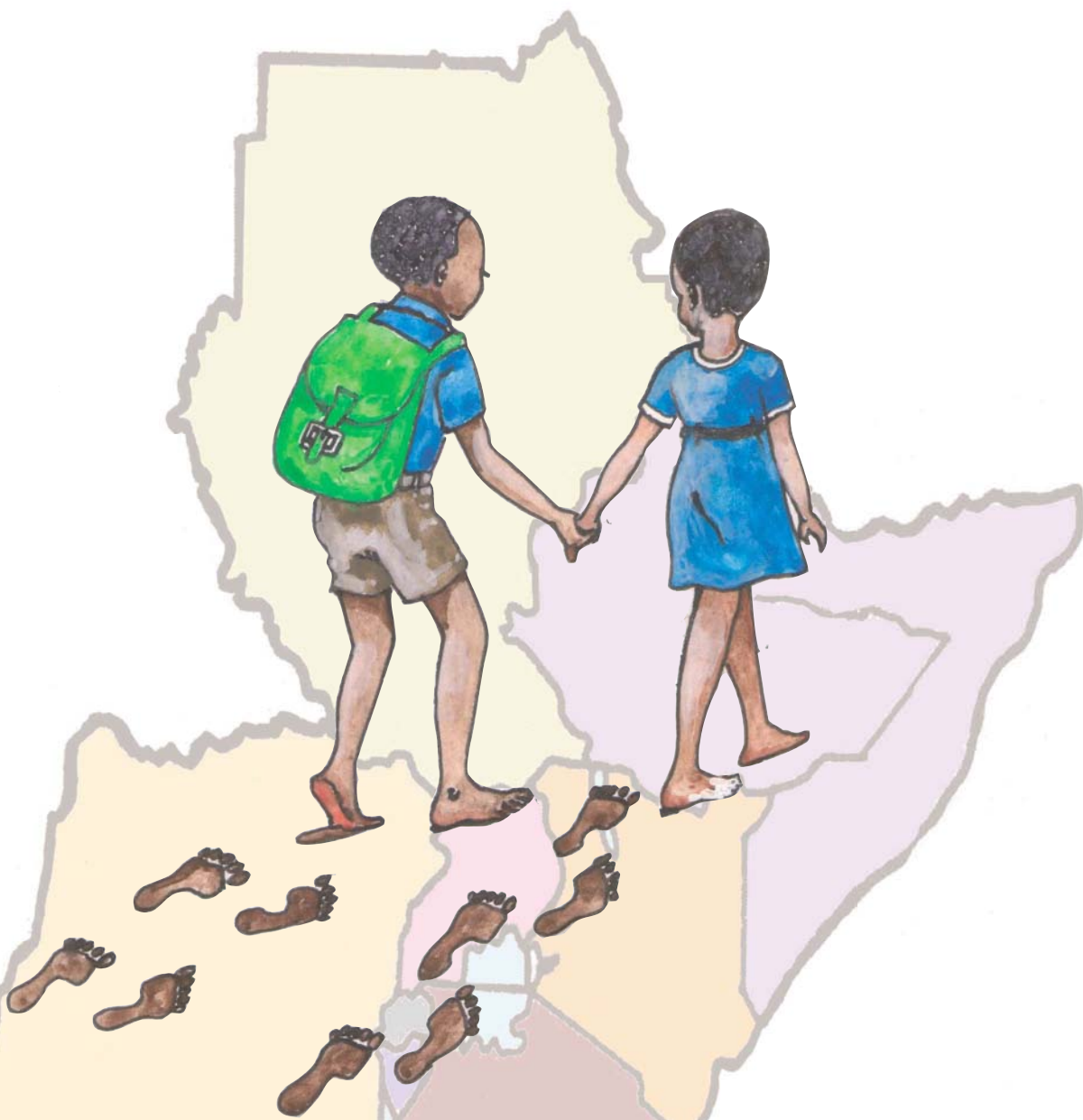


World Vision



Small Feet, Deep Prints

Young People Building Peace with
World Vision East Africa

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Report Author: Valarie Vat Kamatsiko

Cover Page Illustration by Edward O'Du'Boa

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“On any one given day, 20 or more armed conflicts are being fought around the world, most in poor countries. In the past decade alone, because of wars, 2 million children were killed; 6 million were seriously injured or permanently disabled; and 12 million were left homeless. It is estimated that between 80 percent and 90 percent of people who die or are injured in conflict are civilians, mostly children and their mothers.”

The State of the World's Children 2001, UNICEF

“Children can help. In a world of diversity and disparity, children are a unifying force capable of bringing people to common ethical grounds. . . Young people should be seen in that light; as survivors and active participants in creating solutions, not just as victims or problems.”

Graca Machel, 1996

Foreword

How often do we listen to children and youths? How often do we involve them?
How often are we willing to learn from young people?

Small Feet, Deep Prints is a World Vision Africa publication by the East Africa peace network (AmaNet) that documents lessons learned from involving children in working for peace.

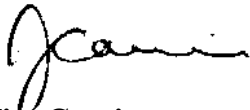
Children and youths in most of Africa lack support to share their ideas. They are vulnerable to violence and abuse, especially when the family unit breaks down as a result of conflict. They are often silent sufferers.

Because of diverse conflicts in the region, children have lost out on school time, parental love and guidance, access to health opportunities and all aspects of self worth and dignity. Many have died, and many stagger through life. They have been betrayed and used as pawns of conflict.

Small Feet, Deep Prints starts us, as development workers, on a journey to tap into the power of the innocence of children and the zeal of youths for community and personal peace. Our work with children and youths in Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, as captured in this book, is testimony that children and youths have a meaningful part to play in human transformation.

In this book, we share milestones, learnings and challenges. As we reflect about the inclusion of young people we also attempt to make recommendations for more meaningful and empowering ways to involve children in peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

Our wish is to see more involvement of children and youths in community initiatives for peace, and our conviction is that peace which starts with children is more sustainable for development.



Jim Carrie
Regional Director
World Vision East Africa

Introductory Note

Conflict is increasing in the world over today; and children are increasingly becoming the largest number of those affected. Children are lured, coerced, abducted, abused and forced to fight wars that they do not understand. Children have become instruments of war; and this has made them vulnerable. Many children are born, grow up and become adults in situations of conflict.

In East Africa, the images of children starving, raped, abducted, displaced, maimed, unaccompanied, night commuting and used as child soldiers are familiar to the world. Such children have continued to suffer in the eyes of communities, governments and the international communities.

This book describes how conflicts have affected children in East Africa. It also documents World Vision's peacebuilding work with young people in Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia and Uganda.

This book shares the experiences of World Vision in East Africa with young people as partners in peacebuilding. This partnership is in line with World Vision's mission, vision and core values.

Further, it highlights the best practices and lessons learnt through engaging children in peace building processes. AmaNet, therefore, calls upon all stakeholders responding to conflict situations to bring children in the center of the responses.



James Odong

Coordinator

World Vision East Africa Regional Peace Network, AmaNet

Preface

‘Small Feet, Deep Prints’ is a publication manifesting that young people have the potential to deeply influence both the young as well as the old, as they traverse communities sowing messages of peace. Working to build peace with support from World Vision Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia and Uganda, young people have touched many in small and big ways.

The focus of projects covered herein has been on processes that change personal and social relationships through music, dance and drama expressions as well as sports. Small pockets of peaceful societies are beginning to evolve with huge potential of having greater multiplier effects on nations.

However, young people may not achieve much on their own. They require the ‘whole’ community’s support – the community thinking and actions must be supportive.

‘Small Feet, Deep Prints’ presents experiences and identifies key lessons that World Vision and other organisations could learn from in order to make their peace work with young people more effective.

World Vision hopes that ‘Small Feet, Deep Prints’ will provide the inspirations to build on existing strengths to improve, expand and establish young people focused peacebuilding programmes.



Valarie Vat Kamatsiko

Regional Coordinator: Research and Documentation,
World Vision East Africa Regional Peace Network, AmaNet

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The different Support Offices, especially World Vision Canada, World Vision Germany and World Vision United States of America for making the documentation process possible.

Valarie Vat Kamatsiko for spearheading this process, designing research tools, collecting data from the different national and field offices and compiling this report.

We hope that this publication will provide insights on how to benefit more young people and their communities. Thank you!

WV Africa
May, 2005

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Acronyms

ADP	Area Development Programme
AmaNet	The World Vision East Africa Regional Peace Network
CAP	Children As Peacebuilders
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child
DCI	Defense for Children International
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FDD	Forces for the Defense of Democracy
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FNL	Forces for National Liberation
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus /Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IDP	Internally Displaced People
LRA	Lords Resistance Army
MAPOTU	Marakwet, Pokot and Turkana Peacebuilding Project
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NO	World Vision National Office
POKATUSA	Pokot, Karimojong, Turkana and Sabiny Project
PRAY	Promotion of Reconciliation Among Youths Project
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
STFG	Somali Transitional Federal Government
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WV	World Vision

Executive Summary

Introduction, Purpose and Significance of this Document

Young people are instruments of change, and if well supported, they have great potential to contribute to building peace. The fact that young people endure suffering in conflicts demands their appropriate engagement in peace processes. This publication attempts to show the importance of partnering with young people and placing them at the centre of World Vision's peace building work. It facilitates sharing of information as well as learning about the significant role young people play; and how best they could be supported to participate as peace builders. The main objective was to document World Vision East Africa's work with young people in the Region.

Methodology

This publication focused on four projects in the World Vision East Africa Region. These included: MAPOTU Peacebuilding Project (World Vision Kenya); Promotion of Reconciliation Among Youths Project (World Vision Rwanda); Waajid Grass Root Peacebuilding Project (World Vision Somalia); and Children as Peacebuilders Project (World Vision Uganda). Using qualitative research methods, data was collected from areas in which these projects are implemented. In

total, 208 respondents - of whom 137 were young people - contributed information through interviews and focus group discussions. The focus of this study was on young people of the age range 8 to 25 years.

Main Findings

Findings are presented in form of case studies, highlighting the background to each project; young people's contribution to peacebuilding at both community and personal level, as well as good practices identified and lessons learnt. Although each case study presents unique findings, what is presented below are general observations and conclusions that were drawn after careful analysis.

World Vision's Peacebuilding Work with Young People

All the four projects engage young people in artistic expressions, such as, music, dance, and drama as well as sports, to convey peace-promoting messages to various target groups. However, the ways in which young people engaged in these activities varied. In this regard, the MAPOTU project involved young people through the school system. The Waajid Project worked with young people mainly through sports teams, while World Vision Rwanda and Uganda partnered with groups or clubs of young people. These too varied in form and character.

With the exception of Uganda, all the other countries engaged young people in inter-community activities that provided opportunities for interaction to communities in conflict. Through a gradual and challenging process, young people have contributed to peace building.

Young People's Contributions to Building Peace

- **Influence on the Wider Community**

Common to all these projects are young people's peace-promoting activities that have influenced their families, their peers and other members of the wider community. These projects have resulted into:

-  A more positive change in attitudes
-  Increased actions and practices that symbolise peace
-  Increased awareness about the importance of peace
-  More opportunities for entertainment and healing
-  Positive changes among family members
-  Increased participation in civil activities by peers
-  Complementing local development agendas

- **Influence on Young Participants Themselves**

Although impacted in similar ways as other community members have been, young participants have

enjoyed exclusive benefits from their participation. Young participants have:

-  Enhanced social skills and values
-  A realisation of their own roles and responsibilities as peace builders
-  Improved discipline and morals
-  Enhanced self-confidence and esteem

Lessons Learnt

The following are general lessons learnt from World Vision's peace work with young people:

-  Young people are powerful agents for peace
-  Working with young people fosters a culture of peace
-  Young people's effective participation requires support
-  Artistic activities promote peace and are therapeutic
-  Young people have been integrating other development issues in peacebuilding
-  Young people have highlighted the link between peace and development

Recommendations

The report calls for the involvement of young people in peacebuilding not only as a means of building a culture of peace; but young people are also powerful and dynamic agents of peace. While World Vision's work with

young people has with no doubt yielded dividends for peace, lessons learnt from the various case studies point to the need to deepen and widen such efforts. Below are broad recommendations that could be tailored to fit both programme and country contexts:

1. Design and implement young people focused peacebuilding strategies and programmes.
2. Build the capacity of young people, staff and other facilitators in peace knowledge, skills and attitudes.
3. Forge stronger partnerships and networks with others for systematic, coordinated and sustainable work with young people.
4. Adopt a multi-level and multi-dimensional approach to ensure a holistic strategy necessary to address different peacebuilding and conflict prevention needs existing at different levels.
5. Engage young people in peace advocacy at local, national and international levels.
6. Share best practices and lessons learnt to facilitate continuous improvement of young people focused peacebuilding programmes.
7. Allocate adequate funds to facilitate effectiveness and

expansion of young people focused peacebuilding initiatives.

8. Adopt young people focused evaluation of peacebuilding programmes they have been involved in.
9. Carry out a study to analyse the extent to which young people's involvement in peacebuilding deters them from being active participants in armed conflict. Also review the extent to which young people can partner with adults to monitor and report on violations committed against them during situations of armed conflict.

Conclusion

'Small Feet, Deep Prints' is a publication illustrating that young people are not just victims of conflicts; but are dynamic agents for peace and effective 'participants in creating solutions'. The participation of young people in peacebuilding, if appropriately supported, can have positive outcomes for peace at different levels. The above recommendations are intended for civil society groups as well as donors and multilateral organisations seeking to partner effectively with young people's peacebuilding initiatives and youth-led organisations. The recommendations propose actions meant to widen and deepen young people's engagement in peace initiatives; thus rendering them even more effective.

1.0 Introduction

In East Africa, conflicts have caused enormous costs on children, families, communities and nations. Conflicts and their impact on young people¹ are of great concern; and this particularly poses a great challenge to a child-focused organisation, such as World Vision. While World Vision works for children, the Organisation is committed as well to working with children as partners in peacebuilding. The fact that young people endure suffering in conflicts demands their appropriate engagement in peace processes.

Young people are instruments of change; and they have great potential to contribute towards building peace. However, in order to benefit maximally from their efforts, young people must not only be empowered; but they should also be given the necessary space to participate as peace builders. Several World Vision national offices have been involving children in building peace in their communities and beyond. In Latin America and the Philippines, for example, children have actively and effectively participated in peacebuilding and reconciliation programmes and processes made possible by World Vision.²

In the East Africa Region, World Vision has worked with young people

to build peace. For instance, World Vision Kenya has facilitated primary school children to use sports and drama as a means of building rapport between the warring groups in the Pokot, Turkana and Marakwet region. World Vision Somalia, through its grassroots peace project, has on the other hand engaged young people in games, music, dance and drama to put across messages of peace and reconciliation.

In Uganda, the Organisation has worked with young people to advocate for peace as well as to promote the reintegration of former child soldiers abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army rebel group into their communities. Through the Promotion of Reconciliation Among Youths (PRAY) programme, World Vision Rwanda has involved young people in spreading messages that reflect the dreaded past and the desired future. As agents of change, the young people have also promoted reconciliation and forgiveness. Case studies of these projects are presented in section 5.0.

1.1 Purpose and Significance of this Document

While World Vision in East Africa has partnered with young people to build peace in communities, it has mostly been at particular project level with limited consideration of wider

¹ Herein used to refer to children under the age of 18 or / and youths up to the age of about 25.

² Melanie Gow, Kathy Vandergrift and Randini Wanduragala, *The Right to Peace: Children and Armed Conflict*, World Vision International, Working Paper No. 2, March 2000.

application. Furthermore, there has been inadequate documentation and sharing of information, experiences and lessons learnt in the area of young people as peace builders in the region.

Therefore, the extent and nature of involvement of young people in peace building within World Vision in East Africa remained localised. In addition, “how it is or has been done,” “what has worked and why”, have remained the prerogative of those specific offices implementing those programmes. As a result, other World Vision programmes have not had the opportunity to learn from these experiences of others in order to improve on their own young people-centred peace building programmes and advocacy. It is with this understanding that AmaNet, the World Vision East Africa Regional Peace Network, found it imperative to document young people’s participation as peace builders in the region.

