



## Africans Rising! Stories from the Movement 2023

Africans Rising is a Pan-African movement of people and organisations, working for unity, justice, peace and dignity.

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For Unity, Justice, Peace & Dignity

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# Africans Rising

For Unity, Justice, Peace & Dignity



# Africans Rising!

## Stories from the Movement

JANUARY 2023

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## INTRODUCTION

Africans Rising for Justice, Peace and Dignity is a Pan-African movement of over 30,000 individual members and 800 organizations working across the continent and diaspora to push governments, businesses, and established national and global NGOs to focus on the issues Africans deem critical. The organization provides a space for progressive African civil society leaders and groups engaged in various civic struggles to convene, connect, collaborate, share knowledge, and build solidarity among people and across issues.

**The Africans Rising Success Story booklet highlights the success stories of our members across the globe.**

### Share your successes with our global network

Africans Rising is working to put together another edition of the success stories booklet for the . If you or your organization has held an event, or achieved success in your activism work during this time, let us know! We want to showcase all the ways our members are working to improve their communities and bring justice, peace and dignity to the lives of Africans wherever they live.

If you would like us to feature your or your movement, please send an email to [media@africans-rising.org](mailto:media@africans-rising.org).



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## Senegalese Youth and Democracy Concert in Dalifort, Dakar, Senegal

By Odelia Koroma



My name is Odelia Koroma and I am a singer. I am based in Sierra Leone, Bo City. I traveled from Sierra Leone to Dakar, Dalifort, Senegal in order to be part of the concert "Senegalese and Youth Democracy" which was held to let young people know that they have a voice which can be heard.

The concert was held on September 30, 2022, and was organized by the African Creative Action Network (ACAN), in partnership with Africans Rising and Heinrich Böll's Youth Advocate for Democracy Program, to sensitize young people about their rights to take part in decision making processes. Often times we let other people (eg. politicians) make decisions for us which do not work in our favor. However, it is time for us to raise our voices and say "Enough". It is time for young people to use their voices as a weapon for liberation and know what decisions are being made for them.

The concert brought together artist-activists from Senegal, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Mauritania and local artists from Dalifort. I participated in the composing of 'My Voice My Weapon'; one of the songs we performed live during the concert. The song really helped the process of spreading our message. It helped the young people in the Dalifort community understand what the concert was really about and helped them understand how they can be a part of social change.

At the end of the concert, many of the young people that attended came to us and said that they would go to the mayor's office the next day to initiate discussions with him because their voices should be heard. At the end of the day, the whole event created the kind of impact we wanted.



Africans Rising supported us with the human resources and coordination we needed to successfully hold the concert, and many of the artists featured were a part of Africans Rising through ACAN. We believe that more young people will stand up for what is right in that community after the concert. We say thanks to everyone who gave us the support we needed to make the event a success.



*Odelia Koroma is a singer and activist based in Sierra Leone. She is also a member of ACAN.*

## Standing up against violence so that others can too

By Editar Ochieng

For violence to reduce you must stand up strongly! I decided to fight patriarchy and injustice because I was not safe in my neighbourhood. No movement has protected my rights like that, driven by the ideology of feminism and liberating women through feminism and social justice activism.

I was born in Kibera and I grew up in Kibera. Growing up in Kibera was both a privilege and a struggle. Life is difficult in Kibera and we live in poverty here, but this place makes a woman both vulnerable and strong, and I believe that I am resilient today because I grew up in Kibera.

I was defiled when I was six years old and it was a very painful experience for me. Violence against women is very common in Kibera and many people have normalized it. So many women experience violence and they do not talk about it because they think it is normal, especially when women experience violence in their relationships.

When I was 16 years old I was gang raped. These people raped me and kept on speaking about it in the community and by that time I was in puberty – I was a girl. I was naïve and they were telling everyone that they did it for fun. That was the sad part. When I realized that I was pregnant, I hid it and went for an unsafe abortion. For violence to reduce, you must stand up very strongly, without shaking, and speak out against it. It was not easy to pick up my life afterwards because I thought my dreams were shattered.

