Pope Francis gives thumbs up for Habitat III conference

On his visit to the United Nations compound late November, Pope Francis gave an endorsement to the Habitat-III Conference, planned for Quito in October 2016, saying it could be a significant occasion for identifying ways to respond to pressing urbanization challenges.

The pontiff set aside a special session where he addressed members of the diplomatic corps as well as United Nations staff and their families at the UN compound at Gigiri. “There is a need to promote projects of city planning and maintenance of public areas which move in this direction and take into consideration the views of local residents.

“This will help to eliminate the many instances of inequality and pockets of urban...

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Helping Youth Succeed in Business and Enterprise

After graduating from the University, I searched for jobs months on end but was never successful.” These were the opening remarks of a speech given by one of the graduates, Patrick Makuyuku, during the graduation ceremony of the Enterprise Development Agents, (EDAs) 2015.

Patrick’s script is familiar, replicated across the country. In Kenya, transition from school to work is slow. Many spend time inactive or unemployed before finding a job. In fact, youth bear the greatest burden of unemployment, with projections indicating a double by 2050. One in every ten Kenyans is unemployed. The youth make up 80% of those unemployed. This high unemployment rate is attributed to factors such as a rapidly growing youth population, the inability of the economy to create a sufficient number of quality jobs, relatively low levels of education, and lack of appropriate labour market skills. It is with the aim of alleviating this situation that the United Nations Development Programme in partnership with the Ministry of Devolution and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund has been training youth in Business Skills and Entrepreneurship Development (BSED) for about a decade now.

The sixth Partners’ meeting of the Global Land Tool Network was successfully held in Nairobi in early November, in an event that saw the 70 Partners of the network as well as other stakeholders in the land sector across the world gather to deliberate on various issues affecting the network and the land sector general. Speakers included Chilean ambassador to Kenya Konrad Paulsen who chairs the International Advisory Board of GLTN, Dr. Joan Clos, Executive Director of UN-Habitat and his deputy, Dr. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira.

Watch Papes’ visit to UNON on this video: https://youtu.be/lFYw3aO9R-o

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poverty which are not simply economic but also, and above all, social and environmental. The forthcoming Habitat-III Conference, planned for Quito in October 2016, could be a significant occasion for identifying ways of responding to these issues,” he said.

According to the Pope, alongside with negligence of the environment, the world had recently witnessed a rapid process of urbanization, “which in many cases has unfortunately led to a “disproportionate and unruly growth of many cities which have become unhealthy to live in [and] inefficient.

“Together we increasingly see the troubling symptoms of a social breakdown which spawns “increased violence and a rise in new forms of social aggression, drug trafficking, growing drug use by young people, loss of identity, a lack of rootedness and social anonymity” he said.

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IPSTC and UN Women Kenya Launches Gender Policy to Close the Gender Gap in Peace Support Operations

THE International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) launched its Gender Policy, in a colourful ceremony held in Karen, Nairobi.

The event was presided over by high level dignitaries including the chief guest Major General Ngewa Mukala, Defence Staff College Commandant-representing Ambassador Raychelle Omamo, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, Ambassador Issimail Chanfi, Director of the East African Standby Force, UN Women Country Director, Ms. Zebib Kavuma, members of the Joint Control Board, Government Security agencies and stakeholders in the Civil Society and the Ministry of Devolution and Planning and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund.

Speaking at the ceremony, Acting Youth Fund CEO Emmanuel Odero urged the EDA's to use the skills acquired in the program to not only improve their own lives economically but also the lives of their fellow youth who have chosen the path of business. “Entrepreneurship undoubtedly is the engine that drives the economic growth of our country with a great potential to employ a large proportion of our young people and consequently address the unemployment crisis we face as a Nation,” added Mr. Odera.

Reiterating the country director's remarks, Anne Mukoma from the Ministry of Devolution and Planning acknowledged that for many years a gap has existed in entrepreneurship and business training, and although previous approaches in addressing this need have been yielded little fruit, the Ministry is confident that Enterprise Development Agents will be instrumental in training youth across counties as unlike hiring already established professionals to mentor the youth through short forums, EDA's will be able to better relate with their peers.

