

USAID/OTI Uganda Annual Summary Report

January 2008 - December 2008

Program Description

As part of the U.S. Mission to Uganda's assistance effort in northern Uganda, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) launched the Northern Uganda Transition Initiative (NUTI) in June 2008 to assist with recovery and development activities in the north. The improved security situation in northern Uganda, as well as increased confidence in the transition process, is providing hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) across the north with a chance to return to their homes and communities. The progress has led to a new focus by both the Government of Uganda (GOU) and the international community on providing a path to post-conflict development. Currently, there is a window of opportunity for OTI to conduct activities aimed at supporting the region's transition to peace and recovery.

The overall goal of USAID/Uganda's OTI program is to encourage and support the voluntary return of displaced northern Ugandans by increasing their confidence in the government and in the ongoing transition process. To support this goal, OTI will focus on the following objectives:

- Enhance the capacity of the Ugandan media, particularly in northern Uganda, to research, inform and report on issues relevant to peace, recovery, and development;
- Increase the visibility of, and confidence in, all levels of government through the delivery of targeted, strategic interventions; and
- Provide support for truth and reconciliation processes.

Country Situation

Peace and Security in the North – Peace and security was pervasive in northern Uganda throughout 2008. There were no attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) within Uganda, and other security incidents were minimal. The harmony allowed the residents of the north to take advantage of two good harvests. Rainfall was abundant and the ground that had lain fallow for 10 years produced abundant crops of sim-sim (sesame), maize, cassava, and millet, among others. More than 90 percent of the people who fled Gulu District have returned. People have left the IDP camps and returned either to satellite camps or to their villages of origin. Return rates in Amuru are nearing 50 percent, and in Kitgum and Pader Districts, return rates are nearly 80 percent.

Government Involvement in Recovery – Since the GOU "launched" its Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for northern Uganda in July 2008, there has been no movement toward its implementation. To wit, the Refugee Law Project found the following challenges in the implementation of the PRDP:

1. The GOU's funding commitment to the PRDP is below what was initially promised;
2. The Office of the Prime Minister does not have the capacity to perform its required monitoring and oversight responsibilities as outlined in the PRDP;
3. PRDP projects currently being implemented lack a coherent focus and may be affected by personal interests of political elites;
4. The failure to coordinate and communicate the PRDP objectives at a national level has left district leaders confused about the PRDP's implications for them and their constituents; and
5. Knowledge about PRDP at the grassroots level is low and often inaccurate.*

The lack of political will to address reconstruction in northern Uganda through successful implementation of the PRDP has caused significant concern at the district level, especially in Acholiland. However, notwithstanding the

apparent shortcomings, reconstruction in northern Uganda and transition to peace and development have continued as donors have reprogrammed support from relief programs to transition and development initiatives.

The LRA and the Peace Process – The failure of LRA leader Joseph Kony to sign the Final Peace Agreement (FPA) on five separate occasions has triggered a renewed military offensive on his bases in Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). On December 14, 2008, DRC Special Forces and the Armies of Southern Sudan and Uganda attacked Kony's hideouts. The attacks were meant to demonstrate to Kony the cost of not signing the FPA and force him to the table. It is too soon to determine if the military operation will have any constructive effect on the peace process. LRA retaliatory attacks in the DRC, however, have led to the deaths of more than 500 people, including many women and children, and the displacement of more than 100,000. Kony has increasingly lost credibility vis-à-vis the international community, the GOU, and his own people in northern Uganda not only for his refusal to sign the peace agreements but also for his active recruitment of children, which is a violation of the peace process, in the Central African Republic, DRC, and Southern Sudan.

OTI Highlights

A. Narrative Summary

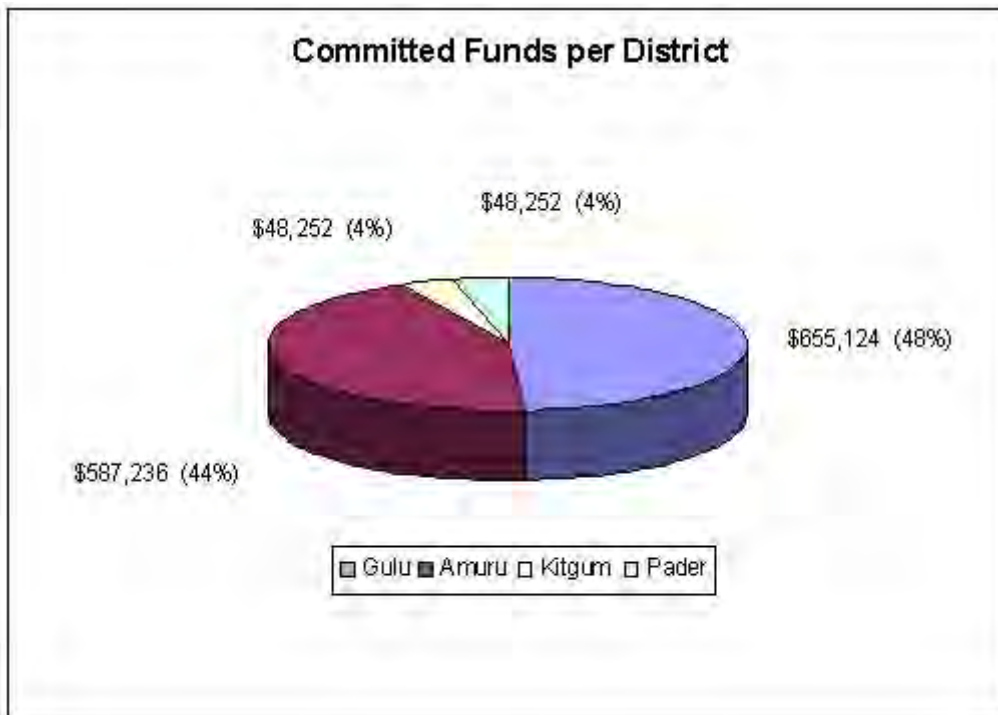
Following the launch of the NUTI program in June 2008, OTI's implementing partner, Casals and Associates, assisted with program start-up and rapid deployment. The aim was to begin the immediate steps of developing strong and relevant grant activities and implementing small grants that would have an impact on local communities. By the end of the program start-up phase in July 2008, OTI had cleared 14 small-grant activities worth \$689,000, demonstrating clearly the ability to quickly implement programs appropriate to the needs on the ground in northern Uganda.

B. Grants Activity Summary

Since May of 2008, OTI has cleared 37 grants totaling \$1,338,865 in four districts in conflict-affected districts of northern Uganda (Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader). The total OTI program budget for 2008 through 2011 is \$7,991,000. Approximately \$1.9 million has been allocated for truth and reconciliation activities.

Grant Approval Summary

Sector	Number of Grants Cleared	Total Amount
Agriculture	1	\$85,175
Civic Education	1	\$14,851
Conflict Mitigation	2	\$82,110
Education	3	\$281,356
Health	2	\$94,636
Infrastructure	6	\$355,053
Institution Strengthening	5	\$67,183
Media	6	\$113,244
Reconciliation	5	\$149,295
Water and Sanitation	3	\$95,961
Total	34	\$1,338,864



C. Indicators of Success

During its brief time in operation, OTI/Uganda has had a number of noticeable successes. In a grant to the Lalogi Farmers Forum, OTI coordinated with local leaders and the National Agricultural Organization (NAADS) to support agricultural production through the distribution of ox plows and agricultural tools and the rehabilitation of five sub-county grain storage facilities. The activity demonstrated the local government's ability to support agriculture in a sub-county in Gulu that has seen high rates of IDP returns. The grain storage facilities were completed in time for the harvest, and NAADS helped the Lalogi Farmers Forum to weigh, tally, and store the harvest. NAADS also helped the group find the best price for its crop.

OTI has also implemented high-impact, high-visibility projects aimed at strengthening the GOU in northern Uganda. By rehabilitating the administrative offices of Odek Sub-County, birthplace of rebel leader Joseph Kony and an area hard hit by the insurgency, the program has improved constituent access to administrative and political leaders, enabled the leaders to meet constituent needs more efficiently, and helped demonstrate that a lasting peace has arrived. The offices will be furnished and equipped by the Youth Employment Pack, a group of formerly abducted youths who have been trained in carpentry by the Norwegian Refugee Council.



DCHA Assistant Administrator Mike Hess and local leaders inaugurate the recently rehabilitated administrative offices in Odek Sub-County.

