



# HEALING *for* PEACE



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AYINET Progress Report 2016

celebrating 11 years of peace building



Medical Rehabilitation



Trauma

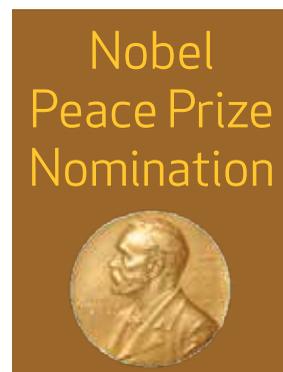


Youth Engagement

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SDG



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Towards the end of the year 2004, the experience of over 20 years of growing up in northern Uganda in the midst of war was painfully escalating. From the atrocities we were surviving on a daily basis, the incomprehensible pain of losing friends and family members. Weakened by agonies, in deep fear if ever a fairer future for our society is possible. From the shock of witnessing a 13 year old girl raped and impregnated by rebels to mutilated children, one would only have to resist the temptation to revenge. The suffering of innocent victims with no clear explanations only made it more unbearable. With too many questions to ask but nobody to answer, everything was far above us.

That's when in 2005, we formed AYINET to help us answer some of those questions. The great historic movement has since helped us to join hands in solidarity to work for peace, heal our people and reconcile our torn apart communities. With a single handed commitment to No More Innocent Victims...



*...[...]* I am grateful that I am here to speak before the public. It's very difficult to talk before a crowd like this. There was a time I went through great difficulties of injuries and pain. If it was not because of AYINET, you wouldn't have seen me like this.

*I ask God to uplift people who are funding AYINET in different capacities and I pray to God to open your heart to continue helping AYINET to help us, and so many other people who are still at home, who are in dire need for assistance but without much hope for desired support... support victims if you can.*

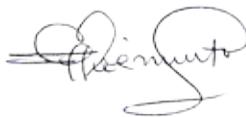
*I want to thank God for bringing me here, I am filled with joy because I can prove to myself that you people love us, and that the public still loves us.*

Voices of deep pain like the above, from brothers and sisters who were taken from us and tortured to the maximum indignity are here with us and living amidst us. That's why AYINET became a victim-centered organization with full commitment to making sure that all efforts for peace and justice respond to the victims' needs.

Despite multiple obstacles and risks that stood in our way, giving voices to and restoring the dignity of victims gives us strength and hope. Our positive response in the face of our most difficult experience gives us the conviction that we must be the last generation to experience this life marred with bloodshed, violence, destruction and suffering; and we must be the first generation to bring an end to these historical cycles of overwhelming indignity to humanity.

In the spirit of peace, this report is a reminder of our long struggle and painful sacrifices that resulted not only into restoring dignity to victims but also providing space for dialogue.

In this report you will find the incredible journey and the immense courage it took AYINET to open up doors to the future. Fully aware that war took too long, destroyed too many lives and property, ingredients of historical injustices still exist and it will be a difficult rebuilding of post conflict communities.



**Victor OCHEN**  
Executive Director  
African Youth Initiative Network

*"Uganda can be very proud that the country's first Nobel Peace Prize Nominee and founder of the African Youth Initiative Network, Victor Ochen, has been chosen as Global Ambassador for the Sustainable Development Goal on Peace and Justice. This is an excellent example of a Ugandan activist from a Ugandan NGO making a global impact."*

**Alison Blackburne, British High Commissioner to Uganda**



## About AYINET

The African Youth Initiative Network (AYINET) was founded in 2005, in the trail of destruction experienced by victims of mass atrocities during the over 20-years conflict between the LRA and the Government of Uganda. AYINET was founded by youthful victims who took initiative to address the prolonged suffering, despair and degradation of social cohesion due to conflict.

The aim was to guide the deeply frustrated communities towards peaceful conflict management and resolution; so as to create a mutually functioning, trusting and inclusive society in promoting peace, post-conflict recovery and development. AYINET has since developed approaches to peace building where notions of peace and justice are not just by proxy, but have been applied practically, tangibly, meaningfully and restored dignity for war victims.



## 15 Years in Focus - 2030



## AYINET's Intervention

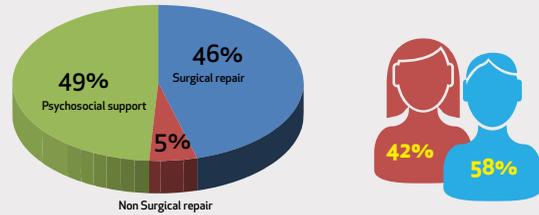
### Medical repair for;

- Chronic war wounds and bone infections
- SGBV - Rape victims
- Torture Swellings
- Burns and Contractures
- Retained Bullets and Splinters

### Psychosocial Support for;

- Families of missing people
- Families of children born in captivity
- Formerly abducted and ex-combatants
- Child mothers
- Child headed families

## Category of Medical Rehabilitation Beneficiaries



Over the last 10 years AYINET has provided reconstructive surgery to over 10,000 and psychosocial rehabilitation to over 50,000 direct and over 200,000 indirect war victims.

**80,000+**

victims and survivors reached through memorial events and consultative meetings; platforms for effective participation in national justice, peace and reconciliation.

**40,000 +**

war victims sensitized by AYINET on their participation before the ICC in the ongoing trials of the LRA commanders

**500,000+**

youth reached through public outreaches, radio talkshows, social media, peace camps and through the support of youth groups that developed into functioning youth organisations.

**200+**

war victims' groups supported across Uganda through economic empowerment and facilitating exchange visits between the groups.



From the youths in the communities reached, the majority gained conflict resolution skills through trainings and workshops while others gained peacebuilding, youth leadership and crime prevention skills.

### Donors



Towards a resilient society...

... **defining needs**

**developing strategies**

**restoring dignity ...**

## Introduction

Decades of civil war have left deep scars in Uganda's history. To date, the country is still struggling with how to address the horrific legacies of wars. Almost all parts of the country have had the bitter experience of conflicts, but the population of northern Uganda has suffered the worst as a result of the over 20 years of war between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and the Government of Uganda (GoU).

The gravity of these experiences depict the urgency for the need to pay adequate attention to the impact of war in Uganda. This must have a specific focus on overcoming the historical and ethnic differences. It should also involve a deeper assessment of the inter-generational effect of the conflicts and provide a platform to create a shared future from a divided past.

### AYINET's Three Progress Pillars



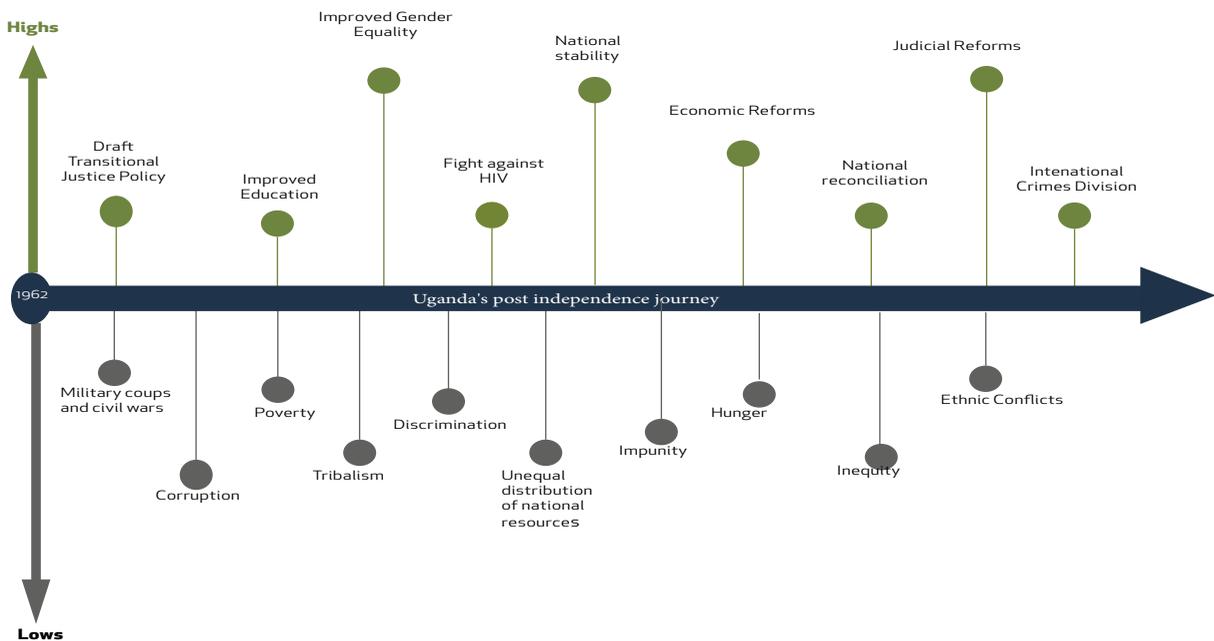
AYINET has for years explored a range of transitional justice mechanisms focusing on social cohesion, and works to assist the conflict affected populations in Uganda, South Sudan and DRC, addressing the harmful effects of conflict,

*We seek to;*

- provide an environment conducive for tolerance
- strengthen communities' regional and national efforts for peace and reconciliation
- provide tools for prevention and enhance communities capacity of acting early together
- support mechanisms for accountability.
- mobilize and empower youth and communities in promoting a healthy, peaceful and just society.
- empower victims and survivors to manage and prevent conflicts.
- promote solidarity for healing, stability and development.

