

United Movement to End Child Soldiering

(UMECS-Uganda)

2007 Annual Report





Mission and Vision

«♦» Mission

UMECS supports secondary school and higher education for children and youth affected by conflict, together with school-based peace education and counseling and guidance programs, and helps to build a culture of peace to prevent future wars.

«♦» Vision

A society through its communities that builds and maintains a culture of peace will reap the benefits of education, community building, sustainable development, environmental restoration, and global citizenship.





UMECS Country Director Charles Onencan praises one of UMECS sponsored students at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School, Pader District for his excellent grades. UMECS sponsors 12 of its 83 students in the Northern Uganda Education Program at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School

Core Values and Guiding Principles

- ◆◆ Transparency and accountability
- ◆◆ Partnership and collaboration
- ◆◆ Personal integrity and culture of integrity
- ◆◆ Community ownership
- ◆◆ Programs should have systemic implications
- ◆◆ Building in sustainability to programs
- ◆◆ Long term commitment to communities and constituents
- ◆◆ Team work and team spirit
- ◆◆ Measurable grassroots impact
- ◆◆ Evaluation and assessment oriented
- ◆◆ Root cause analysis
- ◆◆ Equity for all
- ◆◆ Education for all
- ◆◆ Dialogue, communications and relationship building
- ◆◆ Empowerment of women
- ◆◆ Non-sectarian, non-discrimination
- ◆◆ Self-determination and community-mindedness
- ◆◆ Respect for government and local structures and leaders



Letter from Country Director and Executive Director



◀◀▶▶ UMECS Executive Director Arthur Serota, left, and Country Director Charles Onencan at UMECS Kampala Secretariat

We have much to celebrate.

UMECS 2007 Annual Report denotes a year of remarkable milestones, achievements and impact on the ground (January 2007 – December 2007). We increased our student sponsorship enrollments to 83 students in our Northern Uganda Education Program, and extended the program from Pader, Kitgum and Gulu districts in Acholi sub region to Katakwi District in Teso sub region, Eastern Uganda enrolling highly vulnerable girls and boys from isolated IDP camps in secondary schools in Soroti district. In 2008, we will expand the program to Amuru District in Northern Uganda and increase our enrollments overall to more than 100. In March 2007, we launched a highly needed school-based Counseling and Guidance Program at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School in Pader District in collaboration with Africa University’s Counseling Faculty, to address the psychosocial needs of formerly abducted children and youth. From January – March 2007, we brought six highly skilled Africa University graduate interns from around Africa to Northern Uganda who were hosted by GUSCO, CPA and UMECS. These interns contributed significantly to program development, trainings and capacity strengthening of local NGO’s and projects serving the needs of conflict-affected women, children and youth in IDP camps in Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Lira, and Otuke districts. We appointed Outreach Coordinator Charles Onencan as our Country Director and further strengthened our capacity by hiring Anthony Ojok, a former head teacher, as our Education Field Coordinator. We collaborated with partnered schools and Gulu University to plan the implementation of a School-Based Peace Education Program and we developed international partners to support a Books and Computers for Northern Uganda Schools Campaign. Above all, we were rewarded by our impact on the ground in local communities and the successes of our students whom we support in secondary school, including at tertiary level. They are the future of Uganda, and we are honored to holistically support their educational journey.

There are also great challenges and opportunities before us. Children and youth throughout Uganda, including in Northern Uganda, are eager learners, avid readers and see education as their future yet despite their enthusiasm and will to be in school, the majority of secondary-school age youth in Northern Uganda are not in secondary school due to lack of resources. This is especially so for orphans and highly vulnerable children. As an organization, we continue to respond to the increasing demands to support more children and youth in school; however, much more is needed to ensure every child and youth enrolls in and finishes secondary school, and that tertiary and higher education is available to all. This challenge creates opportunities for us to accelerate our efforts to raise increasing resources to support the education of increasing numbers of children and youth. However, no one organization can achieve these goals alone. There must be increased collaboration and coordination with government and relevant stakeholders to invest in the future of Uganda through full educational support of its children and youth.

Furthermore, it is important to create a systemic means to address the psychosocial needs of the large numbers of children, youth, women and elders affected by conflict still suffering from their ordeals, displacement and loss. This has given us the impetus to launch a school-based counseling program in Pader District, providing the opportunities for model sharing, expansion and replication. Our model of providing counseling services to children and youth in school is also designed to reach families and communities.

We are heartened by the role of NGO's and the private sector in providing support for secondary education for children and youth in Uganda and at the same time, we continue to learn from communities, families and youth that secondary education alone is not enough. Not only is every child and youth entitled to be educated but the purposes of education must be met, and that includes providing skills and qualifications to meet the needs of families, communities and societies. This necessarily means tertiary and higher education must also be supported in addition to secondary school support, so that today's youth become tomorrow's qualified teachers, health care professionals, agriculturalists, environmentalists, social workers, business officials, entrepreneurs and public servants.

We appreciate the Government of Uganda being progressively ahead of the curve on the African continent in championing Universal Primary Education (UPE) and recently initiating Universal Secondary Education (USE). This tangible commitment by the government creates opportunities for NGO's and the private sector to partner with government to invest in education, share the burden of costs, foster sustainability of UPE and USE, improve the quality of education, help districts meet their education goals, advance economic and community development and participate in fulfilling national goals.

Peace is wonderful for all, and a society in peace with itself and its neighbours has the greatest chance of reaping the benefits of education, community building, economic development, environmental restoration and citizenship. Everyone agrees that peace is the way, but peace does not happen nor does it sustain by itself. Building and sustaining peace takes work. Local communities, local organisations, local government, partners and allies, national organisations and government all have their role to play in building and sustaining sustainable peace so that society prospers and lives in harmony with itself.

