Effects of Conflict-Induced Displacement on Women in DRC, Kenya and Uganda

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Introduction

This paper draws on evidence gathered during a major collaborative research project *Making Transitional Justice Work for Women* (eastern DRC, Kenya and northern Uganda) conducted between 2013 and 2016. The project involved in-depth interviews and focus groups with 275 women impacted by conflict and 68 key informants across the three countries. While internal displacement was not a primary focus of the research, it is a feature of all three countries' conflicts and emerged as a significant theme.[1] The research yielded evidence that internal displacement is a gendered process; that it may be a product of unequal gender relations and may in turn compound and deepen pre-conflict gender inequalities. Furthermore, the evidence demonstrates that displacement has strong intergenerational effects, including after people have returned home or resettled.

Conflicts in all three countries have caused large-scale internal displacement. While international bodies have developed expertise in responding to internal displacement, such responses typically occur within an emergency response paradigm focusing on immediate physical survival needs. Internally displaced people are too often over-looked in international policy and planning beyond emergency response programs, yet experiences during and after displacement have critical implications for gender relations. This research evidences profound and lasting social, economic and psychological impacts of displacement on gender relations during immediate post-displacement, prolonged multi-year displacement and, several years after return. In this paper we argue for greater attention to the socio-political effects of displacement and how these effects manifest across time.

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[1] The primary focus of the research was women's access to justice after mass violence. Internal displacement emerged as a significant theme alongside health, education, gender relations, detraumatisation, reparations, prosecution, non-recurrence and others. Further information about the research methodology (including demographics of women and key informant participants, research sites, and interview processes), along with greater discussion of internal displacement and other identified themes is available in the research reports. The reports are available in full for free download:
R Shackel and L Fiske (2016) *Making Justice Work for Women: Democratic Republic of Congo Country Report*: https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au//bitstream/2123/15628/2/DRC%20Full%20Report.pdf;
R Shackel and L Fiske (2016) *Making Justice Work for Women: Kenya Country Report*: https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au//bitstream/2123/15629/2/Kenya%20Full%20Report.pdf;
L Fiske and R Shackel (2016) *Making Justice Work for Women: Uganda Country Report*: https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au//bitstream/2123/15630/4/Uganda%20Full%20Report.pdf.
Summary reports are also available through the Sydney eScholarship Repository: https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/browse?type=author&order=ASC&rpp=20&value=Shackel%2C+Rita

Approaches to Internal Displacement

Internally displaced people and refugees share many commonalities, in that their movement is forced. Like refugees, they have been uprooted from their homes, livelihoods and social networks. The experience of displacement is one of rupture and loss. Unlike refugees however, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have not crossed an international border and therefore do not engage any rights or protections under the *Refugees Convention*. However difficult these rights may be for refugees to realise, IDPs have no treaty explicitly covering their rights, and no international body with a legal mandate to ensure their well-being. Internally displaced people typically are not "seen [by their governments] as citizens who merit protection and humanitarian assistance", but are more commonly seen "as part of the enemy, if not the enemy itself. Therefore, they are neglected, and perhaps even persecuted" (Deng 2001, 145). Responses by the international community are constrained by the sovereign right of the state to determine access to IDPs.

Internal displacement has increased dramatically in recent decades, from 1.2 million people in 1982, to 40.8 million people in 2015 (Castles 2003, 14; UNHCR 2016, 2). This increase in internal displacement primarily reflects the changing typologies of warfare in the post Cold War era. Most wars in the last 25 years have been "internal wars connected with identity struggles [and] ethnic divisions" (Castles 2003, 18). In modern civil wars "the aim is not control of territory, but political control of the population. Mass population expulsion is often a strategic goal… Both government forces and insurgents use exemplary violence including torture and sexual assault as means of control" (Castles 2003, 18). Civilian populations have become prime targets in war, with a consequent increase in the numbers of people displaced from their homes, most of whom do not cross an international border and remain within the jurisdiction of their own state.[2]

The rising number of IDPs, the vulnerabilities created by displacement and the tensions between state-sovereignty and humanitarian concerns became an increasing focus of the international community throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. IDPs enjoyed a period of enhanced focus as a target for policy, law and program delivery from the creation of the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Internally Displaced Persons in 1992, the development of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998), and the allocation (by the Secretary-General) of primary responsibility for IDPs to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (2000). A particular achievement during this period was the broadening of programmatic responses to internal displacement from humanitarian assistance to also include protection needs. Over the last decade however, there has been an increasing trend towards 'mainstreaming' IDPs within the broader

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[2] The rise in internal displacement can also be linked to border protection and containment policies of nations of the Global North which are increasingly determined to prevent out-flows of refugees and keep refugees and asylum seekers out of their territory. The UNHCR role has increasingly focussed on containment in recent decades. The multitude of factors contributing to the rise in internal displacement is beyond the scope of this paper. For more on this see for example: Crisp and Dessalegne 2002; Phuong 2005 or UNHCR 2006.

category of 'vulnerable persons'. This approach has been questioned by Elizabeth Ferris of the Brookings Institute as weakening recognition of the specific vulnerabilities and needs that arise as a consequence of displacement. "IDPs are now", according to Ferris, "less visible than they were a decade ago" and many of the gains made are at risk of being eroded (Ferris 2015).

Even while IDPs were a policy focus, much of this focus was on immediate survival needs, initially within a humanitarian mandate and focussed on provision of aid (food, water, shelter), later expanding to include protection (against further attacks and sexual violence). This model, institutionally located within the portfolio of Emergency Relief Coordination, centres around physical survival within a crisis framework. This approach is in many ways understandable, particularly given the well documented needs and vulnerabilities in both the initial and longer-term stages of displacement including lack of shelter, high rates of food insecurity and malnutrition, sexual exploitation, disease and mortality, poor access to health services, heightened vulnerability to violence and exploitation (Mooney 2005, 16 - 17). This approach is also often a reflection of political and diplomatic sensitivities of negotiating with a sovereign state for international access to its own citizens (Deng 2001, 145).

