

Many of them therefore end up looking on land and cattle as their only source of livelihood. This culture ends up becoming a source of bloody conflicts time and again. The aim is to change the mentality and focus into transforming them into global view and citizenship. This is an ongoing activity working with 150 schools in five provinces.

- Environment conservation and protection of indigenous food species. With the change of weather patterns,



**Environmental program in Kyanzasu, Machakos**

alarming rates of destruction

of our forests and catchments areas, desertification, development of genetically modified organisms and their introduction in Africa, Africa stand to lose much of its indigenous food species and natural heritage. This need be checked urgently. We are working on environment conservation and 'the seed' preservation.

- Promoting positive peace cultures among the youths through indoor and outdoor sports, art works, inter-ethnic and cultural exchanges amongst youths from different communities and regions as well as financial activities. Over 75% of the total Kenyan population is below the age of 35, with only 6% being the aged. Many of them are semi-illiterate and lack employment. They end up becoming hopeless and disappointed with life. Most of them join crime and/or the many illegal groups. We are exploring possibilities of an international exchange program. To give hope, save a soul and fight these social injustices, such activities would come in handy.

## Network growth and regional partnership

The organization has a wide range of partnership with local, national and regional organizations founded on the same principals and therefore able to catalyze wider action across the region. We work in six out of the eight Kenyan administrative provinces. While all partners remain independent, collaboration will remain imperative so as to implement joint synergistic for expanded success.

**Capacity building** Since inception, the peace museum has organized or participated in many capacity building forums, workshops and ground work activities on its many different areas of interest.

## Research and Documentation

The program undertakes research and documentation on relevant fields, package and disseminate it to stakeholders through meetings, workshops, exchange visits, intergenerational & experiential learning.

## Organizational structure

The organization steering committee is led by the curator as the coordinator of the organization's daily activities and running. Directly under the coordinator are the programs officer, administrative secretary and the accounts officer.

**The organization advisory group.** This is a group of sage elders commonly referred to as the board of elders. They provide advice to the steering committee and represent the ideals and ethics of the peace museum and provide leadership inspiration. The board is led by the chairman and is responsible for foreseeing the projects development agenda. All the other members are trustees.

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## THE LARI MEMORIAL PEACE MUSEUM AND CULTURAL RESOURCE CENTRE

“Reflecting on our past to better our tomorrow”



JUSTICE & PEACE

## INTRODUCTION

26<sup>th</sup> of March 1953 marked an indelible mark in the history of Lari. On that fateful night, the nationalist struck the royalists killing over a hundred and fifty individual. Houses were burnt, animals were killed as well. Lari witnessed a bloodbath.

The following morning was even worse. The government came down for revenge. Many were killed within the villages and others taken into the nearby Kereita and Uplands forests where they were short dead. Later, a court was opened for trials on the suspected mau mau adherents. This continued up to mid 1954. A generation was lost. The internal wounds have kept the community in pain, suspicion, hatred and separation between the two sides from one generation to the other. The pain of the internal wounds has refused to go. The wounds and painful memories linger in them as if they happened yesterday. It has remained an indelible mark ever since.

## A BRIEF HISTORY

The Lari Memorial Peace Museum was started in year 2001 and registered on 29<sup>th</sup> May the same year. The Organization grew as a commitment to fight the hatred, suspicion, pain and the many unhealed internal wounds that kept the Lari community since the 1953 infamous Lari massacre.

## VISION STATEMENT

To become a leading regional institution on matters of peace building through memorization of the Lari massacre, human rights and conservation of inter-ethnic indigenous peace cultures towards promotion of inter-ethnic dialogue. We wish for peace and mutual respect for ethnic, cultural, religious and biological diversity now and in the future.

## MISION STATEMENT

To promote peace values in our communities for mutual relationships in promoting forgiveness, wise leadership, sensitive and generous love in order to achieve peace, always remembering that a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye leaves the humankind toothless and blind.

## VALUES

Our organizational core values are:

**Commitment** to the peace-building mission. This is founded on the non-profit making foundation that the organization is built.

**Transparency** as to promote accountability for equal and full participation of all members to get the best of each.

**Honesty** and openness with all we interact on daily basis

**Solidarity** in partnership with all who are working for peace and justice for all peoples and Mother Nature

**Teamwork**, integrity and Respect.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Working for a human dignity and better humanity through peace building using cultural peace heritage.
- Developing a cultural, documentation and educational resource center in Lari.
- Imparting peace heritage in our children through peace education in schools and in/with colleges/universities
- Ensuring life security through environment conservation, food security, promoting human rights and healthy living.
- Documenting our dark history in order to learn from our past mistakes and remember them without victimization. Learning the truth about humanity's past failures is a way to increase peoples capacity to handle conflicts in a non violent manner, through a joint reckoning of his-tory.

## PAST, ON-GOING ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE PLANS

As a Peace and Cultural Resource Center, we have been involved in activities such as:

- Peace building, healing and reconciliation projects through indigenous African heritage like the beading of the Kenyan Tree of Peace, launched on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2008 at Kambaa, Central Kenya by Mr. Chege, the Central Province Director of Culture. The beading took place across five provinces including Central, Western, Eastern, Nyanza and the Rift-Valley Provinces and aimed at rebuilding interethnic trust after the post election crisis.



Offering Relief to I.D.Ps in Limuru in Feb 2008

Twenty-three Kenyan communities participated and plans are underway to bring into board the rest of the Kenyan Communities as well as sustaining the many peace initiatives that were born across the visited areas during the beading aimed at healing the post election wounds. Our objectives in this can be summed up as documenting the folly of our times so as to lead Kenyans towards overcoming bitterness, loss of life and humiliation that many suffered, without a culture of vendetta and revenge taking over their minds thereby avoiding a recurrence of that kind of violence. Without blaming the past, learn from it dialectically, dialogically and creatively in order not to ever repeat these errors again. The future will be shaped on Kenyans successfully pulling themselves out of these conditions and mentalities.

- Documenting and exhibiting the infamous 1953 Lari Massacre history, for those who cannot remember their past mistakes are condemned to repeat them. This is complemented by protection of peace and massacre sites-they are important part of our story and *“it is only the story that can continue beyond the war and the warrior. It is the story that outlives the sound of the war-drums and the exploits of the brave fighters. It is the story that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind. Does the blind man own his escort? No, neither do we the story; rather it is the story that owns us and directs us”* - Chinua Achebe, *Anthill of the Savannah* (1987).

- Human rights and creating awareness on social evils affecting the society as to collectively seek solutions.

- Cultural inter ethnic peace material culture exhibition. The African peace trees and material cultures/artifacts are the remaining symbols of our rich heritage of peace. The results will be an exhibition that will travel across the country in calling for peace and tranquility among different Kenyan communities. It will be mounted in these many community-based organizations participating in peace building, churches and schools in order to reach the people on the very ground who have time and again participated in violent activities. It will be an educational experience that will strive to build a dialogue platform amongst many communities through promotion and participation in oral and visual cultural heritage.

- Fight against HIV/AIDS. With only about a sixth of the world population, Africa carries the biggest world AIDS burden of about 70%. There are many orphans as a result of this and the infected and affected persons need care and support.

- Schools peace projects through computers and libraries in bridging the inter-generational gap. Not many parents are capable of educating their children beyond the free primary education or give them computer skills. The quarter system of education has not spared the communities either.