

# Report

## African Conference 2010



### *Building Peace in Africa: Health through a gender lens in a human right and socio-economic perspective*

December 11th 2010  
Van der Valk, de Pier, Scheveningen, The Hague

This project is financially supported by:



AC African Conference

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## **Foreword**

On the 11th December 2010, the organisers of African Conference (AC) hosted the 12th annual African Conference in Van der Valk, de Pier, Scheveningen, The Hague. The conference was organised by the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders) in collaboration with The African Committee (TAC), Hirda, Support Trust for African Development (STAD) and African Sky. The topic of this year's conference was "Building Peace in Africa: Health through a gender lens in a human rights and socio-economic perspective". The conference brought together African students studying at higher educational institutes in the Netherlands, Dutch and international students, Diaspora youth, as well as NGO representatives and media practitioners. The event was sponsored by Oxfam Novib and the Aidsfonds.

Since the first gathering in 1999, the AC (formally known as the African Student Conference, ASC) has been an inspiring event where students, future leaders and activists from across the African continent come together to share ideas and to discuss solutions about current problems affecting Africa. This year's conference was again a great success for all parties involved, including participants, speakers and organisers. The participants greatly contributed to a positive, informative and inspirational forum, dedicated to future developments in Africa.

Two key note speakers contributed to the conference in the means of facilitating the plenary sessions of the 12th annual African Conference. Ms Dinasas Abdella and Ms Ilse van Velzen presented participants with knowledge and experience within the field of the gender and health and the human rights perspective on gender and health. Furthermore, an international speaker, Pepe Julian Onziema from Uganda, presented in a workshop her knowledge and experience within the field of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual) in Africa. In addition, participants were able to gain knowledge and practical skills during the different workshops on various subthemes related to gender and health. The following workshops were offered: 'Gender Equality: Traditions and Modernism', 'Gender Perceptions and Physical Exercise', 'Gender & Citizenship', 'Girls health and innovative approaches: AFRIpads', 'HIV/AIDS', 'Honour Based Violence', 'How can men be involved' and last, 'LGBT in Africa'. Among the workshop facilitators were Ms Dinasas Abdalla, Mrs Maeva Bonjour, Ms Sanne Bolkenstein, Mr Laurens Buijs, Ms Suad Farah, Ms Merle Gosewinkel, Ms Sanne Nagelhout, Mrs Istarlin Ismail, Mrs Welmoed Koekebakker, Ms Pepe Julian Onziema, Mr Anthony Ovwighose, Mr Toni La Tegola, Ms Ilse van Velzen and Ms Jose de Vries.

UNOY Peacebuilders and its partners would like to thank all the donors, speakers, facilitators, the organising team, the host and the staff of the venue, as well as the participants for making the conference a great success.

**The Hague, January 2010**

**Reporting Team: Myrthe Welten and Jeltsje Boersma**

## **Acknowledgements**

### **We would like to express our special gratitude to;**

- Our Donors: Oxfam Novib and the Aids Fonds
- Van der Valk Restaurant for the venue
- Our continuing partner; The African Committee (TAC)
- Our other partners; African Sky, Hirda and Support Trust for African Development (STAD)
- The hosts of the 12th annual African Conference (in order of appearance); Stephanie Moy, Clara Kansiime, Eleri Josphat and Marije van Velzen
- The facilitators of the plenary sessions (in order of appearance); Dinasas Abdella and Ilse van Velzen
- The facilitators of the workshops; Dinasas Abdella, Stella Ismail, Maeva Bonjour, Pepe Julian Onziema, Toni la Tegola, Suad Farah, Athony Ovwighose, Sanne Nagelhout, Jose de Vries, Merle Gosewinkel, Welmoed Koekebakker, Laurens Buijs and Sanne Bolkenstein
- The volunteers of the African Conference 2010
- The African Conference Coordinators; Myrthe Welten and Jeltsje Boersma

## Organisers



### **United Network of Young Peacebuilders**

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders is a global network of young people and youth organisations active in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. UNOY Peacebuilders, as a network organisation, contributes to the work of its members and affiliates in two fundamental ways: Capacity building and Advocacy. It also engages in a range of additional activities to support these two key functions: Networking, information sharing, advice and support through a pool of resource persons, research, fundraising and administrative support.

Since its inception in 1989, the United Network of Young Peacebuilders has organised a series of international work group meetings, training seminars and regional/global conferences. After taking part in UNOY events, some participants decided to create their own local and regional organisations and initiated peacebuilding projects in different parts of the world. UNOY Peacebuilders has campaigned actively for the - UN declared - International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence (2001-2010) and is promoting the values and principles gathered in the Earth Charter, as a guiding ethical framework for action. The team has presented the results of the Mid-term Report on the Culture of Peace to different organs of the United Nations in New York and advocated for the creation of a Global Youth Fund and Programme for a Culture of Peace. Additionally, the team is raising awareness amongst youth in the UN Secretary-Generals Study on Violence Against Children. In 2005, UNOY Peacebuilders moved its office to The Hague, invited by the The Hague Municipality where the International Secretariat is now based and where 10 youth volunteers run its activities.

*The African Conference is organised in collaboration with The African Committee (TAC), African Sky, Hirda and Support Trust for African Development (STAD).*



### **The African Committee**

The African Committee (TAC) is UNOY's main partner in organising the African Conference. TAC is an association of highly qualified African students studying in the Netherlands. TAC's secretariat is located at the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague. Its main objective is to meet regularly and highlight factual issues affecting the continent of Africa at both macro and micro levels. The committee hopes that the conference will fulfil a number of goals. First, that it will contribute to the awareness and the discussions on the challenges of youth building peace in Africa. Secondly, that it will lead to a growing commitment coordinated interdisciplinary networking and action among African students towards building peace and sustainable development in Africa. Finally, TAC hopes that the valuable insights, views and recommendations of the African Conference will be taken into account by the current leaders and decision-makers.



### **African Sky**

The foundation African Sky is an organisation for East African women living in the Netherlands. The main aim of African Sky is to create a bridge between East African women and relevant social institutions in the Netherlands. African Sky's goal is to give East African women a place in Dutch society and connect African women with young people in the Netherlands. In other words, they hope to improve and increase the participation of East African women in the Dutch society.



### **Himilo Relief and Development Association (HIRDA)**

HIRDA stands for the Himilo Relief and Development Association. Himilo means 'vision' in Somali. HIRDA is a non-profit organisation founded in 1998 in The Hague by the Somali Diaspora in the Netherlands. HIRDA works with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering in Somalia, particularly in South and Central Somalia. In addition, HIRDA acts as a bridge between local communities and international donor organisations. HIRDA also mobilises Diaspora to engage in the development of their country of origin.



### **Support Trust for African Development (STAD)**

Formally known as Sudanese Orphans Support Trust (SOST). The mission of STAD is to support less privileged groups: women, orphans, refugees, youth and elderly in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. STAD envisions a higher living standard and chances of self-reliance for the less privileged groups in The Great lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

### **The African Conference 2010 is organised by:**

#### The United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY)

Jeltsje Boersma  
Myrthe Welten

#### The African Committee (TAC)

Thomas Wilberforce Tuah  
Clara Kansiime  
Iris Kalavo  
Robert Owilli  
Ereri Josphat  
Morgen Chonoona  
Olufemi Adebajo

#### African Sky

Stella Ismail

#### Support Trust for African Development (STAD)

Florence Andrews

#### Hirda (Himilo Relief and Development Association)

Suad Farah  
Kwaku Owusu Afriyie

## **Introduction to the project**

The African Conference (AC) is an annual one-day conference held in The Hague. It has been organised for the past twelve years by the United Network of Young (UNOY) Peacebuilders. The goal of the annual African Conference 'Building Peace in Africa', is to raise awareness, increase understanding and sensitise its participants. The target groups of the conference are African Students enrolled in institutions of higher education in the Netherlands, African Diaspora youth and Dutch youth with an interest in African issues. This year's theme is 'Health through a gender lens,' thereby addressing both the Human Rights and the socio-economic perspective of the theme. The goal of this years conference 'Building Peace in Africa: Health and Gender' is to raise awareness about the relationship between the health situation in different African countries and their unique gender perceptions. Furthermore, the African Conference has focused on positive examples and effective practices in order to inspire participants to take action. The conference will therefore contribute to the knowledge of the participants. It will also spread UNOY Peacebuilders' call for commitment, actions and policies to be put in place to prevent further negative impacts and to develop effective communication strategies for our present and future generations. The conference will present a forum to stimulate reflection and initiate debate among all participants on the issues raised during the day.

## **Background**

Last year UNOY celebrated its 20th anniversary with a special edition of the AC in the Peace Palace, The Hague. Participants included African students in higher education in the Netherlands, African Diaspora and Dutch public with an interest in Africa. The conference addresses peace- related issues of major concern to the African continent in general, as well as topics more specific to new African leaders, to civil society and to African youth. The first conference was organised by the Hague Appeal for Peace (HAP) during its HAP-99 conference. The themes of the previous conferences include a wide range of topics related to "Building Peace in Africa":

- Time to Abolish War (theme of the Hague Appeal for Peace).
- Child Soldiers.
- Peace through Justice: The Role of International Law in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding in Africa.
- Good Governance and Poverty Alleviation.
- NePAD and the Challenges for Peace in Africa.
- Youth Building Peace in Africa: Inclusion, Empowerment, Action.
- Human Security and the Millennium Goals.
- The Impact of Religion on Building Peace in Africa.
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Reconciliation.
- Urbanisation and Human Security.
- The Role of Communication in Conflict Transformation.

The theme of this years' conference was:

**Building Peace in Africa:  
Health through a gender lens  
in a Human Rights and Socio-Economic perspective.**

## Needs analysis

UNOY believes that its annual conferences contribute to the knowledge and awareness of young people, particularly African diaspora youth, as well as Dutch youth interested in Africa, on important topics affecting the African continent. The African Diaspora in the Netherlands can be an important actor in peacebuilding, as most of them either stay in close contact with their community in Africa and/or go back to Africa. Most of them withhold a higher education and have the chance to enrol in jobs that greatly affect the society such as policy jobs, education or management.

## Analysing Gender & Health

Each society has different definitions and stereotypes for femininity and masculinity, as well as societal roles that belong to each of the sexes. Often, these gender norms and ideas lead to unequal opportunities, resources and exercise of human rights. This has led to decreased access over resources for women belonging to some social groups. Unequal access to resources can result in women having limited access to education and health institutions. “Gender roles and unequal gender relations interact with other social and economic variables, resulting in different and sometimes inequitable patterns of the exposure to health risks, and in different access to and utilisation of health information, care and services. These differences in turn have clear impacts on health outcomes.”<sup>1</sup>

Determinants of health include the circumstances in which people live, such as their work, location and age. These conditions are shaped again by several aspects. Power, resources and money can form the determinants of health. Gender and health services are just two of the twelve determinants of health, along with income and social status, employment, education, social environments, physical environments, healthy child development, personal health practices and coping skills, social support networks, biology and genetic endowment and culture. These twelve determinants of health are factors that together affect the health of individuals. Therefore, since the context of people’s lives determines their health, blaming individuals for having poor health or crediting them with good health is inappropriate. Individuals are unlikely to be able to control most of the determinants of their health.<sup>2</sup>

During this African Conference, the concept of health is not only addressed from the angle of physical well being, but also from the angle of emotional well being and the circumstances (context) that influence people’s overall well being.

