

# Diaspora-oriented Peacebuilding Training

*The Hague, 10-14 October 2016*

## Participant Profiles

In this booklet are the profiles of the nine dynamic individuals that took part in the Diaspora Academy Project's fourth Diaspora-oriented Peacebuilding training workshop in October 2016.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
Netherlands



Gemeente Den Haag

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## Acknowledgements

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 10-14 October 2016 they will become even more effective in their various endeavours.

ADPC would like to acknowledge the contributions of Jasmin Nordien who has facilitated all four Peacebuilding training workshops (in 2014, 2015 and 2016) with passion and professionalism. Jasmin, Thank you for your continued support and valuable contributions! In addition, this booklet is only possible because of the nine 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:

Masud J.S.I. Abdi  
Biar Deng  
Hakeim Mayol Jouk  
Bejamin Kalumire-Ndi  
Mamoud Maka Kamara  
Deo Gratias Katya Kasereka  
Sagal Mohamed  
Gisma Rupheal Mou Mou  
Florence Kadogo Nyawade

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## **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 training of 10-14 October 2016 is the fourth training. The project set out to train 40 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.

## Masud J.S.I Abdi

*"Peace is good for everybody"*



Masud is part of the Somali diaspora. He has lived in the UK for many years, but currently resides in Denmark. He founded Kismayo foundation, a non-profit organisation, established by the Somali diaspora to address the humanitarian needs of the homeland. Kismayo foundation believes in the unique position of diaspora as change agents. Masud has experience with mobilization and empowerment of diaspora.

In addition to his work for Kismayo foundation, Masud is busy pursuing his MA degree in African Studies and writing his thesis on Diaspora

Citizenship: Statelessness vs. Trans-Nationalism, looking at the role of the diaspora in the fields of socio-economic development, humanitarianism and political stability in the homeland. Needless to say, he has a wealth of relevant experiences as well as theoretical knowledge.

Most striking about Masud was his remarkably high level of engagement. He was always ready and willing to share his knowledge, experiences and perspectives with the group. His academic background was apparent throughout the workshop. He had great analysis skills and always wished to get into deep discussions that would really scratch beneath the surface. He brought his abundant contributions to the discussions in an eloquent way and with that added a lot of value.



## Biar Deng

*"Justice should be brought. But later. First we need peace."*



Biar is originally from South Sudan. He has a extensive knowledge about his home country and the conflict that it is facing. He currently lives in Finland and is pursuing his higher education (PhD) at the University of Helsinki. He has a background in agriculture but decided to shift towards peace building and advocacy for South Sudan. The outbreak of civil war in his home country was a turning point in his life. The first morning Biar wrote on his 'hand' that he brought war stories and sufferings, which was his drive to shift towards peace building and participate in this training.

He was one of the three members of the Diaspora organization "Voice of South Sudanese Diaspora" (VoSSD) that took part in this workshop. The VoSSD aims at bringing the South Sudanese Diaspora together in order to work towards lasting peace in South Sudan.

Biar, together with his South Sudanese colleagues decided to develop a joint back home action plan for the Voice of South Sudan. With the practical skills and tools they learned this training, they will be able to successfully facilitate meetings, workshops and seminars back home so as to transfer their knowledge to others and thus strengthen their peace build capacity.





## Hakeim Mayol Jouk

*“ We should focus on forgiveness and reconciliation.”*



Hakeim believes in ‘peace for the entire human family’. He is originally from South Sudan and currently resides in Düsseldorf Germany. He participated in the workshop on behalf of the Voice of South Sudanese Diaspora, where he holds the position of secretary of information.

He has over a decade of working experience in the media world. He has worked for the radio and television in South Sudan. Hakeim is still very well informed particularly on past and current international affairs. A fellow participant said: ‘We don’t know how he does it. But he is always the one immediately providing us with all the news and information’.

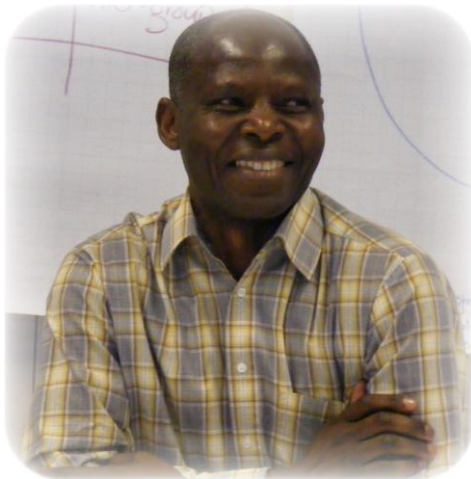
Hakeim aspires to pursue a Masters degree in International Relations and write a book on geopolitics. Not surprisingly, during the workshop he always tried to analyse the broader geopolitical context, in order to identify underlying causes and issues of the topics discussed. In his introductory remarks he mentioned that he brought his interest in geopolitics and his focus on the connections between different conflicts all over the world.



Hakeim is not only concerned with international politics but with national politics as well. For example: he stressed several times that the masses are vulnerable to manipulation by politicians.

## Benjamin Kalumire Ndi

*"You see how easy it is to destroy something. But how difficult it is to restore the same thing?"*



Benjamin was the only participant living here in The Hague. He is originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo. He is involved in peace building activities there through the peace organisation ADDROSMIL: Association pour la Défense des Droits du Secteur de Sécurité et Militaire. ADDROSMIL is primarily active in South Kivu. They focus on the relation between the military, police and civilians. In addition to his experience in peace building, he is also an expert on human rights. He conducted 3 years of research on the violation human rights in the DRC for the Myriam

foundation.

