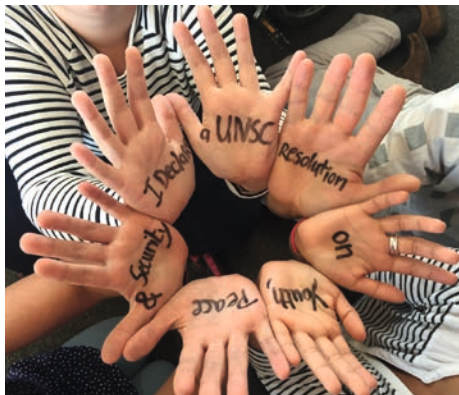
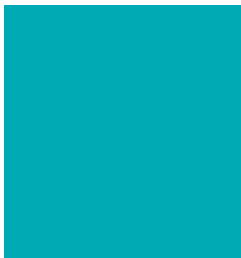
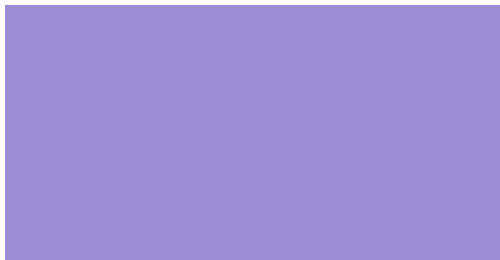


# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACEBUILDING:

## A PRACTICE NOTE



Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development  
Working Group on Youth and Peacebuilding  
with support from  
PeaceNexus Foundation





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The views and interpretations in this note do not necessarily represent the views of the organizations with which the contributors are affiliated.

# ACRONYMS

<b>BBC:</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>CAR:</b>	Central African Republic
<b>CFS:</b>	Child-friendly spaces
<b>CLIPs:</b>	Community-Based Labour-Intensive Projects
<b>CSO:</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>CVE:</b>	Countering Violent Extremism
<b>DRC:</b>	Democratic Republic of the Congo
<b>EU:</b>	European Union
<b>FATA:</b>	Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Pakistan)
<b>GCC:</b>	Mercy Corps' Global Citizen Corps
<b>IANYD:</b>	United Nations Inter-Agency Network of Youth Development
<b>IDP:</b>	Internally Displaced People
<b>IMF:</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>KPK:</b>	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (Pakistan)
<b>KRT:</b>	Khmer Rouge Tribunal (Cambodia)
<b>LDP:</b>	Leadership Development Programme
<b>LEAP:</b>	Mercy Corps' Local Empowerment for Peace
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NVs:</b>	National Volunteers
<b>NYSC:</b>	Nigeria Youth Service Corps
<b>NYSP:</b>	National Youth Service Programme (Liberia)
<b>PBEA:</b>	UNICEF's Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy
<b>PBSO:</b>	United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office
<b>PPI-ME:</b>	PeacePlayers International – Middle East
<b>PPP:</b>	Peacebuilding Priority Plan
<b>PRONI:</b>	Project Northern Ireland
<b>PRS:</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy
<b>PRSP:</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
<b>PSGs:</b>	Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals
<b>SCR:</b>	Security Council Resolution
<b>SDP:</b>	Sport for Development and Peace
<b>SFCG:</b>	Search for Common Ground
<b>SKYL:</b>	Kosovo's Young Leaders
<b>UN:</b>	United Nations
<b>UNAMID:</b>	United Nations–African Union Mission in Darfur
<b>UNDESA:</b>	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UNDP:</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO:</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFPA:</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF:</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNOWA:</b>	United Nations Office for West Africa
<b>UNOY:</b>	United Network of Young Peacebuilders
<b>USAID:</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USIP:</b>	United States Institute of Peace
<b>WG:</b>	Working Group
<b>WPAY:</b>	World Programme on Action for Youth
<b>YJR:</b>	Youth for Justice and Reconciliation Project (Cambodia)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Throughout the world, more than 600 million young people live in fragile and conflict-affected contexts today.<sup>1</sup> They are among the most affected by the multiple and often interlinked forms of violence – from political violence and criminal gangs to organized crime and terrorist attacks that plague their countries and communities, bearing enormous and long-lasting human, social and economic costs.<sup>2</sup>

Over the past decade, the involvement of some young people – particularly young men, but also increasingly young women – in violence and extremist groups has led some to paint youth generally as a threat to global security and stability. But research shows that youth who participate actively in violence are a minority, while the majority of youth – despite the injustices, deprivations and abuse they can confront daily, particularly in conflict contexts – are not violent and do not participate in violence. Moreover, a growing body of evidence suggests that young women and men can and do play active roles as agents of positive and constructive change. The recently adopted Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security marks the formal recognition of the positive role young women and men for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The primary objective of this Practice Note is to inform policymakers and donors of key strategic and programming considerations for supporting young people's participation to peacebuilding. Specifically, this note has been developed to:

- offer evidence-based, promising practices in youth peacebuilding in the field;
- advance the understanding of donors and policy-makers of complex and often interconnected policy and programme considerations for more holistic support to youth peacebuilding interventions, and;
- enhance the effectiveness of policies and funding strategies of bilateral and multilateral donors and agencies supporting youth peacebuilding interventions.

