
EMPOWERED TO HOPE: **The Life and Peacebuilding Work of** **Sarah Akoru Lochodo**

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Edited by Emiko Noma



2010 Women PeaceMakers Program

Made possible by the Fred J. Hansen Foundation

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A NOTE TO THE READER

In the following pages, you will find narrative stories about a Woman PeaceMaker, along with additional information to provide a deep understanding of a contemporary conflict and one person's journey within it. These complementary components include a brief biography of the peacemaker, a historical summary of the conflict, a timeline integrating political developments in the country with personal history of the peacemaker, a question-and-answer transcript of select interviews, and a table of best practices in peacebuilding as demonstrated and reflected on by the peacemaker during her time at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice.

The document is not intended necessarily to be read straight through, from beginning to end. Instead, you can use the historical summary or timeline as mere references or guides as you read the narrative stories. You can move straight to the table of best practices if you are interested in peacebuilding methods and techniques, or go to the question-and-answer transcript if you want to read commentary in the peacemakers' own words. The goal of this format is to reach audiences through multiple channels, providing access to the peacemakers' work, vision, lives and impact in their communities.

ABOUT THE WOMEN PEACEMAKERS PROGRAM

Made possible through a generous grant from the Fred J. Hansen Foundation, the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice's (IPJ) Women PeaceMakers Program annually hosts four women from around the world who have been involved in human rights and peacemaking efforts in their countries.

Women on the frontline of efforts to end violence and secure a just peace seldom record their experiences, activities and insights – as generally there is no time or, perhaps, they do not have formal education that would help them record their stories. The Women PeaceMakers Program is a selective program for leaders who want to document, share and build upon their unique peacemaking stories. Selected peacemakers join the IPJ for an eight-week residency.

Women PeaceMakers are paired with a Peace Writer to document in written form their story of living in conflict and building peace in their communities and nations. The peacemakers' stories are also documented on film by the IPJ's partner organization Sun & Moon Vision Productions. While in residence at the institute, Women PeaceMakers give presentations on their work and the situation in their home countries to the university and San Diego communities.

The IPJ believes that women's stories go beyond headlines to capture the nuance of complex situations and expose the realities of gender-based violence, thus providing an understanding of conflict and an avenue to its transformation. The narrative stories of Women PeaceMakers not only provide this understanding, but also show the myriad ways women construct peace in the midst of and after violence and war. For the realization of peace with justice, the voices of women – those severely affected by violent conflict and struggling courageously and creatively to build community from the devastation – must be recorded, disseminated and spotlighted.¹

BIOGRAPHY OF A WOMAN PEACEMAKER – SARAH AKORU LOCHODO



Photo credit: Michelle Zousmer

Sarah Akoru Lochodo is the only woman – but a powerful one – negotiating among the semi-nomadic and pastoralist communities in her native Turkana District of northwestern Kenya, a region with a long history of violent confrontations. Lochodo was appointed assistant chief of Kainuk Sublocation by the Kenyan government in 2002, at a time when gun violence had become inherent to the banditry and cattle rustling common between the community’s Turkana and Pokot tribes. At times Lochodo has had to carry a gun herself, even as she was stepping forward as the first woman bringing about non-violent resolutions to the region.

Working in a pastoralist, patriarchal culture unaccustomed to women being prominent in public life, Lochodo quickly proved herself. Within one month of becoming assistant chief, she averted a massive revenge killing after a Pokot herdsboy was killed by a Turkana warrior from her own community. By 2009 she succeeded in holding a historic Pokot-Turkana meeting, the first attended completely without arms.

While disarmament has become a large part of Lochodo’s work in her district, she is well known as a community mediator, convening elders from conflicting communities to discuss the root of the region’s violence. With the trust she has earned over her years as assistant chief, the dialogues often end in the surrender of illegal firearms, pre-emption of cattle rustling and solutions to boundary disputes.

Lochodo is a founding member of Rural Women Peace Link, which played a major role in stabilizing communities after Kenya’s violent 2008 election riots. Of the 1,500 chiefs and assistant chiefs in the 2007 Administration College’s paramilitary skills training, Lochodo was one of only three women. She was also one of 25 women in Africa selected for leadership training by the Coalition for Peace in Africa in 2009. In addition to her official governmental duties, Lochodo is now working to combat female genital mutilation and discourage early marriages in rural communities. She also personally supports local girls whose parents’ livelihoods have been decimated by cattle rustling, financing their education and at times providing them a home.

“The peace-driven seething fire inside me isn’t affected a bit,” she says of the patriarchal obstacles that still confront her. “Deep inside I feel that peace has the face of a woman.”

CONFLICT HISTORY – TURKANA, KENYA

The Turkana District in the northwest region of Kenya is an arid and semi-arid, sparsely populated land inhabited by semi-nomadic pastoralist tribes, including those of the Turkana and Pokot. Bordered by Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia, Turkana is often described as an inhospitable land, with an average annual rainfall of less than 6 inches and daily temperatures exceeding 100 degrees in the shade.

The people of Turkana are dependent on livestock (cattle, sheep, goats and camels) for food, requiring an availability of pasture and water. Consequently, much of their cultural traditions and community identity revolve around cattle. The practice of livestock raiding, once known as “wealth distribution” between tribes, including Turkana, Pokot, Karamojong, Marakwet, Samburu and Rendille, has long been practiced as a part of their pastoralist culture. However, the influx of illegal firearms and diminishing resources due to drought have contributed to increased conflict and insecurity in the region. Many people have been displaced due to the conflicts, the largest number of people being women and children.

Imperialism and the Turkana Way of Life

The Berlin Conference, which led to the partitioning of Africa in 1885, was not only a threat to Turkana land and livelihood, but also the means by which firearms were introduced into Turkana culture. For more than two decades the Turkana’s land became a target for both Abyssinian (Ethiopian) and British imperialism. British historical accounts referred to Turkana’s response as Turkana militarization; from the Turkana perspective it was a defense of their land.

In 1918, the Turkana Patrol – a large-scale, punitive expedition launched by the British against the Turkana – resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of Turkana cattle. The Turkana relied on livestock, and cattle in particular, for survival; the losses were devastating. As Robert Collins wrote, “The Turkana never fully recovered from the Turkana Patrol of 1918 economically, psychologically, and socially. It was the watershed in the disintegration of their traditional society.”²

During British rule, Turkana District was cut off from the rest of Kenya by the Closed Districts Ordinance Act of 1920, which restricted movement between northern and southern Kenya. The result was that Turkana was isolated for 40 years, until 1960 when the state of emergency ended and Kenya prepared for independence and majority African rule. Though the region was not officially isolated from that point on, the Turkana, for the most part, continued to eschew Western influence.

Independence and Corruption

In 1963, Kenya gained independence from Great Britain; Jomo Kenyatta became prime minister and then president in 1964 when the Republic of Kenya was formed. In 1978, Kenyatta died and was succeeded by Vice President Daniel arap Moi. Moi, under pressure from the international community, introduced a multiparty system of government in 1991.

Before the general elections in 1992, ethnic conflicts peaked, resulting in more than 2,000 deaths in western Kenya. Task forces were sent to investigate the clashes to determine if they were politically motivated but the process was halted before conclusions were drawn. However, the connection between national politics and the increase of tribal killings was thought by many to be more than coincidental.

Moi's four-decade presidency was marked by human rights violations and corruption, and in 2002 he was defeated by Mwai Kibaki in a landslide victory. The national food crisis, caused by crop failures and drought, continued to escalate and was proclaimed a "national disaster" by President Kibaki in 2004.

Drought and Small Arms Proliferation

In June 2005, the governments of Uganda and Kenya agreed to coordinate simultaneous disarmament of armed pastoral communities in the two east African countries to end cross-border conflicts. However, attempts have been largely unsuccessful thus far.

Persistent droughts spanning the last 30 years in northwest Kenya have contributed to the declining livestock population, which in turn escalated the frequency and brutality of raids between tribes. The availability and affordability of guns, most of which were and are bought in from Somalia and Sudan, contribute to the exacerbation of violence. A 2009 Human Rights Watch report³ urged the Kenyan government to put in place future disarmament operations according to the provisions of the National Policy on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which calls for the underlying economic, environmental, social, cultural and political causes of gun prevalence to be addressed.



Map No. 4187 Rev 1 UNITED NATIONS
January 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

INTEGRATED TIMELINE

Political Developments in Kenya and Personal History of Sarah Akoru Lochodo

- 600** Arabs begin developing trading stations on the Kenyan coast.
- 1500s** Portuguese attempt to establish bases on the Kenyan coast, but are later defeated by Omani Arabs.
- 1895** The British East African Protectorate is established to commercially exploit the area.
- 1920** The East African Protectorate becomes the British colony of Kenya.
- 1944** Kenyans establish the Kenyan African Union (KAU) to advocate for independence from the British. Jomo Kenyatta later becomes the leader of the union.
- 1952** The Mau Mau, a guerilla group made up of fighters from the Kikuyu tribe, begins a violent revolt against white settlers. A state of emergency is declared by the British and Kenyatta is arrested, later charged with organizing the Mau Mau.
- 1956** The Mau Mau revolt ends after thousands are killed, mainly Africans.
- 1959** Kenyatta is released from jail.
- 1963** Kenya becomes independent. Kenyatta is named prime minister.
- 1964** The Republic of Kenya is declared, with Kenyatta becoming president.
- 1973** ***Sarah Akoru Lochodo is born in Kainuk Sublocation of the Turkana District of northwestern Kenya.***
- 1974** Kenyatta is re-elected.
- 1976** ***Sarah is moved to Katilu to live with Edome Lochodo, the first wife of her father, Chief Lochodo Abong Achuka.***
- 1978** Kenyatta dies in office and is succeeded by Vice President Daniel arap Moi.
- 1979** ***Sarah moves to Kainuk to live with her birth mother, Nakiro Lochodo, the fourth wife of Chief Lochodo.***
- 1982** Moi and the National Assembly declare Kenya a one-party state.
- 1985** ***Sarah is moved back to live with the first wife, Edome Lochodo.***
- 1987** Human rights abuses are rampant as political opposition groups are suppressed.

Sarah moves to Kaputir to live with her half sister, Jane Akoru Lochodo.

1991 August – Though illegal, an opposition party, the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) is formed by six opposition leaders, including Oginga Odinga.

December – Under international pressure, Moi agrees to introduce a multiparty political system.

1992 In the months prior to multiparty elections, approximately 2,000 people are killed in tribal conflict in western Kenya.

June – Sarah gives birth to her first child, Mellan Ekunam.

September – Members of the Pokot tribe raid Turkana villages and murder approximately 30 people.

December – Moi is re-elected.

1996 ***Sarah gives birth to her second child, Sharon Ejore.***

1997 December – Moi wins another term in elections not considered free and fair. His main opponents are former Vice President Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga, son of the late opposition leader Oginga Odinga.

1998 ***Sarah, along with the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), establishes the Rural Women's Peace Link movement.***

1999 ***Sarah is hired by the NCCK to work as relief food monitor.***

2001 Ethnic clashes occur across the country.

December – The Children's Act is passed by Parliament, which outlaws various forms of violation against children, including female genital mutilation (FGM) on females 18 and younger.⁴

2002 Several inter-ethnic conflicts over land, cattle and politics result in more than 100 civilian deaths in the first nine months of 2002.

July – The British Ministry of Defense pays more than \$7 million in compensation to 200 Maasai and Samburu tribespeople who were maimed or bereaved by explosives left on their land by the British Army over the previous 50 years.

October – Sarah is appointed assistant chief of Kainuk Sublocation by the Kenyan government.

December – Sarah averts a massive revenge killing after a Pokot herdsboy was killed by a Turkana warrior from her own community.

Mwai Kibaki wins elections, bringing to an end Moi's 24-year rule.

2003 Moi is granted immunity from prosecution on charges of corruption.

2004 Kibaki declares the food crisis a "national disaster."

Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan ecologist, becomes the first African woman to earn the Nobel Peace Prize.

2005 Further conflicts over land and water rights result in the death of more than 40 people.

March to April – Sarah brings 17 Turkana youths to participate in the Tegla Loroupe Peace Race in Moroto, Uganda. Eighteen Turkana warriors participate in a voluntary surrender of illegal firearms to Kainuk Police Station.

July – Parliament approves a draft constitution that would increase the power of the president. There are several days of violent protests.

November to December – Voters reject the proposed new constitution.

2006 Clan violence continues over struggles for land, water and cattle along the northern Kenya/Ethiopia border. Raids and hostilities result in at least 125 civilian deaths.

January – Four million people in the north need food aid because of a drought.

