

Session 1. Peace Education

Women's Peace Education: Changes in Tanzania caused by PLTE

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Dear distinguished guests, IWPG chairwoman, Secretary-General, board members, committee members, IWPG members, representatives from around the world, greetings to you all!

It is an honor for me to be attending the 2023 International Women's Peace Conference. My name is Lillian Msaki, and I come from Tanzania. I work as Christian Social Service Commissions (CSSC) and a public health specialist in a non-governmental organization in Tanzania.

Today, I am here to introduce the IWPG Peace Lecturer Training Education (PLTE) program, which is designed for adult women to learn and discuss the spirit of peace and how to implement it. PLTE was an amazing education program that helped me discover my inner values, awaken dormant peace cells within me, and transform my thoughts and perspectives through concrete guidance on respecting life and practicing altruism. It became clear to me that this program is groundbreaking, highlighting the infinite potential of women and their essential role in world peace, a knowledge that I believe every woman worldwide should possess.

Currently, I hold a Peace Lecturer certification after completing the PLTE course, and I am conducting PLTE lectures for 23 students. In Tanzania, PLTE has been implemented since 2021, and as of 2023, we have graduated over 30 students, with five of us, including myself, obtaining the Peace Lecturer certification. This represents approximately 17% of all PLTE graduates who are qualified to teach.

In Tanzania, however, there are challenges that hinder the expansion and certification of PLTE. Some of these challenges have been slow in progress and had limited coverage over the past two years.

Firstly, there is the issue of the internet. Reliable internet access is crucial for the success of PLTE, but in many developing countries like Tanzania, internet access is unequal, with urban areas having better infrastructure than rural areas. This inequality affects the expansion of Peace Knowledge to rural and hard-to-reach populations.

Paradoxically, those who could benefit the most from education, especially girls and women, are still at risk due to social and cultural issues such as gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, and early pregnancies. Even in urban areas, high data bundle costs make internet accessibility questionable. The government has promised to address this issue, but no decisive action has been taken so far.

Secondly, a shortage of certified PLTE instructors nationwide has an impact on the scale of education. Consequently, most potential groups, such as university students, remain unaware of IWPG and PLTE. This presents a crucial opportunity for us to explore.

Thirdly, the recent effects of the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war contributed significantly to the depreciation of the Tanzanian Shilling against the US Dollar. This has led to increased living costs, unemployment rates, poverty, and socio-economic hardships. Partially, this explains why some graduates may have shifted their priorities, abandoning their certification processes.

However, despite these challenges, my unwavering belief and determination have kept IWPG PLTE going. While it may be impractical to immediately build internet infrastructure, it should not deter us from promoting peace. To address this, I plan to create brochures containing PLTE-related materials and personally visit areas with poor internet connectivity to conduct face-to-face lectures. To achieve this, we need to produce more Peace Lecturers who can work tirelessly on the ground.

In reality, I have already promoted IWPG and PLTE to over 500 women in regions like Tanga, Mwanza, Kilimanjaro, and Arusha. I even took the initiative to translate PLTE materials into Swahili for distribution where needed. The women I encountered expressed great enthusiasm, showing keen interest in IWPG's activities and PLTE. They wished for themselves, their children, and even their husbands to participate in this education.

Furthermore, I am actively seeking ways to support PLTE candidates who engage in income-generating activities. I plan to secure female representatives in each region among PLTE supporters who can manage internet costs. These representatives will conduct special lectures for all aspiring Peace Lecturers in their respective areas, instilling the vision of PLTE and motivating them to complete the course. We will also seek financial support from the government and partner with developed countries to ensure that internet and material costs do not pose a burden.

Working for peace in a challenging environment is not easy, especially in places where women's rights are severely limited. However, the dedication of Naisikare Retiti, a peace activist in the Maasai pastoralist

community, serves as a source of inspiration. She lives in a place where women's rights are deeply suppressed. Despite not knowing English, she endured long waits to obtain Swahili materials and, with the help of PLTE graduates, created translated PLTE lecture materials in booklet form, which she now uses for offline PLTE classes. She travels long distances on motorcycles and on foot to reach remote Maasai settlements, spreading the seeds of peace through continuous collaboration with church groups and the local community. Her dedication is deeply moving and serves as a role model, and through her commitment, Tanzania's journey towards peace is accelerating.

Tanzania is currently experiencing a breeze of peace, and I am extremely excited. Our top priority for achieving significant success in peace education is to collaborate strategically with the Tanzanian government. We are in the final stages of registering IWPG Tanzania Chapter, and IWPG continues to actively engage with local communities, making a real impact.

Furthermore, introducing local offline classes and integrating PLTE regular classes into women's universities will nurture the spirit of peace, drawing a blueprint for the future of peaceful Tanzania. To achieve this, we hope for smooth communication and interest from the government.

IWPG is working together with us to develop the PLTE program, and we look forward to the government swiftly sharing financial support to activate IWPG's peace program process throughout Tanzania, preparing the wisdom of the next generation. I will also make every effort to raise awareness of IWPG, PLTE, and DPCW through various community and political gatherings.

In conclusion, dear esteemed guests, IWPG is encouraging and empowering women and children who have endured anger, violence, scarcity, suffering, and psychological torture due to war and other humanitarian issues. As peace knowledge spreads across borders to remote communities, we see women advocating for their rights, and families thriving in peace and harmony, no matter where they are. I commend IWPG for its dedication to global peace, and I consider it a great privilege to be part of the verified Peace Lecturers who are joining this noble mission.

Thank you for your attention.