

# Global Content & Music Festival

Initiative for Youth



14.11.2019-17.11.2019

Ex Caserma Guido Reni,  
Rome, Italy

# A New Global Content and Music Festival Initiative for Youth



## Dear Reader,

**The first YouthMundus Festival** took place at the Ex Caserma Guido Reni in Rome from the 14th-17th of November 2019. Four days and a program full of panels, music and film presentations - all concerning topics that are directly affecting today's global youth. A festival established because of the urgency to raise awareness about social, political and environmental issues, which impact us every single day. This is why the festival addressed a number of different themes: from **"Mother Nature"** to **"One for all and all for One"**.

The values of the festival are inspired by the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to serve as a guideline to achieve a more sustainable and peaceful future by addressing poverty, inequality, education, and climate among many other goals. The festival focused on two main SDG-related topics; on the one hand, addressing climate action and sustainable lifestyles - on the other hand, discussing gender equality, mental well-being, LGBTIQ\* and women's rights. All these topics were addressed in cooperation with the youth, since the festival had one mission: to bring young advocates together and give them a space to exchange and discuss their concerns in order to stand in solidarity when accomplishing change.



LGBTIQ\* and  
Women's rights

## Mother Nature

Climate  
activism

against global  
warming and pollution

ONE for ALL  
and ALL for  
ONE

LGBTIQ\* and  
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## Introduction to the Youth Ambassadors



### **Lukas von Horbatschewsky**

*The young actor is known for his role as the pansexual transgender boy David in the German teen show "DRUCK". He is dedicated to educate about the importance of LGBTIQ\* rights and the community, as well as mental health.*



### **Lilly Platt**

*Four years ago Lilly started her campaign "Lillys plastic pickup". Now at the age of 11 she is one of the world's leading environmental activists with the goal to educate and inform the world about the effects of climate change and plastic pollution.*



## **Elisa Del Genio**

*The young actress is known for her role as Elena “Lenù” in the TV show “My Brilliant Friend”. She is dedicated to stand up for women’s rights, raising awareness about the importance of education, power of knowledge and global culture.*



## **David Wicker**

*The 14-year-old climate activist from Northern Italy is part of the movement Fridays for Future and started strikes the first week of January 2019, and has not stopped since.*



Photos by: Sheyda Allahverdiyeva

### **Haile Thomas**

*The 18-year-old activist and founder of the non-profit "Happy" creates safe spaces for health education and provides plant-based nutrition in communities and schools.*

### **Hannah Testa Founder of Hannah4Change**

*The young activist is an advocate for sustainability, international speaker and founder of Hannah4Change. She is partnering with businesses and governments in order to influence them to develop sustainable practices.*

## Why is it so important for you to be here at the YouthMundusFestival 2019?

**Lukas:** For me it is really special, because there are so many different people here, from so many different countries. Seeing other people talk about their specific problems in their countries and regions, you feel like you can connect to that as well, because it is very similar to what we are experiencing, in my case in Germany. It really helps to bring everyone together and feel like you can find a solution together.

**Lilly:** I think that YouthMundus is very important to spread the word for children, that want to, but do not know how to express themselves. So children can express themselves through art, music, cooking, school striking or picking up plastic. And I hope that this encourages young people to be who they really are.

**Elisa:** It is important to tell other young people about our issues and to express our voices. The women today are not treated equally as men. For example: in the film I did, you understand this issue easily, because the men were the ones who were supposed to go to school and the women were not allowed. At that time in the film there were way more men in the school and university, and the women had to be home. My character was not allowed to go at the beginning, but then she became the best in school. Women had to work way harder and that is the experience I made in the film "My Brilliant Friend".

**David:** For me this festival is really important, because I got to get to know and work with activists who are active in different fields of society. It is important to share experiences and different point of views, in the sense that nobody can do activism without knowing the entire picture. In a way, I feel all our battles are connected trying to create a future we can live in and where climate change will be a thing of the past.

**Haile:** It is super exciting to be here and be part of YouthMundus, because it is an event that really has never existed before and it is an intersection of music, art, activism and vulnerable as well as real stories. An event focused on intersection is important, because we are finally amplifying the message that everything is all connected and each issue is equally important. Being able to focus on that and hear different discussions and see the way they are connected to each other is super powerful. In addition, to have an event completely centred on the youth and created by the youth is really special, because we are able to finally have a festival that speaks to us in a really authentic way. We do not have the opportunity often enough to collaborate on stage and have honest and real conversations.

**Hannah:** My passion is youth empowerment and inspiring other kids. When I found out about YouthMundus, I was really excited. I have never heard about a youth festival in the first place

that incorporates music, arts and movies, which I think is a great tool for people that do not want to get up on a stage like I do, people that are passionate but do not know how to get involved on issues.

