



CHILDREN-LED COMMUNITY PEACE LABS

Learning workshop

Nairobi August Cohort 2024

Sponsored by





Background and Introduction

The Children-Led Community Peace Labs workshop took place in Kibera, Nairobi County, a region often characterized by its high population density, poverty, and the social and economic challenges accompanying such conditions. Kibera, one of Africa's largest informal settlements, serves as a microcosm of the broader societal issues in Kenya, and Africa, making it a critical area for peacebuilding and conflict transformation interventions.

Children growing up in urban slums like Kibera face numerous challenges, including limited access to basic services, exposure to violence, and a lack of safe recreational spaces. These conditions often lead to heightened vulnerability, with children being at risk of engaging in or becoming victims of conflict. Schools in such communities are not just educational institutions; they are central pillars of the community, often acting as safe spaces where learners can escape the harsh realities of their environment. However, these schools are not immune to the conflicts that arise from broader societal issues, making it imperative for educators to be equipped with the necessary skills to handle conflict and promote peace.

The Children-Led Community Peace Labs (CLCP-Labs) workshop was designed to address these pressing needs by providing training to teachers on conflict transformation and peacebuilding. This training aimed to empower teachers with the skills needed to support learners in navigating contemporary issues that are pertinent to their environment, all while aligning with the values emphasized in Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). The workshop emphasized the importance of teachers as peacebuilders, capable of fostering a culture of peace within their schools and by extension, the wider community.

This learning workshop was held at Sunflower Trust Center and brought together 9 teachers from the Sunflower Trust Center and Glory School Kibera. The workshop was supported by We One Action Network.

Session 1

Self-awareness

The workshop commenced with a deep dive into self-awareness, a fundamental aspect of personal and professional growth for educators. This session was designed to help participants explore their identities, allowing them to gain a clearer understanding of who they are, both as individuals and as professionals. The facilitator emphasized that self-awareness is not only about recognizing one's strengths and weaknesses but also about understanding how one's emotions, behaviors, and personality traits influence interactions with others.

Using the Johari Window and some personality tests, the participants reflected on and shared aspects of their personalities, which helped to build trust and transparency within the group.

The facilitator also encouraged the participants to journal their journey into discovering themselves as individuals and professionals, saying that this will help them in tracking their self-discovery journey, allowing them to document their thoughts, feelings, and insights as they progress. Journaling also provided a private space for participants to process their experiences and emotions, further enhancing their self-awareness.

By the end of this session, participants had gained a deeper understanding of their identities and how they interact with others, setting a strong foundation for the rest of the workshop, as participants were now more attuned to their inner selves and better prepared to engage in the process of conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

Key Takeaway

Self-awareness is foundational for effective teaching; helping educators manage their emotions and reactions in the classroom.

Session 2

Relationship Circle

This exercise was pivotal in helping teachers recognize and reflect on the complex web of interactions they engage in within the school community. By mapping out their daily relationships, such as those with learners, parents, administration, and fellow teachers, the participants were able to see the interconnectedness of their roles and the influence these relationships have on the overall school environment.

Through the relationship circle the teachers learned about their daily interactions which were varried in the forms;
Learners - parents - teachers - administration.
Teachers - learners - administration - parents.

This realization underscored the importance of building strong, cohesive connections with all stakeholders to foster a supportive and peaceful atmosphere in the school. The exercise highlighted that learners are at the heart of their work, emphasizing that positive, collaborative relationships among all entities within the school are essential for effective conflict resolution and the promotion of a culture of peace.

Key Takeaway

Learners are central to the educational process, and building relationships around them is key to effective teaching.

Session 3

Understanding Conflict

The participants defined conflict as love, differences, disagreement, argument, war, e.t.c.

From the definition of conflict, some of the words that stood out were; incompatible, elections, beneficial, war, human interaction, and inevitable. These words helped the participants discuss the causes of conflict in society.

The participants further contextualized the causes of conflict in the schools' set-up as, pride, ego, self-centeredness, and arrogance; all of which were categorized as a conflict of interest.

Throwing a spanner in the works, the facilitator asked “How can conflict be positive?” To help the participants further understand the concept of conflict, the facilitator helped the participants differentiate the types of conflict in a school set-up; classroom, staffroom, administration, and learners.

