

2 May 2019

**Thinking Globally, Acting Locally:
UN Youth Impact's project launch**

UN Youth Impact is a project that aims to create a network of students around The Netherlands who are interested in engaging at a local level with the United Nations and its strategies for youth. We envisage that this network will organize a series of events relating to Youth2030, with a focus on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.



SDG 16 will serve as an umbrella theme, and the events will focus on topics within this theme, such as peace, education, and climate action. The project will run until October 2020, the 75th anniversary of the UN, when there will be a large-scale event in The Hague. At this event, we will

present the activities and outcomes of our project.

UN Youth Impact aims to be collaborative, accessible, and we as participants are the owners. This means we can be as inventive and imaginative as we like with our events. This project runs under the activities of the Chair of United Nations Studies in Peace and Justice, a position held by Professor Alanna O'Malley at Leiden University and The Hague University of Applied Sciences.

UN Youth Impact held its project launch event on Thursday 2nd May. As the day of the event came closer, some of us started getting nervous about whether we had all the arrangements in place - what if we can't fit everyone in, what if there isn't enough food? The organizing team are volunteers who were striving to make successful an event that they strongly believed in. The objective of the event was to gather together students from around The Netherlands, introduce our project to them, and find out what their thoughts and priorities are regarding the UN, the SDGs, and their role as young people in contributing to the SDGs. Making the SDGs relevant and actionable for young people in The Hague and the wider Netherlands is a priority for our project.

The brainstorming and discussion part of the evening was particularly exciting. Poverty (SDG1), Gender (SDG5), Environment (SDG13), Justice

(SDG16), No Hunger (SDG1), Decent Work (SDG8), Industry Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDG9) were all topics that came up for the different groups to discuss. This was a great opportunity for participants to really step out of their comfort zones and give their thoughts on how they could contribute to these SDGs. In one of the groups, International Relations students from Leiden University had a great point on why global poverty is relevant to them even though they live in the highly developed Netherlands: 'If there is less basic poverty, then there is greater stability in today's globalized world.' Others in the group got the opportunity to practice their oratory skills when presenting their ideas of their groups to the larger audience. This activity provided an opportunity for discussing with students how they could implement these SDGs at local levels. Bridging the gap between young people and the UN is one of the most important parts of this project, so coming up with these local level initiatives was a great start. The event also featured inspiring speeches from the Chair of UN Studies in Peace and Justice, Prof. Alanna O'Malley, and from Tey El-Rjula, whose company [Tykn](#) is working on creating digital identities for migrants who do not have paper identity proofs.

The mission now is to design more activities to bridge the gap between youth and the UN, and our next event will run as part of the September 2019 Just Peace festival. We are also focusing on a different SDG each month and setting a challenge related to it - head over to our [facebook](#) or [instagram](#) to follow these and join in!

If you would like to see pictures from the event, you can click [here](#). While you're there, take a look at our Facebook page, where we keep our members updated on events and challenges. We also have a facebook group for the network members, where you can share your ideas for events, and which will also serve as a pool from which to form subcommittees for future events, so make sure to join that too – link [here](#).

You can also find us on Instagram @unyouthimpact

You can email us at unyouthimpact@gmail.com