This study attempts to show the importance of partnering with young people and placing them at the centre of World Vision’s peace building work. It facilitates sharing of information and learning within the WV family on the significant role young people play as peace builders; and how best they could be facilitated and supported to participate in building peace. In addition, it is aimed at informing and enriching programming and implementation of peace building work with a focus

on young people’s participation, especially in conflict situations. World Vision hopes that this study will contribute significantly to the body of knowledge on the subject available to development organisations and the wider international community.

This work documents the involvement of young people as peace builders in programmes and projects implemented by World Vision in East Africa; and it specifically:

- Identifies how national offices in the World Vision East Africa region support and facilitate young people’s participation in peace building;
- Assesses the role young people within the World Vision East Africa region play in peace building in their communities and beyond;
- Identifies promising practices and lessons learnt from involving young people in peace building within the World Vision East Africa region; and
- Proposes programming recommendations, for improved involvement of young people in peace building, to World Vision East Africa national offices and other interested organisations.

1.2 Methodology

Literature on peace and peacebuilding, war and conflict, young people’s participation and other related works

were reviewed. The literature review also informed the documentation tools design phase. Data collection tools were developed, pre-tested and refined to facilitate collection of relevant information on key thematic areas. Where appropriate, a different tool was administered to the different categories of respondents.

In collaboration with the peace building staff at World Vision national and field offices, researchers and interpreters gathered data from projects within the World Vision East Africa region that involve young people in peace building. Data was specifically collected from MAPOTU Peacebuilding Project (WV Kenya), Promotion of Reconciliation Among Youths Project (WV Rwanda), Waajid Grass Root Peacebuilding Project (WV Somalia) and Children as Peacebuilders Project (WV Uganda).

The focus was on young people aged between 8 and 25. This included children under the age of 18 and youths up to the age of 25.

A triangulation of qualitative methods and techniques was used to collect data. This ensured collection

of reliable information as well as strengthened and ensured verification of findings. In this regard, in-depth interviews and discussions were held with World Vision staff and the young people involved in these initiatives. Focus group discussions were held with young people, their families and community members. Case studies of selected projects were also carried out. This was a child-focused documentation that maximally involved young people. In total, 208 respondents were interviewed of whom 137 were young people.

Data was thereafter analysed through a process of data reduction, data display, verification and conclusion drawing. This involved examining evidence and meanings as well as noting themes, regularities and patterns. The case studies and other information gathered were then analysed to identify promising practices and lessons for possible replication in other peace building work. See appendix 1 for more information on methodology.

The next section presents the nature of conflicts affecting the countries under study and the context in which World Vision works.

2.0 A Hub of Conflicts:

AN OVERVIEW OF THE EAST AFRICA SUB-REGION

An overview of the status and form of conflicts in the East Africa sub-region is imperative to paint a clear picture of the environment in which World Vision operates and works with young people to build peace.

To refer to the East Africa sub-region³ as a hub of conflicts is a reality that cannot be overlooked. Indeed, tracing the recent pattern of conflicts in Africa during the last decade, 10 out of the 19 major armed conflicts⁴ were in the East Africa sub-region – namely, in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.⁵

Although most of these conflicts were over government and territory, the region has as well been overwhelmed by several other smaller but equally devastating conflicts - that may not be necessarily categorised as ‘major armed conflicts.’ These conflicts have their roots largely in historical, political, social and economic interests.

Within the East Africa Sub-region, this section concentrates on conflicts in Somalia, Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya – countries of focus in this study.

For more than a decade, intra- and inter-clan conflicts have lingered on in Somalia. The struggle over “who should hold political power” left Somalia divided and in a state of anarchy, without a legitimate government. Only recently, in 2004, was a more promising Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) formed to start the long process of rebuilding this war-ravaged African country.

On the other hand, Rwandans have seen a history of ethnic driven genocides with the most recent in 1994. Parts of Rwanda, especially in the northwest, continued to experience grave conflict up to 1998. As Rwanda struggles to stabilise, tensions between the Tutsi and Hutu are still a potential for a full-blown conflict.

³ The East Africa Sub-region in this case refers to 9 countries that include: Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo (EDRC), Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

⁴ A ‘major armed conflict’ is defined as the use of armed force between the military forces of two or more governments, or of one government and at least one organised armed group, resulting in battle-related deaths of at least 1000 people in any single calendar year and in which the incompatibility concerns control of government and/or territory.

⁵ Mikael Eriksson, Margaret Sollenberg and Peter Wallensteen, *Patterns of Major Armed Conflicts, 1990-2001*; SIPRI Yearbook 2002: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security 18 April 2002.

The current conflict in northern Uganda has lasted for more than 19 years. What started initially as insurgencies against Government - allegedly motivated by a host of religious beliefs and other socio-political grievances - grew over the years into inhumane acts of sheer brutality mostly against innocent civilians by the still active Lords Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group. Recent efforts by a former minister, Betty Bigombe, to broker peace talks between Government and the LRA that began towards the end of 2004 have reset, once again, the peace process for northern Uganda.

The relatively more peaceful Kenya has not been free of this kind of conflict in the northern part of the Country. The Turkana, Marakwet and Pokot pastoral people have over the years lived in communities ravaged by cycles of violent cattle-centred conflicts between ethnic groups. Traditionally, these conflicts over cattle have often spilt over to Uganda. Specifically, this cycle of cross-border cattle rustling

- usually initiated from either side
- has been going on between Kenyan pastoralists and the Karimojong and Sabiny of Uganda.

In Uganda, cattle-rustling has also gone on for decades between the pastoral groups of north-eastern Uganda. For example, the Karimojong have not only continually looted cattle from people in the Teso sub-region. But worse still, they have also displaced them from their homes as well as caused them deaths, abductions, socio-cultural and economic breakdowns.

The above brief review highlights the state of conflicts that are largely responsible for the deteriorating levels of development in the region - hence ranking the region perhaps as one of the poorest in the world. These conflicts have caused enormous costs on children, families, communities and nations. This said, children being children are affected in ways only unique to them, as shown in the following section.

3.0 Unbearably Huge:

THE IMPACT OF CONFLICTS ON CHILDREN

Conflicts and wars hugely and unbearably affect young people both directly and indirectly. Many have been intentionally victimised and violated, while others, for faults totally not their own have been forced to perpetuate violence against fellow children and adults. Many more children have lost loved ones, suffered bodily injuries or even lost their lives. Many others have been displaced within their countries or live in exile as refugees. Yet, many others have been abducted, sexually abused and exploited. To crown it all, degenerating economic and social infrastructure caused by conflicts has had short and long-term negative implications for children's holistic growth and development. This suffering brought onto young people during conflicts is the more reason why they should be engaged in building peace.

3.1 Conflict-related Deaths

In the last decade alone, around 2 million children were killed in armed conflict; and not less than 6 million were injured, maimed or permanently disabled.⁶ Other conflict-related deaths

were due to the collapse of economic and social infrastructure and networks. Because of conflict, children have died due to malnutrition, starvation and other hunger related causes. The horrible conditions children find themselves in are characterised by poor sanitation, limited access to clean water and inadequate medical services – all of which subject them to high risk of infection. In Somalia, where only 2 hospitals and about 25 clinics are operational, only 1% of children have access to adequate medical facilities. This is with the exception of Somaliland⁷.

3.2 Orphans and their Related Problems

Conflicts often directly or indirectly rob children of one or both parents due to the large numbers of adult deaths. As a result thereof, many children are orphaned and at times have no close relative to take care of them. The problem of orphans has other closely related problems, such as, child poverty, child labour, child marriages and prostitution, street children and child headed households, where children assume the responsibilities of adults at a tender age.

⁶ UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 1996*, UNICEF, New York, 1997, pp. 40 -41.

⁷ Somalia is currently divided into regions including Somali Land and Punt Land. Somali Land has a "government" in place; and it is where most agencies operate from, including the UN.

In Rwanda, there are over 1 million war and AIDS orphans - a factor that has largely contributed to thousands of street children found in the capital, Kigali. Children living in child-headed households numbered 1,939 in September 1995, according to UNICEF and the Rwanda Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs⁸.

3.3 Displaced Children

Conflicts are responsible for massive movements of people from their homes. The number of displaced children alone is roughly 20 million, as indicated by UNICEF. These children live either as internally displaced persons or refugees. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), children who have fled their countries with or without their families and communities make up 50% of all refugees.⁹ More than 100,000 children in the Great Lakes region of Africa were found to be unaccompanied, both inside and outside their countries of origin.¹⁰

Displaced children live in appalling and life threatening conditions in

refugee or internally displaced people's camps. The children have difficulty accessing adequate food, shelter, clothing, education, clean water, sanitation and medical care. Measles, diarrhoea diseases, acute respiratory infections (ARI), malaria and malnutrition cause on the average 70 percent of all reported deaths among displaced children.¹¹ In most cases, the security and protection of displaced children are not guaranteed.

3.4 Child Soldiers and Small Arms

The recruitment and use of children as instruments of war and conflict by both rebel groups and government forces has become an all too common phenomenon. In 1998 alone, some 300,000 children were being used as soldiers in 34 conflicts around the globe.¹² For instance, besides the LRA operating in northern Uganda, local defense units and the Uganda Government forces have been reported to recruit children.¹³ Easy availability of small and light arms and weapons, convenient for children to carry and use, is one of the factors

⁸ Machel Graca, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, Report of the Expert of the United Nations Secretary General, UNHCHR, 1996.

⁹ Miles G., Stephenson P., *Children in Conflict and War: Children at Risk Guidelines*, Volume 6, Tearfund, January 2001.

¹⁰ Machel Graca, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, Report of the Expert of the United Nations Secretary General, UNHCHR, 1996.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² International Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Stop Using Child Soldiers*, International Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Second Edition, London, 1998, pp. 14-15.

¹³ Human Rights Watch, *Stolen Children, Abducted and Recruited in Northern Uganda*, Human Rights Watch, March 2003, Vol. 15, No. 7 (A).

that make it attractive to use children as soldiers. Also, because of poverty and hopelessness and the much hyped promise for a better life, recruitment of children as soldiers has not been an uphill task.

Small arms, more than any other type of weapons, have increased the severity of conflicts; and they have also been responsible for the many killings and acts of torture, abductions, injuries, displacements and sexual violence. In addition, small arms have been easy to relocate from place to place and practical to mount almost anywhere; thus making it easy to frustrate delivery of and those in search of life saving services to children in need. This has heightened the crises that children face during conflicts.

3.5 Sexual Abuse of Girls - Gender Based Violence

Conflicts expose girls to the risk of sexual abuse not only by insurgent groups, but also by government forces and civilian males who take advantage of the situation to carry out such acts. The abuse of boys, although present, is not as rampant as that of girls. Children, especially girls, may fall victim to individual, repeated or gang rapes, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, witnessing the rape of family members and forced participation in sex acts with relatives.

In Uganda, economic strains as a result of long periods of conflicts have

caused some families in the north and northeastern parts to force their girls into early marriages for bride price and sex trade to boost family incomes.

These acts of unwanted and unsafe sex often result into physical injuries, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, rejection and stigmatisation, shame and psychosocial and other immediate and future sexual and reproductive health-related problems. Sexual abuse of girls has been rampant during conflicts in northern Uganda and Rwanda.

3.6 Abducted Children and the Unique Experiences of Girls

Adults, youths and children, especially those between 8 and 16, are rounded up and forced to walk long torturous journeys to join insurgent groups. The numbers of children who are murdered and never make it to the designated destination are numerous and many times unknown. While in captivity, the children do hard labour under difficult and severe circumstances of deprivation and punishments. They are forced to perform horrendous crimes – for example, raiding, burning houses, beating and killing civilians, abducting other children to boost rebel numbers, and fighting against opposition forces. In northern Uganda more than 20,000 children have been abducted since 1990; and have gone through horrible experiences instigated by the Lords Resistance Army.¹⁴ One fifteen-year-old formerly abducted

boy from northern Uganda told of his experiences on a journey to southern Sudan:

“As we continued on the endless marches, I got bad blisters on my feet. Thorns embedded in the bottom of my feet became infected. Eventually, I could no longer keep up and the commander, who had initially abducted me, told me I was useless as I could not walk. He turned away and then two soldiers, in full uniform, approached and started beating me with heavy ends of their RPGs (rocket propelled grenades). I was repeatedly beaten on the head and body and left for dead. Two days later, a local farmer found me”.¹⁵

Abducted girls have very unique experiences as slaves, “wives”, and mothers. Their experiences are portrayed by one girl’s case. She was abducted by the Lord’s Resistance Army during the Northern Uganda insurgency, when she was only ten. She was forced to become a wife after five years and had two children in captivity. She named the first child *Komakech*, meaning “I am unfortunate”. She gave the second child the name *Can-Oroma*, meaning “I have suffered a lot”.¹⁶ The names

of her children are a reflection of her innermost emotions. If her children ever live and she lives, they will remain a reminder of her suffering and misfortune.

3.7 Night Commuters

Unique to northern Uganda is the phenomenon of ‘night commuters’. Because children live in fear of being abducted, killed and tortured by the LRA, every evening they walk many miles from their homes to spend the night in “safer” places – such as, in school, hospital and NGO compounds as well as on streets and shop verandahs. The number of night commuters in Gulu and Kitgum districts has been placed at 25,000 by UN estimates.¹⁷ Night commuting has created a multiple of other problems. Children, mostly unaccompanied are exposed to all sorts of risky behaviour, such as the use of drugs and alcohol, prostitution and uncensored access to disco and video shows. A social worker at one of the night centres in Gulu shared his concerns about the future of the children:

“Our biggest concern is their behaviour. Those who sleep on the verandahs are becoming spoiled. They think there are good things

¹⁴ OCHA / IRIN, “When the Sun Sets, We Start to Worry...”, An Account of Life in Northern Uganda, November 2003.

¹⁵ Human Rights Watch, *Stolen Children, Abducted and Recruited in Northern Uganda*, Human Rights Watch, March 2003, Vol. 15, No. 7 (A).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ OCHA / IRIN, “When the Sun Sets, We Start to Worry...”, An Account of Life in Northern Uganda, November 2003.

on the street. On the street, they are free to do what they want. They watch videos and all sorts of things which are not good. This means that the number of children on the verandahs is growing every day, because more and more children prefer the free life in town”.¹⁸

3.8 HIV/AIDS and Conflict

Perhaps more than anywhere else, HIV/AIDS has found soft and fertile ground in conflict situations, where conditions are conducive. Acts of sexual violence, prostitution and sex for survival are commonplace; and these increase the risk of infection. Because people live in grinding poverty and ignorance as well as with poor HIV/AIDS related services and insecurity, they are unable or cannot afford to use any of the commonly known HIV/AIDS prevention strategies. In addition, conflict makes it difficult to provide comprehensive prevention, care and support interventions.

3.9 Psychosocial Problems

Due to conflict and war, many children

in Rwanda, Somalia and Uganda have been denied the most critical part of their childhood development. For the most part of their lives, these children have experienced killing, forced sex, recruitment as child soldiers and abduction. These and other forms of suffering have left children with unprocessed trauma, hopelessness and anger.¹⁹ Research has indicated that 50% of an IDP and refugee population will suffer traumatic stress reactions, such as depression, anxiety, and panic disorder.²⁰

Children develop psychosocial complications; and these are largely caused by loss of and separation from loved ones. And in most cases, this family support is the only source of emotional and physical security and bonding the children ever had. Consequently, this vacuum deals a devastating psychosocial blow hard for the children to handle at this early stage of their lives. In addition, the breakdown of virtually all aspects of life – including law and order – introduce children to another reality that leaves deep and hidden psychosocial damage on their lives.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ndongoni Lincoln, 'At the Mercy of Strangers: Ambiguous Alliances Between Children and Adults in Africa', in *Children and Peacebuilding: Experiences and Perspectives*, Ed. Heather Elliott, World Vision, September 2002. Slobig Hanawalt Judy, 'Peace Education in Montenegro,' in *Children and Peacebuilding: Experiences and Perspectives*, Ed. Heather Elliott, World Vision, September 2002.

