

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SEARCH FOR CITIZENSHIP AND IMAGING REINTEGRATION PRACTICES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses our fourth research question: How does citizenship interface with the war experiences of formerly abducted children and practices for their social reintegration in northern Uganda? The chapter presents an analysis of the research findings on two levels. The first level explains the findings on the children's experiences of war and social reintegration practices in the light of the concept of citizenship. This is in line with our assumption in chapter 2 that active and responsible citizenship is normative and a measure of successful social reintegration. Therein we have argued for citizenship as membership of a community and the relationships this entails without negating nation-state citizenship (Lister *et al.*, 2005). Within this framework, the children's war experiences (chapter 5) are mainly seen as loss of citizenship or the practice of negative citizenship, while social reintegration practices (chapters 6 & 7) are seen as citizenship reconstruction.

The second level of analysis flows from the fact that in spite of the availability of reintegration practices and other societal resources, the formerly abducted children are still facing problems. These problems hinder further citizenship re-creation. The second level of analysis looks at these persisting problems of reintegration and citizenship in relation to needs, competences and opportunities available in society. By doing this we develop what we refer to as the needs-competences-problems-opportunities (NCPO) analysis. The needs are those of the children; the competences are also the personal in-built resources of the children; the problems are the difficulties that the children persistently face in spite of the reintegration practices available to them; and the opportunities are societal resources of any nature that are available to the children which can enhance reintegration and citizenship re-creation. *The NCPO analysis is thus the process of looking at the persisting problems of reintegration and citizenship in relation to the needs, competences and problems of the formerly abducted children and the opportunities that are available for their reintegration.* Through the NCPO analysis the children's overall status, social reintegration practices and societal resources a meaningful framework for explaining citizenship re-creation will be developed. In this sense, the NCPO analysis does not isolate the persisting citizenship problems of the formerly abducted children but provides an insight into them in relation to existing societal resources. It also provides a useful framework

and platform for concrete suggestions to improve social reintegration practices (see next chapter) and enhance the citizenship re-creation of formerly abducted children in northern Uganda.

8.2 MEANINGS (CONCEPT) OF CITIZENSHIP AND FORMERLY ABDUCTED CHILDREN

Helve and Wallace (2001), quoted in Leonard (2007), argue that citizenship is increasingly defined 'as membership of a nation-state' (Leonard, 2007: 487). Without denying this, the focus of this study is on the formerly abducted children's membership of communities to which they return. This is because the immediate issues of reintegration that concern formerly abducted children are about how they function as members of their communities and how their own communities, their immediate 'spaces of active citizenship' (Miraftab & Wills, 2005: 206; cf. chapter 3 above), receive them.

The value and importance of the interaction between the formerly abducted children and the communities to which they return lies, in our opinion, in it rebuilding their citizenship after their war experiences, which distorted their citizenship status and negatively impacted on the processes of becoming citizens. Our assumption is reinforced by the finding that there is a crisis of citizenship in northern Uganda (Woodrow Wilson School, 2006). The Woodrow Wilson School explains this crisis in terms of the difficulties of guaranteeing citizenship to protect rights and discharge obligations during conflict in northern Uganda. In addition, the coerced involvement of children in the LRA and the consequent status of the children as perpetrators of violence are also reasons for this citizenship crisis as they have distorted and disrupted citizenship-formation processes in the community (see chapter 3). This scenario in northern Uganda of forceful conscription of children into an armed group that results in their broken citizenship is in direct contrast to the literature on conscription as a path to creating citizenship as begun in eighteenth century Europe and America and modern day states (Mjøset and Van Holde, 2002). Importantly, dual processes of breaking and creating citizenship through conscription can be identified in Uganda as a whole. Enrolment into the national army, the UPDF, can be comparable to Mjøset and Van Holde's 'citizen-soldiers' while abduction into the LRA is the antithesis of the citizens-soldier.

Leonard (2007: 487) argues that 'newer notions of transnational citizenship' are also taking centre stage in a globalized world. However, our thesis argues that to be realistically effective as citizens of a nation-state and to have a transnational identity, formerly abducted children's local disrupted citizenship needs to be attended to first. Given their experiences of war, the

formerly abducted children first need assistance to practise citizenship in their own local war-torn communities before they can become effective national and transnational citizens. Moreover, formerly abducted children return to and are now growing up in a society plagued by 'internal tensions', where adults have 'competing ... identities' (Leonard, 2007: 488) as victim-parents (see chapter 3) as well as being war-affected in the most extreme manner imaginable (see chapter 2). The competing identities create tensions that constrain relationships between the formerly abducted children and adults in the community. Rather than these polarizing identities, aspects of citizenship such as active engagement in social and economic activities (Lister *et al.*, 2005; cf. chapter 3 above) would reinforce social reintegration. Thus, Leonard (2007: 498) concludes that:

For citizenship ... to be effective in ... sensitive societies ... it must be grounded in the social, economic and political framework within which its transmission is located.

