

The Purdue Peace Project Post

The mission of the Purdue Peace Project is to encourage and assist local leaders in fragile states to address clearly identified situations that threaten to lead to political violence. In promoting locally-driven and inclusive approaches to peace-building, we seek to reduce the likelihood of political violence and contribute to lasting peace.



In this Issue

- Ebola Prevention Campaign
p.2-3
- Profiles of Pen-Pen Drivers
p.4-5
- Delta State, Nigeria
p.6
- Port Harcourt, Nigeria
p.7
- Nandom, Ghana
p. 8
- Berekum, Ghana
p.9
- Research Assistant Spotlight
p. 10



WOMSUD project coordinator Patricia Sumo and community members washing hands at Du-Port Road Junction

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Ebola Prevention Campaign

The Pen-Pen Peace Network (PPPN), in collaboration with the Women's Movement for Sustainable Development-Liberia (WOMSUD) and the PPP (Purdue Peace Project), has continued its Ebola Prevention Campaign into 2015. The Campaign, which started in August of 2014, focuses on disseminating Ebola prevention messages to the public through door-to-door communication, radio dramas, and interpersonal interaction at sanitary stations. Since the beginning of the Campaign, the PPPN team and local volunteers have visited more than 3,200 houses and spoken to more than 14,300 Liberian citizens. Their work has generated the interest of international and local media outlets, including *The Guardian* (<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2014/oct/15/ebola-crisis-liberia-peace-building-conflict-pen-pen?view=desktop>), the *BBC World Radio*, and the *Bloomberg Businessweek* (<http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-10-30/ebola-how-to-bridge-the-trust-gap-in-west-africa#r=recent>).

The recent addition of an Ebola survivor on the team has made the Campaign even more effective. According to the survivor who works on the Ebola Prevention Campaign team every day, “because I am an Ebola survivor people pay attention [to me] more than any other person...as soon as I start explaining, I see they are taking their seats, questioning and other things....to actually listen” (Online interview, December 17, 2014). Volunteers also report that including an Ebola survivor as part of the campaign team has started addressing stigma issues related to Ebola survivors. As the Ebola panic starts to fade in Liberia, the Campaign volunteers recognize the need to continue to encourage preventive actions: “We see that some people are saying that the virus is gone, that they are complacent, that they are not washing their hands, they are not taking the preventive measures. And as we are going back to the field to tell them they are so excited to hear that indeed the group is still working and then we are still telling them that the virus is real and we continue to keep ourselves safe” (Online interview, December 5, 2014). The Ebola Prevention Campaign team, led by PPPN in collaboration with WOMSUD and the PPP, will continue to carry out actions to help raise public health awareness and prevent Ebola in Liberia. For more details about the campaign, visit: <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/ppp/>.



Ebola Prevention Campaign volunteer talks with local resident in GSA community



Ebola Prevention Campaign volunteer talks with local resident on Du-Port Road in Paynesville community

Liberia

Emmanuel George

Emmanuel George is a motorcycle taxi driver – also known as a “pen-pen driver” – in Monrovia, Liberia. As a member of the Liberia Motorcycle Transport Union (LMTU), Emmanuel has been working on a local peace committee which the Purdue Peace Project and WOMSUD-Liberia helped bring into being. The local peace committee, which named itself the Pen-Pen Peace Network (PPPN), has achieved violence prevention and peacebuilding in Monrovia since its inception in July 2013. Working together with other pen-pen drivers from motorcycle transport unions as well as members from Liberia National Police, Ministry of Transport, and the communities, Emmanuel has been actively involved in designing two important campaign initiatives in Monrovia – the Pen-Pen Peace Campaign and the Ebola Prevention Campaign. The Pen-Pen Peace Campaign, which was launched in February 2014, helps reduce the likelihood of violence by encouraging respectful and non-violent behaviors in Monrovia and by changing attitudes and behaviors of, and toward, pen-pen drivers. The Ebola Prevention Campaign, launched in August 2014 in response to the Ebola outbreak, has raised awareness about the Ebola virus and motivated preventative behaviors among Liberian citizens.

In talking about his experience working on the Pen-Pen Peace Network and their locally-led, community-based initiatives, Emmanuel said, “We go on the field to talk with people about preventative measures. If they (the community members) do not want to listen to us, we make the ef-

fort to make sure that we go back and talk to them. We want the message to go across. We want you (the community members) to be able to talk to your children, your family about the prevention message. So we try all means to convince you. And the next time, you go to them, and they listen to you. At the end of the day, they will say, ‘wow, it was good that you were very, very patient in coming and talking to me about it, so I really appreciate it.’ At the end of the day, they feel good about it, and myself, I also feel good, too, because my aim is accomplished.”

