Coping with Crisis: Using Music and Art in Northern Uganda, Darfur, and Beyond

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ABSTRACT

The most personally empowering mediums that can be used by individuals and groups to respond to international crises are music and art. The effect of music and art on the brain has hardly been explored. I will provide evidence for my argument through two case studies. The first will be over the conflict in northern Uganda, where the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) has abducted children to fight as soldiers. I will examine the Shropshire Music Foundation and Invest in Children and Youth, two NGO’s that use education in music (and sometimes art) to reintegrate former abductees and help entire communities to recover physiologically from the traumatizing effects of the LRA’s presence. The second case study will be Darfur, Sudan, which has been faced with the first genocide and one of the worst humanitarian crisis of the 21st century. I will discuss the use of drawings done by children to understand the conflict, the Amnesty International benefit CD Instant Karma, and other nontraditional methods that have been used in response to the crisis such as video games. Both case studies will include interviews with relevant sources including heads of small NGO’s and other fieldworkers. The conclusions I draw will be recommended for future implementation in crises, including the rebuilding of Haiti.