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EDITORIAL

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MULTICULTURAL YOUTH

CHALLENGES OF A GENERATION

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This MONTH SPANDA IS TAKING ANOTHER STEP TOWARDS ITS GOAL: THE beginning of its own newsletter. Another tool with which Spanda can accomplish its goals of promoting interfaith dialogue, cultural and environmental conservation and preservation, and the appreciation between Eastern and Western communities for the realisation of their opportunities. We intend to give voice to those willing to be heard, cross visions and sensibilities, raise awareness, ask questions. Basically we want to open this space to discussion.

Jubilo and Musiké, Spanda's two main current projects both quest for the understanding of who we are and where we come from, focusing on accepting others, despite their differences. We do this by digging in our musical heritage and by learning about other points of view.

The theme of our first newsletter issue could not be more appropriate. It may be a cliché to say that the youth is the future but the youth always holds the future in their hands, and today they bear a heavier one: blurry, uncertain and full of seemingly unanswered questions. When drowning in information it is difficult to discern which is meaningful, and it is key to provide young people with the tools to swim.

Professor Dekker from the University of Leiden conducted a study that revealed that the majority of young Dutch people have negative attitudes towards Muslims. This is more so in those who have little contact with these minorities. Dr Abbas from the University of Birmingham asks Muslim youth to see Islam with their own eyes, return to individual interpretation and draw their own conclusions, regardless of what they are told

to believe in. Terrorism expert Anne Speckhard has talked to terrorists and their families. Above all she has listened what they had to say. She suggests a solution to misunderstanding between cultures: education. The key may lie here. The less people know about other cultures, the more negative they are against the 'other'. Could ignorance prevent harmonious co-existence?

Dialogue might be the only weapon today's youth will have. Our youngsters should not have to carry a multicultural world run by silence and lack of tolerance and respect. The diversity ought to be used in a positive way, by means of exchanging values, lessons and ideas. This is the multicultural youth Spanda strives for: young people who are open to others and are willing to listen, ponder their actions and find solutions in words.

We witness it happening in front of us everyday: people stopped at the door of a nightclub due to their colour, a job being refused due to their gender or because they belong to certain minority, rights being taken away due to people's religion. The events that took place in the streets of Paris more than a year ago were expected at any time in Europe. The youth is rebelling, it is lost and searches for answers. But are

we able to give them these, or help them search?

So, what challenges do we face? Which ways do we take? What advice can we give to our youth, and most importantly, what legacy can we leave them with? The time is running out. It is high time we stopped the bomb from ticking.



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