



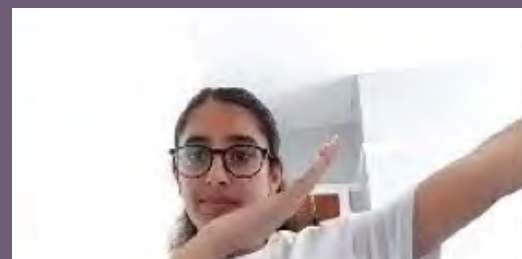
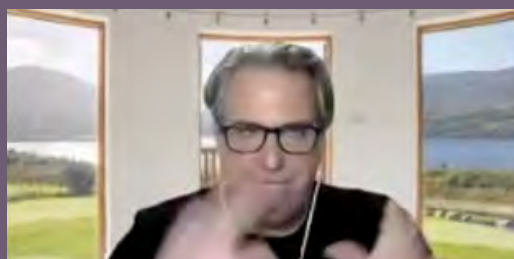
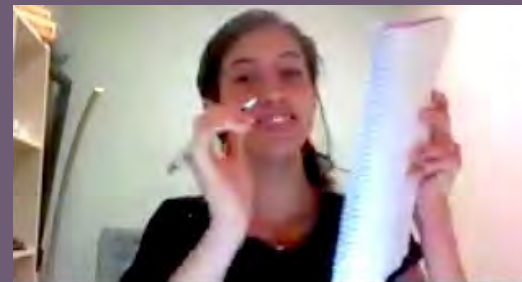
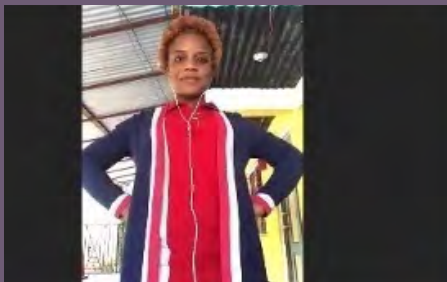
PARTNERS FOR YOUTH
EMPOWERMENT

REPORT FROM THE FIELD

2021

GLOBAL YOUTH
LEARN PEACEMAKING
THROUGH DIALOGUE

BY PEGGY TAYLOR
CO-FOUNDER, PYE





POWER OF DIALOGUE

Music for Dialogue (MFD) provided the platform for these youth to connect, learn dialogue skills, and create new projects of care in their communities around the world.

“Everything we’ve learned about online learning this past year made our long-held desire to have a global youth camp suddenly possible,” PYE facilitator Stef Turner told us.

“The young people had such a big desire to participate, it was very energizing. They wanted to connect with their peers, and they wanted to do something good in their communities.”

The Power of Dialogue (POD), a new international youth program offered by Partners for Youth Empowerment (PYE) in collaboration with the Synergos Global Dialogue Initiative (GDI) and

Our three organizations provided the synergy. The Synergos Global Dialogue Initiative brings together philanthropists and civil society organizations dedicated to spreading the virtues of dialogue from over 10 countries. Music for Dialogue is an Israeli venture at Tel Aviv University that teaches dialogue skills through sharing songs and personal stories related to them. At Partners For Youth Empowerment, we’ve taken a multi-arts approach to learning from difference at our Power of Hope youth camps over the past 25 years. Given the increasing rancor in our world, we were eager to co-create a program that would prepare teenagers to become bridge builders in their schools, families, and communities.

CREATING MAGIC ONLINE

In keeping with these Covid times, Power of Dialogue has been an online project from the start. PYE advisor, Wayne Silby connected our organizations, and we started meeting online. "After a few meetings, we looked at each other through our Zoom screens and said, 'Let's create a program that combines the best of what we each know,'" says Stef Turner. Ten months later we launched POD as a five-day online camp, based on our Power of Hope Camp model with Music for Dialogue's songs and personal story process woven throughout. Synergos provided the glue that kept the process going. "We created a cohesive program," says Ori Leshman, director of Music for Dialogue. "No one felt it was three organizations doing three things. It was so connected."



The pilot program started in August with teams from youth organizations in six countries: Daughters of Africa in The Gambia; Playmakers Theater CBO in Kenya; Debate for Peace in Israel; Oasis Hub: Lister Park in the UK; the Youth for Development Network in Jamaica; and Young Women Empowered in the US. Three of the organizations are current PYE partners and three are new to us.

