

UPF Europe and the Middle East ILC July-August 2022: Berlin Session 2

Sandra Skrodzki
July 26, 2022



Berlin, Germany - The second session of the Europe-Middle East International Leadership Conference 2022 was held under the title "Peace Road: A Global Project toward Sustainable Peace."

Sessions I and II both took place on July 26, 2022, in the ballroom of the Berlin City Mission.

Three more sessions were held in London on August 4, and the final two were held in Larnaca, Cyprus, and Tirana, Albania, both on August 5.

An International Leadership Conference was held in every region of the world in the summer of 2022, with the overall theme "Towards Peace and Security on the Korean Peninsula: Building a Global Culture of Peace."

In Session II, the Peace Road Initiative was introduced as a global campaign that brings together young people from nations with a history of conflict. How can young people turn the situation around by using innovative tools and resources for conflict resolution and reconciliation? How can they mobilize leaders from the fields of politics, religion, and civil society, and contribute to transforming "swords into ploughshares" in Europe, Northeast Asia, and around the world?

The speakers of this session, mainly young leaders and youth representatives of international organizations from Europe and South Korea, brought complementary perspectives on the topic of young people's role in the Peace Road Initiative.



[Mrs. Mélanie Komagata, Postgraduate Student, East Asian Studies, University of Geneva](#)

The moderator was Mélanie Komagata, committee member of the Swiss chapter of the International

Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP), an organization that is affiliated with UPF. Ms. Komagata introduced the platform to which participants could submit their answers to two questions connected to the topic of the conference.



[Mr. Koji Matsuda, President, IAYSP International, Japan](#)

Dr. Koji Matsuda from Japan, the president of IAYSP International, recalled that, as a student, he first came to Berlin 35 years ago to participate in a rally calling for the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of East and West Germany.

He then gave an introduction to the International Peace Highway, which the founders of UPF and IAYSP first proposed in 1981 at the International Conference on the Unity of Sciences. "The construction of such a Peace Highway would unite the entire globe on the day of its completion," Dr. Matsuda said. "The world would be one village interconnected by one road system."

The process of constructing the highway would provide a common purpose for the governments and the people of the world, opening national lines of commerce and recreation which would stimulate the exchange of culture and goods and encourage living together in harmony as neighbors. Dr. Matsuda mentioned that in 1996 a pilot tunnel construction already commenced and that until now 500 meters have been excavated.

He also called for an immediate stop to military aggression in Ukraine, emphasizing the role of Ukraine in the global project as a country connecting Europe and Asia. In conclusion, he read a quote from Mother of Peace, the memoir of UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon: "The passion of youth transcends borders and breaks down walls."

[Click here for the full intervention of Dr. Koji Matsuda](#)



[Dr. Farida Valliulina, Lawyer; UPF Representative to the UN in Vienna, Austria](#)

Dr. Farida Valliulina, a lawyer specializing in public international law and human rights law, currently representing UPF at the United Nations in Vienna, started her presentation by reading statistics from the UN 2019 World Population Prospects, according to which an estimated 1.3 billion people between the ages of 15 and 24 were affected by conflict.

"Considering that 65 percent of the population on the African continent consists of young people, it is becoming increasingly important that, rather than seeing young people as agents of conflict and destruction, they are seen as agents of peace, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, and advocates for social cohesion in their communities," Dr. Valliulina said.

She emphasized that "enhancing structures that promote the participation of youth in peacebuilding will actively contribute to their engagement with decisions that affect their well-being." Referring to the 2015 Amman Youth Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security, she said that young people are key agents of change and crucial actors in the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs).

Dr. Valiullina also explained the five pillars of young people's "meaningful participation" in peace processes and dispute resolutions: participation, protection, prevention, partnership, and disengagement and reintegration. To conclude, she showed examples of youth participation in decision-making processes around the world and suggested the next steps in which the UN can contribute to empowering young people.

[Click here for the full intervention of Dr. Farida Valliulina](#)

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[Mr. Soo-bin Park, Activist, Peace Road Korea](#)

Soo-bin Park, a student and a youth activist of Peace Road Korea, told of his personal experiences taking part in Peace Road activities in South Korea and around the world.