The framing of displacement within a crisis framework draws attention to immediate survival, relief and protection at the expense of the very important socio-political effects of displacement and how these effects change over time. Internal displacement is approached primarily as a geographical displacement and the material effects of that. Evidence gathered in this research indicates that displacement needs to also be understood as a socio-political displacement; that the process of displacement involves disruption and often severance of important social bonds, networks and relationships, with profound effects. A geographical focus on displacement encourages a focus on how many *people* have been forced out of place. A socio-political lens enables a clearer view of the effects of displacement on social relations and structures, thereby drawing greater attention to the impacts on gender roles and relations.

These socio-political effects are especially important to consider in societies with relatively weak formal citizenship, and among populations within societies that have normatively weak citizenship (women, ethnic minorities, children) who, despite formally holding full citizenship, realise their 'rights' through social relationships. In many highly patriarchal societies, including the countries under study here, regardless of legal citizenship status, women realise their rights primarily through relationships with male relatives (fathers, husbands and sons) (Fiske and Shackel 2015; Yuval-Davis 1993). Displacement from familial relationships often has an equal or greater bearing on women and children's life experiences than displacement from place, yet is rarely a primary focus of responses to internal displacement.

Women in the DRC and Kenya articulated a process by which rupturing of familial (particularly spousal) relationships was a major *cause* of their geographical displacement and inhibited

opportunities for safe return regardless of any improvements in security in their home regions. Women in northern Uganda, most of whom were displaced with their families, described how prolonged displacement in IDP camps lead to comprehensive breakdown in the social fabric of their families and communities in highly gendered ways - leaving women today with primary responsibility for domestic and livelihood activities, yet with no expansion of their house-hold or community decision-making power.

While the fracturing of formal citizenship rights entailed in internal displacement affects men, women and children, women's access to rights is doubly impaired: not only are any formal rights previously held effectively suspended by a neglectful or persecutory state, but the relationships through which they accessed these rights may be additionally ruptured or distorted. This has multiple flow-on effects to gender relations among internally displaced populations including causing greater imbalance in power-relations between men and women within family groups, forcing women into exploitative and/or abusive relationships, and leaving women with little or no social support network and at greater risk of the harms associated with internal displacement. These relational effects of displacement extend to intergenerational effects with both immediate and lasting impacts on displaced children.

People may be internally displaced into camps, particularly when large populations are displaced at one time, or into urban environments. While having significant similarities, urban and encamped displaced people may have distinct experiences of displacement, different support structures and different needs. People displaced into camps typically come under the mandate of UN bodies (UNHCR or World Food Program for example), INGOs or a state-based agency (not infrequently the military) and are often compelled to depend on such agencies for food, shelter, security and other needs. Their movement may be restricted and opportunities for self-sufficiency and collective self-determination are limited. People displaced into urban environments have lesser access to the resources of these agencies and more commonly rely on familial and other social support networks. Urban displaced people can become absorbed into the local population and may be hidden from view of government and NGO policy and programming responses. This may result in greater autonomy, but it can also result in greater vulnerability and hardship.

A comprehensive overview of the diversity of IDP experiences is beyond the scope of this paper, however, this diversity is important when considering the countries under study here. The DRC has a mix of encamped and urban IDP populations, with a broad range of experiences. Kenya initially had both IDP camps and urban IDP populations. The IDP camps have closed, but a significant number of people remain displaced (primarily in urban settings) and largely invisible to political and policy actors. Almost everyone who was internally displaced in northern Uganda was displaced into IDP camps. We draw on some emblematic features of both urban and encamped displacement in each country to draw out the ways that displacement can affect gender

roles and relations, familial relations and the intergenerational effects. We focus first on the DRC, where displacement is diverse, current and fluid, before turning to Kenya where internal displacement has been declared over, leaving those who remain displaced largely in urban settlements and lost from policy focus with specific intergenerational implications, and finally to northern Uganda where the longer term effects of prolonged forced encampment are manifesting several years after return.

DRC

Gender relations as casual in displacement
Research demonstrates that gender relations are often impacted and may be reconfigured by war and displacement; injury, incapacitation, and death of young men and husbands in conflict shifts the burden of providing for the household's food, care of children and their education, to a much greater extent, and sometimes exclusively, onto women (Lwambo 2013; Kesmaecker-Wissing and Pagot 2015, 9–11; Shackel and Fiske 2016, 79; Shackel 2016, 39; El-Bushra 2003). However, many of the Congolese women with whom we spoke identified gender roles and relations *prior* to their displacement as *causal* to displacement from place and from essential social networks. This was particularly so for women who survived sexual violence. We have argued elsewhere that in classical patriarchal[3] societies, such as DRC, Kenya and Uganda, episodes of sexual violence "expose the powerful ways in which women carry the burden of honour" (Fiske and Shackel 2015, 112). In classical patriarchy women's social status and value are derived primarily through their roles as daughters, wives and mothers, roles that fundamentally rest on chastity, fidelity and honour[4]. Sexual violence is not only an assault and offence against a woman's physical and psychological well-being, but it often precipitates a catastrophic loss of social status and expulsion from social networks. In the DRC a great many women told us of being rejected, ostracised and abandoned by their husbands and communities following rape. A 41-year-old woman in Rutshuru explained that

> *… before being raped my health was very fine and I had sufficient means. After rape, my husband left me… I am unable to do anything for myself. Even if he comes, I am unable to satisfy his needs, so I am nothing in the society.*[5]

This woman went on to explain that without her husband present, she was attacked a second time by militia forces who abducted her and held her captive for six weeks. Upon her return she discovered that her children were *"already on the streets, uneducated and abandoned by*

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[3] For more on classical patriarchy see in particular Kandiyoti (1998) 'Bargaining with patriarchy' and Yuval Davis (1993) 'Gender and nation'.
[4] For more on links between honour and women's social status see Brownmiller (1993) *Against Our Will. Men, women and rape,* Seifert (1996) 'The second front: The logic of sexual violence in wars' and Chesterman (1997) 'Never again … and again: Law, order and the gender of war crimes in Bosnia and beyond'.
[5] Interviewed Rutshuru 22 April 2014.

everyone." This woman and her children were effectively expelled from familial and social relationships essential to their survival. This social rejection, as much as the conflict itself, forced her and her children to leave home and relocate to an IDP camp. This story of abandonment and rejection was frequently repeated by women in all research sites:

> *there are also cases of women raped in the presence of their husbands. The husband lives the event. And they* [the attackers] *tell the husband: "Either we kill you or we rape her." And then the husband says: "Rather than killing me, please go ahead and rape her." She is raped in the presence of her husband. Once she is raped in such circumstances, the husband will ask his wife to go away! [Saying] "You must have consented to do that."*[6]

Dr Mukwege from Panzi Hospital made a similar observation, noting that "What we have observed about these rapes is that they have a huge impact that destroys communities. […] This results in a massive exodus of people from villages, abandoning them to their persecutors" (Mukwege 2011, 2). Women interviewed in this research described the direct connection between their husband's discovery of their rape and their sudden severance from social and family networks and support. These networks are essential for women's access to basic needs such as food, protection, income generation, and meaningful social relationships. The withdrawal of social belonging becomes a direct cause in women's displacement:

> *When the family gets aware that you have been a victim of that act, no one can draw near you. Especially, no one can give you [their] food since they will only be rebuking you saying they do not want you to approach in order not to contaminate [them]… they hated us because of the act we were victim of.*[7]

For women who are internally displaced following sexual violence and abandonment, life typically becomes precarious in the extreme, with heightened vulnerability to further violence, exploitation, homelessness, ill health and poverty:

> *My husband said, "I can't stand living with you any more, I saw in my presence the way they are raping you," and after being raped by three men, we walked all the night, displacing from the village up to Minova. It was a more difficult life in Minova than the place we were before. [M]y children were no longer studying and I was living in a cottage and the owner of the house told me that "I provide you this accommodation for you and your children but you have to work in my garden twice per week" and the rainwater was flooding my house and sometimes an idea comes to my head to flee also to my side and abandon the children.*[8]

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[6] Interviewed Rutshuru 22 April 2014.
[7] Interviewed Minova 21 September 2014.
[8] Interviewed Minova 21 September 2014.

A young Congolese woman interviewed described how she became internally displaced as a teenager following the deaths of both parents. Together with her twin sister she was taken in by relatives in Goma. Shortly after the girls' arrival, the relatives departed Goma and left the girls with a neighbour. Having lost the protection of familial networks, the girls *"had no choice but to go and to stay with him. We started living together but after a couple of days he started raping me."* Her sister fled and the two girls lost touch with each other. She went on to describe how becoming both orphaned and displaced had precipitated a repeating cycle of poverty and violence:

> *I had a lot of cases of rape, as I was a homeless girl, I was moving from a place to another by the lack of a stable place to stay and the fact of moving from one place to another was exposing me to all kinds of violence.*[9]

Given the dire consequences for women and their children of expulsion from social networks, including effective exclusion from their only sources of social provision and protection, it is unsurprising that women generally do not share their experiences, even with other women, including close female family members. This fear of stigmatisation around sexual violence[10] prevented women from seeking help or support, even if they had already been displaced:

> *I said this to myself: "If I let them know, they will inform my husband and he will abandon me while we are both internally displacing with the children. There is no way I will take care of them as IDPs myself where I have no money. I'd better not say anything."*[11]

Effects on gender relations
In addition to gender relations playing a causal role in displacement, displacement impacts on gender roles and relations, often shifting greater responsibilities onto women and children, and placing significant stress on interpersonal relationships through economic pressures, trauma and uncertainty. Internal displacement can lead to high unemployment and role loss among men, increased use of alcohol and increased domestic violence.

In their study of IDP decision-making in the DRC, Lauten and Kesmaecker-Wissing (2015, 11) identified three key concerns guiding IDPs' choice of destination: "individual and family security; economic opportunity and ability to maintain livelihoods; and the strength of social networks." However, not all IDPs are successful in these goals in their new location, creating

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[9] Interviewed Goma 24 September 2014.
[10] For more on this see Shackel and Fiske 2016, 45–49.
[11] Interviewed Bweremana 23 April 2014.

fertile ground for the continuing effects of initial displacement, or of numerous displacements, to be felt in the future, including long-term.

Food insecurity and poverty are among the most pressing effects of displacement, particularly as IDPs often flee their homes with little money and few resources. The need to re-establish lives for themselves and their children, restarting life from financial positions of destitution, has proven difficult for many of the women we spoke with. "Many IDPs struggle to make ends meet because they are no longer able to pursue their usual economic activities and have difficulty in establishing new ones that pay well enough" (Kesmaecker-Wissing and Pagot 2015, 8). Providing for their children was a priority for many of the women we spoke with, and a source of distress:

> *I am in trouble because I scarcely afford to feed my children. I and my daughter have to carry burdens and digging in people's gardens for living. With regard to what happened to me, my husband decided to flee to his own and abandoned me and got married to another woman.*[12]

The little work that is available to IDPs is often menial, insecure and for low wages. This contributes to displaced women's feelings of hopelessness at their situations:

> *[W]e moved to Minova as displaced people. Once here in Minova, we are surviving by working for the others because we have no financial means. Because we cannot have food if we do not work for others... When I get up I wash my face, I fetch water then I go and look for someone to work for.*[13]

> *I was a teacher, but gave up from the time we became internally displaced people since 2012. So, we spend the day sitting and thinking of our life problems.*[14]

The financial pressures experienced by IDPs, were often further tied to the educational needs of children, and placed increasing burdens on the family unit. "[F]amily relationships and cohesion are key to establishing and strengthening the resilience of individuals and communities as a whole" (Kesmaecker-Wissing and Pagot 2015, 8); as one woman stated, *"I don't have any relative and therefore no support. I am alone and defenseless."*[15] Consequently, when the family unit begins to fracture, it fundamentally undermines the ability of IDPs to settle in their new locations, or to experience any sense of peace. Economic pressures can lead to spouses "becoming estranged and avoiding each other as mutual understanding breaks down, husbands

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[12] Interviewed Minova 19 April 2014.
[13] Interviewed Minova 21 September 2014.
[14] Interviewed Minova 21 September 2014.
[15] Interviewed Rutshuru 23 September 2014.

and wives fighting more often and an increased risk of domestic violence" (Pagot 2015). One woman described the effects of displacement on her marriage:

> *As you know, before we were living in the village. We were not living in this center. We were living in a remote area where we were breeding animals, had farms and crops that our children had food every time. But, when the war came, we were obliged to move to this center where we have no house, no land that is. Those who have houses here are renters even though they don't have money to be paying. But they don't have any choice. Once here, we are being raped while our husband did not expect it. Consequently, our husbands get deceived. But, considering that he has nothing to do while you have got children together, we only observe that the love he had for me is decreasing to the extent that most of the time he is no longer agreeing with me.*[16]

Such tensions within intimate partner relationships are exacerbated by the fact that displaced men often find it more difficult to secure work because "their skills may not [be] appropriate in an overstretched local job market, and they are not part of the informal networks that might provide them with income-generating opportunities" (Kesmaecker-Wissing and Pagot 2015, 9). Where the husband is also a survivor of sexual or other violence, "they have not been able to work and contribute to household income because of physical and mental health issues, including not wanting to leave the home because of shame and fear [and] risk of revictimization" (Christian et al. 2011, 238). In a social context which positions the man as the family breadwinner and head of household, the inability to find employment can lead their wives to label them as "lazy", placing further impositions on their authority and fueling further arguments and reconfiguring gender relations (Kesmaecker-Wissing and Pagot 2015, 9). Furthermore,

> alcohol consumption had risen since displacement, particularly among men, as a way of dealing with their distress and concerns. Not only may men come home drunk, they may have spent the money they earned instead of contributing to the family's wellbeing, prompting disputes and in some cases domestic violence. (Kesmaecker-Wissing and Pagot 2015, 12)

This was substantiated in accounts of women in this research:

> *You may be with that man, maybe he is a drunkard, he never performs any tasks in the house, he just comes and demands food without wondering where the food came from. Or he asks for money from his wife after squandering his with prostitutes, you'll forgive him because a woman is weak; but there are other times when you may become fed up with a man, you start taking care of yourself and your children. You'll do any suitable work, any required work because you know that if you don't do it, nobody else will do it. But of*

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[16] Interviewed Bunyakiri 26 September 2014.

course this is very difficult because there is too much work in a household for one person to do it alone. One person is insufficient. You would think: "She is better off the one who has a husband, who is feeding her."[17]

For some IDPs, there was solidarity among extended family and community members; this became a financial and economic crutch for many IDPs in the Kivus, and was "based largely on the awareness that a host today may become an IDP tomorrow and the expectation that goodwill will be reciprocal" (Lauten and Kesmaecker-Wissing 2015, 15–16). However, while the presence of extended family in other parts of the DRC commonly influenced IDPs' decisions to relocate to particular places, the gendered expectations of women sometimes severed these networks:

> *My brother in law promised to bring me at his place but the day he heard that I was raped, he never came to my place up until now, he did not come to my place two years ago, he does not know in which conditions my children are living because I have 6 children, all of them are girls, so he does not know the way I am living, all these things made us tormented. When we are walking, you may think that someone is walking whereas it is a carcass walking in the streets. My spirit was like a thing tormented.*[18]

Effects on children, education, and intergenerational effects
The impacts of displacement on children can be devastating, ranging from immediate trauma and security to intergenerational risks associated with disrupted education and distortions in parent-child relationships (Shackel and Fiske 2016, 77–84). The range of consequences has been catalogued in literature on the particular susceptibility of children, especially orphans, to the negative effects of displacement:

> The premature death of their parents leaves many children without the knowledge or skills they need to make a livelihood. They face the future without education, work training, or the many critical skills they would learn from their parents themselves. Many children, including migrants from rural areas, end up in the street, where they are exposed to risk including drug abuse, sexual abuse, violence and commercial sex: In turn, this way of life makes them susceptible to HIV infection, and increases their poverty. (Smith 2002, 67)

Accounts of conflict and displacement separating parents from children were common among the women in this research project. Their accounts highlight the precariousness of their daily circumstances – marked by incessant food insecurity, homelessness, and threats of sexual violence:

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[17] Interviewed Rutshuru 23 September 2014.
[18] Interviewed Minova 19 April 2014.

I am alone because my children have gone everyone their way. No one knows where they are sleeping. No one is providing them with food.[19]

There are also cases of children on streets, for example the case in which a little street girl has been attempted to be raped on the street but this little girl escaped by the skin of her teeth and after the trial the little girl does not have a safe place to go and said "I am a war displaced girl, my parents were killed during the war and I do not know where to go". There are not safe places where those children may be placed.[20]

Women in an IDP camp in Bweremana told of rising malnutrition and preventable illnesses among their children, *"They spend days without eating. … because of poverty our children are about to die of malnutrition. And if you look at both the IDPs and the local community's children, they are different."*[21]

The discovery of sexual violence perpetrated against mothers constituted further occasions of trauma for children, particularly as mass rape has been systematically deployed throughout conflicts in DRC as a weapon of social fear, humiliation and identity destruction (Shackel and Fiske 2016, 19). Such tactics of violence cross generations, and their nature as a social weapon, often leads perpetrators to conduct these acts in view of others:

They raped me and my daughter and I was raped in the presence of my daughter, I was taken by three men. On top of that, my daughter has been raped too in my presence. This fact affected me so much and after the fact, they told us to go but as it was getting dark, we could not walk during the night and we spent our night in one of the villages on the way to Numbi and the following day, we moved to Kalungu.[22]

The impacts of sexual violence can ripple out with far reach across the community, and with destabilizing impact, tearing its very social fabric. In the words of Panzi Hospital Medical Director Dr Denis Mukwege,

When children witness the torture of their own parents, they no longer recognize parental authority. When children 12, 13, and 14 years old become pregnant from rape and give birth to fatherless children, it creates turmoil in the community that leads to a collective loss of identity. And this destruction of social cohesion results in the total lack of social organization. (2011, 2)

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[19] Interviewed Rutshuru 22 April 2014.
[20] Key informant interview Goma 18 April 2014.
[21] Interviewed Bweremana 23 April 2014.
[22] Interviewed Minova 19 April 2014.

