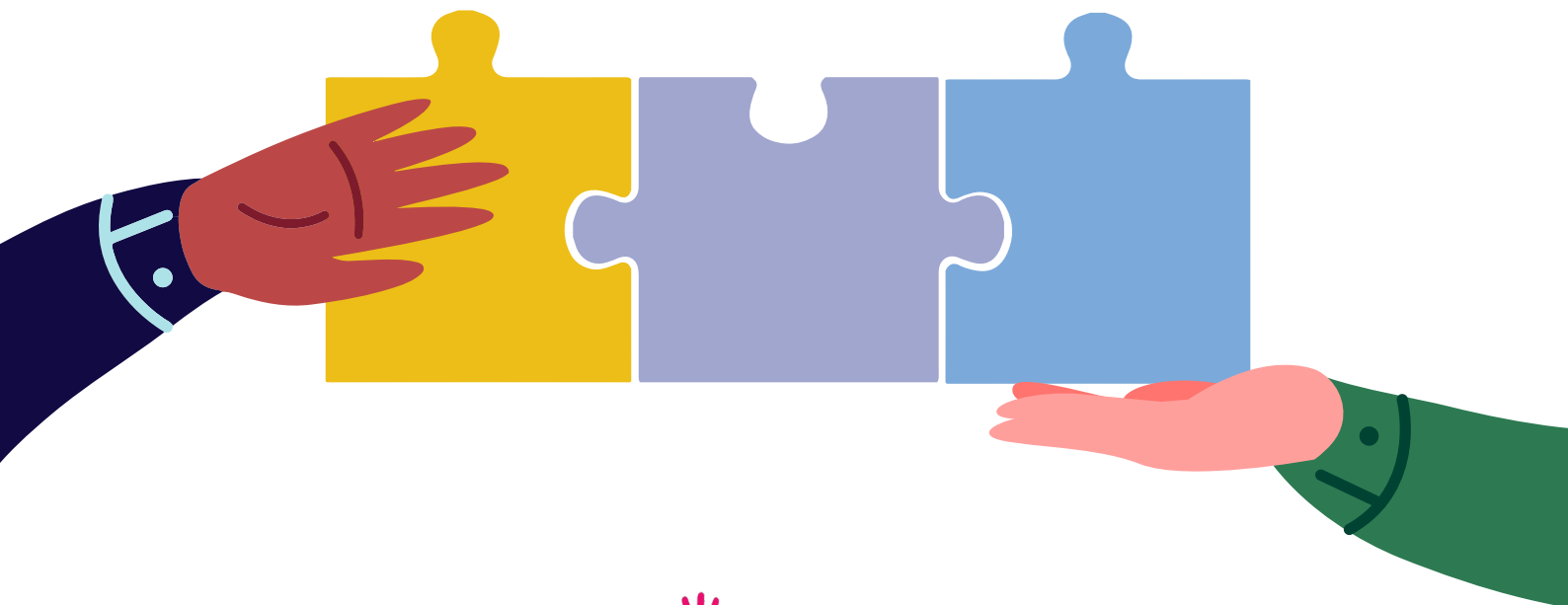


Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at Country-level

A Guide for Public Officials





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FOREWORD

As the world continues to grapple with a turbulent chapter, amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, an uptick in conflict globally means that building sustainable and peaceful communities is as critical as ever. The inclusion of youth premised on meaningful, active, and full participation will be the difference between success and failure when it comes to promoting and maintaining peace and security.

Growing up in Sri Lanka during the time of an armed conflict had a direct and profound impact on my life and shaped my unwavering belief that young people play a pivotal role in consolidating peace and driving forward progress.

Since the unanimous adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) in 2015*, there has been a monumental shift from viewing young people as passive victims or perpetrators of violence towards recognizing young people as a crucial catalyst to shaping ongoing as well as future peacebuilding efforts.

Efforts to translate the YPS agenda from aspiration to concrete policies and collaborative action have only been strengthened with the adoption of UNSCR 2419** (2018) and UNSCR 2535*** (2020). Against this backdrop, Member States have been urged to integrate youth into decision-making processes for the prevention and resolution of conflict.

These milestones serve as an important reminder to shed light on how peace and security are inextricably linked to the broader agenda of young people's stake in sustainable development.

This guide paves a clear and coordinated path for YPS country-level implementation through participatory processes with young people and civil society. The guide also calls to attention the importance of providing adequate institutional capacities and financial resources to ensure that young people are viewed as equal and essential partners for peace and development.

I would like to acknowledge the collaborative way this guide was produced – a real testament to and a beacon of hope for how the United Nations, Member States, civil society and young people can partner to build a roadmap for further action.

My hope is that on the 7th anniversary of UNSCR 2250, in December 2022, we will celebrate an increasing number of Member States leading the way towards sustainable peace through the development and implementation of inclusive youth, peace and security strategies in their respective countries.

We must not forget that it is our collective responsibility to foster enabling and safe environments that reinforce youth-led efforts towards a peaceful future for people and the planet.

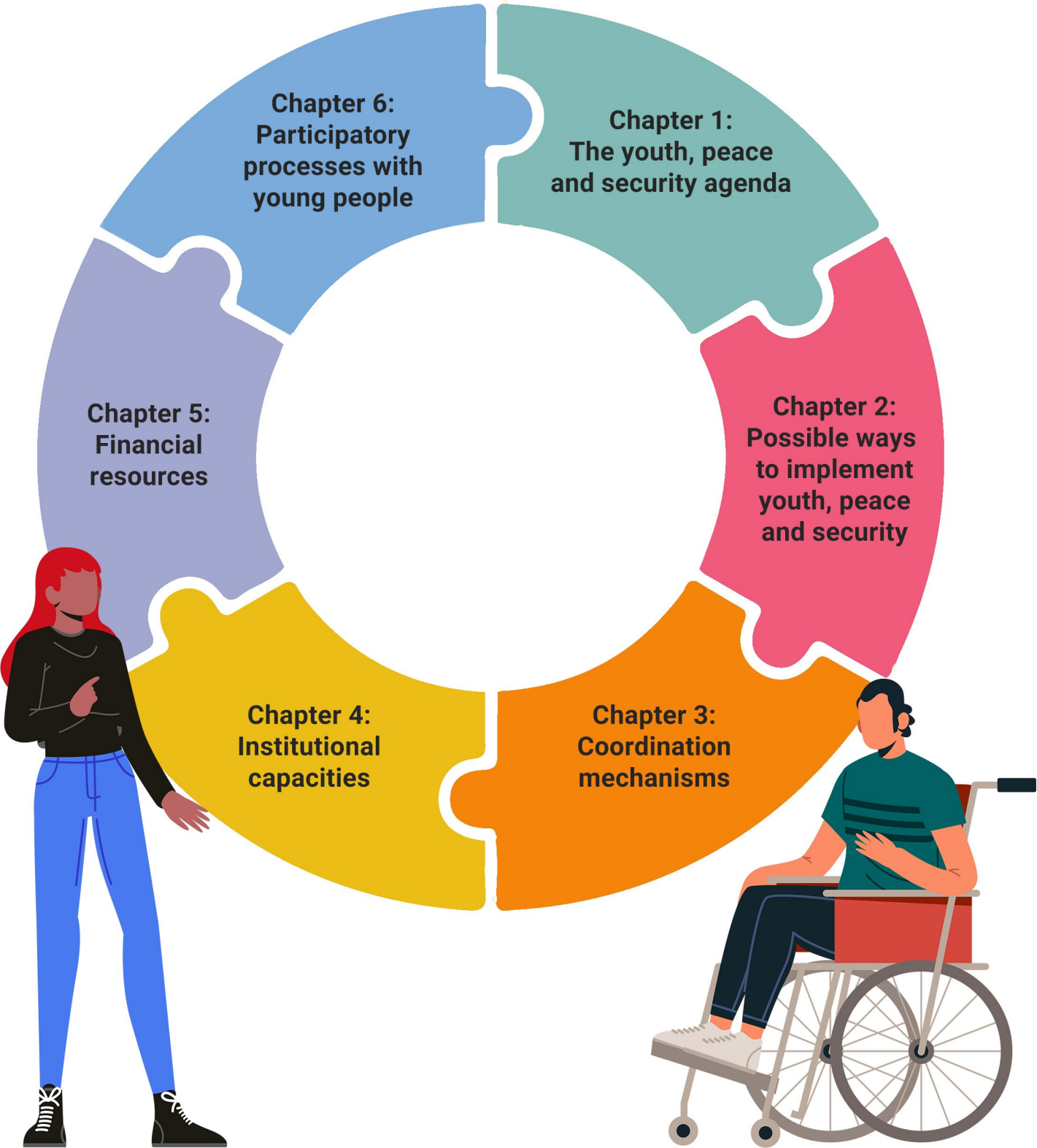
Jayathma Wickramanayake
United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

* United Nations Security Council. Resolution 2250, S/RES/2250 (December 9, 2015).

** United Nations Security Council. Resolution 2419, S/RES/2419 (June 6, 2018).

*** United Nations Security Council. Resolution 2535, S/RES/2535 (July 14, 2020).

OVERVIEW OF CONTENT



1

Chapter 1: The youth, peace and security agenda

- Learn about the youth, peace and security (YPS) agenda.
- Define the ways the agenda is relevant in your country.
- Identify, as a result of context analysis, specific priorities to address in implementation efforts.
- Identify commitments, laws, and policy frameworks that can be built upon to implement the YPS agenda



TOOLS

Tool 1:
Context analysis through a youth lens

Tool 2:
Defining the framework to guide government action on youth, peace and security



EXAMPLES

- Context analysis methods
- Political commitments, laws and policies

2

Chapter 2: Possible ways to implement youth, peace and security

- Consider different implementation options, from roadmaps and action plans to integrating YPS objectives into policies, programs, projects, and services.
- Define objectives and indicators of progress and put in place evaluation and accountability mechanisms.



TOOLS

Tool 3:
Finding the best way for your country to implement the youth, peace and security agenda

Tool 4:
Developing roadmaps, strategic plans or frameworks



EXAMPLES

- Roadmaps, plans, frameworks, policies, programs, projects and services in different policy domains

3

Chapter 3: Coordination mechanisms

- Analyze what is possible within mandates.
- Consider coordination mechanisms, within entities, within governments at national, sub-national and regional levels.
- Involve other non-governmental stakeholders, especially those that are youth-led and youth-focused, for example, through multistakeholder coalitions.



TOOLS

Tool 5:
The coordination organogram

Tool 6:
Stakeholder mapping



EXAMPLES

- Coordination mechanisms
- Multistakeholder coalitions

4

Chapter 4: Institutional capacities

- Strengthen institutional capacities to implement the youth, peace and security agenda.
- Ensure ownership and address resistance.
- Consider young people as partners in capacity-building efforts.



TOOLS

Tool 7:
Institutional capacities assessment



EXAMPLES

- An online capacity-building program

5

Chapter 5: Financial resources

- Mobilize and manage resources.
- Ensure funds are accessible to youth-led groups.



TOOLS

Tool 8:
Developing a resource mobilization strategy



EXAMPLES

- Funding schemes

6

Chapter 6: Participatory processes with young people

- Consider key principles to implement the agenda through a participatory process with young people: meaningful youth participation, inclusivity, gender equality, intergenerational partnership, and do no harm.
- Learn about different forms of youth participation in peace and security.



TOOLS

Tool 9:
Meaningful youth participation: putting it into practice

Tool 10:
Intersectional analysis



EXAMPLES

- Forms of youth participation in peace and security spaces

INTRODUCTION

Why is this guide needed?

Young people are an integral factor in sustaining peace. This guide is designed to facilitate their meaningful contribution to peace and security in your country. In the following chapters you will find insights, examples and guidance to support government actions and shifts in your public policy to make this possible.

In recent years there has been a significant shift towards recognizing young people and their roles in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. It began with the adoption of [United Nations Security Council Resolution \(UNSCR\) 2250 \(2015\)](#).¹ This formalized the youth, peace and security (YPS) Agenda, which has only been strengthened with the adoption of [UNSCR 2419 \(2018\)](#)² and [UNSCR 2535 \(2020\)](#).³ Each new resolution builds upon the work of the last with the latest clearly calling for accelerated implementation of the YPS agenda.

The [Secretary General's report on Youth, Peace, and Security](#)⁴ was published in March 2020, preceding UNSCR 2535 and it highlighted two key findings:

“The first is the **growing recognition** of young people's essential role in peace and security. It is encouraging to see many instances in which Governments, United Nations entities, civil society actors and others are stepping up to meet the requirements of resolution 2250 (2015). The second is that **core challenges remain**, including structural barriers limiting the participation of young people and their capacity to influence decision-making; violations of their human rights; and insufficient investment in facilitating their inclusion, in particular through education.”

This guide is designed to **break down those challenges and make it easier to implement youth, peace and security** at country level by offering practical tools and examples. It has been developed in response to UNSCR 2535 for Member States.

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for **public officials** working at various levels of government in management and coordination roles. It will help people who are responsible for, or interested in, implementing the YPS agenda at the country level. This includes (but is not limited to):

- **executive officials**, such as state secretaries; directors; heads of agencies, departments, and public think tanks;
- **civil servants** such as officers in different policy areas like peace, security, including demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR), foreign affairs, employment, education, youth affairs, and sports;
- **public servants or elected officials** interested in the agenda, such as members of parliament and their advisors.

The guide can also be of interest to **other stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda** at the country level, such as:

- **officials working for intergovernmental institutions** at international or regional levels, yet supporting the implementation of the agenda at the country-level. For example, advisers and focal points at country missions of international organizations;
- **representatives of youth-led and youth-focused groups** and organizations supporting the implementation of the YPS agenda at the country level.

¹ United Nations Security Council. Resolution 2250, S/RES/2250 (December 9, 2015).

² United Nations Security Council. Resolution 2419, S/RES/2419 (June 6, 2018).

³ United Nations Security Council. Resolution 2535, S/RES/2535 (July 14, 2020).

⁴ United Nations Security Council. Report of the Secretary-General on Youth, Peace and Security. S/2020/167 (March 2, 2020) paragraph 10.

