



**UNAOC**  
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

**IN FOCUS**

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## **UNAOC launches the 3rd edition of its Young Peacebuilders programme in the MENA region**

*After 2 successful editions of the Young Peacebuilders initiative, UNAOC launches a third edition focusing on the Middle East and North Africa region.*

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# UNAOC Launches the 3rd Edition of its Young Peacebuilders Programme in the MENA region



## Young Peacebuilders

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA 2019 EDITION



**Afaf Lamkoutar**  
(Morocco)



**Hazhir Azeez**  
(Iraq)



**Aisha Aljaedy**  
(Yemen)



**Mohamed Ahmed**  
(Egypt)



**Chantal Terrón Garzón**  
(Spain)



**Shaker Nairat**  
(State of Palestine)



**Raquel Blanco Águila**  
(Spain)



**Elie Antoun**  
(Lebanon)



**Farah Moussa**  
(Egypt)



**Achraf Tasfaout**  
(Algeria)



**Mozhdah Zinger**  
(Islamic Republic of Iran)



**Abdullah Wajeih**  
(Iraq)



**Vanessa Chamoun**  
(Lebanon)



**Youssef El Mezzaoui**  
(Morocco)



**Shatha Alowda**  
(State of Palestine)



**Mariam AlAwadhi**  
(UAE)



**Mustapha Kammoun**  
(Tunisia)



**Aziz Hannachi**  
(Tunisia)



**Farah El Alami**  
(Jordan)



**Alaa Alsewid**  
(Syrian Arab Republic)

“

*“Education in its various forms – including music, sports, art, drama and film – can help build bridges between communities and people.”*

**(The UNAOC High Level Group Report)**

Guided by the principles that we need to cooperate in resolving the interconnected challenges of the 21st century and that youth are key actors in constructing peaceful and tolerant societies, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) develops educational programming to enhance the ability of young people and their organizations to foster mutual respect, understanding and long-term positive relationships between different peoples.

UNAOC has long recognized the important and positive contribution of youth and youth-led organizations in conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, responding

to the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2250 and 2419 on Youth, Peace and Security, and the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism. The “Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security (2018)” collected plenty of evidence on the impactful and innovative methods young people use to prevent violence and to consolidate peace across the world. The recently launched UN Youth Strategy “Youth 2030” is the ultimate acknowledgement that without the inclusion of youth, there will be no sustainable peace.

Within this framework UNAOC launched in February 2019 the 3rd edition of one of its flagship programmes

called Young Peacebuilders, implemented with and for young people, and generously supported by AEXCID (Agencia Extremeña de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo). This edition supports young civil society leaders from the MENA region between the ages of 18 and 25 in gaining competencies to address negative stereotypes, prejudice and polarization (important drivers of violent extremism), while bringing visibility to their actions and projects towards the promotion of diversity and intercultural/interfaith dialogue.

Selected for their innovative ideas and groundbreaking field work, the 3rd edition's cohort consists of 11 young women and 9 young men coming from 12 MENA countries, namely: Algeria, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, State of Palestine, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The selected participants will go through **4 different phases** that facilitate a progressive and experiential learning process. In July 2019, they started the first phase, the online education program, through which the conceptual foundations of peace are being developed. The second stage will take place in October 2019 and consists of a one-week face-to-face workshop in Spain to learn and practice specific peacebuilding skills and tools, which will be applied during the third phase when participants implement peace interventions in their communities. Each of these learning phases is based on the experiences of the young learner in order to create a transformational journey. The fourth and last phase of the project consists of a final symposium in the

MENA region through which the results of the initiatives implemented by the young people are presented to relevant stakeholders to raise awareness about the power of youth in peacebuilding.

UNAOC designs the project and the curriculum in an interactive way in order to tailor it as much as possible to the needs of the participants and the region of implementation. The final goal is to grow and strengthen a global movement of young peacebuilders who have a seat around the decision-making table.



*Participants of the 2nd Young Peacebuilders edition during the face-to-face workshop in Amman, Jordan*



**PHASE 1:**  
**Online**  
**Engagement**



**PHASE 2:**  
**Face-to-face**  
**Workshop**



**PHASE 3:**  
**Applied**  
**Learning**



**PHASE 4:**  
**Results Sharing**  
**Symposium**

*The 4 phases of the UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme*

*Young Peacebuilders fourth edition coming soon!*

Thanks to **AEXCID** (Agencia Extremeña de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo), UNAOC is proud to announce that we will launch a **4th edition of the Young Peacebuilders programme**.

The call for applications will be published soon!



