



UMECS
The Center for Peace,
Education and Development

The A-Factor Project™ (A for Agriculture)

Education for All through Youth-Led Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Working Document

Project Purposes and Goals

- 1.** To pilot, scale up and mainstream a systematic means for out-of-school youth who are unable to afford the costs of secondary, vocational or technical school in Northern Uganda, (i.e., the majority of youth), to *earn* the full costs of their education through organized small and medium size agricultural enterprises. In this systemic, structured and sustainable project, out-of-school youth will become educated. Concurrently, as it scales up, the project shifts the paradigm of dependence on donors to fund secondary, vocational and technical school education to sustainable self-sufficiency through youth-led modernized agricultural entrepreneurship.
- 2.** To create a generation of experience-based, seasoned youth entrepreneurs and successful, modern agriculturalists who combine modernized science and technology-based agriculture with environmental conservation and land/natural resources management to build a ladder to prosperity, increase agricultural profitability, accelerate food production, fortify food and nutrition security, increase market share, boost supply side impacts, and generate local economic development.
- 3.** To mainstream the project countrywide, creating adaptable models which link with public and private research, extension and other advisory services and create a supportive policy environment.

Situational Analysis

Throughout sub-Saharan Africa including in Uganda, secondary, technical and vocational school costs are prohibitive for the majority of youth, deferring the overall advancement of African society, perpetuating syndromes of poverty and gender inequity and laying the groundwork for future conflicts. Moreover, dependence on donors to fund secondary school, vocational and technical education is neither desirable nor sustainable.

Following a brutal twenty year war in Northern Uganda, youth remain highly motivated to become formally educated and eager to help transform their rural areas through modernized, successful, technology-based agriculture. Youth see formal education as the key to successful futures. Secondary, vocational and/or technical school education in 21st century Uganda is the minimum requirement for youth to reach their potential and contribute to their families, communities and society. Uganda youth should not be relegated to a two-tier society, the educated and uneducated, the skilled and unskilled.

The vast majority of families in Uganda are agriculturally based and Uganda is a predominantly agricultural economy. Yet in a global economy in which agriculture is modernizing, production is increasing, and access to high quality markets requires more information and technology, most families and communities – and youth – in Uganda are not sufficiently engaged in 21st century agricultural advances. Systems of subsistence agriculture in which land is under-utilized, production is minimal, profits are low, and agricultural methods cannot compete with modern and global marketing strategies continue to create and entrench poverty. This malaise is further compounded by how subsistence farming creates child hunger, malnutrition, health crisis, food and nutrition insecurity, and environmental degradation. Major paradigm shifts are needed to transition subsistence to modernized agriculture in ways which foster increased central, local government and key stakeholder collaboration while preserving the character, culture and traditions of rural areas.

Geographic Location

The project will pilot in Acholi sub-region in Northern Uganda, replicate in Karamoja and scale-up in both sub-regions. During the five-year life of the project, it will subsequently scale up in Lango, Teso and West Nile sub-regions of Greater Northern Uganda. The overarching goal of the project is to scale-up and mainstream countrywide.

Project Duration

The project will make its mark in Greater Northern Uganda over a five-year period. The project will pilot in Year I in Acholi sub-region. In Year II, the pilot will launch in Karamoja as it scales up in Acholi sub-region. In Year III, the pilot will continue to scale up in Acholi sub-region, scale up in Karamoja and pilot in Lango sub-region. In Year IV, the pilot will continue to scale up in launched sub-regions and pilot in Teso sub-region. In Year V, the pilot will scale up in launched sub-regions and pilot in West Nile. Annual and final evaluations will determine next steps including continued scale up and countrywide mainstreaming.

Targeted Beneficiaries – Out-of-School Youth

Direct Beneficiaries

Out-of-School Youth are the direct beneficiaries of this project and are defined as all school-age youth not in school and need to complete their Primary Level Examination, O-Level or A-Level, Vocational or Technical School programs.

