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Budapest, 20 November 2025

PeaceLens: Rethinking Peace, Politics and Inclusion

***Report of the study session held by
International Union of Socialist Youth***

***in co-operation with the
European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe***



This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

***European Youth Centre Budapest
16-22 November 2025***

Executive summary

The Study Session “PeaceLens: Rethinking Peace, Politics and Inclusion”, held at the European Youth Center Budapest from the 16th to the 22nd of November 2025, brought together 23 participants from 15 Council of Europe member states to empower young political activists and youth leaders with the skills and knowledge necessary to promote ethical leadership, foster inclusive political dialogue, and navigate conflict in ways that contribute to democratic resilience, foster inclusion, and social transformation. It was organized by the International Union of Socialist Youth, and it responded to the urgent need to equip young political activists with practical skills and knowledge to navigate these challenges and contribute meaningfully to revitalising democracy.

The programme offered a theoretical base for the concepts of Peace, Ethical Leadership, Identity and Inclusion, combining it with a heavily practical approach that encourage the participants to think of realistic ways to promote ethical leadership and peace dialogue within their communities and organizations. Participants concluded that integrity, accountability, intersectional awareness and recognition of privilege are essential for leaders who wish to create safe, equitable environments. Practical tools such as the Reflective Journal and the Individual and Collaborative Action Plan templates helped anchor these ideas in personal practice. They worked on their reflective journals throughout the week and dedicated time to creating a document with their input, vision and values, as well as developing their own action plans and project to implement as follow-up activities.

Introduction

This report will showcase and elaborate on the PeaceLens Study Session as a whole, which took place between the 16th and the 22nd of November at the European Youth Centre Budapest. The report consists of executive summary, introduction, presentation of the aims and the objectives, profile of the target group and the organisation, main topics discussed, results, conclusions, main learning outcomes and program and finally follow up activities. The report additionally includes Programme Day by Day, Reflection journal template, Collaborative and Individual Action Plan template, Participants list and List of links to where we posted about the study session.

The International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY) is an umbrella organisation representing over 160 youth organisations worldwide. We actively engage in promoting human rights, peace, democracy, labour rights, and youth policy, and have worked extensively with the Council of Europe throughout the years to implement activities that respond to the needs these issues bring up within the youth sector. With the increasing polarisation of political landscapes and the growing challenges faced by young people in participating meaningfully and inclusively in democratic processes, the need for a Study Session like PeaceLens became ever more evident. The global political situation over the past few years has served as proof that there’s a lot of work to do within the human rights and democracy field, and that the fight for peaceful, just societies remain incomplete, including within Europe. Young activists and aspiring leaders are often confronted with systemic barriers, such as exclusionary political structures and discrimination, which lead to disengagement from democratic processes and erode trust in political institutions.

This study session responded to the urgent need to equip young political activists with practical skills and knowledge to navigate these challenges and contribute meaningfully to revitalising democracy. The session aligns with IUSY's long-term vision to empower youth leaders, foster inclusive political dialogue, and promote peace and social justice. It builds on our previous experience in conflict transformation, human rights education, and nonviolent engagement methods. IUSY has a strong track record in organising workshops and study sessions on nonviolent communication, critical thinking, and leadership development. These activities have successfully empowered young activists with the tools necessary to challenge discrimination and promote inclusive societies. Our extensive work in these areas has equipped us with the expertise and networks needed to effectively implement this study session.

Furthermore, this activity was of particular significance for IUSY as it served as the kickstart to the Peace Thematic Work, and an opportunity to revitalize it for the year 2026 with active, interested and engaged participants from our member organizations. The Presidium adopted a new annual program for 2024/2025, prioritising peace, with the Peace Thematic Network (PTN) playing a central role. This activity was conceptualised by the PTN to align with IUSY's strategic plan (2021-2026) and contributed directly to the 2025 work plan, as well as to the 2026 one. It focused on strengthening the PTN, giving it the necessary boost to realise its objectives on the ground. Currently, IUSY operates six key working groups: the Feminist Working Group, the Queer Working Group, the Student Working Group, the Pool of Trainers, the Environmental Network and the Peace Thematic Network (PTN). Strengthening these groups, particularly the PTN, is a core organisational goal and a key part of our work plan.

