Pursuing a brighter and safer future for all young people in the World
FORWARD

In this 21st century, humankind is still confronted with numerous armed conflicts, with the illegal use of military force and with various forms of violence. In East Africa and the Horn of Africa, ethnonationalism, xenophobia, racism and discrimination against minority groups, religious extremism and violations of human rights are major causes of an increasing number of local and regional conflicts. As such, permanent and lasting peace and security still remain as a goal to be achieved, as it was 72 years ago at the moment of the creation of the United Nations system.

During the course of the year 2017, UMYDF continued to undertake a series of interventions aimed at eliminating the culture of violence (which is based on distrust, suspicion, intolerance and hatred) and promoting a culture of peace (which is based on non-violence, tolerance, mutual understanding, solidarity and the ability to solve peacefully disputes and conflicts).

To this end, UMYDF invested a number of resources in enhancing the capacity of key stakeholders at community, district, national and regional level to advocate policy reform and take action towards peace, tolerance and mutual cooperation. Among the activities implemented were: capacity enhancement sessions for key influencers and opinion leaders, vocational skills training and networking sessions for young people, and equipping a new community of change agents (psychologists, teachers, social workers, and counselors).

We also devoted time and other resources to influencing mindsets through media engagements; knowledge mobilization; publication and dissemination of conflict-sensitive information; among others.

All the achievements from these interventions were comprehensively celebrated, as elaborated in this Annual Report, which gives details of these and other facets of UMYDF’s work in 2017.

Thanks to all UMYDF members of staff and all those who contributed towards making this a memorable year. Our sincere gratitude also goes to all our development partners including the US State Department PREACT Program; US Mission Kampala; Finn Church Aid; United States Institute for Peace (USIP); Centre for Youth Dialogue (CYD); Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA); The Anti-Tribalism Movement (ATM); Civilization Exchange & Cooperation Foundation (CECF); and the United Nations Centre for Counter Terrorism (UNCCT).

We look forward to similar success in 2018.

AHMED HADJI
Team Leader
UMYDF is a youth-led, not-for-profit, non-partisan, faith-based organization working to provide a link and also develop the capacity of young people across all clusters in Uganda so as to promote their active, responsible and non-violent participation in local, national and global development processes. Our 4-pronged approach thrives on youth leadership, relationships and partnerships, subject matter expertise, and presence in communities as a means of building, promoting and maintaining sustainable peace and security in Eastern Africa and global level.

**Our Vision:**

A brighter and safer future for all young people in the World.

**Our Mission:**

To develop the next generation of young leaders who will enrich our peaceful society and serve as a voice for our community in government, media and community, which leads to a better understanding of Islam

**Core Values & Principles:**

- Volunteerism
- Non-violence
- Collaboration & partnership
- Mutual respect
- Integrity
- Team work

**Areas of Focus:**

- Peace Building
- Conflict Resolution
- Youth Participation

**Our Strategies:**

- Stakeholder Engagements at all Levels
- Capacity Building and Trainings
- Partnerships and Linkages
- Community Mobilization, Sensitization and Organizing
- Experience and Knowledge Sharing
- Research and Documentation
- Lobbying and Advocacy
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INTRODUCTION:

This report stems from the 2017 year of activity for Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (UMYDF), a youth-led not-for-profit voluntary organization, mandated to... The documents reports on programme implementation for the year, which was majorly guided by our four-pronged strategic approach to building i.e. Research and documentation; Capacity building; Coalition building; Community mobilization, organizing and sensitization; as well as our main strategic objectives of:

- Influencing the formulation of and/or change in policy and legislation to efficiently deal with violent extremism and promotes lasting peace;
- Influencing change in attitude, perception and behaviour of individuals and communities towards a culture of peace and tolerance;
- Strengthening individual and collective capacity to prevent violence and promote peace; and,
- Enhancing the capacity of UMYDF for efficient and effective implementation of its mandate.

Thus, the following highlights reflect UMYDF’s top line achievements in the year 2017. Overall, UMYDF achieved nearly all milestones scheduled to be completed during the course of the year, with other milestones ‘on track’ and a very limited set of delays. These factors are discussed in detail throughout the report.
INFLUENCING THE FORMULATION OF AND/OR CHANGE IN POLICY AND LEGISLATION TO EFFICIENTLY DEAL WITH VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND PROMOTES LASTING PEACE

In furtherance of this goal, UMYDF successfully implemented a number of activities that promoted inclusive development, with a special focus on advocacy for gender sensitive legislation reform and formulation.

Advocacy and Lobbying

In collaboration with the UN in Uganda, UMYDF co-organized two face to face engagements with policy makers in the field of prevention and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) with the view of influencing policy reform and programme implementation.

The first meeting was convened as part of the regular dialogue within the framework of the UN – Government of Uganda partnership to discuss practical ways of preventing violent extremism and promoting inclusive development, governance and diversity with particular emphasis on fast-tracking the design of a National Prevention on Violent Extremism Action Plan for Uganda. This Joint Consultative Meeting, which brought UMYDF face-to-face with representatives from UNDP Uganda, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), was preceded by an informal Joint Retreat at Lake Victoria Serena Resort Hotel. The retreat provided a platform for an informal exchange on countering terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism as well as migration. Both meetings took place in a constructive atmosphere, facilitating substantial exchange and the convergence of approaches on different topics.