In this exercise, the participants build scenarios of possible conflicts in schools;

Teacher - teacher

Teacher - learner

Teacher - administration

Teacher - parent

During the reflection session some of the issues that the participants discussed as the cause of the conflicts to escalate were;

Each party's emotions were very "high"

Some of the conflicts could have been avoided.

"When a conflict erupts, sometimes it helps to approach it with empathy.

Key Takeaway

Addressing conflicts constructively is crucial to preventing escalation and fostering a peaceful atmosphere. Emotions and unresolved conflicts can



Session 4

Teachers as Peacebuilders

“How can teachers contribute to peacebuilding?”

Teachers, as central figures in the school environment, are uniquely positioned to cultivate these conditions and influence the broader community. This session delved into the pivotal role that teachers play as peacebuilders within their communities and schools. The discussion began with an exploration of the concept of peace, moving beyond the traditional notion of peace as merely the absence of conflict.

The participants defined peace as;

Group 1 - “Soberness in state of mind; freedom from stubbornness and challenges.

Group 2 - “Peace is inevitable; it is a strategy put in place before and after a conflict to minimize incidences of violence.”

“Peace is the absence of violence, the absence of fear of violence.”

The participants discussed some peacebuilding efforts in their community and the effects they have had on the community.

The participants further discussed the importance of integrating the Pertinent and Contemporary Issues (PCI) values, communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking, into their daily practices to foster a peaceful and supportive school environment. These values are essential components of the CBC and serve as guiding principles for teachers in their peacebuilding efforts.

Some of the participants' views on peace were;

Zur - peace creates a conducive environment for project development and completion in a short period.

Mary - peace enables one to live together with others in harmony.

The participants recognized that peace is not a static state but a continuous process that requires ongoing effort and commitment. It involves creating an environment where differences are respected, where dialogue is encouraged, and where conflicts are seen as opportunities for growth rather than as threats.

The participants in the paper folding activity discovered how perspectives, opinions, and biases influence our view of conflict.

Key Takeaway

Integrating PCI values such as communication, collaboration, and empathy into teaching practices is essential for fostering peace.

Session 5

Conflict Analysis

The Conflict Analysis session was enriched by the cross-the-line activity, which played a significant role in helping participants identify opportunities and threats in resolving conflicts. This exercise not only facilitated a deeper understanding of conflict dynamics but also fostered trust among the participants, as they shared personal experiences and perspectives.

