



**UNAOC**  
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

**IN FOCUS**

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## UNAOC welcomes the 10th edition of its Fellowship Programme

*UNAOC is pleased to announce that 2018 marks the 10th edition of its Fellowship Programme. This year, 24 young civil society leaders from Europe, North America and the MENA region will travel to Egypt, Germany, Morocco, Qatar, Spain and the United States to work with local stakeholders on “Fostering youth resilience to prevent violent extremism and build sustainable peace”.*



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**UNAOC IN FOCUS** is UNAOC's programming-focused newsletter.

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# UNAOC welcomes the 10th edition of its Fellowship Programme



*“Prejudice and hatred are only mitigated when different cultures and religions sit together and find solutions together to address the causes of conflicts. With my organization we brought together 20 youth volunteers from different religions to plant trees in different places of worship. For some of them it was the first time they visited a synagogue or a mosque.”*

**Walaa Ahmed, Director of Better World Organization for Community Development, 2018 MENA Fellow, Iraq**

UNAOC will focus the 2018 edition of its Fellowship Programme on “Fostering youth resilience to prevent violent extremism and build sustainable peace”. Over a period of four weeks, the 2018 UNAOC Fellows will travel to the United States, Germany, Spain, Morocco, Egypt and Qatar to meet with a wide range of stakeholders, including government officials, religious and community leaders, grassroots actors, civil society organizations and journalists. While exploring opportunities for intercultural collaboration, they will also discuss and exchange ideas on how to involve young people in the global efforts to prevent violent extremism and build sustainable peace.

The 2018 UNAOC Fellows are 24 young civil society leaders from the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and North America selected among more than 3,500 applications for their professional involvement in the fields of youth, PVE and peace-building, and for their strong motivation in fostering intercultural dialogue. As a result, the experiences and expertise of the 2018 UNAOC Fellows range from front-line practitioners working on PVE and disengagement

in prisons to leaders of youth organizations promoting interreligious dialogue and peace education in conflict settings. After completion of the Programme, Fellows will submit final reports on issues related to the main theme, basing their observations and recommendations on good practices and lessons learned during their journey. The reports will be available on the programme’s website: <https://fellowship.unaoc.org/themes/>.

*“Since I was a kid I have always been particularly fascinated by religions and their impact on politics, society, economics or their growing role in foreign policy. Today, the cultural awareness and willingness to understand other religions that I developed since my childhood is probably more important than ever.”*