## What is your message to the younger generation?

**Lukas:** I am here as an ambassador for mental health and LGBTIQ\* rights, so I am really persistent on the fact that we need to encourage people to speak up about the problems people from the LGBTIQ\* community have. Furthermore, creating awareness, giving hope that there will be a difference and that it is already changing to the better. Because if young people are losing hope, and lose the will to fight, then we are basically giving up. So that is why I always want to encourage to be strong and show that there is light in this world.

**Lilly:** My message is: never listen to the people that say NO, you can not do this. Never listen to them, because you have the most powerful voice on this planet and you can save the world and find your green heart. And I would say: pick up at least three pieces of plastic per day.

**Elisa:** Always believe in yourself and make yourself respected. Women can do everything in the same manner as men.

**David:** I think most of the youth already know, but to those who do not know: we are in a climate emergency and institutions still do not seem to understand the urgency of this emergency. What we have to do as a youth, is to rise up against this injustice and fight for climate justice and equity.



**Haile:** Activism is a personal journey and activism does not have one shape or form. It can be expressed in so many ways, verbally, through entertainment or through everyday actions. We may now have an idea of what activism is and does, but when we started we had no idea what we were doing. I would say: find what works for you and ensure that the intention is genuinely connected to the issue of helping others..

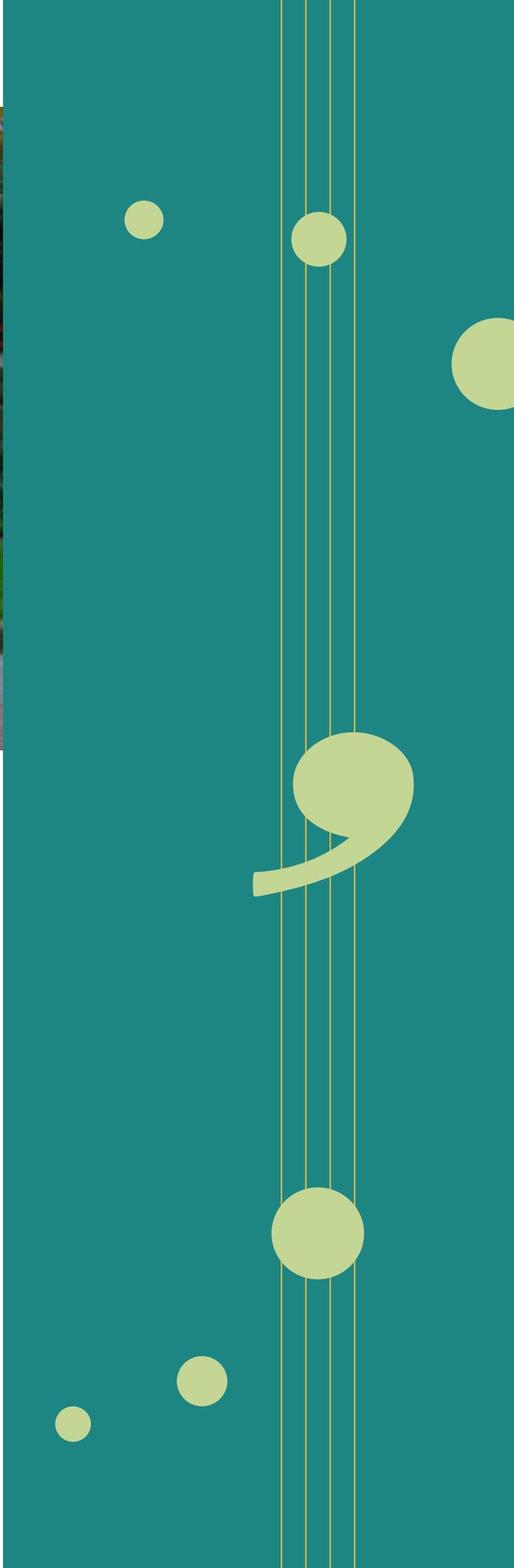
**Hannah:** You do not have to wait to get older to make a difference. I was definitely scared when I started and I did not know other people that were doing what I was doing. It is important to talk to each other, share ideas and network with others. Being able to be in a place with people that work on the same field gives you motivation and support.

