



A Piece of Peace

Issue II

Building peace and empowering women to know their rights

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In this issue:

- Building peace and empowering women to know their rights
- Up-coming trainings
- New Book featuring the stories of rural women
- Conflict Management and Peace building course for the Eastern Africa Standby Force
- Enhancing Kenyan women participation in 2012 political processes

Training of Trainers in Peace Building and Conflict Transformation

In the period 26th-30th March 2012, COPA will conduct a five day training of trainers in Nairobi, Kenya for 25 practitioners in the fields of peace building, development and humanitarian aid drawn from the Horn, the Great Lakes region and Eastern Africa including Sudan and South Sudan.

The training is aimed at:

Building capacities of participants to design training programmes; Improving capacities to conduct needs assessments of their target groups; Enhancing abilities to conduct analysis of their beneficiaries/ organization's operating contexts; Building up skills of to conduct actual training / presentations/facilitation; Enhancing capacities to evaluate their training programmes.

For more information contact martha@copafrica.org or visit our website.

My work has been to empower women against discriminative practices and integrate them socially and economically. I am enhancing their standard of living, by ensuring that women's rights are promoted, realized and protected.

I have been conducting civic education on the new constitution and women's gains as stipulated therein, organizing peace initiatives and informing how the new constitution if implemented can prevent conflict. I am also advocating against GBV by reporting rape cases.

My target group is women and youths and especially victims of PEV in camps i.e. (IDPs) in Trans Nzoia county. Through my work I am offering women the opportunity for personal development through increased access to training, inspiration, recreation and counselling. The idea to work in activities related to women's capacity building, hatched from a need to tackle issues such as violence, poverty and illiteracy. Poverty combined with poor governance and ethnic based politics resulted in the 2007 – 2008 PEV and its consequences: prostitution, unwanted pregnancies outcomes of rape, drug abuse and gender violence.

The situation at the grassroots became alarming. My aim was to turn around this situation, to enable women to participate fully in the development of their livelihood assets and to lobby for peace initiatives to ensure that what happened in 2007 – 2008 will not happen again.

More women are claiming decision-making roles

Since the constitution was voted in 2011, it has been my guiding principle.

Most of the women I have been able to reach, do now understand the gains stipulated in the new constitution. They have realized their rights and appreciated the new constitution.

Girls and women visit the hospitals before 72 hours if they are raped and most rape cases are reported.

Enabling women to participate fully in the development of their livelihood assets and to lobby for peace

I have been able to educate the community and especially the women to realize that they have a role to play in the society. I believe that women will be involved more in key decision-making, peace negotiations and will occupy key roles in the society. Most of the women that I have empowered are interested in politics unlike before. Through the whole process, I have also been able to realize my talents and my passion of working with the community.

Also the UN SCR 1325 has brought a lot of changes in my work because now everything I am doing is supported by an international instrument, which is revolving around women and girls in conflict areas.

I want to continue lobbying for women participation in peace initiatives considering the pillars of UN SCR 1325. I will continue my work towards ensuring that

women participate in the peace processes, their rights are protected, realized and promoted, calling for the adoption of a gender perspective, which includes women and girls during repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction.

Recognizing problems, introducing solutions

When working towards implementing women's rights I am coming across many difficulties. Below I am naming some of them as well as the way I believe we can solve them:

Culture: In most African cultures women are not allowed to play a key role in the society or even address to men.

What we can do? Encourage special measures to be put in place so as to protect women from harmful cultural practices that prevents them from participating in peace initiatives. Also sensitize the community and ensure increased representation of women at all levels of decision-making.

Fear due to insecurity: Insecurity in Trans Nzoia and Mount Elgon has been the order of the day, which is a big challenge for women like me visiting fragile areas on my own. So first of all, we need to appreciate that we are women and thus vulnerable people in the society and be aware that anything can happen during our work. Therefore we can use other methods of peace initiatives like negotiations, visit areas that are safe and also try to walk with men from the community where the security is bad.

A Piece of Peace

'women seek actively a position in the peacebuilding discussion of their communities' and refuse harmful cultural practices'

The ICC process: When trying to talk about peace and its processes some tribes/communities feel that the ICC process has been discriminative against tribes and they refuse to participate. To overcome this challenge I am trying to make people understand the importance of the ICC, what exactly it means and how it works.

Lack of information on the Resolution 1325: which has also been my case. Even though I have been working with women in the community and advocating for their rights, which means my work has been in line with the Resolution 1325, I did not know that I was implementing it. Only recently did I hear about the Resolution. I would therefore advice women to do what I did, which is research and reading as well as documentation of key aspect of the Resolution 1325 and dissemination of the documentation to other women.

Aid dependency and NGOs: Some NGOs issue reimbursements to the participants, which makes it difficult for smaller organizations with limited resources to do their work. What I advice others working towards implementing women's rights to do? When starting to sensitize the community let them appreciate that you are doing the work for their own good, not yours or your organisation's. Explain to them that they have the information you need and you have to give them the knowledge they lack, which is more powerful than a reimbursement.

Language Barriers: Most local women do not understand Kiswahili or English, which forces me to look for translators. In cases I am

facing language barriers, I ensure that a percentage of the participants understand one of the national languages so then they can interpret to others.

Limited funds in amount or duration: Trans Nzoia and Bungoma Counties are huge areas; due to limited funds I have not been able to reach all parts of these counties. My initial target has been very hard to meet; I have not been able to reach as many women as I would like within the two counties.

Also the stipulated time of funds is very short. Women activities always get little funding that can exist for only 2 -4 months, which is not enough time to cover all areas so the activities are cut short again. How to go about it: Write proposals which are long term and also think of a way of introducing income generating activities (IGAs) through new technologies so the projects can become self-sufficient after some initial funding.