2007 ***Sarah attends a paramilitary training class at the Administration Police Training College in Nairobi. Of the 1,500-member class of chiefs and assistant chiefs, she was one of three women.***

December – More than 1,500 people die after disputed presidential elections. The main rivals are Kibaki and Raila Odinga.

2008 Clan violence continues, resulting in at least 200 deaths in the Mt. Elgon District. Independent studies find that there are at least 100,000 illegal arms in circulation, sourced from Uganda's Karamoja region, southern Sudan and parts of southern Ethiopia.

February – A power-sharing deal is agreed to, making Kibaki president and Odinga prime minister.

March – Three new bodies are formed to investigate election violence: the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, the Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence, and the Independent Review Committee on the 2007 Elections.

October – A report by the Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence recommends an international tribunal be established to try those implicated in violence.

2009

Former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan gives the International Criminal Court the names of 10 top officials involved in post-election violence.

At least 10 million people, or one third of the population, are in need of food aid.

August – Sarah attends a leadership training by the Coalition for Peace in Africa, in Kampala and Nairobi, along with 24 other women from Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Sudan and Kenya.

November to December – Sarah facilitates cease-fire negotiations between the Pokot and Turkana warriors.

2010

July – Kenya joins four other countries – Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda – in forming a new East African Common Market, in order to integrate the region's economy.

August – A new constitution that would limit the power of the president and give increased power to the regions is approved in a referendum.

September – Sarah travels to the United States to participate in the Women PeaceMakers Program at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice.

NARRATIVE STORIES OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF SARAH AKORU LOCHODO

For as long as Assistant Chief Sarah Akoru Lochodo can remember, the Pokots and the Turkanas have raided each other's villages for cattle. For the pastoralist communities in northwestern Kenya, cattle and livestock equal life and strength and wealth. Distribution of wealth is leveraged by raids – “visits” from one tribe to another – and sometimes young warriors are killed. Sometimes women and children are killed. And sometimes – people imagine a different way.

Eclipse

Sarah Akoru Lochodo was about to graduate Standard 8, 16 years old and hungry. Her elder sister Jane was not at the home she shared with her “mother” in Kaputir. Jane was working as a nurse at the village health care center and would not be back until dark.

The afternoon sun spotlighted the dust that had collected on the surfaces of Jane’s home – dust that was subject to a rag wielded by Sarah’s long-armed curiosity. The kitchen table led to chairs in the sitting room, which led to a door that opened into a storage closet. The closet – clothes hanging in straight lines on the right, drawers stacked in obedience on the left, one long shelf hovering above the two – dared Sarah to be thorough in her assigned tasks.

Sarah wiped the rag along the front of each drawer: one, two, three – up to the long shelf and across its flat surface – when her hand was interrupted by what felt like a box. Sarah lifted the obstacle from its home to discover that it was more of a briefcase than a box, the slim brown leather rectangle protected with a zipper.

She eased herself down to the floor where she positioned the briefcase onto her outstretched legs, smoothed the cloth over the surface of the case and held it for a moment between her hands. She looked toward the door to the sitting room and noticed how her breath had become amplified. She willed herself to stop breathing for a moment before sliding the zipper open to lift the lid and look inside.

“Father,” Sarah exhaled the word. The sepia photograph of a younger Chief Lochodo Abong Achuka lay atop papers and notebooks, enticing Sarah to remember. With a shaking hand, she lifted the brittle image and studied him as if she were trying to connect the past and the present. He had seemed so tall then.

She remembered tipping her head back as far as she could, without losing her balance, so she could better see his face, so brown and strong and proud. She had been 4 or 5 then – when he used to take her with him when he visited his people.



“*Lopenek!* – my little bearded wise man!” Chief Lochodo’s staccato call to his daughter emphasized the second syllable of the nickname. “Come. Today we visit the Pokots.”

Sarah raced out of the sitting room she had been sweeping for her mother, in the village of Kainuk. “I don’t have a beard, *Apa*.” Sarah giggled. Her mother was the fourth of four wives, paid for with cattle and goats, although the chief also had concubines who were part of the family structure. The wives were from Turkana, but among the concubines there was a woman from Pokot – she was first the chief’s concubine before marrying the chief’s brother, Longoletum.

Chief Lochodo picked Sarah up to kiss her head. “So, small girl. Are you ready?” Her legs twitched and pumped in excitement as the kiss warmed her scalp, and he set her back down. Sarah ran to the sleeping hut to get the small bag that held her picture book and pencil. When she emerged, she saw the men attending to donkeys loaded with an assortment of the chief’s things – a change of clothes, some maize meal, *emuna* – the traditional brew made with honey and wild grapes, *ebur* – the meat preserved in layers of goat fat, and the stick he used to brush his teeth.

“Now we walk!” the chief said and began to move west toward the hills of Pokot. Sarah’s legs were long considering her small frame, and though her father was not a tall man, still she struggled to keep up with his bow-legged stride.

Sarah walked a step or two behind Chief Lochodo and took in the terrain – a blanket of honeyed sand with bursts of acacia – as she embraced the gift of expectation that accompanied a trip with her father, the chief.

The first settlement they came to as they made their way from Turkana to Pokot was *Karaya*, named for the metal troughs that were used to mine for gold. It was a place that bestowed the precious metal to both Turkanas and Pokots. Her father stretched out his hand, inviting Sarah to consider the land. “This place is called Karaya, Akoru.” *Akoru* was one of Sarah’s given names and she liked the powerful way it sounded when her father spoke it.

“I don’t see any karayas.” Sarah squinted her eyes and tipped her head to the side as she surveyed the ground, disappointed to find that in a place named Karaya there were no troughs scattered like stones, as she imagined there would be.

The muscles in Sarah’s legs began to burn as they walked from Karaya to Lous. As they walked, the distance between Sarah and her father began to grow. Her breath came in hot, rapid puffs, but she tried to keep up. Soon she saw her father turn his head. He slowed his pace, picked her up and settled her on the back of the donkey. “Here now, Lopenek, you can ride and rest.”

Sarah settled into the *esajait* that was a combination saddle and carrying basket that rested on the back of the donkey like a “W.” She leaned back and stretched her legs out in front of her, relaxed against the warm donkey flesh and fell asleep to the rocking of the donkey’s steps. When they reached Lous, Chief Lochodo’s servant Ekurosia lifted Sarah out of the *esajait*. “Where are we now?” Sarah yawned as Ekurosia’s strong arms lowered her to the ground. She could see the sun had set and felt the coolness of the arid land, but sleep’s hold on her was strong and pulled her back from wakefulness before she was able to hear the answer.



The sun insisted Sarah wake and she sat up and rubbed the sleep from her eyes. She drank goat's milk from gourds the men had attached to the donkeys for the trip and once again positioned herself beside her father as the group began the second day of the trip. They crossed Orwa River on the way to Orwa town until they reached Marich hills – the hills of the people of Pokot.

As the contingent of Turkanas approached the hills, a small group of Pokot men approached them with a welcome, having been warned in advance of the chief's arrival. "Chief, you are welcome. How was your travel?" The Pokots motioned Chief Lochodo to sit under a tree. "Brother, how are you? How is our sister?" The men inquired about the chief's sister-in-law. Women soon arrived with milk, honey-wine and meat, and the Pokots arranged themselves in a semi-circle facing the chief.

Sarah leaned against a narrow acacia tree just behind her father, who stood in front of the ring of people. She did not yet know much about the conflict between the Pokots and the Turkanas. She did not know much about cattle raids and death. She sat admiring her father, the strong, straight tree against her back. Sarah's belly was full of goat's meat; the sun was warming her shoulders as it set behind her. She sat, feeling the comfort of food and travel – and listened to her father's words.

He talked about the greatness of the land, the strong bulls and brave men of Pokot. He praised the people he visited before he gave them his advice.

"It is grazing season and it is best that you have some room to graze your cattle." The men and women seated there nodded and made sounds of agreement. "Perhaps it is good that you graze in one direction and the Turkanas graze in another. And you can meet in the middle and come together to discuss things."

The words did not make sense to Sarah but she liked the sound of her father's deep, urgent voice.



Now her father was old and bent, though there was a straightness to his character and he was still much respected by the people. Sarah wiped tears from her cheeks as she set the photograph aside and picked up the notebook that was underneath. She recognized it as the book her father used to record the important events in his life and the lives of his people. The book was swollen with years of entries and moisture; it no longer closed flat and neat. She opened it and turned the pages until she came to the year of her birth – 1973.

She let her fingers brush the length of the page, guiding her eyes to the entry she sought: *Mthee*, 16/4/73. It was the record of her birth. Her father had chosen to record her pet name – wise old man, Mthee, after her uncle – rather than her full name, Sarah Akoru Lochodo. But that was all he had written about her. By now she knew that she had been born to the fourth wife, but had been given to the first. The first wife had not been able to produce enough children to uphold the expectation of one of her status. Sarah had not known it when she was small, though even then she had suspected.

There was so much about her life that she didn't understand. She had hoped that the book would have revealed more. She let her gaze linger on the dear name her father had written: Mthee – wise old man. Then she noticed the word, written in capital letters across the top of the page: *ARIBOKINET*. Eclipse of the sun.

The year she was born, darkness and light intersected. And that, she knew, was a powerful thing.

Let Me Also Take This Stone

It was the first day of school and 9-year-old Sarah stood outside the round, thatched sleeping hut she shared with her two younger sisters, thinking about the day ahead. To Sarah, the sun looked like it was too lazy to get up – the way it rested for a moment on the horizon, dressing the arid land in pink and purple before deciding to make its daily jump into the sky.

Maybe the sun is a woman and has to wait for permission before she warms the earth, Sarah thought.

“I do not think you should wait,” she said to the sun. “You are too powerful for that.”

She looked across the homestead to the house of her mother – her real mother – before she walked into the bushes to relieve herself and find a twig from one of the *areng* bushes that thrive in the dry land, to brush her teeth. She filled a basin with water from the small jerrycan she had left outside her hut and washed her face, stopping to look at the goats butting heads and bleating inside the pen her mother had built of thorny branches.

Sarah ducked back inside her hut, put on the blue and yellow skirt that was the uniform of the school, grabbed her blouse and ran to her mother's big rectangle of a house as the roosters continued their call to morning. Inside, her mother stood in the corner of the house, placing gourds full of milk, still warm from the goats, near the plastic tub she had filled with cool water for the day's beverages. “*Mama*, please?” Sarah held the blouse out to her mother.

Sarah stood, with her blouse in hand, watching the mother she loved so much put leaves over the tub to keep the water cool, and wondered how long until she would have to return to the first wife's home. Sarah had been living in Kainuk village with her mother for five years this time. Back and forth, living with her real mother for a few years, then with the first wife in Katilu, then back to her real mother – sometimes she felt like she didn't belong to either of them.

Her mother took the blouse and held it for Sarah as she wiggled first one arm in and then the other. She buttoned up the blouse and stood back to look at her eldest daughter. “Hmmm. Where are your sisters? You'll be late.” She reached up to the ceiling and untied the large plastic jerrycan she used to haul water from the river, and put it outside the door for later. In the same motion, she lifted the metal karaya that was leaned against the wall and balanced the dented metal trough on her head.

A few child-sized steps behind, Sarah followed her mother as she made her way to the center of the compound and began scooping ashes left from last night's fire into the trough. Sarah stopped to work her big toe underneath a rock, succeeding in flipping it over. "I'm hungry, Mama."

"Shhh, Sarah. Chew on a twig."

Sarah left to find the twig she had tossed behind her hut, hoping it would quiet the nagging hunger. And her thoughts turned again to the day ahead. Today she would begin Standard Three class. Sarah felt the heat rise from her belly, crawl up her chest and burn her face as she thought about the stones.



Each year it was the same. The children would arrive at the barren schoolroom and find a place to sit. The girls would sit on the ground with their legs stretched out in front of them; the boys would sit on stones they had grabbed from the path leading up to the school. It was familiar to Sarah. She had watched the men and women at the *barazas* in the village do the same; the men sat on stools while the women sat on the ground.



The hard, packed ground behind her hut was where Sarah found the discarded twig. She picked it up and shook it in an effort to dislodge any stray particles of dust that might have been clinging to the damp bark. Once in her mouth, she worked the pliant twig between her teeth, but its flesh was stingy with its juices; it wasn't like a twig of the *asekon* tree that would release a dark, earthy liquid to lend her stomach a sense of fullness. She saw that her sisters had emerged from the hut and were now standing beside their mother with their hands up, as if they shared one will – to wave her over.

"Why do women always have to sit on the ground, Mama?" Sarah asked the question directly, instead of in the Turkana way of talking around a subject before hitting the target. But she was speaking to her mother, after all, and it was time to leave for school.

Her mother put the last scoop of ashes into the karaya, stood up and rubbed her back with calloused hands.

