

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

A monthly supplement funded by European Union and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

A note from the Project Manager

I have always considered Kenya to be a peaceful country. Kenyans which I have lived with, interacted with, and gotten to know during a span of 8 years have always been friendly, hospitable, accommodating and proud of their identity. Therefore, the post-election violence somehow came as a shock. I knew that elections usually generated violence but this time around I could not even have imagined the extent it would take.

When Swedish journalists started to call me to get a current update of the situation, they also insinuated with their questions that Kenyans were barbaric and of course this was what you could expect from a country with such diversity. I honestly felt offended and responded that my experiences of Kenyans are that they are a proud and peace-loving people.

But what is it then? What is it that makes people who have lived as neighbors for years to suddenly turn against each other? There is no simple answer to the question but we know that the general election of 2007 was not the root-cause of the violence. Under the surface,



By
HANNA CARLSSON

among many Kenyans, have emotions boiled for years like magma, in the inner of the earth, emotions which have been nurtured because of injustices of the past, and suddenly finds a volcano to spill it all out. The disputed election became the volcano and no one was prepared for the streaming lava that suffocated the common sense among people and turned individu-

als and communities against each other.

The experiences of the post-election violence are still fresh in our minds and it is time to heal but also make analysis about the root-causes of the violence and to find a way to prevent future violent clashes. It was in this spirit that the proposal "Strengthening non-state actors' capacities to prevent and resolve conflicts in areas affected by the post-election violence" came to being. Kenya is blessed with an active civil society that usually fills the gap where the government falls short. Also when it comes to prevent and resolve conflicts the civil society plays a major part but has sometimes not the right knowledge and tools. The project seeks to meet this need through different activities. First of all 120 civil society organizations will be identified and invited to join the project. Some of the staff of these civil society organizations will undergo systematic training in peace and conflict issues to prepare them to train people in their own organizations but also other citizens that they come in

contact with through their regular programs. A research has also been conducted focusing on the root-causes and trends of conflict in the target provinces, Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western. This is to make sure that the trainings include tools to better deal with the actual issues on the ground but also to give us facts and reliable data to be used in field-based political analysis and policy dialogue.

This supplement is a part of the project and will be used to spread information, experiences and stories from the ground. It will hopefully encourage people to take not only own peace-initiatives on the ground but also contribute to the national debate. In this issue you will find more information about the project, its implementers, and the funders. Finally, from now on the project will be called Partnership for Peace because we do this as partners to realize a better future for every Kenyan.

The writer is the International Project Manager
Hannacarlsson@gmail.com

EU funded peace project launched

By **THE LINK WRITERS**

THE European Union (EU) has allocated 750,000 Euros equivalent to Kshs. 75 Million for peace building activities in three Provinces.

The project is to be implemented by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), which is co-financing the activities with further 222,126 Euros (Kshs. 22.2M)

The project titled strengthening non-state actors' capacities to prevent and resolve conflicts in areas affected by post election violence in Kenya kicked off on July 1 and will run for 30 months.

"The project aims at contributing to the reduction of violent community conflicts in Kenya," says KAS country representative for Kenya

Ms. Anke Lerch.

Launching the EC co-funded project, head of the EC delegation in Nairobi Amb. Eric Van der Linden noted that conflict resolution was very important for the country.

He said that while it was important to build roads and improve the capacity of ministries in service delivery, it is even more important to strengthen the capacity of non state actors as this would help in reforming the society.

Van der Linden notes that the peace project is the first for Kenya under the European Community's instrument for stability, crisis preparedness component – peace building partnership support.

