

Running for Peace: The Role of Peace Races in Peacebuilding and Development of East African Pastoralists

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ABSTRACT

Running for peace: the role of peace races in peacebuilding and development of east African pastoralists, is an experience sharing of the Tegla Loroupe Peace Races. Peace races are athletic events organized as processes for promoting peace and development among pastoralists in east Africa. Peace races attract high profile sports persons, politicians, diplomats and mass media creating opportunities for advocacy on issues affecting pastoralists, and this makes peace races important peacebuilding and development approach. While reduced conflict incidences and the rising number of community-based peace activities are successes attributable to the peace races, understanding and acceptance of the concept as an approach to peacebuilding and development by the funders and other peace and development actors, along with parallel but negative state interventions to conflict situations remain the common threats to peace race gains.

INTRODUCTION

- Conflict has been challenge and catalyst for societal change and development.
- **because** of the presence of conflict in human society almost all the time[1], many theories and practices have been evolved try to alleviate this ever-present challenge to humanity
- Sports for peace and development which borrows from the ideas of the Olympic truce is one such concept aimed at addressing conflict in human societies.
- organizations involved in sports for peace in the Greater Horn of Africa : Oxfam GB(Kenya),Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation, Practical Action, Mercy Corps, Production Aid(Sudan), UNICEF, CJPC etc.
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- The Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation, is perhaps one of the peace and development organization with highly structured and deliberate programming in sports for peace and development.
- TLPF is well known for organizing peace races which bring “raider-warriors” from communities in conflict to compete in athletics. peace races promote cross-cultural interaction among people from communities in conflict, facilitate discussions on peace, brings together leaders and peace organizations to advocate and campaign for peace and development.
- The paper describes what peace races are; how they are organized and executed; looks at their successes, challenges, and concludes by linking peace races to the millennium development goals, psycho trauma healing and tourism.

KEY WORDS

- **Raider-warrior:** young pastoralist male youth who engage in cattle raiding from other communities whether approved or not the indigenous leadership and authority systems
- **Peace race:** these are athletic events organized as processes by the Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation for promoting peace and development among pastoralists in east Africa
- **Pastoralists:** people who depend almost entirely on livestock and livestock for livelihood

PEACE RACES

Peace races are athletic events organized as processes for promoting peace and development among pastoralists in east Africa.

Peace races attract high profile sports persons, politicians, diplomats and mass media creating excellent opportunities for advocacy on issues affecting pastoralists. This makes peace races important peacebuilding and development approach.

objectives:

1. To create an opportunity for leaders and change agents to advocate for peace, girl-child rights and other related development issues
2. To showcase sports as an alternative livelihood factor
3. To create opportunities for cross-cultural interactions for rebuilding and attitude change
4. To sensitize citizens, governments and other peace and development institutions on the need to address peace and development needs of the pastoralists

Peace races : Cont.

- primary target: conflict-prone pastoralists in the GHA - Turkana, Sebei, Karamojong, Pokot etc
- other stakeholders: peacebuilding NGOs, community groups and government departments.
- Scope: concentrated in North Rift(Kenya) and Karamoja(Uganda) regions.
- PRS create platform leaders (community /national levels) to advocate for peaceful co-existence and socio-economic improvement of the poor and other marginalized groups
- Comparative advantage of PRs: creating opportunities for crosscultural interations,creates opprtunities for crosscultural audience etc.

Peace race cont..

- A peace race involves series of activities include; mobilization of resources and participants, reception and handling of participants (warriors, leaders, diplomats, state agents), meals and accommodation, race, closing party, and prize awards.
- Peace races inputs: money, vehicles, race kits, and human resources.

SUCSESSES OF PEACE RACES

Although the practice of the race is three years old, it has registered important successes:

- Create forum for advocacy on pastoral issues:
 - * presence of captive audience – communities, media and media consumers;
 - * Advocacy issues: girl-child rights peace, environment, anti-small arms campaign, women issues.
- Opportunities for showcasing sports as alternative livelihoods.
 - * delivered warriors from their war-like attitude and activities
 - * talent identification and development: PRs have inspired talent

SUCCESES Cont.

CASE: Chemokil Chilapong

- * The 2004 Nairobi Standard Marathon Champion,

- * Chemokil Chilapong,

- * Was a mother of four at the time

- * now = a career athlete,

- * She is a product of the Kapenguria Race - her testing ; she became number seven(7)

- * She is now a career athlete = she depends on athletics as a livelihood option

SUCSESSES Cont.

