



# Learning Exchange Visit of Young Women Leading for Peace in South Sudan

9th to 13th February 2020  
Kampala, Uganda



**Women's  
International  
Peace Centre**  
Amplifying Women's Voice and Power

**Author:**

Evelyn Birungi

**Editorial Board:**

With the support of Forum for Women and Development (FOKUS)

**Please address all correspondence to:**

The Executive Director

Women's International Peace Centre (The Centre) Plot 1, Martyrs Garden Road B, Ntinda

P.O Box 4934, Kampala – Uganda

Tel: +256-414-543953

Email: [program@wipc.org](mailto:program@wipc.org)

Web: [www.wipc.org](http://www.wipc.org)

ISBN:

All Rights Reserved

Request for permission to reproduce or translate this publication for educational and non-commercial purposes should be addressed to Women's International Peace Centre.



# Table of Contents

## Background

Equipping young women to participate in and influence peace processes and post-conflict governance

---

## Phase 1:

Training on advocacy, gender and peace building

---

## Phase 2:

Learning Exchange Visit To Uganda

Objectives

Participants

---

## Day 1:

**I:** Opening Session

**II:** Young Women's Leadership and Organizing from the Grassroots

**III:** Professional Leadership and Growth

**IV:** Experience Sharing among Young Women Leaders

---

## Day 2

**VI:** Life Skills for Young Leaders

**VII:** Public Speaking And Presentation Skills

---

## Day 3

**IX:** Women in Leadership Symposium: Re-imagining Leadership in the 21st Century

**X:** Intergenerational Dialogue

**XI:** Networking Evening

---

## Conclusion

# Background

**South Sudan assented to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and 2250 highlighting the important role of young women in promoting peace and security.**

The 2015-2020 National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions represents this commitment to i) increase women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, the maintenance of peace and security, and guaranteeing their participation in post-conflict peace building, ii) enable peace and security stakeholders in South Sudan to galvanize their efforts and ensure improved implementation of gender-sensitive peace and security-focused initiatives at national and state levels and iii) ensuring the inclusion of women and girls' needs in the national budgetary priorities of the transitional assistance plans developed by the Government and all programmes funded by development partners, including in the negotiations of the New Compact Deal.

Despite the existence of these commitments, frameworks and mechanisms, there are insufficient attempts to promote young women's participation in peace processes, to amplify their voices or to influence in favour of their specific priorities. Since the outbreak of armed conflict in December 2013, the resurgence in July 2016 and with on-going efforts to resolve conflicts and to reconstruct, young women's critical role in formal peace building and conflict resolution has been under-explored despite their informal contributions. They have also been under-represented in efforts by the wider women's movement to influence and participate in formal peace processes.

The background image shows three young women of African descent smiling and raising their hands in a celebratory gesture. They are standing in front of a stone wall topped with a decorative wrought-iron railing. The woman on the left is wearing a black dress with a red and white floral pattern. The woman in the middle is wearing a blue and gold patterned dress. The woman on the right is wearing a red and white patterned top and glasses, and is holding a bright pink notebook. The overall scene is bright and positive, suggesting a community or educational event.

# **Equipping Young Women to Participate in and Influence Peace Processes and Post-Conflict Governance**

**Women's International Peace Centre (The Peace Centre) is partnering with the Centre of Inclusive Governance, Peace and Justice (CIGPJ) to strengthen young women's capacity to participate in and influence peace processes and their outcomes from a gender perspective in South Sudan.**

# Phase 1

## Training on Advocacy, Gender and Peace Building

The Peace Centre and CIGPJ trained 25 women aged between 22 and 35 in Juba from 26th to 30th November 2019. The 5-day training strengthened young women's understanding of relevant national, regional and international policy frameworks, of on-going national peace processes, national and regional mechanisms as well as key women, peace and security thematic areas.



It also built their skills to conduct gendered analysis of conflict trends, dynamics and their significance for on-going peace processes. Through the training young women's capacity for advocacy and collective action to advance the women, peace and security agenda and their own roles was supported. It included an intergenerational dialogue with older women peace builders, political leaders, CSO heads and other leaders for cross-learning and mentorship.

