

# The Mwanza Process

## Journeys in Co-Learning







**"You cannot develop people. You must allow people to develop themselves."**

*Julius Nyerere, Education for Self-Reliance, 1967*

# Orientation

The theme of the summer school held August 2019 in Mwanza, Tanzania was Researching Conflict, Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development. Effort was made to translate the theme into actual learning processes. Participants were a mix of students and academic staff from St. Augustine University of Tanzania, as well as a small number of academic staff from Germany, China and Malaysia. This diversity in language, generation and status presented a challenge, but it was in finding ways of working together that important work was to be done.

Co-learning spaces would need to be created which would stretch from the campus to community. This is the idea behind 'service learning', which seeks to include all the actors – pupils, teachers, students and professors – in the creation of knowledge in levelled spaces. One of the ways of levelling the space is to offer tasks which are equally unfamiliar, or tasks which require a broad range of abilities. When these require creative activity, the pressure of correctness is reduced. Artistic forms also provide multilingual settings with ways of communication not restricted to language. This involves direct engagement with real people in real situations. To each space, a participant brings a mixture of aptitude and inaptitude!





Co-learning spaces were in a university conference venue, the grounds of a sustainable secondary school, a primary school classroom, an excursion to Saanane Island, the imagined world of children accessed through children's stories, and a digital platform. The summer school was structured into a series of journeys between these spaces. Each of these encouraged unique opportunities for thought and communication.

At the outset, it was made clear that the output was to be five illustrated children's stories which would be retold to children in a nearby primary school. These would also be uploaded audio-visually onto YouTube so as to be widely accessible. The idea behind such collateral learning is that participants are engaged in significant activity and at the same time challenged by the experience. On the way, there were some changes of direction to improve the processes. For many participants, the high point was the time spent at Nyamalango Primary School. Storytelling is a bi-directional experience for participants, and the enthusiastic engagement of pupils a reward for the storytellers. At the end, there was a sense of achievement, but also a recognition that more could still be done to further engage pupils and teachers in future.





# Service-learning

as a tool for journeying in co-learning and sustainable development

Service-learning integrates experiential learning, community service and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen local communities. Service-learning promotes the discovery and application of knowledge and skills in a manner that prepares people for responsible citizenship and social transformation. In service-learning, education is a contributing partner in (local) development for a sustainable economy and social welfare. It is as much about providing a necessary service, as it is about learning from the experience of doing so.

# Co-learning spaces

## University conference venue

**“We welcome international guests to our university. It is important that we exchange ideas, and learn from each other. With new perspectives, our universities will better be able to meet the needs of our societies.”**

*Ambassador Prof. Costa Rick Mahalu  
(Vice-Chancellor, St. Augustine University of Tanzania)*





Founded in 1998 in Mwanza as a private, non-profit institution, Saint Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) provides learning opportunities to more than 10,000 students and has two campuses. On-campus learning spaces comprise a library, seminar rooms and a conference venue. Within the conference venue, there are tables, chairs, a lectern and projector.

SAUT's conference venue provided the first point of departure for journeys in co-learning. It facilitated flexible encounters and thinking: all the furniture and equipment was moveable, making the space suitable for both lectures laying the workshop's theoretical foundations and exploratory discussions around storytelling topics. Here the idea of co-learning took root, with professors, lecturers and university students forming groups that would work closely together throughout the process in Mwanza. Again and again, this academic space was revisited for story creation and reflection.

**“There were different groups of participants – students, lecturers, professors – but age and status did not matter. We realised that there are things that students know and do, that lecturers don’t. The moment when students can say something is when they understand it.”**

*Marcelino Rodrick Mahimboli  
(student, St. Augustine University of Tanzania)*





## Story spaces

Creating a story for children involves travelling back to our own childhoods. When the time comes to begin working on a theme for a children's story, elements from these experiences are used to create the setting. As one identifies with a fragile child, there are emotions of indignation, anger and disappointment that such fragility can be exposed to hate, neglect and loss. Often the small characters that emerge fight with all their hearts against great odds. The creators really do hope that there will be a happy ending, but wrestle with the fact that their audience of small children might be better served if the story is not so simple.





