Dear Friends of the St. Gallen Symposium,

Three years have passed - and the world is inherently different - since we last came together in 2019.

These years, marked by crises and transformative change, have shown us new ways of working together as well as the need for more meaningful and inclusive collaboration. The pandemic has put societies and economies, as well as the St. Gallen Symposium itself, to a test. Even more so, as the Russian invasion of Ukraine - unimaginable three years ago - is reconfiguring the European economic, political and security architecture. The war challenges key values the St. Gallen Symposium stands for, including freedom, democracy, a liberal world order and inclusive dialogue.

An interdependent world in turmoil challenges us to redefine our contribution to a better future. As Leaders of Tomorrow and Senior Leaders, we all have a responsibility to stand up and use our voices. The 51st St. Gallen Symposium has been a great reminder that inclusive dialogue is now needed more than ever, especially in times of uncertainty and injustice. Our mission – enabling cross-generational dialogue to foster leadership with the next generation in mind – has once again over these two days proved not only important but necessary in resolving the challenges of our times.

This magazine highlights the various ways in which our year-round initiatives and the 51st St. Gallen Symposium have an impact towards this vision and mission. The following pages provide insights into the purpose, people and concrete projects the symposium brings together to drive change. You’ll meet senior decision-makers such as Swiss President Ignazio Cassis, and Shell CEO Ben van Beurden who come to St. Gallen to meet the next generation. You’ll read about the ideas and concerns of selected Leaders of Tomorrow, as well as the ISC Team and Alumni community driving the dialogue on- and off-stage.

Thank you for lighting the torch for generational dialogue together with us, the students of St. Gallen.

Beat Ulrich
CEO of the St. Gallen Symposium

To read the magazine online and access more articles and exclusive online-only videos, scan here:
symposium.org/category/sympact/
51ST ST. GALLEN SYMPOSIUM EXPLORES COLLABORATIVE ADVANTAGE

From 5-6 May 2022, three generations of leaders explored new, more impactful models of collective action to address interconnected challenges of global security, climate action, and inter-generational fairness. As the Russian invasion and ways to support Ukraine took centre stage, the cross-generational dialogue at the University of St. Gallen looked beyond immediate developments and discussed the wider implications of the current crisis at a historic turning point.

Author Felix Rüdiger

Learn more about ways to engage and read our joint Call to Action at: symposium.org/call-to-action-new-generational-contract/

In his conference-opening speech, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made it clear that the 51st St. Gallen Symposium convened its global, cross-generational platform at a crucial moment in history. He ended his remarks with a plea for global cooperation: "This event is taking place at a moment when democracy is threatened around the world," he told participants. "We need to do more than just talk; we need to do more than just listen. We need to work together." Working together—but how, and under what conditions? This focal question was raised in light of this year’s theme "Collaborative Advantage" across 48 panel debates, roundtables and workshops, involving more than 520 speakers and about 1,300 participants from three generations of leaders across business, policy, civil society and academia. For the first time in three years, the St. Gallen Symposium gathered its global community in person - linking debates in St. Gallen with three hubs at Swiss Embassies in Beijing, Mexico City and Johannesburg.

Collaboration and International Solidarity in Times of War

The implications of the Russian invasion and effective ways to support Ukraine took centre stage at this year's symposium. Swiss President Ignazio Cassis and Austrian Minister for EU and the Constitution Karoline Edtstadler re-examined the role of Europe’s neutral states in times of war. "In times of crisis, we have to join forces and stand together", President Cassis said. That, he said, is why Switzerland adopted sanctions against the Kremlin and Russia. However, joining NATO and active participation in the war were incompatible with Swiss neutrality. Ukrainian Parliamentary Leader Maria Ressa challenged the idea that the international community and NATO were doing enough to support Ukraine. In a discussion with Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, 4th President of Croatia and Benedikt Franke, CEO of the Munich Security Conference, the young politician criticised "the timing of the support and the amount of the support" as too late, but voiced gratitude and appreciation for the current level of assistance to Ukraine. She also called on Europe to not lose sight of larger issues at hand: "The future of Ukraine is very much linked to the situation in other countries", she said, drawing attention to the fragile security situations of Poland, Moldova and Georgia, for instance.

In this spirit of looking beyond immediate developments, discussions tried to make sense of the numerous ways the war on Ukraine will reconfigure our world in the coming years and for the next generation. Kühne Holding Executive Chair Karl Gerandt, Botswanaian economist and politician Bogolo Kenewendo, and Lufthansa Cargo CEO Dorothea von Boxberg explored ways to make global supply chains more resilient. Shell CEO Ben van Beurden and Vestas Wind Systems EVP Kerstin Knapp focused on the European energy infrastructure necessary to ensure energy security while accelerating the green energy transition across the continent. USAID Assistant Administrator Mareota Escobar and former UN WOMEN Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka called for a more collaborative way to handle refugee movements and a looming food security crisis. And journalist and 2021 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Ressa and Reporters Without Borders head Christophe Deloire emphasised the role of free media in light of rising authoritarianism around the world.

Focus on intergenerational fairness and the next generation

In light of the St. Gallen Symposium’s mission of fostering leadership with the next generation in mind, intergenerational fairness was a key focus of this year’s dialogue. On Friday, 6 May, Friedrich Merz, Leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) of Germany, Manphela Ramphela, Co-President of the Club of Rome, and Claudia Plakolm, Austrian State Secretary for Youth, outlined ways to rethink and remake the generational contract.