The purpose of this activity within IUSY's annual and long-term program, specifically for the PTN, was and is to advance our strategic goals of promoting pluralistic democracy, combating social exclusion, and fostering peaceful and inclusive societies. This study session is a crucial step in our ongoing efforts to empower young leaders to navigate polarised political landscapes, engage in conflict transformation, and advocate for the inclusion of marginalised groups. It reinforces our commitment to youth participation, peacebuilding, and fostering more democratic and resilient societies.

Aims and objectives

The aim of this study session is to empower young political activists and youth leaders with the skills and knowledge necessary to promote ethical leadership, foster inclusive political dialogue, and navigate conflict in ways that contribute to democratic resilience, foster inclusion, and social transformation.

Objectives:

1. Enhance ethical political engagement: Equip participants with the skills to foster ethical relationships through techniques like Active Listening and Nonviolent Communication (NVC).
2. Develop intersectional awareness: Foster understanding of how positionality, identity, and intersectionality shapes political experiences and vernacular politics, helping participants become more inclusive leaders.
3. Encourage critical and inclusive thinking for social change: Challenge participants to apply critical thinking to political and social issues, including analysing neoliberalism, and break down binary thinking by promoting "Queer Thinking" as a way of embracing difference, multiplicity, and flexibility in political engagement.
4. Foster transformative conflict resolution skills: Provide elective conflict work modules to explore practical tools for resolving political and social conflicts constructively.

5. Strengthen and enhance the Peace Thematic Network (PTN): Bolster the capacity and impact of IUSY's Peace Thematic Network by equipping participants with the skills to lead initiatives that promote peace, conflict transformation, and inclusive political dialogue within their local and global contexts.

Participant profile

The Study Session had a total of 23 participants, including team members, coming from 15 Council of Europe member states and one country outside of the Council of Europe which made for an extremely diverse and multicultural group with a wide range of lived experiences and perspectives on peace building and political participation. All participants were aged between 18 and 30 and were involved on some level with an IUSY member organization or a local NGO with a focus on youth work and participation. This allowed for a very comprehensive group of participants, with varying levels of engagement and knowledge regarding both peace building and conflict management and ethical leadership. Most of the participants had been politically active within their organizations and many participants came from conflict zones or adjacent areas which provided them with very relevant in-depth knowledge and experience with which to contribute to the program. Though the group has been diverse in its structure there was no need for interpretation, and the activity has been implemented in English.

Although we had originally planned on reaching a total of 30 participants including the organizing team, we unfortunately encountered several issues with cancellations, specifically late cancellations that made it difficult to find substitutes in due time. This meant that the participant number was a bit lower than expected.

The selection process was carried out by the preparatory team and considered the participants' applications, specifically their motivation, expertise and learning expectations. The regional and gender balance was an important factor, with a specific focus on trying to bring in at least one participant from outside the Council of Europe member states, so as to guarantee a more diverse and well-rounded group with non-Western perspectives, as well as age distribution and general background. The call for participants was widely shared on social media (Instagram and Facebook) as well as via our direct email channels of communication directly with our member organizations.

A key requirement for selection was also a commitment to follow-up activities, including a willingness to implement action projects or share the knowledge gained by developing and executing personal leadership plans within their organizations.

The organization

The International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY) is an umbrella organisation representing over 160 youth organisations worldwide. We actively engage in promoting human rights, peace, democracy, labour rights, and youth policy, as well as party-political participation and socialist solidarity through the dissemination of seminars, workshops, training, meetings, study visits, etc. IUSY has also had a long-standing cooperation with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, having organized multiple Study Sessions together before. The most recent one took place in 2023 under the name "Climate Crisis Gender Impact: Women & the Environment" at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg and allowed participants to directly work with the thematic of the Climate Crisis and the ways in which it affects Women and aggravates gender related issues.

The preparatory team consisted of four people from IUSY's side: two project managers and two trained free-lancing trainers. Both the project managers and the trainers have extensive hands-on experience and knowledge in the topics worked on throughout the study session, drawing from IUSY's focus on political participation, inclusion and democracy, as well as its non-formal education-based training approaches. The external educational advisor has been fully engaged in both online and onsite preparation, implementation and evaluation of the Study Session. The internal educational advisor has been included when needed, based on team demand, both online and onsite.

