

Young Activists for Peace

Youth Exchange:

“Young Activists for Peace and A World We Want”

Sievershausen, 8th – 19th July 2018



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About “Young Activists for Peace and A World We Want”

In view of growing discrimination, hate speech and intolerance against migrants and refugees in many EU countries, the aim of this project was to strengthen the foundations for peaceful communities by enabling dialogue between young people about the future of our planet as well as fostering their active citizenship and democratic values. It also aimed at empowering the participating young people to stand up against anti-islamism, racism and intolerance and for the utopia of a better world based on peaceful dialogue.

Overarching topic were the United Nations “Sustainable Development Goals” and the contribution that their achievement could make to a lasting peace. The volunteers learned about the SDGs, which have been adopted by the UN to give an answer to the most urgent problems we face in current times like wasting ecological resources, climate change, unequal distribution of power and wealth and the permanent endangering of peace and stability. The SDG’s vision of a sustainable, peaceful, prosperous and equitable life for all helped us to understand what we can do to make this planet “A World We Want”.

Details about this Youth Exchange

This exchange was carried out in cooperation with the local NGO “Antikriegshaus”, which is part of the German Peace Movement (see <http://antikriegshaus.de/>). The Peace Studies Center



Sievershausen was established in the rooms of the Sievershausen Lutheran Church community almost 50 years ago. Those were the times when the Vietnam War escalated. Expansions and further re-organisations followed. Now there are several buildings, surrounded by a nice park, including a guest house and a museum with an assembly hall. Every year an international youth exchange and a workcamp are carried out there, and the place really benefits from this

international atmosphere. The seminar house offered sleeping rooms for 3-4 people and the volunteers had a lot of space for meetings, cooking, dining, relaxing and for indoor and outdoor activities. During our visit, the project manager, Ms. Angelika Schmidt, gave us a guided tour through the church building, which taught the participants about the history of the Antikriegshaus and the local Peace Movement.

Included into the program was a two day workshop, based on the pedagogical concept “Young people becoming agents of peace”, teaching the participants peace pedagogical basic competences. A professional certified trainer for peacebuilding and conflict management provided teambuilding activities, reflection exercises and theoretical knowledge that helped the participants to understand what role society values and cultural identity plays in integration, as well as how a sustainably peaceful



society depends on the basic skill of its members to deal with conflicts in an integrative way.



Later on, a one-day workshop was carried out, in which participants learned about the 17 Sustainable Development Goals – a topic which most participants had little knowledge about before. By discussing the SDGs' connection to the problems of their own communities/countries, they reflected on their personal experiences concerning the topic and the significance of action for peace, integration, responsible consumption and the environment for the survival of **all** human beings on our planet.

Complementary to the pedagogical working units, another focus was put on the situation of refugees in Germany and what difficulties human beings face, if they are marginalized by others in their community: Participants were invited to visit refugees in their accommodation and to organize leisure time activities with them. They had the chance to get in contact with the residents of the Asylum Seekers Accommodation in the neighboring city of Lehrte. By means of drawing, painting, dancing, playing football and other games together, they met refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia and Ghana. This way, they were able to hear their stories and perspectives on multiple topics, which included experiences of racism on different levels, as well as occasions of feeling welcome in the surrounding community.



Program Overview

Day 1 Sunday, 08.07.2018

- ❖ *Lunch & Welcome*
- ❖ Bedroom-Lottery (voluntary lottery game to mix up groups in bedrooms)
- ❖ Welcome-Round: Introduction of team and participants
- ❖ Get to know each other: Name games & introductory teambuilding activities
- ❖ Orientation: Presentation of program, organizational details and house rules
- ❖ Introduction to reflection method: Washing Line & Pegs
- ❖ *Dinner*

Day 2 – Monday, 09.07.2018

- ❖ *Breakfast*
- ❖ Welcome-Round: Introduction of newly arrived participants
- ❖ Orientation: Introduction of program, organizational details and house rules
- ❖ Pre-experience barometer
- ❖ Motivations, expectations and fears
- ❖ Teambuilding with reflection afterwards: Rocks & Sharks
- ❖ Social Contract
- ❖ *Lunch break*
- ❖ Introduction to UN Sustainable Development Goals
- ❖ Group work I: Dream House Activity on Prioritizing Goals
- ❖ Group work II: The 17 SDG's in detail
- ❖ Presentation of Group Work II
- ❖ Reflection: Washing Line & Pegs
- ❖ *Dinner*

Day 3 Thursday, 17.08.2017

- ❖ *Breakfast*
- ❖ Energizer Push & Pull
- ❖ Introduction to YAP Training with Christoph Pinkert
- ❖ Socio-metric Activity 4 Corners (What is on you mind?)
- ❖ Biographical work I: Names postcards (participants talk about their names)
- ❖ Biographical work II: Life panorama (participants talk about their biography)
- ❖ *Lunch break*
 - *small group visits refugee shelter in Sievershausen (one member of each team)*
- ❖ Reflection on biographical work II
- ❖ Energizer (Variation of Paper, Rock, Scissors: Tiger, Ninja, Grandma)
- ❖ Feedback about program of the day
- ❖ *Dinner*

Day 4 Wednesday, 11.07.2018

- ❖ *Breakfast*
- ❖ Reflection on participants' notion of "integration"
- ❖ Short theoretical input on the concept of "integration matrix"
- ❖ Reflection on participants' prior core values
- ❖ Reflection and discussion on participants' cultural identity
- ❖ Short theoretical input on concepts of culture: multiculturalism, interculturalism & transculturalism
- ❖ *Lunch break*
- ❖ Movement & awareness game
- ❖ Biographical work & dialogue: Talk & Walk (participants sharing very personal experiences)
- ❖ 4 corner barometer: Integration of participants into the group
- ❖ Exercise about prejudices, labelling and their effects on perception
- ❖ Card game on values and cultural identity in the group
- ❖ Feedback about YAP Training
- ❖ *Dinner*

Day 5 Thursday, 12.07.2018

- ❖ *Breakfast*
- ❖ Excursion to Hannover
- ❖ Guided tour by JANUN e.V. about globalized trade and its impact on environment & society
- ❖ *Lunch break*
- ❖ Presentation of JANUN e.V. about their experiences in voluntary work with refugees in Hannover, Germany
- ❖ *Free evening in Hannover (individual trips around Hannover)*