It emerged from the meeting that Uganda is considering a holistic and inclusive approach involving all relevant government branches and civil society and non-government actors rather than just the traditional security actors in developing a national plan of action to prevent violent extremism which will set national priorities for addressing the local drivers of violent extremism. Other outcomes from the meeting include:

- Agreement that the spirit of the NAP process is commendable and that they may provide an opportunity for clarity on the relationship between the different stakeholders in preventing /countering violent extremism.
- Disconnect exists between the policy level/decision makers and more advanced CSO’s versus grassroots organizations, which get lost in the middle. A NAP is a good place to lay out how CSOs are meant to interact with their governments.
- Unanimous consensus that the role of women and youth is missing from all current NAPs and efforts must be made to ensure a gendered perspective is incorporated into all processes going forward.
- Agreement on the objectives of the group in attendance. These were: (i) serve as platform for reviewing current policies relating to VE to identify gaps and work towards more unified policies; (ii) strengthen institutions to prevent VE; (iii) share experiences, best practices, information sharing; (iv) develop a National PVE strategy that is inclusive and gendered; review implementation of NAPs from a gender perspective.
In addition to the above, UMYDF also co-organized a National PVE Strategic planning meeting on preventing violent extremism and promoting inclusive development, tolerance and diversity. The meeting brought together approximately 30 participants drawn from different fields and sectors across the Ugandan economy including representatives from governments; development agencies; civil society, including youth organizations and women’s networks; academia; media; law enforcement and security communities. This meeting provided opportunity for stakeholders to share and discuss experiences, lessons learned and approaches related to the prevention of violent extremism. It was presided over by Ms. Rose Malango (UN Resident Coordinator) together with the Mr. Okello Wilfred Makmot (Uganda government Focal Point Person on P/CVE and Chairperson of the Drafting team of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Prevention of Violent Extremism), as well as Mr. Ahmed Hadji (Team Leader, UMYDF).

The meeting was a powerful space for lobbying and influencing policy reform within the P/CVE sector, and the key advocacy messages emerging from the discussions highlighted the need for the National Action Plan on Prevention of Violent Extremism development process to consider:

- A strong multi-stakeholder preventative approach anchored in a human rights approach.
- Focus on addressing the root causes of violent extremism (VE).
- Clear understanding and acknowledgement of the role of geopolitics and national politics in fuelling or preventing VE.
- Workable solutions including mechanisms to build both vertical social cohesion i.e. between the state and the diversity of its population, and horizontal cohesion i.e. between groups and individuals in communities to ensure peaceful and respectful coexistence.

Some of the issues raised by UMYDF’s Strategic Approach Paper were adopted including the fact that P/CVE policy efforts would require thorough analysis and research both at the regional and country level, as well as dedicated efforts to capture key lessons learned and knowledge exchange across regions, institutions and sectors. The importance of working with a range of key constituents, including youth, women, inter-faith common front and media with a strong emphasis on analysis and research to capture key lessons learned and knowledge exchange was highlighted too.

Furthermore, the significance of the role of UNDP, Government of Uganda and relevant CSOs in convening the
development community to explore partnerships, approaches and lessons learned in this important field was equally underscored.

**Influencing Change in Education Policy and Practice**

Under the “Nurturing for Peace” project, UMYDF influenced policy change and practices of duty bearers in the areas of education and youth livelihoods sectors within the first year of implementation. The National Curriculum Development Centre, one of the stakeholders engaged by this project, was instrumental in encouraging schools to incorporate peace learning in their daily school activities. However, this recommendation is still pending inclusion in the National Curriculum for schools.

Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA)’s education department was also successfully lobbied by UMYDF to introduce a new culture and practice in its schools of ensuring students voices are listened to through monthly dialogue sessions. As a result, this practice has been embraced by many schools within Kampala and even Wakiso district which led to a significant reduction in student strikes as the year wore on.

Additionally, as a result of our policy advocacy efforts, the Ministry of Gender Labour & Social Development has intensified efforts to reach out to youth in urban slums like Katwe and Kisenyi as possible beneficiaries of the Government of Uganda’s Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP). This came after the YLP Focal Persons from the Ministry were directly involved in project activities thus having an opportunity to share some information with and interesting the youth groups in the most-at-risk areas.
INFLUENCING CHANGE IN ATTITUDE, PERCEPTION AND BEHAVIOUR OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES TOWARDS A CULTURE OF PEACE AND TOLERANCE

In a world where many regions suffer from increasing tensions, conflicts and violence, to make peace a tangible reality is of critical importance. Ethnonationalism, xenophobia, racism and discrimination against minority groups, religious extremism and violations of human rights – all of which are primary causes of an increasing number of local and regional conflicts – are fuelled by hate. At the same time, exclusion, poverty, urban decay, mass migration and environmental degradation, as well as terrorism and traffic in drugs, create very real threats to internal and international security.

The present culture of violence based on distrust, suspicion, intolerance and hatred, on the inability to interact constructively with all those who are different, must be replaced by a new culture based on non-violence, tolerance, mutual understanding and solidarity, on the ability to solve peacefully disputes and conflicts. With the world in dire need of such a new culture invested in a variety of intervention aimed at transforming mindsets and creating a common system of values and new behavioral patterns for individuals, groups and nations without which the major problems of international and internal peace and security cannot be solved.

Training Vulnerable Targets and Potential Recruits in Vocational Skills

In the 2nd quarter of Nurturing for Peace (Prevent Violent Extremism among youth in Uganda) project, UMYDF identified youth in at risk areas of Katwe and trained them in vocational skills as a way of reducing their susceptibility to violence.

The choice of Katwe was informed by a 2016 study titled, ‘Youth Victimization and Offending in Uganda: An Analysis of Serious Violent Crimes’, by the Uganda Police Force Research unit which ranked Katwe slums as the leading in the country, with 61% of unattached or unemployed youth in between 17 and 24 years old in Katwe surviving on crime and violence as a form of livelihood. Gang violence especially assaults, ride-by shootings, iron bar hit-men targeting motorbikes (bodaboda), street car hackers as well as brutal home-invasion robberies account for one of the largest, single, personal threats to public safety in the country.