**AEXCID**  
cooperación extremeña  
JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA



## EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE YOUNG PEACEBUILDERS PROGRAMME

After two successful editions in West Africa (2016) and the MENA region (2017-18), it was time for reflection. An external and independent evaluation was conducted of the Young Peacebuilders MENA programme (2017-18).

The evaluation methodology utilized a holistic approach: it combined quantitative with qualitative research. Besides analyzing relevant data that was already collected by UNAOC, before, during and after the implementation of the project (based on self-assessment, field work and reports), the evaluator conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants, trainers and staff, as well as two case studies of projects implemented by participants.

### IMPACT:

The evaluator came to the conclusion that the Young Peacebuilders programme was:

- **Relevant** as it was in line with current international challenges and responding to the needs of young peace leaders;
- **Successful:** the participants developed a large diversity of competences which they were able to apply in their own social and organizational contexts;
- **Effective:** thanks to the excellent planning, the synergy between each project phase and the intense support of the trainers;
- **Efficient:** the total cost of the project was lower than other projects of this kind.

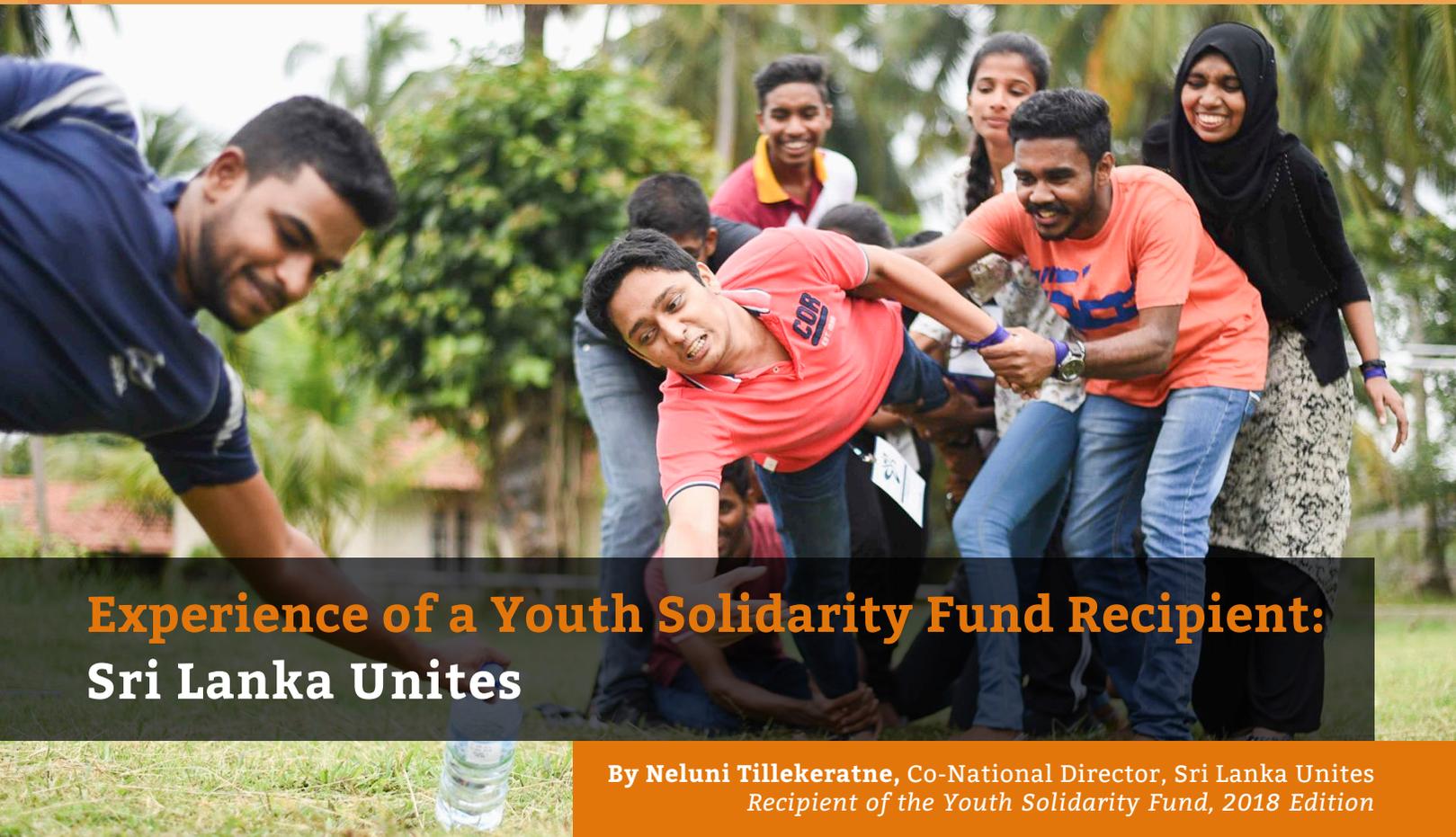
## Empowering Youth Volunteers through Sport



On February 22, 2019, an international coalition of organizations from the Olympic Movement, the United Nations, Academia and civil society launched “**EYVOL**” – “**Empowering Youth Volunteers through Sport**”, a two-year project co-funded by the European Union within the Erasmus+ Programme and aimed at developing a common framework on “Sport Volunteerism”. EYVOL will be supported by UNAOC as an associate partner.

