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Youth Peace Ambassadors

Human dignity
and peace-building
by young people in Europe

Presentation
Call for applications

Group C: 15 November 2011 → December 2012

The Council of Europe invites all youth leaders working in conflict-affected communities to apply to take part in the training for the third group of future youth ambassadors for peace.

Conflict affected communities are understood as communities that experience or are recovering from armed conflict, terrorism, frozen conflict, rise of racist discourse, nationalism and xenophobia, the escalation of hate speech and hate crime, discrimination and social exclusion, especially related to the Roma community, migrants and refugees, or other types of conflict affecting society and young people in particular.

The project combines residential training, distance learning and field initiatives supported by a European network and is run from 2011 to 2013. Applications to be part of the third and final group of "ambassadors" are now open.

You can find below detailed information about the project background, aim and objectives, profile of the candidates and selection procedure.

Human Dignity and Peace-Building by Young People in Europe

The Youth Peace Ambassadors project promotes and supports the role of young people in peace-building activities that contribute to living together in dignity and dialogue. The project is the result of a needs assessment done by European youth organisations and builds up on the particular contribution and perspective that youth work and youth policy can bring to peace-building processes in Europe, especially through its preventive and educational nature. The Youth Ambassadors for Peace project was proposed by the Advisory Council on Youth and endorsed by the Joint Council on Youth of the Council of Europe in its 22nd meeting in March 2010¹.

Central to the project are the concepts of human rights, peace and "deep security", understood as long-term and deep-rooted processes ensuring equality in dignity for all, fostering intercultural dialogue, and providing real access to and participation in the democratic process in Europe.

The project is inspired by the achievements and standards of the Council of Europe in the field of the protection and promotion of human rights, intercultural dialogue and democracy, and particularly those related to youth policy in Europe and to the reaffirming young people's role as active citizens and protagonists of social change.

In the framework of "Agenda 2020" on the youth policy of the Council of Europe, the project contributes to providing young people with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to play a full part in all aspects of society and, in particular:

- empowering young people to promote, in their daily lives, cultural diversity as well as intercultural dialogue and co-operation;
- preventing and counteracting all forms of racism and discrimination on any ground;
- supporting initiatives of young people and their organisations with regard to conflict prevention and management, as well as post-conflict reconciliation by means of intercultural dialogue, including its religious dimension.²

¹ The Council of Europe youth sector is governed by a system of co-management, bringing together representatives of member states governments (European Steering Committee for Youth) and of youth non-governmental organisations (Advisory Council on Youth) to propose priorities and programmes to be implemented. Further information available at: www.coe.int/youth.

² Agenda 2020 is the framework policy document of the youth sector setting the work priorities for youth work in Council of Europe member states. Further information: www.coe.int/youth.

The Council of Europe's youth sector has an outstanding tradition of supporting young people and youth non-governmental organisations as peace-builders and actors in conflict transformation and intercultural dialogue. Previous initiatives include programmes of assistance in the field of youth which focused on conflict prevention and transformation in the Caucasus region; the Youth Peace Camp or the Democratic Leadership Programme, a 10-year project preparing the ground for democratic development. The programme of activities of the European Youth Centres has included several training activities on conflict mediation and conflict transformation which have provided the substance for non-formal education manuals such as the Training-Kit on Conflict Transformation, published by the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth, in addition to *Compass*, the manual for Human Rights Education with Young People. The European Youth Foundation also developed a programme of pilot projects to support youth projects in conflict-struck areas, in addition to the many international activities run by youth organisations with its financial support which have peace and conflict transformation as an aim. All these programmes confirmed the need and to further invest in empowering young people to take an active role in peace-building processes, but as well the valuable contribution youth work makes.

Through the Youth Peace Ambassadors project, the Council of Europe will support young people from different conflict-affected communities in Europe through a training programme that will develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes and involves residential trainings and e-learning as well as community-rooted initiatives and projects carried by the participants.

A European network of the young people involved in the project will further support the participants and contribute to medium-term impact and sustainability of the project. The outcomes and lessons learnt from the project and from the initiatives of the young *ambassadors* should also influence European youth policy approaches to communities affected by conflict, such as those experiencing or recovering from armed conflict, terrorism, frozen conflicts, racism and aggressive nationalism, hate speech and hate crime. Particular attention will be paid to initiatives based in multicultural neighbourhoods or addressing hate speech online or young migrants and refugees or Roma communities.

Aim

The Youth Peace Ambassadors project promotes and supports the role of young people in peace-building activities that contribute to living together in dignity and dialogue through a network of specifically trained young people who strengthen the presence and promote the values of the Council of Europe in conflict-affected areas and communities.

