50% of all casualties in World War I were civilians, 50% in World War II, and 80% in the Vietnam War and over 90% in the current conflicts. The statistics in the last 10 years show that 2

million children have died in war, 12 million made homeless and 1 million orphaned or separated from their parents worldwide.

Brown et al. (1995) revealed also that armed conflicts have left hundreds of thousands dead, permanently disabled, homeless/exiled, displaced and separated. The study showed that between September and October 1994, an estimated one hundred thousand people died in Angola. Roughly, the same number had died in the previous sixteen years. The number of displaced people rose sharply from three hundred and forty four thousand in May 1993 to one million and two by September 1994. The number of landmine victims increased to seventy thousand, the highest total number per capita rate of any country in the world.

Armed conflict is highly disruptive for developmental prospects. The cost in socio-economic, educational development and environment is devastating and its impact in terms of human life is incredible. It has destroyed the essence of human formation, homes, communities and loss of culture. The Amnesty International Report (1997 a) noted that more than two million people in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone fled their homes, friends and livelihoods in 1991 and seventy thousand Kurdish refugees fled to Iran as the fighting spread to Sulaimaniya. The people who survive have to deal with the horrors they have witnessed such as the death of their loved ones, threats from bullets or bombshells, sexual abuse, exploitation, broken families and displacement.

2.5 Armed Conflict in Africa

Throughout history, armed conflict has exacted a horrific toll on humanity. Its intensification around the world has resulted in unprecedented humanitarian tragedies and in some cases led to partial and even total collapse of nations. The modern armed conflict kills, maims and exploits people. Although the global dimension of armed conflict needs to be stressed, Africa is perhaps the continent most devastated by armed conflicts and their catastrophic consequences. Images of armed conflicts are flashed

daily on our television screens and newspapers. These bring to us the horror of Liberia, Sudan, Angola, Uganda and Rwanda.

According to Brown et al. (1997), an estimated eight hundred thousand people had been massacred in Rwanda and the killing spread to virtually all parts of the country. Civilians are the prime victims. They are threatened not only by bullets and bombshells but also by social, economic and educational dislocation caused by the armed conflict. The study carried out by African Rights (2000), illustrated that persistent and brutal conflicts have shattered the lives of so many Africans, and they continue to do so. The research also pointed out that some of the gravest human rights abuses have been committed in Africa's recent past including the steady slaughter of the Nuba people of Sudan. Therefore, war profoundly alters the existing structures of justice, affecting its administration at every level of the society.

The research methodology employed by the African Rights (2000), is very useful. They do not only document abuses, but also seek to understand the historical and political context of the abuses and make direct contribution to the search for solutions. This approach provides practical assistance to the ordinary people, whose lives have been damaged by armed conflicts to strengthen their own support system for peace and justice.

In the Amnesty International report (1997 a), millions of people have been driven away from their homes due to fear of being killed or tortured. The number of African refugees is very high compared to the number of refugees in other parts of the world. These refugees have left behind property, relatives and friends. They have risked everything from road ambushes, snipers, bomb attacks, and landmines and walked long distance for days, weeks and months with limited quantities of water and food. A study done in Liberia by Brown et al. (1997), showed that in 1990 two million and fifty eight thousand people, which is approximately half the original population, were either displaced or refugees. The large number of refugees or displaced people deprives the nations of their

that many primary schools in Acholi region had been destroyed, closed, abandoned or burnt down because of the armed conflict and 84% agreed that; there were many former abducted children in their schools. In addition, 73% of the respondents confirmed that many teachers in Acholiland were not motivated to teach because of LRA threats.

In conclusion, the impact of armed conflict on primary education in Acholiland had been great. The major impacts were: poverty, displacement, abduction of both children and teachers, and destruction of schools.

4.1.7 Possible Concrete Suggestions to Improve Primary Education in Acholiland

The teachers' respondents were asked to give some concrete suggestions so that primary education in Acholiland could be better.

All the respondents suggested that the government should bring the war to an end. They expressed that peaceful negotiation would be the best alternative to end the war for the safety of the children and for the whole community.

Secondly, the respondents expressed their opinion that the teachers in Acholi region should be trained on psychosocial support as a way of improving their relationship and understanding of the effects of war on the children they teach. This would help the teachers to enhance their capacity to meet the needs of the pupils. Some of the respondents also added that the government should ensure that the teachers are well accommodated within the schools for easy movement. A few of them expressed that the teachers in Acholiland need more incentives for motivation because they are exposed to the risks of abduction or of being killed by the LRA.

One of the respondents expressed his opinion,

In my opinion teachers should neither use harsh disciplinary actions on the children nor create an atmosphere of fear and respect. But rather they need to

create a welcoming atmosphere that will help children to love school.

A good number of the respondents also suggested that the government of Uganda should establish good relationship with the neighboring states like Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan in order to avoid the rebels' infiltration in the country.

Some of the respondents said that the government should provide adequate facilities such desks, textbooks and other instructional materials in the schools. They further suggested that the government should sponsor pupils from poor families who excel in PLE, establish vocational training institutes, and deal with school dropout seriously.

Another teacher also suggested,

I think the government needs to establish a strong policy to equalize primary education in Acholiland with schools in other parts of the country. This will encourage healthy competition among pupils.

In addition some of the respondents suggested that the government, the Church, and the NGOs should empower, encourage, and educate the community to participate in the political processes in meaningful and practical ways. In addition, they also expressed the need for the government, the Church and the NGOs to sensitize the Acholi community on the value of education. This will motivate the parents who have lost interest in educating their children.

Finally, the respondents suggested that guidance and counseling programs should be introduced in schools to help the traumatized children cope with their experiences. They also expressed their opinion that introduction of more games and sports and other creative activities in schools could be alternative ways of helping the children cope with their traumatic experiences.

4.2 RESPONSES OF THE PUPILS

Four hundred pupils participated in the study. There was 100% response rate on their views on the current fighting in Acholiland.

4.2.1 Background Information

The background information of the pupils consists of their age, gender, and number in class.

Table 9

Distribution of Pupils' Respondents by Age

<i>Age</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
11-15	60	15
16-20	340	85
Total	400	100

Table 9 shows that 85% of the respondents were aged between 16 and 20. The respondents were adolescents who are more vulnerable to the conflict situation and they have been affected by it.

Table 10

Distribution of Pupils' Respondents by Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	202	51
Female	198	49
Total	400	100

As indicated in Table 10, 51% of the respondents were male and 49% were female. This was a fair gender representation, which indicates that both boys and girls are given equal opportunity to education.

Table 11

Distribution of Pupils' Respondents by number in Class

<i>Number in class</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
40-50	30	8
50-60	25	6
60 and above	345	86
Total	400	100

From the findings in Table 11, 345 respondents confirmed that over 60 pupils were accommodated in one class. This large number of pupils in class shows the impact of armed conflict on primary education. The overcrowding in classes is contrary to the standard number of 40 to 50 pupils per class. In addition, these overcrowded classes have few and poor facilities such as desks and textbooks.

4.2.2 The General Academic Performance of the Pupils

The pupils were asked about the general academic performance of their school.

