

# **TRANSLATING YOUTH, PEACE & SECURITY POLICY INTO PRACTICE:**

*A Guide to Building Coalitions*





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**DEVELOPED BY:**

United Network of Young Peacebuilders and Search for Common Ground



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**ON BEHALF OF:**

Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security



## INTRODUCTION

The 'Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda' is the term used to describe the international policy agenda around youth participation in peace and security issues. This agenda is greatly inspired by the Women, Peace and Security movement, and pushes for greater participation of young people in different stages of interventions, including in decision- and policy-making, programming, fund allocation, and monitoring and evaluation.

The **YPS community** is composed of a **diverse group of individuals, organisations and stakeholders, both youth and non-youth**. This includes young peacebuilders and activists working individually, in youth-led peace organisations, non-youth organisations, and informal groups and movements, among others. It also includes UN agencies working for and with youth, national and local governments, intergovernmental bodies, donors, law enforcement agencies, religious actors, and the private sector.

In every community, country and region, young people are working to prevent violence, foster social cohesion, and build peace using a variety of approaches and tools: arts and culture, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, non-formal education, advocacy, and more. In every decision- and policy-making space, commitments are made that can either support or harm young people. In every peacebuilding intervention, including or excluding young people can crucially influence the outcomes. In every defence, military, law enforcement, peacebuilding, development or humanitarian budget allocation, supporting or marginalising youth can either generate positive or negative impact. All of these elements are part of the YPS agenda.

Young people, therefore, actively engage with a wide range of actors in their work, from their youth peers to policy- and decision-makers—depending on their needs and challenges, and the resources and tools available. The United Network of Young Peacebuilders (hereafter UNOY) and Search for Common Ground (hereafter SfCG) wish to ensure that YPS is locally-led and locally-owned, promoting bottom-top approaches in its implementation.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The guide aims to support the work of young peacebuilders and allies at the local and national levels through locally-led collective approaches that address their exclusion in preventing violence and sustaining peace. It also provides good practices, lessons learnt, and tools to form a multi-stakeholder alliance around YPS.

## **TARGET AUDIENCE**

This guide is aimed primarily to support active young peacebuilders and youth-led peace organisations, as well as NGOs working on YPS and other stakeholders who intend to work with youth.

## **ABOUT THIS GUIDE**

This is the second version of the 'Translating YPS Policy into Practice' guide. This updated version was a collective effort and has captured the voices of youth and entities at different levels.

*For more resources and information on Youth, Peace and Security, visit:*

[www.youth4peace.info](http://www.youth4peace.info)

## Section I

# ABOUT THE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

The YPS agenda was formalised on 9 December 2015, with the unanimous adoption of the **United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250** (UNSCR 2250). This resolution was the result of joint advocacy efforts by youth-led peace organisations, peacebuilding civil society organisations, and UN partners; it represents a significant victory for young peacebuilders everywhere.

**UNSCR 2250** recognises for the first time the positive role young people play in preventing violence and building peaceful communities. The resolution marks a paradigm shift in how youth are referred to in international policy discourse: from either sources or victims of conflict to valuable partners for peace and development.



### **UNSCR 2250 has 5 pillars for action:**

1. **Participation:** Calls on Member States to involve young people in conflict prevention and resolution, in violence prevention, and in the promotion of social cohesion. Member States are urged to consider ways to increase representation of youth in decision-making at all levels.
2. **Protection:** Recalls Member States' obligation to protect civilians, including young people, during armed conflict and in post-conflict times, and in particular protect young women and young men from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence.
3. **Prevention:** Urges Member States and key stakeholders to facilitate an enabling environment, to improve investments in socio-economic development and quality education for young women and young men, and create mechanisms to promote a culture of peace, tolerance, and intercultural and interreligious dialogue that involve youth.
4. **Partnership:** Urges UN entities, international organisations, and civil society to actively increase political, financial, technical, and logistical support for young people's participation in peacebuilding. It also highlights the importance of partnering with youth, local communities, and non-governmental actors in countering violence extremism.
5. **Disengagement:** Supports the meaningful reintegration of young women and men directly involved in armed conflict. All relevant actors are urged to invest in building young persons' capabilities and skills through relevant education opportunities.

In addition, the resolution mandated the UN Secretary-General to carry out a progress study on young people's positive contributions to peacebuilding and conflict resolution in order to recommend effective responses at local, national, regional, and international levels (more on post-2250 developments below).

## Important highlights of resolution 2250

**Definition of youth:** One of the challenges when addressing youth is the age range that is used to define the term 'youth'. Youth is a social construct that refers to a transitional phase in life from childhood to adulthood. Several different definitions are used by UN bodies, intergovernmental agencies, and national governments. UNSCR 2250 defines young people as 18-29 years old. However, the resolution also recognises varying definitions that may exist at the national and international levels. Therefore, the age ranges can be broadly interpreted as between 15 and 29, inclusive of the UN definition of between 15 and 24.

**Inclusivity:** Ensuring that diverse and inclusive engagement of young people from all backgrounds is at the heart of UNSCR 2250. This includes being responsive to different and varying challenges in terms of access, needs, and capacities of young people, which may depend on and be shaped by gender, ethnicity, wealth, education, religion, and urban or rural contexts.

**Gender:** In recent decades, the international community has become increasingly aware and sensitive to how gender roles and identities are a cross-cutting issue in peace and security. They impact power dynamics, access to resources, and narratives around the roles women and men play in violent conflict and peacebuilding. Those gendered narratives tend to stereotype young women as victims, while young men are seen as more naturally prone to be a violent risk factor. As a consequence, peacebuilding interventions targeting 'young people' tend to prioritise young men. It is important to examine the gendered dimensions of YPS, and consider the different challenges, needs, wants, capacities, roles, and impact per gender when programming interventions. It is equally important to promote policies and practices that on the one hand are wholly inclusive, and on the other are sensitive to local gender dynamics.

### WHAT THE RESOLUTION SAYS ABOUT IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP:

- The resolution does not call for specific reporting mechanisms/national action plans;
- UNSCR 2250 should not be implemented in isolation but in the context of existing humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding efforts;
- The resolution serves as an instrument that can be adopted by stakeholders at all levels of engagement. It particularly *urges* Member States to set up mechanisms that create an enabling environment for young people to participate meaningfully in peace processes.

To know more about why resolution 2250 is important and the recent developments since its adoption, see annex I.

## Section II

# SETTING UP A YPS COALITION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

UNSCR 2250 is important, but it is only a tool. The real impact will come from its implementation at the local and national levels around the world. In this section you will find a step-by-step guide to support the advancement of the YPS agenda in your community through coalition building.