²⁰ McFarlane, A. & de Girolamo, G, 'The Nature of Traumatic Stressors and the Epidemiology of Post-traumatic Reactions', in *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experiences on Mind, Body and Society*, Eds. B A Van der Kolk, A McFarlane, & L Weisaeth, Guilford Press, New York, 1996.

3.10 Low School Enrolments and Poor Quality Education

In Somalia, only 2 out of every 10 children attend school; and school enrolments are as low as 12%, with high dropout rates. This is partly because schools charge fees; yet, parents are too poor to afford such costs. Also, in many areas there are no schools. Even where schools are available, many times they are not located in close proximity to the communities they serve. Therefore, children travel long distances to school. Yet, there are limited adequate alternatives, such as, the non-formal and vocational training, to cater for the education needs of children beyond school age and dropouts.

Besides low school enrollments and high dropout rates, the quality of education has suffered even further because of conflicts. Governments spend less and less on crucial services, such as education; and more than often,

resources are diverted to military spending. Worse still, parents or guardians cannot afford the direct and indirect costs of education. This leaves children in very difficult circumstances not conducive for schoolwork.

3.11 Conclusion

As highlighted above, conflicts and their impact on children are of great concern and pose a great challenge to a child-focused organisation, such as World Vision. In all these situations, World Vision strives to build on existing capacities in families and communities to achieve sustainable change for the wellbeing of children. One of the Organisation's core concerns is to see how best to involve children, families and communities and build their capacities to manage conflicts in order to realise peace. And in these special circumstances concerning young people, the need for their participation in building peace cannot be emphasised enough.

4.0 A Partnership to Nurture:

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD PEACE

4.1 World Vision and Peace Building

World Vision in East Africa operates in areas experiencing and affected by chronic conflicts. Disruptive conflicts, such as those in Somalia, Rwanda, Kenya and Northern Uganda, pose threats and special challenges to development. And while these conflicts have enormously disrupted and worsened the lives of both men and women, children have been the most vulnerable and affected. This has directly undermined the vision of creating an environment, where every child can enjoy life in all its fullness - an aim embraced by the World Vision family.

One of World Vision's core commitments is to achieve community based, sustainable and child-focused transformational development in its areas of operation. Transformational development is a process through which children, families and communities move towards wholeness of life with dignity, justice, peace and hope.²¹ Therefore, peace - upon which all aspects of life hinge - is recognised as an imperative foundation that is needed to allow for the holistic development of children, families and communities. For positive and

sustainable impact therefore, the integration of peacebuilding into transformational development has become central - especially in conflict prone and torn areas.

And to achieve this, five core strategic processes guide World Vision. These include:

- Creating a culture of participation and good governance;
- Transforming people and relationships;
- Working in coalitions that impact beyond commonly recognised boundaries;
- Enhancing community capacities that generate hope; and
- Developing sustainable livelihoods with just distribution of resources.

The above strategic processes are the bedrock for the involvement of boys and girls, their families and communities in peace building at various levels.

4.2 Working with Young People to Build Peace

While World Vision works for children, the Organisation encourages working with children as partners

²¹ World Vision's Transformational Development Policy (2002).

in transformational development. This has meant taking ‘children’s participation’ as key and central to successful designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of all programme areas, including peacebuilding.

For many years, World Vision has espoused a comprehensive strategy that focuses on²²:

- Preventing the involvement of children in armed conflict;
- Protecting children from the impact of armed conflict when it occurs;
- Practicing child-focused-post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction; and
- Promoting the active participation of children and their families at every step.

World Vision understands ‘children’s participation’ as “the realisation of their rights to engage meaningfully in all matters affecting them and the lives of those around them”.²³ This understanding is guided by the following principles:

- (a) According to the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC) and all other relevant international standards, a child is any person up to the age of

18 years. The right of children to participate is embedded in the CRC - particularly in Articles 3, 12, 13, 14, 23, 29, and 31 (see Appendix II for Articles in reference).

- (b) Participation is a right in itself; it is also a means through which other rights can be realised.
- (c) Participation should not infringe on the rights of others or one’s own rights.
- (d) Every child “engages meaningfully” if they are able to participate in decision-making and activities related to their physical, social, spiritual and economic well-being.
- (e) Participation should be informed and voluntary.
- (f) Child participation contributes to the development of individual and social citizenship.
- (g) Participation affirms the right and responsibility of parents, guardians and communities in nurturing children to be active and responsible citizens.
- (h) Adults should partner with and facilitate the participation of children in a manner that supports their evolving capacities.

Depending on the prevailing circumstances – and while considering

²² Melanie Gow, Kathy Vandergrift and Randini Wanduragala, *The Right to Peace: Children and Armed Conflict*, World Vision International, Working Paper No. 2, March 2000.

²³ Outcomes of the WV Child Rights Network meeting, Arusha – Tanzania, May 2003. Note that the definition and principles are still under construction.

the child's age and capacity – children may be engaged individually. They may also participate in association with others in various forms of peace building activities, for instance, at the family, the community and the broader societal level. These activities may include: “seeking information; expressing the desire to learn even at a very young age; forming views; expressing ideas; taking part in activities and processes; being informed and consulted in decision making; initiating ideas, processes, proposals and projects; analysing situations and making choices; respecting others and being treated with dignity”.²⁴

Taking every precaution to avoid ‘children's participation’ that is repressive, abusive and exploitative, World Vision strives to create an environment that facilitates appropriate and meaningful participation of children in peace building.

4.3 Why the Participation of Children in Peace Building?

When children participate in meaningful processes that affect their lives and also the lives of those around them, strong foundations for democracy begin to be laid early enough to nurture them into responsible and useful citizens. Children's participation is also another way through which their

holistic growth and development could be guaranteed.

Participation of children in peace building is an investment aimed at building a culture of peace that, in the long run, serves as an effective preventive measure against conflicts. Besides, active participation of children is critical for the comprehension of the local context and the understanding of factors that contribute to conflicts. Children bring with them their own unique perspectives to conflict and peace. Their participation is important in identifying local solutions and influences that can be pulled together to achieve desired peace and social change.

Children are influential in changing their local and immediate environments, and they have proven to be powerful agents for change at regional and international arena. In reference to participation of children in the General Assembly Special Session on Children in May 2002, Kofi Annan - the Secretary General of the United Nations - illustrates how powerful and impactful children can be: “The children's presence transformed the atmosphere of the United Nations. Into our usually measured and diplomatic discussions, they introduced their passion, questions, fears, challenges, enthusiasm and optimism. They brought us their ideas, hopes and dreams”.²⁵

²⁴ UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children*, 2003.

²⁵ Ibid.

The positive impact of children's participation was also felt at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2002, when "in the end, the children accomplished something that had not been possible through the usual process of adult negotiations around the summits final declaration".²⁶

The participation of children in peace building, if appropriately supported and facilitated, can most certainly

yield high dividends for the children's own benefit and that of the wider society.

The following section presents the experiences of World Vision Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia and Uganda with young people as peace builders. The section looks at a specific project within each of the above World Vision offices that works with young people and presents it in the form of a case study.

²⁶ Ibid.

5.0 Small Feet, Deep Prints:

YOUNG PEOPLE BUILDING PEACE WITH WORLD VISION EAST AFRICA



WORLD VISION KENYA

5.1 MAPOTU Peacebuilding Project

5.1.1 Background

Talk of connecting people! Under the Marakwet, Pokot and Turkana (MAPOTU) Peace Project, young people have taken the lead; and adults have followed. They are changing the time and points of interaction between ‘enemy’ communities. Communities that used to get in contact during violent raids are now meeting to engage in productive activities. This is in the Kerio valley of the North Rift Region of Kenya, where the Marakwet, Pokot and Turkana pastoral communities live.

Surprisingly, in the last decade, there were very limited interactions between these neighbouring communities. Strange as it may seem, some young people for instance have never seen what a Pokot or Turkana or Marakwet looks like. Keeping these communities apart has been the longstanding conflict between the Marakwet and Pokot and the Pokot and Turkana. This conflict has largely been over cattle, scarce grazing pastures and water sources. To some extent, the conflict has been politically motivated. The situation has been characterised by a series of life threatening and destructive attacks coupled with a stinging culture of revenge and reiteration. The

conflict has been further escalated by widespread availability of small arms and light weapons.

Although these communities have lived in hostility for decades, the conflict reached its peak between 1991 and 1992 when widespread massacres, cattle rustling and destruction of property and infrastructure were carried out. As a result, the activities of World Vision Area Development Programmes (ADPs) in the region were adversely affected; and the looming insecurity threatened the closure of some. The security question had to be dealt with urgently to enable World Vision continue serving vulnerable children and communities.

This prompted World Vision Kenya to start the POKATUSA Peacebuilding Project in 2000 and, later on, the MAPOTU Peacebuilding Project. MAPOTU targets communities in 37 locations in South Turkana, West Pokot, East Balingo and Tot in Marakwet. The Project is implemented in Kolowa, Tot and Lokori ADPs; and it is funded by World Vision Germany and the Germany Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The Project has been implemented since June 2003 and could run up to 2007.

5.1.2 Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal of MAPOTU is to enhance sustainable peace and development among the Pokot, Turkana and Marakwet communities living in the Kerio Valley area of the North Rift region. The main objective is to reduce incidences of conflict among the three communities through peace activities that enhance interaction and co-existence. On the one hand, specific focus has been placed on strengthening the existing traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and modern institutions, such as, the provincial administration and the chiefs. On the other hand, the school system is also being utilised to build positive relationships between conflicting groups.

MAPOTU engages school children in peace themed music, dance, drama and essay writing inter-school competitions. Children's community based sports teams also engage in intra- and inter-community netball, football and volley ball games. Although not exclusively, young people aged between 8 and 16 are engaged in these peace-promoting activities. They are given a platform to express their feelings. Young people take this opportunity to urge the elders, warriors and government officials to address the existing conflicts and forge peace through performing at *Barazas*.²⁷ Such opportunities would never have been possible given the culture and traditions that do not allow young people, especially girls, to voice their concerns at public meetings.



Maron Primary School at the division level competitions - Kolowa Division, Baringo District.
Photo: courtesy of WV Kenya

Young people have also urged parents and other stakeholders to observe the right to education for every child. In these communities with high populations without a formal education and with a significant number of young people not going to school, education was identified as a strategy that would provide alternative opportunities to livelihoods that have traditionally depended on cattle. Since children of early school-going age are eager to learn, it was seen that educating them and involving them in peace building efforts would mould their values and nurture in them a culture of peace.

²⁷ Meetings called by the area chief where community members come together to discuss matters of concern to the community

The MAPOTU Peacebuilding Project is making preparations to establish peace clubs in schools in the immediate future. The clubs will equip children with knowledge and skills to deal with conflicts within and outside the school.

Also, they will equip them with skills to start peace dialogue while they are still young. Patrons for peace clubs, who will be teachers, will be trained to become peace facilitators in schools. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Project intends to launch peace promoting essay competitions in both primary and secondary schools. So far, more than 100 pupils from more than 18 schools in the Project area are taking part in the exercise. The Project, in addition, plans to work with young people to engage them in community and cross border 'athletics for peace'. The winning side will receive prizes to encourage others to participate in future competitions.

5.1.3 Community Involvement

MAPOTU facilitated the formation of peace structures in collaboration with local community leaders and the provincial administration. All-inclusive peace and reconciliation committees were formed at the grassroots, division and district levels comprising of the youths, religious leaders, elders, chiefs and women. These committees are crucial in making

decisions, planning and mobilising the community for peace. They participate in inter-community peace rallies; and they are involved in reconciliation, especially when stolen cattle have been recovered; and when it is established that people are planning counter raids. They also initiate dialogue. World Vision was instrumental in ensuring that the youths are represented at each level of the committee structure. Each peace and reconciliation committee is responsible for planning its own activities within that location. Each Committee also informs and mobilises the community for young people's activities.

MAPOTU has widened and deepened its commitment to working with young people by partnering with the District Education Office (DEO) and schools to implement inter-school peace competitions. The DEO and schools take a lead in implementing the inter-school music competitions, while World Vision only facilitates the process. The DEO grants permission for inter-school activities to take place; and provides judges, good publicity with government as well as guidance. Schools, on the other hand, identify and train children to participate in the competitions. The role of teachers is to help children come up with peace messages as well as to take care of them, when they are away from home.

Other crucial groups that are actively involved are the parents and other

community members. Parents provide support to the Project by allowing their children to participate in peace related activities across boundaries with communities that have traditionally been treated with great suspicion as ‘enemies’. Parents and other community members also provide food, drinks and accommodation to visiting music, dance, drama and sports teams.

5.1.4 Contribution to Building Peace in the Community

While the initiative has been implemented for only one year, it is already making visible contributions to peace. World Vision’s support for the young people in these communities builds onto efforts by other organisations also working with children to build peace, such as, the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), the Catholic Peace and Justice Commission, Christian Children’s Fund (CCF) and the Kenya Red Cross, among other organisations.



The Influence of MAPOTU on the Wider Community

Already noticeable are the great benefits from interactions resulting from MAPOTU activities that involve young people. There are signs of improving relationships and decreasing animosity among people. The communities are beginning to appreciate each other’s ways of

life; and are starting to realise the importance of good neighbourliness, peaceful co-existence and trade with each other.

Participation in inter-community competitions by young people has served as a bridge for peace and reconciliation between communities that have for long not usefully interacted with one another. Young people have ventured into the so called ‘no go zones’ avoided by adults because of wrong attitudes held about each other. Shadrack Komoiteba, a 17 year old from Kolowa ADP shows how adults have followed the lead of young people to mend fences.

“Immediately after we had sang our songs with messages of peace and after the peace rally was over, people began to cross over to Turkana; and the Turkana came to Pokot. A market place in Marakwet that had been closed for several years was opened; and it is still operational. My people [Pokots] also went for kibarua [job] in Marakwet. Since our participation, the Marakwet have been coming to Kolowa; and they even spend nights there. This has never happened before. In Loywat, Pokots can carry their milk for sell in Chesongoch (Marakwet). Our people appreciate this very much because they say ‘if it was not for our children who brought us together, we would never have been able to sell our milk. Pokot and Marakwet now freely interact and Pokot cows can graze without restraint on the Marakwet side”.

This account was corroborated by members of the Marakwet community. They testified that the children had opened up the opportunities for trade and relationship. A father from Marakwet, whose child participated in MAPOTU activities recounted, “Members of our community could not believe that their children could go and come back home safely. They thought the Pokot would ambush them and kill them on their way. When the children returned safely, it was an indicator that the Pokot were ready for peace. Since that time there has been great change. Old men from our community began to assess the situation. They started going to Pokot to visit their ‘lost’ friends; and they would return without an attack. They went in groups of twos, threes and fours. They did this several times. On return, they would share with other community members about their experiences. They assured them of safety. Other people then started going across, they started buying milk, goats, cows and honey from the Pokot in exchange for cassava, bananas, maize and mangoes. Small markets started developing along the river [Kerio]; and this has so far not been interrupted”.

In both Pokot and Marakwet communities, there were reports of increased actions and practices that symbolise peace. Incidences of a Marakwet or Pokot found hurt by either side were disappearing. One of the boys interviewed, Richard Koskei (16 years) from Kolowa, narrated,

“Gestures for peace are becoming a common occurrence. Immediately after our performance, two girls between 13 and 15 years old were sent out by their parents to go and sell milk in Kolowa Centre. Instead, the girls chose to go to Tot and into the Marakwet villages. The parents had absolutely no idea. Had these been the old days, those girls would have been killed. But this time around, the girls were well taken care of. They were taken to the police station in Tot. Word was sent to Kolowa to let their parents know. The parents went and picked the girls. Ever since, the Marakwet who hosted the girls have become good friends of the girls’ parents”.

