

New Technology and Peace:

Nelson Mandela once said "the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow".

Echoing his wisdom, we invite you to join us in harnessing the power of new technologies to build more peaceful communities and to help prepare new young leaders for their future roles.

Big Data, and Digitization have revolutionized how we work, learn, and live, so our projects will leverage these new instruments to promote cyber fluency and help high-risk youth gain cutting-edge skill sets for the job market and to change attitudes or stereotypes regarding their worth. Our projects also use digitalization to support the education of high-risk adolescents, during war and pandemics, thus facilitating their reconciliation with, and re-integration into, their communities.

Project 1: The High-Risk Youth Digital Education Program (Gottsunda, Sweden)

Although historically one of the most peaceful countries in the world, Sweden has witnessed violent clashes between the police and youth of minority backgrounds. In the district of Gottsunda near Uppsala County, the absence of effective policies and inter-group dialogues has promoted harsh political and media criticism of deteriorating public security. It has also provoked demands for firmer measures against the 'leading criminals' (ledande kriminella)' and 'violence -hungry-youth' (våldskåta kids)'. Yet this risks further alienating the youth concerned and fueling hostile confrontations.

Our project will use advanced digital and gamified platforms and pedagogical techniques to promote cyber fluency and digital literacy among high-risk (mostly immigrant) youth, some with drug issues, police records and problematic performance in traditional classrooms.

With an increasing demand for programmers in Uppsala, these tangible skills can liberate young people from the social stigma of their past, so they can concentrate on their future roles in the labor market.

Project 2: Digitalized Virtual Lab for Science Students in Syria

According to UNICEF MEAN, since 2015, more than two million students in Syria have dropped out of school, and one in five Syrian teachers and counselors were "lost". The war drastically impacted national education, including a drastic loss of public investment in the sector evident.

Potentially a powerhouse for generating social capital, the large school-age population

was handicapped by dwindling educational resources, both in terms of physical facilities and the availability of teaching staff. This situation was compounded by the advent of Covid-19, which further strained a battered educational infrastructure in Syria. This was particularly evident for those studying science subjects like dentistry or engineering that need practical training in labs for their programs.

This is the backdrop to our project which has been initiated in collaboration with SIPAA Academics e.V, a Germany-based NGO promoting the academic improvement of Syrian refugees, AI club in Latakia, and Tishreen University in Syria. Starting small, we first focus on the dentistry students at Tishreen University, which boasts the best dentistry training in Syria. Our project aims to use augmented reality technology and build virtual lab applications on mobile phones, so students without access to physical labs due to wars or pandemics, will still be able to continue their practical training and exam preparation.

Both our projects are sustainable with clear, traceable, and measurable results, such as the recidivism rate and subsequent employment record of our participants. We will invite Rotary Peace Fellows, Rotarians, and experts both locally and abroad, including those in gamification and programming education, and attorneys assisting high-risk juveniles both in and outside of the legal systems, to join our project.

Our projects offer an idea-enriching, spirit-empowering, and above all, a collective experience in which each of us can participate to deploy the new technologies for a more inclusive, equal, and peaceful future.

Webinar Schedules for New Technology and Peace

First one:

September 12th (a Saturday) at 5 PM CET

5 – 6:30 PM

Second one (tentative):

October 10th (Saturday) 5 PM CET.

5-6:30 PM