

# Caring for the environment and environmental justice



**SÍ A LA PAZ**  
JÓVENES POR LA PAZ SOSTENIBLE  
Y LA CIUDADANÍA GLOBAL

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# Caring for the environment and environmental justice

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# I. Introduction

This manual is part of the “YES TO PEACE - Youth for sustainable peace and global citizenship” project, funded by the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, AECID) and implemented in collaboration with the Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad (Movement for Peace, Disarmament and Liberty, MPDL) and the Instituto NOVACT de Noviolencia (NOVACT Institute for Nonviolence).

It is part of a set of five guides designed to provide answers and raise new questions for education professionals who would like to learn about the concerns and interests of young people regarding current threats to peace, as well as their understanding of the different elements of peace and how they engage. It outlines the ways in which education can be used to promote values, attitudes, knowledge and skills among young people so that they become global citizens who are motivated to act locally as leaders and promoters of a Culture of Peace (CP).

This collection of manuals, prepared by Fundación Cultura de Paz with the contribution and supervision of MPDL and NOVACT, addresses different key themes that are essential for nonviolent conflict resolution: gender equality, intercultural coexistence, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and environmental justice, and broad protection of human rights. The topics they address are based on the educational needs, interests and concerns of young people between the ages of 11 and 25 (with some participation of people up to the age of 39) from both formal and informal education settings in five regions of Spain – Cantabria, Catalonia, the Community of Valencia, the Community of Madrid, and Extremadura – which were identified in a previous diagnostic report. The results were compiled in a report produced by Fundación Cultura de Paz, and are available at the following link: [https://www.mpdL.org/sialapaz/06\\_Informe%20de%20diagn%C3%B3stico%20final.pdf](https://www.mpdL.org/sialapaz/06_Informe%20de%20diagn%C3%B3stico%20final.pdf).

The manual is organised into several sections that guide the reader from general topics to more specific ones. Following the description of the central theme, ‘Culture of Peace’, the issues and challenges identified regarding environmental protection and environmental justice in the aforementioned diagnostic report are presented. The following section presents examples of good practices aimed at promoting youth involvement in peacebuilding processes developed by various international delegations of the MPDL and NOVACT. Some of these are described in the form of group activities, serving as inspiration and providing specific methodological resources. Following this, pedagogical recommendations and general strategies are presented for teaching this topic in various contexts. Lastly, a glossary of key terms is provided to support the understanding and use of this manual.

In short, this manual not only serves as a guiding framework, but is also intended to be a practical and accessible tool to support educators in building sustainable and equitable alternatives. It is a living resource, inspiring collective processes of learning, action, and hope in the certainty that other futures are indeed possible.

## II. Thematic overview

### → The environmental crisis and its multidimensional nature

Care for the environment is an essential component of a Culture of Peace. The destruction of ecosystems, the depletion of natural resources and the climate crisis threaten not only the sustainability of the planet, but also the fundamental rights of millions of people. The environmental emergency we are experiencing is not just an environmental problem: it is a multidimensional crisis that affects our health, diet, access to water, housing and the safety of entire communities, especially the most vulnerable. These issues intersect with inequalities based on gender, social class, ethnic origin and migration status, which exacerbates their effects and therefore requires intersectional responses.

### → Climate action and its consequences

Climate action, understood as a set of measures aimed at mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, has now become necessary and unavoidable. Since the late 19th century, human activity has profoundly altered weather patterns, raising global temperatures to unprecedented levels. This phenomenon has intensified natural disasters, biodiversity loss, desertification and forced displacement; creating a cycle of social vulnerability and injustice.

### → Climate justice: historical responsibilities and protection of vulnerable communities

Faced with this reality, climate justice proposes an ethical and equitable response, placing human rights at the center of environmental policies. It involves recognizing that different countries, sectors and companies are primarily responsible for the climate crisis, as well as the impact on already impoverished or marginalised territories. It also requires encouraging governments, companies, and citizens to take shared responsibility in halting and reversing this damage through their consumption, organisational and participation decisions. At the same time, it calls for protecting those who have contributed the least to global warming but who suffer the most from its consequences, including environmental defenders who demand the right to remain in their territories; often under threat to their safety.

