

**THE CHALLENGES OF GUARANTEEING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TO EDUCATION
IN WAR-TORN NORTHERN UGANDA: A CASE STUDY OF FORMER CHILD
SOLDIERS IN GULU DISTRICT**

**BY
DAVID MANYONGA
(MAHRD/12169/61/DF)**

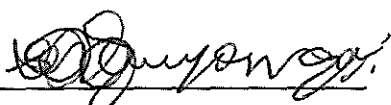
**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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DECLARATION

I, David Manyonga, do hereby declare that the work presented here, concerning ***“The Challenges of Guaranteeing Children’s Rights to Education in War-torn Northern Uganda: A Case Study of Former Child Soldiers in Gulu District”*** is a result of my work except where it is acknowledged, and that it has never been presented for any academic award.

Signed:



David Manyonga

Candidate

Date: 25/10/2007

APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis entitled **“The Challenges of Guaranteeing Children’s Rights to Education in War-torn Northern Uganda: A Case Study of Former Child Soldiers in Gulu district”** was conducted by David Manyonga, who worked under my supervision. This report has been submitted to the Director of the School of Post Graduate of Kampala International University with my approval.

Signed:

M. Mawa (Signature)

Dr. Michael Mawa

Supervisor

Date: 25/10/2007

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my cousin, Elisha Chifamba. You had 'milk on your nose' when you were conscripted into the Zimbabwe liberation 'Chimurenga' war in the 1970s; but you never returned home when the war ended. You are a child soldier who went to war, but you never returned. Wherever you are, we miss you. Let God look over you. Till we meet again. Peace!

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ACRONYMS

AVSI	Italian Association for Volunteers in International Service
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CPA	Concerned Parents Association
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DDRR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
EFA	Education for All
ESIP	Education Strategic Investment Plan
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FCS	Former Child Soldier
GUSCO	Gulu Save the Children Organization
HNT	Human Needs Theory
ORACLE	Opportunities for Reducing Labour through Education
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDPs	Internally Displaced People's camp
IGAs	In-come Generating Activities
INEE	Inter Agency Network for Education
INGO	International Non Governmental Organization
IPLG	Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance
IRC	International Rescue Committee
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
GoU	Government of Uganda
LRA	Lord Resistance Army
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
RC	Reception Centre
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
UCOBAC	Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UMECS	United Movement to End Child Soldiering
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNESCO	United Nations Education and Scientific Organization
UN	United Nations
UPDF	Uganda People's Defense Forces
UPE	Universal Primary Education
US	United States
WV	World Vision

ABSTRACT

This study set out to establish whether children's rights to education were applicable to children who are affected by conflict in war-torn Northern Uganda. More specifically, the study used the case of former child soldiers in Gulu District to establish the challenges that these children face in their bid to enjoying the right to education. To ascertain the level of the enjoyment of the right to education of former child soldiers, the study investigated whether children were accessing primary school education. The study was carried out in four sub-counties of Gulu District, and targeted former child soldiers as the primary target population; whilst members of the Acholi community, government employees, NGO staff and school administrators were the secondary target population.

To get an in-depth understanding of the challenges of guaranteeing children's rights to education, three aspects of schooling were critically looked into, and these are: access to primary school, attendance in class and involvement in learning activities. The study used a sample size of 200 drawn from five sub-counties of Gulu District. The study was conducted using methods that are largely qualitative. A questionnaire and an interview guide were the main research instruments that were used in data collection. Data analysis was done with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), software that produces generative descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation, which were used to illustrate the study summary and findings.

The major findings revealed that former child soldiers in Gulu District were denied their right to education. The denial of the right to education was due to the fact that a great number of former child soldiers were not attending primary school. The non attendance to primary school of these children was prevalent even though there was awareness concerning the opportunities available to them. It was established that many socio-economic, attitude, and administrative factors were the major challenges that hindered former child soldiers from accessing, attending and getting involved in primary schooling.

The researcher recommended that various stakeholders, particularly the government of Uganda, NGOs, and the entire community of conflict impacted areas should collaboratively mobilize and support former child soldiers schooling. The many challenges that former child soldiers encounter in seeking education entail the need for the development of many tailor-made support structures such as free education, psychosocial support and special classes. There is great need for the government of Uganda to consult the various stakeholders and develop and implement a Disarmament, Demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme that is conscious of the children's right to education.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Today, the phenomenon of the use of children as soldiers has attracted the world's attention as one of the worst forms of human rights abuses. However, besides the awareness and measures to curb this scourge, little attention has been given to the practical process of rehabilitating former child soldiers to enable them to live a normal life and also enjoy all the rights they are entitled to as children. International debate has been intensified on the role that families, communities, governments and non-governmental organizations should play in the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) Programmes. If implemented well, the DDRR programmes facilitate the reintegration of former child soldiers in community so that they enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms just like other children.

Child soldiering comes with many long term challenges to the children themselves and other stakeholders. To this end, there is strong need for the rebuilding of broken lives and to reignite the potential of the children to enjoy their lives to the fullest potential.

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether or not former child soldiers are enjoying the right to education by attending lessons in primary schools. The enjoyment of the right to education by former child soldiers is one of the fundamental reintegration and rehabilitation processes. If they are not, the investigator was interested in understanding the underlying challenges and thereafter proposing some solutions.

This study explored the children's right to education. Specifically, the study investigates "The Challenges of Guaranteeing Children's Rights to Education in War-torn Northern Uganda: A Case Study of Former Child Soldiers in Gulu District". This chapter gives the background to the study and the scope of the problem as it relates to some of the human rights challenges related to the right to education of former child soldiers, the impact of conflict on children's rights in general and some of the implications; the statement of the problem, research purpose, objectives, questions, scope, significance and the justification for the study undertaken.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In Africa and elsewhere, armed conflicts tear communities apart and have been a major hindrance to the socio-economic and political development. Mozambique, Sierra Leona and Somalia are just a few of the examples of countries that bear the impact of conflict. During situations of armed conflicts children and women are exposed to untold suffering. Ms. Graça Machel, the Former United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's Expert on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, aptly observes that, while wars have always victimized children, "modern wars are exploiting, maiming and killing children more callously and more systematically than ever."¹

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), prolonged conflicts over the last decade have killed more than 2 million children and have also left four million children disabled, 12 million homeless, and over ten million traumatized.² Everyday, conflict kills, maims or disables approximately 2000 children.

¹ Graça Machel, The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, A Critical Review of the Progress made and obstacles encountered in increasing protection for war-affected Children, September 2000: Available on: <<http://www.reliefweb.int/library/armedconfchildren.htm>>

² United Nations Children Fund: <http://www.caat.org.uk/campaigns/paying-the-price/briefing.php>

The impact of armed conflict has many complex development and humanitarian challenges, including the loss of life, increased poverty levels, gross human rights abuse, destruction of infrastructure and essential services like health and education systems. The education system is one such essential service that is inextricably linked to the states they served. Burne (2004) posit that when states fail, or when ethnic, religious, or ideological cleavages erupt into violence, schooling functions erratically, if at all.³ Such scenarios are pervasive in a number of African countries that have experienced protracted armed conflicts and continue to bear the brunt of war as is the case in Northern Uganda, where social services have collapsed.

Uganda, since its independence in 1962, has not known a real period of peace and has had some of its citizens enduring the worst human rights abuses. After independence the East African country was bedeviled by numerous coups, and a plethora of insurgencies. The most protracted of these insurgencies has been the on-going armed conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Government of Uganda (GoU). The LRA and GoU intrastate conflict in the Northern districts of Uganda has been on-going for 21 years. Over the years the conflict has metamorphosed into a brutal affront on Acholi civilians and has had a unique trait in which child abductions, and the use of children as soldiers is a common strategy of the LRA.

The term "child", as indicated by the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), means "every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier."⁴ This research adopts the Cape Town Principles, which provides a comprehensive understanding of what a "child soldier" means: "any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters,

3 Burne D. (ed) 2004. Education in Emergencies in Post-Conflict Situations: Problems: Responses and Possibilities. New York, Columbia University. *Per*

4 Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989, Article 1. Available at: <<http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/>>.

messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members.⁵

The Northern Uganda conflict has had an impact on thousands of children in many ways resulting into the wide-spread abuse of their rights. There is a wide array of children whose lives has been impacted by the on-going conflict and among a long list of categories are the following: children below 18 who were used as soldiers, others were separated from their families or got lost, others were abducted, so-called 'night commuters' who sought overnight safety away from home, whilst other children were orphaned during the war. Among this category of children, former child soldiers are believed to have suffered some of the worst violation of their rights as they were forcefully abducted and forced to fight as soldiers.

When former child soldiers return to communities efforts are made by Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the Governments and their families to ensure that these children are rehabilitated and reintegrated to normal life. Furthermore, in the war ravaged Acholi sub-region made up of the four Northern Uganda districts of Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader, the Government established Child Protection Committees at both the camp and sub-county level to ensure the monitoring of children's rights and to address protection concerns, including issues related to sexual exploitation and the return of formerly abducted children.⁶ These Child Protection Committees comprise of community leaders, parents, teachers, local district officials, NGOs staff and children themselves.

The rehabilitation and reintegration of returnee children, a great majority of whom were child soldiers occur under adverse conditions as the majority of the population in Northern Uganda is still living in Internally Displaced People's

⁵ Cape Town Principles and Best Practices on the Recruitment of Children into the Armed Forces and on Demobilization and social Reintegration of Child Soldiers in Africa (Cape Town, 27-30 April 1997): Available at:

<http://www.tamilnation.org/humanrights/child/instruments_resolutions/capetown.htm >

⁶ United Nations Report: May 2007, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Uganda, UNESCO. New York

camps (IDPs). It was estimated that about 2 million people or ninety percent of the people in the so-called 'Acholi land' of Northern Uganda live in IDPs where 80% of schools were closed down in the past two decades.⁷ Furthermore, it was estimated that fifty percent of IDP's are children.⁸

Of particular concern to this study was an understanding of the challenges former child soldiers faced in their attempt to enjoy the right to education. The study focused mainly on the right to education as it pertains to basic education or primary education, a level whose attendance is mandatory in the human rights discourse. Given the fact that former child soldiers were faced with many challenges, a number of stakeholders, chief being the community, Government and Non Governmental Organizations were involved in efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate them. Education was one of the programmes, which were used in the rehabilitation and reintegration processes of former child soldiers. As put forward by the American Institute of Research (2007) education prepares children who had served in the military for a civilian life, and is developmentally considered an appropriate way of reintroducing them to the community and peaceful living⁹.

The Northern Uganda conflict war is believed to have started when a religious figure, Alice Lakwena, formed the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) to oppose the in-coming Government of Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA), which took power in January 1986. However, Lakwena's HSM was defeated by Museveni's National Resistance Army. After their defeat some remnants of the HSM are believed to have regrouped under the leadership of Joseph Kony and formed the Lord's Resistance Army¹⁰. Since then the LRA has

7 Id21 insights – Communication development research: "Civil War in Uganda: Education as a Means of Protection", available on: <<http://www.id21.org/insights/insights-ed04/insights-issued04-art07.html>>

8 UNESCO Report (2005) Wenda McNevin(ed) Children in Abject Poverty in Uganda: A Study of Criteria and status of those in and out of school in selected districts in Uganda. UNESCO. Paris

9 American Institute of Research under EQUIP1 LAW. Issue paper # 1 (March 2007) Role of Education and the Demobilization of Child Soldiers. USAID: Available at: <http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADI663.pdf>

10 Refugee Law Project, February 2004, Behind the Violence, Causes, Consequences and the Search for Solutions to the Northern Uganda, Refugee Project, Working Paper no. 11. Available on: <www.ugandacan.org/policypaper.pdf>

wrecked havoc in Acholiland and the neighboring sub regions of Lango, Teso and West Nile.

The exact number of children who were abducted by the LRA to serve as child soldiers is to date not known and remains an area of speculation. Recent estimates made available in the World Development Report of the World Bank estimated that at least 66,000 youths were thought to have been forcibly recruited into the LRA¹¹. This figure was more than double the usual estimate of 25,000 that the UNICEF had pegged¹². The latest estimates on the number of abducted children were made by the Berkeley Tulane University Initiative on Vulnerable Population research, which triangulated data from different sources and estimated that the LRA had abducted around 24,000 to 38,000 children as of April 2006.¹³

Regardless of the number of children abducted and who were forced into child soldiering in Uganda's conflict, it is a popular belief that children were the biggest casualty in the complex conflict, with estimates indicating that between 70—80% of the LRA force comprised of abducted children. Meanwhile, tens of thousands returned to their communities when they escaped or were captured by the Government army¹⁴. These returnees, mostly child soldiers, returned to a ravaged society where the families resided in pathetic Internally Displaced People's camps whose conditions were squalid. The internally displaced persons, who before the conflict were prominent agriculturalists, had lost almost all their cattle and livelihood hence, could barely afford to support themselves and their children.¹⁵

11 World Development Report of the World Bank, 2007, "Development and the Next Generation" available on: < www.worldbank.org/wdr2007>

12 UNICEF, 2006, "2006 Report on the Situation of Women and Children in Republic of Uganda" UNICEF

13 Phuong Pham, Patrick Vinck, Eric Stover (eds) June 2007. Abducted: The Lord's Resistance Army and Forced Conscription in Northern Uganda. June 2007, Berkeley Tulane University, California: Available on: < www.hrcberkeley.org/download/NUgandaReport2007.pdf>

14 The New Vision, Monday, February, 12, 2007, p. 3.

15 Refugee Law Project, 2004, Behind the Violence, Causes, Consequences and the Search for Solutions to the Northern Uganda, Refugee Project, Working Paper no. 11.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), signed in 1989, is regarded as the most significant human rights document to lay down the special protection needs of children in emergency situations. Against the spirit of the CRC, it is evident that the new global phenomenon of child soldiering which came to light a decade ago impacts more negatively on children's rights to education and impinges on international law and a number of human rights proclamations. Among the broader and more complex international responses to child soldiering is the approach dubbed, Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) which, NGOs developed as a series of four stages to assist children involved in armed conflict in returning to normal lives¹⁶. In this research, the investigation focuses on the last component of the DDRR approach, namely, reintegration, to analyze the challenges of guaranteeing former child soldiers' right to education.