Against this backdrop, UMYDF collaborated with Kampala City Traders Association (KACITA) to identify and equip the disenfranchised youth from Katwe slums (considered the ‘crime den of city’) with the requisite vocational they need to enable them to meet the changing needs of private sector employers, and reduce their likelihood of becoming victims and perpetrators of crime and violence.

The training content was informed by KACITA’s Skills Survey on Various Informal Trades and Professions in Kampala. The youth were taught at local apprentice centers by young women and men in professions, including beauticians,
tailors, plumbers, electricians, stone masons and fridge, mobile phone, solar panel repair technicians.

Over 70 young people up to the age of 25 years old in all the 4 Local Council zones attended the two-day training. Each participant received the tools of their chosen trade as well as a pledge from local artisans to assist them in establishing and sustaining an immediate source of income at the end of their training.

With monitoring data now showing that 57 out of the 70 youth who were trained are still in business and thriving, UMYDF intends to roll-out on a more structured vocational training programme on a longer-term basis targeting the youth in at-risk areas.

In another partnership, this time with Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), UMYDF also organized a Business for Peace (B4P) training program which attracted participation from over 70 young people mainly from Kampala and Wakiso district. The training, which was held at the KCCA Employment Bureau in Nakasero in the heart of Kampala city, enabled the youth to gain the market-ready skills, learn about business opportunities and consequently take advantage of the same opportunities.

At the end of the training, the KCCA Employment Bureau pledged to continue providing on-demand training and mentoring the trainees in business development, agribusiness practices and personal effectiveness and finance. In addition, UMYDF and KCCA jointly committed to engage with the local public and private sector partners using a ‘systems’ approach which unique in the field of youth economic engagement to deliver ongoing business for 40% of the youth, as well as preparing these partners to continue supporting them.

(Youth Peace Leadership camps)

During the year, UMYDF organized 2 Peace Leadership Camps for selected youth leaders, gang leaders and student leaders from Kampala city and Wakiso district. The camps provided youth and youth leaders with conflict sensitive information as well as providing them and their peers with positive alternatives by preparing them as innovators and entrepreneurs who will create jobs for themselves and others, thus reducing their susceptibility to extremist lures.

A total of 80 youth and youth leaders from communities in the most-at-risk areas of Kisenyi, Katwe, Bwaise and Kamwokya benefitted from the training. Through storytelling, simulations, dialogue and debate, the youth leaders were empowered to confront their own challenges as well as society’s bigger challenges like violent extremism and
conflicts. The camps were able to engage, inspire, and educate youth to become active leaders in peace making as well as providing an opportunity for young people to become involved in youth-centered peace-building efforts within the UN Security Council Resolution 2250 framework.

After the training, the participants were supported to run peace campaigns and inclusive projects in their communities and mobilize their peers to take action.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

STRENGTHENING INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE CAPACITY TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AND PROMOTE PEACE

Equipping Key Influencers and Opinion Leaders

Through the East African Credible Voices Exchange program, UMYDF was supported by US Mission in Uganda and the US Department of State to implement regional exchanges in respective countries across East Africa in close collaboration with locally based partners.

(i) Uganda

UMYDF hosted the first regional exchange in Kampala (Uganda) when we worked with Center for Dialogue in Tanzania, Anti-Tribal Movement in Somalia and Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance to convene a 37 credible voices including Imams, pastors, youth and women leaders, journalists, tech activists, film makers, business persons, civil society activists, psychologists among others from Kenya, Somalia, and Tanzania for an action-packed 6-day exchange learning program between 4th and 9th February, 2017.

While in Uganda, the credible voices engaged a variety of activities. For instance, they held a discussion on religious engagement, interfaith and ideological refutation, which added to their knowledge on how to apply dialogue as an instrumental tool in loosening religiously-fixed cultural dogmas and taboos in reducing extremist violence; as well as exploring role of education in “uprooting extremists thinking” and thus ending violent extremism within their localities.

Using the example of renowned Muslim Cleric and Mufti of Zimbabwe, Sheikh Ismail Ibn Musa Menk, participants were further exposed to various popular social media platforms and counter narrative campaigns including on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, and how they can use these tools to reach out, guide young people in their communities, and counter extremists’ narratives.

Besides meetings and leadership workshops, the participants took time off to carry out a voluntary community service activity and fundraising at Discovery Junior School in Mutundwe on the outskirts of Kampala. The school is one of the few that builds self-confidence and enthusiasm for learning in young underprivileged through a track program.
Participants also met with representatives of the Inter-religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) led by the 2nd Deputy Mufti of Uganda and Secretary general of IRCU, His Eminence Sheikh Waiswa, where most of them were inspired by the strength in diversity model which emphasizes the fact that respecting the differences and embracing the commonalities between groups enables peace builders to build bridges of understanding, and set a good example to the young people.

They also visited various locations including the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, Mayuge Uganda America Skill Friendship training Center, and the US Embassy in Kampala where they met Ms. Suzan Parker Burns (Ag. Deputy Chief of Mission) and discussed important issues such as the current US foreign policy with a specific focus on the recent immigration ban on the seven Muslim Majority countries, the future of mutual partnerships with already established relationships, academic exchanges, women and youth participation in peace building and development among others.

In the presence of over 50 media houses, participants and other stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment as religious, cultural and community leaders to working together in the fight against violent extremism.

