

Early Childhood Education and Peacebuilding in Areas of ongoing Conflict and in Refugee Settlements in Western Uganda

Achievements, Challenges, and Lessons Learned



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Cover photo: © UNICEF/UGDA201300186/Sibiloni/Young children are playing with toys received from UNICEF in Rwamwanja refugee camp located in Kamwenge District, Western Uganda. The camp is home to over 60,000 refugees most of them from Democratic Republic of Congo.

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Acronyms

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ADF-NALU	Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
ADM	Allied Democratic Movement (Baganda)
BRMS	Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards
CA	Conflict Analysis
CCT	Centre Coordinating Tutor
CCU	Catholic Church of Uganda
CDA	Community Development Assistant
CFC	Child-Friendly Centres
CFS	Child-Friendly Schools
CMC	ECD Centre Management Committee
CO	Country Office
CPTC	Core Primary Teacher College
CSF	Child Safe Facilities
DEO	District Education Officer
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DIS	District Inspector of Schools
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EEPCT	Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition
EFA	Education for All
EiE	Education in Emergencies
ELDS	Early Learning Development Standards
ESAR	Eastern and Southern Africa Region
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FDLR	Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FP	Focal Point
GoN	Government of the Netherlands
GoU	Government of Uganda

HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
KRC	Kabarole Research and Resource Centre
LC, LOC1	Local Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
M23	23 March Movement, Congolese Revolutionary Army (primarily Tutsi)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
NALU	National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PB	Peacebuilding
PBF	Peacebuilding Fund
PBEA	Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
QENP	Queen Elizabeth National Park
QEPA	Queen Elizabeth Protected Area
RFPJ	Rwenzori Forum for Peace and Justice
RO	Regional Office
RPF	Rwandese Patriotic Front
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
STC	Save the Children
TIET	Department of Teacher Instructor Education & Training
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers
UAM	Un-Accompanied Minors
UCO	Uganda UNICEF Country Office
UMSC	Uganda Muslim Supreme Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
VAC	Violence Against Children
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas (U.K.)
WFP	World Food Programme

Document Overview

Purpose and Intended Use of the Case Study

UNICEF sees ECD as having the potential to play a fundamental role in preparing the groundwork for sustainable peace and resilient and cohesive communities essential for breaking cycles of conflict. Evidence from cognitive science suggests ECD, in fostering safe, nurturing, and stimulating environments, prepares children emotionally and intellectually for social life, taking advantage of crucial phases of brain development. This case study seeks evidence on the ground for this and other developmental pathways—particularly those that lead through social structures and culture—to see what is being accomplished in terms of peacebuilding in the actual ‘here and now’ at community level. The accomplishments made by ECD, and the challenges facing centres in Western Uganda are discussed, and recommendations are offered for improving the peacebuilding and child protection potential of ECD services in situations of protracted displacement and emergency/conflict.

As part of this consultancy two case studies have been produced on ECD services in Uganda, each with distinct thematic and regional focus:

- *ECD in ongoing conflict (village and district) contexts and protracted displacement and emergency (refugee) contexts in Western Uganda (the present study)*. Here, the challenge for communities embroiled in ongoing conflict and opposed by ethnicity, livelihoods pursuits (agriculturalists vs. pastoralists), and the claims of rival kingdoms is to find a way for them to keep interethnic lines of communication open, provide tangible peace dividends in the form of education that has a ‘transformative’ potential, and promote security and freedom of movement. The Rwamwanja refugee settlement context also provides an example of how ECD fosters peacebuilding in a situation of humanitarian action and refugee displacement, where the hope is that returnee communities recognizing the

value of ECD will recreate the ECD systems in Eastern DRC, thus contributing to resilient communities and regional peacebuilding. ECD also addresses equity issues creating pressures for conflict and undermining individual and societal resilience.

- *ECD in post-conflict North and Northeast Uganda (for full details see separate case study document)*. Exploring how ECD supports cohesive and resilient societies in post-conflict and ‘development’ phases but still experiencing risk of relapsing to violent conflict.

This case study examines the role of Early Childhood Development (ECD), or pre-primary education, in building peaceful and resilient communities in contexts of ongoing conflict and in refugee settlements in the centre of the Western Region of Uganda. With UNICEF support, ECD has been a key element of Government of Uganda (GoU) education policy since 2007, recognized in the Education Act of 2008, and its implementation and development has rapidly spread throughout the country.

This document is intended to be used by UNICEF staff, implementing partner organizations and other interested practitioners in the education and peacebuilding field. It is hoped that ongoing discussions on the value of Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a tool for community peacebuilding and reconciliation will be enriched by the field observations provided herein.

In crisis situations and the immediate aftermath of violent conflict, ECD centres can become one of the few safe havens available for young children. By virtue of the fact that ECD centres receive children from the various ethnic groups in conflict, the centres are a natural, if not the only, meeting place for parents and act as a community level structure for initiating the difficult task of reconciliation and diffusing information. As the preschool education programmes have become ubiquitous in Western Uganda, there is a need to document the perceptions of stakeholders and evaluate the direct and indirect ways in

which ECD is supporting the transition to peace and sustainable development or, in the context of emergency and displacement, protecting children and preventing new forms of violent conflict at community level. It is also necessary to see if ECD might inadvertently contribute to conflict, and how ECD can be

made more effective as a vehicle for peace and development through stronger application of conflict sensitive approaches through Education in Emergency programming. Insofar as possible, the study gives a voice to the individual actors involved.

Executive Summary

The PBEA in Uganda programme is based on an overarching theory of change of how desired peacebuilding and other programming outcomes can be achieved, whether in post-conflict settings, areas of ongoing conflict, or in the emergency context of a refugee settlement. The Uganda Country Office (UCO) PBEA Outcome 4, which aims to increase the number of schools and ECD centres in target post-conflict districts providing conflict sensitive education that adheres to basic standards, predicts that:



If conflict sensitive education that promotes peace is delivered equitably as a peace dividend in parts of Uganda which are recovering from conflict, then grievances and perceptions of neglect which have historically fuelled conflict in that region will be reduced. Building up education provision in conflict affected areas offers a means to build state legitimacy. Ensuring that schools are conflict sensitive provides an opportunity to empower teachers and administrators to discuss grievances and find productive outlets for issues raised in the community.

Western Uganda (particularly the centre-west portion of that region) provides an appropriate setting for examining the relevance of this ToC and the expected higher level results due to the violent inter-communal attacks carried out in early July 2014, just over a month before this study, and the high levels of fear and insecurity that continue to be felt by communities. This case study examines the role of Early Childhood Education (ECD) in these contexts of violent conflict and humanitarian action.

The Rwenzori Mountain or Rwenzururu sub-region of Western Uganda sits aside the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), its ethnic groups found on either side

of the international frontier. The sub-region has a history of conflict, either of local origin (struggles over land, the jurisdiction of traditional Kingdoms, or most recently a possible future oil windfall) or spilling over from regional wars in the DRC and Rwanda. In July 2014, violence broke out simultaneously in 13 separate attacks across Bundibugyo, Ntoroko and Kasese districts between members of the Bakonjo, Bamba and Basongoro. Leaving some 90 dead and hundreds in police custody, the attacks showed the deep-seated tensions in the sub-region over access to livelihoods and natural resources and the role and prerogatives of traditional kingdoms.

Western Uganda has also been the home for waves of refugees fleeing conflict in Rwanda, and more recently Eastern DRC. Fifty thousand people from DRC are currently sheltered in the Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, in Kamwenge district east of Kasese, a site that was reopened on 7 April 2012 by the GoU to deal with influxes of refugees from the volatile security situation that prevailed from July 2011 (UNHCR Uganda 2014; see section 1.2 below). The situation is still unstable in Eastern DRC, preventing these refugees from returning home in large numbers. At the same time, their continued presence and the government's provision of land and assistance to them, is a bone of contention with local Ugandan communities.

Methodology

The study is based on literature review, consultations in Kampala and field research in Western Uganda. In August 2014, twenty-two ECD centres were visited both in the Rwenzururu sub-region and in the Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement. Among the questions this study will consider:

- To what extent ECD has contributed to enhancing social cohesion, positive interaction between institutions and communities, community resilience and service delivery;

- If grievances and perceptions of inequity and neglect have been reduced;
- The steps ECD centres took in the aftermath of violent conflict and what this tells us about the role of ECD in building peace and healing communities, as well as dealing with the trauma of children caught up in crisis;
- How ECD functions in a refugee settlement sheltering those who have been fleeing continued instability in Eastern DRC;
- How issues of protection, conflict mitigation and child trauma are handled in that context; and
- If ECD services adhere to EiE standards.

This case study adopts complementary EiE and PBEA frameworks for examining ECD in these situations of humanitarian action. In doing so it looks at, and beyond, the immediate emergency priorities of protection and ensuring children's right to education through continuity of services to include conflict mitigation and addressing trauma, while maintaining a focus on the longer term goals of building resilient children who, through education, will help forge more cohesive societies. It is *hypothesized that a synergistic two stage process between EiE and PB (crisis-transition) might represent a way forward in implementing ECD in conflict-related contexts in a way that will contribute to breaking cyclical patterns of violence and supporting sustainable development results for children.* The study documents whether such a process is occurring, and if so, how to improve it.

The research for this case study was carried out in Uganda during August 2014, and began with briefings by key UNICEF PBEA staff members in Kampala, by regional and national government personnel, and by UNICEF staff in the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) in Nairobi. The field study in Western Uganda draws on information received during visits to 3 government offices and 22 preschools (or "care centres" as they are referred to in the ECD programme) where 24 focus-group discussions (FGDs)

were held, supplemented by 8 one-on-one interviews with government officials. Access was provided to a diverse cross-section of private and community-based schools for children aged 3 to 8. In total some 145 people were interviewed or participated in FGDs for this case study about ECD services in Western Uganda.

Research Limitations

The following limitations should be taken into consideration when reviewing this report:

- ECD programming has received support from recent cognitive research showing beneficial effects of early caregiving and stimulation on brain development, which is then related to future peacebuilding outcomes. This report cannot address these results of cognitive research or the posited causal chain through to peacebuilding outcomes. The research presented here does however show peacebuilding outcomes more directly, through social interaction between children and parents and between community members as a result of ECD, as well as important results for protecting children during periods of conflict and strengthening resilience during early recovery/post-conflict reconstruction;
- This study was specifically focused on identifying peacebuilding outcomes of ECD in settings characterized by ongoing conflict and displacement, and as such it cannot be used as a broad policy evaluation of pre-primary education in Uganda;
- In Western Uganda, research was limited to the districts of Bundibugyo, Nteroko, and Kasese (for ongoing conflict), and Kamwenge (for the Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement);
- The visits to care centres coincided with term break, but caregivers, parents and Centre Management Committee members were available to provide the information needed. In several cases, ECD centres normally on break were very kind to reopen and receive children especially for our visits.

Key Findings

This case study finds that the ToC underpinning ECD interventions represents assumptions that are appropriate for both post-conflict districts and for areas of active conflict and for refugee settings. Important results are being achieved across both EiE and PB approaches underpinning ECD interventions for refugee communities and those affected by violent conflict.

Peacebuilding and protection results. Communities in Western Uganda and refugee communities face many challenges including ethnic cleavages, livelihood pursuits (agriculturalists vs. pastoralists), and opposing claims of rival kingdoms over land and resources, most recently oil, and ongoing risks of violent conflict. In this context, ECD services have contributed to:

- Keeping interethnic lines of communication open and restarting inter-ethnic dialogue;
- Preventing 'conflict triggers' in ethnically tense settings by promoting tolerance and respect between groups;
- Protecting children and dealing with conflict-related trauma as when violence broke out in July 2014 in Bundibugyo, Nteroko and Kasese districts;
- Increasing a sense of security in fragile situations by bringing parents and community members together around common goals and building trust between groups;
- Dedicated community management committees provide a lasting platform for peacebuilding in communities struggling to break long-running cycles of violence;
- Bringing deeper societal transformations associated with access to quality education services;
- For refugee communities, children are also being equipped with skills to support their return to home countries;
- Refugee communities also aspire to recreate ECD structures in the Eastern DRC, where they could contribute to strengthening resilient communities and regional peacebuilding.

Achievements of EiE. EiE foundational guidelines are generally followed (with some caveats, in italics).

- **Access and Learning Environment:** equal access is provided, *though information is lacking for isolated Rwenzori communities; protection and well-being ensured; facilities and services meet minimal standards, but risks to continuity of service exist because paying and retaining caregivers is difficult;*
- **Teaching and Learning:** curricula, training, professional development and support are ensured by GoU, UNICEF and partners based on EiE best practices; instruction and learning processes are adapted to local conditions, language and needs;
- **Teachers and Other Education Personnel:** recruitment and selection; conditions of work are acceptable with caregivers typically recruited from affected communities (thus helping bridge cultural and language barriers for young children), *but in terms of salary vary for caregivers from relatively well-paid in many communities (resulting in market-driven scarcities) to low- or irregularly-paid in refugee ECD centres; support and supervision exist and are very well-intentioned but are constrained by financing, for example for monitoring in upland areas, and no evidence was available as to whether conflict sensitive monitoring approaches were being used to ensure adherence to principles of 'do no harm' or promote deeper peacebuilding gains;*
- **Education Policy:** law and policy formulation, planning and implementation have been carried out well *in areas visited.*

Differences between EiE and PB? EiE standards are primarily concerned with ensuring continuity of education services, universal access, minimum standards for physical structures and environment, community inclusion, teacher training and materials provision, risk reduction, and protection of children. EiE has been essential in establishing the rights of children to education, especially in crisis situations.

However, 'lasting peace' depends on addressing factors creating pressures that can give rise to conflict and 'emergency', rather than responding to the impacts of 'crisis'. A major difference between EiE and PBEA would thus seem to be the latter's systematic focus on creating the conditions for social cohesion and community resilience, and for renewing

them when they break down. As one aspect of the programme in Uganda, ECD is targeting the specific needs and capacities of preschool children, creating in the process entry points to reach communities and create these conditions.