Topic and content

The main topics discussed were:

1. The concept of peace, its timeline and the notions of negative and positive peace
2. Conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation
3. Ethical leadership and democratic resilience
4. Identity, intersectionality and privilege, and the ways in which violence ties back to these issues in the context of peace building
5. Practical action: Personal Action Plans and Collaborative Action Plans for a more inclusive, comprehensive and impactful political leadership and participation.
6. Council of Europe Youth Department - history, values, principles, structures and activities, IUSY in the context of cooperation with the Youth Department
7. European Youth Foundation - updates and main structure and funding possibilities and relevant opportunities for project ideas of participants
8. The link between the session's theme and the Council of Europe.

The main theme of the study session was the development of skills to lead initiatives that promote peace, conflict transformation, and inclusive political dialogue. The activity was aligned with the Youth for Democracy Programme, in particular Priority 1 on revitalising pluralistic democracy and advancing young people's participation in political processes, Priority 3 on living together in peaceful and inclusive societies, and Priority 4 related to youth work.

IUSY has a long-term cooperation and strong connection with the work of the Council of Europe, and this study session represents an important milestone within that framework. This was clearly acknowledged and integrated into the programme of the activity. It was made explicit in the opening remarks by the Deputy Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB) who welcomed the participants and formally opened the activity and set the overall tone and helped participants to contextualise the study session within the partnership with the Youth Department.

The work of the Council of Europe was incorporated both through specific programme elements and in a transversal manner throughout the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the study session.

Results and conclusions

The session highlighted several interconnected conclusions across its thematic areas. Participants deepened their understanding of “peace”, distinguishing Johan Galtung’s concepts of “positive” and “negative peace” and recognising that sustainable peace requires structural justice, not merely the absence of conflict. Reviewing the “timeline of peacebuilding milestones” reinforced how global frameworks and institutions have shaped today’s approaches to “conflict prevention, management, resolution and transformation”.

In exploring “democratic resilience”, “ethical leadership” and “inclusive leadership”, the group concluded that integrity, accountability, intersectional awareness and recognition of privilege are essential for leaders who wish to create safe, equitable environments. Practical tools such as the Reflective Journal and the Individual and Collaborative Action Plan templates helped anchor these ideas in personal practice. The participants worked on their reflective journals throughout the week and dedicated time to creating a document with their input, vision and values, which they later shared in plenary. This is an outcome built throughout the Study Session which serves as a basis for the follow-up, in that it allowed for the collection and documentation of important information and insight to add to the Leadership Guide IUSY is now developing from the outcomes of this session, to be used as an educational toolkit in all our activities and shared with all our Member Organizations.

The development of Personal and Collaborative Action Plans showed a strong commitment to applying the learning in participants’ organisations, and it also helped building the foundation for the PeaceLens Study Session to become not just a one-off activity, but the starting point to not just the Peace Thematic Network but also IUSY’s solid work in Peace Building and Ethical Leadership, with our participants active in it both on the global and national/local level. These contributions will help strengthen both IUSY and its Member Organizations (MO) while also contributing to more inclusive, thoughtful and democratic future political leaders. Finally, the inputs from the Council of Europe Youth Department and the European Youth Foundation clarified available structures, values and funding opportunities, encouraging participants to link their project ideas to broader European youth policy objectives. Finally, and most crucially, raise the participants’ strong enthusiasm and desire to participate in the IUSY’s Peace thematic network.

As one of the objectives of the study session was to revitalise the Peace Thematic Network, it would bring added value for both the organisation and the Youth Department to align future developments in the fields of peace and inclusion. Although the initiative to revive the Peace Thematic Network originated from the IUSY Board, it was well received by the participants, who developed an action plan outlining how the network could operate in the future. The Youth Department could support the follow-up process and in-person meetings of the Peace Thematic Network, for example by integrating them into broader programmes or activities, or by supporting specific future initiatives developed by IUSY. These could include a future study session related to the Peace Thematic Network, as well as targeted activities or projects supported through the European Youth Foundation (EYF).

Additional support could be provided to facilitate the participation of individuals in relevant Youth Department activities. Furthermore, support could be offered, upon request, for participants’ needs related to printed (hard copy) publications.