8.3 FORMERLY ABDUCTED CHILDREN'S WAR EXPERIENCES AND CITIZENSHIP

In chapter 5 we presented the war experiences of formerly abducted children from their abduction through captivity, escape and arrival back home. In this section, we view the broad themes of those experiences analytically using the concept of citizenship as explained in chapter 3.

8.3.1 Abduction and citizenship

As already stated, we consider the abductions to have had a negative impact on the citizenship of the formerly abducted children in northern Uganda. Aleinikoff mentions that '[a] 1944 statute provided for loss of citizenship for persons who departed the United States in time of war to avoid military service' (Aleinikoff, 1986: 1477). This condition may not be comparable to the abduction of children in northern Uganda into the LRA rank and file; however, the idea of 'departing as a provision for loss of citizenship' is pertinent. Through abductions during the war, the children were not only forced to leave their communities but to turn against them as well. This is also, in a sense, a loss of citizenship of the community, as one cannot be a good member or citizen of a community and commit atrocities against it. Doing so could be equated with betrayal; moreover, membership of this community can become questionable. When the consequences of abduction, such as becoming perpetrators of violence, are transposed onto the state level, they become acts of treason against the state and could either be punished or lead to the formal loss of citizenship. In fact, the granting of amnesties to the

formerly abducted children and the involvement of the Amnesty Commission (chapter 6) in the reintegration process embodies this idea that the acts of violence the children committed while in captivity are indeed treasonable acts.

In addition, at the moment of the children's abduction most were either in the garden, with their parents, going to school, running an errand or just simply at home (chapter 5). These were normal positive citizenship activities; expressions of citizenship as participation that represents human agency (Lister, 1997). They were learning as children to participate in the activities that build their community. At the moment of abduction this active positive community citizenship was lost. Their captors traded this positive contribution to building their communities for negative citizenship of their own communities, coercing them to kill and commit other atrocities within the same communities. According to the Woodrow Wilson School (2006), abductions also distort the spaces for agency and accountability through violent induction and abusive subjugation, creating fear and threat. The children were therefore constrained to make appropriate decisions about their involvement in the conflict.

8.3.2 *Captivity and citizenship*

In addition to negative citizenship, during their life in captivity the children were stripped of their dignity as human beings – the basic requirement for citizenship – through threats to life, living in the wild and a lack of basic necessities such as food and shelter. In this way, Lister *et al.*'s (2005) universal status model of citizenship which allows for an individual to simply be a being is negatively impinged upon. The US Chief Justice Warren and Justices Black and Douglas are quoted by Aleinikoff (1986: 1480) as decrying the loss of citizenship:

Citizenship is man's basic right for it is nothing less than the right to have rights. Remove this priceless possession and there remains a stateless person, disgraced and degraded.

In captivity, the children had their right to life, food, basic necessities and shelter negated. They were degraded, forced to live inhuman lives and, for girls, disgraced through forced sexual relationships that bring them even more shame and disgrace when they return home from captivity.

The findings further showed that at different times and under different circumstances the children tended to bond and thus identify either with each other as abductees or with their captors (chapter 5). This could be said to express the need to belong to a group, as another primary component of citizenship (Lister *et al.*, 2005). The different dynamics of citizenship exhibited in the children, although in abnormal conditions in captivity, means that the sense of belonging and therefore citizenship can not be alienated

from the individual. It is a right that ought to be protected at all times (Aleinikoff, 1986). The consent theory of citizenship posits that ‘citizenship is ... membership ... generated by mutual consent of a person ... [and ability] to make thoughtful choices about with whom, and where, they would like to live ... [and] not simply an unplanned event or an accident’ (Aleinikoff, 1986: 1488). This may be an overstatement by Aleinikoff as most individuals are citizens by birth and children have no opportunity to consent to where they are born.

Notwithstanding this, in captivity the formerly abducted children had to bond even with their captors, not because they consented to or made thoughtful choices to be members of the LRA but as a survival strategy. Any uncooperative behaviour would lead to death. Honwana refers to this as ‘tactical agency’ (2006: 71), which is the ability to make decisions and act in the moment to stave off fatal consequences for oneself. Tactical agency is not about a sense of wrong or right because it is a situation where one acts from a position of weakness. It is about acting to save your skin at a particular moment. It is a coping mechanism in extremely debilitating circumstances. It explains why abducted children viewed their brutal commanders as protectors and bonded with them. Tactical agency also allowed abducted children to kill their fellow abductees, close family members and commit other atrocities. Tactical agency was expressed in the children always saying: ‘If you did not do it they would kill you’.