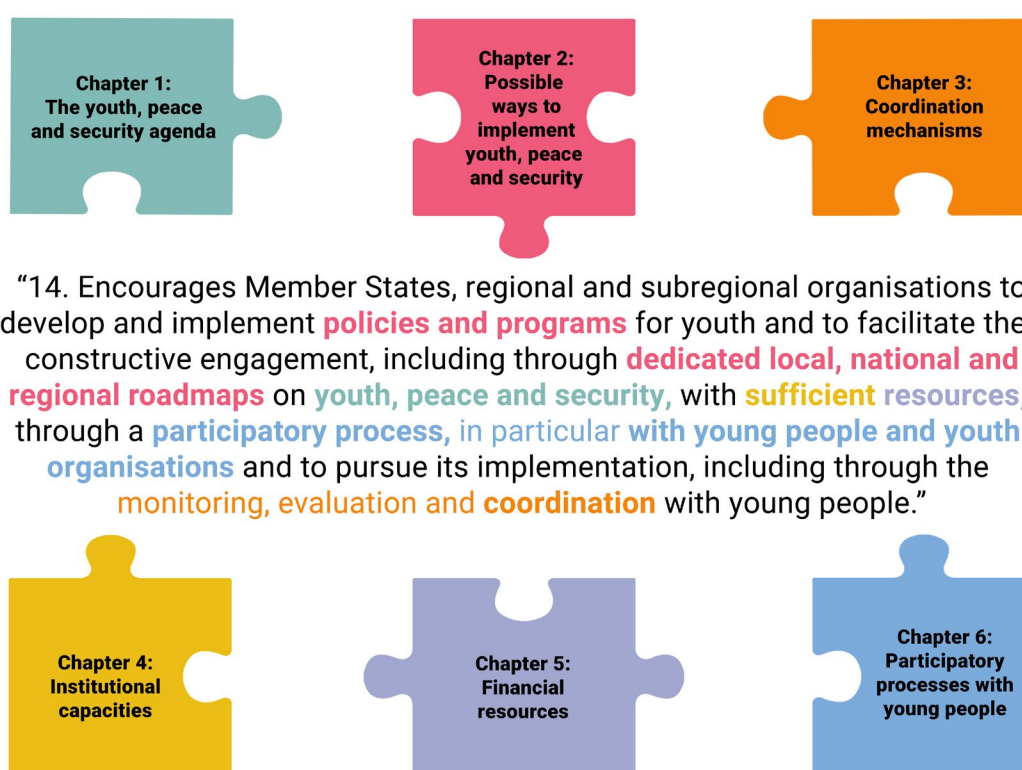
How does this guide work?

This guide has been designed to be adapted to fit your needs. That means each country needs to develop its own path and focus based on current capacities and priorities. That also means recognizing the progress you have already made in integrating young people into peace and security. It works whether you read one chapter or work your way through all the chapters gradually. For this reason it is extensive, to ensure the right elements are there for everyone.

This guide includes:

- key suggestions to support the implementation of the YPS agenda;
- planning and analytical tools;
- examples⁵ of YPS in action.

The guide is organized into six chapters. Each chapter addresses the key elements mentioned in paragraph 14 of UNSCR 2535. The graph below links these elements with the corresponding chapter.



“14. Encourages Member States, regional and subregional organisations to develop and implement **policies and programs** for youth and to facilitate their constructive engagement, including through **dedicated local, national and regional roadmaps** on **youth, peace and security**, with **sufficient resources**, through a **participatory process**, in particular **with young people and youth organisations** and to pursue its implementation, including through the **monitoring, evaluation and coordination** with young people.”

This guide is also based on the recommendations of [The Missing Peace: Independent Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security](#) which were summarized as: “Invest, involve, and partner”.⁶ It also draws on the materials and experiences developed in the context of the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

It aims to be a living document, to be updated and reviewed based on experiences and practices as implementation efforts continue.

This guide complements the global five-year strategy on strengthening youth-inclusive peace processes, which builds on recommendations from the global policy paper [We Are Here: An Integrated Approach to Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes](#).⁷

⁵ Examples have been selected via mapping exercise (March-October 2021) sourcing information via survey (30 countries replied), consultations (UN agencies, civil society) and public information related to activities implemented 2016 - 2021. The selection criteria was based on relevance and specificity to the YPS agenda, thematic and geographical balance. More detailed and updated descriptions of examples are available at: <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

⁶ Graeme Simpson, [The Missing Peace, Independent Study on Youth, Peace and Security](#) (UNFPA – UN/DPPA-PBSO, 2018).

⁷ Ali Altioek, and Irena Grizelj, [WE ARE HERE: An Integrated Approach to Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes](#), (Office of the Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth, 2019).

How will the guide apply to different contexts?

This guide is useful in every context **because the youth, peace and security agenda is relevant to all countries**. It is equally relevant for countries experiencing armed or violent conflict, in transition, or post-conflict as it is for stable countries. This is because they all experience peace and security challenges. That is why partnering with youth actors when addressing violence, exclusion, and discrimination in all forms and promoting dialogue and social cohesion is so important. This is reflected by the breadth of countries highlighted in examples throughout the guide.

Adapt to fit your context. The guide offers suggestions based on existing frameworks and practices from diverse contexts and geographical locations. However, as national stakeholders you will determine the most appropriate implementation path based on your context, priorities, and capacities. This document is a set of tools and inspiring ideas to be considered at the country level, and for each country to choose actions that seem most suitable and feasible.



Not a one-size-fits-all model

Adapt the suggestions and tools to fit with your country's context, capacities, and priorities.

Feasibility and the importance of taking action. It is important to recognize context limitations, especially in challenging contexts of armed violence and instability. At the same time, small, yet positive actions can be crucial and transformative in any context. Respecting the principle of “do no harm”, actions of any scope can help build hope and bridges across dividing lines and generations. It can also serve as reflection, preparation, networking, and planning purposes so that more full-fledged actions can be implemented when the context allows it.

How does the youth, peace and security agenda reinforce existing agendas?

The YPS agenda is inherently linked to and reinforces existing agendas.

At the national level, the YPS agenda can support national and sub-national policies and actions that share its aims, for example:

- national development plans or poverty reduction strategies;
- strategies on youth or national youth policies;
- peace and security plans;
- health and safety policies;
- education policies.

Examples of how YPS has been already integrated into national and sub-national policies and programs in different policy domains and in various countries are described in [Section 2.3](#).

The YPS agenda aims to enhance inclusive peacebuilding and advance the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).⁸ It specifically contributes to Sustainable Development [Goal 16 “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”](#).⁹

YPS also contributes to realizing the [United Nations Youth Strategy: Youth 2030](#)¹⁰, the [Women, Peace, and Security Agenda \(WPS\)](#)¹¹, and the [Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace Agenda](#).¹² These agendas are mutually reinforcing.

⁸ United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals. (2015) Available at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/> (accessed 4 December 2021).

⁹ United Nations, “Goal # 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”, Sustainable Development Goals. (2015) Available at: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/> (accessed 4 December 2021).

¹⁰ United Nations, Youth 2030: The UN Youth Strategy, (United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, 2018). Available at: <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/youth-un/> (accessed 4 December 2021).

¹¹ United Nations Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, “Women, Peace and Security”. Available at: <https://dppa.un.org/en/women-peace-and-security> (accessed 4 December 2021).

¹² United Nations Peacebuilding, “Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace Agenda”. Available at: <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/tags/sustaining-peace> (accessed 4 December 2021).

The women, peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas: mutually reinforcing

The WPS and the YPS agendas are interlinked and complementary, as they both seek to include groups historically marginalized from peace and security processes. Both agendas share core commitments to inclusive prevention, participation and protection.

The recognition of complementarities between the YPS and WPS agendas should, however, never equate to lumping women and youth together, which would deny the specific needs and challenges of each of these groups. Instead, it implies that policy-makers and practitioners need to adopt an intersectional approach, ensuring that all policies, programs and initiatives fully capture the age and gender power dynamics.

This was clearly outlined in the report [Young Women in Peace and Security: at the intersection of the YPS and WPS agendas](#).¹³

Youth in women, peace and security

The WPS agenda should recognize the importance for full engagement of young women while emphasizing that youth applies to both young women and young men. The YPS and the WPS agendas are complementary: “an age-responsive approach only strengthens the inclusivity and relevance of WPS work”.

Gender in youth, peace and security

It is important to apply a youth lens in WPS, and a gender lens in the YPS agenda. This guarantees the protection of young women’s and young men’s rights so that their unique roles and capacities in conflict prevention are not “sidestepped or subsumed under programs for children or adults”.



¹³ UN Women, *Young women in peace and security: at the intersection of the YPS and WPS agendas*, (United Nations, 2018).

1. THE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

1.1 What is the youth, peace and security agenda?

The youth, peace, and security (YPS) agenda, established by **UNSCR 2250 (2015)** and subsequent resolutions, recognizes **young people's inclusion and participation as a key dimension of building and sustaining peace and security for all**. Resolution 2250 notes that today's generation of youth is the largest the world has ever known, with young women and men often forming the majority of the population in countries affected by violent and armed conflicts. The resolution identifies five pillars for action, as outlined below.



Participation

Take youth's participation and views into account in decision-making processes, from negotiation and prevention of violence to peace agreements.



Protection

Ensure the protection of young civilians' lives and human rights and investigate and prosecute those responsible for crimes perpetrated against them.



Prevention

Support young people in preventing violence and in promoting a culture of tolerance and intercultural dialogue.



Partnership

Engage young people during and after conflict when developing peacebuilding strategies along with community actors and United Nations bodies.



Disengagement and reintegration

Invest in youth affected by armed conflict through employment opportunities, inclusive labour policies, and education promoting a culture of peace.

1.2 Why is the youth, peace and security agenda important?

Young people's inclusion and participation in peace and security are key to building **more inclusive, sustainable and effective peace**. There is growing evidence of their positive impacts when engaging in peace processes¹⁴ as well as to the prevention of all forms of violence.¹⁵

Supporting the constructive roles of young people in peace efforts will allow countries to **harness their contributions** in the **present** and in **the future**. Youth make special contributions to peacebuilding such as engaging their peers, working at community level, sustaining dialogue when others have lost hope and bridging divides in polarized contexts. Additionally, **when youth engage in building peace, they learn to value it**, they learn civic skills and often they keep working to sustain peace through their lifetime.

¹⁴ Ali Altiok, and Irena Grizelj, [WE ARE HERE: An Integrated Approach to Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes](#), (Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth, 2019).

¹⁵ Graeme Simpson, [The Missing Peace, Independent Study on Youth, Peace and Security](#).

Young people's participation in peace and security is also about realizing young people's right to participation. Participation is a human right enshrined in article 21 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)¹⁶ and in article 25 of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#).¹⁷ This is key as young people, especially young women, often face structural barriers to participation in formal and informal decision-making spaces, both physical and digital ones.



Public recognition of the constructive roles of youth in peace and security

The YPS agenda needs the public to recognize young people's positive roles in society, and in peace and security in particular in order to be fully implemented.

Often, **perceptions** and culturally-rooted **narratives** portray young people as victims or perpetrators, not accounting for their **constructive roles**. These perceptions are also gendered. For example, young women tend to be perceived as victims of violence while young men tend to be perceived as possible threats to security. It is then crucial to address **gender** and **age stereotypes**, particularly those that contribute to marginalizing **young women**.

Awareness-raising activities about existing normative frameworks - notably UNSCR 2250 and related ones - can help develop a deeper and more balanced understanding of young people's roles in peace and security.

1.3 Basic concepts

1.3.1 Youth

While UNSCR 2250 defines youth as 18 to 29 years, it recognizes the variations of the term that exists at national and international levels. Different **age ranges** are used for statistical and policy purposes by countries which can also include adolescents (10-18 years of age) or young people over 29 years of age.

Youth can be broadly understood as a transition from childhood to adulthood that has biological, social, economic, political, and cultural markers which are context-specific and socially constructed.¹⁸ Youth are diverse. They have different and intersecting characteristics and identity affiliations such as gender, socio-economic background, etc. Recognizing this and adopting an intersectional approach to youth is critical. It can mean, for example, identifying how young women have been specifically marginalized from peace and security processes and discussions, and how their identity as women can intersect with others which may reinforce exclusion even more, for example, being young women refugees, young women with disabilities, etc.

It is also crucial to avoid ageism¹⁹ by recognizing young people as **full members of society** and rights-holders with capacities, roles, and responsibilities.²⁰

¹⁶ United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

¹⁷ United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

¹⁸ Alan France, Julia Coffey, Steven Roberts, and Catherine Waite, *Youth Sociology* (London, Red Globe Press, 2010).

¹⁹ Ageism arises when age is used to categorize and divide people in ways that lead to harm, disadvantage and injustice and erode solidarity across generations. For more information, see [Global Report on Ageism](#) (2021).

²⁰ Roles and responsibilities of young people are also defined in legal terms but these definitions vary across countries. Legal rights and obligations depend on the age of majority, that is, the age at which a child becomes an adult and acquires full legal capacity. Legal capacity means, for example, the right to vote or being able to sign contracts.

1.3.2 Peace and security

Peace is more than the absence of war and violence. It is also about the attitudes and political, economic and social structures that promote and sustain peace. The concept of peace includes both negative peace (the absence of physical violence or fighting) and positive peace (the absence of structural violence, that is, for example, poverty, discrimination, injustice).²¹ Young people connect these concepts to **having a sense of belonging and living without fear**.²²

A **comprehensive understanding of peace and security**²³ implies working in multiple dimensions: the politico-military, economic, environmental and human dimensions. This understanding means that peace and security issues include addressing:

- instability and underlying drivers of conflict;
- policing, rule of law and justice;
- underlying inequalities, exclusions and, discrimination, challenges to social cohesion;
- human rights;
- disengagement and reintegration;
- security sector reform, peacekeeping operations, and disarmament and arms control.

1.3.3 Meaningful youth participation

UNSCR 2250 refers to the “meaningful participation” of youth in peace processes and dispute resolution at all levels. This means that young people should have influence in decision-making spaces related to peace and security and have a say about issues that concern them. Youth participation can be related to formal or institutional political processes as well as non-institutional ones, including participation in physical and digital spaces. [This concept is further explained in section 6.1.](#)



Cross-cutting approaches and principles when implementing the youth, peace and security agenda

There are transversal and cross-cutting approaches that need to be ensured in the implementation of the YPS agenda:

- a participatory and youth-responsive approach;
- an inclusive approach, including intersectional, gender-responsive, intercultural and human rights-based approaches;
- an intergenerational approach;
- a do no harm and conflict sensitive approach.

These approaches and principles are further discussed in [Chapter 6](#).

²¹ Johan Galtung, *Conflict Transformation by Peaceful Means* (Geneva, United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme, 2000).

²² Graeme Simpson, *The Missing Peace*, p.9.

²³ The [OSCE](#) uses the concept of comprehensive security to include the politico-military dimension, including disarmament and arms control, violence prevention and policing, and the economic, environmental, and human dimensions.

1.4 Relevance of the youth, peace and security agenda

It is important to define the relevance of the YPS agenda by analyzing the country's specific social and political context. This section proposes two tools: Tool 1 guides a context analysis exercise through a youth lens and Tool 2 aims to help identify the existing political commitments, laws, and policies related to the implementation of the YPS agenda. These tools aim to guide analysis and reflection on the starting points of implementation.



TOOL 1: CONTEXT ANALYSIS THROUGH A YOUTH LENS

A context analysis conducted through a youth lens can help define the relevance of the YPS agenda at the country level. This means collecting information and data about young people of different backgrounds and identities, their challenges, needs, perspectives, and aspirations. This includes investigating and taking into consideration the age-based norms and power structures affecting them.

This knowledge can be developed through research and analysis, including studies and reports developed by youth-led organizations and groups, and by listening to young people's experiences and perceptions.

These can be key issues to consider in your analysis:²⁴

Demographics:

- What is the proportion of youth in comparison with other age groups?
- What are the most significant demographic trends, what explains these trends?
- What do they mean for intergenerational relations?

Impact of conflict and violence on young people:

- How are young women and young men of different identities and backgrounds impacted by conflict and various forms of violence such as discrimination based on their gender, origin, etc.?

