

This Social Change Initiative report is submitted by **Ts’epang Joel Matsietsa** as a requirement to complete Post Graduate Diploma in Peace Building and Conflict Transformation at Makerere University

**Project:**

Participation and inclusion of youths in the decision-making processes

**Country of Implementation:**

Lesotho

**Location**

Mafeteng, Leribe and Maseru (Lesotho)

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# **Abstract**

Significant progress was made during the initial nine-month reporting period in executing planned activities for the project "Participation and Inclusion of Youths in Decision-Making Processes," led by Rotary Peace Fellow Ts’epang Matsietsa at Makerere University. The project included staff orientation, consultations with school administrations and teachers, and the establishment of platforms for student training in peace education, mediation, and leadership. Capacity-building workshops were conducted at Johnson Baker High School, Sacred Heart High School, and Ikaheng High School, extending the initiative to another district. This project addresses the critical issue of youth exclusion, especially students, from decision-making processes within secondary schools and national structures, emphasizing the importance of their voices being heard. The design involved introducing the initiative, engaging with department heads, conducting student training across three districts, establishing student platforms, and collecting data on participation and outcomes. Key activities included project introduction, student training sessions, and platform establishment for dialogue. These efforts have fostered student engagement, encouraged nonviolent conflict resolution, and promoted a culture of peace and respect. The training sessions empowered students to engage in discussions on leadership, peacebuilding, and community issues, leading to increased awareness of human rights and social challenges. The project's activities have significantly advanced the goals of enhancing youth participation and fostering inclusivity in decision-making, laying a strong foundation for continued progress in creating a cohesive school community.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **Introduction Background**

As part of completing the Postgraduate Diploma in Peace and Conflict Transformation at the Makerere Rotary Peace Centre, Peace Fellows must carry out a nine-month project in their respective countries. My project focuses on promoting the participation and inclusion of youth in decision-making processes, specifically targeting secondary school students. Initially, the project was concentrated in the Mafeteng district, known as the most violent district in Lesotho and the birthplace of the Famo music gangs. Due to high demand, the project has expanded to include the Maseru and Leribe districts. Within secondary schools, the program aims to create platforms for students, provide leadership training, encourage schools to allow students to democratically elect their own leaders, offer training on peace and conflict transformation, and promote the use of peaceful dialogues to resolve issues. Insights and observations from these interactions will be documented, analyzed, and used to develop actionable recommendations. Follow-up meetings will be held post-visit to validate findings and refine the action plan. This approach ensures thorough data collection, stakeholder engagement, and practical outcomes.

The project's objective is to raise awareness among all stakeholders about the importance of involving and recognizing youth and students in decision-making processes. By creating an inclusive environment where young voices are valued, the project aims to contribute to a more peaceful and just society. It is worth noting that the project has been carried out through a student organization called Young Christian Students in Lesotho. This organization is dedicated to addressing issues affecting young people and advocating for the active participation of youth in societal development. YCS focuses on raising awareness and promoting action among students on broader issues of social justice, solidarity with the marginalized, oppressed, and the poor. YCS recognizes young people as key stakeholders in the development of society as a whole.

## **Problem Statement**

The Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho has developed various policies which include Child-Friendly School Standards policy which was designed to support inclusive and participatory environments for students. Though the policy is outdated and there are processes undertaken to develop the new one, it explicitly mandates the inclusion of students in presenting their issues in the school board meetings. Furthermore, pillar 1 within the policy emphasizes the importance of inclusive learner leadership, asserting that student leaders should be democratically elected to ensure equal representation of boys and girls. Additionally, the policy stipulates that elected student leaders should undergo training to understand their roles, responsibilities, and limitations.

Despite the policy's clear directives, there is still an implementation deficit. Many schools in Lesotho have not utilized its provisions that guide the process of including students in decision-making. A critical issue arises in the process of selecting student leaders, where undemocratic practices often lead to conflicts within the school community. Furthermore, the absence of designated platforms like (student councils) for students to actively participate in decision-making processes worsens the problem. It has been observed that practice indicates a deviation from these principles, leading to the emergence of leaders without a democratic mandate, exacerbating gender imbalances, and compromising the quality of leadership. Also, the lack of student leadership training contributes to ineffective leadership and an inadequate response to issues raised by students, including concerns related to injustice, discipline, and punishment.

As a result, this crucial avenue for student input remains largely untapped. This neglect of student voices not only contradicts the policy but also denies students the opportunity to contribute to the governance and improvement of their learning environments. Therefore, there is a pressing need to address these challenges and bridge the implementation deficit regarding the existing Child-Friendly School Standards policy and the actual practices within Lesotho secondary schools. This involves fostering a culture of democratic student leadership, creating platforms for meaningful student participation in decision-making, and ensuring that elected leaders are adequately trained to fulfil their roles effectively. By doing so, schools in Lesotho can move towards a more inclusive and participatory educational environment that aligns with the principles outlined in the policy.

## **Goal**

To create an inclusive environment in the school by empowering students to actively participate in decision-making, minimizing conflicts through dialogue, understanding, and cooperation, and promoting a culture of peace and respect.

## **Objectives**

* To initiate awareness campaigns on digital platforms regarding the significance of involving and including youths in decision-making processes by the end of the first quarter of 2024.
* To foster a peaceful and supportive academic environment for the 2024/2025 academic year.

## **Challenges and Mitigation Strategies**

* Challenges Limited time due to schools’ timetable which often hinders progress.
* Lack of willingness by teachers
* Fear from the school that the students will become politically involved
* Scarcity of resources to carryout activities.
* Difficulty in meeting with policy makers including the Ministry of Education and Training and the Parliament Portfolio Committees.

## **Mitigation strategies**

To mitigate these challenges, a meeting was held with the school’s principal, deputy principal, and heads of departments to highlight the value of the project. This helped in building understanding and support. To address the scarcity of resources, a partnership was formed with the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN), and a social enterprise was established to sell second-hand shoes for resource mobilization. Concerns about political involvement were alleviated by assuring the school management that the project promotes peaceful dialogue, not political engagement. To engage policy makers, we used LCN’s NGO Week to raise issues and present project findings, enabling discussions with key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education and Parliament Portfolio Committees.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **Literature Review**

Students’ participation in the community and school environment is an essential for enabling communities and countries to develop and reach their full potential. Young people who have traditionally been viewed as for years been seen as recipients of change or development are now demanding their space and becoming increasingly important stakeholders in the implementation and management of development programs. Young people are now seen as key drivers of change and ignoring their demands or influence can be detrimental.

The chapter presents literature review, of available platforms for youth in schools and outside of schools can participate and what are the challenges facing them in terms of having platforms where they can voice their issues. The following topics will be discussed: participation and inclusion, students’ participation, structures (formal or informal) available for youth and students to voice their ideas/concerns and the challenges they face.

Participation and inclusion are widely accepted aspects of development, fundamental human rights and prerequisite conditions for inclusive and sustainable development (Yazdani et al., 2018). The 2006 African Youth Charter recognised the right to participation and inclusion of all youth. Since then, there has been growing interest in the promotion of youth rights -inclusive education, employment and community development. However, there is limited evidence about how participation and inclusion are conceptualised and interpreted within different contexts. This is particularly evident in developing countries with different socio-cultural contexts. A comprehensive understanding of the meaning of participation and inclusion in these contexts may help to interpret these terms in local policy and practice environments, thereby contributing to better formulation and implementation of youth inclusive policies and programs.

For oppressed groups, participation can be rewarding, offering a voice and a sense of ownership while also exposing challenging levels. It can be a painful process, exposing people to conflicts, failures and disappointments. Thus, it is essential to consider how much participation is beneficial. Participatory approaches may be broader than techniques that encourage participation. More critical and political interpretations may focus on power, oppression and how participatory approaches might go wrong. Participatory development can be seen as an attempt to encourage collective learning; and foster more equitable relations of knowledge-making.

The term student participation is commonly used to mean the involvement of students in the decision-making processes of organizations and institutions such as schools (M. Mulwa et al., 2015). Such participation does not necessarily need to occur at a formal and institutional level. Baker and Shopes (1983) regard student participation as the involvement of students in the formulation, application and evaluation of educational policies and decisions which, in turn, lead to educational changes and innovations. There are other definitions that consider the socio-political and philosophical dimensions of the term. For instance, Holdsworth (1991, as cited in Chinsamy, 1995) describes student participation as the involvement of students in determining their own environments, in the pursuit of their objectives and aspirations, socially, politically, economically, and educationally, in matters of concern to them, thereby establishing the conditions for equitable, just, responsible and mutually respectful relationships with pedagogical agents and educational authorities. A briefer socio-political definition of student participation is provided by Asthana (1989) who sees it as a process of involving people structurally and actively in education-related matters that address their needs and interests. Dhir (1982) describes ‘student participation’ as a ‘policy question’; a debated issue regarding what functions and decision-making powers students should have in the management and administration of secondary school education (Chinsamy, 1995).