Combining the notions of EiE and PB education in Uganda. Essentially what has emerged via ECD in Uganda is a synergistic two stage process (crisis-transition). Combining results of EiE and PBEA illustrates the value of the two approaches to support effective transitions from emergency to early recovery and, hopefully, sustainable results for children in fragile settings:

- **First, ECD is directed to the youngest members of society, the future of the community and building resilient societies.** Centres prepare children well for primary school, partly through early cognitive development, partly through focusing parents on their responsibilities for their children's education. ECD helps refugee and displaced children access learning opportunities, prepares them for return to their countries of origin, equips them with skills for getting along with others and rejecting exclusion. PBEA places emphasis on both protection and preparation for further education. Last but not least, returnees who bring back models of cohesive communities experienced in exile make valuable contributions to restoring peace in their war-torn countries.
- **Second, ECD provides safe places for children in refugee communities and normal communities alike.** The protection aspect is most important in times of crisis, but it remains important once calm has been restored for freeing up parents for routine household tasks (such as queueing for food distribution, engaging in trade or agriculture). In times of conflict, the ECD centres can become the focus for urgent child protection.
- **Third, ECD helps children recover from trauma and abuse through play and encouragement.** Caregivers in the refugee camps are well-placed to help children emerge from traumatic experiences. In these centres, the administrative personnel were found to be the most engaged in dealing with cases of trauma due to their contacts with parents and presence in the villages.

- **Fourth, positive behavioural changes in children and their families can be encouraged through ECD that can mitigate conflict triggers in fragile settings.** Children learn how to follow rules, share, take turns, and respect others, basic life skills that reduce friction and build friendships and solidarity.
- **Fifth, ECD supports community reconciliation and conflict mitigation by establishing and keeping lines of communication open.** Information exchange in divided communities is found to be occurring across ethnic and religious lines through the ECD structures and networks and their regularly-held parents and community meetings. Increased information flow works against rumour mongering, exclusion and manipulation, and is therefore a key to community resilience and social cohesion.
- **Sixth, ECD brings peacebuilding and conflict prevention messages home and into the communities.** In conflict-ridden communities, children may be the best messengers as they can transmit messages received in school on a variety of conflict-related issues back into the households and communities. This is a telling contribution to peacebuilding that PBEA can add, further supporting the argument that EiE and PBEA have provided mutually reinforcing paths to peace through education.

Recommendations

In view of ensuring the future viability of the centres and enhancing their ability to play effective conflict mitigation and peacebuilding roles in their communities while promoting children's access to quality education, the following recommendations are advanced:

For Government

- **GoU should increase funding of ECD.** GoU should consider funding ECD as pre-primary education to ensure caregivers are receiving a living wage commensurate with their experience and workload;
- **GoU should facilitate the recruitment of qualified staff for ECD centres** with the goal of ensuring equity of service across all regions of the country;
- **GoU should address perceptions of marginalization, neglect and inequity.** Developing community outreach strategies

and information awareness raising about support that the government provides to communities can address misperceptions that lay at the root of some of the communal tensions and conflicts;

- **GoU funding of meals for children.** GoU funding of ECD centres should include provision of a morning meal, as in primary schools, as many centres and families are unable to provide meals for the children, particularly in the uplands;
- **Institutionalize conflict resolution mechanism at community level,** particularly in areas where pastoralism is practiced alongside agriculture. This research has found in ECD centres highly motivated individuals ready to lead local grass-roots initiatives in peacebuilding education;
- **Refresh knowledge of the rules governing responsibilities in ECD management** to avoid problems over jurisdiction of community-based and faith-based centres;
- **Train ECD caregivers and managers in conflict sensitive service delivery,** particularly for refugee and host communities and those districts at risk of experiencing ethnic conflict;
- **Apply conflict sensitive monitoring methods.** Ensure that government monitoring of ECD centres applies conflict sensitive indicators to monitor and respond to cases of conflict or pressures for conflict.

For Aid Agencies (Including Unicef) and Development Partners

- **Address VAC and SGBV in age-appropriate fashion** in caregiving, and raise awareness among adults in household and community. Provide specific training to caregivers on VAC and SGBV issues;
- **Ensure or continue funding for trauma counselling** in areas subject to violent conflict, and in the refugee settlement context;
- **Fast-track peacebuilding training** in districts experiencing ongoing conflict, or considered at risk of conflict. These would include border areas, areas adjoining national parks and game reserves, zones of conflict over jurisdiction of cultural institutions, and where land is in dispute;
- **Go beyond “low-hanging fruit”** in future monitoring and research on ECD in Western Uganda (as in Karamoja), to make a point of visiting isolated ECD centres located in the uplands and Rwenzori Mountains;
- **Funding for ECD in the emergency context** should include adequate and regular salaries for caregivers and address the overcrowding issues;
- **Apply conflict sensitive monitoring methods.** Ensure that monitoring of ECD centres applies conflict sensitive indicators – no evidence of this among partners or UNICEF was identified during field visits or discussions with Country Office personnel.



1. Programming Context in Western Uganda

1.1 PBEA Background

The Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy (PBEA) programme is a four-year, \$150 million initiative established in 2012. Funded by the Government of the Netherlands (GoN), the programme aims to strengthen resilience¹, social cohesion² and human security in conflict-affected contexts by improving policies and practices for education and peacebuilding.³

PBEA represents a continuation of the work of UNICEF and the GoN to implement education programming in conflict-affected contexts. Specifically, PBEA followed the \$201 million Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT) programme, carried out from 2006 to 2011 in 44 countries.⁴ However, the specific focus of PBEA on peacebuilding makes the programme unique; while past UNICEF interventions included elements indirectly supportive of peacebuilding, PBEA is the first that explicitly aims to work on factors creating pressure for violent conflict in fragile settings.

In Uganda, Early Childhood Development (ECD) services have benefitted from UNICEF's involvement in designing emergency education guidelines and training, meaning

that in all contexts—be they post-conflict, conflict-affected or refugee—community ECD centres are expected to adhere to education in emergency (EiE) guidelines.⁵ Though limited in scope to two districts and one refugee settlement, the present study will attempt to evaluate to what extent EiE standards⁶ are being met in the different ECD contexts observed and to what extent EiE interventions have applied principles of conflict sensitivity in a way that supports linkages between humanitarian action and development. Key EiE guidelines being applied through ECD services in Uganda include:

Access and Learning Environment: equal access; protection and well-being; facilities and services;

Teaching and Learning: curricula, training, professional development and support; instruction and learning processes; assessment of learning outcomes;

Teachers and Other Education Personnel: recruitment and selection; conditions of work; support and supervision;

Education Policy: law and policy formulation; planning and implementation.

1 Resilience denotes “an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change” (Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary). Programmes such as PBEA are aimed at improving social resilience, which has been aptly defined by Keck and Sakdapolrak (2013) as comprised of three dimensions: “1. Coping capacities – the ability of social actors to cope with and overcome all kinds of adversities; 2. Adaptive capacities – their ability to learn from past experiences and adjust themselves to future challenges in their everyday lives; 3. Transformative capacities – their ability to craft sets of institutions that foster individual welfare and sustainable societal robustness towards future crises.”

2 Social cohesion has been defined in various ways. A recent report by the OECD (2011:53) “calls a society ‘cohesive’ if it works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalisation, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility.” The report cites the similar definition of the Club de Madrid (2009): “Socially cohesive or ‘shared’ societies are stable, safe and just, and are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.”

3 UNICEF (2014c) “About.” Learning for Peace; <http://learningforpeace.unicef.org/about/learning-for-peace/>.

4 The goal of EEPCT was to support countries experiencing emergencies and post-crisis transitions in the process of sustainable progress towards provision of basic education for all.

5 The term Early Childhood Development itself suggests that ECD is more than simply pre-primary education, as does the equivalent term Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) used notably by UNESCO (e.g. 2015). “The term ECCE is adopted from the Dakar Framework for Action. As in the 2007 GMR, ECCE refers to a broad range of services, including support for children’s and often mothers’ or carers’ health, nutrition and hygiene, as well as for cognitive and socio-emotional development. It also includes pre-primary schooling for children of the appropriate age, and other forms of care for children below the pre-primary school age” (UNESCO 2015:47, note 1). ECD viewed through the PBEA lens adds a robust peacebuilding orientation.

6 See the minimum standards for education (INEE 2013:11).

The PBEA programme has aimed to achieve country level outcomes geared at strengthening policies, improving capacities for delivering and increasing access to conflict sensitive education services. Both the EiE principles and PBEA programme objectives share some common basic concepts around conflict sensitivity. However, the 'PBEA approach' differs from the EiE guidelines in its consistent focus on peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity, while EiE guidelines have a stronger focus 'emergency' and the provision of supplies, the availability of teacher personnel and infrastructure, and for improving the management of education services in humanitarian contexts to ensure children's rights to 'uninterrupted' education.⁷

In terms of ECD, the PBEA Country Programme Outcome 4 is a good starting point in this regard because it calls for increased number of schools and ECD centres in post-conflict districts to provide conflict sensitive education that adheres to BRMS (Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards) and ELDS (Early Learning Development Standards). Based on the understanding that inequities were driving conflict, the first aim was to ensure the provision of ECD throughout the country so that all communities, however isolated, would have equal access to quality conflict sensitive pre-primary education. But like for the first three outcomes, the corresponding ToC provides qualitative criteria, assuming that delivering 'conflict sensitive education that promotes peace' in an equitable fashion to communities recovering from conflict will reduce grievances and perceptions of neglect that have fuelled conflict in the past. The ToC further states:



Building up education provision in conflict affected areas offers a means to build state legitimacy. Ensuring that schools are conflict sensitive provides an opportunity to empower teachers and administrators to discuss grievances and find productive outlets for issues raised in the community.⁸

The assumption is that in conflict-affected districts, including those still recovering from the ravages of civil war or districts hosting large refugee populations in borderlands or disputed territories, ECD is a good entry point for affecting positive societal change and dealing with the impacts and legacies of violent conflict. Interestingly, several parents and educators also argued that based on their own conflict experience and observations, that very young children who have never experienced conflict have a "clean slate," are free of existing grievances or trauma, have nothing to "unlearn," and can thus embrace new ways of interacting with their peers. Moreover, many conflict drivers⁹ emerge in school, through competition, inappropriate punishment and bullying, thus beginning peacebuilding at the ECD level pre-empts conflict triggers that can lead to large scale societal violence.

In using both the EiE guidelines and the peacebuilding approach underpinning the PBEA programme, this case study attempts to link humanitarian programming (e.g. responding to emergency, protection of children, ensuring access to critical services for children) with conflict sensitive approaches (e.g. conflict

7 For example, much of the advocacy for Syrian children refugees revolves around a discourse of 'preventing a lost generation' underpinned by an argument that the future of an entire generation of children is at risk because of conflict-induced displacement and not having access to education opportunities (i.e. their education has been 'interrupted').

8 Outcomes and ToC are from UNICEF Uganda Country Office 2013a.

9 Uganda's conflict drivers will be explored in more detail in sections 1.2 and 1.3.

mitigation and dealing with trauma) and the longer term goal of building resilient communities and preparing children through education to forge more cohesive societies. In the case of refugee communities, an additional challenge is to equip children and communities with skills and capacities to return to their countries of origin so they are able to rebuild resilient livelihoods and make the process of strengthening social cohesion transportable, thus ensuring that that peacebuilding impacts are achieved in both refugee centres (including with host communities) in Uganda and in the countries from which refugees once fled.

EiE as a two stage process supporting linkages to development programming?

– When EiE and peacebuilding approaches are considered on paper, they suggest that an optimal combined approach might have two stages: a **crisis** stage, when conflict mitigation, protection (EiE guidelines) are prioritized, and a **transition** stage, which provides children with the adaptive and social skills and trauma recovery to ease the transition to primary school. The stages need not be rigidly separate, and in most cases will probably overlap (especially given their similar visions). However it works, some kind of synergy could represent a way for ECD for strengthening social cohesion and community resilienceduring transitions to post-conflict recovery phases that aim to consolidate sustainable peace and development.

The workings of this hypothesized process remains to be defined in the present study. In a more practical sense, the study will be looking at 1) what success ECD has had in promoting non-violence, 2) changing behavioural patterns in home and community, 3) bringing communities together in the context of emergency and conflict settings in Western Uganda, including among long-term displaced/refugee communities and 4) examine whether the assumptions in the ToC are borne out in Western Uganda.

1.2 Methodology

The case study methodology adhered at all times to UNICEF’s guidelines on research ethics.¹⁰ The guiding questions for study include:

- To what extent ECD has contributed to enhancing social cohesion, positive interaction between institutions and communities, community resilience and service delivery;
- If grievances and perceptions of inequity and neglect have been reduced;
- The steps ECD centres took in the aftermath of violent conflict and what this tells us about the role of ECD in building peace and healing communities, as well as dealing with the trauma of children caught up in crisis;
- How ECD functions in a refugee settlement sheltering those who have been fleeing continued instability in Eastern DRC;
- How issues of protection, conflict mitigation and child trauma are handled in that context, and;
- If ECD services adhere to EiE standards.

Literature Review and background materials.

This case study was informed at the outset by a literature review and review of PBEA programme documents in Uganda, followed by consultations with ESARO staff and discussions with UNICEF PBEA staff and stakeholders in Kampala. This included four interviews with key UNICEF PBEA staff members in Uganda, group discussions with a wider CO team and with a senior official for the Ministry of Youth, several informal discussions, as well as by a desk review of programme documents.

Semi-Structured Interviews. A semi-structured interview strategy was utilized for discussions with informants. A total of 12 in depth one-on-one interviews were conducted with government officials, focal persons and partners. Questions were guided by the literature review and guiding briefing interviews provided by UNICEF staff, as well as the TOR objective for exploring how ECD services have impacted upon community members to identify whether any more immediate and discernible impacts have been achieved as a result of this work.

Site Observations and Focus Group Discussions. The field study in Western Uganda draws on information received during visits to 3 government offices and 22 preschools (or “care centres” as they are referred to in

10 UNICEF ERIC Compendium at <http://childethics.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ERIC-compendium-approved-digital-web.pdf>

the ECD programme), where 24 focus-group discussions (FGDs) were held with parents and members of the ECD Centre Management Committees (CMCs). In each region, in liaison with PBEA partner institutions and government officials responsible for ECD actions, access was provided to a diverse cross section of private and community-based schools for children aged 3 to 8. UNICEF's partners and trainers were particularly helpful in providing background on ECD services in Western Uganda and the country as a whole, and detailed information on how the programme and training of caregivers, parents, and community members evolved in the specific areas visited. In the many care centres observed, UNICEF partners, administrators, care givers, parents and children provided a variety of perspectives on the value of the programme and challenges still to be overcome.