A round table discussion with the most successful young Imam in Uganda Sheikh Muhammed Abdul who is well-known for his foresight, humility and shared leadership culminated in a direct call upon his fellow Imams and other faith leaders to engage in direct discussions of helping people in their countries outside the Mosque or church to understand the role of religion in society and how to emphasize religious tolerance in our region.

The participants had an opportunity to learn tips from Mr. Kisuule Dunstan (co-founder and CEO, Y-Save) on setting up savings and investment clubs as positive alternative opportunities for the youth and women in their places of worship following the Watoto Church Y-Save model which has over 900 adults and 2000 children currently saving with Y-Save, over UGX 6.3 billion (USD 2m) worth of liquidity, and up to 6 estates of member housing and business projects. “It was a very inspiring example of what young people could be if they provided with safe spaces in their communities that allowed them to flourish”, said Ahmed from Somalia.

It is no surprise that when they were asked what they planned to do after the Kampala program to prevent violent extremism in their communities, Mayuge Uganda America Skill Friendship Training Center and the Watoto Church’s Y-Save model were strong candidates for replication in their own countries to tackle unemployment and poverty from the root as a means of ensuring that young people are no longer vulnerable to exploitation by radical groups.

By and large, the program enabled the credible voices to network with several leaders, and enrich their critical thinking, self-awareness, communication, and team-building skills.

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**Sound Bite:**

*I loved the way the program was lined up with a healthy mix of activities. Above all else, I learned that my thoughts matter – we can start a regional peace movement on WhatsApp!*

— Sheikh Mataka, Tanzania
(ii) Kenya

In Kenya, UMYDF worked with and the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA) to host a team of 50 Credible Voices for a 6-day intense learning program in Nairobi, Kenya from 27th February to 4th March 2017. Participants included Imams, pastors, youth and women leaders, journalists, tech activists, business persons, civil society activists and psychologists from Kenya, Uganda and Somalia. The Nairobi round enabled the credible voices to unpack the Kenyan CVE landscape through a seminar and town hall mode, as well as undertaking field visits to areas and monuments that speak to Kenya’s history and experience with violent extremism with a view to drawing important lessons from the interventions made in response to the same.

Following these engagements, the 50 delegates resolved to use their experiences from this round to cause a multiplier effect by engaging and inspiring others in their respective portfolios to shun hate and take action to prevent violence as a means of ensuring that history is not repeated. The Kenyan credible leaders also plan to carry out a participatory action research to better understand the linkages between election violence and governance; the consequences of election violence on governance and development; how to map potential hotspots; and how to intervene to stop incidents from escalating in their communities in the aftermath of the 2017 National Elections.
(iii) Tanzania

UMYDF also collaborated with Center for Dialogue (CYD) to implement a week-long exchange program in Tanzania from 14th to 19th May 2017. A total of 30 participants took part in the Tanzania round which was hosted in Zanzibar.

The program enabled participants to learn and appreciate the role of Islamic institutions towards enhancing community resilience; the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) and faith based organizations’ (FBOs) in combating gender based violence (GBV); as well as the role of FBOs in promoting positive interfaith relations. They further addressed themselves to the challenges that may lead local communities to radicalism; the role of women in promoting peace and preventing youth radicalization; plus law enforcement programs on community policing among others. As was the case during the Ugandan and Kenyan rounds, participants had an opportunity to visit different historical sites which show how Zanzibar is historically a very resilient place from social violence.
(iv) The US Exchange program

Following the successful implementation of the regional exchanges, UMYDF and its regional partners mobilized a combined total of 12 participants including youth, women, religious and cultural leaders from Somalia, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania to a two-and-a-half week exchange visit to the United States of America (USA), which was hosted and coordinated by the Civilization Exchange and Cooperation Foundation (CECF). This marked the climax of the exchanges and was an experience that the credible voices will live to remember due to the uniqueness of the US in terms of cultural and religious diversity.

The program was designed to offer practical solutions to the common challenges facing religious leaders, youth and women in East Africa and exploring new strategies to enhance their resistance to radical ideologies.

Participants visited the Turkish mosque which also works as a community center where young people come to play games like basketball, aerobics, and gymnastics as a means of nurturing and enhancing a sense of belonging to many disillusioned youth thus reducing their susceptibility to extremist ideologies. Their visit to the Muslim Community Center Clinic of Silver Spring in Montgomery County was memorable as it provided the best example of model religious institution that is dedicated to serve humanity regardless of anyone’s background, religion, race or creed.

They also engaged with several model Muslim communities where they learnt how to promote brotherhood and human dignity among all, as well as developing environment of understanding, compassion and justice in personal and professional life. They got to appreciate the relevance and contribution of immigrants to the Muslim community and the American society; plus the rights and freedoms enjoyed and respect accorded to immigrant communities in the USA.

Other site visits included: (a) the Islamic Cultural Center of New York where they explored the relevance of early childhood learning that involves instilling values of love, tolerance, respect, compassion and a sense of belonging among children; (b) the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine where they were able to appreciate Christian values and beliefs and the meaning they attach to all the symbols in their churches; (c) the United Nations headquarters to get a clear understanding the Scope of the mission and objectives of the UN; (d) Uganda House where they discussed pluralism and inclusivity in American Muslim Communities with special focus on East African Diaspora; (e) Baltimore City Police Department where the credible voices learned how, in the wake of 2015 riots, the department has made a massive effort to reach out to the citizens of the city to re-establish trust and create a dialogue so that officers and residents can work together; (f) the US Supreme Court where topics related to the separation of church and state, protection of religious freedom, constitutionalism, rule of law and the US judicial system were discussed; (g) the Washington National Cathedral which was important for the delegates to understand the history of the Cathedral and its role in promoting inclusiveness beyond the Abrahamic traditions.
The engagements with leading think-tanks such as the Pew Research Center and the Centre for Global Policy were equally crucial to building participants skills in research and confidence in its role to promote evidence-based advocacy for policy and action against violent extremism. They visited the US Congress Library at the Capitol Hill and the literature therein caught the eyes of the credible voices who were amazed by the culture of reading and seeking for knowledge among many Americans that is even enshrined in policy.

