

YOUTH BECOME PEACE AMBASSADORS

LOCATION	Torit County, Bur Payam, Loudo villages
IMPLEMENTER	Global Aim
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“My live has changed after attending the training course in carpentry. I am now able to earn an income that meets my household needs. I advocate for more people to develop business activities, which is a better way to earn money than cattle raiding”, says Taban Paridi.

Unemployment draws youth into violence

Close to three decades of war and conflict had devastating effects on the livelihoods of people in Hiyala Payam, Torit County. Social support systems broke down, access to basic services and education is limited and poverty is widespread. This also affects youth. School dropout levels are high because school fees cannot be paid. For girls this often leads to early marriage and motherhood. As the payams are still recovering from conflict, there are only few paid jobs and apprenticeships, and these are difficult to access for youth without education. Also skills training for youth is mostly absent, so setting up a small business is challenging.

Youth that drop out of school and lack alternatives find it hard to meet their basic needs. Idleness makes them vulnerable to a range of anti-social behaviors, ranging from petty crime to being drawn into inter-clan conflict and cattle raiding.

Especially the latter accounts for the displacement and death of many people.

Strengthening coping mechanisms & self-reliance

There is hence a dire need to strengthen the coping mechanisms and self-reliance of youth through apprenticeship and skills training, while fostering peaceful co-existence among communities. In all five bomas of Hiyala Payam, Global Aim initiated a skills training program, which equips youth who dropped out of school with practical livelihood skills. A total of 41 youth (18 boys and 23 girls) enrolled in carpentry, joinery and tailoring courses, and 34 youth (18 boys and 16 girls) studied auto-mechanics and hairdressing. Global Aim adopted a community based training methodology, making use of the available resources in the target community, for example through using local artisans as trainers and hiring locally available training center space.

Ambassadors for peace

The life skills training helped youth to set up their own workshops. Those trained now earn a profit of between 250 and 750 South Sudanese Pounds (3 to 4 USD) per product that they make in their workshops. As the income of youth has increased, they can now afford to pay school fees, medical bill and purchase household basic needs. This motivates the trained youth to denounce involvement in criminal and anti-social behavior. They have in fact become peace ambassadors and



Photo Global Aim

Taban and George in their carpentry workshop.



Student from tailoring class

advise other youth to be like them and desist from criminal activity. As a result, in Hiyala Payam the number of youth involved in petty crime and cattle raiding has sensibly reduced. Apprenticeship and skills training is thus a viable strategy to curb youth involvement in conflict, transforming them into peace builders.

Engaging other local actors is a factor for success

The beneficiaries need close follow up and mentoring support so that they make most sustainably use of their new skills and resources. This is why it is important to involve the youth, local leaders and partners, such as the department of vocational training of the State Ministry of education, in the planning and implementation of the project. Also the availability of local instructors to provide the courses was a factor for success. Finally, regular monitoring and technical support visits motivated the youth and increased their commitment to the program objectives.

Way forward

More development actors should offer skill training programs in order to address youth unemployment because. Skill training proves to contribute to a reduction in crime perpetrated by youth. These kind of programming is in need for a strong link to dialogue and peace initiatives. Youth should be encouraged to form groups so that they can be more easily accessible and supported after programs end.



Graduation of tailoring class.