

Traditional ways of preventing and solving conflicts in Acholi

Results of some secondary and primary research

carried out by the

**Psychosocial Support Program
Caritas, Gulu Archdiocese**

January 2005

Contents

Introduction and executive summary	4
1. Traditional Acholi leadership	5
1.1. Historical background.....	5
1.1.1. Ancient leadership.....	5
1.1.2. The colonial rule	5
1.2. The (re-) installation of the chiefs and the current traditional leadership in Acholi .	6
2. Traditional conflict management in Acholi.....	6
2.1. General features of traditional Acholi conflict resolution	6
2.1.1. Accepting the responsibility for the committed offence as a first step.....	6
2.1.2. A system of compensation for wrongs committed based on the assumption of collective responsibility	7
2.1.3. Forgiveness	7
2.2. General stages in traditional conflict management.....	7
2.3. “Kir” - Acholi Taboos.....	8
2.4. Traditional jurisdiction	8
2.4.1. Acholi by laws	9
2.4.2. Traditional conflict resolution at different levels of the community	10
2.4.3. Traditional jurisdiction in different sectors.....	10
2.5. Specific rituals and ceremonies	11
2.5.1. “Stepping on the egg” and “washing away the tears”.....	11
2.5.2. Mato Oput	12
2.5.3. The bending of spears	16
2.5.4. “Tum” – purification ceremonies.....	17
3. Discussion.....	19
3.1. Low availability of information on traditional approaches to conflict resolution ..	19
3.2. Changing cultural identity and the relevance of traditional practices in current times.....	20
3.3. Psychosocial healing and peace building.....	21
3.4. The need for mechanisms of conflict resolution on a micro level.....	21
4. Conclusion	22
5. Annex	23
5.1. Literature received and reviewed.....	23
5.2. List of documents compiled and reviewed by PSSP Caritas	32

Acknowledgement

We thank all the organizations and persons who have availed papers for our research and hinted us to interesting literature. Special thanks go to the traditional leaders who have given valuable information and willingly availed their time for interviews.

Introduction and executive summary

The following overview on Acholi traditional ways of conflict management draws from a review of grey and published literature as well as from research carried out by Caritas staff. The literature review was based on papers that we were availed by different organizations (CRS, LDI, ACCORD, Kal Kwaro ...) who had responded to our request to avail us with any kind of printed material that contains information on traditional ways of conflict management in Acholi. Going through the so collected material we realized that the available documentation in this area was very little and could not be summarized into a clear picture. Therefore we engaged in some primary research and collected further data. In order to make the document more readable we decided to present the findings of the literature review and our own research together rather than describing them in different chapters. In the Annex we attached the list of documents reviewed as well as a list of documents compiled by Caritas.

In the first chapter we give some information on how Acholi leadership had been organized traditionally and how the system was then changed under the colonial rule. We then inform on the recent (re-) installation of chiefs and briefly describe the current structure of traditional leadership.

The second chapter then attempts to describe the wide topic of “traditional conflict management in Acholi” in some details. In order to explain the fundamentals of traditional conflict management in Acholi we first give an overview on general features (e.g. underlying principles and values) and then outline general stages in traditional conflict management. In the following section we explain the traditional concept of “kir” (taboo) that has been found to play a major role in preventing and solving conflicts in Acholi.

In the next section we delineate the functioning of the traditional system of jurisdiction. Here we briefly refer to the by-laws and then illustrate how the traditional “court system” was organized at different levels and sectors of the community.

Then the most well-known and relevant rituals and ceremonies are described by giving information on their indication, meaning and concrete procedures. Each description of a ceremony is followed by some observations / comments on its applicability in the current situation.

Finally, we discuss the actual relevance of traditional ways of conflict prevention and resolution from a broader perspective, especially in the light of changing cultural identities. The interrelatedness of peace building and psychosocial healing and the need for further documenting and supporting mechanisms of conflict resolution on a micro level are pointed out.

We conclude that traditional approaches still have the potential to play an important and positive role in building peace at different levels of the community. However, there is need for a systematic process of discussion, involving communities at a grassroots level (including traditional, religious and civic leaders), to see how best they can be adjusted and supported to meet the needs of our time.

1. Traditional Acholi leadership

1.1. *Historical background*

1.1.1. Ancient leadership

Before the colonialization of Acholi, each [main] clan of the Acholi tribe had a royal family. The *rwot moo* (anointed chief), the leader of the clan was selected among the sons of the royal family. Sub-clans did not have royal families, but respected elders who were in charge of the leadership as long as they did “lead wisely”. Neither elders nor the anointed chiefs had power over the people in the sense that they could impose arbitrary decisions on them. The rule was more a rule of establishing a consent that was supported by the community. Accordingly, the chief didn’t command a professional army or police force that could enforce decisions. Each family was widely independent and proud of that. A head of a home in Acholi would express this self-determination with the common say “An *arwotki oda*”, meaning “I’m the chief (king) in my own hut”.

It is said that the most important criteria for selecting the future chief among many sons of the royal family were his perceived ability of being a good listener and his natural quality of being a “responsible person” or having a “sound ability of judgment”. The anointed chief was advised by a council of elders who represented different parts of the community and thus could help him to come to “wise decisions” that were supported by the clan as a whole. A leader who basically ruled by negotiating and mediating consent among his subjects can both be seen as strength and a weakness of the system.

Such a lack of power to enforce decisions and “law” needed to be compensated by an elaborate system and very good skills of a chief to facilitate and establish consensus among people. Apart from that, religious believes - and here especially the concept of “*kir*” (taboo, for further explanations see below) - played an important role in stabilizing the society.

1.1.2. The colonial rule

With the colonial rule, the system of inherited chiefs was abolished and replaced by a system of chiefs appointed by the colonial power. These non-hereditary, administrative chiefs were selected on political and educational criteria. The people often referred to them as “*kalam omia*” [“the pen has given me”] as they saw them as agents of a foreign government who were not seen to represent their culture and interests. Thus the heirs of the traditional chiefs were still informally recognized and continued to carry out many of their cultural duties, especially in the areas of conflict resolution and reconciliation (paper 16, paper 32). The successors of the deceased traditional chiefs were still chosen among the immediate sons of the royal family, but usually not anointed (although some might have been anointed secretly). At the same time – at the beginning of the colonial rule – the traditional chiefs avoided to send their sons to school because they didn’t trust the colonial system. This might have led to further marginalization of the royal families but might have at the same time saved the representatives of the traditional system from getting corrupted in the modern political system. (Dennis Pain, 1997). Up to now traditional leadership and politics are often regarded as being incompatible.

1.2. *The (re-) installation of the chiefs and the current traditional leadership in Acholi*

Despite the erosion of the traditional leadership with time, civil society organizations (with the approval of the government of Uganda) made an effort to find out and negotiate with different clans and communities who could be [re-] installed as a traditional chief of the Acholi tribe. In the year 2000 many traditional chiefs were (re-) instated with the vision of enabling them to take a lead in future efforts to attain peace and reconciliation within and between communities in Acholi and Uganda as a whole.

Currently, the reinstated traditional leaders have set up a council called “Acholi Traditional Leaders Council” with Paramount Chief David Onen Acana II on the apex of the structure. The Paramount Chief is followed by two chiefs representing Gulu and Kitgum/Pader areas respectively. Another six chiefs are in charge of the areas of “Finances and Development”, “External Relations”, “Peace and security”, “Culture”, “Education and Information” and “Land and Environment”. Further members of the Council are two elders, two women leaders and a secretary.

This council is generally seen to represent traditional Acholi leaders and plays an important role in any cultural affairs including conflict resolution.

2. Traditional conflict management in Acholi

2.1. *General features of traditional Acholi conflict resolution*

The Paramount Chief David Onen Acana II emphasizes that the Lwo ancestral myth of the quarrel and consequent separation of ‘Labongo and Gipir’ is central to the value formation in Acholi (paper 33). This myth makes a strong point on the necessity of forgiveness and reconciliation.

