

地域戦略研究所紀要

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Social Innovators of the Future: Building a Kids2Kids Student

Leadership Program at The University of Kitakyushu

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Social Innovators of the Future: Building a Kids2Kids Student Leadership Program at The University of Kitakyushu

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<要旨>

この論文は、北九州市立大学でキッズ 2KIDS と共同して実施された学生リーダーシップ・プログラムに注目したものである。この 1 年間のリーダーシップ・プログラムは、北九州市立大学特別研究推進費から学内資金として提供されたものである。学生リーダーたちは 1 年を通して、キッズ 2KIDS・ダイバーシティ村の公開講座で子どもたちと一緒に働き、2024 年に北九州市で開催される TEDxYouth の準備のため、2023 年 11 月に北九州市立大学で開催された学生サミットを指導し、参加した。この論文は学生の歩みを追ったものである。

Abstract

This paper focuses on a student leadership programme which was set up in The University of Kitakyushu in collaboration with Kids2Kids Change the World. The yearlong leadership programme was funded internally by The University of Kitakyushu Research Fund. Throughout the year student leaders worked with children on the Kids2Kids Diversity Village extension course and led and participated in a student summit held at The University of Kitakyushu in November 2023 in preparation for a TEDxYouth talk planned in Kitakyushu in 2024. This paper follows their journey.

Key Words: Student leadership, diversity, SDGs, Kids2Kids

Introduction

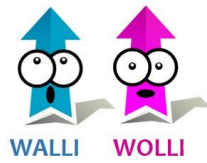
A girl made hearts and gave us them. Student leader, Kids2Kids, 2023.

Kids2Kids is a bilingual social leadership programme designed for youth changemakers between the ages of 6 and 18 that gives children from Kitakyushu and their peers across the globe the opportunity to discover innovative and viable solutions to today's social issues and reinvent the world. The programme was founded six years ago by Christine Pearson¹ ("Kids2Kids," 2018-2023) and further developed four years ago in collaboration with Fiona Creaser, Professor in the Department of English at The University of Kitakyushu. Kids2Kids has been run as an extension course within The University of Kitakyushu since 2020. In addition to this the programme has been run independently with students from The University of Kitakyushu and interns at the American Center in Fukuoka ("The Art of Storytelling") and with adult learners and children in Tobata, Kitakyushu ("Farm- & Sea- to-Table").

Kids2Kids uses experiential learning (Kolb, 2014; Peterson & Kolb, 2017) and project-based learning (Larmer et. al., 2015) as a framework for its programmes allowing the children to be as creative and innovative as possible. Programmes run to date as part of the University's extension course explored such topics as, gender (non-binary) (2020), disability awareness (2021), multicultural Japan (2022), and diversity, equity and inclusion (2023). In 2023 funding was granted by The University of Kitakyushu to aide setting up a student leadership programme in collaboration with the Kids2Kids programme and to prepare for a TedxYouth Talk in Kitakyushu in 2024.

Setting up the student leadership programme

The premise for setting up the student leadership programme was a short "stand alone" Kids2Kids programme organised by the facilitators (Fiona and Christine) in collaboration with the American Center in Fukuoka. The programme "The Art of Storytelling" ran from June to July 2022 and comprised three sessions, the first two sessions were online, and the third session was run in the American Center in Fukuoka. Participants included children from Kitakyushu and Fukuoka, students from the Department of English at The University of Kitakyushu and university student interns working at the American Center in Fukuoka. The children taking part in the programme were given a workbook with the characters Walli and Wolli who were there to guide them through the workbook and the programme. Both English and Japanese were used throughout the programme and the children used a bilingual workbook for activities. Children were encouraged to speak in whichever language they felt more comfortable using and the students and interns were there to translate if necessary, during each session.



