

Empowering Social Actions: Peace Through the Synergy of Football and Dialogue

China

St. Lawrence University

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China has surpassed the US and the UK to become the 2nd-largest host country for African students after France, which hosts just over 95,000 students.¹ As the majority of the African students racially identify as Black, issues related to Black and Chinese intergroup relationships have become noticeable. While 56 ethnic groups reside in China, Black people stand out in the homogenous society with 91.59% of the population being Han Chinese.² As such, Black international students often experience racial injustice and segregation in China and limit their experience with Chinese nationals.

To better understand Black and Chinese students' intergroup relationships in China, this academic year (2021-22), I have been conducting semi-structured interviews via Zoom with both Black international students and Chinese students attending universities in Qingdao, China. Qingdao has a population of 9 million and 16 universities. While most of the focus on anti-blackness in China has been in mega cities like Guangzhou, smaller cities like Qingdao have been left out of conversations. Qingdao is my hometown and where I can make the most impact. One interviewee reported that living in Qingdao as a Black person is not easy, and he would not recommend to other Black students to study there. He shared that some people stare at him as if he were an animal in the zoo. Some Chinese university students record Black international students walking around campus which causes Black students psychological distress and inflames intergroup tension. From the perspective of the Chinese students, they reported that since they have limited interaction with Black students, they did not know how to communicate with them.

Young people are the driving force to shape peaceful relationships, yet there are limited efforts to bridge connections between these two groups in universities. In partnership with local organizations, we aim to connect 20 university students in Qingdao (10 Chinese students, 10 Black International students) for intergroup dialogue, football (soccer) competition, and cultural immersion, with the ultimate goal of facilitating community building and inspiring social action. Participants will begin forming relationships through playing competitive football and taking part in adventurous cultural trips and activities, including a MasterChef event where participants will cook together. From there, they will join the dialogue facilitator to conduct a mindful discussion on their intergroup relationship aiming to explore actions to affect positive change in their communities. This summer project is the final phase in an ongoing initiative I have undertaken, as described in the "My Background" section.

Project Details: Prior to the summer, I will work with my St. Lawrence project mentor to become a trained Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) facilitator. Throughout the 6-week summer project, I will work with staff from the International Centers at various universities, founders of the local football club, and local businesses to bring together students attending universities in Qingdao.

Here is an introduction to the program partners:

1. **Great Football United** (GFU) was founded in early 2013 by Mr. Sandor Nagy to create an international football community in Qingdao. GFU aims to establish a FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) grassroots initiative in Qingdao. GFU believed the best way to attract new players to the sport is to give them access to football in their environment whatever their age, sex, physical condition, skin color, religion, or ethnic origin. The key concept of the program is to bring together as many people as possible through football and promote exchange, sharing human values, and an appreciate of the sport.³ We will work with Mr. Sandor to develop the football component of the program. GUL is a well-respected organization in the community that supports programs for everyone in the community. Whenever I visit GFU, their field is always packed with little kids, parents, university students, and expats. GFU is experienced in providing football training and competitions for adults. They will work with us to ensure a positive and inclusive experience for all the participants.

¹ Victoria Breeze, Nathan Moore, "Why African Students Are Choosing China," U.S. News, June 27, 2017, accessed June 29, 2017,

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2017-06-29/china-second-most-popular-country-for-african-students>.

² Marketus Presswood, "On Being Black in China," The Atlantic, July 17, 2013, accessed July 17, 2013,

<https://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/07/on-being-black-in-china/277878/>.

³ Great Football United, Waves, NAKASA LTD, 2021, accessed Jan 3, 2022. <http://www.greatfootballunited.com/>

2. **Artaus** is a British Appliance Company that has a global office in Qingdao, China. Founder Tom Li has a great interest in promoting multiculturalism and global collaboration in Qingdao. Artaus is happy to host MasterChef at their company, and we will work with their CEO to plan the MasterChef event which will accommodate staff from GFU, Artuas, and all the program participants.

Project Timeline

(February - May) Recruitment. By contacting international office liaisons at universities in Qingdao and GFU, I will develop connections with potential Chinese and Black International participants.

