



7th Global ECPD Youth Forum

YOUTH POWER FOR THE COMMON FUTURE

YOUTH MOBILIZATION TO REDRESS (THE) PRESENT WORLD TRENDS

(Belgrade City Hall, 26 - 27 October 2019)

REPORT

The 7th Global ECPD Youth Forum assembled 86 participants from 30 countries at the City Hall in Belgrade, Serbia, on 26-27 October 2019 for a rich exchange on issues of particular concern to youth. The theme of “Youth Power for the Common Future: Youth Mobilization to Redress Present World Trends” used the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework for finding solutions to unsustainable world trends and existential risks like the climate crisis. After a day and a half of exchanges and intense discussions, the participants left with a new motivation to work positively for the fundamental transformation in society called for in the UN Agenda 2030 and required to respond to the pressing global risks threatening their future.

INTRODUCTORY SPEECHES

Prof. Dr. Federico Mayor, President of the ECPD Council (video link). In his opening video presentation, Federico Mayor described the continuing need for peace after the first and second World Wars. President Roosevelt hoped for no more war based on supremacy, guided by human rights. Today billions are spent on arms while children are dying. The UN Charter begins “We the peoples...” and was intended to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Now that technology has given us knowledge and a voice, silence is not allowed. We must say no to those starting a new arms race. There was a movement of hope in 2015 with the adoption of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The youth know that there is no Planet B and have launched a great mobilization, with no discrimination between men and women.

Prof. Dr. Francisco Rojas, Rector of University for Peace est. by the United Nations. The Rector of the University for Peace, Francisco Rojas, referred to SDG 16 and said that peace was necessary to express any rights. There was war in the Balkans 20 years ago. Now you can create a new country, a new Europe, a new world. Humanity is failing to protect this tiny planet in space, threatened by climate change and loss of biodiversity. There is a growing threat of nuclear war and other wars, and militarization of the migration conflict. The 2019 Global Peace Index lists the most and least peaceful countries. Interstate conflict is down, but internal conflict is increasing. The Middle East is most threatening, giving rise to terrorism and more crises. The principal causes are poverty and inequity; extreme poverty has reduced but there are still numerous poor. Corruption is a new threat in all parts of the world, affecting the public sector, politicians and even religious leaders. Homicides are up in many cities like Los Angeles and across Latin America, especially Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela. Global organized crime is driven by drugs, human trafficking and environmental crime. Prevention is most important, as lack of prevention increases conflict. We need new paradigms for rule of law, based on knowledge and going to the roots of these problems.

Prof. Dr. Erhard Busek, Vice-Chancellor of Austria a.d., President of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe. Drawing on his long experience, as he was born during World War II in a city that was bombed, Erhard Busek told the youth: you are inheriting new problems. Will there ever be peace? We are at a critical point, with new kinds of wars including cyberwars, but you have the capacity to handle it. What does sustainability really mean, and how to reach it? The next generation will ask you if you achieved it, so you must take responsibility. We are closer to solutions on food and meeting basic needs. The challenges are coming with globalization, as depending on each other is not so easy. There are more refugees than after World War II with no solutions. We have new instruments of communications, but do we use them for democracy or for hate speech? You are challenged by interdependence, as democracy is crumbling, with only 20 real democracies left. The Security



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Council is paralyzed with no common solutions, and everyone looking out for themselves. We need common solutions, so you should raise your voices and contribute to creating solutions. Talk about the real problems and real results. Develop change models and new forms of cooperation. Gorbachev talked about the common house of Europe. Today the world is one house, and you should look forward to the future.

Prof. Dr. Tauno Kekäle, Co-Organizer, Rector, VAMK University, Finland, ECPD International Center for Integrative Medicine. The co-organizer of the Youth Forum, **Tauno Kekäle**, referred briefly to the importance of values, trust, networking and communications, building new models of prosperity.