8.3.3 Child mothers and citizenship

Again Lister *et al.*'s (2005) right to voice model – that is, the right and genuine opportunity to have a say and be heard – that we saw in chapter 3, crumbles in the light of the experiences of girls as wives of LRA commanders. Understandably, at later stages the girls gained some sort of ‘status’ as a result of being commanders’ wives, becoming ‘elite’ citizens within the LRA community, receiving better privileges (chapter 5). However, the model still fails because the forcing of young girls into sexual relationships is not evidence of the expression of the right to voice. The girls were simply given away without asking their opinion or consent – ‘I was given to him I was still young’ – (A child mother at GUSCO).

Nevertheless, the notion of human agency – the ability to change human conditions for the better, as another expression of citizenship (Lister, 1997) – is illustrated by the children’s constant attempts to escape from LRA captivity. When the children return home, this agency appears to push the child mothers to want to raise their babies, the young adults to take part in skills training and the young to seek to return to school. These children are constantly trying to be proactive in relation to their own reintegration. This is

planned action with expected or weighed consequences. It is called *strategic agency* (Honwana, 2006) and is the opposite of *tactical agency*.

8.4 REINTEGRATION PRACTICES AS CITIZENSHIP RE-CREATION

Porto, Parsons and Alden (2007) argue that the need for the deep reintegration of war-affected children should be recognized as a crucial part of conflict prevention and a precondition for security, rather than being seen merely as a humanitarian issue. In chapters 6 and 7 we presented the formal institutional and community-based social reintegration practices and experiences respectively in northern Uganda. The reintegration of war-affected children is a humanitarian issue because of the physical, social and emotional devastation that formerly abducted children experienced in captivity (chapters 3 and 5). In our view, the use of social reintegration, especially the lack of it, also becomes a security concern when formerly abducted children's emotional and social problems are not properly addressed, as the children may become social misfits and act out their social dislocation in the communities in which they live. The acting out of social dislocation may take the form of thuggery, becoming thieves or, where conditions allow, resorting to the use of weapons and becoming a threat to public order, thus causing security problems.

The lack of or inadequate social reintegration of war-affected children may re-create conditions for negative or loss of citizenship. In discussing theories of the loss of citizenship, Aleinikoff (1986) argues that if individuals are a threat to public order, the state may consider withdrawing their citizenship status. In the same way, due to the experiences of war-affected children, if their social reintegration is not deep enough, there is a likelihood that they may threaten public order and become problematic citizens in their communities. To become threats to their communities is to negate the 'constructive social participation model' posited by Lister *et al.* (2005). This debate emphasizes the idea that social reintegration practices aid the formerly abducted children by creating a sense of order for them, helping them to have a positive impact on their community.

8.4.1 *Institutional reintegration and citizenship*

One of our central themes in this study is that social reintegration practices, whether institutional or community-based, attempt to reconstruct the children's citizenship status and abilities after these were either lost or degraded during captivity through various processes. By taking care of their immediate needs, such as food, clothing, shelter and medical care, upon their

arrival at the reception centres (chapter 6), the institutions are trying to give back to the children their basic human dignity. These create the right conditions for re-establishing their 'universal status' (Lister *et al.*, 2005) as citizens. Caring for the needs of the children improves their condition as a person and makes belonging to a community worthwhile. In this context, family visits that were encouraged by the centres as a component of family reunion act against the children's rejection. The feeling of acceptance fundamentally relies on membership of a family and community. Moreover, Laar (1999) points to belongingness and a network of supportive relationships as elements of community. The resettlement packages provided by the institutions also allow the returnees to contribute to their families, making them active citizens in this basic unit of society.

The children's involvement in the reception centre activities, such as cleaning and helping with cooking, as well as taking part in leisure activities (chapter 6), provides an opportunity for participation and relationship building (Lister, 1997) as a basis for positive citizenship. The involvement of formerly abducted children in various activities helps them avoid becoming what Leonard calls 'abstract citizens' (Leonard, 2007: 498), meaning being removed from daily life. Involvement in activities is important because after the devastating war experiences it would be easy to slip into 'abstract citizenship', replacing the negative citizenship practised and lived in captivity. These activities further help to identify the strengths of the children, which are needed for meaningful group and community participation.