I will develop an application process to identify students who are passionate about challenging the status quo of the racially fragmented campus scene. Meanwhile, I will train as an IGD Facilitator.

(June) Finalize the Team and Student Group. I will carefully select participants with GFU, International Office liaisons, and my mentor based on their written application materials and interviews to finalize a list of 20 student participants. I will also work with GFU to select staff to organize football training and matches. In the meantime, I will finalize the list of cultural activities (e.g., learning histories of Chinese and Black intergroup relations, MasterChef, visiting local Chinese restaurants).

(June) Project Logistics We will work with Artaus to select a space for MasterChef. With GFU, we will create training and competition schedules and book our football pitch. With IGD professionals at St. Lawrence University, I will design a four-stage intergroup dialogue process:

- Stage 1: Forming and Building Relationships (2 sessions) e.g., explore goals and expectations, distinguish dialogue from debate, practice interactive communication.
- Stage 2: Exploring Differences and Commonalities of Experience (3 sessions) e.g., explore multiple social identities: cultural chest activity, identity-based discussion, discussion of Harro's cycle of socialization.
- Stage 3: Exploring and Discussing Hot Topics (3 sessions) e.g. gather conversation starters related to interracial relationships, separation, and self-segregation on campus.
- Stage 4: Action Planning and Alliance Building (2 sessions) e.g. discussion of Harro's cycle of liberation, develop action plans and skits to illustrate various ways of taking actions for inclusion and social justice.

(June - July) On-Site Project Implementation The project will take place on the GFU football pitch, at Artaus, and other cultural sites in Qingdao. Each day, students will come to the designated workshop space where, following the daily activity schedule, they will engage in intergroup dialogue, football meetings, and immersive cultural activities. As stated above, Stage 4 of the IGD process involves taking action. As such, \$2,000 from the grant will be made available to participants to actualize the plan they develop in this final stage. As the project wraps up, we will collect evaluations to identify areas for improvement. This summer program will serve as a pilot to help us structure IGD training for staff working at GFU and for Qingdao university student leaders. This will not only foster peace, but will also induce a trickle-out effect, impacting other areas of participants' lives as well.

My Background: In the summer of 2019, I connected with some Black international students studying in my home city, Qingdao. I was struck hearing their experiences tackling implicit and explicit racism. I can partially relate with Black international students living in a majority Han Chinese community because I am an Asian international student living in a white majority campus in upstate New York. The intersectionality of being from Qingdao and living in upstate New York allowed me to empathize with their experiences. With my faculty mentor Jessica Sierk, I designed a 3-stage project model. In summer 2020, I conducted a literature review which examined Chinese people's perspective on Black people and the racial interactions between these two groups chronologically since ancient times. In the current 2nd phase, I am applying knowledge from the literature review to conduct a case study in Qingdao (China). The final step to be realized through the Davis grant, seeks to transform knowledge and experience from the previous studies into an action project targeted at fostering peace between these two groups.

Expected Outcomes and Lasting Impact: My project will have a sustainable impact on building connections across racially fragmented communities in Qingdao universities. Through the synergy of football and intergroup dialogue, Chinese and Black international university students will get a chance to collaboratively design an inclusion project for social change. The project will culminate with an opportunity for students to lead an inclusion project in their universities with funds provided. Their experience and interaction will empower them to impact their home communities as ambassadors of communication and peace. In partnership with GFU and Artaus, we will solidify our intergroup dialogue training for football volunteers and current participants and look towards sustaining the program for future summers with new cohorts of students.

Name: Zhuoer Li
 Project Name: Empowering Social Actions: Peace Through the Synergy of Football and Dialogue
 School: St. Lawrence University

TOTAL FUNDS REMAINING:
 0

Total Additional Funding: 0

TOTAL EXPENDITURES:
 10000

Student Expenses					Project Expenses				
Travel (Including Airfare)	Lodging	Communications	Food (Biweekly)	Miscellaneous	Non-Student Travel and Lodging	Direct Equipment and Supplies	Marketing and Event Support	Staffing Costs	Miscellaneous
2600							1500	2000	1000
							1000		
							1000		
							900		
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
2600	0	0	0	0	0	0	4400	2000	1000

Total Student Expenses:
 2600

Total Project Expenses:
 7400