"Why, Mama?"

A whistling sound escaped from between her mother's tense lips. "It is our way, Sarah. Women are lower."

"I don't like it." Sarah chewed the twig as if it held the blame.

"Hmmm." Sarah's mother looked at her. "You," she began. "You ..." She stopped. Sarah's mother shook her head and bent to pick up the karaya, a puff of ash creating a cloud above her head as she lifted it to its perch. "Hsst. Go. It is time for school."

As Sarah and her sisters crossed the dusty road, book bags over their shoulders, other children from the village joined them for the short walk to the school. Jamani Elipan, who was in Sarah's grade, touched her shoulder and ran ahead, looking back at her and making a face that invited a game of tag. But Sarah walked in silence, inhaling the smell of goat dung and dust as the sun began to heat up the road.

Sarah walked along the serpentine path that led to the schoolhouse and watched as each boy selected a stone to carry into the school. For several minutes she stood outside until the teacher leaned her head out of the doorway and called for the last of the pupils to come inside. "Come now. School is beginning." She looked at Sarah and smiled.

Sarah stared at the path and then at the school as she bent down and caressed a stone. Something inside the girl nudged her – an idea, a possibility, a challenge?

And so, why not? Let me also take this stone.

The anger that had spoken *no* to her spirit as she had thought about the boys earlier, now turned colors inside her. The angry red turned to blue – a blue stream of water rushing cool and strong. She selected a craggy specimen and carried it into the classroom, the sounds of first-day conversations and laughter faltering to a hush as each set of eyes discovered what she carried in her hands.

She walked to the front of the classroom, the bottoms of her bare feet absorbing the welcome of the school's dirt floor. She placed the stone amidst the rows of boys sitting on their stones and girls sitting with splayed legs on the ground, and she sat. And for the first time, her head was at the same level as the boys' heads. Her eyes could see the room from the same vantage point as the boys' eyes. And she could see the tops of the other girls' heads – as they sat on the dirt.

Madam Ekal's eyes surveyed the class, pausing for an extra moment on Sarah, before convening the day's class. "Pupils, today is the first day of the school year. You are welcome."

First order of the day was mathematics and Madam began to drill the students on their times tables. "Three times three. Ekudo?" Ekudo rose, her eyes focused on her feet. Sarah liked her and thought that despite her shy demeanor, she would be a strong friend to have. "Nine," Ekudo whispered. Then she took her place once again on the dirt floor.

"Correct. Loupe? Two times five." Loupe rose, his hands clasped behind his back. Loupe was tall for his age and teased Sarah when she tried to play games with the boys at recess. "Ten," he said, and Loupe lowered himself back to sit on his stone.

"Yes. Sarah? Four times two." Sarah rose, thinking that Madam would soon tell her to return the stone and take her punishment. "Eight." Sarah smiled a shaky smile, knowing her answer was correct, yet waiting for her reprimand. When Madam just nodded her head at Sarah, she relaxed herself back down to her seat – and fell backward onto the dirt. Air escaped her open mouth with a forceful *puuhhhh!* Her head snapped back while her legs flew up. She lay on her back, stunned, and listened to the tittering of the boys seated behind her. Out of the corner of her eye she could see Loupe's hand resting heavily on her stone that was now at his feet. She could see his mouth twisted

up at the corners and heard him hiss, “Ha! *Girl!*” Sarah sat up and turned to look at the laughing, snorting boys.

Then she reached behind her, dragged the stone back to its place and seated herself, once again, on the stone.

The Raiding Season

The moon was waxing and approaching fullness, the edges of the sky illuminated with a hazy expectation. “It is the season of raiding,” her mother said. “Eat your dinner quickly. The Pokots are likely to raid tonight.” Her mother knelt beside the *jigga* in the center of the family’s compound and blew the fire, which was nestled between three stones, to life. She stirred the pot that was balanced on the stones, then scooped the last of the maize and beans and handed the plate to Sarah before turning to tend to the younger children.

Sarah ate quickly; she knew her friend Jamani Elipan would be waiting at the playground for evening games – and she planned to meet her despite Mama’s warnings. The evening games of running and tag were the only games Sarah enjoyed with the girls. During the day, she preferred the boys’ games of fighting with sticks rather than the games of homemaking that the other girls played – a preference that earned her derisive glances from both boys and girls. When not in school, the children played in the dry river bed, the boys playing upriver from the girls – a symbolic representation of the filth girls carried with them, even in play. Sarah would walk past the other girls, tending their make-believe fires and feeding their make-believe children, and walk to the boys, sticks in hand. “Ho, now. Let us fight,” she would say as she leaned back and held one stick up in defense and the other poised for a blow.

The boys would laugh. “Sarah, ho! Do you think you have testicles?” And they would bend in half from the force of their humor. But as she advanced with her sticks cutting forms through the hot, desert air, they would forget their joke and engage her in playful sparring.

Tonight, with the almost-full moon illuminating the land, Sarah looked forward to a game of tag with her friend, though she knew her mother’s warnings of possible raids held truth. The words *drought* and *raids* and *cattle rustling* were familiar to Sarah, but to her 11-year-old mind, the words *friend* and *play* and *laughter* held far more importance. She licked her fingers to catch the last bits of maize and beans from the evening meal and ran to meet Jamani at the playground. “Hoooooh! Jamani!” Sarah called, at the same time seeing her sitting beneath an acacia tree. “Shall we play?”

Jamani jumped up and whooped a welcome to her friend as she ran to Sarah and touched her shoulder before running away. Sarah inhaled the cool, night air and replied with her own *hulululu* and sprinted toward Jamani. They raced after each other, one tagging the other and running off, both girls panting and giggling as they zigzagged their way across the playground.

It was a flash of light that reached the girls before they noticed the sounds. They stopped, mid-race, to wonder at the stream of light that pulsed above their heads. Then the *Pow! Pow! Pow!* of gunshots registered and they flung their bodies against the ground. “Pokots!” Sarah yelled as she inched her hand to Jamani’s. The girls jumped up and Jamani pulled Sarah toward the church where

she had been sleeping during the rainy season. Together they ran to the mud bricked building, Jamani leading the way. The girls paused in the doorway. “Please! I don’t feel safe here,” Sarah said as she broke free from her friend’s grasp.

Both girls knew well the drill: Run to the bush and hide until the raid is over. Sometimes during raids, Sarah would sleep in the bush with her sisters, buffalos passing behind them, hyenas sniffing at their bodies, exhaling the stench of death.

“*My shuka!* – I want my sheet!” Jamani said as she ran deeper into the church. Sarah knew the feeling of safety that the sheet would give them in the bush. They could wrap the length of cloth around them and feel the tight security of swaddled flesh. But she could not wait. Sarah ran and threw her body into the bushes, laid on her belly, put her hands over her head and occasionally peeked out to see if her friend was emerging from the church.

Sarah saw the outline of her friend running across the playing field. She heard the “Ai! Ai! Ai!” of Pokot warriors. What they said after that, Sarah could only imagine – “There is one over here!” “You have left goats!” – The words of the Pokot language were strange to her. But, the meaning of the bullets slicing through the night was clear. Sarah watched from her hiding place to see the image of Jamani running toward her. She could hear Jamani’s breath coming in rapid, shallow puffs. Jamani’s last words, as her young body was displaced by gunfire: “Wooooo! Wooooo! Sarah!” Jamani’s body melted into the earth and Sarah bit down hard on her arm to stifle her screams. *I’m sorry, Jamani. I must be quiet.*

And Sarah made herself small, arms and legs tucked beneath her, biting her own flesh and waiting for the light of day.

Sorghum Calling

“Elephants!” Sarah ran the 1 kilometer from the farm until she arrived, panting and shaking, at the compound of the first wife – her adoptive mother Edome Lochodo. Morning was still hovering between cool and warm, the day’s light hesitant. “They were coming for me, Mama.” Sarah rested her hands on her knees and gulped the air. “There ... there ... at the farm; they were coming!”

The first wife had just stood up from where she was seated under the areng tree, making brightly colored beaded bracelets with other women from the village. Her left eye closed partway as the line of her mouth grew smaller and she looked at the girl who was supposed to show the village she was not a failure at reproduction. She held in her hand the long, sturdy stick that she used to chase away wild dogs, the stick she kept near her whenever she was in the compound. Made from the *edome* tree – for which she was named – the wood was hard and unforgiving. “Lazy girl!” Edome took the stick and swung it across Sarah’s back. Sarah’s skin stung and vibrated where the stick’s line marked her body. “Lazy girl! Go back!”

Sarah flinched but would not make a sound as she weighed her options. She would rather go to school than tend the first wife’s farm where the elephants scared her, the way their giant bodies caused the ground to move as they passed behind her in the bush. Really, she would rather go to

school even if she wasn't frightened to tend the farm alone. School made Sarah feel excited, like there was an adventure just around the corner. When the hired man, Ekurosia, was able to work the farm and she could go to school, she would often be first in the classroom, eager to uncover some new mystery. But the stick let her know that today she must go to the farm. The first wife swung it again but Sarah turned before it met its target, and began to run. As she reached the perimeter of the compound – out of sight of the first wife – her run turned to a walk.

The other children of the village had already left, some walking the direction of the school – a mixture of boys and girls. But other girls, like her, were relegated to farming duty. It wouldn't matter if a girl missed school. And Sarah wasn't faring well in the Standard 7 class. She missed at least one, usually two days a week, and her enthusiasm couldn't make up for what the farming duties stole. It was almost the end of the school year and she knew it; she would have to repeat the Standard 7 class – if she were lucky enough to continue at all.

Walking through the bush, she held tightly to the bag that carried her pouch of white cornmeal, a small pan and a bit of salt. As she walked and planned her day, she considered the plastic bags and bits of gunny sack she had tucked into the rope that was the waistband of her skirt.

The plot of land was small, no more than 250 square feet. There, sorghum grew in random patterns in places where, months ago, the seeds had been scattered and then hoed into the unrelentingly rigid ground. Sarah walked, on the lookout for returning elephants, and thought about the problem of the ripening sorghum.



Earlier in the week, she had spent much of her day at the farm chasing away the small brown birds that were determined to feed on the ripe sorghum berries. She had wanted to harvest the little sorghum that was ready. "Mama," she said when she had come home that evening. "I counted. There are seven plants ready for harvest. They should be picked, yes?"

"No. We harvest them all at once."

Sarah had hoped the mama would be pleased at how attentive she had been to the crop, and how successful she had been at protecting the berries from the birds. "But the birds will ..."

"I said, no." Edome had turned her back, and Sarah knew there was to be no more conversation on the topic.

All week Sarah had been thinking about how to prevent birds from eating the berries while the rest of the crop matured. One night, she had been folding the newly empty sugar sack and plastic bags from market. *The birds come. I chase them away. They come to another plant. I chase them away. If only I could cover them up, then they would be protected while I was gone. And when I am there, I would not have to chase away the birds.* She had started to place the sacks in the cupboard that was near the jigga when her attention was drawn to the feel of the sacks, crisp and protective. It seemed the bags had given her the gift of an idea. *But how would the sorghum breathe through the plastic?*



She arrived at the farm to find the birds there, feasting on the sorghum berries. “Shoo! Shoo!” Sarah ran at them, waving her arms. She examined the plants, taking note that much had been eaten since she was last there. “Do not worry, my friends. Today you will wear new clothes.” She took a thorn and poked holes into a bag, placed it over the head of a mature plant and secured it loosely with a bit of thread she had pulled from a gunny sack. Then she stood back and admired her invention. “Heh, birds! Now try and eat my farm.” One after another, Sarah fitted the ripened plants with their protective clothing. Those not finished being ripened by the sun, she left alone. The field made her laugh; the newly covered plants looked like tall, thin women carrying bags of grain on their heads.

As the sun reached its midday perch, Sarah’s rumbling stomach reminded her it was time to cook her lunch. She scanned the horizon for wisps of smoke that would tell her where she could go to borrow some fire. At a neighboring farm, not too far away, she saw thin, opaque fingers of smoke inviting her to come. She plucked a piece of bark from a fallen acacia tree that was sinking into the ground just outside her farm, found the fire and scooped a piece of burning wood into the bark. Then she added grass and donkey dung and wrapped it, leaving just enough air so the fire would not die, but not so much that it would burst into flame. Nurturing the delicate bundle in outstretched hands, she passed her farm to find a place where she had noticed a shallow pool of water. She carried the fire to a place beside the water – welcome leftovers from yesterday’s rain – and opened the bark to let the air bring the fire to life. Staying on guard for wild animals who would also come to drink from the sky’s gift, she took the cornmeal from her pouch, used her hands to scoop water from the brown puddle, put them in the pan with a little salt and cooked her lunch.

