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Youth, Peace, and Security: The Key to Unlocking Human Potential for Peace

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	3
A Global Framework: The Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda	4
A Participatory Approach: Nothing About Us Without Us	5
Barriers to Youth Participation in Peace and Security Processes	6
Other Barriers to Youth Participation in Peace and Security Processes	7
The Need for Flexible Funding	7
The Impact of Gender on Youth Peace Building	9
Sustainable Development Goals	11
YPS as a Peace Accelerant	12
YPS in Practice	14
Best Practices for Supporting Young Peace Builders	16
Conclusion	17
Recommendations	17

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Executive Summary

The global youth demographic, defined as individuals ages 18-29, is the largest recorded in human history, and it continues to grow. At the same time, the world is experiencing the highest levels of armed conflict since the end of World War II, and most of those affected by it live in Global South countries, where the population skews young.

Governments have failed to capitalize on the potential of youth leaders, and, in many cases, have contributed to their marginalization. The Youth, Peace, and Security agenda responds to this dynamic by calling for the meaningful participation of youth in a wide array of discussions related to peace and security, with the understanding that they will not only inherit the planet – but they also can codesign it today.

As conflict persists, and as a wave of nationalism sweeps the globe, young people hold the key to the future. International organizations, governments, nongovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders must embrace a youth-informed, youth-inclusive approach to the design and implementation of their policies and programs to interrupt the conflict cycle and empower collaboration.

Introduction

Peace can be achieved in many ways. It can be coerced or imposed. It can be enforced. It can be experienced as a mirage amid the unsatisfying status quo of an interminable conflict. Sustainable peace, however, must be cultivated with an inclusive, multifaceted and multistakeholder approach to addressing the root causes of conflict and building a diverse coalition of peace activists to forge a new path. Historically, young peace builders have been excluded from formal peace and security processes, despite their leadership of local, national, and international initiatives to promote community resilience and global stability. The persistent marginalization of young peace builders undermines the effectiveness of every political settlement that is negotiated and implemented without the input of youth, and it fuels the conflict cycle while precluding the establishment of a durable peace.

The world is experiencing the highest levels of conflict witnessed since the end of World War II,¹ with roughly a quarter of the global population living in an area affected by conflict.² At the same time, the global youth demographic, defined as individuals from 18 to 29 years old, is the largest recorded in human history, and this shift is most profound in Global South and global majority countries. The median age in most of Africa is between 10 and 19.³ Much of south and southeast Asia has a median age of 20 to 29, and on the other end of the spectrum, most of Europe, Canada, and Japan have a median age of 40 to 49.⁴

Effective policymaking must consider the unique needs, concerns, risks, and opportunities associated with stakeholders; therefore, from a policy perspective, proactive and holistic approaches to Global South countries (especially those experiencing conflict) should be youth oriented and, crucially, youth informed. Moreover, young people from every country in the world possess skills and attributes that can be leveraged to build community resilience, stability, and global prosperity; therefore, youth-informed policymaking is not merely

- 1 U.N. Alliance of Civilizations, & U.N. Youth Office. (2025). *Contributing to the Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals Through the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda*. https://www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/ThematicPaper_SDGsYPS_UNAOC_UNYO_web.pdf
- 2 Archie, A. (2022, March 31). *World is seeing the greatest number of conflicts since the end of WWII, U.N. says*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/31/1089884798/united-nations-conflict-covid-19-ukraine-myanmar-sudan-syria-yemen>
- 3 U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2022). *World Population Prospects 2022*. https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/wpp2022_summary_of_results.pdf
- 4 U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2022). *World Population Prospects 2022*. https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/wpp2022_summary_of_results.pdf

relevant to countries presently affected by conflict but to any country seeking to prevent conflict, promote social cohesion, and reinforce peace.

A Global Framework: The Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda

In recognition of the essential role of youth as contributors to global peace and security, and in consultation with young peace builders and activists, the United Nations Security Council has adopted three resolutions that together make up the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agenda. The first, Resolution 2250 (2015), was adopted unanimously by the U.N. Security Council and outlined five pillars of youth participation in peace and security processes: Participation, Protection, Prevention, Disengagement and Reintegration, and Partnerships. These mutually reinforcing pillars highlight various facets of youth engagement and address barriers to achieving full representation:

- Meaningful youth participation in peace and security processes requires access to decision-making bodies and influence within the decision-making process itself, and “meaningful engagement with youth lays the groundwork for the stability and enhanced legitimacy of Governments.”⁵
- Protection concerns must be addressed for young peace builders to fully exercise their civic duty.
- To be maximally effective, activities oriented toward preventing conflict must be designed with young populations in mind.
- Programs aimed at disengagement and reintegration should be youth-oriented and should include resources that provide an alternative path with economic potential and psychosocial resources for ex-combatants.
- Partnership in all forms (particularly financial) is required to sustain youth peace building work.⁶

The second resolution, Resolution 2419 (2018), recognized “that youth marginalization is detrimental to building sustainable peace and countering violent extremism” and urged member states to consider “how their political, financial, technical and logistical support in conflict and postconflict situations takes into account the needs and participation of youth in peace efforts.”⁷ Resolution 2535 (2020), called on U.N. peacekeeping operations and special political missions to integrate YPS into the operational planning and activities of U.N. field missions, with protection considerations at the forefront. That resolution also tasked the U.N. secretary-general with regular reporting on the status of the implementation of YPS, which took the form of status reports in 2022 and 2024.⁸

5 U.N. General Assembly and Security Council. (2018, March 2). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security*. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

6 United Nations Security Council. (2015, December 9). Resolution 2250 (2015). [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2250\(2015\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2250(2015))

7 U.N. Security Council. (2018, June 6). Resolution 2419 (2018). [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2419\(2018\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2419(2018))

8 U.N. Security Council. (2020, July 14). Resolution 2535 (2020). [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2535\(2020\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2535(2020))

Pillars of Youth, Peace, and Security

Participation	Young people's meaningful and diverse participation in peace and security processes at the local, national, regional, and global levels is an essential ingredient for a sustainable peace.
Protection	It is necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of young peacebuilders, especially those experiencing multiple layers of vulnerability. This can be understood to include protection from harm and violation of their human rights in both physical and digital spaces.
Prevention	Young people play an essential role in preventing, mitigating, and resolving conflicts; their meaningful and diverse participation can also assist early warning systems.
Disengagement and Reintegration	Young people living in conflict zones require access to robust disengagement and reintegration programs that include training and economic opportunities, as well as psychosocial support, to allow them to disarm and reintegrate fully into society.
Partnerships	Implementation of the YPS agenda requires intergenerational dialogue and collaboration with various stakeholders, including governments, U.N. entities, and civil society organizations, as well as reliable and accessible funding for youth-led peacebuilding organizations.

