

Balancing Survival and Education

The success of the Kenya Pastoralist Education Project inspired IIRR to start Alternative Basic Education learning centers in southern Ethiopia. IIRR is now working with nine partners who manage 25 learning centers in eight pastoralist districts and other marginalized communities. Last term, the centers had a total of 2,413 children (1,410 boys and 1,003 girls). In addition, 1083 adults (690 men and 393 young women) attended the Functional Adult Literacy classes.

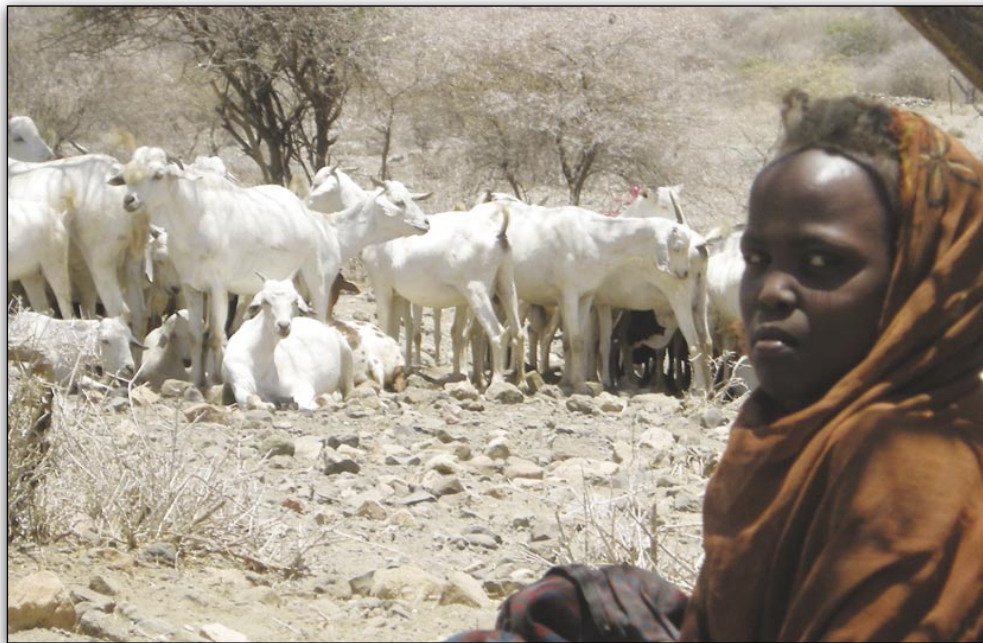
Most of the selected communities do not have access to formal or non-formal education. They live in a harsh environment where there is no basic infrastructure and utilities like roads, electricity, water or other social services. Most of the children cannot go to school anyway because they have to herd at daytime to support their family livelihoods. In some communities, this has necessitated planning of classes in shifts.

The first shift is 8am to noon, followed by the second shift from 2– 5.30pm and the last shift from 8 –11pm. The evening class allows girls and young women an opportunity to attend classes after they have performed the evening chores of cooking and milking. All this is after they are exhausted from a day out in the scorching sun, herding and sometimes having to spend half a day in search of water.

The classrooms are insufficient and the shift system allows many more children to get some education. The recent severe drought resulted in the closure of some of the centers as the communities moved in search of water and pasture for their flock. The schools are also faced with a high turnover of teachers because of the harsh environment.

Thanks to the funds from O'Neill and an anonymous donor, within a short time the project has not only

enrolled several children and adults, it has also improved the quality of learning by enhancing the learning environment. Additional classrooms have been constructed and learning materials, benches and desks have been purchased. The project has managed



