

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

This brief provides you with 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 amazing, unbelievable, horrific, but real-life stories of former ex-combatants/warriors. The brief calls you to read about “*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 two trainings; peacebuilding and conflict transformation, and another in livelihood and income generating activities 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 a bid 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, Yumbe, Kasese

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 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. Livelihood and Income Generating 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 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 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 former ex-combatants/warriors in post conflict communities

1. Irwata Peter – Kalapata subcounty, Kaabong district



Irwata Peter - front, right

Irwata was nicknamed Lokirikaku – meaning the one who always returned with something whenever he went to raid cows. He was one of the most experienced and notorious raiders in his sub county – a sub county known to be one of the conflict-hotspots in the district. He would mostly raid the neighboring Jie community in Kotido district, Turkana (Kenya) Didinga (South Sudan). He was the leader of the raiding group in his community. He and other

youth would obtain guns through buying in neighboring South Sudan at UgX260, 000 (approx..\$70.27). “We would also get guns from the victims we attack or soldiers we kill”. Some of our colleagues would borrow from the cowards who had guns but feared to use them.

He narrates how they would plan raids as a group of about 63 youth. After planning they would visit a seer/witch doctor who would direct them where to go and attack and kill whoever they come across. He narrates that “n case of an attack on our community, we would organize revenge, attacks and kill them and take animals and divide what we have raided”. He adds that “Unfortunately, the family of those who would die in the raid would not get anything”.

According to Irwata, the trigger was the gun. “With a gun, you would feel powerful and fearless, you would move anywhere and revenge when raided”. He also attributes raiding among the youth to bride price. “When you become a youth, you know you very soon you will be needing animals – say 100 for dowry”.

Irwata recalls his worst day when he survived death, they attacked a Kraal in Naporoto, Turkana county in Kenya. “Out of 63 warriors, 16 of us were killed during that attack”.

2. **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 those 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.

(Unfortunately, due to the high number of potential groups identified, Ouma’s group was not among those selected for support by the project)

Machar Lokure – Lolelia subcounty, Kaabong



Machar Lokure -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.

(Unfortunately, Lukure’s group was among those that were not selected by the project)

Waiga Rashid – Ramogi subcounty – Yumbe district



Waiga Rashid - right

Waiga was abducted in Lolonga subcounty – Yumbe and taken to Rojo in Sudan (now South Sudan). He became a child soldier of the defunct UNRFII (Uganda National Rescue Front II). Waiga was among 135 other child soldiers of UNRFII. He spent 3 years in the bush as one of the rebels. CECORE participated in the pre-negotiation process and later a peace agreement was signed in 2000 with the government of Uganda. By the time of the agreement, Waiga had been promoted to the rank of surgent.

Waiga and his fellow former child soldiers say, “we were abandoned, neglected and forgotten”. Their concerns include missing out on the promises and package promised under the agreement. “And yet we had missed education”. He tried reporting the concerns to Uganda Human Rights Commission and Amnesty Commission but is yet to be supported. He feels frustrated. He has formed an association of UNRFII former child-soldiers consisting of 47 members and intend to mobilise members to carry out income generating activities like welding, farming, goat rearing and poultry.

The story of the six 6 Royal Guards – Kasese district

In 2016, the district experienced brutal violence between the government armed forces and the youth loyal to the *Omusinga* (the cultural leader of the Bakonzo in Kasese district). In the process, these youth were accused by the Government security forces of being a militia – referred to as *Kirumira Mutima*. The youth are said to have attacked military installations in Kasese district and killed 4 security officers. One of the retaliations by the military resulted in attacking the palace of the cultural leader and killing of close to 100 people loyal to the king and arrest of the king. Today tensions remain high in the district. During one of the engagements between the project team and the Kasese district chair-person, he remarked “we must work never to see such an incidence again. For example, burying 52 in one day after two weeks was the worst incidence in must life”.

CECORE caught up with 6 of the royal guards who survived. They stated that they had worked as royal guards for 3 years. “We had been deployed in village deployment sites of chiefdoms and so the armed clash involving the Uganda armed forces (Police and Army and royal guards did not find us in Kasese town when the king’s palace was attacked”.

After the clash between the royal guards and the government armed forces, they say they experienced a lot of harassment. And that the community members were too suspicious of them. They faced arrests and say many of their colleagues are still in detention centers while others are in hiding for fear of arrests. We were 46 in number including 3 women. At the moment, we are 6 including one lady who, due to the ordeal she has gone through cannot afford to return to the home village. “When we went back to the RDC and LC V Chairperson to report back or ordeal we were instead advised to form a SACCO so that we could be helped”. The group had not yet formed one but had a name already “Yes we can”.

