



Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange  
(Re)creating Peace Internationally

# 2013 Peace Exposition

Kotido District, Karamoja

HEALTHY FAMILIES FOR A PEACEFUL COMMUNITY



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2013 Peace  
**Exposition**  
Kotido District, Karamoja

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
CAO	Chief Administration Officer
CEWIGO	Centre for Women in Governance
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DGF	Democratic Governance Facility
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HPV	Human Papilloma Virus
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
Isis-WICCE	Isis Womens International Cross Cultural Exchange
LC	Local Council
NAADS	National Agriculture Advisory Services
NAP	National Action Plan
NARWOPA	Nakere Rural Women Peace Activists
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PEP	Post-Exposure Prophylaxis
PRDP	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
UN OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UWOPA	Uganda Women Parliamentarians Association
VAW	Violence Against Women
WORUDET	Women and Rural Development Network
WTF	Women's Task Force

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# The Peace Exposition

The Isis-WICCE peace exposition is a creative approach that was started in 2010 to mark 10 years of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security. The annual expo is organised as part of the international campaign of 16 Days of Activism on GBV to call for an end to violence against women (VAW) between 25th November the International Day against VAW and 10th December which is International Human Rights Day! Other critical days during this time include the World AIDS Day on December 1 and the Montreal Massacre marked on December 6. The expo highlights the link between violence against women and the violation of human rights.

The expo brings together a wide spectrum of community members to engage in dialogue on unique community concerns with a particular focus on GBV as a key issue that affects development. It also includes a health intervention focused on the reproductive health of women, specifically through conducting cervical cancer screening and the related health services. Overall, the peace expo has provided opportune spaces to unlock the potential and assertiveness of grassroots communities by enabling them to directly share their concerns with policy makers; exposed the GBV realities of communities to leaders and planners at all levels; strengthened Isis-WICCE's partnership with other actors as well as led to the definition of a new social mobilisation and communication approach that puts communities at the centre.

Over the years, the peace expo has registered several gains for women and the larger communities.

### **2010 Soroti**

- Women and men informed policymakers of limitations in implementation of the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP)
- Demands made at the expo were shared with the PRDP Policy and Monitoring Committee and informed the formulation of the PRDP11 Framework
- Women's strategic concerns were included in the new PRDP framework (mental health, ending GBV, improving reproductive health services) in line with UNSCR 1325 and the Uganda National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 calling for protection of women's rights

### **2011 Kasese**

- Local, religious and cultural leaders and other stakeholders developed a roadmap to ensure girls are protected from early marriage
- A bye-law was put in place requiring proof of age and a certificate of approval from the local chief before getting married
- The deliberations of the expo fed into the 2011 regional Heads of State Kampala declaration on Zero Tolerance against SGBV (ICGLR)

### **2012 Lira**

- GBV was identified as a key conflict trigger and obstacle to development.
- A roadmap to address GBV was developed with a focus on the SASA model for GBV mitigation which creates behavioural and attitude change through communities own participation and action.

The annual peace expositions organised by Isis-WICCE are nestled within the organisation's long history of using creative means to strengthen women's leadership in post-conflict settings for their participation in peace building, good governance and development. Since 1995, Isis-WICCE has used various innovative strategies to generate critical information and knowledge through an emphasis on documenting women's experiences. Isis-WICCE also harnesses the organised engagement and power of grassroots women by linking their voices to wider regional and international debates in order to challenge mainstream discourse and prompt action on women's issues.

Over the years, Isis-WICCE has focused on addressing sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) through vital interventions enabling women to transform their role, contribute to, influence and participate in leadership and decision-making position related to GBV policy and action. This has included engagement at national and regional spaces such as the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the African Union (AU).



As such, the 4th peace exposition held in Kotido district of the Karamoja sub-region is one of the national spaces created by Isis- WICCE to afford grassroots women the opportunity to meet their leaders and policymakers as they openly audit national and local post-conflict reconstruction plans as well as their effect on the affected communities.