## Transitional Justice in Uganda

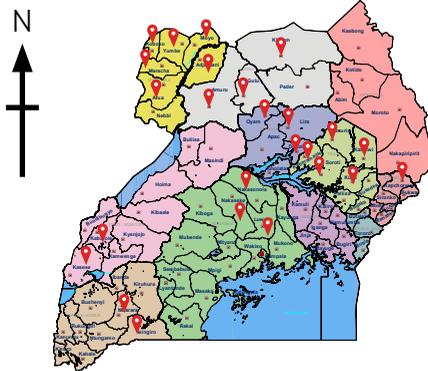
Uganda’s post-independence history has been defined by consecutive wars, rebellions and massive human rights violations. Years of violence have harmed development efforts and severely disintegrated the socio-economic fabric of society. Five decades after her independence, Uganda continues to struggle with her painful legacy and is still faced with many obstacles on her way to the long awaited national recovery.



Several important efforts have been made by the Government to address the post-conflict needs of the country, notably; the establishment of the International Crimes Division of the High Court of Uganda and the development of the National Transitional Justice Policy. Moreover, in 2004 the Government referred the situation in Northern Uganda to the ICC, which consequently issued arrest warrants for the top five commanders of the LRA, including Joseph Kony, the leader of the LRA who remains at large, and Dominic Ongwen who is currently in ICC custody and awaits trial.

The national transitional justice policy, aims to provide an overarching framework designed to address justice, accountability and reconciliation needs of post-conflict Uganda. It is intended to provide the holistic intervention mechanisms to achieve lasting peace in Uganda. The success of the policy remains subject to public understanding and ownership, as well as their willingness to participate in the processes.

## AYINET's approach to transitional justice



AYINET conducts consultative meetings and community outreaches across the country with the objective to promote community and victims' engagement and debate on transitional justice on the one hand, and allow interaction between victims and policy and decision makers on the other.

Since transitional justice is meant for victims, a roadmap towards justice cannot be comprehensive without their participation and contributions in identifying their needs, such as psychosocial support, medical rehabilitation, reconciliation and reintegration into the community.

Our engagements with victims and stakeholders facilitated the organization of the first ever national war victims' conference which was held in Kampala in May 2014. This conference provided a platform for dialogue to ensure that transitional justice processes reflect the interests of the victims and are conducted in a manner that takes into account victims' needs, promotes their sense of dignity and supports their rehabilitation.



The illustration above demonstrates our interventions from grassroots consultations to regional and national engagements where AYINET collected victims' views and priorities. These informed the final development of the transitional justice policy. Additionally, consensus recommendations from the consultations were submitted to the government and informed the development of the national reparation policy by the Justice Law and Order Sectors.

# *HOW we HEAL our DIVIDED SOCIETY!*

How we heal the war wounded



## Healing



*Community public dialogue on national peace and reconciliation in northern Uganda.*

## Emotionally and physically healing war victims

For over 10 years, AYINET has been working to impact the lives of victims of armed conflict in Uganda by providing medical and psychosocial rehabilitation; as well as platforms for victims and conflict affected communities to realize their human rights. For war victims who have suffered so much, emotional and physical healing is a precondition for total recovery.

*Healing must mean transitional justice processes;*

- deliver accountability, justice and peace for the affected person.
- must bring physical and emotional healing for the victims and guarantee non-recurrences.
- facilitate national reconciliation.

*"My son cannot sleep due to pains from injuries sustained from the LRA torture many years ago. He has never been treated since we do not have money. The only way the whole family can sleep is when he is drunk. Sadly, alcohol is the only way we can help him." **confessed the parents of one formerly abducted child***



## Medical Rehabilitation



The barbaric nature of the LRA war as evidenced by the brutal atrocities committed on innocent civilians in the greater northern part of the country, left the communities deeply scarred. Many survivors suffered physical injuries and deformities due to physical torture, gunshots, retained shrapnel, maiming, immolation, burns and sexual abuse.

A study conducted by AYINET in partnership with Feinstein International Center and Overseas Development Institute in 2014 revealed that 23% of individuals with reported physical injuries and 31% with mental or emotional distress in Lango and Acholi reported not having received treatment.

AYINET's medical work aims at providing a more effective response to war victims in critical need of re-constructive surgery and psychosocial support. AYINET has focused on those victims who have experienced the most serious physical and emotional harm and provided medical rehabilitation to over 9000 war victims over the last 10 years.

### Young war victim trades wounds and scars for hope and inspiration

Isaac Ogwal, 12 years old, from Agago District was wounded at a tender age. Throughout the course of his life, he underwent a lot of stigma and torture owing to his maimed nature. Isaac, like many of his friends, relatives and village mates is a victim of the LRA rebellion in Uganda. In 2003 in a village known as Odokoker in Agago district, Isaac is only one and a half years old safely tucked away in his home, a grass thatched hut in a triad of other similar huts, when the LRA rebels attack.

“They (the rebels) ordered them to catch the pigs that were roaming around and killed them, extracted only the fat, threw them on the grass thatched house and forced all captured women into the hut in which Isaac and his mom were in, after which they lit the house.” narrates Nyanga Denis, Isaac’s caretaker who survived that day by hiding in a bush nearby.

The captives were shot at and battered until the UPDF came to their rescue. For Isaac, even though he survived the flames of the burning hut, his face was burnt with hot ashes falling from the roof and his hands were also severely burnt from crawling and holding onto burning wood.

The injuries he suffered at infancy left him with a disfigured face, burnt eyelids with puss continually oozing out of the right eye. The fingers of his right hand became dysfunctional and the fingers of his left hand with a contracture. Isolation, stigma and consistent pain the eyes became a part of his life.



*“When at school my class mates always called me names like ‘wangi obedo agwacha,’ (a lango phrase translated as, your eyes look like pasted greens in peanut butter) yet they used to pain a lot. With a lot of tears and anger, I could look for a stone to throw at those who called me bad names.” Isaac narrates.*

In October 2015, Isaac was identified by AYINET to be a beneficiary of the Medical and Psycho-social rehabilitation program funded by the DGF (The Democratic Governance Facility).

Isaac is now recovered. He is able to see well and play with all his friends without worrying about being called bad names. This experience inspired him to make helping others, like himself, a lifetime ambition.

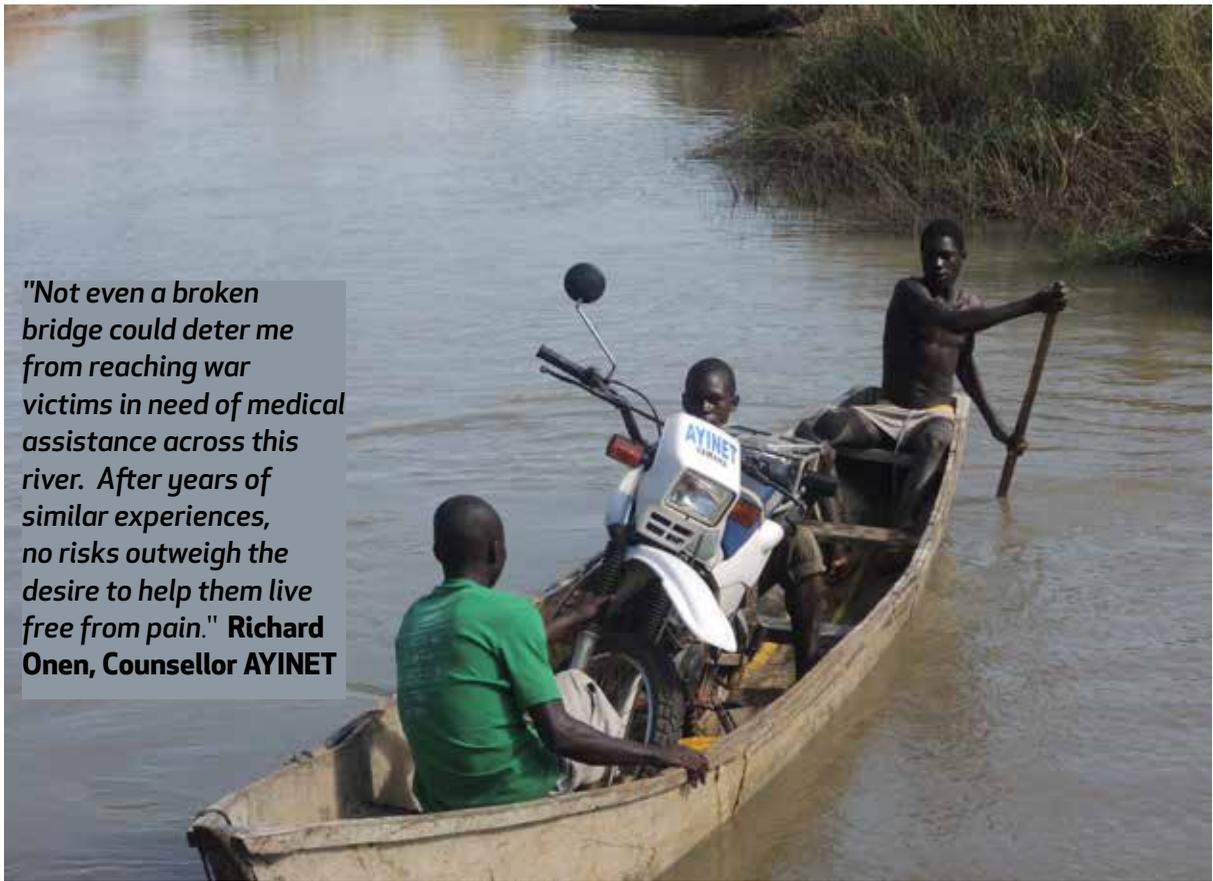
*“I want to thank God and the People who helped me because now my friends do not call me bad names anymore, I can hold a stick and a cup very well. I am even going to study well to become a doctor to help other children like me.”*

## Restoring the lives of war victims



26 year old Nancy Auma, is one of 574 beneficiaries men, women and children who have benefited from free reconstructive surgery, medical rehabilitation as well as counseling under AYINET's medical rehabilitation program supported by United Nations' Peace Building Programme (PBP) for Northern Uganda, which has enabled her to lead a normal life.

