Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (UMYDF) welcomes its new and existing readers to the 3rd Edition of its Newsletter for the period January-June 2018. Starting this year, our Newsletter issue will appear more frequently with more articles and updates highlighting key Organization’s reflections and actions as you will see from this issue.

Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum - a not-for profit, non partisan youth-led and faith based development organization, supports the implementation of United Nation Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security and the Uganda Peace and conflict transformation policy 2016 that serves the needs of young people as peace builders, decision-makers, researchers, development practitioners and other stakeholders, by providing a platform for generating, accessing and sharing knowledge to promote, support and strengthening young people’s participation in Peace building.

As part of addressing the conditions and factors leading to the rise of violent extremism especially among the youth in Uganda, UMYDF has come up with different prevention strategies where the young people can play a part as positive role models in preventing and countering violent extremism through promoting a culture of peace, tolerance, intercultural and interreligious dialogue that involves all youth in all sectors.

In this issue, we provide you with a glimpse of our exciting activities this quarter supported by Finn Church Aid (FCA), captured in the collection of articles highlighting; our New Madrasa Curriculum Incorporating Peace building and tolerance in society, Our contribution to the East African Civil society Research Community on PVE, Our works in introducing A Global Peace Building Movement Dubbed; Extremely Together to Uganda., Our Katwe Skills Center; providing a New Dawn of Hope and Optimism to the at Risk Youth and our Student-led Creative approach to addressing the Growing Violent Conflict behavior in Schools through Participatory Action Research that all testifies to the prominence of UMYDF’s Preventing Violent Extremism through Education; “Nurturing for Peace” program.

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ZAINAB ALI
Programs Assistant
UMYDF

We wish you a nice reading!
Katwe Skills Center; A New Dawn of Hope and Optimism to the at Risk Youth.

"If we portray people as merely unemployed radicals, we'll develop solutions that miss the target."

Th`eroux- Benoni

Building opportunities for youth to develop a sense of purpose and meaning through positive alternatives and engagement increases their sense of self-efficacy.

In a bid to strengthen youth resilience to violence and violent extremism through providing positive alternatives to youth, Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (UMYDF) with support from Finn Church Aid (FCA) established a skills enhancement center for the marginalized youth in the areas of Katwe where a number of initiatives have been created to support and provide services to the youth. The center has enrolled 50 youth who are being equipped with a wide range of skills including Photography, Saloon works and Home electrical engineering.

"The center has given me an opportunity to positively transform my life and this has made me earn respect and trust among my peers and the elders in my community." (Kaweesa Ramadan)

It should be noted that, historically Katwe has always been a den of criminals most of who are young people and is also home to many gangs that are believed to terrorize people in the city such as Kifeesi. Despite its bad criminal record, Katwe is also a hub of innovation and local technology in Uganda. However, not many young people have been part of these initiatives and Katwe remains the most at risk area for youth recruitment into violent gangs among other groups.
According to the 2015 United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (SCR 2250) on Youth, Peace and Security and emerging literature, there is emphasis on the need to switch the narrative to recognize youth as positive agents for peace building and security.

The center has been established to benefit the marginalized youth who have no hope for a positive sense of direction in life as they transition into adulthood. UMYDF believes the skills acquired by the youth at the center will significantly reduce their susceptibility to violence.

“'As a young lady growing up, I used to indulge myself in unproductive activities in order to feed my family but thanks for the opportunity UMYDF has provided for the less fortunate people like us through the skill vocational training center, I can now acquire a decent job and earn out of it. Thank You so much.'”

(one of the beneficiaries from the center.)

As part of the program, a career day that was named “speaker series” is dedicated to all youth under the skill center with an aim of bringing motivational speakers to speak to the youth. The purpose of this career day is to guide and inspire the youth to fulfill their career goals and dreams in a positive way and this has been a success.