UNOY believes that health is a fundamental Human Right. The following quote explains why we believe health and gender should be examined through a human rights perspective: “Every human being is entitled to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health conducive to living a life in dignity. Measures must be put in place to improve child and maternal health and pre- and post-natal care. The measures should also improve sexual and reproductive health services, including access to family planning, emergency obstetric services and access to information, as well as to resources necessary to act on that information. To eliminate discrimination against women, there is a need to develop and implement a comprehensive national strategy for promoting women’s right to health throughout their life. A major goal should be to reduce women’s health risks, in particular to lower the rates of maternal mortality and to protect women from domestic violence.”<sup>3</sup> In addition, in every country in the world there is at least one Human Rights treaty that address health related diseases. Unfortunately, often the laws protecting these rights are not fully enforced<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wilkison and Marmot, Social determinants of health: the social facts, 2003

<sup>2</sup> The determinates of health, Health Impact Assessment, World Health Organisation

<sup>3</sup> African Women’s Report 2009: Measure Gender Inequality in Africa; Experiences and Lessons from the African Gender and Development Index, Chapter 5, The Economic Commission for Africa

<sup>4</sup> Health and Human Rights, World Health Organization

### **The critical issue of health and care**

The distribution of resources for health in the global perspective is rather problematic. When focusing on Africa alone, this issue becomes even more problematic. One example is the outcome of the Abuja Commitment, a meeting between the Finance ministers of African countries in 2001. During this meeting, it was agreed that 15% of government funds would be devoted solely to the health sector. However, in 60% of the Sub-Saharan African countries the health-sector share of total government expenditure is still below 10%. The lack of resources to provide equitable and efficient health services, including financial resources, is a key challenge of many health systems in Africa. When looking at figures, it becomes even more clear how critical this situation is: “Having 10% of the world's population, 25% of the global disease burden, 60% of the people living with HIV, and the highest disease burden for TB and malaria in the world, Africa accounts for less than 1% of global health spending and contains only 2% of the global health workforce.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Gender issues: woman participation**

When looking at the situation of women in Africa and their participation in the workforce of a society, it is a fact that they still face notable difficulties. Not only is it necessary for countries to significantly increase its expenditure on health as a whole, but they also require much more attention to the status of women. As women increasingly participate as labourers, a higher investment should also go to the well-being of these women. “Women provide the backbone of the rural economy in much of Sub-Saharan Africa. About 80% of the economically active female labour force is employed in agriculture and women comprise about 47% of the total agriculture labour force.”<sup>6</sup> In addition, in most African communities, traditional norms accept and/or promote that rural women fulfil a triple workload. This means that women have three different roles, namely; their reproductive role, their contribution to the informal and formal economy sector and their commitment to community tasks. Women are thus carrying a big workload. Even though women take more and more part in the economic sector, the workload within the community and household has in most cases not undergone any changes. The reality is that women have to do household chores before they go to work. Due to the triple workload, women have limited voice and influence over the paid economic sector.<sup>7</sup> Women are substantially overworked and have less time to rest and to revive themselves. The work pressure of the triple workload and its responsibilities influence the mental as well as the physical wellbeing of women. In addition, there is still not enough recognition for the triple workload, which influences the mental well-being of woman. Fonjong (2004) observed that women’s utilisation of health services in most developing countries declined when economic conditions improved.<sup>8</sup>

### **Gender & UNOY**

UNOY believes that the topic of gender and health, within the discourse on African Peacebuilding, is a highly relevant topic that requires further attention. Furthermore, UNOY has several programs/projects regarding gender. Namely:

- The Gender Resource Centre.
- Training course “Youth and Diversity – Does Gender Matter?”
- Gender policy within the organisation.
- Gender working group within its group of members.

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<sup>5</sup> Progress towards the Abuja target for government spending on health care in East and Southern Africa, 2008

<sup>6</sup> MPRA – UNDP, 2005

<sup>7</sup> The fortunes and misfortunes of Women Rice producer in Ndop, Cameroon and the implications for Gender

<sup>8</sup> The fortunes and misfortunes of Women Rice producer in Ndop, Cameroon and the implications for Gender Roles (p. 140) Programme descriptions

## **Aim**

The goal of the annual African Conference 'Building Peace in Africa' is to raise awareness, increase understanding and sensitise its participants. The conference is directed at African Students enrolled in institutions of higher education in the Netherlands, African Diaspora youth and Dutch youth with an interest in African issues. This year's theme is 'Health through a gender lens,' thereby addressing both the human rights and the socio-economic perspective of the topic.

## **Objectives of the project**

1. To **enlighten, sensitise, involve and upraise participants' awareness** on the relationship between peace building and the complexity of health through a gender lens in Africa, with particular attention paid to the socio-economic and Human Rights perspective.
2. To **publicise and raise the attention of major national and international actors on the topic** of the conference and **in particular on the youth perspective** emerging from the students attending it, through the distribution of the AC's reports to gender institutes, governments and other political and non-political organisations.
3. To offer a forum where African students, African Diaspora youth and Dutch students can **meet, discuss, and exchange** inspiring ideas on the issue of health through a gender lens. Materials and background information about the topic will be distributed throughout the conference.
4. To offer a unique **networking opportunity** for African Students, African Diaspora Youth and Dutch youth, who will gather and share opinions on issues of common interest.
5. To offer participants **the opportunity to become acquainted with the work** of The African Committee and The United Network of Young Peacebuilders and its African Network.
6. To give the African Diaspora youth and students (TAC, UNOY interns, volunteers) the possibility to **gain experience and do voluntary work** with regards to organising a conference, which involves many practical skills.

## Program description

Time	Title	Guest speaker
09:50-10:20	Registration of participants	
10:20-10:35	Opening & welcome speeches	TAC: Clara Kansime (Vice president) UNOY: Stephanie Moy (International Secretariat and Outreach Coordinator)
10:35-10:55	1st speaker	Introduction to gender in relation to health Speaker: Abdalla, Dinasas
10:55-11:25	2nd speaker	A socio-economic perspective on gender & health Speaker: Bano, Sabro
11:25-11:40	Coffee/tea break*	
11:45-12:45	1st workshop round	1. LGBT in Africa 2. How can men be involved 3. Gender Perceptions & Physical Exercise 4. Gender Equality: Traditions and Modernism 5. HIV /AIDS (part 1 of 2)
12:45-14:00	Lunch*	
14:00-14:50	3rd speaker	Gender & Health from a Human Rights perspective Speaker: Velzen, van Ilse
14:55-15:55	2nd workshop round	1. Girls health and innovative approaches: AFRIpads 2. Honour based violence (part 1 of 2) 3. Gender Equality: Traditions and Modernism 4. Gender & Citizenship 5. Gender Perceptions & Physical Exercise 6. HIV /AIDS (part 2 of 2)
15:55-16:15	Coffee/tea break*	
16:20-17:20	3rd workshop round	1. Honour based violence (part 2 of 2) 2. LGBT in Africa 3. How can men be involved 4. Gender & Citizenship 5. Girls health and innovative approaches: AFRIpads
17:25-17:40	Closing ceremony	TAC: Clara Kansime (vice-president) UNOY: Marije van Velzen (Chair of board)
17:40-18:40	Drinks	

## Opening statements

### Ms. Clara Kansiiime

Vice-President of The African Committee

On behalf of The African Committee (TAC), I wish to welcome all the participants to this conference: students from various institutions in the Netherlands, African Diaspora youth, NGO representatives and all who have come because you are interested in the topic. We, as TAC, believe that whoever is present here today is a partner or stakeholder in the processes of promoting development and wellbeing of the African continent.



As TAC, we extend our sincere special thanks to today's plenary speakers and workshop facilitators; some of you have come a very long way from home in order to be with us today and we warmly welcome you.

We are very thankful to all of our friends and supporters who have ensured that today's conference becomes a reality. Our sincere gratitude to all our partners including Himilo Relief and Development Association (Hirda), African Sky and Support Trust for African Development, whom we have worked with tirelessly from the beginning up to now in regards to this conference.

TAC is an Association of African Students studying in the Netherlands, with its Secretariat at International Institute of Social Studies of the Erasmus University of Rotterdam in The Hague. TAC's main objective is to highlight and focus on important factual issues for the development of Africa. In line with the objectives, TAC organises annual events in collaboration with ISS management, UNOY, The City Council of The Hague and the other international organisations based in the Netherlands. One of the very special events is the annual African Conference that has been organised by TAC and UNOY since 1999 with several topics relevant to the continent of Africa.

This year's important topic focuses on 'Health through a gender lens in a Human rights and socio-economic perspective'. This topic is highly relevant to the objectives of TAC because health is not only a state of complete physical, social and mental well-being but in functional terms, it is also a resource which permits people to lead a social and economical productive life. It is a resource for everyday life; it emphasizes social and personal resources as well as physical capabilities (as noted by the World Health Organization, 1986)<sup>9</sup>. We considered health through a gender lens because we are convinced that gender is a critical cause for the inequality in health at all levels of society, starting from the individual, family, community, national and the international level. In the context of Africa, all the issues that will be covered in this conference are directly relevant for the promotion of human rights and peace.

The African committee hopes that this perspective will be an important window for promoting sustainable development issues in our lovely Africa. As the committed organisers of this conference, TAC, UNOY and all the other partners hope that the participants in this conference will be encouraged to increase their focus on the important issues that will be raised during the different sessions, in order to promote the wellbeing of our beloved citizens (women, men, and children) of Africa.

Once again, you are very welcome!! Long Live Africa!!

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<sup>9</sup> World Health Organisation (1986), in the Ottawa Charter of Health Promotion

## **Ms. Stephanie Moy**

International Secretariat and Outreach Coordinator, UNOY Peacebuilders



This year is already the 12th African Conference for UNOY. We started the annual conference in 1999. Through the years we have discussed many different topics in our conferences, but each year we always take Peacebuilding in Africa as a starting point. This year we have chosen to focus on: “Health through a gender lens in a human rights and socio-economic perspective”.

This topic is very important for UNOY because in our work we use a broad definition of peace. Peace does not only mean the absence of physical violence, rather, peace is a situation of physical, emotional, cultural and structural well-being. Health and gender are critical components in conflict and peacebuilding. Rape has become an important characteristic of war, just as forced impregnation or abortion, sexual slavery and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/Aids. Also, from a gender perspective, women are indiscriminately affected by conflicts. Women have often been left out during the peacebuilding process, while it has become more and more visible that their role is critical in every step towards peace. What people also tend to overlook is the importance of the social construction of manhood, which greatly affects the expectations of men’s behaviour during conflict and the peacebuilding process.

Therefore, we have decided to focus on health and gender, as these topics deserve more attention in the peacebuilding policy and in the public debate. This conference aims to create awareness on its importance and its consequences. Awareness on gender perceptions can be the start of an empowerment process of several gender groups. In the most positive outcome, this empowerment will lead to improved health conditions of both sexes and a more equal distribution of resources, workload and power.

During this African Conference, we will address the concept of health not only from the angle of physical well-being, but also from the angle of emotional well-being and the circumstances (context) that influence people’s overall well-being.

We have prepared a very interesting and diverse program for you today with speakers who are all experts in their field. They will enrich the debate with examples from their own personal experiences in the field of peacebuilding.

We would like to thank all our distinguished guests to our conference, especially all the speakers, and facilitators. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our partners TAC; HIRDA; STAD and African Sky and our donors Oxfam Novib and the Aids fund, without whom this conference would not have been possible. We are honoured to welcome you all to the African Conference 2010 and we wish you an inspiring day!

I would like to use this opportunity to introduce our first speaker of the day Dinasus Abdalla with the plenary session: Introduction to Gender in relation to Health.