Also read about “My story – part 2”: [Amazing stories of change in the lives of young adults and youth in post-conflict communities in Uganda](#)

Selected beneficiary groups

Name of gorup	District	Income generation supported project (in addition to direct peacebuilding support
“Yes We Can”	Kasese	Welding
Kinyamate 1 Youth for Development (KIYDEV	Kasese	Tailoring
Bwesumbu Youth for Development	Kasese	Tailoring
Yumbe Youth Apostolate	Yumbe	Liquid soap making
Maama Youth group	Yumbe	Goat rearing
UNRII Child Soldiers Association (and Barakala city)	Yumbe	Boba boda
St. Monica Murukomuria Peace entertainment	Kaabong	Hydro-form brick-making and art and crafts
Kalapata Naporoto peace group	Kaabong	Goat rearing and arts and crafts
Kathile youth group	Kaabong	Goat rearing and art and crafts



One of disarmed young adults in Kapalapa – Kaabong district showing the bullet wounds he sustained during a raid – FDG, March 2019.



Youth group in Kathile – Kaabong district performing a peace song for community peace sensitisation.



Youth in Sidok– Kaabong district in a Focus Group Discussion – March 2019.



Youth/young adults in Kalapata – Kaabong district – March 2019.



Patrick Bwire – Project Coordinator (left) and Resident District Commissioner – Yumbe district (second from right) during the meeting with district authorities – March 2019



Patrick Bwire (left) with the chairperson of former UNLFII former child-soldiers – Yumbe district



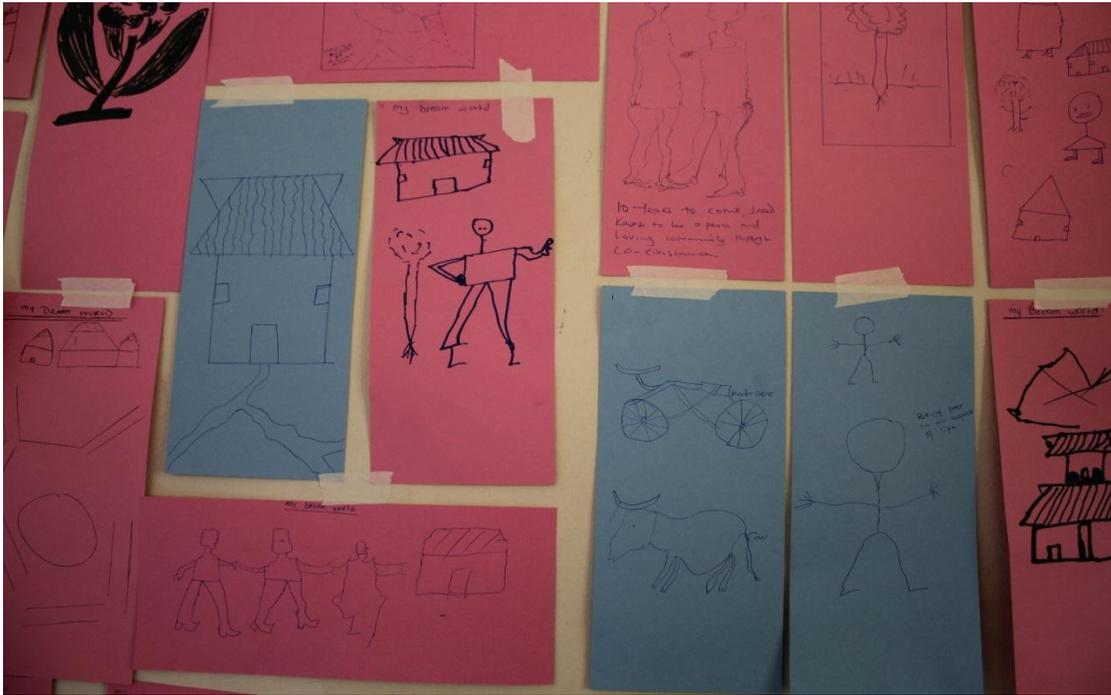
Maama youth group displaying some of the activities they are involved in.



Resident District Commissioner - Kaabong District speaking to the peace champions



Youth and young adults during training in Kasese – April 2019



Display of “my dream world” pictures during training in peace building



Young participants during a training in livelihood and income generating activities – May 2019



Assistant Resident District Commissioner – Kasese during official opening of the training in peacebuilding



Group photo – peacebuilding and conflict transformation training in Kasese



Participants performing a role play of Human Knot Game in Kasese



Chairperson LC5 giving closing remarks during the training in Kasese in peacebuilding



Participants during a group session in Yumbe district during a training in peace building



Drawing by a former child-soldier illustrating what he would like to see in his community ("my dream world")



A youth group member presenting her group's action plan for a liquid soap-making project - Yumbe district



Group photo: Young adult/youth peace champions in Yumbe district after the trainings in peacebuilding and in livelihood.



Local Council 5 Chairpersons – Yumbe District Local Government (left) handing over a certificate to one of the peace champions



Lopeyok Benjamin, aka Afande Natasha (right). He is interested in peace and music. Is part of St Monica Murukomuria Peace entertainment. He promised and is now boosting the project objectives through his talent on peace songs entertainment.



Resident District Commissioner - Kaabong district holding hands with CECORE staff as a sign of peace



Young/adults/Youth in Kaabong in a traditional dance