

Intercultural Dialogue Camp for Peace Building.
Project held in Tanzania by Donald Rusimbi.
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(<http://www.facebook.com/groups/229650973747049/>)

The aim of this project was to contribute towards enhancing peace and development through intercultural dialogues amongst youth in Tanzania and Dar-es-salaam in particular. It paved way for youth from different background to ponder on issues of peace building and in-depth understanding of intercultural issues.

The two batches had a total of 60 participants from different youth-led NGOs, high schools and higher learning institutes. These groups were divided into two batches of 30 participants.

20th-23rd July 2011, a group of 30 participants set off for the project location in Bagamoyo. A small tourist town located in the Coast region of Tanzania mainland with interesting historic sites such as the slave trade sites. Through out the course of this project, these were the matters discussed: After an introduction of the project the first session highlighted issues of “**Gender in intercultural perspectives**”. The participants got an opportunity to learn on how gender is related to other social development as well as policy making and decision making in all levels of governance. The next session focused on “**Building the sustainable and consolidate intercultural youth network**”. We identified issues of youth concern to be addressed by the network such as health, education and participation. Participants learnt how to use social media networks to sustain the network and address the peace and intercultural issues. On the second day of the camp we discussed “**Common understanding among youth in addressing solutions to their common challenges**”. The common understanding among youth was drawn from participants’ contribution. They identified the common challenges that face youth in Tanzania. The challenges identified were summarized into several categories that include health, employment, education and youth participation. The participants worked into groups. The groups discussed four main questions which included, the challenges facing youth, the causes of the challenges, solutions to these challenges and follow up activities to be done after the camp. On the last day of the camp we discussed “**Intercultural perspective in Tanzania and how youth are inter-connected**”. The theme covered wide range of issues on cultural knowledge with a Tanzanian perspective. It included the diverse in attitudes among people in the community. At last the participants got skills that could enable them to respect, understand other people’s culture, maintain peace and order and have solidarity for the welfare of all the people in the community.

This same program was repeated with the second batch of 30 participants on the 7th – 10th August 2011.

Through out the dialogues participants played inquisitive games that aimed at drawing attention of participants into problem solving, rational thinking and creativity. Creativity requires in-depth thinking. Thus addressing challenges facing youth requires adequate time to think and come up with relevant solutions. Participants also engaged in traditional dances around a beach fire and visited multiple historical sites in Bagamoyo.

Some of the challenges were getting participants as most were still in school and I had to get permission from parents and their institute itself. It was also challenging during the opening sessions as participants were not comfortable with each other thus held back their opinion. After

ice-breaking games we were set for a successful camp.

This project created a unique platform that brought together 60 youths in Tanzania who eventually developed mutual understanding on intercultural issues as well as peace and development. It also increased access to cultural information among youth by increasing awareness, relevant skills on peace building and creating networking opportunities for sustaining the strong cultural diversity in Dar es Salaam.

The follow up activities that were immediately implemented was to create the facebook group that could connect all the participants. (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/229650973747049/>)

The participants in all two batches created follow up activities after the camp. The follow up activities included frequent youth dialogues, volunteering dances and sports activities to enhance peace building.

Peace to me means people enjoying life without having anything to worry about, not having grudges and being happy about life. I feel in today's world many assume we are at peace if we are not surrounded by wars and intense hardships. However I believe a person can live in the most calm and collected place but still not feel peace. Once you find inner peace you can be happy and relaxed in the hardest environment.

The Intercultural Dialogue Camp contributes to peace building in many ways. By creating this unique platform to the youths in Tanzania a mutual understanding on intercultural issues is developed. It also increased access to cultural information among youth by increasing awareness, relevant skills on peace building and creating networking opportunities for sustaining the strong cultural diversity in Dar-es-Salaam. This will help youth understand one another and avoid stereotyping and passing any negative judgments towards each other. This opens chance to break boundaries within different cultures in Tanzania and will help youth get together and work for a better Tanzania as they realize that they have a common goal. These are the future leaders and discussion makers of Tanzania so with this understanding built in them, the diversity and future peace developments are looking promising.

This project made me realize that each one of us can make a difference in our communities and if everyone takes initiative and does their part we will achieve the goal of having a peaceful world. It made me realize that sometimes it's the most trivial things that cause the huge problems. Sometimes maybe a simple conversation can break boundaries. In my case I saw the youth from different cultures interacting so well after a few sessions of getting to know each other. This was amazing considering the fact that the same group came into the camps with a different attitude. What I took from this experience is that if you dream to make a difference in someone's life, an opportunity will present itself for you to do so. I've always thought of giving back to my community and thanks to the Davis Foundation for presenting me with the opportunity.

"I feel very privileged to be given this opportunity thanks to the Davis Foundation. I have always wanted to give back to my community in Tanzania and I have done so. I extend my gratitude to all individuals and institutions that played a vital role in making this project a success. Having a peaceful world is possible." Donald Rusimbi.

Group photo of the participants



Participants after engaging in traditional dancing (evening activity).



Participants sharing her opinion during the workshop.



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