The program began with 3 ½ hour sessions over five days stretching across multiple time zones with the US youth starting at 9 am and the youth from Israel and Kenya signing in at 7 pm their time. During this five-day online gathering the youth connected with peers across the globe and developed dialogue skills that included: being open to others, profound listening, containment and empathy, meaningful giving to others, and joining forces to reach common goals. Each team then developed a local project that addresses a social problem using their new dialogue skills. The teams will come back together on Oct 3rd to share the status of their projects with each other.



photo credits: Malick Njie - DaughtersofAfrica

Participants were part of two groups that met each day during the five-day program. “POD groups”, comprised of one person from each of the 6 countries, engaged in dialogue through sharing music and personal stories. “Home Groups”, made up of the country teams, worked together to design their social projects. The Home Groups worked both online and in person during and after the program time to create their projects.



FINDING COMMON GROUND THROUGH MUSIC

Sharing music and stories in the POD groups proved to be very powerful. “Each day we gave the youth and mentors specific tasks,” says Ori.

"They used music and songs they love to talk about themselves, their families, and their friends."

This sharing gave the youth a window into problems around the world like the growing issue of homelessness in the US. They also learned that even though their music may be very different, the songs they love address common concerns. Many youth were also surprised to learn that they knew and loved a lot of similar music.

Two songs, in particular, found deep resonance. Stef recounts a tender time when someone shared a song about suicide called [‘1-800-273-8255’](#) by Logic. “Talking about the song really opened up a wide emotional field as music does,” says Stef. “Music takes us right to the rawness and realness.” A youth from Israel said that when he realized the name of the song was the suicide hotline number, he decided to do some research. “I went online and found that thousands of people had commented on this song. Someone even wrote ‘157 reasons to live.’ It was very powerful.”

Another song, [Cool People](#), written by two sisters, Chloe and Halle, highlighted the importance of the quality of relationships between siblings. The young woman who shared this song explained that she has a supportive relationship with her brother, whom she misses dearly as he is in the military. Another member of the group, listening to her comments, noted that the dialogue about the song had moved her deeply; having a challenging relationship with her own sister, she said she was inspired to repair the discord.

“POD blew my expectations,” says PYE facilitator Andrew Nalani, a Ugandan PhD student who has led several Power of Hope Camps. “I came in with low expectations, because I thought the youth would be tired of being online.” But despite internet fatigue and some serious problems with the technology, the determination to connect was palpable. “I was very surprised to see their consistent desire to engage. A young man from Kenya, for example, spent three hours one day repeatedly trying to get online. He finally made it on for the last half hour.”

Getting to connect with others across the globe was the main motivation for the youth from Seattle’s Young Women Empowered (Y-WE).

“What attracted them was getting to build relationships with young people across the world and having a facilitated forum to build global relationships” says mentor Rose Edwards.

“So many of the Y-WE youth are not from the US, and they eventually want to visit their countries of origin. This was an opportunity to feel like we are part of something greater, and to build

relationships virtually that in the future may be in person.”

According to PYE program manager, Devon Little, the connections grew over the course of the five days. “Day by day you could feel the fabric of the community tighten. On Wednesday we went to a deeper place with people sharing their vulnerability. On Thursday they were saying, ‘We want more time with each other,’ and they began to spontaneously share their artistry with each other. By Thursday we had young people volunteering to demonstrate activities—leadership emerged naturally.”

YOUTH WANT MEANINGFUL CONNECTION

The connections proved to be deep and empowering. Reported one Israeli youth: “The quality of connection in this program was so much deeper than in other programs. We often just talk and talk and talk about our ideas. Here, we are connecting from the heart.” Said Kenyan mentor Michael Kamunya, “Being able to interact internationally gave our youth a lot more confidence. I now think they can face life more confidently.”

“My general impression was that even if it ended after the first five days, I would have been satisfied,” said PYE facilitator Andrew. “It felt to me that young people are hungry to be with each other in meaningful ways.



photo credit: Bronislava Kabakovitch

"I wondered if the spontaneity we see in person at Power of Hope Camps could happen online," says Andrew. It's a fair concern given that online programs require a lot of structure, and nearly every minute is accounted for. But once again he was surprised:

"There was a moment when we had just come out of break out rooms and two things were going on. People were beginning to call out pieces of music that had touched them, and others began asking if they could share about themselves through a song or poem."

CAN SPONTANEITY HAPPEN ONLINE?

A youth from Jamaica blurted out, "I'm going to sing a song for you right now." says Andrew. "He had a golden microphone, and he sang a song for the rest of the group,"

Michael, the mentor from Kenya, then shared a poem in chat. Then the participants asked for more time for this. "It reminded me of those moments of spontaneity, elation, and connection that happen in person," says Andrew. "This was a real celebration."

"It was amazing to see the dedication of the adults," reflects Music for



Dialogue's Ori. "I am a musician and conductor. With operas, the singers enter the stage, and when they get off stage, they get right on their cell phones. When I was co-facilitating with Stef and Andrew, we would do everything we asked of the youth." One day, for example, when everyone was in breakout rooms playing a game called 'What if,' rather than taking a break, the threesome played the game with each other. "It was a very hard day for me because a friend of mine had just lost his daughter under tragic circumstances," said Ori. "Playing 'What If' almost became like a prayer. I get tears in my eyes thinking about it."

Tima Baldeh, mentor from The Gambia, also appreciated the cross generational participation. "This was my first experience to be a mentor, I would say it will be my best because the program did a lot of things for my own personal development. I can say the same thing for my youth as well because everyone was uplifted. This came at just the right time for us." They were so inspired, in fact, that they came up with an ambitious project in which they'll speak with elders in six communities across the coast of The Gambia. "Our young people are talking so much more than they did before," says Tima, "and they are stepping up to challenges. They now want to create a podcast!"



**PLANTING
SEEDS OF CARE**

1. YOUTH FROM ISRAEL WILL DELIVER FOOD TO ELDERS FOR AN ENTIRE YEAR WHILE ENGAGING IN CONVERSATION, STORYTELLING, AND SONGS TO COUNTER ISOLATION AND BRIDGE RELIGIOUS AND GENERATIONAL DIVIDES.

2. YOUTH FROM DAUGHTERS OF AFRICA WILL INTERVIEW ELDERS IN SIX COMMUNITIES ALONG THE COAST IN THE GAMBIA TO LEARN ABOUT THEIR IDEAS FOR SOLUTIONS TO SOCIAL ISSUES. THEY'LL CREATE A PODCAST TO SHARE WHAT THEY LEARN.

BY THE END OF FIVE DAYS, PLANS WERE HATCHED FOR SIX AMBITIOUS SOCIAL PROJECTS.

3. YOUTH FROM JAMAICA WILL DESIGN AND DELIVER A LIFE SKILLS LEARNING PROGRAM FOR YOUTH IN STATE CARE TO INCREASE MOTIVATION AND DEVELOP EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS.

4. YOUTH FROM THE UK WILL KNOCK DOORS AND BRING THE NEIGHBORHOOD NEAR THEIR SCHOOL TOGETHER TO TURN A NEGLECTED ALLEY INTO A PLACE OF BEAUTY AND CONNECTION.



5. YOUTH IN KENYA WILL BRING TEENS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER TO DREAM ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT IN THE FUTURE. THEY'LL HOST A COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING DAY WHERE EACH TREE REPRESENTS A YOUNG PERSON'S DREAM.

6. YOUTH AT Y-WE WILL EDUCATE THEMSELVES ABOUT HOUSELESSNESS AND FUNDRAISE TO CREATE CARE PACKAGES TO HAND OUT TO UNHOUSED PEOPLE IN SEATTLE.

A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

“I see POD creating ripples of care circles in communities—reverberating ripples going out on the grassroots level,” says Stef.

“It was kind of a miracle that this happened,” reflects Ori. “All together we created something new, and we’re not ready to say goodbye. This is only the first POD. Imagine what it will be like after the 50th program. What if in five years all of us meet in the UN with 300 members of different POD programs.”

“And I see the impact of that care having a knock on effect like dominoes. Expanding our capacity to communicate with our peers and communities are necessary skills in this world. ‘Yes,’ to dialogue, but even more important is developing our capacity to listen. When you listen, you start to hear yourself in those around you. Once you get to a place where you can feel people, you start to love them. Then, you are ready to join together and do great things.”



photo credit: Debate for Peace - Bronislava kabakovitch

"I've learned how to be more open, and how to express my feelings to others."
Israel

"POD has upgraded me as a youth. It's a needed project." The Gambia

"The games we played increased my confidence and helped me be more involved." UK



photo credit: Oasis Community Hub

"I've learned how to be more open, and how to express my feelings to others."
Israel

"These three days, I thought 'wow 3 hours it's alot.' But when I came off the calls, I felt energized because we are sharing and it feels good." Israel

"The power of dialogue gave me the strength to think in different ways in order to innovate new ideas." The Gambia

"Usually I'm not the type to communicate with people I'm not friends with. Now I can communicate with new people who aren't already part of my life." Jamaica

"I felt a deep connection with all the different people just in a few days. This made me realise we are connected even with different backgrounds, cultures, and ways of life." The Gambia

"POD has upgraded me as a youth. It's a needed project." The Gambia

"It was really an impactful project and made me realize I can step up to solve issues disturbing our communities."
The Gambia

WHAT YOUTH HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE

"I've learnt that music is the true universal language." Jamaica



photo credit: Youth For Development Network

2021 POD PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Playmakers Theatre CBO: Nakuru, Kenya

[Facebook.com/PlaymakersTheatreCBO](https://www.facebook.com/PlaymakersTheatreCBO)

PTCBO is an arts organisation providing opportunities for youth to exercise their economic and social rights. We empower youth to earn an honest living through art, and we bring development to the community through public art that has meaningful content. Our interactive programs address topics such as mental health, safety, healthy relationships, and more, through poetry, music, plays, graffiti, and dance.

