

Activity report – Full version

Fiscal Year	FY 2021
Code No	21-S-001

A. Name of organization: PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL

B. Project name: Empowering new generations as social communicators and digital innovators

C. Project periods: August-December 2021

D. Aim of the project

This project aims to empowering young people as social communicators and digital innovators and consequently contribute to the construction of a peaceful environment and to the sustainable improvement of the living conditions of local communities. We are living in an era of digitization, with digital technology progressively growing. The digital revolution can improve the lives of citizens and technology and can also help bridge the education gap. By using digital technology, young people will gain new skills that will help them find work in the future. At the same time, digital technology provides opportunities for innovative approaches to prevent conflicts and build peace. As young people represent more than half of the population of DRC, it is impelling to invest in them as they represent the future of their community. An AfriCAN Digital Skills study (<http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=328f78e0-9191-472c-a0e6-ebea4b35da8d>) showed that young people in Africa have a “fierce appetite” to learn and master skills in emerging technologies.

Overall objective

This project aims to empower young people as social communicators and digital innovators and thereby contribute to the construction of a peaceful environment and the sustainable improvement of the living conditions of local communities.

Specific objective 1

Young people who received training on active non-violence in the previous phase of the programme, will be trained in digital literature to combat hate speech and misinformation in social medias

Specific objective 2

Youth who received entrepreneurship training in the previous phase of the programme will be trained in digital business and mobile application development, providing them with the necessary skills to harness the power of new technologies and access economic opportunities.

Expected outcome:

- 25 young people - 12 boys and 13 girls - are able to detect fake news and combat hate speech and misinformation and thus become social communicators in their own communities
- 25 young people - 12 boys and 13 girls - have acquired new skills in digital business and application development

E. Implemented activity, method and general process about implemented activity

In order to give the trainings, an “incubator centre” was created, called *Centre Incubateur sur les Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication, CINTIC*. The incubator centre is managed and coordinated by the director of “Africa Reconciled”, a member of PCI in Goma/DRC. Three (3) experts have been hired to provide the training and laptops, generator, modem, tables, chairs, printer, bloc notes, pens, etc. have been provided.

The programme took place from August 1 to December 2021 and the trainings were organized three times a week.

The launch of this project in Goma was carried out by the head of the Provincial Youth Division in the presence of students, the trainers and Africa Reconciled Staff.

Training on digital literature: creating and using social media to promote peace

This training aimed at introducing young people to the social media environment, including the creation and management of social networks and their potential for social communication in general and the promotion of peace, active nonviolence and cohesion in particular.

This training module included:

- An introductory section on social media (history and role in the digital era);
- How to create social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Skype) and a YouTube channel and manage their security settings;
- How to create a blog and manage the security settings on WordPress and Blogger, as well as how to write blog articles (choosing theme and title and adding pictures or videos) and promote them; Security was an important topic of the training as it is very easy to hack social media accounts to spread fake news and hate speech that can lead to conflict. This training allowed young people to learn how to have their own personal account/blog and set it up for safe and good use.
- What is citizen journalism and the role of a citizen journalist promoting peace and active nonviolence through social media;
- How to write contents for the web (including online campaigns);
- How to manage social media to share thoughts and stories, and avoid the propagation of dangerous and hateful speech online;
- How to create advertisements and reach a large number of “audience”;
- How to search for job opportunities through social media.

Young people also learned the basics functions of Premier Pro (a video editing software).

Training on the Creation and Management of Applications and Database Management

During this training, young people learned the design, creation of apps and management of databases through the MYSQL system. Young people carried out several practical tasks to enable them to have skills in the creation and management of databases.

Four (4) training modules have been prepared: 1 module on creating social networks, 1 module on creating and managing databases, 1 module on taking photos and editing videos, 1 module on creating apps, carrying out business online.

At the graduation day, Pax Christi was represented by the Africa Regional Coordinator (from Brussels). Local community came to attend the event, the government was represented by the regional coordinator of the youth in the North Kivu province/DRC, he delivered a speech in the name of the government. Three local NGOs attended the graduation day as well: UPDDHE (Union pour la promotion du

Développement et des Droits humains et l'Environnement); CADRE (Comité d'Appui au Développement Rural Endogène); SPR (Synergie des femmes pour la paix et la réconciliation des peuples des Grands Lacs d'Afrique).

F. Achievement

In total, 26 students have successfully completed their training and have been graduated, obtaining a training certificate. Precisely, 14 people including 6 girls and 8 boys have graduated from completing the training on digital literacy; 12 people including 4 girls and 8 boys have graduated from completing the training on creation and management of applications and database management.

In spite of their good will, the other students could not obtain the certificates because of the following reasons:

- Seven trainees suspended the training as they were selected for a job position for which they had applied prior to the start of training;
- A girl got married and left;
- 16 trainees attended the training but irregularly as they were not able to combine the courses of the Incubator Centre with the courses of their respective universities. Thus, they did not achieve the required 80% participation required to obtain the training certificates; however, they have been invited to continue the trainings in the next sessions, which will start soon, to complete the modules they have missed.

