

Tamasha La Amani

The Newsletter of IPI

1st Issue 2015



IPI HAIRDRESSING AND BEAUTY COLLEGE

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January - May 2015

A word from IPI President.



Dr. Karambu Ringera
IPI President and
Founder displays her
Lifetime Achievement
Award.

2015 has been a year of many possibilities. Unlike 2014 that proved to be challenging because of the state of national insecurity, we hope 2015 will be a year of progress, more peace and hope. I am thankful to all our friends and partners for their generous support of various activities and initiatives at IPI and KACH.

At International Peace Initiatives, we carried out many women's empowerment projects that spanned 2014/2015 year. See stories on pages 4,5,6 & 7. In the same vein, we had grants from the Evans Cornish Trust and Brilig Trust both of U.K through Ecologia Youth Trust, our Scottish partner, that enabled us to run some important young women's skills development courses through our Youth Polytechnic. The courses include tailoring, hairdressing, catering and ICT.

IPI's approach to sustainable peace and development is systems-based and holistic. Thus sustainable peacebuilding initiatives have been a focus of IPI's work over the years. Many sustainable peace and development programs have been borne from our peace congresses. The Chure Women's Community Based Organization (CBO) is one such entity that has done a lot for the community in Meru South through women's, men's and youth empowerment projects as well as support for children in need. In addition, IPI is partner-

ing with the Sustainable Peacebuilding and Development program at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee (UW Milwaukee) to enhance and expand the experience of masters students taking the Master of Sustainable Peacebuilding degree. The team gifted KACH with children's clothes, stationery and other items.

In 2015, we continue our collaboration and partnership with the MichiKen team from the University of Michigan. The medical team will carry out a dental clinic with KACH children and staff. Rama of E-magine will also install a system donated by MichiKen that will enable KACH kids to skype with sponsors and other friends of IPI and KACH. Additionally, MichiKen donated diverse items to KACH.

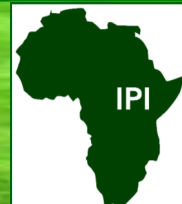
At IPI, we have two volunteers this year - Enoch Owino who holds a bachelor's degree in Journalism from Chuka University, Meru, Kenya and Rita Togba who holds a Bachelor's degree in Development Studies and African Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. Rita came to us through the Ecologia Youth Trust/IPI Volunteers program. You can read about this program at <https://www.ecologia.org.uk/get-involved/>. Enoch is working as our marketing and social networks developer in partnership with the UW Milwaukee team; while Rita loves to work with children and women.

At the Kithoka Amani Children's Home (KACH), we have been able to build a multi-purpose block to serve as a business premise for hairdressing, weaving and a shop. We hope to use these opportunities to build our financial sustainability dream in the coming years.

Caring for the environment and learning how to produce organic food has been a project of Tiriji for some time now. Tiriji is a project of IPI that aims to train people in the community how to develop and sustain successful food sovereignty projects. Tiriji means 'a place of abundance'. At Tiriji we hope to create a training center for peace and permaculture through the Integrated Land Use Design (ILUD) approach. ILUD is a holistic approach of creating food sovereignty through an integrated approach to farming; where farmers are encouraged to grow 'food forests' instead of mono-cropping. Read and learn more about this approach on page.....

At IPI we believe that peace is not merely the absence of war, rather it is when people have access to resources that enable them to meet their basic needs. Our approach is therefore to develop a model that others can learn from so that together we can reclaim our place as stewards of our earth; regenerate our ecosystems; build resilience for our people and communities; and help build transformative approaches to sustainable peacebuilding and development for our continent.

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FEEDING COMMUNITIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

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Editor in Chief: Dr. Karambu

Editor: Mr. Antony Kiarie

There is no tool for Sustainable development more effective than the empowerment of women through education.

By Dennis Mwenda

Agriculture remains the backbone of our economy. Traditionally, farming has provided the basis of sustenance for the population by production of food and raw materials. However, depletion of natural resources through poor management has led to acute food shortage made worse by unsustainable farming practices.

In this regard, International Peace Initiatives (IPI) has adopted a new approach to agriculture in the Tiriji Eco Center, to ensure food security and improved nutrition in the community while at the



IPI's Tiriji Eco-Centre
"The Space for sustainable Agriculture"

same time creating regenerative environment. This has been achieved through adoption of Integrated Land Use Design (ILUD), a design system for creating sustainable human environments. It is a design-based framework for sustainability that can be used to transform lives and landscapes in a manner that is ecologically sound, economically viable and socially just.

Integrated Land Use Design is a consciously designed landscape which mimics the patterns and relationships found in nature, while yielding an abundance of food, fiber and energy for provision of local needs. It is an integrated, evolving system of perennial and self-perpetuating plants and animal species useful to man.

