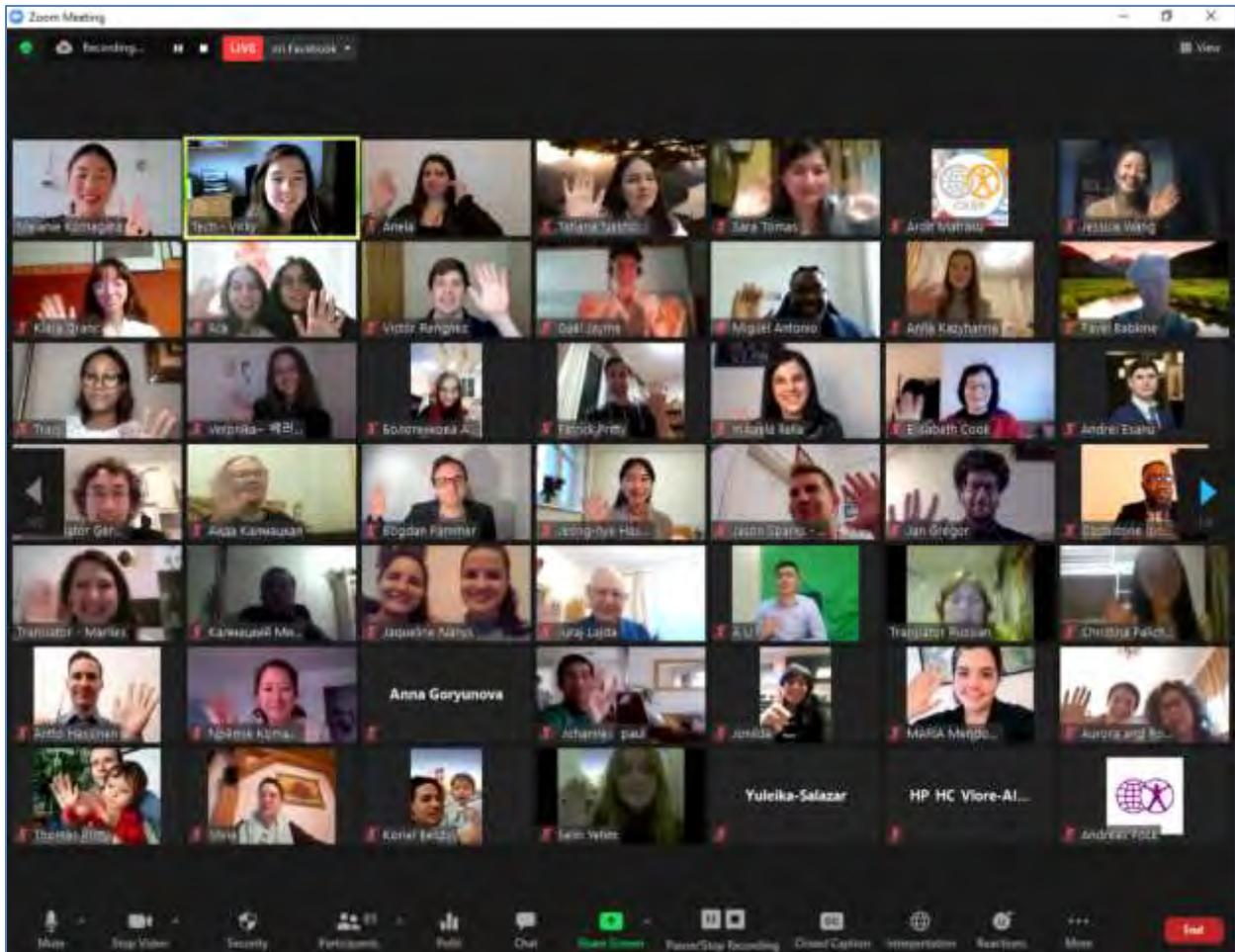


S!NERGY Europe and Middle East: Young Speakers Projects for Peace

Michael Balcomb
December 12, 2020



On December 12th, the International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) Europe and Middle East organized the first annual S!NERGY youth speech contest under the theme: "The role of young people in resolving conflicts and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals". The contest took place online via the Zoom platform which made for an extra challenge to the speakers but vastly widened the reach of the event, enabling an international audience of nearly 200 from around Europe and Middle East to follow live and be inspired.



This year's S!NERGY saw five young finalists from different countries, each presenting the project they are undertaking to create a more peaceful world around them in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The projects covered peace and women's rights in the Middle East, Art Healing for refugees of war, reduction of food waste, cultural interaction and rural service projects in a

developing country as well as promoting the SDGs among European youth. All projects were conveyed with youthful passion, reminding the audience that changing the world for the better is in the hands of every single one of us.



The S!NERGY contest was judged by Mrs. Jeong-hye Yeom, Secretary General of IAYSP Europe and Middle East, and three distinguished recipients of the Youth Hero Award which recognizes exemplification of service to others and the world: Mr. Jan Gregor (Czech Republic), Vice-president for Alliance for Family; Dr. Jason Sparks (Hungary), Youth Delegate of Hungary to the United Nations; and Mr. Dadastone Ipoma (France), Founder and Chairman of IPOMA Association.

First place in the S!NERGY contest was given to Mr. Zabihullah Roshan (Afghanistan) for his inspiring Sustainable Peace Advocates Network initiative which promotes peace and women's rights in his country through peace marches and bike rides for peace. Second place went to the youngest finalist, Ms. Tatiana Nekhodtseva from Russia. She initiated the GoodFood project to increase the effectiveness of left-over food utilization from restaurants and supermarkets by connecting these facilities more tightly with local organizations providing food aid. Both winners received a cash prize to further advance their project. "Our project starts on a local level, but we will continue to develop", assured Ms. Nekhodtseva.