Speaking with Indian Member of Parliament and former UN Under-Secretary Shashi Tharoor, Ugandan climate advocate Vanessa Nakate drew attention to the losses and damages already incurred by climate change, particularly for young people in the global South. Moreover, in the spirit of our most recent White Paper on cross-generational platforms, selected sessions presented our NextGen Value Creation Barometer (partnering with EY) and the Voices of the Leaders of Tomorrow Report 2022 (partnering with NMI). Panels also explored how organisations can harness age diversity and which new financing models best support the next generation of entrepreneurs.

As a key innovation of this year’s symposium, a Cross-Generational Transformation Lab saw symposium participants move to the newly opened HSGB SQUARE on 6 May to co-create and debate. A session with ZEIT ONLINE engaged participants in one-on-one dialogues on controversial questions, while five parallel workshops with Zukunft-Fabrik developed tangible proposals for greater intergenerational fairness. The Transformation Lab launched a multi-year initiative to raise awareness, develop cross-generational ambitions and drive actions for a New Generational Contract, co-initiated with the Club of Rome.

The culmination of a year-round exploration of “Collaborative Advantage” The 51st St. Gallen Symposium marked the highlight of an in-depth exploration of its annual theme “Collaborative Advantage”, which was launched in September 2021. In Berlin, 70 students from the University of St. Gallen, year-round formats such as the Global Leadership Challenge, with the University of Oxford, and global receptions gathered input and inspiration for the main symposium this May. Of course, the dialogue will not end with the 51st St. Gallen Symposium: Concrete initiatives and projects will be developed and followed up on throughout the summer, all with a view to our mission: Lead with the next generation in mind.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We need to do more than just talk; we need to do more than just listen.

Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

A NEW GENERATIONAL CONTRACT

Partnering with the Club of Rome, the 51st St. Gallen Symposium launched a new, global initiative for greater inter-generational fairness and ambitions: "A New Generational Contract." At the symposium, a booth collected hundreds of signatures in support of using our cross-generational platform to foster dialogue and actions which put inter-generational fairness firmly at the centre of decisions taken during "our time." A Cross-Generational Transformation Lab developed concrete project ideas, which we will follow-up on and introduce back to our community in the coming months.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
LOCAL ISSUES, GLOBAL SOLUTIONS: LESSONS FROM WAR IN UKRAINE

Over the past few months, the tremendous impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the lives of ordinary Ukrainians, as well as Russians, has become clear. But as discussions at the St. Gallen Symposium showed, the war affects food security, energy supply patterns, and political alliances across the globe as well. Since global issues require global solutions, reflection on the implications of the war may be helpful to avoid similar crises in the future.

The worldwide economic, social and political repercussions of the ongoing war in Ukraine demonstrate how interconnected the modern world is. But, as the ramifications of the war play out, it is increasingly evident that close ties sometimes come at a price. Take rising wheat prices around the world as an example.

Ukraine is a major food—including wheat, corn and sunflower oil—producer for 400 million people internationally, most of whom live in the poorest regions of the planet. But over the past few and a half months, Russian aggression in Ukraine has been disrupting vital food exports and, as a result, the world faces a tangible risk of food insecurity.

Apart from food-related repercussions, the war gave rise to a monumental shift in global fossil fuel supply patterns, exposing the growing need for a switch to sustainable energy sources. Notably, those Western European countries that remain highly dependent on Russian oil and gas today are diversifying their energy imports in order to avoid future political pressure from the Russian government.

LESSON 1: Violating the integrity of a sovereign nation will not be tolerated by the international community.

“It is often said that Vladimir Putin doesn’t think Western Europe is willing to pay the price to defend freedom,” said Simon Evenett, a professor of international trade and economic development at the University of St. Gallen. According to Evenett, it is too early to conclude whether the international community has passed Putin’s test. Positive shifts in global collaboration against the blatant attack on Ukrainian sovereignty are apparent, though: Over 141 national governments declared the Russian invasion unacceptable.

On the other hand, according to Lisa Yasko, member of the parliament of Ukraine and a speaker at the 51st St. Gallen Symposium, preemptive international assistance could have helped to avoid the war altogether. “The international cooperation that we had for many years is not under threat—it’s actually quite dysfunctional,” Yasko said. “We need to make a real change in such organisations as the United Nations and the Council of Europe. We need to have real tools that can protect peace and security.”

LESSON 2: Collaboration between governments is significantly stronger in the security domain than in international trade and prevention of global food crises.

“As Egypt and Lebanon struggle to sustain necessary imports of wheat from Ukraine and Russia, Indonesia is banning palm oil exports to protect the domestic market from rising prices. To make things worse, the disruption of fertilizer imports from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus due to the war will begin to have real consequences by the second half of 2022,” according to Evenett.

Cross-country collaboration will be crucial in the months to come as part of the effort to combat food shortages as the poor and vulnerable continue to suffer from the actions of the powerful. Western politicians seem to have reached a consensus about the attack on democracy and sovereignty, but the looming threat of food insecurity is at least as menacing and perhaps much more palpable.
LESSON 3: Weaponisation of interdependence may limit globalisation.