The format of a children's book offers access to a wide range of communication, as well as providing for complexity and emotion. The communal process of producing illustrated children's books is very much like the activity to be seen in an art school or in a creative writing workshop. Here it is a group process in which there is a range of available tasks: planning; facilitating; illustrating; narrating; performing; recording and editing. It is thereby a process which is open to many different levels of participation.

At the outset, personal introductions were made by participants recalling themselves as seven-year-olds. These biographical moments provided the material out of which storylines and images would gradually emerge. They touched on issues of violence – direct, structural and cultural – providing intersections between the personal and the societal. The illustrated stories, produced by five groups over three days, are set against backgrounds of poverty, conflict, crime, negative stereotyping, jealousy and bullying. But they are also about friendship, courage and faith.





# Story summaries

## ***Light After Darkness***

Light after darkness is about a boy who has lost his shoes after he took them off to play football. His parents will be angry. He is afraid of the darkness and the howling and scratching in the night. After a while his mother comes and saves him from the darkness. But during the night he has terrible nightmares about creatures which are clawing at his bare feet. The next day at school his friend Charles comes to him to give him back his shoes. His fears are gone and he thinks of the meaning of Ubuntu: "I am because we are ... Because we are, I am".

*Gabikwa Rebeyo, Silke Schreiber-Barsch, Emmanuel Lwankomezi, Augustino Peter Elias, Nicholaus Novatus, Luchemcha Ernest Wanna, Alex Howells*



One fine evening, I made my way home after a long day at school. My heart was heavy. My new shoes were gone .....

I had taken them off to play football with my friends.

When I arrived home I was surprised to be alone.



After a while, I was surrounded by darkness.

I walked towards the toilet building and checked under the grey stone for the spare house key.



It was not there.

The fear took over me and I began to sob silently. The sounds grew louder and it felt like something was coming out of the darkness towards me. I did not dare to look.



I could not remember.... During the night, I could not sleep. I had terrible nightmares, full of strange noises and



Creatures clawing at my bare feet.

The next morning, I walked again with a heavy heart and tired eyes back to school. I sat on my own in the Classroom. Suddenly, my friend Charles came to me and told me to relax.



"Here are your shoes. You left them behind yesterday."

I was so relieved: My mother had saved me from the darkness, and now my friend had saved my shoes.



This is Ubuntu.

I am because we are .....  
Because we are, I am.

# Memories of Childhood

This is a story about a boy, Amani, who lives with his mother and his grandfather. Amani has to overcome several crises. First his grandfather passes away and he can't understand why. Then he has bad experiences with his class teacher's temper, so he decides to quit school and join a gang. One night, while sleeping, he has nightmares about his deceased grandfather whose voice keeps telling him: "You are a champion, the real champion". He starts praying and also remembers the strengthening words of his mother. So, he treasures his grandfather's voice and values his mother's prayer, and starts to study again.

*Denis Ernest, Issa Tusuph, Kasara Ngoboka, Prof. Yang Jianhua, Delphinus Kamugisha, Emiliana Mgaya, Mollel Shangwe*

## MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD

Names of all team members



I'm Amani and this is my story.  
I am living with my mother and my grandfather.  
My father went to the army and I had never seen him.



