

## *The Arrival – THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE*

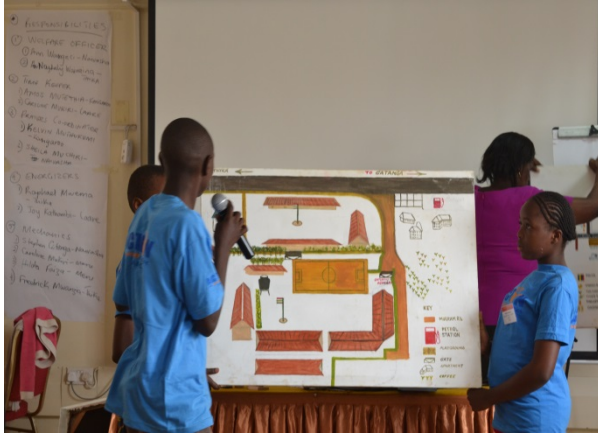
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**As chosen ones** our quest has brought us to the National Youth/Children Conference held at Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) in Nairobi, Kenya on October 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015. We are the chosen ones drawn from the four partners implementing Children Lead the Way (CLW) in Kenya: AfCiC (Action for Children in Conflict), KNOTE (Kenya National Outreach and Training Program), (LCW SACCO) Laare Catholic Waumini SACCO and (KA2000) Kangaroo Actors 2000. We are here to share our experience and the impact of the project in our lives and that of our communities. We will also select our two representatives to the International Conference to be held in Canada early next year.



**As chosen ones** we are here to share our stories, our charms, learn from each other and integrate our stories and charms to form our Country Story.

As AfCiC we are the first to present and we will describe our community by use of painting. In our presentation we have identified our region and community through the different physical features both man-made and Natural. The key economic activities in our region are agriculture – coffee, tea and pineapple farming, animal rearing – tourism and industries. Our calling is “to bring change to the children in our community by ensuring that everyone knows and respects our rights.”



**Figure 1: Our Community has schools and government administrative offices. The school is a haven for children while the chief listen to children grievances (Naftali, 17 yrs.)**



**Figure 2: Respect children and all children have a right (Grace, 12 yrs.)**



**Figure 3: I am in School through the support of the project (Raphael, 15 years)**



**Figure 4: I have been trained on hairdressing and can now support to feed my siblings (Susan, 18 years)**

As KNOTE we will use photos and drawings to describe our community and our region. There are many activities that a child engage in at the expense of their education or play and therefore qualifies to be child labour. We will express the impact on the CLW program by use of poems recited in English and Kiswahili.





**Figure 5: I can differentiate between child work and child labor. Child work is normal and should be encouraged, child labor should be abhorred. (Sheila, 16 years)**



**Figure 6: Deprived of my childhood, overloaded with work, burdened with responsibilities at school age, with so much to learn, so much to accomplish, but not given enough time. (Hamaton)**

We the Laare Catholic Waumini SACCO Chosen One's our call is to bring dignified work to all children. This is what brought us together for social support but also for economic empowerment. The Groups have been registered with the government ministries and the members can access loans from the government at very low interest rates. We will share our challenges and achievements through drama and poems.



**Figure 7: I will not undergo the FGM. I am still a child and need education not marriage. (Joy, 15 years)**



**Figure 8: It's a Bachelor Degree that I am working for. A cap like this will be mine to wear. (Chrisphine, 14 years)**

As Kangaroo Actors 2000 (KA2000) we will present our story by use of drawings, poems and traditional folk songs. Our community and landscape is made up of hills and agricultural productive. In our region

Miraa (Khat) is the key cash crop in the region and the whole life of Igembe People rotates around Miraa. The tree can be described as sweet-bitter because it has been the cause of child labor and neglect.



**Figure 9: We are children. But we have a right to be listened to. (Eric, 17 years)**



**Figure 10: Our Calling is to bring Education – Life Skills – to our fellow children. (KA2000)**



**Figure 11: Our community is rich and fertile for agricultural work. Our problem is the Green Gold (Miraa).**



**Figure 12: We are the voice of the voiceless. We say no to Child abuse. (KA2000, Traditional Dance)**

# As Chosen ones

and many other working children in the country and from the different regions we shared (and others still share) the following challenges:

1. Discrimination – We experience discrimination from the employer due to our age and lack of experience by majority of us. The government on the other hand does not have a position for us as working children. We are in work because we lack other opportunities like education.
2. Poor wages – Due to our age and lack of skills in negotiation we are paid less, overworked and sometimes abused. Sometimes we are not paid at all and we lack support systems to channel our complaints and if we do corruption finds it way and we are victimized the second time.
3. Poverty - high rates of poverty have pushed children to child labor
4. Domestic violence - parents engagement in alcohol leading to domestic violence leading to separation of families
5. Peer pressure leading to many young people engaging into drugs and substance abuse
6. Lack of support from the government – weak systems in fighting child labor
7. Injuries from the harsh work e.g. quarries, water vending , farms
8. End of the Children Lead the Way project is challenge to the Working Children in secondary school
9. Education is affected by cultural practices e.g. FGM, child marriages, early boys circumcision and teenage pregnancies. The parents encourage FGM in some regions due to ignorance.
10. Water shortage/scarcity
11. Lack of business startup capital for those who have completed the apprenticeship programme

Again as chosen Ones, Children lead the Way (CLW) Program through the different partners came to our rescue and that is why we are proud to express our successes and achievements we have realized through the program:

1. We have been encouraged to form groups and through the groups we have initiated Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and this have made self-reliable and we can manage to save, get loans and improve our lives.

2. Through the program we have acquired knowledge on issues of children, children rights, child abuse and child protection. We can identify abuse and have the knowledge on where to report and seek assistance.
3. Some of our group members have acquired courses – dress making, hairdressing, mechanics, carpentry, welding and electrical wiring.
4. As child rights members we can advocating for rights of children in our schools and in our communities
5. Some of us have accessed school through the CLW provision of school fees and uniforms
6. Children have acquired marketable skill through apprenticeship, life skills training and entrepreneurship skills training.
7. Informed on harmful cultural practices
8. Our parents have been provided with Livelihood grants and have begun businesses that help us meet our basic needs and pay for our siblings schools fees
9. Our employers and the larger community have been trained on children rights and therefore are more sensitive on our issues
10. Our teachers in schools have been trained and they are more caring and supportive whenever one of us misses school. They follow us home with our parents to know what stopped us from going to school.

Outside the program our Country is well endowed and can meet all our needs if well managed. Our country is located in Eastern Africa and neighboring Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Tanzania. Its capital city is called Nairobi. Kenya has a devolved form of government with 47 Counties and a Central Government. It has approximately 40 Million people with 19 Million (53%) being children. The Country has 42 different tribes that form diverse cultural activities.

Kenya is a beautiful country with many features making it a tourist destination for people all over the world. We have for example the Great Rift Valley, Mt Kenya, Mt Longonot, Abandare ranges, Lake Nakuru, Lake Naivasha, Lake Bogoria Hot springs, Indian Ocean which has sand beaches, River Tana, the biggest Lake in Africa –Lake Victoria. Kenya has 23 National Parks which makes it a home for the big five (Lions, Buffalo, Elephants, Rhino, and Leopards). The 8<sup>th</sup> wonder of the world which is Wild Beast Migration also happens in Kenya. This draws tourist from all parts of the world.

Other tourist's attractions sites include: Historical sites and cultural heritages. This also play a role in ensuring the Kenyan cultures are persevered and transited to the next generation. Through environmental conservation our leader Wangari Mathai was awarded Nobel Peace Prize due to her work in conserving the environment and championing for the same.



Agriculture is the major source of income. Farming which is both subsistence and cash crop farming fetch a lot of money for the country. We export Coffee, Tea, horticulture and vegetables which includes: (French beans, cabbages, greens beans, cauliflowers, fruits, and broccoli) all over the world as it is favored by the warm tropical climate. We are also among the largest exporters of Rose Flowers in the world. Livestock keeping goats, sheep, Carmel and cattle produce milk and meat enabling many households to raise their living standards. Poultry farming and Fishing are other sources of food and cash for the citizens.

Kenya is the door of the Eastern African communities through the Mombasa Port – the largest in East Africa- and the Railway line that connect the port with Uganda. This creates room for the neighboring landlocked countries to import and export goods.

Kenya is a place of innovation and recently visited held the World Entrepreneurship Conference attended organized by the President of US – Barrack Obama. The Money transfer platform that begun in Kenya known us M-Pesa has been replicated all over the world. This has made it easy for people to transfer money, do transaction, withdraw from bank accounts and pay utilities through mobile phones.

Kenya has 22 public Universities and many more private universities. The country also boast to have many tertiary colleges, Technical Institutes and Polytechnics that absorbs children who have completed class eight and form four. Public Institutes provide education at subsidized rates compared to the private institutions but they are not many to absorb all the children who are ready for transitions. But even with such limitations the country boast producing the best professionals in the world like authors – (Ngugi Wa Thiongo), doctors, engineers, pilots, nurses, lecturers and teachers.

The Country is well endowed with sports personality. In Africa our women volleyball team has been the champion for many years. In the world of athletics Kenya was number one in the world year 2015; taking Golds in Javelin, 800M, and all long distance races. We boast athletes like – David Rudisha and Ezekiel Kemboi. We are also among the best in the world in the field of Rugby (7 people). Our brothers have also managed to join clubs in the European Countries.