Young girls take care of livestock during the day

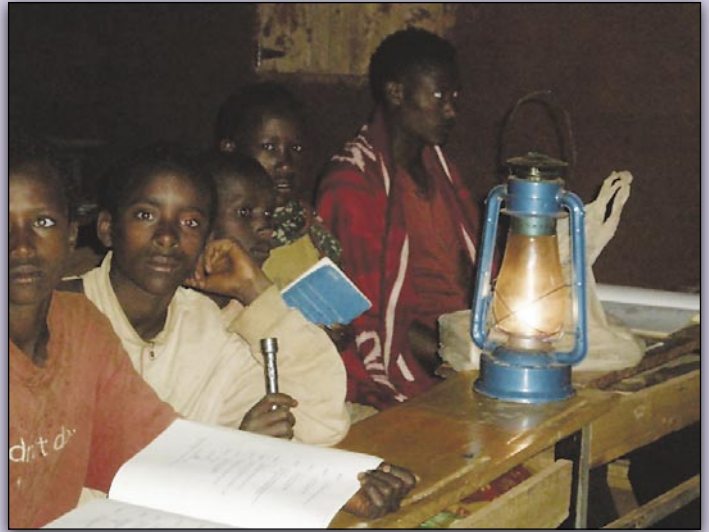
to build some staff quarters (which will encourage teachers to stay), as well as solar lights for the evening classes. The schools have bought storage tanks to harvest rainwater so the children now do not have to walk long distances to fetch water. The communities have owned the project – they contributed local materials and helped with the construction.

The project has made significant progress within a short time. The effort to make education accessible to the communities by our strategic partners and our staff is commendable. Following the recent annual planning meeting of IIRR's global management team, education is now established as one of the institute's global programmes. This means that more energies will be devoted to ensure the success of this programme to contribute to ensuring that pastoralists get access to education.

IIRR president, Dr Isaac Bekalo's impression of the learning center

After a rough daylong journey, our local NGO partner staff informed us that we would visit an evening school, which started at 8pm. We drove for about five kilometers from the main road through the bush and arrived at about 7:50pm. The teacher was already there with two community members but there was no single student. Five minutes later the two 5 by 6 meter classrooms of cycle 1 and 2 were full of children.

The majority were girls ranging in age from eight to 20 years. Each class had about 40 children. With three to four children squeezed on a single bench, there was hardly any space to move ones elbows. The age gap alone made teaching and learning difficult for both teachers and students. The weary teacher who also taught during the day shift shuttled between the two classes occasionally assigning students to take turns in leading a learning activity.



Students attending classes at night

Two dim lanterns lit the two classrooms. The learners squinted on their books in an effort to see. A few 'advantaged' children held flashlights over their books; but the flashlight requires batteries and is expensive for many. The upside is that the two classrooms have been completed and the teachers quarters under construction is almost completed through community efforts with funding support from IIRR's development partners. In addition, nine solar lighting units have been bought for distribution in the learning centers. The learning center has encouraged the pastoralists to start building semi-permanent structures. The community has a vision to grow their learning center to a fully fledged primary and maybe high school.

Building resilience against climate change: Learning from experience



Recent drought has led to loss of livestock

During the last week of September, an Ethiopian group of 11 (two female and nine male) project managers, field staff and representatives of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) community groups visited Kenya to learn about the disaster risk reduction interventions being implemented locally.

The group traveled about 300 kilometers north to Isiolo District. Some of the highlights of the trip were: a session with experts from the government funded Arid Lands Resources Management Program. They explained operations of the early warning system that they share with organizations and communities to guide interventions at different stages of drought and other hazards. During the drive to the different project areas, the delegation witnessed the devastation caused by the severe drought the country is experiencing.

The flip side of the coin was evident on visiting Merti Integrated Development Program (MID-P), a partner of IIRR's Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) project. MID-P is involved in water, sanitation and pasture management; health; distribution of relief aid and purchase of weak animals for meat processing.

The communities around this area have not suffered as much loss as a result of the timely and appropriate response by MID-P. The visiting team got to meet with the management of Rangelands Users Association (RUA) who are members of MID-P. This helped them to appreciate the importance of grazing regulations, use of communal assets such as boreholes in enabling communities cope with drought.

One of the boreholes managed by the association and local community groups is a watering point for over 11,000 cattle, 6 – 7,000 goats/sheep and 2000 camels within a radius of about 25 kilometers, every three days. This borehole is over stretched because the neighbouring two boreholes are faulty. The pastoralists are therefore forced to travel long distances with the real threat of facing raiders and losing their livestock due to lack of pasture and water. The visitors also got an opportunity to meet with two youth groups engaged in entrepreneurship. One group buys and sells livestock drugs to pastoralists at convenient locations. The other group is promoting itself as an



Community members building a dam

agent of the biggest mobile company in the region. The two groups provide employment to tens of jobless youth. It was exciting to visit the Eresa Haboru Community in Garba Tula district which practices CMDRR approaches to assess its situation and to plan timely appropriate interventions.