Sources: Caitlin Dallaire, UNOY, Datawrapper

A Participatory Approach: Nothing About Us Without Us

Resolution 2250 directed the U.N. secretary-general to commission an independent progress study on YPS, and the associated report was published in 2018 under the title "The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security." The report noted the "violence of exclusion"⁹ experienced by young people, and distinguished between policies about youth versus policies formed in consultation with youth, highlighting how an inclination toward the former has fractured young people's faith in their governments and in the international community, contributing to a general sense of injustice.¹⁰ This trend persists in many countries. An African Youth Survey, conducted by the Ichikowicz Family Foundation in 2024, concluded that Africa's rapidly growing youth population is losing trust "in almost all authorities, formal and informal."¹¹ The same appears to be true for young Americans, whose responses to the 2025 Harvard Youth Poll were linked by one student to "financial hardship and a devastating crisis of community."¹²

The Missing Peace report identified other factors that exacerbated this loss of faith in government, among them the prevalent stereotypes around youth and the "policy panic"¹³ that results from these stereotypes. Young men are viewed as "violent predators or potential spoilers of peace,"¹⁴ reinforcing a notion of a

9 United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. (2018, March 2). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security*. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

10 United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. (2018, March 2). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security*. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

11 The Guardian. (2024, September 16). *Africa's youth "losing faith in authority."* https://ippmedia.com/the-guardian/features/read/africas-youth-losing-faith-in-authority-2024-09-16-121002#google_vignette

12 Ewing, G. R. (2025, April 23). *Young Americans 'continue to lose faith in government institutions.'* Politico. <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/04/23/young-americans-poll-trump-congress-00306025>

13 Berents, H. (2022). *Power, Partnership, and Youth as Norm Entrepreneurs: Getting to UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security*. *Global Studies Quarterly*, 2 (3). <https://academic.oup.com/isagsq/article/2/3/ksac038/6645832>

14 United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. (2018, March 2). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security*. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

“universally violent masculinity.”¹⁵ Young women are characterized as “passive victims at best, or invisible at worst, which denies their agency.”¹⁶ In countries with an identified youth population bulge, there is a propensity among policy-makers to “overemphasize violence” and “downplay the role of structural inequalities and exclusion that contribute to youth poverty and powerlessness.”¹⁷ In other words, by assuming that youths are inherently violent, policymakers are more likely to approach youth through the lens of countering violent extremism, aligning efforts and allocating resources accordingly.

This played out in the early 2010s with the rise of the Islamic State: Governments reacting to a growing youth population and a growing terrorist threat displayed a tendency to fixate on the intersection of these two factors while underappreciating the complex set of social and economic variables that create the conditions for conflict and violence.¹⁸ The myth of youth propensity for violence is also employed by governments “to repress the legitimate participation of youth in political processes, social movements, peaceful protests, and expressions of dissent.”¹⁹ The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights reported 82 political abductions in 2024 and noted that the bulk of these kidnappings occurred during and after finance bill protests, which were largely driven by youth. Several of the abductees indicate that they were targeted based on their online activism.²⁰

By shifting the paradigm to view youth as potential contributors to peace, potentially operating inside a violent, neglectful, or exclusionary structure, policymakers can shift their efforts to reforming the structures that are producing violence rather than exacerbating youth marginalization and fueling the conflict cycle.

Barriers to Youth Participation in Peace and Security Processes

Many governments, including the United States, currently are more narrowly defining their national security interests. Amid this global shift toward realpolitik, there is waning commitment to the U.N. charter and the role of collective action in maintaining international peace and security. The current U.S. administration has also drastically reduced the role of development and preventive diplomacy in U.S. foreign policy, first through the dissolution of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and termination of most nonmilitary foreign assistance and then through the proposed reorganization of the State

15 United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. (2018, March 2). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security*. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

16 United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. (2018, March 2). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security*. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

17 United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. (2018, March 2). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security*. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

18 Berents, H. (2022). *Power, Partnership, and Youth as Norm Entrepreneurs: Getting to UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security*. *Global Studies Quarterly*, 2(3). <https://academic.oup.com/isagsq/article/2/3/ksac038/6645832>

19 United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. (2018, March 2). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth and Peace and Security*. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

20 Madung, O. (2025, May 1). *Tortured over a tweet: How the war between Kenya's Gen Z and their president has moved online*. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/may/01/kenyans-tortured-for-a-tweet-president-ruto-satire-x-youth-gen-z>

Department. The new organizational chart eliminates or reassigns many of the bureaus formerly reporting to the undersecretary for civilian security, democracy, and human rights, meaning the kinds of policies and programs that support inclusive peace processes and community resilience are on the chopping block, and arguing for resources to support youth-inclusive peace processes may be challenging. At the same time, a streamlined government must maximize the effectiveness of its diplomatic and development initiatives, which can only be done through a youth-inclusive and responsive policymaking process.

This policymaking climate exacerbates the risk that even well-meaning policymakers and practitioners may advance an overly simplified and overly securitized version of the YPS agenda. To avoid this, advocates for YPS will need to preserve the nuance within the agenda, embrace and weigh some competing priorities, and resist the urge to argue that governments should prioritize youth-oriented policymaking mainly to mitigate the risk of recruitment into violent extremist organizations. While youth recruitment into such groups is certainly a concern, it does not represent the vast majority of youth, nor is it the root cause of conflict.