Day 6 Friday, 13.07.2018

- ❖ *Breakfast*
- ❖ Reflection on Excursion to Hannover
- ❖ Revision of Social Contract
- ❖ Brainstorm about workshop ideas for visit to AWO asylum seekers accommodation in Lehrte
- ❖ Group finding process for workshop planning
- ❖ *Lunch Break*
- ❖ Participants make implementation plans about workshops autonomously in groups
- ❖ Developing Plan B by group exchanges
- ❖ Presentation of workshop implementation plans to the whole group
- ❖ *Dinner*

Day 7 Saturday, 14.07.2018

- ❖ *Free Day (individual organization of the day)*

Day 8 Sunday, 15.07.2018

- ❖ *Breakfast*
- ❖ Presentation of ICJA e.V. & Input about Youth Passes
- ❖ Presentation of Civil Forum, Georgia
- ❖ Presentation of Lastochki, Russia
- ❖ Energizer "Don't let go!"
- ❖ Documentary "Greed – A Fatal Desire" , Part 1 & discussion
- ❖ *Lunch Break*
- ❖ Group discussion on racism, structural discrimination and cultural appropriation

Day 9 Monday, 16.07.2018

- ❖ *Breakfast*
- ❖ Preparation for the workshops of the afternoon
- ❖ Test run of introductory games for workshops in refugee accommodation
- ❖ *Lunch Break*
- ❖ Workshops with asylum seekers in the AWO Accommodation in Lehrte
- ❖ *Dinner*

Day 10 Tuesday, 17.07.2018

- ❖ *Breakfast*
- ❖ Group Reflection on previous afternoon in asylum seekers accommodation
- ❖ Teambuilding: Chair Game (Awareness, communication and competitiveness)
- ❖ *Lunch Break*
- ❖ Workshops with asylum seekers in AWO Accommodation Lehrte
- ❖ *Dinner*

Day 11 Wednesday, 18.07.2018

- ❖ *Breakfast*
- ❖ Final Reflection & Evaluation
- ❖ Farewell Activities: Secret Santa Game & Secret Farewell Letters
- ❖ *Lunch Break*
- ❖ Barbeque and Games with asylum seekers in AWO Accommodation Lehrte
- ❖ *Final Dinner*

Day 12 Thursday, 19.07.2018

- ❖ *Breakfast*
- ❖ Final Cleaning
- ❖ *Departure*

Daily Reports

Day 1 – Sunday, 8th July 2018

Bedroom-Lottery

Since one of the main aims of the youth exchange was to create opportunities for the participants to meet and talk to people from other countries, we played a voluntary lottery game in order to mix participants from different countries in their bedrooms. Each participant pulled a sweet from a bowl and received a bed in a corresponding room. This procedure already showed different levels of readiness of participants to live and work closely within an international group - caused by personal fears of being close to strangers as well as inexperience with the conditions of a youth exchange. However, most participants appreciated the game and the opportunity given to them.

Afternoon Session

Welcome-Round & Getting to know each other

After a short introduction of the facilitators and the project, we started with the name chain game that introduced everyone to each other and gave us a chance to remember the names by repetition. By the end of the game, almost everyone knew the names of the other group members. Following this, we played a teambuilding game which was called the Antikriegshaus Rallye. The participants formed small international groups of 4-5 people. Each team had to find places around the Antikriegshaus, e.g. the games room, the storage for cleaning materials, or the map of the village. This way, they would not only obtain useful information about their surroundings, but also learn more about the other participants.

In the subsequent reflection, we discussed what was helpful and what was not, to fulfil the task. Most participants said, that they found it helpful, to communicate with others (even other groups) and share information. Not so helpful was to be too competitive and focused on an individual gain. The activity was a lot of fun for most participants and prepared them for teamwork in the future activities during the youth exchange.

Presentation of program, organizational details and house rules

We continued with organizational information, which included an introduction to the program for the first part of the youth exchange, information about the youth leader's tasks, an explanation of important house rules (e.g. waste separation) and choosing cooking teams for the first few days.

Feedback method Washing Line & Pegs



At the end of the seminar day, we made our own custom feedback method: Each participants wrote on a colored piece of paper how he*she felt at that moment. Afterwards, we fastened the papers on a washing line and put a peg on it. At the end, we could see, that most participants were very tired, due to their journey. They looked forward to dinner and time to rest.

Results of the day

Although we faced some difficulties during the day, we had a good start into the program. Unfortunately, half of the participants missed the introductory program, because they arrived later, in the evening or the next day. When they arrived, they felt disoriented and the facilitators had the difficult task of splitting their attention between the program and the newly arrived participants.

Day 2 – Monday, 9th July 2018

Morning Session

Orientation: Introduction of program, organizational details and house rules

July 8th was our first working day, but some participants had arrived later. For this reason, we started with a recapitulation of yesterday's program. We split up into small groups, in which the early arrivals gave orientation to the late arrivals by explaining cooking and cleaning plans, tasks of youth leaders and the program for the upcoming days. This activity served as ice-breaker and some kind of warm up for participants and aimed to stimulate their thinking process in the right direction.



What do you bring with you (overview of participant's backgrounds)?

During this activity participants were asked about their backgrounds and experience of participating in youth exchanges, solidarity or educational work with refugees, and their knowledge on SDGs.

This activity aimed to analyze backgrounds of participants, in order to identify individual readiness of group members to upcoming activities.

It turned out, that the majority of people had already participated in youth exchange programs, some of them had met refugees before and almost no one had heard of SDGs.

Your Expectations, Motivations, Fears



This activity was determined to analyze the situation in the group. In the expectations part, the majority of participants went with typical "Learn new things and get new experiences" answers. Because of the generality of the answers, it seemed, that the majority of young participants did not have a clear understanding of the event, they participate in.

"The Motivation" part was pretty much the same, while "Fears" have exposed some interesting moments. For example some participants had no trust in the surrounding people and were afraid of wasting their time.

Teambuilding

Activities like “crossing the river” and “learning about the surroundings” helped building human connections amongst group members. It has to be mentioned, that participants have completed it quite quickly – only on the second try, which, once again, proved that the majority of participants already had god will and also some experience of participating in similar activities.



Social contract

This one, unsurprisingly had brought lots of discussions. The task for the whole group was to find an explicit agreement that lays out the ground rules for participants’ behaviors while living and working together. This activity aimed to teach participants how to come to mutual agreements and also, in my opinion, was the great illustration of democracy in general – clash of various points of view and by the end of the day, finding a common solution.

Afternoon Session

Introduction to the SDGs

In my opinion it was the most important part of the day, ‘cause it covered the topics, most of participants had no idea about. At first we had a short theoretical input about the history of the SDG’s.



