



Community Voices for Peace and Pluralism WhatsApp Workshop Seminar

Series 8

Conversation with members of Community Voices for Peace and Pluralism

Taking the CVPP Temperature

05.06.2020

The Community Voices for Peace and Pluralism - Africa (CVPP) is a non-profit network that builds the capacities of women and other groups in preventing, transforming and solving violent conflict through a Peace and Pluralism approach. CVPP- Africa equips women to contribute to peace processes in decision making roles.

Convener: Alice Wairimu Nderitu, mediator of armed conflict and author

Coordinator: Regina Mutiru, Mentor and Founding Partner at Amani Women Network

Moderator 1: Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Head of the Research, Policy and Planning at the Department of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, Kenya

Moderator 2: Hibaa Ismael, Third Counsellor in charge of Multilateral Affairs and Deputy Permanent Representative of UNEP and UN-Habitat

Seminar Series Coordinator & Rapporteur: Shama Shah, conflict analyst

Participants: Members of Community Voices for Peace and Pluralism Africa

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Shama Shah, Kenya; Seminar Series Coordinator's introduction of the workshop seminar:

Good afternoon everyone! Welcome to Seminar Series 8. As mentioned earlier, this time we'll be doing things slightly differently, in that we have 2 moderators (Dr. Sella and Hibaa), who's bios I have shared earlier. The participants today will be all of us.

Our topic today is:

“Taking the CVPP temperature”

Today's objective is to explore the challenges the pandemic poses at an individual and collective level in order to find ways to support our wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We'd earlier sent a questionnaire for you to respond to. Shortly, Dr Sella will share the results which we can discuss in depth.

As Alice always reminds us, please note our rules of responses that are guided by the following considerations: before we speak or respond, we ask ourselves: *is it kind? Is it necessary? Is it true?*

Dear Dr., Dear Hibaa, I open the floor to you.

Asaaska Labarakwe, Kenya: Thanks, Shama!

Dr. Sella Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya: Thank you for the introduction, Shama. I wish to thank everyone who filled in the brief questionnaire.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti: Thank you Shama, for this introduction. Thank you, ladies it's such a privilege moderating this session which I am sure will be very interesting. As Alice mentioned earlier, this topic had come up while we had a zoom meeting, and we thought to ourselves that it would be interesting to know how our little community feels during these difficult times that we live in. Indeed, we thought we should survey ourselves to know and take the temperature as in a wider picture it reflects our respective communities' feelings.

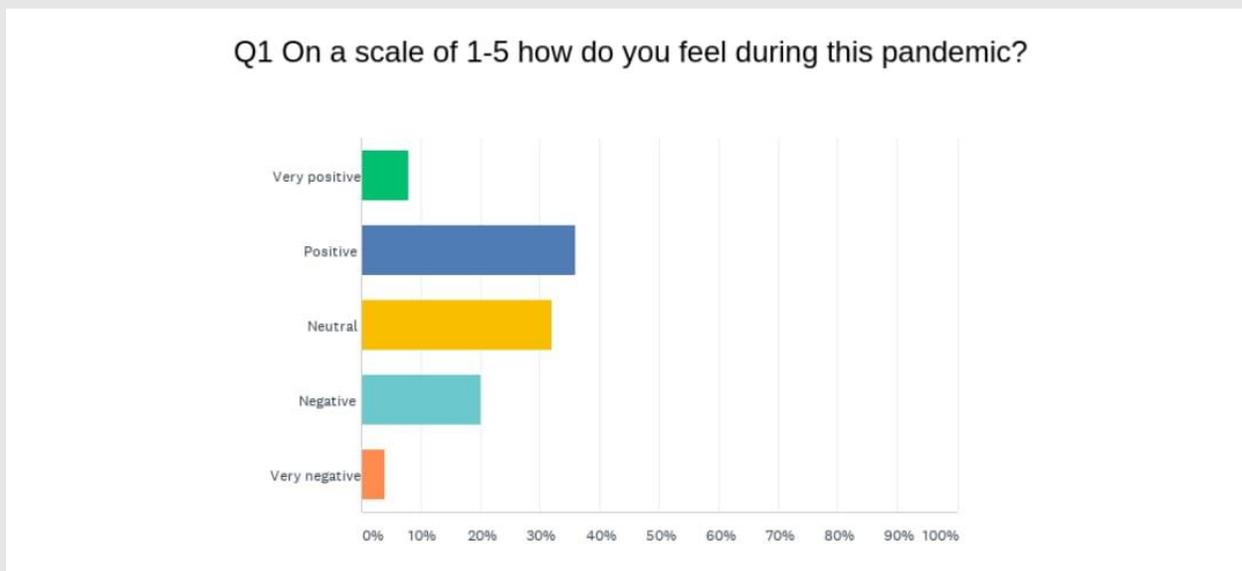
Dr Sellah has set up a survey and will share with you the results that are quite promising and interesting. Then we will listen from all of you. Thank you all for taking the time to fill up the survey!

Dr. Sellah Nasimiya King'oro, Kenya: Thank you Hibaa for opening the discussion. I appreciate all that took the survey too. We are going to take the temperature of every member wherever they are. How are you? Here is the survey.

Q.1) How do you feel during this pandemic?

- ✓ Very positive and why?
- ✓ Positive and why?
- ✓ Neutral and why?
- ✓ Negative and why?
- ✓ Very Negative and why?

Here are the results we got;



Majority of the respondents feel Positive.

Let's discuss this first, before we move to Question 2.

Shama Shah, Kenya: Personally, I wrote that I am feeling positive.

I am not feeling “very positive” because my heart goes out to all those affected by this situation (those who have been affected health wise, and also economically). I am feeling positive because

Africa has not suffered as much as we thought it would (due to various reasons) and, maybe naively, I do believe this situation will soon be over.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti: Thank you Shama, and yes I think we ought to be naive in these uncertain times.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya: Shama, thank you for sharing. Indeed COVID-19 has not only affected the health of our people, we have been affected economically, socially and politically too. However, am glad that you are positive. We need people who can help the flow of positive energy into the universe. Thank you.

