16 X 16 DIALOGUE SERIES

Youth leadership for peaceful, just and inclusive societies

ACTIVITIES IN NUMBERS
2 WEEKS
6 DIALOGUES

75
YOUNG PARTNERS AND UNDP PRACTITIONERS ACROSS HQ, REGIONS AND COUNTRY OFFICES

5
INSIGHTFUL REGIONAL DIALOGUE MEETINGS

23
COUNTRY OFFICES ACROSS ALL REGIONS

160
PARTICIPANTS AT A GLOBAL EVENT

BACKGROUND

Young people are key in building peaceful, just and inclusive societies. In different parts of the world, young women and men are leading innovative actions that are building and sustaining peace. Despite their contribution, they continue to face significant challenges such as intimidation, lack of political goodwill, financial constraints, under-appreciation and other socioeconomic injustices. The collective power of young people cannot be discounted as it leverages on the largest youth population that the world has seen and the creativity and energy of young people to overcome these obstacles and ensure a direction towards sustainable development.

It is against this background that a UNDP 16 x 16 Dialogue Series was organized, fostering a conversation on amplifying youth-led actions and enhancing youth engagement in decision-making processes towards peaceful, just and inclusive societies and bringing together young people, including those from the UNDP Youth 16 x 16 initiative and beyond, and UNDP practitioners at all levels including young fellows, governance leads, Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs), youth focal points, innovation specialists, economic specialists, women, peace and security specialists, among others.

This effort culminated in a global event of the 16 x 16 Dialogue Series with 160 participants which provided a space for reflection upon the future of youth engagement in development processes and achievements of the 16 x 16 Initiative, including by showcasing the work of the young leaders and their organizations, movements and networks and lessons learned from the 16 x 16 Initiative as a model for enhancing meaningful youth participation in the review of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16).

Through the five regional 16 x 16 dialogues, young participants of the 16 x 16 Initiative and UNDP practitioners shared lessons learned and identified regional, national and local opportunities, risks and future activities to support and promote youth-led and youth-inclusive actions for peace, justice and inclusion. The themes discussed were meaningful youth engagement in decision-making processes at all levels, youth-led evaluation, peace education, leaving no youth behind, young women's leadership, youth-inclusive and youth-responsive policies and institutions, partnerships, inclusive governance and accountability.

Sixteen young leaders of youth organizations, movements and networks that work towards building peaceful, just and inclusive societies partner with UNDP's Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace through the UNDP Youth 16 x 16 Initiative and with generous support by the Government of Italy and the Government of Denmark. Since its launch in April 2019 with the support of the Government of Italy, the 16 young leaders have participated in global conversations on peaceful, just and inclusive societies, led the development of a call-to-action on SDG 16, shared their perspectives through a 16 x 16 blog series and social media campaign, provided recommendations to the work of UNDP, and worked with and learned from one another.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Young people are committed to work for more peaceful, just and inclusive societies. The recognition of young people's critical role as agents of change for sustainable development and peace is a way of addressing mistrust between young people and governance institutions, supporting whole-of-society approaches and fostering inclusive and accountable governance.

- It is fundamental to expand avenues for youth engagement in decision-making processes, including in priority-setting and accountability mechanisms and in particular at the local level.

- The promotion and protection of civic space is essential for a safe, gender-responsive and enabling space for youth actions towards building peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

- Inequalities are being exacerbated by the climate crisis and the COVID-19 crisis and should be tackled through relevant policies to also address young people's experience of grievances regarding economic, social, civic and political rights.

- Decision-makers, partners and stakeholders should have the capacity to respond to the realities and lived experiences of young people in order to leave no youth behind, but many have limited knowledge about how to work with and for young people in sustainable development and often institutions lack dedicated capacities such as youth focal points.

- Many initiatives and projects – youth-led and beyond – facilitate the inclusion of the most marginalized and vulnerable young people, which is essential for the sustainability and effectiveness of development policies, programmes and projects, but at the same time, there is a need for additional, deliberate efforts.

- Accessible, relevant, dedicated and agile funding, deliberate support and accessible information are key to scale up youth-led peacebuilding.

- The digital divide and increased stakeholder engagement through online platforms for SDG implementation, monitoring and review can limit youth participation if it remains unaddressed.