2.1.1. *Accepting the responsibility for the committed offence as a first step*

The principle of accepting the guilt by the offender is fundamental in the Acholi culture and court system. Thus, for example, somebody who had committed a murder (outside the village) was expected to make a declaration at the entrance of the village that he had killed. After such a confession procedures of investigation, mediation and conflict resolution could take its path.

Especially when the settlement of a dispute required the payment of compensation, the acceptance of the responsibility by the offender (and his relatives) was a precondition. In most cases the court had no power the force a suspected offender to accept the guilt or pay compensation. People would instead appeal to the “living dead” to take revenge. Such revenge is believed to often take the form of misfortune or illness of the culprit or his family, but it can also manifest in form of nightmares and strange visions. Such kind of “stress” – related to and interpreted in the traditional belief system - would on the long run force the culprit to give in, accept the guilt and pay compensation.

2.1.2. A system of compensation for wrongs committed based on the assumption of collective responsibility

A second striking feature of the traditional Acholi system is that there was no “death sentence” for any crime; neither did the society seek to exclude or isolate offenders from the community. Rather than establishing a system of severe punishment, the Acholi followed a system of “fair” compensation which had to be paid for crimes committed. The “sum” of compensation (e.g. a number of cattle) was determined by the severity and the circumstances of the crime. In order to compensate the family or clan of the victim, the whole family / clan of the offender was expected to contribute to the compensation fine. Thus compensation and conflict resolution was never an individual but always a collective responsibility involving the whole family / clan of the offender and the offended.

2.1.3. Forgiveness

The collective acceptance of responsibility was expected to be accompanied by a collective attitude of repentance by the family / clan of the offender. Chief Acana II says (Paper 33, p.5): “Once genuine repentance was received from the offender’s community, the victim’s community would have no option but to forgive in good faith. Forgiveness was an essential element of reconciliation.”

2.2. General stages in traditional conflict management

According to other papers we received from Kal Kwaro (Paper 17, interview with Latim Garison), the process of conflict management can be outlined in the following steps:

- Conflict prevention: at this stage behaviors that are likely to lead to conflicts are identified and discouraged by elders (e.g. girls going to the river and not behaving well; young men loitering around at night ...)
- Conflict identification (After the identification of a severe conflict, the two involved parties usually suspend their relationships until the conflict is solved: this means no sharing meals, drinking or dancing together, no courtship ...)
- Initial conflict investigation and mediation: separate talks to each of the conflicting parties by an experienced elder
- Agreeing on a meeting of the two parties
- Discussing (looking into causes and the nature of the conflict) with the help of experienced elders
- Confessing, accepting, revealing and saying the truth about the conflict
- Judgment according to the bylaws
- Agreeing on a compensation rate (the issue of compensation comes in after the offender has accepted the responsibility)
- Preparation and arrangements for compensation and reconciliatory process / talk
- Paying compensation, which might involve a ceremony like “Mato Oput”
- End of the conflict, good relationships are restored

2.3. “Kir” - Acholi Taboos

“Kir” (“taboo”) is a very fundamental concept regarding Acholi conflict prevention and – resolution. Most of the behaviors that constitute “kir” in the Acholi culture include behaviors that are relevant to preventing or solving conflicts in the community.

Here some examples:

- Behaviors that might kindle or already constitute conflict, like
 - Quarreling for land
 - Violence in different forms (e.g. fighting between husband and wife, father and son, throwing of food, ...)
 - Quarrels at the water source
 - Quarrels for fire wood
 - Burning somebody’s hut
 - Curses
 - Sexual activities in the bush
 - Sexual activities with relatives
- Behaviors and attitudes that might hinder the resolution of a conflict, like
 - Not accepting or admitting the wrong one has committed
 - Not wanting to eat and not wanting to talk

It is traditionally believed that actions or events which are considered to be “kir”, can lead to death or serious illness of the offender and can generally bring misfortune to the whole family or community. Such misfortune is believed to be brought about by the spirits of the ancestors and gods who are unhappy about such actions. The only way to avoid such misfortune - after “kir” has happened - is to perform a proper ceremony which includes a sacrifice [to the ancestors and / or gods] called “tum” (an outline on “tum”, see below in the chapter on specific ceremonies). Additionally, if the taboo at the same time constitutes an offence regulated in the by laws, a compensation as stipulated has to be paid.

With this background of believes community members have a strong motivation to avoid actions that are considered taboo. If somebody nevertheless committed such a serious offence, a public ceremony and sacrifice was performed. This served again to remind the entire community on the importance to respect stipulated bylaws and taboos.

The ceremonies that were performed to cleanse unclean behaviors (“kir”) were detailed and symbolic. One important function of such a ritual was certainly that people were publicly reminded and warned to adhere to social norms and values. The symbolic acts during the ceremonies can be understood as underlining and supporting the credibility and salience of such “reminders”. Some basic outlines of such ceremonies will be provided below in the chapter on specific ceremonies (“tum”).

2.4. Traditional jurisdiction

The jurisdiction in the traditional setting was quite complex. It worked at different levels (household, sub-clan, clan, inter-clan, inter tribal) and was specific to different sections of the by laws (food production, marital disputes, killing, hunting, etc.). Of course, unlike in the modern court system, there were no citizens who executed their function as a judge or council member as their sole and only profession. Typically the members of a tribunal

were called and met to discuss a specific case. After having settled the specific dispute they dissolved to resume their regular duties in the community until they were again called for another case concerning their specific area of jurisdiction. Their judgment was guided by the thorough examination of the case and the application of the by-laws.

2.4.1. Acholi by laws

Traditional Acholi by laws are a key part of traditional jurisdiction. They are many and most of them are still unwritten. We also have to assume that in former times they varied from clan to clan. While the by laws that had been stipulated in a written document up to now applied only to the area of Gulu, the “Acholi Traditional Leaders Council” has recently embarked on a project of compiling a new by law document that will be applicable to all the districts of Acholiland (Gulu, Kitgum and Pader).

Our program has received a paper that stipulates Acholi by laws and translated it from Acholi into English (Paper 9).

These bylaws regulate mainly the compensatory fines to be paid in case of killings or causing serious injuries, taking into account various circumstances:

- Purposely or accidentally committed
- Clan affiliation of the offender and the offended
- Other circumstances (e.g. causing harm through neglect, poison, bewitchment, by the owner’s animal, in self-defense, death that occurred during elopement)

Most of the stipulated regulations refer to killings, many to causing injuries and disabilities. Others refer to procedures (e.g. who pays the expenses for the investigation, items to be used ...).

Here some examples of the translated by laws:

- Someone who has murdered another person purposely will pay 10 cattle and 3 goats.
- If the killing occurred accidentally, the offender will pay a compensation of 5 cattle and 3 goats.
- Someone who has negligently caused the death of a child will pay 3 cattle and 3 goats.
- If you kill another person in self-defense, you will pay compensation of 5 cattle and 3 goats.
- If you elope with a girl and she dies while being in your hands, you will have to pay compensation of 5 cattle and 3 goats.
- Someone who has eloped with a married woman will have to pay a compensation of 10 cattle and 3 goats to the official husband of the wife, if the woman dies while in his hands.

Most of the offences that are regulated in the by laws are also considered “taboo” (kir) which can be considered an additional deterrent to antisocial or criminal behavior and at the same time motivated the offender to accept responsibility and compensate for crimes once they had already been committed.

2.4.2. Traditional conflict resolution at different levels of the community

The Acholi court system was organized at different levels. Below we give a rough outline of the vertical dimensions of the traditional juridical system:

- The head of the family handled petty cases (like the daughter-in-law quarreling with the aunt) in what could be called a **family court**.
- Clan leaders (elders) came together and presided over cases to settle disputes between brothers and neighbors in a **clan court**.
- Disputes and conflicts between different clans were settled in a **community (or tribal) court**.
- Conflicts involving different tribes were addressed by **inter-tribal courts**. When bigger tribes clashed, a court was instituted where “The bending of the spears” (see chapter below) was done to bring to an end an inter-tribal war.

