

REPORT ON TRAUMA HEALING AND PEACEBUILDING FOR REFUGEES PROJECT IN UGANDA.



Introduction

Uganda is home to many refugees in Uganda who come from Southern Sudan, DRC Congo and Rwanda. Southern Sudanese and Congolese form the highest number of refugees in Uganda. Many of them have left their original countries because of the conflict.

With the influx of refugees in Uganda there is need to continually reach out to them as a host country. However, many refugees still come with a war mentality that becomes a hindrance to any development interventions in the camps not to mention their own social wellbeing and thus the need to first work on mind set change through trauma healing, peace building and conflict resolution interventions.

Many of the refugees have ethnic differences that make them have deep-rooted hatred for those in other tribes and as such struggle to even live together in their host communities which has perpetuated violence even within the camps

With the support of Cornerstone Trust, Kica Transforms Ministry (KTM) set to reach out to at least 150 leaders in 3 refugee settlements (Kiryandongo, Palabek, and Rhino Camp in Arua) with peace building interventions. KTM used the approach of leaders because with their influence, they have the ability to cascade the information to entire communities on the ground. As such the primary participants in this training were selected church leaders, youth leaders, cultural leaders, women leaders and civic leaders from all denominations.

Financial accountability.

Particular	Project Budget	Actual Spending	Variance	Comments
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Summary				
Introduction of project to Camp commandant	3,000	3,000	00 (0%)	The project was introduced to all the 3 camp commandants of Arua, Palabek and Kiryandongo.
Identification of trainers and beneficiaries	600	1,200	600 (100%)	Trainers and beneficiaries were identified. There was extra expense because of Covid effect.
Planning for training	1,500	1,270	-230 (-15%)	Planning was done successfully in all three centers. KTM staff visited and met the committee.
Training of trainers	3,600	3,300	300 (-8.3%)	The trainers were selected, invited and trained well.
Training of Participants	6,900	7,500	600 (8.70%)	A total of 183 participants were trained as opposed to 150 planned. Addition of 33 leaders trained. This is due to the needs on the ground. We included civic leaders.
Quarterly feedback	900	1,200	400 (29%)	Many peace club groups were set up training within the camps.
Community engagement	400	500	-100 10%	Training of pastors and community leaders who are our focal point person completed.
Support Visit	100	100	0	This money is used by team trained for training other members in the camps.
Evaluation	1080	1,080	0	This is cost for evaluation for all the 3 trainings.

Administration (Bank charges)	720	850	-150	This is bank charge to transfer funds and withdrawal from the Bank.
Total	20,000	20,000		

Measures of Success

Projected	Actual	Variance
<i>To equip 150 Church, Community/youth leaders with knowledge of trauma healing, Conflict resolution, forgiveness, Counselling, and 150 leaders from 3 refugees' camps were targeted.</i>	<i>183 Church leaders, Community and youth leaders are trained in three camps about trauma healing, peace building and conflict resolution, counselling, and forgiveness. We selected and called 150 but 183 community leaders from 3 refugees camps reported.</i>	<i>Additional 33 community leaders from 3 refugees' camps. The Church leaders, community /youth leaders were equipped. 22 % of the total leaders trained in the camps</i>
<i>There were 3 trainings planned; Kiryandongo, Palabek and Rhino Camp Arua. The resources was sent to train people in the 3 camps.</i>	<i>The 3 trainings were successfully done and the information on peace building and conflict resolution was shared and leaders got deeper understanding of these concepts</i>	<i>More people were trained with the same resources that we had planned. This is more value for money.</i>
<i>Trauma healing and healing processes to be planted in different tribes in the south Sudan communities and the host community.</i>	<i>Trauma healing and healing processes were triggered among the different tribes in the south Sudan communities in the camps as seen from the testimonies with their counterpart host communities</i>	<i>Different tribes within the camps are now free with one another as oppose to the time of their arrival in Uganda</i>

<p>The societies to live in harmony through training of trauma healing, peace building and conflict resolution, forgiveness and counseling.</p>	<p>The societies have started living in harmony as evidenced by meeting together, eating, laughing, and sharing conflict and trauma stories that cut across communities.</p>	<p><i>There is a tremendous change due to the knowledge passed on to community through trained leaders to the throughout community</i></p>
<p><i>The methodology of trainings to be brainstorming, group discussions, teachings, and notes for continuity of the program in the camps</i></p>	<p>The trainings and notes given to the participants is a permanent tool for program continuity and sustainability as participants are willing to go back and share in their communities.</p>	<p>The leaders were set to reach out to the entire communities through sensitization activities such as peace clubs inform of drama and sport</p>



Ongoing group session and a discussant sharing group views.



Demonstration on the burden of unforgiveness.