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➤ Aris Myrskos and Michelle Benzing



Photos by: Sheyda Allahverdiyeva



## „For the youth, with the youth “ – the organizers



Ina Peterson, Inner Voice Artists



Dijana Stupar, Inner Voice Artists

**“The Women behind YouthMundus”** - That is what the organizers of the first ever YouthMundus Festival have become known for. These two powerful women were driven by a single idea: to create an environmentally conscious festival initiative not just FOR the global youth, but also in collaboration WITH the global youth to inspire and achieve positive social change in the world, and with all the festival content centered around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Ina Petersen and Dijana Stupar own and run, Inner Voice Artists, together, which is an international Management, Production, Event and Media Consulting Company. Ina’s specialties are film and television finance, sales and talent management , while Dijana focuses on public relations, business development and festivals. Their idea for the YouthMundus festival came from witnessing all of the global movements which were taking place across the globe, and which were mostly initiated and organised by the youth themselves. They decided that it

was not enough to just tweet or instagram about it, but that action always speaks louder than words. That is how their idea to create a festival initiative developed, which would allow the global youth, and specifically marginalized groups, to unite and speak up about global causes that were pressing and which they are passionate about.

“Many sleepless months were spent contacting over 8,000 NGOs, doing extensive research and endless Skype interviews – we now have global contacts all over the world,” explains Ina, and “across various fields”. Their goal was not to only invite celebrities, but to get young activists to meet and exchange, in order to provide an authentic, meaningful and educational festival experience. This all happened in less than a year, as the event was launched in February 2019. Nevertheless, it was not all quite as easy as it seemed: “When you start digging and asking questions, it’s frightening how everything is not always what it appears to be. That was definitely my biggest disappointment and learning experience: being in contact with organizations where you think they would do the great work that they so endlessly promote, and then sadly to find out that it is in fact not necessarily the case” stated Ina. She added: “I am not going to work with you because of your name. I am going to work with you, if you actually stand for something and you truly mean it.”

With that said, it was still challenging to completely distance themselves from every sponsor or partner project that was presented at the actual venue since YouthMundus was working together with the local Italian company, Videocitta, an umbrella organization and the lessor of the festival area.

The non-profit organization Amazon Watch criticized this effort because of Videocitta’s sponsor “Eni”, an Italian oil and gas company - a sponsor the YouthMundus organizers did not know about until the first day of the festival. An Eni representative, invited by Videocitta,

attended the opening of the festival giving a last minute speech, but there was no introduction nor dialogue at all between the groups, neither prior to or after the event, regarding YouthMundus. “In retrospect, it was good that there were people in the room representing the opposite side. Our entire point was to bring people together from all over the world and have those important conversations, however much to our surprise we were very taken aback by Eni and their presentation,” emphasized Dijana. The YouthMundus organizers’ vision and mission was to build a sustainable festival with more global and underrepresented voices and not what Dijana and Ina referred to as “green-washing”, which is why the YouthMundus organizers have raised their serious and valid concerns to Videocitta, letting them know about their opinions on this matter and in regards to Eni. Also, while there were embassy officials in the room on opening day, representing their respective countries - on the other hand, and in regards to the representation of bigger company brands as well as politicians at the festival in general, Dijana stated: “It is not that we did not invite them, but who do you actually get to attend who genuinely supports these important and pressing global topics? It’s one thing to say, and another thing to do, and we have certainly seen throughout the inspiring FridaysForClimate movement it’s much easier said than done”. Her colleague Ina explained: “Our goal is to ideally put these people in a room together, so that they can respectfully voice their different opinions and hopefully learn to better understand each other’s differences. We are far from still achieving what we feel needs to be accomplished: which is for them to show up, not speak and instead really listen to what is being voiced.”

But this was only the start of the young festival, as Dijana explained: “It was a pilot edition, we have learned a lot and we definitely want to do it again”, and the goal is for it to be an annual global event because positive change

doesn't happen overnight. It requires persistence, consistency and follow through. She added that they also want to become much more selective about the partners and sponsors. Besides, they also want to continue centering the festival around the UN's SDGs, which is the festival's core blueprint, and especially when it comes to all of these important and universally pressing topics, explained Ina: "We want to see more women represented across all industries, more people of color, LGBTIQ\*, and we certainly also want to further focus on stressing the dangerous effects of climate change."

"At the end of the day, in some shape or form, we are all content creators and champions of art, and as Dijana beautifully said art is such a powerful and universal language - and it also goes back to our background," added Ina as she continued to emphasize on the power of the younger generation as their interconnectedness through social media and technology will only continue to grow. Even though the youth is often talked about, and unfortunately talked at instead of spoken with, in conferences and events, they are still very much underrepresented and that is what the YouthMundus platform attempts to change. Only by collaborating together, while again trying to put our differences aside, can we truly make a difference in our world. As the saying goes, "it only takes a spark to ignite the fire."

