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NETWORK ON YOUTH AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP
Summer Universities 2023
"Young people, peace and climate change"

Concept Note

The Network on Youth and Global Citizenship is a partnership facilitated by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe that gathers youth-led organisations, international youth platforms and governmental institutions from different regions in the world. The Network was set up in 2011 as an informal platform of dialogue and multilateral cooperation at interregional level in the youth field.

Every year, **the Network promotes international youth events called "Universities".** In each "University" several youth-led and youth-oriented organisations have the possibility to run their own activities (trainings, seminars, board meetings…) with a dynamic and participatory approach which encourages networking, cooperation, and peer-to-peer education within a context of intercultural learning.

Every year **the Network on Youth and Global Citizenship proposes a theme** representing the thread that connects all the activities taking place in the framework of the Universities that same year. The plenary sessions and all the other common moments of the University (the "Joint Programme") explore the annual theme, connecting all partners' activities and engaging all the participants involved in them.

Towards **a neighbourhood of values and a global youth partnership for development**. The Universities are built around the overarching policy framework of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a transformative agenda and universal call for action that acknowledges the central role of youth to ensure global justice, human rights, sustainable development, and democratic participation. Youth is mentioned in ten areas of the agenda and over a third of the 169 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets. Within this framework, the Universities rely on the added value of the North-South Centre, as part of the Council of Europe, to share expertise and work on human rights, democracy, and rule of law issues of common concern that, in our interdependent societies, are not restricted to Europe.

A joint effort of the Council of Europe and the European Union with partners from other regions, In 2023, the Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship (MedUni) the University on Youth and Development (UYD), are organised in the framework of Global Europe: Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI-Global Europe) 2021-2027[1] relying on the financial support of two joint initiatives between the Council of Europe and the European Union:

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/global-europe

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- [Intercultural Learning Exchange through Global Education, Network and Dialogue (iLEGEND III)](#)
- [The programme "Protecting human rights, rule of law and democracy through shared standards in the Southern Mediterranean" (South Programme V)](#)

Young people for positive peace and climate action

The findings of subsequent assessment reports of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC) recognised that climate change has significant implications for global peace and security. The cascading effects of the climate emergency are escalating into the social and political spheres. Climate change acts as a risk multiplier in conflicts, exacerbating underlying vulnerabilities and compounding existing grievances and inequality between people, countries, and regions.

Following these findings, research on the nexus between climate change and peace have intensified. However, while few events have put the focus on how it negatively undermines peace[1], namely, violent conflict, migration, and war, less attention has been given to how this phenomenon impacts other forms of social conflict or crime[2]. The relationship between the positive dimension of peace and more local manifestations of environmental sustainability, remain grossly under-examined.

Yet, more and more people around the globe – especially those most at risk, including the young and the elderly – are asking for more accountability and even for the creation of an international court for the environment to address significant gaps in the current international environmental legal order and to have the possibility to address their authorities when lack of or insufficient action to tackle climate goals results in the violation of human rights and hinders quality of life. For the first time, in 2020, the European Court of Human Rights was presented with cases on these grounds: one brought by six Portuguese youths against Portugal and 32 other states, and another one by a coalition of Swiss senior women. This year, French government also appears before the Court for the same reasons.

Coined by Johan Galtung and the [Institute for Economics and Peace](#), positive peace refers to the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies based on eight factors: well-functioning government, sound business environment, acceptance of the rights of others, high levels of human capital, low levels of corruption, equitable distribution of resources, free flow of information, and good relations with neighbours.

The [2019 Global Peace Index](#) report concluded that countries with high levels of positive peace are better positioned to manage climate-induced shocks than those with lower levels. Positive peace is also correlated with economic development which, in turn, facilitates adaptation to climate

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[1] The [Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)](#) differentiates two conceptions of peace: Negative Peace, or actual peace, and Positive Peace. Negative Peace is understood as 'the absence of violence or fear of violence — an intuitive definition that many agree with, and one which enables us to measure peace more easily. Positive Peace is defined as the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. Positive Peace is also associated with many other social characteristics that are considered desirable, including better economic outcomes, measures of well-being, levels of inclusiveness and environmental performance.

[2] Ayyoob Sharii, Dahlia Simangan and Shinji Kaneko (2021) "Three decades of research on climate change and peace: a bibliometrics analysis" in Sustainability science 2021 v.16 no.4 pp. 1079-1095 available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344001970_Three_decades_of_research_on_climate_change_and_peace_a_bibliometrics_analysis Accessed on 12 April 2023.

variability. By coupling peacebuilding problem-solving methods with rigorous climate change research and resilience strategies, we can be better equipped with the tools needed to respond to the climate crisis.

Youth have been at the forefront of efforts to demand urgent action on sustaining peace and addressing climate change. As a matter of fact, the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) movement and the Youth and Climate Action movement emerged at similar times, and, at the local level, peacebuilders are often also climate activists and vice versa[2].

As revealed in the consultation run during the independent study "The Missing Peace: The Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security" (2018), young people's vision on peacebuilding and sustainable development revolves precisely around the notion of positive peace. It includes positive visions of free and democratic societies with environments conducive to development and dignity, which address social, political, and structural inequalities, including climate justice.

Bearing in mind the leading role of young people in both, the peace and security and the climate actions movements, the 2023 summer universities will address and put in value the intervention of young people in the nexus between peace and climate change by tapping into young's people potential to advance factors of positive peace in relation to the environment.

The 2023 theme is an opportunity to build on the work of the previous cycle of the summer universities that focused on SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and its intersection with the SDG 13, specifically, on how to Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

- What is/can be the role of young people to advance to the main factors that build positive peace in relation to the environment?
- What mechanisms can help raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in different countries, including focusing on youth and women?
- What can be done to deconstruct misperceptions of youth grounded in age and gender stereotypes that prevent a meaningful participation of young people in global governance fora addressing climate change matters?
- How can young people play a role in the fight against corruption and bribery as part of the action against climate change?
- How can interregional youth cooperation contribute to strengthening an equitable approach to the fight against climate change

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[2] Masooma Rahmaty and Jimena Leiva Roesch (2021) "Youth Participation in Global Governance for Sustaining Peace and Climate Action". Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep32754 Accessed on 12 April 2023.