

The Status of LRA Reporters¹

The Uganda Amnesty Commission (AC) was established by an act of Parliament in 2000 to support the return to civilian life of “reporters” – those individuals associated with rebel groups who renounce and abandon involvement in armed rebellion and apply to the Government of Uganda for amnesty. To date, more than 21,000 former members of different Ugandan rebel groups have reported, and received amnesty and reinsertion support from the AC. Over half of these reporters are former members of the Lord’s Resistance Army or LRA, which has been engaged in a major conflict with the Government of Uganda for two decades.

The Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program for the Great Lakes Region (MDRP) has been supporting the work of the Amnesty Commission, particularly that related to reporter reinsertion assistance (including reinsertion kits and cash payments) and sensitization around the Amnesty Act, since January 2005. At that time, many LRA reporters had been back in the community for considerable periods of time, yet little was yet known about how they and their families were faring – and whether they had been able to reintegrate into a region that was severely conflict-affected and characterized by internal displacement, insecurity and a depressed economy. Therefore, in May 2005, with the support of the MDRP, the Amnesty

Commission initiated a survey of the status and needs of the first cohort of LRA reporters in Northern Uganda who had received the AC’s assistance with reinsertion.

Over 2,000 male and female LRA reporters in Gulu, Pader and Kitgum took part in the survey, which explored their demographic profiles, experiences with the LRA, and social and economic well-being since leaving the LRA. The results of this 2005 study have been useful to the Amnesty Commission’s internal planning, delivery and monitoring and evaluation of its assistance to reporters since that time.

Today, the positive outlook of the ongoing negotiations between the Government of Uganda and the LRA leadership to resolve the conflict in Northern Uganda, suggests the value of sharing the findings of this survey more widely. A Cessation of Hostilities Agreement has been signed and the Juba peace process continues to move forward. Parties to the talks are optimistic that a negotiated settlement is possible in the foreseeable future. In this context, this note is intended to assist the Amnesty Commission, the Government of Uganda and the many development partners at work in the region to prepare for the implementation of a comprehensive peace agreement and the return of LRA reporters, and to plan for wider peace and recovery efforts in the North.

The Uganda Amnesty Act: In 2000, the Ugandan Parliament passed the Amnesty Act as part of its commitment to find a peaceful approach to resolving armed conflict in the country. The Act promotes: ‘... an end to conflict through reconciliation mediated through a legal guarantee of non-prosecution and non-punishment for all offences related to insurgency.’ It thus provides incentives for those wishing to abandon rebellion and assurances that they may do so without fear of retribution. All those who have committed insurgency offences since January 26th 1986 are covered and allowed to return under the comprehensive scope of the Amnesty Act.

Reporters’ experiences in the LRA

Joining the LRA was not a voluntary decision for almost all reporters. Of those surveyed, 99.8% were abducted into the group, and 10% had been abducted more than once. Most reporters were children at the time of their abduction, with an average age

¹This Dissemination Note is based on the “LRA Study”, prepared for the MDRP Secretariat in November 2006 by Anton Baaré and Aki Stavrou of Nordic Consulting Group, Denmark. www.ncg.dk

among respondents of just over 16. Girls tended to be abducted at a far younger age. Two-thirds of the female reporters had been fourteen or younger, compared to one-third of male reporters. At the older end of the age spectrum, only 2% of female reporters, compared to 25% of males, had been abducted at age 20 or over.

Gender differences were marked not only at abduction, but in all aspects of reporters' experiences while in the LRA, starting with the duration of captivity. Boys, for example, were far more likely to have spent shorter periods of time with the LRA. They were three times more likely than girls to have left within six months, and over 40% of boys had left within one year of entering, as compared to only 15% of girls. Girls, on the other hand, endured much longer stays; over half of girls remained for more than 4 years, and a third for over 6 years, compared with 17% and 8% of boys, respectively.

Sexual abuse, common among reporters, also seemed to have had strong gender dimensions. More than two-thirds of female reporters were sexually abused while in the LRA. A similar proportion had been married during this time, but felt that they had been forced into marriage. Patterns of abuse among men in the LRA, while significantly less common than among women, were also apparent. For example, some 40% of men with multiple wives reported having been forced to take a wife against their will. And 7% of men reported sexual abuse, a figure which, when seen within the context of the great taboo of homosexual rape, may suggest a more widespread trend.

