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**The Impact Of Village Local Councils On The Prevention Of Crimes In The Communities In Uganda, A Case Study  
Of Kakiri Sub-County In Wakiso District Local Government**

**Nalubinga Aidah<sup>1</sup>, Nakimbugwe Sophia<sup>2</sup>**

**1, 2 Metropolitan International University**

**Abstract**

The study heavily focused on investigating the impact of village local councils on crime prevention in Uganda taking a case of Kakiri sub-county in Wakiso district local government. The study was guided by the research objectives, questions and the appropriate methodologies that generated credible and reliable findings that was very significant to the local government, and acted as a guide in the advocacy and formulation of policies and programs geared towards enhancing the general performance of village councils in crime prevention. The study found out that there are a number of factors that affect the performance of Village councils and recommended continued support towards the corporation towards motivating its staffs for better performance. The study depicted that 50 respondents strongly agreed that local councils in Kakiri sub- county are constrained by the contempt of local council courts by the people while doing their roles of crime prevention which constituted 62.5%, and those who agreed were 20 respondents constituting 25%, and none of the respondents was not sure constituting 00%. There were 07 respondents who disagreed constituting 8.75%. The study found out that the village local councils have a significant contribution to crime prevention in local government in Uganda. Government should strengthen the capacity of local councils in conflict resolution and management in Uganda. This can be done through organizing capacity building workshops to train the local council officials to enhance their skills in what they do for effective conflict management at the local levels.

**Keywords: Village, Local Councils, Prevention, Crimes and Communities**

**Background to the study**

A Local Council (LC) is a form of local elected government within the districts in Uganda. A district is made up of several counties and any municipalities in that area. A district is led by an elected local council V (LCV) chairperson and his executive (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). There is also an elected LCV Council, with representatives from the sub-counties and technical staff in the district. The council debates budgets, decisions, and bylaws. The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provided for the creation of Local Councils courts ("LCC") as part of the decentralization of power. In Wakiso district and Kakiri parish in particular LCCs are the lowest units with administrative, legislative, and judicial powers on behalf of central governments (Frank et al., 2023).

Village Local Councils (VLCs) were established in Uganda in 1991 following the 1993 Local Government elections to promote grassroots governance and development. According to the Local Government Act, VLCs comprise an elected Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Councilors and a Secretary who are tasked with coordinating affairs at village level under the oversight of the Sub-County Chief. Kakiri Sub-County located in Wakiso District has over 25 vibrant VLCs spread across its parishes and villages serving a population of approximately 100,000 inhabitants (Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022). Some of the core functions of VLCs in the sub-county as stipulated in the Local Government Act include maintaining law and order, securing community properties, administering local revenue collections, coordinating disaster preparedness and

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mobilizing citizens for self-help activities among others (Ronald & Kazaara, 2023).

However, in recent times, there has been an upsurge in petty and property crimes like theft, burglary and damage to infrastructure within Kakiri Sub-County according to police records. This has triggered security concerns and strained relations between citizens and law enforcement agencies (Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). Vandalism of schools, health centers and defacement of government signposts have severely impacted service delivery. Culprits have tended to evade arrest by operating in loosely knit gangs and exploiting the remoteness of some villages. Survivors of such crimes allege poor vigilance and laxity by some VLC leaders which has emboldened wrongdoers (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). Weak intelligence networks and limited capacity of volunteers manning night patrols have also hampered timely detection and reporting of criminal incidents. Moreover, VLCs have faced challenges mobilizing communities to collectively address security lapses due to deep-rooted societal vices like political tribalism, intimidation, poverty and domestic strife that fuel the crimes (Faridah et al., 2023). Harsh economic conditions have compelled jobless youth to engage in acts of hooliganism while cheap illicit brew dens have

proliferated without proper monitoring.