In total some 145 people were interviewed or participated in FGDs for this case study about ECD in Western Uganda.

Secondary data sources. All available programme documents that outlined progress and challenges with ECD activities were provided for this study. These included monitoring and implementation reports of partners and PBEA Annual Reports and monitoring data. The documents were reviewed to gain a better understanding of the process for implementing ECD activities in relation to relevant programme Theories of Change. Significant amounts of data were subsequently provided to this study by UNICEF's Regional Office and the Uganda PBEA team, especially in relation to providing a better understanding of the numbers of beneficiaries being touched by the PBEA programme.

Analytical Framework. This case study adopts complementary EiE and PBEA frameworks for examining ECD in these situations of humanitarian action. In doing so it looks at, and beyond, the immediate emergency priorities of protection and ensuring children's right

to education through continuity of services to include conflict mitigation and addressing trauma, while maintaining a focus on the longer term goals of building resilient children who, through education, will help forge more cohesive societies. Given the sufficient areas of commonality between EiE and PBEA in relation to issues of conflict from 'emergency' and 'developmental' spectrums respectively, it is *hypothesized that a synergistic two stage process (crisis-transition) might represent a way forward in implementing ECD in conflict-related contexts in a way that will contribute to breaking cyclical patterns of violence and support sustainable development results for children.* The study seeks to document whether indeed such a process is occurring, and if so, how to improve it.

1.3 Research Limitations

The following limitations should be taken into consideration when reviewing this report:

- ECD programming has received support from recent cognitive research showing beneficial effects of early caregiving and stimulation on brain development, which is then related to future peacebuilding outcomes. This report cannot address these results of cognitive research or the posited causal chain through to peacebuilding outcomes. The research presented here does however show peacebuilding outcomes more directly, through social interaction between children and parents and between community members as a result of ECD, as well as important results for protecting children during periods of conflict and strengthening resilience during early recovery/post-conflict reconstruction periods;
- This study was specifically focused on identifying peacebuilding outcomes of ECD in settings characterized by ongoing conflict and displacement, and as such it cannot be used as a broad policy evaluation of pre-primary education in Uganda¹¹, though where the findings have policy implications these will be spelled out;

11 For such an evaluation, see Godfrey Ejuu (2012) The Status of the Implementation of the Education Sector Early Childhood Early Childhood Education Policy in Uganda, Final Report (Kampala: Uganda National Commission for UNESCO).

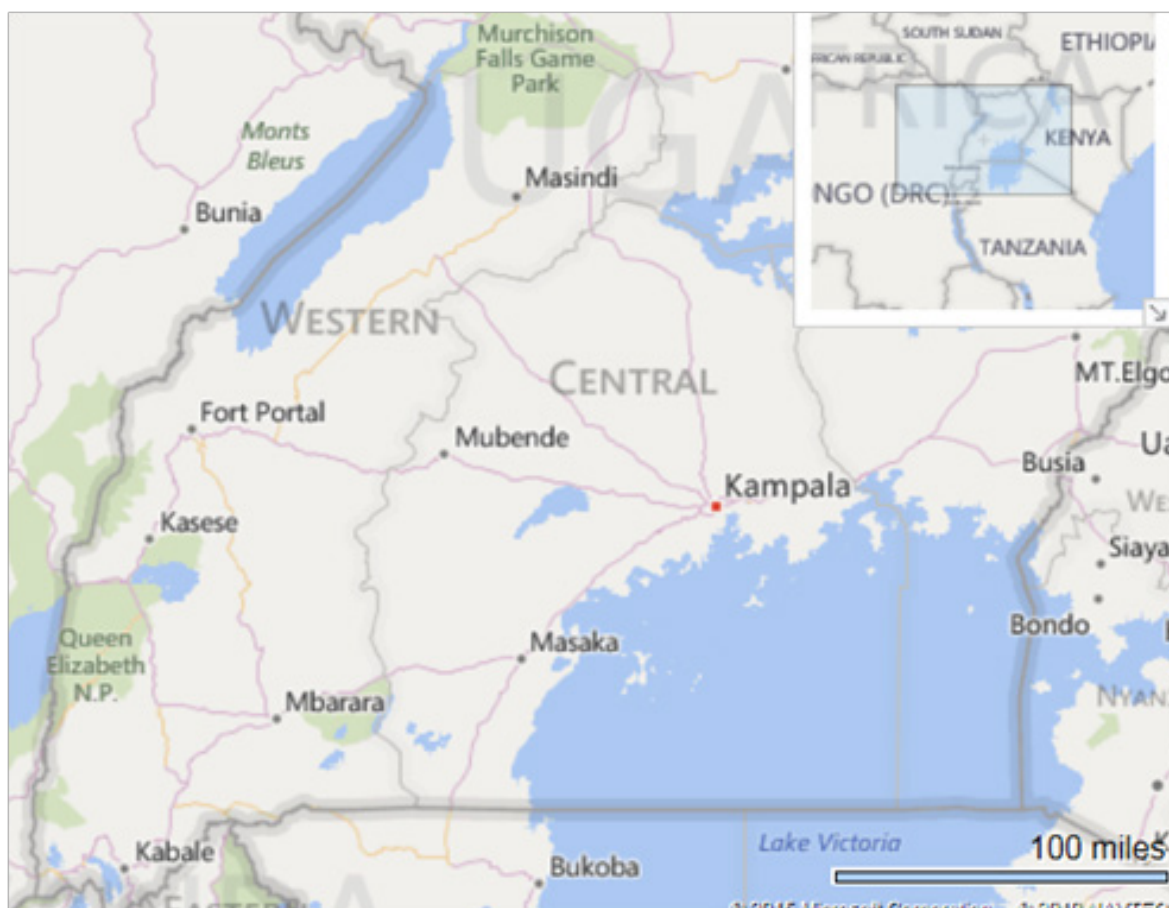
- In Western Uganda, research was limited to the districts of Bundibugyo, Nteroko, and Kasese (for ongoing conflict), and Kamwenge (for the Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement);
- UNICEF's implementing partners without exception provided full assistance for logistics, for arranging visits to schools and for presenting the histories of the programmes, the communities and the challenges in each area visited. In Western Uganda, government officials in charge of ECD were interviewed in Bundibugyo, the Canon Apollo CPTC near Fort Portal, and in Kasese;
- The visits to care centres coincided with term break, but caregivers, parents and Centre Management Committee members were available to provide the information needed. In several cases, ECD centres normally on break were very kind to reopen and receive children especially for our visits.

1.4 History of Conflict and Emergency in Western Uganda and Its Legacies



"The Europeans had destroyed a traditional culture, promising to rebuild it along wonderfully rational lines at a later date. But history forced them to walk away before they could complete their supposedly benevolent alternative system, thus giving renewed tragic relevance to Antonio Gramsci's famous remark that the moment the Old is dead and the New is not yet born is a very dangerous moment indeed. (Gérard Prunier, 2009, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe*, pp. xxix-xxx)

Figure1. Map of Uganda



Western Uganda, and particularly the Rwenzori Mountain or Rwenzururu region, exemplifies the challenges confronting communities undergoing rapid socio-economic and political change. The Rwenzururu sub-region of Uganda is an area spanning the Rwenzori Mountains between Lake Albert and Lake Edward, on the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and comprising the districts of Bundibugyo, Ntoroko and Kasese. The area is inhabited by the Konjo (Bakonjo), with affinities to the Nande (Banande) of the DRC, the Bamba (Amba) and the Babwisi (Bwisi) with affinities to the Talinga of the DRC. The sub-region is characterised by an international frontier that divides its ethnic groups, a history of insurgency against colonial as well as Ugandan rule, rivalries between traditional Kingdoms, and an approaching oil windfall that has exacerbated existing resource-driven conflicts and land grabbing.

The British integrated both the Bakonjo and the Bambainto the Kingdom of Toro in the early twentieth century as a counterweight to the anti-colonialist Bunyoro monarchy to the northeast. The two groups began to ask for separate districts from the Toro from the 1950s, and left the Toro Kingdom on 30 June 1962, the Bakonjo declaring the Rwenzururu Kingdom and their rebellion three months before Uganda became independent. Having mixed fortunes as an insurgent group operating in the Rwenzori uplands, most of the leaders accepted a 1982 offer of partial autonomy from the government of President Milton Obote and received local government positions and economic benefits in exchange for abandoning succession. When the Obote government fell, Obote's intelligence chief and secretary of state, Amon Bazira, fled Uganda to later return to Rwenzori and set up a new Bakonjo rebellion under the name National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), with support from Zaire and Kenya

in opposition to the new regime headed by Yoweri Museveni (Uganda's current President). After Bazira was assassinated in Kenya in 1992, NALU waned and its remnants were merged with the Uganda Muslim Liberation Army (UMLA) and the Baganda monarchist Allied Democratic Movement (ADM) to create the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF or ADF-NALU).¹² The NALU element has disappeared in all but name from ADF-NALU, which is now considered an Islamist terrorist group with possible links to Somalia's Al Shaabab, still active in Eastern DRC and, according to one recent report, recruiting in Kampala.¹³

Communitarian aspirations have been facilitated by the government's creation of new districts or recognition of traditional cultural institutions. In Kasese, the Basongora and Banyabindi are demanding separate districts, and in Bundibugyo, the Bakonjo want a separate district. These demands are due to perceived marginalization at the hands of the majority Bakonjo (in Kasese) and Bamba/Babwisi (in Bundibugyo).¹⁴

On 17 March 2008, the Ugandan Cabinet, reversing a long-standing policy, recognized the Rwenzururu Kingdom and one of the candidates to the throne, Charles Wesley Mumbere Irema-Ngoma, son of the former king (*Omusingwa Bwa Rwenzururu* [OBR]) and leader of the 1962 rebellion. The Rwenzururu Kingdom was the first recognized by the GoU that was shared by two ethnic groups. However, many feel this recognition has opened a Pandora's Box. Despite their common opposition to historical Toro domination, most Bamba/Babwesi in Bundibugyo district do not recognize Mumbere and want the Bakonjo King to remain in Kasese. Some Bamba claim their own sovereign (*Omudingiya Bwa Bwamba* [OBB]) resides in Bundibugyo, and after endorsement of the Bundibugyo District Council now await official recognition by

12 According to Prunier (2009:87) Sudanese backers encouraged the fusion with NALU to provide "good peasant grounding in local realities."

13 For a study on the ADF-NALU and chronology of armed movements on the DRC-Uganda border from 1962 to 2012, see International Crisis Group (19 December 2012) Eastern Congo: The ADF-NALU's Lost Rebellion (Africa Briefing No. 93), Appendix D; on recent attacks attributed to ADF, see Anonymous (2014) "RDC: Opérations 'villes mortes' dans les grandes agglomérations du Nord-Kivu, Jeune Afrique dated 21 October, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAWEB20141021085216/d-fense-s-curit-nord-kivu-adf-nalurd-c-op-ration-villes-mortes-dans-les-grandes-agglom-erations-du-nord-kivu.html>; on Kampala recruitment see Steven Candia (11 April 2013) "Uganda: Allied Democratic Forces Recruiting in Kampala, Says Defector," <http://allafrica.com/stories/201304111226.html>. Over 30,000 Congolese fled when the group attacked and occupied Kamango in North Kivu province (DRC) in July 2013, many going to the Rwamwanga Refugee Settlement.

14 KRC & KFPJ (2012) Stuck in the Mist: Contextual Analysis of the Conflicts in the Rwenzori Region, pp. 5.

Kampala. In the meantime, any attempt by the *Omusingwa* to extend sovereignty to Bundibudyo, albeit symbolically, is considered unacceptable to most Bamba. Violent demonstrations broke out on 6 July 2012 when Mumbere visited a shrine in Kirindi, a village in Bundibugyo district which happens to be his place of birth, resulting in two deaths.¹⁵ From the time of the attack and 21 December 2014, the government prevented any visits by Mumbere to Bundibudyo. In Kasese, the Basongoro and Banyabindi do not recognize the *Omusingwa*; on 3 July 2012, the Basongoro privately crowned Rwigy IV Rutakirwa Agutamba Kabumba Ivan Bwebale as their cultural leader.

Land. Another long-standing conflict in Kasese district pits Bakonjo agriculturalists against Basongoro herders. Both groups find themselves increasingly hemmed in between the Ruwenzori National Park (gazetted in 1991) to the west and the Queen Elizabeth Protected Area (QEPA, or Queen Elizabeth National Park, QENP) to the south-east. Most of the farmers are Bakonjo displaced from the mountains by the Ruwenzori National Park. Available land was in the corridor between the two national parks, formerly taken up by the Ubogo Refugee settlement used by Sudanese refugees for 30 years and later by Rwandan refugees and the Mboko Government prison land. When the refugee settlements were freed up due to the repatriation of Sudanese and Rwandan refugees, the government decided to give the land to the two groups. The former complain that land was inequitably allocated to the Basongoro (some mention 7 ha given to pastoralists, but only 1 ha to farmers), and that encroachment by their cattle herds destroys Bakonjo plantations.¹⁶ In turn, the Basongoro claim they are shut out of local government positions monopolized by the Bakonjo. Landless Banyabindi, who have been

living in settlements for the last fifty years, claim to have been left out of land allocations to the Bakonjo and Basongoro.¹⁷

The Basongoro were nomadic herders repatriated from the DRC in 2006. Some 10,000 Basongoro settled in the QENP along with 30,000 cattle before being resettled on the government land formerly used for refugee settlements and prisons east of the main Fort Portal – Kasese road. The Basongoro were originally from Kasese, but ethnic conflicts and “harassment” forced them to flee to DRC in 1998-1999; they “suffered a lot there” as well. Many Bakonjo consider their renewed presence in the area somewhat illegitimate and some even refer to them as “foreigners.” In Bundibudyo, many among the majority Bamba feel economically frustrated and disempowered as much of the land is in the hands of the Bakonjo. The Bakonjo counter that all the land was acquired through legal purchases from the Bamba. They add that once the hard-working Bakonjo develop the land into productive plantations, the Bamba want to claim it back.