Male and female reporters' perceptions of their relationships while in the LRA differed considerably, and pointed to a pattern of very unequal social relations. Fewer than 2% of married female reporters claimed to have married of their own free will. Polygamy was common and 95% of married female reporters had at least one co-wife; more than half had four or more co-wives and a tenth had more than 11 co-wives.

In this context of forced marriage and sexual abuse, many women had become pregnant while in the LRA. Eight out of ten of the female reporters surveyed had at least one child while with the LRA; more than four out of ten had two or more children. Many women were very young when they gave birth – a quarter, for example, were 15 years old or younger.

By contrast, while 66% of female reporters had said that they were married while in the LRA, fewer than 10% of male reporters considered themselves as such. Of these, 80% said that their wives had been given to them; the remaining 20% said that they had decided on marriage together with their wives – despite only 2% of women having perceived their marriage as voluntary. Men also saw themselves as having fewer wives and children than the responses from female reporters would indicate. More than half of male reporters claimed to have only had one wife, and fewer than 8% said that they had five or more wives. Similarly, only 60% of men surveyed said that they had biological children. Contrasted with the higher data from female reporters, this suggests that some men did not recognize women given to them as their wives or recognize the children they fathered during their time in the LRA.

Return from the LRA: Reception, Counseling and Amnesty

Leaving the LRA, for the vast majority of the reporters surveyed, had meant escape. Much smaller numbers were captured (6%) or were allowed to leave (5%). On their return, over half of reporters had gone directly to a UPDF (Ugandan armed forces) barracks, a third reported to an NGO reception center for reporters and just under a tenth went to a local council. A significant majority of respondents,

over 85%, received some counseling from the UPDF before returning home – most often psycho-social or related to social reintegration. The quality of this counseling was highly rated by respondents, with good counselors and useful information particularly cited. Forgiveness, learning to love, integration with people and forgetting captivity and socialization were the themes most appreciated by respondents. As the survey did not explore the precise form this counseling took, however, it is difficult to say whether reporters had access to professional counseling with qualified staff or rather to more informal opportunities to talk about issues of interest to them. In addition to UPDF counseling, virtually all respondents had also spent time in an NGO-run reporter reception center after leaving the LRA and before resettling into a civilian community.

Respondents were overwhelmingly positive about their experience with the amnesty process. 99% said that the amnesty conditions had fully met their expectations. The overwhelmingly positive nature of reporter perceptions on amnesty is illustrated in Table 1 on the next page. Two-thirds of respondents had heard about the amnesty process via the radio, suggesting that the radio could be an effective means of transmitting messages to reporters and their families.

Social Reintegration and Welfare

Successful social reintegration depends on a reporter's ability to establish or re-establish connections to their families and communities, as well as on their ability to solidify these relationships. The study probed various aspects of reporter relationship-building, including social networks, trust, collective action, and social inclusion. As the vast majority of respondents had returned from the LRA more than six

Table 1: The Amnesty Process

		Male	Female	Total
Which of the following statements best applies to your feelings on amnesty?	I'm sure I'll receive support from the Amnesty Commission for a better life	35.3	44.1	39.7
	I feel protected from UPDF and Police	33.9	34.8	34.3
	I'm glad I can show neighbors and local councils that I reported	22.5	17.2	19.9
	I feel forced to apply but I did nothing wrong	8.3	3.6	6.0
	I feel disappointed about the amnesty commission	0.0	0.3	0.2
		100%	100%	100%

months before the survey, and half had returned more than a year prior, their responses provide a valuable insight into the experiences of reporters trying to reintegrate into local communities.

Social Integration

Overall, reporters did not appear to be socially isolated. Nine out of ten reporters surveyed lived in a household with family members. While only 40% lived with the very same family members as before the war, this may simply have indicated a natural life progression, as reporters had moved from living with parents and siblings to living with spouses and their own children. Family figured importantly in the lives of reporters; they were the most common source of food

assistance, and the group to whom the greatest proportion of reporters would have turned in the midst of an economic problem. Nonetheless, very few reporters were formally married or cohabitating with a partner and over 60% of both men and women had said they were single.