Regardless of the level at which you work or whether you are representing government, civil society, business, or other sectors, this section is applicable to you. Implementing resolution 2250 is a shared responsibility among all actors of society, but someone should take the initiative—it could be you!

In the spirit of collaboration that the resolution embodies, this section proposes setting up alliances, partnerships, or consortia to implement the resolution at all levels. These alliances should be cross-sectoral and intergenerational. They must bring together youth and non-youth actors from different parts of society so that they can all collaborate for a more inclusive peace and security field.



### We suggest a 4-step approach to set up a YPS coalition in your community:

- Step 1:** analyse your context;
- Step 2:** build alliances on YPS;
- Step 3:** activate the partnership to bring about change;
- Step 4:** ensure the sustainability of your work and connect it with national and global conversations on YPS.



### TIPS:

Before delving into these steps, it is important to highlight a few **key principles** that underpin successful interventions at the local and national levels.

**Partnership & collaborations:** It was a global partnership that truly enabled a UN Security Council resolution on YPS to come to life: UN agencies, working in partnership with civil society organisations, youth-led organisations, donors, and scholars. This culture of collaboration is also key at the local and national levels. Additionally, involving relevant government ministries—including ministries of defence, education, youth, justice, women, social affairs, and economy—in the process is critical—beyond just the Ministry of Youth.

**Role of youth:** Through partnerships and collaboration, we are trying to shift the way institutions and individuals engage, invest, and partner with youth. We are urging a move away from seeing youth simply as beneficiaries or troublemakers to seeing youth as essential and equal partners and leaders able to address peace and security issues. So, efforts can alternate between being youth-led and being youth-partnered.





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**Sustainability:** What happens beyond a specific intervention is critical. So, it would be great for partners to collaboratively develop a roadmap for the next 12-24 months that also includes some measurable benchmarks to celebrate the accomplishments along the way. Set short-, mid- and long-term targets, and make sure they are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic/relevant, and time bound). Finally, make sure to assign roles to the different partners and set a moment to follow up on commitments.

**Working across diversity:** Youth is a very diverse constituency and those diversities impact the lives of young people. Diversity comes in many forms: gender, class, ethnicity, religion, race, culture, sexual identity, gender identity, economic background, etc. In your interventions, it is important to both create a space that respects and values diversity, as well as make an effort to reach a wide diversity of youth. This means being inclusive to those beyond the ‘usual suspects’, which depends on the context, but usually involves urban and educated young people. Meanwhile, youth from rural settings, low income contexts, disabled youth, and those from a gender and/or sexual minority often remain excluded—even from youth-led interventions.

**Gender balance and sensitivity:** As mentioned previously, gendered roles often impact the opportunity of young people to engage in peacebuilding. Your intervention should challenge those barriers instead of reinforce them. This entails being gender sensitive in your work and striving to ensure gender balance. The interventions and approaches must be considerate of the needs, challenges, and capacities of young men, young women, and gender minorities.

## Why is it important to build a coalition?

Coalitions bring together a range of different stakeholders to work collectively on a specific agenda, such as YPS. An action plan built from the foundation of a coalition is much stronger, as it has a firm representative body supporting it. Moreover, it ensures that the actions that are taken collectively have a bottom-up approach as opposed to top-down. Countries such as Jordan and Sri Lanka have taken the initiative to build and sustain a coalition.

**Despite the difficulties encountered in building a coalition, YPS Coalition in Sri Lanka have shared some of the lessons learnt from this endeavour:**

- **Gathering strength for peacebuilding organisations:** At present, efforts on building peace are not only undertaken by registered organisations but also by youth groups and movements. Each entity working on peacebuilding has different capacities and engages with a wide range of actors. Pooling these different capacities into one group strengthens and supports organisations that work on building peace, thus expanding the mutual benefits.
- **Creating a platform to share and learn from each other's experiences in peacebuilding attempts:** The coalition provides an opportunity to discuss best practices and lessons learnt in peacebuilding efforts. A coalition comprises organisations and individuals working at various levels and using different approaches; this shared learning can better inform the strategy of the coalition and its members.
- **Avoiding duplication:** In reality, it can be observed that some efforts are duplicated by different groups, which is a waste of time and resources. A coalition has the capacity to draw on these efforts, discuss, and work collectively on a specific initiative by pooling different capacities.
- **Advocacy becomes easier and gains more strength when many organisations come under one umbrella:** The background of the inception of UNSCR 2250 indicates the power of a movement. As mentioned before, the resolution was the result of joint advocacy efforts of many entities that resulted in a significant victory for young peacebuilders all over the world. Similarly, a coalition creates a platform of multiple actors who have various influences in the system. This creates a strong group that is relatively stronger than a single entity in advocating for policies and instruments regarding YPS.
- **Making international initiatives easier when coalitions work locally:** There is a large global YPS community that is striving to create mechanisms and offer support to countries and organisations to undertake peacebuilding efforts locally. Therefore, it is important to have a well-represented national group that has the capacity to work towards localising these mechanisms.
- **Recognition for local level initiatives:** While efforts are undertaken to provide recognition for micro initiatives at an international level, a coalition brings this recognition to a national level more easily. Most local level initiatives have a deeper reach and trusting relationship with the community, but often lack other resources to successfully sustain their initiative. A coalition not only provides recognition to these initiatives but also benefits from the reach and resources that these initiatives bring to the table.



*Peacebuilding integrates key aspects of uniting differences and diversity for a good common goal. Therefore, isn't it important for those who work on peacebuilding to come together too? This is what the YPS coalition does'.*

— Remo Shihan, one of the Co-Chairs and Head of YPS Coalition Member Organisation.

Now you are ready to get to work! Check below the suggested steps to setting up a YPS coalition in your community or country.



## Step 1: Analyse your context

Context analysis is a way to understand the context where you work: the actors, the power dynamics, the drivers of conflict, and the dividers and connectors in a community. This is essential not only to be effective and impactful, but also to prevent taking actions that might cause harm. This is the main idea behind the 'Do No Harm' principle: that any action taken by an actor must be informed enough to avoid causing any unintentional harm to partners, beneficiaries, and communities.

Different tools have been developed in order to support you on that, including conflict and gender analysis that inform you in every step of the way, from planning to implementation, from monitoring to evaluation. Your analysis will depend on the resources you have available, including human, financial, and technical.

Larger national, international NGOs, and UN agencies present in your community probably already use these tools in their work and can support your learning in how to use them in your own work or in the YPS coalition you are building. Another way to bring a youth perspective to peacebuilding interventions is by ensuring that young peacebuilders are included in conflict analysis implemented by those actors.

