



Betty Oloyo, 34

Betty has lived in the Gulu township for 18 years, after leaving her home in Palaro because of the war. A widow, she cares for five of her own children and four of her sister's who were orphaned when the rebels killed their mother and father.

Betty is HIV positive, as are her two youngest children. She says that "life has become easier" for her because of *Paper to Pearls*. She now eats two meals a day instead of one and can afford to buy the milk that is one of the few foods her two youngest will eat. She is able to pay for transportation to the local hospital and for the medications and

supplements she needs. In addition, she has used her beading income to buy a set of chairs and a cupboard for her house, and—luxury of luxuries—a cell phone, an essential mode of communication in Africa.

Most important, Betty now believes she will live to see her children educated.

HIV limits her strength and energy and hard work is debilitating. Before she began beading, she had to garden to grow food for her family, selling part of what she grew for income. Now she thinks about the "empowerment" the beading income has given her and dreams of the small house she hopes to build one day when she can finally go home to Palaro.



Josephine Aol, 30

Although she has never married, Josephine has the responsibility for seven children, all orphaned by the deaths of her sister and brother. Two of the oldest, now 21 and 17, were abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army. They were able to escape and are now receiving counseling and vocational training.

For Josephine, *Paper to Pearls* has "rejuvenated" her life. The income she earns enables her to buy what she needs for her household on a daily basis, and has made it possible for her to send two children to secondary school. An orphan herself, she says everyone doubted her

ability to care for her nieces and nephews. But now she has regular income—far more than she was able to earn through intermittent gardening—and with it has come the respect of her family and the community.

Josephine believes that her group of beaders is different from the other women in the camp. For them there is no more gossiping and idleness, only focus on their work. That work, she says, is giving her nieces and nephews "a real chance", enabling her to meet their needs and ensure that they are in school. And school, she adds, helps them avoid the negative influences of the camp.



Christine Okello, 50

The mother of 13 children aged 35 to eight, Christine has lived in the Acet camp for nine years. Like all the beaders, she laments the effect of camp life on the children. It has made them wild, she says, and dependent on relief aid, while susceptible to negative peer pressures. Like many mothers she tries to keep the Acholi culture alive within her family, telling stories of the traditional ways, of life before the war.

Partially paralyzed from a snake bite, she is not able to garden and uses a portion of her beading income to pay others to do her gardening for her. This leaves her additional time to devote to beading, which has become her lifeline and that of her family.



Alice Amony, 22

Alice was abducted along with her brother in 1999, when she was 12. She escaped in 2005 when her rebel "husband" was killed in a skirmish. At the time she had a two-year old child and was pregnant with a second. Alice was in a rehabilitation center for six months and then went to live with her sister, whose husband died of AIDS.

Alice now supports her sister and her sister's four children as well as herself and her little boy and girl. The income she currently earns from our purchase of her necklaces enables her to buy products in the local market to resell. With this income she meets the family's daily needs and is able to pay school fees for the older children.