

# BIG 'THINK'

## The Power & Potential of Youth Advocacy to Build Peace

A lively intergenerational conversation on the power of youth activism and how best to engage the leaders of tomorrow.

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Virtual Event  
Thurs., Aug. 10th  
10-11 AM ET  
Zoom

Program Agenda  
& Speaker Bios



Raising Children  
of Peace

A LECTURE SERIES

Yale

# “The Power and Potential of Youth Advocacy to Build Peace”

*A lively intergenerational conversation on the power of youth activism and how best to engage the leaders of tomorrow*

## Program Agenda

### Introduction & Opening Remarks



**Kyle D. Pruett, M.D.** *Clinical Professor of Child Psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine, Founding member of the Early Childhood Peace Consortium (ECPC)*

Young people across the globe share a philosophy: 'nothing about us without us'. It means no policy passed, no declaration read, and no resolution signed that impacts the life of young people without the input of young people. They want a seat at the table, and they're willing to raise their voices to get it. The voices of that input are richly diverse in focus and intent, just as those of the other generations at that table.

This seminar, led by Dr. Kyle Pruett and Kyle King, Yale '24, will feature three distinguished youth leaders from around the globe who will share their journeys as advocates - their passions, their successes, and the many challenges they've faced along the way toward building a more peaceful world. A lively cross-generational discussion moderated by UNICEF Program Officer Aditi Shrikhande, and a brief Q&A with members from the audience, will follow.

This seminar seeks to lay a foundation for enhanced intergenerational cooperation, providing a space to come together to find and better ways to build a brighter tomorrow.



**Kyle King, Yale '24.** *Global Youth Advocate for UNICEF USA; Former Member National Council UNICEF USA; Member ECPC Research Working Group (USA)*

*Talk: Same kid, different spaces*

I started advocacy work with both the International OCD Foundation (IOCDF) and UNICEF when I was 14 - certainly on the younger side of things. Despite my age, both organizations welcomed my participation, though they welcomed me quite differently. That is, the IOCDF and UNICEF engaged with and facilitated my early work differently - neither management style was necessarily better, but they both came with unique upsides and challenges. I will begin by discussing why I chose to advocate around mental health and education, providing the context for my work with both organizations. I will then discuss my experiences as a youth advocate in both organizations, detailing how both helped and hindered my journey at different points in time, in hopes of bolstering the activism of younger generations to come.

### Guest Speakers



**Penelope Lea.** *UNICEF Ambassador, Climate Justice Activist, Author (Norway)*

*Talk: Youth advocacy and the fight for climate justice*

I will talk about my own experiences working for climate justice, and why I believe the perspective of human rights and climate change, and how peacebuilding and climate justice work are related, is so important. I will touch upon some of the challenges that many youth activists face in the fight for climate justice: The struggle for funding and financial freedom, and the importance of creating safe spaces for activists from countries where political activism is dangerous. How can creating political organizations for children be a way to do early peace-work? And how may we all contribute?



**Dominique Ogreanu.** *Head of Youth Participation @ the Federation of NGOs for Children's Rights - FONPC, Board Member of S.A.F.E (Romania)*

*Talk: Navigating activism: Making space for care*

Acting as strongholds of memory and intergenerational connectivity, youth networks are built on the support they receive from activists who have dedicated their entire lives to creating a kinder world. It is difficult to control the anger you first feel at systems of oppression when you become part of a movement, and it is easy to be overcome with grief when the status quo seems immutable. These two experiences are cathartic in the journey of youth advocates, which is why guidance from adults is a vital part of keeping momentum and defining a collective identity.

Through Dominique's personal experience, this talk will focus on how to navigate the upheavals of fostering hope when hit with resistance, redirecting rage from within to community organizing and making space for intergenerational support in advocacy.





**Priyanka Lalla.** *UNICEF Youth Advocate for the Eastern Caribbean, Chair of the National Child Rights Steering Committee and Published author/illustrator (Trinidad, Tobago)*

**Talk: My journey ...**

...began in 2017 after Hurricanes Irma and Maria hit the Leeward Islands; I saw the unimaginable devastation so close to home. I felt compelled to take action, even if that meant starting out on my own, in my home and community. I just knew I needed to start somewhere.

I realized that what I had been taught in school - *reuse, reduce, recycle* was so disconnected from meaningful climate action. Hence, I started the Zero Waste Lunchkit initiative where I encouraged children in my school to pack a zero-waste lunch kit with vegetables and fruits they would grow in their own home gardens or kitchens. This one simple act of packing a lunch kit with no waste would have an enormous impact on the health and sustainability of my community. It addressed the issue of NCDs, the climate crisis, and mental health. Imagine if the whole region was supported in packing a Zero Waste Lunchkit.

This is an example of one of my initiatives, which demonstrates truly that we do not need to reinvent the wheel. The solutions already exist. We simply need to support of our policymakers, governments, and educators to provide the opportunities and resources to empower our young people. Education gives us a voice. Not only educating our young people and children but also parents, guardians, and teachers.

### Cross-generational Discussion and Q&A Session



**Moderated by Aditi Shrikhande, M.A.** *Early Childhood Development Programme Officer, Nutrition and Child Development section, UNICEF New York Headquarters; Member, ECPC Expert Support Group (UAE)*

With a background in early childhood development in emergencies and peacebuilding at UNICEF and core experience at the ECPC Secretariat, Aditi will share UNICEFs approaches to peacebuilding across the life course, based on the rights of children and young people. She will lead a lively intergenerational conversation among discussants on the power of youth activism and how best to engage young leaders, followed by a brief Q&A with the listening audience.



