

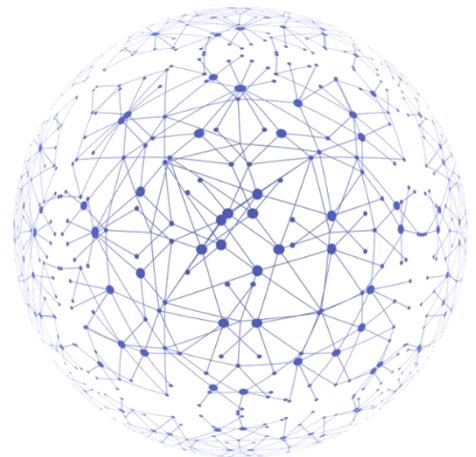


# To live peace, to live for peace. Building a Culture of World Peace

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

### Living Peace Photography in 2023

- » 132 Countries Reached
- » 2000 Schools/associations/parishes...
- » 40 Whatsapp groups as per languages and geographical regions
- » 94 International and national organizations
- » 757 Young Ambassadors of Peace
- » 45 Different versions of the Dice of Peace in 29 languages
- » 82 Big Dice (in squares, cities in 18 countries)



### Organization of the network:

- ✓ 1 international coordinator at AMU
- ✓ 1 international secretariat with 2 part-time people at AMU
- ✓ 100 people, including volunteer local coordinators and members of national and multigenerational coordination groups.
- ✓ **Scientific Committee**, born in 2023 and made up of members of Living Peace chosen for



for their knowledge within the project itself, but also for their degree of depth in some professional areas and/or specific empirical research: pedagogy, psychology, psychiatry and anthropology. The members of the group are six and come from Europe, Latin America and Africa, trying to represent the various continents as much as possible, or at least to give

voice to cultural diversity. A first work done by three of them was an article on the theme of social harmony in Living Peace, which was then also republished partly in the six-monthly AMU News of the month of December.

## International Coordinator's Travels

Also this year there have been several *trips*, opportunities for new sowing of the culture of peace, to strengthen the nodes of the network through meetings and formation and to bring hope! Some relevant aspects of each of these trips, in which about 8,000 people were reached, especially young people and adults linked to the school world, but not only:

### » Germany:



This trip marked a new stage for the Project in the field of Psychology: thanks to the work of the two coordinators from Germany, including a psychologist, it was possible to hold a meeting to present the project to a group of 17 professionals. The reception was beyond expectations and some of them joined the network and expressed the desire to incorporate some elements of the Project into their clinical

practice.

### » Belgium:

In this country where several international and European organizations are present, a significant event was the presentation of Living Peace to a group of Religions4Peace, with representatives of other organizations. The Dice of Peace for interreligious dialogue was much appreciated!



### » Syria:

On this visit, taking into account the situation of the war and the earthquake that had just occurred. It was a valuable opportunity for people to feel heard and valued. There, the presentation of Living Peace was adapted to the local situation, trying to highlight the need for inner peace and presenting the dynamics of the Dice of Peace as a valid and effective tool. The delivery of mandalas and drawings by Italian and Belgian children made for their peers in Syria, as a sign of support from the entire world network, was a moving moment: the joy in receiving the drawings was visible, as if to say:

there is someone thinking of me! And immediately they too wanted to send drawings with messages of peace to their new friends.





» **Lebanon:**

An opportunity to introduce Living Peace to four new schools and officially appoint two new ambassadors of peace. Particularly significant was the visit to the Institute of Audiophonic Rehabilitation/IRAP, a long-standing partner of the project that is always present in the proposed initiatives.

» **Jordan**

In addition to the great formation day for the entire network (11 schools and representatives of partner organizations), it is worth mentioning the official visit to the Minister of Culture and presentation of the project to Princess Alia, who were very impressed and interested in promoting Living Peace in all schools in Jordan. The challenge of 2024 will be to be able to overcome the bureaucratic and organizational obstacles for this to happen.



» **Uruguay**



In addition to the meetings with the coordination group and the visit to schools, of particular importance was the presentation of the Project in Parliament, with the presence of several ministers, deputies and senators, as well as personalities from the world of culture and education. It was also an opportunity to bring together for the first time the representatives of the entire Living Peace network in Uruguay (members from 6 cities in the country) who were able to give testimony of the work carried out.

» **Argentina**

There, by now, Living Peace is a project participated in and promoted also by partner organizations. One of them, Mimos para tus Ojos, coordinated the work for the construction of a Big Dice of Peace made by several schools, where each face chosen by the students is representative of a grade and school order. 89 schools in the Merlo district were involved in this process, which also financed the construction of the Dado.



During the coordinator's visit, the inauguration ceremony took place with the presence of the mayor and, the following day, the Festival of Peace with the participation of the schools that have adhered to the project and presented artistic events. This event was an ideal opportunity for the appointment of two new Young Ambassadors of Peace. Among the 700 participants, 35 were supervisors from public and private schools and representatives of the municipality.