After that, everyone had to write down 15 goals that were important for them to achieve in society. After that we had to team up with 3 other participants and choose 10 goals for the whole group. In a third step, we came together in groups of eight and had to decide together about the five most important goals for society.

This activity aimed to explain the importance of SDGs to the group and why this agenda for needs to

be put in place for the sake of all people in this globalized world. Also participants learned more about certain sustainable development goals themselves and how they are connected to our everyday life.

Connecting SDGs to the workshop

Participants were offered to prepare group presentations about various SDGs and speak about their connections.

Considering the fact, that it was the first group exercise, completed by the group members, it went quite well. In the majority of the groups the contribution was split quite equally, with all participants, trying to use their strong sides for the presentation. E.g. some of them were better at writing and drawing, others (who had better speaking skills) took on themselves the presentation part.



The reflection round

We were asked to adapt the feedback washing line to today's feelings in the group, which meant that we had to choose add new words.

This activity aimed to analyze the attitudes and feelings of the group, towards the finished day and whole dynamic of the day in general. It was clear, that majority of participants were extremely tired and their motivation was down. However, there were certain positive moments in the feedback, with optimistic expectations towards the upcoming days.

Results of the day

The main achievement of the day is of course, the fact, that participants have been introduced to each other, and went through some team activities. It certainly helped them to get used to each other. The day helped them to find common values and agreed to unite their efforts, in order to bring them to life. At least for the upcoming 10 days.

The SDGs part was extremely important, because it helped majority of participants, that SDGs aren't some mythical thing – it's something they actually care about in their local communities and it's something they are willing to contribute to.

Day 3 - Tuesday, 10th July 2018

Morning Session

Today started on a tiring note for us participants due to waking up early and trying to adapt to the schedule of the days programs.

We got introduced to our peacebuilding trainer for the next two days (10th and 11th July 2018) whose name is Christoph. He explained the work he does and what he would be conducting with us throughout these next days.

Energizer Push & Pull

A great start to the sessions was an energizer called push & pull that made us feel relaxed and lifted our inner soul energy and getting ready for the day. We teamed up in pairs and each participant had to try to overbalance his or her partner by quickly pushing or pulling him or her.

Biography Work I: Names Postcards

The training started with an activity, that dealt with name remembrance and knowing each other's first names meanings. This initiated an occasion to sit in smaller groups, get to know each other and easily open up to one another. Each participant wrote down his or her name, why their parents had given it to them, and what it means. They then presented the postcard to the small group.

Biography Work II: Life Panorama

We moved on to a Biography activity that touched upon our past lives leading to our present life.



The task was to illustrate on a big piece of flipchart paper, which most important moments in our lives brought us to this youth exchange. This activity was really complicated and intense in the manner of we had to rethink our past experiences and voluntarily share our stories to each

other. This created a huge emotional connection by hearing different life moments of other participants and also infused a feeling of unity and support for each other.

During Lunch Break

Representatives of the group visited the asylum seeker's accommodation in Lehrte

In the previous days, we chose one representative from each country's group who would visit the refugee center in Lehrte, where we will conduct workshops with the inhabitants. Today, during the lunch break, they went with our Teamer Anna to the center, which is in the neighbouring city from our seminar place, for a pre-meeting with the management of the center to find out more about the daily activities and runnings of the center, including the daily lives of the people. We needed these information to fit our ideas to the inhabitant's needs and interests, as it was important to us to provide a useful and fun program.

Afternoon Session

Exchanging experiences from Biography work II

In the afternoon, our trainer opened the session with an energizer that got us back to the atmosphere of the day. We played a game which was similar to paper, rock, scissors, called tiger ninja, grandmother. The game was very energetic, but also required some teamwork and communication skills. This helped us freeing ourselves from emotional pressures that we experienced through our groups conversations and to focus on communicating as a team.



Afterwards, we continued with the Biography activity. We did a reflection with the whole group, where we exchanged our experiences from the conversations and presentations in the small group activity. We found out that a lot of participants had experienced very difficult situations in their lives, which we would have never anticipated from their general appearance. We learned, that we should be careful not to judge someone too soon and that it is important to get to know someone to understand their motivations and behaviors better.

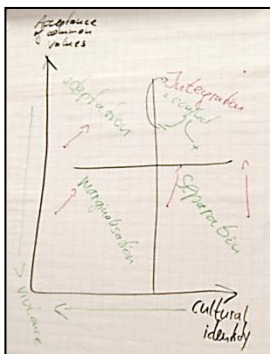
Our session ended with the day's reflection activity that was done by means of associating ourselves with pictures which relate to our mood or feeling about our first training day.

Day 4 – Wednesday, 11th July 2018

Morning Session

Talking about integration

Our peacebuilding trainer Christoph started the session by putting Dixit Cards (very colorful cards with fantasy images) on the floor. Our task was to find a card which, for us, shows integration. Then, we discussed our ideas and notions about integration with our neighbor. In the following reflection round with the whole group, we exchanged our ideas and realized, that almost everyone had a different opinion about what integration means, what is important to achieve it and who is part of the process of integration.



To help with our understanding of integration, Christoph explained the concept of the integration matrix to us. He drew a graphic of integration which illustrated the connection between the acceptance of common values and cultural identity. One of the main messages of the concept is that in order to integrate, the conflict between common values and cultural identity must be solved in a satisfying manner by all those affected. If the conflicts are not being solved, this might lead to either separation, adaptation or even marginalization – and could end in violence.

Talking about core values & cultural identity

After that, we had a look at 10 common values and chose which three of them are the most important ones for us: dignity, honor, truth, beauty, loyalty, justice, equality, solidarity, health or freedom. We also had to find specific examples of recent situations, where we implemented that value in our life, so that we had to think about their application in our daily life. We discussed our choices in small groups and also in the whole group. We found out, that most values are somehow connected to each other and that it is important to keep them in balance. We also found out that on an abstract level we sometimes favor those values that we miss in our society, but in our daily lives we are led by others.



In a next step, everyone had to write down five important traits of their cultural identity. Again, we talked about them with partners. In the subsequent group reflection, we realized that for some people it is easier to know their values, whereas for others it is easier to know their cultural identity. Only for few both tasks were equally easy. Christoph told us that if it was easier for us to find our cultural identity than the examples for common values, we tend to separation, if it's the other way around we tend to adaptation. Only if we know both, we are ready for integration.