Our future plan is to continue supporting the center through creating an alumni network that will enable the youth to continue working together with the organization, local communities and other partners with the same interest to implement similar initiatives within and outside Katwe community as a means of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieve basic knowledge and skills, promote gender equality and empowerment and combating violent extremism while ensuring a safer and prosperous future for the at risk youth in Katwe.
The youth being taken through a practical assessment at the center.
Students Search For Creative Solution To The Growing Violent Conflict In Schools.

Ed ucation for over a century has been the key to building nations. In many parts of the world today, a lot has been done towards curbing down the situation of violent conflict and wars. It is therefore important to recognize the role of education in contributing to building a culture of peace and a conflict free zone.

The need to promote youths’ sense of meaningful engagement and effectiveness can be particularly powerful given the challenges youth face in schools. As a means of highlighting the opportunities, constraints, and lessons learned in our efforts to contribute to the high-quality implementation and evaluation of Participatory Action Research (students led research on their own situations) UMYDF supported the peace club students of Kololo Secondary School to conduct research within their school environment and the surrounding communities with the aim of understanding the needs and challenges affecting them.

Prior to that, we trained the members of Kololo Secondary School peace club as researchers with knowledge and skills which enabled them to conduct research as a means of having a deeper understanding on the challenges they face both within and outside the school community thus coming up with the possible solution to help solve the challenges they face as youths. The research training program that UMYDF does with the peace clubs in schools also inspires students to reflect on their roles as leaders and Peace builders in their communities as well as learn to gather and analyze information collected from a variety of sources.

“Our schools PAR program holds tremendous potential for providing the means by which students can initiate inquiry, develop skills, and provide recommendations that will help address some of the challenges the youth face.”

Kololo SS Peace Club representatives, presenting their research findings during a stakeholders meeting at school.
The Peace Club Student Research Team collecting data from fellow students during an ongoing Research (PAR).

UMYDF’s Programs Officer MS Nanfuka Zulaika (Right), interacting with members at the stakeholders meeting that was held at Kololo SS.
Madrasa’s are to be represented in the Education Councils, but in reality the general schools system dominates and the representation and influence of madrasa’s is generally minimal.

In order to contribute to improved quality education in Madrasa through better trained teachers, improved learning resources and effective quality assurance systems is key. Supported by Finn Church Aid (FCA), Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (UMYDF) in partnership with Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) reviewed and reproduced copies of the Madrasa Education Curriculum and launched it. As a result of this, the curriculum was adopted by the Islamic call University and its being rolled out to over 80 madrasa teachers through the National Madrasa Tutors Enhancement Program. This also resulted into the establishment of the first Islamic Education Primary Examination Board (IEPB) that is mandated to assess and standardize National Islamic education exams for students who have passed through the preexisting curriculum.

The development of this curriculum provided new standards that madrasa teachers and Islamic education institutions should operate within after the police reports indicating that some madrasas were grooming terrorists. The curriculum has also incorporated peace building for the young people.

The Three - Month Madrasa Tutor’s Skills Enhancement program was designed to support the teaching and learning of Madrasa Tutors for Mosque based Madrasa’s or Supplementary Schools that seeks to support and nurture the student learning experience and has a very

**New Madrasa Curriculum Incorporates Peace Education**

UMYDF Team Leader Mr. Ahmed Hadji speaks to the Muslim Teachers during the launch of the First National Madrasa Tutors Enhancement Program at the Supreme Council.

Mrs. Amina Nansake, a qualified trainer and one of the key facilitator during her training session with the Madrasa Teachers.

Madrasa Teachers listening attentively to an ongoing class sessions.
clear focus on protecting children and young people in their care from harm through a robust approach to safeguarding. The program incorporates the latest Islamic education curriculum, safeguarding principles, management, operational and procedural frameworks to support Mosque, Madrasa and school staff to run the educational centre.

The program is theological. It is primarily a comprehensive series of tools, templates, training, policies, procedures and frameworks developed to support management to deliver an effective student learning experience.

Madrasah also lack access to resources available to the general schools because, madrasah managers do not have sufficient information on the resources available.