Naomi Gichuru, Kenya: I am positive because;

1. Africa has not so far been affected as badly as was imagined.
2. Innovation has awakened production of our own materials/machines.
3. We are back to our traditional medicine.
4. New way of doing things will emerge and revive our economies.

Sophie Havyarimana, Burundi: If I remember well, I wrote that I feel optimistic to mean that things will change to the best soon. Somehow positive for the future because there is a certain resilience that is visible from our communities, overcoming the fear and the ignorance towards the pandemic.

Asaaska Labarakwe, Kenya: I also feel quite positive as well. I think at individual level we are all taking precautions to stay home and stay safe and this has contributed a lot in flattening the curve in one way or another. Additionally, COVID-19 has made us become self-sufficient. Africa is quite innovative.

I think overall, as much as the future is uncertain as if now but it's just going to get better!

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Naomi Gichuru): Naomi, wow! I feel you. Especially about revamping our local production. I trust that African governments will take this opportunity to reengineer ourselves into a manufacturing and industrial continent. We can do it! We can add value to our agricultural products ourselves and attain our economic independence!

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Sophie Havyarimana): Sophie. I totally agree with you. The resilience of Africa is unparalleled. I wonder whether religion has something to do with it. Regardless, I tend to think like you that Africa will bounce back with energy. It is where we channel that energy that will define its future.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti: This is quite promising to see a lot of people so positive and thinking of the adaptation measures Africa have and will benefit from. It's an interesting way of measuring our resilience as a Continent.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Asaaska Labarakwe): Very true. We have learnt to become self-sufficient, to operate within the circumstances and still hope for better. Thanks Asa.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Asaaska Labarakwe): Yes, I feel you Asaaska, on the innovative mind Africa has to offer. Especially given the traditional solutions that are available to us! We should explore this more.

Susan Owino-Chege, Kenya: I'm feeling neutral, just not sure yet. The pandemic disrupted all activities I was doing and thank God that it didn't affect us that much. My son came back from Italy at the end of February and we were all scared as a family. Any cough or sneeze we called it COVID. We learnt to appreciate what we have and learnt new skills such as farming and weaving.

Asaaska Labarakwe, Kenya: Also, with this pandemic, we in the SSA should consider implementing the Abuja Declaration in full, i.e. spending 15% of our budget on provision of primary health. COVID-19 has been a wakeup call to our leaders. For example, in Kenya alone we have been spending below 10% on health.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Susan Owino-Chege): Thank you, Susan. It is understandable to be in a place of dilemma especially when we are dealing with a risk as huge as this. I am glad your son and your entire family is safe now, and that you learnt new skills during this time.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Susan Owino-Chege): Very understandable, I believe emotionally it was quite tiring on your family. Many of us have probably felt the same especially those living in the West.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Asaaska Labarakwe): A great lesson to us, Asaaska. Especially when it dawned on politicians that they cannot seek medical attention abroad and overseas... I hope our parliaments will remember this as they allocate resources.

Doreen Nkala, Zimbabwe: I feel so weak and hopeless because those who are better placed and connected to politicians have access to superior services or can buy resources online. Yet those who are poor are stuck with no food or hospitals to go to. Forced to forget about basics, yet basic needs are just unavoidable.

Halima A. O. Shuria, Kenya: I believe I wrote that I was positive and optimistic. I know there has been a lot of suffering, but I think that it also became an opportunity. An opportunity to not only for Africa but for blacks in general. Although we understood many things that were going on, it became blatant and we are starting to fight back in many small ways.

Sophie Havyarimana, Burundi: My area of discomfort is not being able to assist affected family members, neighbors and friends. Visiting them in the hospital is a risk, participating at funeral ceremonies puts us at risk, visiting the mourning families is a risk, and you wonder how are you going to reconnect with them tomorrow....

Doreen Nkala, Zimbabwe (responding to Sophie Havyarimana): So challenging. How do you face them after months of non-close communication?

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Doreen Nkala): Very understandable and it is unfortunately one reality on our continent. Privileges are not well distributed.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Doreen Nkala): Doreen, I understand your point of view. Our societies are so unequal and COVID-19 has just brought these inequalities to the fore. Thank you for sharing how you feel.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Halima A. O. Shuria): Thank you Halima, for sharing this. I think like you, we are using this pandemic to right some wrongs that have become clearer due to this crisis.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Sophie Havyarimana): Someone mentioned that social distancing is actually creating social fragmentation and reading what you are saying Sophie, makes me believe this.

Dr. Mandiedza Parichi, Zimbabwe:

1. I feel positive because while so much has been disrupted about my personal growth because of COVID-19, I have taken this time to reflect and re-strategies and see things differently. I also value the importance of prioritization.
2. I am however saddened by the state of affairs around COVID-19 in my country, Zimbabwe. Quarantine places have been the highest breeding spaces of the pandemic because of the unpreparedness of the nation to manage the situation, and cases are on the rise.
3. I feel positive about Africa in general and its realization of the need for interconnectedness to find solutions together. I'm referring to our work here at CVPP and the ongoing establishment of FemWise-Africa regional and continental networks. The need for Africa finding solutions for Africa cannot be overemphasized.
4. I'm truly optimistic about the growth of Africa particularly women and our inevitable familiarization with technology to still continue with peacebuilding.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti: We understand that some of us don't live in Africa, so we'd like to also hear from those in the group that are currently in affected areas. Your situation is quite different from us, we'd like to hear how you are coping (some of you are maybe experiencing already the post-covid life).

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Dr. Mandiedza Parichi): You remind me of our humanness. We have so many feelings at the same time. Dale Carnegie would tell you Ozara that, 'you have narrowed the space between your heart and your head'.

Salim Musa Umar, Nigeria: Good afternoon all. Just coming online. However, I submitted my feeling yesterday. My community is going through so many challenges and COVID-19 has only been added to many.