Kenya is governed by a constitution that was ratified in 2010. It is termed as one of the most progressive constitution in the world. It has section that promotes the rights of children and protects them from all form of abuse. The challenge is the implementation.

- Even though all children have a right to education – free primary and secondary education – not all children who access school
- Even though the constitution assures health for all many children do not receive proper and quality health care.
- Even though all children are to be protected from all form of abuse this is still happening

The constitution handle child labor appropriately, aiming to make our country a child labor free zone and it is of this that we encourage our governments and its leaders to ensure that what is written in our

constitution regarding children is implemented. We may be weak, young but we know what is wrong when it is done to us.

### **Visual Representation of our Country**

To represent our country we will draw a map of Kenya show indicating all the key physical features and a back stage of the colors of our flag.

- Drawings of physical features
- Kenyan flag
- Map of Kenya

**As chosen ones** from Kenya we have selected the following five charms to symbolize our strength, skills and lessons we have learnt through the CLW program:

1. **The Horn** – we are the voice of the voiceless (children rights advocates)
2. **Pencil** - symbolize education and skills that we have acquired
3. **The Kenyan flag** – the call to patriotism. Regardless of the pain and agony we are proud to be Kenyan.
4. **Book** - how education have change our lives; Skills to be assertive and abstain peer pressure, hard work, Encouragements from teachers and parents, Self-respect and Education.
5. **Ball** – Knowledge of my rights, right to play and leisure, right to association and opinion.

### ***In-Country Declaration***

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**As chosen ones** from Kenya we declare on behalf of all working children that: **“As the working children from Kenya, we demand for our rights; including right to education, opportunity to explore our talents and abilities and dignified work for all working girls and boys.”**

In other words we demand:

- To be given our rights
- To be protected from all forms of abuse
- To be supported to improve our lives through Life skills training
- To be given access to skills training







Mary is the head of Child Rights Club and also the head girl of her school. When she grows up she would like to be a lawyer so that she can advocate for the rights of children.

Hamaton was a working child at a quarry until he was reinstated back to school by the CLW program. He communicates the rights of children through poems.

We have chosen them to represent us in Canada because they are both:

1. Eloquent and understand the challenges working children face in Kenya
2. They convinced us through their 2 minutes speech of their life and later on of their experience with the project
3. They can speak in English
4. They can respond to questions raised and can present their points very well and clearly
5. They interacted very well with all

After voting on the different travel companions we had thought of; this is our selected travel companion who will guide the messengers to the International Conference:

**The Jacaranda Tree** – The Jacaranda tree never dries up or washed away by floods. The tree can withstand all weather. When its dry the tree withers it leaves to reduce the water lose and stay in that condition until it rains and it sprout. As Messengers we are ready to face any challenge we find, we are made to manage every situation.

## PHOTO GALLERY



Figure 1: Margaret W. presenting points of their group discussion



Figure 3: Eric from KA2000 contribute during a discussion

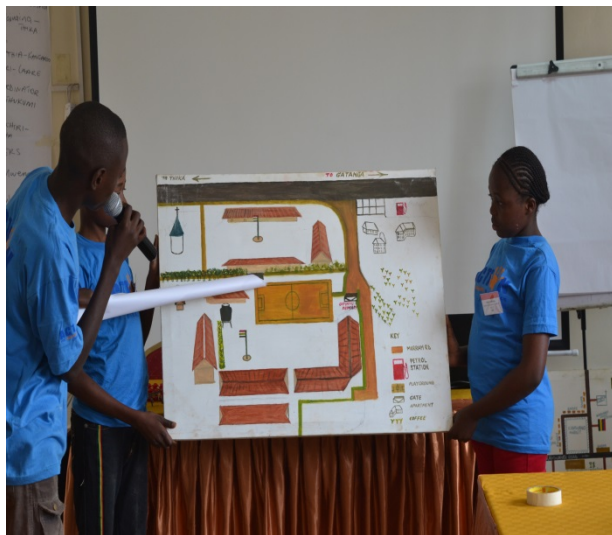


Figure 2: AfcCi Chosen ones present a painting that describes their Community







Figure 4: Laare Waumini SACCO Chosen Ones present a song prohibiting retrogressive cultural practices: FGM and early marriages



Figure 5: Hamaton reciting a poem on how CLW has changed his life

Figure 6: Collins and Triza enjoy and express their joy through dancing





Figure 7: KA2000 chosen ones present a drama discouraging FGM and Girl child exploitation



Figure 8: A charm - Like the airplane flies up high we are also destined to fly high as children