I got involved in human rights work because of my experiences, because of the vision I have for women, and because of the passion I have for human rights. I remember when I was a child I would say I wanted to be a lawyer and, although I am not a professional lawyer, sometimes I feel that I am in that law industry because I protect a lot of rights, I stand up for a lot of people. Kibera is changing slowly. Women like me can share their experiences and, today, women can report cases and some women can walk out of violent relationships.



One of the frustrations in my human rights work is the state of the Kenyan system; our system is very poor. Today a woman gets defiled and tomorrow she will see the perpetrator back on the streets. We need to work on both strengthening the system and preventative measures.

I love working with my society and my community at large. Some of my work includes an economic empowerment project producing liquid soap, peanut butter and other businesses to empower young women to end gender-based violence. One of the areas that we need to address is the issue of data documentation, preservation and reporting. I am also working on an economic empowerment project producing liquid soap, peanut butter and other businesses to empower young women to end gender-based violence.

Being named the 2022 Africans Rising Activist of the Year means that our rescue centre will be renovated and made safer for women and girls who are survivors of gender-based violence. Up until now, it has been a temporary structure and sometimes when it's raining the roof has been leaking and making them vulnerable too. The award goes to improve the livelihoods of women survivors.

*Editar Ochieng is an unapologetic, inter-sectional and a proud African feminist and social justice activist who champions womens' rights.*

*In 2022 she was voted the Africans Rising Activist of the Year.*

*Twitter: @oeditar*



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## Mathare Peace Initiative' Builds Community and Encourages Youth to Choose Peace

By Alphonse Happy



My name is Alphonse Happy and I am a member of Africans Rising. I serve at Mathare Peace Initiative Kenya, which is a registered local organization. This organization was registered in 2017, but I started my peace building long before. In 2007, I was a volunteer in Red Cross Kenya, and we provided emergency services to the people who were affected by post-election violence.

In 2009, I was thinking of ways to bring our community together, so that we could speak on the issues affecting us, and one of the things which was affecting our community was violence. Mathare is one of the hot spots for violence, even way before the August 2022 elections, and I decided to bring our community together through the support of other communities, partners and friends in making sure that we talk to our people to maintain peace before, during and after elections.

My focus has been to build the capacity of local residents because these are the people politicians are after, they take advantage of our poverty to build themselves up. I decided to focus on transforming the local community by engaging them in different activities, programs and trainings.

On 21 September, 2022, Mathare Peace Initiative held our 10th International Peace Day celebration, and the reason I am celebrating 'Peace Day' is because of my background, where I came from. Mathare is a violent place, and this is the only way of bringing my community together.

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This is the only way we can maintain peace during, before and after elections. Whether there are elections or not, let us be peaceful. For Kenyan youth and African youth, Africa is our continent and Kenya is our country. We don't have another country to run to. Let us build peace and let us work as a community but not as different people. To my youth, it is high time to embrace peace.



*Happy Alphonse is a community organizer, peace champion and member of Africans Rising. He founded Mathare Peace Initiative, a community-based organization that promotes peace in Mathare, an informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya.*



# Festival Highlights Art, Debate and Industry to Address Challenges to African Potential

## By Souleymane Jules Diallo

From 01 to 02 October, 2022, JIF'AFRIK held the International Pan-African Festival of Nguekokh (FIPAN) in Nguékokh, Senegal. The festival included debates, palaver trees, cinema forum, traditions, fair exhibition, and an eco-beach. The theme for this year's festival was "Challenges of the Development of African Industry". The overall objective of the festival was to mobilise economic, political, social and cultural actors around the challenges of the continent and propose solutions to these challenges.

The festival reached more than 500 participants and more than six delegations from six African countries and the diaspora. Participants were able to reflect on and search for solutions to help reveal African potential through debates or by proposing products (craft production, films, documentaries, etc). Debate topics included the future economic and political force of Africa and its diaspora, Pan-African ideology and the approach to social transformation, and the establishment of a vanguard artistic movement for the constitution of a soft power.



Africans Rising helped support the festival financially and Movement Coordinator Coumba Touré led a workshop in Popoguine, Senegal, and helped with other supports as well. Speakers included Mamadou Hervé Fall from the RND, the Minister of Culture M Aliou Sow, Professor Babacar Diouf, cultural presentations were made by groups including Nguékokh Communal Troupe.

