



SUCCESS STORY

National Campaign Leads to Dialogue

Road to Religious Tolerance



USAID, Malawi

Reverend Makonde and Zaitun Chimwala participate in the Ndife Amodzi program.

“The clergy have a responsibility of bringing peace for society looks upon them as sacred and impartial..”-Dr. Moses Muocha states as part of the Story Workshop initiative, The Sunday Times April 2006

With the introduction of multiparty democracy in Malawi in 1999, peaceful religious co-existence diminished. Tensions once dormant between Malawians of Christian and Muslim faiths began to emerge as new political alliances developed. The Christian majority which had long dominated politics in Malawi feared the emergence of the United Democratic Party, a Muslim affiliated party. These fears and religiously partisan politicians eventually led to waves of violence including the burning of mosques in the North of the country. Beginning in the summer of 2005, The Story Workshop, an indigenous organization, with support from the United States Agency for International Development, went to work combating intolerance and promoting the Ndife Amodzi program.

Ndife Amodzi which means “we are one in the same,” is employing multiple interventions to achieve peaceful dialogue. The Story Workshop is hailed for its fictionalized dramatization of real life and has used its skills and connections to media sources to build an inter-faith advocacy campaign complete with newspaper ads, flyers, radio spots, quiz shows and media awards. This massive campaign and outreach to members of the National Assembly, clergy, press and ordinary citizens has generated open religious discourse.

In the spring of 2006, more than a half-dozen articles appeared in nationwide newspapers in Malawi that examined topics as varied as education and conversion in faith-based schools to acceptance of financial contributions by church officials from noted politicians. All of these articles cited the role of The Story Workshop program in opening discussion and building key alliances between leaders of differing faiths. Citizens are also showing their enthusiasm for the project and have submitted over 1500 written comments to Ndife Amodzi radio programs this year.