

POLICY BRIEF

iTALKING ACROSS GENERATIONS ON EDUCATIONS CYPRUS



όμιλος ιστορικού διαλόγου
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for historical dialogue
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INTRODUCTION

With the aim to empower the voice of the youth and include them in policymaking process in the areas of 'Education and Sustainable Peace in Cyprus', the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR) organised the 'independent Talking Across Generations on Education'.

For this project, the AHDR has been inspired by UNESCO MGIEP (Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development), promoting the iTAGe youth-driven intergenerational dialogue on education that provides a non-hierarchical platform to the youth to interact, discuss and debate critical issues that concern the future.

The Live Dialogue was held on November 29, 2021 engaging both youth and significant stakeholders/ policymakers, at the AHDR's premises in the UN Buffer Zone in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The AHDR's unique iTAGe modality for actionable dialogue comprised of the following components: (a) online survey and online youth-moderated discussions, (b) face-to-face focus group meetings, and (c) live dialogue.

In the first phase the online engagement and survey-, young people were invited to complete the iTAGe survey and participate in the online discussions to provide their own thoughts, ideas and opinions on four main issues regarding the education in Cyprus: (a) Youth's vision of Sustainable Peace in Cyprus; (b) Youth's perceptions on the role of Education to promote a Culture of Peace in Cyprus; (c) Youth's perceptions on the key competencies needed to promote a Culture of Peace; (d) The role of youth as key partners in promoting a 'Culture of Peace' through Education in Cyprus.

Around 80 surveys were submitted, whereas the online discussions on AHDR's social media (moderated by 8 young people) reached 14 615 people in total. From the survey applicants and 654 social media engagements, around 30 youth participants were invited to take roles in the youth-led focus group discussions that took place at Home for Cooperation on the 6th and 13th November 2021.

Following the focus group discussions, six young speakers and one moderator for the third phase of the project, the live dialogue, were identified based on their online engagement and concrete work on the ground and invited to take part in discussing issues on Education in Cyprus with significant policymakers.

To promote the live dialogue, an invitation letter was sent to trade unions on education in both communities, to different academics in 5 different universities and 500+ students were reached out through universities & academics.

Identified 6 young discussants, were joined by 2 distinguished senior stakeholders, Dr. Michalinos Zembylas, Professor of Educational Theory and Curriculum Studies, Open University of Cyprus, and Mr. Şener Elçil, the General Secretary of Cyprus Turkish Teachers' Trade Union (KTÖS), in a candid iTAGe exchange in front of an online audience of over 1022 people, where they explored issues and suggested solutions regarding education and sustainable peace in Cyprus.

INTRODUCTION

This participatory and inclusive process of engaging different actors in exploring 'Peace & Education' in Cyprus together, while taking into consideration existing educational policies, curricula, pedagogical approaches, and contextual conditions in Cyprus and elsewhere, has led to this short brief which intends to provide youth-generated insights and recommendations for policy intervention.

In general, it seems that the youth envision more contact, collaboration and exchange between the communities; an education system that promotes dialogue, critical thinking, multiperspectivity and peace education across Cyprus.

The youth believes that emotional and cultural literacy, empathy and knowing about civic rights are among the key competencies in order to promote a 'Culture of Peace'. The youth is eager to take active role within the communities- they have the ability and capability to develop their knowledge and skills if given the opportunity.



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iTAG

BACKGROUND

Cyprus is an island nation in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, which is de facto partitioned into the south (effectively under the control of the Republic of Cyprus) and the north (administered by the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and recognized only by Turkey).

The education systems in Cyprus have been deeply marked by the antagonism between the island's two main ethnolinguistic communities, the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities as well as the violent events in the 60s and 70s that caused heavy casualties and divided the island. The events and conflict have led to death, loss of property, increase in militarization and the displacement of 200,000 Greek Cypriots and 45,000 Turkish Cypriots. Since then, the country is de facto divided into two ethnically homogenized parts and, despite negotiations for a settlement under the auspices of the U.N., still remains divided. Since 2003, the opening of some checkpoints in the buffer zone has allowed relative freedom of movement across the dividing line. However, public and political consciousness in each of the two communities is dominated by the perception that violence, trauma and victimhood have been caused by the 'other's' side; the boundaries between victims and perpetrators are very pronounced in national discourses, including education. The exclusion of the 'other's' perspective is achieved through processes of silencing and of constructing one-sided narratives to dismiss the 'other's' claims. After 1974, the education systems on both sides sought to cultivate ethnic self-containment and to ensure the collective remembering of the conflict for the younger generations, perpetuating the division and putting an obstacle for establishing sustainable peace in Cyprus.

