ATOL: Art Therapy OnLine

Peace and Art: A report on a one-off art workshop with underprivileged children and young people in Kampala, Uganda

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Abstract

This article is about a one-off art making workshop with children and young people in Kampala, Uganda. It is based on the theme of the United Nations (UN) Peace Day "Right to Peace". This is in the context of the enduring political, economic and social instabilities in this region. The setting is a half-way house for unsettled children and young people who are homeless, often orphaned as a result of political unrest and who are likely to have experienced multiple trauma. The 'home' situation has a religious base. In addition to food, clothing and shelter, the 'home' provides a mentoring programme to the children and young people who live there, based on biblical teachings.

This article reports on the workshop group process, the discussions and the creative activity based on the theme. The findings of the workshop and their relevance to the lives of the children and young people in the shelter are discussed. All names are pseudonyms and all personal identifiable information has been changed.

Keywords: street children; trauma; basic needs; peace; art; religious symbols

Introduction

This workshop was a follow up from my work as an artist with street children in Kampala city and in Northern Uganda between 2000 and 2008.[1] The workshop was structured under the theme of the UN Peace Day. Peace Pals International (hereafter PPI) promotes the message 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' as a simple, universal expression to unite the hearts of all people in a common desire and hope for peace on earth.[2]

Each year PPI welcomes submissions of children's artworks made on a theme promoting world peace. In 2014 PPI joined with the International Day of Peace and the UN to mark and recognise the universal declaration of Human Rights 'the promotion of peace is vital for the full enjoyment of all human rights' UN resolution 36/37. In 1981 the UN declared 21st September as devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. In 2001 the general assembly unanimously voted to adopt resolution 55/282 instituting 21st September as an annual day of non-violence and cease-fire.[3]

The art workshop took place in April 2014 with 33 children and young people living in a temporary 'home' in Kampala city. The shelter is run by a local organisation that helps homeless children and young people from the city streets, giving them a 'family' to belong to, food and a place to stay, as well as teaching them a better way to live. Some of the children are eventually reunited with their birth families, others move on to join formal school or learn a skill and are helped to be self-reliant adults.

The children and young people – 'street children'

Children and young people are the most vulnerable and worst affected by poverty, the effects of HIV/AIDS and war. There are a growing number moving to urban areas with the hope of living a better life. Whole families move from deprived areas of the country to towns and especially to the capital city Kampala. The children and young people drop

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[1] For further information visit, www.eddiebbira.com
[2] For detailed information about the competition, refer to www.wppspeacepals.org
[3] Refer to the International Day of Peace (IDP) and the United Nations website, www.internationaldayof peace.org for more information

out of school, some are orphaned and in some parts of the country are at risk of being recruited to fight in war or forced into marriage. They end up living homeless on city streets. Some have undiagnosed learning disabilities and other developmental needs, and struggle to cope in ordinary social settings. Such groups are marginalised from mainstream society and left to fend for themselves in the absence of a social support structure.

The migration and household survey (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2010), estimates that 10,000 street children beg and live in filthy conditions in urban areas particularly the capital. Some come from the area of Karamoja, North Eastern Uganda, where they are forced to migrate because of insecurity, harsh climatic conditions, poverty, and food insecurity. They are sometimes lured to the city by peers and individuals promising a more financially affluent life in the city.

It is estimated that more than 940,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS and more than 1.2 million children have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Every family has lost one or more people to AIDS, mostly adults, leaving children without adult carers.

During the civil war in Northern Uganda, from 1986 until recently, an estimated 25,000 children were kidnapped by the rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). They were forced to be labourers and frontline soldiers and, in the case of girls, were sexually exploited.

It is estimated that about 16 children and young people come to Kampala city every day. On the streets they live a semi-structured life, some are members of organised gangs with leaders. In some cases families of mothers and children live on the city streets.

The shelter

There were over 33 children and young people who, until residing in the shelter, lived homeless on the streets. They are referred to the shelter through the police and other agencies, some also come willingly through their peers. The children and young people in the shelter are from diverse backgrounds, different native tribes, and with different levels of formal education, age, physical and mental health needs. They live in this

reception shelter for a period of one year before they are moved on to a country home or resettled with their birth families. They live as a 'family' unit with a team of 4 adult mentors who serve as 'parent' figures and immediate carers. The mentors are part-time university or college age students usually recruited at the start of their training, who serve for the duration of this period, usually three years of university or college training. A new team of mentors is recruited every three years as the outgoing team move on to find employment in their respective professions, while some stay on as employees in the organisation. There are both male and female mentors at any time in the shelter.

The workshop

The main purpose of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for the participants to explore the theme of peace and its implications in their lives and day to day experiences. The art activity was expected to offer a creative outlet for the participants to express how they think and feel about issues that have directly affected their lives in the past and their hopes for the future. The workshop was a social activity for the children and young people to share, work together and to enjoy the benefits of a group activity.

Diversity was acknowledged in the group, for example the phrase 'May Peace Prevail on Earth' was translated into the four tribal languages represented in the group. This was an experience of mutual learning.