**Nereo Peñalver García, Foreign policy adviser at the European Parliament, 2018 EUNA Fellow, Spain**

# UNAOC FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME 2018 ENTRIES

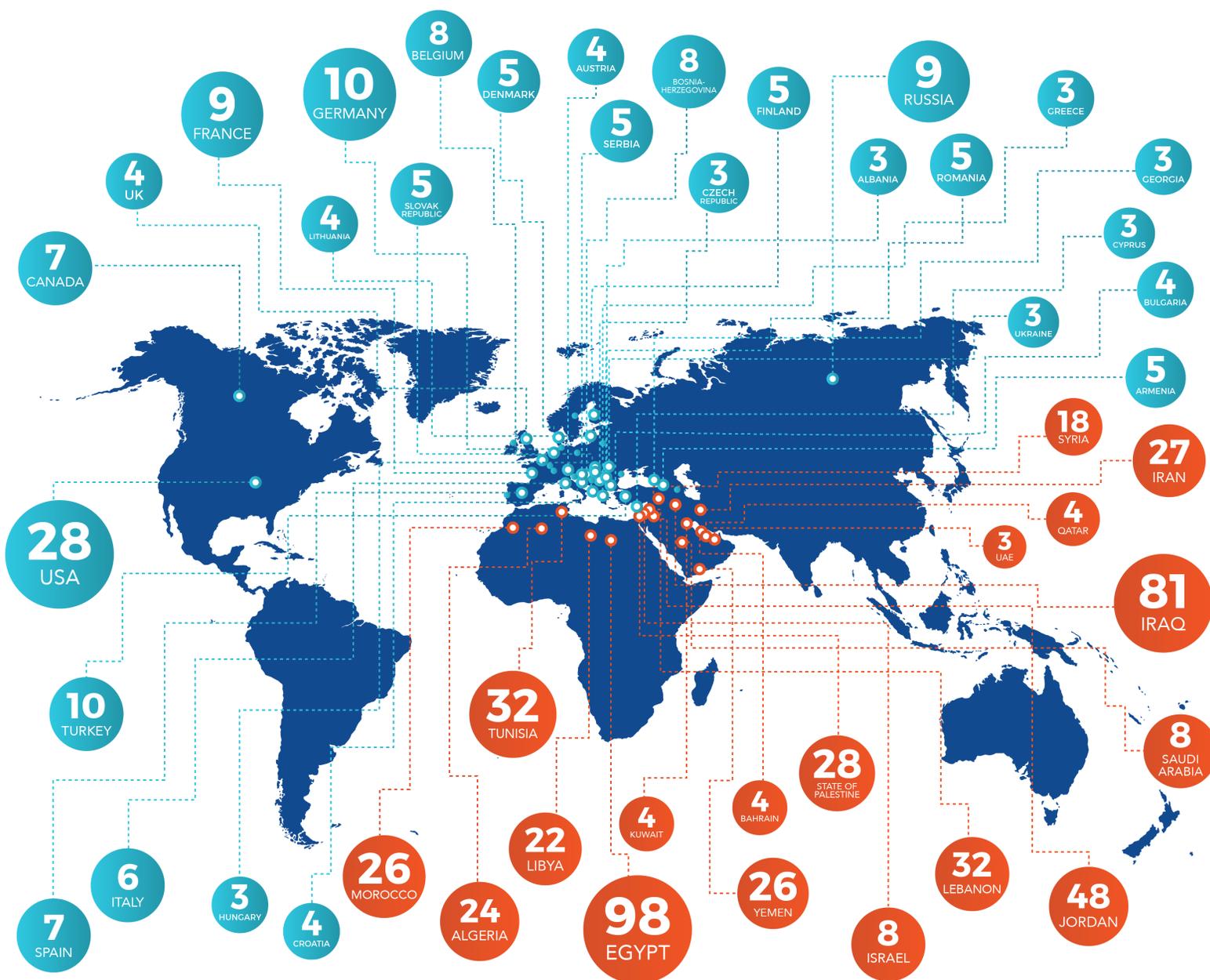
The Fellowship Programme seeks to foster intercultural understanding by engaging with civil society leaders and young experts from Europe, North America (EUNA), the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Organized around 2-week exchange trips, the Programme sends participants from each geographic area to their counterparts' region to interact with a variety of local stakeholders. By immersing participants into culturally diverse environments, the Fellowship aims at challenging perceptions and deconstructing stereotypes.

**MENA**  
493  
qualified  
applications

**EUNA**  
196  
qualified  
applications

● Less than 3 qualified applications

● Less than 3 qualified applications



## MENA APPLICATIONS

## EUNA APPLICATIONS

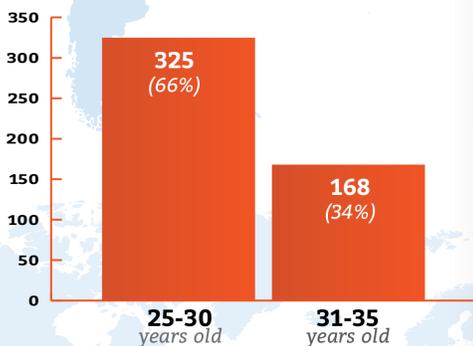


MENA Applicants

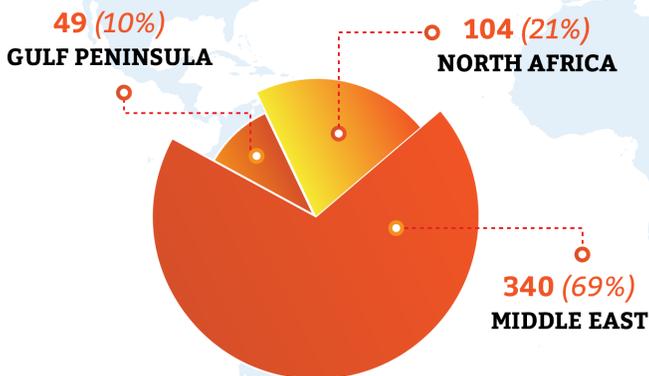
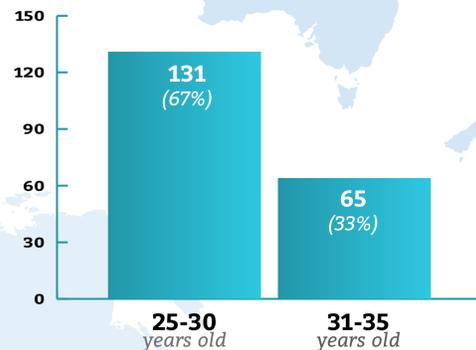


