



CECI UGANDA
Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation

CECI PROFILE

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About

Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation (CECI) is a non-profit, refugee-led organization founded in 2017 to promote peace, self-reliance, and dignity among refugee communities in Northern Uganda. Through innovative programs focused on peacebuilding, education, livelihood, and environmental sustainability, CECI equips refugees, particularly youth, women, and girls, with the necessary tools to prevent, reduce and transform conflicts, build resilience, and rebuild livelihoods for a peaceful and self-reliant community.

Background

CECI was founded in May 2017 by a group of South Sudanese refugees, including students, teachers, evangelists, and social activists, in response to and prevention of violence in refugee communities through innovative and creative locally-led peacebuilding initiatives that aim to prevent, reduce, and/or transform conflicts. It emerged to address conflict tensions and ethnic cleavages stemming from resource access and utilization, cultural intolerance, hate speech, trauma, and limited employment opportunities among and between refugees and host communities.

CECI was registered as a Community-Based organization with the Koboko District Local Government (Reg. No. 563/124) in August 2017 and later incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee in September 2020 under section 18(3) of the Companies Act 2012 in the Republic of Uganda (Reg. No. 80020002697777). CECI currently holds a valid Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda (OPM), granting it full clearance to operate in refugee response operations in Uganda. CECI has expanded its services since 2018 to benefit refugee and host communities in Koboko, Yumbe and Obongi districts.

Vision: An Empowered, Peaceful and Self-reliant community

Mission: To promote peace, self-reliance and dignity through recreational activities, education and other innovations going beyond relief and development

Objectives

CECI Uganda seeks to;

1. Build peace and improve social cohesion among refugees and with host communities
2. Build skills to support development and peace
3. Promote girl child education and early childhood development
4. Increase community knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS care and prevention
5. Eradicate Gender-Based Violence
6. Green the environment
7. Foster creativity and innovation among youth in their respective fields of practice

Core Values

At CECI, our core values are the foundation for our success and growth. They guide our decisions, actions, and interactions with beneficiaries, partners, and employees, fostering a culture of integrity, innovation, excellence, and accountability. They are:

- **Teamwork:** We believe in the strength and value of collaboration and respect for each other's strengths, which can lead to successful outcomes.

- **Honesty:** We uphold the highest level of integrity and transparency in all our dealings and interactions.
- **Commitment:** We work within established timelines and remain focused on achieving our desired results.
- **Professionalism:** We act with integrity, provide quality service, and take responsibility for our actions.
- **Personal Development:** We value learning and growth, and we encourage feedback, coaching, and mentorship for all team members.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** We are responsive, compliant, and maintain clear and open communication with the people we serve and work with.

Program Thematic Areas

CECI operates in four programmatic areas to advance its mission and vision:

1. **Peacebuilding:** We promote peaceful dispute resolution and reconciliation, building and increasing peaceful coexistence and social cohesion among refugees and host communities through hate speech mitigation and media literacy, dialogues and community outreach, conflict management and resolution, and trauma healing and peace education.
2. **Education:** We promote girl child education and early childhood development through menstrual hygiene management, advocacy, community awareness and education, educational materials, public health promotion, gender-based violence community awareness and empowerment, and educational radio programming for children.
3. **Livelihood:** We focus on developing skills to promote peace and development, resilience, and employability through income-generating activities, girls' technological empowerment, and vocational and entrepreneurial skilling.
4. **Environment:** We promote environmental sustainability through community education on climate change and environmental conservation, the promotion of tree planting and the use of alternative fuel sources, and proper waste disposal and management.

Strategy/Approach

CECI follows a comprehensive strategy for effective, efficient and responsive program design and implementation, responding to the needs of the communities it serves. This includes:

- **Participatory Approach:** We encourage beneficiaries to participate actively in all programs, from needs assessment to implementation, monitoring and evaluation and sharing lessons learned.
- **Community-Centered Approach:** We place the community at the forefront of all programs and project interventions and recognize it as the purpose of our existence.
- **Coordination and Collaboration:** We work and coordinate our activities with government and non-governmental organizations, refugee structures, and other local stakeholders within our operational areas.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** We maintain transparency in all program activities and associated budgets, which can be accessed by anyone upon request.
- **Needs-Driven Approach:** Our program activities are not imposed from the top down but are instead based on the needs of our beneficiaries.

Target Audience

CECI's programs address the unique needs and challenges faced by various vulnerable groups in Northern Uganda, focusing on youth, women, girls, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups living in refugee and host communities.

Governance and Management Structure

CECI is run by a team of skilled, competent, and experienced personnel headed by an Executive Director who is Secretary to the Board of Directors – a supreme body of the organization after the General Assembly. The Board, consisting of 5 members, is the custodian of all policies, formulates and reviews them and approves them as laws that the management implements in the interest of the organization.

Key Achievements

1. Covid-19 Innovation Prize: CECI has been a leader in the effort to promote peace and respond to the needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in Koboko and Bidibidi Refugee Settlement. In 2020, CECI received the COVID-19 Innovation Prize from the Response Innovation Lab hosted at Save the Children in recognition of CECI's innovative work and impact in increasing access to information, online schooling, personal protective equipment, and livelihood support for 50,789 youth, children, women and girls, men, elderly, and PWDs and for promoting peaceful coexistence in refugee and host communities.

2. Historic Multi-year Grant: In January 2020, CECI secured its first 3-year project in partnership with Koboko Municipal Council, funded by the European Union. The "CRRF: Inclusive Urban Development and Mobility in the Municipality of Koboko" aims to reduce inequalities, increase safety, and promote well-being within the municipality. To date, this project has positioned CECI as a key player in promoting sustainable development and community empowerment and has empowered 4,524 women, youth, children, students, teachers, and persons with disabilities with knowledge and skills in business, public health, gender-based violence, sports, debating, and provided them with start-up capital.

3. Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus: In 2022, CECI secured two projects as part of its commitment to addressing immediate needs and the underlying factors contributing to conflict and instability in the communities it serves. The first project, a 5-year initiative with War Child Canada and funded by the Master Card Foundation, titled "Bridge from Secondary education and skills development to job opportunities for refugees and host community youth in Koboko, Uganda", aims to address high youth unemployment rates by providing 1,242 young people with the necessary skills and training to secure stable employment opportunities. The second project, a 4-year initiative called "Peacebuilding Initiatives" with OXFAM, aims to strengthen women's participation in leadership and peacebuilding activities by equipping over 183 women and men with knowledge and skills in gender transformative leadership, human rights, and peacebuilding at the local level.

Partnerships and Collaborations

Current Partners: European Union, OXFAM Novib, War Child Canada, Mastercard Foundation, ACAV, Children's Rights and Violence Prevention Fund, Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda (OPM), Koboko Municipality, UNHCR, CSBAG, and CEFORD.

Former Partners: OXFAM America, Watson Institute, Respond Innovation Lab, Save the Children, r0g Agency, Dangerous Speech Network, Wellsprings Philanthropic Fund, Youth Social Advocacy Team, I CAN South Sudan, SUFONET, Here is Life, Platform Africa, Nansey Benansio Foundation, International Refugee Rights Initiative, Ubongo,

Membership in Network Organizations: We are committed to improving our humanitarian, peacebuilding, and development responses for refugee and host communities in Uganda through membership in influential humanitarian spaces for coordination, collaboration, mutual learning, resource sharing, and influencing. As such, CECI is a member of:

Charter4Change, Humanitarian Platform for Local and National Organizations in Uganda, West Nile Humanitarian Platform, Refugee-led Organizations Network Uganda, South Sudan Civil Society Forum, Koboko Civil Society Forum, Network of South Sudanese Civil Society Organizations in Uganda, and Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR).

CECI's Media-Related Programs

Tech4Peace: CECI launched the Sawa Le Salaam (Together4Peace) program in 2020, integrating technology into peacebuilding and education with the aim of strengthening communication with communities (CwC) and disseminating information to both refugees and host communities. It improves refugees' access to information and skills related to health, food, and employment, as well as increase access to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic for refugee children. The program distributes radios and memory sticks loaded with educational materials to households of vulnerable refugees. Additionally, CECI established a Community Radio that runs live local talk shows, debates, interviews, and news and broadcasts pre-recorded messages and children's lessons, which we plan on expanding to other Zones and settlements. Also, CECI records and produces music and audio messages in local languages covering various topics of interest to refugees and host communities broadcast through local radio stations, bicycle messengers and boda-boda-talk-talk loaded with large speaker boxes, and social media.

Rumour Tracking and Hatespeech Mitigation: Since 2020, CECI has been tracking rumours using a rumour tracker developed by U-Learn, which is deployed on smartphones used by Rumour Trackers to record local rumours spreading in the community about covid-19, food distribution, conflicts, and others which then are analyzed and compiled into a report that is shared with partners to inform responsive programming. Also, since 2018, CECI has been running hate speech mitigation programs both online and offline, targeting refugees and host communities, including students, leaders, and partners, to train and raise awareness around misinformation, fact-checking, and responsible social media use.

Refugee Advocacy: Since 2022, CECI has been running a refugee advocacy initiative on social media and local radios, disseminating a combination of text, graphics, images, and video messaging around women's rights, public health promotion, women empowerment, peaceful coexistence and livelihood, and localization of humanitarian aid targeting youth, decision and policymakers. These messages spread through CECI's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube handles, which have a combined following of over 24,000 people, and through its website.