

Addressing Ethnic Tension and Religious Difference among University Students In Uganda

Inter-cultural and Inter-religious News E-Newsletter-August 2013

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Project Background

The project addressing Ethnic Tension and religious differences is a project supported by the United Nations alliance for civilization and implemented by students for Global democracy Uganda a winner of the 2013 youth solidarity fund edition

Activities this August

[Inter-cultural,inter-religious training programs](#)

[Inter-cultural,inter-religious community service event](#)

[Inter-cultural,Inter-relligious seminar at the 3rd annual youth festival](#)

[Youth peace wall](#)

[Inter-cultural, inter-religious documentary screening](#)

Please email

Ivan.otim@sfgd.org for email updates on activities

What is Inter-cultural learning?

Intercultural learning” can be one tool in our efforts to understand the complexity of today’s world, by understanding others and ourselves a bit better. Moreover, it can be one of the keys to open the doors into a new society. “Intercultural learning” may enable us to better face the challenges of current realities. Our “intercultural learning capacities” are needed now more than ever.

In this context, intercultural learning is a personal growing process with collective implications and invites us to reflect why we want to deal with it, which visions we have, what we want to achieve through it. Not just taken as a personal acquisition or a luxury for a few people working in an international environment, intercultural learning is relevant for how we live together in our societies. Inter-cultural learning is a process that can hopefully contribute to some responses to the challenges that we face today.

Intercultural learning is about diversity and difference, about pluralism, complexity and open questions, about reflection and change. its about you and me, about relationships and solidarity and taking the other seriously. Youth finds fewer

POSTING NEWS:

we welcome items on your Take on issues of Inter-cultural-and Inter-religious news. Send an email message to ivan.otim@sfgd.org with the item you would like to post.

Background

Uganda today, the youth have become the focus of degenerating morals as a result of effects of irresponsible politics, tribalistic conversations and lack of social cohesion structures amongst intercultural- interreligious groupings to promote unity amongst the students. These youths have taken political alienation by forming youth brigades attached to different political parties within the universities in Uganda. The lack of an interfaith youth initiative to promote values of peace harmony and reconciliation calls for efforts to address this silent situation that may explode if not checked. Our faiths and religions call us to promote a culture of peace and co-existence and respect for others as stated in the golden rule

reference points throughout their life experiences and the perception of reality are more fragmented. People long for harmony and stability; Intercultural learning is about dealing with the forming, alteration of personal identity, and accepting tensions. Today society gives young people few examples and few spaces to express and encourage diversity, to insist on the right to be or act differently, learn about equal chances instead of dominance. Its is all about difference, about diverse life contexts and cultural relativism.

Why the project?**Addressing Ethnic tension and Religious difference among students in the universities in Uganda Project Implemented by Students for Global Democracy Uganda and supported by United Nations Alliance of Civilization Initiative through its Youth Solidarity Fund, 2013 edition**

The project that is a 6 months campaign will aim at addressing issues of Ethnicity and Religious difference and directly contribute to young people capacity to understand issues of National identity beyond cultural and religion.

The project target is University students however with critical analysis, the challenges of ethnicity and religious difference is a complex issue that happens even at the national level. This happens when we citizens begin to identify each other by names; culture rather than nationality; these conversations about identity are not constructive for national development and in process create room for tension and conflict. Violence has been attached to a culture where youth are mobilized as agents of violence, youth are never part of the contemplary debate about cohesion and identity, tolerance and dialogue for mutual trust which is the best guarantor of peace and security, religions are used as instruments to breed violent tendencies and extremism while cultural is used to divide people in different aspects.

Uganda as a country has over 65 indigenous people with varying degrees of differences and many older and newer religions exist making it a home for diversity, the 1995 constitution contains several provisions that in its envisage, attempts to mitigate extreme forms of intolerance in religion, ethnicity, class and discrimination. Over the last few years,

Quotes.

