

Patongo Community Counselling Outreach

In 2015, we carried out a survey of 500 beneficiaries.

- 90% of respondents reported feeling mentally stronger, coping better with stressful situations, being more confident and able to focus on their work, and more hopeful about the future.
- 83% use the techniques taught them by PCCO counsellors.
- 94% feel the counsellors have helped them overcome their problems.

A 50-year-old woman: my husband was killed in the war, and when I returned home from the camp, my home was destroyed. I have eight children to support, and I felt hopeless and afraid. I had flashbacks and was depressed. The counselling helped stop the nightmares. I've taught my children the things I learned, and now they help me around the house, and the boys treat their sisters better.

A 28-year-old man: my father was killed in the war, so I had to take over his responsibilities and I got no schooling in the camp we fled to. The counselling helped me get through my depression, and I no longer feel I have to hide my HIV+ status. Now I have courage and see myself as a strong individual.

A 45-year-old woman: my husband was killed in the war, and I lost all my possessions when the LRA looted our house. I have one son but I take care of seven war orphans. Living in the camp was very hard. The counselling helped me overcome my fear. It was good to share feelings and then start to think about the future. I now go to social gatherings. And the education about malaria means I don't spend so much time caring for sick children.

A 51-year-old widow with five children: I was suicidal before, but after the counselling I feel strong and that I can handle many problems. I am empowered and I am a problem-solver. I can also identify the signs when other people suffer, and I can try to help them.

A 38-year-old man with five children: both my parents and all of my brothers were killed by the LRA. I couldn't continue with my studies. The counselling helped, and also the business training. Now, I sell beans we grow in the market. I counselled my brother-in-law who was beating my sister, and now they go to family therapy.

A 25-year-old woman with two children: I was abducted by the LRA and lived in the bush for 10 years. I did a lot of bad things there, like killing. I was so traumatised when I returned home; my father had been killed, and I had a baby from one of the soldiers. I was rejected by society. Without the counselling I would have killed myself. Now, I talk about things freely with people who shared my experiences. I counsel other people in my situation.

A 36-year-old woman with five children: I was so depressed I bought the drugs to kill myself. But a friend told me about the counselling, and I came to the group, and it helped me face the trauma. I also learned about farming, and now I'm supporting my children.

A 46-year-old woman with 5 children: my husband was violent and alcoholic from the time we had to live in the camp, away from our home. I started sneaking out to go to the group counselling, and my husband mocked me. Then he saw I started earning money and paying the children's' school fees, and he was surprised. He came with me, and now he has stopped drinking. We talk through our problems and settle disputes without resorting to violence.