

On the road to COP21

The 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ([COP21](#)) comes in a context of increased consciousness on the fact that several planetary boundaries actually limit our growth pattern. Some go on to call it the 'last chance' Agreement, and ask for another development model to be adopted, one that is more protective to our planet. There is a strong concern and consensus that these limits were already overcome when it comes to biodiversity loss and the cycle of nitrogen in the atmosphere, while others such as climate change may quickly grow in the coming years^[1]. Moreover, 2015 is also the year when humanity prepares for a new set of more general development goals to be adopted, much of which pointing towards environmental protection and the fight against climate change.

More than 1.5 planets are used everyday in order to provide the resources we use and to absorb the waste that we produce. This means that it now takes the Earth one year and six months to regenerate what we use in a year.



If current population and consumption trends continue, **by 2030 we will need the equivalent of two Earths to support us.**

In our current society, resources are turned into waste way

faster than waste can be turned back into resources. This creates a global ecological instability that affects the quality and the quantity of those assets on which human life and biodiversity depend for their survival.

The result is diminishing forest cover, reduced soil fertility, intensive agricultural practices, collapsing fisheries, depletion of fresh water systems, and the build-up of carbon dioxide emissions, which creates problems such as global climate change. These are just a few of the most noticeable effects of the ecological instability that we create.

Additionally, this disequilibrium also contributes to resource conflicts and wars, mass migrations, famine, disease and other human tragedies, which tend to have a disproportionate impact on the poor, who cannot buy their way out of the problem by getting resources from somewhere else.

Our (sustainable) life on this planet is influenced by the assumption of these ecological limits central to our decision-making processes. That is what the successive Conferences of the Parties (COPs) are all about. Or at least what they try to achieve.

From the first UN Climate Change Conference held in 1995 in Berlin, to this year's Conference in Paris, this annual meeting reunites all parties to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in order to assess progress in dealing with climate change, and try to establish legally binding obligations for developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The last COP was held last year in Lima, Peru. The main outcome of the Conference at that time was a consensus on the way countries would state their contributions to the Paris 2015 Agreement, as well as on the

role adaptation plays in the fight against climate change.



There is a high pressure on the 21st COP to deliver concrete and effective solutions for fighting **climate change**. More than the political and legal pressure, there is an urgency to take immediate action in order to avoid ending up with a planet that is not liveable anymore. For some, the damage accumulated during all these years is so important, that even a complete, full stop of our activities would not prevent world temperatures to continue rising over the next couple of years. But a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is essential to avoid the worst scenario, and selfish behaviours are not part of the solution.

The EU clearly stated its priority for the 2015 meeting in Paris: the adoption of a legally binding agreement that is ambitious as possible, and that allows us to keep track to deliver the objective of keeping the temperatures rise below **2°C**. Together with the United States and China, the EU committed to a major greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

Parties to the Convention were invited to come forward with their **intended nationally determined contributions** to the Agreement (INDCs) early 2015, well before the Paris conference. These INDCs represent what countries are ready to do to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The Agreement itself would validate and reiterate these commitments. The success of the Agreement would therefore depend on (1) the number of Parties and in particular of major emitters that come forward with such commitments, (2) the strength of the

rules designed to enforce those commitments, the progression in ambition from the pledges made under previous agreements, and (3) the flexibility and commitment of the Parties to further, and periodically review and strengthen their greenhouse gas reduction commitments over time, as scientific claims, economic and technologic development ask for stronger action.

In practice, one can notice **two types of climate change policies**: some which are dealing with **climate change adaptation** (i.e. reducing the intensity of and vulnerability to climate change impacts), while others are dealing with **climate change mitigation** (i.e. reducing the magnitude or the intensity of climate change). Adaptation becomes rather a local responsibility, while mitigation is a more global responsible thing to do. Although these two policies complement each other, financial, human, technical resources, as well as the intensity and urgency of dealing with climate change made these policies follow the global division North-South. While richer countries in the North focus on climate change mitigation, poorer (and usually the most affected) countries in the South focus on climate change adaptation. As it was initially designed, the Paris Agreement would focus only on climate change mitigation efforts. This ignores however the needs and priorities of those that suffer the most from climate change.

Two serious threats could hinder the adoption of an international binding and effective agreement: **(1) international solidarity in the fight against climate change, and (2) transparency and accountability.**

Achieving the 2°C climate change objective is not about autarchic measures. International solidarity should contribute towards a



strong agreement that benefits all. In particular, wealthier countries should help countries in need towards increasing their climate resilience and offer them climate-related support.