Benjamin spoke in French during the workshop and luckily his fellow Congolese colleague, Deo, was there to translate everything. This was beneficial for everybody since Benjamin's experience and quiet wisdom were of incredible value to the group discussions and the workshop in general.

With a background in teaching Benjamin was able to transfer his knowledge in a fun and educational way upon the group. A while into day 1 he accurately sensed low energy in the group. He then introduced a quick 'icebreaker' waking everyone up and simultaneously teaching the group a lesson in (miss)communication. On day 2 he took it upon himself to provide the group with a lesson via a comic illustration about conflict. On top of that he introduced one last exercise where he asked participants to tear a piece of paper in order to let them attempt to put it back together. This exercise illustrated how difficult it is to rebuild peace.





## Mamoud Maka Kamara

*"My vision of peace is that people will be able to just do their normal every day activities. People going to school and work and children playing in the streets."*



Mamoud is originally from Sierra Leone and took up residence in the Netherlands more than 15 years ago. He is actively involved in the Sierra Leone community in the Netherlands. He is board member of Sierra United. An umbrella organization with the objective to bring Sierra Leone diaspora organisations in the Netherlands together.

He is a qualified social worker with a specialization in youth. He practices his profession both in the Netherlands and in Sierra Leone, his country of origin. He has worked in Sierra Leone on several projects for the IOM as a 'Returned Qualified National'. He is a strong believer in grass root initiatives and does projects where he works closely with local communities.

Mamoud has a clear vision of peace: People being able to just go about their ordinary every day activities in peace. People going to work, children to school etc. Therefore he decided to focus his Back Home Action Plan on providing an alternative for the lives people in his community in Sierra Leone. Through the use and managing of an already existing rubber plantation Mamoud strives to bring positive change to the lives of many people.



## Deo Gratias Katya Kasereka

*"I came here to learn. I have eaten. Now I am digesting."*



Deo is currently based in London, UK. But is originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo. He participated in the workshop on behalf of the South People's Project, an organization that strives for peace in the DRC in general and Beni (North-Kivu) in particular. They are engaged in activities varying from providing medicine to initiating dialogue about peace.

Next to his role as a participant, Deo fulfilled another role in this training as a translator for Benjamin. Thanks to his high sufficiency in French and English he made it significantly easier for the group to communicate with Benjamin by taking up the role of

his translator.

Deo is a very curious person with a great interest in understanding conflict and building peace. During the week he stressed several times that he was there to learn. He reminded the group that there are always new things to learn, and people should be open to that. A fellow participant expressed that: 'Deo is always a critical thinker. He never just believes everything people say. He is always asking questions'. This open minded attitude fitted perfectly with his humble and kind personality.



## Sagal Mohamed

*“ When I walk away from this workshop I hope to take with me: cooperation’s, partnerships and new friends. ”*



Sagal is a London based social activist focused on Africa and Somalia in particular. She is involved in several youth organizations. She is executive director of Somalis Against Violent Extremism (SAVE) and the chairperson Pan African Youth leaders for the achievement of the MDGs (ROJALNU – Somaliland). Sagal has years of experience in mobilizing Somali Diaspora. She focuses on youth, as they are an essential group in ensuring lasting peace in the future.

Sagal is extremely passionate about what she does. She always engaged in the group discussions and shared many relevant and helpful experiences from the field. She often liked to get into deeper discussions to exchange experiences and ideas .

She was very eloquent and knew how to express her ideas clearly. Her determination to bring peace to her home country was evident throughout the whole week. She knows what she wants. That in combination with the tools learned in this workshop and her hands on mentality will enable her to succeed in her mission.

Her passion and determination to fight for peace was very inspiring.



## Gisma Rupheal Mou Mou

*"I bring my determination for peace. But most of all I bring hope."*

Gisma has been an eminently active member of the South Sudanese Diaspora for many years now. She has worked for Marginalized Women Alliance for Peace, Development and Equality in Sudan (MWAPDES) as well as founded two organizations herself. The Women Alliance for Development and Food Security in South Sudan (WADFS) and The Voice of South Sudanese Diaspora (VoSSD). Both organisations are committed to development and peace in South Sudan.



Thanks to all her years of involvement in Diaspora activities Gisma has accumulated a great amount of knowledge and experience in development issues and diaspora mobilisation. Through sharing these experiences with the group she contributed greatly to the quality of the discussions.



She emphasized the importance of bringing the Diaspora together to make joined efforts towards sustainable development and lasting peace. She realized that the Diaspora needed to act as a united front to be able to exercise influence and bring about significant change. This was exactly the reason that she decided to establish an organization that brings together South Sudanese Diaspora from all over the world, namely 'The Voice of South Sudanese Diaspora'.



## Florence Kadogo Nyawade

*“ We have to start at home.”*



Florence Kadogo who we have gotten to know as Kadogo, lives in the Netherlands and is originally from Kenya. She is an active member of the Kenyan Diaspora here. She is the deputy chairperson of the Kenya Diaspora Community in the Netherlands (KDCN), an established umbrella association for Kenyans residing in the Netherlands.

She came to the training looking for motivation to keep up her efforts for the Kenyan Diaspora. The workshop came at the right time for her. She expressed that she reached the point where she was not sure why she should keep trying. But after participating in the workshop said that ‘it feels really good to know that you are not alone’ and ‘she feels reenergized and ready to go back home and keep trying’.

She stressed that it is essential to have a united diaspora. However she noted that uniting the African diaspora is extremely challenging. Everybody wants something else so they do not want to cooperate with each other. Therefore it is that important to start solving conflict at home.

Kadogo was happy with the knowledge she acquired in the workshop. she felt ‘like we are studying for a PhD in just one week. That is how much I have learned’.





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