Objectives

The main objectives of this project are:

- To promote the presence and the role of young people as positive actors of change in peace-building processes;
- To strengthen the role of young people in identifying and speaking up against human rights violations, including discrimination, hate speech and those human rights violations affecting especially young people and children;
- To support the field presence and activities of the Council of Europe by fostering cooperation with key stakeholders, partners, non-governmental organisations

working in the field of peace-building in order to promote the values of the Council of Europe;

- To develop the impact and the expertise of the Council of Europe's youth sector in conflict affected areas through non-formal education activities with young people;
- To develop the competences *youth peace ambassadors* in human rights promotion and protection, conflict transformation, peace-building and intercultural dialogue, as well as other specific competences according to the participants' needs, related to their role as future ambassadors;
- To support and give visibility to local youth-led projects for peace-building in conflict-affected areas and communities;
- To enhance the *youth ambassadors* capacity to take action at a local level in environments affected by previous or ongoing conflicts;
- To advance youth policy's role in peace-building and conflict transformation;
- To create and support a European network of *youth peace ambassadors* to secure the sustainability and medium-term impact of the project.

Expected Results

The main expected result is the creation of a sustainable network of *youth peace ambassadors* at the end of the project. The network will build upon the increased level of competence of the participants in working with and in conflict affected communities through training, their initiatives to and projects in local communities and their organisations or institutions.

The network will support the field presence of the Council of Europe and be an active and competent partner in future peace-building activities.

Through the various activities, such as advocacy, consultancy to youth initiatives, lobby, mediation and campaigning, to be implemented by the *youth ambassadors*, a higher level of awareness on human rights violations, instruments and mechanisms of protection of human rights is expected at community level.

The project will result into a higher level of cooperation and communication between different actors active in peace-building activities in conflict-affected communities in Europe (i.e. non-governmental organizations, local, national and regional institutions), cooperation in which Youth Peace Ambassadors are expected to act as liaison between local communities and relevant institutions.

Finally, the project should improve the relations and conditions for dialogue among young people taking part in or being affected by conflicts, including but not only armed conflicts and their consequences in various regions and countries across Europe.

Methodology

The project is based on the training of the youth ambassadors using the experience with intercultural and non-formal education approaches of the European Youth Centres in Budapest and Strasbourg. The participants will be trained during residential seminars at the European youth centres, complemented by distance learning using an e-learning platform and by youth work practice in their organisations and communities.

Three groups of twenty-five youth leaders, the future youth ambassadors, will follow a similar path of training, starting at different moments, but also meeting up to share experiences and support each other in learning, action taking and build up to act as a network.

The training programme comprises two residential training seminars, which are similar for participants of all groups:

- Seminar 1:* Human rights and human rights protection in conflict- affected communities, Peace Building and Conflict Transformation.
- Seminar 2:* Youth taking action on social and cultural conflict related to migration, Youth taking action to ensure social stability and justice: economic, social and cultural rights.

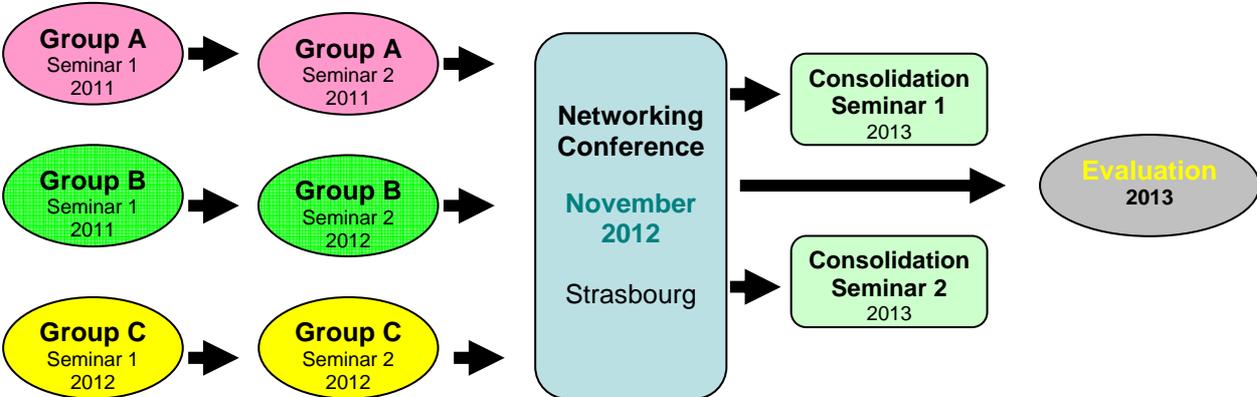
The project builds on the principles of non-formal education, focusing on experiential and intercultural learning as basis for addressing topics such as human rights, conflict transformation and peace-building. It emphasises the links between intercultural dialogue, human rights and conflict transformation as key elements in long-term sustainable peace processes, while exploring and developing participants’ knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in each of these areas.