For our part, as we carry out our activities, UMECS is committed to playing our role in fostering the goals and values of the nation, districts and local communities and to be a respectful partner in so doing. We pledge to continue providing and expanding educational, psychosocial and family support to communities affected by conflict, to promote the advancement of peacebuilding and to help build support for grassroots communities serving the needs of women, youth and vulnerable children.

In partnership with grassroots communities, schools, institutions, local organizations, and local and national government, UMECS is committed to sharing our models and advocating our strategies. We strongly support local ownership of our programs and initiatives which help to make grassroots responses more sustainable.

To our donors, grassroots constituents, partners and colleagues, we express our deepest appreciation and respect as we continue to work together to make our society a better place, person by person, community by community, school by school, each one in harmony with the other.

With gratitude,

Charles Onencan
Country Director, Uganda

Arthur Serota
Executive Director

UMECS Core Analysis and Strategies to End Child Soldiering, Help to Prevent Future Wars and Address the Needs of Children and Communities Affected by Conflict



◀◀▶▶ UMECS Intern Sophie Munjoma from Africa University mentors Simon, age 15, in Palaro IDP camp. Simon lost the use of his right arm when he was shot in the cross fire of an LRA raid. "Mama Sophie," A teacher from Zimbabwe was one of six who interned in UMECS-sponsored Northern Uganda Internship Program

In today's wars, civilian populations are the main casualties and all too often, children are the soldier of choice. Child soldiering will not end until wars and genocide are prevented. This is because once wars start, they take on a life of their own and rage out of control like a forest fire. To prevent wars and genocide, a culture of peace must be built. The following strategies and core analysis

have been learned from the ground, from children, youth and communities affected by conflict. They serve as the foundation of our program and activity planning and implementation and can be helpful to those who are funding or implementing responses to armed conflict, child soldiering, and to the needs of children, youth and communities affected by conflict.

- ◆ In many of today's wars, targeting and brutalizing civilian populations is the modus operandi of winning hearts and minds, consolidating political power and taking control over land, resources and political sub-divisions. Within this context, children - because they are vulnerable, easily brainwashed, blindly obedient and have not fully formed their moral parameters - more easily than adults commit atrocities against civilians. So long as wars exist, child soldiering will continue, plain and simple. Addressing the root causes of war and the dynamics which keep wars going, engaging in active grassroots peace building coupled with multi-track diplomacy to manage down existing wars and prevent new wars are critical components of ending child soldiering.
- ◆ To prevent new wars, a grassroots culture of peace must be built through which communities no longer resort to violence as a response to conflict or fear.
- ◆ To build a grassroots culture of peace, peace education, as one of multiple strategies, must be systemically mainstreamed into the education system, with components which emanate to the family and community.
- ◆ School-Based Peace Education - studying peace and learning the tools of peace building – should start in early primary school grades, continue through secondary school and provide ongoing opportunities for practice. Becoming skilled in the practices of violence prevention,

mediation, meditative capacity, relationship building and cultural reconciliation traditions is critical to building a culture of peace. School-based peace studies and peace activities are important components of building a sustainable culture of peace.

- ◆ All children and youth impacted by conflict are unequivocally and immediately entitled to secondary, tertiary and higher education to ensure a secure future, for social reintegration, as protection from recruitment and abduction, as a component of rehabilitation and a means to contribute to family, community and society.
- ◆ Education of children and youth affected by armed conflict should be linked to psychosocial support, peace education, strengthening schools, local economic development and environmental initiatives.
- ◆ Within the richness of ethnic and sub-regional culture which emphasizes group identity, children and youth should be the space for children and youth to discover their own goodness, serenity, peacefulness and individuality as guardians of peace, active peacemakers and advocates and practitioners of peace.
- ◆ Children and youth in their study of peace should learn about the ancient, ancestral, recent and contemporary cultural practices that have in the past and remain available to prevent violence, mediate disputes, build relationships, practice forgiveness and reconciliation and purposefully devote their lives to building and sustaining a culture of peace.
- ◆ School-Based Counseling and Guidance Programs should provide psychosocial services, life skills and guidance to students affected by conflict, which services should extend to their families and communities.
- ◆ Strategies to end child soldiering should transcend from simply advocating for international declarations, proclamations of condemnation and selective punishment to advocacy for peace, supporting peacebuilding initiatives and providing direct here-and-now services to children, youth and communities affected by conflict.
- ◆ Building peace should be linked with community and economic development. Tangibly connecting development and community building with peace building is a key component of building a culture of peace. Peace will not sustain itself in a vacuum. There can be no lasting peace without development and no sustainable development without lasting peace.
- ◆ Grassroots women, and the perspectives of women, should play defining roles in structuring and implementing peacebuilding programs.
- ◆ Program and project development should have systemic implications
- ◆ Organisations working to end child soldiering should commit to professional development of its staff to develop in-house expertise, practice and professional qualifications in peacebuilding, psychotherapy and counseling, social work, teaching, education administration and community development.

