

Diaspora-oriented Peacebuilding Training

The Hague, 21 – 25 September 2015

Participant Profiles

In this booklet are the profiles of the ten dynamic individuals that took part in the Diaspora Academy Project's second Diaspora-oriented Peacebuilding training workshop in September 2015.



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Acknowledgements

This profile was written by Sari Holtland and Yusrara Medani, ADPC's DAP Project Associates in 2015 under the leadership of Connie Formson-Lorist, ADPC Programme Coordinator. In putting together this profile, the objective is to showcase the work that our training participants are involved in, and how by attending the ADPC Peacebuilding training of 21-25 September 2015 they will become even more effective in their various endeavours.

ADPC would like to acknowledge the contributions of Jasmin Nordien who has facilitated two Peacebuilding training workshops (in 2014 and 2015) with passion and professionalism. Jasmin, Thank you for your continued support and valuable contributions! In addition, this booklet is only possible because of the ten dynamic individuals who took time off their busy schedule to take part in this training workshop. Your enthusiastic and dynamic contributions were invaluable in making the training workshop the success it was -Thank You! In alphabetical order these individuals are:

Mohamed Ali
Andrew Henry
Emmanuel O. Adigwe
Hope Nkurunziza
Jocelyne Ndizeye
Juliënne Doppenberg-Difukidi
Lettie Chimbi
Norbert Mbu-Mputu
Salome Mbugua
Yéra Demebele

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Design: Connie Formson-Lorist, Programme Coordinator, ADPC

Introduction and ADPC in Brief

In May 2014 the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) in cooperation with The Hague Academy for Local Governance (THA) and The Network University (TNU) launched a Diaspora Academy (DA). The overall objective of the DA is to upgrade and strengthen professional skills and competences of diaspora organizations in Europe engaged in improving the social and economic conditions and communal harmony in their countries of origin. Within the project the capacity building trainings for diaspora organizations focuses on three thematic area: Peacebuilding, Advocacy & Lobbying and Smart Partnerships/Networking. The project will run until April 2017.

In December 2014, ADPC held the inaugural Diaspora Academy Peacebuilding training to equip diaspora with critical peacebuilding/conflict transformation knowledge and skills. The second training was held from **21-25 September 2015** in The Hague. During the life of the project, the DA will train 30 dynamic diaspora individuals/organisations to acquire sufficient knowledge, skills about competencies with which to enable diaspora peace activists/brokers to strategically and meaningfully engage in peace-building activities in their countries of origin.