Sophie Havyarimana, Burundi (responding to Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro): I think we are losing what we have as African uniqueness "solidarity". Social distancing does not actually fit our way of living.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya: Hello Salim. Welcome to the discussions.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti: Dr. Sellah, I completely feel you. You just took this out of my mind! Indeed our human nature has given us mixed feelings.

Welcome Salim.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Salim Musa Umar): Tell us why you feel the way you feel...

Salim Musa Umar, Nigeria: COVID-19 challenges succeeded in opening new vista in terms of approach to issues, e.g. the lockdown has unlocked a lot of potentials hitherto that were hidden in us. We are forced to innovate and design new ways of surviving the challenges.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Salim Musa Umar): Indeed, but should we look at ways to sustain these potentials? Ways of harnessing and develop them? It is a very beautiful thing to look at it.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Salim Musa Umar): True Salim. We have had to innovate even at personal or family level. Where I am, I remember people doing bulk purchases of food when the lockdown started. It was hard for some who didn't have means of preserving these foods for long periods of time.

Salim Musa Umar, Nigeria: There were many dimensions and perspectives. Some people were initially living in denial about the virus itself. Now they are coming to terms with the reality. The final straw that broke the camel's back is that the pandemic started picking high profile figures in the society, that completely changed the narrative. People are now seeing that it is true and real.

So, since it is here and real what next? People begin to key in to the measures already put in place e.g. wearing of facemask, washing of hands, social distancing (in reality it is physical distancing, our culture and reality in Africa cannot support social distancing) and many others.

Tamador Ahmed Khalid, Sudan: The peace process is progressing, yet the attack on the arm forces in Central Darfur erupted in addition to tribal conflict in three states leaving new displaced groups. COVID-19 is affecting many but the worrying part is stigma associated with it.

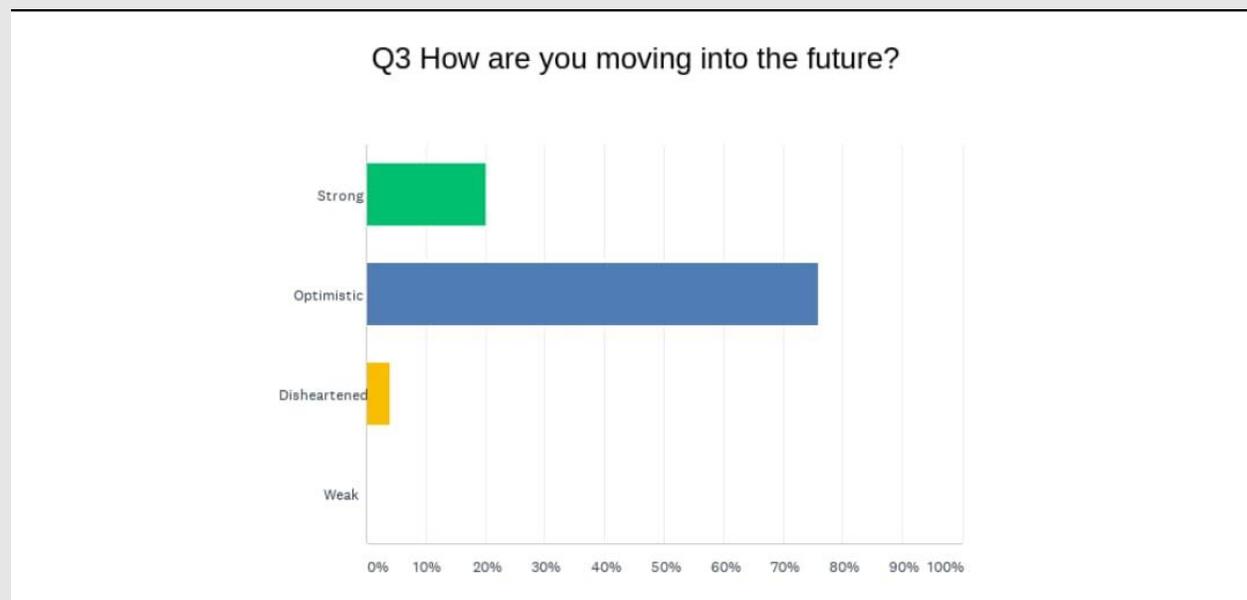
Dr. Sellah Nasimiyyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Tamador Ahmed Khalid): I agree. The stigma has been aggravated by mass cyber bullying and trolling online.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Salim Musa Umar): I remember hearing someone saying (I actually forgot), "social distancing is a privilege to the developed countries", and I do agree that Africa cannot apply to those measures.

Salim Musa Umar, Nigeria (responding to Hibaa Ismael): I think there is no option than to adopt them and agree they have come to stay with us for a long time to come, and maybe keep fine-tuning them to respond to our circumstances.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyyu King'oro, Kenya: Let's discuss Question 3 before we talk about Question 2.

Q3. Given our current temperatures, how do we see the future? How can we exploit our potential, sustain our resilience and explore our innovation?



Good news: 78% of us are optimistic when we look into the horizon. 4% may be disheartened but NONE of us is weak!

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Salim Musa Umar): Salim, you have preempted our next step and I completely agree with you. The realities make life different and we indeed we have to adapt to it. The sense of normalcy is shifting.

Salim Musa Umar, Nigeria (responding to Dr. Sellah Nasimiyyu King'oro): We will surely pull through. Our resilience as a continent with people who have seen more than what is measurable in trauma is not in doubt. What is needed is our collective resolve to face the challenges head on. As Africans, we have seen far more devastating challenges and we were out of the woods. If we remain focused, we are surely going to survive this and utilize lessons learnt for our collective good. As Africans, nothing is new. There is nothing Ali did not see as a gateman!

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Salim Musa Umar): Very true, I think our resilience is our greater asset as a continent, and yes we should explore it.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Salim Musa Umar): Totally agree. We have seen and experienced more than our share and yet we have always pulled through. We shall indeed overcome. And CVPP will be one of the agents of sustaining this resilience.