Globalisation is often regarded as a great opportunity for business and people, especially younger generations. “So much mutual understanding is developed as people cross borders, study and party abroad,” Evenett said. “This helps tie us all together.”

But globalisation also creates interdependence, which powerful political actors or parties may utilise to exert their influence over others, as in the case of Russia’s recent threats to cut gas exports to Bulgaria and Poland.

So does war in Ukraine spell the end of an era of globalisation? Evenett said he predicts that the world is likely experiencing “selective fragmentation of the global economy” rather than a full redrafted de-globalisation, in some realms, including food and energy security, governments may seek to limit their dependence on foreign parties. “I see an evolution of globalisation, rather than deglobalisation,” Evenett said.

In a similar vein, Oksana Matlias, CEO of Teach for Ukraine and Leader of Tomorrow at the 51st St. Gallen Symposium, said that global collaboration motivated governments to reduce their dependence on Russian energy sources. However, according to Matlias, this does not signal complete erosion of globalisation. Instead, it may represent a necessary step on the road to better globalisation, where power imbalance is counterbalanced by global collaboration to avoid abuse of interdependence by powerful political actors.

LESSON 4: Reception of Ukrainians in Western Europe contrasts with the treatment of refugees from the Middle East, Africa and other parts of the globe.

Evenett says Ukrainians fleeing the war westwardly were met with “quite incredible generosity,” whereas hostile treatment of Syrian, Palestinian, Yemeni and Afghani refugees, among others, remains commonplace on the continent. Whether this contrast represents a long-awaited shift in European attitude toward immigrants or simply the latest manifestation of racial prejudices is another open question and an opportunity to learn an additional lesson: wars can happen anywhere, including Europe, and people fleeing from death and destruction should be accommodated regardless of their skin colour or citizenship.

KEY TAKEAWAY

While there are many lessons we can learn from global response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, one conclusion seems clear: Global issues require global solutions given the contemporary interdependent context, since seemingly distant local perturbations will often reverberate across borders.

That’s where the St. Gallen Symposium comes in. “I think that now is the time for rethinking the world order,” Yasko said. “And such countries as Switzerland and platforms like this symposium can really make a change.”

YOU NEED TO BUILD NEW RULES

In the midst of war, a new generation of Ukrainian politicians is playing an increasing role. Parliamentarian Lisa Yasko, 31, is one of them. She traveled to the St. Gallen Symposium to talk about the need to reform international organisations to prevent conflicts in the future.

Author: Vladyslav Aifiers | Photography: Markus Ketola

What is your primary goal for participation in the symposium?

To act as a voice for Ukraine. This is my work and what I believe I can do to make at least a small change, because I’m not a soldier right now. But everyone should be a soldier in some field.

What lessons can we learn from the war and the international reaction to it?

Mainly that we did not learn our lessons from the past. It became obvious that international organisations, like the UN and the Council of Europe, need to change. We need to have real tools that can protect peace and security. And do you have any advice for the Leaders of Tomorrow?

Open your heart—to do not just think rationally, but also feel the world. Be different—to do not just follow the rules that were established many years ago. If you are a Leader of Tomorrow, you need to build new rules and projects.

What can be done to overcome traumatisation in Ukraine?

I am sure that we are the strongest nation in the world right now, and everyone admires us. Legends spread about people going out onto the streets and standing in the way of Russian tanks, without hesitation, it’s very impressive. Yes, we have traumas. But we will deal with that. Making international organisations more effective is what the international community needs to focus on instead.

You mentioned you were impressed by the political position that Switzerland took in support of Ukraine. What exactly surprised you?

Switzerland’s response has been quite progressive and positive: Sanctions, freezing Russian assets, standing up for human rights, welcoming Ukrainian refugees and, most importantly, making such decisions very quickly.

BIO: Lisa Yasko is a member of the Ukrainian Parliament of the 9th convocation elected in the 2019 Ukrainian parliamentary election and a member of the Committee on Foreign Policy and Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation. Born in Kyiv, she has also worked as a documentary filmmaker.
Numbers can sometimes speak as loud as words. Back in 2022 after two years disrupted by a global pandemic, the facts and figures below show the symposium is as dynamic and vital as ever:

Author: Claudia Rapp, Ariadna Mañé

Guests from around the world
The symposium was not limited to St. Gallen this year: In an effort to include and engage people around the world guests joined from hubs on four continents. The average guest in St. Gallen spends several nights in town, a positive impact on the local economy.

Speakers in numbers
Fostering a conversation between generations is the symposium’s core mission. To that end it gathers a high-profile list of speakers each year, from prime ministers and presidents to young activists and entrepreneurs.

Leaders of Tomorrow
The Leaders of Tomorrow are the heart of the symposium’s cross-generational concept – and the numbers show they are a diverse group, both in terms of gender and geography.

Event Organization
Students on the International Student Committee work all year to make the St. Gallen Symposium possible. They are joined in May by hundreds more volunteers, creating a truly unique event.