Debate for Peace: Israel

www.debateforpeace.org

Debate for Peace (DfP) brings together Arab and Jewish students (ages 13-19) from all over Israel and Palestinian territories, to debate, negotiate and (attempt to) resolve the most pressing global conflicts and challenges. DfP organizes the only Model UN conference series in Israel, and Jewish-Arab high school MUN delegations abroad. The DfP leadership program also organizes youth leadership summits, visits with diplomats and foreign embassies, and special workshops and training seminars.

Youth For Development Network: Kingston, Jamaica

www.yfdn.org

The Youth For Development Network (YFDN)'s work is dedicated to improving the lives of the most vulnerable and hard to reach youth in Jamaica by developing an ecosystem that enhances their psychological development through sports and the creative arts. YFDN provides training and mentorship programs, utilizing the A Ganar sports and Creative Empowerment models. We target community-based organizations, teachers/trainers in low performing schools, the Department of Corrections Staff/Juvenile Correctional Centres, and youth. YFDN facilitates camps, certification workshops, and training guides.

Daughters of Africa NGO: Abuko, The Gambia

www.daughtersofafrica.info

Daughters of Africa NGO supports grass-roots development in Africa through the building of sustainable projects for youth and their communities. We believe in building healthy partnerships, and we are committed to addressing the inequalities and lack of opportunities that occur in parts of Africa. We work with communities to co-create projects that build self-determination and foster leadership development.

Oasis Community Hub - Lister Park: Bradford, England, U.K.

www.oasisacademylisterpark.org/community

The Oasis Community Hub is an extended learning opportunity connected to the Oasis Academy. We believe in communities that are holistic, interconnected and totally inclusive. Our extended provision through our Hub team is at the center of our community work. We aspire for the Academy to be at the heart of our local community, recognized by others for our clear understanding and support of local issues and awareness of community needs.

Young Women Empowered: Seattle, WA, US

youngwomenempowered.org

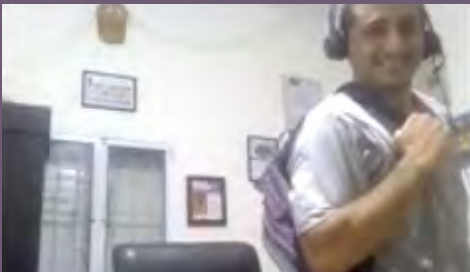
Young Women Empowered (Y-WE) cultivates the power of diverse young women* (*those who identify as female or girls or who were assigned female at birth) to be creative leaders and courageous changemakers through transformative programs within a collaborative community of belonging. Y-WE provides a community of belonging for young women during a stage of life when they are moving toward adulthood, identifying college and career interests, and exploring ways to take action as community changemakers.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE POD 2021
VISIT: WWW.EXPERIENCE.SYNERGOS.ORG/THEPOD

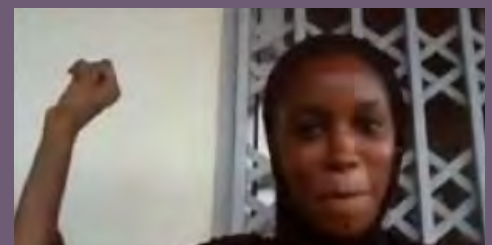
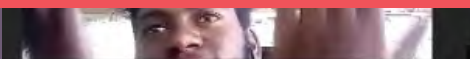
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PARTNERS FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
FUTURE POD PROGRAMS, YOUTH PROGRAMS AND ADULT TRAININGS
VISIT: WWW.PARTNERSFORYOUTH.ORG
CONTACT: SUSAN - INFO@PYEGLOBAL.ORG

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SYNERGOS GDI CIRCLE
VISIT: WWW.SYNERGOS.ORG/GLOBAL-PHILANTHROPISTS-CIRCLE
CONTACT: JAMIE - JWEBB@SYNERGOS.ORG

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MUSIC FOR DIALOGUE
VISIT: WWW.MUSICFORDIALOGUE.ORG/EN/
CONTACT: ORI - ORILESHMAN@GMAIL.COM



PARTNERS FOR YOUTH
EMPOWERMENT



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