



# THRIVE GULU

Year in Review: Reflections on 2020

# LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE WITH GRATITUDE FOR THE PAST

If you are looking for some positive news to raise your spirits during these difficult times, then look no further. THRIVEGulu proved that immense good can come even from emergency situations. Truly, when I say “THRIVEGulu,” I mean all of us – staff, Board of Directors, donors, and our beneficiaries. In 2020, everyone came together because all of us knew we were stronger together. Further, we all sensed that this was our opportunity to make a real difference.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to our mission. Your generosity shone through the darkness, an offering of hope and healing to some of the most deserving people in the world.

In the pages ahead, you will hear from each of our Senior Program Managers. They wanted to share with you directly what they were most proud of in 2020 and what they look forward to in 2021. When you read their brief statements, know that these are true leaders, the vanguard of positive change and global development.

When I look back, **I am most proud of** them and their teams for their courage, selflessness, and innovation – they made rapid assessments of what needed to be done, they developed solutions to overcome obstacles and gaps, and they figured out how to keep saving lives from suicide, how to help women survivors of sexual violence, how to protect children from abuse while schools were closed. And, when I look forward to 2021, I am most excited about working with them to develop new programs and activities. I want to collaborate with our beneficiaries to meet their real needs with services that are replicable and sustainable. And, I want to join forces with our donors to raise the money we need, so that THRIVEGulu may continue to provide the highest quality humanitarian aid with the greatest impact and the lowest cost. **I want you to know that the world is a little brighter because you helped someone THRIVE!**

Thrive on,

Mick Hirsch  
Executive Director

*At THRIVEGulu, we believe that meaningful existence is more than mere survival. We believe the invisible wounds of psychological trauma deserve healing. And, we believe that functionality and productivity can only flourish when an individual and her community are more-than-surviving. Established in 2010 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we support communities in Northern Uganda to recover from the traumatic effects of war.*

*“In Acholi land, the sound of the drum is a very powerful mobilization tool. Dance itself brings healing of the soul.”*



**“The thing I am most proud of** for 2021 is that we secured yet another major grant. For two years, we will implement a pilot project under Comic Relief in partnership with another organization, Dance4Life. This will be an innovative program combining Dance+Therapy to improve mental health outcomes in survivors of war. The fact that we will integrate dance movement into our counseling work is the thing I am most excited about for 2021. In Acholi land, the sound of the drum is a very powerful mobilization tool. Dance itself brings healing of the soul.

Amidst the pandemic, we adapted and developed activities so our staff could continue to keep in touch with the communities remotely. I am proud of our success using technology to share our message. We ran a virtual campaign in celebration of World Mental Health Day. THRIVE hosted a panel discussion, which included two international experts on trauma recovery. We are grateful to the individuals who generously contributed to the good work of THRIVGulu.”

**-Dora Single Alal, Country Director**



*“In seven years as Country Director, I was never more proud of our team in Gulu than during the COVID-19.”*

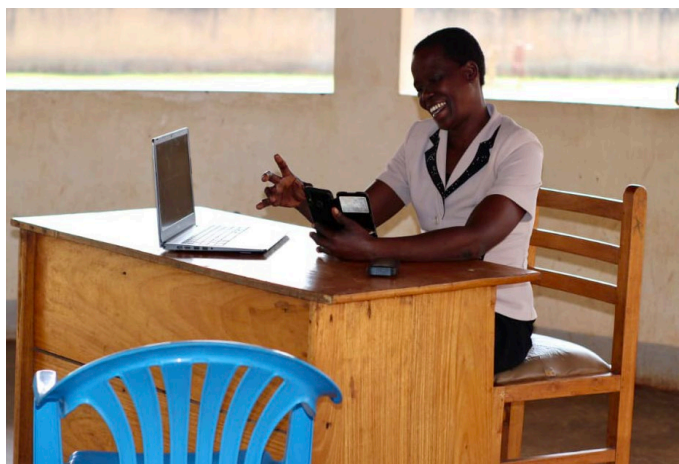
## Empowerment



**“I am most proud of** our prevention and response to violence against women and children in Gulu and Omoro Districts. We held community discussions, hosted 6 radio talk shows assisting 109 callers, and broadcasted information on prevention and response to violence against women and children. We also reached over 2,000 individuals in the most hard-to-reach areas through caravan road drives. The community Lay Counselors/ Gender-Based Violence Monitors that we trained have increased their knowledge and skills to support their communities.