Table 12

Whether there had been Improvement in Academic Performance of Pupils

<i>Response</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	105	26
No	295	74
Total	400	100

It is clear from the elicited data in Table 12, that 74% of the respondents confirmed poor academic performance of the pupils in their schools. A group of respondents said that due to displacement, they had to miss schools for a period of time and this interfered with their learning process. One of the pupils also expressed that the displaced schools were too far from home. As a result he frequently missed school and had trouble keeping up.

A respondent wrote,

“We spend less than half a day in school because of insecurity. We have to travel back home early to search for our hideouts. We cannot study.”

One girl said,

The displaced schools do not have textbooks for references. We rely on the teachers and sometime we are left on our own because the teachers are not available for consultations.

Another boy had this to say,

“Every evening we go to take shelter at Lacor hospital compound and I cannot revise my notes or do my home work.” Some of my friends also go to sleep in bus terminals and church grounds before they return home the following day to prepare for school. They cannot study as well.

Other respondents cited lack of commitment on the part of the teachers who come late to school drunk and without proper lesson preparation.

On the other hand, 26% of the respondents admitted that there were some improvements in the academic performance of the pupils. They pointed out that between 1999 and 2001, most pupils passed their PLE. The reason being that the security had improved because the rebels had settled in their base in Sudan. This short period of peace gave the pupils more time to settle and concentrate in school.

4.2.3 Contribution of the Government and the Parents towards Primary Education in Acholiland

The pupils were asked whether the government and the parents were contributing towards primary education.

Table 13***Contributions of the Government and the Parents towards Primary Education***

<i>Item</i>	<i>Yes %</i>	<i>NO %</i>
i. Do you think the government is contributing to primary education in Acholiland	84	16
ii. Does the District education officer or the inspectors of school visit your school regularly	38	62
iii. Do you feel supported by your parents in your education	43	57

The research findings in Table 13 show that 84% of the respondents agreed that the government was contributing towards primary education in Acholiland. Some of them acknowledged the governments' contribution to primary education through the implementation of the UPE, while the others cited training and payment of teachers by the government. On the other hand, 16% of them revealed that the government was not contributing to primary education. Their reasoning was based on the fact that the government had not been able to bring the war to a halt. This in turn had led to the continuous abduction and killing of thousands of school age going children by the LRA. In addition, 38% of the respondents acknowledged that there were regular visits to their schools by the District Education Officer and the inspectors of school. On the contrary, 62% of them cited irregular visits of the education officers to their schools. According to them, the irregular visits from the ministry to the schools were a clear sign that the teachers and pupils in Acholiland were not cared for.

Regarding the parents' contribution in the education of their children, 43% of the respondents confirmed that their parents had been very supportive in educating them. This parental support was through provision of scholastic materials, guidance and attendance of meetings like PTA meeting. Contrarily, 57% of the respondents acknowledged no parental support in their education. The majority of them attributed the lack of parental support in their education to poverty and displacement while others attributed it to the death of their parents.

One of the respondents wrote,

My parents live in the camp and cannot support me in school because they do not have enough money. Sometimes I am forced to remain at home because they cannot afford to buy the scholastic materials and other school requirements like uniforms demanded by the school.

Another respondent had this to say,

I am an orphan and I need to fend for myself and my other siblings because 'Kony' killed our parents. I pay my own school fee.

4.2.4 The Impact of Armed Conflict on Primary Education in Acholiland Since 1990

The pupils were asked to give their views on the impact of armed conflict on primary education since 1990.

Table 14

Impact of Armed Conflict on Primary Education in Acholiland from the Pupils' data

<i>Item</i>	<i>Yes %</i>	<i>NO %</i>
i. Do you think the current fighting has affected primary education	100	0
ii. Have you been abducted	53	47
iii. Have some of your fellow pupils been abducted or killed by the LRA	96	4
iv. Have you fought with the LRA	49	51
v. Does the school have enough classrooms, desks and and textbooks for all the pupils	52	48
vi. Do you have enough time to study at home and do your homework	46	54

As indicated in Table 14, 100% of the respondents unanimously confirmed that the current fighting in Acholiland had affected primary education. They gave different

reasons to justify their statements. First, the respondents expressed their opinion on the destruction of schools. They pointed out that the schools had been either burnt down or forced to close or displaced. They said that some of the displaced schools were often too far and insecure.

One of the respondents commented,

The distant location and insecurity both in school and on the way to school put us under the constant threats of attack and abduction by the LRA. Many of us show up late or do not make it to school at all.

Another girl also said,

Those of us who manage to get to school the conditions are often abysmal besides the teaching and learning environment, which are extremely difficult.

Secondly, some of the respondents noted abduction and merciless killing of children by the LRA. According to the respondents this was one of the major impacts of armed conflict on primary education in Acholiland. They cited that the LRA targeted schools, abducting pupils and teachers.

One of the boys had this to say,

One-day 'Kony' came to our school and they asked the teachers and the pupils to kill the headmaster, cook and eat it. I did not eat but some of my friends did and they also took some teachers and pupils with them.

Lastly, the respondents also expressed that the high rate of school dropout was the outcome of armed conflict. They pointed out poverty, being orphaned, peer influence, early marriage and hunger as the major sources of school dropout.

Some of the respondents also confirmed their abduction by the LRA rebel group. All those abducted expressed that they were forced to kill innocent civilians using crude and

dangerous weapons like pangas, machetes and axes; walk long distances without food and water while carrying heavy loads of looted property to the rebels' base in Sudan. They also cited severe beatings, and high level of sexual abuse especially to the girls as some of their traumatic experiences. Some of those who fought with the rebels shared their experiences.

One of them wrote,

Before the rebels took us in the bush, we were forced to kill our own parents. It was a very traumatic experience for me.

A boy said,

I was trained only for fourteen days and I was sent to fight. We were not allowed to lie down while firing. You had to stand. Many of us died in the battles due to heavy bombardment.

Another respondent commented,

I participated in the killing of eight men who were riding bicycles. I was asked to cut their feet first before chopping them into pieces. It was horrible.

While another boy had this to say,

I was shown how to use AK 47, G3 assault rifles, anti tank weaponry, mortars and landmines. When I went to fight the Dinka I used the mortar. It was a very bad experience. Many innocent people were killed and their houses torched.

4.2.5 Suggestions from the Pupils on how to Improve Primary Education in Acholiland.

When the pupils were asked to give some suggestions to improve primary education in Acholiland, they gave the following suggestions. All the pupils' respondents suggested that the government of Uganda should end the war in Acholiland through peaceful negotiation with the LRA.

resource base and capacity for self-reliance. The people must therefore depend on international assistance for basic survival. Although such assistance is good in saving lives it may also encourage over dependency and undermine development. This reinforces the vicious circle of poverty, under-development, over dependency and competition for scarce resources. Therefore, the economic dimension of armed conflict leaves many individuals and families destitute, destroys their capacity to support themselves and to maintain their stand in society.

Another consequence of the recent armed conflicts in Africa and elsewhere according to Brown et al. (1997) has been the separation of many families. A large number of children have been separated from their families. This problem reached crisis proportion in Rwanda in 1994 when civil war and genocide resulted in the separation of up to one hundred thousand children from their families in a pattern caused by parental death, internal displacement and migration across national borders. Children who have been separated from their families become vulnerable to hunger, disease, violence and sexual abuse. In order to survive, they resort to any form of life such as living on the streets, violence, theft and prostitution. They have no secure future, as chances of education may be minimal for them.