In noting this reality, the need to take an active role in facilitating the establishment of associations of Madrasah foundations that can be in better position to represent their rights and provide a basis for representation will not only help develop a networking model designed to improve conditions among groups of target madrasah, but also increase community awareness.
A Global Peace Building Movement Dubbed; Extremely Together Expands To Uganda.

Creating Opportunities for the Youth: A section of the Youth that benefited from the CVE training under the Extremely Together Uganda Chapter.

With support from the Kofi Annan foundation, extremely together young leaders Ndugwa Hassan from Uganda and Ilwad Elman from Somalia were supported to conduct a P/CVE training for the youth in Kampala. The purpose of this engagement was to expand the Extremely Together network in different areas such as Uganda, South Sudan, Somalia, Morocco and Nigeria among others and to equip young people with necessary skills, knowledge and tools to prevent and counter violent extremism within their specific communities using the Extremely Together approach.

Established in 2015, Extremely Together has united ten young people from diverse back grounds who have, in their own ways, sought to find positive responses to violent extremism. Brought together by the Kofi Annan Foundation, they have joined forces to learn from each other’s experiences. In sharing these experiences with their communities, they work to support others driven into extremism by hopelessness, rage and false promises.

A total of 19 youth benefited from a two day training from 16th to 17th march 2018 and it focused on introduction to understanding key concepts such as violence, extremism, radicalization, terrorism, countering violent extremism vs preventing violent extremism, de-radicalization and counter narratives among others. This was achieved through education, use of religion and social media inform of group discussions, storytelling among others. In so doing the youth were able to articulate the challenges they face within their communities and why many resolve to use violence as a way of solving their grievances.

“Understanding violent extremism in a broad sense has helped me demystify my thinking that it is Muslim thing. I always thought Islam preaches violence but from the conversation we had, it’s clear to me that it has nothing to do with Islam and I feel ashamed now of demonizing Muslims at all times (Tumusiime Aggrey ET Uganda chapter).”
This engagement proved to be a starting point in creating an Extremely Together movement that will see more youth getting involved with Extremely Together and adopting its approach to P/CVE and carrying its brand forward.

The youth that benefited from this training comprised of those already doing CVE work in their communities, the youth interested in CVE work and those interested in mainstreaming CVE work within their other scope of work. This included university students, student leaders, community youth leaders, local youth CBO representatives as well as youth in the art.

It was envisaged that after training the youth, Kofi Annan foundation would support the trained youth with 500 USDs to develop and implement an idea together.

A WhatsApp group was created to maintain information flow and sharing in order to continuously engage with the bigger groups as they share opportunities and guidance with the leadership of Ndugwa Hassan and Ilwad Elman.

Using the knowledge and skills gained, the trained youth have gone ahead to hold dialogues with fellow students calling for non-violent resolution of conflicts and misunderstanding within the school environment.

“ My community needs me more than ever, if Ilwad is able to confront the challenge in a hostile environment like Somalia, why not me” (Kirabo Marion ET Uganda).

With ET expanding her reach to Uganda, there is optimism that the youth will become more resilient and steadfast in the face of such threats and the training will empower and discourage peers from violence.

“If tolerance, respect and equity permeate family life, they will translate into values that shape societies, nations and the world.” –Kofi Annan
BRICS provides funding to a variety of community based initiatives that are designed to build the capacity of communities to respond to emerging threats of violent extremism (VE) in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, while also encouraging closer cooperation between government and non-government actors in a way that build resilience. BRICS aims at building a more vigorous and robust presence in Uganda by among others, creating a research hub and a network of partner organizations; United Religions Initiative-Great Lakes (URI-GL), Muslim Centre for Justice and Law (MCJL), Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (UMYDF) and Allied Muslim Youth Uganda (AMYU).