## **Plenary session 1: Introduction to gender and health**

*Speaker: Ms. Dinasas Abdella*

Dinasas Abdella, Phd candidate at the Utrecht University gave the audience an introduction to this year's topic. As an expert in gender issues herself, she ran through the most important academic background on gender and health. To start, it is important to recognise the difference between the biological term 'sex' and the component of 'gender', the social differences and society's perceptions of the roles and behaviour of women and men in relation to each other. Analysing gender is important as it leads to a better understanding of inequalities in the society and in policy and politics. She guided the audience through a historical overview of the most important developments in women rights and the subsequent discourses on gender inequalities, feminism, gender mainstreaming and integration. Also in the Millennium Development Goals, gender is explicitly mentioned in goal 3 and 5, in the context of female empowerment and improving maternal health. Why the topic of 'health' with regard to gender? Health concerns are unequally distributed by the division of gender. Interestingly, women in the world suffer more from all kinds of diseases, while men die earlier. Reproductive health now has a broader scope and also includes issues like sexually transmitted diseases, social/mental/physical well-being related to the reproductive system and empowerment of women in particular. Examining health gives clarity on the interaction between biological factors and situations of relative disadvantage in accessing health and status. It is therefore important to include gender in development practices: 'when development practice is not engendered it is endangered'. Hereinafter, Dinasas Abdella raised critical questions on gender and health discourses. Do we want to broaden the scope of gender/health towards a holistic approach, and if so, how? How can we broaden approaches to HIV/Aids that are more sensitive to gender differences? How do we empower women in our patriarchal society, without dis-empowering men, but instead encouraging active involvement of men? Are modern and traditional healthcare approaches competing or complementary, and can gender analysis offer a new perspective to this question? What are 'normal' and 'acceptable' sexual orientations? With these final questions, Dinasas Abdella triggered and inspired the audience to think critically about issues concerning gender and health, as well as giving them a solid background, which they could take advantage of during the rest of the day.



## **Plenary session 2: A socio-economic perspective on gender and health**

*Speaker: Mrs. Sabra Banowho*

Due to a last moment our plenary speaker Sabra Bano was hit by a pneumonia infection. Consequentially, this plenary session to be cancelled. As we took some more time to let people register in the morning, the start of the program delayed, so that the coffee break could follow immediately after the opening speeches by Clara Kansiiime (TAC), Stephanie Moy (UNOY) and the plenary session of Dinastas Abdella.

## **Plenary session 3: Gender and health from a Human Rights perspective**

*Speaker: Ms. Ilse van Velzen*

Ilse and Femke van Velzen are twin sisters and independent filmmakers, exposing injustice in several African countries to a wider audience. Currently they are working on their 5th documentary and at the same time, are developing an educational program for the military in Congo. In this plenary session, particular attention was paid to two of their most recent documentaries: 'Weapon of War' and 'Fighting the Silence'. First the audience was shown some parts from the documentary 'Fighting the Silence'. This film addresses the many cases of rape during the war in Congo. The power of film, according to Ilse, shouldn't be underestimated. The films made by the sisters have raised the issue at the political level: the UN, the Human Right Council and many other government officials in Congo. The film is also 'brought back to the community', which triggered discussion among the people. It created a space for talking about the sensitive taboos in the community. Thus, the film can be seen as a tool to start a debate and eventually could bring forth change.



While making the film, the sisters noticed that their documentary only shed light on the story of the victims. The soldiers are always seen as the enemy and the perpetrator, which does not leave room for their side of story. Often these men are heavily traumatised by the war and do not have opportunities to talk about their experiences. Moreover, the different groups of soldiers used different types of sexual violence. The sisters found it important to find motives by looking at both sides. 'Weapon of War' is all about asking the soldiers about their experiences, their motives and their thoughts on sexual violence. Without a group they belong to, the sisters found that these men were also vulnerable on their own. The documentary demonstrates how war is destroying people's minds and may people turn into 'animals'. The soldiers appeared open and 'normal', but were heavily affected and traumatized by the war.

The next fragment showed the audience, several women in Congo running programs in which they go in and debate with men on gender issues, sexual violence and peace. There are several programs like these but the women are not connected and therefore have limited tools for true empowerment. Much amazement was caused by some of the comments by men, on the guilt of women, on rape. Other fragments showed groups of ex-combatants that spoke with male coaches on their experiences regarding sexual violence. Immediately it becomes clear how much the combatants felt the need to share their experiences but were never able to do so. Left with their traumas, no attention is paid to them. Many of them are unemployed, alcoholic and violent, also towards women. Therefore, this group is a highly important group to work with. A army captain in the documentary tried to address sexual violence in the army raised the issue by talking with other commanders. His call is not received well by most of them; the

commanders feel that the army has 'other priorities'. The sisters feel that documentaries like these can educate people about the war and could bring people together by sharing their experiences.

Ilse van Velzen's story and the fragments of her documentary triggered debate. Many people in the audience were eager to ask questions about Congo, the documentary and the reactions the sisters received. A selection of questions were raised by the audience:

Q: "What is the target group of these documentaries?"

A: "The first target group is the Western world. The primary goal is to create awareness about injustice. Secondly, it should provoke discussion on the political level on the dire situation on the ground. And last, the local community that could benefit from creating a floor to discuss the issues concerned". Ilse van Velzen also expressed her frustration on the lack of programs involving reintegration and rehabilitation. The film also calls for NGO's to start working in this field. She noticed during her field work that some (in particular American) NGO's did not always responded positively to her movie, as most organizations only work with, and for, the victims and do not pay attention to the perpetrators.

Q: "What has been the reaction of government officials?"

A: "The movie is partly funded by the Dutch government. The Swedish government also contributed to the project. There is still a need for NGO's to step in though."

Q: "What are the future projects of IFPRODUCTIONS?"

A: "The next documentary will be on the failing law enforcement regarding sexual violence. Innocent men are punished while many actual perpetrators are never brought into court. The premiere of this film will be next year."

Q: "How did the production of the movies affect you?"

A: The movies brought mixed feelings to the sisters. They are happy to have been able to bring a more balanced view, and to contribute to the fight against sexual violence. It is necessary to try and keep personal feelings aside, to stay as neutral as possible and not to lose sight on their main goal: inspiring people. The sisters were also very inspired by women, as well as soldiers who changed completely after their involvement with the documentary.



## Workshops

### Honour-Based Violence

#### Introduction to the workshop

The workshop Honour-Based Violence focused on honour-based violence against women. Honour-based violence is a code of loyalty for a group that involves loss of face on someone's part if offended against. It can take place within a family or within any other groups that consider honour as a loyalty. The honour code means that women, or sometimes men, must follow rules that are set at the discretion of male relatives and are interpreted according to what each male family member considers acceptable in the family. Breaking these rules is seen as destroying the good name of a family or group within a community, where the concept of honour and shame are fundamentally seen as a code of behaviour. A familiar example is Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Some communities undertake this practice as it would save someone's face and honour. These practices have far reaching impact or effects on women's health.

Honour-related violence is not limited about honour-related killings, and does not only affect women. Men can also be victims and women can be perpetrators. All forms of honour-based violence are unacceptable violations of Human Rights. The argument is that honour-based violence does not happen in one's own community, but rather something of 'the other'. However it does also happen in one's own community. It's not only a problem of Africa or other parts of the world (e.g. India, Arab countries...) but it also occurs within the Netherlands. Violence against women is one of the most common forms of violence. Honour-Based Violence is not only linked to education. FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) is practised in all kinds of families, both low educated as well as highly educated families. The facilitator, Stella Ismail, shared their own experiences in Somalia, examples relating honour-based violence and education. It is difficult to break through these traditions. FGM is often done for others, to meet the social expectations of other people in the community/family etc. Furthermore, honour belongs to the roles you are taught to play in a society/community and what is called appropriate. Honour is taught from the early age on. In addition, in countries like Somalia, you do not think individually, you always see yourselves in the greater context of your family/community. Honour-based violence is often linked to religion. It is often connected with Islamic religion but it also happens in other parts of the world, like India.

There is growing attention to honour-based violence by the media, human rights groups and governments, for example:

- Honour-based violence was put on the UNs agenda.
- In the Beijing 1995 Global Declaration and Platform for Action.
- Commission of the Status of Woman (CSW) in New York in 2010.
- International "Together We can" -campaign against violence against women in 2009.

With the introduction of the prejudices about the violence against women a lively discussion started about women being dressed improperly. That they then 'ask for being raped'. These arguments stemmed from men with African origin.

The in this workshop mentioned prejudices about violence against women where the following;

- Women ask for it.
- Men cannot control their sexual desires.
- Men, need to or, are allowed to use violence to control their family.
- It is written in the Holy Qu'ran.

The workshop concluded with a discussion of the theme: “How can we contribute to eliminate honour-based violence and how to implement women’s rights in the African context?” The following suggestions came from the participants:

- Raise awareness.
- Work with both men and women.
- Raise awareness on positive examples – success stories where people stopped honour-based violence – on role models.
- Addressing the difficulty post-colonial feelings – Who are you to tell us what to do?
- Difficult to change people’s culture – important to talk about it.
- Critical to detach the practices from culture – It doesn’t have to be a part of ‘our’ culture.
- Make alliances.
- FGM: convince men that it also involves them, that their action is also needed to stop it, the need for alliances with men.

All together the participants agreed that this is a long process.

The facilitators ended with a question, which she asked the participants to think about when home: “In Somalia FGM is now talked about for 40 years and it is still there. Why?”

#### Evaluation of the workshop

The participants of the workshop were engaged in a lively debate focusing on gender-based violence. The workshop has been evaluated by 80 percent of the participants as satisfactory. Most participants stated that they have learned a lot from the workshop, which offered a great introduction to the topic of honour-based violence. Some participants expressed the wish that the facilitator and other participants would have focused more on sharing personal experiences. Other participants would have appreciated a larger focus on how one could address honour-based violence. The interactive nature of the workshop was very well received by the participants. The workshop was divided into two different parts and participants from the first part were supposed to join the second part. Unfortunately, the facilitator didn’t tell the participants that they should come back. Therefore, none of the participants who participated in the first part of the workshop came back for the second part. Nevertheless, the second part of the workshop was again well received by the new participants.

## **HIV- AIDS**

### Introduction to the workshop

During this participatory workshop, the participants were invited to analyse how issues concerning sexuality, gender and HIV/AIDS are interlinked in their own context. Furthermore they were asked to communicate openly about sexuality issues, while respecting their own and other people's boundaries. The workshop HIV/AIDS highlighted the importance to broaden the approach to HIV/AIDS to a more comprehensive and positive (open) approach towards sexuality. This approach should take gender into account and includes communication on sexuality issues like pleasure, wishes and boundaries. This is closely related to the rights-based approach in that it recognises (young) people's sexual rights and encourages them to make positive and independent decisions. An open approach focuses on promoting an environment in which (young) people are encouraged to communicate about their needs related to sexual health and well-being in order to safely enjoy the many aspects of sexuality. This workshop has been facilitated by Maeva Bonjour, consultant for Youth Incentives, the international programme for young people and sexuality by the Rutgers Nisso Groep.

Maeva Bonjour (the facilitator) emphasizes in the workshop HIV/AIDS the importance of communication, as it influences gender-roles in the African Society. This workshop was a two hour workshop divided into two different subthemes: sexuality in gender perspective and communication about sexuality issues.