Young voices were represented in 44 out of 48 panel sessions
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As President of the Swiss Confederation, Ignazio Cassis is an expert in dialogue and collaboration. He talked to us about the importance of including younger generations in the political process, his definition of sustainability, and the need to rethink the generational contract. He let his approach to leadership be challenged by the next generation, the political process, his definition of sustainability, and the need to rethink the generational contract. He talked to us about the importance of including younger generations in decision making. Our parents were at war, and for them it was new to have more food than hunger. Today, in Europe, we no longer know what it is to have more hunger than food. That doesn’t exist anymore – and now we all want to eat too much. We don’t care about the impact on the environment, on social sustainability. Is eating meat every day sustainable? These are exactly the questions that need an intergenerational contract to solve.

Is there a concrete example of a decision or strategy that you have taken with the involvement of the next generation?

Yes, we have several. I would say even the mother of all strategies, our overall foreign policy strategy, was based on a vision that was made with a lot of participation from the young. We asked young diplomats to participate and give ideas, together with older consular officers and diplomats to participate and give ideas, and we cannot wait any longer.”

The symposium has launched a new, global initiative to develop “A New Generational Contract”, going one step further than dialogue. Is there a need for something like that?

Yes, absolutely. Sustainability is key. I don’t think my generation has learned sustainability. On the other hand, I am convinced that the new generations want to travel sustainably. As I said, the new generation looks more at habitat than borders, and that’s really how I feel. We were the children of the post-war era. Our parents were at war, and for them it was new to have more food than hunger. Today, in Europe, we no longer know what it is to have more hunger than food. That doesn’t exist anymore – and now we all want to eat too much. We don’t care about the impact on the environment, on social sustainability. Is eating meat every day sustainable? These are exactly the questions that need an intergenerational contract to solve.

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EMPOWERING YOUNG LEADERS TO COLLABORATE ACROSS BORDERS

Every year in December, the Global Leadership Challenge (GLC), convenes 100 young leaders from over 30 countries and senior experts in a hybrid conference to co-create impact projects addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Author: Sharon Zeller, Photography: Thomas Betschart

Ben James is a member of the team that won last year’s Global Leadership Challenge, which took place from 9-15 December 2021. GLC is a joint initiative of the St. Gallen Symposium and the University of Oxford, supported by Leumann Foundation and the Templeton World Charity Foundation.

The winning team was able to participate in this year’s St. Gallen Symposium. “With our group, we were able to have an intimate kind of team perspective,” said James of his experience at GLC 2021. “We wouldn’t have won without that, for sure”. The Global Leadership Challenge focuses on leadership and purpose: “It was such a direct tackling of what it means to be a leader that I hadn’t encountered anywhere else. So that was fantastic.”

James, whose background is in software engineering, is also the founder of the Cambridge Climate Society. “When I started … I felt the power of joining a community. Before that, I had never been exposed to such an energetic and pragmatic community,” he says. “For me, that was the moment I realised I could really help people and make a difference.”

The GLC presented him with some surprises. “I thought at the beginning that we would work in climate, but we were actually put in education” he says. “That forced us to be more diverse in our thought process - for example, our solution ended up being a climate education solution.”

Thinking broadly and expanding the realm of solutions could be key when tackling climate change. For example, James suggests the importance of financial disclosure: “Once we have better data on what climate risks our portfolios hold, and where our capital is allocated, and what emissions that’s funding, that enables us to have a much clearer picture of how we can redirect capital more efficiently.”

SYMMPOSIUM ESSAY COMPETITION

The Global Essay Competition has been part of the St. Gallen Symposium for decades. The top 100 essayists win a chance to attend as Leaders of Tomorrow. For many, it is a life-changing experience.

Sophie Lara Neuber
MPhil Development Economics at the University of Cambridge

An economist’s big idea lands her symposium’s top prize

When asked why a young student is interested in pension funds, Sophie Neuber replies that “they are the true intergenerational contract.” Neuber is a student at Cambridge University, studying Development Economics and working in Mergers and Acquisitions at J.P Morgan. “We have to restructure incentives to align interests,” she says, “and make all generations choose decisions that are beneficial and environmentally conscious for everyone else.”

In countries like Poland (where she has her roots), the taxes a young professional pays contribute directly to not only their future pension, but also to that of their grandparents; the Cambridge development economics student says. To look at the way pensions payouts are distributed differently means to connect the dots and improve the quality of life for both the elderly and early-career workers.

The idea proposed in Neuber’s award-winning essay is for the mathematical function that now regulates pension payouts to include two new aspects: net greenhouse gas emission per capita, to keep track of the environmental impact that a company has, and the Gini coefficient, a proxy that shows the income inequality in a given area.

Louis Klein
Director of the European School of Governance, General Secretary for the International Federation for System Research

A leading essay competition alum reflects on 30 years of change

Louis Klein took part in the essay competition in 1992. At the time, the atmosphere was very different. “Thirty years ago, we were all in a world that was sort of dominated by the idea of competitive advantage,” Klein says. “At that time it suffused everything, thinking about business or thinking about politics, or thinking about well-being in the world.”

The fall of the Berlin Wall made the notion of competition outdated. “Today competition is probably not such a good idea,” Klein says.