Main Learning Outcomes for participants

The learning outcomes for the participants are in line with the original aim and objectives of the activity, with the Study Session having provided the group with a dense, very complete set of tools and input with which to continue their own work and activism. The main learning outcomes include:

- A broad and practical understanding of the concept of peace, its applications and the ways in which it affects the realities affecting their communities and organizations
- A more developed political and intersectional awareness: understanding how identity and intersectionality shape political experiences and vernacular politics, which in turns helps participants become more ethical and inclusive leaders within their own realities.
- What is ethical leadership, how it can be adopted and the positive impact it can have in shaping justice and democratic spaces, as well as its role in peacebuilding through structural justice and conflict resolution.
- The concept of conflict resolution and how this can be used as a tool to create safer, more democratic environments as a political leader focused on ethicality and inclusivity.
- The importance of collaboration in political work: making connections and finding shared obstacles, challenges and values can foster collaborative work that reaches further outside the reach of each individual and allows for the multiplication of the learnings, the tools and the capacity to work within a peaceful, just and safe political space.
- Guided reflection through the use of a Reflective Journal, with prompts, ideas and questions to help guide the participants in reflecting and better understanding their take-aways from each session day and their vision on what Ethical and Inclusive Leadership is.
- How to develop a personal action plan, with the support of a template guiding through the necessary steps, where to start and how to multiply it, as well as being aided by the Reflection Journal, which prompted their reflection towards the creation of an individual project.
- How to develop Collaborative Action Plans, through the exercise of exchanging with each other the details of their Personal Action Plans and finding where they cross and which elements they share that could allow for a merging and creation of a bigger, collaborative and collective project instead. This led to the creation of four main Collaborative Action Plans focusing on the Peace Thematic Network and its effect within IUSY and the cooperation between different IUSY Member Organizations from different regions (Europe, Mediterranean, American)

In the feedback submitted by the end of the session, participants pointed out practical knowledge on Leadership, an understanding of Peace and the importance of connections and international solidarity as the main takeaways from the activity, highlighting the importance in working together and finding common ground to reach further and achieve a more just and peaceful reality both globally and within local communities. When asked about the specific objectives of the project, the overwhelming majority stated they felt these were fully or mostly achieved, with their expectations having, for the most part, been met.

The participants also reported an increased knowledge and understanding on Intercultural Learning, Ethical Leadership, Conflict Management and Human Rights Education. Regarding their understanding of the Council of Europe, its role and its relevancy, the majority expressed

a solid increase as well. A desire for more case studies and practical tools was also widely expressed.

Participants acquired critical tools essential for advancing pluralistic democracy and fostering inclusive and ethical political engagement. These competencies will strengthen young people's meaningful participation in democratic processes and contribute to the revitalisation of democracy.

The combination of practical skills, critical reflection, and conflict transformation methods directly supports the advancement of young people's participation in political processes and promotes more peaceful and inclusive societies.

Programme – inputs and discussions

This study session focused thematically on the topics of peace building, ethical action, democratic resilience, ethical leadership, non-violent communication, identity and conflict management. It was developed with the goal of capacitating the participants and providing the context and the structure for them to apply the tools learned within their own communities and organizations, therefore with a strong focus on practical examples and the creation of practical tools. Additionally, it served as the foundation for the Peace Thematic Network, which is a network that integrates IUSY's annual work and grassroots activism-based action. The flow of the programme has been reviewed so that personal leadership plans are introduced later in the programme (following the inputs on intersectionality and inclusive leadership);

The programme of the session was originally set to four working days but later extended to five working days to better accommodate the needs of the programme and to guarantee enough time to properly achieve the aim and objectives of the activity.