“Motivation from the Enterprise Development Agents programme and the skills acquired led me to the bold decision of starting my own business. I also realized that you can start a business with any amount of money. KShs. 12,000 was my starting capital and I registered the business for credibility as my clientele includes building and construction companies, individual people, schools and churches,” said Patrick while encouraging his fellow EDA graduates. “Indeed, my life has changed,” concluded the excited business proprietor.

Patrick runs a company, Brojas Gen Supplies ltd., in Kisii County, offering a full range of general supplies services to various institutions. Raking in an annual profits of over KShs. 1,000,000, the graduate has so far managed to employ 8 young people.

The Enterprise Development Agents programme incorporates an intensive three weeks business skills training and entrepreneurship certification and four weeks industrial attachment where the trainees are exposed to hands on experience before they can graduate as Enterprise Development Agents. Since its inception, 612 youth have been trained in Business Skills and Entrepreneurship Development and the 2015 graduates join 132 other young people who have qualified as Enterprise Development Agents.
African countries to develop national policies to adopt Open Educational Resources (OER)

UNESCO organized a two-day regional seminar to spearhead the development and implementation of Open Educational Resources (OER) policies for Kenya, Ghana, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Ethiopia and Djibouti in Nairobi Kenya on 23-24 November 2015.

The regional seminar was aimed at ensuring the various member states understand the potentials of OER to achieve Education 2030 and harness policies towards its implementation. OERs are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium, digital or

Professor Jacob Kaimenyi, Kenyan Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education Science and Technology and Jaco Du Toit, Adviser for Communication and Information UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa discuss the potential OER holds to widen access to education at all levels and ways to implement OER policy in Kenya. (Photo by CC Xue Li/UNESCO)

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otherwise, that is freely available in the public domain or has been released under an open license that permits adaptation and redistribution. The seminar drew 31 participants from Ministries of Education, educational institutes, private and public universities and Creative Commons Africa.

Speaking at the opening, the Kenyan Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education Science and Technology Hon. Jacob Kaimenyi said: “This seminar on Open Educational Resources for target African Countries is very important for the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, given that, the Ministry recognizes the potential OERs hold to widen access education at all levels, both formal and non-formal in a perspective of lifelong learning and to improve both cost-efficiency and quality of teaching and learning outcomes. I sincerely thank UNESCO, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO and all stakeholders for setting the ball rolling on matters related to OERs in Kenya.”

Participants were taken through procedures on acquiring open licenses by the speaker from Creative Commons for Africa. He explained the role that Creative Commons plays in ensuring open access to educational resources and highlighted the School of Open Africa initiative that provides for a transformative model of learning.

As Kenya is one of the countries that benefitted from UNESCO support in drafting policy statements on OERs, the national team for OER of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology took participants through the Kenya OER policy statements that the Government of Kenya, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is committed to opening access to educational materials produced with Government funds. The statements address issues related to Intellectual Property Rights and Licensing, leadership and management, professional development and ICT infrastructure and deployment.

Based on the framework for the development of OER policies and the global lessons on the implementation of OER policies and initiatives provided by specialists of UNESCO, participants were able to start the process of drafting OER policies for their respective countries and also made presentations of the same.

This activity is a direct follow-up to the Paris Declaration on OERs calling on governments to openly license all educational materials produced with public funds. Supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (USA), UNESCO is working with several governments to implement dynamic and relevant policies to guide and recognize teachers and learners to find, adapt, use, develop and share Open Educational Resources.

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**UNHCR launches “Artists for Refugees”: a livelihood project for refugees**

Artists for Refugees project came full circle on 4th November when it was officially launched at the opening of an arts exhibition at Alliance Française in Nairobi. The event organized by UNHCR Kenya was a convergence of art, culture and musical talent by refugees from the Nairobi, Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps.

Participants were spoilt for choice from the various genres of visual art that included, henna art on canvas, oil paints, pencil art and batik. The launch was punctuated with a panel discussion themed “Empowering refugees through Art” in which the panelists engaged with the audience on the unique talents of refugees and potential that exists in using art to earn a living.

During the launch, UNHCR Representative in Kenya said, “We want groom, support refugees to express their talents through such initiatives. Through this exhibition, we would like the international community and the general public to understand that refugees are talented and their art is worth buying”.

Artists for Refugees’ is a livelihoods and empowerment project, which provides a platform for refugees in Kenya, encouraging them to explore their talents and build their confidence under the mentorship and training of established local artists that include Mr. Henry Ohanga, a leading Kenyan musician commonly known as Octopizzo.