The Project is raising awareness in the community about the importance of education as a long-term strategy to build peace. Community members reported that more and more children were going to school as a result of the messages the young people have been passing on. For instance, a Pokot youth peacebuilder under MAPOTU said “Children who earlier used to look after animals are now encouraged to go to school so as to ‘look and behave like school-going children’”. To support this, the Chairperson of the Marakwet Peace Committee said, “Children sang and touched the hearts of their parents. They pleaded with their parents to give them an opportunity to continue with their education by accepting peace. The children demonstrated this in their drama by burning guns while crying. That was very touching”.



Lowiat Primary School at the inter-Community Peace competitions held at Chemolongot Secondary School.

Photo: courtesy of WV Kenya

There is also a change in attitude among peers, especially with the way young people from the different communities perceive each other. The young people, who visited neighbouring communities, came home with ‘good’ stories about their neighbours that helped change negative attitudes.

For example, Luke Poghismo Sikatum, a boy aged 13 from Kolowa said “my friends who did not participate in the singing competitions wished they had. At first they could hardly believe that the children of the neighbouring communities were good people. They feared to participate because the competitions were to take place in the neighbouring community. They were scared for their lives. But when we returned safely, they changed their views. They have even developed interest; and they would like to participate in future activities.”

Change of attitude has not only been with peers, but also at family level. While at home, young people speak about their peace activities; and their messages have transformed family members. Parents are slowly internalising the role their children play in building peace. Some who never wanted their children to visit the ‘enemy’ communities are beginning to loosen up.

As one student put it, “My sister participated in competitions organised by World Vision. Our parents had refused to let her go. But my sister did not give up; she insisted on going. Finally, our parents allowed her to go. My sister and others stayed out for three days during the competitions. And when my sister came back, she brought along very beautiful beads a Pokot friend had given her. My mother liked them; and she asked if she could have them. My sister gave them to her; and she was happy”.²⁸ As shown here, the exchange of gifts can be a powerful symbol for friendship.



The Influence of MAPOTU on Young Participants Themselves

MAPOTU activities have not only influenced community members, but also participating individual children and groups of young people. Because of increased interaction between young people of different

²⁸ Focus Group Discussion with secondary school students from Marakwet, 08 December 2004.

communities, they have developed positive attitude towards each other. Values in peacebuilding, such as unity, friendship, sharing, empathy and love are beginning to be sown among the young people from different ethnic groups.

Shadrack Komoiteba, a 17 year old boy from Kolowa revealed that he had made good friends with Marakwet and Turkana boys because of participating in inter-community peace activities. “When we participated in singing in Chemolingot [Baringo], I met a Marakwet boy called Kiprop. He is a pupil at Sambalat Primary School. We became friends. I took him to the trading center and bought him some food. Ever since, we have become friends. Recently, in December 2004, I visited him in Tot. However, my parents have not met my friend Kiprop yet. But I know they will be happy, when they do. After the Chemolingot rally, I also met a Turkana boy who told me he was in class six and loved peace. I told him I loved peace too. We also became friends”. Opportunities for interaction have ended up into healthy relationships.

It was also reported that young people were gradually breaking the negative perceptions and stereotypes they hold about each other – that had been passed on for generations. Learning about each other is helping them develop positive attitudes about one another. As testified by Elijah Domorita (14 years) from Kolowa, “I thought the Marakwet were bad people. Time after

time, we have been told that they kill using pangas, poisoned arrows; and of late using guns. But when I went to Sangach, I realised they are good people. My friend from Marakwet went to their garden and brought me mangoes. I took the mangoes home and gave to my family. This was a testimony that friendship is possible even among children from fighting communities”.

The opportunities for interaction have enabled them to learn more about each other. Young people have been exposed to the cultures of their neighbours. Luke Poghishio Sikatum, a 13 year old from Kolowa, shared his experiences of the visits they had to the neighbouring communities. “I got the opportunity to understand the culture of Turkana and Marakwet. For example, the Turkana women put on heavy necklaces – I sympathise with them”. As a result, they have developed empathy and a desire for peace. These opportunities have helped young people to identify with other people and appreciate their problems. A Marakwet girl who visited Pokot during the drama shows, told the parents that “the Pokot are really suffering because where they live is so dry. They have very little to eat. The government should give them food and not us”.

Through exposure visits, they have come to appreciate the impact of cattle rustling and its attendant costs on communities. To illustrate this,

Milly Chepkoech, a 14 year old from Kolowa said, “one major experience I encountered is the impact the war between the Marakwet and Pokot caused on education. I saw school buildings that were destroyed and deserted; and homesteads that had been burnt down. I told my friends that this should never continue...Today my feelings towards our neighbours – the Turkana and Marakwet – have changed. I don’t think bad about them”.

On the other hand, young people have been able to realise and understand the benefits of peace as well as their roles and responsibilities in building peace in their communities. They now feel they have a role to play; and that they can make a positive change. In one of the interviews, Lorita Chebet

Dorcas, a 14 year old girl from Kolowa explained, “our involvement in peace building has made me realise that peace has many benefits. Today, schools that had closed have been reopened. Marakwet children now come to school in Pokot; and Pokot children go to secondary schools in Marakwet. It was not like that before. I also saw our mothers rejoining with their friends during markets, after long separation by war”. Lorita’s voice was replicated by many young people, who have participated in MAPOTU. Seeing the benefits of their work has encouraged them to be more active.

Below is a case of a young girl who sought to know more about the Pokot – a people whose community she was about to visit (as narrated by her father).

CYNTHIA’S PERCEPTIONS ABOUT A STRANGE PEOPLE

Cynthia Yego, eight years old, is a Marakwet girl full of innocence and love. She is in class one at Kapetwa Primary School in Marakwet. In April 2004, Cynthia got a rare opportunity to cross over to the Pokot land during the inter-community music, dance and drama competitions organised by World Vision. It was a very exciting experience. But before she left for the competitions, her inquisitive mind wanted to know more about the strange people she was about to interact with for the very first time. Her young mind, shaped by negative oral narratives about the Pokot and horrid experiences of her community, is reflected in the kind of questions she asks. But Cynthia still sees no reason why the Pokot and her people should not be friends. She turned to her father for answers.¹

Cynthia: Are Pokots people like us?

Father: Pokots are people like us. It is only a few individuals who are bad. It is not the whole community that is bad. It is a few people who carry out cattle rustling.

Cynthia: Why don’t they come to our area so that we live together?

Father: Soon you will see them come to live in our area. They will soon start attending school with you, play with you and eat with you.

Cynthia: But why then are they killed, when they come to our area?
Father: It is at times an accident. It is not done intentionally. But our people are at times forced to defend themselves.

Cynthia: Why are they taking our cows without asking us?
Father: Some of them are thieves; and thieves do not request for things. For example, they are like people who steal mangoes and bananas. Stealing is very bad; and you should never steal.

Cynthia went for the competitions and together with her schoolmates returned safely and unharmed by the Pokot. She enjoyed every bit of the trip, made friends and found a good people contrary to what she often hears her people say. But she complained that the Pokot lacked mangoes, bananas and cold water to drink. As pastoral nomads, the Pokot rarely engage in agriculture; and they experience high temperatures. On her return, Cynthia shared her experiences with her brother and peers, who had not participated in the competitions. The children were overheard asking a lot of questions: “Do they wear the same clothes like us? Do they have houses like ours?” The brother now looks forward to an opportunity that will enable him experience what his young sister experienced. Such exposure visits and opportunities for interaction between conflicting groups are crucial for expelling stereotypes and negative attitudes held about others; and are a starting point for building peace. And who knows, may be if Cynthia was not going for the trip, there would never have been such a conversation between her father and herself to dispel off the fears Cynthia had; and help shape her into a better citizen.

5.1.5 Good Practices and Lessons Learnt from MAPOTU

This section highlights some good practices by MAPOTU. It also provides opportune lessons learnt from MAPOTU’s peace work with young people.

Good Practices

- MAPOTU involves young people in inter-community peace promoting activities and competitions that provide
- opportunities for interaction between communities in conflict with each other. Such interactions create opportunities for bridging broken relationships.
- MAPOTU has established a partnership with the Ministry of Education; and this has served as a strategic entry point to work with schools and young people to promote peace.
- MAPOTU has facilitated the formation of grassroots, divisional and district Peace

and Reconciliation Committees that involve a wide range of stakeholders, including youths, in promoting peace in communities. This strategy does not only provide the youths with the opportunity to participate in peace processes at various levels and to build their capacity in peace promotion; but it also ensures that the community owns the peace process.

- MAPOTU has integrated children's education into the Project activities as a long-term strategy to achieve sustainable peace. Promotion of education, in the long run, will reduce over dependency on cattle as the only source of livelihood that is actually the center of conflicts in this region. It will also demystify the 'great value' attached to cattle ownership; and consequently, cattle – related conflicts will fade away.

Lessons

- Young people have the potential to lead, while adults follow. Young people are not laden with prejudices that usually hold back adults from freely interacting and bridging broken relationships. Because of this, young people are adventurous and explorative and can easily break into “no go zones.”
- Competitions - if not well thought out and managed - may be counter productive and in the end increase tensions rather than promote peace between communities already in conflict. Involving young people in music, dance, drama and sports competitions to promote peace should therefore be implemented with a lot of care to defuse possible tensions.
- It should not be assumed that schools and teachers already have experience with young people; and therefore have the right skills, knowledge and attitude to work with young people to promote peace in schools and communities. Because of their training and management attitudes and practices, schools and teachers may have attitudes and practices that are not peace promoting. They therefore need capacity building to enable them unlearn such practices and shape them to work better with children to build peace.
- Adults, parents and communities may not recognise the role of young people in building peace because of either ignorance or / and negative cultural attitudes and practices. As a result, young people may not get the support and cooperation they

require from parents, adults and other community members to effectively carry out their peace work. Peace building projects have to take this into consideration and devise means to create awareness of parents, adults and other community members on the roles and rights of young people and the need for community support and cooperation.

- Apart from opportunities presented through drama, music, dance and sports, young people have limited or no opportunities to speak out and express their thoughts on matters, such as conflict and peace, that affect them.
- Working with young people to build peace should not be a one-time affair; but rather, it should be consistently pursued in order to instill a culture of peace.
- Peacebuilding work with young people requires a lot of material, human and financial resources. Networking and partnering with other organisations - doing similar work with young people - will not only reduce duplication of efforts and facilitate the pooling of scarce resources; but may also result in better coordinated, systematic and sustainable interventions.

WORLD VISION RWANDA

5.2 Promotion of Reconciliation Among the Youths

5.2.1 Background

Young people have pronounced a resounding “NO” to the cycle of war, conflict, genocide, hate, discrimination and revenge. And they have stated a categorical “YES” to reconciliation, justice, confession, forgiveness and peace. Since 1998, over 2000 young people aged between 13 and 25 have been shaping the future of Rwanda under the Promotion of Reconciliation Among the Youths (PRAY) project. PRAY is a project of World Vision Rwanda resolute on encouraging “reconciliation among the youths through working with youths groups and giving youths opportunity to express their aspirations for peace through a wide range of artistic expressions.”²⁹ Using traditional forms of cultural expression, such as, art, dance, drama, music, song and poetry, young people have promoted reconciliation among themselves and other members of the community.

PRAY activities have involved public presentations, concerts, campaigns in villages as well as home and prison visits to spread the message of reconciliation and peace. PRAY has, in addition, organised youths’ camps and seminars where young people learn about peace, unity and reconciliation. Other PRAY activities include healing and counseling for traumatised young people; exposure visits to learn about genocide; bringing youths together through different sports; and sensitising communities about the dangers of HIV/AIDS.

The Project, which is supported by World Vision Canada, began operating in three of WV Rwanda intervention zones – Byumba / Umutara, Kanazi and Gikongoro. It has now spread to involve young people in other intervention zones. In the initial stages, a research was conducted to identify possible youths groups to involve in

²⁹ Voices of Hope: A Five Year (1998-2003) Journey of Promotion of Reconciliation Among Youths (PRAY) in Rwanda, World Vision Rwanda, October 2003.

the Project and the different forms of arts that were being used in Rwanda to communicate messages. This research was used to inform the Project. A pilot project was setup in Byumba that involved 197 students in 8 secondary schools in essay competition, writing on themes around genocide and the current struggle for justice. From the pilot project, lessons were learnt that helped to refine the project concept and practices before replication to other areas.



Members of PRAY hold a discussion about their peace work.

Photo: by Vat Kamatsiko

The Project targets three groups of youths, which although stratified, are encouraged to carry out joint activities, where appropriate. The groups include: youths in secondary schools, youths in church and youths outside both school and church systems. All groups can be involved in essays,

drama, handwork, discussions as well as spiritually oriented activities. PRAY's choice to partner with youths groups was based on the following reasons: youths are the future of the nation; they are easily swayed and therefore need guidance; they have energy that needs to be diverted into developmental and purposeful action; and youths can be spiritually dynamic and must be developed physically, mentally and spiritually in order to sustain development efforts.

5.2.2 Group Formation and Guidelines

Young people - both male and female, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa - are encouraged to form groups of 12 to 15 members and develop presentations that express their aspirations for peace in post genocide Rwanda. Church-based groups are encouraged to include representatives of different Christian denominations. Each group, with members of ages between 13 and 25, creates a common vision and builds a team. Each team chooses a leader who organises activities and mobilises team members. Through discussions and consultations - with youths leaders, local leaders, religious leaders and the World Vision staff - consensus is built on goals and guidelines for groups and guidelines for making presentations at public exhibitions.

Groups have to be formed with an aim to express their hopes and dreams for a peaceful Rwanda through

integrating two or more kinds of artistic expressions. Groups start by competing in inter-communal expositions; and later, depending on 'best impact', proceed to zonal and inter-zonal competitions and subsequently to national expositions. Although these are competitions, all participating groups are rewarded and their participation celebrated.

The national exposition offers a variety of sessions to the participating young people. In discussion groups, young people talk about different themes related to peace and reconciliation in Rwanda. They also engage in games and other interaction sessions. Young people are as well involved in the evaluation of the Project. A responsive evaluation approach that takes into account the input of stakeholders, before making decisions for each phase of the project, was adopted and carried out every six to eight months.

5.2.3 Integrating PRAY into Area Development Programmes

At the time of this documentation, PRAY was in its final year of implementation. There are already visible efforts to integrate PRAY into the Area Development Programmes (ADPs). Some steps have been taken to prepare ADP staff for the integration. PRAY has made a commitment to support ADP staff through the

integration process by preparing guidelines to help staff understand the possibilities and processes of working with young people.³⁰

PRAY has as well outlined key questions to assist ADP staff make maximum use of over 2000 young people that have been involved in PRAY, since its inception. The process of preparing ADPs and young people for integration has also involved consulting with ADPs and community members during planning processes since 2001. Five youths in every ADP have been trained to carry the PRAY vision forward. The process has entailed training members of PRAY groups through youths' camps and linking them to World Vision Area Development Programmes. These sessions included explaining the ADP cycle to the youths and encouraging them to participate in development of their communities. This was another important step to integrate PRAY into Area Development Programmes.

5.2.4 Contributions to Building Peace in the Community

PRAY's work with young people, for more than 6 years, has borne wonderful fruit among the young participants themselves and within the communities in which they operate. PRAY's influence has ranged from increased awareness and participation

³⁰ Voices of Hope: A Five Year (1998-2003) Journey of Promotion of Reconciliation Among Youths (PRAY) in Rwanda, World Vision Rwanda, October 2003.

in Gacaca judicial proceedings³¹; building trust between the Hutu and Tutsi; and touching many perpetrators of genocide to admit their guilt and survivors to forgive. Presented below is the influence PRAY has had on the wider community and on the PRAY members themselves.



Influence of PRAY on the Wider Community

PRAY has promoted the will of young people and other community members to participate in the Gacaca judicial processes currently on-going in Rwanda. Because of the teachings of young people, “community members have opened up and are telling the truth about what happened. They say what they witnessed without fear. Some are admitting the crimes they committed during genocide”, revealed members of *Abakunda Mucyo* (Culture Lovers) Group in Ngenda during a FGD.