At the end of the training, participants created an informal network dubbed 'Young Women Leading for Peace' composed 4 working groups and produced 4 work plans for their engagement with key decision-makers and mechanisms on issues of young women in governance and in the coming transitional government of national unity (TGONU), the formation of states/boundaries, security (including DDDR, security sector reform and SGBV) and legislative review processes.

Since then, they have hosted a dialogue to Revitalized Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission of the peace agreement (RJMEC) to explore opportunities for young women to be involved in implementation of the agreement, highlighted the gaps for women and girls in the pre-transitional period on radio talk shows in Juba, advocated for young women's political leadership in political spaces at the South Sudan Nation Youth Union elections and addressed the UN Secretary General on the need to create more spaces for young women leaders and urge member states, particularly South Sudan, to prioritize the protection of women and girls. They continue to raise awareness of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, calling for action.

# Phase 2

## Learning Exchange Visit to Uganda

A 3-day learning visit was **help** from 9th to 13th February for a more immersive learning experience with women leaders and women's rights organizations within Uganda's women's movement. This included a storytelling session, intergenerational dialogue, a visit to a young woman-led women's rights organisation and a session on personal leadership.

# Objectives

1. To facilitate an exchange of information, experiences, strategies and solidarity between the young women in South Sudan and a diversity of women and women's rights organisations in Uganda
2. To expose the trained young women leaders to models and positive examples of young women's leadership and efforts to influence policies, programmes and structures in a post-conflict context
3. To strengthen their personal leadership skills

# Participants

6

**young women leaders  
(and one sign language interpreter)**

---

represented the larger group of  
**25 members of the 4 groups.**

They are each affiliated with women's rights organizations and networks including Women's Bloc, Crown the Woman, Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative, South Sudan Women with Disabilities Network, BPDJ and Community Empowerment for Progress Organisation (CEPO).

# DAY 1:

## I: Opening Session

Proscovia Nakaye, the Women's International Peace Centre's Programme Officer for Leadership Development introduced the young women to the organization. She explained the mission behind its founding, the main strategies, core programmes and the work done by the Peace Centre in South Sudan and globally. Proscovia also described the organisation's strategy for ensuring that all categories of women are included in its work and partnerships. She presented the plan for the exposure visit and discussed the women leaders' expectations.

The young women leaders meet The Peace Centre Executive Director at the organisation's office. From left to right Marline Jore Pitia, Eunice Pikyiko Jacob, Tibiwa Deborah, Apajok Akol Diing, Helen Kezie-Nwoha, Caroline Atim, Arek Malek Rual and Victoria Night



## II: Young Women's Leadership and Organizing from the Grassroots

*"In many countries and for many years, people thought negatively about the youth based on negative stereotypes. However, it is very important to involve young women and it is key to building peace and strong sustainability. " Margaret Nassozi*

This session was facilitated by Margaret Nassozi, a young founding member of Luwero Women Development Association (LUWODA) who is a trained teacher, a grassroots woman peace builder and Peace Centre institute alumna. Margaret shared her own experience as a young leader and

in promoting women leadership at the grassroots along with their involvement and participation in the political, economic and social spaces that are available. This included ideas on how to build the capacity to grab opportunities and not wait for them to be given.

During the discussion that followed, the young women leaders and Margaret defined grassroots leadership, shared the challenges of young women's leadership and organizing at the grassroots as well as the solutions to them.



# Discussions

## What is leadership?

- Being exemplary
- The action of leading a group of people or an organization.
- An individual leads a group of people as an exemplary person delivering and doing what it takes
- Being able to enable influence people
- A person who takes the first step to do something especially when the situation is tough
- A leader is someone who can influence change
- Some people are born as leaders, where people see what you do and are willing to follow you. While others have leadership thrust upon them. A good leader is supposed to aim at change

## Young women should take the lead. How do we apply our leadership at the grassroots?

- Knowing our target groups, their main concerns and defining clear goals for what we want to achieve together.
- Information exchange to understand what the concerns are and how our constituents would like them to be solved
- Proper planning to determine which activities we should tackle and how, considering the needs at local level
- Collaboration and joint efforts with people from the grassroots and civil society groups
- Influencing policies and change in the communities