Perceptions of youth:

- How do society and policymakers perceive young people?
- How do young people perceive their own roles and those of their governments and other actors?
- Do these perceptions of youth change based on gender?

Human rights:

- To what extent are young people's rights realized and protected by institutional mechanisms?
- Are young people aware of their rights and protection mechanisms?

Gender equality:

- What are the structures, norms, and social expectations associated with different genders?
- What are the specific gender-based barriers to inclusion and participation in public life?

Youth participation in peace and security:

- How are young women and young men politically and socially engaged and already contributing to peace and security?
- How are they engaged in institutional mechanisms and non-institutionalized spaces?

Youth groups, organizations and networks:

- How are youth organized through informal and formal groups, networks, movements, and organizations? (See [Tool 6, Stakeholder mapping, in section 3.5.](#))
- Are there any gender differences in terms of participation in these groups?
- Are youth organizations independent from political, social, and other forms of influence?

²⁴ Tool questions based on UNFPA, UNDP, DPPA/PBSO, FBA [Youth, Peace and Security, A Programming Handbook](#), (2021), pp. 25-44 and FBA, [Youth, Peace and Security Adviser's Handbook](#), (2020), pp.41-49.

You can find more detailed context analysis tools descriptions in:

- [Youth, Peace and Security, A Programming Handbook](#);
- [Youth, Peace and Security Adviser's Handbook](#).²⁵



Learn about ...

- Costa Rica's context-analysis participatory methods used in its National Youth Policy.

For more details go to <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>



TOOL 2: DEFINING THE FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE GOVERNMENT ACTION ON YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY

Political commitments, laws, and policies (a normative framework), guide and define governmental action. When you are starting or strengthening the implementation of the YPS agenda it can be helpful to analyze this framework.

Commitments:

- Does your country have any formal commitments to the agenda, for example, a declaration or statement by high-level political leaders?
- Are there commitments made at the regional or global level by your country?

Laws:

- Are there any national laws that already advance YPS aims, even if they do not refer specifically to UNSCR 2250?
- Are there any laws in development that could support the implementation of the YPS agenda?

Policies:

- What are the national policies that support YPS aims or relate to the YPS agenda?
- Are there any efforts to develop or update existing policies?
- Could there be opportunities to include YPS priorities and objectives in them?

The normative framework reflects collectively **shared visions, goals, and principles**. You can analyze how existing frameworks may have already prioritized or addressed specific aspects of the YPS agenda or pillars of UNSCR 2250 (participation, prevention, protection, disengagement and reintegration, and partnerships).

It can also be helpful to analyze the assumptions and policy narratives about the **roles of youth in peace and security** in these frameworks. These may guide prioritization and different policy approaches and can enable or limit implementation efforts. For example, if policy narratives only depict young people as victims of violent conflict, then the policy responses may focus more on the Protection pillar. It is important to assess how priorities and policy approaches are based on evidence and balanced analysis from a youth and gender lens.

An additional tool specific to youth in war-to-peace transitions can be found in: [Youth in Approaches to War-to-Peace Transitions in International Organizations](#).²⁶

²⁵ Tool questions based on UNFPA, UNDP, DPPA/PBSO, FBA Youth, Peace and Security, A Programming Handbook, pp. 25-44 (2021) and FBA, Youth, Peace and Security Adviser's Handbook, pp.41-49 (2020).

²⁶ Yvonne Kemper, "Youth in Approaches to War-to-Peace Transitions in International Organizations", Berghof Report Nr. 10, (Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2005).



Learn about ...

Besides UNSCR 2250, 2419, and 2535, YPS implementation is also supported and enabled by other official statements, normative documents, and policy frameworks at regional, international, national and local level. Examples of these are:

Frameworks that guide government's action on YPS at regional/international level

- African Youth Charter.
- African Union Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security.
- ASEAN Regional Forum Joint Statement on Youth, Peace and Security.²⁷
- European Union Council Conclusions on the role of young people in building a secure, cohesive and harmonious society in Europe.
- Iberoamerican Convention on Youth Rights.
- OSCE Declaration on the role of youth in contributing to peace and security efforts.
- Commonwealth Heads of Government Endorsement to UNSCR 2250 on youth, peace and security.

Frameworks that guide governments' action on YPS at national level

- Finland's Youth Peace and Security National Action Plan.
- Nigerian National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security.²⁸
- Statements during the United Nations Security Council Open Debate (via videoconference) Towards the fifth Anniversary of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda: Accelerating Implementation of resolutions 2250 and 2419 (2020) for example, see Statements of Ireland and South Africa.

Frameworks that guide governments' action on YPS at local/subnational level

- International Charter of Educating Cities.
- Lima's Metropolitan Area Youth Strategy (Estrategia Metropolitana de Juventudes)



Key takeaways

This chapter provided suggestions and tools to help you:

- Learn about the **youth, peace and security agenda** and define the ways it is relevant in your context.
- **Identify**, as a result of your context analysis, specific priorities that need to be addressed through implementation efforts.
- List **existing commitments**, normative, and policy frameworks that can be used and built upon to implement the YPS agenda.

²⁷ ASEAN, "Adopted Joint Statement to promote the YPS Agenda at the ARF, August 2021, Available at: <https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Adopted-Joint-Statement-to-Promote-the-YPS-Agenda-at-the-ARF.pdf>

²⁸ Nigerian Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, "Nigerian national action plan on youth, peace and security, September 2021, Available at: <http://csdea-africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/YPS-NAP-RS.pdf>

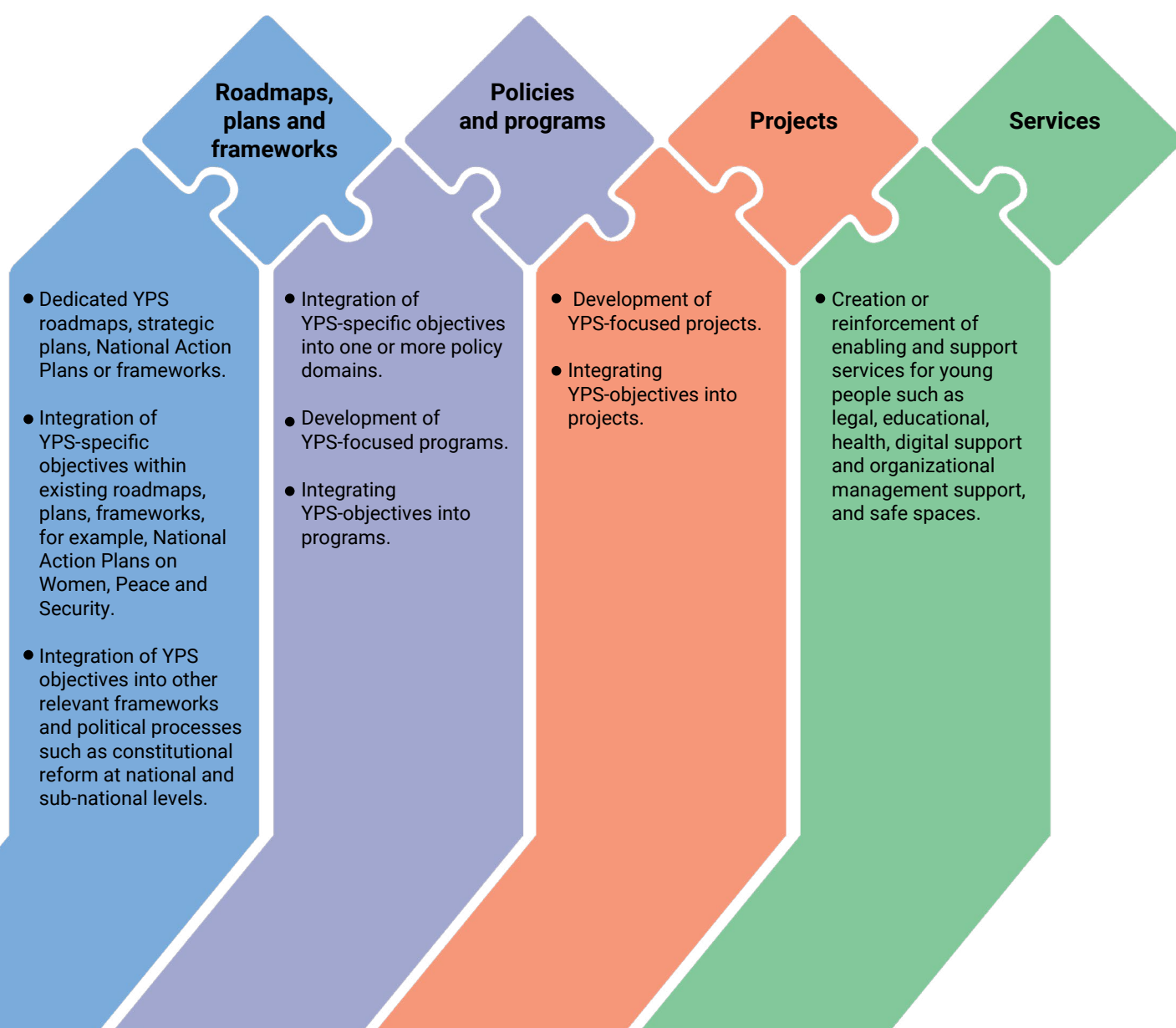
2. POSSIBLE WAYS TO IMPLEMENT THE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

This chapter outlines ways to implement the youth, peace and security (YPS) agenda and is supported by examples from different policy domains and contexts. The selection is diverse; in terms of scope, thematic orientation, and approaches, yet they all advance the aims of the YPS agenda.

This chapter also offers ideas on evaluation and accountability activities and mechanisms as they are relevant in any form of implementation effort.

2.1 Overview of possible ways to implement the youth, peace and security agenda

These options to implement the YPS agenda should not be seen as mutually exclusive but rather as possibilities to be adapted, combined, and interlinked according to the national context.



A starting point can be to reflect internally (within your team, unit, department, or ministry) on the special relevance of the agenda in the country context and consider possible options through:

- an internal meeting involving different levels of management and seniority, including young officials;
- an internal policy brief in which the reasons for implementation and possible courses of action can be described;
- a special working group to explore implementation options;
- a consultation with relevant ministries, entities, and other stakeholders, especially young people, youth-led and youth-focused groups and organizations.





There is no *one* best option or single path to implement the youth, peace and security agenda.

A **combination of actions** at different levels makes it possible to best respond to varied priorities and needs in your context. What is important is to ensure a **participatory process**, engaging young people of diverse backgrounds and youth-led and youth-focused organizations and groups.



TOOL 3: FINDING THE BEST WAY FOR YOUR COUNTRY TO IMPLEMENT THE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

When deciding on the best ways for your country to implement YPS, it can be helpful to consider the following:

- your **country's context** and needs through a youth and gender lens, especially considering the needs of young people engaged in peace and security efforts;
- the **feasibility** of adjusting institutional capacities, in relation to mandate, financial and human resources;
- the **level of support** of all relevant stakeholders to implementation plans, including the trust and support of young women and men and overall societal recognition of young people's roles in peace and security;
- the fact that more strategic approaches tend to improve **policy coherence** and coordination among multiple efforts in different policy domains;
- the desired **impact**. Sustained policy and programmatic approaches tend to lead to long term impact in comparison with one-off projects;
- the **risks** and **challenges** related to the social and political context, especially those of conflict-affected countries which may affect most directly young people;
- the **evidence**, past **experiences**, and **lessons learned** resulting from efforts sharing similar aims such as efforts to implement the Agenda 2030 or the WPS agenda in your country and in other countries.

2.2 Roadmaps, plans and frameworks

UNSCR 2535 encourages Member States to take action "including through dedicated local, national and regional roadmaps" on YPS. A few countries have started to develop dedicated roadmaps and National Action Plans (NAP) and some have also integrated YPS objectives into other strategic plans, for example, within the WPS NAPs.

At a regional level, the African Union Peace and Security Council also called on its Member States to develop NAPs setting the target that 25% of Member States should develop "youth-led and centered NAPs on YPS by 2024, and 50% by 2029 in the context of its [Continental Framework for Youth, Peace and Security](#).²⁹

Sub-national and local governments have also started to integrate YPS objectives into their strategic plans.

²⁹ African Union, "Continental Framework on youth, peace and security", August 2020. Available at: <https://au.int/en/documents/20200821/continental-framework-youth-peace-and-security>

Developing strategic planning documents and normative frameworks can help you to:

- engage all relevant stakeholders in defining a common vision and encourage commitments to implementation;
- identify YPS context-specific priorities;
- define objectives and targets;
- allocate roles and responsibilities and the corresponding resources;
- integrate multiple actions into one strategic, sustained and coherent effort;
- create coordination and accountability mechanisms.



Roadmaps, action plans, strategies or frameworks?

These terms are often used interchangeably and they may be defined differently depending on the context. Regardless of the term used, what is important is that they serve as **strategic planning, resource mobilization** and **accountability tools** to support implementation, and do not become an end in themselves. They are convening and coordinating documents which guide implementation that happens through policies, programs and other specific measures.



Learn about ...

- African Union Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security and its 10-Year Implementation Plan 2020-2029.
- Finnish Youth, Peace and Security National Action Plan.
- Ireland's Third Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan.
- Jordan's process to develop a National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 2250.
- Kosovo* Roadmap on Youth, Peace and Security.
- Nigeria's National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security.³⁰
- Lima's Metropolitan Area Youths Strategy (Estrategia Metropolitana de Juventudes).
- The Philippines' process to develop a National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security.

For more details go to <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

*References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

³⁰ Nigerian Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, "Nigerian National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security", September 2021. Available at: <http://csdea-africa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/YPS-NAP-RS.pdf>



TOOL 4: DEVELOPING ROADMAPS, STRATEGIC PLANS OR FRAMEWORKS

This tool focuses on key principles and issues that can be useful to consider when leading or participating in a strategic planning process from a youth perspective.³¹

STARTING POINT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the current social, political, and economic situation of young women and men in your context? (See Tool 1) • What are the available national, regional, and global strategies, policies, and frameworks that can guide your strategic planning? (See Tool 2)
STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is currently doing what? Are there other YPS initiatives already taking place? (See Tools 5 and 6) • How are young people of different backgrounds engaged in the implementation of the YPS agenda? Is there a national network or coalition on YPS? (See examples of coalitions in Chapter 3)
PROCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will lead coordination efforts? • Who will be involved in implementation efforts? • Who needs to be involved in the different steps of the process to ensure a broad representation of perspectives and inclusive approach? • What role will young people play in the strategic planning process? • What will be the guiding principles of engagement and ethical standards? (See Chapter 6) • Are there any risks to be considered? Importantly, are there any risks for young women and men involved? How can a “do no harm” approach be ensured? (See section 6.5.)
VISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent is there a shared vision among all relevant stakeholders? • What are shared aspirations and expected outcomes? • What are the key issues young people identify as priorities? Are there any gender differences? • Are they reflected in the vision?
ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main policy and methodology approaches proposed? • Are they evidence-based? (See Tool 2) • Are they age-and-gender responsive? • To what extent can the principle of policy coherence and complementary be ensured so as to reinforce and build on already existing strategies and policy goals? • How to best sequence actions? • How to ensure actions are sustainable?
RESOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the necessary resources available? (including human, material and financial resources) (See Tool 7) • How can resources be mobilized? (See Tool 8)
EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can progress be monitored and measured? • What mechanisms and methodologies can be implemented to monitor and measure progress? (See section 2.6.) • What indicators can be used to assess progress in terms of overall process and outcomes possibly considering UNSCR 2250 pillars? • How can youth be part of the monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms and activities?