2.6 Armed Conflict in Uganda

Uganda has a deplorable record of conflicts. The present violent conflicts in the country go back to the deep crisis of how the state was created during the colonial rule. The administrative policy of the colonialists according to Termmerman (2001) generated ethnic, religious and regional divisions that have contributed to many years of instability and political violence in the country. The British administrators left the civil service mainly in the hands of the southerners while the Acholi and other ethnic groups from the north were recruited in the army. The people of the northern region (Acholi and Langi) were the country's military elite who fought on the British side all over the world during the Second World War.

Lucima (2002) argued that at independence in 1962, conflict broke out between the country's first president Mutesa II a Muganda from the south and Prime Minister Milton Obote a Lango from the north over the land issue. The disagreement between the two was not resolved and Mutesa II was forced into exile while thousands of his followers were either tortured, buried alive or killed. Since then, armed conflict became a key instrument in settling political disputes in the country.

According to Ward (2001), religious conflicts have also deeply characterized the country's violent history since 1960s. Religion notoriously has been part of the problems of Uganda, fostering faction and partly strife, exacerbating old tensions and creating new tensions. This observation is realistic because religion in Uganda has played a significant part in perpetuating violence at different levels.

Kasozi (1999) did a study on violence in Uganda between 1964 and 1985. The researcher noted that Ugandans were exposed to a level of violence that far exceeded that of any other people in Eastern Africa. Over one million Ugandans were killed during this period through politically instigated violence. Many were murdered with the approval of political leaders whose main duty was the protection of life. Hundreds of others were slain by powerful persons who were protected by the state authorities. The study further established that the estimated number of people slain for political motives during the first Obote administration (1962-1971) ranged between four hundred and one thousand. The number killed for a similar motive during Idi Amin's regime (1971-1979) was about fifty thousand and could be as high as three hundred thousand. In the second Obote period (1980-1985), the estimated number of those killed ranged between three hundred thousand and one million. In the same period, ordinary peasants were also displaced in Luwero Triangle, West Nile, southwestern Uganda and Karamoja. In Luwero Triangle, about one hundred and fifty thousand people were displaced and about eighty thousand were put in concentration camps where the living conditions were similar to those of the Nazi Germany.

In 1984, it was estimated that the Uganda army, Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) had killed between one hundred thousand and two hundred thousand people most of whom were non-combatants since 1980. Hundreds of thousands of Ugandans were violently torn away from their homes and turned into refugees. During Amin's regime over eight hundred thousand people were forced to leave Uganda as refugees either through expulsion or to save their lives. Many of these people were highly educated and skilled (Kasozi, 1999).

The civil war that followed the NRA/M victory in January 1986 gave the Acholi a taste of how destructive conflict can be. The harrowing war according to Lucima (2002) has claimed many innocent lives, forcefully displaced over four hundred thousand people, destroyed schools and health centers in Acholi. HURIFO (2002) and ARPL (2001, July) confirm the research findings of Lucima (2002).

2.7 Emergency of Armed Conflict in Acholiland

The NRA/M victory of 1986 began a new cycle of violence in Acholiland. According to Lucima, (2002), the NRA/M immediately began violating human rights through raping, killing unarmed civilians, kidnapping, torturing and arresting of innocent people. The study done by Dolan (2000, April), confirmed that the NRA/M committed these atrocities. He further argued that all the armed parties carried out these multiple abuses (NRA/M, UPDA, HSM, LR, LRA). Other forms of abuse included looting, burning, cattle rustling and a considerable destruction of infrastructure such as dispensaries and schools. Dolan's study is likely to be objective since it is the outcome of a two-year fieldwork inside the war zone. The researcher participated in the culture of the people and shared in their suffering situation making the research more objective.

As a reaction to these atrocities, different insurgent groups fighting the NRA/M were formed in Acholiland. The UPDA, followed by HSM, LR and the present LRA led by Joseph Kony. The sixteen years of prolonged armed conflict in Acholiland has resulted in the destruction of social and economic infrastructure, displacement of over a half of

the population many of whom live in life threatening conditions. Like in other parts of the country, thousands of Acholi people have been killed, exiled, disabled and displaced as a result of the armed conflicts. On its part, the LRA also targets schools so that they can abduct children to fuel the army. The children abducted are later trained as soldiers or 'married' as wives and are forced into a life of brutality and perpetual danger. The children who manage to escape face incomprehensible trauma. They live with fear everyday and are terribly scared emotionally. The terror and pain come back in flashbacks and nightmares. This has been very disruptive to the learning process.

The research carried out by the Amnesty International (1997 b) revealed that in July and August 1996 fifty-nine primary schools were burnt down by the LRA, leading to the closure of one hundred and thirty six out of one hundred and eighty primary schools in Gulu district. In addition, between 1993 and July 1996, seventy teachers were killed by the LRA in Kitgum district and between July and August 1996; eleven teachers were killed in Gulu district. The dream of education has therefore become nearly impossible to realize for children in Acholiland.

Dolan's (2000) report indicated that, over three hundred thousand children in the north are unable to go to school because of the LRA activity. Furthermore the interviews conducted by HURIFO (2002) in Pabo displaced camp revealed that, a number of school age going children are still out of school because of lack of money, accommodation in the school or guidance from the parents. The research result confirmed that many parents find it better to marry off their young girls at the age of 15 or 16, and send their boys to fend for themselves. The research findings are evidence of the cost of armed conflict on the young boys and girls in Acholiland. The children within the camps who are unable to go to school live just like street children. The only avenue for young boys is to join the army at tender ages of about 12 and girls get married. Those who manage to go to school are under constant threat and fear of abduction. They are unable to concentrate in school due to the traumatic experiences they have had such as witnessing

the killing of their parents, relatives and friends, sexual abuse or any other forms of violence inflicted on them. This has resulted in poor academic performance.

However, Ward (2001) on the role of Christian churches in the conflicts of northern Uganda gives new hope to the prevailing situation. The catholic, protestant and other churches have painfully learnt the need for a practical ecumenism in fostering peace initiatives, in addressing justice and peace issues, in exploring ways of cleansing, healing and reconciliation. They have also insisted on the restoration of rebels, their rehabilitation and incorporation into a common life. Although there is a degree of idealism in this construction of hope, perhaps it is necessary in overcoming the despair inherent in actual situation. For the churches in Acholi, it is a constructive envisioning of new futures, however futile the attempts have proved so far, that hope is preserved and created afresh. The end of year peace march organized by the ARLPI on 31st December 2002, in which the researcher was a participant is a great sign of hope for peace in the region.

2.8 Conclusion

Armed conflicts are highly disruptive for development prospects. Some of these conflicts have cost much: loss of human life, destruction of property, disruption of national economies and resolution of conflicts. The costs in human potential, social and productive capital and physical infrastructure can be such that decades of development effort are lost.

In Uganda, like in many other parts of the world, armed conflicts have left permanent scars that are found in every facet of life. The country's infrastructure has been destroyed. In Acholiland the region is devastated by poverty. The socio-economic and moral degeneration has permeated the region. The education sector raises more concern as the insurgency intensifies.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design and methodology. The study was carried out in primary schools in Gulu and Kitgum districts in Acholiland, northern Uganda. The chapter includes the research design, the target population, description of the sample and sampling procedures, description of research instruments, data collection procedures and data analyses.

