Peace and Conflict Transformation Day

The Common Thread

TCT

The Common Thread



COVER ART BY:
SONAM

Khun Nandita's storytelling workshop

Before the wheel was invented, humans told stories. These stories passed down generations: they took the shape of myths, legends and even folk music, helping communities connect and ideas shape history. Today, the timeless power of storytelling can still be harnessed to incite positive change in this modern era of uncertainty.

Khun Nandita's workshop was an enlightening reflection on the role of details in storytelling. We were provided with two texts: one of them narrated a scene with elusive language and limited imagery, while the other narrated the same scene with vivid details and definitive context. When asked for our preferred text, the group was divided: while some preferred the flexibility of inserting their own interpretation into the lack of details, others found this paucity difficult to emotionally relate with.

This discussion sparked a question: when should details be omitted? Should they be omitted at all?

According to Khun Nandita, it depends. Context is important to create a vivid image, but naming the places and people you write about makes it difficult not to have a polarised debate. If your intention is to make the reader reflect on an issue without a bias, eliminating controversial details can ground them into a state of reflection over contention.
On the other hand, situations are almost never as simple as their principle, and details are crucial in bringing out nuance and fighting ignorance.

Ultimately, the choice of whether to include or omit certain details also rests on an ethical responsibility. There's a thin line between accuracy and insensitivity in describing someone else's experience, and the power of storytelling can be harnessed for both good and bad. It's important not to claim expertise you don't have, and to stand on the right side of the narrative.

Stay in touch with Khun Nandita to explore this topic deeper and to engage in critical reflection of urgent social, political and cultural issues through this QR code:

Story Smuggler - Laila

Western Sahara

While writing my personal statement for universities, I found myself confused. Not because I didn’t have a story, but because I have many. And 650 words are not enough to tell my story or the story of the millions who walk with me.

Stories of those
Who resist in the occupied territories,
Of those who survive in the refugee camps,
Of those who flee both to find asylum that allows them to live with dignity.
I didn’t know whether to speak of those who said goodbye to freedom before they ever reached it,
Of those who gave everything, without hesitation, for freedom.
Of those who leave, not by choice...
Those who risk everything, no matter what they lose.
Those who smile, even though their hearts weigh as heavy as stones.
Or
Those who arrive,
Those who stay on the journey,
Those who sink in seas that know no borders, leaving behind untold stories.
Or those who fight every day against papers that decide if they deserve to exist,
Against inhumane laws that deny them a place, a right, a refuge.
When people hear the word "freedom," many imagine it differently. Let me tell you mine:
Freedom is dancing, wrapped in a melhfa that embraces my body,
To the rhythm of Sahrawi songs, caring about nothing else.
Freedom is being able to live the legacies of my ancestors without fear that my identity will condemn me to a dark prison.
Freedom for me is leaving the word "refugee" behind every time someone sees me.
It’s no longer being defined by a place I didn’t choose.
Freedom for me is existing without fear.
Today, in this large, cold room, full of people, I want to tell our story. Not just mine, but the collective struggle, the dreams, the sacrifices. Our voice deserves to be heard, even though many try to silence it.
Here I am a story smuggler who wants to tell the story because each step, each word, and each memory carries weight. But it is a weight I cannot carry alone, one I cannot leave behind. I want you to carry it with me, for each of you to feel it, to remember it, to take it wherever you go.
My tears have dried for all I lost, for all I will never touch again, for those who never had the chance to tell their story.

ECHOES OF THE FORGOTTEN - DARIA

UKRAINE

I returned in the summer, a bittersweet day,
The streets felt familiar, though touched with decay.
The bakery's scent, the cobblestone's song,
For a moment, I thought, "Perhaps I belong."

But the sirens scream, shattering air,
Planes rumble above, spreading despair.
The power cuts out, the shadows descend,
The illusion of normal can never extend.

Dinner underground, in the shelter we sit,
A dusty, cold room where no light is lit.
My brother's school is a vault beneath ground,
Where childhood's laughter makes no sound.

They've stolen so much–our land, our lives,
Dreams of tomorrow cut down like knives.
My uncle, my aunt–they now belong
To memories whispered in grief's quiet song.
Homes stand hollow, their walls burned black,
Whole cities erased, with no way back.

But there's something they'll never destroy,
Not our courage, not our joy.
The songs of my people still fill the air,
Our language, our spirit–they'll always be there.
Grandmothers guarding their history with pride,
Children who learn with rockets outside.

They've stolen so much, yet we refuse to break,
Their cruelty, their hate, it only fuels our wake.
Their bombs may destroy, their guns may kill,
But our hearts, our will, they can never still.