Talking about concepts of culture

Christoph explained to us, that there are different ways to understand and organize different cultures in society. One of the concepts is multiculturalism, but this one is problematic because people then do not integrate, but separate from each other. Interculturalism is a similar concept, where individuals from different backgrounds mix, because their cultural differences are accepted.

But still they do not integrate, because they do not share common values. Another concept is transculturalism, which means that individuals - even if they came from different backgrounds - integrate, because they adjust and transform their values and cultural identity when meeting each other. In addition, we might have more in common with people from completely different parts of the world, for the reason that our lives are complex and we are shaped by various living conditions, like class, gender, family status, sexual orientation, race and so on, and the experiences we make with them along our way in life.

Afternoon Session

Movement & Awareness game

We started the afternoon session with a silent movement game, which focused us on awareness towards other group members, so we could easily slip into the next exercise.

Biographical work & dialogue: Talk & Walk



For this exercise, we were given the cards with different kind of question like "What have you created or what do you want to create?", "What moment of your life you would like to live again?", "What was an embarrassing moment in your life?" etc. While we were answering the questions with a partner, we went for a walk. The beautiful nature around us and the movement made it easier to relax and we even shared very emotional and personal experiences. Then we returned back and reflected on what similarities and differences we found with our partners. This exercise emphasized what we had learned in the morning session.

4 corner barometer: Integration of participants into the group

Christoph asked us to position ourselves on one of four sides of the lawn to answer the question of how integrated we feel in our youth exchange group. Each side meant one of four answers: integrated, separated, marginalized and adapted. We discussed some interesting topics connected with integration in our group and found out about some small conflicts and problems within the group, which we could then resolve by communicating about them.

Exercise about prejudices, labelling and their effects on perception

Christoph put the cards with the names and pictures of different cities on the ground and we were supposed to choose one card with the city we feel connected with and some people explained their choice. But at the end, he told us that the places shown on the pictures do not actually show the cities they were labelled as. The fact that almost no one noticed, showed us, how our perception of something can be deceiving, as it is strongly influenced by prejudices we have about something.



Card game on values and cultural identity in the group

After that we played a card game that enabled us to talk in small groups of four about our similarities and differences concerning values and cultural identity. While some groups were very engaged in profound discussions, others had more trouble to share their ideas.

Feedback about YAP Training

We completed the Peace Training with a final feedback round in which the participants expressed how much they had enjoyed the training, the gratitude about all the things they had learned and how it had changed their perspectives for the better.

Day 5 – Thursday, 12th July 2018

Excursion to Hannover

Today, two projects of a local organization called JANUN e.V. invited us to learn about their work and connected topics. We all looked forward to our day trip to Hannover, which we started in the morning by walking together to the next train station. The 45 minute walk gave us the opportunity to get to know each other better since there were a lot of discussions about personal backgrounds and topics of the seminars between the participants.

Guided tour about globalized trade and its impact on environment & society

Our first activity of the day was consumption critical, guided tour, which is a regular activity of JANUN e.V. being offered to school children in Hannover. It had 4 stations with a specific topic each:

The first one was about clothing: how it is produced, how far and where it has to travel before it's sold and how globalization is connected to these production and transporting patterns.



The next one was about shoes: how much it costs to produce, transport and sell them to the

customers and how much each sharer (production workers, factories, retailers, retailers staff etc.) earns. During this presentation we also discussed, what could be done to improve worker's situations in the global south.

The next stop was about food and the impact of its production on the environment: we learned that animal products lead to higher CO₂ emissions, soil pollution and land erosion. Therefore, a vegetarian or even vegan diet would help to reduce global warming and climate change.

The last station introduced us to alternatives for conventional consumption patterns. We talked about Fairtrade and second-hand buying as strategies to promote and contribute to the achievement of the SDG's on an individual level.

Presentation about voluntary work with refugees in Hannover, Germany

After our lunchbreak we met Sulaiman and Svea, who are volunteers at the JANUN e.V. office and mainly work in refugee projects. They told us about their previous activities and shared their experiences about successes and errors when undertaking something with this target group. In an open discussion after the presentation, we discussed what we could offer the refugees in the accommodation in Lehrte. Questions were, for example, how we could help them, what their interests might be and how to approach them. We learned that, first of all, we should treat them just like other people and not reduce them to their refugee status. This also means to respect the privacy and autonomy of them and not be too invasive with questions. Svea and Sulaiman advised us to just do something fun and be open to the individual persons we are going to meet, trying to put aside any presuppositions or prejudices we might have about refugees, as their backgrounds, stories and personal circumstances vary immensely.

Free evening in Hannover

After we worked on two very serious and stirring topics, most participants wanted to spend some leisure time in the city of Hannover. Thus, in the late afternoon, the participants parted into small groups to explore the city on individual trips.

Day 6 – Friday, 13th July 2018

Morning Session

Reflection on Excursion to Hannover

This day started with a short group reflection on the excursion in Hannover. We found out that most participants were still concerned about how to approach the people in the refugee accommodation. The presentation about volunteer work with refugees seemed to have made the participants insecure, since they had raised a lot of difficult issues. We decided to set those concerns aside for later, since the actual planning process of the workshops included an activity that would help to deal with them.

Revision of Social Contract

The next activity was a revision of our social contract. After living together for 5 days, we wanted to evaluate, whether any changes had to be made to it. We divided into small groups of four, so that even shy participants could express their opinions, and we wrote down any proposals we had. When all the groups were finished, one of the participants successfully moderated the process of negotiations about amendments to the rules, e.g. about listening patiently (even to opposing opinions) and awareness about other's needs (for quiet spaces).

Brainstorming workshop ideas and group formation

Since we had some time left before lunch, we decided to start with the preparation of workshops by brainstorming ideas for activities with refugees. One of the ideas was to conduct a Henna

workshop, but one of the participants asked, whether it is appropriate to do, because he would define this as cultural appropriation, which is a racist practice. A heated discussion flared up between those who agreed and those who did not perceive any problem in the adoption of another culture's practices for entertainment purposes. Since we observed this topic to be an issue in the group, we agreed to have a seminar session on cultural appropriation, that some of the participants wanted to prepare for until Sunday.

We focused back on the preparation of workshops and started to organize in groups by creating an overview list on a flipchart and signing up to workshops according to our interests and, if needed, have some more inspiration about improvements to the workshops.

Afternoon Session

Workshop planning

After lunch, we continued the workshop preparation. We started to develop workshop implementation plans that would consider our specific target group (e.g. children, women, youths etc.), what exactly we wanted to do and what we would need for it (materials, equipment, space etc.) The representatives who had previously visited the accommodation functioned as a source of information to us, if we had questions about the space or the people in the accommodation.

In the second round of our planning process, we were asked to present our plans to another group. The other group then had the task to find things that could go wrong and by doing this, help us develop a 'Plan B' for the implementation.

Last but not least, we presented our implementation plans in the whole group in order to inform each other about the whole program we would offer in Lehrte.

Day 7 – Saturday, 14th July 2018

According to our program plan, the day was free for everyone. Many participants undertook day trips to near-by cities like Hannover, Hamburg or Bremen. Others joined the Zeitbrei music festival in Sievershausen and a few enjoyed the peace and quiet in the almost empty Antikriegshaus.

Day 8 – Sunday, 15th July 2018

Morning Session

Presentation of Sending Organizations

In the morning, we learned about some of the sending organization: ICJA e.V. from Germany (which was not only sending, but also the coordinating organization for this Youth Exchange), the Civil Forum from Georgia and Lastochki from Samara in Russia. It was interesting to see, what organizations from other countries were working on and what strategies they developed to achieve their goals.

After the facilitators of the youth exchange had presented ICJA, they also provided some information and links to the YOUTH PASS page, as well as an explanation on the purpose of the YOUTH Pass Tool and how we would work with it in this Youth Exchange. We were informed that we would get a Youth Pass Certificate after the Youth Exchange and that we could ourselves add the competences acquired so that this Certificate reflect our personal learning results.

Energizer "Don't let go!"

After we had listened to three presentations in a row, we looked forward to enjoying some fresh

air and sunshine outside while playing a little game that one of the participants had planned for us. He asked us to stand in a circle and hold the hands of our neighbors. Our feet should also touch our neighbors. We would then have to move our right foot to touch another foot of the left neighbor, which meant to stretch and get into awkward positions. Meanwhile we were not allowed to let go of the others hands, because then we would be out of the game.

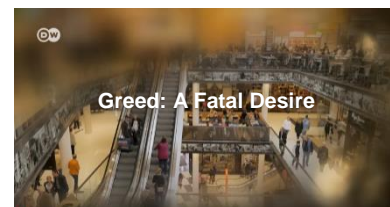


It was a lot of fun to most participants, as we really put our effort into winning, but at the same time taking care of each other, so that we could play it for as long as possible. The game also highlighted the characters and roles of

the participants within the group, so we could also learn something about our group dynamics.

Documentary "Greed – A Fatal Desire", Part 1 & discussion

Together we watched the documentary "Greed: A Fatal Desire" which features an assortment of voices from each end of the spectrum about the topic of greed, including medical experts, sociologists, religious figures, and those who proudly defend their drive to achieve greater wealth and material comforts. It portrays greed as the gateway to moral decline and the trigger for global devastation, since it drives our thirst for more (money, property, power etc.) In part, this "fatal desire" can ensure survival and achievement, since (according to the speakers in the documentary) it derives from the ancient instinct of survival and it is one of the causes for humankind's most important developments. But when the quest for more power, possessions, and attention comes at the cost of others, this behavior can cripple individual, communal and cultural relationships. Together with the modern tendency towards individualism, the class divide widens, and an acceptable quality of life becomes unattainable for far too many citizens of the world.



Concerning the SDG's the documentary proposed an explanation as to why they could not be realized yet, since they are based on the idea of equal human rights for everyone on earth, which also means a due share of the wealth and well-being for everyone on the planet.

A passionate debate after the documentary led us to an important insight: Together, we figured out that in many situations there is a polar opposition between the freedom of an individual and the solidarity with others, which can often only be realized when individuals limit their freedom for the sake of the other person's freedom. The question then was, who has the responsibility to make sure that every human being can have his or her due share of the wealth and well-being in society, why is it so important to achieve the SDG's and what are just and reasonable measures to do so?

Afternoon Session

Group discussion on racism, structural discrimination and cultural appropriation

After cooling off from our passionate debate about "Greed" during our lunchbreak, we worked on another important issue, which is connected to obstacles for a just and empowering society on the basis of the concept of cultural appropriation: racism and structural discrimination. Together we tried to understand what effects racism and prejudices can have on the social status

of individuals and groups. We discussed how cultural appropriation reproduce stereotypes and the oppression of non-dominant cultures that are being discriminated against for the same practices and symbols that privileged groups get credit for (e.g. in form of money, influence, and representation) by illustrating it with examples like Yoga, African Print, Traditions like Henna, and First Nations Headdresses, amongst others. While some participants, at first did not understand how to draw the line between cultural exchange and cultural appropriation, supporters of the concept explained that the problem arises when somebody takes something from another less dominant culture in a way that members of that culture find undesirable and offensive. The problem is that the more marginalised group doesn't get a say, while their heritage is deployed by someone in a position of greater privilege – for fun or fashion, perhaps, and out of a place of ignorance rather than knowledge of that culture.

We also discussed anti-racist strategies like sharing financial and symbolic power, promoting self-representation of disadvantaged persons, and awareness for other people's culture in connection with discrimination.

Day 9 – Monday, 16th July 2018

Preparation for the workshops of the afternoon

Today, we have had the most long-awaited day of the program Young Activists for Peace – the first day in the refugee accommodation in Lehrte. Some of us were excited, some found it daunting because we had no idea if the refugees were interested in our visit.

Thus, the time before lunch was spent on preparation for the visit. We collected the materials we needed for our workshops and tried a dry run of some games and activities, that we wanted to function as ice-breakers.

Workshops with asylum seekers in the AWO Accommodation in Lehrte

After lunch we took a bus and went to the refugee accommodation. This was the first time, I have seen an accommodation for refugees in Germany. The buildings were grey and simple, but at the same time neat and tidy.

Our group was met by several men who lived there and one of the social workers that were in charge of the running of the accommodation. At first, there was some uncomfortable feeling and many of us did not know what to start with, but it did not take us much time to get our bearings. We got together with some people and started playing volleyball and football which helped us break the ice.



We had planned six activities: a language exchange, dancing, juggling, Kubb, handcrafts and face painting for kids. Eventually, we managed to conduct only handcrafts and a game called Kubb,



which went pretty well. We were not brave enough to conduct the other activities we had planned, because we had the impression that the refugees were not interested in them.

Apart from that, many of us had difficulties in communication because of the language barrier, confusion and awkwardness. All the interaction stopped at the level of small talk, because we did not know what is ethical to discuss with the refugees and what is not.

At last, I would like to say that we all were really exhausted at the end of the day so that we decided to shift our reflection meeting to the next morning.

Day 10 Tuesday, 17th July 2018

Morning Session

Group Reflection on previous afternoon in asylum seekers accommodation

In the morning we started with our reflection on our experiences with the refugees and conducting workshops. Again the insecurities about how to approach refugees was brought up and the facilitator reminded the group of what they had learned from the presentation of voluntary work with refugees by JANUN e.V. We thought about strategies to overcome these problems like giving get-to-know-energizers another try.

We also had to address the issue of giving personal information of participants to refugees and the expectations of the latter when they receive those information. The facilitators explained that asylum seekers in Germany often feel isolated, since they often had problems connecting to surrounding communities for different reasons (e.g. being in isolated places, language barriers, discrimination, depression etc.) and longed – like every human being – for friendships. Therefore, it would not be helpful to give contact details away, if the participants did not plan on fulfilling the refugee's hopes and should be clear on their intentions of meeting them for just a short time.

Teambuilding: Chair Game (Awareness, communication and competitiveness)

The next activity was a silent teambuilding game, which was developed by Betzavta¹ for democracy education. Each participant receives a small paper with a task on it, which he*she is not allowed to show to the others, and they are not allowed to talk to each other. What the participants do not know is that there are only three different tasks, so that are actually three groups with participants having the same assignment. In addition, the tasks are chosen in a way that would enable all of them to fulfil their duty, even if they are different:

1. Set up the chairs in a circle!
2. Arrange the chairs in sets of three.
3. Put the chair around a pillar.

When the participants first started, they showed different reactions to the confusing situation when they realized they all had different tasks. Some observed the situation to find out what was going on, some gave up their task, others started to fight in order to reach their goal.

¹ Betzavta is a Hebrew word and means "together". The title of this method of learning democracy, which was developed by the Adam Institute in Israel, makes up the programme and philosophical background at the same time. Betzavta developed a concept of creative conflict resolution. With the help of a special conflict dilemma method, it achieves the essential conditions for tolerant social interaction: the willingness to mutually recognize the right to personal freedom. Today, Betzavta is an internationally renowned democracy education programme used in schools and non-school educational institutions.



Only when some participants opened up to communication with the others by mimics & gestures, the situation changed and the group slowly found a way of dealing in a peaceful and productive way. Finally, they managed to stack the chairs in piles of three, formed a circle out of the piles which they arranged around a pillar.

In the subsequent reflection, we gathered (a) what had happened and (b) how this connects to society in general and (c) the specific situation of asylum seekers, when they are being discriminated against and marginalized by society. Concerning the first point, the participants found out that conflicts can only be resolved, if we open up for communication and try to focus on a solution for everyone instead of just insisting on our individual wished to be fulfilled. The same insight is true for society, since behind the conflicts between groups often lies a fight about resources - whether it is power, dominance (sometimes of an idea about values) or material things - and the unawareness of other person's needs. If a person or a group of people is being excluded from resources in a society, they will probably end up using the same strategies like the participants did: giving up (marginalization) or doing things their own way without consideration of their surroundings (separation). Also assimilation could be a possible reaction, in the hope of becoming part of the exclusive part of society, but then they have to abandon their own needs and goals, which shifts the conflict from their outside world (society) to the inside world (psyche) and cause problems there.

Afternoon Session

Workshops with asylum seekers in AWO Accommodation Lehrte

Today, the participants seemed to show little motivation to start their workshops. Some of them mentioned, that they were disappointed about the low number of asylum seekers that attended to the program on that day and that were also frustrated with the long journey to the location.

When they finally started, they set up a comic workshop, a language exchange and an open stage. For the first few minutes, the open stage was well attended to, but after some brave and talented musicians had finished, people seemed to be too shy to join in.

While some of our participants actively tried to talk with the inhabitants, others seemed to be less successful opening up



to them and stayed together with their friends from the youth exchange or played with the children only.

There were also voices from refugees, who said that they had hoped for the same group as last year and they would have liked to have more time in order to get to know the participants better and get involved more.

The day in the accommodation ended with very mixed impressions and experiences.

Day 11 – Wednesday, 18th July 2018

Morning Session

Final Reflection & Evaluation

This morning started with the final reflection and evaluation of the youth exchange and all our activities. The facilitators had prepared three flipchart posters on which we could leave our feedback about our youth exchange², divided into three categories:

1. Suitcase: What do you take with you?
2. Washing machine: What would you do again, but differently?
3. Trash bin: What do you want to leave behind?

After that, our facilitators explained about the ICJA evaluation forms: how to fill them in and what they are needed for. We had as much time as we needed to think about our answers and we could also fill them in where we wanted, so that we could choose to do it in secret.

Farewell Activities: Secret Santa Game & Secret Farewell Letters

After the evaluation, we played our Secret Santa Game. Before the exchange started, we were asked to bring a small present from our country, something that was special for us and that we wanted to share. Our facilitators explained the game to us at the beginning of the youth exchange, so that we had lots of time to prepare. Today, we would finally give away our presents to a person that pulled the number of our present from a bowl. The highlights were drinking horns, as well as the Hannover postcards that we knew from an activity with Christoph (our peace building trainer). Apart from that, a lot of traditional sweets of the different countries were given away. This game was really fun and showed our appreciation for each other, because we shared the happiness of receiving a gift with everyone.

Our final activity in the morning was to write little secret farewell letters to the others. An envelope for each participant was put on the table and we could leave them some final messages, which they would read later on and take them home.

Afternoon Session

Barbeque and Games in the AWO Accommodation

For our last day in the asylum seekers accommodation, we had planned a barbeque dinner and some final activities. When we arrived, the inhabitants of the accommodation had already prepared the yard for us and some of them had also prepared some of their favorite barbeque foods for us, which we happily added to the dishes, we had brought along with us.

² The results are published in Annex 1 (Qualitative Anyalysis –Results from Feedback-Flipcharts). <A/N>

This time, we started with an energizer (Hi Ha Ho) to initiate the contact, which worked quite well. While the meat cooked on the barbeque, we launched a common dance (Macarena) and hoped that more people would join in. But they were still very reserved, so we abandoned the idea and we resorted to just having talks and some little activities (drawing and playing football or tennis).



Unfortunately, there were still only few people from the accommodation, who joined us for the day. But it was nice meeting our acquaintances from the previous days again and when we left, we received a warm good-bye from everyone.

Day 11 – Thursday, 19th July 2018

Special Breakfast, Final Cleaning and Departure

Our last day started very early for some of us, since they had to leave very early in the morning and we had to organize the cleaning of our rooms and the common spaces before we leave.

But at least, we woke up to a special “fancy breakfast” which gave us more energy and positive vibes for the early chores.

The Turkish and the German team, as well as a Russian participant, stayed until after lunch and enjoyed a farewell lunch that the Turkish team had prepared for all of us. We agreed that the dish they had made (fried potatoes and egg) was something common to all of us and that is probably made as a simple and delicious meal almost all over the world. So, we indulged in our truly transnational dish as a symbol of the things we all have in common.



Conclusions

Group dynamics

This year, most of the activities in the youth exchange focused on team building and other activities that promoted group integration. This perfectly matched participant's demands, since making new acquaintances and friends was the most mentioned motivation and expectation during the seminars. Nonetheless, many participants more often relied on free time activities with their compatriots rather than with participants from other countries. Very helpful for the exchange the peacebuilding training, which enabled participants to find common ground as well as comprehension for each other's differences. By the end of the exchange, we had managed to improve group integration considerably.

We also aimed to work based on the self-determination and self-responsibility of participants. This effort was greeted with full approval by participants that highly valued their personal freedom and autonomy and were open for group decision making. Others expected a more authoritative leadership with clear tasks and strict organization. Even though some participants were not happy with the resulting time management and free time, the success of this strategy is reflected by the high results concerning the opportunities to participate (80% voted full points) an motivating atmosphere (56% voted very good, 32% good).

Time management

Time management was an issue in this youth exchange and was often criticized by participants. This criticism was caused by many different aspects, one of which has been mentioned above. Others were:

- adjustments to the schedule due to late arrivals and diverse demands of participants
- too little time to fit all the seminar contents into the schedule and adjust program to needs of the group (e.g. teambuilding activities, freetime for unregulated learning, and knowledge transfer)
- limited public transport options due to location of asylum seekers accommodation and holiday schedule of busses

Considering all those difficulties, which were mainly caused by lack of time, we still accomplished almost all our goals:

- of providing opportunities for teambuilding,
- fostering relationships and exchange between participants,
- the extension of knowledge about peacebuilding, SDG's and refugees, as well as
- empowerment of participants.

Seminar contents

The program established at least three topics for the seminar work (peacebuilding, Sustainable Development Goals, refugees), all of which are very complex on their own, but also interrelated. In an introductory activity, we found out that most participants had previous experiences with peacebuilding activities, but only few have had previous contact with refugees and almost no one knew anything about SDG's.

The participants were very much interested in the topic of SDG's, but in order to have meaningful conversations, we needed to introduce the SDG's from scratch, which costed some extra time. Nonetheless, the seminars on SDG's were quite successful as the participants felt more accustomed to the topic and could attach the SDG's significance to their communities and personal life.

It was more challenging to prepare the participants for their work in the refugee accommodation.

Although, we spent a lot of time on this topic and approached it from many different angles, many participants found it difficult to put their new knowledge into practice when they finally started their workshops in the asylum seekers accommodation. In the facilitator's opinion, most of the participant's learning processes about this topic happened during the peacebuilding training and teambuilding activities, as well in the free time discussions, and not least because a refugee took part in them as a member of the exchange group. Likewise, did the refugee benefit from the experience of having the exact same status as the others around him and being able to build relationships at eye level.

The most popular topic among participants was peacebuilding, which was probably due to their previous experiences with the topic, having been active in this field before and/ or having very personal encounters with conflict and war. A substantial majority of participants wanted to increase the duration of the professional training (cf. Annex 1 – Qualitative Analysis: Results from Evaluation Form), as they very much enjoyed the activities and drew a lot of new perspectives and ideas on peaceful and just community living from it.

All in all, we managed to establish a basis for future engagement with all those topics and, hopefully, empowered all participants for their future peacebuilding and anti-discriminatory activities in civil society.

Finally, we would like to thank all participants, partner organizations as well as all supporters for their good cooperation and highly valued contributions!

Annex 1 – Final Evaluation by participants

Qualitative Analysis – Results from Evaluation Form

"I especially liked the training with Christopher [YAP Trainer]. I made a lot of new experiences in that time. I learned a lot in these 10 days and had also a lot of fun! Maybe we could have one more free day to explore a bit. And not analyze too much (e.g. social contract). But actually, I loved everything 😊"

"I liked very much the seminars, especially with Christopher [YAP Trainer]. I found them very interesting and unique. With this way, we had the opportunity to learn more about the others. I liked a lot that we visited the camp, too. It was very nice to be with many people from different countries there and learn about their stories. For future youth exchanges, I would like to suggest more organizing seminars in the mornings and more games for the pleasure of the participants."

"I'm very glad and happy to be here for almost 2 weeks. It was great experience for me. I made many friends, my knowledge is enriched now, my motivation has risen and I'm coming back to my home country with great admiration and excitement."

"Great atmosphere, nice trainers. It would like to go deeper in the topic. I would like to have less duties as participant (cooking, cleaning) I suggest next course to have more activities."

"Creative and enriching non-formal education techniques are one of the best sides of this project. The way all participants think/ act/ reflect were all in kind and thoughtful way. Being here is truly great opportunity for both my personal, social and academical life. There should be more theoretical background presentations about topics related to the project that help promote improvement in project."

Qualitative Analysis – Results from Feedback-Flipcharts

At the end of the youth exchange, the participants were asked to leave their feedback on flipchart papers according to three categories. For reasons of data protection and legibility the remarks were transformed into word clouds.

What do I take with me?



I would do it again, but differently...



What do I leave behind?



Qualitative Analysis – Statements from follow-up process

We received the following statement from a participant from the Russian Federation, 3 weeks after the youth exchange by e-mail:

“I am writing to thank you for organising this amazing event. It was a unique experience for every participant. We have learned a lot, raised our awareness of peace and racism issues, made new contacts and friends!”

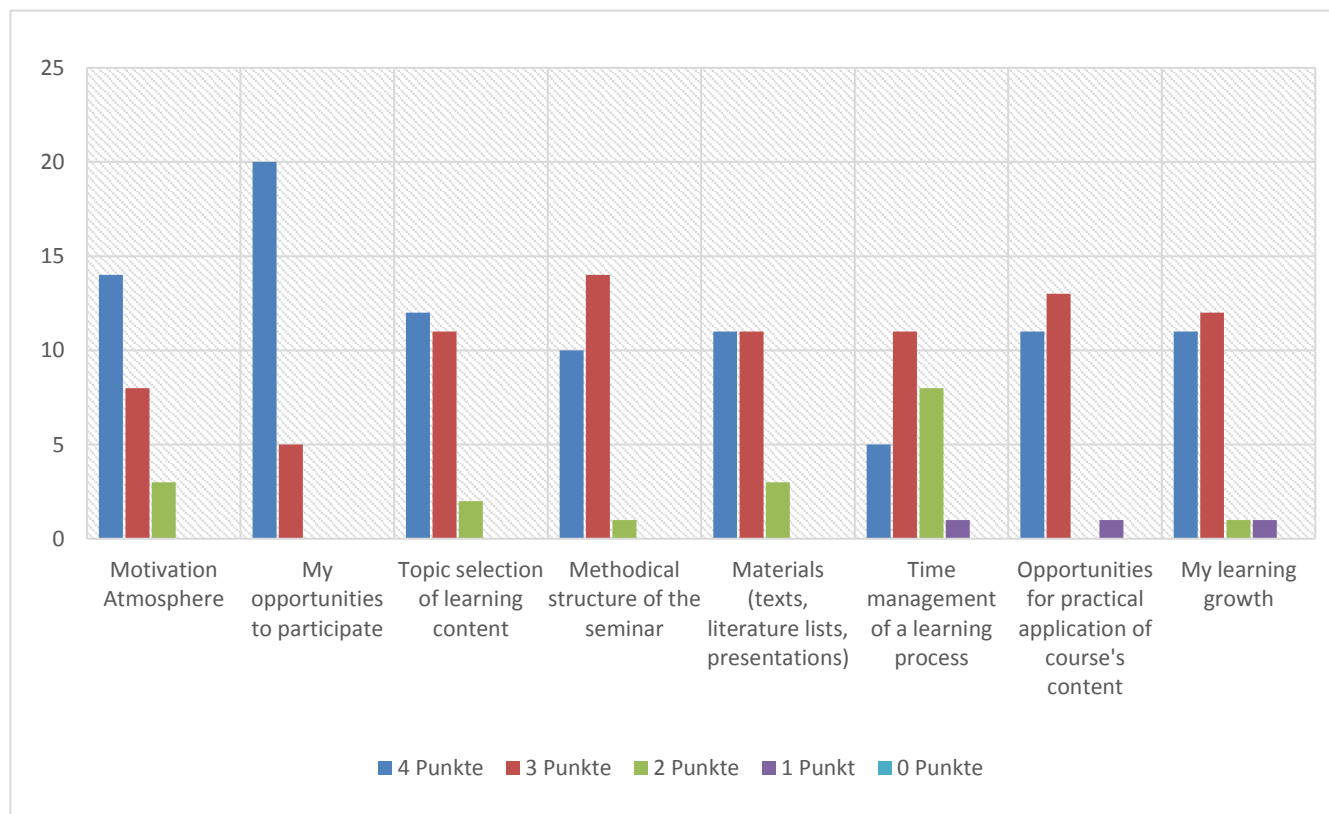
The following statement is an excerpt from the final group report, written by the team leader of the Turkish participants and forwarded to us by our partner organization Genctur:

“Firstly, I would like to say that, this exchange program, was an unforgettable experience for all participants. It really changed some of our prejudices for example, before the camp my Turkey group was biasness for Greek group because of some problem that two countries have experienced in the past. But just few days later I saw our guys was dancing with Greeks and they made joke about their past prejudice and judging their thoughts. Of course that was just an example but also very brief summary.

That development and lots of others was possible because of the activities, educations that we made in camp. At first as small groups of Georgia, Greece, Russia and Turkey groups were hanging in their own but in short time with lots of creative activities, group integrated. Especially one of instructor Christoph [YAP Trainer], the things he explains and the activities he made was very impressive. Especially when we explain our life in biography event was so emotional because everybody faced with his/her life and the life of others as a whole, personally listening to our Syrian friends, was striking things ever I experienced.”

Quantitative Analysis - Results of Evaluation Form

	Points received				
	4	3	2	1	0
	😊		😐		😞
My learning growth	44%	48%	4%	4%	
Motivating atmosphere	56%	32%	8%		
My opportunities to participate	80%	20%			
Opportunities for practical application of course`s content	44%	52%		4%	
Time management of a learning process	20%	44%	32%	4%	
Topic selection of learning content	48%	44%	8%		
Methodical structure of the workshops	40%	56%	4%		
Materials (texts, presentations)	44%	44%	12%		

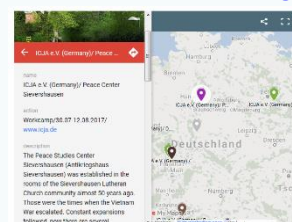


Annex 2 – Participating Organizations

Turkey	Genctour	http://genctur.org/eng/
Georgia	Civil Forum	http://cforum.org/#/home
Germany	ICJA	http://www.icja.org/
Russian Federation	Lastochki Samara (ICYE Russia)	http://www.icye.ru/en/about-us
Greece	ELIX	http://elix.org.gr/index.php/en/79-elix-ngo-en

Annex 3 – Articles, Links and Social Media

Young Activists For Peace Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/YoungActivistsforPeace/
Facebook Group for participants	https://www.facebook.com/groups/236387723805198/
ICJA Official Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/ICYE.Germany/?fref=ts
Short Documentary by participant Elena Vasileva	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pW8PzsGA7UY&feature=youtu.be
Short Article on Blog of the German-Greek Youth Office	https://agorayouth.com/2018/08/17/eine-welt-wie-wir-sie-wollen/ (in German)
Press publication AWO (Region Hannover)	https://www.awo-hannover.de/presse/pressemitteilung/keine-beruehrungsaengste-beim-kulturellen-austausch-2/ (in German)
Newspaper article in "Hannoversche Allgemeine" (German)	http://www.haz.de/Umland/Lehrte/Jugendbegegnung-im-Antikriegshaus (in German)
Local Awareness Activities Description on "Raising Peace Campaign" Website	https://raisingpeacecampaign.wordpress.com/awareness-raising-actions/local-awareness-activities/ (click on marker near Hannover, Germany on interactive map)



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This project is registered as local awareness-raising activity associated with the Raising Peace campaign.



Raising Peace is a networking initiative that aims to contribute to the construction of peace, the guarantee of human rights all over the world, and to highlight the role that International Voluntary Service (IVS) plays in the field. The programme achieves this through advocating for human rights, non-formal education training and capacity building, empowerment of activists and organisations and through communication and visibility campaigns.

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