EUNA Applicants

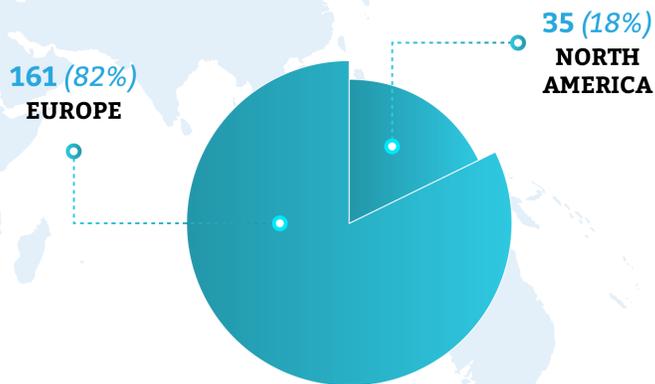
Age distribution of MENA applicants



Age distribution of EUNA applicants



Regional distribution of MENA applicants



Regional distribution of EUNA applicants

## UNAOC Fellow Speaks at the Security Council Open Debate on Youth, Peace and Security

2016 UNAOC Fellow Ms. Anca Gliga was invited as a speaker to two side events held in the margin of the “Security Council Open Debate on Youth, Peace and Security” organized in April 2018 at UNHQ, New York.

As a global youth advocate, Ms. Gliga has been heavily involved in the realization of UNSCR 2250 (2015) and the Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security (2018). During her interventions, she urged the UN and Member States to involve young people in building peace and to commit their financial, social and political support to youth-led peace-building initiatives. “Young people are uniquely skilled to build and mobilize the social fabric of trust within their communities, by reaching the ‘hard to reach’ in areas where no other actors exist.” She added that the impact of young people goes beyond their peers and can reach local and national authorities, as well as minorities, elderly people, and displaced persons.



## UNAOC Fellows Take Part in an Event at UNHQ on Global Citizenship Education

2016 UNAOC Fellows Marissa Gutierrez-Vicario and Rafal Szczurowski participated in an event on “Educating younger generations on global citizenship through intercultural literacy” organized by UNAOC in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. The event, held on May 2 at the UN Headquarters in New York, served as a platform for panellists to discuss ways to promote cross-cultural exchanges at university level in order to engage younger generations on global citizenship and the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As an adjunct professor in International Affairs at the City University of New York (CUNY), Mr. Szczurowski spoke about his experience in introducing graduate students to intercultural education and to the concepts of global citizenship and the SDGs. “Cross-cultural and cross-departmental education empowers students to become active global citizens. We are seeing the emergence of well-rounded students capable of taking up the multidimensional challenges of the 21st century. The key benefit of this approach is that students become more active in their local and global communities.”

Ms. Gutierrez-Vicario, founder and executive director of ARTE – Youth Development and Human Rights through Education, shared her experience as an educator using art as a tool to prepare young people to become global citizens. “At ARTE, we work on educating youth on human rights to equip them with the knowledge to identify the root causes of systemic inequity. Our aim is to provide them with a space to create and learn around human rights through visual arts.”



In photo: 2012 UNAOC Fellow Amanda Figueras signing her book at Madrid's Book Fair, Madrid, Spain, 2018



## Interview with UNAOC Fellow Amanda Figueras, Author of “Por qué el Islam: Mi vida como mujer, europea y musulmana” (Why Islam: My life as a woman, European and Muslim)



**InFocus: What is your book about?**

**Amanda:** My book is about my journey to Islam, a journey that I started in the aftermath of the 2004 terrorist attacks in Madrid. At that time, I was a journalist for El Mundo and I had been asked to write a paper on the Muslim community in Spain. This is when I realized that I knew very little about Islam and Muslims in general. This is why, while I describe my experience as a new Muslim, I explain basic things about my faith to the reader. I share some knowledge I think everyone should have if we want to better understand and live with one another. I am very interested in the topic of women in Islam. In my book, I try to address some of the common misunderstandings surrounding that matter.

**InFocus: When and why did you decide to write this book?**

**Amanda:** It all started in 2015 when I decided to write an article for El Mundo on my decision to become a Muslim. One of the newspapers' editors read it and called me because he wanted to know more about my journey. He then made me an offer and suggested that I use my personal path to write about Islam. I accepted the challenge. I think my advantage was that I could genuinely understand non-Muslims' point of views since I have been in their shoes for so many years. At first, I was both extremely happy and terribly scared. I was afraid of being misunderstood. I didn't want people to think that I was pretending to speak in the name of all Muslims, as if I was a great example to follow. At the end of the day, I am still very new to Islam with so much more to learn.