The selection criteria were:

- Be between 18 and 35;
- Have participated in the trainings on active nonviolence and entrepreneurship that have been previously organized by Pax Christi International;
- Be a member of a peace club and active in the promotion of active nonviolence;
- Be creative and innovative;
- Be willing to work in a team;
- Awareness of the ability of social media to reach and influence the masses

The training started off with 50 students who were chosen out of many candidates. As we had more candidates than available places, the criteria mentioned above were strictly applied and a careful selection was made. Trainees who left at the beginning of the trainings were replaced by those on the reserve list. However, once the training courses had reached an advanced level, it was no longer possible to replace trainees who dropped off. At a certain point, the course was too far advanced and it was not possible to catch up with what had already been taught.

Young people trained in social networking have become social communicators for peace, active nonviolence and development, in particular by learning how to disseminate reliable information.

Many articles have been already published online. A few examples are reported below:

1. Blog by PAULIN MUNYAGALA: <https://paulinmunyagala.wordpress.com/>
2. <https://renaissancekamite.wordpress.com/2021/10/30/la-transversalite-de-la-non-violence/>
3. <https://peacejournalistnews.wordpress.com/2022/01/28/affaire-maimai-invulnerables-aux-impacts-des-balles-mythe-ou-realite-a-gomaboheme/>
4. <https://peacejournalistnews.wordpress.com/2022/01/24/un-autre-militant-de-la-lucha-rdc-tue-par-balle-a-beni-au-nord-kivu/>

5. <https://peacejournalistnews.wordpress.com/2021/12/17/des-morts-par-balles-on-en-a-parle-et-on-en-parle-encore-comme-si-cetait-normal-a-goma-chef-lieu-de-la-province-du-nord-kivu-en-rdc/>
6. <https://peacejournalistnews.wordpress.com/2021/12/15/un-enieme-changeur-de-monnaie-abattu-par-les-personnes-non-autrement-identifiees-a-goma/>
7. <https://peacejournalistnews.wordpress.com/2021/12/14/un-autre-militant-pro-democratie-tue-par-balle-dans-la-nuit-du-lundi-au-mardi-14-decembre-a-goma-en-rdc/>
8. <https://peacejournalistnews.wordpress.com/2021/12/13/les-etudiants-les-taximen-et-certains-mouvements-citoyens-dans-des-rues-de-goma-ce-lundi-13-decembre-2022/>
9. <https://florentinbyenda.wordpress.com/2021/10/23/goma-2021-un-nouvel-espoir-aux-sinistres-du-volcan-nyiragongo-les-agr-et-lacompagnement-psychosocial-renforcent-la-resilience-des-jeunes-et-femmes-sinistres/>

The trained young people have begun to develop digital apps and proposals to resolve community issues.

Below there are 2 examples:

GONNAT NGOYI KASONGO created USALAMA (peace in Swahili), an app that aims to end the fishing war in the Great Lakes region by using digital technology to help restore a climate of peace through the sustainable management and conservation of shared aquatic resources. The app provides: digital information on effective management and conservation of aquatic resources; digital surveillance to prevent people from crossing lake boundaries and fishing in areas restricted for fish nurseries and protected species; emergency alerts to prevent insecurity in fishing areas.

At the Incubator Centre, the young people learned how to create databases as well. A group of trainees, guided by KAKULE MUSITU EZECHIEL (a young trainee himself), created an application that manages stocks, books, materials, logistics, etc. Via this application, you have access to different material and books; each material has a code, its delivery date, its value, its current status, the donor/funding agency, the detailed balance of each material in the stock, etc. Each student is able to offer and sell this application to merchants and organizations. This application has a local database accessible by local users. It is possible to make it accessible from everywhere only provided a monthly fee is paid to a host server.

G. Future tasks

PCI will continue to follow up the development of the incubator centre, give advice to its local partner and involve other partners of Pax Christi's network as well as promote the initiative via its channels. This was a successful test case carried out in Goma that Pax Christi we will promote in the other areas where we work in Africa.

The local partner, Africa Reconciled, will make sure that the incubator centre continues to exist and to function as a professional centre for training.

During the project implementation, outreach strategies have been developed to promote the incubator centre and the training taking place, in order to:

- Engage other partners to support and subsidize the incubator centre;
- Engage the state, local leaders, authorities, and communities to support this initiative;
- Attracting benefactors to the centre;
- Encourage the state to give grants and/or scholarships to students under certain criteria;
- To create and develop (digital) pay services for organisations, companies and traders, etc.)

- After the first class of this project, students will pay 50% of the training fees;
- The incubator centre has just published the registration form for the 2nd session 2022:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1QCsqVCRONZZopdn1oRGo9hI0MICTH-uKvSCOYD8RZIs/edit?ts=61eea89c>

This way, the incubator centre will achieve social, institutional and financial sustainability, and will function as a centre for professional training of young people for peace and digitalisation/new technologies.

The 3 trainers are available and ready to continue the work for peace promotion and digitalization.

This initiative is innovative and advantageous in terms of education and promotion of new generation in DRC: young people are learning new technology and changing their behaviour (active nonviolence & peacebuilding). Young people represent more than half of the population of DRC, it is impelling to invest on them as they represent the future of their community. The digital revolution can improve the lives of citizens and technology can also help bridge the education gap. The above mentioned app USALAMA is a concrete example of how technology can be used to address local challenges, improving the livelihoods of the local community and preventing violence. The creator of USALAMA, Gonnat Kasongo, has now received funds by USAID to further develop this app.