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*Standing up for Remembrance:
Testimonies from the Past as Lessons for the Present
- Holocaust and Human Rights Education through Oral History*

STAND UP

International Youth conference: Follow-up peer education activities report

May - July 2026



Executive Summary

The STAND UP International Youth Conference took place in Zagreb, Croatia, from 23 to 26 April 2026. The event brought together 48 individuals from 13 countries, including 41 young participants and 7 facilitators, organisers and chaperons. Throughout the conference, participants engaged in interactive workshops, simulations, and discussions, gaining practical experience with a variety of educational tools and methodologies. Participants also developed concrete follow-up plans to implement peer education activities in their local communities after the event.

By the beginning of July 2026, ***36 participants had already delivered peer education workshops, reaching more than 780 young people*** across several European countries and promoting democracy, human rights, Holocaust remembrance, and inclusion. In the following months, additional participants will continue implementing their planned activities, with further workshops and educational initiatives scheduled for late summer and early autumn.

Key Information

STAND UP International Youth Conference was planned as a multi-day educational programme bringing together 40 young participants from 10 European countries. During the conference, participants were planned to develop concrete ideas and action plans for follow-up activities to be implemented in their communities after returning home. Each participant was expected to organise one to two peer education activities, with the overall aim of reaching a minimum of 1,000 young people through these multiplier activities. By combining historical learning with peer education and youth participation, the conference contributed to creating a network of young educators capable of promoting inclusion, human rights, and active citizenship across Europe.

Thirty six young people submitted their peer education activity reports in the May-July 2026 time frame. The reports document 780 direct participants engaged in workshops, debates, classroom activities, exhibitions, and online sessions. In addition, one social-media activity (an Instagram reel exploring what Anne Frank means to young people) reached 1,436 views and received 66 likes by the reporting date (end of July 2026).

The follow-up activities were implemented in the following countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, and - through an online international workshop - participants from multiple countries. Most activities took place in secondary schools and classrooms, while others were hosted in a youth centre, the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, or online.

Most individual activities involved groups of approximately 15–28 participants, although group sizes ranged from six participants in a small workshop to 46 participants in a large session on propaganda and social-media influence. Several facilitators conducted more than one workshop or worked with more than one class. These cases demonstrate that some peer educators extended their work beyond a single session.

Peer Educational Approaches

The activities were diverse, but they can be grouped into several recurring areas.

Human rights, discrimination and equality formed the largest thematic cluster. These activities included workshops on everyday human rights, privilege and discrimination, modern slavery, freedom of speech, justice and injustice, tolerance, antisemitism, equality, and non-discrimination. Facilitators frequently used situations, cards, movement exercises, videos, group work, and structured questions to help participants connect abstract rights with real-life experiences.

Democracy and active citizenship were explored through brainstorming, reflection exercises, debates, and gamified learning. Participants considered what they appreciate about democracy, what concerns them about democratic systems, how democracies can be weakened, and how citizens can respond. One workshop used the title *Who Destroyed Democracy?*, while another combined democratic reflection with post-it notes and flipcharts.

Anne Frank, the Holocaust and remembrance were addressed through documentary screenings, discussions, historical photographs, personal stories, watch parties, an exhibition, and an expert talk on Holocaust education and art. Several activities encouraged participants to reflect on the lives and identities of people affected by the Second World War rather than approaching the period only through dates and general historical facts. The online workshop *Lost Names, Untold Stories* focused specifically on children abducted during the Second World War.

Media literacy, propaganda and contemporary communication were also prominent. Activities examined news articles, propaganda, the ways people are influenced through social media, and the importance of evaluating information critically. These sessions connected historical manipulation and discrimination with contemporary media environments.

Debates and structured dialogue were among the most commonly used methods. Topics included freedom of speech, justice, discrimination, antisemitism, democracy, and human rights. Debates were generally preceded by an introduction to respectful communication and followed by reflection or evaluation activities. Several facilitators stressed that the format enabled participants to express different perspectives without disrespecting one another.

Creative and awareness-raising activities included an exhibition and expert talk, film and documentary screenings, presentation-based sessions, an Instagram reel, photograph interpretation exercises, and short activities presenting the Anne Frank Youth Network and opportunities for further engagement.

Engagement & Outcomes

The follow-up activities were predominantly participatory rather than lecture-based. Common methods included:

- small-group work and card-matching exercises;
- debates and moderated dialogues;
- post-it-note brainstorming and flipchart reflection;
- photographs, documentaries and short videos;
- role-based or movement exercises;
- personal testimony and historical case studies;
- presentations followed by discussion;
- hand evaluations and other reflective closing exercises;
- gamified workshops and scenario-based learning.

A particularly strong feature was the combination of individual reflection, collaborative learning and open discussion. Facilitators often began with a stimulus—a photograph, statement, video, question or fictional scenario—and then invited participants to discuss its relationship to larger issues such as democracy, prejudice or human rights. This approach helped make complex themes relevant to participants' everyday lives.

The reports consistently describe participants as *interested, active and willing to contribute*. In many activities, students shared personal experiences, asked questions and listened to perspectives different from their own. Facilitators observed that interactive methods encouraged teamwork and made difficult historical or human-rights topics easier to understand. Several activities also created links between historical events and present-day issues, particularly discrimination, propaganda, social media, civic responsibility and freedom of expression.

The activities appear to have produced *outcomes at two levels*. First, the participating young people gained opportunities to develop critical thinking, empathy, historical awareness and confidence in expressing their opinions. Second, the peer educators strengthened their own facilitation, communication and organizational skills. Organizing an activity required them to adapt conference methods, manage discussions, explain complex concepts, respond to unexpected situations and encourage quieter participants to contribute.

The findings also indicate that peer education can create a different learning atmosphere from ordinary classroom instruction. Because the activities were facilitated by young people, discussions were often informal and interactive, enabling participants to relate to the facilitator and communicate openly. The activities provided spaces in which young people could discuss sensitive subjects without being expected to arrive at one predetermined answer.

The following verbatim quotations from the young peer educators can be used to illustrate the reach, atmosphere and educational value of the activities:

"The activity went very well because it was interactive and encouraged teamwork."

"The participants were extremely interested in the topic and were very engaged."

"The open communication helped create a respectful and supportive atmosphere."

"Many students actively participated, asked questions, and expressed different perspectives while respecting each other's opinions."

"Young people can be very engaged and talkative, they have a lot of things to say—you just need to find the best approach."

"The debate created an open and safe atmosphere for conversation about important social issues."

"It helped us connect actual situations with human rights and made the topic easier to understand."

"A key takeaway was that open discussions can help people better understand the experiences and feelings of others."

"One of the key takeaways for me was realizing how important open dialogue and active participation are when discussing democracy."

"The activity also highlighted the value of respecting diverse opinions and creating a safe space for discussion and critical thinking."

"It helped students better understand the importance of tolerance, empathy, and respectful dialogue."

"The students were mostly engaged but it was hard to get them to open up and talk freely about their thoughts."