



# International Peace Initiatives

## INSPIRING ACTION FOR PEACE

# NEWSLETTER

### A MESSAGE FROM IPI FOUNDER & PRESIDENT, DR. KARAMBU RINGERA

Since COVID hit our world, I have not been able to visit the United States, but various invitations to present around the U.S. provided me the opportunity to travel. The primary reason for my extended trip has been to reconnect and grow relationships with IPI friends and supporters I have not seen for many years. Here is a brief report of where I have been and where I am headed.

I visited Cleveland, Ohio to visit a longtime friend and faithful IPI supporter, Nancy and her husband David, who raised funds for IPI by selling jewelry made by the women of Meru, Kenya. I went from Ohio to Michigan where I met up with three former and current IPI-U.S. Board Members. It was wonderful to visit with Michael and his wife Sharon, Heather and her husband Nevin, and Steve and his wife Chelsea. They are all so devoted to our efforts and have dedicated so much of themselves to IPI.



Next, I was in Rhode Island to visit with new IPI-U.S. Board Member and former IPI-Kenya employee, Ann Naitore and her husband Mutuma. Then, I journeyed to New York for the Gender Equity and Reconciliation International (GERI) 30th Anniversary Summit. We launched a book I co-authored with GERI founders, Cynthia Brix and William Keepin, and 16 other GERI facilitators (*left*), titled *Gender Equity & Reconciliation*. It is [available for purchase on Amazon](#). The connections, conversations, and heart-storming visions around these issues—and their spiritual dimensions—were inspirational and I pray that they will continue well into the future. Then, I presented at Trinity School, which partners with Students Shoulder-to-Shoulder (SStS) to bring high school students to Kenya each summer. This year, SStS brought 10 teens to Meru on an immersive trip to experience our transformative and regenerative work. We hope to see even more visitors in

2023! I also enjoyed a visit with former IPI-Kenya Programs Director (and my cousin), Kathleen Kamau in New Jersey.

After I left New York, I had the opportunity to visit with many current and former board members including Mike, Ralph, Margi, Ann, Kat, and Jody, as well as current supporters in Denver and Boulder. Margi and Ann helped me prepare a Kenyan meal we served at Margi's home where 20 friends gathered to hear all about IPI and KACH and how we navigated 2020 with COVID-19. It was great to reconnect with everyone! It was a successful event and we are so thankful for all the generous contributions! ASANTE SANA!

My Colorado schedule was busy! I presented at Regis University's Master of Development Practice Program, Rotary Club of Denver, Silver Creek High School in Longmont, and finally at the annual *Ethical Leadership Program* Students Shoulder-to-Shoulder hosts. Silver Creek High School has Peace & Service to Africa Club, led by Justelle (*right*) and the students raise funds all year to support one of our KACH kids. Justelle's daughter is starting up a new club at her school to also [sponsor one of our KACH kids](#). What great news!!



I've been to California to visit a former IPI College Scholar and new Board Member, Fredah; to Wisconsin to present at the University of Wisconsin's Master of Sustainable Peace Program and for a reception with Tim, the Chair of the IPI-U.S. Board; and to Atlanta to see friends who lived with us at Tiriji Eco Center for more than a year. I'm headed to Kansas City, St. Louis, and Seattle before returning home mid-December in time for the holidays. [Thank you very much for all your generous support to help us continue our work!](#)



## BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING



Millions of people worldwide are struggling with food insecurity due to poverty, war, disease, corruption, climate change, and COVID-19. Many in the rural areas of Kenya live on less than \$2USD per day and lack food.

In September, shortly before Dr. Ringera left for the United States, she visited Samburu County, a rural area in dire need of food.

Working with the Naledi Initiative, IPI-Kenya gifted the families they met in the Samburu Tribe with food and clothing.



This is one of the important lessons we instill in our children at KACH. We have been blessed and we should do all we can to bless others. **You** have helped our kids be a blessing to others. Would you please [consider a year-end donation](#) this giving season? Asante sana!

***“Yvonne knows the color of struggle...but chose to flap her wings against the storm.”***

### ICSP SCHOLAR GIVES BACK

A former IPI College Scholar is giving back to the program that gave him so much. Jeremiah (pictured below) has finished his degree and now volunteers and teaches at the IPI Polytechnic Training School.

“The [IPI College Scholars program](#) supported me at Kenyatta University. At IPI’s Polytechnic, I am living my dream of becoming a teacher. I teach entrepreneurship and computer skills to our students. I am equipping them with knowledge and skills that are updated with the current Kenyan market that is going digital. I am grateful for this opportunity,” Jeremiah said.



### STANDOUT STUDENT

Meet Yvonne. Yvonne is a standout student, who recently finished her studies at St. Anthony of Padua Primary School in Meru. In Kenya, in order to attend secondary school, a student must take a national exam and achieve a certain score to advance.

Yvonne scored a 386 out of 500 possible points on the very difficult entrance exam. She earned the highest score among females in Meru County and the second highest score overall!