Reporters seemed to have strong friendships, with nine out of ten having claimed to have good friends. Importantly, in the case of ex-combatants, where social reintegration necessitates the expansion of relationships beyond ex-combatant networks, reporters exhibited a considerable diversity of friendships. The majority of respondents had said that most of their friends came from different age groups, religious backgrounds, education levels,

professions and neighborhoods than their own. While overall, only a third of reporters said that their friends were predominantly other LRA returnees, this was much higher among female than male reporters. While this trend could have indicated that female reporters faced a stigma among other women, Table 2 suggests this was not the case. Rather, shared trauma and experiences within the LRA may have been a bonding experience among women who were former LRA abductees.

Within their relationships, the majority of respondents felt as though they were treated the same as other men and women – though as illustrated in Table 2 below, gender differences were observed.

Table 2: Relationships

		Men	Women
Do you feel that men treat you differently to other men when it comes to relationships?	No	81.5	
Do you feel that women treat you differently to other men when it comes to relationships?	No	87.9	
Do you feel that men treat you differently to other women when it comes to relationships?	No		69.5
Do you feel that women treat you differently to other women when it comes to relationships?	No		77.9

Of potential concern for the social reintegration – including marriage possibilities – of female reporters, was that close to one-third of these women felt as though men treated them differently than they would other women. This may have accounted for the very low proportion of female reporters, only one quarter, who were married (as compared to 37% of men).

Within the community, most LRA returnees felt that people within their neighborhood, village or camp generally trusted each other. Returnees themselves claimed to have strong levels of trust in others – including their peers, community figures (such as shopkeepers, teachers, medical personnel and NGO staff), and figures of authority (such as military, police and government officials). In terms of social cohesion, almost 80% of respondents had rated their neighbors as ‘sometimes’ to ‘usually’ ready to help other households in the community. Reporters had also felt able to speak their mind, even when they disagreed with the dominant opinion in their community. Reporters claimed similar ease with authorities, and the majority felt that local leaders took into account the concerns of LRA returnees. On the other hand, despite reporters’ high levels of trust in others, they had felt as though other people within the community did not tend to trust LRA returnees. This suggests a continued need for further reconciliation, trust-building and stigma-prevention

Gender Differences in Trust:

One interesting point was that women were generally less willing to fully trust anyone. The percentage of women who would trust to a very great extent was consistently lower across all the categories. One exception was nurses and doctors, whom women reporters saw as the most trustworthy professionals. One explanation could stem from the fact that women were more likely than men to interact with medical personnel as care-givers for them and their children.

activities at the community level, given the fear and suspicion that have likely arisen in many communities after years of insecurity.

Such community-level facilitation may also help to encourage reporters to more fully engage with community groups and events. While most reporters had built strong individual relationships, the vast majority did not belong to any formal social groups and had not taken part in recreational activities or local festivals and ceremonies during the year preceding the survey. A foundation for such engagement did exist however; despite the extent to which most households were struggling economically, 40% of reporters had engaged in some activity of benefit to their community in the year leading up to the survey and the majority had felt that helping others would have positive effects for themselves in the long run.

Living Situation

The vast majority, almost nine out of ten, of reporters surveyed had lived in a rural village prior to being abducted. Upon leaving the LRA, however, just under half had settled in a similar context. One-third had made their homes in IDP camps, likely due to insecurities in their former rural home settlements and an additional fifth of reporters had settled in urban settings. Interestingly, however, regardless of the specific settlement, the majority of returning reporters had remained within Northern Uganda.

Residential mobility among returnees was high, with more than 70% having moved at least once since their return, and 15% having moved three or more times. While this might suggest that reporters faced rejection from their families upon their return and thus had relocated, as over 90% of reporters claimed to live with family members, this seems not to have been the case. Instead, this mobility was likely closely linked to the need to relocate/reunite with family members, or to changing security conditions and general widespread population displacements in the North.

Reporter’s housing was very consistent throughout the sample, with nearly 95% of respondents living in huts. Slightly more than half of respondents had rated their housing situation as worse since their return, as compared to before joining the LRA – though this was higher among women than men. However, just over half of respondents said that their living condition was the same or better than their neighbors, indicating that reporter’s housing situation had been consistent with that of the overall population.