Most often, however, the women we spoke with expressed grave concerns about the inability of their children to access education. Education was viewed as key to a stable and happier future, and its absence noted as a common reason for the perpetuation of cycles of disadvantage and violence:

> *"[O]nly school can help somebody. When a child goes to school, he is able to find a job and to fend for himself and his old parents."*[23]

> *"[M]ost of them are not going to school, they are a hidden bombshell, we have school-aged children including those who are born out of rape, they are not going to school and tomorrow they could be dangerous for the society. They will grow up and sometimes they can organise a malicious group, so we need to take care of those children."*[24]

All the women in this research project found it extremely difficult to keep their children in school due to conflict-related poverty. Internally displaced women however, found it almost impossible to maintain their children's education. This causes great distress to both parents and children:

> *You find that all your children are going to school while you have no job, no food, maybe you are renting a house. Then getting money to pay their school becomes hard. Each child should have shoes, uniform, school bag while you yourself have no work to do. This makes it harder to the time that you decide that some of them give up while others keep on. The one you ask to give up feels bad and thinks you hate him/her while you are yourself feeling bad when seeing him/her not going to school.*[25]

> *Once here [at the center], you keep on getting children while there are no means to send them to school. As I explained you, my husband went out looking for jobs; he did not get any and did not get back.*[26]

The pressures placed on parents, and the difficult choices required of parents when faced with the lack of opportunities and resources available to IDPs, can negatively impact the relationship between themselves and their children. Pagot (2015) (see also Kesmaecker-Wissing and Pagot 2015, 13), described as "the most striking thing" the fact that many IDP children

> had lost respect for their parents, particularly their fathers, and distanced themselves from them. Children see their parents struggling, and sometimes failing, in their role as carers, providers and figures of authority, and some appeared resentful at having had to drop out

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[23] Interviewed Rutshuru 23 September 2014.
[24] Interviewed Minova 19 April 2014.
[25] Interviewed Bunyakiri 26 September 2014.
[26] Interviewed Bunyakiri 26 September 2014.

of school to help out with household tasks and earning money. Girls are often the first to have to do so.

Even families able to maintain their children's education in IDP camps faced obstacles. Displaced children frequently face discrimination in schools (see Shackel and Fiske 2016, 81–82), and schooling environments proved hostile for those children who, during the course of their displacement, had experienced some form of sexual violence:

They never want IDPs to study in [the school in Bweremana]. That school is almost empty.[27]

When I finally went to school, the other students started laughing at me. "That is Musaada, who was raped by soldiers. Don't you see that she hasn't been to school for four months?" So I couldn't have peace of mind. Whenever I spoke, they would remind me of those facts. I kept crying over and over, until I left school. My mother encouraged me to stay there, but I refused. They were always pointing fingers at me even in the neighbourhood, in the streets.[28]

Internal displacement in DRC is distorting and often severing familial and communal relationships. Pervasive sexual violence in the conflict is combining with conservative pre-conflict gender norms to produce particularly harmful effects for women and children. Unsurprisingly, many women expressed nostalgia towards their home villages – places where strong communal bonds created a network of support and social relationships that helped ensure the adequate provision of basic requirements:

The conflict has negatively changed our lives as we can no longer farm. In the past, all families were farming and eat well. But, today we hardly find food as we are no longer together and have no access to our farms.[29]

For this reason, many women said their greatest desire was for peace and to return home (see Shackel and Fiske 2016, 54–57):

Peace first because even here where we are living, we are leading a hard life. Rather than leaving us in these hard conditions where people are dying, children are dying, re-establish peace so that we can go back where we came from and once there we will re-start our farming activities and overcome this situation.[30]

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[27] Interviewed Bweremana 23 April 2014.
[28] Interviewed Bunyakiri 26 September 2014.
[29] Interviewed Minova 21 September 2014.
[30] Interviewed Bweremana/ 23 April 2014.

<u>**Kenya**</u>

Post-crisis: intergenerational disadvantage

Internal displacement may come to an end through local integration, resettlement (within the country or internationally as a refugee) or return to home. Each of these resolutions may happen with the assistance of government or international agencies, or in an ad hoc manner as individuals and family groups make their own determinations. States often have a vested interest in declaring internal displacement situations to have finished as an important signal of return to normalcy post-crisis (Mooney 2005, 22). Kenya's Post-Election Violence (PEV) of 2007-8 caused over 660,000 people to be displaced both to IDP camps and informal urban settlements (UNHRC 2012, 7). The Kenyan government implemented several rounds of assisted return packages (land and money) and declared in October 2010 that all IDP camps were closed and PEV-related internal displacement to have concluded (Kamungi 2013, 7). Despite return and resettlement programs and the government's declaration, large numbers of people remain internally displaced particularly in urban areas (UNHRC 2012; NRC and IDMC 2015). Remaining IDPs are struggling for recognition with implications for their health, security, education, political participation and livelihoods. While the effects of this hidden ongoing displacement are far reaching and in need of attention, we focus here on the intergenerational effects in particular.

Internally displaced women in Kenya, like those in DRC, reported great difficulty in maintaining their children's education following displacement. These difficulties resulted from a number of causes: financial pressures having lost access to productive resources and social networks, loss of documents necessary for accessing education subsidies and, children taking on livelihood roles to support the family.

Some women were unable to find enough money for all their children to go to school, and consequently had to choose which child(ren) to send. This decision sometimes carried gender implications.

> *From that time we ran away, we have been staying here. We left all the property, livestock and all other things. When we left, all our property was burnt. … Children who were going to school are now not going to school and now my two children who are in form one, one of them is at home and one is trying his luck. I do not know if I will manage because I do not have any source of income. The girl remained at home and the boy continued with his education.*[31]

An internally displaced woman in Nairobi, explained that her son left school to work and earn some money to help provide food for the family. She explained that he was so distraught at

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[31] Interviewed Malindi, March 27, 2014.

seeing her unwell from HIV (contracted through rape during the PEV) that he refused to go to school anymore, and insisted on providing food for her:

> *My youngest son when he was twelve years old. He refused going to school and started looking for food in corridors the time we lacked food. And I am on medication but when I lack food, I cannot take that medicine, you see. And for two years I was in a very bad situation and it is only recently that I started gaining a little strength because of the Doctors counselling. That boy left school because... he has never seen his mother in problems any other time. When we started having problems that child started going to Markiti market to wash potatoes, he kept some then he sells to help me who is sleeping, you see. To date he refuses school. I have tried and he said that he cannot go to school without [us] eating anything because sometimes we lack and like now I am sick. And if we lack something to eat, it will force me, by four, to go to the shop... I if I don't get, I go to someone like her (points to another woman in the focus group) and tell her to help me with one cup of flour to cook for those children. And it made that child to have the feeling of problems and he refused to go to school at all. And so I am saying if the Government give us something small to lift us or support us, we can prevent some issues like children refusing to go to school because of seeing their parents suffering. The children would have been going to school well.[32]*

