

## **Ethnic Cohesion through Student Centered Learning Experience of the Social Harmony and Conflict Resolution Course Module at Wayamba University of Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

The young graduate may play a vital role in the reconciliation and post conflict recovery when the well rounded graduate is fully aware of vitality of local initiatives for reconciliation and has intercultural understanding. Efforts were made to incorporate learning opportunities in the curriculum to develop socially responsible and sensitive graduates. A non-credit compulsory course module which totally operates in student-centred mode was designed. The adoption of the module and learning activities were planned to enrich cross cultural understanding, non-technical skills of the undergraduates to work in multicultural environment for promoting ethnic cohesion.

Eleven projects were conducted with the participation of 78 students in the first round in 2011. Project outputs included short movie on ethnic cohesion, book release on multi-religious study, exploration of multi culturally important archaeological sites, up-liftmen programme for internally displaced school students in the north, workshops to university community on ethnic cohesion. There was a wider participation from the university community for all the programmes and final output were focused on local strategies for reconciliation. The participants' feedback revealed that the course module designed to challenge the students to use the best of their abilities and creativity, provide support to complete the task, keep relevance to the students' expectations and activities involved the students very energetically. Participants (93%) believe that their life skills were improved by completing the course unit and their understanding and mutual respects towards other communities have been widened through the participatory approach of the course module. Students (96.4%) were in the opinion that the programme enriched the participants' views on social responsibility and enhance teamwork skills.

**Keywords:** Conflict resolution, ethnic cohesion, social harmony, student centered learning