The EU, as a Party of the Convention, has translated its at least 40% economy-wide GHG domestic reduction target into an INDC. Together with its Member States, the Union provides also technical and financial support to countries in need for drafting their own INDCs. The Union also encouraged the inclusion of an adaptation component within INDCs, which was one of the main concerns of developing countries. In fact, European support towards third countries against climate change already includes support to national climate change adaptation strategies. Existing arrangements under the Convention could however, and should be used to strengthen cooperation and coordination between climate change adaptation and climate change mitigation. International aid should therefore contribute not only to achieving developing countries goals, as set in their INDCs, but also strengthen these countries' resilience against climate change.

Public actors don't bear alone the responsibility and costs of achieving a solid agreement though. They will act as enablers and facilitators for climate resilient investments, development plans and national policies that attract private investors. They will put the basis for investments in technology and infrastructure that allow us to live on a resource-constrained planet. Their action represents just the first step towards the set up of a public demand that enables

businesses and policy-makers to participate. In order to achieve a climate resilient society and keeping the increase in temperature under 2°C, the world needs a significant amount of resources. 100 billion dollars per year by 2020 were estimated to be the needs of the world population back in 2009 at the COP in Copenhagen. This amount is however far from the actual flows of development aid against climate change. As an example, the EU contributes around 12 billion dollars out of this amount.

For **developed countries**, engaging in the fight against climate change would also procure self-benefits, apart from the obvious social justice. Avoiding climate migrants and easily spreadable climate related diseases are just some examples.

But the goodwill of some is not enough to ensure that everyone will deliver on their commitments. The seriousness of the efforts must be measured through a standardised procedure. Expectations, possibilities for climate change action should therefore be made clearer through a simple, understandable and predictable accounting system and standard, that is internationally enforced. Introducing fairness in the process will make sure that rules apply to each and every country which is Party of the Convention, in a way that reflects its capability and national circumstances.

Civil society is encouraged to fully participate in the preparatory events for the COP21. Ensuring the same level of knowledge about the importance of climate negotiations among NGOs, local authorities, media, researchers and companies in both developed and developing countries would ideally increase popular pressure for transparent and accountable commitments. Moreover, solutions and actions coming from the civil society could guide decision-makers in formulating their own actions.

The road to Paris was long and fastidious. Some countries went to deny their responsibility for climate change and claimed their “right” to make use of world resources and develop.

Indeed, for a long period countries have considered that decreasing their carbon emissions would slow down their development. This mentality is against any agreement to be found in Paris. To put all chances on our side for keeping the planet a liveable place, solidarity and transparency must be the key words to define the new climate deal. And there is hope for a strong agreement in Paris. Economic and social data now slowly comes to prove that the transition to a low carbon society is not only decisive, but it can also generate prosperity, create new jobs, and improve our health and well-being. New business models were developed, allowing us to make an infinite use of rare resources that would otherwise fill up our landfills, pollute our waters and soils, and deteriorate our human condition. Climate change adaptation is in some cases not seen as a constraint anymore, but as an opportunity to generate growth and create a better way of living. In some countries, for example, protecting ecosystems and coastal areas against erosion has generated economic opportunities, preserved landscapes and livelihoods. Civil society is also more and more mobilised in the fight against climate change. Numerous networks have already shown their support to making the COP21 a successful Conference and have shown their interest in maintaining a strong dialogue before, during and after the official meetings.

[1] Limits to growth, planetary boundaries, developed by the Stockholm Resilience Centre, <http://www.stockholmresilience.org/21/research/research-programmes/planetary-boundaries/planetary-boundaries/about-the-research/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html>

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Alexandru Ghiurca is a junior consultant in environmental and development policies. He is a former trainee in the Climate change and environment unit at the European Commission, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development.

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Communicating the SDGs? Mind your business!



When analyzing Eastern European's reactions to the refugee crisis Ivan Krastev rightly pointed to a *compassion deficit*[\[1\]](#), quoting statistics that showed that the citizens of the Czech Republic were against allocating any public resources to help the refugees and Slovakia's Prime Minister saying that 95% of the people arriving to Europe are not 'real' refugees and in any case Slovakia could only receive Christians into the country. In Romania, President Iohannis embarrassed himself by first saying that under no circumstance will Romania receive more than 1700 refugees, just to realize later that he will have to bend to the quota voted by the European leaders in Brussels and receive a bit over 6000 people. Still in Romania, after World Vision launched a

fundraising campaign for the refugee children, under the slogan 'They have no fault, but they are the most affected', cynical comments flooded their social media channels: 'Why don't you help the poor Romanian children? Poverty in Romania is rampant and all you can think is how to help a group of future killers', 'Their only fault is that they have stupid parents', 'These kids are dangerous. They are taught to kill from very early ages. Help Romanian children instead'.