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EU Peace Project Launched



Project takes root in Nyanza



Project Coordinators

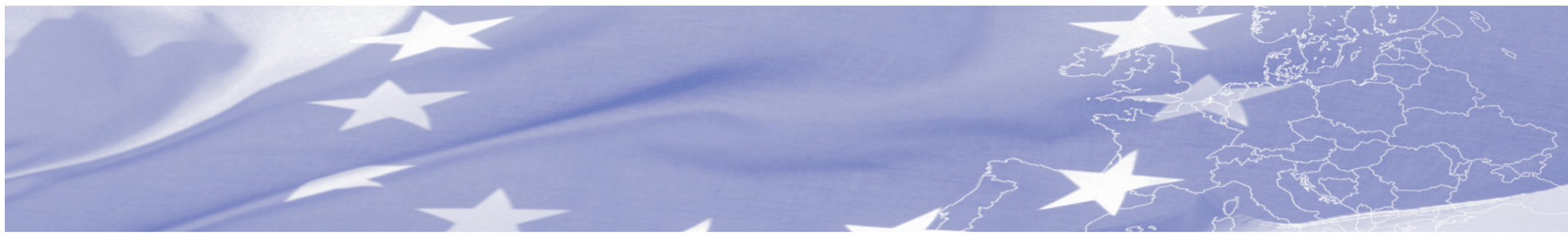


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EU funded peace project launched



Residents watch in disbelief as houses go up in smoke after the post-election violence in 2007.

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"The world is a nasty place but we have to make the most of it," the head of EC delegation in Kenya went on to say.

The programme will cover Nyanza, Western and Rift Valley provinces and is further aimed at strengthening the capacities of non-state actors in the three province as a means of mitigating community conflicts by improving their knowledge base and know how in early warning mechanisms, informal mediation, field based political analysis, policy oriented conflict research and policy dialogue.

Partners in the project include the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) of the Kenyan Episcopal Conference for Rift Valley Province; Mount Elgon Residents Association (MERA) Western Province and the Community Initiative Action Group – Kenya (CIAG-K) is the associate partner in Nyanza Province.

The Link newspaper is the information dissemination strategy for the project that is targeting 360 representatives of local Civil Society Organisations, 80 volunteer trainees from 120 CSOs,

12 experts, 1440 divisional community leaders, 340 policy makers at local and 60 policy makers at national level.

The final beneficiaries are an estimated 16.1 million Kenyans, the population of the three regions that the project will cover over a 30 month period.

Amb. Bethuel Kiplagat who launched the project emphasised the role of the government in peace building.

He expressed concern over the perception by Kenyans of political leaders appealing for tolerance.

"Even though politicians are perceived to be the cause of the problem, they are also part of the solution to the problem and should not be isolated. We need to work with them, engage with them," Kiplagat advised the non state actors involved in peace building.

He says there is a general trend of pessimism among Civil society organisations and among the general public that Agenda four of the National Accord has not been dealt with.

"Despite all the weaknesses that are there, the passing of all bills, have created institutions like the boundaries review commission, the independent interim electoral commission and the committee of experts on constitution re-



Eric van der Linden

view went through Parliament."

Kiplagat further noted that the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission bill was passed by parliament and all that is remaining is nominating persons who will constitute the tribunal.

He reminded Kenyans that everyone is innocent until proven guilty, "we need to ensure that justice prevails for all."

Ms. Hanna Carlsson, the International Project Manager who will be based

in Kisumu said the main project activities are an inception meeting for project personnel, partners and associates in Nairobi and a situational fact finding survey to establish the actual number and extent of activities of CSOs in each region.

The project will also undertake a research on conflict trends in the province; develop a training curriculum to define scope and content; establishment of three regional reference points for co-ordination, exchange and cooperation between CSO partners; establishment of expert pools; building of data and information banks on past conflict trends and cross regional exchange visits on best practice.

The project intends to build on current and past experiences of organisations and institutions that have been involved in peace work. Act of duplication and lone efforts are to be discouraged as the project will focus more in rolling the wheel than reinventing one.

Other activities include running of a monthly publication in cooperation with The Link Newspaper; conducting policy dialogue with government/state institutions and quarterly meetings by partners and networks for systematic conflict monitoring in each province.