In the process of working on the campaigns, Emmanuel has also realized how meaningful their work is. He states: “When I go to the field, I say, it’s true that Ebola came into the country, but I was part of the fight. If someone asks me, how were you a part of the fight, I say, I myself and other colleagues, we work in the field to talk to people about preventative measures, to talk to people so that they stop doubting that this virus is not here. Now that everybody knows the virus is here... I come back to be a fighter of this, I’m happy about that.” “What we did,” Emmanuel says, “the awareness messages that we sent out, played a major role in fighting against Ebola in this country.”

Harris Kollie

Harris Kollie is a pen-pen driver in Monrovia, Liberia. In addition to being a pen-pen driver, Harris serves as the vice president for operations in the United Motorcycle Transport Union-Liberia (UMTUL). In this capacity, Harris seeks to improve the daily welfare of pen-pen riders by mediating disagreements between pen-pen drivers and the Liberian police, as well as ensuring proper medical care for pen-pen drivers who have suffered road accidents. In July 2013, Harris became a member of the Pen-Pen Peace Network (PPPN), a team of Liberian citizens that focuses on violence prevention and peacebuilding in Monrovia. Through his membership in the PPPN, Harris has been involved in activities to foster a pen-pen community of law-abiding and peaceful citizens. As a PPPN member and a pen-pen rider himself, Harris is proud of the achievements of the Network in changing the public image of pen-pen riders in Liberia.

In August 2014, to respond to the Ebola outbreak in Liberia, the PPPN initiated and organized an Ebola Prevention Campaign. As a committed member of the PPPN network, Harris became a field coordinator for the Campaign. When he was asked to describe what he does in the field, Harris stated: “We’re doing a house-to-house awareness. This is one of the important aspects of our campaign. We know that one of the biggest weapons against the Ebola virus is awareness, so we decided to go from house to house. Everywhere where we got people living, we went there in order to create awareness... When people are aware of the situation, that’s when they are going to take the preventive measures... we work on our feet from house to house, from jungle to jungle, from street to street, to ensure that the proper message is being disseminated to our people on a daily basis. And since the beginning, we are seeing fruitful results.” Harris enjoys being part of the campaign. As he shares, the most enjoyable part of the campaign is the social activity: “It [the Campaign] brought us to know more people, and also it brought us together as PPPN people.”



Harris sees his involvement in the Ebola Prevention Campaign as deeply meaningful despite daily difficulties: “Since the awareness started, I’ve been with the Ebola Prevention Campaign. It was just quite recently when my wife came down with some complication. She had a liver problem. During the last round [of the Ebola Prevention Campaign] I was not fully part of the awareness because my wife came down with this sickness. It is not easy for me... But even though my wife is sick, I still participate in the Campaign... To see your brothers and sisters dy-

ing, it is not a good thing for us... I still participate [in this Campaign] because that’s my civil right, it’s my civil obligation to do whatsoever I need to do for my country, also for my people, for pen-pen riders.”

Delta Communities Renew Commitment to Boundary Demarcation

Representatives of Ibusa and Asaba communities in Delta State, Nigeria, have renewed their pledge to collectively work with Nigeria's boundary demarcation agencies to delineate a common boundary that will resolve the land dispute between both communities. Disagreement over the exact boundary is responsible for the likelihood of violence between the neighboring communities. The representatives also unanimously pledged to abide by the demarcation decided by the agencies.

The local peace committee in Delta, the Obi-Ogadi and Ogboli -Ibusa Peace Committee (OOPC), spoke on behalf of the communities during a joint brainstorming session with representatives of PPP, and Health Matters Inc. at Asaba, on December 8, 2014. The session was attended by the director of PPP, Dr. Stacey Connaughton, and graduate research associate, Agaptus Anaele. Also present at the meeting were the executive director of HMI, Mr. Peter Ujomu, and senior program officer, Maryann Mokobia. The OOPC was formed after PPP convened an actor meeting in December 2013, and has become a strong voice against violence in their local communities.