The good work the government and the organizations are doing is remarkable. However, the drought is so severe that the efforts are but a drop in the ocean. Roads are dotted with dead wild and domestic animals. It was not unusual to see abandoned livestock dying after their owners realized there was nothing they could do for them.

Good planning must be followed up with resources support and capacity building. Enhanced engagement by the government, NGO and the International community will go a long way in making life bearable for the pastoralist communities. The Ethiopian delegation witnessed firsthand the difference DRR processes make.

CMDRR course attracts 33 participants from nine countries

Thirty-three participants from nine countries (Senegal, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Denmark and Germany) converged in Kampala for a ten-day Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) course on 14 to 25 September 2009. The course is based on good community practices in coping with drought and other disasters.

The course focuses on facilitating communities to build their resilience to withstand and cope with the impact of hazards. It enables participants to apply the philosophy, concepts and principles of CMDRR, analyze various disaster risk reduction frameworks and models, identify and analyze different types of hazards and examine community managed approaches to reduce disaster risks. The novel idea is for a development practitioner in collaboration with the communities to plan and implement prevention and mitigation measures before a disaster happens.

The exciting training was well structured to enable participants to fully appreciate the model through facilitator presentation, group work and field-work. The training climaxed in a two-day visit to the Nalukongo Village of Migyera sub county in Nakasongola district north of Uganda where participants facilitated the CMDRR process. The shift of focus from responding to a disaster after it strike to addressing it before it happens is a totally new idea for most of the organizations. In addition to this, is the added value in a process in which the community's capacity is built to be able to fully manage a disaster risk reduction process. The course offered by IIRR is very relevant in the context of the present day disaster that development practitioners have to deal with. The frequency of these disasters has increased and therefore this needs innovative interventions that are community friendly.

The writer works for World Vision that has engaged in humanitarian and emergency affairs for a long time. It has supported intervention on response, reconstruction and rehabilitation after disasters such as floods, conflict, HIV/AIDS, disease epidemics, and environmental degradation among others. However, recurrence of disasters demands innovative ways to effectively support the vulnerable communities in implementing disaster prevention or mitigation measures. The four staff from World Vision who attended the training are expected to train their colleagues on the process.

— Samuel Marty, World Vision

16 Ethiopian officials in learning mission to Kenya

"The efforts made by the Kenyan women to create a nationwide movement to work for their rights is very impressive. I will share this experience with my colleagues so as to mobilize women in my region to bring meaningful change in their lives. I am sure this can be easily implemented in our situation." — Ethiopian official.

For a period of two weeks, 16 officials (one male) from the Ethiopian parliament, Women's Affairs Standing Committees, House of the Federation, Regional State Councils, Women

Affairs bureaus, Women Lawyers Association, Media Women Association and the media; visited Kenya.

The purpose of the trip was to share experiences and draw lessons from the peace building activities of other Kenyan women as well as the challenges they face in peace building. The group picked lessons applicable to the Ethiopian situation. The interaction and shared perspectives would, hopefully, culminate in the creation of an Ethiopian Women for Peace Network. While in Kenya, they visited 10 organizations working on peace building, conflict transformation and related works, the Kenyan Women Parliamentarian Association and media organizations, among others. The IIRR regional office also organized various presentations related to peace and women's rights. The trip charged the group and they promised to put into practice what they had learned.



Ethiopian group and IIRR staff at the Ethiopian Embassy in Nairobi

After the visit, one of the participants had this to say; "Kenyan women really have self confidence and courage to find every possible space to work for their rights. They also have a national vision and are committed to offer whatever they can for their community and society at large. I will work hard to use the lessons I learnt from Kenya to bring attitudinal change in my own life, family, neighborhood and organization."

IIRR supports local innovations through ProInnova

ProInnova (Promoting Local Innovations) has annually run three-week international training of facilitators since 2004. IIRR (Philippines) is a member of the International Support Team (IST). The workshops focus primarily on the competencies needed in supporting the process of local innovation in agriculture and natural resource management. They provide participants an understanding of socio-organizational arrangements needed to regulate the use of natural resources, tap into the social capital within communities, and discover new ways of stakeholder interactions that would encourage local innovation development.