³¹ Adapted from FBA, *Youth, Peace and Security Adviser's Handbook*, (2020), pp. 53-57. West Africa Network for Peacebuilding *Development and Implementation of National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions*, (Accra: WANEP, 2012). Zsuzsanna Lippai and Angelic Young, *Creating National Action Plans, A guide to implementing Resolution 1325*, (Inclusive Security, 2017).

2.2.1 Basic components of a strategic planning document

The results of the strategic planning process can be reflected in a document which can have these basic components:

- introduction to the YPS agenda and its normative framework, especially to: UNSCRs 2250, 2419, and 2535;
- methodology used and process to draft the plan;
- contextualization and rationale for implementation;
- definitions and cross-cutting themes;
- priority areas, objectives, specific measures and progress indicators;
- responsible Ministries, governmental agencies and other entities, and time-frames or deadlines;
- financial provisions;
- implementation and coordination mechanisms;
- accountability and evaluation procedures.

2.2.2 Integration of youth, peace and security objectives into other strategic plans and political processes

YPS objectives can also be integrated into other strategic plans and political processes. For example, making sure a youth lens is applied in analysis and decision-making processes and enabling participation of young people from a diversity of backgrounds in:

- political processes such as constitutional reform, public administration reform, local government and decentralization processes at national and sub-national levels;
- women peace and security roadmaps and National Action Plans development and implementation;
- Agenda 2030 implementation processes and national, sub-national and municipal development plans;
- national humanitarian response plans.



Lessons learned from the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda

It is important to draw lessons from the multiple WPS implementation experiences so as to build on them in the implementation of the YPS agenda.

Since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 (2000)³², 98 countries have developed WPS National Action Plans (50% of UN Member States); twelve regional organizations had regional strategies or plans in place³³ and some countries have institutionalized WPS objectives through their domestic gender equality legislation.

The following factors are crucial for the effective implementation of WPS agenda: political will; funding; coordination; inclusion; localization; clearly identified policy priorities, concrete steps, and time frames; systemic monitoring and evaluation frameworks, including indicators to help assess progress; and a strategy for collaboration with local and regional civil society organizations and groups.³⁴

In the case of NAPs specifically, a study shows that despite limitations, they remain important policy and advocacy mechanisms as they help encourage and sustain institutional efforts.³⁵

³² United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1325, S/RES/1325 (October 31, 2000)

³³ United Nations Security Council. UN Secretary General's report on Women, Peace and Security, S/2021/827 (September 27, 2021).

³⁴ Caitlin Hamilton, Nyibeny Naam, and Laura J. Shepherd [Twenty Years of Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans: Analysis and Lessons Learned](#) (University of Sydney, 2020).

³⁵ Mirsad M. Jacevic, "WPS, States and National Action Plans", in *The Oxford Handbook on Women, Peace and Security*, Sara E Davies and Jacqui True, eds. (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 2019).

2.3 Policies and programs

UNSCR 2535 encourages Member States to take action through developing and implementing policies and programs. Countries have started to do this in various policy domains.

This section describes the ways countries have implemented the YPS agenda through ten policy domains. These domains are in no order of priority but starting with those that have appeared more closely related to the YPS agenda such as youth policies and peace and security policies.



Policies and programs are important tools to:

- guide action as they address theme and context-specific priorities;
- define objectives and targets in the medium- and long term;
- engage various relevant Ministries and government entities in the implementation of the YPS agenda;
- engage relevant stakeholders in policy making, and encourage commitments to implementation through different policy domains.

YPS objectives can be integrated into different policy domains³⁶ at:

- **domestic level** through national and sub-national-level policies and related programs and projects;
- **foreign level** through foreign affairs and cooperation policies implemented at bilateral, regional, and global levels.

³⁶ These reflect common groupings of policies and those that appear as most common among efforts documented through a survey by Office of Secretary General's Envoy on Youth and partner organizations. 30 Member States completed this survey in the period March-October 2021.



Youth, peace and security agenda and policy coherence

Where possible, the YPS agenda should not be siloed into one policy domain but fully mainstreamed across policies at both domestic and foreign policy levels, following the principles of policy coherence and complementarity among policies. This means that policy actions at different levels and domains should **mutually support** and **reinforce one another**.

Policy coherence in this context can mean analyzing peace and security policies and programs through a youth lens, and more specifically, in regard to the YPS agenda pillars. It also means looking at youth policies from a peace and security perspective.

2.3.1 Youth policies and programs

Youth policies are cross-sectoral and relate to all aspects of young people's lives. They should not be limited to narrowly defined "youth affairs" but rather be connected to and reinforce other policy domains such as peace and security or education. Youth policies have integrated the YPS agenda in the following ways:

- promoting peace, conflict resolution, and civic engagement through **non-formal education**, for example, by training young people as mediators and peacebuilders;
- supporting young people to become involved in peace programs through **volunteering opportunities**³⁷, **paid traineeships**, and as **paid staff positions** as junior or technical staff members;
- fostering young people's **political participation in decision-making** spaces at all levels. This includes in electoral processes and specific (permanent or temporary) measures to encourage and allow young people to become elected officials in regional, national, sub-national and local parliaments. This could happen through age³⁸ and gender quota systems, lowering the eligibility age for candidates to run for election and occupy leadership positions and capacity building programs for young people active in political parties youth wings.³⁹ Furthermore, a special emphasis can be placed on addressing barriers to participation among those that are often most marginalized such as young women, young migrants, young people with disabilities, etc.;
- creating **youth empowerment and leadership opportunities** in social, economic inclusion, humanitarian and cultural projects;
- promoting **youth employment and economic inclusion**, especially for those groups that are most marginalized;
- establishing **sports programs** as tools for youth development and social inclusion, intercultural and interethnic dialogue, and prevention of violent extremism.⁴⁰ Sports programs are increasingly becoming more gender-responsive and specifically aim to engage young women, addressing the still common perception in many contexts that sports is a masculine activity.

³⁷ Young people gain "valuable experience, self-esteem, awareness, voice, social status, and larger and more diversified social networks" when volunteering (United Nations Volunteers, *The Role of Youth Volunteerism in Sustaining Peace and Security*, 2017, p.3). Most youth-led peace groups are heavily dependent on volunteers (Graeme Simpson, *The Missing Peace*), showing their enormous commitment. However, relying only on voluntarism often limits the impact of these groups. Young people's contributions should be duly recognized, and compensated - through paid positions when possible - so they can engage in sustainable and meaningful ways.

³⁸ Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Uganda, among other countries, have adopted some forms of age quotas to bolster the representation of youth. For more information, see Youth and Elections on [The Electoral Knowledge Network](#) (accessed 4 December 2021).

³⁹ United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on Youth, Peace and Security. S/2020/167 (2020), pp.5-6. and Ruth Beeckmans, et al. Youth participation in Electoral Processes, Handbook for Electoral Management Bodies, (UNDP-European Commission, 2017).

⁴⁰ Some countries report implementing the YPS agenda through C/PVE policies. Though these two agendas coexist and share goals, they adopt different policy approaches. The YPS agenda emphasizes the constructive roles of young people in peace and security, while the P/CVE agenda has been influenced by policy narratives which portray young people, especially young men, as potential threats to security, with the related consequences of securitizing youth. There is a risk of wrongly criminalizing and stereotyping young people, and even violating their rights in the context of surveillance and crime prevention strategies.



Learn about ...

- East Timor's National Youth Policy.
- Qatar's National Youth Strategy.
- Turkey's Young Volunteers Platform.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

2.3.2 Peace and security policies and programs

The YPS objectives have been implemented through peace and security policies, programs and projects in the following ways:

- promoting youth participation in **formal and informal peace processes**, in political reform processes such as constitutional reform, and security sector reform processes at national and local levels;
- developing youth-specific and gender-sensitive and responsive **demobilization and reintegration strategies**;
- supporting youth participation in **violence prevention initiatives** at the local and regional levels, including regional exchange activities, initiatives addressing challenges related to organized crime, participation in early-warning mechanisms and hate speech monitoring mechanisms, participation in peace committees, national and municipal youth councils;
- promoting youth engagement in **mine action and risk education** such as youth-led campaigns raising awareness about landmines and disarmament;
- developing programs for the **prevention of violent extremism leading to violence**⁴¹, including racially or ethnically motivated and politically-motivated violent extremism, through gender-aware social support, alternative narratives to reduce the appeal of violent extremism, peer-to-peer counseling, and addressing negative aspects of notions of masculinity among young people.



Learn about ...

- The Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) created by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.
- Colombia's Youth Differentiated Reintegration Strategy in the context of the peace agreement between Colombia's state and FARC.
- A Conflict Prevention's Leadership program for young leaders in Liberia.

For more details go to <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

*References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

⁴¹ See footnote Nr. 40.

2.3.3 Foreign affairs and cooperation policies and programs

Governments have supported the YPS priorities at the multilateral and bilateral levels, through their diplomatic and cooperation work, especially to support peace processes and post-conflict recovery. They have done so in the following ways:

- **promoting the YPS agenda at international level**, supporting the work of UN entities and multilateral bodies such as the UN Security Council and the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). For example, a number of Member States proposed the development of a [Strategic Action Plan](#)⁴² to help guide and monitor the UN PBC's efforts on YPS;
- advancing the agenda through **the work of regional organizations** such as the African Union, the European Union, the Commonwealth, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Organisation of Iberoamerican States, among others;
- **creating spaces for young leaders**, both women and men, to voice their views at the **regional or international levels**, for example, through UN Youth Delegates or African Union Youth Peace Ambassadors schemes, and other forms of participation in regional and multilateral work;
- creating **consultative spaces for young people** to discuss and provide inputs on the foreign affairs and development cooperation policy priorities and action plans;
- adopting YPS principles and objectives in cooperation policies, including them in **plans, policy documents, and evaluation frameworks** (including using gender and age markers), especially those related to the protection of youth rights and the promotion of youth participation. The recognition of the importance of the agenda has impacted the support provided to programs and projects with YPS objectives through funding and capacity-building support to partner countries and civil society efforts, including to youth-led organizations.



Learn about ...

- Germany's Action Plan "Agents of Change - Children's and Young People's Rights in German Development Cooperation".
- The USA Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) Act.
- USAID's Youth in Development Policy update.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

2.3.4 Education, culture, and the arts policies and programs

Ministries of Education, Culture, and Arts and educational entities at national and sub-national levels have integrated the YPS objectives in the following ways:

- promoting **peace and global citizenship education** at all levels of formal and non-formal education, including education for conflict resolution, gender equality, human rights and for sustainable development/climate;
- strengthening **inclusive and equitable access to education** to address inequalities, discrimination, and marginalization, including the digital divide in education and access to digital technologies;

⁴² United Nations Peacebuilding, [Strategic Action Plan on youth and peacebuilding](#) (United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, 2021), 23 February 2021.

- supporting the **contributions of education systems** to promote peace and social cohesion with and for young people, including via inclusive education policies, multilingual education, curricula reform, teacher training, inclusive school governance mechanisms and extra-curricular activities;
- developing **(online) media literacy programs** to equip young people with critical thinking skills to address fake news and hate speech, including online hate speech and harassment;
- promoting **artistic expressions and youth work** to foster a culture of peace through non-formal and informal education, such as organizing festivals, theatre plays, artistic expressions in the public space;
- creating programs and spaces for **intercultural learning and interreligious dialogue**;
- offering programs that develop core competencies and life skills for young women and men, including transferable skills, through accessible **vocational programs** for economic and social inclusion.



Learn about ...

- Qatar’s Education’s programs of the Education Above All Foundation.
- Global Education Network Europe (GENE) work with young people.
- International Organisation of Youth for Iberoamerica (OIJ) program “Travesías” (Journeys).

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

2.3.5 Economic affairs and employment policies and programs

Member States have integrated YPS objectives into economic affairs and employment policies⁴³, especially in relation to the prevention pillar in the following ways:

- promoting **youth-centered and gender-sensitive social and economic development**, including providing decent⁴⁴ and meaningful employment opportunities both in urban and rural settings;
- **fostering economic livelihoods**, and addressing challenges related to the informal economy, gender-specific inequalities, barriers to economic inclusion for young people with disabilities, marginalized and minority groups;
- developing **professional and technical competencies for youth employability**, especially in post-conflict settings and marginalized areas, including through DRR programs;
- supporting youth-led enterprises through access to **youth-friendly financing and business management skills** training.



Learn about ...

- Ecuador’s National Agenda for Intergenerational Equality.

For more details go to <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

⁴³ Note the limitations of adopting economic inclusion and employment policies as the only or main approach for YPS implementation and the need for holistic approaches based on evidence-based analysis, see for example: ILO, UN Peacebuilding Support Office, World Bank and UNDP, [Employment programs and peace, a joint statement on an analytical framework, emerging principles for action and next steps](#) (2016).

⁴⁴ Decent work is employment that respects human and workers rights in terms of work safety, respect for individual integrity and fair remuneration. For more information, see [Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth](#).

2.3.6 Justice and human rights policies and programs

YPS has been integrated into justice and human rights promotion and protection in the following ways:

- developing networks of young mediators and promoting their **integration into public and private mediation** services;
- **strengthening human rights protection mechanisms** in conformity with international law, making them accessible to young people and taking specific measures to ensure the protection of young human rights defenders and peacebuilders;
- improving **access to justice** for young women and young men;
- engaging young people in **traditional justice and reconciliation mechanisms**;
- ensuring **youth participation in social audits and accountability processes**;
- ensuring a **YPS and human-rights approach** to crime prevention programs;
- working towards **social reintegration of young offenders and prisoners** of different genders through developing employability and peace skills.



Learn about ...

- Cameroon's Creative Skills for Peace and *Prisonpreneurs* initiative.
- Ireland's Third Women Peace Security National Action Plan with specific activities in relation to restorative justice and mediation training for Juvenile Liaison Officers in all Garda (National Irish Police) Divisions.

For more details go to <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

2.3.7 Gender equality policies and programs

Gender policies and initiatives have integrated the YPS objectives in the following ways:

- promoting **young women's agency** in formal and informal political processes and institutions, through capacity building, political education, logistical assistance, and support for young women's grassroots initiatives;
- ensuring all policies adopt a **gender and age-responsive approach**, for example, youth, education, peace and security policies, etc.;
- adopting a **gender-responsive approach to demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR)** programs, working with young men and young women former combatants or involved in other military support roles;
- developing **awareness-raising programs about the root causes of gender-based violence and discrimination**, including reflecting on gender norms, stereotypes, and expectations related to masculinity/femininity which may be negatively limiting the potential of young people of different genders and gender identities and their human rights;
- strengthening programs of **protection** against sexual exploitation and abuse, prevention of gender-based violence, prevention of female genital mutilation and child marriage; and child care/maternity-paternity leave policies and programs as issues that are key safety and rights issues for young women in particular and that help create an enabling environment for their participation.