### → Criticism of the economic model and proposed sustainable alternatives

Environmental protection goes hand in hand with changing the economic and social models that have put the balance of ecosystems and our communities at risk. The current system of production and consumption, driven by immediate profit, infinite growth and overuse, has exceeded the planet's physical limits. There is a pressing need, therefore, to develop alternatives based on sus-

tainable human development that ensure the wellbeing of present generations without compromising the future. These alternatives are based on principles such as reciprocity, mutual support, shared responsibility and community life. This manual also seeks to translate these principles into concrete teaching resources to assist educators in their everyday work with young people.

### → Community practices and the role of youth

In different parts of the world, community practices are already emerging that offer alternative approaches to our relationship with nature, moving away from harmful practices. This manual aims to help raise awareness of such practices, fostering synergies among them and strengthening the conviction that other futures are possible. In this sense, we recognize that young people are not mere recipients of knowledge, but are also active in the development of these sustainable and just alternatives.

### → Environmental education and Education for Development and Global Citizenship as a central theme: connection with other pillars in the Culture of Peace

Environmental education, raising awareness about the effects of climate change, denouncing climate change denial, and promoting citizen participation in advocating for sustainable development are all key strategies for driving cultural transformation. In the framework of Education for Development and Global Citizenship, education is key to transforming environmental awareness into concrete action, connecting learning with social and political participation. Promoting care for the environment also means promoting peace, equity and sustainability. There can be no peace without environmental justice, and no justice without a respectful and responsible relationship with nature. This commitment is closely intertwined with the other pillars of the Culture of Peace - gender equality, intercultural coexistence, the eradication of poverty and the defense of human rights - and reminds us that environmental justice can only be achieved together with social justice on the whole.



# III. Issues and challenges in working with youth on this topic, as identified in our diagnostic report

Prior to the detailed presentation of the educational experiences that we hope will inspire fellow youth educators (dedicated to raising awareness and engaging young people to care for the environment and environmental justice), we would like to share some of the key findings identified in the above-mentioned diagnostic report.

In the report, it is evident that the young people surveyed demonstrate a **high level of awareness or concern about climate change, although their analysis of causes, effects and responsibilities is limited**, and they have little confidence that they can do anything to resolve or mitigate this problem.

It should be noted that **climate change denial has not gained much traction** among them. Three out of four young people surveyed acknowledge that the climate crisis is real, and approximately the same percentage disagree with the statement that climate change is not relevant to them simply because they will not suffer from its consequences. Again, almost three out of four respondents reject the idea that ecological disaster is inevitable and that nothing can be done about it.

It is worth noting, however, that **this widespread concern, shared by three out of four respondents, does not indicate a willingness or commitment to change their consumption habits or to support climate-related protests**. In both cases, less than half of the respondents were willing to change their habits or show more commitment.

**The lack of depth of understanding of the problem is reflected in two significant figures:** only 20% of the youth surveyed mentioned that the climate crisis poses an existential risk to humanity, and only 12% signalled corporate responsibility for global warming.

«Three out of four young people surveyed acknowledge that the climate crisis is real»



## ) Educational challenges identified

With these conclusions in mind, we have identified the following challenges in the educational task of fostering motivation and skills among young people to engage in shaping sustainable development:

- 1 Facilitating understanding of the scale and seriousness of the problem**, fostering their understanding that it is a major existential threat. At the same time, we must highlight that there is still time to stop or reverse the damage, and that there are inspiring examples of people and communities around the world who are promoting alternatives to the prevailing model of unlimited growth. Instead of resorting to rhetoric about environmental collapse - which leads to fear, discouragement, and a lack of confidence in our ability to make a difference - we propose using approaches that promote responsibility and care for nature, drawing inspiration from environmental utopias and other motivational narratives. The key point here is to emphasize that young people have the ability to take action not only as individuals, but also through organised and collective action.
- 2 Fostering a deeper analysis of the causes, responsibilities and evolution of the phenomenon**, encouraging young people to do their own research. This includes looking at data on changes in temperature since the industrial era, the percentage of greenhouse gas emissions by certain industries, and the evidence underpinning the concept of climate justice. Beyond the hard facts, it is essential to suggest practical experiences or activities that resonate with everyday life, evoking emotions and raising awareness of the issue. In this exercise, it is also worth highlighting the different degrees of responsibility of those involved, while at the same time pointing out that citizens, both individually and collectively, have the power to either worsen the crisis or help resolve it.
- 3 Linking the climate emergency to the predatory and unjust capitalist economic system**, and linking climate action to care, advocacy and justice. It is important to show that this crisis does not affect all people equally, and that exponential growth benefits only a handful of people, while exacerbating poverty and exclusion, especially in already vulnerable communities. It is also worth highlighting how the climate crisis intersects with inequalities based on gender, age, social class and cultural background, intensifying its impacts and which calls for an intersectional solution. At the same time, it is necessary to point out how the governments and companies of the Global North influence the territories and peoples of the Global South, exploring the ways in which personal consumption decisions impact the lives of other people and environments.
- 4 Introducing them to leaders who advocate for climate justice and defend the environment and territories**, especially in the Global South. This involves identifying those responsible for the climate crisis, while highlighting the violence faced by environmental defenders. It is essential to foster empathy towards these defenders rather than rejecting them, while also encouraging the decolonization of thinking; recognizing that many of the alternatives to the capitalist and fossil fuel-based model originate from grassroots movements in the Global South.
- 5 Reflecting on environmental damage, recognizing it as a form of violence**, and raising awareness of the concept of environmental peace; linking climate justice with the development of a Culture of Peace.