### **Lesotho**

In Lesotho, the concept of student participation in decision-making processes within schools is gaining recognition as essential for fostering responsible citizenship and leadership among youths. The Education Act No. 3 of 2010 acknowledges students as stakeholders; however, their voices remain largely excluded from formal decision-making structures, such as school boards and the unavailability of student leadership structures thereby effectively rendering them passive recipients of decisions made by adults. This exclusion is rooted in cultural perceptions that view children as minors, relegating decision-making to parents and school authorities.

The Lesotho National Youth Policy advocates for the gradual establishment of youth centres at the community level. Currently there exists a national youth co-ordinating structure established by an Act of Parliament in 2008, known as the National Youth Council of Lesotho. There are other civic structures modelled after Lesotho’s political party system.

This little-known matter began some 35 years ago, as an effort by students to structure themselves and rally for a common cause, which was the right to associate freely within institutions of learning in Lesotho. COSAS formed an umbrella group for various student councils throughout the country. Student governance refers to student councils created on the school community or national level. While Young Christian Students in Lesotho and Student Christian Movement have also played a part in supporting and forming students’ leadership programs in schools. Current arrangements on the governance of youth have this history. Regarding the Lesotho National Youth Policy, two matters are covered. The first deals with the formal structures at the moment of the policy and the second deals with informal structures that are emerging (Mudimu, 2017).

Youth councils exist in various forms across the globe. In some countries there are national youth councils, whilst in others there are either local youth councils, or youth representation is provided through a different level of structure such as an umbrella formation. A national youth council is a representative organisation that advocates for the rights of young people at a national level. Unlike to umbrella formations, which cater to a single sector of civil society and which are typically more passive, youth councils have more active public roles. National youth councils advocate for young people and typically interface with broader governance systems at a national level such as parliaments. Examples of such councils are, for example, the South African Youth Council (SAYC) in South Africa, the Young People’s Council in Sweden, or the Council of Europe Advisory Council on Youth (Gloria. Chanza, 2006).

Nationwide youth councils have emerged in several developing nations across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Recently, national youth councils have also emerged in countries undergoing political transition, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. These transformations generally occurred following the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994. There, it was pointed out that youth participation is critical for governance structures in both developing and developed nations alike (Mudimu, 2017).

Assuming an understanding of the common terms in the field of Youth and Student Participation, the following will not provide any specific definitions for the terms here. It will highlight the theory and practice for youth and student participation but focusing on the objectives, challenges, and guidelines concerning the education system of Youth and Student Participation structures in the context of Lesotho. Further, a study conducted in other similar developing countries (South Africa) relating to its civil society's role will also be included discussing a similar topic around socio-economic issues for youth and student characters of the society. One of the important focuses for this Literature review will be the Student Unions and Associations and the education system represented numbers/stats in the context of Lesotho that will represent the educational scenario comparable to South Africa.

Youth and Student Participation is seen as a part of youth empowerment that can involve the process where young people are encouraged and supported to take part in decision-making activities and processes which are concerned with their lives or the lives of other young people (Gloria. Chanza, 2006). Structurally, it is divided into two levels i.e., Youth Participation structures and Student Participation structures. In South Africa, Youth Participation is embraced through the National Youth Policy of 2000 founded on values enshrined in the South African Constitution. On the other hand, Student Participation is embraced, through the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the Regulations on the Establishment of Learner Representative Councils of 1999 focusing on the elections of the councils in opportune consultation, and care for a considerate understanding of learners’ needs and rights (for instance, Disability and Participation of Learners with Disabilities in School Governance).

### **Africa**

The African Union Commission’s Agenda 2063 recognises young people as an important force for the continent’s social, political and economic development. However, conflicts, youth unemployment, human trafficking and socio-economic inequalities hindering the realisation of youth’s potential as agents of change and development (Waigwe Muchiri, 2017). In Africa, youth make up the majority of the continent’s population, with approximately 60% of Africa’s one billion people being under the age of 35. In South Africa, youth under the age of 35 comprise more than 50% of the total population. It is important to highlight that “youth” is defined differently depending on the context. In South Africa, according to the National Youth Policy (2020), youth are defined as persons aged 14 to 35.

Youth participation in decision- and policy-making processes that affect them is of both global and regional importance and is supported by international and regional frameworks (such as the African Youth Charter). With the growing necessity of critical and systematic youth participation, it is imperative to take stock of existing literature on youth participation in Africa, especially the processes, spaces and channels through which youth voice their issues and concerns. Literature that assesses emerging opportunities and challenges for formal and nonformal youth participation in Africa is scarce. Studies that provide a better understanding of existing youth participation literature, including the gaps, biases and limitations, are lacking (Geza et al., 2021).

### **World**

Understanding how young people in schools can be included in decision-making and how the meaning of participation can be interpreted differently is imperative, especially given the cultural differences in democratic practice throughout the world. The exploration of inclusion may provide insight into the ability of some children and young people to participate in decision-making, while at the same time, it may reveal tensions involved in groups’ participation and ensuring that this does not aggravate existing inequalities among children. An empirical case study of councils within schools and local authorities, purposely selected because of their emphasis on the involvement of children in democratic processes, has been subjected to a critical analysis of these tensions. In this process, the concept of participation has been operationalised (Graham et al., 2019).

A full picture of how a particular situation is being conceptualised can be gained by attending to different perspectives and interests. All actors involved in, advocate for, or are affected by a particular issue will have their own views, understandings, and interests. In addition, the broader societal context also provides varied interpretations of a situation, affecting how participation is being conceptualised. Therefore, using a plural understanding of the school as a democratising arena also includes an understanding of differences among children and, accordingly, a focus on exclusion, furthering insight into how democracy is being understood and practised in schools (Yadessa et al., 2022).

The empirical case of councils within schools and local authorities has demonstrated the problematic positioning of the councils in the tension between inclusion and dominance. Participation in councils, for the children involved, has meant a sense of belonging and personal agency regarding matters important to their lives. However, councils in schools and local authorities have also resulted in children’s conditions for participatory parity being eroded. Council participation has increased children’s workload and responsibilities without corresponding rights. Within school councils, children’s participation has largely failed to influence decision-making and has, instead, highlighted the power of adults. In councils on the local authority level, it has even been argued that children’s participation has silenced their voice by adhering to a predetermined agenda of issues deemed appropriate for children to enter into.

There has been an increase in the calls for genuine participation and inclusion of students in decision-making processes. Particularly, young people’s involvement in decision-making processes that affect them has been controversially under focus in education organizations over the last two decades (Graham et al., 2019). European institutions have begun to advocate for the full participation of students in the decision-making process in education. In many different contexts, decision making has been deemed at best questionable and at worst dangerous and misleading without the views of those whom these decisions affect most. In education, it is easy to forget that the principals and teachers, most importantly the students within the school, are not only affected by the decisions but also contextually and experientially knowledgeable. As this call for action rises, it becomes pertinent to examine the efforts and readiness of such decision making.

There exists a growing body of literature examining the participation and inclusion of students in decision-making processes (Yadessa et al., 2022). However, the effort to scrutinize those processes from the Global South perspective, particularly Africa, seems scanty. Consequently, the need for this literature arises. There are remarkable challenges and opportunities for the participation and inclusion of students in decision-making in developing nations. Here, Ethiopia depicts one of such stories concerning the challenges and opportunities for participation and inclusion.

Exclusion from decision-making processes relating to policies, regulations, and student affairs has been widely reported by students. In addition to concerns about lack of knowledge and information sharing, students prior to representation, claimed to experience exclusion from decision-making processes. Students also reported exclusion from access to documents, regulations, procedures, and information relevant to student concerns and the decision-making process (Yadessa et al., 2022). Exclusion from institutional decision-making processes is one of the biggest challenges faced by undergraduates for active representation and participation. Resultingly, institutional governance may be secretive and undemocratic and limit accountability to all stakeholders. When student concerns are intentionally excluded from decision-making processes by managements, the institution fails to govern at its best.

The right to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly is the basic foundation of student representative systems to govern student affairs and promote student rights in educational institutions (Khoaeane & Naong, 2015). Nonetheless, students have been silenced, excluded, restricted, and denied these rights by many institutions around the globe. Even if the status of student representation existed, becoming involved in and shaping institutional policies and directions is almost impossible without freedom of expression and access to information. If freedom of expression is restrained and there is no access to information, representation would merely become tokenistic and meaningless as no individual student’s views would be voiced in the decision-making process. Furthermore, becoming involved in the decision-making process without access to adequate information on students’ issues, policies, and regulations relevant to the concern being represented would be futile.

