

EVENT REPORT

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

TANZANIA

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WOMEN INTERFAITH NETWORK: CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEACE BUILDING IN TANZANIA

INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

On 16th of February 2017, the Interreligious Council for Peace Tanzania, (IRCPT) and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) jointly convened a seminar for the Tanzania Women Interfaith Network (TWIN) in Dar es Salaam to ensure gender inclusion and strengthening the role of TWIN in the council of IRCPT in particular, as well as in society in general.

IRCPT combines various institutionalized faith based organizations including the different religions such as Muslims, Christians, Hindu, Baha'i, and Buddhists, under its roof. On 12th November 2016, main religious leaders of all member organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) stipulating areas of collaboration in their efforts to ensure peace and stability of the nation. Its constitution as well as the MoU recognize TWIN as a crucial part to ensure gender inclusion and the participation of women as key stakeholders in peace building initiatives. TWIN further has a seat at the national board of IRCPT. Hence, the goal of the seminar was to create a platform to discuss about new opportunities and challenges for TWIN after the signing of the MoU and to develop a strategic plan for further actions in order to strengthen the influence of TWIN in fostering peace building initiatives in the society.

The seminar began with a joint prayer. Subsequently, representatives from IRCPT, TWIN and the different partner organiza-

tions such as KAS, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Foundation for Civil Society (FCS) each gave a short welcome note. Canon Thomas Godda, IRCPT's Secretary General, and Shamim Khan, Chairperson of TWIN, highlighted the importance of the meeting for promoting the participation of the women and addressing challenges TWIN is facing, e. g. financial obstacles and how to reach the local level. Whereas UNDP pointed out the importance of peacebuilding initiatives in order to counter violent extremism, KAS set focus on the second crucial role of TWIN, which is taking a stand for women rights.



Participant during discussion.

Afterwards, the IRCPT Program Coordinator Godwin Mongi summed up the purpose of the meeting and explained that the seminar was structured into three discussion rounds. In the first session, the participants exchanged views on the status quo and responsibilities of TWIN in peace building. Furthermore, the general composition of the IRCPT board was discussed and a stronger representation of women was called for. The

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second discussion round focused on challenges for TWIN in Tanzania and how to overcome them. The third topic concentrated on opportunities for TWIN in Tanzania and how to use and augment them. One aspect discussed was the question which group to target. On one hand, ground level work is needed in order to reach the local level and empower and educate women in their rights, on the other hand, a better high level involvement of women for example in board meetings was requested.



Group Picture

The seminar allowed the participants of TWIN, IRCPT, the Tanzania Youth Network (TYN) and partner organizations to be on the same page, to discuss about cooperation opportunities and clarify the way forward for TWIN, in order to strengthen the work of the women for peacebuilding initiatives.