May Peace prevail on Earth – English

Emirembe gibe munsi – Luganda

Obusingye bube munsi yitwe – Rukiga

Obusingye bube munsi yeitu - Runyakole

Amahoro abwe mwinsi yacwe – Kinyarwanda

According to the rules and requirements of PPI exhibition and awards, each participant was to include the above message as part of their artwork. The artists had a choice to write the phrase in their mother tongue. Luganda was used as the common language in all discussions.

This was a 3 hour workshop. The participants were asked to discuss and explore the theme basing on the following questions:

What is your understanding of the term peace?

Who has the right to peace?

What would the world look like if everyone lived in peace?

How does the United Nations help to build a peaceful world?

What will you do to make sure all people have a "Right to peace"?

The group was composed of 29 boys and 4 girls, with ages ranging from four to seventeen, from a representation of four tribes out of over fifty tribes in Uganda. Two of the participants were originally from Rwanda. The workshop was facilitated by an art therapist supported by two male mentors.

The art therapist had visited the shelter three days before the day of the workshop and met some of the children and young people. The initial visit was an opportunity for the therapist to familiarise himself with the setting, to do introductions, and to have a planning meeting with the mentors.

The workshop was set up in the meeting room of the shelter with two large tables. Some of the participants sat around the tables and others on benches around the room. The art materials were spread out on each table for all to share. The girls sat on benches on one side of the room and the boys sat around the tables in the middle. The arrangement and setting was identical to a classroom learning environment.

Key topics arising from the questions were discussed at first and the participants came up with ideas and thoughts in response to the theme. Time was allowed for the participants to think about an image that came to mind in relation to the questions, and their understanding of the theme. Some of the participants reflected quietly, whereas others exchanged ideas and discussed with each other. The boys in the centre of the room engaged in a more active debate on issues related to the theme. The discussion generated a lot of ideas and there was obvious excitement about using the art materials. Most participants made more than one image, as they experimented with different materials.

Basic materials were provided such as paper, pencils, erasers, crayons, coloured pencils, felt tipped pens and scissors. The participants were encouraged to work within the guidelines of the competition. To some extent this limited the art materials that were used in the workshop, for example the guidelines for the dimensions of the images dictated the size of the paper offered. Materials like clay were not used because three dimensional art works were not eligible for submission.

A few of the participants presented with challenging behaviour, the two mentors mainly helped with managing the behaviour and order in the session. Each participant had a chance to talk about their art work at the end of the workshop.

Literature review

There is a widespread use of creative arts as interventions to address such epidemics as HIV/AIDS, famine, trauma and poverty in Africa (Barz & Cohen, 2011). The creative forms such as art and music have gained prominence as agents for addressing prevailing problems and communicating broad based information such as directives on sexual health and behaviour. Art, music, dance and drama are used as effective mediums through which powerful networks are created to express ideas and tell individual and communal stories. The arts are widely used for public health campaigns and sensitisation activities, but their therapeutic qualities have not been hitherto explored.

Writings on art therapy developments in Africa suggest community oriented approaches and a focus on using the creative means as a language to shape the therapeutic orientation in context (Kalmanowitz & Lloyd, 1998). There are key questions as to whether a balance can be negotiated between traditional African forms of healing and Western forms of counselling.

In their studies into the effects of early trauma on brain development, Perry and Pollard (1998) report that chronic exposure to threat, danger and violence can lead to the persistence of fear or terror related neurophysiologic patterns, that impact on emotional, behavioural, cognitive and social functioning. Teicher (2002) and DeBellis *et al.* (1999)

concluded that the neurobiological effects of early trauma or severe stress and abuse are likely to alter brain development.

There is growing support for the use of non-verbal therapies in the treatment of trauma. Van der Kolk (1943) in 'The Body Keeps the Score', Kellerman and Hudgins (2000), Herman (1998) and Bannister (2006) all advocate for therapies that use more of physical action than verbalisation. They argue that memories, images, emotions and recollections are too painful and are pushed out of awareness, but remain stored in the body where they become frozen. Children and young people may not have the capacity and the knowledge to narrate such information but it can be re-enacted through the creative media.

There are historical links between art making and psychological healing. Adrian Hill believed that art making led to recovery. He taught art to returning injured war veterans (Waller, 1991). There is a growing body of literature on art therapy interventions treating war veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (Lobban, 2014; Smith, 2016).
Gantt (2016) and Tripp (2016) recommend their Intensive Trauma Treatment (ITT) and suggest that nonverbal methods like art, unlike language or cognition, are useful in helping clients construct a graphic description of the trauma.

There are a number of symbols that have been adopted to represent peace, such as the rainbow, the dove, olive branch, broken riffles and the smiling sun. The roots of such symbols and other peace icons can be traced to ancient times but their origins remain unclear (Rigby, 1998)
The dove and olive branch as a symbol of peace can be traced from the myth of the flood in Genesis (Genesis 8:6-12), the wall painting from the early Christian catacombs of Marcellinus and Peter in Rome, and Picassos' painting 'Dove of peace' (1962).
The peace flag is composed of seven rainbow coloured stripes with the word 'peace' in the centre. It was first used in 1961 when Aldo Capitini (1899-1968), an Italian pacifist and social philosopher, organised a peace march from Perugia to Assisi. Capitini derived the meaning of the rainbow flag from Genesis (9:7-16) a "sign of and covenant

between me and the earth" and the rainbow is generally recognised as a symbol for peace today.