Prof. Dr. Arthur Lyon Dahl, Chair of the 7th Global ECPD Youth Forum. The chair of the Youth Forum, **Arthur Dahl**, emphasized the importance of unity in diversity as a foundational value, quoting from the international governing body of the Bahá'í Faith:

“Consider how radically different... a fragmented conception of human identity is from the one that follows from a recognition of the oneness of humanity. In this perspective, the diversity that characterizes the human family, far from contradicting its oneness, endows it with richness. Unity... contains the essential concept of diversity, distinguishing it from uniformity. It is through love for all people, and by subordinating lesser loyalties to the best interests of humankind, that the unity of the world can be realized and the infinite expressions of human diversity find their highest fulfilment.” He concluded that “the pathway to sustainability will be one of empowerment, collaboration and continual processes of questioning, learning and action in all regions of the world.... As the sweeping tides of consumerism, unfettered consumption, extreme poverty and marginalization recede, they will reveal the human capacities for justice, reciprocity and happiness.”

FIRST SESSION

The first session was to help the youth get inspired by the experience and knowledge of several speakers. It asked what world youth wanted to build? The Sustainable Development Goals provide an overarching framework, with a strategic goal to leave no one behind. But there is often no discussion of fundamental values and motivation. The ECPD Conference yesterday often reflected pessimism about the future, as the present generation has largely failed for lack of values, and cannot give advice. You are the last hope in the growing culture of scepticism and greed. You need to mobilize for the SDGs, as you are the only ones who can say where we are going. The example of putting men on the moon showed what could be done with concentrated effort. You need creativity as you look for the adjacent possible beyond the usual.

PAPER PRESENTATIONS

The remainder of the first day was devoted to presentations mostly by young people on the variety of topics of special interest to youth and largely moderated by youth.

For the **economy** (SDGs 7,8,9,12,16,17), **Daily Atieno Omondi**, (Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste (IJGD), Berlin, Germany) talked about the challenge of being qualified and unemployable, which can happen if you are not planning for what is coming ahead. She advised to choose role models you can relate to, create networks and build experience, recognizing that you need to start at the bottom and work your way to the top. This requires a strong mindset, thinking positively, acknowledging that failing is normal, but you should never stop trying. **Aleksandra Manasijević** and **Aleksandar Božović** (Magic Lamp Association Vergara) related acting, the economy and war, with particular reference to the role of theatre and the film industry, which needs greater thematic freedom. War builds budget deficits and a war economy with resources devoted to arms, as in the Third Reich, the Yugoslav wars and Bosniacs and Serbs.

For the **environment** (SDGs 6,7,12,13,14,15), **Divya Sree Muppichetty**, (International Relations, Social Entrepreneur, CEO of MEDICONEED, India) described the advantages of green schools and ecological schools where students can learn the advantages of farming and being close to nature. **Venneisha Myers** (Student Union Economics Faculty (SUEF), University of Belgrade, Serbia), gave an example of the impact of climate change in





the Caribbean and the position of the youth in finding solutions. She described hurricane impacts in Jamaica destroying agriculture, and a young entrepreneur who developed eco-friendly farming using hydroponics to allow higher production in a small space, preserving soil. **Merle Lefkoff**, (Founder and Executive Director of Center for Emergent Diplomacy, Santa Fe, USA, and one of the few non-youth) warned about the vulnerability of our complex civilization, with climate change and species extinctions bringing such rapid change that we cannot keep living as we are now. Imagine if there is no electricity because there is not enough, so no Internet, no water. We must learn to grow and store food, working with indigenous elders who still know how to survive with little. It might in fact be a much better life as a small-scale farmer. **Dana Rodriguez** (Master student, Politics and Public Administration, University of Konstanz, Germany) then led a discussion on a Green Economy. To adapt to climate change with economic development, farming will need to become more important in daily life. We need to incorporate the economy into nature, with more rural connectivity, and also connecting with bigger markets.