Asende, a refugee with the Burundi talking drums group from Kakuma camp. (Photo by Carol Opile/UNHCR)
and Mr. Victor Ndula, a renowned illustrator and cartoonist. The two artists continue to play an important role in inspiring, motivating and empowering the refugees through their mentorship. The key elements in the empowerment project are art, music and sports, and is implemented through UNHCR partner, Film Aid International.

Cuba, one of the refugee artists said, “Art is my livelihood”.

Guests were treated to cocktail of cultural dances from Nuer cultural group originally from South Sudan, Somali Bantu cultural group from Somalia and Burundi “talking” drums. The musical groups performed alongside the Kenyan hip hop artist, Octopizzo in a medley musical that infuses cultural and contemporary music.

At the project launch, the US Ambassador to Kenya, Bob Godec said, “Art has given the refugees an opportunity to tell their stories, recover from their tragedies, but also express their fears, hopes and dreams”.

It is envisioned that the refugees’ art exhibition will be an annual event.

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**Inspiring girls in STEM: Scientific Camp of Excellence**

The shortage of engineers is a major concern in Africa and across the world where there has been declining interest and enrolment of young people, especially women. The graduation statistics from Kenyan Universities across the country have consistently indicated that much fewer female students are admitted into engineering and applied science courses.

While it is known that admission into university in Kenya is based on marks scored in high school and the cut-off points, it is also possible that there are other factors influencing the choice of engineering and applied science courses among female high school students. The situation is even worse for engineering courses where enrolment continues to decline and even those who enroll continue to dropout before completion of the course.

"Technological gaps will keep on growing between developed and developing countries as long as new approaches are not adopted in the teaching of STEM in primary and secondary schools. Most Kenyan secondary schools laboratories are ill-equipped for students to carry out experiments; thus they perceive sciences as dull, theoretical and abstract. They fail to relate what they are taught with its application in the real world. Science will remain an abstract pursuit to learners so long as they are not exposed to its real application in their daily lives. Technology will never be appropriate if students are not afforded means of contextualizing it – this should earnestly begin in our laboratories.” - Prof. Shem Wandiga, Professor of Chemistry at the University of Nairobi

This explains why we need to not only bring science closer to secondary school students but also to expose them to both the learning and working environments for increased interest in subjects that are
becoming more and more distant from their daily lives.

UNESCO’s Scientific Camp of Excellence aim to increase female enrolment into engineering and applied science courses and taking up science-based professions. Kenya is among the countries that have embraced this concept with a focus on secondary school girls. The concept was first applied in Nairobi in 2014 where a total of 98 girls were mentored in STEM courses. A further 343 secondary schools from six counties in the North Rift Region were mentored in May 2015.

More recently, over 100 students were mentored at Kisumu Girls High School from 23rd to 28th November, 2015, targeting secondary girl students from Kisumu and nearby counties of Kisii, Homa Bay, Migori, Siaya and Nyamira. The camp was organized in partnership with the Ministry of Education Science and Technology and the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Other partners included the Office of the County Director of Education for Kisumu County, Maseno University, Ramogi Institute of Technology (RIAT), Women in Aviation Kenya Chapter and Safaricom.

In the camp, students were introduced to women scientists and engineers who serve as role models across multiple science-based disciplines, such field included experts in ocean science, aerospace engineering, bio-chemistry, agro-forestry and telecommunications. By interacting with the role models, students received not only mentorship on STEM, but also on life skills and survival techniques affecting women and girls in schools and workplace. A total of 20 teachers were also mentored on gender equality issues and the teaching of STEM from a gender responsive perspective.

Aimed at helping students to make informed career choices, participating professors also provided girls with information on the different STEM courses offered at university level and tips on how best to prepare for examinations. Furthermore, students visited the Department of Applied Physical Sciences and Industrial Chemistry at Maseno University, and took part in its laboratory exercises, where the Dean together with female researchers participated by mentoring the students. The visit provided students with exposure on campus life and learning environment of STEM related courses.

In collaboration with Muhoroni Sugar Company, Mabati Rolling Mills, Coca Cola and Spectre, industry visits were organized to provide students to link various scientific disciplines with businesses that are vital to addressing basic human needs, improving the quality of life and creating opportunities at a local and national level. Together with these visit, the Scientific Camp of Excellence offered students to think as a young scientists and engineers through case studies that required them to identify problems and challenges in the real world in group exercises and to propose possible scientific solutions in view of sustainable development.

