

Christian international peace services experiences on peace and reconciliation between the Iteso and the karimojong

A paper presented during the peace symposium

Biography and Theme Introduction

- ▶ Robert Okuda is Kotido District Agricultural Officer, Karamoja holds a bachelor degree in Agriculture, Major in Agricultural extension Communication/Education. He worked as Manager in Christian International Peace Services for 5 years and later with the Local Governments of Kotido and Abim for 7 years
- ▶ His presentation focus on living within/amongst the conflicting parties, sensitivity in the composition of the peace makers and lessons learned during the peace making on Teso-Karamoja border.

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- ▶ Background of Christian international peace services {CHIPS}
- ▶ Work ethos of chips Approach to peace and reconciliation
- ▶ Lessons learned

Background

- ▶ Christian International Peace Services [CHIPS] is a UK Registered Charity which started its work way back In 1966 between the Turks and Greek Cypriots
- ▶ It began its Operation in Uganda early 1991 after the visit of Graham Tucker who had worked In Uganda between 1964 To 1972, he made an in-depth assessment of the area and found out that there is tension and Conflict which was exacerbated by fully Armed Karimojong Warriors and Less armed Iteso

Background Cont'd

- ▶ CHIPS began its activities by getting to know the drivers of the Conflict between the Karimojong and the Iteso. the following findings were got:

Findings of the survey

- ▶ The karimojong felt they were a government of their own and needed to graze their animals any where as they wished
- ▶ Battle on grazing land was inevitable
- ▶ There was liittle and or/ no deliberate efforts by government to regulate the Karamojong grazers when they come and go

Findings Continued

- ▶ The Iteso were endowed with good food security crops such as cassava and sweet potatoes which was lacking from the karimojong herders
- ▶ some Iteso free riders use to connive with karamojong to deprive the weaker Iteso families of the little hard earned livestock

Findings of the survey

- ▶ The army were trigger happy whenever they meet the karimojong warriors they start by shooting {the killing of the clan father of Lt general Gutti in his cassava own Garden Orungo Corner[mistaken identity of a cassava thief report 2001 March]}
- ▶ the karimojong assumed this was the work of the Iteso betrayers and they unnecessarily revenged on them {Ngariam massacre of 11th sept 2001 and Ocoringnimongin murder of the 14th sept 2001}

Findings of the survey cont'd

- ▶ the karimojong were suspicious of the iteso leaders who in 1982 betrayed their leaders[killing of apaloris in wera]
- ▶ Grass was always abundant on teso side yet there was resistance from the local leadership of the iteso not to allow the warriors from crossing
- ▶ The LCs attempted to manage cases which were above their level

Findings of the survey cont'd

- ▶ The rebel activity was on one hand raging within teso and this provided ready barter trade with the Karamojong in exchange of livestock with guns and other ammunitions
- ▶ Boarder line became more contentious than ever before {LOMARATOIT Massacre 16th/Jan /2001} 17people left dead
- ▶ False reporting by national news media {Nathan Etengu RIP} news paper report of the 20th/Jan/2001 new vision that it was cross fire not cold blood murder

Findings of the survey cont'd

- ▶ False claim by the Iteso after cattle theft by karimojong, the local leaders in teso told the local communities that in the event of any theft report to us, if two animals are stolen the local leaders tell the army that they were twenty in number{CHIPS 2001 cattle theft report}

Work Ethos of chips approach to peace and Reconciliation

- ▶ Establishing a team made up of people from both tribes who live and work together thereby demonstrating the possibility of peace
- ▶ Carefully researching the main drivers of the conflict and seeking to tackle some of underlying root causes

Work Ethos of chips approach to peace and Reconciliation Cont'D

- ▶ Encouraging positive interaction between the opposing sides through cross border co-operation in mutually beneficial practical projects-roads, dams and trade
- ▶ Reducing enmity by helping to alleviate the suffering and poverty caused by conflict
- ▶ The team attempting to absorb enmity from all parties to the conflict through their presence in the boarder area and relationships with the local people

Work Ethos of chips approach to peace and Reconciliation Cont'D

- ▶ Establishment chips bases in areas of tension and conflict
- ▶ Putting in place workers of both conflicting sides in each and every base established by chips project
- ▶ Researching from the bible the verses which brings peace and reconciliation- Romans Chapt 12:17-21, Heb 8:12, this was demonstrated practically.

Work Ethos of chips approach to peace and Reconciliation Cont'd

- ▶ Joint work by both communities on common good such as roads, dams market sites
- ▶ Continuous capacity building of the local leaders on equity during case arbitration
- ▶ Invitation of renown guest speakers such as bishops on both sides of the conflicting districts to pass messages on peace and reconciliation

Work Ethos of chips approach to peace and Reconciliation Cont'D

- Joint monitoring by project staff, district officials from the Karamoja and Teso districts and selected local community leaders
- Encouraging joint settlements along the border where there was continuous tension
- Partnership with international NGO's who were willing to support border peace conflicts though they themselves could not establish their presence where there was conflicts

Lessons learned

- Presence of mixed teams in peace building provided confidence on both conflicting communities
- Presence of settlements of mixed communities along the boarder provided buffer in reducing those with intention of crossing to wreck havoc onto the other communities

Lessons learned Cont'd

- Continuous search of triggers to conflict and tension provided a fresh entry points on designing strategies on conflict management
- Trigger happiness of the army when they meet the warriors was viewed by many as the least approach in conflict mitigation

Lessons learned Cont'd

- The use of the army in recovery of livestock with less involvement of the affected parties was looked at with a lot of suspicion
- The local leaders especially the politicians on the Iteso sides of doubling/excergarating the stolen livestock worsened the suspicion from the Karamojong side

Lessons learned Cont'd

- ▶ Some Iteso household members employed sinister methods of restraining little Karamojong herds boys in order for the cattle to eat and trample their gardens with the aim of being compensated{CHIPS Paravet Report feb 2001 wera and Amili mil incidences}

End