Our Programs, Milestones and Achievements in 2007



◀◀▶▶ UMECS staff member Joel Ojok reviews school reports of two UMECS sponsored students at Y Y Okot Memorial College (secondary school) in Kitgum

Our Programs

Northern Uganda Education Program

- a. We sponsor 83 gender-balanced displaced children and youth from Internally Displaced Persons camps in Northern and Northeast Uganda in secondary boarding schools, the majority of whom are orphans and highly vulnerable, many of whom are former child soldiers, formerly abducted children and child mothers. We pay school fees, exam fees and uniforms, and purchase shoes and attire, scholastic materials, personal hygiene supplies, mattresses, book bags, trunks, course equipment and transport.
- b. We sponsor each of our students from secondary school through higher education (A-level, diploma and university degree programs)
- c. Our culturally and community-connected education staff provides ongoing mentorship and guidance, including career guidance, and maintains connections with students' families and communities.
- d. We involve students' family members and communities with each student's educational journey.
- e. We involve our students in program planning and evaluations.
- f. The program enters Year IV in January 2008, with an over 95% student retention rate. This is attributed to our holistic support structure. This continues to keep our students hopeful about their futures and the power of hope nurtures success.
- g. We are in partnership with 14 secondary boarding schools in Northern and Northeast Uganda; our students are enrolled in cohorts as small as three and as large as 12 in each school. Our three-prong school-based program strategy is designed to meet the pressing, high-priority needs of the over 10,000 children and youth enrolled in these 14 schools. These three prongs are:
 - I. School-Based Counseling and Guidance Programs
 - II. School-Based Peace Education Programs
 - III. Books and Computers for Northern Uganda Schools



UMECS Country Director Charles Onencan provides career guidance to a UMECS sponsored student at Kitgum High School where six of UMECS 83 sponsored students are enrolled.

For more information about and pictures of the Northern Uganda Education Program, please visit www.endchildsoldiering.org and see home page articles: “Why Raymond and Rachel Must Be In School” and “UMECS Extends Its Education Program to Northeast Uganda.”



UMECS Intern Makwanise Ndakaitei from Africa University demonstrates the use of a camera in Ngariam Primary School, Katakwi District, during the selection process of UMECS sponsored students in February 2007. UMECS extended its Northern Uganda Education Program to Teso sub region, enrolling 12 girls and 8 boys from high poverty isolated IDP camps in Katakwi to two secondary schools in Soroti

Northern Uganda Internship Program

Under UMECS auspices, this collaborative program, entering Year IV, brings highly qualified Africa University graduate students from around

Africa to Northern and Northeast Uganda who, hosted by partnered grassroots organizations, contribute to community development and peacebuilding projects, and help to strengthen the capacities of local civil society organizations serving the needs of highly vulnerable women and children.

A collaboration initiated by UMECS and the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance at Africa University, interns are hosted by Gulu Support the Children Organization (GUSCO), a center serving the psychosocial, reintegration, educational and training needs of formerly abducted children, child mothers and caregivers; Concerned Parents Association (CPA), a child-centered advocacy and social service organization; Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC), a child welfare organization that enables local communities to acquire and sustain the capacity to plan, obtain, and manage resources to improve the welfare of children; and UMECS. Interns, largely teachers, pastors, project managers and peacebuilding practitioners, bring seasoned real-world skills, including organizational development and project management skills to grassroots communities. Our six interns in 2007 were from Kenya and Zimbabwe. 2008 interns will be from Zimbabwe, Kenya and Democratic Republic of Congo. For more information about and pictures of this program, please visit www.endchildsoldiering.org and see home page article: “Africa University Interns from Kenya and Zimbabwe ‘Come Home’ to Northern Uganda.”



◀◀◀ Teachers at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School following their March 2007 counseling and guidance training by John Mapfumo, head of Africa University's Counseling Department (front row, second from left. Seated at far left is Patrick Obonyo, Head teacher/Principal of Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School

School-Based Counseling and Guidance Program

The need for psychosocial services for children and youth affected by conflict in Northern Uganda is well documented but the availability of accessible services currently fails to match the needs. In response, and in collaboration with our partners, UMECS piloted a School-Based Counseling and Guidance Program at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School in Pader District, Northern Uganda in March 2007 as a systemic means to begin addressing counseling needs of tens of thousands of secondary school students, many of whom are still traumatized by their ordeals as formerly abducted children, from displacement and loss.

In February and March 2007, the head of Africa University's Counseling Department, John Mapfumo, together with two UMECS Africa University interns, UMECS and school staff designed the first phase of the program and trained 19 teachers and community members in counseling skills to address the counseling needs of more than 650 students. The program is now being further designed to include wider ranges of counseling training and qualification. In its commitment to schools and communities in Northern Uganda, UMECS is exploring a wide range of training options for further development and replication of this program including with the Peter C. Alderman Foundation which is committed to addressing the psychosocial needs of communities affected by conflict in Uganda. For more information about this program, please visit www.endchildsoldiering.org and see home page article: **"School-Based Counseling and Guidance."**

School-Based Peace Education Program

Many factors lead to war but once wars start, they take on a life of their own and rage out of control like a forest fire that burns until it expires. Protracted wars seldom respond to peaceful interventions. The dynamics which keep wars going may be different from the factors that started them. Once genocides start, they too become self-propelling. International proclamations of "right to protect," are of no avail. War and genocide must be prevented.

To prevent wars and genocide, a culture of peace must be built.

To build a culture of peace, peace education (among other strategies and scenarios) must be systemically mainstreamed into the education system, with components which emanate to the family and community.

As a response to the need to build a grassroots culture of peace, UMECS and its institutional, school and community partners formed a Design Team to design a School-Based

Peace Education Program which will be piloted in partnered secondary schools. Designed to prepare children and youth to become lifelong peacebuilding practitioners, the program has three core components:

1. Peace Studies Curricula, focused in three areas:

- A. Indigenous worldview reconciliation, mediation and traditional justice
- B. Learning active non-violence. How the U.S. Civil Rights Movement worked. How Gandhi used non-violence in South Africa and India to achieve social justice goals. History of indigenous non-violence.
- C. Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation – Learning the tools and practice of contemporary peacebuilding.