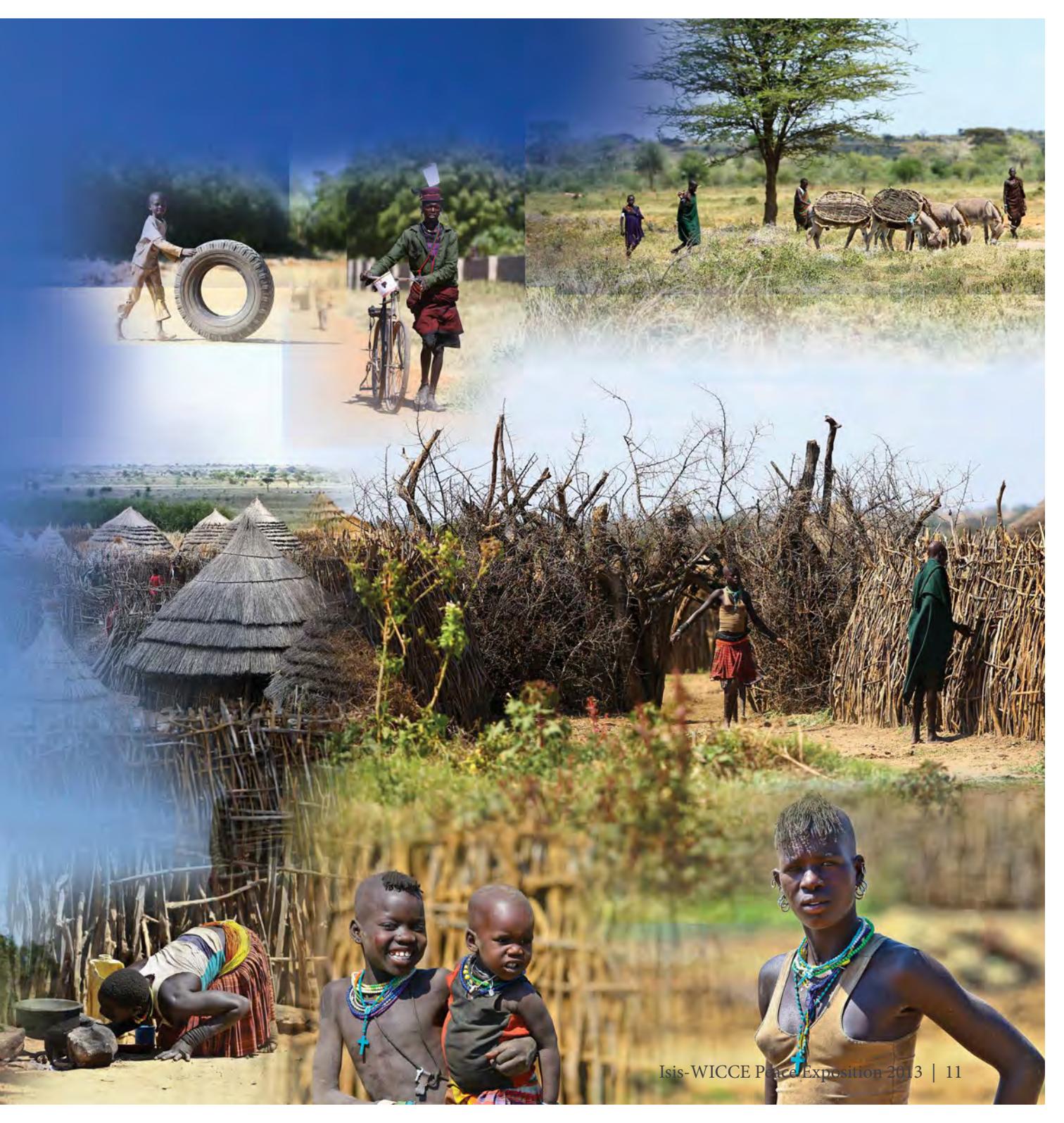
This report shares the experience of the 2013 expo by using pictures and text to show a Karamoja unlike its stereotypes, working towards peace and using culture as a means to end GBV.



# Demystifying KARAMOJA

In Pictures





## Demystifying Karamoja: In Words

*"It was a struggle and a campaign to bring the expo to Karamoja but a group of women said 'no, we shall not wait for Karamoja to build more lodges, let us go and see' and now we are together."*

**Jesca Ataa, NARWOA**

*"We are happy that Nakere Women convinced us that Kotido is the place to be. We have started a journey together and we believe peace can only be there when we work together."*

**Lillian Mpabulungi, CARE**

*"For many years, Karamoja has battled cattle rustling. Some people said it was a culture of the Karimojong and we refuted that idea. During the struggle to get guns out of Karamoja, even before disarmament, the church was at the forefront of uniting communities to share grievances and differences. Karamoja has changed."*

**Bishop James Nasak, Church of Uganda**

*"We have been crying for peace for many years, let us uphold it. Let us hold this peace so dearly and make sure we do not lose it."*

**Roselyn Akello, Woman MP Kaabong**

*"We need to open up even more and change the cultures that see women as outsiders from the family of men."*

**Paul Achuka, Lokochil/Messenger of the Elders**

*"The community police will spread the message of healthy families and peaceful communities to the villages."*

**LC5 Chair, Kotido**

*"We have community peace communities and Kotido is 97% peaceful."*

**Resident District Commissioner, Kotido**

*"We are writing a new story about Karamoja. I have learnt that Karimojong are happy jolly people and that Karimojong men value their wives. It is one of the first places Isis-WICCE has done screening where husbands have been walking to accompany their wives. The husbands also add information on other things hurting the woman. The people of Karamoja are determined to have peace and peace they will have."*

**Thelma Awori, Isis-WICCE**

“We are writing a new story about Karamoja. I have learnt that Karimojong are happy jolly people and that Karimojong men value their wives...”  
Thelma Awori





# Demystifying KARAMOJA

In Song, Dance, Poetry and Comedy

Lokirinyiri Women's Group sang a song inviting all Karimojong to promote peace and for leaders to prioritise peace and allot money to it.!

The women called on the RDC, MPs, Elders, District Chair & CAO to join their dance and declare "the money is in the CAO's hands, we want money for peace".!

Lomukura Primary School students recited a poem, 'women are the pillars of peace' and performed a traditional

Karimojong dance.!

Local comedian Angella Godfrey Rajab (Muze G) performed a stand-up comedy act on violence, dealing death and women's challenges within polygamous marriages.



Lokirinyiri Women's Group sang, "let us embrace peace or war will finish us" and asked leaders to speak about peace, end conflict and promote education.!

Mother's Union Church of Uganda performed a song in Ngakarimojong with English voice over stating "all women's rights are human rights"

Lil Keyz sang Napei Kolong, New Signing and Women of Jie about the changes in Karamoja and praising women for contributing to peace and development.!

Women of Destiny sang "peace is the only door.... We should all have peace."

From Warriors of Violence to

# Warriors of Peace

The Peace Expo in Kotido made it clear that the people and leadership of Karamoja are well acquainted with the sub-region's history of violence and associated factors as well as the current state of affairs. Even more, it revealed a strong commitment to positive change and sustained peace.

## The State of Gender Based Violence and Militarism in Karamoja

Karamoja has experienced decades of violent conflict characterised by armed cattle rustling, high proliferation of small arms and light weapons as well as sustained military operations. A successful disarmament programme by the government of Uganda has resulted in relative peace, however the levels of gender-based violence have remained significantly high. Research has revealed that high GBV is the result of long-held



militaristic tendencies and the immense power difference between men and women that is deeply rooted in culture. This has translated into grave disregard for women's rights and discrimination against women. Common types of GBV in Karamoja include wife battery, rape and defilement, forced marriage, courtship rape, women doing more family roles, forceful widow inheritance, sexual harassment, marital rape, child labour and exploitation. Research has also revealed that this GBV is fuelled by factors such as poverty, insecurity, cattle rustling, harmful traditional practices, alcohol abuse, low levels of education and lack of information on rights.

