

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



The Anna Lindh Foundation  
**VIRTUAL MARATHON**  
FOR DIALOGUE IN THE EUROMED

## VIRTUAL MARATHON FOR DIALOGUE

*Promoting Cultural and Social Cooperation in the EuroMed Region  
May-June 2021*

### THE KEY ROLE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

*JUNE 29, 2021*

#### DISCUSSION TOPIC

*The importance of sustainable partnerships  
in promoting interculturality & the integration  
of young change-makers*



## EIGHT HIGH-LEVEL GUESTS AND PARTICIPANTS

<b>NAME</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
<b>AISSAM BENAÏSSA</b>	<i>Intercultural Debates Expert</i>
<b>ELEONORA INSALACO</b>	<i>Head of Operations &amp; Intercultural Research at ALF</i>
<b>H.E. AMBASSADOR HAIFA ABU GHAZALA</b>	<i>Civil Societies Organisations Department at the League of Arab States, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Secretary-General of the LAS</i>
<b>THEMIS CHRISTOPHIDOU</b>	<i>DG Commission Youth, Education &amp; Culture</i>
<b>SAMIR ANOUTI</b>	<i>Regional Youth Advisor, Arab States Regional Office, UNFPA</i>
<b>INGRID DANCKAERTS</b>	<i>Coordination Committee of International Voluntary Service (CCIVS), France</i>
<b>FATIMA ZUHRA UTAÏSS</b>	<i>Debate and dialogue facilitator   Morocco</i>
<b>ANIS BUFRIKA</b>	<i>Expert in socio-cultural development, University teacher, Leader of the Tunisian network of ALF</i>

TOPIC

# THE KEY ROLE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

## THREE PILLARS

①

### THE ACTIVE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR INCLUSION

Integrating youth  
in the decision-  
making process  
and reaching all  
communities

②

### CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE & RESHAPING PERCEPTIONS

The importance  
of initiatives that  
enrich societies  
with values of  
cooperation

③

### BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

The success of  
partnerships  
built on trust in  
achieving  
common goals

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Main Recommendations emerging from the Virtual Marathon for Dialogue on The Key Role of Partnership in Intercultural Dialogue, tackling the role of youth and their involvement in decision making and the importance of partnerships in promoting interculturality.

①

**TO TRULY INVOLVE THE YOUTH IN DECISION MAKING WITHIN PARTNERSHIPS BY SUPPORTING YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES** rather than having their participation be a tokenistic gesture.

②

**TO WORK TOWARDS PROVIDING DIGITAL ACCESS TO REMOTE AREAS** in order to ensure the inclusion of marginalised communities and to spread the concept of interculturality.

③

**TO EXPAND VOLUNTEERING INITIATIVES** in order to foster a feeling of interconnectedness across the different sides of the Mediterranean.

④

**TO FOLLOW A BOTTOM-UP APPROACH, PRIORITISING THE NEEDS OF THE YOUTH** in order to have tangible and unified agendas in the development of relevant initiatives.

⑤

**TO EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS THAT ARE BUILT ON TRUST AND THE VALUES OF INTERCULTURALITY** in order to maintain balance and motivation in working towards common and sustainable goals.

## CONTEXT

In the framework of the Celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process and the “Renewed Partnerships with the Southern Neighbourhood: a new agenda for the Mediterranean”, the Anna Lindh Foundation and its EuroMed civil society Network organized the Anna Lindh Foundation Virtual Marathon for Dialogue in the EuroMed region (VM).

The Virtual Marathon gathered activities of ALF civil society Network and partner organizations were set to take place during 42 days from the 19th of May to the 29th of June.

## MAIN AIMS OF THE VIRTUAL MARATHON FOR DIALOGUE

The first aim of the Virtual Marathon for Dialogue is to **highlight the importance of the Intercultural Dialogue to build sustainable societies in the EuroMed Region**, taking into consideration the challenges and opportunities brought about by the Covid19 pandemic.

