

Highlight Wara / Warc Peace Initiative Project

Youth Forum

"Dëkkëndo Jamma Ca Gën"

Between May 7 and 9 2009, about seventy students took part in the first? Dëkkëndo? Youth Forum held in Saint-Louis (North of Senegal). Students duly registered in the universities of Dakar, Saint-Louis and Ziguinchor came from Cameroun, Togo, DR Congo, Congo (Brazzaville), Chad, Central African Republic, Mali, Gabon, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Benin, Rwanda, USA, Mauritania, and Guinea Bissau.

From the opening ceremony it became very clear that the theme of this first meeting is a major concern worldwide: "Dëkkëndo Jamma Ca Gën" was the credo around which the various speeches were built: her Excellency the US ambassador in Senegal, the Rector of the Saint-Louis University, the Director of WARC, the Director of WARA and the Dakar University ombudsman (speaking in the name of the Ucad Rector) all highlighted the need to actively work for peace and the opportunities such an endeavor offers to youth from around the world.

Throughout the symposium "Dëkkëndo Jamma Ca Gën" was also the lifestyle participants adopted: in the conference room, in workshops with small groups but also while sharing a meal, finding ways to live in peace with a neighbor was constant practice. All participants confirmed that one major appreciation they have about the symposium is the opportunity to be in a room with various nationalities with their own definition of "Dëkkëndo" (neighbor).

Participants also enjoyed being able to hear people from several backgrounds share their experience of conflict and conflict resolution. Moving forward participants suggested it would be terrific to have a second symposium. It has been suggested that each university should set up a "Dëkkëndo Initiative" which the aim to promote peace and good neighborliness on all campuses. One student even came up with the idea of being a "Dëkkëndo" ambassador.

Students have encouraged Peace Initiative to keep an eye on follow up activities that were collected on the last day on which day it became apparent that we all learnt a lot from each other and definitely would love to have another opportunity to meet and share again.

The proceedings of the Symposium, particularly the papers presented by the students themselves will be selected for future publication.

Henri-Pierre Koubaka Wara/Warc Peace Initiative Coordinator

PS: For more information and pictures on the symposium please go to:
<http://www.initiatedepaix.org/>