For a long time, Karamoja sub-region was closed to outsiders, however government and other actors, especially community members, are working through various efforts to bring about the desired change. This has included a special ministry for Karamoja Affairs and development programmes by partners such as the Norwegian Embassy tackling critical sectors such as livelihood support and food shortages. The women of Karamoja have also been engaged in monitoring PRDP implementation in the region, in partnership with the Women's Task Force (WTF) for a gender responsive PRDP. As such, through their efforts they have consistently highlighted that GBV in the region is not sufficiently addressed and adequate funding is not allotted to respond to it. In addition, women and grassroots communities have not had opportunities to discuss issues related to GBV and therefore their voices have been ignored.

## Joining Forces through the Peace Expo

Isis-WICCE acknowledged that without a prolonged approach to respond to GBV, progress would be difficult in vital areas such as food security and improved livelihoods where women play a central role. More importantly, it recognised the potential of culture as an ally and tool to address GBV in culturally rich Karamoja. Consequently, Isis-WICCE proposed to use the ICGLR Declaration as a yardstick to launch a campaign on Zero Tolerance to GBV in Karamoja starting with the 2013 peace exposition where women would also have a chance to speak out about the problem. This was influenced by the principle underlying UNSCR 1325 that calls for the protection of women's legal and political rights as well as physical wellbeing. In addition, acts of violence against women and threats to their peace and security are by all means threats to broader security.

As such, the 2013 peace expo focused on the interrelated issues of gender based violence, issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights and women's participation. The expo ultimately sought to understand the dynamics and extent of GBV in Karamoja with the goal of raising awareness and triggering action by stakeholders in the region to reduce social tolerance to GBV.

# Handover of Peace Flag



The peace flag symbolising the duty to take concrete actions for peace was passed on to Kotido district. This was during a ceremony where actors representing Isis-WICCE, Soroti, Kasese, Lira as well as Kotido districts made remarks.

*“We hand over a peace flag symbolic of the peace expo theme. It is a major reminder of the peaceful family and community to ensure that district authorities follow up to ensure a healthy woman and a peaceful community.”*

**Beda Kireju, Isis-WICCE**

*“We shall make women’s activities and women’s peace, the first agenda in the district. I pray and hope that the rest will follow.”*

**Gregory Lukarek, Soroti District LC5 Chair**

*“The flag was handed over to Kasese and we have been looking at women’s issues seriously. We have pledged to always give women priority.”*

**Lucy Biira Kabanyoro, Minister for Women and Gender, Rwenzururu Kingdom**

*“Last year we received the peace flag. Lira district was not the best and we were given the task to curb GBV. I am privileged to report the district worked hard with the Community Development Officer, District Chair and women achievers, advocating for women in families and at the district. Today we are saying let there be peace in Kotido.”*

**Joy Atim Ongom, Woman MP Lira**

*“This remarkable occasion is a moment to define peace for women and everyone in Kotido district. As Kotido we shall keep the flag flying higher and higher with the support of development partners and the central government.”*

**Margaret Aleper, Woman MP Kotido**

*“I am a serious chairman so this flag will fly high in the region until we realise healthy families and peaceful communities in Karamoja. I will not hand over if we are still violent. I encourage all the Karimojong to help me so we remove violence against women and have peaceful communities in Karamoja.”*

**Calistas Lokwi Adume, Kotido District LC5 Chair**



## Peace Walk

Residents of Kotido district took part in the peace walk through the centre of Kotido town led by Bishop Giuseppe Filippi of the Catholic Diocese. The procession followed the peace van playing songs on peace, women and development in Ngakarimojong. Walkers included Kotido woman parliamentarian, LC5 chair Kotido, Brigade Commander 405, members of the police, media and representatives of civil society from different districts of Karamoja, Teso, Acholi as well as national level.





## Peace Exhibition

The women representing Nakere Rural Women's Group (NARWOA) displayed pictures of the group's HIV/AIDS sensitisation efforts in Panyangara, Kotido. This is done to increase women's understanding of their sexual and reproductive health (SRH) in addition to providing support to women living with HIV/AIDS in Kotido. In addition, the women showed cultural wear including skirts, shoes, bracelets, beaded necklaces and sheets. These items are made by NARWOA women in groups of 5 to 10 to bring women out of their homes and into a space where they can discuss personal and family issues. During these sessions women feel free to discuss their personal experiences of SGBV, receive counselling and discuss ideas for personal and family development.

Isis-WICCE photos showed the importance of girl child education in promoting development and ending sexual violence against girls and women. Various publications shared the organisation's findings and intervention strategies on sexual and reproductive health, SGBV and women's participation in influencing post-conflict reconstruction. This sought to share the Isis-WICCE experience with SRH and SGBV such as the case of a rape survivor in Teso and that of the 2010 medical intervention in Lira.

CARE and CEWIGO exhibited research documents and their work on UNSCR 1325 and GBV. This included information from the monitoring of the PRDP from a gender perspective as well as the perspectives of conflict-affected women in Acholi sub-region in relation to their psychosocial wellbeing. The role model men working under Women and Rural Development Network (WORUDET) displayed wooden stools and bicycle seats to represent the work they do in response to SGBV. It was explained that these men teach other men how to make these handicrafts and contribute to household income in order to reduce the burden on wives. The same group makes a specific stove that cooks faster, uses less firewood, produces no smoke, and therefore men can contribute to the household but helping with the cooking using this superior stove. The role model men talk to other men and their households about GBV and provide individual counselling to men.

The women's group members displayed the pigeon pea, beans, shea butter (cosmetic and cooking), preserved bitter greens (boo), simsim, beads and okra. These women work in groups to build each others' capacity, they also produce these goods and sell them to increase their income and ability to stand up to GBV.

