

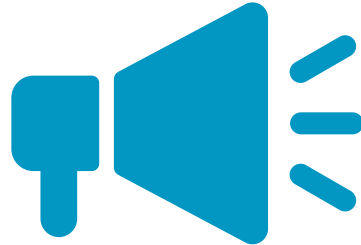


# INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE AS CRITICAL AGENTS OF CHANGE TO SUSTAIN PEACE

SparkBlue e-discussion

8 December 2020 – 18 January 2021

# AT A GLANCE



**3 WEEKS**

**67**  
**REGISTERED MEMBERS**

**5 MODERATORS**  
(2 UNDP staff members and  
3 young leaders)



**23**  
**ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS**

**63**  
**THOUGHTFUL  
CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Contributions from HQ and 4 regions**  
(Africa, ECIS, Asia-Pacific, Arab States)

# DISCUSSION BACKGROUND

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) convened an e-discussion titled “Investing in young people as critical agents of change to sustain peace” between 8 December 2020 and 18 January 2021. It was hosted by the UNDP’S [Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace](#) and UNDP’s [Community of Practice on Governance for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#), on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda (adoption of [United Nations Security Council resolution 2250](#) (2015) which recognized for the first time the critical role that young people play in building and sustaining peace at all levels).

The e-discussion sparked ideas on strengthening support to youth, peace and security and provided a space in which to reflect on lessons learned, challenges, opportunities and way forward. The unique perspectives, insights and recommendations shared by colleagues and partners in the e-discussion have:

- Contributed to strengthening our community of practitioners and collective knowledge on youth and YPS, by enhancing peer-to-peer global, regional and cross-regional learning and leveraging our internal and external networks;
- Nurtured our collective reflection on the future of development and of governance, in the context of the development of the next UNDP Strategic Plan;
- Contributed to inspiring a new generation of programmes and projects, including new joint initiatives with other United entities, youth organisations and other partners;
- Informed (and will continue to inform) the development of relevant YPS reports and guidance; and United Nations’ broader reporting on youth, peace and security as a response to United Nations Security Resolution 2535 (2020), on policies and programme relevant to youth, on Our Common Agenda, and on the United Nations Youth Strategy (2030 Agenda).

Our most sincere thanks go to all participants from around the world, partners, senior leaders and colleagues who dedicated time to this conversation and shared most valuable insights. We particularly thank our moderators: Lynrose Genon (UNDP 16x16 Initiative, Philippines), Samira Barucija (UNDP 16x16 Initiative, Bosnia and Herzegovina), Wevyn Muganda (UNDP 16x16 initiative, Kenya), Noella Richard (UNDP) and Maria Stage (UNDP) and our CoP facilitator, Ezgi Ozturk (UNDP).

The fifth anniversary of United Nations Security Council resolution 2250 was also commemorated through [campaign activities](#) carried out by the [Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security](#) (GCYPS) (see [GCYPS Comms Hub](#) and UNDP’s [Youth SparkBlue space](#), for more information).



# HIGHLIGHTS

## 1. We need to transform systems of exclusion

- Supporting the collection and analysis of evidence on youth perceptions, aspirations and roles would help in addressing this challenge.
- Youth should be included in all their diversity, and their specific and diverse vulnerabilities should be taken into account. For example, young women have a different experience and needs and are disproportionately affected by social challenges in the community. Bridging the YPS and the WPS agenda will address the gap in participation of young women in peacebuilding and work cohesively to address violence and discrimination faced by women and girls globally.
- Beyond including youth, it is important to meet youth (all youth) where they are, doing what they do.
- Youth engagement in decision-making processes is important for a policy and development planning that respond to the concerns and perspectives of young people.
- Active civic participation of young people is crucial for healthy and vibrant democratic governance and to transform systems that currently generate exclusion.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new challenges: while everyone agrees sacrifices have to be made to ensure the health and safety of our societies, all need to be vigilant that these measures and restrictions are proportional and necessary and do not unwittingly or needlessly infringe on people's human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly young people.
- Local institutions are considered as an interesting entry-point for more deliberate and longer-term investment in youth engagement.
- All rights and freedoms that apply offline, should be guaranteed and protected online as well. Reflecting on the means to combat online repression and how to best protect those who fight for human rights on social networks would surely have its place at the top of our human rights agenda.
- A comprehensive approach to youth, peace and security is recommended.
- Investing in a young workforce to advance the youth, peace and security, among others, within the United Nations, would also matter.



