

SKILLS TRAINING FOR A PEACEFUL FUTURE

LOCATION	Nyong Payam, Torit, Hiyala, Bur and Himodonge Payams
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The majority of young people in former Eastern Equatoria State (EES) live in remote areas where social services are limited. They are illiterate, have little skills, are unemployed, and can hence not sustain themselves. This increases their vulnerability to being exploited or recruited into criminal activities.

Youth: perpetrators and victims?

Hiyala, Bur and Himodonge Payams have experienced several communal conflicts that claimed the lives of many people. Between 2013 and 2015, there were serious clashes between the villages of Bari and Omorwo, and between Murahatiha and Tirangore villages. More than 100 people were killed in road ambushes, home attacks and revenge killings. 80% of those killed were innocent women, children and elderly. Many households were displaced to the neighboring payams, although some of the conflict also extended to these payams. The inter- and intra-communal conflicts have affected education, health services, agriculture, businesses and free movement. In Bur and Hiyala Payams the main perpetrators of violence are identified to be youth. They have been recruited to join armed gangs to attack communities and carry out revenge killings. Youth are also the major actors in cattle raiding,

leading to prolonged insecurity in the area. Youth are manipulated into violent behavior because they have limited future prospects. They are unemployed, mostly illiterate and face discrimination. The latter is especially the case for returnees who lived for decades in Sudan and can only speak Arabic. In general, it is hard for youth to earn an income that meets their needs. Traumatized by this situation, some ended up committing suicide.

Youth skills training to improve human security

SARRA conducted a needs assessment in four payams to identify the root causes of conflict, which was followed by four awareness-raising campaigns on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. In Hiyala, Bur, Nyong and Himodonge Payams a vocational youth training program was started. A total of 26 trainees (9 girls, 17 boys) were enrolled in carpentry and joinery training in 2016, and 32 more enrolled in 2017 (10 girls and 22 boys). The training provided them with skills to set up workshops for income generation. This is with the aim to offer them an alternative to violence, improving security in the communities.

In November 2016, SARRA conducted an exposure visit for the trainees to the State Ministry of Education, the State Ministry of Infrastructure, the State Ministry of Social Development and the office of the State Peace Commissioner. The visit was meant to familiarize the youth with the relevant line ministries of Eastern Equatoria State. Following these visits, the Director of Quality Education in the State Ministry of Education, Gender



Vocational training in Torit.

and Social Development promised to re-open the Torit Technical School to enroll some of the trainees.

Better relationships helps to reduce conflicts

The 58 trainees have formed 8 groups that each established a workshop as small-scale business venture. Each group has its own binding rules and regulations as to ensure accountability and transparency of their activities. The groups also intend to register their group as legal entity. The trainees are role models in their communities and have become ambassadors of peace. They visit youth from the warring communities, calling on them to forget the differences they had before. In some cases they now work together and conflict has reduced.

For example, one trainee from Tirrangore had joined an armed group to raid cattle. He served in the frontline of the recent inter-communal conflicts between Tirrangore and Murahatiha Bomas. When the peacebuilding and community livelihood rehabilitation program started in Hiyala Payam, he enrolled in the skills training. “After graduating from the training, I now established two carpentry workshops. As youth team leader I advocate for peace. I reach out to other youth to join vocational training and encourage them to denounce criminal activities”, he says.



Boys and girls learning practical skills.

Way forward

To avoid that the youth slide back into criminal activities, there is a need to continue the engagement with the trainees and follow-up on their business endeavors. Extending the program to reach more youth as a viable strategy to withdraw them from violence is also important. SARRA furthermore noted that especially girls and women have great potential that should be stimulated. Finally, there is a need to couple vocational training with functional literacy and numeracy courses. This will further improve their business skills but will also create opportunities to be involved in other (community) activities and decision making.