

Summer School Starts Saturday, August 4th

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We look forward to welcoming the 3rd UN Alliance of Civilizations Summer School in just a few days! The week long seminar will gather an eclectic mix of 135 participants aged between 18 and 35 years in the city of Coimbra, home to the most ancient University in Portugal. The group is geographically and culturally diverse representing 69 different countries from around the world. We ensured gender balance, and half the group are young women and the other half young men.

Participants represent a wide array of interests, organizations, and affiliations. Some of them are students, representatives or members of youth organizations engaged in community, social, civic or political action. We have also some participants who work for their governments. They all are key multipliers, playing active roles within youth organisations, networks or services at the local, national or regional levels. They have significant experience in international youth work and project work.

The pedagogical team includes members with dynamic professional backgrounds: scholars, experts, policy-makers, civil servants, facilitators, trainers. The whole team will comprise more than 20 people.

The objectives of the Alliance Summer School are to:

1. Promote the empowerment of youth by strengthening intercultural skills and competences,

2. Strengthen young people's capacity to get involved in the preparation and implementation of cooperative action across divides
3. Facilitate moments of encounter and exchange between young people and
4. Develop a network of participants in the Alliance summer schools

During the week-long course, we will focus on mutual learning, using the participants' experiences as the starting point of the training-learning process. Active participation and in-depth reflection are key methodologies used in the course. Participants will compare their approaches to youth work in our increasingly diverse societies and serve as agents of change while engaging in the preparation of concrete projects to be carried out once back home.

All kinds of ideas are already popping up in our Facebook page and chat rooms. Here is a glimpse of what our participants are talking about:

From Hungary:

'We are working on our project here. It is called EuroArab Project. Please, let me know if you are interested in it. We will be soon recruiting more Europeans and Arabs to our core team. :-)'

From Australia:

'I'll be coming over from Melbourne Australia. I represent an organization called YGAP which inspires and enables social entrepreneurs to end poverty. Looking forward to the conference!!'

From Tunisia:

'Dear All,

I am from Tunisia, a graduate student working to promote Human Rights in Tunisia and Women rights more specifically.

I am really glad to be part of this amazing team and I can't wait to meet all of you soon in Lisbon.'

From Brazil:

'I am student of International Relations.... and I love to understand other cultures! I also like to be involved in Human Rights, Global Governance, Youth Empowerment and so on. I am a volunteer at the YMCA Sao Paulo and I had a speech in one of our programs (Youth Leadership Development) about Citizenship and Culture of Peace!

I am 27 years old.

I am sure this summer course will be awesome!!! See you all in Portugal!'

We look forward to a week of intense brainstorming, heated debates and perhaps the birth of exciting new projects and collaborations across borders!

One last word to everyone who applied: This year we had more applications than ever before and while we are enthusiastic with the success generated by this event, we had an extremely difficult task of selecting among the best and the brightest! If you did not get selected this year, we encourage you to apply again for other events because there will be plenty of other opportunities in the near future. Stay tuned!

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