UNITED Conference Report
‘Power of Coexistence: Turn it on! Bridge, Cooperate, Overcome’
15-20 May 2019, Albania

Between 15-20 May 2019, UNITED for Intercultural Action, Youth Centre Perspektiva and Projekte Vullnetare Nderkombetare held a conference entitled 'Power of Coexistence: Turn it on! Bridge, Cooperate, Overcome' in Durrës, Albania.

The conference focused on coexistence, not only as a general value of understanding and peaceful living within a community, but also as a practical strategy that can help overcoming the current challenges faced in Europe and beyond.

Day 1 (Wednesday, 15 May 2019)

On May 15, participants from all over Europe arrived in Durres, Albania, for UNITED’s 2019 spring conference on Coexistence: Bridge, Cooperate, Overcome. After arriving at the venue and registering, participants took part in a 'Breaking the Blocks' activity, where they got to know each other in an informal way.
Day 2 (Thursday, 16 May 2019)

The next morning the formal programme kicked off with Luis Bekteshi, director of the host organisation Perspektiva, underlining the relevance of Albania for coexistence, as it is a country where many different religious communities live together.

Bálint Josa, UNITED’s programme coordinator, then introduced UNITED’s historical origin and purpose. He explained that UNITED was founded in the ‘90s to bring scattered activists from different areas together to empower them and enable them to have a bigger impact on society. At the time the USSR had just collapsed and as Yugoslavia started a dissolution process, 1992 was marked as the most violent and xenophobic year of the time. Many activists raised their voices in those difficult times,
but they lacked cooperation and a common goal. 'The problem of single activists and single organisations,’ he said, ‘is that they are powerless. Union makes us stronger!’

He explained the methods of UNITED such as the importance of meeting in person, the rotation of participation in conferences, advocating for issues by contacting city mayors rather than national politicians, and collecting useful resources across its network. Throughout the conference, Bálint used the metaphor of a small car on a road trip to describe UNITED’s journey – with people joining and leaving, refuelling the car from outside, and encountering problems on the road. 'How do we try to move this complex car? We collect different methods of work and we use them together to achieve shared goals. UNITED wants to hear your voices, ideas, and proposals!'

Bálint then introduced the main donors of the network, the European Commission and the Council of Europe. He talked about the negative developments that might affect UNITED: the Council of Europe is planning to cut its budget on the youth sector, and depending on the outcome of the European Parliamentary Elections, the future of the Erasmus programme is uncertain. Luis Bektishi encouraged participants to spread the word on social media on the importance of the Council of Europe youth department. Finally, both Bálint Josa and Tamar Kapanadze, representing the Georgian organisation Center for Participation and Development, in which Vitaly Safarov was active, commented on his tragic murder last November. Vitaly was a human rights activist from Tbilisi, Georgia, working with minority groups and actively involved in the UNITED network. He participated in several conferences and was due to co-organise this one. The trial of those responsible for Vitaly’s death is ongoing, and evidence points to a hate crime. If recognized as such, this would be the first official hate murder in Georgia. Vitaly had many friends within the network and his death deeply affected UNITED as a whole.

All participants briefly presented themselves and what UNITED meant to them. For some it meant nothing less than a family, for others a useful network for collaboration, and many still had to find out as they were new to it.

This was followed by a presentation of the conference’s five ‘inerts’, a term coined during the session to replace the word ‘expert’ which was deemed by many to be inappropriate, as it gives the impression of someone with superior knowledge coming to explain something and then leave,
whereas the ‘inperts’ were going to stay for the entire conference and we agreed that they did not necessarily have more knowledge than any other participant. The role of the ‘inperts’ was to guide the conference’s five parallel thematic workshops, each of which would have to be linked to coexistence as an overarching theme: advocacy, communication, campaigning, education, and community building.

Brisilda Taco is a Roma activist from the Albanian organisation Rromano Kham. She has been an activist since childhood and was involved in many organisations and in the international Roma community. It was the first time she ventured out of this community to share her knowledge with a wider network of activists. She received an EU Award for Roma Integration in the Western Balkan and Turkey. Brisilda talked about interfaith coexistence, discrimination of Roma, the concept of living versus existing, and defined advocacy as raising an issue all together

Michael Hall explained that coexistence is not passivity, and just listening to someone else: coexistence has to be active, we as citizens have to be proactive about issues and not only react when our leaders do something we do not approve of. He said we at the conference are not yet actively coexisting, because he heard negative narratives used even by the participants.

Rut Einarsdottir represented the Better Tomorrow Movement from Iceland. She takes part in the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe.

Jeroen Wils from Belgium calls himself a human and not an activist: ‘I practice humanity’. He has been volunteering with refugees in the Balkans and with indigenous communities in the Brazilian Amazon. He told an anecdote about helping refugees with his friends from Kumanovo, and quoted ‘When the sea is calm, you cannot see the good sailor, but you recognize him when the storm comes.’ He studied pedagogy, psychology and education, and led the education workshop during the conference. He aims to look critically at Western industrialized education.

Anie Treanor from Ireland said she wanted to connect struggles together and that’s what community building is about.
Afterwards, a heated discussion followed on the importance of calling North Macedonia by its new internationally recognized name.

After the plenary, participants were divided into working groups for the traditional conference activity 'Danger of Words'. The Danger of Words, a recurring activity in every UNITED conference, focused on the meanings of frequently used terminology in human rights activism. However, this time, participants were asked to give feedback on UNITED’s draft of a Danger of Words handbook, in which many words used in activism are listed with their UNITED definitions. Participants were split into five different groups, which were led by members of the IPG (International Preparatory Group).

**Group 1 (with Anastasia)**

In the group run by Anastasia, participants had an open discussion about a few of the terms listed in the Danger of Words material. The words that were discussed were coexistence and integration.

The first discussion focused on the word coexistence. Participants discussed what it means to exist, and whether merely existing is enough, or whether living together requires more active involvement. One participant argued that coexistence is the ability to practice your beliefs, lifestyle, and identity, and that if one of these is lacking, there is no coexistence. In general, participants thought that coexistence requires active participation from different parties: communication and interaction with each other, accepting differences, standing up for each other, and showing interest.

The second word discussed was integration. Participants focused on what integration meant to them, and how this term should be used and interpreted. One thing they discussed was whether integration means adaptation of the minority to the majority, as it is commonly used, or whether it should also involve the majority adapting to the minority group. Participants agreed that coexistence implies the latter: all parties involved should accept one another. Participants also discussed the value of language in terms of integration and coexistence.
Group 2 (with Bálint)

This group focused on the idea of 'politically correct' and discussed certain terms that can trigger others. The group discussed how these terms are not always universal and that about some terms people may have different opinions. Participants also brought up that political correctness may lead to hypocrisy, if people speak in a politically correct way, but do not act like it. Still, overall participants thought it was good to try to be correct and use 'politically correct' terminology.

Some topics that were discussed were North-Macedonia, Roma, the word clown, and gender pronouns. The group also discussed a few questions related to political correctness, such as how labels can become descriptive of certain groups, how individual speakers can change the meaning/effect of certain words, and how a politically correct word can be used in the wrong way. Participants also compared the meanings of certain terms, especially of the word Roma, in different contexts, including Albania, Hungary and Georgia.

Group 3 (with Alessandra)

This group discussed the terms coexistence and homophobia. Participants first came up with terms that describe a similar vision: social cohesion, social inclusion and social integration. Some suggestions were to change the first sentence and to make it shorter and clearer, and to include that coexistence starts with living in a common space and time together, and that it embraces diversity as a positive potential.

The second term the group focused on was homophobia. The group discussed how homophobia is usually used as an umbrella term to refer to all forms of discrimination towards sexual minorities, and that it stems from a bigger fear related to gender identity and gender roles.
Group 4 (with Martin)

After reading the Danger of Words material, this group decided to focus on a few terms in depth. They discussed four terms: multiculturalism, coexistence, nazism and homophobia.

The group started with the word ‘multiculturalism’. Participants discussed how this word can be seen as a positive thing (for example in Japan), but how it can also be negative. Estonia and Sweden were mentioned as examples for countries striving for a good multicultural society through policy making. The group talked about how for some, multiculturalism is a goal (Albania), and how for others, it is more of a value that is promoted, especially within religious communities. Participants also discussed the relation of multiculturalism with other words like interculturalism, cross culturalism, and transculturalism. Then, a few personal examples were given: participants talked about the North of
Serbia, where inhabitants are living together peacefully in a region with seven languages, and where in everyday life, multiculturalism is working well. One participant shared how it was a struggle to be accepted as Algerian in France.

The next word the group discussed was ‘coexistence’. Some participants felt this was a strange term, as they considered existing to be the bare minimum, less than living. They suggested terms such as peaceful co-living, or social cohabitation. Still, they also felt that the word could be useful to highlight the struggles of certain communities.

The third word the group discussed was ‘nazism’. It was brought up than in Estonia and Finland, there are some modern nazist groups, that do not want to be called nazis. The discussion that followed focused mostly on hate speech. The situation of different countries was discussed. For example, in Estonia, in order to be prosecuted for hate speech, there needs to be an expressed threat. In Armenia, participants discussed that there are big issues for minorities, and that there are very few laws to protect them. They also discussed how groups that speak hate speech are often hiding behind the idea of freedom of speech to defend their expressions.

The last word that the group discussed was ‘homophobia’. The group talked about stereotypes and gender roles, and how homosexuality was seen, and is still seen in some societies, as a disease or something that can be cured. Participants discussed that it is important to protect the rights of LGBTQI people, even if you are not from the community.

After a fruitful discussion, the group came to the conclusion that concepts can change over time, and that they can be challenging to define.

Group 5 (with Enrico)

This group started by choosing the place of meeting, the rules, and terms, in a democratic way. Then, based on the UNITED Danger of Words material, they chose five terms to elaborate on and discuss together. Before starting the discussion, participants all read the definitions together to increase understanding and to find interesting details.
The first time the group discussed was ‘nation’. In the Danger of Words booklet, there is information that nations came up during the 19th century, which was challenged by some of the group members. They discussed the concepts of primordialism and the concept of creating a nation. It came up that nation is usually attached in the moment of birth. They especially focused on the last sentence of the definition: 'one history, one language, and one territory'. According to some members of the discussion group, some nations are spread through different territories (Jewish), have various languages (Swiss) and different history. The topic of identity also came up in relation to this.

Next, the group picked the term ‘xenophobia’. Participants shared information about the Greek roots of this word, and its connection with mythology. Some members had a problem with the element ‘phobia’ in the word. They thought that the psychiatric term ‘phobia’ should not be used in those negative examples of behaviour.

The next term was ‘sexism’. Participants discussed differences between sex and gender, as well as biological and cultural differences in the process of understanding belonging. Some participants did not find the definition very clear. They also discussed problems with patriarchal society and how it affects sexist incidents.

The next term was ‘people of colour’. They discussed the role of white supremacy in this process. According to the group, the term was invented by white people and sometimes has a negative connotation, but at the same time, some minority groups (for instance in the United States) use this term to identify themselves.

The final term the group discussed was ‘coexistence’ - the topic of the conference. The group noticed that the reality is not the same as the idea of this concept. One participant mentioned that maybe social justice should be included in the explanation. The group also discussed people’s focus - citizens prefer to remark differences, not similarities. Major struggled when it comes to coexistence are lack of integration and tolerance. During the discussion, the group discussed how the concept of coexistence could be redefined to make it more meaningful and wider.

After the Danger of Words, UNITED’s Campaign Preparatory Group (CPG) for 2019 presented UNITED’s campaigns, after a short personal introduction on each of the CPG members

The session started with an introduction by Laura Royer, coordinator of the CPG. She gave a short introduction about the history and function of the CPG. Then, all the members introduced themselves and the members that were not present.

In order to engage the audience, the CPG then used the tool mentimeter to ask three questions: ‘Which of these UNITED campaigns are you familiar with?’, ‘What was the main channel you got information from about the UNITED campaigns?’, and ‘Did you use any of the materials provided by UNITED for any of the campaigns in the past year?’ The answers to these questions can be found below:
After a general introduction, the members of the CPG each presented one of the campaigns. The campaigns that were presented were the European Action Week against Racism, the European Elections 2019, International Refugee Day and the International Day against Fascism and Racism.
They presented some results from the various campaigns in previous years, including examples of activities, graphics created, and other outcomes.

The 'International Day Against Fascism and Antisemitism' takes place on November 9, historically the day of 'Kristallnacht' (Night of Broken Glass), on which in 1938 the Nazis started a pogrom against the Jews by destroying houses, setting synagogues on fire and smashing shop windows across the country. It is seen as the symbolic beginning of the Holocaust. It is very important to remember this day is not only to commemorate the victims, but also to remember the past and learn from it. As Primo Levi said, 'All those that forget their past are condemned to relive it'. Every year, hundreds of organisations in over 45 countries take action around this day, sharing a vision of a society without hate and discrimination, based on equality and human rights.

20 June is World Refugee Day as introduced by the United Nations, and every year on that date, UNITED releases an updated version of its Refugee List of Deaths. An ongoing project since 1993, this list collects fatal incidents involving migrants and refugees whose death can be traced back to the policies of the European Union and its member states. Information for the list is taken from major media sources as well as local media and NGOs. Throughout the years the list has been shown at art expositions, displayed in public spaces, published in newspapers, and used by activists in street actions. It has gained popularity since the Guardian published it in 2018, and spreading of the list continued since then, including a street exposition in Liverpool where the list was repeatedly and intentionally damaged, and the publication of the list in book form in German. For this year’s Refugee Day it will be published in a Norwegian newspaper, and as a message UNITED will focus on the fact that most of the people on the list are dying anonymously – without identification. Although the list is usually the focus of UNITED’s campaign, there is always a possibility to do something else as well. For example in 2016, participants of the UNITED conference in Turin launched an idea which became the successful social media campaign #LifeSeekers, focusing on countering the usual narratives on refugees that obscure the real problems of European societies.

After presenting the campaigns, the CPG once again invited the engagement of the audience through mentimeter. This time, they asked the following questions: 'Which campaigns did you/your organisation engage with in the past year?', 'Which material provided by UNITED did you find the most useful?', and 'Which working group would you be most interested to bo join on Sunday?'. The
audience was invited to use this session as an input for the brainstorming workshop on Sunday, in order to help the CPG with new ideas for future campaigns.

Finally the participants worked in small groups on a non-formal education activity designed to make them think about and discuss a variety of beliefs that might seem outdated in activist circles, such as the belief that the Earth is flat or that sex before marriage is wrong. We asked ourselves whether those beliefs really were outdated, where they came from, whether they made sense, and what led to
a change in these beliefs in part of society. In the plenary, participants then shared their conclusions. It turned out no one was sure of what ‘outdated’ meant, and it could be argued that all those statements are still believed by some or even most people around the world. After all, we have different experiences, cultural backgrounds, families and studies, each of us interpreting information in their own particular way. Some beliefs were outdated, but then became popular again. We found it is dangerous to estimate how common a certain belief is without basing it on facts, because one is prone to under- or overestimation of how common their own opinions are. Furthermore, some of the beliefs we consider legitimate now, will in their turn be outdated in the future. We discussed the distinction between facts and beliefs, the fallibility of science, to what extent beliefs can be changed and others’ beliefs should or should not be tolerated, and whether ignorance is a choice. This discussion was a fruitful basis to go deeper into what coexistence and tolerance really means.

The day ended with the traditional good practice market, where participants could present their organisation to each other and share their materials.

**Day 3 (Friday, 17 May 2019)**

After a short energiser led by Anie Treanor and Jeroen Wils, which was both a collective and by-pairs activity encouraging participants to go out of their comfort zone and creating a positive atmosphere, the third day of the conference kicked off with a plenary brainstorming session about the five topics of the conference workshops – communication, advocacy, community building, education, and campaigning. This was led by Rut Einarsdottir and Michael Hail and done by passing five flipcharts around five groups of participants at regular intervals of a few minutes, giving people limited time to write down everything they could think about regarding each topic. Afterwards each of the five ‘experts’, who were introduced the day before, shortly introduced the basic idea and framework of their respective topic to ensure that participants could make an informed choice. Everyone then subscribed to the one workshop they wished to attend for the whole conference. The workshops started and ran throughout the entire afternoon of day 2, for one hour in day 3, and one hour in day 4.

**Communication Workshop (with Rut Einarsdottir)**

The communication tunnel started with discussing what they were expecting, and in which way they wanted to work. They decided on common values such as active listening, sharing good practices, honesty, and not judging one another (both in terms of opinion and language use).

The tunnel then dove into the topic of communication with a discussion/question posed by one of the participants, who had tried to make an online campaign about a girl who couldn’t go to school. The participant did not get too many responses, and therefore asked what went wrong and what else could have been done. Participants came up with the following communication strategies:

- Define a specific target audience;
- Share the campaign in different places, and ask others (individuals or organisations) to share;
- Relate the campaign with the interest of the target audience;
- Get the public’s attention with the first sentence;
- Use hashtags;
- Try to involve the media. For this, it is good to communicate good flow, background story, and context;
- Try to use both national and international contacts, depending on the exact topic of the campaign
- Use appealing material. For example, illustrate the campaign with photos or graphics, not text only.
In following sessions, participants were divided into groups and they received topics to plan a campaign about, such as 'Cats are taking over the spaceships' and 'Unicorns in Durrës'. Participants focused on the different aspects of communication and took into account the strategies that had been discussed previously. After creating a plan, the groups presented their work to one another and commented on each other’s work.

Through the different exercises, participants gained knowledge about strategies and tools for effective communication, and learned how to develop a communication plan for campaigns.

Advocacy Workshop (with Brisilda Taco)

The group started with an introductory session, where participants got to know each other better and shared why they joined this tunnel. Most participants joined because they were interested in learning more about advocacy. After this session, the participants were given an assignment: to write down what they expected of the working group. Some things that participants wrote down was to learn what advocacy is, how to get funding, sharing experiences, learning from each other, how to make an impact, and gaining practical skills.

The group then went into a conversation about what advocacy means. They discussed that it means presenting yourself and trying to get or defend your rights, to help people, and to improve people’s situation. They were then given some different definitions of advocacy:

1) Advocacy is when you raise a problem and improve the situation/law to bring a change.  
2) A problem you try to solve, in the court, to create awareness about the problem.  
3) Advocacy is using certain tools to improve the situation of people.

Based on this discussion and the different definitions, the group came up with their shared understanding of advocacy: Standing up for yourself and others. They noted that you need to communicate with the people you fight for/with, in order to really achieve a meaningful change.
The group discussed some examples of advocacy, such as the protest against US chemical weapons in Albania, which was successful. Another example that was discussed was the housing problem in Albania.

After discussing examples, the group decided what topic they would focus on in order to really put advocacy into practice. After discussing different possibilities, they came to the topic of child marriage. In order to make it more concrete, they decided to focus on a specific case, and to develop an advocacy plan about child marriage in Albania.

They defined that the goal would be to make the problem of child marriages more visible, and to reduce child marriage in Albania by educating about equality in (especially) Roma communities. In this way, the problem would get more attention, and people would be more aware about it. They decided that in order to do so, they would need to mobilize people, find partners, and also find and receive funding.

The group was divided according to different focus points, and some basic ideas were established for each focus point:
- Situation and goal: child marriages happen especially in the Roma community - focus on this group;
- Funding: European Union, crowdfunding, Albanian government;
- Coalition/Partners: European Union, Albanian government, local schools, local/international NGOs;
- Communication Strategy: website where people can report child marriages, use social media, campaigning;
- Organising activities.

After working on these different focus points, the group discussed their individual findings and presented their ideas. Then, they worked on a presentation to present their outcomes to all participants of the conference.
Education Workshop (with Jeoren Wils)

In the education tunnel, participants discussed how to apply educational methods for peace and coexistence, under the facilitation of Jeroen Wils. It was a calmly-paced working group where much time was taken to get to know each other, explore background information and lay out expectations before devising the practical outcomes of the tunnel. After all the main aim was to get to know others working in a similar field and get in contact to continue sharing good practices and advice after the conference was over. To this aim participants shared email addresses with each other.

First participants got to know each other by presenting themselves and sharing some positive and negative experiences from their own school time, and creatively wrote down their hopes and expectations about the workshop on shells they gathered on Durrës' beaches. Then Jeroen Wils introduced participants to his theoretical perspective on the topic by showing videos on social darwinism and mutual aid. According to some critics, social darwinism can be seen as the framework on which Western education is traditionally based, as its origins are linked to colonialism and the idea of 'survival of the fittest'. Therefore Western education aims to make individuals competitive, rather than cooperative. However, evolution is not in fact about survival of the fittest, but survival of the most adapted, and adaptation can come in many forms, including the strategy of becoming indispensable to other living beings, like bacteria do. Contrary to social darwinism, mutual aid is an aspect of evolutionary mechanisms that can be linked to education just as well. In nature both competition and cooperation play a role, and in an educational context, mutual aid (i.e. cooperation) might on the long term provide more benefits than social darwinism (i.e. competition). This perspective can be a good basis for education focused on coexistence.

Participants then presented their organisational backgrounds and explained the reasons for what they wrote on some of the hope-and-expectations shells. Some worked in non-formal education with children, others were formally teaching students of various ages. They informally asked about and shared experiences from each other's educational work. In the final session, the pace fastened as participants shared concrete advice and practices and summarized them on a flipchart, attempting to identify principles common to all those practices. The outcomes could be summarized under four clusters: Bonding, Safe space, Methods, and Feedback.

Bonding and Safe space referred to the basic requirements that need to be laid down in a classroom or other educational context before any concrete exercises can begin, in order for coexistence education to work. Bonding means the personal, trusting relationship between teacher and student, as well as within a class, for which the basic pedagogical, open, non-judgemental attitude of a teacher is extremely important. Group activities can be organised to facilitate bonding between students, and throughout the entire duration of the teacher-student relationship, the teacher should continue to coach students personally and monitor how they are doing emotionally. Several methods were proposed for this, a simple example being a 'How are you feeling today' post-it board where students can match themselves to various levels of well-being at the beginning of each day, so the teacher can check who needs extra attention.

Safe space means that the teacher should start by actively laying down a basis for curiosity, trust, emotional support, and empathy within the group. This can be done by monitoring discussions appropriately, creating safe space rules in cooperation with the students, and training them in necessary skills, such as active listening and understanding of consent. Once a safe and trusting relationship is formed within the classroom, concrete activities for coexistence can start.

Methods referred to common principles identified in the ideas put forth by participants: educational activities should be non-formal, creative, based on pedagogical principles, include active rather than
passive involvement of the students, and many activity ideas had the aim to counter stereotypes (e.g. understanding that one cannot decide on the basis of a photo whether someone belongs to a particular ethnic group; openly sharing and discussing preconceived ideas about certain groups; bringing students from different backgrounds together to work on a common goal) and/or explore the diverse identities of the students (e.g. drawing their country or community, creating an identity mandala, comparing identities to discover what they have in common).

Finally, Feedback referred to the fact that constant constructive feedback is very important in education, both from teacher to student and among students. Therefore students should also be trained in constructive feedback throughout the process of education for coexistence. Constructive feedback includes both positive points and points for improvement that are phrased in motivational rather than negative terms, and is presented in a 'sandwich' format – starting and ending with a compliment. It also focuses on a person's actions and presupposes their motivation to learn and do better next time, rather than focusing on a person's characteristics or presupposing negative intentions or lack of motivation.

**Campaign Workshop (with Michael Hail)**

In the first session, participants shared where they were from and what their backgrounds were, as well as their previous experience with campaigning. After this, participants received some theoretical input to analyse case studies. The following aspects were included:

1) Stating a clear aim
2) Mapping activities to achieve your campaign aim
3) Outcomes and how to get there – using 'so that' chains
4) Understanding how social change happens – outcome mapping
5) Capacity of the organisation to achieve change
6) Evaluation built into the model

Participants received a template, to be used when analysing the case study.
The first example of a successful campaign was the campaign on introducing LGBT studies into the Scottish system of education. It started with two men. It is a 'TIE' campaign (Time for Inclusive Education). The campaign lasted just for 4 years. During the campaign, the organisers:

- Launched a petition (the petition collected the necessary amount of votes, was sent to a working 'petition' group of the government, the petition was refused for the technical reasons); Tie Campaign launches as a petition to Holyrood demanding inclusive education and backed by 1000 Scots.
- Went to the Trade Union;
- Obtained funding;
- Started training teachers to be teachers on the topic of LGBT;
- Organised the 'pride' march;
- Obtained support from the Trade Union;
- Obtained support from the majority of the PM.

Interview Comments from TIE Campaign Founders:

'A key aspect of our success was acquiring support from across Scottish civic, social, and political institutions. We targeted Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament (resulting in majority support from the Parliament) but also the Scottish trade union movement (every affiliated trade union to STUC supported us, as did the teachers’ union EIS); the parents’ group’s (National Parent Forum for Scotland backed us); equalities and human rights orgs, Young people’s group’s.'

'We didn't just target those organisations who would traditionally have supported LGBT rights - we wanted to make clear that this was an issue for all of us, and Liam’s allyship as someone who isn’t from the LGBT community was so crucial in achieving this and is largely what marked our approach out as being really unique. From the beginning, we centred our campaigning around storytelling - encouraging people to speak up about the issues which had affected them at school - and as we started gaining traction and political leverage and support, we had to become policy makers.'

'In February 2017, the Scottish Parliament mandated our proposals after a majority of MSPs signed up to the calls in our 5-point strategic pledge. In May 2017 a Working Group with the Scottish Government was set up to look at how we could implement our pledge proposals. We proposed 33 policy recommendations to the Scottish Government which were accepted in November 2018. This of course culminated in Scotland becoming the first country in the world to embed LGBT-inclusive education in all public schools - a huge success for our campaigning efforts after 3 years!'

Two tools that were identified as valuable in creating successful campaigns were to create the impression of the movement, even without the movement, and to involve the 'stakeholder' to the campaign.

Participants discussed the theory of change. The Theory of Change goes further: it takes the logic model and there is a greater focus on what types of activities are undertaken and the interrelationship between the activities. It challenges campaigners to think about what the links might be between the activities they undertake and the end goals they seek by using insights from some of the best thinking in political and social theory about how change happens. The TOC model challenges campaigners to think hard about the assumptions they make when selecting the campaign activities which they hope will lead to change.

The main elements of the TOC model were defined as follows:

1) Stating a clear aim. Concise aim, foreseen outcome (what will happen if we do this). Take into account the capacity of the campaign and be honest;
2) Mapping activities to achieve your campaign aim;
3) Outcomes and how to get there – using ‘so that’ chains;
4) Understanding how social change happens – outcome mapping;
5) Capacity of the organisation to achieve change;
6) Evaluation built into the model;
7) Good planning;
8) Technical support.

'A theory of change clearly expresses the relationships between actions and hoped for results, and could also be described as a roadmap of the strategies and belief systems (e.g., assumptions, ‘best practices’, experiences) that make positive change in the lives of individuals and the community. A theory of change can be articulated as a visual diagram that depicts relationships between initiatives, strategies and intended outcomes and goals.' ORS (2009) Ten Considerations for Advocacy Evaluation Planning: Lessons learned from Kids Count grantee experiences. Prepared for Annie E Casey Foundation (Seattle, ORS).

Something that was defined as important is developing a ‘so-that’ chain to explore the outcomes for the campaign and how to get there. A key part of this process is also to be aware of the factors that might help or hinder the change sought, and what strategies are deployed to address these factors. This process is often called reverse planning or backwards mapping as the idea is to start from the goal to be achieved and work backwards to the conditions needed to achieve it.

Questions that should be kept in mind are: 1) To what degree is there clarity and consensus among key stakeholders regarding beliefs and assumptions, audiences, models of change, strategies and key outcome areas? 2) To what degree is the emerging picture of change compatible with the organisation’s beliefs, approaches and overall culture? For example, beliefs about how change happens, timeframe for that change, implied roles and relationships between the different groups to bring that about. 3) To what degree does the Theory of Change you are developing have implications for the capacity of the organisation to carry out their plan?

By following this model, campaigners are prompted to think systematically about the underlying assumptions to their strategies, and to deploy them to build more secure plans and interventions that focus on the outcomes they wish to achieve.

Participants produced a clear analysis identifying long-term goals and the assumptions behind them:
1) Backwards or reverse mapping of the issue, which connects all the preconditions or requirements necessary to achieve the goal using outcome mapping and ‘so that’ chains;
2) Identified the campaign activities that will be undertaken to create the end goal for change;
3) Developed indicators to measure the outcomes in order to assess the performance of the campaign;
4) Involved stakeholders and beneficiaries in the process;
5) Produced a written plan or narrative to explain the logic of the campaign.

In order to have campaigns be run by volunteers, the following things need to be taken into account:
- Good planning of the activity and proper use of the help of the volunteers;
- Respect;
- Transparency;
- Shared values;
- Culture of the society in which volunteering is supported;
- Connection with other activist of the campaign.
Community Building Workshop (with Anie Treanor)

In the first session of this tunnel, participants presented themselves, their goals, their organisations and their experience in the field of community building. They also decided on rules for the group. They decided to use certain signs for communication, to allow for a smoother discussion flow - instead of interrupting each other or jumping in, participants used hand signs to show that they wanted to speak.

The next session focused on the power of definitions, and their importance and influence in the daily life and work. Another point discussed was trust: some participants mentioned that sometimes, members of communities may find it easier to trust people from the outside.

The group then talked about funding problems: major obstacles that were identified were competition between NGOs, short application periods to get funds, and problems with local authorities. The group talked about solutions for these problems: intercultural mediators, culture connection processes, official supporters, staying closer to the community. Other ideas to strengthen communities were a crowdfunding system, selling local products instead of importing souvenirs, trading solidarity between producers and workers, and scholarships for community members.

In the next session, the group was divided into smaller groups and given the task to come up with examples of exemplary grassroots organisations. Some examples that participants came up with were Ni una menos - feminist activist groups from Argentina, MigHelp from Budapest, which helps migrants and refugees, and Liberi Nantes, a football club for refugees.

Finally, the group discussed possibilities of effective action, such as fundraising, seminars and training for workers, big events and festivals, sport activities. They also highlighted the importance of the language we use, and the dependence of the region of work. The biggest problems that participants found were a passive community, attempts to solve every problem in the community when there are fewer opportunities available, charging, and participation fees.
At the end of the day, participants came back together in the plenary to attend presentations on best practices in peaceful coexistence.

First, Pawel Klymenko presented the work of the FARE Network, which fights discrimination in and through football in more than 40 countries, working together with NGOs, minority groups and football fan groups. It also reports incidents of racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, and other discrimination in football. Football currently reproduces patterns of discrimination seen in larger society, but at the same time, it is also a universal language that can be used to bring people from all backgrounds together. It binds people in the physical world without the need for much verbal communication, and is therefore very easy to engage with. As it is such a popular sport on a world scale, its reach can also successfully be used to counteract discrimination via famous role models. Furthermore, football itself is based on values of coexistence and tolerance. Pawel showed us five videos as examples of the great potential of football, noting that nowadays ‘everyone is a storyteller’ – advocating for a cause happens through telling stories, like in these videos. They were about how football helps Roma children, the Georgian national football team leader who made a statement by wearing an LGBT arm band, the lesbian women’s football club Les Degommeuses in Paris, people of all genders and a hundred nationalities playing together in Poland, and an anti-nazi video by FC Dortmund, a very popular club. Pawel talked about the great experience of the World Cup 2018 in Russia. He concluded by advertising for FARE Network’s action week in October.

Next, Erna Salihu presented the work of the UNITED Youth Taskforce, which works to improve the lives of youth in Kosovo, cooperating beyond ethnic lines. For example they invited decision-makers to events and arranged speed dating between them and local youth, to give disadvantaged youth a voice and empower them, and ensure that decision-makers are aware of their concerns. They also organised self-defense courses for girls – ‘No Means No’ – and an art project in which both adults and children from disadvantaged backgrounds made drawings representing their own view of their community. Once they gathered together more than 200 young people from different communities in Kosovo, and they all put on typical costumes, shared food, danced and celebrated together.
Sacha Bogaerts presented the United Societies of Balkans and its project Balkan Hotspot which is run by its EVS volunteers. As the name indicates, the organisation focuses on the Balkans, but it is based in Thessaloniki, Greece and its volunteers are from everywhere in Europe. USB envisions youth empowerment at local, national and international level, intercultural dialogue, the promotion of democracy and human rights through the mobilisation and mobility of young people, their assimilation into volunteer work as well as awareness-raising on social issues. Balkan Hotspot runs media projects, creates podcast series, art exhibitions, contests, and also offline events such as the human chain against racism. This year Balkan Hotspot volunteers contributed to UNITED’s CPG and created a video for the Week Against Racism campaign.

Barbara Marosvary then presented Menedék, a small organisation that supports migrants and refugees in Hungary. They mainly focus on gastronomy to make cultures meet. This is because
nowadays most people draw from diverse cultures in their diet, but as Barbara states, ‘people don’t really understand the connection between the food they eat and the people who provide that food’. This is the gap that Menedék fills by organising events where people cook together, share national dishes of a specific culture, and eat the prepared food while participating in quizzes and attending presentations about that culture. Currently Menedék has a Facebook campaign about fasting in different religions, where every post is about a special food that is traditionally related to fasting in a specific culture.

Finally, Luis Bektushi from Perspektiva, one of the conference’s co-organisers, introduced the religious history of Albania. Traditionally, there are many religions in the country: Islam, Bektushi, Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodox Christianity. But under communism, religion was illegal; for example people were not allowed to fast. After the communist regime fell, religion regained significance, but was never salient in society: People did not care what others believed or did not believe in, and were often not even aware of their friends’ religion. It was normal that people had different religions, but it was never talked about. Only when problems arose at a societal level did people become aware of the challenges of diversity. Muslim girls were rejected from a university, which was surprising for many people. This sparked protests and as a result, an anti-discriminatory law was called into being. Albania even has an interfaith council. ‘I was really surprised when I learned that we actually have one’, confesses Luis, again underlining how unimportant religious issues are in the everyday life of Albanians. The council has roundtables to decide on interfaith issues, such as how to counter religious extremism. This is something Albanians are completely new to and don’t know yet how to deal with. Every year the council changes and another religion takes the lead.

A Q&A session followed in which presenters answered the public’s questions. How can we get sportsmen involved in human rights? Pawel answered that in fact, times are changing and nowadays more and more sportsmen are socially aware and involved in societal issues. What is the point of organising self-defense for women? Unfortunately, today it is still necessary, and the course is not only about being able to physically defend yourself, but also building women’s self-confidence. A short debate followed among participants about whether a focus on self-defense for women makes sense or not from a feminist point of view. Shouldn’t we concentrate more on gender education for everyone? Someone asked what the legal framework is in different countries regarding women’s self-defense. In Kosovo, there is not much resistance to it: the laws about this are generally
good, and many organisations help Youth Taskforce. Luis discussed that generally, international law states that any self-defense should physically match the attack, otherwise it is punishable. However, someone commented, the law often favours women, because of their disadvantage in physical power and the severity of rape. But most of the time, these laws are not properly implemented by police, who risk re-victimizing women who resorted to self-defense. Finally, all presenters were asked how they could improve their work and what their challenges were.

The day concluded with political café's, informal discussions freely organised and attended by participants. This time there were café’s on the UNITED Advisory Board and UNITED’s future.

**Day 4 (Saturday, 18 May 2019)**

The third day of the conference started with workshops on how to optimally make use of different types of funding as activist organisations. There were 5 workshops: Anie Treenor led one on offline fundraising; Laura Quintana Soms from Minority Rights Group Europe on online crowdfunding; Jeroen Wils on UN funds and how to match funds to your goal; Bálint Jósa on social entrepreneurship; and Nensi Dragoti on CSR.

**Corporate Social Responsibility (with Nensi Dragoti)**

Nensi Dragoti is a full time professional working for various companies as an advisor on company branding. He gave a detailed introduction to various CSR opportunities and explained how NGOs should engage with for profit companies. The group discussed various ideas and he gave his feedback.

**International Funding (with Jeroen Wils)**

Jeroen Wils is a creative activist working in various organisations as project coordinator and fundraiser. In this workshop, he introduced his good practices on how to look for funding from international organisations on Human Rights topics such as migration, legal support, direct assistance and anti-discrimination. His take is special, as he tries to translate the NGO needs into projects, and warns about being too focused on the priorities of the donor. Participants shared their own views and had an interesting discussion on the topic.

**Social Entrepreneurship (with Bálint Josa)**

Bálint Josa presented the work carried out by the Hungarian NGO Subjective Values Foundation on social entrepreneurship. Thanks to the European Integration Fund, two projects (‘Get Down to Business’ and ‘Entrenders’) were developed by Subjective, aimed at helping immigrants of third countries accomplish their plans of establishing enterprises, and by this, advancing their integration and access to the Hungarian labour market. In the framework of these two projects, mentor training has been provided to several hundreds of migrants in Hungary, therefore creating added value for both the host society and the newcomers.
Crowdfunding (online) (with Laura Quintana Soms)

Crowdfunding refers to a campaign where you ask a great amount of people to each give a small amount of money for a cause or product. Anyone can start a crowdfunding campaign, but many fail. Ensuring its success requires attention to many factors and a lot of hard work. What is important to bear in mind?

First of all, many people try crowdfunding even though they don't need to get money; they just want to build their public and receive supporters. There are many other ways to do this. Only start crowdfunding if money for a specific cause or product is really your goal.
You need to have a clear goal and a clear target audience. The latter means, for example, that you should communicate to the audience in one language only, the one that fits the target group best.

Ask yourself whether you would support your cause after reading the information you provide. You have to sell your idea as the best ever, but information also should be as transparent and complete as possible, because people only donate when they trust the receiver and have a clear idea of what their money will be used for. Be specific: break down what different percentages of the money will go to, including any charging fees for the platform.

Give thought to practical considerations:
- Would you be willing and able to give people a small reward for their donation?
- Which platform to pick? There are many possibilities which differ according to which currencies and payment methods they support, which donor rewards can be offered, and whether they are 'all-or-nothing': On some platforms the collected money is accessible only once the goal is reached, and on other platforms it is accessible no matter how much was donated, even if the amount is small. Many platforms are specialised in a type of cause or product. Match your cause to the platform, and make sure to read the terms and conditions!

A crowdfunding campaign consists of three phases:

Planning: It has to be planned well in advance, at least several months. Get inspired by the successes and failures of other people's campaigns. What strategy made this a hit, and what mistake made this a flop? Create a task timeline and a clear overview for yourself on a spreadsheet: the amount you aim for, the average amount you expect per person, the number of donors needed. For the goal amount, be realistic, and keep it low if you are using an all-or-nothing platform. Create a short promo video and find potential partners. It is important to do a pre-launch campaign! Get in touch with friends, acquaintances, media, and try to involve influencers.

Going live: Once the campaign is launched, be aware that you can expect donation patterns to start very high, then go down towards the middle of the campaign, and surge up again towards the end. It is crucial to keep thanking donors using a method as personal as possible, to deliver your promises concerning any rewards, and to be truthful about any delays.

Follow-up: Keep updating donors about the project they funded for the years to come.

The visual below summarizes all of this and presents examples of platforms:
UNITED Conference Report

'Power of Coexistence: Turn it on! Bridge, Cooperate, Overcome'

15-20 May 2019, Albania
Community funding (offline) (with Anie Treanor)

This workshop focused on how to get funding from communities. The following questions need to be answered, in order to build a successful community funding strategy:
- How much money is needed?
- Which type of fundraiser?
- Who does what?
- When? Consider the calendar of your target and make sure it does not clash with similar causes.
- Where? For example: community spaces, private spaces… Consider the equipment needed, the accessibility and appeal on your target (e.g. how far from the city centre, public transportation, stairs or other obstacles, but also, for example, a pub can have less appeal for those who don’t drink).
- Consider the capacity of your group and the amount of work.
- Promotion: start at least two weeks before (minimum). Think of graphic design, posters (where), mailing list, social media (not only Facebook), press release, online promotion, local press (newspaper, radio, …)
- While holding the event: what needs to be done? Photos, promotional post on social media
- Decide: donations, participation fee, raffle?

The group then discussed a few case studies or specific forms of community fundraising: social events, strategic fundraiser, and mass participation fundraiser.

The characteristics of social events were that it is ‘easier’ to receive money, as it is based on what people already like to do, for example a dj set, or a table quiz. An advantage is that people will come, that it is relatively low effort, and that it brings people together. A disadvantage is that it is not so political, that is a bit more 'light' and this might mean it is harder to mobilize people for the cause.

The strategic fundraiser, in contrast, seemed to have less money involved, but more linked to the cause: for example, people could swap clothes for ethics and the environment.

Finally, the mass participation fundraiser was discussed. It came up that for this, you need a big base and good communication. Examples of this type are marathons, 'Darkness into Light' from Pieta House (a mental health institution): a night walk until sunrise, with a participation fee to raise money.

Afterwards participants continued to work on the five tunnels, and after lunch went to visit Durrës for the rest of the day. Everyone posed for an aerial photo holding the UNITED flag and signs saying #NoFutureWithoutYouth to protest against the Council of Europe’s budget cuts in the youth sector, and another photo with signs saying #ForVito, to support Vitaly Safarov’s community going through the trial of his murder, his organisation the Center for Participation and Development, as well as the 'No place for hate' movement started in Georgia after his murder. We enjoyed panoramas of the city, a walk on the beach, and Luis Bektashi showed us around important places like the Archaeological Museum, the Roman amphitheatre from the 2nd century AD, and a local mosque. Participants had the occasion to do some souvenir shopping. The day ended with a dinner all together and dancing to the music of an amazing local DJ.
Day 5 (Sunday, 19 May 2019)

The day started with a summary of the conference by UNITED’s programme coordinator Bálint Josa. He reminded everyone of the necessity to remain mobilised behind Vitali Safarov’s family and friends, and called on the human rights activist bias to be integrated within the hate crime legislative framework. He also warned the audience against the consequences of financial cuts threatening the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. Eventually, he gave details on the upcoming UNITED conference on the topic of hate speech, which will take place in Slovakia in November.

On the morning of the last day participants finalised their work in the tunnels, and finally presented all their outcomes in the plenary.

In the afternoon, the members of the CPG led parallel workshops on UNITED’s campaigns that they had presented before. In the workshops, participants had an opportunity to contribute their feedback, improvement suggestions, and ideas about the campaigns. As a tool, they used flipcharts to write down what they wanted to ‘trash’, ‘keep’ and ‘improve’. Workshop leaders also asked participants which communication and media their organisations used to reach their audiences, for inspiration; and what material they needed from UNITED to successfully engage with the campaigns at local level. Then participants reported their outcomes in the plenary.

In terms of what people needed from UNITED, they seemed to all agree that stickers were great to stick on your laptop and promote campaigns everywhere you go, that social media were important – Facebook and Twitter being the most used - but that flyers were outdated and only destined to end up in a bin. More social media support is needed so UNITED’s partner organisations can stay informed and share updated information about the network with their own followers. There was an idea of designing UNITED T-shirts, and that UNITED should really have a YouTube channel. There was also a consensus among participants that UNITED’s focus is often too negative, too ‘against’ something rather than being ‘for’ something. In all campaigns, the message should be more positive, giving an alternative narrative instead of a counter-narrative, also in terms of the messages and colours used on the graphic material.
This group focused on the intersections of UNITED’s work with other causes. The group discussed how UNITED’s work could be made more inclusive, without trying to branch out too much and while staying within its field of expertise. The group discussed feminism, LGBTQ activism and activism for disabilities, and how UNITED could support these causes, as they do intersect with the work of UNITED. For example, UNITED can make its work more accessible on a digital level by making sure images on the website or social media have alternative text.

Some questions that were also discussed were how UNITED can function as a connection between different member organisations within the network, how UNITED can reach the network most effectively, how the organisations of the participants communicate with their stakeholders, and how UNITED can most effectively support member organisations.

**European Action Week Against Racism 2020 (with Arianna)**

The group was formed by people working with the topic of antiracism, mainly in the education field (minors/schools) but also workplaces, litigation (assistance of victims of discrimination and other legal actions), and advocacy.

The session started with sharing each other focus, activities and good practices. The participants benefited from discovering some tools that they can use in their activities, both by other participants (mostly online tools) and by UNITED (available resources they didn’t know).

Concerning UNITED’s campaigns, the group reflected on the width of the topic of antiracism, which entails the possibility to be included in different campaigns but also the risk of remaining vague. The participants agreed on the necessity of the materials and messages to be constantly up to date, catchy and easy to share. Some suggestions included the language-neutrality of the material (having material without text, or easily adaptable in different languages), the necessity to create a narrative around the message, and the focus on accessibility. Alongside with Facebook, Instagram content
would also be useful for many associations, more than Twitter that is not used by most of the beneficiaries. Also a list of movie would be appreciable within the activities suggestion.

International Day against Fascism and Antisemitism 2020 (with Yana)

The group started with very open questions such as which social networks are used by the participants’ organisations, what they need from UNITED, what UNITED can offer them. A participant point out to the fact that the communications strategy should be adapted to the local audience. The group ended the discussion by suggesting different narratives for the upcoming campaigns.
International Refugee Day 2020 (with Klára)

The Refugee Day group said that the List of Deaths was a very important project that should continue every year and that, while it was being promoted with success offline, there should also be more social media content to share about it. Furthermore, activities that were popular for the Week against Racism – such as cooking, music, art or game activities bringing people from different backgrounds together – could easily also be used on Refugee Day.

General Communications (with Laura)

The session started with a short introduction, followed by participants presenting their skills in the field of communication. Some things they shared in terms of experience were contact and knowledge about local media, social media, mailing lists, oral communication, consulting, non-profit media, story-telling, and trainings about digital media. Some of the participants worked in the field of media, or did an internship with elements of communication and marketing.

Following this, the group focused on methods for UNITED to promote their organisation and a future actions. Laura, the facilitator, first presented her ideas: posters, stickers, Facebook posts, Twitter, text content, gadgets, activity suggestion and providing materials for events. The group then gave their reflections on these topics. They also discussed some additional ideas, such as infographics, statistics, facts, and sharing more positive news.

Then, the group discussed the visual identity of UNITED. Feedback that was given was that the logo is too aggressive, that some slogans are too radical, that the newsletter should be regular, and that there should be a clearer agenda of the network. Participants gave their input and ideas for a new logo, changes to the website, a hierarchy of information, the application GRAV, a roll-up banner and a mobile version of the webpage.
Finally it was time to wrap up the conference. Organisers, ‘inerts’, workshop leaders and participants alike shared their thanks and their impressions. First-timers said they were amazed, shy people that the conference had encouraged them to speak up, and people said it was a great feeling to know that there are people everywhere doing such great work. Each person summarized, in their own words, the connection they had felt during the conference. Bálint Jósa was called to speak and picked up his great car metaphor again, saying that he hoped we would join the car and encouraged everyone to do so by, for example, continuing to follow UNITED’s activities and news, nominating for the next conference, getting involved in the campaigns, or applying for the next CPG. He said UNITED did not only need the money of its network, but much more importantly, its attention; and that he hoped someday someone else would take over as a director, at which the whole room protested.

The conference closed with a long evening of the traditional UNITED tombola, sharing of local drinks and snacks, dancing and talking into the night.

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