The reaction from the participating students and schools has been very encouraging with high demand for the programme coming from other regions and counties. The Scientific Camp of Excellence aims to inspire girls in secondary schools to embrace science-based subjects with a view to enhanced participation in STEM courses and careers. The Camps address the gender inequality starting at high school levels and provide girls with the necessary skills to pursue studies and a career in the sciences, engineering, technology and mathematics; while simultaneously becoming powerful agents for gender equality. The Camps also seek to empower the girls to start projects, activities and science clubs at school, to facilitate further mentorship and networking opportunities.
OVER 100 humanitarian workers from The United Nations alongside other agencies in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Turkana County pledged their support and commitment for gender equality through The UN Women HeForShe campaign in Kenya. The campaign is mobilizing men and boys to be agents of change and advocates for gender equality.

The launch follows a previous launch by the County Government of Turkana spearheaded by Governor Josphat Nanok.

The population of the 20-year old camp stands at approximately 179,000 refugees of whom 46% is made up of women and girls drawn from 16 different countries in Africa and who are faced by challenges of access to education for girls, high drop-out rate due to teenage pregnancy, early marriages and limited school spaces among others.

Some of these challenges have led to the establishment of two rescue centers for women within the refugee camp where women, girls and children seek asylum. The rescue centers offer them education, shelter, food, counselling services and physiotherapy services for those with special needs amidst several challenges.

The campaign brought together United Nation Head of Agencies in Kakuma from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee in Kenya (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Windle Trust Kenya, Lutheran World Federation, Danish Refugee Council Kenya Programme, to commit towards supporting gender equality by mobilizing men and boys as change agents and advocates of gender equality through mainstreaming gender issues in all sectors.

The Head of sub office, UNHCR Kakuma Mrs. Honorine Sommet-Lange stressed the need for involvement from everyone highlighting that UNHCR continues to promote gender equality and ensure women and girls equal access to provision of protection and assistance through ensuring integration of gender perspective across sectors and the use of targeted action to address a specific
potential concerns faced by women and girls. UNHCR programs strive to build women resilience and strengthen them to support their own empowerment.

“Women and girls in displacement and refugee camps like Kakuma face specific risks and are less likely to have access to their rights than men and boys. Such risks include discrimination, sexual and Gender Based Violence.” She added.

The launch saw participants interact and engage on masculinity and femininity in the context of the community highlighting the challenges, perception and beliefs held by men in the community and organization on an experience sharing basis coordinated by The African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) representative Kennedy Otina.

Raphael Sungu, the UN Head of agencies representative on his part highlighted the importance of communities to understand the advantages of ensuring that there is gender parity. Most arid and semi-arid regions with gender inequality there exists a correlation between gender imbalance and under-development. We have to change mindsets, attitudes and misconceptions in order to curb the retrogressive cultures. We must ensure that our cultures are in line with time.

“There is a lot of affirmative action to ensure women access to opportunities, mobilization and community engagement through the media and some agencies that have recruited mobilizers to ensure issue around gender parity are addressed. “ Mr Sungu reiterated adding that there are a lot of engagement with community, religious and opinion leaders in the various communities to advocate for gender equality.

As a way forward, the move to launch the campaign in Kakuma was applauded and seen as a formal platform towards a structured approach to showcase all the efforts from all the other agencies that include the Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) working group, protection departments and referrals within agencies and learn from each other.
Turkana County through its Governor Hon. Josphat Koli Nanok on 6 November officially launched the UN Women HeForShe solidarity movement within the county. This is the first county in Kenya to rollout the movement that mobilizes men and boys as change agents and advocates of gender equality.

Turkana County, also known as the cradle of mankind, has previously been facing Inter-communal clashes in what has always been viewed as a lawless region in recent years with armed gangs raiding villages; steal cattle and making certain routes impassable. However, with the discovery of oil in 2012 and the construction of Africa’s biggest wind farm on the east of Lake Turkana has seen a rise in development and stability in the area.

The event that was graced by the Turkana County Governor Hon. Josphat Koli Nanok, his Deputy Hon. Peter Ekai, UN Women Deputy Country Director Ms. Karin Fueg and the Turkana County Executive for Education, Culture and Social Developments, Hon. Margaret Kuchal took place within the margins of the Turkana Trade Fair and Investment Conference and brought together over 700 men and women from the Turkana community and beyond.

