

CHILDREN-LED COMMUNITY PEACE LABS

KAKAMEGA AND UASIN GISHU COUNTY SCHOOL VISITS REPORT



Executive Summary

On July 18-19, 2024, Re-Imagining New Communities went on a field trip to assess the Peace Labs established by the August 2023 CLCP-Labs Cohort participants. A total of 6 schools were visited; four of the trained schools and 2 new schools. These periodic assessments are conducted to monitor the progress of the labs; challenges, opportunities, and best practices that may have been adopted.

Objectives

1. Record the progress of the labs; number of learners, activities conducted, shared concepts, challenging concepts, and the frequency of lab meetings.
2. Encourage and support the Peace Lab members.
3. Offer guidance and advice on improving the management and operation of the Labs.



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Field Highlights

Holy Trinity School

Number of Lab members

This peace lab has a total of 25 members; with more girls than boys in the ratio of 2:1.

Lab Activities

The lab conducted arts and crafts by developing placards with messages of peace on them, these cards are used during any international days that celebrate peace and are also put up in designated spots in the school to create a calm serene environment for the entire school.

Shared Concepts

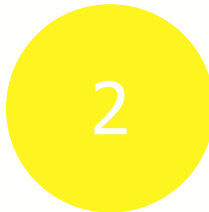
The lab patron has been able to share the concepts of self-awareness and the relationship circle successfully with the learners. This has enabled the learners to understand who they are and approach one another with awareness, creating harmonious and empathetic interactions among the learners.

Challenging Concepts

The concept of conflict resolution is still challenging for the lab patron to replicate to the learners.

Frequency of Lab meetings

The school has designed that the lab meets at least once a week during the club day on Monday, however, the labs have not been able to consistently meet due to a packed school schedule during the second term of the school year.



Beatrice Telewa Memorial School

Number of Lab members	This lab is made up of 61 members, spread across grades 4 - 7. There is a balance of boys and girls.
Lab Activities	The lab patrons conduct the labs according to the school grading system. Each grade conducts its activities and only comes together for joint activities such as debates (discussing everyday issues that affect society), their agricultural project (each grade has a portion of the farm that they tend to), games (the learners play together and often compete against one another), and the Amani Project (in this project, the learners develop placards and campaign materials and go out into their community to preach messages of peace, unity, and conflict transformation). The patrons confessed to having seen a change in the learners' behavior since the introduction of the peace labs. Through the regular activities and interactions, the learners have learned good sportsmanship, responsibility, and teamwork, and are more aware of pertinent issues happening in their community and the country at large.
Shared Concepts	Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution.
Challenging Concepts	To effectively conduct the activities of the lab, the school requires more agricultural materials, and arts and crafts materials.
Frequency of Lab meetings	The labs meet weekly during the designated school activity days.



Furaha Inua Global School

Number of Lab members

This lab has a membership of 18, with more girls than boys. The lab patrons have been able to integrate more teachers into the lab by having information sessions with them about the concepts learned from the workshop.

Lab Activities

The lab conducts community clean-ups and tree-planting activities regularly in their community. The group of learners meets every two weeks because of the tight school schedule.

Shared Concepts

The key concepts that have been replicated by the learners are peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and communication.

Challenging Concepts

The Child Protection Policy and Self-awareness.

Frequency of Lab meetings

The lab meets at least twice a month. The frequency of the lab meetings is hindered by the tight school schedule.





St. Michael Suema School

Number of Lab members	The lab is made up of 5 grade 3 members.
Lab Activities	The lab patron engages the learners in music and drama through plays and skits as a way to teach peace and conflict resolution to the learners.
Shared Concepts	Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution
Challenging Concepts	None yet
Frequency of Lab meetings	The lab meets during the class time.



Shalom Junior Secondary School

Number of Lab members

The lab has 12 members of grade 8, and the successful integration of one new teacher into the lab.

Lab Activities

The lab has been able to conduct two community visits; a visit to the women’s prison and a children’s home for persons with disabilities. These activities have been designed by the learners as a way for them to replicate the learned concepts from the ab to the community.

Shared Concepts

The learned concepts by the learners are leadership (the learners take responsibility for the lab, the class lessons, and the learners from the elementary school), communication (the patron encourages open communication among the learners to ensure information is passed swiftly and efficiently), and peace and conflict (the learners share concepts to other learners and the communities they visit in form of song, poem, and banners around the school compound ensuring there is a bit more harmony and justice in the world).

Challenging Concepts

Self-awareness

Frequency of Lab meetings

The lab rarely meets because of the rigid school schedule, however, the lab often meets during the designated class time.



Number of Lab members	This lab has 16 lab members, with an equivalent number of boys and girls.
Lab Activities	The lab often engages in games, dialogue, and school ground maintenance while learning concepts of peace and conflict resolution through these activities.
Shared Concepts	Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution.
Challenging Concepts	Self-awareness
Frequency of Lab meetings	The labs meet every week. These lab meetings are often short because of the school schedule. The lab is often affected by the absenteeism of learners.

Key Achievements

- The total number of learners in the labs is 137 - this number has grown, with the inclusion of the two additional schools, and the increase of Holy Trinity's learners from 12 to 25, and Furaha's increase from 15 to 18. The labs have also integrated additional teachers interested in the activities of the lab. The total number of integrated teachers is 19.
- Learners and patrons demonstrated ownership of the labs and their activities - the learners and teachers are devoted to curating activities and initiatives that spread and teach the concepts of peacebuilding and conflict transformation to their peers.

These two points demonstrate the growth and stability of the labs. This is promising and presents an opportunity for Re-imagining New Communities' goal to directly work with the children.

Learners' Contributions

From the sessions with learners some of the needs that came out were;

1. The desire to have an exchange program with learners from the other schools. This encourages peer-to-peer learning.
2. Two schools requested that there be a teachers' training to encourage more teachers to join the peace labs and also because the Lab Patron for Holy Trinity is retiring at the end of the year leaving the lab unattended.
3. T-shirts for branding and ownership of the labs.
4. Arts and crafts materials for the learners to create more peace messages.
5. An activity handbook for learners and patrons.



Challenges

Logistical challenges- the budget intended for the visit did not foot the bill.

Resistance to change – as much as the labs have grown, it has not been as smooth as the patrons have encountered resistance in the implementation and set-up from colleagues and sometimes the administration.

Resource constraints – the labs require supplies and materials to ensure the smooth running of the activities.

Recommendations

- A learning workshop/boot camp – to enhance the patrons' and learners' skills and knowledge on peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and community-building. This collaborative project encourages collaborative projects between the different peace labs within the same locations and the community to promote unity and a sense of shared goals.
- It is easier to facilitate joint projects that involve participants from the same location.
- Take learners identified by the lab patrons through the Re-Imagining New Communities Leadership Academy to nurture and empower them to take up leadership roles in their communities.
- Resource mobilization –identify potential sources of funding and resources for the Children-led Community Peace Labs program to ensure sustainability.

Conclusion

The Children-led Community Peace Labs activities bring us closer to the ideals of unity, togetherness, and social inclusion. The involvement of the young learners creates a vibrant space for them to learn and nurture their talent.

The challenges encountered during the fieldwork reinforced the importance of our mission.



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