



# Mapping the Landscape

## A Comprehensive Analysis of Youth Peacebuilding Initiatives

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This report presents an in-depth analysis of diverse initiatives led around the globe to foster the meaningful engagement of youth in peacebuilding processes or advance the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. Through a meticulous mapping process, the study uncovers the wide array of strategies employed by both youth-led and non-youth-led organizations, and identifies thematic and programmatic trends. While this analysis was originally envisioned to contribute to the United States Institute of Peace's (USIP) strategic promotion of the Youth Peace and Security (YPS) agenda worldwide, it also offers valuable insights for other global entities for future youth engagement in peacebuilding.

# Background

The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted the first resolution 2250 on youth, peace, and security (YPS) in December 2015, recognizing the positive contribution of young women and men to peace. Resolution 2250 was followed by Resolution 2419 in 2018, and Resolution 2535 in 2020, further underlining the vital need to include youth in peacebuilding decision-making and supporting their work in building and sustaining peace.

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is dedicated to the proposition that a world without violent conflict is possible, practical, and essential for global security. USIP sees youth as agents for positive change and works to equip young peacebuilders with the knowledge and skills they need to bring divided communities together and manage conflict non-violently. This mapping was conducted to enable USIP to identify avenues to advance the global YPS agenda and to strengthen its support for youth to be at the center of peacebuilding.

# Methodology

The mapping process focused on accessing reports, blogs, and articles from **over 1200 youth peacebuilding projects, programs, initiatives, and events**. Information was gathered through organization websites, social media platforms, and communication with the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security (GCYPS). The mapping primarily examined initiatives implemented over the last 5-6 years (between July 2017 and April 2023), with a particular emphasis on global organizations involved in YPS programming.

While the mapping reviews a wide array of initiatives, it's important to acknowledge certain constraints impacting the depth of the analysis. Limitations include the lack of detailed information in some reports, an absence of quality assessments for the initiatives examined, and the complex nature of categorization within the mapping process itself.

# Mapping of Youth Peacebuilding Organisations and Initiatives

In the course of the mapping, a total of 147 entities engaged in youth peacebuilding were identified. Of these, a detailed mapping was conducted for **538 initiatives from 104 organizations**, focusing on youth peacebuilding. These 104 organizations encompassed a range of stakeholders, including 56 NGOs/CSOs/INGOs, 27 UN agencies, 9 donors and/or government organizations, 4 academia, and 8 national youth coalitions.

The 538 mapped initiatives demonstrated a wide array of thematic and programmatic focuses, targeting global, regional, and national contexts. Of these initiatives, **69% have a global focus, 16%**

have a regional focus and 14% have a national focus. The initiatives were implemented in **111 Countries and 22 Geographical Regions** (different organizations/agencies categorize the world geography differently).

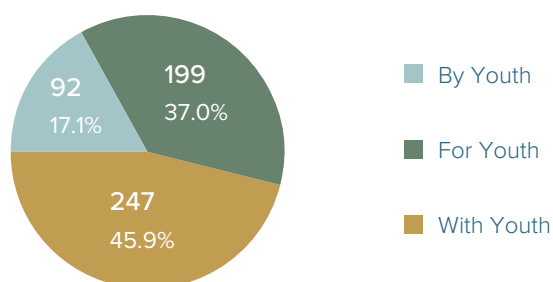
Based on observations, each of the 538 initiatives was categorized based on their thematic focus and programmatic approaches. This process led to the identification of **82 unique thematic focus areas and 26 distinct programmatic approaches** within these initiatives. Below is a highlight of some of the most prevalent themes and approaches:

- **Thematic Focus of the initiative:** Political and/or Civic Participation, Peace Education<sup>1</sup>, Gender/WPS, Protection, Peacebuilding<sup>2</sup>, Disarmament/Nuclear Disarmament, Climate, Youth Engagement & Empowerment (YEE) and/or Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE), Financing, Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE)/Terrorism, Media/Media Information Literacy (MIL), Peace Process and YPS (combined)<sup>3</sup>.
- **Programmatic Focus/Approach of the initiative:** Training, Resource/Manual development, Research, Campaign, Dialogue, Consultation, Competition<sup>4</sup>, Funding, Conference, Seminar/Webinar, and Advocacy.