The programme will develop and implement innovative educational methods to train youth volunteers on how to utilize sport to promote intercultural dialogue, and peacebuilding, including in the context of social inclusion through sport and major sporting events. EYVOL, whose initial results will be tested in the larger Mediterranean region, will provide young multipliers with concrete and action-oriented educational and training tools while assessing the normative and practical conditions to promote sport volunteerism at the international level providing a set of policy recommendations, guidelines and best practices on this regard.

Inspired by Save the Dream, the programme will be led by the International Olympic Truce Center (IOTC) and implemented jointly with the Comité Olímpico de Portugal (COP), Orama Neon – Youthorama, the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE), Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano (CONI), the European Platform for Sport Innovation (EPSI), the European Non-Governmental Sports Organization (ENGSO), the Universitat de les Illes Balears, Fundación del Centenario del Sevilla FC, Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne and Fondazione garagErasmus.



## Experience of a Youth Solidarity Fund Recipient: Sri Lanka Unites

By Neluni Tillekeratne, Co-National Director, Sri Lanka Unites  
Recipient of the Youth Solidarity Fund, 2018 Edition

In August 2018, Sri Lanka Unites (SLU) – a youth movement for hope and reconciliation – was a recipient of the Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF), awarded by UNAOC. SLU obtained the grant for the implementation of a project to design a peace education curriculum for school students and youth in Sri Lanka. Volunteers were trained to be educators of the guidebook in English and local languages, who are competent to teach the concepts of intercultural coexistence in different ethnic and religious contexts.

### The rationale for our project

SLU decided to invest in peace-education through a formal approach given the alarming statistics on the diversity of students who attend the 10,162 schools in the country. Sri Lanka has only two official local languages being “Sinhalese” and “Tamil”. The languages are spoken most often based on the ethnic group of an individual. The Sinhalese ethnic group speaks in Sinhalese, the Tamil ethnic group speaks in Tamil, while the Muslim ethnic group speaks a mixture of both. Language is a barrier to communication in Sri Lanka as in any other culture. According to the Education Ministry of Sri Lanka (2016), only 0.66% of schools in Sri Lanka teach using both Sinhala and Tamil materials. This means that only less than 1% of all school students in the country

are exposed to peers from other cultures, because of segregated schooling system. While it is believed that the decade old tradition of separating government schools based on religion and race is to improve efficiency in administration, it is evident that the lack of intercultural exposure makes the country naturally vulnerable to hate between communities.

It is in this deeply divisive background that SLU fights to bring communities together. The school system automatically becomes a prime area of intervention. SLU was therefore extremely encouraged to have been recognized by UNAOC to take on this ambitious project.

### Our solution

Through the support of UNAOC, SLU published a guidebook with the following 7 modules.

1. Non-violence
2. Conflict transformation and reconciliation
3. Grassroots movements
4. Youth leadership and character
5. Gendered leadership
6. Social media and storytelling
7. Environment and peacebuilding

*“The experience of working with UNAOC is one for which SLU will always be extremely grateful. The Youth Solidarity Fund by design promised to be more than just a fund but a structure to support the growth of skills, vision and network of a grassroots movement...”*



The guidebooks were written by the SLU team and subject experts from Sri Lankan civil society. The value of the guidebook was in the fact that the modules included in the book have already been tested for effectiveness over a 10-year period since the inception of Sri Lanka Unites in 2007.

An example is an activity in the module on conflict transformation and reconciliation, which openly discusses the grievances of each ethnic group. SLU has seen the transformational power of a mixed group of youth from different ethnicities sit in one room and share the struggles of their own communities with each other. The activity requires a lot of vulnerability as the youth open up their hearts about their insecurities to those who are viewed as their enemy. The SLU trainers mediate the session in a way where young people realize that our communities hurt each other, most often because each community is scarred by hurt themselves. This hurt turns to violence. When young people see the cycle of violence, they immediately understand that we need to stop the careless ways in which we hurt each other. This activity has been practiced in the SLU network for over 5 years and has proven to be extremely cathartic to young people across the country, of all religious and ethnic groups. It was therefore included in the guidebook, to be practiced with a larger audience.