## **Theoretical Underpinnings**

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in youth participation, voice and inclusion, especially in educational contexts. Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, as outlined in several resolutions and recommendations of the Council of Europe adopted in the late 1990s, highlights the importance of equipping young people with the knowledge and skills enabling them to participate actively in democratic processes. The participation of students is seen as a measure of democracy in schools, focusing on empowerment and engagement (Shiratuddin et al., 2017). Within these, there are three different aspects that require exploration within this context: student participation of students in school governing bodies, as well as consultative bodies without decision-making powers and students’ participation in an informal way, that is, outside school, in political and community activities. School governing bodies can be defined as decision-making entities, such as school committees where students have the right to vote. Other bodies may be more consultative in nature or involve initiatives within the classroom setting. The term ‘global youth activism’, akin to ‘student activism’, refers to youth and students’ participation in expressive activities with formal (non)governmental actors beyond the local level or in supranational fora.

However, the involvement of youth and students in global decision-making processes is often perceived as problematic. Discussions often centre around the need for youth and students to be ‘better represented’, ‘trained’ or ‘included’. These approaches, focus on moulding youth and students to meet the expectations and demands of the global governance system. Yet, whether this is feasible in an optimistic view or necessary in a pessimistic view, it disregards the broader pertinent questions surrounding the role of youth and students in global governance and its implications for the governance system itself (Flewitt et al., 2017). Moreover, the disagreement about the nature of youth and education could lead to decisions that hinder the goal of participation and inclusion.

### **Human Rights Approach Theory**

In accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, every person holds a number of rights regardless of age, gender, colour, social status, etc. Children and youths have the same human rights values as adults, with special guarantees for these rights, taking into account age, development, and special needs of the individuals. Participation and children's rights are protected, and regulated by various laws, guarantees, and prohibitions or the following texts. Previously children’s and young people participation was limited to adults acting/speaking on their behalf. Adults took an active part in decision making without directly involving the relevant age groups. However, the children advisory boards (specific to children and exerting influence) have become well-known. These organisations, in some way, assume legislative approval and command respect. They help children feel protected and promote the exercise of speech and cultivation of personal responsibility.

### **Application of Human Rights Approach in Youth and Student Inclusion**

To enable youth and students to participate in decision-making processes, it is crucial to provide opportunities, and establish systems or mechanisms to ensure effective and meaningful engagement. These mechanisms should be institutionalized within dialogue and engagement processes, especially by responsible authorities and actors who should duly consider and treat decision making processes. This approach aligns with promoting avenues for inclusion and effective participation elaborated in this section, based on a human rights approach towards promoting avenues and pathways for the participation and inclusion of youth and students in decision-making processes. This approach has synergies with other conceptual thinking on "social inclusion" and "effective participation" meaning giving attention to, ensuring spaces for, and enabling marginalized or disadvantaged groups, including youth and students.

By applying these principles, policies, and mechanisms, engagement, dialogue, and inclusion processes could be portrayed as democratic or participatory. However, widening the lens of coded discursive intention reveals that this is not always the case. Such systems might be in place in either name or form; however, they are usually not fully enforced, applied, or supported, or fail to steer or structure action as intended. Hence, they may remain cosmetic or nominal efforts at democracy or participation (Flewitt et al., 2017). It is from such discursive perspectives that the intent of this project is anchored.

In both democracy theory and its practical implementation, the participation of people in the decision-making processes lies at the center. When democracy theory, as described in philosophical and political theories, deals with the question why people should directly or indirectly have the power to participate in making democratically significant decisions collectively, the discussion usually revolves around two important concepts: who should be able to make decisions that concern the community, and how should those making decisions be chosen? The first aspect is defined as the issue of decisions about what, the matter of electoral constituency; the second is known as the question of decisions by whom, defined by the electorate.

The answer usually given in the field of traditional democracy theory is that people should decide collectively about all issues, with the concept that sovereignty is vested in the people, making them the collective decision-makers of anything important, outside of binding interpersonal relations. This position implies the idea of full government, i.e., government by all or by the majority - the strict rule of the majority.

Every potential participant therefore has the same effective rights to participate, meaning that all potential participants have fully the same number of votes and equal rights, and no public deliberative apparatus can impose any majoritarianism or minority constraint. A democratic decision rule implies both the principles of transnationalism and convergence, and the notion of a democratic process whose characteristics define a set of possible democratic translations. This decision rule is not applicable to a general set of problems and claims that can be characterized as desirable or undesirable, defining the constraints, purposes, or values of an evaluative framework for individual and collective decisions.

This theory of democracy is of paramount importance, and its essential value lies in its essential characteristic of treating individuals as irreplaceable players in the decision-making processes: their direct or indirect participation depends on the choice of all community members. This aspect is fundamental for several reasons related to legitimacy, justice, and guarantees of respect for individuals.

### **Application of pillars of positive peace**

Positive pillar of peace that was applied was the acceptance of the rights of others, students’ rights in most cases are violated unknowingly by the teachers, their voices are not heard nor do they had any platforms to discuss some of the issues that affect them as students and youths at the same time. Not only that but the framework was used to make the students understand the sustainable peace within their communities, for example the discussion was made with students on all pillars of positive peace and they applied it within their own environment. Students reflected on various pillars of positive peace within their campus. Under Well-functioning Government, they expressed concerns about the lack of support from school governance and the absence of policies addressing student issues. They recommended that administrators receive relevant training and that policies be implemented to allow students to design community-support projects, with resources distributed equally to prevent conflicts. Regarding the Sound Business Environment, students raised issues about restrictions on running small businesses, which limited their ability to fund projects like providing sanitary towels. In terms of Equitable Distribution of Resources, students from disadvantaged backgrounds struggled due to the lack of school feeding programs and the unaffordability of fees. Under Acceptance of the Rights of Others, students felt their rights were being violated, particularly in decision-making processes, and pointed out that corporal punishment still existed. Lastly, they noted that while the Free Flow of Information was generally working, further improvements could enhance communication.

## **Change theory and its application**

The Problem which is being addressed is limited student participation and inclusion in decision-making processes within schools, lead to a lack of student representation, unresolved student issues, diminished democratic practices in school governance and conflicts between students and management.

The long-term Goal is to create a school environment where students actively participate in decision-making processes, leading to a more inclusive, democratic, and peaceful school culture that respects students' rights and perspectives.

#### **Assumptions**

The project assumptions are that the;

* School management, teachers, and students are open to adopting more democratic practices in student governance.
* Training and sensitization will effectively enhance awareness and understanding of democratic principles and other policies.
* Empowered students, will actively engage in decision-making processes and contribute to resolving issues that affect them. Inputs: The Inputs for the project are as follows;
* Training workshops on leadership, peace, conflict management, and human rights.
* Development and dissemination of a training manual for student leadership.
* Establishment of student councils and committees to represent student interests.
* Tools for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) designed for students, teachers, and management.
* Engagement with school principals, management, and other stakeholders. Activities: The activities of the project involved;
* Contacting the school Principal. Let him/her know of your interest in starting the social change initiative
* Sensitisation about the policy and the project activities.
* Having meetings with different stakeholders (Teachers, Management and Students)
* Establishment of student’s platforms (student executives, students council, clubs etc)
* Hold a training workshop for the students, in leadership, peace education and mediation.
* Designing tools for the project implementation
* Using digital platform to sensitise the students and the relevant stakeholders and providing other trainings through digital platforms.
* Data analysis
* Production of the report and hand it over to the school management and also to Makerere Rotary Peace Centre.
* Furnishing the stakeholders about the details of the project.

#### **Outputs**

The outputs for the project are;

* More than 60 students sensitized about the project and the importance of participation in decision-making.
* More than 60 students trained in leadership, peace, conflict management, and human rights.
* Establishment of 2 student councils/committees and guidelines for democratic elections within the school environment.
* Development of a leadership training manual and M&E tools for students, teachers, and management.

#### **Outcomes**

The outcomes for the project involve; Short-Term Outcomes:

* Improved awareness and understanding of the project objectives among school management, teachers, and students.
* Enhanced commitment to democratic principles, leading to increased compliance with student inclusion in decision-making.
* Adoption of transparent and democratic election processes for student leaders.
* Strengthened leadership skills among elected student representatives.

#### **Medium-Term Outcomes**

* Active involvement of students in school governance, contributing to more inclusive and participatory decision-making.
* Improved communication and collaboration among school management, teachers, and students.
* Increased trust and a positive school culture that values open communication and shared decision-making.

#### **Impact**

Long-Term Impact;

* Establishment of a sustainable model for student participation in decision-making processes, leading to a more democratic, peaceful, and inclusive school environment.
* Creation of a generation of students who are empowered, responsible, and capable of leading future democratic processes at national and community levels.