### Part 1: Sexuality in gender perspective.

Small groups discussed the concepts they associate with sexuality. While discussing these concepts, a discussion started on the statement that 'women never want to talk about sex'. This exercise focused on the definition of sexuality, it included aspects of biology, psychology and society. Comments from the audience: " One participant commented that 'society' rules out 'psychology', meaning that when homosexuality is not allowed, a person will not practise his/her sexuality'.

The sexuality lifeline exercise (what sexual events do African males/females experience during their life?) started in the first part of the workshop and continued in the second part.

### Part 2: Communication about sexuality issues

After some hesitation, the group discussed the subjects more openly. After finishing the lifeline exercise, the group discussed the difference between the sexuality roles of women and men: women are more restrained to experience their sexuality, whilst men are encouraged in practicing sexuality, e.g to have more partners.

Learning how to communicate about sexuality helps to protect individuals against the infection of HIV/AIDS. Examples showed on the lifeline included

- It is risky that girls are told that they should not talk about sex: this makes them insecure and they will not communicate about sex with their husbands.
- It is risky that men are stimulated by society to have more partners: this practice will spread the HIV infection much quicker.

Conclusion of the participants and facilitator of the workshop:

To diminish the risks of HIV/AIDS infection, more open communication about sexuality is necessary, especially during the childhood of African boys/girls. The reduction of HIV/AIDS is not dependent on

rationality and exposure to the right information, but also on the expectations regarding sexual behavioural of women and men.

The workshop was highly participant-orientated and included the methodology of the ‘sticky wall’.

#### Evaluation of the workshop

Due to the sensitive topics relating to sexuality it took the participants some time to discuss openly and freely. After some hesitation however, the participants felt free enough (especially during the second part of the workshop) to discuss the sensitive topics amongst one another. The workshop was divided into two different parts and participants from the first part were supposed to join the second part, which didn't happen. Luckily, new participants joined the second part. As demonstrated by the evaluations, the interactive nature of the workshop was very well received.



## **LGBT in Africa**

### Introduction to the workshop

Discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people is underpinned by 'heteronormativity'. This is the idea, dominant in most societies, that heterosexuality is the only 'normal' sexual orientation. Some current political leaders from all over the continent, view homosexuality as 'un-African.' Being LGBT is seen as sinful and unnatural. Same-sex practices are seen as an import from the west. This workshop has focused on homophobia in Africa with a case study on the current situation in Uganda. It included ignorance of existence of homosexuals in Uganda, the legal entity, new and existing laws on homosexuality, the role of religion and the religious institutes, state sanctioned homophobia and cultural norms regarding sexuality. The workshop was facilitated by Pepe Julian Onziema and Toni La Tegola. Pepe Julian Onziema is an LGTB activist from Uganda. As a program manager at the organisation 'Sexual Minorities Uganda' she also talked about her personal experiences in a country with increasing homophobia. Toni la Tegola, the president from The African Gay Youth Foundation in the Netherlands focused on the influence of the African Diaspora on these topics. The workshop LGBT in Africa was facilitated twice during the African Conference.

The aim of the workshop was to have an open debate about LGBT people in Africa. The facilitators Pepe Julian Onziema and Toni La Tegola opened a debate around the following questions:

1. Is Africa ready for LGBT?
2. Can LGBT co-exist with religion?
3. What can the young African population do to empower LGBT people?

Although these three questions were raised by the presenters, the discussion was centred on the first question; is Africa ready for LGBT?

Most of the opinion settled around leads to the thought that Africa is not currently ready to embrace LGBT and will not be ready in the future. Different arguments were made to support these opinions. The major argument was based on the social rights and majority rule principles in democratic nations and, as the majority is non-LGBT, policies that support LGBT movement are unlikely to be approved. On top of that the participants discussed that, including themselves, most Africans do not find LGBT healthy for society and they cannot see the positive aspects of it. There were some participants who believed that with passing time, Africa might be ready for LGBT rights.

### **Points addressed in the discussion;**

*'Due to the socio-economic and political climate in Africa, Africa is not ready for LGBT's. There is a lack of tolerance. The Western situation cannot possibly be compared to the African situation; we cannot expect Africa to be ready for LGBT's.'*

*'We cannot impose Western values (acceptance of LGBT's) on African culture. Issue: are LGBT rights universal human rights?'*

*→ 'Expressing yourself as an LGBT is about the right to be a person. That right is a universal right.'*

*→ 'Are universal rights not too much of a Western paradigm, but too often perceived as universal? It is necessary to focus on the definition of 'human rights' within the target community.'*

*(To the speakers): 'Are you recruiting?'*

*'What about the negative aspects of homosexuality? E.g. sexual violence. Homosexuality can be harmful to the community.'*

*→ 'Sexual violence is totally distinct from sexual orientation. It is the lack of education and discussion on the topic in Africa that cause these misconceptions to emerge.'*

*'In a dialogue with religious leaders about LGBT, they are put up in a defence mode merely by addressing to the topic. It creates a communication barrier.'*

→(from the speaker) *‘The aim of LGBT-rights organisations is not to accuse people, but rather to co-exist with the community.’*

*‘In reality, LGBT is not discussed in Africa; it is not a part of sexual education.*

*‘We (Africans) display this opinion due to the way we are shaped by our culture. It is valuable to us, difficult to change and nobody has the right to judge us for this view.’*

*‘Regardless to cultural background and attitude towards LGBT, everybody present today has shown their curiosity and openness towards LGBT-rights, simply by attending this workshop. That shows open-mindedness.’*

The second time the workshop was facilitated; more emphasis was placed on the role of the African Diaspora youth in the Netherlands and what African LGBT people in the Netherlands experience next to the three questions mentioned above.

The note-takers expressed the following group dynamics “The audience seems to consist of people that are evidently unsupportive of LGBT’s, however people that are LGBT themselves and/or supportive of LGBT’s and a group of people that stand rather ambivalent towards LGBT rights were also present. However, each person present has shown his or her curiosity to the subject by attending the workshop. In this way, the audience appears to be representative of the different attitudes toward LGBTs in the Dutch-African community”.

#### Evaluation of the workshop

The LGTB workshop was by far the most popular workshop, at least in the number of participants attending it. The content of the workshop was highly controversial, demonstrated by the extremely heated debate it triggered. The facilitation of Pepe J. Oziema from Uganda is generally perceived as positively contributing to the debate. She was calm and reasonable, listened very well to the (sometimes offensive) arguments of the participants. Toni la Tegola, who assisted in facilitating the workshop, was generally received less positively. Toni la Tegola is head of the African Gay Youth foundation in the Netherlands and turned the debate into a fast and lively one. However, the African participants evaluated him as too provocative: This is clearly a learning point for UNOY. Dutch participants enjoyed his humorous and cynical style, however, the African community clearly felt that it was inappropriate in the context of this topic.



## **Gender Perceptions & Physical Exercise**

### Introduction to the workshop

Sports can be an effective tool in achieving the millennium development goals (MDG's). It can for instance be used to educate and deliver health information to young mothers, resulting in healthier children, serve as an opportunity to improve female physical and mental health and offer opportunities for social interaction and friendship. It can also motivate children to enrol in and attend school and thereby help improving their academic achievement. For girls and women it provides greater access to reproductive health information and services. The benefits that can be associated with sports are never-ending. However, in spite of all these benefits the participation of women and girls in sports in developing countries is nothing to write home about when compared to their counterparts in the developed countries. The question that one pauses to ask is: what are the factors that prevent women in developing countries and to some extent migrant women in western countries, to participate in sports? And besides, what can be done to motivate them to participate in sports and sporting activities? The workshop Gender Perceptions & Physical exercise provided the opportunity to explore this topic in detail by bringing on board experts who have experienced the positive change that sports has made to their community. The migrant organisation HIRDA truly believes that sports can be a tool that empowers women in different aspects of their lives. This workshop has been facilitated by HIRDA representatives Suad Farah, Sanne Nagelhout and Anthony Ovwighose.

The workshop Gender Perceptions and Physical exercise based on a panel discusses with the participants of the workshop. The panel members Suad Farah and Sanne Nagelhout have both professional experience in sports and development. Suad is involved with the (African) Diaspora/immigrant youth in The Netherlands and Sanne Nagelhout has experience in involving youth in sports in both Ethiopia and Zimbabwe.

The first part of the workshop focused on obstacles regarding sport projects in the South and the North:

- Regarding integration of projects in the North, like in The Netherlands, it is challenging to reach girls. Girls are often not allowed to go out late (among the Somali Diaspora). The same problem also occurs in the South (in this case Somalia). Nevertheless, in the North the situation is changing.

Statements regarding gender empowerment in the panel discussion:

- Sport can be an employment opportunity.
- It is important to empower people with disabilities and especially disabled girls.
- Sport takes girls out of the house.
- Interviewing girls who are participating in sport creates awareness.
- Sport helps to create leadership skills and creates role models.
- Experience in Zimbabwe shows that sport enables entrepreneurship skills and in sport teaching programs. Furthermore, girls are able to speak up for themselves.

A participant shared his experience regarding sport when he grew up. Sports were associated with colonialism, with Westerners, and the whites and the rich. As follow up, the following question was put forth. "Is there anyway you can engage policymakers and government officials to take on sport to avoid segregation and misperceptions?"

Other participants from Uganda shared that there is an organisation called "Right to Play" that promotes sports. But most parents dissociate themselves from taking their children to the organisation claiming that their children will be turned into lesbians and gays.

Conclusions shared in the workshop:

- Continue in the struggle with the help of role models. In that way, increasing numbers of women will participate.
- How do we sensitise the El-Shabaas in Somalia?
- It would be nice to have some notable soccer players from different countries to visit countries in the South. It may encourage and inspire youngsters, especially girls.
- Explain to the people the benefits gained from sport; “healthy spirit in healthy body”.

#### Evaluation of the workshop

The participants of the workshop Gender Perceptions and Physical exercise were inspired by the importance of empowerment through sports. Several participants had never thought that physical exercise can be used as an empowerment tool for women from developing countries. They therefore evaluated this workshop as fascinating.



## **How can men be involved**

### Introduction to the workshop

Following the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, on the adoption of a gender perspective that included the special needs of women and girls, the Woman Peacemakers Program has, since 2002, been training female activists in gender-sensitive active nonviolence. Since 2009, the program initiated a Training of Trainers Program (ToT), entitled “Overcoming Violence: Exploring Masculinity, Violence, and Peacebuilding”. It mainly focuses on male peace activists, aiming to build a mixed pool of women and men working together as allies in gender sensitive peacebuilding. In this workshop, a short introductory has been given on why a women’s program decided to actively involve men in her work and the process towards forming a mixed pool of activists. Some of the dilemmas, as well as lessons learned from this pilot project, were discussed. In addition the facilitators gave an overview of some of the activities completed by the participants of the ToT. Finally, a short video has been shown, in which some of the male participants involved in this project shared their experiences.

The facilitators, Jose de Vries and Merle Gosewinkel, shortly introduced the idea behind the Woman Peacemakers Program: ‘Gender sensitive active non-violence’; exploring masculinity, reasons for violence and ways to find peace. Although female empowerment is the key to peace, it appears that this goal is hard to reach within the current political context. Women decided to create their own movement for peacebuilding (female activism), but its effectiveness is limited because of the lack of support from men. The Woman Peacemakers Program therefore decided to work on the partnership between men and women and focus on building support on the side of men. Their approach was illustrated by a video on a successful peacebuilding program in the Philippines, with a gender sensitive approach to non-violence.