2. Youth-Led Peace Activities:

(Peace drama, debates, essays, peace clubs, peace tours, community radio, expressive arts)

3. Community Projects

Students will intern with community organizations and peace building initiatives during school breaks to bring what is learned in the classroom into practical community projects

Peace Fellows Program

The goals of this program are two-fold:

- 1. To create a growing body of trained and credentialed peace building practitioners to organize and help sustain peacebuilding activities in war zones and post-conflict sub regions.
- 2. To provide opportunities for Ugandans for relevant graduate program experiences.

Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between UMECS and Africa University in Mutare, Zimbabwe designed to bring services and resources to communities affected by conflict in Northern Uganda, a series of programs were designed and implemented to achieve these goals, including the Northern Uganda Internship Program now in Year IV and described within and the Peace Fellows Program.

Whereas the Northern Uganda Internship Program is designed to being highly qualified graduate students from other parts of Africa enrolled at the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance at Africa University to Northern Uganda to serve grassroots communities, the Peace Fellows Program is designed to empower Ugandan youth with full sponsorship in a peace and leadership masters program at Africa University.

The selection criteria includes the candidate’s experiences, track record of dedication to peace and community building, gender equity and commitment to return to contribute to their communities in Uganda.

Our first Peace Fellow, Job Akuni, distinguished himself as the top graduating student, and served as the class representative. Now back in Uganda, Mr. Akuni is preparing to fulfill his long held goals of serving communities affected by conflict in Uganda. Our second Peace Fellow, Esther Acio, a formerly abducted child from Northern Uganda, is completing the program in June 2008 and intends to launch her own NGO in Northern Uganda to serve the broad psychosocial and community development needs of formerly abducted children, with a focus on girls and child mothers. For more information about this program, please visit: <http://www.umcsc.org/africa/News/ThisWeekSept2006.pdf>



Esther Acio of Lira, UMECS Second Fellow at Africa University

Books and Computers for Northern Uganda Schools

This unique program encompasses UMECS admiration of one of Uganda’s greatest assets – its children and youth who across the board throughout the country are eager learners, avid readers and do not take their school enrollments for granted. However, so many of our partnered schools and hence, teachers and students, are challenged by a lack of classroom text and library books, deterring the highest potential of teaching and learning. UMECS resolved to address this situation and partnered with Books for Africa, www.booksforafrica.org, a U.S.-based NGO which for the past 19 years has been sending high quality school books to primary and secondary schools in 25 countries in Africa. UMECS has committed to identify and work with partners who pledge to raise the shipping funds for Books for Africa to ship high quantity-high quality books and computers to UMECS’ partnered secondary schools.

The first campaign is being administered by students and staff at Nyumburu Cultural Center and the Black History Committee of the University of Maryland. Our first beneficiary schools are in Kitgum, Gulu, Pader and Amuru districts. Please visit: <http://www.booksforafrica.org/donate/projects.php?p=23>



UMECS Country Director Charles Onencan with some of UMECS sponsored students at Kitgum Alliance College together with UMECS and Alliance Staff. Books are urgently needed for classroom use and Alliance’s library.

Peace and Community Building Initiative (PCBI) in Soroti, Kumi and Katakwi

This project combines peace building trainings, community development projects and land/natural resources management as a means to solve the inter-related and comprehensive problems which arise when neighbouring pastoralist and agricultural communities compete for scarce resources.

A lack of biodiversity and other factors contribute to depleted soil, arid lands and a competition for land, water and other natural resources, resulting in armed violence, cattle raids and displacement. This is a global phenomenon, which also affects sub regions in Uganda and throughout East Africa. This leads to increased vulnerability of children, damaged traditional family and community support structures and threatened food security. In its growing commitment to Northeast Uganda, UMECS and its partner Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC) continue to plan and seek resources for this collaborative project, and brought in Holistic Management International as its technical, environmental partner www.holisticmanagement.org

We had hoped to launch PCBI this past year; however, the scope of the project requires significant funding commitments and both UMECS and UCOBAC continue to seek these commitments collaboratively.

At the same time, after visiting Teso sub region on a number of occasions as we were familiarising PCBI with local government and communities, UMECS decided on a long term commitment to Teso and extended its Northern Uganda Education Program to Katakwi district IDP camps as an immediate response to the high levels of poverty and isolation we observed. Accordingly, in February 2007, UMECS enrolled 20 highly vulnerable children from Ngariam, Olilim and Ocwin IDP camps in Katakwi in St. Mary's Secondary School, Madera and Jeressa High Schools in Soroti district, extending our education program and increasing our number of sponsored students, described within in more detail..



UMECS-selected students from Ngariam IDP camp now enrolled in secondary schools in Soroti

Professional Development

Professional Development of its staff is among UMECS inter-related strategies to ensure longevity of its programs and activities and further to ensure that relevant organizational and program skills, expertise and empathy enrich our programs and best serve grassroots communities. For example, UMECS sponsored our Country Director in Public

Administration and Management, and, Computer Technology certificate level programs and a comprehensive social work and social work administration diploma program. Currently, our Education and Research Fellow is completing a diploma level program in psychotherapy and counseling. UMECS sponsored its regional coordinator in a human rights and development masters program focused on the education rights and needs of children affected by conflict.

UMECS remains committed to the professional development of its staff as a means of empowerment, human dignity in the workplace and as a further means of adding quality to the lives and communities to which UMECS is committed.