### **Application of Theory of Change**

The Theory of Change was applied through a strategic implementation plan that involved direct engagement with students, training them to become leaders and mediators, and establishing structures that support democratic practices within schools. The project ensured that all stakeholders were involved in the process, fostering a collaborative environment that promotes transparency and accountability. By continuously monitoring and evaluating the project's progress, adjustments were made to maximize impact and ensure that the long-term goals were achievable."

## **Methods and Design**

The project on the participation and inclusion of youths in decision-making processes employed various approaches, combining dialogue sessions, training workshops, and the use of questionnaires to gather data. Each method was designed to address specific objectives of the project, ensuring a comprehensive understanding and engagement with the target group.

### **Dialogue Sessions**

The Objective was to create a platform for students to engage with each other in a peaceful and constructive manner, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration. The method that which used was a structured dialogue sessions were organized where students could openly discuss issues related to their involvement in decision-making processes within their schools and communities. These sessions encouraged active listening, empathy, and respectful exchange of ideas.

The process undertaken were that students were grouped into small circles to ensure everyone had an opportunity to speak. Facilitators guided the discussions, ensuring that the conversations remained focused and constructive. The dialogue sessions were designed to be inclusive, allowing students from diverse backgrounds to share their perspectives. These sessions helped to build a sense of community among students, enhanced their communication skills, and allowed them to express their views on their role in decision-making.



Dialogue Session at Holy Family and Sacred Heart Secondary School



Students in a Group session during mediation practical’s (Johnson Baker)

### **Training Workshops**

The objective was to equip students with essential skills in mediation, leadership, and conflict transformation, thereby empowering them to take on active roles in decision-making processes.

The workshops were carefully designed to provide practical training and knowledge in key areas that are critical for effective participation in decision-making. • Process: o Mediation Training: Focused on teaching students’ techniques for resolving disputes amicably, fostering a culture of peace within their schools. o Leadership Training: Aimed at developing students' leadership abilities, encouraging them to take initiative and lead by example in their schools and communities. o Conflict Transformation Training: Provided students with the tools to understand and address underlying issues that lead to conflict, promoting long-term peace and cooperation.

The training workshops enhanced students' capacities to engage in decision-making processes, equipped them with valuable life skills, and prepared them to be effective leaders and mediators within their communities.



Training Workshop for Students in Peacebuilding at Johnson Baker High School

### **Questionnaires.**

The objective was to collect data on the opinions and perceptions of both teachers and students regarding the inclusion of students in decision-making processes.

Questionnaires were designed and distributed to gather quantitative and qualitative data from the participants. The questionnaires include open-ended questions to capture a wide range of insights. Distribution: The questionnaires were administered to a representative sample of teachers and students across the targeted schools and institutions.

Questions covered topics such as the current level of student involvement in decision-making, perceived barriers to inclusion, and suggestions for improving student participation.

The data collected provided valuable insights into the attitudes and perceptions of both teachers and students, helping to identify gaps and opportunities for enhancing student inclusion in decision-making processes.

## **Overall Design**

The project design was holistic, combining participatory methods such as (dialogue sessions), capacity-building (through training workshops), and data collection (via questionnaires) to address the complex issue of youth inclusion in decision-making. By engaging students in dialogue and equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge, the project aimed not only aimed to enhance their participation in decision-making but also to cultivate more inclusive and peaceful school environment. The integration of multiple methods ensured that the project tackled the issue from various perspectives, offering a comprehensive approach to promoting youth participation and inclusion in decision-making processes.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **Interventions and Activities**

The key activities employed included dialogues, meetings, training sessions, workshops for learners, the establishment of learner clubs and leadership groups, and the use of questionnaires. Dialogues and meetings were foundational in facilitating open communication among stakeholders, allowing us to gather diverse perspectives and build consensus on key issues. Training sessions and workshops were designed to equip learners with essential skills and knowledge, fostering a deeper understanding of the subjects at hand and promoting active participation. We also established learner clubs and leadership groups to provide continuous engagement and a platform for students to exercise their leadership skills, encouraging peer learning and collaboration. Additionally, the use of questionnaires played a critical role in gathering data and feedback from participants, which informed our decision-making processes and helped us to tailor our approaches to better meet the needs of the community. Together, these strategies created a comprehensive and dynamic framework that supported the goals of our project, ensuring inclusive and effective engagement across all levels.

## **Impact/Key findings**

During the implementation of transformative education practices, significant changes were observed in the receptive behaviour of both teachers and learners. Teachers showed increased openness to adopting innovative teaching methods that promote critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving among students. This shift was evidenced by their active participation in workshops and training sessions focused on transformative teaching strategies. They demonstrated a willingness to integrate new pedagogical approaches into their daily teaching practices, fostering a more engaging and student-centred learning environment. Learners also exhibited positive changes in their receptive behaviour towards transformative education. They showed enhanced curiosity, motivation, and enthusiasm in exploring complex issues related to sustainability, social justice, and global citizenship. This was reflected in their increased engagement during classroom discussions, eagerness to participate in experiential learning activities, and improved critical thinking skills. The implementation of student-centred approaches empowered them to take ownership of their learning journey, fostering a culture of active learning and personal growth among students. Teachers underwent a notable behavioural change as they embraced transformative education principles. They shifted from traditional lecture-based teaching methods to more interactive and participatory approaches that encourage dialogue, reflection, and interdisciplinary learning. This change was supported by professional development opportunities and collaborative learning communities, where teachers shared best practices and learned from each other's experiences. As a result, teachers became advocates for transformative education within their schools, influencing their peers and administrators to prioritize holistic student development and community engagement. Learners demonstrated significant behaviour change as they became active participants in their own education journey. They developed a deeper understanding of global issues and their interconnectedness with local contexts, fostering empathy and a sense of responsibility towards social and environmental sustainability. Students exhibited proactive behaviour in initiating community projects, participating in debates on pertinent social issues, and advocating for positive change within their school and wider community. This behavioural transformation was nurtured through inclusive classroom practices, mentorship programs, and opportunities for experiential learning, empowering students to become agents of positive social change.

## **Discussions and Findings.**

Several activities were conducted to understand the challenges within the schools, the activities included workshops and questionnaire. During workshops, students were engaged in various activities. A survey of 44 teachers at Johnson-Baker High School in the Mafeteng district highlighted numerous challenges and potential solutions for improving student engagement and educational outcomes.

## **Challenges Identified**

Teachers reported significant issues including poor infrastructure (e.g., lack of electricity, unsafe classroom floors), chronic absenteeism among students, financial constraints, drug abuse, high dropout rates, and inadequate resources such as instructional technology and textbooks. Concerns were also raised about the teacher welfare, lack of parental involvement, and poor communication within the school community. Root Causes: The root causes were attributed to poor management, lack of funds, absenteeism of both students and teachers, economic difficulties faced by families, and inadequate support for orphaned and vulnerable students. Additionally, changes in the school curriculum, poor communication among stakeholders, and a lack of innovation in teaching methods were highlighted as contributing factors.

## **Impact on Teaching and Learning**

These challenges negatively impact the learning environment leading to poor academic performance, indiscipline, and lack of engagement among students. Teachers reported difficulties in aligning teaching methods with the curriculum due to lack of resources and support, hinder effective teaching and learning.

## **Solutions and Improvement Strategies**

* Teachers suggested working together to develop teaching skills, attending workshops, involving parents, and forming teams for teaching assistance.
* Proposals included better financial support for teachers' professional development, providing necessary teaching tools, prioritizing teachers' welfare, and regular monitoring of teaching activities.
* Teachers recommended stricter disciplinary measures, regular parent-teacher meetings, formation of task committees, and ensuring the inclusion of students in decision-making processes.
* Requests for resources included computer labs, renovations of school buildings, better salaries for teachers, and financial support for needy students. The government was urged to provide books and cover fees for disadvantaged students.
* Enhanced security, reporting of absenteeism, and involvement in school activities were suggested for community support. Additionally, businesses and NGOs were encouraged to donate resources and sponsor students.
* Teachers called for a curriculum that is relevant to students' needs, incorporating vocational education and practical subjects. Effective instructional strategies mentioned were experiential learning, problem-based learning, group work, and the use of technology.
* Ongoing training through workshops, refresher courses, and collaborations with tertiary institutions were identified as key to improving teacher skills and student outcomes.
* Encouraging student participation in clubs, sports, and other activities, along with providing awards and incentives for academic performance, were recommended to foster a culture of engagement and motivation.
* Strengthening partnerships with parents and the community through regular communication, involvement in school activities, and community support for security and discipline were highlighted as crucial for supporting student learning.

