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**AYINET PEACE**  
*e-Newsletter*



# Unobstructed Future

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## INSIDE

**On the radio:** the SAFE team has taken to the air to discuss issues of youth criminality and solutions

**Community and school outreaches:** hundreds of youth turned up for the dialogue.

Youth participation in the National War Victims Conference

**Peace building symposium:**

**Youth leadership training**

### **SAFE Project:**

**The USAID SAFE project began in December 2013 and project activities are still ongoing**

## Why SAFE at AYINET?

Uganda has the youngest population in the world with the highest rate of youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is a country in which youth make up over 70% of prison inmates. These youth represent a ready pool of recruits for extremist groups who may be seeking to mobilize them for violence. For the above reasons, it is imperative that we empower and engage the young population to

build a culture of peace, tolerance and human rights. This corresponds to the existing core values of the implementing organization, African Youth Initiative Network (AYINET).

AYINET, with support from USAID SAFE, is running a series of activities with youth-specific approaches aimed at post-war conflict transformation, reconciliation and peace building. Events and tools

aim at fostering a non-violent culture and strategies for female and male youth to recognize and address injustice and promote a culture of peace. All this is intended to mobilize the youth to learn how to positively resolve conflicts, improve peer communication, make good choices, and strengthen culturally appropriate coping mechanisms.



## SAFE Activities

AYINET is implementing the SAFE project with support from USAID. Project implementation targets youth from the two districts of Lira and Gulu. The SAFE project at AYINET kicked off in December 2013, and the team. The youth are already benefiting greatly from the project activities that are being implemented.

We have been hosting community dialogues, appearing on radio talk shows, creating web messages for our Youth Peace Website, creating IEC materials, establishing our Mandela Peace Library, and identifying youth leaders who can take part in our trainings and conferences, youth peace building symposium, Youth participation in the war victims conference, Podcasts.

## Community Dialogues



Photo by AYINET  
A young girl in Agweng subcounty Lira District sharing her views about the role of youth in leadership

### Mobilisation of Communities of Odek Sub-County in Gulu District and Agweng Sub-County in Lira District



Stephen Okello of AYINET SAFE Team responding to a question put forth by a youth of Odek Sub-County in Dulu district during our Community Dialogue

AYINET conducted outreaches in a number of conflict-affected schools and communities in Northern Uganda with the aim of strengthening the capacity and network of youth-led and youth-centred initiatives for peace building and recovery. This brought students from a number of secondary and tertiary institutions as well as youth from surrounding communities together. The dialogues provide a platform to

share views on leadership, factors contributing to youth criminality, human rights, peace and reconciliation. What the youth said: Most recently has to be removed. Response of AYINET The last sentence has to be removed; the following has to be added. As a team, we have noted these challenges of the youth and we addressed them in our most recent youth leadership trainings. Youth were provided skills in leadership, peace building and conflict mediation & mitigation. After returning to their communities they shared this knowledge and acquired skills at the training. As a result we have seen increased youth involvement in youth leadership, conflict resolution and increased productivity in our project .

## On the Radio...

The radio talk shows, online peace messaging and podcast, 'Peace Generation Series' are an advanced way of utilizing technology to conduct media advocacy. We use these tools to reach out to youth residing in difficult to reach places of Northern Uganda, to help them understand the roles they play in reducing violence and to use their knowledge to facilitate reintegration, peace and reconciliation in their own communities. We conducted one-hour radio talk shows in Gulu and Lira.



We invited a number of our exemplary youth leaders who had taken part of our youth leadership development trainings to share experiences on the air. We found that there was vast active participation from the listeners. Many listeners called in during the show, or even wrote to AYINET to voice their reaction to the shows and share their own opinions on the subjects. Many of them commended the quality of our broadcast; we were excited to hear that some of our listeners were located outside of Lira or Gulu Districts In one of the discussions titled:

**"What are the causes of crimes and what should be done to prevent youth from committing these crimes,"** we aimed our discussion at identifying

key drivers of youth resilience from involvement in criminality by youth populations.

Many youth called in and engaged in these discussions and gave their views. Some of their responses to the common causes of crime included: poverty, unemployment, peer pressure, permissiveness, drug and alcohol abuse, and ignorance.

Some of the notable possible solutions included: encouraging fellow youth to engage in income generating activities, increasing access to education for all, involving communities to take action on regulating and monitoring crime, such as in the form of crime prevention communities, community sensitisation on the dangers of crime and encouraging fellow youth to overcome peer

### Radio conversations in Lira

1. Richard – "leaders have the ability but they don't have money, so he wonders whether AYINET will help them in the process of election."
2. Ray (Agweng Sub County) – Appreciates AYINET for the youth program.
3. Samuel Barlonyo – Women should be leaders but when they get into leadership, they don't respect their husbands.
4. Ogwal (Aleka) – its good for the ladies to be in leadership but they are always biased on men in their leadership
5. Raphael (Agweng) – the elderly people always minimize the youth when they come out of leadership.
6. Denis (Aromo) – Men feel jealousy on women getting into leadership because they feel they can be dropped





## Youth participation in the National War Victims Conference

As a team, AYINET selected our most engaged and exemplary youth leaders from our activities and invited them to participate in AYINET's first National War Victims' Conference held in Kampala, Uganda. Both a youth leader and a war victim, Christine Ayo explained that it was surreal for her to meet victims from other regions of the country and the world. At the conference, she learned that other parts of the country also suffered directly from conflicts and war. From this experience she was told us that she is even more encouraged to embrace peace and reconciliation. Afterwards, she returned to her community and shared her experiences with other community members, she encouraged all members of her community to do their part by participating in the transitional justice process.



Christine Ayo

## THE PEACE BUILDING SYMPOSIUM



AYINET organized a Youth Peace Building Symposium in Gulu where 35 youth leaders from the post conflict communities shared experiences and engaged in discussion concerning new perspectives on peace and conflict. The symposium aimed at empowering our youth to understand the concepts of peace building, while also gaining a more in depth understanding of their own cultural heritage while also

embracing their national identity. Youth learned the concept of mediation, and how to effectively solve local issues in the role of a mediator

Using a relevant scenario, youth acted out mediations in an effort to solve a problem whereby all members benefit in some manner. Youth participated in numerous outdoor teambuilding games and exercises that enhanced the notion to cooperate and work together to effectively solve problems. The Tekwaro-Acholi Chief encouraged the youth leaders to actively involve themselves in efforts of reconciliation and asked them to serve as bridge builders for peace. He emphasized the roles that youth can play in peace building, especially through our traditional approaches such as mediation and negotiation, traditionally referred to as kayo-cuk, mato-oput.

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