## Insights:

1. The analysis looked at the varying levels of youth participation across initiatives (the role of youth in the implementation of each initiative). The analysis revealed that **37%** of the mapped initiatives are organized/implemented **'For Youth'** (i.e. trainings for youth or research on youth context by non-youth led organizations), **46%** **'With Youth'** (i.e. consultation with youth by non-youth led organizations), and **17%** **'By Youth'** (i.e. trainings, advocacy or research, etc by youth-led organizations, with or without the support of other stakeholders).

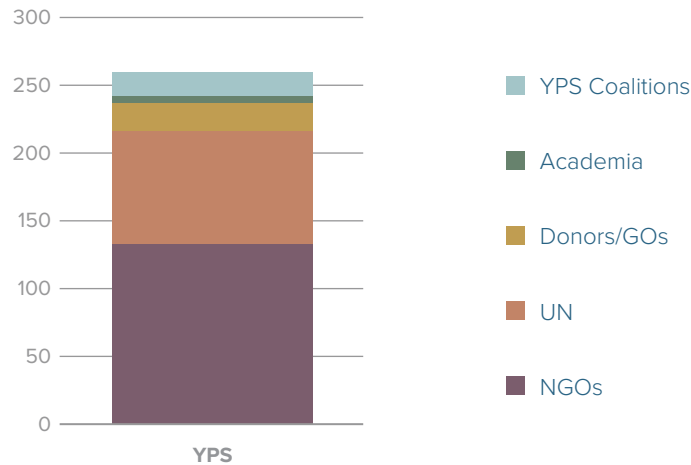
**CHART 1. Role of Youth in Initiative Implementation**



1. Educating to adopt a positive attitude to manage, resolve and transform the issues of conflicts.
2. Where the initiatives aim to contribute to Peacebuilding in general.
3. Where the initiatives focus on YPS as a whole, rather one of its pillars.
4. Activities where individuals or teams compete to produce better results innovatively or creatively. Some of the mapped examples are video/movie challenges, Hackathon, developing digital games solutions, developing apps, and music challenges.

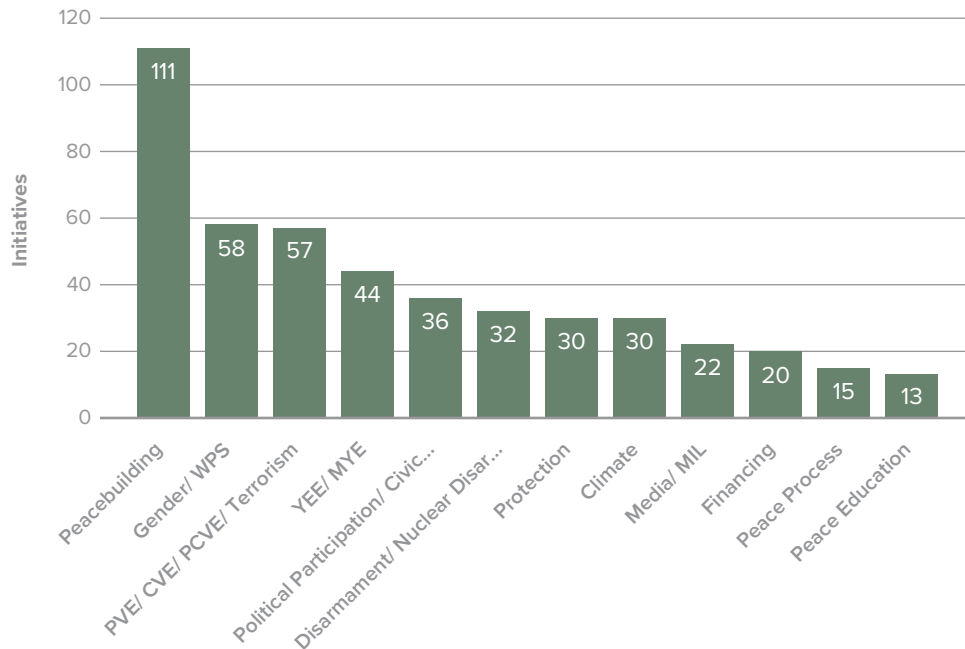
- Thematically, **48%** of all the mapped initiatives focused on **YPS (combined)**, meaning initiatives focus on YPS as a whole, rather than one of its pillars.