Furthermore, analysing your context also includes identifying the needs with respect to the YPS agenda so that you can develop suitable interventions. For example, there might already be a strong policy on youth inclusion but the problem may lie in implementation. In this case, you can focus on how to implement the policy, instead of convincing policy-makers to work on a policy in the first place.

### Be aware!

Peacebuilding is a political field and, as such, can be tricky and sensitive. Some young peacebuilders might face challenges bringing institutional actors together, as they are not often seen as legitimate stakeholders. In this case, finding a larger and/or more established partner is even more strategic.

Another risk is bringing in actors that are not trusted by community members, which would create tensions and put the legitimacy and sustainability of your efforts at risk. In those cases, discuss the topic with trusted partners to find the best way forward.

Building a coalition might be a longer and more complex process than the one described below, and it can demand time, resources, effort, and strategic thinking and action. Focus on leading a positive process through openness and transparency, building trust and awareness among potential partners. The outputs, such as a campaign or an action plan, will come as a consequence and should not be the first priority.

## Step 2: Build an alliance on Youth, Peace and Security

While UN Security Council resolutions, such as resolution 2250, are directed primarily at governments, as mentioned earlier, the resolution requires a wide range of actors to work together to be successfully implemented. Young people, youth-led civil society, governments, NGOs, the private sector, and media all have important roles to play, among others.

Getting such a diverse group of actors to work together can be challenging and so the first step requires that energy be dedicated to the creation of such a partnership. It is important for different stakeholders to discuss what resolution 2250 means to each of them and decide which pillars described in the resolution take priority. This is highly context specific! This phase can form part of the workshop or form a separate activity itself.

To increase awareness of resolution 2250 and create a culture of transparency and collaboration in its implementation, we suggest carrying out group discussions with each stakeholder group early on in the process of building your alliance.



## Getting people on board

1. Mapping stakeholders: Identify who the key stakeholders are that influence peace and security. They could include youth-led organisations, organisations working with youth, international NGOs, community-based organisations, UN agencies, national government, local government, religious leaders, police, social media influencers, donors, academics, business leaders, and others. Try to think of at least 5 members per category who can contribute and add value to this effort, with an aim for an equal division of young men and young women. Within each organisation or institution you identify, make sure you have a main contact person.
2. Introducing the YPS agenda: Share the key reading documents with them and ask them to familiarise themselves with the content first. Spend time explaining the purpose of sharing, what you want to do with resolution 2250. Ultimately, inspire them to be your champions!
3. Mobilise: Invite every organisation or institution identified to organise a discussion among their constituents/members and unpack the five core pillars of resolution 2250. In these focus groups, they can discuss the following:
  - a. How they view and interpret each pillar;
  - b. What they think the priorities for their organisation are based on the five pillars; and
  - c. How these priorities can be addressed.
4. Monitor and report: Ask key contact persons from each organisation or institution to report on some of the key findings. Use a simple reporting format, such as a Google form to compile the results. Continue to build relationships and trust with these key partners. This will be important for all other phases and stages of this process.
5. Follow up: Decide on a date and agenda for a launch workshop with all the key organisations you have identified, to be carried out after each organisation has held their own internal discussion. Once the date is confirmed, please share the workshop details with the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security (GCYPS) co-chairs: Gizem Kiliñç <[gizem.kilinc@unoy.org](mailto:gizem.kilinc@unoy.org)>, Cecile Mazzacurati <[mazzacurati@un.org](mailto:mazzacurati@un.org)>, and Saji Preliş <[spreliş@sfcg.org](mailto:spreliş@sfcg.org)>.

## Bring your alliance together

Invite members of your coalition to the workshop. Select a good facilitator to help and identify a neutral location for the workshop. If UN agencies are involved, perhaps one of them can act as a neutral host, as this is a workshop about a UN Security Council resolution. Other possible hosts might be universities, schools, museums or other actors considered neutral and appropriate in your context.

See the proposed structure of the workshop in **annex 3**.

Important points to keep in mind for all the activities of your workshop:

- The workshop should be interactive, building on the principles outlined earlier in this guide. Recognise that not all of your goals will be met in one workshop, but strong

relationships and mutual respect will help in achieving some.

- Set up a coalition or alliance so that all stakeholders can feel part of a YPS community. This coalition can then support and facilitate the activities and commitments over the next 12 months, at least.

Once the workshop has concluded, please share the report of the workshop, including outcomes, timelines, members with the GCYPS co-chairs: Gizem Kiliñ <[gizem.kilinc@unoy.org](mailto:gizem.kilinc@unoy.org)>, Cecile Mazzacurati <[mazzacurati@un.org](mailto:mazzacurati@un.org)>, and Saji Prelis <[sprelis@sfcg.org](mailto:sprelis@sfcg.org)>.

The co-chairs will invite you to report on your progress at the Global Coalition monthly meetings for the entire YPS community. This is an opportunity to share country-specific efforts at the global level.



### Step 3: Initial alliance actions

It is not the aim of this brief guidance note to elaborate on all of the individual actions that need to be taken in order to implement resolution 2250, given the different national and local contexts around the world. However, there are several actions that you can take within your new alliance as initial steps towards an established YPS agenda in your community.

1. **Translate the resolution into local languages** and produce a children- and youth-friendly infographic that is also culturally relevant.
  - a. Develop a distribution and communications strategy to ensure the resolution reaches as many young people as possible;
  - b. Tap into the various networks your coalition partners have to distribute this infographic;
  - c. Report on the reach and response this effort has had when the group meets each time.
2. **Discuss the resolution in local media**, for example on the radio or in the newspaper (depending on your context). Alternative media also offers great avenues, such as blogs and podcasts. Make sure you join the global movement by sharing content using the hashtag #Youth4Peace.
3. **Contribute to the global youth mapping process**. This is an opportunity to map out the different youth organisations active in peace and security efforts, understand their impact, and create opportunities to amplify their efforts nationally, regionally, and globally. For more info, please reach out to the co-chairs of the GCYPS.
4. **Joint policy analysis**; in collaboration with youth, non-youth, government, and non-government actors, it is useful to review public policies, programmes, and decision-making structures that relate to peace and security. Based on your review, ask the following questions:

- a. What opportunities are there for young people to engage in the field of peace and security? What support do they receive? Which communications channels already exist?
  - b. What are the key obstacles young people face when engaging in peace and security? Are any of them hindering youth participation in unintended ways?
  - c. Are young people able to participate in decision-making around peace and security? If so, which approaches have proven successful? If not, how might youth participation be enabled?
  - d. How can you ensure that the impact of the obstacles identified is decreased, and how can you amplify the opportunities you have identified?
5. Consider **setting up a scheme to support youth-led peacebuilding initiatives**, for example, through youth-friendly granting schemes or youth peace innovation labs. This can be done on a small scale to begin with, using whatever resources the members of the partnership have available—being effective doesn't always have to be expensive!
  6. **Map out the most marginalised youth groups** in your country or community. Then, look for ways they can contribute to this process where they are, but also nationally and globally.
  7. **Support a series of social or traditional media efforts** to amplify the constructive roles young people are playing to promote peace in their communities. Make them the champions of peace that they are.