In his speech, Governor Nanok stressed on the need to include the issue of women in business throughout the Trade Fair and Investment Conference and further committed to involve both women and men on a 50/50 basis in a business incubation center the County is building.

In matters of security, the Governor noted that over the years’ women were left victims of cattle rustling that left them as the sole breadwinners for their families when the husbands got killed. He however underscored that the level of violence has toned down over the years with few pockets remaining for complete eradication.

The Governor acknowledged the high girl-child enrolment in education that stands at 40% and committed to increase this amidst the challenges of the perception of education to all children in some parts of the county.

The Governor in underscoring the importance of going beyond the launch stated “The most critical issue is not the signing up for the campaign but the commitment to ensure that the message is spread to reach every village in the county through various structures like schools, churches and women association within the county.”

The Turkana County Deputy...
Governor, Hon. Peter Ekai in his remarks reiterated on the need for inclusivity for both men and women to work and live together. He further challenged the private sector to pull resources together in empowering women by embracing gender diversity and inclusivity.

Mr. Ekai also warned against domestic violence within the county calling on security partners to work together with the county government to ensure that Violence Against Women and Girls is not condoned and challenged men and boys to shun the tradition, culture, and peer-pressure that have previously been held on what makes a man.

“Violence Against Women is Violence Against the Society and Humanity.” He Stated

The County’s Executive Committee (CEC) for education, culture and social developments, Hon. Margaret Kuchal highlighted that the County supports gender responsive planning, budget and integration as part of the strategy for the realization of gender equality.

UN Women Deputy Country Director Karin Fueg in her remarks, emphasized on the need to empower women and girls as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) noting that they have gained rights to primary education. Moreover, political participation has increased but there is still much to be done in areas of Violence Against Women and Girls, political participation is at 20% which is below what the constitution grants, and only 5% of rural girls have access to land.

The HeForShe solidarity movement launch in Turkana County follows the National launch by H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta, corporate launch by Safaricom, Academic institution launch by Kenyatta University, and a launch by the UN agencies in Nairobi.

Taking the Qingdao Declaration forward - Seizing digital opportunities in East Africa to lead education transformation

UNESCO held a 3-day Colloquium on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and Teacher Training in Eastern Africa on 25-27 November 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Colloquium concretizes the principles of the Qingdao Declaration in Eastern Africa, taking into account the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Education, and SDG 9 on Innovation. The event brought together 81 representatives from five countries, namely: Kenya, Uganda, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Tanzania, as well as IGOs, NGOs, foundations, and the private sector in the region.

ICT has the potential to transform teaching and learning processes. However, many countries face enormous challenges in providing the necessary justification of their investments in ICT infrastructure and massive roll-outs of teacher training initiatives. Mr Juan Ignacio Ponelli, President of POSITIVO BGH Africa, gave a keynote address highlighting the important role that teachers play in nurturing a future generation of responsible and innovative citizens. In illustrating how Kenya recognizes the crucial role of teachers, Mr Richard Belio Kipsang, Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology in Kenya, highlighted that Kenya “…shall continue to do in-service training for our teachers. We have a program called Digital Literacy Program, which is the successor of Laptop Program and looks larger than the device”.

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At the International Conference on ICT and Post-2015 Education conference in Qingdao, China, in May 2015, it was reiterated that the successful integration of ICT into teaching and learning requires rethinking the role of teachers and reforming their preparation and professional development. It calls for promoting a culture of quality in all its aspects: staff support, student support, curricula design, course design, course delivery, strategic planning and development. Ms Patti Swarts, Director of Programs from Global E-Schools and Communities Initiative (GESCI) recognized the importance of leadership for sustainable ICT integration and education transformation: “We need to start positioning ourselves as leaders to deal with the changes brought by technology advance, not only at global, regional or national level, but also at school level. What we aim at is transforming the practice of teachers in the classroom, not taking them out of the classroom, but working with them in a very deliberative way.”

The UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT-CFT) is a useful framework that outlines the competencies that teachers need to transform their practices and serves as a set of competencies that teachers need to integrate ICT into their practice and professional development, in order to advance the learning process. In the Eastern Africa region, the framework has been applied in different growth phases, especially technology literacy and knowledge deepening. Content developers have produced a range of materials, including Open Education Resources (OER) to roll out the initiatives, and participants had an opportunity to exchange best practices in its implementation in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

During the 3-day colloquium, participants identified 10 priority areas that should be addressed in recognizing the important role that teachers play in furthering ICT in the education sector. These priorities address leadership and vision, ICT in teacher professional development, curriculum, content, infrastructure, resources, and monitoring and evaluation systems.

Participants also related these priorities to the East African Community (EAC) eLearning strategy. As Mr Aloysius Chebet, Education Officer from the EAC, underlined the importance of focusing on teachers’ role in ICT integration in education in the region: “Our focus should now shift to the teacher. The challenge is capacity building for teachers. EAC has tried its best to develop an ICT strategy that brings ICT integration in our educational institutions, including embracing public private partnership, mounting training in ICT skills and reviewing current ICT training policy to address the gaps.”

Participants of the Colloquium also highlighted the importance of measuring the impact of ICT teacher training initiatives. Following an introduction to various indicators and methodologies from different countries in Africa and Brazil, participants agreed to develop a shared set of indicators that can accompany the numerous ICT and teacher training initiatives in Eastern Africa.

The Colloquium, being a follow-up to the Qingdao Declaration on ICTs and education, where ministers of education from different Member States agreed that ICT could expand teacher training to all teachers. Mr Mohamed Djelid, UNESCO Representative for Eastern Africa, promised the participants UNESCO’s support “…to seize digital opportunities in Eastern Africa leading to educational transformation.

By looking at the best practices in policy formulation in your countries, analyzing existing initiatives and monitoring and evaluation systems we aim to formulate a regional strategy for ICT in Education for teacher training, based on the Qingdao Declaration and that corresponds to your needs and priorities.”

The event was made possible with the generous support of the Chinese Embassy in Uganda, GESCI, Huawei, Intel, Microsoft, and POSITIVO BGH. These partnerships are important to effectively cooperate and collaborate on ICT teacher training initiatives and as the Qingdao Declaration states: “We encourage governments, industry partners and all other education stakeholders to join forces and share resources to create equitable, dynamic, accountable and sustainable learner-centred digital learning ecosystems.”
UNV- Kenya joins world volunteers to mark the 2015 IVD

Volunteerism continues to contribute greatly to the world’s social, economic and political progress despite the misconceived notion that volunteering is merely an act of charity and often associated with unskilled manpower. In Kenya, despite acknowledgment of the immense contribution of volunteers in the country, the National Volunteer Policy notes that volunteer activities and practices have remained uncoordinated and inadequately supported.

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme contributes to peace and development through volunteerism. To advocate for volunteerism and its contributions to national development, UNV in Kenya works with the Government of Kenya and other partners to support the National Volunteer Policy while supporting the VIO network to further enhance national advocacy and joint delivery. The international volunteer day is among the activities and interventions by UNV to advocate for volunteerism and the impact it has in meeting peace and development challenges.

UNV Kenya in collaboration with the Government of Kenya, Volunteer Involving organizations’ Society (VIO Society) and other stakeholders organized a National Volunteer Week that culminated in the 2015 International Volunteer Day (IVD) celebrations held in Wote Town, Makueni County on 5th December 2015.

The overall aim of the celebrations was to pre-launch a pilot of the Lead the Change Campaign that seeks to build a national volunteer campaign platform for mobilizing community change makers across Kenya to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Kenya’s Vision 2030 by documenting, showcasing and supporting the remarkable work of volunteers at local and national levels.

“The world is changing. Are you? Volunteer’, was the theme of the day, marked by planting of over 500 trees in collaboration with Makueni County, followed by a selfie moment where participants took selfies with their Lead the Change campaign pledges against the trees they planted for the global UNV Selfie campaign. The ceremony also saw the unveiling of 32 Lead the Change volunteer ambassadors per ward in Makueni County.

“A lot of volunteers are young people and this is encouraging. Volunteerism is a catalyst in economic growth across the world and its recognition and support is of paramount importance,” noted Prof Kivutha Kibwana, the Makueni County Governor, while speaking during the ceremony even as he encouraged those in attendance to take up some form of voluntarism in addition to their everyday work.

