

Youth, peace and security and climate



KEY TAKEAWAYS



A roundtable discussion hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Youth Global Programme (BPPS/Gov/Youth) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), on the occasion of the International Day of Peace, 21 September 2022 and as a follow-up to the [Youth4Climate](#) flagship event, convened on the margins of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Peace in today's world is challenged by the interconnectedness of multiple crises – COVID-19, climate, violence and armed conflict, energy crises – and their compounded effects on societies and people. Young people are responding to crises across the world and acting for peace and climate in their communities through innovative solutions to bridge divides and spear climate action.

On the International Day of Peace 2022, this roundtable discussion brought together approximately 45 young climate activists and peacebuilders and development practitioners, partners and stakeholders from across all regions and engaged in various efforts: from initiatives at the grassroots level to global advocacy. The purpose was to bring to the fore the perspectives of young climate activists and peacebuilders from across the world; identify promising practices for development programmes; and highlight how youth engagement can be supported across the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus and in decision-making processes relating to peace and climate at the local and national levels.

The roundtable discussion took place under Chatham house rules and following the conversation UNDP and UNFPA prepared a summary of the key messages.

The intersection between climate action and peacebuilding

- Climate action is inherently about peace, and no peace is possible without climate justice. Both climate action and peacebuilding concern the future of people and the planet.
- Action at the local level is key, and there is a need for people-centered approaches to ensure climate negotiations and peace processes are informed by local voices.
- Climate change hinders peacebuilding efforts, e.g., draughts may aggravate tensions and disputes over resources such as water and food, disrupting peacebuilding initiatives.
- Civic engagement and peacebuilding activities, if not careful, can negatively impact the environment, e.g., unsustainable use of resources, littering, etc.

Characteristics of youth efforts on peace, security and climate

- Young people demand safe spaces and are motivated to influence decision-making about their lives, communities and the future of the planet.
- Youth are proactively working to localize peacebuilding and climate action to ensure efforts are sensitive to specific contexts and the diversity of young people.
- Follow-up and monitoring of climate commitments are areas through which youth participation and inclusion can be strengthened.
- Young people bring critical experiences and local know-how on opportunities for climate action and peacebuilding in communities.
- Young people are bridging divides and bringing diverse groups of people together to take climate action in conflict-affected societies.

Barriers to an enabling environment for youth efforts

- Some young population groups face additional challenges to participate in decision-making processes relating to peace and climate, including indigenous youth.
- A shrinking civic space is limiting opportunities for peacebuilding and climate action.
- The threats that young people face when engaging in civic space includes reprisals that in some instances lead to the killing of young activists.
- Freedom of expression is an enabler for youth-led climate action and peacebuilding.
- Limited access to resources, including financing, is a challenge for youth organizations and initiatives.
- It can be challenging to spear climate ambition and commitment in divided societies and where there is limited political consensus on the future.

Opportunities for support to youth actions

- Enhance quality and access to youth-friendly information on climate change and sustainable peace to ensure climate negotiations and peace processes are more accessible to and inclusive of different groups.
- Take into account indigenous youth's access to climate and peace education and recognize the role of traditional knowledge in climate action.
- Enhance access to information on protection mechanisms and support networks for young climate activists and peacebuilders to address protection challenges and concerns.
- Provide safe and friendly spaces for young people to exchange knowledge and experiences to aid their climate action and peacebuilding efforts. Youth platforms that provide mentorship and moral support to activists and youth-led organizations must be prioritized, particularly in crisis contexts.
- Raise awareness among civil society organizations on the intersection of the climate and peace movements to enhance collaboration and the uptake of youth-led ideas and initiatives.
- Integrate mental health and psychosocial support in peacebuilding and climate programmes involving youth.
- Integrate sustainable financing in peacebuilding and development programmes to mitigate negative consequences for the climate and environment.
- Foster collaboration between young people and municipalities on matters relating to the environment and peace.