The data collection activity at Jonathan Baker High School in the Mafeteng district aimed to gather students' perspectives on health, education, the environment, sports, student leadership, and other school-related issues. A total of 150 open-ended qualitative questions were used.

**Health**: Students raised concerns about hygiene, frequent fainting, migraines requiring medication, and the lack of medical facilities and supplies. They highlighted insufficient sanitary towel provisions, allergies to school food, difficulties with period discomfort, obesity issues, challenges for students with disabilities, and high dropout rates due to financial constraints.

**Environment:** Environmental concerns included the lack of bathroom doors, dustbins, adequate ventilation, and security in classrooms. Students also reported issues such as broken classrooms and libraries, insufficient water taps and toilets, lack of pavement and proper fencing, dirty environments, classrooms without windows, inconsistent electricity supply, and a lack of environmental education and student involvement in decision-making.

**Education and Learning**: Key issues in education included a shortage of English-speaking teachers, insufficient teacher training, and lack of critical materials like whiteboards and textbooks. Students noted the neglect of Sesotho speakers, broken library equipment, scarcity of desks and laboratory materials, favouritism among teachers, insufficient practical subjects like home economics and computer studies, and high school fees leading to increased dropout rates.

**Sports:** Problems related to sports included cracked grounds, shortages of team outfits and equipment, lack of creativity and diversity in sports, and absence of sponsorships for sports events. Students also complained about the limited number of sporting codes available.

**Student Leadership**: Concerns about student leadership included lack of identifying badges for leaders, poor training, lack of participation, disconnect between leaders and students, ineffective leadership, favouritism, and lack of support.

Other Issues Additional issues highlighted by students included bullying, inadequate food, restricted morning study time, crowded school facilities, bland kitchen food, lack of water and hygiene, bans on traditional clothing, frequent corporal punishment, and gender inequity. Socio-economic issues such as discrimination and poverty also impacted student education and engagement.

# **CHAPTER FOUR**

## **General Conclusion**

The project successfully addressed the inclusion of students in decision-making processes within schools, demonstrating tangible outcomes in both student and teacher behavior. The approach, combining dialogue sessions, training workshops, and structured feedback, fostered a deeper understanding of democratic governance and conflict transformation among students and educators. The intervention not only improved communication but also empowered students to take leadership roles and actively engage in school governance.

Key challenges identified, such as infrastructure deficiencies, lack of resources, absenteeism, and poor communication, were addressed through collective efforts involving teachers, students, and the broader community. Teachers' willingness to adopt transformative education practices contributed significantly to the success of the project, with noticeable improvements in student participation and engagement. Furthermore, the collaboration between schools, local communities, and external stakeholders was critical in addressing broader socio-economic issues impacting students' educational experience. The data collected from questionnaires and workshops highlighted both the systemic and behavioural changes needed to improve educational quality, student welfare, and overall school governance. The findings emphasize the need for continued support in fostering an inclusive, democratic, and peaceful school environment that empowers students and nurtures their potential as future leaders.

## **Recommendations / implications for Policy**

* Advocate for legally recognised student’s platforms, establishing legal frameworks that allow students to make autonomous decisions. This autonomy will enable them to fully participate in issues that impact them.
* Develop Strategic plan for secondary schools that will help them achieve all their objectives
* Schools should allocate a budget for training student’s leadership and conducting student elections.
* Advocate for student representation on the school’s boards

## **Sustainability Plan**

The sustainability of the project "Participation and Inclusion in Decision-Making Processes" depends on strategic initiatives that integrate its principles into educational frameworks and empower students. This report highlights essential components contributing to the project's long-term viability, emphasizing collaboration with school administrations, alignment with existing educational programs, student leadership initiatives, and ongoing evaluation mechanisms.

1. **Embedding Principles into School Policies**

1.1. Collaborating closely with school administrations is essential for integrating the project's principles into school policies and practices. This partnership institutionalises the value of participation and inclusion, enabling policy changes that promote inclusivity and empower all students to engage in decision making. By engaging school leaders, the project can influence policy changes that promote inclusive practices, thereby creating an environment where all students feel valued and empowered to participate in decision-making processes.

2. **Strategies for Implementation**

2.1. Collaborate with school administrations to develop policies that explicitly support student participation in governance. This could include establishing student councils or committees that have a real voice in school decisions.

2.2. Provide training for educators on the importance of inclusion and participation, equipping them with the tools necessary to foster a culture of engagement among students.

3. **Alignment with Existing Educational Programs**

3.1. To enhance sustainability, the project should align itself with existing educational initiatives and programs. This synergy can amplify the project's impact and ensure that its principles are reinforced across various educational contexts.

4. **Potential Collaborations**

4.1. Work with educators to integrate the principles of participation and inclusion into the curriculum, making them a fundamental part of the educational experience.

4.2. Collaborate with non-governmental organizations that focus on youth empowerment and education to leverage their expertise and resources, thereby enhancing the project's reach and effectiveness.

5. **Student Leadership Programs**

5.1. Introducing and sustaining student leadership programs is vital for empowering youth to take active roles in decision-making. These programs can cultivate essential skills such as critical thinking, communication, and teamwork, which are crucial for effective participation.

6. **Key Components of Leadership Programs**

6.1. Establish mentorship programs where experienced leaders guide students in developing their leadership skills and understanding the importance of civic engagement. 6.2. Offer workshops that focus on leadership development, conflict resolution, and effective communication, preparing students to engage meaningfully in decision-making processes.

7. **Platforms for Student-Led Initiatives**

7.1. Creating platforms for student-led initiatives encourages a culture of continuous involvement and innovation. These platforms can serve as incubators for new ideas and projects that reflect the interests and needs of the student body.

8. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

8.1. Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system is crucial for assessing the project's impact over time. This system should include measurable indicators that reflect the project's goals and objectives.

9. **Evaluation Framework**

9.1. Conduct regular assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented strategies and gather feedback from students, educators, and administrators.

9.2. Utilize surveys and focus groups to collect qualitative and quantitative data on student engagement and the perceived impact of the project.

10. Utilizing Feedback for Improvement

10.1. Using feedback to make necessary adjustments ensures that the initiative remains relevant and effective. This iterative process allows for continuous improvement based on the experiences and suggestions of participants.

11. **Feedback Mechanisms**

11.1. Implement anonymous surveys to encourage honest feedback from students and staff about the project's effectiveness and areas for improvement.

11.2. Organize regular feedback sessions where students can voice their opinions and suggest changes, fostering a sense of community and shared ownership.

12. **Documentation and Knowledge Sharing**

12.1. Documenting the project's processes, successes, and challenges is essential for knowledge sharing and fostering a culture of learning. This documentation can serve as a valuable resource for other communities seeking to implement similar initiatives.

13. **Knowledge Sharing Strategies**

13.1. Host workshops and conferences to share insights and lessons learned, providing a platform for dialogue and collaboration among educators and community leaders.

13.2. Produce reports and articles that highlight the project's achievements and challenges, contributing to the broader discourse on participation and inclusion in education.

The sustainability of the project relies on strategic collaborations, the establishment of student leadership programs, and a commitment to ongoing evaluation and improvement. By embedding its principles into school policies, aligning with existing initiatives, and fostering a culture of student-led engagement, the project can create lasting change in educational environments. Through effective knowledge sharing, the insights gained can inspire similar initiatives in other communities, further promoting the values of participation and inclusion.

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# **Appendices I: Pictorials**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Group photo of students at Johnson Baker High School | Students dialogue, during workshop training at Johnson Baker High School |
|  | Students at Johnson Baker in a workshop | Students at Johnson Baker discussing issues that affect them. |
|  | Students during the mediation processes, in a group discussion | Students in a group practicing mediation processes |
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| --- | --- |
| Student during prayer and solidarity messages | Group discussions |
| Group Discussions | Group discussion |
| Students dialogue | Students listening to the facilitator |
| Students with the facilitator, Cde Makatleho | Cde Makatleho facilitating the session |
| Students singing | Students |
| Students listening attentively | All students who participated at the event |
| Ikaheng High School students during solidarity songs |  |
| Ikaheng Students |  |
| Agenda at Ikaheng High School | Students during Horse shoe dialogue sessions at Ikaheng |