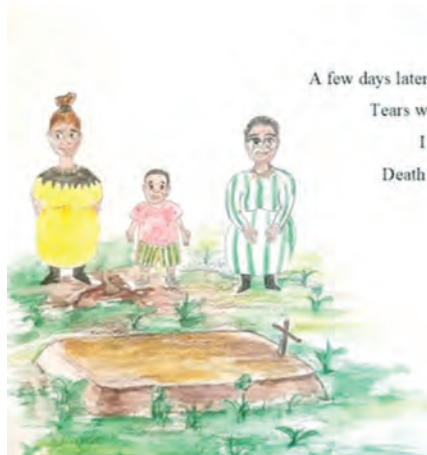




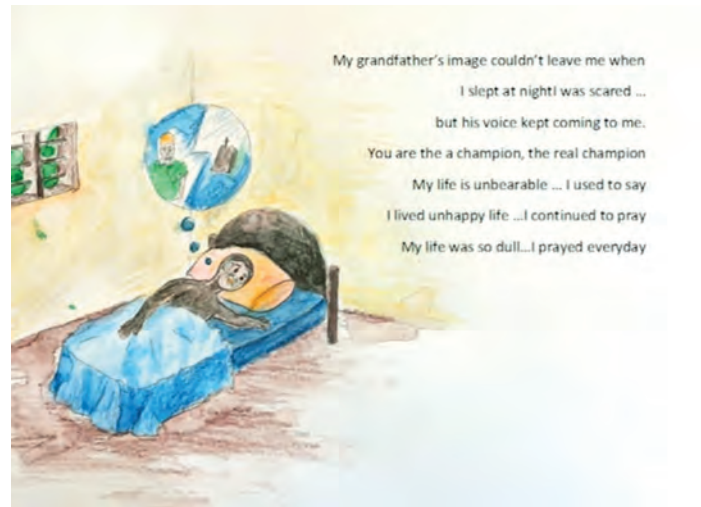
At age seven my mother sent me to  
school and I was eager  
But I was scared of my class teacher's temper  
When I saw him my heart was  
beating faster and faster



Studying was no longer a deal  
I couldn't enjoy it for real  
I quit schooling and joined a gang  
We burnt bushes because they provided sticks



A few days later my grandfather passed away  
Tears welled up in my eyes everyday  
I cried until my voice dried up  
Death took my beloved grandfather  
Why all this happen to me?



My grandfather's image couldn't leave me when  
I slept at night I was scared ...  
but his voice kept coming to me.  
You are the a champion, the real champion  
My life is unbearable ... I used to say  
I lived unhappy life ...I continued to pray  
My life was so dull...I prayed everyday

## The Seed

Sofi and Munira are two friends from the Jitengeni village. They always used to play mdako with an avocado seed and now Sofi keeps the seed as a symbol of their friendship, but one day her mother cleans her room and sweeps the seed away. The seed ends up on very fertile soil and a young avocado tree begins sprouting. After some time, Sofi sees the young tree without knowing what kind of tree it is. The tree matures and begins producing big green fruit. Sofi picks one and realizes that inside is the seed she lost. Sofi and Munira are overjoyed to see that the seed, the symbol of their friendship, had sprouted into a tree.

*Joseph R. Gadda, Kassim Bakari, Mariane Munyao, Mussa Sitta, Neema Kalebu, Saada Z. Mumba, Sospeter Daniel*

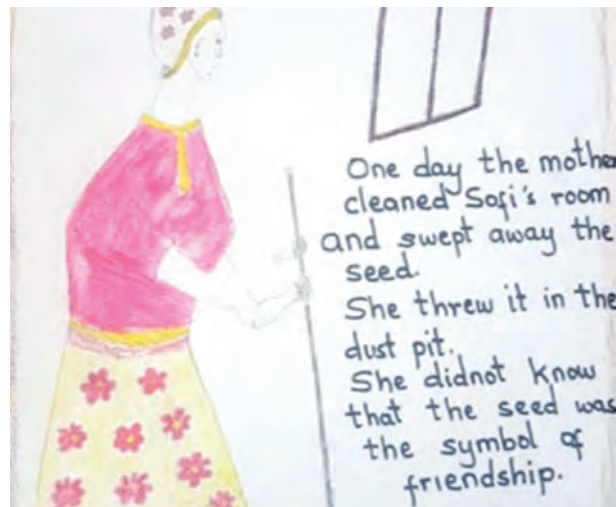


These girls would meet and play 'mdako' game using an avocado seed.