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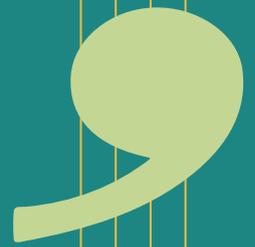
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ALL for  
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# Mother Nature

**Climate**

**activism**

against global  
warming and pollution

# The fight in the Amazon region – indigenous communities in cooperation with western organizations



Photo by: Sheyda Allahverdiyeva

**Amazon Watch** is a nonprofit organization that protects the rainforest and the rights of indigenous peoples in the Amazon region since 1996. They partner with indigenous and environmental organizations and focus their work on three parts: stop Amazon destruction, advance indigenous solutions and support Climate Justice.

*“We are here right now in Europe to talk to the governments and the parliaments, companies and consumers, to make them aware of their consumption. Because beef or soy is food of indigenous blood from Brazil. So we are here to spread the message. We want respect, especially from the government. They have to respect our human rights, our right to live and have our own land. We need all*

*the consumers to think about where the products are from. We need everybody to support us to force the government to make a law of traceability so that everybody can control where the products are coming from.”*

**-Gasparini Kaingang, member of the indigenous community in the Amazon region in Brazil**

**Letter written by Erisvan Guajajara**

*Another Guajajara was murdered. Erisvan Soares Guajajara was 15 years old. Son of Luécia Guajajara and Luzinho Guajajara. He was murdered in Amarante, where Arariboia indigenous land is located, in Maranhão state, Brazil.*

*The impunity keeps on running over many lives and racist speeches on courts keep generating new victims.*

*Accurate public policies are needed to access persecution of the use of national force as an emergency measure. We urge for proper public policies and punishment of the deforesters, land grabbers, gold miners and to all kinds of criminals who now feel empowered to invade our territories, lands of our own by right, assured by the Federal Constitution.*

*Conversely to the set of measurements, which award invaders and land grabbers as the Provisional Measure and dismantle the Indigenous and environmental organs, we need efficient policies for inspection and the fortification of Indigenous Bodies.*

*We need health care policies for the ill and to prize scientific knowledge, our traditions and our knowledge. We need a universal education for the young people, children, sons and daughters, nephews and grandchildren - more Indigenous schools in our villages. We need investments in the National Policy on Environmental and Territorial Management of Indigenous Land (PNGATI) and in policies developed under the leadership of Indigenous people.*

*We will stand fighting until the last Indigenous person falls - that is what we are doing for 519 years. Our lives are public service for humanity. We are the ones who guarantee the air you breathe, the water you drink and the balance of the planet's climate. Without us, there will not exist a future for humankind. Therefore, fighting for Indigenous lives is to fight for those who you love. This fight is for all of us, it is a fight of gender and of race, it is an environmental fight, a class struggle for human rights for life.*

**-Erisvan Guajajara**

**“If we do our work well,  
we are very much invisible”**



**Interview with the Program Director of  
Amazon Watch, Christian Poirier**

**Michelle: Why advocating for indigenous rights here at the YouthMundus Festival?**

**Christian Poirier:** The reason why we are here is because we think that it is important to work together with youth movements. Of course, Greta has shown us how important youth empowerment is. Their voices are much more featured in the movement for climate justice, accountability and the system shift that we need. Eventually, they are going to be the ones leading it. The more we can engage with the constituency the better. The work that we do is about the future of our civilization - and the Amazon is a critical part of that. You can not separate the future of the Amazon and the destiny of the planet. Amazon indigenous communities understand that and that is our theory of change: Helping the indigenous people’s movement, their rights and their land.

**Michelle: Often we see Western organizations that exploit indigenous communities for their own benefit. Coming from the global north yourself, how do you ensure that indigenous people get the right attention?**

**Christian Poirier:** A lot of the time you might see organizations that coopt movements. More and more indigenous people get the space that they deserve to tell their story and to be understood as a solution for the climate crisis. However, some organizations might take advantage of that to expand their brand - and that is exactly what we do not want to do. We do a lot of communication work. We try to center

the voices of indigenous people. We want to get their voices being heard by the press, not ours. If we do our work well, we are very much invisible, and our partners are very much in the front; where they belong and where they are recognized by the public. Yes, we are an advocacy organization from the global north and solidarity organization. The movements of the south are relying more heavily on northern solidarity to advance their struggles. Because of the influence of international consumption and additionally the breakdown of democracy in their own country, they need to call on their brothers and sisters abroad to support their work. But not to do it in a way that I am going to take your work and speak for you. No, I am going to help you to get your voice heard here. Because we in the north maybe understand our institutions better than our partners in the south, and they understand them better where they are from. We therefore can help to guide their advocacy. Be a technical, political, logistical support for movements, that need to advance for collective wellbeing.