However, research by Leonard (2007) on children's citizenship education in politically sensitive societies (based in Northern Ireland) found that citizenship education 'programmes remain adult-centred and children remain invisible at the decision-making stages of these initiatives' (2007: 494). This compares with the programmatic activities for the formerly abducted children in the reception centres in northern Uganda (see chapter 6) which, in our view, are also initiated and designed by adults, often following internationally 'acceptable' routines (see chapter 3). The children have no input into the programmes based on their particular needs. The programmatic activities can thus undermine the agency of the children, which was very visible, for example, as the children planned their escape from captivity. However, this agency becomes less visible as they enter the reception centres. It is also here that formerly abducted children begin to see themselves as in need of help, especially from NGOs and other aid organizations, in spite of their independent attitude and the competences utilized while in captivity.

The amnesty granted to the returnees (see chapter 6) satisfies the requirements of citizenship considered as a relationship between the state and the individual. It confers a constitutional and national identity as legally recognized citizens rather than renegades. Thus, it is envisaged that with the

children's citizenship restored through the various interventions, the children will become 'new' citizens through their everyday participation in their communities. Participation in ordinary activities entails agency and being productive members of a community (see chapter 3). Productivity can be said to be participation in development, which is a key component of as well as a platform for active citizenship.

8.4.2 Community-based reintegration practices and citizenship

The formerly abducted children who have returned and are now living in the community as young adults are living their citizenship in the community in a number of socially and economically productive ways (chapter 7). They are making contributions to the community in terms of Lister *et al.*'s (2005) 'respectable economic independence', explained in chapter 3, by engaging in meaningful work in their communities. These young adults have formed work groups and music, dance and drama clubs and are also members of local football clubs. For example, a youth group consisting of the formerly abducted children in Coo-pe had organized themselves into a performance group. Their performances dealt with issues such as sensitization concerning coexistence, the problems of formerly abducted children and the general theme of peace-building and development (chapter 7). These social activities help to rebuild communal relationships with other members of the community (Bujo, 2001). Sendabo (2004) also found that in Liberia rebuilding communal relationships and engaging in productive activities were important for the reintegration of children who had been to war. They are processes of healing and symbols of acceptance.

In the same way, the acceptance of marriages by partners and their families is also a sign that these formerly abducted children have been accepted as 'normal' members of the community who have the right to engage in social contracts such as marriage (chapter 7). In addition, the responsibility assumed by families and the larger community of elders to perform traditional rituals (chapter 7) expresses an open attitude of acceptance towards the formerly abducted children. It satisfies Bujo's (2001) idea of the African community as a function of the palaver, communion and a relationship with the ancestors, both the living and the dead. It is an expression of accepted citizenship through membership of the community. Being accepted by the community also reinforces the more active elements of participation and agency (Lister, 1997), which drives the formerly abducted children to become active in the social and economic life of their communities (described in chapter 7).

8.4.3 Schooling and citizenship

Schools are one of the important structures of a community. There is a symbiotic relationship between the two. Members of the school are also members of the community. Because of this, Leonard (2007: 496) states that:

Attitudes that flourish beyond the boundaries of the school filter into the classroom ... children do not come into the classroom as empty vessels. Rather they bring with them the attitudes and beliefs of their communities beyond the school gates.

This quote reflects the schooling experience of the formerly abducted children in northern Uganda. The attitudes manifested towards the children while in school were a mix of positive and negative attitudes, such as support by peers and teachers on the one hand and fear of the children on the other (chapter 7), which generally reflect what was going on in the wider community.

This study looked at schooling as a community-based practice, but that does not deny the institutional character of the school. Looked at this way, going back to school is another form of institutionalization which may limit the agency exhibited while in captivity. However, participation in school activities, especially extra-curricular activities, is also important for active citizenship as members of a school community. Feeling accepted into the school community by both teachers and other, non-abducted children (chapter 7) also grounds 'the right to have rights' (Aleinikoff, 1986) – the foundation of citizenship.

However, in chapter 7 we found that there are still continuing difficulties and challenges facing the community-based reintegration practices. Challenges such as the problems of child mothers, the wounded community and the receding importance of elders in the community do not offer much hope for building citizenship as status and participation as envisaged by Lister (1997). These challenges also negate the practice of Lister *et al's* (1997) five models of citizenship discussed in chapter 3. Negative experiences such as lack of school materials, continued stigmatization, weak family structures for social support and continued societal fluidity play negatively on elements of citizenship such as agency and participation, as described by Lister (1997), and acceptance (Laar, 1996) These issues are taken up in the following section.

