

Call for Participants

Advancing Young Scholars and Peacebuilder Careers 2021

A variety of challenges characterizes life in the Caucasus. Many of these are equally affecting people in different parts of the region. At first glance, attention is drawn to many unresolved conflicts in the comparatively small region. Promoting Peace in the Caucasus's various protracted conflicts has been a challenging endeavor for nearly thirty years. During this period, regrettably, the prospects for a peaceful resolution have continuously deteriorated; similarly, the conflict has been solidified as a normality, and the polarized division between neighbors and within societies has been institutionalized. However, it does an injustice to the societies between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea to limit them only to those conflicts. The field of social challenges is diverse, and the local potentials to deal with them bigger than many think. Knowledge within the next generation of researchers and social activists is at the heart of this potential and key resource for the region's future development. However, there is limited support for and visibility of young experts in local, regional, and international discourses, limiting their prospects to fulfill their dreams and positively impact their societies and beyond.

To this end, firstly, the project will strengthen the capacities and skills of the young scholars and peacebuilders through training and knowledge transfer. Secondly, we facilitate knowledge exchange, open dialogue, and networking among them and with international experts. Thirdly, we will strengthen the visibility of the participants within the expert community and enable knowledge transfer from the Caucasus into international discourses. In order to achieve the objectives set, the project consists of several measures that build on each other. The centerpiece of our project is the promotion of several collaborative research projects in small intercultural groups. The aim is to analyse common problems from different perspectives and to work together on new ideas and approaches to deal with them more effectively. The main objectives of the research work are to provide an insight into the internal social and political processes and their relevance to the regional context, assess the prospects for conflict transformation and regional cooperation, and contribute to the promotion of mutual understanding, confidence, and peacebuilding.

Central project components:

A one-week workshop on "Common Challenges and Future Perspectives in the Caucasus" in Germany, August 15 – 20, 2021

The workshop, which is the heart of the project, will bring together 20 young scholars, graduates, advanced students, and civil society activists from all over the Caucasus and international experts in conflict studies and peacebuilding. The gathering is a combination of a small conference, training, and regional exchange. During the workshop, the intercultural teams can work on their projects and receive feedback from their peers and international experts. Furthermore, participants will receive training on vital skills and competencies which help them to fulfil their potential.

Support for collaborative academic articles or opinion papers of the workshop participants

After the workshop, we offer participants continued training and several mentoring sessions with international scholars and experts to advance their work. Additionally, we will provide language editing services and research support.

A joint print and online publication “Corridors-Proceedings Vol. III”

All papers submitted in time and successfully get through the mentoring and review process will be published in the edited volume to facilitate knowledge exchange and awareness-raising, stimulate academic discussion, and promote the knowledge and skills of the young experts. The book will be published and widely distributed, both online and in print.

A public event and presentation of the publication in the region

At the end of the year, we will organize a hybrid public event in the South Caucasus to promote the publication and expertise of the project participants. The event will allow the young scholars and peacebuilders to reach out to a broader audience, spread their results, and strengthen their visibility in the expert community.

Project participants:

Our project aims to support young scholars and civil society activists from the whole Caucasus region. We invite young experts from social and political science, conflict research, neighbouring disciplines, and young civil society activists from Georgia/Abkhazia, Armenia/Nagorno-Karabakh/Azerbaijan, and Russia to apply for the project. This includes advanced students, graduates, doctoral candidates, lecturers, and civil society activists up to 40 years of age. By selecting this target group, we aim to strengthen future multipliers in the Caucasus and facilitate dialogue and cross-regional networking.

Application:

The application documents consist of two parts. Firstly, a short **letter of motivation** (one page) and a **curriculum vitae**. Secondly, a **short abstract** (max. 750 words) on one of the proposed topics.

Together with our local project partners, we have identified the following topics under the overall theme *Common Challenges and Future Perspectives in the Caucasus*:

- Youth as an actor in social and political processes
- Potentials of education as a driver for change
- Ecological challenges and sustainable development
- Opportunities for regional cooperation
- Dealing with hate speech and disinformation
- Promising approaches to conflict transformation
- Woman and peacebuilding

Your abstract should outline your perspective on one of these topics, formulate a related question that is particularly relevant to you, and an approach to answering that question. Please remember that we will form small research groups of 3-5 people from all applications. Therefore, your abstract should not be too specific, and you should be open to working jointly on one topic. You can also apply together with a colleague.

Please send your application consisting of a letter of motivation, curriculum vitae, and abstract to info@opencorridors.de not later than by 6 June 2021 and with the email subject “AYPC 2021”.

This project is a joint effort from Corridors with the Centre for Humanitarian Programs (Sukhum/i), Civic Idea (Tbilisi), Humanitarian Research Public Union (Baku) and the Youth and Community Action Club (Samakhbyur). Thanks to the funding of the German Federal Office (#CivilSocietyCooperation), we will cover all project-related costs for the selected participants, including travel, accommodation, full board, and excursions.