

Evaluating the effectiveness of mediation in conflict management in Kasese District

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Introduction

Kasese District has in not a very distant past, been buffeted by violent conflicts between the *Allied Democratic Forces* and the Uganda People's Defence Forces on the one hand, and the Rwenzururu kingdom and the Uganda People's Defence Forces on the other. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of mediation in the management of conflict in Kasese.

Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. to examine the causes of conflicts in Kasese District,
2. to identify the factors affecting mediation as a conflict management strategy in Kasese District, and
3. to assess the strategies put in place by the government of Uganda in resolving conflicts in Kasese District.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional design and used both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The target population was 632 and the sample size was 245 respondents, out of whom 240 returned questionnaires. Simple random sampling and purposive techniques were used to select respondents. The study used survey and interview as data

collection methods, and self-administered questionnaires and an interview guide as data collection instruments.

Key findings

The study found that the causes of conflicts in Kasese District included violent armed groups, political rivalry, ethnic chauvinism, contestation of democratic outcomes, unequal distribution/access to resources, poverty and the failure of the government to build and maintain peace. The study also revealed that the factors that hindered mediation in Kasese District included the lack of common character among the concerned parties, lack of transparency in mediation processes, the absence of procedural fairness in treating the conflicting parties, lack of public confidence in mediating parties and inadequate funds to run the mediation. The study further discovered that the strategies to conflict management in Kasese District included framing conflict ideologies, effective planning and preparation for mediation, promotion of conflict management option, properly defining the ground rules of mediation, clarifying and justifying the need for mediation and promoting effective communication.

Key recommendations

The study recommended that there should be greater use of traditional community-based structures such as elders' arbitration councils and that should be a resort to local justice system to support the national court system.

Key references

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