8.5 THE NEEDS-COMPETENCES-PROBLEMS- OPPORTUNITIES (NCPO) ANALYSIS

In the first level of analysis we considered the children's war experiences and the reintegration practices in the light of the concept of citizenship because we saw it as normative and a measure of reintegration (see chapter 3). However, in the overall scheme of things in northern Uganda, as we saw in chapters 5–7, there are still persisting problems facing the social reintegration of formerly abducted children in spite of the available reintegration practices. In this second level of analysis, we focus primarily on the persisting problems and needs of formerly abducted children, despite some enabling factors such as the children's own competences and the opportunities available. The section also lays the foundation for the validation of our research, as explained in chapter 4, and as will be discussed in the following chapter.

8.5.1 *The NCPO framework*

The framework for what we refer to as the NCPO is inductively drawn from the children's current experiences and also from how the community experiences them. We find that these experiences in turn suggest that the children have needs, competences and problems in addition to opportunities available to them (see Table I below, also chapter 6). Specifically, the needs and problems of the formerly abducted children exist despite the reintegration activities occurring in the region. The reintegration practices already in place occur in the formal institutional and community-based settings described in chapters 6 and 7 above and represented in Table 3 below. In this analytical framework, institutional and community-based practices and societal resources are related to opportunities. From the children's war experiences and reintegration experiences in the community, we draw the survival and coping strategies, expressed in terms of the competences exhibited by the formerly abducted children (also see Table 3 and Diagram 3 below) – their personal resources. The children's reintegration and agency for re-creating citizenship depend on these competences. However, after juxtaposing the competences, needs and problems of the formerly abducted children to the prevailing reintegration practices, there still appear to be some neglected areas and issues – persisting problems of reintegration and citizenship re-creation such as psychosocial problems, schooling needs and the problems of child mothers. We use these persisting problems to further put into perspective the needs, opportunities, competences, problems and gaps not apparent in our findings in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

8.5.2 Trauma

The fact that children are still experiencing nightmares and exhibiting erratic behaviour (chapter 6) indicates that there may be a huge need to seriously address problems of mental health. An unpublished report by Gulu University Faculty of Medicine shows that there is a 'huge unmet need for psychological services among former child soldiers of the LRA' (Ovuga, Oyok and Moro, 2007: 3). The studies by Honwana (2006) and Igreja (2003) also show that long after major armed conflicts, the survivors exhibit signs of trauma (seen in those studies as spirit possession). Therefore, the need to invest in mental health in northern Uganda to address the long-term effects of trauma must be emphasized. In chapter 7 we saw that there are traditional ways of addressing the long-term effects of bad experiences (trauma); however, a form of therapy where professional mental health care and cultural aspects of healing could be combined would be preferable. This is because our findings show that both approaches have their own contribution to make in the process of social reintegration. For example, the counselling sessions at the reception centres (see chapter 6) were the first helpful steps in drawing out the bad experiences of the children (see chapter 5). Traditional rituals and social acceptance in the form of marriages, for instance, helped in the medium-term reintegration into the community. The valuable elements of the two approaches could thus be combined according to individual needs and circumstances to deal with the persisting trauma. How this would work in practice could be determined by professional and traditional practitioners together, with each bringing on board their expertise and complementing each other.

8.5.3 Uncoordinated skills training

Most of the skills training offered by the NGOs and the Amnesty Commission, such as tailoring, carpentry and brick-laying (chapter 6), seem not to be market oriented. The Woodrow Wilson School (2006) similarly found that training centres are not informed by any labour market analysis. After the formerly abducted children gain these skills where do they use them and who are their targeted customers? In addition, the products of the skills obtained (such as furniture) may be beyond the purchasing power of the general population which should make up the market. The local population is still living in poverty after two decades in displaced people's camps. Their immediate concern might be basic necessities rather than furniture, for example. Moreover, the same skills training appears to be provided to most of the returned children. The extent to which the market is flooded with people who have the same skills is not clear and it is possible that there are many people with the same skills attempting to make a living in a community that cannot afford their products. Even if there is a possibility of opening markets

outside the impoverished communities in the north, concerns could also arise about the quality of the products, as the training period of about three months is quite short, just enough to learn the basics of a trade. Whether the products of the formerly abducted children could favourably compete with the best products in other parts of the country is also not clear.

These issues only became apparent after our main fieldwork period (March 2006–June 2007). During this time, many formerly abducted children had just returned or were still returning from captivity. Any opportunity provided by anybody, especially the NGOs, was seen as a privilege and good enough in comparison to their life in captivity. However, two years later, the children, now young adults, have come to criticize the services they received from the NGOs and the Amnesty Commission. This was evident during the process of the validation of our research and in our search for appropriate interventions, which occurred in the workshops (September 2008), as explained in the following chapter. This time dimension related to the value of assistance is interesting. It shows that the needs of people change as extreme emergency situations give way to relatively stable conditions.