**InFocus: What's next for you?**

**Amanda:** I am currently working as a journalist, a translator and a voice-over artist but I am always searching for new opportunities. And even if I don't have anything clearly defined yet, I already have some ideas on what I would like to write about in my next book.



## Young Peacebuilders from 12 countries across Middle East and North Africa trained by UNAOC in Jordan

UNAOC, in collaboration with Generations For Peace, and with the generous support of the Agencia Extremeña de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AEXCID), implemented a weeklong workshop to continue its efforts to grow and strengthen the global movement of young peacebuilders. Held from 19-23 February 2018 in Amman, Jordan, the event hosted 20 young peacebuilders from 12 countries across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, each between the ages of 18 and 25 and representing youth-led organizations in their communities.

UNAOC organized this event as the second phase of a four-part programme, designed to support young people as they gain skills that can enhance their positive role in issues of peace and security, while bringing visibility to their initiatives towards peacebuilding and promoting diversity and human rights. The workshop took place after an intensive online preparation and was led by field experts and trainers, who helped the young peacebuilders to analyze conflicts, practice peacebuilding tools to build bridges between cultures and religions, and

design peace projects, which are currently being implemented in each participant's community.

According to a conducted survey, participants were extremely satisfied with the Amman workshop and applauded the experience-based learning methodologies, the quality of the trainers and the networking opportunities.

All participants stated that they would definitely recommend the programme to other young people.

*Continued on page 9...*

*"I find it quite interesting how these problems are recurring in many societies and how many people are even aware of them, yet unfortunately little to nothing is being done to overcome them and raise awareness. I hope we all amount to something of great benefit through this program and become as well as inspire others to become promoters of peace."*

**Sally Itani (Lebanon)**  
PARTICIPANT, UNAOC YOUNG PEACEBUILDERS, MENA EDITION





They consider the programme as a source for the most current information on conflicts, stereotypes and identity, while it enhances skills on peacebuilding and project management, it promotes out-of-the-box thinking and empowers young people to be change-makers. Shadi Rouhshahbaz, a young peacebuilder from Iran, looked back on all she had learned from the workshop: "The best thing about

*"The best thing about this programme is that it gives me a better and holistic understanding of the fact that conflicts are more or less rooted in the same causes. I now have an understanding of global mechanisms to deal with, and face, stereotypes."*

**Shadi Shahbaz (Iran)**  
PARTICIPANT, UNAOC YOUNG PEACEBUILDERS  
MENA EDITION



*"If we are to build peace, we should invest in the youth. They should be at the forefront of the decision-making process and be given more leadership spaces to occupy, and most importantly should be able to express themselves fearlessly."*

**Marwa Azelmat (Morocco)**  
PARTICIPANT, UNAOC YOUNG PEACEBUILDERS  
MENA EDITION



this programme is that it gives me a better and holistic understanding of the fact that conflicts are more or less rooted in the same causes. I now have an understanding of global mechanisms to deal with, and face, stereotypes.

The groundbreaking UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, which recognizes that "young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security" formed the common thread through this workshop. Marwa Azelmat from Morocco, the daughter of an Amazigh father and an Arab mother, is one of these young women committed to contribute to more inclusive societies where all people encourage appreciation of cultural differences.

*"It is not just an award. Here, the ethos of developing an awardee intellectually, building their capacity, giving them exposure, is something that is very unique. This kind of peer-to-peer engagement allows me to learn something and go back to implement it. This component overrides the award itself."*

**Syed Ali Abbas Zaidi, Peace Rickshaws Project (Pakistan)**



## Capacity Building Workshop for Latest Intercultural Innovation Award Recipients Held in Munich, Germany by UNAOC and the BMW Group

The first capacity building workshop for the ten most recent recipients of the Intercultural Innovation Award took place at BMW Group headquarters in Munich, Germany from 15 to 20 April 2018. Hosted by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the BMW Group, the workshop focused on the topics of communications, strategy and design thinking.