**Closing Remarks with Dr. Kyle D. Pruett**



***Stay connected!***

### To learn more about how you can become a volunteer youth advocate:

- Visit [UNICEF UNITE Clubs](#).
- Visit [U.N. Careers](#) to seek an internship at the United Nations.

### About the Early Childhood Peace Consortium (ECPC)

The [ECPC](#) is a global consortium of United Nations agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, academia, practitioners, and the private sector focused on sharing scientific and practice-based evidence on how investment in early childhood development (ECD) can contribute to sustainable peace, social cohesion, and social justice. We recognize that investing in ECD is a powerful and cost-effective strategy for reducing violence, poverty, and exclusion and for building peaceful societies.

- Follow the ECPC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [iTunes](#), and [YouTube](#).
- Subscribe to the [ECPC e-Newsletter](#).



## Speaker Biographies

### Kyle D. Pruett, M.D. (Co-founder ECPC)



Dr. Kyle D. Pruett is a clinical professor of child psychiatry at the Yale Child Study Center and the School of Nursing, has been named president of Zero to Three, a national nonprofit organization of pediatricians and child development specialists who share new knowledge about children's early development with parents, policy makers and other professionals. Dr. Pruett is nationally known for his work with traumatized children and for research on how fathers influence their young children's development. Dr. Pruett says the issues of quality medical and day care will be a primary focus of his work for Zero to Three, which is under the auspices of the National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families. [More.](#)

### Kyle King



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attend medical school upon graduation.

Kyle King is a 21-year old mental health advocate from the United States. Kyle first began advocacy with the International OCD Foundation in eighth grade after being diagnosed with OCD himself. Around the same time, Kyle began volunteering with UNICEF, energized by the mission to increase access to education for children everywhere. Over the years, he has grown in both organizations. He has served two terms as a UNICEF USA National Council member and is currently a Global Youth Advocate for UNICEF USA. In addition, Kyle is one of the senior National Advocate with the International OCD Foundation, having received the 2022 Hero award for his dedication to community. Outside of advocacy, Kyle is a rising senior at Yale '24 and plans to

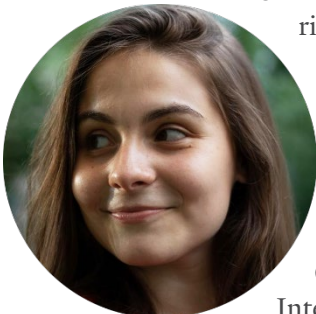
### Penelope Lea



rights, peacebuilding, freedom of expressions and democracy. For several years she has attended and worked at global summits and conferences.

Penelope Lea is an 18-year-old climate justice activist, UNICEF Ambassador, and author from Norway. She started her work in 2013 when she joined the Eco Agents and became the leader of Eco Agents Oslo. From 2016–2020, she was a member of the Children's Climate Panel and led the panel from 2018–2020. In 2018, she received the Norwegian volunteer prize. She was appointed UNICEF ambassador in 2020. In 2021 she worked for the International Comity of Nature and Youth, and published her first book, entitled «I hverandres verden»/«In each other's world- 11 conversations about climate, nature, activism, politics and human rights». She is committed to highlighting the connections between climate change and human rights, children's

### Dominique Ogreau

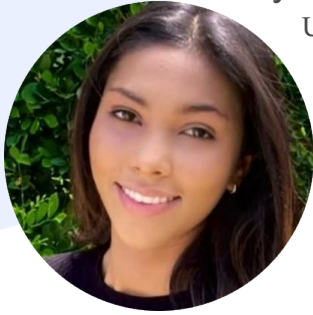


involved in several research projects regarding sexual harassment in schools.

Dominique Ogreau (she/they) Dominique (she/they) is an activist for reproductive rights and the protection of children's rights in Romania. Dominique currently serves as the Head of Youth Participation at the Federation of NGOs for Children's Rights, an organization with which they have led the training of over 100 children and youth in topics such as inclusivity, gender equality and mental health. Previously they sat on the UNICEF Romania Children's Board, a platform from which they advocated for the adoption of systems rooted in compassion, openness, and collective healing in their country. Outside of advocacy, Dominique is pursuing two bachelor's degrees, one in International Relations and the other in Journalism, while simultaneously being



## Priyanka Lalla



**Priyanka Lalla** is a 16-year-old from Trinidad and Tobago and, since 2020, a UNICEF Youth Advocate focused on children’s right to education, children’s health, and climate action. Since 2018, Priyanka has been a National Child Rights Ambassador and Member of the U-Report Main Steering Committee. She currently chairs the National Child Rights Steering Committee at U-Report. In 2022, Priyanka released her first book, “Svara’s Ocean Adventures”, both as author and illustrator. She is also a Zero-waste Lifestyle Blogger.

## Aditi Shrikhande, M.A.



**Aditi Shrikhande** (she/her) serves as Programme Officer for Early Childhood Development, with the Nutrition and Child Development team in UNICEF’s New York Headquarters. Since 2018, Aditi has worked on programming, planning, partnerships, and advocacy around early childhood development in humanitarian action and peacebuilding, including supporting the secretariat of the Early Childhood Peace Consortium. She has a M.A. in Sociology and Children’s Rights from the University of London (UCL), and a B.A. from Vassar College in New York. [More](#).

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