For example, one – Sildion – said that his mother had told him to reveal a Tutsi’s hideout so that the militia could kill the victim. For long, he lived with guilt and he feared to tell the truth about his mother during the Gacaca judicial proceedings. Because of continued reconciliation messages from PRAY, he got the courage to

freely share this during one of the proceedings. Although it was painful, he felt very relieved of this burden, after he told what happened. During visits to prisons in Butare, Gitarama and Rilima, members of *Imirasire* (Sun Rays) Group reported that prisoners, as well, owned up to the atrocities they committed during the 1994 genocide.

As a result of PRAY’s activities, people have sought forgiveness, while others have forgiven. Perpetrators during the 1994 genocide have actually gone to homes of survivors to ask for forgiveness. One such example is of a man who stood up in one of the meetings conducted by *Inshuti Nyayo* (A Friend Indeed) Group and confessed to having killed family members of one of the people in the audience. The survivor at first refused to grant him forgiveness. Later, the killer visited the survivor’s home and once again pleaded to be forgiven. The survivor, a woman, finally forgave him. The process of healing and reconciliation then began to take place in the lives of both parties.

In Nyamata and Ngenda, the *Amizero* (Hope) and *Inshuti Nyayo* Groups respectively, reported that their activities were influencing community

³¹ Gacaca jurisdiction – inspired by a traditional justice system - was instituted by the Government of Rwanda to address the culture of impunity and in a bid to establish justice that is conducive to reconciliation following the 1994 genocide. Judges elected by community councils open files of detainees accused of crimes linked to the genocide and all community members participate in providing facts and evidence.

SAW IT ALL, BUT READY TO FORGIVE



*Mwiseneza's
unhealed scar*
Photo:
by Vat Kamatsiko

It was 1994; and Jean Paul Mwiseneza was only 11 years old. He survived death narrowly and only by the grace of God. His head will always bear that deep and unhealed scar, curved by a wooden hammer-like tool with nails mounted on it for effective killing. Painful as it were, he survived. But his parents were not as lucky. Mwiseneza longs for the day when their neighbours will own up to what they did to his parents.

“I know the people who did this to me. They were our neighbours; but they are now in prison. After killing my parents, they went to hide in Congo. They came back in 1999. The local people knew them well; and they reported their return to the authorities. They were arrested and taken to prison; and later to court. I have testified against them; but what

hurts is that my parents’ murderer has completely denied”.

“I need him to admit”. This, he says, will be the turning point because it is then that he will forgive them. “I feel that I will easily forgive them, if they came and asked for forgiveness”.

“PRAY has been helpful to me”, says Jean Paul. “Before PRAY started performing here in Nyamata, I was this one isolated person, always in grief and sorrow, always depressed. I could not laugh or talk to anybody. I was full of hatred. Through PRAY, I have been helped out of trauma. I have received comfort and consolation. I feel a lot more peaceful than before, except for the frequent headaches that I suffer because of the injuries”.

Jean Paul explained that many times the pains in the head evoke sad memories. Visiting his parents’ graves also brings back a lot of pain. And finally he said, “coming to terms with what happened is not easy. I regarded the killers as enemies but this is gradually changing. I need some time for this mind-set to be completely uprooted”.

members to take positive action towards reconciliation. They have seen perpetrators, who looted property during the 1994 genocide, reveal their wrongful acts to survivors, and take further steps to return the property they looted. In a bid to reconcile, they have returned cattle, goats and other property to survivors as a form of restitution. One such case is that of Mwiseneza (20 years old). His parents' property was looted during the genocide. The looters have approached him and owned up to their act. Mwiseneza, whose story is covered in detail later, has forgiven them.

After the genocide, Hutu and Tutsi families were very suspicious of each other and kept to themselves. There was little interaction between the two groups. PRAY activities have done a lot to reduce such suspicions among community members; and as a result, interaction has increased. As testified by members of *Inshuti Nyayo* Group, "families that never thought of intermarrying or sharing anything have now began to share the little that they have. Many Hutu and Tutsi families did not permit their children to play with children of either ethnic group. This is now a thing of the past". Young people now freely relate to one another without fear of what their parents would say. There is, as well, increased interaction between adult members of the two ethnic groups.

PRAY has complemented the local leaders' development agenda by sensitising and mobilising community members for peace, reconciliation and other development activities, such as, planting trees for the case of Ngenda District, a very dry area. Because of PRAY's work, rape and defilement cases were reported to have gone down. Communities have been sensitised about this violation against girl-children. Street children have been counseled; many are now back in school and this has reduced their numbers on the streets.

A number of youths have benefited from counseling 'services' offered by PRAY members. Many youths have been touched by PRAY messages; and their attitude towards life has changed. They live a more careful life and are more involved in community activities. Youths are taking more of a reconciliatory approach to their relationship with parents – they want to reconcile whenever situations go wrong. Many youths have gone for HIV/AIDS tests; and those who have been found positive have formed associations and are witnessing against AIDS.

It was also reported that PRAY members have had positive influence on their own families. Their activities and way of conduct have changed the way parents relate to them. Some

reported that parents now care more about them than they used to, before they joined PRAY. Others revealed that their parents used to deny them permission to participate in PRAY activities; but they now willingly allow them.

Besides, some members of PRAY gave accounts of their family members' positive response to their messages. They have used the skills and knowledge acquired in PRAY to pass on reconciliation messages to their family members. One Murorunkwere, now 22 years old and a former member of *Imirasire* Group, was happy to share that she managed to change her aunt's unforgiving heart and is almost winning over her cousin. "My aunt never understood the word 'forgiveness'. She was so bitter. I challenged her that, if I could forgive then she could as well. After some time, she forgave those who committed atrocities against her and our family. I am now persuading my cousin, who is also a survivor of genocide, to embrace unity and reconciliation. He has started to take some positive steps; and I am hopeful that he will accept to forgive".



Influence of PRAY on Young Participants Themselves

Young people involved in PRAY have had opportunities to learn about a wide range of issues affecting their nation

and communities. Their knowledge on issues, such as, the causes, consequences and possible solutions to genocide; the importance of unity, reconciliation and peace; and HIV/AIDS has been enhanced. Not only has PRAY enhanced their knowledge, but the young people have also gained skills in artistic expressions as a means of communicating messages; team building; peace building; and life skills for HIV/AIDS prevention. They feel champions over their own destiny.

Young people in PRAY were very certain about the knowledge and skills they had acquired. To cite an example, members of *Amariba* (Source of Ideas) and *Indangamirwa* (Role Models) groups, both in Nyarutovu District, testified that they benefited a lot from visits made to genocide sites in Ntarama, Nyamata and Gashora. Nyarutovu is a district that experienced limited cases of massacres during the 1994 genocide. Visiting genocide sites was an eye opener to these young people, who had not yet conceived the magnitude and gravity of the Rwandan genocide.

The following voice captures well what was expressed during FGDs with the two groups. "Trips to genocide sites helped us know how grave this genocide was. We saw mass graves with heaps and heaps of human skeletons, bones and skulls. It was very shocking and depressing. At present, we appreciate

the reason why we should all work hard to bring these divisions to an end. We now understand our role as regards reversing Rwandan history by promoting peace and reconciliation”.

In addition, members of PRAY have learnt to forgive and to reconcile with others so as to make peace. They are ready to forgive those who have been found guilty of killing their family members and relatives during the 1994 genocide. Members of *Amizero* Group - an all-orphan group and most of whom are household heads - are already putting forgiveness into action. They have not only spoken about forgiveness; but they have indeed taken further steps to forgive those who wronged them. They however hastened to say that forgiving people you know killed your parents was not easy. Some young people also disclosed that PRAY had built them up morally to have peace within themselves. One girl - during a FGD with the *Abakunda Mucyo* Group - declared, “I made the decision to live peacefully with my family. I am undergoing a gradual reconciliation process with my stepmother. I decided not to take legal action against her over family property. I forgave my stepmother”.

PRAY has, in addition, given young people an opportunity for social interaction; and has delivered them from loneliness, isolation and anti-

social tendencies. They have made new friends beyond ethnic boundaries. While this was true in all the areas we visited, it was most evident in Nyamata where all the 20 young people we talked to were orphans; and had lost most members of their families. Some lived alone. Voices during a FGD with *Amizero* Group members, mostly Tutsi survivors, revealed that “through forgiving the Hutu, we have been able to go and visit the Hutu youths. And in turn, the Hutu youths have opened up. We all feel like one people. We are slowly but surely overcoming the state of guilt and fear”.

Engaging in PRAY has enabled young people - of Hutu and Tutsi origin - to grow up with awareness of and willingness to reverse the ideology of ethnic segregation. Their participation and interaction in PRAY with each other have driven away fear of and separation from one another. Mixing, interacting and doing things together are gradually eliminating ethnic divisionism. The young people now look at each other as equals with the same value and equal rights in society. “I feared the Tutsi. I was always scared that they would revenge, especially during *Icyunamo* [nationally recognized mourning period 01st to 07th April]. But after I interacted with them in PRAY, that fear is now gone”, a Hutu girl confessed during a FGD with *Abakunda Mucyo* Group in Ngenda.

Young people in PRAY, in all the areas we visited, openly admitted that they had had a desire to revenge. Some of the young people declared they had developed similar attitudes of ethnic hatred as their parents. They however declared that such attitudes, that were largely due to family influences, have greatly been minimised amongst them because of participating in PRAY activities. PRAY members said they now feel more open to interact with either Hutu or Tutsi.

Former members of PRAY groups have used the experience they gained - in organising others, teambuilding and using creative arts to communicate messages - to form similar groups in various places. For example an active club *Tuseeme* (Let's Talk), spearheaded by former members of *Imirasire* Group, exists at the Kigali Institute of Education. In Rushashi

District, another former member of the same group started a club called *La vie de L'avenir* (Future Life) to continue PRAY's vision of changing what happened to Rwandans in 1994. Niyonzima, now 23 years old, explained that the club he founded works in a community where revenge was on the "minds and lips of most people." The club endeavors to explain to people that revenge is bad. He reported that the Club had made some progress.

Furthermore, members of PRAY groups have been role models to other young people. They have gained popularity as peace promoters. Other young people, taking PRAY as an example, have also formed similar clubs all over the regions. More youths and children have been encouraged to join reconciliation clubs and to attend seminars and youths camps.

LEADING THE RECONCILIATION CRUSADE

Mukasafari Agenesta is 18 years old; and the leader of the Amizero (Hope) Group in Nyamata District. She provides leadership to an all-orphan all-survivor group of about 20 members. She is a pioneer member of Amizero that was formed in 2000 to promote healing, reconciliation and peace in their community.

Asked what her role in this group is and how this has changed her, she stared deeply at the wall and took a moment to answer. "Before I got involved in PRAY, I had a deep hatred for the Hutu who massacred my parents and other people. I was also selective as to who becomes my friend. It has not been easy. I am now free to associate and interact with both Hutu and Tutsi.

Before I interacted with other orphans in PRAY, I used to think I was the only one suffering. When we started sharing about our lives in PRAY, I felt better. Other orphans were worse off. I have a lot of hope; and I am no longer in despair".

On her role as a leader, Agenesta passionately said "I take charge to mobilise young people, to bring them together, hold meetings with them, organise concerts and look for opportunities where we could present our songs, poems and other compositions. I am also responsible for inviting community members to our concerts".

Agenesta, like other young people in her group, was orphaned during the 1994 genocide. She is the second in a family of four. She is, however, one of the very few lucky orphans in her community. She is now attending senior four at Alliance High School in Buriza District. She affirmed that she has hope, a lot of hope.

"People! We must forgive, put behind our past and focus on the future because it is what matters. The past just pulls us back". She concluded with a firm message of peace.

5.2.5 Good Practices and Lessons Learnt from PRAY

PRAY's experience of more than half a decade working with young people to promote peace and reconciliation in Rwanda presents some lessons and good practices to learn from.

Good Practices

- PRAY employs a multi-ethnic group strategy to work with young people to promote peace and reconciliation. This strategy enables young people - through inter-ethnic understanding and awareness - to appreciate one another, reduce and eliminate complexes, fear and hate as well as increases interaction, empathy and love. The groups also engage in inter-community activities. The groups have clear and documented guidelines to guide their formation and participation in activities at different levels.
- A process to integrate PRAY in Area Development Programmes is ongoing. ADP staff, young people and communities are being prepared for integration of PRAY into ADPs. This strategy is aimed at handing over the torch to ADPs, the young people and communities to ensure sustainability of PRAY's vision even after the Project has phased out. Guidelines for working with young people and questions to consider during the integration process have been proposed and documented.
- PRAY involves young people as well as other stakeholders in responsive evaluation of the Project every six to eight months. The process has resulted into a continuous learning and modification process that has shaped the relevance and appropriateness of the Project in every subsequent phase of implementation.
- Although PRAY has involved groups in competitions at various levels, the Project took a strategy that curtails possibilities of tensions between winners and losers that usually accompany competitions. All participating groups are rewarded and their participation and achievements celebrated.
- A research that was conducted during the initial thinking informed the design of the Project. From the research, a pilot project was implemented; and lessons were learnt that helped to refine the project concept and practices before replication to other areas.

Lessons Learnt

- Involving young people in artistic expressions to communicate peace and reconciliation messages in itself provides opportunities for healing from the trauma caused by genocide, conflicts and wars.
- Young people have the potential, if well prepared, to become torch-bearers for peace and reconciliation processes that they have passionately been involved in. Young people have the capability to spearhead their own initiatives from experiences gained. The formation of groups by former PRAY members presents a good example.
- Peace and reconciliation programmes that involve orphans and children who are household heads should be designed to cater for their special needs. Such children may have extreme challenges related to psychosocial problems and lack of basic needs. They also face time constraints due to the overwhelming responsibilities on their shoulders.
- It is possible to achieve reconciliation. But it is important to note that reconciliation is a gradual process that requires a lot of patience. More so, the process of reconciliation involves other process components, such as, confession, forgiveness, healing, justice and restitution that should be addressed in order for total reconciliation to take place.
- Churches, from their calling, are meant to bring together all God's children - through use of teachings and messages that promote God's love, unity, forgiveness, peace and reconciliation. This in itself provides opportunities for inter-denominational peace initiatives. Working with the church to engage in inter-denominational interactions calls for more sensitisation about PRAY's goals to enable them appreciate and further raise their interest to participate. In the case of PRAY, only a few church-based groups exist; and they are not inter-denominational as the guidelines required.

WORLD VISION SOMALIA

5.3 Waajid Grass Root Peacebuilding Project

5.3.1 Background

It is a network of thirty football teams stirring into motion thirteen Waajid villages in Southern Somalia with hopes for peace. Complemented by a few volleyball teams and the efforts of *Fanka* (Star) Theatre Group, these teams are knitting threads of peace around villages with support from World Vision Somalia. Operating in a country still in conflict, it has been extremely challenging for World Vision to engage in meaningful rehabilitation and development without first attaining some measure of peace and stability in the country.

According to Somali ethnic identity, culture and tradition, each Somali belongs to a clan-family. The clan-family is further divided into clans, sub-clans and sub-sub-clans. Putting aside the merits of the Somali clan

system - such as providing its members with physical security, a social welfare safety net and a rich body of customary law designed to minimise and manage conflict - the system has been manipulated for political reasons; and has sadly become a source of division and fragmentation. In Waajid alone, there are seven major sub-sub-clans, namely, Jiron, Hadamo, Garwale, Moallim Weyne, Harin, Leysaan and Ashraaf, that fall under the lineage of big and bigger sub-clans and clans. Waajid, like the rest of Somalia, is a region under clan and factional rivalry. It is such conflicts that World Vision is working to address through partnering with young people's teams.

World Vision has been operating in Southern Somalia since late 1992. Along other programmes, World Vision is currently implementing the Waajid Grass Root Peacebuilding

Male Youths have not only enjoyed the game, but have used football to reach out to communities with a message of peace.

Photo: Courtesy of WV Somalia



Project. Since January 2004, World Vision Somalia has worked with Waajid communities to enhance peaceful coexistence through support of sports and cultural activities. The Project, which has been implemented on a pilot basis, has aimed at building the capacity of the district's sports committee in peacebuilding, mobilising communities to support peacebuilding efforts by leaders, youths and other young people; and developing sports leagues and competitions in towns and schools. Provision of sports equipment and facilities to soccer and volleyball teams, formed at village level and in schools, has been part of World Vision's support to achieve the project objectives.