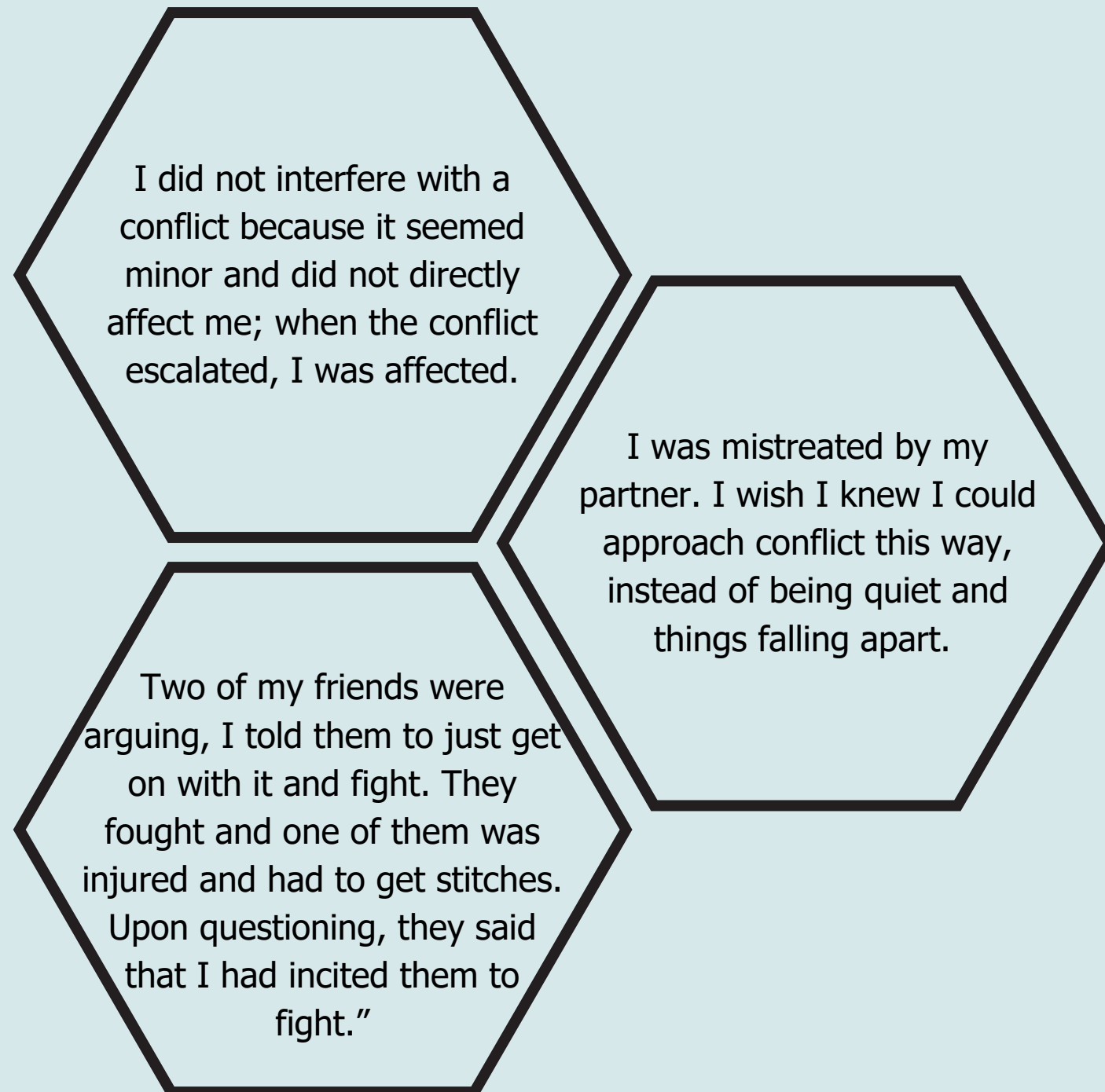
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The conflict analysis framework provided participants with a structured approach to gather the necessary information, broadening their perspective and understanding of the conflicts at hand.

The participants, in groups, were then tasked with identifying a past or ongoing conflict in their community and analyzing it using the framework; who? What? Why? When? Where?

This organized approach allowed them to explore conflicts more comprehensively, leading to more creative and effective problem-solving. The participants in the discussion disclosed that avoiding a conflict or rushing to resolve a conflict could further escalate it causing restlessness, fear, and emotional damage.



Following this discussion, the participants did a conflict styles test, allowing them to reflect on how they tend to respond to conflict. This exercise helped the participants to not only know how they deal with conflict but also helped them figure out what they might do differently to manage conflict better or find more positive outcomes.

Using the previous conflict scenarios, the participants reworked the skits using the different styles and later discussed what style was most suitable for each scenario.

Key Takeaway

Rushing to resolve conflicts without thorough understanding can lead to further escalation and negative outcomes.

Learning

Systematic analysis of conflicts helps in understanding their root causes and identifying opportunities for resolution

Session 6

Effective Communication for Peacebuilding

The facilitator displayed two scenarios and asked the participants to identify which one had good listening skills and which one had poor listening skills;

Scenario; It is monday, the school had some sports. Teacher A and B meet on their way to class:

Scene 1

Teacher A: Hello, how are you?
Teacher B: (Distractedly) Yeah, yeah, good.
Teacher A: How was your weekend, did you go to the school game?
Teacher B: Good...(bouncing on their feet impatiently and looking around) Yeah.
Teacher A: Well then... have a good day.
Teacher B: (Already walking away)... cool cool.