Amidst the protracted conflict in Northern Uganda, the social reintegration of former child soldiers has been on-going at the behest of international organizations working in partnership with communities, local NGOs and the Government, in a number of ways. In Northern Uganda, given that the majority of the population resides in Internally Displaced People's camps, the social reintegration of former child soldiers is fraught with many challenges as it is taking place in the context of an on-going conflict, unlike in a post conflict scenario to which DDRR is best designed. The Northern Ugandan conflict has compromised the realization of the educational rights of many children in multiple ways, ranging from the total exclusion from the formal education schooling system, to schooling in unfriendly (unhealthy, unsafe, and unproductive) learning environment¹⁷.

Children who were abducted and served as soldiers (former child soldiers) face a lot more challenges as they drop out of school and usually return to their communities when they are traumatized and sometimes stigmatized. This

16 Orange, J. (1997). *Child Soldiers- Madness of the 20th Century*. Child Soldiers. Heiger Publications, Amsterdam

17 IRC, "Civil War in Uganda: Education as a mean of protection", op. cit.

research places the reintegration of former child soldiers (FCS) under scrutiny, specifically, analyzing the challenges of guaranteeing former child soldiers right to education. The research would want to understand why former child soldiers face challenges even though the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development principal outline that, “the aim of reintegration efforts is to enable formerly abducted, or other vulnerable children, to access the same range of service available to all children in the community¹⁸”.

In most post-conflict societies, DDRR programmes are comprehensive peace building efforts that seek to remedy the violation of former soldiers’ rights through protection, rehabilitation and reintegration into their respective societies¹⁹. According to Boyden and Berry (2004) rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers through DDRR programmes have been advanced by the United Nations, Governments and other international organizations as the natural continuum in the peace process²⁰. Today DDRR programmes have been used in different contexts to address the needs of children who were soldiers as well as the needs of their families, communities and societies

In this regard, therefore, the researcher recognizes that families, NGOs and communities play major roles in the social reintegration of former child soldiers. One such method being used as a rehabilitation and reintegration measure is to facilitate the right to education of all children, among them former child soldiers. This study proposes to investigate the challenges of guaranteeing former child soldiers right to education.

18 Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development publication on: Good Practice for Working with Formerly Abducted and Other Vulnerable, War-Affected Children in Uganda, 2006. Speech: Kampala

19 Boyden, J. and de Berry, J., 2004, Children and Youth on the Front Line, London: Berghan Books.

20 Boyden, J. and de Berry, J., 2004, Children and Youth on the Front Line, London: Berghan Books.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Children are the most vulnerable members of the human family as they depend on adults for protection, feeding and most of their needs and nurturing. During times of war, when families and societies are torn apart, children are one of the categories of people who suffer some of the conflicts' worst consequences as they are exposed to many life threatening situations and live at the mercy of adults. Even though there are international standards and humanitarian laws meant to protect children against manipulation and abuses, this is not usually the case. In fact, in most conflicts, children have been taken advantage of and are forcefully used as war spies, sex slaves, potters, human shields, and soldiers.

The now 21-year conflict in Northern Uganda is one such conflict that has seen thousands of children being abducted into the ranks of fighting forces. Upon enlistment into armed forces these children encounter untold human rights abuses, among which sex slavery, torture, and forced labour are the most prevalent. Sometimes children are not so lucky to survive and are killed in the abduction process or in cross-fire during fighting. It is not only abducted children who suffer abuses during a conflict, but even those who remain with their families or communities suffer different consequences of the conflict too.

Among some of the conflict consequences is the disruption of normal life and social infrastructure, which ensures that people in a conflict zone are denied many of their rights. In Northern Uganda the Government moved the majority of the people into Internally Displaced People's camps (IDPS) where the concentrated populations have little or no access to social amenities such as schools and health facilities. This, coupled with the deterrence to eke a living, limits the chances of the inhabitants to enjoy a number of their human rights. As a result, right to health, food, free-movement and education are some of the many human rights that are difficult to guarantee during war times.

solders was heightened by the perceived view that education is both a rehabilitation and reintegration means.

1.3 PURPOSE

The purpose of the study was to establish whether former child soldiers in Gulu District were enjoying the right to education. To ascertain the level of the enjoyment of the right to education by former child soldiers, the study investigated the former child soldier's involvement in school activities.

1.4.0 OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 General Objective

This study investigated children's rights to education, with specific focus on the challenges former child soldiers' faced in accessing formal basic education, school attendance and involvement in the schooling experience in Gulu District of Northern Uganda.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To determine how formal primary education is accessed by former child soldiers in Gulu District.
2. To find out whether former child soldiers effectively attend primary school programmes in Gulu District.
3. To establish the involvement of former child soldiers in primary school programmes in Gulu District.

1.4.3 Research Questions

1. Do former child soldiers access primary school education in Gulu District?

2. Do former child soldiers effectively attend primary school in Gulu District?
3. How are former child soldiers involved in primary schooling activities in Gulu District?

1.4 ASSUMPTIONS

The assumptions in this study were as follows:

- a) That given the high number of children who had served as soldiers, there were challenges these former child soldiers were facing in accessing formal primary school education in Gulu District.
- b) That the right to education for former child soldiers was being affected by not attending school in Gulu District
- c) That not all stakeholders were aware of the right to education of former child soldiers.
- d) That the researcher was to be permitted access to all respondents and institutions that are in the five sub counties, which were targeted for this research.
- e) That there will be sufficient security for the researcher to carry out the study.
- f) That the respondents will be willing to cooperate and provide answers that are truthful and based on their knowledge and experiences.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was about establishing the challenges of guaranteeing the right to education for former child soldiers in Gulu District of Northern Uganda. The focus of the investigation was the former child soldiers in Gulu District, which is one of the four districts in the Northern Uganda's conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda. More specifically, the study zeroed on former child soldiers, as it is assumed that a great number of them grappled with rehabilitation challenges and coping with normal life after captivity. The variables treated in the study were: accessibility, attendance and

involvement as having correlation to the right to education of former child soldiers. The choice of the district was not in any way related to prior findings but rather, the choice was most reasonable for the research considering security concerns, resource and time restraints.

The investigation was limited to finding out the challenges and whether former child soldiers in the war-torn district of Gulu were enjoying the right to education. The study focused on five sub-counties of Atiak, Bobi, Bungatira, Odek, and Lalogi in Gulu District and targeted 200 respondents, as an adequate enough sample to permit generalization of the findings to the whole of Gulu District. All in all, 15 former child soldiers, 15 members of the Acholi community, 4 Government officials, 4 school administrators/teachers and 2 NGO employees were interviewed in each of the five target sub counties. The study targeted the following categories of people: former child soldiers, Acholi community members, Government officers, school authorities, leadership of NGOs and Community Based Organizations.

The study was carried out in Gulu District, one of the districts in the Acholi region that was affected by the conflict. Particularly, the survey was carried out in the camps for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), which are scattered all-over the district.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study was concerned with establishing whether former child soldiers in Gulu District, Northern Uganda were enjoying their right to education. The researcher particularly desired to delve into this study primarily for its significance and urgency. The study is vital for potential end-users and urgent because of the challenges faced in the rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers in Northern Uganda. The list of potential end users include relevant Government department heads, programme managers of Non

Governmental Organizations, human rights defenders, former child soldiers, opinion leaders and individual persons from Gulu District.

Whereas different stakeholders were seeking to broker peace between the Government of Uganda and the LRA rebels as was the case with the Juba Peace Talks, which had secured a binding cessation of hostilities, it seemed that efforts to reintegrate thousands of former child soldiers into their communities had not taken a center stage. This situation was made obvious by the absence of a Government Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) programme. Save for the Uganda's Amnesty Commission Act of January 2000, which offer immunity and resettlement packages to all armed opponents who surrendered their weapons, there were no DDRR programmes. This perceived gap compelled the researcher to establish the status on the right to education as it pertains to former child soldiers.

Furthermore, the relative negative peace which was being experienced in Northern Uganda following the LRA and GOU cessation of hostilities had brought in hope for a peaceful solution to the protracted conflict and also the urgency to come up with a plan for post-conflict rehabilitation programmes. While on the other-hand NGOs and the local communities were assumed to be playing an unequivocally invaluable role in the education of former child soldiers, there was limited empirical knowledge regarding the challenges former child soldiers faced in regards to their right to education. It was therefore urgent to know the situation of former child soldiers as it relates to their right to education. The undisputed fact was that education was one of the most effective ways of rehabilitating and reintegrating former child soldiers to normal life. The study therefore, may benefit a number of stakeholders:

- i. For the Government, the research may avail information that would allow them to know the exact extent of the violation of the right to education;

and as such, this would allow them to formulate appropriate compensatory strategies and policies.

- ii. Gulu District Local Government leadership may use this study's findings in formulating new policies and bye-laws that address specific needs of former child soldiers.
- iii. Non-governmental organizations might find the results of this study appropriate for initiating new response rehabilitation and reintegration endeavors for former child soldiers.
- iv. School authorities might be able to help former child soldiers to settle in their schools so as to benefit from the schooling experience.
- v. Former child soldiers might be enlightened about their right to education and be able to effectively enjoy this right.
- vi. Communities in Gulu District might be sensitized to be able to support school development programmes and provide requirements that will enable former child soldiers to effectively attend primary schooling.
- vii. The researcher may make a contribution to the stock of knowledge by expanding right to education of former child soldiers, a scenario which may further empirical investigation into related areas.

All the stakeholders stand to miss the above enumerated possible benefits if the study was not conducted. There would be ineffective decision-making policies at national and local level, poor support from funding agencies and NGO; poor access of the right to education by former child soldiers, denial of expansion of knowledge by other scholars and diminished community participation and involvement in supporting the schooling of former child soldiers.

This chapter has discussed the background to the study and has captured issues related to what is perceived to be the challenges of former child soldiers in Gulu District, what interventions need to be taken, why the study was important and urgent, the scope of the problem, the purpose and the relevant questions for the study. The subsequent chapter will deal with the conceptual framework and

a review of related literature concerning the right to education for former child soldiers.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a general understanding of children's right to education within the context of the human rights discourse and also the situation of children impacted by conflict. The review of literature places the plight of former child soldiers in Africa on the spotlight and relates their experiences as regards their quest to satisfy the right to education. It highlights some of the dominant human rights principles and conflict theoretical frameworks used to analyze the impact of conflict on children's rights in general, and in particular the right to education for former child soldiers in Gulu District of Northern Uganda. In this chapter, the researcher reviewed literature in relation to what other scholars had established about the right to education of former child soldiers in Africa and elsewhere. The literature is presented in view of the research questions.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1.1 Human Rights Principles and Theoretical Frameworks

It is difficult to critically get an understanding of the plight of children impacted by conflict unless one employs human rights and conflict principles and theoretical frameworks. This section explores the school of thought and principles within the human rights and conflict paradigms, so as to situate the claim to the right to education by former child soldiers living in war-torn societies. By placing the situation of former child soldiers within the human rights discourse, it was hoped that the researcher was better able to investigate the claim that education is a right for all children, regardless of their situation in life. In this study the basic human needs theory from the conflict theory is juxtaposed

to the universally acclaimed human rights principles to offer grounds to investigate the former child soldiers' right to education.

The claim to the right to education for all children, regardless of their condition is further stated in Article 28 of the 1989 Convention of the Right of the Child (CRC), which states that States Parties recognize the right of the child to education and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity²². Furthermore, Article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child also states that every child has a right to education and further points that the education of the child shall be directed to foster human rights.²³

Much as human rights are everyone's reasonable demand upon the rest of humanity, their observance hinges on circumstances and conditions. One condition that violates the very basic rights of human beings is the threat of security. The threat to security violates one of the basic human rights as cited by Shue (1986) who posits that "no one can fully enjoy any right that is supposedly protected by society if someone credibly threatens him or her with murder, rape, beating e.t.c, when he or she tries to enjoy the alleged right".²⁴ Shue's (1986) argument was that security is one of the basic human rights that is so fundamental that its violation forecloses the enjoyment of other rights.

In terms of the situation of former child soldiers in Gulu District, the researcher believes that the said children who were once abducted and lived in obscurity, servitude and deprivation continue to suffer an abrogation of many of their rights during and after their reintegration into community. In a related development, Henry Shue singles out security rights as one of the basic rights to

22 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), 1989, Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC), adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by UNGA resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989, entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with Article 49 of the CRC, hereinafter referred to as "the Convention".

23 Organization of African Unity (OAU), 1990, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/24.9/49 (1990).

24 Henry Shue in Werhane. H. Patricia, A.R. Gini and Ozar David T (eds) (1986). *Philosophical Issues in Human Rights: Theories and Applications*. New York Random House.

physical security – the right to security entails not being subjected to murder, torture, mayhem, rape, or assault.

As such the context of the rights to education of former child soldiers in Gulu District should be analyzed within the context of the on-going conflict and its direct and indirect influence on the basic rights of children. Accordingly Shue (1986) concludes that in human rights there are two premises. The first is that everyone is entitled to enjoy something as a right. The second, that further explains the first, is that everyone is entitled to the removal of the most serious and general conditions that prevent or severely interfere with the exercise of whatever rights the person has²⁵. Since this applies to everyone, it establishes a right that is universal.

2.1.2 Conflict Theoretical Frameworks and Human Rights

In the case of former child soldiers in Gulu District of Northern Uganda, the on-going 21 year conflict creates conditions that interferes with their rights when in captivity and upon their return to their communities. As regards the condition of the conflict itself, many scholars present different explanations as to why conflicts occur among humans at intra-personal and inter-personal levels. A look at conflict theoretical frameworks is essential in this study as this allows the understanding of the nature of conflict and its impact on the people.