**Michelle: I think that it is really important to self-reflect what role we play from the global north and to check our own privileges and positions. We can play a role, but rather by supporting the ones who are most affected. A lot of indigenous representatives are travelling through Europe at the moment. Why do you want to make people aware of that over here?**

**Christian Poirier:** Europe is incredibly important in terms of the power of Brazils agricultural

business sector, which is what buys the environmental and the human rights crisis in the Amazon region. And not just there, but in other regions where we see indigenous rights under attack. It is being driven by a group of politicians being called the “Ruralistas” who represent the most regressive form of agriculture and who are also responsible for putting Bolsonaro in power and keeping him there – not exclusively, but they had a lot of hand in that. How we get to Bolsonaro is by going to the market that sustains this sector. If these markets that are so important in Europe are no longer able to import mass amounts of soy and beef and to funnel cash to the actors on the ground, you take away the financial and commercial power of these actors and you are hobbling the government. You are showing the power of indigenous movements with their international partners who are pushing back. Europe is a central piece in the global strategy, as well as China, because China is a much larger consumer and financial actor, but Europe is the main investor and we need to identify this as a key leverage point to influence these actors, including the Brazilian government.

**Michelle: In the past, Bolsonaro has accused NGOs and indigenous communities of destroying the Amazon forest. The International Community might see who is actually responsible, but how do you get the message to the people?**

**Christian Poirier:** Bolsonaro was elected on a platform of fake news. People like Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro are relying on the spread of toxic discourse. It is sometimes very difficult to counter that because it spreads like wildfire on social media, but we need to speak the truth. The way that you fight someone like Bolsonaro is by influencing, maybe not his base since you can not reach them, but those people who are disillusioned. It is about the truth and the exceptional message of the indigenous community. To counter his narrative, which is a very powerful tool to do. The most important way

to build resistance is by elevating the voices of people who are bringing alternative messages that are based on the truth. Because when Bolsonaro says NGOs are lightening those fires it is not only to distract by creating a polemic, but it is also to whip up his base who will believe anything, who believe he is a victim.

**Michelle: What would be the most efficient way to create change from your point of view?**

**Christian Poirier:** I see that there is a big toolbox of ways to initiate change. For me, the way we are going to create change right now is the leverage of economic power. That is what drives political power and unless we are holding the industry and finance accountable, we will not get far. Unless we are challenging the people defending this fossil fuel-based economy, we are not going to get far. Political change is really important but I do not think it is going to happen unless other channels take the lead. That will be the economic sector that we are trying to work on right now, not just in Brazil, but all around the world.

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 **Michelle Benzing**

# Fridays for Future panel urges on fighting climate change



Photo by: Sheyda Allahverdiyeva

## ***FFF representatives point out a better education and collective action to prevent a climate crisis***

**The** second day of the YouthMundus Festival kicked off with the Fridays for Future (FFF) panel, where representatives discussed the issue of environmental protection. The panel highlighted that climate change is a result of human actions and that the solution is dependent on our willingness to fight the problem. According to the speakers, change is only possible, if we take over the responsibility of protecting the environment, both as individuals in our everyday life and collectively as a society.

"I am doing activism and I am here because of the climate catastrophe that is happening. It is very important that every single person, starting from the new generation, fights against this. Every single one of us can do his part in changing this world", said Riccardo from FFF in Rome. He argued, "We need to create a common front and to join forces. We need to do it together, because our force and the loudness of our voices are dependent on how many people will join our cause".

The panel also pointed out, how important it is to raise awareness of the climate emergency. For Riccardo, activism also means "to open eyes to a more complex reality. Knowledge, cooperation, action - those are words that can make a difference. Every single one of us can develop consciousness about what is happening". As a student in natural sciences, Riccardo aims to communicate his knowledge with the public. He claimed, "Every kind of life in our planet changed in this last year. A lot of animals and plants are going to become extinct because of our way of living". He added, "What we do not know is that the fishes in our sea are really decreasing. We should be scared, but we are not scared at all. And I strike because I want people to be scared about this".

Finally, Riccardo discussed the social injustice that goes along with the climate crisis. Riccardo said, "I am following data continuously to point fingers at the industry and the people who are mostly causing the climate change and who do not have in mind the word respect". As he stressed, the problem is that many industries do not "respect the natural rules of the planet earth", due to the fact that their only goal is to make more money. He concluded, "We are victims of a system that privileges some people and this is why most of the people are not living but are surviving".

