

CHAPTER IV

UNICEF'S ROLE TO REINTEGRATE AND REHABILITATE FORMER CHILD SOLDIERS IN UGANDA (2006-2011)

Child soldiering is a disturbing social and political phenomenon and it is as old as warfare. It becomes universal problem and its manifestations in Africa have been complex, endemic and resulting devastating effects. The future of formerly child soldiers of conflicting countries in Africa including Uganda was very apprehensive. The actors who should be responsible did not give much attention to solve the problem. The reintegration and rehabilitation of child soldiers in Uganda become a serious concern both state and non-state actors as well as UNICEF.

UN defines reintegration as a set of process of former combatants to get civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Essentially, reintegration is social and economic process as part of country development that takes place from individual, community at a local level (UN, 2014). Accordingly, reintegration process require programs not only direct assistance or compensation, but also vocational training and income generation as one of the most important component in reintegration process (United Nations, 1999)

Singer, further attempts that reintegration of child soldiers is a reciprocal process which by returning the former child soldiers and re-introduced the children back to their home and community, the children can rejoin the society with positive relations (Singer, 2006).

According to Jereg, Rehabilitation of child soldiers means bringing back the children, the child's functioning as it was before. It is supposed to be an organized process started from children's demobilization from escape or release by certain armed force. It is followed by re-orientation of children that led by people who has special training to help them re-adapt in their social and psychological life (Petty, 1998)

Reintegration and rehabilitation are implemented with the goal of bringing security and stability to the former child soldiers in the post conflict. United Nations has been involved in international efforts of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Rehabilitation (DDR) especially to conflicting countries since in the late of 1980s. In past five years, DDR has been component peacekeeping operation in several countries such as Republic Democratic of Congo, Haiti, Liberia and Sudan (Petty, 1998).

UN expanded its engagement under non-peacekeeping purposes including the matter of former child soldiers in Somalia, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Indonesia, Nigeria, Somalia, Solomon Islands and Uganda. UNICEF as the same partner who concern on the protection of children's rights engaged in DDR programs to rehabilitate children who have been involved in armed conflict in Asia, Latin America and Africa. UNICEF reported that in 2006, the large scale of internal displacement especially in Northern Uganda, caused approximately 1.7 internal displacement people, including 935.000 children (UNICEF, Uganda donor update, 2006) into 200 camps in several districts like Acholi, Lango and their sub-regions (UNICEF, Humanitarian action report, 2007).

UNICEF makes a lot of programs to address the humanitarian issues such as Report of Humanitarian Action that is held UNICEF annually as a whole and each country region, and many more. Those reports are used as the parameter in this research to answer how UNICEF helps to reintegrate and rehabilitate of former child soldiers in Uganda.

A. UNICEF Serves as Informational Function: Gathering and Analysis of Data and Publication of Former Child Soldiers.

UNICEF acts as informational function means it contributed to significant number of data collection activities and researches that aimed to provide the evidences of children-based problems in the whole world and specifically in northern Uganda. The objective of data gathering and analysis is for monitoring the situation of children and women. UNICEF believes, through data collections are critical to the development of children and very important to make the world realizes that the children's rights should be protected.

All the data and publications continue to support advocacy, providing government with the accurate data and targeting supporting interventions to assist the children based problems. The data are gained from reports, researches, surveys, articles, in which each of them is published in UNICEF official website *www.unicef.org*. in the part of UNICEF publications.

During running its program, UNICEF engaged with large partnerships Districts Local Government, UN agencies, and more than 40 local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as UNAIDS, UNFPA, WHO, Concerned Parents Association, Action Contre la Faim, Médecins

Sans Frontières and the International Medical Corps (UNICEF, Humanitarian action report, 2006). The partnerships are dedicated to continue to the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable children in the most disadvantaged district.

