

# Peace pigs / With Mary Ilero and Sam Eibu

**Segun Olude** 00:00

Once upon a time in a village in rural Uganda, a pig came to live on the farm of Mary Ilero. One pig becomes a source of many ways to earn money. And Mary now is empowered to better support her family, from just one pig.

**Christy Kauffman** 00:18

You may have heard that story before or read about it, or maybe even bought a pig like Mary's for your family or a friend in MCC's Christmas giving guide. Mary has been shining this past Christmas season as an example of what it can mean for a family or person to receive something as simple as one pig.

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Today on the show, we're speaking with Mary. She is also referred to as Ilero throughout this episode, we get to hear about the impact that one pig has made in her life in both creating income and creating peace with her husband. We also chat with Sam Eibu, director of the MCC partner organization that runs the pig project Action for Peace and Development. Also known as APED. We hear about why it's important to include peacebuilding in a development project like this one.

**Mary Ilero** 01:24

My name is Ilero Mary

**Christy Kauffman** 01:26

So Hi Mary, I'm so happy for you to join us on the show today, I understand that you have a pig named friend, can you tell us about your pig?

**Mary Ilero** 01:39

That piglet called friend, but now is the big pig, not again a piglet so I joined this group. It's now almost six to seven years. So they decided to give me a piglet because I was active in that group. And I named that piglet a friend. Some how I managed to raise that piglet, I was with that pig, till that pig grows up, and that pig produce for the first time. So it produced nine piglets for the first time. So I bought a cow. The second produce, I bought a machine so I have now a sewing machine. So I am now a tailor, I can make for you clothes, even for myself, for my children for my husband. I have money through APED. and I'm now changed, and well trained how to be up raise, and how to keep that piglet, APED is good. As trained me how to keep my home. We can now work hand to hand. We love each other those days back without me getting these trainings, All the time we were fighting all the time fighting because me also I don't have money. But now it has brought peace to my home.

**Christy Kauffman** 03:06

So you're saying that having a pig can help bring peace even with you and your husband with you and your family?

**Mary Ilero** 03:15

Really we are doing well. We are really really doing well. Not like the same, even with my neighbors we are doing well. There is love. We have started again, not like those days back. We are now doing good. Right now I have 14 piglets and in future I want to train. And I'd be training, training going somewhere to train how to keep piglets like that. In my future.

**Christy Kauffman** 03:46

I understand that you started in this project because of your participation with Action for Peace and Development known as APED. What are some of the specific things that you learned from them?

**Mary Ilero** 04:00

How to raise a piglet to another level, how managing, in our family, we are doing well. I have learned that, I've learned about peace, love each other, sharing.

**Christy Kauffman** 04:16

In op ed trainings. You had the trainings for animal husbandry and for some conflict resolution?

**Mary Ilero** 04:25

And forgiveness and if there is any problem challenges we have to sit down and with my husband, and we share and learn how to forgive each other you will also say sorry, I'm also sorry, and we always plan together.

**Christy Kauffman** 04:40

How are your children affected by the changes in your life?

**Mary Ilero** 04:45

I can pay them school fees, I give them also pocket money, go and buy bread, buy soda

**Christy Kauffman** 04:51

How many children do you have for children?

**Mary Ilero** 04:55

I have four children.

**Christy Kauffman** 04:56

They help with the pigs too?

**Mary Ilero** 04:57

They are really helping me as now, they are giving them water. They always give them, they even feed them when I'm not there at home. They really help me and I'm happy for them. We're sharing together our hands

**Christy Kauffman** 05:12

They get to learn through you.

**Mary Ilero** 05:15

Yeah.

**Christy Kauffman** 05:16

Are you proud of what you've accomplished?

**Mary Ilero** 05:19

I'm happy. I'm proud. I welcome this project with the hand, with all my two hands.

**Christy Kauffman** 05:27

I'm so happy to hear that.

**Mary Ilero** 05:30

I'm a new Mary.

**Christy Kauffman** 05:32

Thank you so much for telling me about your story. Mary, I do have some questions for Sam, now. I'm curious about more APED's story as well.

**Sam Eibu** 05:45

Yes, APED is Action for Peace and Development started in 2012. And it just started because we saw that there were people suffering, especially the youth in the communities after the wars in our region. So we felt we could do something together to lift the life of the youth in the villages. And that's why we were able to pick up a person like Ilero who has done very well in the community, as she is an example, a very good example, to the people in the community. Many people go to have to learn about piggyery. They go to her to learn about tailoring, they're going to her to learn about how she has been able to achieve even building a house, which is very expensive, especially getting a cow. So it's not only Ilero who does that in Action for Peace, we have many participants, and some of them we don't have their stories here .

**Christy Kauffman** 06:46

You talk about Mary, as she's clearly a success story of APED, what are others experiencing that might be different or similar to her some of the challenges or successes?