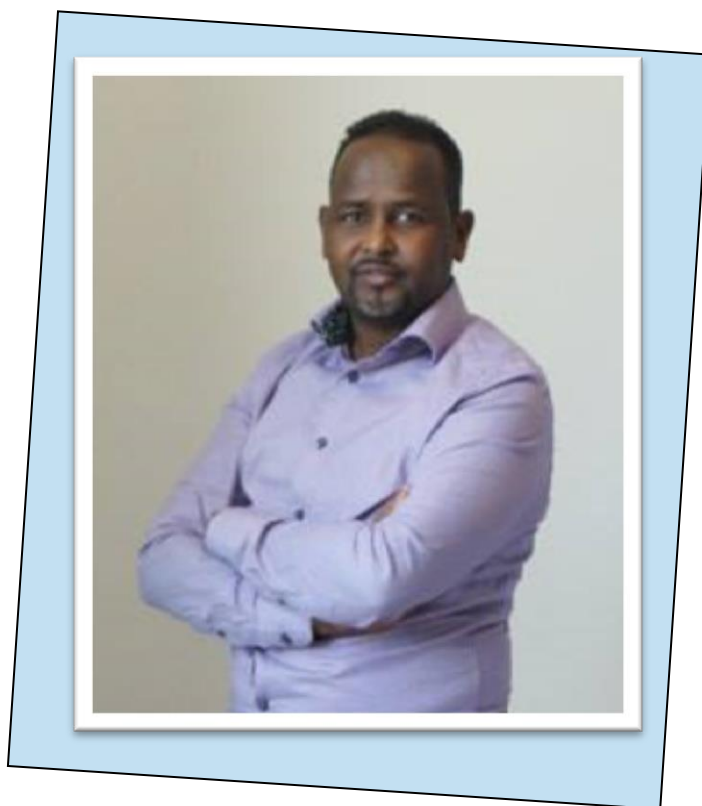
ADPC in Brief

ADPC is a leading Diaspora think tank dedicated to mobilizing African Diaspora in Europe for the development of Africa. We conduct evidence-based, policy-related research based on diaspora perspectives, mindsets, experiences and expertise. The knowledge and information we generate is primarily targeted at three groups: diaspora organizations in Europe, development practitioners and policymakers dealing with diaspora related issues, both in Africa and in Europe. We also promote research collaboration between diaspora and homeland researchers in Africa and their affiliated institutions in the production of knowledge in this emerging research and policy field. ADPC offers high-quality capacity building training to the emerging Diaspora ministries and other institutions in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries that are tasked with overseeing diaspora and development related matters.

The main purpose of the training workshop is to strengthen the policy making capacity of the diaspora-oriented policymakers, by providing them with the essential knowledge, skills and tools to develop feasible policies aimed at maximizing the contribution of the diaspora to the development of their respective home countries. We facilitate network building and linkages in and among Diaspora organizations and other stakeholders active in the field of migration and development both in the host and home countries. We do this by organizing expert meetings, conferences and workshops in which diaspora development practitioners make contact, establish viable networks, learn from each other's development- related activities, exchange valuable information, and share best practices and positive experiences in the field of diaspora and development. We also actively lobby for the access and incorporation of diaspora development practitioners in the networks of established development cooperation circles, both in host and home countries.

Participant Profiles and Stories

Mohamed Ali is part of the Djiboutian diaspora. He came to training with the goal to learn how African diaspora can be engaged to support and contribute to the development of their countries of origin. Mohamed currently resides in Sweden where he is the founder and president of Swedish Djiboutian Development Agency (SDDA). SDDA coordinates activities that promote good integration and network opportunities between Djiboutians and Swedish society, youth empowerment, and development in the Horn of African. Within SDDA they have established a training course “Social Youth Entrepreneurship, Space for Youth



Participation and full integration in their society” with the aim of sensitizing youth on intercultural understanding and connecting them with each other through entrepreneurs projects. Furthermore they have organized an exchange programme for youth immigrants from Sweden and Portugal dealing with social conflict management and mediation in problematic neighbourhoods and social youth responsibilities.

By adopting the constructive conflict transformation methods learned during the workshop, Mohamed will be able to advocate and improve the living conditions of the youth for better responsibility, cooperation, social mediation and partnership within their communities. As well as providing them with sufficient confidence that they can make a difference for a better change.

Prior to his engagement at SDDA, Mohamed has done a significant amount of interpreting and teaching of Somali language throughout his career. With a background in teaching, it comes naturally to Mohamed to transfer the knowledge he gained in order to make a difference both in Djibouti and in Sweden.

Andrew Henry was the only participant coming from outside Europe, namely from the USA. Andrew is originally from South Sudan. In his daily life Andrew is an International Ministry Pastor at Worthington Christian Reformed Church. Next to this he is also active as a Board member of World Renew, the Christian Reformed Church Relief Organization. From these positions and perspectives he brought in a lot to the group. Another important thing he brought into the group, was his very kind attitude.



During the workshop Andrew focussed on the concepts; several times he asked for clarification of a theoretical concept. He wanted to know more about the different definitions. This were not the only things he wanted to know more about, Andrew showed himself as a very interested participant by asking several good questions during the training. He clearly wanted to go deeper into the material. He also brought up several good ideas and examples, which often led to fruitful discussions. For example, he mentioned the idea of 'imposed peace', and this was something that triggered many of his fellow participants.

In his Back Home Action Plan it was very clear that Andrew is used to speaking in front of groups. He was a confident presenter and his presentation was captivating. He precisely mentioned the issue of his home country, namely the 'prevention of future conflicts'. He has a clear vision regarding his initiative and what it means to: 'walk with the people on the ground'. Andrew hopes to achieve his through peace education to the average person in communities in South Sudan. He main approach to peace education will be through workshops provided by expert trainers. This worked well in the Rwanda context, and he sees this as a good approach for his own cause.