Resource Leveraging – OTI's activities in northern Uganda reach beyond the level of immediate impact, as each activity requires community participation. In-kind community assistance ranges from the efforts of volunteers that help to supply or transport material for building renovations to the work of local council leaders who mobilize their communities to participate in the projects.

These local government rehabilitation projects—coupled with more community-oriented projects such as soccer field

reconstructions, soccer and dance competitions, and community discussions on land conflict and other important topics—provide energy to the transition process, which in turn supports and benefits the communities and the government.

In addition, OTI is working and coordinating closely with local governments, international organizations, donors, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other U.S. Government-funded initiatives. Examples include the following:

- Peace journalism. OTI and the U.S. Embassy are jointly developing a peace journalism training initiative. OTI will support training activities in northern Uganda, and the Embassy will support a similar effort in Kampala.
- Youth Education Packs (YEPs). The program has enlisted Norwegian Refugee Council-supported vocational training centers to make furniture for the sub-county offices and schools it is rehabilitating. YEPs focus on war-affected youth, many of whom were abducted during the conflict or were unable to access formal education because of hostilities.
- IDP camp phase-out. OTI is supporting district and sub-county governments and the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees' implementing partners that are charged with managing clean-up and phase-out activities at northern Uganda's IDP camps.

Re-targeting/Flexibility – At the end of September 2008, OTI received resources from the USAID Mission to carry out truth and reconciliation interventions. To date, OTI has developed two truth and reconciliation activities in close cooperation with Ker Kwaro Acholi, traditional cultural leaders, and the NGO Forum, which has formed a civil-society-led transitional justice working group. The project is also seeking to increase the level of engagement between northern Uganda and policymakers in Kampala about truth and reconciliation around the conflict. In addition, OTI is participating in a dialogue with various stakeholders about two potential areas for intervention: (1) how to appropriately memorialize the conflict and (2) how to encourage Acholi youth to become more engaged with their culture and traditions.

Program Appraisal

After four months of operation, OTI conducted a review of programming and reaffirmed the main objective of supporting the transition to peace in northern Uganda through support to local government, media activities, and the peace and reconciliation process. In particular, OTI saw the importance of targeting its interventions to specific sub-counties. Sub-counties were selected for activities after analysis of multiple criteria, including—

- rate of population return
- availability of a sub-county development plan
- presence of a resident sub-county chief
- community interest in contributing to change
- sub-county needs
- presence of other OTI projects
- political environment and history
- potential for participation by parish development committees
- potential for participation by women

Following its analysis, OTI selected the sub-counties of Odek and Alero, in Gulu and Amuru Districts, respectively, to receive numerous simultaneous small grants. The influx of projects, particularly those focused on rehabilitation of infrastructure and government-community engagement, is expected to positively impact residents' perceptions of the GOU. The rapid pace of implementation should also create momentum leading toward a stronger transition to peace. The results of a perceptions survey, which is currently underway, will be used to assess the impact of OTI's strategic approach, so the program can adapt, if needed, in the coming months.

Next Steps/Immediate Priorities

OTI will continue to monitor the political and security situations in Uganda, particularly in light of the military offensive against the LRA in the DRC. Any changes in the overall context may have implications for program objectives and the way forward.

Priorities for the next quarter include the following:

- Complete a quarterly strategy review with OTI staff from northern Uganda and Washington and the USAID Mission in Uganda in February 2009. The review will touch on the strategic direction of the program, the program's expansion in Kitgum and Pader, the effects of recent political and security developments on OTI objectives, and accomplishments in northern Uganda.
- Support community truth and reconciliation by extending the successful pilot program of cleansing ceremonies and reburials in Gulu and Amuru Districts to other areas.
- Use the results of the ongoing SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) of radio stations in northern Uganda to program OTI media-development funding.
- Create, upon the conclusion of the perceptions survey, a baseline for monitoring and evaluation of OTI activities in northern Uganda as well as a public opinion study to measure how the GOU is perceived.

* Refugee Law Project, *Is the PRDP Politics as Usual: Update on the Implementation of Uganda's Peace, Recovery and Development Plan, Briefing Note No. 2*, December 2008, http://www.refugeelawproject.org/briefing_papers/RLP.BP0802.pdf.