## Step 4: Ensuring sustainability

Finally, you should strive to ensure that your efforts are sustainable instead of one-off interventions. You can do that by fostering certain values, procedures, approaches, and more.

It is important to cultivate **values** such as *inclusivity* and *equality* throughout the process: when selecting partners, reaching out to youth groups, making decisions, and implementing actions. This will promote trust, collaboration, and legitimacy among partners. It is vital that these values are not just words on paper, but that they truly guide your actions. You can do this by embracing a culture of collaboration and using the **Guiding Principles in Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding** to engage young people in your efforts.

The **practices and procedures** you adopt will also have a direct impact on the sustainability of your interventions. For this reason, reserving time and resources for thoughtful and informed planning and strategising is essential. Moreover, creating monitoring and evaluation frameworks for your action plan, and setting moments for reflection and learning will ensure that you are able to measure progress and adapt to unforeseen scenarios.

Finally, securing **resources** and ensuring good management of those resources is key—that includes time, technical capacities, and financial resources. You don't need to have access to large sums of money to make an impactful intervention; however, having

access to space, technical equipment, and support from experts will make a big difference. A large portion of those resources can come through the partnerships you foster, such as a meeting space<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, many donors will require you to have a track record before funding you, so being creative in the beginning while you build such a track record might be crucial.

Finally, be in touch with the GCYPS co-chairs! A lot of efforts are being done around the world to move the YPS agenda forward; you can learn from them, support them, and cooperate with them. The GCYPS is the one place to go to learn about others' initiatives, as well as showcase your own!



Learn more about the GCYPS in section IV.

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1 Read the case study below: 'In-kind support through partnerships'.



## Partnerships

In this section, we provide guidance on creating partnerships for your coalition on YPS in your community or country. Read below the success story of the youth in El Salvador, who managed to implement a national consultation process in partnership with a wide range of actors.



### Case Study - National Coalition: El Salvador

In 2018, we promoted a national consultation process on resolution 2250 with the support of UNFPA and in collaboration with the country's foreign ministry. This was made possible thanks to a broad working alliance among community and territorial networks, social movements, and networks of national civil society, which was supported at the regional level by the Latin American and Caribbean Youth Forum (FLACJ).

During the national consultation, youth's priorities on peace and security issues were identified. As a result of this process, the national steering team was established, made up of youth groups, grassroots organisations, and students nationwide.

The Association Generations of Peace (Asociación Generaciones de Paz - ASDEPAZ) is the entity that facilitates the coordination of the team, with the Links for Sustainability Movement since November 2018. The process is being strengthened, through the creation of local agendas for YPS. With these, we are formulating the agendas together with young people and based on their territorial priorities defined in the consultation, linking them with other processes, such as the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, and other international commitments, such as the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Agreement. Additionally, we are promoting training in citizen monitoring so that young people develop organisational capacities in their territories and dialogue with government administrations and their institutions. This allows them to influence local and national decisions on peace and security, affirming that educated and informed citizen participation is the main means of implementing public policies and international agreements.

As part of the follow up to the consultation and the creation of local agendas, we are identifying possibilities of alliances. In other words, joint and collaborative work with other entities and organisations that allow us to consolidate our national work, considering the importance of deepening and strengthening the accompaniment to the territorial processes. We maintain communication and open dialogue with the central government administration and with the UN, in particular with UNFPA.

It is very important to create tools that contribute to expanding and strengthening the spaces for dialogue and youth participation at all stages, areas, and levels of the implementation of resolution 2250. Youth should participate at the level of decision-making, and ensure that they give intentional and effective responses to the challenges they face in their communities and territories for the fulfillment of their human rights and for the care of life, nature, and the global common good that represents sustainable and lasting peace for the youth of El Salvador.

Cesar Artiga, Equipo Impulsor Nacional de la Resolución 2250 en El Salvador

## Section III

# OTHER DEVELOPMENTS & INTERVENTIONS

In this section, we outline other positive developments and practices in the implementation of UNSCR 2250 on the international, regional, and national levels. These developments might inspire you to create strategies for the implementation of 2250 in your community or country beyond coalitions.

As above, the decision on what strategy to adopt should come after careful consideration of your context, including who the stakeholders are, which resources are available, and what the challenges are.

## Policy

In Finland, the government decided to develop a National Action Plan to support the implementation of YPS both in domestic and foreign policy. Read more about it below.



### Case Study - National Action Plan: Finland

Finland was the first country to announce the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 2250. NAPs provide a means to promote the implementation of a UN Security Council resolution as they provide a structure to achieve the goals outlined in the document by setting priorities, coordinating actions, and tracking progress. As a consequence, NAPs promote accountability, create space for stakeholders to work together and accomplish more. In short, NAPs provide a blueprint for governments, multilateral institutions, and civil society to coordinate action and track results.

The Finnish 2250 NAP is developed through a participatory approach where the whole effort is led by the Finnish 2250 network: a consortium of youth-led peacebuilding organisations. 'Peace surveys' and target group consultations have been carried out to reach Finnish young people, youth living in Finland, and civil society actors. The consultation process was carried out in spring 2019 and more than 300 young people participated in the process. A report based on these consultations has been submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to inform the next steps of the NAP development process.

In March 2019, Finland hosted the first International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes. Approximately one hundred specialists, mediators, researchers, and opinion-makers gathered in Helsinki to share their experiences in mediation, to strengthen their networks, and to consider new ways of fostering young people's

participation in peace processes. Half of the attendees were youth with first-hand experience of peace processes in conflict-affected areas. The Finnish 2250 network also took part in the Symposium and organised a side-event for the international participants.

In June 2019, a paragraph on the 2250 NAP process was included in the new government programme in Finland, further securing political commitment for the resolution under a new government. This was a victory for the Finnish 2250 network, as the youth organisations' relentless advocacy work had resulted in a success.

In September 2019, the youth-led peacebuilding organisations held the first Youth Week for Peace in Finland. The aim of the week was to raise awareness for peacebuilding topics and to encourage Finland—the President of the Council of the European Union at the time—to act to include youth more profoundly in the decision-making in the EU. The Youth Week for Peace was a success, and it is planned to be held annually from here onwards. During the UN General Assembly in September 2019, the Finnish Youth Delegate for the UN attended the 3rd committee discussions promoting UNSCR 2250 in speeches and resolutions.