Still, Klein says, we need to take things one step further: “We need to ask ourselves, rather than playing the game, how do we change the game?” When tackling complex issues like climate change, Klein suggests that we should focus on relationships, rather than focus on complexity. “This is what brings us back to the St. Gallen Symposium,” Klein says. “It’s the easiest way to have compassionate conversations where out of deep listening grow human relationships. All that we can possibly think about governance, politics, economics goes back to that.”
ISC ALUMNI GATHER TO CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF FOSTERING DIALOGUE

In 1970, conflict defined the relationship between generations. As students elsewhere took to the streets to protest, a few in St. Gallen took a different approach. More than half a century later, the conference they started is still going strong. In May, hundreds of International Student Committee Alumni gathered to celebrate the St. Gallen Symposium’s 50th anniversary.

Author: Axel Koch, Photography: Markus Kotola

In 1970, the St. Gallen Symposium took place for the first time, and was set to celebrate its 50th anniversary in the spring of 2020. But – as it did so many other things – the coronavirus pandemic disrupted those plans, too: the event was postponed entirely in 2020 and held in a hybrid format in 2021. It was only this year that the 50-year-anniversary of the symposium could be celebrated in person, a special occasion that brought together more than 460 alumni of the International Students’ Committee (ISC), the organising body of the symposium.

More than 50 per cent of this community, including representatives of 48 out of the 50 former organising committees, signed up to attend, a tremendous turn-out testifying to the deep bonds among the ISC community. Arriving from 15 different countries, they all gathered the Saturday after the symposium at the SQUARE, the University of St. Gallen’s brand new learning centre opened only three months ago. This modernist glass structure, designed by Japanese architect Sou Fujimoto, was the venue for a relaxed brunch in the morning and a festive dinner in the evening. Debate over a New Generational Contract, hiking in the Appenzell Alps or a taste of St. Gallen’s beer culture were on offer to round out the program.

Among the alumni present, Christoph Loos, CEO of the multinational power tool manufacturer Hilti, remembers his time as part of the 22nd Organising Committee as the activity that, in four years of university, taught him the most. “I matured and picked up a number of skills and self-confidence that, in a normal student life, I would not have,” Loos says.

Christian Sutter, president of the ISC Alumni Committee and member of the 46th and 47th Organising Committees, recently co-founded the app “Mympact”, measuring the carbon footprint of purchases. He calls the ISC a “school of life”: it’s where he met many of his business partners, and he considers it one of the reasons for his post-ISC success.

At the centre of the alumni gathering was Wolfgang Schürer, who founded the St. Gallen Symposium and the ISC in 1970. At the time, student-led riots had spread from France to other European countries, including Switzerland, as a protest against the conservative social establishment, while in Czechoslovakia, the brief period of cultural liberalisation known as the Prague Spring was crushed when Soviet tanks came rolling in.

It was an era when the generational divide seemed insurmountable, and the concept of a cross-generational symposium was something unusual. “There was scepticism among our professors and fellow students, as well as government and private sector representatives, who thought, ‘if students went to the streets with stones in their hands and lit fires, why would they suddenly be looking for dialogue?’” Schürer recalls. “We had to do some intense effort to convince them that this was a serious approach. And then we were able to generate interest.”

Schürer’s founding role was celebrated by several speeches, including by former German President Horst Köhler. In a recorded video message played on a screen, Köhler praised Schürer for his “commitment and engagement” and called for today’s younger generations to “respect what previous generations have accomplished but still have the courage to realise their own ideas”. To that end, organiser’s also announced a Monika and Wolfgang Schürer Award to honour promising cross-generational initiatives every year from now on, of which the two nameakes were the inaugural recipients.

As the St. Gallen Symposium goes into its second half-century, alumni say, maintaining this platform of dialogue will be a challenge requiring constant effort from future organising committees. For Sutter, the ISC can always be even more proactive in inviting and including diverse voices, but the structure of the committee, each year composed of a new, younger generation of students, gives him confidence: “this is what allows us to always maintain new impulses and what allows the St. Gallen Symposium to remain at the cutting edge.”
HOW CAN CROSS-GENERATIONAL DIALOGUE ACCELERATE CHANGE?

When it comes to climate change, the younger and the older generation seem to often take different stands. We spoke with environmentalist Laura Hernandez Merlano and Shell CEO Ben van Beurden about the most pressing crises facing the world today and how we can improve cross-generational dialogue to tackle them.

Author: Lisa Oder, Photography: Markus Ketola

In 1968 students worldwide protested against capitalism, the elite, racism, and the Vietnam war. In this context, five students initiated the first St. Gallen Symposium to start cross-generational dialogue. What are the topics the two generations are discussing the most right now?

Ben van Beurden:
No doubts, climate change. Of course, I am very exposed to it because of the industry that I am in. But, even if I try to stand back and be objective, I do think climate change and therefore the energy transition probably is one of the most discussed topics. The other is general equality in society – whether it’s gender equality, racial equality, or freedom of ideas.

Laura Hernandez Merlano:
Fifty years ago, it was this message of justice and peace that we saw. Today this justice approach is incorporated into the way we approach sustainability, as well as how we make sure that we are getting all perspectives, and not just those of traditional stakeholders. Although some of these values of sustainability and cross-generational dialogue are seen as innovative, they have been shared by Indigenous people since time immemorial.

What does cross-generational dialogue mean to you?

Ben van Beurden:
Practically, it means discussing things with my four children, who are all in different age brackets. We also have a significant number of young people in our company who want to understand not only what the direction of the company is, but also if we can change it and what their role in this is. Intergenerational dialogue is not an abstract concept for me. It is present every day.

