

Educational Approach to Fostering Collaborative Peacebuilding

Mr. Noah Amrono

Secretary General of United Nations Youth Association of Kenya, Kenya

Thank you so much, Chairman Lee, the director for IPYG, distinguish guests, members of the peace, all protocol observed. Annyeonghaseyo, joh-eun o-hu-ib-ni-da, my good name is Noah Amrono and as you had I am the Secretary General for the United Nations Youth Association of Kenya. And I'm also a born-again Christian by the faith and by the grace of God. I would like to share with you a speech that I have under the topic 'Educational approach to fostering collaborative peacebuilding'. First of all, I'd like to really thank Chairman Lee in absentia of HWPL and all the members of IPYG group for inviting me here to this event. I'm equally happy and honored to be here to represent my country, Kenya and to share our story of peace with HWPL and IPYG.

While working for peace in Kenya, I got to know two global peace organizations that is HWPL and IPYG. HWPL's peace work has really inspired me to create sustainable peace based on the DPCW and empower youth to become peace workers themselves.

HWPL and IPYG have provided a number of peace-oriented training programs and activities to empower African youth to lead their futures. So today, I'm here to share with you the history of peace work that HWPL and IPYG have been doing with young people in Kenya, as well as their vision for future peace work.

Starting with a talk concert with Kenyan young people in 2018, HWPL and IPYG organized peace walks for the Declaration of World Peace with a total of 600 youth and community members three times between 2018 to 2023. More than 700 letters of support for the DPCW were collected through the 'Peace Letter Campaign'. However, as you all know, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this prevented us from all activities, and so IPYG started the Youth Empowerment Peace Class that is YEPC in Kenya.

IPYG proactively implemented Zoom online classes as part of its ICT capacity-building program to help young people access education, and established an educational platform called YEPC, which includes training on various topics such as parents, youth, religion, and career or character advancement and this was done to strengthen their capacity as global citizens. YEPC has produced graduates and thus the Youth Empowerment Peace Workshop that is YEPW in Kenya began.

This led me to join the IPYG in submitting a joint statement condemning the anti-government protests violence in Kenya in July this year and calling for a peaceful resolution including the IPYG. through dialogue. The UN Youth Association and 14 affiliated organizations together with IPYG made a call for peace, urging "all leaders and all interested parties to resolve the situation peacefully through meaningful dialogue" and supporting the efforts of political parties for a peaceful resolution.

Growing up with peace, these young Kenyans have become, have gone on rather to become even more active in peace activism since the pandemic. Scott, who is the Secretary General for Kenya Model United Nations and who had also participated in the YEPC program, invited the IPYG Chief Branch Manager in Kenya to speak at the Kenya Model U.N. conference in March earlier this year at the United Nations Office in Nairobi.

As a result of this event, the Model U.N. signed an MOU with the IPYG in May at the 10th anniversary of the Declaration of World Peace in Kenya, where over 200 members of the organization participated. We are still planning and carrying out many activities for peace work.

As UNYA Kenya we believe that for the future of Kenya and the young people who will lead the future, it is crucial to resolve the conflicts that we are facing peacefully and to instill a culture of peace in the current generation. Education is the foundation for building sustainable peace in a world plagued by conflict and division. Therefore, we must renew our commitment to an educational approach for sustainable peace. So, we want to take a two-pronged approach.

The first one is the spread of YEPW across the country, aimed at learning peace by doing. As UNYA Kenya we have a large number of young people in each region of Kenya. Collaborative peacebuilding is possible. In particular, based on the IPYG MOU signed by the Kenya Model U.N., we will build an active network of collaboration with the IPYG when implementing collaborative peace activities, such as youth leadership training conducted by the United Nations Youth Association of Kenya, which I am a member of, and regular invitations to SDG-related events. We will also implement the 'Peace Supporters' program in collaboration with the IPYG to train young people as supporters to become true peace leaders. We will also introduce the results of HWPL, IPYG, and YEPW's activities at a gathering of representatives from the county governments across the country even or rather every May so that YEPW's activities can serve as a model for all regions, all county governments in Kenya and engage the civil society. We will also work on networking at the national level to ensure that peace activities are supported by practical institutions and that we can work together.

Secondly, we will provide various opportunities for young people. In particular, to lay the groundwork for youth sovereignty to be realized, we will regularly give lectures on peace and leadership at schools that are members of UNYA and the Kenya Model United Nations. We will also work on the LP campaigns for youth to organize in their schools with the IPYG so that the DPCW can be introduced to the United Nations and give lectures on peace so that young people can constantly practice peace. In order for Kenya to move towards peace, we will have all youth organizations in Kenya join YEPW through the local governments and representatives from the 47 county governments, and also create an extended YEPW peace project.

As I conclude, let me remind us that war begins in the mind and as such, we need to create a paradigm shift by rewriting history through a New World Order that begins in our minds today here and now. Let us plant seeds of peace in our minds. Let us continue this dialogue. Let us continue to learn from one another and let us continue to strive together for a world where peace is not just a distant dream but a living reality. In closing, let me echo the sentiments of our director by quoting scripture from the Bible in the Book of Matthew Chapter 5 which says that blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God. And when I look at this podium here, I see children of God seated all around. Let us give peace a chance. We are one! Thank you.