### **The impact of our project**

The curriculum was launched through the newly established “Sri Lanka Unites Education Department” at workshops and conferences throughout the year. By the end of 2018, almost

600 young people from over 50 schools in all 25 districts of the country had been trained. School and university students, even teachers, appreciated the guidebook as they said it gave solutions to approach the struggles of intercultural coexistence, as opposed to just discussing the problem.

By the end of 2019, we aim to reach 200 new schools in the Sri Lankan system. SLU will continue to train volunteers and messengers of peace until one day we are working in all 10,162 schools in the country.

### **Theory to practice? How the SLU network was made resilient to the attacks in Sri Lanka**

On 21 April 2019, Sri Lanka was off to a peaceful morning as the Catholic community in the country were attending Easter Sunday mass or Easter Sunday breakfast. The holy morning turned bloody, as 7 suicide bombers blew up 3 churches and 3 hotels, killing more than 300 innocent civilians in a matter of minutes. The sensitivity of the times tested the fabric of the nation. The relatively subtle anti-Muslim sentiment which existed prior to the attacks escalated to be extremely disheartening. However, the response of the SLU network at the time was encouraging. Young Muslim and non-Muslim students who were trained through the UNAOC guidebook program, held on to the core beliefs that terrorists do not represent a majority of a community. It was encouraging to see young SLU students being firm in their beliefs despite the peer pressure of being surrounded by students who did not receive this training.

## UNAOC, more than a funder

The experience of working with UNAOC is one for which SLU will always be extremely grateful. YSF by design promised to be more than just a fund but a structure to support the growth of skills, vision and network of a grassroots movement. Through YSF, SLU was trained on a number of skills including monitoring and evaluation, communications, and research. A week of training for YSF project coordinators was held in Nairobi, Kenya.

YSF was also a platform through which UNAOC connected SLU with youth groups and well wishers across the world. SLU was invited to the 8th UNAOC Global Forum at United Nations headquarters as well as to speak at the 5th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in Azerbaijan. SLU was introduced to the amazing UNAOC youth alumni who have gone on to be trailblazers in their respective countries. It was encouraging to see how UNAOC does not treat its recipients as onetime investment but as young activists to be mentored and supported throughout a lifetime.

Both events linked SLU with multiple organizations, a noteworthy connection being the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development based in India. This connection is extremely meaningful because SLU bases the approach to non-violence by studying the life of Mahatma Gandhi.



*SLU was invited to speak at the 5th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in Baku, Azerbaijan*

The best part of YSF, however, was the space SLU was given to adapt our project based on the unpredictable realities of our country. We had the flexibility to use iterative learning without the pressure of sticking to rigid project plans. We sincerely appreciated the YSF flexibility when the country was brought to a standstill in October 2018 by a non-military coup. YSF gave us the opportunity to adapt the program accordingly.

## Thank you, UNAOC!

We are grateful beyond measure to the one in a million team at UNAOC. Their warmth was a reflection of the UNAOC ethos towards young people and seeing us as valid contributors to enhancing their campaign towards fruitful intercultural coexistence.



*SLU and other YSF recipients with Jayathma Wickramanayake, UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, at the 8th UNAOC Global Forum in New York*



*SLU and other YSF recipients meeting with Ambassador Pekka Metso from the Government of Finland*

## Launch of the 8th edition of the Youth Solidarity Fund

On 25 July, UNAOC launched the YSF 8th Edition call for applications. Through seed funding and capacity-building support, UNAOC assists youth-led organizations whose work seeks to foster peaceful and inclusive societies through improved understanding and collaboration across cultures, faiths and beliefs. Projects under YSF will be implemented by youth-led organizations from November 2019 to November 2020. Financial support for the YSF 8th edition was provided by the Government of Finland.

# Youth Solidarity Fund Recipients Featured in a UNAOC Side Event During the 2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum

*“Young people have the power to implement projects. They have the power to be agents of positive change. They go into their communities - they are part of the community, so they understand what is happening there. They are able to reach their families, their friends and others that they know. That has really worked for LIFE and the project that was supported by YSF.”*

**Ms. Abiodun Rufus Unegbu**

Executive Director of the Leadership Initiative For Youth Empowerment (LIFE),  
Recipient of YSF 5th Edition

*“Truly, YSF provided a pioneering and strategic service, and the Government of Finland played a flagship role in supporting YSF since its inception. This is an important strategy in supporting and scaling support for youth-led organizations globally. UNAOC were not just a donor, they provided key support to these youth-led organizations that went beyond typical donor services.”*

**Mr. Michael McGill**

Author of the independent evaluation report for the Youth Solidarity Fund for the years 2016 and 2017

UNAOC organized a side event during the 2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum, in partnership with the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations, the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and Search for Common Ground. The event focused on a data-driven and evidence-based approach to investing in youth-led organizations for advancing the youth, peace and security agenda.