Focus has also been placed on supporting cultural activities that enhance peace and better relations between communities. Through songs and cultural dances, peace-promoting messages have been chanted. Of recent, the Project is paying more attention to involving girls and female youths in peacebuilding by increasing their opportunities to access sports activities. The Project is supported by World Vision Australia.

5.3.2 The Girls' Volley Ball Teams

To increase girls' participation in building peace, World Vision is facilitating the formation of girls' volleyball teams. So far, four young teams composed of girls aged between

14 and 25 years have been formed. The idea of forming girls' volleyball teams was hatched in 2003; after the girls felt left out of a male dominated sport – football. In 2004, the idea was rejuvenated and with support from WV Somalia, the girls have formed their teams. They were provided with volleyball nets and balls. World Vision has as well facilitated this process by identifying and preparing pitches and providing culturally appropriate sports uniforms, covering most parts of their bodies.

Although the teams are still very young, the girls and female youths are very excited about the initiative. More and more girls are getting interested. The girls have high aspirations. In a focus group discussion, the girls revealed: “we were just sitting at home. And this was meaningless. We are now part of this team, because we want to get some exercise and become physically fit. We want to make friends and get to know each other better. We want to play volley ball and use it to build peace.”

5.3.3 Fanka Theatre Group

Another group supported by World Vision is the *Fanka* Theatre Group composed of both young people and adults. The girls and boys as well as women and men engage in performing arts to raise awareness of communities about the dangers of war and diseases, such as, HIV/AIDS. The group uses traditional songs, dance and drama to

reach out to communities. Through these activities, the group has used the platform to appreciate the peace process and remind the community that they need to recover. At the time of gathering information for this documentation, World Vision was making arrangements to build the capacity of the Group in theatre for development.

5.3.4 The Youths Football Teams

As far back as 1994, there were several football teams in Waajid; but they suffered a lot of setbacks due to the Somalia civil war. The all male teams started receiving support, mainly in the form of footballs and mobilisation of communities, from World Vision in 2003. Currently, World Vision supports 30 teams spread out in 13 villages. The teams are composed of members of different clans. The teams play with other teams in the village and with teams from other villages. Football, the most popular game in Somalia, was chosen by World Vision to serve as an avenue to bridge relationships and build peace.

5.3.5 The Perceptions of Children

Effective participation of children in building peace can be linked to how children perceive peace, those who drive conflicts and their own role in peacebuilding. These three areas were explored.



Children's Perceptions of Peace

Children's perceptions of peace did not differ from the common understanding of peace as "not only the absence of war; but also the presence of security, harmony and freedom". To these children, peace was simply the opposite of war and conflict. They associated war with bad things and associated peace with all the good things a child would like to have, experience and enjoy. On one hand, girls who are members of the *Fanka* Theatre Group - in a focus group discussion - explained their understanding of peace. "Peace is a condition where there is no fighting; and one can do anything one wants to. If there is war, you cannot do everything and anything you want. We always want to get peace. Peace is if everything can go well. If we can enjoy good education and good health, if there are no tensions, if we have no problems, then we can say there is peace".

This explanation of peace echoed the views of many children who participated in this study. On the other hand, boys aged between 13 and 15 years, also members of the *Fanka* Theatre Group had this to say about peace: "Peace is a secure area where schools flourish, where we can play games, such as, football; and where we can participate in dancing and entertaining ourselves. It is where

there are no militia and no guns; and we can go wherever we want. Peace is good”.

The children stated that conflict has incapacitated their development and growth. They expressed the need for quality education and health services, good food, freedom of movement, and freedom to play.

Children’s Perceptions of the Militia

Children’s perceptions of the militia were also sought. They identified the militia as the agents of war in their communities. The children were also concerned about the absence of a functioning government to help keep law and order and provide security to its citizens. Mohammed, a 14 year old boy, expressed his opinion about the militia, “the militia are wrong doers. They want to loot property that belongs to others. They want to get everything using their guns. If we get a government, the militia will be stopped. Government will keep the rights of our people”.

Children’s Perceptions of their Role in Peacebuilding

Children were aware of their role in building peace. In their responses, they mentioned a wide range of roles that included: providing advice, connecting and educating people and communities. Both boys

and girls believed they had a role to play. Although they were aware of the constraints their culture and traditions had on their participation in activities, such as, those that build peace, they still insisted that they had a contribution to make. Suleqo (16 years old) said “we can stop men from going to war. For instance, we can stop our brothers and the ones we want to marry because they can listen to us. If I can do something, I will always try”.

The children, in addition, looked at themselves as a generation that would at one time take full charge of their communities. Weli Adde (13 years old) put it, “we want to grow up and replace wrong doers. We want to emulate what our elders do; they always advice the militia to stop fighting. Personally, I want in the future to be a teacher”.

Adults’ Perceptions of the Role of Children in Peacebuilding

Adults also recounted how children were already contributing greatly to peacebuilding through sports, songs and speaking against violence. As narrated by Salad Bisharo, a 32 year old woman member of the *Fanka* Theatre Group, “two days ago, some militia men came here from the neighbouring community. They wanted to fight our community. The community came out and demonstrated against them. The children were very instrumental”.

Adults acknowledged the great potential young people have in building peace. They associated this potential to the way children relate, associate and group together. Through these processes, adults said, children change, shape and inspire each other. Mahad Mohammed Mohamud, the World Vision Somalia Peacebuilding and Sports Assistant explained the ability of children to impact other children in the following words: “Children are the only group that freely hangs out in clusters either to and from the Koran School or at small playgrounds. They therefore have every opportunity to influence each other, if taught how to build peace”.

Adults were also aware that children did not only influence their peers; but they caused positive change in adult practices and attitudes. For instance, one member of the community narrated about the influence children have - “most families have children whom they love so dearly. If children are well behaved, do well in school and are good entertainers, they will hold the community together. If the children have a good message, the community will embrace it”.

5.3.6 Contributions to Building Peace in the Community

While, as noted earlier, the Waajid Grass Roots Peacebuilding Project is supporting volleyball teams and the

Star Theatre Group, they are still very young to determine what influence they could have had. This section will, therefore, focus on football’s contribution to building peace.



The Influence of Football on the Wider Community

Football has had commendable influence on the Waajid community. Respondents pointed out that football had promoted cooperation and a culture of sharing and helping; increased interaction between and within communities; and provided opportunities for building relations and friendship.

The composition of the teams – made up of members from different clans - has been an advantage. The inclusiveness and representativeness of the teams have made them more acceptable; and they have received a lot of support from the communities. Some members of one team revealed, “most important, the accommodative nature of our teams gives a good example to different clans in the community and neighbouring districts. The teams are a replica of the community. The fact that team members from different clans can cooperate, while playing, shows that people of different clans can co-exist and do things together”.

Football has increased interaction between communities and clans as

teams from one community play with those from other villages and clans. For instance, young people from Geliyo have played with those of Gomoriale and Dulmuri. Mohad Mohammed Mohamud explained “the differences between clans become irrelevant on the playing field. People continue to interact and socialise even after the game is over. It is a starting point for good relations. People get to know each other better. After several interchanges, they get encouraged to know each other more”. The discussions go beyond the playground to homes, trading centers and gardens. As a result of this, young people have associated across multi - cultural systems, clans and families.

Also because of increased interactions, community relations are gradually being cemented. Maalim Kusow Mohammed, the village Chairperson for Gomoriale, shared their experience, “the children have served as a bridge towards minimising differences between communities. People used to fight over water catchments, grazing pasture and the like. But ever since the children began to interact and socialise with children in other communities, communication lines have been opened. We are able to talk openly and hence resolve our differences. We no longer fight, we dialogue!”

Community members emphasised that football has been a good source of entertainment, providing different

opportunities to spend idle time. They continued to say that the longstanding civil war had left most youths and young people unproductive and idle. A situation that they said could be tempting for them to engage in war promoting activities. One community member appreciated the gap that football was filling. “Before, the youths were idle and could be tempted to join the militia or do other social evils; but now they can play football”, she appreciated. Instead of people being redundant, sitting under shop verandahs or loitering, they watched games.

Football has created and enhanced friendship even among those who never had a relationship at all. Young people playing football together was seen as a long-term strategy to prevent tensions or conflicts in future. The village Chairperson of Geliyo Village shared that when children played football together, they grew up as friends. Chances that they would fight were highly minimised. “Children come and play, laugh and make friends. They share the joy of the game; and it brings them out of agony”. This they said was important, especially for communities such as theirs that have been engulfed in civil wars for years. Some friendships have sometimes resulted into marriages, they said.

Football has had an aspect of strengthening the culture of sharing and helping among community

members. When teams went out for a game outside their communities, community members came together to assist. The assistance was in form of food, transport costs and even offering to host the team members from other villages. Increasingly, this has been readily done.

And lastly, the young people have been role models to their peers who wanted to be just like them. And because of this, many young people have become interested in football. It was reported that little children always made their own small football grounds adjacent to those where the teams played. “When we have a match, younger children play football near the pitch,” said Hassan Sheikh Abdullahi, a 16 year old teenager from Geliyo Village. He also added, “I am a role model in my community because I do sports and succeed at school as well. Some parents send their children to me. I help them with their school work; and I also teach them football.”



The Influence of Football on Young Participants Themselves

Football, like many other sports and games, has offered young people opportunities to learn how to live by the rules and to regain and further develop their social skills. These skills have far reaching implications in real life at school, at home, at work and in the community, as reflected below.

It was observed that football was nurturing the young players to become more responsible and law abiding in a society where conflict has destroyed structures and systems that promote law and order. Football, they said, was teaching them to respect rules. “Football teaches one how to work with others. We have rules. For instance, one cannot bring a knife a long; neither can one fight nor hurt or kick anybody intentionally. We have to go by these rules”, stated Aweis Ali Aden, a 17 year old from Gomoriale Village. This point was also emphasised during a focus group discussion with the Sports Committee members, “the young people who play football have learnt the rules of the game; and they are abiding by them. This is important for molding good and responsible citizens. The ones who play have changed a lot. They are more disciplined”.

More so, football is equipping the players with social skills, such as, teamwork and cooperation. The



These three girls are members of the Fanka theatre group.

Photo: by Vat Kamatsiko

players interact and socialise easily; and this was not the case before. “At the start, they were anti-social. They reluctantly interacted and played with others. Now they have made many friends from within the community and from other villages”, the Chairperson, Sports Committee, Geliyo explained.

Moallim Kuusow, a 9 year old from Gomoriale, said that playing football has enabled him to mend broken relationships. Football has helped him to control his anger. “I once fought with one boy called Hussein. But when we started playing football, we became friends. I recall, we were playing when he threw a stone at me. I got very upset and we fought. That was not good; but I was only defending myself. Now if I am upset, I do not fight anymore. I don’t easily get angered either”.

Many reported that football has given young people an opportunity to acquire skills and attitudes to live in diversity. They have learnt to accommodate and appreciate each other - not to look at their differences. As Ali Isaack Bakoule, a 16 year old from Geliyo Village shared, “I play with young people from different clans. This shows that even if we are different, we can still be friends and play together”. The young people make friends with anybody without discriminating. Bakoule added “my family encourages me to play and make friends. They like my new friends, even though they are from a different clan”.

5.3.7 Good Practices and Lessons Learnt from the Project

Below are some good practices and lessons learnt from the Waajid Grass Root Peacebuilding Project.

Good Practices

- The Project made a deliberate attempt to include girls, who were left out because football is predominantly viewed as a male game. The Project is also facilitating girls with ‘culturally appropriate’ sports uniforms, in line with their culture and traditions.
- The Project is building on football since it has the potential to mobilise people across age, sex and clan. It is involving young people in a game they have a strong passion for; and the Project is exploiting the opportunities the game presents as an entry point to reach out to adults who love the game.
- The Project uses sports and recreation that are important paradigms of national development and growth. These unite people of different aspirations and backgrounds; and build in them a sense of togetherness and belonging and ultimately national pride and identity.

Lessons Learnt

- To effectively work with young people, projects have to deliberately target them. The projects have to be conceptualised as those that will work with children to build peace. Otherwise, adults may relegate them to the rear; or worse still, leave young people out completely.
- Working with girls to build peace, especially in societies that still constrain their involvement in social life, should be backed by gender awareness and empowerment. A close link or collaboration between the peacebuilding and the gender project, if available, would increase the effectiveness of girls.
- While football in itself has peace promoting aspects, the game can best be used to build peace - if taken advantage of as a platform to communicate peace messages. The use of music, dance and drama groups to pass on peace messages during half time, before and after the game may render this method more effective.
- The existence of teams or group associations avails an opening to start creating pockets of democratic spaces within the Waajid society. Building the capacity of teams to enable them establish 'formal' associations, manage them and provide democratic leadership and participation would start a gradual process of sowing democratic practices and attitudes that are necessary for peace.
- Understanding young people's perceptions of peace and their own role in peacebuilding is necessary to design age and context appropriate activities for their effective participation.
- Although games and sports unite people, they have a potential to cause violence. Therefore, appropriate skills need to be nurtured that honour win-lose situations without resorting to emotional explosions or violence often associated with losses in games, sports and other competitions.
- In a country torn by conflict and war, with virtually no opportunities for recreation to pre-occupy the often redundant young people, low or no cost sports and games can be promoted to fill this gap; hence, this will refocus the young minds, their energy and talent to more constructive efforts while at the same time providing them the rare opportunity for fitness exercise and enjoyment through socialising.

WORLD VISION UGANDA

5.4 Children As Peace builders Project

5.4.1 Background

“We are here, we matter and we want to contribute to peacebuilding and the restoration of our communities”³² is the message flagged by the Children as Peacebuilders Project (CAP). CAP is implemented by the World Vision Uganda Children of War Rehabilitation Programme in conflict torn northern Uganda. And indeed, community members have heard, seen and felt the message.

Initiated in Uganda in March 2000, CAP is an international project working on policy and programming initiatives for children in conflict and post conflict situations.³³ CAP is a joint venture amongst church groups, national and international NGOs and youths’ groups from countries where there is war or a war has recently ended. The Project is sponsored by the Defense for Children International (DCI) - Canada and funded by the Peace Building Unit of the Canadian International Development Agency.

Young people under CAP promote peace through performing peace-related drama shows, songs, poems and traditional dances in Internally Displaced People’s (IDP) camps. Debates, acrobatics, radio talk shows and discussions with people are other avenues used by the young people to promote peace. The focus has been on themes that promote non-violence and reconciliation, sensitise the community about resettling formerly abducted children and educate the public about the Amnesty Act; and the dangers of involving children as child soldiers. Emphasis is also placed on messages that promote acceptance and resettlement of child mothers into the community, many of whom have been stigmatised.

Young people have also engaged in clean-up campaigns targeting the IDP community. They have swept and cleaned markets and other public places. They have dug rubbish pits and pit latrines in IDP camps. They have as well integrated HIV/AIDS and child rights awareness in club

³² Cultural Connections, A Kind of Friendship: Working for and with War Affected Children and Youth, A Resource Manual for Programmes produced by the Children as Peacebuilders Project, 2003.

³³ Other CAP groups exist in Angola, Burma/Thailand, Cambodia, Colombia, Guatemala, Mozambique Peru, and Philippines.

activities. The groups are aiming at self-sustainability; and currently, they are in the early stages of engaging in activities, such as, growing crops to raise funds.

CAP has three components: the Youths' Peace Team, the Girl Mothers' Club and Unyama Child Rights Club.



CAP members build peace pyramids to demonstrate that peace is not easy to achieve and requires the cooperation of various stakeholders.

Photo: by Margaret Alerotek

5.4.2 The Youths' Peace Team

This group consists of a mixture of students, some of whom are former child soldiers. Together they create plays about village life, abduction by the Lords Resistance Army (LRA), life with the LRA and the possibilities for reconciliation and reintegration.