The discussions and cooperation between the MFA and the Finnish 2250 network continue, in an effort to develop a participatory, youth-centric approach for the next phase, and to ensure that youth views and experiences are at the core of the NAP. A working group method on UNSCR 2250 pillars is planned to ensure alignment of policies and youth input from the consultation. A tentative goal is that Finland's NAP on 2250 is ready by the end of the year 2020. However, despite the ambitious preparatory process and the NAP outcome, the work is not finished when the NAP is ready; rather the NAP will provide a strong basis for coordinated implementation, resource mobilisation, and impact tracking, which will require mutually supportive efforts from various government entities, civil society, and youth.

Learn more about the process through the Finnish YPS website [here](#).

## Funding

Accessing resources remains one of the biggest challenges for youth groups working in peace. Often, donor requirements do not match the reality of youth peace groups, including the need for registrations, strong track records, experience managing large budgets, and burdensome monitoring and reporting. Most youth peace work is local, with modest yet flexible budgets that allow them to adapt to their needs.

Faced with this reality, young people find alternative and creative ways to access resources to enable projects and interventions. Read the story of one such story below.



## Case Study - In-kind support through partnerships

**Youth for Peace International** (YfPI) is a youth-led and volunteer-based organisation in India, working on peace education using non-formal methodologies and adult learning principles. YfPI work at the community level in remote areas and in universities, as well as at state, national, and international levels, targeting youth, children, teachers, community members, and government officers. YfPI uses these capacity development programmes as a tool to bring out and address the structural and cultural violence in society, and to enable young people to work on conflict transformation and the YPS agenda.

YfPI was established three years ago. For the first two years, they operated without raising funds. So, how did this group of people organise training programmes at various levels? A well-known method of securing funds is by winning grants/sub-grants and approaching donors for these grants. An alternative method that was used by YfPI was securing in-kind support through partnerships with various stakeholders, including some big donors—such as governments and UN agencies—in the form of venues, volunteer trainers, and lodging and boarding support. This approach brings different stakeholders together to work on an effective project, while also enabling meaningful participation of young people as a co-lead in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the whole programme. This is a key element in the YPS agenda.

An excellent example is the **Global Training of Trainers on Youth and Peace**, organised by YfPI in partnership with various stakeholders working on similar priorities. Thirty-two young people from 14 countries joined the training. Instead of seeking funding, YfPI requested UNFPA Asia Pacific to sponsor four international trainers and a few participants. Through the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (Govt. of India), YfPI secured the training space and lodging; and through UNOY, YfPI master trainers were secured and programme content was prepared, while YfPI coordinated and managed everything. YfPI also received a small fee from a few of the participants to cover certain expenses that the government institution was not able to provide in terms of international training catering standards. Overall, the training was hugely appreciated by the participants and partner organisations.

Therefore, even a newly founded organisation has the capacity to form meaningful partnerships *if they have a concrete intervention and activity in mind*. It's important to identify the stakeholders with whom you can engage and *to which capacity*. Partnerships are better facilitated when the other party sees how it benefits them. When you pitch your proposal to organisations, it might be about fulfilling their mandate. For the private sector, it might be about completing their Corporate Social Responsibility to the community. (Yes! You can partner with communities for space and other resources.) Partners' motivation might be having their needs addressed, which is the case in training programmes organised for universities by YfPI.

You can partner with existing youth groups and youth-led organisations to strengthen your side of the partnership. The YPS community is vast and many kinds of entities exist at all levels. Keep in mind that it's you who is playing the lead role.

*"If you look for the fund or in-kind support partnerships without routing the expenditure through you, it saves youth-led organisations from the demotivating hurdles of all the legal and financial requirements that your organisation might not be ready to meet. At*

*the same time it also enables you to effectively work on the community peacebuilding needs that you have identified. We also take it as an opportunity to build trust and credibility with donors".* Mridul Upadhyay, Board member of YfPI.

Although obtaining in-kind support through partnerships may not seem like a sustainable model, it is indeed a great way to get started. Moreover, the partnerships you form give you more credibility, accessibility, and visibility.

## Section IV

# ABOUT THE GLOBAL COALITION ON YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY

The GCYPS is the leading platform for shaping global policy and practice on YPS. The GCYPS facilitates exchange, coordination, and collaboration among more than 90 organisations from civil society, including youth-led and youth-focused organisations, UN entities, donors, academia, and intergovernmental bodies.

The GCYPS is co-chaired by **UNOY**, **SFCG**, and the United Nations (**PBSO** and **UNFPA**).

The objective of the GCYPS is to strengthen youth participation in peacebuilding policy and practice. The GCYPS is a platform for member organisations to:

- Support policy and programmatic efforts in the field of YPS;
- Enable partnerships among youth, multilateral, government, and civil society actors;
- Generate collective knowledge on YPS;
- Monitor progress and measure the impact of the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018);
- Advocate for young people's meaningful and inclusive participation in policy-making at the global, regional, and national levels.

In order to achieve this, GCYPS operates in six different workstreams:

- Implementing and localising YPS;
- Policy and institutionalising;
- Measuring, reporting, and accountability;
- YPS as an academic field;
- Communications;
- Fundraising.

*The work of the GCYPS can inspire similar efforts. Coalition members have shared some invaluable lessons learnt.*



### **ESTABLISHING A COMMON LANGUAGE:**

Different stakeholders use different terms around peace and security. Globally, we worked together to develop the **guiding principles of young people in peacebuilding**. This not only helped create a common language but also helped build trust over time.



### **TAKING TIME TO BUILD TRUST:**

Do not rush into work. Trust between coalition members takes time to build and nurture, but it is a fundamental element.

#### **Making people feel part of something bigger than themselves and their institutions:**

This helps people use their organisations as vehicles to promote the YPS agenda, and not get stuck within organisational mandates and politics.

#### **Embracing who we are ultimately serving:**

It is not our institutions who we aim to benefit, but people locally, especially young peacebuilders. Otherwise the politics of institutions can get in the way of serving people.



### **COMMITTING TO A PROCESS OF LEARNING AND ITERATING:**

Often coalition members do not have all the answers on how to best structure and coordinate the work, which priorities to set, resources to use, etc. However, through creative and careful planning, monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes, the answers will emerge.



### **USING A MOVEMENT MINDSET NOT A PROJECT MINDSET:**

YPS is a transformative agenda that challenges the status quo and proposes a shift of power. In order to achieve such a change, we must move away from the project mindset (single interventions in a limited timeframe) and develop a movement mindset (several initiatives and interventions rooted in inclusivity, communication, and coordination that reinforce one another in a long timeframe).