So raise your voice, as silence is their game–
Stand with us, and ignite this flame.
It's time to act, time to care,
Or watch as we perish, alone in despair.



How did you find this experience of peace and conflict transformation?
You run a workshop, how was it?
What do you think should be done differently?
Did all these experiences filled out your expectations?
What would you like to see next year for peace and conflict transformation day?

INTERVIEW WITH KRU CURRAN

The peace and conflict transformation day was a deeply enriching experience for me. What made it truly special was the diversity of intelligent, compassionate individuals from various backgrounds and life experiences who participated. Our community holds a wealth of knowledge and experience that often goes unrecognized, and this event provided a valuable glimpse into our collective wisdom and the complexities of our world.

I facilitated a theater workshop focused on peace-related monologues–many actually addressing war and conflict. We began with a brief discussion before participants selected monologues to practice and receive feedback on. I was impressed by everyone's serious and respectful approach. It was particularly rewarding to see Crystal and Nikki volunteer to present their work afterward.

The main limitation was time. We couldn't fully perfect the performances or, more importantly, process the emotional impact of engaging with such weighty material about war and conflict. When performing these pieces, you're affected on an emotional level, and we needed more space to unpack those feelings together.

While the day met my expectations, I believe these conversations should be integrated into our daily lives rather than confined to a single annual event. One day of discussion doesn't allow these important topics to truly sink in. I appreciated what we accomplished, but I want more.

Looking ahead, I'd suggest expanding this initiative–perhaps to a full day or even threading activities throughout an entire week. The day itself was valuable with meaningful conversations, but my real desire is for more regularity. Some UWCs implement weekly or biweekly "Global Affairs" community discussions about current world events. Implementing something similar here–even just a recurring hour-long session–would make a significant difference.
These discussions shouldn't be treated as annual checkboxes but as ongoing conversations that deepen our understanding and connection to global issues and to each other.

Interviewed by Marceline, Grade 11

REFLECTIONS ON PRESENTING

RAHEEL, AFGHANISTAN

WHAT WAS YOUR WORKSHOP ABOUT?

MY WORKSHOP WAS ABOUT HOW EDUCATION IS AFFECTED IN CONFLICT ZONES, PARTICULARLY IN AFGHANISTAN. I SHARED MY PERSONAL JOURNEY, WHICH IS ALSO THE STORY OF MILLIONS OF AFGHAN WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF THEIR BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH 30 YEARS OF CONFLICT AND THE TALIBAN'S OPPRESSIVE RULE. THE AIM OF MY WORKSHOP WAS TO HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN PROMOTING PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE WORLD.

WHAT WAS THE MOST SURPRISING OR IMPACTFUL MOMENT FROM THE WORKSHOP FOR YOU?

THE MOST INSPIRING AND IMPACTFUL MOMENT IN MY WORKSHOP WAS WHILE THE PARTICIPANTS WROTE A MOTIVATIONAL LETTER FOR THE CHILDREN IN CONFLICT ZONES TO EMPATHIZE WITH THEM. IT REMINDED US TO THINK ABOUT OUR OWN PRIVILEGES, OPPORTUNITIES, SHARED EXPERIENCES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS HUMANITY. IT SHOWED ME THAT WHILE OUR PATHS MAY DIFFER, WE ALL HAVE THE CAPACITY TO USE WHATEVER WE HAVE TO UPLIFT OTHERS.

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE IMPACT OF PEACE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION DAY HAD ON OUR CAMPUS?

I THINK THAT DAY WAS THE MOST INSPIRING AND IMPACTFUL DAY IN MY UWC EXPERIENCE. AT THE END OF THE DAY OF EVERYONE WAS FILLED WITH SO MUCH EMOTION AFTER DISCUSSING SO MANY HEARTBREAKING CONFLICTS IN THE WORLD. BUT RATHER THAN LEAVING US FEELING HOPELESS, IT REINFORCED EMPATHY AND INSPIRATION IN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY IT REMINDED US THAT PEACEBUILDING STARTS WITH AWARENESS, AND EVEN SMALL ACTIONS LIKE EDUCATING OURSELVES ABOUT THE CONFLICTS THAT HINDER PEACE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Thoughts from P&CT Leadership

Krystal, Uganda

Q. HOW DID THE PEACEBUILDING SOCIETY CONTRIBUTE TO MAKING THIS EVENT HAPPEN?

THE PEACE BUILDING SOCIETY CONTRIBUTED TO THE DAY IN MORE WAYS THAN WORDS CAN EXPRESS. FROM CURATING WORKSHOPS TO COLLECTING STORIES AND RUNNING PEACE-BUILDING SIMULATIONS, THE TEAM DID A TREMENDOUS JOB AT ENSURING A SMOOTH FLOW OF THE DAY WHILE STILL KEEPING OUR INTENTIONS.

