

USAID/OTI Uganda Quarterly Report

April - June 2009

Program Description

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) launched the Northern Uganda Transition Initiative in June 2008. The program supports the voluntary return of internally displaced Ugandans to their homes by increasing their confidence in the ability of the Government of Uganda (GOU) to deliver strategic services and strive for their welfare. To assist these efforts, OTI focuses on three objectives: (1) increasing access to information on peace, recovery, and development programs through media and strategic communications; (2) increasing the visibility of, and confidence in, the GOU through the delivery of strategic interventions; and (3) supporting truth and reconciliation initiatives.

Activities

The OTI program is based in the Acholi region of northern Uganda, and projects run in the districts of Gulu, Amuru, Kitgum, and Pader. A sampling of activities includes the following:

"Peace and Love at Home" Concert Series – To increase citizen confidence in the current peace and stability, OTI sponsored a series of 20 hip-hop and rap concerts at the sub-county level, where the rates of return have been the highest. The activity spread the message that the war is over, that people can return to their homes, and that future conflicts must be resolved peacefully. The concerts were well attended, and many attendees commented that they had never seen so many people gathered in one place except when food was being distributed.

Langol Health Center II Staff Housing – As part of the program's objective to increase GOU visibility by assisting with strategic interventions, OTI supported the District Health Office with an effort to provide staff housing for an important health center. The center is in an area with high rates of returns, and the on-site housing allows the nurses and technical staff to live at the health center and provide health care to returnees. Prior to the initiative, many staff members lived in Gulu and often had difficulty adhering to work schedules because of travel issues. The health center staff housing was inaugurated by high-level district leaders and OTI's Acting Director.

Wang Oo for Peace and Reconciliation – Wang Oo is a traditional Acholi activity where the elders pass oral traditions and cultural practices to young people. The practice, which takes place fireside, has been neglected in recent years, leaving an entire generation of Acholi youth ignorant of their rich cultural heritage. To address this loss, OTI, in partnership with Ker Kwaro Acholi (the office of the Paramount Chief), is supporting Wang Oo celebrations in 15 villages that have seen high rates of returns. More than 1,000 people attended the first Wang-Oo event, exploring the culture and dancing through the night.

Country Situation

PRDP Rollout – The GOU's Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) is set for rollout. The plan is the overarching framework for the reconstruction of 40 disadvantaged districts in the north that have been widely affected by the long-running conflict. The GOU has earmarked 130 billion shillings (US\$60 million) for the plan in the FY2009–10 budget. The entire northern region is keen on seeing the funding appear in district budgets during the first quarter of the fiscal year.

Nascent Rebel Movement Thwarted – The GOU apprehended 11 people that were planning rebel activities in northern Uganda. The GOU arrested and disarmed the group, finding weapons caches and demonstrating its control of the security situation in northern Uganda. The incident, however, concerned residents for various reasons: Some thought the episode was an electoral stunt, staged to shore up support for President Yoweri Museveni; others were afraid that the emergence of a nascent armed movement could signal a resumption of violence. The ability of the GOU to ensure peace throughout the country is essential to the continuation of the return process.

Land Disputes – Seven people were injured and several homes were burned during a land dispute in Amuru District in northern Uganda. As people return to their homes after years of displacement, disputes over land are increasing.

Challenges to the PRDP – Uganda's senior police leadership has threatened to pull most of the police force from northern Uganda, claiming that funding is inadequate. PRDP funding was expected to supplement donor funds for 2,400 additional officers sent to northern Uganda in 2006; however, lack of progress by the GOU in implementing the PRDP has left the police under-resourced.

Continued LRA Activity – The Lord's Resistance Army remains active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Sudan. During its most recent attacks near the city of Yambio in South Sudan, the LRA murdered several people and abducted others.

Upcoming Events

- 23 July 2009 - Program trip to Pader District. The program will make its first trip to the fourth of its four target areas to discuss projects with the Local Council 5 and the regional Chief Administrative Officer.
- 7 August 2009 - Inauguration of the offices of the Gulu Resident District Commissioner (RDC). Given the importance of the RDC office and the positive message a working office sends to the region, the inauguration marks the fruition of one of OTI's most politically significant grants to date.

Grants Summary

From program inception through the end of June 2009, OTI cleared 99 activities for a total of \$4,691,662. During the

April-June quarter, the program cleared 39 grants totaling \$1,894,461, initiating projects at an average rate of 13 per month. Since inception, the Northern Uganda Transition Initiative has worked directly with more than 130,000 people and has facilitated dozens of infrastructure projects.

District	Number of Grants*	Number of Beneficiaries	Total Funding
Amuru	42	65,750	\$1,768,419
Gulu	53	89,497	\$1,687,826
Kitgum	33	26,660	\$962,940
Pader	15	30	\$240,429

*Double counting occurs because some grants are implemented in more than one district.

