



Campusalam Project Overview

The Campusalam Project was started by the Lokahi Foundation. [Lokahi](#) is an independent charity devoted to [research and community projects](#) on faith, belief and culture and their impact on society. Our [staff](#) members come from a variety of cultural and professional backgrounds, which encompass the voluntary sector, local government, academic institutions and media.

Since 2007, [Campusalam](#) has been supporting UK university students of faith and university staff with resources, skills and advice on contributing to positive change on campus. The first phase of the project comprised three years of working with students, student societies and staff across 30 campuses to address unique challenges faced by Muslim students. We created an [online skills toolbox](#) of over 300 pages, supported innovative student-led events including public debates and [comedy shows](#) attended by hundreds of students, and delivered trainings on a student-led method for problem-solving called [FlashPODs](#) to 90 student leaders from 30 campuses.

NEED

Diversity: challenge or opportunity? UK university campuses are increasingly diverse in religious and cultural identity, with student societies representing all nine major world religions, various student groups within each religion, and cultural and interest-based societies that overlap with religious identities. This diversity is often overwhelming to university administration and student societies, characterised by inadequate procedures for consultation and underdeveloped structures to address grievances. Existing networks of cooperation within and between student societies and administration are often insufficient to withstand the pressure of external conflicts and campus crises of beliefs and values. As a result, minority communities that are marginalised in society are often in a similarly disempowered position in their campus community, with severe implications for future community relations outside campus boundaries.

Our needs assessment reveals that minority student leaders and staff, by strengthening a specific set of attributes, could more effectively participate in a harmonious campus community. Networks of cooperation should be customised to the needs of each campus, sensitive to crises that arise abruptly, and transferable as one generation of students rapidly changes to another.

PURPOSE

After thorough evaluation and consultation with campus partners, Campusalam is launching a new three-year phase of work. We aim to build stronger bridges between student societies and with university administration around issues of beliefs and values. We will achieve this aim by equipping 'resourceful' campus environments, a concept describing communities of mutual understanding, networks of trust, positive interaction and collaborative decision-making. A larger outcome of our work is lasting change in structures of decision-making and crisis management in local campus communities, and the incorporation of effective methodologies into the practice of national bodies.

WORK

We provide a core group of student leaders and staff on highly diverse campuses with a **comprehensive support package** and a **dynamic online resource** to manage conflicts of beliefs and values constructively. The support package is customised to the unique needs of each campus community based on thorough needs assessment. Elements include student society-led events, bespoke trainings, weekly support and monthly campus visits. The online resource consists of toolkits and examples of positive relations collected on our social networking portal, which we will disseminate to other campuses and to our national partners. Project learning will be incorporated into a parallel national research study on diversity, conflict and participation, which will influence local and national policy on community cohesion.

RATIONALE

We have piloted a methodology for working with campus partners that we will further expand and evaluate. Our methodology is based on three approaches:

- > Enhancing resourcefulness of student society representatives and staff enables positive interaction. Four key areas of resourcefulness required are: 1) knowledge of the other, 2) attitudes that foster positive interaction, 3) skills to enhance creative problem-solving, and 4) aspirations to become constructive change agents.
- > Building effective campus partnerships that are localised, relational and sustained, working from student societies outwards.
- > Developing online social movements from the bottom up, by linking communities of practice through social networking.

SCOPE

For maximum impact and an enriched research environment, Campusalam aims to partner with five campus communities in 2011-12: three in Greater London, one in the West Midlands and one in West Yorkshire. Based on evaluations on each campus, support will either be continued for another year or other campuses will be chosen according to needs assessment. We intend to offer sustained support to a total of 10 campuses over the next three years, providing multiplied impact by sharing resources with other campuses, national representative bodies and policy makers.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on Campusalam, please visit our website at Campusalam.org or contact:

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