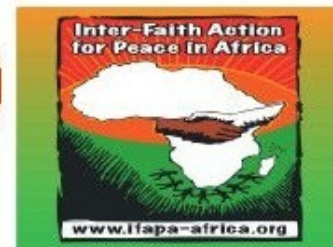




NEWSLETTER



The Inter-Faith Action for Peace in Africa (IFAPA) Youth Desk is a Continental Coordinating office for Inter-faith Youth activities. The desk was established as a recommendation of religious leaders during the second IFAPA Summit and by the Commission. With financial support from Trust Africa Foundation, the desk opened up in June 2008 in Kampala, Uganda-East Africa.

Our overall aim is youth involvement in the IFAPA's main aim of bringing together religious communities to promote peace on the continent through genuine inter-religious understanding, cooperation, and respect for each other. The methodology applied is networking, information sharing, training in peace building and conflict resolution, building capacities and youth involvement in socio-economic transformation of their communities.

Our vision is to have an ennobled youth in a harmonious Africa, whose mission is an all Africa interfaith network which is built on living a sustainable culture of peace, for the well being of all God's creation. A spiritual Africa where the youth live purposeful lives, are educated, developmental and foresighted, where youth and children are protected from conflicts, violence, abuse and disease. An Africa for all Africans regardless of gender, tribe, nationality, or creed.

New beginnings call for new ideas, creativity, and diversity. Think of IFAPA Commissioners, Coordinators, and youth regional network leaders/contact persons as a blood family of relatives of all ages scattered around the African continent. A cream of a network genuinely dedicated to peace initiatives and other challenges such as climate change, poverty, water, child sacrifice and trafficking, corruption and bad governance, use of rape as a weapon of war, conflict and insecurity, xenophobia, gender based violence and HIV/aids among others in Africa with African solutions.

After 2 years of youth involvement, the youth Desk after consultations has decided to commemorate this great achievement by initiating this newsletter. This is to become an information tool to share updates with the various inter-faith youth regional networks, and partners. The Newsletter should help us reach each other, share wisdom of challenges and opportunities.

Guidelines for Writing

Length: Maximum 3 pages double spaced, but shorter is better.

How to Begin: A title (center heading) in bold, but not caps. Then, write a first paragraph that indicates purpose, question, or main topic (for example, "to report or share. Make suggestions/contributions. . Ask a question . . . etc).

How to End: Your first name, last name, and e-mail address. Provide the place where you are writing from e.g. Adama Tombekai, Monrovia, Liberia

Deadline: June 10th, but sooner is better.

Where: Send to, ifapayouthdesk@gmail.com at your convenience, you may also copy to ifapa-youth-voice-network@googlegroups.com, the Youth Coordinator on, hamid.byamugenzi@ifapa-africa.rg, the IFAPA Consultant on saliou.mbacke@africa-faithforpeace.org and media and Communication consultant on ritva.rasila@ifapa-africa.org,

How: by Microsoft Word Attachment, if possible. Otherwise, send by e-mail.

Message from the IFAPA President/ Commission Convener



Noko

The commemoration of the youth desk's 2 years of existence has seen increased youth involvement in promoting peace on the African continent. This was one of our dreams from start as sighted by African religious leaders who form the IFAPA Commission. The opportunities ahead are; renewed commitment and team spirit as the continent continues to undergo a period of challenges such as the unfortunate crisis in Nigeria, increasing tension as most African States prepare for general elections, climate change challenges such as prolonged droughts and rains in some countries leading to water and food insecurity as well as land slides. The increasing scourge of HIV/AIDS, malaria, child trafficking, the question of resources, unemployment, xenophobia, and poverty in the majority of our communities can never be underestimated. It is a responsibility for us all to combine efforts and support the youth involvement. Less of this means a big gap. We need to remind ourselves that attempts to solve any of the above challenges are a genuine gesture of translating peace into a language that is best understood by African communities. The IFAPA Commission is grateful to the Trust Africa Foundation for supporting the youth desk establishment and continues to seek for more partnerships.

A brief account of the two years of Youth involvement

a) Training of the Youth in Peace building



Some of the captions of participants during training sessions

After successful registration and acquisition of office, the youth desk in collaboration with the local faith communities brought together the youth for a training camp in peace building. Participants were drawn from the cultural institutions such as kingdoms, and faith institutions namely the Bahai faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism while taking keen interest in fair gender representation.