Women in all Kenyan research sites reported that they lost identity documents during displacement and have not been able to access government subsidies to support their children's education, including those who had returned home. As this woman from Bungoma explains:

> *It is just still the struggle on the birth certificate for the child. I recently went and I was given a form and I filled, but they were telling me that if the child is not having birth certificate, he cannot be given the bursary. They denied me.[33]*

The MIT Poverty Action Lab study identified people displaced by the PEV as a group potentially at high risk of educational disadvantage, and about whom more needs to be known:

> The 2007/8 post-election crisis resulted in major internal displacement, with loss of income, community ties, and property, including documents. There is very little known about the plight of the internally displaced with regards to education. (Glennerster 2011, 13)

Interviews with displaced women, and particularly widowed and/or HIV positive displaced women, suggest that one under-recognised effect of the PEV is the creation of a group of

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[32] Interviewed Nairobi, September 29, 2014.
[33] Interviewed Bungoma, April 15, 2014.

severely disadvantaged children, who will be further disadvantaged in all areas of civic and economic participation later in life due to disruption to, or exclusion from education. More study needs to be conducted to establish the precise demographics and locations of this group, with a view to their recognition as a vulnerable group, and subsequent targeting in policy.

Uganda

Long-term effects after return home

A marked feature of the conflict in northern Uganda was the displacement of 1.84 million people into IDP camps across northern Uganda (UNHCR 2012). Large-scale encampment began in 1996 through the Ugandan government's policy of forcing people into "protected villages," often using violence and threats to make people leave their homes.[34] Most people returned home from 2009 onwards and almost all IDP camps are now closed. The experience of returned IDPs in northern Uganda illustrates that repair of the damaged social networks requires more than return to place. The social displacement of internal displacement can leave lasting legacies that impair individuals', families' and communities' ability to recover.

"Camp life" emerged as a major theme in this research. A majority of the Ugandan women who participated in this research, despite having returned home up to eight years earlier, spoke strongly about the profound impact encampment continues to have on their lives. Many women traced a direct causal line between encampment and the social breakdown, alcoholism, violence, land conflict, and poverty with which most Acholi communities are now struggling:

> *Yes, indeed there is a great link between the experiences of camp life and the problems the people are facing up to today. Because before people came to the camps life was very different, life was different and people were thinking differently but once people were confined in the camps, they started behaving in the camp way, doing things in a direction that was never done before … doing a lot of things that are not befitting and it is from that that you find that there is a lot of family breakdown, a lot of divorce, there is a lot of HIV/AIDS rate, there is a lot … just because of that life we were exposed to in the camps.*[35]

Women described camp life in terms of extreme deprivation, over-crowding, forced dependency, and a profound breakdown in social norms and relationships.[36] Scholars and practitioners

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[34] For more on the violence and coercion used by Ugandan government forces to force the population into camps, see in particular Dolan (2009) and Branch (2007).

[35] Interviewed June 17, 2014.

[36] Conditions in the camps are well documented by multiple studies. See for example: ARLPI and JPCGA 2001; Dolan 2009; Fiske and Shackel 2016; MoH and WHO 2005; MSF 2004; Okello and Hovil 2007; Pham et al. 2007; UHRC and UNOHCHR 2011.

working in the field of internal displacement have long argued that "while camps may be useful in the initial reception phase, … long-term encampment should be avoided, since it leads to hopelessness, inactivity and dependency" (Castles and Van Hear 2005, 31). Prolonged encampment, enforced reliance on humanitarian aid, and the development of camp economies has impacted gender relations and roles in northern Uganda. The data gathered in this research reveals severe rupturing of family and clan structures, high levels of alcoholism, violence and reduced productivity among men, with corresponding increased burdens on women, and secondary consequences for children, particularly around access to land and education and, for those born outside of marriage, dislocation from clan structures and corresponding problems with identity and belonging (Fiske and Shackel 2016).

Breakdown in family and altered social norms

There is no doubt that "camp life" has caused profound harm to the social fabric of Acholi communities. Time and again, women stated that *"camps changed people's mentality," "people lost a sense of humanity," "girls engaged in very risky behaviours," "men started misbehaving towards us,"* and *"life became meaningless"* in the camps. Women described a spiralling disintegration of social norms: people were forced to live in grossly over-crowded conditions; the necessities for survival (food, water, and sanitation) were scarce; and any opportunities for livelihood severed. As a result, alternate economies emerged enabling people to meet survival needs. Young men turned to crime, and formed gangs utilising violence to extract food, sex, and other goods and services from fellow IDPs. Women and girls engaged in transactional sex with men (both fellow IDPs and UPDF soldiers) who could offer a small payment or a degree of protection (UHRC and UNOHCHR 2011, 52). Meanwhile, displaced Acholi men, having lost much status as well as productive roles, took to drinking with subsequent increases in domestic violence.

In 2001 the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative reported the devastating cultural and social effects of the camps, and warned against the future implications:

> As one moves through any of the displaced camps, one of the most depressing sights is to see scores of unattended children everywhere, idle youth loitering about and men drinking alcohol. This is just the surface of a deeper problem that most people, especially elders, feel as something very painful: the collapse of the good cultural values that people used to feel proud of. A whole generation is growing up in a moral and cultural vacuum, and considering that children under the age of 15 account for more than 55 percent of the total population in the IDP camps in Acholi this is a very serious situation.