The second aim of the Virtual Marathon for Dialogue is to **develop and promote new ideas and policies towards better cultural and social cooperation in the EuroMed region.**

*The Public Virtual Dialogues will involve participants and panelists who play a major role in the economic, ecological, social, and cultural development of the region. Those include high-level policymakers, journalists, decision makers, young people, business & private sector, gender pioneers, academics, CSO representatives. The challenge is to create synergies with the civil society, especially the Youth and the Women, to create the conditions for positive social change.*

## ABOUT DIALOGUE 7

Dialogue 7 focuses on the importance of sustainable partnerships, prosperity, peace, and resilience as elements that can only be established

through stable collaborations based on common values and active dialogue across the Mediterranean region.

**All EuroMed countries must engage in intercultural dialogue in order to eliminate extremism and alter perceptions, ensuring a future where different sides can cooperate and exchange for the benefit of the collective.** The importance of this dialogue is evident today more than ever, due to globalisation and digitalisation, as ideas and opinions can be exchanged efficiently and swiftly, facilitating development. The League of Arab States hopes to collaborate with ALF again, reactivating their joint initiative Young Arab Voices, which had been one of the most impactful projects, having had a significant impact in emphasising the role of youth in redefining the Arab identity. H.E. Ambassador Haifa Abu Ghazala encouraged collaborations that facilitate the implementation of common initiatives and strengthen the values of cultural understanding.



*H.E. Ambassador Haifa  
Abu Ghazala  
Civil Societies Organisations  
Department at the League  
of Arab States*

**Young people must play an active role in building their own future.** The EU partnership with the SEM region has put young people at the heart, whereby projects like *Erasmus Plus* allow the youth of each side to engage with ‘the other’ environment, strengthening cooperation and enhancing intercultural dialogue. Since 2015, 33,000 scholars from the SEM region have visited the EU, and 20,000 EU scholars have visited countries of the SEM. In addition, the *Creative Europe* programme supports intercultural exchanges between the two shores of the Mediterranean, and the new EU agenda for the Mediterranean has committed to increasing the uptake of the programme. Several countries, like Tunisia, are now interested in participating, which gives the strategies and programmes of the Commission solid foundations for better cooperation. However, these projects cannot be implemented without civil society participation. Ms. Christophidou thanked the ALF for playing a role in implementation through their initiatives.



*Themis Christophidou*  
DG Commission Youth,  
Education & Culture

Despite the restrictions put in place by the Covid19 pandemic, the objective of the ALF Virtual Marathon was to create a space where members of the ALF network and representatives of partner institutions could *identify and discuss needs* within the EuroMed context, *suggest formats and initiatives* that can be scaled up for the promotion of tolerance, knowledge, respect, as well as exchanges that fight prejudices. ALF also wants to share successful initiatives that promote interculturality and which have already taken place. Looking back at 42 days which have passed, it is clear that the objectives have been met. Ms. Insalaco thanked all partners who made the Marathon possible, as the conversations they have had with journalists and civil society members have allowed them to draw out the following key proposals for the development of the new agenda for the Mediterranean.

1. Investment in young people and engaging young women and men in actions and decisions at the local and international levels.
2. The importance of education and working with young people to target hate speech and promote diversity and tolerance
3. The centrality of the environment and the ‘environmental emergency’ as a shared interest among all sides of the Mediterranean together with the importance of education.
4. The seriousness of the fight against cultural and gender stereotypes with the important role of the media.
5. Investment in intercultural policies at the local levels and the importance of combining the efforts of the government, civil society members, young people, and the media.



*Eleonora Insalaco*  
Head of Operations &  
Intercultural Research at ALF

In the end, Ms. Insalaco announced that the ***Anna Lindh Foundation*** accepts the invitation of the ***League of Arab States*** to reactive their partnership through programmes like ***Young Mediterranean Voices***, highlighting the importance of collaboration.