The programme was so intense that by the time they went on a comprehensive 6-hour tour of Washington DC, the political capital of the US, they had earned it!
Outcomes of the Credible Voices Exchange Program

The investment made in the East African Credible Voices program was a worthwhile one. Some of the major outcomes include the following:

- UMYDF successfully supported the credible voices to plan and implement, either individually or as a group, a variety of interventions within their respective contexts based on the key lessons drawn from the exchange tours they had been involved in. The interventions were all geared towards strengthening peace and development outcomes for all.
- The credible voices gained a better understanding of how the diverse cultures and religions within the United States forged and/or sustained their interdependence. Having a better awareness to USA and its cultural background has deepened their citizen agency and consciousness. This, in the long run, will enhance the sustainability of the program.
- Participants are now able to question their own teachings, behaviors, interactions and engagements with their constituents, and have modified their approaches to have a different vision of the constituents.
- They have kept in touch with each other through various social media channels and we believe partnerships will keep going. These partnerships have been further facilitated by the follow on activities that have attracted joint efforts of the credible voices.
- Participants are now able to debunk the stereotypes about the United States such as, Muslims are discriminated against and live in fear while in the US, and anti-Muslim crusades exist more often in the US among others. For many of the participants it was the first time they engaged with Shiites since majority are Sunni Muslims. Praying and understanding the beliefs and practices of the Shiite community was very empowering. To our people, this was the beginning of understanding the origins differences within the Muslim community itself. Interfaith cooperation should be preceded by intra-faith understanding and cooperation if we are to resolve religiously motivated violence as a people.

Training Amirs and Amirats on the new Islamic Education Curriculum

This activity was delivered using a two-pronged approach i.e. through radio dissemination of the improved curriculum and direct training of selected Amirs and Amirats.

Over 200 madrasa head teachers, Amirs and Amirats were mobilized to tune in to various radio stations, and were trained on the Islamic education curriculum which had been jointly developed and launched by Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (UMYDF) and Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC).

The training was the first of its kind to be given to madrasa teachers in Uganda as part of the efforts to empower the Muslims in education. The dissemination trainings were hosted on Bilal FM, Voice of Africa and Pearl FM.
Later on, UMYDF directly trained over 30 madarasa tutors and Islamic education teachers on the improved curriculum. The training focused on understanding the content within the curriculum as well as the delivery mechanisms of the curriculum to students. The training was conducted by both UMYDF and external facilitators involved in the development of the curriculum. It targeted the real users of the content in the curriculum who were equipped with various techniques of comprehension and delivery to the students.

Participatory approaches to learning were largely emphasized during the training as educators were encouraged to use the curriculum to empower students to learn about their own faith and other faiths. They were further urged to broaden the awareness of their students through teaching about religion in general and not just one’s faith as this is the first step in knowing the other.

As a result, the madrasa teachers belonging to different Muslim groups, including the two factions of the Kibuli, Tabliq and Old Kampala factions were excited to get basic Islamic education and Peace building training highlighted in the new curriculum.

Shakyh Waiswa, a trainer in psychology and behavioral modification, laid emphasis on confidence building measures and that psychological approach was the best to effect behavioral changes in children. He pointed out that the training currently offered to children through thousands of Madrasas in the country could be made more effective with minor re-orientation. He called upon the teachers to adopt modern methodologies of teaching. “We are trying to help them understand a vital point that internalization of the great values they teach can be ensured through reinforcing. It will be much more effective if madrasa teachers adopt a more practical orientation to their teaching methodology,” Shakyh Waiswa said.

In 2018, UMYDF will build on the success of these trainings to roll out a 6-months training course targeting other educators.

### Supporting the Madrasa Educators’ Course at the Islamic Call University

With support from Finn Church Aid, UMYDF gave financial and technical support to the Islamic Call University under
the auspices of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council. This came after the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two parties to work together to ensure peace education and learning is fostered within Islamic education in the country.

The support involves the roll out of the improved madrasa curriculum that will be used as a foundation for course lessons. The course will provide over 50 Amirs, Amirats, Imams and Sheikhs an opportunity to also enrich their understanding of the English language, conflict resolution, peace building, community mobilization, professionalism and preventing radicalization and violent extremism.

**Mobilizing Knowledge through Participatory Action Research (PAR) to Influence Policies**

UMYDF collaborated with youth in schools and communities to conduct Participatory Action Research with a goal of helping participants understand their own challenges as related to violence and extremism and devise means of addressing them collectively by taking positive action.

Youth in schools and in the communities embraced the research process in overwhelming numbers. Out of the 7 schools of operation where UMYDF established Peace clubs, 6 schools participated. The participating schools include; Old Kampala SS, Kasanga seed school, Mariam High School Kisasi, Kawempe Muslim SS, Kingstone High School and Kololo SSS. 27 youth participated in each of these schools, and 11 youth also participated from each school community area.

The Action Research helped amplify the voices of participants by documenting and disseminating their realities, hopes and fears and these findings were shared widely with practitioners and policy makers and informed action in schools, communities and other youth spaces.