The director of PPP, Dr. Stacey Connaughton, members of Obi-Ogadi & Ogboli Peace Committee (OOPC) during community peace strategy meeting



The director of PPP, Dr. Stacey Connaughton shares PPP's commitment to local leadership peacebuilding with our local partner Health Matters Incorporated & members of Obi-Ogadi and Ogboli Peace Committee

COPEDI Unveils Peace Campaign in Port Harcourt



Members of the Community Peace Development Initiative (COPEDI) and PPP's representative, Agaptus Anaele finalizing the local peace campaign strategies

Ahead of Nigeria's general election in February 2015, the local peace committee in Port Harcourt on January 8 commenced a weekly live radio peace campaign on Nigeria Info FM. The peace committee known as Community Peace Development Initiative (COPEDI), stated that the campaign slogan, "Shun Violence, Let's Embrace Peace (SUVLEP)" is meant to stimulate conversation around ways in which local communities can prevent the likelihood of violence during elections. The campaign also seeks to promote peaceful coexistence between students and their host communities, and will increase public profile of COPEDI in their environment. During the weekly episodes, three members of COPEDI are featured on the live radio panel to discuss peace promotion strategies during the elections, and offer tips on strategies to strengthen university-host community relationships, among other themes. Following their panel conversations, audience members are encouraged to call into the program and interact with the panel members. Callers who correctly answer questions posed by the panel are rewarded with special gifts, a strategy that enhances community engagement in the peacebuilding effort of COPEDI.

Commenting on their excitement about the campaign, a COPEDI member said, "We are happy to be championing this cause in our environment. We (COPEDI) members are committed to building peace in our environment." A leader of the COPEDI group, Ms. Gladys Gogo, said the campaign is part of its integrated strategy to promote peace in their local environment. COPEDI is comprised of community members who are committed to peacebuilding in their environment. The group emerged after PPP's actor meeting in 2014 that brought together representatives from the university, host communities, and the student body to dialogue on strategies to prevent violence in their local environment.

Nigeria

Playing for Peace

After six months of games between 16 different communities in the Nandom area, the Dagara-Sissala Peace Committee's (DASPIEC) football tournament concluded with a well-attended championship match Sunday, Dec. 28, in which Bu was declared the winner of the Dagara-Sissala Peace Trophy. The football tournament, organized by DASIPEC with support and encouragement from the PPP, aimed to bring youth from previously disputing communities together to engage in friendly football matches and to sit with one another to discuss peace. This was a locally driven effort that involved representatives from each of the teams and communities working together to set rules, develop a schedule, and run the tournament.

The championship match, held between Bu and Nandomkpee, was broadcast live on local radio and was attended by area community members and visitors as well as by local dignitaries. The district chief executive, who kicked off the final match, donated a trophy to the "Most Disciplined Player." The trophy was awarded to the Bu captain. All 16 teams received certificates recognizing their communities' involvement and a football. Despite the tournament ending, team leaders have continued organizing friendly matches with one another.



PPP director Stacey Connaughton with the teams before the semi-final match



PPP director and the youth leadership of the tournament with the teams before the ceremonial kickoff

From Local Peacebuilders to Local Leaders

More than a year after the judgment on the Berekum paramount chieftaincy dispute, the work of the Berekum Peace Committee (BPC) continues. Their reputation grows stronger day by day as traditional and governmental leaders in Berekum recognize their efforts in maintaining peace in Berekum.

During a recent interview with the PPP research team, one of the BPC members underscored the committee's enhanced role in Berekum, especially as recognized by the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE, equivalent of a mayor) and the Municipal Security Council (MUSEC), saying, "We have gained a lot of recognition. The Berekum Municipal Assembly recognizes the peace committee as very serious. Any meeting that they do at the assembly they invite the peace committee. At the budget meeting the MCE invited us. Any time there is a MUSEC meeting they invite us." Another way in which the BPC exemplifies the approach of the Purdue Peace Project!



Ghana

Research Assistant Spotlight

Erick Thomas is an undergraduate student at Purdue University, majoring in Political Science. His primary research interests lie in social and environmental policy especially in developing countries, the inevitability of globalization and how to effectuate positive change in the world. It seemed only serendipitous when he came across the Purdue Peace Project (PPP) in 2013 featured in the Brian Lamb School of Communication's newsletter. The article highlighted how scholarship could help make a positive impact in the "real world" while maintaining the highest academic standards and contributing to knowledge. Since joining in the Fall of 2013, Erick has quickly become an integral part of the PPP team as he brings in his knowledge and insight of political science to inform project discussions. Erick says about his experience with the PPP, "Being a member of the PPP has been a thrilling and enlightening experience, and to this day, I still feel the same sense of excitement I felt when Dr. Connaughton first gave me the opportunity to join the team."



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