

**OSCE High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination  
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OSCE High-Level Conference on Non-discrimination and Tolerance

Session 5: The role of education in providing mutual understanding and respect to the diversity according to existing OSCE commitments  
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My name is Hafsa Arain, and I am a youth leader with Interfaith Youth Core, an international NGO based in the United States. Interfaith Youth Core uses a model of educational volunteerism, what we call service learning in the United States. Educating young people through volunteer action involves using dialogue with youth from different religions, ethnicities, and cultures alongside participating in community-oriented action and charity work.

As a youth leader with Interfaith Youth Core, I participated in an exchange with a group of young people from Amman, Jordan. We used dialogue to bridge the gaps between our different cultures and religions, and we also connected with one another on the basis of our charity work with refugee populations in each of our countries. As a young person in Chicago, we worked with refugee children to help them with their schoolwork and literacy. When the Jordanian youth joined us for the exchange, we created blankets to pass out to the refugee families. From that experience, I learned about the power of different people working together on a common problem, and also learned about Jordanian culture in a way that I could not have learned inside of a classroom. This combination of dialogue and action was very powerful for both of our groups, and dispelled stereotypes among us.

We recommend that OSCE nations investigate and implement models of educational volunteerism as a means of promoting non-discrimination and tolerance among young people of different cultures and religions. This model has been highly successful in building relationships across differences, especially with young people. OSCE countries would benefit greatly by involving young people in volunteer learning.