

DPCR

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ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DPCR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



Photo: David Naylor



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Words from the chair

Dear Alumni,

As I am typing these words, my mind takes me to the vivid corridors of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research (DPCR) at Uppsala University. The halls echo with fervent discussions and passionate academic debates, serving as a reflection of our shared dedication to comprehending and resolving some of the intricate challenges that the world faces.

The DPCR was established over fifty years ago. Since 1971, we have been driven by a thirst for knowledge and are constantly exploring novel and inventive methods to address the pressing challenges of our era. This year, we proudly celebrate the 10th anniversary of the DPCR Alumni Association, a testament to our ties to our esteemed institution and our collective dedication to advancing peace.

The DPCR is a beacon of research, nurturing curious minds. Our alumni association strives to enhance this legacy by providing opportunities for alumni to reconnect and share insights on the ongoing discussions about peace and conflict.

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Marking this 10-year milestone of our association, I'm overwhelmed with gratitude. It's more than just the passage of time—it's about the indelible moments we've created and the promising horizon we collectively strive towards.

Throughout the year, our association have continued to recruit new members and stayed connected with our previous members through various in-person meetings. The purpose of this annual newsletter is to further enhance our relationship with the alumni and to keep them informed about the association's activities and accomplishments.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,
Mert Can Yilmaz



Mert Can Yilmaz

President of the DPCR Alumni Association
(2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024)

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About the association

The DPCR Alumni Association strives to enhance the bond between past and present students and staff, both professionally and socially. We also aim to establish a stronger connection between the alumni and the Department of Peace and Conflict Research. To achieve this, we organize various events, including lectures and social gatherings, that are open to all members.

Sign-up: Join the Association by signing up for free in the UU Alumni Network. You can access the network via pcr.uu.se/alumni/about-us/ or contact us at dpcr@alumni.uu.se.

Insights from the Former Presidents: Gudlaug Olafsdottir and Marie Allansson

Juan Diego Duque Salazar

The DPCR Alumni Association, guided by former presidents Gudlaug Olafsdottir and Marie Allansson, has thrived and matured over the years. In two separate conversations, they offer insights into the evolution of the association and the role the association plays in the lives of its members. As we celebrate the tenth year, let's delve into the journey that have shaped this community over the decade with our former presidents.

Why do you believe that an alumni network is important?

Gudlaug: I think that an alumni network has the potential to be a bridge between people with similar interests. If the network is large and active its members can gain opportunities to reach out to people in their field of interest that they might not have met, but who have a common perspective and training. It also helps those that already know one another to stay in touch and continue to learn from each other as their careers progress. Through the network the department can continuously learn from those working more practically with the issues that we study, which is of course very valuable for our research. Similarly, maintaining links with the department can be useful for graduates that want to stay up to date on current research, and let this feed into their practice.

Marie: An alumni network is a valuable tool to keep in touch with the university and former classmates, regardless if you are in Uppsala or on another continent. It is also an opportunity to meet alumni who studied at the University during a different time period. For the university/department an alumni network offers a great opportunity to stay in contact with former students and for example learn more about career opportunities for current students.



Gudlaug Olafsdottir

Former President of the Association
(2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021)



Marie Allansson

Former President of the Association
(2015-2016 and 2016-2017)

Looking back on your time as president, what accomplishments are you most proud of in terms of what the Alumni Association was able to achieve?

Gudlaug: I am proud of the development of the mentorship program, which was piloted during my time as president. I hope that it can help achieve the goal of linking our students with alumni who are already active in careers that the students aspire to.

Marie: When I was elected president, the Alumni Association had only existed for a couple of years and the primary focus was on outreach and increasing the number of alumni activities. During 2015-2016 the number of members grew substantially and several well-attended activities were arranged. This work continued during the next term, which also saw the re-launch of the Alumni Newsletter. All thanks to great teamwork both within the Alumni Board as well as with other members of the Alumni Association.

What were some of the most memorable events or activities that took place during your time as president of the Alumni Association?

Gudlaug: We had a really successful mingle together with the alumni association of the political science department in Stockholm. It was well attended and many people from both networks met. These types of collaborations are particularly fruitful in terms of providing opportunities for establishing new contacts with others with similar interests yet whom we otherwise wouldn't have met.

Marie: A couple of the most memorable events were the pub quizzes at Smålands nation. It was great fun, both to come up with the questions as well as to see such engagement from fellow alumni. Questions ranged from dinosaurs and ghost towns to war ships and the name of cocktails. The first pub quiz, in 2015, coincided with the arrival of the department's, at that time, brand new profile t-shirt. Hence the quiz prize was a given. Another memorable event was posting hundreds of luggage tags with the text "DPCR, Uppsala University" to alumni members all over the world. Hopefully they all arrived at their final destination!

In your opinion, what is the most valuable benefit that the Alumni Association can provide to its members?

Gudlaug: I believe that the greatest benefit is providing a network, an opportunity for maintaining and establishing contacts within one's field of interest. As the network grows, and becomes more active with different types of initiatives, such as mingles and mentorship programmes, it becomes ever more useful.

Marie: The most valuable benefit the Association can provide, both then and now, is probably to serve as a link both to the Department and to fellow alumni. An opportunity to stay in contact, reconnect with former classmates or perhaps find a fellow alumnus to connect with when moving to a new country. Have a look at the class notes in this newsletter, perhaps there are alumni of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research working within the same organization as yourself!