- There is an opportunity to support the capacity of youth peacebuilding and human rights organizations in SDG monitoring and evaluation and further invest in youth political participation and civic engagement.

- The United Nations should prioritize establishing and nurturing partnerships with youth organizations, movements and networks, also in conflict-affected societies, and facilitating a conducive space for intergenerational and multistakeholder dialogue on development planning and peace priorities at all levels.

- Meaningful youth engagement can be supported through the co-creation of development solutions with young people, youth expertise and experiences driving the priorities, the engagement of young people throughout the programme cycle, the usage of creative approaches to extend the reach to a diversity of young people, the connection between local and global levels and different sectors and a spotlight on youth actions for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

- Decision-makers, partners and stakeholders should work with young people in the formulation of educational policies and plans for formal and non-formal education for peace, human rights and global citizenship.

AFRICA DIALOGUE

Partnerships for progress towards peaceful, just and inclusive societies

This closed meeting included 20 participants from UNDP Kenya, Dakar (Sahel office), Togo, Ghana, Malawi, Addis Ababa (regional service centre) and Headquarters in New York and young partners from the 16 x 16 Initiative, UNDP Kenya's youth sounding board and Mutual Aid Kenya.

Ameyovi Alice GOZA
International Association of Women and Young Leaders (AIFJL), Togo

Charles KAJOLOWEKA
Youth and Society (YAS), Malawi

Wevyn MUGANDA
HAKI AFRICA (former); Beyond the Lines; Kauli Zetu Mtaani, Kenya

Emmanuel AMETEPEY
Youth Advocates Ghana, Ghana

THREE KEY OPPORTUNITIES WERE EMPHASIZED:

- Recognition of the contribution of young people to sustainable development and peace is a way of trusting their agency and fostering strong partnerships for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.
- UNDP can prioritize capacity development for young people, local youth organizations and stakeholders as a way of supporting meaningful youth engagement. Capacity development can be through youth-to-youth projects and bridge formal and non-formal processes by familiarizing youth with policy processes.
- Enhanced collaboration between young people and institutions in the planning phase of projects is an opportunity to promote youth mainstreaming in governance and across different sectors.

THREE KEY CHALLENGES WERE HIGHLIGHTED:

- There is a lack of access to funding for youth organizations. Even when funding is flexible, accessible and relevant to the work of youth organizations, young people can face challenges due to lack of knowledge about the application process, limited experience in drafting funding proposals and lack of accessible information.
- The digital divide and a lack of connectivity for many young people are challenging meaningful youth engagement, because access to information and decision-making processes is unequal.
- Young people's expertise and experiences are often excluded or disregarded, which can cause young people to be deprived from influence upon decisions about their own lives and societies.

THREE KEY MESSAGES CAN BE DRAWN FROM THE MEETING:

- Accessible information, deliberate support and designated funding opportunities to local youth initiatives are needed for youth organizations, movements and networks to effectively use funding mechanisms and other resources and opportunities.
- UNDP has a role to play in promoting an enabling environment for youth leadership, but youth engagement must be a deliberate part of broader governance and peacebuilding efforts in order to foster strong partnerships with youth-led organizations and contribute to youth empowerment for sustainable development and peace.
- Youth is not a homogeneous group. Therefore, to effectively work with and for young people, projects and programmes should be gender-responsive and address specific youth groups/cohorts – in particular, young people that are hard to reach and the most marginalized and vulnerable.

THREE KEY INITIATIVES WERE RAISED:

COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION
KENYA	The Youth Sounding Board, established by UNDP Kenya to foster youth-inclusive and youth-responsive programming in UNDP, has 15 members from all regions of Kenya and the responsibility of facilitating the inclusion of diverse youth perspectives on issues for societal transformation.
REGIONAL	The 'Africa's Promise', UNDP's renewed strategic offer in Africa, includes youth employment and empowerment as a strategic impact area. Alongside subregional programmes such as the 'UNDP regional project for youth empowerment in the Sahel' and country projects, this new offer provides an entry point for strengthening partnerships between UNDP and local youth organizations, connecting young people and investing in youth leadership.
GHANA	The Multi-stakeholder Consultative Platform on Peace and Governance in Ghana is contributing to conflict prevention through promoting accountability and making the government responsive to the needs of the people. Youth engagement at the local level is one of the focus areas of the multi-stakeholder platform. The platform was key to enhancing partnerships between youth groups and UNDP during the country's last election period.