Out-of-school youth, largely those orphans and vulnerable youth living in extreme poverty, will become educated, mentored and trained as modern agriculturalists, environmentalists and entrepreneurs. By joining well managed small and medium agricultural enterprises, out-of-school youth will earn the costs of their formal education. Many will stay in agriculture as modern farmers; others may later join the agro-industrial sector; still others will pursue new careers through their formal educations, well equipped with entrepreneurship skills, experience and confidence. All will be prepared to be successful lifetime modernized agriculturalists.

Indirect Beneficiaries

1. Families of Direct Beneficiaries
2. Peers of Direct Beneficiaries
3. Communities of Direct Beneficiaries
4. Districts, through district agricultural development, poverty alleviation, land and natural resources management and a mature, educated, productive and personally developed youth population
5. National society as the project scales up and mainstreams countrywide
6. The national economy, through increased agriculture, more profitable production, increased GDP, increased employment and foreign exchange export earnings.

Attracting Out-of-School Youth to Agricultural Entrepreneurship

Incentives and Strategies

There is an understandable perception that out-of-school youth are not interested in agricultural pursuits. Upon closer examination, however, rural out-of-school youth have strong parallel aspirations: **1)** To return to school to finish their educations, **2)** To be engaged in a sustainable livelihood and **3)** To be connected to the modern world of technology. Youth are out-of-school due largely to living in poverty and coming from vulnerable families who cannot afford the costs of their educations. Today's youth are not afraid of hard work nor do they shun agriculture. It is simply that they no longer resign their lives to subsistence-farm generated poverty. Today, youth want more, and what they want, including their role as modern agriculturalists, is exactly what is needed to uplift their communities and Uganda's economy.

Project Incentives

- Returning to school through the fruits of their labor
- Completing secondary, vocational or technical School
- Entrepreneurship Training
- Modern Agricultural Training (production, economics, science & engineering)
- Technology Training
- Environmental Training
- Becoming qualified as modernized farmers
- Becoming qualified for agro-industrial employment
- Becoming a seasoned, experienced entrepreneur
- Becoming qualified in new careers
- Becoming eligible for tertiary education
- Becoming a productive contributor to family and community
- Joining a project with mentorship, guidance & counseling
- Elevated self-esteem through personal development

Strategies to Attract, Recruit, and Retain Out-of-School Youth

Despite their vulnerability and growing despair, out-of-school youth in Northern Uganda have inherent family, cultural, and community strengths and assets upon which to build. They seek self-esteem and respond positively to productive, in-school peers and role models. They are eager to become successful and respected.

Many have personal agricultural plans: “If I just had “x” amount of Uganda Shillings, I would plant three acres of garlic and raise chickens.” Many believe in the power of modern technology and aspire to become modern farmers and entrepreneurs. Lacking in their lives are the means and visible opportunities. Out-of-school youth are painfully aware that their educated peers are climbing the ladder of prosperity, and want to join them.

That said, each idle unproductive day drives out-of-school youth farther away from the mainstream. Smart, effective strategies are required to attract the most vulnerable and marginalized out-of-school youth into agricultural pursuits. Project strategies consider gender and the power of positive peer role-models. These strategies include:

- Recruiting positive, self-disciplined youth who will serve as positive role models and recruiters for more vulnerable, marginalized youth participants
- Conducting individual assessments to determine the social, emotional and psychosocial needs and addressing them with mentorship, counseling, guidance and referral services
- Conducting motivational orientations into the program
- Gender balancing youth participants, so that uneducated girls become empowered and educated, reducing their chances of becoming exploited
- Recruiting volunteer community mentors who serve as 24/7 mentors and link student participation with family and community
- Recruiting qualified school and community professionals as mentors and counselors, providing ongoing professional-service mentors
- Establishing peer support structures including youth support groups
- Building in a structured guidance and counseling component

Why the A-Factor Project Matters, and Why it Matters Now

The A-Factor Project matters, and matters now, because post-conflict Northern Uganda is at the crossroads of its future. Approximately 80% of the youth are too poor to afford secondary, vocational or technical school educations and will remain poor and uneducated. This is a formula to create a pool of disaffected youth, fueling the next conflict.