Learn about ...

- The Young Men's Clubs Against Violence Program in Democratic Republic of Congo.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

2.3.8 Health policies and programs

The YPS agenda has been implemented through health policies in the following ways:

- creating **mental health support services** for young people and youth workers, especially those struggling with issues such as trauma and stress caused by having experienced violent conflict, discrimination and other forms of violence due to their identity, origin, situation of vulnerability or/and their civic engagement;
- providing **holistic approaches to drug addictions** and youth criminality in connection to the related public health and security policies and programs;
- engaging young people as **partners** in addressing food security challenges and response to public health emergencies.⁴⁵



Learn about ...

- Mexico's National Strategy of Addictions Prevention "Together for Peace".
- Slovakia's Youth agency's (IUVENTA) promotion of mental health among young people and youth workers.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

2.3.9 Environment and climate change policies and programs

Environmental and climate change initiatives have integrated YPS objectives by:

- **creating spaces for youth participation in environmental and climate change decision-making spaces**, involving young experts and scientists in both environmental and social sciences who have been researching on the nexus between environment, conflict, and human security;
- organizing **environmental and conflict prevention programs** with young people.

⁴⁵ Young people have partnered with authorities and local communities to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. See: Jayathma Wickramanayake, "Meet 10 young people leading the COVID-19 response in their communities", Africa Renewal, 3 April 2020.



Learn about ...

- Dniester River Youth Summer School, an environmental protection and cross-border collaboration initiative with young people in Moldova and Ukraine.
- Youth Champions for Peace and Environment, a program in Cyprus supporting young people to develop environmental campaigns.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

2.3.10 Science and technology policies and programs

It has not been documented how science and technology policies have integrated specific YPS objectives at the national level. However, YPS objectives could be integrated by:

- making sure that a **youth-lens is applied to peace and security research** and that specific YPS relevant topics are researched, for example, youth identity formation in conflict settings, the role of young people of different backgrounds in peace and security, and online hate speech affecting young people;
- **involving young experts and scientists**, both women and men, in peace and security research;
- **enabling participation** of young women and young men **in decision-making processes** in this policy domain, while addressing the gender gap in scientific research and technology development and use;
- increasing opportunities and resources for **youth-led research** that could support the implementation of the YPS agenda.



Learn about ...

- The Comprehensive Nuclear-test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) Youth Group.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

2.4 Projects

Projects can be developed using similar approaches as those outlined in [section 2.3](#) for policies and programs. They can allow targeted actions, put into practice innovative ideas, and set in motion implementation efforts.

Projects can be useful to:

- reach specific YPS objectives within an already existing program;
- address urgent needs and tap into new emerging opportunities;
- implement short-term and small and medium-size initiatives;
- seize an opportunity to bring stakeholders together to start to work on the YPS agenda;
- offer a first learning experience or step parallel to the development of other actions and plans that may require more time, capacities and consultations for their development;
- create an opportunity to co-implement and co-lead specific actions with young people and youth-led organizations and groups;
- explore innovative ideas through a pilot project, which can later be developed and scaled up.



Learn about ...

- Kyrgyzstan's "Strengthening Capacity to Prevent Violent Extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic" project.
- An inter-generational and multi-stakeholder training project in Papua New Guinea.
- The "Empowering Youth to Promote Security Sector Reform" project in Serbia.
- Youth-led projects at municipal level in Africa, the Americas and Europe.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

2.5 Services

Public services include social, health or sanitation services that are considered necessary for the community as a whole and thus, they are made available to all citizens. Within general public services, specific services can support and enable the implementation of the YPS agenda through youth-friendly and youth-and-gender responsive services.

Services can be helpful to:

- address the multiple - not so visible - barriers youth face to engage in public life⁴⁶, especially barriers faced by young women, rural youth and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or minorities in terms of social protection, mobility or access to relevant and specialized information;
- create an enabling environment for youth civic engagement through specific support measures and facilitation of youth-friendly safe spaces within public and institutional spaces at all levels.

These services can be:

- **legal advice and support on accessing the justice system and human rights protection mechanisms**, including legal and safety support and guidance, knowledge on personal data protection (off- and online);
- **support for civil associations**, legal advice to register associations, and technical support on administrative, management, financial and fundraising aspects;

⁴⁶ These can include pervasive threats such as sociocultural pressures (intergenerational hostility, intimidation, stereotyping, harmful customs), political, financial, legal, economic digital barriers etc. See OSGEY, Global Coalition on Youth Peace Security Protection Group, [If I disappear, Global report on Protecting Young People in Civic Space](#) (2021); European Youth Forum, [Safeguarding Civic Space for Young People in Europe](#) (2020).

- **inclusive and safe youth spaces**, including meeting, sports, social, health and cultural spaces such as local youth centers, public libraries, and info-desks available at local level;
- **psychological support and counseling services**, especially prepared to address trauma-affected young people in the context of violent conflict or violence, including trauma related to gender-based violence and any form of discrimination;
- **information services** on educational, employment and volunteering opportunities, for example, those related to peace and intercultural education and peace camps; funding, junior position openings, paid traineeships, scholarships, youth exchanges and international mobility opportunities;
- **language learning, translation and interpretation services**, especially in multicultural and multilingual communities;
- **ICTs and digital security support services**, support to access and develop online platforms, software, connectivity, and digital security tools to enable safe youth online participation;
- **transport and mobility measures**, such as availability of routes connecting rural areas to cities, discounts in public transport to help young people access education and participation activities.



Beneficiaries and partners

Young people do not need to be only beneficiaries of services. They can actively contribute to designing, facilitating, and monitoring the provision of services. They can do so as hired public officials, staff, and as members of partner organizations or monitoring mechanisms.



Learn about ...

- Bahrain's National Youth Policy and youth empowerment centers.
- Kosovo's* Roadmap on Youth, Peace and Security which includes specific recommendations in regards to services in relation to three pillars of UNSCR 2250.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

*References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

2.6 Evaluation and accountability

Defining realistic and measurable objectives is important for ensuring effective planning, implementation, evaluation, and accountability in implementation efforts of any scope. A baseline assessment of the current situation or, in other words, defining a point of departure with key indicators is fundamental and can help compare progress in the future against that original situation. For example, in terms of the scope and forms of youth participation in peace and security decision-making spaces. [Tools 1](#) and [2](#) proposed in [Chapter 1](#) can help define the situation at the start of any implementation effort.



The importance of collecting data for monitoring and evaluation

Collecting **age, gender and sex-disaggregated**⁴⁷ data can help to assess the inclusivity of efforts and to what extent age or gender barriers to participation are being addressed. Ideally, data relating to other characteristics of youth, such as ethnicity, refugee or migrant status, socio-economic background, etc. could be also collected (See Tool 10 Intersectional analysis in [section 6.4](#)).

For example, indicators related to promoting meaningful participation of young people in peace and security can be:

- percentage of young women and men participating in peace and security decision-making spaces (quantitative) and the kinds of roles and influence they have in these spaces affecting outcomes (qualitative);
- percentage increase in resources and support for YPS actions for young people, especially marginalized groups (quantitative) and quality of support and effectiveness of these actions in promoting young people's meaningful participation (qualitative).



Learn about ...

- Germany's GAD-Marker (Gender Age Disability Marker) used in planning and evaluation of cooperation programs and projects.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

Evaluation and accountability mechanisms are not only important in terms of learning and transparency, but also for effectiveness purposes. Gathering and analyzing information on implementation efforts can help improve them and visualize their impact. These mechanisms can be:

- **a monitoring group** to coordinate data gathering, analysis, and reporting, for example, to the parliament;
- **periodic meetings and specific evaluation activities** including technical theme-specific meetings, involving resource persons, and representatives of youth actors with experience in YPS;
- monitoring information according to **pre-set indicators, including age, sex and gender markers**;
- **international peer-review exercises**, through which a country is reviewed by one or more countries to allow for the development of common standards and sharing of lessons learned.

⁴⁷ Sex refers to "the different biological and physiological characteristics of males and females, such as reproductive organs" and gender refers to "the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men", Council of Europe, [Gender Matters, a manual on addressing gender-based violence affecting young people](#), (2019, 2nd edition) pp.33-35.

KEY IDEA



Facilitation of evaluation activities

Evaluation activities can be sensitive in any context, and even more so in settings where there are power imbalances and lack of trust among stakeholders. Therefore, they need to be carefully planned and facilitated, ensuring all perspectives are taken into account and especially involving young leaders, youth-led and youth-focused organizations. Efforts should aim for transparent, impartial, and independent evaluations so that these become safe, trust-building learning experiences.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



Key takeaways

This chapter includes suggestions, tools and examples to help you:

- Choose the **ways to implement the YPS agenda** that work best for your country's context, mainly through strategic planning, policies, programs, projects in different policy areas or/and services.
- Identify the main **priority areas, objectives, actions, and indicators** of your implementation efforts and put in place **evaluation** and **accountability** measures.



3. COORDINATION MECHANISMS

This chapter focuses on possible coordination mechanisms⁴⁸ that can help ensure inclusive decision-making, leadership and effective implementation of the youth, peace and security (YPS) agenda. Coordination mechanisms are systems of roles and responsibilities that different organizations and individuals can take up in order to optimize and increase collaborative forms of work.

3.1 Mandate definition and leadership

Clear mandates are important to clarify roles and responsibilities and to ensure implementation moves forwards. High level decisions and senior management can help define mandates and guarantee institutional support and necessary resources to realize a given mandate.

Considering that multiple policy domains are related to the YPS agenda, different ministries could be involved. Ideally, all relevant ones would work together to foster a broad awareness of the YPS agenda and policy coherence.

A lead entity is nevertheless essential to facilitate leadership and a clear division of roles. To date, it has primarily been Ministries of Youth and Ministries of Foreign Affairs that have taken the lead for implementing the YPS agenda at the national and international levels respectively. Other relevant Ministries and national agencies could also be considered, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Interior, ombudspersons, national and local peace and security mechanisms including national peace committees, commissions or councils, National Youth Commissions, Councils, and Parliaments, etc.



Mandate analysis and specifications to support youth, peace and security implementation

It is important to analyze the mission and mandate of relevant public agencies, especially the one you are working in, as this may define your scope of action. You may need to **frame** and **align** YPS objectives with your institution's strategic goals. Your institution may also need to **specify mandates** so that YPS specific actions can be initiated and include **leadership** and **coordinating roles** explicitly.

Mandates can evolve over time to respond to a changing political and social context, so if existing mandates may appear unspecific or limiting to the implementation of the agenda, these could be redefined. If YPS issues become more central in the political and institutional agenda and the need for a redefined mandate is felt, you can engage relevant actors - your senior management for instance - to work on developing enabling mandates and related supporting guidelines and procedures.

⁴⁸ For an overview of other possible coordination mechanisms which have been used in SDGs implementation and which could be built on or learned from see UNDP, [Institutional and coordination mechanisms: Guidance Note on Facilitating Integration and Coherence for SDG Implementation](#) (2017).

3.2 Coordination at the national level

Coordination mechanisms can be put in place:

- within Ministries and relevant public entities;
- within the overall government to coordinate efforts among different Ministries and entities, for example, through inter-ministerial working groups;
- between national and sub-national governments entities to ensure vertical coordination and complementarities;
- at societal level, to consult and coordinate efforts with other stakeholders such as youth-led and youth-focused civil society organizations and academia.

Clear leadership, coordination mandates and defined accountability lines help ensure effectiveness and efficiency by assigning specific roles and resources to those involved, building on existing capacities, and avoiding duplication of efforts. This can be done through the creation of a specialized unit and main focal point within one lead entity.



Setting up focal points with an intergenerational approach

Focal points are points of contact or coordinators appointed to lead and facilitate implementation efforts. Focal points can be individual staff members or teams. To ensure an intergenerational approach, there can be two persons, one lead and one support person, in each unit/entity and preferably a mix of junior and senior officials.

3.2.1 Coordination within ministries and government agencies

Dedicated units and focal points can be responsible for moving the agenda forward and overseeing its implementation on an ongoing basis. They lead and manage implementation efforts, whilst also adopting important coordination and communication tasks.⁴⁹ To do this, they need to work with the necessary support from management levels. It is also crucial to be clear about how their work is aligned with and supports existing institutional missions and mandates. Ideally, focal points can be nominated (or appointed) in various relevant Ministries and national institutions, coordinated by one lead focal point.

Possible roles and tasks of YPS focal points

- Leading the development of a strategic approach to YPS, with responsibility for co-chairing or supporting inter-ministerial working groups and YPS coordinating mechanisms.
- Developing a communication strategy to help raise awareness about the YPS agenda within institutions and for the wider public.
- Leading and supporting internal capacity-building efforts on YPS and helping to institutionalize the agenda into relevant governmental entities, addressing institutional barriers to youth engagement and ensuring a youth lens is applied when designing and planning strategic and programmatic interventions.

⁴⁹ For a detailed guidance on the roles and tasks of YPS specialized staff, see Erike Tanghøj, and João Felipe Scarpelini, [Youth, Peace and Security Adviser's Handbook](#), (Stockholm: FBA, 2020).

- Communicating and coordinating with other Ministries' focal points and sub-national focal points.
- Building up trust and partnerships with youth networks and other stakeholders.
- Making public presentations in inter-agency meetings, parliamentary sessions and other relevant fora.
- Being in regular contact with other Member States' focal points to exchange good practices.
- Identifying challenges or difficult issues and managing them through dialogue.

3.2.2 Coordination among ministries and government agencies

Youth, peace and security inter-ministerial / inter-agency working groups can be useful to coordinate efforts among Ministries and entities at the national level and help integrate YPS in the work of all relevant ministries. These working groups can meet periodically at ministerial and technical levels to ensure high-level policy dialogue as well as the proper follow-up, dialogue, and coordination at the technical level.



Learn about ...

- Democratic Republic of the Congo's Technical Secretariat in charge of the implementation of the YPS agenda.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

3.3 Coordination at sub-national levels

When setting up any coordination mechanism, it is important to consider the specific institutional setup, especially in federal states, and taking into account decentralization processes.

It can be helpful for representatives of national, sub-national and local entities to liaise vertically. For example, representatives of local or provincial youth councils could participate in national-level coordination mechanisms. At the same time, horizontal coordination mechanisms can be put in place within sub-national and local entities such as inter-departmental working groups as well. Local youth councils can be key actors in coordination mechanisms.



Learn about ...

- North Macedonia and OSCE's Manual for Local Youth Councils.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

3.4 Coordination at the regional level

Coordination at the regional level is important considering the relevance of regional organizations and how they have integrated YPS objectives into existing regional policy frameworks.

Coordination at the regional level is also vital considering the multiple interdependencies among countries in terms of cultural, political, and economic ties as well as in terms of peace and security challenges. Regional coordination mechanisms can be:

- bilateral and regional working groups and commissions in the context of regional organizations;
- special Envoys and Special Representatives for Youth in regional organizations;
- “groups of friends” as platforms for exchange among public officials of country delegations to an international organization.



Learn about ...