BRICS relies on local knowledge and context from UMYDF given that it has active programming in eastern Uganda. Ahmed, the director of UMYDF is part of the advisory board members and together with other directors of the CSOs, plays a supervisory role, give general oversight and give much needed advice and contacts for networking in Uganda. In the past, the board members have made input during the whole research process from areas of research, general scope and research methodology as well as giving input on the draft report. The board members are therefore a vital part of the BRICS networking and research processes in Uganda. In addition to having a director as part of the board members, UMYDF has also shared their human resources with BRICS by contributing to the BRICS research team. Zulaika was chosen to represent UMYDF and be part of the field researchers who also provide great input during designing of the initial research, scope of work and general research instruments. Zulaika as a field researcher also advices on the local context, geographical locations and the local contacts.

She also helps in data collection, data analysis and gives input on report writing as well. BRICS takes advantage of inclusive research methodology so that the whole research process has input from the field researchers, the advisory board members and other local stakeholders as easily acquired.
UMYDF Contributes To The Development of A National Strategy on PVE

In this quarter, Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum’s Team leader Mr. Ahmed Hadji and Program officer Ms Zulaika Nanfuka participated in the development and launch of the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) mobile app in Accra, Ghana, implemented developed with funding from the Government of Japan, provides guidance to development practitioners and specialists to develop effective communication strategies and interventions in Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE).

The first of its kind, the app provides a comprehensive set of tools on all stages of developing effective communication strategies, focusing on themes mostly relevant to analysis, strategy and messaging.

It provides a practical, step-by-step, guide on strategic and communications elements – from basic concepts of narrative to campaign planning; and incorporates a number of case studies, tips, templates and online resources. One of the greatest challenges in mobilizing civil society to counteract extremist groups’ narratives is one of basic understanding and expertise: whereas many radical groups have innate technical skills, being digital natives, the organizations willing to act often lack communications awareness and strategic knowledge, whether in the alternative or counter-narrative domains.

Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, complimented UNDP for its global efforts in developing PVE specific programming through a sustainable development approach.

“This is an innovation that will assist groups across the region in preventing violent extremism. Our engagement on this issue has taught us that the battle against violent extremism needs to be won at the local level as most of its messaging is built on grievances found within communities,” Chambas added.

The vast body of current research on violent extremism, and particularly UNDP’s recent, ground-breaking report “Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment”, emphasize that a comprehensive model
that target the root causes and structural drivers of violent extremism. From 2011 to 2016, it caused 33,300 fatalities as well as widespread displacement, creating situations of pronounced and critical humanitarian need.”

The highly localized nature of recruitment uncovered by the Journey to Extremism in Africa report has important implications for response strategies and the search for solutions that are tailored to Africa’s circumstances. As Ahmed further stated, “there is a crucial need to effectively leverage media and technology as far as possible to counter the growth of violent extremism, while simultaneously contributing to an environment that is receptive to those who choose to disengage.”

This mobile app intends to serve as a resource base for stakeholders intending to use communication means in an effort to counter and prevent violent extremism. At the launch, participants including representatives from over 12 sub Saharan countries discussed the challenges and different contexts in which extremism occurs and the approaches taken by national and international actors in developing tools suitable to their country context; and acknowledged that the app is designed to close this gap.

for PVE should integrate responses across the security and development pillars of governments, engage security actors and communities to reduce distrust and mutual suspicion; and seek the active involvement of faith-based, as well as youth and women’s organizations.

The Journey to Extremism research suggests a number of programming entry points relating to communication activities, such as:

» supporting and amplifying the voices of traditional religious leaders who challenge misinterpretations of Islam and preach religious tolerance and inter-faith cohesiveness
» leveraging the perspectives and voices of former recruits as conduits for counter-messaging
implementing counter-messaging programmes that are highly relevant to local cultures, emphasize peer-group factors and influences, and are delivered through DVDs, SMS, radio and community centres, avoiding over-reliance on the internet, and drawing on trusted local organizations as ‘messengers’.

Mr. Ahmed Hadji, Team Leader, Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum, stated, “We contribute to the prevention of violent extremism by supporting development solutions
UMYDF Team Participates in The process of Developing A National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

Uganda is in the process of developing a National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. In June 2018 here in Kampala, the Government of Uganda with support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and financial contribution of the Government of Japan Collaborated in designing a strategy that will be developed within the framework of supporting the operationalization and development of the Counter-Messaging Hub.