Q. ***WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU FACE WHILE ORGANIZING THIS EVENT, AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THEM?***

I'D SAY ONE OF THE MAIN PERSONAL CHALLENGES WAS TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO MAKE PEOPLE THAT WOULD NOT TYPICALLY BE HEAVILY INVESTED INTO THE DAY (FOR THE LACK OF A BETTER WAY TO PUT IT) TO BE INTRIGUED, WHILE STILL HONORING THE TIME AND ENERGY OF THOSE WHO WOULD. IF THAT MAKES SENSE. SO THIS MAYBE LOOKED LIKE DELIBERATELY MAKING SOME WORKSHOPS FUN AND INTERACTIVE TO CATCH PEOPLE'S ATTENTION, EVEN THOUGH THE ISSUES WE AIMED TO ADDRESS ON P&CT DAY ARE NOT FUN AT ALL. THEY'RE SERIOUS ISSUES THAT SHOULD DEMAND ATTENTION WHETHER OR NOT THE WORKSHOPS ARE 'CAPTIVATING'.
HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THE TEAM MANAGED TO FIND THE PERFECT BLEND OF SERIOUSNESS AND ENGAGEMENT.
ANOTHER CHALLENGE WAS MAKING SURE ALL THE VOICES WERE NOT ONLY HEARD BUT ALSO LISTENED TO, BOTH EXTERNALLY AND ALSO WITH IN THE PEACE BUILDING SOCIETY. THIS LOOKED LIKE REACHING OUT TO PEOPLE AND ASKING FOR THEM TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH US SO WE COULD HONOR THEM. THIS ALSO LOOKED LIKE LONG DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN TEAM MEMBERS TO ENSURE THAT WE WERE ALL ON THE SAME PAGE.

Q. WHAT DO YOU HOPE STUDENTS TOOK AWAY FROM THIS EXPERIENCE?

I HOPE STUDENTS LEFT THE DAY WITH EMPATHY AND BOLDNESS. I HOPE THEY LEFT THE SPACE WITH THE COURAGE TO ASK QUESTIONS OR SPEAK RESPECTFULLY AND EMPATHETICALLY ON PEACE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION. I HOPE THAT THE CONVERSATIONS THAT WERE HAD IN THE CONFINES OF THE DIFFERENT WORKSHOP LOCATIONS SLOWLY TURN TO MONTHLY, THEN WEEKLY, THEN DAILY CONVERSATIONS.
FINALLY, I HOPE THAT PEACE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION BECOMES NOT JUST A DAY, BUT A LIFESTYLE.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN KINDERGARTEN

DEAR KRU MARK AND BOARD MEMBERS,

WE ARE WRITING ON BEHALF OF KINDERGARTEN WHO, INSPIRED BY OUR CURRENT UNIT OF INQUIRY, HAVE TAKEN SOME ACTION AND ASKED US TO PASS THEIR MESSAGE FORWARD.

