

What it is

We are living in a time when nothing short of global cooperation can successfully address the dire problems developing in the world today. Cooperation across vast differences begins with building a strong and resilient “relational infrastructure,” a relational system grounded in equal dignity and mutual respect. Education is the most effective vehicle for cultivating the crucial relational principles and practices of equal dignity. Therefore, our aim is to invite educators, academics, and practitioners from around the globe to share responsibility for leading the world toward greater cooperation by bringing dignity to learning, locally and global.

The World Dignity University (WDU) fosters education on a wide range of Human Dignity related matters and on Humiliation, being the violation of Human Dignity.

"If I've learned one thing covering world affairs, it's this: The single most underappreciated force in international relations is humiliation."
— Thomas Friedman, author of *"The World is Flat"*

The WDU is envisaged as a university in the original sense of the word: A community of scholars emphasizing education. It is not an accredited institution controlled by any government or corporation. It is an educational initiative run by a (yet) small group of activists from the NGO “Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies” (HumanDHS) to support the Common Good. Neither WDU nor HumanDHS have any financial interests.

Contact

For enquiries please send email to:

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More information is available at:

www.worlddignityuniversity.org

see also:

[www.humiliationstudies.org/
education/education.php](http://www.humiliationstudies.org/education/education.php)



World Dignity University

Bringing Dignity to Learning

Globally and Locally

Who we are

The WDU was initiated by members of the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies network. HumanDHS is a worldwide community of scholars and practitioners with interest in analyzing social and personal aspects of Human Dignity and its violation – Humiliation.

The project was initiated by HumanDHS founding president Evelin Lindner, HumanDHS Director Linda Hartling, plus other members of the network. Please refer to the HumanDHS website (www.humiliationstudies.org) for details about the initiators.

Among WDU founding members are:

- Prof. Inga Bostad, Vice-Rector Univ. of Oslo (Philosophy)
- Prof. Morton Deutsch, Columbia Univ., NY (Social Psychology, Founder of the Int. Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution)
- Arun Gandhi (Author and Non-Violence Educator)
- Prof. Francisco Gomes de Matos, Recife, Brazil (Peace Linguistics)
- His Excellence Shahid Kamal (Pakistan's Ambassador to Germany)
- Prof. Kamran Mofid, Dalhousie Univ., Canada (Economics)
- Prof. Reidar Ommundsen, Univ. of Oslo (Social Psychology)
- Ole Petter Ottensen, Rector of Univ. of Oslo (Medicine, Neuroscience)

Background

A World Dignity University must respect and draw from wisdom globally. Our vision is all about connecting across cultures, disciplines, and institutions, serving the important goal of creating “unity in diversity.” Technology allows us to easily build cyber-bridges across cultures, disciplines, and institutions, opening the door to new possibilities and innovative ideas.

As a learning community, HumanDHS efforts have revealed that equal dignity is not something one gives to others; it is a way of being in relationships. Thus, it needs to be cultivated through thoughtful actions that consistently communicate mutual respect and build mutual understanding. Moreover, equal dignity will not be achieved through individual change; it will be achieved through changing relationships – relationships at all levels, e.g., interpersonal, social, and international – and this changes everything we do to promote dignity!

Ultimately, we envision the WDU as a model of global academic collaboration with “equality in dignity” at the core of its curriculum! Unlike any other network, it will provide a platform for a world community of scholars united in their efforts to realize equal dignity through a global approach to excellence in scholarship. Most of all, it will offer an innovative and urgently needed new pathway to peace based on co-created learning that dignifies the lives of all people.

Status

The WDU is intended as an ongoing, ever-evolving collaborative project. We are currently in the start-up phase, elaborating the concept and inviting proposals for courses.

In June 2011, the initiative was presented to the public. A workshop with about 30 participants in Oslo plus additional online attendees was held with support from the University of Oslo.

Erik Solheim, Norway's Minister of the Environment and International Development greeted the participants via a pre-recorded video message.

Another warm message of support was given by Federico Mayor Zaragoza, former Secretary General of UNESCO, also via video.

Currently (as of fall 2011) the founding team collects proposals from members of the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies network, as well as from other scholars.

Apart from planning a curriculum and courses, the operational aspects of the World Dignity University are discussed and co-operations with further higher education institutions are envisaged.

As the WDU is globally distributed and operates without a fixed location, it relies heavily on the Internet for communication. The WDU website and a Moodle-based online learning system are currently being set up.