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Building a Program
Grassroots Visions, School Leadership and Ministry Partnership
Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this launch-edition of UMECS-Uganda Journal of Peace Education and Guidance & Counseling. I commend UMECS for launching this vital journal, which in this first edition provides focus on our collaborative program: Peace Education and Guidance & Counseling in Secondary Schools in Northern Uganda.

The major goals of the Peace Education program are to systematically build a culture of peace so as to prevent new wars and build peaceful schools and communities. Peace Education promotes forgiveness as a value and provides the values, skills and competencies to address conflict through dialogue, cultural traditions, relationship building and other nonviolent means. The Guidance and Counseling component of the program is institutionalizing key instructional, psychosocial and programmatic activities designed to strengthen child development, address adolescent issues, enhance career development and address psychosocial needs including those stemming from the recent protracted war in Northern Uganda. There are significant links between Peace Education and Guidance and Counseling, including the role of peer mediation and acquiring the values, skills and competencies for students and community members to resolve conflicts peacefully through relationship, dialogue and peer counseling.

UMECS plays an instrumental and critical role in implementing the program with the Ministry. UMECS familiarized the program in the four districts of Northern Uganda with Local Government and schools, collaborated with our training partner Makerere University Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, organized the training of 88 teachers and lecturers, played a leading role in the process of curriculum development and coordinated and managed the roll out of the program in Terms I and II 2010 in the seven secondary schools in which the program is being piloted. The long term plans are to mainstream the program throughout Northern Uganda and ultimately throughout Uganda.

The pilot program has been a huge success. Head teachers, teachers and students report dramatically reduced indiscipline in all seven schools combined with greatly enhanced harmony and improved relationships. Students have acquired the skills to become peer counselors and peer mediators and have taken up their role with high motivation and commitment. Students have become open about their problems and our trained teachers now have the skills to help students address and solve their problems. This is resulting in improved student performance, a commitment to peace and reconciliation, teachers who are more fulfilled in their professions and students who are focused on their studies and upcoming careers.

I wish to thank the head teachers for their leadership and teachers for their hard work and commitment to make this pilot program successful at their schools. I praise the students – more than 2,440 are participating in this program – for their critical role in helping to so positively transform themselves and their environment. SPRING AND USAID deserve considerable acclaim for supporting this project and of course, UMECS walks the extra mile every day to ensure the project's success and continued implementation and mainstreaming.

Sincerely,

George Wirefred Opiro,
The Department of Guidance and Counseling
Ministry of Education and Sports
Building a Program: Grassroots Visions, School Leadership and Ministry Partnership

Partners and Key Stakeholders: Recognizing the Pioneers

Voices of Peace: Peace Education Students and Teachers Share their Stories

Groundbreaking Success: Guidance and Counseling Transforms Students into Peer Counselors, Peacemakers and Problem Solvers

My School Has Become a Place of Harmony and Performance: Head Teachers Report Greatly Reduced Indiscipline and Positive Attitudinal Changes

Creating a Successful, Systemic Model: The Roles of Vision, Planning, Community, Teamwork and Partnership

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About UMECS

The Role of Support Partners: Making a Lasting Difference
Launching the trainings. Ministry of Education officials, UMECS and SPRING teams and Makerere University Institute of Adult and Continuing Education trainers gather with the selected 88 teachers and lecturers as we launch certificate level peace education and guidance and counseling trainings.

As a child growing up in the village in Northern Uganda, I had no idea that life could change so dramatically. We helped our parents, drank fresh milk and ate fresh food every day, played with our age mates and listened to the elders as they told proverbs and stories every evening at the wong oo (bonfire). Life was good. I was growing up as a regular kid and had no reason to believe this could ever change. Then came the war.

The war changed everything. We were displaced from our village and for the next twenty years, our families and communities suffered unspeakable brutality, violence and loss. What happened to us should never happen again, not to us, not to our children, not to anyone in Northern Uganda, not to anyone throughout Uganda, not to anyone ever again.