ASIA-PACIFIC DIALOGUE

The role of inclusive governance in sustaining the future of the planet and peace

This closed meeting included 19 participants from UNDP Nepal, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Fiji and the Pacific office, Bangkok Regional Hub and Headquarters in New York and young partners from the 16 x 16 Initiative.

Jagdish Kumar AYER
Association of Youth Organizations Nepal (AYON), Nepal

Lynrose Jane D. GENON
Project YACAP; Young Women for Peace & Leadership Philippines

Philip SUBU
Malaita Youth Caucus (former), Solomon Islands

Elisha BANO
Act It Network, Fiji

THREE KEY OPPORTUNITIES WERE EMPHASIZED:

- There is a need for youth engagement in the development of policies and programmes relating to peaceful, just and inclusive societies. This can be supported by expanding avenues for meaningful youth participation in decision-making processes at all levels, advocating for an increased representation of young people in parliaments and as policy-makers and through capacity development, training and education.

- SDG 16 on peaceful, just and inclusive societies is a priority for young people, as evidenced by the My World Survey, which is indicative for the potential of and momentum for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015), 2419 (2018) and 2535 (2020) on Youth, Peace and Security.

- Policy and programme support can better contribute to inclusive societies by increasing capacities for youth-inclusive programming that recognizes youth as a diverse group with different and intersecting vulnerabilities as a way of tackling inequalities and marginalization. In this regard, development efforts should reach the younger youth, youth beyond the usual suspects that often participate in United Nations processes and youth organizations, movements and networks that are representative of their constituency.

THREE KEY CHALLENGES WERE HIGHLIGHTED:

- Youth organizations, movements and networks that are leading efforts for sustainable development in local communities often lack accessible funding and resources, because these organizations tend to be informal and without legal registration.

- A lack of understanding of the diversity of young people is limiting the impact of development efforts. Often, youth is not represented by young people and in some contexts, the upper limit for youth is 40 years old. Culture and traditions can also create barriers when young people are expected to stay silent in decision-making processes. Furthermore, stereotypes around gender and age can cause young women leaders to be excluded and their contribution to peace and development become invisible.
- Youth face challenges of high unemployment, limited access to decision-making, the impact of climate change and natural disasters, limited access to technology, a closing civic space, threats in offline and online spheres such as reprisals and online sexual harassment and the risk of being left behind in sustainable development including for youth in conflict-affected societies, rural youth, young women and young migrants.

THREE KEY MESSAGES CAN BE DRAWN FROM THE MEETING:

- There is a need for spaces for dialogue between multiple stakeholders to co-create development solutions and UNDP has a role in bridging the gaps between governments and youth organizations, movements and networks to improve collaboration and partnerships towards the achievement of the SDGs.
- To support youth leadership for peaceful, just and inclusive societies, inequalities must be tackled, relating to a lack of access to employment and green jobs, the climate crisis and the COVID-19 crisis exacerbating existing inequalities, lack of youth friendly policies and limited reach to and inclusion of a diversity of young people.
- Misconceptions about youth must be addressed in order to foster a recognition of young people's critical role as agents of change for sustainable development and peace and an enabling environment for youth actions towards building peaceful, just and inclusive societies including through the promotion and protection of civic space and greater protection of young peacebuilders and activists.

THREE KEY INITIATIVES WERE RAISED:

COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION
NEPAL	The critical role that young people play in promoting social cohesion and countering information pollution is evident during the COVID-19 crisis, as was the experience of UNDP Nepal and the Association of Youth Organizations of Nepal (AYON). Youth were debunking myths to minimize stigmas and discrimination and the use of local language increased the reach of the efforts.
REGIONAL	Youth Co:Lab promotes regional and national dialogues between youth and decision-makers and supports youth social innovation for the achievement of the SDGs.
REGIONAL / NATIONAL	Regional and national engagement platforms and action plans for the implementation of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda can contribute to strengthening the avenues and expanding the opportunities for youth participation in peace processes and enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of the peace processes.

ARAB STATES DIALOGUE

Meaningful youth engagement in decision-making processes and the role of peace education

This closed meeting included 18 participants from UNDP Egypt, Iraq, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Somalia, Morocco, Algeria, and Regional Hub Amman and the Governance team in New York and young partners from the 16 x 16 Initiative.