According to the Human Needs Theory (HNT), developed in the 1970s as a generic or holistic theory of human behavior, it hypothesize that humans have basic *needs* that have to be met in order to maintain stable societies. One of the HNT proponents, Burton (1991) describes:

We believe that the human participants in conflict situations are compulsively struggling in their respective institutional environments at all social levels to satisfy primordial and universal needs - needs such as security, identity, recognition, and development. They strive increasingly to gain the control of their environment that is necessary to ensure the

25 Henry Shue in Werhane. H. Patricia, A.R. Gini and Ozar David T (eds) (1986). Philosophical Issues in Human Rights: Theories and Applications. New York: Random House.

*satisfaction of these needs. This struggle cannot be curbed; it is primordial.*²⁶

Furthermore, Burton (1991) states that:

*Now we know that there are fundamental universal values or human needs that must be met if societies are to be stable... Unless identity needs are met in multi-ethnic societies, unless in every social system there is distributive justice, a sense of control and prospects for the pursuit of all other human societal developmental needs, instability and conflict are inevitable.*²⁷

The researcher recognizes the significance of this theory in that it makes legitimate the former child soldiers' education needs as a right, and also reaffirms the importance and universality of human rights. Therefore, the human needs seem to imply that if the basic human needs of former child soldiers' are not met further conflict may prevail.

2.1.3 Impact of Child Soldiering on Education

The tragedy of today's conflict is that children are the prime target of fighting forces. Graça Machel, the Former U.N. Secretary-General's Expert on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, aptly observed that, while wars have always victimized children, "modern wars are exploiting, maiming and killing children more callously and more systematically than ever."²⁸ As such, the large-scale abuse of children's rights in situations of war or conflicts has entailed a creation of new perspectives within the human rights discourse as well as the call for an interrogation of the nature of the rights entitlement and enforcement. The issue of child soldiering has undeniably become a global problem and has revealed shortfalls in human rights protection. The tackling of child soldiering has brought to the forefront several human rights challenges faced by children.

²⁶ John Burton, 'Conflict Resolution as a Political System' in Vamik Volkan, et al (eds.) 1991, *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Volume II: Unofficial Diplomacy at Work*. Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, Wash D.C.

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ United Nations Report (2000). *The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, A Critical Review of the Progress made and obstacles encountered in increasing protection for war-affected Children*, Graça Machel

The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers estimates that at any one time, there are over 300,000 child soldiers around the world.²⁹ With such a growing phenomenon the plight of former child soldiers has over the past decade been taken up as an important agenda by International NGOs and Governments seeking the outright stop of the use of children as soldiers and the setting up of remedial programmes for the rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers. The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers further concludes that education should be the centre of what must become a renaissance, a transformation of schools into safer havens for communal care, learning and support.³⁰

In Northern Uganda, the exact number of children who served as soldiers has been difficult to determine. As such many authorities claim that because of the LRA over reliance on children for its fighting forces, Northern Uganda could be having a record number of former child soldiers worldwide. Different organizations have been issuing varying estimates for children who have been used as soldiers in Northern Uganda. The estimates so far range from 25,000 as estimated by UNICEF³¹ and 66,000 which was claimed in a recent World Bank Report of January 2007.³²

The estimate of children abducted into LRA in a space of one year offers an insight into the extent of the problem. In this regard, UNICEF estimated that 8,400 children were abducted between June 2002 and May 2003.³³ Outside the human toll, the Northern Ugandan civil war has destroyed most of the infrastructure such as schools and health centers; while teachers and community

29 Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. Some Facts available at <<http://www.child-soldiers.org/childsoldiers.some-facts>>

30 Ibid

31 31 UNICEF, 2006, "2006 Report on the Situation of Women and Children in Republic of Uganda", UNICEF. New York

32 World Development Report of the World Bank, 2007, "Development and the Next Generation" available at URL: <<http://www.world%20deve%20report.htm>>

33 Report of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, UN Doc. A/58/546-S/2003/1053, 10 November 2003, available at: <<http://www.un.org/documents>>

leaders have increasingly become vulnerable targets³⁴. Over this period as many people as 12, 000 people are believed to have lost their lives, whilst nearly two million more were forced into Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) Camps.³⁵

The recruitment of children into armies is not only done by rebel armies but also occurs in Government armies. In November 2003 UNICEF accused the Government authorities of failing to prevent the recruitment of children. It found that 120 recruits out of a sample 1,200 in Lugore training centre in Gulu District were under the age of 18. In response, the authorities said that any recruits found to be under 18 were withdrawn from the forces.³⁶ Children who escaped, were captured or rescued from LRA captivity, some as young as 13, were sometimes recruited into the armed forces or forced to take part in military operations.³⁷ In March 2004 President Yoweri Museveni denied that child soldiers were recruited, blaming parents for lying about their children's ages so that they could earn army salaries.³⁸

The researcher submits that the conflict situation in Northern Uganda has far reaching implications on children's rights. As such when one takes the right to education of former child soldiers, there is a lot of vulnerability, insecurity and uncertainty about the possibility of realizing their full potential in life.

2.1.4 The Right to Education

In the contemporary time, the centrality of education to humankind cannot be underestimated. Education - in the broadest sense of the term – is a fundamental human right. The denial of this right may effect the enjoyment of other rights, since ignorance, which is the consequence of an incomplete

34 Singer, P.W. (2005). *Children at war*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books quoted by Strecker M.H. in Burne D. (ed) 2004. *Education in Emergencies in Post-Conflict Situations: Problems: Responses and Possibilities*. New York, Columbia University

35 Simon Nampindo (ed) *The Impact of Conflict in Northern Uganda on the Environment and Natural Resource Management*. USAID report August 2005

36 IRIN, "Uganda should do more to stop child soldier recruitment", 13 November 2003. – see *Child Soldiers Global Report* - <[www.Childsoldiersuganda.pdf doc](#)>

37 HRW, *Stolen children: Abduction and recruitment in northern Uganda*, March 2003.

38 The Monitor Newspaper, 5 March 2004. "Museveni Rejects World Court UPDF Probe". Kampala, Uganda

education, may deprive individuals the means to fully develop and express their personality and gain recognition.³⁹ In a different vein, the right to education is taken as an enhancer of all other human rights when guaranteed; but can foreclose the enjoyment of most, if not all rights, when denied. Civil and political rights, such as freedom of expression, freedom of association or the right to political participation, only require substance and meaning for people who have been educated.

The holistic character of the right to education is undeniable. In fact, the right to education is considered to be one of those rights that operate as a multiplier.⁴⁰ Education creates the voice, through which rights can be claimed and protected,⁴¹ and without education people lack the capacity 'to achieve valuable functioning as part of the living'.⁴² In Northern Uganda, the researcher observes a situation that is precarious and unpredictable for former child soldiers, who seem to be voiceless and cannot on their own, claim and have their rights protected. The predicament of abduction, child slavery, maiming, assault and rape of children in conflict zones pose significant demand on the Government and other stakeholders to come up with urgent and serious interventions to avert the situation.

However, the plight of former child soldiers has not been handled as per the prescriptions of the legal framework of Uganda. Whereas education is legally guaranteed by the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda which in Articles 30 and 34(2), provides for the right to basic education for every Ugandan, this seems to be a platitude for former child soldiers. Furthermore, such national projects like the 2025 Vision for Ugandan's Development formulated in 1997,

39 Save the Children Report (March 2000). Denied a Future? The Right to Education of Roma, Gypsy and Traveler Children. Save the Children, London

40 Katarina Tomasevski (2003) Education Denied, Zed Books, London

41 K. Watkins, The Oxfam Education Report, (Oxford: Oxfam 2000) quoted in Education Rights: A Guide for Practitioners and Activists, Global Campaign for Education, Action Aid International, June 2007

42 A. Sen 'Capability and Well-being' in M Nussubam and A. Sen (eds), The Quality of life, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 30 – 35 quoted in Education Rights: A Guide for Practitioners and Activists, Global Campaign for Education, Action Aid International, June 2007

which incorporated a commitment to education as a development priority giving rise to the Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) 1997-2003 framework places emphasis on the education for all. Under the 1st and 2nd Poverty Eradication Action Plan, Universal Primary Education was the Government's chief education priority and is therefore central to the current ESIP.

Uganda's Universal Primary Education of 1997, committed Government support for primary education of four children from every household by paying tuition and assisting with the construction of school structures and teacher training.⁴³ Under this policy, Government was to provide 'free' education to a maximum of four children from each family.

The Major Objectives of Universal Primary Education

- Making basic education accessible to the learners and relevant to their needs as well as meeting national goals;
- Making education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities;
- Establishing, providing and maintaining quality education as the basis for promoting the necessary human resource development;
- Initiating a fundamental positive transformation of society in the social, economic and political field;
- Ensuring that education is affordable by the majority of Ugandans by initially providing, the minimum necessary facilities, resources, and progressively, the optimal facilities;
- Enabling every child to enter and remain in school until they complete the primary education cycle.⁴⁴

As part of its achievements, the enrolment figures after the launching of UPE shot up from nearly 2.5 million in 1996 to nearly 6.8 million in 2000.⁴⁵

⁴³Uganda Universal Primary Education document available at:

<<http://www.dip.go.ug/english/education/upe/?PHPSESSID=f9ba5f379027f6796d8830752fd6b8d1>>

⁴⁴ Ibid

On the other the Government's Education Strategic Investment Plan (ESIP) main priority actions in primary education was improving efficiency, as envisaged in multi grade teaching, improving the quality of mainly teachers, supervision of the teaching and learning process as well as improving accessibility to basic education by giving incentive to teachers in hard to reach areas like Gulu District, so as to motivate and thereby improve the performance of teachers and to impact on learning outcomes, among others.

Viewing poverty as a hindrance to good governance, security and sustainable economic growth, the Government in 1997 embarked on a Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). PEAP had investment components in education seeking to contribute to the accumulation of human capital, which is essential for high in-comes and sustained economic growth.⁴⁶ Such Government programmes and policies confirmed that the right to education of children is of paramount importance to the national development and tranquility of the communities.

A review in New York based Nations Newspaper recently summed up the dilemma of former child soldiers as it relates to education, "Most child soldiers, however, are not so lucky. Attempting to emerge from war with no education and no economic prospects, often stigmatized and shunned by communities because of their participation in war and with no family or social support, many children relapse into soldiering'.⁴⁷

2.2 International Human Rights Instruments and the Right to Education

The phenomenon of child soldiering has in the recent decade been on the agenda as one of the activities that bring double jeopardy because of forced

45 Uganda Universal Education document available at:

<<http://www.dip.go.ug/english/education/upe/?PHPSESSID=f9ba5f379027f6796d8830752fd6b8d1>>

46 Poverty Eradication Action Plan document available at: <<http://www.dip.go.ug/english/peap/>>

47 The Nation Newspaper, 28 May 2007, The New Face of Warfare, by Fatin Abbas available on:

<<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20070528/abbas>>

abduction and stigmatization that follows thereafter. To unpack the right to education and locate whether former child soldiers are accessing their right to education there is need for an understanding of the international and local legal obligations around the education of children.

In the discourse of human rights, the fundamental starting point is that human rights are the minimum standards needed in order to live a dignified life and as such these rights are indivisible, inalienable and universal. These rights are upheld in international law through the bill of rights. Human rights law establishes rights that every individual should enjoy at all times, during both peace and war. The obligations, which are incumbent upon every state, are based primarily on the Charter of the United Nations and are reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) though not legally binding provided for the fundamental impetus to frame the right to education in later international human rights instruments. Article 26 of the UDHR states that: 'Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages...' Later in 1966, the International Covenant on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) set a legally binding standard through Article 13, which states that: "The State parties of the present covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms..." Furthermore, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966 also guarantees the respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions. The Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 seems to guarantee a wide range of human rights – civil and political, economic, social and cultural – to the

children.⁴⁸ Article 28 specifically establishes the child's right to education, recognizing education as essential for all children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) through Article 28 states the core minimum expectations to education, indicating that there should be free compulsory primary education for all and different forms of secondary education and vocational guidance 'available and accessible' to all. It states that: "State parties recognize the right of the child to education, with a view to achieving these rights progressively and on a basis of equal opportunity..." Article 29 of the CRC reflects a consensus of world opinion about fundamental purposes of education. It does not detail the tools of learning but addresses learning's basic aims: to develop children's full potential; to prepare children for 'responsible life in a free society', and to enshrine the values of respect for all others and for the natural environment.

The Government of Uganda is a signatory to all United Nations instruments proclaiming the right to education of children through Article 30 of its 1995 Constitution which states that, "All persons have a right to education".⁴⁹ However as Tomasevski (1999) puts it, the core content of the right to education which emerges from the plethora of international and local human rights instruments can be structured into a 4-As scheme.⁵⁰ Under the 4-As, Governments are obliged to make education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable. Tomasevski (1999) further explains that within the context of availability, the right to education is facilitated when Government permits the establishment of schools, and also when it ensures free and compulsory education is available to all school going-age children. On the other hand Government is obliged to secure access to education for all children in the

48 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, GA Res. 44/25, 44 UN GAOR, Supp. (No. 49), UN Doc. A/44/49, at 166 (1989), reprinted in 28 ILM 1448 (1989)

49 The 1995, Constitution of the Republic of Uganda

50 Commission on Human Rights, Annual report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Katarina Tomasevski, UN Doc. E/CN.4/1999/49, para 51-57 E/CN.4/2000/6, paras. 36-65

compulsory education age range, but not for secondary and higher education. Acceptability requires a guaranteed quality of education, minimum standards of health, safety, or professional requirements for teachers.

