magDA

Dialogue Academy Magazine

3RD EDITION OCTOBER, 2025

WE GIVE VOICE TO THE STORIES THAT SHAPE OUR FUTURE



Table of Contents

05 LETTER TO THE READER

06 CRACKING THE WALLS OF DIVISION
Desantila Muriqi

08 WALKING THE THIN LINE
Davor Džakula

11 YPS CROSSWORD PUZZLE: WORDS OF PEACE

12 BORDERS DIVIDE, FRIENDSHIPS UNITE: THE YOUTH IS CHANGING THE WORLD
Marija Jovanović

13 WHEN BRIDGES ARE NOT ENOUGH
Ardita Xhemajli

15 THE DAY THE WORLD WAS NO LONGER A CAGE
Hassina Akbari

16 ORGANIZE SMARTER: WHAT ARE THE ECHOES OF THE BLED STRATEGIC FORUM?
Lazar Simić

19 YPS TERM DECODER - MINI MATCHING GAME CAN YOU MATCH THE WORDS OF PEACE?

20 THE AWKWARD SILENCE OF YOUTH IN PEACE PANELS
Alba Jakupi

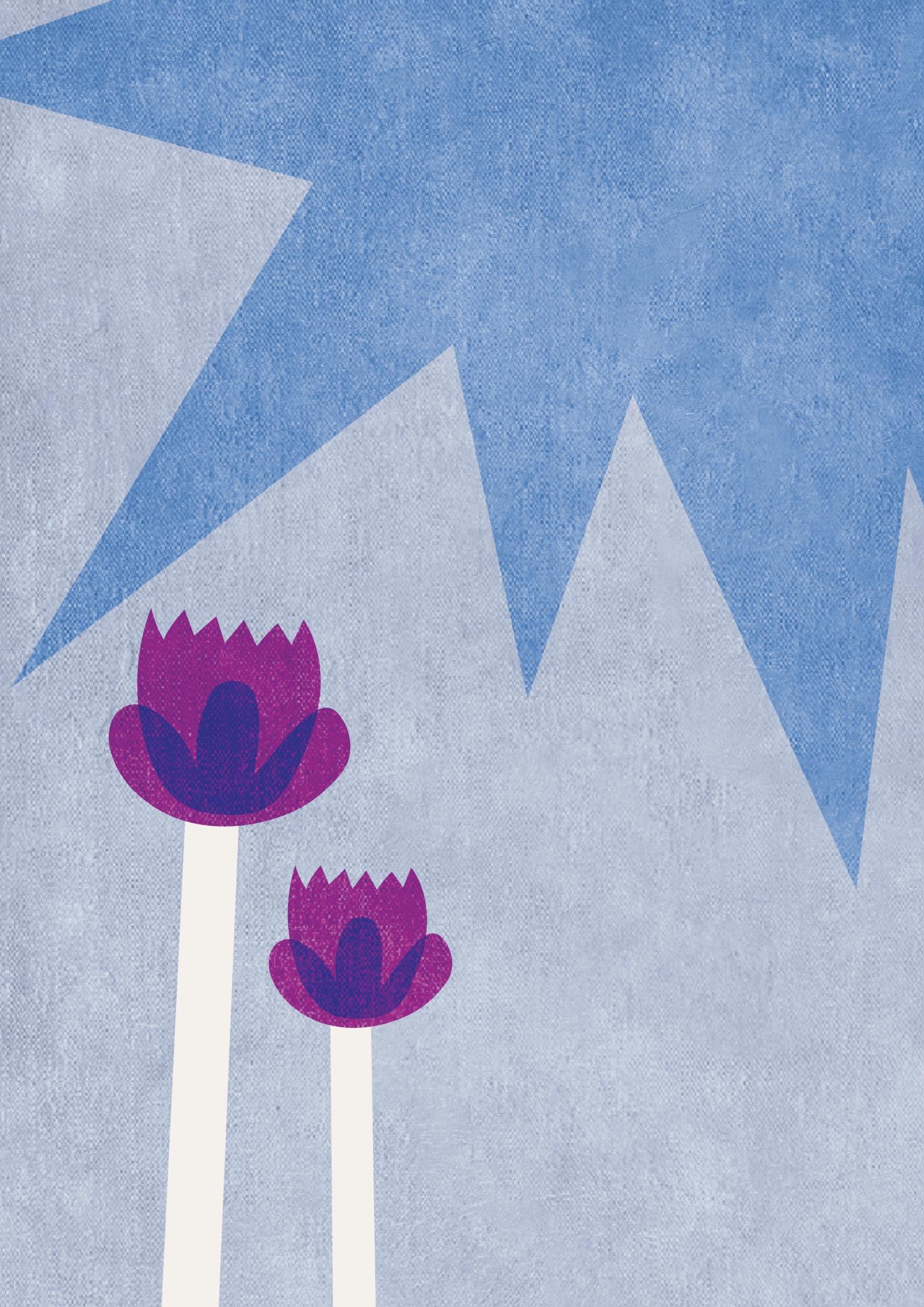
23 ENSLAVED
Mihane Hoxha

24 SPACES OF BELONGING : YOUTH CENTRES, ARCHITECTURE, AND PARTICIPATION
Orgesa Gashi

28 NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE: LESSONS FROM STUDENT PROTESTS
WHY STUDENTS PROTEST
PROTESTS AS A TOOL FOR PEACEBUILDING
Andrijana Milojević

32 REBELLION...OR SIMPLY EXISTING?
Albina Kastrati

35 ONE WORD THREE TOUNGES



Dear reader,

Welcome to the **third edition of MagDA – the Magazine of the Dialogue Academy**!

This edition is dedicated to the **Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda**, a global call recognizing the crucial role that young people play in shaping peaceful, just, and inclusive societies.

Across its pages, we highlight the voices, ideas, and creativity of young women and men who continue to challenge stereotypes and imagine new possibilities for dialogue and coexistence. From rethinking what participation truly means, to addressing the silences that often surround youth in decision-making spaces, this edition brings forward reflections that are both bold and hopeful.

Through essays, illustrations, interviews, and poetry, the young contributors explore the tensions and opportunities of being recognized as peacebuilders, while also confronting the barriers that keep youth at the margins. Whether it is navigating intergenerational divides, reimagining civic spaces, or amplifying the agency of youth in local and regional processes, these contributions remind us that the YPS agenda is not abstract – it is lived and embodied daily.

We hope this edition sparks dialogue and action, inspiring all of us to see young people not only as future leaders, but as present actors who are already shaping the pathways toward peace, inclusion, and justice.

In solidarity and strength,

THE magDA Dialogue Academy Magazine TEAM

Aida Fejzullahu, Editor, DA Alumna 2023
Anja Anđušić, Editor, DA Alumna 2019
Marija Jovanović, Editor, DA Alumna 2019

Under The Guidance of
Alba Jakupi, DA Alumna 2018

CRACKING THE WALLS OF DIVISION

AUTHOR: Desantila Muriqi

They say youth is about possibility - energy, ideas, futures waiting to be written together. What they don't say is how heavy that possibility can feel in a region where walls are older than our dreams, and hope has to be rebuilt every day; a weight we have felt firsthand, being shaped by it, bruised by it, strengthened by it.

In the cracks of those old walls, youth across the region find one another. Some days it feels like we are shaping something real from stone. Other days, like we are chasing a dream that slips through our fingers. You meet people you love with all your heart. You dream together. You rage together. You fight to change things. And then you hit the wall. You feel powerless - so powerless that you search desperately for ways to reclaim even a fragment of agency. Because you learn how fragile progress is: years of effort can collapse with a single decision, a single signature.

At some point, exhaustion makes you question everything - whether the work matters, whether it impacts anyone at all. The hardest part is not that politics has weight, but that it begins to feel like the only thing that does. So you return to what is still in your hands. You keep doing what you can, where you are, with the tools you have. You plant seeds and trust the process. And you promise yourself that when the time comes, when you do hold more power, you'll use it to make space. So that youth won't have to wait to be taken seriously. So that others can grow without feeling erased. Because now it's your turn to break through the cracks, to let light in, and let the walls crumble from within.

But then you start to wonder, will that time ever come? You begin to question whether what you're living is real or just a fragile illusion made possible by being inside a bubble. A hopeful bubble, yes, but one that many never get to enter. And your thoughts turn to all the young people who never even taste that hope. Some look at regional cooperation with suspicion. Others dismiss it entirely. Many are trapped in cycles they can't escape, cycles built on inherited narratives and unresolved divisions that most of us haven't lived, yet still carry as if they were our own. For them, it often feels like there's only one choice: the country or the region. In their eyes, loyalty can't stretch far enough to hold both. The idea that regional identity could exist alongside national belonging, or even European aspiration, feels like betrayal. And so, the space shrinks. Fear settles in. The walls stay up.

And that's when a new kind of "us versus them" begins to take shape - not along ethnic or national lines, but in how we choose to see the region. Do we face the past or turn away? Do we believe in reconciliation or keep our distance? Do we hold on to hope, or let it go.