E-learning features and activities are foreseen during the periods in before and between residential seminars. E-learning is necessary to deepen participants’ knowledge on the main themes of the project, to foster communication and cooperation and to share practices. E-learning units will first address common learning areas and, at a later stage, be tailored to individual learning needs and experiences. E-learning will be based on a Moodle platform of the Directorate of Youth and Sport.

Participants will have the chance – and are expected to - implement their learning into practice by initiating various activities in their community to support youth participation and contribution to peace-building processes. Support will be offered, in the form of peer groups and guidance, to assist and contribute to the success of their learning and projects. In some cases, projects and initiatives may qualify for financial support through the programme of pilot projects of the European Youth Foundation.

The project includes also support measures to create and develop the network of youth peace ambassadors encompassing members of all three groups, including a seminar for the three groups. The seminar should help to start-up the network by allowing participants to get to know each other, reflect, share and discuss the aim and role, objectives and initial action plans for the network.

A third consolidation training seminar, open for participants from all three groups, might be organised to consolidate learning taking into account the needs identified by participants as a result of their projects and initiatives.



The curriculum of the training seminars and distance learning will make full use of the educational resources of the Council of Europe's youth sector, in particular Compass, the manual on human rights education with young people" and the T-Kit on Conflict Transformation.

Competences

Through the long term training course, participants are expected to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes in the following areas of work related with their role as future *youth peace ambassadors*:

- Human rights, including key concepts, international standards and mechanisms of protection, identification of human rights violations and capacity to speak against them, advocacy for human rights;
- Intercultural dialogue and learning and their application in youth and community projects;
- Conflict transformation and peace-building, including conflict theories and dynamics of peace, and the application in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and conflict transformation work.
- Awareness of and promotion of the Council of Europe's work in the field of peace-building and related topics, including capacity to liaise between local actors and the Council of Europe;
- Networking and partnership development at local and international level;
- Development and implementation of youth initiatives and activities in the field of peace-building.

Calendar of the project for Group C

2011

a) Recruitment and selection of participants

September – October 2011

Dead-line for applications: 21 October 2011; Results announcement: 11 November 2011.

b) E-learning Phase 1, participants will get to know each other, the Council of Europe and its instruments for promoting and protecting Human Rights in Europe. Participants will also be supported in developing their local project initiatives ahead of the first residential seminar, **15 November 2011** – Mid January 2012

2012

c) Seminar 1: Human Rights, Human Rights Protection and conflict transformation in Conflict-Affected Areas. 6 working days, **22-29 January 2012** (incl. days of arrival and departure), European Youth Centre Strasbourg

The first training seminar will focus on human rights, conflict and the role of human rights education in relation to peace-building and conflict transformation with young people. Six working days are foreseen so as to allow some time for group building and development of the local project initiatives of participants.

d) E-learning Phase 2 and implementation of local project initiatives, Participants will be provided with e-learning units to strengthen their knowledge on conflict transformation, human rights education and various other related topics depending on the needs of the participants group. Participants will implement their local project

initiatives with the support and coaching from the team of trainers, **February – November 2012**.

e) Seminar 2: Youth taking action on social and cultural conflict and ensure social stability and justice, 5 working days, **2-8 September 2012** (incl. days of arrival and departure, European Youth Centre Budapest).

The participants in the first seminar will have gone through a phase of e-learning and have implemented their local project initiatives before coming back together for the second training seminar, focusing on youth taking action on social and cultural conflicts and taking action for social stability and justice. The five days foreseen are necessary, especially in view of the need to evaluate learning in the on-line phase and the local projects and to plan the next steps. The seminar will be preceded and followed-up by e-learning.

f) Networking meeting: 9 – 13 November 2012 (incl. days of arrival and departure)

The meeting will bring together all participants in the project and relevant stakeholders: representatives of statutory bodies of the youth sector of the Council of Europe, representatives of other relevant services of Council of Europe, institutional and organisational partners.