Key lessons learned

- ✚ Refugees suffer intense trauma and thus need serious rehabilitation measures to help them come back to normal life. The painful past experiences tend to make it hard for them to be rehabilitated or even move on in life.
- ✚ Using biblical principles of forgiveness has a greater impact. Many participants testified that many organizations have tried to reconcile communities but with little or no impact, soon the people return to their normal lives of conflict amongst each other. As heard from the testimonies many said that this was a training with a difference.
- ✚ Bringing warring tribes or factions together in one room to share experiences helps to break long existing myths and creates harmony. Many tribes have been taught from childhood to hate the others as the cause of their problems but when you bring them in one room they realize that they are all carrying an unnecessary burden of unforgiveness because of unfounded myths.
- ✚ Sharing of stories and testimonies by both participants and facilitators is a key learning approach that deepens learning and creates trust which is key in a healing process.
- ✚ Training of leaders to train their own communities is a great way to impact leaders but also to reach to a bigger community using minimal resources.
- ✚ Inception meetings are very vital to ensure success of interventions. This is because during these meetings which are mainly interactive local community members mainly refugees share their needs to enable implementers provide tailor made interventions.
- ✚ Refugees require constant monitoring of activities as they easily fall back in despair and depression

Challenges

- Covid 19 lockdown which slowed down the entire project. At some point movement was not allowed nor was gathering of more than 10 people which made training challenging.
- The variety of tribes in the refugee settlements made training a bit challenging as there was need for translation. If you translate in one and not the other, the others feel marginalized which was a challenge.
- Poor facilities in the camps meant that much as the trainings were held successfully, some facilities were not so conducive.
- Strong restriction on refugees by the government could not allow for some activities earlier planned such as exchange visits.
- Bad road network. Two of the refugee settlements visited are very far off and have a bad road network. At one point the staff almost got an accident because of the bad road.
- Illiteracy especially among women in camps meant that fewer women compared to men could be reached using conventional means.
- Most refugees have lost hope of returning to their country, there is need to get people of their own from South Sudan come and talk and encourage them.
- We need to empower the Church even more because communities feel the church has failed to help them.
- There is need to empower Pastors independently to prepare them to address the refugee crisis.



Limited transport options coupled with bad road network (wooden bridge in picture)

Stories of impact

Lilian Ason from Adobu Zone in Arua testified that she had lost property and close relatives and was planning to revenge but learnt that by holding these offenders in her heart she is the one who is carrying the heavy burden, she added that it is even causing her ulcers and more trauma. “I have forgiven the offenders so I can move on to do more profitable things for my life. I promise to share my story with others who may be going through similar struggles in the camps.”

This skill was acquired after the illustration of carrying with us a back pack full of bricks symbolizing the many people that we have not forgiven yet still hold them in our hearts.

Samuel from Kiryandongo refugee camp testified about his friend who used to sleep with different women. Samuel had warned him several times and eventually told him to go and get tested for HIV/AIDS. When the results came out the friend was positive, so he resorted to lock himself in his room and would be found crying alone by himself. He refused all advice and counselling from Samuel and decided to join the military saying, “Let me go and die in the military.” Indeed, he eventually died on the war front in South Sudan; this incident has also traumatized Samuel. Samuel has learnt from the training basic skills of helping people suffering with trauma.

Lugolo Benjamin from Eden Zone-Rhino camp in Arua realized that it is unnecessary conflict that caused him to end up in the refugee camp and that they have carried the same conflicts to the camps.

“From the training on conflict resolution and peace building, I have learnt that conflicts can be solved or even avoided. I pledge to be a peace ambassador.”

Apai Mary from Siripi zone in Arua testified that her husband was killed as she looked on helplessly because of the conflict in Southern Sudan. She had this to say:

“My husband was killed while I was looking and also some other relatives, men were taken and we’ve never seen them again. Through this training I have learnt that I need to forgive although I find it hard. The shared Bible verse Psalm 73 and Psalm 23 has strengthened my faith and trust in God”



Apai Mary testifies during the training & Yunis the first from the right

Yunis Wuorgutjalth from Palabek refugee camp who lost two fingers during a clan fight say that conflict has affected his entire life. He has learnt and is willing to use his suffering to help other people avoid escalating conflicts

Enrita Ezoa a young lady from Arua says,

“My neighbors were attacked by soldiers and my parents told me to escape for fear of being raped by soldiers. I boarded a vehicle towards Uganda and our vehicle was ambushed and all our things were taken, people were tied and slaughtered in our presence, one of the soldiers identified me and released me. I walked and joined other groups and found myself in the camp, very traumatized, separated from my father and mother: I was alone in the camp and one night I was raped and it ended up in pregnancy. I delivered a baby boy now 4 years old. Since then the boy who raped me is threatening to kill me if I do not take him as a husband. I have since been transferred from camp to camp. I desire to go back to School yet I am traumatized and my life is at risk. I have found this training very helpful as it has started the healing process in me. Only thing I ask is that you keep visiting us so that we get totally healed.”



Enrita sharing her life story

Prayer points

There's a high influx of refugees amidst poor and limited facilities which means that they end up living in deplorable conditions.

- Pray for better life for refugees and restoration of peace upon their land.
- Pray for continued support to refugees especially in terms of psychosocial interventions as many are still suffering from effects of trauma.
- They need to be encouraged to engage in income generating activities which can be a way of restoring hope as many of them currently have no source of livelihood making them destitute. Literacy programs especially among the women need to be encouraged. Pray for this to be achieved.
- Pray for the church in the refugee camps. The church in the camp needs to be empowered as the center of hope and peace.
- There is need to restore trust in the church as many refugees had given up on church because they don't seem to have their answer. In relation to this it would be good to have bibles distributed to leaders so that the current scenario where only the pastor owns a bible is dealt with. Also women can be given audio bibles since many are illiterate.

Way forward

- Continue monitoring of peace clubs in the refugee settlements
- Economic empowerment of refugees through simple interventions that can provide them a source of livelihood.
- Empowerment of the church.

Conclusion

The project was an eye-opener to understanding the refugee crisis in Uganda. With the successful implementation of this project KTM can work more closely with the church in refugee settlements for purposes of holistic development.