Before the war, Northern Uganda was known as “The Breadbasket of the Nation.” Soils are still fertile, the land is arable. Yet despite the market opportunities, the majority of youth, poor and uneducated, are not excited about digging with hoes for small returns. Youth desperately want to be in school, to become successful, to be relevant, but well-selected multi-dimensional interventions are required for real and lasting change to occur.

Given the incentives, recruitment and retention strategies built into the project, youth will return to school, become educated, skilled and productive. These opportunities and incentives will connect youth with the 21st century, create technology-based agriculturalists, seasoned entrepreneurs and grassroots environmentalists with the multiplier effects and outcomes that are incorporated into the project.

There is a cautionary note, however. A growing number of educators, community members and stakeholders believe the situation of idle, uneducated and unemployed youth in Northern Uganda is a ticking time-bomb, which, given the growing disparity between those who are prospering and those who are not, will plunge Northern Uganda into a two-tiered society of the educated and uneducated, the haves and have-nots. The tremendous potential that still exists for children affected by war will erode as those who, marginalized by conditions, fall apart and become increasingly anti-social. Today’s poster-child to end child soldiering, filled with promise, is tomorrow’s uneducated ticking time-bomb of, distant from culture, disaffected, committing crimes and seeding the next conflict. Whether one is informed by this viewpoint or simply observes the tragedy of this generation of youth emerging from a war they never asked for, immediate interventions are urgently required now.

It will be too late five years from now to say: “If only we had responded then.” Now is the time to respond. Now is the time for youth to be educated, trained and transitioned into productive members of society – while they are young. Now is the time for rural transformation in Northern Uganda. The A-Factor Project addresses the comprehensive, integrated, an immediate needs of youth, agriculture, the environment and the economy.

Modern Agriculture, Linkages to Advisory Services, Supply Side Impacts and Rural Transformation

As long as farming remains, at best, marginally rewarding, young men and women will drift away from the rural areas to increase the battalions of the urban poor.

Former President Olosegun Obasanjo of Nigeria

The A-Factor Project as a comprehensive intervention provides the opportunity to transition rural areas from subsistence to modern agriculture by embracing the policy goals and programs of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, utilizing extension and other advisory services and benefitting from the services of the public agricultural research institutes. Combined with utilizing existing and new technologies, this will lead to improved quality and quantity of agricultural produce and products for domestic consumption, increased profitability, increased employment, reduced inflation, food security, enhanced nutrition and capturing high quality markets. There will be an emphasis on the role of local government in the transformation of subsistence to modernized agriculture and the promotion of environmentally friendly technologies, policies and practices.

As the project scales up and mainstreams, it will develop its own set of experiences and recommendations which, in partnership with government, can help to scrutinize and inform policies and programs, including what reassessments may be necessary.

Simply put, if youth are to be engaged in agriculture, young farmers need to make money! In order for agriculturalists to make money, not only must there be an increase in their productivity but in the *value* of what they produce. This principle cannot be over-emphasized enough.

In order to increase the value – increased productivity and *profitability* - of what is produced, the A-Factor Project will shift the paradigm away from subsistence level agriculture to modernized technology-based agriculture, linked to government extension advisory services, to public research institutes and to relevant public-private partnerships.

Rural transformation is as critical to poverty alleviation and building ladders to prosperity as is the transformation of agriculture from subsistence to modernized farming. Increased biodiversity, land and natural resources management, environmental conservation, reforestation, composting, recycling, and water conservation are among the areas that need to be integrated into modernized agriculture, local consciousness and practices, school and district programs.

