

# GIMUN DAY CONFERENCE 2021



**POPÆDIA**



Report and impressions of the conference

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## SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

What happens when you combine three humanitarians in a room full of young students tired of bearing the dreadful consequences of global warming? Actually, you leave with a new restored hope for the future. This year, GIMUN had the pleasure of holding a Day Conference at the United Nations. The conference started with insightful discussions about experiences and thoughts on the current state of affairs regarding the climate crisis held by three humanitarian Guest Speakers: Lars Peter Nissen, Nishanie Jayamaha and Amir Khouzam.

Mr Nissen, visiting professor at the University of Copenhagen and director of ACAPS since 2009, shared four central points which he believes are crucial to move forward in the right direction. The first step is to transform individual challenges and unite beyond nations. Secondly, we must fix the unequal concentration of power and how it affects vulnerable nations. Thirdly, innovation is key in tackling the climate crisis as new technology is important in cutting down gas emissions. Lastly, governments must be renewed in order to tackle issues on a more local scale.

Ms Jayamaha is a Humanitarian Affairs Specialist and has a lot of experience coordinating humanitarian mechanisms and programs. For her, it's important that we remember that vulnerable people also have power. Human beings globally know how to adapt and take action and will continue to do so, as power doesn't only lie within governments. People at a local level take action regardless of inaction of the state and we must focus more on supporting communities on the ground. We must include these people in the decision making process and our learning. As individuals, we should also pay attention to our acts on a day to day basis.

Our third guest was ICRC Policy Adviser Mr Khouzam, who has experience at the intersection of humanitarian action, peacebuilding and diplomacy. He reminded us that climate change is already creating humanitarian needs. Fragile countries are already in stress and dealing with broken infrastructures. These countries lack a resilience capacity to deal with the crisis and lack resources to fight against the effects of global warming. Over half of the 25 countries the most severely hit are already affected by war. Humanitarian actions need to be accompanied by strong political powers and loud voices. We must focus on how we can help and what different responses are possible.

# GIMUN DAY CONFERENCE 2021

## INTERVIEWS

Did you have any expectations for this Conference Day?

*"I was mostly really excited to see what it's like to be in the UN, it's the first time being here for me and it's a whole new dimension."*

What stood out the most from the Guest Speaker's discussion for you?

*"Definitely the part about uniting beyond nations, this is really something that stood out to me. How can we do this, how can we communicate with each other? Also the part about agency and power as an individual, and how you're actually able to change things even though you think you can't."*

Aline Leutwiler, Delegate of Republic of Kiribati

This is your first time participating at an event with GIMUN, how has your experience been so far?

*"I'm enjoying it quite a lot. It's very new for me and I like how you get to see all the sides of the debate, discuss and hear other opinions. I haven't grasped all the rules yet but it's coming along quite well. I have a friend here who's helping me so that's great. I'm enjoying it and I might sign up for the Delegation next year."*

Siobann, co-delegate of Russia had her very first experience in a Debate at the United Nations.



# GIMUN DAY CONFERENCE 2021



Would you agree that our generation of young people in general feels more pressure to fix global warming related issues compared to previous generations?



*"Yes, I think so. Something that struck me is that when you talk to older people in general, or at least in my case since I was a child my parents have told me that I was going to have big problems when I grow up to which I replied, that was their fault! Seeing as not all the guilt is pushed on us and that we're actually all suffering from it and we all have the same problem, their generation might not see direct consequences from climate change but they still want to help create a better future for their children and future generations."*

Questions to Secretary General and experienced member of the Chair, Darius Harnisch

Was there anything particular during the Guest Speaker's presentation about climate change that surprised or inspired you?

*"It was inspiring that they also included us as part of the solution, the ones who have the most power. Especially Mr. Nissen, who spoke specifically about how our generation has immense power with social media and also Ms. Jayamaha who spoke about advocacy and what we can do to combat frustration and hopelessness. It was good to know they're also in the same situation as us and are trying their best to do what they can in their position."*

Darius Harnisch

I noticed that you were very passionate during your opening speech. Is it easy for you to represent this country given the difficult circumstances it's in regarding climate change?

*"Yes, the country is very impacted by climate change and is almost underwater, so there's a sense of urgency for them."*

Aline Leutwiler, Delegate of Republic of Kiribati, who presented a very passionate and impactful opening speech on the imminent dangers that the country was facing due to global warming.

*"I've never represented South Korea before but it's always great learning about a new country and the ins and outs of their policies on a specific topic, so discovering South Korea's way of mitigating climate change effects and whether or not they accept climate refugees, (which they don't by the way) it's interesting to argue for them and has been a fun experience."*

Delegate of South Korea, Erin Hayes, who was recognised by the Chair as the best Delegate of the debate

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## CONCLUSION

The GIMUN Day Event was a success in many ways. Not only did the Delegates manage to write two resolution proposals and find a middle ground, but it also offered us an enriching dialogue surrounding the future handling of the climate crisis. We shouldn't forget that we are the leaders of tomorrow and that we do, as we found out, have the power to make meaningful change.



*These interviews were collected by Popaedia Co-Heads Sofia Quadrini and Narjes Dhaif, on Wednesday 17th of November, 2021. Text written by Sofia Quadrini and Zoé Cottez, digital editing by Sofia Quadrini and Valentin Gloor. Photos courtesy of Geoffrey Cherubin.*