*"Not even a broken bridge could deter me from reaching war victims in need of medical assistance across this river. After years of similar experiences, no risks outweigh the desire to help them live free from pain." Richard Onen, Counsellor AYINET*



## Engaging stakeholders in the rehabilitation of war victims



CSO's, government representatives and victim communities from the greater north discussing strategies on scaling up AYINET's medical rehabilitation program to help tens of thousands of victims still in need.



"I urge the leadership from the affected regions to take up the responsibility of addressing the war victim's challenges by involving them in government development programs like Operation Wealth Creation, NUSAF, and PRDP among others." **Mr. Oryema Titus LCV Kitgum district**



"I had a lot of pain and suffered stigma because of the stench produced by the wound. I believed I was waiting only to die completely, because other parts of my body had already died, my legs were dead. ...After the surgery, I now have a life to live again." **Charles Petum, 25 years, from Agago district**

## Disillusioned War Captive Revived

Charles Ogal aged 29 from Pader district was only 16 years old, harvesting Cassava to take back home to the IDP camp when the brutal and infamous LRA rebels ambushed and abducted him tying a rope around his waist. He spent the next 2 years enduring torture and being forcefully taught on how to use a gun and dodge bullets during warfare. They were trained along with other captives while being required to go back to the communities to raid homes and gardens capturing more recruits and adding to their food supplies. He was also forced to torture other abductees who tried to escape.

Even though he later got the opportunity to escape during a cross fire with the UPDF (Government soldiers) where he wittingly crawled towards the UPDF. As a result, he suffered grave injuries on his left hand and sustained bomb splinters from a blast that killed the rest of his colleagues. During rehabilitation at World Vision in Gulu where the Government soldiers took him before reconciling with his family, he was checked and told he would live with the bomb fragment in his body for the rest of his life.

Leading a normal life was still a distant reality even after re-uniting with this family after 3 years. Besides being isolated by his own peers and neighbors, physical pain crept in on his left hand where the fragments had remained. Charles explained he could not lift anything and the pain intensified during rainy seasons climaxing to electric shocks through his body whenever lightning struck. This only added to the emotional pain and resentment he felt being stigmatized for up to ten years, notwithstanding the worries of taking care of his family as he could not help in the fields whereas farming was



*"After one week in the hospital, I came back home. When it is raining nowadays I sleep with a lot of comfort and no pain, I can even dig with a hoe any time and help my wife in the garden, I can even fold my fingers into a fist. The anger that I had has even now left me and I am happy that my 10year problem has been solved. I am also requesting everyone to forgive me if I ever wronged them with my behavior, now I know I have a future to work and live happy."*

the only source of income.

It was while listening in to a radio talk show about AYINET's mobilization of war victims for medical rehabilitation that he started to feel a glimpse of hope for his grim condition. Upon reaching the venue, he was assessed and taken to Kitgum at the medical surgical camp. On 28th October 2015, he was successfully operated and the retained bomb splinters were removed.

Charles is now grateful being fully recovered and rehabilitated both physically and mentally demonstrating reconciliation with himself, family and peers.



# Trauma

AYINET’s psychosocial support interventions aim at helping individuals, families and communities that have witnessed and survived the gruesome horrors of violent conflict and its consequences.

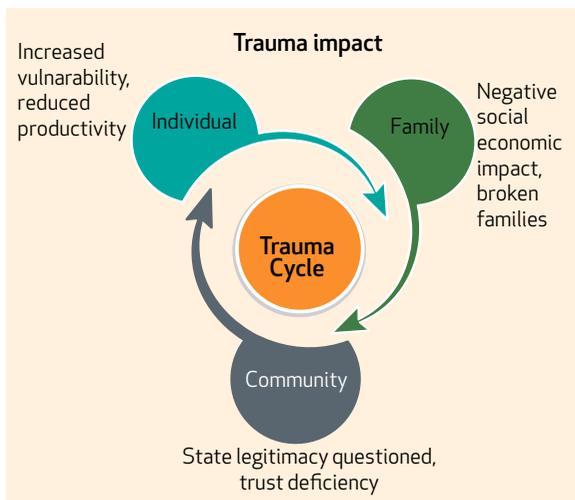
Trauma affects individuals reducing their productivity and presenting challenges in accessing services. The family is also affected as resources are depleted which bears negatively on communities as they easily adopt attitudes of resentment; questioning the state’s legitimacy.

AYINET focuses on helping families with missing members, formerly abducted, children born in captivity, children who witnessed family members killed, the physically injured and victims of gender based violence through the psychosocial support program. Approaches used include individual counselling, focus group and family counselling with the aim of building safe, peaceful and healthy communities and strengthening a human rights culture. Over the last ten years, AYINET has offered psychosocial rehabilitation to over 12000 victims.



©Heather McClintock

*Not only was Janet shot at 8 months but she was also the only survivor of an attack that killed her mother and 22 others in Barlonyo.*



*“I now relate AYINET to the second god that created me because they relieved me from the pain and I thank them for the good work done and request them to continue treating other people”*  
Ijaga Hamim had lived with a chronic war wound for over 20 years



## Engaging Communities

An important aspect of genuine and full recovery of post-conflict societies is involving the whole community in the healing process.

The findings in the illustration below are derived from AYINET’s experience of engaging communities in the post-conflict regions of the greater northern Uganda. The illustration shows the change in communities that have been offered psychosocial support services.

Before Intervention	After Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many Suicide Cases</li> <li>• Domestic Violence</li> <li>• Land wrangles</li> <li>• Alcoholism</li> <li>• Low school enrolment</li> <li>• Stigmatization</li> <li>• Child neglect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mediation and conflict mitigation platforms</li> <li>• Functional community institutions</li> <li>• Reconciled families &amp; communities</li> <li>• Sports programs</li> <li>• Treated wounds</li> <li>• Shared domestic responsibilities</li> <li>• Cultures of tolerance</li> <li>• Improved livelihoods</li> <li>• Community social institutions</li> </ul>

AYINET uses various activities to engage as many members of the community as possible, among them are community dialogues and resilience fairs, individual and group counselling, sports and arts, memorialization events, exchange programs and learning visits. These activities are aimed at achieving peace and



*AYINET staff speaks to the community during a mobilisation and assessment outreach to identify victims that need medical and psychosocial redress*

## "I don't regret sharing my story..."

Victoria (not real names) was one of the participants that received counselling during a dialogue held in Awere in July 2016. She lost her first husband to the LRA insurgency and was left with two children. She later lived with another man and conceived but unfortunately the in-laws never accepted her and continually accused her of theft coupled with several insults that forced her to flee back to her parents' house. Her parents didn't welcome her either because of the new found pregnancy and gave her the options to either abort or return to the father of the unborn child. This drove her into considering both abortion and suicide having no alternatives to survive.

*"I don't regret telling my story to the counsellor because she talked to me and gave me a lot of hope, something that I had lost a long time ago... I also learnt that the boat I was taking would lead me nowhere so I now had to let that boat sink and take another boat full of hopes"*  
Victoria expressed her joy.

### Story telling as a healing process



## Memorialisation



Memorial events are important in shaping common identities, building from difficult episodes of a painful past and a sincere moment for deep reflection, solidarity and laying new foundations for hope for war victims and survivors.

Commemoration is an opportunity for the victims to pay tribute to their loved ones and this is a key part of psychological healing both individually and collectively as a community.



Memorials not only offer a platform for victims to remember the past atrocities but also contribute to the construction of an accurate historical narrative in a way that promotes forgiveness and reconciliation.

Young people are engaged to learn from the past and inspired to build a peaceful future.

Over the years, AYINET has taken a lead role in supporting and participating in victims-led commemoration events in communities that suffered mass atrocities in Uganda.

“

*“We want to pray for our brothers and sisters who were massacred during the conflict so that their death is never in vain. ...let’s be the champion to promote the value of human beings. We should lead in this and show the whole world the value of human beings right from the womb.”* **Archbishop John Baptist Odama (Gulu Arch diocese).**



*‘... there has been no treatment to those who suffered the violence... how will reconciliation be possible since many people have been killed leaving many others traumatized. I call upon government, international bodies, and civil society to come to our aid; we need compensation for the grave abuses of human rights here.’* **Mrs. Inzikuru Esther, (Mukura Attack survivor)**

*“We wish that what happened here is never repeated. Please, mark the day and there is nothing we can do to retrieve those we lost. Forgive the perpetrators and that is the healing processes we want.”* **Omara Denis, Lira district (Barlonyo Massacre survivor).**

*“Our message is let us change the history of this country. That this may not happen again. That is the only solution. This is not the only massacre in this country. In Luwero, in West Nile, in Acholi, in Teso land. This country is full of blood. And some of the people who killed are walking, driving and enjoying themselves. How can there be peace, when there is no justice? It cannot”.* **Atiku Alex, Clerk to the Cultural Institution of the Lugbara. (Ombaci memorial event)**

”

For victims, healing is a form of justice and unless people can heal emotionally and physically there cannot be peace.