## Strategies for engaging at the grassroots?

- Organizing mentorship programmes
  - Engaging the youth in peace building and meditation
  - Organizing public speaking skills programs for example interclub school debates.
  - Skills training
  - Keep communities engaged and connected to the policies through advocacy and networking
  - Raising awareness on the need for change related to political, economic and social policies.
  - Promoting the good leadership values.
  - Learning from each other
  - Giving more people the opportunity to lead.
-

“Like a tree needs its roots well-watered not to wither, that’s how the grassroots affect us as a whole”. Arek Malek Coordinator of Young Women Leading for Peace

The young women leaders looked inward to reflect on their own leadership skills and practices. Each one shared a challenging experience and the lessons they learnt. The three key lessons to sustain young women’s leadership at personal level under trying conditions were to;

- Encourage other young women to be stronger
- Keep a light sense of humor
- Mentor others



**Educate the community at the grassroots so that the activities of young women are not taken as a threat to men.**

## Young Women's Leadership at Grassroots level

### Challenges

- Cultural barriers and negative cultural stereotypes about women leaders. In South Sudan a woman is not supposed to speak in public, raise her voice or talk back.
- Early and forced child marriages that limit girls education and access to knowledge needed.
- Discrimination against women and girls in the community
- Communities denying them chances to leadership.
- Lack of information limiting them from exercising their rights and duties.
- Lack of acknowledgement of work done by the young women in the communities/ societies.
- High level of illiteracy amongst young women which excludes them from leadership positions.
- Women are the main caretakers at home and in communities with no chance to go into political, economic and social leadership grounds. A woman is expected to stay home and raise children
- It's hard to make women groups in South Sudan especially because associations forget about you when projects start up.

### Solutions

- Build alliance with the chiefs or community leaders to easily influence the change needed in the community.
- Conflict management, if there's a fight call for a meeting and explore how to solve it.
- Educating the community at the grassroots so that the activities of young women are not taken as a threat to them.
- Identify the right group to target; if it's the youth, then one should know the issues affecting them and what needs immediate attention.
- Provide conflict resolution and management skills through trainings to community members
- Advocate for change in a peaceful manner on why it is important to educate girls, abolish early and force marriages and other barriers.
- Raise awareness on the importance of including of women matters at all levels of decisions making.
- Use intergenerational dialogues. Break the cultural barriers encourage women to speak.
- Talk to the community leaders and give them the responsibility to disseminate information to their communities.
- Encourage the young women to form groups around specific needs of the specific community.
- Forming of clubs in schools to encourage girls, talk about their issues faced at home eg SGBV and try to find solutions among themselves

### III: Professional Leadership and Growth

Rita Atukwasa shared her own journey from early orphan hood to becoming the Executive Director of Institute for Social Transformation at a young age. She told it as follows, "Leadership has never been easy and it is something you need to be deliberate about as it requires sacrifices. Growing up I assumed leadership because I was orphaned at a young age. My father was a civil servant and my mother had a range of responsibilities, in very many fields including loads of charity work. I was left in the home our parents had and had to take responsibility of their resources, school and my siblings. Leadership

was placed upon me. I had a responsibility to share roles between two siblings and make sure the work was done and moving. Going to school, leadership appealed to me because I was noisy. To avoid me being loud and disruptive teachers made me the class head. I was inspired again to be a leader and would become the games captain, school captain and then head girl. One of my personal highlights was when I represented the school on a national radio programme in English. It helped because public speaking now comes easy to me."



ita shared with the young women leaders important nuggets for leadership, particularly for those seeking to advance women's rights through work in a civil society organization.

- When you are on a team, do not be afraid to take on leadership. Seize every small opportunity to lead. Stay ready. If no one nominates you, nominate yourself. Push yourself.
- It is important to speak out and stand out even if you are going to say something contrary or critical. Never leave a space when no one has heard your voice.
- Use your experience; no one has a story like yours. Wherever you are, you can use it to help others.
- Leadership has to have a purpose that adds value to you as an individual.

“As a Counselor, I was often upset and sad because I was working with rape victims. This was at a time when domestic violence wasn't a crime. I started to deal with structural issues in police. I later felt happy because I was influencing policies and budgets and working as Advocacy Manager.”