### **BEING CAREFUL OF HOW MONEY CAN CORRUPT AND DISRUPT THE PROCESS:**

Resources are important, including financial. However, it is important to have strong and transparent accountability mechanisms in place to make sure the resources are spent in the most effective manner, while serving the goals of the coalition. In addition to that, more is not necessarily better. When fundraising, search for grants that you have the capacity to absorb and effectively manage.



## ENSURING DIVERSITY IS EMBRACED AND PRACTISED:

As mentioned before, diversity is an essential element to ensure that any coalition on YPS is representative of the diversity of the field itself, in perspectives, institutions, and individuals.

*If your work is contributing to the YPS field, share it with the GCYPS:*

**Gizem Kiliç** <[gizem.kilinc@unoy.org](mailto:gizem.kilinc@unoy.org)>,  
**Cecile Mazzacurati** <[mazzacurati@un.org](mailto:mazzacurati@un.org)>  
and **Saji Prelis** <[sprelis@sfcg.org](mailto:sprelis@sfcg.org)>.

**\* Your feedback on this guide is really important to help make it as useful and relevant as possible for young people like yourself. If you have any comments to share, kindly use [this form](#).**



photo: ©Leonardo Párraga

# RESOURCES

## Learn about the UN Security Council resolutions and the latest updates on the YPS agenda:

**Youth4Peace portal:** The central place to go to find updates on the YPS agenda, including policy developments and opportunities for engagement.

## Guidelines and policies on YPS:

**Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding:** A guide that explains why and in what ways to engage young people in peacebuilding programmes. Available in multiple languages.

**UN Plan of Action Against Violent Extremism (2015):** Plan developed by the UN Secretary-General, which includes a section on youth empowerment.

**Youth Action Agenda to Prevent Violent Extremism and Promote Peace (2015):** A document produced entirely by young people that highlights their definition of violent extremism, what they are doing to address it, and ways to partner with young people to promote peace and prevent violent extremism in their communities. This document is a result of the Global Youth Summit Against Violent Extremism held in New York, in September 2015.

**UN Youth Strategy (2018):** This strategy outlines four priority areas in which the UN should improve investment, coordination, capacity development, and participation of young people in order to consolidate its position as a global leader in engaging with youth. The strategy will guide the UN system in stepping up support for the empowerment of young people, while ensuring that the organisation's work fully benefits from their insights and ideas.

## Tools:

**UNSCR 2250 Toolkit (2019):** Developed by UNOY, this toolkit provides a wide range of resources for those who want to understand the YPS agenda, the content of resolution 2250, and how to engage with it. Available in English, Spanish, and Korean.

**Youth4Peace Training Toolkit (2018):** Developed by UNOY, this toolkit is a valuable guide to develop your own training on peacebuilding, conflict transformation, and creating peaceful narratives. Available in English, Arabic, Spanish, and French.

**Youth-led Research Toolkit (2017):** Developed by SfCG, this toolkit provides an understanding and guidance on why and how to conduct youth-led research through which



youth are able to position themselves in a leadership role and build a stronger relationship with the community.

**Gender Toolkit** (2011): Developed by UNOY, this toolkit provides a guide to work with gender in youth peace organisations with checklists, best practices and modules.

## Evidential reports & studies:

The Global Coalition and its members strive to contribute to the growing body of evidence on youth's positive role in building peace. For updated reports and studies, please visit:

- UNOY Peacebuilders <[www.unoy.org](http://www.unoy.org)>
- Search for Common Ground <[www.sfcg.org/children-and-youth/](http://www.sfcg.org/children-and-youth/)>
- Youth4Peace portal <[www.youth4peace.info/featured-resources](http://www.youth4peace.info/featured-resources)>

## MORE ABOUT UNSCR 2250

### Why is resolution 2250 important?

Resolution 2250 is a historical document not only because it is the first resolution on YPS, but also because:

**It supports a new narrative.** Youth are often portrayed as either victims or perpetrators of violence. However, the resolution recognises that young people are also engaged in building peace. It's an important step to change the negative perceptions and prejudices people hold against youth.

**It provides recognition and legitimacy.** It is not enough to build another perception of youth as peacebuilders. It is also crucial to recognise that a great part of young men and women are working at the grassroots, local, national, regional, and global levels towards sustainable peace. They deserve a seat at the negotiation table.

**It brings visibility.** The resolution provides a new focus on youth and peace, giving visibility to the initiatives, actions, and projects initiated by young people and youth organisations towards peace, justice, reconciliation, and promotion of diversity.

**It ensures youth protection.** The resolution reminds governments of their responsibility to protect young people in armed conflict.

**It promotes youth representation and participation.** The resolution urges member states to take youth's needs and perspectives from a variety of backgrounds into consideration, while demanding their participation at all levels in peace processes.

**It fosters partnerships.** The resolution provides a platform for partners to work together and build partnerships with representatives of different sectors to generate inclusive peace processes, including the UN, governments, donors, civil society, and youth organisations.

**It provides an alternative approach to countering violent extremism.** The resolution acknowledges the threat of violent extremism for youth, but also clearly shows that the majority of youth are not agents of violence. On the contrary, they play a role in countering violence and extremism and in establishing lasting peace. Therefore, supporting and investing in young peacebuilders is more effective than targeting youth as potential perpetrators.

**It highlights gender equality as a tool for peace.** The resolution is framed with the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, thereby underlining the importance of gender equality throughout the YPS agenda as a crucial element for sustainable peace.

**It ensures an evidence-based approach.** The resolution requests the UN Secretary-General to carry out a progress study on youth's positive contribution to peace processes and conflict resolution. As a result, more effective policies, programmes, and responses can be designed.

**It ensures accountability.** The resolution calls for an annual debate in the Security Council to discuss the progress on the implementation of the resolution.

## IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS:

Since the adoption of UNSCR 2250, many positive developments have been achieved, including the publication of the *Missing Peace*<sup>2</sup>, an independent progress study mandated by the resolution and the adoption of UNSCR 2419 (2018), reaffirming the importance of youth inclusion in peace processes. In addition to that, national action plans, coalitions, policies, and funding streams have been created in order to address the growing demand for youth protection, inclusion, and participation in peacebuilding.

### UN Security Council Resolution 2419 (2018)

On June 6th, the UN Security Council adopted **resolution 2419** under the YPS agenda. Building upon the recommendations of UNSCR 2250, and in order to address a specific context of peace processes, this resolution has an additional focus on the inclusive representation of youth for the prevention and resolution of conflict, including in the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements. UNSCR 2419 urges appropriate regional and subregional bodies in particular to consider developing and implementing policies and programmes for youth, as well as to facilitate their constructive engagement. The resolution also requests the UN Secretary-General to report on the implementation of resolutions 2250 and 2419 by May 2020, strengthening accountability for the YPS agenda.