2.3 Access to Primary Education

Most children and young people growing up in war zones have no access to education. Precise data, however, is usually lacking. During the Mozambique civil war in the late 1980s, a total of 2,655 primary schools, 22 high schools and 36 boarding schools situated in the rural areas, were destroyed or forced to close down. This situation prevented around 600 000 children in mostly remote areas from having access to education.⁵¹ Little wonder that the Education For All (EFA) initiative launched in 1990, as a worldwide collaborative movement had the original goal of ensuring universal access to education by the year 2000. Seven years later, this goal is far from being reached as more than 130 million children in the world do not have access to school; hence the new deadline for Education For All (EFA) is now set for year 2015.⁵²

The to Inter Agencies Network on Education in Emergencies (2004) gives children the opportunity to develop life-saving skills, bringing shape and structure to their lives, and providing protection against exploitation and harm.⁵³ The 180 countries attending the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 promised to ensure by 2015 that all children in difficult circumstances (including those affected by war) have access to, and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

In the case of Mozambique, former child soldiers and other children impacted by the conflict had their educational needs catered for through a

51 Bennett E. (ed) Child Soldiers in Southern Africa. Monograph no 36, April 1999, Available on: <<http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No37/Contents.html>>

52 Ingvild Hestad & Margarita Facas Licht (2002) Lessons: Basic Education in Rural Africa, Save the Children Report, Oslo

53 Inter-agency Network on Education in Emergencies. (December, 2004). Minimum standards for education in emergencies, chronic crises and early reconstruction handbook. Paris

Department for Special Education. Through this unit, the Ministry of Education embarked on a national programme which had as its objective, the training of primary school teachers, the screening of students in need of special assistance, and instituting procedures to prioritize and facilitate transfers of school for children who had returned from areas of war and from refugee camps.⁵⁴ The Governments of Mozambique went further to try and guarantee the right to education to dislodged children, through the establishment of schools in war zones and in refugee camps in neighboring states.

In general once a child serves in the military, the time spent is seen as a time of lost opportunity after which he or she would carry a double burden. On one hand, former child soldiers would be lacking training for a constructive role in society, on the hand, they would have learned to use the gun, and been indoctrinated into violent life-styles which rely on the use of force to achieve objectives⁵⁵. Whilst in the military, not only will the children receive no education, but in many countries conflict tend to destroy institutions which serve children – in this case education – making it more difficulty for them to resume normal life.⁵⁶

Armed conflict around the world is one of the most formidable obstacles to accessing education world-wide; approximately 120 million children living in countries engaged in or recovering from conflict are estimated to be out of school.⁵⁷. Many of those in areas of conflict are doubly disadvantaged by being refugees or internally displaced persons.

A 2002 survey on Education in Emergencies carried out by the Women Commission for Children and Refugees found out, that in 10 countries with conflict-induced displacement, 27 million children had no access to formal

54 Inter-agency Network on Education in Emergencies. (December, 2004). Minimum standards for education in emergencies, chronic crises and early reconstruction handbook. Paris

55 Amnesty International: In the firing line: War and Children's Rights, January 1999, London

56 Rachel Bret & Margeret McCallin (1998) : Children The Invisible Soldiers, Stockholm: Radda Barnen.

57 Refugees Studies Centre, December 2006

schooling.⁵⁸ The vast majority of these, more than 90%, were IDPs. While attendance for all displaced children and youth was staggeringly low, the attendance and retention of displaced female students of all ages lagged significantly behind that of males. The same report survey found out that the majority of displaced children live in IDPs camps (more than 90%) and their school attendance (youth and children) was staggeringly low.

2.3.1 Instruments that Facilitate Access to Primary Education in Uganda

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995) asserts the protection and promotion of fundamental and other human rights and freedoms. These are 'inherent and not granted by the state'.⁵⁹ As such rights have to be respected, upheld and promoted by all agencies of Government and all persons. In chapter 4 of the Constitution, it is further stated that all persons are equal before and under the law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life and in every other respect and shall enjoy equal protection.

The right to education is granted in the Uganda's Constitution, "All persons have the right to education".⁶⁰ In Chapter 4 Article 30 of the Constitution centers on the rights of a child to education, "A child is entitled to basic education which shall be the responsibility of the State and the parents of the child... No child shall be deprived by any person of medical treatment, education or any other social or economic benefit by reason of religious or other benefit. Children are entitled to be protected from social or economic exploitation and shall not be employed in or required to perform work that is likely to be hazardous or to be harmful to their health, physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development...The law shall accord special protection to orphans and other vulnerable children".

58 Women Commission for Refugee Women and Children Report, *Against all Odds: Surviving the War on Adolescents Promoting and Protection Capacity of Uganda and Sudanese Adolescent in Northern Uganda*, September 2001, New York

59 The 1995, Constitution of the Republic of Uganda

60 Ibid

Further to the Constitution, the Government also came up with the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy in 1997. The idea behind UPE was that the disadvantaged families benefited first, and it states that "Children with disabilities (special needs) have a priority over normal children" and that all children have free access to education for up to four children per family, two of whom must be girls.⁶¹ However as noted by the 1996 Report of the Conference on Law and Children's Human Rights in Uganda, poverty was curtailing the effectiveness of UPE programme, whilst at the same time the high teacher pupil ratio was overwhelming the teachers by numbers and therefore the quality of education was no longer assured. The conference doubted any possibilities of meeting the needs of children's quest for education. As such this may imply that former child soldiers may be deprived of the opportunity to receive special care and protection when they are induced in school.

2.4 Primary School Attendance for Former Child Soldiers

The right to education and especially its package of the school environment has been fronted by many as a great springboard for the recovery of children impacted by war. However, as Graça Machel noted in her report on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, "Many teachers and parents may object to having ex-combatants enroll in schools, fearing that they will have a disruptive effect"⁶². Machel further notes that former child soldiers may not enroll where schools exist or because they lack proper documentation, are not considered residents of the area and because they are unable to pay school fees.

Other reasons that may hinder vulnerable children from attending school may have to do with the feelings of exclusion, as well as the struggle for survival and protection. These factors may lead children to join parties to the conflict or to become street children. As such the attendance to school of former child

⁶¹ Uganda Universal Primary Education document available at:

<<http://www.dip.go.ug/english/education/upe/?PHPSESSID=f9ba5f379027f6796d8830752fd6b8d1>>

⁶² Machel, Graça Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children. Impact of Armed Conflict on Children (New York, United Nations, 1996) available at: <[http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/A.51.306.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/A.51.306.En?Opendocument)>

soldiers requires the support of many players. UNICEF and the International Rescue Committee noted that while the attendance rates in Ugandan school had increased to 87 percent in the country overall, the dropout rates was still high with only 23 percent of children completing primary school. Attendance rates were considered to be much lower in areas of conflict because vulnerable children groups e.g. Children associated with fighting forces, displaced children, children orphaned by HIV/AIDS and children working in exploitative and harsh conditions often did not have access to education.⁶³

Furthermore, the safety of schools has become endangered in some areas because the LRA was using them as places of abduction. There was a dearth of programming to reintegrate children associated with fighting forces who have experienced physical and psychosocial trauma into the education system.

- However, as the World Bank report noted, regardless of the known importance of the right to education in war-affected areas, many children who should be in school are hard to find, hard to get into school, and hard to make sure they remain there until completing, at the very least, their primary education.⁶⁴ The same rationale ensured that the United Nations adopt the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) a strategic framework of development, which has Universal Primary Education is one of the eight target goals to be achieved by the year 2015.

2.5 Involvement of Former Child Soldiers in Schooling Experiences.

In reaction to conflict atrocities, non-governmental organizations developed a series of four stages to assist children involved in armed conflict in returning to normal lives: Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (DDRR).⁶⁵ In the recent past, rehabilitation has not been emphasized as this is an on-going process in all the stages. Sinclair posits that reintegration brings normalcy and routine back into the child's life and helps restore

⁶³ INEE. Uganda Emergency and Education Information available on: <<http://www.ineesite.org/page.asp?pid=1334>>

⁶⁴ World Bank Report (June 2002). Social Development – Children and War: Reaching Education For All (EFA) Objectives in Countries Affected by Conflict, Paper no 1

⁶⁵ Orange, J. (1997). Child Soldiers- Madness of the 20th Century. Child Soldiers. Netherlands: Watoto wa Amani.

community and familial identity through group healing.⁶⁶ The issue of reintegration of former child soldiers has been analyzed by scholars from various disciplines which includes; human rights specialists,⁶⁷ sociologists,⁶⁸ psychologists⁶⁹, anthropologists,⁷⁰ development scholars⁷¹ as well as peace building scholars⁷².

For Lederach⁷³, failure to comprehensively reintegrate demobilized children can threaten prospects for sustainable peace. These perspectives surmise the need for concerted efforts in the reintegration processes and calls for the involvement of the former child soldiers in reintegration. However, when the beneficiaries of decision making are involved they develop interest, efficiency and ownership of the decisions they have participated in hence the high probability of implementing them.

The researcher observes that the scholars seem to reiterate the need for bottom up planning in all activities. While laboring to evolve interventions for mitigating the impact of child soldiering, former child soldiers should be directly involved in making an in-put in the decision making process so as to chart their destiny. In the learning experience of former child soldiers, which is a great part of the reintegration process, children should establish new foundations in life based on their individual capacities. On the contrary, former child soldiers have gaps in their lives when their right to family that children must enjoy was violated; hence they have grown up away from their families and have been deprived of

66 Sinclair, M. (2002). *Planning Education in and After Emergencies*. Fundamentals of Educational Planning Series, 73. Paris: UNESCO quoted in Dana Burde (ed): *Education in Emergencies and Post-Conflict Situations: Problems, Responses and Possibilities*, Volume 2 Spring 2005: Columbia University New York

67 Smith Rhona K.M. (2005) *International Human Rights*, New York: Oxford University Press.

68 Honwana, A., 2006, *Child Soldiers in Africa: The Ethnography of Political Violence*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

69 Wessels P., 2006, "Psychological Assistance for Youth: Towards Peace in Angola" in *Journal of social Issues*, Vol 62, No 1, 2006, pp121-139.

70 Gupta, A.L. et al, 2002, "Is Culture Always Right?" in *Traumatology*, Vol 8, No 3 (September 2002).

71 Brofenbrenner, U. et al, 1979, *The Ecology of Human Development*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

72 Lederach J.P. (2004), *Building Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Wash D.C, United States Institute of Peace.

73 Ibid

many of the normal opportunities for physical, emotional and intellectual development.

Article 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes that recovery and reintegration should take place in an environment that fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child⁷⁴. In this regard Article 39 mandates States Parties to take all appropriate measures to promote children's physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration. However, as will be noted, neither the community nor the State or any single party for that matter can afford real reintegration without the support of others parties, and especially so the involvement of the former child soldiers themselves.

In fact Arnold quoted in Burde (2005) notes that DDRR programmes have evolved to incorporate education as a means to rehabilitate war affected children.⁷⁵ Using Tonderai Chikukwa's dialogue notes, Arnold illustrated how to incorporate the involvement of the community in the discussion of basic needs for former child soldiers,

*'You are a mother, a chief, a religious leader. What do you want for your child? What are your dreams for your child?' They respond, 'I want to be able to feed my child and I want my child to be educated. I don't want my child to be abducted on the way to school... (Personal communication, March 2, 2005)'*⁷⁶.

From the above notes one can conclude that once the adults of any community have embraced the ideals of their children's basic rights, attention must turn back toward educating the children and other rights the community deems relevant.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, GA Res. 44/25, 44 UN GAOR, Supp. (No. 49), UN Doc. A/44/49, at 166 (1989), reprinted in 28 ILM 1448 (1989)

⁷⁵ Arnold J.S quoted in Dana Burde (ed): Education in Emergencies and Post-Conflict Situations: Problems, Responses and Possibilities, Volume 2 Spring 2005: Columbia University New York

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Arnold J.S quoted in Dana Burde (ed): Education in Emergencies and Post-Conflict Situations: Problems, Responses and Possibilities, Volume 2 Spring 2005: Columbia University New York

Usually, demobilized soldiers are embarrassed to be shown to be functionally illiterate and are ashamed to be sent back to school to be in the same class with other children they left behind before they were abducted. This is a quagmire because former child soldiers, just like any children require being educated as education is a fundamental right. The above highlights the many challenges around accessing the right to education by children. What the precise position has been for the former child soldiers of Gulu District provided the impetus for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The study employed a number of techniques in the data collection, presentation, and analysis and presentation process. This chapter reveals how the research design that was chosen, It specifically describes the research design chosen, the research population and area, and the methods of data collection, presentation and analysis that were employed. Indeed, it also describes the researcher's approach in dealing with ethical issues that surrounded the study in its entirety. In addition, the chapter underscores the limitations that the researcher encountered in the course of undertaking this study.

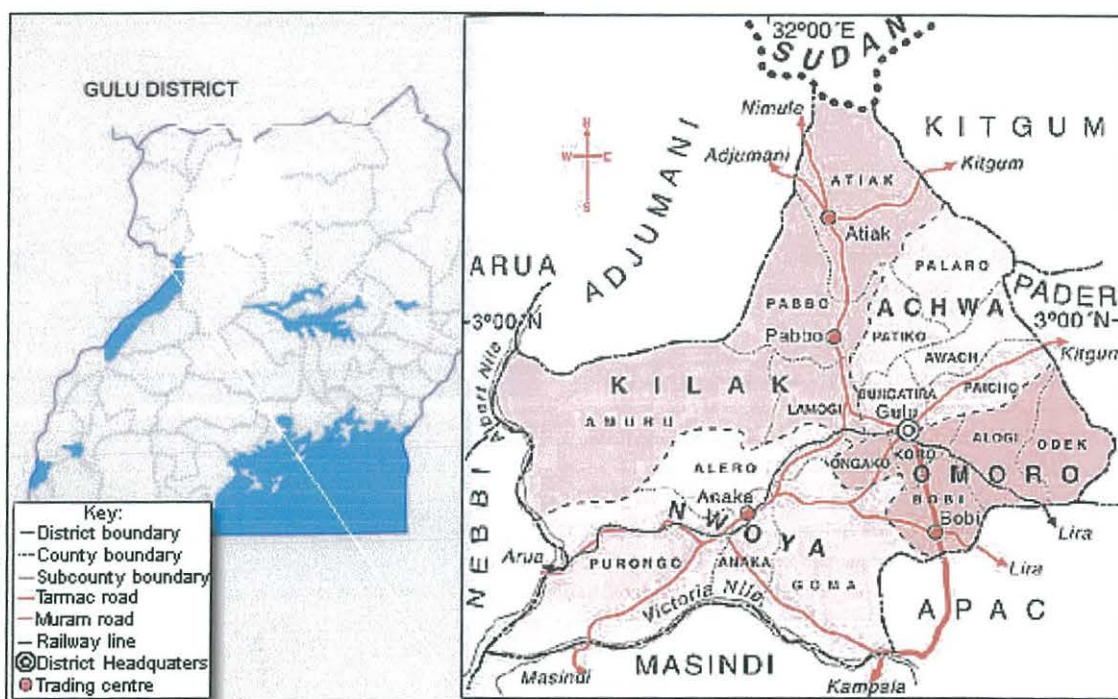
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study utilized the non-experimental descriptive method to investigate the challenges of guaranteeing children's rights to education in war-torn Northern Uganda. The findings of this study are the direct outcome of the chosen method of investigation. As such, it seeks to inform policy, practice and discourse. The study was based in war-torn district of Gulu in Northern Uganda. The researcher interacted with former child soldiers and other stakeholders in the research processes and administered a questionnaire. An interview guide was used to further solicit information for cross checking and adding value to the questionnaire responses. The researcher also made use of secondary material on the topic of child soldiers and held key informant interviews with Government, NGO staff, civil society leaders, traditional leaders, parents and former child soldiers.