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 **Aris Myriskos**

## Meet Global Youth Ambassador and climate activist David Wicker



Photos by: Sheyda Allahverdiyeva

### *The young student that protests every Friday for climate justice and equity*

**David** Wicker is a 14-year-old Italian activist from Turin. He is one of the Global Youth Ambassadors of the YouthMundus Festival and he spoke at the event about climate change. David participates in Fridays for Future strikes (FFF), an international movement of school students, who protest against inaction on the climate crisis.

FFF started in August 2018, when a 15-year-old student, Greta Thunberg, demonstrated for three weeks in front of the Swedish parliament. Greta spread her message about the need for action to prevent further global warming through social media. The hashtags #FridaysForFuture and #Climatestrike went viral and the movement soon attracted global attention. Today, every Friday, students and adults protest outside of their parliaments and local city halls all over the world. Explaining the reasons that motivate David to protest, he mentioned that he is scared of the future he has to live in. "We skip school on Fridays, just to skip some lessons? Absolutely not. We do it, because we are scared. But we, the youth, cannot do much; we are striking so the adults act", David argued. "Parents are still putting forward the grades instead of putting forward the future that their children will have to live in", he said.



Photos by: Sheyda Allahverdiyeva

David urges the EU and the Italian government to take into account the warnings of the scientists, asserting that they still fail to comprehend the urgency of the climate crisis. He has been organizing strikes in Turin since the beginning of 2019 and he is striking every single Friday. He also went to the streets in many other occasions. For instance, on the 25th of May 2019 he participated in the demonstration in front of the European Parliament, where students occupied the entrance of the institution for 25 hours. Describing his experience, he told the audience, "There were policemen all around us. But we stayed there together, singing and shouting, ignoring any difference between us".

Summarizing, David claimed that his activism aims to bring equity and fight injustice. He argued that while parents are teaching their children that every action has a consequence, today, young people have to pay for the mistakes of the past generations. He ended his inspiring speech stressing that "the youth of the world is coming together and everyone is united under the scream: climate justice".

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🗣️ Aris Myriskos

# The Recycle Man of India – a new definition of recycling



Photo by: Sheyda Allahverdiyeva

**“We** lost the real meaning of recycling” claims Dr. Binish Desai from India. The Cambridge Dictionary defines recycling as “[t]he process of collecting and changing old paper, glass, plastic, etc. so that it can be used again.” But partly this also generates waste. The Indian scientist, however, does not believe in the concept of “waste” because Desai claims that the concept does not truly exist in nature. To him, it is a circle of recycling, where everything goes back to nature itself. Furthermore, Dr. Desai criticizes Western countries that externalize their waste by exporting it to countries in the Global South. But why is a different definition of recycling such an important issue? He concludes that waste was

generated by human consumption, which makes it humanity's responsibility to deal with the consequences.

"Have you ever wondered what happens to the newspaper you read in the morning?", the social entrepreneur asks the audience. He explains that about 60% gets recycled and the rest will be dumped. That is when the young innovator and author of the new book "The Recycle man", started his recycling idea by the age of 11 through carrying out experiments with the waste of paper and chewing gum. The dumped rests of the newspapers build the base, while the chewing gum holds it together: a brick out of waste.

At the YouthMundus Festival, he presented his idea of bricks in order to build houses in India, especially in the rural areas and so-called Slums; "I dream of a world where one person's waste becomes the other person's treasure". But it was not an easy start for the young inventor because the topic of "waste" and someone working with it used to be a taboo in his community in India. Nevertheless, at the age of 16, he started his first project by founding his company "Eco Eclectic Technology" with just about 25 Euros in his pocket. What used to be waste now helps to create houses, toilets, furniture, lamps, clocks and other affordable and economic products. "Let's all of us take waste as a natural resource," he invited the young activists around him.

The process is easy: the waste gets neutralized, so that it is not in any way contaminated. It gets washed and naturally dried for about 4-6 hours. That is how, together with his team, he recycled more than 700 tons of Industrial waste. Furthermore, his micro social enterprise "Eco Lights Studio" supports the empowerment of women in rural areas by employing them for the construction of the bricks in the backyard of their homes and training them to convert waste into luxury decor. You never know, "the rest of your toilet paper might become a sustainable brick one day", Dr. Desai concludes at the end of his panel.

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Michelle Benzing

# Hannah Testa in YouthMundus: When you know better you do better



Photo by: Sheyda Allahverdiyeva

## *How a school student founded an organization to protect the environment and animal rights*

**Hannah** Testa is a 17-year-old American environmentalist and animal rights advocate. She founded the organization Hannah4Change to educate adults and children on animal rights, plastic pollution and climate change. As one of the YouthMundus Global Youth Ambassadors, she shared her personal story to encourage the attendees to get involved in activism.

