



**Sophie Umazi Mvurya**  
**Nairobi, Kenya**  
**Peace Journey**



### **Begin the Journey – Peace Club Teen**

#### **June 2012 -- Beginning Peace Thought:**

Thank you very much for the opportunity you have granted me to be a Peace Teen with Mattie's Foundation. It is such an honor that I am very excited about and looking forward to! Please find attached my thoughts on peace and how Mattie influenced me. I was not able to express my reflections on Mattie's message via spoken word but I was able to do so through two paintings.

**NOTE:** Sophie is a 2012 Global Teen Leader through the WAFF Three Dot Dash Program. She is one of the 117 teens Jeni has worked with through the annual Just Peace Summit which is rooted in Mattie's vision for a peaceful world, and on his Just Peace book in which he writes that peace is possible if the basic needs of all humans are tended to and met in an equitable way.

#### **Sophie's Project begins: January 2009 –**

We are all human beings before we are Americans, Kenyans or Indian. I believe that in this day and age where the world is so interconnected we are no longer just citizens of one country but citizens of the world. As citizens of the world I believe that it is our responsibility to uphold peace and prosperity in all parts of the world and not just our individual home countries.

#### **Choice 1: Peace Seeker – Reflect on Mattie's Message**

**March 2012 -- Peace Post on *JUST PEACE: AN ENDEAVOR* and the *I AM* poem  
From "*Just Peace: A Message of Hope*" by Mattie J.T. Stepanek**



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## Choice 2: Peace Maker – Respond to Mattie’s Message

April 2012 -- Project Plan: I AM KENYAN PROJECT



The I AM KENYAN project is a global initiative whose roots lie in Kenya. The project aims to promote peace and patriotism primarily through photography.



The I AM KENYAN project is a globally backed, Kenyan driven, awareness campaign that uses photography as a platform to promote peace during the upcoming Kenyan elections in 2013. Photography is a powerful story teller and when Kenyans, both locally and in the Diaspora, come together to tell of and confirm their identity through this powerful platform, a strong message is

sent to the Kenyan public encouraging them to see themselves as Kenyans before identifying themselves ethnically.

### The need for the project.

On December 31st 2007, the results of the Kenyan presidential elections sparked tribal clashes. The severity of the Kenyan 2007 post-election violence intensified in the 59 days that followed, and by the 28th of February 2008, there were 1500 deaths and over 600,000 Internally displaced persons. Although the immediacy and timing of these clashes can be blamed on the irregularities in the election results, tribal tension can be traced through history where inter-ethnic struggles have stemmed largely from the ethnicization of politics.

To this date, the ethnicization of politics is still being used as a campaigning strategy by a vast majority of Kenyan politicians. As the country approaches the 2013 election year, there is growing concern that this campaign strategy will lead to yet another post-election violence. With the volatile state of the country during this period, Kenya cannot afford further ethnic division at the expense of political gain. Therein lies the need to remind the Kenyan nationals that before they identify themselves by their ethnic groups, they need to identify themselves, and each other, as Kenyan.

### How does the project work.

#### **Phase 1**

Individuals who are willing to participate, are requested to take a photo of themselves on a plain background with the words "I AM KENYAN" written in any language anywhere in the picture making a funny, happy or silly face. Each participant is encouraged to be creative. The I AM KENYAN project is not limited to only Kenyans, but is open to persons from other nationalities. This show of solidarity will largely be a means to asserting our identity as human beings despite our different places of origin; we are citizens of the world despite our

individual uniqueness. Getting this message to Kenyans across the country prior to the elections would be greatly helpful in preventing the "us" and "them" mentality that was adopted four years ago.

If one sends in their picture to the "I AM KENYAN" project as a contribution to promoting peace in Kenya, they are consenting to the use of their photo for the "I AM KENYAN " project; this picture may also be used, posted or displayed in websites, social media or publications that are aimed at promoting peace in Kenya.

### **Phase 2**

After collecting the photos, they will be blown to black and white 2mX3m posters that will be plastered on public walls in urban areas, rural areas and Internally Displaced Persons camps across the country. This will be done through public marches that will be followed by concerts and a public display of the photos.

### **Phase 3**

The initiative is a continuous process that aims to continue spreading its message of peace by launching school clubs and youth forums.

### **Choice 3: Peace Bringer – Reach Out with Mattie’s Message, and Yours!**

#### **April-Present 2012 -- Project Presentation:**

The project has a number of platforms on top of photography so as to spread the message of peace further. We are conducting talks in both local and international schools and universities, we are very active on social media and we are also planning to further our talks in IDP camps and rural areas.

Here is the link to the facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/IAmKenyanProject>

Here is the link to the website: <http://www.iamkenyan.or.ke/>

### **Celebrate the Journey – Teen Peace Ambassador**

#### **Month Year -- Celebration Peace Thought:**

Universal and lasting peace will be achieved once we all learn to appreciate each other and not tolerate each other!