Stella Sabiiti, Uganda: Very interesting conversation! Thanks for being innovative.

Tamador Ahmed Khalid, Sudan (responding to Hibaa Ismael): What I see, and feel is that we are absorbed by the current responses to COVID-19. Have we thought about post COVID-19, such as resources? The priorities and focus are shifting.

Felistas Mushi, Tanzania: I am strong - knowing that God is on our side and that whatever happened cannot be changed but there is an opportunity to start over.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Tamador Ahmed Khalid): Exactly Tamador, you are right on point. We are hoping that through this session today, it will give us the opportunity to think of post COVID-19.

Salim Musa Umar, Nigeria: We should always have at the back of our mind that good wishes don't achieve us anything, but good actions do.

Procrastination gets us nowhere, but good action does.

If we keep on contesting over a piece of farmland and we don't have yam seedlings, the one with the seedlings gets on planting. So COVID-19 has provided us with an opportunity for self-evaluation in order to remain relevant.

No complacency. Let's move on.

Asaaska Labarakwe, Kenya: This is very interesting. Thanks for sharing your experiences.

Dr. Mandiedza Parichi, Zimbabwe: I think for me with the current pandemic and the ongoing race conversations there is some realization that Africa needs to explore all seven levels of power in order for the continent to progress. Power is tilting currently towards the West (recent

rejection of WHO of the Malaysian COVID-19 solution). This is despite the fact that development has been proven not to be universal. We need to tap into our traditional ways of managing issues and adopt only helpful strategies and maybe produce a hybrid in order to develop. We need to also invest in each other so that as a force and whenever necessary we come together and be supporting pillars of each other.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Salim Musa Umar): Very true and we shouldn't be laid back and waste time! I like that.

Florence Mpaayei, Kenya: Thanks for this opportunity to share. Looking to the future, I realize the importance of being very deliberate and ready for any change at many levels. While we work for the now, let's always know things can change overnight without warning. We have all lived this reality as a community.

Felistas Mushi, Tanzania: I also know that what we thought was normal will no longer be normal - things like handshakes, social gatherings will be minimal, travelling will be limited (many airlines cutting down on routes). I also know that "shopping spree" to me is no longer attractive (no big parties, social events and visits are limited).

But sure though there is awakening to our individual and continental potential of which I am very proud.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya: The experiences by many of us point to a hopeful future. We seem to be getting to terms with the 'new normal' that should bring out the best in us.

Alice Nderitu, Kenya (Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro): Personally, I have been impressed with the number of courses that have been happening online because of COVID-19. I have now taught two and been in one, even took an exam online. I think we have been a slow as continent in embracing virtual learning because we love to meet physically!! Now we are online.

My biggest source of optimism though is the innovations. Imagine for example such a beautiful WhatsApp conversation this afternoon and the immense geographical area/ distance it covers! Imagine how connected we are! So COVID-19 is a nasty horrible disease that has made us see the world differently.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro): I think so too, Dr. Sellah. Maybe also the new normal wasn't strange to us. For example, we had other traditional ways of saying hello to each other in Africa, so maybe this situation is making us look back to our roots.

Tamador Ahmed Khalid, Sudan (responding to Dr. Mandiedza Parichi): I agree. This is the time where we as Africans come up with our African solutions, success stories and experiences.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Alice Nderitu): Very true, Alice. I think from now on COVID-19 has made us save money on unnecessary travels to meet. From now on meetings will happen through these platforms that have been developed.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Hiba Ismael): One practical way that my organization has benefited from this crisis!

Samia El Hashmi, Sudan (responding to Hiba Ismael): On other hand we discovered that some people are ignorant about it and using it for work (not only leisure), so I think we need to have some training on IT and security.

Last thing I can add....I had time to talk with my grown up sons, who were outside home all the time before the lock down!

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Samia El Hashmi): Yes indeed, capacity building on IT is quite interesting!

Dr. Mandiedza Parichi, Zimbabwe: I am very optimistic of the future. Africa is no longer regarded as the dark continent. Through technology we have managed to get into local, regional and international spaces and meaningfully contributed concerning our communities, countries and continent. Not as symbolical representation like generations before. We should continue to fight for space and offer African solutions so that we are not just recipients of experiments that may not work. I also am optimistic because of the mentorship through digital networking. We should all be encouraged not to be techno-phobic but embrace these global developments.

Alice Nderitu, Kenya: COVID-19 really made us see the world as it is - those with the luxury of social distancing and those living in one room in crowded spaces. It has made us understand inequality both in the developed world and in our continent.

Florence Mpaayei, Kenya: In welcoming advanced technology, I have also been cognizant of the fact that in some regions the infrastructure for connectivity does not exist, hence isolating others.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Dr. Mandiedza Parichi): Wow yes, love this! I totally agree with you. The inclusivity of Africans in spaces where we were left behind is now put into the forefront!!!

(responding to Alice Nderitu): But in the face of the virus it's an equalizer, social distance or no!

Asaaska Labarakwe, Kenya: We need to embrace the 'New Normal'.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Alice Nderitu): Very true. It unveiled inequality and equalized us by ensuring we all seek medical help in our own countries.

Felistas Mushi, Tanzania: We have also learnt to respect our traditional medicine! Soon we will revive all the local industries that went dead because of influx Chinese goods - hopefully.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Felistas Mushi): Oh yes we should explore ways of developing them and boost such industries.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Florence Mpaayei): This is one area we must seek to improve as we move into the future. All areas should be enabled and our educational services should take more advantage of this space.

Halima A. O. Shuria, Kenya: Life will never be the same. Business will not be 'as usual'. We have learned that we are able to be even more productive while working from home than we were sitting in the offices. It cost us less as we don't have to pay for transportation, lunches and other unnecessary costs. We were able to get closer as families, do things together that were more creative to pass time, we were able to reach out to family and friends on phone. We supported each other in one way or another. We enriched our minds through books and such forums.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Asaaska Labarakwe): We should do this, Asaaska, and even take advantage of the new normal to improve our humanness to the environment and to each other.