*"It has been amazing to meet awardees and participants from other countries. I was inspired by their stories and life-changing struggles to create impactful projects in their communities. It has also been a blessing to learn from our trainers, how to improve our weaknesses and scale-up our projects to be more impactful in the future."*

**Ahlem Nasraoui, Unleash Tunisia Venture Bus (Tunisia)**



*"I have learned a lot from this workshop. The experts here are fabulous, they are very helpful for us to take our project to the next level. It is also an incredible experience to learn how other awardees are dealing with their situations at a local level, and to realize that you're not alone."*

**Maria Cristina Gallegos Jaramillo, Awakkuna (Ecuador)**

The workshop was attended by the organizations who received the Intercultural Innovation Award at the ceremony held at the United Nations headquarters during November 2017. Awardees from Argentina, Ecuador, Egypt, Israel, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tunisia, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, participated in various training sessions designed to build their capacity with a view to enhance the long-term effect and sustainability of their projects, such that their initiatives can expand and replicate in other contexts. A highlight of the workshop was the opportunity for awardees to interact with BMW Group managers, with a simulation of a pitch to potential sponsors and partners. Following their pitches, awardees received valuable feedback from employees of BMW Group.

Some of the sessions were attended by BMW Group managers who had their own social good projects. This created a space for both Intercultural Innovation Award recipients and BMW Group employees to learn from each other's experiences. The training in Munich is part of the one-year support provided to recipients of the Intercultural Innovation Award.

## SPOTLIGHT ON INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION AWARD RECIPIENTS

### Games for Peace Recognized in the United Nations Security Council

On 23 April, Intercultural Innovation Award recipient Games for Peace was recognized by the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations in the United Nations Security Council at an open debate on youth, peace and security. The type of activities conducted by the organization, in leveraging video games as a platform for the promotion of dialogue between Jewish and Arab school children, was noted as key for building a foundation for sustainable peace.



### Community Relations in Schools Receives a Spirit of Northern Ireland Award

Community Relations in Schools and their "Buddy Up! A School-Based Peacebuilding Approach" initiative received the education prize at the Spirit of Northern Ireland Awards on 20 April. The ceremony was broadcast live on national television and paid tribute to the communities in North Belfast involved in the "Buddy Up!" initiative for their daily commitment to building peace. The prize follows their success at the Intercultural Innovation Award Ceremony at United Nations Headquarters in November 2017.

### The Post-Conflict Research Center (PCRC) organizes meeting between Mr. Adama Dieng, UN Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide and CSOs

On 12 February 2018 at the United Nations office in Sarajevo, PCRC organized a meeting between Adama Dieng, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, and key representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina's civil society organizations (CSOs). During the meeting, CSO representatives were able to present their work and discuss challenges, strategies, and their visions for the future. As a result of the discussion, PCRC and the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect (UN OSAPG) partnered in building the Western Balkan Coalition for Genocide Prevention.



## Spotlight on Intercultural Innovation Award Recipients *(continued)*

### Minister of the Interior of Nigeria hails the Interfaith Mediation Centre for their Peace Initiatives

Intercultural Innovation Award recipient, the Interfaith Mediation Centre, conducted a conference in Abuja on 23 February which was attended by RTD Lt-Gen Abdulrahman Dambazau, Minister of Interior of Nigeria. He urged religious leaders across faiths to educate their congregations against engaging in violence and hailed the Interfaith Mediation Centre for their various peace initiatives.

The conference was part of a programme funded by USAID. The USAID Mission Director for Nigeria commended the Interfaith Mediation Centre's work for strengthening relationships between Christians and Muslims, especially for faith-based women's organizations, who worked together across religious lines to promote peace in their communities.



### Cultural Infusion becomes a formal partner of the Australian National Commission for UNESCO

On 22 March 2018, Cultural Infusion announced their partnership with the Australian National Commission for UNESCO. The collaboration acknowledges the alignment of both organizations' agendas to promote education, intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity as pathways to mutual understanding and peace. Cultural Infusion, strives to promote intercultural understanding through a range of educational initiatives.

As a result, the partnership did not only increase visibility for Cultural Infusion's educational programs but since its launch, requests for different programs have risen by up to 20 %. "Something that UNESCO and Cultural Infusion have in common is that we both tell the stories of our ancestors, stories that come from all cultures of the world, which have contributed so much. These stories can show us that we have a lot more in common than we have different, that we are all the same," said Peter Mousaferiadis, CEO of Cultural Infusion.