3.1 Research Design

The researcher used survey and case study designs. The survey design allowed collection of data from a large number of people. It also provided reliable, valid and meaningful information since it relied on the individual's self report of his /her knowledge and attitude. On the other hand, the case study design also focused on a group of parents. It determined factors and relationships among the factors that have resulted in the behavior under study. The investigation made a detailed examination of the group.

3.2 Target Population

The target populations were the teachers, pupils and parents in Acholiland. The schools' population consisted only of the primary school teachers and pupils in the nine selected schools.

3.3 Description of the Sample and Sampling Procedures

The sample size for the teachers was 100 out of a total population of 135 teachers. Meanwhile the sample size for the pupils were 300 out of a total population of 2520 pupils. The headteachers were selected for purposive sampling because they were informative. The rest of the sample groups were randomly selected so that each member of the population had an equal and independent chance of being selected.

Table 1

Sampling of the Respondents

Respondents	n	N
Teachers	100	135
Pupils	300	400
Parents	80	100
Total	480	635

Where n = Sample
 N = Actual population

3.4 Description of Research Instruments

The researcher used two types of data collection instruments namely, questionnaires and interviews.

(a) Questionnaires

The researcher designed two categories of questionnaires, one for the teachers and the other for the pupils. The questionnaires were both closed and open-ended formats. The researcher's option for questionnaire was to collect data from a large population within a short period of time since questionnaires are fast and economical. It was also to give the respondents more time to consult records before responding.

(i) Questionnaires for the Teachers

The questionnaire for the teachers was three pages long and was divided into four sections. The sections elicited data collection on the background information about the respondent, the contributions of the government, the Church, the NGOs and the parents towards primary education, the concern of the ministry of education for the teachers'

needs in Acholiland, the impact of armed conflict on primary education and some suggestions on how to improve primary education in Acholiland.

(ii) Questionnaires for the Pupils

The questionnaire for the pupils was three pages long and was divided into three sections. The sections drew out data on the background information about the respondent, the contribution of the government towards primary education, the supervision of the District Education Officer and the Inspectors of Schools, the impact of armed conflict on primary education and some suggestions on how primary education in Acholiland can be improved.

(b) Interview Guide for the Parents

The interview guide was one page with seven items and, the parents were the focused group. The researcher interviewed 100 parents. The interview provided in-depth answers, which was not possible to get through questionnaires. Probing helped the interviewer to get additional information. The content of the interview guide was on the impact of armed conflict on primary education, the parents' own contribution to primary education and the difficulties they face in educating their children, the contributions of the government, the Church and the NGOs towards primary education. It also sought to find out some suggestions on how to improve primary education in Acholiland.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher used questionnaires and interviews for data collection. She went to the field, that is, the actual school locations to collect the data. She delivered 535 questionnaires to the respective schools with the help of three research assistants. None of the research assistants was a participant in the study. Two of them were teachers and none of them teaches in the selected schools for the study. The other one was a doctor involved in social work. With the help of the research assistants the researcher explained the need of collecting the data to the respondents.

Preceding the interviews the researcher also explained the purpose of data collection to the respondents who were the parents. The researcher interviewed 100 parents and those interviewed were not necessarily the parents whose children went to the schools selected for the study but any parent in the region. This helped to get a more balanced view.

3.6 Data Analyses

The data collected was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics, percentages and frequencies. Data was analyzed as per research questions and presented in a tabular format.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the collected data. The data are analyzed and arranged in tables, frequencies, and percentages. The data presentation and discussion are based on the main research questions of the study. The chapter is divided into three parts. First, it analyses the teachers' responses, then, the pupils' responses and finally the parents' responses based on the interviews.

4.1 RESPONSES OF THE TEACHERS

One hundred teachers participated in the study on the impact of armed conflict on primary education in Acholiland. All responded and there was 100% response rate.

4.1.1 Background Information

The background information of the teachers' respondents includes gender and the number of pupils in the schools.

Table 2

Distribution of Teachers' Responses by the number of Pupils in their Schools

<i>Number of pupils</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
500-600	15	11
600-700	0	0
700 and above	120	89
Total	135	100

Table 2 shows that 89% of the respondents confirmed that most schools have over 700 pupils. It can be deduced that most of the schools are overcrowded compared to the standard number of 600 pupils in a school. It reveals the impact of armed conflict on primary education in Acholiland.

Table 3

Distribution of the Teachers' Respondents by Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	95	70
Female	40	30
Total	135	100

As indicated in Table 3, the majority of the respondents were male. No explanation was given to justify the gender imbalance. According to the researcher, the gender imbalance could be due to the fact that the female teachers are more vulnerable to the armed conflict situation hence; they opt to teach in other peaceful areas.

4.1.2 The Trend of Enrolment of Pupils

An item was constructed to elicit data on whether there had been improvement in the trend of enrolment of pupils in the last twelve years.

Table 4

Enrolment of Pupils in the last Twelve Years

<i>Response</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	103	76
No	32	24
Total	135	100

It is clear from Table 4 that improvement in enrolment recorded the highest percentage. Seventy six percent of the respondents confirmed high enrolment level when the UPE was implemented in 1997. Some of the respondents also reported that displacement of pupils from the villages in towns contributed to the high enrolment rate.

On the other hand, 24% respondents revealed low enrolment rate. All of them pointed out abduction, destruction and closure of schools as the cause of low enrolment. Therefore, parents preferred to keep their children at home instead of sending them to school.

From the above findings, it can be concluded that improved security and free primary education can lead to high enrolment rate in schools.

4.1.3 School Dropout

In the open ended section of the questionnaire, the researcher sought to elicit data on the impact of armed conflict on primary education in Acholiland on whether school dropout rate can be reduced.

Table 5

Whether School Dropout rate can be reduced

<i>Response</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	115	85
No	20	15
Total	135	100

The findings in Table 5 reveal that, 115 respondents agreed that school dropout rate could be reduced. All of them acknowledged that ending the war is one of the ways of reducing school dropout rate. Another group of the respondents said that sensitization of the community on the value of education can be another way of reducing school dropout.

One of the respondents said,

Establish vocation-training institutes and promote girl child education to reduce school dropout.

The rest of the respondents suggested that sponsoring pupils from poor families who excel in the PLE and, establishment of good rapport between teachers and pupils could be other alternatives of reducing school dropout in Acholiland.

Contrary to the majority who expressed that school dropout can be reduced; twenty (20) respondents said that school dropout rate could not be reduced. Most of them had similar sentiments that it is difficult to reduce school dropouts because of the continuous abduction of children, destruction of schools and poverty.

One of them said,

Parents in Acholiland have lost interest in educating their children because of abduction and they prefer to stay with their children at home

Another respondent added,

These parents prefer their children to carry on with the petty jobs such as 'boda boda' cyclists, which provide immediate income rather than sending them to school.

4.1.4 The General Academic Performance

The teachers were asked whether there was improvement in the general academic performance of pupils in the last twelve years or any specific year.

Table 6

General Academic Performances of Pupils

<i>Response</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Yes	35	26
No	100	74
Total	135	100

As indicated in Table 6, 74% respondents admitted that the general academic performance of pupils in the last twelve years had been poor. They explained that most of the pupils were displaced and at other times they had to sleep in hideouts or in bushes to protect themselves from the rebels. As a result, they had no time to revise their class work.