This year, ProInnova Kenya, was attended by; World Neighbours (WN), Kenya Network for Dissemination of Agricultural Technologies (KENDAT) and Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI). The successful International refresher workshop, held in August, 2009, was attended by trained facilitators of Participatory Innovation Development (PID). The 16 participants were drawn from Nepal, Ethiopia, South Africa, Niger, Kenya, Cambodia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and the Solomon Islands. The workshop was facilitated by the IST members - Dr Kennedy Igbokwe (IIRR-Uganda) in collaboration with trainers from ProInnova-South Africa and ETC Eco-Culture.

The refresher course is a forum in which PID trainers share their experiences in the application of skills learnt within the context of their respective countries. They critically review PID training implementation on the ground over the past years, the general capacity building strategy in the network including the role played by the Training of Facilitators, in the process, and the support provided by IIRR, ETC, and other international resource organizations. The workshop findings, recommendations and action plans of the training pointed towards improving in-country PID training.

Safe water kiosks bring hope to many

Rachel Children's Home is situated in Mwea village of Gatundu North district and is a thirty-minute drive from Kenya's capital, Nairobi. The home is surrounded by captivating sceneries of leafy coffee farms and undulating hills where the Kariminu River gracefully meanders in the valley below. This beautiful scenery and the river's presence, however, belie the challenge of access to safe drinking water for the six thousand residents of the area.

Started in 2000 as a shelter for orphaned girls, the home caters for 35 children. It is named after Rachel Muiruri, a community leader who also manages its day to day running. The home, as well as the entire village depends on the Kariminu River for its water supply.



Women washing clothes at Kariminu River

In the hilly terrain, accessing water in the village is a daily challenge. Each day, many women and children carry empty jerrycans down to the river to fetch water for their household needs. Mwea residents travel long distances to fetch water from this river. The alternative is to spend Ksh 15 shillings (20 US cents) for a 20 litre jerrycan of water, a cost many cannot afford because households require at least five such jerry cans per day. It is common to see women and children as young as 12, carrying heavy containers of water up the hills on their backs. They spend hours fetching water that hardly meets their household needs. Rachel spends about 3,500 shillings (US\$ 46) per week on firewood to boil water for the children in the home. Most households do not boil or treat the water before drinking. Fetching water is also not safe for girls and women – the thickets sometimes harbor criminals. There have been incidents of children being defiled as they come to draw water from the river. Children are also kept from focusing on school work to meet household water needs.

A Safe Water Kiosk Initiative project team recently visited Rachel's village to assess levels of dependency and the hygiene status of Kariminu River. The team observed that scores of villagers were using the river's contaminated water. Some villagers farm, bathe and wash their clothes along the river bank. On occasion, one may also see human feces and carcasses in the river, especially in the rainy season when there is run off from the hills. Margaret Wambui, a 27 year-old mother of four has lived in Mwea all her life. She washes the family's linen in the river oblivious of the contamination that takes place in the river. "It is too tiring to get away from the river to pour the dirty water farther away; besides, everyone pours it in the river,"

she explained pointing to a group of women washing their clothes in the river.

"Many people complain of stomach pains, diarrhoea, amoeba and malaria. We have been advised by the health officials to boil drinking water or treat it to prevent these diseases but many people do not do it as firewood and chemicals are expensive. It is also time consuming and women are busy with other household chores." After several visits in the village, the project team decided to put up a safe water kiosk at the children's home. The kiosk will provide safe drinking water to the home and the wider community at an affordable fee. Rachel Children Home will run the water kiosk as a business enterprise to boost the home's income.

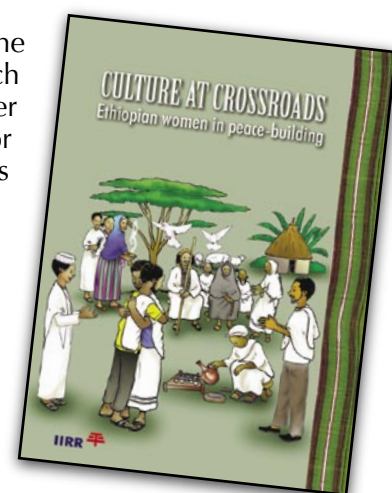
This is one of the three pilot projects being implemented in Central Kenya through a consortium of five organizations comprising Pureflow, Sterling Micro Development Consultants, International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), Hope Worldwide International and Safe Water Network as the lead partners. The safe water kiosk initiative will bring hope to thousands of rural communities who hardly access water. The project will also open kiosks in other parts of the country to provide safe water and help reduce water borne diseases. Rachel says. "We are grateful that the initiative is relieving our burden. We are very happy." The installation of the kiosk is a bold step in the journey to empowerment and better health, especially for women.