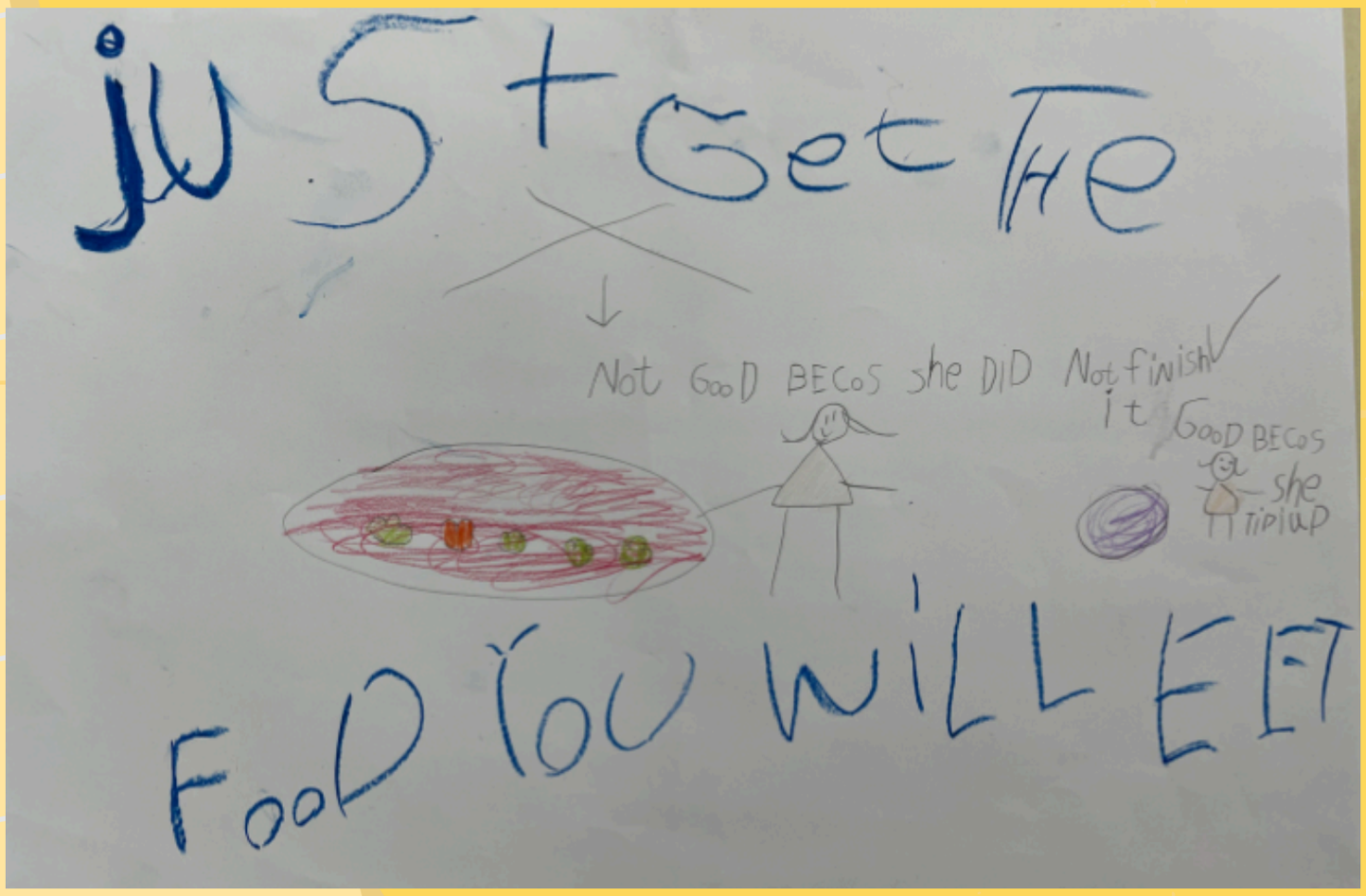
IN ORDER TO GIVE YOU SOME CONTEXT, THE CENTRAL IDEA OF OUR UNIT OF INQUIRY, UNDER THETHEME OF HOW WE ORGANIZE OURSELVES, IS "SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SOLVE PROBLEMS BY LISTENING TO IDEAS, MAKING DECISIONS AND TAKING ACTION TOGETHER." COLLABORATIVELY, WE LOOKED AT SOME CHALLENGES WE FACE IN THE EARLY YEARS AND HOW WE CAN FIND SOLUTIONS TO MAKE OUR CORNER OF THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE FOR EVERYONE. BY INTERVIEWING SOME OTHER GRADE STUDENTS, THEY IDENTIFIED THE CHALLENGE OF NOT HAVING CUPS AVAILABLE AT THE CAFETERIA. THEIR CHOSEN SOLUTION WAS TO MAKE POSTERS TO REMIND STUDENTS TO ALWAYS BRING THEIR WATER BOTTLES. ANOTHER SELF-INITIATED ACTION WAS A POSTER FOR THE CAFETERIA, ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO ONLY GET THE FOOD THEY ARE GOING TO EAT. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, A GROUP OF STUDENTS HAVE CHOSEN TO RECORD A VIDEO AS THEIR ACTION. HOWEVER, THEIR REQUEST IS OUT OF OUR "JURISDICTION", WHICH IS WHY WE ARE WRITING THIS LETTER.