As part of the methods of developing the Strategy, the Government of Uganda’s multi sectorial committee comprising of senior officials from the Office of the President and Prime Minister, Ministries of Internal Affairs, Education, Defense, Gender and Social Development, Foreign Affairs and UNDP are holding consultations with various national stakeholders. The process has kicked off by an inauguration meeting held in the three regional consultations in Central, Greater Kampala metropolitan area, and Eastern region. Consequently, in-depth and inclusive consultations were carried out in Kampala, Jinja, Wakiso, and Mukono. These consultations were intended to ensure the strategy is based on a shared understanding of the issues and builds on existing experience, while providing a forum for knowledge exchange.

The main goal of the consultation process is to collect the views, perspectives and recommendation of key national stakeholders on what should be the main elements of the PVE/CVE strategy.

UMYDF participated in the Kampala and Wakiso district consultations organized by the Ministry of Internal Affairs by providing evidence policy advice drawn it’s on the ground experience in PVE/CVE programming. The national consultations involved various actors in the conflict prevention sector work including government, civil society, faith-based organizations, academics, and development partners, among others.

During the two days meeting, participants discussed issues on preventing and responding to violent extremism through a development lens, community resilience to violent extremism, research as well as state capacity to deal with violent extremism, all of which will contribute to the final strategy for the country.
Strengthening UMYDF’s Response To Online Hate Speech Through The Amani Leo Campaign

As a means to support and enhance the positive role of young people, Amani Leo Campaign is a powerful example of an online platform designed to counter online hate speech through creating a basis for the young people to dialogue, network and build relationships through different avenues such as music and art, with a key objective of working together to promote global peace.

The term hate speech according to some civil society organizations is defined as “any phrase of discriminatory hate towards people that is expressed through any forms such as written, spoken or visual and spread through any medium such as the internet or in the street.”


Amani Leo Campaign is a program under Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum that started out as a campaign in March 2017, as part of the global peer to peer challenge that engages young people around the world to counter online hate speech while creating awareness against violence and violent extremism.

“Peace Today” is the meaning that comes to mind when the name “Amani Leo” is mentioned, an online platform that focuses on young people combating hate speech online by inspiring youth to positively speak out on their challenges especially those that have been exposed to violence in all its forms. And this has since evolved into a talent based association that uses different talents to refine solutions towards harmonizing different cultures, status and gender differences through Music and Art.
Ben among many is a refugee in Uganda and one of the direct beneficiaries of the Amani Leo Campaign. Given his talent as a young upcoming artist, Ben uses his talent as a tool to inspire and promote peace.

A song that culminated from an online “Sing for Peace Challenge” where two finalists collaborated in bringing both their stories to inspire positivity amidst all, – “Still standing” is a campaign under Amani Leo, that sets out to use music and art as an instrument to foster intercultural dialogue and understanding between nations and cultures with over 30,000 followers online, aiming at stimulating cultural exchange and collaboration between refugees and host communities in Uganda. It’s on this basis that the campaign aims to penetrate the region in collaboration with different stakeholders in achieving the desired outcomes through partnerships.

Under the supervision of Andrew Salema, a visual artist with experience in using art as a tool of rehabilitation, hosts a weekly jam sessions as well as online radio talk show where young people are encouraged to dialogue and network as a means of realizing more possibilities on a global stage.

In a bid to building a more inclusive, empowered, peaceful and just societies, where young people are equipped with necessary competences to recognize and act against online hate speech, Amani Leo Campaign believes in addressing stereotypes and prejudice as a means to breaking the barriers that exist through promoting human rights, equality, dignity and diversity in their online expression.

Press briefing to popularize Amani -Leo Campaign initiatives through the Mainstream Media.
“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, his background or his religion. People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

–Nelson Mandela