One of the respondents said,

Often time schools are closed down; teachers and pupils are forced to flee for weeks and months because of LRA attack before reopening the school. The pupils have little time to study.

Another teacher had this to say,

Irregular class attendance on the part of the pupils is also a contributory factor to the general academic performance.

On the contrary, twenty six percent (26%) of the respondents confirmed that there was improvement in the general academic performance between 1999 and 2001. They agreed that the situation was calm because the rebels had settled into the Sudan. According to them, this peaceful situation has enabled the pupils to concentrate not only in schools but also had time to revise their work at home. Consequently, most of the pupils have excelled in the PLE.

4.1.5 Contribution of the Government, the Church, NGOs and the Acholi Community towards Primary Education

Table 7
Sampled Likert Scale Items from the Teachers' Data in Percentages

	<i>Item</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>UD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SD</i>
		<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
i.	The government has played an important role in improving primary education in Acholiland	5	76	4	13	1
ii.	The District Education officer and the inspectors of schools have been able to carry out regular supervision in the school	1	32	2	73	7
iii.	The ministry of education has been able to respond to the needs of the teachers by organizing seminars, workshops etc	11	73	2	7	6
iv.	The contribution of the NGOs to primary education in Acholi has been tremendous	10	84	1	4	1
v.	The church has played a significant role in improving primary education in Acholi	5	75	9	7	4
vi.	The parents' contribution to primary education has been great through tuition fee, uniform etc	6	75	5	12	2

It can be deduced from Table 7 that 76% of the respondents agreed that the government had played a major role in improving primary education in Acholiland. Another 73% agreed that the ministry of education had been able to organize workshops, seminars and courses for the teachers in Acholiland. They expressed that the workshops, seminars and courses were helpful to the teacher. Through them the teachers learnt new methodology of helping their learners to cope with traumatic experiences of war. Eighty four (84%) of the respondents agreed that the NGOs contribution toward primary education had been tremendous, while 75% agreed that the role of the church in improving primary education in the region had been very significant. Lastly, another 75% agreed that the parents' contribution towards primary education had been significant. However, 73% of them disagreed that there was no regular supervision from the ministry of education's office.

From the data, it can be argued that the government and the stakeholders have contributed greatly towards primary education in Acholiland. While this is so, there is need for dedication and commitment on the part of the government through the Ministry of Education and Sports for regular supervision of schools.

4.1.6 The Impact of Armed Conflict on Primary Education in Acholiland Since 1990

The teachers were asked whether armed conflict in Acholiland had any impact on primary education.

Table 8
Responses to the Sample Likert Scale Items from the Teachers' Data in Percentage

	<i>Item</i>	<i>SA</i> %	<i>A</i> %	<i>UD</i> %	<i>D</i> %	<i>SD</i> %
i.	Armed conflict has greatly affected primary education in Acholi since 1990	98	1	1	-	-
ii.	It is estimated that about nine to ten	67	32	1	-	-
	have been abducted by the LRA					
iii.	The schools' dropout rate has been high since 1990	30	68	1	1	1
iv.	Primary education in Acholiland was well attended and catered for before 1990	19	71	4	3	6
v.	The hope for secondary education has become	18	71	7	3	1
vi.	Many teachers are not motivated to teach in Acholiland because of LRA threats	73	25	-	1	1
vii.	Many teachers have either been abducted or killed by the LRA	47	50	1	1	-
viii.	Many primary schools have either been destroyed or burnt down by the LRA	79	20	1	-	-
ix.	The school has enough facilities, classrooms, textbooks & desks for all the pupils	-	6	3	66	25
x.	There are many former abducted children in the school	10	84	1	4	1

In Table 8, the majority of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the prolonged armed conflict in Acholiland has had deep impact on primary education. For instance, 98% of the respondents strongly agreed that armed conflict has greatly affected primary education in Acholiland. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of them strongly agreed

Another group of the respondents expressed their opinion that the government should rebuild all the schools that have been destroyed. According to them, this would help to reduce overcrowding in schools. Some of them also added that the government should ensure that the schools are adequately provided with desks and textbooks for all the pupils. They suggested that the government should award scholarships to pupils from poor families who perform well in the PLE or rather introduce free secondary education in Acholiland alongside the UPE.

The respondents also suggested that there is need for the government to provide good accommodation for the teachers within the school, protect and give allowances to motivate them. A respondent expressed his opinion that the teachers should also establish good rapport with the pupils and be committed in their teaching profession.

In addition, some of the respondents suggested that the parents should be fully involved in the education of their children, guiding and encouraging them on the importance of education. They also added that pupils should work hand in hand with their parents and teachers for good academic performance.

Finally, other respondents suggested that when the government services are unable to fully meet the educational needs of the children for reasons, other agencies should be encouraged to fill in the gaps.

4.3 INTERVIEWS WITH THE PARENTS

The researcher interviewed a total of 100 parents. The interviews were conducted in Gulu district and Bweyale trading center where the displaced people of Kitgum and Pader districts had taken refuge. The interviewees comprised of 56 female and 44 male. All the interviews were conducted in *Lwo*, the local language, and translated into English for compilation and writing purposes.

4.3.1 The Views of the Parents on the Current Fighting in Acholiland

When asked about their views on the current fighting in Acholiland, all the interviewees unanimously agreed that the war had created an immense poverty in Acholi region. They explained that the economic disruption from mass displacement had resulted in loss of access to agricultural land. They also added that, most of the camp residents live below the poverty line.

A man said,

Because of re-location many families are unable to till their land hence realizing too little production to sustain their family.

Another woman exclaimed,

We rely only on the relief assistance from the humanitarian agencies for our survival and it is difficult to make ends meet.

A respondent commented,

Even to carry out some petty trade has become impossible because we do not have income.

A sixty five year old man recounted,

I used to have a yearly harvest of ten bags of groundnuts, which I would use for paying my children's education. Now I wake up in the morning, I cannot go to my fields and my only choice is to spend the whole day doing nothing.

Another group of respondents pointed out abduction and brutal killing. They explained that thousands of innocent children had been abducted from their homes and schools. They added that these children had been forced by the LRA to commit atrocities against their own families and communities.

An elderly man expressed;

The children have become the frontline troops of the LRA raiding villages, killing and mutilating residents and destroying properties.

The interviewees declared that abduction is a disturbing experience. They said that it is an act of violence, ripping terrified children from the security of their families.

The people interviewed also expressed their views based on internal displacement. They said that internal displacement had led to moral decadence. The women explained that the girls were the most affected as regards morals.

One of the renowned women in the camp articulated,

Some parents have lost control over their daughters. This has resulted into high rate of pregnancies, elopement and marriage of teenage girls to men with resources like teachers, businessmen and army officers. Some of these parents give out their daughters for the sake of material gains. Consequently, this has led to an increased number of unwanted children who lack parental care and guidance. There are many unattended children in the camps, mushrooming of street children, idle youth loitering about; men, women and adolescents drinking alcohol and the children becoming petty thieves. The good cultural values of the Acholi are now lost.

One of the social workers expressed that the high level of overcrowding in the camps was particularly pathetic. He cited poor sanitation, water and accommodation problems. He said that these problems were the cause of diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea and intestinal worms, among others.

