

The Purdue Peace Project Post

The mission of the Purdue Peace Project is to convene groups of local citizens in fragile states where clearly identified situations threaten to lead to political violence, and encourage and assist these citizens in their efforts to bring about peaceful solutions. 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 doing so, we also seek to add to the body of knowledge in this field by documenting and disseminating our work to practitioners and scholars alike.



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The Pen-Pen Peace Network: Ongoing



Representatives of the Liberia National Police (LPN) at a PPP-supported actor meeting, September 2015

The Purdue Peace Project (PPP) congratulates the Pen-Pen Peace Network (PPP) on its work to help stop the spread of Ebola in Liberia. In response to the sudden Ebola outbreak in the country, the PPP rapidly designed and implemented a locally-driven Ebola Prevention campaign between August 2014 and January 2015. The campaign consisted of several components, including: the creation of sanitary stations in the capital city of Monrovia, face-to-face interactions with Liberian citizens about Ebola prevention, and the release of a media campaign in five Liberian counties. During their Ebola Prevention Campaign, the campaign volunteers visited more than 600 houses and spoke to more than 28,000 local citizens. Liberian citizens recognized the positive impacts of the campaign in addressing Ebola-related public misconceptions. Volunteers also claimed that as Liberians listened to their messages, they would quickly start implementing Ebola prevention practices. Currently, the PPP is resuming its peacebuilding work related to pen-pen riders. In September 2015, with the support and encouragement of PPP the Network commenced violence prevention work associated with the role of pen-pen riders and the Liberia National Police in the upcoming 2017 Presidential elections in Liberia. They will be collaborating with the Liberia National Police and other actors on this initiative. The Purdue Peace Project congratulates the PPP on their ongoing contribution to peacebuilding in Liberia and wishes the Network many successes in its upcoming projects.



The LPN and pen-pen riders brainstorming strategies for violence prevention leading up to the 2017 national elections.



Liberia

Building Peace Through Dialogue: Kato, Ghana

In previous newsletters we had reported the emergence of the Love is Good Committee (LIGC) in Kato, Ghana, a city experiencing a chieftancy dispute between two royal families. The peace committee consists of everyday citizens of Kato including political leaders, youth, marketwomen, and members of both royal families. Since the actor meeting in March 2015, and the formation of the LIGC in May 2015, Committee members report seeing a positive change in the community, especially with respect to cordial relations between members of the royal families. They attribute this positive change on the interpersonal level to the actor meeting and the symbolism expressed through the formation of the LIGC, which saw the two royal families come together and be a part of the committee. However, the work of the committee is not done yet. During the latest visit by PPP researchers in September 2015, LIGC members emphasized the need for continued work. For the LIGC, unity begins at home, and the chairman plans to conduct team building activities among the committee members to foster a positive working environment. The LIGC will formalize its goals and strategies for their work and will continue to help cultivate peace in Kato while they await the judicial decision on the chieftancy dispute.



The LIGC Peace Committee from Kato, Ghana, with Arunima Krishna (PPP Research Assistant), Rosaline B. Obeng-Ofori (PPP, West Africa Program Manager), and Stacey Connaughton (PPP Director) (back row, left to right).

Ghana

Opening Possibilities for Peace Through Dialogue: Somanya, Ghana



Current and former administrators of Mount Mary College, distinguished alumni, PPP Director, Stacey Connaughton (far left) and PPP research assistant, Arunima Krishna (second from right), Somanya, Ghana, September 2015

In September 2015 the PPP helped kickstart the process of a boundary dispute resolution between Mount Mary College in Somanya, Ghana, and a few members of the adjoining community. The dispute began when certain community members claim to be the legitimate owners of portions of land on which Mount Mary College currently stands. This disagreement between the college and community members was proving to be a disruptive force for the college's hundreds of residential students. In keeping with our philosophy of bringing actors together to dialogue, the PPP facilitated a series of meetings between college officials, staff, alumni and governing council members to help them strategize the best ways forward to resolve this boundary dispute. The PPP also met with the community members to better understand the dispute. As a result of this facilitation, college officials were able to begin productive dialogue and collectively devise strategies to move toward a resolution.