Susan Owino-Chege, Kenya: We have also learnt that culture is dynamic holding funeral meetings on WhatsApp with no food.

Alice Nderitu, Kenya: I was also very sad about the securitized approach to COVID-19. Law enforcement officers treating people suspected to have COVID-19 like criminal suspects was not good. The stigma too for positive patients was/is unnecessary. Community approaches (where if you live in a town your neighbor is your community) would have been great.

Chief Sarah Lochodo, Kenya: TURKANA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

MINISTRY OF HEALTH SERVICES AND SANITATION

INCIDENCE REPORT FOR A REPORTED COVID19 POSITIVE CASE
TURKANA CENTRAL

Background

Two male truckers (driver & tan boy) aged 35 and 24 years respectively working for Kenma Invest, BOX 5651-00500, Nairobi with truck registration no KBJ 164C. They had their supplies to be delivered to China Railway No 5 Engineering Group Limited based in Lokichogio,

Turkana West in Turkana County from Mombasa Cement Company based at Athi River (Nairobi). Their place of sleep was the same truck, all along their trip.

On 28th May 2020 at around 3pm, the two commenced their trip for Lokichogio but time caught up with them and decided to sleep in Mai Mahiu. They embarked on their journey the following morning and arrived afternoon hours in Eldoret where they presented themselves to Huruma Sub-County hospital for test but were informed sample collection will be on Monday 1st June 2020. The two had to spend the weekend at Huruma grounds. A nearby hotel owned by a Ugandan was their place of eating. On Monday 1st June 2020, their samples were taken and they were released to continue with their journey and told results would be relayed once RT-PCR test was done at MTRH.

On their way, they stopped over at Maili Tisa at the famous “Chicken eating place” and had a meal, paid with cash and left for Turkana without stopping till Kainuk border where they were screened by county surveillance team. After being cleared of their vitals, they proceeded to Lokichar where they spent the night (1st June 2020). They had their supper at Yassin hotel in Lokichar at around 10 pm. Early morning of 2nd June 2020, they bought Chapati in an eatery adjacent to Safari Hotel before embarking on their journey. At around 10 am & 3pm respectively, they had a stopover for Nyama Choma at Gold in Turkana South & Nasiger center in Loima sub-county. Thereafter they left for Lokichogio and arrived at around 8pm where they slept.

On 3rd June 2020, they off loaded the cement in section 5 and 7 and immediately left for Nasiger for another meal, where they spent nearly the whole day. At around 11 pm, they left for Lodwar but slept near China Construction Company Camp. On the morning of 4th June 2020 at 8:30 am, they proceeded to Lodwar Car wash at Kanamkemer. This is when the test results were relayed to them. The driver tested COVID -19 Positive while his turn boy had COVID-19 Negative results. He was advised to either visit the nearest health facility or Police station for help and he opted for the later. The SCRRT, Turkana Central was informed by OCPD at around 3 pm.

Action taken

- The case was immediately handed over to the case management team at Kanamkemer Sub County Hospital Isolation ward for admission.
- The case management team put all the requirements in place and admitted the patient.
- The Turn boy in the truck was taken to quarantine at Lodwar KMTC and thus handed over to the institution’s quarantine manager
 - The IPC team conducted disinfection of the truck
 - The Surveillance team embarked on contact tracing
 - ACSM team carried out sensitization of the Community around the Isolation facility to create awareness that the hospital was being used as an Isolation Centre and therefore medical services to be sought from neighboring facilities’

Lumbasi Rapando

For SCRRT
TURKANA CENTRAL

Sarah Lochodo shared the document above and made the following comment (Sarah is the Chief of Kainuk and the first Turkana woman Chief): This how Corona has forcefully gained entry to Turkana County through my Location Kainuk as the entry point.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Halima A. O. Shuria): Indeed Halima, this crisis has helped us enrich our personal lives and show the importance of life. It made us less materialistic (I hope) and more focused on human nature.

Alice Nderitu, Kenya (responding to Susan Owino-Chege): True Susan! Who would have imagined funeral planning meetings or wedding planning meetings on WhatsApp!?

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Alice Nderitu): I agree. Even from the health perspective, now that we are having more Community transmissions, we should be working more with community health workers for prevention. But we are using top down approaches more than local or bottom up approaches.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Alice Nderitu): Yes Alice, I was just thinking of that now. The Stigma and trauma that COVID-19 has given us, and how we should get over this is another challenge to explore.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Susan Owino-Chege): Especially in Luhya, Kenya - our culture is indeed dynamic.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Chief Sarah Lochodo): Sorry to hear that Sarah. It's sad. I always thought Covid will enter through Loima or any other border point. All will be well though.

Chief Sarah Lochodo, Kenya (responding to Alice Nderitu): I witnessed the interception of 6 contacts (both drivers) at Kainuk police roadblock. Stigma automatically will creep to the minds of the suspects under quarantine now. Sellah, the first 6 entered through Nadapal international border and now we have one through Kainuk.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyyu King'oro, Kenya: Let us now go to the final part of our session, which was actually Question 2 in the questionnaire. What lessons have you learnt during this Crisis?

Please share your lesson even if it's the same as what you submitted in the survey.

Susan Owino-Chege, Kenya: Working with young people in informal settlements has not been the same. I have witnessed strong bonds and love among them. When 5 young men were evicted from their homes, the rest made sure they had at least one solid meal, blankets and warm clothes.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Susan Owino-Chege): This is one thing I have considered as the hallmark of resilience in informal settlements in Kenya. I am a witness.

Stella Sabiiti, Uganda: No need to go through the tedious process of applying for visas to attend conferences etc - conferences are right in our homes now, they come to us.

Alice Nderitu, Kenya:

A) I have learnt that wearing a mask is so uncomfortable.

B) I have learnt that people who get paid a lot of money like celebrities are completely useless in an epidemic/a pandemic.