In addition, the people interviewed also cited family separation as an effect of the current fighting in Acholiland. They explained that many children had been separated from their families. These children had no parents to care for them; hence they had been

left on their own for survival such as security, food, clothing and health care. Therefore, some of these children had resorted to life on the street. The findings of this study are in conformity with Brown et al. (1995) discussed in chapter two of the study.

Lastly, a group of people interviewed expressed their views on unemployment problem. They attributed the low development in Acholi region to the current fighting.

One of the men an ex-police officer said,

The high level of unemployment is the outcome of low development caused by the war. The educated as well as the uneducated are all in the same basket of unemployment. Many people from other regions of the country despise most of these people.

4.3.2 The Impact of Armed Conflict on Primary Education

Out of one hundred (100) people interviewed, all of them approved that the current fighting in Acholiland had enormous impact on primary education. Ninety-eight (98) of those interviewed said that the prolonged war in Acholiland had not only led to the destruction and closure of schools but also the abduction of pupils, teachers and school administration. The interviewees also explained that the children who manage to escape after a long stay in captivity; face enormous difficulties readjusting to a normal life after constant violence and brutality with the LRA. They find difficulties in concentrating in class because of the traumatic experiences they had been through and as a result they often drop out of school.

A woman explained,

Education services have been disrupted in many ways. For example, pupils and teachers are abducted; the schools are often closed and other times the pupils are left without teachers because the teachers do not feel safe and they withdraw to safer areas.

The interviewees also expressed their opinion about displacement. They said that the movement of people to camps led to overcrowding in schools that must accommodate large populations from the IDP camps. They cited that in most camps several schools had been amalgamated under the leadership of one of the headmasters. They added that the amalgamated primary schools were overcrowded; they lacked educational materials and teaching staff, hence lowering the standard of education.

One man in his fifties acknowledged,

In Koch Goma camp, teacher- pupil ratio is one to a hundred. In the camps, indoor classrooms are few and lessons are conducted under thatched roofs or under trees with no barriers to wind, noise or other forms of interruptions. Trees also provide no shelter from rain, which regularly disrupts classes.

Another woman added,

Few pupils have desks and chairs. Most of them sit diligently bunched closely together on rocks, papyrus mats or recycled humanitarian assistance food cans, and this make learning difficult.

Some of the people interviewed expressed their concern about the high number of orphans in Acholiland. They pointed out that thousands of adolescents head households in which adults have been killed either by the LRA, UPDF, died of HIV–AIDS or other causes.

One of the interviewees said,

Adolescents' heads of households are responsible for themselves, younger siblings and other family members. Most of them find difficulties in school and dropout because of family responsibilities.

4.3.3 Importance of Primary Education

Regarding the importance of primary education, 39% of the interviewees agreed that primary education was the foundation for further education. They explained that through primary education children acquire literacy, which is the ability to read, write and calculate arithmetic. This research finding confirmed Achola (2001) discussed in chapter one of the study.

Some of the interviewees also expressed that primary education helps the children to acquire basic scientific skills and knowledge, which they are able to apply in their daily living.

A retired teacher commented,

Besides the acquisition of scientific skills, children can also think critically, make their own decisions, become assertive and more aware of who they are and what they want to become.

Lastly, those interviewed pointed out that primary education helps the children to interpret their environment and to determine how well they can fit into it.

4.3.4 The Contribution of the Parents towards Primary Education

Out of 100 people interviewed, all of them confirmed that the parents were contributing to primary education in various ways. Seventy two (72) of them admitted that the first contribution of the parents to primary education was by sending the children to school, providing for their scholastic needs, guiding, and encouraging them.

Twenty-eight (28) of the people interviewed also said that the parents contribute towards primary education through their participation in the school management. They participate in the construction of school buildings and teachers' houses through provision of local building materials such as bricks, poles, and sand, manual labour and so forth. They also attend school meetings like PTA and other school functions.

4.3.5 Difficulties faced by the Parents in educating their Children

When asked whether they had difficulties in educating their children, all of them agreed and gave the following reasons to justify their responses. Fifty four percent (54%) of the interviewees expressed that the parents lacked money for school supplies, uniforms, examinations and tuition fee not covered by the UPE. Accordingly, it had led to low attendance and high school dropout rate among children whose parents could not meet the demands of the schools. The interviewees also stressed that although UPE made education more accessible financially, parents must still pay for supplies and some school costs including examinations.

One of the women explained,

Tuition for a term of primary school costs about 5,000 Uganda shillings. With three terms a year many families cannot afford the payment. Therefore, most school age going children are at home due to lack of money.

The interviewees also admitted that some parents find difficulties in guiding their children on the value of education. They stated clearly that some of these parents do not see their children continuing with secondary education either because of poverty or abduction by the LRA. One of the interviewees articulated that the girls are married off at tender ages while the boys are recruited into the government's own home guards, the Local Defence Units (LDU) due to lack of parental guidance.

4.3.6 Contribution of the Government, the Church and the NGOs towards Primary Education in Acholiland

Those interviewed agreed that the government, the Church and the NGOs were contributing towards primary education in Acholiland at various levels. Ninety eight percent (98%) of them said that the government's, the Church's and the NGOs' major contribution to primary education had been through construction of schools. They admitted that these institutions provided building materials such as cement, iron sheets and so on.

One of the displaced women acknowledged,

The institutions do not only build permanent school structures but they also provide temporary school structures such as tents in the camps.

The interviewees also noted that the Church and the NGOs offer sponsorship programs in different schools.

A social worker with the Good Samaritan said,

The sponsorships are given to former abducted children, orphans and children from poor families. We are also involved in youth ministry to help the young people in their psychological, spiritual and human development, she added.

Another woman also commented,

The NGOs provide other facilities such as desks, textbooks, sanitary pads and supplementary meals for pupils in schools. World Vision, WFP, IRC, NRC, GUSCO and the Good Samaritan are some of the NGOs involved.

In addition, the interviewed people said that the Church, the NGOs and the government had been organizing workshops/seminars for the teachers.

One of the officials working with ICR said,

Through workshops/seminars and courses the teachers are prepared in participatory methodology, psychosocial issues, and gender and peace education. These programs equip the teachers to encounter the frightened faces of traumatized children in their classes.

The interviewees also explained that the church was also promoting the teaching of CRE in schools. They pointed out that the teaching of CRE instills Christian values in children to live in moral uprightness.

Some of the interviewees praised the government for her contribution to education through the implementation of UPE, training and payment of teachers. They also approved of the establishment of Primary Teachers Colleges (PTC) in Acholiland by the government. Although 75% of the respondents praised the government for her contribution to primary education, they also pointed out that the UPE did not benefit the Acholi children. They explained that the insecurity hindered the full implementation of UPE. For that reason, many young people could not complete quality education due to abduction, displacement and so on.

A man remarked,

UPE policy states that children should not be forced to repeat classes purely on the ground of poor academic performance. The children are promoted to the next class irrespective of their performances. Some of them complete the primary school cycle without knowing how to read and write properly.

4.3.7 Suggestions to improve Primary Education in Acholiland

The people interviewed were asked to give some suggestion to improve primary education in Acholiland. All the people them unanimously suggested that the government should end the war through peaceful negotiation so that the children in Acholiland may enjoy their rights to education. They emphasized that education was not a privilege but a right for every child and the duty of every parent.