- Challenges are what grow you. Move out of your comfort zones.
- Be open to opposing views. You cannot always be right.
- As a leader, always add value to others. Learn to say the truth to yourself.
- When you are a leader you must build different networks and not walk the journey alone.
- There is no small and big decision.
- Be presentable and treat preparation as very important.
- Learn to think deeply and reflect. Ask yourself how does this affect me, and my community?



## Tips for Personal and Professional Growth;

### Marline Pitia shared what she **learned** as follows;

- Never ignore any space of leadership no matter how small it is.
- Make unforgettable impression on your leaders minds and they will always remember you whenever opportunities arise.
- Voice your opinions and make yourself known, identified and acknowledged.
- Use every opportunity
- Surround yourself with the right people who have knowledge or experience of that goal you are aiming at.
- Consult before making a decision.
- Challenge yourself to learn every day.
- Take up opportunities.
- Learn to understand things in depth.
- Avoid selfishness and adopt the culture of sharing information and ideas
- Practice solidarity in your daily lives.
- As a leader, you must be always ready for any take up or change (personal preparation)
- Never cancel yourself before others cancel you.
- A leader entertains ideas and is close to the smart participants in the team.
- We must always practice self-confidence in our daily lives.

### **Self-leadership begins with you before you reach out to the community**

- Wish others well, give them opportunity never fear to be outsmarted.
- Leaders cry. Things can go wrong and go hard always focus on those who support you.
- In leadership there are challenges but self-awareness is very important and helpful. Ask yourself, what your strengths are and what your weaknesses are. Work hard on your weaknesses and flex your strengths.
- Systems help us for example setting up policies, guidelines and procedures will give you boundaries and keep you accountable.
- Mentoring and molding never stops

## IV: Experience Sharing among Young Women Leaders

“For most people leadership is synonymous with ‘big people’ and posts like presidency. Sometimes this makes us question or doubt ourselves. But if the impact you are giving to the local community as a leader is positive, it is also a big deal. Remember leadership can always start small.” Racheal Wanyana

Racheal Wanyana is a lawyer, an Advocacy Officer at Uganda Women’s Network and the founder of Wanyana Foundation for Justice and Equitable Development an organization committed to advancing gender equality, sustainable peace and equitable development. She told her story of coming from a humble beginning to pursuing and achieving her current position. Racheal also facilitated a conversation centered around examples of young exemplary leaders around the world who had great influence despite their age/

### Racheal also shared the critical 3 Ds of leadership

#### **Dreaming:**

Dreaming: have big dreams and speak life into your dreams

#### **Discipline:**

Discipline: dreams without discipline can’t be achieved. Practice self-discipline in how you work, talk to others and present yourself.

#### **Determination:**

Determination: stay assertive, show a confident and forceful personality and never give up no matter how difficult things get. With hope, belief and determination you can get to your desired destination.



# DAY 2:

## VI: Life Skills for Young Leaders

“This is a unique opportunity to interact, challenge, rethink and re-strategize for the future that we want. Seize all opportunities that come from this new awareness. Create the future you want and let nothing stop you. You owe it to yourself to give the best and nothing less.” Harriet Nabukeera Musoke

Harriet Nabukeera Musoke of Libra Academy trained the young women on personal goal setting, public speaking, and self-care. She challenges the young women leaders to reflect on how they relate with others, manage money or other people as a leader. Individually, the young women were invited to write down what they would like to achieve personally, at family and community level along with the associated risks. The game, which required the participants to fill an empty water bottle up from a water source. Filling the bottle was the ultimate goal and whoever did it fastest won. This was a fun exercise, which was related to planning and achieving your goals and helped them reflect on obstacles and strategies to succeed.



Apajok Akol Diing shared what she learnt from the game as the following:

- Strategy is critical as it was hard to fill the bottle if you didn't approach it from a specific position.
- Keeping focus is important.
- Practice makes competence. The first couple of runs were difficult but when you get used to it you get better.
- It's important to keep your target and goal in mind.

