



# VIJANA NA AFYA

- Let's create a healthy world!

Documentation of a  
Kenyan-German  
Exchange Project



arche noVa  
Initiative for People in Need



# Foreword

**Integrating key concepts of health and wellbeing into youth work and youth-led initiatives is an important factor in creating a holistic work-life balance and developing self-confidence and self-esteem among young people worldwide.**

It is the young people of today and future generations who will be confronted with the consequences of unsustainable development and lifestyles. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for 2030 recognises the need to empower young people to bring about change. As young people improve their skills, they will be able to be increasingly vocal and active in demanding change and accountability from the world's policymakers; especially when it comes to addressing the pressing challenges of the present.

Youth exchanges are key to sharing knowledge and experiences, understanding common and different views and promoting cultural diversity. *Vijana na Afya – Let's Create a Healthy World – Health and well-being at the Centre of Youth Work* provided an excellent framework for integrating health, well-being and sustainability among young people from different economic, geographical and social backgrounds from Kenya and Germany.

We take away both questions and suggestions from the project:

*What kind of leadership does the future need?*

Independent thinking while recognising other opinions; trust in others and the ability to use this trust; motivation and action.

*What elements are important for the future of education, health, well-being and youth work?*

Improving self-image; learning through dialogue; accepting the unknown; being a role model.

*What are important elements for the realisation of projects or initiatives with youth participation?*

Finding supporters and skills that share your passion; respecting different values; offering different ways to get involved; and good communication.

This publication was produced in close cooperation with the programme participants and other relevant stakeholders.

The recommendations contained in this documentation are intended to offer suggestions that can be adopted in future youth exchange programmes. To emphasise the value of youth exchanges, the publication presents various activities, learning experiences and instruments that are transferable to different individual, local and institutional contexts. For this reason, the publication is intended to reach as many stakeholders as possible to facilitate a broad exchange of experiences.

**We invite everyone to use this experience report to implement projects that can bring about positive change on an individual and community level!**

**Dr Dorcas Beryl Otieno, OGW  
Managing Director Kenya Organisation  
for Environmental Education (KOE)**



# Table of contents

## Participant profiles

## Project context

- 08 Background and information on the project
- 11 Recommendations on games and methods
- 20 Reviews of workshops and excursions

## Testimonials

- 29 Personal insights and prospects
- 35 Thoughts on (inter)cultural experiences and observations
- 39 Dealing with challenges
- 43 Brief glimpses



„Vijana na Afya“ is Swahili and means „youth and health“. Swahili, the Bantu language with the most speakers worldwide, is the second official language in Kenya after English. In Kenya, it is the most widely spoken language on the coast and in the countryside. Swahili is also the lingua franca throughout East Africa.

## Results

- 47 Food for thought and topics for discussion
- 51 Project reports of the tandems
- 59 Public event

## Résumé

- 64 My impressions in a few words

## Imprint





## Faith Kilonzo

Top 20 Global Young Women in Sustainable Development.

An award from the organisation

Young Women in Sustainable Development highlights the efforts of outstanding young women who are committed to sustainable development.

Current role: Deputy Coordinator, Makueni County Government, Kenya

Founder of the Maundu Maseo Initiative-CBO, a community-based organisation operating in Makueni district since December 2021.

Field of interest: Environment and health, rural development and sustainable development, partnerships, scholarships, exchange programmes

## Selina Rausch

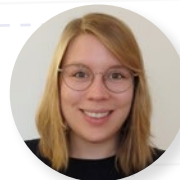
Age: 30

Job description: Project engineer for the commissioning of railway lines

Volunteering: tribal leader in the Protestant Scouts; setting up a women's wheelchair team, including structures to manifest in the association structure and compete at the national level

What I'm looking for: making contacts in disability sports; interested in accessibility and awareness issues; giving input on disability and facilitation.

What I'm curious about Environmental and (mental) health issues and solutions; personal development



# Participant profiles



## Marlene Gräf



## Anne Ahmadi

26 years, is a social worker in the field of migration, current employer is the Dresden Youth Welfare Office, interested in multicultural life and work, human rights, animal welfare, sport, travelling, photography



## Johanna Bauer

22 years old. I completed my Bachelor's degree in Social Work a year ago. I particularly like working with children, young people and refugees. I am also interested in topics relating to mental health and resilience. I love tackling creative projects and enjoying the beauty of nature on walks.



## Kay Zeisig

Kay Zeisig is studying Digital Humanities (Master) at the Technical University of Dresden. As a trained social worker, he has worked in the fields of youth work, theatre and sports education with a focus on violence prevention, drug and addiction support, (mental) health promotion and personal development of participants.



## Sharlyne Anyango Owuor

Age: 26, Occupation: Assistant to the programme manager at Uvumbuzi Africa, Volunteer work: Kenya Organisation for Environmental Education, Uvumbuzi Africa and Greenpeace Africa, Areas of interest: Voluntary service, social work.



## Mara Kayser

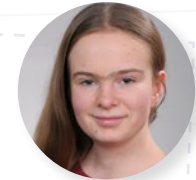
Project Manager Vijana na afya Project at arche noVa e.V.

Connected with Kenya since 2007. Studied African Studies, seminar support for international voluntary services, alumna of the ESD Expert Net, Art of Hosting fan and Lernkulturzeit coach. Competence-orientated educational concepts, international exchange and potential development are important elements of my areas of activity.



## Selma Weidensdörfer

born in May 2005, volunteers at Seebrücke Dresden and the PrimaKlimaAG at FAS Dresden. My interests are wide-ranging, I am particularly interested in political issues relating to migration, climate and equality. I am also interested in ESD and how it can be implemented within society.



## Bryan Chesoli

Organisation: Ashoka East Africa  
Position: Programme Manager for Youth Affairs  
Expertise: Youth engagement/project management  
Areas of interest: I am passionate about driving social impact initiatives and fostering the potential of young African innovation talent.



## Selma Petalla



## Glorious Jesang

A 24-year-old student with a university degree Master's programme in research and public policy, Bachelor's degree in community development, Specialised interest in the relationship between climate change and human health, Research Assistant at the African Population Health and Research Centre in Nairobi, Focus on health and well-being issues, involvement in political decisions, Volunteer at Youths for Green Action Kenya, Active participation in tree and mangrove cultivation initiatives to protect the environment



## Maria Nelz

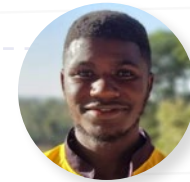
I am Maria. I have been passionate about justice and humanity for as long as I can remember. That's how I came to study Tropical Forestry, where I built up a sound knowledge of resource justice and global relations. In my current work as an ESD project coordinator and speaker, I organise workshops on the SDGs. The Vijana na afya project enabled me to develop professionally and personally because I was able to take advantage of a wide range of opportunities for exchange in our international group and inspiring friendships were formed as a result.



## Danson Matekwa

Project Manager Vijana na afya Project at Kenya Organisation for Environmental Education (KOEK)

Experienced and interested in global learning, citizen participation, public relations, sustainability research in the public and private sectors and green economy.



## Georgina Njeru



## Monica Waigwa

environmentalist and youth advocate on climate, sustainability and animal welfare issues in Kenya, volunteering with AIESEC in Mauritius and Wildlife Direct in Kenya, recently became an influencer for We Don't Have Time on their social platform to review climate-related policies and name governments, organisations or individuals whose actions pose a threat to the health of the planet.

Master's degree in Environmental Planning and Management from the University of Nairobi.



## Lamech Opiyo

Lamech Opiyo is an award-winning environmentalist and youth leader. He is also a committed climate activist, a humanitarian worker and a change maker based in Kenya. Lamech is a graduate of Kenyatta University and holds a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and Community Development. He is currently part of the UNESCO Chair in Higher Education Development for a Green Economy and Sustainability (UNESCO HEDGES) at Kenyatta University. He is also on various steering committees and boards of various environmental groups/organisations as well as a member of several environmental and humanitarian organisations including Rotary International, Green Rotaract Concept, Miti Alliance, Fridays for Future Kenya, UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration and others. His main areas of interest include education for sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, environmental and climate activism, nature-based solutions, and green and circular economy.



# Project context





# Background and information on the project

According to studies, young people are severely affected by the current crisis. Climate anxiety is also on the rise, according to the [Children's Health Report 2023](#) published by the Children's Health Foundation. The latest findings from the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) show that one in seven young people worldwide suffers from a mental disorder. With Sustainable Development Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-being, the global community aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. In both Kenya and Germany, mental health among young people is an increasing challenge for public health.

The impact of health and well-being on young people's lives is profound. They affect their ability to cope with the challenges of everyday life, perform well in school and at work, and maintain committed relationships. Compared to others, young people struggling with mental health issues are tragically more likely to engage in substance abuse, sometimes even contemplate suicide, and face a host of other negative consequences. At the same time, young people are the most frequent target group of educational programmes that aim to impart

knowledge and skills to develop solutions to our current global challenges. Children, adolescents and young adults are confronted with the fact that the well-being of the planet and their future depends on their actions.

With the youth exchange programme „Vijana na Afya – Let's create a healthy world“, we have embarked on an intercultural research trip to find out how we can sensitise and activate young people for sustainability and global coexistence without risking further mental overload.



**Project duration: May 2022  
until December 2023**

## Project structure

The Vijana na Afya Youth Exchange Programme was the first project collaboration between the Kenya Organisation for Environmental Education (KOE) and Arche noVa e.V. The project proposal was written jointly. To ensure good cooperation and achieve the desired goals, we, as project coordinators, adopted certain procedures, which we changed and adapted as needed during project implementation. In the following, we will discuss some of the structures and framework conditions that we used and found helpful.

## Selection of participants

The programme comprised a total of fourteen participants, seven from Kenya and seven from Germany. Participants were selected via an open call for applications, which was publicised on various social media and by email via our networks in both countries. In the call for applications, we specified the target group we were looking for, the requirements, the content and objectives of the project, as well as the tasks following a successful application. We were looking for young people who are interested in sustainability issues as well as health and well-being, who work with young people themselves and who could imagine passing on their experiences from the project as ESD multipliers. Online interviews were conducted with all applicants, which formed the basis for the selection process.

A special feature of the project was those tandems were formed from the seven participants from each country, who then lived together temporarily during the encounter phases and were each to get to know their respective areas of work. The tandems were put together by the project coordinators after all participants had been selected and after the first joint meeting.

## Interactive support

At the beginning of the first project phase, a shared email address was set up so that participants could contact both project coordinators. During the project implementation, participants also had the opportunity to arrange virtual or physical meetings with the project coordinators individually or as a (sub)group in the event of urgent problems. During the meeting phases, the need for this proved to be quite great, which led us to the realisation that more than two people should be available as contact persons and confidants for the entire group during the meeting of both groups. This would make it easier to divide up and alternate areas of responsibility in the future, which would take a large burden off the project coordinators.



Nachhaltigkeitsziel 3:  
Gesundheit und Wohlergehen

## Effective communication

Communication is the backbone of any collaboration. For uncomplicated, fast communication, a joint WhatsApp group was set up after consultation among the participants, through which we could quickly share information and reminders with everyone and also offer the participants a space for informal discussions. Participants were also able to communicate questions and suggestions via this channel. To maximise the added value for everyone, we agreed on basic „rules“ of communication and content in this chat group at the beginning.

Two country specific WhatsApp groups for communication only were created for the respective national groups.

However, all official project related information and announcements were exchanged by email. Contact with the participants via social media (WhatsApp) also proved to be indispensable, however, emails were sometimes read irregularly and interaction via them seemed much more cumbersome.

Our common working language was English.

## Participatory approach

For ESD to work with young people, it makes sense to involve them in at least part of the planning and decision-making processes. Throughout the implementation of the project, we involved the participants in the selection of

topics that best met their needs, in the planning of the public specialist event and in the scheduling of online meetings and seminar dates. The lesson we learnt from this is that seminar and online meeting dates should be fixed before the participants are selected to ensure that everyone is available for the group meetings. We have also concluded that the individual expertise of the participants and the different wealth of experience should be more strongly integrated into the content of the programme to facilitate an appreciative exchange between the participants and an easier connection to their realities.

## Regular meetings

Online meetings were an integral part of the programme to prepare everyone for the face-to-face meetings and also to strengthen and later maintain the group spirit. On average, meetings were held every four to six weeks as a whole group or in the national teams. The meetings of the national groups were focussed on the respective needs, while the joint meetings brought the two national groups together to discuss topics or exchange ideas. During the encounter phases, we also set up national meetings to create a safe space for sharing emerging challenges. The regular meetings proved to help keep the group together over such a long period and created opportunities to stay on top of the project topics alongside everyone's personal daily lives.

## Seminars and contents

The processes and content of the seminars were already roughly outlined in the application. Based on the selected participants, their wishes and the developments during project implementation, we adapted the content and methods accordingly. Each national team had a total of three weekend seminars, which we used to prepare for and follow up on the encounter phases. The content included sensitising participants to the respective cultural context, preparing them for their role as hosts and guests, examining their positions and common narratives, as well as reflecting on and evaluating the previous phase.

The three-week encounter phases were divided into three phases. In the first week, there were mainly joint workshops and excursions with a thematic focus, as well as group processes. During the second week, the guests stayed at their tandem homes and each tandem realised a small joint project that focused on sustainability and health. In the third week, everyone came together again. There was a public event at which the tandem projects were presented, cultural activities and individual-themed workshops and excursions before it was time to say goodbye.

## Evaluation and reflection

The continuous review of both the methods used and the content plays a central role in un-

derstanding the direction in which the project is developing. This enables process-oriented changes and adjustments during the programme, which have a positive influence on the participants' learning experience and the achievement of the project goals.

For the duration of the project, we offered participants the opportunity to keep a learning diary. During the seminar phases, there were repeated sessions with reflection questions, which the participants then answered individually to record their learning journey. In addition, after each physical meeting, there were anonymous online evaluation forms in which we asked about satisfaction with the seminar organisation and content, as well as an assessment of new insights and learning experiences based on the project activities. We took the results into account as far as possible when planning and implementing the next project activities.

Below you will find descriptions, reports and thoughts from our participants, which they wrote for this documentation at the end of the project.

We would like to thank all participants in this pilot project for the shared learning journey, their great commitment of over 20 months and the many constructive suggestions for future projects!

## Enjoy reading!

**Danson Matekwa Imbwaga (KOE) & Mara Kayser (arche noVa e.V.),**  
Project coordinators „Vijana na afya“





# Recommendations on games and methods



Written by  
Faith Kilonzo

***As a participant in the Vijana Na Afya project, I embarked on an insightful learning journey, exploring different methods of understanding and promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in both Kenya and Germany. While the learning approaches in Kenya were mainly theoretical and provided an insightful introduction to the One Health approach, the experiences in Germany were more practical with playful approaches to learning. This report summarises some of these innovative approaches.***

## The world game

This interactive game enabled a deeper understanding of global dynamics and interdependencies and fostered a sense of global citizenship among us participants. We played a game about the distribution of basic resources (water, electricity and money) across the 7 continents. We were asked to distribute the resources to the continents according to our assumptions about availability. Through a series of questions, we exchanged our knowledge about the amount of resources. We were then told the answer by Kathrin. The brochure with the respective figures is constantly updated by the arche noVa team to ensure that the infor-

mation is up to date. I was surprised that most of my expectations regarding the distribution of resources were not met. Most of the highly populated continents were not sustainably developed, while the situation was different on the less populated continents that had an abundance of resources. The game continued to test our knowledge of history, fashion and even the threat of animal exploitation for food production. Overall, the game was great. It can be a little overwhelming (especially for vegans) when confronted with the aspect of consumption that goes into meat production. However, it's worth noting that this game can be adapted to different themes (e.g. migration) etc.



### Methode Weltspiel

<https://www.endlich-wachstum.de/kapitel/materials-in-english/methode/the-world-game/>

## The chair game

To understand the different perspectives within teams working on the same task, the chair game was played and introduced. This game illustrated how different perspectives can lead

to different problem-solving approaches and emphasised the importance of inclusion, cooperation and teamwork. Three teams were given different instructions to achieve a similar result, namely stacking chairs on top of each other. In this method, verbal communication is discouraged. The participants have to observe and make decisions. One team was instructed to place the chairs with their backs to the wall, the second team was to ensure that all the chairs were in the centre of the room and the third team had the task of stacking the chairs in the middle of the room. After some competition, we realised that we were working towards the same goal and could only succeed together. When everyone started to help each other, the task was solved. This showed me how important it is to reflect with the people around me and use information to promote sustainable development.

## The privilege test

As part of the workshop on beauty ideals and colonialism, we dived deep to look at ourselves and understand our privileges. The test opened our eyes and highlighted inequalities in our society, particularly concerning race, beauty ideals, gender and class. The participants line up in a horizontal row. The questions are read out to the participants.

If a participant agrees that he/she is privileged according to the question read out, he/she takes a step forward.

This method is important for young people, especially adolescents, to understand the social norms that are established based on a person's appearance or origin. During this method, I was made aware of my privileges, some of which I question the meaning of. For example, looking good seems to be a privilege in many societies, but at the same time women in particular experience more sexual harassment as a result. Neither has any added value for sustainable development. However, I think this method is still very important for shedding light on other global inequalities that are an obstacle to our sustainable development. My honest conclusion about this method is to do it together and not divide it into German and Kenyan teams as we did. This way, both teams can better understand each other's problems.

## Apocalypse Challenge

In a workshop with Maja Dshemuchadze (psychologist, Dresden), we tried out the Apocalypse Challenge, which she developed based on the concept of paradoxical interventions. In this method, the participants chose a hypothetical apocalypse scenario of how the world will end and explained why this scenario is better than others. This method is particularly suitable for young people in the field of sustainable development. This challenge stimulates critical thinking and raises awareness of the urgency

of sustainable development. As a participant, I learnt that if I advocate for some sustainable development goals first, I lessen the burden of other inequalities in the world. For example, if I were to argue that not creating sustainable

communities is a better apocalypse than living poorly on the land, I would put more energy into advocating for better living on the land, which in turn would lead to building sustainable communities.



## Booklets

I found the method booklets to be a rich source of information on all the Sustainable Development Goals and environmental health. These books provided valuable insights into global environmental issues and emphasised the importance of sustainable practices for a healthier planet. Although the colourful design of the book suggests that it is aimed at children under the age of 13, it is also very useful for adults who want to learn about sustainable development in a simplified way.

I will always be grateful for this handbook, which I have already distributed to schools where I teach ESD. But it saddens me that a school with 300 students without computers and the Internet has to rely on this one book. While group discussions facilitate the dissemination of information, I would like to see more cooperation between Germany and Kenya to expand the sustainable development curriculum. I hope that more teachers, carers and children in rural areas will have access to materials with this knowledge.



[www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/publikationen/environment-health-educational-information](http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/publikationen/environment-health-educational-information)

***To summarise, these innovative methods, which have been developed in Germany and are already quite widely used, are an inspiration to all those working for sustainable development. There is a need for future cooperation between Kenya and Germany to replicate these tools and methods in a language spoken in Kenya. Sharing a rich pool of knowledge is crucial to reducing the disparities in sustainable development between Germany and Kenya.***



**One Health means „one health“. The One Health approach is based on the fact that the health of humans, animals and ecosystems is inextricably linked. Accordingly, the effects of human activity on nature – such as the conversion of forests into pastureland, climate change, the loss of biodiversity, air and marine pollution – have direct consequences for the health of humans and animals, and the close connection becomes clear, for example, when pathogens are transmitted from animals to humans and – through subsequent human-to-human transmission – lead to epidemics or pandemics, such as AIDS, Ebola and corona.**



<https://www.bmz.de/de/agenda-2030/sdg-3>





Written by  
Sharlyne Anyango

## The world game

It was an interesting concept that showed me how countries or continents are distributed in terms of resources, consumption and environmental protection. I think it's a great method for young people who want to learn more about countries and their contribution to the environment, and I'm curious to see how the relationships it depicts will develop in the future.

## The climate puzzle (Climate Fresk)

This activity helped me to gain a deeper understanding of environmental issues and their impact, with a particular focus on the role of humans in environmental degradation. Learning from Maria and Selma was impressive and thought-provoking. This type of learning can be used in any type of ESD workshop or training, especially with young people, particularly in universities.



Link zur Methode

<https://climatefresk.org>







## **Alternative healing methods/ Ayurveda workshop**

These traditional health practices from India offered insights into holistic wellness and alternative approaches to health and well-being. I learnt that I can do some of these methods in the comfort of my own home or anywhere outdoors and that it only takes a few minutes to connect with myself if I am determined to focus on it.

## **Health box for youth work**

This box, which is available to borrow in Saxony, is in my view a great resource/tool for promoting health and wellbeing in young people. We have only had a brief look at the individual

methods included in the box on various topics (sport, nutrition, addiction, sexuality, etc.), but I think it has the potential to be used to promote health education among young people.

## **Meditation, reflection, diary keeping**

These practices were very helpful for personal growth and stress reduction, and I thank Mara and Danson for including them. It helped me because I was able to integrate these methods into my everyday life and they helped me to re-evaluate my life and connect with my feelings. This method can be used especially in workshops to promote active learning.



✍️ Written by  
Selma Weidensdörfer

## The climate puzzle (Climate Fresk)

The Climate Fresk method is a kind of climate puzzle in which maps with climate change factors are put with each other. The result is a kind of mind map that helps to get a better overview of the causes and effects of climate change. It also illustrates which effects are already occurring, which will worsen and which will be added. The method can only be used by trained persons. To be able to instruct the method, Climate Fresk offers further training courses, after which you get access to the material and contact with other trained people worldwide. Climate Fresk is a method that is carried out in groups to pool and exchange the knowledge of all people. As the method is very demanding, it is particularly suitable for adults and young people who have at least a basic knowledge of climate change.

### Realisation:

1. First, we were divided into two groups of 6 people each, with one instructor per group.
2. Then it was explained to us and we got started.
3. Firstly, we were given six cards, which we arranged from left to right on a large piece of paper. On the left, we arranged the causes of climate change, in the centre the factors that play a role and on the right the effects.
4. We were given new cards at intervals of about 10-15 minutes and had to place them in such a way that there was a logical connection between the cards. We repeated this about six times until all the cards were logically connected.

5. Then our instructor checked whether all the cards were assigned correctly and corrected them if necessary.
6. We then drew additional reference arrows between the cards, as not all cards that are connected can lie next to each other where it is important.
7. Finally, we came up with a heading together and wrote it on the paper on which the cards were arranged.

## Alternative Healing Methods/ Ayuwerda Workshop

In this workshop, we were told about Ayurveda and its benefits for body and mind. This was exciting to learn about but ultimately had nothing to do with the original workshop title (Alternative Approaches to Health and Wellbeing). Towards the end, we went into the garden together and had a guided yoga and meditation session to stimulate and relax the mind and wake up the body after sitting. I found the yoga class helpful because it was in the first week of the first encounter phase, at that time there was a lot of new information and impressions and I was always thinking about the next workshop and the things I still wanted to do. That's why the class helped me a lot to get back to the here and now and to concentrate.

## The railway Energizer

This WUP made us all laugh. One participant brought it in and it was very funny. The Wupp is about all the participants sitting in a circle and

having to complete a turn. First of all, we were explained the different movements and sounds that are needed for the Wup. The index fingers are the barriers, they have to close when the train arrives, while they are closing the tinkling (ding, ding, ding) of the barriers has to be imitated. The train passes through the barriers with a sound (choo, choo, choo), the head is the indicator by which you can see where the train is. The train travels round to the right when the train to the person on the left starts to move, the barriers are closed. The barriers must always be closed before the train arrives and then opened again, again with bing, bing, bing. Once the train has completed a lap, the speed can be increased.

The Wupp is not only fun, it also promotes concentration and brings new vigour to groups.









Written by  
Anne Ahmadi

## Balloon game

Everyone was given a balloon and wrote their name on it. Then music was played and the group was allowed to dance around the room and throw the balloons to each other. When the music stopped, everyone took a balloon, looked for the person with the name on the balloon and answered questions such as favourite animal, age, profession, etc. At the end, everyone took a balloon and the person behind it was presented to the group. At the end, everyone presented a balloon and the person behind it to the whole group.

This method is well suited to a group that does not yet know each other. The questions can be changed individually. I found this method good because you playfully learn names and can link the person to certain facts. You could also identify common interests or start a conversation based on the answers.

## Back of compliments

Everyone gets a piece of paper (A3) stuck to their back and we write compliments or things that we appreciate about the person. Everyone decides for themselves whether they want to write their name underneath. This method is suitable once the group has got to know each other and is a good way of comparing self-perception with the group's perception of others. This method strengthens self-confidence and

is a good way of expressing appreciation for each other and growing even closer together. Even if there are initial conflicts, it draws attention to the sides of a person that you like – and you can always find something positive about each person. This perspective is trained through the method.



## “why are you here – why are you really here?”

Everyone was asked to find a partner and then answer the question of why they were there. In the next round, the partners were swapped again and the question was asked in the direction of why you are here. This was a good way to get to know the person better, to have a topic to talk about, to find out the different motivati-

ons, and also to be honest about why you are here. This opened up the space for familiarity, secrets and understanding. Afterwards, you had a different relationship with the people you were talking to. The method is suitable for groups that are still getting to know each other and to encourage participants to reflect on their existence.

## Feedback letters

Each participant designed an envelope with their name on it. On the last day, we then had time to put small personal letters in the envelopes. The envelopes were then taken by each participant and opened after departure. There were very nice words, compliments and encouragement to read. Recommendation: Plan at least two days, because with many participants you need a lot of time to write to everyone. Anonymous and non-anonymous is possible. This method makes it possible to awaken memories, share observations and express unspoken things. It is a nice way to conclude a meeting and draw on it, as the written word, unlike the spoken word, is more lasting and often more thought-provoking.



Written by  
Selma Petalla

## Rainbow method – What does health mean to you?

As SDG 3 – Health and Wellbeing is the focus of the project, this method was a particularly good fit.

Each person chose two cards (with printed motifs) that represented a personal relationship to health. This could represent how the respective person defines health for themselves or to what extent the image can be expressed about individual health. In addition, the material also includes a pad depicting a rainbow. The different colours represent different areas, such as Me, lifestyle, friends and family, etc. Each person placed the selected cards in a square and had the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences.

Health is a multifaceted concept that cannot be easily defined and exists in every area of life. The method was therefore very interesting and it was enriching to hear how health is defined for others and how it manifests itself in their lives.

From: „Healthy luggage“ practical kit for promoting health in child and youth work from AGJF

<https://agjf-sachsen.de/gesund-es-gepaeck.html>

## Globalize Me method box

The Globalize-Me-Box was developed by arche noVa for open youth work.

It contains various methodological compilations on topics that children and young people can relate to personally in their everyday lives. (smartphone, food, cosmetics)

The box gave us a good opportunity to try out interactive and playful methods and thus gain new perspectives on the practical implementation of ESD. For example, we played a memory game.

In the memory game, there were cards on which animals were depicted and we had to assign their respective natural and industrial life expectancy to them. Even though some of us already had prior knowledge of intensive livestock farming, many of the results were surprising and informative. In the „Cosmetics“ category, we also tried out a method in which we had to guess the respective countries for various pictures depicting national and traditional make-up.



### Globalise me Box booklet

[https://arche-nova.org/sites/default/files/content/dokumente/Globalize%20Me%20Begleit-heft%20zur%20Methodenbox\\_komplett.pdf](https://arche-nova.org/sites/default/files/content/dokumente/Globalize%20Me%20Begleit-heft%20zur%20Methodenbox_komplett.pdf)





# Reviews of workshops and excursions



 Written by  
Marlene Gräf

## Good preparation

During the interim seminars, we had workshops to prepare us for the topic of health and well-being in youth work as well as for the cultural exchange and the hosting phase. In my opinion, these seminars and inputs were very important and essential for the success of the project. Most of us had never hosted a Black person from the Global South for a week at home. I remember the seminar unit with an external person who had experienced racism in Germany herself. She prepared us for what we need to be aware of when our tandem partners come to stay with us and what we need to be aware of when we receive the Kenyan group in Saxony. During this workshop, we worked very practically on examples and possible situations and developed strategies for action. This helped me a lot and made me question situations and contexts in terms of their safety (for whom and how).

## Workshops with a difference

For me as a German, it was very interesting that the workshops during the Kenyan encounter phase were very different from what I am used to in the German workshop context. Many

speakers shared their personal stories, which was interesting but also confusing, as there was no recognisable „common thread“ that guided us as a group through the workshop. Instead, we were more or less silent participants listening to a lecture. Sometimes I would have liked there to be an introduction at the beginning of the workshops so that we could categorise what was to come. I enjoyed the workshop on gender-based violence, which was led by a person affected by gender-based violence. Although she also shared a lot of personal information and we listened rather than participate interactively, it felt very coherent in this context and picked me up and gave me a lift. The energisers that the workshop leader did with us in between also helped a lot to deal with the heaviness that was in the room (through her stories) and not to fall into a powerless stupor. Above all, they were physical and vocal energisers that brought us out of our thoughts and into the here and now and were also funny.

My conclusion is that the more charismatic the workshop leader seemed to me, the more successful each workshop was. The more we worked together as a mixed German-Kenyan group the more the different knowledge, experiences and influences that we had in the room were utilised and appreciated.

We were able to experience several excursions that had very different focuses. Most of them had a technical focus on SDG 3 Health & Well-being, while some focussed more on the experience of cultural exchange.

## Examples of good practice

An excursion in Kenya took us to the Lucky Summer project, which is a community project in the Mathare slum area. The group is working to clean up and renaturalise the river section on a public site by planting shrubs, fruit trees and vegetables. So the focus of the project is green spaces and health (of the community). We spent 3 hours there and planted trees together with the people who were involved. The cofounder of the project also gave us an introduction to the history of the project and the challenges and opportunities that the people there face. For me, this was the most impressive and memorable excursion during the seminars, as I was still thinking a lot about the encounters and conversations I had that day. I was also very impressed by the image of the river and the perseverance of the people in the face of the recurring pollution, which leads to everything being cleaned and sanitised anew every week. Because I know that I often don't

have the perseverance to stick with something, even if it looks like I have to start all over again.

## Culture or tourist attraction?

The cultural excursions took us to a coffee farm on the outskirts of Nairobi, with the only coffee that is not exported to Europe but is processed directly on the farm and also sold in Kenya. It was interesting to learn about this economic model, the coffee processing and the farm grounds, but for me, it also had a bit of a tourist attraction vibe

and I wondered afterwards how many Kenyans visit this farm and who can drink the coffee in the end (as it was also quite expensive compared to the Nestle coffee that is otherwise drunk a lot in Kenya). I would have liked to see more dialogue and room for discussion afterwards about how such projects are accepted and known in Kenya.

In the last few days, we visited the Giraffe Centre and a Maasai market, where most of the German participants stocked up on gifts for home. I am still in two minds about how I categorise these

„tourist excursions“, because I wanted to do and experience them on site. From a distance, however, the excursions to community projects moved me a lot more and also gave me more insight into people's everyday lives and thoughts. In any case, it was very important for me to be able to leave the seminar house grounds and see something of Nairobi (through the matatu and bus journeys alone). That's why I think that excursions are very important in a project like ours so that you don't just stay in the isolated world of your seminar.







✍️ Written by  
Monica Waigwa

## Permaculture and community gardening at Wurzelwerk Pieschen

On a very cold and rainy August morning, the participants of Vijana na Afya in Dresden visited an extraordinary place – a garden in the middle of a concrete jungle that perfectly combines permaculture and community gardening. As it was my first time visiting a community garden, I was particularly excited to see it up close in this unique setting. Something like this is not commonplace in Kenya. I immediately felt at ease when I entered the garden. I was very curious about the idea behind it and to learn about the different aspects and composition of the garden. With a hot cup of coffee to welcome us, Sebastian, the host, gave us a brief introduction to the garden. He then introduced us to the [„Nine Ways of Observing“](#) – a concept from permaculture that was completely new to me.

I found it not only educational but also fascinating, with a lot of respect and appreciation for nature. Afterwards, we quietly split up to enjoy and observe the garden in our ways. I opted for the observation question „I wonder“, for observing from silence and observing patterns. I found this exercise very therapeutic as it allowed us to discover a wide variety of vegetables, flowers, fruits and even insects. It was a wonderful opportunity to take in our surroundings. Then we met again, each with our questions, curiosities and interesting observa-

tions. Sebastian happily responded to everyone as he guided us through the different areas of the garden. We felt and smelled the plants with enthusiasm and even tasted some delicious berries while getting drenched in the rain. Everything felt just right, like heaven on earth.

I got to know the different members of the community who take care of the different areas of the garden and learnt how the produce is consumed and distributed. I found the whole concept of the community garden to be a great way to bring people together. I was particularly impressed by an artificial pond that looked very natural and even included some papyrus perennials and lotus flowers. An idea that I am currently recreating at home for my two ducks.

I admired the garden's commitment to sustainability: dry toilets, composting, water conservation through drip irrigation and much more. It was an unforgettable learning experience, a



[ufer-projekte.de/  
gemeinschaftsgaerten/  
wurzelwerk](https://ufer-projekte.de/gemeinschaftsgaerten/wurzelwerk)

concept that should find many imitators.



## Workshop on planetary health in cooperation with Cambio e.V.

The concept of planetary health deals with the health of human civilisation and the natural systems on which it depends. This lecture by Dr Sina Lehmann (gynaecologist, Dresden) was one of the highlights of my stay in Germany. For me, it was a new perspective on the One Health approach to tackling global environmental problems, which I had previously learnt about in another workshop in Kenya.

For the workshop, we met with multipliers from Cambio e.V., who were currently conducting a training course on the importance of planetary health as a topic within ESD in Tharandt, to discuss various topics: the climate crisis as a health crisis, the health consequences of climate change, transformative measures and the added value of climate protection measures. I found it very interesting to learn how this concept came about and in which areas health is of central importance: from personal health, public health, global health, one health and finally planetary health.

The world is full of inequalities and when it comes to climate change, I learned more about the sad truth when Dr Lehmann presented us with a comparison of emissions per person in different continents. This was not only shocking but also shows how unfair the fight against climate change is. In 2013 alone, one person in the USA emitted an average of 17 tonnes, in Germany 9

tonnes and in Kenya 0.5 tonnes. The richer global North is largely responsible for global emissions, while the vulnerable global South, which has far fewer financial and technical resources to adapt to increasing droughts, storms and other climate disasters, is feeling the consequences the most.

I took two things away with me:

- a) What's good for my body is also good for the earth – such a diet means eating less meat and more pulses and seasonal vegetables.
- b) I want to increase my handprint reduce my footprint in terms of emissions and keep the health of the planet in mind when making life choices.

The conversations we had together that day left a lasting impression and opened my mind to new perspectives. I will never forget the kindness and warmth shown to us by the wonderful group from Cambio in Tharandt, as well as the delicious home-cooked food and their coffee.



Written by  
Faith Kilonzo

## A rich seam of knowledge

The workshops of the Vijana Na Afya programme were a treasure trove of knowledge about ESD in youth work. They served as a platform for intercultural learning and promoted a global perspective among us participants. The innovative methods such as the privilege tests, the world game, the team game „stacking chairs“, the Apocalypse Challenge and the presentation of method handbooks promoted a comprehensive understanding of sustainable development.

In Kenya, we went on several educational excursions. We visited a coffee farm where we learnt first-hand about sustainable farming methods and the importance of trade history. A trip to the Giraffe Centre offered insights into the efforts to protect wild animals. The tree planting tour in the Lucky Summer slum area was a practical experience in environmental protection and highlighted the importance of reforestation in the fight against climate change and for a clean environment.

In Germany, we had an enriching experience in a community garden. Over coffee and raspberries, we learnt about community gardening and its benefits for sustainable development. This visit emphasised the importance of community involvement in promoting local sustainability.

We also visited the German Hygiene Museum in Dresden and learnt about health and well-being, two important aspects of sustainable development. A steamboat trip to Rathen ad-



ded a relaxing aspect to our learning journey while emphasising the importance of sustainable tourism.

In summary, the Vijana Na Afya programme, with its innovative approaches to workshops and field trips, has made an important contribution to promoting ESD and intercultural learning in both Kenya and Germany. These efforts serve as an inspiration for young people worldwide to actively participate in sustainable development initiatives.









Written by  
Lamech Opiyo

## Planetary health, interactive workshops and educational excursions

I enjoyed most of the workshops and excursions both in Kenya and in Germany. My favourite was the workshop on the health of the planet that we had in Germany. I like that most of the workshops were very engaging and educational. The visit to the Lucky Summer Community Project in Nairobi was very inspiring because I saw how young people are implementing a project to bring about change in their community. I also noticed that most of the workshops in Germany were more action-orientated, such as „The Climate Puzzle“, to understand the context of the climate debate. The visit to the community garden in Dresden was very insightful, I learnt a lot about urban agriculture and would like to try to apply some of the lessons learnt in my youth work with different organisations. I also realised that most of the workshops in Kenya and Germany are structured differently. In Kenya, most of the workshops were delivered in the form of PowerPoint presentations and intensive lectures, while in Germany, most of the workshops were participatory and engaging, for example, through the use of illustrations, games and vivid participatory learning. In addition, the trip to the Hygiene Museum to see the „Hello Happiness“ exhibition was a great experience with many new experiences and insights, especially on dealing with emotions, coping mechanisms and ways to connect with oneself.





✍️ Written by  
Anne Ahmadi

## Campaign planning with Mufasa – the Poet

What is our theme? Which slogan do we choose that is appealing, meaningful and memorable? How do we present our cause, what needs to be presented? These were the questions we dealt with in the workshop „How to launch a successful campaign“.

Firstly, we trained our decision-making and selection skills in the group as a whole. To do this, we had to think of our favourite person on a piece of paper and write down ten things why we value this person. In the next round, the piece of paper became smaller and we now had to decide on the five most important points. Finally, we had to decide on the one characteristic that we value most about the person.

The method was very suitable as the question about a favourite person did not require any indepth knowledge of a specific topic and all of the participants were able to find an answer. The example topic was therefore chosen in such a way that the participants were able to fully engage with the method and learn to make a decision and sharpen their focus on the essentials.

After evaluating the method, we were then divided into our tandem constellations and asked to develop a practical campaign on the topic of „pedestrian safety“. We discussed what our cause was, why it might be important and how it could stand out from other causes. We then

only had a short time to agree on a slogan for our campaign and then had to present it to the whole group in a way that would arouse their interest. It was a good exercise to learn how to promote something in front of other people and attract attention. It was also interesting to see that everyone came up with different issues, even though the topic seemed very clearly defined at first.

The final step was to design a poster to go with our campaign. No words or sentences other than the slogan were allowed. The posters were then also presented and evaluated by the group.

At first glance, the workshop appeared to have no connection to the exchange project, as the example topics such as „favourite person“ or „pedestrian safety“ were only remotely related to health. However, this was expedient, as the participants were not able to get lost in the content of the example topics, but were able to concentrate fully on the method.

The individual methods enabled us to focus either entirely on decision-making and selection processes or on finding a title or slogan and finally on the graphic design. It was also the first time that we worked together as tandems on something and were able to familiarise ourselves with each other's working methods and skills.

The workshop was relevant for me

because it gave us the tools to plan and organise a campaign and we were able to try it out in practice. Ultimately, it doesn't always have to be a campaign, but we were able to develop an awareness of presentation, choice of words and, above all, what is important in our cause. We can take this into our day-to-day work and apply it to our workshops and projects. For example, it is possible to work with irritation, because this is how people get stuck on a poster, think about it, become curious and want to find out more. It is also important to realise that the target group decides on the type of campaign.



Link to Mufasa:  
<https://mufasapoet.com>





# Testimonials





# Personal insights and prospects



Written by  
Selma Petalla

## Intensive & enriching

Vijana na afya was an extensive, diverse and complex exchange project. ESD, SDG 3 and youth work. These three terms are easy to link in your head. The programme was varied, but also very extensive. I learnt an incredible amount from the various inputs, the workshops and the tandem projects. I learnt new methods for implementing ESD. However, there were times when I felt overwhelmed by the new and wide-ranging content knowledge. Sometimes I lacked a common thread and reference to practical implementation. Again, this diversity of content also meant that we as participants were able to develop freely in terms of topics. My tandem partner and I therefore had the opportunity to create and run two workshops on mental health, a topic we are both very passionate about.

The participants included people with different backgrounds and therefore diverse expertise. Every time we got together with a group and worked on an idea and its realisation, I felt a creative, innovative energy. Looking back, I would have loved it if we had had the chance to learn a lot more from each other.

The three-week exchange phases were inten-

sive, but also extremely enriching for my personal development. I learnt that it is possible to implement the projects you want, even if it seems particularly challenging at first. I became more self-confident and did a lot of self-reflection. But what will stand out the most for me are the many friendships that were made.





✍️ Written by  
Kay Zeisig

For me, the project not only offered the opportunity to learn about a completely new topic, as I had no formal training in sustainable development in the sense of environmental sustainability but also to immerse myself in new cultural perspectives. As I knew little

about the African perspective on environmental issues, it was very interesting to discover both similarities and differences in this area. However, we didn't just talk about environmental issues, which was very helpful for my future work. We also discussed, for example, beauty standards and interpersonal learning methods

for transferring our theoretical knowledge. All this together – theory and practical methods – will be useful for my future work, as I work in the field of informal education, especially in theatre work, where a wide variety of topics can be integrated.







✍️ Written by  
Glorious Jesang

The prospect of being selected for the Vijana Na Afya youth exchange programme was like waiting for a key to unlock a treasure trove of experiences. I had no idea that I would soon enter a world where every day would

be a new episode of a great adventure, with a diverse group of people who would turn my journey into a real circle of friends, network and colleagues.

From the beginning, the focus of the Vijana Na Afya youth exchange programme was on education for sustainable development in youth work and on health and well-being, especially in the context of youth work. When I look at the first lines I wrote in my diary during the first phase of the exchange in Nairobi, Kenya, these are the main points I had in mind – they were the expectations I had of the programme and the excitement of engaging with these issues.

Our trip was an exploration of the intricate connections between human activities and the environment. In addition, I would like to mention the personal skills and growth in knowledge that I gained from the programme. Working with a diverse group helped me develop self-confidence, patience, perseverance and strength. These qualities were the result of the interactions we had on the programme, both online and during the on-site meetings. The variety of topics and formats – from self-care to aspects of sustainability and worldview to health and well-being – were important learning experiences because they are also part of our daily work.

I reflect on the connections we have made so far with the project participants and realise how healthy it is to work and think together to bring about positive change in society. It is also fascinating to learn from unique people with different experiences in youth work. The cohesion and participation as well as the encouraging praise and positive criticism from the other participants have had a very positive impact on my personal development.

## Wichtigste Erkenntnisse

Dear Glorious,

welcome to Germany, I wish you a great time with lots of new experiences. A great time with fun, lots of laughter and new friends. You are a great woman, with many talents and a stunning personality. Become who you want to be and do what is good for you.

from Selma W.

**An extract from the welcome postcard  
– Encounter Phase Germany**

Since I first wrote down my expectations of the programme in my diary, I am pleased to say that some of these expectations have been fulfilled now that the trip is coming to an end. In this diary, I have documented my experiences of the programme and my reflections on the workshops, excursions, outcomes and learning experiences throughout the programme period.

My most important findings and results from the programme are personal growth and increased knowledge. My knowledge of various ESD topics has expanded greatly. Key areas in this regard are the idea of planetary boundaries and the need to develop an educational model that addresses current challenges. Ideas to promote Eco-Schools such as the Kivukoni Eco-School in the coastal region of Kenya. Secondly, the One Health approach and the need to develop basic concepts for living together with the environment, animals and people.

Throughout the 'journey', the exchange programme offered a wide range of workshops and activities that were both educational and entertaining. The focus was on education for sustainable development, but the sub-themes such as global health, education and inequality, climate change, health and well-being were also of particular importance to my development. I immersed myself in the complex relationships between human activity and the environment and learnt how to effectively address these challenges. This experience was transformative and left a deep impression. I realised that my knowledge about climate change was insufficient and the climate puzzle helped me to understand more facts about this huge phenomenon in the world.

The project made me want to advocate for a greener society and teach eco-friendly practices to youth and children. I witnessed the incredible tandem projects that were carried out both in Kenya and Germany. I was amazed by

the unique and creative ideas that were implemented. I was lucky enough to plan and participate in two tandem projects in Kenya: a playful lesson for children in a children's home to help them overcome their mental health issues through art, and a theatre play in Germany to raise awareness about forest fires.

I also took away from the programme that we humans need to take action on all phenomena. The workshops and training sessions we took part in encouraged us all to take action and work towards a better and more liveable world. We need to take care of ourselves and others. This applies on a social, mental and physical level to achieve the goals for health and well-being set out in Sustainable Development Goal 3. We need to take care of the environment we live in and the animals we live with. The environment is only habitable if we live without depleting its resources. This inevitably leads to achieving the SDGs for climate action, health and well-being, life on land and life below water.

### Personal learning experience

As I look to the future, I take away the most important learnings from the programme, both in terms of personal development in terms of career and knowledge expansion, as well as the soft skills I have acquired so far. I am proud of my ability to interact and collaborate with a diverse team, my cultural competence, my ability to balance group dynamics and find a balance that is fair to all perspectives in a group. I be-

came more aware of the importance of global health, education for sustainable development and addressing pressing issues such as education and inequality, health and well-being. The experiences we shared and the challenges we faced left a lasting impression. I am now inspired to continue advocating for positive change and connecting with people from all walks of life. I look forward to teaching and sharing these key components with others (young people) and to more such exchanges.

### Prospects

My commitment to preserving the health of our planet and promoting education for sustainable development was strengthened, and I am determined to make a difference in my career by using evidence-based research to effect change through policy formulation. The exchange programme gave me a new perspective on the world and showed me the importance of addressing critical global issues with understanding and empathy. It has made me a global citizen ready to face life's challenges with an open heart while advocating for global health, education for sustainable development and issues such as education and inequality, health and well-being as our shared mission for a better world.





 Written by  
Selina Rausch

I decided to take part in this project because, although my day-to-day work is in technical project management, I am also a volunteer with the Scouts. In the Scouts, we are very much in our bubble and I was curious to see what else is out there in youth work. I already had some theoretical background knowledge about the SDGs through the Scouts and participating in a United Nations module. I'm also very interested in health issues. When I lived in the USA, I realised how differently health is dealt with. Even in industrialised countries, universal healthcare is not necessarily common and even when it is available, it often does not meet the needs. The project has opened another door of knowledge in the field of SDG 3 and youth work. Overall, the project has given me many new insights into SDG 3, youth work, intercultural, political and, of course, personal issues.

## Results

The project made me realise that I already know a lot in some areas and very little in others. For me, the technical content wasn't the most important thing, as I realised that scouts work very differently and I don't yet know how I can put what I've learnt into practice. What is more important is that I now have a network outside the Scouts, an international network that I can turn to if I need help. I have also realised that although I am very well trained, I still lack a lot of knowledge. I realise that, but that's quite normal. Nevertheless, people often

talk as if they know the ropes, as if they know the facts or as if they are trying to break them down. I think the difficult thing in such a complex society is to contextualise the thoughts, knowledge and facts that people give. Not to take things as they appear at first glance, but to try to understand the context and scrutinise things. Everyone has their truth. That doesn't mean that things are universally true, but they are the truth for that person with their individual experience.

## Prospects for the future

Now back to practice: in future, I would like to concentrate on moderating and communicating topics. At the moment, I have the opportunity to try out facilitation techniques with other scouts at the Scouts. Unfortunately, this only happens from time to time as the children and young people in our town are very busy, but we are trying to create more opportunities.

To become a trained facilitator, I am in contact with my employer – in the hope that they will also see a benefit in training me in facilitation.

## Findings

A big realisation for me: there is still a lot to do to overcome colonialist (world) views and discriminatory beliefs that have manifested themselves over time.

I will endeavour to understand and overcome these views as best I can, and I hope to do so in

my social circle. However, I believe that it often takes the personal experience of living colonialist views to begin to understand the issue. The problem of growing up in a society that lives with colonialist views and beliefs is that many stones have to be set in motion to change the existing conditions. Experiences from projects like Vijana Na Afya can at best initiate learning processes that make it easier to get these stones rolling. I hope that we as a society can work a little faster to expose the views and beliefs that are so hurtful and harmful to so many people. I hope that I can get past these hard feelings and the way I unintentionally treat people with a colonialist view and then be able to act more consciously. I wish I could say that I would act anti-colonialist, but that's probably unrealistic since I grew up in that society. But I hope I can move closer to that, through more kindness, respect, cooperation and helping each other when needed.







# Thoughts on (inter)cultural experiences and observations



Written by  
Maria Nelz

According to Wikipedia, during an intercultural experience, we are confronted with different ways of life and insights that will challenge our tolerance for ambiguity, our sociability, our flexibility, our emotional stability, our motivation to perform, our empathy and our ability to critically reflect on our slice of reality.

In Germany – a Eurocentric society built on a colonial legacy and fuelled by white privilege – the intercultural competencies mentioned above are still seen as something special – something we can add to our CV – if we want to.

As these are my reflections, I have no empirical evidence to support my assumption, but I would venture to suggest that these competencies are natural and necessary in Kenya, as the country is home to a multi-ethnic society.

So can we all use the certificate of attendance on our CV as proof of intercultural competence from now on? Or is the stamp in our passport ultimately more valuable to enable further inter-

continental travel? Was the intercultural experience unidirectional? Was the intercultural experience the motivation for all participants?

I know these questions hurt, but these and many other questions must be addressed in a post-colonial context and dealt with transparently. Only then will we understand the wishes of the participants. Only then can we create programmes that are beneficial to all. And only then can we overcome advantages at the expense of others.

For myself, I realise that I, and no one else, am primarily responsible for my post-colonial awareness. If I want to educate people about colonial history and white privilege in my educational work, I will take this into my own hands from now on. Too often I have held back on these difficult topics and left them to my migrant colleagues. What does this have to do with the exchange experience? The connection lies in the question of the responsibility that we in Germany must finally take for our colonial heritage.





Written by  
Glorious Jesang

In addition to ESD in youth work, health and wellbeing, the exchange focussed on allowing participants to gain an insight into the different cultures of Germany and Kenya. This ranged from food and language to experiences in the cities of Dresden and Nairobi.

Coming from Kenya, where time management is not so important, it was both an adventure and a great experience for me to get to grips with the German understanding of time. Punctuality is a hallmark of German culture, be it in meetings or on the tram. It was difficult for me to get used to at first, but over time I got used to it and wanted to emulate it in my daily life. I must say that I have learnt to appreciate and accept this efficient way of time management and that my sense of time discipline has been greatly strengthened.

Our adventures outside the seminar venue were another experience that brought me closer to the vibrant city of Dresden. We explored the Hygiene Museum in Dresden, the city festival in August, old museums that convey history, the Moritzburg Castle and the city museums were impressive. After vi-

siting these historical sites and taking part in the city festivals, it is enriching to learn how other countries organise these festivals and how modernity and history come together in these places. In addition to the beautiful German festivals and museums, travelling to these places was accompanied by an efficient German road and rail network that allowed us to explore the

country's diverse landscapes. I remember travelling home on my tandem and seeing the beautiful countryside and charming villages.

Whether it was the beauty of the landscape outside our train windows or the freedom of the open road, my experience of German road traffic enriched our adventure. Thanks to my tandem partner Kay, I also learnt about a new sport: Jucker. I joined the city's jucker team, the Golden Riders, in one of their evening games.

As far as I know, German is one of the most difficult languages in the world to learn. Coming from Kenya and already speaking three languages, I was very excited to learn a word or two in German. I had been preparing for months before my trip. But the few words I had learnt (Hallo, Danke Schon, Tschüss, Ich bin Glorious, Guten Morgen, Guten Tag etc.) were not enough for me to fully get my bearings. I remember the last few days in the supermarket when I couldn't communicate with the supermarket employee because of the language barrier. I keep all these beautiful memories that remind me of the beautiful multicultural world we live in. This trip was more than just a language experience; it was a moving experience that taught me the art of patience and the beauty of communication.

Our time in Germany and Kenya was an experience of sharing our different cultural beliefs, practices and different experiences. When I reflect on my cultural experiences in Germany, I think of the main enjoyable experiences including the vibrant cities, German food, transport system, waste disposal, time management, trams and the language barrier.





Written by  
Lamech Opiyo

During the exchange programme in Kenya and Germany, I gained a wide range of intercultural experiences. The cultural diversity in Kenya, characterised by different tribes with unique languages and traditions, contrasted with Germany, where a uniform culture prevails. Communication styles and social interactions showed clear differences: In Kenya, there was a warm, communal atmosphere, while Germany was characterised by more reserved forms of communication.

Dealing with time was particularly formative. Punctuality and keeping to time are of great importance in Germany, whereas in Kenya there is a more flexible approach to time. Another noticeable difference concerned eating habits: In Kenya, maize, vegetables and potatoes characterise the staple foods, whereas in Germany bread and sausage dominate. The fact that Germans favour cold dishes was an unusual cultural nuance for me. In Kenya, on the other hand, offering cold food would have been considered disrespectful.

These experiences taught me that mutual respect and openness are crucial to overcoming intercultural challenges. The different elements of both cultures have woven themselves into a rich tapestry of shared experiences, which has broadened my perspective. I appreciate the unique opportunity to have participated in this exchange programme and am grateful for the diverse insights.







Written by  
Sharlyne Anyango

The comparison between Kenya and Germany in terms of culture reveals some interesting differences:

1. Time management: Germany has changed my attitude towards punctuality, because in Kenya I am a punctuality fanatic, but not as much as the Germans. Understanding these differences is crucial for effective communication and cooperation.
2. Animals and pets: Cultural attitudes towards animals and pets can be very different. In German cultures, pets are like family members, whereas in Kenya they may not be kept or valued as pets as much.
3. Food: In Kenya, our staple food is maize, which is ground into flour to make a solid porridge called „ugali“. In Germany, we mainly eat bread and we had to get used to the new diet.
4. Language: Language is a fundamental element of culture. Understanding and communicating in different languages can be both challenging and enriching. As for the German language, although I understood a few words, people tended to speak quite fast. Sometimes this was a bit of an obstacle to effective communication.
5. Infrastructure: Differences in infrastructure can have an impact on daily life and the general quality of life. Compared to Kenya, Germany has a great technological advantage, especially in terms of transport infrastructure. Cycling is therefore widespread. In Kenya, cycling is quite a challenge and is sometimes used as an option by the low-income population groups.
6. The dynamics of people: Cultural differences influence social interactions, hierarchies and norms in relationships.

These intercultural experiences are valuable for my personal growth and can also be important for effective cross-cultural cooperation and communication. I am grateful that I was able to have this experience. This programme has opened my eyes and changed my way of thinking.





# Dealing with challenges



 Written by  
Bryan Chesoli

Bringing together young people from different backgrounds is a huge responsibility. People have different ways of interacting, which are often determined by the social norms of their respective societies. When two groups come together who do not appreciate the customs of the other group, friction inevitably arises. However, we humans cannot simply unlearn behaviours that have shaped our lives over many years.

To prevent possible misunderstandings, there were preparatory seminars for both groups in which we familiarised ourselves with the common customs in both countries. This sensitisation to what is acceptable, tolerable and undesirable created a framework that was beneficial for all participants.

However, difficulties happen and offer the opportunity to learn and adapt. Here are some lessons I learnt from the planning process.

## Intercultural learning and adaptability

Despite these preparations, difficulties arose that were seen as learning opportunities. Intercultural learning and adaptability took cen-

tre stage. Tensions, which are inevitable in a space with different cultural backgrounds, were not seen as negative but as catalytic for growth. We experienced situations where tensions led to divisions, but also to deeper bonds once these obstacles were overcome – the introduction of a dialogue circle led by impartial mediators is an excellent approach. This emphasises the need for a neutral party, a mediator, who can guide and resolve challenges during the exchange. This person plays a crucial role in creating safe spaces for reflection and open dialogue.

## Learning speed

In the context of intercultural exchange, the concept of pace of learning should be considered. This could include a flexible adaptation of the programme schedule to give participants time to process and internalise new cultural knowledge. It is important to find a balance between structured activities and opportunities for self-reflection and informal interaction. In some cases, the content delivered in one day was too difficult for participants to process. A good approach to solving this problem could be to take into account the different learning styles of the participants and allow more time for personal

socialising and learning.

## Appreciation of diversity

Consider the importance of valuing diversity as a fundamental goal of the exchange programme. Encourage participants to actively seek to understand and respect each other's perspectives, traditions and values.

Highlight specific activities or strategies used during the programme to promote the appreciation of diversity. These may include structured discussions, cultural exchanges or joint projects that promote mutual understanding.

In summary, continuous learning, adaptability and a proactive approach to cultural tensions contribute significantly to the success of intercultural exchange programmes such as Vijana na Afya. These insights can be valuable for the future planning and improvement of similar initiatives.



 Written by  
Anne Ahmadi

## Working together

It can be challenging to work with someone you haven't known very long and well and with whom you have never worked before. Then there are differences in age, language, work culture and profession. In my experience, it's important to allow yourself to be unfamiliar and overwhelmed and to question yourself: why do I feel this way, what does this do to me, what is it actually about? On the one hand, unfamiliar ways of working trigger thought and emotional processes that are important and that you should initially accept for yourself. On the other hand, it is important to distance yourself from your ideas about how things should work in your (mental) world. It can be internally stressful if, for example, a project is not planned down to the last detail or preparations are made at short notice. However, I have noticed that flexibility also creates more space for the topics and perspectives of the target group as well as for creativity. If everything is planned, a lot of content can be taught in a short time, but it also creates time pressure for the lecturers and there is hardly any room for what the learners bring with them and fill a topic with life and practice. If, on the other hand, processes are planned flexibly or left partially open, there is more openness for the target group and human interaction – but you have to embrace the unknown and the unplannable.

I found this experience important, even if it was challenging at times. However, the change of

perspective allowed me to discover other approaches and their advantages. This has given me a broader spectrum of approaches for workshops and projects in the future.

## Hosting

In Kenya, I was a guest at my tandem partner's home for a week and in Germany, I hosted her for a week. One of the challenges was that even the smallest thing was different and unfamiliar: the cooker doesn't work on electricity, but on gas – how do I switch it on? The shower has a heater, but it's not in the bathroom and you have to switch it on before you can take a hot shower – how do I get hot water? And then of course the fact that you're in someone else's flat – where do I find a spoon and where do I put the cup after I've washed it?

All these little things and the realisation that suddenly nothing is the same anymore leads to uncertainty. You have to ask for the most normal things and you feel pretty stupid yourself. Sometimes I didn't ask and behaved passively instead. It's exhausting and tiring for the guest and can lead to withdrawal, increased need for sleep and mood swings. As a host, you should also not underestimate the constant responsibility for the guest's well-being – it can also be very draining and emotionally demanding.

However, it is a valuable experience that both sides should have. You get to know both roles and understand how challenging everyday life in a foreign country can be. You also learn

that there are no stupid questions and that as a guest it is better to offer too many explanations and help than too little. You can quickly overwhelm the guest with everyday things and it can be helpful to let them observe and not get directly involved in everything or to give specific instructions – depending on the guest's needs. You also learn that procedures can be different and longer than in your daily routine. An important learning step is that you communicate your uncertainty and questions and that you can also take a step back and observe at the beginning – but communication is the be-all and end-all!

## Learning together in a foreign country

During the meeting phase in Kenya, I had great difficulty getting involved in the content of the first week of the seminar. For one thing, my English was not at the same academic level as that of the Kenyan participants. Secondly, I didn't know the contexts in which topics were discussed and worked on. As a result, I often felt uncomfortable or even overwhelmed in seminars and workshops.

I learnt from this that it is quite normal not to know the social, political and professional contexts in another country and that you have to work your way into them. Listening and thinking along are important steps here. The fact that the local participants can then contribute more in their own country was a logical conclusion and



I learnt to reflect on my expectations and place them in the context.

Secondly, it made me realise how much I had overestimated myself and my knowledge and how Eurocentric my way of thinking was. I believed that I could go to another country and apply my knowledge there one-on-one. I had also disregarded professional discourse outside the Global North and thus underestimated other perspectives and other knowledge.

This experience brought me back down to earth and I learnt from it that when travelling to other countries for seminars, you always have to adopt a learning attitude first, in which the locals are the ones who know, from whom and with whom I can learn. Of course, learning together also means contributing your own experiences and knowledge. However, I now realise that these are very much related to my lifeworld and other contexts and are not universally valid, and I have opened my eyes to the knowledge of others.

## Group dynamics

During my studies, I once heard the sentence: „The more people there are in a team, the more potential for conflict there is“. As you can imagine, with sixteen people spending several weeks very closely and intensively together, conflicts and various group dynamics are inevitable. Topics included different needs for learning content and free time, different individual reflection and communication skills, different expectations of the project, the organisers and tandem

partners as well as the entanglement of private problems with the project.

I have learnt from this that I always need time to reflect, which I also need to take for myself to sort myself and my thoughts, emotions and needs. This is necessary to be able to communicate what I need to feel good. If I'm not feeling well, it can have a big impact on the whole group and negatively affect the mood and the flow of work. It is also important to practise restraint when speaking if you are having a bad day or are upset inside or to communicate a temporary withdrawal.

It is also important to keep an eye on others and do your bit to ensure that everyone feels as comfortable and seen as possible. I have realised that everyone has an influence and therefore also a responsibility for the group as a whole and must contribute to the development of healthy group dynamics. You can't fulfil this responsibility to the same extent for everyone every day, but you should always be aware of it.





Written by  
Marlene Gräf

## Self-care

During the very intensive meeting phases, I was very burnt out and lacking in energy towards the end.

The many impressions, adapting to new and unfamiliar circumstances, the intensive time and the dialogue in the group were all very valuable and exciting, but also exhausting. I learnt from this that it is necessary to respond to and respect the boundaries and needs of the participants. Above all, I need to take care of my own needs and those of others. After all, a project like this can only work well if the participants are also doing well. So there should be at least two or three empty rest days, free of a programme, during such a three-week encounter phase.

## Communication

My tandem partner and I had very different mechanisms for dealing with conflicts and also different ways of communicating. For me, it was always very important that my counterpart was able to describe their emotions to me if they affected the interpersonal relationship. But that didn't work for us in Kenya or Germany. I was very frustrated by this and felt very uncomfortable at times, as I couldn't judge what was going on in my tandem. Looking back, I think we all communicate very differently and it's important to find a common denominator so that both sides get along well. However, the fact that we are best friends and open up to



each other and give each other insights into our emotional world doesn't have to be the case. In this case, I have also tried to transfer my conditioning and view of the importance of emotional communication to my partner, which has also led to misunderstandings and discomfort on both sides. I have learnt to endure and accept situations that are not clear and that feelings may not always have to take centre stage.

## Privileges

Sometimes I had the feeling that the German group dominated discussions and decisions. This dominance was not necessarily intentional, but our very clear facial expressions alone, which made no secret of whether we liked something or not, and the „radical honesty“ that we always expressed directly, often meant that the Kenyan side subconsciously wanted to please us. And we as a German group were

not yet so sensitive to the fact that the Kenyans sometimes say that it's okay, but don't mean it at all or only say it because they want to be good hosts and are less likely to show clear boundaries and displeasure due to their cultural background. In addition, it was always clear that the

intentions to take part in this project were very different on both sides. For most of the German participants, it was a good opportunity to broaden their horizons and develop personally. For most of the Kenyan participants, it was a good opportunity to network internationally, improve their job opportunities and „prove themselves“. With these two different focal points in mind, it was of course also easier for me as a German person who was not „dependent“ on the project to criticise things or contribute to a discussion. Through the time spent together, I have become more sensitive to such points and try to think more and more about who is sitting in the room with me and what different starting positions and perspectives are automatically present. I have become much more aware of my privilege of being able to raise my voice because I don't have to be afraid of „losing“ something and I want to be careful about when and how I use it.



# Brief glimpses



Wow! The programme has brought back wonderful memories. The programme has brought me into contact with wonderful souls and amazing people. I take away a heart full of gratitude because it showed me the side of humanity and unity that exists in the world despite the many differences in culture and background. I remember the end of our exchange in Germany where everyone was so compassionate and supportive when I had some challenges and even lost money, haha! The team stood up for me and that reminds me of the reason why we are in the world. We are here to live, love and support others. I carry with me a heart full of gratitude, joy and appreciation for the love I have experienced here.



I had the opportunity to gain international experience, especially in terms of cultures, life-styles, diversity and lifestyle.



The memories we made during this youth exchange programme will last forever.



The joint activities with other tandems during the Kenyan encounter phase, such as our excursion to the large Karura forest with a picnic at the beautiful waterfall, were great and enriching and made me look forward to getting up every day.



Good memories, lots of laughs and great connections were made.



Our dance sessions together, led by our dancing queen Sharlyne, led to hundreds of smiles for me



When the energy in the group was low, especially when some participants were not feeling well physically and mentally.



I had a big exuberant smile on my face when we had all mastered the specialist event and got it over with.



The programme was not without its ups and downs. The memories of the experiences in Germany during the week of observation also pop up in my head when I think about the trip. It is the shortcomings in the planning and preparation of the tandem project that led to disagreements. But the challenges that had to be overcome were no greater than the smiles they also brought. In every experience, some difficulties make us stronger and help us to become courageous for all other experiences. Adios friends!



The little delicate bright blue butterfly finch that hopped across the terrace into the neighbouring corn bed in the morning made my heart leap and brought me much joy.



There were a few moments during the tandem week that challenged me beyond measure and made me feel lonely and powerless.



The programme has opened up opportunities and networks for me that I am very proud of. I am proud of the things I have achieved through the programme, including a Master's scholarship. This is one of the highlights of the programme that has made a huge impact on my life professionally and personally. The internship I received by mentioning that I was part of this exemplary team is another notable achievement. I am proud of the person I have grown into, I am proud of the heights I have scaled, and finally, I am proud of the life that has been created through the Vijana Na Afya Exchange Programme.



Friendships, tandem projects, brainstorming, living together with my tandem partner, trying out methods, workshops, saying goodbye, looking back on events that didn't go well



To meet the staff of arche noVa in Dresden and find out more about their work.



There were tears when we had to say goodbye for an indefinite period. I very much hope that I will meet my new friends again.



The many games we played during our workshops in Kenya and Germany made us so happy. I particularly liked Selina's train game.



The tears I had represented the joy I felt at being able to express myself in a group for the first time. Although there were some challenges, I had a positive attitude that kept me going.



Vijana na Afya was undoubtedly the most laughter-fuelled trip I have ever taken. The dance sessions and the new and exciting impressions kept me in fits of laughter until I had a stomach ache. These moments of joy and pure happiness created an unforgettable bond between me and the team and made this programme an extraordinary and exhilarating adventure for me.



Racist encounters during our time in Germany.



For me, Kenya is now a country that I was able to marvel at the beauty of as a tourist and get to know as a place in this big world. I have gained deeper insights into everyday life, the diversity of the country, and local organisations and families. I was able to work, learn and live with Kenyans and I am very grateful for that!



I will never forget the dance sessions after our workshops. They helped to recharge after a long day of sitting, and they were such a joyful opportunity to connect without words.



When all the Kenyan participants received their visas after a seemingly impossible task. We had all made it and were looking forward to travelling to Germany.



Tears flowed literally and inwardly through the many human encounters and stories that I was able to experience, that moved me and took me with them.





I sometimes felt helpless when it came to racism. The Kenyan participants had various negative experiences in public in Germany (negative looks, being stared at, whispering to audible statements, turning up their noses, etc.). As a German team, we prepared ourselves for various scenarios in the interim seminar and this also helped, as I became more aware of my responsibility to assess situations in advance, safeguard myself and rule them out if necessary. I also realised once again that our guests are not here to fight basic social battles with them, but that they should feel comfortable and have a good time and that I should therefore first stand next to them, distract them or change places instead of going into confrontation. Nevertheless, these microaggressions hurt and unsettled the Kenyan participants and disturbed their sense of well-being, welcome and (human) being. Some did not feel comfortable in public and did not want to go out. Others felt for the first time that they were black, different and viewed negatively because of their skin colour and their self-esteem and basic sense of security were shaken. This also hurt me and I was shocked by the impact this has on mental and psychological health, such as withdrawal, self-doubt, sadness, but also headaches, tiredness and a racing heart. It was important here to give people the space to talk about it, not to relativise it and simply to listen and be there.



Saying goodbye was hard!



When the Kenyan participants met for the first time: We were all so excited to take part in the programme.



The visit to the national park's breeding centre, where a lion is still a cat – sleepy, playful and sometimes clumsy – was great fun.



Saying goodbye, looking back on events that didn't go well



I was so proud of Danson when I saw him cycling so confidently and with a full plan in Dresden. Especially considering how haphazard it was in Nairobi.



I found a new friend in my tandem partner and got to know her intensely and profoundly. We travelled together, learned together, lived together, ate together, tried new things and showed each other our everyday lives. It is rare to meet a person and develop such an intimate relationship so quickly. We had lots of good conversations about God and the world, but we also had a lot of fun together. Many „smiles“ go to her account!



When Johanna visited us in Schmieberg and brought her new baby with her to meet the team.



„When I arrived in Germany, I realised that I was black“. My tandem partner repeated this sentence throughout the exchange phase in Germany to describe the discomfort he felt when he was exposed to the white gaze.


# Results





# Food for thought and topics for discussion



 Written by  
Selina Rausch

## Mental health

Mental health has a similar stigma in both communities, but there is a shift. Depending on which community you're in, the stigma is more or less present. I think that through social media, knowledge is more accessible. Social media can be used in different ways. For example, I only learnt that I might have ADHD or ADD through social media. That's from the videos I've seen on Instagram. However, the added value of these posts very much depends on how the individual uses Instagram. It can also go to extremes if the user thinks they have something and overreacts or takes information from social media, from 'experts' as truth and potentially harms themselves or others. I think there is great potential for both favourable and unfavourable use.

We as project participants of Vijana na afya talked about mental health, but in the project in the slum of Kibera, which I carried out with my tandem partner, many also found it difficult to talk about it. Many had a stigma around mental health issues, but others were also interested in mental health issues or how much mental health affects life in general. But some didn't have a phone. I didn't expect this, as internet

and phone costs are relatively cheap in Kenya and everything is done via smartphone (payment, communication, etc.). I had also not yet discovered any Kenyan literature on this topic. It can be a big hurdle for people who are interested to not have access to the relevant resources. Yet the internet offers so many opportunities if you are aware of them.





Written by  
Bryan Chesoli

## ESD in a global context

In the field of global learning, education for sustainable development (ESD) has long been an integral teaching and learning framework. In Africa, however, ESD is still a foreign development concept. As a result, the value of ESD has not yet been recognised by many.

In my opinion, the following two factors have a major influence on the acceptance of new concepts in African society.

Firstly, there is no general understanding of what Education for Sustainable Development is. As part of the Vijana na Afya project, I held a discussion with various stakeholders about the general understanding of ESD. It became clear that each stakeholder has their interpretation of ESD. Their perspectives overlapped, but could not be brought together to form a common definition.

Secondly, the nexus of ESD seems to be the West. As a result, many people from Africa who have extensive training or knowledge in the field are not interested in contributing to the effort because they believe it lacks local nuance. This contributes to a low level of acceptance of the approach or interest in learning it.

From November 2022 to December 2023, Vijana na Afya brought together young ESD and One Health champions from Kenya and Germany to learn and network. As one of the selected participants, I reflected on the transformative

journey that evolved throughout this exchange.

The first thing that stands out is the enthusiasm with which several learning experiences were created that went beyond conventional workshops, such as the workshops in Germany with an integrated gamification approach. A workshop session started with an introduction to the topic (theory) and then led to outdoor team activities where teams were encouraged to reflect on the topic and share and present their perspectives. This energy encouraged relationship building and the sharing of experiences.

The second important point is the richness of multicultural interactions. The fact that young people with different backgrounds and life experiences came together in one place made for an enriching learning experience. The diversity made the encounters lively, as the young people in the group reflected on their backgrounds and brought this into the discussions.

The choice of presenters was not arbitrary either. They delivered their talks with a charismatic passion that set the tone for meaningful engagement. However, I made an interesting observation. In Kenya, the presenters borrowed heavily from the Kenyan context and in Germany, the German presenters borrowed heavily from their context. This is a standard approach. However, due to the mixed composition of the audience, there were instances where the Kenyans could not relate to the content and vice versa where the German presenters borrowed heavily from their context.

In terms of the teaching and learning approach, the facilitators took care to deliver the content in a blended way. They did not stick to a theoretical approach, which often involved sharing best practices and literature-based texts, but also integrated participatory learning. The gamification involved was a good addition to our collective knowledge and created a pool of ideas that transcended national borders.

The content of the workshops during the Kenyan part of the exchange played a crucial role in developing our understanding of ESD. The sessions were designed to cover a wide range of topics and give us a comprehensive overview of the principles of sustainable development. From delving deeper into the topic of Education for Sustainable Development to exploring the One Health concept, each session aimed to equip us with the knowledge and skills we need to effectively advocate for sustainable practices in our respective communities.

The holistic nature of the workshop content ensured that we gained not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills. We were guided through the process of developing effective campaigns, an essential aspect of turning theoretical concepts into actionable initiatives. This practical approach enabled us to see ourselves as agents of change capable of driving sustainable development in our communities.

In addition, the exchange project offered a unique mix of formal and informal learning experiences. Cultural activities were as much a part of the programme as structured workshops.





From language exchanges to community visits, each activity was designed to deepen understanding of each other's cultures and foster genuine connections. These informal interactions were instrumental in breaking down stereotypes and building bridges of empathy between the Kenyan and German participants.

Beyond the exchange of ideas, the project became a platform for building lasting relationships. The connections forged during the exchange went beyond the planned timeframe and developed into joint initiatives across geographical boundaries. The global network that emerged from this exchange has become a source of constant support and inspiration as we continue our journeys as advocates of sustainable development.

The impact of this exchange project can be felt in both the personal and collective growth of the participants. As individuals, we have become ambassadors for ESD and are actively contributing to the integration of sustainable practices in our communities. The lessons we have learnt from our German counterparts and the

experiences we have shared have given us a sense of responsibility and a new perspective on the interdependence of global challenges.

Looking back, this exchange project is proof of the transformative power of intercultural interaction and education. It has highlighted the importance of embracing diversity in the pursuit of sustainable development goals. The exchange catalyzed change and inspired a cohort of young leaders who now have the knowledge, skills and networks to drive positive change in their communities.

We say goodbye to a year in which we have learnt and grown a lot. The echoes of this exchange reverberate in our endeavours and remind us that the journey towards sustainability is a shared journey. The exchange project has planted the seeds for a more sustainable and connected future, where the lessons learnt and relationships forged serve as pillars for a world that prioritises education, diversity and sustainable development.





Written by  
Maria Nelz

## ESD, health, sustainability goals

A year of intensive exchange with my Kenyan and German colleagues is coming to an end and I remember my first thought as if it were yesterday: a healthy society needs more than prosperity and a functioning infrastructure.

Inspired by this, I designed ESD project days around the topic of health and tried them out with several pilot groups. Although the feedback was good, I left the workshops feeling increasingly dissatisfied – I realised that I was missing something...

But that took a back seat for the time being because my highlight of the project was just around the corner: the physical exchange in Germany. 3 weeks in which we became participants in ESD workshops. As different as they were, they all had one thing in common: the creation of posters on which we were supposed to creatively note „what we could do“. The persistence in the subjunctive and the one-dimensionality of the individual level between consumption and renunciation triggered dissatisfaction in me – something was missing...

When I wasn't dancing or playing table tennis to shake off my dissatisfaction, I listened attentively to my colleagues talking about their ESD projects. On the Kenyan side, there was a great



deal of practical work, from planting trees to mentoring innovative companies that are orientated towards the common good. I was very impressed by this and my thoughts slowly began to come together: ESD practice as I knew it up to that point was too abstract and too theoretical for me!

So the Kenyan colleagues left again, a few months went by, and I caught up on everything that had been left behind during the exchange and before I knew it, the final seminar began. I looked back on the year and the most important realization came clear before my eyes:

To achieve the SDG goals, ESD must be contextualized! We need projects that promote skills beyond competencies. So design competence becomes participation and thought becomes action!

No sooner said than done... what does that mean for me in my professional practice? I have lots of new ideas and try to implement them in the context of our funding and day-to-day administration. For example, I would like to link ESD with career counselling and inform young, committed people about professions in which they can make a difference as agents of change.



# Project reports of the tandems

Each German-Kenyan tandem implemented a small ESD project during the communication week in both Kenya and Germany. The following is a selection of the project reports.



Written by  
Glorious Jesang

## Raising awareness of forest fires through theatre play

*Project by Glorious and Kay in Dresden*

### Introduction

Wildfires are devastating natural disasters that can cause significant damage to our environment, our communities and our lives. To raise public awareness of the dangers of wild-fires and promote safe practices to prevent them, our project included the creation and performance of a theatre piece. Through the use of the arts, we aimed to engage and educate our audience in an accessible and engaging way.

### Project data and location

The play was rehearsed from 19 to 25 August and premiered on 26 August 2023. The play was performed and premiered in the theatre rooms of the Technical University of Dresden.

### Aim of the project

The main aim of our project was to raise awareness of the risks and consequences of forest fires engagingly and understandably. We wanted to inform the public about the causes of forest fires, their impact on the environment, and the importance of fire prevention measures. We wanted to convey these messages interactively and memorably and encourage our audience to take preventative measures and promote responsible behaviour.

### Tandem

The project was realized by us, Kay Zeisig and Glorious Jesang, as a team. The problem of forest fires was very close to both of our hearts and we believed in the power of art to convey important messages effectively.

### Details of the project

The centrepiece of our project was the creation and performance of a play. The play contained a narrative centred around the experiences of a community affected by a forest fire. It showed the emotional and physical toll that forest fires take on people and their environment while emphasizing the importance of prevention and safety measures. The play was carefully written

to ensure the message was clear and effective.

### 5 actors on stage

The play was brought to life by five talented actors who portrayed the different characters in the story. Each character represented a different perspective on the wildfires, from firefighters to community members affected by the disaster. Thanks to this diverse cast, the audience was able to identify with the characters and their experiences.

### Involvement of the audience

The play was performed in front of an audience of over 45 people in the theatre of the Technical University of Dresden. After the performance, there was a Q&A session where the audience had the opportunity to ask questions and share their thoughts. This interaction allowed for a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding wildfires and encouraged the audience to reflect on their role in preventing wildfires.

### Quiz session

As part of the interaction with the audience, we also ran a quiz session. In this part, the audience could prove their knowledge about forest fires through a question and answer session.



In an entertaining and informative way, the audience could test their knowledge and learn more about fire safety measures and the prevention of forest fires.

### The challenges

Our project to draw attention to the forest fires with a theatre play was successful, but not without its challenges. One of the biggest challenges

was the extremely tight time frame, as we only had one week to write the play and premiere it on the sixth day. This time constraint presented several difficulties:

### Limited time for script development

As we only had a week to write the play, there was little time for thorough research, script writing and revision. Due to this tight schedule,

it was a challenge to ensure that the play communicated the message effectively while maintaining a high level of storytelling and character development.

- Preparing the actors: Der enge Zeitplan wirkte sich

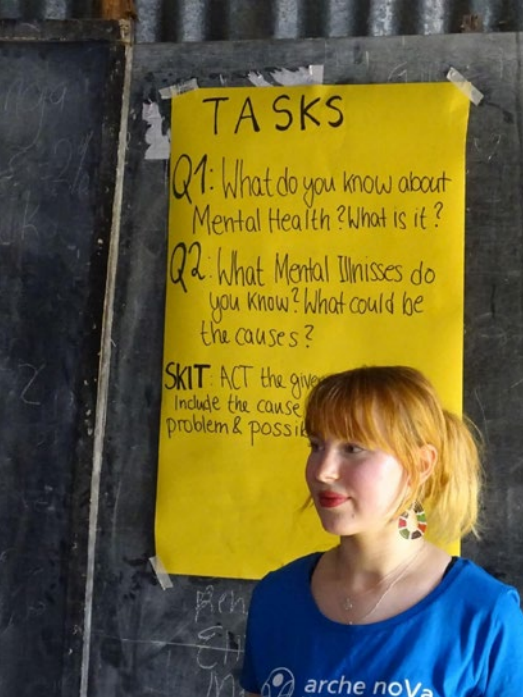
auch auf die Vorbereitung der Schauspielenden aus. Sie mussten schnell ihren Text lernen, ihre Figuren verstehen und die nötige emotionale Tiefe entwickeln, um die Rollen effektiv darzustellen. Es war herausfordernd für die Schauspieler:innen sich voll und ganz in ihre Figuren und die Geschichte hineinzusetzen.

- Rehearsal time: Rehearsals are important to refine the performance and solve any problems that may arise during the play. With only a few days available for rehearsals, it was a challenge to ensure that the actors were fully prepared and that the play ran smoothly.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, we hope that our efforts will contribute to a safer and more responsible approach to fires. We aspire to a world where the risks and consequences associated with wildfires are significantly reduced and communities around the world are better prepared and protected. The challenges we faced, especially the time pressure, were indeed considerable, but they only strengthened our resolve. They reminded us of the importance of effective project planning and the need for adaptability in the world of theatre and public awareness initiatives.





## Ufahamu wa afya ya akili - Awareness for mental health

*Project by Sharlyne and Selma in Nairobi*

- Target groups: 40 young people (16-18 years old)
- Main objectives of the project:
  1. Questioning the state of knowledge about mental health
  2. Raising awareness of the importance of mental health
- Where: Njiru-Future World – Secondary School, Nairobi

- When: Workshop on mental health on 1 March, Wednesday, 15:30-17:30
- Interview with psychologist Duncan Pius on mental health education in preparation for the workshop, on 28 February
- Reflection meeting with the headmaster and the headmaster on 1 March, Wednesday, 17:45-18:30

### Description

The idea of organising a workshop on mental health came to us early on in the project phase. As the topic is very complex, we focussed on raising awareness and challenging the students' existing knowledge.

We drew up our schedule at the end of the first week of the exchange phase and revised it from time to time. After interviewing psychologist Duncan Pius, we put the finishing touches to

the project plan. Fortunately, he gave us a lot of good advice.

### Programme of the workshop

Firstly, we gave the students questions to think about: „Have you ever been heartbroken? Have you ever felt hopeless after an argument? Are there days when you don't want to talk to anyone?“

We then supplemented what we had shared with facts: „According to the Kenyan government, it is estimated that one in ten people suffers from a common mental disorder.“

### „What are we going to do today?“

It was important for us to emphasize that we were not there to give a talk, but to initiate conversations and discussions about mental health. It was also important to talk about confidentiality so that we could create a safe space for participants to feel comfortable sharing their experiences. Finally, one of the most important points was to make it clear that we are by no means professionals, but people who care about mental health.

Then we briefly introduced ourselves to the class.

### Energizer

We started with a fun energizer to make sure the students weren't tired and could focus on the topic.

### Grouping

We divided the participants into five groups of 8 students each. Each group chose a group leader

who presented their content to the class. We asked them two questions to think through in their groups. „What do you know about mental health?“ and „What mental illnesses do you know?“. After each question, the groups presented their answers and discussed them. We then provided additional information on the two questions using posters that we had prepared.

### Sketch

We gave six volunteer participants a draft of a sketch to perform. There were six characters: two ‚bullies‘, a victim, a teacher who didn't care, the victim's mum who didn't think it was so bad, and a friend who listened and gave advice. The pupils blossomed while working on the task and gave great feedback.

### Exchange

We then discussed the following questions with the whole class: „How would you deal with people around you who might have mental health problems?“ and „Do you know any solutions for what you can do if you are struggling with mental health problems?“

### Conclusion

Finally, we talked about the Kenyan Red Cross and its free hotline for mental health problems. We gave all the students a personalized diary in which they could write down their feelings. It also contained the number of the Red Cross hotline.

## Links to health, sustainability, and youth work

Raising awareness of mental health, especially at a young age, is important because mental illnesses such as depression increase the risk of many types of physical health problems. Mental illness can affect our daily lives.

Mental health and well-being are linked to all challenges such as poverty, inequality, labour, education, and access to green spaces. For this reason, progress must be made on mental health and all SDGs must be included. A sustainable life and environment makes us aware of what influences people's emotions

Mental health awareness is an important part

of everyone's well-being, from children to adolescents and adults. Mental health affects adolescents more as they are exposed to different types of emotions. Due to physical, emotional, and social changes, adolescents can become vulnerable to mental health problems. We felt it was necessary to challenge 16-18-year-old students' awareness of mental health so that we can educate them on the importance of knowing about mental health to break down stereotypes, stigma, and bias associated with mental illness.

We wanted to create a safe space for the participants and make them aware of the negative consequences of not taking care of their mental health.



## Personal conclusion

**Selma:** I was worried and a bit anxious in the days leading up to the workshop. But that made us prepare everything down to the last detail, which was good preparation in the end. Looking back, I never had to worry. Sharlyne and I weren't sure if it was right to tell the teenagers about our journey with mental health issues. But it made them trust us and open up to us even more. I am very grateful for that. The students also got in touch with us after the workshop and gave us great feedback. And finally, I realized that a creative, playful, and active part was crucial for the workshop to work. The students were very engaged and cheerful during the performance of the sketch. I had the feeling that they also had a lot more energy afterwards and were even more interested in the topic.

**Sharlyne:** First of all, this workshop was something I've never done before, even though I've had a desire to make a difference in my community for a long time. When you take the chance to organise a workshop specifically on mental health, it takes a lot of courage and knowledge before you can share information. I am glad that everything went smoothly from planning to execution, even though there were some time challenges that we were able to overcome. The students were very cooperative and we made them feel comfortable. Finally, I have seen some changes in my life as I now dare to express myself and my ideas to contribute to my community.



## Mental health – What does waste management have to do with mental health?

### *Georgina and Selina's project in Nairobi*

- Target group: Youth (18-23 years)
- 20-30 persons
- For the organisation „Slums Going Green“ in Kibera
- Short workshop
- Duration: 1h

### **Why did we organise the workshop on „Slums going green“?**

Georgina works as a project assistant at the Centre for Environment Justice and Development. There she is dedicated to the zero plastic issue and is particularly committed to the formalisation and inclusion of informal waste pickers in waste management systems. As part of her work, she collaborates with a youth group in Kibera known as „Slums Going Green“.

In line with the Vijana na Afya theme, we saw a great opportunity to contribute by raising awareness of issues close to both our hearts – waste management and mental health.

On the Tuesday before the workshop, we visited the „Slums going green“ group. Thanks to this meeting, we learned a little more about the challenges faced by waste pickers.

### **What was our aim with the workshop?**

The main aim of the workshop was to raise awareness of mental health, particularly among young people working in waste management.

Three further targets were set:

1. We hope to encourage young people to act as multipliers and/or raise awareness of mental health, particularly in the waste management sector.
2. Giving participants an open space to talk about mental health – being open-minded about the outcome.
3. Since the workshop was the first impetus from us, we gave the participants a short list of online resources that they could access by phone if needed. We hope that some of them will expand their knowledge, inform themselves, seek help and/or help someone else if they want or need to.

### **Schedule of the workshop and thoughts that contributed to it**

(shortened workshop due to time management)

- Presentation of the exchange project „Vijana na Afya“ and ourselves
- Quick trigger warning for everyone, because of the topic of our workshop and the content we are discussing.



- Input and exercises on mental health to create a foundation of knowledge for the participants and us.
- Individual reflection and processing activities with pen and paper to brainstorm on (1) „What does waste management have to do with mental health for you?“ and (2) „Feelings about mental health“.
- The participants can express their thoughts while we moderate. Sometimes Georgina spoke in Swahili so that the participants could use their everyday language and feel more confident (English is taught in school, but in the slums, Swahili and Sheng (officially recognised youth language) are mainly used).

We thanked everyone for coming, handed out flyers with more mental health resources and socialised with attendees.

### **How did the workshop go?**

From our point of view, the workshop went very well. Beforehand, we were unsure how the participants would take to the workshop and the input. Whether they would get involved or not, whether they would be tired or not (it was the last workshop of the day) and whether the group of young people would be interested in the topic or not. We didn't know much about the participants other than their age, the size of the group and their field of work. So we prepared ourselves as best we could and voiced our thoughts, uncertainties and concerns. Our goal throughout the preparation process was to make the workshop as suitable as possible for the target group.

Our biggest concern was that the participants would not interact with us. Another was that our

topic was far removed from their concerns/interests.

The group needed some time to warm up, but we received very interesting contributions. The contributions were very creative and perhaps did not correspond directly to what we had imagined at the beginning. Only a few wanted to share something personal. As the topic is very stigmatised, we expected this. By letting the participants write something first – if they wanted to – we tried to initiate an individual thought process without putting pressure on the individual to express their thoughts. Some gave us their written thoughts. We were amazed by the input the young people gave us and by the workshop as a whole. We were welcomed with open arms and overall had a great time with the group.

### What would we do differently?

Plan the workshop well in advance and possibly organise two or more sessions. Set up follow-up functions for young people.

It would be helpful if a professional came along every time or at least once.

### What else have we discovered?

After some time, the young people were more engaged and spoke more openly about their perceptions and perceptions of mental health in their community.

We think the creative thinking worked well (a short writing session where they were asked to write down what mental health means to them and what mental health and waste ma-

nagement mean to them, with the opportunity to share).

We had the feeling that they could relate to what we were saying and most of them were able to follow us, even if they seemed very tired at first.

One young woman said that for her or the community, mental health is *kuchizi* (going crazy). This showed us that there is still a long way to go and that the perception of mental health can be very dangerous.

Some were very interested in the topic and took part in the discussions.

As tools/knowledge are not so easily accessible in everyday life in informal communities, it is all the more important to talk and educate about mental health.

We have to keep raising the issue of mental health because their life situation is so much

different to ours. Sometimes, for example, it's good to go for a walk or take a cold shower, but that may not be possible at all or only with difficulty.





## The healing effect of nature

*Project by Faith and Selma at the Freie Alternative Schule Dresden 23.08.2023 from 15:00 to 17:00*



### Introduction

Nature has a profound influence on our health and well-being. It can provide us with natural remedies, nourishment, relaxation and inspiration. However, in the modern world, many people are disconnected from nature and its benefits. This project

aimed to reconnect young people from Germany with nature and its healing properties by sharing recipes, practices and experiences related to natural health.

### Objectives

The aims of this project are:

- Promoting intercultural exchange and learning between Kenyan and German students on the topic of natural health.
- Raising awareness and appreciation of the diversity and value of nature and its resources for human health.
- Encourage creativity, curiosity and collaboration among students through hands-on activities and games related to natural health.
- Improve students' skills and knowledge about the use of natural remedies for common ailments such as menstruation, flu and mosquito bites.
- Students should be empowered to do something for the health of the planet through a sustainable and healthy lifestyle.

### Activities

The project involved 10 pupils from the Freie Alternative Schule Dresden, who were divided into three tables according to their interests and preferences to answer three questions about the benefits and connections of nature for our health. The groups discussed and docu-

mented their results on a sheet of paper. Each group spent 15 minutes on a different question about natural health before moving to another table.

Activity 1: Introduction and getting to know each other. The participants shared their personal stories and hobbies. They also talked about their expectations and goals for the project.

Activity 2: Natural remedies. As project leaders, we shared recipes and tips for using herbs, spices, fruit, vegetables and other natural ingredients to relieve menstrual pain and cramps.

Natural remedies for the flu. We also shared recipes and methods on how to make teas and other natural remedies for the flu. And finally, we shared recipes on how to use natural substances to soothe mosquito bites.

As well as exchanging recipes and information, we also carried out practical activities in the school kitchen. We had bought some food which we prepared. All participants danced, played games and discussed cultural issues related to natural health. We documented these activities with photos, videos and flipcharts.

### Results

The project was a success in terms of achieving its objectives. The students reported that they:

- had fun learning from each other and discovering new aspects of their cultures.
- have acquired new skills and knowledge about the use of natural remedies for common complaints
- felt more connected to nature and its healing power

- have developed a sense of responsibility and concern for the health of the planet
- Making new friends across borders

The project also produced tangible results, such as:

- A collection of recipes for natural remedies that the pupils have compiled in a booklet.
- A picture gallery presenting the highlights of the project.
- A flipchart documenting the progress and considerations of the project.

## Conclusion

The healing power of nature is a valuable resource that can promote our health and well-being. By sharing recipes, practices and experiences related to natural health with young people from different cultures, we can promote intercultural dialogue, learning and collaboration. We can also inspire them to appreciate the diversity and value of nature and take action for the health of the planet. This project has been a rewarding experience that has shown the potential of tandem learning for promoting natural health among young people.





# Public event

## Professional event Kenya/Nairobi

 07/03/2023  Michuki Park



 Written by  
Kay Zeisig

When we arrived at Michuki Park in Nairobi, we set up benches around our banner. A bench in the centre was set up for those presenting their tandem projects and for our project coordinators Mara and Danson. After a delay due to a technical fault, the event could finally begin. We were able to welcome more than two dozen people, including project partners and interested parties who joined us by chance or were invited. This was followed by an introduction of our project and ourselves, during which our guests were also able to take the floor to introduce themselves and explain why they had come.

The main presentation naturally took place in pairs. The tandem partners presented their projects together, both verbally and visually with a poster that they had created in the days before. We then had the opportunity to discuss with our guests, who were able to form a specific group. We exchanged thoughts, arguments and sometimes even contacts for future projects.

We then ate our lunch under the leaves of a bamboo grove, happy and full of new ideas and thoughts.



 Written by Selma  
Weidensdörfer

The specialist event in Kenya took place after the tandem week. It was there to present the projects we had planned and implemented with our tandems during the tandem week. The event took place outside in a public park in Nairobi.

We all set up together from around 9 am. The event started about 1 hour late because there were technical problems and many registered people arrived much later so that only very few people were present at the planned start. Mara and Danson started by introducing the project and the two organisations (KOE and arche noVa e.V.). There was an opportunity for guests to briefly introduce themselves. The tandems then introduced themselves and described their project in a dialogue, talking about what went well and what could perhaps have gone better, what hurdles they faced and how they overcame them. The tandems also talked about what they had observed during the project, what in-

sights they had gained from the project and what they had learnt themselves. Afterwards, there was the opportunity for an exchange between the guests and us participants about the various projects. This helped us to get to know people who work in similar areas and to network. There was also time for questions and constructive criticism. The exchange was followed by the lunch break, the moderation and the dismantling.

All in all, I thought the public event was very successful despite the delay and minor problems. It gave us participants another opportunity to think about our project in detail and we were able to look at it from a different perspective by asking questions from outsiders.

**Voices of guests: Mr Lewa Omar from KNATCOM UNESCO (The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO)**

„I liked the whole idea of the public event, especially the kind of unique, creative posters that the participants had designed to showcase their projects. The participants came from different fields of work, which was a great way to learn from each other and appreciate the role each profession plays in promoting sustainable change. Thanks to the event, I was able to interact with members of a local youth group



working on environmental protection in one of the informal settlements in Nairobi, with whom I can imagine working together in the future. Such events could take place more often and also involve political decision-makers in the discussion."





## Professional event Germany/ Dresden „International ESD in child and youth work“



30/08/2023



former Outer St Matthew's Cemetery, Dresden



Written by  
Sharlyne Anyango

Preparations for the event began on Tuesday 29 August 2023, with the Vijana Na Afya team travelling to the venue to prepare presentations, set up flipcharts and set up the room.

We had already prepared for the public event in the days leading up to it. My tandem partner Selma and I placed particular emphasis on a visually appealing presentation, as we thought this would benefit the presentation of our project.

The event took place on 30.08.2023, where we arrived early to welcome the registered guests. This was followed by a round of introductions, during which everyone introduced themselves by name and field of activity. An interesting observation for me was how small the sustainability community can be. It was a surprise to meet some of the people I had already interacted with over the past two and a half weeks. The guests were curious about the programme and how it related to our professional fields.

I used to be rather shy in public presentations. However, the specialist event was a turning point for my public speaking. When I took the microphone and started speaking, all my fear of public speaking disappeared. In our presentation, I spoke about my experiences in our tandem project on mental health.



After the presentations by the other tandems, we had time for a social get-together, where I was able to make some new contacts.

**Voices of guests: Mr André Dobrig, Head of Training, Advice & Projects, AGJF Sachsen e.V.**

„The specialist event „ESD international in child and youth work“ on 30.08.2023 organised by arche noVa e. V. revealed various qualities for me and my work. In addition to meeting enthusiastic (young) people who are committed to realising the SDGs and want to inspire others with their work, the presentations of the tandem projects were particularly valuable for me.

The impetus provided, for example, gave rise to the idea of focussing more on natural spaces in our educational work and, above all, communicating the topics to people tangibly and experientially. The resulting learning effect seems to be a hundred times more effective than a sober lecture. In addition, my colleagues and I were able to use the contact with the people present to expand our own ESD network and we may even have succeeded in attracting experts from Kenya, for example, as speakers or participants for our international multi-day symposium in 2024, thus deepening the exchange that has begun. Many thanks to our colleagues from arche noVa e. V. for a very successful event.“





CONTEXTUALIZING ESD

How can we make ESD awareness, practical and the challenge?

Comparison of two projects done during teacher trainee:

- Understanding challenge
- All ages & year learning content
- All regional groups (project) understanding to have actual on environment
- All local young people's capacity to give judgement and critical, but awareness
- All local young people's capacity to give judgement and critical, but awareness
- All local young people's capacity to give judgement and critical, but awareness

Target group: local, national, regional, international

Where:

- All local
- All national
- All regional
- All international

Challenges:

- All local
- All national
- All regional
- All international

Summary:

- All local
- All national
- All regional
- All international

ANNE + MONICA

Gesundheit

THEME: Creating awareness for

Target group:

- unaccompanied minor
- Male (14-17 yrs)
- 8 boys

CONTEXT:

Refugee camp in Dresd

Temporary stay after

4 nationalities - Syria, /

OBJECTIVES:

- creating awareness
- creating happy moments
- creating lasting impressions

METHODOLOGY:

- using existing knowledge
- related to individual experience
- giving space
- non-verbal
- playful

OUTCOME:

- spark
- group

Health



# Résumé



# My impressions in a few words

In the Vijana na afya exchange project, I was able to make contact with new people, whom I got to know in a short space of time through intensive, informative, reflective, emotional and really fun group activities. Thanks to the exchange, I realised that the well-being of nature and the well-being of people are always directly related. I have seen and experienced how precious clean water is for people, animals and plants and the effects of a shortage. I look back on my first major intercultural encounter with a smile.

**Johanna Bauer**

At the workshop on planetary health in Tharandt, I learnt that what is healthy for my body is also healthy for the planet. This sentence has stayed with me and has strengthened my attitude towards a healthy life. Cooperation is the key when it comes to solving global problems. Every nation and every individual has a role to play and we need to champion approaches that aim to improve ourselves and the planet. The global North is leading the degradation of the planet's health and the global South is bearing the consequences. When the going gets tough – Meditate!

**Monica Waigwa**

This exchange was more than just a programme of professional development. It was a journey for me that changed me on so many levels and taught me a lot. The central theme was health and I was able to explore the many facets of health – whether it was thinking about the origin of my food, understanding the links between gender-based violence and (mental) health, learning about planetary health or discussing the opportunities and risks of human and animal coexistence. My awareness has changed as I have begun to better understand global connections. This has been reflected in my consumer behaviour, for example, or in my lifestyle, namely getting out of my comfort zone and, for example, consciously moving more every day – not to fulfil any beauty ideals or as a chore, but playfully and with the experience of how good it does my mood, my ability to concentrate, my body awareness and my sleep. These are not all new things, but I have started to take practical steps, to begin change with myself and to live it. I see this as the first step towards tackling these and other topics in my professional work with young people and discovering spaces for the practical implementation of knowledge. In addition to many professional inputs and new knowledge and experiences, I was able to expand my professional network, especially in Dresden, and make new friends in Germany and Kenya. I am grateful to have found a family in Kenya and a place I want to return to. I have learnt to question my understanding and view of Africa. I became aware of subconscious stereotypes and was able to work through them. I learnt how diverse Kenya is in terms of languages, cultures and ways of life. I was also impressed by the seriousness and passion with which our Kenyan colleagues approached the topics and I appreciated learning from each other.

**Anne Ahmadi**



Participating in Vijana na afya was one of the most valuable experiences I have had so far. It was sometimes overwhelming, informative, emotional or even instructive. All these qualities contributed to my personal and career development throughout the one-year project. I learnt a lot and also felt a lot. I made great friends. I also learnt about new approaches and ways of implementing ESD. I also deepened my knowledge of mental health and realised enriching projects on this topic together with my tandem partner, which gave me confidence. But above all, I began to reflect and learn.

**Selma Petalla**

The most important thing I take away from the programme is the need for us humans to become active in all areas. The workshops and training sessions we took part in challenged us all to take action and work towards a better world worth living in. We need to take care of ourselves and other people. This applies to the social, mental and physical spheres to achieve the goals for health and well-being set out in Sustainable Development Goal 3. We need to take care of the environment we live in and the animals we live with. The environment is only habitable if we live without consuming its resources. This will inevitably achieve the SDGs on climate action, health and well-being, life on land and life below water.

**Glorious Jesang**

The programme has provided me with a profound learning experience, especially about One Health and its importance. I have become more aware of the interconnectedness of human, animal and environmental health. This holistic approach to health emphasises the need to implement a more integrated system that encompasses all of these issues in the facilities where I work. The project has also emphasised the central role of education in sustainable development. I have been equipped with knowledge and skills that will trigger long-term, transformative change. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to arche noVa and KOEE for providing me with this important and team-orientated opportunity.

**Faith Kilonzo**

In the course of the project, I changed my idea of how ESD can be implemented. Although ESD is taught interactively in Germany, the learning objectives remain abstract. There is a lot of emphasis on raising awareness, but there is a lack of concrete problem-solving and contextualisation. In conversations with my Kenyan colleagues, I realised that ESD could and should serve to build the capacity to foster a youth that cannot only think but also practically shape a sustainable society. This conclusion challenges and reorganises my idea of how I will design and implement ESD projects.

**Maria Nelz**

This programme has taught me the importance of opening up and saying what I feel, especially when I am in a group. Career-wise and professionally, I have gained skills and experience from the Kenyan and German participants and speakers not only in the workshops but also in the activities outside the programme. I now know what my goal in life is and what I want to do in the future. I have made great friendships and connections that I hope we will continue to foster in the future.

**Sharlyne Anyango**

I take some seeds with me that will continue to grow and flourish within me. Seeds that expand my images, my ideas of globality and crises, of society and role models, of right and wrong by many more dimensions and bits and pieces. I take with me not to generalise countries and people, indeed entire continents, but to work again and again on breaking down my prejudices and seeing and enduring the many different facets and perspectives. After the encounters, I feel much more in areas that were previously very knowledge-based. My personal experiences and the reflection process that was triggered within me now determine my perspective more than images that were previously presented to me from the outside. I take with me the question of when I want to share my opinion and why. And the question of when I judge and why. I also took away the realisation that it can be very liberating to simply join in with motivation. To have this motivation, I need to connect and network and maintain emotions and dialogue even when we don't see each other live. I need the networking to realise that I am not alone with my questions, my excessive demands, my joy and my fears.

**Marlene Gräf**

It was a great experience to be part of the Vijana na Afya youth exchange programme. The trip was filled with a lot of learning, funny moments, new experiences and impulses. The most important thing I take away is the insights from the different topics we covered during the program. The most outstanding ones were the One Health approach, global learning and the implementation of ESD in different contexts. I was also inspired by my colleagues who are implementing great projects. I also learnt a lot about intercultural experiences and diversity and how to embrace and value them. I am grateful for this exchange programme because it has influenced me both professionally and personally. In my activities in environmental protection and sustainability, I look forward to applying what I learnt in my professional life. And finally, I am forever grateful for the memories, friendships and connections made. Many thanks to Arche noVa e.V. and KOEE for the opportunity.

**Lamech Opyio**



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