### David Lubell, Founder of Welcoming America, receives the Charles Bronfman Prize

David Lubell, Founder of Welcoming America and alumnus of the Intercultural Innovation Award, received the Charles Bronfman Prize for inspiring communities by building and providing opportunities for immigrants and refugees in more than 190 communities across the United States of America. The ceremony was held on 30 April 2018 in New York where David also participated in a conversation with Fared Zakaria, host of CNN's Fared Zakaria GPS.

The Charles Bronfman Prize is presented to humanitarians under 50 whose innovative work has significantly improved the world. "There are 250 million immigrants and refugees in our world, more than any time in history and they are increasingly blamed for a host of society's ills. This scapegoating of foreigners, paralleled by the growth of anti-Semitism, must be recognized and confronted," stated Lubell.



# Ich bin bei LinkedIn weil man überall auf der Welt eine Community braucht

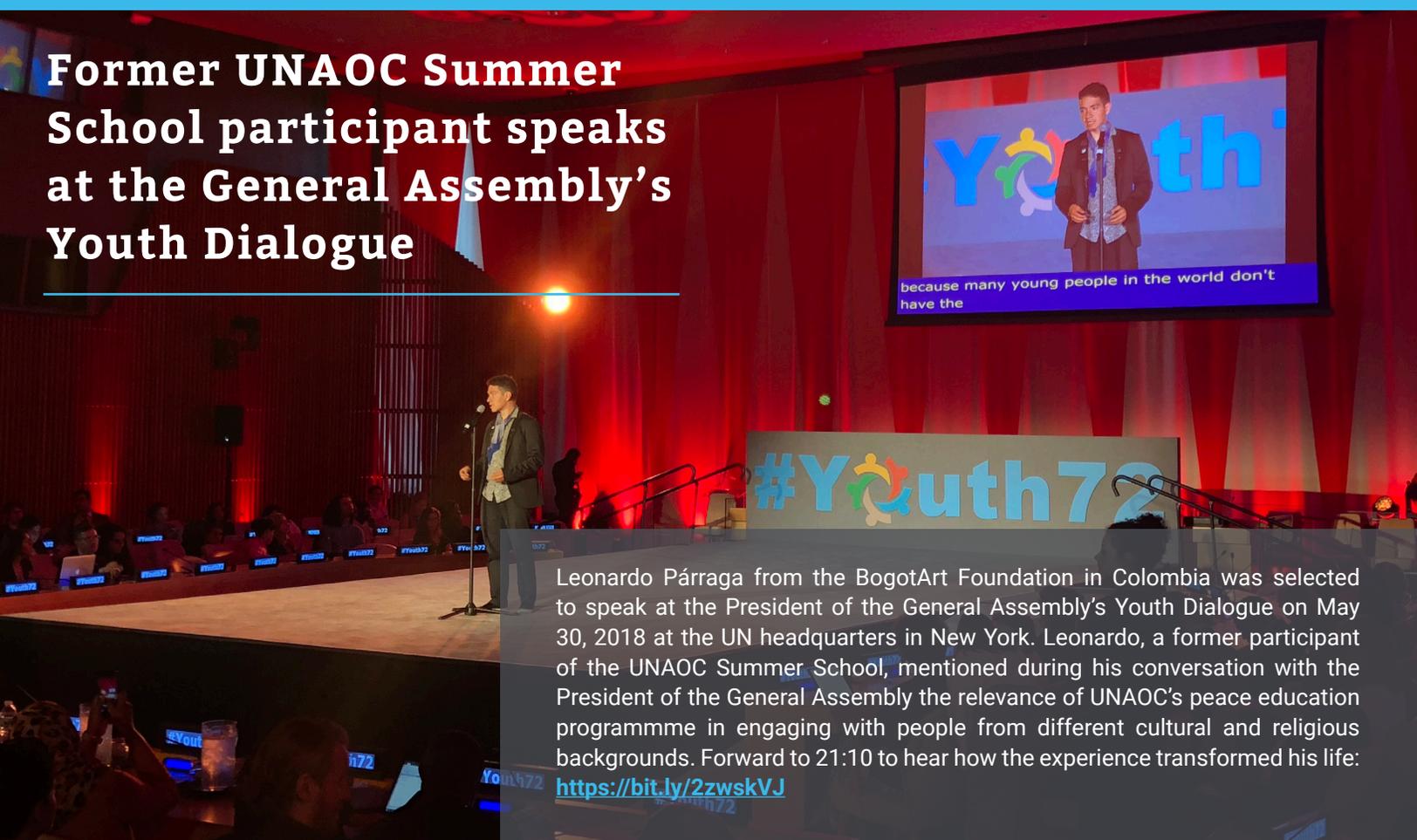
Annamaria Olsson • Gründerin; Give Something Back to Berlin