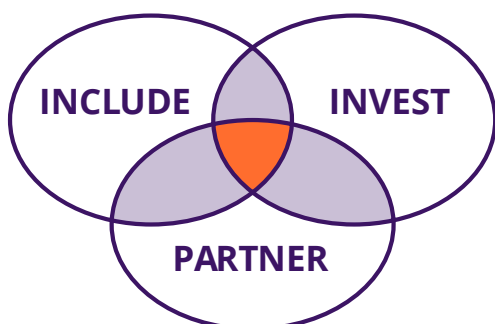
Some important outcomes from this was the first International Symposium on Youth Participation in Peace Processes, held in Helsinki, Finland, between 5-6 March 2019. The Symposium brought together over 100 participants from 45 different countries, who have engaged with peace and mediation processes. Participants included young women and men leaders, senior peace mediators and negotiators, government ministers, United Nations, African Union, and European Union representatives. Over two days, the participants engaged in a series of strategic panels and discussions related to why young people's engagement in peace negotiations matters for sustaining peace, how young women and men have influenced peace agreements, and key lessons learnt to shape recommendations in moving this field forward collectively and effectively. The Symposium included the launch of the first global policy paper on youth participation in peace processes, '**We are here: An integrated approach to youth inclusive peace processes**', which set the foundation for discussions and finalising recommendations.

### Progress Study: The Missing Peace (2018)

The progress study mandated by UNSCR 2250 was carried out by an independent researcher over a period of two years, with the support from an advisory group—half of which were youth. The participatory research heard more than 4,000 young people from 150+ countries through several regional and thematic consultations, as well as in-country and focus group discussions.

2 Simpson, Graeme (2018). *The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security*.

The outcome report, **The Missing Peace**, addresses the following questions:



- What are the main peace and security challenges that young women and men face, and how do these impact their lives (locally, nationally, regionally, or globally)?
  - What factors prevent or inhibit the involvement of young women and men in building peace and contributing to security? And what factors could promote and support young people's active involvement in building peace, preventing violence and contributing to positive social cohesion in their communities, societies, and institutions?
- What are the peacebuilding and violence prevention activities, initiatives, and projects being undertaken by young people? What is their impact?
  - What do young people recommend to enhance the contribution and leadership of young men and women to building sustainable peace and preventing violence? Do they have particular views on how their government, state institutions, civil society organisations, media, or the international community could help to support these contributions?

## The main findings of the report are:

- The reciprocal and growing **intergenerational trust gap** between young people and other political actors, including governments, multilateral organisations, international CSOs, and so on. Young people's mistrust in systems of patronage and corrupt governance has triggered their scepticism about formal politics and other institutions, leading them to create alternative spaces for participation. On the other hand, institutional actors' mistrust towards youth has fuelled policy panic in relation to the 'youth bulge', youth migration, and violent extremism. The result has been disproportionate investment in hard-fisted security measures, which address the symptoms of violent conflict rather than the root causes of the structural and psychological '**violence of exclusion**' faced by young people.
- **Closing civic space disproportionately affects young peacebuilders** and their ability to act. Young people have historically been at the forefront of political and social change, challenging the status quo through peaceful protest, artistic expression, and online mobilisation. The growing restrictions to their freedom of movement and assembly, in addition to the criminalisation of their activities, has a negative impact on their peacebuilding work and **further accentuates the violence of exclusion** mentioned above.
- **Young people organise themselves in diverse ways**, including through youth-led and non youth-led organisations, movements, networks, and other systems, which might not look like 'organisations' in the traditional sense.

- **Most youth-led peacebuilding organisations are modestly funded or underfunded.** Half of the organisations surveyed for the progress study operate on a budget of 5,000 USD per year or less<sup>3</sup>. These organisations are largely driven by volunteers, united around a vision for positive change in their societies.
- **Youth-led peacebuilding traverses the pillars of peace, development, and human rights, and all phases of peace and conflict cycles**—from prevention to humanitarian support to post-conflict truth and reconciliation processes. Youth engage with different types of violence, including violent extremism, political conflict, organised criminal violence, and sexual and gender-based violence.

### THE REPORT ALSO PROPOSES THREE MUTUALLY REINFORCING STRATEGIES:

1. **Fostering intergenerational dialogue and partnership** where young people are viewed as equal and essential partners for peace;
2. **Transforming the systems that reinforce inclusion** through youth participation in decision-making and protecting youth civic spaces;
3. **Investing in young people’s capacities, agency, and leadership** in peacebuilding.

These strategies are to guide the work of different stakeholders in the YPS agenda, including young peacebuilders and youth peace groups, policy-makers, CSOs, donors, and UN agencies. The Missing Peace provides a *blueprint* for furthering the YPS agenda on the local, national, regional, and global levels.

## UN Security Council Resolution 2535 (2020)

On July 14th, 2020, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2535 - the third resolution on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS). UNSCR2525 underscores the role of youth in preventing and transforming conflict, building and maintaining peace, and it encourages Member States to include young people in decision-making processes across all areas of peace and security. UNSCR 2335 also calls on all relevant actors to consider ways to increase the inclusive representation of youth for conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in peacebuilding, including when negotiating and implementing peace agreements.

