“Young people can have powerful and positive effects on adults, organizations, and communities. Through empowering processes such as learning decision-making skills, critical awareness, managing resources, and working with others, both youth and adults become better equipped as change agents. On the other side, empowered outcomes allow individuals to gain a sense of control, critical awareness and participatory awareness”\textsuperscript{1}.

IDF Europe values the **essential role youth play in raising awareness on diabetes**. Their first-hand experience of diabetes makes them powerful advocates not only to raise awareness on this condition, but also to urge stakeholders and the general public to take action on diabetes. In addition, their broad network built through social media gives them a wide reach which can support IDF Europe’s outreach.

The IDF Europe Youth Leadership Camp (YLC) is one of the pillars of IDF Europe activities. It offers young advocates (T1D) between 18 and 30 from all over Europe the opportunity to connect, learn, share ideas, discuss, debate and network, to improve their knowledge, strengthen their skills and to develop decision-making processes to become the driving force to improve the life of people with diabetes in Europe.

The long-term objective is to empower youth to engage in policy and advocacy-related activities by inspiring them through examples of positive leadership, and to build a strong and active pan-European network of young advocates for diabetes.

This year’s IDF Europe Youth Leadership Camp was hosted by the Romanian Federation of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases on 10-16 July in Cluj-Napoca (Romania), with the generous support of Eli Lilly and FEND.

A Selection Committee and a Programme development Committee formed by IDF Europe Board Members (Cristina Petrut, Kyle J. Rose, Iryna Vlasenko) and João Manuel Valente Nabais, former IDF Europe President, gave direction for the organization of the Leadership Camp. The coordination of the Camp was done by Elisabeth Dupont.

From thirty-four applications across the European region, twenty-four participants from as many countries were selected on the basis of their motivation for participation in the Camp and optimal geographic representation.

Participants came from Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom. We thank our Member Associations for their active role in the dissemination of the call for application and in the selection process of the candidates. The procedure used intend to ensure that participants are engaged in initiatives promoted by their national diabetes association.
As in previous years, the programme (Appendix 1) combined sports and leisure activities, interactive workshops and participant presentations. This combination has proven key in the success of the IDF Europe Youth Leadership Camp.

Professor Sehnaz Karadeniz, IDF Europe Regional Chair, opened the programme by welcoming participants via skype. Cristina Petrut, IDF Europe Board Member, presented IDF Europe’s mission, activities and priorities.

Professor Ioan Veresiu, President of the Romanian Federation of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases, presented the history and activities of his association. He took this opportunity to remind significant milestones in diabetes research. Professor Gabriela Roman then gave an overview of the current diabetes situation in Romania including prevention strategies, allocated resources, challenges and planned activities.

Building on the experience of previous years, a series of presentations and workshops were organized addressing topics aligned with IDF Europe’s advocacy and communication priorities, to help participants understand the work carried out by IDF Europe and to build bridges with the youth advocates for future work. Each of the workshops was designed to be highly interactive, with breakout sessions, brainstorming in small groups and group reporting.

“All the workshops were very useful for me and inspired me to be more active in my association. After the IDF Europe Youth Leadership Camp I feel more confident and ready to participate in diabetes activities organized in my country”. Miroslav, Bulgaria

“A great opportunity to improve skills, learn techniques and exchange experiences with other participants.” Jelisaveta, Serbia

Inspiration is a key element in engaging young adults who, in turn, will become inspirational leaders. A number of researchers have shown that “positive role models boost young people’s motivation by modeling a guide to achieving success” 2. With this in mind, João Manuel Valente Nabal, former IDF Europe President, was invited to present his journey as diabetes advocate at the national and European level. Through an interactive and creative presentation, he shared his passion and commitment to help raise awareness and empower young people living with diabetes.

The panel titled “How to work with partners” (moderated by Kyle Rose Jacques) intended to offer insight from industry, diabetes association and patient organizations on issues such as partnerships between industry and NGOs and collaboration between diabetes national organizations and IDF Europe. Maurizio Guidi and Chiara Pizzi, Eli Lilly, took part in the session through skype. Case studies were then submitted to participants addressing specific fundraising issues and/or grant requests (congress organization, fundraising event and publications to create awareness advocating for political/policy changes).

The advocacy session (Stella de Sabata and João Manuel Valente Nabalais) focused on the definition of advocacy and the description of advocacy strategies, as well as on the importance of shaping campaigns for desired impact. It also included a general overview of the European political institutions most likely to influence the decisions of national government with regard to diabetes prevention, treatment and care, a

2 http://www.rootsofaction.com/role-models-youth-strategies-success/
brief description of key advocacy partners that participants could engage with in their respective countries and how young advocates could get involved to have an impact. After the presentations, participants were divided into 5 groups and were requested to develop an advocacy plan on 1) improving access to insulin pump, 2) ending discrimination at the work place, 3) setting up a diabetes discussion group at the national parliament, 4) lobbying for diabetes at a political campaign for national elections and 5) allowing all people with diabetes to play sports. This workshop ranked first on the list of most relevant sessions as per participants’ evaluation and feedback given at the end of the week.

