

# 10 YEARS GRASSROOTS WOMEN SPORTS CELEBRATIONS & COMMUNITY SDG FORUM

18<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2018



Kibera women started engaging in sports to promote unity and cohesion immediately after the post-election violence in 2008, when Kenyans were completely divided along tribal lines. There were no play grounds, the few that were there were used by children. They used the bushy, stony and full of human shit, DO Open grounds, which led to improvement of the ground that would later be used for several meetings and games. Polycom Development Project later settled for Volleyball games which is a Kenyan Woman Game and require less space to play. The games have been replicated in 3 other informal settlement, Mukuru, Kiambuu and Mathare.

## **The Event**

### **Objectives**

To commemorate 10 years of Women Sports in slums, Polycom Development Project organized a Women Sports Parade, which was meant;

- 1) To promote the use of sports in mobilizing and organizing women to develop a voice to influence change on matters that affect their lives.

- 2) To showcase their work and achievement to various institutions in Kibera including the local government and the corporates so as to attract support and collaboration for their other development initiatives.

### **Participants**

The activity brought together 100 women from Mukuru, Mathare, Kiambiu and Kibera, who are already engaging in Women Volleyball Sports.

### **The Event**

The women assembled at Polycom Development Office in Olympic Estate Kibera, where they dressed up in their sports gear. The meeting was officially launched by singing the 2 stanzas of the National Anthem, which has a powerful message of Peace, Love and Unity as well as development and hard work. The background of grassroots women sports, successes and lessons learnt were shared and the participants given space to give recommendations for smooth continuity. A few leaders got the opportunity to address and encourage the women.

The women in their full sports regalia then set off for the parade through Kibera, they shared fliers along the way and discussed how to join the sports groups for those who are interested. The women converged at the Administration Office where they were addressed by the senior most Government Officer who was present. He encouraged the women to continue engaging in Sports, he promised support from the government. The Member of Parliament's Office praised Polycom Development Project for the great work with adolescent girls and now the women, they shared about the opportunities available for the women and who the women can access them.

The women marched peacefully back to Polycom Offices chanting peace and women power messages, they strategically engaged commuters along the way in conversations around the power of engaging women in development processes. Commuters cheered and encouraged the women; several women were attracted to this powerful unity through sports and have committed to join the wagon come 2019. Back to the office the women danced and celebrated, they had a chance to give their inputs into the strategic plan for the year 2019.

### **Event Outcome**

- More united and community slum women ready to take slum women sports to the next step
- Reaffirmed support from other stakeholders including the Women Rights Organizations, the Government and corporates to grassroots women led initiatives
- Opportunities for meaningful engagement and women leadership enhanced
- Amplified voices of Grassroots women development agenda especially round Resilience Programs and the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Challenges**

**Due to limited resources many women were locked out of the event;** There is need for early planning and engagement of as many partners as possible in good time so that women are not left out in the procession.

### **Way Forward**

The leaders meet in January 2019 to validate the 2019 Action Plan, quarterly games have been proposed, more partners to be approached in different regions to support the initiative.

A retreat is proposed in February to train leaders on mapping of opportunities, reporting and claiming leadership opportunities.

### **Gratitudes**

**Ambassador Daria Mejnatowez;** For the Sports Equipment, for all the support, we appreciate the sports uniforms, the bags and other equipment that have made sports a success and colourful

**Huairou Commission;** For developing our capacities to understand our value as grassroots women, this has built our confidence to engage without fear.

**Sub County Agricultural Office;** They have stood by and with us in the implementation of improved urban farming and food preservation, we are proudly celebrating improved food security and access to basic need.

**The National Government:** For recognizing us as important constituents in the development agenda, for the engendered committees, and for encouraging representation and participation of women.

### **Report Prepared by**

**Anne Akoth**

**Senior Programs Officer – Polycom**