Touring the disputed land, September 2015

In Appreciation: Rosaline B. Obeng-Ofori



Mrs. Rosaline B. Obeng-Ofori, a renowned womens' rights activist and development worker, has always held a strong belief in empowering people and communities to solve their own problems. She says, "When actors own the process, they are able to come up with their own best and pragmatic solutions." And so, during their first meeting, when Milt Lauenstein, the PPP's benefactor, told Rosaline about his vision for the PPP being a results-oriented, locally-led initiative the nature of the work immediately appealed to Rosaline. Since 2012 Rosaline has been the PPP's West Africa Program Manager, facilitating several projects in Ghana and Liberia. She sees her work with the PPP as an opportunity to practice the conflict transformation and peacebuilding strategies that she had been training others in prior to joining PPP. Being a former development worker and activist, Rosaline recognizes the importance of the peacebuilding work that the local citizens, with PPP's support and encouragement, do. "For me, I see it [PPP] as the icing on the cake in my development work. If there is no peace any development activities will not work. Any development work always includes the word "peace" because unless there is peace in a community, development initiatives will not succeed."



Rosaline B. Obeng-Ofori with some of the Berekum Peace Committee members, Berekum, Ghana

NYPAD: Building Peace From and Through Football



A regular Sunday afternoon for young men in Nandom, Ghana, usually entails a visit to the bar, and an evening spent drinking, often excessively, with friends. However, the past year or so has seen a change in what a Sunday means. Instead of spending the day idling in bars, the youth now spend Sunday afternoons watching and participating in an inter-community football (soccer) tournament organized by a group of volunteers called the Nandom Youth for Peace and Development, or NYPAD. The NYPAD is a group of volunteers which initially came together to support a football tournament supported through the locally-driven work of the Purdue Peace Project in early 2014. The NYPAD soon emerged as the driving force that propelled the tournament forward. Today the football matches organized by the NYPAD every Sunday involve 16 communities in and around Nandom, some of which had not been on pleasant terms in the past. The tournament also includes teams of female players from schools and Nandom communities. This enterprising youth group, which consists of young teachers, students, and nurses from Nandom, believes strongly in the ability of sports, especially football, to bring people together toward positive ends. One NYPAD member articulated the impact of the football matches by saying: "No matter differences we have in the community when the community team is playing everybody puts those things aside and come and support the community team. So I think the football has been one of the every effective tools of bringing people together for them to understand that when you are always together you can always achieve what you want, and that is the peace we are talking about. Together we stand; divided we fall.

Sports

NYPAD's women's football match, supported by PPP; September 2015



Sports



NYPAD's men's football match, supported by PPP; September 2015



Introducing PPP's New Research Assistants

The Purdue Peace Project welcomes two new graduate research assistants.

Jessica Pauly and Neva Štumberger are both second-year Ph.D. students in the Brian Lamb School of Communication at Purdue University. The two bring valuable research, educational, and professional backgrounds to the PPP team.

Pauly's research program uses qualitative methods to examine the intersections of organizations, gender, and religion. She received her B.A. in communication studies in 2007 from Nebraska Wesleyan University. She worked full time as merchandizing coordinator in New York City at Marcolin and then MARR International GROUP until 2011. She received her M.A. in communication studies in 2014 from the University of Kansas, working full-time in the Center for Civic and Social Responsibility.

Štumberger's primary research interests include corporate social responsibility, organizational ethics, intercultural communication, and social change. Prior to joining Purdue, Štumberger worked in the media and public relations industry in Slovenia. She holds a M.A. in Marketing Communication and a B.A. in Journalism from the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana.



Jessica Pauly



Neva Štumberger

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