Subsequently, this study sought to assess the effectiveness of VLC initiatives in safeguarding citizens and properties. Quantitative data was collected using surveys from 150 respondents cut across the sub-county. Key informant interviews were also held with VLC officials, police command, LC chairpersons and opinion leaders. Findings indicated lukewarm response to night watchtrotas, delayed feedback on reported cases and lack of coordination with higher security organs (Aslam et al., 2022). In addition to the relief mentioned above, the Local Council Court may make a guidance order under which the child shall be required to submit himself or herself to the guidance, supervision, advice and assistance of a person designated by the court. A guidance order shall be for a maximum period of six months. LCCs are one of the most accessible justice mechanisms in contemporary Uganda. Many of the studies conducted on LCCs in Wakiso district revealed that LCCs are much more trusted by local population, since they are heavily inclined towards reconciliation and dispute resolution. However, there is still a lot of efforts needed in order to promote the rule of law for rural people, where LCCs operate (Jallow et al., 2022).

### **Problem Statement**

Kikiri parish, just like others in the country was created by the Ugandan government to streamline and decentralize power. This was in line with the central government's effort to decentralize power and bring services closer to the people of Uganda (Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022). One of the major roles of LCs is to ensure community security and order. The village local councils are supposed to know everyone in the village and register every visitors in the community. This is to curb the insecurity and crime issues (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). However, despite the existence of local councils in all villages around the country and Kakiri parish in particular, crime rate continues to increase in most local communities every year. For example over the past four years, there has been cases of panga wielding gangs terrorizing communities, children and women kidnaps in most areas of Wakiso district such as, Nansana, Entebbe, Kakiri among others (Oliver et al., 2023). Theft, burglary, domestic violence, sexual assault, murder and others have continuously increased to unprecedented levels even at village levels (Police Crime Report, 2020). Whereas many opinion leaders are hitting the drums in favour of strengthening the local council systems, these crimes are continuing to

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ravage communities which all have elected local councils. There are also cases of corruption reported as local leaders are getting compromised to shield criminal acts in their areas, this coupled by the limited legal knowledge and skills to interpret the law and dispense justice fairly (Oliver et al., 2023). The researcher is therefore fascinated by this anomaly and wishes to examine the impact of village local councils on the prevention of crimes in community using Kikari parish in Wakiso district as a case study.

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To analyze the role of village local councils in combating crime in Kakiri sub-county
2. To assess the challenges that village local councils face when combating crime in Kakiri sub-county.
3. To investigate the causes of crime in Kakiri sub-county local government.

### **Methodology**

The descriptive design was adopted, which aimed at examining the effect of village local councils on crime prevention in Uganda (Jallow et al., 2022). The descriptive research design refers to the systematic process of gathering descriptions of existing phenomena in order to describe or explain what is going on (Ololube, 2019). A descriptive research design was adopted for the study since it focused on the people as well as their attributes which enabled the investigator to understand and examine the influence of village local councils on crime prevention (Godfrey et al., 2023). The study population comprised of Residents of Kakiri parish, Wakiso district who were above 18 years. These included civil and political leaders, local residents above the age of 18 years and some members of civil society (Aslam et al., 2022). The researcher used the probability sample since the research focused on the entire parish population/ Residents of Kikari parish, Wakiso district were eligible to participate in the study. The probability sampling approach involved selecting a sample in such a way that all the elements in the population had same chances of being selected (Amin, 2015). The simple random sampling technique was also used such that all population elements were accorded a proportionate likelihood of being nominated within the sample (L. A. Nafiu, 2012). This research used self-administered questionnaires for the respondents. These were distributed among suitable respondents. The justification for using this instrument was that questionnaires were easy to quantify and analyze. In addition, the questionnaire were used because the study focused on opinions, attitudes, feelings and perceptions of the respondents. This research used self-administered questionnaires guides for the respondents (L. Nafiu et al., 2013). These were distributed among suitable respondents. The justification for using this instrument was that questionnaires were easy to quantify and analyze. This is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of raw information gathered for purposes of getting a feel for reliability and testing the research questions (Sekaran, 2014). Initially, data will be entered into MS Excel computer program for cleaning. The data will be also imported to SPSS version 23 statistical software for investigation. Quantitative data analysis entailed descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Nelson et al., 2022). Descriptive statistics involved analysis using frequencies, percentages, mean, charts, and standard deviation (L. A. Nafiu et al., 2012). The Analysis of central tendency and dispersion based on; a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strong agree to strong disagree. Similarly, inferential statistics were done based on the Pearson's correlation coefficient and linear regression analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed by reporting of summary results in numerical terms and were presented using a percentage distribution technique but maintaining a specified degree of

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confidence (Creswell, 2013).