- The African Union’s work on Youth Peace and Security.
- Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) (Western Balkans).
- Group of Friends on Youth and Security of the OSCE.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>





TOOL 5: THE COORDINATION ORGANOGRAM

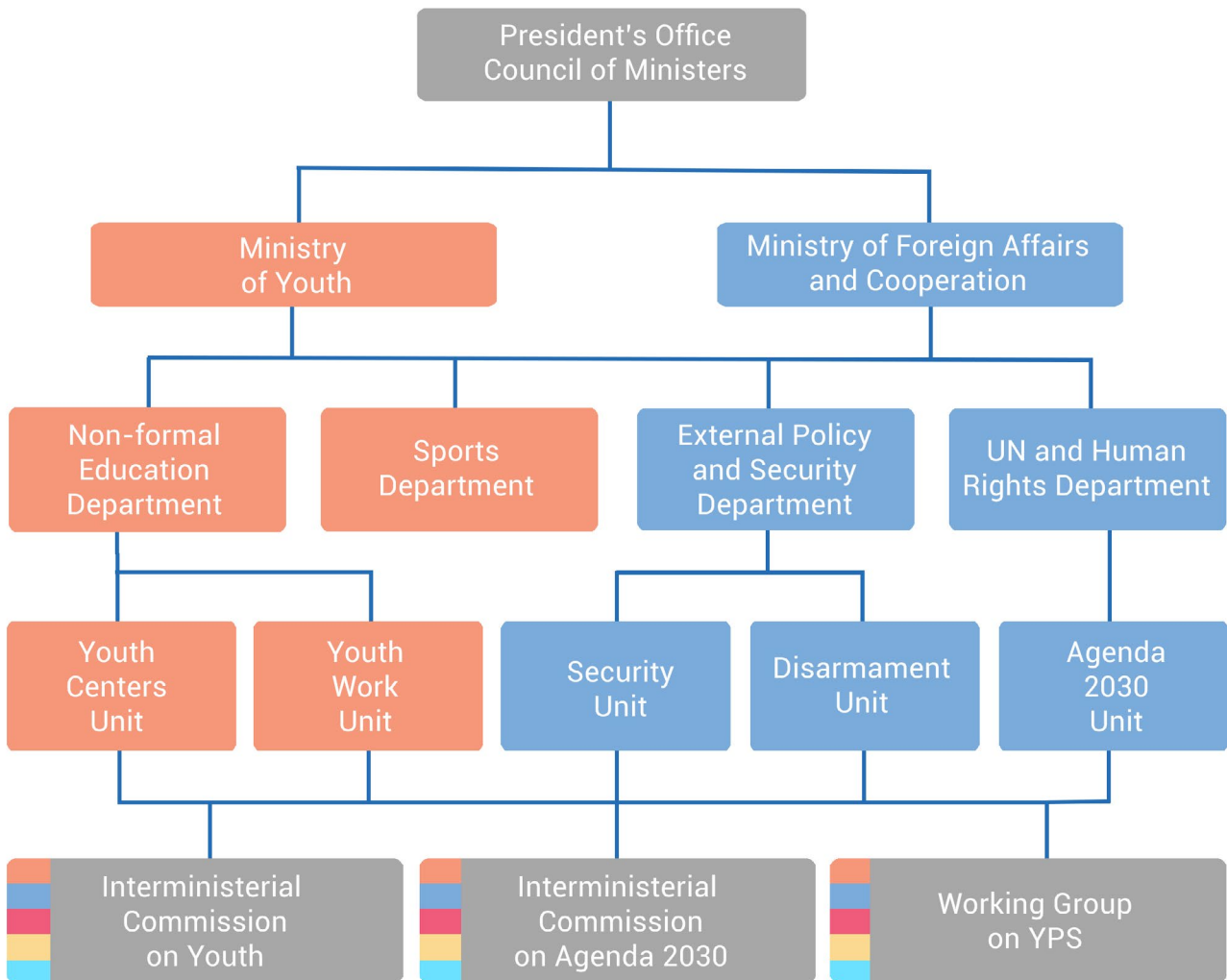
It may be helpful to look into your institutional organogram and identify your own position/unit as well as other positions/units to help progress the implementation of the agenda.

STEP 1: Looking at your government's organogram, find out which Ministries, entities and specific departments and units are already engaged and have a mandate to implement the YPS agenda and those which might be relevant or interested in engaging.

STEP 2: Identify how these different entities relate, for example, if commissions or working groups exist which can be of relevance to the implementation of the YPS agenda.

STEP 3: Identify how new coordination mechanisms could be put in place, or how to build on existing ones.

This is an illustration of a simplified partial fictional organogram involving two Ministries.



3.5 Youth participation in coordination mechanisms

UNSCR 2535 (2020) specifically asks for young women and men to be involved in the coordination and evaluation of implementation efforts. Young people can participate in spaces:

- **within the government,**
 - as young public officials or civil servants working at Ministries and other government agencies. They can be appointed as focal points, technical or support staff in specialized units, and as such take part in steering committees, and in inter-ministerial/inter-agency coordination spaces;
- **within parliamentary or public consultative spaces,**
 - as young elected officials and members of parliament, they can lead or support work within parliamentary commissions, liaise with government-led coordination mechanisms, create spaces for monitoring and accountability on the implementation of the YPS agenda, and liaise with (young) parliamentarians of other countries and regional parliaments (if applicable);
 - as elected members of National or Municipal Youth Councils, National Peace Councils and other relevant decision-making spaces;
 - as independent technical advisors, researchers or professionals;
 - as citizens and representatives of youth-led and youth-focused or other relevant civil society organizations or students associations;
- **within multistakeholder spaces,**
 - as representatives of governmental entities, youth-led or youth-focused civil society groups, young researchers/experts from academic institutions, inter-governmental organizations or private sector actors in multistakeholder working groups, task forces, and coalitions.



National and Local Youth Councils

Youth councils, commissions, assemblies, and parliaments can contribute significantly to coordination and implementation efforts. The format and way of functioning vary across countries, yet they can be spaces for young people to express their views, coordinate actions, identify common priorities and engage in dialogue with policymakers.

It is also important to note they face challenges such as ensuring a broad representation of the diversity of youth populations, being perceived as too influenced by party politics dynamics and contributing to segmenting youth and non-youth. These challenges should not taint the valid practices of more innovative and inclusive youth councils and efforts to make them spaces for dialogue and coordination.

3.6 Multi-stakeholder coalitions

To date, coalitions have been key drivers of YPS implementation efforts. One reason for this is their collaborative approach. YPS coalitions have included national and sub-national governments, international organizations and civil society, with strong leadership from youth-led organizations and groups as illustrated through the examples mentioned below. A broad representation of members is important in terms of legitimacy.

Coalitions have served as spaces for:

- coordination and information-sharing about on-going initiatives, so as to avoid duplication;
- joint analysis (including risks and opportunities) and learning;
- intersectoral and intergenerational dialogue and trust-building;
- recognition of efforts and motivation to work jointly on the agenda, especially as a space for youth empowerment;
- consensus-building on key policy priorities and needed actions;
- collaboration, sharing and mobilization of resources.

At the same time, challenges need to be carefully considered, especially in contexts of conflict, polarization, and where civic space is limited and there is limited trust among stakeholders.⁵⁰

Challenges you may need to overcome:

- some actors may dominate or not listen to other less vocal or powerful actors due to age, gender, and/or other factors; some may feel ignored, disempowered, and even pressured and manipulated by political or other power holders;
- dialogue is not strategic or proactive, which leads to conflicts and demotivation;
- confidential and sensitive information can be misused;
- processes are time-consuming, consensus on actions needed is not reached leading to inaction, frustration, and disengagement;
- focus on one-off events instead of strategic and sustained action;
- lack of transparency, limited information sharing and reflection due to a weak culture of evaluation, and thus limited learning and accountability;
- money can corrupt and disrupt processes if not managed in an effective and transparent way, it can create wrong expectations, frustration, and mistrust.



Youth participation and leadership

The participation of young elected officials, young public servants and representatives of youth-led and youth-focused groups and organizations in any coordination mechanisms, including coalitions, is vital. See more about youth participation principles and mechanisms in [Chapter 6](#).



Learn about ...

National coalitions

- Canadian Coalition for Youth, Peace and Security (CCYPS).
- Cameroon National Coalition on Youth Peace and Security.
- El Salvador's National 2250 network.
- Indian Coalition on Youth Peace and Security.
- Jordan Youth Peace and Security 2250 National Coalition.
- Indonesia Youth Coalition for Peace and Security.

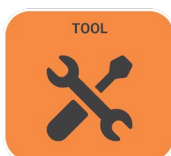
⁵⁰ Adapted from Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, [Multi-Stakeholder Processes for Conflict Prevention & Peacebuilding: A Manual](#), (2017) p. 19. And UNOY Peacebuilders and Search For Common Ground, [Translating Youth, Peace and Security Policy into Practice. A Guide to Building Coalitions](#), (2020).

- Iraqi Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security.
- Italian network on YPS.
- Nigeria Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security.
- Sri Lankan Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Coalition.
- US YPS Coalition.

Regional coalitions

- Asia-Pacific: The Thematic Working Group on Youth Peace and Security in Asia-Pacific within the Asia-Pacific Interagency Network on Youth (APINY).
- Latin America: Youths for peace online community (Juventudes por la Paz).
- Middle East and North Africa: MENA Coalition on YPS.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>



TOOL 6: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

Mapping relevant stakeholders can identify institutions, groups and individuals who may be supportive, uninterested or reluctant to implement the YPS agenda.

These **guiding questions** can help you conduct a basic stakeholder mapping and analysis:

- Who are the primary stakeholders directly affected by or engaged in peace and security efforts?
- Which ones are youth actors, that is, those that represent young people, are youth-led, are youth-focused or work with young people?
- What are the interests and priorities of each stakeholder? How are youth-led actors' interests and priorities similar or different from those of other actors?
- Which actors apply a youth and gender lens in their work?
- How are actors related? Which actors play bridging and connecting roles enabling the participation of youth and especially, of those who are most marginalized, for example, young women?⁵¹

Mapping youth leaders, youth groups and constituencies⁵²

- How are young people organized (formal and informal groups)?
- How are these groups representative of the diversity of young women and young men's aspirations and needs?
- In what ways do these individuals and groups participate in peace and security efforts? To what extent are there any gender differences?
- To what extent are these groups independent or vulnerable to the co-opted or pressured by other actors?
- Which young people are not organized, represented, or heard? Are there any gender differences?

⁵¹ For an introduction into social network analysis, see INTRACT, [Social Network Analysis](#) (2019).

⁵² Search for Common Ground, [Mapping Youth Leaders for Peacebuilders](#) (2014).



Key takeaways

- Analyze the extent to which **mandates** of relevant Ministries, entities and agencies enable implementation.
- Identify the main **coordination mechanisms** that could be strengthened or put in place at national, sub-national, and regional levels.
- Ensure **senior management support** when creating or strengthening coordination mechanisms.
- Think about how all relevant stakeholders can participate in coordination roles, especially **youth actors** in civil society.
- Consider the opportunities and challenges of starting, joining or supporting national, subnational or/and local **coalitions** on YPS in your country.



4. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES

This chapter highlights the ways that institutional capacities can be strengthened in relation to youth, peace and security (YPS). This may be through the institutionalization of commitments, creating a conducive organizational culture, and strengthening human resources and knowledge management mechanisms in relation to YPS.

In order to ensure the practices are sustainable it is key to mainstream “a youth perspective in all aspects of organizations mandates, structures and operations”.⁵³ That could mean working on some of the factors addressed in other chapters, such as ensuring enabling mandates (Chapter 3) and the necessary financial resources (Chapter 5). It could also mean training staff.

It is useful to note, that while staff training is an important aspect of capacity building, it is not sufficient on its own to develop adequate and sustainable institutional capacities.⁵⁴

4.1 Factors in institutional capacity building

Institutional capacities are determined by a number of factors⁵⁵, mainly:

- the **will** to commit to and prioritize the implementation of the YPS agenda which needs to be encouraged by an organizational culture of innovation and learning;
- the **knowledge** of the agenda and related frameworks and methodologies among staff at all levels, and institutionalized through human resources and knowledge management policies;
- the **opportunities** created by adequate material and financial resources, institutional setup, and spaces, enabling mandates and legal frameworks.



TOOL 7: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES ASSESSMENT⁵⁶

These guiding questions can help you to assess your institutional capacities in relation to the implementation of the YPS agenda.

WILL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent has support for the YPS agenda been expressed by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ political leaders in general?◦ your senior managers?◦ your supervisors?• To what extent is the mandate of your entity explicit about or enabling the implementation of the YPS agenda?• Are there any specific YPS objectives and indicators included in the entity’s strategic plan?
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⁵³ Erike Tanghøj and João Felipe Scarpelini, [Youth, Peace and Security, Strengthening institutional capacity for implementation](#), (Stockholm: FBA, 2021, p.3).

⁵⁴ See section on capacity building for youth mainstreaming in Leslie Hess, Milena Stosic, [Working with and for Youth, Guidelines for youth mainstreaming](#), (OSCE Mission to Serbia and PeaceNexus, 2021) pp. 109-111.

⁵⁵ Based on Erike Tanghøj, and João Felipe Scarpelini [Youth, Peace and Security Adviser’s Handbook](#), (Stockholm: FBA, 2020), pp. 67-68.

⁵⁶ Ibid pp. 70-71.

KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the level of knowledge of the YPS agenda at different levels of management within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ your entity? ◦ other relevant Ministries? ◦ public entities? • What are the perceptions, attitudes, and narratives associated with youth and youth's role in peace and security? • Are there tendencies to framing or stereotyping youth in such a way that these may hinder the implementation of the YPS agenda? • Are there any youth-specific reports or studies produced by your entity or other public entities in your country? • Could these materials be useful in the implementation of the agenda?
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are there specific financial, material and human resources allocated to the implementation of the YPS agenda? For example, a focal point person or dedicated budget. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ If these resources are limited, in which ways could they be increased and allocated? • Is there a "group of friends" or working group on YPS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Which Ministries and government agencies does it involve? ◦ To what extent are young officials involved and young citizens consulted?

4.2 Institutional priorities and commitments

Sensitizing and reflection activities can help to ensure the implementation of the YPS agenda is recognized, prioritized and sustained. This can mean:

- organizing regular public and internal **presentations** and seminars to inform about the relevance of implementing the YPS agenda;
- periodically collecting and sharing **success stories**, and, if relevant inviting public officials of partner countries to share experiences and lessons learned;
- creating and sustaining opportunities for **dialogue**, especially, intergenerational dialogue among all involved in peace and security efforts, in which aspirations and ideas can be exchanged from different perspectives;
- developing a study or **analysis** of the evidence in support of the need for and opportunities of implementing the agenda for the country and publish results in the form of briefs or policy papers;
- adopting the practice of including YPS specific content and updates into **reports**, ensuring data is disaggregated by age and sex, adopting a gender and generational perspective to analysis of strategies and programmatic interventions;
- creating **incentives and recognition** for officials for their commitment and dedication to YPS actions in the form of annual awards or special letters of recognition.

