



R-GDI at Drysdale Student Center; University of Lynchburg



Row4Life; DMI Orphanage; Kabo, South Sudan; July 2022

Leading with Diversity

Row4Life Global Diversity Initiative (R-GDI)

<https://R-GDI.org>



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R-GDI Activities:

- Forum
- Round-table
- Discourse
- Fund raisers
- Newsletters
- Leadership workshops
- Team-based competitions
- Social events
- Professional networking
- Ambassadors, Governors, and dignitaries to speak and endorse (via video and in-person meetings)



Rejaf, South Sudan; 2022



Kabo, South Sudan; 2022

The Erg (rowing machine) Never Discriminates

Power of Diversity = Global Leadership



Lack of Global Diversity



Conflict can generally be traced to the lack of empathy concerning diversity, and a similar ignorance concerning the strength of diversity. These two issues are by far the world's most common causes of conflict.

- Future leaders are clearly pre-selected by virtue of demographics, affluence, education, and social status. This is not the problem. The problem is that these young leaders are not groomed to understand the power of diversity while still “young”.
- Unless and until we groom and nurture young leaders to understand the power of diversity, they will simply become older leaders,.... Who still fail to understand.
- This information gap within young (college level) leaders is essentially universal, with few exceptions.
- Root causes are the tendency to support the status quo
- There are really no impediments to nurturing and training these young leaders; We just have to do it!

Lack of Diversity in South Sudan and how Row4Life is seeking to fix it!

Row4Life seminar; DMA Orphanage; Kabo, South Sudan



- Goals: Bring peace to South Sudan by nurturing leaders that understand the power of diversity. This is key since cause of current civil war is ethnic based.
 1. Mitigate conflict amongst the youth of South Sudan by providing an outlet for competition other than crime and violence. Competitions can be between schools, towns, States, and countries.
 2. Discovering rowing prodigies amongst the youth of South Sudan who can be awarded athletic scholarships from universities. Upon graduation, these athletes are South Sudan's future leaders.
- Provide Concept-2 (world standard) erg Rowing machines (called and erg) provided to various locations throughout South Sudan. Students (boys and girls) between ages 12 and 16 will be introduced and trained. Three ergs are already in the country and being used.
- South Sudan is home to the tallest and strongest individuals in the world; Strength and height are required for world class rowers
 - Within ten years; enter and competitively race in world-level (Olympics, World Games, etc.) rowing competitions as the *South Sudan Rowing Team (men's team and women's team)*

Row4Life site; Straight Link Secondary School, Gudele (near Juba), South Sudan



R-GDI uses Row4Life as Foundation; R-GDI Mission is:

1. Promote global diversity among student leaders at university campuses across the world

- R-GDI seeks to use rowing machines, posters, and pictures as a proxy or symbol to promote discourse (roundtables, forums, speakers, debates, etc.) on issues concerning diversity and thereby promote global diversity in a way that unites people over their differences rather than divide them.

2. Nurture global leaders among student leaders who can lead with diversity in all their future endeavors

- R-GDI will encourage student leaders of university campuses to lead and stand for global diversity and to participate in R-GDI events as well as create their own events that promote global diversity.

3. Promote global citizenship through intellectual discourse and advocacy

- As nations are becoming increasingly blurred due to migration patterns and international trade it is important to promote a philosophy of global citizenship that embraces the commonality that we are all human regardless of nationality, race, ethnicity, or political alignment.

R-GDI Outline

- Students from across the U.S. and the world will be invited to R-GDI events.
- Each student's respective university will be provided, if desired (but not required):
 - Posters and other promotional materials; Free
 - Erg Concept2 Rowing machine; Free
- R-GDI is expected to grow to tens of thousands of student leaders among thousands of colleges, worldwide, through its student leaders attending R-GDI forums, roundtables, guest lectures, etc.
- Student Leaders will be found via: SGA members, scholarship recipients, word of mouth.
- R-GDI activities (forums, roundtables, etc.) conducted by student leaders at their own school is at their own choice. There is no fee, no requirement, and no obligation.



R-GDI Business Model Advantages

Advantages for R-GDI Business Model

- Zero costs to new R-GDI clubs; R-GDI will donate the rowing machine and posters promoting diversity if school desires and wants; Student leaders will do all management; Maintenance is zero.
- We are leading and training other leaders; These other leaders are hungry and wanting programs like this to enact change
- R-GDI realistically expects to have thousands of students from hundreds of universities by 12-2024.
- College Presidents, Ambassadors of Embassies, and others of very high visibility will accelerate adoption while enhancing credibility.



R-GDI at Drysdale Student Center; University of Lynchburg

How do we know that R-GDI Will Change the World?