14:00-14:45

Team meetings (Breakout rooms):

Actions needed:

- Welcome your team back**
The kids will be excited to be with you again! Ask them some questions and/or talk about what you have done since the last time you saw them.
- Student Café (Workbook, p6)**
 - (1) The kids should have already thought of and written down questions for you (Workbook, p6) before this session. If someone has not written anything, please give them 3 minutes to write or think of something to ask.
 - (2) Please be prepared even if they are not able to think of a question. You may talk about (a) a particular global/social issue that you are interested in, (b) what people are affected by this problem (for example, COVID-19 and kids, war and LGBTQ+ groups, etc.), and (c) how this group is affected.
- Brainstorming on global/social problems and vulnerable groups**
 - (1) Use Google Jamboard and continue to brainstorm about global/social problems with the kids (Slide 1 + blank Slide 2), as well as groups that may be affected by these problems (Slide 3 + blank Slide 4).
Google Jamboard links: Please put these in the chat so the kids can join. If they have problems, please screenshare and write their ideas

The students and interns were given a copy of their own workbook with detailed notes to help guide the children during their time on the programme. In addition to the three meetings with the children, students and interns also met online in between the sessions to gather notes about the last session and to prepare for the next session. The goal of the programme was to give the children the courage to find their own voice and present their ideas about a topic of their choice to their parents at the American Center in Fukuoka. Seventeen children (ages ten to eighteen), four interns and five university students took part in the programme and the children were split into two groups with students and interns assigned to each group. We also invited students from the TOMODACHI/MetLife Women's Leadership Program² (TOMODACHI Initiative 2013-2024) to give a talk about fair trade to the children online and help them start the process of thinking about the issues that interest them.

Feedback from the programme was positive and the intergenerational approach towards learning impacted the students and interns who came away from the experience with a new perspective of the next generation, as the following feedback shows.

“We could make a comfortable and safe environment for kids to share their ideas. They asked us a wide range of topics, about our university life or many social problems. So, we tried to link the problems which kids shared. Also, we tried to let them feel confident after asking us questions.”

“It was amazing. All kids had opportunities to talk about the issues that happen around the world. Also, I had more kids smiling and enjoying talking about it. I even thought I could had more time for breakout. I am so excited for face-to-face session on July!”

“Conversation with kids! I am sure the kids don't really get opportunity to have conversation with uni students like us and they were pretty much excited!”

“First of all, I really enjoyed talking with kids and I was impressed, hearing how kids feel about social issues. Focusing on gender problems, the younger kids are the more they are aware of these problems. Thinking of future, I feel more like anxiety or fear because we still have so many problems to solve, but I realized that future can be changed by these kids in the future. I believe that old politicians will be replaced by new young national leaders in a decade. Also, I have to work harder on taking actions to be a part of new generation. Thank you for giving us such a wonderful opportunity❤️”

“The Art of Storytelling” was so successful that we decided to run a similar programme in The University of Kitakyushu with students from the Department of English in conjunction with the 2024 Kids2Kids Diversity Village extension course. The student leadership programme was funded internally by The University of Kitakyushu’s Research Grant (特別研究推進費, 2023). To inspire and motivate students, guest speakers were invited in the first and second semester. During the first semester a ninety-year-old participant and external facilitator of the “Farm- & Sea- to-Table” programme came to talk to the students about their life experiences. In the second semester the Principle of the principal of Bright Kids Garden International School came to speak to the students about her school and her diverse approach to education.

The Kids2Kids student leadership programme (公開講座)

Taking “The Art of Storytelling” (2022) as the template for the beginnings of a Kids2Kids student leadership programme the first step was to begin recruiting students who wanted to work with children during the extension course. Initially we thought that six students would be an ideal number to begin with and as with “The Art of Storytelling” the facilitators began the recruitment process with students from Professor Creaser’s seminar. In total, nine students from the Department of English wanted to work as student leaders, two fourth-year seminar students, six third-year seminar students, and one first-year student. Four out of the nine students were only able to work during the first semester as they were planning to study abroad in the second semester. Once the student leaders had been decided the facilitators moved on to the next step in the process of establishing the Kids2Kids student leadership programme: deciding how students

would be divided into groups working with the children on the Diversity Village extension course.

