PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT FORUM

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WINDHOEK NAMIBIA

Breaking Barriers... Creating Connections

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Promoting wellbeing – engaging youth in psychosocial support programs within Refugee settings - AVSI Foundation in Omugo Refugee Settlement, West Nile, Uganda

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AVSI works for a world where every person, aware of her value and dignity, is the main protagonist of her own integral development and that of her community, even in crisis and emergency contexts.

**Sectors**

- Education
- Food security and Nutrition
- Agriculture
- Health
- Protection
- Psychosocial care
- Family strengthening
- Livelihoods
- WASH
- Energy
- Environment
- Urban development
Total Refugees population in Uganda: 1.3 million (70% are South Sudanese) in 14 settlements

62% of refugee population is below 18 years

Majority of youth are out of school and exposed to protection risks such as sexual exploitation, child labour, drug abuse, early marriage and pregnancy, beside the psychological distress resulting from the conflict and displacement experience

AVSI Foundation is implementing youth programs in four refugee settlements

- Omugo (Rhino Camp Extension) – Arua District: 32,400 individuals
- Palabek – Lamwo District: 44,575 individuals, high influx (300 a week)
- Kyangwali – Kikube District: 102,2015 individuals
- Rwamwanja – Kamwenge District: 68,851 individuals

Institutional donors: AICS, UNICEF, EU, EVAC, ECW, USAID
FINDINGS – AVSI needs assessment

• Only 38.7% of the adolescents (18-24 years) reported to have participated in psychosocial program (recreation activities, home visits, life skills, counselling) – baseline
• Poor psychosocial functioning among children manifested in behavioural and conduct disorders.
• Study in Palabek Refugee settlement found about 35% estimated youth at the settlement were struggling with depression and that 25% of survey respondents showed moderate to severe depression with 23% of respondents reporting having suicidal thoughts (PHQ-9)
AVSI MODEL with YOUTH

• Establishment of **Youth Centers** as safe environment for the delivery of psycho social support programs (attached to **multifunctional sport pitches**)

• Routine **recreation activities** such as sports, music dance and drama, debate, art, indoor games, cinema shows and life skills trainings conducted with the **guidance of educators**

• **Peer-to-peer clubs/groups** with participation of youth leaders and **strong focus** on engagement of **adolescent girls**

• **Peaceful coexistence** among different tribes and with host community. Sport as chance to bring together refugees and nationals representing opportunities for peace, unity and reconciliation
Achievements

• 70% of the youth participate in sports and recreational activities organized by AVSI, at least one day in a week

• Identification of traumatized children and youth and to refer them to the nearest identified facilities that handle mental/psychological health using the established case management referral system.

• AVSI and Strong Minds Uganda have started group IPT to treat depression among 7,000 youth in Palabek

• Mitigating of the displacement situation and rebuild a feeling of self-worth and responsibility over one’s life

• Promotion of unity among community members, refreshed their minds, increased their moral in participating in community activities, healed the trauma, and help to reduce chances of developing diseases.