1. UNICEF's Annual Reports

UNICEF provides annual reports in which spotlights the significant achievements and its partners on the world's children conditions. It also emphasizes the role of UNICEF's partners together with UNICEF that the children's rights are heart of new global goals. This annual report is an output of UNICEF's Annual Strategic Plan as one of effort to protect the children's rights around the world.

In Uganda, for example UNICEF works actively with international NGOs; Light Force International, Samaritan's Purse and other NGO that provide educational assistances in northern Uganda. Over 11.000 girls and boys affected by armed conflict were benefited from construction of rehabilitation's classrooms, teacher facilities, and latrine stances. Partnerships with NGO usually dedicate to children rights' advocacy; moreover in the conflicting country like Uganda, children are vulnerable (United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF humanitarian action, 2010).

2. Humanitarian Action Report (HAR)

UNICEF also creates specific report called Humanitarian Action Report (HAR) launched in 2005. It is purposed to emphasize funding and action plans in the area that are affected by humanitarian crisis around 33 countries. Each edition

of the report includes funding overview for the current year and explanation of emergency information of regions or countries, achievements and the explanation the previous year funding spend.

Humanitarian Actions Report in Uganda is also a form of assistance and monitoring of children condition, in which most of the HAR highlighted the post armed conflict children's condition. The rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers in Uganda are inserted in the programs assistances. It consists of five priorities plans; education, child protection, health and nutrition, HIV/AIDS, shelter and non-food items, and environmental sanitation. The programs are expected to improve the children life especially children are affected by armed conflict.

3. UNICEF's Technology Based Report in Uganda

Inside of regular reports of UNICEF, the method of UNICEF in Uganda especially in the northern to address the child soldiers' problem was supported by the technology innovations. For example there is program called U-Reports started in 2010 (Fund, UNICEF Uganda 2010 annual statement, 2010). Uganda works with the biggest national youth group to run a free-SMS that allow the youth in Uganda to speak about humanitarian issues both in their own country or globally. This method is used to give additional information and make youth generation eager to speak about their condition development after the long armed conflict actively.

UNICEF also helps communities and especially the most vulnerable children and youth to access critical information and areas of health, education, job

trainings and protective services. The devastating effect of armed conflict really closed any accesses for the children and youth to get information. They were isolated and lack of information means lack of access to get their basic services. In response, UNICEF was developing solar powered computer kiosks and made in simple design which would serve as information access points. The important information such as education, protection and others would be available for free and communication would be built and they can contribute to give information (Uganda, 2009).

UNICEF improved its technology innovation to reintegrate children through Rapid Family Tracing and Reunification (RapidFTR). It is an open source mobile phone application and data storage system of collection short and it shares information about children who were separated from their caretakers. Therefore, children in emergency condition can register to this data collection service. RapidFTR is specifically design to streamline tracing and reintegration efforts both children in aftermath of long civil war and during ongoing rehabilitation efforts (United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF Uganda 2012 Statement, 2011).

4. UNICEF Research and Information Center

UNICEF has a research center called Innocenti Research Center (IRC) which publishes researches especially in all countries who have humanitarian problem regarding children. The researches about children in Uganda are published including the former child soldiers who continued their lives as Internal Displaced People (IDP) (United Nations Children's Funds, 2013).

In Uganda, UNICEF has information center that is purposed to spread the knowledge to researchers, policy makers in Uganda, development practitioners, through strengthening the library. Currently, the library which is located Makerere University Main Library functioned as UNICEF Informational Center in Uganda.

B. Technical and Financial Assistances of UNICEF to Rehabilitate and Reintegrate Former Child Soldiers.

During armed conflict, children have lost their rights to get education, health services, protection, and basic needs such as proper shelter and food. Therefore, UNICEF's efforts will be emphasized to help Uganda recovery from the devastating effects through assistances. This is actually as one of form of UNICEF's Protective Environmental Framework (PEF) on basic and targeted services to ensure rehabilitation and reintegration of child soldiers through assistances.