The University of Kitakyushu extension course (公開講座)

The Diversity Village extension course was run over six sessions, three in the first semester and three in the second semester. The Diversity Village extension course was open to children between the ages of 6 and 18 (elementary school first grade to high school third grade). Eighteen students enrolled in the Diversity Village extension course, and on average, about twelve children attended each session. A special guest speaker, Junko Ota, a researcher at IGES³ in Kitakyushu, attended session four of the Diversity Village extension course to teach the children how to play the kids' version of the 2030 SDGs Game.⁴ During the first semester on average between eight or nine student leaders came to each session and during the second semester between four and five student leaders attended each session, the exception being session five when only one student leader was able to attend. In addition to the children and student leaders, parents and guardians of the children were also invited to join in the activities.⁵

The aim of this extension course was to encourage children to create the foundations of a diversity village with the university students, parents, and guardians built on the premise of empathy, inclusion, equity, and belonging. The sessions were broken down as follows.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Session One | キッズ 2KIDS 村一緒に作ろう。 Building Blocks for the Kids2Kids Diversity Village |
| Session Two | 思いやりカレンダー。My Kindness Calendar |
| Session Three | 幸せのためのハート。Hearts for Happiness |
| Session Four | 誰一人取り残さない。Leave No One Behind |
| Session Five | 世界に目を向けよう！グローバルなデザイナー。 Look to the World! Global Designers |
| Session Six | キッズ 2KIDS ダイバーシティ村へようこそ！ Welcome to the Kids2Kids Diversity Village! |

Each session began at 13:00 on Saturday and was ninety minutes long. Student leaders were requested to come to the university for a pre-meeting at 11:00. During the pre-meeting students were guided through the flow of the session and helped bring materials to the classroom and set up the classroom.

Pre-meetings

At each pre-meeting students met with the facilitators to go through what was expected of them that day. For details of an example of the pre-meeting see Appendix 1. Students and facilitators went through each session and decided who would take on each role. During the first session it was decided that the two fourth-year students would be “floaters” in the classroom because they had experience participating in “The Art of Story Telling” programme. The other students were assigned to groups where they would work directly with the children. The floaters’ walked around the classroom and made sure that the groups were running smoothly and encouraged the children as they were participating in the activities. During the first session parents and guardians were asked to sit at their own table with two student leaders and work on the same activities as the children. In other sessions parents/ guardians sat with their children or sat with other parents and guardians depending on what was being done on the day. This was especially important for the first-year elementary school students, as sometimes they enjoyed being close to their parents for guidance and at other times they enjoyed working independently with the rest of the children and students. With nine student leaders attending the sessions during the first semester it was easier to arrange the ratio of students to children and parents/guardians for each session compared to the second semester when there were only five student leaders present. For future programmes this ratio will have to be thought about more carefully especially as the programme expands to provide all participants with the best possible experience.

Student leaders were given instructions on what to do during each session, but had free licence to accomplish this in whatever creative way they wanted. They were also invited to the front of the classroom so they could experience what it is like to be on the ‘other side’ of the desk. Seeing the classroom from the teacher’s point of view for the first time filled the students with a great sense of responsibility. From the second session onwards, students were asked to actually lead activities in the sessions. To begin with we asked two fourth-year students to lead activity two ‘Stepping Stones.’

| |
|---|
| Stepping Stones (Session led independently by student leaders) |
| ACTIVITY 2: Stepping Stones (2 fourth-year students) This activity will focus on equity and acts of kindness. The fourth-year students will explain this activity to the kids (and parents/guardians) in English and Japanese. |
| 1. Place the stepping stones on the floor in the centre of the room to re-create a forest. The fourth-year students will explain what to do with the facilitator and several children demonstrating the activity. |

2. Each group will pick one scenario card (out of five possible scenarios) and brainstorm possible solutions within their group to the problems presented in the scenarios.
3. Each team will demonstrate their solution to everyone using the stepping stones.

Scenarios: How would you help someone in the forest if:

- They were blind
- They were in a wheelchair
- They just hurt their leg while hiking
- They were afraid of the woods
- They don't want to be touched AND don't speak the same language as you

At first the students were daunted at the prospect of leading sessions but as each session went by they took turns in leading sessions and the fourth-year students took turns in opening and closing the entire session. The facilitators observed how the students' confidence and skills increased with each session they did.