Laura Hernandez Merlano:
Cross-generational dialogue means shifting the narrative to an inclusive, intersectional and holistic approach. It means valuing lived experience and intergenerational knowledge just as much as we value the opinions of industry leaders and academics. We need to make sure that this cross-generational dialogue is inclusive and amplifies the voices of the most overburdened and underserved people. We must prioritize voices, since these decisions have direct impacts: Forests are burning, ocean levels are rising. That is why we feel this urgency to act compared to previous generations. Climate change has been emerging as a priority and has been recognized as a crisis in global discussions, but youth haven’t necessarily seen that urgency reflected in actions. That’s why the relationship between older and younger generations must prioritize accountability and collaboration. Youth needs to be represented on boards and other leadership roles in the decision-making process.

What can we do to improve this relationship?

Ben van Beurden:
It needs to be done by both. For a long time, people would simply argue that if you change supply, things will change. But if we were to stop selling petrol today, I don’t think people would say: Now that I can’t fill up my car at Shell, I will buy an electric car. Ultimately, we have to work at least as much on the demand side regulation. And there we have a role to play. We have to work with customers and governments to find out how we can support the demand for greener products.

Laura Hernandez Merlano:
The biggest impact we can make is giving overburdened and underserved communities which are facing the direct effects of climate change a voice. When we give them – not just the younger people but across generations – a platform to share their experiences and how they have been dealing with this, we can begin to foster really inclusive intergenerational dialogue.

Last year, a court ordered Shell to adjust its climate targets. Several environmental non-governmental organisations had filed a lawsuit against the company. As a reaction, van Beurden said that even if Shell stopped selling oil and gas immediately, this would not change the demand for fossil fuels. Do we need to approach climate change from the supply or the demand side?

Ben van Beurden:
I would be tempted to say yes – much more so looking at it through the eyes of the younger generation. I do detect that there is limited patience, but also limited trust from the younger generation. That is only natural because they still have the challenges ahead of them.

Laura Hernandez Merlano:
Climate change is here already. Young people are already experiencing its effects: Forests are burning, ocean levels are rising. That is why we feel this urgency to act compared to previous generations. Climate change has been emerging as a priority and has been recognized as a crisis in global discussions, but youth haven’t necessarily seen that urgency reflected in actions. That’s why the relationship between older and younger generations must prioritize accountability and collaboration. Youth needs to be represented on boards and other leadership roles in the decision-making process.

What can we do to improve this relationship?

Ben van Beurden:
Dialogue wouldn’t help but also more participation across the generations. The pandemic hasn’t helped in many ways. Before, it was more common for me to meet up with a small group of young people and talk about what they think about the strategy of the company. And more often I have heard about good ideas and didn’t just explain what I was thinking. Today, we can and should do more of these meetings again.

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One of the biggest challenges mankind is facing is climate change. If we do not reach climate targets, especially the younger generation will feel the consequences. Does that impact the relationship between the two generations negatively?

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Laura Hernandez Merlano: Both. The industry has the responsibility to be innovators and leaders. They should not wait for governments or courts. But this is coupled with an opportunity to empower individuals to understand the power they hold as consumers in a capitalist society. We can vote democratically, but we can also vote with our dollars. Individuals can create incredible change once they realise their ability to influence demand.

Is it possible to be the CEO of one of the largest oil companies and still be committed to environmental protection?

Ben van Beurden: You say oil company, but I like to think of ourselves as an energy transition company. Our mission is to provide more and cleaner energy solutions. If you think of yourself like that, then it is logical that you try to accelerate the transition. I did say – to the horror of some of my industry compatriots – that we should ban internal combustion engines. Only then are we going to change the emissions associated with mobility. We have to have governmental interventions to do it, and those need to be supported by companies like ours.

Laura Hernandez Merlano: The industry leaders of these companies need to be the most responsible and accountable in this space. It isn’t just possible to be committed to environmental protection, it is a requirement. If you call yourself an industry leader, you need to act like one. We need to be able to shift so that the globe can recover and heal, or otherwise there will be no future for us or these companies.

THE INTERNATIONAL RELEVANCE OF NEUTRAL STATES IS STRONGER NOW THAN EVER

Traditionally neutral states, including Switzerland and Austria, are reconsidering neutrality after witnessing the violence happening on the EU’s eastern border. Has the age of non-alignment come to an end?

Author: Ariadna Mame, Photography: Markus Ketola

Since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, societies and parliaments in the traditionally neutral states of Europe have begun discussing membership in international organisations and military alliances.

At the St. Gallen Symposium, Swiss President Ignazio Cassis and Austrian Minister for the EU and Con-stitution Karoline Edtstadler discussed the historical and current relevance of neutrality in their respective countries, as well as its specific role in times of war. Switzerland and Austria have been neutral since 1815 and 1955 respectively, a decision both initially took to protect themselves and their societies.

Edtstadler pointed out that “intergenera- tional participation is the solution” and “the international arena and in societies is also becoming a growing problem. “The world is simultaneously growing together and drifting apart”, Cassis lamented. In the face of these trends and challenges, neutral states will have to thread a fine line in their positioning in conflicts that allows them to continue functioning as stages for discussion and agreement.