## Pillar ①: THE ACTIVE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE NEED FOR THEIR INCLUSION IN BUILDING THEIR OWN FUTURE

How can the youth be integrated in the decision making process and lead their own initiatives? How can remote communities and marginalised groups be introduced to the concept of interculturality and be provided with the chance to voice their concerns?

### Taking the suggestions of young people into consideration



*Fatima Zuhra Utaiss  
Debate and Dialogue  
Facilitator  
Morocco*

The integration of the youth within partnership has not yet been actualised in an effective and meaningful manner. When they are included in certain processes or partnerships, it is normally a tokenistic gesture, and their recommendations are not always taken into consideration. **We need to ensure that young people have a meaningful say in the partnerships they are involved in.** Programmes like *Young Mediterranean Voices* have ensured that young people are at the core of dialogues and that their recommendations are taken seriously.

It is also important to reach out to the youth living in difficult situations such as marginalised groups, people of color, or women. These groups should have a voice to represent their communities. Panelist Fatima Zuhra Utaiss suggested **investing in youth-led initiatives that foster interculturality, providing funding, training and mentorships, and giving the youth the opportunity to become initiators rather than receivers.** Young people can create their own youth led initiatives when they are given the support.

### RECOMMENDATION 1

**To truly involve the youth in decision making within partnerships by supporting youth-led initiatives** rather than having their participation be a tokenistic gesture.

### Spreading the concept of interculturality



*Anis Bufrika  
University Teacher  
Leader of the Tunisian  
ALF network*

For intercultural dialogue to be effective, all communities need to be part of the ongoing conversation on interculturality. Although digital means may allow the message to reach a wider audience, they are still unhelpful when it comes to reaching remote areas and villages without access to technology. **It is only when the concept of interculturality begins reaching remote villages can we claim success for intercultural exchange.** Moreover, social media fails to provide platforms that facilitate true intercultural exchange. Panelist Anis Bufrika explained that although people are opening up to the world through social media, they are closing off on the personal and individual levels. In other words, when artificial intelligence is guiding the user, showing them only what they wish to hear, this impedes the process of building acceptance and tolerance, and instead encourages extremism and fundamentalism.

### RECOMMENDATION 2

**To work towards providing digital access to remote areas** in order to ensure the inclusion of marginalised communities and to spread the concept of interculturality.

## Pillar ②: THE IMPORTANCE OF CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGE IN BUILDING TOLERANT SOCIETIES AND RESHAPING PERCEPTIONS

How can dialogue shape diverse mentalities and enrich societies with values of acceptance and cooperation? How can programmes and volunteering initiatives facilitate cross-cultural interactions?

Fostering the feeling of interconnectedness among youth at  
CCIVS



Through international volunteering, organisations create bridges between people of different backgrounds. In fact, CCIVS is a coordinating network of grassroots organisations which promote international volunteering. Panelist Ingrid Danckaerts emphasised that **only a people-to-people approach would lay a foundation for mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue**, and CCIVS facilitates such partnerships and creates opportunities for civil society organisations worldwide to connect, build partnerships, develop common projects, and exchange volunteers who would become ambassadors of solidarity. One such example is of an organisation in Tunisia which works in an oasis to prevent further desertification. They initially involved local youth in different volunteering and awareness raising activities, but then were joined by other young individuals from different countries for two weeks.

Through that common project, the foreign youth had the chance to witness the effects of climate change and how it is affecting the lives of the people in the oasis. They also became aware of how their actions have consequences on others, realising **that all countries are interconnected**, ultimately inspiring a whole new understanding for volunteers and forming a small network of activists. Moreover, by working together with the local farmers, they formed common values like respect, active listening, and the ability to reach a consensus. Finally, **CCIVS has also started implementing values of interculturality by looking outside the network for expertise**. They have organised a course on volunteering in conflict areas with the University of Coventry as well as developing an impact research programme with the University of Illinois.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

**To expand volunteering initiatives** in order to foster a feeling of interconnectedness across the different sides of the Mediterranean.

## Pillar ③: THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST

How can partnerships truly succeed in achieving common goals??