# IV. Good Practices

The following section presents a number of experiences dedicated to promoting youth participation in peacebuilding processes, focusing on environmental protection. These experiences have been identified by teams from some of the international delegations of MPDL and NOVACT, and will hopefully serve as inspiration for readers of this manual.

Name of the activity:

## Grupo joven Miyolt Nicaragua (youth group)

 Nicaragua

### Theme(s)

#### CP theme(s) involved

- ☒ Gender equality and prevention of violence
- ☒ Care for the environment
- ☐ Defense of human rights
- ☐ Interculturalism and anti-discrimination
- ☐ Poverty reduction
- ☐ Non-violence/ peaceful conflict resolution/ other specific contents

#### Other topics addressed

- Reinforcing egalitarian masculinities as a key element in building interpersonal and community relationships based on coexistence, fair treatment and care.
- Sustainability of life: promoting agroecology and community collaboration for the protection and shared management of livelihoods.

### Objective/s

Carry out training in egalitarian masculinities with groups of young male farmers in Nicaragua.

### Target population or specific group

Young Nicaraguan male farmers living in rural communities.

### Ubicación o zona de intervención

Rural communities in the department of Estelí, Nicaragua:

- San Luis (municipality of San Juan de Limay).
- El Rosario and Guasuyuca (municipality of Pueblo Nuevo).
- El Jocote (municipality of Condega).

### Duration

- Training workshop for facilitators and members of the Asociación Miyotl “Rayo de Luz”: 3 half-day sessions (13 hours in total).
- Replication in the community: 4-hour workshops led by Miyotl facilitators in their own communities.

### Intervention strategy and/or methodology

The group behind this process are the young members and founders of the Asociación Miyotl “Rayo de Luz”. They participate in training on egalitarian and positive masculinities in order to broaden their awareness of the connections between violent masculine models, lack of community care and environmental degradation. These trainings also aim to strengthen the skills of these young people to become trainers of new groups of youth located in rural areas. This facilitates a peer-to-peer learning process, in which teaching what has been learned reinforces the learning process of all involved, and is highly effective in connecting with other similar groups, thus amplifying the transformative nature of the activity.

This shift in understanding masculinities, as they become more egalitarian and nurturing, allows the community to better face environmental challenges. It creates a change in the way the community interacts with nature and natural resources, as well as with their own systems of production and community care.

These types of approaches and links between masculinity and sustainable development promote the identification and implementation of agroecological techniques that ensure the protection of all community livelihoods, which are applied in different rural communities.

### Supporting resources

Source (video): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAGz5tSwwxA>

### Implementation of the activity

The phases are as follows:

- Creation of a young men's leadership group.
- Initial training of the leadership group in egalitarian and positive masculinities, addressing the connections between violent masculinity, lack of community care and environmental degradation. This training also focuses on the development of positive communication skills, the expression of emotions and peaceful conflict resolution.
- Skills reinforcement to turn this leadership group into trainers of new groups in other rural communities.
- Peer-to-peer learning through facilitating opportunities for this group to teach what they have learned to other young people in similar contexts, with an emphasis on implementing caring masculinity in protecting community livelihoods.

### Analysis of risks, difficulties and achievements identified

#### RISKS:

Macho attitudes of some men may hinder the process and make them reluctant to participate.

#### DIFFICULTIES:

Need to adjust the course schedule to agricultural calendars to encourage attendance.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Positive experiences are passed on among peers and applied in everyday life, which reinforces and gives credibility to new actions.
- Agroecological actions (e.g. setting up community water tanks) carried out and understood as practices of caring for nature and the community are successfully linked to models of positive masculinity.

### What changes or transformations has this experience brought about or contributed to?

- Change in the understanding and practice of masculinities: integration of care in family, community and agricultural life.
- Transformation in the relationship with natural resources and the community production system.
- Recognition that the connection between egalitarian masculinities and agroecology is both a personal and collective need.

### Lessons learned, recommendations for the future and adapting to working with youth

- Support peer-to-peer learning and learning-by-doing processes, such as the ones described here.
- Encourage the youth leadership group to undertake training, replicate it, and delegate responsibilities to other trained youth, who will continue with new processes.

## Recommendations for adapting best practices to the scope of the 'Yes to Peace' project



### > Miyolt youth group from Nicaragua

Youth groups in formal, non-formal and informal education spaces - such as those who participated in the diagnostic report that inspired this manual - can become, like the young people in the Miyolt group, catalysts for environmental protection.

As with the Nicaraguan experience, it is possible to promote motivation and skills among youth to care for the environment by encouraging care for people and livelihoods. This means practising egalitarian models of masculinity, with a special emphasis on the need for men to integrate this care into their daily lives.

The following experiences are feasible in these contexts:

- Direct contact with agroecology and community collaboration for the care of the shared environment through community gardens or reforestation activities in local environments.
- Involvement in awareness-raising activities to promote caring for the environment and the community through agroecology; for example, by designing recycling and plastic reduction campaigns, or campaigns aimed at reducing wasteful consumption or consumption that is not in line with fair trade principles.

In this sense, the values of shared responsibility, intergenerational solidarity and commitment to sustainability are strengthened, connecting youth participation with the construction of a broader Culture of Peace; one which integrates social justice, climate justice and environmental care.

An essential element in replicating this practice is to incorporate gender equality as a cross-cutting principle, encouraging equal participation of girls and boys, questioning the reinforcement of traditional roles in these spaces, and promoting the construction of egalitarian and caring masculinities. This approach allows us to question violent and authoritarian models inherited from patriarchal societies, and pave the way for fairer and more respectful relationships among peers and with nature.

Other possible practices

In addition to these recommendations, the team of educators from MPDL and NOVACT involved in this project provide a series of workshop guides to inspire educational work, as proposed below:

Activity:  
Brainstorming and ‘5 truths and 5 lies’



Objective

Facilitate understanding of the magnitude of the climate crisis among young people.



Materials

Whiteboard and sheets of paper.



Duration

60 mins



The activity

By way of introduction, the first activity we can carry out is a short brainstorming session aimed at sharing the group’s understanding of the question ‘What is climate change?’ With it, we can learn or refresh our knowledge about this issue in the classroom, what aspects of their experience are related to this global phenomenon, their views on it, and how it influences their lives, etc. This is a space to encourage the students to express their opinions.

After a long break, the next activity takes a more serious tone based on facts rather than opinions, as many of the severe effects of the climate crisis are not well known, making it difficult to understand the true magnitude of this issue.

To begin, divide the students into smaller groups of three to four people. Write ten statements on the board (or use a projector), including facts related to climate change. State that five of them are true and five are false. Ask them to discuss it with their groups to decide which ones are true. After a few minutes, go through the statements aloud to see which they think are true or false.

In fact, all ten statements are true, which we will tell them afterwards. The aim is to produce an emotional response as they discover that all of them are true. Some are easily identifiable as true, while others may surprise them and be difficult to believe.

Regarding the statements, it is clear that we have to do some work to find a few that fit with the characteristics we are looking for (surprising but true). We can also take advantage of this initial activity to introduce information related to the aspects addressed in the following activities (relationship between Global South and Global North, extractive capitalism, collective action, etc). We can also use them as the basis for conducting a short research project, taking advantage of the fact that we will have discussed the statements as a group.

We can end the session with a discussion about which facts were most surprising and the impact they have on our daily lives.

The different phases of the session are as follows:

- 1. Brainstorming about climate change.
- 2. 5 truths and 5 lies, but they are all true - group work.
- 3. Final reflection on the most surprising facts for the students.

Activity:  
North-South game



Objective

Recognizing the link between the climate crisis and extractive capitalism, and understanding the geography of the problem.



Materials

Tokens for the categories of development, waste, advantages and disadvantages.



Duration

60 mins



The activity

This is a team activity that aims to generate an emotional and empathetic response in the classroom towards the people who suffer most severely from the consequences of the climate crisis.

Begin by dividing the group into two teams. Ideally, the groups should be smaller, but it is up to the facilitator to decide. The rules are as follows:

- Each group is given the four types of tokens as mentioned in the materials section.
- Each team has a development zone and a waste zone.
- Each team can take turns placing a development token in their development zone. Each time a development token is used, a waste token must be placed in the waste zone.
- For every three development tokens in their development zone, the team gains an advantage token.
- For every three waste tokens in their waste zone, the team gains one disadvantage.
- Three advantages are enough to ensure the team’s wellbeing.

The guiding principle of the activity is that one of the teams represents the Global North and another the Global South, but we do not explain this at the beginning. Therefore, the teams are treated differently by the ‘system’ (the facilitator in this case). For example, we can give the Global North team the opportunity to move one development

token each turn (or even two), while the Global South team can be denied this opportunity repeatedly in their turns. We can also ask that the waste tokens generated by the Global North team are placed not in their own waste zone, but in the other team's zone.

It is important to know how to take advantage of this unfair distinction so that both teams experience the unequal treatment from different perspectives. The goal is to generate an emotional conflict.

It is important that we reflect on the exercise afterwards. Ask them if they can guess who each group represents and then reveal the answer. This is the moment to address issues that have come up in the activity, such as:

- The Global North team has not stopped accumulating advantages, even though they only needed three for their wellbeing.
- No questions were raised as to whether advantages could be transferred between teams.
- Perhaps the burden of disadvantages has made the Global South team more reluctant to continue developing, even though the waste is not theirs.
- It is possible that the 'Kicking Away the Ladder' metaphor of the Global North has been revealed: Concealing from the Global South that their development process has been based on government interventions, and then forcing the Global South to presumably follow suit under the principle of liberalisation. On top of that, preventing the full development of local productive capacities – which would otherwise enable their participation in the global market – from being highly valued domestically and not fundamentally export-oriented and extractive.

Activity:

Greta Thunberg



Objective

1. To learn about the link between the climate crisis and extractive capitalism.
2. To inspire collective commitment in the pursuit of environmental justice.



Materials

Printed resources, projector, tablets or computer with internet access.



Duration

60 mins



The activity

The aim of this session is to build on the first two activities by learning about Greta Thunberg and her political journey.

In the first activity, we provided contrasting data on the climate crisis, and in the second, we showed how the economic development of the Global North is a burden on the Global South in our extraction-based system. With this Greta Thunberg-themed activity, we will link both issues, while introducing students to a young person who is a role models for environmental defenders, exposing those responsible for the climate crisis and protesting against them.

1. (5 mins) Start the activity with a small brainstorming session about 'what ideas we associate with Greta Thunberg'.
2. (20 mins) After this, divide them into groups and start the research phase. In this phase, we can use the groups chosen in the first activity, as well as some of the issues discussed in it, which are conveniently related to the topics to be addressed now. Provide them with different resources to work with, such as [interviews](#) with Greta or [articles](#) so that they can explore the links between the [climate crisis and capitalism, colonialism, human rights, migration](#), and other issues. All of these materials will be used for a short research project focused on the intersectionality of the climate crisis with other crises, using the example of the Swedish climate activist as a starting point. In order to do this, they will need to prepare a brief biography using some of the materials provided, dealing with a topic that is specific but intersects with the others. The choice of sources and medium is important in this activity. We can use either a poster board or a digital project using Canva or PowerPoint, for example.
3. (15 mins) After this brief research phase, a sharing session will take place in which each group presents their results, aiming to answer the question: 'Why do environmental movements in general, and Greta Thunberg in particular, insist that there can be no climate justice without social justice and without challenging the extractive capitalist model?' The aim is to show the intersection between the various topics covered by each research project.

Activity:  
**Survivors**



**Objective**

- 1. To promote cooperative work and the brainstorming of ideas.
- 2. To boost creativity and the capacity to tackle climate emergencies and the effects of climate change.
- 3. To gain insight into the different contexts in which climate change has an impact, and facilitate awareness among young people.
- 4. To connect with international experiences through techniques that focus on the local level.



**Materials**

Chairs and 4 tables, blackboard and markers.



**Duration**

20 mins



**The activity**

We will use a cooperative group work technique, in which participants are placed in a storytelling scenario as a team of survivors who must travel through different environments, where they will encounter adverse weather conditions and try to survive. We will later reveal to them that these scenarios are real in different places around the world.

**BEFOREHAND:**

First, have them search for climate scenarios in different parts of the world. These could be situations that are a consequence of climate change, or climate events that we are not familiar with but which we are not prepared for, and may encounter in our lifetimes if climate change progresses. For example, freezing temperatures for a long period of time, monsoons and torrential rain, not seeing sunlight for months, etc.

**AT THE START:**

Split them into different subgroups and introduce the storytelling: “You are a group of explorers with a mission that is going to take you on a great journey. You are going to sail to different islands, and on them, you will have to find a way to survive and think about all the potential dangers”.

**THE ACTIVITY:**

There are several rounds with the following structure:

- Storytelling narrative (with the facilitator’s own creative contribution) with the aim of introducing the new chapter. This can be worked on as artistically and creatively as each facilitator sees fit.
- Presentation of the challenge: to survive under “x” amount of torrential rain for “x” amount of time. Be specific, so that it is clear and concise.
- 10 minutes for participants to devise ways to survive.

- 5 minutes to share proposals: participants present their proposals indicating which dangers still remain, which have not been considered, as well as effective and ineffective measures.
- 5 minutes to reformulate survival ideas: In the previous exercise, many of the different aspects that may be affected by the climate crisis were probably not considered: housing, temperature, food, disease, shelter, day-night cycle, etc. Preliminary work should be done on 3-4 climate conditions and all their effects, so that at this stage the group can be given feedback on how effective their proposals are or what they still need to cover. Afterwards, the different conditions are displayed on the board. Each group should take one of them and write down what would happen in their territory/ city/ town/ village if this were to happen tomorrow. Afterwards, the answers are pooled together.

**CLOSING:**

We then reveal the location of each situation and discuss whether climate change affects us or not. Mention can also be made of changes that are already happening, including information from past decades. As a final step, each student should state what is necessary to survive in just one word.

Activity:

**Metaphor “Crossing to the other side”**



**Objective**

- 1. To analyse how the management of resources and material conditions affect the lives of people and communities.
- 2. To reflect on the current privileges, inequalities and structural violence, linking the experience of the game with real injustices.
- 3. To foster empathy towards those living in poverty or socially disadvantaged situations.
- 4. To explore the relationship between social inequality and environmental sustainability, highlighting the impact of consumption and waste management.
- 5. To encourage cooperation and constructive conflict management through teamwork.
- 6. To offer a practical space to observe how the dynamics of power, exclusion and competition are reinforced.
- 7. To provide a space for critical thinking and collective dialogue on social and environmental justice.



**Materials**

Newspaper and an object to mark their successful crossing (string, chalk or something that the person in charge has on hand).



**Duration**

30-60 mins

### The activity

The “Crossing to the other side” activity is an experience-based metaphor for inequality in access to resources and its effects on people and the environment. Through a cooperative game, groups must cross a “river” using only sheets of newspaper as a means to move forward. However, each group has a different number of resources: some have an abundance of newspaper, while others have only the minimum necessary.

The game touches on situations of inequality, frustration and privilege, which are then analysed as a group. In the final debate, the group should reflect on resource management, privileges, structural violence and its environmental and social impacts, emphasizing how material conditions shape our opportunities and wellbeing.

#### PREPARATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GROUP:

1. We will simulate the banks of a river that is wide enough for the game to work (ideally about 4 meters, but this will depend on the available space).
2. Three teams are formed. Students stand close to the river, separated from one another.
3. We then explain that the aim of each group is for everyone to cross the river, but that they can only do so by stepping on the newspaper. Each group has the same objective, but with different conditions:
  - Groups 1 and 3 have more paper than they need.
  - Group 2 is given little paper; just enough to cross the river but which makes it difficult for them.

#### THE ACTIVITY:

4. After explaining the objective of the exercise and giving the material to each group, give them 2-3 minutes to get organized and prepare a strategy for crossing the river. It is important that they have a clear idea of how to cross.
5. Start the game on the count of three.

#### CLOSING:

6. Once the three groups have crossed the river, look at where each group has ended up and what they have done, and any conflicts that may have arisen. Ask them the following questions:
  - How did this feel?
  - What happened during the game?

It is important to capture the feelings of satisfaction or frustration that both sides may have in order to empathize with those who suffer most from structural violence.

### Reflection

- In which case was more waste generated?
- Do you think that having more resources (in this case, more paper) causes more waste to be produced?

- It is easy to see how each group’s resource management policy has consequences for humans and the environment. Why do you think some groups play a greater role than others? What do you think this represents?
- In today’s world, do resources influence development?
- Are there any groups that have been in conflict with one another? How did it arise? How was it resolved?
- What were the guidelines for each group?
- Are there any similarities with real life?
- What do you think could be done to reduce inequalities between the groups?
- How can our consumption patterns be more respectful of the environment and people?



# V. General final recommendations

The following suggestions for adapting the experiences outlined in this manual are aimed at promoting youth participation in peacebuilding, strengthening their transformative potential.

## 1. Adaptation to the local context

### › Connecting the local and the global:

Help identify the different forms of social injustice or violence (direct, cultural and structural) in the area of intervention, linked to the theme of peacebuilding, as well as the connection with similar occurrences in other parts of the world. In doing so, we can address cross-border issues such as the lack of job security among youth, structural racism, violence against women, violence on social media or hate speech; emphasizing both commonalities and differences while continuing to highlight intersectionality.

### › Listen from the beginning:

Young people should be co-creators from the start of the educational processes in which they participate, not just beneficiaries. In this regard, the subtopics addressed in the intervention and the activities or methodologies that shape them will better spark their interests and be more relevant to them, and the insights will be more meaningful. In the consultative process that preceded the design of these manuals, it became clear that ‘feeling listened to and being able to discuss matters’ was one of their main concerns. In addition to exploratory talking circles based on the topics of interest, as recommended in restorative educational practices, the following references can be consulted for initial insights into the issues most relevant for youth in Spain in relation to each of the pillars of the Culture of Peace, as outlined in these manuals:

- Diagnostic Report “YES TO PEACE”: [https://www.mpd.org/sialapaz/06\\_Informe%20de%20diagn%C3%B3stico%20final.pdf](https://www.mpd.org/sialapaz/06_Informe%20de%20diagn%C3%B3stico%20final.pdf)
- *Informe Juventud en España 2024: entre la emergencia y la resiliencia*, Ministerio de Juventud e Infancia, INJUVE (2024 Youth Report in Spain: Between emergency and resilience, Ministry of Youth and Children, INJUVE).

### › Use accessible and culturally relevant language:

Avoid technical jargon in our approaches and in engaging with youth culture (music, social media, sport, urban art).

### › Value the internal diversity of groups:

Acknowledge cultural backgrounds, different immigration statuses and diverse gender identities, ensuring that all voices are heard. Use an intersectional approach to analyse how gender, class, ethnicity, age and other factors are interconnected and lead to inequalities.

## 2. Conditions for a safe space

### › Develop coexistence agreements together with youth:

Based on respect, confidentiality and active listening. For the talking circles approach, as recommended in restorative educational practices, the following basic agreements are suggested: only the person holding the talking stick may speak while the rest listen, speaking is voluntary, and everyone must be respectful of one another.

### › Include protocols for mutual support or care in case of discomfort:

Some topics (violence, racism, poverty) may be personal triggers.

### › Recognise young people as key players:

We should make it clear to students that they are not passive recipients of information. This means avoiding one-way communication, encouraging participation from everyone, and moving away from adult-centered perspectives. By showing genuine interest in what students know and think, we help them see that knowledge is built together. This way, we avoid the old cliché that ‘teacher knows best’, recognizing that students’ minds are not just blank spaces to be filled in by adults.

### › Promoting courageous spaces:

Based on the experience in Palestine presented in the *Gender Equality Manual*, the aim is to go beyond creating a safe space to address uncomfortable issues in order to develop alternative perspectives, moving away from the prevailing attitudes that glorify violence. To find inspiration when initiating these conversations between individuals and groups in polarised or tense contexts, with the aim of developing a common strategy to achieve transformations that foster long-term co-existence, we can refer to John Paul Lederach’s “Improbable Dialogues” or *Discrepancia bienvenida: guía pedagógica para el diálogo controvertido en el aula* (Welcome Disagreement: Educational guide for dialogue on controversial issues in the classroom) from the Escola de Cultura de Pau (School for a Culture of Peace).

### 3. Suggested methodologies

#### › Art and culture:

‘Theatre of the oppressed’, mural painting, music, photography or community circus as creative tools that foster emotional engagement, as well as critical personal and collective reflection based on the experience of real or realistic situations that are motivational.

#### › Sport and play:

Promote cooperation, respect and the prevention of violence.

#### › Community dialogues and forums:

Reinforce social cohesion, especially in intergenerational and intercultural spaces. For the design of these talking circles, we suggest using examples of restorative educational practices, such as those of Belinda Hopkins and ‘Circle Time’ or ‘Talking Circles’.

#### › Digital technologies:

Offer an opportunity to design youth campaigns on social media around any topic of interest, based on nonviolence. As an inspirational resource for this work, we suggest the “Digital Organising” programme developed by NOVACT, an online training resource to design impact campaigns that promote a global Culture of Peace through the use of new information and communication technologies: <https://novact.org/es/formacio/>.

### 4. Key factors for long-term success

#### › Continuous processes:

Avoid isolated one-off activities and instead pursue educational processes based on a planned medium- to long-term approach that allows for project-based work, and which integrates core content across different subjects.

#### › Youth leadership groups:

To encourage young people’s motivation and skills so that they are engaged and able to get involved in their communities, and raise awareness or promote social mobilization in others, helping to scale up processes.

#### › Work in networks:

Coordinate with community associations, educational centres, social services, and youth groups to link learning with real opportunities for participation.

#### › Intergenerational shared responsibility:

Engage educators, families and youth center staff as reliable role models.

#### › Involvement of local authorities:

This is key to ensuring long-term and financial sustainability.

#### › Participatory evaluation:

Include opportunities for young people to evaluate what they have learned and suggest improvements, strengthening their role as co-creators in the processes.

These recommendations do not provide a definitive solution, but are a set of open guidelines that each group and educator can adapt to their own circumstances. It is essential that we maintain the conviction that youth can play a leading role in peacebuilding and environmental justice, and that our educational mission is to support, facilitate and empower them. With this in mind, each experience can become a seed of change; an opportunity for shared learning and a firm step towards a more fair, sustainable and peaceful future.



# VI. Glossary

- **Climate action:**

“Refers to efforts to combat climate change and its consequences. These efforts include reducing greenhouse gas emissions (climate change mitigation) and/or preparing for and adjusting to the effects of climate change (climate adaptation)” (European Union). Climate action is also one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 13). Examples of mitigation measures include switching to renewable energy, promoting public transport, and protecting and restoring forests. Examples of climate adaptation measures include building barriers against rising sea levels, planting more drought-resistant crops, and improving early warning systems.

- **Sustainable human development:**

“Meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Sustainable human development also refers to the existence of social, environmental and economic justice; a path that aims to improve the lives of all people, leaving no one behind.

- **Environmentalism:**

Socio-political movement concerned with the protection of nature (Greenpeace). Environmentalism promotes changes in public policies, lifestyles, production and consumption patterns.

- **Climate Emergency / Climate Crisis:**

“The climate crisis refers to the ongoing and escalating environmental problems caused by human activity that is warming the Earth’s climate, leading to a range of severe consequences such as more extreme weather events, rising sea levels, ocean acidification, loss of biodiversity, and potential disruptions to food and water security, economic instability, population displacement, and even conflict” (UNDP). The term “climate emergency” refers to an extreme situation that requires an immediate solution (Verificat).

- **Climate justice:**

This involves putting equity and human rights at the center of climate change decision-making and action. The concept implies that those who have become wealthy through activities with high greenhouse gas emissions should bear the main responsibility for mitigating the effects of climate change on those who are negatively affected, particularly the most vulnerable countries and communities, which are generally those who have contributed least to the crisis (UNDP). “We understand that environmental problems stem from a greed-based model of production and consumption driven by capitalism, which also gives rise to other social issues. If we want to avoid an environmental and multidimensional crisis, we need to challenge those who are damaging the environment and who legislate against climate resilience. At the same time, we must raise awareness and develop alternative ways of living that are mindful of the system’s already exceeded physical limits, on the basis of reciprocity, mutual support, and community” (NOVACT).

- **Climate denial:**

An attitude based on denying and questioning the extensive scientific evidence that warns of the severity of the climate crisis and the need to take action. It is often insincere and clearly serves certain interests, both economic (large companies that do not want to see their massive profits affected) and political (due to the lack of willingness by politicians to implement ambitious measures that may run contrary to the elites that support them).