# Justice...

...whose justice?





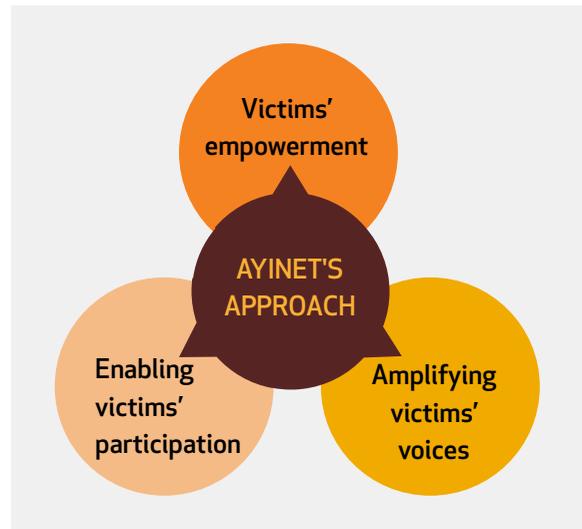
## International Criminal Court

### Justice and Accountability for war victims

Since its creation, AYINET has worked with numerous war victims and communities affected by conflict in Northern Uganda and beyond. Victims' struggles and concerns have always inspired and guided our thematic focus.

Using a victims-centered approach to deliver justice and accountability to affected individuals and communities, AYINET empowers, engages and amplifies victims' voices. This includes supporting victims to participate in the ICC procedures.

In advocating for delivery of justice and accountability for war victims, AYINET brings together victims and young people from post-conflict societies across Africa to share their experiences and join efforts.



*"The ICC will ensure that justice is delivered to the victims and survivors of the LRA atrocities in northern Uganda."*  
**The ICC Chief Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda while addressing victims of Barlonyo during an outreach event organized by AYINET.**



Chris Ongom and the ICC prosecutor



*A survivor narrates her ordeal in Lira*

## Victims participation in the ICC

AYINET, with support from Trust Africa has been comprehensively supporting victims for years. In the interest of advocating for justice that is meaningful to the victims as opposed to giving prominence to perpetrators. We launched the platform Victims' Voices for Justice with the aim to ensure that years of victims' tormenting struggle for justice are not minimised to ensure a fair criminal procedure and justice for the perpetrator.

Victims' Voices for Justice builds upon our recent actions and events, carried out in the framework of engaging victims and communities with the ICC. We have, among others, organised and continue to coordinate meetings of victim-centred organisations, victim-communities and local leadership from across the Greater North.

Notable examples of our engagement include;

- Leading the state delegations to meet and dialogue with victims regarding participation in ICC Court proceedings during the 2010 ICC Review Conference in Kampala.
- The participation of AYINET's Director at the initial appearance of Ongwen in The Hague.
- Continuous organisation of community-level events and radio talk shows informing victims about latest developments.
- Gathering of intermediary and partner organisations of the ICC, as well as the visit of the ICC Chief Prosecutor to the affected community in Northern Uganda in early March 2015.
- Organising live screenings of the confirmation of charges hearing at the

## Victims Voices from the ICC live screening of confirmation charges hearing of Dominic Ongwen

During the screening many victims saw Ongwen for the first time and had diverse reactions. Some were reminded of the horrible atrocities they experienced, while many others were relieved to see him on trial. The event was an opportunity for members of the affected communities to communicate their opinions on how Ongwen should be brought to justice, their demands to the government and the ICC, and their concerns about ICC procedures.

### *The victims' identities are herein concealed for confidentiality*

*"If Ongwen wins, what will be the impact? The Court should come and help the people who lost their property and families. Though I didn't lose any of my immediate family member; I lost close relatives, neighbors and felt with witness the pain and suffering. The Court should pronounce what benefit we are getting after all this pain and suffering gone through."*

*"They should not discourage the other rebel soldiers from coming out of the bush by penalizing Ongwen."*

*"If Ongwen is able to tell the truth, we shall forgive him since he was also a victim himself abducted and brutalized like the rest. We feel Ongwen, given his rank in the LRA and his knowledge of the operations of the LRA would be the more preferred person to tell us the truth about the attacks, our missing people and even other perpetrators involved"*

*"We are in pain, We have to uphold the constitution, lives and properties. The world should pressure the Government to compensate people's lives and properties lost. People will feel justice is done when Ongwen is convicted. He should be punished somehow to make it justice"*

*"The only person who can't be tried is one whose hands are tied. Ongwen was giving orders and is responsible for those notorious actions. He should be pinned for that. On Government, there's evidence that they didn't play their part and they should give an answer or explain why?"*

*"We should not be bitter and only await the final three (judges) to decide, Ongwen was young but did so many things as a grown up man. What about the peace talks?, Why didn't he come out then but insisted on staying with the rebels."*



*Victims and interested community members at the livescreening at the AYINET office in Lira.*

## Countrywide Outreaches

During consultations throughout Uganda, victims, CSOs and senior Government representatives had opportunities to exchange views on how to ensure war victims have access to remedy and justice through active participation in the Transitional Justice processes. Through public dialogues and mass media, victims were able to articulate their needs and priorities as well as urgency for national reconciliation.

## National War Victims' Conference

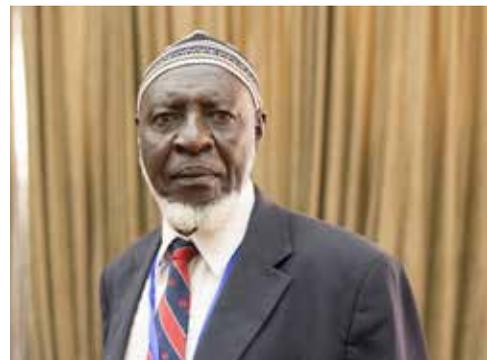
AYINET organized the first ever National War Victims' Conference in Uganda where war victims from across Africa, government representatives, diplomatic missions and international organizations joined together to discuss transitional justice and victims' needs. Victim communities from different countries shared their common fate and recollections that contribute to healing, forgiveness and reconciliation in a search for dignity.

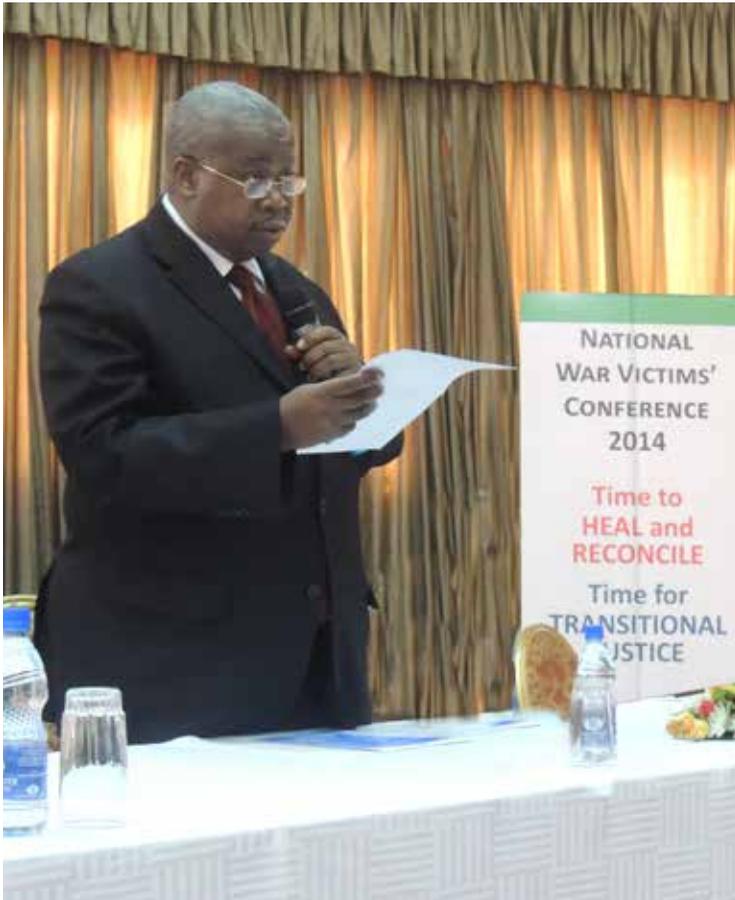
The conference also offered a platform for victim communities from other countries to advocate for policies that support reparations, truth-telling, forgiveness and justice thereby advancing transitional justice processes in the countries of Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Liberia, Senegal, South Sudan, Mali, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya and Rwanda.



*"We need to stop glorifying perpetrators. Attention needs to be with the victims,"* **Col. Felix Kulayigye** during his address to Conference participants

*"Uganda's reconciliation will not come from the North, not from West, East or South, the reconciliation will come from all Ugandans, those at home and those living abroad. All we need is to open up the process, just like AYINET has started by reaching out to all corners and engaging all people. We are today talking to each other in a forum that has never before happened in the history of Uganda. It is a huge step forward."* (**Mzee Ssebi Longa from West Nile, Chairperson of Moyo War Victims Association**)





*"We are here today, because the Government of Uganda supports victims' participation in the Transitional Justice process and is willing to work with victims to have their needs addressed. We are ready to collaborate with victims from across the country, to learn from our past experiences, to empower ourselves to stand united and to serve as a positive example of peace and progress for the rest of our continent." (Honourable Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Kahinda Otafire, delivering the opening address at the National War Victims' Conference)*



*"A platform like the one established by AYINET is a wonderful basis for an honest dialogue which can build trust and confidence. If it is honest on all sides, it is a foundation for peace-building. You cannot have peace-building without truth-telling." Assitan Diallo, Mali, West Africa."*



*"Nothing is more powerful than talking to someone who has gone through the same experience as you, so you can share. You can share and relate your feelings and experiences." Stella Ndirangu, ICJ Kenya*

## Traditional Justice Mechanisms

### *Gender, generational and ethnic controversies around traditional justice*

Traditional justice mechanisms have many merits but also grave risks associated with them. From consultations around the country, the divided opinions have some tribes in favour of traditional justice mechanisms while others perceive it as an ethnic impunity strategy. Majority views were however in favor of criminal justice processes to handle heinous crimes like those committed by the LRA in northern Uganda.

