

The Advocacy Project

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Stella Makena and Eunice Ngigi are leading members of Shield of Faith, an association of single mothers who compost their food waste and grow organic vegetables in the informal settlements of Nairobi. AP raised \$15,000 for their campaign and sent a Peace Fellow to help in 2023.

www.advocacynet.org



From our Director

Tribal people in the Indian state of Odisha were among 13 communities supported by AP in 2023. Although the threat from COVID-19 receded, our partners remain acutely vulnerable to poverty, social exclusion and a shortage of services. We helped to fill the gap by deepening our investment in start-ups launched during the pandemic. After vaccinating over a thousand tribal people in Odisha, Jeevan Rekha Parishad ("Lifeline") used community engagement to bring down cases of malaria from 127 a month to zero in ten villages. This exciting progression from start-up to social change is the theme of our 2023 annual report.

Iain Guest



Stakeholders

Esther Wambui battles poverty in the Nairobi settlement of Huruma and the albinism which exposes her daughter Hope to bullying and skin cancer. 3,077 stakeholders worked with AP in 2023 and most were constantly on the lookout for innovative solutions (below). Esther sold embroidery through our store and used worms in composting, to the delight of Hope. See page 9 for more on the composters.



Talent for innovation

Shield of Faith turns recycled plastic jerry cans into tower gardens that produce vegetables. Stella Makena, the group coordinator, designs the gardens and advises on their upkeep.



Partners with purpose

Victoria Njyanjura, center, is one of 14 women who managed start-ups and programs supported by AP in 2023. Victoria founded Women in Action for Women (WAW) in Uganda for survivors of gender-based violence during the LRA rebellion. Like other partners, Victoria credits AP for boosting her personal development and skills as a leader. For more see page 13.



“It has been really a good year for all of us. You made me stronger and a happier person in life. Thanks for giving me your shoulders to lean on!”

- Emma Ajok (Gulu Disabled Persons Union, Uganda)



Bridging the North-South Gap

We believe strongly that advocates from the North and South have much to learn from each other. Bobbi Fitzsimmons from AP, seen above, accompanied Merry May to develop a new line of tote bags with fiber artists in Nairobi using donated sewing machines. We also promoted

North-South collaboration through the World Bank, at US federal agencies (below), quilting guilds, fellowships, and at six US high schools.

“ I learned so much from you today! Your organization is an inspiration to the world to get involved globally!”

- Amye Brown-Curtis, the US Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

Telling the Story of COVID



2023 saw the culmination of *The COVID Stitch*, a major 3-year project to record and confront the pandemic. Stitching offered a powerful antidote to the loneliness and isolation. As soon as the pandemic broke out in March 2020 we commissioned COVID stories from Nepal, Zimbabwe, the US, Uganda, Kenya and Bangladesh. The stories were assembled into quilts in the US, profiled in a catalogue (above) and exhibited in Washington in October 2023.



The COVID Stitch by numbers:
* 212 stories * 202 artists * 6
countries * 12 quilts * 14 quilters

Left: Florence Wangari, from the Kangemi settlement in Nairobi, finds her COVID story in the catalogue



Ending early marriage in Zimbabwe

Over the last four years Trish Makanhiwa has helped to mobilize hundreds of girls to make and sell *Clean Girl* soap in the poor neighborhoods of Harare. Led by Women Advocacy Project (WAP), the business generated \$49,276 for 98 participating girls in 2023. Since 2019, no WAP girl has married below the legal age of 18. Photo: Trish introduced girls from her group in the community of Epworth to visitors from AP in August.



Trish ties the knot

Trish Makanhiwa's personal campaign against early and forced marriage culminated in her own wedding to her childhood sweetheart Alvin - on her own terms. She remains heavily involved in the *Clean Girl* project.



Improving the hygiene of girl students of Northern Uganda

We raised \$15,000 to help the Gulu Disabled Persons Union (GDPU) install WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) for girl students at the Panykworo primary school. Parents dug the latrine pit and the package included a changing room for girls and free liquid soap. The enrolment of girls increased from 526 to 560 as a result. AP attended the opening ceremony and helped Emma Ajok, the GDPU project leader, to monitor WASH in nine other schools.



A principal who cares

GDPU's WASH program relies on partnerships with head teachers. None is more dedicated than Joyce Okee from the Awach Primary School. Asked if she likes her students, Joyce replied with a smile: "I do! I really do."



Reducing pollution and improving food security in Kibera

Catherine Nyambeki, seen with her son Biden, is one of twenty mothers who are transforming the informal settlements of Nairobi. Led by Stella Makena, the group composted 3.9 tons of organic waste in their homes and grew vegetables in 12 kitchen gardens made from recycled material. They hope to work with Project Elimu and introduce composting to schools in Kibera in 2024.