**CHART 2. Thematic Focus YPS**



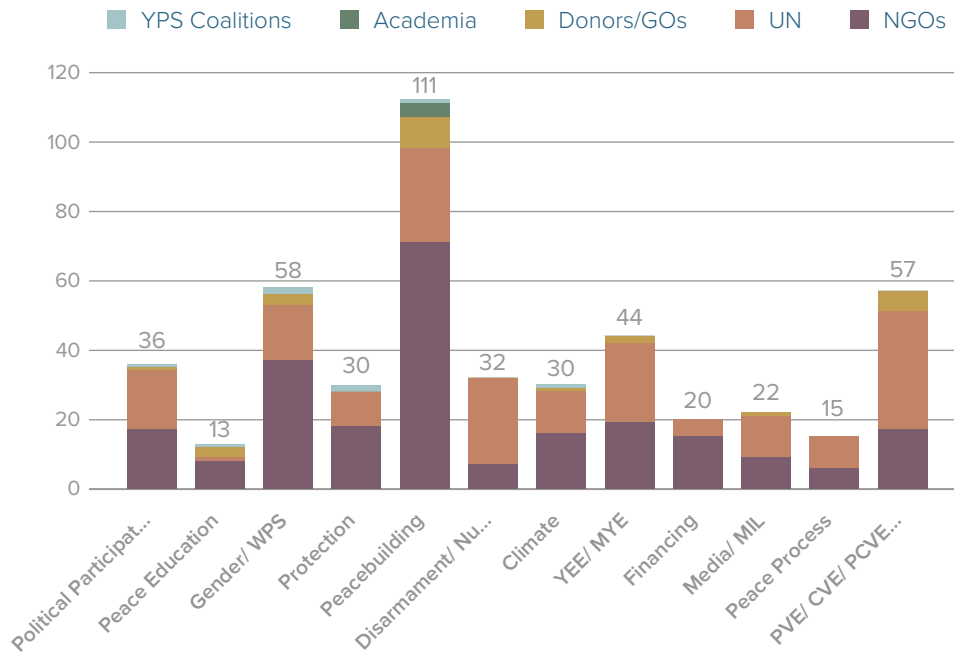
- General **peacebuilding**-focused initiatives are the second highest, accounting for 21% of the mapped ones. The third place was shared by two themes: **Gender/WPS** and **Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE)**, each observed in 11% of the mapped initiatives.

**CHART 3. Thematic Focus**



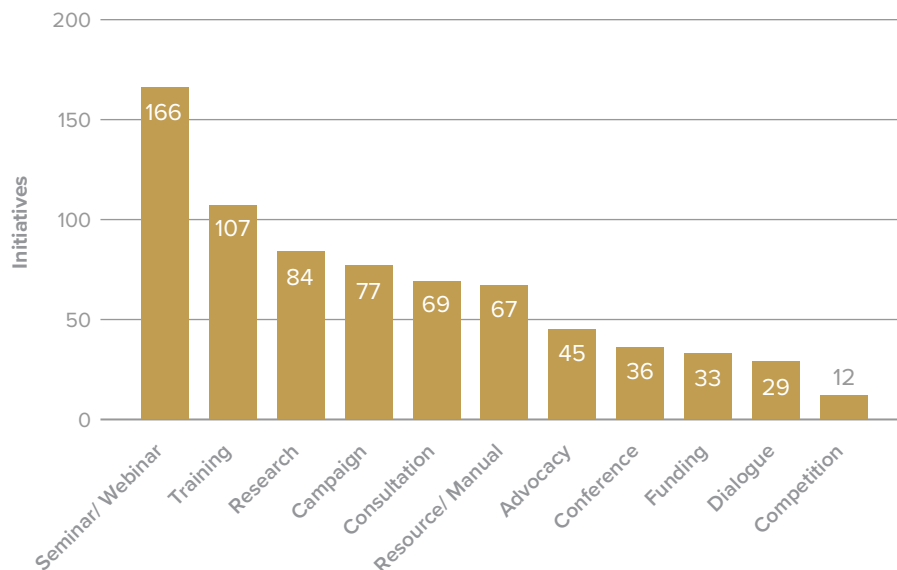
4. When looking at initiatives by the type of organization implementing them, the thematic area where UN agencies have been focusing the most, other than YPS (combined), is **Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE)/Terrorism**. For CSOs, it is **Peacebuilding** (general).