According to Yvonne’s former headmaster at St. Anthony’s, Ms. Judith Makena, Yvonne is a determined girl who maintained a strong focus on her academic journey and is destined for success. Makena and many fellow students and teachers came to KACH to congratulate Yvonne and celebrate with her KACH family.

“If you argue that the roots of education are bitter, know also that its fruits are sweet. Today we are here as a team to celebrate the fruits of hard work from a girl who knows the color of struggle and the role scarcity plays in life, but chose to flap her wings against the storm to scale heights above it. Yvonne has made us proud in Meru County and nationally. We have always known her as a bright, disciplined student who was meant to fly,” said Makena at the celebration.

Yvonne set the record at KACH for the highest score and set the bar higher for other KACH kids to work harder in the next round of national examinations. Ten KACH kids sat for the primary exams, and all did exceedingly well. Naomi Mwangi, IPI-Kenya Executive Director addressed everyone gathered at the celebration.

“We are here because we value equitable education opportunities and are so proud that she has proved how, given an opportunity, dreams of anyone can be achieved.”

When you [sponsor a child](#), you provide more than an education, **you provide encouragement and support** to children like Yvonne as they work to make their dreams become reality. Congratulations to all our students for passing their exams!





*Students Shoulder-to-Shoulder working alongside KACH kids to create raised garden beds.*

## SSTs RETURNS TO MERU

Since its founding, IPI has prioritized making KACH, Tiriji, and all of its major programs as fiscally self-sustaining as possible. A critical strategy in attaining this sustainability has been to host groups of students involved in educational programs.

By 2019, more than 900 guests were hosted by IPI. COVID-19 undeniably changed IPI's ability to welcome these groups to Kithoka. However, this past summer, the IPI-Kenya staff was delighted to welcome back a group of high school students organized by one of their longest standing partners, Students Shoulder-to-Shoulder (SSts).

Below is a reflection written by this year's SSts leaders:

## STUDENTS BUILD LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS...AND GARDEN BEDS

For the first time in two years, IPI was able to host their first group of visitors this summer! A group of 10 students from Students Shoulder-to-Shoulder (SSts), along with three course instructors, went to visit for two weeks in late June. Our time together was as full of excitement, as it was of unknowns, but from the moment we arrived in Nairobi, Dr. Karambu and her team were kind, welcoming and put us all at ease.

Our time in Meru with IPI was nothing short of magical. Our work kicked off with a permaculture project in [Tiriji's "food forest,"](#) creating raised beds for planting kale, beans, and more while learning about indigenous farming practices in the process. We also broke ground on a gray water project behind the kitchens that would repurpose discarded sink water. Even though we weren't able to complete the project in its current state, we learned a valuable lesson about adaptability (and when to step away from something that just isn't working out)!

The majority of our project work was spent creating a second story of rooms on a building that would expand Tiriji's capacity to host more guests in the future. This is where the magic happened! The project coincided with many of the KACH kids' summer recess, so we spent a lot of time building and learning alongside one another. Having our SSts kids getting to know so many of their Kenyan peers was great, and **they created bonds that we're sure will last a lifetime.**

Even before we took off for our trip, all our students were so eager to meet and connect with the kids at KACH. From hauling bricks with the older kids to making chapati and swimming with the little ones on a hot afternoon, we loved every second spent with the incredibly unique young people at KACH. We miss everyone dearly, and we plan to make good on our promise to return next summer.

**- Alaina and Valentina**





## CELEBRATING 35 IPI POLYTECH GRADUATES



IPI-Kenya partner, Ecologia Youth Trust, has provided grant funding for a Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy training program at the [IPI Polytechnic School](#). This year was especially challenging for the program, as it was the first session since the COVID-19 shutdown.

As always, IPI-Kenya rose to the challenge and on July 22, 35 young women graduated the program with the skills needed to secure a better future for themselves and their children. The course included beauty and hairdressing training, but also leadership, mentorship, and reproductive health classes.

Rising costs caused many budget constraints. Dr. Ringera offered leadership training and mentorship free of charge. Two professional acquaintances of Dr. Ringera's offered training sessions at a reduced rate. IPI offered childcare to the young mothers enrolled in the program. Fundraising for IPI has been dramatically affected due to the pandemic, but everyone understood the challenges facing the program implementation and were innovative and still provided a top-notch program for the young ladies. Congratulations to our recent graduates!



**A generous donor has offered a matching grant, matching all year-end gifts dollar-for-dollar, up to \$10,000! Would you please consider [making a year-end gift today?](#)**



### International Peace Initiatives

Kenyans partnering to:

*Empower Women  
Educate & Inspire Children  
Create Thriving, Resilient &  
Sustainable Communities*

International Peace Initiatives envisions a world where violence, poverty and disease no longer exist and every individual lives in dignity and with integrity.

*IPI-U.S. is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports IPI-Kenya, which runs all operations in Meru, Kenya.*

### International Peace Initiatives

1777 S. Harrison Street  
Suite 1500  
Denver, Colorado 80210

Phone: 303-949-5642  
E-mail: [info@ipeacei.org](mailto:info@ipeacei.org)  
Web: [www.ipeacei.org](http://www.ipeacei.org)  
Tax ID: 65-1249494