Laura Hernandez Merlano: This means that while the state will not assist or attack any party in a conflict, sides can be taken politically and economically. “Neutral states proved to be the perfect places for that.”

Cassis defended the neutral stance in an interview with SYMPACT. “Not only is neutrality ethically justifiable, but it is also ethically necessary.” Cassis said, it is “an instrument for peace, serving the international community”.

While globalisation is constantly increas- ing and cooperation and multilateralism become more important, polarisation in the international arena and in societies is also becoming a growing problem. “The world is simultaneously growing together and drifting apart”, Cassis lamented. In the face of these trends and challenges, neutral states will have to thread a fine line in their positioning in conflicts that allows them to continue functioning as stages for discussion and agreement.
COLLABORATIVE ADVANTAGE AROUND THE WORLD

As French poet Anatole France once wrote, travelling changes opinions and prejudices. Therefore, the St. Gallen Symposium decided to travel – and thereby spread its vision, to «Lead with the Next Generation in mind» around the world.

Author: Frauke Kops

**Berlin, Germany**
Gathering not far from the German parliament in Berlin, the Symposium launched this year’s new topic, «Collaborative Advantage», during the run-up to Germany’s election of a new chancellor. The focus was on the technological dimension of collaboration. To foster innovation, attendees agreed, the collaboration between technology start-ups and large corporations is key.

**Oxford, UK and globally**
A joint initiative of the St. Gallen Symposium and the University of Oxford, the Global Leadership Challenge 2021 connected 100 young leaders from over 30 countries with more than 20 Senior Advisors to promote responsible leadership that furthers societies’ sustainable development goals. The winning team, whose members hailed from Europe and Africa, was invited to attend the St. Gallen Symposium.

**Singapore**
At the National University of Singapore, discussion shifted to the eco-geographical perspective of collaboration. With no natural resources and a multi-religious and multi-racial population with little shared history, Singapore still managed to achieve prosperity, making it an excellent case study of what collaboration on different levels can look like.

**London, UK**
In London, the discussion explored the future of the economic relation and collaboration between China and the UK. The dispute over China’s national security law and the UK’s ban on Chinese 5G technology has led to a drastic cooling of relations between the two nations.

**Copenhagen, Denmark & Oslo, Norway**
The gatherings in the Nordics, namely Copenhagen and Oslo, focussed on collaboration in the fields of energy and the social acceptance of renewable energies. The Nordics collaborate to propose energy projects of joint Nordic interest – a collaborative effort in a region already known for its close ties. The different backgrounds participants brought to the table made for an insightful discussion, leaving many with actionable take-aways for accelerating the global energy transition.

**Luxembourg**
In a gathering in Luxembourg, guests considered legal views on collaboration. The session focused on emerging forms of work, with a view to changes accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. New organisational formats coming out of digital workspaces need a new legal framework to protect (self-)employees, participants said.

**Moscow, Russia**
In Russia, collaborative efforts in education was at the top of the agenda. Collaboration is an effective tool that allows educators and learning specialists to work together to meet the needs of students and sustain inclusive settings.

**Copenhagen, Denmark & Oslo, Norway**
in cooperation with the Embassy of Switzerland to Mexico, the St. Gallen Symposium invited Luis María de la Mora, Vice Minister of Foreign Trade of Mexico, to speak to a gathering in the Mexican capital. The breakfast session, held on the eve of the symposium, included 40 participants.

**Mexico City, Mexico**
In Mexico City, «Collaborative Advantage» was discussed from an economic perspective. One idea: Collaboration between governments, employers and trade unions may reduce the risks of discrimination in the labour market.

**Beijing, China**
Together with the Embassy of Switzerland to China, the St. Gallen Symposium invited Prof. Feng Zhongping, Director, Institute of European Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, to be part of the hub event at the residency of the Swiss Ambassador. On-site discussions among 30 participants followed the streamed panel.

**Johannesburg, South Africa**
Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Former Deputy-President of South Africa, Founder of Umlambo Foundations, participated in the session “A Lesson in Interdependence: How the War in Ukraine Put Global Food Security at Risk” at the Embassy of Switzerland to South Africa. Leaders of Tomorrow from South Africa presented further ideas on collaboration to the audience in Johannesburg.
"WE WORK SO CLOSELY TOGETHER"

Putting together a two-day symposium takes 10 months of tireless work by a dedicated team of student volunteers. The ISC journey provides them with unique experiences, close friendships and an understanding of global complexity.

Author: Elodie Phillips  Photography: Markus Ketola, Fabiano Mancresti

It was Tuesday morning, barely 24 hours before the first guests were to arrive, and the main campus looked more like a greenhouse than a conference venue. Potted plants covered the plaza and the foyer; green leaves peeking out behind huge crates of dishware and stacks of furniture. In the midst of it all was Olivier Be-noit, member of the 51st International Students' Committee (ISC), the team of students whose job it is to organise and run the St. Gallen Symposium. A successful symposium is the physical result of months of intense planning, organisation, and collaboration between the 33 members of the ISC, particularly in the weeks and days before the event itself. The three-person core Technical Operations crew, for instance, work 100-hour weeks leading up to the Symposium; it takes the crew around six days to construct the symposium infrastructure.