Traditional justice mechanisms are to-date still widely applied because of the advantages associated with them such as speed, accessibility and cost effectiveness. The application of traditional justice mechanisms however also presents considerable challenges because the practices involved are ethnically, generationally and gender divisive.

Common views indicate that the capacity of traditional mechanisms to adequately handle issues of sexual violence against women is lacking, as some of them do not foresee punishment for rape.

Moreover, the use of traditional justice mechanisms bears the risk of amplifying tribal divides and initiating further conflicts because the various ethnic groups have different approaches to justice, which means that groups affected by the same perpetrator have different and at times opposing expectations.

Using only traditional justice comes close to

giving out blanket amnesties and supports a culture of impunity. Thus, while traditional justice has benefits, it should play a subsidiary role to formal justice.

AYINET promotes an inclusive approach to traditional justice where the voices of young people and women are heard equally. During our youth symposiums and community dialogues, clan leaders are involved in sensitizing communities and mediating conflicts. Traditional practices such as 'bonfire discussions, where elders tell stories to the youth around the fire at night and where young people learn about the past, renewal and hope in a way that helps them to reconcile, also form an important component of our interventions.



*Elders engage youth in a bonfire discussion during a symposium in Gulu in 2015.*

## Youth dialogue on national peace and reconciliation



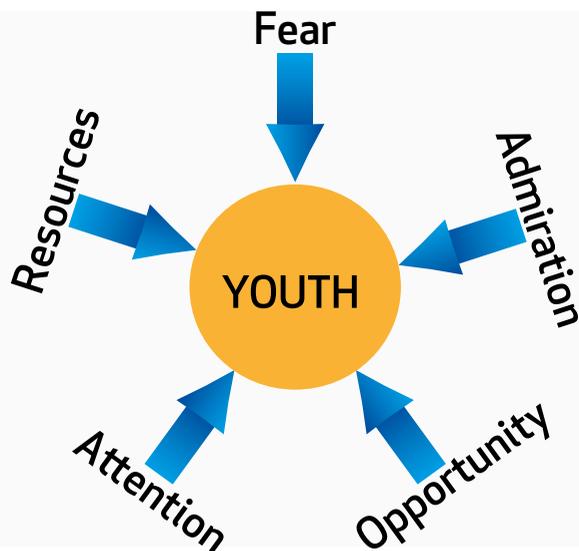
*If youth are not free from the heavy weight of war, the current poverty and anger will only bring more suffering and conflict in the future.*



Youth  
...a growing force

After 20 years of enduring conflict and exposure to violence and displacement, young people in the greater northern Uganda are under extreme stress, living in communities impacted by conflicts, with eroded family and social ties, at risk of exploitation and with little chance to compete for national opportunities.

In an effort to help post-conflict communities look beyond crisis and with the prospect for transformation, AYINET designed a youth-specific program, “**Engaging and Empowering Youth as Leaders, Youth at Risk and Youth as Game Changers**” to help resilient young people from extremely challenging backgrounds to develop into compassionate, innovative problem-solvers. This is done to promote responsible youth leadership to build cultures of peace, tolerance and human rights in Uganda and Africa.





## Peace Movement... to Counter Violent Extremism ..

AYINET's years of engagement prove that in northern Uganda there is a widespread and repeatedly echoed stockpiling of anger and bitterness among the young generation, like in any other African country building from a complex and violent post-independence.

### **United Nations Security Council resolution 2250 – youth peace and security**

The discourse on conflicts over the past decades, including on recent violent extremism in different parts of the world, has unfortunately reflected the role of young people – particularly young men, but also increasingly young women who make up a large percentage of armed forces and armed groups worldwide– as members of terrorist and extremist groups, leading to a popular depiction of young people as a threat to global security and stability.

Recognizing the threat to stability and development posed by the rise of radicalization among young people, the Security Council in 2015 unanimously adopted resolution 2250 and urged Member States to consider ways to give youth a greater voice in decision-making at the local, national, regional and international levels.

Youth get provoked when they;

- feel marginalized
- feel unprotected
- feel targeted
- feel ignored
- feel segregated
- lack employment
- are faced with impunity
- are illiterate
- face political repression
- lack political voices
- see no positive change

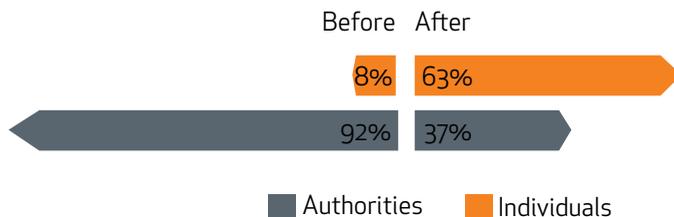
## Youth leadership for peace and reconciliation

Youth are undeniably a key force in achieving peaceful communities and forming paths to post-conflict recovery. Despite this, they are often not only victims but also perpetrators of violent crime. One of the main reasons for their involvement in criminal activity is poverty, which is a destructive consequence of the war.



In addressing this challenge, AYINET mobilizes and empowers youth to become credible leaders, problem solvers and peace builders within their communities. This is done through youth leadership trainings, peace symposiums, radio talk shows, school and community outreaches by partnering and networking with actors that include USAID(SAFE), Peace Corps, Sites of Conscience, Peace Clubs and Peace Advocats.

### Improving capacity of youth to resolve and mitigate conflicts



Whereas only 8% of the youths were able to mitigate arising conflicts by themselves before the leadership trainings, afterwards, 63% were able to do so, thus decreasing the numbers of cases being referred to authorities from 92% to 37%.

Benefits of conflict resolution by individuals include easy accessibility, youth-friendliness, promotion of social ties and harmony, reconciliation, local dispute resolutions and cost-effectiveness as opposed to the corruption, bureacracy and cost implications often connected to using authorities to resolve or mitigate conflicts.



AYINET staff, Jackson Opio and Peace Corps volunteer Sarah Powell meeting the US ambassador to Uganda

*“It is not where you are born, who your parents are or how much money they have; we all should have the opportunity to contribute and grow and succeed.”*

(US Ambassador Scott H. DeLisi).

## Engaging and empowering youths for peace and reconciliation

Using youth-friendly approaches, AYINET trains young people in peace building, conflict mitigation and transformative development to foster sustainable growth. Empowered, these young people move on to share and demonstrate these skills in their communities.

Within the framework of the project “Engaging and Empowering Youth as Leaders, Youth at Risk, Youth as Game Changers for Peace and Reconciliation,” supported by USAID through Supporting Access to Justice, Fostering Equity and Peace (SAFE), 60 youth groups were established and supported towards implementing peace building and empowerment activities in the districts of Gulu and Lira.

The majority of the youth groups engage in agriculture along with other income generating activities, Voluntary Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), arts, health outreaches and sports as avenues to build sustainable peace in families and whole communities.

*“These activities influence our attitude. We strive toward living in a peaceful community and keep encouraging other youths to participate in activities that have the potential to improve their productivity and their social and economic well-being, while also reducing the overall level of poverty.” Omach Justice, Secretary of the Paluo-Oribe youth group in Gulu*

## Vulnerable youth transformed into a peaceful conflict mediator

Twenty-six year old Okeng Martin, a resident of Ngetta Subcounty, Lira District, dropped out of school in lower primary due to the LRA insurgency. He explains, *"I hustled to make ends meet. I would walk to and from town, a distance of about 10kms, hawking roasted g-nuts and managed to see my siblings through till they all joined vocational school."*

This ordeal helped him realize he had inborn leadership and problem-solving skills. He started to attend community meetings, dialogues, and mediations, but didn't know how to become more involved: *"I always wanted to participate but I didn't have the confidence."* In 2014, he joined an AYINET-trained youth group in his community.

In April 2015, there was a land wrangle in Okeng's neighborhood. Though the local council land committee, religious leaders and the clan chief attempted to intervene through community dialogues, Okeng said that they always ended violently with drunken youth from both sides disorganizing the mediation process. Seeing this, he became interested in ending this chaos and reconciling the two parties with his newly acquired skills.

He therefore arranged a private meeting for the two conflicting persons together with few witnesses. Okeng took lead in the mediation process using the dialogue and negotiation skills he had learned during his time with the youth group. Through his intervention, the conflict



***"I was amazed at the way the youth conducted their activities, mediated conflict, had the confidence to speak in a public forum, and also trained other youth. From then I felt a sense of belonging in that youth group and with my already inborn skills of leadership and problem-solving, I felt I was in the right place and doing the right thing"*** he said.

ended amicably with acknowledgment of the original boundary, reconciliation, and planting of trees locally known as "omara omara" to demarcate the boundaries.