- Allow yourself to make mistakes. It is only normal.
- Eliminate things that are not important to you or slowing you down.
- Be prepared to have the right tools
- Never give up and listen to those who have been successful or made it
- You need people to encourage and advise you.

## VII: Public Speaking And Presentation Skills

The young women watched public speakers including Michelle Obama, Mona Eltahawy, Toni Morison, and many others. They reflected on the various reasons why they were engaging which included;

- Their confidence
- Passion about the topics they discussed.
- Their ability to put life into speech
- Knowledgeable about the given topics.
- Body language or the way they carried themselves
- Keeping its simple
- Factual in their presentations

To practice and improve our public speaking, participants broke off into groups to give presentations on why donors should come to or invest in South Sudan.

*"We were able to notice and understand our areas of weakness. We understood the need for evidence or compelling information to support your argument. We were also able to learn that your presentations should flow from introduction to conclusion, not forgetting highlighting the importance of giving statistics to show the need for help or more attention." Eunice Pikiyiko*



## Key Lessons on Public speaking and Presentation

- You should know your audience
- Develop key messages
- Mind your personal appearance
- Practice, practice and be ready to deliver
- Prepare you presentation in advance
- Be ready to deliver (time and material)

### Structuring a Presentation

#### 1. Introduction

- Title
- Introduce the topic

#### 2. Body

- Narrate
- Discuss
- Analyze

#### 3. Summarize

- Make a conclusion
- Key message, your appeal
- Action request

### Making a Public Speech:

- a) Make a strong start to engage your audience and keep them interested.
- b) Show passion
- c) Be humble
- d) Be confident
- e) Use appropriate facial expressions
- f) Make a move on the stage
- g) Personal grooming
- h) Eye contact.

## VIII: Self Care

Harriet Musoke encouraged the young women to reflect on how each one handles themselves and balances their responsibilities, social roles, home roles and work roles. She encouraged the young women to plan for their lives and recommended journaling as a daily wellness practice.

### Tips for Personal Wellbeing

- You must have Me Time and be principled in keeping it. For example dedicate an hour a day to yourself.
- Plan out your clothes and dressing because dress code is important.
- Time management is key. Show up early and avoid mismanaging time especially if you set a time bound goal

- Keep clutter out of your lives because clutter sucks energy and slows your growth.
- Take care of your personal hygiene this includes choice of underwear, body odor and grooming.
- Have the confidence in who you are you are beautiful the way you are.
- Wisdom and tact are important in navigating life.
- Prioritize events with the help of a to-do list

### Victoria Night shared the lessons learnt from this session as;

- Thinking big as a leader is important to create what you want to see.
- It is okay and encouraged to be selfish. Have personal dreams, hopes and plans
- You can't give what you don't have so care for

yourself in order to be able to care for others especially since our goals are inclusive of family and community. Take me time

- The power of public speech and presentation
- We need to jump at opportunities and not shrink ourselves

- Personal goals need one to strategize and reach out. Stop mediocrity. Everything you touch, ask what is the big picture?
- Confidence and communication skills
- For you to make it in life, you need wisdom and tact





## **IX: Women in Leadership Symposium: Re-imagining Leadership in the 21st Century**

“It is imperative of all us to hold the hand of an aspiring young leader keeping in mind what we are up against. This is because for women to survive in this patriarchal world, it is crucial that we create spaces where women in leadership can share information and learning.” Dr. Maxine Houinato, UN Women Uganda.

The symposium co-hosted by Akina Mama Wa Afrika was driven by the need to give young women opportunities for learning and shared growth on their journey as young leaders. The first session focused on sharing best practices of leadership development particularly mentorship models and examples of efforts to nurture young women’s activism. The discussion was led by Naana Otoo from Foundation for Women’s Health Research and Development (FORWARD), Sarah Nakame from Mentoring Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW), Maria Alesi from Fredrick Ebert Stiftung (FES) and Kate Kiama from Akili Dada.

The common good practices were based on feminist leadership principles and also highlighted self-care. They include;

- Sisterhood, including support systems and mentors.
- Understanding yourself and your power.
- Understanding feminism, patriarchy, social norms and becoming an effective feminist leader,
- Understanding your community and seeing how this affects you.
- Strong focus on facilitation and not teaching, tell me something I forget, show me I remember, involve me and I’ll actively start on it.