Emmanuel O. Adigwe

brought, as he said himself the first morning, 'the values of the pope' since he was coming from Rome. He is originally from Nigeria, but he has been living in Italy for many years.

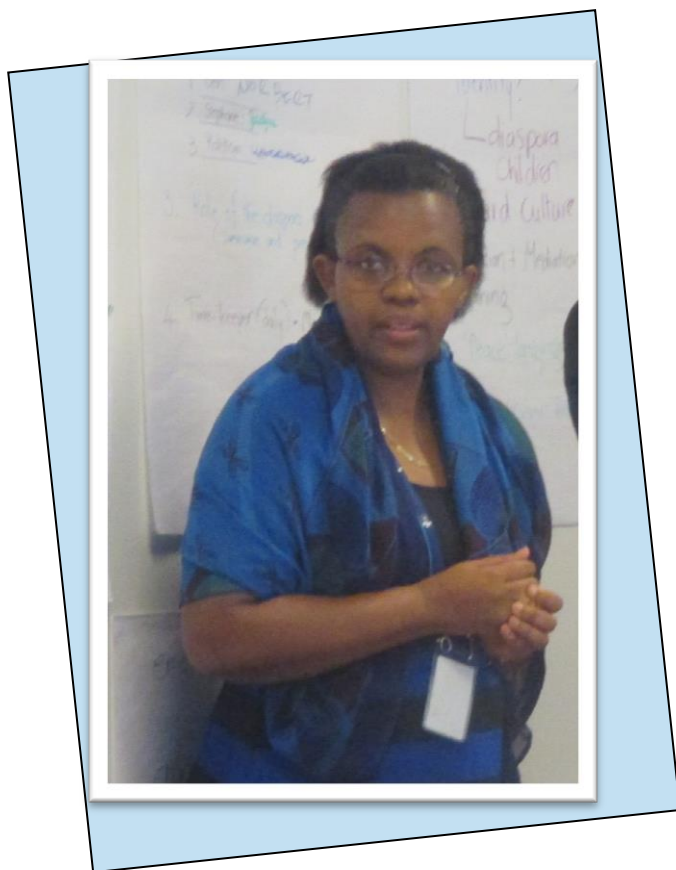
Emmanuel has been an active member of NIDO Europe since its foundation in 2000 and currently holds the position of chair of NIDOE Italy. He has also been actively involved in several other African Diaspora organizations in Italy.

Through his involvement in these organizations he gained a lot of practical experience with African Diaspora organizations. He actively shared this during the workshop and provided a wealth of information to

other participants.

Emmanuel's involvement in various organizations and broad networks within the African Diaspora community will serve as a good platform for him to put into practice the knowledge and skills gained in the workshop. In response to the current violence in Nigeria and the increase of terrorism he hopes to implement peace education in the schools in Nigeria. In addition, he wants to organize trainings for the diaspora living in Italy and Europe.





Hope Nkurunziza has a dream of passing on the message of love without ethnic hatred and division. Originally from Burundi and living in Sweden, Hope is engaged in various organizations such as the 'Deborah Ministry Sweden' and 'Tabitha Hjälpen' to fulfill her dream.

Deborah Ministry Sweden organizes conferences and seminars where Burundians in Sweden meet and pray together. Hope is president of Tabitha Hjälpen, an association for the improvement of children's life in Burundi. Through the association Hope has helped set up an orphanage called "Rouah Orphanage" to impart the

basics of Christian life to children.

Religion is a focal part in Hope's life as reflected in her personal, educational and professional background and during her participation in the workshop. She expressed her passion of helping people through spreading Christian values and teaching the Gospel.

During the training Hope expressed that *"To invest in people, you have to plant a seed and protect that seed"*.

By virtue of the peacebuilding workshop Hope was able to gain insights and new ideas on how to educate others to embrace and cherish differences, turn differences into positive assets (plant a seed) and strategies to resolve conflicts (protect that seed).

Throughout the workshop Hope stressed the need for people in Burundi to unify and work together. This was also made clear in her BHAP, in which she wants to set up project "Deborah Peace Academy" as an open school to educate children on the Christian faith with its values of loving one another. Furthermore she wants to train women in Burundi so that they can teach other women and keep the knowledge circle growing.