# **Appendices II: Informative Newspaper Article**

# **Appendices III: Questionnaires for data collection.**

## **Teacher’s responses**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Questionnaire for the teachers and other staff members and board** | |
| 1. Identify the challenges your school is currently facing: | * Students are forced to attend morning study, its winter so when the students get to class there no electricity so it’s hard for them to read, because its dark. Moreover, the classroom floors are not in good condition so both teachers and students might get injured. * Teachers used to get free coffee and tea in winter but that does not happen anymore * The school is stationery, there is no progress, no aircons * Chronic absenteeism (that is students missing a substantial number of school days (49%) * Financial strain * Fencing, paving, refurbishing of classes hall. * Teachers not attending classes regularly. * Absentees of pupils * Limited funds to run the school * Students’ dropouts * Child headed family * Drug abuse * Vulnerable students/children * Teachers’ welfare not taken care of by the administration * High rate of failing students * Poor rate of retention * Lack of parental involvement * Lack of instructional technology equipment * Dysfunction library * Having structures that do not fully perform their duties * Change of school curriculum * Lack of communication among teachers, administration, school board and teaching service departments * Lack of teaching material and text books * Baad relationships between students themselves, teachers and students and teachers and teachers and management. Unhealthy environment-hygiene * Poor feeding * Poor infrastructure * Failure to improve buildings * Low maintenance of property * Minimum measures to disciplinary * Many teachers doing single measure * Many subjects done at school * Lack of agricultural activities to raise funds for the school * No financial reports done work * Unclear strategies on book schemes * Now that there are no longer form E, these students are not able to read * Abundant students |
| 2. In your opinion, what are the root causes of these challenges? | * Poor management * Lack of funds * Absenteeism of students is mostly caused by teachers who mostly do not attend classes yet they are at school. * This academic pressure is caused by lack prioritisation. * Parents do not want to pay school fees unless students are expelled. Parents do not take the responsibility for their children to attend school. * Teachers were used to not coming to school prior during the first principal. * Great population and not checking registers regularly * Students’ dropouts * Most parents are not working * Being very needy * Some parents are dead and some are outside of the country * Early marriage * Orphanage * High divorce rate * Peer pressure * Lack of knowledge about innovative instructional material/technology * Overloaded curriculum-LGCSE students are expected to take only four years at school. This puts teachers under a lot of pressure to cover the syllabus on time * Lack of relevant books in the library and knowledgeable personnel. * Many students come from impoverished backgrounds therefore they struggle to pay fees and end up dropping out with lack of desired to attend school. * Many parents seem to have abandoned their role of moulding their children. Again, they are working out of the country, reducing their chances of being involved in school activities. * Not having/ not understanding common goals of the school. The structures are not able to plan and set objectives in relation to the goals of the school * Change of curriculum is difficult for learners to comply with. * Stationery hinders frequent assessment * Sometimes things don’t go according to plan because of lack of communication among the stakeholders * Poor performance is caused by students coming to high school from high school from primary not having or meeting standards. * Relationships are poor due to poor communications * Management fails to resolve conflicts instead resort to imposing matters as orders to teachers which sometimes are not done or followed. * Unhealthy environment-poor finances, many orphans at school, negligence by management. * Unmotivated teachers * Poor families * Use of drugs due to too much pocket money * Peer pressure and orphanage * Budget is not done properly * No good choice of preference of activities * Lack of team spirit among colleagues * Imbalanced subject measures during employment * Fear factor that some teachers will get transfer * Norm of not reporting is okay to proprietor * Overseer does not pay attention to how best to do book rental schemes * High inflation rate and lack of good paying jobs * Diseases leading to high school deaths rates |
| 3. How do these challenges affect your teaching and the learning environment? | * Some windows in some classes do not open anymore. So, its hot teachers cannot walk properly. In winter teacher’s ca not do their work because some classrooms have improper doors others there are no doors at all. Both teachers and students get very cold. * They affect teaching negatively because when students are absent, teachers have to reteach * Teachers should find out from the management if the school is aiming on quality or quantity * It is negatively affected as pupils are not taught at in a respectful manner as teachers dodge * Poor performance of students * Academic performance very poor * Poor class attendance * Students became abusive * Indiscipline * It is difficult to align teaching methods curriculum and assessment in some of the topics due to lack of instructional technology equipment * Forces top move on to the next topic even when the students are lagging behind because of an overloaded curriculum * Teaching students who are failing is cumbersome because as a teacher are ends up being domesticated. * Sometimes we use the assessment methods we did not intent to use because of irrelevant books in the library. * Other bodies/organisations from outside easily penetrate our structures with their set objectives and disturb teaching and learning. For example, ministry of health through its health centres can just come unannounced to give learners injections. * They affect learning and teaching because their lack hinders progress of teachers and learners to do work in time, to such an extend that they do not cover enough syllabus in time. * Students that do not have prerequisite knowledge have problems in getting what is taught hence hate school and there is no learning at all and they resort to bad behaviour. * Bad relationship results in into bad environment for teaching and learning. People are not happy hence cannot perform. * Poor infrastructure like toilets, poor desks and building affect the health. * Suspensions, expulsion makes attendance of classes difficult * Teachers never know when to make suggestions for improvements * Learners do not come to school as expected, they are usually absent. For instance, if learners miss lessons for about 2 to 3 weeks the teachers feels like teaching such topics again for the sake of those who were absent, this hinders the teacher to finish the allocated topics on time for that particular year |
| **Solutions and Improvement** | |
| Teacher's Role |  |
| 1. How can teachers collaborate to improve the teaching and learning experience? | * Teachers through representatives could take the matters to the upper body. * To work together in brainstorming of ideas on how to develop teaching skills learning experience. * To always attend more workshops and to always attend short courses to improve their knowledge * Teachers themselves should understand that whatever they are doing, they use the same students, knowledge, any money contributing is from the same students. The key to this is to communicate as staff * Encourage parents to pay school fees * Checking registers * Invite police, parents and counsellors to help the students * Attendance regularly * Giving assignments and test frequently. * Forming team teaching or seeking assistance from seniors. * Invite parents’ counsellors and police officers * School working together with the community and area chief * Advice the ministry of education to increase the number of years students should take of LGCSE * Make requests for relevant books * Ensure that parents are involved * More workshops, seminars, conferences, presentations physically and online. * Teachers need to sit and set objectives towards achieving common goals of the school. There must be people to account and at the end of the day there must be an evaluation. * Each department has to sit and plan, then all the departments come together and share their plans and how they are intensifying to achieve them. This is where they can learn and share their experiences * They have to try their best to make use of those that are available and even go to an extend of compromising if possible * They should work together and encourage students to assist each other and share their learning experiences together and with teachers. * Have to teach prerequisite knowledge can be done as extra job. * Improve relationships may brings counsellors or address issues where they arise. * Face the management on other issues that are not communicated * Raise funds, seek sponsorships. * Use skilled labour to produce food. Agricultural and parents to pay fees with their Agric produce. * Use social worker * Look for external motivation e.g. Friendly games in sports and inter-subjects * Look for visits from other schools to share challenges during teaching and how to Tuggle such challenges per subject. * Join associations of subjects to get free counselling when dealing with subjects * Reflect yourself on the mastery of teaching frequently * Scheme for topics per department or subject than integrate with other subjects for relating topics * Encourage assessment as part of monitoring teaching to check mastery of content * Put same type of eggs in one basket ie. Place learners of the same class with same percentages in one class to create competition * Set standards before learning and do results analysis at the end of each assessment. * It is a general problem throughout the country * Encourage the administration to use methods which will cater for both, the problem and the learning processes e.g expel students pair stream not the whole school |
| **School Management's Role** | |
| 1. How can school management support teachers in addressing these challenges? | * Through financing the teachers who want to take part in short courses and to finance the teachers who want to further their studies. * Students should not be promoted only for the roll, but for quality education. * Environment should be that one for effective learning * Clock book is never a tool for learning. There must strategies for attending Classes. Not clocking in the morning but never attend any classes at all. * Giving them necessary tools to the job * Checking teachers class attendance and requesting registers for the registry. * Teachers’ welfare prioritized * Teachers be motivated * Allocate departmental budgets so that teachers could meet their needs e.g. Instructional technology equipment. * Hire educated personnel in the library and buy relevant books * Management has to play a monitoring role. They have to know when to call people to account on given roles, coordinate all the structures and motivate teachers to the better. * They have to provide them with financial support and have frequent consultation about the mode of transport. * Listen carefully to teacher’s grievances and listen to every positive suggestion that may improve performance or learners * Account to previews suggestions which were implemented |
| 1. What changes or improvements would you suggest for school policies or procedures? | * The test should be checked, teaching processes itself rather than noticing at the end of the quarter that some students are never taught. * Serious disciplinary measures must be the policy of the school. * Meeting parents regularly to discuss school policies, challenges and solutions * Make policies as the old ones are no more meeting the challenges * Forming committees for tasks and responsibilities. * Ensure that teachers are upskilled in various ways * Support and train teachers whenever there is a need * Offer presents to better performing learners in all grades as way of motivating them and inviting others to do better. * There should be a set time frame for payment for materials. Frequent consultation between teachers and administration about changes in the school polices. * Inclusion of student’s council * Remunerate teachers who do extramural as motivation. * Constructive ideas which are suggested are not successfully put into action, showing lack of good policies |
| **School Board's Role** | |
| 1. What support or resources would you like to see from the school board and the government? | * Computer lab (provision of projectors). So that students can be computer literate. The reason being this life now is about technology. * To renovate these old buildings at this school * Schools Board and Government should facilitate workshops and support them with finances. Also, a sort of motivations they can provide will be beneficial to teachers. * School board to do its job accordingly * Assisting school management positively on policy improving teacher’s other academic staff. * Needy students and vulnerable to be sponsored * Teachers to be given 13th cheque * The school board should support the staff in implementing changes. * Government has to pay better salaries to teachers so that they can be motivated to do the work even after hours. * Government has to provide books to learners and pay school fees for learners who are not able to pay their fees. * The board should encourage parents to pay for materials on time during parents’ meetings. * The board should pay frequent visit to hear what teachers have to say and support them as far as their needs are concerned. * Include students in their everyday running of the school or decision making especially that affects. * Allow teachers to further their studies * Provide paid study leave * Make educational trips for teachers. * Board should follow up the salaries whether they are paid accordingly * Government should benchmark salaries of teachers to other countries * Board should again ensure there is a proper security of teachers and their environment. * Board should clearly have short term policies or goals which will lead to achievement of long-term goals * Government should have means of motivating hardworking schools and teachers i.e. should be considerate. |
| 1. How can the school board facilitate a more conducive learning environment? | * Provision of computer for easy learning * Provision of aircons * The board which is advised by the principal should make sure environment is conducive one, since the board cannot come to school to identify some of the things * Look for the sponsors so as to help school with other things * Maintenance of class rooms regularly * Supply heaters during cold times in class rooms * Instructional technology equipment * Educated resource persons of education office * Communication between Board and teachers is the best tool to success * Meet every stakeholder to listen to their concern and together work on them. Eg. Students, teachers, HOD’s and management. * Improve infrastructure * Form a strong bond between school and neighbourhood villages eg. Villagers report students who don’t go to school * Rentals places to students to be discussed between school and landlords |
| 1. What is the role of the chiefs in ensuring that there is provision of quality education and that students in communities are attending the schools? How can their work be improved in ensuring their oversight role in ensuring that quality education is provided? | * Chiefs will make sure that there are no students moving up and down in their villages during school hours. Their work will improve by punishing culprits if found. * Safety for all and make sure that the community police are working together with the watchmen to help at night with safety for students who come for study. * Having meetings with them to raise issues and solving them together affecting the school and community around. * They take part in school meeting (parents) * They engage the community police to see that student do not attend schools * Always available to help * Report the needy students to humanitarian welfare organisations so that they could be helped with various school needs * Chiefs are not playing much role. Their work can be improved by getting support from the school board. Together they can ask for community gathering where they can discuss safety of learners in the community and how they can solve the problem of absenteeism where learners hide in the community places * They should provide protection to leaners and teachers especially during the night studies. They should also see to it that no students are loitering in the village without valid reasons known by the school whereby they will be working with policing forums and the residents’ owners. * Make gatherings with parents and the land lords * Chief is a member of a board by default but there is a weak bond between him and school e.g. Property of the school get stolen from time to time * School never received report of ill-discipline by students from village * At one time our student was killed brutally from evening study on his way home from school. * Chiefs are Board members therefore they should implement policies involving community and other surrounding stakeholders |
| **Other stakeholders** | |