Calling for peace and hoping for peace is good, but it does not bring peace. Hard work brings peace - hard work, tireless commitment and effective strategies.

United Movement to End Child Soldiering (UMECS) was founded on the premise that it takes grassroots strategies to build cultures of peace to prevent new wars, and grassroots commitment to address the educational and psychosocial needs of children and youth affected by war. In 2006, the idea that to prevent new wars, it was necessary to build a culture of peace began to crystalize with us. We held dialogues with our partner secondary schools in Northern Uganda and the idea resonated. We further reasoned that building a culture of peace entailed long term systemic strategies. It became obvious that peace education in secondary schools was that systemic strategy, a means for children and youth to prepare to become lifelong peacebuilding practitioners and build peaceful schools and communities.

Before long, given the trauma children and youth suffered during the war, we started to see the connection between peace education and guidance and counseling. We began meeting with officials in the Ministry of Education and Sports and discovered we shared a similar vision. In early 2007, we piloted the first leg of a guidance and counseling program at Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School in Pader. The results were remarkable; students were healing and teachers were feeling empowered by their new skills to guide and counsel students. For the next two years, we continued to dialogue with our school partners, conducted needs assessments and planned what a combined Peace Education and Guidance & Counseling program in secondary schools would look like.

In 2009, in a highly competitive process, we won a grant from USAID/SPRING to pilot Peace Education and Guidance & Counseling in Secondary Schools in Northern Uganda, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports. Chief goals: building a culture of peace to prevent new wars, building peaceful schools and communities, replacing cycles of revenge with reconciliation and linking peace to economic and social development domains.

The project is being piloted in seven secondary schools in Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts – at Sir Samuel Baker School, Sacred Heart Secondary School, Gulu College and Gulu High School in Gulu; Pabo Senior Secondary in Amuru; Kitgum Alliance College in Kitgum and Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School in Pader. The success stories and transformative experiences have been extraordinary.

Here is how we built the program:

1. We familiarized the program with Local Government and the seven secondary schools we selected to serve as the pilots and conducted a baseline survey.
Commissioner George Wirefred Opiro, Department of Guidance and Counseling, Ministry of Education and Sports addresses 88 teachers from the seven pilot secondary schools and NTC-Unyama on 30 November 2009 as certificate level trainings in peace education and guidance and counseling are about to begin.

2. We spent quality time with the head teachers and teacher corps at each school to further brainstorm the program and develop areas of training.

3. We established teacher selection criteria and in collaboration with head teachers, selected 88 teachers and lecturers from the seven schools and NTC-Unyama.

4. We selected Makerere University Institute of Adult and Continuing Education as our certificate level training partner and conducted trainings in peace education and guidance and counseling.

5. We developed curricula in peace education and guidance and counseling.

6. We rolled out a four part program in the seven pilot schools: Peace Education Classes, Student-led Peace Activities; Guidance Classes; and Psychosocial Counseling

7. The program was piloted in Terms I and II 2010, with groundbreaking results.

Along the way, there have been keys to our success. These include:

a. Creating a new model which combines peace education with guidance and counseling – a model which emphasizes student-centered activities and skills.

b. Consulting closely with the inspirational leadership of the head teachers.

c. Building in program ownership with the teachers at every level including selecting training materials, developing curriculum and designing the program.

d. Fostering a spirit and practice of teamwork between UMECS and teacher teams.

e. Linking peace to sustainable development, gender, education and environment.

f. Equipping students with the skills to become peer mediators and peer counselors.

Building in the role of teacher ownership was a chief objective, the results of which are characterized by this statement by Mr. Michael Obote, a UMECS-trained guidance counselor at Gulu High School following the trainings last year: “This has been more than a training we have attained. The opportunity has created a strong bond of brotherhood and sisterhood and created cadres of peace builders, guidance and counseling educators throughout Northern Uganda”.