Oil. The discovery of oil in the Lake Albert area and the designation of oil blocks along the Albertine Rift from the Sudan to Rwanda border have only served to intensify these conflict drivers. Although the role of the kingdoms has been limited by the GoU to cultural matters, jockeying for position between rival kingdoms has already begun in earnest since the oil discoveries, said to be the largest on-shore field discovered in sub-Saharan Africa in twenty years.¹⁸ Conflicts over the boundaries of proposed districts is fuelled by speculation over the location of oil and gas, land-grabbing by well-connected individuals and kingdoms, and the hope that kingdoms will be able to claim a percentage of the windfall.

15 Mubatsi Asinja Habati (20 July 2012) “Uganda’s Tribal Districts are a Ticking Time Bomb, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/mubatsi-asinja-habati/ugandas-tribal-districts-are-ticking-time-bomb>; Felix Basiime, Thembo Kahungu Misairi & Geoffrey Mutegeki Araali (14 July 2012) “The Bakonjo, Bamba Clashes: Looking Beyond the Fights,” Daily Monitor, <http://mobile.monitor.co.ug/News/The-Bakonjo-Bamba-clashes---Looking-beyond-the-fights/-/691252/1453512/-/format/xhtml/-/2uxp1n/-/index.html>; see also KRC & KFPJ (2012), pp. 11-15.

16 Conflicts between agriculturalists and pastoralists are seemingly omnipresent in semi-arid Africa. While there is a common perception that conflicts over resources are on the rise, empirical evidence is so far inconclusive. See Karim Hussein, James Sumberg & David Seddon (1999) “Increasing Violent Conflict between Herders and Farmers in Africa: Claims and Evidence,” *Development Policy Review* 17:379-418.

17 KRC & KFPJ 2012:19.

18 Map of oil blocks: <https://crossedcrocodiles.wordpress.com/2009/06/10/uganda-oil-reserves-to-rival-saudi-arabia/uganda-oil-blocks/>

Poverty. Against this tense backdrop of historical armed insurrection and foreign intrigue, insecurity, pressures on livelihoods and land access, demands for autonomy and royal sovereignty, and now oil, Rwenzuru sub-region communities try to cope with the demands of daily existence, which for many means living on the edge of poverty. Most of the region's people live from subsistence farming on the fringes of the parks and foothills, and trade is centred in the main cities. A pollution-spewing cement factory at Hima is one of the few industries in the area. An important security presence is maintained due to the perceived threats from DRC and the high levels of ethnic tension.

Violence. On the weekend of 5-6 July 2014, seemingly coordinated attacks attributed to Bakonjo¹⁹ occurred in Bundibudyo, Nteroko and Kadese districts, 13 in all, on government and civilian targets.²⁰ Education facilities in the three affected districts closed and began summer break early, and thousands of families were temporarily displaced. In the course of this research, it was possible to visit two ECD centres located where two key attacks occurred just over one month earlier, at Kanyamirima and Bigando. A third ECD centre (Kasulenge II, Bundibugyo) is in a village from where many of the attackers originated. In Bundibugyo district, a mass attack on the 39BN Military Camp at Kanyamirima was repelled after one Captain was injured and a soldier killed, resulting in the killing of forty-five of the attackers. In Kasese district, a soldier on leave and three of his children were killed, as well as 6 Basongoro in Bigando,²¹ a majority Bakonjo enclave surrounded by Basongoro. In villages affected by the clashes, *the ECD centres served as essential safe zones*, and remain key focuses for peacebuilding in the aftermath. In August, ECD staff were still on hand and involved in community networking to convince reticent parents to send their children back to the centres for the new term.

On a much higher level, the involvement of education authorities in peacebuilding following the incidents was evident in the 21 December 2014 reconciliation ceremony held in Bundibugyo in the presence of OBR and OBB, the State Minister for Primary Education, and the Bishop of South Rwenzori diocese.²²

The Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, Kamwenge District

The Rwamwanja refugee settlement has existed on and off since 1964 when it was made available by the head of the Tooro Kingdom to resettle Rwandan Tutsis fleeing civil war and ethnic conflict (Otunnu 1999:9; Helle-Valle 1989:79). The Tutsi exiled in Uganda participated in the successful overthrow of the second Milton Obote regime, but were never integrated as Ugandans. These "Ugandan" Tutsi were to play a leading role among the diaspora composing the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) when it invaded Rwanda in October 1990, beginning a four-year war that culminated in the April to June 1994 genocide of the "internal" Tutsi by Hutu extremists. When the RPF finally captured power in Kigali, the *génocidaires* fled with thousands of Hutu civilians across the border to DRC. As the Tutsi refugees returned to Rwanda, the area of Rwamwanja began to be re-occupied by locals.

In April 2012, faced with mounting numbers of refugees fleeing the M23 Rebellion in Eastern DRC, the GoU reopened Rwamwanja to resettle them away from the border. However, the status of the land had been left unresolved for over a decade, with the Tooro Kingdom reclaiming it and local government opposed to the idea of settling refugees there. Just prior to the reopening, locals violently resisted vacating the land, leaving a camp coordinator dead and others injured (Baiisme and Mutegeki 2012). Against this backdrop of local land conflicts, continuing crises in

19 The attacks have been attributed to Bakonjo youths locally known as Eshyamba Syo'obusinga (Rwenzuru Spear-handlers), acting without knowledge of OBR.

20 President Museveni provided a detailed statement following the incidents: "M7 On Rwenzori Attacks: Schemes of Confused, Selfish Bunch of People," reported by Alex Mazereka, dated 8 July 2014, <http://www.redpepper.co.ug/m7-speaks-out-on-rwenzori-region-attacks/> (last accessed 27 December 2014).

21 According to the presidential statement at the time; local sources count eleven killed in two households in Bigando.

22 Thembo Kahungu (2014) "Mumbere: Bundibugyo Attackers are Heroes," dated 22 December 2014; <http://ugandaradionetwork.com/a/story.php?s=69797>.

Eastern DRC caused the refugee population at Rwamwanja to grow to 20,000 by the end of 2012 and shoot up to 42,000 by April 2013. When visited in August 2014 for this study, relative calm appeared to reign. Rwamwanja's population stood at over 54,000 people²³ in 34 villages spread over some forty square miles of land.

Continued insecurity in DRC feeds both spurts of displacement and some back and forth migration corresponding to periods of crisis or attacks by still active armed groups, notably ADF-NALU, FDLR²⁴, and Mai-Mai.²⁵ Reduced levels of conflict in some parts of eastern DRC have led tens of thousands of refugees to voluntarily repatriate, with or without humanitarian assistance (UNHCR 2015), a movement that is expected to continue in 2015. However, continuation of unresolved conflicts and lack of accountability for crimes committed in DRC (McKnight 2014) as part of political action or the war economy serve to fuel cycles of conflict that stand to maintain some refugee influx in the foreseeable future.

In Uganda, refugees are allotted 0.25 ha of land for agriculture, tools, food and other assistance and participate in activities run by twelve implementing organisations. One of the key activities is ECD, supported by UNICEF and its implementing partner Save the Children (STC).

1.5 Conflict Drivers and their Impacts on Education and Children

A large number of conflict drivers found operative throughout Uganda are also relevant in Western Uganda. These include regional instability, poverty and regional development disparities, resource competition, poor governance and democratic deficits, human rights abuses and erosion of civil liberties,

restricted space for civil society, lack of truth, reconciliation and transitional justice, tensions between cultural institutions and government, inequitable social service provision, bulging youth population, high youth unemployment, high levels of violence against children (VAC) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in homes and schools, mental health issues/PTSD, localized religious tensions, and environmental and climate change.²⁶ The current leadership faced more than twenty armed insurgencies between 1986 and 2006.²⁷ The following, along with the more specific local and regional conflict drivers that were outlined in Section 1.2, have direct and indirect impacts on education and children:

- Disputes over land and income-earning opportunities make livelihoods insecure, discouraging households from investing in their communities, including for education;
- Insecurity due to conflicts between ethnic groups prevents children, teachers and caregivers from accessing schools and centres;
- Recognition of traditional kingdoms, though for some building pride of place and identity, for others contributes to insecurity, increased resource competition, tribalism and exclusion from which children suffer disproportionately;
- Insufficiencies in infrastructural and services development in the Rwenzori uplands and in areas settled by minority groups are symptomatic of inequities that impair education service delivery and caregiver recruitment, fuelling perceptions of exclusion;
- Perceptions of marginalization felt by almost all groups in at least some of the territories they occupy are transferred to children, who grow up with a sense of injustice that can breed fear, anger, prejudice and further conflict while eroding faith in government;

23 As of March 2014, the population stood at 52,207: 52,187 coming from Congo DRC and 20 from Rwanda. Two from DRC are asylum seekers, as are 7 from Rwanda, the remainder being refugees (UNHCR Uganda 2014:1).

24 Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda is an anti-RPF Hutu guerrilla group still active in eastern DRC.

25 Term for various community-based militia groups in the North and South Kivus generally supportive of DRC government forces and opposed to Rwanda-backed groups.

26 UNICEF Uganda Country Office (2013b) PBEA Conflict Analysis Summary: Uganda; Knutzen, Anna and Alan Smith (2012) UNICEF Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme: Uganda Conflict Analysis (Kampala: UNICEF).

27 Quinn, Joanna R. (2007) Social Reconstruction in Uganda: The Role of Customary Mechanisms in Transitional Justice, Human Rights Review 8 (4, July), p. 390.

- Mistrust of the security sector (perceived as favouring one or another group) also risks being transferred to children, heightening a sense of fear and victimization;
- Land disputes can arise from central government decisions (to resettle refugees or returnees, create national parks or allocate natural resources) that are not seen to have sufficiently consulted local governments and communities, and leave perceptions of arbitrariness and powerlessness—breeding grounds for conflict;
- Failure to inculcate in school children the values of non-discrimination, inclusion, human rights and equal dignity—admittedly a challenge in a country with a history²⁸ of ethnic rivalries and narrow ethnic-based governance—is a recipe for continued conflict;
- Education itself can act as a conflict driver when it is not perceived to be operating on a “level playing field”: i.e., when in a given district specific ethnic or social groupings are seen to have preferential access to civil service positions, land or other resources.

28 Horowitz (2000:486-492) has called the 1960s-1970s period in Uganda as one of “descent into ethnocracy” due to the narrowing bases of presidential power during that period.

2. PBEA Programming Response and Theory of Change

2.1 Development of the ECD programme

2.1.1 Justifying ECD in terms of cognitive development

ECD programmes in Uganda have aimed to develop children's capacities, promote healthy physical growth, and instil good moral habits.²⁹ From the start, emphasis in ECD centres was on moral development, imagination, self-reliance, thinking power, appreciation of cultural backgrounds, customs, language, and communication skills in the mother tongue.³⁰ One of the six goals (appreciation of cultural backgrounds) promoted peacebuilding in an aspirational sense: "To help the child towards appreciating his/her national cultural background and customs and developing a feeling of love and care for other people and the Uganda and a sense of unity leading to national harmony."³¹ ECD has been envisioned by Ugandan authorities as primarily a way of developing skills in young children, preparing them for productive and peaceful social life and nation building. ECD is being implemented throughout Uganda, including inside refugee settlements sheltering those who have fled to Uganda to escape violence in their own countries, primarily the DRC and South Sudan.

UNICEF's justification for ECD was to a large extent motivated by recent psychological and cognitive development research.³² Along with research on emotional development³³ emerging research in psychology is indeed

providing strong support for ECD, in a number of ways, including the following:³⁴

- The development of the brain is affected by the interaction of genes and environment;
- New frontiers of scientific inquiry are exploring how parenting and caregiving may change the expression of genes in the brain, potentially affecting future generations;
- Children may not achieve their development potential if subjected to adversities at a young age—lack of adequate nutrition, poor health and stimulating, nurturing, responsive and safe environments;
- Significantly for UNICEF, investing in early interventions timed to take advantage of crucial phases of brain development can improve the lives of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and their societies, helping to break cycles of poverty, violence and despair;
- Safety, play and stimulation are pre-requisites for early brain development, and early neglect and deprivation are hard to remedy later in life.

In light of the above points, the presence of ECD structures would appear particularly crucial in emergency contexts, where the stable, nurturing household, so essential for early cognitive and physical development, is under pressure. In such contexts, failure to provide safety, play and stimulation to young children could well have costs for society as they grow older.

29 Ministry of Education and Sports (2007) The early childhood development policy (Kampala: MoES)

30 National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) (2005) Learning Framework for Early Childhood Development (Kampala: NCDC); Godfrey Ejuu (2012) Implementing the early childhood development teacher training framework in Uganda: Gains and challenges, *Journal of Early Childhood Research* 10(3):282-293.

31 MoES (2010) Guidelines for Early Childhood Development Centres (Kampala: MoES), p. 1.

32 UNICEF (2014a) Building Better Brains: New Frontiers in Early Childhood Development http://www.unicef.org/earlychildhood/files/Building_better_brains__web.pdf; UNICEF (2014b) "How Children's New Brains Develop" <http://blogs.unicef.org/2014/05/14/how-childrens-brains-develop-new-insights/>; UNICEF (2014d) "Messages from UNICEF's Neuroscience Symposium" (conference document).

33 See, for example, the Roots of Empathy Research Symposium in Toronto, Canada (15-16 May 2012) http://www.ncb.org.uk/media/904024/roe_conference_summary.pdf.

34 UNICEF (2014a) Building Better Brains, p. 2, et passim.

In addition to fundamental cognitive factors, this report will show how peacebuilding pathways in a conflict-induced emergency context or one of protracted refugee displacement also *lead through social structures and culture and lead to immediate peacebuilding results and increase the resilience of children and communities*. Following birth, the child's development is first centred in the home, but by preschool age the child's environment is expanding beyond the household at an ever-increasing rate. This is particularly true for refugee children, who find themselves in a strange land far from home, recovering from the trauma of violence and displacement. They need the stability and protection of the camp and school, with education providing a secure daily routine. At first overwhelming, the experience can become very positive in terms of opening up new horizons to the child. Able to interact within the household and with an expanding group of peers and teachers of different backgrounds, the ECD child in a refugee settlement is well-placed to learn about inclusivity, reconciliation, peace and tolerance. Similarly, access to ECD in areas of Uganda undergoing ethnic conflict *provides Ugandan children with safe places* and the opportunity to express their fears and apprehensions in a secure environment with trained caregivers. The caregivers and ECD support network can interpret conflicting narratives and reinforce messages of peace and reconciliation in the midst and in the aftermath of crisis.