The plays also highlight the problems returnees face, when they return home; and what the community can do to facilitate smooth reintegration. These plays and poems are performed before audiences of 1,000 and more in displaced people's camps, schools and villages around Gulu, in northern Uganda. The group has also engaged in inter school debating competitions to mobilise the youths and to sensitise them on ways to bring peace among themselves and their communities. The debates have been around themes, such as, the synergy between HIV/AIDS and conflict; and the impact of conflict on development – addressing key issues of concern in their communities.

5.4.3 The Girl Mothers' Club

This peer support group for girl mothers is relatively new. For long, it had been recognised that something needed to be done to support girls in the communities. Those immediately identified were girls who have been abducted by the rebels, particularly child mothers. This issue was discussed with the girls and other women of all ages; and it was found out that the war hurt all their lives. In addition to great worries about security and basic survival, women were concerned about high levels of violence and breakdown in communication between mothers and daughters - a treasured bond and an important part of northern Uganda traditions and way of life.

Determined to change their situation, the child mothers formed the Club to provide a safe place for former girl soldiers to discuss their problems. The Club has an emphasis on life skills. The girls were seen to have many resettlement problems because they have children to care for; and because their communities do not readily accept them. So far, this has given them their own space and a platform to discuss their unique challenges. The Club has as well provided psychosocial support and an opportunity to acquire basic skills that they missed learning as children. They as well engage in peace promoting songs, traditional dance and drama.

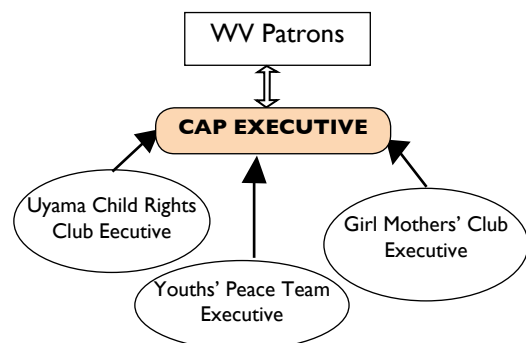
5.4.4 Unyama Child Rights Club

The Child Rights Club raises awareness about child rights. It targets children and youths in Paicho sub-county that has the largest number of former child soldiers in Gulu District. Paicho has three large camps with a population of over 10,000 displaced persons in each camp. Considering the life situation, children's rights continue to be violated by both the rebels and the local population. The Club raises awareness of mainly camp residents about child rights and promotes peace through songs, traditional dance and drama. The goal is to empower the local community to foster and protect children's rights and enable them to live in peace. The Club has also

engaged in cleanup campaigns. It has a membership of both in-school and out-of-school children.

5.4.5 CAP Structure, Operations and Capacity

The above three groups are solely run by young people. Each group has an executive committee, made up of young people, and is responsible for ensuring the development of the group. The committees meet regularly to make decisions, plan and budget for activities. They also ensure the day-to-day running of the group. Each of the three executive committees sends representatives to the CAP Executive Committee. World Vision staff only serve as patrons of the groups; and occasionally, they give advice. The diagram below illustrates the CAP structure.



Young people are encouraged to develop their own activities, such as, plays. Where necessary, external technical support is sought. As stated by one member of staff, “children develop the plays. We invited a tutor who has specialty in music, dance and drama to train them. We were also privileged to receive some people who trained the children in circus, acrobatics and theatre development.” Young people’s knowledge and skills have also been enhanced through exposure conferences, where experiences and lessons have been shared with CAP projects from other countries and continents.

5.4.6 Staff Capacity

Effort, although minimal, has been geared towards building the capacity of staff and other facilitators to enable them acquire the right attitude and skills necessary to effectively engage children in building peace. Staff, directly involved with the Project, have been exposed to child rights training, and how to work with young people and protect them. They have also been trained in circus, acrobatics and theatre development. The staff have as well participated in exposure conferences with other CAP projects. It was, however, mentioned that most of the skills and right attitude have been acquired through hands-on experience working with young people.

5.4.7 Contributions to Building Peace in the Community

The influence of the CAP project has been felt at several levels, namely: the young participants themselves; their families; their peers; and the wider community. Young people have touched many in small and big ways.



Influence of CAP on the Wider Community

Many people we got in contact with testified about the influence CAP activities have had on the wider community with regard to building peace. There was indication that CAP activities have not only been entertaining and educative; but they have also promoted forgiveness and reconciliation; reduced the occurrence of violence; filled the socialising gap left by the long standing conflict; and led to the mushrooming of “peer clubs”.

“The activities bring hope and joy to us even when we are living in difficult times”, said one community member. “They give us a peace of mind. The children are exemplary; and they have tried to reach many people. Their presentations have also provided healing to people – in audiences – who have been affected by conflict. The children are promoting love for one another in the IDP camps”. When

young people perform on stage, both young and old spectators- laugh and release tension. These activities help them refine emotions and provide a forum to relieve life experiences. The entertainment provides a form of therapy that creates peaceful minds.

It was also mentioned that traditional songs, dance and drama were an avenue through which young people learnt moral values of the Acholi people. Parents and elders acknowledged that conflict has shattered the social mechanisms, through which they used to reach to the young ones. A community member said, “since parents do not teach their children at the fireplace in the evenings anymore, the child rights club is helping to mold the future of all our children in a good manner”.

Some of the messages put out have been those of non-violence, co-existence and respect for one another. These messages have reached many people. Many lives have been touched; and people are working on their behaviours and practices. Local Council leaders in Unyama camp, for instance, associated the reduced occurrence of violence cases in the camps to the positive response by the community to children’s messages. “...our work is appreciated by local leaders. They say that our efforts have promoted peace, unity and

reconciliation among all people”, said Omona Denis, a 15 year old member of the Unyama Child Rights Club.

A Local Councilor for Tepwonyo Village in Unyama Camp confirmed this. “We, camp leaders are now using the messages got from the peace building activities to run our administration. For instance, we have been able to address domestic violence; and it is now reasonably under control”. Denis also added that women at Cuk pa Cenjere market had reported that their husbands had changed greatly after the concert they did on domestic violence. Another community member said, “there was a lot of rape cases, domestic violence, theft and school dropouts; but all these are on the decrease”.

A remarkable change about the youths was noted. CAP members had especially appealed to their peers. It was said that, among the youths, respect had increased, drunkenness reduced and many had joined vocational skills training. “The best thing the Club did was to create awareness about HIV/AIDS. Because youths were already aware, when TASO³⁴ visited the area, a lot of them went for HIV/AIDS tests. We are very proud of the children’s club, because it has transformed Unyama camp”, said a community member. CAP members are said to have done tremendous work raising people’s awareness

³⁴ TASO is the acronym of The Aids Support Organisation whose services among others is voluntary counseling and testing (VCT).

about how HIV/AIDS is contracted and prevented. Conflict has been cited as a major factor responsible for the high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Gulu District. Because of HIV/AIDS awareness, many girls were said to have stopped flirting with soldiers. CAP members have been approached, on several occasions, to provide advice on HIV/AIDS.

CAP activities have promoted acceptance and reintegration of formerly abducted children and youths back into the community. The seed of forgiveness and reconciliation has been sown through song and drama. For instance, the Patron of the Child Rights Club said “insulting returnees in our communities has reduced. These days, it is not even heard of.” While another community member mentioned that “before the drama shows began, there was a lot of hatred for returnees. People now welcome them with a smile. The act of forgiveness is already taking root. Communities are sensitised on how to receive returnees”.

Participation of young people in CAP has inspired other young people to take part in civil activities that benefit their communities. Young people’s ‘clubs’ are springing up. Whether in clubs or not, young people were getting more and more involved in civil activities. Adong Betty, a 19 year old member of the Youths Peace Team reported “we started when we were only 10; but now everybody wants to be recruited.

Youths are now forming groups to advocate for peace and children’s rights. Our activities clearly show the importance of peace and harmony in society.”

Betty’s statements were corroborated by many others. For instance, a community member said “as an outcome of these plays, other groups have been formed by the youths in the camps. For example, *Labongo Lworo* (Without Fear) started and are now performing songs and dances to educate people on peace. One other group, mainly made up of girls, has also started”.

The influence these young people have had on their families cannot go unnoticed. Their parents and other family members look at them from a different angle. They see them as role models. Families have noticed great change among the CAP members – an aspect that has made parents proud and earned them respect in the community. Within families of CAP members, some transformation is taking place. There were reports of reduced quarrels, fights, increased parental responsibility and care, increased solidarity and cooperation and respect for each other. Although it is difficult to attribute all the positive change to what these young people are doing, they are definitely making a difference. For example, “Paul’s [not real name] parents were very quarrelsome; but after Paul got involved in the club, there was a lot

of change in their behaviour which I attributed to Paul's involvement in CAP activities".



Influence of CAP on Young Participants Themselves

Talking to the young people involved in CAP activities revealed that their participation in peace building had had an impact on their lives. They reported that CAP had enabled them acquire a variety of skills. Debates have been particularly instrumental in enhancing young people's knowledge and building the necessary skills for peace, such as, logical argument, expressing one's opinions and feelings in an organised and acceptable manner, critical thinking, communication and public speech. One 14 year old girl, Adokorach Vicky said that her involvement in CAP activities had sharpened her. "Before I joined the group, I used to fear talking in class and even before people. But now I no longer have fear; and I am more active". Besides this, CAP members have acquired skills in peacebuilding, circus and theatre development.

Young people involved in CAP are exhibiting positive characters at home as well as in the community. Their experience with CAP has positively shaped them. They are easily identifiable. CAP has given them a special status in the community. "That boy or girl who plays in the drama" is an example of statements often made in reference to CAP members.

"The children are empowered; they have self confidence, high self esteem and stand out. They are also responsible. For instance, at Gulu High School, these are the same children who have responsibilities and leadership positions", said Michael Oruni of the World Vision Children of War Rehabilitation Centre. CAP members themselves testified to this. They reported that they had a high sense of responsibility; and were willing to take on challenges for the good of society. Odhiambo Samuel Kitara, a 21 year old member of the Youths Peace Team had this to say, "morally, once you are a peace builder, you have to be peaceful. I am now a different person in the community. When things get out of hand, I always try to calm the situation".

Participation in peacebuilding has enabled CAP members gain knowledge in a variety of areas. Members revealed that they were ignorant about the environment in which they lived; and they were not aware of their rights and responsibilities. Participation in CAP is said to have opened new horizons for them. As stated by Aromorach Proscovia, 18 years, "I have come to know many things, which I never used to know. I did not know the way forward to peace. I have learnt about my rights and responsibilities. With this awareness, I always report to our group whenever I see a child's rights being abused; and we try to help as a group". Other members of CAP reported that they had learnt about

their cultures and traditions, which many youths living in IDP camps have been denied. They were also proud to have easy access to information on how to live safely as youths. They gave examples of information on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections.

Because of what they have been exposed to, CAP members have gradually had their attitudes and behaviours changed. Some have forgiven and reconciled with their adversaries. Others live more carefully without drinking alcohol, smoking and stealing. And many others have acquired behaviours that prevent them from catching HIV/AIDS. Acayo Kevin, an 18 year old girl who does not go to school, testified that CAP had reformed her life. "I used to go for disco at night. I now think positively because I have hope for the future". Another member testified that he went for an HIV/AIDS test after being encouraged by group members. He used to have many girl friends. He is now very happy since he tested negative; and has promised to marry only one wife after she too has undergone an HIV/AIDS test.

Like most other people, CAP members had negative attitudes towards former child soldiers, who had returned from captivity. They looked at them as enemies; as people who had committed atrocities; and as people, who did not deserve to be forgiven. Although it has not been easy,

CAP members had to unlearn this. "Before some of us joined CAP, we had a revengeful attitude, especially towards returnees. We however learnt to forgive before we can transform others into forgiveness", reported Arop Julius Ronald, 19 years old. On the other hand, Aromorach confessed that she had never before felt pity about formerly abducted children and youths. She began to sympathise and empathise with them after she got an opportunity to interact with them. "I can now forgive others without blame including returnees".

Young people through CAP have not only had an opportunity to make friends; but CAP has also provided them their own space to socialise and bond as brothers and sisters. Many CAP members, especially those who were formerly abducted and were in captivity, found it difficult to socialise; and always kept themselves isolated. CAP has enabled them overcome this dysfunction. A member of the Girl Mothers Club, Amony Jennifer, said "involvement in these activities provided me the opportunity to make friends and share laughter. It has relieved me of boredom and worries that used to affect me". On the other hand, Acan Joyce, also a member of the Girl Mothers Club said that her life was much better. "I have now developed interest in play. My thinking has also changed. For instance, I used to hate people around me; but now I am free with every one", she concluded.

Parents were generally happy with their children. One father who has most of his children as CAP members summed up his observation, “I have noticed unity, love, respect, humility and a high spirit of participation among the group. No cases of immorality, violence and aggression have been observed. The children are very respectful. Three of my children, one boy and two girls joined the club; and I want to tell you that I have found rest. The children have become very obedient and helpful. My children are now self-reliant and have planted sugar cane, potatoes and tomatoes. My elder daughter helped me pay her school fees. My children are very hospitable. In the past, I used to beat them up and quarrel because of immorality; but now my daughters have changed. Our family is a very peaceful one”.

Below is a case study of Odiambo Samuel Kitara, showing how participating in CAP peacebuilding activities has changed his life for the better.

5.4.8 Good Practices and Lessons Learnt from CAP

A closer look and analysis of CAP practices and activities reveals some good practices and lessons.

Good Practices

- The Project is run by young people, who are involved in initiating, planning, and implementing activities as well as club governance. Young people devise their own peacebuilding initiatives, with minimal adult intervention, in response to the needs of their communities.
- The Project integrates HIV/AIDS awareness and psychosocial support into its peacebuilding work. This strategy addresses conflict related trauma and the HIV/AIDS pandemic escalated by conflict.

SHAPED FOR BETTER

“I was so aggressive, I couldn’t forgive. At Layibi College, one of my friends picked my spoon - just a spoon - and he misplaced it. Being aggressive, I lost temper and we fought. When I joined CAP and reflected on that incident, I realised I had fought for a mere spoon. I felt terrible, I felt ashamed. I went and apologised to him and he forgave me. This is how CAP has helped me reform. The newly recruited members can easily be identified. They are different. With time they change for the better.”

This is Odiambo Samuel Kitara, now 21 years old. He joined CAP in 2000 and was one of the pioneer members. He is, currently, the Chairperson of the CAP Executive and Chairperson of the Youths Peace Team. Odiambo, now on long vacation after taking his Advanced Level examinations, has volunteered to coordinate CAP activities as he awaits his results.

Samuel further narrates how CAP has positively shaped him. In 2000, when he

was 17 years old he had a test of his courage. "Before I joined CAP, I couldn't be allowed by my parents to go to our village, that is far away in Palaro camp. My parents feared I would be abducted.

My father wasn't around - we had no money at home. We could hardly survive. I went back home, my young brothers were suffering, I got a bicycle and started my journey. I reached Bungatira and the soldiers stopped me. They told me the way was not safe. I pleaded with them to let me proceed but they totally refused. Then I requested to talk to the commander, who also refused, but promised to send us money. I made a return journey; but his promise was not fulfilled.

I went back to see the commander, who later allowed me to proceed to our village. When I crossed river Unyama I saw some soldiers whom I thought were government troops. A Muzei (old man) told me they were actually rebels and they had taken away his belongings.

I sat down some where for 2 hours until they disappeared.

When it was safe, I proceeded with my journey. I reached our village home, got food and spent the night there. The next day, I began my journey back. I crossed the dangerous zone. At a place called Lukome, where the rebels were before, there were government soldiers. They were lined up along the roadside. They first stopped us. It was very late. They gave us tough conditions and allowed us to proceed. I arrived home safely and everybody was happy. I got all this courage from being a CAP member."

Asked what key lessons he has learnt from CAP, Samuel said that "peace building has made me humble; and I am now able to associate with people of different status. As a peacebuilder, one has to be devoted. Otherwise, one may not be able to risk themselves to save others. I've learnt how to counsel people, to comfort them and to talk sense to them. At the end of it all, they understand", he proudly concluded.