Health and Welfare

The majority of reporters, over 85%, claimed to be in good health, while 11% were undergoing medical treatment, and the remainder waiting for medical rehabilitation. Disability screening was one area in which the release process for reporters was seen to have significant shortcomings, as more than half of respondents had not been screened for disability after reporting. The Amnesty Commission and other agencies working with returnees should work to improve disability screening for future reporter caseloads. Encouragingly, however, the quality of the screenings that did take place seems to have been high; of those reporters who had been screened, almost all had felt that their classification was correct.

In terms of sexual health and HIV/AIDS awareness, over three quarters of respondents had received some form of sex education and an even greater proportion were well aware of HIV/AIDS and the nature of the disease. On the other hand, close to 40% of men and over 20% of women had never taken an AIDS test and, of those who had, more than a quarter did not know the results. More than 80% of respondents, both men and women, however had said that they would be willing to attend a discussion on sexual issues. This is an opportunity to better disseminate information on safe sexual practices and encourage safe sexual behaviors that agencies working with reporters should capitalize on, particularly at the moment of return, when only 2% of the reporters surveyed had received HIV/AIDS counseling.

The study was less informative in terms of reporters' psychosocial recovery from their LRA experiences. According to the research, returnees had not seen themselves as suffering from any long-term problems, with more than eight out of ten claiming to never have problems sleeping, concentrating when working, talking with friends, trusting others, or controlling their temper. Violent or aggressive tendencies were similarly said to be limited, with more than eight out of ten respondents also having claimed never to quarrel with family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, strangers or people in authority. Further research on the lingering effects of the LRA experience on reporters could be beneficial, particularly given the traumatic experiences many reporters suffered (two-thirds of female reporters, for example, were sexually abused). The study team also noted that the overwhelmingly positive nature of the current responses may partly have resulted from respondents having wanted to paint themselves in a positive light to the research team.

Safety and Security

Feelings of fear among reporters varied both by gender and by time of day. Overall, two-thirds of reporters had 'definitely' felt safe in their community during the day, though this was higher among men (74%) than among women (60%). Consistently, the proportion of female reporters who 'definitely did not' feel safe during the day was almost twice that of men (22% vs. 13%). At night, respondents felt less safe and gender differences were less pronounced. More than 40% of women and men had claimed to feel unsafe, although an equivalent proportion claimed to feel completely safe. It is difficult to know whether these trends were specific to reporters, or were consistent with feelings of insecurity among the general population in Northern Uganda.

The most significant perceived threat at the time of the survey in 2005, among both men and women, at both day and night, was the fear of re-abduction (over 60%). These feelings had a geographical distribution, with the majority of those who feared re-abduction living in rural

settlements in northern Uganda where insecurity was high. Encouragingly, in the face of insecurities, respondents advocated non-violent strategies and solutions far more often than violent ones. Strategies like complaining to the police, the UPDF or a village leader, going out in groups, getting stronger doors and locks, having someone trustworthy in the house or commuting to the nearest town were all seen as useful options by the majority of respondents; carrying a weapon for protection remained limited.

Economic Well-being

Reintegration into economic systems and opportunities is crucial for ex-combatants to develop livelihoods, support themselves and their families and stay engaged in ongoing peace processes. The study probed several aspects of reporter livelihoods including education, access to land and employment opportunities, and results suggest a high degree of economic vulnerability.

Education

In terms of education, the survey highlighted low overall literacy and education levels among reporters and notable gender differences, with male reporters considerably better educated than their female peers. One third of male reporters and almost two-thirds of female reporters were unable to read and write. Half of male reporters and over 80% of female reporters had not completed primary school; one in ten had no education at all. Three-quarters of respondents felt that they had less education than both their parents and their friends and neighbors. This trend of low and interrupted education was unsurprising given that the vast majority of reporters surveyed were of school-going age when abducted into the LRA.

Encouragingly, many respondents had returned to education. Over half of male reporters and a third of females were continuing with their education at the

time of the survey, the majority through formal schooling and about 15% through vocational training. Apprenticeship was an option pursued by only a handful of reporters. Also notable was that close to 80% of reporters identified continuing their education as a high priority (with almost the entire remainder claiming that they would consider it). Surprisingly, three-quarters of reporters had claimed to have the resources to undertake education or training through a variety of sources including family members, government and civil society organizations. Since motivation and financing did not seem to be serious constraints, yet a significant number of reporters were not back in school, support agencies may need to facilitate reporters' return to education and training, for example by combating stigma or gender-bias in education, supporting child care for student parents, facilitating access to educational institutions (providing identity documents, lobbying schools to enroll reporters year-round etc) or by facilitating adult education classes in evenings and weekends. The low numbers of students in vocational training and apprenticeship programs may also have signaled a shortage of such opportunities in the area, or the need for better sensitization of reporters about skills training and apprenticeships.