I tribute and thank the program teachers who work tirelessly. They are making a difference that goes beyond words. I am equally grateful for our organization to be working hand in hand with the Ministry of Education and Sports. Together, we are building a program that can have huge positive impact on our country, and can be successfully replicated regionally and globally.

Charles Onencan is the Associate Executive Director of UMECS-Uganda.
PARTNERS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Recognizing the Pioneers

UMECS-Uganda proudly recognizes the following public bodies, institutions and organizations that as our partners and key stakeholders are making a difference in the lives, schools and communities piloting Peace Education and Guidance & Counseling in Secondary Schools in Northern Uganda:

- The Ministry of Education and Sports
- SPRING-Uganda
- USAID
- Local Government
- Sir Samuel Baker School, Gulu
- Sacred Heart Secondary School, Gulu
- Gulu High School, Gulu
- Gulu College, Gulu
- Pabo Senior Secondary School, Amuru
- Kitgum Alliance College, Kitgum
- Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School, Pader
- National Teachers College – Unyama
- Makerere University Institute of Adult and Continuing Education

A debater from Pabo Senior Secondary School in Amuru district passionately speaks for peace in a Peace Debate at a UMECS-sponsored Peace Activities event on 13 September 2010 in which Pabo hosted Kitgum Alliance College.
Voices of Peace

Peace Education Students and Teachers Share their Stories

by Margaret Akech

As a mother and a teacher, I think a lot about the future of my child and the future of the secondary school children and youth I used to teach. I now think a lot about the 2,441 children and youth in the seven pilot secondary schools who are participating in our Peace Education and Guidance and Counseling program in Secondary Schools in Northern Uganda. They have been through war and continue to face the many challenges adolescents face under any circumstance but at the end of the day, they are all unique, they want to do good with their lives and they all require our guidance, supervision and care.

As I reflect on the past year serving as UMECS-Uganda Peace Education Coordinator, helping to coordinate the implementation of our peace education and guidance and counseling program and look toward the future as we mainstream this endeavor into new and more secondary schools, I am taken aback by how remarkable the results have been, not only for students but for teachers as well.

For students, we have seen the benefits of a combined peace education and guidance and counseling program. This combination is working miracles because students require guidance and counseling services in order to deal with their personal, emotional, and relational issues. This has made them more open and free, and we regularly see students who were shy becoming open and talkative. Students who were aggressive have become humble and peaceful. Bullying has practically stopped at the seven pilot secondary schools where we are piloting the program. Cases of indiscipline have greatly reduced. This is documented at each school by the teachers and head teachers.

Students share stories with us about how they are learning to overcome depression through support from their classmates. They also share stories of students they see changing in positive ways, such as students who were harsh and have become peaceful and gentle.

Students have been especially enjoying and benefiting from peace activities. This is peace drama and debates, poems, essays and presentations, music, songs and dance. We have held many school and dual-school Peace Activity Events. Not only are student performances quite exceptional, many students have never participated in activities like this before. They tell us the peace activities is building their talents and confidence, and helping to build self-awareness. We see these positive changes taking place before our very eyes in improved student academic performance and the way students reach out to help each other. Because we built in student-learned peer mediation and peer counseling skills into the program, students have these very skills and competencies to counsel and support each other, and to mediate disputes.

This has resulted in students improving their lifestyles and values, including testing and counseling for HIV/AIDS. Students talk openly about the value of harmony and how their schools have become more peaceful. They have become stakeholders for peace in their own environment.

We are also happy with the fact that what students are learning in their peace education classes, they are practicing amongst themselves, and using in their peace drama, debates, poetry and writings.

Not only students but teachers lives are being changed. This is happening in many positive ways such as teachers who intervene on behalf of students involved in discipline matters and arrange for counseling and mediation. This gives the teachers great satisfaction and reward because their interventions are resulting in saving and changing lives.

