

UGANDA

Youth Rehabilitation and Reinsertion

Rebuilding Trust, Rebuilding Opportunity, Rebuilding Lives in Northern Uganda

For the past two decades Uganda has generally experienced robust economic growth and improving levels of education and health. While the northern region has historically lagged behind the rest of the country, this trend was dramatically exacerbated by the armed conflict that erupted in 1986. Marked by extraordinary levels of brutality and atrocity, the anti-government insurgency has been responsible for the looting of villages, torture, random killings, and the abduction of large numbers of youth and children.



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they have also lost their role in society and social responsibilities.

With restricted movement due to the security situation, young people have grown apart from their parents' traditional rural land-based livelihood. As well as the lack of land access, the absence of any real kind of income-generating activity is perceived as one of the major problems facing youth. Annan et al (2006) showed that young people in IDP camps were working an average of 7 days per month, and earned on average US\$0.55¢ a day.

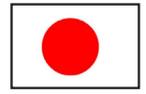
The Project

Initiated in 2003, The Northern Uganda Youth Rehabilitation Fund (NUYRF) aimed to selectively test the merits of interventions that target vulnerable youth (internally displaced, "gun drop outs", ex-abductees, ex-combatants, school drop outs and others) in Northern Uganda and test implementation arrangements, particularly the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community-based Organizations (CBOs).

"Each day for me is categorized with problems because when I wake up in the morning, I just sit around and do nothing until evening and eventually bed time. There is even no piece of land here in the camp where I can do any little cultivation and the lack of any form of activity to engage in so as to earn some little money escalates my problem more."
- 25-year old man in Acholibur, cited in Annan et al (2006)

Major population displacement started around the mid-1990s, as the government attempted to protect the civilian population from insurgent activities. It is estimated that nearly 1.6 million people were displaced in the northern Acholi districts (Kitgum, Gulu, Pader), and a large number still live in overcrowded, poorly serviced "protected villages" or Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps.

Perhaps more than other segment of society, young people between 15- and 25-years-old are bearing the costs of the war. This has had a profound effect on social and human capital as well as traditional social structures and norms. Not only have young people been displaced physically,



An additional driver for this project, although less explicitly stated, was the recognized need to identify innovative ways of addressing the trust gap that had grown up between the government and local communities and between different levels of government following years of strife. CSOs could act as neutral intermediaries that could build trust through a program that was not explicitly government sponsored and potentially build links with local and central government.

World Vision International - Uganda (WV), based in Northern Uganda, was selected as the primary implementing agency for the project. Around 110 qualified small and medium scale CSOs/CBOs and local artisans were contracted by WV as service providers to support youth skills training. These groups were provided sub-grants to procure training materials and post-training toolkits.

The Project had four key objectives:

1. To provide youth with specific vocational skills and tool kits to enable them to earn incomes and improve their livelihood.
2. To contribute towards community reconciliation and conflict management.
3. To build the capacity of NGOs, CBOs and the private sector to respond to the needs of youth.
4. To enable youth to participate in the Northern Uganda Social Activity Fund (NUSAF) activities.

The Project had three components:

- 1. Strengthening implementing agencies:** This provided capacity building for community-selected CSOs, local government officers and supplemental support for the Northern Uganda Liaison Office (NULO).
- 2. Support for Vulnerable Youth:** Working through existing NGOs/CSOs to facilitate the formation of groups of vulnerable youths who would subsequently design activities and interventions specific to their needs.
- 3. Youth and Community Peace Building:** This component supported community-based and traditional peace-building and conflict resolution initiatives that upheld the social values and beliefs of the youth. This included traditional systems of conflict resolution, negotiation, follow-up of abducted children, and the reunification of families. The component also focused on sensitization of political leaders, rebel groups and ex-combatants. Finally, the component included support for the social reinsertion of ex-abducted children, including the social preparation of households and communities, and provision of psycho-social support aimed at contributing to the community reconciliation process.



Project Data

- Implementing Agency: *World Vision International -- Uganda*
- Grant (TF050522) Amount: *\$1.66 million*
- Implementation Period: *09/11/2003 to 6/30/2006*

Results

Despite the many uncertainties and risks associated with the security situation during the implementation period (there was some improvement post-2006), the project was largely successful. It piloted a community-based skills training model that relied heavily on local structures, more specifically on CSOs and the private sector working in partnership with the local authorities, and supporting life skills development and youth reinsertion into the productive economy. Given this success, many aspects of the program were subsequently replicated under the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) (see Box 1).