Seven years later the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported:

Over 800,000 IDPs have been traumatized by terrorist attacks and have remained physically and mentally idle in camps for over five years. Nearly all traditional community and family mechanisms for ensuring cohesiveness and stability in society have broken down. Children have lost years of schooling, preventing them equal access to employment and future opportunities for participating in the national political system and economy. (2008, 139)

Camp life shattered social norms, which had previously guided a wide range of social relations and interactions, including conflict resolution, sexual relations, parenting, marital relations, land allocation, resource distribution, economic activities, and decision-making. The impact of this breakdown in social norms has a doubly harmful effect as large numbers of people are engaging in behaviours that were previously rare; and at the same time, the social structures to deal with transgressions have been profoundly damaged. While the Ugandan government promised a range of programs to assist in the return of displaced people – including economic and psychosocial support – very little assistance was delivered by either Ugandan authorities or the international community. Subsequently, all communities visited in this research reported a toxic mix of family and broader social breakdown, which is distorting gender roles and relations in ways profoundly disadvantageous to women, and with serious consequences for children.

Alcoholism and lost productivity

One of the most commonly reported concerns for women in this research was that men had started drinking alcohol excessively in the camps, and have continued the practice after returning home leading to a lack of productivity and high levels of violence. As one woman summarised:

> *In the camps, men's behaviour really changed. Some men would steal the little supply (food aid) to sell. Such money they would use to buy alcohol. This kind of behaviour has continued up to now. Men have left all their responsibilities. Today women carry all the burden to look after the children and provide for their families. Women struggle to cultivate and grow crops, while the men steal, sell and drink the foodstuff produced.*[37]

Women in all research sites spoke of men in their communities and families drinking from the morning, and throughout the day and evening. While accurate baseline figures for alcohol consumption in northern Uganda are not available, several studies have reported high rates of excessive alcohol consumption, predominantly by men (Annan et al. 2008; Annan and Brier 2010; Kizza et al. 2012; Okello and Hovil 2007). The women explained that high levels of alcoholism have led to men refusing to work in the fields, leaving all the labour to the women. Men continue, however, to exercise exclusive control over income generated by women's labour:

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[37] Interviewed March 13, 2014.

Women face so many difficulties. They have to work tirelessly hard to provide for their families. You see these women here digging (points to women working in the field near us)*? You will find their husbands at the trading centre drinking. The children are sent home for school fees or books or pens. It is the women to look for this and help the child. Even food in the house. Women are the bread winners in the home. The women work tirelessly hard. (But the husband) is the one who decides. Because all are his property. Everything in the house belongs to him, it's his to make decisions over. So even if you do some casual work, he will ask "So, you went to dig in so-and-so's garden. How much did you earn?" And you have to share. You feel painful about it. It hurts, but what can you do? You're in his house and so you have to bear.*[38]

This selective change in gender roles was described everywhere:

I dig and work tirelessly, but during the harvest period I do not have any say on the yields. My husband even stopped me from group savings. The men ensure that women are economically disempowered.[39]

Many women saw their low status in the community as a barrier to them achieving any community-based solution to redress this widespread problem:

Our husbands sell the harvests and foodstuff in the house and drink all the money. Women do not have a voice to speak out in the community.[40]

Every time women try to fight for justice they are insulted, despised, accused of bias and impartiality.[41]

An NGO worker attributed changed gender roles to NGO practices in the IDP camps:

… the World Food Program and NGOs preferred working with women because then it was at least assured that the aid would reach the children. … So there was a reversal of roles and unfortunately this affected gender relations and it is still continuing. There are so many negative traits that were picked up by men in the IDP camps - drinking became the norm of the day and is still continuing. It is very common to go into the communities and you find the women complaining that they have to go and do all the gardening work themselves. The men drink, then when the produce is ready for harvesting, the men sell it

[38] Interviewed June 24, 2014.
[39] Interviewed February 13, 2014.
[40] Interviewed March 13, 2014.
[41] Interviewed February 6, 2014.

and get the money and drink. Women actually are shouldering the economic burden of looking after their families in northern Uganda.[42]

The role reversal described above is better understood as a burden shift. The shifting of roles has been uni-directional with women taking on many (previously men's) responsibilities in *addition* to their own. There has been no trading off of traditionally women's roles in exchange for the new responsibilities. Women in northern Uganda have been left with an enormous burden of responsibility, without the commensurate economic and decision-making power to meet these responsibilities (Fiske and Shackel 2016, 30-31).

Violence

In addition to lost productivity, excessive drinking is a major driver in alarming rates of domestic violence in post-conflict northern Uganda. A great many women in this study reported that their husbands or partners are violent towards them, particularly when drinking:

> *I go to the garden early and he goes drinking. When I return he beats me. Every day.*[43]

> *The men are alcoholic and every time they get drunk they become abusive. Apart from alcoholism, there is no substantive cause of domestic violence.*[44]

Studies support the testimonies of the women; namely, that alcohol use is "rampant" and is a major cause of widespread domestic violence (Annan and Brier 2010; Okello and Hovil 2007; Saile et al. 2013). International Alert surveyed 775 people (404 women, 371 men) in the Acholi sub-region about a range of issues, including Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in 2011, 2012, and 2013. The survey found that SGBV has increased dramatically. In 2011, 41.1 percent of respondents reported that SGBV was present in their communities; this figure had risen to 99.7 percent in 2013 (IA 2013, 42). Thirty-nine percent of respondents identified alcohol and drug use as the leading cause of SGBV, with poverty the second major cause (IA 2013, 41). An important finding was that 0.1 percent of respondents said that tradition condoned SGBV, and no-one said that it was "normal/legitimate" (IA 2013, 41).

Many of the social and cultural norms which would previously have prohibited much of the violence have been severely disrupted by displacement and encampment. Neither formal legal nor traditional justice systems are effectively responding to violence in communities – violence which, women told us, has risen significantly since returning from the camps. The result is a cycle of escalating violence and further social breakdown.

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[42] Key informant interviewed 25 June 2014.
[43] Interviewed June 17, 2014.
[44] Interviewed January 22, 2014.

Most women said that they wanted to stay in their relationships and marriages, but wanted the violence to stop. Almost all women said that familial disputes[45] had to be resolved through traditional systems and only in the most egregious cases, and then only with the sanction of the family-head, could a matter be taken to the police. This reliance on traditional structures for regulating gender relations amplifies the importance of damaged social fabric and customs for women and children, as Burke and Kobusingye describe:

> Where the family or clan is strong and organized, the rights of each member of the clan including women and future generations are generally better protected. In instances where the clan or family is weak or fragmented women's rights to land are often abused. When questioned on what they mean by the "strength" of the family or clan very few people referred to the physical size of the family. The majority of respondents referred to the financial resources at the family's disposal and levels of education while others spoke of "love," "unity" or "cohesion" within the family institution. (2014, 18)

The reliance on damaged social structures and relationships provides, at best, only tenuous protection and access to rights for women and children.

