



Civilizations Exchange & Cooperation Foundation

Better Understanding for a Better World (BUBW)

INTRODUCTION

Despite a surge in social media, people still lack the face-to-face dialogue needed to foster understanding, respect, compassion and cooperation amongst the various nations and communities of our ever-so-intricate world. For this reason, BUBW Conferences conducted in the U.S. in Orlando, FL, San Diego, CA, Baltimore, MD, and Des Moines, Iowa, as well as BUBW International Conferences conducted regionally in Indonesia for Southeast Asia, Kyrgyzstan for Central Asia, and Uganda for East Africa, are needed more than ever before. In 2022, we are planning for our first in-person BUBW Conference in Des Moines, IA, as well as for our first multi-country BUBW International Conference in France, Belgium and Holland for Europe. We are delighted to share our BUBW vision and some exciting updates and additions to be incorporated soon.

The five-day in-person conferences, as well as our two and three-day virtual conferences focus on issues such as:

- Multi-Cultural Understanding & Competency
- Interfaith Experience
- Leadership Development
- Conflict Resolution
- Civic Engagement
- Diversity Training
- Countering & Preventing Radicalization and Violent Extremist Ideologies
- Youth Empowerment
- Societal Challenges

VISION

A world of multi-cultural / multi-faith understanding and cooperation

MISSION

To provide multi-cultural, youth-oriented leadership and interfaith programs for life transforming opportunities

GOALS

- Emphasize world citizenship and cultural competency development
- Focus on leadership development and being ambassadors of goodwill, reconciliation and justice
- Encourage civic engagement among program participants

OBJECTIVES

- Facilitate dialogue, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation between participants from diverse economic, social, religious, and cultural backgrounds
- Expose participants to the beauty of diverse cultural practices and faith traditions in a pluralistic world with emphasis on respect, common values and our shared humanity
- Discuss the dangers and solutions for discrimination, radicalism, ethnic nationalism and religious extremism, which have historically been recipes for war and conflict for many civilizations
- Introduce aspects of leadership including those central to entrepreneurship, innovation and social business
- Cultivate ties of friendship and encourage future leaders to foster and seek out a better world and better future for all

INTER-CULTURAL & INTER-RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING

Examining closely intercultural competence and how it is developed and measured is a vital component to be passed to the participants of the BUBWs. The interfaith segment of the conference is principally focused on the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, however participation of people from all faith traditions, as well as those who may not be active in any faith tradition are welcome. Combining the proper understanding of the proper combination of religious content and cultural content in this five-day conference, is what makes the BUBW unique.

BUBW AS A TRAINING MODUAL

Since 2019, the interfaith faculty at CECF developed a BUBW manual to use when training religious and community leaders of international seminaries and religious institutions.

KEY PARTICIPANTS

Since 2006, the majority of the BUBW participants have been international high school exchange students from placement organizations like AFS, CIEE, YFU, CCI, PAX, ASSE, World Heritage, YFU, World Link, AYUSA, FLAG, American Councils, AIFS, PIE, AYA, World Learning and others. These U.S. Department of State sponsored students represent the YES, FLEX, CBYX and other programs. The conference also welcomes American high school students and placement organization area representatives.

LINKS & TESTIMONIAL

Students benefit greatly from these experiences, where they learn that *“it is their duty to take steps to establish cooperative and peaceful environments and lead others to do the same”*, as one participant said. Students are exposed to cultural presentations by students representing other countries. They learn that we are all human beings with the same needs and desires. Here is a quote from one of our BUBW alumni:

“The most amazing part was that we became one big family, which shows that it’s not about the countries that are in conflict, or have been in the past, but rather, it’s about us; peace will come from individuals who step forward to change stereotypes, become friends and spread love worldwide regardless of race, religion and nationality.”

In 2013, World Link, an American placement organization, filmed our conference to use as an educational tool for their students and schools in Iowa and surrounding states. In return, they gave CECF this short video <https://vimeo.com/68963013>.

In July 2016, BUBW International-Kyrgyzstan was attended by over 100 young leaders from 16 countries. Read more about it on the U.S. Embassy in Bishkek’s website

<https://kg.usembassy.gov/better-understanding-better-world-promoting-tolerance-dialogue-partnership/>.

After each BUBW Conference, participants create their own videos and write articles describing their experiences during the conference and its impact. The Office of Youth Exchanges of the ECA at the U.S. Department of State includes these articles on their website. On August 31, 2017, this article was published

<http://www.yesprograms.org/stories/better-understanding-for-a-better-liberia>.

BUBW Alumni, Eldos from Kyrgyzstan, attended our 2017 BUBW-Baltimore as a FLEX student. Read about the empowerment he gained from the conference in an article published by the FLEX program

<https://www.pax.org/there-is-humanity-in-the-world>.