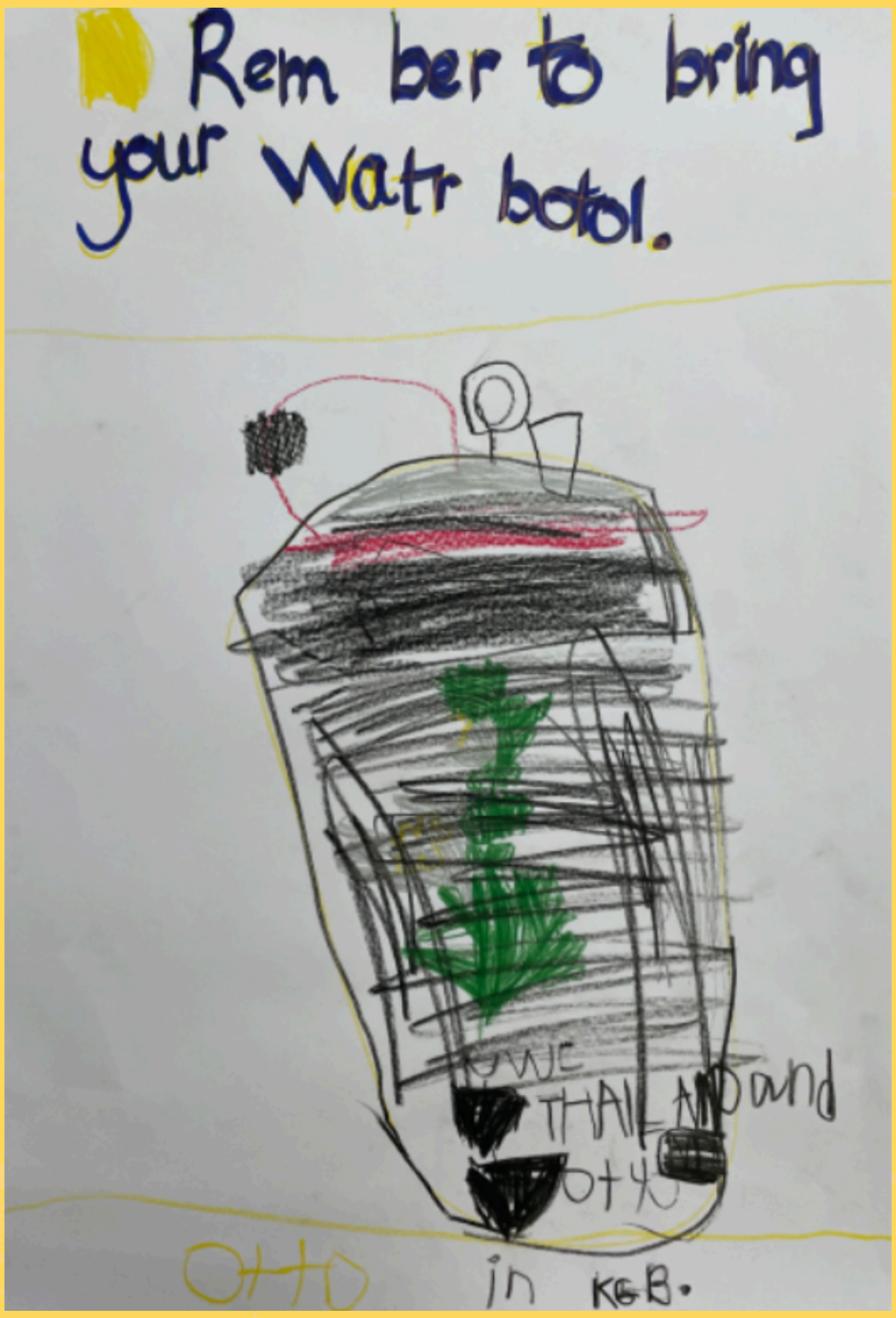
CURRENTLY, THEY ARE ONLY ABLE TO ENJOY THE PLAYGROUND IN THE MORNING UNTIL 10:00 AS "IT GETS TERRIBLY HOT", IN THEIR OWN WORDS. WE WILL BE HAPPY TO WELCOME YOU ON A TOUR SO THE CHILDREN CAN EXPLAIN THEIR THINKING AND IDEAS FURTHER.

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND, INDEPENDENTLY OF THE OUTCOME, WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU.