| 1. What support or resources would you like to see from the community, relevant external stakeholders and the government? | * Security rented housing for the students just for their support of reporting actions of students. * Help report pupils who hide in the dongas, forests and their homes not coming to school. Live peacefully with pupils who have hired houses around. * Help to report those uses drugs * Understanding the school policies and where to assist one another * The community should help to pursue students to attend classes * They should be involved in building the school vision * The government should decrease the examination fees which is rising every year * The community should raise funds for students who are needy and performing well. * NGOs and well-established businesses should donate food parcels and pay fees for disadvantaged children * Community members should not only provide rental houses to learners but they also have to play a parental role. * Parents, priests, village health work, support groups work with the MOE to provide necessary services to the school during time of need. * Support teachers in disciplining students and avoid selling drugs to students. * Insurance companies come to school to sell products to teachers but never donate with stationery for assistance * Parents and community should know each other properly including having cell phone numbers and communicating regularly. |
| **Educational Quality Improvement** | |
| 1. How can the curriculum be enhanced to better meet students' needs? | * Curriculum and instruction, more often than not and the strategies should e eye contact, virtual AIDS, using symptoms and shape instead of colour coding for those with colour-blindness * Strategic teacher circulation, a quick checklist on the board or so students can see where they are in the lesson * Sports should be taken under considerate as other pupils knows only sports. * Vocational education and agriculture should be compulsory * Stakeholders should meet after 3 years to review curriculum and instructions and changes be made where necessary. * It should be suitable for all the students * It to be contextualised * Be within their interest * It should be implemented on time with relevant instructional materials * Mix slow learners and fast learners in groups * Differentiate tasks within a learning outcome * Provide supplemental learning through the use of videos where possible. * Science seems to be higher than the cognitive level of learners, it should be reduced to suit their level. * Most of the subjects should be communicated in the language that learners understand best (mother tongue) * English should be taught and assessed for the purpose of communication only not as a priority for learners’ promotion. * More subject should be practical than theoretical * Provision of relevant textbooks and human resources or trainings * Provision of teaching and learning materials and infrastructure for such curriculum * Inclusive curriculum * Learner centre * Design should address local learners instead of adopted vision from abroad. * Students who are not good academically are not getting assistance |
| 1. What instructional strategies have proven effective in your classroom? | * Experimental learning: its effective as is the processes of learning through experience, it is learning through reflection * Problem based learning: this one is more effective as is a teaching method in which students learn about a subject through the experience of solving an open-ended problem found in trigger material * Involvement of learners in learning-Teaching processes * Group work * Discovery learning * Contextualised teaching and learning methods/theories such as constructivism * More continuous assessment where departments use it together with standardisation of question papers for assessments * Use of cell phones or internet * Use of practical and field trips * Instruction discussion * Use of technology in classroom |
| **Professional Development** | |
| 1. What professional development opportunities would benefit teachers in improving student outcomes? | * I opt for periods workshops, in class observation and these are to give professionals the opportunity to learn and apply new knowledge and skills that can help them in their job and further their career. * Provide refresher courses * Workshops, conferences, in service training seminars, presentations. * Collaborations with experts from tertiary institutions. * Educational tours to educational institutions and educational resorts areas. * More trainings on current changes in educational concepts * Career counselling, trainings * Subject associations * Paid study leaves for teachers to further their studies * Supply teachers with appropriate learning aids and facilities so that all categories of students should be assisted e.g brilliant students, students who are good extra morally, slow learners etc. |
| 1. How can ongoing training and support be provided to ensure teachers are equipped with the necessary skills? | * Teachers must have workshops regularly so that they can even discuss their problems. Apart from that teachers learn every day from other teachers. * It should be facilitated be facilitated by the academia people who have deep advantage subject area. * The frequency of trainings to teachers be increased * Program must be designed to equip and motivate teachers. * Financial support be provided for teachers’ trainings * Positive reinforcement in the form of certificates to be issues after every training and be incentified. * Financial and marriage counselling |
| **Student Engagement and Motivation** | |
|  |  |
| 1. How can the school foster a culture of active student participation and engagement? | * Students should be encouraged to take part in clubs at schools as part of the content is done there. * They should be part of learning not teacher centred. * Students must be given time to do other activities like singing in the school choir, sports etc. * They should be praised when they have done well * By carrying out needs analysis programmes and ensuring that the gaps identified are met * When the needs of the students are addressed that on its own will stimulate the students * Set both short- and long-term personal targets which students should achieve. * There should be more activities performed by learners than a teacher. * The success of these activities should be awarded positive reinforcement which should be visible to others * Creation of competition among learners should be improved * Use of prefects (students council) * Cultural day * Debates * Clubs. eg English club, science clubs etc * Design curriculum and timetable thata permit participation and enagement of leaners more than teachers * Reduce the total number of subjects done per stream to make active learners throughout the daylong |
| 1. What strategies can be implemented to motivate students to achieve academic excellence? | * There must be awards for students who perform well. Motivation is the one that can foster them to have competitions to a larger extend. * Help them to speak English * Be given regular test and feedback be gentle * Be given incentives after good marks * Be helped with study time table and be encouraged every time. * Slow learners should be given enough teaching and learning times * Ensure that teaching and learning materials are available quarterly * Set rules and expectations, let learners know what is expected of them, what they can expect from their classmates and what they can expect from their teacher. * Celebrate students’ success * KYS (know your students) knowing their concerns and backgrounds will help to deal with them. * Using teaching methods that engage students e.g. discovery * There should be variety of positive reinforcements * Competitions internally and externally * More tests * Do positive comments at all times (positive minded teachers vs learners) * Create external competitions with other schools locally or globally * Encourage good study habits at all times * Promote independent learning |
| **Parents and Community Engagement** | |
| 1. How can the school strengthen partnerships with parents and the community to support student learning? | * Parents should come to school maybe when the reports are given to students as to discuss issues related to learners. * In meetings they should be made aware that they are part of the three parts which can help pupils. * Check whether kids are really at home, check whether they are given work and are marked and come to meetings. * Go out tot the communities and inform them about their targets and request them to help them in various ways so that they could achieve them * Communicate with parents and the community and involve them in the decision-making and give them feedback * Parents should be given frequent performance of their children. * Parents should be involved in helping learners with research where they can. * Community around the school should provide security to learners who stay around their residences. * The school should hold consultation meetings with the community to discuss learners’ affairs * Parents to be included with their skills to build school generally eg. Constructions, health services and farmers * Create platforms to communicate about life of the school and set or the set goals together |
| 1. What initiatives can be introduced to involve parents more actively in their children's education? | * When students are given work, parents should sign at the end of that work * Also, parents should know that time their children are studying and should make sure they deal with different subjects * Pupils be given home work to be helped by parents * Pay school fees on time * Parents meetings should be compulsory * Give learners activities which need the input of their parents * Ensure that parents are informed on time about the schools needs * Parents should know the school’s mission statement thoroughly so that they could see where there are gaps and inform the school to address such. * Teachers and management must communicate * Schools has to build trust with parents * Treat parents as major stakeholders, involve them in the decision-making and give them feedback * Provide home activities and ask parents to sign the work when it is completed by the learner. * They should provide necessary financial and academic support to learners. * They should be encouraged to follow-up their children’s performance and behaviour * Parents giving wards to their students at school * One on one meetings concerning reports * Make parents understand expression ‘It takes a village to raise a child’ * Set mission and vision of the school together and make them known to students to make dream come true * Some student’s projects (academic) may be designed to make learners go to parents and community. * Should be encouraged to bring their children closer to school and clearly know the owners of renting houses. |
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| **Student’s responses** | | |  |
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| No | Thematic area | Problem | Recommendation |
| 1 | **Health** | * Hygiene * Fainting or unconsciousness * Uncontrollable headache which requires medicine * There are no health facilities near the schools and there is shortage of medicine, hand gloves for handling injured people (first aids kid) * The toilet is cleaned without hand gloves * There are no rooms in schools that can be used when students are sick or have serious injuries before they can attend to hospitals * When students are sick, teachers tend to say they are faking the illness * There are no pads/sanitary towels at school some students do not have money to buy them * Some students are allergic to food that is being offered at school * Period pains * Cross contamination whereby a teacher pinches every student not wiping off their hands after pinching each student * Students struggle with obesity which can lead to both physical and mental health problems, obesity can lead to low self-esteem and social isolation. * Other students are disable * There is high drop out of students due to been unable to pay school fees | Keneuoe have eyes problems and headaches most of the time therefore teachers must be aware of her situation.  Mpoetseng have ears problem and leg problem and teachers must be aware of that.  Mokhethi have eyes problem, heart problem and  Teachers should not beat students on the head since they have headache problems  Clinical rooms should be allocated |
| 2 | **Environment** | * Lack of security in classes and unavailability of toilet doors * Shortage of dustbins * Damaged classrooms and the library * Inadequate water taps * Inadequate ventilation * Inadequate toilets * Lack of improved fence around the campus * Lack of pavement * The environment is unclean * There are no windows * There is no electricity in some classes * Toilets are not in good condition * Lack of environmental education in schools and lack of student’s voice in environmental decision making * There are no brooms to clean the environment | * Improve school kitchen |
| 3 | **Education** | * Lack of English speaking * Lack of high-quality teachers * Inadequate teacher training on how to deliver the curriculum or to meet the needs of all the students. * No whiteboards * There are no measures taken on Sesotho speakers * Inadequate books for every student * Damaged library equipment which restricts students from using them * Some teachers do not attend classes * There is favouritism of choosing students in class * There is no Basotho cultural day yet teachers expect students to pass Sesotho * There is shortage of materials used in the lab * There is a shortage of desks * The school does not provide practical subjects like home economics and computer studies. * Mathematics teacher should give students time to ask questions and be patient with all students * Some teachers bully other students * Most students have low self-esteem because they are being humiliated about their performance when they want to take part in other activities * Other teachers just give work to students without assisting them * The school fee is too high some parents are not able to afford it. |  |
| 4 | **Sports** | * Cracked grounds * Lack of outfits for some of the teams * Lack of equipment used by the teams * No innovation * No diversity and inclusion * There is no sponsor ship for the sports activities * There are not enough sporting codes at school |  |
| 5 | **Students Leadership** | * Poorly trained leaders such as prefects * Inadequate participants in leadership * Lack of badges for leaders which identify them from other ordinary students * Students’ leadership are unable to do their job * Ignorance to follow instructions * Favouritism * The prefects treat other students unfairly while they treat their friends with mercy * No freedom of speech * Students do not keep uniform * Students’ leaders do not do their work, they are always playing * Lack of support for students’ leadership * Lack of awareness about the impacts of everyday initiatives |  |
| 6 | **Other problems** | * Bullying and stealing * Some students do not get enough food due to a large number in each class * Students are not given enough time to study in the morning * The school’s hall is very small and cannot accommodate all the students * Tasteless food cooked from the kitchen and also there is tendency of food running out in classes while there are still in the kitchen * There are other teachers who prefer other students in the class. * Problems with poor motivation, concentration and time management * There is shortage of water and not clean * Students are not allowed to wear traditional attire * There assembly is not attended on daily basis * Teachers uses corporal punishment, there is also gender inequality when it comes to male teachers they lash female students inappropriately. * Low level of critical thinking * There are students who do not listen to the teachers * There are students living around the school who need help like school expenses, school shoes and food and cosmetics * Discrimination is also a problem, making students feel like they do not belong or that they are not valued. Ther issues like homelessness, food insecurity and family stress can all impact the student’s education. * Other students insulting others * Students are not allowed to state their problems so that that teachers are able to help * Some students do not want to participate in activities at school because of not wanting to show their background of poorness and poverty * Students are compelled to attend the sports activities even though they are not interested in them | * There should be Early study time in the morning * Improvement of classrooms and kitchens * The pavement should be constructed and fence and also organised playgrounds must be built * Engaging the students on recycling properly is the most crucial way to reduce general waste * Provide healthy diet * Regular exercise and adequate sleep can help with health issues * Dustbins should be provided near the tuckshops * There should be a holistic approach that addresses the social, emotional and physically needs of students. * New sports equipment should be bought * There should be assembly on daily basis * The school should raise funding through activities such as entertainment i.e. vintage day, funny day, career day etc. * There should be no corporal punishment * In every two weeks the environment should be cleaned by the students including the toilets * They can be helped by social development and other learners at school, they can be given the donations and at home * There should be social workers at school * Teachers should pay attention to things concerning school staff and they should be formal to students. * Teachers should attend counselling every month because some release their stress on students * There should be open communication between students, parents and teachers to ensure that everyone is aware of potential problems and solutions * The school principal should ask the students to give comments about education given at school other activities so that their grievances maybe resolved. |