## **RESULTS**

**To investigate the role played by local governments in crime prevention in Kakiri sub-county.**

**Table 1: showing the response rate of the respondents on whether the village local councils detect crime in Kakiri sub-county local government.**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Agree                 | 25               | 31.25             |
| Strongly agree        | 45               | 56.25             |
| Disagree              | 06               | 7.5               |
| Strongly disagree     | 03               | 3.75              |
| Not sure              | 01               | 1.25              |
| <b>Total response</b> | <b>80</b>        | <b>100%</b>       |

**Source: primary source (2023).**

The above table depicts that 45 respondents strongly agreed that village local councils detect crime in Kakiri sub-county local governments which constituted 56.25%, and those who agreed were 25 respondents constituting 31.25%, only 1 of the respondents was not sure constituting 1.25%. There were 6 respondents who disagreed constituting 7.5%. While 03 respondents strongly disagreed constituting 3.75% (Nelson et al., 2023). This meant that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed and confessed to have ever seen the village local councils detecting crime in Kakiri sub- county.

**Table 2: showing the response rate of the respondents on whether the village local councils carry out crime reporting in Kakiri sub-county local government.**

| <b>Response</b>       | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Agree                 | 45               | 56.25             |
| Strongly agree        | 25               | 31.25             |
| Disagree              | 06               | 7.5               |
| Strongly disagree     | 01               | 1.25              |
| Not sure              | 03               | 3.75              |
| <b>Total response</b> | <b>80</b>        | <b>100%</b>       |

**Source: primary source (2023).**

The above table depicts that 45 respondents agreed that the village local councils carry out crime reporting in Kakiri sub-county local government which constituted 56.25%, and those who strongly agreed were 25 respondents

constituting 31.25%, only 3 of the respondents were not sure constituting 3.75%. There were 6 respondents who disagreed constituting 7.5%. While 01 respondent strongly disagreed constituting 1.25% (Moses et al., 2023). This meant that the majority of the respondents agreed and confessed to have ever seen the village councils reporting crime to higher stakeholders like police and courts of laws.

**Table 3: showing the response rate of the respondents on whether the village local councils carry out village patrols in Kakiri sub-county local government.**

| Response              | Frequency | Percentage  |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Agree                 | 25        | 31.25       |
| Strongly agree        | 45        | 56.25       |
| Disagree              | 06        | 7.5         |
| Strongly disagree     | 03        | 3.75        |
| Not sure              | 01        | 1.25        |
| <b>Total response</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Source: primary source (2023).**

The above table depicts that 45 respondents strongly agreed that village local councils carry out patrols in their areas in Kakiri sub-county local governments which constituted 56.25%, and those who agreed were 25 respondents constituting 31.25%, only 1 of the respondents was not sure constituting 1.25%. There were 6 respondents who disagreed constituting 7.5%. While 03 respondents strongly disagreed constituting 3.75%. This meant that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed and confessed to have ever seen the village local councils carry out patrols to arrest criminals and potential suspects within their localities.

**Table 4: showing the response rate of the respondents on whether the village local councils do try and sentence criminals in Kakiri sub-county local government.**

| Response              | Frequency | Percentage  |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Agree                 | 25        | 31.25       |
| Strongly agree        | 45        | 56.25       |
| Disagree              | 06        | 7.5         |
| Strongly disagree     | 03        | 3.75        |
| Not sure              | 01        | 1.25        |
| <b>Total response</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Source: primary source (2023).**

The above table depicts that 45 respondents strongly agreed that village local councils do try and sentence criminals

in Kakiri sub-county local government which constituted 56.25%, and those who agreed were 25 respondents constituting 31.25%, only 1 of the respondents was not sure constituting 1.25%. There were 6 respondents who disagreed constituting 7.5%. While 03 respondents strongly disagreed constituting 3.75%. This meant that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that local councils do try and sentence criminals which means that local council courts are instrumental in dispensing justice at the grass root levels in Uganda.