Obstacles in women's participation in politics
When it comes to Kenyan women's participation in peacebuilding and political processes ,culture is again an obstacle. In most cultures it is believed that women are there to be seen and not to be heard; that their place is in the kitchen and they should remain silent forever. Because of this belief women are not supposed to say anything in front of a man.

Linked to the culture is the fear that women have of losing their families. Firstly, there are the many tasks they have to perform when involved in politics, which keeps them away from their children. In

addition, when women join politics the society and their relatives believe that they have become prostitutes and consequently they lose their families. Furthermore, there are some religions, which do not encourage women to get involved in politics.

Finally, ignorance is one of women's worse enemies. Most women do not understand the process of elections nor its importance. For example, they believe that the registration process takes time and they feel they do not have this time. So they avoid this 'time consuming' process all together.

As I mentioned earlier my main work has been empowering women against discriminative practices as stipulated in the constitution and Resolution 1325 ensuring that their rights are realized and protected. I have used the constitution to encourage women to participate in politics because its one of their fundamental rights.

I have encouraged them to seek actively a position in the peacebuilding discussion of their communities. I have convinced them to refuse harmful cultural practices. I believe that these women will participate fully in the elections and vote or vie to be voted, they will participate in peace negotiations and sign peace agreements.

I believe that come 2012, there will be more women in the parliament and other governmental and non-governmental bodies because I am sensitizing women to be empowered and make right decisions. And for that I should thank the new constitution and the UN SCR 1325 for being in place.

New Book featuring the stories of rural women

The Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA) in partnership with Peace Women Across the Globe (PWAG) is carrying out the programme: 'Enhancing Kenyan women participation in 2012 political processes'.

As part of the programme, COPA carried out a research aiming at showcasing tangible evidences of gains rural women in the targeted areas have been able to achieve as a

result of the opportunities the UN SCR 1325 and the new constitution have opened up. Outcome of this research is the book: '[Achievements, challenges and opportunities for women in the conflict zones of Kenya's Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia & Mount Elgon: A Dissection of the UN SCR 1325 & Kenya's New Constitution.](#)' In this book, the stories of rural women working towards the em-

powerment and protection of other women are presented.

With this book COPA is acknowledging the efforts of the featured women and are aiming at using it to reach out to other women beyond the project's geographical reach as well as increase awareness about the realities at the grassroots.

The book will be soon out and available at our website.

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Conflict Management and Peacebuilding course for the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF)

COPA delivered after request a two week training to the EASF so as to improve the conflict management and peacebuilding skills of the selected staff members. The aim of the course as approved in the Civilian Course Prospectus by the Council is to impart conflict management skills in the form of negotiation, mediation and facilitation, to EASF targeted Civilian Peacekeepers and Peacebuilders. The training was organized by the EASF and facilitated by COPA from 30th October to 11th November 2011 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Training Content

- Theories of conflict
- Understanding conflict
- Conflict mapping
- Principles and methods of negotiation

and mediation

- The processes of developing peace agreement
- Conflict Transformation (case studies)
- Facilitation skills
- Truth and reconciliation commissions
- The role of the international community

The training brought together civil servants and civil society working in collaboration with government institutions from Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopia, Comoros, Djibouti, Southern Sudan and Sudan. The rich mix of nationalities and backgrounds provided a good platform for exchanging ideas on strategies that different organizations have successfully put in place

to positively impact on conflict situations. All the trainees were nominees of the Eastern Africa Standby Force – Civilian Component.

The training aimed at providing them with practical skills of intervention in conflict situations so that they can effectively undertake peace keeping missions as civilians alongside trained military personnel from regional and international bodies.

The training content was largely motivated by the ongoing conflict and post conflict reconstruction in the east Africa region and provided room for participants to reflect on what has been done, what has worked and what needs to be replicated in countries that seem to be entangled in cycles of violence.

Are you passionate about development and sustainable peace?

Are you working in the area of Peacebuilding or development in Africa?

Do you want to share your views on a peace related issue ?

We want to hear them !

Write and send us your views and your article can be featuring in one of our publications *On African Peacebuilding* or *A Piece of Peace* as well as distributed among our network and members!

Enhancing women participation in the political processes

A training for 40 women leaders from Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia and Bungoma Counties

The Enhancing Kenya Women participation in 2012 political processes training was a five month project designed for grassroots women who desired to participate in peace processes and political participation in the 2012 general elections in Kenya.

This was a joint project with Peace Women Across the Globe (PWAG) a partner organization based in Switzerland who provided the technical support of the project.

Two capacity building trainings were carried out; the first one targeting 20 women leaders from Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia Counties was held from 3rd to 12th October 2011 and the second training targeting women from Bungoma and Trans Nzoia Counties was held from 21st November to 1st December 2011 in Eldoret.

The trainings focused on:

1. **Understanding Conflict, Peace and Conflict Resolution strategies**
2. **Understanding the UN SCR 1325**

3. **Gender gains in the New Constitution and Strategies of Political participation**

4. **Understanding Gender**

5. **Leadership Skills in Peace Building and Political processes.**

The objective of training the 40 women was: to ensure that after the training the women were able to roll out civic education forums; reach out to more rural women, enhancing their capacity and knowledge on their rights; ensure that the rural women are active participants in the implementation of the National Action Plan of the UN SCR 1325 and acquire skills on peace building and conflict resolution.

Other areas of importance were on Gender, Leadership skills, Political processes and voter registration.

Soon more information about the outcomes of the training will be featuring in our website!