The facilitators raised the issue of the lack of understanding on the gender of men; their identity is often taken for granted, in contrast to the widespread discussion on women’s roles in society. In particular, in conflict situations, men are expected to behave aggressively. However, they also suffer during conflict situations. Therefore the needs of both sexes should be included in the peacebuilding programs. The new programs that focus on men should give space to develop an attitude of opportunities to question the identity, or the expected identity, of men. According to the facilitators, it is useless to only train women as they have to go against men that are in power. Collaboration with men is the key solution. In training men should feel that they can bring about change. We should tackle the perception generally believed that violence often works in the benefit of men.

Other videos showed positive examples in different countries. One example provided was a demonstration in Zimbabwe, where women demonstrated within the context of ‘16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign’. However, this demonstration was ‘against men’ and did not include both men and women to strive against violence.

### Evaluation of the workshop

This workshop was especially appreciated by the participants for its ‘refreshing perspective’ on gender and peace programs and was, according to the evaluation, well visited. It was interesting to hear about gender programmes that address men's issues, masculinity, and violence.

## **Gender equality; Traditions and Modernism**

### Introduction to the workshop

This workshop addressed the following fascinating question: Are modern and traditional gender perspectives competing or complementary? Despite the fact that women have more individual choices and freedom, their freedom on issues related to marriage, sexuality and other issues is much more limited. The following issues were discussed: 1). Arranged marriages (including child marriages) and its implications on women's health – eg. Fistula and teenage pregnancies 2). Traditional practices - eg. FGM, dry sex. 3). Health rights versus social ostracism and its implications on gender equality. 4) Traditional care versus modern care (accessibility to various socio-economic groups, women and youth). The workshop aims to provide institutions with recommendations regarding gender policies. This workshop was facilitated by Dinasas Abdella.

Dinasas Abdella started by emphasizing that the workshop purpose is to create a knowledge sharing platform which required very active involvement. It discussed traditional and modern practices of relationships and sexuality in Africa, and the incorrect widespread belief that these practices are always opposites of each other. Healthcare has become “modernised” since the early 70's and entered the mainstream of healthcare. However, for various reasons, traditional healthcare is given little space in the mainstream.

The first topic that was discussed was ‘arranged marriages’. What are the underlying motives for these practices? The group was divided into two. Both groups were asked to write down reasons to support both arranged marriages and marriages initiated by the partners. Some reasons for arranged marriages given by the participants were: the wish of the family to control and maintain the cultural heritage and arranged marriage used as a tool to control sexuality (especially over girls).

As explained by Dinasas Abdella, in some areas (like in Tanzania), girls are abducted by men who are looking for a partner. When the girls have at least spent one night from home, she is forced to marry as she would otherwise be perceived as an outcast. Abduction happens regardless of the age of the girl. Although this practice is illegal, it happens regularly as there is limited or no law enforcement. The practice of girls getting married to rich men in order to escape poverty is very common. Moreover, girls are often married to solve disputes or in order to control resources.

The practices of abduction and forced marriage at a very young age often result, as explained by the facilitator, in severe negative consequences. For example, young girls get traumatized as they are not ready for sex yet. Also teenage pregnancies, despite physical immaturity, are a common phenomenon. Problems of fistula (destruction of vagina/anus as a result of rape and violent sex) were commonly discovered in Congo after its 5 years of war.

Another harmful traditional practice is female genital mutilation (FGM). This practice condemns sexual enjoyment of women and often results in wounds that are extremely painful. This practice also spreads diseases as HIV/Aids, as often the same instruments are used for several operations. It appears to be extremely difficult to eradicate this practice, not solely because it is so hard to understand in other contexts like Europe. Simply condemning it clearly has the opposite effect. In Kenya, some tribes now invented new alternatives to female genital mutilation. They are now organizing ceremonial practices alone to make a woman ready for marriage. We have to keep in mind that many diaspora groups in Europe and the United States also continue with this practice. In Egypt, hospitals offer cleaner services for mutilation; is this a form of solution? What kind of education is required to tackle this problem?

### Evaluation of the workshop

Participants followed the facilitator's request for active participation. On the topic of arranged marriage, a participant commented that some girls seem to be happy with the practice. When parents arrange the marriage and the girl is to contend with the choice of the partner it may not fit in the definition of forced arranged marriage. There was also a lively discussion on the reason for circumcision of girls. Why does this happen? Why is it seen as a part of religion or culture that is worth saving? Would it help when men are involved in a higher extent so that they could advocate that they will not marry circumcised women? Moreover, participants reacted on the topic of traditional medication in Africa. One participant suggested that these practices, as some of them are rather harmful instead of curing diseases, should be subjective to standard tests. Others replied the ambiguousness of this 'solution'. How do we standardise? Whose standard? Also the value of virginity was discussed. Protection of virginity results in marrying girls at a very young age. Also in the evaluation form, participants appeared to be inspired by the range of topics discussed in the workshop. They mentioned 'the necessity to involve and understand cultural diversity before we condemn them'. 'Modernity will not replace tradition and the way our ancestors lived'. Dinasas Abdella's workshop was, after the LGTB workshop, the most popular one when looking at the number of participants.



## **Gender & Citizenship**

### Introduction to the workshop

The struggle for women lies in the possibility of translating de jure equality into de facto equality. State level commitment to gender equality does not always translate itself into tangible outcomes at the local and individual level. When we leave empowerment and opportunity to citizens it appears that change does not always occur. The process is rather arbitrary and the level of citizenship varies from one society to another, depending on its own rules and wishes. This workshop addressed the problem of 'exclusion' within the debate on citizenship, as well as examples of efforts towards inclusive citizenship and gender equality in Africa, especially in Sudan.

The workshop tackled the issues of gender and citizenship in development practice as well as in conflict situations in Africa. The workshop began with an explanation of the concepts. Citizenship is the state of being a citizen of a particular social, political, or national community. It is about membership of a group, community or nation. Citizenship connotes 'rights and obligations'. Rights: governments' accountability and security. Obligation: obeying the law, paying taxes and conscription.

Crucial to the notion of citizenship is exclusion and marginalization. Universal rights hide differences and can exacerbate differences (highlighting realities in inequality). Everyone has experienced some form of exclusion, e.g. children, restrictions (alcohol, drugs) or nationality. Factors that can contribute to exclusion are; age, gender, level of education, religion and health, (health factors can also contribute to exclusion – mental health and trauma). Factors that exacerbate exclusion are war and conflict. The more factors co-exist, the more severe the exclusion. The challenge of citizenship and exclusion is when people belong to many national/cultural identities. Groups can continually sub-divide into new communities. When a group within a broader group feels excluded, there is an opportunity to mobilize and to create their own independent group(s).

The second part of the workshop focused on citizenship through a gender lens:

1. De jure versus de facto situation for gender equality – opportunities for advocacy to 'translate' de jure into the facto impacts.
2. Public- private division in gender. The gendered division of roles and labour between women and men, where men are 'political agents' and women are responsible for 'reproduction' under the protection of men. It has led to the perception that women's rights are not belonging to the realm of citizenship rights.
3. Division between formal law and customary law – In some countries, women may have equal status under formal law, but under customary law they are excluded from land ownership and decision-making.

Violation of citizenship rights may be an opportunity for peacebuilding and conflict transformation. In particular women may be in a position to effectively mobilize for peace and conflict transformation, as they are less directly involved in the conflict and not holding positions of direct power. An example derived from the movie "Pray the Devil Back to Hell", depicted the Liberia peace process to be aided by the actions/involvement of women.

### Evaluation of the workshop

The participants had an open and proactive attitude and were actively sharing their views, opinions and debating among themselves during, and after, the workshop. The facilitators encouraged all participants, including the ones who were not confident enough, to speak up. The way the workshop was presented, by using several movie clips, examples, pictures was very well received. Some participants however would have appreciated it when there would have been more time for the discussion. Others noted that there was too much information given in a short period. The overall conclusion of the participants on the content of the workshop however was excellent and the facilitator was rated as highly competent.



## **Girl's health and innovative approaches: AFRIpads**

### Introduction to the workshop

AFRIpads are reusable, environmentally friendly menstrual pads that are produced and sold in rural Uganda. Girls in rural developing countries often don't attend school when they menstruate. These girls do not have access to or cannot afford menstrual pads. The AFRIpads foundation addresses the problem of one of the important causes for girls to drop out early from secondary school. The products are produced locally. AFRIpads employs 50 women who sell the AFRIpads to local school girls as well as to NGO's. The workshop wanted to share thoughts and it used the participants' knowledge and experiences in a lively discussion regarding its three main challenges:

- Distribution and local sales: how do you get AFRIpads to the customer in a country with a severe lack of good infrastructure?
- Efficiency: the little history of AFRIpads has already shown that economy of scales works. More efficiency, however, could lead to a loss of jobs. What is the balance between a low price for our product and offering enough employment?
- Empowerment: how do we make sure that the money "our girls" earn is spent the correct way, and doesn't flow to their husbands immediately? How do we reach true female empowerment in a male-dominated society?

This workshop was facilitated twice by Laurens Buijs and Sanne Bolkenstein, board members of the AFRIpads Foundation.

The AFRIpads Foundation addresses a very fundamental, basal problem. Although talking about menstrual pads seems peculiar in the context of peacebuilding and health and gender, the menstrual pads make a significant difference for girls in Uganda.

As shown in the introduction film, one of the main reasons for girls to drop out of school in Uganda is due to menstruation. The girls don't have access to "normal" menstrual pads which are either not available or too expensive. In response to this, a Canadian couple working in Uganda tried to tackle this problem by producing re-usable menstrual pads. The pads are environmentally friendly and washable. Thereby girls can buy a pack and use it for a year. In addition to that, the pads are also a big improvement in the health of the girls since the pads are more hygienic than the rags, newspapers or leaves that are otherwise being used. The slogan of the company is therefore: 'When you educate a woman, you educate a nation'.

The AFRIpads foundation is an interesting answer to the latest critique on development work. As demonstrated by AFRIpads, a 'socially engaged company' can make a huge difference to local development. AFRIpads is continuously evaluating its policy in order to make their presence most beneficial for the local community, without losing sight of the fundamental goal of a company: making profit. The founders specifically chose to make it a company, not a charity. Hereby the company can also continue to exist, run by locals, when the current owners withdraw. The pads are made in local factories that employ local women, who hereby get the chance to provide a living for their families. The women are also taught how to spend their money in a responsible way. The employees are all shareholders in the company, thereby increasing their involvement and loyalty. The profits that are made are reinvested in new social enterprises.

Laurens Buijs and Sanne Bolkenstein shared their continuing struggle to find the most appropriate policy for AFRIpads. For example, in order to increase efficiency they should use more machines. But increasing machine-use would decrease work places. They are also considering expanding the company to other countries but at the same time they do not want to risk the social character of the company. Moreover, the distribution to places further inland appears extremely costly. The people living in these remote areas

need to be convinced to spend money for tackling a problem that they have never tackled before. Another problem is the dependency on unreliable electricity and the wish to stay in the most remote areas, as well as the relatively high reward women receive for the work and the wish to influence their spending pattern. Interestingly, the company receives plenty of positive responses in the Netherlands as well, which translates in increasing western shareholders. These shareholders have the option to reinvest in the company rather than directly benefiting from the future profit of the company.

#### Evaluation of the workshop

The audience was really inspired by the story of how a simple invention could be a solution to a comprehensive problem like this. Also, the social character of the enterprise received lots of admiration.

Many African Diaspora students requested to expand the company to their own native countries as they recognized the earnestness of the problem of schoolgirls. The facilitators were open to stay in contact with those who would like to assist the company with advice on how to start the business in their home country. The request from the facilitators to 'spread the word' was, therefore, well received.