The festival successfully brought together many young people from the continent who submitted proposals on the theme and has become a driving force for several other initiatives (Mosan, Festival d'assoukatene Diouloulou, UPLEADS, etc.).



*Souleymane Jules Diallo is a Pan-African activist committed to the sovereignty and development of Africa.*

## Building Community and Resilience Through Artistic Performances

By Etienne Kasereka



I am a young artist and activist committed to social change in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I was born in 1996 in the territory of Rutshuru, where war is raging due to the increased instability caused by local and foreign armed groups in this part of the country. In this complex context, I have used my talents as a composer, singer and performer to help the people of the region rebuild their lives and live together peacefully despite daily traumatic ordeals.

Since 2016, I have been active in the youth space, specifically as a member and volunteer in several local and regional movements and organisations, including Amani-Institute ASB and Foyer Culturel Goma.

As a result, I have been a part of several resilience and community-building activities, including community work, recreation activities to give moral support to children in IDP camps, and participatory forum theatre workshops to bring members of local communities to dialogue and reconciliation by using art as therapy.

Through my artistic performances, I am able to raise awareness among members of local communities on issues of civic education, the fight against hate speech, and the promotion of human rights, particularly the sexual and reproductive rights of young people living in violent conflict areas.

My commitment has earned me recognition at local and regional levels. Being named as the first runner-up in the category of Activist Artist of the Year in the 2022 Africans Rising Activism Awards will allow me to amplify the impact of my work. It is also a new responsibility that allows me to remain committed and proactive in community service. With this award, I will try to influence other young people and train them to become Africa Rising members.



*Etienne Kasereka is an artist and activist in the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

*He was voted the first runner-up in the Artistic Activist category of the 2022 Africans Rising Activism Awards.*



# In South Sudan, Pan-African Peacemakers Alliance Advocates for Civic Space, Peace and Democracy

## By Yoal Gatkuoth (Chàngè De Gatkuoth)

On the 22nd of February, 2022, the Pan-African Peacemakers Alliance (PAPA) team and I held a youth dialogue on good governance and democracy in South Sudan. The dialogue brought together 30 youth participants from diverse backgrounds, including activists representing various civil society organizations. The dialogue was held to develop and dialogue new perspectives on how to achieve good governance and democracy in South Sudan through lasting peace and stability. The dialogue was also meant to create awareness among youth on the importance of exercising civic rights and duties as the basis for the promotion of a culture of peace and democratic governance in the country.

The conflict which erupted in South Sudan on December 15, 2013, resulted in massive displacement and death of civilians that led to health and social problems and economic vulnerability. The majority of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) living in the camp in Juba are women, children, and young people who face considerable health and economic challenges. At the outset, young girls and young women in the camp experienced severe adverse effects on their social, health, emotional, economic, and spiritual well-being due to their living conditions and the loss of their all properties to the conflict, which left them with little or nothing to support their families and limited access to the health facilities and other valuable facilities for their health in the camp and schools. The inability to provide for one's self and family, and lack of access to services, and skills all have immediate and long-term consequences for Internally displaced women these include post-traumatic stress disorders, psychosomatic illness, depression, anxiety, and even GBV in camp.



Considering these circumstances, PAPA and I conducted our third intervention in the camp from the 24 – 27 May, 2022. The event was a four-day training on how to make re-useable sanitary pads in IDP camp 3 in Juba, South Sudan, and was attended by 70 participants, girls and young women from the camp. The training was organized to empower the girls and young women with knowledge and skills to sustain themselves when there were no opportunities of getting pads to continue to maintain proper menstrual hygiene in the camp. This training on Menstrual Health Management, with the value of Comprehensive Sexuality Education awareness in partnership with the AfriYAN and UNFPA.



Since the 2013 war, there has been continued and increasing harassment, intimidation, jailing, silencing and other acts of violence and oppression carried out against civil society groups, human rights defenders, and related organizations. In the context of shrinking civic space, PAPA and I, as a deputy chair of the Civic Society Coalition on Defense of Civic Space, carried out advocacy and lobbying meetings from October through December, 2022. In these meetings, we met with key government officials, MPs, governors, and Ambassadors on the continuation of human rights violations in the Greater Upper Nile, intimidation of activists, and the shrinking of civic space in the country and peace agreement.

