

Project: “Building peace through young adult *peace champions* in post-conflict communities - to prevent youth re-radicalization in Uganda – Phase II”.

This brief provides a snap-shot of a unique tailor-made project in addressing conflict and livelihood challenges among young adult and youth groups in post-conflict communities in Uganda. Read about “*My story*”; the sometimes unbelievable, horrific, but real-life stories of former ex-combatants/warriors. The brief calls you to stay-tuned to this page for “*My story* – part 2”; amazing stories of change in the lives of young adults and youth in post-conflict communities – after the project intervention. And some pictorial to affirm and connect the words with realities on the ground.



Young adult and youth groups (peace champions) after completing a training in peacebuilding and conflict transformation in Kaabong district, Karamoja region.

Know more about this unique tailor-made project

Goal of the project: The project desires to contribute towards stability in post-conflict communities. To realize the stability and progress towards peace, it aims at preventing re-radicalization in selected post-conflict communities in Uganda -in abid to prevent the targeted young adults from sliding back into acts of violence. This is done through the establishment of a team of young adult and youth *peace champions* who have become the change agents in their communities and who are leading in transforming the attitudes of their fellows in the community.

Selected districts: Kaabong, Kotido and Lira

Target groups:

1. Young adult groups in post-conflict communities (25-35 years). The majority are those who have been engaged in violence like ex-combatants, formerly abducted children, children born on captivity, children orphaned due to armed conflict, and ex-warriors
2. Youth groups (18-24 years) involved in peace building and income generating activities at community level

Main components of the project and approach:

1. Peacebuilding and conflict transformation
2. Connectors for peace – through livelihood activities

The first component is aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict by creating a team of young adult and youth *peace champions* who lead in transforming the attitudes of fellow young adults/youth. The second component is aimed at uniting and providing the groups with skills in income generating and contributing towards addressing one of the key drivers of conflict - unemployment. This two-way approach is vital for sustaining peace. This project provides a model that enhances youth participation, address violent conflicts, and promote unity and livelihoods at community level

Implementing organizations and funding

The project is implemented by Center for Conflict Resolution ([CECORE](#)), in partnership with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict ([GPPAC](#)). Since 2017, CECORE is the Regional Secretariat for GPPAC Eastern and Central Africa regional Network – where it is leading in the coordination of GPPAC Eastern and Central Africa network activities in 16 countries in the region. The project is funded by the Federal Foreign Service of Germany through [ifa-zivik](#).

Read about “My story”: The amazing stories of returnees (former ex-combatants, formerly abducted children and children born in captivity) and warriors in post-conflict communities

1. Discrimination on account of rape-The case of Immaculate, Lira District

Immaculate is one of the many children who became orphaned as a result of the LRA war. Their home, located behind the current Barlonyo massacre mass grave site, was attacked in 2004 by the LRA rebels when she was 8 years and both parents were killed. A social worker took her to a shelter home in Lira town where she stayed for 4 years before returning to her grandmother’s home. The grandmother took her to one family where she became a helper. The man in the home where she worked as a helper sexually abused her and she became pregnant. The man then chased her out of his home. She decided to return to the shelter home. She later married a man in Aleptong district, Teso region, who later chased her away after hearing rumours that Immaculate had been sexually abused by rebels and that is how she had become pregnant. Her child later died and Immaculate now sales oranges in Lira town to earn a living. *(Unfortunately due to the high number of groups, Immaculate’s group was not among those selected to benefit from the project)*

2. Rejection by community members.

Rejection by parents, relatives and the community is one of the key issues affecting the returnees. For example, it was reported that one of the parents of the 200 Aboke Girls abducted in 1996 whose daughter was killed while in captivity has refused to accept the child of the deceased daughter, unless he gets his daughter back. While the action of rejecting the granddaughter may be out of anger, the granddaughter feels rejected by the only immediate relative she knows; who she thought would reduce her pain by accepting and owning her as her parent. One participant said, “Those children had turned into something else. Accepting them was dangerous because they could turn against you and even kill you any time and such cases were many.”