The cornmeal *ugali* made her sleepy, and Sarah rested for a moment before returning to the farm to pull the stubborn weeds from the hard, packed dirt. She scooted on her bottom through the maze of plants as monkeys teased her from the trees. “Why are you here when you should be in school?” Sarah imagined that they abused her, laughing and insulting her with their monkey chatter. Sarah pulled weeds with renewed energy and threw them at the cheeky creatures.

Sweat trickled down the sides of Sarah’s face and she reached up a dusty hand to wipe it away. “Who thought of a way to save the sorghum?! Was it you, monkeys? No!” Her voice gained strength and volume as she surveyed the product of her time and efforts. “It was me, Sarah Akoru Lochodo!” Somehow she felt better giving words to her accomplishment and saying her name and her father’s name – Lochodo – out loud. But still, she wondered what she had missed that day in school.

A Smoldering Fire

It was afternoon and the heat of the day was at its fullest. Sarah sat in the corner of her aunts' home – Ekai Eregae Iroo and Elibit Ebokan – in Kitale, baby Mellan at her breast. Flesh against flesh, warm and moist, Sarah and her baby shared a moment of quiet in the middle of the day, beads of sweat sealing their skin. Milk trickled down the side of Mellan's face. She made snuffling noises and worked her mouth in a sucking motion, though she was sated and her body became limp with sleepiness.

Sarah – *Akoru* to her aunts – rocked her body back and forth, humming a lullaby and encouraging the baby to welcome sleep when she looked up to see her Aunt Ekai entering the home. “Akoru,” Ekai whispered. She stood in the doorway. Her face was bathed in shadow as the sun leaked into the house around her frame. She leaned against the door jam, her body bowed in grief, keening. “Akoru, Kainuk is finished.”

“Finished?” Though the word made sense, its meaning didn't penetrate, so immersed was Sarah in the sleeping magic she shared with her child. “What do you mean *finished*?”

“The Pokots have raided,” Sarah's aunt stopped, as her breath heaved and swallowed her next words. “Aaaiiiiiiii.” Ekai's knees folded and she cradled her own head in her hands. “So many ...”

“And my sisters?”

Ekai swayed, unable to speak, shaking her head and beating the dirt floor as Sarah pushed past her into the street, her baby still sleeping in her arms.



The lorry that carried relief food to southern Sudan pitched and leaped along the rocky road, the full moon illuminating the way. Sarah sat, crushed between two men who had also purchased a ride. Five shared the cab of the lorry – the driver, the two men, Sarah and baby Mellan. The driver was quiet as he navigated the lorry between rock and rut. The other men slept, as did Mellan, despite being occasionally thrust upward and sideways when the driver was unable to avoid the road's challenges. Sarah could not sleep. She could think only of her two younger sisters who attended primary school in Kainuk Sublocation. Sarah's mother was ill and was being cared for at the Legio-Maria Church in Matisi. Her sisters – Stellah and Hellen – had been living at the school with some of the other children.

Mellan began to wiggle and fuss and Sarah placed her pinky into Mellan's mouth. The baby reached out and held her mother's hand between her own and sucked the living pacifier with noisy enthusiasm. “Shhh, small one. We're going to see your young aunts.”

The lorry stopped in front of the hotel in Kainuk though Sarah could see neither guest nor Hassan Farah, who ran the hotel. One old mother sat in front of the building, spotlighted by the morning sun – legs stretched out in front of her, head in her hands, moaning. Sarah held the passenger's door of the lorry with one hand and Mellan in the other arm as she disembarked. She took the length of cloth from around her waist and in one motion swung Mellan onto her back and

secured her there with the cloth. She walked toward the woman whom she now recognized as the mother of her old classmate, Loupe. “Mother, are you well?” Sarah placed her hand on the woman’s shoulder, but the woman did not answer; she just lifted her head and stared across the road. Sarah began to run toward the center of Kainuk. Smoke hovered above what was once the villages’ hub. The air, heavy with the smell of razed homes, made her want to vomit – the spicy smell of charred wood from the huts’ walls mingled with the sweet, noxious scent of melted plastic from jerrycans. And there was the smell of roasted flesh.

Though the gray haze and putrid smell beckoned her to the villages’ center, Sarah willed herself north, gaining speed as Mellan bounced against her back. The school compound had not been razed. But the stillness of the place felt like death. Sarah slowed her pace and calmed her breath as if in reverence; she walked toward the girls’ dormitory.

“Hello!” Sarah warned those inside the school, if there was anyone there, of her approach. “Hello!” She opened the door and stood, letting her eyes adjust to the darkness inside the building. She heard collective breathing and saw there, in the corner of the school, a group of children standing tightly against one another, looking as if they were trying to be invisible.

“Sister?” Stelah reached out a tentative hand. Sarah stood, immobilized with gratitude, before the huddle of children. Her sisters broke loose and ran to her, the impact of their bodies feeling both violent and thirsty, and Sarah wrapped her long arms around them. “Shhhh. You are well, sisters.”

Behind Sarah the sound of movement startled her. Madam Auko, the girls’ teacher, came into the room with a jerrycan full of water. She stopped and looked at Sarah for a minute – maybe more – before putting the jerrycan down and covering her mouth with her hand.

“How many?” Sarah asked.

“I don’t know. I’ve stayed here with the children.”

“Please. It is good that we should know what has happened to my beloved center, my village – my home. Please keep them well while I go and see.” Sarah hugged her sisters and promised her return as she left the school, with Mellan on her back, to see who was alive and who was dead.

The villages that made up Kainuk Sublocation were quiet. Sarah could only imagine that those who had survived had fled. She walked through the villages to the center, still hot from fire. Hut after hut was charred, ash and smoke and sparks rising to the sky in a memorial offering. A mother’s body, crisp and dark, lay circled around the remains of a child. *This is Akunoit’s hut. This is her child.* Sarah took a few more steps. *This is Pastor David Ngorkit’s house. These are his two children.* Sarah kept walking, the impact of what had happened surrounding her like a cloud with each body she passed. 27, 28, 29.

White-headed vultures – *ngataruk* – circled silently above her, on their way to gather at some point further ahead on the path. She wished the birds would make some noise, that something would interrupt the silence of the place. She squinted her eyes and looked side to side, up and down, feeling a warning. Step by step, she approached the focal point of the birds.

A stick, sturdy and long, thrust into the ground like a flagpole. At the top, a small child, burned.

Sarah reached behind her to touch the warmth of Mellan's body, wrapped so tightly against her own. It seemed that the smoldering fire had jumped inside her. Inside her breast, full with milk, there was a heat that was new to her.

These things must stop. I want to make this stop.

The Economy of Being a Woman

The memory of the massacre in Kainuk six years before followed Sarah like an expectant ghostly shadow. The razed homes, the families who had fled, the families who had died. The child.

By the time she returned to live in Kainuk in 1998, she had given birth to her second daughter, and though the fire still burned in her to bring hope and peace to the people of her home, she was no closer to knowing what she might do to bring this thing about.

There was one thing Sarah did know: If she had been able to take the child down from the stick, wrap it in a cloth and take it to the women of Pokot, they would surely have grieved with her.



As women gathered to join the men at the baraza, the daily village meeting in Loyapat, to hear the news of the region and receive their rations of relief maize, they sang. Erect posture, their bodies moving up and down with the rhythm of the song, bent arms tapping the air, heads shaved on the sides with a rectangular patch of hair decorating the crowns, small braids cascading down the backs of their heads – they sang. “*Areme etengan ngatuk ekileee angikiliok. Esigor Etengan ngaupe. Etengan.* Man among men has raided cows, and he has killed Pokots.” Their unified voices were an offering to the community that encouraged the culture of killing to continue.

Sarah, now 25 years old, was working as relief food monitor for the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), the responsibility of her people's dependence and hunger heavy as the bags of grain she would distribute after the meeting. After the chief had spoken, Sarah took a turn addressing the people. “This relief food will not come to us forever. We need to be independent.” She pointed at the men and women seated around her. “The men raid and kill to bring meat and feel big. Pokots kill Turkanas and take their livestock. Turkanas kill Pokots and take cows and goats. But that is still not enough to satisfy. And our children die.” Her words erupted from her mouth in strong, short bursts. “This killing ... the raiding ... it holds us back. Peace and development are connected.”

Sarah leaned forward and began addressing the women, looking to their faces, entreating “Why can't we do something when we come together that will bring food to our families? Heh? Why can't we make something we can sell instead of waiting for help? Why can't we sing a different song? Why can't we sing of the brave young men and women who farm for food, who start a business, who go to school?”

She stopped for a moment, catching her breath and letting her words catch up to the ears of her sisters as she wiped the sweat from her forehead with her long fingers. “Why can’t we – Turkana women – join with the women of Pokot to change the culture of killing that leaves us empty?”

Before sitting down, Sarah looked around her at the people she loved. There were those nodding their heads and sending agreement with their voices. “Heh, yes, Sarah.” “Ho, Sarah.” But others looked down to their hands resting in their laps, casting silent votes.



Sarah arranged the first meeting for the women of Turkana and Pokot, to take place in the Reformed Church of East Africa in Kainuk. She had used her address at the baraza to present the idea for women’s empowerment and then let it simmer and grow like yeast before she moved it forward. It had been two weeks since then, and now women arrived in the church, while Sarah silently rehearsed what she would say. Young women arrived with babies tied to their backs. Old mothers, whose bodies were shrinking and whose faces were a map of their families’ lives, sat near the front of the church. More than 40 women were assembled when Sarah rose up from the pews and walked to the front of the church.

“You are welcome, sisters, mothers and daughters.” Sarah cleared her throat. “You are welcome to this meeting today where we women come together to address the raids that interfere with our security. You are welcome to this meeting where we women can talk about ways to bring economic empowerment to us – the women of our villages. And when women are empowered, there will be security and peace for our people.”

Women raised their arms and cheered. “I propose that we support each other to finance businesses. You see, maybe we give this mamma 50 Kenya schillings each,” Sarah said, indicating an elder woman in the front row. “Then she can take the money and decide what she wants to sell. Maybe she wants to make necklaces and bracelets. Maybe she wants to make sculptures or sitting stools. She takes the money and buys what she needs to get her business started. And next week, it will be another woman’s turn to receive the money. This is how we can support each other and empower ourselves.”

Sarah looked out at the women and saw her friend Adwer, the mother of six children – three boys and three girls. Adwer nodded her head and encouraged Sarah with a hallelu.

The meeting ended and women gathered in clusters to eat roasted goat and talk under the tree outside the church. “How is your boy?” “Is your daughter well?” “How many have you lost to raids?” The women moved with ease among each other, for there was not one among them who did not know the sharp pain of loss. There was not one among them who did not know the weight that came with feeding her family.

One by one the women returned to their homes. At the end of the day, four women found themselves huddled together, planning for how to proceed with the plan for women’s empowerment that would become the Rural Women’s Peace Link. “Shall we fast and pray in the bush as we begin this thing?” Safina said.

Achom nodded. “When the moon is full.”

Sarah called her friend and civic leader, Lilian John Kura, a councilor of Pokot, to invite women of Pokot to join them.

Six women – four Turkana and two Pokot – set out on a November day to the bush. The weather was beginning to cool and clouds gathered above the six women who walked to a place where trees provided shelter and there was a river nearby for water. There they fasted and sang and danced and prayed together for strength and success of their initiative. It was a new song they sung, replacing the elevation of raiding and killing with praise of commerce, education and peace. “*Ebee bala Sarah yangaya ebee bala Sarah Nokosi atoloto natuketio natuketio atoyeretea*. Our enlightened daughter Sarah talks of forming groups for development. What would this land look like if we joined together?”

Who Should Lead?

Sarah was preparing to distribute food to the interior of Kainuk’s sublocation, just 8 kilometers from the road, as relief food monitor for the NCKK. The baraza was finished and people were lining up for their share of maize. “Sarah! Have you seen?” Daniel Emuria, an elder of the community, asked. “It is posted – the position for assistant chief.” Daniel Emuria might as well have been a member of Sarah’s family, so much did he love and admire her. “*You* should be assistant chief, Lopenek.” He used the nickname her father had given her.

“Yes. I’ve seen it,” Sarah answered him as she scooped grain into a woman’s bag. She had noticed the posting requesting applications for assistant chief along the road last week. Tacked to the side of the Juba Hotel she had seen the paper, the words *Assistant Chief of Kainuk Sublocation* typed in large black letters across the top. And even though she was interested, she had dismissed it, because – as everyone knew – it was a position for a man.

Sarah stood and straightened her back and looked at the woman before her for a quiet moment. She knew the woman had heard the exchange.

“Your father was chief,” the woman offered. “You are a help to us now, yes, but you can do more.”