**Appendices IV:** Project Workplan



**Participation and inclusion of Youths in the decision making: WORKPLAN Social Change Initiative:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No  Activities | |  | Months | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Comments | |
| 1 | Orientation of project to YCS staff and planning of the project. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | The activity is completed. | |
| 2 | Contacting the school Principal. Let him/her know of your interest in starting the social change initiative |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | The activity is completed. | |
| 3 | Sensitisation about the the project activities. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | The activity is completed. | |
| 4 | Having meetings with different stakeholders (Teachers, Management and Students) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | The activity is completed. | |
| 5 | Establishment of student’s platforms (student executives, students council, clubs etc) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | The activity is completed in one school while other are yet to establish them | |
| 6 | Hold a training workshop for the students, in leadership, peace education and mediation. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | The activity is completed. |
| 7 | Designing tools for the project implementation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | The activity is completed. |
| 8 | Using digital platform to sensitise the students and the relevant stakeholders and providing other trainings through digital platforms. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | The activity has been done though not much effort was made |
| 9 | Data analysis |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | The activity is completed. |
| 10 | Production of the report and hand it over to the school management and also to Makerere Rotary Peace Centre. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | The activity almost completed. |
| 11 | Furnishing the stakeholders about the details of the project. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | The activity is almostcompleted. |

**Appendices V**: Participants Lists

# **Appendices VI: Letters**