Most of the disputes could be solved at a lower community level by the head of the family or involving traditional leaders like the “Atekere” and the “Rwot Kweri”. Conflicts that had already led to serious injuries or murder, or conflicts involving many homesteads had to be taken to the chief.

Each chieftaincy (main clan) had a council of elders who met at specific places to discuss, investigate and judge cases. At the highest level, Acholi elders met in the presence of their chiefs and held what was called “Cobo tal” (the highest tribunal in Acholi).

2.4.3. Traditional jurisdiction in different sectors

As an example of the functioning of the traditional jurisdiction in different sectors, we shall below outline the settlement of conflicts at a lower community level by the “Rwot Kweri” and the “Atekere”. Both of these traditional leaders are in charge of settling conflicts at the grassroots level of the community.

The “Rwot kweri” [“chief of the hoe”] was charged with the responsibility of ensuring food production and solving any conflict related to food production. This could include complaints raised by a wife on a lazy husband, land disputes and solving conflicts among youth who might have engaged in a fight. Whenever communal digging was organized, it was the role of the Rwot kweri to solve any conflict in this regard. Practically the Rwot Kweri was in charge of solving almost all the petty cases of conflict that occurred in the community. However, all cases that required sacrifices had to be referred to the Atekere for the execution of the sacrifice.

Apart from presiding over sacrificial ceremonies, the Atekere was also in charge of settling marital disputes at a [sub-] clan level. He was to settle conflicts between husband and wife that could not be handled by the family head. The area of jurisdiction of the Atekere was much smaller than that of the Rwot Kweri. The Atekere didn’t interfere with the issues of Rwot kweri.

Any conflict that was beyond the jurisdictions of the Atekere was referred to other clan leaders and elders. If the conflict went beyond and required separation of the married couple, it was referred to the “jago” [sub chief]. The “Jago” was a sort of a legal assistant and personal secretary to the chief.

2.5. Specific rituals and ceremonies

In Acholi culture we find many rituals and ceremonies that are instrumental in the area of conflict prevention and –resolution. The most important and well known are outlined below.

2.5.1. “Stepping on the egg” and “washing away the tears”

2.5.1.1. Indication and meaning

When people have stayed outside their home (clan territory) for a long time, a cleansing ritual has to be performed according to Acholi culture. This goes back to a belief that outside home people could contract foreign spirits that need to be cleansed before returning home (Heike Behrend, 1999). Otherwise they could bring misfortune to the whole community. This necessity for cleansing also applies to ‘reporters’ who come back from LRA captivity.

But the meaning of the ritual of **“stepping on the egg”** goes beyond that of a mere cleansing ceremony. It is also seen as a gesture of welcome and commitment of both the community and the returnee to restart living in harmony together. In this regard, the Kal Kwaro has often organized welcoming ceremonies with the “stepping on the egg”.

According to paper 17 (p.6) this ceremony has the following implications:

- A sign of welcome, love and peace
- Acceptance for reintegration
- Reconciliation and forgiveness
- Removal of evil spirits
- Assurance of harmony and tolerance from the community

To perform the basic ritual of “stepping on the egg”, only three things are needed: a “layibi” (stick for opening the granary), a twig of the opobo tree and an egg.

The “layibi” (granary stick) symbolizes that the granary from which the child had eaten before his/her abduction should again feed the child as well as the other relatives. The egg stands for the innocence of the abducted child, whereas the opobo twig symbolizes the washing away of “dirt” [her referring to spirits] that the person might have contracted during the stay outside.¹

Another related ritual, the **“washing away the tears”** is seen to be important when the returnee had been mourned because people believed that he/she had already died. If the tears are not washed away in a proper ritual, the shed tears are believed to bring misfortune.

¹ The bark of the opobo tree was traditionally used to produce a soap-like substance applied to wash away “dirt” of any kind (e.g. washing hair, lice, clothes, etc.), hence the symbolic meaning of washing away “dirts”. However, “dirts” is here clearly referring to the spiritual dimension, not a physical one.

2.5.1.2. Procedure

For the ceremony of “stepping on the egg”, an egg is placed on the path leading to the homestead in between a split opobo twig, the Layibi lies behind it. Before entering the homestead the returnee steps on the egg and then passes over the Layibi. The chiefs emphasize that even if such a ritual is performed collectively at a ceremony organized by the Kal Kwaro it should be repeated when the child enters the homestead.

After the stepping on the egg on the path to the homestead, the parents or relatives would slaughter a goat to “wash away the tears” that had been shed for the child. The goat is eaten and the water that was used for washing the hands is then used to bless and cleanse the child by pouring it on the grass thatched roof of the hut when the child enters and again when the child comes out of the hut.

2.5.1.3. Applicability in the current situation

The “**Stepping on the Egg**” is still in frequent use. This might be due to the easy availability of the basic requirements for the ritual (egg, opobo-twig, granary-stick) which even poor households can afford. Furthermore the Kal Kwaro and NGOs have repeatedly organized the ritual in a bigger style.

In the current situation, where many people return from the LRA and trickle back into the Acholi community the ritual can be seen as a very important symbolic act that allows both the community and the returnees to express their good intentions to start living together in harmony. At the same time the cleansing aspect which is attributed to the ritual can be expected to have a general stress reducing effect on members of the community.

According to our observations, the “**Washing away the Tears**” is not in such frequent use, most likely because many households cannot afford the requirement of slaughtering a goat for that sake. However we have seen people using “ordinary water” to symbolically cleanse the returning child according to a similar procedure but leaving out the slaughtering of the goat.

2.5.2. Mato Oput

The term “Mato Oput” is widely known as a key element in Acholi conflict resolution beyond the borders of this area. At the same it has often been misunderstood and romanticized. To clarify on some of the misperceptions we shall describe it in more detail.

2.5.2.1. Indication and meaning

Basically, a process of reconciliation that can lead to “Mato Oput” is indicated when a premeditated killing had occurred in the community. However, the traditional ritual of “Mato Oput” would only be carried out after the two involved parties have agreed on the payment of compensation and the payment is done. Thus the ritual of “Mato Oput” marks the peak and successful end of a reconciliation process between two families or clans in case of a premeditated killing.

Mato Oput was traditionally not applicable for killings that happened in war. The killing of an enemy required a different cleansing ceremony (Kwero Merok) while Mato Oput

always applied to killings within a clan or among clans maintaining friendly relationships with each other.

“Mato Oput” means literally drinking “oput”. Oput is a tree and its smashed roots are used to prepare a bitter drink that is shared at the peak of the ceremony. Unlike the modern juridical system which has little provision for restoring relationships, the reconciliation process culminating in the ritual of Mato Oput aims at re-establishing good relationships among the parties (families or clans) who had been involved in the killing. Fundamental to the process however is the willingness of the offender’s clan (not the offender as a single person) to assume the responsibility for the act committed as well as its readiness and ability to pay compensation.

In former times, young girls were given to compensate for deliberately committed murder. The idea behind it was that these girls would give birth to children who could replace the dead person (paper 17) and at the same time the sacrifice of a daughter to the victim’s community affirmed the genuineness of the repentance and commitment to peace by the offender’s community (paper 33). Meanwhile the practice has been replaced by a system using cattle or money for compensation.

Beyond the meaning in terms of a process that leads to the reconciliation of two parties the process of “Mato Oput” also addresses a “spiritual dimension” or in other words, a dimension of “psychosocial healing”. Traditionally it is believed that someone who has killed will be followed and attacked by the spirit of the dead person which would lead to nightmares and other disturbances. As mentioned above in the chapter on “Kir”, the fact of not addressing the wrong done in a culturally appropriate way is also believed to potentially cause diseases and misfortune to the killer and the related family or clan. Thus in psychological terms we could say that – like many other rituals and ceremonies – “Mato Oput” also addresses and reduces “psychosocial stress” in individuals and the entire community affected.