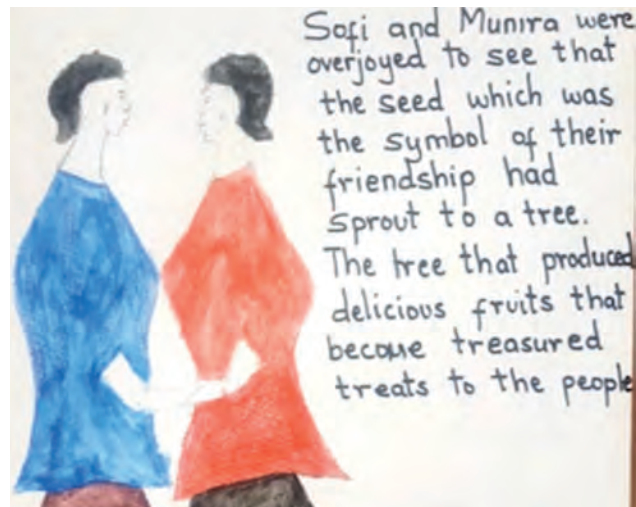
a ripe fruit and ate it. Oooh it was so yummy. She was so happy to realize that inside the fruit there was the seed she had lost back then.



One day the mother cleaned Sofi's room and swept away the seed. She threw it in the dust pit. She didn't know that the seed was the symbol of friendship.



All the villagers from Jitengeni visited Sofi's home to eat delicious avocado fruits



Sofi and Munira were overjoyed to see that the seed which was the symbol of their friendship had sprout to a tree. The tree that produced delicious fruits that became treasured treats to the people

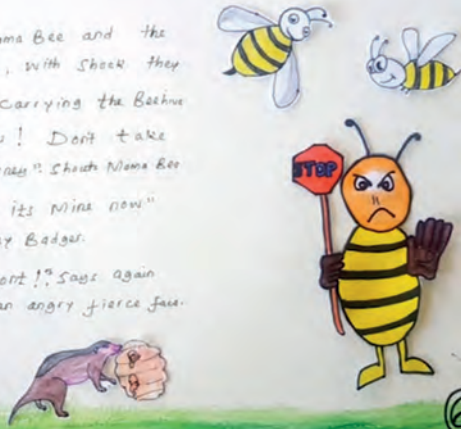
## Sweet, Sweet Honey!

At the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro lives Mama Bee with her little bees. One day, Honey Badger comes to steal the sweet honey. Mama Bee attacks. From a distance, Rabbit tries to settle the dispute. He says that they are all from one community and that they all depend on each other, so they should share what they have in harmony. They shake hands and eat together cheerfully.

Veneranda Paulo, Happy Mwansonka, Issaya Michael Sanka, Marcelino R. Mahimgali, Julius Kiting'ati, Mlowe Mlowe H., Elizabeth Mashao, Joseph Badokufa



Suddenly Mama Bee and the little ones arrive, with shock they see Henry Badger carrying the Beehive away. "Hey you! Don't take our precious honey!" Shouts Mama Bee  
 "Not a way, its mine now" replies Henry Badger.  
 "I insist Don't!" Says again Mama Bee with an angry fierce face.



6

(An attack! from Mama Bee)



7

Now!! That's good my friends now let us eat together  
 cheerfully. They shake hands together with big smiles on their faces



11

Since that day they live together, happily ever after!!



12

## Tabu and the Giant Kabeba

Tabu is a clever girl from a small village called Kasa, where she studies at the primary school. Nobody wants her to go to school and the boys bully her because she performs better than them. On her way to school she has to cross a forest which, according to a local myth, is home to a frightening giant named Kabeba. Tabu meets Kabeba and realizes he is not so frightening. He supports her to gain acceptance from the people in her village community, who then allow all their daughters to go to school.

*Anna Julius Msangi, Dismas F. Kombe, Hyasinta D. Izumba, Jasmine Kamtande, Joyce Henerico, Li Qiao, Salvatory Delifinus*



In a small village called Kasa, by Lake Victoria in Mwanza there is a seven year old girl called Tabu. Tabu lives with her parents and studies at Kasa Primary School.



In Kasa village there is a myth about a giant creature called Kabeba, who lives in a forest Tabu has to cross on her way to school.



At school the boys bully Tabu because she performs better than them.



It is the last day of term, and a group of boys decide to bully Tabu because of her very good performance in school. It makes her feel terrible. Later the same day, when the school day ends, the boys begin to chase Tabu. Tabu starts to run towards home and enters the forest. Suddenly Kabeba appears to defend Tabu and, as soon as the boys see him, they run away.



The giant Kabeba takes Tabu to her home, where her father, mother and neighbours scream upon seeing Kabeba with Tabu.



Then Kabeba stops in front of the house and raises his hand. Magically a beautiful schoolbag appears and Kabeba disappears. From that moment on, the whole community decides to allow their daughters to go to school.

# The grounds of a sustainable secondary school



Father Ramon Boys' Secondary School in Mwanza is a private educational institution moving towards sustainability. In order to sensitize pupils to environmental preservation and equip them with vocational skills in the field of farming and agriculture, the school grounds have been reserved for crop-growing and animal-rearing activities. There are shelters and feeding grounds for cows, pigs, chickens and goats, land that has been prepared for growing crops – including tomatoes in a greenhouse-like structure – and areas where mango trees have been planted as part of a service-learning project.



**“A commitment to sustainability is no longer optional for us. Our schools ought to integrate education for sustainable development in their curricula. Co-learning with an emphasis on service-learning among school stakeholders facilitates a smooth intergenerational transformation and inspires people of all ages to aspire for, and work creatively towards, sustainable development in society.”**

*Joseph Badokufa (lecturer, St. Augustine University of Tanzania)*







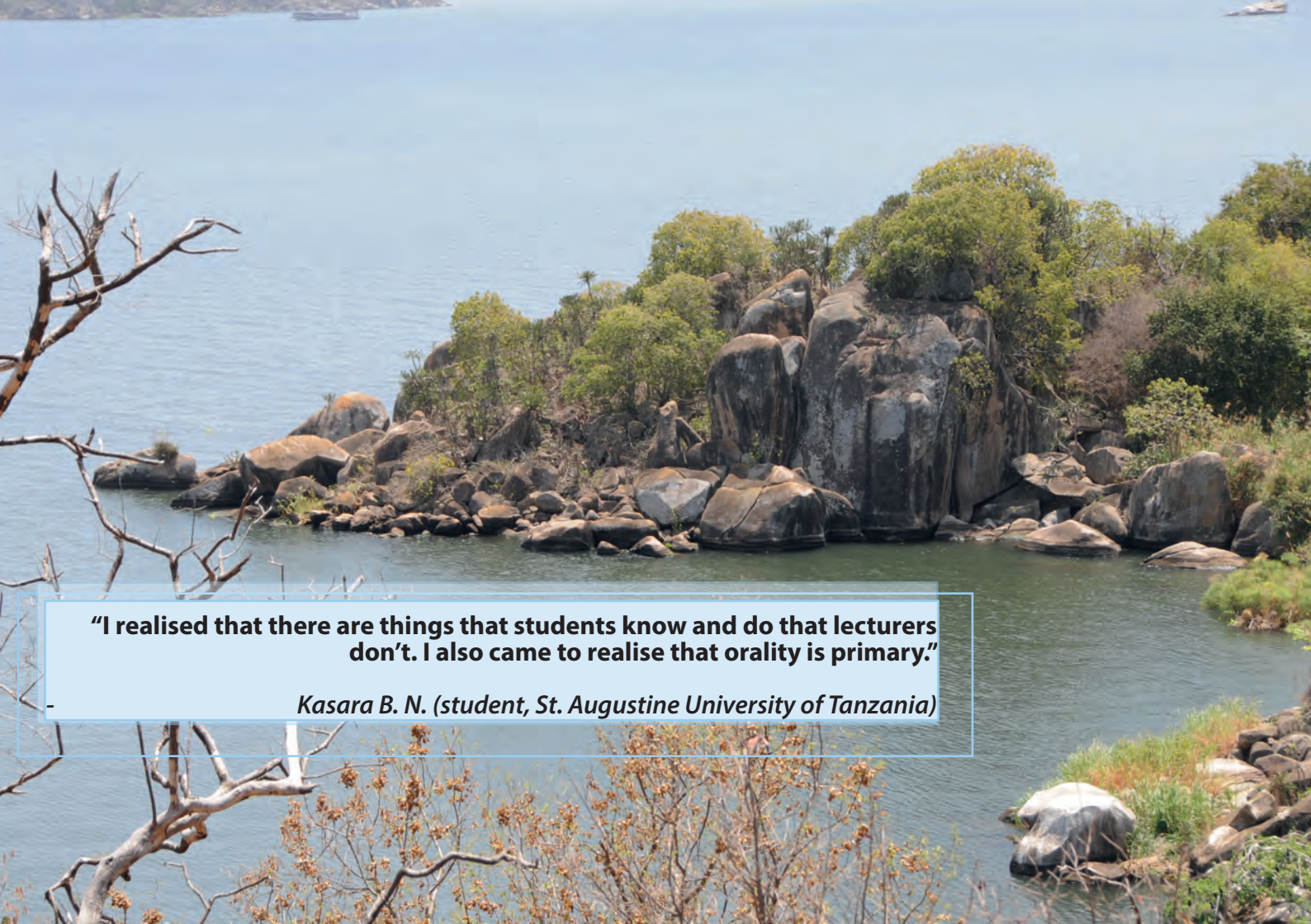
A visit to Father Ramon Boys' Secondary School constituted the first physical journey between spaces. It involved a transition from the indoors to the outdoors and a shift to more active and less formal thinking. University professors, lecturers and students walked together with schoolteachers around the grounds in order to learn about efforts towards sustainability and to reflect on how the theme of sustainable development might relate to their emerging story ideas.



# Excursion to Saanane Island



Saanane Island is East Africa's smallest national park and is situated in Africa's largest lake. It is made even more special by its proximity to urbanity: only a short boat ride from Mwanza City yet covered in wild flora and fauna, the island feels at once accessible and remote.



**"I realised that there are things that students know and do that lecturers don't. I also came to realise that orality is primary."**

***Kasara B. N. (student, St. Augustine University of Tanzania)***

Crossing over to Saanane Island was a way of creating some distance and relaxation after some intense days of literary production. Walking through the natural environment provided an occasion to think and communicate with others. Participants were, however, also expected to prepare for the retelling of their stories in school classes the following day. During lunch a facilitator explained the task for each group. They were to take on roles; what he meant was that they would need to identify who would be the storyteller, the photographer, researcher of pupil responses and more. When the groups returned, it became clear that something else had been understood. The roles were now those of the different characters in each of the stories. This improvement on the set task became an important moment. There was an excitement in performing stories which they themselves had created, and in some cases, some of those who were less active in previous days found their voice.






# Primary school classroom

The prospect of performing in front of a live audience generates a degree of excitement that can influence a process from its inception. The interaction can be exhilarating, as presenters not only give but can also receive a great deal of affirmation.

A visit to Nyamalango Primary School had been planned as the culmination of the summer school. In their preparation, the groups tried to find ways of involving the pupils. Each was assigned to a class and had one hour for their storytelling event.







**“It is a unique feeling to be a creator, and it is even more unique to verbalize what you have created. For me, the moment I treasure most is the time we spent in the classroom. I believe it is going to last in the children’s minds for a long time.”**

*Joseph Badokufa (lecturer, St. Augustine University of Tanzania)*

Pupils responded with facial expressions, clapping, singing and rhythmically dancing, all the while helping to retell the story and act out roles. With the experience of trying to create a co-learning space for children and adults came the suggestion that it would have been appropriate to collaborate with the school from the very beginning of the process – rather than only at the end – so as to involve teachers more actively in the creation of stories. This improvement can further refine the process in the future.





# A digital platform

For stories to become products for local communities all over the world, they can be transferred and adapted to a digital platform that is accessible online. The story's journey from paper to screen requires the digitisation of manually created text and images, as well as the generation and integration of additional content such as short video clips and audio recordings. This new content is not simply a repetition of what has already been created: it serves to bring the story to life in another space.

During the process in Mwanza, migration onto a digital platform for co-learning followed a series of steps. To digitise the story pages produced using paper, pen, crayon, water and glue, the participants utilised a mobile camera scanner to create high-quality images. Additionally, audio files of voice recordings, which verbalised the stories' narratives, were created using a Dictaphone or a mobile phone with a voice-recording function. In some cases, complementary video clips were also developed to fit with the images and audio recordings. Video-editing software then provided the means to bring together these different digital file formats into a single video, which was uploaded to YouTube. There is a risk that, during this process, participation is limited to a few individuals responsible for operating devices and software; limited participation may undermine the concept of co-learning. To prevent this from happening, alternative tasks

can be assigned, such as photocopying the story so that there are enough copies to give to the children. If less ink is used so that the text is only just about discernible, the children can be encouraged to add their own writing and colouring to what is already there.



# Reflection space

During the course of the summer school, many photographs were taken. Thirty of these were made available as a means of reflection on the final day. 'Photo-elicitation' is a research method which uses the self-interpretation of photographs. Participants represented in the photos were encouraged to recall thoughts and feelings they had at the time the photos were taken; they were provided with yellow paper from which to make thought and speech bubbles. What usually happens is that such exercises quickly switch into activities, better described as cartooning or even trolling. They worked in small groups, and what developed was a set of new stories. From these, a selection was made of those that best expressed the experiences of participants at different stages, conveying vividly the confusion and feelings of inadequacy that accompanied the start of the process. And there are also scenes which capture the excitement of completing the task, and particularly satisfaction from interacting with the children in the primary school. Another important part of the process was self-critical reflection on the extent to which the different stages of the Summer School had embodied the ideals of peacebuilding and sustainability.







**“Every art communicates because it expresses. It enables us to share vividly and deeply in meanings.... For communication is not announcing things... Communication is the process of creating participation, of making common what had been isolated and singular ... the conveyance of meaning gives body and definiteness to the experience of the one who utters as well as to that of those who listen.”**

*John Dewey, Art as Experience*

# Book space

A book can be a travelling companion. The illustrated text of a children's book is an invitation to pause at one page, and then to move forwards or backwards. The reader is in control. Creators of stories have these listeners and readers in mind. The thought of publishing one's story as a book is then an appealing thought.

Towards the end of the workshop, some thought was given to actually publishing the stories and making them available to children. The costs were prohibitive, particularly colour printing. It was this limitation that led to the next idea. The pages could be photocopied, and the absence of colour would offer space for pupils to provide their own. Each page could be printed very faintly, so that the text would also need to be worked upon. This thought of students making books their own was a gratifying one for the original authors.







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# Impressum

## Partners

**The Art Peace Project** is an initiative located in the Education Faculty of Hamburg University. In the context of seminars and international summer schools, arts-based inquiry is explored as a means of expanding capacity to think about issues of peacebuilding and sustainability.

**Service Learning Tanzania** is an NGO based at St. Augustine University of Tanzania. It has gained considerable experience in the overlap between university and school, bringing together students, lecturers, pupils and teachers. With support from Wonderful World, they will continue to use the process to produce and publish illustrated children's stories.

**Wonderful World Foundation** is an expanding network of over twenty universities in Asia, Europe, Africa and north America. In the annual film and digital animation festivals, students and lecturers have the opportunity both to exhibit their work and to create new work together.

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