After opening remarks delivered by the Permanent Representatives of Spain and Finland, young people representing the Leadership Initiative for Youth Development in Nigeria and Chantiers Sociaux Marocains in Morocco, presented their work. Both organizations were recipients of the Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF) from UNAOC. They spoke about YSF’s impact through receiving

funds that could directly impact their community, as well as being given the opportunity to express their creativity as young people. A presentation was also made on the results from an independent evaluation report conducted on YSF for the years 2016 and 2017.

Technical experts from UNFPA/PBSO, and Search for Common Ground then provided a global level view on an evidence-based approach of investing in youth-led organizations. A panel discussion took place between all participants that included an interactive dialogue with the audience. The meeting closed with a call for interested stakeholders to convene through the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security to discuss next steps on developing a framework for evaluation, and the evidence-based approach for investing in young people and youth-led peacebuilding organizations.

# PLURAL+ **Receives** Record Number **of** Videos

This year, the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) received more than 1,200 video submissions from over 70 countries, over three times more entries than in 2018! Throughout July, UNAOC held PLURAL+ pre-selection screenings with United Nations colleagues and other professionals, to select a shortlist of videos to be reviewed by the PLURAL+ International Jury. The 2019 PLURAL+ winners will be announced in the fall and celebrated during the annual PLURAL+ Awards Ceremony at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in November.

# PLURAL+



**UNAOC**  
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations



**IOM**  
UN MIGRATION

**YOUTH VIDEO FESTIVAL ON MIGRATION, CELEBRATING DIVERSITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION**

## PLURAL+ 2019 ENTRIES

*In 2019, PLURAL+ received 1,200+ video entries from 75 countries.*



*PLURAL+ received entries from the following countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, and Zambia*

## UNAOC and IOM Reveal Members of the 2019 PLURAL+ International Jury



Each year, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) assemble a prestigious PLURAL+ International Jury of six to eight members, whose career, experience, and achievements are strongly linked to the themes of PLURAL+, namely migration, social inclusion, diversity, and the prevention of xenophobia. In July, the two partner organizations revealed the names of the 2019 PLURAL+ International Jury, which includes Athar Ahmad (BBC News), Axel Caballero (HBO), Aya Chebbi (African Union Youth Envoy), Lula Dualeh (Digital Advocacy Strategist), Maha Jaafar (YouTube Creator for Change), Chaker Khazaal (Author and Journalist), Tania Safi (Video Journalist and Producer), and Arun Venugopal (WNYC). Throughout August, PLURAL+ Jurors will review a shortlist of PLURAL+ videos, and the winners will be announced in November during the annual PLURAL+ Awards Ceremony at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

## UNAOC Organizes PLURAL+ Photo Exhibit at ECOSOC Youth Forum



As part of the 2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum at the United Nations Headquarters on 8-9 April, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) organized a photo exhibition showcasing their joint initiative, the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival. Launched in 2009, PLURAL+ invites youth around the world to submit original and creative videos focusing on the themes of migration, diversity, social inclusion, and the prevention of xenophobia. The photo exhibition was set up in the SDG Media Zone, alongside various interactive installations presented by other UN entities. The PLURAL+ exhibit highlighted some of the most compelling photos and quotes from winning PLURAL+ videos. UNAOC staff were present throughout the ECOSOC Youth Forum to answer the questions of the 1,000+ youths in attendance.

## PLURAL+ Video Screenings at the 24th World Scout Jamboree

During 26-28 July, UNAOC took part in the 24th World Scout Jamboree held in West Virginia, United States of America. UNAOC organized screenings of award-winning videos from the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival and engaged with participants afterwards in discussions on the topics of migration, social inclusion, diversity and the prevention of xenophobia. UNAOC also had the opportunity to present their youth programming in a Town Hall meeting at the Global Development Village. The 24th World Scout Jamboree was attended by 42,000 total youth participants and adult volunteers.



### UNAOC Participates in “People on the Move” Panel at ECOSOC Youth Forum

During the ECOSOC Youth Forum at the United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) was invited to participate on 9 April in a panel entitled “People on the Move.” The discussion, which took place in the SDG Media Zone, focused on the pressing issues of xenophobia, human rights, safety, and freedom of migrants, especially youth and featured representatives from UNFPA, the Canadian Rohingya Development Initiative, IOM and UNAOC. UNAOC presented the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival and described how, over the years, the initiative has empowered global youths to be catalysts for change. The discussion was broadcast live on UN Web TV and is available for streaming.