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A volunteer, Mary Nduta, who has devoted her skills to volunteerism for more than 6 years, reiterated the Governor’s remarks, adding that through volunteerism, her community based public health organization, Nuru na Uhai, had had the privilege of educating the community on best practices in disease prevention.

“Every year on International Volunteer Day (IVD), we recognize the invaluable contributions of volunteers to peace and development. This year, just two months after the launch of the new, universal development agenda, we promote the special role which UN Volunteers and volunteers worldwide will play in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”, noted Mr. Lee Hantembe from the UNV Regional Office for Africa, who spoke on behalf of the UNV Executive Coordinator, Mr. Richard Dictus.

By celebrating a big number of volunteers and organizations in the country, the celebrations brought more awareness of volunteerism through the publicity and motivation generated from those awarded at the event. While applauding those involved in volunteerism, Fred Sadia, from the Volunteer Involving Organizations’ Society, an umbrella network of volunteer organizations, thanked the United Nations system for integrating volunteerism into their operations and UNV Kenya and UNDP particularly for supporting the development of the Kenya National Volunteer Policy.

The Kenya National Volunteer Policy whose formulation was supported by UNV Kenya, is anchored on the Constitution of Kenya 2010, the Kenya Vision 2030 strategy and the second Medium Term Plan (MTP II). The policy seeks to provide guidelines on efficient and effective coordination, management and sustenance of volunteerism in Kenya.

A day before the celebrations, university students, youth and partners held a symposium at the Strathmore University in Nairobi to discuss innovative ideas to promote National Volunteerism. The meeting brought together more than 5 public and private Universities for a consultative forum for designing the Lead the Change volunteerism campaign.

Connecting Turkana women entrepreneurs to market opportunities through public procurement

UN Women in collaboration with the Joyful Women’s Organization (JoyWo), Turkana County Chapter and the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO) organized a sensitization and awareness raising forum for women, youth and persons with disability (PWD) - led enterprises from Turkana County on economic opportunities through public procurement. The forum was held at the Ekalees Centre in Lodwar on 5th November 2015 and was convened in the context of the inaugural Turkana Trade and Investors Forum held at the same venue from 5-7th November 2015.

The Turkana forum was undertaken as part of UN Women’s project on...
Empowering Women through Public Procurement. Established in 2012, the project aims to harness the potential of women entrepreneurs to scale up and access domestic markets. However, while women-led businesses represent over 40 percent of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Kenya, they are prevalent in less productive sectors and are largely invisible and under-represented in the government supply chain. In Kenya, public procurement constitutes approximately 40 percent of the annual national budget, but women-owned enterprises receive only a tiny share of this market.

To address this gap, UN Women supports training and skills development of women entrepreneurs on how to sell to the government. In addition, UN Women conducts advocacy for inclusive public procurement policies and regulations, convenes dialogue platforms with financial intuitions and other key stakeholders to advance women’s participation in procurement and forums with buyers to mitigate demand side barriers.

The forum attracted 148 women traders drawn from various sectors such as agricultural, tourism, handicraft and services sector. The participants also belonged to women’s savings groups affiliated to JoyWo and MYWO. The main objective of the event was to connect and sensitize traders about market opportunities through the domestic public procurement sector. Specifically, the forum sought to create awareness about the Public Procurement Preference and Reservations Scheme of 2011 through which the government of Kenya has set a minimum target of 30 percent of government expenditure through public procurement for the benefit of disadvantaged groups. This scheme is popularly known as Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO).

The forum was opened by UN Women Deputy Country Director, Ms. Karin Fueg who reiterated UN Women’s commitment to promoting women in domestic, regional and international trade and business leadership including addressing gender related trade barriers.

During a vibrant and exciting session, three entrepreneurs from Nairobi County shared their personal experiences with regards to AGPO. They talked about how they started their businesses and how they have benefited from AGPO including the impact this unique opportunity has had on their lives and business growth.

One of the entrepreneurs, Ms. Ruth Michoma who is a PWD encouraged the participants to grab the opportunities open to them through the 30 percent policy. She said: AGPO is real and encouraged the women- “If I could do it, so can you!” Overall, the live testimonies of women entrepreneurs about their personal experiences, success in winning tenders as well as challenges they encountered were a big eye opener for participants, many of whom believed that public procurement is the preserve of large, established and experienced enterprises.