In the coming year, I am looking forward to helping even more women and children. Our team is excited to form more Empowerment Groups and provide trainings on small business success, savings and loan, and adult literacy. Lastly, I hope to create awareness on violence against children both at home and in schools, knowing that child abuse increased during COVID-19 when schools were closed.” **-Brenda, Senior Empowerment Manager**

## Counseling



**“The one thing that I am most proud of** from 2020 is the tele-counseling that was introduced to reach mental health patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. I’m proud of this because now THRIVEGulu counselors are able to provide care any time our clients are in need of psychosocial support. We can even provide support for people outside the project area, thus more are reached than before.

In 2021, I’m most excited about the expansion of THRIVEGulu activities, especially with the new Comic Relief grant, which will bridge mental health gaps being faced by our communities.

I’m also excited about increasing knowledge of THRIVEGulu activities to the rest of the world and other partners within the region. THRIVEGulu is being highly recognized for the good work it’s doing around mental health and psychosocial support witnessed by having increasing number of students applying for internships around mental health practices and other partners referring mental health patients to us for counseling and empowerment services.” **-Christine, Senior Counseling Manager**

## Save the Children International (SCI) & Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)



“Over the past year, I am most proud that we re-enrolled 226 youth (165 child mothers and 54 child fathers, 7 of which had disabilities) into local schools. 65 students are now registered for primary exams in March 2021. We also provided psychosocial support to 2,285 children and reached 848 beneficiaries with mental health awareness raising using both caravan drives and community meetings.

In the year ahead, I am looking forward to implementing psychoeducation in schools, supporting more children with disabilities with

appropriate assistive devices, and re-enrolling more child mothers and fathers back to school upon reopening.” **-Winnie, Program Manager SCI/Norad**

## South Sudanese Refugee Project: TROCAIRE & IRISH AID



“From 2020, I am most proud that 100% of clients who received direct counseling support from THRIVEGulu professional counselors reported an improvement in their psychosocial wellbeing. This is a true reflection of the positive impacts we are creating in the lives of refugees and vulnerable host communities that we serve in Palabek Refugee Settlement.

For the coming year, I am looking forward to the re-opening of schools so we can implement our planned school-based group therapies with children.” **-Naomi, Program Manager HPP**

*Our vision is for a Northern Uganda in which all people are treated with dignity, live in safety, and have the chance to contribute to the good of the community. THRIVE offers two interlocking pillars of support: 1) Mental Health & Psychosocial Support; 2) Individual & Community Empowerment. Our commitment is twofold: Go to the most marginalized and war affected peoples; and work with individuals and communities as partners: “nothing about us, without us.”*

# Literacy



**“In 2020, I was most proud to see great improvement in reading and writing both in Acholi and English. Our year-end literacy evaluation showed 60% of baseline illiterate learners have attained a basic level of literacy in both English and Acholi. The topics and stories in the literacy manual that we developed inspired 75% of our learners to start their own micro-businesses, such as selling fish, operating a food kiosk, brick laying, farming, rearing chickens, etc.**

**In 2021, I am most excited about expanding our literacy program into Omoro District. Our pre-assessment found that 95% of the participants were excited to receive literacy education, especially because the stories in the manual are based on their life’s experiences.”**

***-Vincent, Literacy Manager***

## Library & Resource Center

**We are excited to announce plans to build a Library and Resource Center at our THRIVEGulu Campus! Our fundraising will kick off on International Women’s Day, March 8, 2021. You can be a part of building this wonderful community space by buying a brick or naming the building. We hope you will join us!**



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*\* Donated every fiscal year since January 2018.*

Donors listed are from contributions made between January through December 2020. Every effort was made for a correct list of donors. We apologize for any mistakes.



# THRIVEGULU

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