KINDEST REGARDS AND WISHING YOU VERY HAPPY HOLIDAYS,

THE KINDERGARTEN TEAM


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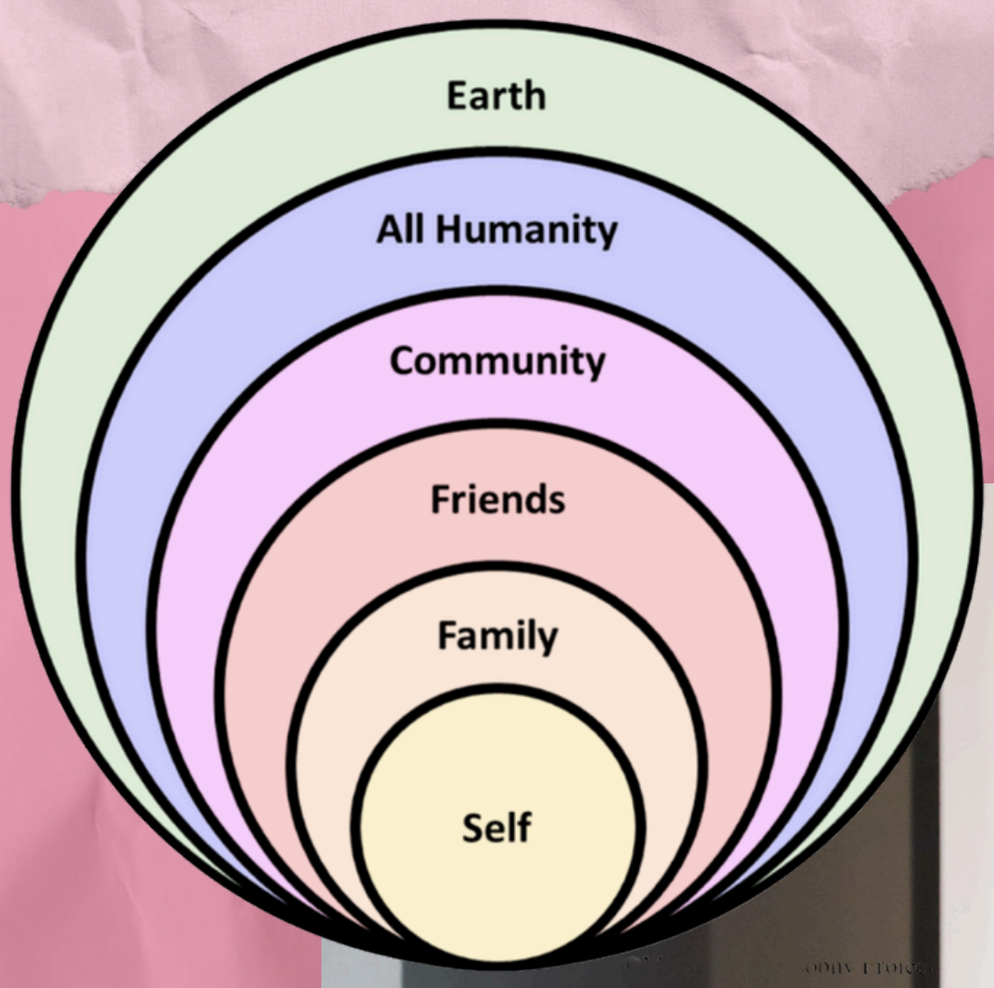




WORKSHOP WITH QUAMARUZZAMAN

“Q's workshop was powerful in its balance of realism and optimism. Q didn't shy away from the extraordinary challenges faced by those working to build peace in a world rife with conflict; however, he helped us find a transformative vision of how self-awareness and intentional community building can translate to powerful connections between people around the world, ultimately leading to positive change”

- Kru Elizabeth





“Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.”

-Rumi

THEATRE IN PEACE AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: NICKY CHILE

Theatre as a Tool for Change

I have seen firsthand how theatre can challenge injustice and heal communities. My journey with Theatre of the Oppressed–a form of interactive theatre by Brazilian theorist Augusto Boal–has shown me its power in peace and conflict transformation. It is more than just storytelling; it is a way to amplify unheard voices and turn pain into action.

