

The Community Voice



UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE-GREAT
LAKES AFRICA

July-Sept 2018 Edition

Kenya CCs in an IDP Bang



Kenya CCs JDP Cont.

It was all colour and splendor during the Kenya CCs (international Day of Peace (IDP) this September procession in the Kibera community organized by UNDUGU Family Kibera CC and the Visionary Women organized with the support of the other Nairobi CCs. Moving along on the streets, the 'PEACE' messages and songs were chanted or to create much attention of the bigger public in awareness of peace, alluding to the theme; **"The Right to Peace - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70."**

The white colour was strategically chosen (a white garment or any other white object), as a symbol of peace. The community members marched along the streets of Kibera village. Several stopovers were made during the procession for entertainment or giving out peace speeches to make more people understand the importance of observing peace.

"We counted successes with a good turn up by community members, positive reactions from participants attended in wanting to engage more in peace awareness, meeting our objective, which was to create peaceful sensitization to many people, and appealing feedback from the community on the importance of the day. "

Through support from the URI and the coordination of other Kenyan CCs, community the event was realized and the objectives met. Story compiled and shared by Wambui Ngige-URI Africa Trustee



Undugu Family Kibera CC in a Community Co-existence Drive in Kenya



During this quarter, Undugu family CC based in Kenya organized a series of activities, including: community conversation which engaged members in a dialogue on how to sustain coexistence in the community especially during election period that often divide communities. Next was the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, with messages delivered through theatrical plays around the villages in dissemination of information against gender based violence/SGBV which are increasingly high in the community. Several other events also came into play including the International Youth Day mainly which focused on transformational leadership and how to create safe spaces for the young people.



The successes and impact from these efforts is continuation of such social actions which highlight the plight of the less privileged and offering them safe spaces to dialogue and seek alternative mechanisms to address them. **Story shared by Ibrahim Hassan, Secretary, Undugu family Kibera**



Heart to Heart with Women in Conflict in South Sudan: Special JDP Celebrations

Heart to heart talks are a common place to a society living in conflict situations. Founded to Wipe the Tears of the suffering and abused women living in conflict areas of South Sudan, Wipe My Tears Foundation (WTF) CC decided to treat the soul during this year's International Day of Peace celebrations in South Sudan. Saint Mary Cemetery Camp was turned into a safe space for the women and girls sharing with each other with an open hear, singing and dancing with joy. When it got to the general experience sharing, in their narrations of the past five years, the women said that, the current situation is even made it worse with the current crisis, massive displacement and disruption of livelihood that makes life very difficult to many people. The government and humanitarian actors focus mostly on internal displace people in the UNMISS camp, yet perpetual insecurity limit most of them from accessing the basic services causing fluctuating levels of vulnerability. As a result women and children are forced to adopt risky and sometimes harmful coping strategies, including collection and sale of firewood where many women and girls were raped and even killed when fetching firewood and many young girls were forced to marriage in order for the family to make living. This Pressure for survival exacerbates the potential for intimate partner violence. In a courteous gesture by WTF the women and girls received some modest food items such as maize flour, Red Lentils, sugar, cooking oil, biscuits for children and non-food items such as soap, secondhand clothes and shoes for men, women, girls and children. **Story shared by Jane Keji Alex-WTF Executive Director**



Grassroots Women Activists Appreciated in South Sudan

Sufi Women
organization
international leader
in promoting universal
human rights



We proudly present one of our members, Jane Keji Alex-Executive Director-Wipe my Tears Foundation (WTF) CC-South Sudan, for winning **the Sufi Women Organization's Annual Women's Wisdom Service Appreciation Award, 2018**. Her recommendation came through from our Regional Coordinator, Despina Namwembe, as informed by the noble works for women and girls.

It's an award that makes us proud as URI global family, for Jane being one of the six women leaders, from international communities that was selected to receive this award. This is in honour her (and team's) wonderful and much needed advocacy for our human family. The award came with a certificate of appreciation and monetary support to be used towards her organization's works.

Congratulations!!!

Jane Keji Alex-Executive Director-Wipe my Tears Foundation (WTF)... "on my behalf and the team of Wipe My Tears Foundation to express our gratitude's to the team of Sufi Women organization for the remarkable recognition grant award and to URI through Ms. Despina Namwembe for nominating Wipe My Tears Foundation for this service appreciation grant. Your appreciation and commitment towards supporting our organization is a great motivation to help us move towards our set goals for the vulnerable women and girls of south Sudan". I felt honored and great full to Sufi women organization for having found WTF work worthy for the award and very many thanks to Madam Despina and URI for nominating me. The grant award fulfilling my dreams of giving mindfulness Based Stress Reduction training to this vulnerable women, men and girls who are fighting with their emotional stress without any techniques of building emotional resilience.

The Annual Women's Wisdom

The 2018 honoree for distinguished service in a deserving community with humanitarian need is given to the dedicated work and innovation of

Jane Keji Alex

Sufi Women Organization, founded in 1993, is a humanitarian organization advocating for women's rights, education, and social equity, and a forum for women of diverse backgrounds. Sufi Women Organization is a department of the International Association of Sufism, a California non profit, and a United Nations NGO/DPI.