### UNAOC Participates in Youth Media Panel at Forum on Indigenous Issues

As part of the 18th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, UNAOC was invited to participate in a discussion at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 25 April.

Entitled “Rights to Indigenous Communications: Honoring our cultures, languages, and traditions through digital storytelling,” the panel was organized by Wapikoni mobile, as well as the Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Cine y Comunicación de los Pueblos Indígenas (CLACPI), Isuma TV, and Cultural Survival. It featured short films by indigenous filmmakers, highlighted the challenges that the community faces, and presented the impact of media initiatives on vulnerable youths.

UNAOC presented its PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival and how the initiative has been instrumental in providing youth filmmakers – including indigenous filmmakers – with a platform to make their voices heard about pressing social issues.

# 2019 Fellows Traveled to Morocco, Egypt and Qatar to Discuss the Role of Women in Peacemaking and Conflict Prevention with Local Stakeholders



Twelve young civil society leaders from ten countries of Europe and North America traveled to Rabat and Casablanca in Morocco, Cairo in Egypt, and Doha in Qatar from 26 June to 10 July 2019. Selected for their expertise in the fields of gender and peace-building, UNAOC Fellows met with international institutions, government representatives, civil society organizations, media and religious leaders. Together they exchanged good practices on the role women should play in building sustainable peace and in preventing conflict.

Twelve Fellows from the MENA region will travel to Germany, Spain and the USA in October.

The UNAOC Fellowship Programme is made possible thanks to the financial contribution of the governments of Azerbaijan, Germany, and Spain, and the support of the governments of Morocco and Qatar and the League of Arab States. For more information, please visit [fellowship.unaoc.org](http://fellowship.unaoc.org).

*"There is a need to stress the importance of role models. We met with a lot of influential women leaders, who indeed are true role models in their society that young girls and boys look up to."*

**Rugile Butkeviciute (Lithuania)**  
2019 UNAOC Fellow



## UNAOCC FELLOWS' PERSPECTIVES: *William Lindsay (U.S.A.)*



*After completion of his trip across the MENA region, William Lindsay (U.S.A.) shared some insights about his experience and the good practices he brought back home.*

Over the course of two weeks, I traveled as one of the 2019 UNAOCC EUNA Fellows to Morocco, Egypt, and Qatar where we met with groups and organizations to discuss women's role in conflict prevention and peacemaking. My knowledge and experience with the regions of Middle East and North Africa was, prior to this fellowship, somewhat limited in scope. The entirety of my work as a young professional has thus far been defined by working with newcomers (refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants) in both Europe and the United States. The majority of newcomers with whom I have worked are from a broad range of Arab and African countries. I currently work as a Program Manager at Women of the World in Salt Lake City. One of the largest accomplishments for the women we serve is to become gainfully employed; meaning helping them identify a career path and secure a livable wage for them and their family.

While our Founder and Executive Director is an Iraqi woman, our case managers have historically been white American women. Their approach is entirely secular, and doesn't adhere to any specific religion's beliefs or customs. In fact, we actively dissuade both volunteers and clients from bringing religion into their mentoring relationship with women. This irreligious approach to our organization's services can sometimes conflict with the norms of traditional Muslim families. By visiting countries where Islam is the prevailing religion, I aimed to understand the perspectives of stakeholders we encountered and how they can inform culturally-specific strategies to collectively empower the women we serve at my organization.

The conclusion of many of our meetings with grassroots

movements, civil society groups, and intergovernmental entities concluded three priorities: Education, Dialogue, and Intercultural and Interfaith communication. These three areas are primary vehicles of preventing extremism by spreading a tolerant and moderate interpretation of Islam. They should be promoted in a way that engages stakeholders with less visibility, such as women and youth, while maintaining the inclusivity of men. We have explored the importance of why these demographics should be involved, and have seen frameworks that hold education and youth as priority from organizations like the Idmaj Association in Casablanca. We learned from organizations in Cairo the utmost importance of dialogue and education as a vehicle for peace and collaborative problem solving. Lastly, we garnered the perspective of the UN Secretary General's Humanitarian Envoy in Doha for connecting the global and local stakeholders to cogenerate solutions for shared issues.

Back at Women of the World, we can apply these lessons of education, dialogue, and inclusivity when we engage with women and their families. To best serve our women, we must collaboratively establish their goals in a way that doesn't counter their religious or cultural customs. To take it a step further, we can expand the perspective of women's empowerment to an economic perspective and a central means to advocate for women as leaders in their households. By bringing in their husbands into the shared goal of economic empowerment, we hope to likewise create a step-by-step plan that is culturally relevant and consistent with the women we serve.