There were some remarks made in regard to the costs of the product (USD 1), but it was explained that this was already under cost-price and that the product could be used for twelve months. Also questioned was how the employees were selected. The company mostly employs girls who are trained as seamstresses. Another question was whether it was measurable to what extent the pads improve girls' health. Although this is not exactly measurable in numbers, it is clear that the pads are more hygienic than the use of newspapers or rags. In order to improve hygiene further, talks are being held with soap factories to include pieces of soap with the pads.

Moreover the existence of the AFRIpads Foundation was questioned, as this initiative is not-for-profit. The facilitators explained that the company is now running 'break-even' and still needs some support from the foundation. When the company is able to make enough profit they will resign the existence of the foundation.

## **Closing statements**

### **Ms. Clara Kansiiime**

*Vice-President of The African Committee*

As TAC, we need to reflect by asking ourselves an important question, ‘what does the outcome of the conference mean for the future of TAC in relation to its goal and objectives? We are grateful that we have had a wonderful partnership with UNOY in organising the annual conference for 11 years since 1999 and look forward to many more wonderful years of co-operation.

We thank you all for making this day a great success.

### **Ms. Marije van Velzen**

*Chair of Board, UNOY Peacebuilders*



My name is Marije van Velzen. I’m the chair of the board of UNOY. I hold the honour of closing the conference today. This year’s conference has been wonderful! This conference has been a learning project for UNOY. We will use all the knowledge we gathered today to support the youth organisations in our network. Today’s conference will help us and our members to better understand issues of gender and health, which allow us to use these perspectives in our network and everyday work.

It is inspiring to see so many young people interested in this topic and sharing their views, experiences and future plans. Thank you for your great participation! We are hoping that this conference has inspired you on the topic and has helped broadening your mind. Therefore I would like to ask you to take one minute before leaving the conference, to think about what you have learned today and how you can use this knowledge to help your organisation or community, because Peacebuilding starts with little steps. It starts in your daily life. You can make a difference! So take this opportunity and set a goal in what you want to achieve within the next couple of months or within one or two years.

We would like to thank all the speakers and facilitators who have worked hard to make this day such a great success! We would also like to thank Van der Valk for the location. Also, a big thank you to our partners, who were helping us making this beautiful day possible. On behalf of UNOY Peacebuilders, The African Committee, HIRDA, Support Trust for African Development and African Sky, we would once again like to thank our donors Oxfam Novib and Aids Fund for their generous support throughout the years. We would like to thank TAC for such a fruitful co-operation over the years and for the wonderful statements by Clara and the co-chair Ireri. It was a pleasure working together with you. In addition, I would like to give a special thanks to our other partners, Suad and Kwaku from Hirida, Stella from African Sky and Florence from Support Trust for African Development (STAD).

I would also like to express a ‘thank you’ to Myrthe and Jeltsje -the main organisers of this conference- all the other volunteers from UNOY and to Lillian and Stephanie-who guided the whole project, for the enormous energy they put into the conference.

We thank you all so much for coming and hope to see you again next year for the 13th African Conference or at one of UNOY’s other activities!

## **Information market**

Throughout the day, participants had the opportunity to gather more information on the topic of the conference and on the work of UNOY and its partners. Four different organisations were present.

The organisations represented with a stand at the information market were; African Sky, Hirda, Support Trust for African Development (STAD) and the United Network of Young Peacebuilders. All these organisations presented materials and projects that were related to the subject of the day. Participants had the opportunity to study the materials, which gave them an idea of some projects related to the topic that organisations are currently working on.

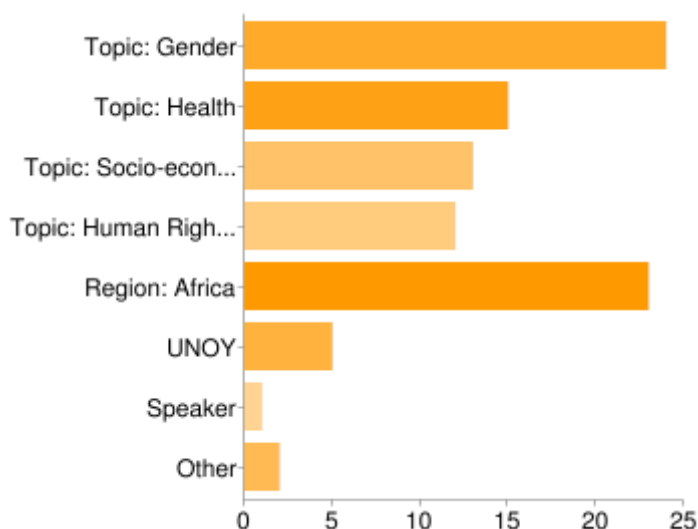
In addition to that, a wide range of materials related to the conference topic, made available by other organisations were ready for participants to look into. Participants had time to visit the information market during the coffee breaks, lunch and drinks.

## Evaluation

The majority of participants at the conference were from Africa or had an African background. An estimated 70% of the attendees were Africans. Among the countries represented were Sudan, Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Benin, Cameroon, Somalia, Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya, and Liberia. The countries Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia were most represented at the African Conference 2010. Note: not all participants and latecomers indicated their country of origin.

Participants came to the conference because of an interest in particular in African or Gender Issues. The topic could attract people with quite a wide range of field of interests. The chart on the right shows the division of the participants' interest in the conference.

Our participants generally evaluated the mix of the themes positively. Participants often noted different learning aspects, including 'information on issues on gender in respect to socio-economic issues/factors,' 'more in-depth understanding about the continent of Africa', insights in 'various forms of violence', on 'issues about citizenship', 'in human rights issues and the position of woman'. One participant however, mentioned the limited time for an in-depth discussion on all topics included in the Conference.



The plenary sessions:

Three quarters of the participants that evaluated the conference expressed most appreciation to the plenary session of Ilse van Velzen, over the other plenary sessions. Participants expressed their wish for additional time for Q&A and highly appreciated the interesting video material. They mentioned that the video material provided an eye-opener to the topic of violence in Congo. This evaluation is understandable, as the story of Van Velzen was appealing and engaged the participants also through the video material that was used during her speech. However the plenary session: 'Introduction to gender and health' by Dinasas Abdella, introduced the participants to the topic, which required some clarification on the approach the conference would take. It was therefore a little more theoretic in its nature. Nevertheless, the plenary session of Dinasas Abdella was very high rated.

In this report we have included after a description of every workshop and the evaluation of that specific workshop.

Some participants also took the time for writing down some suggestions on how to improve next year's conference. Most noteworthy were the following advises:

- Time keeping; organise time a little bit better and more guides to direct the participants to the right areas.
- Reduce the number of workshops and give them more time for people to discuss issues comprehensively (although other participants mentioned that they appreciated the extensive choice for the workshops).

- Offer a platform for participants to share information with other participants before the conference day.

Critical statements statements where made with regard to the LGBT workshop:

- 'Not the LGTB thing'.
- 'The LGTB workshop had great potential, yet remained artificial. I left without satisfactorily understanding the "why" and "how".'
- 'I would not promote LGBT – these people have a special problem that requires special attention, not integration into society.'
- 'I liked hearing about Pepe's personal experiences with her work in the field. It allows, I think, a different and very unique perspective from the 'top' and European NGO's perspective. These are the people we should be learning from'.

Mentioned knowledge/skills/experiences the participants gained from attending this conference included:

- "Cultural relativism Rights".
- 'I have learned to participate in open discussions and brainstorming on key issues'.
- 'Knowledge about LGBT and increased violence towards LGBT people'.
- 'I've learned more about exclusion and the situation in Congo'.
- 'Lots of networking and insight into the work from NGO's'.
- 'More knowledge on the relationship between HIV/Aids and gender'.
- 'Co-existence in diversity'.
- 'That people from different backgrounds can co-exist'.
- 'Our diversity is a source of opportunity'.

### **Evaluation of the objectives**

1. To **enlighten, sensitise, involve and upraise participants' awareness** on the relationship between peace perspectives and the complexity of health through a gender lens in Africa, focusing especially on the fields of socio-economics and Human Rights.

*Participants were introduced to many different academic theories, viewpoints, case studies and experiences on the topic of gender and health, presented by different plenary session facilitators and workshop facilitators. In total the group of facilitators existed of 14 different experts, all with their own experience. Among the facilitators there were academics and practitioners from the field. The different backgrounds of the facilitators made it possible to discuss the topics gender and health from contrasting angles.*

2. To **publicise and raise the attention of major national and international actors on the topic** of the conference and **specifically on the youth perspective** emerging from the students attending it, through the distribution of the AC's reports to gender institutes, governments and other political and non-political organisations.

*The conference presented youth as important actors for change, highlighted their role in health through a gender lens and peacebuilding in Africa. Participants were able to discuss and explore the issues of Gender and Health with a number of highly qualified speakers and facilitators.*

*The participatory orientated methodology of the conference gave participants the opportunity to ask questions related to the presentations and to discuss issues that arose in more detail with all plenary speakers during and after the workshops with the workshop facilitator. This was an effective way of*

*linking the presentations together and having a concluding discussion with the participants. Furthermore, participants had the chance to discuss issues with each other during the breaks. The report of the African Conference 2010 will be distributed to institutions relating to gender and health, governments and other political and non-political organisations in the Netherlands and in the countries our network is based in. It will also be made available on our website and advertised in our newsletter and e-groups, reaching around 4.000 youth all over the world.*

3. To offer a forum where African students, African Diaspora youth and Dutch students can **meet, discuss, and exchange** inspiring ideas on the issue of health through a gender lens. Materials and background information about the topic will be distributed throughout the conference.

*The African Students Conference made it possible for African, Dutch and International youth to meet and come together, discuss, and exchange ideas on the topic of Gender and Health. African students, as well as African Diaspora youth, were present at the conference. There were numerous opportunities for the participants to discuss and share inspiring ideas on the issue of gender and health, during the discussions, the breaks, the workshops and the drinks. Special attention was paid to the knowledge and experience of the participants, by giving them the opportunity to share their wisdom during the panel session and the interactive workshops, in means of the participatory participated orientated bases of the conference. An information package was distributed to each participant of the conference. The package included the program; information about UNOY Peacebuilders and the partners of the conference; short biographies of the speakers, facilitators and chairs; the logos of donors and supporters; the workshop descriptions; program; map of the venue and the evaluation form. Furthermore, participants were able to look at background materials and information at the information market, which was open during the breaks.*

4. To offer a unique **networking opportunity** for African Students, African Diaspora Youth and Dutch youth, who will gather and share opinions on issues of common interest.

*The conference presented the participants with numerous opportunities to network and to build relationships. Participants had the chance to get to know each other better during lunch, the the two coffee breaks and the drinks. The workshops also presented a good opportunity for people to get to know each other better while working in smaller groups. A few respondents mentioned in the evaluation form that they found new friends during the final drinks. The presence of some NGO representatives provided networking opportunities for a diverse group of people.*

5. To offer participants the opportunity **to become acquainted with the work** of The African Committee and The United Network of Young Peacebuilders and its African Network.

*Participants at the conference were given an extensive information package, which included a description of all organisers of the conference, including their contact details and websites. Most participants have been signed up for the African Conference e-group, where they can exchange information and opinions on the conference and its topic, as well as to stay in touch with the UNOY staff. Members of the organisations were present at the conference and participants had plenty of opportunities to talk to representatives and to ask questions during the coffee breaks, lunch and during the final drinks. Several volunteers and participants of the African Conference applied for an intern position at UNOY after their involvement with the work of UNOY at the conference.*

6. To give the African Diaspora youth and students (TAC, UNOY interns, volunteers) the possibility to **gain experience** and **do voluntary work** with regards to organising a conference, which involves many practical skills.