## Launch of UNSCR 1325 Monitoring Report

The Guest of Honour Bishop Nasak officially launched the 2013 UNSCR1325 monitoring report. Robina Rubimbwa of CEWIGO presented the content of the second UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan and its focus on the need for women's participation in decision making, eliminating SGBV in society, providing services for SGBV survivors through health workers in centres and hospitals, the police and judiciary and finally allotting funds to implement strategies that prevent SGBV.

She shared the monitoring process of 35 organisations including government agencies that gather information to feed into the annual monitoring report, which CEWIGO launches at the peace expo. This year's report discovered that GBV is increasing in all districts with rape and defilement as the most prevalent crime. In addition unwanted pregnancies and drop out rates among girls are growing. Women suffer from ill health and health centres that do not function. The report calls on parliament to make sure adequate resources are awarded to address issues of the NAP.

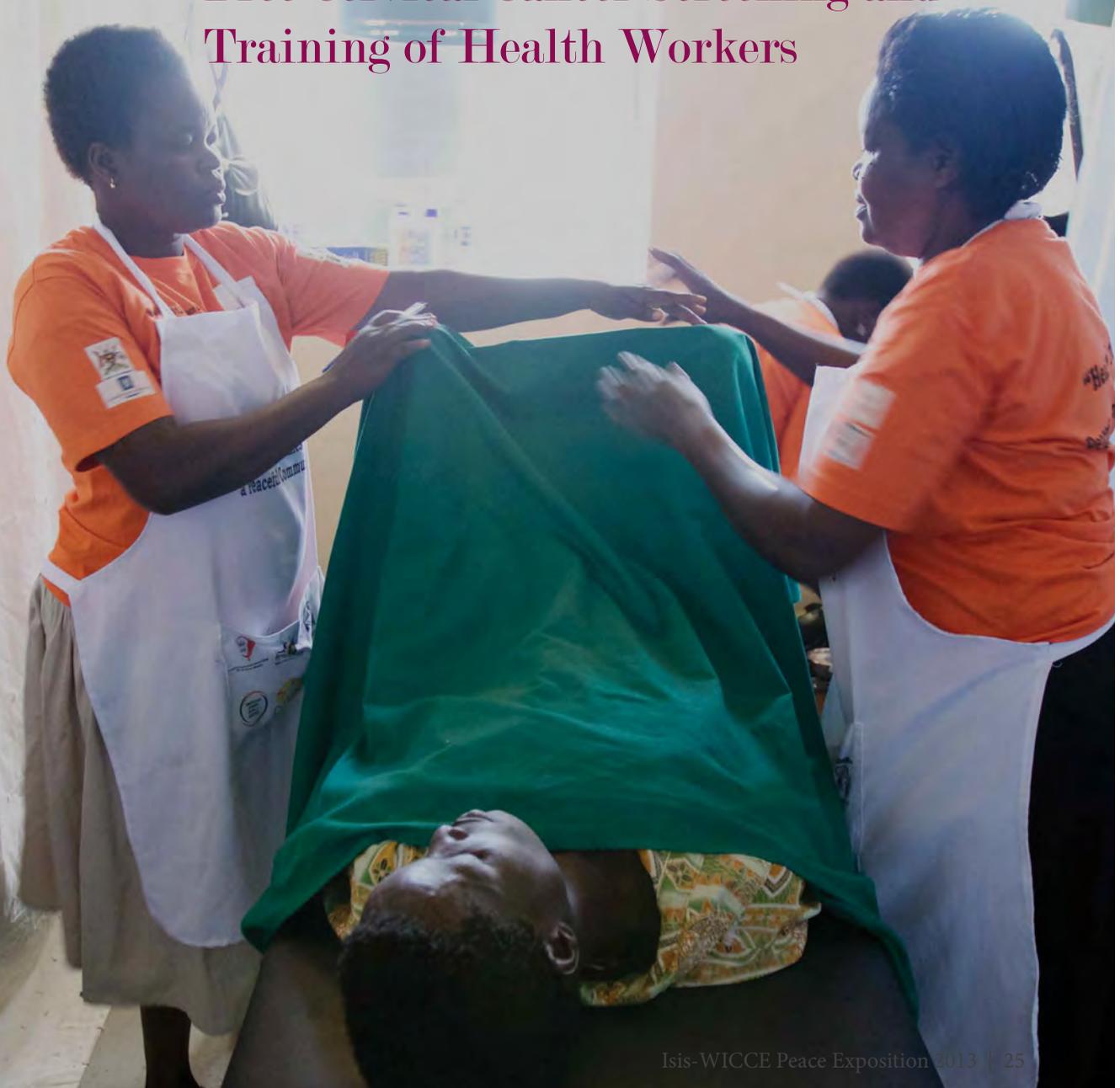
## Commemorating International Human Rights Day

**T**imothy Sagal of ASP spoke on behalf of CSOs in the Kidepo region on the previous 20 years of human rights work. He shared the words of Navi Pillay the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and a case study of the human rights situation in the Kidepo region of Karamoja 20 years since the Vienna declaration. It was revealed the fundamentals for protecting human rights (laws, standards and institutions) are in place, the capacity of local leaders including armed service men has been built, perpetrators have been arrested and held accountable, community policing is ongoing and documentation of human rights cases has improved significantly.

Despite this, human rights law and standards are not fully implemented. Enjoyment of human rights is low and political will, financial and human resources to improve this are minimal. Women, children, the elderly and persons with disability continue to experience violence and discrimination. There is limited access to justice and heavy backlog of cases due to irregular high court sessions in Karamoja. Civilians are still tried and detained in military court, there is high impunity for human rights violators and civil society is weak to spearhead advocacy on promotion, protection and fulfilment of rights. Land rights issues are on the rise due to land grabbing and scramble for land by foreign investors, access to health services is low and new challenges such as climate change and destruction of natural resources are growing.