UMECS Education Field Coordinator Anthony Ojok distributing school requirements to UMECS students sponsored at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School, Pader District



UMECS Country Director Charles Onencan demonstrates the use of a video camera to UMECS sponsored students at Pajule College, Pader district as UMECS Regional Coordinator David Manyonga, with glasses, looks on



UMECS 2007 Africa University Interns From left, Kudakwashe Chirambwi who interned with CPA-Lira; Joseph Kibucwa (GUSCO); Veronica Mhlanga (GUSCO); Octavious Masunda (UMECS); Makwanise Ndakatei (UMECS) and Sophie Munjoma (CPA-Gulu).

Milestones and Achievements *What We Accomplished in 2007*

1. Northern Uganda Education Program, our holistic support program which sponsors children and youth affected by conflict in partnered secondary schools through higher education.

- ◆ Expanded our overall enrollment to 83 students including five in tertiary level in Kampala, Jinja and Masindi districts.
- ◆ We extended the program to Teso sub region, Northeast Uganda, enrolling 12 vulnerable girls and 8 vulnerable boys from three high poverty isolated IDP camps in Katakwi district as Senior 1 students in two secondary schools in Soroti district.
- ◆ Hired Anthony Ojok, a former head master at Rackoko Secondary School as our Education Field Coordinator.
- ◆ Our students did well overall academically and socially in school. We feel our holistic support program combined with mentorship and guidance contributes to their success. Some were highest ranking students.
- ◆ We met with the RDC (Resident District Commissioner) of Amuru District in Northern Uganda to help plan expansion of enrollments to Amuru in January 2008.
- ◆ We adopted a School-Based Program approach to address needs of all students in our partnered schools and infrastructural/capacity building needs of schools so instead of just serving 83 students we sponsor, we will serve up to 10,000 students in our partnered schools with counseling and guidance, peace education and books for schools programs.

2. Northern Uganda Internship Program which brings graduate students from the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance at Africa University, Mutare, Zimbabwe to Northern Uganda to intern with Gulu Support the Children Organization (GUSCO), Concerned Parents Association (CPA) and UMECS. Interns bring teaching, entrepreneurship, project management and peacebuilding skills to grassroots community programs, and strengthen capacity of local NGO's serving women, children and youth and communities affected by conflict.

- ◆ Six interns, Veronica Mhlanga and Joseph Kibucwa (GUSCO), Kudakwashie Chirimbi and Sophie Munjoma (CPA), Ndakaitei Makwanise, and Octavious Masunda (UMECS) served thousands of women, children and youth directly and indirectly from January through March with trainings, program facilitation, writing proposals and training manuals, mentorship and family/community reintegration activities in IDP camps, schools and local communities.
- ◆ Two interns, Masunda and Makwanise assisted IPLG Professor John Mapfumo in piloting UMECS sponsored Counseling and Guidance Program at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School in Pader district as a first stage pilot to address counseling needs of formerly abducted children in school and their families.
- ◆ We accompanied Professor Mapfumo and facilitated the IPLG intern site visits in Otuke, Lira, Kitgum, Pader and Gulu districts.
- ◆ UMECS staff organized and hosted our annual NUIP Orientation in January and Evaluation Retreat in March.



John Mapfumo, head of Africa University's Counseling Department, demonstrates a point during one of the counseling and guidance training workshops at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School

3. Counseling and Guidance Program: UMECS piloted Stage 1 of our School-Based Counseling and Guidance Program at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School, Pader, sponsoring the travel and accommodations of Africa University Counseling Department head Professor John Mapfumo who spent Feb/March with a two-intern team at

LPSSS to conduct research, design the program and conduct teacher and community trainings. This provided first level counseling skills to teachers at this school of over 600 children. Twelve UMECS students are enrolled in this school. The next stages of the program will be developed in 2008 as follows:

- ◆ Dr. Regis Chireshe, an educational psychologist, co-author of books and articles with John Mapfumo and an experienced school-based counseling and guidance program designer was interviewed and recommended by the Country Director as our consultant to further design our Counseling and Guidance Program, conduct assessments of the program, provide technical assistance and evaluate trainings.
- ◆ Peter C. Alderman Foundation, which operates counseling clinics and counseling trainings in Uganda, among other training resources, will conduct trainings of teachers in our pilot counseling and guidance schools
- ◆ Evaluations

4. School-Based Peace Education Program, part of our three prong school-based program strategy, designed to help build a sustainable culture of peace by preparing children and youth to become lifelong peacebuilders. Three part program: a) Peace Studies b) Youth led activities c) Community projects. This year, in collaboration with partnered schools and the office of Gulu University's Academic Registrar, we held planning meetings to plan the program development, which includes curriculum development, teacher training, program design, production of teaching materials and facilitation of youth led activities. Previously, we met with the Ministry of Education which encouraged the project.

5. Peace Fellows Program – We met frequently with and provided resources for Esther Acio, our current Peace Fellow at Africa University's Institute of Peace, Leadership and Guidance, who is now in her second and final year in the master's program which we sponsor. Esther recently completed her internship with Save the Children in Harare, Zimbabwe.

6. Peace and Community Building Initiative in Soroti, Kumi and Katakwi, our planned project in partnership with UCOBAC to combine peacebuilding, community development and land/natural resources management. As we seek grant support for PCBI, UMECS and UCOBAC leadership met with Africare in Kampala in August to familiarize the project and seek their support. The next steps are pending.