## Give Something Back to Berlin (GSBTB) partners with LinkedIn in a German nationwide campaign

GSBTB, recipient of the Intercultural Innovation Award, an initiative focused on fostering community integration and participation among Berlin's diverse migrant populations, is partnering with LinkedIn in a German nationwide campaign. The campaign slogan "making worlds meet for a better city" aims to create meeting points between groups that normally wouldn't come in contact with each other, build inclusive networks and counter anti-migrant discourse, which have been the organization's goals since it started in 2013. GSBTB contributes to social integration efforts on a daily basis by creating a positive community and connecting refugees and migrants with broad networks in greater society while sharing experiences.

## Former UNAOC Summer School participant speaks at the General Assembly's Youth Dialogue



Leonardo Párraga from the BogotArt Foundation in Colombia was selected to speak at the President of the General Assembly's Youth Dialogue on May 30, 2018 at the UN headquarters in New York. Leonardo, a former participant of the UNAOC Summer School, mentioned during his conversation with the President of the General Assembly the relevance of UNAOC's peace education programme in engaging with people from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Forward to 21:10 to hear how the experience transformed his life:

<https://bit.ly/2zwsKVJ>

# PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival Receives 371 Video Entries for its 2018 Edition

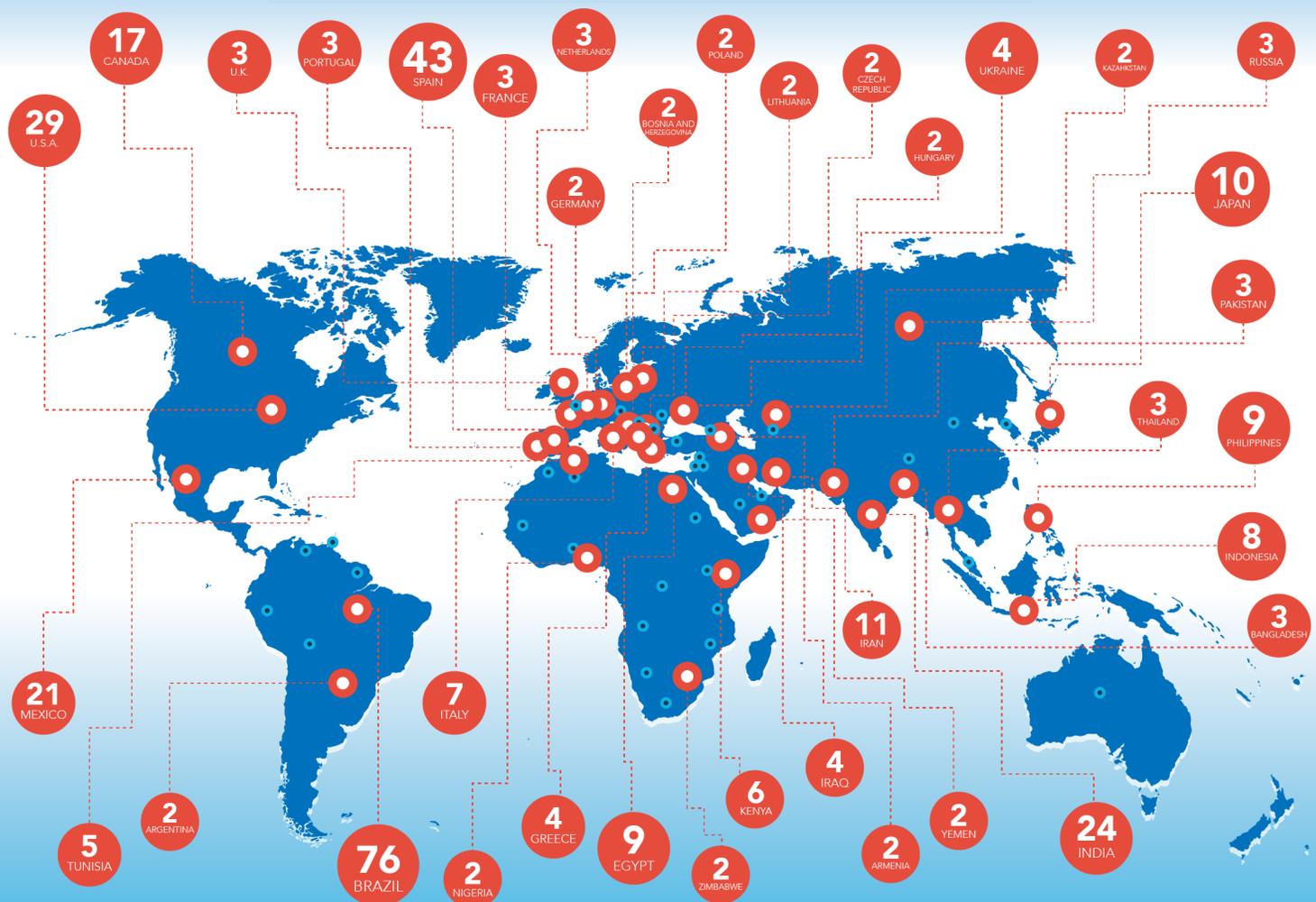
This year PLURAL+ received 371 video entries, fifty more than last year. PLURAL+ 2018 awards ceremony will be celebrated this autumn. Young video makers from around the world will attend the event to present and discuss their award winning videos with Forum participants.

