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2017 - 2018

THE VOICES OF CONCERN NARRATIVE REPORT



"Be a voice of concern"

I: INTRODUCTION

Community Support for Development in Kisumu (CSD Kisumu) is women led Community Based Organization (CBO) registered with the Ministry of Gender and Social Development – Kenya. It is a non-political, non-discriminatory and non religious civil society organization (CSO) operating in Kisumu County. Our interventions targets the Kenyan rural women communities from the conflict hotspots drawn from the 4 sub counties of Kisumu West, Seme, Kisumu East and Kisumu Central in Kisumu County with a combined population of 467,000 which consists of 60% women and 40% men. Youth population is estimated at 65% and the youth out of school stands at 30%. About 60% of our targeted women are living in extreme poverty against the national level of 46%, the school drop outs for girls mixed with early pregnancies stands at 60% while drug and substance abuse among the youths along the lake shores and major highways such as Kisumu –Busia road stands at 75%. Women in elective politics are less than 1% while youths who are mostly used in political contests as hired goons stands at 80%.

CSD Kisumu therefore raises awareness on key peace building (political and resource based conflicts), advocacy, human rights, education, governance, livelihood and cohesion concerns. We have 3 programmes of Governance, Peace & Advocacy; Women and Education. We also do capacity building trainings and support to other smaller women and youth groups, peace committees and county government departments, support education through sponsoring needy cases, clean and safe water in schools, feeding in schools and extending support to the parents to cushion school drop outs among the child headed households. We are supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) as well.

In the year 2017 - 2018, under the Governance, Peace & Advocacy programme, we implemented the “Voices of concern” project under the support of Niwano Peace Foundation and other actors that included Kisumu County government, Election Observation Group (ELOG) through the Centre for Governance and Development (CGD), Haki Africa, Jamii Thabiti, Community Actions for Women Empowerment (CAWE) and local training institutions based in Kisumu. This was a one year project (July 1st 2017 – 31st July 2018) at the initial cost of US\$ 15,057 but yet to increase due to post polls issues.

The “Voices of Concern” project was a women peace, human right and democracy – advocacy project that aimed at contributing towards attainment of a peaceful atmosphere in Kenya during the 2017 general elections and enhancing the respect of women human rights by the grassroots community members in South West Kisumu Ward - Kenya, before, during and after 2017 general elections. This was done by improving the participation of the grassroots women civil society activists (Voices) and enhancing the participation of the security agents in ensuring the safety of the women, men, children and their properties in event of conflicts which was foreseen during the post poll days.

“Voices” in this context were the outstanding, resourced and respected local women civil society activists, who had excelled in their respective fields (Agriculture, education, business, human rights, politics) for the improvement of the society and the community, but they had been infringed by political regimes, gender biasness, tribalism and political parties that their voices in terms of good attitudes, examples and practices had never been heard, but it was believed that their involvements through guidance, mentoring and persuasions could change the attitude of the community – men and youths, on negative electoral practices, human rights violations and scattered development which had been the main catalysts to violence and sufferings of the women and children in any electioneering periods in Kisumu more so on the rural setups.

This project therefore identified these voices from South West Kisumu Ward of Kisumu West Sub County which was the main hotspot in Kisumu County, trained them on advocacy, dialogue facilitation and human right issues, then offered them platform (churches, funerals, barazas, chamas) and forum (vernacular radio talk shows) to meet and offer guidance to the community. The project also worked with the security agencies through the county policing authority and the Sub County Peace Committees and other actors (Kisumu County government, Election Observation Group (ELOG) through the Centre for Governance and Development (CGD), Haki Africa, Jamii Thabiti, Community Actions for Women Empowerment (CAWE) and local training institutions based in Kisumu) to enhance the involvement of the grassroots women, men and children in offering the early warnings during the conflicts.

At long last, the project fostered the creation of grassroots women platform to deal with any related conflict issues, had a working reporting centre on conflicts prevention and human rights violation and a general attitude change on political activities by the entire South West Ward within the Kisumu West

community – which has now been scaled up to cover the entire Kisumu County.

II: OBJECTIVES

The goal of the “Voices of concern” was to contribute towards attainment of a peaceful atmosphere in Kenya during the 2017 general elections and enhance the respect of women human rights by the grassroots community members.

Specifically, this project intended to enhance the persuasion power of women to lure men who are known warriors to change and protect the women and children in conflicting atmosphere in South West Kisumu Ward which was a known political conflict hotspot during the 2017 general elections. This was done by improving the participation of the 15 grassroots women civil society activists (Voices) and enhancing the participation of the security agents in ensuring the safety of the women, men, children and their properties in event of conflicts.