2.1.2 Government and UNICEF Country Office Support for ECD

Although pre-primary nursery schools have been supported by churches and private organizations in Uganda for many years, government interest in their development and certification has been more recent. Government involvement was aimed at harmonizing the curriculum and general approaches used by faith based, community based and private preschools. UNICEF supported MoES in producing key documents to enable communities, local NGOs and community based organizations (CBOs) to open, develop and organise ECD centres in

accordance with the framework and become certified. These fundamental texts include the following: *Early Childhood Development Community Mobilisation: A Training Manual* (MoES 2008); *Early Childhood Development Training Manual for Management Committees of Nursery Schools and Community Based ECD Centres* (MoES 2009); and *Early Learning and Development Standards for 3 and 5 Year Olds* (MoES 2012).

With the support of UNICEF and the World Bank, the government published the *Learning Framework for Early Childhood Development (3-6 Years of Age)* in 2005 and the *Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy* in October 2007. These documents are also used for training caregivers to run ECD centres in the Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement and in other emergency settings. More focused on the region and on emergency situations, UNICEF and Save the Children (STC) have collaborated to design the *Eastern and Southern Africa Education in Emergencies Training Toolkit* (UNICEF and STC 2009) that sets out a comprehensive strategy document for ESAR emergency programming and training, much of which is applicable to ECD. UNICEF has also helped develop the *Early Learning and Development Standards for 3 and 5 Year Olds* (ELDS) released in November 2012, a document that addresses peacebuilding in all learning contexts.

2.1.3 Peacebuilding in Caregiver Training



ECD helps for building peace. There is a difference in those pupils who come from ECD, because the teachers have imparted knowledge that the primary school teachers do not have", (District administrative official in Bundibugyo)

Caregiver training has intensified since 2010, when three international consultants were recruited by UNICEF to strengthen ECD programming in Uganda.³⁵ The consultants designed trainings that emphasized life

³⁵ One of these consultants was replaced in 2011 by UNICEF ECD Advisor Ms Helen Stallard, who provided much information on the training of caregivers and monitoring of ECD centres in Northern and Western Uganda.

skills, group play, language acquisition (mother tongue and English), pedagogy and recordkeeping. Notably, the trainings emphasized the self-reliant production of teaching materials and toys from locally-available and recycled materials. Many aspects of this caregiving training were aimed at providing rules of behaviour and skills for interacting respectfully and peacefully with others.

Peacebuilding is a recurrent theme throughout the three modules of the *Face-to-Face College-based Residential Training for FBO Caregivers and ToTs Training Manual*. The training of DCR refugee caregivers employed at Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement is done in Swahili. As most of the refugees come from North Kivu, DRC, these caregivers will teach their refugee charges in their mother tongue, usually Banyabwisha (related to Kinyarwanda), and Swahili, with a little French, languages all caregivers are familiar with. Simple words in English are taught and posted in the centres as well. The PB elements of the caregiver training are present in all three workshop modules (below is just a sample):

- *First module.* Children's rights and responsibilities explored in depth. Ninety minutes introduction to PB concept and conflict, pedagogy of role play, group work and brainstorming to build PB skills in children. In contrast to EiE, and appropriately for post-conflict or conflict-affected communities, the ECD caregiver training emphasizes PB as the principle theme integrated into the learning framework.
- *Second module.* Cooperation, sharing, team work along with motor skills emphasised. Positive discipline: non-violent consequences for poor behaviour and techniques for reinforcing good behaviour. Extensive training on record keeping techniques and reporting to parents as this is the way ECD builds trust in the community. This is particularly important from the point of view of DRC refugee adults. Many children were exposed to violence in DRC, or at least felt the concern of their parents. Many parents who had no access to preschool for their children in DRC are intrigued to see them progress and closely monitor the progress

of their children. Any mistrust they had is assuaged by the regular reporting and meetings between caregivers and parents.

- *Third module.* PB, how to build self-confidence in children through kindness, praise, encouragement and mitigating confrontation and positive discipline strategies for children. Learning outside the classroom, PB and materials and activities to promote peace and build children's self-confidence. Developing skills in children for sharing, taking turns, accepting to lose a game and 'playing by the rule'. These skills are very relevant for children in an emergency centre, faced with overcrowding, rarity of games and play materials and for those children recovering from trauma.

Caregivers in the emergency setting of the Rwamwanja refugee settlement have undergone the same ECD training as ECD caregivers in regular community settings, but using training materials that are translated in Swahili. Typically recruited from the communities they are meant to serve, caregivers share refugee status with ECD children and their experiences of fear, flight and installation in Uganda. They understand what small children and community members have experienced and speak the same languages as small children and community members. Hence they easily find ways to connect on PB with children and community members. The examples they use in class are drawn from this shared experience, in some cases even shared emotions. These caregivers are in a good position to inform this study of the potential and the challenges of ECD and the changes seen in children over the months or years in the ECD centre and the refugee settlement.³⁶

2.1.4 Challenges for community and refugee settlement based ECD

A number of challenges are faced by communities in Western Uganda in setting up ECD centres. The obvious challenge of dispensing ECD lessons in the midst of violent conflict will be explored in examples from specific centres. The July 2014 inter-communal clashes caused some families to pull their children out of centres located

36 The interviews with caregivers, parents and CMC members at Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement were carried out in French.



Figure 2. Unable to afford school fees, a parent built this office for Abraham’s Faith ECD (Hima, Kasese)

in areas where clashes took place. In some centres attendance dropped by between 20% and 50%. Families were afraid or unable to transport their children to the centres, transferred them to centres closer to home or composed of children of the same ethnic group, or kept them home. The longer term effects on ECD enrolment could not be assessed in August, as the centres were on term break, but administrators were expressing concern for when centres reopened in September. Low numbers would jeopardize caregiver salaries and the ethnic composition of the centres would be considerably less diverse. Tensions fortunately subsided in the following months.

Most ECD centre management have difficulties finding and retaining caregivers in normal times, despite the fact in Kasese alone 1293 caregivers have been trained. Competition for caregivers has pushed up salaries and the corresponding fees parents must shoulder to maintain their children in ECD. Several centres spoke of losing caregivers who were attracted by higher salary offers. That caregivers are able to receive “decent” salaries—that their efforts and skills are being valued—is positive in light of the situation in some areas of the country where caregivers are not paid.

But the high salaries could go beyond the capacity of poor or isolated communities with little to attract trained caregivers and lead to rising inequity in the future, with the best caregivers moving towards towns and the less effective ones left in isolated areas. There is a risk that Western Uganda could attract trained caregivers from North and North-East Uganda, where salaries are substantially lower or inexistent, jeopardizing the already fragile programmes there.

In order to avoid prohibitively high ECD fees, few centres adhere to the rule of one caregiver per twenty children. Caregivers receive from UGX 50,000 to 200,000 per month, sometimes less if all families are not paying the fees.³⁷ Fees range from UGX25,000 to 40,000 a term, with more than half the centres providing morning porridge to the children. When parents cannot pay due to bad harvests or an adversity, most centres accept to keep receiving their children. Some centres accept payment in kind (maize, hens, construction work for centre, etc.). These economic issues crop up in almost all centres in normal times, and could be behind a selection process if one community is much less well-off than another. Bamba in Bundibugyo have over the years

³⁷ For example, at Kasulenge 2 ECD centre (Bundibugyo), many households depend on cacao for livelihoods and have irregular income. Caregivers receive either UGX 100,000 or 150,000, depending on how many parents have paid up.

sold much of their land to Bakonjo, who are better off and have fewer difficulties paying ECD fees. It was not possible to document a widespread inability of Bamba to put their children in ECD, but this could arise in the future if Bamba dispossession trends continue.

Obviously, every impediment to the smooth running of centres, including economics, becomes more serious during periods of violent conflict. Families may pull their children out of a centre completely if access becomes dangerous, if they feel threatened due to their minority identity in a multi-ethnic centre, or if they have to relocate their household for security or livelihoods reasons. Once begun, this movement signalling a decline in trust could amplify, leaving the community with one or more mono-ethnic ECD centres and defeating the unifying purpose of ECD.

In the mountainous areas, according to the ECD FP, some families are unable to provide food for the centres or for their children to bring, and there are even some primary schools that do not provide meals. Some families can only provide fees or food for a few months before having to leave school early (commonly referred to as 'dropping out'). A large number of centres exist in the upland areas of the Rwenzori Mountains, but have never been reached. Centre Coordinating Tutors (CCTs) are in charge of monitoring them and some data is collected through community volunteers. However, according to the ECD Focal Point (FP) in Kasese, Ms. Kulthum Masiika, the lack of special funds from the ministries to incentivize the collection of accurate data means these areas are effectively "unmonitorable." From an EiE perspective, the situation of upland Rwenzori ECD centres should be of particular concern. The ADF attack on Kamango, North Kuvu, in July 2013, which sent 30,000 DRC refugees streaming across the border at Bundibugyo, underlined the danger of armed groups who use the border areas, and have been known to move through the Rwenzori highlands.

In the centres visited for this study, hygiene and sanitation facilities are not always up to code, making it difficult to inculcate good hygienic habits in children under care. Not all schools have the full set of teaching materials or have not yet received the UNICEF kits of teaching aids. UNICEF has sent funds for data collection to determine the exact number of

caregivers, centres, children in day-care and home-based centres, children in community based ECD centres and in nursery schools, and additional funding was expected for inspections and additional trainings to address these information gaps and inequities in ECD services.

Despite a key goal of ECD being to foster peacebuilding and social cohesion, the many issues faced by *ECD centres sometimes create conflicts within the community*. A faith-based organization (FBO) that first sets up an ECD centre may sometimes feel entitled to management of the centre, and require all members to be from the congregation, but this will be opposed by the CMC, which wants the chairperson to come from the community. Even when committees have opened up ECD centres on their own initiative, a nearby FBO will sometimes claim ownership. These sorts of issues *do not affect refugee ECD centres*, as they are set up by NGOs and international agencies adhering to EiE minimum standards and standard procedures.

Vandalism is a problem in many communities due to endemic poverty. Teaching materials have to be securely locked indoors when not in use. Outdoor equipment provided by communities—such as swings, tires, seesaws—are sometimes stolen for firewood, building materials or (in the case of tires) to make sandals. When a school builds a fence to keep cattle out of the playground often the poles will be taken for firewood. These communities are poor and economic need forces some individuals to resort to theft to save cost on fuel or building expenses. Children who lack toys, are unable to attend ECD, or who are simply thrill-seeking, may be tempted to steal materials from the centres. The pilferage could be connected with ongoing conflicts. Though difficult to prove, fencing materials installed to keep cows off a school playground might be intentionally removed by pastoralists. Vandalism was not mentioned as an issue at Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, though as a general precaution centres are locked when not in use.

The multiple difficulties faced by ECD centres in some conflict-affected communities, alongside the clear need for them, is starkly illustrated in the following summary entitled "Challenges" in a four page document furnished by Irungu Childcare Services, an

ECD centre in Katwe (Nyukunyu, Kasese) and written by the CMC Chair Mr. Babiiha Shelly:



So far, the major challenge is on the social-economic welfare of parents, guardians who fail to pay in advance and actually default and affect the progress of the centre. Most of our children are born in families of people who have died in Queen Elizabeth National Park for poaching; others are victims of the ADF Rebel Wars of 1996 in the Rwenzori and others are victims of psychological torture as a result of domestic violence and HIV/AIDS. The children have been victimized, neglected, hence need a strong support in terms of clothing, scholastic materials, bedding. The disabled children need good care and support and special training for caregivers in special needs is required.

The challenges in the refugee settlement at Rwamwanja are quite different. Many of the families have been displaced for years (a few have been on the move since the 1990s, from Rwanda to DRC to Uganda, sometimes going back and forth) and have become

dependent on humanitarian aid. Many view themselves as victims entitled to assistance, or believe the government should provide free education, thus see little reason to contribute to the ECD centres, as Mr. Musemakwele Kalikste, caregiver at Kyempango B ECD centre, explained:



The community gives nothing here. Because as soon as we started suggesting it, it's like in the Congo, where they say it's the NGO that must pay the caregivers. They say 'so it's us who have to pay the civil servants so our children can learn? Here we go again, you want us to pay?!' They will just leave it. There are a few parents who understand the importance of ECD, and thank us, but the majority of the parents do not.

This is coming from a highly competent and dedicated refugee caregiver who invests himself totally in his work, for which he receives a small and irregular compensation; he is obviously frustrated that parents are not contributing as much as he would hope. In addition, some pairs of Rwamwanja caregivers have huge classes to deal with (up to 250



Figure 3. Irungu (Katwe, Nyukunyu), Kasese) community built artisanal swings; other climbing toys were vandalized by villagers in search of firewood.

children). The parents of Rwamwanja ECD children are primarily focused on returning to their homes as soon as conditions permit, and the small parcels they farm are insufficient for supporting their families, explaining in part the unwillingness of some to contribute more to the centres. Though it is understandable that refugee families will feel less sense of ownership for an educational structure in a temporary way-station than normal families in normal villages, ways can perhaps be sought to engage refugee parents more. Their focus on the future return home can be seen in a positive light. Meetings or trainings could be designed for parents to discuss how the ECD centres in exile can become important models to bring back and plant in their home communities, structures that could contribute to restoring peace and preparing their children for the transition away from conflict to sustainable peace and development in their countries of origin, as well as equipping their children to gain productive livelihoods in the future. Parents may need help to begin seeing ECD not as a temporary structure to bide time in exile, but rather as a valuable investment to develop and cherish.

A further challenge mentioned at the time of the research was the expected decision of Save the Children (STC) to pull out of Rwamwanja at the end of 2014 to concentrate on other priorities. This has meant that activities have had to be scaled down and emphasis put on the exit strategy to turn the facilities over to the communities, which requires intensive ongoing training. The scaling down has particularly affected one of the more successful aspects of ECD, trauma counselling (see section 2.2.3), which can no longer be dispensed on the regular basis that is required.