Recommendations therefore are that UN OHCHR and other partners raise awareness of human rights violations and lobby the state to play its role. The judiciary in Karamoja should be strengthened to improve access to justice and human rights violations by state institutions (especially police) should be investigated and the responsible punished. Finally awareness-raising on human rights needs to be intensified in the communities by all stakeholders.

# Medical Camp: Free Cervical Cancer Screening and Training of Health Workers



## **Training of Health Workers in Kotido** Medical Hall, Kotido District, Headquarters 29th November 2013

**A** team of medical personnel (Dr Tom Otim, Sr Rose Mukwana and Dr Waiswa) trained 19 health workers on the importance of cancer screening, visual inspection methods for screening, examination techniques as well as a practical session to focused on screening. The training ended with a session on the practical challenges health workers are likely to face while screening. Cervical cancer represents 70% of gynaecological deaths in Uganda, and the highest incidence and mortality rates.

Therefore the value of the first ever training of health workers on cervical cancer screening cannot be overestimated. In addition, girls and women in Karamoja region face a higher risk of cervical cancer, as the majority of girls are sexually active by 15 years.

The trained health workers recommended that the same training is conducted in other parts of Karamoja in partnership with the local government. They also expressed their commitment to use the acquired skills to reduce the risk of mortality due to cervical and breast cancer in Karamoja. Following this, the health workers went on to advertise the availability of free cervical cancer screening at their churches and other forums.

## **Free Cervical Cancer Screening** 2nd to 9th December 2013

**T**he LC5 Chairperson Kotido declared the screening exercise open. Women along with their husbands who had accompanied them were invited to benefit from the medical camp. It was acknowledged that this teamwork has led to increased concern for the health care of women at household level.

Following this, the male and female health workers provided a detailed explanation of what was involved in the cancer screening process. The screening targeted women between the ages of 17 to 80 and included screening for breast cancer, cervical cancer and other reproductive health conditions. Men aged 14 to 93 years were also screened for sexually transmitted diseases and infections along with other conditions.

A total number of 1,342 men and 1,662 women were screened. 27 women had cervical lesions that could progress to cancer and 2 women had advanced cervical cancer and were referred for further treatment. One woman had fistula, 5 women were found to have perineal tears and 5 women had genital prolapse. 3 of the women were referred for treatment outside of Karamoja.

A man wearing a green hat with a white feather and a patterned jacket is speaking into a microphone. He is standing outdoors, and the background is blurred, showing a crowd of people. The lighting suggests it might be late afternoon or early morning.

# Embracing Culture

## to End Gender Based Violence

Open Dialogue on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, GBV, Women's Rights

**C**ommunity members, local leaders and elders analysed the results of the cervical cancer screenings. Each reproductive health condition was discussed along with the possible causes and underlying factors contributing to its occurrence.

David Pulkol facilitated the open dialogue and Calistas Lokwi the Kotido district LC 5 Chair set the pace for the conversation, by encouraging those present to take advantage of the opportunity to discuss the rarely spoken of issues. He added, “the results of this dialogue will help the district in its planning.”

## **Fistula and Perineal Tears**

5 women were found to have cases of fistula characterised by uncontrollable flow of urine and faeces. It was explained that this results from a tampering with the woman's reproductive system such as (gang) rape, forced sex within marriage, under age pregnancy, early marriage causing girls to carry pregnancies before their bodies are ready, use of herbal concoction and delayed treatment. Of the 5 women, 3 were recommended for treatment outside Karamoja and declined.

## **Cervical Cancer**

27 women had lesions on their cervix that could progress to cancer and 2 had advanced cervical cancer. It was explained that men are carriers of HPV which causes the cervical cancer and do not suffer from it. Some of the causes discussed included men with several sexual partners and it was said to be higher during conflict situations and in communities with polygamy.

- The myth that cancer is the result of bestiality with monkeys was debunked
- Community members focused on the need to maintain good personal hygiene and specifically for men to get circumcised or keep a high level of cleanliness
- It was clarified that cervical cancer is not solely transmitted by uncircumcised men or men who are rougher during sexual intercourse.
- Members were encouraged to avoid sexual promiscuity and resist the temptation of women (who were compared to tamarind) and the advances of men (referred to as cocks)
- One of the elders shared his concern for girls/daughters who are in schools, saying that they are often raped and not much is being done
- Participants questioned the role of the government in addressing cancer and the other conditions. It was asked, "Why can't government bring the health services nearer to the people?"

## **Genital Prolapse**

5 women were found to have genital prolapse characterised by the womb coming out through the vagina so while the woman walks she feels something hanging out of the vagina. This is associated with violence and 3 women refused to take the next step for the repair of the issue.

- Participants discussed the challenges faced by women with fistula including abandonment by their husbands.
- It was agreed that people should be told that fistula can be managed and rituals or animal sacrifices should not replace medical treatment.

- Husbands were encouraged to sell a goat or cow to fund the medical treatment of their wives when faced with conditions such as fistula or cancer.
- The Kotido district chair called on community members to counsel the 3 women so that they accept the offer of treatment. He added that the content of the dialogue would help the district in its planning. He encouraged participants to dialogue on the issues that are rarely discussed in the villages.
- The Messenger of the Elders called on members present to open up and support women faced with these conditions as opposed to being a culture that sees women as outsiders from the family of men.
- Women were encouraged to stand up to promiscuous men and embarrass them with loud noises when they make advances
- Men were advised to open their minds and be considerate because often men challenge a woman who shares news of her illness with “where did you get that disease from?” yet in many cases it was transmitted to her by her husband.
- Women spoke of rape in marriage especially by husbands who abuse alcohol

### Other Causes

Participants discussed some causes such as defilement, rape, abortions and early marriage. Some of the contributions that were made included

- Community members discussed abortions commonly occurring among students in towns and in higher institutions, saying the girls should talk to their parents instead of risking tears and other conditions
- Men were encouraged to provide an enabling environment for sex in their homes instead of engaging in forced intercourse. They were also encouraged to be supportive and peaceful when their wives or daughters report reproductive health concerns
- Elders were advised to educate the youth and prepare them for marriage with the right knowledge
- Members were cautioned against being accomplices to defilement by keeping silent about its occurrence or even providing a location for defilement or rape.
- “We need more screenings, more treatment, more health workers to address these conditions.” It was added that many women suffer from fistula and so more screening should be conducted and in cases where women are too poor to access treatment, they should be supported.
- “We have a right to healthy living and therefore should seek medical treatment all the time.”
- The courtship ritual of men visiting girls at night, sneaking into their rooms and forcing

themselves onto the girls should stop. In order to avoid fistula, girls and men should negotiate and consent to sex.

