

6. Conclusions

The study surveyed 410 reporters and 182 community members in order to examine the reintegration experiences of both groups and gauge the level of reintegration of reporters in Ugandan communities. The survey was conducted in seven locations corresponding with the locations of the AC DRTs.

The study found that reporters and civilians in Uganda are successfully reintegrating, economically and socially and that this is an outcome of various complex multi-dimensional peace and stability interventions in Uganda. This is also a foundation upon which relevant development programs such as CDD and IGA initiatives can be implemented in the future.

6.1 Economic reintegration

Despite chronic development challenges, communities have been largely welcoming and accepting of reporters including into economic networks. Communities and reporters share an understanding that reporters face additional challenges to economically catch up with the community. Reporters attest that they rarely suffer discrimination in the workplace on the basis of their insurgent history. Reporter employment trajectory is positive (and while the unemployment rate is twice that of community members it is still relatively low at under 10%). The nature of reporter employment closely corresponds with that of the rest of the community. This reveals that there is little distinction between reporter and community regarding the sectors in which reporters are employed or studying and the percentage in each sector. What this shows 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.

However, reporters face greater difficulties accessing micro-credit than community members and are less involved in micro-economic activities than community members. At least partially, difficulties around credit are related to challenges in reestablishing the economic linkages that were disrupted by the conflict. This also reflects on the finding that while largely economically reintegrated, reporters generally have greater challenges establishing their economic sustainability, most likely because of the stage where many reporters find themselves in their economic life.

Within reporter groups, female reporters are an at-risk group with less access to economic networks. The characteristics of the economic activities of reporters in the 31-40 year category are less established than those of the corresponding demographic group in the community.

6.1.1 Community driven development

The level of economic reintegration is such that reporters and communities would significantly benefit from IGA programs, particularly those that are capable of targeting vulnerable sub-groups across the reporter-community population. One example of such programming is CDD (such as NUSAF) targeting income generation. Vulnerable community members, particularly females, would benefit from targeting in a CDD initiative in order to enable them to become less reliant on credit to meet household expenses and to become better economically and socially networked. CDD with a sub-component in micro-finance would likely greatly assist reporters increase their access to credit to a level similar to fellow community members. Similarly, CDD supports reporters in assuming leadership positions on a comparable basis with com-

community members (for example on management committees) may contribute to equalizing the findings around reporter under-participation in leadership positions in associations, including economic associations.

6.1.2 Rural-urban periphery

Most reporters who reside in the rural-urban periphery are most likely of all reporters who are engaged in agriculture to meet monthly expenses and break even financially at the end of each month. Economically they are performing significantly better than those in rural settlements or isolated homesteads but with the same economic profile. This is likely because access to urban markets improves the ability to generate income. It would benefit reporters and community members—in particular vulnerable sub-groups such as women who are functional household heads—to be targeted by CDD projects focusing on the development of the rural and private sector. This would include support to producers and local administration in order to improve efficiencies along the value chain of agricultural commodities and improve infrastructure to facilitate the same.

6.2 Social reintegration

In the surveyed communities there is good social reintegration of reporters and communities. Reporters tend to have strong family support and integration, however they do encounter more challenges regarding marriage, particularly female reporters. Reporters generally have a far higher rate of separation and marriage breakdown than non-combatant community members.

Similarly, reporters encounter risks pertaining to the size of their social networks. While reporter and community social networks are comparable in composition to those of other community members they are more limited in size. That said, reporters feel valued in their community and generally are valued as equally as any other community member. Across most indicators including stigma, security, acceptance and empowerment, reporters are largely on par with community members. Factional reintegration is positive with all relevant indicators in social (and economic) reintegration indicating that many linkages with command

structures have been deconstructed by reporters and that they value the diversity of their social networks.

It is concerning that younger reporters believe their position in development is not only ‘one step’ below that of the community but also that in all key areas (food, housing, clothing and finance). In the last twelve months their situation has worsened. However, generally reporters and community members consistently identify themselves in the poorest half of society (between steps 2 and 3 on a 9-step ladder) and within one step on the scale of each other with reporters being lower and so poorer according to their own perception in all areas. Also, community respondents in the 18-30 year olds category state that their situation has worsened.

6.2.1 Younger reporters

The social and economic exclusion of younger reporters (including those not addressed in this study, i.e. under 18 years old) in post-conflict recovery is a crucial issue that should be addressed in future development interventions particularly any economically focused CDD programs as mentioned above. While in general reporters appear socially and psychologically resilient, the pressure exerted by social exclusion as evidenced in the pessimism of the younger cohort in this study is cause for concern.

6.2.2 Female community members

Female community members not only endure economic disadvantage but, in comparison to female reporters, they also endure more social marginalization. Females in the community have less participation in formal gatherings, are more isolated, more at risk in terms of personal security and so more conscious of safety and security issues than males. Despite having similar social network challenges to female community members, female reporters are likely to be more secure socially, economically and in how they perceive the security of the external environment. Future programs targeting the reintegration of female reporters should include a larger cohort of female civilians to promote social and economic inclusion of this subgroup. All future programming should be more gender sensitive than DDR programs to date in Uganda.