“Hmmm,” Sarah said, and nodded her head to the next woman in line so that she would come for her share of food.



The evening meal was finished and the dishes were washed and put away. Her daughters lay sleeping in the next room. The syncopated rhythm of their breathing made Sarah smile. *My strong, small girls. Even in sleep they differ*. Sarah lit the kerosene lamp that sat on the kitchen table and took a piece of paper and pen from the table’s drawer and began to write:

*Sarah Lochodo
Kainuk Trading Center
P.O. Box Kainuk
Via Kitale*

19 August 2001

*The District Commissioner
Turkana District
P.O. Box 1
Lodwar*

Ref: Application for the post of Assistant Chief, Kainuk Sublocation

Dear Sir,

I hereby write to indicate my desire to apply for the position of Assistant Chief of Kainuk Sublocation. I am 28 years old and am from Kainuk. For the past years, I have served my community as ...

Sarah stopped and looked at what she had written. Then she stared into the lamp's flame, watching it expand and contract in obedience to the night air. *Would they ever really select a woman chief?* She put the paper back in the drawer, blew out the lamp and went to bed.



“Do you think I should apply to be assistant chief?” Sarah poured tea for her guests seated in a circle in her sitting room. The half walls allowed for a breeze and the thatched roof shaded them from the midday heat. The men – teachers – were sons of her father's friends. She returned the pot to the table and sat down.

Ahmed Yussuf, a Somali man, spoke first. “You mean you have a heart to do this thing?” He chuckled and took a drink of the hot tea. After all, Kainuk was considered a hot spot even for a male chief.

“Yes.” Sarah's voice was quiet as she looked directly at Ahmed.

Ahmed's face sobered. “Then you should try. We will help you with the application if you want. We can make it sound more official.”

“We can call you Chief now, Sarah.” The men teased her.

The conversation turned to other topics as Sarah sat quietly. She made her decision. She would finish the application and send it in. But she would write it herself.



Sarah was notified in a few weeks that she was shortlisted for the position. She packed a bag and traveled to Lodwar for the interviews. She stood before the district commissioner and the board and answered questions about how she would lead the people, how she would protect the people. She weighed her answers so carefully – and with awareness that she was a woman who needed to step lightly but also prove that she was as good as a man. Of the 13 people who interviewed, three were women. After two months passed, she was informed that no one from the group had been selected. The position remained vacant.

In March 2002 she applied again. Again she was called to interview. Again there was no assistant chief selected. The position had never been vacant for so long. That August, when it was posted for the third time, Sarah walked by the stark paper hanging on the side of the road as she was on her way to a leadership meeting in Eldoret for the NCKK. This time, she did not stop to consider the posting. She was tired. She was embarrassed. And, yes, she was still interested.



“Sarah Lochodo?” The new district commissioner approached her at the meeting. “Sarah. I know of you. You have applied to be assistant chief of Kainuk, have you not?”

“Thank you, sir.” Sarah’s smile and easy laugh did not reveal her frustration at the process. “Yes, I applied twice. This time, though, I think I will not apply.”

“Madam, I advise you to try again. Changes are coming for Kenya. Elections are near and who knows what will happen. You should apply.”

His encouragement gave her heart and she applied again. But this time when she was selected for interviews, she did not tell her friends she was going. She did not tell her mother. She told only her cousin, who was also interviewing for the position.

Sarah left Kainuk early in the morning to take a ride with the lorry heading the 170 kilometers to Lodwar. She had packed her satchel with three changes of clothing, including the blue and cream suit she wore when she exercised her duties for the church, and had worn for each of her interviews. She arrived in Lodwar in the afternoon, dusty and sweaty. She spent the next day at her sisters’ compound to rest and ready herself for the interviews. *This time I will say exactly what I think and will not measure my answers so carefully.*

The morning of the interviews, Sarah dressed herself in the light cotton suit. She wore no jewelry except for the beaded bracelet she had made with the Rural Women’s Peace Link. The waiting area outside the district commissioner’s office was full already with several candidates. Sarah waited in the adjacent sitting area until her name was called several hours later.

Like the two times before, Sarah walked into the room filled with seven men, seated in a half circle behind tables at the front of the room. The air conditioning of the room both welcomed her and assaulted her bare arms. Backing the men seated before her were President Daniel arap Moi’s portrait and plaques engraved with the names of past district commissioners.

Sarah stood stick straight with her arms at her sides.

“Welcome, Sarah,” they said.

She stood until they encouraged her to sit, and then she crossed her arms in front of her and looked into the face of each man in the room, one after the other, and smiled.

To Sarah, it seemed that the questions asked of her assaulted her with rapid-fire precision. “Who is the minister for internal security?” “Who is the permanent secretary of education?” “When was Lodwar declared a district?” She answered each question, grateful for the time she spent studying in school and staying up on current events. But it was the last question they asked that was the heart of her desire to be there.

“Sarah, we are assuming that you are the assistant chief of Kainuk,” the district commissioner said. “Let us say that the Pokots have raided and finished Turkana. They have taken livestock. They have killed many people. Those who are left are crying and turning to you for help. What do you do?”

The massacre at Kainuk – almost 10 years ago – flashed neon-like in her breast. *These things must stop. I want to make this stop.* She could feel her baby on her back. She could smell the roasted flesh and melted plastic. She could hear the quiet that comes after violence. She knew what the other candidates had most likely said: “I have a gun. I have my boys. We will follow the Pokots and we will finish them.”

Sarah stood – she could not sit and answer such a question – and for that moment, she did not see a room full of powerful civic leaders deciding her fate. She saw the people of her village looking to her for an answer. “Thank you. You are most welcome. For those who have come to my homestead, you are most welcome. I am sorry for what has happened. And so, for everybody, if you want to cry, please cry. For the youths, I want you to go and take care of the bodies of those who have been killed.”

She took a deep breath before continuing, seeing in her mind’s eye the people of Kainuk whom she loved and wanted to lead in peace. “First I am going to pass the information to the district commissioner so they can increase the security here. Then I am going to talk to the leaders of Pokot and try to retrieve our livestock. I will find medical care for those who are injured. And please, I wouldn’t like us to revenge for this. There has been enough killing. And so, please, just feel free to light a fire and rest here while I gather the leaders to address this terrible thing that has happened.”

The seven men listened, rapt by Sarah’s oration, and when she stopped talking, they clapped.

In their applause was a message: Sarah Akoru Lochodo was to be the next assistant chief of Kainuk.

Counterplay

It was 2002. November clouds gathered above the people of Turkana and Pokot. The cool weather brought relief from the heat, but November signaled the beginning of two months that often drew blood from the pastoral people of northwestern Kenya. It was known among the people that Sarah had not been the choice of the chief of Kainuk. He had indicated and put forth the man he had wanted to share power with. No, it was not Sarah – and of this she was well aware.

Sarah had been an assistant chief for less than two months when she accompanied the chief to Lodwar for a district leaders' meeting. Both Sarah and the chief upheld protocol with tense reserve.

Sarah was not willing to stay any longer than necessary. When the meeting ended in the afternoon, she secured a lorry pulling two grain bins returning from southern Sudan. Rather than wait until morning, Sarah purchased a seat in the front of the vehicle, while others made the trip in the grain bins.

The lorry stopped 40 kilometers short of Kainuk at Kalemngorok Center. Sarah alighted to stretch her arms and back after bouncing along the rocky road. Two men stood by the side of the road, bags in hand, ready to board the lorry. "Heh, Chief," one of the men addressed Sarah. "Are you not the assistant chief of Kainuk?" He continued without waiting for her to answer. "Do you know what has happened there?"

Sarah held the lorry door, her muscles tensed. "No, sirs. Please tell me what has happened. Yesterday I left them and they were well."

"Your youths. Turkana youths have killed a Pokot herdsboy in your village center." The men seemed to vibrate with sweet adrenaline as they delivered the message to the chief. "And the Pokots have vowed revenge. They say they will kill 100 Turkanas in response."

Oh, my God. And the chief is still in Lodwar.



"Thank God you have come." Namoni ran toward Sarah, a large trunk secured with rope balanced atop her head. She lowered her belongings to the ground. "The Pokots have vowed to kill us. Are they coming? What do you know, chief?"

"Please, I am here now. Please put your belongings back in your home. We will call a baraza and I will help you sort out this thing that has happened while I was gone." Sarah walked to her own home and set her luggage inside the door. She leaned against the door frame for a moment and rubbed her forehead, thinking. *One hundred lives for the one boy.*

It was almost six in the evening when she arrived at the meeting tree. Many people were already assembled. A breeze, cool and insistent, was at her back. "Welcome, members of the community. I am sorry for the fear we are feeling and I will dialogue with the Pokots to help resolve this terrible mistake. But please, first, for those who feel unsafe, you can go to the police station to sleep tonight." Sarah scanned the crowd of people, many of whom were packed and ready to leave

the village unless she could convince them to stay. “And for others, you will come to my compound where we can just stay together. Tomorrow, I will see what I can do.”

The people started to disassemble – some headed to the police station, some to Sarah’s compound and some picked up their luggage and set out to the main road. Sarah walked in silence to her home to make the people comfortable and to think about what she should do.



Sarah woke to the sound of a vehicle approaching though it was still dark. She put on the khaki uniform that was issued her when she became a chief. As she emerged from her home, roosters began to crow, and Sarah thought they, too, must feel the urgency of the day. Ariongo, the former councilor of Masol, a location in Pokot, parked his small, white car a few meters from her home, got out and walked over to Sarah. “Welcome. Welcome, sir.” She shook both of his hands with her own, pressing hard on his flesh. “I am glad you are here. Please can you tell me what has happened?” The two stood at the side of the vehicle, talking in whispers as the people in the compound began to wake. “What are the Pokots going to do? Do you know?”

“Chief, I have come to give you information. I know you have been told of the Pokot youth who was killed.”

Sarah nodded and felt weariness cast itself over her shoulders like a cold, heavy blanket as she thought about the boy and what this could mean for the two communities. “Yes. I am so sorry. Even now his body is lying in the police station. It is a terrible thing.”

“You know that I am a man for peace and so I want to give you this information. There are 52 young men, all armed with weapons, hiding in the bush. They have taken five Turkana boys who were on their way to the river to fish. They plan to kill them and more. They plan to kill 100 people in revenge of their loss.”

Sarah was already aware of their intent but that they had begun to act was news to her. “Why do they plan to kill so many for this one boy? It was a terrible thing, yes, but 100 people for the one boy?”

Ariongo shrugged his shoulders as if the logic were inescapable. “He was a boy who would have brought wealth to the community. He was planning to raid and bring much livestock to his family – so they want the blood of many in return.”

Sarah and Ariongo stood in silence for a few minutes as Sarah considered what she should do. And suddenly she knew. It wasn’t a formulated plan as much as it was a magnetic pull. It was as if her spirit was being pulled toward those of the young men who were hiding in the bush, fortifying their anger. The blanket of weariness that had shrouded her shoulders was replaced by energy and intention, and as she spoke, she began to walk toward the village center.

“OK. This is what I would like you to do, if you would. Please, I want you to take me to where they are. Even if you do not go into the bush with me, just lead me to the place and I will go and talk to them.” She looked down at her uniform and thought about the message that the clothes

conveyed. She felt it when she wore them and could see the affect it had on the people when she addressed them at the barazas – *power*. “Wait here for a moment, please.”

Sarah ran back into her house to change into the traditional clothing of a Turkana woman. She donned a long colorful dress and tied the red and black sheet over one shoulder. Then she worked the many layers of colored beads over her head until they circled her neck, signaling beauty and fertility.

She held the sheet to one side with her hand as she ran to the village center to find a police reservist. She found Joseph sitting on a stool outside the hotel, talking with other men from the community. She heard the words “Pokot” and “revenge” and could see anger and pride in the faces of the men. Breathless, she entreated them without taking the time for proper greetings. “Please, hurry – one of you must come with me to the place where there are 52 armed Pokot warriors holding five of our boys.”

They did not respond as the news settled. “We must hurry. Joseph, you will accompany us.” Sarah repeated her direction.

“Madam, do you understand what you are asking? Fifty-two armed Pokot warriors?” He shook his head. “We would be killed.”

“OK, fine. Then just come with us partway, and you can wait in the car. But we must go now – before it is too late.” Sarah turned and ran back to the car, the reluctant officer following.

Ariongo drove the three of them to a place along the main road and turned off the engine. The officer shook his head at Sarah. “I’ll wait,” he said.

Sarah and Ariongo began the 2-kilometer walk to the interior. Screams and whoops – the sound of hot anger rising – increased in volume as they approached the place where the boys were held. “Whistle,” Sarah instructed her companion. “I want them to know a man is coming. But I want them to be surprised when they see that it is a woman who has come to address them.”