4.3 Human resources and knowledge management

In order to implement the YPS agenda in a sustainable way and make it part of the regular work of organizations, it is critical to integrate it into human resources and knowledge management practices. Ad hoc activities may help develop specific skills or raise awareness, but may not be sufficient to fully integrate YPS into institutional practices.

Integrating YPS into human resources and knowledge management can mean:

- developing **specific training modules** or content on YPS and integrating these in the **regular induction** and training activities (face-to-face and online);
- adjusting **recruitment strategies** and policies to attract young professionals and candidates with specific qualifications and experiences related to the YPS agenda, creating **traineeship opportunities** for new graduates;
- expanding data gathering to collect age and sex-and-gender disaggregated data and **strengthen data analysis** and **research capacities** to help create and share knowledge about the implementation of the YPS agenda and its impacts;
- engaging in and supporting **YPS-specific communities of practice** at national and international levels to exchange experiences and lessons learned.



Learn about ...

- ASEAN's Youth Peace and Security for Young Public Officials online course.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

4.4 Youth as partners in capacity building

Young people are often the main beneficiaries or participants of capacity-building activities in the form of training courses. Even though this is very much needed, this approach may also imply that it is only or mainly youth that lack capacity.

There is growing evidence on the multiple roles played by young people as peacebuilders and changemakers able to develop specific and valuable expertise. They have been key bridge builders, role models for their peers, inspiring educators, human rights and equality champions, knowledge creators adopting innovative future-oriented approaches.

In order to build on young people's expertise, resources and experiences, it is important to involve them as partners in capacity building efforts that do not only target youth, but all stakeholders involved. Young people can be engaged in the following ways:

- recruiting young professionals, trainers and facilitators to design and co-lead capacity building activities, for example, if they are specialized in the YPS agenda, to integrate it into overall capacity building activities;
- making sure young professionals join rosters, pools of trainers or advisory committees;
- developing partnerships with youth-led organizations to support capacity building activities.

4.5 Ownership and addressing reluctance to implementation

A shared understanding of the YPS agenda within any organization and entity can enable support for its implementation. However, there may be doubts, concerns or even resistance to it. Reluctance is to be expected either in explicit or other less visible forms such as inaction. These are suggestions⁵⁷ to address it:

- **build a solid understanding** of the YPS agenda, including evidence in the form of facts and positive stories of success to respond to questions;
- get **all levels of management**, and especially senior management and high-level leaders **to champion** the YPS agenda and its institutionalization;
- **assess the type of resistance** and who is expressing it to prepare adequate responses;
- focus efforts on those who are open to engaging in dialogue;
- **lead by example** and proactively seek ways to involve young women and men of diverse backgrounds in all spaces and to adopt a youth-lens to policy and programming.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



Key takeaways

This chapter provided suggestions and tools to help you:

- Analyze the main strengths and challenges you observe regarding your **institutional capacities** to implement the YPS agenda.
- Consider strategies and activities that can help you **strengthen** your institutional capacities and **institutionalize** the YPS agenda.
- Ensure **ownership** and address resistance.
- Realize the importance of involving **young people as partners** in capacity building efforts.



⁵⁷ These tips are based on those proposed by FBA, adapted from the VicHealth model to address gender discrimination. For a more detailed version of the tips see: FBA [Youth, Peace and Security Adviser's Handbook](#), (2020), pp. 25.

5. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

This chapter provides suggestions on resource mobilization, budgeting, and resource management. It focuses on financial resources, but acknowledges that goods and services (equipment, educational materials, facilitation of physical spaces) are also valuable resources.

The chapter also highlights the importance of making resources available for youth-led initiatives and involving young people in financial resources management, including monitoring and auditing practices and specific suggestions on how to do it.

Ensuring the necessary resources is key to accelerate and sustain the implementation of the youth, peace and security (YPS) agenda, and a central aspect of building institutional capacities as explained in Chapter 4.

5.1 How to finance implementation

Clear and specific budget commitments can significantly boost implementation. Resource mobilization efforts can happen at:

- **national, subnational or municipal level**, allocating funds for relevant Ministries and agencies with mandates to implement the YPS agenda as part of the overall budgeting process;
- **ministry, agency or entity level**, allocating funds to YPS implementation from the already assigned budget for that ministry or entity, and searching for matching funds from other sources or cooperating with other ministries and entities;
- **department or unit level**, allocating funds to YPS implementation from the assigned budget to that department or unit and searching for matching funds.

Ministries and agencies can:

- propose and prioritize to add specific budget lines;
- include YPS sub-lines into already existing budget lines in the regular national budget cycle;
- ask to dedicate resources to YPS implementation within the allocated budget of their ministry or entity;
- mobilize resources in partnership with other stakeholders who share the same goals and principles of the YPS agenda. This may include; international cooperation partners, private foundations or philanthropic entities, and private entities through their corporate social responsibility schemes.



TOOL 8: DEVELOPING A RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY

Prioritizing the YPS agenda in the allocation of public financial resources depends on the political support. It also requires an understanding of the relevance of more and better spending on YPS among key stakeholders. Developing a resource mobilization strategy can help to identify opportunities and ways to motivate other actors to support proposals for increased resources. The basic steps of such a strategy can be:

1. **Spelling out the reasons for increased resources for youth, peace and security.** The rationale or reasons need to be clear for the specific decision-maker you are talking to, for example, senior managers, members of parliament, partners. Your argumentation can be based on:

a. appealing to shared values, norms and existing commitments can help in your efforts to mobilize financial resources. Explain the reasons why implementing the YPS agenda contributes to realizing already shared visions, missions and mandates. [Tool 2](#) can be useful to identify the existing normative framework;

b. using technical knowledge can provide evidence and analysis to justify new or different allocations. This is especially useful when engaging with technical staff and advisors;

c. appealing to citizens' preferences and needs for more and better support to the YPS agenda, especially those of young people and youth actors can be motivating. [Tool 1](#) can be a good basis for this.

2. Identifying key decision-makers and stakeholders. The stakeholders mapping suggested in [Tools 5](#) and [6](#) can serve as a basis. Yet, you will need to analyze the interests and scope of action in terms of resource mobilization of different stakeholders.

3. Developing communication strategies to reach out to different decision-makers. Prepare materials, such as policy briefs or presentations to use during meetings with high level political leaders, senior managers or members of parliament.

4. Preparing to engage in dialogue with those that may be indifferent or resist the idea of increased allocations, see suggestions on [section 4.5](#) on how to increase ownership and address resistance.

5. Communicating results during and after implementation. Sharing information about the impacts of implementation can help sustain and increase support for it.

5.2 Budgeting

YPS-specific allocations can be made within existing budgetary frameworks and practices. This can build on gender budgeting⁵⁸ and child-responsive budgeting⁵⁹ initiatives which are already practiced in several countries. Adding YPS-specific objectives into the budgeting process (at the national budget level or at ministry, entity or department level) would help ensure adequate allocations and related monitoring of allocations. The budgetary process can include:

- **Budget analysis:** an assessment of past and current expenditures and their impact on the realization of youth rights, especially in relation to the right to participation and other rights which enable the role of young people in peace and security.
- **Costing and budgeting:** a process of identifying the specific resources and costs to implement planned actions.
- **Budget tracking:** a monitoring mechanism of the use of public resources.⁶⁰
- **Budget auditing:** an assessment of the reach, relevance and impact of allocated resources in relation to the expected impacts.



Options when budgeting

- **Dedicated budget allocations.** These can support specific actions, making it easier to track, account for, and evaluate. They can also raise the profile of YPS actions, avoiding funding being diffused within other budget allocations.
- **Increasing budget allocations for YPS-actions within already existing budget lines.** Mainstreaming YPS into already existing policies and actions may also be effective, building on and working with already existing budget lines. Yet, it is important to earmark allocations so that they can be tracked and serve accountability purposes.

⁵⁸ For more information on gender budgeting, see: Ronnie Downes, Lisa von Trapp and Scherie Nicol, "OECD Journal on Budgeting", Gender Budgeting in OECD countries, volume 2016, No.3 (OECD, 2017).

⁵⁹ For more information on child-responsive budgeting, see Bob Libert Muchabaiwa, Child responsive budgeting in South Sudan, a guide for policy makers and child focused organizations. (Government of South Sudan and Save the Children, 2014).

⁶⁰ For example, see UNICEF Social budgeting methodologies.

5.3 Youth-friendly access to resources

Youth-led groups, organizations, and movements are key stakeholders in the implementation of the YPS agenda. However, due to specific characteristics of youth engagement, many small-scale initiatives or unregistered initiatives face difficulties accessing resources for their work.⁶¹ This is especially the case for youth-led initiatives at the grassroots level, particularly those that work in remote areas. They often lack the formal requirements to access funds and the capacities to comply with procurement procedures due to limited technical skills or the fact that most groups are composed of volunteers. It is crucial that funding and support are made accessible to them. This is one way to break down barriers that can result in young people being marginalized.



Youth-friendly accessible resources

- Keep procedures simple and flexible.
- Create grant schemes which are easier to manage for small-scale groups.
- Ensure reporting or accountability demands are proportional to the amounts provided, for example, give preference to flat rates and lump-sums.
- Establish mentorship and support mechanisms for financial management as needed.



Learn about ...

- The European Youth Foundation's support to youth organizations.
- The Swedish agency for peace, FBA's security and development grants to Swedish civil society organizations.
- The Youth 360 approach to support youth-led peacebuilding.
- The UNAOC Youth Solidarity Fund.

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>

5.4 Building trust through financial monitoring and auditing

Financial resource management should be transparent and comply with national regulations. Importantly, specific information and accountability mechanisms can be put in place to allow citizens, and specifically young citizens, to feel trust in the process and in the institutions or organizations managing the resources. Actions to achieve this can be:

- **involving citizens** in the process of deciding how money is used (participatory budgeting);
- ensuring your budget has a **clear and transparent** way to manage resources, that can be visible to citizens;
- making **information accessible** in the form of executive budget proposals, enacted budgets, or approved budgets; sources of funding and aims of expenditures;
- ensuring **clear oversight, tracking, and control mechanisms**, including the participation of young people, especially of those groups partnering in implementation efforts.

⁶¹ A 2017 survey revealed a majority of the youth-led organizations operate with limited funding, with 49% operating under USD 5,000 per annum and only 11% over USD 100,000. For more information see Search For Common Ground and UNOY Peacebuilders, [Mapping a sector: Bridging the Evidence Gap on Youth-Driven Peacebuilding](#), (2017).



Key takeaways

This chapter provided suggestions and tools to help you:

- Find the **ways resources can be mobilized** and the YPS agenda be considered within your budgeting process.
- **Include young people** in all aspects of resource management, from the budgeting process to evaluation, whether as grantees, staff or as citizens feeding back on processes.
- Design funding streams that make **resources available** to civil society organizations, especially **youth-led groups**.



6. PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Ensuring a participatory process with young people of all identities and backgrounds can lead to a more inclusive, effective and sustainable implementation of the youth, peace and security (YPS) agenda. If young people, and the diversity of youth actors, are involved in meaningful ways, implementation efforts can be enhanced by their ideas and contributions making it a broad-based societal and intergenerational effort.

This chapter explains key principles⁶² when engaging with young people in peace and security processes:

- meaningful youth participation;
- inclusiveness;
- gender equality;
- intergenerational partnership;
- do no harm and conflict sensitivity.

It also presents examples of young people's participation in peace and security.

6.1 Meaningful youth participation

The concept of meaningful youth participation underlines young people's agency, that is, their ability and capacity to independently reflect on their experiences and engage in action. Understanding the importance of young people's agency is important to enable their active participation in peace and security spaces. Through meaningful participation young people can have an influence on and (co)take decisions on matters that concern them at all levels and in all stages of policy and program implementation. There can be multiple forms and levels of participation, such as being the beneficiaries of programs, being participants of a training seminar, being part of consultations, or being responsible for organizing activities for other youth or groups.

Promoting meaningful participation requires space (being able to participate), voice (being allowed to express opinions), audience (being listened to), and influence (being able to shape decisions).⁶³



Meaningful youth participation

Meaningful participation is about the **kinds** and **levels** of influence young people have on decision-making and implementation processes.

⁶² Based on UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development's (IANYD) Subgroup on Youth Participation in Peacebuilding (Now Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security), [Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding](#), (2012).

⁶³ UNICEF, [Engaged and heard! Guidelines on Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement](#) (2020).



TOOL 9: MEANINGFUL YOUTH PARTICIPATION: PUTTING IT TO PRACTICE

You can promote meaningful youth participation by:

- Making sure young people participate at **all stages of implementation**: design, preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and follow-up.
- Diversifying and deepening **the kinds of roles young people adopt** and thus the kind of influence they have on decisions, using the three-lens approach to youth participation.⁶⁴
 - Are young people the **target audience or beneficiaries** of actions? For example, participating in a training program, receiving information, or being users of youth-focused services;
 - Are young people **participants and partners** in implementation actions? For example, being consulted in workshops / public hearings, being co-evaluators of policies and programs, volunteers or staff members of initiatives, coordinators, trainers, educators, youth workers, advisors or experts;
 - Are young people **initiators and leaders** of implementation actions? For example, being elected representative of a constituency, policymakers, members of advisory boards and steering committees, leaders of independent research, initiators of projects and campaigns.
- Making efforts to **include young people of different backgrounds and identities** reflecting society's diversity. See more about inclusivity in [section 6.2](#).
- Making sure spaces and activities are **accessible** and **safe**, that is, address barriers to participation such as interpretation, technical jargon, internet access, and limitations in accessible transportation to activities.
- Ensuring **appropriate facilitation** to address unequal power dynamics and consider protection measures such as young people being aware of possible risks and having protection protocols in place.

You can see a more detailed checklist on meaningful youth participation developed by the United Network of Young Peacebuilders.⁶⁵

6.2 The different ways young people's characteristics can impact engagement

Youth is an incredibly diverse group, with varied characteristics, identities and needs. Recognizing and incorporating this makes changes you make more powerful and impactful. To achieve that, an intersectional analysis can help you to understand how young people are shaped, conditioned, or enabled by different factors such as gender, origin, or background, to name a few.



TOOL 10: INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS

An intersectional analysis⁶⁶ can reveal how young people are simultaneously included or excluded based on different identities, affiliations or characteristics, namely:

- gender;
- sexual orientation;
- class or socio-economic background or caste;
- ethnicity, origin, or linguistic group, including indigenous status;

⁶⁴ UNFPA, UNDP, DPPA/PBSO, FBA, *Youth, Peace and Security, A Programming Handbook*, (2021), p. 16. adapted from World Bank Development Report (2007).

⁶⁵ UNOY Peacebuilders, *Checklist for Meaningful Youth Engagement, What is Meaningful Youth Engagement?* (2021).

⁶⁶ AWID, *Intersectionality: a Tool for Gender and Economic Justice*, (2004).

- educational background;
- religion or spiritual beliefs;
- disabilities and functional variations;
- political ideology or affiliation;
- status and experience as a refugee, migrant, or internally displaced person;
- geographical location, urban or rural background.