3.2 STUDY AREA

In Uganda the Northern Uganda armed conflict has been rife in four districts that make up the Acholi sub-region: Amuru, Gulu, and Kitgum and Pader districts. This study focused on Gulu District and as such was able to get an in-depth understanding of the challenges child soldiers encounter in their bid to enjoy the right to education. In order to get understanding of the challenges former child soldiers faced in accessing education, the researcher focused this study in five sub-counties of Gulu District, which are: Bungatira, Bobi, Lalogi, Odek and Atiak. See the selected sub-counties on the map of Gulu District on the following figure.

Figure: 1. Map of Gulu District



Source: Gulu District Information website⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Gulu District Map available at: <<http://www.gulu.go.ug/background/index.htm>>

3.3 STUDY POPULATION

The study population sample engaged former child soldiers and other key informants among them the Acholi community members, representative of Government, Non-Governmental Organizations and staff at schools as subjects. All the above mentioned study population were selected on the basis of their knowledge of education, human rights and reintegration issues of former child soldiers in Gulu District, Northern Uganda.

3.4 SAMPLING METHODS

The research population sample consisted of 200 respondents that were determined through random and purposive sampling. Given the sensitivity of the study, convenient target sample was achieved, and then the researcher proceeded to employ the snowball sampling method to ensure that the most knowledgeable representatives of former child soldiers, school leadership, community and also Government and Non Governmental Organizations were reached.

3.4.1 *Inclusion Criteria*

- a. All persons whom the researcher considered to have knowledge of human rights and humanitarian laws, especially the children's right to education
- b. Representatives of Government policy implementers and local opinion leaders
- c. Representatives of staff of NGOs working on human rights and humanitarian agencies
- d. Former child soldiers

Table1: The Target Population

Categories of respondents

N=200

S/N	Sub county zones	Former child soldiers	Acholi comm.	Sch. Ad. teachers	Govt Officers	NGOs/ CFO	Total
1	Bungatira	15	15	4	4	2	40
2	Bobi	15	15	4	4	2	40
3	Lalogi	15	15	4	4	2	40
4	Odek	15	15	4	4	2	40
5	Atiak	15	15	4	4	2	40
	TOTAL	75	75	20	20	10	200

3.5 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Data collection was done using a combination of an unstructured questionnaire, a structured questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire and an interview guide were used as they allowed the researcher to get in-depth information of the challenges that former child soldiers faced.

Open ended and closed ended questionnaires were used to help to come up with socio demographic characteristics of the research population, as well as the state of knowledge, attitudes and practices of the respondents. The use of these interviewing methods was useful in cross-checking the authenticity of information availed.

A key informant interview guide was used to get data from key informants. The key informants were purposively sampled and included: decision makers and field workers in the Non Governmental Organizations, members of the civil

society and former child soldiers. The interview guide was useful in allowing the interviewer to probe, cross-check information as well as an getting in-depth picture of the situation of former child soldiers.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

All quantitative data was coded and feed into the Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) programme for analysis. The SPSS allowed the researcher to cross check for consistency and also come to conclusions on outstanding issues. The responses from the questionnaire were coded so as to allow the identification of patterns related to former child soldiers' access to basic education. The SPSS allowed for the analysis of data using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation as a way of connecting the relationship between variables. Qualitative analysis was done from the frequency distribution, tables, graphs and pie charts, which were generated using the SPSS software. The qualitative data was manually analyzed and the findings were integrated with the quantitative data during data analysis and the presentation of the findings.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study primarily engaged former child soldiers who, being under 18 years, were minors and vulnerable subjects because of their experiences. As such, ethical considerations were at all times guiding gathering of data from respondents. The necessary guardian or parental consent was sought, and in some interactions, interviews were when the subject's mental state and emotionally were affected by the questioning. Given the sensitivity of the inquiry, the study protected respondents through confidentiality and creating a friendly atmosphere for information exchange.

3.8 LIMITATIONS

The study encountered some limitations that included the following:

The non- return of questionnaires by some respondents, but this was resolved by the purposive and snowball sampling that were specifically opted for to counter to ensure that the correct target sample population was reached. Language barrier made communication difficult even though the researcher used the services of an interpreter. Conducting interviews through an interpreter took a lot of time and entailed the consumption of more time.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings and indicates how data was presented, interpreted and analyzed. The findings in this chapter are consistent with the research questions and objectives. The analysis utilized the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), whilst data presentation and analysis was mainly qualitative. The data is presented as tables, graphs and tallies. The presentation is per research question and opinions were developed from the responses given from field visits and contact with respondents.

4.1 Access to Primary School

“How do former child soldiers access primary education in Gulu District?”

This question was asked so as to find out whether or not former child soldiers access basic education, their level of awareness to available educational opportunities in their areas, the type of educational institutions they attended, availability of records on their attendance, distance traveled from home to school, the kind of support received on scholastic requirements. Furthermore, respondents and stakeholders were asked to identify the challenges and opportunities available for former child soldiers as it pertains to their accessibility of primary education.

4.1.2 Educational Opportunities

On the question of whether former child soldiers were aware of educational opportunities available in their areas, 90 % of the respondents indicated a high level of awareness. See the table below indicating the

respondents' level of awareness to educational opportunities available for former child soldiers in the selected sub-counties.

Table 2: Awareness of Educational Opportunities

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Aware	180	90
Not aware	20	10
Total	200	100

Awareness of educational opportunity by FCS

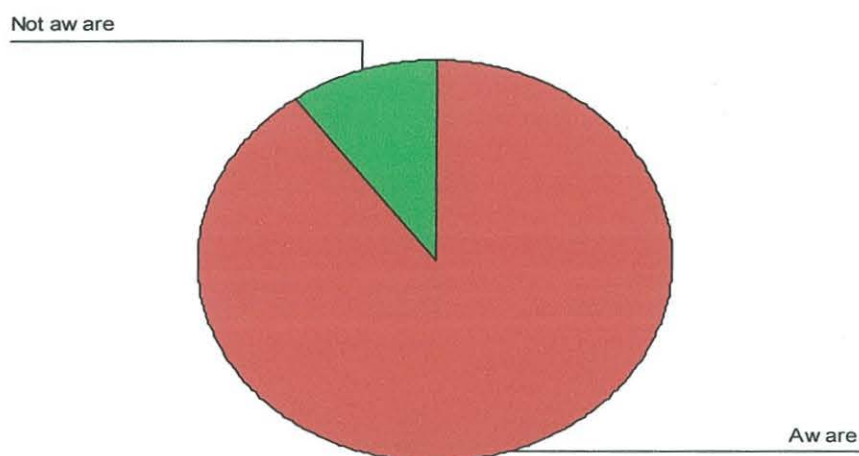


Figure 2: Awareness levels of Educational Opportunities

As per the information given above 180 respondents accepted that they were aware of the education opportunities available to former child soldiers, constituting 90% of the total number – whereas only 20 respondents said the contrary. These are represented by 10% of the respondents. Those who

accepted that they were aware of education opportunities available for FCS revealed that their source of information was as indicated on the table below:

Table 3: Source of Information on Available Educational Opportunities

S/N	Source of information	Frequency	Remarks
1	School before abduction	170	Through guidance and counseling teachers
2	Psychosocial counseling	145	Collaborate with peace building and humanitarian/ NGOs/CBOs
3	From guardian/parents	130	Before and after abduction
4	From local leaders	125	Gulu District Council Local Government
5	The Community	80	Through casual interaction
6	From peers	20	Rarely discuss education

170 respondents reiterated that awareness took place at school before abduction; 145 accepted that awareness creation resulted from psychosocial counselors at Reception Centres of humanitarian and peace building NGOs like Gulu Save the Children Organization, which supports former child soldiers with scholastic, as well as access to education programs. One hundred and thirty confirmed that FSC got awareness from their guardians/parents, before and after abduction; 125 from local leaders and in particular Gulu Central Government structures of local council one to five. 80 respondents confirmed that they got information from the community through their casual interactions and twenty from their peers.

The researcher established that most former child soldiers were aware about educational opportunities in their areas. A significant number of the FCS knew about educational opportunities from schools before abduction, as well as from psychosocial counselors at the reception centres, guardians/parents, local

leaders, the community and to some small extent, their peers. The various sources entail that concerted effort was used to disseminate information about availability of study opportunities to FCSs. For those who thought that FCSs were not aware of education opportunities in their areas, their reasons are indicated in the table below:

Table 4: Reasons For Not Being Aware of Educational Opportunities

S/N	Reasons Why Former Child Soldiers Were not Aware of Educational Opportunities	Number of responses
1	Born in captivity	15
2	Schools in camps destroyed	18
3	Far to reach area	14
4	Lack of interest	13
5	No idea	15

Of those whose response were negative, 15 mentioned that former child soldiers were born in captivity, 18 said that the schools in camps had been destroyed, 14 said they came from far to reach areas and thirteen confirmed lack of interest.

It is manifest that some former child soldiers could not access information because they were in camps where schools had been destroyed, others had been born in captivity and thus had no exposure information on available social amenities; some traveled long distances in far to reach areas, and others lacked interest or had negative attitudes towards education. Instead, they insist on survival strategies so as to satisfy other economic needs.

4.1.3 Former Child Soldiers Access to Primary Schooling

When the respondents were asked whether or not former child soldiers accessed primary education after being reintegrated into society, their responses are as represented on the following graph:

Table 5: Former Child Soldiers' Access to Primary Schooling

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	90	45%
No	110	55%
Total	200	100%

As per information above, one hundred and ten respondents denied that FCS accessed primary education, representing 55% of the total number. Whereas ninety accepted that they accessed primary education, they represented 45% of the total. It is evident that a significant number of former child soldiers in Gulu District do not have access to primary education schooling and were therefore not attending school. The reasons that were put forward as deterrence to accessing schooling were enumerated as presented on the following table.

Table 6: Reasons For Not Accessing Primary Education

S/N	Factor	No. of responses	Remarks
1	Stigmatization of FCSs	96	Kills morals to join school
2	Lack of scholastic materials	106	Made school environment un conducive
3	Lack of interest in schooling	83	Interest shifted to economic ventures
4	Sickness/morbidity	66	HIV/Aids, malaria, fever and others diseases and having witnessed horrific scenes
5	Physical and mental disability	16	Due to bullet fire exchange, violence and
6	Child mothers	62	Under-age girls forced into relationships
7	Child headed family	10	Children who stay home to look after siblings
8	Long distance to school	03	Scared of traveling long distances

As per the information above, of the respondents who did not accept that they accessed school; 96 emphasized stigmatization of former child soldiers, that killed the morale to join school, 106 mentioned lack of school fees and scholastic materials, that made the school environment unconducive, 83 mentioned lack of interest in schooling that was attributed to a shift of interest into economic engagements to earn a living; whilst 60 mentioned morbidity which was attributed to HIV/Aids malaria, fever as some of the most common sickness.

Meanwhile, 16 accepted that physical disabilities were a cause of their failure to access school which, they said was a consequence of gun shots, landmines and violent assault they were in captivity. 62 accepted that child

mothers were unable to access school as they had siblings to look after. Most child mothers had gotten children as a result of defilement or being sex slaves to rebel commanders and other parties to the conflict and therefore had to look after their children. Related to this, 10 respondents indicated that former child soldiers, both males and females, who headed child headed families, could not access schooling as they stayed at home to look after orphaned siblings related to them. Lastly, only three respondents cited fear to travel long distances to school as a reason for not accessing primary school.

It was ascertained that accessibility to primary education is still a big challenge for former child soldiers in Gulu District, and the significant factors are lack of school fees and other scholastic requirements, stigmatization of former child soldiers in communities and at school; lack of interest in schooling, morbidity due to illness, the responsibilities of being a child mother or a child family head. Fear of re-abduction and also long distances to school were also singled out as some of the reasons that deter former child soldiers in Gulu District from accessing primary education.

4.1.4 Records of Former Child Soldiers in Primary Schools

When the respondents were asked whether the records on former child soldiers that attended school were available, their responses were represented on the table below.

Table 7: Records of Former Child Soldiers in Primary Schools

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	170	85
No	30	15
Total	200	100

As per the information given above, one hundred seventy respondents accepted that the records on former child soldiers were available, representing 85% of the total number, while only thirty respondents representing 15% said the records were not available.

According to the feedback from the respondents, it can be safely concluded that the majority of school managers do keep records on former child soldiers' school attendance. From these school records the researcher was able to get an overview of number of former child soldiers in the research areas as outlined in the following table.

Table 8: Number of Former Child Soldiers in Primary School

S/N	Responses	Frequency	Ranking
01	10 and below	2	4th
02	Between 10 and 20	5	3rd
04	Between 20 to 50	13	2nd
04	Above 50	150	1st

Of those who confirmed availability of the records at school on former child soldiers, two said their numbers were ten and below, five said they were between 10 and 20 FCS at their school, 13 said this number was between 20 and 150 said the number was above 50.