In recent times the term “Mato Oput” has become pretty popular beyond the borders of Acholiland: It can be found in English (meaning non-Luo) newspapers and some articles that can be retrieved from the internet. It must be noted however that the use of the words “Mato Oput” here is often metaphorical in the sense that it refers to any process of reconciliation in general. In other contexts we have seen the procedure being romanticized and idealized as if it was a kind of magic bulled to solve any kind of conflict.

In the traditional sense, the process that leads to Mato Oput is a very practical and “down to earth”, but still powerful procedure as will be outlined below.

2.5.2.2. Procedure

The procedure the leads to Mato Oput and the ceremony of Mato Oput itself are very rich in details and symbolic acts. In the following we shall give a rough outline that should make the process and its meaning in the context of the traditional culture more understandable.

2.5.2.2.1. The process that leads to the ceremony of Mato Oput

After a murder has been committed it will be reported to the local representative of the rwot moo (anointed chief) by either side: the relatives of the killed person or the relatives of the offender. The representative sits together with his council to examine the

circumstances of the killing. In case the offender (the offender's clan) assumes the responsibility, compensation is agreed upon. According to traditional by laws the compensation is 10 cattle and 3 goats for a premeditated killing. In monetary terms a cattle is seen as equivalent to 50.000,- USH, a goat to 20.000,-. The offender will then sit with his/her relatives to discuss who can contribute with which amount. Everybody is supposed to contribute as the effects of the killing would affect the entire clan. To collect the compensatory fine an elaborate system had been in place to assure that the fine is brought together as soon as possible. When the money has been realized, the bereaved family or clan can consult a diviner to find out who should receive the compensation.² Then the representative of the rwot moo will summon the representatives of the two parties to agree on a date for the ceremony and discuss the things required to carry out the ritual.

Up to the successful performance of the ritual the relationships of the two parties are considered to be "suspended", they would not share any meal or drink with each other during this time.

The following utensils are required for the ritual (list not comprehensive):

1. A piece of broken pot for taking herbs "oput" (the pot should be new).
2. A virgin lady to pound the herb (oput).
3. A new calabash where the two parties will unite their hands while eating [from which the two parties will eat together].
4. A bowl made out of clay.
5. Local brew (kwete) brewed by all the parties.
6. One sheep from each clan.
7. A new knife for slaughtering.
8. Salt from both clans for cooking.
9. A flat basket to put the "odeyo" [remains of the mingled flour that was stuck on the sauce pan while preparing local bread] to be eaten jointly by the two clans.
10. The "odeyo" from each of the two clans.
11. A bull for the grave that is given by the murderer or his clan.
12. She-goats for the messenger and the rwot moo.
13. Layibi [stick used for opening granary] – used for separating the two clans.
14. Court fine – 2,000/=
15. A new spear for slaughtering the sheep.

All the above requirements should be new to symbolize that the past is over and a new life should begin.

2.5.2.2.2. *The day of the reconciliation ceremony*

On the day of the reconciliation ceremony the rwot moo and his representatives together with the members of the council for reconciliation of the different [sub-] clans gather with the two clans that were directly involved in the murder. The 2 goats and the court fee of 2,000/= are presented to the rwot moo and the messenger (if it hadn't been done in

² Traditionally the received money should be used to marry a woman (by paying the pride price) who should give birth to a child that would then be seen as the continuation of the killed person. The ajwaka (diviner) traditionally would see and tell the family who should receive the money or cattle.

the previous meeting). The things required for the compensation are presented to all the people present. The clan of the killed person will then receive the compensation.

The rwot moo sends someone to go and dig up the root of the Oput tree which then is given to a virgin lady to smash and put it in a broken piece of pot [otako].

The two clans are called to come and meet on the path leading to the homestead where the ritual shall be conducted. Then 4 or 6 representatives of the rwot moo hailing from different sub-clans place the “layibi” [the stick used for opening the granary] between the two clans. In the process, the side of the murdered person would abuse and symbolically try to engage in a (mock-) fight with the other side. Then the representatives of the rwot moo separate them using the granary stick while saying: “Such kind of heart [feelings] should stop today”. Then they bring [two] sheep and put them alongside each other [each looking in a different direction]. The two parties bring a spear and slaughter the sheep [they are actually cut into two parts across the middle]. Then the “wee”³ of the slaughtered animals is taken and mixed with unfiltered local brew and oput.

These preparations are followed by a highly symbolic act that has given the name to the ceremony: the drinking of the bitter drink that has been prepared. In this process, two people from each side – from the offender’s and the offended community – kneel down with their hands folded behind their back and sip the juice from a little bowl – their heads touching in the process. This process goes on in pairs until each member of both communities have drunk and thus participated in the symbolic act of reconciliation.

Afterwards a meal is shared “in the presence of the ancestral living-dead and the creator as a witness to the covenant of peace” (paper 33, p. 6):⁴

The bull for the grave is slaughtered. While women cook the bull’s meat inside the house, the sheep is prepared by men outside in an open place. Meanwhile, each of the two clans send about 4 or more representatives into the house [which was assigned to one of the parties] to eat the remains of the “odeyo” [mingled flour that was stuck on the sauce pan while preparing kwon] from the new “odero” [flat basket]. Then they go to the house assigned to the other party, enter and also eat “odeyo” together. When all the food is ready, the millet bread is put in a new calabash and the sauce is put in a new bowl made of clay. The two clans unite their hands while eating [i.e. they eat together from the same dish].

Finally the people of the 2 clans (or families) are warned never to do any wrong to one another in regards to the issue that has been resolved that day. Then the people disperse.

2.5.2.3. Applicability in the current situation

2.5.2.3.1. Concerning the traditional indication: a single murder in an otherwise peaceful community

Despite the “fame” that “Mato Oput” has gained in and outside Uganda, the ritual in its traditional sense is being very rarely performed in the current times.

³ Content of the lower intestines

⁴ The sharing of meals in Acholi culturally implies a profound fellowship and thus is another symbolic act to reaffirm the attained reconciliation.

The destitute poverty that has been rampant in Acholi for many years might be one reason for the low occurrence of the ritual. Related to and in addition to this consideration we need to be aware that the whole process of reconciliation begins with the offender's community accepting the responsibility for the murder committed, including their readiness (and ability!) to pay the compensation. Without the repentance and the payment of the compensation, Mato Oput cannot take place and might not have any meaning in Acholi culture.

Traditional beliefs that the spirit world will revenge on the offender and his community in case the ceremony is not performed might also have been weakened in the course of time – through a general tendency of westernization and Christian teachings that at times reject any kind of traditional rituals - thus further contributing to the decline of the ritual.

2.5.2.3.2. *Can “Mato Oput” be adjusted and applied to the current situation?*

To say that the ritual of Mato Oput has been much weakened does certainly not mean that it has completely lost its importance. It is essential to consider that there *are* strong values of forgiveness and reconciliation in the Acholi culture and for many Acholi this spirit of forgiveness and beginning anew is associated with the word “Mato Oput”. Furthermore the symbolic acts in the ceremony have a strong power and meaning in the local culture that could still be used to help reconciliation in and among communities.

On the other hand the current circumstances in the community are in many ways not favorable. To apply the process described above to children who have been forced to kill their own people in big numbers is certainly not straightforward and the Kal Kwaro does not support the application of procedures involving compensation in such cases.

Nevertheless, in discussions with elders we noted that they are thinking about how the procedure of Mato Oput could be used in one or another way to support reconciliation processes in the Acholi community, especially after the ending of the present civil war.