In 1958, Herbert Holtom (1914-1985) designed the symbol that is the logo for the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). This was adopted by anti-war and counter culture activists in the USA and elsewhere and it continues to be used as a symbol of peace.

Another symbol is the 'V for Victory' hand signal. This is made with the palm facing outwards, with the index and middle finger open and all other fingers closed. It was used to represent victory during the Second World War. In the 1960s it was used by activists against the Vietnam War, and in subsequent anti-war protests in the USA it was adopted as a sign of peace.

Method

This was a 3 hour workshop, the participants were asked to discuss and explore the theme basing on the following questions: (i) What is your understanding of the term peace? (ii) Who has the right to peace? (iii) What would the world look like if everyone lived in peace? (iv) How does the United (v) Nations help to build a peaceful world? (vi) What will you do to make sure all people have a 'Right to peace'? The questions were discussed as a group and participants were encouraged to explore individual ideas and collective views were acknowledged.

The workshop adopted the arts based research methods (McNiff, 1998) and artistic inquiry (Wardsworth, 2000). In the process of art making the participants explored their world within the structure of the workshop. The workshop was a structured process of discovering new ideas, creative experimentation and knowing. The participants were encouraged to talk about their images in the group or in one to one settings. The meanings and messages derived from the discussion, and the images, are analysed and interpreted.

Findings

The discussion was extensive, being both diverse and shared in terms of the opinions, views and thoughts expressed on the subject of peace. The process provided an opportunity for the participants to tell their personal stories, and there followed the emergence of key themes associated with the subject of peace.

Faith and religion

There was a widespread belief that prayer, faith in God, reading the bible and attending church are essential practices for all people to have peace. The participants suggested that through prayer they can make the world a peaceful place for everyone. There were several images illustrating Christian symbols i.e. the crucifix, the cross, the church buildings and Bible were dominant features (Figure 1). They presented a collective view of the image of Jesus (Figure 2) as a symbol and hope for peace.

Figure 1. God is love, God is peace

Figure 2. Jesus on the cross

Two participants made distinct pictures of building structures that they identified as mosques (Figures 3 & 4). Like the church and crosses, the mosques represented the participants' faith in Islam as the source of peace.

Figure 3. Mosque

Figure 4. Mosque

Anna

Anna, 17, was mostly quiet and seemed withdrawn from the group. She worked in silence and in isolation from others. She was one of the oldest in the group. She did not participate in the discussion but appeared to be attentive and followed the discussion. She joined in during the art making activity, and appeared thoughtful in the process of making this image (Figure 5), occasionally erasing and re-drawing some sections of the picture. Anna did not say much about her background and how she came to live on the streets and subsequently in the shelter.

Figure 5. Anna's image

Anna described the image as two women kneeling in a prayer posture before a crucifix with an angel and a dove towering above them. Anna argued that peace is a gift from God and that we can have a peaceful world through prayer to God. She said the dove is symbol of peace. Anna said that when she prays to God she feels peaceful in return.

On another of Anna's images, she wrote a statement in Luganda (Figure 6), paraphrased as "There is a belief that if you are rich you have peace. That is not true. Some people are rich but do not have peace. I believe that when you pray, God can give you what you want and you can have peace." Anna's statement was contrary to those who suggested financial affluence as synonymous with peace.
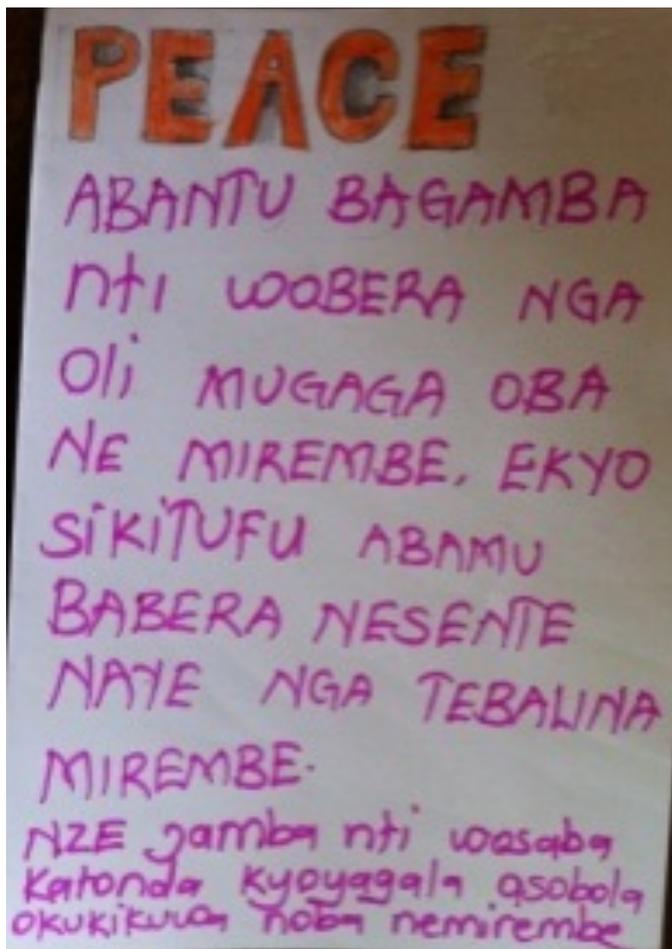