Sarah of MEMPROW shared from her experience working with activism in schools emphasizing the importance of knowing who you are and drawing inspiration through others’ experiences. Maria of FES reflected on relationship dynamics, mentorships as gives and take along with the need to think deeply about what you bring to the table then picking a mentor.



## X: Intergenerational Dialogue

*“Leadership is about your vision, your passion and your ability to influence. Make your cause, the cause of the people” Dr. Miria Matembe*

“What does it mean to be an effective feminist leader?” This was one of the questions asked and answered many times over at the TuWezeshe young women’s leadership retreat hosted by Akina Mama wa Afrika on behalf of the TuWezeshe Akina Dada Africa-UK Young Women’s Leadership and Empowerment Movement in partnership with the Foundation for Women’s Health Research and Development, Sub-Sahara Advisory Panel and Children’s Dignity Forum supported by Comic Relief.

The Intergenerational conversation was opened by Dr. Miria Matembe a former minister and parliamentarian, Rebecca Karagwa, a university law student and Phoebe Namulindwa Resident District Commissioner of Luwero. The speakers shared how they started their journey for advocating for gender equality and working in the public sector as well as the challenges they had faced in the different aspects of their work.

## Lessons learnt by the young women leaders included;

**Never give up.** Even though you feel low and frustrated or are being pulled down by people in different spaces.

**Have a network with people that are of benefit to the work you are doing.** This support group will help you to keep going no matter the challenges.

**Always mentor other young upcoming leaders** so they can easily take over when you step down or retire.

**Never take this journey alone.**

The participants later broke out into sessions which discussed current, cross-cutting issues and concerns affecting women in different contexts. Talking about young women's leadership and activism, Patricia Humura, a Tuwezeshe fellow, and Annet Birungi, UN Women Uganda fellow engaged the participants in a discussion about good practices and strategies that will strengthen their capacities to generate change.

Doris Mugambi from Akili Dada moderated a conversation on transforming young women's leadership through entrepreneurship development, which brought together professionals who advised

young women on how to build sustainable projects that enhance women's economic liberation. Tackling burnout and mental wellbeing was addressed by Phoebe Murungi and Misha Matovu Camarra who invited participants to share their experiences and provided tips for mental wellbeing in daily life. Last but not least, different forms of sexual violence were discussed led by Shira Natendo, Fionah Komusana, Nura Ali and Naima Isa Sebbi. This conversation allowed participants to understand sexual harassment and its manifestation. Participants also shared personal experiences, which encouraged collective, in-depth reflections, and ideas on how to address these.

## XI Networking Evening

The day came to a close with a networking cocktail and dinner where the young women leaders were joined by ten Peace Centre staff members and other women leaders who participated in the symposium. This allowed them to interact at an interpersonal level, bond and share their most memorable parts of the day. The networking event was a great opportunity for the women leaders to expand their knowledge

and also broaden their network of contacts. This space also enabled them to take a step back, evaluate their progress so far and strategize on ways in which they can improve their impact when each one returns to their organisation. The day ended with a re-commitment and renewed energy for their own work and other women's leadership.

# Conclusion

**The young women leaders reviewed the exchange visit as a success for a host of reasons. They appreciated the opportunity to learn from the life experiences, strategies and lessons of other young and older women leaders.**

The women's leadership symposium was a highlight as it gave them a chance to engage with, and learn from both the current prominent women leaders and the future women leaders of Uganda. The visit also exposed the young women leaders to models and positive examples of young women's leadership and how other young women are also seeking to influence policies, programmes and structures in a post-conflict context. For the South Sudanese women leaders, it was also valuable to

see and discuss how the opportunities for women's leadership have evolved in Uganda and how women are adapting to different challenges and opportunities at personal level, within organizations and in the wider movement. Lastly, the young women leaders left the training re-energised and feeling strengthened in their personal leadership skills particularly due to the focus on their individual goals in relation to their personal and professional life as young leaders.



**Lastly, the young women leaders left the training re-energised and feeling strengthened in their personal leadership skills particularly due to the focus on their individual goals in relation to their personal and professional life as young leaders.**