C) I have learnt that to work as a health care worker to take care of other people is truly a calling.

D) I have learnt that many of those people purporting to be miracle workers did not know what to do with a pandemic. They have no miracle to make it disappear.

Felistas Mushi, Tanzania: I learnt that it is possible to achieve a lot with minimal resources if we use IT facilities. Some of the expenses we used to incur for meetings were actually not necessary.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Alice Nderitu): Alice, this just made me laugh! But you are so right on each point!!! And indeed, Masks are so uncomfortable, and we can't breathe in them.

Alice Nderitu, Kenya (responding to Stella Sabiiti): Absolutely!! Remember the visa queues and the invasive immigration questions? It's great to know that home was actually a nice place to stay and we now know better.

Felistas Mushi, Tanzania: Worship is internal. One can worship truly from home if he/ she so wishes.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Alice Nderitu): We can travel in our home country while attending virtual meetings!! Then we make sure there's connectivity everywhere.

Asaaska Labarakwe, Kenya: Science reigns again!

Shama Shah, Kenya: I have learnt to appreciate the freedom we had (especially in terms of mobility, etc).

I have also learnt how powerful the media is and how it can affect the masses (it can be a source of valuable information, and also a source that spreads fear).

I have learnt that I am blessed, in so, so many ways.

And same as Alice, I have truly learnt what a nuisance masks are!

Dr. Mandiedza Parichi, Zimbabwe: Lessons learnt: For me, the human mind is not limited but conditioned and is adaptive to available conditions. I was forced out of the comfort zone. I had to join others or outrightly sink. I chose to swim. In the same manner I felt if Africa works hard the way it is doing right now to manage the situation with little outside dependence, we will be forced to swim. Most countries are swimming. Countries like Rwanda and Botswana to mention a few have put in place policies that favor citizens for development.

I learnt that to leverage power in international negotiations you also have to have some power as a country or continent. This power is derived from economic development and independence.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya (responding to Dr. Mandiedza Parichi): Sink or swim... For sure Africa can swim. Our leaders need to exhibit true transformational leadership and viola...!

Salim Musa Umar, Nigeria: So many lessons learnt from the real to the absurd. Who could have ever imagined a security guard at gate taking the temperature of a medical doctor! It is happening courtesy of COVID-19.

Dr. Mandiedza Parichi: Very true. Most religious leaders are charlatans.

Felistas Mushi, Tanzania: I have learnt not to panic in times of emergency. There is always a way out. But we need a cool and sober mind to see it.

Halima A. O. Shuria, Kenya: Personally, at first, I was angry when Masjids were closed. However, I learnt that this was already set in Islam.

1. The Adaan call for prayer could be done differently.
2. Idd prayers could be done at home.
3. Lock down was done in epidemics.

And so much more. Actually, I can confidently say this was my best Ramadhan and the most sacred.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Halima A. O. Shuria): Yes Halima, I think it taught us so much about our own religion and made us more connected with it!

Alice Nderitu, Kenya: I also learnt to bake! I could bake basic cakes but now I am on another level.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Alice Nderitu): Bravo!

Salim Musa Umar, Nigeria (responding to Alice Nderitu): Hahaha, can't wait for my next birthday then.

Halima A. O. Shuria, Kenya (responding to Alice Nderitu): It took me back to my home economic classes and I started making cushions from old pillows for my prayer corner and also did some planting.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya: I have a **before photo** of me as we entered the COVID-19 period let's see if I'll have intentionally dropped of a few kilos after the lockdown.

Salim Musa Umar, Nigeria (responding to Halima A. O. Shuria): COVID-19 made all of us discover one basic truth we have been sidelining. Prayers has always been online? Isn't it?

Hibaa, more spiritually connected online.

Alice Nderitu, Kenya: I also learnt we could exercise from home. Sellah posted a skipping exercise on Facebook that I have been following it. Hopefully she will post it here too.

Halima A. O. Shuria, Kenya (responding to Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro): I think I gained - I officially filled out my veil!

Susan Owino-Chege, Kenya: You can work anywhere with limited resources. I learn to make my own peanut butter, grow my own vegetables and do poultry farming. I am also teaching subjects I didn't learn like chemistry and physics and how children can adopt to new situations.

Shama Shah, Kenya (responding to Alice Nderitu): After COVID I'm coming for tea.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti: I think Dr. Sellah and I are really enjoying the lessons learnt here!!!

Asaaska Labarakwe, Kenya: It's been a learning curve for all of us. I have learnt a ton personally, from how to breathe with a mask on to being a full-time teacher to my two kids. Being a teacher and working in the health sector is truly a calling.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti: How about going back to school with the home schooling?

Halima A. O. Shuria, Kenya (responding to Hibaa Ismael): I was thinking the same thing. I believe my children are doing better with the home schooling. Although the reason may be different, because their mother is at home for once.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Halima A. O. Shuria): Same issue here

Asaaska Labarakwe, Kenya (responding to Halima A. O. Shuria): Same. It's been quite a ride and a ton of fun.

Alice Nderitu, Kenya (responding to Susan Owino-Chege): I also learnt how fast employers moved to cut pay. One of the organizations I write for wrote to say they were giving all of us writers a 40% pay cut because of COVID.

I thought it would have been wiser for employers to, instead of giving pay cuts and losing good people, to say to us as writers, "we have a crisis created by this pandemic, how can you work with us to find new ways of staying profitable ? "

Many people lost their jobs.

Felistas Mushi, Tanzania: COVID-19 has brought families together. They got to know each other too, also, children have quality time with otherwise very busy parents.

Alice Nderitu, Kenya (responding to Halima A. O. Shuria): Interesting to think that all the visas in our passports that we valued so much now have a different meaning.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya: The many positive observations justify our optimism. These discussions have inspired me and opened a different perspective of where I stand in this crisis as an individual and as a continent.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti (responding to Alice Nderitu): Unfortunately it is a reality in this capitalist world we live in. Businesses don't foresee the potential of their employees and only think of their profits.