The first two days of the program served as introductions to the main topics as well as laying the groundwork for the participants to get to know each other as well as the program, the centre and the Council of Europe. The participants were introduced to the programme and the aim and objectives of the study session, while also having a space to express their expectations, desires and fears for the upcoming week. The remaining sessions on both days focused on dynamic team-building methods while also introducing the themes the activity focused on for the rest of the week. As the Study Session focused on so many different important topics, with a very clear need of tying them together, the programme for the first days was split into sessions dedicated to introducing each main thematic and allowing the participants to have a more theoretical first contact with them, while also making sure to include practical examples and allow for discussion, exchange and reflection after each big block of information. These days were also where the participants were properly introduced to the Council of Europe, its structure and work and its main focus and priorities, which created the foundation on which the whole activity was built and provided the necessary context for the partnership between IUSY and the CoE. At the end of the first day, the participants were given a Reflective Journal with prompts, questions and ideas, and encouraged to fill it in gradually as the week progressed, a tool to be later used for feedback and to gather knowledge and information to build, after the Session, an Inclusive Leadership Guide.

The third day served as the middle point for the programme, and the morning sessions were dedicated to the topic of identity and leadership, which provided the necessary tie with all the other thematics to allow the participants to jump onto the practical side of the Study Session in the following days. With such heavy planning, and such an intense focus on practical tools and toolkit production, the final two days were dedicated entirely to looking into the

practical application of Ethical Leadership in the participants' realities as well as the work within their organization and IUSY as a whole - including their role and vision for the Peace Thematic Network (PTN) and the ways in which this group can and should exist in IUSY's broader landscape and reach. Besides drafting the structure and planning for the PTN, the participants also were given the space and resources to develop their own individual Action Plans and afterwards Collaborative Action Plans to be implemented within IUSY and the PTN in the following years as follow-up activities to the Study Session. For many participants, the collaborative sessions were major highlights of the programme, providing them with knowledge, tools and new connections to further engage politically - individually and within their organizations - in IUSY.

From the very beginning of the activity, participants were introduced to the work of the Council of Europe Youth Department. This helped to frame the activity and to build a clear understanding of the institution's core values, principles, and structures, as well as their relevance to the IUSY network.

Participants had the opportunity to become familiar with and make use of relevant activities and resources, which was highly appreciated. The human rights education approach was introduced through the implementation of activities from *Compass*, as well as through key publications of the Youth Department and the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership.

Some participants already had experience with projects supported by the European Youth Foundation, which they shared alongside the inputs provided by colleagues from Strasbourg. The development of personal and collaborative action plans demonstrated a strong commitment to applying the learning within participants' organisations. Moreover, inputs from the Council of Europe Youth Department and the European Youth Foundation clarified existing structures, values, and funding opportunities, encouraging participants to link their project ideas to broader European youth policy objectives.

Finally, and most importantly, the session generated strong enthusiasm and a clear desire among participants to actively engage in IUSY's Peace Thematic Network.

New ideas, conclusions, and projects emerging from the discussions and working groups included strengthened cooperation within the Peace Thematic Network, concrete follow-up actions at organisational level, and increased use of Council of Europe tools and programmes in future initiatives.

The last day also included a session dedicated to the work of the youth department in the Council of Europe, as well as the work of the European Youth Foundation, which complemented the programme really well as it provided the group with resources and knowledge on ways to engage with the CoE and find funding and support to pursue future projects and activities that can directly support and contribute to the Action Plans being developed as well as the general work of their organizations. Each day ended with reflection groups, where participants gathered in groups to reflect on the day's sessions, learnings and main take-aways and overall feelings and emotions - using many different non-formal education tools and games.

The Study session increased the capacity of young political leaders for ethical and inclusive leadership and in this way contributed to strengthening democratic participation of young people. The study session is linked to 3 priorities of the Youth for Democracy, mainly focusing on building peaceful and inclusive societies.

Notable sessions:

Session 1.2: Council of Europe, human rights, democracy, peace - building common understanding

This session was one of the first ones in the whole programme and introduced the participants to the Council of Europe and its work in a dynamic way. It began with a short get to know each other activity where participants shared with each other their experiences related to the main topics of the Study Session in the form of a bingo game - methodology adapted directly from Compass. Afterwards, four groups were formed and each group played against each other in a quiz with questions about the history, structure and work of the Council of Europe. The final thirty minutes of this session were dedicated to learning more about each other's personal, activist and political paths.