Teachers also say they are empowered with their new skills as peace educators and counselors and these new skills have increased their motivation as teachers. Some also discuss how their new skills have helped with family relationships. Overall, it has become obvious that teacher to teacher and teacher student relationships have greatly increased in all seven schools.

Other teachers have found peace education to benefit their spiritual lives. One teacher has written an article, Teaching Peace Education at My School Transformed Me: “The Power of Inner Peace.”

This program is transforming all of us, students, teachers, head teachers and program staff. As the program grows, as we grow in peace together and as the youth become peacebuilders, we have the highest expectations that their role as youth peace practitioners will build a culture of peace to prevent new wars, just as they the students together with their teachers and our staff are helping to build peaceful schools and communities together. We have a lifetime of work ahead of us as building a culture of peace is an ongoing process. This is a lifetime of work to which I look forward.

Margaret Akech is UMECS-Uganda Peace Education Coordinator
GROUNDBREAKING SUCCESS

Guidance and Counseling Transforms Students into Peer Counselors, Peacemakers and Problem Solvers

by Joel Ojok

Bullying, which is violence, can be greatly reduced in secondary schools through guidance and counseling. We are seeing this every day at the seven secondary schools in four districts where we are implementing *Peace Education and Guidance & Counseling in Secondary Schools in Northern Uganda* in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports. Some of the schools have been dealing with bullying for some time. The fact that bullying has greatly reduced with the implementation of our program is a groundbreaking success. Credit belongs not only to our program but to the head teachers themselves who provided the support for our programs to be successful at their schools.

Students, who are both the perpetrators and victims of bullying are the most amazed and most happy by this success.
As one Senior 5 student at Sir Samuel Baker School has said, “Bullying at schools can end through counseling.”

Counseling in our program takes many forms. We have individual counseling and group counseling, led by teachers. We also have student-led counseling in the form of peer counseling. Students also play lead roles in the counselor-led group counseling sessions. This gives confidence to the student group counseling members and helps to eliminate long held fears and stigma.

Other benefits of guidance and counseling are creating groundbreaking successes. Teachers talk about how lonely and shy students have opened up and their social interaction has improved. Teachers and students also discuss how student skills have developed from both parts of the program, guidance and counseling and peace education. In particular, self-assertiveness and effective communications.

The program has helped teachers become empathetic and understand the learning challenges some students face. Teachers discuss how some have been frustrated by students who were not performing well and now, they understand about learning challenges and how to address these with students.

The stories of success and positive transformation are numerous and varied. We are no longer surprised by so much positive change. It is groundbreaking on the one hand but as a trained counselor, I understand why these successes are taking place. Seeing so many teachers and students improving their life is a source of reward to me.

Joel Ojok is UMECS-Uganda Counseling and Guidance Program Director
My School Has Become a Place of Harmony and Performance

Head Teachers Report Greatly Reduced Indiscipline and Positive Attitudinal Changes

As a former head teacher in Pader district, I know the challenges of administering a school. I am also a son of the soil from Northern Uganda and like so many, endured the ordeals of the war. I am very excited, therefore, to be part of the UMECS-Uganda team that is implementing Peace Education and Counseling & Guidance in Secondary Schools in Northern Uganda and excited even more that the results of our efforts are bearing fruit. We have recently completed Year I in piloting this program and remain elated by how much positive impact the program has had in such a short period of time.

Rather than speaking for them, I prefer to share the words of the head teachers of the pilot secondary schools. I have chosen three to include here and in future articles, I will share the views and experiences of others. In addition to the results, we are especially pleased by the consistency of the results, such as at these three schools in three separate districts.

Otim Walter Knox is the Head Teacher of Pabo Senior Secondary School. Founded in 1982, Pabo SSS is a government assisted, mixed day school that serves students from Amuru, Gulu, Pader and Kitgum districts. During the war, Pabo SSS was situated in the largest IDP camp in the sub-region. Next year, Pabo will be the only school in Amuru with an A-Level section.