One of Hannah's favourite hobbies is gardening. "I was always passionate about mother earth and I love being out in the nature playing and feeling connected to the earth," she said to the audience. So, her story begins at the age of 4, when

she realized that no one in her class in school had a garden. She then decided to grow tomatoes and give them to her classmates on Earth Day, to explain them why we celebrate this day and why it is important to have an organic garden.

Later, when she became aware of global issues that affect animals, as the illegal killing of African elephants or the dolphin hunt in Japan, she knew she “could not sit back and not take action”. Therefore she started fundraising, participating in protests and she managed to introduce a state bill to protect endangered animals.

In addition, at the age of 10, Hannah started raising awareness on the problem of plastic pollution. As she explained, her perception of the issue changed when she watched the documentary “Plastic Paradise”. “It really opened my eyes, in terms of how much impact we have as individuals. I thought that, since I recycle my plastic, I was doing my part. But after watching this documentary I realized I was not actually,” she said.

After Hannah convinced her family to make a shift in their daily life regarding the usage of plastic, she knew she could not stop there. She said, “I had to educate other people. So I reached out to my local library to show them the documentary. I was really nervous, wondering if the librarian would listen to a 10-year-old? But my mom always says: if you do not ask, you do not get. So I ended up having a screening of the documentary. And this screening had 100 people that showed up, just to hear a 10-year-old talking about plastic pollution.”

Finishing her speech Hannah stressed that this experience was really important for her, as it motivated her to engage in more voluntary activities. She told the audience, “I remember someone said to me: when you know better, you do better and that kept me going.” Since then, Hannah has delivered presentations to over 20,000 people across the world, as well as to various businesses and governments on how to reduce their plastic footprint.

**ONE for ALL  
and ALL for  
ONE**

**LGBTIQ\* and**

**Women's rights**

## Transgender representation in movies: Interview with Lukas von Horbatschewsky



*The 19-year-old actor Lukas is one of the ambassadors at the Youth Mundus Festival for mental health and LGBTIQ\* rights. In the German youtube serie "Druck" he plays the transgender character David who falls in love with the main character Matteo in the third season. During his panels at the festival Lukas talked about support for people with mental health problems, the representation of transgender in movies and the importance of friendship.*



**Michelle:** You are here as a LGBTIQ\* ambassador at the Youth Mundus Festival. Being transgender yourself and playing a transgender character in the series "Druck", what do you think about the representation of transgender in movies?

**Lukas:** In recent times transgender became more of a topic, so it is changing definitely for the better. Back in the day, there was a lot of trans representation of characters that get killed or are the victims, which is important in

my opinion, because you show the public what problems they have to go through, get more empathy for them and understand their struggles better. But when we are moving on from this educational part at some point, which I think we are moving towards, we have to start trying to incorporate characters that represent the trans community and where transgender people can identify with the character. As you can probably understand – no one wants to identify with a character that gets killed or bullied. It is nice to see trans representation in a positive light and

it is giving hope to people who experienced the same thing. They see: it is going to be okay for the character I love, so I guess it is going to be good for me some time too.

**Michelle:** How did you experience what you just described in the series “Druck” for yourself and the character David?

**Lukas:** It definitely applies to “Druck”, because the character I played was not outed as transgender until the last three episodes. So the general public, that did not know me beforehand, they just watched the series and experienced him as a normal boy, which is really important to us and the writers. Furthermore, he was also the love interest of the main character, which was his main purpose in the story. Of course he had his secret of being transgender and there was a conflict in the whole story line where he got outed in school and that obviously scared him. But the message in the end was not: be careful and do not be outed. All his friends and his love interest stood up for him and beside him, so it is a positive message in the end. It was the first time that I saw this storyline with a transgender character. It was especially important for me, because the original did not have the aspect with transgender and so I was really proud that the German production decided to do it differently.

**Michelle:** The German series also caused a lot of attention on social media. What do you think about the representation of transgender in the media in general?

**Lukas:** Looking for trans representation in the media, it is most of the time transwomen, which is great if you look at Orange is the New Black for example. It is amazing that trans women get more opportunities to show how beautiful their community is, but trans men are not really represented in the media, especially not in Germany. This can come from people just not telling, which is totally fine, because someone

wants to be just the actor and not the trans actor. I can totally understand, because I am trying not to be this one thing only. But in the end of the day I think it is very important to have trans men representation as well.

**Michelle:** You are here as an ambassador for mental health as well. Do you think social media is dangerous for people with mental health issues or is it rather a platform of support? How important is support in real life?

**Lukas:** Depends on where you go in social media. There are so many different corners and some corners glorify mental health issues. They glorify: Oh I am depressed. So they kind of make it their identity. I think this is very hurtful, because if you make it all that you are about, you are not trying to overcome it anymore. If people encourage you to do so, you feel like that is the thing you have to do. Communities can be helpful and damaging. It really depends on where you go and with whom you connect with. For those reasons, I would try to have at least one friend in the real world. I have my friend and we know each other since I was one-year-old. She and I know when something is wrong and talk to each other. It can be any person, just someone that tells you: it is not your identity to be sick, it is not something you should want, it is something you can overcome and I am here for you and I will help you with it. A lot of people turn to the internet for support, but sometimes seeing someone face to face like a psychologist is better than listening to someone else who has the same problems. But it is hard for me to judge, if everyone is getting the right support from the internet. At the end of the day everyone makes his or her own decision. But I always try to say: try not to make your mental illness your identity, because you are more than that.

## **Michelle: What did you take away from the Youth Mundus Festival?**

**Lukas:** Festivals like these can bring people together and also in our minds. I am here as mental health ambassador and for LGBTIQ\* rights, and there were so many presentations about climate change. I know about it, I even decided to come here by train, but not that much about plastic. I did not know how big the problem of plastic pollution in the sea was and what you could do about it. This is just amazing to open your mind to other topics that are so important as well. We can not get stuck in the problems we have, that are really important to us personally. You understand when you meet other people that are so personally affected by something else, because you realize: oh it affects me as well and we are all having similar issues here.

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🗣️ **Michelle Benzing**

# The social and structural dimension of sex discrimination

**Aris:** What is the public's reaction to your support of intersex people?

**Ino:** Unfortunately, when you talk about this topic, people often have this image of strange persons. We are just saying that they are human beings and that there is nothing different or wrong with them. We are all different.

**Francesca:** It is really important to educate people. If you speak about your story and your point of view, you can expand the point of view of others.

**Aris:** Speaking in YouthMundus against unnecessary genital surgeries on children, you mentioned that health professionals are not interested to hear your arguments on this issue.

**Francesca:** The philosophical approach is not so good for the medical class. Maybe I am exaggerating a bit, but it seems that the process of questioning is sometimes difficult for the scientific mentality. It is very important to demonstrate that, yes, there are facts but these facts are interpreted by persons. So, we can change the interpretation of the facts. The dualism between male and female is a cultural pattern and it is very important to deconstruct this pattern.

## An interview with representatives of the group Intersexioni.

*Intersexioni was founded in 2013. It is a group of activists and scholars that stand for gender equality and aim to fight all kinds of sex discrimination. Ino and Francesca represented Intersexioni at the YouthMundus Festival. They discussed how their organization supports the activism of intersex people and they spoke to Orange Magazine about their perspective on this issue.*

**Aris:** Judith Butler suggests that gender is performative. She views gender not as an expression of oneself, but rather as something that a person does. She asserts that our behaviour creates our gender. Can you deconstruct this cultural pattern through performativity?

**Francesca:** Yes, this is why, in my opinion, the problem of being either a male or a female is not really a problem, because you can state your identity in a performative way.

**Ino:** But I would say that it is not only about performative statements, as we have rights and duties that are bound to the fact that we are classified and categorized as male and female. So, it is not just something social and cultural but it became even structural. Since our society is still based on categories, in particular sex and gender categories, we are dealing with a social problem that became structural. This problem really influences a huge amount of our society

and it is not that easy to be what you want to be, because often there are many obstacles.

**Francesca:** For me, it is not important to create another hegemonic pronoun. It is important to learn to skip the hegemonic discourse and to recognize that the political habitat is a performative habitat.

**Aris: Do you think that intersex groups would benefit from an intersectional solution to sex and sexual orientation discrimination?**

**Ino:** It is really important to differentiate, as there is still a lot of confusion about different issues. For instance, what transgender people face and what intersex people face. This is the reason why some intersex associations and movements are against being part of this big family of LGBTIQ\*. They do not want to create more confusion about the connection between sexual orientation and gender identity. From a legal perspective, I would say that it is true that there are some commonalities. The question, if more specific rights are required - like rights for women, intersex and transgender groups- or if a more general law is needed, is a big discussion. These two different ways need to be studied, so we can have a clear picture with respect to what could work better. For example, regarding the specific case of genital surgeries, one solution would be to prohibit all forms of unnecessary and not urgent genital surgeries on children.

**Francesca:** From a philosophical perspective, this is an aporetic discussion. You can continuously expand your horizon, but in my opinion, maybe our world after all is so complex that it is impossible to design an ideal pattern, apply it now and expect it to work forever.

# Highlights of the event



Photos by: Sheyda Allahverdiyeva

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