Greening education in Kibera

Michael Wamaya welcomed Stella's offer to install a kitchen garden at Project Elimu, an after-school program that caters to over 200 students. Michael fervently believes that growing vegetables teaches children in the slums to respect their environment.



Reducing malaria in the tribal villages of India

AP helped Jeevan Rekha Parishad (*Lifeline*) in Odisha State to launch a malaria start-up in ten tribal villages. Using education, prevention and community mobilization, JRP reduced cases from 127 a month among vulnerable villagers to zero. Above: Surajita Sahu from JRP and Musumi, a village health worker, use red paint to identify the house of Mita, one of 261 pregnant women who was kept under constant watch.



When nets save lives

Mosquito nets have proved critical to the success of Lifeline's campaign. After the government was unable to provide nets for free, the project paid for 512 nets. These were distributed to lactating and pregnant mothers, elderly and children.



Promoting victim-centered transitional justice in Nepal

We supported the campaign of the Network of families of the Disappeared in Nepal (NEFAD) to demand justice for family members built around truth, memorialization, reparations and social acceptance.

NEFAD was founded by Ram Bhandari, above left, whose father Tej Bahadur disappeared during the conflict in 2001. We also sold Tiger bags made by NEFAD members including Kushma, below.



Community talent

Kushma Chaudhary has risen above the loss of her father, who disappeared during the war, to become a skilled fiber artist and embroidery trainer. She has stitched festival designs to use on dinnerware.



Pastoralist women advance peace in Kenya

When fighting broke out in Northern Kenya in 2023 it jeopardized efforts by Children Peace Initiative Kenya (CPIK) to promote collaboration between businesswomen from the Pokot and Samburu tribes. However CPIK kept communications open between the communities and extended the model to the Ilchamus and Pokot in Baringo, with help from a German donor impressed by the model.



Cows and conflict

Julia Holladay, seen here with Monica Kinyua from CPIK, helped CPIK launch two start-ups aimed at promoting collaboration between pastoralists during her 2022 fellowship. Julia has since joined USAID and sits on the AP Board.



Supporting survivors of sexual slavery in Uganda

Victoria Nyanjura, second from the right, was one of two Ugandan survivors invited to New York to review a landmark indictment by the International Criminal Court against Dominic Ongwen, a former rebel commander in Uganda who oversaw Victoria's abduction. Victoria has formed Women in Action for Women (WAW) to advocate for girls who were - like herself - forced into marriage. She used advocacy quilts from her group to illustrate the anguish of captivity.



Power of the stitch

Christine Akumu is one of ten WAW members who have used stitching to regain their confidence and earn money. AP has used their butterfly designs to launch a new line of tea towels.



Employment and nutrition of River Gypsies in Bangladesh

AP funded a third fishing boat for River Gypsies on the isolated island of Mayadip in 2023. The fish sales pay the wages of 10 crew members a week and feed up to 50 vulnerable gypsies at a feeding kitchen. The project was self-sustaining within two months. Twenty gypsy women made stories about COVID for two quilts that were exhibited and profiled in our catalogue.



Shahed leads the Gypsy fleet

Shahed Kayes, left, founded the Subornogram Foundation to support marginalized River Folk. He is seen with Anwar Hosen, builder of the third fishing boat commissioned by AP. They have named the boat Nakshi Kantha, after a traditional Bengali embroidered quilt.

Our 2023 Peace Fellows



Caitlin Mittrick (George Washington University) Shield of Faith, Nairobi



Rohit Samal (Rajdhani College), Lifeline, Bhubaneswar, India



Emma Pautz (Barrington High School, RI) high school composting



Maggie Lauder (Portsmouth High School RI) composting



Bella Quiroa (East Bay MET high school, Newport, RI) High School composting



Liam Gurevitch (Lower Merion High School, PA) composting



Ruby Meador (University School, Nashville TN), Clean Girl soap, USA



The high school connection

Ruby Meador, 13, gathered a group of school friends at the University School in Nashville to make their own brand of *Clean Girl* soap in 2024, bringing the number of US high schools involved in the program to three. Together, they have raised over \$2,441 and paid for two years of schooling for five young soap-makers in Zimbabwe including Paidamoyo (below).



Back to school

Paidamoyo Mazundu, 14, lives with her parents in the neighborhood of Epworth, Harare. Tuition fees at the Glenwood academy, which she attends, cost \$270 a year - beyond the means of her parents.

COVID quilts connect North and South

Our exhibition of 12 COVID quilts at the prestigious Textile Museum in Washington made a powerful statement and attracted distinguished visitors. A second, virtual, event attracted fiber artists from 6 countries.