He won the trust of his community through his leadership, problem-solving skills and qualities. *"I'm grateful to AYINET for empowering me and paving way for my new beginning."*

## Arts and sports for peace and reconciliation

AYINET uses sports, music, dance and drama as a tool for community mobilization for trauma healing, targeting victims and the affected communities to open up space for reconciliation, peace and tolerance.

Sports create an environment that inspires, motivates and promotes peaceful coexistence, fostering self-esteem and healing.

The events act as a bridge between geographical and cultural barriers by uniting people of different diversities and norms. In addition, they are an opportunity to address gender inequality and advocate for women’s rights and empowerment.

*“Ever since, the Adilang football field had never been without violence but this is the very first sports tournament which has ended peacefully.”*  
**Hon Morris Ochana, Vice Chairman from Agago** (after a sports and cultural gala organised by AYINET in Agago.)



## Peace Camp

AYINET in partnership with Peace Corps organized a week-long peace camp in December 2014 in Comboni College in Lira district. The camp aimed at empowering youths in post-conflict communities such as in Northern Uganda to become peacebuilders as opposed to being used as tools of conflict and injustices.

Youths were engaged in life skills and capacity building trainings. The training sessions focused on peacebuilding, conflict resolution, democracy

building, gender issues, sexual and reproductive health and post-conflict reconciliation.

The life skills imparted were positive identity and self-esteem, culture of tolerance, positive communication, decision-making and critical thinking, leadership, emotional health, HIV transmission, prevention, condom use and pregnancy prevention.



*Peace camp organised by AYINET and Peace Corps uganda*



## Peace Summit

The Youth Peace Summit, a part of the African Network of Sites of Conscience was organized with support from the National Endowment Democracy (NED). It was a call for youth in Africa to embrace peace as they struggle with contemporary legacies of slavery, colonialism; genocide and civil wars.

The youths shared experiences based on the common historical background characterized by layers of conflicts and struggle; such as slave trade in the Goree Island in Senegal, apartheid in South Africa, genocide in Rwanda, Uganda that suffered the over 20 years LRA insuregency besides other power struggles and Kenya that is still going through a transitional process.

The youth participants represented Constitutional Hill in South Africa; Goree Island in Senegal; Kigali Genocide Memorials in Rwanda; GAPS-Center for Governance, Peace and Security in Uganda; Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health in Kenya; and African Youth Initiative Network (AYINET) that brought youth from post conflict northern Uganda and the Foundation for Rwenzori Formerly abducted youth.



*Teach real history to the young generation; protect the memory of the victims without furthering discrimination but in the spirit of promoting reconciliation in Africa. Eloi Coly, Chief Curator House of Slavers, Goree Island, Senegal*



*Youth must learn and get a mutual foundation for reconciliation based on full account of what exactly happened; and this is not a favour but a right for us young Africans. War and violence should never be a solution to anything; war is not an option and JUST STAY AWAY FROM WAR. ...Nonhlanhla Masanabo*



## Engaging youth in understanding law as a tool for human rights

Africa's foundational problems rest in the existing leadership challenges. A majority of the conflicts on the continent arise from ethnic inspired power struggles that cause grave violations of human rights for the ordinary citizens. Given our experience of seeing the roles young people played in these human rights violations and the evident desire by the young people for justice, AYINET works to strengthen the pillars of justice with an aim of preventing the reoccurrence of the wars.

AYINET in partnership with the Kreisau-Initiative e.V. organizes the Model International Criminal Court (MICC), a simulation of the International Criminal Court, which trains youth across the globe on human rights and international humanitarian law. Through its multinational character and emphasis on group work, MICC lays the foundation for intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between participants of various national and cultural backgrounds.

The simulation of the International Criminal Court encourages and emboldens young people to engage with human rights and their enforcement through international criminal law. The simulated court cases are embedded in a program comprised of trainings, workshops and discussions.



*Youths participate in an MICC court simulation in Krzywowa, Poland in 2016.*

## Participants attending a recent MICC event at AYINET in Uganda;

### **Martha Ikayak; South Sudanese working for Youth Empowerment Network for Peace and reconciliation**

*"...I have been an activist talking against bad things happening in society; I learnt the need for a bigger network to reach wider audiences. It will help me to talk more authoritatively about these issues having learnt several other instances and events all over the world we can relate to. ...As youth, we need to use this energy towards strategies for peace avoiding violent measures of avoiding conflict/war."*

### **Ian Wabwire; A youth activist, Law student in Makerere University**

*"Lawyers get to understand how urgently justice needs to be dispensed to the vulnerable people/war victims...I will write blogs to spread all this information with a wider audience."*

*"Leaders should find a way to stop over thinking about power but be humane, understanding they come and go but should leave a legacy of peace and human rights...Youth should get involved in building peace and promoting realization of human rights through all available means, like using social media to change the world...Peace agenda should transcend, preaching hope, justice plus reconciliation."*

### **Derrick Ndayishimiye; A Burundian portrait artist living in Uganda as a refugee,**

*"Our Elders always tell us, the future belongs to us, yet the present is not even being seen. We have to open our minds and hearts and stop being used as criminals and yet at the end of the day, we suffer the consequences... Brotherhood should flourish as opposed to ethnic divisions. We have to reconcile."*



## Partnership for youth livelihoods

AYINET with support from USAID SAFE identifies youth groups, supports and equips them with peacebuilding, conflict mitigation and leadership skills. According to Martin Okeng, the chairperson of Bango Bango Moko (BBM), an AYINET supported group, most youth used to spend their time in gambling activities like playing cards and drinking alcohol and less engaged in

economic activities. To change this, a few of them thought of forming a youth group so as to engage meaningfully in economic activities that would give them an alternative to gambling and idleness.

The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) is a National Saving Scheme mandated to provide social security services to private sector employees in Uganda. As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility program, the NSSF undertook a series of community initiatives in fulfilment of its duty to contribute to the well-being of the community. Under the theme, “unlocking youth potential” in the Customer Connect week, The NSSF partnered with AYINET in identifying established youth groups with their needs and activities such that they can be supported and empowered further.

On April 15, 2016 at Ngetta in Lira district, 30 goats with a fully built paddock, 4 oxen, 2 ox-ploughs and vaccines were handed over to the two youth groups of BBM and Di cwiny respectively.

*“I would like to thank the NSSF for this great work towards the youths and contribution of AYINET who come to work directly with the community. If this project were to pass through the government channels it would not have reached the community. As a political leader I promise to be close and ensure this project stands to benefit many people in the long run.”* LC 3 Ngetta.

Mugabi Gerrard, NSSF, who was the Chief Guest of the occasion advised the youths, *“You now have the peace, health, land and goats, you need to work hard to chase poverty.”*

## Empowering women in post-conflict communities

The conflict in northern Uganda resulted in high rates of gender-based violence, sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancies, and a generation exposed to a lifetime of violence. Concerned with the loss of protective traditions, resettling communities seek opportunities to support their young people.

AYINET seeks to combat gender based violence and enhance economic empowerment of women in northern Uganda through formation and capacity building of womens' associations, community sensitization through dialogues, music dance and drama and supporting livelihood programs.

In our experience, gender inequality in most of the returnee communities has not only hindered the recovery progress, but has also increased vulnerabilities in those households that are struggling to recover. Sexual and gender based violence, unemployment across gender and land conflicts have remained major obstructions for populations to recover their livelihoods after displacement.

Subsequently, being a hindrance to full recovery of post conflict northern Uganda. Alongside have been some detrimental effects such as lack of women's rights to property ownership. These mindsets exist and have negatively affected the lives of a large portion of society, the poorest segment which are women.



## Gender Roles Equality and Transformation (GREAT)



AYINET, in its commitment to achieve an equitable community where everyone is respected regardless of their gender, integrates the GREAT (Gender Roles Equality and Transformation) program across all gender and youth interventions.

The GREAT Toolkits helps the youth to:

- Learn about their bodies, reproductive health, gender-based violence and gender roles;
- Talk about how to grow up, or support young people to grow up with good reproductive health, safety from gender-based violence, and equality of boys and girls;
- Act to support changes in the home and community for adolescents.

GREAT activities encourage equality between women and men. AYINET has scaled up the GREAT component which was implemented by Pathfinder with support from USAID by integrating it in our already existing youth projects.

## AYINET and Rotary Club Lira organise health camps

AYINET in partnership with the Rotary Club Lira organized free health camps in Lira district to reach needy communities with free health services, encourage communities to practice healthy living and demonstrate to the community the importance of seeking medical attention.

The health services freely provided were immunization, cancer screening (cervical, breast, and prostate), dental services, HIV/AIDs testing and counselling, safe male circumcision, family planning services and general medical diagnosis and treatment.



*A child being vaccinated against Polio at Lira Referral Hospital – one of the health camps organized by AYINET in partnership with the rotary Club Lira*

“As for we women this is the only opportunity that we can utilize for testing since our men cannot allow us to move together with them, but they sneak and go for tests. So it’s your role as a woman to see that you don’t miss out the opportunity when brought close to you.”

## Family Outcast Regains Dignity and Acceptance

Apiyo Sarah (not her real name) was abducted in 1997 and returned in 2005. A few months after her abduction, Apiyo's elder sister and step-brother fell in a trap of the rebels on their way to town. Apiyo's sister was sexually abused, beaten and left to die while her step-brother was abducted. My brother was recruited into the LRA army as a "kadogo," after 4 years in captivity my half-brother died in an ambush in one of the raids. I managed to get the news about his death but there was no way I could pass the message to the home people. After years I managed to escape from the LRA base in South Sudan

I was very surprised to meet my elder sister whom I thought was dead. At home there was already tension between my mother and my stepmother as they accused my sister for laying a trap for me to kidnap my brother. When I broke the news of my half-brother's death the tension increased. My stepmother didn't have kind words for me and my family, saying I should have been the dead one – "Why was I left while my brother was killed?"