Scene 2

Teacher A: Hello, how are you?
Teacher B: (smiling warmly, with an arm stretched out for a handshake) I am very fine, how are you?
Teacher A: I am well, (returning the smile) How was your weekend, did you go to the school game?
Teacher B: (Enthusiastically) Yes I did, it was great!
Teacher A: Tell me we won.
Teacher B: Unfortunately... (both mirror sad expressions)(Showing interest in the other teacher)You did not go to the game?
Teacher A: No, I wasn't feeling well.
Teacher B: Next time...
Teacher A: Next time. It was good catching up, see you during the break.
Teacher B: Yeah, definitely, see you then.

After reviewing the two scenarios, participants provided insightful responses regarding effective communication:

	Scene 1	Scene 2
Listening Skills	Teacher B demonstrated poor listening skills by being distracted and disinterested, which made Teacher A feel dismissed.	Scene 2 displayed effective communication, where both teachers engaged in active listening, maintained eye contact, and mirrored each other's emotions, creating a positive interaction.
Importance of Body Language		Several participants noted the significance of body language in Scene 2, where Teacher B's warm smile, extended hand, and attentive posture conveyed genuine interest and respect. They emphasized that non-verbal cues like these are essential in building trust and rapport.
Empathy and Engagement		Participants highlighted the empathy shown in Scene 2, where Teacher B listened attentively and expressed concern for Teacher A's well-being.

The facilitator emphasized the key component of effective dialogue is active listening, which consists of; asking questions for clarification, paraphrasing or reframing what has been said, and encouraging the other party to keep sharing, eliciting, restating, and empathizing, all while ensuring that the body language is showing interest in what the other person is saying.

He highlighted that effective communication is not just about speaking but also about truly hearing and understanding the other party, which is critical in resolving conflicts and building trust within the school environment. The participants reflected on how such communication fosters a more supportive and collaborative school environment, which is crucial for peacebuilding.

By actively listening, showing empathy, and engaging thoughtfully, educators can better understand and address the needs and concerns of students, parents, and colleagues. This approach contributes to creating a more peaceful and cohesive community, highlighting the importance of communication as a foundational element in the peacebuilding process.

Key Takeaway

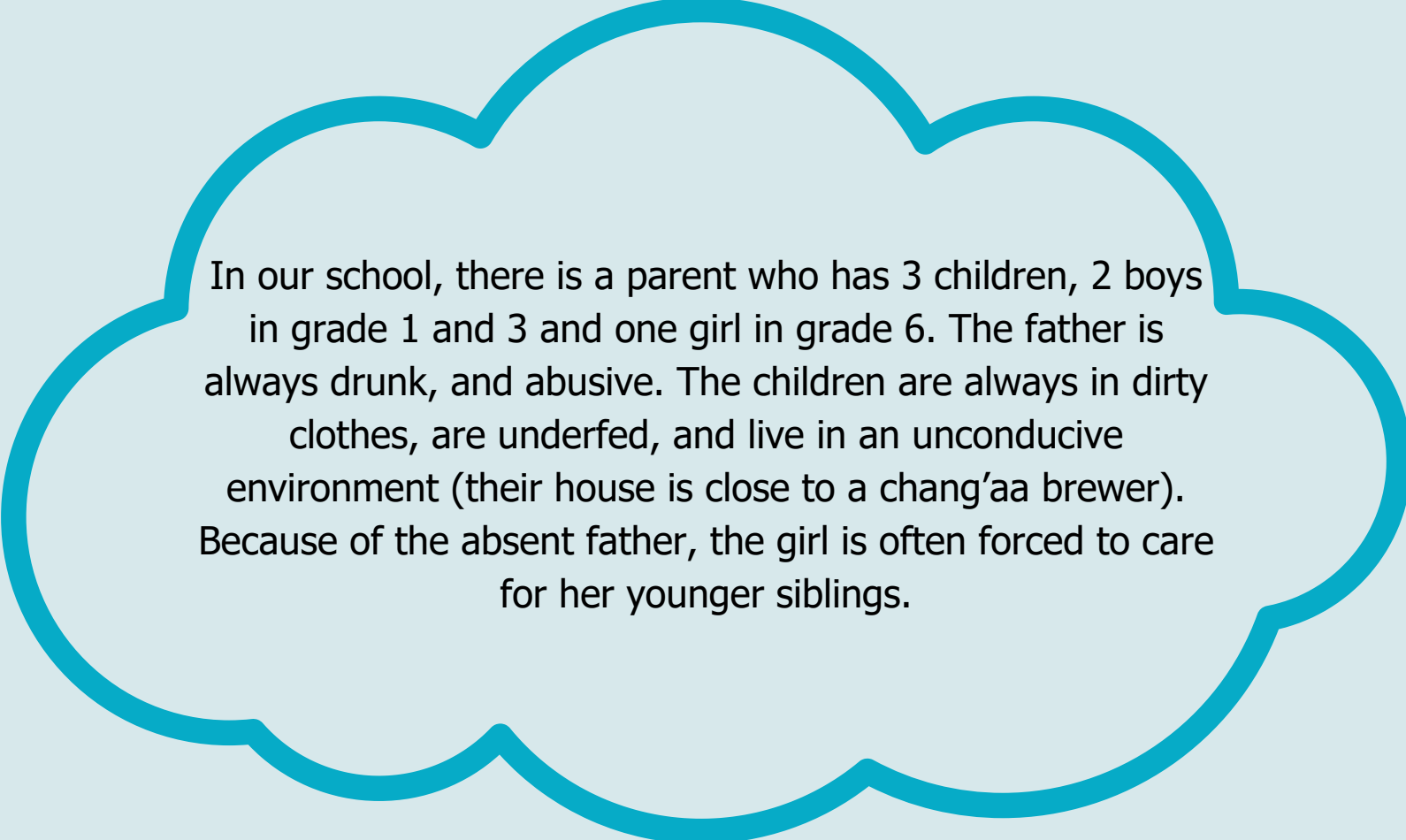
Effective communication can prevent misunderstandings and help de-escalate conflicts.