Maureen Nyanduko in Kenya was one of 212 artists who described COVID through stitching



Yvonne Miller in California integrated Maureen's story into a quilt for exhibition at The Textile Museum



Dr Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund, admiring Maureen's story



Vashti Lechuta, from the Kenyan Embassy, delivered a message from her Ambassador

“These quilts have demonstrated that art has the power to transcend borders, cultures and languages, bringing people together. The government of Kenya profoundly appreciates the incredible work by The Advocacy Project in the Kibera and Kangemi communities” - HE Lazarus Amayo, Ambassador of Kenya to the US



Donations from the heart

AP relied heavily on the generosity of individuals in 2023. They included members of the Zonta Club of Washington, which first donated to AP in 2008. Photo: Jennifer Christensen and Katelyn DiBenedetto, past and present presidents of the Club, attended our exhibition of COVID quilts in Washington. The Club gave two grants to AP in 2023, totaling \$4,500. In 2023 AP received \$118,940 from 158 individuals, listed on page 23.

“Connie thought highly of the Advocacy Project. Her involvement was a reflection of her belief in social justice and peace. I am glad to help through my monthly gift and look forward to hearing more about the continued great work being done by AP.” - Glenn Moser donates in memory of his wife Connie, a long-time participant in our quilting program.



Selling embroidery

Southern Stitchers, our online store, opened for business in November 2022 with four products: embroidery blocks (from Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya); bags (from Mali, Kenya and Nepal); wall hangings from Mali; and tea towels from embroidery made by our partner WAW in Uganda (above). Sales in 2023 came to \$5,092.17.



In the bag!

Merry May and Bobbi Fitzsimmons from the AP Board visited Nairobi to help partners produce animal bags for sale through our online store. They are seen here with Spencer Moraa, Sabina Mutiso and Theresia Kithanga in Kangemi.



People of AP

Rohit Samal, right, a graduate of the Rajdhani Degree College in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, was the first Peace Fellow to be recruited locally in the twenty years of our fellowship program. Rohit contributed excellent blogs about tribal practices and malaria. He is seen here with other team members from JRP, our partner.

Board: Scott Allen, Tom Carver, Karen Delaney, Colleen Denny, Talley Diggs, Joe Eldridge, Bobbi Fitzsimmons, Devin Greenleaf, Iain Guest, Larry Ingeneri, Merry May, Delaney Rogers.

Staff and contractors: Iain Guest (ED), Abby Hack (IT and online store), Mary Ellen Cain (Accounts and administration), Gio Liguori (Video), Josh Nichols and Matt Heinrich (Web maintenance), Beverly Orr (Accounts), Jonathan Bramell (Design), Ed Suarez (Auditor). **Peace**

Fellows: Caitlin Mittrich, Rohit Samal, Maggie Lauder, Emma Pautz, Bella Quiroa. **High**

Schools: (Georgia) Lalitha Appana, Nina Thakur, Sahasra Thokala, Aum Ragavendrisha, Aishwariya Vijaykumar, Radish Gupta, Saanvi Rambole. **Quilters:** Bobbi Fitzsimmons, Merry May, Gill Rebelo, Beth Suddaby, Anne Watson, Colleen Ansbaugh, Dawn Piasta, Eleanor Levie, Deborah Weir, Carol Churchill, Peg Sullivan, Mary Harned, Donna Bergman, Susan Louis, Janice Ewing, Judy Miller, Yvonne Miller, Nancy Hershberger.

2023 Financials (provisional 8/26)

Income

Unrestricted Contributions	\$117,655
Restricted Contributions	\$106,709
Program revenue	\$16,529

Total Revenue and support **\$240,843**

Expenses

Salaries	\$66,140
Payroll taxes	\$6,592
Fundraising	\$2,680
Grants	\$58,411
Information technology	\$6,614
Insurance	\$4,391
Meetings and conferences	\$7,219
Professional fees	\$11,140
Miscellaneous	\$1,206
Office expenses	\$7,226
Rent	\$13,156
Stipends	\$10,338
Travel	\$11,372

Total Expenses **\$206,485**

CHANGE IN NET ASSET: **\$34,408**

2023 Stakeholders

Communities: Tribal people in Odisha, India; Afghan refugees in the US; Single mothers in Kibera, Nairobi; Mothers of children with albinism in Nairobi; River Gypsies in Bangladesh; Girls in inner-city Harare, Zimbabwe, at risk from early marriage; Pastoralists in Northwest Kenya; Families of the disappeared in Nepal; Primary school students in Gulu District, Uganda; Survivors of forced marriage and pregnancy in Gulu District, Uganda; families affected by Agent Orange in Vietnam; high school students in Tennessee, Rhode island and Georgia.