He whistled as they approached the clearing, and the whooping and screaming stopped. The two entered the clearing where the five Turkana youths were laying face down in the dirt. Several warriors surrounded them – the tattooed scars lined up on their bare chests, announcing the numbers they’d killed. Other warriors were scattered around the periphery. When the young Turkanas saw their chief walking toward them they began to cry, their tears turning the dirt beneath their faces to mud.

A tall Pokot youth, AK47 slung across his shoulder, waited and stared at Sarah as she approached, her long sheet tied over one shoulder, her neck covered with layers of colorful beads. “It is a woman!” He turned toward Ariongo. “You didn’t indicate that you were accompanied by a woman.”

“I don’t know what she intends to tell you, but she had a heart to come and see you. Maybe we can give her time and we can listen to her.” Ariongo spoke in the Pokot language.

The warrior continued his address to the man. “How dare you bring us a woman?” He looked Sarah up and down. “What good is she to us? Heh? Tell me. If we kill her, we cannot count the kill because she is only a woman.” The other warriors nodded. “If we rape her, she will not even be enough for all of us. She would die before we could finish.” Ariongo translated the words to Sarah, though she had already sensed their meaning.

Sarah took one step forward. “OK. Fine. Just tell them that I have come here because I am a mother; I am like their daughters; I am like their wives – mother, daughter, wife – presently here. I am here on behalf of all three.”

After Ariongo translated, she continued. “Many of you knew of my father, Chief Lochodo. He had a concubine from your community. She was like another mother to me. So you are like my uncles and this is why I decided to come here today. Not everybody else can come to such a place, but I felt like because you are also my people, I could come to you today.”

The warriors, one by one, sat down as the words seemed to speak themselves. “I used to travel with my father to the villages of Pokot when I was a girl. We would sit together and eat roasted goat and *atap*, the millet and sorghum meal.” She knew instinctively that she must keep talking, piling words upon words to create a mountain of resistance and logic.

Muma – it was a flash of a word that surprised her. As she reminisced about her father for the sake of connection with the young warriors, the Pokot word for *agreement* appeared in her thoughts like a gift. “Muma,” she said. The warriors turned their faces toward her at her use of the Pokot word. “My father taught me about the practice and, in fact, an agreement has just been confirmed with the provincial commissioner of Rift Valley Province.” The warriors looked up at her, surely unaware of government proceedings, so far removed were their secluded kraals. “Yes, it is so,” Sarah answered their surprised expressions. “Representatives from Pokot, Marakwet and Turkana people sat together in Koloa to sign such a declaration only one week ago. Why can we not use this as our agreement? If either a Turkana or Pokot kills someone, the person who has killed must pay 40 head of cattle to the family of the victim. If someone is shot and injured, 20 head of cattle must be paid. Shall we not try this *muma* together?”

The leader of the young men raised himself back up to a standing position. “How would we get him to pay? We were told he ran away and we are not even sure who he is.”

“Yes, but I have connections with the police. We will find him.” Though Sarah already knew the name of the man, she kept it to herself for the moment. She did not want to find him dead before she had a chance to arrange payment. “And if we don’t get him, we will get the cattle from his mother and father.”

“Yes, it is a good *muma*. You are a brave girl. Yes, go and look for the person who killed our boy and you arrest him until he pays the cattle.”

Relief flooded Sarah’s body as she realized that they had arrived at a peaceful agreement. She didn’t know if it was bravery that had led her there as much as it was some driving force outside herself – and desperation to see an end to the killing. *Hmm. A brave girl? I am a woman – but at least you have listened.*

They released the young hostages.



The district commissioner heard about Sarah’s bravery and the dangerous position she had subjected herself to in her quest for peace and security for her people. Within a month Sarah was issued her own gun. “In such an insecure place, you must be armed,” he had told her.

She held the MP5 assault rifle in her hands for the first time in the armory in Lodwar – and felt a kind of power transfer itself from the firearm to her heart. *With this I can protect myself and the people of my village.* Though she had only just picked it up, she felt its magic changing the avenue of her resolve. She felt that with the rifle, she could walk around her village in the middle of the night without fear. She felt like she could stand against intruders and they would be intimidated. It was as if the thing cast a veil over part of her heart. It was a separate thing. She felt its seduction and, for a moment, understood the heart of a warrior.

One Step

“When I carry a gun, I have different heart, not like the one God gave me.” Sarah addressed the 10 young men and women who rode in the van with her as they headed back to Kainuk from Moroto, Uganda. Windows were rolled down and hot dust-filled air circled the passengers who were wedged together for the 12-hour ride. “It’s like it gives you an extra kind of energy. So this gun, it takes you far away from home, and because of it you are a powerful thing.”

The men nodded. “Yes, chief. That is it. It makes me strong to carry a gun.” Eiton, along with the other nine Turkana youth, had just run in the Tegla Loroupe Peace Race in Moroto. There were more than 500 people who raced the 10 kilometers. He had finished well.

“That is how it feels, yes,” Sarah said. “But it just takes a minute and someone is dead. Maybe you have killed a Pokot and you feel big. Or maybe it will be you who is killed. When there are guns, someone dies. Will you aim your gun at Matanda, the Pokot man you raced beside yesterday? Will you shoot Nangiyo, the Karamojan woman I saw you talking with after the race? Who will be the one to die because you carry a gun?”

“Will you strip us naked? How will we protect our cows?” Eiton practically fell off of his seat in the packed van as he leaned over the back seat, his spittle punctuating the words he aimed at the chief. “How will we protect our families?”

“It is happening in Uganda. The government is disarming the people there. Kenya is planning to do the same. And when that happens, they will use force.” Sarah turned back to face forward and gaze out the window at the road. *How can I get them to start thinking about what their lives could be without guns? How can I move them in the direction of peace?*

When the van arrived in Kainuk, the sun was setting and the trees and grass glowed orange and red. “Please come tomorrow to my place and we will talk more,” Sarah said as the youths began to head to their homes. “And, please, no guns.”

The next morning after the daily baraza with the elders of Kainuk, the young warriors who had raced in Uganda arrived under the meeting tree, bringing with them more warriors. Sarah moved to greet them. “Oh, yes! Welcome. Welcome.” Sarah smiled, noticing that they had left their guns behind as she had asked.

“So, now, my new friends.” Sarah had worked hard to gain the trust of those who went to the Peace Race. She had sat with them at the school where they stayed while they were in Moroto, and they had spent much time talking and laughing. “You have come. I am so happy. Please, now, sit and we can talk about what we can do about disarmament.”

“*Is Kenya planning to disarm us?*” asked Ekalale, an older warrior who stood slightly taller than Sarah, his slender shoulders decorated with tattooed vertical lines to commemorate his kills. His voice was sharp and trembled.

“Yes, that is their plan, though it will not happen for a month, I think.”

“But how will we protect our livestock? The government is always asking us to give up our guns but they don’t help us with our livestock. Chief, if I turn in my gun, how do I know that the government will replace it?”

“The government can take your fingerprints and give you a gun that they can monitor. If you use it for killing, the government will know and they will arrest you. But if you insist on keeping your illegal guns, who knows? Maybe the government will take them by force. It is upon you to choose. But I tell you, for me, I am your sister. I am like your mother. Yes, I am a chief but we are friends and it would be better for us to remain in peace with the government.”

The men’s muscles began to tense as they looked down at the ground and became very quiet. Sarah could not tell if the quiet meant they were considering her proposal or hardening themselves against her.

Sarah, too, bowed down and became quiet. Several minutes passed until Ekirimet, who had also applied to be assistant chief of Kainuk, stood up and began to speak. “A long time ago our fathers – our forefathers – could not drink from the same bowl as children.” The warriors nodded agreement. “Now it is different. Nowadays we are bound to use the same bowl with our children. And this is something we should honor because times have changed.”

Sarah was relieved. He had acknowledged her place as a leader. Women and children had always been considered the same. Now she – a woman – held a position of power and he was indicating that the warriors should trust her.

“Please, now, we shall meet here tomorrow and you will bring your guns,” Sarah said. “We will go together to the police station; they will take your fingerprints and issue your new weapons.”

The following evening 18 warriors arrived at Sarah’s compound, guns hung on their shoulders. They left the firearms in her care for the night. Sarah slept little that night, aware that the guns resting in her compound were vulnerable to her brothers – perhaps they would see an opportunity in their sister’s strength and help themselves. But as the sun rose the next morning, the

guns were undisturbed and Sarah accompanied the men to the police station, where they turned in their firearms.

In three days the men were issued government firearms. The government recorded the names of the men, and Sarah reminded them that they could not use them for raids or the government would be able to track them and they would risk arrest.

It is a step. It would be better if they had no guns at all, but it is a beginning. Sarah returned to her compound to prepare the evening meal for her family. And as she stirred the mixture of maize meal and cow's blood over the fire, she prepared her mind for the next day's baraza. She thought about the firearms that were in the hands of her people, firearms that were government-issued but still – firearms with bullets that have only one purpose, and she wondered what should come next.

The Sound of Peace

5 November, 2009. The letter arrived from the district commissioner in Lodwar, postmarked for Assistant Chief Sarah Akoru Lochodo. She hadn't received any official government communication for 10 months – ever since she and the chief had been interdicted for suspicion of misappropriation of resources. They had initiated a plan to allocate relief maize to people of the community based on work they did to construct an office building for the village center – three fourths for the workers and one fourth for those who were elderly and vulnerable, and could not work. But questions were raised about the way the food was distributed, and Sarah and the chief were reduced to half salaries as their actions were investigated. She could guess what was behind the accusations. There were those in leadership above her who were invested in the continuation of the cycle of violence, people who had been vocal in their opposition of Sarah's desire to unite the Pokots and Turkanas.

She had taken the forced time off to attend leadership training by the Coalition for Peace in Africa in Kampala and Nairobi, and had recently returned to Kainuk, refreshed and inspired. Now Sarah tore open the letter from the district commissioner. "Dear Assistant Chief Sarah Akoru Lochodo," she read. The words on the page blurred and moved in a wavy confusion of letters. Sarah squinted her eyes and started to read again.

Dear Assistant Chief Sarah Akoru Lochodo,

On behalf of the government of Kenya, we have investigated your actions in relation to Kainuk Sublocation and the allocation of its resources. After careful consideration, it is our belief that you have acted with integrity based on the felt needs of your community and we hereby reinstate you as assistant chief of Kainuk Sublocation, effective immediately.

Sarah lowered the hand that held the letter. So much killing had transpired while she was away – and she had felt helpless.



PUH! PUH! PUH! PUH! PUH! Shots fired from Sarah’s own gun. *Was that me?* PUH! PUH! PUH! PUH! PUH! *Was that them?* Drop. Shoulder. Aim. Shoot. Roll. Run. Stay low. Turn back. Dive. Aim. Steady. Breathe. Shoot. Stand. Run. Drop. Shoot. *Did I aim?* Run.

Run.

Run.

Run.



Drops of sweat formed a community on Sarah’s brow and dripped onto the letter. She had discharged 21 rounds that day four years ago. The Kainuk villagers had been planting a farm on the area that bordered Pokot. It was her initiative. Security was an issue – but so was hunger. Five people had died during the surprise attack – two elders and three women. And though Sarah had been defending her people and did not think her bullets met with flesh, she felt the combined guilt of leading the people into insecurity and of using a gun. *How do I influence people to live without firearms in such an insecure place – especially when I carry a gun myself?*

Sarah shook off the memory and decided to convene a meeting with the Turkana and Pokot warriors to talk about the plan she had been formulating during her time away from her duties as assistant chief. *What if we start by just taking a break from the killing? What if we could negotiate a cease-fire?*

The young warriors of Kainuk showed up at the meeting Sarah called them to the following week. Then she contacted the area manager of World Vision to gather leaders of the Pokot warriors to pitch the idea to them. Both sides agreed to meet and Sarah set the cease-fire negotiations to take place on November 22.

The morning of the historic meeting the sun angled its way up the sky, halfway between horizon and zenith, when the young men from Pokot and Turkana began arriving in groups – 160 Pokot and 200 Turkana warriors, all without their guns. Some stood, some sat, creating a half circle under the meeting tree that was Sarah’s office. Neither group spoke as they waited to listen to Sarah’s plea for peace. She hoped that she could leverage the trust she had built over the last several years, and the enthusiasm the tribes felt at her return, to bring about the cease-fire.

“Welcome, youths of Turkana and Pokot.” Sarah stretched out both arms straight in front of her and expanded them as she looked at the men gathered before her. She let her eyes linger on the strong, lean bodies of the warriors of the two neighboring communities and though she could recognize who belonged to which tribe, she thought how much alike they all looked. Some sat on stools they had carried with them. Some leaned against trees. She thought that the pride and fear she could read in each of their faces could not be separated by “Pokot” or “Turkana.”

