

Becoming 'Generation Peace'

UPF Europe Youth Leadership Training

Kloten, Sweden, 20. – 24. August 2014



UPF Europe hosted its first Youth Leadership Training in the scenic village of Kloten, Bergslagen, Sweden. This training brought together young people, not only from Scandinavia and other key European nations, but also Russia and North Africa.

Altogether 10 nations were represented: Sweden, Finland, Denmark, France, Germany, UK, Austria, Malta, Tunisia, and Russia. There were 45 participants, including 1st & 2nd gen young people and parents who came to help and support.

Since October 2011 and in different regions of Europe, Youth UPF has been bringing together young people to challenge themselves by going beyond national boundaries and social divisions within their societies. The aim of this workshop was to

1. Train the leadership in already active chapters
2. Initiate new chapters in the Scandinavian region
3. Develop European level Youth UPF Projects

About the sessions

The schedule comprised mainly of four sessions a day combining lectures, mini-workshops and group discussions. An emphasis was put on making the

sessions very interactive. The participants' active contribution in each session was key to the workshop's success. They all revolved around a shared theme of starting and developing UPF peace activities around Europe. Interspersed throughout the duration of the workshop were also reports on the various initiatives and projects from Youth UPF around Europe.



Combined with the lectures, that gave both the political and philosophical foundations for peace, as well as the consensus on what peace is in world religions and the various interactive activities that focused on discussing relevant issues but also

techniques for project-building, the workshop served as a good and general foundation for peace work for the attendees.

A lot of the participants were very appreciative and inspired by the reports from the various Youth UPF branches; there was no flaunting of past achievements, but rather good advice and inspiring ideas given in a free and open manner. The reports also served as a reminder to the leaders of the various Youth UPF branches of how important communication can be, as they realized how little they knew of UPF activities outside of their own country.



In the lecture Political Conceptions of Peace, given by Joana Pereira, a clear and succinct explanation was given of how the philosophical narrative on the concept of peace has developed in the western world, since the time of the ancient Greeks up to our modern times. Joana also talked about her unique experiences working within the European Union, as well as giving good advice on potential funding opportunities from the EU.

Conceptions of Peace in World Religions gave an overview on various thoughts of peace in different world religions. It started with an excellent introduction by Asuka Östberg, followed by group discussion on selected parts from the holy scriptures of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism and Buddhism. There was an emphasis on trying to understand how the message of the different religions were essentially unified, and how these universal messages could help ourselves internally in preparation for practical endeavours.

Mark Brann shared about the core principles and genesis of the Universal Peace Federation. He highlighted the successful contribution of UPF to peace and development in Nepal and shared from the recent Global Summit in Korea, thereby highlighting the direction that our work in Europe should take.

Bogdan Pammer gave an accessible introduction to the philosophical background of UPF in Father

Moon's Thought. Father Moon's main philosophical framework revolves around peace and is oriented around the conception of history as a progression towards an ideal, through the providence of interaction between different societal strata (Individual - family - tribe - nation - world). Bogdan neatly described how the concept of an "ideal" and a divine providence tied into the core philosophies of UPF.

Throughout the workshop there were a lot of intense discussions both inside and outside of the schedule. In What challenges do our societies face? Hakim Salem organized the participants into small groups of think-tanks, tackling various social and political issues. In My Foundation, led by Alexandre Huard, the participants reflected upon their personal plans and projects, which was followed by discussion in groups where everyone could exchange feedback.

The participants also enjoyed the Swedish wilderness. One activity was canoeing in a nearby lake. A few participants were lucky to be able to also see elks.



Results of the WS

(1) The leaders of the active chapters (Austria, France, Finland, Germany and UK) gained new resolve for their work and a clearer framework for interaction between each other, and support of individual chapters was established. The chapter leaders are now equipped with additional resources that can assist them in their team management, event planning and educational work.

(2.1) Many previously inactive BCs determined to become active. We could hold a special session with Swedish 2nd gen in which they could share their "pain and confusion" about the True Family's problems and they said this sharing was helpful and that as they work through their pain and difficulty they see themselves becoming involved in YUPF.

(2.2) A young Ambassador of Peace in Denmark got inspired to start developing Youth UPF activities there.

(2.3) Through the great work of the Swedish movement led by Ingmarie Hedberg and many mothers and fathers coming to help with the workshop (cooking, serving and transportation etc) a mini revival of the Swedish movement could take place. A trinity to revive UPF activities in Sweden was formed.

(3) Project-plans and time-lines for European level projects were developed and are ready to be put into action. These projects include (3.1) an EU funded

youth exchange focusing regionally on the Baltic sea nations (Finland, Russia, etc.) and thematically on holistic education, (3.2) a joint youth conference in Moscow, (3.3) Religious Youth Service Project and education activities in Tunisia.

The workshop was overall a powerful kick-off for national and European Youth UPF activities in the academic year 2014/2015 towards our goal of raising well recognised national-level political, social and religious leaders in Europe by 2020.

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