**Table 5: showing the response rate of respondents on whether crime is caused by poverty in Kakiri sub-county local government.**

| Response              | Frequency | Percentage  |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Agree                 | 25        | 31.25       |
| Strongly agree        | 55        | 68.75       |
| Disagree              | 00        | 00          |
| Strongly disagree     | 00        | 00          |
| Not sure              | 00        | 00          |
| <b>Total response</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Source: primary source (2023).**

The above table depicts that 55 respondents strongly agreed that crime is caused by poverty in Kakiri sub-county local government which constituted 68.75%, and those who agreed were 25 respondents constituting 31.25%, none of the respondents was not sure constituting 00%. There were 0 respondents who disagreed constituting 00%. While 00 respondents strongly disagreed constituting 00%. This meant that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that poverty is the biggest cause of crime in local government.

**Table 6: showing the response rate on whether crime is caused by unemployment in Kakiri sub- county local government.**

| Response              | Frequency | Percentage  |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Agree                 | 35        | 43.75       |
| Strongly agree        | 25        | 31.25       |
| Disagree              | 06        | 7.5         |
| Strongly disagree     | 03        | 3.75        |
| Not sure              | 01        | 1.25        |
| <b>Total response</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Source: primary source (2023).**

The above table depicts that 25 respondents strongly agreed that crime is caused by poverty in Kakiri sub-county local

government which constituted 31.25%, and those who agreed were 35 respondents constituting 43.25%, only 1 of the respondents was not sure constituting 1.25%. There were 6 respondents who disagreed constituting 7.5%. While 03 respondents strongly disagreed constituting 3.75%. This meant that the majority of the respondents agreed and confessed that without curbing unemployment, crime prevention will be very hard in Kakiri sub- county.

**Table 7:** showing the response rate on whether crime is caused by drug abuse in Kakiri sub-county local government.

| Response              | Frequency | Percentage  |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Agree                 | 50        | 62.5        |
| Strongly agree        | 25        | 31.25       |
| Disagree              | 04        | 05          |
| Strongly disagree     | 01        | 1.25        |
| Not sure              | 00        | 00          |
| <b>Total response</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Source: primary source (2023).**

The above table depicts that 25 respondents strongly agreed that drug abuse was among the causes of crime in Kakiri sub-county local government which constituted 31.25%, and those who agreed were 50 respondents constituting 62.5%, and none of the respondents was not sure constituting 00%. There were 4 respondents who disagreed constituting 05%. While 01 respondents strongly disagreed constituting 1.25%. This meant that the majority of the respondents agreed and that drug abuse is one of the major causes of drug abuse in Kakiri sub- county. This calls for both government and non-government interventions.

**Table 8: showing response rate on whether local councils in Kakiri sub-county are constrained by lack of financial facilitation and motivation to do their roles of crime prevention**

| Response              | Frequency | Percentage  |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly agree        | 65        | 81.25       |
| Agree                 | 15        | 18.75       |
| Disagree              | 00        | 00          |
| Strongly disagree     | 00        | 00          |
| Not sure              | 00        | 00          |
| <b>Total response</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Source: primary source (2023).**

The above table depicts that 65 respondents strongly agreed that local councils in Kakiri sub- county are constrained by lack of financial facilitation and motivation to do their roles of crime prevention which constituted 81.25%, and those who agreed were 15 respondents constituting 18.75%, and none of the respondents was not sure constituting 00%. There were no respondents who disagreed constituting 00%. While 00 respondents strongly disagreed constituting 00%. This meant that the majority of the respondents agreed that local councils are not well facilitated which greatly hampers their effective performance in crime management within their localities.

