



Youth Leaders for Restoration and Development (YOLRED)

Project Title: Community Based Reintegration of Former LRA combatants in Northern Uganda

Reporting Period: Quarter Report; July – September, 2017

Contact person:	Omony Geoffrey
Partner Address:	Kirombe Customs Plot 13B James Arwata Rd Box 441, Gulu - Uganda
Telephone:	+256(0)773348688
Email:	omonyjeff.yolred@gmail.com
Website:	www.yolred.org

Send Feedback to
Omonyjeff.yolred@gmail.com
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1. Basic Project Information	
Profile	
Name of project	Community based re-integration of former LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) combatants in Northern Uganda
Project goal and objectives	<p>Goal: Promoting the social and emotional well-being of former combatants.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective I: Supporting former combatants by helping them heal physical, psychological and spiritual wounds; ● Objective II: Promoting unity and reconciliation between former combatants with their families and communities; ● Objective III: Providing skills development and livelihood opportunities for victims, and their children; ● Objective IV: Encouraging current combatants to leave the fighting and return home through radio broadcasts and outreach; and, ● Objective V: Advocating for policies and programs that uphold and augment the rights and dignity of former combatants and their roles in society.
Location of the project	Acholi sub-region, Northern Uganda
Geographical coverage	Gulu Municipality

2. Quantitative presentation of Project Results

Key Results expressed in terms of Outputs	Indicator	Y/ N	Current (Gender disaggregation)	Status
Output 1.1.1: Increased knowledge of reconciliation and forgiveness as one way by which returnees can reintegrate easily in the community	Number of people (men and women) reached with knowledge of reconciliation as a way by which returnees can reintegrate easily in the community.	Y	127 (57 male and 70 female)	
	Number of returnees (male and female) who have received knowledge on reconciliation as a way by which returnees can reintegrate easily in the community.	Y	46 (18 male and 28 female) ¹	
Output 1.1.2: Increased knowledge on rights and behavioral changes of former abductees/combatants	Number of people reached with knowledge on rights and behavioral changes of former abductees/combatant.	Y	127	
	Number of people (men and women) actively involved in the protection and promotion of rights of former abductees/combatants, as individuals or groups.	Y	41 (15 male and 26 female)	
	Number of returnees who have received education of their rights and self-control.	Y	46	
Output 2.2.1: Enhanced awareness and understanding of behavioral changes of former abductees/combatants	Estimated percentage of individuals with knowledge of the behavioral changes experienced by former abductees/combatants while in combat.	N		
	Number of people reached with understanding of the behavioral changes of former abductees/combatants.	N		

¹ These are part of the larger 127 community group members because their reintegration with the other members helps in reducing stigma and discrimination, which impact reintegration.

3 General progresses

Progress towards results:

YOLRED is organizing a music, dance and drama contest among community groups to be held in December, 2017 which is expected to attract an estimated 500 people, including different stakeholders ranging from local, cultural religious, and district leaders, Newswriters, media houses (local radio stations), TV stations and other development agencies/civil society organization such as Bed ki Gen, Thrive, Grass Root and Reconciliation Project, Caritas Counseling and Training Institute, Feed the Children, Save the Children and World Vision International have also been extended invitations.. The theme of the competition is ***“Music Therapy: A tool for community reintegration,”*** which was given to six informally organized community groups who are composing and practicing songs, dances and dramas to the community on reconciliation and forgiveness as a way of re-integrating ex-combatants with children born in captivity, as well as the rest of the community. Two other community groups have registered for the showcase category, too. The competing groups’ performances shall be assessed by judges who will extend awards based on the level of presentation, innovation, and creativity exhibited relevant to the theme of the event ranging from numbers one to six; the group awarded number one will receive a certificate, trophy, and 300,000 Ugandan shillings, while those who will be showcasing receive 100,000 Ugandan shillings, only. Based on the capacity assessment done at the point of inception of the project, each community group will be given 100,000 Ugandan shillings to helps bridge instrumental gap as they prepare for the a final public gathering.

Progress towards Output 1.1.1: Increased knowledge of reconciliation and forgiveness as one way by which returnees can reintegrate easily in the community.

During this period, YOLRED conducted series of activities that contributed towards achieving output 1.1.1: *Increased knowledge of reconciliation and forgiveness, as one way by which returnees can reintegrate easily.* **20** group and **12** individual counseling sessions were conducted whereby 127 (70 female and 57 male) clients benefited.

These sessions were constructed for both individuals, and group formats which were generated from the individual needs assessment forms filled by YOLRED field staff, in which key psychological and psychosocial needs were identified among other needs. These interactions consisted of:

One on one sessions conducted with clients who have depressive mood swings as evidenced by personal feelings such as helplessness and hopelessness, loss of concentration in daily activities, weight changes, sleep changes, anger or irritability, loss of energy, or self-loathing. The sessions are aimed at bringing about a voluntary change in a client in which the counselor facilitates the therapy to generate positive options for a healthy choice for a dependable decision after developing a positive self-understanding/client’s self-concept. The therapeutic session lasting between 45 minute to an hour takes about 10-15 sessions per client on agreed, time, date and venue. These sessions are summarized in three phases;

- 1) **Trust building phase** involves agreeing on the negotiable and the non- negotiable terms where the negotiable includes: agreeing on the time, venue, dates, nature of the relationships among others; and, the non- negotiable which includes breach of confidentiality would arise when there is a sign of the “3Ds:” danger to self, danger to property and danger to others.
- 2) **Working through the process phase** is the middle stage of a therapeutic session where client will have built trust in a counsellor, hence he/ she is able to opens up and begins to develop and realize the merits of understanding himself/herself (self-concept), and start feeling at home in the therapeutic world, accepting one’s self and life choices.
- 3) **Termination phase** involves evaluating the progression of the therapeutic sessions, consolidating what both the client and the counselor have learned, including what went well and what did not. Feeling satisfied with the issues shared in the therapeutic sessions, it is also at this point where referrals can be made for the client.