Access to Land and Food Security

Consistent with the overall difficult living situation in Northern Uganda, in which the vast majority of reporters were located, more than 7 out of 10 reporters had lacked access to land. Many of those who did have agricultural land had been unable to access it to plant and harvest crops due to the insecurity in the region. Predictably in this context, the majority of reporters and their families did not have access to enough food and went without certain foods regularly; three-quarters were recipients of food aid. Among unemployed reporters, friends and family had been the number one source of food assistance, with another quarter relying on NGOs and one-tenth on government support.

Job Trends among Employed Reporters:

Among employed reporters, certain occupations were common to both male and female reporters – such as manual labor and farming – while others had distinct gendered trends. Petty trade, for example, was far more common among women than men, as were professional positions (such as teachers, medical staff, administrators and NGO or private sector workers), where women outnumbered men almost three to one. On the other hand, one-third of men were employed by the military or police force, a profession to which none of the female reporters surveyed belonged. Including militia forces, over 40% of employed male reporters worked in the field of defense and security. This high level of employment for men in the military may explain the considerably higher wages earned by male respondents as compared to their female counterparts. It could also have accounted for their relatively higher stability of employment: two-thirds of employed female reporters had been unemployed during the 12 months preceding the survey, as compared to only half of employed male reporters.

As only a very small number of reporters were in full-time employment, it is difficult to say whether this data was representative of the wider reporter population – or only indicative of a trend worthy of further study. It is also possible that these trends were not specific to the reporter population and reflected the realities of employment for the civilian population as a whole. Wider employment trends in the population, namely high levels of unemployment, may also have accounted for the fact that while 70% of employed reporters did not earn enough from their jobs to support their needs, 90% of them had claimed to be ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ satisfied with their job. This satisfaction may also have been relative – as more than 70% of reporters found their economic situation at the time of the survey equal or better than before being with the LRA.

Employment

Employment is often a key measure of economic reintegration among ex-combatants. Unsurprisingly, in economically depressed Northern Uganda where unemployment was high among the general populace in 2005, unemployment was also high among reporters. Less than one in twenty respondents were employed or self-employed, whether on a full- or part-time basis and more than half were actively unemployed (i.e. searching for employment, as opposed to students, housewives or the ill who were not employed but were not searching for jobs). The highest percentage of unemployment, by age, was found in what should have been the most employable age cohort, that of adults 25 years and older. Furthermore, there seemed to be a progressive drop-off in employment in the formal sector with age – possibly reflecting the fact that people had left the formal waged labor force to return to subsistence farming.

Of the half of respondents who were actively unemployed, more than nine out of ten had not worked at all since their return. Close to one-fifth of unemployed reporters attributed their unemployment to a lack of job opportunities; three-quarters cited their lack of work skills. This is an important finding, and suggests the need to help reporters access vocational training and skills development opportunities in order to assist them in developing viable livelihoods. In the absence of such support, however, respondents had been overwhelmed by the uncertainty of the economic depression around them – only 20% had believed that there was a good chance of getting a job in the near future.

The overall economic picture for most reporters was thus weak and their economic vulnerability high, as reporters tended to have low levels of education, low access to land for farming and few employment opportunities. This finding must be viewed within the overall context of Northern Uganda, however, where insecurity and economic decline were particularly prevalent at

the time of the study and economic trends among reporters mirrored the poverty and economic vulnerability of the wider population. The consistency of reporters’ economic challenges with those of their neighbors and other returning populations highlights the importance of ensuring that they are included within wider community recovery and livelihood development programming.