Although subsistence farming devastates the environment and encroaches on habitat, modernized farming is not necessarily environmentally friendly. In fact, modern farming can exacerbate environmental problems unless land and natural resources management and environmental-friendly technologies, policies and practices are built into the transition of modern agriculture. This includes responding to unfavorable climate change.

Nevertheless, modern agriculture is a more intensified use of land, and therefore reduces converting natural habitat into agricultural lands which, when unaddressed, leads to soil erosion and decreased biodiversity. The A-Factor Project integrates modernizing agriculture with environmental practices so that each enhances and sustains the other.

Safeguarding Culture and Traditions in Rural Transformation

Does modernizing agriculture, including the role of science and technology-based agriculture, drain rural areas and village life of the character and traditions that are the core strengths of rural African culture? Although case studies often contradict this perception, it is imperative that grassroots leaders, civil society stakeholders, agricultural and environmental planners, and local government officials gather to set clear visions and goals around rural transformation.

Our worldview is that modernizing agriculture should transform rural areas in ways which enhance, strengthen and sustain rural family life, traditions and culture. This includes vision and planning considerations such as farm size, environmental impacts, the role of elders as well as youth in modernizing agriculture, and how expanding agricultural opportunities leads to the development of small scale cottage industries.

Youth will not stay in static rural areas where agriculture is not modernizing. Their departure is draining rural areas of the very stakeholders and population that are at the heart of keeping rural areas vibrant, viable and sustainable. Modernized agriculture provides economic opportunities and social benefits that can combine rural traditions with the benefits of education and prosperity. As youth become enthusiastic stakeholders in economically developed, prosperous, technology-connected rural areas, rural culture, rich family life and community support systems flourish, are generative and dynamic.

The Role of Science-based Technology

The role of environmentally friendly science-based technology is a critical component of modernizing agriculture in Uganda and is one of the drawing points to engage the essential role of youth in economically viable agriculture and rural transformation. The role of science-based technology, through trainings and practice, is a vital component of The A-Factor Project.

Although there are divergent positions amongst agricultural, environmental and public health advocates, researchers, policy makers and practitioners on best practices, there must be only one position on the overall issue of modernizing agriculture through science-based technology. A failure to do so leaves the current situation of subsistence agriculture intact, relegating the majority in Uganda to lifetimes of entrenched poverty, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, unemployment and underdevelopment.

Moreover, the collective wisdom and aspirations of marginalized youth, floundering in rural poverty, calls for their engagement in science and technology-based agriculture. Following is a sampling of science-based technology that is among the priorities for exploration and inclusion in the A-Factor Project's trainings and implementation:

- The role of technological change and improvement of technical efficiency in rapid agricultural growth
- The role of agricultural biotechnology for improving the productivity and environmental sustainability of food and fiber production
- The role of improved access to information and sound regulations in the implementation of biotechnology in agricultural production
- The benefits of genetically engineered crops weighed against the costs and harms
- Weighing the use of inputs like chemical fertilizers and pesticides against environmental and health concerns and the role of technological change and technical efficiency in addressing these concerns
- How the flow of information, better infrastructure and availability of capital and quality inputs can affect farmers' managerial capabilities, environmental protection and the profitability of farming
- Improved methods and advocacy to address strategic gaps in science, technology, extension and research & development, and the role of youth in addressing these areas
- Attention to how diverse agricultural enterprises can lead to the development of small scale cottage industries, hence increasing employment in rural areas
- The role of biological pest control weighed against the high use of chemical pesticides
- The role of water conserving technologies and enhanced irrigation efficiency

Project Youth Support Services and Trainings

The following support services and activities are built into the project:

1. Mentorship
2. Guidance and Counseling
3. Nutrition and Hygiene information; prevention and management of HIV and STD's
4. Teamwork building, relationship issues
5. Career Guidance and Individual Education Plans
6. Social Work/Family Issues
7. Alcohol issues and treatment

Project youth will be sequentially trained in the following areas:

1. **Entrepreneurship Training** (Business Planning and Management; Administration; Marketing; Team Building; Human Resources Management; Investing; Sustainability)
2. **Agricultural Training** (Crops and Fiber; Agronomy; Livestock and Fisheries; Organic farming; Science-Based Technology; Extension and Advisory Services; Marketing; Rural Transformation; Agricultural Economics; Agricultural Engineering)
3. **Environmental Training** (Land and Natural Resources Management; Biodiversity and Conservation including water conservation; reforestation; composting; recycling; biotechnology; indigenous technology)
4. **Rural Transformation Training** (social change; human development; safeguarding culture & traditions; globalization and economic development; livelihoods;

integration of modernized agriculture with natural resources management; conservation and biodiversity; rural technology and energy)

5. **Peer Counseling Training** (Basics of Guidance & Counseling; Listening Skills; Counseling Skills; Professionalism; Support Groups; Relationship Building; Empowerment)
6. **Peer Mediation Training** (Mediation Basics; Listening Skills; Communication Skills including Nonviolent Communications; Dispute Resolution and Conflict Mitigation; Reconciliation; Indigenous Mediation; Relationship Building; Leadership Training)
7. **Peace Education** (Inner Peace; Conflict; Cultures of Peace; Gender; Human Rights; Social Justice; Conflict Transformation; Reconciliation; Community Mindedness)
8. **Communications Training** (Listening Skills; Verbal Skills; Nonviolent Communications; Self-Awareness and Assertiveness; Social Media Proprieties)
9. **Leadership Training** (self-development, ethics and values, understanding leadership, group dynamics, problem solving, goal attainment, cultural protocols, teamwork)

Key Project Stakeholders

The A-Factor Project creates a demand for youth education, the role of youth in profitable, modernized agriculture and rural transformation. Project stakeholders will play significant roles in meeting those demands, both in the pilot and scale up strategies. Here is a brief introduction of stakeholder roles:

- A. District Local Governments:** We are in substantial programmatic relationships with district local governments in Northern Uganda, including in a comprehensive 5-year MOU with Gulu district local government which includes our developing collaboration with The A-Factor Project. These relationships evolved and strengthened through our Peace Education and Guidance & Counseling Program in Secondary Schools in Northern Uganda, and our Northern Uganda Education Program.

Pilot Stage Stakeholder Role: Donation of agricultural inputs, expertise in production and marketing, project planning, monitoring and evaluation team.

Scale up Stage Stakeholder Role: Donation of land, infrastructure, agricultural inputs, expertise in production and marketing, human resources.

- B. Communal Land Leaders:** We are in close relationship with multiple communal land leaders throughout Northern Uganda. Communal lands and natural resources are available for The A-Factor Project and will play a role in the scale up strategies.

Pilot Stage Stakeholder Role: Project planning, monitoring and evaluation team, preparing for scale up role.

Scale up Stage Stakeholder Role: Donation of land, contributions to infrastructure, indigenous and professional expertise, human resources.

- C. Secondary, Vocational and Technical Schools:** We are in close, long term, programmatic relationship with 18 secondary, vocational and technical schools in Northern Uganda by virtue of our Peace Education and Guidance & Counseling in Secondary Schools in Northern Uganda and our Northern Uganda Education

Program. Many of our school partners have expressed enthusiasm over their potential stakeholder and scale up roles with The A-Factor Project.

Pilot Stage Stakeholder Role: Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Team, Human Resources, Donation of conference, workshop and training space.

Scale up Stage Stakeholder Role: School partners leadership have expressed their vision and interest in their schools serving as A-Factor sites. In this scenario, new and returning students will be the participating youth, serving as a means for vulnerable students to earn their school fees. Another scenario involves the role of schools donating land, infrastructure and human resources in exchange for their students accessing the A-Factor trainings. Further planning is required. In the meantime, we wish to capture the enthusiasm currently being expressed by secondary, vocational and technical school stakeholder roles in the project.

- D. Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF):** We will establish links with key departments, programs and services, and identify focal point persons to connect extension and other advisory services, research and technology to the trainings, project implementation and service delivery.
- E. Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES):** We have held preliminary, encouraging discussions with MoES and have been asked to keep their interest incorporated into project planning. Initial reaction is that the education of school-age “out of school youth” falls within their interest, concern and mandate. As soon as the project is ready for formal planning, they would like to be at the table and contribute to the goals and implementation of the project.
- F. Training Institutions:** University, agricultural and institute training institutions will provide the core trainings in the pilot and scale up stages. The trainings will incorporate key services and roles of MAAIF, MoES, Local Government and other entities. In-service trainings, training of trainers, pro bono services will all be incorporated into the planning and management processes. There will be explorations as to whether trainings may be accredited as an additional incentive.
- G. Religious Leaders:** Religious leaders and organizations in Northern Uganda and countrywide play wide and varied roles in community development, education, social services and poverty alleviation. The project will be familiarized with religious leaders and organizations to determine their role, use of networks and support structures to contribute to the pilot and scale up stages of the project.
- H. Civic Leaders:** Civic leaders and civic organizations similarly have track records of community service and contribution. Selected civil leaders and civic organizations will be invited into the planning.
- I. NGO Forums:** NGO forums need to be involved in the project at various levels, including planning, outreach to NGO constituents and exploration of the role NGO’s can play in pilot and scale up strategies and operations. There may also be training, volunteer, expertise and outreach opportunities which will be explored.

Project Implementation

The project will be implemented in time-framed phases:

Phase I – Pilot

Phase II – Scale Up (Year II, onward)

Explanatory Note – The Role of Stakeholder Ownership in Scale-up

A critical strategy of The A-Factor Project is to *first* build in ownership among key stakeholders – local and central government, communal land, cultural, religious, school and civic leaders, and agricultural and environmental institutions *before* launching the pilot phase of the project. No matter how perfectly operational and successful the pilot, it will scale up, mainstream and shift paradigms only to the extent deeply rooted ownership is built into the key institutional stakeholders of the project. This is because, from Year II as the project scales up, the project’s key stakeholders are the very entities and institutions that will be participating in the scale up. In Years II and III, this will largely be through the donation of land, providing technical assistance and in-kind contributions and sharing in operational responsibilities. Practically, In Year I, building in stakeholder ownership includes stakeholder roles in project planning, in-kind contributions and monitoring and evaluations. Building key stakeholder ownership into the project is also a vital component of the project’s sustainability strategy, discussed below.

Phase I – The Pilot

1. A project site is acquired, arable land that meets a set of pilot criteria.
2. Project familiarization with key stakeholders and partners during which stakeholder ownership is built into the project. This includes stakeholder roles in project planning, in-kind contributions and their role in scale-up strategies and operations.
3. On-site training center and project infrastructure and irrigation system constructed.
4. Baseline Survey Conducted
5. Project Youth Beneficiaries Selected
6. Project Orientation
7. Youth Support Services time-tabled and rolled out
8. Project Trainings
 - a. Entrepreneurship Training
 - b. Agricultural Training
 - c. Environmental Trainings
 - d. Rural Transformation Training
 - e. Peer Counseling Training
 - f. Peer Mediation Training

- g. Peace Education Training
- h. Communications Training
- i. Leadership Training

9. Project youth organized into cohorts of small and medium enterprises. Business plans are drawn up, marketing surveys conducted, administrations set up, SME's implemented (e.g. poultry, small livestock, crops, gardens, brickmaking, tree plantations, etc.). The entrepreneurial, agricultural and environmental principles and practices acquired during the trainings are fully integrated into project operations.

10. Project proceeds are plowed back into the project to sustain and grow the business enterprises. A percentages of the proceeds are devoted to secondary, vocational and technical school costs for project youth.