IIRRs role is documentation of the process and development of operators manuals and an entrepreneurs guide. IIRR will also develop and undertake monitoring and evaluation for the project.

Women Peace book launched

Culture at Crossroads: Ethiopian Women in Peace building was launched at the Hilton, Addis Ababa, in a colorful ceremony on 24 September 2009. The launch recorded the highest attendance ever for an IIRR function. Guests included partner organizations, government, non-governmental organizations, and the donor community. A record eight, major print and electronic media organizations covered the event.

It was officiated by Her Excellency Wz Firenesh Mekuria, State Minister of Women's Affairs who hailed IIRR for contributing, in the last 10 years, to enhanced empowerment of women in greater and effective participation in leadership and decision-making in Ethiopia. This publication was possible through the generous support of The Royal Netherlands Embassy; which also supports the Women in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Project. The Acting Development Cooperation head, Mr Franta Hijchers talked about the partnership between IIRR and his Embassy (RNE) to promote gender equality.



The book shows how Ethiopian women play a key role in peace building and conflict transformation using unique tools based on culture and tradition. It highlights cases from communities across the country where the skills and abilities of women are used to bring peace.

Full text of the Speech by Her Excellency Wz Firenesh Mekuria

Ethiopian state Minister of Women's Affairs

I would like to welcome you all to this occasion of launching the book: *Culture at crossroads – Ethiopian women in Peace Building* documented jointly by the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) and Royal Netherlands Embassy.

As you know the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has formulated several laws and policies to promote gender equality and women empowerment. It has been supporting the mainstreaming of gender in all its development policies and strategies and ratified international and regional instruments, revised policies and created enabling structures. The conducive policy environment that has been created by the government includes, among others, Article 35 of the constitution that clearly stipulates the rights of women.

The Women's national policy was formulated in 1993. National institutional machineries have been established at Federal, Regional and District levels to implement the policy. Moreover, the establishment in October 2005 of a full fledged Ministry of Women's Affairs with duties and responsibilities of ensuring the participation and empowerment of women in political, economic, social and cultural matters are clear evidences of the importance the Ethiopian government attaches towards gender issues. Indeed, all these will contribute to the development of our country. Ethiopian women have been using various tools based on culture and tradition to bring peace and resolve

conflict between individuals and communities. However, these experiences and achievements have not been properly documented. This book documents the unique skills and abilities of Ethiopian women to bring peace and resolve conflict. I have learnt that the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction has been implementing Ethiopian women in peace project that aims at building the capacity of women and their organizations in Ethiopia to play active role in peace building and conflict resolution. I have learnt that the organization also documents best practices for learning, sharing and replication.

I'm aware that for the past 10 years, IIRR has been working with the Federal Ministries, particularly with over 13 Women's Affairs bureaus of the ministries through its Gender in Leadership and Decision-Making project. We recommend the efforts the organization to contribute towards enhancing the empowerment of women for greater and effective participation in leadership and decision-making in Ethiopia. I also appreciate the work of IIRR and the Royal Netherlands Embassy that funded the documentation of this book. I believe the book will help governments and development organizations to identify and integrate this approaches into their peace building and conflict transformation practices. I believe knowing and understanding the traditional symbols, tools and institutions which are discussed in this book would help to preserve positive cultural practices for the future.

Once again, I would like to thank IIRR and the Royal Netherlands Embassy for making possible the publishing of this important book and announce that the book *Culture at crossroads-Ethiopian women in Peace Building* has officially been launched. I thank you very much.

Empowered through Farmer Field Schools

For the past 20 years, Joseph Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels have wrecked havoc in northern Uganda. The attacks on civilians resulted in the creation of Internally Displaced Peoples' (IDP) camps to give security for over 1 million people. The camps are characterized by congestion, poverty, food insecurity, denial of access to farm land, reliance on food aid for survival and limited or no access to basic services like education and health.

In 2008, relative peace returned to Northern Uganda, and people began to gradually return to their original villages. Humanitarian and development actors flocked to the area to help restore the productive capacities of the affected population.