2013 (provisional)

g) Consolidation seminars for all groups: 5 working days, **early 2013**, (to be confirmed)

Participants from the three groups will have identified learning needs in relation to their role as future youth peace ambassadors and their projects. Taking this into account, two seminars might be offered focusing on those themes or competences that are cross-cutting for the entire group, and participants will be offered the chance to choose the one to participate in.

h) Evaluation and Follow-up Meeting of the project, Mid 2013, (to be confirmed)

Meeting bringing together members of the Joint Council on Youth, trainers, participants and external evaluator to review the achievements, evaluate the project and prepare the follow-up with the "Youth Peace Ambassadors".

Transversal features (2011-2012) for all groups

E-learning, November 2011 – December 2012

E-learning is necessary to develop participants' knowledge on the main themes of the project, to foster communication and cooperation and to share project plans. E-learning units will first address common learning areas and, at a later stage, be tailored to individual learning needs and contexts. E-learning will be placed on the Moodle platform of the Directorate of Youth and Sport.

Participant's initiatives for peace-building in local communities, November 2011 – December 2012

It is expected that, after the initial residential seminar, participants in the different groups will initiate actions for peace-building in their local communities. The initiatives will constitute a learning experience and will be supported through mentoring and peer groups, but will also benefit of institutional support in varied forms depending on need and particularities.

Peer groups and mentoring, November 2011 – December 2012

Small groups of participants will act as peer support to each other in order to consolidate learning and share experiences in relation to community projects developed. Peer groups will be formed during the first seminar. Each participant will be also assigned a contact person from the training team in the first seminar to set personal learning objectives, to guide and support learning throughout the project.

Participants' Profile

Potential applicants should fulfil the following criteria:

- be aged between 18 and 26 (exceptions may be made on the basis of justification)
- be able to use English language independently in both written and oral communication;
- be available and fully committed to take part in all stages of the project, including an average of 2 hours/ week for online work within the project;
- possess basic computer and internet literacy and be committed to further develop this competence;
- be actively involved in projects for peace and/or social change with an impact in their community and be motivated to implement youth initiatives for peace building within the project's framework;
- be motivated to learn and to apply the Council of Europe values and approaches for peace-building, notably human rights, democracy and intercultural dialogue;
- be committed to promote peace and work towards conflict transformation through initiatives and projects involving young people;
- preferably be involved in an organisation or network, institution, formal and/or informal group ready to support them throughout the project duration;
- be ready to develop and implement projects/actions for peace within Youth Peace Ambassadors project framework;
- possess a sense of responsibility for one's own actions and a commitment to personal and community development;
- be curious, open-minded and appreciate diversity;

Application, procedure and selection of participants

All candidates must apply on-line, completing the application form under this link: <http://youthapplications.coe.int/>.

Applications must be submitted by 20th October 2011. If the participant is affiliated with an organisation, a letter of support from their sending organisation can be uploaded on the platform or sent separately by e-mail, fax or post to express support offered throughout the project to the participant and his/her initiatives.

Thirty participants will be selected for group C for the initial e-learning phase. Twenty-five participants will be invited to the training seminar based on their shown commitment to the e-learning phase and their local project initiatives. The initial selection will be made on the basis of the correspondence with the profile outlined above. The selection will also take into account balance between sexes, geographical regions, different types of experiences, cultural backgrounds and organisations, institutions and projects.

Candidates will be informed about whether their application has been accepted or rejected, and if they have been put on the waiting list, by 11th November 2011.

Deadline for applications

The application form must be submitted on-line, with the support letters if applicable, until **Friday 21st October 2011**.

Financial and practical conditions of participation

Working language

The common working language of the course will be English. Candidates must be able to use English language independently in both written and oral communication.

Travel expenses

Travel expenses and visa costs for all residential training seminars of the project are reimbursed upon presentation of the relevant receipts, according to the rules of the Council of Europe. Only the participants who attend the entire training course can be reimbursed. The payment will be made either by bank transfer after each course, or at the end of each course in cash (in Euros).

Accommodation

Board and lodging for all training seminars in the project are provided and paid for by the Council of Europe at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg and European Youth Centre Budapest.

Enrolment fee

An enrolment fee of **60 Euros** is to be paid by each participant for each training seminar. This amount will be deducted from the amount to be reimbursed for travel expenses or paid at the EYCs during the course.

Other training courses of the Directorate Youth and Sport

If you are interested in a training course in international youth work, but your profile does not fully correspond with the requirements of this course, please note that the Directorate of Youth and Sport organises other training courses. For details please consult our webpage www.coe.int/youth or contact one of the European youth centres.

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