Other Barriers to Youth Participation in Peace and Security Processes

The most recent U.N. report on the status of the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda highlights several other barriers to the full implementation of the agenda and to youth participation in peace building activities and security spaces. These include shrinking civic space, the increase in digital threats, lack of commitment among Security Council members, and an increase in armed conflict. These challenging conditions are compounded by global health and environmental challenges (manifesting through the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change), unequal access to education and economic opportunity, a shift toward autocracy in many countries, and violations and abuses of human rights. Individual youth experiences also engage with intersecting identities like age, race, ethnicity, social status, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, religion, proximity to an urban center, and level of education, among other factors.²¹

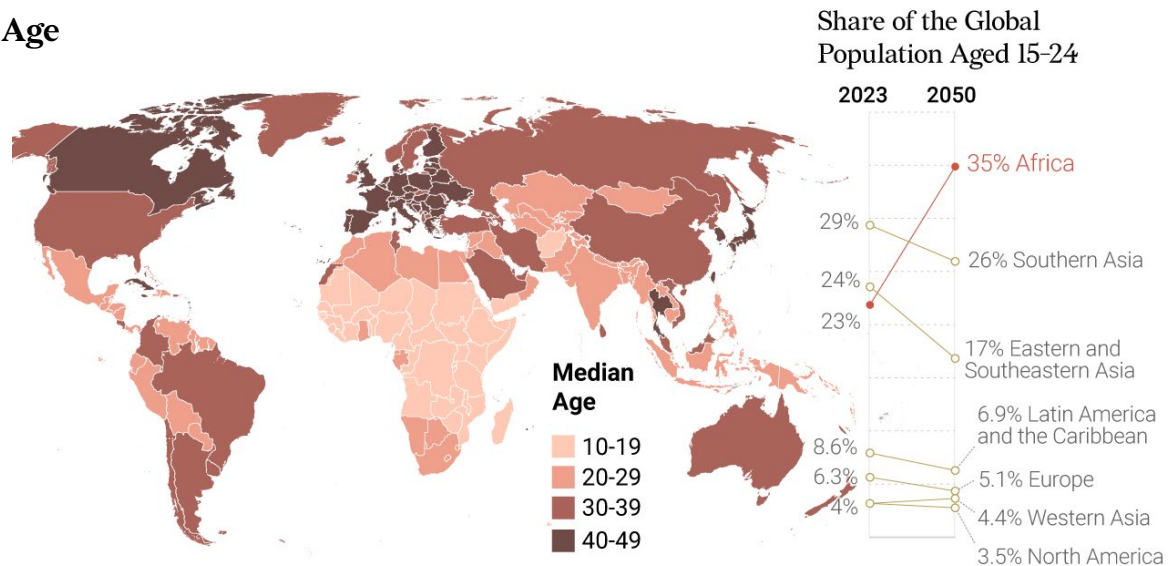
The YPS agenda recognizes that youth are not monolithic; therefore, their meaningful and diverse participation in peace and security processes is key to successful outcomes. Youth from a rural community, for instance, often have a harder time accessing political spaces than youth from an urban community or the political elite; therefore, their location is a barrier, and their perspectives are unique and informative. The same is true for youth from different socio-economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. If a wide range of perspectives can be reflected in peace negotiations and other political processes, there is a greater chance that the result will be sustainable; therefore, identifying and mitigating barriers to diverse youth participation is essential.

The Need for Flexible Funding

The lack of flexible funding presents a significant barrier to youth peace building work – a challenge that is only exacerbated for young people experiencing multiple layers of marginalization. According to a report published by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, peace building funding is rarely accessible to local

21 U.N. Secretary-General. (2024, March 1). *Youth and Peace and Security: Report of the Secretary-General*. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4042803?ln=en&v=pdf>

Global Median Age by Country



Sources: The New York Times, U.N. World Population Prospects 2022

peace builders, including women and youth.²² Half of all youth-led peace building organizations operate on a budget of less than \$5,000 annually, with 97% of their members contributing as volunteers.²³ When young peace builders are successful in securing funding, it is often short-term, project-based, and tied to an expectation for specific results. This can put young peace builders in the position of adjusting their programs to fit funding requirements over contextual considerations, focusing on short-term gains rather than sustainable solutions. It also forces these organizations to waste resources continuously fundraising rather than on conflict prevention and peace building work.²⁴

Earmarked funds donated by U.N. member states are also notoriously inflexible and non-inclusive of local voices within the decision-making process, which makes the process more “transactional” than collaborative.²⁵ The GPPAC report also notes that a majority of peace-building funds are directed to conflicts that are on the U.N. Security Council or Peacebuilding Commission’s agenda, leaving peace builders in “under-the-radar” conflicts to compete for even fewer funds.

Finally, implicit bias and power dynamics in the donor-recipient relationship severely hamper young peace builders. Many donors focus on “capacity building” that is defined by and oriented toward the donors’ own priorities, rather than recognizing that the capacities needed to promote peace and stability may vary from context to context. In this way, traditional funding models have not adequately supported locally led, context-specific peace building work, and

22 Crockett, C., & Kumskova, M. (2022, April 12). *Financing Peacebuilding: Advancing Opportunities in Local Civil Society*. Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. <https://www.gppac.net/news/financing-peacebuilding-added-value-gppacs-locally-led-network-approach>

23 United Network of Young Peacebuilders. (n.d.). *Mapping a sector: Bridging the evidence gap on youth-driven peacebuilding*. <https://unoy.org/downloads/mapping-a-sector-bridging-the-evidence-gap-on-youth-driven-peacebuilding/>

24 Crockett, C., & Kumskova, M. (2022, April 12). *Financing Peacebuilding: Advancing Opportunities in Local Civil Society*. Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. <https://www.gppac.net/news/financing-peacebuilding-added-value-gppacs-locally-led-network-approach>

25 Crockett, C., & Kumskova, M. (2022, April 12). *Financing Peacebuilding: Advancing Opportunities in Local Civil Society*. Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. <https://www.gppac.net/news/financing-peacebuilding-added-value-gppacs-locally-led-network-approach>

there is a profound need for more innovative, flexible approaches to funding peace building work in general, and particularly for youth-led organizations.²⁶

The Impact of Gender on Youth Peace Building

The impact of gender on a young person's experience with conflict and peace is profound, complex, and dynamic. In many contexts, men and boys face social pressure to protect and provide for their families while adhering to a rigid set of norms associated with "masculinity." With limited education and/or economic opportunities, and with many violent organizations and right-wing groups placing hypermasculine violence at the center of the social construct, joining a violent extremist organization and embracing violence can become a viable option for survival among young men. According to research conducted by the International Peace Institute, Osama Bin Laden's speeches from 1994 to 2004 deployed a "gendered hierarchal narrative" that called upon young men to fulfill their masculine duty to protect the Islamic community from the threat posed by America and the West.²⁷ The same report highlights the way this manifests in Somalia, where this narrative is layered with the local clan system to produce a scenario in which joining al Shabaab might offer a young man the most direct path to a livelihood, power, and respect.²⁸