*Yoal Gatkuoth (Chàngè De Gatkuoth) is a peace and human rights activist in South Sudan. He is the founder of Pan - African Peacemakers Alliance (PAPA).*



# Encouraging students to lead peacebuilding in Cameroon

## By Epah Mfortaw Nyukechen

Cameroon is the theatre of multiple wars. Since 2014, the ISIS-affiliated terrorist organisation Boko Haram has expanded its operations into northern Cameroon. In the East, the humanitarian crisis resulting from the internal conflict in the Central African Republic poses a real security challenge for Cameroon. In 2016 armed separatist groups began a war of independence in Cameroon's English-speaking North-West and South-West regions. The latter, whose roots are endogenous, has been engulfed in a vicious fratricidal war where civilians have been haunted by extreme violence, including extrajudicial killings, beheadings, mutilations, torture, and rape. Thousands of Cameroonians have died and tens of thousands have been displaced, including people who are now refugees in neighbouring countries.

As inhabitants of this common global village, we are called - each in our own way to serve humanity.

I have witnessed the unfolding of this unfair drama in Cameroon, and as a son of the English-speaking minority region, I have been a victim of extreme violence, kidnapped on my way to school in 2019 by separatist fighters. After a severe beating and paying a large ransom, I was lucky enough to have been released.

The events of my life inspired me to found and coordinate the organisation WeBuild as well as a student-led peacebuilding initiative called the University Lecture on Peace in Africa. Through WeBuild, I am working with several universities in Cameroon to reach out to young leaders and shake them out of apathy, building knowledge, imparting skills and awakening their minds to the challenges and the opportunities to help their communities, countries, and continent achieve peace and development.

The lecture series features traditional, commemorative, theoretical lectures by high-level or otherwise distinguished persons and a programme of innovative, practical exercises based on the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security; the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 on Women, Peace and Security; and the AU Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security.

The lectures bring together women peacebuilders, grassroots activists, religious and traditional leaders, members of local civil society organisations, practitioners, policy makers, sundry peacebuilders, youth leaders, development experts, and stakeholders involved in peace efforts, processes and studies.



The purpose of these lectures is to highlight the importance of youth involvement in peace efforts across Africa; identify the root causes of conflict; and to urge governments in Cameroon and Africa to be flexible and to adopt practical solutions calling on stakeholders to step up the peace rhetoric and not be passive bystanders. Within three years, the University Lecture on Peace in Africa has reached over 10,000 young persons within Cameroon, engaging them in the search for peace.



*Epah Mfortaw Nyukechen founded and coordinates the student-led peacebuilding initiative called the University Lecture on Peace in Africa.*

# Supporting Women's Rights through Storytelling and Advocacy in Sudan

By Afraa Saad

I work to enhance the participation of Sudanese women in public, political and civil work, and in all scientific, practical and life fields, and focus on women scholars in low-income professions.

I also work on promoting women's activism so they receive more recognition and seats in decision-making positions, especially women's decisions.

My work in civil society organisations made me aware of women's issues and the marginalisation that falls on them despite their hard work to obtain equal opportunities.

I work for Sudanese women who are working hard to make the Sudanese revolution a success so that they can obtain freedom, peace, dignity, justice and equality and reverse their struggle on the Sudanese street.

They are engaged in peaceful mobilisation to support the skills of women in war and conflict zones and to document the violations they are subjected to and their likeness through news stories and images.



Being voted the Artistic Activist of the Year in the 2022 Africans Rising Activism Awards encourages me to continue in my work to reflect women's stories and motivate women to advocate for their issues in their different and multicultural categories.

In Sudan, we must come together to reach solutions to our common issues and advocate for and support campaigns that are important to us.

My assumption of the title will help me to consolidate my faith in Bertoul Maputo to guarantee women's rights, including the right to participate in the political process, equality, social and political equality with men, improve autonomy in reproductive health decisions, and end genital mutilation.