2.2 ECD's Contribution to Recovery, Community Resilience and Social Cohesion

2.2.1 Preparing conflict-affected and refugee children for adapting, coping and thriving

In the context of EiE, ECD is increasingly recognized as particularly important for children living in conflict-affected environments and

refugees recovering from violence and the experience of urgent flight from their homes, and (for some) the 'disruption' in access to education. Providing continuity of education services through periods of crisis, one of the rationales of EiE, ECD is one of the only mechanisms in conflict-prone areas that consistently provides a safe place for children to shelter or to be protected during periods of crisis, but the day-to-day routine of "normal" ECD play and interaction is perhaps what is most effective in helping children develop adaptive and coping capacity to thrive even during difficult times. Despite ethnic killings having taken place only one month prior to the fieldwork for this case study, ECD centres in the most conflict-ridden villages of Western Uganda expressed unwavering commitments to the basic foundational justifications for ECD, i.e., preparing children for successful entry to primary school, and building networks of trust in the community. *In accordance with EiE standards, they were able to provide protection and well-being* in the immediate aftermath of the crisis by sheltering children and seeing that they were *safely reunited with parents*. They helped children cope with the uncertainty and fear they experienced. But once the crisis was over, concern quickly shifted to *restoring a state of normality*, and ensuring that centres could retrieve as many of their children as possible at the start of the new term.

The ECD centres in non-refugee conflict-affected areas never lost sight of their essential mission, one that is compatible with the EiE framework: *continuity of service and preparation for primary education*. The partners and caregivers understand that social cohesion and community resilience—which are advanced by a base of children that receives quality and relevant education—will be essential for long-term reductions in conflict and strengthening individual and community resilience. Helping children cope with adversity, embrace diversity, and become productive members of their households and communities is the first step.

School preparedness is high in the minds of most West Uganda parents. Some parents pay for transport to send their children to a distant ECD centre that is renowned for its results. According to those interviewed in and around ECD centres in conflict areas, primary school

integration is going well. A primary school teacher who receives children from Parental Care ECD in Karugutu, Nteroko said the ECD children can read by the time they enter P1, unlike those who come directly from home. They “have a readiness to learn” and “have no hardships” when they reach P1. “Studies go very thoroughly,” she said, adding that “they behave appropriately with individuals of the opposite sex.” Atooko Musa of Nyankonda Quran ECD & Primary School (Bundibugyo), who sees both levels in his combined ECD-primary structure, agrees that ECD prepares children differently:



Those who join P1 without having ECD are often old, having stayed overage at home. The ECD children come at the right age, learn to play and develop sharp minds while they are young. They integrate the ways; they develop the culture, of interacting with others, including teachers. They can express themselves free, not to be shy, they grow in such a way that they are able to sharpen their minds.”

A district administrative official in Bundibugyo, supported by headmaster and primary school teacher, explained why ECD is an essential preparation for primary school:



Not only in academic work, but in skills: how to socialize, eating, hygiene behaviours. They are already in the system; we don't have problems with them. Those who come from home direct, we have many problems: they don't want to go to class; adjusting to the new environment is not easy for them. The primary school teacher has to bend very low to help them. Most of the ECD pupils are in advance of what is taught in primary, they know how to count from one to a hundred. They can talk to you in English.

According to the district official, the teaching style is totally different in ECD, where they are taught skills, how to get along with others, “those skills that really form the real background for living peacefully in society.” He said there were even some private primary schools that require the community to open an ECD to qualify their children for acceptance in P1. Although this practice was not encountered elsewhere in Western or Northern Uganda—and if confirmed might even be illegal—it nonetheless suggests a rather strong sort of validation of ECD as preparatory education.

In the Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, parents and caregivers agreed that *ECD produced children that were well-prepared for the future return to their countries of origin*, with key abilities like counting, understanding and respecting themselves and those around them. Informants to the case study also expressed a belief that both interpersonal and the more “scholastic” skills will be required upon return to home countries. The former will be essential for maintaining societal resilience against conflict and dealing constructively with others, while the latter will be needed for finding productive peaceful livelihoods. As it was not possible to interview primary school teachers in DRC, there is not the same proof of ECD graduates doing well as is available in Bundibugyo and Kasese.

2.2.2 The ECD centre as “safe place” during emergency or conflict

“Child Friendly Schools” (CFS)³⁸ has been one of the key concepts underpinning UNICEF's engagement with education, and specifically with ECD. Parents cite safety as one of the most important services provided by ECD centres. They are increasingly supportive of calls for better structures, latrines, and safe play areas which contribute to CFS, and (outside of the emergency context, and within their means) are willing to provide community funding for such improvements. Care centres are not only places where children may be kept safe, in many communities they are also the primary source of information on health and sanitation, risk avoidance and safe behaviours.

38 See UNICEF (2009) Child Friendly Schools Manual http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Child_Friendly_Schools_Manual_EN_040809.pdf

As such, ECD contributes to community resilience by improving preparedness and risk avoidance.

Peacebuilding is served by having well-organized sustainable households. In times when tensions are high, livelihoods take a direct hit. Access to agricultural fields or roads is no longer assured, marketing is disrupted, water and fuel constrained. Parents need more time to manage daily needs. As in eastern and northern Uganda, ECD structures in the west also help families by taking care of their children for four hours every morning and relieving them of a burden of surveillance so that farm work and chores can be taken care of efficiently. Conflicts within the home in Western Uganda over mundane issues of money, workload and simply putting food on the table can become more acute in periods of active conflict. By relieving parents of the burden of taking care of their children for a few hours every weekday ECD contributes to household management while reducing stress on parents.



Figure 4. Found abandoned in a dustbin, this boy has been fostered by the head of St Angella's ECD (Fort George, Kasese)

Some West Uganda conflict areas have to contend with a multiplicity of different risk factors, underlining the sometimes lifesaving role of ECD surveillance and care. St. Angella ECD (named after the founder) in Fort George (Kasese) lists crocodiles and hippos among the environmental risks faced by children there, on the banks of Lake Edward. *Child abandonment is a risk* for children of desperately poor or traumatized parents. Ms Angella has personally taken in two abandoned children from her area. Some parents mention the risk of child abduction as a reason for sending children to ECD. Apparently unrelated to local conflicts, persistent rumours have circulated that children are disappearing to be used in witchcraft or sacrifice.

The recent interethnic clashes, and the low but potential risk from ADF-NALU in Uganda itself, are also factors that have served to raise vigilance and concern for child safety and corresponding recognition of the value of ECD. Caregivers note that they take *precautions to prevent children from being picked up by unauthorized persons*. Vital child protection was provided by the ECD centres closest to the July 2014 violence. Kasulenge II ECD centre (Bundibugyo) has many children belonging to participants in the attack on the Kanyamirima military camp, which left forty-five of the attackers dead. Two others centre parents died carrying out an attack which killed two soldiers guarding the nearby shrine and birthplace of the Omusingwa and preventing its renovation. The director of the ECD centre explained how they *sheltered the children* until they could be safely brought back to their families, as rumours of revenge killings of Bakonjo were beginning to circulate:

“

When the conflict happened, we prayed with them, we had to organize them. After one day, when things were normalized, then we took them back into the hills. [...] Some of the parents were among the attacking Bakonjo, so we had children who are now orphans, staying with other family members.

In the Rwamwanja refugee settlement, each of the ten ECD centres are grouped together with a Child Friendly Centre (CFC) in compounds spread across the site. Children

can attend ECD from 8 to noon under the supervision of 2 caregivers, and CFCs are open to both younger and older children in the afternoon and supervised by two facilitators. A separate facility at Rwamwanja cares for unaccompanied minors (UAM) until foster parents are found for them. Parents appreciate the ECD and CFC centres as spaces to keep their youngsters out of trouble while they are in the fields or running errands. Strict controls are in place to verify who is authorized to pick up children from the compound. Information gathering at the camp level is reputed to be very effective at keeping the camp free of interference from DRC militia groups seeking to recruit youths for their cause. Programs are in place to address risks older children may have, such as drug use, fighting and SGBV. Child abduction is sometimes alleged, but appears rare in the areas visited. When disappearances occur they are temporary, most often when a child wanders off with other children to an unfamiliar area and gets lost when trying to return home alone.

2.2.3 ECD promotes healing through play

In Rwamwanja, UNICEF and STC-led ECD, CFC and youth engagement programs have

had a significant impact on children and their communities. The trained caregivers impart knowledge of risks and safe behaviours, nutrition and hygiene, which are transferred back to the households and community. The centres have had an especially noted impact on addressing child trauma, according to Ms Maureen Achia, Child Protection Officer at STC UK:



Play is essential to that process of recovery. The affected children are not always open to us as adult counsellors, but they are able to interact and work through their trauma with the other children. And as long as they have the play materials, they tend to forget the trauma, to put it behind. That is the beauty of it.

Examples of how play is used include ‘role play’ and art. Children are encouraged to represent what the life was like before, and typically draw pictures of guns and bombs. Over time these images fade and are replaced by “normal” child artistic themes. The same transition is noted for child group play. Soon after arrival, gestures and self-fashioned toys



Figure 5. Peace messaging on cactus pads at Abraham’s Faith ECD (Hima, Kasese)

and games reflect war and battle themes, but these also fade over time. Caregivers know to expect such behaviour, and seek to gently orient it towards more neutral themes. ECD is particularly well adapted to deal with children recovering from trauma because it provides learning environments that are secure, safe, and care that is non-judgemental. The recovering child's *psychosocial wellbeing is addressed either individually or in a group context by caregivers who have been trained to deal with their special needs*, and have through training and hands-on experience acquired a tool-kit of culturally appropriate activities and play materials to draw on. As refugees themselves, they know the histories of the parents and can consult them (unless the child is unaccompanied) in order to adapt their approach to the individual child.

2.2.4 ECD drives positive behavioural changes within conflict-affected and refugee communities

ECD contributes to social cohesion through children acting as agents of positive change in their communities. Through ECD, young children assume peacebuilding roles and adopt new more appropriate behaviours in groups, preparing them for productive interactions in society. Musemakwele Kalikste of Kyempango B ECD centre in Rwamwanja gave a commonly-heard explanation:



There is a difference with those who haven't been to ECD. But they now know how to create friendships, that to fight with others is not good, and how to master their behaviour, how to greet their parents. There is a change in terms of intellectual development as well.



Figure 6. Messaging at Good Care ECD, Kinyamaseke (Kasese)



Figure 7. Rose Kongonda (facing camera) was killed with two of her preschool sisters and father (Bigando, Kasese)

At Abraham’s Faith ECD in Hima (Kasese), the director Juliette Moumouwene underlined the importance of behaviour change and peace messaging at a time when rumours have the community in a state of fear and apprehension. Rumours are flying about land wrangles, rebel incursions from DRC, the conflicts between farmers and herders, leading to a 30 percent drop in attendance. People fear allowing their children to walk to the centre, or even begin to fear the motorcycle taxi that take them. A disturbing trend is the rise in cruelty to animals by uneducated children, perhaps bored or in search of facile “empowerment” given the current uncertain context.³⁹ The dichotomy between educated and uneducated children thus appears stark and further speaks to the importance of increasing children’s access to quality and relevant conflict sensitive education services. Ms Moumouwene believes in the power of education and peacebuilding messaging to advance this agenda, examples of which can be found all over her centre, even on the cactus pads. Message posting is common in other centres, including Good

Care Primary School and ECD in Kinyamaseke, Kasese.

Within this context parents are praising ECD centres for the changes they have seen in their children, who have become more polite, considerate of others, who now ask before taking and await their turn. Often parents find themselves adopting through their children some behaviour they might not have had the opportunity to learn in their youth, and they agree that positive social behaviour is most effectively learned at an early age. Unlearning is also important: teasing is a very harmful and dangerous habit children need to unlearn to enable peacebuilding in ongoing conflict situations (see section 2.2.5).

Parents at the Rwamwanja refugee settlement appreciate the behavioural changes seen in their children since attending ECD. At Kyempongo A, *parents saw a real change in children sent to ECD, who learned to eschew fighting and stealing common among the other children who were not attending.* On realizing this positive impact, parents went

³⁹ This is a serious issue, also because cruelty to animals in childhood has been linked to violence in adulthood.

to work convincing all members of the local community to send their children as well, with the aim of putting an end to asocial behaviour. Importantly, the benefits associated with improved behaviour of children in turn led to communities 'coming together' to increase children's access to ECD and in turn appeared to be *strengthening group bonds at community level* (i.e. strengthening social cohesion) – *thus bringing with it an indirect but tangible peacebuilding impact*.

2.2.5 ECD enables intercommunity and interethnic contact intimates of crisis as in peacetime

In the sites visited, it was observed that ECD promotes resilience to conflict and social cohesion by strengthening intra/inter communal relationships. The head at ECD Victoria (Bundibugyo) kept community members informed and promoted cross-ethnic communication by bringing parents together for meetings to discuss the July 2014 attacks on the Kanyamirima barracks nearby:



We informed them of the situation. We just condemned the situation. We got them to confirm their friendships. 'Please don't do this, don't mind about the other things, you have brothers and sisters here,' we told them. We were able to [use the conflict outbreak incident] to talk about many issues in the community. A learning situation is just like a government. After that chaos, we called a general meeting to cool the situation. [We told them:] "Please don't mind. In education, please don't put [practice] tribalism and segregation and other things that can make children different. So we trained them—all the parents came—after the chaos had cooled. [...] A school is like a government, because it does not segregate; racism, that one, does not follow [...], people are just brought [up] in the same way."



Figure 8. Bigando school management committee chairman Jimmy Mumberi laughs when admitting that farmers have unlawfully planted land to right of boundary marker located in the mound



Figure 9. Pastoralists assembled in Church in Nyakakindo listen politely to plea to keep sending their children to mixed ethnic schools despite killings of 11 pastoralists nearby six weeks earlier.

Having this institution in a district that had just had a serious conflict was obviously *essential to maintaining stability and supporting rapid recovery* in this village, by *protecting children from being caught up in possible reprisals*, and providing a place and mechanism for discussing and working through the disturbing aspects of this sudden outburst of violence.