It is clear then that there was a significant number of former child soldiers as represented by 150 respondents who indicated that there were fifty and above enrolled in the specific primary schools. Those who said that records for FCSs were not available cited lack of skills in record keeping and laxity of the record keepers as the reasons for not having a database of FCSs in their records. In the final analysis, the researcher established that most of the schools have

records on accessibility and attendance for former child soldiers whose number is big, though some lacked the record keeping skills and commitment.

4.1.5 Distance Traveled to School

When asked about the distance covered by former child soldiers to the nearest school, the respondents gave their responses as indicated on the following table.

Table 9: Distance to Nearest Primary School

Distance	Frequency	Percent
0 - 1 km	124	62
2 - 3 km	57	28.5
4 - 5 km	4	2.0
5 km +	15	7.5
Total	200	100

As revealed above, 124 respondents said that former child soldiers covered a distance below one kilometer to the nearest school, 57 said that the distance covered was between two to three kilometers; 15 said that a distance of over 5 kilometers was covered to the nearest school and only 4 respondents accepted that a distance of between four to five was traveled to the nearest school.

The researcher observed that most schools were within the confinement of the Internally Displaced People's camps for security reasons. To this regards most children do not have to travel long distances to school, and where long distances to school were mentioned, such former child soldiers were be living with relatives in nearby camps and did not necessary mean that the child had to travel to these schools everyday.

On further probing on the distance former child soldiers covered to the nearest school, it was revealed that there some of them were of recent (in the past 8 months) traveling distances of between two to three kilometers from homes, as they had relocated from original mother camps due to the on-going decongestion of the camps, which the Government embarked on in early 2007 as a result of peace prospects. However, the researcher might have established that distance to the nearest school is not a significant factor affecting accessibility of former child soldiers to schooling.

4.1.6 Source of Scholastic Support

When asked about the source of support for former child soldier's scholastic requirements, the respondents gave their responses as indicated on the following below.

Table 10: Source of Scholastic Support

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Central Government	150	75%
Local Government	04	2%
Parents and guardians	23	11.5%
NGOs/other donors	20	10%
Faith based organizations	03	5%
Total	200	100%

As stated above, one 150 respondents accepted that former child soldiers got support from Central Government, constituting 75% of the total number; four said scholastic support come from Central Government, represented 20 respondents singled donors and Non Governmental Organizations, representing 10% of the total number, 23 said parents/guardians supplied the requirement, representing 11.5% and three said that from Faith Based Organizations, whilst

support from Local Government was said to be the least as supported by only four respondents.

It was apparently established that the main source of support to former child soldiers in terms of scholastic requirements hailed from the Central Government in form of Universal Primary Education grants, followed by support from parents, guardians, donors and Non Governmental Organizations, respectively. Gulu Central Government and Faith Based Organizations made significant contributions in terms of scholastic requirements to former child soldiers.

4.1.5 How Former Child Soldiers Join Primary Schools

When former child soldiers were asked to state how they joined schools, their responses are indicated below.

Table 11: Source of Motivation to Join School

Source	Frequency	Percent
Government initiative	80	40.0%
Parental involvement	60	30.0%
Community motivation	40	20.0%
Self initiative	16	8.0%
NGO involvement	4	2.0%
Total	200	100%

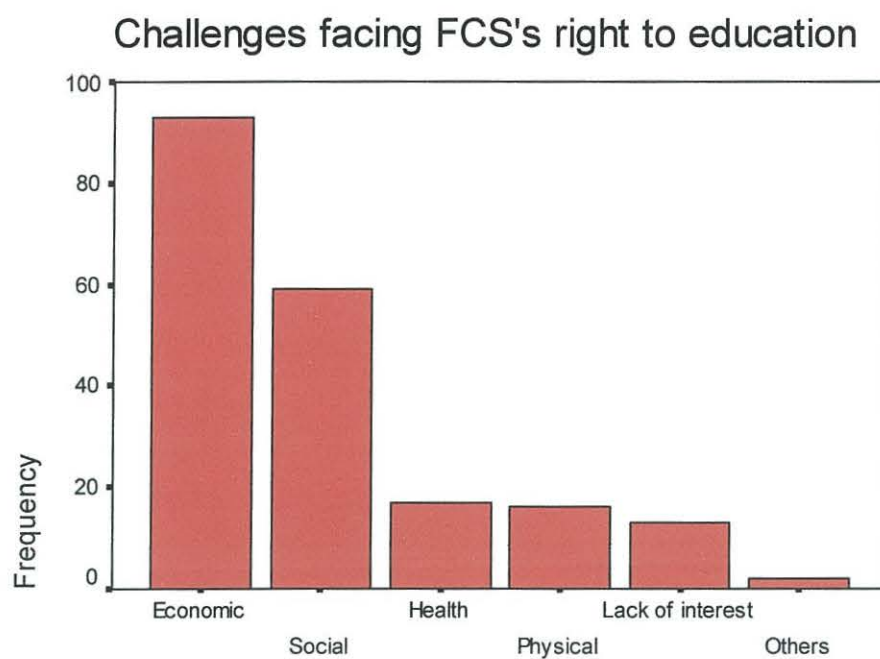
As indicated above, four respondents said former child soldiers were motivated by NGO staff, representing 2% of the total number of respondents; 60 mentioned motivation by parents, representing 30% of the total number, 16 assumed self-initiative by FCSs, representing 8% of the total; while 80 respondents agreed that FCS joined schools through Government initiative, representing 40% of the total number, and only 40 accepted that FCS were motivated by the community, represented by 20% of the total number of

respondents. It was concluded that FCS joined schools through Government initiative, and parents' motivation, community mobilization, self-initiative and NGO's motivation, respectively.

It was evident that Government, parents and the community seem to be significant variables in explaining how FCSs join schools, there were core stakeholders in the effort to reintegrate and helping FCSs benefit from their educational endeavors. When the respondents were asked to enumerate the challenges FCSs face in enjoying their right to education. Their responses were as presented in the table below.

Table 12: Challenges to Basic Education Access

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Economic	93	46.5%
Social	59	29.5%
Health	17	8.5%
Physical	16	8%
Lack of interest	13	6.5%
Others	2	1%
Total	200	100%



Challenges facing FCS's right to education

Figure 3: Challenges to Basic Education Access

The significant challenges faced as revealed above included economic, social, physical and health challenges suggested. When the former child soldiers were asked to explain further the problems they often face in accessing education, they provided responses that are summarized in the following table.

Table 13: Challenges to Accessing Primary Schooling

S/N	Challenges	Suggested solutions
01	Lack of teachers for guidance and counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ In-service training of teachers of guidance and counseling▪ Change of attitudes
02	Lack of midday meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Parents/guardians to provide midday meals for all children
03	Poor leadership in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Improvement of school leadership▪ Bottom-up planning
04	Unconducive learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increased teachers' responsibility and commitment to teaching and learning process.
05	Lack of school fees and scholastic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Scholarship programme by Government/NGOs▪ Increased parental and community support
06	Sickness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Early diagnosis, prevention and disease control.▪ Government effort in the provision of health services
07	Unwanted pregnancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Emphasis on abstinence by the youth
08	Child labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Change of attitude through increased awareness
09	Early marriages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increased sensitization, vocational, special needs programs
10	Lack of parental support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Strengthening Parents and Teachers Association (PTA).▪ Increased parental support and regular meetings.

4.2 Primary School Attendance by Former Child Soldiers

To establish whether former child soldiers were attending primary school attendance the following question was asked, "Do former child soldiers attend school in Gulu District?" This question was intended link school to the right to education.

4.2.1 School Attendance Levels of Former Child Soldiers

When the respondents were asked to comment on former child soldiers attendance, their responses are as presented below:

Table 14: School Attendance Levels of Former Child Soldiers

	Frequency	Percent
Irregular	90	45%
very irregular	49	24.5%
Regular	31	15.5%
Very Regular	30	15%
Total	200	100%

As per the given information above, 30 respondents commented that school attendance for FCSs was very regular, representing 15.5% of the total number of respondents; 31 said attendance was regular, representing 15.5% of the total, 90 said attendance was irregular, representing 45% of the total and forty nine indicated that school attendance for FCSs was very irregular, which is represented by 24.5% of the total number of respondents.

Respondents, who indicated that former child soldier's attendance in school was very regular, cited effective school administration and interested teachers and pupils as major pull factors, whilst those who said that attendance was very irregular gave the following reasons: poverty-trap, which pushes FCS to prioritize seeking income, embarrassment arising from age difference with other young students. It was also noted that the reasons for regular attendance was aided by effective administration of schools and guarantee personal security guarantees at the schools; whilst, those who thought that the attendance was irregular cited sickness, unwanted pregnancies and poverty major hindrance.

The researcher established that most FCSs attend school irregularly because of lack of scholastic support hence they would be seeking income. Other reasons for not attending school were: poverty, sickness, unwanted pregnancies, and stigmatization. However, some schools were well administered and sensitive to the needs of FCSs so much so that they are well protected the FCSs from abuse as well as showing interest in their progress. The degree of administration and effectiveness of the schools in reintegration FCSs was a major attraction to joining school and attending school regularly.

4.2.2 Completing Primary School Cycle

When asked whether or not former child soldiers were able to complete the primary education cycle (basic education) without dropping out of school, the respondents said the following.

Table 15: Completing Primary School

Responses	Frequency	Percent
No	181	90.5%
Yes	19	9.5%
Total	200	100%

As per the information above, 19 respondents accepted that FCSs completed the primary schooling cycle (from primary 1 up to primary 7) constituting 9.5% of the total number, while 181 indicated that former child soldiers were able to complete their basic education cycle without dropping out of school. This is represented by 90.5% of the total number of respondents. It established that the majority of FCSs dropped out of school without completing the primary cycle.

Those whose response was positive about FCSs ability to complete the primary cycle gave the following reason as presented on the following table.

Table 16: Reasons for Failure to Complete Basic Education

S/N	Reasons	Frequency	Remarks
01	Effective leadership at schools	18	Promoting attendance and completion rates
02	Provision of guidance and counseling	17	Promoting social cohesion, retention and problem solving
03	Provision of mid-day meals	07	Promoting well-being
04	Provision of learning educational material	11	They are inadequate <i>vis a vis</i> the high enrolment

As revealed above, of those who answered positively that FCSs had the ability to complete the primary cycle gave reasons as follows: 18 cited for the effective leadership of schools hence promotion of attendance and retention rates; 17 cited the provision of guidance and counseling thus promoting social cohesion, retention and problem solving at school, seven indicated that the provision of midday meals hence enhancing retention of pupils and only 11 said that the provision of learning/educational materials to children.

Those whose response were negative constituted the majority of the respondents, and their reasons for FCSs not being able to complete the primary cycle are summarized on the following table.

Table 27: Reasons for Dropping-out of Primary School

S/N	Reasons	Frequency of response	Remarks
01	Ineffective leadership at school	156	Undermining retention and survival rate
02	Lack of mid day meals	40	Creating un-conducive learning atmosphere
03	Lack of teaching learning material	169	De-motivating to teachers and learners
04	Lack of guidance and counseling/ psychosocial support	73	Entails that reintegration of FCS was difficulty
05	Stigmatization of FCS	140	Affecting socialization of pupils
06	Lack of school fees/other dues	170	Hindering effective attendance of school
07	Sickness/morbidity	51	Hindering affective attendance of school
08	Poor academic performance of FCS	49	Leading to drop-out from school
09	Peer pressure	07	Due to preference of other activities to learning
10	Orphan-hood	23	Children being heads of families and have to look after family siblings

The reasons given by the respondents why FCS fail to complete the primary cycle included: ineffective leadership at schools supported by 165 respondents, lack of midday meals by forty, lack of teaching learning materials by 169, lack of guidance and counseling support by 73; stigmatization of FCSs by hundred forty, lack of school fees/other dues by 170; sickness by 51 on poor academic performance of FCSs by 49, peer pressure by seven, and orphan hood by 23.

It was established that FCSs dropped out of school before completing the primary school cycle was attributed to lack of school dues, poor school

administration, and unfriendly teaching methods, scarcity of learning materials, diseases, stigmatization and hunger. This was seen to be undermining retention and survival rates. Other factors such as morbidity, poor academic performance lack of midday meals, orphan hood and peer pressure were secondary. However, provision of guidance and counseling, teaching and learning materials and mid-day meals – were being adhered to in a few schools. These facilitated FCSs completion of the UPE.

4.2.3 Drop-out Rate of FCS from Primary Schools

When asked to comment on the dropout rate of former child soldiers from primary school, as compared to other children, their responses are as indicated in the following figure.

Table 18: Drop-out Rate in Primary School

Drop-out rate	Frequency	Percent
Higher	179	89.5%
Lower	20	10%
Same	1	.5%
Total	200	100%

As per the information given above, 179 respondents revealed that the rate at which former child soldiers dropped out of school was higher than other ordinary pupils; representing 89.5% of the total number, while 20 respondents said the rate was lower, representing 10% of the total number of respondents. Meanwhile, one said the rate was the same, representing 0.5% of the total number. When asked for the reasons for the answer they gave concerning dropping out of school, the respondents said the rate of former child soldiers who dropped out of school was higher gave the following reasons;

- (i) Indiscipline
- (ii) Poverty

- (iii) Poor school conditions
- (iv) Stigmatization and
- (v) Low morale

Respondents who said that the drop-out rate was lower, though insignificant indicated that former child soldiers were given special attention and studied in good schools. The only respondent who said the rate was the same argued that former child soldiers went through similar conditions with the ordinary children who although they were not enlisted into the ranks of the warring parties were equally riling under the consequences of war, were equally traumatized and lacked school fees, psychosocial support as did FCSs.