Naomi Gichuru, Kenya: It also reminded us how important strong family ties are and what friends mean in our socio support.

Felistas Mushi, Tanzania (responding to Naomi Gichuru): Yes! Families we had little time to bond pre-COVID-19.

Halima A. O. Shuria, Kenya (responding to Felistas Mushi): Since I have not been able to carry out the workshops I normally do, I transformed my role to home and I think my kids and other members at home will kick me out soon. Anyone willing to accommodate me if this happens, please!

Alice Nderitu, Kenya (responding to Halima A. O. Shuria): My dear Halima, have you been taking your children through an understanding of the conflict onion?

Halima A. O. Shuria, Kenya (responding to Alice Nderitu): Alice, more like each one choosing a topic to research and 2 days a week they would present. We ask questions, add, comment and give feedback on the presentation and how they should improve.

Millicent Oucho Otieno, Kenya: I have learnt that I can follow sessions, learn and not say a word until we close. Thanks moderators and participants, it was enriching.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti: This was an interesting and enriching discussion. Truly Dr. Sellah and I have enjoyed moderating this session, it was an eye opener and helped us see the crisis in a different way. The optimism within the group is well reflected through the various enjoyable responses. I believe that as a Continent we are resilient enough to overcome this crisis as we had seen worse. Thank You all for participating and taking the time to share your experiences and feelings, we felt that as a family we should exchange our thoughts.

Thank you.

Merci.

Asante.

Shama we hand over to you to close the session.

Dr. Sellah Nasimiyu King'oro, Kenya: I concur. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to moderate.

Salim Musa Umar, Nigeria: Thank you all for your wonderful contributions. I have learned a lot.

Halima A. O. Shuria, Kenya: Thank you Dr. Sella, Hibaa and Shama this was fun.

Alice Nderitu, Kenya: Thanks Sellah, Hibaa and Shama. We really appreciate you. Particularly as you even prepared a temperature check that we had to take yesterday. So many thanks.

Tamador Ahmed Khalid, Sudan: This was such a motivating and an inspiring session. Thank you all and have good evening.

Asaaska Labarakwe, Kenya: Thank you so much for this opportunity! The experiences have been amazing to say the least.

Naomi Gichuru, Kenya: Thank you all, it was a great learning session.

Alice Nderitu, Kenya: Reading through all the posts again and saying thank goodness for resilience because it's really been a tough time for all of us and more so for some of us than others. I wish Jane had shared her experience.

Dr. Sethunya Mosime, Botswana: It's my first time today on this group and I really enjoyed the seminar. Sethunya.

Dr. Mandiedza Parichi, Zimbabwe: Thanks so much Sellah and Hibaa I loved this insightful but relaxed conversation, and I learnt a lot. To Alice and Shama as always, thank you for making an otherwise dull COVID-19 era lively and educative. My sisters here - may we Always love each other this way, regardless of circumstances.

Shama Shah, Kenya: What a super conversation we've had today! I'd like to thank everyone for participating, and for Dr. Sellah and Hibaa for moderating the session so beautifully.

Of course, although this session has officially closed, please let's keep this conversation going!

This concluded Community Voices for Peace and Pluralism's seventh Seminar Series.

Although this session was concluded, the discussion still continued, with experiences worth noting.

Anna Tonelli USA: Hi everyone! I'm in San Francisco and so I'm not always awake for the call/discussion times. This week has been particularly exhausting, so I let myself rest as long as I needed today. I feel something positive which is that I'm slowing down. I've been provided an environment where I have to sit with my emotions because there aren't the usual distractions. What's hard about COVID is not being able to see my family. It's been really difficult to be separated from those you love in this moment, though I know it's love to keep the separation.

Jane Anyango, Kenya: I feel you Anna, this too shall pass.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti: Hi Anna, thank you for sharing your sentiment. It's indeed an opportune time to explore our feelings and appreciate ourselves as human beings!
Thank you again.

Nimo Ali, Somaliland/Kenya: Hi Anna. It's been a journey for all us. It is life changing times but we feel you my dear... I have lost over 10 relatives and friends and still recovering from the shock. God is our strength. Let's keep the prayers and courage together.

Poorvi Chitalkar, India/Canada: Hi all, I'm sorry to be late to this "temperature check". First of all, thank you to everyone here for sharing their ups and downs. Feeling connected to other, even while we are all distancing is very helpful.

In Canada, we are nearing 3 months since lockdown kicked in. It has been difficult, particularly because we have an older population and many unfortunate deaths in our long-term care homes.

It has really put a spotlight on our treatment of elders as a society and many systemic health care issues (like privatization of old age homes) which I hope we seriously reckon with. As always, the impact of the crisis is more strongly felt by racial groups and Indigenous peoples. In Canada, we don't have a lot of good data by race/ethnicity/indigeneity which also obscures the issue. Another thing I hope we do, having learned from this crisis, is collect better data. I don't think change can happen until you first acknowledge and realize what the problem is. And without data, we are living in the dark.

In addition to COVID-19, the powerful mobilizations against racism in the US and around the world in the past week have been deeply inspiring and moving. I joined the march/protest here in Ottawa and I really got the feeling that this is big. I have had a lot of conversations recently with friends, family and colleagues who are committing to learning more, checking their own biases, educating themselves and be better allies. I will certainly do the same.

More generally I feel like the last 6 months/1 year has shown us many, many very powerful movements. In Sudan, in India in support of minorities, in the US against racism etc. I am a big believer in the power of social movements and so for me, seeing all of this in my lifetime is reassuring that change will happen. This kind of true power will not go to waste.

Finally, personal temperature check. I am immensely and constantly grateful. My family and I are healthy, I have a secure job, a safe home to live in, food, access to beautiful outdoors and fresh air. Cannot complain. My father is 65 years old and a cancer doctor in India. He is going to work every day. I worry about him, but on the other hand, as he says, this is his calling and he is honored to be able to serve humanity in this moment. One of the most difficult things for me is not knowing when I will see my family in India and my husbands' in the US. As someone who has lived away from home for almost my entire adult life, the idea that my family is "just one flight away" has come crashing down. But we are finding new ways of staying connected.