As a son of Korean and Japanese parents, he often felt heartbroken whenever Korea-Japan relations became difficult, or whenever he thought of the division in Korea. Therefore, he said, "the vision of the Peace Road project represents hope."

He took immediate action when he heard about the Peace Road 2022 activities launching in Germany. He flew there right away with the hope that his homeland, Korea, one day will reunite just as Germany reunited in 1990. The audience was stunned when Mr. Park described bicycling 1,200 kilometers with a fellow Korean student, carrying the Peace Road banner with them through Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic, arriving in Berlin just in time for the ILC.

He concluded by expressing that world peace cannot be accomplished solely by the efforts of governments; there needs to be a change within individuals as well.

[Click here for the full intervention of Mr. Soo-bin Park](#)



[Ms. Srruthi Lekha, Youth Affairs Coordinator and UN Representative, Women's Federation for World Peace International, Switzerland](#)

The next speaker was Srruthi Lekha, a youth affairs coordinator and representative to the United Nations in Geneva of Women's Federation for World Peace International (WFWPI), another organization that is affiliated with UPF.

She expressed her delight in meeting all those attending the conference. Because youth engagement often is used by institutions as just a "decoration" in declarations, she said she was grateful to UPF and IAYSP for taking actual steps toward engaging youth.

Ms. Lekha explained the concepts of positive and negative peace, as well as the theory of global humanism in international relations, according to which people interact prioritizing global humanity.

Although global humanism often is criticized in politics, she found the Peace Road Initiative to be deeply rooted in this theory of international relations and global politics.

Ms. Lekha gave the example that instead of being ready for war, building trust between all parties is key to creating a world of peace. She also related her own experience, showing that young people today are more interconnected than ever, thanks to technology and globally available channels of communication. She concluded by saying that all human beings make one big family. "Differences, distinctions, and borders are all man-made realities which can be and should be changed into one identity, which is humanity." Young people and the Peace Road Initiative could be the tool for it, she said.



[Dr. Diana Eșanu, Sub-regional Director, IAYSP East Europe](#)

Dr. Diana Eșanu from Moldova, a medical doctor and cardiologist who is also the director of IAYSP for Eastern Europe, talked about the historical importance of the Roman Empire's road system and the Silk Road.

The roads the Romans built were essential for the growth and maintenance of such a vast empire. Around 400,000 kilometers in total length, these roads were built with durable stones, most of which still exist in today's Italy.

Similarly, the Silk Road, a network of Eurasian trade routes, over 6,400 kilometers in total length, has played a central role in facilitating economic, cultural, political, and religious interaction between East and West.

Today such routes can be found in the European Union (international E-road network) as well, which she personally had a great delight in using for her travels.

Dr. Eșanu described Moldova's situation, where customs and border control cause great inequalities (difficulty of mobility, limited access). This was especially clear when Ukrainian refugees, many of them children, tried to cross the border with Moldova in the spring of 2022 and had to stand in line for sometimes days to be able to enter Moldova.

IAYSP Moldova, however, responded immediately to the great influx of refugees from Ukraine, through volunteering and donations, cooperating with the national refugee centers and establishing the Sunflower Center, which was created to help refugees, in the Peace Embassy. Dr. Eșanu described the main activities of IAYSP Moldova, which supports Ukrainian mothers with their children. She concluded with reflection questions as food for thought.

[Click here for the presentation of Dr. Diana Eșanu](#)

Question-and-answer session

To the first question - "What are the prerequisites for the International Peace Highway to be realized?" - Ms. Komagata read the top answers submitted by the audience: money, cooperation, trust, vision, confidence, forgiveness, love, hope, peace, unity, and reconciliation.

Ms. Lekha added that there is also a need for dialogue between the main actors, and cultural openness among people, giving the example of Indian and Pakistani citizens.

Dr. Valiullina commented that channels of communication between religious leaders are also crucial, as well as hard work, a clear vision, and leaders who are open, motivated, focused, resilient, and brave - people who are willing to break down walls between nations.