Food security, nutrition, and livelihood security is key for development and UN FAO in partnership with IIRR decided to play a part in the restorative development in Amuru district; one of the most affected districts.

IIRR mobilized the community for the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) project in April 2008. Initially, there was mistrust in the community as a result of the war, but they agreed to form groups of 25-30 with the help of IIRR facilitators. Forty groups were formed in the two sub counties of Anaka and Amuru in Amuru district. The number of FFS has now grown to over 90.

After going through a six-month training, farmers graduate. Members have embarked on vegetable growing and commercial farming. The farmers grow tomatoes, cabbages, onions, okra, carrots, water melon; just to mention a few, to meet both household nutritional needs and income generation. Since 2008, the farmers involved in the FFS project have harvested severally. The farmers have also learnt to control pests and diseases using locally made organic pesticides.

Some FFS groups have testified having benefitted from farmer field schools. For example; the members of Ngom Lonyo FFS had this to say about the benefits of the farmer field schools.

With the knowledge acquired, farmers are determined to become leading vegetable producers in the Northern Region. They have also acquired oxen and ox ploughs for increased acreage and to produce enough food



Junior farmers in their vegetable garden

for themselves. They also hope to collectively market their produce through the sub county Farmer Field Schools network so as to by pass the middle men who occasionally exploit them. The dream of most of the groups is to take their children to better schools and build iron sheet roofed homes. They also dream about the possibility of buying tractors for commercial farming five years from now.

Strength in Unity

“Farmer field schools have united us. We are now living together amicably and cooperating as a result of being FFS members. We have also known the importance of vegetable growing, and line planting. The FFS has also introduced new crops in our area like carrots. Before, the FFS, we did not know these crops yet they are better income generating crops because they have relatively high prices and with ready markets. The crops require a very small piece of land for production. We see the possibility of reducing our poverty levels by producing enough foods both for our families and a surplus for sale. This is because of the skills and knowledge we acquired from FFS.”

“We used to think that certain crops like maize, cassava are the only ones to be line planted, but we discovered that if some other crops like beans, onions, rice, are line planted, their management and weeding becomes easier.”

Farmers are able to identify and control pests and crop diseases using either natural means or locally available materials like red pepper, soap and many others.”

BIG difference in Philippine schools

IIRR is intent on establishing Bio Intensive Gardening (BIG) initiatives in 51 schools in Davao, Phillipines.

Everyone is excited about the fresh, nutritious and chemical free vegetables for the school feeding program. This has contributed to the general improvement of the health of school aged malnourished children. The children are mostly from poor families. As a result of the improved nutrition, their academic performance has also improved. School feeding expenses have been minimized in the schools practicing BIG. In addition it has become an income generating activity for the schools. The income from the extra vegetables is used to add variety to the diets amongst other things.

IIRR transfers technical skills to the students through BIG trainings and mentoring activities. This is a practical technology which can be incorporated as a Sustainable Agriculture component to their curriculum. For the students, the BIG knowledge and skills is an important contribution to their personal "life skills", as



BIG participants next to their vegetable garden

well as a tool for food security and poverty alleviation of their families and communities.

BIG has created opportunities for the schools to become known or popular - a model in the community which can be visited for lesson sharing. One of the participating schools were winners in the competition for the *gulayan sa eskwelahan* (vegetable garden in schools) program.

2009 end of year events

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| • International CMDRR training Asia | 23 November – 4 December 2009 |
| • Value Chain Development Training (Ethiopia) | 26 October – 6 November 2009 |
| • CMDRR Advocacy Training (Kenya) | 20 – 26 October 2009 |
| • LOWO Writeshop (Ethiopia) | 2 – 6 November 2009 |
| • DRR Partners Review and Reflection Workshop (Kenya) | 23 – 27 November 2009 |
| • Women in Peace Conference (Ethiopia) | 10 – 11 November 2009 |

IIRR is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-governmental global development organization.

Our Regional Center for Asia is in the Philippines, and the Africa Regional Center is in Nairobi, Kenya.

The headquarters is also in the Philippines, with a small liaison office in the United States that operates out of New York.

Contributions are tax deductible for US taxpayers to the full extent allowed by law and may be sent to:

IIRR-US Office, 40 Exchange Place, Suite 1111, New York, NY 10005. IIRR's annual report is available upon request.

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