

Pokot-Turkana Pastor's Forum

Organization's Information

Pokot-Turkana Pastors Forum
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Description of specific project, practice or technique: Information on the organization or agency including history and scope of work:

This is a group called Turkana-Pokot Pastors forum.

The forum is approaching conflict issues through reconciliatory processes to reconcile and create lasting peace in two pastoralist communities, Pokot and Turkana who have for many years had resource based conflicts.

The group observed that the ministry of reconciliation requires and calls forth a specific type of leadership that is able to unite a deep vision, with the concrete skills, virtues and habits necessary for the long and often lonesome journey of reconciliation; reconciliation requires leaders rooted in God's vision who work patiently beyond literal expectation. Thus, according to their views, reconciliation needs the church, but not just another social agency; they observed that the forums' place in this ministry role is a gift from God.

The pastors forum have a goal to Engage and promote peace dialogues among youth (morans), women leaders and elders through church leadership platforms-Pastors fellowships in an effort to heal, reconcile, and enhance community cohesion in the North Rift Valley Province that has experienced extensive loss of human lives and property during cattle raids and attacks.

The main objectives:

- To facilitate dialogue between youth (morans), grassroots women leaders and elders from the Turkana, Pokot and Samburu warring communities towards addressing perennial interethnic conflicts;
- To strengthen the ministry of reconciliation in churches through capacity building trainings
- To engage church leaderships through pastors forums in healing, reconciliation and peace building in communities as deterrence to violence over contested County boundaries and shared resources;
- To engage the youth (morans), women leaders, elders and pastors in various social action projects aimed at building intercommunity trust and unity in peace building.

Describe the context in which the agency works, analyse conflict, and indicate how this analysis has influenced the peacebuilding work of the organization:

The Turkana – Pokot – Samburu communities continue to engage in violent and bloody conflicts that are characterized by loss of lives, loss of property (animals), poor investment due to high insecurity and tens of thousands of school age children not going to school while others are orphaned at early ages. The region has poor infrastructural development and the insecurity in the region has hindered people's free access to health care and school facilities.

Conflict types in these communities include resource conflicts where there is scuffle for often scarce resources as water and pasture; cattle rustling; and boundary based, another dynamic

type of conflict especially following the new constitution which was anticipated to resolve long contested boundary issues. This has not brought much difference; it has come with a new dispensation of counties, where original structure of districts is done away with. Thus, issues of boundaries stand unresolved.

Through the years, efforts to restore peace and enhance coexistence have not touched much on reconciliation. Incomplete healing and reconciliation among these communities has forced them to live on a “cease fire basis” when not violently conflicting. That doesn’t mean that there is peace and unity but a moment of superficial calm that degenerates in violent conflicts by any slight provocation.

Previous as well as ongoing peace processes have had little impact in transforming the culture of violence in the region. Besides isolated incidences of raids, community sanctioned raids draw their blessings from the Laibons/kraal leaders who are the spiritual leaders in the three communities. These leaders have a lot of influence among the people and perpetuate the culture of violence.

Impact of work:

The forum has so far reached out to 25 reformed warriors in both Turkana and Pokot; two (2) of which are key in reforming the others, and village leaders and key community leaders such as councillors.

Reformed warriors (youth) who have embraced Christianity and also those in other religions share their experiences during their times as warriors and their newness in life in public meeting providing the strongest deterrence among fellow morans against violence. These reformed morans have expressed willingness to go public and lead in the social transformation of their colleagues. One event is when the warriors accompanied by two pastors from Pokot and Turkana went to Sauti Ya mwananchi, a local FM radio station and expressed their happiness in a transforming life.

The pastors are very keen in reaching out to wider levels of society to influence the regional leadership and policy processes to be friendly to pastoralists.

Story of agency’s peace work:

The forum took an initiative to move from village/Kraal to kraal in both Turkana and Pokot communities to urge warriors to reform and treat one another like brothers.

The forum also use church services to reach out to wider groups to spread messages of peace. Kapedo is a very contested areas in terms of Pokot and Turkana borders. The resource conflicts between the two communities have been heightened by border conflicts emerging following new county dispensations in the new constitution implementation.

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