» **Brazil**

A real marathon of visits from the south to the northeast of this great country took place there. As Brazil will be the next venue for the Genfest 2024, a global youth event organized by the Focolare Movement, a special attention was given to the contribution of Living Peace and its members to this moment. An important role is certainly that of the Young Ambassadors of Peace, with whom there were four new appointments during the visit to the city of Londrina.



» **Portugal**

On the occasion of World Youth Day, 3 international events were organized by Living Peace Portugal together with the international coordinator:

- International Interreligious Festival Canto pela Paz: 16 groups of different religions and confessions were present: Muslims (Ismailis, Shiites), Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Baha'is, Mormons, Evangelicals, Catholics.
- International Living Peace Expo
- Conference "Living Peace, a path of education for Peace"



» **Switzerland**



There was the invitation of the partner organization, *Anna Bacchia Consciousness Institute*, in order to plan the upcoming activities, where there will be mutual collaborations, such as the "Choir of the Earth" and the Genfest. It is also an opportunity for a deeper understanding of each other!

» **Costa Rica**

Invitation to the 3rd International Summit "Building Leaders for a Better World" which had the participation of 50 representatives of organizations and foundations coming mainly from various countries of Latin America, Spain and Italy. In addition to weaving new relationships with the participants, it was also an opportunity to visit several schools to present Living Peace. The most significant and enriching aspect of this Summit was the collaboration that was born with organizations present in Central American countries where Living Peace was not yet known, such as Honduras and San Salvador



» **Italy**

- New meetings in **Banna (Biella), Lodi, Loppiano, Milan and Turin** with the presentation of the Project to teachers, formators, catechists and local authorities.
- Network strengthening and new partnerships in **Catania**, with;
  - ✓ the presentation of the ***Dice of Peace in Braille and*** 3D made by the Italian Union of the Blind and Visually Impaired in 5 languages.
  - ✓ The appointment of the first Italian school in the Living Peace network as the "**Embassy of Peace**", the State Comprehensive Institute P.S. Di Guardo – Quasimodo, by the Partner Association *Mil Milenios de Paz*. The ceremony was followed in *streaming* in some foreign countries and was attended by schools and educational institutions of Catania. For the occasion, President Mattarella sent his greetings, congratulating on this initiative.



## New Great Peace Dice

Six are the new Great Dice of Peace inaugurated in different parts of the world, a concrete invitation to live for Peace. In some places, we are told that it is the homeless who watch over them so that they are not plundered, while for others they represent a meeting point for a different catechesis or even an opportunity for a teacher to go on a small educational outing! In addition to the Dice inaugurated in the International Center of the Focolare Movement in Rocca di Papa, other big dices were inaugurated in the citadels of Belgium and Santa Maria in Brazil.



## New Dice Releases

The year 2023 has been characterized by a diffusion and expansion of the Dice of Peace in different disciplinary and academic fields, as well as in different social contexts, some examples:

- ✓ Conflict Resolution Dice
- ✓ Eco-friendly Dice
- ✓ Thermodynamic dice
- ✓ Prison Context Dice
- ✓ Scout Dice
- ✓ Families Dice
- ✓ Christmas Dice
- ✓ Braille dice in 6 languages



## Network World Events

There are countless activities and events within the Living Peace network carried out by schools, youth groups at local, city or country level. You can get an idea by following Living Peace on [Facebook](#). Here we limit ourselves to highlight some activities, events launched internationally and organized by the international coordination:

- ✓ **School Day of Peace and Non-Violence** (30<sup>th</sup> January): mainly attended by the Living Peace network of the northern hemisphere of the world, as it is holiday time for others.
- ✓ **Plogging**, launched on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April, on the occasion of *World Earth Day*, in synergy with the *Portugal Plogging Association*. In this country alone, more than 1000 people in 98 different cities and towns have carried out this activity and collected about 5 tons of waste. From Madeira Island they wrote to us: *100 pupils from the school in Caniço experienced a special day, together with parents, teachers and friends, collecting and sorting rubbish. It was a way to get some exercise while cleaning our city, taking the opportunity to raise awareness of the harmful effects that lack of responsibility and pollution cause to each of us, and on a larger scale to our city, region and our world!* But also in Argentina, Brazil, Tanzania, Korea, Philippines, Italy, Spain and many other countries, plogging has now become a regular event every year and can be considered a real act of love for the Planet.

