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EDITORIAL

Voices under the radar

I dare say that the *UNU Peace and Progress* has never been this ambitious yet since its inception in 2013. For one, the journal only reopened its doors for publication this year following a two-year hiatus (the last issue was published in 2016). In the months leading to this publication's release, the Board also produced a total of three bi-monthly *Transforming Our World* newsletters relating to each of UNU's thematic clusters for 2015 to 2019: [Peace and Governance \(Jan-Feb 2019\)](#); [Global Development and Inclusion \(Mar-Apr 2019\)](#); and [Environment, Climate, and Energy \(May-Jun 2019\)](#).

The decision to produce both journal and newsletter publications resulted in amendments to the UPP's original organizational structure. Whereas there were only the EIC and Editors in the previous Boards, this year saw the development of more distinct roles fitted to the Board's growing mandate. The UPP website, meanwhile, was given a fresher, more modern spin to adapt to changes in today's design and digital trends.

No less significant among these accomplishments is the reestablishment of partnership with the UNU-MERIT in Maastricht, The Netherlands—a UNU campus involved in journal operations in 2015 but has not been represented in the Editorial Board since. To ensure that the partnership run sustainably, our Board Members from UNU-MERIT helped incorporate UPP responsibilities in their charter for DEMOS, the study association of students of the M.Sc. in Public Policy and Human Development program at UNU-MERIT.

Finally, this year's journal issue is also set to launch at the inaugural, student-led Sustainability Research Symposium 2019 at the UNU Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan on July 4. A first in its brief history, this launch was conceived in the hopes of gaining a wider reach for the journal and encouraging more academics and researchers to submit for publication.

In light of these recent changes and triumphs, it is helpful—even paramount—to look back at the motivations behind the foundation of the UPP in 2013. While the UPP has undergone transformations over the years, its core remains to be inspired by the Charter of the United Nations University and its mandate: to solve the “pressing global problems of human survival, development, and welfare” (Article 1, Paragraph 2) and disseminate knowledge for “dynamic

interaction” (Article 1, Paragraph 4).¹ It is precisely this rationale that makes the UPP unique; it seeks to address global issues that are salient to today’s realities.

In recent years we have seen a renewed focus on the human dimensions of sustainability—from growing discussions on the protection of climate migrants to the involvement of women in political decision-making processes. This is the phenomenon that the current issue reflects: guided by UNU’s thematic clusters, the one research paper and two commentaries comprising this issue revolves around the themes of ethno-nationality and conflict, refugee crisis, and women empowerment. Weidinger’s work examines the role of ethno-nationality on voting preferences in Northern Ireland, and found that ethno-nationally minded voters are more moderate—as opposed to extremist—in their voting decisions where these choices relate to the more distant UK level of governance, and less moderate during regional elections where the level of governance concerned is closer to the conflict. Pozzato’s commentary studies the current state of refugees vis-à-vis Agamben’s theory of *Homo Sacer*, and argues for the development of a new legal rights system for refugee protection. Under the Global Development and Inclusion cluster, van Wijgerden critically analyzes Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) targeted at women, and calls for a transformative approach to social protection grounded on the concept of human rights.

All these works have one thing in common: they interrogate the politics of conflict and inequality amongst marginalized sectors. While these are issues that are best debated upon by our leaders in their wide-reaching government platforms, Pozzato, Weidinger, and van Wijgerden—who are all public policy students at the time of writing their respective articles—prove that the academe is an equally viable venue for innovative ideas to flourish. This is exactly what this issue of the UPP offers at its core: a platform to demonstrate that the youth are still in a formidable position to make an impact at the policy landscape. After all, it is high time that young voices—those echoing from the four corners of the classroom—be sought and heard.



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¹ Lee, Soohyun (2013). Editorial: The need for inclusivity in global governance. *Peace and Progress – United Nations University Graduate Student Journal*, 1(1), 1-2.