To exemplify this, we give the opinion of elders whom the Program has interviewed in Lubuje camp, Kitgum:

“... But as we know, the ceremony Mato Oput is conducted as a response to killings when the two people (killer and killed) are known. In the current war it is very difficult to establish who killed who. It is the Rwodi that should take Oput (reconcile) on behalf of the people” (Caritas Paper 10, p 7).

2.5.3. The bending of spears

2.5.3.1. General indication and meaning

“The bending of spears” (“Gomo tong”) was performed in former times as a symbolic ceremony to mark the end of a war or bloody conflict between different clans or tribes. It implied a vow – evoking the living dead – by both sides, promising that such killings would not be repeated. “The bending of spears” is a symbolic act in which each clan bends its spear and gives it to the other clan. It denotes that if one would - without a very good new cause – again go to war on the other clan, the tip of the spear would turn back against the aggressor.

In the process of bending of spears, tribal chiefs were involved. A historical example for the bending of the spears among two Acholi clans is the conflict between the clans of Payira and Koch which was concealed this way (paper 17, p. 5-6)

2.5.3.2. Procedures

2.5.3.2.1. Bending of spears with “Mato Oput”

In case the conflict had occurred between two Acholi clans, the chief would call the elders of the two clans to meet at the border and discuss the reasons for the fighting among them. After coming to an agreement, a ceremony of “Mato Oput” could be performed. Then the bending of spears would follow while both clans promise not to lift their spears against each other again. Any person who would continue with the killing would then be dealt with according to the by laws.

2.5.3.2.2. Bending the spears without “Mato Oput”

If conflicts had occurred between neighboring tribes (e.g. Acholi and Lango) “the bending of the spears” was performed without the ritual of “Mato Oput”. Nevertheless elders of the two tribes would sit down to discuss the reasons triggering and maintaining the conflict. After coming to an agreement to stop the fighting, the people would be warned to stop the killing. On the day of bending the spears the elders would also discuss on how to ensure that further conflicts and killings can be avoided. The bending of the spears is then performed as a vow not to repeat such killings. Finally the the two tribes slaughter a bull for the elders to eat and then disperse.

2.5.3.3. Applicability in the current situation

Certainly the ritual of “bending the spears” has not been practiced since quite a long time. However, its symbolic meaning could possibly inspire people and be translated into other symbolic acts to visibly and metaphorically mark the end of a bloody conflict of a bigger dimension.

2.5.4. “Tum” – purification ceremonies

2.5.4.1. General meaning

As explained above, actions that were considered to be “Kir” (taboo) called for a purifying (and at the same time sacrificial) ceremony in which the ancestors and gods are traditionally asked for forgiveness and further protection. In case the ceremony is not performed negative consequences for the offender and his/her clan in form of ill health, diseases, accidents, unfertile fields, etc. are expected.

According to traditional customs, basically two types of purification rituals are distinguished: Rituals that require a goat and rituals that require a sheep to be slaughtered.

2.5.4.2. Purification rituals requiring a goat

2.5.4.2.1. Indication

Purification rituals that require a goat are those that are to cleanse the result of swearing / vows in which the living dead were evoked to be a witness, quarreling over land, embracing the chest of the father while wrestling or fighting, fighting at the water source, disputes between the wife and the husband on the issue of sex and many more.

It is believed that such offences – if not properly purified - can cause diarrhea in children or ‘akwota’ [“akwota” is any sickness that causes swelling of the body or parts of the body].

In the process of deciding on a concrete procedure for purification, the family elder (an elder who oversees the family / households) calls the people who are involved in the conflict to sit down and examine the cause of the conflict, to look into the kind of offence that had been committed and to find a way of preventing such offences to occur again. The family elder / leader then gives a report to “ateker or Atekere” who comes to re-examine the cause of the offence. After coming to the conclusion that “kir” had been committed he would decide on the actual procedure and request the offender to bring a goat for purification of the crime.

2.5.4.2.2. Procedure

During the purification ritual, when the ‘Ateker’ is sacrificing the goat for the crime, the offender is holding the head of the goat and the offended is holding the legs. The offender is holding the head to show acceptance and repentance for the crime that has brought uncleanness [dirt] into the family. During the purification, ‘Ateker’ slaughters the goat while making pleas, saying:

*“You goat, your blood is to take away the dirt [-y action] that occurred at home.
Today we are not killing you without a cause; let your blood wash away this sin so
that people stay in good health.”*

He then cuts the goat open, takes the content of the lower intestine (“wee”) and puts them on the feet and the position of the heart [pal cwiny] of the victims of the offence [here meaning the offended and the offender]. He also sprinkles it on the houses to make sure that the offence gets off the offender, offended and the whole family.

After the purification, the two persons who were involved in the quarrel are publicly warned not to repeat such a mistake. This at the same time serves as a warning for the entire community.

2.5.4.3. Purification rituals requiring a sheep

In Acholi tradition it is said that the blood of a sheep is cold and able to cool down the situation.

2.5.4.3.1. Indication and procedures

Purification rituals that require a sheep are to cleanse offences related to fire, ashes or feces. These rituals are again classified into two classes:

Slaughtering a sheep to be eaten in the homestead

This practice is applied to purify offences like throwing food at somebody, beating someone seriously (to the point of defecating) and many more. In such a case the ‘Ateker’ slaughters the sheep at the homestead and the procedures are the same as for cleansing with a goat. The meat is cooked on the compound and everything is eaten. The

water used for washing the hands is poured to the direction of the setting sun so that the crime should go forever and not come back.

Slaughtering a sheep to be dragged away from the home stead

This procedure is performed for offences related to ashes and fire like the setting on fire of houses. For this, a herbalist who has the herbs for 'kir' is called by the 'Ateker'. The person called should know the herbs for 'kir' and have the herbs for dragging away the 'kir'. The herbalist would come and drag the sheep round the burnt house [taking the sheep by its legs], pierce its stomach, take out the contents of the lower intestine ("wee") and throw them on the house. Afterwards he/she weaves grasses to make a rope which is then used to drag the sheep out of the homestead. They go and divide the sheep from outside the homestead, the meat should not be brought to that home and the family members of that home do not eat it. This is to "drag away" the ashes that could attack people through 'kir' in order to make it leave the home.

2.5.4.4. Applicability in the current situation

According to our observations in the field, the application of "tum" is still practiced and demanded by the people (see our activity report to CRS for concrete examples). We have indication that the omission to carry out such cleansing rituals due to the lack of livestock and other requirements leads to considerable tensions and "psychosocial stress" in the communities, especially among the older generation.

Furthermore the public warning to adhere to pro-social norms in the context of the symbolic power of a ritual still has the potential to considerably contribute to a more peaceful living in the communities.

3. Discussion

The above descriptions attempted to delineate some basic principles, structures and procedures that are common in Acholi culture. They are of course far from being comprehensive and also neglect the many differences among clans in the way they traditionally handled issues of conflict management. Our activity report to CRS contains further information and descriptions of traditional rituals, especially community cleansing ceremonies.

Below we discuss some of the major findings of our research and pertinent issues.

3.1. *Low availability of information on traditional approaches to conflict resolution*

While the program has received quite a number of documents, the papers dealing with "traditional conflict resolution in Acholi" were few in comparison to the many papers discussing wider issues related to our given topic (see "table of documents received" in the annex). This might reflect a high willingness of the contributing organizations to support the project while at the same time the availability of good and "at the point" material seems to be very low. While the most interesting papers were availed by the Kal Kwaro, most of them had not yet been translated into English. This lack of easily available information on traditional ways of conflict resolution in Acholi might be

mirrored in a widespread ignorance about traditional approaches among NGOs and donor communities (often mixed with a tendency to romanticize traditional approaches) and is in contrast with lip services rendered about the importance of strengthening and using traditional approaches in conflict resolution.