A variety of papers touched on the **social dimension** of sustainability (SDGs 1,2,3,4,5,7,10,11,12,16). **Prof. Mila Goldener Vukov**, (The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, Australia) presented change as an opportunity. We all need to change, and with the help of positive psychology this should become our reality, building integrity in our family and at home. **Dragana Koštica**, (MA Cultural Policy & Management, Editor in Chief, *Still in Belgrade* Magazine, Serbia) considered squatting, occupying unoccupied land or buildings, as expressing the right to the city. It can be driven by deprivation, as alternative housing, for entrepreneurial reasons or as a political statement. A UK Urban Perspective was provided by **Danny Briottet** (Music Producer & Broadcaster, London, UK) who shared details on violence in London due to budget cuts in police and social services. **Ana Krmar**, (PhD Candidate, Research Fellow ECPD UN, Belgrade, Serbia), raised the importance of integrity and perseverance of young people as values to battle the superficiality reinforced by current trends, showing how values and knowledge are interrelated.

Simona Aleksovska (Consultant, EVROSIMOVSKI Consulting, Skopje, North Macedonia) and **Vladimir Petkovski** (Assistant Professor in Institute Economics, Skopje, North Macedonia) described the psychological and social effects of mass media marketing on young people. In a world where 2.5 billion people struggle to survive on less than \$1.50 per day, while 29 people have the same wealth as the lower half of humanity, the mass media give no priority to the malfunctions of society. Everyone should try for modernity, achievement and success, with growth as the supreme value. Social feedback aims to create a feeling of belonging. Happiness shared on line is contagious and shows what we should try for. The result is a reality gap, between objective, subjective and inter-subjective realities. **Milena Peralović**, (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Serbia) discussed localization of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals by reforming the academic community. **Hannah Wahler** (BA student Social Sciences with a focus on intercultural relations, University of Applied Sciences Fulda, Germany) provided a picture of Serbian youth and the 2030 Agenda with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in network. Serbia has a national program for the SDGs, but it is mostly talk and little action (for example in recycling rubbish). Serbian youth have power that should be implemented, but they lack trust in the UN and also in the SDGs. There is a need for a youth strategy for the SDGs. Nature's Common Third Model was presented by **Melina Zia** (School of Philosophy and Education, Thessaloniki, Greece). The garden of inclusion was created to encourage interaction between locals and refugees. The NGO Athirma provides motivation and cognitive support for negotiated identities in which everyone finds their place.

Nicolas Maclean (CMG, Chief Executive, Federal Trust for Education and Science, UK) explored the key role of youth in the maelstrom of British politics. Scotland gave youth the vote at age 16, but this was refused in England by Brexiters as it would have reversed the result of the referendum. Young people were shocked and traumatized by the vote to leave the EU. The parties for Brexit were fined for fraudulent campaigning, and they have accused remainers of projecting fear. On 19 October over 1 million marched in London, and young people are joining anti-Brexit parties in preparation for the election on 12 December, where they may swing a marginal difference. **Marco Boccaletti** (BA student of Russian and Spanish Philology, University of Verona, Italy) compared the importance of



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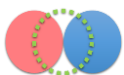
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Green parties in Serbia and Italy. The Green Party is low in Italy with no representation in parliament. In Serbia, there is low awareness of the Green Party as people who hug trees. Priority is given to other “bread and butter” issues like salaries, pensions and migrants. However, an alliance with the socialists gave them two seats in parliament.

Guglielmo Rezza, (Red Cross and Red Crescent Partnership on Substance Abuse in Villa Maraini Foundation, MA in international Relations) described youth engagement for a humanitarian drug policy. The world has 275 million drug users aged 15-65, and each year 45,000 die from drug overuse, 76% youth. Drug trafficking is continuing despite repression, so we must address demand. A criminalized war against addicts does not work. Since drug use is a reality and cannot be eliminated, the best is a harm reduction approach, not stigmatizing or marginalizing, but reducing the impact on the health of the user. To avoid HIV transmission, the rules in order of priority are: don't start, take treatment, don't inject, use sterile equipment, disinfect with bleach. Access to treatment is needed including in jail and in neighborhoods, with distribution of clean needles. Youth leadership and commitment is required, promoted in the Red Cross and by public authorities. An example of a youth in direct contact with the reality on the ground was **Rebecca Meyer** (MBA Student Peace and Conflict Studies, Marburg, Germany), who described her work in Cambodia studying the influence of history education on national identity in post-conflict contexts. During the Khmer Rouge regime in 1975-1979, 1.5 million people were killed, leaving the median age today at 24.9 years. The issue is highly political and sensitive, with many Khmer Rouge still in government, illustrated in selective memory in a social reference framework for identity formation. Non-formal education can serve as a catalyst for peace-building. **Tara Ropret** (Representative of Serbia in Karate, Karate Club NIPPON, Psychology student, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade) and **Tatjana Petrović** (Member of the Olympic Committee of Serbia, President, Karate Club NIPPON, Belgrade, Serbia) described sport as a platform for youth cooperation worldwide. Karate emphasizes cultural and moral values of respect and learning from mistakes. It is a sport where one travels a lot, building friendships and connections, and learning to communicate. It is also important for the promotion of women in sport.