## 2. Working with young people through genuine, inclusive, legitimate and meaningful partnerships, is fundamental

- There is a loud call for the youth, peace and security agenda to take a centre stage in the UN's work at country level.
- Partnerships between the United Nations and youth enable to move from policy to practice, mobilize funding for youth-led peacebuilding and advocate jointly for making youth, peace and security a priority of governments.
- Stakeholders/partners should design their programmes WITH young people rather than FOR young people -this cultivates a relationship based on trust and encourages ownership which would make the project gains sustainable beyond funding.
- For better monitoring, accountability and impact, there is a need for concrete indicators to measure progress and achievements on YPS.

## 3. We need to invest in the youth capacity, agency, and leadership and a conducive environment for youth

- Mainstreaming youth representation and meaningful participation in high-level dialogues is an essential first step that would gain to be systematized.
- Investing in the capacity of young people leading peacebuilding efforts in communities was highlighted together with awareness raising and a focus on local ownership. Capacity development activities with young people for them to understand, contextualize and design their own solutions would address the challenge of youth participation being tokenistic.
- For an enabling environment, it is important to invest in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, socioeconomic opportunities and access to the internet. At present, youth-led networks are already disadvantaged in terms of legal structure, years of experience and, to most, if not all, level of influence.
- Funding policies and requirements need to be inclusive to formal and informal youth-led organisations. The establishment of dedicated and accessible funds for youth-led initiatives on youth, peace and security was recommended.
- Civic education from the grassroots level on youth rights and decent jobs for youth should be priorities.
- Need to specifically invest in young women as peacebuilders and peacekeepers.



# KEY REFERENCES

## Examples of initiatives, programmes and projects:

- [UNDP Youth Global Programme](#)
- [UNDP PVE Programme in Central Asia](#)
- [From Divisive Memories to Shared Futures: the UNDP-UNFPA-RYCO joint project in the Western Balkans \(funded by the UN PBF\)](#)
- [Youth co:Lab \(UNDP and Citi Foundation\)](#)
- [Deep Demo with Chora Foundation and the support to multisectoral national youth policy in Tunisia](#)
- [SDG16 Global alliance – Global alliance for Reporting Progress on Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#)
- [Peacebuilding Fund project implemented by UN Women and UNDP at the Mali-Niger-Burkina Faso border](#)
- [UNDP-DPPA Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention](#)
- [UNDP project on political vigilantism in Ghana](#)
- [Young Women + Leaders for Peace-Philippines](#)
- [PBF Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative](#)
- [Online high-level symposium in Libya](#)

## Publications:

- [UNDP ACE project](#)
- [UNDP Frontlines Report](#)
- [Folke Bernadotte Academy Youth, Peace and Security Adviser's Handbook](#), released on 9 December 2020, at a [joint high-level event](#) by co-convened by UN partners (including UNDP) and Sweden, Jordan, France and the Dominican Republic
- [Mainstreaming SDG 16](#)
- [The Missing Peace – Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security](#)
- [Policy Brief – Agents and Drivers of Peace in Libya](#)
- [Role of women in peacekeeping forces \(Viet Nam\)](#)

## For further reading & engagement:

- [United Nations Secretary-General's Report on Youth, Peace and Security \(2020\)](#)
- [UN Youth, Peace and Security Programming Handbook](#)

- [16x16 Dialogue Series Insights Paper](#)
- [If I disappear - Global Report on Protecting Young People in Civic Space](#)
- [UN Youth2030 Strategy platform](#) (mapping, toolkit, Youth2030 progress report)
- [STEP-UP! Joint Commitment by Heads of United Nations entities on child and youth participation and the right of future generations](#)
- [Shared Futures](#)
- [UNDP Funding Windows](#)
- [UN Volunteers](#)
- [We are here](#)

## Stay in touch!

- [UNDP Youth SparkBlue Space](#)
- [UNDP4Youth Twitter](#)
- [Youth4Peace.info](#)

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