Women and girls, on the other hand, are at heightened risk of violence, particularly sexual and gender-based violence in conflict zones, a form of violence regularly deployed as a weapon of war and a tool of genocide.²⁹ According to the U.N. secretary-general's 2024 report on the YPS agenda, "within three months of heavy fighting in Sudan, the number of women and girls at risk of gender-based violence had increased by a staggering 40 percent. In Haiti, Gangs continue to systematically use sexual violence against women and girls to consolidate control over populations."³⁰ The risk to women and girls is exacerbated by factors that compound conflict, including climate change and climate-driven migration. When women are required to travel longer distances to source water (a role traditionally held by women in many cultures) they are more exposed to violence along the way. When women are left at home as the men and boys in their community venture out in search of food or employment, they are left in a more vulnerable position should combatants enter their communities.

Elements of gender, and the social expectations associated with gender, can be exploited in favor of peace. For instance, Organizations that provide skills, education (including social-emotional education) and marketable experiences can have a profound impact on the outlook of men and boys steeped in a cultural context that promotes the protector or provider mentality, as well as for the community at large. Through research, programs, and advocacy, Equimundo Center for Masculinities and Social Justice takes this approach to achieving gender equality and social justice "by transforming intergenerational patterns of harm and promoting patterns of care, empathy, and accountability among

26 Crockett, C., & Kumskova, M. (2022, April 12). *Financing Peacebuilding: Advancing Opportunities in Local Civil Society*. Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict. <https://www.gppac.net/news/financing-peacebuilding-added-value-gppacs-locally-led-network-approach>

27 Dier, A., & Baldwin, G. (2022, June). *Masculinities and Violent Extremism*. International Peace Institute. <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Masculinities-and-VE-Web.pdf>

28 Dier, A., & Baldwin, G. (2022, June). *Masculinities and Violent Extremism*. International Peace Institute. <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Masculinities-and-VE-Web.pdf>

29 Kapp, C. (2022, November 1). *The devastating use of sexual violence as a weapon of war*. Think Global Health. <https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/devastating-use-sexual-violence-weapon-war>

30 U.N. Secretary-General. (2024, March 1). *Youth and Peace and Security: Report of the Secretary-General*. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4042803?ln=en&v=pdf>

boys and men throughout their lives.”³¹

Researchers, policymakers, and practitioners should explore ways to positively engage and empower men and boys to play a role that supports the peaceful expression of their masculinity. This could involve programs that support men and boys as caretakers, which is not a far stretch from the commonly held male expectation of being a provider and protector, and which has the added benefit of creating opportunities for women and girls to explore their own education and career opportunities thanks to a more equitable balance of caretaking duties.

Similarly, women and girls are often viewed solely as victims of conflict and violence rather than leaders and agents of change. It is possible to conceive of a practice of femininity that neither defies traditional cultural values in many contexts nor limits the agency of women and girls. For instance, traditionally tasked with responsibilities like farming and water sourcing in their communities, women and girls are on the front lines of responding to climate change. They are perceiving the changes to their environment, predicting the associated risks and community impacts, and innovating methods of mitigation and adaptation in real time. Through their leadership on this issue and others, young women and girls are building peace and resilience in their communities and developing locally led, context specific, sustainable solutions to one of the greatest existential threats to humanity.

At the same time, they are becoming innovators and entrepreneurs, growing their influence within their communities, increasing their financial independence, and creating opportunities for other women and girls in the process. In alignment with the U.S. Strategy to Respond to the Effects of Climate Change on Women, the Department of State’s Office of Global Women’s Issues built a network of women organizers and innovators addressing climate issues through an initiative called Innovation Station, which contributed to the creation of 1,400 new partnerships and the growth of many women-owned startups in the climate space.³²

Digital threats tend to manifest differently for young men and women. According to the U.N. Secretary General’s 2024 progress report on Youth, Peace, and Security, “State and non-State actors can use online platforms and surveillance to amplify hate speech and disinformation, as well as target, silence, harass and radicalize individuals.”³³ This is true for people of all genders. Young women are most vulnerable to technology-facilitated gender-based violence, which presents a significant risk to mental health and has also been proven to directly correlate to elevated risk in the physical world. The violence perpetrated against women and girls online – threats, blackmail, and more recently AI-generated deepfakes designed to embarrass, endanger, and intimidate – dissuades them from engaging on social and political issues and deters their participation in politics. This is a form of censorship and a symptom of the larger trend of shrinking civic space and increasing violence in all spaces.

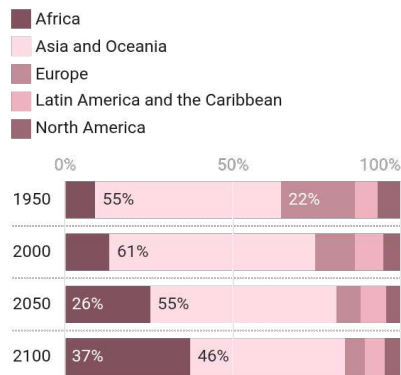
Young men’s experience of and with violence online is perhaps more profoundly underexamined. They are often perpetrators of violence against women and girls online. Men and boys are also targeted by online communities seeking to exploit the social, emotional, and psychological vulnerabilities common among young men – particularly those who feel prevented from fully expressing their

31 Equimundo. (2025, April 11). *Our Work*. <https://www.equimundo.org/our-work/#by-thematic-area>

32 Paris, A. (2024, July 16). *The Innovation Station Amplifies the Voices of Woman and Girl Innovators*. Archive: U.S. Department of State: Secretary’s Office of Global Women’s Issues. <https://2021-2025.state.gov/the-innovation-station-amplifies-the-voices-of-woman-and-girl-innovators/>

33 U.N. Secretary-General. (2024, March 1). *Youth and Peace and Security: Report of the Secretary-General*. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4042803?ln=en&v=pdf>

Share of World Population



Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Sources: IMF, Our World in Data | Created with Datawrapper

masculinity as they understand it, due to lack of economic opportunity, real or perceived marginalization, and a deficit of supportive relationships in their own lives. This is not only occurring in conflict zones – it is a global phenomenon stemming from a crisis of disconnection, poverty, and inequality, governance issues, and a lack of evolution in our collective understanding and social construction of what it means to be a man. In online spaces, there is a growing trend of young men and boys joining what has been recently named the “manosphere” – a vast network dedicated to advancing a vision of masculinity that is rooted in misogyny, which has gained power and popularity by “using strategic messaging that speaks to young men’s lived challenges,”³⁴ according to Equimundo.