Mr. Knox confirms that, as in the other pilot schools, our program has made a difference in many ways. The school has far fewer students brought up on indiscipline cases than before the program was introduced, noting students have far more respect for one another and for teachers than previously existed. Parents who were having problems with their children are also expressing relief – and disbelief. They want to know why their children's behaviours and attitudes have changed for the better. Mr. Knox notes that fighting and violence have greatly decreased, adding that teachers and students meet regularly for counseling and guidance sessions, attend peace education classes and participate in peace activities and this is proactively providing mediation skills and peaceful values to students. Mr. Knox’ analysis is that bad conduct is prevented.

Mr. Knox states that students who did not appear interested in reading are now showing up in the library. Students who were idle are now participating in peace drama, debates, music and dance. This has created a positive, productive and peaceful school environment.

Obonyo Patrick, head teacher of Lira Palwo Senior Secondary School in Pader reports similarly. Lira Palwo SSS was founded in 1981 by the Church of Uganda. It is a government assisted, mixed day and boarding school that serves those affected by the war, local business owner families and peasant farmers. Its A-Level Section started in 2007.

by Anthony Ojok
Pabo Senior Secondary School Otim Walter Knox, left, and UMECS Associate Executive Director Charles Onencan at the UMECS-sponsored Peace Activities Event on 13 September 2010 in which Pabo and Kitgum Alliance College participated in peace drama, peace debate, peace poems, folk songs, music and dance.

As with other head teachers whose schools are participating in the program, Mr. Abwola states there is greatly reduced bullying, teasing and abusive behavior by students. Students with personal problems are regularly and freely reporting for counseling for assistance. “The program is a holistic one, focusing on the personal, social, academic and well-being needs of both the teachers and the students. It should be mainstreamed.”

The head teachers’ words in the pilot stage of the program tell a big story, a story we plan to become an all-Ugandan story.

Anthony Ojok is the Education Field Coordinator for UMECS-Uganda.

Creating a Successful, Systemic Model

The Roles of Vision, Planning, Community, Teamwork and Partnership

by Arthur Serota

Today’s wars are not about armies clashing on the battlefield. In today’s wars, children are often the soldier of choice, hence rampant child soldiering throughout the world. Equally as tragic, civilians - unarmed non-combatants - are the main targets of armed combatants. Terrorizing civilian populations is the major strategy of many of today’s wars. This was the strategy of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Northern Uganda; it is the strategy that has led to the deaths of six million people in the Democratic Republic of Congo during the past two decades and it is a strategy that plays out throughout the world. Who suffers the most from war? Women, children and families. This is not acceptable and humanity can no longer sit by waiting for events to happen. In order to be protected from war, new wars must be prevented. To prevent new wars, a culture of peace must be built, a culture of peace that replaces revenge with reconciliation, a culture of peace linked to sustainable development.

UMECS was established to help build cultures of peace to prevent new wars and to address the educational and psychosocial needs of children and youth affected by war. For us, grassroots strategies must be conceived and implemented. In addition, there must be a long term commitment to building and maintaining a culture of peace. This means that strategies to build a culture of peace must be systemic which implies school-based peace education and the critical role of youth. Peace must be linked to sustainable development. Without sustainable development, lasting peace is an illusion.

Likewise, without lasting peace, development is not sustainable. Each one is linked to the other.

We discovered, for school-based peace education to be successful, it must be linked to guidance and counseling. This is especially so in post-conflict areas where youth are dealing with war-related trauma in addition to the usual challenges of adolescence. Therefore, in collaboration with secondary school partners and the Ministry of Education and Sports, we developed a new model on the ground, Peace Education and Guidance & Counseling in Secondary Schools in Northern Uganda. This is a “first-ever” model, one which is in line with the Ministry’s vision and goals and this new model is producing remarkable results in seven pilot secondary schools in Northern Uganda.