IPI seeks to set the pace for the community by demonstrating how ILUD can be adopted and used effectively to help combat the perennial food shortage, improve nutrition and food quality in the community by use of sustainable farming techniques. Unsustainable farming techniques not only impact on natural ecosystems but also ultimately make farming impossible.

"We are the pioneers of ILUD in the entire County. We are driven by the need to create friendly ecosystems and at the same time ensuring the community has access to nutritious, quality food and a clean and healthy environment", remarks Dennis Mwenda, the farm manager at IPI.

Due to the pressure on natural resources especially land, communities are faced with hunger. Through ILUD, IPI invites the community to protect existing ecosystems, and where ecosystems have been destroyed to help restore them. It calls for the community to proactively take care of nature while providing nutritious food, hence ensuring a healthy and resilient community.

The only basic and comprehensive solution to the colossal harm that our continued environment degradation and poor land use is causing to the environment, a problem that could lead to the extermination of life, is to replace it with a sustainable system geared largely to the non-polluting, life-enhancing tool of ILUD.

(Continued in page 13)

SKILLS FOR TRANSFORMING LIVES

By Antony Kiarie

When women are empowered economically the society changes for the better. Children go to school and achieve their dreams, women are no longer dependent on men for their needs and generally country economies grow. This is IPI's main goal to transform societies through women who have gone through a lot of challenges in life. Women who have fought the stigma associated with HIV AIDS and those that are fighting against domestic violence. It is for these women that IPI exists.

Through a grant by Ecologia Youth Trust, in early January 2015, IPI trained 25 women from Mwiruthi women's group in food processing skills. The women were taken through a thorough 3 days Yoghurt, Peanut butter and Jam making skills training. To start with the group was taken through a counseling session. During the counseling session the



Members of Mwiruthi Women's group making jam.

women were encouraged to commit themselves to the course.

To make the training more manageable and efficient on the first day the women were divided into 2 equal groups of 12 and 13 women each. The two groups were given different tasks while one group was making peanut butter the other was making jam. They would then come together on the third day to train each other on the skill they learned differently thereby acquiring practical experience.

"I had never and equally the women in my group had never dreamt that they would be able to make peanut butter, jam and yoghurt. We are very grateful that IPI has granted us this amazing opportunity to learn to make products that can fetch a sustainable income for us and our families. Most of us are now going to become financially independent" Says Susan Kendi the group's secretary.

After the training the group was then taken through 2 days business support training in financial literacy, accessing business loans and marketing. After which they immediately hit the road for marketing. This women's group has planned several marketing events in churches and their community during which they have made a minimum of **Ksh. 4,000** per event. They do have great plans of taking their products to local supermarkets. Though this will require them to get a food safety license from the Kenya Bureau of Standards the group is determined to reach the peak of the food processing business.



Members of Mwiruthi Women's group making peanut butter.

IPI does wish Mwiruthi women's group all the best in all their endeavours.



A member of Mwiruthi women's group concentrates when making peanut butter.

GIVING GIRLS A SECOND CHANCE

By Antony Kiarie

In Kenya the number of girls denied opportunity to enjoy their rights is on the increase. This is most common among teenage girls in rural areas like Meru. This is because of existing traditional prejudices that jeopardize the lives of young girls putting them at risk of early pregnancy and marriage.

Within families, girls are of less value than boys. When a family is economically challenged, boy get preference or education than girls. When teenagers become parents, the girls drop out of school, while the boy is not affected by this state of affairs. When girls become pregnant, more often than not, they are disowned by the father of their child. Hence, many girls who drop out of school for economic or other reasons have no future. Most get married early and abject poverty becomes their daily reality. Even if these girls eventually go to school, most schools will not admit them because they are mothers. These are the girls that IPI through its School of Hairdressing and Beauty mainly targets.

It is against this backdrop that from February 2015 that IPI enrolled talented and passionate young ladies eager to learn and hone their skills in hair dressing and beauty. These girls have found a second chance at IPI School of Hairdressing and Beauty; a chance to acquire skills for earning a livelihood. The school offers trendy haircuts and styles with a variety of latest products including shampoos, conditioners, hair colour and other beauty products.

The school which also doubles up as salon provides services

for children and adults in the neighboring community from haircuts to styling. The school is a source of hope for a brighter future to these girls in the who were rejects in the community. These girls have become purveyors of beauty. This is attested by the long queues of customers lining to get their services that ranges from pedicure, manicure, blow dry, retouch, plating among other services.



One of the hairdressing skills beneficiary working on one of her colleagues during a practical session.

"We have learnt a lot since we joined the beauty and hair dressing class. We have gained skills in pedicure, manicure, beauty therapy, plaiting, haircuts, massage and blow dry among other skills. We feel ready to venture into the market. We feel confident and that we have a lot to offer in the beauty industry," Explains Alice Karambu, one of the hairdressing and beauty students at IPI.

The hairdressing and beauty college is dedicated to providing students with the necessary skills that will enable them provide their customers with the best treatment for a relaxing, rejuvenating experience.



