

3. Economic Reintegration

Sustainable economic reintegration is achievable through a complex strategy relying on similar structural successes and access points to social reintegration. Reporters return to communities in Uganda with limited skills and education as a consequence of time spent in conflict. The mix of spontaneous self-demobilization and formal demobilization complicates the situation for communities that need to economically as well as socially absorb reporters. Generally communities did not have a formal demobilization processes prior to return . As such they tended not to be prepared. In many communities the situation is further complicated by the low level of economic development and by the income and food security challenges faced by the community. In these conditions the return of reporters can worsen real or perceived vulnerability of local communities as those communities struggle to assist or accept them. It could be expected that this would exacerbate hostility or unwillingness of communities to accept back reporters.

Despite chronic development challenges, communities in Uganda are welcoming and accepting of reporters. They understand that reporters face added challenges to catch up with the community in terms of economic productivity, meeting household expenses and accessing credit. Reporters, because of their lack of skills, access to land, and because of their uncertain history can be perceived as a liability and can provoke a reaction of fear and hostility. However the study has found that this is not the case. Rather the return of reporters is characterized largely by understanding by the community and a sense of acceptance.

Community members are familiar with reporters: just under two thirds of the community sample have re-

porters in their immediate family, particularly 18-30 year olds community members. This should inform any understanding of levels of acceptance. When reporters began to be reinserted in the communities, just over half of the communities had fears relating to this return. Most common fears held by the community pertained to male reporters, although around a third of community members had fears of female and 18-30 year olds reporters. For many the fear was a general apprehension of the return of reporters. Those who could identify exactly what the fear was named a fear of social unrest or violent social activity. Today however only 3.3% of the community have any fears about reporters, showing how completely the risk of reporter return has been dispelled.

The community accurately understands the barriers experienced by reporters as they attempt to achieve economic productivity on par with fellow community members. Lack of qualifications for work is the most frequently cited barrier to employment by a similar percentage of reporters and community members. Two other barriers to employment are the lack of education and stigma. With regard to lack of employment, specific training is the main barrier identified by both groups that reporters must face. Regarding barriers to economic productivity, both the community and reporters identify that they experience the same barriers.

There are subtle differences between the two groups, with the community's lesser concern about capital, which indicates the difference between the two groups when accessing credit. The community has more established economic practices (and track records) compared to reporters. This is a symptom of reporters recovering from the lost economic opportunities as a

result of time spent in rebellion. However just under one third of reporters identify lack of financial support or capital as a threat compared to roughly half that proportion of the community. Also, the community is more worried about inflation than the reporters, which supports the idea that reporters are at an earlier economic stage and thus more affected by issues common to less established economic activities.

Opinions and perceptions held by the community and reporters largely correspond, which is a high level indicator of economic reintegration, at least perceptually. Measures of the actual economic profile of reporters and community, and comparative analysis of key indicators of economic productivity such as access to credit and household income thresholds add an additional depth to the analysis. Dynamics such as positions held in economic associations add nuance to the analysis of the stages of reintegration.⁷

There are very similar baselines for basic household expenditure and household income for reporters and community indicating strongly that the two are in very similar financial situations.

Regarding the generation of income, the trajectory of reporter employment since demobilization is positive, with more reporters employed now than at demobilization. When comparing the situation at the end of the conflict with the present, a similar proportion of community members were unemployed (approx 5-6%). One third of reporters were unemployed at demobilization compared to 9.2% now.⁸ The nature of reporter employment closely corresponds with that of the rest of the community, revealing little distinction in the sectors in which reporters are employed or studying and the percentage in each sector. What this indicates is that the labour market is not stratified in any significant way to either section off reporters from community or to have a negative bias against reporters.

More reporters believe their economic situation will improve in the future than not (approximately two thirds compared to one third). Young reporters and those of the LRA are the most positive about the future. Collectively reporter and community also broadly agree on the reasons for believing their personal economic situation will improve in the near future. Both groups emphasize: (i) improved agricultural productivity; (ii) improved productivity, working hard and saving, and (iii) improved or expanding business. Differences are minor, with reporters twice as likely to

identify government assistance as a reason for their optimism. They also profess a greater reliance on faith and hope that their child will get an education, job and support their parents in the future.

The main contrast in the economic activity of reporters and community is access to credit. Reporters have less access to micro-credit than community members: nearly half as many reporters have applied for credit from a financial institution as community members. Reporters are slightly less successful in their applications with approximately half of reporters being successful compared to nearly two thirds of community members. 18-30 year old reporters and 31 – 40 year old reporters are less successful than all others.