A Section of some of the Peace Camp participants holding their certificates

The event took place at the Uganda Joint Christian Council Peace village in Mukono, Uganda. The training enhanced local involvement, and ensuring that the capacity of the youth to fully participate in the peace building processes is achieved. This also enabled participants to constitute into an inter-faith youth peace forum in the country. Participants also vowed to Promote youth action based on spiritual and cultural values addressing issues of meaningful peace through regular consultations, networking, advocacy, and seeking further training.

Most important, this activity created a formidable bond of cooperation and understanding amongst the IFAPA, local communities, and religious institutions. This has today become the strong foundation that the youth desk rides on locally.

b) The Regional youth Networks

Riding on lessons from the peace camp and the objectives of establishment, the Youth Desk today enjoys presence in various regions of the Continent. This comes after successful establishment of regional inter-faith networks with youth contact persons in Tanzania-East Africa, Liberia, and Ghana in West Africa, Cameroun in Central Africa, Botswana in Southern Africa, with developing ones in Morocco and Sudan in Northern Africa. The Youth Desk Coordinator Sheikh Hamid Byamugenzi made physical visits to the various countries seen above in order to have this achieved.



A section of a meeting in Dar-es-Salam, Tanzania

With priceless cooperation and wisdom from IFAPA Commissioners in these regions, inter-faith youth meetings were organized where the Coordinator participated. These meetings later came up with local committees whose head became the contact person. Although every country and region had separate meetings and identified own challenges and way forward, some cross cutting issues were identified. In the end, it was resolved that the youth desk would work hand in hand with the various regional networks in attending to the identified challenges with a local approach in each country and region high on agenda.

c) Youth Summit/ Consultation



Some of the participants during the consultation

After establishment of regional networks with contact persons, the next logical question was what next? However, the IFAPA Commission had already foreseen this and after further consultation, a youth summit / consultation was organized and hosted by the youth desk at Pope John Paul II Memorial Centre in Kampala, Uganda. The event brought together the youth from the various countries and regions of the Continent for training and consultation.



Some of the participants during a breakup session

During the Consultation, participants constituted themselves into a continental inter-faith youth forum. This forum was named the “**IFAPA Youth Voice**” abbreviated as IYV. See page 1 for the adopted logo. It was during the same event that participants developed and adopted a 3 years strategic plan. Among the highlighted issues in the plan were, civic education for the youth communities especially as the most African countries prepare for election, developing a resource mobilization strategy for the IYV, further training in peace building, involvement in addressing issues of climate change among others.

Reflections of the Coordinator: Analysis and Strategic Planning for the IFAPA Youth Desk



Byamugenzu Hamid

Today, the IFAPA Youth Desk is already 2 years. For a child of this age, this would mean experiencing one of the hardest phases in personal development: For us, it is more realistic to conceptualize this stage as one of reinforcement in terms of consolidating achievements and innovations to ensure more youth involvement in the best way possible. During the continental youth consultation/summit, a three year strategic plan was developed by the youth themselves. We continue to push ideas in this document. In the following lines, I proceed to share and welcome fresh wisdom to further push our general IFAPA aim ahead as well as strengthening the capacity of the African youth to actively participate in the entire process.

Strategies for Strengthening IFAPA

Participation of all age groups, institutions and other parties in the peace process does not remain a vital tool in Africa but a proven strategy world over. This helps in identifying and sustaining practical plans of action for now and in the coming years. I suggest that the youth in their different regional networks consider this initiative as they increase their participation in IFAPA programmes.

At the secretariat, we have been engaged in several planning initiatives. Among these, have been constant and consistent consultations with the Commissioner Pattni, the IFAPA Consultant Sheikh Saliou Mbacke, the Women Desk Coordinator Ms. Merab Mulindi, Commissioner Margaret Arach Orech, and the IFAPA Uganda Chapter members.

Based on their wise contributions, Let us outline draft strategies for strengthening the youth desk and increasing youth participation in the peace processes on the African continent. These include; (a) Reminding ourselves about the nature of IFAPA, (b) Consolidating previous achievements and ensuring more youth involvement, (c) Working together with the women desk in some programmes, and (d) Increasing the link with the IFAPA Commission plus the various national faith institutions.

a) Nature of IFAPA

The unique background of IFAPA forms the fulcrum of all programmes, projects, and activities of this organization. We remind our selves of the IFAPA Constitution wherever it is established as a Secretariat, Desk, or local Chapter. This states that “we are a non profit organization,” but rather a process initiated by African religious leaders of the seven major faiths on the continent for peace and development.

These faiths include; African Traditional Religions, Bahai faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. Our aim is bringing together religious communities to promote peace through genuine inter-faith encounter, cooperation, and respect for each others values.

