

“Risks cannot be eliminated from human rights work, the way forward is to provide protection and support to [W]HRDs to enable them to continue their important work.”

Background

WHRDs face a unique set of security challenges on top of those already encountered by other HRDs in the urban settlements. Female WHRDs are often confronted with gender-based violence, such as sexual violence, and discrimination in communities where women are expected to conform to traditional gender roles. The Toolkit was developed specifically for WHRDs in Nairobi's urban settlements and offers resources as well as recommendations to help address the challenges they experience.

The Toolkit is a living document which aims at providing an overview of the resources available for WHRDs, as well as being a source of information and knowledge. The Toolkit seeks to address challenges identified by WHRDs in urban settlements, mainly the lack of networks and lack of knowledge on existing support programmes for WHRDs. It is primarily an online tool available through the website www.toolkit-whrd-kenya.org.

There are plans to develop a printed booklet in both English and Kiswahili, as well as a mobile application.

Objective

The objective of this Toolkit is to establish stronger (protection) networks between WHRDs in and beyond the urban settlements, as well as create greater recognition of their invaluable contribution to society. The ultimate goal is for the Toolkit to be owned and run by the WHRDs themselves.



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www.toolkit-whrd-kenya.org

Call for Toolkit Organisers

The Go TO source for WHRDs

To ensure that the Toolkit is **disseminated widely**, is **locally owned** and continues on as a **living document**, we are looking for WHRDs from the urban settlements to serve a one-year term as Toolkit Organisers (TOs). The TOs, with support from PBI Kenya, will take the lead on the dissemination of the Toolkit in Nairobi's urban settlements.

Who are we looking for?

Women human rights defenders:

- who are committed to and passionate about social justice and women's rights
- with some experience in community work and/or community activism
- who are willing and able to devote time each week to the Toolkit
- who are well connected and respected in their communities

What do we offer?

A benefit package, which includes:

- capacity building sessions in order for you to develop as an activist (e.g. on women's rights, networking, documentation)
- monthly Mandazi Meetings
- modest transport support
- access to a network of devoted WHRDs

If you are interested in becoming a TO please email us for the nomination form at kenyateam@peacebrigades.org or download it at the Toolkit website: <http://www.toolkit-whrd-kenya.org>

Deadline for Nominations:
Tuesday December 20, 2016



**Toolkit for WHRDs
in Nairobi's
Urban Settlements**

www.toolkit-whrd-kenya.org



**Empowering and Protecting
Women Human Rights
Defenders**



Peace Brigades International (PBI) is an international NGO that has been promoting nonviolence and protecting human rights since 1981. PBI has field projects in Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nepal, Indonesia and Kenya, as well as 14 country groups spread across 3 continents. The PBI Kenya project was launched in 2013 in order to react to the numerous risks and challenges faced by Kenyan HRDs when attempting to go about their human rights work. PBI supports HRDs working on an array of topics, such as women's rights, land rights, violations by the police, and corruption.

PBI's approach is threefold; physical accompaniment (PA), advocacy and capacity building. **Physical accompaniment** provides HRDs with protection, support and recognition, which involves members of our team accompanying them with the aim to deter violence and enhance their access to justice. **Advocacy** involves raising the profiles of HRDs at risk, advocating for human rights protection mechanisms, and bridging the gap between grassroots HRDs with the international community and state authorities. **Capacity building** consists of workshops, personalised risk assessments, and security plans for HRDs. Our work is based on non-partisanship and non-interference, in the belief that lasting transformation cannot be imposed from outside but must be based on the capacity of local people to construct genuine peace. We act only at the request of local people, with whom we work to develop a partnership that meets their needs as HRDs.

PBI's global involvement with WHRDs

International experience has taught us that WHRDs face additional challenges beyond those of other HRDs, particularly if they are female. This motivated PBI UK to organise a conference in 2012 titled 'Women Human Rights Defenders: Empowering and Protecting the Change Makers'. The conference brought together WHRDs from Afghanistan, Colombia, Iran, Kenya, Mexico and Nepal with professionals working in the fields of human rights, government, law and academia.

PBI Kenya and WHRDs

2015: Initial Workshop

As a follow-up to the conference, PBI developed a toolkit for Latin American WHRDs working on land and environmental issues. PBI's interaction with WHRDs in Nairobi, combined with the experience in Latin America encouraged us to develop a similar toolkit focused on WHRDs in Nairobi's urban settlements. In spring 2015 PBI Kenya gathered a group of WHRDs for an initial workshop in Mathare. WHRDs identified issues of concern that negatively affect their work, including lack of recognition as HRDs, balancing their work as activists with their home lives, as well as increased vulnerability to sexual violence. The WHRDs explicitly expressed the need for a toolkit that targets their specific situation as WHRDs in the urban settlements of Nairobi.

2016: Researching for and drafting of the Toolkit

Male and female HRDs from Mathare, Kibera and Mukuru participated in focus group discussions and workshops. Participants frequently mentioned a lack of connectedness with the wider human rights community and lack of knowledge of available support resources among others. This Toolkit is the start of a living document that empowers the work of WHRDs.

Recommendations

WHRDs are the key audience of this toolkit. We envision that they will not only utilise the toolkit, but provide feedback for its constant improvement.

The research that fed into the toolkit resulted in the following recommendations:

(I)NGOs

- Organise regular debriefing/counselling sessions for WHRDs working in urban settlements.
- Provide capacity building workshops and trainings to WHRDs (e.g. documentation, paralegal skills, first aid, advocacy, IT, fundraising, security, self-defence & mediation).
- Create an operational 24hrs hotline number for reporting Women Human Rights Violations.
- Create collaborative networks – by empowering local networks and by setting up a national umbrella network for WHRDs.

Kenyan Authorities & International Community

- Publicly support WHRDs and back local campaigns that promote recognition and respect for their work.
- Assist with resources and facilities.
- Ensure witness protection mechanisms are upheld in order to guarantee the safety of WHRDs who speak out in court.
- Increase presence, accompaniment, and visits of international community on the ground in order to provide political and moral support to WHRDs, underline the importance of their work to local communities, state, and non-state actors, and serve as a deterrent to would-be perpetrators.
- Ensure adequately trained and legally recognised community paralegals are in every county, constituency and grass-root level.
- Provide greater visa support for WHRDs travelling to advocate or attend trainings/conferences abroad.

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