Capacity Building and Facilitation: Vocational Training Institutions (VTIs) and CBOs were invited to participate in the project to provide training services to beneficiary youth. A series of rapid capacity/needs assessments were carried out, where CSOs were asked to provide details on their financial and human resources and technical capacities. A final list of CSOs was selected by the District Standing Technical Committee. Successful candidates from each of the Project zones, together with the relevant District Youth Officers (DYO), were provided with training, notably in financial management.

A consultant, working with local instructors drawn from the CSOs, developed simple, but comprehensive hands-on skills training curriculum and modules for all needs areas identified. Courses included Business

Skills, Financial Management and Procurement, Psychosocial Skills, Environmental Conservation and, Community Reconciliation and Conflict Management. Handbooks and reference materials were produced for a number of these courses - to ensure uniformity of training across the region.

Through the project, capacities were increased, not just of the beneficiaries who attended training courses, but also of the main implementing agency, World Vision International, and the institutions and individuals delivering the courses. Institutions that carried out the training reported benefiting from the training and the overall experience of working with the Bank and Government.

The physical infrastructure used for training also received upgrades. In three zonal areas, Gulu, Soroti and Arua, 22 service providers received support for the rehabilitation of training sites/institutions. Additionally, three large training centers in Pader, Yumbe and Nakapiripirit were constructed in these newly-created districts which had no organized private or public vocational training facilities.

Support for Vulnerable Youth: 3152 youths (1,139 female and 2,013 male) and 137 youth groups across the 18 districts of Northern Uganda were trained in various vocational skills including brick laying and concrete practice, tailoring, welding and metal work, carpentry and joinery, catering, borehole repair and maintenance, clay molding, bee keeping, motor vehicle repair and maintenance, shoe repair, bicycle repair, hair dressing and handicrafts. This number represents less than 5 percent of the youth who expressed interest in participating in the program, the key constraint being the budget available for the program. The overwhelming response also shows the extent of the unmet need in the target communities. Skills training presented an opportunity for youth in the Northern region to get to their feet and support not just themselves but their families and communities as a whole.

A key output, individual post-training toolkits, proved to be expensive (notably for courses like carpentry, tailoring and brick laying). Budget constraints reduced the coverage of such kits and trainees were urged to share the resources.

Youth and Community Peace Building: The program trained 90 community facilitators in extended Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). Training in Community Reconciliation and Conflict Management was extended to 108 religious youth leaders, youth council leaders, and community resource persons actively involved in the peace process. These leaders were subsequently able to extend this training to the 3,152 youths and others in their areas of jurisdiction. Additional training in psychosocial support and counseling skills was provided to community resource persons and CSOs who in turn trained all the youth in the program. The resource persons assessed the psychosocial needs of participants and provided basic counseling support to enable them to better cope with their past experiences.

Soft Governance: Overall, the institutions involved have been able to collaborate to deliver this program successfully. There were some very concrete pay-offs. The post of the DYO was revived within the district administration and the Northern Uganda Youth Liaison Office within the Office of the

Box 1 - Scaling up

In March 2005, the IDA-supported Northern Uganda Social Activity Fund (NUSAF) decided to scale up the results of the JSDF Program and committed roughly \$6 million to the Youth Opportunities Program (YOP), with an additional \$9 million to be disbursed under Vulnerable Group Support (VGS) and \$6 million under Community Driven Initiatives (CDI).

YOP, the principal youth-focused program within NUSAF, has three main objectives - based on those of the earlier program:

- To provide youth with specific vocational skills and tool kits to enable them to earn incomes and improve their livelihood;
- To contribute towards community reconciliation and conflict management; and
- To build capacity of NGOs, CBOs, and VTIs to respond to the needs of youth.

To accomplish these objectives, NUSAF has developed a highly decentralized, community and district-driven system of youth vocational training. Under YOP, small groups of youth self-organize, identify a vocational skill of interest and a VTI, and apply to NUSAF District Technical Offices (NDTOs) for funding. The NDTOs process and recommend proposals to the District and the central NUSAF Management Unit (NUMU), who screen for incomplete or inappropriate proposals. Youth groups with successfully approved proposals receive a cash transfer of up to the equivalent of US\$10,000 to a community bank account. These funds are used to enroll in the VTI, purchase training materials, and equip graduates with the tools and start-up costs for practicing the trade after graduation. NDTOs are supposed to provide supervision and technical assistance throughout.

Prime Minister was able to contribute substantially to the policy dialogue on the development of the region and to raise the issue of youth unemployment to the national platform.