How, in this context, can we expect to successfully communicate the **Sustainable Development Goals** in the Eastern European countries? UK observers deplore that less than 4% of the British citizens knew about the MDGs in 2013 and call for better communication strategies to be created for the SDGs. If this is the case in one of the countries who invented the notion of 'international development' from the ashes of the colonialism ideology, how much bigger the need is in a country like Romania, Bulgaria or Hungary (to name just a few) where the majority of the people believe that they still need to be helped to overcome their own poverty and where events from the developing countries are very rarely reported by the media?

Here are four simple ideas:

Mind your messenger.

The agreement on a new global plan to fight poverty is an important step, but similar plans have been presented and have failed in the past. Many in the post-development circles show that after 60 years of 'development' and trillions spent, poverty is still a shameful reality of the human race, at a time when we would have all the resources to truly eradicate it, as the supporters of the development business have been trumpeting all along the way. Development is growingly contested as a useful technology and many call for its demise. 'Development is dead' or it should be killed as soon as possible, say thinkers like Wolfgang Sachs, Gustavo Esteva, Dambisa Moyo, James Ferguson, Serge Latouche and many others.

In Eastern Europe not many will remember the Millennium Development Goals and still fewer will be able to say if they were a success or a failure, but many believe that our own development is our first priority and a promise that was not delivered on. Additionally, racism is rampant, with many people believing that other nations do not develop simply because they are too lazy to do so. Cynicism is also on the rise as shown by the recent refugee crisis.

Who, in this context, is the right messenger for promoting the SDGs? CEOs of big NGOs or inter-governmental organizations (many of them perceived as indulging in luxury and totally disconnected from the 'normal' people), high profile public officials, diplomatic staff will in no way be the best people to communicate that. The people who should carry the message should be perceived as genuine and legitimate: those who can talk about poverty from their own efforts to help poor people or those who know poverty in and out because they live in it. Compelling story-telling techniques rather than sophisticated advertising techniques should be used. The story of the people who fight poverty or the story of the people experiencing poverty should be documented, told and disseminated instead of advertising vague messages about how the world should fight poverty. The costs would probably be in the same range, with far better results that can also have indirect results, such as reducing the mental space for racism and cynicism.

Mind your language

The development business is infested by technical jargon, many 'isms' that combine into long and abstract sentences that are incomprehensible for the non-expert audiences, i.e. the majority of the population. Mass murders are transformed in 'abuses', wars become 'tensions', 'incidents' or 'crisis', starving children and adults become 'people who live on 1.25 USD / day', the millions who run from torture are actually facing 'escalations'. In terms of actions, what we do is to 'condemn', 'regret', 'deplore', express 'concern', ask for

resolutions and make recommendations on top of other thousands of recommendations and resolutions never heeded by anyone. Jargon can never produce the empathy which is needed for the global solidarity movement that is implied by the SDGs, but it can surely create the kind of misunderstandings that lead to prejudice and narrow-mindedness. The messages should therefore be 'tested' with their end users and not only in the large creative agencies or communications departments of the institutions and the organizations meant to lead the 'awareness' campaign. In general, the civil society should consider fighting the 'discursive' war that waters down the big tragedies of our world in a way that allows for starvation in a time of lavish affluence. Fighting under-development is the word of the day, but why not fighting the over-development that creates and perpetuates under-development? Fighting poverty can easily turn into fighting the poor, if the ways of the opulent are not considered.

Mind your business

In the Eastern European countries the talk about the predicament of the developing countries is constantly opposed to 'our own poverty'. In Romania and other EU Member States the failure of the state administrations to integrate the Roma populations created unprecedented levels of racism. Many still use the term 'crow' to refer to the Roma citizens, as they use the term 'monkey' to refer to non-white persons. Before 1989 the non-aligned movement included the Eastern European countries in a global movement where under-development was hotly debated, although ideologically blamed on the Western countries. In those years the Romanian 'Scînteia' (the main newspaper) had a whole page on international affairs and very often the articles reflected the situation of the developing countries, global meetings, Romania's positions in the international summits, etc. After 1989 the 'free' but resource-depleted mass media stopped reporting from the developing countries which totally disappeared from the public

discourse. For the regular Romanian, Romania is probably one of the poorest country in the world and statistics showing that Romania scores in the first 70 countries in the world in the Human Development Index are not convincing. And still, the voices who want us to first address 'our own poverty' before any talk about global development are frequently dismissed by development professionals as a proof of degrading and outdated selfishness that should be quickly marginalized. This can result only in frustration on both ends, while a middle way, that of speaking of co-development and the global inter-dependencies do exist, although it would require us to go the extra mile for identifying those areas where these inter-dependencies could be explored and harnessed.