Figure 6. Anna's statement

Financial affluence

Ivan

Ivan, 12, came from a small village in South Western Uganda. He said that he boarded a bus and came to the city to look for his cousin who was then living in Kampala. At first he lived with his cousin for a few months in the city suburbs. He described life as being very difficult at his cousins' home, so he moved to the city streets. In the city he was able to find some odd jobs to earn money and made friends on the streets. Ivan eventually decided to live on the city streets with friends. He was making some money and life on the streets seemed more promising than living with his cousin. Ivan lived on the streets for over two years before he came to the shelter. He learnt about the shelter through a friend whom he had known on the streets.

Ivan explained his understanding of peace as having money to buy all the things he needs in life, that the world would be a wonderful place if everyone was rich. He described peace as living an idyllic lifestyle, driving expensive cars, drinking wine (Figure 7) and having fun.

Figure 7. An idyllic lifestyle

At the time of the workshop Ivan had lived in the shelter for less than a year. His idea of having a right to peace was to get a good job and earn money. He implied that having the financial means to afford the basic and material needs in life was the ultimate meaning of peace. Some of the participants shared Ivans' idea, believing that everyone has a right to peace and that it is every individual's responsibility to make and maintain peace in the world.

Peter

Peter was relatively new to the shelter, he was brought to the shelter by a friend he knew from the streets. His image (Figure 8) depicts a mini bus, a flag, a house, a pencil and a table. Peter worked on his image with great care and extensive planning. He reserved the top half of the paper for the text and he sought help from others to do the lettering. He described the image as a collection of the things he desires, these are the table and pencil representing school, the house - a home, and the flag representing country.

Figure 8. Mini bus, flag, house, pencil and table

Tom

Tom made two images (Figure 9 & 10) a car and an aeroplane. He associated peace with having material possessions and he used the images of a motor car and an aircraft as symbols of wealth. Tom believed that the world would be peaceful if all people were rich. Toms' dream is to own a car.

Figure 9. Motorcar

Figure 10. Aeroplane

James

James was clearly fascinated by motor vehicles. He made several attempts to draw a perfect image of a car (Figure 11) he spent a lot of time perfecting this drawing of a car and a man. For James owning a car symbolised peace.

 Figure 11. James's image

Family and relationships

There was a shared view that a peaceful world means having a network of friends and family.

Amos

At the time of the workshop Amos, 12, had been in the shelter for nearly a year and was attending school provided through the sponsorship programme run by the organisation. Amos explored the theme of peace in the context of his family. He was referred to the shelter through a local church from his home village in Western Uganda following incidents of domestic violence in his family. He talked about how he missed his family and how he wished to reconnect with them, although he maintained that he was happy with his new found 'family' in the shelter. His image (Figure 12) depicts a happy family,

each family member doing a specific activity. He said this was a representation of how he wished his family to be peaceful.

Figure 12. Amos's image

Amos accompanied his images with captions describing each of the sections in his composite picture.

"Boys kicking ball"

"Mother is dancing"

"Brother greeting father"

"Cross"

"Uganda flag"

"Jesus on the cross"

Amos identified with the boy on the top left and a friend on the right. He said that he missed his friends with whom he used to play football. He said that his mother used to dance when she was happy, and 'brother greeting father' shows his brother shaking hands with his father as a gesture of friendship. He said that his older brother had left home after a disagreement with his father. Amos said that he added the cross, Uganda flag and Jesus on the cross in order to have something in common with others in the group. The cross, flag and Jesus on the cross, represented his yearning to identify with the other participants who are his new 'family'. Amos had an opportunity to share his past experiences, his present circumstances and how he would like his future to be.

Patriotism and national independence

Abdul

Abdul's family lives in one of the slum areas of the city within walking distance from the shelter. Abdul, 10, is the third in a family of 6 children. He gradually left home and moved into the shelter. He settled in the children's shelter and was considered a member of the 'family'. He visited his parents and siblings regularly. Abdul said that he left his home to live in the shelter because he had made so many friends at the shelter. He said that his picture (Figure 13) means that Uganda is peaceful and all Ugandans live in peace without wars and insecurity. His definition of peace related to national security and safety of the people, the national flag symbolised peace in the country.

The image of the Uganda national flag featured in a number of individual participants' artworks. The flag represented collective political identity, a symbol for good leadership and patriotism. The discussion revealed the participants in-depth awareness and insight into the political history of Uganda. They collectively described the national flag as a sign for peace, nationalism, independence and a reminder to the political leaders that they are responsible for maintaining peace.

Figure 13. The Uganda national flag

Insecurity and war
John

John, 10, was born in one of the small towns near Kampala. Both his parents died and he lived with his paternal grandmother until she was unable to look after him and sent him to the shelter through a friend. He had lived in the shelter for less than six months at the time of the workshop. John seemed to have little or no memory of his parents but talked a lot about his grandmother. He was one of the children attending school, and he

actively participated in the discussion. John made about three different images at the beginning and seemed undecided about which one to focus on. Among the first images he made was the national flag, which he abandoned possibly because other participants were making the same. He finally focused on working on and completing the image of a helicopter gunship and land-to-air missiles targeting the aircraft (Figure 14).