7. **Gulu University Partnership** – We held a series of full staff meetings with Gulu University Academic Registrar Geoffrey Lamtoo who authorized us to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding for UMECS and Gulu University to proceed with program collaboration, first centered on our School Based Peace Education Program. Our Executive Director and Gulu University’s Vice Chancellor shall sign the MOU at the next opportunity.
8. **Secured offices in Gulu** – UMECS secured offices in the GUSCO Peace Center in Gulu which serves as our Northern Uganda headquarters, in addition to our Kampala-based headquarters in Bugolobi. Our Gulu office space provides DSL options and has in-house conference and workshop facilities.
9. **Staff Professional Development** – UMECS-Uganda staff participated in the following staff development programs in 2007:
 - a. **Country Director Charles Onencan** completed a one-year diploma program at the Makerere Institute of Social Work and Social Work Administration, achieving a diploma in social work and social work administration.
 - b. **Education Research Fellow Joel Ojok** enrolled in the Psychotherapy and Counseling Diploma Program at the Institute of Advanced Leadership – Uganda and completes his program in 2008. Joel was also elected class president. Both Charles and Joel are graduates of Makerere University in Kampala and will continue with professional development courses and programs
 - c. **Regional Coordinator David Manyonga** completed a master’s program in human rights and development at Kampala International University focused on the rights of children affected by conflict to be educated.
10. **Appointment of Country Director:** Charles Onencan, previously UMECS Outreach Coordinator, was appointed Country Director of UMECS-Uganda.
11. **Appointment of Education Field Coordinator** Anthony Ojok, former head master of Rackoko Secondary School and classroom teacher was appointed Education Field Coordinator.
12. **Welcomed Board President visit to Uganda** – UMECS staff welcomed the visit of UMECS Board President John Chambers to Uganda in July and August.
13. **Meeting with Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Amuru District, Northern Uganda to update on UMECS programs and 2007 activities and plan expansion of Northern Uganda Education Program to Amuru in January 2008.**
14. **Books and Computers for Northern Uganda Schools was launched between UMECS and Books for Africa** in the U.S. as a means to raise 35,000+ books and ten computers for UMECS most-needy partnered schools in Northern Uganda. Books will be donated to schools and school libraries. The Nyumburu Cultural Center at the University

of Maryland, U.S. has taken the responsibility to raise the \$13,000US for Books for Africa which will then ship the container of books and computers to Northern Uganda. Approximately \$1,500 has been raised so far. In February 2008, the campaign will formally kick off on the campus.



◀◀◀ Mrs. Hellen Nyeko, Gulu Municipal Inspector of Schools with UMECS Country Director Charles Onencan at Gulu Public Primary School following discussion of enrolling Gulu and Amuru students in UMECS Northern Uganda Education Program

Major Goals for 2008

- ◆ Continued operation, development and expansion of our programs
- ◆ To expand Northern Uganda Education Program enrollments to Amuru District and bring our total number of sponsored students to just over 100
- ◆ Leadership development of our sponsored students
- ◆ Develop and implement Stage 2 of the Counseling and Guidance Program at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School, and replicate the program to a minimum of two other schools
- ◆ Launch School-Based Peace Education Program at partnered secondary schools in collaboration with Gulu University
- ◆ Receive the 35,000 books and 10 computers through our Books for Africa campaign and distribute them to partnered schools in Northern Uganda
- ◆ Bring more Africa University interns to Northern and Northeast Uganda to contribute to grassroots programs and activities hosted by our partnered grassroots agencies and UMECS
- ◆ Work with Gulu University in our community and school-based programs and projects.
- ◆ Recruit Ugandan project volunteers for service learning, project facilitation and community development



◀◀◀ UMECS students sponsored at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School in Pader District, with UMECS staff member Joel Ojok

Success Stories

The Story of Irene

Irene, age 17, a student sponsored by UMECS at Rackoko Secondary School in Pader District, is planning to become a teacher. She draws her inspiration from the teachers within her school. When she was 13, Irene was abducted by rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army from her village located within the IDP camp in Rackoko. On the third day of her captivity, she was "given a man," an older combatant who had also been abducted whom she was forced to "marry." For the next two weeks, she witnessed and was forced to participate in a series of atrocities against some of her peers who refused to carry out raids in local communities. This introduced Irene to the "kill or be killed" environment of child soldiering. She was taken to Sudan and there, in an LRA base camp was given a gun and trained to commit atrocities. Later, she was brought as part of an LRA unit to raid inside Northern Uganda. For three years, she was held captive in this manner, during which time, her first "husband" was killed and she was given to another man. At the age of 16, she managed to escape. She returned home to find her parents had been killed and she went to live with a relative who enrolled her back in school. She performed well in Primary 7 and went on to Rackoko Secondary School to improve her life as a student. Her extended family had few funds to support her so it was difficult to keep up with school fees although she was an excellent student. UMECS heard about her story and situation, verified her commitment to studies, self-discipline and exemplary school citizenship and agreed to sponsor Irene as a Senior II student through A level and a teaching degree. Now 18, Irene is secure in knowing her dream to become a teacher will come true.

The Story of Churchill

Churchill was twice abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army. When he was a fourteen year old primary school student, he was digging in the garden outside the Kitgum IDP camp to which his family had been displaced when he was captured by rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army. For the next three years, he and other boys with whom he was captured were based in Sudan, and forced to commit raids both in Sudan and Northern

Uganda. After three years, he managed to escape with the help of other children who had been abducted with him when they went into the bush to collect firewood for cooking. For two weeks, he attempted to reach home, but was captured by another LRA rebel unit in Northern Uganda. He was held for three months more and managed to escape for a second time when UPDF made contact with the LRA unit and a battle ensued. He was rescued by UPDF, brought to the Child Protection Unit and was then sent to the Gulu Support the Children Organisation (GUSCO) for three weeks of psychosocial services. He later learned that the boys who helped him escape the first time were ordered killed by their LRA unit commander as punishment. Churchill returned to Primary 7 when he was 19 later was eligible to enroll in secondary school. His family was too poor to afford school fees but he was accepted at Kitgum Alliance College, a new secondary school with lower school fees and preceded through Senior I. A talented student, his head teacher recommended him among others for sponsorship to UMECS, who now sponsors Churchill in his educational journey to become a doctor.

