

# **Young Activists Performing Peace**

# **Training Seminar for Youth Workers Sievershausen, 23.10. - 29.10.2021**





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# **Young Activists Performing Peace**

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#### WHY?

Since 2015 ICJA offers trainings and youth exchanges in the frame of a concept we call "Young

Activists for Peace". In four years over 300 participants came from different corners of the European Union, Eastern Europe Caucasus, as well as Mediterranean Region. The "Young Activists for Peace" projects offered a wide range of activities, topics and pedagogical concepts in the field of peace education, trainings for democracy, empowerment for youngsters with fewer opportunities etc. We do this, because we believe in the impact of this work on the young participants and in the long run also on



more democratic and peaceful societies. This year we hosted 17 participants from France; Greece, Turkey, Palestine, Israel, Azerbaijan and Germany.

#### WHAT?

The Training provided sessions and opportunities to:

- To promote Peace and international friendship in our societies and further develop the methodology used in our non-formal peace learning activities.
- To train on theatre pedagogy and peace education.
- To learn about developments and challenges for peace in the EU and in the world, and find ways to cooperate with each other in order to reach out to a wider community.
- To tackle issues such as increasing nationalism, hate speech, xenophobia and racism especially among young people.
- To learn how motivate and empower young people to take a more active stand against right-wing propaganda, discrimination against Muslims and human rights violations against refugees and migrants.
- To get to know the situation of peace work in Sievershausen and prepare a theatre performance for the local community.

# **Program Overview**

## Day 1

- Arrival and getting to know each other
- Welcome evening
- Orientation about venue and Corona rules
- Expectations, first information about program

## Day 2

- Introductory Session (continued)
- Introduction in the program
- Getting to know each other: on personal level, on level of activities and your organizations
- Different reflections about Peace
- Presentation of peace related activities of the partner organizations
- Daily reflection round

## Day 3

- Personal experiences on the subject of conflicts
- Conflict resolution strategies
- Peace and justice
- ❖ Theory of "Betzavta" as concept of political and democratic education
- Erasmus + & Youth Pass
- Daily reflection round

## Day 4

- About conflict, groups and structures Part I
- Simulation game: "Monolitia"
- ❖ About conflict, groups and structures Part II
- Daily reflection round

Afternoon: free time

#### Day 5

- About Power
- Theater as tool for political action, presentation of different examples
- Finding and developing of own projects
- Developing the own project together
- Exchanging feedbacks and further development of own projects

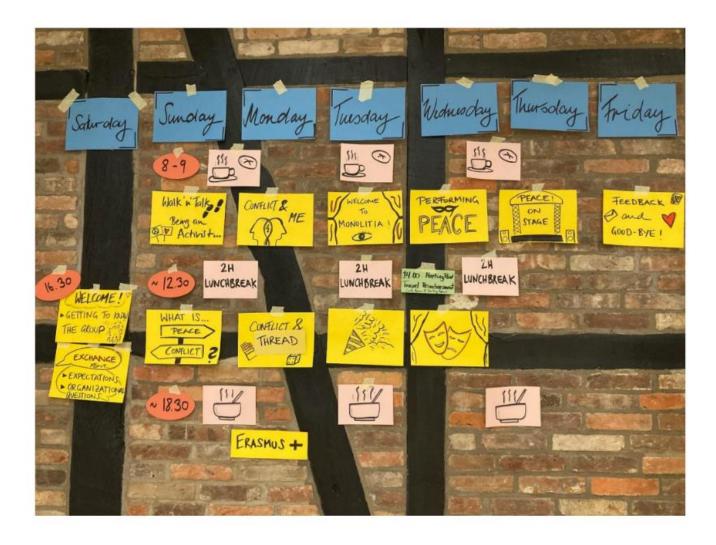


## Day 6

- Finalizing the own project
- Trip to Hannover
- Presentation of own project / performance in Hannover
- Visit of the city
- Reflection and discussion about the day
- Farewell party

# Day 7

- ❖ Feedback and Evaluation, what will we do back home?
- YouthPass
- Farewell and Departure of Volunteers



# **Daily Reports**

# Day 1 - Saturday 23/10/2021

- Arrival
- Getting to know each other (Methods: first checkin round with guiding questions, name game "4 Names", Metaplan Methode with Dixit- Cards)
- Corona and house rules
- Expectations of the group
- Program presentation (Presentation of daily schedule, review of the aim, objectives and expected learning outcomes)
- Informal night walk in village

#### **Arriving**

On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 2021, the participants arrived to Sievershausen, Germany were the project took place. After everyone arrived, we all met together at 4:30 pm. The project started by introducing everyone, learning more about the program and explaining the reasons that brought everybody here. We exchanged about expectations and things that were important for us in living in a group, dos and don'ts.