3. **Ouma Peter** – Kaabong West, Kaabong district:



Ouma peter - front

“I loved the joy of killing, but my worst day was when I was shot and lost one of my testicles. I now have one” - Ouma narrates. He always felt good when he would be welcomed by girls praising him after a successful raid. Ouma was nicknamed Lamanatamoe – meaning one who kills around the gardens and one who even works/kills at night.

He started raiding at around age 12. He started by escorting the raiders by carrying their belongings - mainly out of group influence. Upon return, the raiders could give him one of the raided cows. Later he sold the cows and bought a gun. His initial intention of acquiring a gun was to obtain cows for pride price - more than 100. “But I realized, I was looking for death. Most of my colleagues died”. Today Ouma admits that he needs a lot of counselling in his life.

4. **Machar Lokure**– Lolelia subcounty, Kaabong



Machar Lukure -front

Lokure was popularly known in his community as Lokomolimoyi /madowadowa – meaning combat. He was a fierce warrior because of his braveness in killing his culprits. He was among a group of 180 warriors. He mostly raided the

Turkana (Kenya), Jie and Acholi (both Ugandan communities) and even within Kaabong district. In one attack, they would raid between 100-200 heads of cows. He says he would buy guns from South Sudan. He was motivated by the fact that he and his community had been raided, and lack of what to eat/lack of income. “Sometimes I would divorce some of my women to be able to claim back my dowry/cows to sell and get some money”. [This is contrary to the Ugandan marriage and divorce law that prohibits and outlaws forceful demand for the return of dowry in times of divorce]. Lokure abandoned raiding in 2010 and says he needs support.

Stay-tuned to this page for “My story – part 2”: Amazing stories of change in the lives of young adults and youth in post-conflict communities in Uganda

Selected Groups - 2020

Group name	Sub county	District
Sokomej Rural Youth Group / Lolelia disarmed youth group	Kaabong West/Lolelia	Kaabong
Sokodu disarmed farmers group	Kaabong East	Kaabong
Kaabong Young mothers group	Kaabong Town Council	Kaabong
Lokatawa Lomonía Youth Group	Panyangara	Kotido
Losilang Abungu anamoni (we have been in the bush and we have come back).Youth Group.	North Division	Kotido
Watakau shoe making Group (plus Panyangara Post-Test women group.	Nakapelimoru	Kotido
Oriib ching (let us work together) youth group	Aromo sub county	Lira
Note en Teko (working together strengthens us)	Ogur	Lira
Lira Transit Shelter group	Ojwina division.	Lira

More pictures:



Patrick Bwire – Project Coordinator (right) and Resident District Commissioner – Lira district (second from right) during the meeting with district authorities



Young-adult and youth during a baseline study in Lira district



Young adults.youth during a baseline study in Kotido district



A young a dult in a workshop where me makes local shoes – Kotido district



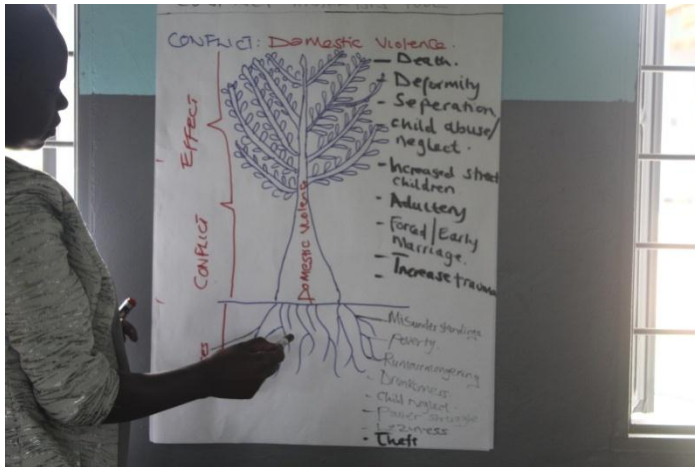
Youth in Sidok– Kaabong district in a Focus Group Discussion



Youth/young adults in Kalapata – Kaabong district



One of the drawings by young-adults in Kaabong showing the current context of conflicts in the area



One of the participants during a training in peacebuilding and conflict transformation in Kotido



Participants during a role play in mediation during a training in peacebuilding and conflict transformation in Kaabong



Young adults/youth performing a traditional dance in Kaabong