- An elder focused on the need to sensitise youth. He encouraged doctors and nurses to carry out sensitisation and also encouraged men to accept rejection from a woman and not force themselves on her through rape.
- The LC3 Kacheri sub county advised husbands and wives to agree on how to take care of each other and live healthily.

## Conversation Circles for Culture-based Solutions to GBV

Community members agreed to engage in introspection by continuing the conversation in homogenous groups as girls, boys, men, women and elders. In these camps, the conversation looked at the positive cultural practices in Karamoja that should be promoted and those that should be discarded in order to end GBV. The challenges associated with accessing SGBV referral pathways and services were also discussed.

## Positive Karimojong Cultural Practices to Promote

### Girls/Young Women

- Traditional disciplinary gatherings e.g.
- Ameto where the community punishes wrongdoers
- Decent dressing
- Ladies walking in groups for firewood or water
- Whistle blowing when a girl is raped

### Boys/Male Youth

- Ameto (the cultural conflict resolution mechanism)
- Cleansing rituals like Engeth
- Respect for parents
- Men staying in the kraal
- Good dress code

## Women

- Mutual understanding within families
- Promoting education of the girl child
- Education on SGBV, reproductive health ad family health
- Men and women building economic assets and wealth together
- Men accompanying women for antenatal classes or screenings and understanding the oucomes together

## Negative Karimojong Cultural Practices to Discard

### Girls/Young Women

- Early marriage  
Choosing a partner on behalf of the girl and without her consent.
- Night courtship where boys visit the girls room naked.
- Traditional dances held at night where girls are exposed to rape and volence.
- Alcohol abuse that causes men to fight and rape
- Girls working in town as maids being exploited, underpaid and raped by male employers
- Widow inheritance
- Parents sending girls to run errands in town at night where they are defiled.

### Boys/Male Youth

- Girls sleeping in one house unprotected
- Polygamy
- Drunkenness
- Dress code
- Using human rights as an excuse for indiscipline
- Elders accepting bribes from criminals

### Men

- Women supporting men's drinking habit
- Forced marriages
- Lack of community gatherings that support women to discuss health issues and social challenges

## Women

- Widow inheritance
- The separate house for girls promotes promiscuity
- Early marriages
- Men battering women
- Ameto where the community watches elder beating an individual for their crimes.
- Men who object to family planning

**Available Referral Systems and Services for Survivors** Conversation circles discussed the existing referral systems and services in relation to healthcare, case management, psychosocial support, legal aid, community support and protection.

**Women's camp:** Police, Local Council, SASA Group by Refugee Law Project and Ateker (the clan). Boys Camp: Church, health workers, Council of Elders, Courts of Law and case managers. Girls Camp: When girls are raped at school (usually by the milk bush, after night preps or when going to the toilet at night) they report the case to the senior woman teacher or head teacher who informs the parents of the boy and girl as well as the police. Girls who are raped in the evenings at the borehole or on the way to town, talk to their parents who sometimes report the rape to police, often take them to a doctor and also provide counselling. Girls discussed Etem and Ameto as cultural referral systems that allow elders to seriously address GBV cases and punish perpetrators.

## Obstacles to Accessing SGBV Services and Referral Systems

### Girls/Young Women

- Girls do not get full service at health services and are sent to buy drugs they cannot afford
- Girls are not included in stem or village assemblies presided over by elders to address issues
- Girls find it hard to speak to parents about defilement because they are blamed for the rape occurring.
- When girls speak out and defilers are arrested they are not always sentenced.
- Pregnant girls are not always supported to continue their education even if it was the result of rape
- Girls who get pregnant following defilement are excommunicated by families

### Women

- Police's delayed handling of cases
- Women who report GBV cases to the clan are forced to make peace with the husbands because they do not have cows to refund.
- Probation officers are not supportive to women

### Boys/Male Youth

- Corruption in health sector
- Distance from health services
- Ignorance of human rights
- Limited access to justice

### Men

- Absence of structures that engage men in ending SGBV
- Inadequate referral pathways. Especially for SGBV survivors who needs medical services such as PEP and psychosocial services

# Community Recommendations



### **Girls/Young Women**

- Government should provide free sanitary pads for girls in health units and regularise supply to schools. This will help girls not be lured and raped by men offering them money for pads, clothes and shoes.
- Government should provide enough drugs to address the health needs of girls who are raped.
- Government should also sensitise communities on SGBV during village meetings in addition to providing sex education for girls.
- Ministry of Education and Schools should put in place and implement rules that regulate male teachers interaction with female pupils. This would reduce the cases of girls raped in male teachers homes where they were sent to make deliveries.
- Parents should not make decisions on behalf of girls concerning who and when to marry. Parents should not promote early marriage or support widow inheritance.
- Parents should protect girls by not sending them on errands in town at night as they often get raped.
- Government and Parents should fight girl child labour in towns where girls engaged in housework are underpaid, overworked and raped by their employers

### **Male Youth/Boys**

- Girls should stay with mothers or within the homestead and not together with the girls of the whole manyatta.
- Efforts should be made to address abuse of alcohol (waragi) that causes youth to be violent
- Corruption among elders should be stamped out as they should discipline/punish perpetrators of SGBV but are often bribed to overlook it.
- More legal officers should be provided to handle SGBV