## Why is Resolution 2535 Important?

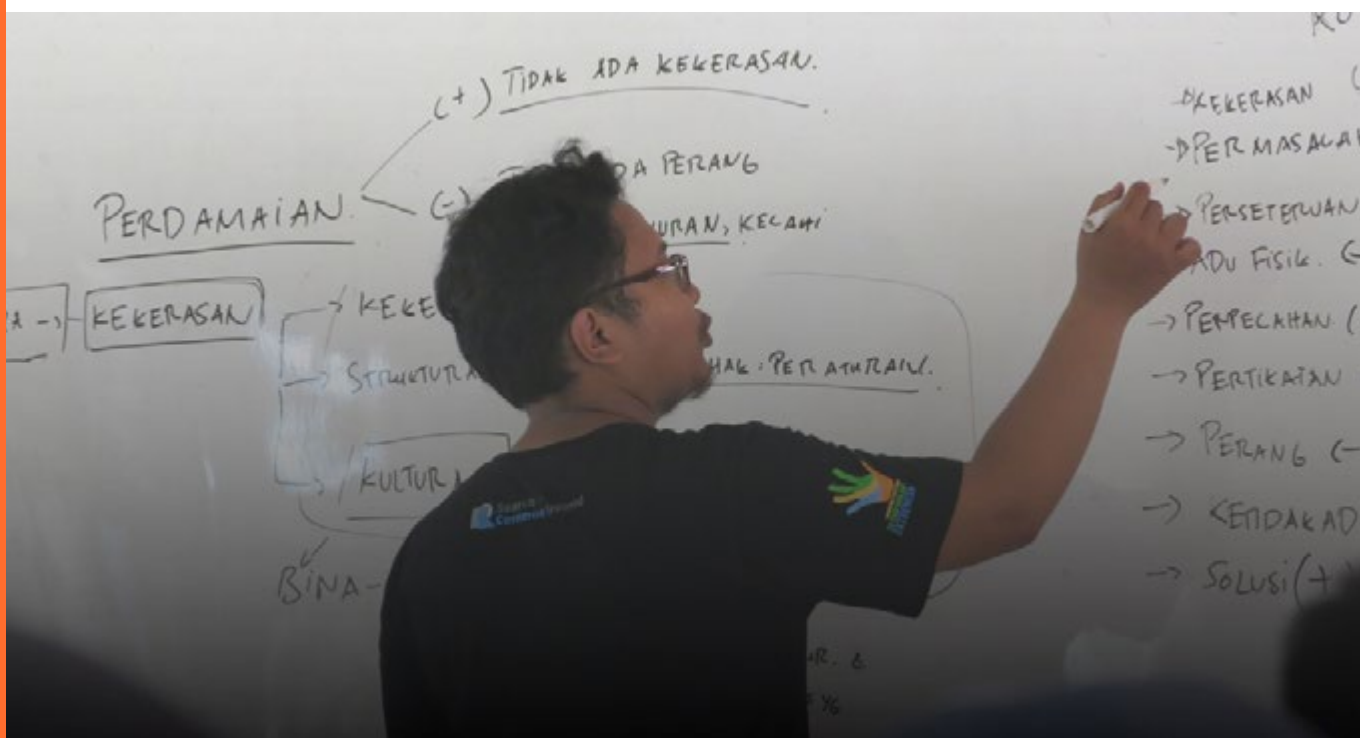
UNSCR 2535 builds on previous resolutions on YPS - UNSCR 2250 (2015) and UNSCR 2419 (2018) - in terms of advancing a progressive language for greater inclusion of youth in peacebuilding processes. The resolution also provides a new language that

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<sup>3</sup> Search For Common Ground and UNOY Peacebuilders (2017). Mapping a Sector: Bridging the Evidence Gap on Youth-Driven Peacebuilding. Available [here](#).

focuses on the protection of civic and political spaces and recognizes meaningful youth engagement in humanitarian planning and response as essential to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. In addition, UNSCR 2535 emphasize the following:

- **It recognizes the importance of civil society organizations (CSOs) and protection of civic and political spaces of young people:** this reaffirms the obligation of Member States to respect, promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals while upholding equal access to justice, which also makes strong links between human rights, Justice and peacebuilding.
- **It ensures protection of young peacebuilders and human rights defenders:** this includes fostering enabling, safe, inclusive and gender-responsive environments for young people to engage in peace and security initiatives - including the important need for explicit protections of human rights defenders.
- **It recognizes the important role of young people in humanitarian response:** it highlights the need to work with and for young people in these settings particularly by ensuring that they are informed, consulted, and meaningfully engaged throughout all stages of humanitarian action.
- **It creates an implementation and accountability mechanism:** encouraging the United Nations, Member States, regional and subregional organizations to develop and implement policies and programmes with and for young people in all levels and processes of the peace and security agenda.



## WORKSHOP OUTLINE

### Introductory session (90 minutes)

#### WHAT?

Take some time at the beginning to introduce:

- Resolution 2250;
- The people in the room;
- The programme of the day;
- Expected outcomes.

The exact method for the introductions will need to be tailored to your context. In addition to formal presentations, make sure you use icebreakers and other activities to help the participants get to know each other.

#### WHY?

The introductory session will help make sure that all participants are on an equal footing by making sure that they have the same basic information.

A well-designed introductory session will help you to create a productive and safe environment for the rest of the workshop. In particular, breaking the ice between the people in the room will help young participants begin interacting with participants such as government officials or security sector representatives, who they may not be used to talking to as equal partners.

#### BREAK (15 MINUTES)

### Internal group discussions (75 minutes)

#### WHAT?

Split up into the different stakeholder groups present. For example, youth can form one group, while local government and national government leaders can form another. Police and military can form a separate group, and so on.

Instruct the groups to share their findings from their focus group discussions with one another;

Identify in each group common threads or where there is consensus on issues of the resolution and its five pillars;

Identify for each group the key priority pillars. Each group can identify their top 3 pillars;

Create a gallery walk so all participants can view each other's findings.

## WHY?

By allowing each group to discuss internally, you give them a chance to have a sense of identity and a feeling that their particular background and experiences are being valued.

Sharing the findings with other groups will then provide an opportunity for participants of diverse backgrounds to get acquainted with each other's points of view.

## Cross-group discussions (60 minutes)

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### WHAT?

Now ask the participants to form mixed groups, each with adequate representation of different categories of stakeholders. Ensure that there is adequate gender balance in each group. Ask them to discuss the following:

Identify the top priority pillar based on the gallery walk and everyone's feedback;

Discuss how they themselves think progress should be assessed overall for that pillar;

Present findings in plenary.

### WHY?

By mixing the groups, you create a sense of collegiality and cooperation among people who might not be used to working together.

With these mixed groups, the final decisions on which pillars to prioritise will feel like joint decisions, which all the different stakeholder groups can identify with.





## **BREAK (60 MINUTES)**

### **Developing a roadmap together (75 minutes)**

#### **WHAT?**

Separate groups into two based on the two pillars that they are most interested in. Now that the priorities are identified, develop a roadmap for how to actualise that pillar. The discussion topics can include:

1. What does the group as a collective want to accomplish in the next 12 months?
2. What are the main goals and objectives for the group that will lead to that accomplishment?
3. What are some benchmarks and a timeline for meeting those benchmarks?
4. Identify and document key activities and commitments, including who is doing what, when, and how.
5. Outline the next steps, including when the group will meet next.

#### **WHY?**

This session is aimed at helping you decide a way forward that is collaborative and based on feedback and joint decisions.

## **Share in plenary and celebrate the day**

**(45 minutes)**

#### **WHAT?**

Each of the two groups should present to the others what they have planned to begin working on, such as their pillar of resolution 2250. At this stage you should also present or discuss the suggested way forward for the alliance on YPS.

At the end of the day, take the time to celebrate what you have achieved. What you choose to do will depend on your context. This could be a musical or dance performance, a dinner, a reception, or whatever else you feel will give participants a sense of closure after the day, and optimism for moving forward.

#### **WHY?**

This final session of your workshop is very important, as it will shape how sustainable your alliance is in the long term. Use this session to make sure everyone is on the same page, and motivated to continue working together on YPS.