The Story of Esther

On October 10, 1996, 139 girls were abducted from St. Mary's College, Aboke, Apac district by the Lord's Resistance Army rebels. Esther was one of the abducted. Raised by her parents in a supportive family environment, Esther's life went from the hard work and hope of being in secondary school to the brutality of being a captive of the LRA. Held for three months, she was forced to witness horrible atrocities which children were forced to carry out against their own friends, neighbours and family members. When she escaped, she vowed to devote her life to building peace, restoring the humanity of formerly abducted children and rebuilding damaged communities. Esther was fortunate to have come from a family who, together with other parents of the abducted "Aboke Girls," helped to organize Concerned Parents Association (CPA). CPA's original purpose was to seek the release of their daughters. In time, CPA became a strong voice of advocacy for the unconditional release of all children abducted by the LRA, and started support programs for parents, family members and formerly abducted children. Esther returned to school, graduating from Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi where she majored in Ethics

and Development Studies. During the school breaks, she worked for CPA as a social worker tracing families of formerly abducted children and helping with reintegration. She also joined Concerned Children and Youth Association (CCYA) where she developed administrative and program planning and management skills, counseled formerly abducted children and participated in health and sanitation and HIV management and prevention campaigns in the camps. In 2006, UMECS selected Esther as its second Peace Fellow at the Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance at Africa University two-year masters program where she is concentrating in peace and governance. Recently, she completed an intensive internship with Save the Children in Harare, Zimbabwe and graduates with a master's degree in June 2008. Her goals? To launch a grassroots NGO in Northern Uganda that contributes to community peacebuilding and healing, addressing the psychosocial and reintegration needs of formerly abducted children and to contribute to her vision of her community and nation of living in "peace one day."

The Story of Raymond

Raymond, now age 15, the subject of "Why Raymond and Rachel Must be in School" on UMECS website home page story (see www.endchildsoldiering.org) grew up in Unyama IDP camp outside of Gulu Town. Not formerly abducted, Raymond is one of the many children whose family was displaced by the war, with extended family losses during the war, and living in extreme poverty. In January 2007, when Charles Onencan, then UMECS Outreach Coordinator and now UMECS Country Director and Executive Director Arthur Serota were visiting primary schools in Gulu District, one headmistress told us about a special boy whose family was very poor whom she "recycled" back into P7 again so he would remain in the loop for secondary school. We met with Raymond's family, interviewed Raymond and decided to enroll him and Rachel, a girl orphaned by the war, at the same time. We enrolled Raymond earlier this year at St. Joseph's College, Layibi, one of Northern Uganda's top schools. Raymond rose to Number One in his Senior I class of 240. The story of an unknown boy living in a crowded IDP camp in Northern Uganda. We expect Raymond will become a major change agent in the fullness of time, and we will be supporting his entire education journey.

Tributes

The following are representative tributes to UMECS in 2007



"UMECS continues to be a strong, consistent advocate for the needs of people and community development in Pader District with a proven solid commitment to the education of children and I am pleased to note UMECS is committed to expand its programs to Amuru District."

Edwin Yakobo Komakech,
Resident District Commissioner
Amuru District, Uganda

"What we appreciate about UMECS is their commitment to the students they sponsor and their attention to their full needs.....We are exceedingly pleased that UMECS sponsors its students through the highest level of education and training. This is good for the students, their families, and the communities to which they will return as they will be the most qualified and prepared to make great contributions."

Owang Mercy Christopher
Bursar
Kiryandongo Technical Institute
Masindi

"We are grateful to UMECS for its strong commitment to our children and look forward to more UMECS sponsored student enrollments at Sacred Heart."

Rev. Sr. Mary Carla
Headteacher,
Sacred Heart Secondary School
Gulu

"UMECS is contributing greatly to our communities, children, youth and indigenous NGO's in terms of capacity and educational support."

Immaculate Akongo
District Coordinator – Gulu Branch
Concerned Parents Association



UMECS Country Director Charles Onencan conducting a formal intake of one of UMECS new students from Ngarim IDP camp, Katakwi District. In February 2007, UMECS extended its education program to Teso sub-region, enrolling 12 girls and 8 boys from high poverty Katakwi IDP camps in two Soroti secondary schools

“UMECS vision, mission, leadership and commitment to our students, staff, school and community is highly needed and valued.”

Patrick Obonyo
Head Teacher/Principal
Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School
Pader

“UMECS Northern Uganda Education Programme is an institution in our communities that must continue to help our children become fully educated. We further appreciate UMECS as they keep their commitments.”

George Mwaka,
Deputy Head Teacher
Kitgum High School

About Us

History

United Movement to End Child Soldiering (UMECS) was founded in September 2001 in Soweto, South Africa by social justice activists from South Africa, Zimbabwe and the U.S. as a *grassroots, community-based* movement to address the root causes of war, build a culture of peace and address the immediate and long term needs of children, youth, women and communities impacted by war and conflict in Southern and Great Lakes Region, Africa. UMECS registered as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non profit organization in Washington, DC, U.S. in December 2001.