“Welcome. Welcome. I am so happy to return as your chief. And there is much work for us to do so we can prosper.” Sarah paused and smiled, feeling a rush of fear and love for the future of the people she loved, before she continued. “But I have been so much disturbed to hear of the killing that has occurred while I have been away.” Sarah paced in front of the group as she spoke, looking into the eyes of those warriors whose eyes were not focused on the dirt in front of them.

“December is a month in which we lose many lives. Pokots kill Turkanas. Turkanas kill Pokots,” she said. “This year, shall we not make December a peaceful month? No shooting. No raiding. No killing. For one month.” The excitement Sarah felt as she spoke fueled her voice and soon she was shouting. “For the small time left this month and all of December, we will enjoy a time of peace.”

One young Pokot warrior stood near the front of the group drawing circles in the dirt with his walking stick. His sheet was wrapped and knotted around his waist. His jacket hung open, exposing his tattooed chest, the front pocket bulging with a pouch of tobacco. “Madam Chief,” he said. “To agree on a time of peace between us is good. We are tired of the fighting.”

A Turkana warrior standing on the far side of the group nodded his head in agreement. He was sitting on the meeting stool his mother had carved for him, and he leaned forward, coming to a standing position. The young man was dressed much the same as the Pokot warrior – sheet and jacket draping his body, rubber sandals made from old tires on his feet. Though he agreed that the Turkanas were also weary of the fighting, his words were defensive. “Chief, we do not fight with the Pokots of our own will,” he said. “This you must know. We only respond because the Pokots have attacked us first.”

Sarah held up a hand as he stopped speaking. *It is only because we are meeting under a tree in Turkana that they feel they must challenge the Pokots with such words.* Sarah hoped that if she kept the focus on the possibility of peace, she could keep the groups from engaging in a discussion of who was at fault. “Thank you. Thank you all for joining me in this effort for peace,” she said. “Please, now shall we raise our hands in a vote? Whomsoever will pledge to stop the fighting and raiding for this month, please raise your hand.” Sarah felt her chest expand with sweet pain as she watched each man raise his hand. She could not see one warrior who did not raise his hand in agreement.



For the first time Sarah could remember, December was a month of peace – peace that lingered through January. Sarah knew long-standing peace would never be realized until the problem of hunger was resolved and both men and women were empowered to hope. But she let the success of the cease-fire give her heart.

Often during the month of peace, Sarah would stand before the people of her village gathered underneath the meeting tree. She would listen to their voices raising concerns of the day. She would listen to the wind dancing through the bush. She could hear the call of elephants and cows and goats. But there were no shots fired, no explosions of gunfire to pierce her eardrums and place fear in her heart.

Yes. Is peace not sweet?

A CONVERSATION WITH SARAH AKORU LOCHODO

The following is an edited compilation of select interviews conducted by Sigrid Tornquist between Sept. 19 and Nov. 5, 2010, and an interview by IPJ Deputy Director Dee Aker on Oct. 12, 2010, in the Peace & Justice Theatre of the IPJ.

Q: Describe your land and what it looks like. What is it like to survive there?

A: Turkana District is the northwestern part of Kenya and it is a semi-arid land. We are pastoralists and rely on livestock products like meat, blood and milk. We do also some farming, just along in the southern part where the river Turkwel crawls down from Mount Helgon, but most of the land is not arable. Additionally the water table is very low and when you get 30 kilometers or so away from the river, you find that it is hard to get water. That is why you find women will decide to dig very deep wells – boreholes – whereby you have to have eight or so women lining up to get the water by a bucket brigade.

Q: You're an assistant chief. As such, what are your responsibilities?

A: Assistant chiefs, like the chiefs, are appointed by the government. One qualification is that she or he must be a part of that particular community and at the same time be accepted by the community. She or he represents the community and the government in that particular area, as well as acts as a liaison between the two.

Q: It's very dangerous in your area, and at times you've called it a culture of killing. What made you believe that things didn't have to be that way?

A: Most of the friends I had gone to school with decided to get jobs outside the district – outside of Turkana. Some are even working outside the country. Most of them opted for greener pastures and a safer place. I just knew that I had to do something for my community. It is my home. It is a place I love. And I am among the minority in that I have been able to complete secondary school and continue my education beyond that. So I thought, *Who else can come and rescue our people? Maybe I can do something and maybe our place will change.*

Q: One of the things you do is take on cultural traditions regarding gender roles. Does it ever seem impossible to you that your work could bring a change?

A: I've always believed that in whatever I have a vision for, I'll try my best to make sure that it's done, despite the challenges. Like in the case of setting up meetings for dialogue – sometimes I will make a meeting and some of my colleagues may not be happy about it and so they disrupt it. Elders are the final decision-making organ in the community, and sometimes it makes it hard for me to accomplish the changes I think are necessary for our community.

Q: What is the structure for marriage in your community?

A: In the community one is regarded as a leader and is given respect as per the number of wives he has. Those who have only one wife are not given much respect. Wives and women are considered to be the same as children. Also, the amount of livestock a man owns determines how respected he is, which contributes to the stealing from other communities.

Girls do not have a say in the matter of marriage. It is the parents who decide who a girl will marry, which depends upon how much livestock the man has and how many wives he has. The parents choose – and they hope to choose someone who has many animals and several wives.

Q: How does the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) affect your community? How do you approach this issue with the neighboring community, which practices FGM?

A: FGM is a common practice in Kenya but among the 42 tribes, only three do not do FGM, and among these three, one is my community – the Turkanas. But my neighbors, the Pokots, practice FGM. In fact, they do it in the worst way because they practice the most extreme version whereby they destroy the being of the woman – they clear everything. Many girls die from blood loss after the procedure. And we find that most of the women are suffering in the community [from the practice], especially those who have given birth several times. [In these cases] the two openings often meet and the women are unable to control their bowels and bladders, and consequently the men will leave them.

It was through the network I had with Pokot women, after we established the Rural Women’s Peace Link, that we would share our experiences and problems in our respective communities. It is out of one of our meetings that one of our Pokot members decided to introduce the topic of FGM. Sometime later some of them decided to strip naked so that we who do not do it can see [what it is like], so we could maybe own [some] of the process. They needed someone [outside their community] to help them stand against it because FGM is rooted in the culture. It signals a girl’s transition into womanhood.

After that, they would invite me to their kraals and we would go together to talk about it. We would talk about how much women suffer because of the practice and that it holds us back. We are seeing some progress now and not all girls are taking part in the practice.

Q: You have worked on some farming initiatives, which have been challenging considering drought, tribal conflict and the cultural practices of a pastoralist community. Considering those challenges, what do you think the chances are of convincing the communities to settle somewhere and not be semi-nomadic?

A: Yes, most of the places are dry and so the livestock also succumb to that, which results in most of the people living in poverty. And the drought is the reason they decided to settle in places like the [village] centers – places where we have water. One thing I am focusing on now is teaching about alternative livelihoods. We have those pastoralists who – because of drought, because of famine, because of the raids – are rendered helpless. So they tend to run to settlements – to centers where people are already settled. And those are the ones we use to empower with different ways of survival – like farming and bead making. We are working on other ways of economic empowerment besides livestock.

Q: How has the extent and nature of cattle raiding changed over time? And how has the influx of small arms exacerbated the problem?

A: Cattle raiding has probably always been a part of our culture. Originally it was not thought of as raiding; it was called “wealth creation.” In the time before our people had access to guns, they carried spears. And of course with a spear you can’t kill someone who is far away. There are

probably two issues that have contributed to the increase in killing: one is the availability of small arms and the other has to do with a lack of resources and economic opportunities. Drought and famine are rampant.

“There are probably two issues that have contributed to the increase in killing: one is the availability of small arms and the other has to do with a lack of resources and economic opportunities.”

Q: Many boys and girls from your communities never complete their primary education – let alone secondary – but the drop-out rate for girls is much higher than for boys. What do you think are the reasons behind this phenomenon and how can educational issues be addressed for both boys and girls?

A: There are two kinds of lives here. There are women who are exposed to education and view school as important, and they are the first ones to take their children to school without even consulting their husband. But there is this traditional woman, which is a lot of the population, who asks permission from the father to take the children to school. They will not defy the governance of the father. I convince the women that education is the only way we can survive in this world, now that we are losing our livestock to raids and drought.

But there are many challenges. Girls are responsible for helping cook the meals, going to the river or borehole for water, and fetching firewood. They often miss school and homework time because of these duties. Many also miss school because of a lack of sanitary towels. Without a way to manage menstruation, they stay home rather than be embarrassed or ridiculed.

Having money to pay school fees for secondary school is an issue for both boys and girls. That is why I petitioned the National Council of Churches of Kenya for ways in which we can assist pastoralist children – both Pokots and Turkanas. We came up with a program called the Pastoralist Education Program, which encourages children to go to school, trains parents in how to support their children in their education and provides scholarships. The program trains School Management Committees to help with the process.

I also petitioned the International Rescue Committee for help to build a school. It is an organization that normally does international work for rescue. But for this case I was able to place my argument with them that we shouldn't just be looking to the international perspective. The conflict between the Pokots and the Turkanas could affect the whole country if the fighting obstructs the main road that connects one end of the country to the other and is a thoroughfare to Sudan and Ethiopia. The argument attracted them and they came to Kainuk, did some assessments and asked what they could do for us. I asked that they construct a school, which they did. They built a beautiful school and even furnished it.

Q: It wasn't until the end of 2007 that electricity became available to residents of Kainuk – thanks to your efforts and the efforts of several community members. How did you manage to convince the government and power company to bring power to Kainuk?

A: In 2006 I was invited by CEMIRIDE [Centre for Minority Rights Development] to come and participate in Kenya Pastoralist Week [a regional advocacy event on pastoralist issues] in Nairobi. I knew that ministers for electricity would be at the conference. I was given some time at the conference to speak briefly about the background of the pastoralist community of the Turkanas, and also I touched on Kainuk being in a hot spot. But it's just 23 kilometers to where the power plant is. The power plant is something that the former president – President Daniel Moi – initiated and it was expected to bring development to the Pokots and Turkanas. We thought it would be our shared resource. We thought it would bring all the development that we required.

I explained that the plant is near Kainuk center, on the highway that is a stopping place for vehicles going to Sudan and Ethiopia. I explained our need for electricity and how it would be a benefit to travelers. After hearing me speak, one of the permanent secretaries to the then minister for electricity requested that I make an appointment to see him. He suggested that I approach our Member of Parliament (MP) to ask him to bring the request to Parliament to be considered as a bill. The MP preferred to request bringing the electricity to Lokichar, where he lived. I knew that request might stall the process, as Lokichar is further from the plant, so I enlisted the help of some of the educated members of the Kainuk community and took them to the Turkwel Power Plant to see if we could make any progress from that angle.

Five of us approached the chief engineer who suggested we register our group and apply for electricity, which we did. We enlisted 22 members and called it the Kainuk Community Development Group. We plotted the land by single plots and double plots, wrote our reasons for why such a remote place should be provided with electricity, and returned to Turkwel. The plant supported our request – however, it would cost 36 million Kenya shillings to bring electricity to us. Where were we going to get 36 million shillings?

We began to write letters – to the MP of Turkana, the MP Central, MP Turkana North and the minister in charge of electricity – presenting the idea of doing a fundraiser. Two of us went to Nairobi to the Office for Electricity, then to the Rural Electrification Office, presenting our case. It was there that we found someone to take our requests to heart and speak on our behalf. He presented our proposal to the minister on site.

Within three months he brought a crew to do a site evaluation. He came to Kainuk with good news. He told us that the government and the Turkwel Power Plant have decided to bring electricity to Kainuk without charge. It was only required that each home pay the connection fee. I was the first to apply and now several of us have electricity in our homes.

It was December 2007 when my house was connected. Now I use my home as a place for the community to come and watch the news on TV and stay informed on what is happening outside of Kainuk. And I give the first seats to the traditional women of Kainuk.

Q: In general, it is the men of the community who participate in raids, which result in deaths for both Pokot and Turkana communities. How do the women participate in the

process, and what are the ways in which the women of the communities can change what the communities value as accomplishments?

A: Women definitely play a role in supporting and encouraging the raiding and killing. Turkanas are great singers and we love to sing about the accomplishments of members of the community. But many of the songs are about the strong warriors who have killed so-and-so and have strong bulls. We are now replacing those songs with songs about education – like when a girl performs well in school or when a boy performs well in school – we sing and praise that child: “Oh yes, he or she will become a doctor or he or she will become a nurse. Or do you know that so-and-so’s son became a teacher?” Pokots are doing the same. Instead of always praising girls going for circumcision [FGM], they sing songs of girls who have excelled at life.