Irena Dubak (Senior Business Manager, OTP Bank Serbia, founder of civil society organizations “Live healthier”, “House of Achievements”) explored the influence of technology on youth power for the common future. She noted that technology has become a way of life, with advantages and dysfunctions. It is important to keep a balance of spiritual, intellectual, emotional and psychosocial life. There is presently no systematic prevention of technology addiction, which starts with children. Studies show that young people who do not play outdoors are not able to plan better options for their future life. A 30-minute walk can stimulate the brain and increase awareness. **Maria D'Oultremont Tantiñá** (Journalist, Blanquerna Observatory on Media, Religion and Culture, Ramon Llull University, Barcelona, Spain) explored art and creativity as tools for change through media for dialogue, using as examples the video *Refugee Village* where they all hate the word “refugee”, and #BeTheKey. A mural had the theme “hope makes the future”. The boxing squatters were empowered and changed their vision. In a maternity, victims of rape had a baby that was not wanted. Another first-hand experience was shared by Libyan refugee **Mohamed Alyatem** (Senior associate, Arabic Cultural Centre, Belgrade, Serbia) who discussed the role of youth in post-conflict states to achieve peace. The view was more negative than positive. Youth oppose authorities and politicians with a PhD in hypocrisy. They are drawn into Muslim groups by ideology or a vision with a need for youth integration. In Libya, 40% are under 15 years old and only 13% over 40. Youth turn to crime and violence and reject politics. They are used as pawns in political games, hoping to win and get privileges. In the final paper, **Thomas Hilker** (Program & Fundraising Manager, For Peace Initiative, Berlin, Germany) noted that we have failed in peace and sustainability at so many levels. We have a responsibility to prevent, but where does peace start? How do we co-create it? We need to change structures, interactions and mindsets. The German constitution is committed to peace, but €43 billion is spent on defense. The For Peace Initiative calls for a Ministry of Peace, inclusive with women and youth, with funding for peace building and peace education involving civil society. It develops the concept of positive peace, not just the absence of war, connected with the environmental movement. They are planning a summit on an alliance for peace-building with Costa Rica.



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The day ended with a **workshop on the Dialogue process** led by **Marco Boccaletti**, Merle **Lefkoff** and **Vern Redekop**. The principles of dialogue include becoming aware of what is happening inside of you, especially strong feelings, being respectful of time and giving everyone time to speak. It is important to be able to listen, not interrupting and giving everyone equal time. Dialogue can be used in real negotiation processes, building trust so that the truth can come out. In thinking creatively together, try to build on each other's contributions and come up with shared action areas.

A second workshop was on **Fake news and improvement of organizational communication practices**, moderated by **Prof. Dr. Velimir Dedić**. He described fake news as an oxymoron or contradiction in terms. After exploring many dimensions of communications, he suggested requirements for good communications: from whom, to whom, in what context, time and place, with adequate reference frames and an agreed context. Fake news involves denial, privacy breach or repudiation, with a foreign, obsolete or inadequate reference frame, and a default context fallacy. It plays on human ignorance and aims to achieve an unethical goal. It is important to be honest and sincere in communications and not to play games.