Figure 14. John's image

At first he related this image to a war movie he had watched. When we explored this in the context of the theme, John talked about the recent war in Uganda and how, without such wars, Uganda would be peaceful.

Simon

Simons' image (Figure 15) depicts a war scene showing a helicopter, a deserted house, a flag, a tree and a wounded man with his face covered in blood. Simon said that United

Nations can help build a peaceful world for those injured in war. The picture shows a UN helicopter helping people affected by war.

Figure 15. Helicopter, house, flag and war casualty

Play and creative expression

Patrick

Patrick is mute and his age is unknown. He was brought to the shelter by the police, who found him on the streets in the city. He had lived at the shelter longer than any of the other participants. I was told that his social interactions and social skills had greatly improved since he came to the home. There was little known about his birth family background and how he got to the city streets. He was given a new name when he came to the home and his age was only estimated. Patrick sat alone on a bench, away from the group. He did not participate in the discussion but joined in the art making. He was particularly excited about using the art materials; his image (Figure 16) is a composition of scribbles in different colours. One of the mentors helped him write the phrase *Amahoro abwe mwinsi yacwe* to complete his image.
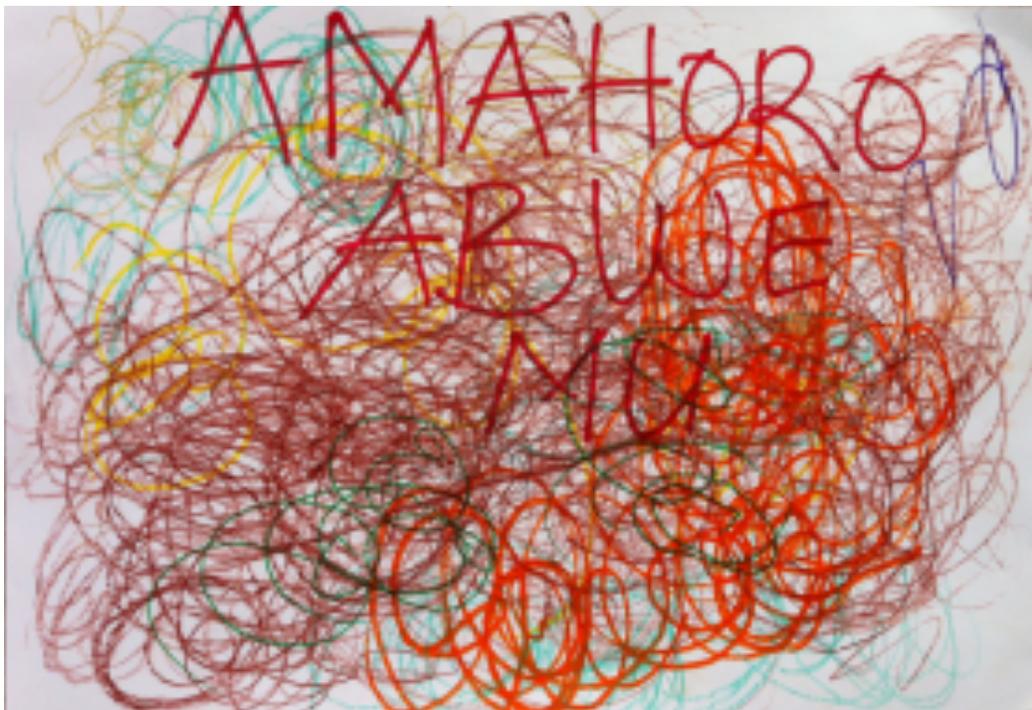

Figure 16. Patrick's image

The images made by the younger children were scribbles, jottings and irregular shapes and colours. Though illegible, the process of making these images was richly expressive. Sam (Figures 17 & 18) and Ken (Figures 19 & 20) made two images each.

Figure 17. Sam's image

Figure 18. Sam's second image

Figure 19.Ken's image

Figure 20.Ken's second image

In the process of art making there were noticeable elements of play especially for the younger children who enjoyed the creative process as a positive social activity. It was valuable for them to have a special time to play and to get positive feedback for their efforts. They made the most of the opportunity to make several images each (Figures 21 & 22)

Figure 21.

Figure 22.

Football was depicted by two participants Allan (Figure 23) and Willy (Figure 24) who both expressed a wish to play. Allan said that the world can be peaceful through football. He argued that because football is a popular sport it could be used to make the world peaceful. He talked about his support for Manchester United football club. Willy said he feels peaceful when he plays football.

Figure 23. Allan's image

Figure 24. Willy's image

Gender roles

Michael

Michael made two separate images of a man and a woman. The man in Figure 25 is walking to church, carrying a bible and an umbrella to protect him from the rain. In the second image (Figure 26) a woman is seated on a chair holding a bible in a reading position. Michael did not explain the message in both images but there is a clear message specific to each gender. He labelled the items in each of the images.

