

1009 child soldiers



Games are a popular activity at the rehabilitation centre in Beni. Pinos (with a white shirt), the centre leader, pays close attention.

Altogether 1009 child soldiers, 774 boys and 235 girls, have been rehabilitated at our centre in Beni during the previous year. Between 30 and 40 villages are enrolled in the program and have received children that are being reintegrated in the local community and with their family.

86 new children have arrived at the centre the last two months. CEPAC church is responsible for the reintegration of the children. They report that the fragile peace experienced in the area makes it easier to keep the kids in the program. When the war was raging at its peak last fall, the risk of re-recruitment was high, especially to the Mai Mai guerilla.

The children do not want to return to a life as a child soldier. Also the local church networks great involvement and the programs effectiveness are well known in the whole area, and this prevents re-recruitment. Pinos and his team in Beni are well known even in the different guerilla groups, and the local connection is of great value.

Keeping the spirit high



Mama Jeanne and Jeanette are involved in helping raped women for the fifth year in a row. The picture is from the opening of the rehabilitation centre in Kashebere.

Mama Jeanne and Jeanette are now able to travel freely in and out of the region where we are helping victims of rape. They express sadness and sorrow of what they saw when they could reenter the warzone, asking when this would end. The tragedy just seems to go on and on. The women have been working with this project for five years, and only in short intervals the conditions have been better. New acts of war and riots occur, and every time the lawlessness and brutality increases.

The last year there has been a strong focus on the problem of rape in Congo. The annual humanitarian action of the medical student body focused on the theme, Jan Egeland uses every opportunity to alarm the world and wake up to this reality and Dr. Mukwege has received several prizes in 2008 for his work to the benefit of the women of Congo. The last prize was "African of the year" from Nigerian Daily Trust. The prize was 20 000 \$ and Dr. Mukwege will grant the money to a support program for the women that are transferred back to society after treatment.

Våpen i bytte med arbeid



We are now restarting the demobilization project in Congo with financial support from The Norwegian office of foreign affair.

Through the years CRN has conducted several projects where soldiers from various guerilla groups are offered to trade weapons for work or building materials to rebuild their houses. Congo is flooded with weapons, and war and unrest have resulted in good times for the sale of weapons. People now hope for peace more than anything else, especially the women. Dan Anderson, the leader of our projects in Congo, is reporting that women are also active in this new project. They influence their men to choose to trade their weapons and get a livelihood instead. On this background we have included fabrics in the trading packets, so that the women get a chance to contribute to the family income by making clothes.

Three guerilla groups are taking part in the project. Negotiations have been conducted with these groups over a long period of time, and the first 300 weapons are now ready to be gathered.

Updates available at crn.no