Catering to the needs of the people through effective  
partnerships



**Partnerships play a central role in the promotion of intercultural dialogue.** An example of a successful partnership is the Arab Youth Forum which focuses on youth both in the Arab region and neighbouring countries and works in close partnerships with all stakeholders, starting with youth representatives, networks as well as decision makers. The forum has been creating projects since 2018 including investment in building innovative platforms and tools that promote dialogue for the youth. Yet although it seems obvious that all parties in a partnership must work towards a common goal, it is not always easy to ensure compatibility in agendas. To do so, **partners must first**

**be committed and dedicated.** Second, **they must prioritise of the needs of youth rather than the interests of the organisations. Those needs must be determined, quantified, and assessed.** Once commitment and prioritisation are established, **initiatives must not only be coordinated and aligned by different parties, but they should be jointly programmed from the start.** Joint programming differs drastically from coordinating already existing initiatives and truly honours intercultural exchange. This, in fact, is the model followed by the 17 UN agencies in developing their work plans. The same procedure is adopted by the Arab forum.

#### RECOMMENDATION 4

**To follow a bottom-up approach, prioritising the needs of the youth** in order to have tangible and unified agendas in the development of relevant initiatives.

#### Partnerships between young people



*Fatima Zuhra Utaiss*  
Debate and Dialogue  
Facilitator  
Morocco

Young people are now beginning to take the lead in finding solutions and building bridges with other young people in different communities, unifying their efforts to implement creative solutions for common issues. Through collaboration, intercultural dialogue is fostered, creating a common understanding that alters perceptions and eliminates racism, xenophobia, and hate speech. Although the younger generations are more attune to cultural diversity, still racism and xenophobia are an obstacle to positive social relations. To counter these views, a programme by the British Council called *New Narratives* brought participants from Africa and the UK together to discuss existing narratives about their countries. It was discovered that individuals are often fed false narratives about certain cultures which subconsciously give rise to prejudices. Quite simply, *being provided with the opportunity to interact* gave rise to partnerships between young people to create *Maverick*, an organisation that reconstructs existing narratives in the media. Therefore, **partnerships that aim at promoting intercultural dialogue are key in creating change**, and Panelist Fatima Zuhra Utaiss suggested replicating this experience across different regions.

#### Fair and sustainable partnerships

Sustainable relations are dependent on having solid bases of common goals and common understanding. Also, what helps create more sustainable partnerships is **involving all levels of society on equal footing, where everyone feels valued.** Panelist Ingrid Danckaerts explained that a successful partnership is not about including grassroots organisations because it looks good for a particular project; it is about actively involving them by taking their input into consideration.



*Ingrid Danckaerts*  
CCIVS  
France

Panelist Fatima Zuhra Utaiss concurred, emphasising **the need to find a point of equilibrium where the interests and responsibilities of all partners are met.** The commitment of stakeholders in achieving the goals for which the partnership was created is always the result of mutual trust that is built on common understanding.



*Fatima Zuhra Utaiss*  
Debate and Dialogue  
Facilitator  
Morocco

## RECOMMENDATION 5

**To build partnerships based on trust and the values of interculturality** in order to maintain balance and motivation in working towards common and sustainable goals.

Dialogue is an example of partnership. Despite the lockdown, ALF was in contact with their civil society network, having identified the need to stay connected and continue working. The dialogue was jointly planned, and the Marathon was a puzzle that brought together different countries. ALF is currently working with partners on a manifesto, creating a new agenda for the Mediterranean. Moreover, and as mentioned in previous dialogues, ALF would like to launch a contest to continue expressing the meaning of intercultural dialogue through different formats, with plans for the launch of the EuroMed Capital for Dialogue Award that recognises dialogue work at the city level. ALF will be financially supporting projects taking place around the region, and in the fall, there will be a clear mobilisation of the network along with initiatives on dialogue. The network prioritises creating the feelings of coalition and cooperation, and Ms. Eleonora Insalaco thanked the ALF network and those who made the dialogues possible.