An intersectional analysis consists of reflecting on how different identities “intersect” or reinforce one another deepening inclusion/exclusion dynamics. These questions can help in the analysis:

- Which groups are included/excluded and why?
- Which are the characteristics and identities linked to those that are most excluded and marginalized?

6.3 Gender equality

A gender-aware and gender-responsive focus is essential to the YPS agenda, as all genders are affected by peace and security issues in specific ways. Importantly, young women face greater challenges to participate in social and public life and are affected by violence in particular ways, such as sexual violence. Young men also face specific challenges such as being forcefully recruited in the context of armed violence, or being expected to adopt aggressive behavior as a symbol of manhood. Gender minorities face multiple forms of discrimination and harassment.

Successful implementation of the YPS agenda, relies on being able to address gender-based barriers to inclusion and participation. It is paramount to prioritize the inclusion and empowerment of young women and young people of different gender identities and address specific barriers to their participation. At the same time, a gendered approach should not be equated to working with young women and gender identities only, but working also with young men. *The Missing Peace Study*⁶⁷ explained:

“... most youth peace work relating to gender continues to be undertaken primarily by – and revolves around the unique experiences of – young women, and sexual and gender minorities. The view of gender as synonymous with young women and of youth as synonymous with young men has contributed to the victimization of young women, and sexual and gender minorities. It has also made less visible issues related to masculinities. Global policy and programming on youth, peace, and security must engage with the gendered identities of both young men and young women, to support and promote positive, gender-equitable identities and roles, paying particular attention to cultivating non-violent masculinities”

6.4 Intergenerational partnerships

Youth can engage meaningfully if they feel they are truly listened to, trusted, and supported, and if they themselves trust their counterparts. An intergenerational approach is key to finding common ground for action, developing mutual respect, and bridging trust gaps among generations. You can consider the following when engaging in intergenerational partnerships:

- setting out **clear expectations** to avoid misunderstandings and disappointments;
- **communicating openly and respectfully**, having a listening and appreciative attitude, and avoiding unnecessary formalities and tokenistic or patronizing attitudes;
- finding **common issues of concern** across generations, and respecting all perspectives;
- providing each other with **mutual mentorship and support**⁶⁸ where both young people and adults can learn;
- **avoiding platitudes or stereotypes** such as those in comments like “You are too young/old to know” and “We know what is best for you”.

⁶⁷ Graeme Simpson, *The Missing Peace*.

⁶⁸ Cross-generational mentoring is about the practice of acting as a mentor, guiding, advising and facilitating the cross-generational relationships, procuring a mutual benefit from this action. The mentoring can be two-way across generations. See more information in: Intergenerational Socioeconomic Research Center, [Cross-generational mentoring](#), (2020).



Getting out of the “youth” box: the importance of intergenerational partnerships

Young people’s participation often remains circumscribed to “youth” issues, spaces, and not fully engaged on all societal issues and spaces. They are an important part of society so **intergenerational dialogue, partnership** and **co-leadership** are crucial to ensure meaningful participation.

Young people’s participation is not limited to youth-led or youth-focused groups and organizations. Many young people are part of and play important roles through non-youth led organizations too. **All organizations**, governmental and non-governmental, should adopt policies and practices that support young people’s leadership and participation, especially in countries with proportionally high youth populations. By doing so, they can better enable young people to **choose the form of engagement** that they feel best fits their needs and goals and, at the same time, improve **young people’s access to decision-making opportunities**.

6.5 Do no harm and conflict sensitivity

Civic engagement in the context of violent conflict and authoritarian regimes can be challenging and risky for any person, and even more so for young people who may not have the tools, knowledge, resources or family/social support to sustain their engagement and protect themselves. When civic spaces shrink, youth are often the first to be targeted. Young people experience discouraging sociocultural pressures as a result of their civic engagement (intergenerational hostility, intimidation, stereotyping, harmful customs) as well as political, financial, legal, economic and digital barriers.⁶⁹

The principle of “do no harm”⁷⁰ stresses the imperative to identify, avoid and mitigate any possible risks related to or caused by the planned actions. This approach is closely related to the concept of conflict-sensitivity, which aims at avoiding inadvertently triggering negative impacts when working in conflict or polarized settings. These approaches are key as young people continue to experience harassment, threats and are victims of violence, including sexual violence and abuse as a result of their civic engagement, both in the physical and in the online space.⁷¹



Opportunities and risks of participatory risks analysis

Involve all relevant stakeholders in risk analysis, including young people. Any risks for young people engaging in such analysis need to be considered at the same time.

⁶⁹ Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, [If I disappear, Global report on Protecting Young People in Civic Space](#), (2021).

⁷⁰ The principle of “do no harm” emerged from the Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA) [Local Capacities for Peace](#) project and it is based on the idea that local leaders understand what divides and connects people at community level and are, thus, well-positioned to identify possible risks.

⁷¹ European Youth Forum, [Safeguarding Civic Space for Young People in Europe](#) (2020); OSGEY, [If I disappear, Global report on Protecting Young People in Civic Space](#) (2021).

6.6 Forms of youth participation in peace and security

Young people participate in peace and security efforts in different ways and spaces, including **institutional or formal spaces** of decision-making as well as **consultative** and **alternative non-institutionalized spaces**. All contributions are valuable and often, reinforce one another and adopt hybrid forms in practice. For example, a public campaign for peace can effectively contribute to support the continuation of a peace process.

Youth as a cross-cutting social and political constituency naturally build connections and relationships between the formal and informal spaces.⁷² Young people contribute to peace processes, bringing critical voices to address conflict issues, beyond the visible representation in the negotiating delegations.⁷³



The importance of both institutional and non-institutionalized spaces

It is important to strengthen institutional spaces of youth participation. At the same time, it is critical to value and to enable other non-institutionalized or alternative spaces where young people can express their concerns and aspirations, meet, self-organize and engage in dialogue with other stakeholders.

It is also important not to expect to find one representative of young people, considering youth as a heterogeneous group. Youth councils, platforms, and coalitions aggregate their interests, but sometimes they may face limitations in representativeness, for example, involving more urban and educated youth in comparison to suburban and rural youth.

EXAMPLES OF FORMS OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN PEACE AND SECURITY

INSTITUTIONALIZED SPACES	CONSULTATIVE SPACES	SELF-ORGANIZED YOUTH/ CIVIL SOCIETY-LED SPACES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people in delegations negotiating peace agreements • Young parliamentarians and elected officials proposing and voting laws • Young public servants in leadership positions proposing and negotiating policies and programs • Representatives of youth-led groups as members of advisory or co-management systems • Youth participation in National Youth Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth-led civil society groups participation in consultative spaces, working groups, and advisory commissions • Young technical experts in advisory, monitoring, and research roles in areas such as security sector reform, cyber-security, conflict prevention and early-warning systems etc. • Youth participation in multistakeholder coalitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth-led civil society advocacy campaigns for peace in public physical and digital spaces • Youth-led memory, healing and reconciliation actions at community level • Youth-led peace journalism and research • Young people in self-organized humanitarian initiatives

⁷² Ali Altiok, and Irena Grizelj, [WE ARE HERE: An Integrated Approach to Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes](#) (April, 2019).

⁷³ For more guidance on how to ensure the participation and representation of young people in the design and implementation of peace processes, see: Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security (2022) *We are in this together: Operationalizing a five-year strategic action plan for youth-inclusive peace processes*. New York: Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.



Learn about ...

Institutionalized spaces

- Colombia's National Council for Peace, Reconciliation and Coexistence which includes youth representatives.
- Yemen's National Dialogue Conference and its youth quota system.

Consultative spaces

- USIP's Participatory Action Research for Advancing Youth-led Peacebuilding.
- The United Arab Emirates' Youth Circles as spaces for dialogue between young people and policy makers.

Self-organized/ alternative spaces

- South Sudan Civil Society Forum contributions to engage young people in the country's peace process.⁷⁴

For more details visit <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/doha2022/>



Structural barriers to youth participation in peace and security

Youth participation, in general, remains limited in a number of ways in most if not all countries. For example, young people under age 30 constitute just over 2.6 percent of the world's parliamentarians.⁷⁵ Though it is not specifically documented, it can be inferred that few join peace and security parliamentary committees. Additionally, some peace and security spaces are considered highly technical and sensitive and therefore, tend to limit the participation of young officials and technical staff or/and of civil society in general and to even a lesser extent, of young citizens.



Key takeaways

This chapter provided suggestions, tools and examples to help you:

- Design and implement the YPS agenda through a **participatory approach** with young people, considering key **principles** of engagement.
- Create or strengthen the mechanisms and spaces for **meaningful youth participation** in peace and security.

⁷⁴ IBID, pp.20-21.

⁷⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union, [Youth participation in national parliaments](#), (volume 4, 2021)

GLOSSARY

Agency refers to the ability and capacity to engage in action under one's own power and control, consciously aware of social structures and norms which may influence, limit or shape one's action and choices.

Ageism is the actions related to stereotyping, having prejudices and discriminating against people based on their age. It is a synonym of age discrimination.

Co-management⁷⁶ refers to a model of youth participation practiced for example in the Council of Europe's youth sector. Representatives of both the governments and young people decide together on the priorities, budgetary priorities, implementation of work priorities and on the allocation of the resources.

Conflict-sensitivity means to carefully assess the possible negative impacts of interventions but doing so taking into consideration conflict dynamics.

Cross-Sectoral Youth Policy⁷⁷ is an approach to policy making which is broad, holistic, integrated and cross-sectoral. Cross-sectoral co-operation in youth policy may refer to vertical communication between young people and youth organizations with relevant ministries. It may also refer to horizontal co-operations between different ministries dealing with youth issues. The principle of cross-sectoral youth policy states that policies concerning young people need to take into account not only youth affairs, but all the connected policy sectors such as education, social policy, employment, family policy and child welfare, health, housing and environment.

Gender, while sex refers to "the different biological and physiological characteristics of males and females, such as reproductive organs", gender refers to "the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men".⁷⁸ It is commonly expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity and it is culturally determined. Thus, gender-based roles and attributes change over time and are cultural context-specific.

Gender identity is a person's sense of their gender, whether male, female or non-binary, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth.

Gender mainstreaming is the systematic consideration of the differences between the conditions, situations and needs of different genders in all policies and actions. It refers to the process of analyzing the implications for persons of different genders of any planned action, including legislation, policy or programs.

Gender responsiveness⁷⁹ refers to outcomes that reflect an understanding of gender roles and inequalities and which make an effort to encourage equal participation and equal and fair distribution of benefits. Gender responsiveness is accomplished through gender analysis and gender inclusiveness.

Inclusivity⁸⁰ is an established norm in international policy. It affirms the idea that diverse groups across a broad spectrum of society should have a say in processes that affect them, with a specific focus on marginalized groups. While participation and representation are key aspects of inclusion, efforts to ensure respect for human rights and strengthen the capacity of marginalized communities may be as important for meaningful inclusion as inviting them to the table.

Intergenerational means the engagement of members of two or more generations in activities that can make them take into account different (generational) perspectives. It implies improving interactions, seeking collaboration to achieve common aims and mutual learning.

⁷⁶ Council of Europe and European Union's Youth Partnership, [Glossary on youth](#) (2021).

⁷⁷ IBID.

⁷⁸ Council of Europe, [Gender Matters, a manual on addressing gender-based violence affecting young people](#) (2019), pp.33-35.

⁷⁹ United Nations Development Programme, [Gender responsive national communications toolkit](#) (2015).

⁸⁰ The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, [Realising Inclusivity: The role of the United Nations in promoting inclusion at the country level](#) (2021).

Intersectionality⁸¹ describes the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalized identities. This concept has been the basis for an analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics/identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination.

Peace⁸² means not only the absence of violent conflicts (negative peace), but also the presence of justice and equity, as well as respect for human rights and for the Earth (positive peace).

Policy coherence means consistency and coordination of goals and actions among various national and sub-national policies whenever possible, or in simple terms, when policies “go together in the same direction” instead of seeking opposing or different goals. Policy coherence can be sought horizontally among various policy domains at the same level (national or subnational). It can also be sought vertically among the same or similar policy domains at different levels (national, sub-national, local).

Security is a subjective state in which an individual or collective feels free from threats, or danger. Such insecurities have typically been defined in relation to nation-states, for example regarding protection of borders (national security). However, societies and individuals have increasingly become the primary concern. This expanding doctrine includes the coinage of new terminology, such as ‘human security’, ‘common security’, ‘co-operative security’, ‘democratic security’, and ‘environmental security’.

Securitization⁸³ is the practices of security being placed on aspects of human life and interactions that lie outside of the areas of international relations, law enforcement and jurisprudence.

Tokenism is the practice of making a symbolic effort to employ inclusive practices to give the appearance of inclusiveness and fairness.

Violence is often understood as the use or threat of force that can result in harm, or death. It may be physical, verbal or psychological. Galtung has distinguished three forms of violence: (1) direct violence, such as war, or torture; (2) structural violence, such as poverty and limited access to rights; (3) and cultural violence, such as the devaluing and destruction of human identities and ways of life, sexism, ethnocentrism, racism and colonial ideologies, and other forms of oppression.

Youth actors are all the relevant stakeholders in the youth field. They may be young or self-identifying as young or working with young people. This could be young leaders, representatives of youth-led and youth-focused groups, organizations, and movements, youth-wings of political parties, young parliamentarians, parliamentarians, public officials, and researchers working on youth issues.

Youth lens⁸⁵ means analyzing social reality and any kind of intervention in it by taking into consideration knowledge about young people of different backgrounds and identities, their situations, needs, perspectives, and aspirations, and about the age-based norms and power structures affecting them. This knowledge can be acquired through data from external sources, including research and resources produced by youth-led organizations, and by listening to young people’s own experiences and perceptions.

Youth participation refers to having the right, the means, the space and the support to engage and (co)take decisions to contribute to positive societal change, especially in relation to issues that directly affect young people. Youth participation can take place in formal political processes or informal ones such as campaigns. It is meaningful when youth can be genuinely heard and influence decisions.

Youth mainstreaming⁸⁶ refers to the process of analyzing the implications for youth of any planned action, including legislation, policy or programs. It is a strategy for making young people’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy and programs so that young people benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. Youth mainstreaming requires detailed social analysis from a youth lens and highlights the importance of involving young people in that analysis and decision-making.

⁸¹ European Institute for Gender Equality, [Glossary and Thesaurus](#) (2021).

⁸² Council of Europe, [Manual of Human Rights Education with Young People](#) (2015).

⁸³ Alexander Lautensach and Sabina Lautensach, [Human Security in World Affairs: Problems and Opportunities](#) (2019).

⁸⁴ Council of Europe, [Manual of Human Rights Education with Young People](#) (2015).

⁸⁵ Adapted from FBA, [Youth, Peace and Security Adviser’s Handbook](#), (2020) p. 25.

⁸⁶ Commonwealth Secretariat, [Youth Mainstreaming in Development Planning, Transforming Young Lives](#) (2017).

ACRONYMS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
COE	Council of Europe
EU	European Union
GCYPS	Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
NAPs	National Action Plans
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSGEY	Office of the United Nations Secretary-General Envoy on Youth
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
DPPA/PBSO	UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs - Peacebuilding Support Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNAOC	United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nation Children's Fund
UNPBF	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security