Alice Karambu plaiting a client's hair

The students have been imparted with skills on how to handle their customers with a great deal of professionalism. The hairdressing and beauty college mainly caters for students who could not further their education by empowering them to acquire skills that will enable them make a livelihood for themselves and giving them hope for a brighter tomorrow.

Whether you are a highly driven professional, a stay home mother, a student, a struggling artist or a farmer, IPI Youth Polytechnic salon is the place for you. It is a place you can look and feel great and receive styles and services customized specifically for you and your lifestyle. It is focused on empowering and enriching the lifestyle of today's man and woman seeking beautiful, healthy and enriching lifestyles by empowering young girls to be masters of their own destinies through skill and craft.

"I feel that I am now well rounded . I have hope for a brighter future because I will be living by my own sweat. IPI Youth Polytechnic has equipped me with the necessary hair dressing and beauty skills even to start my own business when I complete my course," adds a joyful Alice.

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The Hairdressing class at KACH.

ENHANCING KNITTING SKILLS FOR WOMEN

By Purity N'kirote

Women are the backbone of every community and when they are able to provide for themselves and their families, then positive change is realized. It is against this backdrop that in late August 2014 IPI through a project funded by Ecologia Youth Trust began training 25 women from Upendo Kiuro Women's Group in knitting. The Upendo Kiuro Women's Group is made up of 10 single mothers vulnerable to poverty while the rest are either HIV/AIDS widows or living positively with HIV.

The women were taken through an intensive 18 days training in knitting various products like Monkey Caps, Sweaters and Scarves. During the 18 days women sat in circles to talk about their day to day challenges in dealing with domestic violence, HIV/AIDS and how to eradicate extreme poverty among themselves. They were both excited and challenged that their physically challenged trainer was able to take them through the training effectively and efficiently.



A woman learns knitting— the trainer a physically challenged young woman.

"The knitting training went on very well. We have learnt a lot and we do appreciate IPI for thinking about women and offering an empowerment platform for them, especially women living with HIV/AIDS and under extreme poverty

like most of us. The skills women in my group have acquired in these 18 days will positively transform their lives and those of their families" Magdalene the group's secretary said.

In early January 2015, the group was then taken through a 2 days business support training in financial literacy, accessing business loans and marketing. During the business support session, the women were challenged to come up with more innovative ideas of knitting different products for the changing global market trends and to be more proactive in every area of their lives. They were also inspired to think of ways of growing their new knitting business beyond Meru County.

"The business knowledge we have accrued from the business support training will positively impact most of our lives. We have learnt new business skills that will help us earn a meaningful income," Said Purity N'katha the group's treasurer.

After the business support training the group then went for marketing. On their first marketing venture in Meru Town main market, the women were able to sell knitted products worth **Ksh. 5,550**. The group continues to grow their income levels and as the Chairlady of the group ascertains, women in the group are now more confident that they are able to provide for their families.



A woman knits a monkey cap using a knitting machine bought by IPI for the group.

"We will continue with this great journey. We can't stop now why should we. We have seen a BIG Light at the end of the tunnel. Business is doing well because we have now captured several parents and we are selling school sweaters for their children to them. For us the future is bright. All we can say is asante sana IPI and Dr. Karambu to live long," Cecilia Karimi the group's Chairlady concludes.

We at IPI wish The Upendo Kiuro Women's Group the very best in their new found knitting business. We pray that they soar even higher.



The women marketing their knitted products in Meru town market.

SKILLS TRAINING IN BARSOAP AND COSMETICS PRODUCTION

By Antony Kiarie

Real community transformation in Africa can only take place when women at the grassroots are economically empowered. This can be best achieved by fully tapping into the synergy experienced when women sit together and plan to positively transform their lives. This is IPI's main goal to build communities driven by women that are economically empowered; women who enjoy their full socio-economic and human rights.

In February 2015, IPI trained 32 women from KINORU FACTS CBO in bar soap and shampoo making. All the women in this group are positively living with HIV. The women were taken through a 6 days intensive training during which they learned and made bar soap and shampoo. After the training, the women were then taken through a 2 days business support training during which they were trained in marketing and packaging, product differentiation, financial literacy and accessing business loans.

The business support also doubled up as a women listening workshop during which we created a session for the women to talk to each other and encourage one another on ARVs usage and balanced diet. From this session many women that had given up on ARVs because of their situation were encouraged to start again.



Shampoo Making

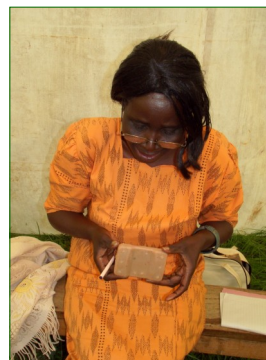
The women making shampoo for selling after training.

