

## **Open Hands International - Director (F)**

### **Background**

You have worked with refugees in a number of conflict zones over the past 10 years. After finishing university, you took a job helping refugees relocate within the US. You met and interacted with refugees from all over the world and learned about the violent conflicts they escaped in their home countries. You heard many stories about family members being separated from one another, some left behind in IDP and refugee camps. After this experience you chose to dedicate your life to helping people displaced by conflict.

You've worked with a host of organizations serving refugee communities. Through this work, you've observed that peace negotiations almost always neglect the experiences and needs of IDPs and refugees. To address this gap, you founded Open Hands International ("Open Hands") six years ago to focus on building linkages between refugees and IDPs and the peace processes that govern their future.

Open Hands works specifically with women in refugee and IDPs settlements, by providing leadership training, capacity building, and financial support for programming. With Open Hands, women leaders conduct consultations with camp residents and develop strategies for feeding those perspectives into the formal peace process.

Your organization has supported a Women's Peace Committee (WPC) in one of the IDP camps in Danaan. Prior to partnering with Open Hands, the WPC initiated a number of impressive reconciliation programs in their IDP camp, by shuttling back and forth between ethnic groups and building a safe space for dialogue. You want to bring the WPC leader to Abayo (the capital of Trumont) to meet with the parties and their international supporters because you believe she will be instrumental in securing a voice for the displaced in Danaan. She hasn't had much experience with peace processes but she is a courageous, charismatic, and a strategic thinker. You're confident that her story and demeanor can open the hearts and minds of senior policymakers.

### **What you hope to accomplish**

Open Hands wants to ensure that the voices of IDPs and refugees are not ignored. The camps are already sprawling and you are concerned that without attention brought to their plight the camps could become permanent encampments. Further, the inter-ethnic violence within the camps could threaten any agreed upon ceasefire. A humanitarian corridor must be opened and protected, at all costs, particularly in the areas around the IDP camps. The conditions in the camps are dire and are exacerbating the growing frustration and desperation felt by camp residents. The main actors in the peace negotiations are not sufficiently connecting with the people of Danaan, and much less IDPs and refugees, so it is your mission to find entry points for lifting up these marginalized voices.

You are currently working closely with the WPC representative and want to set up meetings for her with as many senior officials as possible. You have already tentatively arranged meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Trumont and the UN Senior Mediation Expert. You also feel she should meet with the US Special Envoy and the UK Special Envoy.

You understand that there are other local civil society organizations, such as 4Peace and the Danaan Women's Unity League (DWUL), supported by other internationals, such as the ROEI

Commission on Gender and Women United International, that are hoping to gain access to the Joint Mediation Team and negotiating parties as well. You believe that WPC offers an important and distinct perspective, by focusing on the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in the conflict. You see value in possibly collaborating with these other groups, but you are worried about WPC's message becoming diluted.

You want to set WPC apart from other civil society organizations, especially from 4Peace, who you feel is speaking too politically. Many of the women representing other Danaanian civil society organizations, like DWUL, are considered elite and disconnected from the experiences of those outside of the capital.

### **Capacity to create change**

To your knowledge, no one else is representing IDP/refugee perspectives in the peace process. This is a significant gap and you are confident that you can bring WPC to the forefront of the peace talks. As an international NGO, you are able to foster relationships between the people on the ground and policymakers directly involved in the peace talks. You don't have that many direct connections with policymakers at the talks, so you'll need to use your political savvy and ingenuity to create access for the WPC representative.

### **Relationships with other roles**

You have a close relationship with the leader of the Women's Peace Committee and have immense respect for her. You know of Women United International and the ROEI Commission on Gender by reputation, but you feel they are too focused on their own self-promotion and are disengaged from the bulk of Danaanian society. As far as you can tell they've only worked with elite Danaanian women who are not prioritizing the needs of all Danaanians.

You were introduced to the UN Senior Mediation Expert through other contacts and have scheduled a meeting for her to meet the WPC representative.

Through your work in the Danaanian refugee camps in Trumont, you have had the chance to meet the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Trumont. Refugee resettlement is one of his major areas of work, and he is eager to work with organizations such as Open Hands to make this happen. You would like to leverage this connection to introduce the WPC representative to other high-level officials involved in the peace talks.