



Youth Leaders Mediation Workshop



Nairobi
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Introduction

Recognizing the pivotal role youth leaders play in shaping the moral and spiritual foundation of their congregations, the mediation workshop was carefully designed to enhance self-awareness, introduce key mediation concepts, and examine the significant role of religion in conflict resolution. By bringing together young leaders from five churches—Deliverance Church, Glory Ministries International, The World Restoration Church, Missions Outreach Church and The Redeemed Gospel Church.

The workshop provided a safe and reflective space for participants to engage in meaningful discussions, share experiences, and practice mediation techniques tailored to their unique ministry contexts. Through a blend of theoretical instruction and hands-on exercises, participants were empowered to apply these new skills to the real-life challenges they face in their roles as youth leaders.



Session 1

Self-awareness

Participants defined self-awareness in their own words e.g.

- “Knowing who you are in all spheres of life”
- “The realization of self”

Self-awareness helps individuals understand who they are, why they exist and how to discover their purpose. As one participant noted, “If you do not know who you are, you cannot lead others.”

A coloring activity allowed participants to identify and present some of their identities, describing two prominent identities and a positive and negative emotion they experienced from them. For example:

Name	Identity	Feeling
Participant 1	Mentor	Negative - Feeling used.
	Musician	Positive - I am proud and happy when my mentees do better because of my influence.
Participant 2	Confidant	Positive - It makes me proud that I am trustworthy. When I pick out outfits, they give me the confidence to face the world.
	Fashion enthusiast	Negative – Being a confidant sometimes leaves me feeling helpless whenever I am not in a position to help. Being conscious of how I dress makes me aware of how others also dress and predispose me to be judgemental.
Participant 3	Family member	Negative - As a provider for my family and having a demanding job, I sometimes feel drained and burnout especially when I am not able to provide for them.
	Nurse	Positive - When my family or patient gets better, I feel fulfilled.

Session 2

Introduction to Mediation

Building on the foundation of self-awareness, participants explored the concept of mediation. Referencing Amos 3:3, "Two cannot walk together unless they agree," participants defined mediation as:

Participant A - "The process of bringing people together"

Participant B - "An agreement after a conflict"

Mediation was described as future-focused rather than past behavior, with approaches and styles dependent on culture. The importance of mediation includes promoting peace, uniting people, preserving relationships across generations, and preventing conflict escalation.

Principles of mediation

1. **Self-determination** - Parties have free will and must jointly work towards a resolution.
2. **Confidentiality** - Ensures a safe environment for open discussion.
3. **Mediator's Role** - Facilitate rather than dictate, maintaining impartiality and neutrality.

Role of mediator

1. Ensure a neutral, safe environment.
2. Role-model appropriate behavior.



Session 3

The Role of Religion in Mediation

Religion plays a significant role in mediation by forming values, promoting peace, providing moral guidance, and supporting intellectual growth.

Principles of religion

1. Common faith - shared beliefs and doctrines that unite members of a religious community. This shared faith creates a foundation of trust and mutual understanding, which is crucial in the mediation process. When mediating conflicts, the common faith provides a basis for parties to find common ground and work toward resolution.
2. Relevant to cultures - Religion is often deeply intertwined with culture, making it relevant to the lives of its followers. This cultural relevance means that religious principles and practices can be effectively used in mediation to address conflicts within a specific cultural context. By acknowledging and respecting cultural nuances, mediators can create a more inclusive and effective mediation process.
3. Rituals and symbols - play a significant role in mediation by providing familiar and comforting practices that can help reduce tension and build rapport among conflicting parties. Rituals such as prayer, blessings, and symbolic gestures can create a sense of solemnity and commitment to the mediation process, fostering a cooperative spirit.

The participants discussed religious dimensions as follows;

1. Ideas - Religion gives a sense of authority that can influence behavior and decision-making. In mediation, religious leaders can leverage their moral authority to encourage ethical conduct and promote values such as forgiveness, reconciliation, and compassion. This moral framework helps guide the parties towards a fair and just resolution.
2. Community and fellowship - Religion often involves a sense of community and fellowship, which can be harnessed in mediation to foster a supportive environment. The communal aspect of religion encourages parties to consider the well-being of the larger group, promoting a collective approach to resolving conflicts. This sense

of belonging can motivate individuals to work towards harmony and unity.

3. Institution and structure -

Religion provides an institutional framework and structured approach to conflict resolution. Religious institutions often have established protocols and processes for addressing disputes, which can be utilized in mediation. The structured nature of these institutions ensures consistency, reliability, and accountability in the mediation process.



4. Spirituality - as an intrinsic aspect of religion, offers a deeper dimension to mediation. It encourages parties to reflect on their inner selves, fostering self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Spiritual practices such as meditation, reflection, and introspection can help individuals gain clarity and perspective, aiding in the resolution of conflicts.

In groups, the participants discussed mediation processes led by religious leaders and explored the essence of these processes, emphasizing the following points:

- Fostering dialogue among leaders from different faith traditions to promote mutual understanding and respect. This approach bridges religious divides and encourages collaborative problem-solving.
- The importance of documenting mediation processes in Kenya led by religious leaders. Proper documentation ensures that successful strategies are recorded, shared, and can be replicated in future conflicts. It also serves as a reference for evaluating the effectiveness of various mediation techniques.
- The role of indigenous and alternative justice systems in mediation. These systems often incorporate traditional and cultural practices respected and accepted by the community. Integrating such approaches with religious mediation can enhance the legitimacy and acceptance of the resolution process.

Session 4

Worldview Differences and Conflict

In this session, participants delved into the concept of worldview, gaining insight into its influence on conflicts and exploring strategies to address differences effectively.

Definition of Worldview

Worldview is defined as “the comprehensive perspective through which individuals interpret and interact with the world around them. It encompasses a set of beliefs, values, and ideas that shape how a person understands reality, makes decisions, and behaves.”

Factors Influencing Worldviews

During the session, the following factors were identified as key influences on worldviews:

- Culture
- Religion
- Education
- Personal Experiences
- Social Context

Components of a worldview

Beliefs - Fundamental convictions or accepted truths about existence, the universe, and human nature.

Values - Core principles that guide behavior and decision - making, such as



honesty, loyalty, and respect.

Ideas - Concepts and notions about various aspects of life, including politics, ethics, science, and society.

Cultural Norms - Shared customs and traditions that influence how individuals interact within their community.

Religious Teachings - Doctrines and practices derived from spiritual or religious beliefs.

Personal Experiences - Life events and individual journeys that shape one's perspective.

Addressing differences and conflicts

Conflicts often arise from differences in worldviews. Addressing these conflicts requires understanding and respecting diverse perspectives. Key strategies include:

1. Active listening and empathy.
2. Finding common ground.
3. Cultural competency.

Practical Mediation Skills

Participants practiced mediation skills through role-playing scenarios that reflected conflicts in their youth ministries. These practical skills include:

- Active Listening
Ensuring all parties feel heard and understood.
- Empathy - Showing compassion and understanding for each party's perspective.
- Encouragement - Motivating parties to express themselves openly and work towards a resolution.
- Clarification - Asking questions to ensure clear understanding and prevent miscommunication.
- Reframing - Restating negative or contentious statements more positively and constructively.



Applying Mediation in the Ministry Context

After a day of learning, participants discussed specific conflicts in their youth ministries and

role-played mediation scenarios. They addressed issues such as leadership positions, social class differences, tribalism, favoritism, financial management, ideological differences, ignorance, emotions, jealousy, leadership wrangles, support issues, group differences, guests and youth activities.



Reflective questions

- What is the role of the church in the ongoing demonstrations? What is the role of Christians in activism?
- Who is the church?

These reflective questions encouraged participants to think deeply about their roles and responsibilities within their communities and how they can apply mediation skills to promote peace and unity.

Workshop Summary

The one-day youth mediation workshop was structured to foster self-awareness, introduce the foundational concepts of mediation, examine the vital role of religion in conflict resolution and provide participants with hands-on opportunities to apply these skills to real-life ministry challenges. The sessions were dynamic and reflective, encouraging participants to engage in activities that enhanced their understanding of their roles as mediators within their communities.

The workshop began with a focus on **self-awareness**, emphasizing the importance of understanding personal identities, emotions, and roles within one's community. This foundational step prepared participants to grasp the principles of mediation and consider how these could be utilized to promote peace and unity in their ministries.

Religion emerged as a key theme, with discussions exploring how religious principles, shared beliefs, and community values can influence mediation processes. Through case studies and group discussions, participants reflected on how these principles could be effectively applied in their contexts, particularly in Kajiado — a region characterized by its cultural and religious diversity, which often presents distinct challenges.

The workshop also highlighted the impact of **worldview differences** on conflict, offering strategies such as active listening, empathy, and cultural competence to address these differences constructively. Practical sessions, including role-playing mediation scenarios, provided participants with opportunities to apply their new skills to realistic conflict situations within their youth ministries.

Overall, the workshop equipped participants with the tools and confidence to act as mediators, fostering peace and understanding in their communities.

Conclusion

The Youth Leaders Mediation Workshop equipped young church leaders with basic skills to foster peace and resolve conflicts within their communities.

Workshops like this are particularly valuable for youth leaders in churches, as they not only empower them to address conflicts within their congregations but also prepare them to serve as agents of peace in the broader community. In diverse and rapidly evolving communities —characterized by cultural, social, and economic challenges—these skills are indispensable.

The workshop also underscored several critical needs within grassroots churches. Among these were the necessity for more structured mediation processes, the documentation of successful mediation strategies, and the integration of indigenous and religious approaches to conflict resolution. Addressing these needs will enable church leaders to navigate the complex social dynamics in their communities more effectively, fostering a more peaceful and cohesive society.



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