"We are very grateful to IPI for the support they have given to us. The trainings on how to make bar soap and shampoo will go a long way in helping the women to provide for their families," Said

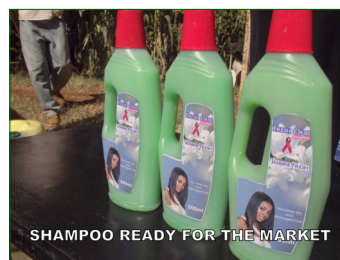
Marion Mworia, the group's chairlady.

The women's group then planned marketing events to sell their products. To the amazement of IPI's project coordinating team, the marketing events made sales of between Ksh. 5,000(\$60) to Ksh. 8,000(\$100). The women also got to learn the different product preferences of their clients and what they would love to see done differently on the products they were

buying. From the marketing events the women also got to discover that they have an amazing potential that they can use to transform their lives and those of others both in their group and the community. We hope that these women will continue to use their synergy to their advantage.



A woman admires a barsoap made by her women's group.



SHAMPOO READY FOR THE MARKET

Packed shampoo ready for the market.



Marion standing far right with the rest of the group display their products

The KINORU group display their products during the marketing event.

EMPOWERING YOUNG ADULTS WITH CATERING SKILLS

By Catherine Mwari

If our youth arise and act, they have the capacity and dynamism to transform the society. Most young people in Kenya are desperate because they either come from families that have suffered the effects of HIV/AIDS or made vulnerable by poverty. Youth from such situations are desperate because they are not able to access quality education that would enable them get meaningful employment. It is against this background that from August 2014 to March 2015, IPI trained 22 vulnerable young women and men in hospitality and events management.

The 22 youth have learnt a lot including how to set crockery and cutlery on a dining table, how to cook different types of cakes, snacks and main dishes. The class has also been trained in house keeping, entrepreneurship and communication skills.



One of the catering students learns how to make snacks at KACH kitchen.

The catering class has also been very creative; they for example came up with a strategy of selling food and snacks they have made from their practical lessons to IPI staff. This was very positive as it showed that their entrepreneurial skills had come alive.

"I have learnt a lot at the catering class at IPI. How to prepare a good balanced diet; to bake and make more delicious food than before. With this knowledge I can confidently start my own business so that I can afford to support myself and my family members," Says Elsie one of the catering class beneficiary.

The group also did benefit from an Events Organizing and Management training from IPI's U.K partner KORl a youth-led group. This training saw the beneficiaries plan a colorful event at KACH grounds and several other events such as mock weddings and parties.

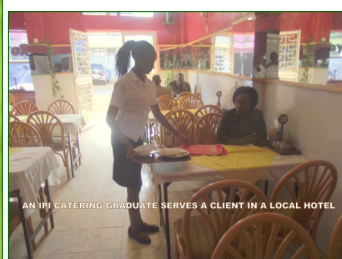
The class completed its course work on 19th March 2015 and are now undertaking their internships in different hotels in Meru town and its environs. The students will be graduating in July this year. IPI does wish the Catering and Hospitality class of 2015 the best in all their endeavors.



Catering students learn how to arrange crockery and cutlery on a food serving table at KACH.



A catering student baking a cake in the catering class at KACH.



An IPI catering student serves a client at a local hotel during her internship.



An IPI Catering student works in the kitchen of a local hotel during her internship.

IPI FOUNDER SET FOR PRESTIGIOUS USA LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

By Enoch Owino

Dr. Karambu Ringera, the founder and president of International Peace Initiatives (IPI), has received an invitation from The McCain Institute for International Leadership to participate in a leadership program called Next Generation Leaders Program, which is set to begin in September 2015.

Ethical leadership according to Dr. K is the capacity and the will to rally women and men to a common purpose, and the character that inspires confidence. Through her efforts and initiatives, Dr. Karambu exhibits true leadership qualities by providing a platform for marginalized people in the community to empower themselves.

The McCain Institute for International Leadership mission is to bring leaders from around the world to share their professional and personal experiences while developing their own roadmap for how they plan to advocate and implement their leadership action plan in their different fields. The program is committed to advancing character-driven leadership based on security, economic opportunity, freedom and human dignity around the world. The institute seeks to promote humanitarian action, human rights and democracy, and national security, and to embrace technology in producing better designs for educated decisions in national and international policy.

The McCain Institute plays a unique role in a crowded intellectual space by bringing leaders into conversation with each other through open debate and rigorous analysis. These processes include convening experts, publishing policy-relevant research, and holding decision-making exercises. The McCain Institute aims to challenge conventional wisdom, make action recommendations, train high-quality staff and fellows, and influence policy.

Recognizing that the challenges facing the world are universal and require universal cooperation and contribution

, the institute brings experienced leaders from all over the world to create partnerships and a discourse regarding the world's diverse issues. This practice is essential to IPI's mission as well. The organization also seeks to bring together a global network of individuals and organizations seeking to share innovative and alternative means of overcoming the devastation of disease, conflict and poverty.