Nahid Angha

Nahid Angha, Ph. D.
Founder, Sufi Women Organization

Women's Wisdom
women
in ACTION

30 AUGUST, 2018





National Coalition- Burundi's Demonstration of Environmental Conservation



The National Coalition of Religions and community Together Burundi CC has in partnership with the Health for All Association IMBONEZA embarked on a campaign to plant Bamboo and fruit trees along the shores of MUGERE River to address the effects of climate change. This is thanks to CARITAS Burundi.
Story shared by Hakizimana Jean Pierre & Bishop Telesphore

CACOPA CC in an Ebola Fight in D.R. CONGO

Dr AIME of AFNEVID (fourth from left) and Mr. Nixon of CACOPA (Sixth from left), during the campaign



A medical team at work in Mangina

In July this year, there was an outbreak of Ebola in Mangina; village located 30 km away from the city of Beni, in the eastern Congo.

The Central Africa conflict Prevention Association (CACOPA) CC in synergy with the Africa's New Vision for Development (AFNEVID) to fulfill their objectives joined also the medical team through a campaign which sensitizes people in Mangina and abroad on 'the way to behaving in front of EBOLA'.

CACOPA's participation in this joint effort helped them to draw some lessons:

There are still some communities (like that of Mangina) which believe that the epidemic is from an evil spirit and requires traditional rather than modern treatment. Early warning and sensitization of communities about the risk of contracting Ebola as well as safety precautions are vital as well as joint efforts from civil society organizations.

Story of how the Epidemic spread

It is 's said that, a cat was found dead and a family took it as a meat. Two people died later from an unknown disease. Then, the epidemic spread day by day (through contamination). Actually, from the epicenter of Mangina, the epidemic has reached Beni city (30km away) , some cases in Butembo city (80 km away) and the big city of Goma (420 km away) is under threat. The government is focused on washing hands campaigns and on taking temperature at checking points. These are ways of prevention while some churches are relying on God. For some good reasons, Ebola 100 times dangerous than the HIV. Its kills over 6 to 10 days. **Story shared by Kasimu Yuma-Executive Director-CACOPA CC**

Youth Entrepreneurial Skilling with the US Embassy at URI offices

We hosted Cheryl Edison an American expert from Silicon Valley in the US on Entrepreneurship at the URI offices on the **27/09/2018** for dialogue on social entrepreneurship. It was an enthusiastic conversation she had with about 8 of our CCs within Kampala, especially in awakening members to be the future they wanted to be by growing their business ideas. **One of the key take-aways in growing a business innovation was: Being playful with fresh eyes to see a potential, Test and Notice (client response), and focus on that area that seems to work for you. Bottom line, if something doesn't work for you, drop it, re-strategize and pick on another idea and move on!**

Her Bio

Cheryl Edison is a Silicon Valley serial entrepreneur and global business development expert with a track record of successfully launching companies, products and services into new markets across 47 industries. Cheryl advises Global 500 on innovation creation, and leads presentations and workshops for a wide range of interest groups including Sales Force, Lufthansa, Make Media, Norway Innovation, C-level execs, and Burning Man in her continued pursuit to contribute to local economies by linking creativity, community and commerce.



When Men and Faith Leaders become the Advocates of Women's Economic Empowerment

CC members from the Christian and Muslim faith background in Uganda, (Latter Glory of Religion in Busoga and Friends of Community Health respectively), are championing our women's economic empowerment project. A journey that started with a lot of resistance and with more family domestic conflicts and abuse of women's economic rights is beginning to bear some fruits. Some of the voices from some our routine follow up calls/spot checks:

In one of our routine phone call to follow up on the women's small businesses the husband to one of our project beneficiaries (woman), responds; "your call got me in a commuter taxi going to work but let me go back and get my wife for you". To us that was moving! **Wife:** "my vegetable vending business is bearing fruit. My husband gives me advise on using the start-up money from URI more productively and I like it when he supports me now unlike before".

"I didn't know anything about book keeping. Those issues of capital or profits was a mystery for me. I would struggle keeping my business afloat but from URI's trainings i learnt not to spend the capital and I see some change as a result of this business discipline. Although I cant write but my son helps me to keep records. **A female beneficiary**

"Whenever our sister in law came to us to get a share of her late husband's property (my brother), we would chase her to go back and claim that from her family. But from this entrepreneurial skilling workshop, I have come to realize that we were in wrong. My pledge before all of you, is that I am going to sit down my clan and family members to secure a portion for this poor lady and her children". **A male participant during one of our trainings; in Mayuge. These efforts are supported by Filantropia Finland & the Finnish Foreign Ministry with URI playing the coordination and oversight role.**



We support and Nurture Women's business ideas and rights to property



*Men and Faith Leaders Become the
Advocates for Women to own
Property*



International Peace Award Ceremony in Kampala



We are also happy for hosting the URI-Africa Director, Ambassador Mussie Hailu and Former URI Africa Trustee Arch Bishop Odoma during their visit for the International Peace Award ceremony in Kampala.