Corona rules and house rules were explained; we also decided the kitchen helping teams and the documentation teams. Then we had the opportunity to know each other better over a delicious dinner and a walk night through the village.

#### Marah's experience:

I was so excited when we got to know each other, I wanted to get to know everyone present and hear their stories and struggles they always face, and I felt overwhelmed from the stories of the group, their aspirations and the ambition of some of them.

#### **Imane's experience:**

Despite the tiredness of the journey to get there, I was very excited and happy to arrive at the project site and meet the other participants. I was very impressed by the background of some of them and their life experiences. I like the fact that there is a great diversity in the background of the participants. I am very much looking forward to learning and discovering new things with them.



# Day 2 - Sunday 24/10/2021

- Warm up (Methods: walking in the space with Body- and Group-Experiences and Mindfulness, Group Synchronisation)
- Morning round
- Program presentation and welcoming of new participants (Presentation of daily schedule, review of the aim, objectives and expected learning outcomes)
- Getting to know each other
- Participants share their experience as activists
- Team building
- Meaning of peace for us
- ❖ Peace and Conflict Theory and Concepts: Negative and Positive Peace, 3 Dimensions of Violence / Triangle of Violence by Johann Galtung
- Activity and reflection on: How do we realize peace? How do we contribute to Peace? (Method: experience based method (Betzavta) - Chair Sculpture)
- Daily reflection round

#### Warm up

After breakfast, we did a warm up with the method of walking in the space, with Body- and Group-Experiences and Mindfulness Synchronisation. We then started the activity with a round of "how are you?" to see the mood of the group using the traffic light cards.

We also did a round trying to answer to the questions: Where do we come from? Who are we back home? What describes and shapes us?

#### Being an activist

We then reflected on the meaning of being an activist. We answered to the following questions by writing and/or drawing or experience as activists, our cause and context.

- Which problem are you trying to change? What do we need to know to understand the context?
- With whom and how do you work on this? How would you called the "strategy" you follow?
- What motivates you personally to go on? Which (small) successes do you enjoy?
- How could others help you? Which open question do you bring with you to this training?

Divided in two groups, we then used the Art gallery technique to explore each other's projects. The first group shows their poster and the second asks questions or adds comments, and then the opposite. We could present an existing project or something we dreamt about doing...

It was very interesting to see the projects of the others, the difficulties they face in their own countries and the different causes they fight for.



#### The meaning of peace

After lunch, we played a game called 33 as energizer: the group had 33 tasks in 33 minutes. We managed to accomplish all the tasks, and the group was working well together. It was a lot of fun! Then we stepped in the topic, we first had some solo time to think about personal peace experiences, and when do we feel at peace. Secondly we were divided in small groups and had to discuss "what is peace for us?" trying to write a short definition. We then exchange about it in the big group and Lisa gave us a definition of violence and peace, explaining how negative peace can be absence of direct violence, but positive peace can be absence of cultural and structural violence, which is the ultimate understanding of peace. The theory is inspired by the Triangle of Violence by Johann Galtung.

#### **Realizing Peace?**

After a short coffee break, we divided in two groups and we received a different task to achieve using the chairs in the room: one group had to build a chair sculpture as high as possible, the other had to build the biggest square, also with chairs. A lively discussion came up as we tried to achieve both goals, listening to each other ideas and suggestions. Not everybody agreed and there were some interesting group and power dynamics happening. We finally had a kind of solution, and we deepen into the strategies, talk and behaviours that each one of us had during the task. How did we fell, were we satisfied by the outcome? Did we like the way our group worked and how did we understand the task? We used the traffic lights cards as tool.

At 6 pm we did a closing round about our feelings on the first day and we went for dinner.



# Day 3 - Monday 25/11/2021

- Morning round
- Warm up (Method: body expression round)
- Own conflict biography and pattern (individual work)
- Conflict strategies and wishes to change (group work)
- Reflection of dynamics of conflict transformation (Method: body statues)
- Reflection and transfer to personal reality
- \* Relation of Peace and Freedom (Method: Betzavta thread game)
- Daily reflection round

#### **Morning round**

Today we started with a morning round to know how everyone is feeling and begin the day. I like that way of starting a day because it makes everyone aware of each others energy level. This helps the trainers as well to take in consideration the diversity of moods in a group.