**CHART 4. Thematic Focus by Type of Organization**



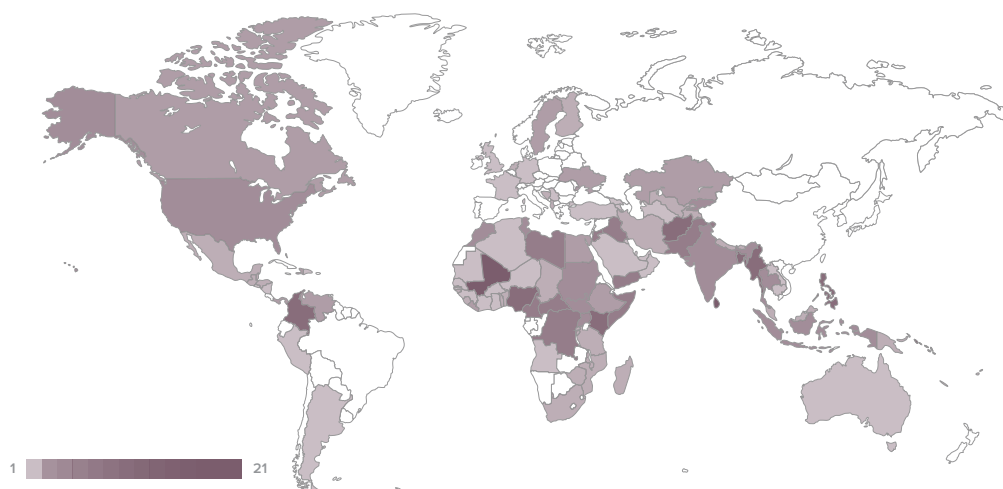
5. When looking at the programmatic approach, the most common programmatic approach was webinars, seminars, conferences, or conference-side-events (**38% of initiatives**). These include both virtual and on-site initiatives.

**CHART 5. Programmatic Focus**



6. The other most preferred programmatic approach is **Training (20% of mapped initiatives)**. Comparatively, only 5% of initiatives preferred approaches like **Dialogues**, and only 2% were innovative **Competitions**.
7. Among the research initiatives, there are very few examples of **youth-led participatory research**. For example, **'More than tokens'** research by the Canadian Coalition on YPS and [Participatory Action Research for Advancing Youth-Led Peacebuilding in Kenya](#) by USIP.
8. While these 538 initiatives were implemented in 111 Countries, only 22 (20%) countries account for more than 50% of the initiatives. 11 Countries with the most initiatives are Mali (21), Sri Lanka (20), Kenya (16), Nigeria (16), Philippines (16), Afghanistan (14), Somalia (14), Colombia (13), Jordan (13), Myanmar (13) and Yemen (13).