Q: You’ve talked about the challenges to your communities as you work for peace. Beyond those communal challenges, what are some of the personal difficulties for you?

A: This is not easy work, but I love my community. I love my home. I have had this burning fire in me for a long time to do something to stop the killing. But there was one time in particular when I realized the part forgiveness would have to play for me to lead people toward peace.

“I have had this burning fire in me for a long time to do something to stop the killing.”

It was November 1999, before I even had thought about becoming assistant chief. I had invited members of the Pokot and Turkana communities to meet and plan to put in place a sort of early warning system. I invited the unofficial leaders of the tribes – those people who are called “opinion leaders” – to find ways to prevent raids from happening in the first place. We had come together to discuss ways of letting each other know when there was movement among the warriors and the other tribe should be especially wary. It was difficult because no one wants to betray their own community, but these were people who wanted to help stop the cycle of killing. But if we wanted to convince World Vision to help us start a farm, we knew we would have to prove that the place was becoming more secure.

The meeting was a two-day event. On the first day, as people gathered, I was so happy – the meeting was promising to be successful. Many people were coming. As people were gathering, this man from Pokot came and took me aside and said to me, “You do not know me but it was me who caused the death of your grandmother.”

When I was a young girl my father’s mother was killed in a raid – and my brother and I were there to hear her die. At that moment with that man standing in front of me, I just felt it all over again – like something was moving in my heart in the darkness. Can you imagine what it is like to hear an elder person being killed, not with a bullet but with a spear? We heard the *whoo whoo whoo whoo whoo* – the sound of the spear moving through the air. And then it just stops as it goes into to someone. We

heard her fall down and she cried and then produced some sounds, like the air being removed from her body. That is what I can remember of my grandmother.

And now this guy is greeting me, telling me it is him who caused her death. That was the way he put it. He didn't say: I killed. But there is somehow a way when someone talks who doesn't want to come direct. He said that since then his wife had been killed. His son had been killed. His relatives. Many, many of his people. He seemed to regret killing her and he was looking for forgiveness.

But I regretted in the first place greeting him. I just withdrew myself and I went out from the meeting place. I couldn't stay for the introductions. In my heart, I thought, *I can't forgive him for killing my grandmother*. I even thought maybe I should say, "I'm sorry but maybe this meeting cannot even go on." It was so hard to take in. I was supposed to speak at the meeting but I found it very rough knowing that he was in attendance.

I told my other co-facilitators that it would be better if they facilitated the meeting because there was this person there that I could not forgive. So the first day, when I returned in the afternoon, I just stood at the back of the crowd and listened. But for the second day, I decided that since I had convened the meeting, I should speak and take on my role of facilitator.

On that second day, I informed the people why I didn't introduce myself the day before – and that was my entry point. I told them that you can't just achieve peace in one day. It demands sacrifice and perseverance. And that I had to persevere so that I would be with them in that second day. But because I wanted peace between us – between Pokots and Turkanas – I remained. I explained that there was someone in the room who had admitted to killing my grandmother.

But before I even finished, he stood up and said, "I am here. I am here and I seek forgiveness. And you know, I lost everybody after doing that act. And thank God, that time is just but years ago. And nowadays I am a member of a church. After realizing what I did that time, I actually also took it in, and that is the bad part of being conscious of something you've done – because it haunts you." Some people laughed, the way he was expressing himself – not like someone with strength but talking with a voice lightly, with seeking forgiveness.

So I forgave him. And I called him and greeted him with respect. I said to the crowd, "Can we continue now?" And everybody yelled, "Yes!" But before we continued there was applause. Everybody stood up and started to clap hands and celebrate. It was another way of reconciling. And I said, "If I could forgive this one who killed my grandmother, what about you? Why can't you tell your uncle to leave the act he's doing in Turkana? Your brother? Your cousin? And the same case with you Turkanas: Why can't you tell people to leave what they are doing against each other? And then we will move forward with our peace and stay in peace and also work on development together."

BEST PRACTICES IN PEACEBUILDING

PEACEMAKING STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION	EXAMPLE
Sensitizing the community regarding the cessation of the use of weapons	Sarah uses community meetings as forums for educating community members of the consequences of solving tribal disputes with violence, and offers alternatives to compensate offended parties.	In the case of the Pokot herdsboy who was killed by Turkana warriors, Sarah traveled to the place where Pokots were holding Turkana youth to dissuade them from killing the boys as a payment for the Pokot life lost. Sarah negotiated an agreement whereby a life taken will be compensated by the offending person by 40 head of cattle. If someone is shot and not killed, 20 head of cattle must be paid.
Economic empowerment and raising awareness of women's rights	Sarah uses public barazas (meetings) and group training sessions to educate people, mainly women, on alternative livelihoods.	<p>Sarah sets up training days for the women of the community to teach them how to make soap, detergents and beads to sell. She, along with several women from Pokot and Turkana initiated the Rural Women's Peace Link, an inter-tribal effort to assist each other in commerce. The members alternately contribute funds to designated women to be used as start-up funds for a business.</p> <p>For farming initiatives, Sarah invited outside officers from NGOs to enlist help in starting and maintaining community farms.</p>

PEACEMAKING STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION	EXAMPLE
Lobbying and advocacy	Sarah is committed to facilitating disarmament and peacebuilding for the Turkana and Pokot people. As part of her duties as assistant chief, Sarah explains to the Kenyan government the complexities surrounding the specific needs of her community and advocates for education and resources that are necessary to end the cycle of violence.	<p>Sarah communicates to the Kenyan government the challenges the Turkana people face in terms of survival and the protection of their resources, and explains how limited resources are tied to the use of small arms. She provides written reports on issues discussed at the barazas, and presents the issues in person at the headquarters in Lodwar. She takes every opportunity to request resources from the government and NGOs for assistance in procuring resources such as relief food and, more importantly, resources to build infrastructure that will support alternative livelihoods.</p> <p>Sarah encourages NGOs to employ women and encourages women in the community to apply for positions with NGOs and government.</p> <p>Sarah established the Kainuk Community Development Group to lobby the Kenyan government and the Turkwel Power Plant to bring electricity to her community.</p>
Disarmament of warrior youths	Sarah convenes meetings that only warriors are allowed to attend. At the meetings, they have the opportunity to voice concerns, and Sarah offers opportunities to trade in illegal firearms for government-issued arms. Sarah defines the choices and alternatives the warriors have as they move toward disarmament.	Sarah convenes the meetings in a separate location from the one where she convenes barazas. In an effort to foster a feeling of security for the warriors and a place where they can speak freely, she travels to the bush and/or kraals.

PEACEMAKING STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTATION	EXAMPLE
	Sarah also convenes meetings with tribal elders and leaders to sensitize them of the need for disarmament and how they can support the process.	
Community mobilization	Sarah mobilizes the community in segments and as a whole. She uses public barazas to address the entire community, at which she announces opportunities for different segments of the community.	<p>Sarah accompanies youth to the annual Tegla Loroupe Peace Race, at which warring tribes compete and have the opportunity to connect with youth from the other tribes.</p> <p>Sarah designates days at which she educates the community on various aspects connected to community health and how to use available resources to achieve community health and wellness, such as Women’s Day and Environment Day.</p>

FURTHER READING –
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BIOGRAPHY OF A PEACE WRITER – SIGRID TORNQUIST



Photo credit: Michelle Zousmer

A freelance writer and editor, Sigrid Tornquist believes that putting words to an experience can be a catalyst for change. Most of her varied work experiences have been focused on respecting and elevating the opportunities and rights of people whose value is often not recognized by society at large. She has worked with children with disabilities, senior citizens in a resident setting and in the community, and for an elementary school with a high at-risk student population. Tornquist has a B.A. in writing from Metro State University and is currently pursuing her M.F.A. in writing from Hamline University, both in St. Paul, Minn. She spent several weeks in Cameroon writing about the Birth Attendant Training Program class offered annually by the Life Abundant Program, which seeks to empower people in the community to combat the high mortality rates of women and children. In the fall of 2010, Tornquist's work "Perspective," in the magazine *Specialty Fabrics Review*, was awarded Gold in the category Best Regular Column. The award is given by the Minnesota Magazine & Publishers Association.

JOAN B. KROC INSTITUTE FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

The mission of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice (IPJ) is to foster peace, cultivate justice and create a safer world. Through education, research and peacemaking activities, the IPJ offers programs that advance scholarship and practice in conflict resolution and human rights. The institute, a unit of the University of San Diego's Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, draws on Catholic social teaching that sees peace as inseparable from justice and acts to prevent and resolve conflicts that threaten local, national and international peace.

The IPJ was established in 2000 through a generous gift from the late Joan B. Kroc to the University of San Diego to create an institute for the study and practice of peace and justice. Programming began in early 2001 and the building was dedicated in December 2001 with a conference, "Peacemaking with Justice: Policy for the 21st Century."

The institute strives, in Joan B. Kroc's words, to not only talk about peace, but also make peace. In its peacebuilding initiatives, the IPJ works with local partners to help strengthen their efforts to consolidate peace with justice in the communities in which they live. In Nepal, for example, for nearly a decade the IPJ has been working with Nepali groups to support inclusiveness and dialogue in the transition from armed conflict and monarchy to peace and multiparty democracy. In its West African Human Rights Training Initiative, the institute partners with local human rights groups to strengthen their ability to pressure government for reform and accountability.

In addition to the Women PeaceMakers Program, the institute has several ongoing programs. The Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series is a forum for high-level national and international leaders and policymakers to share their knowledge and perspective on issues related to peace and justice.

WorldLink, a year-round educational program for middle school and high school students from San Diego and Baja California, connects youth to global affairs.

Community outreach includes speakers, films, art and opportunities for discussion between community members, academics and practitioners on issues of peace and social justice, as well as dialogue with national and international leaders in government, nongovernmental organizations and the military.

In addition to the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies includes the Trans-Border Institute, which promotes border-related scholarship and an active role for the university in the cross-border community, and a master's program in Peace and Justice Studies to train future leaders in the field.

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

Chartered in 1949, the University of San Diego (USD) is a Roman Catholic institution of higher learning located on 180 acres overlooking San Diego's Mission Bay. The University of San Diego is committed to promoting academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse community and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical and compassionate service.

The university is steadfast in its dedication to the examination of the Catholic tradition as the basis of a continuing search for meaning in contemporary life. Global peace and development and the application of ethics and values are examined through campus centers and institutes such as the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice, the Values Institute, the Trans-Border Institute, the Center for Public Interest Law, the Institute for Law and Philosophy and the International Center for Character Education. Furthermore, through special campus events such as the Social Issues Conference, the James Bond Stockdale Leadership and Ethics Symposium and the Joan B. Kroc Distinguished Lecture Series, we invite the community to join us in further exploration of these values.

The USD campus, considered one of the most architecturally unique in the nation, is known as Alcalá Park. Like the city of San Diego, the campus takes its name from San Diego de Alcalá, a Franciscan brother who served as the infirmarian at Alcalá de Henares, a monastery near Madrid, Spain. The Spanish Renaissance architecture that characterizes the five-century-old University of Alcalá serves as the inspiration for the buildings on the USD campus. The architecture was intended by the founders, Bishop Charles Francis Buddy and Mother Rosalie Hill, to enhance the search for truth through beauty and harmony. Recent additions, such as the state-of-the-art Donald P. Shiley Center for Science and Technology and the new School of Leadership and Education Sciences building carry on that tradition.

A member of the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa, USD is ranked among the nation's top 100 universities. The university offers its 7,500 undergraduate, graduate and law students rigorous academic programs in more than 60 fields of study through six academic divisions, including the College of Arts and Sciences and the schools of Business Administration, Leadership and Education Sciences, Law, and Nursing and Health Science. The Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies opened in Fall 2007.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEMIRIDE	Centre for Minority Rights Development
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
ICC	International Criminal Court
IPJ	Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice
KAU	Kenya African Union
KPU	Kenyan People’s Union
MP	Minister of Parliament
NCCK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
USD	University of San Diego

ENDNOTES

¹ A version of this paragraph first appeared in the article “‘Women Cannot Cry Anymore’: Global Voices Transforming Violent Conflict,” by Emiko Noma in *Critical Half*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2007). Copyright 2007 Women for Women International.

² Robert O. Collins, “The Turkana Patrol of 1918 Reconsidered,” *Ethnohistory* 53:1 (Winter 2006).

³ Human Rights Watch, “Bring the Gun or You’ll Die: Torture, Rape, and Other Serious Human Rights Violations by Kenyan Security Forces in the Mandera Triangle.” June 29, 2009.

⁴ The law has far from eradicated the practice.