**Sam Eibu** 07:01

Well these story is almost similar. So many are doing the same. And so for us as APED we pray believe that we could be able to expand and help more people such as Ilero, because the community is too large, when we're only covering a small piece of the community. And we're proud to be small and see the impact. But we want to see that we can cover more of such people and their families can benefit from the proceeds from APED. So we, I'm very, very excited about Ilero, but I am also very excited about MCC. You know if it were not because of the love of MCC wouldn't be having Ilero here today. So I want to thank MCC want to pray for MCC that God will bless MCC and MCC will be able to

support as many as such as Ilero today. So I feel like we need to bring peace building and conflict resolution together with other aspects of development.

**Christy Kauffman 08:05**

Yeah, and you mentioned some a little bit about the context you're working in. And it sounds like there's a bit of history built into why people are in need. Can you talk a little bit about why people are in need in that area specifically?

**Sam Eibu 08:21**

So our need to help them came out of looking at their situation of poverty, and a situation of conflicts. And so because we knew that if we don't come around the conflict would have probably escalated and brought a bigger problem into the community. So as we stay now, there is no war in Uganda. There is no civil war in Uganda. But the youth are still suffering from the results of those wars. So because we come and teach them about peacebuilding, how to live together coexistence, we are now seeing a change in many of these youth that we are in contact with. We're seeing that they're changing their ways of doing things. They're changing their attitude. So the genesis of our problem here was war, war, caused a lot of trauma. People are still suffering from trauma situation, different from other youth. That's why we're saying if there is opportunity for us to increase the numbers and do the same. We might have a better Uganda. And that is what I wanted to say

**Christy Kauffman 09:36**

How are you seeing peacebuilding and development fitting together? Because you talk about that a lot.

**Sam Eibu 09:43**

I think they're intertwined, first of all when I was a student at the Eastern Mennonite University, I was taught a lot about peacebuilding and conflict resolution. So peacebuilding and development cannot be separated, you can't do anything, if you don't have peace, you need peace is a prerequisite for development. And so to me, I think I cannot develop without peace. If you develop without peace, I think there will be a pseudo development because it can be taken away from you at any time by another person who does not have peace. Yeah, to begin from Mary, you know, we used to build many, many items. And one of them is the goats, and also the pigs. So it depends on the heart of a person, a particular person, what you want to excel in. And I think at this time, Mary excels in the piggery. But there are others who are doing agriculture, we're doing farming God's way. So it depends on the choice of an individual, they work as a group, but from the group, some of them excel, some of them do not excel so much. So they begin learning from people like Ilero. But initially how we did it. In the on the first day, what we did was, we picked up youths from the communities, which was suffering, and we brought them into town for training. So we train them in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, for at least a year, before we did anything. So we were there, they were arriving from the villages about 30 kilometers away, 40 kilometers away, 50 kilometers away. They were coming to us in town. And we didn't have any house, we didn't have any office. So we were under a mango tree. And we trained for one year under a mango tree. When we saw the change, the impact of the training MCC came about they came around, they were going around. And when they found us under a mango tree, they said, Wow, I think this is worth something. We need to talk to these people and see how we can make this thing bigger. So from then MCC said, Okay, I think we can work with you. So they asked us to develop

a proposal. And so they started supporting us. But we started without anything. We were just training because we wanted to change in our community.

**Christy Kauffman 12:19**

I love the image of you guys training under a mango tree as peacebuilders I feel like there's something so beautiful about that.

**Sam Eibu 12:28**

Actually the tree has just fallen, we are sitting near the tree but it has fallen. We feel like want to be plant another one to replace it.

**Christy Kauffman 12:37**

I think that would be good. I think you should have some mangoes while you're doing peacebuilding, right, that would add to the peace building.

**Sam Eibu 12:45**

The tree was a mango tree and we used to eat the fruits from that tree.

**Christy Kauffman 12:48**

Yeah..

**Sam Eibu 12:50**

In the community, we have a program called peace cycles, where the community comes together, they see it, bring in their matters and they discuss them, and find a solution for their problems. So we feel peace cycles are very, very good in the community brings freedom, that people are able to express themselves about what is happening in their own families in their own community. And they find their own solution. So we feel very proud about that one.

**Christy Kauffman 13:24**

Yeah, I love that too. Because that's looking at non-violent ways of solving problems and actively finding solutions too. Being creative. I think there's creativity in that. How does faith tie into APED? You're a faith based organization? How does faith tie into what you do?

**Sam Eibu 13:48**

Yes, we believe we are faith based and we believe everything is created by God. And we have a God of peace. God who wants us to live with one another, not a God who wants us to be separate from one another. So we believe strongly in faith that everything is held together by God, by the word of God. So if everything is held together by the word of God, and Jesus is the author of peace, then there is no way you can separate yourself from, from faith. They all work together.

**Christy Kauffman 14:26**

So Sam, what motivates you personally working with APED?

**Sam Eibu 14:32**

My motivation came from love for the community and love for peace. When I returned from EMU I was burning with a passion to see that everybody around me is peaceful because I also needed peace. If I had enough peace with the neighbor, then I would be in more problems. So my motivation is that we should live in peace with one another we should coexist and be able to share the little resources God has given us.

**Christy Kauffman 15:04**

Yeah, peace is very clearly a high value for you.