Dr. Eșanu said personal contribution is also necessary. Through investment, she said, one can feel that one is the owner of a project.

To the second question - "What would be the consequences if the International Peace Highway were realized?" - many answers were submitted by the audience. One person expressed that "people would get to know each other more and learn to work together. This would help them realize how many similarities people have, and that would motivate them to work even more together."

Another inspiring answer was that such a highway would "resolve anxiety connected to opening oneself to the rest of the world and to explore and understand it."





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Intervention of Mr. Soo-bin Park in the EUME ILC July-August 2022: Berlin Session 2

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Written by Mr. Soo-bin Park, Activist, Peace Road Korea

26 July 2022



I am the child of a multicultural Korean-Japanese family. Therefore, whenever Korea-Japan relations were not good, it was heartbreaking to see that the two countries could not reconcile even though they were both my country. Just like Korea and Japan, also Korea itself is a divided country. We used to speak the same language and lived in peace, but it is heartbreaking that we have been living separately for 70 years. For me, Peace Road's vision represents hope. The vision of 'opening the era of a global village by uniting all people as one family' gave me a dream. My dream is to ride by bicycle along the International Peace Highway, the construction of which is the main goal of Peace Road. Until I came to Europe, I had only participated in the Peace Road in Korea and Japan. When I heard that the World Peace Road will be launched in 'Germany' this time, I flew here right away with the hope that my homeland, Korea, can one day be reunited, just like Germany was.

As part of Peace Road Korea, I rode about 1000 km from Busan to Seoul, and in Japan nearly 1600 km from Tsushima and Hokkaido. In Europe we passionately travelled with our bikes from Frankfurt, through Austria and the Czech Republic to Berlin, totaling 1200 km.

I think that the division between the two Koreas cannot be solved by the state and politics alone, but it absolutely requires the role of individuals. Therefore, we do not stop at riding bicycles, but also raise awareness through a 10,000 signature campaign, gathering the support of those who love peace. Through the voice of 10,000 global citizens, we will give a strong voice for reconciliation and cooperation on the Korean peninsula, which will be the start to resolving the numerous conflicts between countries, ethnicities, and religions around the world. I want to let everyone here know that the unification of South and North Korea is a major step for world peace. Three days ago, while working on the signature campaign near the Parliament building in Berlin, I met a group of Canadians who repeatedly emphasized how crucial peace is. I felt reassured that the longing for world peace is a universal desire and that each and every one of us has an important role in it.

Recently, the peace in Europe has been threatened by the war between Russia and Ukraine, and the whole world is suffering from the economic consequences. It may be just a small step forward, but I will lead the Peace Road with the desire to achieve a world of peace. By linking the road between countries, we create active exchange between their peoples which is the only way for creating stable, lasting, and loving relationships.

It is an honor to be able to hold this conference for peace with all of you who have gathered here today. I would like us together to make this Berlin Peace Road a success and by inheriting the spirit of unity in Germany to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula and the world. Thank you.



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[Click here for the PowerPoint presentation of Dr. Farida](#)

[Valliulina](#)

The role of youth in peacebuilding processes

Introductory remarks

- The UN World Population Prospects statistics estimate that there are 3 billion 15-24 years olds in the world (2019) and nearly one billion live in developing countries where conflict is more likely to have taken place.
- Being deeply affected by conflict situations, young people's voices have to be heard and included in the processes of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.
- Considering that 65% of the population on the African continent consists of young people, it is becoming increasingly important that, rather than seeing young people as agents of conflict and destruction, they are seen as agents of peace, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and advocates for social cohesion in their communities.
- Enhancing structures that promote the participation of youth in peacebuilding will actively contribute to their engagement with decisions that affect their wellbeing.
- The growing mobilization of young people and their untiring advocacy to have a say in local, national and international policies, and to have a seat at the table in peace/ security efforts have caught the attention of the international community & policymakers.
- During the first Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security in August 2015, hundreds jointly drafted the Amman Youth Declaration, which called for greater partnerships with young people in addressing issues of peace and security, gender equality, and young people's empowerment.