UMECS anchored in Uganda in 2004. In 2006, UMECS was approved as a Registered NGO by the National Board for Non-Governmental Organisations.

Board of Directors

John R. Chambers, *President*, is senior vice president of a marketing and public relations firm in Washington, DC.

Darrell Boyd, *Vice President*, is proprietor of a publishing and printing company in Cleveland, Ohio.

Rachel Diender, *Treasurer*, is a program officer for a fair trade NGO in Utrecht, Netherlands

John Torpey, *Secretary*, is director of the Ph.D. program in Sociology at the City University of New York in New York City

Jacob Mann is Associate Director of a national education organization that provides professional development programs for culturally connected teachers in Washington, DC

Rodney Williams is a corporate marketing executive in Oakland, California

Management/Staff

Charles Onencan, *Country Director*

Charles Onencan, a graduate of Makerere University, is also Program Director of the Northern Uganda Education Program. He holds certificates in public administration and management, computing and internet technology and completed a professional development

diploma program in social work and social work administration. An experienced program manager and administrator, Charles Onencan is also a writer, photographer and documentary producer.

Anthony Ojok, Education Field Coordinator

Anthony Ojok, a graduate of Christian University, Mukono is a secondary school teacher, and former headmaster of Rackoko Secondary School in Northern Uganda. A seasoned classroom teacher and education administrator, he serves as Education Field Coordinator for the Northern Uganda Education Program. His responsibilities include school selection evaluations, student enrollments, student assessments, mentorship, program development and partnership liaison.

Joel Ojok, Education and Research Fellow

Joel Ojok is a graduate of Makerere University, a trained educator and serves as a program officer in the Northern Uganda Education Program. A member of the Uganda Counseling Association, he is completing a diploma program in Psychotherapy and Counseling and is a member of the UMECS/Africa University team developing and expanding UMECS Counseling and Guidance Program.

Arthur Serota, Executive Director

Arthur Serota is a civil rights lawyer, educator, author, peacebuilding advocate and project management specialist. For the past three decades, he has served as an Africa advocate and activist, working for eight years on the ground in rural Zimbabwe and urban South Africa developing and managing agricultural, reforestation, education, youth and community development projects. With fifteen years of nonprofit/NGO management experience, he has led the development of UMECS, its key programs, team building and partnership development.

David Manyonga, Regional Coordinator

David Manyonga, from Zimbabwe is jointly UMECS Regional Coordinator and Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance at Africa University Project Coordinator. A

communications specialist, David Manyonga is a former program officer in the Information Office at Africa University and with the Zimbabwe Family Planning Council. He is a skilled peace research trainer and peacebuilding facilitator.

Partners

Grassroots Organisations

Concerned Parents Association (CPA)
 Gulu Support the Children Organization (GUSCO)
 Uganda Community Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC)

Schools

Jeressa High School, Soroti District
 Kiryandongo Technical Institute, Masindi District
 Kitgum Alliance College, Kitgum District
 Kitgum High School, Kitgum District
 Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School, Pader District
 Pajule College, Pader District
 Rackoko Secondary School, Pader District
 Rackoko Vocational School, Pader District
 St. Charles Lwanga Secondary School, Kalongo, Pader District
 St. Joseph College, Layibi, Gulu District
 St. Mary's Secondary School, Madera, Soroti District
 Sacred Heart Secondary School, Gulu District
 Y Y Okot Memorial College, Kitgum District

Universities and Institutes

Africa University
 Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance at Africa University
 Gulu University

Financial Information

United Movement to End Child Soldiering-Uganda UMECS-Uganda

Financial Statements For the year ended 31 December 2007

Statement of Receipts and Expenditures – Currency in Uganda Shillings

31 Dec 2007

Receipts

Funds transferred from UMECS- USA to UMECS-Uganda	101,532,812
Direct expense from UMECS-USA	140,089,642
Total Receipts	241,622,454

Expenditures

100 Fixed Assets acquisition	8,840,000
501 Northern Uganda Education Program	103,740,922
502 Northern Uganda Internship Program	59,451,032
503 School based Counseling and Guidance Program	2,380,000
504 School based Peace Education Program	2,040,000
505 Peace Fellows Program	6,460,000
506 Operation Costs	43,474,000
507 Grant to Partner NGO	5,100,000
Total Expenditures	231,485,954

Excess of Receipts over Expenditures	<u>10,136,500</u>
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Statement of Fund Balance

31 Dec 2007

Accumulated Fund	<u>10,136,500</u>
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Represented by:

Bank Balance	<u>10,136,500</u>
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Our Supporters

UMECS-Uganda gratefully acknowledges support from individual donors and from the following foundations and organizations:

American Jewish World Service
Bridgeway Charitable Foundation
DeLaCour Family Foundation
The O.P. and W.E. Edwards Foundation
The Francis and Susan Mullin Charitable Fund
The National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)
Stowe Rotary Club



◀◀◀ Annual Northern Uganda Internship Program Evaluation Retreat in March 2007 following the hosting of six Africa University interns with GUSCO, CPA and UMECS in Northern Uganda. Interns provided critical training, psychosocial services, mentorship and capacity building services with local NGOs and grassroots communities.

Contact information

United Movement to End Child Soldiering (UMECS)

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Gulu Office: GUSCO Peace Center Building, Plot 2B/2C, Samuel Doe Road, Gulu

Tel: 0772-845663/0752-845663

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 21632, Kampala

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Email: info@endchildsoldiering.org

Website: www.endchildsoldiering.org

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Renée Winfield Drawing & Design

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