Of course, with the limited resources we have put into this research, we can not rule out to have missed out on important documents and we would still be grateful to anybody who could still avail us with such information. But at least it can be said that any literature not considered in this review was not “easily available” to us, an organization which is working on the ground on this very issue. This also points to a striking lack of accessible documentation which would be needed help NGOs and donors to make more informed decisions.

3.2. *Changing cultural identity and the relevance of traditional practices in current times*

The writing of this brief report was challenging in many ways. Apart from the complexity of the subject we always stumbled over the question of whether to write many of the descriptions in the present or the past tense. While certain practices have not been practiced in some areas of Acholi, they might still be frequent in others. Some rituals might not have been performed for long because of the impossibility to get the necessary requirements in a totally impoverished community, but might still be applicable and requested for by the community. Thus, regarding the crucial matter of “applicability and limitations” of certain procedures in the current days we noted down a few first observations as far as specific ceremonies are concerned. Yet further research needs to be done in this area.

Of course we need to be clear about the fact that there is no going back to former times. Neither was the (re-) installation of the chiefs a reinstatement in the sense that the old system had been reestablished, nor would such an undertaking be realistic and helpful. The cultural identity of the Acholi people nowadays is not only shaped by “*Tradition*” but also by “*Christian and Moslem*” beliefs and by general “*modern*” or “*global*” influences. These three pillars of identity (“Tradition”, “Christianity or Islam” and “Modernity”) are related to certain beliefs, attitudes and practices on the ground (rituals, prayer, court hearings ...). While designing interventions to support conflict resolution, reconciliation and peace building we need to be aware of this complex and dynamic blend of identities and beliefs. Traditional approaches are still very meaningful and important to many people in Acholiland, but it is also true that they are at the same time less relevant to many others. Especially many of the young people who have grown up in times of war with very restricted possibilities for cultural practices seem to be alienated from the tradition of their own people. Many Christian believers – especially the Balokole (“the saved ones”) – even vigorously reject traditional practices as being “satanic”.

As times have changed, many of the traditional practices might have lost relevance. Others certainly need adjustment to the current circumstances. This is another very practical issue that deserves further investigation. But apart from doing further research on the topic, it will be important to support the Acholi community (including traditional-

church- and civic leaders) to engage in a systematic process of discussion with the aim of generating ideas and agreeing on how traditional approaches could in future be used to support peace building in and among communities at different levels.

3.3. Psychosocial healing and peace building

It is evident that peace building and psychosocial healing are inextricably intertwined and can indeed be considered to be two sides of the same coin. Thus the above described ceremonies can be both related to “psychosocial healing” and “peace building”. The psychosocial effect of such rituals might be seen in a general reduction of unspecific stress (e.g. feeling haunted by spirits) in the community, in the reaffirmation of positive cultural values, increase of community cohesion, improvement of interpersonal relationships and so forth. It is easy to see how these factors contribute to an environment that is more conducive to the solution and prevention of conflicts. If we understand the term “peace” as denoting more than the mere absence of conflict, the notions of “psychosocial healing” and “peace building” draw even closer.

On a more general note, many people claim that strengthening and supporting the unique and positive identity and values of a people ravaged by war can help restore a sense of dignity and orientation for the future and thus be a strong factor for “psychosocial healing” and “peace building” on a collective (community or society) level.

Even if “traditional identity” has been weakened by many influences in the last decades, the roots and much of the uniqueness of an ethnic group still lie in their traditions. Thus it is certainly encouraging for a people to see their roots recognized and related practices supported by “outsiders”, rather than further weakened by neglect and oversight.

Many practices of Acholi culture were abandoned or weakened starting from the beginning of the colonial era and deprecated as being backward. This happened without the foreigners fully understanding their meaning or assessing them for their positive social function. Also in this respect, the acknowledging of positive cultural values and related practices is important. If NGOs working in the area of “conflict resolution and peace building” remain ignorant on the precious traditional values and practices of the local culture they might not be in a good position to blend their “modern contribution” with the resources that are already available on the ground. Such ignorance would not only convey a “colonial spirit” of automatically assuming that modern approaches are superior to traditional ones, it would also reduce the effectiveness of well intentioned support.

3.4. The need for mechanisms of conflict resolution on a micro level

The continued practice of rituals like the “stepping on the egg” can without doubt be considered an achievement. However, according to our experience in the work with returnees and concerned communities tensions and conflicts arise regularly after reunion in day to day life, despite good intentions expressed and affirmed symbolically in this welcoming and cleansing ritual by both the returnees and the community.

Such conflicts call for mechanisms of conflict resolution that are applicable in the day to day life on a community level. Unfortunately, the literature we have reviewed doesn't depict such procedures and our own little research has just been a good start but has not

yet yielded the necessary details on that level. That does however not mean that our efforts have been futile. In our psychosocial program we try to address conflicts in the community within the operational framework of our follow up of returnees, where our social workers – after having identified conflicts - encourage and facilitate dialogue among the different parts of the affected community. Here we found it important that the often young social workers who have studied far from their home area for many years are made aware of the traditional set up and its possibilities. This makes them more effective in their efforts of encouraging community dialogue. In this respect we are just at the start of an interesting process.

Identifying mechanisms of conflict resolution on a micro level and finding ways to strengthen them in the context and in synergy with the church and modern approaches should be a priority area for further research.

4. Conclusion

There is no doubt that traditional ways of conflict prevention and resolution are still strongly rooted in Acholi society and thus still have the potential to play an important and positive role at community level. However they have been much weakened not only during the colonial rule, but even more so in the course of the current conflict. The destitute poverty of the people and the restricted living conditions in IDP camps pose major obstacles to traditional ways of living. Furthermore the cultural identity has shifted in the last century, now for most people being strongly based on the three pillars of “Tradition”, ”Christianity or Islam” and “modern/global” influences. Approaches to conflict management should strive to integrate and support practices related to the three pillars of identity in a way that they can complement each other and produce effects of synergy. There is an evident danger that they can easily be seen as competing with each other, thus enhancing confusion, disorientation and conflicts among people.

The adjusting and blending traditional methods in times of rapid change is quite a challenge that calls for further research and documentation in this area. But in addition to that, a systematic process of discussion with the objective of generating ideas and agreeing on how best traditional approaches can be used to foster peaceful living in and among communities is much needed. In this process the communities at grassroots level should be involved, including traditional-, church-, and civic leaders.

5. Annex

5.1. Literature received and reviewed

The department has received 38 documents from 6 different organizations and persons. Four documents were translated from Acholi into English. Additionally, we screened the following books / report for contents concerning our topic and inserted the relevant information into our report:

Pain, Dennis (1997). *The bending of the spears. Producing consensus for peace and development in Northern Uganda*. A report commissioned by International Alert, in partnership with Kacoke Madit.

Behrend, Heike (1999). *Alice Lakwena and the holy spirits. War in Northern Uganda 1986-97*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.

Finnstroem, Sverker (2003). *Living with bad surroundings. War and existential uncertainty in Acholiland, Northern Uganda*. Lund (Sweden): Studentlitteratur.

Below we have compiled the basic information on the documents that we have received from different organizations (e.g. Kal Kwaro, LDI, CRS, ACORD ...) or friends following our request for papers on traditional conflict management in Acholi. They are sorted according to the comments we have added to the list in the following sequence:

- Papers that contained information on traditional conflict management in Acholi (Acholi: on the topic)
- Papers that elaborated on the topic of peace building in Acholi, but without referring to traditional methods
- Papers that inform on Acholi history (of different clans, specific customs, the recent re-installation of the chiefs)
- Papers that elaborate on peace building as a general topic, but not specific to any geographical area
- Papers that describe the topic of peace building referring to other countries (Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa ...)

The list contains information on the title and content of each document as well as our comments to it. Interested readers can get the full text of the reviewed documents on request.