Jocelyne Ndizeye is originally from Burundi and lives in The Netherlands. She is actively involved in the 'Burundian Women for Peace' network. Within this network Jocelyne is engaged in different activities, including field visits to Burundi. Drawing from her role as a mother, Jocelyne expressed that she utilised the concept of 'soft power' within her household to the extent that when a conflict arises, she, or one of her family members, can call for 'Time Out'. The 'time out' gives that person the opportunity to bring their emotions under control and thereafter they can have a rational and respectful

discussion. The concept of 'Time Out' she introduced came back several times throughout the training week.

Another memorable moment during the week was when Jocelyne was facilitator during the session on the case study presented by expert Stephanie Mbanzendore who is also a member of the Burundian Women for Peace network. Jocelyne created a good atmosphere, which contributed in a positive way to Stephanie's presentation.

At the end of the week Jocelyne became the presenter herself when she presented her BHAP. She started her presentation by drawing a heart, which referred to the geographical form of Burundi, but also to the emotional place Burundi has for her, namely in her heart. After this she elaborated more on the current situation in Burundi and she explained her plans. Her plan had two tracks, one in the Netherlands and one in Burundi. In the Netherlands Jocelyne wants to work with Burundian families; she wants to give trainings to help Burundians to deal with their trauma. In Burundi Jocelyne wants to train people so that they can train other people themselves in order to spread the skills and knowledge. She also wants to be active in secondary schools and in sports.

Juliènne Doppenberg-

Difukidi is based in The Hague herself and comes from the DRC. Juliènne is qualified in applied pedagogy and she makes great use of this in her work for her home country, the DRC. Juliènne is chairperson of the Tosangana foundation which she in 2006. Through her foundation she has had several successful achievements which include, but are not limited to: the construction of a 'Multifunctional Center Elikia' in Kinshasa; training of primary school teachers in the DRC; mobilisation of funding for the successful surgery of a young girl in the DRC who suffered from a brain tumour; and training of teachers in Ethiopia in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam.



Juliènne was very intrigued by the theory and tools, in particular conflict analysis tools, provided through the training. She expressed that: *"It was like I was in the dark and now I can see the light"*. But she was not the only one learning from her participation; she generously shared her experiences with the other participants; especially her various experiences with funding and 'how to reach the big organisations' were extremely useful. Juliènne also provided several practical additions to the concept of 'Non-Violent Action', through her examples of its by women in South Kivu.

At the start of the training Juliènne mentioned that she did not only want to 'take something away' from this training, but that she also wanted to 'throw something away' during this training, namely her fear of starting to set up an organisation in Africa. According to her Back Home Action Plan, which she presented at the end of the training, she has clearly thrown away at least a part of this fear. In her BHAP she appointed the problem of the generational conflict in the DRC; the ambitions of the youth often clash with the culture and traditions of the elderly. Therefore she has developed a program in which 100 young people and 100 adults will participate in order to bring their ideas and values together.

Lettie Chimbi has been

engaged in the care and social services industry for many years. She has brought a great deal of experience about the industry and about her home country Zimbabwe.

In her current role as social support worker in the United Kingdom, Letti provides support services to resettling asylum seekers, and facilitates integration back into the community. Letti is also the chairperson of Woman for Resources (W4R), that aspires to provide support, practical

assistance and funding to relieve financial hardship of women in Wales and in Sub-Saharan Africa through initiatives designed, run and managed by women. In addition she is a board member of three other organizations: Minority Ethnic Woman's Network, Sub Sahara Advisory Panel and Displaced People in Action.

Being part of these organizations, Letti was very interested in learning more about fundraising techniques for her own organisation and for the various other organizations she is involved in.

In her BHAP she broadened the view of conflict and peace; she explained that people are not fighting in Zimbabwe but there is still unrest due to poverty. In 2013 Letti founded the Tose Foundation, a project that supports women and girls orphaned by HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe. With her BHAP she wants to educate and support these women by implementing proper irrigation channels as the majority of the community lives mainly from farming. A vital lesson Letti learned from the workshop is the importance of also including men and others partners in the community in her plan. She expressed that: *"Men are powerful in Africa so you cannot do anything without men."*



Norbert Mbu-Mputu has

worked in many multicultural environments for several years as a writer, journalist and researcher, especially in the field of sociology and anthropology. He has various publications on diverse topics in these fields. Norbert has also been actively involved in different organizations.