- 11.** Ongoing roles of Key Stakeholders, including MAAIF, MoES, and district structures
- 12.** Ongoing mentorship, guidance and counseling and youth support services
- 13.** Ongoing peer mediation, peer counseling and peer education
- 14.** Ongoing assessments and technical assistance
- 15.** Monitoring and Evaluations are conducted
- 16.** Project documentation is ongoing: Reports, photography, videography, stories
- 17.** Final Evaluations

Phase II – Project Scale-up

- 1.** Key stakeholders will donate land for new projects
- 2.** Key stakeholders will donate agricultural inputs, material goods, infrastructure and human resources for new projects
- 3.** Pilot project(s) will assist and inform scale up projects
- 4.** M&E's and Final Evaluations will inform scale up projects, resulting in increased project efficiency and cost-saving
- 5.** Galvanized support will result in additional stakeholders and contributions
- 6.** Growing numbers of projects will economize by sharing common costs, e.g. storage facilities, transport costs, etc.

Expected Outcomes

- Viable youth managed agricultural businesses will be established
- Costs of secondary/vocational/technical school will be funded
- The project will be scaled up, shifting dependency mindsets to self-sufficiency paradigms

- Out-of-school youth idleness will be abated; exploitation of girls averted.
- Out-of-school youth will be mentored, guided and counseled
- Participating youth will become seasoned entrepreneurs and jobs creators
- Science and technology based agriculture, combined with extension and other advisory services will transform stagnant subsistence farming into profitable, modernized agriculture and in the process, transformed rural areas
- Environmental, land and natural resources management will create strategies and models to modernize agriculture, avert famine and drought and transform rural areas

Risk Reduction and Risk Management

Agricultural projects have inherent risks including but not limited to crop and livestock diseases, unfavorable climate changes, drought, floods, fluctuating market prices, natural disasters, overuse of pesticides, vandalism, theft and others. These risks can be minimized, reduced and managed through diversified agriculture, utilizing storage facilities, improved market information networks, well planned irrigation systems, utilizing MAAIF advisory services, exploring insurance options, staff hiring criteria and sound planning and management.

Likewise, youth projects have inherent risks which can also be reduced, minimized and managed through sound planning and management. We will also explore the role of insurance coverage to reduce and minimize risks.

A comprehensive risk reduction and risk management plan will be fully developed and in place as part of the management and implementation plan.

How the Project Links with Key UMECS Programs

Two key UMECS programs in Northern Uganda add value and contribution to the project:

A. Peace Education and Guidance & Counseling in Secondary Schools

Established in seven secondary schools in Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts, UMECS implemented, coordinates and manages this program in which more than 3,000 students participate in peace education classes, student-centered peace activities (peace drama, debates, poetry, music, song and dance), guidance classes and psychosocial counseling. In addition, students are trained as peer mediators and peer counselors..

The program is adding new community integration components, focused on the role of program youth conducting workshops, seminars, trainings and activities with out-of-school youth. In addition teachers certificate-level trained as peace educators and guidance counselors will be participating in the community outreach programs. This program can provide the following project contributions to The A-Factor Project:

- a. Peer educators to train project youth as peer mediators and peer counselors
- b. Peace Educators and Guidance Counselors to participate in trainings

- c. Teacher and peer mentors
- d. Psychosocial counseling
- e. Collaborative youth activities (workshops, drama, music, volunteering)

B. Northern Uganda Education Program

In this program, now in Year 9, we sponsor 111 war affected children and youth in secondary school through higher education graduation. We have strong relationships with 18 secondary, vocational and technical schools, largely in Northern Uganda, many of whom are interested in their potential roles with The A-Factor Project.

Accordingly, we work with a strong cadre of vulnerable, war affected youth who hail from throughout Greater Northern Uganda who will be a significant resource to the project, networking us to additional youth groups and consulting with us on ever-growing contemporary youth issues. Many of our sponsored youth are in higher education programmes and may serve as project role models and peer mentors.