Kind of document	Content of document	Comments
A paper on Acholi by-laws	Cik me culu bal - culo kwor - I Gulu district (Rules regulating compensation for different "crimes" in Gulu district) ,Cik ma lubo tic pa Rwodi moo, I kare me culo kwor (Regulations governing the operations of Chiefs during compensation for death)	Acholi: on the topic - interesting
A paper on "kir" (taboo) and requirements of the different forms of kir	Kir that requires a sheep to be sacrificed, Kir that requires a goat to be sacrificed, Things that require sheep oil	Acholi: on the topic - interesting
A paper on the roles of Acholi traditional leaders in fostering peace and harmony in society	Aim of the workshop (To promote awareness of human rights and to focus on the on going peace initiative in Acholi sub-region with a view to identify the obstacles to peace and proposing ways and means of accelerattng the peace process, Brief background of how the Acholi culture have been suppressed, Examples of conflicts, Traditional roles / stages in fostering peace and harmony, Description of practical traditional leadership roles in peace building, Possible obstacles to peace, Possible ways and means of accelerating peace process	Acholi: on the topic - interesting
A paper on building sustainable peace in Northern Uganda.	Acholi chiefdom, The role of present Rwodi in Acholi society, Rwodi Acholi and current peace effort, The way forward	Acholi: on the topic - interesting
A paper on rules that guide the behavior a chief (Rwot moo)	The laws that govern the chief: to have respect, be trust worthy, how he should behave in both public and private, and what is not expected of him. How people should behave towards Rwot and what should not be done to him or in front of him.	Acholi: on the topic - interesting

<p>A presentation by Rwot Acana II, made during a study tour in South Africa and Mozambique</p>	<p>Background of conflict in Uganda, The Northern Uganda conflict, Reconciliation in African culture with special reference to Acholi (luo) society, The process of reconciliation, acceptance of responsibility, Repentance, Forgiveness, Compensation, Ceremony of reconciliation, Implications, General beliefs of the Acholi, Overview of the peace process from about a year ago, The on going peace initiative, The role of traditional and religious leaders up to-date, Key outcomes, Challenges, Conclusion</p>	<p>Acholi: on the topic - interesting</p>
<p>A conference Paper, COPE working paper No 32.</p>	<p>Key research findings: an introduction to the conference , Key finding from research on the "Roles of traditional and Modern leadership structures", HIV and conflict in Gulu District: findings from Acord study, High lights of "Conflict and means of livelihood research, Armed conflict and human rights: a critical evaluation of the treatment of civilians in Northern Uganda</p>	<p>Acholi: on the topic - interesting</p>
<p>An organigram outlining the structure of the “Acholi Traditional Leaders Council”</p>	<p>Structure of Acholi traditional leader (Rwodi moo) council 19/06/2001</p>	<p>Acholi: on the topic - interesting</p>
<p>A paper referring to the roles of Acholi traditional leaders in conflict management</p>	<p>Background information (talks of the current conflict in Northern Uganda, and the phases it has gone through), When Acholi leadership started, Current structure of Acholi traditional leadership, The role of the traditional leaders in the context of resilience and dialogue, Traditional conflict management mechanisms, Proposed strategies and approaches, Plan of action, Budget</p>	<p>Acholi: on the topic - interesting, but brief on the concerned topic</p>
<p>A paper titled “Mato Oput”</p>	<p>Brief description of the "stepping on the egg" of a returnee, then outlining the experience of returnee in captivity, finally attached budget for the ceremony</p>	<p>Acholi: on the topic - paper titled mato oput, but depicting a process of "stepping on the egg"</p>

<p>A draft paper on using African approaches in conflict resolution</p>	<p>Introduction; the significance of incorporating african values in the resolution of conflicts in its continent; what is culture and its role in society; elements of African traditional conflict resolution; case study of the Acholis; conclusion</p>	<p>Acholi: on the topic - Mato Oput is described as a "success story", idealizing traditional procedures</p>
<p>A web page on a case study of Acholi and Karamojong Tribes in Peace Building</p>	<p>The Acholi (Rituals of resolving conflicts), The Karamojong (Reasons for cattle raida and way of resolving conflict)</p>	<p>Acholi: on the topic - very brief and superficial</p>
<p>Report on the conference "Peace Research & the reconciliation agenda" District Farm Institute, Gulu, September 1999.</p>	<p>Introduction (the aim of the conference), Axes along which reconciliation is required (Uganda - Sudan relationship, Government-civilian population, UPDF-civilian population, acholi sub-region-karamoja sub-region, home-diaspora), Social-legal prerequisites to reconciliation (the amnesty bill, human rights and the rule of law), Socio-economic issues (return and resettlement of all categories of displaced people; rehabilitation, reconstruction and infra-structural development; Industrialisation, commercial agricultural development; community economic empowerment), Psycho-social Issues (marginalisation of youth and women, secondary and higher education, sexual abuse), Opportunity for creating a conducive climate for reconciliation (dialogue,dialogue and more dialogue; Information and research, constructive international pressure, networking and collaboration), Concluding remarks</p>	<p>Acholi: peace building on a macro level - without special reference to traditional procedures</p>
<p>A general Report on the peace process in Northern Uganda</p>	<p>The Northern Dialogue for peaces workshop, Human insecurity in Northern Uganda, Stakeholders in the peace process, Research and Policy intervention</p>	<p>Acholi: peace process: not touching the "traditional" topic</p>

A COPE Methodology Paper. COPE working Paper No 34.	Introduction (The role and modalities of research in conflict situations), Theoretical underpinning, Methodological underpinning, Research methodologies used, Practical dilemmas, Further uses to which the research can be put, Research as an integral part of peace building and reconciliation	Acholi: peacebuilding - research oriented, not touching the "traditional" topic
A paper on a case study on the 1992-1995 Post Conflict Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme in Uganda.	Executive summary with the aim of the EU policy to the conflict in Uganda, challenges, the cause of the conflict, aim of the DRP, and the effects of the war in Northern Uganda, which has led to NURP I. The EU policy on Economic, trade and investment; development co-operation support; Democratisation, government capacity and Decentralisation; security sector reform; Demobilisation and Reintegration of ex-combatants; small arms proliferation; Peace building initiatives; Civil societies	Acholi: politics of EU (macro), not touching the topic of traditional conflict management
History and culture of Lamogi	Lamogi chiefs, The god of lamogi people (Got kilak)	Acholi: pure history of Lamogi
A paper on the History and chiefs of the Pagak chiefdom	How Kal kwero of Pagak began, how it was inherited, problems that interfered with leaderships, scramble over leaderships or Rwotship, distribution of responsibilities to various clans, and the current leadership of Pagak	Acholi: pure history of Pagak
A paper on history and Chiefs of Parabongo	How people of Parabongo came to settle in the current place, the initial clans of Parabongo, various Rwodi of Parabongo, the chieftain in the period of war and elders that are helping Rwot Dominic in the leadership	Acholi: pure history of Parabongo
A paper on how sacrifices were made on the mount Kilak	Things required and procedures of making sacrifices on the mount Kilak	Acholi: pure history of a specific custom