The hatred and desire for revenge increased, as they often referred to me as "Anek" meaning killer. Custom demands that anyone involved in murder should pay money and cows as means of compensation commonly known as "Culu Kwor" in Acholi. I was so helpless and felt so guilty for my brother's kidnapping and death. I decided to leave home as the situation intensified and besides I couldn't afford to pay for compensation.

It was an intervention by youth trained by AYINET who came up and helped us reconcile when I shared my story with them. They took me through the healing and reconciliation process, and they arranged



meetings for me, my family, clan and church leaders in July 2014. It was in March 2015 when the storm finally came to an end, with tears rolling out of her eyes, my stepmother and brother fully embraced, forgave and asked me to come back home. I was free from the pain and hatred at last. After the reconciliation and reunion, a cleansing ritual traditionally known as "Kiir" was carried out by my clan leader to mark peace between me and my stepfamily.

I am now able to live happily with my stepmother and brethren's, since I am no longer being accused as it was in the past and life is more bearable and I see a lot of possibilities."



THE GLOBAL GOALS  
For Sustainable Development

## Sustainable Development Goals



### Barlonyo community welcomes the Sustainable Development Goals

On 23rd September 2015, thousands of massacre survivors from Barlonyo in Lira district of northern Uganda were joined by representatives from other conflict affected communities, government officials, CSOs, politicians and development partners in welcoming the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Barlonyo, is no strange place to Ugandans where the Lord's Resistance Army carried out one of the biggest massacres during the twenty year rebellion. This event and location is therefore of great significance to the victims and suffering communities extending across the world. A sign of acknowledgment of the pain and trauma, and

underscores the global commitment to ending wars and conflicts. The reality of peace is now closer as a result of recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.

*"For the many years that I survived in Barlonyo, the only highest flying objects that I saw were bullets. But today, we are happy to see that the SDG flag is flying highest; and above all for Goal 16 – Peace and Justice. We are happy to be included in this global commitment for peace and justice"... Moses Ogwang, former camp leader Barlonyo massacre memorial camp.*





In a symbolic gesture and show of solidarity, Victor Ochen, the United Nations Global Goals Ambassador hoisted the flag in Barlonyo, representing SDG Goal 16 – Peace and Justice. He was joined by thousands of war victims and members of the public, as an expression of their desire to realize peace and justice.

*“Peace is a precondition to development and without it, none of the goals will be sustainable. This commitment to the Global Goals should be a moment to think beyond governments, and focus on the community itself and create partnerships and engagement at all levels. I am happy to be part of making sure everyone around the world is involved in the Global Goals, and we will need a movement mind-set to create a platform for local change”. Victor Ochen*





*Richard Kurtis The President of the UN General Assembly H.E Mogens Lykketoft Victor Ochen and Helle Thorning - Schmidt the former PM of Denmark during the launch of the Global Goals World Cup during the 70th UNGA in New York*

## Peace Generation Campaign

AYINET launched the Peace Generation Campaign in reinforcing our commitment towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Inspired by the Pan African spirit that the people of African descent share, not merely a common history, but also a common a destiny, the Peace Generation Campaign will be promoted among the young generation who have unfortunately inherited a system and history constructed based on hatred and division.

The campaign is an ambitious long term initiative seeking to inspire and amplify voices of the emerging young leaders across Africa, arouse collaborative actions to prevent conflict, respond to humanitarian crisis and support recovery to create an environment for growth.

It is designed to champion promotion of shared unity, build bonds and alliances among the emerging leaders, deepen their understanding

of human common fate, reinforce the vitality of solidarity, and nurture the culture of resilience in the face of presently common African political threats.

Based on trust and confidence, Peace Generation will seek to forge grassroots, national and African regional cohesion and reconciliation, at a key stage of the emerging leadership, and foster positive change from within. The movement will mobilize alliances, create community peace bridges and challenge social injustice, arouse the interest of young people to act positively and promptly as we propagate the cause of peace in Africa.

Peace norms will popularized in society and leadership culture will be increasingly a favored alternative to violence. The programs will include the use of traditional tools, creative ideas and modern technologies to generate more room for expression and empower grass-roots action for peace, justice and reconciliation in Africa.





## Nobel Peace Nomination



### AFSC nominates Ugandan advocate for 2015 Nobel peace prize



PUBLISHED: FEBRUARY 16, 2015



#### Young advocate for victims' healing and justice has impressive impact

Victor Ochen, himself a childhood victim of war, and the African Youth Initiative Network, which he founded to work for the healing of trauma and to promote youth leadership, have been nominated for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).

"Victor Ochen has consistently shown both commitment and effectiveness in his efforts to address the needs of victims. He has worked for transitional justice, while simultaneously promoting human rights through nonviolent means, nourishing the leadership skills of other young people, and challenging systemic issues that lead to the continued vulnerability and suffering of war victims," the AFSC wrote in its nomination letter.

At age 33, Victor Ochen has been a steadfast advocate of nonviolence most of his life. His life story mirrors the stories of the population his organization serves, but he has never allowed his own grief and trauma to coerce him toward violent reactions to the hardships he has faced.

Though it has calmed somewhat in recent years, the conflict between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has had a massively detrimental impact on life in northern Uganda for over 25 years, affecting millions - including Victor Ochen's own family. Forced as a child to flee the conflict, Victor supported his schooling and his family by making and selling charcoal - even as schools and homes were burned to the ground and many of his schoolmates and neighbors were abducted and killed. Most of his peers saw their options as limited to either joining the Ugandan army or being forced into the LRA. Even after he lost his mother because of the LRA, Victor Ochen saw a better path.

Though it has calmed somewhat in recent years, the conflict between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has had a massively detrimental impact on life in northern Uganda for over 25 years, affecting millions - including Victor Ochen's own family. Forced as a child to flee the conflict, Victor supported his schooling and his family by making and selling charcoal - even as schools and homes were burned to the ground and many of his schoolmates and neighbors were abducted and killed. Most of his peers saw their options as limited to either joining the Ugandan army or being forced into the LRA. Even after he lost his mother because of the LRA, Victor Ochen saw a better path.

"Based on a promise to his mother never to pick up a gun, and his deeply-held conviction that guns only invited more violence, he reasoned that staying focused on helping each other to survive and finding ways to pay for school fees was a better path," the AFSC wrote.

"While (working with) victims in the community, he continued to secondary school, graduated and then went on to earn a Bachelor's degree...In December 2003, Ochen's oldest brother and cousin were abducted by the LRA; both are now among the thousands... whose fate remains unknown. Even after the abduction...Victor never wavered on his commitment to nonviolence," the letter continues.

He founded The African Youth Initiative Network, based in Lira, Uganda, in 2005, to work in two critical areas: medical rehabilitation of those who have suffered burnings, mutilations of all kinds, rape, and psychological torture, and the building and promoting of youth leadership. It has built a national and international network of medical professionals that helps victims rebuild their homes and livelihoods. Just one network program in the Acholi region provided 1,300 medical treatments and counseling sessions to 574 victims during 2011-2012.

The youth-led network conducts outreach programs to promote dialogue between youth in different communities in northern Uganda, and has begun a one-week Peace Camp to teach skills in conflict resolution, peace building and leadership, as well as understand the law as a tool for human rights.

In May 2014, the network organized the first National War Victims Conference, attended by more than 250 people from all corners of the country, as well as representatives from Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Burundi and other countries. The goal was to develop a roadmap for a successful transitional justice process in Uganda to address healing the physical and emotional wounds of war to build toward national reconciliation.

The AFSC wrote that Victor Ochen and AYINET "offer a unique and powerful example to be emulated by marginalized people all over the world. We therefore respectfully request that the Norwegian Nobel Committee recognize Victor Ochen and the African Youth Initiative Network's work on behalf of victims of violent conflict by awarding them the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize."

In 1947, AFSC and the British Friends Service Council accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of "Quakers everywhere." Nobel Peace Prize laureates have the privilege to nominate candidates for this honor.



*“My heart swells with pride to hear of one of my ‘children’ leading change in Africa,” commented Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu. “Victor is part of a special group of African leaders who have graduated from the program that bears my name and I wish him well as a potential recipient of this auspicious honour.”*  
**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

**Acceptance**

Victor Ochen and AYINET accepted the nomination with gratitude. Surprising and humbling was the overwhelming approval expressed for our values and work. We were grateful to the AFSC for the faith in deserving the nomination they had earlier awarded to Martin Luther King Jr. and His Grace Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the faith that Victor Ochen belongs in the group that hosts outstanding leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Kofi Anan, Barack Obama, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and the faith that AYINET should join organizations, such as the American Friends Service Committee or the International Committee of the Red Cross, as one of the humanitarian actors that make this world a better place for all humanity.

The nomination remains a sign of deep respect for victims and survivors of unspeakable atrocities who, instead of being crushed by war, struggled and regained their dignity that allows them to leave in peace with their fellow humans.