Our Project Donations and Contributions

1. **Land:** We own land in Northern Uganda, and have multiple offers of donated land to implement the project in Northern Uganda.
2. **Supplies:** Seeds, fertilizer and other agricultural inputs and supplies are being offered by local district authorities.
3. **Technical Assistance:** Local district authorities are offering a range of agricultural technical assistance and services.
4. **Trainings:** Agricultural institutions are offering training as part of their community outreach.
5. **We have substantial capacity and equipment to contribute to the project,** including a high capacity staff that has implemented and administered a multi-dimensional USAID project, and equipment such as generator, computers, projectors.

Scale up and Sustainability Strategies

The key to both is the *ownership* vested in key stakeholders during the planning and implementation stages of the pilot. Key stakeholders will donate land, technical support, material goods, and human resources, greatly reducing the project's costs and providing benefits to stakeholder constituents. As the project builds momentum and galvanizes support, these contributions will continue to increase exponentially.

Whereas the project's support partner will invest in the project's goals and purposes, the idea is not to trade one dependency (on donors to fund education) for another (project grant dependence).

Scale up strategies are the center of this project. Launching and implementing a successful pilot does not, by itself, guarantee scale up, replication and mainstreaming. A pilot will benefit a set number of youth participants. Scaling up will benefit the many. This is why a key strategy is to bring on board key stakeholders who will help to scale the project before the pilot is fully planned and launched – for ownership, inclusion, shared vision and commitment.

Budget

The project budget will be planned and compiled in collaboration with our support partners, program partners and key stakeholders.

Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

Monitoring & Evaluation is a critical component of the project, not only in terms of measuring but also managing success, effectiveness and achieving key quantitative and qualitative benchmarks. We will perform a baseline survey, develop and manage data from which to coordinate, monitor and evaluate project components and quantitative and qualitative outcomes, and rapidly respond to needed adjustments.

Our M&E plan will measure specific objectives and performance indicators, set benchmarks and measure quantitative and qualitative goals. Data collection will be from multiple sources and data collectors will be conversant with M&E processes and techniques. Both quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to interpret data. Frequent counts will be used for quantitative data while content analysis will be used for qualitative data. We will consider using an appreciative inquiry approach as part of our evaluation, and compliment this methodology with other approaches. Our plan will be designed to build a credible evidence base to position our project for future replication and scale.

UMECS staff will be onsite on a continual basis, coordinating and managing the project, conducting regular assessments and providing technical assistance. UMECS staff will participate in the trainings and manage implementation activities

As part of our evaluation process, we will seek to determine magnitude of impact, lessons for improving design, and which project components are reaching their goals. In addition to evaluative tools, we will utilize surveys, questionnaires, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews. We will conduct regular assessments for rapid response adjustments and provide regular technical assistance to respond flexibly to project needs. In summary, we will be seeking evaluative inputs as the project is being implemented and monitored, making needed changes and adjustments along the way, conduct a mid-year evaluation and a final evaluation that measures whether and how we achieved specific results. In short, we will conduct both a formative and summative evaluation.

Management Plan

Note: The Management Plan will have two components: Managing the Pilot and Managing the Scale-Up.

The following are among the management structures that will be put in place:

1. A transparent project administration will be structured.
2. A database management system will be implemented.
3. A Project Manual will be compiled which delineates project policies, principles and procedures.
4. The roles of the project manager, component coordinators and other key personnel will be known and clearly defined.
5. There will be weekly project staff meetings, and monthly stakeholder meetings which are well scheduled with purposeful agendas and minuted.
6. There will be clear lines of authority, decision making, accountability, communications and reporting.
7. The project manager will review and respond to weekly and monthly reports.
8. Lines of supervision and communications will be established at all levels.
9. The M&E Plan will be strictly adhered to with monitoring visits and reports well established and communicated.
10. The project will be regularly documented through photography, videography, reports, stories and narratives.
11. Risk reduction measures will be developed and implemented.
12. A project tool will be developed to coordinate the sharing of documents, status updates, weekly, monthly and special reports and other forms of communications.