R-GDI assumes that:

1. Vast majority of the world's leaders originate from a group of young leaders at various universities and colleges around the world, 20 years earlier in their careers. Prob. of Truth: 100%
2. Vast majority of leaders are neither diverse nor do they fully understand the power of diversity; Prob. Of Truth: 99%
3. Diversity-based disagreement is the most common source of conflict and strife, worldwide; Prob. Of Truth: 99%
4. The power of diversity is casually discussed, but not really given much credence in schools, work, and general life; Prob. Of Truth: 99%
5. Young leaders, if given a chance to become further involved in "leadership" will be aggressive in their pursuit; They want to lead!; Prob. Of truth: 100%
6. Providing young leaders, a chance to hold forums, seminars, speeches, debates, interaction, and discourse while in college is exactly what they are looking for; Prob. Of Truth: 100%
7. Exposing young leaders to the spotlight and audiences associated with diversity while in college will help shape their personalities and appreciation so that when older (as leaders) they will better appreciate the power of diversity; Prob. Of Truth: 50%
8. Providing a harmless vehicle (like a rowing machine or R-GDI promotional material) as an image of non-judgmental performance will serve as a tool for college leaders to promote discourse on global diversity. Prob. Of Truth: Very High

Current R-GDI Leaders' Universities

- University of Lynchburg
- Norfolk State University (NSU)
- University of New Dehli (India)
- U.S. Naval Academy
- Humboldt University (Germany)
- University of Illinois

R-GDI Partner Recruitment

- Formal Recruitment is starting now.
- 100-200 invitations will be sent for R-GDI Forum #2 (late December 2023). These leaders will come from
 - Bonner Leader Program
 - Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U)
 - U.S. Senate Pages
 - Model EU/UN
 - Introductions from Embassies and Ambassadors
 - College ROTC Programs
 - Personal networks



The Bonner Program

*Access to Education,
Opportunity to Serve.*



CGI U 2023 Class

R-GDI Partnerships with Foreign Embassies

- Embassies in Washington D.C. will be recruited to be R-GDI Embassy Partners
- Each embassy will receive one or more rowing machine(s) along with promotional material
- This will establish the embassy as having a political stance on global diversity and global leadership
- Each embassy will promote global diversity by contacting, introducing, and encouraging universities within their home country as R-GDI partners
- R-GDI activities will have speakers and interaction facilitated by the embassies
- This is global leadership and diplomacy at its finest as each embassy is helping to train young student leaders worldwide, all in the interest of promoting global diversity
- The Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan in Washington, D.C. has agreed to be the first R-GDI Embassy Partner

12-6-23



Left: Kyle at University of Juba Library with Dean of Libraries; location of R-GDI center at University of Juba



Right: Kyle with Hon. Gordon Buay; Deputy ambassador of South Sudan to the U.S. sealing the partnership between R-GDI and the embassy

R-GDI Summer 2023 Photos

- Both R-GDI and Row4Life expanded in the summer of 2023 with great accomplishments
 - Row4Life donated an additional four rowing machines to secondary schools in three new states in South Sudan; Total is now seven ergs in six states.
 - The picture below is of the Row4Life rowing machine being donated to a school in Malakal (see bottom right photo)
- R-GDI formed partnerships with both the University of Juba and Destiny University (see top right for photo with Destiny University faculty)





Row4Life Photos From 2023 (Inspirational Images for R-GDI)

Status & Plans

- R-GDI Partner Recruitment
 - Kyle Thaller is a Newman Civic Fellow, a Clinton Foundation Fellow, Former U.S. Senate Page, and a Bonner Leader (70 Universities). These groups will be targeted for recruitment.
 - UL Student Gov't Association (SGA) has agreed to help. SGA officers going to recruit among other college's SGA rosters.
- Revised Expansion Strategy:
 - Now focusing on having students participate in R-GDI forums first, and then asking/convincing them to accept a poster and/or erg.
 - Hundreds (or thousands) of prospective student leaders will be invited to events; It's fine if only 10% opt to show up.
 - Poster and erg donation is optional; If R-GDI students attending an R-GDI event desire a free poster or erg then that's even better. We will provide.
 - Strategy revision occurred because colleges were reluctant to accept/allow posters and athletic equipment due to liability concerns.
- R-GDI at University of Lynchburg;
 - Five ergs in two locations
 - Four posters on campus
- First R-GDI forum occurred at UL on December 3rd
 - Six colleges represented
 - Topic was "Providing Aid to Gaza Region; Yes or No?".
- Next R-GDI Forum is planned for late December with several hundred invitations. This should expand to thousands very quickly.
 - Monthly events; Thousands to be invited from our proprietary networks of likely student leaders
- Need to identify and recruit Vice Presidents as well as the next President since Kyle is graduating in December 2024; Perhaps Kyle will remain as advisor??



R-GDI Activity on 12-3-2023

- Inaugural Forum held via GoogleMeet on 12-3-2023
- Only 30 minutes since this was during final exams for many people.
- Six colleges represented.
- Overall, feedback was fantastic!
- Topic was “Giving Aid to Gaza Region; Yes or No?”
- Rules of decorum adopted from U.S. Senate
- Philosophical take-away: “Let’s all keep in mind that none of us live in the Gaza or Israel regions, and so we need to be sensitive to the feelings and opinions of those on the ground in both areas. Their opinions are much more important and relevant than ours.”