<p>Draft Report on efforts in peace building by strengthening traditional structures and procedures</p>	<p>Existing machinery for reconciliation in Acholi and Uganda, Procedures undertaken for peace building and reconciliation process, The way forward joint forum for peace, Challenges micro-finance, Challenges - Strengthening cultural institution, Resolution made by chief during a peace building workshop in Kitgum district, Profile on major clans and sub-clans in Kitgum district</p>	<p>Acholi: reinstallation of rwodi - of historical interest on a macro level</p>
<p>Report on activities carried out in the process of the reinstallation of traditional structures (chiefs, etc.)</p>	<p>Introduction (activities which were carried out by the District local government in collaboration with the resident district commissioner Kitgum and Acord-Kitgum), General background , Strategy, Processess for revival / reactivation (Identification, Mobilization of the concerned persons, Restoration of power, Building confidence, Elimination of impoosters), outcome, lessons learnt, impact analysis (peace building)</p>	<p>Acholi: reinstallation of rwodi - of historical interest on a macro level</p>
<p>Minutes of a meeting of chiefs and members of the District Reconciliation Peace Team</p>	<p>Agenda, Problems identified, Address by the L.C V - Gulu (lok kom Awitong), Tekwaro me Acholi, Lok ikum roco kal kwaro, Mitti me kacoke makilwongo ni,</p>	<p>Acholi: reinstallation of rwodi - of historical interest on a macro level</p>
<p>Minutes of a meeting of stakeholders (traditional, civic and church leaders, government, NGOs) held on 18th Nov,1999 at Gulu DFI</p>	<p>Ground rules, introduction of the chiefs, review of the work done after a meetings of different clans in relation to ACORD visit, constitution of the Kal kwaro, evaluation of what has not yet been got and done, what should be done, the origin of bringing back the cultural leadership in the current government. The conclusion: the days of installation of the chiefs, and the report of ACORD, what to be done in future.</p>	<p>Acholi: reinstallation of rwodi - of historical interest on a macro level</p>

A paper on Peace education	Main elements that are tackled in the training of peace education and conflict prevention plus resolution skill	general: peace education, not touching the "traditional" topic
Excerpts taken from a study by Helga Gibbons: "Dynamics of peace building"		general: peace building - interesting opening remarks, but very general, not touching the traditional topic
A paper on aspects of local and national peace building	Introduction (use of local knowledge in peace building), Underlying principles (open dialogue, consensus decision-making)	general: peace building: interesting, but very general and brief
A report on a workshop on traditional methods in conflict resolution	African traditional methods, Discussion and reactions, Key issues that were identified by the discussion group on African traditional methods, Significant players identified in this field of African traditional methods, Recommendations on African Traditional methods	general: traditional methods
A paper presented at the All-Africa Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, Addis Ababa, 1999	Some conceptual considerations: how traditional mechanism should be integrated into the mainstream discourse; early warning [definitions of early warning]	general: traditional methods - interesting, but very general and brief

A paper on traditional leaders and conflict resolution in Bougainville	Change and continuity in traditional leadership, Origins of councils of chiefs system, The council of chiefs system, The council of elders - system, Combining the systems, Bougainville chiefs past, present, and future, References	other areas: Bougainville - detailed outline on tradition and conflict resolution in Bougainville
A paper on Tradition of Bashingantahe in Burundi	The civil war in Burundi and its effects, the meaning of Bashingantahe and the role of Bashingantahe people, the role they played in the process of reconciliation and arbitration, reasons for the restoration of Bashingantahe institution, the state of the institution before and after independence, and a research case study that was appeal in the council of notable between a 65 years old Marcien Karushwa from Mushingantahe and Emile Wakana from Bashingantahe.	Other areas: Burundi
A paper on Traditional Conflict Resolution in Kenya	The indigenous methods of conflict resolution among the Pokot, Tukana, Samburu and Marakwet communities in North Rift Kenya	other areas: Kenya - interesting!
A paper on a case study of the Pokot and Maasai Peace Building Culture	Peace concepts and symbols used in the processs of reconciliation.(Oсотua, Grass, Leketio, Oloip)	other areas: Kenya - very general
A paper on a case study of the Agacaca Method of Conflict Resolutoin among the Banyarwanda.	Agacaca method of conflict resolution amongst the Banyarwanda.	other areas: Rwanda

A paper on reconciliation in Rwanda	The search for Justice, Living with the enemy, Return to Gacaca, Truth and consequences, Long live ubuntu	other areas: Rwanda - interesting point: gacaca system similar to mato oput? But very little info on "real" gacaca
A paper presented at the All-Africa Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, Addis Ababa, 1999	Introduction (a brief history of Somaliland), The role of traditional leaders under Siad Barre, Evaluation of clan structures, Progress to peace, Role of women, How the peace conference have worked, Next step, Conclusions, The institutionalization of the Guurti and their controversial role in the resolving the second round of fighting in Somaliland, Dynamics of peace building, Strengthening social capital, Strengthening Institutional structure, The peace committee for Somaliland	other areas: Somaliland
A paper on the Roles of the Traditional Leadership and the Local Government	Different Research titles that IPT did in the period of two years from 2000; Background to the research, Local leaders complain of their status and powers and lack of clarity of their role in the legal documents of South African constitution and the Local Government Act, Problems caused by policy gap.	other areas: South africa
A paper on African Principles of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation	The need for Africans to find African solution to African problems, the aim of the conference, African approaches, Follow up and conclusion	other areas: South Africa, Rwanda, etc. - very general

5.2. List of documents compiled and reviewed by PSSP Caritas

Most of the documents depicted in the following list are transcripts from interviews that our program carried out with traditional leaders and traditional healers in the context of our research on “traditional coping in general” and “traditional coping with posttraumatic stress”. Other interviews were carried out explicitly to complement missing information to be able to compile the above report. Contents that were used and summarized in the report are printed bold.

No	Document title	Function of informant	CLAN	Content of paper
1	Traditional concepts and ways of coping with traumatic stress	Chief at sub-clan level and elder	Alokolum	The concept of ajiji (causes, signs and treatment); coping with killings: mato oput (indication and procedures) and kwero merok; coping with incidents related to hunting and other distressing events
2	Traditional concepts and ways of coping with traumatic stress	elder	Lamogi Palema	The concept of ajiji (causes, signs and treatment); coping with killings: mato oput (indication and procedures) and kwero merok; coping with incidents related to hunting and other distressing events
3	Traditional concepts and ways of coping with traumatic stress	traditional healer	Bwobo	How J. became a traditional healer, coping with killings: mato oput (indication and procedures) and kwero merok; coping with incidents related to hunting and other distressing events
6	Traditional concepts and ways of coping with traumatic stress - Confirmatory Meeting	Ajwaka (diviner)	Acholi Labwor	More on Akote, Joggi (jok mony, jok lyel, jok lurongo), Agat, Moyo, helping returnees from rebel captivity , The different types of madness

7	Traditional coping in general and coping with traumatic stress	traditional leaders (chiefs and elders)	Payira, Lamogi, Patiko, Bwobo, Alokolum, Puranga, Paibona, Guna, Paicho, ...	Formerly abducted children: common experiences and how to help them (e.g. stepping on the egg, etc.); The concept of ajji with signs, causes, and treatment. 'Bale pa wic': its causes, signs, and treatment. Traditional war: what could lead to war, the 'lapir' and blessings of the chief's mother, the differences between traditional war and the current war.
10	Traditional coping in general and coping with traumatic stress	17 elders	different clans around Mucwini sub county	the concept of ajji; Comparing the current war to traditional wars; Coping with killings - 'kwero merok' and mato oput (indication and procedures) ; Coping with hunting incidents and other distressing events, especially on spirit related illness; Helping returnees (stepping on the egg, applicability of "tum", "mato oput" and other traditional procedures)
11	Traditional coping in general and coping with traumatic stress	chief and elders	Labongo-Amida, ...	The concept of ajji, signs and treatment; Comparing the current war to traditional wars; Coping with killings - kwero merok: indication and procedures, mato oput: indication and procedures ; Coping with hunting incidents; Bale pa wic - causes, signs, treatment and interpretations; How to help returnees (e.g. stepping on the egg, etc.);
13	Traditional ways of Conflict Resolution	elder	Payira.	The number of the annointed chiefs, Traditional leader's council, Traditional By-laws, Traditional court tribunal, Stages in conflict resolution and then Mato Oput
14	Tradional ways of Conflict Resolution	Elders	Alokolum	Conflicts that can be solved at village level; conflicts that are traditionally taken to the chief, general steps taken in conflict resolution, purification rituals in conflict resolution, bending the spears

15	Traditional ways of Conflict Resolution	Community Resource person	Koyo	Detailed description of the process that leads to Mato Oput and the ceremony itself
----	---	---------------------------	------	--