Reporters are also less involved in micro-economic activities than community members primarily because reestablishing the economic linkages that were disrupted by the conflict is more challenging for reporters than for community members. Approximately one third of reporters are engaged in micro-economic activities compared to over half of community members.

While largely economically reintegrated, reporters in general have greater challenges ensuring economic sustainability. This is because of the stage where many reporters are in their economic life. The study confirms that within reporter groups, female reporters are an at-risk group with less access to economic networks (and as will be seen, social networks). It confirms that reporters in the 31-40 year category have less established economic activities than those of the corresponding demographic group in the community. They face challenges associated with their stage of business or economic activity. This is evidence of the gradual recovery from lost years in rebellion.

3.1 Migration

Migration patterns and the triggers for migration of both reporter and community are similar, demonstrating that perceived discrimination is not an influential trigger for reporter migration.

7 See section 6.1, annex 1 section 3.6 and annex 2 section 3.5

8 “Demobilization” refers to demobilization stage (i.e. during the receipt of amnesty) and not the time of formal demobilization, for example, when the WNBf demobilized en masse after a negotiated settlement in 1997.

Few reporters have migrated however the percentage that has is nearly double that of community members (18.0% compared to 11.5%). The major statistic regarding the frequency of migration concerns those who have migrated once: 71.6% of reporters (78.6% of female reporters and 67.4% of males), compared to 76.2% of community (85.7% females and 71.4% of males). There is no evidence of community members migrating multiple times but 14.9% of reporters have migrated twice.

Migration patterns of reporters and community members are similar but the distribution of population to various kinds of locations at the end of the conflict (identified in the study as the first step or location before migration) is somewhat different. Comparing the points of origin (place lived at the end of the conflict), it is evident that reporter net migration is limited. The main change is a move to peri-urban settlements and Kampala. For community members, the migration to urban centers has been largely balanced by migration to rural settlements. So overall there is limited net differentiation between the movements of the two groups revealing that there is nothing abnormal driving reporters to migrate.

The main drivers of migration are economic or pertain to the social networks of the reporter: job opportunities, housing, family, land access, property costs and moving with friends. Stigma and discrimination are minor triggers.

3.2 Additional reintegration dimensions

3.2.1 Factional dimensions

While it is discussed in detail under social reintegration (Section 4.1), it is pertinent to note here that reporters do not turn to other reporters in any significant number for economic assistance. In fact reporters rely first on their family for economic help. This is particularly the case for younger reporters. Only 3.1% of reporters turn to friends who are reporters when seeking financial or other economic assistance. This indicates the degree to which most reporters' social-economic networks do not rely on former command

structures for economic advancement. It should be noted that the degree to which reporters state they turn to non-reporter friends for assistance does not fully correspond with the number of non-reporter friends held by reporters: it exceeds the number of non-reporter friends.

3.2.2 Economic dimensions

All key indicators identify that reporters and community are economically reintegrated. These indicators are baseline household indicators where reporters and community members display limited differences. Moreover unemployment and employment trajectories identify that a higher percentage of reporters are unemployed than the community. In line with other data, this shows that the labor market is not stratified in any significant way to either section off reporters from community or to have a negative bias against reporters. The indicators identify that there are vulnerable sub-groups who are more at risk economically, particularly female and disabled reporters. The analysis tracks the economic progression of 31-40 year old reporters in comparison to the same group in the community, and this illustrates how reporters are figuratively one step behind community members in terms of establishing the sustainability of their income and accessing credit.⁹ However, practically, reporters have reintegrated economically to an extent that much of their economic hardship is in many ways comparable to that of the community and a symptom of wider development challenges.

⁹ Reporters were questioned using a 10 step ladder response prompt. Their responses are tabulated (annex 2 table B14 and section 4.5) and by mean score. The lower the mean score means that the respondent is closer to the bottom rung of the ladder, that is, where the poorest people tend to be. The higher the mean score means that the respondent is closer to the highest rung on the ladder, where the wealthy are. Community members like reporters tend to rate themselves somewhere in the middle of the bottom half of the ladder in response to all questions regarding current and past status in food poverty; housing; clothing and finances. However the community is nearly always one rung above the reporter groups reflecting the more positive self-perception but also the fact that as a group the community tends to be slightly more food secure, slightly better housed, slightly better in terms of clothing and slightly better in finances but not to a large extent.