- cross-cultural interaction:
 - * helped participants redefine their perceptions and rebuilding relationships
 - * Peace races as events and as processes have strong potential in uniting communities - people discover the power of their similarities in uniting rather than dividing them
 - * Discovery of their cross-cultural similarities become building blocks for developing positive attitudes
- increased communication and interaction among participants
 - * The chain reaction in interaction and communication

SUCSESSES Cont.

- * During the overnight night parties, participants enjoy each others presence through dance, conversations and sharing meals
- By staying in a common residence, participants begin to appreciate each other
- Bringing the world to the communities and taking communities to the world.
- * Bring the world into the communities:
 - attendance of very politically and diplomatically significant persons e.g. Vice President, High commissioners and ambassadors, and ministers and members of parliament

SUCSESSES Cont.

- * Taking communities to the World: profile of the diplomats and politicians make the pastoral issues media stories. Awareness of the peace and development challenges of the communities is raised locally and internationally.
- Exposure tours: PRs have also served as exposure tours for participants and the hosting communities. The realities they experience in different peace race sites are life changing.
- boosting grassroots efforts:
 - * Chain reaction: TLPF's experience shows that PR events have had chain reaction for grassroots peace activities. Peace races have motivated local leaders and peace organizations to engage in local level peace and security processes.

SUCSESSES Cont.

CASE: peace meetings between Ugandan Security forces on the Mt Elgon border, Pokot and Sebei which followed after the to 2006, Kapenguria Peace Race. The networks and interactions created during peace races eventually produce such chain reaction of peace activities.

* Boosting esteem of the individual peace workers - other than motivating and catalyzing local peace initiatives, PRs also re-energizes the

SUCSESSES Cont.

PRs as powerful attitude change processes

* Accepting and celebrating their areas of commonness and differences, close interaction is encouraged and co-existence becomes a potential reality that remaining a pipe dream among conflict-prone pastoralists in east Africa.

* Friendship values: peace races attempts to draw from positive values of the communities notably the Pokot, Turkana and Karamoja – once cross-cultural friendships are formed they are sustained forever. No amount of intercommunity stereotyping and hate attitudes can break such bonds. Peace ¹⁶

SUCSESSES Cont.

- Cross-cultural exposure tours. By hosting races in different sites, participants take advantage of the opportunities as cross-cultural tours - they encounter and learn of challenges unique to other communities, appreciate opportunities and the other people's social, economic and ecological challenges. The Tour element of the peace race has been a big pressure from the communities to the Foundation; everyone wishes to attend peace races held outside their communities. The Foundation along with its partners for encouraging human interaction through peace races.

SUCSESSES Cont.

- Acceptance of the PRs
- Relative peace episodes are also attributable to peace races.
- The peace races are both process and an end-in-itself strategy.
 - * Stopgap: PRs create an atmosphere that can allow discussions and negotiations
 - * One of the expected outcomes of the races is the attitude change which is an important variable that can be manipulated for peace or conflict. Manipulating for peace makes the races more of an end-in-themselves rather than stopgap measure.

SUCSESSES Cont.

- Individual change. Peace races have been instrumental turning points especially for the former raider-warriors.
- Reduction in incidence and magnitude of raids. This is attributable in part to peace races. Because lead raider-warriors have crossed to peace side of life, the remaining warriors are left leaderless.
 - * CASE: reduction of conflict is evidenced in the West Pokot-Luhya-Sebei Trans-Nzoia conflict triangle. time.

CHALLENGES FACING PEACE RACES

Like any new concept and practice, Peace races equally have their challenges.

- The infancy of the concept and practice: Very few peace actors understand, accept and support the concept and approach to peacebuilding and development.
- Scanty literature and research findings of the best practices on the sports for peace and development.
- Involvement: not everyone has athletic talents
- State interventions of conflict situations: often interrupt civilian efforts and undo the gains
- Problem with indicator-based and instant impact donors
- Cost of holding a peace race.²

- CONCLUSION

- Given the strides that the Foundation has made in facilitating attainment of relative peace, attempting at creating conditions conducive for development, creating opportunities for cross-cultural interactions and making platform available for leaders and other change agents to take on relevant authorities for appropriate interventions, makes the Foundation a key player in millennium goals achievements. Peace races remain important processes for creating conditions that are conducive for trade, tourism and development. We must all make our contributions to create opportunities for living fulfilled lives at both local and global spheres.

THANK YOU

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*“Peace cannot be kept by force. It can
only be achieved by understanding”
Albert Einstein*