



I00 Projects for Peace  
Davis United World College Project  
Spring, 2007

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“Soccer for Peace”

**Background**

Ghana stands as the model of peace and democracy in sub-Saharan Africa, a region plagued with civil wars, ethnic conflicts and economic strife. In recent years, however, the northern region of Ghana has been destabilized by a host of ethnic and chieftaincy disputes.

In March 2002, a conflict broke out between the Andani and Abudu clans in Dagbon, a large state in northern Ghana. The two ethnic groups were disputing over which side had the right to occupy the throne of Dagbon king. The dispute resulted in violent clashes and on March 27, climaxed into three days of killings and destruction in the Dagbon capital, Yendi. The Dagbon king was murdered along with 40 other people; several houses and property were burnt in the process. This was not the first time such carnage occurred in the north. The clans have been feuding over the position of Dagbon king for almost 40 years.

The government declared a state of emergency in the region for almost 2 years, while various efforts were pursued to resolve the Dagbon conflict. Finally in 2004, with the intervention of the government and eminent chiefs of other states across the nation, the Andani and Abudu clans settled the dispute.

Although peace has been restored, it is yet fragile, and tension subtly looms in the Dagbon state. Several countries – Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, DR Congo, Eritrea/Ethiopia, Rwanda and most recently, Sudan (Darfur) – broke into civil wars and worst of all genocides, because of ethnic differences such as we have seen in the Dagbon conflict.

“Never again” should we allow such snippets of ethnic hatred, mistrust and feuds grow into the scale of human destruction that is evident, today, in Darfur, Sudan. The fragile peace in Dagbon needs to be nurtured, and the rest of the world, particularly the youth, must act now to protect this peace for the rest of Ghana and posterity. Our project for peace should serve this end.

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## The Project

### Rationale:

The objective of this project is to ultimately help build the foundation for a more peaceful future for the youth in Dagbon. Soccer is a sport that has proven to rise above cultural, racial and social differences in many communities<sup>°</sup>. Through the game of soccer, students in Decorah, IA and Accra, Ghana will learn about the relationship between team/community building, co-operation, and fair play (law). These elements of the game are critical functions of maintaining peace. The soccer games will be used to raise awareness about the Dagbon conflict, sending a call for lasting peace in the region and initiating mini-projects to promote the fragile peace.

Our strategy is to build a proactive model to demonstrate how community building through education and sports can help sustain peace.

### Process:

Part I: Decorah, USA. Spring 2007

- “Soccer for Peace” tournament at Luther College to raise additional funds for the project. There will be an equipment drive for used soccer equipment and cleats to ship to Ghana to help support the development of a soccer team at the Johnn Haavad School, in Accra, during the summer.
- Participants in the tournament will attend a workshop to learn strategies for promoting world peace using the Dagbon conflict as the focus point. Guest speakers will provide information about how sports have historically contributed to peace between countries and communities<sup>†</sup>. Students will engage in discussions about specific strategies to maintain the peace in Dagbon.

Part 2: Accra, Ghana. Summer 2007

- A team of at least four Luther College students and one faculty advisor will travel to Ghana during the summer of 2007 to organize a “peace promotion” tournament. The tournament will be hosted by the Johnn Haavad School<sup>‡</sup>, which has expressed support for the project.
- Press coverage will be provided to highlight the purpose of the tournament and a peace message from the youth in Decorah and Accra, to the leaders and people of Dagbon. A donation of soccer balls and equipment will also be made to the youth in the Dagbon state.
- Prior to the tournament, the Luther team will hold a training workshop to teach the students how to promote peace in their own country. The workshop will be modeled on an innovative research program,<sup>§</sup> “Teaching Students to Be Peacemakers”, developed by researchers David and Roger Johnson at the University of Minnesota Cooperative Learning Center. The training will create a “cooperative context” (soccer tournament) to develop peace-making skills through problem-solving, negotiation and mediation. The lessons of the workshop will be related to the Dagbon conflict and will be finally implemented on the soccer field.

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<sup>°</sup> Press release in Ghana : <http://myjoyonline.com/news/read.asp?contentid=I018>

<sup>†</sup> Foer, Franklin. “How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization”. 2004

<sup>‡</sup> Johnn Haavad web address : <http://www.haavadschools.com/index.htm>

<sup>§</sup> A seven step approach to train students in cooperation and conflict resolution:  
<http://www.acrnet.org/about/crejohnson.htm>