PLURAL+, a the youth video festival addressing the topics of migration and the prevention of xenophobia, organized

by UNAOC and IOM, had numerous screenings around the world during the first six months of 2018 including: Children's Festival of Seattle (USA), the African Film Festival of Tarifa (Spain) and Tangier (Morocco), as well as special screenings in Tunis (Tunisia), at COPEAM's 2018 Forum, Majorca (Spain), at Cinemes Girona of Barcelona (Spain) and at the United Nations Headquarters in New York during the 17th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

## PLURAL+ 2018 ENTRIES

*In 2018, PLURAL+ received 371 video entries from 72 countries.*



*In addition, 1 entry each was received from the following countries: Algeria, Angola, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Peru, Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, UAE, Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen, Zimbabwe*

## PEACEapp: Local Youth and Refugees Meet in Tunis

During PEACEapp Tunis (28-31 January) thirty young people, half from Tunisia and the other half young migrants and refugees from nine countries (Benin, Cameroun, Chad, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Rwanda, Syria, and Yemen) worked together creating video games as a platform for intercultural dialogue. Through the process of collaborating together in small groups, young participants had the opportunity not only to gain computational thinking skills but also to develop a better understanding of the challenges that migrants and refugees face on a daily base. Participants produced Internet-based games and digital narratives by learning how to work on the MIT Media Lab gaming platform SCRATCH. This UNAOC initiative had additional support of IOM-Tunisia, UNHCR-Tunisia, and the local educational organization Association ADO+.



## Applications Received for the Youth Solidarity Fund

The Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF) began as a response to calls for action made by youth-led organizations around the world on the importance of establishing funding mechanisms for youth. Today the fund is more relevant than ever, as the global agenda speaks increasingly of supporting young people in their contributions to peace and security. YSF is aligned with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) by providing the partnership and financial means to help young people in implementing activities that prevent violent conflict, promote peace and encourage social inclusion.

For the YSF 2018 edition, the call for applications was open from 23 January until 2 March. 717 applications were received



from youth-led organizations based in 79 countries. This represents an increase of 15% from applications received for the 2017 edition.

## UNAOC joins UN Office of Counter-Terrorism to lead strategic communications training for PVE in Trinidad and Tobago

UNAOC joined the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and its Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) to lead several pilot training workshops in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The workshops are the initial phase of a comprehensive project by the United Nations to enhance awareness and build the capacity of Member States in strategic communications for preventing violent extremism (PVE).

Entitled "StratCom 101," the training workshops took place over the week of 9-13 April at the Police Academy of Port of Spain. Participants included representatives of the government of Trinidad and Tobago, local civil society organizations providing services to youth, women, and faith communities, and the United Nations country team, totaling close to 100 stakeholders.

Participants in the workshop were introduced to the concept of strategic communications and how it can be used effective-



ly to prevent violent extremism (PVE). The training also included modules presenting various United Nations programmes and frameworks, and exercises in small groups, which led to productive discussions. During the civil society training component (photo), a particular focus was put on the use of social media to reach at risk youth.



*UNAOC aims to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures and to reduce polarization at local and global levels. It helps develop more inclusive societies, in which diversity is experienced as an asset.*

**United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)**

**730 Third Avenue, 20th Floor, New York, New York 10017**

**☎ Phone: +1-929-274-6217    📠 Fax: +1-929-274-6233    ✉ Email: [contactaoc@unops.org](mailto:contactaoc@unops.org)**

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