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Report

Public



Kid's Session Final Report

One of the objectives of WP 3 was the Realization of “Kid’s Session” during the three Festivals of Art and Education “DUOS” in Kilifi.

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Introduction

The original programme (with one edition in 2020, one in 2021, and one in 2022) was modified due to the emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, but the implementation of three editions of the DUOS Festival became an integral part of the cultural and artistic events in Kilifi and Mombasa. The UNIMC team organized the first and second edition in 2021, and the third edition in 2023.

The Kid's Session aim was to involve kids, families, schools, and communities in meaningful creative and artistic experiences. The team organized mixed groups of researchers, artists, teachers, social educators, university students, and volunteers from local associations in order to develop educational activities and artistic workshops for kids and schools.

The project offered children and adolescents spaces for creative expression in which artistic languages became mediators of community learning. They had the opportunity to play with their imagination, discover new materials, colours, languages, and learning by doing.

The cooperative approach was also developed through the use of local materials and the discovery of the territory as a space to be known and explored.

The proposal of the three editions of the Kid's Session, while changing the topic, was supported by an 'edutainment' approach in which the participants were the protagonists of the experience.



1. First Edition (February-March 2021)

1.1 Themes and Objectives

The first Kid's Session (February-March 2021) focused on the theme of "Community" and addressed this aspect through two levels of work: the development of the concept of community with its different representations through the use of artistic languages, and the group experimentation of cooperative and participative dynamics, with which the different facets of community perspectives could be highlighted.

The educational objectives were:

- describe the concept of community, valuing each emerging perspective;
- to experiment with participatory dynamics;
- to experiment with cooperative and creative experiences;
- to know and use artistic materials and languages.

The transversal objectives were:

- to consolidate the relations and educational alliances established with schools in the area of Kilifi;
- to expand the network of schools involved;
- to consolidate the educational dialogue on the importance of creativity with teachers and adults;
- to share the outcomes of the workshops held with the community and the local area.

1.2 Institutions Involved and Targets Reached

The first edition of the Kid's Session focused on the involvement of a few schools in Kilifi, heterogeneously distributed throughout the territory. This edition took place in compliance with the hygienic and sanitary regulations imposed by the Covid-19 Pandemic, so it did not include the direct meeting of different schools and institutions. This conditioned the planning and required an organization divided into territorial areas and school buildings. The organization of the workshops and creative activities took place together with the school leaders and teachers, also taking into account the educational programmes and curricula of the different classes involved in the project.

The schools that participated in the design and implementation of the workshops were:

- Kilifi Junior Primary School – grade 3 to grade 6 – 44 kids, 1 teacher, 1 head of the teachers, 1 director of the school.
- Kilimo Primary School – from grade 1 to grade 3 – 279 kids, 4 teachers, 1 head of the teachers, 1 director of the school.
- Nazarene Church Academy School – from Pre-Primary 1 to grade 6 – 50 kids, 2 teachers, 1 head of the teachers, 1 director of the school.



- Ocean of Wonders Primary School – grade 3 and 4 – 80 kids, 4 teachers, 1 head of the teachers, 1 director of the school.
- Seahorse School and Temporary Art Centre – from Pre-Primary 1 to grade 6 – 30 kids, 1 teacher, 1 head of the teachers, 1 director of the school.

1.3 Workshops and Results Achieved

Given the various composition of the working groups and the heterogeneous age of the participants, several workshops were developed to support the participation of everybody.

At the Kilifi Junior Primary School, UNIMC Team, teachers, and kids were involved in a workshop on different meanings of “Community.” Many small groups shared ideas, visual brainstorming, and planned how to represent several versions of community, freely chosen by the pupils.

The opportunity to work together on an initially abstract concept in order to make it more concrete required the participants to draw on their own knowledge, to compare themselves with real experiences and to connote their artistic work in a personalized way. Multiple narratives of the meaning and forms of community emerged, and, at the same time, the open dialogue allowed them to find mediations and accommodate different points of view.

At Kilimo Primary School, due to the high number of participants, diversified activities were planned, experimenting with creative languages and tools. With kids of grade 2, UNIMC Team and teachers realized a workshop on primary colours, discovering materials and tools (fingers, brushes, banana leaves, etc.). Two classes were involved through a cooperative learning approach, and they realized artworks using objects, icons, and symbols. A class of grade 3 was involved in a photo-language workshop focused on the idea of community. Students used images and short text from newspapers and magazines to describe meaningful images of community. The kids of grade 1 participated in a creative workshop focused on the idea of cooperation: students created paper flowers and stars, working one by one and then in small teams, to achieve common results.

The possibility of communicating one’s own idea and sharing the experience as a group allowed the children to express numerous points of view and to find mediations and similarities, both from the point of view of its artistic-creative techniques and from the point of view of being part of a group-community.

At Ocean of Wonders Primary School, UNIMC Team, teachers, and kids were involved in a photo-language workshop focused on the idea of community. The team conducted two parallel working sessions, and the students used images and short text from newspapers and magazines to define community with visual messages.

In this case, the use of familiar references to the context (the newspapers were predominantly local) allowed the children to choose the most significant images and compose an original version. The use of images to create plural messages opened up dialogue and respect for many nuances of the concept “community” and also allowed for links to be made between similar representations but with different meanings.



At Nazarene Church Academy School, UNIMC Team, teachers, and kids were involved in a creative workshop focused on the idea of cooperation. Students played with colours and created several games with natural materials (small stones and sticks) and paper flowers working in small teams. The opportunity to build something together allowed the children to be creative and, at the same time, to self-produce games to be used and shared with other kids. The valorisation of the local material also supported the focus on creativity and recycling.

At Seahorse School and Temporary Art Centre, UNIMC Team, teachers, and kids were involved in two creative workshops focused on the idea of community and cooperation. In the first part were discovered the primary colours through different techniques and tools; in the second part participants worked on a large image of a village (full of details of the local context) and then created paper flowers working in small team, to achieve common results.

The children worked by sharing spaces and materials to construct articulated narratives of community space, especially in reference to the representation of the village as a familiar place. Observing the commitment and care put into the big map and the realization of the origami brought out many possibilities for dialogue in which every kid could who tell his/her stories, allowing adults to access their vision of space and time lived together.

The workshop activities with the schools lasted three weeks. All the materials collected formed part of the research documentation and, during the first edition of the DUOS Festival, some of the outcomes were displayed in Kilifi. In particular, the stars-flowers made with the origami technique and collectively coloured and the map with the representation of the village created together were exhibited. In both cases, the focus was on cooperation and community.

1.4 Photographic Documentation





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2. Second Edition (August-September 2021)

2.1 Themes and Objectives

The second Kid's Session (August-September 2021) focused on the theme of "Women Power" and addressed this aspect, consolidating the strategies of participatory dynamics, stressing the attention on the topic of female empowerment and the roles of kids, girls, and women in society. The classes that participated in the training proposal, shared with the teachers, have deepened a current theme, starting from different representations and stereotypes, in order to identify ways of recounting the power of women, especially through the role of the visual arts.

The educational objectives were:

- analysing and deepening the concept of "women power," valuing each emerging perspective;
- envisage new ways of overcoming stereotypes of the female gender;
- to experiment with participatory dynamics;
- to experiment with cooperative and creative experiences;
- to know and use artistic materials and languages.

The transversal objectives were:

- to consolidate the relations and educational alliances established with schools in the area of Kilifi;
- to consolidate the educational dialogue on the importance of creativity with teachers and adults;
- to expand interdisciplinary dialogue;
- to foster networking between different professionals (teachers, artists, students, researchers...)
- to share the outcomes of the workshops held with the community and the local area.

2.2 Institutions Involved and Targets Reached

The second edition of the Kid's Session focused on the involvement of various schools in Kilifi, heterogeneously distributed throughout the territory. All the schools already involved in the first edition were again involved in these proposals. Furthermore, although still conditioned by the working methods imposed by the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, we felt it appropriate to open the project to another school and one socio-educational agency.

The planning of the workshops and creative activities took place together with the school leaders and teachers, also taking into account the educational programs and curricula of the different classes involved in the project.

The UNIMC working team was enlarged thanks to the collaboration of two local artists (one painter and one sculptor) and one expert in education, who contributed to the realization of the activities also by introducing new working techniques. In addition, cooperation with four students from Pwani University made it possible to create working subgroups, in which to facilitate free



expression and deepen dialogue on the chosen theme.

The schools that participated in the design and implementation of the workshops were:

- Kilifi Junior Primary School – grade 6 and 7 – 15 kids, 1 teacher, 1 head of the teachers, 1 director of the school.
- Kilimo Primary School – grade 5 – 149 kids, 4 teachers, 1 head of the teachers, 1 director of the school.
- Nazarene Church Academy School – from Pre-Primary 1 to grade 6 – 60 kids, 4 teachers, 1 head of the teachers, 1 director of the school.
- Ocean of Wonders Primary School – grade 5 and 6 – 66 kids, 4 teachers, 1 head of the teachers, 1 director of the school.
- Seahorse School and Temporary Art Centre – from Pre-Primary 1 to grade 6 – 26 kids, 1 teacher, 1 head of the teachers, 1 director of the school.
- Upendo Primary School – from grade 1 to grade 6 – 23 kids, 1 teacher, 1 director of the school.
- Nyota Ya Asubuhi – Koinonia Community – from Pre-Primary 1 to grade 7 – 35 kids, 2 educators.

2.3 Workshops and Results Achieved

The interdisciplinary structure of the working group made it possible to design activities attentive to listening to children and adolescents, and to promote the development of critical and creative thinking skills. In particular, collaboration with local artists enabled the children to explore new arts dimensions and to become familiar with different materials and languages through which to express themselves. The theme, also particularly felt by the teachers, was analysed with different levels of intensity, opting for the direct involvement of everyone, paying great attention to the presence of the girls as the primary bearers of ideas. The educational keys were always based on awareness of the challenge of gender equality and the construction of spaces for dialogue and self-narration.

The use of visual and manual languages, including painting and sculpture, has led the schools involved to produce shared materials that bear witness to all the ideas represented.

In this year, having chosen to work with smaller groups and more homogeneous age groups, the activities planned were cross-cutting in terms of location.

In the schools where the workshops were carried out with the support of the painter (Kilimo Primary School, Ocean of Wonders Primary School, Nazarene School, and Nyota Ya Asubuhi – Koinonia Community) the activity was structured in three phases: presentation of the theme and brainstorming on “women power” (collective presentation, individual and small-group reflection work); graphic representation of the theme in small groups with individual artifacts (sharing ideas with the artist, and support from the students and the research team, in deepening the stories belonging to each child’s real experience); collective discussion of the ideas that emerged and the



representations made.

In the schools where the workshops were carried out with the support of the sculptor (Seahorse School and Upendo Primary School), the activity was structured in three phases: presentation of the theme and brainstorming on “women power” (collective presentation, individual and small-group reflection work); creation of two-dimensional women’s profiles with recycled natural materials (sharing ideas with the artist, and support from the students and the research team, for the deepening of the theme and the stories belonging to each child’s real experience); collective discussion of the ideas that emerged and the artistic objects realized.

The climate of dialogue that was generated throughout the activities allowed the participants to express their ideas and ask questions, from the point of view of content, and the use of materials, to artistic techniques, and the production of original messages. The use of different codes and the possibility of creating drafts of artistic works facilitated the expression of content that is not easy to express only verbally or in written language.

Also in the second edition, the workshop activities with the schools and the socio-educational agency lasted three weeks. All the materials collected formed part of the research documentation and, during the second edition of the DUOS Festival, some of the outcomes were exhibited in Kilifi and in Szczecin.

As for the artifacts produced with the visual-pictorial language, the artist involved and the Pwani University students, after supporting the management of the activities, created “artist books” by collecting all the works drawn by the participants with illustrated covers by the painter. These enhanced the theme and the main contents that emerged during the workshops.

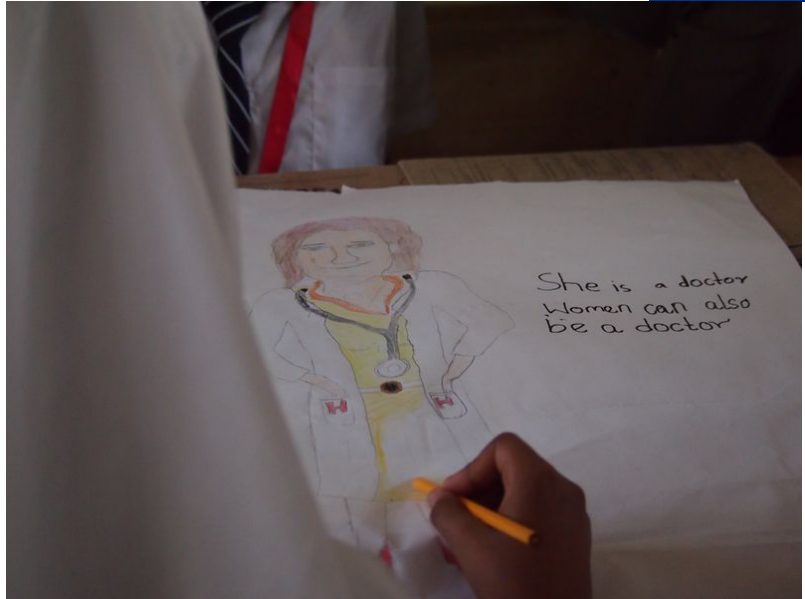
Some of the images depicted by the children were chosen to produce stickers, which were then distributed to the young artists and visitors to the final exhibition, depicting alternative narratives of the role of women.

As for the artifacts produced with the support of the sculptor, they were exhibited on a specially made support, and a parallel session on the tools of sculpture was initiated through direct interaction between the artist and visitors to the final exhibition.

The activities of this edition of the festival were always organized in order to encourage cooperation and dialogue among the kids with a communitarian learning style. In addition, several convivial moments allowed for very direct interaction with the participants (children and adults), consolidating educational alliances and working methods. Finally, it should be emphasized how the presence of local experts favoured the prefiguration of further activities to be managed in co-designs aimed at enhancing the skills present in the local area, listening to the needs of the school and educational agencies.

2.4 Photographic Documentation









3. Third Edition (February-March 2023)

2.1 Themes and Objectives

The third Kid's Session (February-March 2023) focused on the theme of "Social Ecology," and it was discussed in depth with respect to the balance between humans and nature and in relation to the dynamics to be experimented in the workshops implemented.

While previous collaborations were more focused on the educational alliance between preschools, primary schools and the research group, this edition of the festival involved more socio-educational organization, including the territories of Kilifi and Mombasa.

This choice was due to the fact that the intention was to create an educational impact on the territory, also through non-formal social organisms, in order to consolidate community strategies and co-creation of content, democratic processes, plural narratives, and self-organization of children and young people.

The educational objectives were:

- analysing and deepening the concept of "social ecology," valuing each emerging perspective;
- finding ways to actualize the social ecology paradigm in contexts of experience;
- to experiment with participatory dynamics;
- to experiment with cooperative and creative experiences;
- to support the democratic processes of self-organization of children and adolescents;
- to know and use artistic materials and languages.

The transversal objectives were:

- to consolidate the relations and educational alliances with socio-educational organization in the area of Kilifi and Mombasa;
- to consolidate the educational dialogue on the importance of creativity with educators and adults;
- to expand interdisciplinary dialogue;
- to foster networking between different professionals (educators, artists, students, researchers...)
- to share the outcomes of the workshops held with the community and the local area.

2.2 Institutions Involved and Targets Reached

The pedagogical design of the activities maintained the collective approach, which characterized all the editions of the Kid's Session, further enhancing the co-creation of pathways and workshops that could empower all those involved (children, young people, and adults). This made it possible to act with great flexibility with respect to emerging skills, with a continuous evaluation and feedback gathering process.

Since educational work with social realities requires more planning, not being within formal



educational institutions, the working group opted for the involvement of two local organizations and fewer children and young people.

Differently from the first two editions, in 2023 we were able to hold a final collective event, both in Mombasa and Kilifi, in which all the participating agencies were involved in the final events which were open to the community.

The planning of the workshops and creative activities took place together with the socio-educational agency, involving leaders and educators, also considering the specific educational needs and priorities of the different organizations, considering the target audience, and the different urban and rural contexts.

The UNIMC working team was enlarged thanks to the collaboration with the socio-educational organizations. Furthermore, four students from Pwani University made it possible to create working subgroups, in which to facilitate free expression and deepen dialogue on the chosen theme.

The socio-educational organizations that participated in the design and implementation of the workshops were:

- SwahiliPot Foundation in Mombasa – from grade 4 to grade 8 – 13 kids, 5 experts in communication and educators.
- Nyota Ya Asubuhi – Koinonia Community – from Pre-Primary 1 to grade 8 – 90 kids, 2 educators.

2.3 Workshops and Results Achieved

Also in this last edition, the interdisciplinary structure of the working group made it possible to design activities aimed to listening to children and adolescents, and to promote the development of critical and creative thinking skills. In particular, collaboration with local socio-educational organizations allowed for a close and daily dialogue with the educators and experts who, through co-creation of content, interaction, and direct observation in the field, provided useful indications on the process to be developed to promote greater autonomy in the children. Moreover, the presence of university students in the field of education and ecology made it possible to design ad hoc micro-actions with which to explore the topic in an interactive manner. In this sense, the process of collective construction of knowledge and creative experience was even more evident.

Children and adolescents investigated the theme of social ecology through different artistic languages, exploring territories, making small videos, taking photographs, drawing, painting, and experimenting with cooperative and self-organization games. In the different experiences, kids and teenagers expressed their creativity as active protagonists.

The use of several creative languages and technological tools allowed the children and adolescents to explore the territory and represent the balance between human beings and the environment from direct observation. Photographic and video documentation made it possible to reconstruct significant details and contexts and to focus on the need to take care of living contexts. The



awareness of being part of a natural balance was expressed through drawings, illustrations, the creation of short texts, and the construction of objects with recycled materials. During the various explorations, the dialogues between children, young people, and adults brought out different awareness of environmental roles and responsibilities (as the extended ecosystem). Furthermore, the possibility of self-organizing playful activities involving cooperative social dynamics emphasized the need to create places of proximity and collaboration.

During the final events, the children and young people showed the path they had taken and had the opportunity to explain their point of view, as well as to participate in a final session of activities where their bodies became a tool for representing meaningful relationships.

More specifically, at the end of the three weeks of immersive workshops, activities, and feedback, the Kid's Session produced an exhibition at Alliance Française and organized a full day of workshop at the Water Sports Ground in Kilifi, involving children from Nyota ya Asubuhi and the local community and taking part in the DUOS Festival activities.

Workshops with other DUOS artists were also realized in Kilifi, including an animation workshop with Izabela Plucinska and a photography and creative installation workshop with Igor Omulecki.

Furthermore, thanks to the cooperation with Swahili Pot, a short documentary on the activities was produced and screened during the final event in Kilifi.

As in the second edition, some of the artifacts produced by the Kid's sessions were also exhibited at Szczecin.

2.4 Photographic Documentation





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