

Policy plan UPEACE Centre The Hague (UPH) for the period 2021-2025

The aim of UPH is to assist and promote in Europe the University for Peace in Costa Rica (UPEACE). Looking back to the policy plan 2018 – 2020 shows that UPH has taken steps in fulfilling its plans, despite the year 2020 with the covid-19 pandemic.

In 2018 UPH presented a report “Blue Helmets in Donbas” with options and possibilities for deploying a UN peace-keeping force in the Ukrainian region Donbas. This report was the start of quiet diplomacy conducted by UPH Chairman Robert Serry, and later was transferred to the European Institute of Peace in Brussels, with Robert Serry as special advisor.

In March 2019, UPH organized a conference in The Hague to promote UPEACE, with about 200 guests and speakers. The keynote speech was delivered by special guest Sigrid Kaag, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. This created positive reactions from students, academics and diplomats. Due to this outcome the board of UPH decided to organize a special event once each year, but this could not be fulfilled in 2020.

In April 2021, UPH organised in cooperation with UPEACE and the European Institute of Peace a webinar on the subject: “The role of quiet diplomacy in international relations”. The main purpose of the event was to reach out to students, so it was combined with information by the Dean of UPEACE. About 60 students from different countries in Europe followed the webinar and UPH received very positive reactions, so this might be the start of similar webinars in the future.

UPH plans for 2021-2025

The above-mentioned events are examples of reaching out to students, of ways to combine practice and theory, and to co-operate with UPEACE and other institutes. UPH will organize similar events at least once per year.

In coordination with UPEACE, UPH will seek to maintain and strengthen the unique relationship of UPEACE with the UN system, including by helping to ensure internships for its students. In this regard, UPH will also explore possibilities for internships with international institutions in The Hague and Brussels. Students who have applied for a Master with UPH assistance will be prioritised.

UPH will continue to explore opportunities and to assist UPEACE when needed to enter into partnership agreements (for example: Double Degrees) with universities in the Netherlands and in Europe. This includes assistance with ongoing partnerships, such as the Master course in Water Cooperation and Diplomacy, jointly carried by IHE Delft, Oregon State University and UPEACE.

In addition, UPEACE and UPH will study the possibility to have students at Dutch and other European studies follow courses (online or in person) at UPEACE in order to gain some credits (ECTS). This could be done either with courses already running at UPEACE or by designing a new course, for example in conflict management and quiet Track II diplomacy. Another possibility would be the option of connecting students in Costa Rica and from Dutch and other European universities in joint research projects. UPH could provide the bridge between UPEACE and a Dutch university whereby students could jointly gather and analyse data about issues with urgent societal impact (a UPEACE-UPH Diplomacy Lab?).

UPH intends to promote short study visits of selected groups to UPEACE, optionally to be combined with visits to UPEACE-connected National Parks or other places of interest in Costa Rica. This could be done in collaboration with a (Dutch) travel agency and in close concertation with UPEACE.

Upon request of UPEACE, UPH is ready to help to facilitate study visits for UPEACE students to The Hague – city of international justice. For example, visits to the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court or other institutions could be organised for students enrolled in the dual degree M.A. in Development Studies and Diplomacy by UNITAR and UPEACE.

UPH intends to focus special projects on international conflict management and the role of quiet diplomacy in international relations (for example, the ongoing Track II Ukraine-Russia dialogue project) and will continue to share information about these activities with UPEACE, including by offering special lectures to students. If possible, the parties will support each other's special projects, including by helping to generate funding.

UPH may recommend qualified scholars and/or senior practitioners, which would be able to contribute to UPEACE programs and activities. This could also be realised by organising on-line lectures.