You try to include. You try to explain, to make space, to bridge the gap. But often, it feels like it doesn't reach anyone. The narratives that divide are louder, more familiar, and easier to accept. They require less questioning, and they serve a more political purpose. Sometimes, even European integration - the so-called common horizon - no longer brings people together. Some don't see the connection at

all; they treat the region as something separate, irrelevant. Others, shaped by disappointment, disillusionment, and stagnation, have stopped believing it ever meant anything. You try to speak the language of connection, but it feels like fewer and fewer are listening. And when that happens, the space doesn't grow. It shrinks. The gap doesn't close. It deepens.

Still, we try. Because we know what's at stake. We grow up with boundaries pressing in - walls that mark where we end and the other begins. Even when we push, they endure. Some hold onto them as a guide; others test their edges. Yet these walls shape how we see one another, how far we trust, and how we imagine our place in this region. And then there's another pull: the forward-looking promise of Europe. For many of us, that vision feels real. Because it gives us something additional to hold onto.

And sometimes, without warning, something opens. A gathering. A conversation. A shared silence. And in that space, you realise you're not alone. There are still people who believe the region can be more than what it has gone through. People who dare to imagine a region where countries cooperate, reconciliation is lived, and human rights are respected. Even if those voices aren't always the loudest, they're still there, holding space, showing up.

Because regional identity matters - in all its complexity. It's layered, conflicted, fragile, shaped by pasts we are still dealing with and futures we are still negotiating. But it's also full of meaning, in the moments of recognition, in the unspoken understanding, in the sense that something connects us even when everything else tries to divide us. As such, we speak. Because youth cooperation gave us each other. And from that, something begins to shift. In the questions, we start to ask. In the spaces we slowly learn to hold, for ourselves, and for one another.

And maybe that is the point. Not that the youth will solve everything, or that the walls will fall tomorrow, but that we refuse to stop trying. That we dare to insist on belonging to both our countries, our region, and the European Union, to ourselves and each other. In a world quick to divide, holding space together might be the most radical thing we do. And perhaps, it will be enough to make the walls tremble. Until one day, when they finally fall.





WALKING THE THIN LINE

AUTHOR: Davor Džakula

I still remember the first time someone asked me, “So, what are you, really?”

They weren’t asking about my hobbies or my dreams, but about my identity. Growing up with a Muslim mother and an Orthodox/Catholic father meant that these questions were never abstract. They were part of everyday life, woven into language, traditions, and the silent tensions that shaped our societies. For me, living in between was less a burden and more an invitation: to listen, to hold contradictions, and to imagine bridges where others saw walls.

Yet I was also raised in a fairly homogenous environment, where diversity often felt distant, even misunderstood. That made my encounters with people from other backgrounds more challenging and more transformative. Youth exchanges and regional projects opened my eyes to realities my hometown never could. I learned that identity isn’t a fixed category, but a space of dialogue, negotiation, and sometimes even healing.

My journey in peacebuilding began long before I knew what the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agenda was. As a teenager, I joined local volunteering initiatives and cross-border youth exchanges. What mattered most then was not the theoretical frameworks, but the lived experiences: meeting peers from across the divide, discovering how similar our struggles, hopes and humour were, and realising that the image of the other was often a projection shaped by politics and history, not reality.

One of my earliest memories of such an encounter was sitting in a circle with young people from across the region, all of us hesitant at first, guarded by stereotypes and invisible borders. Hours later, we were sharing music, jokes, and stories about school and family life. The barriers dissolved not through lectures, but through laughter. That was reconciliation in its most authentic form – spontaneous, genuine, and deeply human.

Back then, I didn’t think of myself as a peacebuilder. I was simply a participant, curious to meet others. Yet those moments planted the seed of what would become my mission. Over time, I moved from participant to organiser, from sitting in circles to facilitating them, and then to coordinating projects that gave others the same opportunities.

Being from a mixed background often put me in the role of a bridge. At times, this was heavy. I felt that I didn’t fully belong anywhere. But it also gave me one of my greatest resources: the ability to empathise with different stories, to listen before judging, to see the grey areas where others only saw black and white.

This duality shaped not only my personal worldview but also my professional path. In a region as complex as the Western Balkans, identity can easily become a dividing line. Yet it can also become a meeting point. My story is just one of many proving that reconciliation isn’t only a policy goal. It’s something lived, fragile but real, by thousands of young people carrying multiple belongings.

v

Studying Geography in Novi Sad, I began to notice how landscapes are never only physical. They carry memories, borders, and invisible lines of division. Later, during

my master's in Democracy and Human Rights, I found the words for what I had already been feeling. Conflict transformation and human rights aren't abstract concepts, but lived realities in our region. These studies also connected me to peers worldwide, reminding me that the struggles of the Balkans echo far beyond its borders.

Working on climate change adaptation and Urban Heat Islands in Novi Sad, Skopje, and Zagreb changed my view of peace. Until then, I thought of peace mainly as dialogue and reconciliation. However, facing the reality of climate change showed me that peace also depends on how we deal with heat, air pollution, or the way our cities breathe. It was clear to me that the YPS agenda can't stay limited to traditional conflicts. It must also embrace environment and sustainability, the challenges shaping our shared future.

From local initiatives, I eventually found myself at international forums presenting youth perspectives within the OSCE Pool of Young Experts and speaking at the OSCE Youth Forum in Helsinki. Standing there, speaking to diplomats and policy-makers, I often thought back to my nervous teenage self at a local camp. The journey between those two moments wasn't straight. It was full of doubts, mistakes, and learning. But it showed me how youth participation can grow from local encounters to global conversations.

These experiences convinced me that young people aren't just benefiting from such programs. We're partners and leaders in shaping peace. When I spoke in Vienna or Helsinki, I wasn't only speaking for myself. I was carrying the voices of the young people I met in Šabac, Skopje, Sarajevo, and Novi Pazar. Local and global are never separate. Climate change doesn't know borders, and neither should peacebuilding.

Integrating the Green Agenda into youth cooperation has been one of the most exciting parts of my recent journey. It connects generations of students, teachers, and policy-makers across the region around issues that affect us all. It reframes reconciliation. Cooperation is not only about overcoming past divisions, but about facing the future together.

Looking back, I feel I've been walking a thin line between identities, roles, and local and global spaces. Sometimes it felt shaky, but often it gave me balance and perspective. It let me speak both as a young person from the region and as someone helping shape policy.

The Youth, Peace and Security agenda is, in many ways, about this line. It calls on us to recognise young people not as problems to be managed but as partners to be trusted. It challenges us to see youth not only as those to teach but those who teach.

If there is one lesson I take from my journey, it is that stories matter. Institutions and strategies are essential, but what truly changes hearts and minds are the lived experiences of young people who refuse to be defined by divisions.

The YPS agenda is not an abstract resolution. It is embodied in the faces of peers who dared to meet across borders, in the teachers who supported new generations, and in my own story of navigating identities.

In the end, I believe the most powerful peacebuilding tool we have is the courage to tell our stories and to listen to those of others.

...

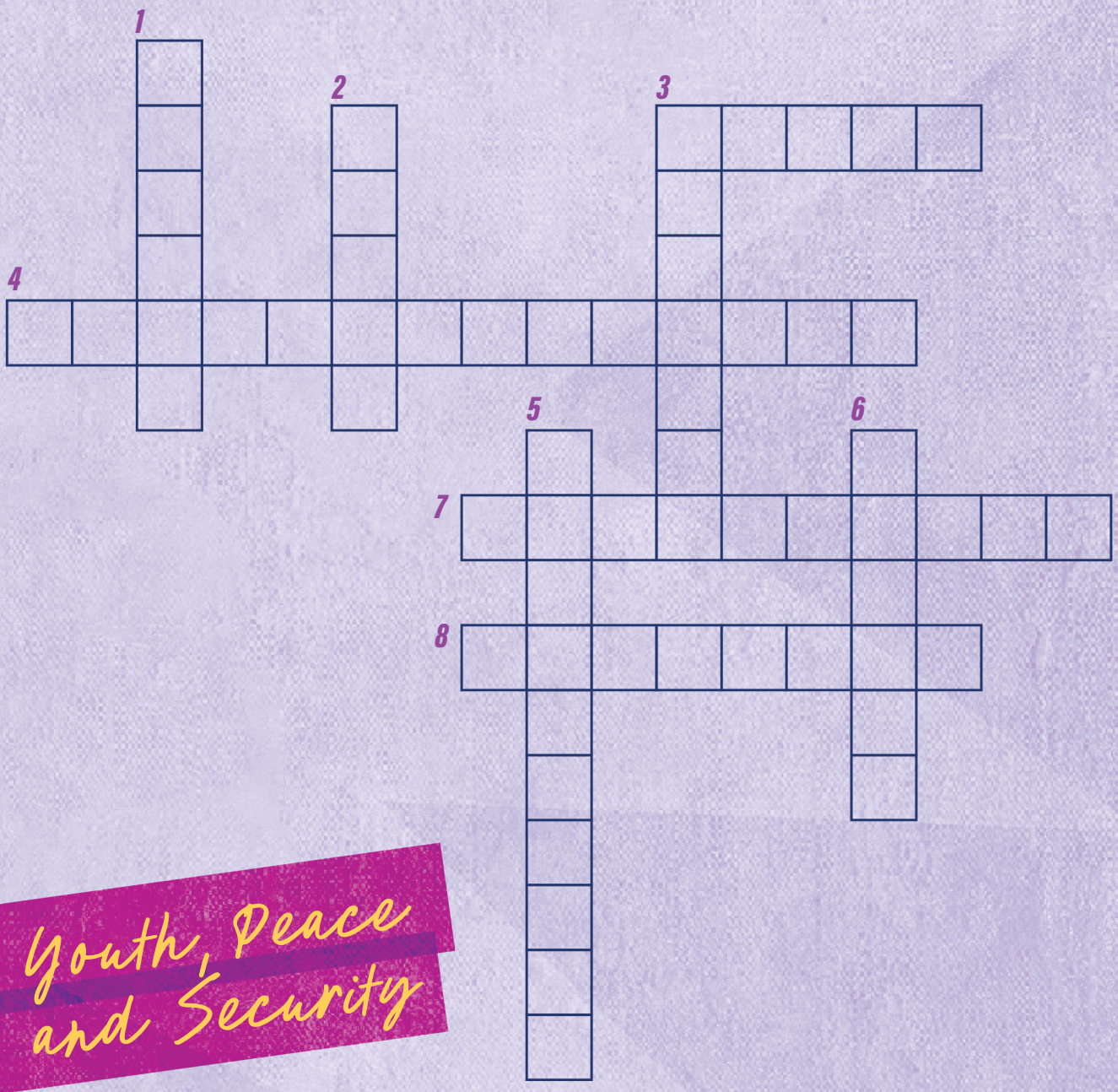
That, perhaps, is the true spirit of YPS: recognising youth not just as changemakers, but as living bridges between past and future, division and reconciliation, fragility and hope.

Maybe the real question isn't whether young people can build peace, but whether peace can exist at all without them.



YPS Crossword Puzzle

Words of Peace



Youth, Peace and Security

1. A method of resolving conflict through conversation and mutual understandi ng.
2. The opposite of war.
3. UN Resolution that officially recognized youth as key to peace processes (number only).
4. Emotional or physical harm caused by conflict or abuse.
5. A group of young people working together on a shared goal.
6. To stand up against injustice without violence.
7. What youth seek when expressing opinions freely (hint: also a human right).
8. The ability to influence change in your community or society.

BORDERS DIVIDE, FRIENDSHIPS UNITE :

THE YOUTH IS CHANGING THE WORLD

AUTHOR: Marija Jovanović

This poster illustrates the power of youth connections across borders. The main point being a photo of three girls, captured in Northern Ireland — a place that itself symbolizes peacebuilding and reconciliation — represents how shared experiences and mutual understanding can bridge divisions of background and history.

Behind it, like the voices of our ancestors, are the words "**The youth is changing the world**" written in Serbian and Albanian. Despite challenges that often keep post-conflict communities apart, young people continue to build bonds of trust and solidarity, reminding us that their friendships and cooperation are the foundation for a more inclusive and peaceful future.



This is my little homage to those friendships and an illustration that should show that young people are changing the world.

WHEN BRIDGES ARE NOT ENOUGH

AUTHOR: Ardita Xhemajli

Mitrovica is often described as a symbol of division. For outsiders, it is a city of bridges, photographed, debated, and endlessly cited as proof of what keeps Kosovo apart. For those of us who live and work here, however, the bridge is not just a metaphor. It is the background of daily life, shaping where young people study, whether they cross for work, and how they carry the weight of political tensions they did not create.

As one of the youngest societies in Europe, Kosovo's youth are routinely celebrated as "the future" and "agents of change".These slogans sound optimistic, but in Mitrovica, they often ring hollow. Young people are praised for appearing in multiethnic photographs or for joining symbolic events, but their voices rarely shape the policies that affect them most. The expectation that they will build bridges is high, while the support they receive for doing so is fragile at best.

Recent security events, widely reported in local and international media, have been a harsh reminder of how unstable support for young people remains. Beyond the violence itself, these events reinforce a feeling among many young people in Mitrovica that stability is never guaranteed. Every surge of unrest or nationalist rhetoric pushes them further into caution and self-preservation. Cooperation is possible here. It happens every day in classrooms, workplaces, and among friends, but it is fragile and easily overshadowed by political agendas.These larger security and political tensions often filter down into everyday life, shaping how ordinary youth activities are experienced and perceived. Meaning that even ordinary youth events can become sites of scrutiny and tension.

Recent youth activities in the city illustrate this fragility. A sports tournament, a cultural festival, or even a simple initiative meant to bring people together can quickly be politicized, embraced one moment and questioned the next. What should be ordinary spaces of connection often become tests of loyalty or identity. For instance, the Mitrovica International Jazz Days festival, held for the third consecutive year in 2025, included performances in both South and North Mitrovica, with workshops for young talent. While the festival aimed to foster community engagement and cultural exchange, some members of the Serbian community in the north perceived the event as politically motivated. Tensions arose in North Mitrovica when the Mayor, Erden Atiqi, arrived at the alternative stage, leading to protests and minor disruptions. The organizers ultimately removed the stage in that area. Such incidents highlight how everyday youth initiatives can become politicized, creating an environment where participation carries social and political risks.

Faced with this kind of environment, many young people decide to step back from cross-community activities, not out of apathy but out of caution. The risks are real, the pressures heavy, and the political narratives discouraging. Recognizing this complexity matters. Choosing to step back is also a form of resilience, a strategy for navigating a difficult environment.

Others, however, make the opposite choice. Despite knowing the risks, they decide to engage, to cross the bridge for school, to

to work in mixed teams, or to maintain friendships across boundaries. Young people who take these steps can face social consequences, such as being questioned by peers, labeled as disloyal, or feeling marginalized within their communities. This is something I have observed in Mitrovica, in both parts of the city, where participating in cross-community activities can provoke curiosity or skepticism from others. For generations of young people who began working in the 2000s, the challenges were even greater. Today, the risks and pressures continue to depend largely on recent political developments, yet many continue to take these steps, demonstrating persistence and commitment to building connections despite the obstacles. Their persistence sends a clear message: cooperation is possible, and young people are actively shaping the social fabric of their city. Whether young people choose to step back or step forward, both decisions are shaped by the same complex environment and reflect the difficult choices they navigate daily. Both stepping back and stepping forward reflect the same reality of living in Mitrovica, where everyday interactions require balancing personal safety, social pressures, and the desire to foster meaningful relationships. Institutional support for youth initiatives in Mitrovica is often limited or inconsistent, leaving young people to navigate Mitrovica is often limited or inconsistent, leaving young people to navigate challenges largely on their own. Promises of inclusion and support may appear in reports or policy statements, but without practical follow-up, young people face skepticism, obstacles, and the risk of their initiatives being politicized.

The real story of Mitrovica is not only about division. It is about persistence in the face of fragility, about young people who insist on creating connections even when the political climate discourages them. If institutions and international actors are serious about peace, they must move beyond photographs and slogans. Supporting youth here means listening to them, protecting their initiatives from politicization, and recognizing that their daily choices to study, to work, to cooperate, or even to step back are all shaped by the same difficult context.

Bridges may dominate the imagery of Mitrovica, but the real test lies in whether the young people crossing them are recognized not as symbols, but as active agents shaping their communities, whose efforts require real institutional support to succeed. Until that shift happens, youth will continue to bear the contradictions of being celebrated as the future while struggling to be heard in the present.

THE DAY THE WORLD WAS NO LONGER A CAGE

AUTHOR: Hassina Akbari

Creating this painting was both a challenge and an act of defiance. As an Afghan woman and refugee, I live with limitations that often silence or restrict me. Yet with every brushstroke, I chose to paint the dream I still carry in my heart.



This work reflects the dream of Afghan women, a dream of laughter, of freedom, of choices we were denied. The lapis lazuli earrings, the tabooed red dress, and the swallows dancing in the sky symbolize our lost femininity and our unwavering hope for liberation. The poppy in her hair echoes both beauty and the blood of sacrifice, while the green mountains behind her whisper of the homeland we continue to long for.

For a moment, in this painting, I dissolve into that imagined freedom. But reality soon reminds me that the struggle is not over. Each day, no matter how small, I continue to move forward, carrying with me the belief that one day, this dream will no longer be just a painting, but our lived reality.

ORGANIZE SMARTER:

WHAT ARE THE ECHOES OF BLED STRATEGIC FORUM

AUTHOR: Lazar Simić

Peaceful, clean, green, but also daring and brave - Slovenia. In addition to being very sympathetically branded as the only country in whose name you can feel love (eng. I feel Slovenia), this country between the Alps, the Adriatic and the Sava can also be proud of its bold foreign policy.

This is what I, as one of the young participants, could notice at the Bled Strategic Forum (BSF), which took place not far from this picturesque lake in early September. For almost fifty of us young people, from China to Argentina, this important geopolitical meeting started a little earlier - at the Young Bled Strategic Forum (YBSF). So, the first "ingredient" of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda is here - young people. I would say hardworking and motivated young people who are ready to act and manage the present of their societies and this global society of ours.

Peace and security, and in practice war and threats to security, permeated all our conversations, debates and activities, both during official parts and in informal gatherings.

Was that planned? Probably not, but it was necessary.

First things first: Who are these young people in Bled?

Let's go in order, where did we come from and what is the point of YBSF?

"To share ideas and find inspiration to improve our own communities", states ambitiously but honestly on the website of this event. As a participant in this year's Forum, I confirm that what was written is true.

The great team that runs this Forum gathered more than forty young people from all over the world, from the most diverse backgrounds, but with one common feature, which is the desire to change our communities for the better and that solidarity plays an important role in this. The youth part of the Forum allowed us to get to know each other and connect before joining the "adult" Forum. Don't get me wrong, we are already adults and often very serious, but we live in a world where the space for decision is still selfishly guarded. Who guards it? Some other adults, but who have not been young for a long time.

Apathetic or prevented from making a primal impact?

Perhaps it is the disease of every generation to overestimate the importance of its time. Either he regularly sighs with the thought "how many problems we have to solve" or firmly believes that something is happening for the first time in history even though it has already been seen (but forgotten).

Maybe that's not the case after all.

I was amazed when one of the participants, Ricky from Croatia, tactfully responded to an older gentleman's accusation that young people are apathetic and that we don't want to deal with our society. As a young man

from Serbia, where young people, primarily students, have been showing everything but apathy for ten months, I was, to put it mildly, shocked by that statement.

For the purposes of this writing, it is not important to say who characterized us as apathetic. The answer is important: "You left us the world in a much worse state than you got it from your parents," and I add, "you don't give us enough space to act." That is why the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda is important. Resolution 2250, adopted by the United Nations Security Council in 2015, recognizes that "youth should be actively involved in shaping lasting peace and achieving justice and reconciliation." Slovenia shows that it understands why this is important years ago. That is why, next to the Bled Strategic Forum, this Youth Forum was created.

"Adults" still jealously guard their space

The Forum in its entirety is a tool of Slovenian foreign policy, that's no secret. He recognizes that it is important to include young people who are not some kind of "leaders of the future" but the agents of today. And this should be repeated like a parrot.

Part of the narrative that young people are the future is (self) misleading and can be very dangerous. Although there are benign understandings of this platitude, there are also those who deliberately emphasize that we are the future because then we ask ourselves - but only in the future. Until then, the train passes through the corn, as they say in the Serbian language.

Some of my colleagues were justifiably disappointed with the space for questions, comments and active participation at the Bled Forum itself. The main speech was given by the highest political representatives, already emancipated politicians, diplomats, generals, journalists. And that, at least for me, was not a surprise. We know that the organizers of the Youth section of the forum did their best to involve us young people as much and meaningfully as possible.

What we have today is certainly more than some other young people had 5, 10 or 15 years ago. There is no need to talk about the time before that. Likewise, what we have today is still not enough.

Young people still conquer the space that belongs to them

When we talk about building lasting peace, and we add that it should be positive, not just the absence of war and violence, then young people are key - already now.

The oft-repeated phrases "youth are the future" and "letting the voice of the youth be heard" are empty of content and stuck in potential.

At the time of writing, much of the world's attention is focused on Nepal. We read headlines about "Generation Z" bringing down the government because it wanted to ban social media, but also because of deep-rooted corruption in the Himalayan country.

Young people, or the famous Generation Z, to which I myself belong, are citizens at the same time, just like everyone else. Or is there something that sets us apart?

What is an advantage of our generation is that we are digital natives and that we are more media, digital and information literate than some older generations. We are not necessarily smarter or more educated, but the crucial three seconds of attention have shaped us to think differently and act faster. We recognize artificially generated content much more easily than some others, and we see social networks not only as a place for entertainment, but also for timely and immediate information.

If we accept that something is different in our generation (young people are 18-29 years old according to the Youth, Peace and Security agenda), then we accept that young people can play a decisive role in the changes needed by human society as such.

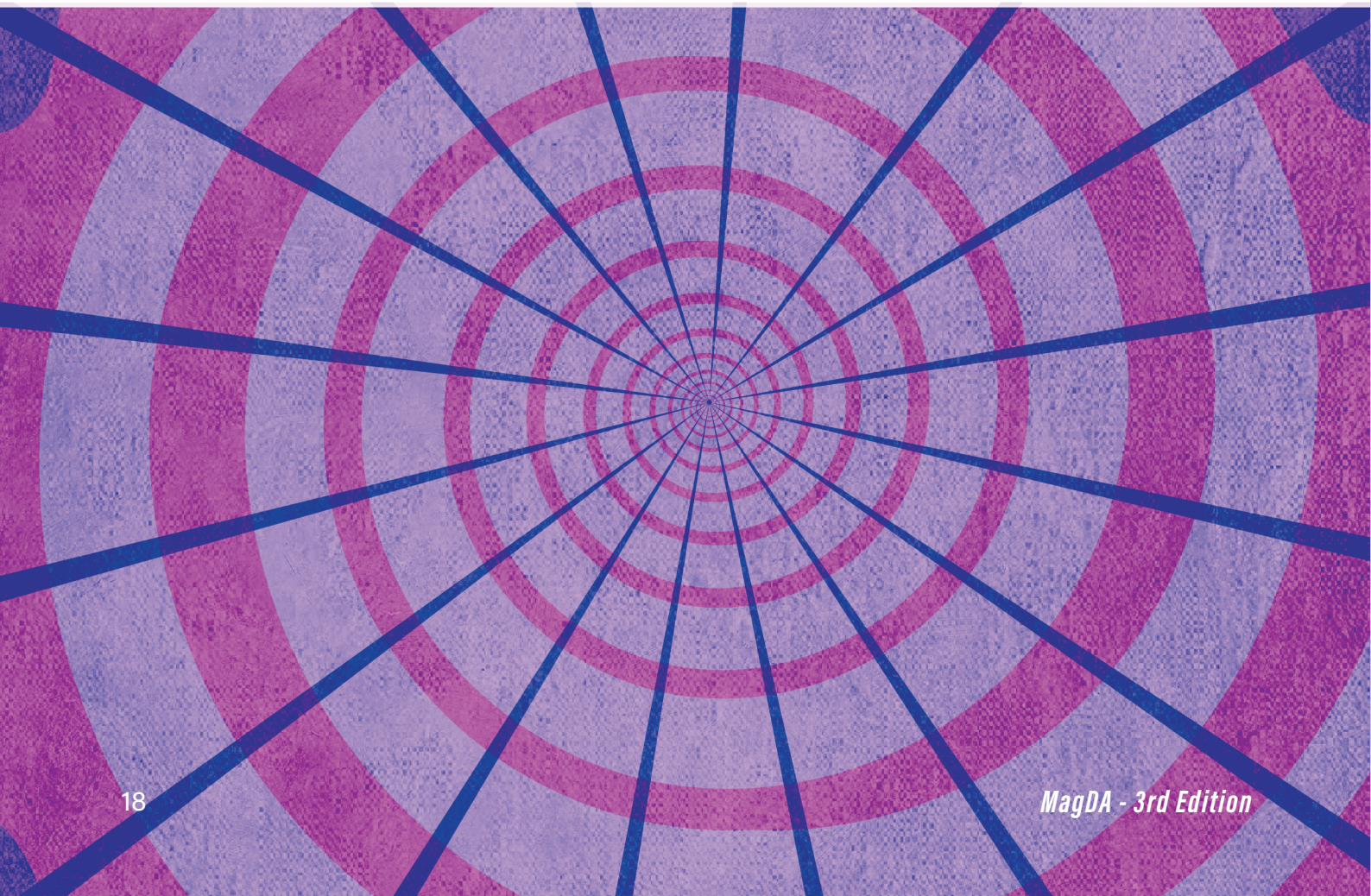
The future is in unity

Let's go back to Slovenia and Bled. One of the strongest impressions I have after the Bled Strategic Forum is the message from the Slovenian state that small countries must cooperate. They must cooperate because they first understand the value of peace and security, which they often cannot provide on their own, viewed individually.

I feel that the generations of young people who are conquering the space that belongs to us also understand how important unity and solidarity are. Thanks to social networks, or rather our connection on them, ideas have never been shared faster, and solidarity once again seems like a living phenomenon, not an archaic concept.

It is time for the actions of individuals, various forms of communities, but also states that want peace, to be coordinated and consistent. A small fish will only defend itself against a big fish in a school with other small fish. Or as Serbian students cleverly say:

"The smarter one organizes himself."



Can You Match the Words of Peace?

match the TERMS

to the DEFINITIONS

TERMS	DEFINITIONS
AGENCY	The power or ability of individuals to act independently and make choices
MEDIATION	Coming to terms and building trust after conflict or harm
RECONCILIATION	The process of gaining confidence, control, and access to resources
SOLIDARITY	A method of resolving conflict through facilitated discussion
EMPOWERMENT	Support or unity among individuals with shared goals

EVERY WORD COUNTS IN PEACEBUILDING - **HOW MANY DID YOU GET RIGHT?**

THE AWKWARD SILENCE OF YOUTH IN PEACE PANELS

AUTHOR: ALBA JAKUPI

It usually starts with excitement. You get an email invitation with all the right words: Youth, Peace, Security, and Participation. There are so many logos on the flyer that it makes you dizzy. The event will take place in either a hotel conference hall with chandeliers or a cultural center that looks a little dim and has broken microphones. The email says, "youth voices will be at the center of this discussion."

Then the truth hits you: you get there, sit in the audience, and realize that "youth participation" means being the decorative parsley on the institutional plate.

Let's set the stage for a typical peace panel in the Balkans. Three ambassadors, two government officials, a university professor, and a youth representative all squeezed into the corner of the table after some polite negotiation. After ninety minutes of speeches about "youth being the future," the moderator finally looks at you and says, "Now we will give the floor to our young participant."



You clear your throat, make a point about how important it is to go from symbolic gestures to real change, and maybe even stop using the phrase "meaningful participation" for good measure. The audience nods politely. Then an ambassador quickly gives the microphone back to you, thanks you, and goes on to explain what young people really want. The irony is so thick, you can cut it with a knife.

THE BALKANS: WHERE YOUTH PANELS ARE LIKE FAMILY REUNIONS

Peace panels in the Balkans are often like family reunions. The older man who says "things were better in the old days," the aunt who quotes international law like it's a recipe, and the cousin who nervously looks at the clock because lunch will be running behind. Young people are the kids at the table: they are tolerated, sometimes laughed at, but rarely taken seriously.

And what if young people finally speak up? A lot of the time, the feedback is rude, like "So articulate! Such fresh perspectives!" as if they thought you were going to juggle instead of talk. Young people's real lives, on the other hand, are politely left out of the "serious" talks. These include unemployment, moving to a new country, distrust between ethnic groups, and the rise of TikTok politics.

The title of this article comes from that awkward moment when everyone is quiet after a youth intervention. Not because what you said was bad, but because the panel doesn't know how to answer. Your idea that young people should be part of decision-making bodies doesn't fit with the way they have planned things out. So, instead, they nod, smile, and move on quickly.

This quietness is more than just being uncomfortable around other people. It shows a structural problem: youth participation is often set up as a performance instead of a partnership. Institutions are aware that they need to be seen with young people. But to really give young people power? That's a lot more dangerous than letting them ask the last question of the day.

The Youth, Peace, and Security agenda, which started with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015), tried to fix this exact problem. The resolution stressed that young people are not only beneficiaries of peacebuilding, but also partners and leaders. Its successor resolutions, 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020), stress even more the need to systematically include young people's voices in politics. But in practice, the spirit of these resolutions is often boiled down to one awkward Q&A session.

WHEN SILENCE TURNS INTO REBELLION

Balkan youth have mastered humor as a means of survival. When they have to deal with panels that make them sound polite, they turn to satire. People in Prishtine/Pristina joke that if they get asked to be on another youth panel, they will put "Professional Participant" on their CV. Students in Belgrade joke that the best way to remember to apply for visas to Germany is to have panel discussions about their future. This humouristic part isn't just being cynical. It helps people deal with things. Youth regain a sense of control by laughing at the absurdity. If the system makes them into spectators, they turn the show back on the system.

But here's the twist. Not all the time is the awkward silence forced. At times, it is chosen. Young people have learned that silence can be louder than being polite. Picture this: a group of important people asks, "Any questions from the youth?" and the room is silent. No eager hands, no polite

comments, just silence. It makes the whole show feel off. I once heard about a youth group in Bosnia that joined a peacebuilding event, sat through the first two hours, and then all left at the same time when it was their "designated slot." Their absence said more than any three-minute speech.

Of course, the bigger problem is the difference between panels and practice. The YPS agenda says that young people should be involved in making decisions, not just in pictures of panels. But in a lot of the Balkans, how many young people went to the event is what counts, not whether their ideas changed policies.

For example, Kosovo's Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth (2025). It sets up the rules for youth councils and how to get involved. It looks good on paper. In reality, many youth councils do not get enough money, are ignored, or are treated like clubs instead of relevant mechanisms for youth participation. What happened? Panels keep coming, but structural change is still hard to find.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Some people might say, "At least young people are invited." That's true, but being asked to speak at the kids' table isn't the same as being part of the family decision to sell the house. In the Balkans, where unresolved conflicts still affect politics and where migration is taking away young people, real inclusion is not just a symbol. It is existential.

If young people are always silenced or used as tokens, peacebuilding becomes a project for everyone but those who have to deal with its effects. And if institutions keep confusing participation with performance, they will keep getting that awkward silence, which gets worse with each generation that leaves.

FOR LESS AWKWARD FUTURES

What would meaningful youth participation look like, then? This would mean:

- **Panels that really work:** Youth should not just be decorative speakers; they should also be moderators, decision-makers, and agenda-setters.
- **Follow-through:** The suggestions made by youth panels were actually used to write policy drafts instead of being hidden in reports after the event.
- **Everyday involvement:** Going from conference halls in hotels to schools, neighborhoods, and online spaces where young people actually live.
- **Intergenerational dialogue:** not lectures from older people, but conversations where new ideas and old experiences can meet on equal ground.
- And maybe, just maybe, panels where young people don't have to start their comments with "Thank you for letting us speak." The truth is that they already have a voice. They need a microphone that they can hold on to for more than three minutes.

CONCLUSION: LAUGHING IN THE QUIET

The uncomfortable silence of young people in peace panels is more than a story. It shows how our area still has work to do when it comes to participation. The Balkans are great at hosting conferences, but they're still learning how to have conversations. Until that changes, young people will keep using their humor, irony, and sometimes even silence as ways to rebel.

In the end, silence can be a strong statement. When Balkan youth use it, it is louder than applause, sharper than criticism, and funny enough to make the whole performance uncomfortable.

ENSLAVED

AUTHOR: MIHANE HOXHA

In vain I search among people
For fallen respect.
Delirium dissolves, love slips away,
And poetry's pale veins have been gnawed away.

Melancholy songs dressed in poison and potion, Warm hope has been parcelled and stolen.
Dreams, like street beggars, have grown impoverished.

Why are so many desires enslaved in life, Like birds caged, robbed of flight?
Why do free limbs run heavy chains,
Or is the air pressed beneath the jaws of plows, And youthful vigor crushed between fetters, Falling to earth like a pilgrim's tired step?

And to flee the deep shadow of slavery,
Wasn't it enough to stretch beneath the sunlit plains?
The ring of chains digs into the limbs
Even as cages dissolve on the forge.

SPACES OF BELONGING :

YOUTH CENTRES, ARCHITECTURE, AND PARTICIPATION

AUTHOR: Orgesa Gashi

Architecture is often seen as a discipline of concrete, steel, and design, but it is also a powerful language of identity, inclusion, and peace. Within the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda, young people are recognized not only as advocates for peace but also as builders of spaces that embody dialogue and coexistence. Architecture shapes not only skylines but also the rhythms of daily life, the ways people meet, connect, and feel they belong. For young people, architecture of public and semi-public spaces, youth centres, cultural halls, community rooms, can be especially powerful. Under the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) framework, which emphasizes youth participation, inclusion, and creating peaceful societies, these spaces become more than buildings: they are stages for agency, creativity, and social cohesion.

In Kosovo, the **Law on Youth No. 08/L-264 (2024)** establishes a new legal framework



Photo credit: ***Djellza Ibrahimi***

It defines youth spaces as "*safe and inclusive multifunctional spaces serving the needs of youth where they exercise their activities and which meet the standards of safety, operation and inclusiveness*". Municipalities, through their youth directorates, are required to support at least one youth centre, provide financial and human resources, and ensure that youth organizations can manage these centres through transparent public calls.

The law also highlights youth participation as a right, ensuring young people's involvement in decision-making, program design, and structured dialogue at both central and local levels.

However, despite this clear legal foundation, implementation challenges remain. Many municipalities still struggle with budgetary support, consistent staffing, or sustaining vibrant programming. In some cases, centres exist on paper but remain underfunded, underused, or inaccessible. In Gjakova, for instance, a youth centre exists but struggles with funding, while in Prizren the Youth Center Qendra Rinore has been praised for cultural programming yet still relies heavily on international donors. These contrasts highlight how uneven implementation remains even within Kosovo.

Similar patterns are visible across the Balkans. A recent research project *From Presence to Power: Youth Shaping Public Spaces in the Balkans* found that young people often have ideas and energy for improving public spaces, parks, benches,

multifunctional areas, but institutional support and integration into urban planning are inconsistent. Public participation in design tends to be tokenistic: consulted only during occasional workshops rather than involved throughout planning, budgeting, and management.

So why are youth centres and designated social spaces so vital? From an architectural perspective, several features make them particularly important for achieving YPS goals:

SAFE AND INCLUSIVE GATHERING POINTS

Youth centres provide semi-formal, safe spaces where young people can congregate, explore interests (art, sport, culture), hold meetings, learn skills, or simply socialize. They help young people build networks, trust, and identity outside of purely family or school contexts. When designed well, with attention to accessibility, lighting, multipurpose rooms, indoor/outdoor usable areas, they foster inclusion (across gender, economic class, ethnicity) and reduce social isolation.

The most glaring example in Prishtina is Termokiss. It was born when activists and volunteers revitalized an abandoned, unfinished concrete structure originally built for the heating company Termokos. Now it has workshops, concerts, debates, and exhibitions, where the programming is controlled directly by the people. What is special about Termokiss is not just the reuse of abandoned architecture, but also the ownership it gives to the youth. The center has become a safe space where various groups come together, often crossing social and cultural boundaries which could otherwise exclude them. By making an unused building a shared home, Termokiss shows that safe and welcoming spaces can create solidarity, trust, and imagination among young people.

AGENCY & PARTICIPATION BUILT IN

If young people are involved from early in the design process (what programs go in, what furniture, how spaces divide/use flow), they not only use a space, they invest in it. Architecture thus becomes itself a mode of participation. YPS highlights that youth should be actors, not just recipients. Co-designing youth centres can strengthen their sense of ownership and responsibility.

NORMS & VISIBILITY

The presence of youth centres in the city fabric signals that youth matter. It's a visual and spatial affirmation that youth activities are legitimate, supported, and visible. That helps shift norms: from seeing youth as a problem (needing supervision) to seeing them as citizens with contributions. Architecturally prominent, well-maintained youth centres can act as landmarks of youth empowerment. This is why in Tirana the Pyramid of Albania, once a symbol of dictatorship, has been renovated into a youth and tech hub. Its very visibility changes the way the city acknowledges young people.

FLEXIBILITY & MULTIPLICITY

Youth centres are most useful when they are flexible: spaces for learning, performance, recreation, rest. Good architecture allows rooms that can transform, from rehearsal studio to lecture hall to gallery. Outdoor/public spaces connected to youth centres multiply their potential (festivals, workshops, open-air meetings). This kind of flexibility does not only apply to buildings, but also to how entire cities can be reimagined as youth spaces. In Prizren, for example, the youth festival Dokufest uses public squares, cinemas, and even riverbanks as temporary

youth spaces, showing how flexibility can expand the reach of youth programming far beyond four walls.

Even with the new law, the gap between legal mandates and lived reality is significant. Municipalities are formally obliged to ensure youth centres, appoint youth officials, and provide budgets. Yet few have fully operational, well-funded centres with consistent programming.

Elsewhere in the region, examples of well-used youth centres show what's possible. The Belgrade Youth Center ("Dom omladine Beograda") is a longstanding cultural institution, organizing hundreds of events a year across art, debate, performance, and youth outreach. In Sarajevo, the International Center for Children and Youth in Novo Sarajevo hosts daily workshops, performances, sports, and creative studios, forming a hub for young people across arts, culture, education. These centres benefit not only their immediate users but contribute to civic culture, to cross-community exchange, and to a sense of place.

For architecture to serve the YPS agenda, legal frameworks are necessary but not sufficient. It takes intentional investment, not just in money but in participatory processes, in design quality, in ensuring maintenance and programming. Youth centres shouldn't be afterthoughts or checkbox obligations, but integrated into city planning, local budgets, and young people's own visions.

At its core, both YPS and architecture are about imagining what does not yet exist and daring to bring it to life. They are about envisioning societies where belonging is built into the foundation, where diversity is reflected in design, and where futures are shaped with care. When youth design with intention, whether buildings, projects, or policies, they demonstrate that peace is not only negotiated at tables but also designed into the everyday spaces where we live, learn, and grow together.



Photo credit: ***Endrit Tasholli***

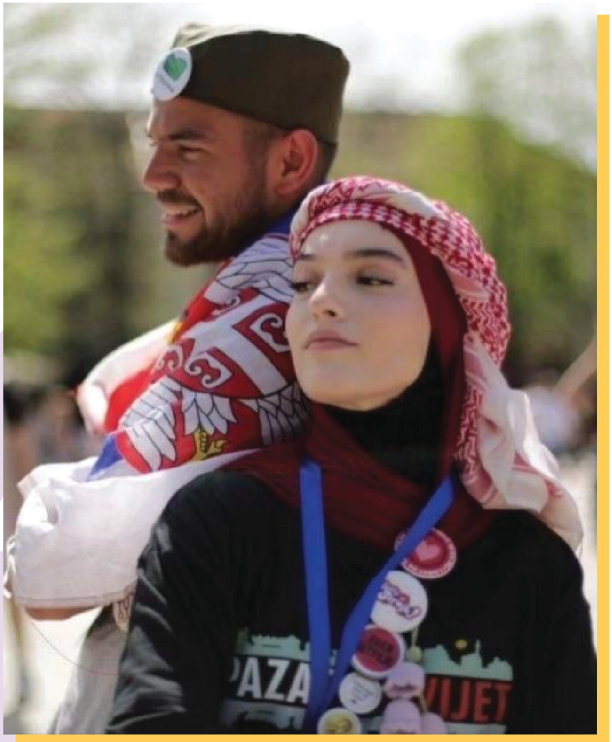
NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE :

LESSONS FROM STUDENT PROTESTS

AUTHOR: Andrijana Milojevič

On November 1, 2024, a canopy at the newly renovated railway station in Novi Sad collapsed. Sixteen people lost their lives, and one more was severely injured. Despite the magnitude of the tragedy, no one was held accountable. The government remained silent, but the public demanded answers. Out of this silence, a movement was born, and students emerged as a leading voice.

Guided by the principles of freedom, justice, dignity, and solidarity, articulated in the so-called "Student Edict" of March 1, Serbian students began a movement that has stretched across ten months. Day after day, they have taken to the streets to demand justice for the victims, accountability for government negligence, an end to impunity, and transparency through the release of all documents related to the station's reconstruction. However, the government's approach was anything but conciliatory. Instead of addressing the core grievances, it responded with repression: deploying tear gas, stun grenades, baton-wielding riot police, and even a sound cannon to disperse peaceful protests. Protesters, including students and journalists, were detained; academics who showed solidarity were dismissed from universities.



Student Protest in Kraljevo, April 16th 2025.

Photo: @infarlicina via Instagram

More drastically, the movement has raised concerns about gendered risks during protests. The public accusation by Nikolina Sinđelić, claiming physical assault and threats of sexual violence by a high-ranking police commander, Marko Kričak, shows how female protesters may face particular vulnerabilities. However, the violence during the protests has affected many students regardless of gender, with numerous reports of people being beaten, injured, or targeted by security forces.

Building on the courage and resilience shown in confronting repression, the protests gained additional moral and symbolic weight through deliberate acts of remembrance and solidarity. Symbolic acts, like the 16-minute silent blockades in 11:52 (the exact moment the canopy collapsed) to honour the victims of Novi Sad, honoured the victims and reminded the nation of the human cost of negligence. Students walked from city to city, cycled to Strasbourg, and

ran to Brussels, showing the determination to pursue justice across borders and the lengths to which they were willing to go to make their voices heard.

Having participated personally in the walk from Belgrade to Novi Sad, I glimpsed the intensity of commitment and shared emotion that fuels such actions. The atmosphere on the streets, the sense of unity, purpose, and collective responsibility was ineffable, a lived experience that words can scarcely capture. It was during this journey that we also learned the student movement had been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, which gave us even more strength and motivation to continue advocating for justice and solidarity.

Yet the significance of these mobilisations extends beyond physical demonstrations. What made them remarkable was not only their persistence but their inclusivity. From Belgrade to Novi Pazar, students transcended ethnic and religious boundaries, proving that reconciliation is possible when justice becomes the common goal. Their message was clear: peace is not the absence of protest, but the presence of justice.

WHY STUDENTS PROTEST

Protests are not simply moments of disruption; they are often tools of peacebuilding, or steps toward justice that transform frustration into collective action. Understanding the contribution of student protests requires an examination of the agendas and motivations that shape them. When rooted in principles of inclusion, dignity, and fairness, student protests can open pathways to change and show that peace is inevitably connected to justice.

Student resistance has been part of university life from the very start. For centuries, students have wielded their collective energy to challenge the societies and institutions around them. The catalysts for these movements vary widely across time and place: Black student activism in the 1920s and 1930s in the United States, resistance movements against Nazi rule in the 1940s, civil rights and anti-communist protests of the 1950s, the anti-nuclear and anti-dictatorship movements of the 1960s, anti-war protests in the 1970s, the anti-apartheid struggle of the 1980s, the pro-democracy uprisings of the 1990s, and the human rights and social justice movements of the 2000s and beyond.

Often, even more specific events crystallise broader societal grievances: the murder of a student in South Korea in 1987, rigged elections in Serbia in 2000, violent crackdowns on free expression in Iran in 1999, or discriminatory education policies in South Africa in 1976. Even seemingly "minor" incidents, such as censorship of a student newspaper, the arrest of a campus activist, or a police raid, can ignite years of pent-up frustration, transforming local grievances into powerful calls for systemic change.

History shows that student activism frequently plays a pivotal role in democratic transitions. From the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia to the Indonesian reformasi movement, student-led protests have repeatedly toppled authoritarian regimes or catalysed significant reforms. Other examples include the Soweto uprising, the June Democracy Movement in South Korea, and Otpor! in Serbia. These movements reveal some patterns: protests often cluster in waves inspired by successful campaigns elsewhere, demonstrating a "contagion effect" where victories in one country encourage activism in another. Even when facing violent crackdowns, students persist, using creativity, nonviolent resistance, and coalition-building to sustain their movements.

Contexts differ, but many of these

movements share a pro-democratic impulse. This universal pattern has been recognised at the highest levels of international governance. The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace and Security marked a historic acknowledgement that young people are not merely passive victims of conflict or instability but essential agents of peace. The resolution calls on governments and international institutions to increase the participation of youth in decision-making, to protect their civic space, and to support their role in preventing violence and building sustainable peace.

Read in this light, student protests are not only a local expression of dissent but also part of a broader global movement that aligns with this vision of youth as crucial in peacebuilding. The persistence, courage, and creativity of student movements around the world demonstrate that youth activism is more than dissent: it is a force capable of shaping more just, inclusive, and peaceful societies. In Serbia, this means that student mobilisations should not be dismissed as disruptive, but rather valued as contributions to democratic renewal and social reconciliation.

PROTESTS AS A TOOL FOR PEACEBUILDING

Student protests can be a powerful tool for peacebuilding by raising awareness, promoting social and political change, and fostering democratic participation and well-being within the student community and beyond. Peaceful protests give a voice to ordinary people, build consensus, and can trigger lasting social and policy reforms. Historical movements such as Gandhi's Salt March, the U.S. civil rights sit-ins, and the anti-war student protests of the 1960s and 70s show how youth mobilisations can shift public consciousness and drive systemic change.

Protests often bring visibility to humanitarian crises and social injustices that otherwise remain silenced. This role of young people has been formally recognised by the UNSCR 2250, which underscores that youth are not only victims of violence but also critical partners in preventing conflict and sustaining peace. In the language of peacebuilding, protests become a form of storytelling: they transform private grief into public memory, individual frustration into collective action, and fragmented voices into a shared narrative of justice.

For years, Serbia's political leadership has emphasised "stability" as a national achievement. But this so-called stability often reflects only negative peace, the absence of open conflict, while corruption, inequality, and suppression of dissent remain unaddressed. True peace, or positive peace, requires justice, accountability, and the protection of human rights. This is what students want to remind people of – by taking to the streets, they challenge the illusion of stability and demand a deeper peace, one built not on silence and fear but on dignity and fairness.

After the canopy collapse in Novi Sad, the government attempted to frame the tragedy as an isolated accident, carefully sidestepping accountability. Yet the public saw it differently – linking the disaster to years of neglect, corruption, and weakened institutions. What further deepened the crisis of trust were the conspiracy narratives promoted by members of the ruling Serbian progressive party, who suggested the collapse was not merely an accident but a deliberate act: a diversion, an act of sabotage, even a "terrorist attack" allegedly intended to import a revolution into Serbia.

Such rhetoric trivialised the victims' suffering, and also reflected a broader strategy of delegitimising dissent, portraying genuine civic anger as a

manufactured threat. Furthermore, police brutality, propaganda, and even the deployment of sound cannon against protesters sought to maintain "order," but what they really defended was negative peace, a fragile quiet imposed from above. The persistence of young people across Serbia, however, exposed another possibility: that peace can grow from collective action and solidarity.

Nowhere was this more visible than in Novi Pazar, a city often described as a microcosm of Serbia's ethnic and religious diversity. Protests there carried particular significance: they transcended entrenched lines between Bosniak and Serb communities, offering a rare glimpse of solidarity in a region historically scarred by mistrust and the memory of the 1990s conflicts. Students and citizens stood together as a unified front calling for dignity, accountability, and fairness. For the first time in decades, residents experienced solidarity that cut across ethnicity and religion. What has kept these protests alive for ten months is not just outrage, but a shared determination rooted in unity in all cities.



In a country long fractured by ethnic tensions, nationalist narratives, and a propaganda machine that doubled down during the Milošević era, this kind of solidarity feels revolutionary. As the saying goes: *united we stand, divided we fall. Flags, once symbols of division, were carried as signs of belonging and dialogue. One student reflected: "At that moment, we felt we truly belonged to Serbia. Not out of fear or loyalty, but out of recognition of our dignity*."

Observers described the rally as authentic and profoundly nonviolent, a turning point in Serbia's protest narrative. It demonstrated that reconciliation across ethnic lines need not be orchestrated by distant politicians but could emerge from the grassroots, through the courage and empathy of young people themselves. Their slogan, Novi Pazar je svijet (Novi Pazar is the world), expressed a vision of inclusion: a belief that their struggle for dignity is universal, and that the city could model peaceful coexistence for the entire country. In this way, the protests were not only acts of defiance but also acts of peacebuilding in practice. They showed how justice can become a shared cause even in societies historically marked by division. The unity in Novi Pazar turned protest into a rehearsal for reconciliation, a lived experience of positive peace.

From Serbia's experience, three lessons emerge. First, protests rooted in solidarity can transcend deep divisions and foster reconciliation. Second, the persistence of youth activism proves that accountability and justice are essential to lasting peace. And third, positive peace is not delivered from above but built from below, through the courage of ordinary citizens who refuse silence.

REBELLION... OR SIMPLY EXISTING?

AUTHOR: Albina Kastrati

From the moment I was born, my rebellion was born with me. In fact, I made a few aunties cry because—another girl? Three daughters and only one son so far? Outrageous, of course. As a child, I somehow sensed that resentment from them, even if I didn't fully understand it yet. My perfect grades didn't help, nor did my habit of debating with people three times my age as if I were an experienced politician during an election debate.

In my Albanian culture, talking back to elders, especially if they were guests (with a high probability of having invaded your house unannounced), was forbidden. And if you were young and a girl with a sharp tongue? Scandalous. The debates often centered on how everything unfortunate was somehow a woman's fault, or the miserable aunties criticizing my mother. They had it coming.

My uninvited participation in these debates stemmed from two things: first, I love my mommy, and second, I found it hilarious to witness their expressions when I proved my point. Moments like this were not only entertaining; they were formative. I can still see those moments vividly, almost in slow motion—their faces turning red, eyes bulging with anger, and the crisp gasps echoing in the room. Each debate felt like a mini victory, igniting my desire to share my voice and find a way to speak up for others. Enter: journalism.

Of course, the power of my voice was tested even outside of family matters, as I was met with people who had nothing but audacity, just because they could.

who had nothing but audacity, just because they could.

"It is not that deep," I heard a gentleman say from a distance, who was furious that I did better than his son, my classmate. Well, I guess it is sir, because otherwise why would you politely threaten my homeroom teacher to give your son the first place? My certificate for the best student award was stripped from me. My teacher apologized and apologized, but frankly I could just awkwardly nod and smile. First heartbreak. I was so angry, not a word was I able to mutter.

I believe it around this time, aged 9, when I made the decision to become a journalist. Iconic behavior, if you'd ask me. And of course, just like everything else in my life, I remember it vividly (well except for names…or birthdays).

It was a breezy spring day, not too hot, not too cold. Perfect weather. The apple and cherry trees in our yard were blossoming. Stepping barefoot on the cold concrete stairs outside home, I wore some sandals too big for my size to go look for mommy. Every morning, the first thing I did was search for her in the demolished room that had been burned down during the Kosovo-Serbia war. My mom used it for storage, sometimes even as a kitchen. Before the war, it was her marital bedroom, but now it was the heart of the house. If my mom wasn't in that room, she was definitely working in her little garden. On my way to her, I passed a hose connected to a water pipe. I stopped to wash my face. The water

was deliciously cold, and I chugged it like I hadn't drunk in ages.

"A u qove, mam?"—Have you woken up?—is an informal way of saying good morning to a loved one in Albanian. She was sowing tomato seeds, and I rushed to kiss her. After kissing me back, she scolded me for being all wet. As she went on and on, I sneaked behind her and grabbed some not so-ready little strawberries. Of course, she caught me. "What? The chickens eat them anyway, mommy."

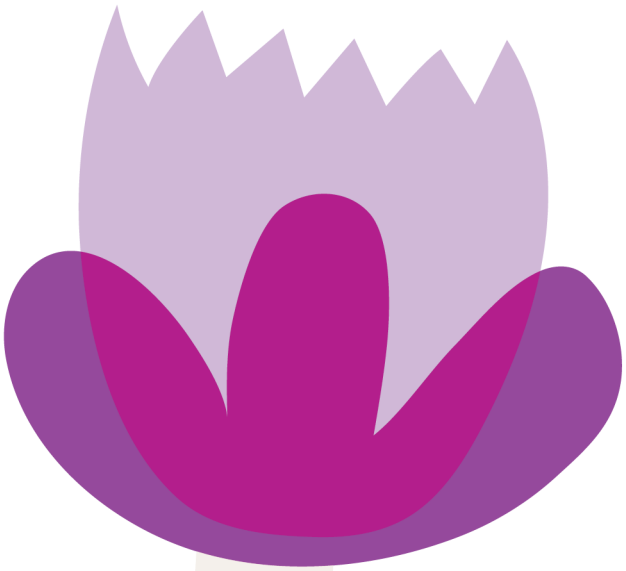
Later, we were inside and had breakfast with the whole family together, besides my father, who worked on Saturday mornings too. I was in front of the TV, doing my homework in no rush. Mother was already preparing dinner. As I was looking at the very small screen—a TV you had to punch a few times for it to work—there was a news anchor. Suddenly, I felt the need to ask my mother,

"Mom, what do you want me to be when I grow up?" She paused and pointed the little knife she had at the journalist on the TV. "Like her. Go to school and be the best."

I'm certain she doesn't even remember this now, but I took to heart what she said. Never again did I look back.

To me with writing, it was always as being pulled by the tide to the moon. As much as one enjoys debating while young, the more you grew and saw that these people are seriously trying to argue why a woman is less— the more it hurt, if I am being frank. Writing in journals wouldn't be enough. Fast forward, after graduating in journalism, I had to do an investigative piece that would forever change my life, as well as make me certain that this is the call—my call. I know, a bit corny. But it was. The misogyny and unwanted remarks were worth ignoring when I got messages from people wanting to help my sources—or when a mother I interviewed still reaches out, asking for help with her son's homework. The nerd in me secretly loves that.

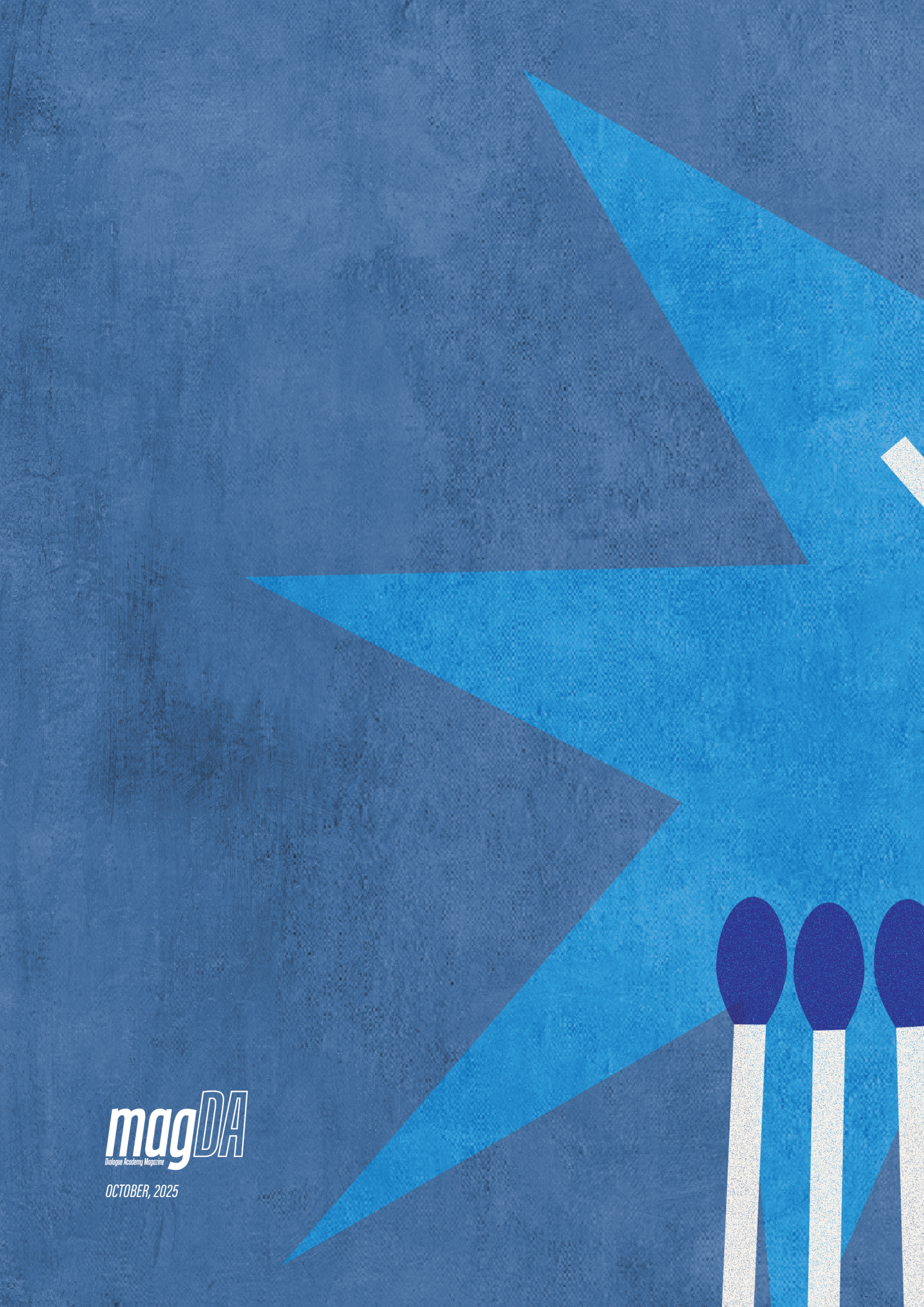
Truth be told, I wasn't a fan of when people called me rebellious. I understood they meant it in their own way to compliment, but all I was doing was simply be, speak, laugh, disagree, go after my dreams. It's confusing. It cannot be that rare, no? I am surrounded by women who do the same and we have the same exact question; Why does it have to be revolutionary to say *** off? In historical context, we get it, but, dear reader, has this become the norm by now or is it still controversial?



1 Word 3 Tounges

ENG	ALB	SRB
DIALOGUE		
Dialogue	Dialog	Dijalog
A conversation can heal what silence cannot.	Dialogu shuan atë që grindja ndez.	Dijalog je most preko najdublje reke.
SOLIDARITY		
Solidarity	Solidaritet	Solidarnost
Shoulder to shoulder, no weight is too heavy.	Solidariteti bën të lehtë barrën më të rëndë.	U solidarnosti je snaga jača od kamena
TRUST		
Trust	Besim	Poverenje
Trust is built in drops, but lost in buckets	Besimi hap dyert që çelësat nuk i gjejnë.	Poverenje je drvo koje raste sporo, ali traje dugo.
AGENCY		
Agency	Agjenci / Veprim	Delovanje
Those who act shape the world, those who wait follow it.	Veprimi eshte gjysma e fatit.	Ko deluje, ostavlja trag.
PEACE		
Peace	Paqe	Mir
Peace is not the absence of noise, but the presence of justice.	Paqja rritet aty ku urrejtja shuhet.	Mir je tišina srca, ne samo tišina sveta.

ENG	ALB	SRB
RESPECT		
Respect	Respekt	Poštovanje
Respect costs nothing but is worth everything.	Kush jep respekt, korr nder.	Poštovanje se ne traži, već zaslužuje.
INCLUSION		
Inclusion	Përfshirje	Uključivanje
A circle is whole only when no one is left outside.	Përfshirja është bukuria e të jetuarit bashkë.	Uključivanje cini stol veći, ali srce toplije.
JUSTICE		
Justice	Drejtësi	Pravda
Without justice, peace is only an echo.	Drejtësia vonon, por nuk harron.	Pravda je spora, ali sigurna.
EMPATHY		
Empathy	Empati	Empatija
To understand another's heart is the greatest wisdom.	Empatia është dritë që shikon përtej vetes.	Empatija je jezik bez reči.
FUTURE		
Future	E ardhmja	Budućnost
The seeds of today are the flowers of tomorrow.	E ardhmja i përket atij që punon sot.	Budućnost se gradi, ne prorice.



magDA

Dialogue Academy Magazine

OCTOBER, 2025