#### Warm up

After this we started a so called gesture circle which had different purposes: on it to get everybody in their body and also awake, since we needed to stand up and move. One person had to start with a very

small gesture and each person afterwards (going in circles) had to make the gesture bigger. Niklas told us to think about the topic of conflict when we created our gestures but most participants used other gestures, more like showing their emotions (e.g. yawning or stretching). This method showed me how much one can express by simply gestures. Often this happens subconsciously but the opposite realizes it and interprets it. Additionally it made me think that it is possible to not use words and still show with the body on which topic one it thinking. This actually creates hope inside of me since we can overcome language and still express us to each other.

#### **Conflict biography**

The next task was to think about the topic of conflict in our life. We had to find a comfortable place and try to look back into our personal story of conflicts. Niklas handed out a sheet of paper with different questions:

- 1. If you think back: Which situations do you remember when you think e.g. about school, family and friend circles? Who was involved, what happened?
- 2. Try to find one sentence to describe the way people around you thought about conflicts (e.g. you have to fight for your own interest! Or don't make a big deal our of it!)
- 3. How did you act in those situations? How do you feel remembering them?
- 4. Which patterns to behave within conflicts do exist within your group of friends?
- 5. Which pattern to behave within conflict do exist within your home region/country?
- 6. Which other person/group surprised or inspired you most regarding how they deal with conflicts? How would you like to change the role conflicts play in your life or how you behave in conflicts?

We had 25 minutes for the task and I enjoyed the time to self reflect and analyse private conflicts.

#### **Conflict transformation**

Afterwards we got together in groups of 3-4 persons and discussed for 20 minutes on our conflicts. It was interesting to see how different the reflection and the conflicts were.

Then we had to choose 1-2 conflicts and build sculptures out of them. Meaning we had to show the situation of the conflict by using our team partners as actors/roles. The person whose conflict it was the sculptural artist. After the sculpture, the artist had to think about how he/she wished the conflict situation had happened and create a second sculpture.

In the end, one sculpture was presented in front of the whole group and we discussed the conflict as well as an alternative outcome or reaction of the person involved in the conflict.

After this intensive morning, we had pasta for lunch and some of the group visited very friendly and cuddly animals in the village.

#### Peace and freedom

After getting back together at 2.30 pm we played the energizer dragon&princess.

Then Lisa asked us to write 2-3 things down, what we would like to do if we had 10 minutes free time right now. Then she gave around a role of thread and told us to take a piece of thread, how long we needed it to be. This piece of thread needed to be attached to us. Then we built groups of 4 persons and Lisa and Niklas tied our 4 threads together. Suddenly moving was not easy anymore, especially for those who had very short threads. After being tied together, we were supposed to fulfill our wishes for the 10 minutes free time. In my group, we decided on fulfilling the wish of each one of the group but we did some things simultaneously, so we had enough time and everyone was satisfied.

10 minutes later we got together again and discussed some questions around power and limited freedom.

Our findings were interesting, since we realized that cooperation is much more needed once the freedom of each is limited. Therefore, a sense of community is strengthened. Also, it gets more important to take responsibility for each other but also a leader has a lot of responsibility once he/she decides to take the peoples freedom.

In the evening, Niklas gave



the group inputs and explanation about Erasmus +. Key action 1, 2, 3, the aims, the funding lines and the must-haves to succeed. In addition he gave an introduction about the youth pass: What it's all about. How to use the online tool to add learning outcomes. What's the personal benefit of having a youth pass and it's importance as proof for nonformal education in the frame of Erasmus + activities.

# Day 4 - Tuesday 26/10/2021

- Morning round
- Group open discussion on the methods and training process (focus on group dynamics)
- Conflict on a structural level (Method: Experience Based Simulation "Monolitia")
- Discussion about the experience
- Daily reflection round
- Free afternoon

#### **Morning open discussion**

We started the day by an "how are you?" Round the trainers started asking if someone wants to talk and express him/herself. One person is saying that he did not like the way to speak and to ask of one of the trainers and he explains why he is not feeling comfortable. Then a few persons express their opinions too. After the trainers ask us (the participants) to talk with our neighbour to know and reflect if we want to keep follow the same method for the training or if we want to change it in a more communicative way, exchanging and so on. We talk and everyone took a decision. The ones who want to keep going on the same method are invited to the meeting room, the other are staying in the living room.

#### Monolitia!

After a little break we started again. Before entering the meeting room, the trainer gave us an ID card with an eye and the name of an organization. The game is like a life simulation with a government composed by two political parties in coalition, a security and justice organisation part of the democratic structure, a newspaper and an activist movement. Soon, there will be election in Monalitía (the imaginary city); the two political parties want to win the election and try their best to do it, speak with the newspaper, make promise to the social movement ect... As a real political life, we use the same way already existing without thinking out of the box. It was a really good and nice game and I really enjoyed it. I think everyone enjoyed it but I think if I had to play another time I will try to play and try to make it with a different way and use different strategy that are not the one everybody knows.



We then had lunch and the afternoon free. A big group decided to spend their free afternoon in Hannover, while four people stayed in Sievershausen, enjoying the quiet time.

# Day 5 - Wednesday 27/10/2021

- Morning round
- Warm up
- Experiencing power by body work
- Theater as a tool for Peace Activism
- ❖ Beginning of the group work: Specification of the topic and collecting ideas for creative implementation
- Energizer (group juggling)
- Elaboration of the creative theatre scenes in small groups
- Presenting first ideas in the group and gathering feedback

#### **Experiencing power**

The warm up today was a chair-balance game, which made as work as a team. We then did a hypnosis exercise: in couples, we were working with our eyes and our bodies, respecting the rhythm of the other. We later tried as a whole group, connecting our hands and sights to a big hypnotized human chain. This was a way to experience, express and feel power with our bodies. How does it feel to be controlled by someone, or to control someone else? A leader should be aware of responsibility and how it effects every single part of the structure!

#### **Theatre for Peace**

After this very cool exercise, we started planning our action for the following day in Hannover. We discovered different types of public theatre actions: the invisible theatre, the newspaper theatre, the creative theatre, the political theatre, the flashmob through videos as examples. Participants chose their favourite type of theatre performance and built two groups. Each group discussed different topics until the idea for their own theatre project was developed.

We had pizza for lunch ©

#### Preparing the performance

In the afternoon, the participants worked together in groups on directing their idea into a stage performance in a practical way. The first one concerns the anti-extremism and anti-discrimination; the second one concerns the administrative detention that Israel is using against Palestine prisoners and the hunger strike that they are going through recently. At the end of the day, each group performed in front of the others and received their feedback.



# Day 6 - Thursday 28/10/2021

- Morning round
- Last rehearsals in the Groups
- Travel to Hannover
- Arriving in Hannover and looking for an appropriate space for the projects
- Performance of the political street theatre in the Center of Hannover
- Visit of the city
- Coming together as a Group

#### **To Hannover**

On this day, we travelled to Hannover after breakfast and the last preparations, to discover the city and perform our theatre project.

The group was very excited and willing to visit the city.

#### Performing!

We were looking for an appropriate space for the performances; we visited an artsy neighbourhood and had lunch there. We then moved to the main shopping street, where we decided to act. The first group performed in front of the train station, with the others taking pictures and videos. Then the second group did their project in an area close to the shopping centre, they also had music and the group danced shortly together, before ending their performance.



#### And it's a wrap

Everyone was very excited and happy about the public theatre projects, adrenaline was released and the group went to celebrate with a coffee to a bar al together.

Later in the afternoon, someone stayed longer in the city to visit it, others travelled back to the Antikriegshaus to relax.

It was for sure a great ending of the work we did: finally seeing our experience in action in a public space. Even if it was not perfect, we had the courage to perform it and learnt what does it mean, to occupy public space in a political way.



# Day 7 - Friday 29/10/2021

- Morning round
- Looking back, Preparation of reflection on Take-Aways
- Group Reflection about Take-Aways and future projects
- Sharing (of Insights during Silent Discussion) and Goodbye
- Handing over of the YouthPass Certificates
- Departure

#### **Feedbacks**

On the last day, we met again for the "how are you round", getting more formal feedback about the performance the day before and a general feeling about the training ending.

We then had a "silent discussion" feedback, where we answered to the following questions on posters, and where we could write back and comment on other people's writing.

- What has been inspiring for you?
- What do you want to take from the seminar back home?
- What would you like to be changed next time?
- If you could choose anything: on/about which question/topic would you like to work in the next seminar?

#### YouthPass and the end

We then had a last word sharing round, when everybody could express their farewell. Finally, the YouthPass Certificates were handed out. Each one handed the certificate to someone else with an appreciative sentence and a "thank you for". We closed the program with the goodbye ritual of la ola wave.

# Online Meetings 11/10/2021 & 29/11/2021

# Pre-Training Online Meeting, 11/10/2021

- ❖ Welcome, technical check + name round, energizer
- Presentation of the people involved, the team and the program for the online meeting
- Activities to get to know each other
- Peace, conflict and theatre a first step into the topic
- ICJA and the partners, actual list of participants
- Final greetings + important info for the training

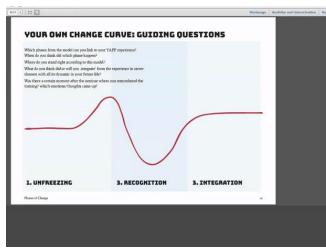




Meeting the participants and the trainers before the training was a great opportunity. Not only we were not strangers as we met on the first day of the training in presence, but we also could focus on the topic in advance. It was useful to answer the last open questions and doubts and to create a nonformal and relaxed atmosphere for all.

# Post-Training Online Meeting, 29/11/2021

- Welcome, technical check, energizer
- How are we-Round
- Look back: arriving home from the training
- Short input about conflict and peace
- Creative method for the closing
- Greetings from ICJA



Seeing the group a month after the training was ideal:

we could see how the small seeds of the experience grew in every person, what they really brought home from Sievershausen and the new projects they are planning.

# **Conclusions**

After ICJA and its partners had organized 5 peace-promoting Erasmus + projects since 2015, we are relieved we could finally manage to offer a training despite the Coronavirus Pandemic this year.

The seminar took place in an important place for peace, the Antikriegshaus in Sievershausen. 17 participants from 8 countries with very different social, structural and political backgrounds had the opportunity to exchange views on issues that are of high concern for the young generation all over the European Union and in neighboring countries as well as worldwide.

At least 6 more participants were planning to join the training, but could not finalize their intent due to difficulties related to the pandemic. It makes harder, especially for not-EU citizens, to travel to Germany.

When analyzing the benefits that "Young Activists for Peace" brought to the participants, it was surprising to see the interest they had for each other's stories, countries, personal struggles and cultural aspects. The broad range of perspectives and relevant social issues brought by participants from their own environment formed the basis for urgently needed discussions about the currently tangible threats to peace and even survival on our planet. The main question was how each and everyone of us in what we are doing can contribute to creating "a more peaceful world" and which is sustainable. Also, how we experience and what is our attitude towards conflict. This led to many interesting discussions and to a better understanding of the societies and backgrounds the individual participants came from.

The participants also had a hands-on experience and learned about methods of international youth work — they shared the experience they made, and the methods they use in their respective associations and groups. Supported by two experienced trainers, they learned about concepts such as the political theatre and theater of the oppressed; "Betzavta" and body experienced exercises.

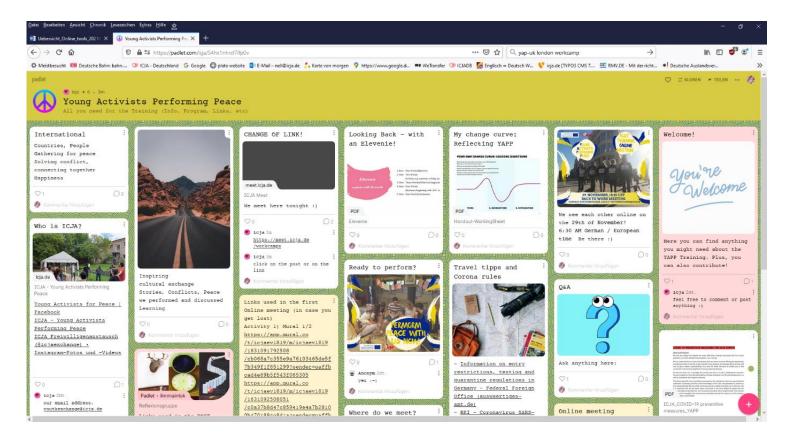
The performance in Hannover enabled the group to put into practice what they learnt during the training, but also to experience with their bodies the meaning of acting in public spaces, standing up for their ideas and sharing them with strangers in a direct way, without the help of social media, for example.

The exchange with each other was a joy for everyone and extremely successful, as it could be seen at the various group work of the program.

The online sessions, one before the training and one after it, have been a way to reinforce the connection among the participants and the trainers. The Pre-Training online meeting had the aim of stepping in the topic and meeting as a group for the first time, which enabled a smoother start of the training in presence. The Post-Training online meeting, which took place a month after the training, was very useful to observe the outcomes of the event and the learning process of the participants with a cooler mind.

We, the team of ICJA, take this opportunity to thank all participants for their continuing commitment for peace under increasingly difficult circumstances. We also thank the partner organizations, cooperating institutions and supporters of the project for their valuable cooperation without which this seminar and the development of "Young Activists for Peace" would not have been possible.





# **Feedback of the participants**

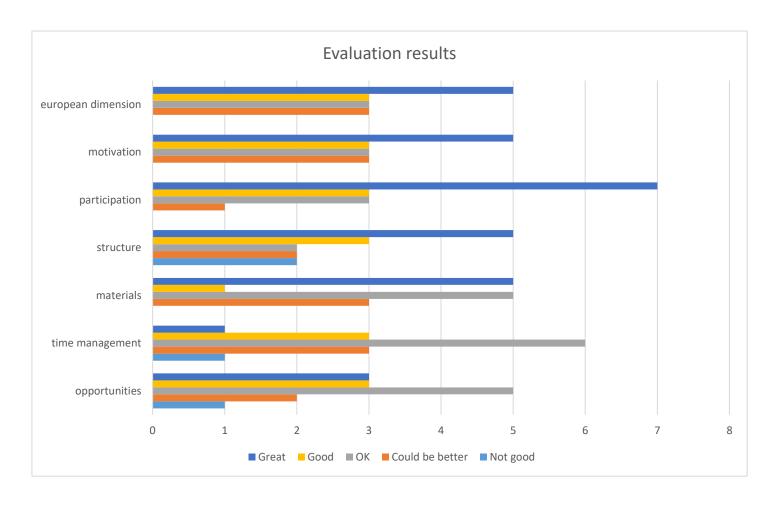
Time flies when you are having fun and I really got the meaning here!

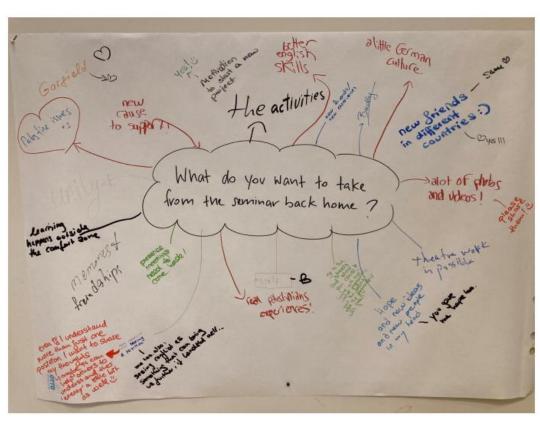
Thank you for this huge opportunity!

We want to thank each one of you for such a wonderful experience, thank you for listening and sharing your stories. Stay powerful!



# **Quantitative Analysis – Results from Evaluation Form**





# **Annex**

# **Participating Organizations**

FRANCE	Concordia FR	www.concordia.fr
FRANCE	Solidarites Jeunesses	www.solidaritesjeunesses.org
GREECE	ELIX	www.elix.org.gr/index.php/en
TURKEY	Europublic	https://www.facebook.com/europublicofficial/
PALESTINE	IPYL	www.ipyl.org
ISRAEL	BALADNA	www.momken.org
AZERBAIJAN	COMMON SENSE	www.csyo-az.org/en
GERMANY	ICJA	www.icja.de

# **Articles, Links and Social Media**

Links of international organizations

Europublic – Turkey

(20+) EUROPUBlic: Belong to Youth | Facebook

Concordia FR - France

Offres Erasmus+ : Echanges de Jeunes et Formations | Concordia

Presentation of the project on ICJA website:

https://www.icja.de/en/content/Workcamps/Jugendbegegnungen/Young-Activists-for-Peace/

CCVIS - International Voluntary Service

CCIVS (@ccivsvolunteer) • Instagram-Fotos und -Videos

#### **Facebook Young Activists for Peace**

#### Young Activists for Peace | Facebook







# **Coordinating Organization**

ICJA Freiwilligenaustausch weltweit e.V.

Andreas Schwab Nikolaus Ell Stralauer Allee 20E 10245 Berlin www.icja.de

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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The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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