Our vision to develop this model was shaped by community. No community wants to be visited by war, especially communities that have suffered through war. Our mandate, therefore, was to develop systemic strategies to prevent new wars. Having collaborated with school partners, the next step was patient planning and persevering. We persevered for almost three years, seeking the support to launch the program. Then, last year, we were awarded a grant by SPRING/USAID to pilot the program in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports. We are deeply grateful to SPRING/USAID for their support. Our greatest joy has been collaborating with the Ministry of Education and Sports to pilot and soon, mainstream the program. This is, in fact, the Ministry’s program and we are honored to serve as its partner in this endeavor. It will take some years for the program to be fully mainstreamed.

No one can do this alone. Partnership, collaboration and team work are formulas for effective and successful program development and implementation. As we enter Year II of the program, buoyed by the successes and transformations at the pilot secondary schools that appear on the pages of this Journal, we move forward with visions of lasting peace, peace linked with development, peace that creates communities and groups that exist in harmony – and want to exist in harmony.

Arthur Serota is Executive Director of UMECS-Uganda
OUR CURRICULUM
Classroom Learning Combines with Student-Centered Activities

The following are selected summaries of curriculum areas. The curricula contain additional areas and include both classroom instruction and student activities.

Peace Education

1. Peace: Why Teach Peace Education; types of Peace; advantages and benefits of peace; ways of maintaining peace; characteristics of peaceful societies.
2. Developing Inner Peace: Developing self-confidence, compassion, peace as resolution of inner conflict, peace as transformation, practicing self-awareness.
3. Conflict: Types, levels and causes of conflict; methods of conflict resolution; indigenous and traditional mechanisms, conflict management, conflict mitigation.
4. Violence: Types, causes and prevention of violence; overcoming substance abuse; dealing with peer pressure; non-violent approaches as tools of peace building.
5. Culture: Definitions, elements, dimensions, importance of, cultural dynamics, cultural diversity, cultural approaches to peace.
7. Vulnerable Groups: Identifying vulnerable groups, causes and effects of vulnerability; reducing vulnerability; people living with AIDS; and orphans.
8. Gender: Difference between sex and gender; gender equality and inequality in the community; gender roles; gender-based violence; gender and peace.
9. Fundamental Freedom and Democracy: Understanding democracy and freedom; governance and democracy; leadership, social ethics, social conduct.
10. Social Justice: Understanding social justice; provision of and equal access to social justice; social services; the Millennium Development Goals.
11. The Environment and Sustainable Development: Understanding the eco-system; caring for the environment, food security; green living.

Guidance and Counseling

1. Orientation and Introduction: School Rules and Regulations; school's physical environment; administrative structures, clubs and mission, strikes, bullying, awareness.
2. Self-Awareness: Discovering personal abilities; coping mechanisms, positive self-concepts; debates and role-play, career information.
3. Self-Assertiveness Training: Skills of expressing feelings, skills to live with others, overcoming shyness and aggression, accepting oneself, self-appraisal.
4. Adolescence and Reproductive Health: Drug abuse, body changes, peer pressures, challenges faced during adolescence; misconceptions; STD's; hygiene.
5. Sex, Sexuality and Gender: Definition of terms, gender roles, guidance and counseling, discussions, debates, drama, poems, role plays.
6. HIV/AIDS: Definitions, historical background, transmission, symptoms, prevention, tests, ART, positive living, stigma, testimonies.
7. Career Guidance: Vocational exploration; changes in the work world; study skills; time management; listening, note talking and examination skills.
8. Communications: Effective communications; writing skills, public speeches; chairing meetings; debating; letter writing; music, dance and drama (MDD).
9. Spiritual Guidance: Love, forgiveness, self-acceptance, prayers, singing; Bible/Quran study; formation of spiritual clubs; prayer retreats; fellowship.
10. Crisis and Stress: Forms of crisis and stress; causes and effects; management of crisis and stress; leisure activities; counseling services.
11. Grief and Bereavement: Causes, effects and symptom; stages of dealing with grief; counseling; role of friends, relatives and teachers.
12. Trauma: Definitions; causes and effects; PTSD; therapy, counseling services; sharing past experiences; referrals.
13. Problem Solving and Decision Making: Types and skills of decision making; creation of alternative solutions; group discussions; guidance and counseling.
14. Human Rights: Definitions; types of human rights; children's right; rights and responsibilities; drama; abuse; talk shows; exposure.
15. Conflict Resolution and Management: Definitions, causes and response to conflict; approaches to conflict management; role of students and other stakeholders in conflict resolution; guidance and counseling; drama; role plays; peace clubs; reconciliation.
WE LOVE PEACE
Sung by Peace Education students of Gulu High School