Mind the compassion deficit

Krastev is doing us a big favor when coining the metaphor of the 'compassion deficit', as he gives us a crucial insight into how our SDGs communication campaigns should be framed. People in the 'new' EU Member States were eager to join the EU for the prosperity promise. A promise about how prosperity would be shared with themselves and not about how they would be expected to share with the 'others'. Living at the margins of the most developed club of nations, not far from the shiny comforts of some of the most industrialized countries in the world, the Eastern European citizens feel that they are the unluckiest people in the world. History had wickedly conspired to keep them away from progress. Any comparisons with those who are even unluckier is taken as a bad joke. Blinded with the sparkly luxuries they can almost touch across a border that does not even exist any longer, Eastern Europeans feel that they suffered enough and now they 'deserve' to be as developed as anyone can dream. In the EU 'new' Member States any SDG 'awareness campaigns' needs to take this complex aspirations into account and probably build on them, instead of dismissing them. Smart communicators will want to talk about common interests, before they speak about any

'duty' or moral obligation to help those in need.

[1] Ivan Krastev, Easter Europe's Compassion Deficit, available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/09/opinion/eastern-europes-compassion-deficit-refugees-migrants.html?_r=0.

Mirela Oprea has earned a PhD in international development from the University of Bologna and she is a Senior Liaison Manager at World Vision Middle East and Eastern Europe. She writes a blog at www.mirelaoprea.com.

Infrastructures for Peace- From International Need to Context Adapted National Implementation

According to the World Bank statistics from 2013 surveying 186 countries, 526.000 people are killed by armed violence each year. Even though, people being killed in conflict settings represent only 12,2% of people being killed, the rest of 87.8% are killed in non-conflict settings with 75% of them being victims of intentional homicides. [1]

Other statistic, made by Wars in the World, reveals that 65 countries are currently directly involved in a war fighting over 650 militias-guerillas, separatist and anarchic groups in their region, with most of ongoing conflicts in Africa and in

Asia. [\[2\]](#)

Reviewing these numbers and the statistics, one can notice that even the international context has changed in the nineties with the end of the Cold War, armed conflicts and violence are still present, impacting societies all over the world. The numbers I have mentioned are just a small part of the effects caused by **direct violence**, the visible effects of violent clashes. But there is always more than that, even if only the tip of the iceberg is visible to us. The willingness of states to get involved into armed conflicts, the eagerness of terrorist, anarchic and separatist groups to fight their enemies, the high death rates of victims of intentional homicides reveal a small part of the most dangerous facet of violence, which is strongly embedded in most societies: **cultural and structural violence**.

One can identify aspects of structural violence in many societies where authorities and public policies use violent methods to deal with conflicts. Their actions rather encourage the creation of structures which facilitate the escalation of conflicts, being supported by cultural violence, strongly embedded in people's mentalities and mirrored by their behaviors.

When it comes to conflict, every state has largely determined its own mechanisms for solving various types of conflict. Many or maybe most countries face various institutional gaps in order to manage conflicts – they lack tools, resources and structures needed to deal with them. Other states completely ignore the possibility of peaceful settlement and draw on violence based tools, which are deeply rooted in their culture, in their human nature and are justified by the mentalities of the majority.

This is the point where infrastructures for peace are brought in discussion. They are less expensive than wars and can be built on existing structures.

The term infrastructure for peace is most often associated with conflict zones or countries experiencing various forms of direct violence or conflict escalation. The concept itself can be put into practice in countries experiencing tensions within society and that are dealing with other types of violence, such as cultural and structural with the purpose of transforming conflicts at an early stage and consolidating peace.

Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) is a term that knows a wide range of definition proposals although the concept is still in definition phase. Even if it is a new term, abstract and complex it has shown various ways of adapting itself to existing realities and specific contexts. **Jean Paul Lederach** is the first who introduced the concept in the 1980s, assuming that sustainable peace can only be the result of a deep and structural conflicts transformation, including socio-economic roots and political drivers.[\[3\]](#)

Chetan Kumar, Senior Conflict Prevention advisor at UNDP defined an I4P as a network of interdependent systems, resources, values and skills- shared by the government, civil society and community institutions. A functional I4P is in his opinion based on dialogue, consultation and peaceful mediation among these actors.[\[4\]](#)

Paul van Tongeren, author of many articles related to infrastructures for peace, defines infrastructures for peace as institutional mechanisms, appropriate to each country's culture which promote conflict solving approaches based on dialogue and non-violence within communities.[\[5\]](#)

Summing up some major streams in the literature, one can identify common aspects as key elements to define an I4P which is in fact a structure based on institutional mechanisms, on peaceful mediation, dialogue and networking within communities aiming to prevent or to diminish violent conflicts.

I4P International – an international network of NGOs, local peace committees and peacebuilding practitioners – defines Infrastructures for Peace as following: “a dynamic network of structures, mechanisms, resources and interdependent qualifications contributing to conflict prevention and peace restoration in the society through dialogue, consultation, cooperation and coordination”.[\[6\]](#)

Reviewing the existing literature, one can notice that the majority of examples of implementing infrastructures for peace can be found in Africa, followed by some Asian countries or singular examples in the Middle East and South America. Some components of infrastructures for peace exist also in other contexts but are not gathered under the same umbrella called I4P. Even so, the External Action of the European Union acknowledges the importance of infrastructures for peace also at the European level, in terms of strengthening national capacities for dialogue, mediation and national dialogue platforms with regards to conflict prevention.[\[7\]](#)

The concept of infrastructures could be translated into reality in peaceful but also in conflict-torn societies with the aim of preventing violence and dealing with conflict. To this purpose, one can have as examples:

- National Dialogues:
- Local Peace Committees
- Mediation

The **National Dialogues** can be implemented as roundtables or national conferences, aiming to ensure platforms for discussions legitimized by the national authority.

The **Local Peace Committees and Councils** represent structures which facilitate the creation of networks of local bodies. Within the network, interaction is encouraged with the goal of strengthening national peace infrastructure, addressing issues of local relevance considered to be a threat to peaceful

conditions, supporting the peaceful settlement of disputes and establishing consensus among different parties involved in conflict situation.

Mediation is another component of infrastructures for peace aiming to restore broken relationships between and within communities, where tensions emerge among different ethnic and social groups.

A major remark is that even if infrastructures for peace have some common components, these have to be adapted to each context when implemented. An infrastructure for peace has to be acknowledged and owned by the community and by the civil society but has to be also legitimized by the national authority.

An example of a partly successful I4P can be considered the case of Nepal. This country found its path towards democracy in 1990, having free parliamentary elections one year later. Unfortunately, the high expectations of the population regarding social and economic change were not met, escalating into the Maoist insurgency from 1996, which had cost over 16,000 lives and had led to a large amount of internally displaced people. After the bloody conflict, due to the eight-party negotiations a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed and ambitious plans for an infrastructure for peace were made.

The components of the Nepalese infrastructures for peace were implemented at national and local level. On the national level the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) was established having as major tasks to coordinate the implementation of the Peace Agreement, to set up local peace committees (LCPs) and to manage the Nepal Peace Trust Fund. At the local level, local peace committees were established in almost every district. These LCPs had the role to link the national peace process to the communities, to run programs on conflict prevention, to have activities related to domestic violence and psychological healing. Even the infrastructures

for peace have had a comprehensive design and accordingly established institutions[8], the Nepalese model was not as successful as expected. It has been criticized that LCPs were not efficient in addressing core issues because they were not really owned by the communities and civil society due to high implication of the government, which had a too political oversight. Moreover, the infrastructure itself lacked capacities in terms of funding and skilled staff, which burdened the achievement of its goals.

Having the example of Nepal in mind, one can learn from its experience and before establishing an infrastructure for peace in an apparently peaceful society, former communist country starting to answer the question: why do we need I4P here?

The main argument why we need I4P in Romania is not because each of us is confronted every day with direct violence and we experience war, but because:

- structural and cultural violence are strongly embedded into every structure within the Romanian society and dominate the mainstream mentalities and behaviors

- Romania has a history in approaching conflictual situation with violence (the Revolution from 1989, violent uprising of the miners in 1990, the inter-ethnic conflicts between Romanian- Hungarian minority, Romanian- Roma minority)

- externally, due to contemporary interactions at the global level and to the synergies we are directly affected by the war in Ukraine, the wars in the Middle East and the existing tensions and instability within the European Union

- internally we face increasing numbers indicating cases of violence in schools and domestic violence, with measures taken to address the effects and not the causes of violence

- internally, we experience very often political instability, inter-ethnic tensions due to the lack of inter-ethnic dialogue

-hate speech and violent speech is present in everyday life and promoted in the media

– lack of methods and instruments for transforming conflicts in a non-violent way, in order to prevent cases of violence.

In other words: we have perfect conditions for nurturing violent conflicts. With regards to the needs, challenges, gaps and threats identified, a new chapter on I4P starts to be written by AIDRom – the Ecumenical Association of Churches in Romania and PATRIR – the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania.



AIDRom in partnership with PATRIR have started on the 1st of March 2015 the implementation of a 14 months project called **I4P Romania- “Establishing Infrastructure for Peace Romania”** financed by the EEA Grants 2009-2014, through the NGO Fund Romania. The project

aims to create a network of organizations in Romania, to build and transfer capacities for conflict transformation to these organizations. Beside training NGOs and fortifying their capacities to deal with different conflict typologies, the project also aims to develop advocacy skills with the purpose of acknowledging the importance of infrastructures for peace from national authorities.

Within these 14 months, the organization team organizes trainings on Complex Conflict Analysis, Reconciliation and Restorative Practices and on Design Intervention in Conflict Transformation Processes. Moreover, in order to achieve one of its goals and change mentalities with regards to approaching conflict, three Good Practice Guides providing examples for conflict transformation for different conflict typologies will be elaborated. These Guides will be presented within workshops

and will be disseminated to the Romanian NGOs to fortify their capacity to deal with different conflicts. Another component of the project is related to developing a White Paper and create legislative proposals to consolidate the NGOs position towards dealing with conflict at the national level. The peak of the project is represented by the network of organization, which will have the legitimacy to come together and develop activities related to conflict prevention and conflict transformation in their communities, being in a constant dialogue with public authorities.

Through this project, one will set up the basis for an infrastructure for peace inspired by I4P internationally but designed in accordance to the specificities of the Romanian context, according to the existing needs and to the surrounding internal and external factors.

Being aware of the high rates of direct violence but also of the prevalence of structural and cultural violence embedded in the most of the existing structures, establishing an infrastructure for peace in Romania means raising awareness about the importance of peaceful settlements, changing mentalities and behaviors, challenging diverse actors, communities and authorities to have a dialogue and work efficiently on conflict prevention and conflict transformation.

To impact the Romanian society peacefully and change people's lives. To maintain peace and prevent violence. To shift the terrifying statistics.

[1] Geneva Declaration: Global Burden of Armed Violence, <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/global-burden-of-armed-violence.html>, (25.09.2015).

[2] Wars in the World, <http://www.warsintheworld.com/?page=static1258254223>, (25.09.2015).

[3] Jean Paul Lederach in Embedded Peace. Infrastructures for Peace: Approaches and Lessons Learned, by Hans J. Giessmann (Berghof Foundation), 2015, p.6.

[4] Ibid., p.7.

[5] Ibid.,p.7.

[6] I4P International- The International Civil Society Network on Infrastructures for Peace, <http://www.i4pinternational.org/>, (25.09.2015).

[7] External Action- European Union, http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/conflict_prevention/docs/2013_eeas_mediation_support_factsheet_peace_infrastructures_en.pdf , (1.10.2015).

[8] Hans J. Giessmann : Embedded Peace- Infrastructures for Peace: Approaches and Lessons Learned, the Berghof Foundation, 2015, p. 31-33.

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Otilia Fogorasi- Hencz studied International Relations and European Studies at Babes-Bolyai University (Romania), Otto-von-Guericke University (Germany) and Lazarski University (Poland). She continued her studies with two MA programmes (*Comparative European Political Studies- Germany and Eastern Europe* and *International Development*) at Babes-Bolyai University (Romania) where she specialized on political development and peacebuilding in Central and Eastern-Europe, Asia and the MENA region.

Currently, she works as capacity building and networking coordinator at PATRIR- The Peace Action Training and Research Institute of Romania.

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For more information about the project please contact Ms Otilia Fogorasi- Otilia.fogorasi@patrir.ro

Visit:

<http://www.aidrom.ro/proiecte/i4p-romania-pregatirea-retelei-infrastructuri-pentru-pace-romania/>

**“Development Cooperation
Days” Romanian Development**

Camp, 8th edition



The Romanian Development Camp 2015 – entitled “Development Cooperation Days” was a public event organised by the **Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND** in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme – Regional Centre for Europe and Central Asia. This

edition took place between 8th – 10th of July in Bucharest in the context of the **European Year for Development 2015**. Having the unique opportunity to bring the public closer to development issues, the event’s main purpose was to raise awareness on Romania’s role as an international donor and inspire Romanian institutions, organisations and individuals to become more involved in the global efforts of eradicating poverty in the world.

Reaching its 8th edition, the Romanian Development Camp has become a traditional annual event, which reunites representatives from NGOs, government, academia and mass-media within a unique space dedicated to fostering an open and constructive dialogue on topics relevant for the field of international development cooperation.



This year’s edition was different from all the others, being **an interactive and open event which combined plenary sessions and thematic workshops with side-events such as a movie projection and debate, photo exhibition, theatre forum and a projects’ fair**. Throughout these activities, the audience had

the chance to better understand how aid works and how they can become more involved in development efforts. Also the projects' fair offered visibility to development projects and activities with focus on results and provided the tools to better communicate development projects and results.

Moreover, the 2015 edition of the Romanian Development Camp enjoyed the presence of some of the most relevant speakers in the development cooperation field. The key note speaker was **Mr. Simon Maxwell**, an expert with a career in international development of over 40 years, currently Senior Research Associate at the **Overseas Development Institute** (UK's leading independent think-tank on international development and humanitarian issues) who talked about the complexity of the field of international development, the achievements reached so far and the challenges we are facing in the context of a new post-2015 development agenda.

"An excellent event and a productive partnership between civil society and the Government of Romania, demonstrating the country's commitment to sustainable development in all its aspects, and Romania's leadership at regional level. There is a lot to do if we are to secure a safe, prosperous and sustainable world by 2030. Romania's engagement, on its own account and within the EU will be essential."

The audience also engaged in fruitful discussions with: **Ms. Carmen Burlacu** – State Secretary for Global Affairs, Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **Mr. Geert Laporte** – Deputy Director, European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), **Ms. Deirdre de Burca** – Member of the EU Beyond 2015 Campaign Steering Group, **Ms. Amalia Garcia-Tharn** – Policy Officer, Policy and Coherence Unit, Directorate – General for Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid, **Ms. Ebba Dohlman** – Senior Adviser, Office of the Secretary-General, Policy Coherence for Development Unit and many other representatives of national/European institutions and organizations (NGOs, think-tanks).

The plenary sessions were bolstered up by the **thematic workshops**, focused on more specific subjects such as: Promoting development through social media, Young people in international development, The role of academics, Migration and Development, Financing Development: The role of Multilateral Development Banks, Child Protection, Gender & Development, Humanitarian Assistance.

Nevertheless, one of the most interesting and engaging parts of the Romanian Development Camp were the side-events. Below you can have a quick peek of the most exiting moments during the event.

Living Library: Getting to Know Migrants' Experiences in Romania



Projects' Fair: Development Cooperation Initiatives and Projects



Forum-Theatre: From Spectator to Actor – Disaster Risk Reduction



Food Workshop: Traditional International Cuisine, Dance and Music



For more details regarding the Romanian Development Camp 8th edition – “Development Cooperation Days” we invite you to visit fondromania.org and [FOND FB page](#).

The Romanian Development Camp is an annual event organized by the Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND, in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme – Regional Centre for Europe and Central Asia.

Where do youth fit in the SDG architecture?

Our vision is a world that values diversity, environmental sustainability and active participation by all citizens. A world that operates an economic system based on fairness and equality, where everyone has access to basic services such as health and education and where the standards of those services are high no matter what people’s background or economic

situation. No young person in this world would be excluded or marginalized because of gender, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation. Young people in this world are incorporated into decision making processes and given access to the levers of power regardless of their background.”

[Visions and principles for a post-2015 world](#)

In September 2015 world leaders met in New York to adopt the post-2015 development agenda. In what has been considered the most inclusive global debate, thousands of voices made themselves heard and tried to bring their contribution to the world of tomorrow. The SDGs are the goals to be achieved by 2030 and a simple reading of them makes it quite obvious that by success or failure, they will shape the future in a significant way. From ending extreme poverty in all forms to fighting climate change, inequality and injustice, what has come to be known as the seventeen global goals touch upon all aspects of human life, all over the world.



The world of 2030 will be inhabited by today's youth, and we currently live in a 'younger' world than ever before. There are an estimated 1.2 billion youth age fifteen to twenty-four worldwide, 85% of them living in developing countries. Improving economic opportunities, promote quality education and ensure healthy lives for all are just a few aspects that will shape their

life and future choices. Consequently, it should be quite obvious that youth should have a prominent voice on these topics. Moreover, since the SDGs are not legally binding and the review of their implementation is voluntary, citizens' involvement or lack thereof will have a great impact on their

success.

Today's youth face a number of general and specific problems whose resolution will depend upon the success of the SDGs. To name just a few, low economic opportunities, poor education and poor health services affect the lives of hundreds of millions. According to the [International Labor Organization](#), youth unemployment has been constantly rising to reach up to 13% in 2015, roughly three times bigger than the adult unemployment, while youth represent 25% of the working age population. In 2014 alone, 74 million youth were looking for work, this problem not being contained to developing countries alone. An [index](#) developed in the spring of 2014 shows that the overall wellbeing of 85% of the youth in the countries included in the index falls between medium and low, with the lowest index score in the economic opportunity domain. More than 87% of young women and men living in developing countries facing a broad range of development challenges and issues related to [inequality](#), with around [238 million youth living with less than one dollar a day](#).

Youth voice in the SDGs

In contrast to their predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs focus on all countries, with an overall focus on sustainability. Even if the global goals pick up the unfinished work of the MDGs, they feature a much more comprehensive view of development, which falls in between social and economic development and protecting the environment. As youth consultations point out, all three dimensions of sustainable development are relevant to youth everywhere, thus it is interesting to see how youth were involved in the shaping of the post-2015 agenda, what are their top priorities in the SDGs, where do they fit in within it and how will they participate in its implementation.

Youth around the world have actively participated in shaping the global goals through consultations and working groups

which made recommendations for the decision-makers. While youth participated in the national and thematic UN consultations as stakeholders, they were also represented in one of the Major Groups for the negotiation of the post 2015-agenda. The UN Major Group for Children and Youth in the United Nations ([MGCY](#)) was the youth 'constituency' within sustainable development negotiations, and worked in the shaping of the global agenda by making [recommendations and proposals](#), with major thematic proposals falling in twelve categories, the most important being promoting **gender equality and participation, decreasing youth unemployment worldwide through the promotion of decent work and universal education and increasing access to universal health care.**

Similarly, another significant involvement of youth in shaping of the global agenda was through the consultations carried in twelve countries worldwide under the Youth Conversations for Post-2015, a project initiated by the DFID/CSO Youth Working Group. Worried that youth participation in the UN consultations was not as meaningful and broad based as it should be given youth relevance for the whole process, the group carried inclusive consultations in twelve countries, in order to mainstream the results into the negotiation process.

Eleven principles emerged, which are the backbone of the vision for the future the consulted youth hold (in the order of their importance, as compiled in the [final report](#)):

1. Equality and freedom
2. Fair, responsible and accountable governance
3. Environment sustainability
4. The right to be healthy
5. Peace
6. Quality education for all
7. Responsible approach to the economy
8. Respect for diversity
9. Decent employment for all
10. Civic participation and active citizenship including

youth empowerment

11. Global co-operation

Although these are the priorities emerging from all consultations, youth from different countries prioritized these principles differently. For example, for the Romanian youth, the most important ones were **active citizenship, primary health affordable to everyone and combating all forms of discrimination**, while the youth in Sierra Leone prioritized **equality of power and resource distribution, increased youth participation in decision making and stability for all**.

How are these principles reflected in the SDGs?

A look at the seventeen goals shows that the above mentioned principles are generally fairly represented. However, interestingly enough, young people do not have an SDG 'of their own', but they are included in three of the seventeen goals and six of 169 targets, specifically those regarding education, employment and one climate change-related goal. Under the mentioned targets, we are supposed to achieve universal literacy for youth, increase the number of youth who have relevant skills for employment, reduce the proportion of youth not in employment and raise the capacity for effective climate change related planning in least developed countries, including focusing on youth. However, youth are not explicitly included in the goals regarding health, political infrastructure or security, although these were identified by youth themselves as most relevant areas of interest.

To get to the point, while youth are somewhat represented in the post 2015 agenda, it is not at all obvious how this targets will be achieved, with states being quite free to adopt their own policies, and youth in different parts of the world having different priorities. Similar with not specifically including youth in the goals, youth participation in the achievement of the SDGs is not explicitly codified in the post-2015 agenda. With the MGCY itself observing that

children and young people are seen rather as beneficiaries than contributors, and that the overall post 2015 agenda falls short of recognizing the centrality and potential of youth in the implementation of the agenda, it seems that while the SDGs somewhat represent the key interests of youth, they fall short of empowering them to actively engage into the achievement of the Goals.

Steps further

While states have pledged to allocate resources for the achievement of the Goals, and, more importantly, the Goals themselves stand as a moral commitment to the world of 2030, there is a lot to look forward to. However, since the SDGs are not legally binding, and review of the progress made by states is voluntary, citizens will have a large impact on the success of that commitment. Moreover, citizens should be the driving force behind the achievement of the SDGs if they are to be truly sustainable.

As the majority of tomorrow's population, youth have both incentives and opportunities to actively participate in the achievement of the SDGs and shape the world they will live in. The same youth consultations carried between 2013 and 2014 identifies five major themes which synthesize the results of all debates in terms of solutions for the problems identified by youth:

“Sensitize: Raise awareness to promote human rights, respect for others, support equality and protect the environment.

Empower People: Support wide scale civic participation, proper representation, accountability and knowledge of human rights.

Harness Technology: Use technology and promote innovation to enable, support and strengthen solutions and their reach.

Collaborate: Build effective relationships from local to international levels to support solutions across issues and

amongst everyone involved.

Reform Institutions: Review and reform systems across education, health, governance and infrastructure (to ensure access to basic human securities).”

While all solutions proposed by youth consultations sound great in principle, the degree of their practical usability depends on the overall progress of the SDGs as a whole, starting with empowering youth to take action and awareness raising with a strong focus on education for sustainable development. Definitely, with the transition from the *Millennium Development Goals* to the *Sustainable Development Goals*, the focus shifts on the world of tomorrow.