As IPI continues to engage with these challenges, the leadership program will prove beneficial to both IPI and Kenya. The region will continue to benefit from Dr. Karambu's knowledge and contribution long after the program has ended.



Dr. Karambu recently receiving an award.



Dr. Karambu attending an event at KACH.

EQUIPING YOUTH WITH TAILORING SKILLS

By Antony Kiarie

Young people are the pillars of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for sustainable development and peace. If, however, they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have very opportunity to participate fully of the lives of their societies," Kofi Annan once said.

It is against this back drop that for the past 11 months, IPI



A physically challenged girl sews a shirt at the tailoring class.

has been empowering 15 young people from challenging backgrounds on Clothing and Textile. Though the skills training in Clothing and Textile begun with 15 youth they have since dropped to 11 because of numerous challenges that some of them were facing. One of the young women who unfortunately couldn't go on with the course was a physically challenged girl who due to health challenges, could no longer attend classes. Also attending the course was a pregnant teenager who is now a mother at only 17 years old. She however came back and completed the course.

The Clothing and Textile skills training for the youth has provided real transformation in the lives of the project beneficiaries. Most of them acquiring skills that they didn't even imagine they could ever gain due to the very challenging life circumstances. Apart from sewing the students are also taken through a communication, entrepreneurship and life skills training. This part of the course has brought great impact in the self-esteem of most project beneficiaries who had a very low self-esteem when they were admitted to the course.

"Before I joined the course I didn't know much about tailoring but I can now sew my own clothes like dresses, skirts, trousers and many others, including men's garments. I also have enough experience on how to make embroidery seat covers, table clothes and loose covers. At the moment I have 3 sets of my own embroidery seat covers," says 22 year old Purity Kananu.

As part of industrial exposure, the trainees were taken for an education trip to a silk culture industry in Nkuubu



The best student receives a sewing machine during the class' graduation from IPI Manager Silas Muriungi.

and also attended a machine allocation centre to learn more about the machines which we do not have in our institution. The trip expounded their minds in silk production from the first stage of maintaining the worms to the final stage of getting the silk material.

Lydia Gacheri had this to say about the course.

"The Clothing and Textile course that I have attended at IPI has helped me a lot because I have gained a lot of skills that I didn't have in the past. The trip to the silk culture industry was particularly an eye opener. I have learnt to make different outfits, skills I use during the weekends and holidays to make garments for sale. The course will help me a lot in future because I have planned to start my own business. I believe after completing the course, I will be able to work and feed my family without depending on anybody."

These group of students also challenged the project team



KACH girls putting on clothes tailored by the tailoring class.

by requesting for an exhibition to exhibit the tailored products they have been making. During their training period, the students have been able to organize and successfully carry out 3 exhibitions at KACH to show and sell the various items they made in the Clothing and Textile workshop. The best student was awarded

with a sewing machine that she will use to open a business in line with what she has learned.

AUTHENTIC MANHOOD

By Enoch Owino

In the words of John Piper, a Christian man is obligated to lead his family to the best of his ability; if his family has purchased too many items on credit, then the financial crunch is ultimately his fault. If the family never reads the Bible or rarely goes to church, God holds the man to blame. If the children are disrespectful and disobedient, the primary responsibility lies with the father, not his wife. This is a reality modern day men have failed to live up to, to be responsible for their families. The world's greatest need in families today is for husbands to begin guarding their families, rather than putting every physical and emotional resource into acquisition of money.

Kithoka Amani Community Home hosted its first seminar for men dubbed "Authentic Manhood" that aimed at awakening men to rise up to the occasion and be counted as heads of families. Men's roles have been diminishing in most societies and as a result many young boys have lost direction as they transit to manhood. Several men from Kithoka community turned up for the seminar which was facilitated by Dr. Gershon Mwitii of the Leadership Institute of Kenya. Dr. Mwitii took participants through a series of topics on manhood that aimed at awakening the sleeping giant in men.

The lack of connection between fathers and their children, made worse by broken homes and busy lives, has left many children, especially boys, with a masculine identity crisis. Dr. Mwitii emphasized that fathers are absent from the lives of many children in Kenya today. Fathers have a way to point their sons to manhood with clear ideals, a code of conduct, a vision for manhood and a transcendent cause. Fathers need to motivate their children to live lives of integrity, nobility and honour. Involvement of fathers' in their children's upbringing is very critical, as it could certainly go a long way in solving societal problems and issues that manifest in current anti-social behavior.

Men listen keenly to the of the seminar's facilitator Dr. Gershon Mwitii.

"Our sons need fathers. Men help young boys of our society successfully navigate the journey from childhood to adulthood. It takes a man to teach a boy how to be a man. It takes a man to provide sons and daughters with positive affirmation only a father can give," said Dr. Mwitii.