Session 2.1: Introduction to Democratic Resilience and Ethical Leadership

The second day kickstarted with the introduction to Resilience and Ethical Leadership, with a short warm-up session followed by a first activity discussing the concepts being introduced. For this, the participants were divided into five groups and invited to create their own definitions of ethical leadership and democratic resilience in a maximum of two sentences, writing them into a flipchart. Afterwards, all flipcharts were hung around the room and the whole group walked around and read each different flipchart. To follow, they gathered back into plenary and discussed the content of the flipcharts with the questions "What is common through all definitions?", "What is still missing perhaps?" and "What is controversial?" as guidance. Once done, the participants were asked to go back to their original smaller groups, this time to discuss the question "How does ethical leadership support democratic resilience and peace?", listing three aspects on another flipchart as a result of this exchange. To conclude, after looking around and sharing input in plenary, the participants were asked "Have you seen any surprising links?".

The final 15 minutes of the session shifted the discussion towards personal leadership styles, encouraging the participants to reflect on how they connect with the concept of ethical leadership in their own leadership style. They were then showed a visual projection of 8 different traits of ethical leadership and asked which ones they already practiced, which ones they would like to start practicing and which ones did not resonate with them at all and why. These answers were then shared within the smaller groups they worked with earlier.

Session 4.1. and 4.2.: Ethical Leadership in Action

On the fourth day, the group started working with a more practical approach to Ethical Leadership, to pave the way for the later practical sessions where the participants worked on their own personal and collaborative plans. The bulk of the session was spent playing a simulation role-play exercise called "[A Mosque in Sleepyville](#)", which explored a "dispute over the building of a new mosque in a traditionally Christian area through the simulation of a town council meeting". In this exercise, all participants are citizens of Sleepyville and all are troubled by the problem of whether a new mosque should be built on a piece of derelict council

land. They were given different roles and asked to discuss in smaller groups (depending on the roles) and later in the main "Council Meeting". At the end of this meeting, a vote was held regarding whether to build the Mosque. After the exercise finished, the participants joined in plenary for a debrief where they were asked a set of questions:

- Were you surprised by the result of the vote, and did it reflect the position of the person you were playing?
- How much influence do you think you (in your role) had on the result?
- Did interaction with other people or groups make you alter your approach or your attitude towards the problem?
- How easy was it to identify with your role? Why or why not?
- Do you think that this situation could arise in real life? Can you think of any similar cases?
- How would you react if this case arose in your town / place of residence? Did the activity alter your attitude at all?
- What do you understand by the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion?
- Do you know of any cases in history (or today) when this right has been denied?
- Why do you think that religious freedom is a fundamental human right?
- To what extent do you think this right is observed in your community?



Session 4.3.: Strengthening the Peace Thematic Network (PTN) and creating the skeleton for the Inclusive/Ethical Leadership Guide

The first afternoon session of the fourth day invited the group to reflect and discuss the Peace Thematic Network and what they wished for it to become. After a short introduction on what the Peace Thematic Network (PTN) is, its intended goal and the activity it had thus far, the participants were split into smaller groups and presented with a set of questions to guide them in thinking and drafting their ideal PTN:

- What PTN should be about? How should the PTN reflect IUSY's mission, political identity, and priorities?
- What themes or issues should PTN focus on in the next 2-5 years?
- How should the PTN work? (what principles should guide?, how can we ensure continuity, collective ownership, and accountability?)
- How do we ensure the PTN's activities respond to real needs across regions within IUSY?

The results were shared amongst each other and the group was then encouraged to reach a consensus and draft a finalized, collective plan for the Network to be later brought into IUSY and applied in the future.

Session 5.1.: EYF and Youth Department plans/activities related to peace and inclusion

The final day kicked off with a first session dedicated to the European Youth Foundation, with a virtual presentation from one of EYF's Project Officers joining virtually. The participants had a chance to learn more about all the activities funded and supported by the EYF and how they can take advantage of them to promote the work of their own organizations or expand IUSY's work in the topics discussed even further.