**Training of Trainers amongst Teachers, CSOs Working with Schools and Youth in communities**

Within the first quarter of the year, UMYDF conducted peace building and conflict management Training of Trainers workshop for 4 days in Kampala for 2 cohorts of participants. The workshop attracted a total of 64 participants representing all of the major spheres of influence from youth and youth leaders, teachers, priests, CSO to community leaders who were all drawn from both rural and urban centers.
In addition to the intensive workshop, the program enabled the youth and community to learn from civil society organizations and to better understand how young women and men are leading such work and what policymakers can do to ensure that the largest generation of youth, the country has ever known is not left on the sidelines coupled with a long-term vision and approach to build sustainable programs and institutions. The program also intended to ensure that the community leaders are equipped with skills and knowledge on the model of peace education and religious moderation.

Participants had dynamic exchanges with imams, teachers, journalists, academics, peace building NGOs, and government officials on the local-first approach to development. They also strongly emphasized the power of youth programming to prevent and counter violent extremism where it is most prevalent.

One of the key outcomes of these trainings included improvements in the capacity among educators and community based organizations working with schools to use participatory approaches to identify, understand, document, and address issues relating to violent extremism and radicalization within school communities. Participants also gained insights on how to use participatory methods as a tool for learner and community engagement which they have been utilizing in their communities to impact narratives. They were also enabled to explore participatory ‘popular education’ which draws on the knowledge and experience of different stakeholders in the community as a means to designing locally appropriate strategies for community change and the positive empowerment of youth.

Participants also gained knowledge in peace building, negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution. Trainers used participatory tools, methods and exercises throughout the course of the workshop. The trainings also actively engaged participants and built off their knowledge and experiences.

These efforts have been sustained by the fact that several participants serve as trainers within their schools and communities and have also helped education professionals and community actors with planning and delivering conflict-sensitive programs.
ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF UMYDF FOR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS MANDATE

The investments aimed at harnessing and strengthening the knowledge, skills, abilities, processes and resources that UMYDF needs to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world were made as highlighted below:

Staff Skills Building Workshops

This year, the UMYDF staff team members participated in several trainings meant to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization in fulfilling its mandate of providing a link and also developing the capacity of young people across all clusters in Uganda so as to promote their active, responsible and non violent participation in local, national and global development processes.

The trainings covered a wide range of topics such as: communication and documentation, results based reporting, fundraising and resource mobilization, equal opportunities and diversity, as well as trainings in participatory action research (PAR) so as to bolster the organization’s monitoring, evaluation and reporting component.

In addition, the UMYDF team participated in other team building activities such as retreats and staff/project team meetings. These boosted organizational performance and staff morale.

UMYDF Internship and Volunteer Programme

At UMYDF, we take pride in promoting volunteerism as one of our core principles. Thus, it continued to form the basis for additional recruitment of interns and volunteers that were attached to different programs within the organization.

The volunteers and interns directly participated in numerous ongoing programmes and projects, thus gaining employability skills such as communication and writing, teamwork, problem solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organizing, self-management, learning and technology.
ENGAGEMENTS IN COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TO CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE

Collaboration and networking is an invaluable way of expanding organizational knowledge and skill, making relevant connections and developing rapport to grow the organizational impact. In order to realize these objectives, UMYDF engaged in the following partnerships, collaborations and networks:

1. **Joint Project Implementation Planning Meetings with Stakeholders**

UMYDF organized over 5 consultative and consensus building meetings with schools, teachers, religious leaders, youth leaders, civil society and community leaders, and government officials from the Ministries of Education, Gender & Social Development and district officials from Kampala and Wakiso. The meetings created awareness about the aims of the organization’s projects among influential group of audiences, user groups and enabled them to come to a common understanding about the project implementation strategies, and how the objectives/outcomes would be attained and sustained even after the projects phases out.

2. **UMYDF Contributes to Development of a Good Practices Handbook for Victims of Terror**

Associations of terror victims have been established across Africa and the Middle East; with the majority established as a direct result of an attack to cater to the needs and requirements of people who have been directly impacted. Other associations, although primarily established in response to a terrorist attack, have grown beyond their geographic borders and focus areas to encompass areas and issues on victims that are far more wide ranging. Different associations provide support and assistance in different and unique ways relevant to their national context and on a wide variety of issues. However, their overarching aim is the same i.e. to protect, respect and promote the rights of victims of terrorism, whether it is fighting for compensation, providing a platform for victims’ voices, or collaborating with their national governments to recognize victims’ rights.

Having been formed as a result of a terrorist attack, UMYDF has been working with the United Nations Centre for Counter Terrorism (UNCCT) as well as other Victims’ Associations and organizations all over the world to ensure that victims’ voices are amplified and their rights protected and respected. In this regard, UMYDF is working with the UNCCT to develop a “Handbook of Good Practices to Empower and Strengthen Victims of Terrorism Associations
“Good practices Handbook to strengthen the efforts and effectiveness of Victims of Terrorism Associations.”

Once completed, the Handbook will provide support and guidance on a number of topics that victims associations grapple with on an almost daily basis. These good practices have been ‘tested and proven’ by several victims associations, international organizations, and victims themselves to be the best approach in achieving their objective of placing victims’ rights and interests at the fore.

Plans are underway to have the Handbook translated into the six official languages of the United Nations, and be made available online through the UN Victims of Terrorism Support Portal.

3. Commemorating the International Day of Peace, 2017

As a proponent of peace, UMYDF fully participated in the international commemoration of day (2017) under the theme of “Peace and Tolerance for One Another and Respect of the Faiths of Others.”

We take pride in ourselves as an institution that has walked the talk of spear heading peace building efforts in this country by engaging with policy makers and community leaders in making sure that what happened in the past remains in the past.