- ✓ **United World Week** is now an important event for the Living Peace network. Also this year it has proposed:
  - **Peace Got Talent:** for the first time it was organized by a high school in Catania with the protagonism of the students becoming themselves the promoters. This year was also an opportunity to concretely witness inclusion through diversity and disabilities. 3500 children, teenagers and young people from 19 countries on 4 continents took part.
  - **Run4Unity:** relay race for Unity which brings together groups, schools, associations of the Living Peace network that carry out artistic, social and sports activities and, here too, plogging! In the DR Congo, three large Run4unity were carried out in Kinshasa, Kolwezi and Lubumbashi, bringing together more than 5000 children and adolescents, to witness their commitment to integral ecology! In Cairo, Jordan, Brazil, Mexico, Spain as well as in many other countries, the adolescents included in their program the action of planting trees, embellishing gardens with flowers, and many gestures of love and respect for the environment. With an important involvement of other partner organizations, institutions, friends and relatives. During the United World Week, Living Peace also proposed various artistic initiatives such as the construction of "Kites for Peace", "Mandalas of Peace – I paint the half, and you the other", "The Tree of Peace for the care of nature" and a debate on the film "Noi Tutti"(We all), a documentary that aims to be a source of inspiration by showing stories of women and men who dare, all over the world, to take the step towards the other, despite the existing tensions and prejudices.
- ✓ **The Canto pela Paz (Song for Peace) Interreligious Festival** was the only interreligious event *in the entire World Youth Day 2023 - Lisbon (Portugal)*, promoted by the Catholic Church and the first in the history of these World Youth Days. A program run by three Portuguese Young Ambassadors of Peace that had the participation of about 600 young people and in which the Interreligious Dice of Peace was also presented. Being this a moment attended in presence for the first time after the pandemic, it has made it possible to create relationships of friendship and brotherhood between members of different organizations and religious groups.
- ✓ **World Day of Peace – 21<sup>st</sup> September**, which this year was entitled: "Actions for Peace: Our Ambition for the Sustainable Development Goals".





## New Initiatives

### ✓ Strategic Planning Meeting



Taking into account the ever-increasing diffusion of Living Peace, both at a territorial level, but also in gradually more numerous areas, it was felt necessary to assemble a representation of the "stakeholders" of this project to understand together a strategy for greater sharing of coordination in a vision of sustainability understood at 360°, in the near future, in the medium and long term.

Through a participatory work and the presence of a facilitator, they came to several shared proposals that require the

continuation of the work, with the help of an extended circle of people in different parts of the world who have been voluntarily collaborating with Living Peace for years, to arrive at a practical Action Plan.

### ✓ Participation in the AFR.E.S.H Project

A project funded by the European Union, which provides virtual exchanges between people from five African countries and four European countries, on some topics, including Education for Peace. In 2023, 3 meetings were held:

- Three meetings for educators, moments of exchange and reflection, of shared work on the issues of peace. It is also an opportunity to involve other countries where Living Peace is not yet widespread (such as Africa).
- Two meetings for young people involving 1 Italian class, 2 Burundians, 3 Congolese and a group of Belgian students. They were real moments of exchange of knowledge between the cultures to which they belong, also in relation to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. In the final evaluation, several reported that these meetings helped to go beyond prejudices and stereotypes.

- Two meetings with young leaders and ambassadors of peace. They were opportunities to get to know reciprocally, exchange of good practices and work regarding the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.



## Formations

### Coordinators

An online meeting of the international coordination with about 72 coordinators and local representatives of the Living Peace project. An opportunity to outline the role of coordinators and redefine some organisational aspects. The training took place in 4 languages and in the evaluation made it was possible to notice the importance of this type of meeting that allowed learning and improving from the experience of others. There was also a demand for more meetings during the year and, if possible, some per language.



### Young Ambassadors of Peace

Also this year, four online courses were held in different languages (PT, SP, IT and EN) for the formation of young people in the themes of Peace. Those interested, young people aged 16 to 30, participate in 6 meetings of 2 hours each and at the end of the course everyone decides whether or not they want to apply for Young Ambassadors of Peace (GAP). The involvement of those who are already a GAP is always very important, from the organization to the conduct of the meetings!

As a result, in 2023, 3 adult Ambassadors and 132 Young Ambassadors of Peace were appointed by the Universal Circle of Ambassadors of Peace from 11 countries, in some of them for the first time, such as the Netherlands and Guinea Bissau, for example.

In addition to the School, young people continue to be the protagonists of many activities in their own schools, in catechesis and beyond:

- Environmental initiatives with the collection of debris in public places, mangroves, beaches, parks and also tree planting and reforestation, informing and involving local authorities too
- After-school activities in social centers, hospitals, Children's homes or homes for the Elderly. In one children's hospital, for example, they painted the interior walls with cartoon characters, in another they spent an afternoon dressed as clowns bringing joy and doing various activities with the sick.
- On the occasion of 21<sup>st</sup> September, World Day of Peace, the Asian Young Ambassadors organized a webinar, focused on the theme given by the UN for that day: "Action for peace: our ambition for the Sustainable Development Goals".
- In Argentina, the coordination group also organized a weekend of face-to-face training, characterized by moments of reflection and dialogue for the young Ambassadors.



## Awards

- » PRÉMIO Municipal de Mérito Escolar (Matosinhos City Hall, Portugal), on 25.11.2023.
- » INTERNATIONAL PEACE AWARD by the One Billion Youths for Peace Foundation, on 19.08.2023. The award will be officially presented on February 10 during the World Peace Summit 2024, in India.