The session on **communication and social media for campaigning** (Weronika Kowalska and Cristina Petrut) was articulated in two parts. The first focused on the changes in communication trends and the increasing influence of social media. The second described the “persona” marketing concept and the essential persona attributes to craft a more effective communication. Youth advocates were divided into groups to develop personae for targeted communication that would represent and communicate attributes of their specific target group (qualitative and quantitative information).

The **project management** (Stella de Sabata) workshop was also highly interactive. After a brief introduction to project management concepts, tools and techniques, participants were divided into 4 groups to apply their newly gained knowledge to create their own project plan for WDD. All groups came out with projects that demonstrated innovative and creative thinking:

- «Commonwealth Games »
- «Healthy Food Festival»
- « Diascience »
- « AirT1D »

Inaugurated last year, the “**Taboo Forum**”, led by Cristina Petrut, is one of the most popular sessions of the camp. Anonymous questions collected during the week were addressed during an informal group discussion. Topics raised included diabetes in the workplace, diabetes and alcohol as well as pros and cons of insulin pumps.

This year, two new sessions were introduced. The first one, on **Health Care in Europe and Trends in Diabetes** was a specific request from participants from previous IDF Youth Leadership Camps. It addressed a topic of special interest to this year’s participants (more information on page 5). The second new session was on **“Ending discrimination”**. This session was highly successful and participants continued the discussions and exchange of experiences during the «Taboo Forum». 
Regular physical activity is a key part of managing diabetes and this was one of the core messages of the camp. Although the topic was most specifically addressed during the session titled “Prescribing physical activity to overcome the feat of Diabetes” (Kyle J. Rose and Mihaela Dalea), it was also discussed before and after the sport activities.

All physical activity sessions were led by a “pair” made of one IDF faculty/staff member and one participant. The objective of this approach is to help them develop their leadership and motivational skills. The participant from Serbia, Jelisaveta Fotic, a competitive swimmer for more than 10 years, shared her experience with the group and described how top-level sport helped her not only to better manage her diabetes but also to become psychologically stronger, more resilient and responsible. Other activities included volley-ball, basketball, swimming, football, walking and sport games.

As in previous years, participants’ presentations were one of the highlights of the Youth Leadership Camp. Prior to the Camp, participants were asked to prepare a PowerPoint presentation to briefly introduce themselves, give an overview of the incidence of diabetes in their own country and resources available for treatment, describe activities of their diabetes association, their own present involvement and further plans as diabetes advocates.

This sharing of experiences was an opportunity for the participants not only to learn more about diabetes incidence and treatment in Europe but was also an inspiration for engaging in diabetes activities in their own country. Participants showed a deep interest in comparing the 22 health systems and decided to collect information on a series of data such as availability of insulin pumps and continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) systems, insulin, national reimbursement policies, number of free test stripes and psychological support. The group decided to follow up after the camp to collect missing data and prepare a table that would provide a quick overview of the situation in 22 European countries.
It is no doubt that the highlight of the week was the **flash mob**. This was performed by the participants on the 13th July in the Salt Mine of Turda, at 115 meters depth! The live performance was shared on Facebook and other social media platforms, attracting more than 600 views in less than a few minutes. This initiative was an opportunity to implement newly acquired skills and further develop creativity and teamwork.

On the last evening participants organized a closing ceremony where a short video with some of the best moments of the camp was projected, awards given to participants and faculty and certificates handed over by IDF Europe to participants.

As per the evaluation conducted at the end of the week, the Youth Leadership Camp was deemed a huge success by participants, who especially valued the sharing of experiences, the immediate friendships they developed, the knowledge gained, the dedication and engagement of the speakers and the constant interaction during workshops and presentations, during physical activities, at the time of the hike and during free time in the evening. They left with an increased sense of belonging to the diabetes community and have already formed a network of active young advocates.

“**Truly had the most amazing time. Exceeded all expectations. Hugely grateful to all organizers and speakers. Experience will stay with me forever and I hope this is only the beginning of my involvement with IDF Europe!**” Rebecca, United Kingdom

“**This was one of the most wonderful experience of my life. I have met so many interesting and inspiring people from across Europe. I have learned how to organize myself and improve my impact in local and international projects.**” Ewout, Belgium

“**The IDF Europe Youth Leadership Camp is when you get tools to transform your ideas into projects and to make a difference**”. Mathilde, Norway
IDF Europe wishes to thank the Romanian Federation of Diabetes, Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases, the Romanian medical team (Dr Mihaela Dalea and Dr Diana Sima), Eli Lilly, FEND, all the speakers and IDF Europe Regional Office for their involvement, contribution and support to a very successful Youth Leadership Camp. Last but not least, IDF Europe wishes to thank all participants for their enthusiasm and positive energy during the training week and for what they are and will be contributing to their communities for improving the lives of fellow people with diabetes.

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