Figure 25. Michael's image of a man

Figure 26. Woman

Art materials

The art materials provided (Figure 27 & 28) appeared to invoke a level of anxiety for some of the participants. The pencils, pens and paper were associated with formal

education and for those participants with little or no formal school experiences this was a relatively new involvement. Some of the participants were hesitant to engage in art making, giving reasons such as "I cannot draw"; "I am not an artist"; "I cannot write" etc. It was obvious that some of the children had never attended school, some had attended but dropped out years before they lived on the streets, and a few were attending school at the time. Those attending school took the lead in the discussion and art making. They helped others with writing and suggested ideas of what draw. They looked up to the facilitator for ideas and possibly thought their artistic skills were being critiqued.

Figure 27.

Figure 28.

Some of the participants struggled with basic skills such as writing their names and other texts, and had to seek the help of others to add text to their images.

Peter was visibly anxious about the writing component of the exercise, from the start he asked his peers if they would help with adding text to his image (Figure 8). Peter was confident in his drawing and he reserved the half of the format for the text. He struggled to get someone to add text to his image. He managed to get two different writers

towards the end. They only helped with parts of the text because they were busy with their own images.

Discussion

The theme and discussion revealed collective as well as individual meanings and ideals for peace. The children and young people's views, thoughts and opinions were important in understanding their experiences and how they view the world.

The discussion and art making was focused on exploring the theme and giving the participants a platform to share their opinions. They made a contribution to strengthening the ideals of peace in their lives and spreading the message beyond through the images. The workshop triggered a lot of thinking and reflection on personal and collective issues. The images provided a concrete representation of the interpretations being a visual reminder of the participants' wishes and a cause for social action. The images effectively represented the general perspective of peace in Uganda and highlighted the social, political and economic implications of peace on the past, present and future.

The participants came up with varied ideas, meaning and images representing peace. The images symbolising peace ranged from the figure of Jesus, the crucifix, the dove, the cross, the bible, church and mosques. Other images such as cars, aeroplanes, houses and flags were also represented as symbols of peace. The Uganda flag repeatedly featured in several images as a symbol for peace and independence. This seems to serve the same purpose as Aldo Capitini's peace flag.

There is a striking similarity to internationally recognised peace symbols with some of the images made in the workshop. The dove in Anna's image (Figure 5) can be associated with Picassos' 'Dove of peace' and the biblical story of the flood in Genesis. The symbolic hand shake in Amos' image (Figure 12) 'brother greeting father', is a sign of fellowship and reconciliation, and is also widely used as a peace icon.

The art materials provided were associated with formal education, which, to most of the participants, was a new or distant undertaking. They perceived the activity as a test and this was associated with feelings of fear of failure. It is usual to think that children and

young people from any background will automatically be excited to use such art materials such as crayons, coloured pencils and paper. This workshop brings to light some underlying associations that may not be obviously explored for example with varying literacy skills. It would have been helpful to get the participants input in suggesting the kind of art materials to use. It would be useful to explore locally sourced or traditional materials such as, clay, charcoal, tree bark, banana fibres, papyrus and recycled paper.

The art workshop was a means of creative expression and play for most of the participants, and the art work was secondary to the creative process involved in making it. As Dubowski, (1984) suggests, my task was to:

> "help the children to grasp the skills necessary to produce meaningful marks – meaningful first and foremost to the children and only secondary to the therapist" (1984, p.49).

Some of the images, for example (Figure 21 & 22), did not fit with the aesthetic requirements and values of the art competition, but it was important to note that the creative process was beneficial to the artists.

The images revealed the artists views, thoughts and ideas, which to some extent symbolised a collective voice and an emotional collective expression and communication, (Hammer, 1997). They depicted shared experiences and ideals of peace in the region. For example the image of the national flag (Figure 13) represents the collective wish for political leaders to preserve and maintain peace.

The images communicated a general demonstration and understanding of peace in this context, Hocoy (2005, p.7) states "the image has the unique ability to bring to consciousness the reality of a current collective predicament."

The creative activity was, for Amos, a way of seeking consolation from his current predicament of living in the shelter away from his family. Schaverien (1991) proposes that art making intercedes between the material world and the world of spirit. In this case Amos' image was a depiction of his emotional depth - for himself and for the viewers. He was happy in the shelter but had an inner wish to live in peace with his

family – the image was a concrete record upon which he was able to reflect on his wishes. In his image (Figure 12) Amos was starting explore some of his autobiographical memory and was able to integrate it into a verbal narrative.

The children and young people in the shelter are provided with the physical resources to meet their physiological needs and also safety, compassion, direction and a sense of belonging. It is evident from the discussion and the images made, that the participants expressed a need for material provisions as necessary prerequisite for peace. In their images, Ivan (Figure 7), Peter (Figure 8), Tom (Figures 9 & 10) and James (Figure 11) argue that having the financial means to acquire material possessions is the foundation of peace.

The need for material comfort as depicted in the images can be reminiscent of other underlying desires for essential human needs. According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, the first three categories i.e. meeting physiological needs, safety and love and family, are provided by the shelter, whilst the top two categories; esteem and self-actualisation are yet to be attained.