8.5.4 Problems of schooling

Although there are Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) programmes for all Ugandan children, the educational needs of the formerly abducted children appear to go beyond what UPE and USE can offer. When the formerly abducted children return home from the bush and go back to school, they may appear to be like other children but it is important to appreciate that their experiences, as explained in chapter 5, set them apart. For example, there is a need for teachers to keep track of issues such as the children's attention span, their social skills when interacting with other children and their general mental alertness. Most schools visited during the study did not have special programmes for the formerly abducted children (see chapter 6), even though it is apparent that their experiences make them candidates for dropping out of school.

Notably, the government of Uganda has made an attempt to introduce a special school for the formerly abducted children at Laroo with the help of the Belgian government. The school was to provide 'accelerated learning' care. The accelerated learning concept was designed to work as follows: children who were abducted after attaining three years of education would attend this school for one year and be promoted to Primary six in order to prepare for Primary seven, when the national primary leaving examinations are normally taken. If a child had only two years of primary education, they could attend two years of accelerated learning, and those who had had no formal schooling

at all could attend for three years before joining Primary six in preparation for the national examinations in Primary seven. At least, that was the idea.

The physical structure of the school has long been completed and it is well built. There are a number of teachers available and some hundreds of children have enrolled. However, an informal conversation with a teacher on duty at the school during our fieldwork revealed that it was not clear what curriculum the children were to follow. More than two years after the school had opened it was still waiting for a curriculum from the Ministry of Education and Sports. In the meantime, many children had left and the 'normal' school curriculum was tentatively being followed. The teacher also told us that initially the wider community had thought that this school was going to offer high-quality education judging by the quality of the buildings. Many non-abducted children thus registered at the school. This shows that it is not only the formerly abducted children who are in search of appropriate, quality and sustained education. In fact, it is clear that in a post-war situation such as northern Uganda, all youth have similar problems of survival, whether they were directly involved in the war as soldiers or not. This reality calls for action and programmes to help the youth generally.

Furthermore, during the interviews and focus group discussions with both the teachers and formerly abducted children, it was clear that a host of NGOs were giving schooling and scholastic support to a number of the formerly abducted children (chapter 7). However, these efforts tended to be erratic and disorganized to the extent that many school administrations were not involved in such educational NGO support given to their own students and pupils. There is a need to organize the resources available for support of schooling, whether from NGOs or otherwise, in a way that can be monitored and equally distributed with regard to needs, sex and areas in the region.

8.5.5 The problem of child mothers

From our findings in chapter 5, what is apparent is that the child mothers, most of whom returned without their 'bush-husbands' and their children born in captivity, tend to receive unreliable help. At best they receive fearful support from the community and short-term provision of resettlement packages from different NGOs. Many might have just returned to their families without further support from institutions and no clear social status in the community (whether as wives of their rebel husbands or unmarried daughters and single mothers). From this it can be concluded that there is a need for an organized support system for this category of formerly abducted children. Again, the challenge here is whether such a support system would be exclusively for the formerly abducted child mothers and their children or inclusive of the many young and single mothers in northern Uganda who are a product of this long conflict.

8.5.6 *Neglect of agriculture*

In our findings on community-based practices of reintegration, agriculture did not feature as a reintegration practice. This was in spite of agriculture being the economic backbone of the region and Uganda as a country. Perhaps this can be explained as a result of the then prevailing insecurity. In line with Peters' (2006) research in Sierra Leone, with the relative peace and security now being experienced, a focus on sustainable agricultural activities for long-term employment and reintegration would go a long way to encouraging the formerly abducted children to become responsible citizens.

However, it is obvious that sustainable agriculture for long-term employment and reintegration requires more than the provision of tools such as hoes. Fortunately, there are other forms of assistance through various societal opportunities, as well as the personal competences of the formerly abducted children themselves. For example, in focus group discussions with adult formerly abducted children in Anaka and Coo-pe IDP camps we found that this group is willing to engage in whatever makes good economic sense in relation to their circumstances and environment. This is something that the government or any group interested in the long-term reintegration of formerly abducted children can capitalize on. Agriculture is an activity that would not isolate these people from the larger community. It is an activity that is *in situ*, where social reintegration of formerly abducted children into community citizenship takes place.

8.5.7 *Figurative presentations of the NCPO analysis*

A summary of the NCPO is presented in the following table and diagram. The table presents the needs and competences of the formerly abducted children in addition to the problems that they still face in relation to their reintegration. Furthermore, the table also shows the opportunities available to the children which can assist their reintegration. The last two columns of the table provide a general idea about what is being done in relation to reintegrating the formerly abducted children and what appears to be neglected or lacking in the reintegration process respectively. We identified these issues, as already shown in the NCPO analysis above, from the findings of our research (based on chapters 5–7). In a way, they represent our analysis of the children's war experiences and the general practices used for their reintegration.