**Endorsements**

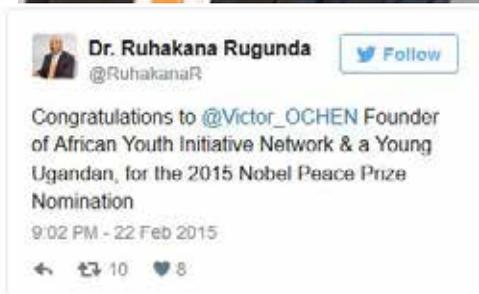
The nomination for the Nobel peace prize attracted dozens of endorsements from distinguished, high profile personalities, institutions, government representatives and partners across the globe in support of the auspicious award to Victor Ochen and AYINET. The endorsements reinforced not only recognition for those victims who devoted their lives to heal others but also contributions of Africa’s young generation, not as tools of injustice but as agents of prosperity and peace.



*The work of Victor OCHEN and AYINET – Uganda is the living proof that fulfilment of human rights is the fastest road to lasting peace.*



*President of the Republic of Uganda H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni congratulates Victor OCHEN upon his joint nomination with AYINET for the Nobel Peace Prize 2015.*



*“Congratulations to @Victor\_OCHEN Founder of African Youth Initiative Network and a Young Ugandan, for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize Nomination”, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, Uganda’s Prime Minister*



*Trust Africa is delighted to join His Grace Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Ugandan President H.E Y.K Museveni, Fatou Bensouda - ICC Chief Prosecutor, and H.E. Ruhakana Rugunda, Prime Minister of Uganda, and countless others in congratulating Victor Ochen and the African Youth Initiative Network (AYINET) for their joint 2015 Nobel Peace Prize Nomination.*



*We are thrilled by the nomination of Victor Ochen and AYINET for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize.*



*It is with great pleasure and sincerity that GAPS Centre for Governance, Peace, and Security strongly endorses the joint Nobel Peace Prize Nomination for Victor Ochen and his organization African Youth Initiative Network (AYINET).*



*We are excited to join the rest of Africa and the world to endorse Mr Victor Ochen and African Youth Initiative Network (AYINET) for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize Award. Aside from being one of the change-makers on our network, we have had the privilege of interacting with Victor and sharing in his dream of a third millennium Africa: "an Africa of peace and security"*



## AYINET's Transitional Justice Programming and Financial Strategies

AYINET implements programs that provides direct services to victims, such as medical rehabilitation, trauma healing, memorialisation and livelihoods in order to facilitate a victims-led advocacy on transitional justice

Planning Context	Financial strategies	Goals to be achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitional justice responds to victims' emergency and humanitarian needs - healing.</li> <li>• Transitional justice policy is shaped and influenced by victims' views and priorities.</li> <li>• Active participation of victims in justice and accountability processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on programs that directly benefit victims contrary to the usual prosecution, advocacy and perpetrator centeredness.</li> <li>• Building synergies among social actors; NGOs, youth, women to have a broader social impact.</li> <li>• Attract donor interests in supporting local victims' focused initiatives and boost solidarity among partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community cohesiveness</li> <li>• Resilient society</li> <li>• Sustainable peace</li> <li>• Social justice</li> </ul>

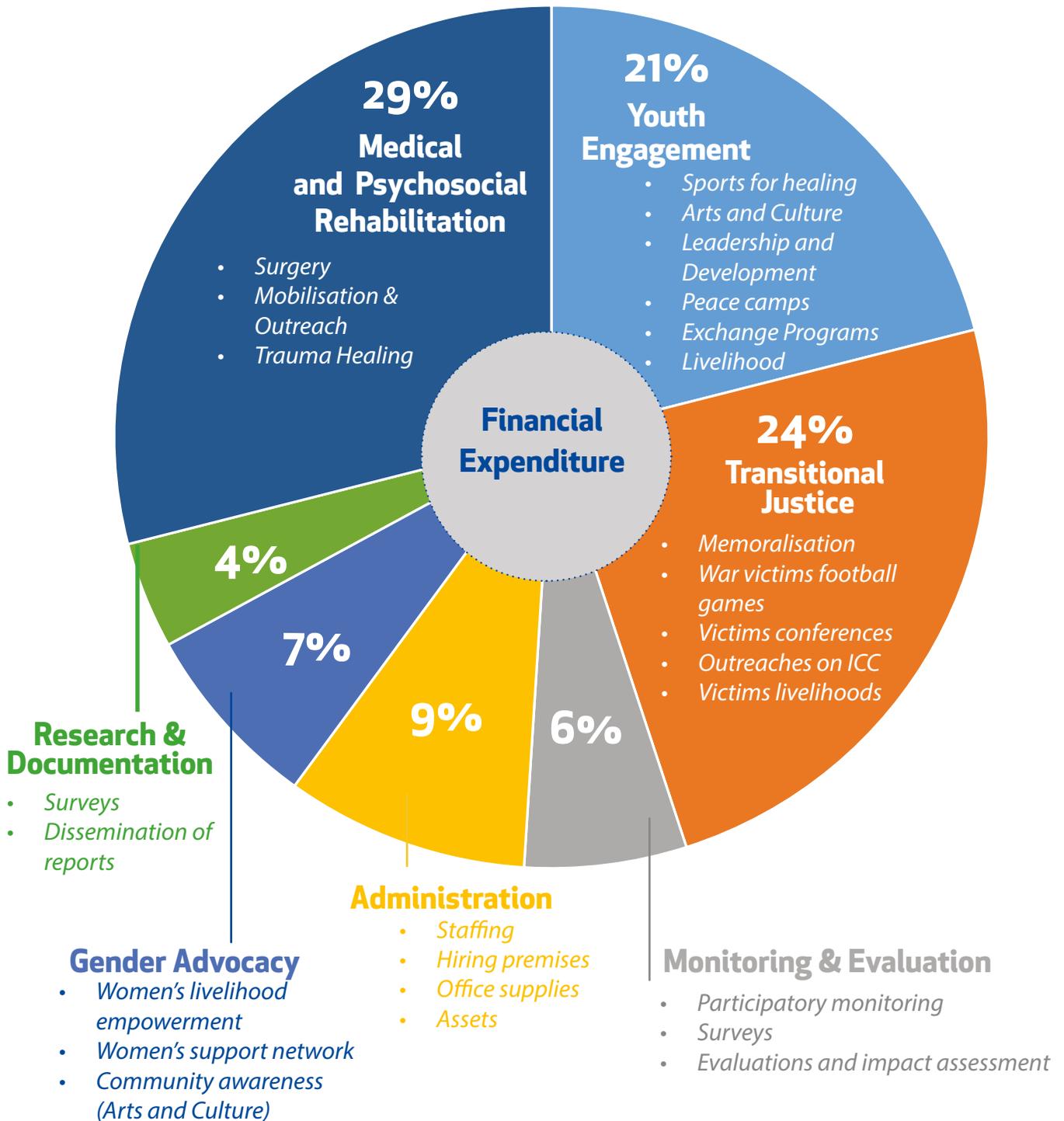
## Donors



Center for Global Health and Peacebuilding  
A Center of The Underwood Foundation



## AYINET's Income and Expenditure for the period 2014 - 2016



AYINET's operational budget for 2014 - 2016 is UGX 4,748,384,921 (\$1.4m)



**Mr. Alex Omwa,**  
Board Chairperson,  
*Assistant Inspector of Police*



**Ms. Sophie Rose Acen**  
Vice Chairperson,  
*Senior Education Officer,*  
*Ministry of Education*



**Dr. Patrick Andrew Opio**  
Board Member  
*General Surgeon*



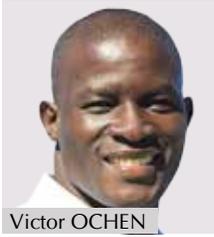
**Mr. Patrick Ogang,**  
Board Member  
*Community Opinion Leader -*  
*Northern Uganda*



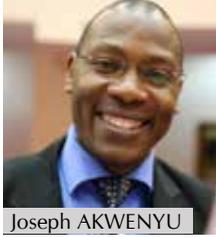
**Ms. Maureen Agena**  
Board Member  
*Gender Activist & Specialist in*  
*ICT for Development*



**Mr. Victor OCHEN**  
Board Member  
*Executive Director, AYINET*



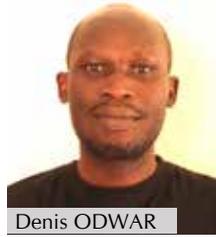
Victor OCHEN



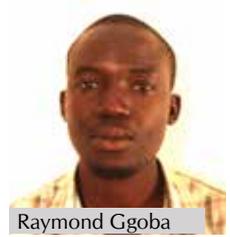
Joseph AKWENYU



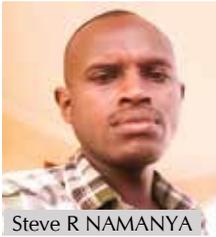
Jolly Ayo



Denis ODWAR



Raymond Ggoba



Steve R NAMANYA



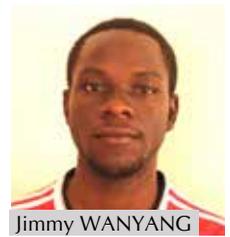
Stephen OKELLO



Diana AKELLO



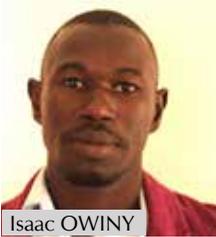
Anna AONYO



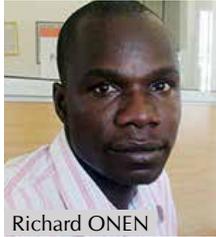
Jimmy WANYANG



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Sarah Neumeyer



Martin OENEN



Jackson OPIO



Scovia AUMA



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Augustin OTIM



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Jacob Aloka