Karim HABIB
Educuality, Egypt

Sihem NASRAOUI
Peace Lab, Tunisia

THREE KEY OPPORTUNITIES WERE EMPHASIZED:

- In context of the trends in young people's perceptions of governance and development in the region, namely mistrust in governance systems and limited interest in participation in formal politics, UNDP can increase support to youth leadership for peaceful, just and inclusive societies through promoting youth civic engagement, partnerships with youth-led organizations, movements and networks and creative approaches to youth inclusion in decision-making processes.
- It is essential that development efforts reach and engage a diversity of young people – including young women, youth from rural areas and young people not usually participating in activities – as a mean of fostering inclusive societies that takes into accounts the needs and aspirations of all segments of the population.
- UNDP can adopt a more risk tolerant approach to development efforts, overcoming barriers of a lack of political will to support youth and utilizing the so-called "youth bulge" as a real "demographic dividend" for sustainable development and peace.

THREE KEY CHALLENGES WERE HIGHLIGHTED:

- In societies where young people are perceived by the government as troublemakers and where there are barriers to inclusive governance, youth empowerment can be perceived as a way of engaging in internal affairs of the country.
- A lack of dedicated capacities in governance institutions, such as youth focal points, and few spaces for conversations on peace education and the common future of society constitute barriers to an enabling environment for youth leadership for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.
- Investment in youth-led activities is still insufficient, which leads to youth-led organizations lacking opportunities to grow and a lost opportunity to support young people's ideas and solutions to tackle the complex development challenges of today.

THREE KEY MESSAGES CAN BE DRAWN FROM THE MEETING:

- Youth efforts that contribute to sustainable development and peace take many different forms – from informal initiatives in local communities to participation and representation in formal politics – and the protection of young people in all spheres of work must be a priority in order to foster an enabling environment for youth leadership.
- A recognition of the role of non-state actors is important for support to youth empowerment and is connected to issues of power relations and international organizations' approach to risk in development projects and programmes.
- Young people in Arab States tend to be more interested in informal processes, have relatively limited interest in political participation and express mistrust in governance institutions. Therefore, support to civic engagement, youth-led efforts and connecting formal and informal processes offer opportunities to invest in youth leadership for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

THREE KEY INITIATIVES WERE RAISED:

COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION
Tunisia	Peace Lab Kasserine is bringing opportunities to remote areas and mobilizing young people for peace and conflict transformation through context-sensitive approaches in Tunisia. 'Why innovative grassroots approaches matter to build inclusive peace', 16 x 16 blog by Sihem Nasraoui.
Syria	The Youth Leadership Programme (YLP) in Syria facilitated the inclusion of young people in UNDP planning processes through youth engagement in discussion and evaluation of the Country Programme Document.
Tunisia	The local consultations on quality education with young people in Tunisia is a way for the government to involve young people in the development of policies on education.

Why innovative grassroots approaches matter to build inclusive peace

Sihem Nasraoui

16 x 16 BLOG SERIES

The contribution of art in peacebuilding

16 x 16 BLOG SERIES

Peace

Artwork & blog by Karim Habib

Art   Youth

EUROPE DIALOGUE

Meaningful youth participation in evaluation and decision-making processes at all levels

This closed meeting included 12 participants from UNDP Ukraine, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Istanbul Regional Hub and Headquarters in New York and young partners from the 16 x 16 Initiative and Youth for Peace BiH.

Antonina RISHKO-PORCESCU
EvalYouth, Moldova

Samira Fatma BARUCIJA
Youth for Peace BiH, Bosnia and Herzegovina

THREE KEY OPPORTUNITIES WERE EMPHASIZED:

- Prioritization of participatory approaches can foster a conducive space for dialogue between decision-makers, youth and other stakeholders that can contribute to policies that take into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of the population.

- While youth engagement is important throughout the programme cycle, the planning phase is an important entry point to change the approach and working practices by ministries and other partners and stakeholders toward more systematic inclusion of young people in the development of policies and programmes. Digital governance enables new avenues for participation, but the digital divide illustrates inequalities in access.

- Decision-makers and the United Nations can engage with youth more broadly by working with young people. In conflict-affected societies, partnerships with local youth organizations can increase the reach to young people. In communities, youth advisory groups can foster engagement on social, economic and political issues at the local level.

