

Title: Coding for Peace and Prosperity
Count of project implementation: Kenya
Sponsoring College: Harvard University
Student name (nationality and school): Joseph Dudi Miabok (South Sudan, Harvard University)
Link to project's facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/kakumacodes>

PART. A. FINAL WRITTEN REPORT

Section I: Narrative

a. A two-sentence summary of the goals of your project

Education is a basic human right every child deserves. Investing in the education of children, especially through the infinite power of technology, is key to achieving harmonious and more cohesive societies in the near future.

b. Did other fund-raising efforts contribute to your project? What were they?

No other fund-raising effort came through for me. I relied on Davis Projects for Peace funds. When the Davis funds were diminished, I used my credit to ensure project completion.

c. How did you come up with the idea for your project?

I was chatting with a friend of mine in an apartment in New York city and I was explaining to her about how I think I would have been better off as a computer science student if I knew what programming/coding was in 9th grade. Then I remembered there were kids who were then in that situation and haven't discovered the beauty of computer science just because they have not been exposed yet. I thought that is something I would want to do someday: introduce these kids to learn more about programming and teach them about college access with the goals of enhancing peace and harmony among them as well as how they can make a living out of coding. My friend then informed me that I could do it through a few ways, and Davis Projects for peace can fund such an idea and I decided to pursue the idea.

d. Why do you think the issue your project is responding to exists?

First, I lived through the issues my project is responding to. Secondly, there is a reliable data showing the gap of access to higher education for refugees. Teaching students how to code as well as teaching them the possibilities of joining colleges is great way to decrease access to higher education gap. Given the increase in crimes committed by young people as well as engagement in unlawful activities in the camp because of idleness, a motivation to dream big would keep them occupied and work towards a more cohesive community.

e. Why did you choose your host site to work in? a. What was it like to work in your host site?

Kakuma felt like a natural place to conduct the program because I grew up there. I know what refugees from that camp face and having the opportunity to alleviate a problem that faced my community was an opportunity I couldn't refuse. Working at the host site felt like I was reliving my adolescent life from a different lens. Rather than being the kid with so many dreams yet so few opportunities to achieve them, I was now in position to listen to young dreamers and encourage them to work hard so that they can achieve their dreams like I did. I was there to tell them they could achieve their wildest dreams if they worked hard enough. This is something that I lacked when I was growing up. Those whom we looked forward to for inspiration and encouragement were so far removed from us. So, as a kid, I never really knew the line between what could remain fantasy and what was achievable.

f. Did you feel at any point that the project was not going to work? In what ways?

There are times where running got frustrating. First, it was difficult to find a proper training site equipped with laptops and electricity to conduct the training. At some points when I got sick of Malaria (I had malaria four times in 2.5 months), the training slowed down so much. In addition, the grants were below

the actual cost of the implementation of the training, so I had to make decisions that weren't favorable to me, such as spending from credit card, to ensure the completion of the project.

g. What were the challenges you encountered in communicating with people?

There weren't many challenges as majority of the people I was communicating with were very supportive of the idea. However, there were just many delays in communication due to the bureaucratic process and COVID.

h. How do you define peace?

Peace is not just the absence of violence. Peace is when you walk down the street and have the confidence to work towards your goals without having to worry about someone or some event snatching away your dreams other than yourself. Peace, for a refugee adolescent, is knowing that they have a future to look forward to and to wake up every day excited and energized to work towards their goals. That is peace for me.

i. How does or will your project contribute to peace?

Short-term?

Bringing together different kids from different schools, ethnicities and nationalities promotes cohesion within the camp residents. Their graduation brought together their families and having families celebrate together was just one way to realize maybe they aren't so different from each other. Interaction between students from different nationalities who live in different neighborhoods helped debunk the myths and misconceptions that were already installed in these adolescents.

Long-term?

The program participants are the future policy makers and leaders of their respective communities. Hence, learning to work together with people they'd never known before and building friendship with them will shape their world view as they lead their communities in future. When their turn to lead comes, they will desist from engaging in politics of division.

a. Please describe changes created by the project during the summer? b. Please describe anticipated changes that will continue in the future as a result of the project.

The project brought together children from different communities, ethnicities, and nationalities. They made friends and built strong bonds among themselves. In addition, their parents had the opportunity to engage with each other, hence, bringing together members of the camp whose communities might have been hostile to each other. I hope that they will serve an example to rest of the camp members and work together. In addition, students were really inspired by the possibility of attending a higher education especially abroad and vowed to work hard to earn those prestigious spots. Furthermore, some of them discovered their passion for computer science and hope to pursue a career in computer science in the future.

j. Has your project changed the way you think about the world? How has it changed you?

This project has motivated me so much about the work that needs to be done in this world especially the need to work for the less fortunate in fighting for a more just and equitable world. Not until there is no need for charity organization. Not until everyone can become whoever they want without that being dictated by where they were born or who their parents where, I shall always work towards an equitable and a more just world. In regard to that, I co-founded a college access program for Kakuma students, and I will be working on it even though I am a full-time student.

k. Was your project impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? a. If yes, please describe any impacts you and/or community members engaged in your experienced. b. How did you advance your projects goals despite these challenges?

COVID-19 obviously impacted all of us in so many ways. First, this project was scheduled to be implemented last year. However, it was cancelled due to the pandemic. Secondly, social distancing made

the class less social as students would have benefited more by being close to each other. Furthermore, we were always on the lookout for when the government might declare a lockdown, thankfully it never happened. However, we invested our time planning the alternative to a lockdown which would have forced us to cancel our project. Other than that, we also felt the logistical and economical challenges brought by the pandemic.

i. What advice would you give to future PfP grantees given the pandemic-related challenges you experienced? c. If you were able to implement your project remotely, speak to the highlights and challenges of a conducting a remote project

Dear future PfP grantees, you have been blessed with this amazing opportunity to serve your community. Therefore, take advantage of it to create a meaningful experience for your community. This is a great chance for you to make the world a better place for them, for the future generations.

Section I: Narrative (continued)

I. At the end of your narrative, please provide a one- to two-sentence personal statement, suitable for use as a quotation, addressing how and why this project was valuable and what was the most important thing you learned as a result. For quote attribution, please provide full name(s) to be listed for team leader and each team member providing individual quotes. If quote provided is reflective of the entire team, please provide all names accordingly. PfP Liaisons are also welcomed to provide a quote reflective of the participating institution's team and the implementation of their project.

m. Please provide team leader full name and, if applicable, full list of team member names along with associated permanent contact email address for our PfP alumni database (do not provide your college/university issued email address). This list will only be used internally for follow up/research contact and will not be distributed outside of Projects for Peace.

Section II: Photographs a. Paste 2-3 photographs on one page

b. Submit original jpeg files of the same 2-3 photographs to your Campus Contact, to be uploaded to the Dropbox folder

“Our generation has chosen a path towards a fair, more just, and an equitable world. Technology is the best tool to achieve that goal. So why not let refugees have access to that tool so that they can also claim their place at the table to contribute towards shaping a future we all desire: a future of inclusivity.”

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