Leaders: Stella Makena, Caren Mybyaki and Christine Kibuka in Nairobi, Kenya; Constance Mugari, Dickson Akenga and Trish Makanhiwa in Harare, Zimbabwe; Ram Bhandari, Pinky Dangi, Kancham Chaurdhary and Kushma Chaudhary (Tharu people) in Nepal; Hilary Bukuno (Gabra tribe) in Northern Kenya; Sadiqa Basiri, Afghanistan; Shahed Kayes, Sunargaon, Bangladesh; Simon Ojok, Emma Ajok, and Victoria Nyanjura in Gulu District, Uganda; Manoranjan Mishra, Surajita Sahu and Biraj Krishna in Odisha State, India; Afghan families resettled in the US.

Partner organizations: Shield of Faith, Nairobi; Kangemi Advocacy and Self-Help Group, Nairobi, Kenya; Children Peace Initiative Nairobi, Kenya; Gulu Disabled Persons Union, Gulu, Uganda; Women in Action for Women, Gulu, Uganda; Women Advocacy Project, Zimbabwe; Backward Society Education, Tulsipor, Nepal; Network of Families of the Disappeared, Bardiya District, Nepal; Association for the Empowerment of Persons with Disability, Quang Binh province, Vietnam; The Subornogram Foundation working with River Folk, Mayadip Island, Bangladesh; Jeevan Rekha Parisad (Lifeline), Odisha State, India; Cameron Art Museum, Wilmington, NC; VIBHA Club of the South Forsyth High School, Atlanta, GA; Clean Girl group at the University School, Nashville, TN.

2023 Benefactors

Organizations: Foundation for Systemic Change; George Washington University Textile Museum; Human & Civil Rights Organizations of America CFC; Humanity United; Just Future Fund, Amalgamated Foundation; PA CleanWays; Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Dublin OH); Quilters by the Sea Guild (Wilmington, NC); Sierra-O'Connell Family Fund; WICOMICO Capital LLC; World Connect; Zonta Club of Washington

Individuals: Nancy Hoff Allen, Scott Allen, Karen Baskett, Elizabeth Branda, Mary Ellen Cain, Tom Carver, Jacob Cohn, Sandra Coliver, Michele de Nevers, Charles Dougherty, Janice Ewing, Lloyd Feinberg and Betsy Marcotte, Barbara Fitzsimmons, Van Fitzsimmons, Rosa Goldsmith, Donna Greene, Iain Guest, Nancy Harris, Sara Hunsicker, Kim Ingeneri, Lawrence Ingeneri, Lisa Kherle, Joyce Leader, Eleanor Levie, Susan & Michael Martin, David McCarthy, Pat Clark McCarthy, Donald McInnes, Nadal Milga, Sally Minnich, Caitlin Mittrick, Sandra Shaw, Carol Sibley, Dherrod Sturrock, Charlotte Vetter-Burmeister, Pat Walters-Lowery, Anne Watson, Betty J. Young

World Bank Staff/Retirees: Elizabeth Acul, Maria Dacunha, Susan Goldmark, Kei Kawabata, Thondaiman Nagarajan, Kim-Van Nguyen, Mona Niebuhr, Juddy Otieno, Bayo Oyewole, Funke Oyewole, Adrian Poffley, Zubedah Robinson, Steven Shalita, Siv Tockle, Bowen Uhlenkamp, Kanako Yamashita-Allen

Global Giving: Hope Barton, Caroline Berksoy, Fred and Joan Bliss, Thomas Carver, Kathleen Conroy, Karen Delaney, Susan Denvir, Paul Fitzgerald, Barbara Fitzsimmons, Roy Goldman, Jennifer Guest, Jon Holladay, Julia Holladay, Kim Ingeneri, Lawrence Ingeneri, Stacy Lamb, Nancy Lujan, Andrew A. MacGregor, Merry May, Caitlin Mittrick, Delaney Rogers, Alison Soldano, Sherrod Sturrock, Joan P. Taylor

Quilting donors: Anne Watson, Charlotte Vetter-Burmeister, Sallie Minnich, Lisa Kherle, Janice Ewing, Donna Greene, Karen Baskett, Nancy Hoff, Sherrod Sturrock, Pat Walters-Lowery, Pat Clark McCarthy, Sara Hunsicker, Joan Taylor

COVID story-telling project: Susan Louis, Odell Plantin, Dorothy Thomas, Eleanor Levie, Michelle Venus, Annette Scarpitta, Natalia Kanem, Emily Vogt, Jill Chinkin, Teresa Abney, Jennifer Pippins, Lezetta Moyer, Leslie Davidson.