With the digital world being the primary place young men now spend their free time,³⁵ policymakers and practitioners will need to better understand the connections between masculinities, the manosphere, conflict, and peace.

Sustainable Development Goals

While the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda has the potential to be a force multiplier for all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there are four that the U.N. Youth Office and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) identify as being closely connected to and supported by YPS: Quality Education, Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, and Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.³⁶

The synergies between education and peace building have been understood by UNAOC since its inception. The UNAOC Young Peace builders program equips young participants to develop expertise in conflict prevention while working on grassroots projects in their communities. In 2022, the U.N. Youth Office and its partners coordinated an initiative to engage 450,000 youth from over 170 countries to gather recommendations regarding education, resulting in the Youth Declaration on Transforming Education – “a landmark document outlining youth demands for an education framework rooted in peace and human rights.”³⁷

The goal of advancing gender equality has been largely understood through the lens of empowering young women; therefore, in 2022, U.N. Women partnered with UNAOC, the United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Children’s Fund to launch the Young Women Peacebuilders Initiative, which has provided capacity-building training for young women from conflict-affected countries and support the development of a peer network. This effort created visibility within the U.N. system for young women peace builders, some of whom were invited to brief the U.N. Security Council through Arria-formula meetings.³⁸ This initiative is meaningful and responds to a critical gap in women’s leadership in peace building and many other spaces, but the advancement of women alone does not necessarily result in gender equality. For this reason, future work to advance the SDG of Gender Equality should adopt a more holistic approach to understanding the role of gender in conflict and peace by considering how

34 Equimundo. (2024, August 16). *What is the Manosphere?* <https://www.equimundo.org/what-is-the-manosphere/>

35 Equimundo. (2024, August 16). *What is the Manosphere?* <https://www.equimundo.org/what-is-the-manosphere/>

36 U.N. Alliance of Civilizations, & U.N. Youth Office. (2025). *Contributing to the Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals Through the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda*. https://www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/ThematicPaper_SDGsYPS_UNAOC_UNYO_web.pdf

37 U.N. Alliance of Civilizations, & U.N. Youth Office. (2025). *Contributing to the Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals Through the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda*. https://www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/ThematicPaper_SDGsYPS_UNAOC_UNYO_web.pdf

38 U.N. Alliance of Civilizations, & U.N. Youth Office. (2025). *Contributing to the Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals Through the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda*. https://www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/ThematicPaper_SDGsYPS_UNAOC_UNYO_web.pdf

The YPS agenda can act as a peace accelerant across the conflict-peace spectrum. Meaningful, diverse, and equitable youth participation in all facets of society can mitigate many of the root causes of conflict by addressing inequality and structural violence.

gender also impacts the risks and opportunities represented by men and boys in conflict.

Efforts aimed at reducing discrimination and inequality are supported through the implementation of the YPS agenda and through the empowerment of youth. The Youth Solidarity Fund, a UNAOC initiative, provides partnership, capacity-building, and financial resources to youth-led organizations to “implement activities to prevent violent conflict, promote peace and foster social cohesion through intercultural and interfaith dialogue.”³⁹ This fund targets youth in countries receiving development assistance.

Youth play an essential role in supporting peace, justice, and strong institutions, and the full implementation of the YPS agenda enables more equitable access to these institutions, which traditionally marginalize or fail to serve youth. UNAOC and the International Organization for Migration have partnered to create the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, which provides an outlet for youth around the world to explore issues like “migration, diversity, social inclusion, and the prevention of xenophobia through artistic multimedia production.”⁴⁰ This initiative capitalizes on the idea that the messenger is as important as the message – young people speaking to other young people, and to their own communities, can be a powerful force for peace, justice, and inclusion. Further, at Summit of the Future Youth Action Day in September 2024, the U.N. Youth Office recommended creating an “intergenerational dialogue platform” and “introducing youth engagement metrics in national SDG reporting to institutionalize youth participation and promote intergenerational equity.”⁴¹

YPS as a Peace Accelerant

The YPS agenda can act as a peace accelerant across the conflict-peace spectrum. Meaningful, diverse, and equitable youth participation in all facets of society can mitigate many of the root causes of conflict by addressing inequality and structural violence. USAID’s Youth in Development Policy created a framework to guide programming toward an overarching goal: “Increase the meaningful participation of youth within their communities, schools, organizations, economies, peer groups, and families, enhancing their skills, providing opportunities, and fostering healthy relationships so they may build on their collective leadership.”⁴² USAID pursued this goal through three objectives:

- Increasing youth access to “high quality information, safe services, and livelihood opportunities”⁴³
- Promoting the right of youth “to fully participate in decision making as key partners to contribute to individual, household, community, and national well-being”⁴⁴

39 U.N. Alliance of Civilizations, & U.N. Youth Office. (2025). *Contributing to the Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals Through the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda*. https://www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/ThematicPaper_SDGsYPS_UNAOC_UNYO_web.pdf

40 U.N. Alliance of Civilizations, & U.N. Youth Office. (2025). *Contributing to the Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals Through the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda*. https://www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/ThematicPaper_SDGsYPS_UNAOC_UNYO_web.pdf

41 U.N. Alliance of Civilizations, & U.N. Youth Office. (2025). *Contributing to the Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals Through the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda*. https://www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/ThematicPaper_SDGsYPS_UNAOC_UNYO_web.pdf

42 U.S. Agency for International Development (2022). *Report to Congress on USAID’S youth in development policy*. https://srhrindex.srhforall.org/uploads_2023/09/2022/USAID_Report-to-Congress-on-Youth-Policy.pdf

43 U.S. Agency for International Development (2022). *Report to Congress on USAID’S youth in development policy*. https://srhrindex.srhforall.org/uploads_2023/09/2022/USAID_Report-to-Congress-on-Youth-Policy.pdf

44 U.S. Agency for International Development (2022). *Report to Congress on USAID’S youth in development policy*. https://srhrindex.srhforall.org/uploads_2023/09/2022/USAID_Report-to-Congress-on-Youth-Policy.pdf



A Uruguayan member of the U.N. Stabilization Mission in DR Congo stands in front of a mural at a base in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, on April 21, 2016. (Pablo Porciuncula/AFP via Getty Images)

- Contributing to youth capacity for collective action so they may self-advocate within existing local and national systems in a way that supports positive youth development.⁴⁵

USAID's strategy highlighted the multilevel, multifaceted approach necessary for advancing this agenda and through it, advancing youth leadership as a means of conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and sustaining peace. Despite the dissolution of USAID, future efforts undertaken by the Department of State to promote stability and economic prosperity around the world can and should incorporate these best practices within future development and diplomacy initiatives.

There is also a clear advantage to implementing the YPS agenda fully through U.N. peacekeeping operations. U.N. Security Council Resolution 2535 "urges all peacekeeping and other relevant U.N. missions to develop and implement context-specific strategies on youth, peace, and security,"⁴⁶ tasks the secretary-general with biennial reporting on the implementation of the agenda, and requests the secretariat to develop expertise and improve capacity-building and technical guidance on YPS.⁴⁷

In practice, implementing YPS through peacekeeping operations requires U.N. Security Council member states to advocate for language on YPS to be included in the operative paragraphs of peacekeeping mandates, which are generally renegotiated annually. Once this language exists in a legally binding resolution, it then justifies the allocation of funds toward YPS-related activities. This is decided by the 5th Committee of the U.N. General Assembly, which provides peacekeeping missions with their budgets. Once included in the mandate and resourced through the budget, peacekeeping missions must then determine how to implement YPS activities in a way that is consistent with the mandate and appropriate within the context of the mission and the conflict environment.

Fortunately, many of these activities can be done within existing resources and capacities by increasing YPS awareness and expertise in-mission. Missions can then apply a youth lens to conflict-prevention activities like Community Violence Reduction projects; demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programs; human rights education activities; and facilitation of peace negotiations through the Head of Mission's Good Offices. Importantly, and unlike other stakeholders on the ground, peacekeeping missions are also able to provide significant protection to young peace builders through their armed forces, which can enable youth access to voting sites, political and justice institutions, etc. in fragile contexts. Peacekeepers can secure critical access routes for humanitarian aid and community mobility and carry out a range of other activities that already serve disproportionately young populations by virtue of the demographics in many conflict zones. Applying a youth lens to peacekeeping can improve operational effectiveness and create the conditions for an eventual transition and a sustainable peace.

Following the transition of a peacekeeping mission to a special political mission, which is smaller in footprint and does not maintain a large military force, the U.N. should continue to provide capacity and expertise to local stakeholders to ensure that youth inclusive peace and security processes are a part of the design and implementation of a negotiated peace.

45 U.S. Agency for International Development (2022). *Report to Congress on USAID'S youth in development policy*. https://srhrindex.srhforall.org/uploads_2023/09/2022/USAID_Report-to-Congress-on-Youth-Policy.pdf

46 U.N. Security Council. (2020, July 14). Resolution 2535 (2020). [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2535\(2020\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2535(2020))

47 U.N. Security Council. (2020, July 14). Resolution 2535 (2020). [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2535\(2020\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2535(2020))



Girls sit in the European Parliament chambers in Brussels, Belgium, during a celebration of the body's founding in May 2024. The day featured informative stands on upcoming elections, fostering political engagement and dialogue. (Michael Currie/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images)

YPS in Practice

Following the U.N. Security Council's adoption of the YPS agenda, Finland, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Gambia adopted National Action Plans on YPS, and approximately 60 more have plans in development. Additionally, the African Union adopted a Continental Framework on Youth, Peace, and Security in 2020, acknowledging "the need for institutionalized initiatives and targeted actions that reflect the needs and perspectives of youth in the prevention and recovery from armed conflicts and insecurities in Africa."⁴⁸ The document notes, "The youthful demography of the African continent is also a defining factor as exponential increases in the population of young people (persons below the age of 35 are estimated to account for three quarters of Africa's 1.2 billion population) is a rare opportunity (development resource) as much as a challenge (increases the risk of violence) in the context of injustice, limited education and socio-economic opportunities, and exclusion from decision-making processes."⁴⁹ The AU framework's goal is to acknowledge the demographic reality overlaying conflict on the African continent, enhance collaboration among stakeholders, and encourage member states to develop their own national action plans. It is worth noting that several years before the adoption of UNSCR 2250 and establishment of YPS, the Economic Community of West African States published a Youth Policy.⁵⁰ Africa has been a leader in the conversation on positive youth engagement for at least 15 years.

In 2021, Finland became the first country in the world to formally adopt a national action plan on YPS. Finland's plan aligns with the five pillars of YPS and includes themes of intersectionality, climate change, and new technologies. The plan is managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented across Finland's branches of government.⁵¹ Finland's implementation of the action plan is ahead of many other countries, but there is still room for improvement. The European Centre for Civilian Crisis Management notes that YPS experts are typically serving in several capacities, having received little training on the topic; therefore, dedicated capacity and expanded expertise is needed to advance the agenda's implementation.⁵²

Nigeria was the second to adopt a National Action Plan on YPS, also in 2021. Nigeria's plan outlines the dynamics that drive generations of conflict and violence, noting, "In urban cities today, youth participation in violence takes the form of involvement in gangs, some of which are allegedly politically-backed and used in a variety of ways to help political parties to gain mileage, particularly around election time,"⁵³ and "the surge in radicalization and violent extremism within the last two decades also tends to be associated with the political and socio-economic disaffection of young men, and increasingly young women,

48 African Union. (2020). *Continental Framework for Youth, Peace, and Security*. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39150-doc-continental_framework_on_youth_peace_and_security_-_english.pdf

49 African Union. (2020). *Continental Framework for Youth, Peace, and Security*. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39150-doc-continental_framework_on_youth_peace_and_security_-_english.pdf