This Practice Note summarizes the situation of youth in conflict-affected environments, argues the importance of investing in youth and peacebuilding, addresses existing assumptions and theories of change regarding youth and peacebuilding, and overviews key issues and highlights a variety of promising practices in different sectors and thematic areas. The Practice Note primarily explores promising practices in the field that have undergone some level of evaluation or review, although limitations in evidence were encountered. The

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *UNDP Youth Strategy 2014-2017: Empowered Youth, Sustainable Future* (New York, 2014). Available from [http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Youth/UNDP\\_Youth-Strategy-2014-17\\_Web.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Youth/UNDP_Youth-Strategy-2014-17_Web.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, *World Development Report 2011* (Washington, D.C., 2011).

note closes with the following overarching recommendations for donors, policy-makers and planners:

- In developing strategies and policies, avoid the conceptual trap that youth are either victims or perpetrators, or only a risk factor – draw upon the increasing evidence that demonstrates that youth are largely peaceful agents and assets.
- Fund and require independent evaluative work of youth and peacebuilding projects and programmes that measures impact on conflict dynamics, and compare this with the situation of youth who were outside of the intervention.
- Use and require use of – in donor strategies, procurement tenders, and in programming – theories of change that are evidence-based, holistic and multi-sectoral as much as possible. Sectoral initiatives should factor in cross-sectoral youth considerations for integrated, holistic approaches.<sup>3</sup>
- Support youth strategies and programmes that promote youth-led initiatives that go beyond capital elites, and foster intergenerational dialogue and collaboration.
- In results frameworks, include youth in outcomes and results as appropriate, and disaggregate indicators by sex, age, location, identity, etc., as appropriate.
- Learn from successful violence prevention efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean to inform youth peacebuilding initiatives in other countries.
- In developing peacebuilding strategies and policies for and with youth, ensure consistent attention to gender equality and young women's participation. Girls and young women are youth, just the same as boys and young men are. Ensure implementation of and complementarity with the United Nations Secretary-General's Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Building.
- Fund rigorous, longitudinal, research and evaluative data that demonstrate how interventions contribute to (or fail to) developing skills, attitudes, and behaviour of youth – including marginalized youth – for peacebuilding.

The note also contains more specific recommendations related to sectors and thematic areas.

<sup>3</sup> Mercy Corps, *Youth and Consequences: Unemployment, Injustice and Violence* (Portland, OR, 2015), pp. 49-52.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## a) Background and Purpose

Throughout the world today, more than 600 million young people live in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.<sup>4</sup> They are among the most affected by the multiple and often interlinked forms of violence – from political violence and criminal gangs to organized crime and terrorist attacks that plague their countries and communities, bearing enormous and long-lasting human, social and economic costs.<sup>5</sup> Young men aged 15 to 29 account for the majority of casualties of lethal armed violence;<sup>6</sup> while young women (as well as young men) are at heightened risk of physical and sexual abuse and exploitation. Lack of access to education, basic social services, economic opportunities, grievance over injustices, and a generalized distrust in the capacity of the state to account for its citizens are fueling a cycle of poverty, hopelessness and frustration.

Over the past decade, the involvement of some young people – particularly young men, but also increasingly young women – in violence and extremist groups has led some to paint youth generally as a threat to global security and stability. But research shows that youth who participate actively in violence are a minority, while the majority of youth – despite the injustices, deprivations and abuse they can confront daily, particularly in conflict contexts – are not violent and do not participate in violence. Moreover, a growing body of evidence suggests that young women and men can and do play active and valuable roles as agents of positive and constructive change.<sup>7</sup> Youth-led social and political movements, peacebuilding and conflict-prevention interventions, taking place at the local and national level, help build more peaceful societies and catalyse more democratic, inclusive governance.

In December 2015, the importance of engaging young women and men in shaping lasting peace was recognized by the Security Council in a ground breaking resolution on Youth, Peace and Security. Resolution 2250 urges Member States to increase inclusive representation of young people in institutions and mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict and for countering violent extremism and calls for an increase in political, financial, technical and logistical support the participation of youth in peace efforts and to take account of their needs.<sup>8</sup>

An inter-agency working group (WG) on youth and peacebuilding was established in 2012 under the umbrella of the wider United Nations Inter-Agency Network of Youth Development (IANYD)<sup>9</sup> to help actors working in the field of youth and peacebuilding advocate for a paradigm shift in supporting young people as a force for peacebuilding. This group, co-chaired by the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), the international Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) *Search for Common Ground* and United

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