### **Elders**

- Informal courts/conflict resolution mechanisms like Ekiko should be used to address SGBV cases
- Police and formal mechanisms should be put to task to close cases.
- Survivors should be compensated
- Upholding women's rights should be the business of both men and women
- Women should be given equal employment opportunities
- Bad cultural practices should be uprooted such as forced marriages, and early marriages.
- Development partners, government and local CSOs should work together to eliminate SGBV

- Government should revise the punishment for different crimes to reflect their gravity. For instance adultery is fined at 600 shillings while for rape it is 8 cows. It should be 100 cows.
- Men should not leave women to handle household tasks on their own but should care for children and contribute to the household's income.
- Families should develop the practice of resolving their disputes or conflicts internally.
- Screening for cancer and other reproductive health conditions should continue.

### Women

- Probation officers should be well trained women in order for their services to improve
- Girls should be educated in order to access positions of influence
- Women's groups should be strengthened and supported to generate income and get information on family issues.
- Women appreciate the dialogue and would like conversations of this nature to happen frequently in order to discard bad practices.

### Men

- Men should share with friends information on reducing GBV
- Parents who promote forced marriage should be sensitised on the dangers
- To curb child marriages, birth certificates of girls should be presented before she can be married.
- Men should accompany women for antenatal classes and family planning sessions
- Community groups should be created to act as role models for not being perpetrators of SGBV
- Men should change their mentalities and embrace productive activities to reduce poverty
- The level of alcoholism should be reduced to address GBV
- Non-violent traditional disciplinary measures for dealing with troublesome community members should be revived.
- Human rights groups should be invited to sensitise communities on human rights.





**ISIS WICCE PEACE EXPOSITION  
2013  
KARAMOJA PEACE DECLARATION ON SGBV 2013**



*Napojji Okilungu* THE PEOPLE OF KARAMOJA  
*are the victims and* PLEDGE  
DO away with all harmful traditional practices  
Provide a good environment for girls to stay in schools  
Harmonise traditional & Modern laws to end SGBV  
Mutual Respect for man & woman in the family as a basis  
Raising awareness on health & SGBV in all communities  
Strengthen & Activate traditional systems of managing SGBV  
Strengthen the referrals systems for SGBV survivors  
*of the* *John Sanyal* *2.* *John Sanyal*

# Signing of the 2013 KARAMOJA PEACE DECLARATION

A Peace Declaration was drafted to reflect the recommendations of the community members and the commitment of leaders. It was signed in front of the entire gathering at the 2013 peace expo. This was by the LC5 Chairs of Kotido and Soroti, the RDCs of Kotido and Nakapiripirit, DPC Kotido, woman MP Kotido, a youth representative, a representative of the traditional elders, Brigade Commander Kidepo region and representatives of CSOs (including Nakere Women's Group).

## The People of Karamoja pledged to

1. Do away with harmful traditional practices
2. Provide a good environment for girls to stay in school
3. Harmonise traditional and modern laws to end SGBV
4. Maintain mutual respect for women and men in the family
5. Strengthen and activate traditional systems of managing SGBV cases
6. Strengthen the referral systems for SGBV survivors

The representative of the elders expressed his commitment to abandon bad cultural practices that promote SGBV. He also shared the elders' hesitance to promote girl child education as the result of increasing cases of defilement and impregnation of girls by teachers and stressed the need for the police to curb this occurrence. The Kotido LC5 Chair also pledged to follow up the commitments listed in the declaration in addition to partnering with leaders in other districts of Karamoja to honour and put into practice the pledge it makes.

A photograph of two men in traditional African attire speaking at a podium. The man on the left wears a blue patterned tunic and a red and yellow hat. The man on the right wears a black shirt, a red and white checkered shawl, and a green hat with a white feather. A flag with red, yellow, and black stripes is visible in the background. The text 'Remarks from PARTNERS' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# Remarks from PARTNERS

**Jesca Ataa, the Programme Coordinator of NARWOA,**

appreciated the demonstrated commitment to address violence and obstacles to peace in Kotido, Karamoja and Uganda at large. She thanked Isis-WICCE for accepting the Karimojong women's request to hold the expo in Kotido and for its role as their lead organisation, linking the women of Karamoja internationally. She also appreciated the training of health workers in Kotido on cancer screening stating that this had never been done in Kotido because the district does not have a hospital. She acknowledged the support of the Norwegian government through Isis-WICCE, which has built their confidence, strengthened their activism and placed them at the forefront of demanding for and protecting their rights. Ms Ataa also highlighted the contribution of the government to Karamoja's development adding that this same commitment is required to end violence within the families. She underlined the growing economic status of women in Karamoja who have taken advantage of peace to become significant actors in the economic sphere while paying for the education of their children and contributing to their families. She stressed the women's commitment to fight poverty, disease, violence and injustice for a healthy peaceful society and nation.

**Thelma Awori, Immediate Past President of the Isis-WICCE Board,**

thanked the people of Karamoja for a warm welcome. She described the peace expo as a space where Ugandans can come together in all their diversity and creativity to look for solutions for peace in our communities. She expressed gratitude to those from different districts for having gathered in Kotido as Ugandans. Ms Awori appealed to the government to provide more health centres and services to match the peoples' openness to new ideas and new development. In addition she called on the government to allot a big portion of the budget for post-conflict reconstruction to the repair of women's bodies, spirits and minds. She shared Isis-WICCE's lesson from different post-conflict settings where it has been discovered that despite women's bodies being destroyed during the war, governments focus on repairing roads and buildings leaving NGOs the expensive and immense job of addressing women's reconstruction. She thanked the leaders from all the sectors including the church, military, traditional, local government and others for being present and willing to dialogue with community members as the peace expo intends. In closing, she affirmed the commitment of the Kotido LC5 to peace.