(YOLRED don’t bring in outside counselors. The program is run by the organizational team.)

Through individual counseling, some ex-combatants with extreme levels of anger, stress and depression which could lead them to feeling isolated, withdrawn from the rest of the members and lowering their self-esteem, were able to reach a level of spiritual and psychological healing. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) helped changed the irrational thoughts of these clients to rational ones where they are able to understand themselves (self-concept/understanding), and make informed decisions which allowed them to relate more easily with other members of the group, and larger community. These 127 people also benefited from different movement therapy sessions where clients were able to actively participate in connecting the mind with the soul, heart, and body for an holistic expressions of feelings, emotions and behaviors. Movement therapy is a mindfulness exercise conducted by a therapist who facilitates the process either with a recorded melody, or a commanding voice to help collect and ease the minds of clients. The clients’ views are shared based on their feelings at the time of the deep self-inquiry, or meditation, which creates rooms for choice between impulses and actions that can help develop coping skills and behavioral change.

Progress towards Output 1.1.2

Increased knowledge on rights and behavioral changes of former abductees/combatants.

Through music, dance, drama and group sessions, participants were able to actively engage in discussing human needs, protecting and safeguarding the danger to self, others, and properties. Subsequently, they would share their experiences of engaging themselves in concentrating and performing productive activity. During leisure time, they would pay visits to friends, watch educational movies, join game and sport clubs, traditional cultural dance groups, and faith-related programs helping them manage their traumas of being in captivity.

Report on gender and disability mainstreaming

Female participants have been willingly and actively participating in leading trainings of traditional dances, songs and dramas, openly sharing their individual life experiences they went through while in captivity as well as when they returned.

Persons with disabilities including the blind, lame, deaf and mute have been integrated in the program through the Gulu Primary School and School for the Blind. This development was based on a consultative meeting with the school administration. The majority of whose pupils have disabilities, and/or were born in captivity. Consequently, they have shown a willingness to participate in the programming of the music therapy which helps to mitigate the stigmatization and segregation of disabled persons.

Challenges faced during implementation:

*Needs assessment: Based on the prevailing situation which is evidenced by high level of stigmatization, trauma and segregation of the former child combatants which needed quick actions to try and evaluate which strategy would help in harmonizing these issues to enable their reintegration, it was really challenging to conduct massive community needs assessment. However, the situation was managed through having an interception and dissemination meetings at YOLRED's headquarter to get their insight about the program and they were positive though the participants had high expectation on allowance/transport refund which we managed to keep them informed that the project belongs to them and they own it.

*Transport is a great challenge as YOLRED does not have any means to help facilitate the project field staff and even other staff to deliver services to its target beneficiaries on official duty, and this sometimes restrict and limits service delivery. However, the organization is managing to implement a pilot project within the Municipality of Gulu where we are able to use only local Boda-Boda Motor Cyclist to reach community groups.

*Electric gadgets and equipment; YOLRED still lacks a number of facilities, as it needs a solar-power generating system as an alternative to the irregular, traditional electrical supply in Gulu. Other critical items the organization lacks include computers, a digital projector, and digital cameras for the team through the ability document and easily share its multi-media materials. Further there is a need for consistent access to high speed Internet ensures accuracy and quality for YOLRED's data collection, recording, processing, editing, storage and management. To this point, the organization has managed without most of the aforementioned items by purchasing an ordinary camera for photography, and occasionally outsourcing for information gathering and documentation services.

Lessons learned:

- The ex-combatants feel they are valued members of society because of the various state and non-state actors programming that always includes their concerns and issues like the reparation program, however it was not comprehensively done. The music therapy approach which YOLRED developed addresses the physical, psychological and social gaps identified for a comprehensive reintegration program.
- There are also registered cases of some children born in captivity who don't know where their biological parents are, and this means tracing and relocating them back to their parents, helping address the high rate of marriage separation, divorce, domestic violence, and violence against children, etc.
- Many ex-combatants, children born in captivity and other members of the community who experienced LRA atrocities for over twenty years have low economic status and a consequent missing quality of basic services, medical services, education, feeding and proper shelter. Girls are forced to get married at an early stage, or engage in sex work among other exploitative actions, leading to rampant STD (sexually transmitted diseases), or STI (sexually transmitted infections).

The Way Forward:

- There is need for a theatre for music programs performances alongside a rehabilitation centre. Traditional music and arts are strong tools for nurturing reconciliation through uniting families and communities who have been in conflict with each other. For instance, the community of Lukodi is now using traditional dance as a way to reconcile and console themselves. This is what the YOLRED field staff were told when visiting the community during the organizational re-design period. However, other cases outside YOLRED programming need referrals to strategic partners.
- There is need to psycho-educate the community on the rights of the ex-combatants and their children to have a sense of belonging and own properties.
- Where possible, education support programs to the children of returnees must be provided, as well as income generating activities (IGA) , livelihood programming, networking for resource mobilization, and referral linkages to strategic partners and external service providers.
- Serious engagement of the different key stakeholders including civil society organizations, religious leaders, cultural leaders and other government institutions to help address the high rates of violence: spiritual, psychological, and social for a comprehensive reintegration programs.



Disemination meeting with group leaders



Members training in traditional dance



Members during group session



sharing her experience on rights





School pupils during drama