**Table 9: showing the response rate on whether local councils in Kakiri sub-county are constrained by lack of the lack of competent technical knowhow to do their roles of crime prevention.**

| Response              | Frequency | Percentage  |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Agree                 | 20        | 25          |
| Strongly agree        | 50        | 62.5        |
| Disagree              | 05        | 6.25        |
| Strongly disagree     | 03        | 3.75        |
| Not sure              | 02        | 2.5         |
| <b>Total response</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Source: primary source (2023).**

The above table depicts that 50 respondents strongly agreed that local councils in Kakiri sub- county are constrained by lack of competent technical knowhow to do their roles of crime prevention which constituted 62.5%, and those who agreed were 20 respondents constituting 25%, and 02 of the respondents were not sure constituting 2.5%. There were 05 respondents who disagreed constituting 6.25%. While 03 respondents strongly disagreed constituting 3.75%. This meant that the majority of the respondents agreed there is a knowledge gap calling for capacity building of the local council officials.

**Table 10: showing the response rate on whether local councils in Kakiri sub-county are constrained by the contempt of local council courts by the people while doing their roles of crime prevention.**

| Response              | Frequency | Percentage  |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly agree        | 50        | 62.5        |
| Agree                 | 20        | 25          |
| Disagree              | 07        | 8.75        |
| Strongly disagree     | 03        | 3.75        |
| Not sure              | 00        | 00          |
| <b>Total response</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Source: primary source (2023).**

The above table depicts that 50 respondents strongly agreed that local councils in Kakiri sub- county are constrained by the contempt of local council courts by the people while doing their roles of crime prevention which constituted 62.5%, and those who agreed were 20 respondents constituting 25%, and none of the respondents was not sure constituting 00%. There were 07 respondents who disagreed constituting 8.75%. While 03 respondents strongly disagreed constituting 3.75%. This meant that the majority of the respondents agreed that local council courts are not fully respected by some of the local people. This continues to hamper their roles.

**Table 11: showing response rate on whether local councils in Kakiri sub-county are constrained by corruption while doing their roles of crime prevention**

| Response              | Frequency | Percentage  |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly agree        | 65        | 81.25       |
| Agree                 | 15        | 18.75       |
| Disagree              | 00        | 00          |
| Strongly disagree     | 00        | 00          |
| Not sure              | 00        | 00          |
| <b>Total response</b> | <b>80</b> | <b>100%</b> |

**Source: primary source (2023).**

The above table depicts that 65 respondents strongly agreed that local councils in Kakiri sub- county are constrained by corruption while doing their roles of crime prevention which constituted 81.25%, and those who agreed were 15 respondents constituting 18.75%, and none of the respondents was not sure constituting 00%. There were no respondents who disagreed constituting 00%. While 00 respondents strongly disagreed constituting 00%. This meant that the majority of the respondents agreed that local councils are corrupted which greatly hampers their effective performance in crime management within their localities.

### **Conclusions**

Local councils are very instrumental in conflict resolution and management in the local communities of Uganda.

Corruption is a cancer eating up the justice system in Uganda making the cost of justice expensive obstructing the poor from accessing justice free of charge.

Local council officials are not technical in their mandate as they lack the necessary competence and technical knowhow in crime prevention in Uganda.

### **Recommendations**

Government should strengthen the capacity of local councils in conflict resolution and management in Uganda. This can

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be done through organizing capacity building workshops to train the local council officials to enhance their skills in what they do for effective conflict management at the local levels.

The non-state agencies such as the religious institutions, the media and non-governmental organizations and activists should become more supportive towards the local councils. Concerted efforts are very crucial and effective measures for conflict management at the grass root. Such effective partnerships can also be essential for the fight against graft at the grass root justice mechanisms.

The government should become supportive to the local governments through prioritizing funding so as to enable local officials to implement their budgets, fund their activities and provide adequate compensation to the real victims and potential victims of local criminal acts.

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