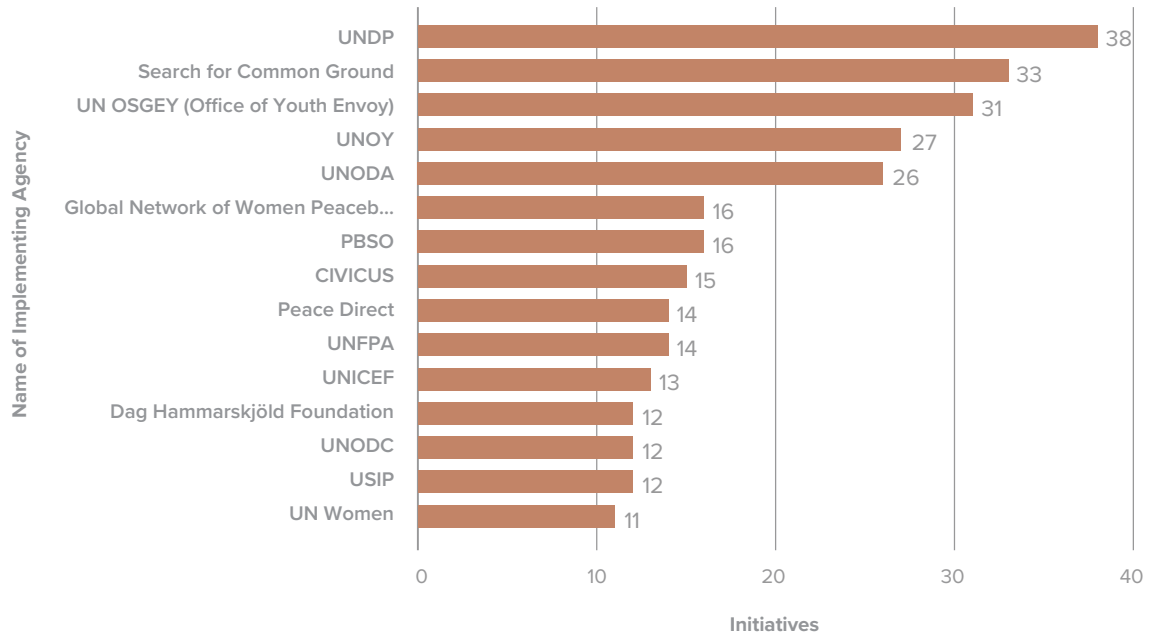
**CHART 6. Initiatives by Country**



9. While these 538 initiatives were implemented in 22 Regions, 70% of these had a global focus. The five Regions with the most initiatives are Africa (55), Asia (33), Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (26), Southeast Asia (20), and Europe (13)<sup>5</sup>.
10. The 15 Organisations with the most initiatives in this mapping are UNDP (38), Search for Common Ground (33), UN Office of SG's Youth Envoy (31), UNOY (27), UNODA (26), Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (16), PBSO (16), CIVICUS (15), Peace Direct (14), UNFPA (14), UNICEF (13), Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (12), UNODC (12), USIP (12), and UN Women (11).

5. Other regions were the Caribbean, South Asia, North America, the Pacific, Europe and Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean (LAC), Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia, Latin America, Asia Pacific, Australia, East Asia and Pacific, Europe and North America (EUNA), Europe and the Southern Mediterranean region, Northeast Asia, and the Western Balkans.

## CHART 7. Implementing Agency and Initiatives



- The 15 organizations, which represent 14% of all organizations mapped, are responsible for more than 54% of the mapped initiatives. On average, the data indicates that each of the organizations mapped is involved in approximately 5.167 initiatives.



## Recommendations

- 1. Enhance direct and active youth participation in formulating strategies for implementation and monitoring the implementation of the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agenda at national and local levels.** 538 youth peacebuilding initiatives from 104 organizations (69% of which were implemented with a global focus) in the last 6 years is strong proof that there is a lot happening since the adoption of UNSCR 2250 in 2015. However, this has not resulted in achieving equally impressive success in changing national or local realities for youth. This gap may be due to the fact that youth are often involved in a limited and selective way. Within our mapping, we discovered a relative dearth of initiatives designed to enhance youth mechanisms for direct engagement in YPS implementation or to advocate for accountability and transparency at the national level. This underlines the urgency of ensuring that young people or youth-led organizations are meaningfully part of the YPS implementation processes, including **coalition-building efforts, policy formulation, and monitoring implementation efforts.**
- 2. Support the establishment of strong national YPS coalitions/networks to promote collaboration, strategic planning, and inclusivity.** The success of prominent multi-stakeholder networking efforts like YPS Coalitions in the implementation efforts has been well observed. YPS coalitions/networks serve as critical platforms to enhance collaboration, strategic planning, and ensuring accountability and transparency. They also provide young peacebuilders with leadership opportunities, allowing them to engage meaningfully in advocacy, address power dynamics and contribute actively to national and regional peace and security dialogues and decisions. However, the mapping reveals an underutilization of these coalitions. The eight YPS Coalitions identified have only implemented 18 initiatives, reflecting a ratio of 2.25 initiatives per coalition, significantly lower than the average of 5.167 initiatives per organization. Furthermore, our mapping shows that five organizations have launched more initiatives individually than these eight coalitions combined. While individual organizations are making significant strides, there is a missed opportunity in leveraging the collective power of coalitions. Thus, the formation of more national YPS coalitions or networks should be encouraged, and the work of existing coalitions should be better supported.
- 3. Apply multi-dimensional programmatic approaches that are suited to utilize youth agency optimally for YPS implementation.** Our mapping reveals an overreliance on training and seminars/webinars, while other potentially effective methods like dialogues and competitions were significantly underutilized. In order to achieve better results from youth peacebuilding