The interviewees expressed their opinion that the Acholi community needs a serious sensitization on the importance of education. They articulated that the education problem in Acholi was historical. The children in the region had seen other fellow Acholi living successfully in life through the use of guns as soldiers, police officers and security guards without higher education.

Some of the interviewed people also suggested that the government should train and recruit more teachers in Acholiland to balance the teacher-pupil ratio.

4.4 Conclusion

The data show many points of convergence on the responses of the teachers, pupils and parents in regard to the impact of armed conflict on primary education in Acholiland. The trio confirmed that the current fighting in Acholiland has had a great impact on primary education. Some of their points of agreement included abduction and killing of both pupils and teachers, destruction of schools and the high rate of school dropout. For any meaningful development of a society to take place, the human resources must first be developed. Therefore there is great and urgent need for collective involvement for peace in Acholiland in order to improve primary education.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations to the study.

5.1 Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of armed conflict on primary education in Acholiland in northern Uganda since 1990. The study was guided by the following research questions.

- i. What is the impact of armed conflict on primary education in Acholiland on enrolment and performance since 1990?
- ii. What has been the contribution of the government, NGOs, the Church and the Acholi community towards primary education since 1990?
- iii. What has been the response of the ministry of education towards the needs of teachers in Acholiland?
- iv. What are some of the possible concrete suggestions that can help to improve the conditions of primary education in Acholiland?

The researcher used survey and case study designs. The survey design helped to collect data from a large population while the case study design made a detailed examination of the parents as a group. The study was carried out in nine primary schools in Gulu and Kitgum Districts. The sample groups included the headteachers, teachers, pupils and parents. There were 635 respondents of whom 135 were teachers, 400 pupils and 100 parents. The instruments used to elicit the data were questionnaires and an interview guide. The questionnaires were fast, economical and collected data from a large number of people within a short time. Meanwhile, the interviews provided in-depth information to the study. The responses were analyzed using frequency distribution and percentages.

The major findings of the research were:

- i. Abduction of pupils, teachers and parents by the LRA.
- ii. Brutal killing of pupils, teachers and parents by the LRA.
- iii. Destruction of schools since most village schools are burnt down or closed.
- iv. Insufficient facilities such as desks and textbooks in the displaced schools.
- v. The high rate of school dropout.
- vi. The high level of poverty, which makes it difficult for parents to educate their children.

5.2 Conclusions

Armed conflict has had a tremendous impact on primary education in Acholiland. The continuous abduction of both pupils and teachers has created more setbacks in primary education in Acholiland. The government needs to seek peaceful negotiation to end the war in order to improve primary education. The Acholi community reiterates their deep conviction that an end to the war would improve livelihood and education opportunities of their children.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was noted clearly that armed conflict had affected primary education in Acholiland. Therefore, there was great need for combined efforts to improve primary education in Acholi region through the following.

- i. The government needs to seek peaceful negotiation to end the war. The Acholi people want a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict that put reconciliation at the heart of the search for peace.
- ii. The government, through the Ministry of Education and Sports, needs to incorporate some conflict resolution and peace education programs in the primary school curriculum. This would be of vital importance to preparation of children on how to be involved in peace resolutions.

- iii. The government, the Church and the NGOs need to challenge Acholi community on the value of education through serious sensitization.
- iv. The government needs to invest on regional development that will lead to employment opportunities for school leavers and graduates.
- v. The government needs to adopt and implement an affirmative action education program for children and adolescents living in conflict areas. This could be through allocation of special fund to pay for secondary education of students in northern Uganda or through the expansion of sponsorship programs by the government and stakeholders especially for orphans, formerly abducted children and the children from poor families.
- vi. There is need for the Ministry of Education and Sports to improve the teachers training college and better conditions for teachers in Acholi region. This is especially urgent in order to secure the necessary number of qualified and committed teachers.
- vii. The Ministry of Education and Sports needs to ensure that teaching methodology is less authoritarian and participatorier with good learning facilities and equipment. Improved school system and good rapport between teachers and pupils would attract higher attendance and win the full support of the parents.
- viii. The LRA should end all forcible abduction, cruel and degrading punishments, and deliberate and arbitrary killings of innocent children.
- ix. The Church through the ARLPI should continue to support reconciliation and peace building. She should continue to be involved as a mediator for peace negotiation between the government and the LRA.
- x. The Acholi community should be committed to seek ways to end the war through peaceful negotiation. Their quest and commitment to bring peace in Acholiland can be a powerful voice to the government, LRA and the international bodies.

5.2 Areas for Further Research

This study focused on the impact of armed conflict in Acholiland only. However the following areas could be considered for further research.

- i. Impact of armed conflict on education in northern Uganda as a whole.
- ii. A comparative study between school dropouts in armed conflict zones and non-conflict zones in the country. Such a study might encourage greater cooperation of finding solutions to school dropout.
- iii. The roles of teachers in armed conflict.

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APPENDIX I

**SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA/USA (Nairobi Campus)
CHRIST THE TEACHER INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION
TANGAZA COLLEGE**

Sr. Akumu Lily Grace (Comboni Missionary Sisters)
P.O. Box 15023
00509 – Langata
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E-mail: cmslangata@wananchi.com

Title of the study

The Impact of Armed Conflict on Primary Education among the Acholi of Northern Uganda Since 1990

Questionnaire for Teachers

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed as an instrument for a study on the impact of armed conflict on primary education among the Acholi of northern Uganda since 1990.

Please, take time to complete this questionnaire as honestly as possible. All the information you will provide will be held confidential. Your responses will be very helpful for the success of this study. This study is done in partial fulfillment of my course of studies at Christ the Teacher Institute for Education (Nairobi Campus), Tangaza College.

Instructions

Please,

- Tick (✓) where appropriate.
- Provide brief information in the section below.

Section A

Background information

Number of pupils in the school: 500-600 600-700 700 and above

Gender: Male Female

Section B

In this section, please tick (✓) in the appropriate box depending on your response to the statement given below.

Key

SA= Strongly Agree

A= Agree

UD=Undecided

D=Disagree

SD=Strongly Disagree

#	Statement	SA	A	UD	D	SD
1	Armed conflict has greatly affected primary education in Acholiland since 1990					
2	It is estimated that about nine to ten thousand school age going children have been abducted by the LRA					
3	The school's dropout rate has been high since 1990					
4	Primary education in Acholiland was well attended and catered for before 1990					
5	The hope for secondary education has become elusive for most pupils in Acholi					
6	Many teachers are not motivated to teach in Acholiland because of the LRA threats					
7	Many teachers have either been abducted or killed by the LRA					
8	The District Education Officer and the inspectors of schools have been able to carry out regular supervision in the school					
9	Many primary schools have been either destroyed, closed, abandoned or burnt down because of the armed conflict					
10	The school has enough facilities like classrooms, textbooks and desks for all the pupils					
11	There are many former abducted children in the school					
12	The parents' contribution to primary education has been great through tuition fee and provision of school facilities					
13	The government has played an important role in improving primary education in Acholiland					

14	The contribution of NGOs to primary education in Acholiland has been tremendous					
15	The church has played a significant role in improving primary education in Acholiland					
16	The ministry of education has been able to respond to the needs of the teachers by organizing workshops, seminars and courses					

Section C

- Tick (√) where appropriate.
- Provide brief information as per the questions given below.