*UNOY Peacebuilders has been working together with TAC in organising the African Students Conference for many years. The African youth from TAC were involved not only as organising and planning partners but also as volunteers before and during the conference. Likewise, part of the UNOY Peacebuilders team was involved as volunteers during the day of the conference. Furthermore, interns and staff at UNOY were able to learn a lot from the process of organising the African Conference. The conference was completely organised by youth and for youth, which makes it a unique process. The conference has always been a good opportunity for African Students and African Diaspora youth as well as Dutch and international youth to gain experience, practical skills and to do voluntary work.*

## **Follow-up**

Participants are invited to join the Yahoo group on the African Conference 2010. Here, the facilitators shared (parts of) their presentations and other interesting links and videos. It enabled the participants to continue discussing the themes, but also to follow-up their networking efforts that they undertook during the conference.

Participants were also included in the database of UNOY Peacebuilders so that they would be kept updated on the activities within UNOY's network. They will also receive news on our future events and activities, which will allow them to stay involved. Some of the volunteers explicitly expressed their wish to stay involved and to be informed about future opportunities within UNOY. These volunteers are taken into a separate database and, when new positions are available, we will invite them immediately to apply.

UNOY hopes that this conference has given participants the opportunity to network with other people that are equally interested in this topic, as well as with professionals that work in the field of peacebuilding.

## **Conclusion**

Just like in the previous year, the 2010 edition of the African Conference involved profound discussion and critical reflections on crucial themes in the field of peacebuilding in Africa. The presence of (international) facilitators together with motivated and experienced participants resulted in high-level debates on the issues of gender, health and peacebuilding. Coming from various regions in Africa, the Diaspora Africans and African Students (and other participants) participated actively in all the sessions and brought in interesting views on the situations they are familiar with. Moreover, experts working either in the field of civil society or academic research sharpened the discussion with their critical analysis, while international students brought in fresh energy and new ideas. Thanks to the exchange of all these different perspectives, the conference was a highly inspiring event for the participants involved.

The strong emphasis on the African perspective made the conference a truly unique event and experience. The lively and broad number of topics discussed enhanced the diverse audience. Some workshops triggered a lively discussion on very sensitive topics and allowed participants to discuss topics as LGBT in Africa and Honour-Based Violence. Topics have been handled delicately due to their importance yet sensitive nature.

## **Chair of the Day:**

### **Clara Kansime**

Chair



Clara Kansime from Uganda is Masters student (2009/2010) in Development studies specialising in Politics of Alternative Development at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University, Rotterdam. She is interested in empowering local marginalised communities to develop themselves by ensuring that their path to a meaningful life is recognised and promoted; and understanding the underlying causes of inequality not only in the world but at individual and family levels. Clara Kansime is the vice-president of The African Committee (TAC).

### **Ireri Josphat**

Co-Chair



Ireri Josphat from Kenya is a Masters student (2009/2010) in Development Studies: Women, Gender and Development at the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University, Rotterdam. Ireri Josphat is the Secretary of The African Committee (TAC).

### **Jeltsje Boersma**

Project coordinator African Conference 2010



Jeltsje Boersma (The Netherlands) graduated at the ISHSS Amsterdam with a Master in Conflict Resolution and Governance. She also holds a Bachelor in International Relations at the University of Amsterdam. Jeltsje Boersma is Project Leader at UNOY and, together with Myrthe Welten, organised the African Conference 2010.

### **Myrthe Welten**

Project coordinator African Conference 2010



Myrthe Welten is from the Netherlands and is currently finishing her Bachelors degree in European Studies at The Hague University. She is the African Conference Officer at UNOY Peacebuilders. Before becoming full-time African Conference Officer she was also responsible for the African region of UNOY as the African Desk Officer.

## **Facilitators:**

### **Abdalla, Dinasas**

PhD Candidate, Faculty of Geosciences, Department of Human Geography and Planning, International Development Studies Research Group, Utrecht University (The Netherlands). In light of Dinasas' strong sense of social responsibility, her interests and expertise are in development, gender, health, and peace building issues in Sub-Saharan Africa. As PhD candidate in International Development Studies /IDS at Utrecht University, she focuses her research on the implications of decentralising sexual and reproductive health services in Tanzania and Ethiopia. She is a SYLFF Fellow and serves on the SYLFF global council. She received a cum laude master's in International Development Studies at Utrecht University. In this time, she interned with SNV in Tanzania to identify health interventions in service delivery. Then, she received her second master's cum laude in human geography and planning and conducted empirical research in Ethiopia on engendering and decentralizing reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. Following this, whilst working at the Social Science Research Council in New York, she engaged in gender mainstreaming with UNDP and the establishment of the new Research Platform on Gender, Crisis Prevention, and Recovery (G-CPR). She also co-ordinated the International Expert Group meeting for the SSRC-UNESCO co-publication in 2008 on gender, culture, and HIV. During 2008-2010, she has served as a UNOY board member.

### **Bolkenstein, Sanne**

Sanne Bolkenstein is a student in Political Science at the University of Amsterdam and involved in several projects in Africa, mainly aimed at the wellbeing of children. She is a member of the board of the AFRIPads Foundation.

### **Bonjour, Maeva**

Since 2008, Maeva Bonjour has been working as a consultant for Youth Incentives, the international programme for young people and sexuality of the Rutgers Nisso Groep, the Dutch expert centre on sexuality. Maeva specialised in the facilitation of participatory workshops on sexual and reproductive health and rights, open communication about (young people's) sexuality issues, and in particular the more sensitive sexuality issues such as sexual violence, abortion and sexual diversity. Before joining the Youth Incentives team, Maeva worked as capacity builder for local NGOs in Zimbabwe and Nigeria working on HIV prevention among young people. For her Master thesis in Epidemiology & International Health, she conducted a study on the determinants of late presentation for HIV testing in a HIV clinic in Venezuela.

### **Buijs, Laurens**

Laurens Buijs is a Phd-student in Sociology at the University of Amsterdam. He is a member of the board of the AFRIPads Foundation.

### **Farah, Suad**

Suad Farah pursued a degree in Journalism at Windesheim and is currently completing a Masters Degree in Political Science at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). Her interests lie within conflict resolution, good governance, Africa and the EU. Suad Farah has experience in the fields of journalism, communications, and youth and integration in the Netherlands. She has participated in specialised training in the Netherlands on the issues of gender perceptions, the significance of sports and the participation of migrant girls and women in the Dutch society. In 2009, she was involved in a project on development through sport in South Africa, which aims for increasing the participation of girls and enhance their performance in different ways. Suad is also currently involved with Lobby and Advocacy with HIRDA in Brussels, where she actively works towards increasing the participation of Somali women

in sports – a challenging target given the fragile and anarchic condition that Somalia is currently in. Suad has a rich personal experience in sports which has given her a first-hand understanding of the potential benefits it holds in terms of personal development and confidence-building.

### **Gosewinkel, Merle**

Merle Gosewinkel joined the IFOR's Women Peacemakers Program in 2009. Prior to that, she was working at the Internationaal Informatiecentrum en Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging in Amsterdam, whilst completing her Masters in Gender, Sexuality & Society at the UvA.

### **Nagelhout, Sanne**

Haarlem-Mutare

Sanne Nagelhout pursued a degree in Communication Science and International Development Studies at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). Her work involved setting up many sport projects for people with a disability, while using sport as a tool for socialisation; supporting women and empowering them through sport, income-generating activities, leadership training, etc. Currently, Sanne is working as Sport Co-ordinator for the City Link Haarlem-Mutare. The organisation runs very successful sport projects with the help of the Mutare Haarlem Sportleaders (independent since 2000). The focus lies on the following five topics: promoting sport in the community, attracting boys and girls to play sports; sport for socialisation to contribute to equal rights for boys and girls, empowering disabled people, contributing to peacebuilding, Kicking Aids Out and other topics important for cohesion and empowerment of vulnerable groups. The programs also stimulate the development of sport clubs, trains sport leaders and builds up organisational capacity.

### **Ismail, Istarlin**

Istarlin Ismail was born in Mogadishu, Somalia and now lives in the Netherlands. She is the President of the Association of East African women African Sky and works at the Refugee Organisation in the Netherlands. She is an expert on Gender and Human Rights issues and represents her organisation at national and international level.

### **Koekbakker, Welmoed**

Welmoed has been working on Peacebuilding, Conflict Transformation, Human Rights and Women's Rights for 30 years. She has been researcher at the University of Amsterdam on arms production and root causes of conflict. She also has been Gender Adviser at Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, the Head of Asia Department of a funding organisation (Hivos). She is currently an independent Trainer and Consultant with a focus on Peace Building, Human Rights and Gender. Welmoed worked in conflict areas like Sudan (Darfur, South-Sudan), Ethiopia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India (Gujarat, Kashmir), Sri Lanka, Indonesia, East-Timor. She has worked with Women's Organisations, NGOs, Human Rights Organisations and Humanitarian organizations in the South and in the North. She has also worked with EU, UN, local governments, Red Cross, universities and corporate sector. Welmoed is also a visual artist. Her sculptures (stone, bronze, glass), photographs and installations reflect her work in conflict areas. A silver lining in her artistic work is the relation between vulnerability and strength. Many of her sculptures and installations are about peace building. Welmoed made the Art Work for the UNSCR 1325 Award that was awarded to the Women Peace Network in Liberia, and she built a "Peace Shrine" in the Himalayas.

### **Onziema, Pepe Julian**

Pepe Julian Onziema about herself: “I am a Ugandan, I came out as a lesbian when I was 12, but I identify myself as a Transgender. I am a Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual rights activist. I am the Programme Coordinator for Sexual Minorities Uganda – SMUG. I am the LGBT representative on the Pan African Human Rights Defenders’ Network Steering Committee. I have spoken and presented statements on LGBT issues at the NGO Forum and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights in the Gambia and the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. I have worked with civil society, development and diplomatic missions to fight draconian laws and bills discriminating gay people. I have spoken out against the Anti-Homosexuality Bill 2009 which was introduced to the Ugandan Parliament, both local and foreign media”.

### **Ovwohose, Anthony**

Anthony Ovwohose works with HIRDA’s fund-raising team and has undertaken various projects in both private business and human development. He has experience in moderating and facilitating workshops organised in the Netherlands, Nigeria, and in the United Kingdom. Anthony has participated in several workshops and seminars as both moderator and facilitator both in the Netherlands, Nigeria and the United Kingdom. Anthony has played a role in the launching various platforms on youth empowerment and anti-corruption campaigns. He has also worked with several organizations such as Afro-Caribbean Foundation, served as a Co-chair to the Nigeria Diaspora Communities in the UK for four years and as an Executive member of the Africa Root Movements Anthony.

### **Tegola, la Toni**

Toni la Tegola is a second generation Kenyan - Italian with experience in Community development, Finance and in Media. Prior to leading the African Gay Youth Foundation as a volunteer, he worked in diverse positions such as TV Producer, Program Officer, Operations manager and as a Credit Controller. These experiences have empowered him with the tools necessary to plan and implement projects that use the arts and media to create awareness, stimulate positive social change, inclusion and most of all, providing a positive role model for LGBT Immigrants of sub-Saharan origin living in the Netherlands. Toni la Tegola about himself: “I grew up in a society whereby same sex relationships are not tolerated and therefore, understand first-hand the importance and need of having a support community organization for Migrant LGBT individuals”. In his role as Project Director for the African Gay Youth Foundation, he is committed to empower gay immigrants to be confident in their abilities and sexuality, setting an example of staying on track and accomplishing different goals, yet at the same time remembering that life is beautiful and should be lived to the fullest each day.