Highlights

USAID Collaboration/Coordination – OTI has worked closely with the USAID Mission and the Northern Uganda Advisor to ensure that OTI activities overlap and are closely coordinated with other USAID initiatives, thereby adding value to the extensive U.S. Government (USG) portfolio in northern Uganda. To date, OTI has collaborated with 22 other USAID projects in the region. Overlapping and closely coordinated activities include the following: building health center housing where the PEPFAR program has a lab; training district engineers in software and equipping them with offices, computers, and housing for upcoming reconstruction activities (both USG and non-USG); and purchasing pumps to get water flowing in the town of Kitgum, where USAID is implementing a three-year water services project.



OTI Acting Director Rob Jenkins cuts the ribbon to officially open the on-site housing at the Langol Health Center.

Media Focus – OTI is the only program focusing on strengthening media in northern Uganda. The program provides hardware and capacity-building support to targeted radio stations so they can better serve the populace. To date, OTI has cleared 18 media-related activities. Examples include the following:

- **Hardware.** The program provided equipment to three radio stations, one in each of the districts of Kitgum, Pader, and Gulu. Equipment was selected following an assessment that looked at a number of factors, including station location and potential to serve the information needs of returnees. Equipment provided included generators, repeaters, production equipment, microphones, motorcycles, computers, and other items required to improve the stations' signal strength and broadcast reach.
- **Capacity building – operations.** OTI has embedded four media experts with three radio stations to provide hands-on assistance with station management, financing, production, and equipment. During the four-month project, the experts will rotate between the stations at three-week intervals to help station managers and journalists organize and streamline station operations, market airtime, and improve content.
- **Capacity building – peace journalism.** In coordination with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kampala, OTI sponsored a peace journalism-training activity for 20 journalists in both Gulu and Kitgum towns. The training was facilitated by Steve Youngblood, a U.S.-based journalist and professor and expert in peace journalism. The project proved extremely relevant, as many of the attendees were unaware that their reporting methods were less than impartial and could lead to conflict.

Strategic Visits – OTI received two important visits during the quarter. These strategic visits are important as they build interest in, as well as buy-in to, the OTI program in northern Uganda and highlight positive developments in the region. The program's first guest was OTI Acting Director Rob Jenkins, who visited in May. Acting Director Jenkins was able to visit 10 project sites, inaugurate an infrastructure initiative with the Amuru District Government, and see the peace that has come to northern Uganda. The director also had an opportunity to meet with the USAID Mission and the U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affairs.

The second visit came from OTI/Washington's internal Program Performance Review team. The team came in June to assess how well the program was meeting its objectives. The team was able to visit dozens of projects and speak with USAID Mission staff, the U.S. Ambassador, local government personnel, and other partners. The visit also allowed the team to enhance its understanding of the transition to peace in northern Uganda, providing it with a deeper insight into the challenges the country faces as it moves toward development.

Program Appraisal

By all measures, the OTI program is a successful initiative. The program is currently approving grants totaling \$600,000 per month, with the disbursement rate reaching almost \$400,000. Inaugurations are ongoing, activities are keeping up with strategic events, and the transition is progressing well.

The OTI objective of empowering the GOU is on track and continues to be the correct strategy. The USAID Uganda Mission Director has endorsed this strategy, stressing the need for all USAID programs to work more closely with the government.

Uganda's transition to peace, recovery, and development is progressing well. Displaced Ugandans continue to return to their villages, and camp housing continues to be demolished. Progress and stability is increasing confidence in the

GOU. In addition, a number of large initiatives for reconstruction in northern Uganda will be coming on line soon. OTI programming is filling a critical strategic window as these large reconstruction initiatives gear up. The table below provides a partial list of funding entities and funds pledged for upcoming activities.

Donor	Amount	Start Date
PRDP	\$120,000,000	July 2009
USAID/NUDEIL	\$50,000,000	January 2010
JICA	\$20,000,000	January 2010
World Bank NUSAF II	\$100,000,000	January 2010
DFID	\$150,000,000	January 2010

PRDP - Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (GOU)

NUDEIL - Northern Uganda Development of Enhanced Local Governance, Infrastructure and Livelihoods

JICA - Japan International Cooperation Agency

NUSAF - Northern Uganda Social Action Fund

DFID - Department for International Development (United Kingdom)

Next Steps

OTI priorities for the next quarter include the following:

- Expand program activities into Pader District, the final district in Acholiland that OTI has targeted for activities;
- Finalize the discussion on 1207 funding for the construction of Community Justice Centers, a key initiative for building confidence in the GOU, and begin the process of planning construction;
- Continue to initiate projects at the sub-county level to develop the capacity of local government and help local governments demonstrate that they can address public needs; (Under this paradigm, the program selects a sub-county and facilitates a transparent and inclusive community meeting where a set of 7 to 10 grant activities totaling approximately \$300,000 is identified. Activities completed through this approach have included school and health center renovations, government sub-county office renovations, trainings, agricultural interventions, tree planting, and activities that engage war-affected youth in positive pursuits.)
- Pilot a communications strategy that depicts OTI's work in northern Uganda on a human level, producing a series of three- to five-minute videos that tell the story in a creative fashion to both educate the public about programs and demonstrate the impact that USAID has on people's lives.