17. Do you sense some improvement in the school's general academic performance in the last twelve years or just any specific year? Yes No

a. If yes, which year and what changed after?

b. If No, no needs to explain.

18. Do you think the school's dropout rate can be reduced? Yes No

Give reasons:

19. Do you see some improvement in the enrolment of pupils in the last twelve years? Yes No

Give reasons to your answer

Section D

20. Give some suggestions to improve primary education in Acholiland.

Thank you very much for your responses and honesty.

APPENDIX II

**SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA/USA (Nairobi Campus)
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Title of the study

The Impact of Armed Conflict on Primary Education among the Acholi of Northern Uganda Since 1990

Questionnaire for Pupils

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed as an instrument for a study on the impact of armed conflict on primary education among the Acholi of northern Uganda since 1990.

Please, take time to complete this questionnaire as honestly as possible. All the information you will provide will be held confidential. Your responses will be very helpful for the success of this study. This study is done in partial fulfillment of my course of studies at Christ the Teacher Institute for Education (Nairobi Campus), Tangaza College.

Instructions

- Tick (✓) where appropriate.
- Provide brief information in the section below.

Section A

Background information

Number in class: 30-40 40-50 50-60 60 and above

Age: 6-10 11-15 15-20

Gender: Male Female

Section B

- Tick (✓) in the appropriate box depending on your response.
- Provide brief information as per the questions given below.

1. Do you think the current fighting has affected primary education?

Yes No

Give reasons

2. Have you ever been abducted by the LRA? Yes No

If yes, what was your experience?

3. Have some of your fellow pupils been abducted or killed by the LRA?

Yes No

4. Have you fought as a soldier with the LRA? Yes No

If yes, how was it?

5. Do you feel supported by your parents in your education? Yes No

Give reasons for your answer

6. Does the school have enough classrooms, desks and textbooks for all the

Pupils? Yes No

7. Do you have enough time to study at home and to do your homework?

Yes No

8. Does the District Education Officer or the inspectors of school visit your school regularly? Yes No

9. Do you think the government is contributing to primary education in Acholiland?

Yes No

Give reasons _____

10. Do most pupils in your school pass the primary Living Certificate (PLE)?

Yes No

Section C

11. Give some suggestion to improve primary education in Acholiland.

Thank you very much for your responses and honesty.

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. What are your views in regards to the current fighting in our land?
2. What is its impact on primary education in our land?
3. Do you see the importance of primary education? Give reasons for your answer.
4. What has been your contribution towards primary education in our land? Give reasons.
5. What are some of the difficulties you face in educating your children?
6. Are the government, the Church and the NGOs contributing towards primary education in our land? Give reasons.
7. What practical suggestions can you give to the government, the Church, the NGOs and the parents in order to improve primary education in our land.

APPENDIX IV

Figure 2

A photograph of P2 pupils in class

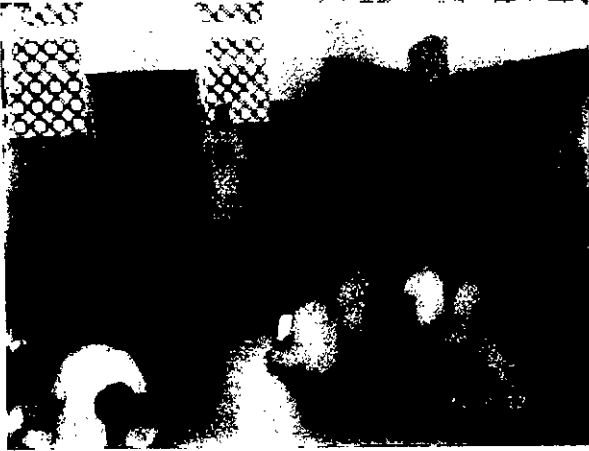


Figure3

A photograph of nursery children in class



The Comboni Sisters in Lacor hospital provided a temporary informal school for the displaced children of Lacor camp. The purpose is to help the disadvantaged children whose rights to education have been denied.

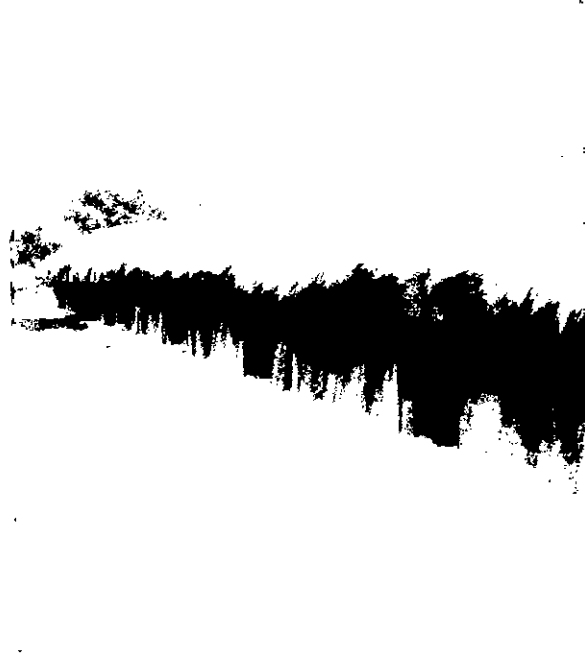
Figure 4

A photograph showing the inside arrangement of a class in a displaced school



Figure 5

A photograph of a displaced primary school in Lacor parish



Most village schools lack proper facilities. The children have to adhere to these hardships in order to acquire knowledge and skills.

Figure 5

A photograph of Lacor Displaced Camp



At the time of the interview there were about 3,000 displaced people living in the camp. Most displaced people in Acholiland live in improvise tents/houses where the living conditions are very poor.

Figure 6

A photograph of some rescued brutalized children from LRA captivity



The LRA targets the young children because they can easily be indoctrinated into their life styles. Any resistance on the part of the children leads to severe torture.

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15 January 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

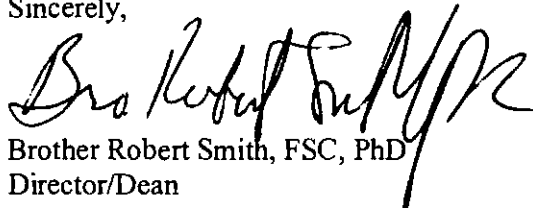
Sister Lily Grace Lam Akumu, CMS (#9902), is a fourth-year full time student in good standing at Christ the Teacher Institute for Education. In May, she will be graduating with a B.Sc.Ed. As part of her final semester, she is enrolled in a research seminar, during which she is to conduct research and gather informational data regarding various issues, leading to the writing of a major paper. Her lecturer for this course, and the person responsible for directing her research, is Mr. Simon Wachira, our Registrar and one of our lecturers in Education.

Christ the Teacher Institute for Education is an institute in the School of Education of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota/USA. It is also an institute within Tangaza College, one of the constituent colleges of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

In order to accomplish her work, I respectfully request that you allow Sister Lily Grace the courtesy of having access to your institution or program for the purpose of gathering data, all of which will be shown to and discussed with you.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request. Please contact me if I can provide additional information, clarification, or amplification of anything above.

Sincerely,



Brother Robert Smith, FSC, PhD
Director/Dean

Associate Dean, School of Education, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
Dean, Nairobi Campus, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota

