**MASKANI' Digital Peacebuilding
Closing Workshop Report
Kisumu, October 23, 2020**

Overview: Objectives and Outputs

On October 23rd, the Center for Media, Democracy, Peace and Security – Rongo University together with Build Up team members facilitated a workshop for 25 participants divided into students, university faculty and community members representatives. Each university invited the 3 top performing students, resulting in 9 women and 9 men, while all other students were invited to the certificate ceremony by Zoom and an afternoon WhatsApp live chat session following the workshop.

The students and faculty met in advance among their student teams to develop their collective ideas on the way forward and possible next steps for the Maskani program. The workshop ran for a full day and aimed to create links between the program and the community peacebuilding initiatives, offer a space for discussion on project reflections and way forward and share findings of the program with the participants.

The **objectives** of this workshop were to award exemplary students who had completed their tasks during the sprints, create a space where the community representatives would engage with the students and faculty to identify ways, they could support each other in future and share findings of the program. Concretely, the participants:

- Received certificates for their participation in the full program
- Exchanged experiences and got to know one another
- Learned about offline peacebuilding programs in their communities and how the Maskani work could be integrated and or support these programs
- Learned about the program findings on what worked, and what did not, collective challenges and lessons
- Began brainstorming and planning on the next steps for the program in the lead up to the Kenyan general election in 2022.

The main **output** of the training was to seed initial ideas from students and faculty, together with the community representatives on goals they would like to achieve through Maskani and how to scale the program. For both Build Up and Center for Media, Democracy, Peace and Security (CMDPS), the aim was to close the workshop with an idea of which new themes the participants would want to focus on, and to know roughly how the community would be a part of the Maskani program. The workshop summary below goes deeper into the specific outputs of the conversations that ensued throughout the day.

Workshop Summary

The workshop was delivered through 5 key sessions that focused on gathering views and input from the students. Facilitation in the 5 sessions was done by a member of Build up or CMDPS together with a student from one of the universities. The sessions ranged from presentations using PowerPoint slides, and oral question and answer sessions/discussions in plenary and a panel. Below is a detailed agenda of the full workshop:

09:00 – 09:30   Introductions & Opening Remarks

Participants were welcomed to the workshop and were informed of what to expect during the workshop. The agenda, **Annex 1**, was reviewed and agreed upon. One faculty member and a student shared an overview of how the Maskani program had impacted their lives positively.

09:30 – 10:00 Brief Maskani Overview (TBD)- Adapting The Commons: The Spirit of Maskani & #NguvuPamoja: Digital Peacebuilding in Kenya Lessons and Future.

In this session, a select number shared their journeys from how they were introduced to Maskani and the challenges and opportunities that they encountered along the way in adapting the commons and lessons that they learned along the way. This was a reflective session from both the faculty and the students to point out how different paths all led to a common goal between different individuals. The story telling highlighted the unique nature of Maskani, which is the mutual respect and collaboration between faculty and students for a common cause.

11:00 - 12:30   Community Members Engagement: Panel discussion with Student
                         Ambassadors

In this session, three community members and a resident fellow from CMDPS shared previous and current peacebuilding initiatives in their communities and how these could benefit from Maskani. Everline Okoth, Mercy Adhiambo, and Brian Osome, community peacebuilders from Champions of Peace in Kisumu, pointed out the challenges that they face in offline interventions and opportunities that have made peacebuilding possible. After presenting their work the students were given an opportunity to ask them questions and propose ideas on how to collaborate. This session was moderated by a student with the aim of exploring areas of synergy between the offline interventions and the online approaches by the Maskani team.

For the local peacebuilders present, the key opportunity they saw was how Maskani could support their work. They talked about not having the capacity to engage online and that Maskani could do a lot by combining efforts. They mentioned how they engage with people in offline spaces and then later see the same people spewing hate online- Maskani could complement the offline efforts to create a 360 degree approach that moves offline to online and back again. They also talked about having some students train their teams on how to work around social media spaces would also bring greater visibility. What we really liked was a suggestion of narrative comparison. The offline interventions would share with Maskani, the narratives they are hearing on the ground and compare with what Maskani members see online and this would inform both interventions (offline and online) so that people are not working blind to what is happening in either space.

12:30- 13:00   Awarding of Certificates (Fredrick Ogenga, Susan Kilonzo & Caleb
                         Gichuhi)

Students were awarded certificates for the practicum (**Annex 2**). Each certificate reflected the achievements they accomplished based on the badge tracker used. Each student attending were appreciated by the faculty for their great work. Students who participated remotely were able to receive their certificates when faculty members returned to their campuses. This session was streamed via Zoom to enable the students who could not attend the workshop participate from afar to also hear their names mentioned in celebration.

14:00– 14:30   M & E Feedback Session (Caleb Gichuhi via Live discussion, Jerry McCann, Rita Costa via WhatsApp live chat)

Participants were taken through a learning session (**Annex 3**)where the monitoring and evaluation findings from the program were shared and they got to respond to the findings and unpack some of these. For instance, the participants got to see the common attributes of posts that gathered the most comments and likes on social media, the common challenges that were faced by all members among other findings. This was a reflective session where the participants contextualized some of the findings and gave examples of how they addressed some of the challenges in the findings and the strategies they used to get higher engagement rates. A similar session was also being run on WhatsApp to enable the students who were not present to participate and share their ideas.

14:30- 15:30   Next steps and way forward for Maskani (Caleb Gichuhi via Live discussion, Jerry McCann, Rita Costa via WhatsApp live chat)

The participants were taken through an ideation session. They were asked to share their ideas, visions and goals for the Maskani program for the future. They explored and discussed how they as individuals/and or groups could support the realization of these goals and visions. This was a preliminary discussion on next steps that will be explored deeper in future. Participants were able to discuss future ideas that included a wider team beyond the university and began to propose ideas on how Maskani would collaborate with the offline community initiatives on peacebuilding. The following are some of the ideas that emerged:

- Reaching a wider demographic, not just the youth but the older population through Maskani
- Developing a universal platform to accommodate youth who would like to join to get information that can help in depolarising their societies
- Elevating what Maskani is. Striving to take its initiative forward, recognized in Kenya as a peacebuilding movement led by students in collaboration with community-owned programs.
- Partnering with community-based organizations.
- Broadening their inclusion to welcome in the physically challenged, many of whom may not be able to engage across communities offline given the contextual challenges but could have equal impact in the online spaces.
- Amplifying the Maskani platform and network to further challenge extremism in Kenya
- Branding Maskani with youth positivity in addition to its digital peacebuilding orientation
- Setting up Maskani clubs in schools/universities to serve as Maskani zones/spaces where past students can come to train new students

Faculty, students and Build Up all recognize the importance of taking this process forward. There is a commitment to continue to explore ways the next chapter can be pursued. In the meantime, the Maskani team committed to stay engaged and use the established online platforms (WhatsApp and Facebook groups) to keep their skills strong and their pursuit of peace active, recognizing the greatest risks to peace will grow as the 2022 elections grow nearer.

ANNEX 1

WORKSHOP AGENDA

'MASKANI' Digital Peacebuilding closing workshop
Center for Media, Democracy, Peace and Security and Six public universities in western Kenya

23rd OCTOBER 2020, Great Lakes Hotel, Kisumu

Participating Universities
Rongo University
Kibabii University
Maseno University
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology
Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology
Kisii University

09:00 – 09:30   Introductions & Opening Remarks (Fredrick Ogenga, Michael Kyalo & Susan Kilonzo)

09:30 – 10:00   Brief Maskani Overview (TBD)- Adapting The Commons: The Spirit of Maskani & #Nguvu Pamoja: Digital Peacebuilding in Kenya Lessons and Future (Fredrick Ogenga, Kelvin Allan, Bryson Omwalo, Janeffer Mwikali, Sheila Akinyi)

10:30-11:00   *Tea Break* and Group Photo

11:00 - 12:30   Community Members Engagement: Panel discussion with Student Ambassadors

12:30- 13:00   Awarding of Certificates (Fredrick Ogenga, Susan Kilonzo & Caleb Gichuhi)

13:00 – 14:00   *Lunch Break*

14:00– 14:30   M & E Feedback Session (Caleb Gichuhi & Evabessy Kinya via Live discussion, Jerry McCann, Rita Costa via WhatsApp live chat)

14:30- 15:30   Next steps and way forward for Maskani (Caleb Gichuhi & Biko Brian via Live discussion, Jerry McCann, Rita Costa via WhatsApp live chat)

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ANNEX 2

SAMPLE AWARDED CERTIFICATE

CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATION

This is awarded to

Fridah Wambua

for successfully completing the Maskani Digital Peacebuilding Practicum from July 27th 2020 to October 15th 2020 with the following badges:

POSITIVE MESSENGER · LISTENER · STORYTELLER · CHANGEMAKER · MVP
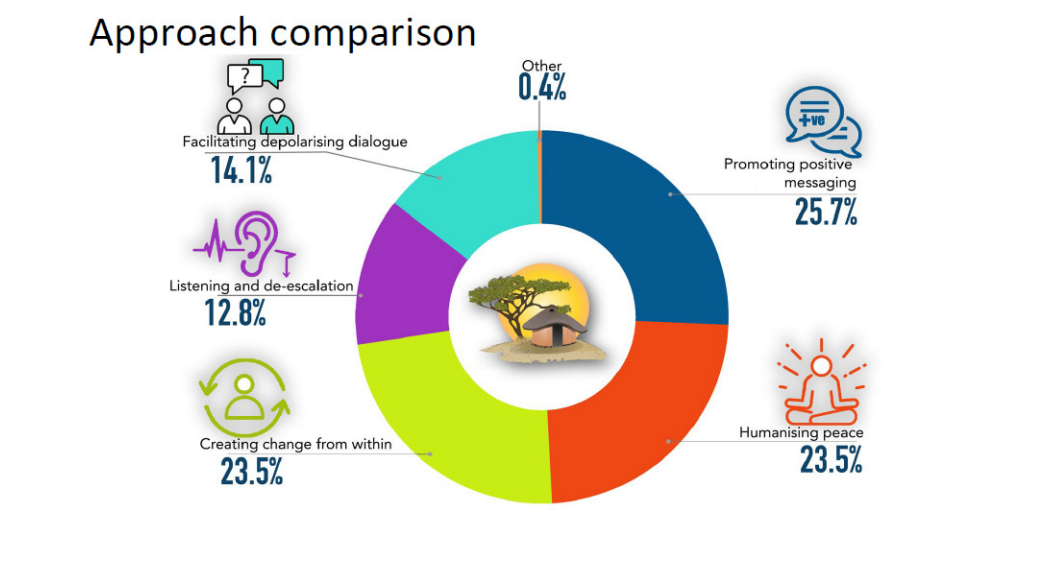
Michaela Ledesma
DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER, BUILD UP

CMDPS

Fredrick Ogenga
DIRECTOR, RONGO UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR MEDIA, DEMOCRACY, PEACE AND SECURITY

ANNEX 3

WORKSHOP SLIDE DECK

Maskani Digital Peacebuilding
Closing Workshop
October 23rd , 2020

Monitoring and Evaluation
Reviewing the digital peacebuilding journey

Total number of Interventions 226 These were divided into three issue areas

Kenyan Politics 50%

Ethnicity 25.6%

COVID-19 24.3%

Approach comparison

Facilitating depolarising dialogue 14.1%

Other 0.4%

Promoting positive messaging 25.7%

Listening and de-escalation 12.8%

Creating change from within 23.5%

Humanising peace 23.5%

Challenges

- **User (Student) Challenges:** These are challenges that affected the student e.g. they were demotivated at certain times during the sprints, they were ill, they did not have experience with other platforms e.g Instagram
- **Platform Challenge:** These are challenges specific to the platforms used e.g. WhatsApp content is private so you can't see who shares your message to motivate you or Twitter is limited in text and one has to get the message across in multiple tweets.
- **Audience Challenge:** Audience refers to the social media users being targeted - e.g. they are negative i.e. rude, mean, they are slow to reply or they don't reply at all.
- **Process Challenge:** These are challenges specific to the approaches. E.g. It was difficult to find a personal inspiring story because I didn't have one, or it is difficult to draft positive messaging to promote.
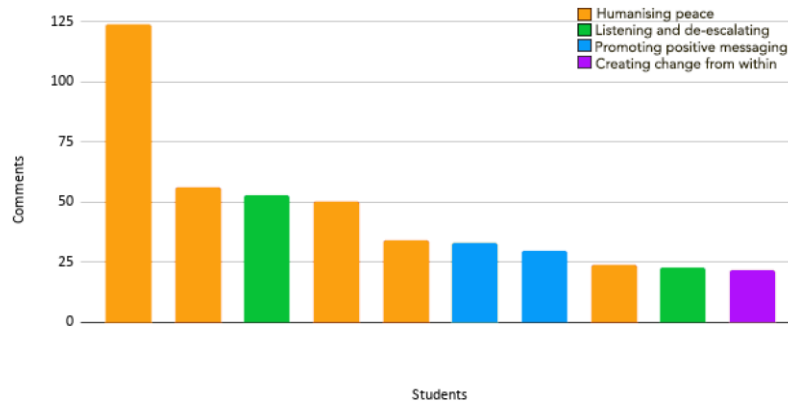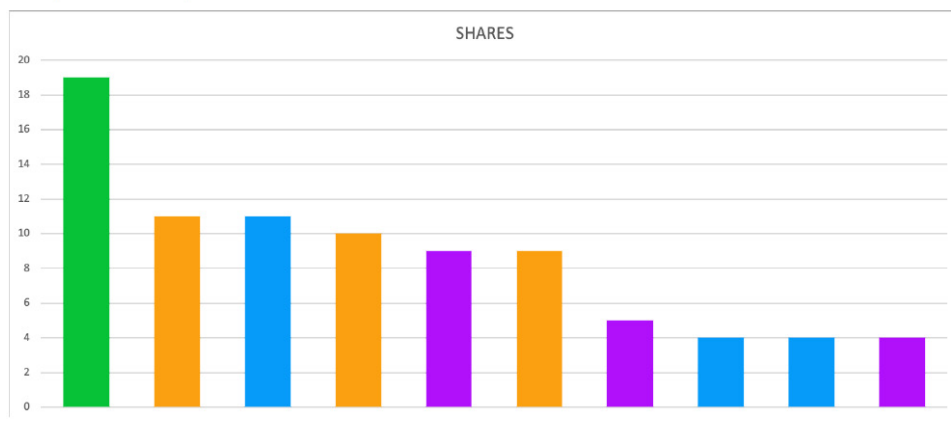

Challenges
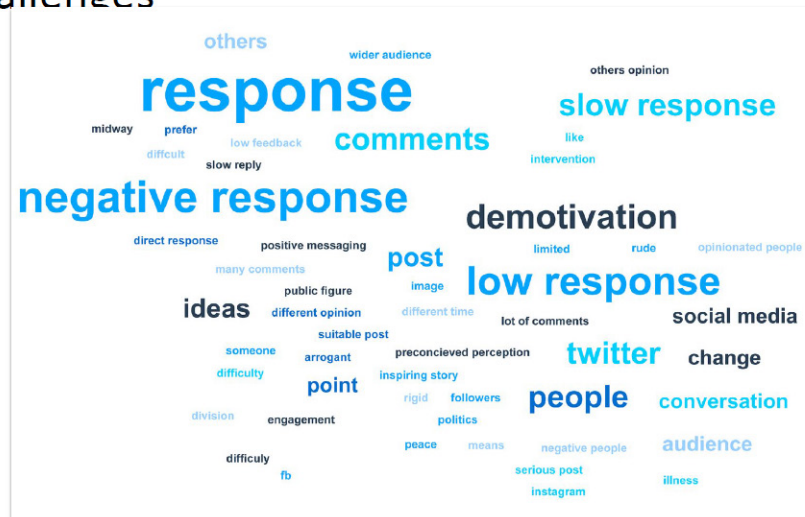
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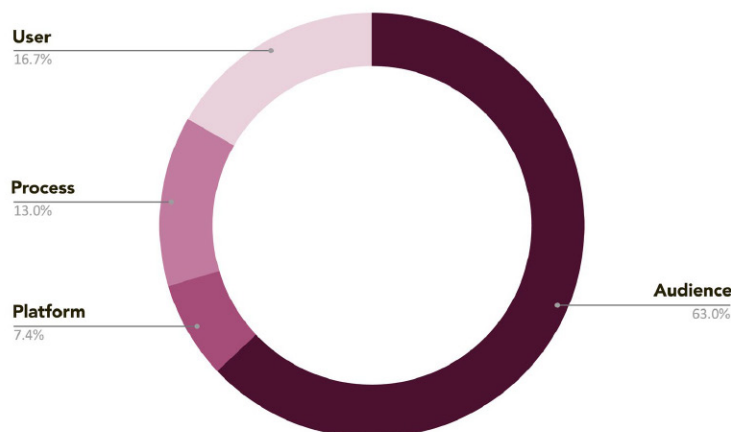
Comments

Facebook posts with the most comments

Shares

Top ten Facebook posts with the most shares

High engagement posts similarities

Photos Tagging others Personal Stories Trending Hashtags Shared Values Group Inspiration
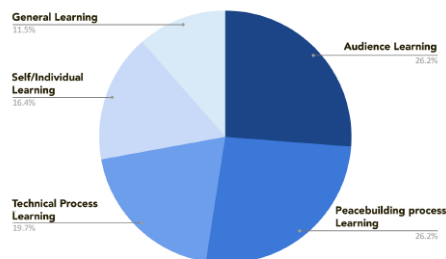
Lessons learned

- **Audience Learning:** These are lessons about the social media audience and how they respond to the interventions or how their perceptions. E.g. '*Most people just give likes for positive messages while they comment for negative messages* OR *most of the audience is not familiar with this kind of posting where we come out and sort of try to challenge the status quo thats probably why many dont respond to such posts.*

- **Technical Process learning :**These are lessons about which technical process and which strategies work best to create engagement. E.g. *Using more pictures/ visuals will result in engagement,* OR *keeping the story short is likely to give people time to read it than long stories,* OR *if you want to get engagement you can use an already trending hashtag in your post.*

- **Peacebuilding Process learning:** These are lessons about peacebuilding approaches when applying them in the interventions. E.g. My lesson is *Learn to listen carefully to understand the discussion hence easy for engaging OR I feel that listening and de-escalating leaves the intervention hanging at some point. As you try to listen and give the participants a chance to be heard and their concerns raised ,as a peacebuilder its a bit tempting to give them a piece of your mind which will call for a different strategy OR humanising the conversation in my post enables people to celebrate the good work nurses are doing*

- **Platform learning:** These are lessons about the social media platforms that were used during the interventions: e.g. *Social media platforms have been designed in a way that negative news sells than building or positive information* OR '*Tweeter does not have a great reach .so I prefed fb*

- **Self/Individual learning:** These are lessons that the students/users were learning about themselves during the interventions. e.g. '*Personal stories are not the easiest stories to tell....i realised those are the stories that hurt most of us and we are still healing* OR *Having few likes can be some how demoralizing to me,* OR I *have learnt to maintain a civic tone while engaging in depolarizing dialogues and share my opinion with calmness.*

- **General Learning:** These are lessons that cut across the other learnings and apply to the overall interventions e.g. *If we as digital peacebuilders can reach one or two Kenyans and rekindle their hope of life in the political issues then with time political depolarization will slow down* OR ''*Appealing to a certain group is more like advocacy therefore even passing the message across to one person counts.*

Lessons

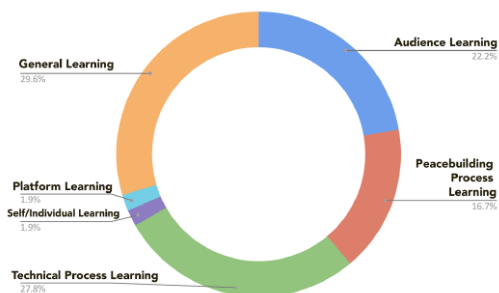### Lessons from Promoting Positive Messaging
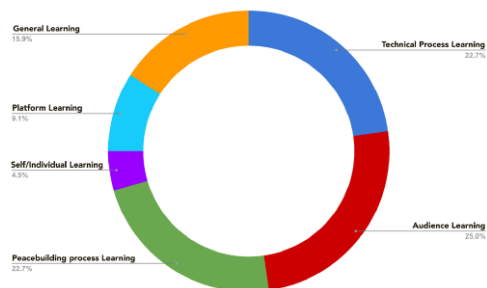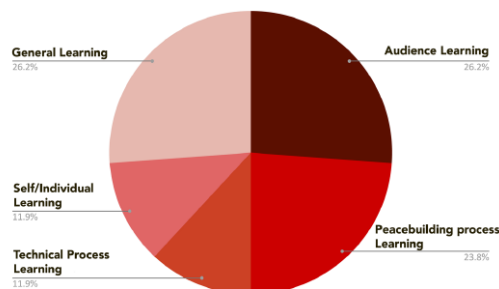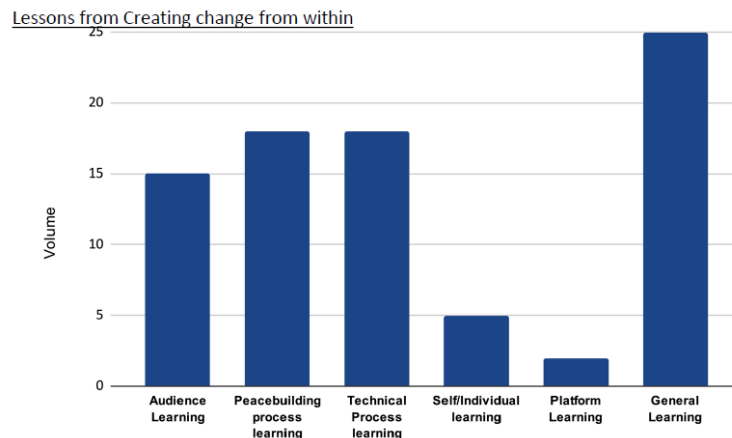

Lessons from listening and de-escalating

Lessons

Lessons from Humanising peace

Lessons from Facilitating Depolarising Dialogue

Lessons

Lessons from Creating change from within

Other Learnings

- **Timing is Key**: For a post to be successful, you need to intervene when a polarizing post is still fresh and trending- You get more reach and responses, than if you came to it a day later.
- **Negative content sells/ trends:** Many people just like posts which are not making more sense and they just don't read posts which are making sense... But once you post "udaku" (grapevine) that is when you will see a thousand likes.
- **Metrics:** Use the platform metrics to measure the full engagement of your posts - Insights for FB and Analytics for twitter. People might only like your messages and not comment.
- **Demotivation:** It is possible and normal to feel demotivated when people dont respond to your content online. Keep this in mind but there are ways that you can get motivated if this happens.
- **Self Check:** You might see content that you do not agree with, or people might be mean to you but remember not to respond with aggression and try not to take it personal.- Use a calm, non aggressive approach in your approach.
- **Audience:** The more you engage with the audience the more you learn about them, their perceptions and what matters to them.
- **Patience:** There is a process to peacebuilding that sometimes takes time.

Social media platforms