One clear message that was sounded in the seminar is that, if men are trained and supported to be real men, to uphold women as equals in homes and everyday life, if men are trained and supported to be real fathers, to hold their children with Christian qualities, then surely the outcome will be a better world for women and children and for society as a whole.



Participants at The Seminar.

The seminar was an eye opener for many men in Kithoka village. *"Today, we need qualities that go with true manhood. We need the positive resolutions of courage, of commitment, of wisdom to take up work that must always be done by fathers in the society,"* one of the participants pointed out.

"Today we feel inspired. We have been challenged that authentic manhood takes a community effort. Encouragement, accountability and wise counsel is needed in authentic manhood. We have been encouraged to take the lead in our homes in the capacity God gave us," said Paul Kinyua, one of the participants in the seminar.

Authentic manhood is the solution for homes. It is the solution for communities. It is the solution for nations and ultimately the solution for the world. The home, Gods blueprint for discipleship, growth and maturity in life needs solid biblical leadership by men.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

By Enoch Owino

Tenda wema nenda zako a popular Swahili saying meaning do good and don't expect much from those you help, is what Dr. Karambu Ringera experienced in her recent visit to the U.S where she had gone to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award from Denver University for her life changing work here at IPI Kenya.

The University of Denver awarded International Peace Initiatives (IPI) founder and president, Dr. Karambu Ringera, with a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of her outstanding efforts in creating and supporting initiatives that mitigate the effects of poverty, disease, discrimination and violence.

Recognizing that women and children are hardest hit by the effects of HIV/AIDS, Dr. Karambu's initiatives have always addressed these populations. She founded International Peace Initiatives as a response to disease, conflict and poverty devastating whole communities in Kenya.

The award recognizes Dr. Karambu's efforts in uplifting and raising the living standards of women, children and marginalized people in the community. IPI's tools for achieving this goal are education, empowerment and enterprise programs for women. IPI also places a significant focus on children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, prostitution, and child sex abuse.



Dr. K displays her Prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

Children who have lost parents to HIV/AIDS need and deserve an education. However, because of AIDS, children are bullied, isolated and shut out of school. Being part of a school environment will prepare them for the future, while helping to remove the stigma and discrimination associated with AIDS. Through IPI, Dr. Karambu has implemented a successful education program that keeps children in school who have lost their parents to AIDS. The children have also found a home at the Amani Children's Home, which takes care of children from the community who have been orphaned by AIDS.

Dr. Karambu recognizes that in order to promote real empowerment for women, enabling them to fulfill all their capabilities as drivers of growth and development, a structural change is required. To reduce inequalities, a special focus must be placed on vulnerable women due to their social condition, poverty and disease.

Through enterprise programs like the jewelry-making training program, an initiative that aims to promote the livelihood of women by bettering their lives through design, women are being empowered economically.

Progress for women is progress for everyone. Investing in women is more than a matter of rights; it also makes good economic sense. When women are empowered and given the chance to exercise their rights, become leaders or make use of educational and employment opportunities, economies grow. If we want to use this potential and strive towards equality between women and men as partners in development, we must use every means available to eradicate violence against women and girls. Through its various programs, IPI envisions a community where violence and discrimination against women no longer exists.

Peace involves creating and securing space for others to contribute the best that they have and all that they are. For this reason, Dr. Karambu has also created an eco-project to help people in her community re-think food production for sustainable livelihoods.



Dr. Karambu's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dr. Karambu's vision of communities free from violence, discrimination, poverty and disease has brought hope to many. Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, they send forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance. The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes the impact of the ripples Dr. Karambu and IPI have made, and will continue to produce.

Hongera Dakdari !!!

FEEDING COMMUNITIES THROUGH SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

By Dennis Mwenda

According to John Magu, IPI staff who works at the Tiriji Eco Center, the problem with the community is poor planning of land use and haphazard use of land resources. He quickly adds that the community is however, invited to learn what we are doing at the IPI farm. He says that they have taught various people about ILUD and the feedback is positive. John says most people trained in ILUD have reported that their families now get enough nutritious food to sustain them while creating an eco-friendly environment at the same time.

Soil conservation is an important aspect of ILUD. The soil is a great connector of lives. Without proper care for it we can have no life. ILUD aims at conserving soil and ensuring soil fertility is maintained through effective land use.



Cabbages planted at IPI's Tiriji Eco-Centre.

The role of agriculture in transforming our economy and nation is tremendous and cannot be overlooked. This importance lies in empowering communities to be

self-sufficient. Through ILUD, IPI seeks to engage the community in a participatory process to ensure eco-friendly sustainable ways of food production through effective land use. Ignorance about land use is a major impediment to food security in many communities.

This process is participatory, thus empowers the community by giving them confidence in their ability to make decisions based on local knowledge. It cultivates local ownership of the project, which is essential for sustainability.

