

ARTIVISM IN KIBERA: SETTING THE STAGE FOR YOUTH-LED EDU'ACTION



YOUTH CASE STUDY: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL KENYA

SUMMARY

In Kibera, the largest informal settlement in Africa, self-organised youth group Wasanii Sanaa are getting creative in response to the local lack of interest in human rights. Through partnership with Amnesty International Kenya, the group gathers information about their rights and use these to create theatre and dance performances to educate and empower their local community with regards to key issues affecting them.



STORY OF CHANGE

Wasanii Sanaa is a youth-led organisation made up of 28 young people from Kibera, Kenya. They use a combination of civic education and theatre to stage entertaining and informative performances to educate their community about their rights, and to advocate for change. In 2013 the group approached and established a partnership with Amnesty International Kenya. Since then the organisations have worked in collaboration to strengthen their human rights education in Kibera, including through the delivery of a three-year project on police reforms that engaged 5,304 community members through community dialogues and interactive community theatre. Realising that community members were more engaged in learning about human rights through approaches that involved entertainment, the group created a range of energetic songs, dances and skits on key issues affecting their community, such as gender-based violence and extrajudicial killings by the police. Around their jobs and studies, they meet five days a week to practice and hone their skills, and give weekly performances in busy public areas across Kibera which draw large crowds. After they have performed, Wasanii Sanaa refer community members who have been affected by the issues to local organisations who are able to offer guidance and support. Since they began performing in Kibera the group has noticed an increase in people's people's ability to recognise when their rights are being violated and that

they are taking action and advocating for their rights when this happens.

'Across Africa, young people are not recognised in decision-making. However, young leaders know what's important for their generation and by listening to our voices, young people will feel more empowered to speak out rather than doing drugs, stealing or killing.'
Julian, member of Wasanii Sanaa

OBJECTIVES

- Use entertaining approaches to engage and educate the community about their human rights.
- Increase community awareness of human rights and build community members' confidence in advocating for their rights.
- Support young people living and organising in Kibera so that they can take action and address the issues affecting them and their community.
- Work in partnership with human rights organisations to gather information to inform performances, and direct/refer affected community members to them for more information and support.

IMPACT

- Community members are more aware of their rights and now approach Wasanii Sanaa after their performances to discuss the issues, how they are affected by them, and to seek support or advice.
- Members of Wasanii Sanaa have increased their confidence through learning about human rights, giving public performances, and by creating theatre and music.
- Since Wasanii Sanaa was founded, the group has grown from four members to twenty-five, and interest from young people in Kibera is steadily growing.



TIPS AND TRICKS

- *Get creative when sharing your message!* Creating bold new ways to share information on human rights was key to engaging uninterested community members.
- *Engage young people outside of education!* Wasanii Sanaa is made up of members who did not complete school due to personal challenges encountered from living in an informal settlement, as well as young people who have completed school or further education. They use their different experiences to inform their songs, skits and performances.
- *Establish partnerships!* Through their partnership with Wasanii Sanaa, Amnesty International Kenya committed to nurturing and supporting youth-led activism in Kibera. By providing capacity building and human rights education they have contributed to the strengthening of human rights work in Kibera led by young rights holders themselves.
- *Practice Makes Perfect!* New members of Wasanii Sanaa must audition to join, and the group rehearse five days a week to ensure their performances are ready for the public and draw in crowds.

VINCENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Vincent is the Founder of Wasanii Sanaa and shared: “I wanted to be a champion for human rights and I was encouraged to take up this cause by Charles Nyukuri, from Amnesty International Kenya. Inspired, I decided to nurture talent and educate people so they knew how to deal with issues such as poverty, drug abuse and gender-based violence, so I set up my own organisation, Wasanii Sanaa. We recently staged a theatre performance on police reforms. Afterwards, two young people told me what happened to them. I documented the case and referred it to an organisation that could take it further – I told them it was an opportunity to have the police investigated.”

“One of the greatest impacts we can have is to make sure people can speak out for themselves. Every day, young people are killed by the police. They kill everyone they think is a thief, even if it is just an allegation. But people are starting to speak out, thanks to our work with Amnesty International, which focuses on educating people about human rights.”
John, member of Wasanii Sanaa

STAKEHOLDERS

- Wasanii Sanaa: Young community members from Kibera who are rights holders and activists.
- Amnesty International Kenya
- Residents of Kibera
- Local human rights organisations: Centre for Rights, Education and Awareness (CREAW), Life and Peace Institute, Gender Violence Recovery Centre (GVRC) and Transparency International Kenya have all partnered with Wasanii Sanaa to empower and engage communities with their rights.

INFORMATION

- Contact Gregg Mwendwa at Amnesty International Kenya for more information: gregg.mwendwa@amnesty.or.ke

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