Religion is not War

All different All equal

Opportunity In Diversity

**Multi-Culturalism for
Cohesion**

Why Universities

The Tertiary Institutions should be acknowledged for valuing and promoting diversity and inclusion that in the end creates safe, respectful and inclusive environment on campus and in the communities. There should be increased recognition that diversity and inclusion are essential to institutional and academic excellence of the students and strengthen their capacity to tolerate with each other despite difference in culture and religion. In universities, there are many other religious, and culturally distinct groups on campus, Young people have mobilized themselves depending on where they come from and in the end creating minorities on campus.

Uganda has become more culturally and religiously diverse and this happens to be one of the many issues that create developmental challenge and in a salient situation, creating a culture of violence and tension within our societies.

The cultural and religiously motivated diversity has taken on different forms in recent years, The challenge is as a result of the often consequence of the fragmentation of social norms, there is a trend to explain social up roar or discontent within society with clashes, riots and protests, expression of outrage by the increasing number of disgruntled youth.

The project activities will focus on issues and investigate them and through the process and series of activities will create a common vision of an inclusive inter-cultural, inter-religious environment with a common purpose to address issues that stop us from achieving this vision of a new we and a greater societal change where other cultures and religions are tolerated, appreciated and never abused by people of different cultures.

Multiculturalism, ethnicity and religious diversity already exist in our everyday lives and its at this point that we have to acknowledge that we are all part of one or several minorities and lets begin looking at our diversity and not perceive it as a threat but rather an opportunity to create something new



Makerere University Student Guild Representatives Participating In a Meeting with Staff of SGD-Uganda to Indentify the challenges through which Ethnic Tension and religious differences Manifest in the University.

THE PROBLEM FRAME WORK

What does it mean to be a Ugandan?, a good place to start to understand this question is to explore a country national narrative on issues that unite or divide that society, what is the story that people tell each other, mufuruki, mulwugwala, modookolo literally meaning the people of these culture are attached to the above and are identified by calling themselves names, people using other people cultures to abuse others, culture used to insult others, no respect for ones identity, in a country without a coherent national narrative, the sense of national identities can be fractured, Democratic countries usually have a narrative about its people, its history, its cultures and values, but the shared story is not always predicted on the truth and said in good faith, sometimes that narrative is about our cultures and personalized identity rather than the country they have with a cohesive identity. we all have different stories, myths, cultures, faiths, beliefs and its at this stage that we need to analyze what makes us Ugandan, What values do we share as Ugandan, How are these values shaped when we seems to run in isolations and identify each other by tribe rather than nationality, how would we want the country that we live in to be? How do we brand our cultures and religions without the unforgettable set of images that we would create and begin to think as Ugandans, What kind of story do we tell each other?



The program officer Mr Otim Ivan delivering a tools development session on Inter-cultural and Inter-religious Understanding at the organization office



Students for Global Democracy staff Participating in a Tools development and Communication design meeting at the organization office

**ADDRESSING ETHNIC TENSIONS AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES AMONG
UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN UGANDA
PEACE WALL”**

**DIVERSITY NATIONAL UNITY SOCIAL COHESION
HARMONY COLLECTIVITY DIVERSITY COMMUNICATION
EQUALITY RECONCILIATION TRADITION SHARED ASPIRATIONS
RESPECT NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMUNITY BUILDING
COMMUNICATION PEACE BUILDING DISCOVERING
INTERCULTURAL OUTREACH COOPERATION RESPECT
INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE AND LEARNING CULTURE OF PEACE
FREEDOM OF SPEECH MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING
RELIGION IS NOT WAR NON VIOLENCE RELATIONSHIP
ALL DIFFERENT ALL EQUAL MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING
INTER-FAITH WORK OPPORTUNITY IN DIVERSITY**

The university setting is a place for the free exchange of ideas, a place for debate and discussion and for critical inquiry and learning among all members and students, There has to be enhanced debate and speech within the University that take place in ways that do not silence or prevent constructive dialogue, finding a balance between exercising academic freedom while respecting the rights and beliefs of others in all aspects of the university experience. The university classroom is identified as an ideal place for respectful knowledge exchange and critical inquiry related to religion, race and culture.

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project Implemented by Students for Global Democracy Uganda

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