

## **Welcoming Joshua Konkankoh at the University of Coimbra, Portugal**

The Seminar on Practices of Peace, Humanitarianism and Development that is held as part of the Master's Degree on Peace, Security and Development Studies at the University of Coimbra, seeks to bring to the students a variety of voices who are working for peace, for humanitarian action and for international development cooperation. The purpose is to present to the students as many perspectives and professional experiences as possible, so that they may personally know the many paths that they can take when trying to implement an agenda for peace, for humanitarianism and for development.

In this context, it was very important and useful to welcome into the Seminar Joshua Konkankoh, founder of Better World Cameroon and of the Bafut Ecovillage, and member of the Global Ecovillage Network. Joshua Konkankoh's talk not only focused on the work done at Bafut Ecovillage, highlighting the positive role that ecovillages can play regarding peace work, community-building and youth empowerment, but it also had the central contribution of bringing to the students of the Seminar a non-Western, African voice highly committed to peace work and sustainable development (in a non-Western framework). For students of this Master's, who are learning about the international system and about peace and conflict dynamics around the world, it is extremely important to come into contact with people who do not come from the West.

This allows them to connect with different perspectives, experiences, ways of communication and worldviews. Hence, the talk given by Joshua Konkankoh allowed the students to engage for a moment in a culture-to-culture dialogue that is increasingly important in a globalized world where the challenges of peace work, humanitarian action, cooperation for development, community-building, grassroots activism, youth empowerment and more are all interconnected. For those who are on a path to work in these areas, it is now more necessary than ever to understand the cultural diversity that must permeate these processes, and to promote these encounters and this mutual learning, so that we can all work towards the same goals without perpetuating the dominant paradigms brought about by the colonialist and capitalist systems created by the West.