III. RESOURCES

This project, with an initial budget of US\$15,057, attracted the support from Niwano Peace Foundation worth US\$6,960 in cash, Kisumu County government worth US\$1,057, Election Observation Group (ELOG) through the Centre for Governance and Development (CGD) worth US\$2,500, Haki Africa worth US\$2,000, Jamii Thabiti worth US\$1,500, Community Actions for Women Empowerment (CAWE) worth US\$500 and local training institutions based in Kisumu worth US\$500. The project is still ongoing at the time we did report. The financial breakthrough for the Niwano Peace Foundation is hereby attached.

IV. PROJECT OUTCOME / ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS

Outcome

- 15 trained women voices that facilitated the fora and gatherings targeting men and youths have already been done.
- A well delivered forum and deliberations of persuasions were carried out though much is still needed.
- Active and working reporting centre on conflicts prevention and human rights violation is already in place through the response side needs a lot of investment in terms of training.

Achievements

- The project delivered a changed attitude on men and youth warriors in South West Kisumu Ward towards human rights violations and to maintain peace and respect for the human kind in any conflicting situation. It also ended any conflict that arose during the post poll days when the county went to a repeat presidential elections and subsequent boycott by the opposition party which is the main dominant party in Kisumu County.

Results

- The project provided a situation where the local community can use their strength to handle some of the long term problems such as violation of women rights among the grassroots community through simple approaches such as persuasions led by outstanding community members with networks such as women.

V. IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES

Mobilization – It took 3 weeks where the project team that was led by the CSD Kisumu and boosted by Community Actions on Women Empowerment (CAWE) staffs visited and held a forum of 100 women each, chief, political parties and administrators in all the 3 units of Ojolla, Kanyawegi and Osiri within South West Kisumu Ward to brief the targeted population on the projects aims and objectives and to select 15 resourced, outstanding and respected women for TOTs. In the community meetings, the project used the already acquired materials that included the T-shirts, banners, airtime and stationeries.

The final day of mobilization was marked by a joint launch held at Obambo Community Hall and attended by the local administrators and the key project partners. There was a road show that covered the main 3 markets in South West Kisumu Ward which was graced by 2 local artists which entertained the community with the project messages of peace and cohesion. The area chief, Mr. Paul Otieno presided as the chief guest under the request of the County Commissioner who could not make it to the function due to some unavoidable circumstances. The entire event was covered by the local media, both digital and print. The cost of the project materials, road-show under the mobilization and the launch conference were fully funded by Niwano Peace Foundation while village visitations were funded by Kisumu County Government.

TOT Training – The project trained 15 voices for 3 days that covered the training on human rights, advocacy approaches, facilitation of dialogue skills, current affairs and peace approaches as the country draws closer to August 2017 general elections. The training was conducted by qualified facilitators outsourced from the local training institutions in Kisumu. The participants were awarded certificates of participation on completion. The training of the voices was funded by Niwano Peace Foundation.

Supporting the Fora – After the training, from September 2017 to June 2018, the TOTs: - Were supported by being given monthly lunch and transport allowances for a period of 10 months to visit and facilitate a human rights and development dialogue on informal and formal gatherings in churches, chief barazas, women merry go rounds and market places. This was well covered by the Jamii Thabiti initiative. Each TOT was expected to conduct a minimum of 10 gatherings per month. Participate on radio dialogue talk shows on human rights and development agendas that affect Kisumu West was fully done under the support of Haki Africa and ELOG. The Election Observation Group (ELOG) involved the voices as election observers in all the 5 Wards in Kisumu West.

Documentation – The project team documented the progress of the project, achievements and challenges as from July 1st 2017 to 31st July 2018 that were included in the planning under the Monitoring and evaluation aspects. The M&E aspect was boosted by the CSD Kisumu Board that met after every 3 months to review the progress of the project. This provided a leeway in looking for other actors when it became evident that the initial support from Niwano Peace Foundation was not going to be enough. The documentation part resulted in the project report, individual fields report and this final project report. This aspect was made possible by the support from Niwano Peace Foundation and the Community Actions on Women Empowerment (CAWE).

VI. CHALLENGES, CONSTRAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

- There was increase demand for the same initiatives in the neighbouring villages and wards.
- Our initial number of voices which was pegged at 15 was too small as more voices came up and joined on a voluntary basis though they were not trained formally.
- The post election days come with its own challenges that needed another strategy. There were open violations of the rule of law by the security agents that ought to have protected the community.

VIII. LOOKING AHEAD

- We are looking for more partners and actors in the future interventions.
- We are grateful to all actors led by the Niwano Peace Foundation for having trust in us by giving us the first fund for this project.
- There is a serious need for more resources to tackle the challenges brought about by post polls happening.



Rolling out the voices of concern under the support of Niwano Peace Foundation



Community dialogue sessions of early warnings and community participation which was held in Maseno area



Community during the women meeting with the voices on the progress of women issues programme. The community were being task to propose more women to benefit in the subsequent activities to be rolled out.



Project banner that was used during the project implementations.