Evaluation: Between February and May 2005 data was collected from the CSOs that had been contracted to provide skills training. A sample of 56 CSOs provided data (around 51%). Two of the key findings were:

- **Enrollment by course** - Tailoring attracted the highest number of youth (463), followed by carpentry/joinery (354) and brick laying (179). Motor mechanics, welding and hair dressing also attracted sizeable numbers.
- **Sustainability** - Seventy-seven percent of those trained were still practicing the vocational skill they had acquired through the project and more than eighty percent rated the courses as good or very good on content, practicality and administration. Additionally, a number of the CSOs have retained many of the youth in skills areas such as tailoring, brick-laying and joinery to work on contracts that were won as a result of the training in the local communities.

The NUYRF program demonstrated that targeted interventions for vulnerable youth can be successfully implemented using NGOs and CSOs. The sustainability of the results will depend on additional public and private funding going towards skills training, the ability to couple skills training with business skills training and connect youth with appropriate resources to enable them to gain employment or to become self-employed given market conditions and the security situation. Care will need to be taken to avoid overwhelming market demand in any particular trade, given that this would have an associated effect on opportunities and prices/income.

Impact of using CSOs on achievement of grant objectives:

World Vision, the lead implementing agency, handled the implementation of the project in a professional and timely manner. Implementation reviews and regular contact with the lead NGO indicated that project management has been very thorough in terms of quality of staff, procurement, financial management, reporting as well as contribution of counterpart funds from World Vision. WV dynamically leveraged and managed the political situation by enabling direct interaction between the government and CSOs, which enhanced mutual understanding and trust between local communities and government. WV subcontracted 110 CSOs to deliver the training in a wide variety of topics, and they helped better identify the target population of young boys and girls between the ages of 16-25 who were mostly ex-combatants and/or school drop-outs. The NUYRF program has demonstrated that targeted interventions for vulnerable youth can be successfully implemented using NGOs and civil society organizations.



Effectiveness of CSO capacity building: The CSOs, district staff and other local stakeholders have benefited from training which enabled them to offer better services and reach a larger number of beneficiaries. This grant further strengthened WV's training capacities and expanded its operational scope beyond agriculture, technical skill and social development. After the grant was completed, as a trainer, WV was able to provide instruments such as district-level and participatory planning to meet the immediate needs of local communities.

Lessons Learned

The Project produced a number of lessons that informed the NUSAF.

- Quick delivery of services is possible through CSOs.
- Unskilled, redundant youth can be empowered to live meaningful and gainful lives through skills training.
- Public-Private Partnerships are an effective approach to the delivery of community-based services.
- Involvement of civic leaders in the sensitization and mobilization of communities is critical in bringing about attitudinal change for community development.
- Living testimonies are powerful engines for the social transformation of communities.
- Participatory approaches stimulate the active engagement of local agents and build a sense of ownership by the community that ensures sustainability of program interventions.
- Rejuvenation of socio-economic development in post-conflict situations calls for a multi-dimensional approach.
- Gender sensitivity ensures effective participation in project planning and implementation.

Testing Ideas: The JSDF Program was able to successfully test ideas relating to the use of CSOs as a means of providing critical services under the most challenging of circumstances. Assessed through rigorous evaluation, many of these ideas were subsequently adopted under the NUSAF and other donor/NGO programs.

Notes / Key Resources

IRIN (2007), "Indepth: Youth in crisis: Coming of age in the 21st century", online feature, February 2007. IRIN is a service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Jeannie Annan, Christopher Blattman and Roger Horton (2006) "The State of Youth and Youth Protection in Northern Uganda: Findings from the Survey for War Affected Youth", UNICEF Uganda. See <http://chrisblattman.com/projects/sway/> and <http://www.SWAY-Uganda.org>

Christopher Blattman, Nathan Fiala, Sebastian Martinez, (2009) "Baseline Report - Impact Evaluation of the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund Youth Opportunities Project, Uganda Results from the Baseline Individual and Group Surveys"

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The Japan Social Development Fund -- The JSDF is a partnership between the Government of Japan and the World Bank that supports innovative social programs in developing countries. JSDF grants are executed by NGOs/CSOs and local governments and implemented at the community level. JSDF projects meet four basic requirements: (i) they target and respond to the needs of poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged groups, and aim to achieve rapid results, (ii) they are innovative and pilot alternative approaches or partnerships, (iv) they use participatory designs and stakeholder consultation to design inputs and as an integral part of monitoring and evaluation, (iii) they empower local communities, local governments, NGOs/CSOs through capacity building and rapid feedback of lessons learned, and (v) they focus on scale-up potential, replication and the sustainability of interventions.