Overall Well-being and Outlook for the Future

The diverse and dynamic patterns of reporters’ generally positive social reintegration and challenging economic reintegration contexts were reflected in the complex, and at times contradictory ways in which reporters had perceived their overall well-being. On the one hand, reporters identified themselves as among the poorest people in their communities. When given a 9-step poverty ladder on which the poorest were on Step 1 and the richest on Step 9, the majority had located themselves on the bottom step, and more than nine out of ten on the bottom two steps. Perhaps unsurprisingly in this context, reporters consistently expressed feelings of disempowerment. Half of respondents felt that they lacked control over the decisions that affected their everyday lives and that they lacked the power to change the course of their lives. These difficult post-return circumstances, coupled with the experience of war itself, likely accounted for the fact that over eight out of ten reporters surveyed had said that if they were to die tomorrow, they would have been dissatisfied with what their lives had meant.

On the other hand, this frustration and disappointment was tempered by a real sense of optimism. A quarter of the reporters surveyed had believed that their economic situation would improve within a few weeks, and three-quarters had believed that it would be better within a few years. More than 80% of reporters had felt that they had some impact on making the community a better place and a similar proportion felt valued by their immediate society.

Close to eight out of ten reporters, both male and female, considered themselves happy.

Study Implications: How can these findings be used?

This study suggests that even in the absence of formal reintegration support targeted to reporters (the AC having provided basic reinsertion assistance, but not a reintegration program), men and women formerly associated with the LRA were reintegrating both socially and economically into their communities. Clearly, however, vulnerability was high among reporters, particularly among those who returned to insecure and economically depressed communities and IDP camps in Northern Uganda. What can be done? The study suggests multiple axes through which the Amnesty Commission and other agencies working on reintegration in the North can better promote socioeconomic reintegration and reconciliation among existing reporters, future LRA reporter caseloads and wider communities, which in turn can contribute to a stronger foundation for peace and development programming in the region.

→ **Reporters, like their neighbors, were economically vulnerable.** The consistency of reporters' economic concerns with wider economic problems in the region,

whether in terms of a lack of livelihood opportunities or access to land, suggest that provision of reintegration support targeted to reporters on an entitlement basis may not be the most effective strategy for supporting their economic well-being. Rather, reporters should be explicitly included within wider community-recovery, livelihood development projects and social safety net programs. For those economic challenges which are more prevalent among the reporter population, such as illiteracy and low levels of educational attainment, advocacy with specialist government and civil society agencies can encourage existing programming to be widened or adapted to meet specific reporter needs.

→ **Gender played a significant role in determining reporters' experiences while in the LRA and was equally relevant to reporters' lives after their return.** Female reporters were more likely to have been abducted at a younger age and to have endured forced marriage and sexual abuse while with the group. After their return, female reporters had lower levels of literacy and education with which to build productive livelihoods, and were less likely to trust and to feel empowered. These trends suggest the importance of a gender-sensitive approach among organizations working with reporters such as the Amnesty Commission, so that the particular gender-related challenges facing both male and female reporters are taken into account. Given the particularly vulnerable situation of many female reporters, ongoing advocacy with women's NGOs in the region could be useful in encouraging them to include

female reporters within their programs, and to develop activities to address the stigmas and gender-specific obstacles to reintegration that they face.

→ **Social exclusion of reporters was not widespread, yet additional reconciliation and awareness-raising efforts would be useful in reducing stigma.** Reporters, for example, currently felt that they were not trusted by other community members which could have impacted their involvement in community life. Stigmatization was also one possible rationale for low reporter return to education. Ongoing social reintegration, reconciliation and sensitization activities to build trust and reduce stigma and stereotyping will be especially important in communities with high numbers of LRA reporters. Radio was found to be an effective medium for messaging to reporters and could also be explored as an option for information-sharing and sensitization of the wider community.

→ **Counseling services were a valuable support for reporters.** To date, however, these services have not been offered to returning reporters on a systematic basis and the training and experience levels of counselors has not been assessed. Future counseling services, whether provided by reporter reception centers, the Amnesty Commission or NGOs, would clearly benefit reporters' reintegration. Given the feedback from the respondents of this survey, some useful themes for inclusion could include reconciliation, sexual health and HIV/AIDS awareness, livelihood development and access to community services.

For more information on the work of the Uganda Amnesty Commission, please visit: www.mdrp.org



The Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) is a multi-agency effort that supports the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in the greater Great Lakes region of Central Africa. MDRP is financed by the World Bank and 13 donors – Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the European Commission. It collaborates with national governments and commissions, and with over 30 partner organizations, including United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations.