



# March 2022 Featured Project

Healing the wounds of torture survivors



TOGETHER WOMEN RISE

# Important note

In February and March 2022, our Featured Projects focus on the mental health needs of survivors of gender-based violence, each using a different approach to treatment and recovery. Gender-based violence is one of the most prevalent issues faced by women and girls around the world, and it can have lifelong repercussions for survivors.

The topics raised by these projects may be difficult for some Together Women Rise members to discuss. Please consider your own well-being before engaging in this content.

# Introducing The Center for Victims of Torture

## Mental Health Counseling for Women and Girls in Uganda

Works to end torture and heal the wounds of torture

- for individuals and families from refugee and local communities
- with focus in Uganda on rehabilitative care of women and girls kidnapped and trafficked as child soldiers or sex slaves of male combatants



# About Uganda

- Population 44.7 million
- Located in East-Central Africa
- One of the youngest and most rapidly growing populations in the world
- Literacy rate is 82.7% for men and 70.8% for women
- Women on average -- less-educated, less paid employment, little say in childbearing decisions



# Life Challenges

## For women in Uganda

- Recovering from nearly 20 years of conflict including widespread torture and human rights violations
- Health, societal, and financial challenges are barriers to accessing social services and opportunities



# Life Challenges

- Thousands of baby girls were kidnapped, trafficked, and forced to be child soldiers, or used as sex slaves for male combatants
- During captivity, many women contracted HIV and delivered children born of rape
- Women feel immense shame, lack access to resources, have limited education, experience trauma symptoms, and may face rejection from community
- They were victims of violence and also forced to perpetrate violence

# The Project

The goal is two-fold:

1. Improve the mental health of torture and war trauma survivors through individual and group mental health counseling
2. Strengthen the capacity of Ugandan mental health care providers to understand, identify, support, and treat survivors of torture and trauma

Beneficiaries include Ugandan women survivors of torture and trauma, and Ugandan and international organizations providing mental health services to Ugandan and refugee communities

**340 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES (160 WOMEN PER YEAR, 20 TOTAL COUNSELORS) AND 2,000 INDIRECT BENEFICIARIES**

# The Project

## Components:

- Mental health counseling provided by local counselors hired, trained, and supervised by CVT expert staff – group counseling, trauma recovery, reconnection to community, restoration of dignity
- Medical and livelihood partnerships for services to improve health and financial stability
- Programming for internally-hired CVT staff, Masters-level interns from Makerere University, and local counselors from partner organizations

# Budget

Item	Description	Cost
Field Staff	Associate Psychotherapist – Gulu (Shares supervision responsibilities, provides training to the national mental health staff, provides management and coordination of counseling activities directly related to the project)	\$20,854
Field Staff	Psychosocial Counseling Supervisor (Assists senior clinical staff with onsite supervision and provides support in the development of training sessions and program direction)	\$17,608
Field Benefits	Health insurance, life insurance, and taxes for the field staff	\$11,538
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$50,000</b>

# About The Center for Victims of Torture

- Founded in 1985, CVT was the first rehabilitation center for torture survivors in the United States; remains one of the largest organizations of its kind in the world
- Work began in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota serving immigrants from war-torn countries
- In 1999, launched its first international direct services program in West Africa
- Today, international rehabilitation programs operate in Jordan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Iraq, and Uganda

# Share your thoughts

1. Why do you think capacity building for local mental health professionals is important for this project?
2. How do you think group counseling makes a difference in trauma recovery?
3. Why is it important for counseling and treatment to be culturally relevant?