## UNAOC FELLOWS' PERSPECTIVES: Rugile Butkeviciute (Lithuania)



*Rugile Butkeviciute (Lithuania) is a women's advocate and works for the Women's Issues Information Center in Vilnius, Lithuania. During her Fellowship experience, Rugile said she met with powerful female role models in Morocco, Egypt and Qatar.*

There is a need to stress the importance of role models. We met with a lot of influential women leaders, who indeed are true role models in their society that young girls and boys look up to.

In Morocco, we visited the Mohammed VI Institute Training for Imams, an institution that trains imams and religious leaders from different countries. To our surprise there were women who were students and teachers at the Institute. A young female student from Nigeria explained that after graduation she will go back home and become a leader in her community. She intends to interpret the Holy Quran for women groups in the mosque as well as talk to them about domestic violence and other pressing issues related to gender. Dr. Asma Lamrabet told us how she is advocating for an interpretation of the Holy Quran that would highlight the egalitarian message that is at the heart of Islam, and help Muslim societies understand and address gender related issues through a contemporary lens.

We also learned some good practice from initiatives tackling gender issues like sexual harassment in the streets. In Morocco, we met with the founder and members of #ZankaDialna, a spontaneous citizen initiative that was born in June 2018 to address harassment and violence against women. The main claim of this initiative is to reclaim the public space for women and encourage women and men to share their stories of sexual harassment on their Facebook group, which now has more than 10,000 active members. #ZankaDialna also initiated silent walks and performances in front of the Parliament in Rabat.

Rasha Mansour, Professor at the British University in Egypt, told us that Egyptian feminism was more than a century old. Egyptian women have been fighting for their rights for quite some time! In her class, she likes to challenge gender stereotypes while engaging her female and male students as she believes that youth have a crucial role to play to sustain peace within their community.

While visiting Qatar we observed how women role models can shape the mind of young girls and women. We learned about H.H. Sheika Moza bint Nasser who is an important female role model in Qatar and who has endorsed many educational projects and initiatives targeting women and girls. Her Highness initiated the creation of a museum dedicated to telling the history of slavery across the MENA region from ancient times up until today, highlighting the issue of modern slavery. We met with H.E. Lolwah Al-Khater, Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar. She is also an important role model for young girls in Qatar supporting education and career development for women and girls in various fields.

I would like to conclude by saying that we all have stereotypes. Some are adopted from our families, others picked up and enforced by society. We need to challenge those stereotypes by meeting people from different countries that suffer from them and become ambassadors of inclusivity and peace in our community. I am grateful that UNAOC gave me opportunity to come closer to this goal.



## UNAOC and BMW Group host event in Berlin for Intercultural Innovation Award Alumni



The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, in partnership with BMW Group, hosted an event for the alumni of the Intercultural Innovation Award in Berlin, Germany, from 1 to 4 April 2019. Participants in the event were selected from different editions of the Award and come from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas and Oceania.

The Alumni event was designed as an interactive learning experience during which participants shared experiences about their work in the field of intercultural dialogue, as well as best practices, challenges, and success stories, and reflected upon the future of the alumni network of the Intercultural Innovation Award.

During the first day, representatives from the selected organizations presented their work and the challenges they've encountered, various strategies that they've used,

and other methods related to innovation, sustainability, and replicability. These three sessions served as a basis for the second day of the event during which the alumni had the opportunity to discuss those topics more in depth.

As part of the alumni event, participants also got a chance to visit a Berlin-based recipient of the Intercultural Innovation Award "Give Something Back to Berlin," a platform and network fostering community integration, intercultural dialogue, and participation among Berlin's diverse migrant communities.

Participants also met and networked with a group of local NGOs working on promoting refugee and migrant integration at the local level through innovative ways.

## Spotlight on Intercultural Innovation Award Recipients

### Give Something Back to Berlin (GSBTB) invited to Town Hall Meeting held by President Obama in Berlin



GSBTB attended a town hall meeting held by the Obama Foundation, featuring an appearance by the former US president himself. Participants discussed the meaning of being an active citizen in Berlin, diversity and representation matters, inclusion and more.

*"It obviously doesn't get more 'establishment' than hanging out with a former US president, but if that establishment starts listening to or looking a little bit more like the crowd that was present in that room it would already be a win for the world."*

Annamaria Olsson, Founder, GSBTB, IIA Recipient

### Safarni sets up a Diversity Festival with the IOM Living Together Project in Alexandria, Egypt

In January 2019, Safarni culminated the IOM Living Together Project in Alexandria, Egypt, a project in which they implemented intercultural programs with Syrian, Yemeni, Egyptian and Sudanese children in the coastal city of Alexandria, Egypt. The project objective was to build social cohesion in Alexandria between migrant communities and the Egyptian host community.