It is expected that once the project rolls out, there will be increased knowledge and improved know how on early warning and response mechanisms; reduced latent, confrontational and open conflict among communities; regular information and exchange on sources of anger, emerging conflicts and crisis through a monthly conflict resolution focused publication (The Link) to be distributed through network members and subscribers.

As a result of the activities, communication channels between the Civil Society Organisation networks in the three provinces, the different political forces and regional as well as national authorities on approaches, instruments and policies for reduction of tensions and prevention of violent conflicts will be established.

During the public launch of the EC co-funded project, Ambassador Van der Linden also said that the EC has set aside up to Kshs. 250 billion to help in prevention of conflicts. Key in the Kshs. 250 billion support is the bringing of all parties together to mend fences.

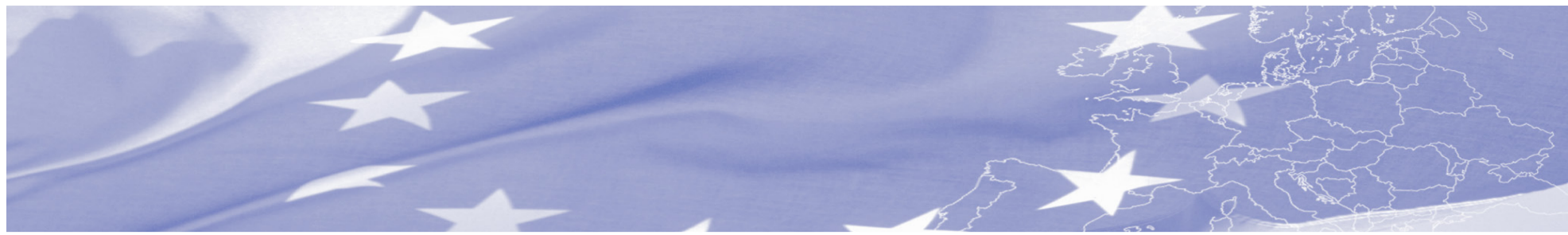


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One of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) feeds her child after 2007 post-election violence.

By **CHRIS OWALA**

Nyanza Province was one of the regions of Kenya that was heavily affected by the post-election violence that rocked the country in 2007/08 electioneering period.

With a population of about five million of different ethnic origins, high levels of poverty and widespread political awareness, the province is among the most highly susceptible to politically motivated violence in Kenya.

No wonder it, together with Rift Valley and Western Provinces, bore the brunt of the PEV. Nyanza's border with Rift Valley, especially the Kuria and Borabu/Sotik border, cattle rustling has led to sporadic conflicts.

To deal with such conflicts and prevent them from becoming full-blown violent ones, it is imperative to understand their root cause and to involve all stakeholders in resolving or preventing them.

A project funded by the European Commission and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) called Partnership for Peace that is currently being implemented in Nyanza, Rift-Valley and Western Provinces, seeks to build a lasting peace in the three regions.

The project is built around sound understanding that non-state actors' contribution to conflict resolution cannot be ignored not only in Kenya but all over the world. This is because seeking solutions to conflict tackling can-

EU-KAS peace project takes root in Nyanza

not be entirely left to the Government.

Under the two-year project, non-state actors will be strengthened to enable them to mitigate conflicts among the populace.

In Nyanza for example, the local project partner is Community Initiative Action Group-Kenya (CIAG-K). In the region, the project will not only look at visible violence akin to that often experienced in Kuria, but will also seek to address invisible violence such as historical injustices, which have been cited as one of the reasons as to why the skirmishes were so vicious. There is also rampant poverty, which has led to many idle youth resort to violence.

Based in Kisumu, CIAG-K will be the Nyanza regional focal point. It will be responsible for training and coordination of activities of the civil society organisations (CSOs) that will join the project as grassroots partners.

To ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the project in the province, CIAG-K working closely with KAS-Kisumu Office, will develop communication, education and information tools to support outreach and peacebuilding activities.