Each column of the table can be read independently of the other columns for presentation purposes. However, in reality, the needs, competences, problems and opportunities for formerly abducted children are interdependent. They can reinforce each other positively or negatively.

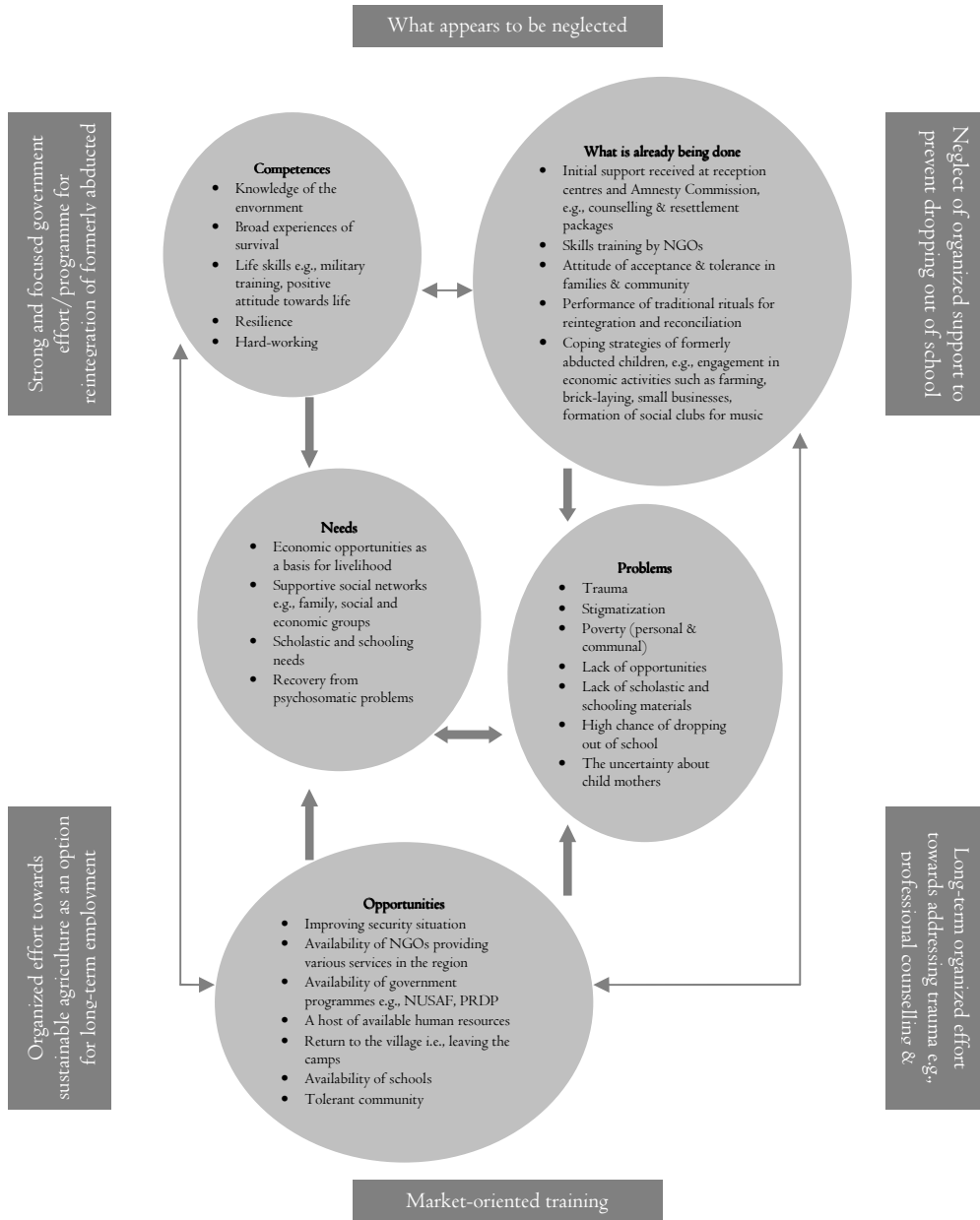
Table 3: Needs, competences, problems and opportunities in relation to the reintegration of formerly abducted children