**Sam Eibu 15:07**

Yes, very high value. And I think many people have realized that I am such a person. Without me speaking, people understand that I'm such a person who really wants to live with each other. So it came to the time of these conflicts and wars in our area. And so we started distributing food into the community. But when we're distributing food, we saw that people did not want food alone, they wanted peace, because we could take food to the community. But after one day, the food is finished. So we asked ourselves, what do these people really need? When they have little food in their garden, they can use it for a long time, when we take to them food, they can use it for a very short time, this family wanting something else. So I started talking about living in peace with one another, instead of taking food, but living in peace, while also giving food. My mother had left and I was with my grandmother, so my grandmother was a person who like to keep goats and sheep. And so when I was coming back from schools, he would say, you go and pick the sheep and bring home. So my grandmother got impressed, say, it's a young man, he likes these sheep so much. So no wonder I didn't know that I was being trained to do peacebuilding but the training came from keeping the sheep because I didn't want any sheep, which was limping, do you want in a sheep, which was sick, I would, I would want everything good. So when I joined this project, I continued, my heart was always in to say that people are living in harmony. And it became pattern, my passion of life. So that how I pulled into this building is all just coming into it. But it was my life long thing from when I was young.

**Christy Kauffman 17:04**

It is a lifelong thing you've described there.

**Sam Eibu 17:07**

So working with APED now actually is like a confirmation of what God has called me to do. I don't suffer about it, I'll only feel joy, even if there is suffering in it.

**Christy Kauffman 17:22**

Yeah, you have a very clear personal motivation for peace. Your passion for peace is also shown through Mary's story as well.

**Sam Eibu 17:34**

Mary is here next to me. She also, she has a passion for peace.

**Christy Kauffman 17:41**

Yeah, is there anything else that you want to make sure to tell us as a part of your story about APED, or personally?

**Sam Eibu 17:51**

As APED, I feel like this project should continue to grow more people into peace and into coexistence. I feel like we need to continue with APED. I feel like it's, I just feel like it is my life. APED is my life. And I want to really continue with APED, so that we see our communities in peace with one another. But I also feel a little more than that, because I'm seeing a lot of pain in my heart. When I see people dying in other parts of the world, like now in Ukraine in Russia. Not only that, but also in Uganda, in Congo, in Rwanda, in Kenya, I sometimes my heart wants to go beyond the community here to maintain the community, but also go beyond the community a bit so that we see peace for each one for everyone, not just for APED, not just for these groups. That's my heart. I always ask what can I do in this situation where people are killing each other?

**Christy Kauffman 19:08**

A very big heart. Going far beyond your community.

**Sam Eibu 19:12**

Yeah, I want to make a contribution whatever, however small my contribution will be, but I always feel I want to make a contribution for peace.

**Christy Kauffman 19:21**

Yeah, and I wanted to acknowledge for our listeners, they know the context of Mary's story in her getting one pig and it becoming a lot more than one pig.

**Sam Eibu 19:38**

Yes.

**Christy Kauffman 19:40**

What is the value of one pig to someone? We've seen that through Mary's story, the value how it expands beyond that. But what I'm seeing through this conversation is that it's the peace building aspect that really grows and allows that pig to be the source of income of many things. Is that something you see?

**Sam Eibu 20:06**

I agree with you 100%. What you see in Mary's family is the peacebuilding, you know, when they started before she got the pig, she had run away from the husband, as she said. But when she got into APED, and with all these pig and sewing and teachings, she became peaceful with a husband. And if you come to this family now, you will see that it's not the pig, but it is the peace that they have in their hearts, that helps them to run the family. Because even if she had 100 pigs, without peace, the husband would be selling them without telling her, but we have learned from their family, and from the training in peace, that they now share. They make decisions together. And so all that we see there is actually peace and peacebuilding in that family. And is the reason why people come to her to learn because they want peace in their families.

**Christy Kauffman 21:10**

So when someone gives a gift of a pig, they're giving the gift of peace as well.

**Sam Eibu 21:15**

As soon as you give a gift of pig you have given peace. You have given peace and I think Ilero can testify that, she got peace from a pig. And we are telling everybody that when they go and see what is happening at Ilero's, then they come back to us and say but why has she managed, we say it is peace.

**Christy Kauffman 21:40**

Thank you so much for speaking with me today.

**Christy Kauffman 21:45**

Thank you to Sam Eibu and Mary Ilero for sharing their stories. And thanks to 'Segun Olude for lending his voice for the narration at the start of the episode.

This episode of Relief, Development and Podcast was recorded and produced on the traditional land of the Algonquin, Lenape, Nanticoke, Piscataway, Shawnee and Susquehannock people groups.

This episode was produced and hosted by me Christy Kauffman and Linda Espenshade. The head producer is Emily Loewen. We have a bonus episode coming out for you soon. An audio diary from her head producer Emily Loewen. From her recent trip to Ukraine, be sure to subscribe so you don't miss it.

A lot is happening in the world right now. It is a difficult time for many. May you experience God's provision and protection as we work together to share God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ. Thanks and take good care.