The responses indicated that the rate of drop-out from school of former child soldiers is higher than that of other ordinary children due to factors such as indiscipline, poverty, poor school conditions, stigmatization and low interest and morale. These factors seem to be manifestations of volatile situations that can not facilitate effective teaching and learning in especially war ravaged areas.

4.2.4 Challenges in Attending Primary School

When asked to identify the challenges faced by former child soldiers and their effects in attending school, the respondents gave the following reasons as challenges that former child soldiers faced: poverty, child headed family responsibilities and limitations, poor school infrastructure, stigmatization, inadequate community support and being over-aged for primary school classes. The reasons given above, 130 respondents indicated that over age was a reason for former child soldiers not attending school for fear of being embarrassed of schooling with young 'kids'; 190 cited poverty as another reason that limited their attendance to school as school dues, food supplies and uniforms required additional money even though Government was paying fees for some of them through the Universal Primary Education programme.

It was established that former child soldiers' attendance in school was being deterred by many challenges. The solution to increasing the attendance to school of FCS required the collaboration of many partners and should be an on-going process during the reintegration and post-conflict situation.

4.3 FCSs Involvement in Schooling Activities

"How are former child soldiers involved in schooling activities in Gulu District?" This question was asked to solicit responses on how former child soldiers got involved in schooling activities in Gulu District. The question also sought to ascertain the schooling activities former child soldiers got involved in and to establish their involvement in choosing these activities.

4.3.1 Involvement in schooling Activities

When respondents were asked whether or not former child soldiers were effectively involved in schooling experiences, their responses were as indicated on the figure below.

Table 19: Involvement in Schooling Activities

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	57	28.5%
No	143	71.5%
Total	200	100%

As indicated above, the results of the study show that only 28.5% of respondents agreed that former child soldiers were actively involved in the learning experience, whilst a majority of 71.5% said that FCS were not involved in the learning experience at school.

On further inquiry of the type of activities FCS were involved in 183 respondents indicated co-curricular activities such as music, dance and drama, football, netball and athletics were the main activities. This represents 91.5% of the total number of respondents; only 3 mentioned that former child soldiers got involved in church activities such as church choir and attending sermons; was

1.5% of the total number, whereas only 2 accepted that former child soldiers got involved in leadership activities such as being school prefects and class monitoring. This is represented 10% of the total number, respectively; other ten (10) respondents agreed that written work was one of the activities in which former child soldiers got involved, representing 5.5 of the total number of respondents. Those who accepted that debates were also used as one of the activities in which FCSs got involved were only two, representing 3.6% of the total number of respondents.

FCSs got involved in co-curriculum activities such as written activities, church activities, leadership and debate. The researcher established that there is minimal involvement of FCSs in the school core learning activities. FCS had a high interest in co-curricular activities as a means for them to gain interest in attending school and to socialize with other pupils. According to the researcher, the interest of FCS in co-curriculum activities should be used as a means to introduce them to effective learning.

4.3.2 Choosing Schooling Activities

When asked whether or not former child soldiers were involved in choosing the intended activities, the respondents gave their responses as indicated on table below:

Table 20: Choosing Schooling Activities

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	31	15.5
No	169	84.5
Total	200	100

As per the information indicated above, 31 respondents accepted that FCSs were involved in choosing learning activities, representing 15.5% of the total number, whereas 169 respondents denied involvement of FCSs in choosing

the intended activities. These represented 84.5% of the total number of respondents.

However, those who denied that former child soldiers got involved in choosing the intended activities cited the following reasons:

- Poor leadership of schools
- Marginalization of FCSs
- Lack of special classes for FCSs
- Lack of guidance and counseling, and
- Lack of spiritual leadership

The respondents further indicated that the community has roles in supporting involvement of former child soldiers in school activities and the researcher identified three major roles that the community played in supporting involvement of former child soldiers in primary school activities and these are: maintenance of access roads, teaching traditional customs/values and providing counseling guidance support to FCSs. However, the degree of support was not easily established.

4.3.3 Challenges in Schooling Activities

When asked about the challenges related to FCSs involvement/participation in school activities, the respondents gave their responses and suggested the following remedies outlined in the following table.

Table 21: Challenges in Schooling Activities

S/N	Challenges	No	Suggested solution
01	Top bottom planning	183	Bottom up planning to include all stake holders in decision making
02	Slow rate of integration	191	Stream line and expedite reintegration of FCS
03	Poverty	194	Gov't increased support to FCS in scholarships/ Involvement in IGAs to alleviate poverty
04	Inadequate scholastic materials and poor school facilities	51	Provision of adequate scholastic materials and availability of school infrastructure
05	Ineffective mobilization and sensitization of FCS	140	Increased mobilization and sensitization of the communities/ families on the need for rehabilitating FCS in many ways
06	Attitude of teachers and parents towards FCS	60	Attitudinal change through programmes that help FCS to settle in school
07	Poor leadership at schools	189	Improve school leadership and administration so that there is sensitivity to FCS needs and inclusiveness in planning
08	Inadequate psychosocial support	43	Provide guidance and counseling training to school staff and also establish special classes for FCS

As per the information given above, top bottom planning was identified as a challenge related to involvement in school activities of former child soldiers, by 183 of the total number who suggested that bottom up planning to include all stakeholders in decision making should be encouraged. Furthermore, the slow rate of integration of former child soldiers in day to day life, cited by 191 respondents who suggested that Government should streamline and expedite reintegration of former child soldiers. Thirdly, was the challenge of poverty which was identified by 194 respondents, who suggested Government increased support to FCSs in schools such as scholarships, and involvement in in-come generating activities for over aged children to alleviate poverty.

Further still, 51 respondents reiterated that inadequate materials and facilities undermined involvement of FCSs in school activities and hence suggested the provision of adequate scholastic materials and facilities to schools. Ineffective mobilization and sensitization of the populace was identified as a challenge by 140 respondents who suggested increased mobilization and sensitization of the members of the public to be involved in rehabilitation of FCSs. Attitude of teachers and parents towards FCSs was also identified as a challenge and was cited by 60 respondents who further suggested that attitudinal change through programmes that help FCSs settle in school should be affected by all concerned. Poor leadership of schools was yet another challenge that attracted 189 respondents who suggested that the leadership in schools should be more accommodative, sensitive to the needs of FCSs and inclusive, and that vocational training of FCSs be provided. Also identified was the challenge of inadequate psychosocial support such as provision of guidance and counseling. This was supported by 43 respondents who advocated for the provision of guidance and counseling training at all levels of society and the establishment of special classes for FCSs.

Based on the relationships above, the researcher concluded that there are significant gaps besetting involvement of former child soldiers and these include: poverty, slow rate of reintegration, poor leadership in schools, top bottom planning, and ineffective mobilization and sensitization of the population.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses and makes conclusions based on the results presented in chapter four. Recommendations are also made relating them to the views of the researcher and also the indications of other scholars who are familiar with the subject. The researcher's personal views are carried in this chapter as a supplement, confirmation and dispute of views. The chapter summarizes the researcher's conclusions and offers recommendations on possible ways to facilitate FCSs enjoyment of the right to education.

5.1 DISCUSSION

5.1.1 Access to Primary Education

The conclusion drawn from the responses to the study revealed that former child soldiers do not effectively enjoy their right to education due to various factors which include but not limited to the following: economic, social, political, attitudinal, and also health challenges. This is commensurate with the original presupposition given in the background that the Northern Uganda conflict had impacted and trampled upon thousands of children who as a result of the conflict consequences were unable to enjoy their rights, among which was the right to education.

The background and literature review advanced that among some of the children who suffered the worst violation of their rights is the category of former child soldiers, many of whom were abducted and forced into armed forces ranks. The researcher's analysis of the situation on the ground confirms that there were indeed serious violations of children's in Northern Uganda. It is further stipulated

that children below the age of 18 who had served as child-soldiers faced challenges when they attempted to enjoy their right to education. As such, it was ascertained that former child soldiers were not enjoying the right to education. There were many challenges emanating from the direct impact and consequences of the prevailing conflict.

As per the findings, the many stakeholders should join hands in dealing with the challenges deterring former child soldiers from their right to education and also collaborate in their rehabilitation. Despite the awareness they had about education opportunities, former child soldiers had limited access to primary schooling due many factors. Indeed, the experience from the Northern Uganda conflict confirms the assumption that war violates every right of the child – the right to life, the right to grow up in a family environment, the right to health, the right to survival and full development and the right to be nurtured and protected, among others. The rights of former child soldiers are being violated and this effectively bar or limit their access to primary education.

The researcher's background information and the literature review seem to be in harmony with the findings hence it seems to hold water that former child soldiers in Gulu District are denied their right to education. The researcher is agreeable to the above because he believes that where there is anarchy, or political catastrophe, there is no development in all dimensions of life.

The various stakeholders' views seem to concur with who posits that true some peace building scholars who posit that building peace should be an inclusive process of merging the macro, meso and micro levels. In the case of Northern Uganda, this proposition should entail that international NGOs, national NGOs, Community Based Organizations, grassroots leaders and ordinary people should work together in reintegration of former child soldiers. It therefore means that sustainable peace and successful DDRR can be achieved when the above levels are acting in cohesion and synergy.

Article 28 of the convention on the rights of the child underscores the importance of the right to education and Article 29 states that education should develop the child's personality talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. According to the researcher, the findings have established that the development of children's rights to education is at stake in Gulu District. Further it was observed that the entitlement to education by former child soldiers in Gulu District was far-fetched as reintegration of former child soldiers was occurring in internally displaced camps, whose conditions are a sorry state of what would be the original Acholi communities.

5.1.2 School Attendance

The background information and literature review postulate the issues of former child soldiers' attendance to primary school clearly. The finding on former child soldiers primary school attendance in Gulu District indicated that effective attendance was not possible because of many factors included the following: poverty, stigmatization, inadequate community mobilization and sensitization, disinterest induced by being over-aged among many others. These factors seriously undermined the regular school attendance, effective schooling, and retention in class.

From the above, the researcher concluded that school attendance by former child soldiers was not without 'bottlenecks'. The effectiveness of school attendance was largely dependent on the capability and willingness of the various stakeholders to pull together as a team and remove the obstacles hindering former child soldiers from enjoying their right to education.

While commenting on the need for concerted efforts in removing obstacles to attendances, the respondents reiterated that the Government agencies at the district levels have a formidable task to address the raised issues. Through other stakeholders could come in to ensure that the plans were community owned and

implemented successfully. They indicated with concern that even though Northern Uganda maybe home to a world record of former child soldiers, the Government had dragged its feet in coming up with a clear DDDR policy and as well as bringing peace.

As such tens of thousands of former child soldiers were integrated into the 'artificial' so called Internally Displaced People's camps, whose social amenities, physical infrastructure and conditions were all in the poverty abyss and lacked guarantees to security and livelihood.

5.1.3 Involvement in Schooling Experiences

The study established that former child soldiers were not effectively involved in choosing the intended activities at school. This was due to socio-economic and political factors such as poor leadership in schools, marginalization of former child soldiers, and lack of special classes for former child soldiers, limited or non-existent guidance and counseling programmes. However, the community was identified to be playing a significant role in mobilizing and enticing former child soldiers to attend and get involved in the learning processes.

From the experience of FCSs involvement in schooling activities, it was proved that when the beneficiaries of decision were not involved in making an input on their cooperation in implementing them it would be limited. In the case of Northern Uganda, former child soldiers felt alienated when at school and that deprived them of the opportunity to fully realize their potential.

The research is in agreement with the view proposed by Musaazi (1982)⁷⁹ and Katende (1980)⁸⁰ who advise that as a principal of a school, one is likely to be more successful and effective in the job if they control, lead or guide the staff

79 Musaazi J.S.C (1982), *The Theory and Practice of Educational Administration*, Lagos: Macmillan.

80 Katende A.S. (1980) "The Mode of Pupil Control in some Secondary Schools in Uganda" Unpublished. M.Ed. Thesis, Kampala: Makerere University

in discussions on matters affecting the school that are intended to arrive at certain decisions, rather than making decisions without allowing stakeholders to participate in the decision making process. The same should apply to teachers when interacting with special students like former child soldiers, most of whom had missed many years of schooling and lagged behind their age mates.

Furthermore, when former child soldiers are not allowed to choose the activities in which to get involved, and were only confirmed in co-curricular activities, their interest and ability to perform withered. The challenges that former child soldiers were facing outside the class had a bearing on their right to education and also reintegration process. It was also observed that the lack of involvement of former child soldiers demoralize these children as that added up to stigmatization and curtailed their effective attendance of school.

The study suggested many solutions to the challenges that former child soldiers were exposed to. These interventions as suggested by the respondents are commensurate with the UDHR's directives, equal treatment of all human beings globally being a prerequisite. Findings from this study revealed that former child soldiers were not treated as equals and that limited involvement in schooling experiences due to restrained imposed by political, social, economic, attitudinal and administrative challenges.

Whereas the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of November 1989 advocates for the most comprehensive and specific protection for children, its implementation appears not to bear impact because DDDR, the basic starting point was not even in place. It was established that the plight of former child soldiers and children in general needed collaborative rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. The hitherto, insecure and environment of dilapidated infrastructure does not allow for effective teaching and learning of children in Gulu District of Northern Uganda.

5.2 Conclusions

Basing on the discussion of findings of the study, the researcher had drawn the following conclusions:

5.2.1 Former Child Soldiers Denied Right to Education

Former child soldiers in Gulu District were denied their right to education. Despite attempts that are in place to facilitate Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) endeavors as advanced by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, accessibility to basic education is yet to be achieved where such factors as poverty, morbidity, inadequate instructional and scholastic materials persists. The Northern Uganda conflict has had serious negative impact on the people and the region's infrastructure

5.2.2 Many Former Child Soldiers are Out of School

It was also established that a great number of former child soldiers were not attending school despite awareness created concerning the opportunities available to them. Economic and social reasons were advanced to explain why FCSs were not taking up schooling. As such Government, parents and community participation in enhancing attendance of former child soldiers should continue and be implemented in a collaborated manner. It was apparent that such efforts were inadequate.