In order to ensure full involvement, IFAPA has a Commission comprising of religious leaders as her decision making body who recommended establishment of a Secretariat, as a coordination office now established in Dakar, Senegal, a Women's and a Youth Desk established in Nairobi Kenya and Kampala, Uganda Respectively. The organization also has a media and communication consultant who is also the website administrator based in Finland. All these are today's functioning IFAPA arms. This foundation requires unique and associated knowledge bases that can be facilitated through IFAPA, her member faith institutions, partners, and international cooperation. As individual peace ambassadors in our respective capacities wherever we are, we appreciate what peace is and how it is understood by our communities in terms of causing positive change which is often a consistent process.

Media and Communication consultant / Website Administrator Ms. Ritva Rasila

Media and
Communication
Consultant

IFAPA's website was initiated several years ago as www.ifapa-faithforpeace.org. However, due to various reasons the website has since 2009 changed to www.ifapa-africa.org. this new website is has a better look, frequently updated, well spread with language options, religious links and many other advantages. Kindly visit the new website and see for your self! We owe many thanks to Ms. Ritva Rasila whose arrival brought this immediate positive change.

The Media and Communication Consultant to edit and add text. A passport size photograph may also be needed s at the side of this text in the box on your left hand. A biography may also be required.

Contact Ms. Ritva on Email:

Although not in the same country, the two desks have been side by side of each other through regular consultations. The relationship between the two Desks cannot be over emphasized as young women are a major focus within the inter-section in the work of the two. IFAPA Women Desk's vision is a Healthy Africa: *healthy* in the broad, holistic sense of the word.

To contribute to the realization of this vision, IFAPA seeks to open space and build capacity for the women of Africa to address the different forms of *malaise* in Africa thus laying the foundation for a more participatory role of the African women in actions aimed at bringing about peace in Africa. The key outputs of the Women Desk are:

Women
Desk
Coordinator

- Elevating the status of women through equipping them with leadership and life skills, enhancing their intuitive skills in problem solving and conflict prevention, and emphasizing their role as mentors to the youth.
- Education: spiritual, religious and moral education that retains core African values, promotes understanding of religious diversity and teaches peace and respect of human rights, with priority given to the education of girls and grass-root women.
- Networking and Cross Regional collaboration through networking among women faith-based groups across Africa that includes rural, refugee and disabled women, and using tools such as ICT and newsletters.
- Documentation that highlights women's contributions to peace-building and inter-faith collaboration for peace in an empowering manner, rather than manipulatively.
- Gender mainstreaming: understanding the role of women in various religions and their teachings, providing men with gender training to raise awareness on women's issues and concerns, and emphasizing the need for women to work with men as allies and partners for peace

Youth
Commission
Representative

Jonathan Ravat the youth commission representative. The new youth commission representative tacks on from Sheikh Hamid Byamugenzi. Jonathan, please insert additional text such as your history with IFAPA your work/ role in Mauritius, bio data, etc. You are also reminded to send us your passport size photo and any other activity pictures you may have.

Contact Ravat at email:

Regional Youth Network contact persons

Like for Jonathan, regional contact persons other than writing some brief of their network progress, are kindly requested to send us their brief profiles, passport size pictures and any other filed pictures they may have.

A special reminder goes to Mr. Adama Tombekai, Ms. Fofana Kula, Miss. Joyce Larko Steiner Mr. Dupleix Kuenzob, Mr. Bertrand T, Ms. Ashura Kayupayupa, Ms. Souhaila Triki, in Liberia, Ghana, Cameroun, Tanzania, and Morocco respectively.

IFAPA
Consultant
Coordinator and
Head of
Secretariat

Will be updated by IFAPA Consultant Sheikh
Saliou Mbacké

IFAPA registers in Kenya

The Peace award

FAPA president tours African Countries

IFAPA Coordinating Office/ Secretariat moves to Dakar Senegal

Preparations for the 4th IFAPA Summit in high gear

·IFAPA registration progress in Botswana

New Calendar events for the year 2010 and beyond

By Commissioner Pattni

Dear members, kindly submit your calendar so that the Commissioner may look at them for inclusion in this newsletter.

IFAPA
Commissioner
and Secretary
General for the
Hindu Council for
Africa

New Calendar events for the year 2010 and beyond

Editors:

- I. Hamid Byamugenzi (Youth Coordinator)
- II. Francis Maberu

For Gmail users, a copy of this draft is available of the ifapa youth voice network goggle group. Simply go to Goggle groups and then type ifapa youth voice. You will then be able to see this group where you can access this document and many more. By clicking join this group (this option is on your right hand side), you become a member.

Also remember to visit the IFAPA website www.ifapa-africa.org for general information