1. Our brothers and sisters,
   Are fighting for properties;
   Has led them to hatred,
   And disunity! ........we love peace!

2. Our Fathers and Mothers,
   Are living unhappy lives;
   They are in disagreement,
   The family’s gone! ........We love peace!

3. In every community,
   In every society,
   The members are fighting;
   They’re fighting for land! ........we love peace!

4. Our message for you today,
   Is spreading the Gospel;
   Of great love and unity,
   Our future is bright! ........we love peace!

A Poem composed & presented on 17 September 2010 By Okello Daniel Obina, Senior 6,
Gulu High School at a UMECS-sponsored Peace Activities Event

PEACE OF MIND, PEACE OF OUR SOCIETY

A casual observer
Would not have expected
Any violence;
But violence
Still rules our World situation.
I have confidence for peace.
To agree together is
To make progress.
If you offended someone, ask for pardon;
If offended, forgive.

Poem by Oketa Pope Paul, Senior 3 of Sir Samuel Baker School

Rescue the Children, Restore their Lives
Would you desert the drowning child or the infant trapped in a fire?
How about the angry, inarticulate thief?
Time is running out for the rescue of thousands of vulnerable children
Society wants to punish them for their crimes
Label them “problems”
Without understanding their circumstances
Believe in the children as pillars of the nation
Leaders of tomorrow
About UMECS

United Movement to End Child Soldiering (UMECS) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organization and a Registered NGO with the Uganda National Board for Non-Governmental Organizations.

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. We seek solutions to problems that foster self-sufficiency, have systemic implications and are sustainable.

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.

Our Programs and Projects

Peace Education and Guidance & Counseling in Secondary Schools in Northern Uganda, a pilot program in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports. Major goals include building a culture of peace to prevent new wars, build peaceful schools and communities and provide for the guidance and counseling needs of secondary school students.

Northern Uganda Education Program: UMECS sponsors war-affected children and youth in Northern and Northeast Uganda from secondary school through higher education graduation. In addition to providing all school fees and school requirements, the program provides culturally and community connected mentorship, counseling and guidance.

The A-Factor Project: A developing program in partnership with Rotary Club of Gulu, The A-Factor Project (A for Agriculture) is designed to transition donor dependence to fund secondary education to sustainable self-sufficiency through youth-led agricultural entrepreneurship.

The E-Factor Project: A developing program in partnership with the Faculty of Medicine at Gulu University and Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, The E-Factor Project (E for Education) is designed to drive massive investment in girls’ secondary education in Northern Uganda as an integrated strategy to prevent HIV/AIDS.

Strengthening Schools in Northern Uganda Program: A program to strengthen teaching, learning and student performance in secondary schools in Northern Uganda through books, science and computer lab campaigns.

Our website

www.endchildsoldiering.org

The Role of Support Partners

Making a Lasting Difference

There are many ways to make a difference in community and society and support of effective initiatives is one such way.

When an effective initiative is building a culture of peace to prevent new wars, everyone benefits. When there is peace, civil society benefits. When there is peace, global society benefits. When there is peace, business and industry benefit. Banks benefit. International agencies benefit.

When children and youth in post-conflict societies can heal and prosper through peace education, guidance and counseling, everyone benefits

Please consider your potential role as a support partner, making a difference in lasting ways.