Speaking Truth Through Theatre

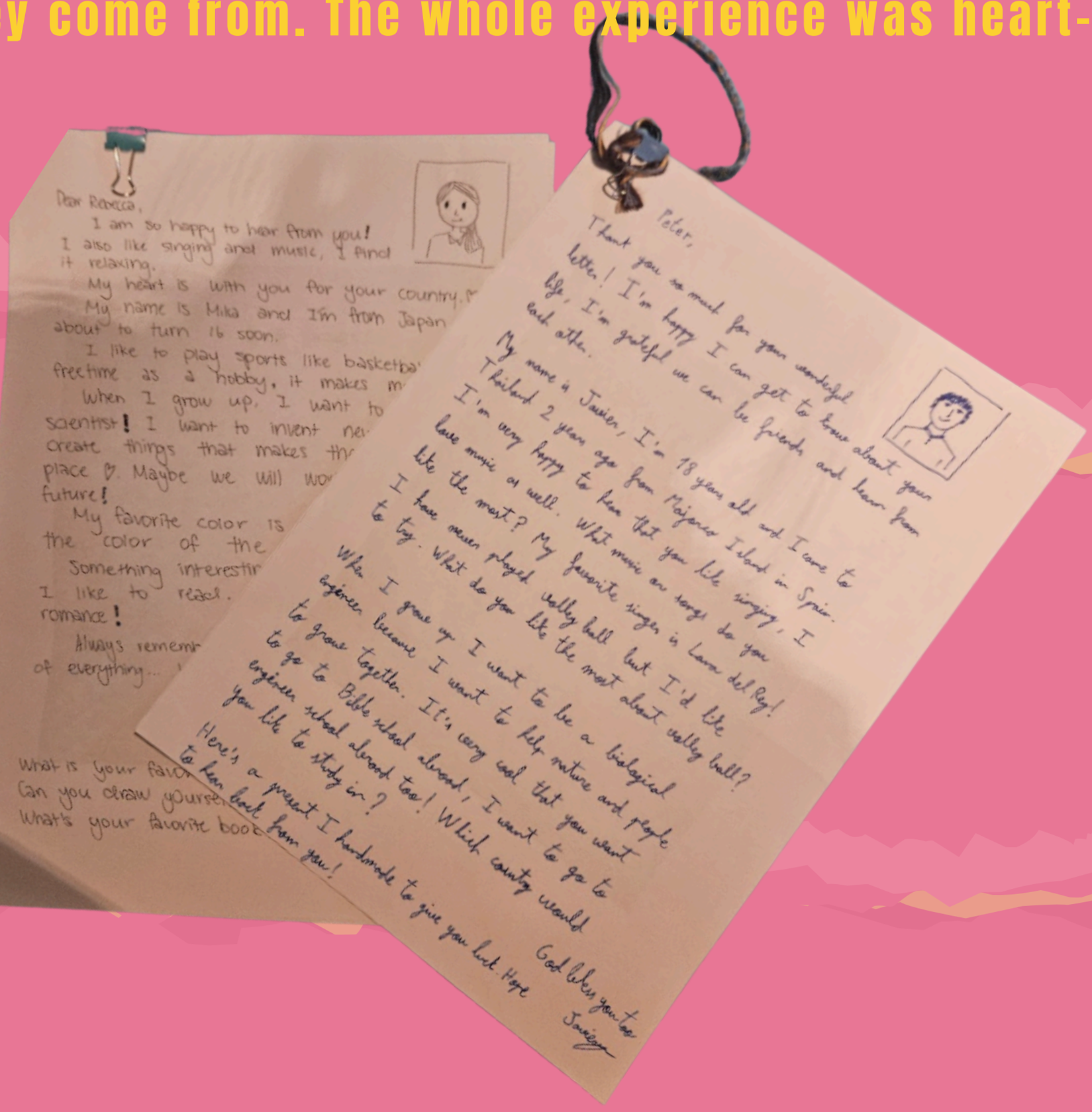
One of my teachers once worked with elderly women in a hospital during a political crisis, using theatre to highlight injustices in the healthcare system. Through performance, they found both a voice and potential solutions. This struck me–how theatre could empower everyday people, start difficult conversations, and drive real change. It wasn't just about exposing problems but also about finding ways to address them together. Another defining moment for me was Auspicianas, a performance addressing gender violence in my hometown, Altos Picio. Staged in public spaces, it challenged traditional narratives about women's roles in the community. Unlike conventional theatre, the audience surrounded the performers, making it immersive and inescapable. I remember watching the crowd–people who may have never stepped into a theatre–engaged, moved, and questioning the realities they once accepted. Seeing theatre create that kind of impact was unforgettable.

Theatre as Resistance and Healing

For me, theatre is more than art–it's activism. It helps people express frustration, grief, and hope, fostering dialogue and social change. It gives space for people to process trauma and reimagine their futures. On Peace and Conflict Transformation Day, I performed a moving monologue that captured these themes, proving that theatre doesn't just reflect reality–it reshapes it. I now understand that theatre has the power to transform not just individuals but entire communities, making it one of the most powerful tools for peace and resistance.

