

and plan of action to combat the worst forms of child labor, including children engaged in commercial agriculture, fishing, domestic labor, the informal sector, street activities, commercial sexual exploitation, construction sector, and children in armed conflicts.

USDOL has targeted several of these sectors through programs implemented by ILO/IPEC. USDOL has also financed surveys on child labor in Uganda. Recognizing that forced and compulsory recruitment of children in armed conflict is a worst form of child labor as identified in ILO Convention 182, USDOL, through funding provided by this solicitation, seeks to support the education needs of this population in northern Uganda.

In addition to the MGLSD, the Ministry of Education has been engaged in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In 1997 this ministry instituted a policy of Universal Primary Education (UPE) to make formal schooling more affordable and thus more available to students in Uganda. Since the implementation of this policy, enrollment has increased dramatically, from 3.4 million in 1996 to 7.2 million in 2002.

Unfortunately, much of the success of this program has been concentrated in the south. Sixteen years of war in northern Uganda has hindered the full implementation of UPE, and has created enormous barriers for young people living in these areas to gain access to and complete quality primary education. Since the birth of the Lord's Resistance Army's (LRA) rebel campaign in 1986, between 10,000–15,000 Ugandan children have been abducted to serve as porters and soldiers for this rebel group. Abducted girls often suffer the added trauma of rape, and are frequently given to rebel commanders as sexual slaves.

In addition, at least half of the population living in areas of conflict in northern Uganda (a majority of whom are adolescents and children) is internally displaced. Escalated LRA attacks since the beginning of 2000 have forced an increasing number of people to seek refuge in Internally Displaced Persons' (IDP) Camps called "Protected Villages," or, alternatively, in the towns of Gulu and Kitgum. According to the World Food Program (WFP), 26.4 percent of the IDPs living in camps are children aged five to 14 years old. The majority of these children have been out of school since the conflict escalated in July 1996. Although national primary enrollment averages 95 percent for all children aged six to 13 years, less than 30 percent of school-age children in IDP camps are currently enrolled on a full-

time basis, with young girls especially affected.

According to the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) Fourth Division Commander in Gulu, over 300,000 children in northern Uganda are unable to go to school at present. Low enrollment and retention in war-affected areas is the result of several complex and interrelated factors. Stress levels among children have dramatically increased because of displacement, separation, death, violence, abduction and sexual abuse. For formerly abducted children and child soldiers this trauma is particularly acute. Girls are especially affected, as they often return from captivity with babies. In addition, both former child soldiers and war-affected children returning to school after a long absence find themselves in the difficult position of being older than their classmates and having missed years of schooling. This situation leads them to either not return to school, or to drop out after they re-enroll.

Despite government incentives to local teachers and a teacher training college located in Gulu, northern Uganda is also suffering from a shortage of educators. The few remaining teachers are often unequipped to accommodate the many special needs of their students. Furthermore, for many children, the cost of purchasing school supplies and the opportunity cost of attending school is too great. Although some young people have expressed an interest in learning skills or a trade, most technical training colleges require a level of academic achievement that former child soldiers and war-affected children have not attained. Furthermore, many young people lack the basic literacy skills needed to succeed in formal training programs.

Nonetheless, the commitment to and desire for education among these young people and their communities is considerable. Education is often the top priority identified by communities immediately following an attack or displacement. The Government of Uganda has responded through the provision of several new policies and programs. The Ministry of Education has drafted strategies for working with children living in areas of conflict in a Basic Education Policy and Costed Framework For Educationally Disadvantaged Children. The policy aims to increase community participation in education; strengthen linkages between formal and non-formal education; improve education quality by ensuring appropriate infrastructure and curriculum content and methodology, and provide appropriate learning materials. The Ministry of Education

and the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development have established a multi-agency working group to address the needs of children who have suffered from armed conflict. Several international and local NGOs have also developed programs focusing on the rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers and war-affected children.

However, there is a great need to expand and improve upon efforts to educate and train former child soldiers and war-affected children. The work undertaken by government entities and international and local NGOs working on the ground provide a solid foundation, but gaps remain in current efforts to provide access to quality education. Areas requiring further development include: (1) Non-formal education, catch-up classes, and basic literacy training (2) skills and vocational training, (3) teacher training and recruitment, (4) the development of appropriate curricula, materials and teaching methods and the provision of school supplies, and (5) community mobilization and sensitization to meet the education needs and psychosocial needs of children and adolescents in northern Uganda. The funding provided by this solicitation encourages applicants to propose solid approaches that will address these needs.

Given the complex unique social situation of these children, USDOL encourages collaboration with programs in northern Uganda working on issues of poverty, health and nutrition, community development, peace and security. USDOL encourages models that work within existing government structures and national plans of action. USDOL seeks to fund sustainable programs that provide for the emerging educational needs of these children as northern Uganda transitions towards peace. Applicants should be ready to adapt services to accommodate the fluidity and constantly changing nature of the security situation, and related migration flows.

IV. Requirements

A. Statement of Work

Taking into account the challenges to educating working children in each country of interest, the applicant shall propose and implement creative and innovative approaches to provide educational opportunities to children engaged in or removed from child labor, particularly the worst forms. The expected outcomes/results of the project are to: (1) Increase educational opportunities (enrollment) for children who are engaged in, at risk of, and/or