Bigando (Kasese), six weeks after the 5 July attack, was just beginning to have government mediation visits at the same time our visit was made to the Bigando Nursery and Primary School. The Bakonjo heads described the incident as a random attack unconnected to the attacks in other parts of the Rwenzururu sub-region. It followed up from a conflict over a surveyor's delimitation of the pastoralists-agriculturalists boundary that two weeks earlier had led to the temporary detention of the local council member. In the wrong place at the wrong time, three sisters and their father, along with six or seven others, were killed simply because they were Basongoro. Photos of the victims are displayed at the multi-ethnic ECD centre and primary school.

The Bakonjo feel trapped in Bigando. On three sides are Basongoro herder settlements. Their

only access is to the west, over army land to the main road. To sell crops or obtain water, they must pay members of a neutral ethnic group, the Muchiga. Their one acre land allocation is too small to support households, and they feel hemmed in by the seemingly advancing boundaries of the QENP compared to the markstones placed 50 years ago by the Queen. It is perhaps understandable that farmers feel justified in planting beyond the boundaries, but this plays a part in maintaining grievances. Once trapped in their village due to the conflict, the Bakonjo could no longer harvest their fields and the Basongoro took revenge by letting their cows take the harvest.

At St. Peter's Nursery and Primary (Hima, Kasese), Basongoro herders were still mourning 11 of their kinsmen slain in nearby Bigando, when the research team visited them in late July after Bigando. Like for Bigando ECD, *the centres were seen as a way of promoting maintenance of communication links between the Bakonjo and the Basongoro* in the aftermath of the killings. The head of St. Peter's, Christopher, and his colleagues were convinced that mixed ECD centres were important, but still feared sending their

children to them, preferring to stay on their windswept centre on top of the plateau for the time being. Teasing by Bakonjo children was feared (the same fear was voiced by the Bakonjo in Bigando). Teasing might seem like childish play in normal contexts but in a context of ongoing conflict and ethnic tension it can in fact 'trigger' large scale communal conflicts.⁴⁰ It thus complicates peacebuilding by reinforcing prejudices, stoking hatred and fear, and inviting retaliation.

The centre head, who happens to be the only Basongoro sub-county counsellor, said material aid and peacebuilding training were needed, but feared such aid would be captured as it went through bureaucratic channels from which his ethnic group is excluded. This demonstrates the depth of mistrust that exists between the communities, and marginalization felt by the Basongoro. *Peacebuilding training with both groups were deemed urgent for this and neighbouring communities.*

The vice-chair of the Infant Preparatory ECD in Karugutu described how the peacebuilding training was particularly useful in their multi-ethnic community in Nteroko district (composed of Bakonjo, Bamba, Batoro, Batuku, Valega from DRC), completed before the violence broke out simultaneously in the three districts:



Two of our members were shot dead. Some are still on the run, others have gone for amnesty, and some are in Katodjo in prison. The training was given to parents, and was helping them. If they had not received it [before the conflict broke out] the thing [conflict] could have escalated. The children have also received [the peacebuilding training, through the trained caregivers], and that's why they are able to work together, sit together, eat together, because of that kind of messages, if it was not there we would be having so many cuttings, fighting, but because they are already brought up with that kind of spirit, they are able to work together, learn together.

There is widespread interest among centre managements and parents in expanding the role of ECD in peacebuilding. The head of Rural Model School in Kasese, a highly-regarded centre that received many children from Bigando to the south before the 4-5 July 2014 killings, hopes his centre can be used for seminars to discuss peacebuilding,



Figure 10. Some of the supporters of Infant Preparatory ECD (Karugutu, Nteroko)

40 See the extensive literature on communal conflicts in eastern Indonesia during the early 2000's, which identifies how 'teasing' in contexts of ethnic tension triggered massive communal conflicts.



... in those seminars, there would actually be a way of creating a good ground for peace. Because from those seminars they will brainstorm a lot, and from there they will narrow down [the solutions] and peace would come back to the community. If people would be actually brought in for seminars and people taught on conflict resolution people would come back to their senses and begin living their lives again.

The ability of ECD to bring children and parents from diverse social and ethnic origins together is particularly striking in the Rwamwanja refugee settlement. Moses and David Komolie, respectively Hutu and Tutsi caregivers at Kyempango A, are just one example of how the priority of looking after young children leads communities to disregard past divisions, now seen as irrelevant: "All the tribes exist: Hutus, Tutsi, Nandé, Bahondé... Hutus and Tutsi are brothers here, we work together."

2.2.6 ECD introduces discussions of conflict and peace in the classroom

The experience of Karugutu ECD shows that when caregivers are given peacebuilding training, they can pass on their competence in these issues to the young children through peacebuilding lessons in class. Most ECD centres in the areas of ongoing conflict have not received training, and it is perhaps for this reason that they are avoiding or plan to avoid discussing the recent clashes out of concern to avoid traumatizing the young children. In the immediate aftermath of violence, ECD management in Bundibudyo, Nteroko and Kasese has focused on child protection first, sheltering children and locating relatives who could take in a number of orphans left

after the July 2014 killings, and children of arrested Bakonjo during their months-long incarceration. All the while, the ECD centre management and CMCs tried to keep open (or reestablish) lines of communication between communities.

These early contacts were generally limited to adults of the two communities. Maate Abas, head of Modern Life Nursery and Primary School (Kasulenge II, Bundibugyo), from where many Bakonjo attackers on the Kanyamirima military camp originated, expressed a commonly-heard opinion that the current conflict should not be discussed with young children:



In [ECD] school, we don't bring in those things. We teach them oneness, unity. That's what we teach them. We don't talk about conflict. We look at it as something that can bring divisions. We don't even talk about it. Maybe when they go home they talk about it. Maybe in the upper classes: P7, P6, P5 it is possible, but not for these young ones.

Not all believe preschool children are too young for discussions of conflict. One of the caregivers at the Rwamwanja Kyempango B ECD centre, Musemakwele Kalikste, 25, who has five years of study in the humanities and a diploma in pedagogy, is unafraid to broach the subject of conflict and peace with his children. Although the Rwamwanja ECD centre staff and communities have not yet received peacebuilding training. Musemakwele shows how more caregivers can realize the peacebuilding potential of ECD in conflict-affected communities by engaging with the younger children. He describes the way he develops a discussion to encourage his young pupils to come up with ideas themselves:

MK: What happened that made you get here?

Children: We arrived here because of the war!

MK: What caused that war?

Some children: It's the tribalism!

Some children: It's the rebels who are rebelling!

MK: So what made them rebel?

Children: They rebel so that we can't find peace!

MK: So we who are now staying in a country where there is peace, what should we do?

Some children: Teacher, when we get home we'll tell our parents not to cause war so our country will be like Uganda!

Some children: If Father and Mother are fighting, we'll tell them not to fight!

MK: And do what?

Children: Make peace!

Musemakwele finds play theatre is a good way to teach young children about conflict and peace. He has had much *success getting the children over the trauma they were feeling* from the violence they saw and the flight to Uganda. "Some had bad thoughts, but that's over now. Their minds are thinking about other things now." The example of Musemakwele shows that the potential for ECD to build peace in young minds is vast, and priority should be given to training caregivers who require the skills necessary to achieve this potential in more centres.

2.2.7 ECD brings peacebuilding and conflict prevention messages home and into the community

In the sites visited it was observed that ECD has promoted resilience to conflict and increased social cohesion by ensuring that peacebuilding and conflict prevention messages during periods of crisis or emergency are received by the households and communities supporting the centres. Evidence increasingly shows that communities are becoming receptive to these messages and are acting on them. ECD FP in Kasese, Ms Kulthum Masiika, speaks of the common rhymes sung about love between family members, hygiene, or peace:



There are a lot of things that they teach their parents. They bring the rhymes from school, and at the end of the day you find the whole family knows the rhymes.

The messages children are bringing home are having an impact because parents are listening. A parent representative from St Christi's ECD centre just south of Bundibugyo town explained that children intervene when parents are fighting, and get results:



They play a role because the family consists of three people, the father, the mother and the children. The child can stand in the middle of the father and mother and say 'Please Father don't, don't do that.' The father can easily stop.

Mr. Atooko Musa of Nyankonda Quran ECD & Primary School sees the key in forgiveness, a skill that needs to be learned in the rough and tumble world of childhood:



When they are here, they keep fighting, it's normal. They are free, they are playing games, and they knock each other, but they say 'sorry, sorry! They develop this spirit of forgiving, that ability to say sorry when they hurt one another. They develop that spirit whereby it is possible to get them to accept peacemaking, because they begin with it as early as possible.

In the Rwamwanja refugee settlement, just witnessing parents, caregivers and children from diverse ethnic groups interacting normally demonstrates the peacebuilding outcomes that can be attained by ECD. Parents who have worked together on common goals and seen the benefits in their children are building lasting bonds that can continue during a return process. Their investment in their children spurs an interest in their child's progress, in the messages the child brings home, and in perpetuating a positive learning environment.

3. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

3.1 Lessons Learned – PBEA’s Contribution to PB and Protection

If comparing ECD in post-conflict communities in North and Northeast Uganda,⁴¹ ECD in communities embroiled in conflict in Western Uganda, and ECD centres set up in a refugee settlement, it has become clear that interventions in support of ECD in development and emergency contexts share many similarities. In all contexts, the young children require protection from both extraordinary and ordinary forms of abuse, life skills to recognize threats and risks in their environment, and personal and social skills to adapt to primary school. Even refugees need to be prepared for education lest a lack of schooling and opportunity condemn them to poverty when they return home and leave them few opportunities outside of criminal and armed groups. It is *with the aim of breaking this familiar cycle that post-conflict and refugee communities are embracing ECD* as they recognize its beneficial impacts.

However, there are specific results being achieved for children and communities in situations of conflict (or crisis) and protracted displacement (i.e. refugee communities). These results are outlined below under peacebuilding, protection and EiE with comparisons made between the frameworks.

Peacebuilding and protection results. The observation in August 2014 of how ECD works in a sub-region of Western Uganda, where images of violent conflict were fresh in mind, sheds light on the use of education as an entry point for peacebuilding. These communities face many challenges. Embroiled in conflict for decades, they are separated by ethnic cleavages, livelihoods pursuits (agriculturalists vs. pastoralists), and opposing claims of rival kingdoms over land and resources, most recently oil. In this context, ECD services have

contributed to:

- Keeping interethnic lines of communication open and restarting inter-ethnic dialogue;
- Preventing ‘conflict triggers’ in ethnically tense settings by promoting tolerance and respect between groups;
- Protecting children and dealing with conflict-related traumas when violence broke out in July 2014 in Bundibugyo, Nteroko and Kasese districts;
- Increasing a sense of security in fragile situations by bringing parents and community members together around common goals and building trust between groups;
- Dedicated community management committees provide a lasting platform for peacebuilding in communities struggling to break long-running cycles of violence;
- Bringing deeper transformations associated with access to quality education services;
- For refugee communities, children are also being equipped with skills to support their return to home countries;
- Refugee communities also aspire to recreate ECD structures in the Eastern DRC, where they could contribute to strengthening resilient communities and regional peacebuilding.

At the outset of this case study, it was suggested that in addition to fundamental cognitive factors at play in preparing children for positive interaction in society—and when societies are divided, for peacebuilding—social structural and cultural factors are also important for peacebuilding. Ordinary interaction within divided Western Uganda communities must remain fluid in order to preserve peace and harmony. ECD centres provided this fluidity when conflict suddenly erupted on 4-5 July 2014 by offering safe havens for children and the interaction pathway for rebuilding community resilience and social cohesion as the dust was settling.

41 See the companion case study on ECD in the Acholi and Karamoja sub-regions.

Achievements of EiE. In analysing the role of ECD centres in responding to both ongoing conflict in Bundibugyo, Nteroko and Kasese and the needs of the emergency context of the Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, one finds that EiE foundational guidelines are generally followed (with some caveats, in italics below).

- **Access and Learning Environment:** equal access is provided, *though information is lacking for isolated Rwenzori communities;* protection and well-being ensured; facilities and services meet minimal standards, *but risks to continuity of service exist because paying and retaining caregivers is difficult for communities, and unacceptable to most refugee adults;*
- **Teaching and Learning:** curricula, training, professional development and support are ensured by GoU, UNICEF and partners based on EiE best practices; instruction and learning processes are adapted to local conditions, language and needs; assessment of learning outcomes emphasised as a key tool of community trust-building for ECD centres;
- **Teachers and Other Education Personnel:** recruitment and selection; conditions of work are acceptable with caregivers typically recruited from affected communities (thus helping bridge cultural and language barriers for young children), *but in terms of salary vary for caregivers from relatively well-paid in many communities (resulting in market-driven scarcities) to low-or irregularly-paid in refugee ECD centres;* support and supervision exist and are very well-intentioned *but are constrained by financing, for example for monitoring in upland areas, and no evidence was available as to whether conflict sensitive monitoring approaches were being used to ensure adherence to principles of 'do no harm' or promote deeper peacebuilding gains;*
- **Education Policy:** law and policy formulation, planning and implementation have been carried out well *in areas visited.*

Differences between EiE and PB? The general adherence to EiE foundational guidelines (with caveats already noted) explains only a part of how ECD centres are contributing to peacebuilding, social cohesion and resilient communities. In practice, EiE standards are primarily concerned with ensuring continuity of education services, universal access,

minimum standards for physical structures and environment, teacher training and materials provision, risk reduction, and protection of children. EiE has been essential in establishing the rights of children to education, especially in crisis situations. It provides impetus for ensuring education gets off on the right foot in such situations, where nothing comes easily.

However, 'lasting peace' depends on addressing factors creating pressures that can give rise to conflict and emergency, rather than responding to the impacts of crisis or ensuring continuity of education when crises do occur. A major difference between EiE and PBEA would thus seem to be the latter's systematic focus on creating the conditions for social cohesion and community resilience, and for renewing them when they break down. As one aspect of the programme in Uganda, ECD is targeting the specific needs and capacities of preschool children, creating in the process entry points to reach communities and create these conditions.