Session 7

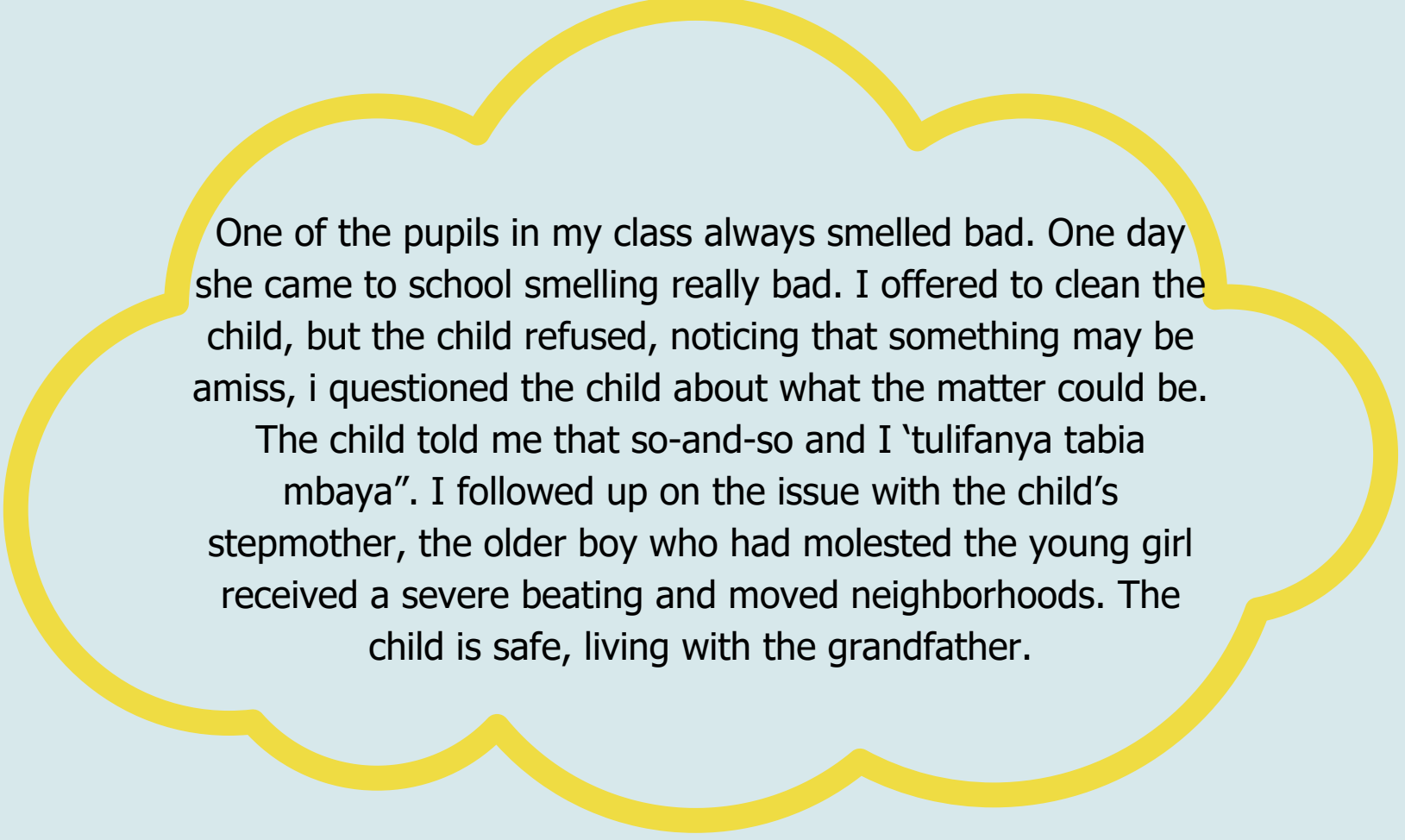
Introduction to Children Peacebuilding

This session introduced the teachers to the concept of children as active agents in peacebuilding. The discussion centered on the transformative potential of empowering children to become peacebuilders within their schools and communities.

The facilitator shared that children face various forms of violence at home, school, community, and online. Some of the participants' responses to acts of violence they have witnessed against children were:



In our school, there is a parent who has 3 children, 2 boys in grade 1 and 3 and one girl in grade 6. The father is always drunk, and abusive. The children are always in dirty clothes, are underfed, and live in an uncondusive environment (their house is close to a chang'aa brewer). Because of the absent father, the girl is often forced to care for her younger siblings.



One of the pupils in my class always smelled bad. One day she came to school smelling really bad. I offered to clean the child, but the child refused, noticing that something may be amiss, i questioned the child about what the matter could be. The child told me that so-and-so and I 'tulifanya tabia mbaya". I followed up on the issue with the child's stepmother, the older boy who had molested the young girl received a severe beating and moved neighborhoods. The child is safe, living with the grandfather.

These responses illustrate the pervasive nature of violence against children and its long-lasting effects on their well-being and development.

The discussion then shifted to schools' critical role in mitigating the effects of violence and fostering a safe, nurturing environment for all learners. Teachers were reminded that they are often the first line of defense against violence, as they are uniquely positioned to observe changes in children's behavior and to intervene when necessary. The session emphasized the importance of establishing clear protocols and support systems within schools to address instances of violence, including Child Protection Policies, counseling services, peer support groups, and partnerships with local child protection agencies.

The session highlighted that when given the opportunity, children can play a powerful role in promoting peace within their communities. For instance, peace labs allow learners to lead in organizing activities that promote understanding and tolerance among their peers. Peer mediation programs train learners to help resolve conflicts among their classmates, fostering a sense of responsibility and ownership over the school environment. These programs help to prevent conflicts and empower children to see themselves as capable agents of change.

Key Takeaway

Teachers should be vigilant in recognizing signs of violence or distress among students and take proactive steps to intervene.

Learning

Empowering students through peace education and peer-led initiatives can foster a more peaceful and inclusive school environment.

Session 8

Building Resilience

In the session on building resilience, participants explored how they can be mentally prepared to deal with challenges that affect their work as educators, emphasizing well-being and mental health for themselves and their learners. The discussion centered on understanding resilience, how past experiences shape responses to adversity, distress, or trauma, and recognizing its crucial role in a teacher's professional life.

The facilitator explained that building resilience enables individuals to interpret and respond positively to stressful events, a key skill in problem-solving and in fostering meaningful connections with others. Resilience is not just about coping with stress but also about maintaining emotional strength and adaptability in the face of ongoing challenges. This adaptability is essential for educators working in environments prone to conflict, as it equips them to navigate and transform such situations constructively.