### **Velzen, van Ilse**

Since 2002, Ilse van Velzen, and her twin sister Femke are specialised in making documentaries. They expose injustice (in developing countries) to a worldwide audience and give oppressed people a voice. Ilse and Femke operate and produce documentaries as independent film makers under their own label IFPRODUCTIONS. Their documentaries typically give oppressed people a voice in order to make their stories known to the world. Two well known documentaries are:

Weapon of War: presents a quest into the hidden causes of war crimes and sexual violence committed against civilian population in this case of the Democratic Republic of Congo. In this documentary we will meet those that fight, murder, loot and rape. We look into the deepest of their souls in order to understand their dark motives.

Fighting the Silence: a documentary on the struggle for recognition by victims of sexual violence in the Eastern Region of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Vries, de José**

Since 2007 José de Vries has been working for IFOR's Women Peacemakers Program. Established in 1997 the WPP works to support and empower women peace activists and actively advocates the recognition of women's experiences of war and conflict and works towards the integration of a gender perspective in peacebuilding processes. The WPP recognizes that it is crucial to consider ideas about masculinities and femininities when taking a gender perspective on peacebuilding. Before working for the WPP, José was working with traumatized refugees in the Netherlands and Kenya. For several years now, José has also been actively working for youth empowerment globally, as a Board Member of the Netherlands based Youth Fund "Alert, Fund for Youth Activities".

**Donors**

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders would like to express a special thanks to the donors of the African Conference 2010:







**THANK YOU!**

**United Network of Young Peacebuilders**

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## ANNEX 2: List of participants

#	Last name	First name	Gender	Date of birth	Nationality	Country of origin	Occupation
1	Ababo	Simon	Male	21/11/1979	Ugandan	Uganda	Student
2	Abdel Gabar	Isra	Female	13/08/1978	Ethiopian	Ethiopia	Student
3	Am	Kabadhe	Male	07/01/1991	Somali	Somalia	Student
4	Atingu	Beatrice Stella	Female	24/09/1979	Ugandan	Uganda	Student
5	Bah	Fatmata	Female	05/02/1985	Dutch	Sierra Leone	Student
6	Bambe	Grâce	Female	31/01/1991	Dutch	Rwanda	Student
7	Bent	Gesa	Female	30/08/1983	German	Germany	Professional
8	Bögli	Alice	Female	04/05/1990	Swiss	Switzerland	Student
9	Brooks	Kelston	Male	08/06/1905	Dutch	SXM	Student
10	Caldeira	Maria	Female	17/07/1962	Portuguese	Mozambique	Volunteer
11	Caringal	Herminia	Female	08/04/1967	Filipino	The Netherlands	Student
12	Cieol	Nora	Female	05/05/1986	Italian	Italy	Student
13	Wit, de	Sanne	Female	01/06/1989	Dutch	The Netherlands	Student
14	Fischer	Kathrin	Female	07/01/1987	German	Germany	Student
15	Garland	Johanne	Female	12/01/1983	American	United States	Student
16	Georgo Haile	Aster	Female	21/09/1982	Eritrean	Eritrea	Student
17	Häber	Maxi	Female	28/04/1989	German	Germany	Student
18	Hailemeskel	Feben	Female	01/06/1905	Ethiopian	Ethiopia	Student
19	Hessels	Suzanne	Female	13/02/1985	Dutch	The Netherlands	Student
20	Hilhorst	Branda	Female	20/08/1988	Dutch	The Netherlands	Student
21	Ikalany	Betty	Female	04/03/1977	Ugandan	Uganda	Student
22	Kelbisow	Selamawit	Female	06/04/1980	Ethiopian	Ethiopia	Volunteer
23	Kelly	Aldrich	Male	14/02/1985	Netherlands	Aruba	Student
24	Kempers	Laurence	Male	04/05/1985	Dutch	The Netherlands	Student
25	Kumar	Richa	Female	26/05/1982	Indian	India	Student
26	Kwakkenbos	Anne	Female	18/05/1988	Dutch	The Netherlands	Student
27	Mapunda	Lisungu	Male	23/04/1971	Tanzanian	Tanzania	Student
28	Mkushi	Gloria	Female	02/01/1984	Zimbabwean	Botswana	Student
29	Mwesigwa	Albert	Male	25/03/1975	Ugandan	Uganda	Student
30	Nalubiri	Agnes Grace	Female	04/03/1982	Ugandan	Uganda	Student
31	Nsanganiye	Juvent	Male	01/01/1969	Burundi	Burundi	Professional
32	Oribabor	Kamilla	Female	15/10/1979	Dutch	Nigeria	Professional
33	Paaskesen	Lise	Female	18/02/1985	Danish	Denmark	Student
34	Peters	Eline	Female	29/11/1989	Dutch	The Netherlands	Student
35	Pfeifer	Jalmar	Male	10/12/1984	Dutch	The Netherlands	student / professional
36	Poh Chesi	Lorraine	Female	31/01/1990	Dutch	Cameroon	Student
37	Roelofs	Maarten	Male	26/02/1990	Dutch	The Netherlands	Student
38	Rottmann	Sophia	Female	27/06/1991	German	Tanzania	Student
39	Ruysenaars	Jan	Male	13/05/1944	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
40	Shuma	Jane	Female	17/06/1980	Tanzanian	Tanzania	Student
41	Smits	Femke	Female	13/05/1987	Dutch	The Netherlands	Student
42	Tegegn	Alemayehu A	Male	01/10/1972	Ethiopian	Ethiopia	Student
43	Timmermans	Femke	Female	16/09/1985	Dutch	The Netherlands	Volunteer/intern
44	van Foeken	Eelke	Male	21/09/1982	Dutch	The Netherlands	PhD in Computer Science

45	van Leeuwen	Willemijn	Female	24/03/1986	Dutch	The Netherlands	Student
46	van Leeuwen-den Dekker	Petra	Female	28/06/1977	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
47	Arendonk, van			16/05/1983	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
48	Mvkankundiye	Christine	Female	15/08/1980	Rwandese	Rwanda	Student
49	Koyang	Timothy	Male	12/05/1972	Ugandan	Uganda	Student
50	Siemons	Karel	Male	22/11/1985	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
51	Wit, de	Anna	Female	01/10/1983	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
52	Petchet	Kumonwom	Male	01/05/1989	Thai	Thailand	
53	Mbire	Moreblessing	Male	01/01/1984	Zimbabwean	Zimbabwe	Student
54	Ohr	Malacci	Female	09/03/1987	Ghanaian	Ghana	Student
55	Belale	Damenu	Male	20/09/1969	Ethiopian	Ethiopia	Student
56	Miltenburg	Johan	Male	15/06/1946	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
57	Kusmallak	Nebil Ahmed	Male	14/03/1979	Eritrean	Eritrea	Professional
58	Wentalue	Dereje	Male	01/01/1982	Ethiopian	Ethiopia	Student
59	Blahio	Ana	Female	30/10/1982	Costa Rican	Costa Rica	-
60	Wilke	Josephine	Female	23/03/1988	German	Germany	Student
61	Roux	Chloe	Female	24/02/1990	French	France	Student
62	Penninge	J	Male	27/08/1984	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
63	Kulunia	Fatina Sunny	Female	14/05/1981	Tanzanian	Tanzania	Student
64	Seid	Saeed	Male	01/07/1989	Dutch	Turkey	Student
65	Dusabe	Denise	Female	26/07/1986	Dutch	Rwanda	Student
66	Feng	Chloe	Female	08/11/1989	Chinese	China	Student
67	Denge	Foyo	Male	01/01/1972	Kenyan	Kenya	Student
68	Klison	Box	Male	29/08/1973	Zimbabwean	Zimbabwe	Student
69	Hlongwanse	Khangelani	Male	15/06/1988	Zimbabwean	Zimbabwe	Student
70	Ochere	John	Male	10/05/1982	Kenyan	Kenya	Student
71	Daniels	Sharron	Female	14/09/1977	Nigerian	Nigeria	Student
72	Nduugu	Catherine Nheri	Female	23/03/1982	Kenyan	Kenya	Student
73	Namaalwa	Susan	Female	29/09/1979	Ugandan	Uganda	Student
74	Namanda	Clara	Female	08/01/2010	Ugandan	Uganda	Student
75	Almaw	Timuwark	Male	03/03/1980	Ethiopian	Ethiopia	-
76	Mumbo	George	Male	23/07/1975	Kenyan	Kenya	Professional
77	La Tegola	Carayne	Female	07/05/1983	Italian	Kenya	Professional
78	Kifate	Charles	Male	21/10/1981	Kenyan	Kenya	Student
79	La Tegola	Toni	Male		Italian	Kenya	Professional
80	Onziema	Pepe	Female	30/11/1980	Ugandan	Uganda	Professional
81	Abdalla	Dinu	Female	10/08/1980	Ethiopian	Ethiopia	Student
82	Velzen, van	Ilse	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
83	Vries, de	Jose	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
84	Gosewinkel	Merle	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
85	Farah	Suad	Female	-	Dutch	Somalia	Student
86	Bolkenstein	Sanne	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
87	Bonjour	Maeva	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
88	Ovwhigose	Anthony	Male	-			
89	-	Kwaku	Male	-	Nigerian		
90	Nagelhout	Sanne	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Student
91	Ismail	Stella	Female	-	Dutch	Somali	Professional
92	Koekebakker	Welmoed	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
93	Andrew	Florence	Female	-	Dutch	Sudan	Professional

94	Buijs	Laurens	Male	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Student
95	Beswick	Teri	Female	-	-	-	Volunteer
96	Meijlis	Thessa	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Volunteer
97	Canali	Chiara	Female	-	-	-	Volunteer
98	Kanzayire	Esperance	Female	-	Rwandese	Rwanda	Volunteer
99	Abanes	Menandro	Male	-	-	-	Volunteer
100	Gabrovska	Enitsa	Female	-	-	-	Volunteer
101	Weeland	Martine	Female	-	-	-	Volunteer
102	Staarink	Rosa	Female	-	-	The Netherlands	Volunteer
103	Zewdu	Selamawit	Female	-	-	-	Volunteer
104	Martens	Suzanne	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Volunteer
105	Hendriks	Floortje	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Volunteer
106	Steen, van der	Roderick	Male	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Volunteer
107	Velzen, van	Marije	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
108	Adebajo	Olufemi	Male	-	-	-	Student
109	Kansiime	Clara	Female	-	Ugandan	Uganda	Student
110	Josphat	Ileri	Male	-	Zimbabwean	Zimbabwe	Student
111	Chonoona	Morgen	Male	-	Zimbabwean	Zimbabwe	Student
112	Owilli	Robert	Male	-	Ugandan	Uganda	Student
113	Kalavo	Iris	Female	-	Tanzania	Tanzania	Student
114	Santer	Vera	Female	24/1984	Austrian	The Netherlands	Professional
115	Geus, de	Roosmarijn	Female	-	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
116	Moy	Stephanie	Female	-	French	France	Professional
117	Deng	Julia	Female	-	Chinese	China	Professional
118	Welten	Myrthe	Female	12/09/1987	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional
119	Boersma	Jeltsje	Female	11/06/1986	Dutch	The Netherlands	Professional