Student feedback

We asked for student feedback after each session and after the programme was completed. The reason for this was twofold, we wanted to know how we could improve upon each session, and we also wanted to see how students' confidence levels developed over the course of the programme. Although the sample of student leaders was small the overall results of the programme were very positive.

Students felt that their confidence levels rose between the sessions and the opportunity to guide the sessions significantly helped them in developing a sense of self-worth and responsibility as the following comments show.

“I am shy and rarely act on my own initiative, but as I engaged with various people, I felt that there was a change in the way I proceeded to talk and act proactively.”

What the facilitators also began to realise was that although there is much talk about young people taking leadership roles there are very few hands-on opportunities for students to incorporate leadership skills and experiences. The following comment was indicative of what other students who took part in the programme thought:

“Actually, there was not an exact opportunity to take a leadership [role] in classes or my part-time work but now I feel that I don't have to be afraid of standing in front of people and taking a leadership role.”

We began to realise that not only was the student leadership programme a place where students could develop confidence and leadership qualities it was a place where they

could feel safe expressing themselves freely and have faith in one another and in themselves. The overall feedback from the programme was very interesting, it showed the facilitators that even though we thought some students were confident they were very shy underneath the air of confidence they projected.

“I used to think I was not good at taking leadership and giving directions to other students, but now I know I just keep telling myself I was not the kind of person who becomes a leader because I worry about what other people think when I fail or I might be afraid to realize that I couldn’t do that as I expected. I found it is not good and not healthy for myself.”

Students were using the programme to explore their own self-development and some of the students got more out of the programme than we ever expected.

Classroom experience

We were lucky enough to be able to run the extension course in a classroom designed for interactive learning. We wanted the students to be fully immersed in the experience and so we tried to create a space that was as three-dimensional as possible.



As the photo shows we set up stepping stones in the classroom for the children to play on if they wanted. The tables were arranged so that students and children could work comfortably with each other in groups of about four to six people. The room also contained a table with children’s books about diversity so that the participants could sit and read independently if they wanted. The tasks were colourful and interactive, children created large flowers as the building blocks of their village and wrote or drew something unique about themselves in each individual petal. As they put together their individual petals, they wrote or drew pictures about what connected them together in the centre of the flower. Each group also brainstormed and shared ideas about inclusivity and created murals of their ideal villages.



The stepping stones were used in session two to demonstrate the concepts of inclusivity and empathy. In this activity, a “forest” was created using the stepping stones and the groups were given a scenario and asked to come up with ideas on how to navigate their way through the woods. The scenarios were as follows,

| |
|--|
| <p>森の中を散歩しています。目が見えない人をどう助けますか？ You are walking in the woods. How would you help someone who is blind?</p> |
| <p>森の中を散歩しています。車椅子を使っている人をどう助けますか？ You are walking in the woods. How would you help someone who is in a wheelchair?</p> |
| <p>森の中を散歩しています。ハイキング中に足をけがした人をどう助けますか？ You are walking in the woods. How would you help someone who hurt their leg while hiking?</p> |
| <p>森の中を散歩しています。森を怖がっている人をどう助けますか？ You are walking in the woods. How would you help someone who is scared?</p> |
| <p>森の中を散歩しています。触られるのが嫌いで、自分と同じ言葉を読さない人を、どう助けますか？ You are walking in the woods. How would you help someone who doesn't like to be touched and doesn't speak the same language as you?</p> |

The photographs show the inventive and innovative ways the students and children came up with to get across the stepping stones.



Feedback from the children

The children filled out an exit ticket after each session and had the opportunity to write about or draw pictures of what they thought about each session.

The feedback from the children showed that they also came away from the extension course with a lot of new discoveries about themselves.

One high school student wrote:

“ハートを作るのが楽しかったし北九大に入学できるように頑張ろうと思った/ Since this program and making my own heart object today, it motivated me to get into this university.”