Young people and the 2030 Agenda (2015)

Greater cooperation with young people at the United Nations and in other regional and national settings demonstrate the need to include young people in all processes.

Young people are seen as:

- key agents of change and crucial actors in the implementation of SDGs, particularly (SDG 16) "advancing peaceful, just and inclusive societies;
- key to the commitment in the 2030 Agenda to "leave no one behind".

UN Security Council resolutions on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS)

- The emergence of the YPS agenda through the adoption of Resolution 2250 by the UN Sec Council was the milestone towards challenging the exclusionary approach to youth in peace & security. This was the outcome of a youth-driven advocacy process supported by a global coalition of UN agencies, civil society org-s and youth-led

org-s.

- The agenda is integral, covers conflict prevention, peace-making, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, hum/assistance, human rights & development, and considers civil society leadership (including that of women and youth) as indispensable to lasting peace.

1. UN Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015)

- The unanimously adopted Resolution recognizes, for the first time, that 'young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security' and that 'their marginalization is detrimental to building sustainable peace' ((n 5) Preamble, para 2).
- It identifies five pillars for action, and calls for mechanisms that allow the meaningful participation of young women and men in peace processes and dispute resolution.

What does "meaningful participation" really mean?

- From a rights-based perspective, young women and young men have the right to be informed and consulted and to have their voices taken into account regarding all matters that have a direct or indirect impact on their lives and futures. The realization of their right to participate needs to be guaranteed by duty-bearers and the United Nations.
- From an efficiency perspective, ensuring that young people are engaged and have a say in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes can significantly improve the relevance, legitimacy, sustainability and impact of projects.
- Engaging young people does not only mean providing them with access to these processes, it also involves the United Nations holding itself accountable to an important constituency.

The five pillars of SC Res 2250

- Participation– Take youth's inclusive representation at all levels in local, national, regional and international institutions, and their views into account in decision-making processes, from negotiation to peace agreements.
- Protection– Ensure the protection of young civilians' lives and human rights, and investigate and prosecute those responsible for crimes perpetrated against them.
- Prevention– Support young people in preventing violence and in promoting a culture of tolerance and intercultural dialogue.
- Partnership– Engage young people during and after conflict when developing peacebuilding strategies, along with community actors and UN bodies.
- Disengagement and reintegration– Invest in youth affected by armed conflict through employment opportunities, inclusive labour policies and education promoting a culture of peace.

Promote and support coalitions that engage a diversity of YPS actors.

» Prioritize the creation of YPS coalitions to ensure a collective impact on YPS at local, national, regional and global levels. Such coalitions should be multisectoral and cross-cutting partnerships between young people, including young women; youth organizations; and multilateral government and civil society actors, including the private sector, religious communities, private foundations and educational institutions. Examples include:	• The Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security • Finland's National Action Plan on UNSCR 2250
» Collaborate with regional entities.	• Regional youth organizations and networks, such as the Pan-African Youth Network for a Culture of Peace, the European Youth Forum, the Asian Youth Peace Network and the Commonwealth Youth Peace Ambassador Network, regularly engage with national and regional actors on peace and security issues.
» Support partnerships with international financial institutions in crisis-affected situations.	• The UN–World Bank youth employment programme in Mali has been implemented to give young people a greater economic stake in society.
» Engage with the private sector and philanthropists	• UNDP has joined forces with the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) to launch the TEF–UNDP Youth Entrepreneurship Programme to empower an additional 100,000 young African entrepreneurs over the next 10 years with seed capital, business training and mentoring, using the Foundation's tried and tested approach to philanthropy, which prioritizes African entrepreneurs as the key enablers of economic development.

PILLAR FOUR – PARTNERSHIPS

- Establish new and strengthen existing partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders, prioritizing partnerships

with youth organizations, movements and networks that support the funding of youth-inclusive/led initiatives.

2. Create opportunities for networking and collaboration among young leaders and youth-led organizations and movements as well as between youth, decision-makers and international organizations.