50 Economic Community of West African States (2010). *ECOWAS Youth Policy and Strategic Plan of Action*. <https://www.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Youth-Policy.pdf>

51 European Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management. (2021). *Youth, Peace and Security: Finland's National Action Plan 2024–2021*. <https://www.coe-civ.eu/kh/youth-peace-and-security-finlands-national-action-plan-2021-2024>

52 European Centre of Excellence for Civilian Crisis Management. (2025). *Findings and Recommendations to Strengthen the Implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda within Civilian Crisis Management*. <https://www.coe-civ.eu/kh/findings-and-recommendations-to-strengthen-the-implementation-of-the-youth-peace-and-security-agenda-within-civilian-crisis-management>

53 Building Blocks for Peace Foundation. (2021). *Nigeria Launches National Action Plan on UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security*. <https://bbforpeace.org/yplib/2021/11/04/nigeria-launches-national-action-plan-on-UNSCR-2250-on-youth-peace-and-security/>

who join extremist groups such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and ISIL.⁵⁴ It goes on to acknowledge that exclusion and marginalization are common experiences for young people, and “in the absence of opportunities and participation, youth become vulnerable and many times stay caught up in a vicious cycle of violence and stigmatization.”⁵⁵ The plan identifies the failure of tokenistic or non-participatory youth participation in peace and security processes and details the positive role of youth in mitigating social grievances, combating violence, and contributing to a sustainable peace. Despite these intentions, lack of capacity on YPS and funding gaps, as well as persistent structural barriers, and competition from international and regional actors have limited the impact of Nigeria’s national action plan.⁵⁶

The Philippines adopted its National Action Plan on YPS in 2022 after several years of research, development, and consultations conducted by the Office of the Presidential Advisor on Peace, Reconciliation, and Unity with young peace builders through regional forums and educational events for youth. These forums allowed the office to mobilize a youth constituency and gather recommendations that informed the plan, which was designed to “provide the framework of the country’s youth-centered, youth-serving, and youth-led programs, initiatives, interventions, and strategies on peace building and security.”⁵⁷ By meaningfully consulting youth in the design and development of its National Action Plan, the Philippines government began the process of institutionalizing the agenda and simultaneously modeled how to put YPS into practice – mainly through robust consultations with youth stakeholders. An assessment of the Philippines’ implementation of its plan published by the International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research found a high degree of adherence but recommended greater program differentiation to tailor initiatives to the diverse needs of various community groups.⁵⁸

The Democratic Republic of the Congo’s National Action Plan on YPS came to exist through young leaders of the Congolese Youth, Peace, and Security coalition’s participation in U.N. and African Union events and consultations on YPS, and through persistent and coordinated action. The Congolese government created the Ministry of Youth, New Citizenship, and National Cohesion as the National Technical Secretariat for the Implementation of UNSCR 2250 in the DRC in 2020, and in 2021, young civil society leaders came together to launch the Congolese YPS coalition. The coalition developed the DRC’s YPS National Action Plan and it officially launched in August 2022.⁵⁹ All of this has occurred amidst ongoing, active conflict, which is particularly acute in eastern DRC, and which has not been resolved through the presence of the U.N. peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO; therefore, there are significant challenges to implementation in DRC, but there is also a great need for active youth participation in the resolution of the conflict and co-creation of a durable and lasting peace.

54 Building Blocks for Peace Foundation. (2021). *Nigeria Launches National Action Plan on UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security*. <https://bbforpeace.org/yplslibrary/2021/11/04/nigeria-launches-national-action-plan-on-unscr-2250-on-youth-peace-and-security/>

55 Building Blocks for Peace Foundation. (2021). *Nigeria Launches National Action Plan on UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security*. <https://bbforpeace.org/yplslibrary/2021/11/04/nigeria-launches-national-action-plan-on-unscr-2250-on-youth-peace-and-security/>

56 ConnexUs. (2023, July 24). *Impact Report: One Year into the Implementation of the Nigeria National Action Plan on Youth Peace and Security*. <https://cnxus.org/resource/impact-report-one-year-into-the-implementation-of-the-nigeria-national-action-plan-on-youth-peace-and-security/>

57 National Youth Commission. (n.d.). *Philippine National Action Plan on Youth, Security and Peace (NAPYPS 2023-2033)*. <https://peace.gov.ph/napyps/>

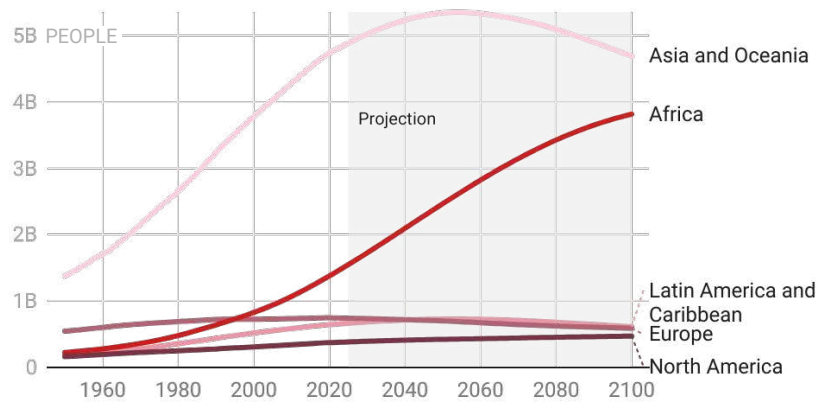
58 Harry, J.S. (2024). *Effectiveness of the National Action Plan on Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda in Baguio’s Youth Peacebuilding Organizations*. International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research. <https://www.ijfmr.com/papers/2024/6/31450.pdf>

59 Akilimali, J. (2022, September 22). *Joseph’s Journey Towards the DRC’s National Action Plan on YPS*. United Network of Young Peacebuilders. <https://unoy.org/josephs-journey-towards-the-drcs-national-action-plan-on-yyps/>

Population Growth and Projection through 2100

Approximately 1 in every 4 people are predicted to be African by 2100.