THREE KEY CHALLENGES WERE HIGHLIGHTED:

- Not all decision-makers, partners and stakeholders have experience working with youth or knowledge of youth development issues, which can limit their efforts' responsiveness to youth.

- Young people are experiencing a lack of access to education and employment, and young women experience challenges disproportionately. Furthermore, local youth organizations have limited access to funding and funding modalities are often encouraging short-term projects.

- Initiatives face challenges in reaching the diversity of young people and beyond the usual suspects, because many young people have limited interest in 'traditional' participation approaches such as capacity development workshops or local policy consultations. Therefore, more dedicated efforts are needed to engage youth in conflict-affected societies, rural youth, young diasporas and young migrants.

KEY MESSAGES

- It is important to understand that youth is not a homogeneous group in order to foster meaningful youth engagement in development activities, which is essential for the sustainability and effectiveness of policies, programmes and projects. Providing feedback to young partners and following up on their recommendations are ways of making engagement meaningful, enhancing accountability and fostering trust.
- Young people are actively contributing to social cohesion, advocating for human rights and engaged in local development processes but many young people also express feelings of being left behind and having restricted influence upon decisions about their own lives and societies and mistrust in governance systems.
- Engagement mechanisms and platforms can be strengthened by better translating policy into action and engaging more young people, in particular youth at risk of being left behind.

THREE KEY INITIATIVES WERE RAISED:

COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION
Europe	EvalYouth worked with young people in revisiting an evaluation design of a project on quality education and, subsequently, identified additional indicators such as psychological safety and having time for friends that were not evident in evaluation design framework prior to engagement with young people. Evaluations can be improved by working with young people in defining indicators and measurement.
Ukraine	The national Youth Worker Programme by UNDP Ukraine is connecting youth at the grassroots level with consultations for local and national policies and programmes and supporting capacity development for civil servants and youth civic engagement.
Moldova	The Transnistrian Dialogues in Moldova are engaging young professionals from civil society and young journalists, among others and fostering social cohesion through increased capacity in conflict resolution and mediation and a strengthened space for dialogue.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN DIALOGUE

Youth-inclusive policies and meaningful youth engagement that leaves no youth behind

This closed meeting included 12 participants from UNDP Honduras, Jamaica, Panama Regional Hub and Headquarters in New York and young partners from the 16 x 16 Initiative.

Neville CHARLTON
Youths Inspiring Positive Change, Jamaica

Dalia Francheska MARQUEZ ANEZ
United Youth in Action, Venezuela

Rene DIAZ
Ayudando a Honduras / Red de Jóvenes de Jutiapa, Honduras

THREE KEY OPPORTUNITIES WERE EMPHASIZED:

- There is an opportunity to increase youth engagement at the local level and UNDP's convening role can contribute to include rural youth and co-create development solutions between multiple actors. This can contribute to peace, justice and inclusion through improvement of state-society relations, but there is a need for dedicated efforts to include youth in such collaborations and the United Nations should maintain connections to local organizations in conflict-affected societies.
- The contribution of projects and programmes to youth empowerment and leaving no one behind could be strengthened by prioritizing sustainability of interventions, transparency, and access to information and funding. National hubs, bringing together all relevant information in a youth-friendly way and mapping development initiatives with, for and by youth, is an opportunity to address this.
- Partnerships between young people and UNDP can strengthen governance and peacebuilding efforts by making the efforts more responsive to the needs of the affected populations, increasing knowledge of the situation in communities and identifying new development solutions.

THREE KEY CHALLENGES WERE HIGHLIGHTED:

- Reaching youth at risk of being left behind requires dedicated efforts and with many development processes and projects being centralized, rural youth should be encouraged and supported in engaging and raising their voice about issues affecting their lives and society.
- Young people experience the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on human rights by being denied their rights to participation and safety (i.e. lack of protection mechanisms for young human rights defenders) and access to socioeconomic opportunities and witnessing exacerbation of inequalities within societies.

- Youth organizations, movements and networks lack access to funding and information to enhance and sustain their work, and the nature of youth organizations needs to be better taken into account; e.g. not all youth organizations have legal registration, instead, they tend to be informal local community initiatives.