Intergenerational effects on children
Evidence from northern Uganda indicates that the effects of displacement on children's education and full development are not resolved through a return home. The social breakdown caused by displacement, continues to impair children's access to education in northern Uganda. Women interviewed in this research universally identified children's disrupted education as an urgent concern. The consequences of a disrupted education can embed poverty trans-generationally, with particular effects for girls. One woman with four children explained that she can only afford to send one child to school. She was widowed during the war and has since been forced off her land, contributing to her poverty. She explained that she feels *"trapped in so many difficulties, especially when it comes to the children. I have not been able to look after them and pay their school fees as I should be doing as a parent."*[46] Regarding her daughter, she explained that

> *when she reached P6[47] she had to drop out and now she also has produced children and now she is here with me in the home. I have to take care of her and her children.*

Caring for her daughter's children has added financial burden and produced compounding negative effects which have affected her ability to pay for her youngest child to go to school:

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[45] Including domestic violence, drinking and lack of productivity.
[46] Interviewed June 17, 2014.
[47] Primary school grade six.

[T]he little one who is supposed to be in P4 is also not going to school. [He] helps me … he can do casual labour so we can get some little money to be able to cope up with the daily demands in the house. This hurts me a lot. Sometimes I do not even sleep in the night because I keep thinking about them. It comes with a lot of pain.[48]

Children's education is strongly dependent on having a father present who is willing and able to ensure access. Women's lack of decision-making power over household expenditure is compounding the intergenerational effects:

I'm really struggling so hard to see that my children have a bright future but I seem to be defeated now. I'm getting defeated. … Last year when I [had] my baby, I had a caesarean birth and I could not work much in my garden and this year we have this problem coming in, the problem of school fees. When I tried to talk to my husband that one of these goats be sold to pay for these children's school fees and the balance I also see how to help with to meet our daily needs in the home. He refused, that I should not do it.[49]

While social norms governing gender relations around work and family responsibilities have been profoundly altered by displacement, traditional gender roles governing access to land and household resources have remained intact or even become more rigid in disadvantaging women and children. The return from IDP camps has been marked by widespread land conflict.[50] While land conflicts affect many communities and impact all – men, women and children – they have particular effects on women. Women may have claims to land under both statutory and customary law, but they are struggling to realise those rights (Rugadya 2008; Burke and Egaru 2011). Contemporary interpretations that women have no independent rights to customary land mean that women can often only access land through their relationships with male relatives. This reassertion of men's traditional rights to land is particularly problematic for unmarried mothers (both through sexual servitude in abduction, and those who became pregnant outside of marriage in IDP camps), widows and women wanting to return to their parents' home to escape an abusive relationship.

Widows reported being refused land in their husband's clan:

[Land grabbing] is facing very many widows in this area, even myself. They had started very badly to grab land from me. I was lucky my father-in-law was on my side and he came and spoke very strongly. They say I'm just a woman – a mere woman with no

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[48] Interviewed June 17, 2014.
[49] Interviewed June 26, 2014.
[50] The issue of land conflict and land ownership in northern Uganda is highly complex and critically important to understand a range of social and power relations. It is not possible to explain the complexities in this paper, for more see: Burke and Egaru 2011; Burke and Kobusingye 2014; Fiske and Shackel 2016, 55-59; or Rugadya 2008.

land.[51]

Unwed mothers and women leaving violent relationships reported not being accepted into their birth clans:

> *Today, children are not welcome in their mother's family because [the families] think they should live in their father's family where they can inherit land in order to avoid future land misunderstandings.*[52]

As land is the primary productive asset in northern Uganda, land rights have a direct link to one's ability to produce sufficient food for subsistence and income generation (Asiimwe 2001). Access to land is a major determinant of poverty and economic well-being with material effects on children's education and development. Many widows, unwed mothers, and women with poor familial relationships reported they are struggling to realise any rights to land, and are consequently thrust into ever deeper and more entrenched poverty.

The distortions in gender roles and relations, brought about by internal displacement in northern Uganda have created a complex and mutually reinforcing interaction of factors resulting in men holding almost exclusive power within households and local governance structures. While there has been some assistance for returning IDPs to resume livelihood activities, there has been little attention paid to the repair of social relationships, or to the effects of displacement on gender relations. This has left women and children bearing the burden of work, violence, poverty and missed opportunities, embedding the transgenerational effects of war and displacement.

Conclusion

The internal displacement of people in conflict zones is at a record high and growing each year. While there is general recognition of the immediate humanitarian and protection needs of IDPs, internal displacement is largely approached within an emergency and crisis response framework and focuses on the physical displacement of people with little recognition of, and attention to, people's social dislocation. Those internally displaced to urban areas are often lost from view, yet they face serious vulnerabilities, and are exposed to multiple sites of disadvantage, and have needs that are largely unmet by state or international bodies. People displaced into camps risk dependency, role loss and social and family breakdown; losses that have lasting impacts on individual, family and community recovery after displacement has ended. Return programs are often inadequate, focus on return to land rather than rebuilding social structures and relationships, and end prematurely. IDPs "usually simply disappear from the statistics, and international attention and funding quickly vanish" (Eschenbächer 2005, 51).

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[51] Interviewed June 23, 2014.
[52] Interviewed February 7, 2014.

The findings of this research indicate that a socio-political lens is necessary to ensure that approaches to displacement do not serve to de-gender the experience of IDPs and that the effects of displacement on gender roles and relations, including intergenerationally, are not obscured and overwhelmed by the humanitarian and protection needs of IDPs. Displacement is a social phenomenon and interrogating its social effects enables the reconfiguration of gender roles and relations during and after conflict-induced displacement, to become more visible. Internal displacement in Kenya, DRC and Uganda has resulted in greater hardship and inequality for women, disrupted education for displaced children, and transgenerationally further embedded disadvantage and exclusion. It is clear that there is an urgent need to revisit fundamental responses to internal displacement, which recognize distortions in gender relations and roles, in order to appropriately address these.

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