DPCR Alumni Talks 2023: Water, Climate, and Peace

Jenniina Kotajoki

On May 10th, the DPCR Alumni Association and the Uppsala Peace and Development Students' Association (UPaD) jointly organized a discussion on "Water, Climate, and Peace." The talk was part of the DPCR Alumni Association's annual Alumni Talks series. The event was chaired moderated by Vivian Hoac, the Head of Education at UpaD. The panelists included Ashok Swain, Anders Jägerskog, Kyungmee Kim and Jakob Schabus. The discussion was well-attended and it was heartening to see so many people interested in the important topic on a sunny May evening.



Ashok Swain, the Head of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research (DPCR), emphasized the importance of combining knowledge on water, conflicts, cooperation and politics. All the speakers agreed that the significance of this nexus is expected to increase due to climate change. Anders Jägerskog, Program Manager of the Cooperation on International Waters in Africa (CIWA) Trust Fund at the World Bank, described the work of the World Bank in promoting cooperative water resources management and development in Africa. He highlighted the importance of academic research for policy work and the broad impacts of water management on development issues.

Kyungmee Kim, a researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute with a PhD in Peace and Conflict Research from Uppsala University, emphasized the importance of increased research on the issues of water, conflicts, and peace at different levels of analysis. She also stressed the benefits of the skills gained at the DPCR for her research and policy work, encouraging the students in the audience to utilize these competencies. Similarly, Jakob Schabus, Communications Manager at Stockholm International Water Institute and a former research assistant at the DPCR, brought forth the importance of building cooperation between different types of actors such as states, industries and international organizations. He also alluded to the need to assess the relevance of existing cooperation in the future due to climate change. The speakers expressed concern about the effects of increasing militarization on the issues of water, climate, and peace, but were hopeful about the solutions that research and cooperative policies can provide.

The DPCR Alumni Association thanks all speakers and participants for this engaging and timely discussion.

Alumni General Meeting 2023

A new alumni board for 2023/2024 was elected at the Annual General Meeting on 7 June. The new board consists of Mert Can Yilmaz (President), Juan Diego Duque Salazar (Vice-President), Matiss Krafte (Secretary), Maxine Leis (Treasurer) and Karolina Schützer (Department Liaison).

The DPCR Alumni Association was founded in June 2013 with the aim of strengthening and fostering contacts and networks between former and current student of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research. Membership is open for anyone who has

- a) obtained credits in at least one course taught at the Department,
- b) worked, taught, or carried out research at the Department,
- c) been recommended for membership by the Board of the Association.

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Class notes 2023

Nina Bilal (Class of '15): Hej alla! I am currently based in the north of Sweden in Luleå where I work as a postdoctoral researcher at Luleå Tekniska Universitet (LTU). I am exploring the area of sustainable food production in the Swedish and global context. Also, I continue developing my previous interests, i.e. entrepreneurship with the focus on immigrants, migration and diversity management. In my free time I spend time with my family and explore the Scandinavian nature.

Clara Orstadius (Class of '18): Hey hey! I currently work as a Research Officer at the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy, a Sida-financed NGO focusing on SDG localization. After my BA at DPCR, I worked with interreligious dialogue in Cyprus for a couple of years, did a masters in conflict & human rights in Utrecht University, and then ended up in development instead, based in tiny Visby but in international work. As a research officer, my role is to connect academics and local authorities and help bridge the gap between science and policy.

Pauline Bloeth (Class of '19): Hej! I'm Pauline and after graduation started working in German development cooperation (GIZ), first in the Afghanistan/Pakistan portfolio (based in Germany), then in Security Risk Management for Central and West Africa (based in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire) and now I'm working in Safeguard Management (based in Germany).

Tristan Ober (Class of '19): Hey everyone! My name is Tristan and I graduated from the DPCR in 2019. I currently work as senior policy officer / deputy coordinator for the counterterrorism and extremism unit of the municipality of The Hague. I primarily focus on our signaling structure regarding radicalization, as well as increasing awareness among local professionals and dealing with political questions or motions from our city council.

Inge Volleberg (Class of '22): Hej! After graduating last year, I moved to Brussels-region taking on the researcher and coordinator position at Inclusion Europe. Inclusion Europe is a European member-based organization representing 20 million people with intellectual disabilities and their families in Europe, fighting for their human rights and an inclusive Europe! I am also the coordinator of the European Expert Group on the transition from institutional to community-based care.

Maël Hanon (Class of '22): Hej hej! After having enjoyed half of a Swedish summer after graduation, I moved to Bogotá, Colombia, to continue my work for the child rights organization War Child (for whom I initially did my internship at the Stockholm office as part of the Master program). After a couple of months in and around Bogotá, I moved to Geneva, Switzerland, where I have been working as a trainee at the HQ of the ICRC :)

Giulia Messmer (Class of '22): Hello everyone, I'm Giulia and currently working as Head of Media Department & Spokesperson at Sea-Watch. Sea-Watch is a non-profit organization that conducts civil search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea. In the presence of the politically induced crisis, Sea-Watch provides emergency relief capacities, demands and pushes for rescue operations by European institutions and stands up publicly for safe passage to the EU. During my Master's degree, and until a few months after, I worked as Project Manager at the Safe Passage Foundation where I'm still voluntarily involved.

Hayk Smbatyan (Class of '22): Hej hej, Hayk here! After graduation, I moved back to Armenia where I'm from, and took the position of Deputy Research Director at the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC)-Armenia, which is a local independent research foundation with a regional focus. While continuing publishing and working up my way to a doctoral degree in sociology, I am also relishing teaching "Conflict Studies" and "Research Planning & Methods" to Bachelor students at Yerevan State University.



Photo: David Naylor