The benefits of ILUD are wide. Dr. K adds that By engaging the community, the process is participatory and all inclusive. Community members feel they own the project. They learn better ways of land. Through Tiriji Eco Center, IPI has been able to create a greener landscape, achieve organically improved soil, increase biodiversity, and inculcate positive attitudes towards indigenous knowledge and endogenous development, increase access to fruits, vegetables and herbs among other foods. It has also increased value of land, improved agro-ecological skills and aided in soil and water conservation.

"Our long term goal is to create a food forest full of nut trees, fruit trees, vegetables and other crops in a bid to demonstrate effective land use, combat food insecurity,

improve nutrition and conserve the environment by creating an eco-friendly surrounding," remarks an enthusiastic Dr.K.

The potential for replication of the ILUD project is massive. IPI has already extended the program to Tharaka Nithi, Embu, Laikipia and the expansive Meru County. IPI in partnership with *Ecologia Youth Trust*, a Scottish Charity, is preparing to roll out the project to reach out to many farmers in a bid to create eco-friendly environments by use of sustainable land use methods. IPI is committed to ensuring food security by provision of nutritious foods cultivated through eco-friendly land use.



Mr.Dennis Mwenda working at Tiriji Eco-centre



IPI's Tiriji Eco-centre
The place of abundance.

New Story Mindset

By Dr. Karambu Ringera

Since I attended the New Story Summit in Findhorn in 2014, I have had many thoughts about what a 'new story' means to me. As I continued living in my community and looking for ways to 'live' the new story style, I have come to the realisation that the 'new story' mindset has to begin within me. For if I have no new story in me, then, what will I be sharing with others? The new story mind set begins within me - I live it and then I apply that way of living in my day-to-day life: what I say, do and think. Going deeper into how this 'new story' mindset manifests in my work, I have developed some values or tenets to inform my approach.

My beginning point has been to ask: What is the 'new story' mindset for me? Secondly, my exploration has led me to ask: what are the values of 'new story' thinking I need in my life/work? And lastly, I ask: how do I apply these in my 'new story' transformation endeavour?



Dr. K displays her Prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award.

I begin by explaining my work 'context.' It seems that crisis is a great place for innovative thinking. Recently, Kenya was shocked when nearly 150 students were massacred at a local University by Al Shabaab extremists. These attacks are meant to instil fear in the hearts of everyone

in Kenya. Since HIV/AIDS was first declared a national disaster in Kenya in 1999, it has killed millions. It had killed many more since 1986 when it was first detected in Kenya. Today, 1.6 million are living with HIV/AIDS; we have 91,000 new infections yearly for adults and about 13,000 new infections among children annually. The impact of AIDS on a population is not only in the numbers it kills, more fundamentally the impact lies in how it changes how people live their lives. Al Shabaab's attacks endeavour to do the same.

In Kenya, many women have been left widows by the disease. many children have been orphaned and many made vulnerable by the disease. Women have lost their matrimonial homes to relatives, forced to live in slums with their children and many revert to prostitution because they have no means of livelihood. This spreads the disease further. Orphans are forced out of school because they have no school fees and no one to fend for them.

Child-headed homes are on the increase. For me, the most painful effect to watch is the apathy of the rest of the society. All these are a form of 'violence' in the society.

In the face of the economic, social and cultural devastation HIV/AIDS has meted out to families, the enormous 'burying-our-heads-in-the-sand' syndrome within the communities and the pathetic stories of children abandoned by their dead parents and living relatives, one can truly be discouraged. This is where the story of International Peace Initiatives begins - reclaiming wastelands in these unlikely spaces: HIV/AIDS, violence and poverty.

My new story has come to mean 'reclaiming' the wastelands in my mind, heart and body first - where to reclaim means to be aware, understand, own and take the responsibility to 'change' or 'transform' these aspects in my life. The Gandhi words, "Be the change you want to see in the world," is very



Dr. Karambu's Lifetime Achievement Award.

valid here. I must change myself first before I can attempt to change others. Indeed, in any situation that is not working for me, I have to change to turn that situation around. I have used the acronym RECLAIM to inform my new story mindset.

R stands for taking Responsibility - be aware, understand, own and take the responsibility of the situation I am in. In the context of my work to transform lives of people living with, affected by or infected with HIV/AIDS, I had to come to the understanding that I could be infected. If I am not infected, I could be affected by the disease. This is the situation for many families in my community. Even today, few people talk about their status or whether or not their families have been infected/affected by HIV/AIDS.

In the context of this 'silence' how can one be in a 'new story' frame of mind? Only by taking responsibility through understanding, owning and working with the situation to transform it, can we start really looking AIDS (Al Shabaab, poverty, violence, etc) in the eye and saying, I am going to 'conquer' this. Conquer here means 'no battles' as in warfare waged - merely choosing a 'winning' attitude and a refusal to be put down by whatever circumstances life brings your way. Choosing to be true to who you are, in the midst of the multitude of other voices trying to draw you to their story.

