

# Child Protection in Crisis Uganda: March 2012 Learning Retreat

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Community Mapping and Capacity Building  
Initiative – Identifying and Strengthening Community  
Systems

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Child Protection in Crisis

Network for Research, Learning & Action

# Why Child Protection Systems?

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Examining systems puts child protection violations within a larger context of range of interrelated factors, including immediate and underlying causes.

Children may face multiple protection problems, a focus on individual issues can sometimes resolve one problem without addressing others.

A systems-building approach to child protection is required, especially in settings where formal systems are weak and communities must assume the majority of the child protection burden.

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# Mapping Child Protection Systems

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- ▶ Mapping formal and informal child protection systems will provide evidence upon which to base future programming
- ▶ Mapping will demonstrate strengths and gaps of existing systems
- ▶ Mapping will also show where or whether the formal systems interact, and how that interaction can be improved
- ▶ We cannot move forward to strengthen systems until we know what presently exists



# What are Informal Child Protection Systems?

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- ▶ These are also called Community-based Child Protection Mechanisms
  - ▶ A collection of supports and resources that help take care of children including:
    - ▶ Immediate and extended family
    - ▶ Friends
    - ▶ Neighbors
    - ▶ Traditional leaders and elders
    - ▶ Teachers
    - ▶ Youth and community groups,
    - ▶ Religious leaders, and
    - ▶ Others who provide valuable care and protection
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# Why Are CBCPMs Important?

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- ▶ Children's protection and healthy development depend critically on the care and protection provided by caretakers, typically family and extended family.
- ▶ Families' ability to provide care and protection for children depend on having a secure, protective environment and access to child and family support at the community level.
- ▶ Evidence suggests that 80% of cases are resolved under the community systems.



# Formal Child Protection Mechanisms

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Informal child protection mechanisms may have difficulty meeting all child protection challenges. In some circumstances formal child protection mechanisms are desirable.

- ▶ The formal child protection system includes any mechanism that is instituted, funded or authorized by the government according to the law, such as:
    - ▶ Police
    - ▶ District and National Court
    - ▶ Probation and Social Welfare Office
    - ▶ The Local Council system
    - ▶ Related laws and policies
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# Ethnographic Mapping of Community-based Child Protection Mechanisms

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- ▶ **The aim** of the research is to learn about existing community-based mechanisms of child protection and support for children.
  - ▶ **The task** is to describe the mechanisms and supports that currently exist, as diverse members of the communities understand them.
  - ▶ **The locations** are Arua and Nebbi districts
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# Key Research Questions

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- ▶ **What are the factors or practices in communities, homes, families, and schools that protect children from or put them at risk for abuse, exploitation, violence or neglect?**
  - ▶ How do these connect to formal child protection mechanisms, if at all?
- ▶ **When children have been harmed (e.g.abuse, exploitation, violence, neglect) whom do they go to for help, and what are the processes and perceived outcomes?**
  - ▶ What proportion of the 'child protection burden' falls to communities in comparison with formal systems like government?



# Pilot Mapping In Dokolo and Lira

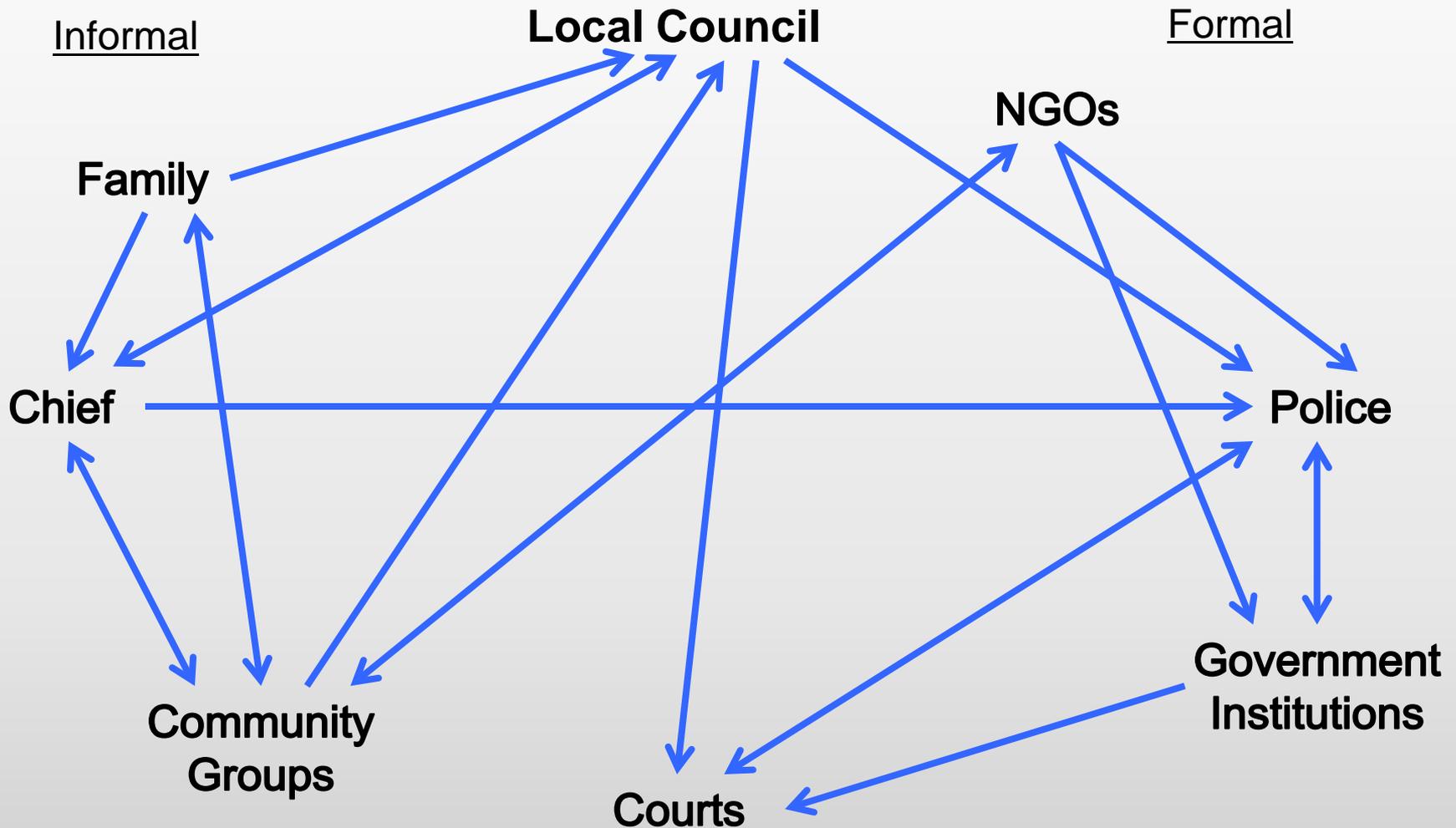
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- ▶ A pilot took place June – August 2011
- ▶ Data collection includes community observation, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews
- ▶ Results included:
  - ▶ Mapping of the informal system,
  - ▶ Mapping of pathways of response to child protection violations
  - ▶ Identification of factors contributing to the vulnerability of children in relation to potential risks and threats



# Example of a Child Protection System

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# How will this research be used?

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- ▶ This research will be used to inform future programming, policy and advocacy by PLG and others in the country.
- ▶ The long term goal is to strengthen existing child protection systems, both formal and informal.
- ▶ This research will directly contribute to the development of programs that will take place in years 2 and 3 of funding to address issues encountered during this research.