Session 5.2., 5.2. and 5.3.: Personal Leadership Development Plans and Collaborative Action Plans

The final three working sessions of the PeaceLens study session were dedicated exclusively to creating a space for the participants to start developing their Action Plans. Picking up on the final session of the previous day, the participants were given 30 minutes to reflect on the last question of their Reflective Journals and handed in a template to draft a Personal Leadership Plan they could see themselves implementing within their organization/community or within IUSY. After they were done, they were brought into a more dynamic session where they created a 'Dating Profile' for their personal plans, showcasing focus, goals, and visual identity. They then walked around to find their project 'matches' with whom to create a Collaborative Action Plan. From this exercise, the group created four collaborative action plans:



From this exercise, the group created four collaborative action plans:

- a project focusing on international education for youth, aiming to bring together organizations from around the world and solid networks with branches of action and wide regional reach to promote peace building, youth participation and economic development.
- a project aiming to expand and grow the Peace Thematic Network within IUSY, promoting more activities and planning the creation of a Peace Thematic Summit to gather MOs and involved activists and offer training and tools to multiply the knowledge throughout the organizations
- a global network for political activists that promotes educational activities and the usage of practical methods to practice inclusiveness, empower youth and fight their alienation with the political process
- a project promoting connections within the Peace Thematic Network, looking to reach and gather the active MOs within IUSY through already its main bodies (like the IUSY Congress) to promote peace activism directly from within IUSY's set structures.

Follow-up activities

The collaborative action plans, as well as the newly drafted structure and plan for the PTN, will be taken as the layout for the immediate follow-up activities stemming directly from the PeaceLens Study Session. As the participants took the time to develop fleshed out plans for future projects, the goal is for IUSY to provide the resources and structure for these projects to integrate our future activity plans and to give the PTN a kick-start. Therefore, IUSY intends to promote online meetings with the PTN (to which the PeaceLens participants are directly invited to and encouraged to engage with and dynamize) and to bring to life the specific action plans handed to us by the participants on the last day of the Study Session - this means that in 2026 and 2027 we aim to implement multiple meetings - online and in person - to multiply the knowledge and tools developed during the study session in Budapest, November 2025. The participants also showed interest in applying, like PTN, to follow up study sessions with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe to continue the educational work we started with PeaceLens.

Appendices

Draft Programme

Sunday, 16 November 2025

Arrival of participants
19:00 Dinner
21:00 Welcome evening

Monday, 17 November 2025

09:30 Opening with Introduction to Study Session,
Intro of aims & objectives of the Study Session / Expectations & programme
11:00 Break
11:30 Council of Europe, human rights, democracy, peace - building common
understanding
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Building Positive Peace - From Theory to Ethical Action
16:00 Break
16:30 Building Positive Peace - From Theory to Ethical Action
17:30-18:00 Reflection group
19:00 Dinner
20:00 Cultural evening

Tuesday, 18 November 2025

09:30 Introduction to Democratic Resilience and Ethical Leadership
11:00 Break
11:30 Non-violent communication and political dialogue
13:00 Lunch break
14:30 Conflict - and how we deal with it
16:00 Break
16:30 Conflict in the world - case studies
17:30-18:00 Reflection
19:00 Dinner
21:00 Free evening

Wednesday, 19 November 2025

09:30 Identity and Leadership - Challenges, Opportunities, and Privileges
11:00 Break
11:30 Identity and Leadership - Challenges, Opportunities, and Privileges
13:00 Lunch break
Free Afternoon and Dinner in the city

Thursday, 20 November 2025

09:30 Ethical Leadership in Action
11:00 Break
11:30 Ethical Leadership in Action
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Strengthening the Peace Thematic Network (PTN) and creating the skeleton for the Inclusive/ethical Leadership Guide
16:00 Break
16:30 Practical Session working on inputs for the Guide: Applying Inclusive Leadership Practices in Political Activism
17:30-18:00 Reflection
19:00 Dinner
20:00 NGO Fair

Friday, 21 November 2025

09:30 EYF and Youth Department plans/activities related to peace and inclusion
10:15 Group Work: Developing Personal Leadership Development Plans
11:00 Break
11:30 Peer Feedback Session on Leadership Plans
Group Work: Developing Collaborative Action Plans
13:00 Lunch
14:30 Group Presentations: Collaborative Action Plans and Feedback
16:00 Break
16:30-18:00 Evaluation and goodbye
19:00 Dinner