Norbert has also worked for the UN in the DRC, where he is also originally from, but nowadays he is active in the organization Community Space Partnership. Originally from DRC Norbert now lives in the UK, although he frequently travels around the world.



Norbert's background as a writer was a value added for the training. He often came up with various stories, which were not only entertaining, but aptly illustrative of different theoretical concepts. For example through his stories he embraced the need for influential African profiles such as Nelson Mandela in order to get the voice of the African diaspora heard.

Norbert's goal is to use the Congolese love for dance and music as a unifying factor given the importance of dance and music within the Congolese culture. The creation of a network of Congolese is an ambitious plan since there is an huge diversity amongst Congolese. However, in his BHAP Norbert proposed to use the Congolese dance Rumba as a means to achieve his plan. Through the joint love for dance and music, he hoped to establish a network of the Congolese diaspora.

Salome Mbugua was born in Kenya, lives in Ireland and carries out development in the DRC. She is the founder of two organizations, AkiDwa and Wezesha, in which she remains active. The two organizations are e.g. active in the areas of gender equality, gender based violence, immigrants, awareness raising and capacity building. Next to her work for these organizations, Salome is also busy with her PhD, which is also related to the above topics.



Salome did not only bring many experiences and knowledge to the workshop, above all she brought her powerful personality and her 'hands-on' mentality. She showed herself ready to take action and with this mindset she clearly motivated her fellow workshop participants.

Her readiness to take action was definitely not based on short term projects; she was very much focused upon the long term. In the workshop she was always looking for sustainable ideas she could translate into practical solutions. She strongly believed that it was better to empower local people themselves instead of to keep managing them from a distance.

Regarding her BHAP, Salome was eager to learn from others. She asked several times for clarification so that she could use the ideas of others for her own projects. But, she did not only learn from the other participants. They also learned a lot from her BHAP, which was received by great enthusiasm. In her BHAP she elaborated more on a project in Kinshasa. This project started in 2013 with capacity building trainings to a group of 40 women. The idea behind this was that these women could spread the knowledge and skills gained by these trainings to other women. This idea clearly worked since this group is nowadays expanded to 400 women. They are now also planning on building a peace centre in this area. Next to this, Salome is active in Ireland itself; she and her colleagues are mapping the diaspora currently living in Ireland in order to create more unity.

Yéra Dembele has great knowledge and extensive experience in the field. He is originally from Mali and currently lives in France. Therefore his main language is French, but luckily we had many other French speaking people in the workshop so the translation he sometimes needed was no problem at all. This was very much in favor of the other participants since Yéra is someone who has a lot to share about the issues related to the workshop. He has a rich educational background in Management Sciences and in Economics. In addition to this, he has also many practical experiences. He is involved in several platforms and network activities. He was for example active in EADPD, the European-wide African Diaspora Platform for Development, and he is currently busy with local development enterprises of African diaspora living in France.



With these experiences and theoretical knowledge he knew a lot about different countries and organizations, networking and the creation of platforms and he helped his fellow participants a lot with his information on these topics. He emphasized the importance of the role of the diaspora several times during the workshop. He argued that the diaspora could be the bridge between Africa and the West. Yéra expressed that the African diaspora had a kind of worldwide overview of the situation, they could combine their knowledge of the West and of Africa. But in order to fulfill this task, the diaspora has to work together. Therefore he strongly advocated for a united diaspora. Along these lines, Yéra has developed a platform in France where the Congolese diaspora could come together in order to help in their home country. This worked in the beginning, but after a while the divisions between the Congolese people became too big. Recommendations on this front was that it would be important to create a common vision among the Congolese in order to bring about unity.

Yera elaborated more on his vision of a united diaspora in his BHAP. At first he gave a clear explanation of the history and the current situation of Mali. Hereafter he explained the need for social cohesion in Mali, he shared that the Malinese people have to understand each other's perspective in order to collaborate. This collaboration is needed to get acknowledgement from the government and the large organizations and in order to get more funding.

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