- » Jointly convene diverse youth forums and conferences; offer opportunities for young people of different genders and from different backgrounds to come together, connect, bond and build friendly relations with their peers.
- The first Global Forum on Youth Peace and Security, in Amman, was organized by the Peacebuilding Support Office, UNDP, UNFPA, the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY) and Search, with the Government of Jordan.
- YouthConnekt Dialogue in Rwanda has enabled children of the perpetrators and survivors and leaders who lived through the genocide to come together to discuss the history of Rwanda (with a focus on the genocide) and how they can build a better, brighter future.
- Stories from the Other Side thematic working sessions bring together UN workers and young professionals from different communities (United Nations Mission in Kosovo).
- The United Nations Economic and Social Council Youth Forum has held sessions on sustaining Peace and SDG 16.

The UN Security Council expanded on the YPS agenda through Resolutions 2419 (UN Security Council, 2018) and 2535 (UN Security Council, 2020a).

2. UN Security Council Resolution 2419 (2018), builds on its key recommendations to:

- invest in and empower young people's capacities and leadership;
- urges the UN Secretary-General and Special Envoys to take into account the views of youth and to facilitate their equal & full participation at decision-making in discussions on PS;
- expresses an intention to invite youth-led org-s to brief the Security Council.

The United Nations Youth Strategy launched in 2018 marks a shift away from merely working for young people towards an approach that involves them, amplifying their voices and engaging them as partners and leaders.

It lays out fundamental commitments to work with youth across its three pillars of:

- peace and security,
- human rights,
- Sustainable development.

"Young people constitute a tremendous and essential asset worth investing in," UN Youth Strategy, "Youth 2030".

The main components of the strategy include:

- support of youth leadership and greater awareness of youth-related issues;
- strengthened knowledge production;
- accelerated resource mobilization and partnership development;
- a greater funding base and mechanisms for youth-focused programming and youth-led actions.

3. UN Security Council Resolution 2535 (2020):

- entrenches the YPS agenda within the UN system by requesting the submission of a report by the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the implementation of the associated Resolutions;
- lays out concrete steps for the operationalization of the YPS agenda, including a request for the UN to improve capacity-building and technical guidance;
- aims to diversify youth participation.

The cases of the Anataban Campaign in South Sudan and the youth dialogue initiative in Somaliland are powerful examples of the work young people lead that has a positive impact beyond their communities.

1. The Anataban Campaign in South Sudan

With South Sudanese civil society raising the consciousness of an active citizenry through workshops and information sessions, including in refugee settlements in Uganda, the youth are leveraging their collective power to hold leaders to account. Anataban Campaign utilises the power of arts to foster discussions on key issues for local peacebuilding such as government accountability and redressing social injustices.

The group launched the online campaign #SouthSudanIsWatching (throughout the world) to put pressure on leaders

to implement the 2018 peace agreement. Young organize other artistic events to re-claim a public platform to monitor the peace talks.

2. Youth dialogue initiative in Somaliland

The Somaliland Youth Development Organization described their experience of bringing together a group of young men and women:

'We opened a seven-day long discussion on de-escalation of conflicts with 30 young men and women, who had taken part in the latest violent conflict in the district. These young men and women have never gone to school. They were often praised [for] their role in the conflicts by their fellow clansmen and women. Changing this approach requires time and a proper way to present your arguments. The young men and women are now peace ambassadors in their villages and they have moved to the urban cities in Somaliland so that they don't find themselves again engaged in the conflicts.'

3. UPF PEACE AMBASSADORS

Peace Council for Albanian Diaspora in Austria

On July 7 2022 the Peace Council was established in Vienna. Over 70 people were present at the conference, including prominent Albanians from all over Austria, local Ambassadors for Peace and youth, and 15 Albanians living in Austria were appointed as Ambassadors for Peace.