Sources: Caitlin Dallaire, UNOY | Created with Datawrapper



In 2025, Gambia became the most recent adopter of a National Action Plan on YPS, which contextualizes progress on YPS within the country's larger Recovery-Focused National Development Plan, including a commitment to addressing inadequate empowerment and social exclusion, particularly among youth. The NAP identifies the unique vulnerabilities experienced by youth in the country and provides a practical guide for "youth, government, civil society, international partners, and indeed all stakeholders, to work together to create inclusive policies that ensure the protection, participation and empowerment of youth in peace and security efforts."⁶⁰

It is no coincidence that National Action Plans have generally proliferated in countries currently experiencing, or having recently experienced, violence and conflict. The governments in these countries seem to recognize not only the risks associated with disenfranchising or marginalizing youth, but the massive squandering of potential and the lost opportunities for growth, development, prosperity, and stability. As the world experiences record levels of conflict, it is possible that more governments will begin to recognize the need for proactive strategies to promote social cohesion through a future-oriented approach that centers on youth. Moreover, with a growing number of borderless challenges like climate change, migration, violent extremism, cyberthreats, and weaponized disinformation, governments would be wise to adopt strategies that harness the full power of human potential for problem-solving and peace. They will also need to acknowledge the inherent risks associated with alienating or repressing a large portion of the population – a tactic often used by authoritarian governments, which is actually anathema to regime security. Finally, it is important to remember that "without dedicated funding and institutional support, even the most well-intentioned and well-designed NAP processes could remain 'plans for action' rather than mechanisms that truly generate action."⁶¹

Best Practices for Supporting Young Peace Builders

The full implementation of the YPS agenda and robust participation of youth in peace building activities requires not only an understanding of the five interconnected pillars of YPS but also of best practices associated with this work. The United Network of Young Peacebuilders is the world's largest youth-led peace building network, and its guide to youth-inclusive consultations highlights the importance of intergenerational partnership and collaboration among youth and non-youth stakeholders. The network notes the need for all participants to co-create the consultation process in a way that recognizes and responds to

60 U.N. Development Programme (2025). *National Action Plan on the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS)*. <https://www.undp.org/africa/waca/publications/national-action-plan-youth-peace-and-security-yps>

61 Kern, L. (2025, January 28). *Do national action plans actually lead to action on the youth, peace and security agenda?* United Nations University. <https://unu.edu/cpr/blog-post/do-national-action-plans-actually-lead-action-youth-peace-and-security-agenda>

the limitations on all parties – particularly on youth leaders, a majority of whom work on a volunteer basis and may experience other challenges associated with their participation. A “do no harm” approach is paramount, as many youths experience safety concerns when engaging in peace building or activism work.⁶² This approach requires analysis of the conflict context and the potential unintended consequences that could result from an intervention. These consequences could include elevated risk to young peace builders or accidental exacerbation of conflict dynamics; thus, addressing these concerns from the start can improve outcomes and promote greater youth participation.

Beyond inclusive consultations, policymakers and practitioners working to advance YPS should identify both top-down and bottom-up methods, to ensure that the agenda (as policy) is institutionalized and mainstreamed across a vast network of agencies and nongovernment stakeholders, and that the programs being supported are locally led, locally owned, and context specific. Young peace builders, many of whom operate on limited budgets, have frequently sounded the alarm regarding the difficulty of applying for funding, the pitfalls of adapting their programs to meet donor requirements, the difficulty of competing with larger (often international) organizations for funding, and the limitations to the impact and sustainability of their work due to these challenges. Flexible funding is therefore perhaps the greatest gap to be addressed in order to support youth peace building, and with the international development field in upheaval, it is a gap that must be considered in the design and implementation of new (public or private sector) funding programs. Finally, a participatory approach that centers youth and responds to the violence of exclusion is essential to implementing the YPS agenda and supporting youth leaders in their pursuit of peace.

Conclusion

The Youth, Peace, and Security agenda is a framework that was developed in consultation with young peace builders, elevated through youth activism, and unanimously endorsed by the United Nations Security Council. It remains an underused tool by governments, but contains enormous potential to guide, inform, and accelerate peace building, improving the efficacy of this work and contributing to a more just and sustainable peace. The YPS agenda supports collaboration on every level and promotes positive intervention at every stage of the conflict-peace spectrum. Youth hold the key to our future, and through the empowerment of young leaders, it could be a more peaceful future.

Recommendations

The U.N. Secretariat should dedicate resources to advancing the Youth, Peace, and Security agenda not only through regular reporting, but also through the institutionalization of YPS across the U.N. system under the leadership and coordination of the Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Issues.

Members of the U.N. Security Council should commit to elevating youth issues on the Council’s agenda by:

- Applying a youth lens to issues undertaken by the council;
- Inviting a more diverse group of youth peace builders to brief the council on security issues;
- Requiring meaningful youth participation in peace processes, including but not limited to future peace talks in Israel/Gaza, Ukraine, DRC, and Sudan;

1 DEDICATE RESOURCES TO YPS

2 ELEVATE YOUTH VOICES ON MATTERS OF PEACE AND SECURITY

⁶² Ananhanzo, L., & Souza, J. (2024, August). *Guide on Inclusive Consultations*. United Network of Young Peacebuilders. <https://unoy.org/downloads/guide-on-inclusive-consultations/>

3 ADOPT NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON YPS

4 HOLD ROBUST CONSULTATIONS WITH YOUTH

5 PRIORITIZE A “DO NO HARM” APPROACH



- Including YPS language in all resolutions on peacekeeping missions and special political missions (addressing youth protection concerns among other issues) and ensuring that missions are adequately re-sourced and capacitated to advance YPS priorities; and
- Exploring a new resolution on YPS in 2025 that addresses the evolving nature of conflict and responds to new and emerging threats.

Governments should draft and adopt National Action Plans on Youth, Peace, and Security in consultation with local youth leaders, and adequately resource the relevant agencies and organizations to implement the necessary changes to policy, programs, and doctrine.

INGOs, NGOs, philanthropists, and other potential funders should ensure that best practices for peace building work include robust consultations with a diverse range of youth leaders, recognizing that youth are not a monolith; further, these stakeholders should prioritize funding local, youth-led organizations, and should ensure that funding is flexible.

All policymakers and practitioners should ensure that the protection concerns of youth leaders are adequately addressed through a do-no-harm approach in all policies and programmatic initiatives, and that rapid response funds are available to youth peace builders whose safety is endangered through their work.

AUTHOR

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