- The Project is working with young people grouped according to their unique experiences to cater for their distinct interests.
- The Project has made effort, although minimal, to build the capacity of CAP members as well as staff and other facilitators to enable them acquire the right attitude and skills necessary to effectively engage young people in building peace.

Lessons Learnt

- Although young people have influence over adults, they do even better when it comes to their peers. Young people speak in a 'language' easy for their peers to understand and identify with. Their illustrations enable other young people to understand better; and therefore their impact is greater.

- When left alone, young people are bound to make mistakes. Yet with encouragement and support from adults, they can accomplish even greater things when given the opportunity. Therefore, guiding and correcting them – while taking care not to hurt their feelings – will strengthen them, build their confidence and give them room to excel.
- Support from parents of young people involved in peacebuilding is important. Parents should therefore be sensitised and involved at every stage to enable them understand their children's roles and rights. Parents should be helped to balance their own interests with those of their children. This will go a long way to defuse the negative attitudes some parents have that often lead them to bar young people from participating.
- Working with young people to build peace instills in them a culture of peace and moulds their moral character early in their lives. Such an early start is the beginning of their sustainable involvement in peace work; and they grow up to become peaceful and very powerful agents for peace.
- Young people need support in order for them to play their peacebuilding role effectively. Young people require capacity building in peace knowledge, skills and attitudes. They as well need to be facilitated with appropriate material resources and equipment. When working in risky areas, measures must be put in place to ensure young people's security.
- Patrons or advisors to young people's clubs or groups must have a vision ahead of theirs.

6.0 General Observations and Findings

6.1 World Vision's Peacebuilding Work with Young People

All the four projects engage young people in artistic expressions, such as, music, dance, and drama as well as sports to convey peace-promoting messages to various target groups. However, the ways in which young people engaged in these activities varied. The MAPOTU project involved young people through the school system. The Waajid Project worked with young people mainly through sports teams. While World Vision Rwanda and Uganda partnered with groups or clubs of young people, although these too varied in form and character. With the exception of the Children As Peacebuilders Project, all the other projects engaged young people in inter-community activities that provide opportunities for interaction to communities in conflict with each other.

Common to all these projects are the young people's peace-promoting activities that have influenced communities at different levels. Their work has touched their families, peers and wider community in many positive ways, as stated below.

6.2 YoungPeople's Contributions to Building Peace

6.2.1 Influence on the Wider Community



A more positive change in attitudes: As a result of young people's activities, there has been increased interaction between communities in conflict. This provided opportunities to build relationships and mend broken ones. Young people also promoted friendships and peaceful co-existence; built trust as well as reduced suspicion and animosity between groups and within communities. Through interactions, communities and individuals have been able to learn about each other's ways of life and problems. Gradually, negative perceptions and stereotypes are being demystified; and more positive attitudes are being nurtured.



Increased actions and practices that symbolise peace: As a result of young people's messages, community members increasingly did acts and gestures that connote peace or willingness to

make peace. These were practices and actions that were not happening or had ceased to happen due to tensions and conflicts between communities and individuals. These included acts, such as, sharing of gifts and exchanging goods and services, as in the case of Kenya; seeking and granting forgiveness as seen in Rwanda; working together, cooperation and sharing in Somalia; and forgiving, acceptance and reintegrating former child soldiers back into their communities as has been done in Uganda.

 **Increased awareness about the importance of peace:** Messages about peace, reconciliation and co-existence - from the young people - have increased the knowledge of community members about the causes of conflicts, their consequences and possible solutions. There is also increased awareness about the costs of wars and conflicts and the benefits of peace. Hence, communities are now more informed and in position to make better decisions to deal with the conflicts affecting them; as well as to prevent them from ever reoccurring.

 **More opportunities for entertainment and healing:** During music, dance, drama and sports presentations, young people have not only entertained their audiences; but rather their activities have been a form of therapy for

processing and healing trauma and other psychosocial problems associated with conflicts. Young people's activities have also provided alternative ways to meaningfully spend idle time – for especially economically inactive and redundant youths- that could otherwise be spent on conflict-promoting or socially unacceptable activities.

 **Positive changes among family members:** The participation of young people in peace promoting activities has had a positive influence on their family members. Parents, siblings and other immediate family members have been touched; and the response has been increased care, support and respect for young people involved with World Vision peace projects. Besides, the messages have reached them more proximately; and there has been a change in their attitudes and practices.

 **Increased participation in civil activities by peers:** As role models, young people involved with World Vision projects have inspired and given hope to their peers. In all the four projects, there was increased interest and participation of peers in matters affecting their communities. As a result, other young people have formed groups to carry out similar initiatives.



Complementing local development agendas: In carrying out their peace agenda, young people have promoted other development initiatives. They have managed to mobilise communities for peace and reconciliation – necessary prerequisites to allow other developments to take root. Other contributions made by young people towards the development of their communities included raising awareness about HIV/AIDS, educating communities about children's rights and the importance of educating children. Generally, communities have benefited through more positive and careful living, reduced violence as well as increased numbers of children going to school.

6.2.2 Influence on Young Participants Themselves

In touching other lives, through World Vision peace projects, young people's own lives have been greatly changed. Not only have they communicated peace messages to others; but they have also made efforts to put their messages into practice through positive living. They have experienced personal growth and change in attitude. They have as well enhanced their knowledge, skills and values about peace, how to deal with conflict and other related issues. In addition, these activities have provided them with opportunities for entertainment, physical fitness and healing. More

specifically, the young people have benefited as follows:



Enhanced social skills and values: Through World Vision peace projects, young people have had opportunities to interact with other young people and adults from diverse cultures, backgrounds, ethnic and clan groups. In cases where groups or teams are made up of young people from different ethnic and clan groups, they have been equipped with skills to work and live in diversity. Other social skills acquired include teamwork, sharing and cooperation. These skills have far reaching implications in real life and are necessary for peaceful co-existence.



Realisation of their own roles and responsibilities as peace builders: Most of these young people joined peace work with World Vision for the sake of joining a team or group. They had no idea about what impact these activities would have on their own lives, their peers, family and community. Along the way, they gradually began to realise the difference they were actually making in people's lives. This realisation of their own roles and responsibilities as peace builders has inspired them to do more.



Improved discipline and morals: Young people, participating in peace promoting activities, behaved and carried

themselves differently compared to their peers. Their participation with World Vision had changed their ways of life and conduct. They were more disciplined, had a higher sense of responsibility and were regarded by many as role models.

 **Enhanced self-confidence and esteem:** Many young people testified that before they got involved in peace promoting activities, they were shy, timid and less outgoing. Participation in these activities before large audiences has enhanced their confidence and self worth. They have better public speaking and presentation skills; and were in a better position to shape their own destiny.

6.3 Lessons Learnt Across Case Studies

The following are general lessons learnt from World Vision's peace work with young people:

 **Young people are powerful agents for peace:** If appropriately facilitated, young people have great potential to impact communities, their families and themselves. They do not only have the right 'language' with which to communicate and impact their peers; but they also appeal – in a unique but powerful way - to adults.

 **Working with young people fosters a culture of peace:** Involving young people, at an early age, in building peace moulds them into responsible citizens; shapes their attitudes and skills; and instills in them a sustainable culture of peace.

 **Young people's effective participation requires support:** To effectively participate in peacebuilding, young people require support and facilitation from the 'whole' community in order to play their role. They need support from parents, community members and leaders as well as organisations working with them. The support could be in form of capacity building, creating space for and encouraging them, having the right attitude towards them and providing appropriate materials and equipment.

 **Artistic activities promote peace and are therapeutic:** Engaging young people in music, dance, drama and sports as a means to spread peace messages does not only promote peace; but it helps people to heal from conflict related trauma. As young people and their audiences internalise peace messages, they are entertained while this - at the same time - provides them a moment to reflect on their

past, process the trauma they are experiencing and engage in a healing process.



Young people have been integrating other development issues in peacebuilding: Young people have been able to address and include issues of critical concern to their communities into their peace work. Young people have promoted awareness on HIV/AIDS, children's rights and the importance of education. Issues

that were integrated in peace work were some of the most pressing in their communities.



Young people have highlighted the link between peace and development: Peace messages by young people have emphasised the need for peace to prevail in order for other development activities to take place. They have underscored that peace facilitates access to education and markets.

7.0 Recommendations and Conclusion

The report calls for the involvement of young people in peacebuilding not only as a means of building a culture of peace; but also because young people are powerful and dynamic agents of peace. While World Vision's work with young people has yielded noteworthy dividends for peace, lessons learnt from the various case studies point to the need to deepen and widen efforts. Below are broad recommendations that could be tailored to fit both programme and country contexts.

1. **Design and implement young people focused peacebuilding strategies:**

Strategies to guide implementation of peacebuilding programmes should deliberately focus on young people. Questions, such as, 'what do we want to do?'; 'how do we want to do it?'; 'with whom shall we work?'; and 'where and for how long shall we work?' should be considered not only in the socio-economic, political, cultural and historical contexts of young people; but the age, sex and capacity of the young people one plans to work with must also be given consideration. A pre-strategy design analysis of such contexts - that involves young people - is worth exploring to enable young people bring in their unique perspectives.

2. **Build the capacity of young people, staff and other facilitators:**

The capacity of young people in peace knowledge, skills and values should be enhanced; and the approaches, methods and techniques they use to implement peace activities enriched. This could be through introducing peer education and child-to-adult methodologies. Such methods would empower young people to effectively influence diverse audiences. In addition, working successfully with young people calls for special skills and attitudes; and the staff as well as other facilitators must be helped to acquire these attributes.

3. **Forge stronger partnerships and networks with others:**

Peacebuilding is a complex and not a small and easy task; and requires a lot of resources. Building stronger and strategic partnerships and networks - with parents, churches and other Faith Based Organisations (FBOs), schools, local administrations, and other relevant institutions and organisations - is crucial for systematic, coordinated and sustainable work with young people. Such relationships must be built at various levels. Intra World Vision networks should also be strengthened and supported.

4. Adopt a multi-level and multi-dimensional approach:

Although peacebuilding programmes must have specific levels at which they intend to work with young people, consideration must be given to other levels - the individual, family, community, national and international levels - deemed strategic to the programme. A multi-dimensional approach to peacebuilding work with young people – attending to spiritual, psychosocial, political, economic, socio-cultural and physical needs - is also proposed to address the different drivers and impacts of conflicts. A multi-level and multi-dimensional approach would ensure a holistic strategy necessary to address different needs.

5. Engage in peace advocacy with young people:

Young people are powerful agents of change and can speak for themselves. Situation analyses at local, national and international levels should be made; and barriers to young people's advocacy addressed while their opportunities for advocacy work identified and made use of. However, caution must be taken to avoid involving young people in advocacy for exploitative reasons and their confidentiality must be respected.

6. Share best practices and lessons learnt:

Adopt a culture of sharing experiences, best practices and lessons learnt from working with young people to build peace. Young people participating in World Vision peace programmes should as well be given a voice and space to share their experiences through different media including a newsletter. This would facilitate continuous improvement of young people focused peacebuilding programmes.

7. Allocate adequate funds to facilitate effectiveness and expansion:

This documentation makes it clear that young people are key partners in peacebuilding processes. Young people focused peacebuilding programmes should be allocated adequate funds to support their participation in a more sustainable manner; and to facilitate expansion of such programmes to reach more young people and communities.

8. Adopt young people focused evaluation:

Young people should be appropriately involved – considering their age and capacity - in evaluating programmes in which they have participated.

9. Carry out studies and reviews: Carry out a study to analyse the extent to which young people's involvement in peacebuilding deters them from being active participants in armed conflict. Also review the extent to which young people can partner with adults to monitor and report on violations committed against them during situations of armed conflict.

Conclusion

Small Feet, Deep Prints' is a publication illustrating that young people are

not just victims of conflicts; but are dynamic agents for peace and effective 'participants in creating solutions'. The participation of young people in peacebuilding, if appropriately supported, can have positive outcomes for peace at different levels. The above recommendations are intended for civil society groups as well as donors and multilateral organisations seeking to partner effectively with young people's peacebuilding initiatives and youths-led organisations. The recommendations propose actions meant to widen and deepen young people's engagement in peace initiatives; thus rendering them even more effective.

Appendix I

Methodology

General Question and Research Tools

This documentation was guided by the following 7 general questions:

1. How does the organisation support and facilitate young people's participation in peace building?
2. What peace building activities are young people involved in?
3. How is the rest of the community involved?
4. How is the involvement of young people contributing to building peace?
5. What are the challenges and barriers to involving young people as peace builders?
6. How can these challenges be overcome?
7. What key lessons have been learnt from involving young people in peace building?

From these 7 questions, other questions were generated depending on the target group and project. Different interview guides and questionnaires were developed for the different projects. Questions were adjusted to solicit relevant information from the different target groups. The questionnaires and interview guides were pre-tested and refined before use.

Methods Used

The study mainly used qualitative methods that helped in getting the true picture of the situation on the ground. Focus group discussions were used to get views from a general perspective. On average focus group discussions lasted for an average of

two and a half hours. Interviews were used to solicit in depth information that could not be attained through focus group discussions. The observation method was used to study respondents' gestures and expressions as well as other physical things that needed to be studied. The triangulation of these methods gave an opportunity for further probing, cross checking answers given to questions and ensured the verification of responses and findings.

Sample Details

Data was collected from one project per country identified with the help of mainly national office staff. With the support of national and field staff, respondents were identified, notified and arrangements for interviews made. The type of respondents depended on who the Project regarded as stakeholders and whom they involved in implementation of the project. In total, 208 respondents were interviewed. An average of five working days were spent collecting data in each project area. Below are details of who the respondents were in each of the Projects covered in this study.

MAPOTU Peacebuilding Project:

Respondents included World Vision Kenya staff at both national and field levels, parents of the young people involved in the Project, teachers, secondary school students, youths on peace committees, community leaders, children in primary schools involved in MAPOTU in the Pokot and Marakwet areas. A total of 33 respondents were interviewed.

Promotion of Reconciliation Among Youth (PRAY):

88 respondents were involved. Respondents included 1 field staff, young people involved with PRAY in 7 different groups, former members of PRAY, parents of young people involved in PRAY and community leaders.

Waajid Grass Roots Peacebuilding

Project: Respondents included 1 national and 2 field staff, members of the girls volley ball team, members of the *Fanka* Theatre Group, members of the various football teams, parents of the young people involved in peace building, community leaders, teachers and members of the district sports committee. In total there were 54 respondents.

Children As Peacebuilders Project (CAP):

In this case, there were 33 respondents who

included: staff at the WV Uganda Children of War Rehabilitation Programme, members of the Unyama Child Rights Club (primary school going and non-school going children) and their patron, members of the Youths Peace Team – mainly secondary school students, members of the Girl Mothers' Club, community leaders and parents.

As stated above, the sample size and the type of respondents depended greatly on the nature of the project as well as the situation on the ground. The table below gives details on the sample.

WV NO	Area	Programme / Project Name	Staff		Young People		Community members	
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Kenya	Pokot & Marakwet	MAPOTU Peace building Project	-	4	4	9	3	13
Rwanda	Ngenda, Nyamata & Nyarutovu	Promotion of Reconciliation Among Youths (PRAY)	1	-	35	40	3	9
Somalia	Waajid	Waajid Grass Root Peacebuilding Project	1	2	13	20	3	15
Uganda	Gulu	Children as Peacebuilders Project (CAP)	1	2	9	7	3	11
Sub-totals			3	8	61	76	12	48
Total			208					

Appendix II

United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child: Articles Referred To

Article 3

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.

3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.

Article 12

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either

directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Article 13

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:

(a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; or (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.

Article 14

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.

3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

Article 23

1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which

ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

2. States Parties recognize the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.

3. Recognizing the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development.

4. States Parties shall promote, in the spirit of international co-operation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of preventive health care and of medical, psychological and functional treatment of disabled children, including dissemination of and access to information concerning methods of rehabilitation, education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling States Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in these areas. In this regard,

particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

(b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living; the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

Article 31

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Appendix III

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