

Biographies Speakers Lunch Session 19/09/2023

‘Woman leaders on promoting local peace & security in DRC and Kenya’



Mary Maina – Focal Point Mensen met een Missie in Kenya



Mary Maina is a young woman leader, a peace promoter, and an experienced development practitioner with a background in the fields of gender, governance, peace, and security. She is a board member of the Catholic Justice and Peace Department (CJPD), a Catholic Commission that promotes justice and challenges oppressive structures in society. She is also engaged in several initiatives geared towards the evolution of state and non-state actors and their contributions to improving public safety, peace, and security.

She sits in the County Engagement Forum and Ideological Pillar. These are multi-sectoral platforms that inform participatory state and non-state actions and evidence-based programming initiatives on Preventing and Countering Violence Extremism (P-CVE) in Kenya.

Mary is also a known voice for holistic gender transformation, she supports Women of Faiths in Kenya. This organization collaboratively nurtures, and sustains an environment that mainstreams women of all faiths and harnesses their potential to strategically engage duty-bearers in decision-making processes and policy actions.

She believes real gender transformation happens when policies connect to and are grounded on the realities of all women. She is convinced that true power lies in empowering women to design prevention strategies that are relevant to their convictions, experiences, and context.

Déodatte Chishibanji – Coordinator Programme MAnU 2.0. (Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi)



Déodatte Chishibanji, of Congolese nationality, is currently Coordinator of a regional program called "Mwanamke, Amani na Usalama" in acronym "MAnU2.0". This is a collaboration program of Mensen met een Missie, CARE Nederland (CNL) and the Synergie des Women for Peace and Reconciliation of the Peoples of the Great Lakes (SPR) within the framework of the implementation of Resolution 1325.

She has extensive work experience of more than 7 years in the implementation of activities relating to Resolution 1325 with women's organizations and networks at the national level and in the Great Lakes region. She is active as an advisor to the Women Leadership Program for Peace and Security (WLPS) within Cordaid. Next to that, she is also a Coordinator of the "National Campaign Right for All" with 14 Cordaid partners. Their goal is to support the judicial system in order to combat the culture of impunity under the angle of three themes including land rights, the handling of cases of sexual violence and the rights of the accused.

She has also worked for more than 10 years with the American international NGO "Global Rights" in the Women's Rights and Gender Equality program. This program supports women's organizations and platforms in North and South Kivu, Maniema, in Eastern Province and North Katanga. They assist women's networks in capacity building, advocacy and mobilization for the promotion of women's rights and involvement in the peace process in DR Congo. Also strengthening the political participation and conflict transformation capacities.

In addition to her professional experience, she is very comfortable in her spiritual activities. Started more than 20 years ago, each year she manages a ministry within the Catholic Church as either an animator of the basic ecclesial community or being first responsible at different levels of the prayer movement within the Marian priestly movement.

Elakano Justine - Focal Point Mensen met een Missie in Democratic Republic of Congo



Ms. Elakano Justine has a master's degree in Advanced Studies in Social Practices from the University of Paris III-Sorbonne Nouvelle, in France. She began her career as a rural animator, and it was during this period that she realized that women were not involved in decision-making in the villages, while they were the mainstay of the rural economy. She then created women's organizations to deal with women's problems in rural areas. After a rich experience with the peasant world, she decided to continue her studies to deepen her knowledge in the field of Social Sciences.

Back in Africa after her studies, she continued to work in the field of development. She successively occupied the positions of project manager, project coordinator and consultant for Channel Research in the field of evaluations of development and emergency programs, Next to that, she is a specialist in women's issues and development.

She is currently an independent consultant and has more than 30 years of experience in the field of development. With the perspective provided by her university education, she links theory to practice. As an African woman, she has a great experience in several countries of Africa and Europe.

Currently, she is interested in delving deeper into the issue of gender – faith and religion.