5.2.3 Challenges hindering Right to Education

There were socio-economic, attitudinal, and administrative challenges that negatively affected the involvement of former child soldiers in their schooling experiences. The administration of schools and prevailing environment and other related factors that undermine involvement should be improved if former child soldiers are to enjoy their right to education.

5.2.4 Communities a Pillar in School Involvement

The community was identified as one of the significant pillars in bargaining for peace, protection of former child soldiers and the enhancement of their involvement in schooling experiences. The serious challenges that undermine involvement at the various schools need to be addressed with the inclusion of all the stakeholders. Ultimately, the researcher concludes that the social order in Northern Uganda can not be restored unless the conflict is stopped.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the conclusions reached, the researcher feels that certain interventions should be put in place by the various stakeholders in order to address the plight of former child soldiers in Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration. It was concluded that it would only be when the people, who are currently in Internally Displaced People's camps return to their villages that the current challenges militating against the enjoyment of rights can be redressed.

5.3.1 Government Should Lead in the Recovery Process

The Government of Uganda should lead the process of removing challenges impeding former child soldiers from accessing school, with due sensitivity to stepping up economic ventures for poverty alleviation; among disadvantaged children such as former child soldiers; intensive sensitization drives to change attitudes; improved the population nutrition and health services; and the provision of necessary tuition and educational materials to facilitate the teaching and learning process. Inter ministerial collaboration could go a long way towards improvement of the plight of former child soldiers. A participatory process that embraces all stakeholders should be used so that each player can add in the reintegration and rehabilitation of Northern Uganda.

5.3.2 All Stakeholders Should Work Together

It is paramount for the various stakeholders, particularly the Government of Uganda, the parents and the entire community to effectively mobilize and encourage former child soldiers to attend schools and get complete their primary education. It is strongly recognized that education is source of socio-economic and political stability; hence, former child soldiers should be targeted to attend school so as to stop them from slipping back into fighting armies.

5.3.3 Schools Should Involve FCSs in Schooling Activities

School management committees and school leadership with liaison of Local Government should make a deliberate attempt to ensure effective involvement of former child soldiers in the schooling activities. Through concerted efforts, the socio-economic, attitude and administrative challenges may be addressed. If former child soldiers get involved in the learning process, they will confidently get involved in academic areas and be motivated to realize their full potential.

5.3.4 Bottom-up Approach Required in DDRR

It is specifically imperative for Government, schools and NGOs to utilize the bottom-up planning process that involves the beneficiaries of decision in the Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of former child soldiers. It is not surprising to note many DDRR projects fail to achieve their missions and objectives because of poor planning; managers therefore, at all levels have a formidable task of synchronizing the individual, community with organizational needs. This would keep the various stakeholders motivated and engaged.

5.4 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The conclusion that former child soldiers are unable to enjoy the right to education is consistent with the findings of other scholars as indicated in the background and literature review. The research findings of this study are open to debate and further exploration. They are subject for scrutiny, revision, criticism or if found good, can be replicated on other areas where the issue of former child soldiers is involved. It may thus be necessary that more research is conducted in the following areas:

- I. The need to understand the various human rights implications of child soldiering on children.
- II. The need to understand how education is a contributing factor in the protection and promotion of children rights.
- III. Unpacking human rights perspectives of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process of former child soldiers.
- IV. The impact of the Northern Uganda conflict on children and the interventions being used to mitigate them.

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APPENDIX I

KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES

Questionnaire for School Administrators/Teachers

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am carrying out a study to find out the challenges of guaranteeing children's right to education in Gulu District. Specifically we are focusing on whether former child soldiers in Gulu District are accessing basic education. By completing this questionnaire, you will be giving important information for use to the study.

You are requested to answer all the questions as honestly as possible. It is not a test; your name is not required. All the information will be treated with the highest confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Please, read the instructions and answer accordingly.

A: Background information (Tick the appropriate Box)

1. Name of your primary school..... County

2. Status: Boarding ☐ Day ☐ Day and Boarding ☐

3. Sex Male ☐ Female ☐

4. Age

Below 15 years	16 - 20 years	21 -30 years	Above 30 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Marital Status

Single	Married	Widowed

6. Position in the school

Teacher	School Administrator

1. Are former child soldiers within your area aware of educational opportunities available?

a) Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If the answer is a **Yes**, How?

i).....

ii).....

iii).....

c) If the answer is a **No**, Why?

i).....

ii).....

iii).....

1. Are former child soldiers within your area of work able to access primary education after being reintegrated into society?

b) Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If so, what type of educational institutions do they attend

i).....

ii).....

iii).....

c) If not, why are they not able to access education?

i).....

ii).....

iii).....

iv).....

v).....

3. Do you have any records on former child soldiers who attend primary school?
(Tick one)

a) Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If a yes, how many former child soldiers are on your record? (Tick only one)

10 and below ☐

Between 10 and 20 ☐

Between 20 and 50 ☐

50 and above ☐

c) If a No, explain why are the record not available?.....

4. a) What is the average distance from home to school? (Tick only one)

Within ½ Km ☐

1 Km – 2 Km ☐

2 Km – 3 Km ☐

Above 3 Km ☐

5. Who supports former child soldiers with tuition and scholastic requirements? *(Tick all that apply)*

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| I. Central Government | <input type="checkbox"/> | IV. Local Government | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| II. Parents/guardians | <input type="checkbox"/> | V. Donors/NGOs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| III. Any other? (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

6a) Are former child soldiers mobilized to join schools? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If yes, how is it done?

.....

c) If the answer is no, why?

.....

7 a) What challenges do former child soldiers face in enjoying their right to education in Gulu district?

.....

b) Suggest solutions to the identified challenges

.....

Section B: School Attendance of Former Child Soldiers

8 a) What do you say about former child soldiers' school attend? (Tick one)

Very regular ☐ Regular ☐ Irregular ☐ Very irregular ☐

b) Give reasons for your answer

.....

.....

9 a) Are all former child soldiers able to complete their primary education cycle?

Yes ☐

No ☐

b) If your answer is a yes, give reasons why you think they are able to complete primary education without dropping out of school.

- I.
- II.
- III.
- IV.

c) If your answer is a no, what makes them drop out of school?

- I.
- II.
- III.
- IV.

10 a) If former child soldiers drop out of school, what is their rate of drop out as compared to other children? (Choose one)

(i) Higher ☐

(ii) Lower ☐

(iii) The same ☐

b) Give reasons for your answer

.....

.....

.....

11) a) What challenges are faced by former child soldiers in attending school?

- I.
- II.
- III.
- IV.

b) What are the effects of those challenges?

- I.
- II.
- III.
- IV.
- V.

12) Suggest solutions to the identified challenges

	Challenges	Solution
I.
II.
III.
IV.
V.

Section C: Involvement of Former Child Soldiers in Schooling Experiences

13. In your opinion, do you think former child soldiers are effectively involved in schooling experiences? (Tick one)

- (i) Very much involved ☐
- (ii) Involved ☐
- (iii) Slightly involved ☐
- (iv) Not involved ☐
- (v) Not sure ☐

14. a) What activities are they involved in at school?

- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii)
- (iv)

b) Why do they get involved in such activities?

.....

.....

15 a) Are the former child soldiers involved in choosing the intended activities? (Tick one)

Yes

☐

No

☐

b) If the answer is yes, how?

.....

.....

c) If the answer is no, why?

.....

.....

16. Outline the role that the following play in supporting former child soldiers in primary school activities:

i) you /your organization

.....

ii) the community

.....

.....

17 a) What challenges related to involvement/participation in school activities do former child soldiers face?

.....

.....

.....

b) Suggest how the identified challenges in that area can be dealt with.

.....

.....

APPENDIX II

KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES

Questionnaire for Local Government Officers/NGOs

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am carrying out a study to find out the challenges of guaranteeing children's right to education in Gulu District. Specifically we are focusing on whether former child soldiers in Gulu District are accessing basic education. By completing this questionnaire, you will be giving important information for use to the study.

You are requested to answer all the questions as honestly as possible. It is not a test; your name is not required. All the information will be treated with the highest confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Please, read the instructions and answer accordingly. Thank you.

Background information (Tick the appropriate Box)

1. Ministry/Organization

2. County/Area of Operation

3. Sex Male ☐ Female ☐

4. Age

Below 15 years	16 - 20 years	21 -30 years	Above 30 years

2. Marital Status

Single	Married	Widowed	Orphaned

3. Occupation

Teacher	Community leader	Government employee	NGO/CFO employee	Student (FCS)	Others (please specify)

Section A: Accessibility of primary education by Former Child Soldiers

1. Are former child soldiers within your area of educational opportunities available?

a) Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If the answer is a **Yes**, How?

i).....

ii).....

iii).....

c) If the answer is a **No**, Why?

i).....

ii).....

iii).....

2. Are former child soldiers within your area of work able to access primary education after being reintegrated into society?

b) Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If so, what type of educational institutions do they attend

i).....

ii).....

iii).....

c) If not, why are they not able to access education?

i).....

ii).....

iii).....

iv).....

v).....

3. Do you have any records on former child soldiers who attend primary school?

(Tick one)

a) Yes ☐

No ☐

b) If a yes, how many former child soldiers are on your record? *(Tick only one)*

10 and below ☐

Between 10 and 20 ☐

Between 20 and 50 ☐

50 and above ☐

c) If a No, explain why are the record not available?.....

4. a) What is the average distance from home to school? *(Tick only one)*

Within ½ Km ☐

1 Km – 2 Km ☐

2 Km – 3 Km ☐

Above 3 Km ☐

5. Who supports former child soldiers with tuition and scholastic requirements? (*Tick all that apply*)

IV. Central Government

☐

IV. Local Government

☐

V. Parents/guardians

☐

V. Donors/NGOs

☐

VI. Any other? (specify)

☐

6a) Are former child soldiers mobilized to join schools? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) If yes, how is it done?

.....

.....

c) If the answer is no, why?

.....

.....

7 a) What challenges do former child soldiers face in enjoying their right to education in Gulu district?

.....

.....

.....

b) Suggest solutions to the identified challenges

.....

.....

.....

Section B: School Attendance of Former Child Soldiers

8 a) What do you say about former child soldiers' school attend? (Tick one)

Very regular ☐ Regular ☐ Irregular ☐ Very irregular ☐

b) Give reasons for your answer

.....

.....

9 a) Are all former child soldiers able to complete their primary education cycle?

Yes

☐

No

☐

b) If your answer is a yes, give reasons why you think they are able to complete primary education without dropping out of school.

- V.
- VI.
- VII.
- VIII.

c) If your answer is a no, what makes them drop out of school?

- V.
- VI.
- VII.
- VIII.

10 a) If former child soldiers drop out of school, what is their rate of drop out as compared to other children? (Choose one)

(i) Higher

☐

(ii) Lower

☐

(iii) The same

☐

b) Give reasons for your answer

.....

.....

.....

11) a) What challenges are faced by former child soldiers in attending school?

- V.
- VI.
- VII.
- VIII.

c) What are the effects of those challenges?

- VI.
- VII.
- VIII.
- IX.
- X.

13) Suggest solutions to the identified challenges

	Challenges	Solution
VI.
VII.
VIII.
IX.
X.

Section C: Involvement of Former Child Soldiers in Schooling Experiences

13. In your opinion, do you think former child soldiers are effectively involved in schooling experiences? (Tick one)

- (i) Very much involved ☐
- (ii) Involved ☐
- (iii) Slightly involved ☐
- (iv) Not involved ☐
- (v) Not sure ☐

14. a) What activities are they involved in school?

- (i)
- (ii)
- (iii)
- (iv)

b) Why do they get involved in such activities?

.....

.....

15 a) Are the former child soldiers involved in choosing the intended activities? (Tick one)

Yes ☐

No ☐

b) If the answer is yes, how?

.....

.....

c) If the answer is no, why?

.....

.....

16. Outline the role that the following play in supporting former child soldiers in primary school activities:

i) you /your organization

.....

ii) the community

.....

.....

17 a) What challenges related to involvement/participation in school activities do former child soldiers face?

.....

.....

.....

b) Suggest how the identified challenges in that area can be dealt with.

.....

.....

APPENDIX III

KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES

Interview Guide for Former Child Soldiers and Acholi Community

Section A: Accessibility of Former Child Soldiers to Formal and Non-formal Education

1. Is education accessible to all children without discrimination?
2. Is primary education within safe reachable distance?
3. Do former child soldiers access primary Education in your area?
4. Do you know of any former child soldiers who attend primary school in your area?
5. Who supports former child soldiers in their scholastic requirements?
6. Do community social workers mobilize former child soldiers to join school?
7. What challenges do former child soldiers face in enjoying their right to education?
8. Do former child soldiers attend school regularly?
9. Do former child soldiers drop out of school?
10. If former child soldiers drop out of school, what is the rate of drop out as compared to other children?
11. What challenges are faced by former child soldiers in attending school?
12. Suggest solutions to the identified challenges.
13. Are the former child soldiers effectively involved in schooling experiences?
14. What activities are they involved in?
15. Are the former child soldiers involved in choosing the intended activities?

16. What role does the community play in supporting involvement of former child soldiers in primary school activities?

17. What challenges related to involvement do former child soldiers face?

18. Are guidance and counseling services of former child soldiers effectively offered in primary schools?



KAMPALA
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

P.O.BOX 20000
KAMPALA-UGANDA.
TEL:-041-266813

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
SCHOOL OF POST-GRADUATE STUDIES

21st June 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MR MANYONGA DAVID

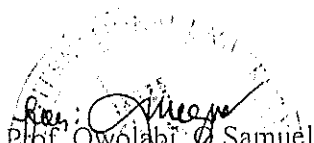
The above named is our student in the School pursuing a Masters in Human Rights and Development (MA HRD).

He wishes to carry out a research in your Organization on "Children's Rights to Education in Uganda: A Case Study of Gulu District.

The research is a requirement for the Award of a Masters Degree in Human Rights and Development. (MA HRD)

Any assistance accorded to him regarding his research will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


Prof. Owolabi O. Samuel
DIRECTOR-SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES