

## INTERNATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL 10-15<sup>th</sup> of October 2022

### SUMMARY

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2022, Cross Cultures' kicked off its third International Youth Council in Hammamet, Tunisia. The council brought together 143 volunteers/staff from 17 different countries to discuss strategy and advise the Cross Cultures Board on future developments. We spent five days working together in strategy workshops, debates and socializing with Fun Football, dancing, yoga, beach volley and much more. In true Cross Cultures spirit, all activities were co-organized by volunteers and staff from the different countries. The workshops concluded in several strategy- and organizational breakthroughs and recommendations – here among that Cross Cultures must communicate that we are an **International Alliance** of diverse associations and that we must go back to our roots with peace as our core focus. Finally, the council involved two Market Places, one internal and one with external guests incl. media coverage, showcasing the work conducted in each country. The council was among Cross Cultures' most successful international events to date, with many fresh ideas, constructive dialogues, new friendships and everyone leaving with heightened motivation.

### KEY FIGURES

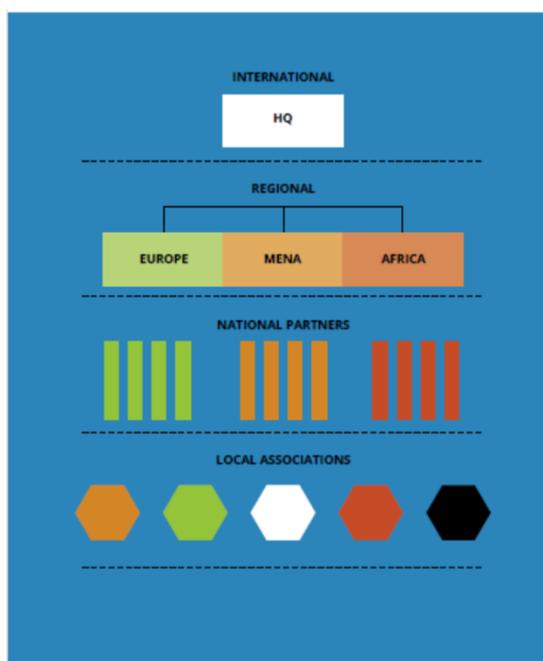
Participants	Total: 143	Female: 68	Male: 75
<b>Countries</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Armenia</li> <li>2. Azerbaijan</li> <li>3. Bosnia-Herzegovina</li> <li>4. Croatia</li> <li>5. Denmark</li> <li>6. Iraq</li> <li>7. Jordan</li> <li>8. Lebanon</li> <li>9. Moldova</li> <li>10. Montenegro</li> <li>11. Morocco</li> <li>12. North Macedonia</li> <li>13. Serbia</li> <li>14. South Sudan</li> <li>15. Tunisia</li> <li>16. Syria</li> <li>17. Algeria</li> </ol> <p>Unfortunately, our colleagues from Georgia, Kosovo and Ukraine were unable to attend.</p>		

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The International Youth Council resulted in a number of conclusions and recommendations to Cross Cultures' board:

### Cross Cultures Alliance

Cross Cultures is more than an organization – it is an international alliance of partners that work regionally, nationally and locally towards a shared goal and guided by a common set of principles. The alliance partners include a wide a variety of actors ranging from regional offices to local, youth-led grassroots associations. While the organogram places the Danish headquarters at the top, it was agreed upon at the council that it is crucial for Cross Cultures Alliance to have a strong bottom-up structure. The headquarters' most important task is therefore to support the creation and continued development of local associations in the partner countries. Finally, we propose that Cross Cultures Project Association, legally changes its name to Cross Cultures Alliance.



### Going back to our roots - playing for peace

Cross Cultures is going back to its roots: Promoting peaceful coexistence through Fun Sport. Rather than trying to convey every single nuance of our work, Cross Cultures must clearly communicate our key purpose – we are *playing for peace*. We will return to the core of our work and (re)position Cross Cultures Alliance as a unique peace movement that uses fun sport to bring people together across ethnic, religious, political, and social divides. We will be guided by our conflict philosophy, which centers around the belief that localized violence is what drives a conflict by stirring hate and fear rather than the general themes of politics, religion or ethnicity, and that preventing/resolving conflict requires that people are able to communicate and develop positive relations with each other. Going back to our roots does not mean that Cross Cultures will no longer work within areas such gender equality, employability, child safeguarding, civic engagement etc., but that we will promote our programs based on peacebuilding with localized add-ons. In other

words, we will apply a so-called nexus approach that takes point of departure in creating peace through Fun Football and the Youth Leadership Education, which also addresses humanitarian and development issues.

### **Instating a Youth Council Board**

Cross Cultures current statutes stipulates that the organizational body must include an International Council. At the International Youth Council, it was agreed that this should be changed to a Youth Council Board in order to elevate the voices of our young volunteer leaders and emphasize that Cross Cultures is a youth-led alliance. The Youth Council Board will comprise seven people – two from each region – as well as a President. The Youth Council Board will play an import role in ensuring 1) that the alliance represents the stakeholders in the countries where we operate and 2) that young and diverse voices are heard and given an opportunity to influence the direction of the alliance. The mandate of the Youth Council Board will be to coordinate across the regional level in collaboration with the regional offices on issues related to the Youth Leadership Education and subsequently advise HQ and the Board.

### **Ambitious, but achievable – 2023-2027**

In an exercise led by Claus Bindslev from the Danish consultancy company NEXT STEP, every country participating in the council had to list their concrete ambitions for 2027. Based on inputs from all countries and considering what is realistic, the ambitions is for Cross Cultures Alliance to reach:



### **World Cup event**

It was decided at the council that Cross Cultures in connection with the World Cup finals will organize a Playing for Peace event, wherein each country simultaneously organize a fun football festival which will be live-streamed. The purpose of the event is to use the media momentum of the World Cup to promote Cross Cultures Alliance and advocate for football as a means for peace.

## ACTIVITIES & WORKSHOPS

10. Monday	11. Tuesday	12. Wednesday	13. Thursday	14. Friday	15. Saturday
Arrival	8:30 – 10:30 Rotation	8:30 – 10:30 Rotation	8:30 – 10:30 Rotation	9:00 -11:00 Preparation Market Place	Departure
	10:30 – 11:00	Coffee		10:00 – 11:00 Press Conference	
	11:00 – 12:30 Preparation Market Place	11:00 – 12:30 Workshop II: Springboard Story	11:00 – 12:30 Workshop IV Added Value	11:00 – 14:00 Market Place	
	12:30 – 14:00 Lunch				
	14:00 – 16:30 Market Place	14:00 – 16:00 Workshop III: Creating a common ground (I)	14:00 – 16:00 Workshop V Prep. Parliament	14:00 – 14:30 Cleaning up	
15:00 – 16:30 Cross Cultures Cup	16:30 – 18:30 Workshop I: I have a Dream	16:30 – 18:30 Creating a common ground (II)	16:30 – 18:30 Workshop VI Cross Cultures Parliament	15:00 – 16:30 Goodbye lunch & accommodation	
Dinner	18:30 – 19:30				
19:30 – 21:00 Welcome Ted Talk Social media challenge	19:30 – 21:00 Olympic Games	19:30 – 21:00 Olympic Games	19:30 Goodbye party		

### Rotations

Each day began with a physical activity/rotation, where everyone met at the pitch to play football and other games. Cross Cultures is all about having fun and being together, and the purpose of the rotations was therefore for the participants to loosen up, bond, and start the day on a happy note before getting down to work at the strategy workshops.



## Workshops

The council included six workshops focusing among others on storytelling, ambitions for the future and how to get there. Below are some highlights:

### Workshop I: I have a dream

The 'I have dream' workshop is an exercise in moving away from talking about past achievements and current activities, and instead communicate our visions for the future. Concretely, the exercise involves groups of three sharing their personal dreams and reflecting on how being a part of Cross Cultures can help them achieve those dreams.

*"I have a dream that one day I have freedom of speech  
I have a dream that we will not be afraid to do or say something we think is important  
I have a dream that the world will be safer for everyone  
I have a dream that people will be happy, healthy and without wars  
I have a dream that one day we will all just be people who don't care about skin color, religion or nationality  
Through Cross Cultures I met people that I can learn from to help achieve my dreams in the future"*

Ivana, volunteer coach from Montenegro

### Workshop II: Springboard stories

The most important story a leader can tell is a springboard story; through springboard stories we can communicate complex ideas and inspire action to implement them. That is what leadership is all about - inspiring people to implement new ideas and impact the future. The purpose of the workshop was for the young volunteer leaders to create their own springboard story and practice how to formulate an easily understandable narrative that conveys the need for change, paints a picture of their desired future and inspires action.

Springboard story process:



**Step 1** of the workshop was for the participants to clearly formulate their change idea answering the following questions: What do you want to change in the world? What specific idea will you attempt to get others to understand and implement? What are people not doing now and what do you want them to do in the future? The participants were encouraged to keep in mind that their change idea must have the potential to resonate with people and emphasize the purpose

behind the idea. During **step 2** the participants had to think about an incident where the idea has already happened – in their own life/community/association or somewhere else. **Step 3** involved describing what the change will look like once the change ideas have been resolved. Finally, the participants had to make a post or short video visualizing their change story.

The springboard story created by Cross Cultures’ Bosnian team is a good example of how to easily convey a problem, solution and vision: **1)** war has torn people apart demonstrated by the broken bridge; **2)** Cross Cultures’ Open Fun Football Schools concept rebuilds the metaphorical bridge by bringing people together; **3)** once the bridge has been rebuilt and people are able to communicate, new relationships, communities etc. can blossom.



Workshop III: Creating a common ground

In order for an organization’s mission to resonate with stakeholders – including donors - its’ messaging must be clear-cut. Moreover, the communicators must keep in mind that different stakeholders respond to different messages. Claus Bindslev was invited to conduct a workshop, wherein the young volunteer leaders practice how to convey key messages to five important stakeholder groups. The participants were divided into groups and came up with numerous messages, here among:



In addition to clear messaging, organizations must have concrete ambitions – this is important in order for the staff/volunteers to understand what they are working towards as well as for potential donors to get an idea of what they are supporting. In the second part of the workshop each participating country therefore had to define ambitions for how many children they aim to reach through fun football, how many volunteers they aim to train as coaches and community organizers as well as other parameters important to them – all to be achieved by 2027.

Examples of country ambitions 2023-2027:

- 40 OFFS
- 8000 + 4000 children
- 40 festivals
- 80 Community Organizers
- 600 coaches
- 600 assistant coaches
- 16.000 parents
- Minimum 50% women otherwise we will not do it

Croatia

- 19 coordinators
- 160 Community Organizers
- 3840 coaches – 50/50 gender balance
- 32.000 children – 60% boys 40% girls

Iraq

- OFFS operational in all 10 states (currently 4)
- 100.000 children per year → 45% girls and 55% boys
- Train 4000 volunteer coaches → 45% women and 55% men
- 400 Community Organizers
- 200 parents/stakeholder meetings
- Train and employ 2000 thousand coaches via vocational training
- Produce 100.000 t-shirts/uniforms
- 20 coordinators employed to run the 10 states
- Mobilize funds around \$26 million
- Produce footballs and equipment
- 4000 volunteers create VSLA groups
- Organize 180 festivals in 3 years
- 10 peace dialogues in 10 states

South Sudan

## Workshop V: Cross Cultures Parliament

The overall theme of the parliament was resolving how the youth can get more involved in shaping Cross Cultures and influence decision making. The workshop took point of departure in discussing the Cross Cultures Alliance organogram (see page 2) and how it can be turned “up-side down” so that the local, youth-led grassroots associations are effectively on top. In other words, what actions are needed so that the youth are in the best position to develop and implement activities on the ground and how do we ensure participative decision-making. To this end we also discussed what challenges they encounter/foresee, how to address them and what issues should be prioritized.

Concrete suggestions included raising core funding, as opposed to only project funding, which can be used to establish regional offices. The regional offices will facilitate cross-country and cross-regional collaboration and interaction, assist the national offices with raising funds and educate Community Organizers. Moreover, it was proposed that Cross Cultures’ organizational structure should include a Youth Council Board consisting of two youth leaders from each region along with a president. The Youth Council Board will coordinate across the regional level in collaboration with the regional offices on issues related to the Youth Leadership Education and advise the Board on future actions.

During the parliament Tamara Benkovic was appointed President of the Youth Council Board. Tamara grew up attending Open Fun Football Schools (OFFS) in Bosnia and has since become a volunteer OFFS coach herself. If the proposal is accepted, an additional six youth leaders from Europe/Caucasus, MENA and South Sudan will be democratically elected to form an official Youth Council Board. Finally, it was emphasized that Cross Cultures Project Association should officially become Cross Cultures Alliance.



## Market Places

The first Market Place was internal for Cross Cultures volunteers and staff. The purpose was for the participants to learn about each other's work by visiting each country's market stand and filling out a questionnaire asking the following questions: "what is your change idea?", "what are your activities?", "what is the impact of your project?". The Market Place increases organizational cohesion by providing an opportunity for the volunteers to learn about Cross Cultures outside their own country and realize that they are part of a bigger movement.



The second Market Place was held in Tunis and opened by the Tunisian Minister of Sport and Youth in a press conference. Various organizations and Ministries, such as the Ministry of Youth and Sport, UNICEF, Council of Europe, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, Institut Français, the Tunisian Heart Association, Danish Refugee Council, the Danish-Arab-Partnership-Programme, the Danish Youth Council, Tunisian Scouts, the British Council, OXFARM Tunisia, and the Tunisian Sports Federation were in attendance. At the marketplace, each participating country created their own stand, where they had the opportunity to present their individual projects and ambitions to external guests including potential donors and partners.



## FINAL NOTE

On a final note, we were sad that Marwen, a Community Organizer from Tadamen (Tunisia), who has been part of Cross Cultures since 2014, could not join us in Hammamet. Many of us had been looking forward to learning about his and ATSL's activities on issues such as anti-radicalization, gender equality and sports for the disabled just to mention a few. However, we are very happy to share that Marwen's absence was due to the fact that he was in Oman to receive the **Gold Award** for the **Best Sport for Change Program in the Arab world!** The award was handed over to Marwen by the mother of the King of Oman.

From the entire Cross Cultures Alliance – a heartfelt congratulations to Marwen and ATSL!