initiatives, the usual training and seminar approaches can be complemented with others like research, competition, advocacy or participatory funding to start, scale, or replicate successful initiatives. This expanded approach can enable youth to assume roles beyond mere participants in 'for youth' or 'with youth' initiatives. Given that most countries' national policies do not yet fully reflect YPS commitments, there is a critical need for programs that equip youth with the skills to analyze these policies and advocate for the incorporation of YPS principles. Hence, we recommend that stakeholders broaden their programmatic approaches to fully harness the potential of youth agency in YPS implementation and advocacy.

4. **Prioritize effective protection and sufficient financing mechanisms to ensure active youth political and civic participation.** Our mapping reveals that only 7% of the initiatives focus on Political Participation or Civic Engagement, which aligns with the first pillar of the YPS agenda: Participation. However, active youth political and civic participation is not possible without effective protective measures and sufficient financial resources<sup>6</sup>. Our mapping data suggests that these critical elements are often overlooked in existing initiatives. Therefore, future programs must prioritize these aspects to ensure meaningful youth engagement.
5. **Address the lack of specific programs supporting youth who face wrongful prosecution in peaceful protests related to peacebuilding, climate change, human rights, or cultural preservation.** No such program was identified in this mapping. The initial step in this direction could be to organize a legal literacy and youth rights program.
6. **Strike a balance between approach aimed at Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE), which comprised 11% of the initiatives in our mapping, and other crucial pillars of the Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agenda, particularly participation and protection.** The focus on PCVE initiatives, particularly those addressing intolerance, hate speech, and extremism, primarily online, has often overshadowed other essential aspects of the YPS agenda. Such **disproportionate attention** conflicts with the core idea of the YPS agenda that most of the young people are peaceful and key contributors to building and sustaining peace in the communities. Youth-PCVE work should get only proportionate attention (as per the need) in comparison to other YPS work in different contexts.

This report on the comprehensive mapping of global youth peacebuilding initiatives provides valuable insights and recommendations for promoting youth's active role in building and sustaining peace. By addressing the identified gaps and leveraging multi-stakeholder collaborations, the international community can enhance the implementation of the YPS agenda and support young peacebuilders worldwide.

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6. <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2021/06/first-ever-global-report-on-protecting-young-people-in-civic-space-highlights-need-for-stronger-global-protection-mechanisms/>

# Appendix:

Type of Entity	Entity Mapped (#)	Initiatives Mapped (#)
NGOs	56	256
UN	27	219
Donors/GOs	9	35
Academia	4	10
YPS Coalitions	8	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>538</b>
<b>Initiative/ Entity Ratio</b>		<b>5.173</b>

Type of Entity	Pol Parti /Civic Engmt/ Gov	Peace Ed	Gender	Prot- ection	Peace- building	Nu- clear / Disarm -ament	Cli- mate	YEE/ MYE	Fi- nance	MIL	Peace Pro- cess	PCVE	YPS
NGOs	17	8	37	18	71	7	16	19	15	9	6	17	133
UN	17	1	16	10	27	25	12	23	5	12	9	34	83
Donors/ GOs	1	3	3	0	9	0	1	2	0	1	0	6	22
Academia	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
YPS Coalitions	1	1	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>260</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>48%</b>

Type of Entity	Train- ing	Re- source / Manual	Re- search	Camp- aign	Dia- logue	Consul- tation	Compe- tion	Funding	Confer- ence	Sem- inar/ Webinar	Advoca- cy
NGOs	50	25	51	31	12	21	3	26	12	89	27
UN	49	36	21	36	9	41	9	5	18	53	12
Donors/ GOs	4	4	7	6	4	2	0	2	2	15	2
Academia	1	0	5	0	0	3	0	1	0	4	1
YPS Coalitions	3	2	2	4	4	2	0	0	4	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>8%</b>