Amos's image shows how he wished his family to be. With the aid of this image we learnt more about his family background and the underlying emotional needs. Wood (1984) proposes that the making of a mark is a form of play that contains the flow of activity and mirrors it back to the child. The child is then engaged in an exchange with his own meaning and so attains awareness of it. The participants became more aware of such individual needs that were never discussed prior to the workshop. O'Brien quotes Freud (1961) ".... thinking in pictures ... approximates more closely to unconscious process than does thinking in words" (O'Brien, 2004, p.8). The discussion and ensuing image making, brought to the surface material that had hitherto been unresolved. Thereafter the participants were able to generate ideas for possible solutions.

It is likely that the children and young people are exposed to and suffer multiple traumatic experiences in their lives before they live on the street, and such factors lead them to live on the streets. Most street children come from disadvantaged backgrounds

and will have suffered major disruptions in their lives and this continues on the streets. Schimmel (2008) defines life on the streets as a continuous struggle to survive, physically and psychologically. They live in constant danger and violence, which is exhausting and makes a lasting impact on their psychosocial wellbeing. Van der Kolk (1984) notes that the disruptive effects of trauma influences thinking, feeling, behaviour and regulation of biological systems.

There is growing interest in the area of arts therapies and the treatment of trauma. The creative processes involved in art, music, dance movement and drama have been proved to be effective in treating trauma. Gantt (2016) and Tripp (2016) argue that when the graphic narrative is represented, the client can hear and see that the event is truly history; it is no longer felt to be present tense. They uphold the ITT approach as effective in the cure of preverbal trauma.

Through his work with street children, Williams (2011) advises that to effectively assess and treat street children, the worker has to develop a secure, authentic and potentially long term relationship as the only context in which to determine different dimensions of trauma.

Humanistic psychology approaches advocate for positive unconditional regard as a key element for healthy human growth (Rogers, 1978). Children live homeless on the streets as a result of traumatic experiences, and most likely experience more traumas when living on the streets.

Schimmel points out that:

> "Individuals who have suffered from psychic stress and trauma are in particular need of unconditional positive regard in order to gain self-respect, self-confidence, trust and faith in society and their capacity to reintegrate themselves into society and become contributing members of society" (Schimmel, 2008, p.217).

Interventions that target and treat trauma should be integral parts in holistic rehabilitation of street children.

The participants made personal reflections through the discussion and art making. For example, Amos talked about the problems and difficult relationships in his family and subsequently started thinking about solutions to these problems see (Figure 12) 'brother greeting father'. Amos used the process as a self-initiated learning to work out and resolve his presenting difficulties, devising strategies to solve these problems. Rogers (1978) advocates for a 'person-centred' methodology, in which true self - initiated learning can happen by letting the children and youths face these problem situations in their own way.

The numerous representations of religious symbolism may be attributed to the knowledge and influences from the mentoring programme based on biblical teachings. An explanation of the images made in the workshop fits with Baxandall's concept of 'intentional criticism' (Baxandall, 1985, p.41-42). Baxandall describes intentional criticism as considering the artist's aims; the critical purpose of the artist in relation to his/her culture; the artist's relation to other artists and the element of process or progressive self-revision involved in making a picture.

The workshop was a collective process of sharing ideas, knowledge, art materials, and creative skills informed by a common Christian culture in the shelter. Baxandall's idea of the 'self-revision' involved in making a picture was realised when some of the participants' images were explored. Each participant had a personal story to tell about his/her image. The images embodied the individual artist's meaning of peace. They were a pictorial representation of the artists' personal story and elements of the culture in the environment. Amos' image represents his personal story and features of the shared culture in the shelter i.e. the cross, crucifix and the national flag.

A cross section of the participants represented Christianity and the church with the symbol of the cross and others represented Christianity with the crucifix (Figures 29 & 30). In depth discussion and elaboration revealed the separate representation of the Catholic and Protestant denominations in the group. The crucifix is identical with the Roman Catholic Church liturgy and symbols. The English translations of *The Roman Missal* (2010) instructs that there is to be a cross adorned with a figure of Christ