A junior high school student wrote:

“生きるために必要なものと欲しいものを分けると今の自分は恵まれていると思いました。子どもの権利条約についてもっと学びたいです/ It hit me how much I live a privileged life by learning the Convention on the Rights of the Child.”

Of the SDGs session a first-grade elementary school student wrote:

“SDGsは自分では何もできないと思っていましたが、世界を少し変えられると思えるようになりました。 / I thought I might change the world even a little bit.”

One result of the extension programme was that the high school students who took part in the programme became friends and decided to present as a group at the student summit, organised by the facilitators, in November 2023.

Student Summit

The facilitators organized a student summit in November 2023 in preparation for a TEDxYouth talk planned to be held in Kitakyushu in 2024. The facilitators invited students from different parts of the university to give presentations at the summit. The theme of the summit was *friendship*. We wanted students from diverse areas in the university to come together and recognise that despite the different activities each group was involved in they all had common goals and common issues they could discuss. Altogether six groups chose to present their activities at the summit, five groups of university students, and one group of high school students who had taken part in the Kids2Kids extension programme. The groups who presented were as follows;

- 1) キッズ 2KIDS の学生リーダー (Kids2Kids Student Leaders)
- 2) キッズ 2KIDS の高校生 (Kids2Kids High School Students)
- 3) 北九州市立大学の留学生 (Foreign Exchange Students at The University of Kitakyushu)
- 4) 北九大野菜販売所 (UKK Farm Stand)
- 5) 421 Lab の学生(生理の貧困 PJ) (421 Lab Period Poverty Project)
- 6) クリーサー教授のゼミ生(性教育ワークショップ) (Sex Education Workshop, Professor Fiona's seminar students)

Each group had eight minutes to present their activities and after the presentations they had the opportunity to network with the audience and the other presenters. The summit was open to the public and advertised around the university, as well as during the Kids2Kids extension course. Between 20 to 25 people came on the day and the student leaders were in charge of the opening and closing remarks as well as introducing each group of presenters.



During the last thirty minutes the students and members of the audience got together in groups to network and talk about their activities. To get the students to network the facilitators did an icebreaker similar to a speed dating game but this was a speed self-introduction game. At the final round of speed self-introductions, the students sat down with the people they partnered with. Before the student summit, student leaders were given guidelines on how to create a comfortable presentation environment and they were given hints on how to include all presenters even the shy and nervous ones.

Attendees of the student summit were invited to fill in a questionnaire before they left for the day. Twenty-one people answered the survey, and nineteen out of twenty-one members gave a five-star satisfaction level and two people gave a four star satisfaction level for the overall production and organisation of the student summit. The most interesting parts of the day for the attendees were, different perspectives on friendship, level of enjoyment, presentation topics and depth/breadth of student activities, and the opportunity for students to learn about other activities at UKK in detail. Attendees wanted to hear more about the results of the period poverty Christmas drive, self-care, adults' ideas on these topics, gender, culture, sex education, social projects, connections with local communities, activities on and off campus, and how to apply what you learn to your future, all ideas that can be used by the facilitators to develop the TEDxYouth talk.

Conclusions and future projections

During this yearlong project the facilitators have worked with student leaders and children to create a solid foundation for a leadership programme that can be expanded upon. During the year student leaders have been given opportunities to govern themselves and guide children taking part in the Kids2Kids extension programme. Students have been able to tap into their creative skills and learn from the children as well as from each other. They have been given inspirational talks by guest speakers and they have learnt how to inspire themselves and other people. The feedback from the student leaders has shown that this year long programme was also one of self-discovery:

“I used to think that I had to kill a part of myself so that I won't be left behind by others, but now I think being different to others is great and valuable!”
(Student Leader, Kids2Kids, 2023)

By immersing the students in a world full of diversity, they were able to gain confidence in themselves, put their leadership qualities into practice in a safe space, and discover their true selves.

This yearlong Kids2Kids student leadership programme is just the beginning. The facilitators have already made plans for 2024. In addition to the University's extension course, they are going to run a yearlong “Dream Big” programme for teenagers (age 16 to 19) with Kids2Kids student leaders. The “Dream Big” programme will comprise of student youth advisors (teenagers), Kids2Kids student leaders, and Kids2Kids student ambassadors (Kids2Kids student leaders who have graduated from the University). This programme aims to give young people a sense of purpose and direction in life and obtain leadership skills whilst learning about self-care. The facilitators also plan to bring Kids2Kids to rural areas in Japan as part of an outreach programme initiative. The facilitators hope that the Kids2Kids programme will inspire others to initiate action and bring people globally and locally that one step further together.

(本学 外国語学部 教授)

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Appendix 1

Example of pre-session meeting one.

1. Session with Student Leaders (June 3, 11:00-12:00)

Objective

- - To meet and get excited for the program!
- - To learn about research for the Student Leaders program
- - To prepare materials for the Kids2Kids session

Activities

- - Icebreaker (Christine)
- - Explanation on research timeline (Fiona)
- - Explanation on research code of ethics (Fiona)
- - Explanation of afternoon session and what Student Leaders will be doing (Christine)
- - Prepare materials for the afternoon Kids2Kids session: Laminate cards,

2. Kids2Kids Session (June 3, 13:00-14:30)

Objective: Set the stage for the year program

Topic: Building Blocks for the Kids2Kids Diversity Village (Focus: Empathy and Diversity)

Program

| Time | Activity and Description | Materials |
|-------------|--|--|
| 12:45-13:00 | Setup room using layout (UKK students) (1) Setup 3 stations for 6 kids(total 18 kids), 2 additional stations for free play (if there is room) (2) Place SDG laminates & diversity cards around room (3) Place slips of paper on desks before kids arrive | Layout Paper (large) Origami three different colours |
| 13:00-13:02 | Opening remarks by UKK staff | |
| 13:02-13:15 | Icebreaker: Diversity Bingo (Christine) (UKK students to participate together with kids and help those who may be hesitant or shy) | Bingo cards |
| 13:15-13:25 | Overview of Diversity Village (Key ingredients: DEI empathy) (Christine & Fiona) | PPT, handouts |
| 13:25-13:28 | Break into groups by paper colour (Mixed groups) | |
| 13:28-14:20 | ACTIVITY 13:28-13:40 Human Knot (Energizer) (Christine) (UKK students to participate together with their groups and help those who may be hesitant or shy) 13:40-14:20 Beautiful You (Flower Drawing) (Fiona) (UKK students to guide groups on what to do and help those who may be hesitant or shy) | Paper (Large) Markers |
| 14:20-14:25 | Exit ticket (Christine & Fiona) (Finish this sentence: Today, I was most surprised by...) | Exit tickets |
| 14:25-14:30 | Close (Fiona) | |
| 4:30-14:45 | UKK Student Leaders debrief and room breakdown | |
| | HomeFUN! (Optional): Global Citizens Statements | |

¹ Christine Pearson is a wordsmith by profession and has worked over the past three decades in advertising and marketing, conference organising, and coordinating international environmental programmes before transitioning into her current lifework as a translator, interpreter, editor, public speaking coach, and educator helping youth changemakers discover their own solutions to reinvent the world. She is the founder of Kids2Kids Change the World.

² The TOMODACHI/MetLife Women's Leadership Program is a partnership between the TOMODACHI Initiative and MetLife Japan launched in 2013 with the aim of developing the next generation of female leaders. The program is run over a 10-month period and provides female university students in Japan with opportunities to develop leadership skills in mentoring partnerships with professional women.

³ IGES (Institute for Global Environmental Strategies) was established in March 1998. “The aim of the Institute is to achieve a new paradigm for civilization and conduct innovative policy development and strategic research for environmental measures, reflecting the results of research into political decisions for realising sustainable development both in the Asia-Pacific region and globally.” (IGES, 2024)

⁴ The 2030 SDGs Game is a card game which takes you into the real world of 2030. It was designed in 2016 in Japan and is now available in English as well as Japanese. Junko Ota (IGES) is licensed to deliver the game in English and Japanese to children as well as adults.

⁵ The University of Kitakyushu requires that elementary school children in first through fourth grade be accompanied by a parent or guardian during each extension course.

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