

PEFO brought hope to my life and family- Acheng Josephine has a story to tell

Acheng Josephine is a mother to Ocio Oliver one of the OVC under PEFO education support in Abunga parish, Lira district. Acheng was the 7th sibling in the family of 9 children. They were orphaned at a tender age which left them in the hands of their grandmother and she studied up to P.7. At the age of 13 years she was married off because there was no hope for her further education as priority for education was offered to the boys.

“I gave birth to 2 daughters, in 2004 when the LRA insurgency reached our village, we ran to Barr sub-county headquarters to seek refuge. However life turned so difficult with vast diseases and starvation due to food insecurity. Sometimes we would run back to the villages to dig in the morning and then return to the camp in the evening. However, one day my husband did not return home only to find out a few days later he was slaughtered by the rebels. Life became more complicated without him as I had remained alone to take care of the children. My brother in-law who could have supported us was also killed days later on his way from the garden. I was terrified knowing that I was left alone, but later soldiers were brought to protect us in the camp hoping for relief. However life did not change as we expected as soldiers put the lives of our children at stake. Children were abused with lots of immorality. Rape and defilements became rampant by the people we thought that they came to protect us. Sending my kids to school within the camp was impossible. My first daughter was defiled an age of 11 by a soldier and taken away. After losing her baby she was dumped and she came back home.

With security stability in 2006, we left the camp and went back to our village. After some years I started developing constant fever and body weakness, and in 2010, I became really ill and that is when I decided to go for medical checkup. I was tested only to discover that I was HIV positive, I felt more tormented, isolated, frustrated and hopeless. I was put on ARVS but felt no difference losing hope thing any day I would die.

My life only changed when PEFO came up to support us, they opened my eyes and made me chose to live. I realized that I was now left with my daughters who needed me more than I thought, PEFO gave me hope. PEFO introduced me to a counselor during voluntary Counseling and Testing which was carried out at a primary school in our community. I received constant counseling and started taking medication with visiting the hospital regularly. PEFO introduced me to a caregivers group in my community where I have made many friends and also joined a group savings group where i save 2,000/= per week. I can also borrow some money to support my family with little challenges. I am stronger than before and I have grown. Through modern crop trainings, I set up a vegetable garden at the swamp where I planted greens and tomatoes. I also grow rice in the swamp and from the sale of the produce I can top up school fees for my daughter who is now in senior 3 at St Teresa Alanyi secondary. I bought a bicycle to transport her to a boarding school and myself to hospital for monthly drugs. Without PEFO my daughter and I would be no where, but now we are living a joyful life. Thank you PEFO...Long live PEFO”, Acheng Josephine testifies.