Needs	Competences	Problems	Opportunities	What is already being done	What appears to be neglected/lacking
Need for supportive social networks (e.g., strong family, social and economic groups)	Knowledge of the environment	Trauma	Improving security situation	Initial support received at the reception centres and the Amnesty Commission (e.g., counselling, medical care, resettlement packages)	Long-term organized effort towards addressing trauma e.g., professional counselling and psychotherapy
Need for economic opportunities as a basis for livelihood	Broad experience of survival under difficult circumstances	Stigmatization	Availability of NGOs providing various services in the region	Skills training by some NGOs	Market-oriented skills training
Educational needs	Life skills (e.g., military training, positive attitude towards life)	Poverty (personal and communal)	Availability of government programmes (e.g., NUSAF, PRDP)	An attitude of acceptance and tolerance in the families and communities	Lack of effort or neglect of organized support to avoid school leaving of formerly abducted children
Need to recover from psychosomatic problems	Resilience	Lack of opportunities	A host of available human resources	Performance of traditional rituals for reintegration and reconciliation	Organized effort towards sustainable agriculture as an option for long-term employment
	Hard-working	Lack of scholastic and schooling materials	Return to the villages/ leaving the camps	Survival and coping strategies of the formerly abducted children, such as engagement in economic	A strong and focused government effort/ programme aimed at reintegrating the formerly

				activities, e.g., brick-laying, small-scale businesses, farming	abducted children
		High chance of leaving school	Availability of schools	Survival and coping strategies such as formation of social clubs for dancing, drama and sensitization	
		The uncertainty about child mothers	A tolerant community attitude	Opportunities to go back to school	

The information in the table and the foregoing discussion can also be presented diagrammatically. The diagram below, representing the needs, competences, opportunities and problems facing the formerly abducted children, shows that there are linkages between all of these issues. The opportunities, competences and what is already being done are positive elements that attempt to address the needs and problems of the children. In contrast, there is a strong link between the problems and needs of the children. If left unattended these problems and needs can reinforce each other and lead the lives of the children to disintegrate further. To avoid this and build on their competences and what is already being done, those neglected areas (shown in red boxes around the outside) need to be addressed. If attention is paid to these areas, the reintegration of formerly abducted children as active citizens and the community to which they return will be highly enhanced.

Figure 3: Needs, competences, problems and opportunities for the reintegration of formerly abducted children



8.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter we have presented an analysis of our findings at two levels. The second level of analysis drew on and built upon the first level of analysis, which explains the children's war experiences and their social reintegration in the light of citizenship. The first level of analysis showed that the formal institutional and community-based practices used to reintegrate the formerly abducted children are vital but inadequate to re-create the children's citizenship as a measure of reintegration. The first level of analysis, therefore, urges us to look deeper into the needs, competences, problems and opportunities of the formerly abducted children, beyond the resources currently available. This leads to our second level of analysis, which in turn exposes persisting problems such as trauma, schooling problems, problems of child mothers and the neglect of agriculture. The social reintegration of formerly abducted children in northern Uganda must address these persisting problems. We consider them the basis on which to build a collaborative set of suggestions for improving reintegration practices in northern Uganda.

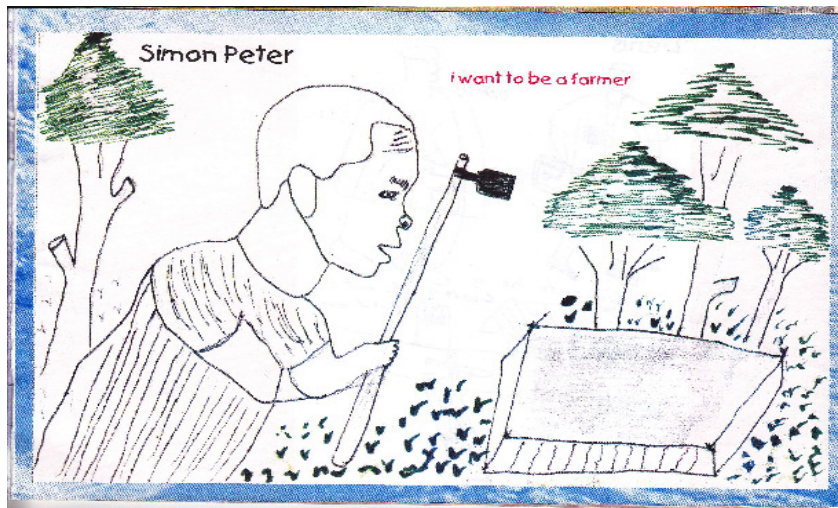


Making suggestions for reintegration

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“We want to re-start the sitting at the fire place so that we can teach our cultural values to the young members of the community. During the day we should take our children to the field and train them to work. We should begin digging big fields so that the surplus we get can be sold to earn us some income. This is a process of teaching children to be self-reliant.”

(A woman from the workshop)



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