crucified during the celebration of holy mass. This is in contrast to the Protestant Church symbol of the cross without the figure of Jesus. Records show that about four-fifths of the Ugandan population is Christian, primarily divided between Roman Catholics and Protestants (mostly Anglicans) [4]
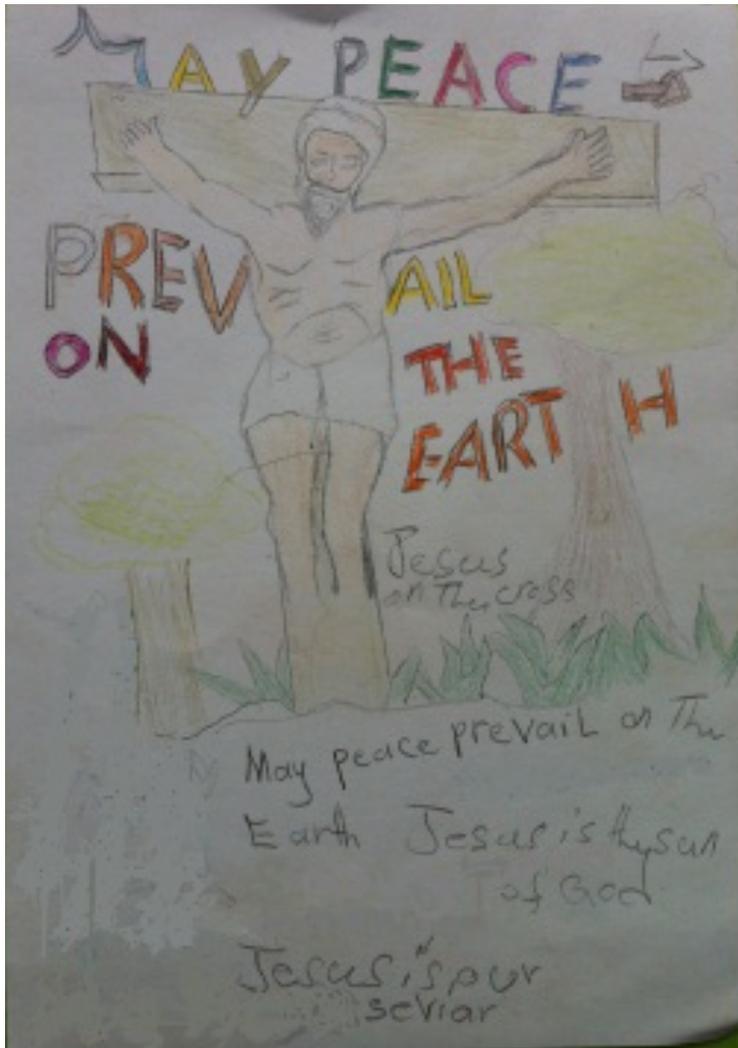

Figure 29.

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[4] http://www.britannica.com/place/Uganda/Religion

Figure 30.

The images (Figure 29 & 30) portray the figure of Jesus Christ crucified on the cross. Both participants told me that they know Jesus was crucified on the cross and the crucifix is sign of peace. The denominational differences were only revealed through the images, there were no obvious divisions in the group based on such doctrine differences.

The aim of the biblical mentoring programme is to teach the children and young people a better way to live. The teachings are based on the principles, precepts and person of Jesus Christ. They attend weekly formal discipleship teaching sessions which serve as spiritual and social support.

Figure 31. The Bible

Figure 32. Church

Other religious symbols represented were the Bible (Figure 31) and church building (Figure 32). There were also two participants who made images of the mosque (Figures 3 & 4) as a symbol of the Islamic faith. This emphasises the overall importance of religion as a key element and determinant in the course of their lives.

In this context it seems worthwhile to consider how religion and psychological support can co-exist as complementary support systems, and if this combination can offer shared outcomes. It is important to be aware of the traditional differences between the two systems. Maslow (1964) attempts to bridge the wide philosophic divide between the knowledge of the body and of the spirit. He argues that 'peak-experiences' are:

> "valid psychological events worthy of scientific, rather than metaphysical, study
> – keys to a better understanding of a peculiarly 'human' aspect of man's existence."(p.viii).

In this case it may require clearly defined goals and expected outcomes of the spiritual separate from the psychological interventions.

Maslow argues:

> "that the same kind of subjective experiential responses (which have been thought to be triggered only in religious or mystical contexts) are also triggered by many other stimuli or situations, e.g., experiences of the aesthetic, of the creative, of love, of insight, etc" (p.xi).

The prospect of the co-existence of the biblical mentoring programme, with art psychotherapy interventions in the shelter, will be a worthwhile venture to explore.

This region has experienced a turbulent political past since independence to date. John's image (Figure 14) shows a helicopter gunship and land-to-air missiles targeting the aircraft. John mentioned that he had not experienced war, but that he had heard how wars affected communities. O'Brien (2004, p.8) relays Traverthen's (1995) idea referring to art as a "record of emotion in the experience of making and in the imagination of its creator", and that within it are the perceptions, movements, emotions, thoughts and memories that occupy the artist in the process of making art. John made a vivid depiction of his imagination of war, a major factor affecting peace in this region.

Conclusion

There is interest in exploring the healing and therapeutic elements of the creative arts and how they can be utilised. In this context it is essential to discover how artistic expression can be used to restore order to the chaos and destruction caused by the trauma, pain, loss and devastation left by war, disease, poverty and violence. The workshop offered a space to explore their individual needs, hopes and dreams, to recognise their specific strengths, self-worth and dignity.

It was noted that there is a need to develop a sustainable programme. This can be done through delivering skills and sharing training sessions in using art as a tool for therapy, with the mentors and other professionals who are directly working with children in the shelters on a daily basis.

The rich discussions on the subject of peace, from deeply individual viewpoints to collective meanings, revealed the necessity for psychological support beyond the basic human necessities offered. The discussion and images shows the significance of the Christian religious teachings as a support system for the spiritual and emotional needs of the children and young people in the shelter.

This workshop was the starting point for navigating the direction for implementing the use of creative arts as therapeutic support alongside the already established support systems, and adapting an appropriate therapeutic model for this context. It also presented opportunities for considering the art based research methods as a unique way of knowing and discovering the potential of arts therapies in this context.

Biography

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He is a state registered art therapist working with children and young people in inner London schools and with a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). He worked as an artist with street children in Kampala and continues to be actively involved with creative therapies initiatives in Uganda. He is the founding director of the Creative Therapies Initiatives, Uganda.

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