Combining the notions of EiE and PBEA in Uganda. Essentially what appears to have emerged via ECD in humanitarian settings in Uganda is a synergistic two stage process (crisis-transition) that is a product of the similar visions—yet different focus—each approach brings to the table, EiE notions setting the foundations and informing the practical setup of ECD as a form of education, then PBEA more intensively training caregivers the techniques to build self confidence in children and ease their trauma, effect behavioural change that goes through and beyond children, build trust among segments of the community, and stitch back that fabric of society when it becomes severed due to violent conflict. All the while preparing children to help move their communities towards a more cohesive and resilient future. Combining results of EiE and PBEA along the two frameworks illustrates *the value of applying the two approaches to support effective transitions from emergency to early recovery and, hopefully, sustainable results for children in fragile settings:*

- *First, ECD is **directed to the youngest members of society, the future of the community and building resilient societies.*** Centres prepare children well for primary school, partly through early cognitive development, partly through focusing parents on their responsibilities for their children's

education. Many parents now see education as an opportunity to improve their child's life chances, and will be more receptive to efforts to remove obstacles to education (such as conflict, exclusion, bullying and VAC). ECD helps refugee and displaced children access learning opportunities, prepares them for return to their countries of origin, equips them with skills for getting along with others and rejecting exclusion. ECD in refugee communities provides children the opportunity to grow up and create bonds with children from other social and ethnic groups, reducing the likelihood of ethnic conflict in the future. Preparation for continued education is essential therefore, both in terms of cognitive development, literacy, and social skills for succeeding in school. PBEA places emphasis on both protection and preparation for further education. Last but not least, returnees who bring back models of cohesive communities experienced in exile make valuable contributions to restoring peace in their war-torn countries.

- **Second, ECD provides safe places for children in refugee communities and normal communities alike.** The protection aspect is most important in times of crisis, but it remains important once calm has been restored for freeing up parents for routine household tasks (such as queueing for food distribution, engaging intrade or agriculture, and minding toddlers). In times of active conflict, the ECD centre can become the focus for urgent child protection.
- **Third, ECD helps children recover from trauma and abuse through play and encouragement.** From observations and discussions, the caregivers appear to be successful, both in engaging directly with children and with their parents, when necessary. Sharing recent experiences with their charges, the caregivers in the refugee camp are well-placed to help children emerge from traumatic experiences. In ordinary communities, caregivers are not necessarily recruited from the local community, though they all have basic training in dealing with trauma through the curriculum and by talking through issues. In these centres, the administrative personnel were found to be the most engaged in dealing with long-

lasting cases of trauma due to their contacts with parents and presence in the village.

- **Fourth, positive behavioural changes in children and their families can be encouraged through ECD that can mitigate conflict triggers in fragile settings.** Children learn how to follow rules, share, take turns, and respect others, basic life skills that reduce friction and build friendships and solidarity.
- **Fifth, ECD supports community reconciliation and conflict mitigation by establishing and keeping lines of communication open.** Information exchange in divided communities is found to be occurring across ethnic and religious lines through the ECD structures and networks and their regularly-held parents and community meetings. The concern for child welfare brings people to the neutral territory of the ECD centre to work together on common goals; discussions can often then branch out to deal with more contentious issues while still keeping the lines of communication open between communities. Increased information flow works against rumour mongering, exclusion and manipulation, and is therefore a key to community resilience and social cohesion.
- **Sixth, ECD brings peacebuilding and conflict prevention messages home and into the communities.** In conflict-ridden communities, children may be the best messengers. Innocent and unsuspected, they can transmit messages received in school on a variety of conflict-related issues back into the households and communities. Perhaps their parents have realized they have a new stake in their child's future. In any event, this is a telling contribution to peacebuilding that PBEA can add, further supporting the argument that EiE and PBEA have provided mutually reinforcing paths to peace through education.

3.2 Recommendations

In view of ensuring the future viability of the centres and enhancing their ability to play effective conflict mitigation and peacebuilding roles in their communities while promoting children's access to quality education, the following recommendations are advanced:

For Government

- *GoU should increase funding of ECD.* Inequities between centres are beginning to emerge due to caregiver salary competition, and in some centres children are at risk of exclusion if their parents cannot pay centre fees. GoU should consider funding ECD as pre-primary education to ensure caregivers are receiving a living wage commensurate with their experience and workload;
- *GoU should facilitate the recruitment of qualified staff for ECD centres* with the goal of ensuring equity of service across all regions of the country;
- *GoU should address perceptions of marginalization, neglect and inequity.* Developing community outreach strategies and information awareness raising about support that the government provides to communities can address misperceptions that lay at the root of some of the communal tensions and conflicts identified during this study;
- *GoU funding of meals for children.* GoU funding of ECD centres should include provision of a morning meal, as in primary schools, as many centres and families are unable to provide meals for the children, particularly in the uplands;
- *Institutionalize conflict resolution mechanisms at community level,* particularly in areas where pastoralism is practiced alongside agriculture.⁴² Issues of range management, changing park boundaries, climate change and reduced rainfall, combined with the politics of elections, decentralization and rival cultural institutions make conflict resolution a highly complex and difficult task. Yet, this research has found in ECD centres highly motivated individuals ready to lead local grass-roots initiatives in peacebuilding education;
- *Refresh knowledge of the rules governing responsibilities in ECD management* to avoid problems over jurisdiction of community-based and faith-based centres;
- *Train ECD caregivers and managers in conflict sensitive service delivery,* particularly for refugee and host communities and those districts at risk of experiencing ethnic conflict.

- *Apply conflict sensitive monitoring methods.* Ensure that government monitoring of ECD centres applies conflict sensitive indicators to monitor and respond to cases of conflict or pressures for conflict.

For Aid Agencies (Including Unicef) and Development Partners

- *Address VAC and SGBV in age-appropriate fashion* in care giving, and raise awareness among adults of the importance of eradicating these ills in household and community. Provide specific training to caregivers in identifying and correctly engaging with children, families and communities having VAC and SGBV issues;
- *Ensure or continue funding for trauma counselling* in areas subject to violent conflict, and in the refugee settlement context;
- *Fast-track peacebuilding training* in districts experiencing ongoing conflict, or considered at risk of conflict. These would include border areas, areas adjoining national parks and game reserves, zones of conflict over jurisdiction of cultural institutions, and where land is in dispute;
- *Go beyond “low-hanging fruit”* in future monitoring and research on ECD in Western Uganda (as in Karamoja), to make a point of visiting isolated ECD centres located in the uplands and Rwenzori Mountains, as little is known of their capacities and needs in terms of materials and teaching aids, their ability to recruit qualified personnel and maintain the centres, and the peacebuilding and child protection issues they may face;
- *Funding for ECD in the emergency context* should include adequate and regular salaries for caregivers and address the overcrowding issues (only two caregivers for up to 250 children in one centre) by provision of additional caregivers and structures as required;
- *Apply conflict sensitive monitoring methods.* Ensure that monitoring of ECD centres applies conflict sensitive indicators – no evidence of this among partners or UNICEF was identified during field visits or discussions with Country Office personnel.

42 A comparative study of conflict and conflict resolution in pastoralist settings that could be useful in this regard is Charles R. Lane, ed. (1999) *Custodians of the Commons: Pastoral Land Tenure in West and East Africa* (London: Earthscan).

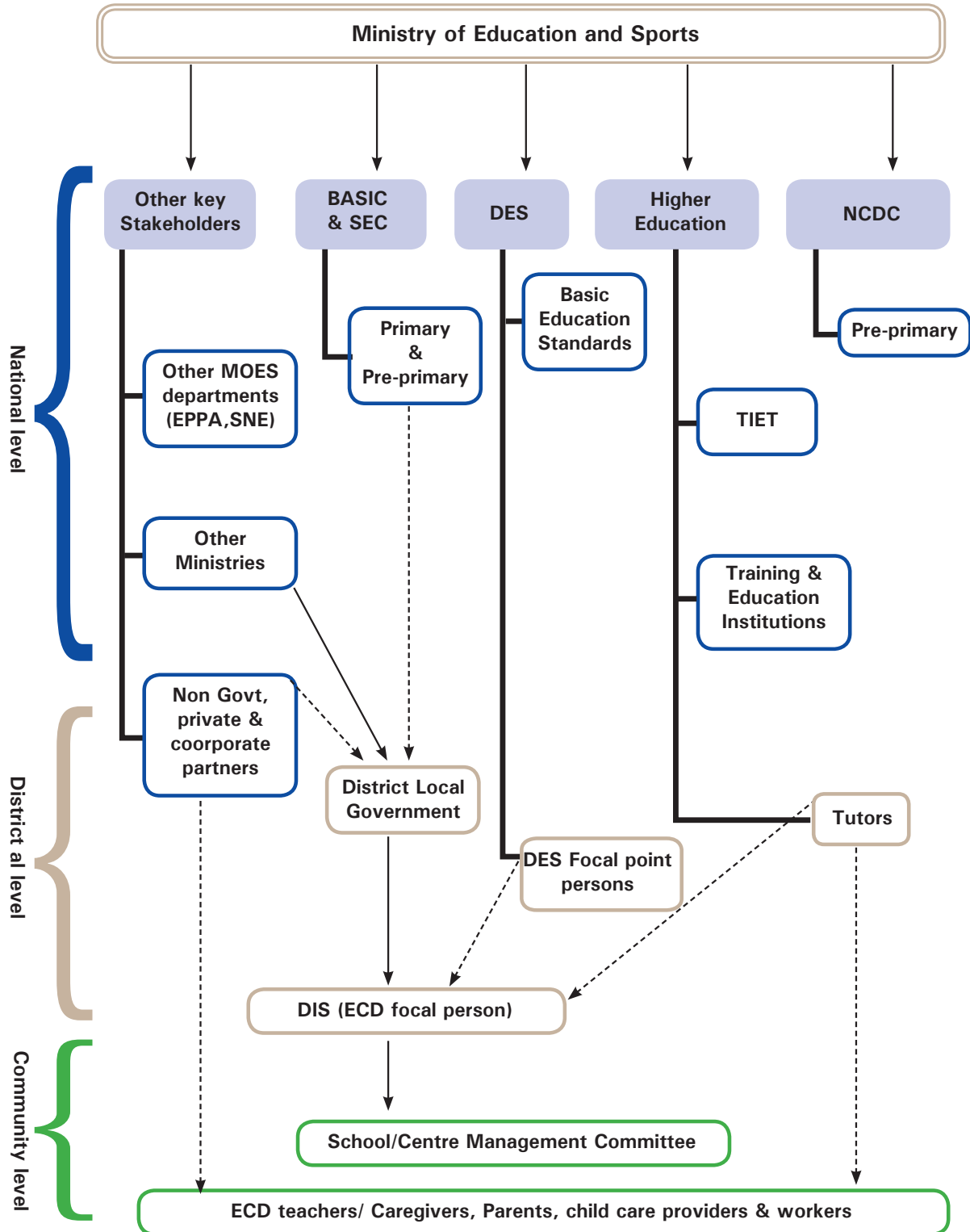
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Annex A

Key Implementation Structure for ECD in Uganda



Annex B

Theory of Change

The Uganda Country Office (UCO) five point ToC is presented below. Indented under each point are comments based on the case study findings related to the ECD programme.

UCO ToC for Outcome 1 (Peacebuilding and education integrated. Increased understanding of the relationship between conflict drivers and education): “If education policies, plans and strategies are not conflict sensitive and instigate tension between groups then they can contribute to and fuel conflict. If policies, plans and strategies that promote cultures of non-violence, promotion of social cohesion and encourage the change of social norms that condone violence are being implemented in schools then they can support the breaking of cycles of violence and contribute to building positive social relations between children, youth and teachers in schools. If policies, plans and strategies ensure equitable distribution of resources in terms of teacher distribution, availability of infrastructure and access to education then tensions between regions and districts decrease leading to reduced levels in ongoing violence.”

UCO ToC for Outcome 2 (Increased institutional capacities of UNICEF, MoES and districts to supply conflict sensitive peace education and of responsible institutions to address VAC): “If MoES institutions provide education that supports social cohesion and peacebuilding and addresses issues that may have fuelled conflict, such as unequal access to services, VAC in school, inability to access school due to lack of opportunity, then education will contribute to positive transformation of relationships and social change. If children and youth are provided with mechanisms that can support them in channelling complaints related to violence to appropriate instances such as the police and the court, while providing a supporting and conducive environment for talking about VAC, then this will have a deterrent function and

lead to a decrease of the societal acceptance of VAC and prevent future acts of VAC. This will then break the intergenerational cycle of violence that leads to trauma, anxiety, depression and emotional isolation that makes a society more prone to experience an eruption or continuation of existing conflicts.”

UCO ToC for Outcome 3 (Increased capacities of parents, children, youth and community members to prevent, reduce and cope with conflict and promote peace): “If schools are used as platforms for bridging community divisions (ethnic/tribal, religious, or otherwise) and become incubators for positive interaction and cooperation through sports, community dialogue and arts then this has the ability to unite communities providing social cohesion around common interests, goals, and values to promote.”⁴³

UCO ToC for Outcome 4 (Increased # of schools and ECD centres in target post-conflict districts providing conflict sensitive education that adheres to BRMS and ELDS): “If conflict sensitive education that promotes peace is delivered equitably as a peace dividend in parts of Uganda which are recovering from conflict, then grievances and perceptions of neglect which have historically fuelled conflict in that region will be reduced. Building up education provision in conflict affected areas offers a means to build state legitimacy. Ensuring that schools are conflict sensitive provides an opportunity to empower teachers and administrators to discuss grievances and find productive outlets for issues raised in the community.”

UCO ToC for Outcome 5 (generation of knowledge for evidence-based implementation of Uganda PBEA programme) “Because peacebuilding is somewhat new to UNICEF, it will be valuable to institutional learning as well as effective programme implementation to ensure that activities are evidence-based and sensitive to ongoing fluctuations in stability. If a programme has an active learning

43 A second part of this ToC concerns youth.

methodology that continuously aims to address gaps in knowledge and gather learning from other sources and that are translated and fed back into practice then interventions will be informed and more effective. Working with local institutions will ensure that research capacity is built and sustained beyond the life

of the programme. Therefore a strong body of evidence will demonstrate the linkages between education and PB and will in turn help to support the reposition of UNICEF education programming to support resilience in fragile state contexts and thus mitigate the negative impacts of violent conflict.”

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