The forum was a huge success in terms of creating awareness about public procurement opportunities given that majority of the participants had never heard about the preferential scheme and how to access government tenders.

For further information on this initiative please contact Banu Khan, Programme Analyst, UN Women Kenya; email: banu.khan@unwomen.org

From left to right AGPO beneficiaries- Ruth Michoma, Sally Miybey and Jane Murrey share their success story. (Photo by Kennedy Okoth/UN Women)
UNESCO in partnership with stakeholders in the Education sector in Kenya organized a 5-day training on Inclusive publishing and web accessibility from 9-13 November, 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya. The training focused on persons with disabilities especially the visually impaired and those with hearing impairment. The main aim of the training was to prepare education stakeholders in ensuring equal access to digital educational materials.

The 5-day training attracted 35 participants comprising 20 men and 15 women of which 3 of the participants were visually impaired. The participants were drawn from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, specifically under the National ICT and Innovation Centre (NI3C), Kenya Institute Of Curriculum Development (KICD), ICT Authority, inABLE Africa and Kenya Institute for Special Education (KISE). Ms. Marina Patrier, UNESCO’s Education Programme Specialist spoke to the participants on the first day of the training saying UNESCO is totally committed to ensuring everyone is able to read in the digital age.

During the workshop participants were provided with an overview of the lack of access to information by the disabled; according to recent WHO estimates, 10% of each country’s population has a particular disability. Mr. Prashant Verma, the trainer also highlighted that only 0.5% of published information is available in accessible formats. This hence, is reason enough to ensure Kenya as a country campaigns for better access to Information so as to have equal and open access to knowledge since without access to knowledge, the right to education is denied.

Participants were able to interact with the facilitators and each other as they practiced use of the Speech-to-Text Technology which enables persons with visual impairment to read on their phones and computers. It was also noted that visually impaired persons can access the computers well by using the keyboard as opposed to using the mouse. Participants also had the opportunity to look at various web accessibility features that are friendly to persons with disability.

The third day of the workshop saw the participants get introduced to various Softwares for creating Science and Mathematics content. The participants were encouraged to always have the interest of the learners with disabilities in mind when creating or when publishing content. All present at the workshop also had the opportunity to carry out exercises just to ensure they were at par with the technologies presented. On the last day of the training, participants were able to do presentations of various exercises as far converting books content into accessible formats.

The five training ended on Friday 13 November, 2015. In a short closing ceremony, Mr. John Temba from the Ministry Of Education Science and Technology said “We are grateful to UNESCO for this opportunity; I also thank the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development for mobilizing all stakeholders so as to cater for the needs of persons with disabilities. I will see to it that Kenya Institute of Special Education is also actively involved so that learners with disabilities can open and freely access digital information.”

It is evident that the Kenyan government is committed to ensuring that everyone has access to information and that is why during the closing ceremony, Mr. John Kimotho, from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development(KICD)said “I am grateful that my staff has been equipped with all the relevant knowledge. We will see to it that our already published digital content is altered so as to incorporate features that will enable persons with disabilities to access the information.”

This training took place within UNESCO’S framework on “Enabling universal access to information and knowledge”under ICT accessibility, including for the disabled, and for all languages, promoted in Member States.
Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

1.3 billion people – one in five globally – still lack access to modern electricity.

- 3 billion people rely on wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste for cooking and heating.
- Energy is the dominant contributor to climate change, accounting for around 60% of total global greenhouse gas emissions.
- Energy from renewable resources – wind, water, solar, biomass and geothermal energy – is inexhaustible and clean. Renewable energy currently constitutes 15% of the global energy mix.

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Global unemployment increased from 170 million in 2007 to nearly 202 million in 2012, of which about 75 million are young women and men.

- Nearly 2.2 billion people live below the US$2 poverty line and poverty eradication is only possible through stable and well-paid jobs.
- 470 million jobs are needed globally for new entrants to the labour market between 2016 and 2030.
- Small and medium-sized enterprises that engage in industrial processing and manufacturing are the most critical for the early stages of industrialization and are typically the largest job creators. They make up over 90% of business worldwide and account for between 50-60% of employment.
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8. Mobilizes US$ billions in humanitarian aid to help people affected by emergencies
9. Advances democracy, assisting many countries a year with their elections
10. Promotes maternal health, saving the lives of millions of women a year

For more information please visit: www.un.org

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