On Tuesday Benoit was a blur of motion, darting between the foliage as he searched for tablecloths, cleaning supplies, and truck keys. Details matter. The ISC wants each plant to blend seamlessly into the symposium atmosphere, for example, so Benoit directs student volunteers to work all morning in groups to cover each plastic plant pot with black felt before each is placed carefully around the building. When the symposium began two days later, it represented the culmination of an arduous but rewarding 10-month long journey. Waiting for the Opening Ceremony to begin just before 9am on Thursday morning, this proves an emotional moment for Vivian Bernet, one of the ISC's three leaders. Prior to going on stage, she confesses her only concern about the event is crying during the welcome video, which was produced by her team without her input. Someone asks behind-the-scenes if she is nervous and she replies, "I am not nervous, I am just so excited!"

On the morning of the symposium, Ber-net’s main job is welcoming the Presi-dent of the Swiss Confederation, Igna-zio Cassis, but she has many hands to shake and tasks to complete in order to ensure the first day runs smoothly. “We will drink a lot of coffee today”, she says, as she greets participants leaving the Aula after the Opening Ceremony. Yet talking to members of the ISC, it is clear that the experience is worth all the sleep deprivation, stress, and long planning meetings that go until 2 am. Committee members get to travel all over the world, meet with international partners and organise their own events. Through developing partnerships abroad, the team meets many high level person-alities they would ordinarily not have ac-coss to until well after they have graduated.

Surprisingly, considering the high standard the team set for themselves, they largely learn on the job, with help from a strong community of alumni. During the symposium, an 84-member WhatsApp group, comprised of professionals work-ing for the SSIS foundation, ISC team members and alumni share frequent mes-sages of where support is needed most. Help from the alumni community has taken on even greater significance after a prolonged hiatus: The event was canceled in 2020 and held mostly online in 2021. Minuscule items, such as screens for the sun umbrellas, haven’t been put to use in three years and the tech crew have had to canvas the WhatsApp chat to locate them. Only four members of the current ISC witnessed an in-person symposium. The community doesn’t only provide practical help. Bernet has been part of the symposium for three years and fondly recounts how she has formed strong friendships each year. “It is because we work so closely together”, she says. The stress of the last few weeks pushed the committee even closer together.

The ISC divides their work into two phases. The first is more centred on individ-ual networking and concentrating on the region they are assigned to source partners and organise events. However, in the second phase, namely the weeks leading to the symposium, the team fo-cuses more on the logistics of the event. Being part of the ISC provides an unique networking opportunity, which motivates many members to apply. However, Ber-net says this was not the driving force behind her interest in the ISC: After starting university, she was searching for a “competence to find confidence” and found the chance when she formed part of the symposium’s support crew in 2019, working in catering. “It’s just a huge opportunity to grow”, she says on her decision to join the ISC. When combined with the hard work, frustration, and painstaking attention to detail that go into the ISC’s daily work, the ultimate result is a collective journey of professional and personal growth, which lasts long after the symposium’s closing ceremony.
DOES JOURNALISM HAVE A FUTURE?

Digital media, including social media networks and online-only publications, presents tremendous challenges to traditional journalism. Successful adaptation will likely depend on journalists’ willingness to construct new business models and take into account younger generations’ information consumption habits.

Author: Vladyslav Alforov, Photography: Markus Ketola

The media should be treated as a public good, Joanna Krawczyk, chairwoman of the Leading European Newspaper Alliance and the Gazeta Wyborcza Foundation, says. “Media are indeed the pillar of democracy: thanks to journalists, citizens become informed. And information is power—this is the key to free societies.” As such, overcoming numerous obstacles faced by contemporary media companies around the world will require external help from governments, international organisations and the public itself.

Although legacy media, primarily print, have considerably more experience in producing professional journalism, in comparison with digital media and social media networks, traditional media do not change fast. Understandably, adaptation of their technology, production lines, management hierarchies and work ethics takes time. But there’s no choice. “There is no going back to the kingdom of print. It’s gone, and we have to face it,” Krawczyk said.

The transition will be jarring—and for organisations unable to change fast enough, may even spell their doom. “In order to create the digital space above your business model, you have to probabilistically give up and destroy something much faster than its lifespan would probably be,” says Kai Diekmann, former editor-in-chief at the German tabloid Bild. Experience shows that both readership and revenues tend to fall during the transition to digital.

Successful organisations, Diekmann argued at the symposium, must retain the attention of younger generations, who will soon constitute the majority of media consumers. That requires adapting the content and telling stories in new ways. More visual, interactive forms of information are what younger audiences are looking for. “The product has to fit into the ecosystem,” Diekmann said.

According to Diekmann, younger media consumers differ from older generations, who seek information actively—by leaving their houses and heading to newsagents’ kiosks. Digital media consumers, on the other hand, expect to have entertaining, relevant information delivered to them. Journalists are faced with the task of finding ways to make news of public importance more entertaining and algorithm-ready. “If we try to sell the same old wine in a different bottle, it won’t work,” Diekmann said.

Overall, Diekmann and Krawczyk were optimistic about the future of journalism. There will always be a need for quality information, as humans are social beings who want to be part of a bigger community, Diekmann says: “We simply need something to talk about with one another.”

New Bottles, New Wine

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