The **Wrap-up Session** on Sunday 27 October was moderated by the Chair of the Youth Forum, **Arthur Lyon Dahl**. He invited all the participants to suggest the topics they wanted to discuss. These were combined into six common themes, and everyone was invited to join small group discussions on the themes that most interested them. A first round discussed a **Green Economy, Ecosystems and Environmental Management**, and **Lifestyles**, while the second round explored **Racism and Migration, Education**, and **Dialogue processes and inspiration to change**.

The diversity of participants from many cultures and countries and different academic and practical perspectives was enriching for everyone. Each group summarized their reflections on a large piece of paper and jointly presented their results to everyone present. Participation was so active that the session lasted much longer than planned. Each one went away at the end of the Youth Forum with a wider and deeper understanding of the challenges facing the world and the power of youth to address them.

The following are the topics discussed and the conclusion presented during the session.

GREEN ECONOMY

Rules of Household

- Cannot have a green economy in a capitalist system
- What are the rules that will reward people to live more environmentally consciously?
- Grey economy—how does it work? What are the rules?
- Renewable energy is unreliable and not shared well/efficiently
 - o Areas with surplus and deficit
 - o Nuclear power?
 - o Solar panels → cause the usage of all of earth metals
- Nomadic blessing: young and old share
 - o Finland and Sweden → both have a policy to link young people who do and create with investment in start-ups by youth
- India has government program yearly to invest in start ups
- Encourage greener/eco-tourism start ups

ECOSYSTEM/ ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT

Tourism

- Waste management
- Sustainability

Carbon tax

- Environmental policies

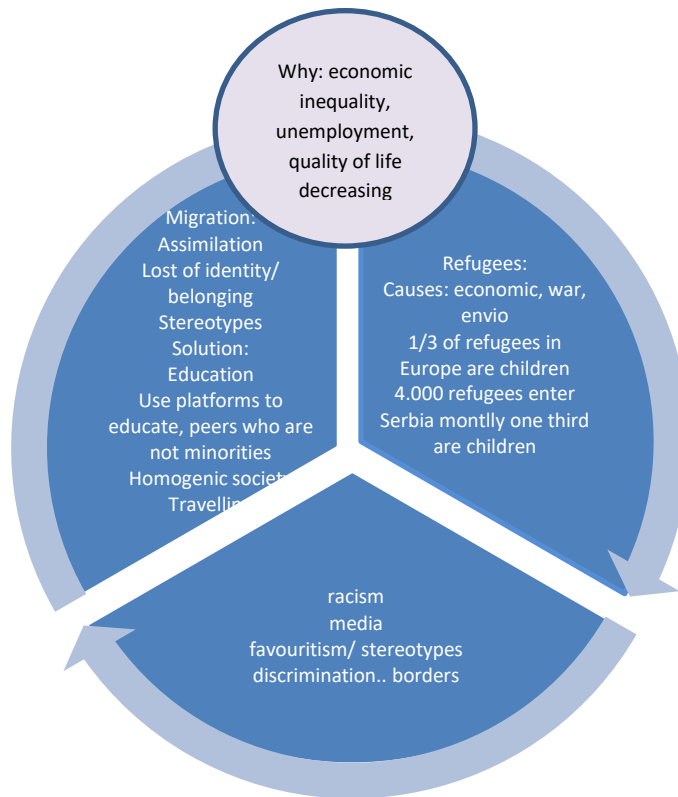
Education

- Culture
- Awareness

LIFESTYLE

Individual	Collective
Open mind to alternatives	Raising awareness
Reusable bottles	Stimulating companies
Stand by your choice	Media under our influence
Speak out	Government support
Act together (involve others)	Make alternatives more accessible

RACISM/ MIGRATION



EDUCATION

GREEN SCHOOLS; LOCAL COMMUNITIES

1. Education
 - training
 - involve parents
 - small acts
2. Green schools
 - what is a green school?
 - how can we reach it?
3. Local communities
 - join the movement
 - share
 - raise awareness

DIALOGUE: INSPIRATION TO CHANGE

Bridging a link with dialogue