Participants learned that it is important to identify their coping strategies and understand the sources of their social support. This self-awareness is vital in managing stress and preventing burnout, which can significantly impact their ability to foster a positive learning environment. The facilitator emphasized that self-care and well-being are crucial for maintaining a healthy work-life balance, directly influencing their capacity to support learners and contribute to peacebuilding within the school community.

Moreover, resilience in educators is critical for peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Resilient teachers are better equipped to model positive behaviors, manage classroom dynamics effectively, and create an atmosphere of trust and safety for their students. To enhance resilience, the facilitator recommended seeking relevant resources, engaging in coaching and mentorship for professional development, sharing best practices among colleagues, and learning from one another.

By building their resilience, teachers can play a pivotal role in creating a peaceful and supportive educational environment, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of community peacebuilding.

Key Takeaway

Teachers' well-being directly impacts their ability to support learners effectively, making self-care an essential aspect of professional development.



SCHOOL ACTION PLANS TO REDUCE VIOLENCE

Sunshine Trust

- 1. Physical violence.
- 2. Emotional violence.
- 3. Neglect.

- 1. Parental engagement.
- 2. Teacher training on ways to handle child violence.
- 3. Build a relationship between the learners, teachers, parents, and community with open communication.
- 4. Adopt alternative ways of disciplining children.
- 5. Monitor and report any suspicious behavior that a learner may have.
- 6. Offer after-school mentorship programs for the learners.

Glory School, Kibera

- 1. Bullying.
- 2. Neglect.
- 3. Child marriage/trafficking.
- 4. Physical violence.
- 5. Emotional violence.

- 1. Report all incidences to the concerned authorities.
- 2. Conduct background checks on reported or suspected cases.
- 3. Support the children victims with necessary resources.
- 4. Educate parents and learners on matters concerning children’s rights.
- 5. Sensitize the community on the social issues that contribute to the acts of violence.
- 6. Produce messaging materials for the community.
- 7. Work as a team to curb child violence and all related outbreaks of violence.

Workshop Summary

The first day of the workshop in Kibera, Nairobi County, they laid a strong foundation for understanding the role of teachers in conflict transformation and peacebuilding. The day's activities focused on self-awareness, encouraging teachers to reflect deeply on their identities, strengths, and emotional responses. This introspective approach was aimed at helping educators better understand themselves, enabling them to manage classroom dynamics more effectively.

As the day progressed, the discussions shifted towards understanding conflict within the school environment. Teachers were introduced to the complex nature of conflicts and the importance of addressing them constructively, the day concluded with a focus on the critical relationships within the school community, highlighting the interconnectedness of teachers, learners, parents, and administrators. By recognizing these connections, participants began to see the broader impact of their interactions and the importance of fostering a cohesive and supportive school environment.

The second day of the workshop built on the insights from the first day, deepening the participants' understanding of their roles as peacebuilders. The discussions emphasized the active role that teachers can play in promoting peace, not just by resolving conflicts but by creating conditions that prevent conflicts from arising in the first place. This included integrating values such as communication, collaboration, and empathy into their teaching practices.

A significant portion of the day was devoted to exploring the potential of children as peacebuilders. Teachers discussed strategies for empowering students to contribute positively to their school environment, recognizing that children, when equipped with the right tools and guidance, can be powerful advocates for peace. The day also addressed the importance of resilience, both for teachers and students, in maintaining a positive and peaceful school atmosphere. Participants were left with practical strategies to support their mental well-being and to foster a culture of peace and mutual respect within their schools.



The Children-Led Community Peace Labs workshop provided valuable training to teachers in Kibera, equipping them with the skills necessary to navigate and transform conflicts within their school environments.

By focusing on self-awareness, effective communication, and the critical role of teachers as peacebuilders, the workshop aimed to create a ripple effect that would extend beyond the classroom into the broader community. The sessions emphasized the importance of understanding and managing conflict, promoting peace, and building resilience, all of which are crucial for fostering a supportive and harmonious school environment in communities.

The insights and tools gained from this workshop are expected to empower teachers to be more effective in their roles, ultimately contributing to a more peaceful and cohesive society.



hello@rncommunities.org

www.rncommunities.org

www.weoneactionnetwork.org

info@weoneactionnetwork.org