Thanks again, Alice and everyone on this group for the connections, the support. I am usually quiet but very much enjoy learning from all of you.

Salim Musa Umar, Nigeria: Thank you Poorvi, for this perspective. One thing is sure; the COVID-19 challenges are going to pass. For now we just have adjust and live with the reality imposed on us by the pandemic. Best wishes as always.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti: Thank you Poorvi, for sharing with us. Very grateful to hear from someone who is outside the continent. Thank you

Stella Sabiiti, Uganda: So sorry, dear Nimo. We're brave but there are moments when we feel down. In April I emailed an old Italian priest from my childhood. His calling all his life was working with Karimojong and Turkana pastoralists communities. He retired back to Italy about 2 years ago. We exchange emails regularly but of late we weren't. I remembered him because of COVID-19 in Italy and sent him an email. He responded immediately, saying he was in hospital in Milan. Then he asked me to pray for him as he prays for me. I called my mom two weeks later to give her greetings from our priest friend. Shortly after that I sent him an email to check how he was doing, no response. Then I called his number, no response. I grew frantic as I didn't know

anyone else in his life. Then I remembered a young Italian at a workshop in Nairobi from the Italian government. She checked for me and immediately got back to me. My priest friend had unfortunately passed on. Every so often I think about him and his prayer request, and just wonder about life. It's so sad when we lose our people, I'm with you all who've lost those even closer

Felistas Mushi, Tanzania: I feel you sister. The best we can do under such circumstances is to thank God for the gift of the lives of those we were privileged to have in our lives: and pray for the grace to live with the fact that the world is not our final destination.

Hibaa Ismael, Djibouti: Thank You sister Stella, that's why as some sisters said yesterday one of the Negative sides to the COVID-19 pandemic is not being able to reach out to family and friends during this period.

You were lucky to have been guided by Allah to reach out to him and pray for him. Now feel better than if you found out too late. God is good great and is the healer. For all those who lost family members or friends may Allah help you during this time and help you find a way to assist them in some way. Nimo and Sophie and many of our sisters who may not have mentioned it poleni (sorry).

Benedicte Storm, Demark: Hi everyone.

I am sincerely sorry to come late into this conversation on this important temperature check! It has really been incredible to learn from you and being able to follow these conversations. To me, it really shows a heartfelt connectiveness that I think is really rare.

For me, I think the biggest lesson has been about resilience and how powerful people can be when they stand together. The COVID-19 pandemic has really exposed the existing inequality crisis, which I think is a crucial momentum to renegotiate roles, positions and power dynamics. It has been filled with anxiety, isolation, but also been a time for gratitude and deep appreciation, self-reflecting on privilege and positionality. At the same time, it has also underscored that people are capable of adapting, finding solutions and innovations globally, locally and acting together, not only for our own good but to put the needs of those who are at stake and vulnerable ahead. Solidarity is really a concept that sits with me. I too joined the anti-racist demonstrations in CPH yesterday and it was the first time in a while that I felt part of a bigger movement. It was so powerful that I could cry.

On a more personal note, it has been a time to refocus on core values; the health of my family, the importance of mental health and the importance of nurturing my relationships and seeking deeper connections and conversations. It has been a time for reflection. It has put fundamental things in perspective and made me much more appreciative of life, opportunity and core values.

I feel deeply appreciative to be part of this space, I really cannot say how inspired and grateful this makes me. I wish I had more to contribute here, but I am still learning and not used to taking up space. A heartfelt thanks Regina and Alice for everything you do.

Biographies



Dr. Sellah Kingo'ro

Dr. Sellah King'oro is a researcher of over fourteen years' experience in peace, social cohesion, social justice and social policy research. Currently, she is the Head of the Research, Policy and Planning Department of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, Kenya where she has worked for over seven years. Prior to her appointment at NCIC, she was a Researcher at Development Policy Management Forum, a Programme Officer at Peace and Development Network and a Chairperson of the Conflict Analysis Group at the National Steering Committee of Peace Building and Conflict Management in the office of the president.

Dr. King'oro holds a PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies from Kisii University, a Master in International Studies from the University of Nairobi, a Bachelor of Education Arts from Maseno University, a Bachelor of Laws from Mount Kenya University and two post graduate diplomas from Bradford University, UK and Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.

Dr. King'oro is a Rotary Peace Fellow and a Chevening Fellow. She was appointed Global Peace Index ambassador in 2015 by the Institute for Economics and Peace, USA following her leadership in developing the 2013 social cohesion index for Kenya. She is also the president of Rotary District 9212 Alumni Association which covers Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea.

She is a Board member of Namang'ofulo Secondary School, a public school located in rural Kenya and the Open Learning Exchange (OLE), a United States international organization committed to ensuring everyone, especially girls, get access to high quality basic education. She has published several peer reviewed articles on peace, governance and democracy and has presented unpublished papers in a number of international and national conferences.



Hibaa Ismael

Hibaa-Haibado Ismael Houssein, is a Djiboutian Diplomat currently deployed in Kenya, as a Third counsellor in charge of Multilateral Affairs and Deputy Permanent Representative of UNEP and UN-Habitat. She is responsible for following issues related to AMISOM and its logistical support for Djiboutian troops deployed under that umbrella, through the UNSOS (UN Support Office for Somalia) office. She has been a member of the FemWise network since 2018. She has an extensive knowledge on the Horn of Africa region and its political dynamics.

She is a graduate of the Institute of Peace and Security Studies of the Addis Ababa University, where she earned an Executive Master in Peace and Security, prior to which she graduated from the HELP University College in Malaysia, studying Business Administration.

Hibaa embraced the business environment through experiences in a consultancy company and English teaching school, where she was in charge of marketing. She then shifted to diplomacy, a field she was always passionate about where she got the opportunity to defend the interests of her country and the African continent.