In this context, the Association for Historical Dialogue (AHDR) was established in 2003 as a multicomunal, non-profit and non-governmental organisation, that has been active in the fields of History and Peace Education, by providing workshops, educational materials to teachers, students, youth and the general public to contribute to the advancement of a culture of democracy and sustainable peace.

In 2011 the AHDR opened the Home for Cooperation (H4C), a unique educational and cultural community centre in the heart of Nicosia, in the UN Buffer Zone. The H4C is the embodiment of intercommunal cooperation, contributing to the collective efforts of civil society in their engagement with peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue. It essentially aims to act as a bridge-builder between separated communities, memories and visions and provides working spaces and opportunities for NGOs and individuals to design and implement innovative projects.



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BACKGROUND

'Culture of Peace' is a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations.'

(UN Resolutions A/RES/52/13: Culture of Peace and A/RES/53/243, Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace)

The AHDR seeks to develop new ideas, activities and projects that assist not only in the construction of such a culture of peace, but also in sustaining and stabilizing it within the Cypriot society. The AHDR is responding to the rising demand of the youth, educational community and the society in general for relevant, strategic, and innovative grassroots approaches to education for a sustainable culture of peace. In this way, education addresses key challenges and sets the conditions for sustaining these efforts for present and future generations.

Youth policy on education has become a key element of interest and work for the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR) since education has played a divisive role in Cypriot society. As well as that, although refugee children have access to education, there are deficits and challenges in the system; thus, there is a need for recognising multicultural, multilingual and multifaith profile of emerging youth in Cyprus. duals to design and implement innovative projects.

The independent 'Talking Across Generations on Education' (iTAGE) (Cyprus) project is considered vital since the Culture of War is maintained and perpetuated, at different levels (i.e.: educational system, faith representatives/bodies, media, and other), thus, rendering Cypriot society unable to transform it into a Culture of Peace.

Above all, the covid-19 pandemic has undermined many peacebuilding gains as the crossings were restricted across the island during and even after the lockdowns significantly affecting the dialogue and dynamics between the communities in Cyprus and interrupting processes that prepares conditions for a culture of peace.

The project provides a unique and significant opportunity for the youth of both communities to come together and discuss issues on education and peace with educational policymakers. The iTAGE project enabled a youth-led discussion encouraging a participatory and democratic process, where young people took active roles in leading the discussions with significant policymakers and voicing out their common concerns regarding education and sustainable peace in Cyprus.

Pre TAGe

Before the Live Discussion, an online survey and online discussions on AHDR's social media took place. Then, around 30 youth discussants were invited to participate in the focus group meetings where they discussed and reflected on the current conditions, problems and challenges of Education in Cyprus; on their root causes and reasons and provided solutions and recommendations.

iTAG^Y

**8 SOCIAL MEDIA DISCUSSION
YOUNG MODERATORS**

654 SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS
14 615 PEOPLE WERE REACHED ONLINE
2 FACE TO FACE FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS
AROUND 30 YOUNG PARTICIPANTS

The infographic features a central illustration of a desk with a computer monitor displaying a virtual meeting with four participants, a black office chair, a potted plant, and a desktop tower. The iTAG logo is in the top right, and the AHDR logo is in the bottom right.

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The 4 main topics

Topic 1: Youth's vision of Sustainable Peace in Cyprus

The first online discussion invited youth to share their visions of sustainable peace. Specifically, the discussion focused on the question “What is your vision of ‘sustainable peace’ in Cyprus?”.



The 1st question post was moderated on social media by Maria CHRISTODOULOU and Merve GÜRALP. For the youth in Cyprus, dialogue, cooperation, solidarity, respect, awareness, empathy, breaking prejudices and stereotypes, and a culture of peace must be prioritised in order to sustain peace in Cyprus. Here are some of the comments made by youth:

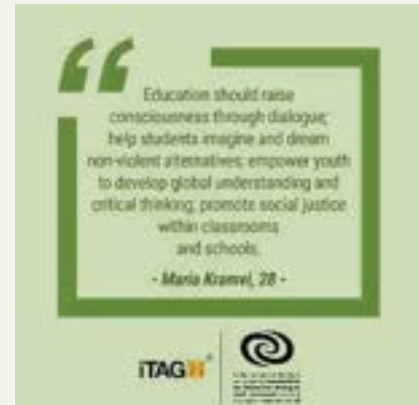
“Starting from youth, appreciation and recognition of diversity, mutual understanding and acceptance of the past and a will for building a future with the collaboration are keys for sustainable peace.”
Mehmetcan Soyloğlu

“Sustainable peace in Cyprus means reaching a stage where the political conflict has been transformed and the presence of a UN peacekeeping force is no longer required. Sustainable peace is both the absence of conflict and the presence of justice.”
Loizos Lambis

The 4 main topics

Topic 2: Youth's perceptions on the role of Education to promote a Culture of Peace in Cyprus.

For the second online discussion, youth were asked to provide their insight on “What do you think is the role of education in Cyprus towards achieving a ‘Culture of Peace?’”. The second Question post was moderated on social media by Çağlayan Deniz DOĞANAY and Konstantinos KARSERAS.



Most comments and responses underlined that education should promote acceptance, diversity, tolerance and inclusion; focus on intercommunal dialogue, critical thinking, multiperspectivity and highlighted the need for challenging and deconstructing one-sided narratives that perpetuate division. According to youth, education should be adapted to both local and global realities. Living in a global planet requires dealing with global issues and problems globally. In order to achieve that, education must allow for transcultural learning, respect for diversity of identities and experiences and solidarity among individuals and groups.



The 4 main topics

Topic 3: Youth's perceptions on the key competencies needed to promote a Culture of Peace.

The third iTAGe question posted on AHDR's social media was "What are the key competencies that may enable youth to promote a 'Culture of Peace' across the island?". Maria K. GEORGIU and Esra Selin ÇINAR moderated the online discussions.



In general, there was a consensus on the need for development of social and emotional skills of the young generation such as empathy, tolerance and understanding, non-violent communication, respect, and civil courage that enable an environment and learning for a culture of peace. Youth highlighted that young generation's knowledge and skills need to be built on and strengthened through education, by providing them different learning opportunities to promote culture of peace through understanding that each young individual can serve as an agent of change.

“1) Emotional Intelligence - Most of the time, sensitive topics will be discussed in order to get to the root of the problem, thus it is essential during the peace process to find ways to de-stress and simultaneously empathize with others.

2) leadership - Young people have so much ambition and determination that they would not hesitate to take initiative and lead the way during the peacebuilding process.

3) active listening: Youth have the ability to listen to one another's opinion and views in order to have a mutual understanding. Listening to the other side and their story is integral for conflict resolution.”

Loizos Lambis



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The 4 main topics

Topic 4: The role of youth as key partners in promoting a 'Culture of Peace' through Education in Cyprus.

After diving into the youth's key competencies needed to promote a 'Culture of Peace', the iTAG's fourth and final social media discussion topic was posted. Young people were invited to respond to the question "One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world" (Malala Yousafzai). What is the role of youth as key partners in promoting a 'Culture of Peace' through education in Cyprus?"



This discussion was moderated by Yagis BEY and Andreas CHARALAMBOUS. Young people commented that they are the agents of change and able to melt the ice between generations and communities; to build bonds and bridges through initiatives that have to do with education, arts, entrepreneurship, environment, innovation and so many other aspects of life, and to advocate for more just space.

“Political discourse should promote understanding, tolerance and empathy towards youth needs. Youth should be involved in decision-making as we are also citizens and individuals affected by political actions.”

Elif Bulbul

“The role of Youth in promoting a 'Culture of Peace' through education in Cyprus is to be agents of change themselves. Youth can set example of being a civilized, but also motivated activist in developing the peace process in Cyprus. It is crucial for youth to use all their tools as disposal to encourage inter-communal contact in different settings (work, school, neighborhood, bi-communal events) and not to concede to the demands and outdated ways of thinking of politicians and extremists groups. Youth must demonstrate courage and patience during their struggle to promote peace and must be very consistent with their projects and campaigns.”

Loizos Lambis



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KEY YOUTH REFLECTIONS

An urgent call to deal efficiently with nationalism, discrimination, racism, stereotypes, prejudices, victimization and silencing in both communities, to promote diversity and inclusion and furthermore (political and civil) equality and justice for all. Youth is proposing more transparent and democratic institutions and decision-making; for the establishment of mechanisms for the prevention of direct, structural and cultural violence and marginalisation.

The current two educational systems in Cyprus are characterized as ethnocentric. They may be contributing to propaganda, racism, sexism, bias; promoting nationalistic narratives, conflict, hate and division; invalidating the bicommunal peace initiatives inside the school environment.

There is a need for an inclusive and multicultural educational system that embraces all its people; re-evaluates values, principles, attitudes and behaviors in order to promote a Culture of Peace; eliminates the political and religious interventions; constructs the shared narratives (e.g., changing the narrative from the "heroes of war" to "heroes of peace") with a focus on inter-communal dialogue, co-existence, democratic participation and other issues (e.g., feminism; sex education and queer matters; environmental awareness).

A common educational curriculum and the promotion of Peace Education through the non-formal education and the channels/ frames of the arts, the common shared cultural heritage and the sports.

Bicommunal interaction and building stronger bonds (starting from early ages), are strongly emphasized by the majority of the young people. Inter-communal contact might be allowed in different settings: exchange of schools visits, establishment of bi-communal schools, work and entrepreneurship, bi-communal events (camps, festivals, talks, workshops, etc.), arts (theatre, music, literature, visual arts, cinema), cultural heritage and site visits, sports activities, gastronomy, the use of public spaces to promote connection and communication; global peace summits and peace activists' talks in the island.

KEY YOUTH REFLECTIONS

An emphasis on critical thinking and analysis, objectivity and multi-perspectivity seems to be the key in order to allow mutual understanding. Youth asks to be taught both sides of the history and furthermore, 'rewrite' their shared history. There has been an interest to learn about their local history but also the Mediterranean and World history and culture, to enhance the development of their global understanding. Youth should be encouraged to ask educators the difficult questions; to question the 'pre-defined' answers; to speak up and bring down 'walls' in classrooms.

The development of young people's active listening skills and non-judgemental dialogue will lead to mutual understanding, acceptance, tolerance, trust and respect among the communities and the people.

Youth and minorities' participation in a safe space allow them to be equally represented and heard in the peace building processes. Young people expressed their need to participate in social life bicomunal activities. The awareness of the interdependency among the people and the communities leads to togetherness.

Every Cypriot should be able to speak both languages (Greek and Turkish and even the dialects) in order to overcome the language barriers.

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An urgent need to explore our shared identity and acknowledge its conflicting parts will allow youth to start reconstructing the historical narratives that promote division. The history, the history lessons and the history textbooks must be redesigned immediately.

KEY YOUTH REFLECTIONS

The traumas of the two communities need to be acknowledged and Emotional and Moral Literacy need to be promoted with an emphasis to both the development of empathy and kindness, and also to the raise of consciousness, inner peace and social harmony.

Young people's environmental consciousness constitutes a precious key towards a forward- instead of a present-thinking society.

Young people need to be motivated and equipped with an interest to participate in the cultural and political scene of the island; to become peace ambassadors, peace makers and change agents through activism and democratic participation; to practice their role as active citizens; to advocate for what they want to change, through expressing their views and moreover dealing with various issues (e.g., the island's division; unemployment; climate change, etc). Youth have the power to change things by acting as a bridge between the present and the future.

Media literacy can be a powerful tool for the youth to connect; to interact; to communicate and furthermore to raise awareness towards a Culture of Peace (on social media, blog posts and interactive websites).

THE LIVE DIALOGUE

The final six shortlisted participants were chosen based on their online engagement and concrete work on the ground. These participants were joined by 2 distinguished stakeholders, Dr. Michalinos Zembylas, Professor of Educational Theory and Curriculum Studies, Open University of Cyprus, and Mr. Şener Elcil, the General Secretary of Cyprus Turkish Teachers' Trade Union (KTÖS). In a candid TAGe exchange in front of an online audience of over 1022 people, where they regenerated ideas about peace and education, and suggested ways to promote an education for a Culture of Peace.

The Live Discussion on Education and Peace in Cyprus, allowed young participants to pose intriguing questions to the stakeholders on various aspects of education, including issues such as identity, diversity, nationalism, formal and non-formal education, youth engagement, challenges in politics and its relation to education in Cyprus.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

The two separated educational systems are based on monolithic, mono-communal, nation-centered and religion-based perspectives that promote division. They have failed to prepare children and youth to live in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-faith society, as research demonstrates that they lack dialogic and critical thinking skills (the current system is based highly on memorizing and exam achievement); respect and tolerance to each other; empathy.

A new-formed common educational system in both communities based on Multicultural and Diversity Education in both communities is urgently required through the implementation of new policies; training the teachers; new textbooks that provide especially, multiperspectivity into history curricula and systematic key changes at all levels of education in order to achieve sustainable peace.

Teachers' power in the actual classrooms is immense. Thus, structural policies that define clearly the teachers' role in the promotion of a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-faith society through Education (curriculum, pedagogies, practices) across all educational levels, and furthermore teachers' training are crucial.

Changing the national narratives from one day to another is a difficult and unrealistic challenge for now. Some important competencies that students need to develop in order to both stand critical towards the current controversial narratives about the Cyprus problem and also to become catalysts for change, solution and sustainable peace are multi-perspectivity, empathy, decision-making, leadership and responsibility.

Women, minorities, refugees, other vulnerable groups and their representations are left out from the discussions and the curricula (from history books to the literature). Affirmative actions, systemic changes and clear policies recognizing and naming the injustices, the prejudices and the discriminations across those groups are need in order to bring change.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

The hard truth is that it's not easy to change the educational system and moreover, education is not able to change the whole society -politics are more powerful. It is an illusion to believe that by changing the educational system, the methods or the textbooks, the society will change immediately. It is acknowledged that there are minor changes in Cyprus, maybe not the ones expected, but still they are here. It needs a strategic and thoughtful approach, a step-by-step process, much patience and persistence in order to bring significant and sustainable change in Cyprus through education.

A new model of democratic school is important to be applied in order to inspire youth and teach them about human rights, universal values, dialogue and democracy through their own active engagement and practical learning, allowing and encouraging them to reflect critically and ask questions.

Non-formal education, games, arts and sports (already applied by NGOs) constitute effective methodologies and pedagogical tools for experiential learning, allowing children and youth from both communities to come together; to communicate; to collaborate and create friendships.

Teachers and parents may inspire and motivate youth through a more inclusive language and action in order to engage in supporting inclusion and respect to diversity in Cyprus. Furthermore, youth can teach others to think differently and provide examples (their everyday life, events, the way they understand things).

A major problem of the peacebuilding processes is the romanticization of the peace process, which often remains on the first step of intercommunal engagement. For a meaningful transformation to occur in the communities, both social actions, bicomunal meetings and honest discussions about the sensitivities are needed. It is important to understand that a community effort -and not just individual actions- is needed to have realistic results towards a Culture of Peace and a sustainable peace in Cyprus.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Implement **Critical Thinking** skills within the curricula of educational institutions to empower students to put their knowledge into action, to foster their critical reasoning, to help their understanding and engage constructively for the betterment of society.

Incorporate **multiperspectivity** into history education and implement **teacher-training for Multiperspectivity** - Equipping educators with the latest techniques in history education and providing access to authentic and diverse, transcultural materials can reinforce learners' critical thinking and understanding of the plurality of the representations and divisive narratives of the past and present. By this way, learners' intercultural skills can be developed so that sensitive and controversial issues can be studied or learnt from an unbiased perspective.

Support **Social and Emotional Literacy** education starting from early years. Providing emotional literacy resources in classrooms will enable learners to recognise, understand, manage and appropriately express emotions. By this way, self-awareness and empathy will also be nurtured. Above all, communities will eventually grow a 'culture of peace'.

Add **Diversity training** programmes in schools. For a peaceful community, we need to value diversity, equity and inclusion. Teaching about human rights helps educational authorities to deliver their legal duties. As well as that, promoting Peace Education can cultivate the awareness of diversity and respect. Embracing diversity and practicing tolerance can be boosted in formal and non- formal educational settings.



RECOMMENDATIONS

A new model of democratic school is important to be applied in order to inspire youth and teach them about human rights, universal values, dialogue and democracy through their own active engagement and practical learning, allowing and encouraging them to reflect critically and ask questions.

Non formal education, games, arts and sports constitute effective methodologies and pedagogical tools for experiential learning, allowing children and youth from both communities to come together; to communicate; to collaborate and create friendships.

Youth Leadership programmes should be embedded within curricula and educational institutions should promote multicultural projects; they will not only empower youth for future but also help workforce of communities to sustain. Youth can be creative, innovative and proactive in independent and collective acts; therefore, education systems should direct youth in building their knowledge, capacities and motivation to perform as youth leaders to help their communities prosper.

Media literacy can be a powerful tool for the youth to assess data information and resources; understand biases in order to tackle extremism and hate speech; connect; interact; communicate and furthermore to raise awareness towards a Culture of Peace (on social media, blog posts and interactive websites).

Language teaching for both Greek and Turkish should be encouraged in both communities, in order to overcome the language barriers.



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WAY FORWARD

The aim of the AHDR's first iTAGe project in Cyprus was to identify and propose key actionable recommendations for stakeholders to include and meaningfully engage youth in decision-making, as well as challenge the youth to do their part in building sustainable societies.

The youth who participated in iTAGe from both communities are willing to increase dialogue and build bridges for reconciliation and peace in Cyprus. The iTAGe gave the youth a platform to voice out their opinions and become visible as main stakeholders in Education. There were suggestions about generating projects that could bring the communities closer. The participants expressed gratitude for the fact that both the online and the face-to-face iTAGe exchanges inspired and motivated both themselves and the whole community. Everyone has to work together so that these recommendations are implemented to establish and sustain peace in Cyprus.

AHDR will be launching its policy paper in Autumn 2022 and the Youth Policy Brief will also be presented at the event, featuring the 2 youth speakers as youth representatives. Relevant key stakeholders and partners will be invited to the launch and the process of the policy paper development, findings, recommendations will be shared and presented.

The policy brief will be translated into Greek and Turkish languages for inclusivity reasons in Cyprus context. The policy paper, including the policy report, will be sent to educational authorities, partner organizations, relevant institutions, and stakeholders, accompanied by the qualitative and quantitative analysis of all the data gathered.

The goal of the promotion is to raise awareness of the importance of youth participation on common issues like Education and Peace in Cyprus; of involving young people in decision-making processes and to raise awareness for the community to understand the perspectives of young people on Education and Sustainable Peace in Cyprus.

The AHDR, together with the stakeholders and policymakers that participated on the dialogue, will continue to bridge, and enable safe spaces for young people to continue to create and sustain dialogue and work in solidarity on issues concerning all.

STAKEHOLDERS

Dr. MICHALINOS ZEMBYLAS is a Professor of Educational Theory and Curriculum Studies at the Open University of Cyprus, an Honorary Professor at Nelson Mandela University in South Africa, and an Adjunct Professor at the University of South Australia. He has written extensively on emotion and affect in relation to social justice pedagogies, intercultural and peace education, human rights education and citizenship education. His recent books include: 'Affect and the rise of right-wing populism: Pedagogies for the renewal of democratic education', and 'Higher education hauntologies: Living with ghosts for a justice-to-come' (co-edited with V. Bozalek, S. Motala and D. Hölscher). In 2016, he received the Distinguished Researcher Award in "Social Sciences and Humanities" from the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation. He participated in several education policymaking efforts in Cyprus and is currently the Greek-Cypriot Co-Chair in the Bi-communal Technical Committee on Education.

Mr. ŞENER ELCIL was born in Kalavassos, Larnaca, in 1963. He had to migrate with his family twice, due to the societal incidents and conflicts in Cyprus in 1960s and 1970s. After completing his high school education in Famagusta, he graduated from Teacher Training College in 1984 and worked at various schools as a primary school teacher. In 1986, Elcil started to take an active role as a unionist and he is continuing his career as General Secretary of Cyprus Turkish Teachers' Trade Union (KTÖS) since 2001. Şener Elcil as the General Secretary of KTÖS puts in significant effort for re-unification of Cyprus against the ongoing invasion and division of Cyprus since 1974; demilitarizing and disarmament of the island and; contributing to the struggle of Cypriots demanding respect to their political will and the human rights. Elcil also endeavours to promote free, quality and democratic education for all in the society. Besides, he's taken part in the Establishment Committees of Home for Cooperation, Queer Cyprus Association, Trade Unions Platform (Sendikal Platform), 'This Country is Ours' Platform (Bu Memleket Bizim Platformu), Bi-communal Teachers Platform and many others in Cyprus.

YOUTH SPEAKER PROFILES

THE MODERATOR for the Live Dialogue

Andreas Charalambous is a Communications Specialist and Political Analyst, currently based in Nicosia, Cyprus. He has studied in the USA, UK, Netherlands, Greece and Cyprus. He specializes in Active Citizenship and Conflict Resolution. Andreas has collaborated with many major international institutions, such as the EU Commission & Parliament and the UN. He has been a peace and environmental activist for 17 years. He lives with a gorgeous black cat for the past 3 of those.

**MONDAY 29
NOVEMBER
17:00 - 18:30**

ANDREAS CHARALAMBOUS

**MODERATES THE LIVE
DISCUSSION ON
EDUCATION & PEACE**

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YOUTH SPEAKER PROFILES

YOUNG PARTICIPANTS for the Live Dialogue

Sophia Ioannou is a sociology student at the University of Cyprus Social and Political Sciences department. Her academic interests and activism motivates her to deconstruct and embrace the Cypriot identity and common culture. She is also interested on how arts and performance can become a political statement through intersectional feminism. Sophia is a member of Håde, a multi-communal youth initiative.

"From the history books to the literature, a mono-communal, nation-centered and religion based perspective is being exposed, leaving women and minorities outside the discussion. How can we achieve diversity and multiculturalism within the educational system in your opinion?"

The poster features a circular portrait of Sophia Ioannou, a young woman with dark curly hair, red glasses, and red lipstick. The background is split into orange and light blue sections. Text on the poster includes: 'iTAG' logo in the top right; 'MONDAY 29 NOVEMBER 17:00 - 18:30' in a white circle on the orange background; 'SOPHIA IOANNOU' in a white box on the orange background; 'PARTICIPATES IN THE LIVE DISCUSSION ON EDUCATION & PEACE' in bold black text; a Facebook 'LIVE' icon; and the logo of the 'Association for historical dialogue and research' in the bottom right.

"When we are referring to peace education, the first thing that usually comes to people's minds, is how can we completely change our history books. I think, we can all agree that changing a national narrative from one day to another, is a difficult and unrealistic challenge for now. In your opinion, what are the main tools that students need to develop from the educational system in order to stand critical towards the current narratives about the Cyprus problem and in order to promote sustainable peace?"



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YOUNG PARTICIPANTS for the Live Dialogue

Özgül Saygun is Program Manager at PeacePlayers-Cyprus. She is in a leadership position with respect to the implementation of the European Commission funded projects. She has volunteered in peacebuilding activities and worked in NGOs in Ankara and Cyprus prior to joining PP-CY. Her current focus is on Youth Development and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in non-formal education.

"How do you think non-formal education can be integrated into the school curriculum in order to empower young people's competencies to promote a Culture of Peace? "



"With the changing demographics altering the diversity in schools on both sides of the island, there is more need for a Culture of Peace. How can youth be inspired and motivated in order to engage in supporting inclusion and respect to diversity in Cyprus? "



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YOUNG PARTICIPANTS for the Live Dialogue

Marina Kyprianou has a BA in Psychology from the University of Cyprus and an MSc in Social and Cultural Psychology from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Currently she serves as the Vice President of the Cyprus Psychologists Association (CYPSPA) Students' committee. Her research and academic interests focus on Social and Political Psychology.

"A sense of social-justice (regarding human rights/ practices) could be crucial in sustaining a culture of peace in Cyprus; hence, what could be a realistic first step to take right now to help cultivate a social-justice notion through educational practices?"



"AHDR and other NGOs are working towards sustainable peace in Cyprus; this particular initiative of AHDR will lead to a policy paper. What are the next steps? How could we realize this policy paper in formal/ non-formal educational practices that could hence encourage stakeholders (educators, teachers, parents, students) to work towards sustainable peace?"



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YOUNG PARTICIPANTS for the Live Dialogue

Merve Güralp is a Junior Non-Key Expert at the Training and communications department of an EU project to improve the implementation of food safety standards and disease crisis preparedness. She also works as a teacher, Proctor, and as coordinator of Creating Friendships for Peace. She studied German at Queen Mary, University of London and has an MA from UCL in Education.

"A good education is a foundation for a better future. In your opinion, what has education achieved so far towards the vision of sustainable peace?"



"In my opinion education is the most significant instrument in preparing the societies for the future and the future belongs to the younger generations. In your opinion how can youth leadership be promoted in achieving sustainable peace on the island?"



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YOUTH SPEAKER PROFILES

YOUNG PARTICIPANTS for the Live Dialogue

Andri Christofides is the Manager of the Home for Cooperation (H4C) in Nicosia, Cyprus. Her role includes overseeing and coordinating all operations and projects of the organization, as well as developing plans and strategies. Andri holds an MSc in Social and Cultural Anthropology from K.U. Leuven, Belgium, and a BA in English Literature from the University of Surrey, UK.

"There seems to be a general feeling in the youth community that the history education we receive at school is not enough or not well rounded enough. Yet, organizations in the Civil society like AHDR have produced well researched material, supplementary material and other sources which point to the need to revisit history school books. Why is this not happening? Why is it so difficult? "

The graphic features a portrait of Andri Christofides, a young woman with long dark hair, smiling. The text on the graphic includes: 'MONDAY 29 NOVEMBER 17:00 - 18:30' in a white circle on an orange background; 'iTAG' logo in the top right; 'ANDRI CHRISTOFIDES' in a white box below the portrait; 'PARTICIPATES IN THE LIVE DISCUSSION ON EDUCATION & PEACE' in bold black text; a Facebook Live icon at the bottom left; and the AHDR logo and name in Greek and English at the bottom right.

"We sometimes tend to romanticize peacebuilding efforts, which although essential, they often remain on the first step of intercommunal engagement. How do you think the next step can be taken for meaningful transformation to occur in the community?"



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YOUTH SPEAKER PROFILES

YOUNG PARTICIPANTS for the Live Dialogue

Arif Osum is working as a Communication and Events Officer at Civic Space Project, which aims to strengthen the civil society in Cyprus. Arif has taken part in youth organization in Turkish Cypriot community, also worked as skills and capacity building specialist responsible for vocational and skills training for socially under risk youth. He finished European Studies in European University of Cyprus.

"Believing that education is the core where change can begin, I would like to ask, is it possible to create an education system beyond "unquestionable truths" that the political interests are shaping, aiming to bring values such as justice and equality, and help youth to generate habits such as questioning and researching, before following or submit to those "unquestionable truths"?"



"We are talking about the youth becoming a catalyst for change, solution and peace; in other words, we as youth are seen as key towards sustainable peace. What transformations in educational practices do we need to enable youth become actors in decision-making and to be able to raise their voice and experience responsibility?"



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PHOTOS OF THE LIVE EVENT



TAGe Live
November 29, 2021
@Home for Cooperation
from 16.00 to 18.00
Nicosia, Cyprus



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