*Afraa Saad is a filmmaker and photographer. She studied at Al-Neelain University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Libraries and Information.*

*She is the founding member of the Kandaka Women's Group at Al-Neelain University. Saad is Interested in humanitarian, human rights and women's issues.*

## Investing in the African Child Whose Education is in Crisis

By George Omer Nalo

Founded in August 2019, Education In Crisis is a non-governmental organisation led by youth from six African countries working to strategically invest in quality education by bringing together resources to reach African children impacted by poverty, conflict, and illiteracy. We do this through sponsorships, capacity building, advocacy, lobbying, networking, research and information sharing as our methods of delivery. In the past three years, we have supported 207 scholars under a fully-funded scholarship program in four countries: Tanzania, Uganda, Sudan and South Sudan. As we continue our work, we hope to expand to more countries.

After having observed that many children are out of school due to many barriers, our mission is to promote inclusive, equitable, quality education to help alleviate poverty and provide a pathway for sustainable development. Our vision is that all African youth will have access to improved, free quality education. There are many ways we work toward this goal. We provide scholastic materials, raise awareness about the learning crisis, and advocate for better financing education policies and learning outcomes. We support capacity building of teachers and promote reading culture, language, and numeracy skills so that young African students can enrich themselves with knowledge, skills, academic abilities and explore their hidden talents which only education makes it possible.

Through the schools we partner with, Education in Crisis has been able to: train 193 teachers on trauma-related cases that directly affect children's learning; distribute 950 sanitary towels to school girls to keep them in school; and distribute 10,000 pens and books to 750 students in our countries of operation under the I4APen project. For children in conflict areas like Sudan, we have offered 8 scholarships allowing them to study in Uganda. We do this by mobilising local resources from local people, especially working groups, by educating them on the importance of one dollar to a child whose education is in crisis.



We work with local grassroots communities, activists and supporters of the right to education, teachers, professionals, students, community leaders, civil society organisations, policy makers, educationists, private sector and businesses, and schools and institutions with an aim to enhance free and quality education for all groups, including those with disabilities and girls.

Being named the second runner-up in the Movement of the Year category in the 2022 Africans Rising Activism Awards means a recognition of our work in the communities in which we operate and a new partnership with Africans Rising Movement, which is an important achievement. It has given us credibility and encouragement to keep mobilising and doing more to transform the lives of millions on the continent whose education is in crisis by promoting inclusive, equitable, quality education for all.

*George Omer Nalo is the executive director of Education in Crisis. Initiated by African Partnership For Education, Education in Crisis is a non-governmental organization based in Arusha, Tanzania. The organization operates in four African countries delivering education to the most vulnerable children and youth.*

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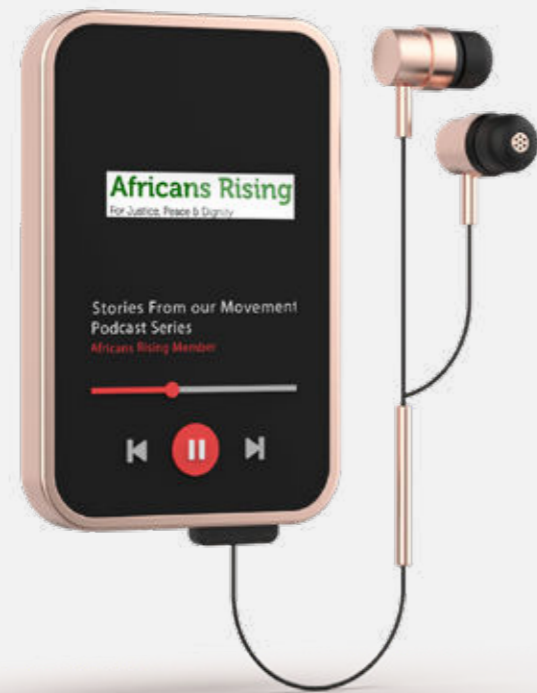
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# Stories From our Movement Podcast Series

Our movement recently started a podcast series to feature the amazing stories and successes of our individual and organizational members. We currently have 3 episodes of the "Stories from our Movement" podcast series available in English, Swahili and Arabic.



## You can listen to the podcast on



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