Since 2003 UNICEF with one of its corporation, Noah's Arks and AVSI (Association Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale) has provided technical assistance by supplying basic shelters, blankets, access to sanitation facilities to approximately 12.000 night commuter children in Gulu, Kitgum, and Kalongo (UNICEF, The state of the world's children : Children under threat, 2004).

1. Education Sector

UNICEF concerns very much to help children fulfilling their basic needs including education as one of important elements that can bring benefit by enlarging their knowledge. Uganda is still long way to meet universal primary

school to sustain education in all sectors especially after the devastating effects of long armed conflict.

UNICEF with its partnerships allocated financial assistance for education development for children. Below the summary of budget allocation from 2006 to 2011.

Table 4. 1 UNICEF Financial Needs on Education

Education Sector for Uganda (2006 – 2012)	
Year	US\$
2006	8.450.000
2007	9.179.000
2008	13.717.400
2009	2.167.430
2010	7.100.000
2011	1.500.000

Source: UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report 2006,2007,2008,2009, 2010, 2011

Children had lost of chances to get proper education during armed conflict because schools were targeted by LRA to recruit children became combatants. Regarding to this, UNICEF initiated to provide primary school and Early Childhood Development (ECD) to 21.000 children through 86 branches in Uganda with learning materials and training for caregivers. The branches were located in the most suffered districts consisted of 11 camps in districts of Gulu, Kitgum, and Lira. UNICEF built approximately 200 temporary classrooms for

displaced students caused by armed conflict and other 160 classrooms which were still under construction. (UNICEF, Humanitarian action report, 2006).

UNICEF also established rehabilitation classrooms to former child soldiers both male and female children and supported training progress targeting local and district government education officials and teachers in the area that most affected by conflict. They received training in creating child-friendly school environments. The training also conducted for districts committees of District Disaster Management (UNICEF, Humanitarian action report , 2010).

Besides, UNICEF provided service training to approximately 400 school teachers in psychosocial care, concerning to special female students, and promote hygiene and sanitation during the learning process (UNICEF, Humanitarian action report, 2007)

2. Family shelter, and Non-food Items

The long armed conflict in Uganda caused a lot of children to be abducted to become combatants. As a legacy, the emergence of night commuters especially children who flew from one place to another place to avoid abduction also made children more vulnerable. Both of abducted children and night commuters lost their home and it forced them to live in roads, station or somewhere else.

This problem became UNICEF concerns to facilitate children by providing shelters for children and family. As reported, UNICEF provided emergency shelter and household items to fulfill their needs so they can continue their life after very long conflict. In 2005 precisely after the end of long armed conflict, 40.000 night commuter children and 2.500 formerly abducted children including

their families were provided shelter by UNICEF. Then a year ahead UNICEF tried to give more assistances for children to get shelter and household items. (UNICEF, Humanitarian action report, 2006)

Table 4. 2 UNICEF Financial Needs on Shelter and Non-Foods Items

Family Shelter and Non-food items for Uganda (2006 – 2011)	
Year	US\$
2006	4.680.000
2007	6.314.000
2008	5.298.426
2009	1.378.470
2010	_*
2011	_*

Source: UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report 2006,2007,2008,2009, 2010, 2011

(In this year, the assistance has accomplished)*

3. Water and Environmental Sanitation Services

UNICEF has improved the water facilities and services by constructing 200 water points to access by the children and people in IDP camps. To get safe water, UNICEF helped the children and their families in IDP camps by creating hand pumps to the wells, repairing the existing 214 boreholes, and constructing more 12.800 latrine stances (UNICEF, Humanitarian action report, 2007).

The friendly environment education that has been taught in school often helped the children to start to life healthily with what had been provided by UNICEF and its partners (UNICEF, Humanitarian action report , 2010)

Table 4. 3 UNICEF Financial Needs on Environmental Sanitation and Water Services

Water Environmental and Sanitation Services for Uganda (2006 – 2011)	
Year	US\$
2006	7.000.000
2007	890.000
2008	17.619.593
2009	4.515.430
2010	4.700.000
2011	2.000.000

Source: UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report 2006,2007,2008,2009, 2010, 2011

4. Health and Nutrition

The purpose of UNICEF to give health and nutrition services is making children or families in the camps met their basic medical needs. UNICEF together with partners provided health treatment drugs to former child soldiers especially from several potential diseases such as malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea, and other diseases among 3000.000 children from 300 IDP camps.