### Media Focus in Africa launches Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Project in the Rwenzori Region



The team at Media Focus in Africa launched a new initiative to promote intercultural dialogue and to demonstrate alternative ways of dealing with conflict that can lead to more social cohesion and sustainable peace. This initiative addresses the conflicts in the Rwenzori region (Uganda).

MFA has partnered with Maisha Film Lab and two local radio stations in the region to produce a thirteen-episode radio drama series on peace-building which should air early August 2019.

## Spotlight on Intercultural Innovation Award Recipients

### UN Women invites On Our Radar to contribute to Social Innovation hackathon in Afghanistan



On Our Radar was invited to contribute to the design and facilitation of a social innovation hackathon in Afghanistan run by UN Women, which brought together over 70 women and 10 men from across the country.

The purpose was to design a mean for increasing the number and diversity of women's voices being heard as part of the Afghani peace process. The experience served as a breakthrough for these women as it demonstrated not only their creativity but also their passion for peace.

### PCF's Amara Project partners with P2PModels to begin development of New Platform Tool for a Collaborative Economy

In June 2019, PCF partnered with P2P Models, an organization that is exploring the potential of blockchain-based technologies to foster a more social and collaborative platform economy.



P2P Models aims to discover the consequences of redistributing governance of crowdsourcing rules to the members of crowdsourcing communities, in the hopes of developing more social, worker-centric crowdsourcing platforms that do more than simply create capital for owners.



### Vaga Lume Association granted European Union Human Rights Award by the European Union Delegation in Brazil

Since 2001, Vaga Lume has continued to advance its programs by empowering children living in rural communities of the Amazon region and promoting literacy and community libraries as knowledge sharing places.

Their continuous work has proven to be extremely fruitful as in November 2018, Vaga Lume Association was granted the European Union Human Rights Award. This award was created in honor of the anniversary of the Declaration by the European Union Delegation in Brazil, aiming to identify common projects that work in the promotion of human rights.

As a result, in June 2019, Vaga Lume Association was granted by the European Union Delegation in Brazil a participation in the European Development Days 2019 in Brussels, Belgium, which brought together government officials and civil society to discuss the theme "Addressing inequalities: Building a world that leaves no one behind."

## Encontrarse en La Diversidad launches two new projects to include Women and Adults



Encontrarse en la Diversidad launched “Monólogos para la Diversidad”, an initiative that invites participants to reflect upon complex themes like diversity and inclusion from a holistic perspective, starting from humor. With more than 500 participants, the initiative was successful in involving youth and adults from diverse backgrounds, including immigrants, members of indigenous communities, students, executives, government workers, NGO members, religious leaders, and more.

## The Parent’s Circle organizes first joint meeting for “We Want a Better Tomorrow”

The first joint meeting of the new narratives group “We Want a Better Tomorrow” gathered 30 Israelis and Palestinians in Beit Jala in order for them to get to know one another through an introduction of the participants’ personal and national narratives.

Group members shared their personal stories and were exposed to the reality of life on the other side, building trust and empathy between participants. They assisted in a lecture on the national narratives given by two historians, Professor Mustafa Kabha and Professor Aviva Halamish, which allowed them to hear the differences between two narratives that depict the same historical events.

As part of the program, group members participate in various activities, including tours familiarizing them with national traumas, the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum and the destroyed village of Lifta near Jerusalem.

After completing the process, they will join the Forum’s Narratives Project alumni community. The community now counts about 1,000 Palestinians and Israelis who have participated in the project since 2010, some of which continue to promote peace and reconciliation in both communities.

## CRIS launches Buddy Up! Digital Media Resource & Buddy Up! Urban Villages programme



CRIS is launching Buddy Up! Digital Media Resource and Buddy Up! Urban Village programme, two new side projects that will act as a training resource for school staff, parents, students and the wider school community.

Over the next two years, CRIS will expand the ‘Buddy Up!’ programme into 40 school communities within the Urban Village areas. This will give students, parents and staff the opportunity to meet, learn and play with their new ‘buddies’ across school and community boundaries.

As a result, this has contributed to the making of a ‘Buddy Up!’ digital media resource, designed both to promote ‘Buddy Up!’ and to act as a training resource for participants.

## Wapikoni Mobile partners with NETFLIX in Canada



On June 11 2019, The Wapikoni Mobile announced the signature of a partnership with Netflix at the Banff World Media Festival, in Alberta, Canada.

With this new partnership, Wapikoni will be able to coordinate its important collective of emerging filmmakers, organize numerous opportunities, and structure a program of both continuing education and professional coaching which will have a profound and lasting impact on the next generation of Indigenous creators.



*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.*

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