On this occasion, UMYDF published and disseminated over 3,000 copies of a curriculum that will help all beneficiaries in their quest for peace and tranquility. This was part of our long-term strategy to ensure that our mandate of promoting peace is realized.

In addition, the UMYDF team joined other young peace builders at the National Youth Peace Festival at Makerere
University in Kampala where they issued a press release on the importance of building a peaceful and prosperous Uganda for all youth on the sidelines of the youth peace.

Organized under theme “Youth Building Peace,” the festival provided a perfect opportunity for over 5,000 youth leaders, humanitarian organizations, government, development partners and the private sector to perform acts of peace and kindness; from observing a minute of silence, attending peace education events and writing peace poetry, to participating in peace marches.

Our own Ndugwa Hassan (UMYDF Program Manager) appeared on a Discussion Panel on the Role of Youth in Promoting Peace in Uganda alongside ACP Emirian Kayima (Uganda Police Force Spokesperson), and ceased the moment to “urge all stakeholders to engage young people in peace building by creating space for them to express their opinions and listen to them rather than simply acknowledging them as victims or perpetrators of violence. It’s vital to engage youth as social actors with their own views and contributions.”

4. Inspiring Youth in Cologne, Germany

Towards the end of the year 2017, Ndugwa Hassan (Senior Programs Manager, UMYDF) flew all the way from Uganda to Germany to meet his colleague, Mimoun Berrissoun, and spent seven days touring European cities. It was an amazing week with a lot of touring and civil society events.

Hassan and Mimoun are both members of Extremely Together, which is a group of 10 Young Leaders brought together by the Kofi Annan Foundation from diverse backgrounds around the world, all active (in their own ways) in preventing and countering violent extremism in their communities and beyond.

While in Germany, Hassan and his colleague visited mosques, the local police and met key figures on different occasions, including speaking at an EU Commission event in Brussels. The main issues discussed were the importance of peace building, social cohesion and violence prevention.

The highlight of Hassan’s visit was the football tournament organized by 180 Grad Wende under the theme “Kick it against Hate.” He used this tournament as an opportunity to inspire in excess of 70 young people to become peace
builders in their communities. To achieve this, Hassan related his personal and touching experience with violence and violence prevention.

As a result, the bridges between Germany and Uganda are much stronger now as Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum and 180 Grad Wende build and strengthen a long term partnership in Preventing Violent Extremism. Under their umbrella of Extremely Together, there will be more productive meetings and teamwork between the two young leaders and their organizations.

5. Implementing the Credible Voices Exchange Program

From 27th February to 4th March 2017, Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (UMYDF) partnered with the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA) to host a team of 50 Credible Voices for a 6-day intense learning program in Nairobi, Kenya. The Credible Voices who participated in the Nairobi round included Imams, pastors, youth and women leaders, journalists, tech activists, business persons, civil society activists and psychologists from Kenya, Uganda and Somalia.

The East African Credible Voices exchange program is a soft-power approach to countering violent extremism and builds upon established efforts to identify practical solutions to the common challenges facing religious and cultural leaders as key influencers and opinion makers in East Africa and explore new strategies to enhance their constituents’ resistance to violent extremist ideologies. The program provides credible religious and cultural leaders from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Somalia with an opportunity of sharing best practices, expertise, resources, and developing effective strategies and programs of their own to counter violent extremism.

Some of the activities undertaken during the Nairobi round included unpacking the Kenyan
CVE landscape delivered through a seminar and town hall mode; field visits to areas and monuments that speak to Kenya’s history and experience with violent extremism; as well as the interventions made at the time.

The areas and monuments visited included the Majengo/Pumwani area which is internationally as a recruiting ground for the Al-Shabaab militant group based in Somalia; the US Embassy in Nairobi where they discussed and shared experiences with Embassy staff on various initiatives to counter violent extremism; Kibra and South B Mosque; as well as the August 7th Memorial Park (site of the former U.S. Embassy in Nairobi) where they were shown a film of the devastating effects of the 1998 bombing of the US Embassy so as to enable them to re-live and share in the horror of that day and appreciate the need to counter the ideology of hatred that breeds terrorism.

Following these engagements, the delegates resolved to use their experiences from this round to engage and inspire others in their respective portfolios to shun hate and violence as a means of ensuring that there is a multiplier effect to the Credible Voices’ message so that history is not repeated.

Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (UMYDF) partnered with the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA), the Anti Tribal Movement, the Center for Dialogue (CYD), and the Civilization Exchange and Cooperation Foundation (CECF) to host Credible Voices for week-long intense learning programs in Nairobi (Kenya), Zanzibar (Tanzania), Kampala (Uganda) and the USA. The Credible Voices who participated in program included Imams, pastors, youth and women leaders, journalists, tech activists, business persons, civil society activists and psychologists from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Somalia.

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6. **UMYDF Participates in Panel Discussions at the Launch of UNDP’s Journey to Extremism in Africa**

During the course of the year, UMYDF’s Team Leader, Mr. Ahmed Hadji, was part of the panel discussions during the launch of study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment, in Stockholm, Amsterdam, Brussels and New York.

The study reveals that a rapidly expanding youth population which has little chance of economic or social betterment is approaching a point when their anger will boil over.

“This study sounds the alarm that as a region, Africa’s vulnerability to violent extremism is deepening,” Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, UNDP Africa director, said at the launch of the report in New York, before hastening to add that, “Borderlands and peripheral areas remain isolated and under-served. Institutional capacity in critical areas is struggling to keep pace with demand. More than half the population lives below the poverty line, including many chronically underemployed youth.”

