



THE INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION AWARD

A partnership between
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations & BMW Group

“THE COEXIST INITIATIVE”, BASED IN KENYA, RECEIVES FOURTH PRIZE AT THE INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION AWARD CEREMONY

Baku, Azerbaijan – 27 April 2016 — The Coexist Initiative from Kenya received the 4th prize at this year’s Intercultural Innovation Award (IIA) Ceremony for their “Girls Education Promotion Program”.

"Any girl who is able to finish school is a reward to the world," says Wanjala Wafula, founder and CEO of the Coexist Initiative. "We are grateful that the IIA has acknowledged our efforts to involve men and boys in breaking down the social and cultural impediments to girls' education."



The organization has established itself as a pioneer in promoting gender transformation and advancing human rights, by encouraging men and boys to be champions for girls' education. Rather than narrowly defining or sidelining the role of men in gender equality, the Coexist Initiative engages men, boys and communities to address complex socio-cultural barriers such as customs of male dominance and the traditional roles of women.

The Intercultural Innovation Award, a partnership between UNAOC and the BMW Group, supports grassroots initiatives that promote intercultural dialogue and understanding, thereby contributing to peace, cultural diversity and more inclusive societies. Close to 1000 applications were received from more than 120 countries, from which ten awardees were selected across five continents. This underlines the award's importance and commitment to the worldwide promotion of intercultural diversity and understanding.

The award was presented at a dedicated ceremony on 26 April during the 7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), chaired by H.E. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, and Mr. Bill McAndrews, Vice President BMW Group Communications Strategy, Corporate and Market Communications.



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“Supporting grassroots organizations that are deeply committed to promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding lies at the core of UNAOC’s work,” said H.E. Al-Nasser. “That we are doing this in partnership with BMW Group is further evidence of the innovative approaches we pursue in a world where cultural identities and differences need not divide but unite us.”

“In the past five years, we have enjoyed outstanding results with our approach – the awardees, UNAOC and the BMW Group alike have all benefited from our shared commitment,” said Mr. McAndrews. “In our centenary year, the BMW Group is particularly emphasizing our focus on the future and innovative solutions to the challenges of tomorrow. It is with great pleasure that we, together with UNAOC, foster the development of initiatives that share our pioneering spirit.”

In addition to monetary support, the Coexist Initiative will receive mentoring from UNAOC and BMW Group to help their projects expand and replicate in other contexts. This includes the opportunity to participate in training activities and workshops, as well as to become part of the exclusive “Intercultural Leaders” network. Project support is customized based on the individual and specific needs of award recipients.

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