

Decolonizing Social  
Work Research to  
Prevent Violence  
Against Women and  
Girls and Promote  
Good Education  
Outcomes through a  
School-Community  
Collaborative

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## Decolonizing Social Work Research to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls and Promote Good Education Outcomes through a School-Community Collaborative

### Overview

This pilot study aims to address two interconnected challenges in the post conflict context of northern Uganda: low educational outcomes for girls and violence against women and girls. The study is a community partnership between social work researchers and a rural school community. This project is grounded in the belief that a social work informed approach to community engagement and collaboration between and among local community structures holds the promise of fostering sustainable improvements in both girls' education and safety for women and girls.

### Study Objective

The study aims to pilot participatory approaches in a collaborative initiative between social work researchers and the local community in Gulu. The goal is to prevent violence against women and girls and improve educational outcomes for children in a grassroots setting. Consistent with the idea of working as an 'ally' with marginalized populations to support their own research, and co-production of knowledge, the study places the local community at the center of the research process. This represents a shift from traditional colonial research approaches, and incorporates insights from southern epistemologies.

### Study objectives

1. To explore social norms, risk and protective factors for children's socio-emotional needs and violence within school settings and the community;
2. To delineate the traditional leadership framework and review existing school-community collaboration initiatives aimed at improving education and child protection outcomes;
3. To conduct school-community engagement activities to stimulate community-led actions for a school-community collaborative aimed at good education and child protection outcomes in a rural school setting;
4. To co-design an intervention that targets clan leaders as change agents in social norms transformation for violence prevention in northern Uganda;
5. To undertake a detailed documentation, review and analysis of the community engagement processes and draw lessons for a larger study that allows further scientific testing of the impact of decolonial social work research strategies on education and violence prevention outcomes in Uganda.

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