In addition, it will create strong linkages and networks

between the CSOs partnering for peace, other non-state actors and state actors. Involvement of political opinion leaders and decision makers of various shades will be accorded high priority. This is aimed at creating a better network for successful conflict prevention and mediation efforts in the region.

Further, such cooperative approaches would ensure and guarantee faster intervention in situations of tension and also for constant information exchange with the aim of forestalling conflicts from becoming violent.

The project will create, maintain and share a database of conflict management experts who will from time to time be called upon to serve as mediators and trainers as need arise.

To achieve lasting peace in the region, all stakeholders (both state and non-state) will have to work closely with each other for the purposes of early warning, prevention and resolution of conflicts.

The Writer is the Coordinator of Community Initiative Action group-Kenya (CIAG-K). He can be reached on: 0737-470558/0716-384135 or grassrootlink@yahoo.com or ciag-kenya@hotmail.com



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Project Partners' Contact

KAS: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation close to but independent from the Christian Democratic Union in Germany. The Mission of KAS is the promotion of democracy, rule of law, fundamental freedoms, respect for human rights and social justice in Germany and all over the world. In Africa, KAS conducts projects with local partners like NGOs, Think Tanks, democratic political

parties, parliaments, and governmental institutions on strengthening civil society, civic education, democratic institution- building, legal and judicial reforms, protection of human rights, conflict prevention and resolution, promotion of peace and security. The newly established KAS project office in Kisumu will be the overall reference point for the Partnership for Peace.

CONTACT PERSON:



Ms. Hanna Carlsson
International Project Manager
Hannacarlsson@gmail.com

**Project Office in Kisumu, Varsity
Apartments 3rd Floor,
P.O. Box 668, 40100 Kisumu
Tel. +254 732 846 215
+254 711 358 013.**

CONTACT PERSON:



Ms. Jane N. Murutu, Co-Manager
Tel +254(0) 723- 729 017;
Email: jennyprosperity@yahoo.com

MERA: Mt. Elgon Residents Association (MERA) is a local organization in Western Kenya province working on intra-and-interethnic conflicts through mediation, peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance. It also works to promote citizen participation, responsibility and public partnerships. MERA is the regional reference point for the project in Western Province.

CONTACT PERSON:



Chem Ngeyo, Project Coordinator
Western Province
P.O Box 21-50201, Cheptais-Mt. Elgon.
Mobile : 0720-744827; 0734-517489.
Email: pchem2007@yahoo.com

CIAG-K: Community Initiative Action-Group (CIAG-K) is a non-state organization based in Nyanza province, working mainly in the areas of human rights, social policy, conflict management and peacebuilding. As an associate KAS, CIAG-K is the regional reference point for the project in Nyanza Province.

CONTACT PERSON:



Mr. Chrispin Owalla, Project Coordinator
Nyanza Province
0737-470558/0716-384135
Varsity Apartments 3rd Floor,
P.O. Box 668, 40100 Kisumu.
grassrootlink@yahoo.com or
ciag-kenya@hotmail.com

CJPC: Kenya Episcopal Conference – Catholic Justice and Peace Commission is a Catholic Church initiative. It has over the years used its pastoral mandate to include aspects of peace work in the Rift Valley region, ranging from humanitarian assistance to informal mediation, resettlement and pos-conflict development initiatives. CJPC is the regional reference point for the project in Rift Valley Province.

CONTACT PERSON:



Mr. James Kimutai, Project Coordinator
Rift Valley Province
Waumini House Westlands
Box 13475, 00800 Nairobi
Tel: +254 20 444 31 33
E-mail: jameskimisoi@yahoo.com

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The European Union,
Union Insurance House, Ragati Road,
P.O.Box 45119-00100 Nairobi.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. – Country Office Kenya
Mbaruk Road No. 27
P.O.Box 66471, 00800 Nairobi.



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