4. Rwanda - Dealing with the past and road for the future

- Never Again Rwanda (NAR) was founded by students who identified the challenges for youth in post-genocide Rwanda. They saw the merits in establishing platforms to engage youth to promote peace and to work on the important issues for youth relating to post-genocide life.
- NAR has created safe spaces for youth through closed groups of 20 to 30 individuals who have shared their traumatic experiences and have received necessary support in return, such as psychotherapy. The absence of a platform before this to share views limited youth participation in decision-making. NAR also works to empower young people in Rwanda to become active, critical-thinking citizens.

5. The Youth, Peace and Security School in Turkey

Young peacebuilders of Turkey, the first youth-led peace organisation in the country, held a 'Youth, Peace and Security School' in January 2021:

- This first-of-its-kind project brought 35 youth participants with experts from academia and NGOs to address the issues of peacebuilding & YPS Agenda.
- The objectives of the School were to enhance the knowledge and skills of youth participants, as well facilitating networking and advancing YPS as an academic field.
- Young peace builders now act as peace mediators amongst their peers in schools and communities.

7. The National Youth Jirga (Forum) of Afghanistan

- The Forum brought together 100 youth representatives from all 34 provinces for a three-day conference to discuss the Afghan peace process and the role of youth. Young Afghan men and women, who can often feel disenfranchised from the country's legislature, gathered to discuss how to bring about peace in the country, improve education and address unemployment.
- The Forum culminated in the adoption of a resolution that focuses on the role of young people in shaping the future of the country, which has been shared with the Afghan government and the international community.

Lessons learned from Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)19 on Women and Peace and Security (WPS)

- Emphasizes the important role of women in peace and security efforts;
- Calls for equal participation and the inclusion of women in conflict resolution, peace processes, hum/response & post-conflict decision-making;
- Urges actors to apply a gender lens in policies and programmes.

In the 22 years since the adoption of the resolution, the work of the global WPS movement to ensure women's participation and inclusion has provided an insight into strategies to support the implementation of SC Res 2250 on YPS to include youth in decision-making and peacebuilding.

The linkages between the two agendas offer opportunities for partnership and recognizing the contribution of young women to peacebuilding efforts.

UNESCO's framework for action on peacebuilding is structured in three areas:

Youth empowerment and inclusion:

- Foster youth participation in PS decision-making processes, thus supporting good governance.
- Engage with M/S, partner organizations and other stakeholders to develop national youth policies.

- Support Member States in the implementation of UN SC Res 2250.

Global advocacy and awareness-raising:

- Organize events to give visibility to young people participating in peacebuilding processes.
- Develop communications actions that sensitize on resilience, peacebuilding and violence prevention.
- Support research actions on violence and radicalization to better understand the social, political and economic factors that lead to violent extremism.
- Foster knowledge exchange and transfer of good practices at local and regional levels.

Capacity development:

- Equip youth with values, knowledge and skills to communicate and cooperate peacefully across social and cultural boundaries, and to meaningfully engage in civic processes.

What is next?

The momentum garnered through the restless activism of young people and the increasing recognition of governments and the multilateral system of the imperative to meaningfully involve youth is now solidifying and generating the political will for change.

The YPS agenda requires efforts to integrate it into programmes, policies and rules of operations.

The next steps include:

- establishing larger and more adequate funding mechanisms and procedures, both within government entities and throughout international agencies;
- gathering data and carrying out an analysis to better inform policymaking at the local, national, and international levels;
- designing systems of focal points and networks that ensure mainstreaming of YPS language.

Concluding remarks

Accomplishments such as the UN Youth Strategy and SC Resolutions 2250, 2419 and 2535 are not the end but rather the beginning – they offer a common framework for developing a ROADMAP and ensuring coordination across YPS actors.

Although the critical role of youth in driving positive change in society is being increasingly recognized, the ROAD to achieving global peace would remain bumpy until the root causes of instability, conflict and crisis are adequately addressed by relevant stakeholders at all levels.

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo charges Nigerian Youths,

"Take Over Leadership Now, Tomorrow May Never Come", (July 23, 2022).

"My advice for Nigerian youths is, never let anybody tell you that you are the leaders of tomorrow. If you wait for tomorrow before you take over leadership, that tomorrow may not come. They will destroy it. This is the time, youths get up and make it happen."

I THANK YOU!

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