In fact, UNICEF held ‘‘Children Day’’ to give routine treatment and accelerate the spreading of Vitamin A supplementation for the children and held

routine immunization to children to avoid measles, diphtheria, and tetanus (Funds, 2008)

Table 4. 4 UNICEF Financial Needs on Health and Nutrition

Health and Nutrition for Uganda (2006 – 2011)	
Year	US\$
2006	10.385.492
2007	300.000*
2008	8.191.920
2009	7.056.650
2010	6.000.000
2011	3.000.000

**Financial on Health Nutrition and HIV/AIDS in 2007*

Source: UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report 2006,2007,2008,2009, 2010, 2011

5. Child Protection

During armed conflict, children were not only phisycally abducted but many girls were sexually abducted by rebel army. UNICEF puts deep concern to those children by providing remedial responses.

According to UNICEF's report, in Uganda it was estimated that on half of all children are vulnerable and easy to experience human right abuses and 76% of children had experienced sexual violence (Uganda, 2009). The other report stated in newly year of ending conflict, it was found that there were more than 250 cases of sexual and gender-based violations. As a following, UNICEF also conducted training in child protection issues for more than 300 officers of the UPDF, in

which in the conflict, UPDF was one of the actor that recruited children to become soldiers instead of LRA (UNICEF, Humanitarian action report, 2007).

The significant step to rehabilitate former child soldiers that was done by UNICEF was to provide follow-up psychosocial counseling to former abducted children and unaccompanied children including the night commuters. Psychosocial describes as dynamic relationship between psychology of people and the social factors, in which both of them influence each other. Psychology refers to emotions, behavior, thoughts, abilities, and memory. Social factors imply on to change social condition such as breakdown of family or community, values, culture, practices and many more (Russel & Gozdzia, 2006).

For example, at the Gulu Support Centre, was supported by UNICEF and other partners, which provide medical services, psychosocial counseling, reunification services for formerly children and women associated with rebel army in Northern Uganda. Then after the agreement of case fire from LRA, up to 2000 children and women returned from LRA to their families or community. (UNICEF, Humanitarian action report, 2007).

Table 4. 5 UNICEF Financial Needs on Child Protection

Child Protection for Uganda (2006 – 2011)	
Year	US\$
2006	6.327.000
2007	750.000
2008	9.784.755
2009	2.803.400

2010	1.500.000
2011	1.500.000

Source: UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report 2006,2007,2008,2009, 2010, 2011

6. HIV and AIDS

The most affected region of armed conflict, Northern Uganda especially the children had suffered from the impact of conflict. By May 2004 the number of Ugandan displaced people has reached approximately 1.6 million in which 80% of them were children and women (United Nations Children's Fund, The states of the world's children 2005, 2004). Mostly children became night commuter as a result of the conflict. They were living without protection in temporary shelter like street or bus station, facing physical abuse, sexual exploitation, including rape. Therefore, HIV/AIDS was spreading significantly.

To prevent the spreading of HIV and AIDS, UNICEF provided medical services by visiting the camps to give Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) and prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) services to approximately 13.200 people (United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF humanitarian action, 2010)

Table 4. 6 UNICEF Financial Needs for HIV / AIDS

HIV/AIDS Prevention for Uganda (2006 – 2011)	
Year	US\$
2006	7.000.000
2007	300.000*
2008	3.439.900
2009	-
2010	1.100.000
2011	2.000.000

**Financial on Health Nutrition and HIV/AIDS in 2007*

UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report 2006,2007,2008,2009, 2010, 2011