The study took two years to compile, and involved interviews with 495 voluntary recruits who had joined Africa’s most prominent extremist groups, including Boko Haram and Al Shabaab. The UNDP believes that more than 33,000 people have died in Africa due to extremist attacks between 2011 and early 2016.

One of the study’s eye-catching findings was that more than seven out of ten of the recruits interviewed said that some form of government action had inspired the “tipping point” moment that triggered their decision to join an extremist group – with the killing or arrest of a family member or friend being a key driver.
While appearing on all panel discussions, UMYDF’s Ahmed Hadji kept encouraging all governments in the region rethink their approach for dealing with extremism; cautioning that the instinctive desire to ignore rule of law and human rights in a rush to crush terror groups is counter-productive and leads to more incidents. Instead they should focus on strengthening the state and welfare services.

UMYDF also participated in regional workshops in Kenya and Djibouti that established the East Africa Civil Society Organizations Hub (CSO Hub) to support and deepen a “network of networks” for national and regional CSOs and other independent actors such as academics, religious leaders, and community representatives. Facilitated by Global Center on Cooperative Security with initial support from the Government of the Netherlands, the CSO Hub is an independent network of civil society organizations and leaders engaged in P/CVE in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. It provides a mechanism for CSOs across the region to share expertise and best practices on P/CVE, discuss national and regional priorities and challenges, and ensure that a broad range of voices and priorities are reflected in local, national, regional, and international policy and donor assistance platforms. The CSO Hub provides capacity-building assistance for smaller or emerging CSOs to help strengthen their program development, outreach, and evaluation capacities, as well as expand their role in P/CVE policy development and discourse.
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SHARING

As an institution, we value knowledge management and information sharing as one of the most important strategies for enhancing our relevance and competitiveness. Consequently, UMYDF remained intentional in developing and disseminating information/knowledge that was generated from its interventions.

1. **Project newsletters** that documented stories of change resulting from all UMYDF interventions.

2. **Media Advocacy**

   UMYDF facilitated the airing of at least 40 radio and 10 television talk shows as well as over 50 spot adverts on national and local radio and television stations that raised awareness and inspired many youth and other community members to choose life and break the cycle of hate.

   Press conferences were equally utilized to convey information along the same lines, in addition to calling upon government and other key stakeholders to review and/or adopt legislation that prevents violent extremism and promotes peace and tolerance in Uganda. Additionally, while in Kampala, our Credible Voices made a public declaration, through a press conference with local and regional media, of their solidarity against hate and violent extremism in the region and vowed to use their influence as leaders to build resilient communities starting with the youth.

3. **Flyers, T-shirts, PVC and pull-up banners, stickers and posters** in English and translated versions containing simplified messages about the basis of peace and tolerance, mutual respect, dangers of violent extremism, solidarity against hate and violent extremism were produced. In total, over 10,000 assorted copies of these materials were produced and disseminated.

4. **Online Advocacy**

   (i) An e-newsletter that is interactive with user features like photo, print, web links, and videos was electronically mailed out to stakeholders on a monthly basis. It contained an update of UMYDF project and programme activities and was shared both internally and externally with key stakeholders.

   (ii) **Social media** – by the end 2017, the UMYDF Facebook and Twitter pages had a following of 2,601 and 190 respectively. These were utilized to initiate and sustain discussions on the need to promote peace and tolerance through shunning hate and violent extremism.

   (iii) The organizational website, hosted on URL [www.umydf.org](http://www.umydf.org) was utilized as the one of the main channels for issuing out information about UMYDF and its activities. It registered web traffic of close to 32,980 visitors in 2017.
MOBILIZING AND INSPIRING YOUTH TO TAKE ACTION FOR PEACE

Through the ‘Amani Leo’ (peace today) campaign, UMYDF mobilized and created safe spaces for young people from all walks of life (including refugee communities) to be inspired to take action against hate and violence in their communities. It was implemented in Uganda but later spilt over to neighboring conflict-hit countries such as Burundi and South Sudan through strategic partnerships forged in the course of implementation. The campaign focused on a positive narrative that inspires, empowers and engages youth by promoting values of hope, love and tolerance.

Some of the key activities included school and community outreaches that involved trainings on peace building and social cohesion to youth, Art and theatre for change, music of hope, peace runs among others. A baseline study, was augmented by a desk review, involved 450 youth and 231 parents, and helped identify existing violent extremism threats in Uganda and the East African region.

It identified the areas and people that are most at risk and also identified the best strategies of engaging them to reduce their susceptibility to extremist lures and give them hope to achieve their dreams and aspirations. Youth in refugee camps, urban and peri-urban areas were also identified as the most at risk because they are disillusioned and hopeless. Youth in school were also at risk due to the influence of the external environment around them such as peers already recruited in gangs, the media and radical political groups.

The research findings enabled UMYDF to engage these identified communities through more youthful, enjoyable, engaging and informal strategies such as art and theatre, music competitions and schools outreaches all channeled through social media platforms. The ‘Sing for Peace’ competition, the ‘Walk for Peace’ Facebook Challenge and theatre adopted by the campaign got many youth from all over the world involved in inspiring others to choose life and break the cycle of hate.

Numerous partnerships emerged and enabled UMYDF to work with as many stakeholders as possible to amplify campaign messages within their constituencies. Such partnerships included Street Anatomy; Galaxy Dance project; Sophie Muwanika Institute of Art for Change; Talent for Health Initiative; Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU); Africa Masharik Fest; Buzz Teens; Laba Street Art Fest; and Fashion House.
Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum
P.O.Box 5364, Kampala - Uganda
Plot 2, Agape Close, Ntinda - Kiwatuule Road
📞: +256 44 530 280
📧: info@umydf.org,
🌐: www.umydf.org