Saturday 22 November 2025

Departure of participants

List of Participants

Participants

Albania / Albanie

Glindxhet Madhi

Armenia / Armenie

Anahit Babkenyan

Austria / Autriche

Julia Kosciuk

Bulgaria / Bulgarie

Stefani Valeva

Chile

Mónica Reinoso

Georgia / Georgie

Natia Jaliashvili

Germany / Allemagne

Kiki Lemmens

Ana Manvelishvili

Leni Ann Villalon Stoupa

Finja Lauer

Tekle Jgarkava

Greece / Grece

Ioannis Afxentiou

Italy / Italie

Paolo Trabucco

Portugal / Portugal

Sílvia Nemchuk Schulzhyk

Sweden / Suede

Walid El-Ali
Mira Hallenberg
Lars Nicolas Larén Hillerström

Ukraine / Ukraine

Oleksandr Bulin

United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni

Pól Mac Fhirléighinn
Waleed Hassan

Preparatory team

Salome Adamia, Judit Landtai

Course director

Carolina Alves

External Educational advisor

Vojislava Tomic

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Supervising EYC Educational Advisor

Nelli Gishyan

EYC Secretarial assistant following the session

Peter Zelenka

European Youth Foundation

Vasiliki Tsaklidou



Peace Lens

RETHINKING PEACE,
POLITICS AND INCLUSION

17-21 NOVEMBER,
2025

Budapest,
Hungary

THIS STUDY SESSION IS ORGANISED IN COOPERATION WITH THE
YOUTH DEPARTMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE





Reflective Journal

This reflective journal belongs to:



REFLECTIONS ABOUT

Foundations of Democratic Leadership and Ethics



- *What does democratic leadership mean to me?*

- *What values guide my leadership decisions and interactions?*

- *How have I seen leadership exercised inclusively or exclusively in my community or organization?*

- *How do different identities (e.g., race, gender, sexuality) affect who is heard or included in leadership decisions?*



- *Identify one value or practice you want to strengthen in your leadership this week.*

Action!

REFLECTIONS ABOUT

Ethical Engagement and Critical Thinking



- *What ethical challenges have I faced or observed in leadership or teamwork?*

- *How did values influence the decisions made?*

- *What assumptions am I making about leadership or authority that might need questioning?*

- *How do I analyze multiple perspectives before acting in situations of conflict or ethical dilemmas?*



- *Note one strategy to practice ethical decision-making more consciously in my future leadership roles.*

Action!

REFLECTIONS ABOUT

Conflict Resolution and Inclusive Practices



- *How do I currently respond to conflict?*

- *What strategies learned today could make my approach more constructive and inclusive?*

- *How can I create a safe environment for all voices to be heard, especially those from marginalized groups?*

- *What barriers to inclusion exist in my team or community, and how could I address them?*



- *Commit to one inclusive practice to implement in group decision-making.*

Action!

REFLECTIONS ABOUT

Intersectional and Queer-Informed Leadership



- *How can non-normative perspectives challenge traditional leadership assumptions?*

- *How do intersecting identities shape leadership opportunities and barriers?*

- *How can I actively support marginalized voices and perspectives in my leadership practice?*



- *Commit to one inclusive practice to implement in group decision-making.*

Action!

REFLECTIONS ABOUT

Learning and planning



- *How has my understanding of democratic leadership, ethics, conflict resolution, inclusion, and Queer Thinking evolved during this session?*

- *Which strategies, approaches, or insights will I adopt in my leadership practice going forward?*

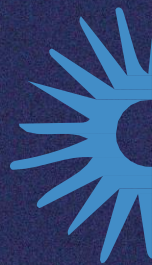
- *How will I continue to integrate critical thinking and intersectional perspectives in political activism?*

- *What is one personal commitment I will make to foster inclusive leadership in my community or organization?*



- *Create a personal leadership development plan based on the reflection on the past days. 2–4 specific, measurable steps to practice inclusive leadership.*

Action!





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Collaborative Action Plan

STEP BY STEP:

- Leadership Vision (Where Do We Want to Be) -> Vision statement

- Development goals (*In What Ways Can Our Collaboration Grow*)



1. Choose 2–4 specific, measurable goals to guide your growth

Goal 1:

Goal 2:

Goal 3:

Goal 4:

2. Area of Focus (*Intersectional awareness, queer thinking, peace approach, ethical leadership etc.*)

3. Action steps

4. Timeline



5. *Success Indicators/how to measure?*

6. *Resources and support (what I need to achieve my vision)*