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New Story Mindset

By Dr. Karambu Ringera

The E in RECLAIM stands for Empoweredness. This is about being in a state of 'knowing oneself, thus being empowered. This is not a one time event of finding oneself, rather, empoweredness is about being in a perpetual state of inner joy-full-ness because you 'know' who you are. When people do not understand why I chose to do this work instead of looking for a 'good' job abroad, be-



Cabbages planted at IPI's
Tiriji Eco-Centre.

cause I KNOW why I do it, I am not distracted by their judgment. It is my call and my vision and my dream. Only I can embrace my dream, no one else can. If I let go of my dream because of what other people think or say, I am the loser. I CHOOSE to live my dream because the vision IS mine - I take responsibility of my calling. Even in the midst of challenges, I am happy because I am doing what I have chosen to do with my life.

C stands for Courage. It takes courage to own ones dream in the midst of judgment by everyone else. It takes courage to look disease, poverty, violence, ETC in the eye and say, 'I am doing this anyway!!!! It takes courage to look deep inwards and 'own' who you find there and work with them to build a better you. For me the 'new story' mindset is about accepting my weaknesses and strengths and using both to reach out for the opportunities I have been offered to 'change' myself. The greatest work that needs to be done in the world is to change oneself, for when all of us are truly transformed, then the 'whole' is changed. I believe that 'When I AM peace, and you ARE peace, then the whole world IS peace'!!!! It takes COURAGE to find myself in that very deep and vulnerable place and own it totally with love and light.

The L stands for Love and Light. Every human being is endowed with Divine gem of Love and Light. Humanity has been unable to shine these on our world because we forgotten how to Love and shine the Light on ourselves. Unless I am Love and Light unto myself, it is not possible to BE that for another. My 'new story' mindset is to harness these gifts that I have forgotten live in me and AWAKEN them and begin to live them again. As a child I had these alive in me, but the society in which I was brought up taught me another way of being. Now it is up to me to reclaim those gifts and live them again as my new story!!!

A in RECLAIM stands for Adjustiveness. This is very different from 'adaptiveness' or adopting. For me 'adjustiveness' is about 'dancing' with life. A river never stops to ask rocks and boulders on its way why they are on its way. The river chips away at the rock or flows around it or takes the boulder with it!!! In life, my new story is about 'dancing' with life and stopping complaining all the time. The beauty of adjustiveness is in reflexively embracing what IS and waltzing with it until you overcome the 'block' in your way or in your mind or your heart, for that matter!!

I stands for Intuition. Each one of us is gifted with DIVINE WISDOM - that KNOWING that comes in silence. Stop the mind for a moment and LISTEN in stillness, and that stillness will speak to you. That is where the answers to many of our questions, requests and needs are hidden. Look within, be still and you will hear the voice of the Divine Essence in each of us. My 'new story' is about accessing this wisdom every moment of my life, and in particular when I am in the midst of a difficult situation. I believe in any situation, there are answers, when I am still. For even the Bible says: "Be still and know I am God."

M stands for Mindfulness. many of us live our lives 'at large' - that is, not paying attention. Mindfulness is about BEING PRESENT in my own life. Living my life with awareness and being present to how I am living my life every moment. My



Tiriji Eco-Centre
The Place of the New Story
Mindset.

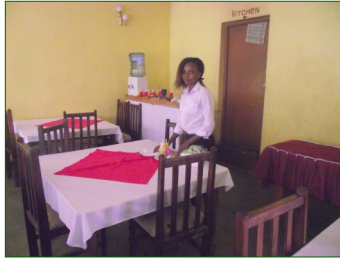
'new story' attitude is captivating being present in my life - living as if I AM living my life and not life living me. I want to BE, not necessarily in charge or control of my life (because I know a larger essence supports me in that area), rather I need to 'FEEL' that support every moment of my life. A letting go and a KNOWING that ALL IS WELL anyway. Being in

a place of NOT KNOWING, yet KNOWING all is known!!!!, although I do not know all. My 'new story' is about BEING in this space of NOT KNOWING and being 'safe' in it.

IPI PICTORIAL



An IPI catering graduate works at a local hotel's kitchen during his internship.



An IPI catering graduate works at a local hotel's dining during her internship.



A tailoring student sews the edges of a woven mat at IPI's Clothing and Textile workshop.



Dr. Karambu Ringera displays her Lifetime Achievement Award at D.U.



KACH kids enjoying a fun day out.



Dr. Karambu with Jane (From Ecologia Youth Trust U.K) IPI's development partner at Tiriji Eco Centre.



Women beneficiaries of Bar soap Shampoo training during their marketing event.



Authentic Manhood workshop at IPI- KACH.



An IPI hairdressing and beauty student shaves a client at IPI's Hairdressing school.