**Doreen Kyaligonza of the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF)**

expressed pleasure for the opportunity to experience the peace expo in Kotido, linking its aim to the goal of the DGF to promote a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society. She commended women for their role as pillars of peace and development and expressed support for a Karamoja with health families, peaceful societies and an end to GBV. She referred to UNSCR 1325, the Uganda NAP and its focus on women's health issues, thanking CEWIGO, local government and all organisations involved in effecting and monitoring its

implementation. In close, she expressed confidence that “the peace expo would be an added strength to increase women’s participation in decision making and promoting the health rights of women for a peaceful community”.

### **Calistas Lokwi Adume, LC5 Chair Kotido**

acknowledged the contribution of Isis-WICCE in terms of knowledge and screening equipment left in Kotido. He thanked Oxfam for the peace van, David Pulkol for his support and guidance and the organisers for doing their best despite challenges. Finally he implored the people of Karamoja not to abuse alcohol, to fight for what is right and stamp out corruption in order for peace to be sustained.

### **Roselyn Akello, Woman MP Kaabong**

thanked Isis-WICCE for the free cancer screening and requested similar services in other districts of Karamoja so that all women can benefit. She also called on the people of Karamoja to uphold the current peaceful state that they yearned for over many years.

### **Joyce Atim Ongom, Woman MP Lira**

spoke on behalf of the Uganda Women Parliamentarians Association (UWOPA). She shared information on the work of UWOPA that identifies gender gaps in government policies in order to legislate and advocate for them. She stated that UWOPA had held various roundtables on GBV and carried out outreach to discover how districts are mainstreaming gender. In addition, they have identified gaps in the penal code, which will be addressed when the edited code is tabled. She called on men not to defile, rape or batter women, called on the judiciary to offer justice and not demand for money, on the development partners to continue advocating for peace and MPs to make implementable laws.

### **Margaret Aleper, Woman MP Kotido**

thanked Isis-WICCE for the collaboration and trust, which has yielded many fruits including the capacity building of 18 Kotido health workers in screening for cancer, fistula and other STIs. She thanked the Norwegian government and other funders for supporting the work of Isis-WICCE and encouraged them to continue supporting the healing of women and their participation in development. She reported that 36 women had complicated cases and have been referred for further specialised treatment. As the custodian of the peace flag, she committed to work with local government to train health workers to address reproductive health challenges. She called on development partners to prioritise reproductive health and realign their budgets as such. Religious and cultural leaders were encouraged to sensitise and mobilise communities to respond to SGBV and related challenges using churches, shrines, radio and other gatherings.



### **Bishop James Nasak, Church of Uganda**

who was the Guest of Honour expressed gratitude to the women of Nakere for their role in bringing peace. He reflected on the situation in Karamoja and spoke of a new war, not involving the negative behaviour of cattle rustling but concerning modern diseases such as cervical cancer and high blood pressure. He spoke of the cultural interpretation of these illnesses in the villages as the result of witchcraft or the use of latrines and called on community members to go for screening and debunk all the myths. The bishop encouraged community members to return to the old ways where girls delayed marriage and only approved of a man well reviewed by peers. He proposed this as a means of reducing GBV. In closing, he appreciated the message of the flag and called on the people of Karamoja to change their way of living to match the changes in Karamoja and fight the new evils.

# Closing Remarks

Margaret Aleper, Kotido Woman MP thanked all present for the work done and Isis-WICCE for the work done in support of the healthy family and peaceful communities such as donating screening machines. She appreciated the rare spirit exhibited especially where everybody was given food without discrimination. She thanked the public for leaving their work to gather and address the community issues. Lastly, she called on the government of Kotido to look at families and ensure that facilities are open to them.

The LC5 Chair of Kotido continued to thank Isis-WICCE, development partners and all the artists. He added, “This is just the beginning of the struggle. Let us continue until we have healthy families and peaceful communities. I will keep the flag high by stopping bad traditional systems and using community policing to spread this to the village.”

In closing the RDC called on the community peace committees to ensure that the people take full advantage of available resources to uphold peace and enhance development. He also announced that 29th November to 10th December would be gazetted by local government as days of peace, on the district calendar which are celebrated annually.







Memories of the Peace Exposition 2013

# The District Organising Committee



Adome Lokwii Calistus  
**District Chairman**



Adoko George  
**CAO**



Locheng Mark  
**Deputy CAO**



Narem Sarah  
**A. CAO**



Hon Natuk Judith  
**District Speaker**



Natyang Cecelia  
**Human Resource**



Okoth Jackson  
**Human Resource**



Lotukei Ambrose  
**D.E.O**



Dr Olinga Philip  
**District Health Office**



Katungwensi Anatoli  
**District Police Comdr**



Musinguzi Godfrey .B  
**District Internal Security .Ofcr**



Okore George  
**District Engineer**



Hon Aleper Margret  
**Female MP Kotido**



Hon Lokii Peter Abrahams  
**Male MP Kotido**



David Pulkol  
**Consultant & Executive  
Member ASSN**



Rt Rev James Nasak  
**Bishop North Karamoja  
Diocese**



Abura Levi  
**Production Officer**



Akello Vicky  
**Board Member NARWOA**



Ataa Jesca Ruth  
**Coordinator NARWOA**



Milton Lopiria  
**Project Coordinator  
Warrior Squad**



Nachan Lilly Grace  
**District Community  
Development Officer**



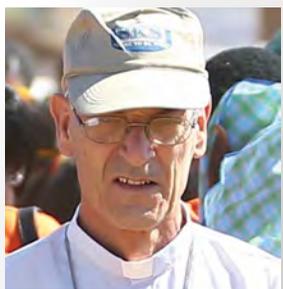
Ogwaria Lawrence  
**Probation officer**



Okuda Kennedy  
**NAADS coordinator**



Olanya Euguene  
**Committee Member  
Welfare**



Bishop Giuseppe Filippi  
**Catholic Diocese**







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