



Observations from the 2016 GPI Report Tweetchat

By Sellah King'oro (@SellahKingoro)



On January 2016, I participated in the Rotary Peace Fellowship (RPF) in Chulalongkorn University of Thailand; a great opportunity to learn and connect with other RPFs. I learned a great deal of knowledge the twenty participants, but the workshop on how to run a twitterchat delivered by Elsa D'Silva (@elsamariedsilva), 2016 Rotary Peace Fellow, resonated with me. Although I had a twitter account for the past three years, I had only posted 30 times. I learned that one can run a large discussion on important matters on twitter. After my participation in the twitter conversation that Elsa organized on the 2016 women's day, I decided to organize several discussions, and I continued participating in Elsa's even after I went back to Kenya.

As a 2016 Global Peace Index Ambassador I decided to organize my first Twitterthon, the largest campaign on Twitter I had ever run. As my country Kenya was heading to the 2017 General Elections, I wanted to promote the GPI Report as a great evident base research study on peace. Now I had Twitter as a tool to promote a national public discussion on a matter that we all care for based on real data. The Twitterthon was conducted under the hashtag #GlobalPeaceIndexKE on 3rd April 2017. With 4,630,000 tweets and 5,958,983 impressions, the Twitterthon recorded a reach of over 3,000,000 people. With 60.1% male and 39.9% female contributors, we received tweets contributions from six countries in Africa and the United States.

Besides generating discussions on the status of peace in Kenya, the Twitterthon solicited responses from other countries like citizens of Burundi who were surprised yet pleased that their country is ranked among the top ten most peaceful countries in the world. The most important participation however was that of the Global Peace Index twitter handle itself.

In addition, innovative suggestions regarding how Kenya can secure a peaceful election were made. These included increase in Government investment in conflict early warning & response systems, more deployment of police in hotspot counties, enhance civic education efforts and researchers to focus on the drivers of peace among others.

The greatest lesson derived from this engagement was the fact that social media provides a platform on which we can discuss and generate ideas that can save the world from conflict. That as a GPI Ambassador I have a powerful knowledge that contributed to elevate the conversation around peace in Kenya among its citizens and other citizens around the world. The ideas generated are as variant and innovative as the variety of the contributors who were neither limited by their age, location nor gender. I am looking forward to my next Twitterthon on the 2017 GPI report.