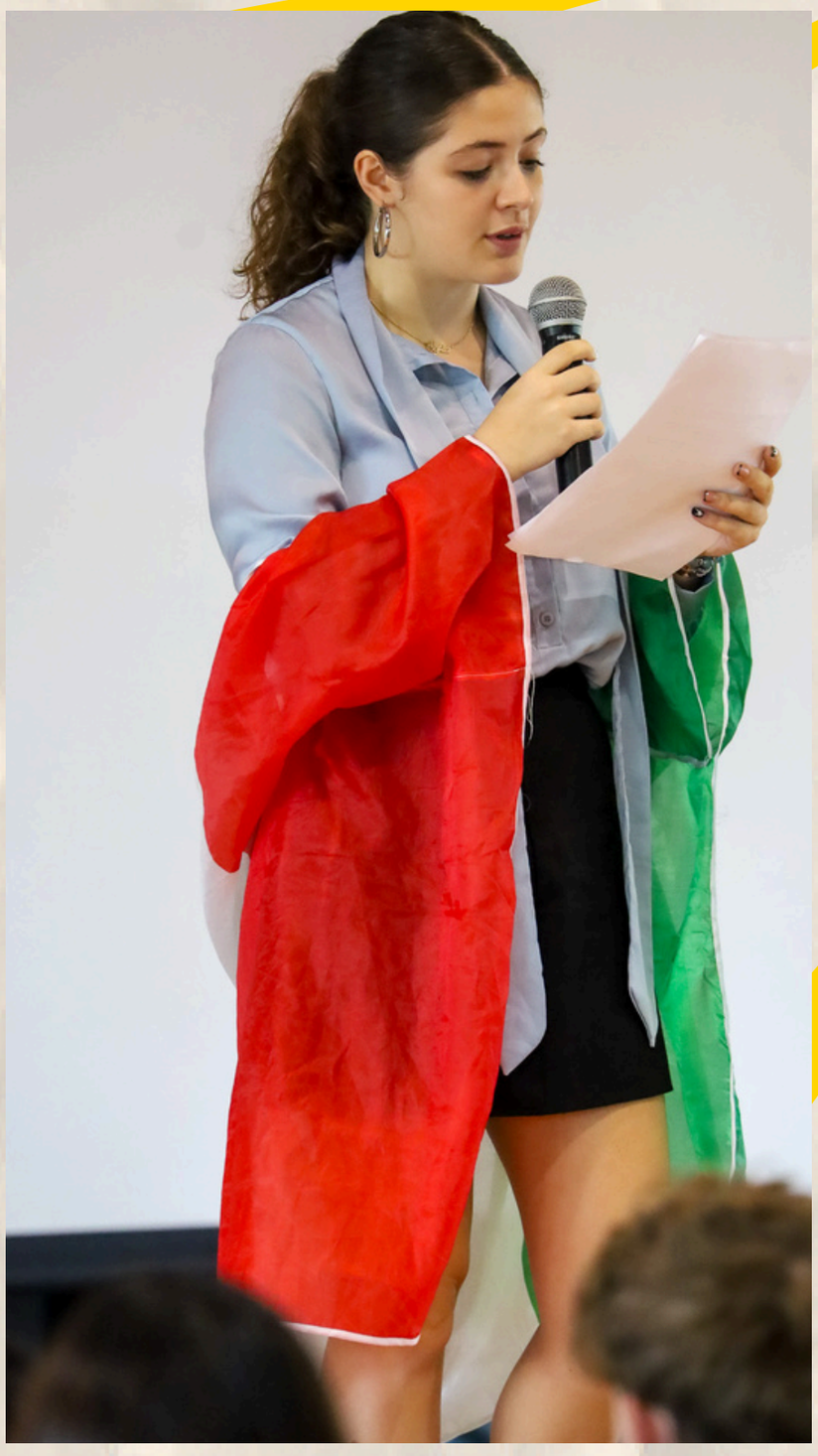
PENPAL WORKSHOP: NARA'S EXPERIENCE

Having been working during the workshop as a member of Peace Building Society to help facilitate the workshop, I was really impressed and touched by the engagement happening there. It was very casual, fun but still informative, as all participants were really eager to connect to friends around the same age as them, who live in a more complicated environment they've never experienced before. No matter what grades they are I saw all of them actively engaging, asking questions whether they are allowed to do this and that, can they draw, can they decorate. Some of them even attached the letter, their handmade bracelet, and a polaroid picture. I'm glad this session prompted awareness in the issue of continuing loops of refugees which had been rooted from the exploitative government now is known more to these participants, as the spotlight most of the time is on striking, new issues. A lot of them also talk about their favorite movies, their hobbies, and what they want to do with their lives in the letter. I think the pen pal workshop is evidence that humans can connect no matter where they come from. The whole experience was heart-warming




Strengths
Limit
- Tangible impacts
easy to see / measure
- Potentially comprehensive
- Builds soft/relational power
- Benefit not spread equally
- Short-term exploitation
- Exacerbate inequality
- Narrow view
- Natural focus
- Qualitative : includes rights
- Society-building
- Legitimacy
- Indicates a "functioning system"
- Natural flows
- Long-term focus
- Holistic
Who are the Taliban?







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We asked grade two what peace means for them:

pese mens to me calm and qiyet

peace to me is me being in my room alone

QUIET, SITING OR STANDING and on my own

PEACE to me is BEING mINDFULL AND CALm

Peace mean no fight

QUIET MINDFUL

PEACE mean Quiet NO fighting NO war