THREE KEY MESSAGES CAN BE DRAWN FROM THE MEETING:

- Young people are committed to work for more peaceful, just and inclusive societies, but there is a lack of safe and inclusive spaces and platforms for meaningful youth engagement in decision-making processes.
- There is a need for greater commitment from governments to youth organizations and recognition of the contribution by young people to sustainable development. This is particularly important at the local level, as local government and youth can engage on the social and political issues facing communities, and especially rural communities.
- It is critical that development efforts reach rural and marginalized youth and facilitate the inclusion of their needs and aspirations in policies for decision-making to become relevant for all segments of the population.

KEY INITIATIVES WERE RAISED:

COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION
Jamaica	The Amplifying Youth Voices and Action project by UNDP Jamaica is supporting youth engagement in citizen security mechanisms and investing youth solutions for security and safety in communities. UNDP Jamaica facilitates youth mainstreaming across the office's portfolio in areas of environment, citizen security and prevention of gender-based violence, among others.
Latin America and the Caribbean	Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) regional Inter-Agency Working Group on Youth (IAWG-Y) and Youth International Organism for Iberoamerica (OIJ) are examples of regional networks that provide entry points for strengthened support to youth leadership.

GLOBAL EVENT

Youth leadership for peaceful, just and inclusive societies

160 participants attended this public event and 450+ registered for the event.

Speakers were young leaders of the 16 x 16 Initiative; the Major Group for Children and Youth; the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs (UNDESA); the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations; the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations; United Nations Volunteers Sri Lanka; and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

KEY MESSAGES ON ENABLING LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY ENVIRONMENTS FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT WERE HIGHLIGHTED:

- Barriers to young people's participation are multiple, multifaceted, overlapping and intersecting. It is fundamental to expand avenues for youth engagement in decision-making processes, including in priority-setting and accountability mechanisms.
- Enabling policy environments for youth empowerment should be characterized by a recognition of the contribution of young peacebuilders, human rights defenders, volunteers, development practitioners and community servants, which in some contexts is challenged by negative perceptions of young people while the majority of youth are positive agents of change for sustainable development and peace. Furthermore, inclusion of multiple knowledge sources through youth-led analysis, data collection and evaluation, including in Voluntary National Reviews and SDG monitoring and follow up, contributes to an enabling environment.
- The goals and principles of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be guiding the reaction of the international community to the COVID-19 crisis, namely, leaving no one behind, SDG 16: peace, justice and inclusion, and a 'whole of society' approach.
- It is critical to protect and promote civic space, which, in context of the COVID-19 crisis, is closing in many societies. The promotion and protection of civic space is first and foremost the responsibility of Governments. Human rights mechanisms also have a role to play and can provide some protection to youth, but there is an opportunity to strengthen the responsiveness to youth.

"It is cool to care"
Wevyn Muganda, 16 March 2021

"Youth are not useless; they are used less"
Neville Charlton, 16 March 2021

KEY MESSAGES ON CAPACITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH ORGANISATIONS TO EFFECTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC LIFE, AND WELL-EQUIPPED INSTITUTIONS THAT CAN TAKE INITIATIVE AND RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WERE HIGHLIGHTED:

- Institutions can create and strengthen youth engagement mechanisms as a way of working with youth organizations, networks and movements.
- To leave no youth behind, institutions and decision-makers must have an understanding of youth as a diverse group, with diverse vulnerabilities and specific needs; they should therefore prioritize the inclusion of the most marginalized and vulnerable young people and have the capacity to respond to the realities and lived experiences of young people.
- To scale up youth-led peacebuilding efforts in local communities, there should be accessible, relevant, dedicated and agile funding and resources that overcome challenges with legal registration, which can be a long process, at the same time as peace and justice in communities cannot wait.
- The COVID-19 crisis has affected the capacity of all stakeholders to engage in SDG implementation and follow-up, including lack of funding, capacity and staff and at the same time, there is a demand from governments to increase capacities to engage meaningfully with young people in SDG implementation, monitoring and follow up and throughout the programme cycle.
- There is an opportunity to increase the capacity of youth peacebuilding and human rights organizations in monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs.

KEY MESSAGES ON SOLID AND INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS, SPACES AND NETWORKS TO FOSTER YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WERE HIGHLIGHTED:

- Youth networks on peace, justice and inclusion are important because support from peers and stakeholders are important to amplify the voice and actions of young people and create a space for learning and exchange of knowledge and opportunities.
- Civil society organizations and networks should strengthen and broaden the engagement of young people.
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships are vital for the implementation of the SDGs and even more so in context of the COVID-19 crisis. While online platforms have increased stakeholder engagement, this is not true for the most marginalized and vulnerable and children and youth are among the affected.
- For initiatives to foster meaningful youth engagement, these should seek co-creation with young people, be driven by youth expertise and experiences, go beyond conference participation, connect local and global levels, bridge different sectors, and spotlight youth actions for peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

KEY INITIATIVES WERE RAISED:

COUNTRY	DESCRIPTION
Global	The United Nations Common Agenda and the <u>declaration on the occasion of the United Nations 75 Anniversary</u> entails commitment to listen to and work with youth.
Global	The <u>ECOSOC Youth Forum</u> is an annual institutionalized mechanism for youth engagement in policy discussions at the United Nations and the outcome (Summary and Presidential Statement) can be considered a contribution to <u>High-Level Political Forum negotiations</u>.
Multiple	Entry points for youth engagement in SDG review, beyond national Voluntary National Review (VNR) processes, are regional dialogues convened by the <u>United Nations Regional Commissions</u>, regional preparatory events for the <u>High-Level Political Forum</u> and <u>local VNRs</u>.
Global	<u>The Secretary-General's Call to Action on Human Rights</u> addresses the need to promote the rights of children, youth and future generation to a healthy environment and to participation in decision-making processes.
Global	The United Nations guidance note on the promotion and protection of civic space (2020).
Global	The <u>UNDP Youth 16 x 16 Initiative</u> has amplified youth voices, strengthened capacities for youth-inclusive policy and programme support and expanded existing and opened new avenues for meaningful youth participation in SDG implementation, monitoring and review with a focus on SDG 16. The Initiative is implemented through <u>UNDP's Youth Global Programme for Sustainable Development and Peace</u> and it's first phase (2019-2021) resulted in more than 100 activities and fostered co-creation and collaboration between youth organizations, networks and movements and the United Nations.
Sri Lanka	Young entrepreneurs in communities and at the global level are supported through <u>Youth Co:Lab</u> Sri Lanka and hackathons.
Multiple	A recent tool seeking to increase capacity building on meaningful and inclusive stakeholder engagement is: '<u>What is a 'good practice? A framework to analyze the quality of engagement in the implementation and follow-up to the SDGs</u>' (UNDESA and UNDP, 2021).
Global	<u>Rome Youth Call to Action on SDG 16</u> was developed through a participatory process with the <u>young leaders</u> of the <u>16 x 16 Initiative</u> drafting the call to action on the basis of expertise and experiences from their youth organizations, networks and movements and with the insights from an online consultation with young people from across the world.
Sri Lanka	The youth, peace and security coalition in Sri Lanka is supporting youth engagement in sustaining peace. Report: <u>Youth, peace and security</u> in Sri Lanka (2017)
Honduras	Through the project Peace Artist, <u>Helping Honduras</u> is working with children and youth in rural communities towards sustainable development and peace.
Philippines	During the COVID-19 crisis, the <u>Young Women Leaders for Peace Philippines</u> have worked to reach the marginalized and vulnerable such as people experiencing poverty, displacement or living in conflict-affected areas by using local language for COVID-19 prevention material, advocating for peaceful and gender responsive dialogues on digital platforms and spotlighting young women at the frontlines through a campaign.
Togo	<u>International Association of Women and Young Leaders (AIFJL)</u> is supporting women and youth leadership including by training 500 youth in human rights, conflict prevention and mediation.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

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@UNDP4Youth
#16x16 #Youth4Peace

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Page 6, PNUD Mali: 2018 Election.
Page 10, left, Sihem Nasraoui: portrait for the 16 x 16 blog series.
Page 10, right, artwork by Karim Habib for the 16 x 16 blog series.
Page 12, Maria Stage: Samira Barucija, 16 x 16 participant from BiH delivering remarks at a conference, Rome, 2019.
Page 14, Maria Stage: Neville Carlton, 16 x 16 participant from Jamaica being interviewed on SDG 16, Rome, 2019.
Page 18, Rene Diaz: 16 x 16 participants at the preparatory conference for the High-Level Political Forum on SDG 16 and leaving no one behind, Rome, 2019.