

United Network Of Young Peacebuilders

Patron: H.H. The Dalai Lama, Nobel Peace Prize Winner



Strategic Plan 2011 – 2015 UNOY Peacebuilders

The 2011-2015 Strategic Plan reconfirms the Vision and Mission of UNOY Peacebuilders. The document sets out four broad strategic priorities and identifies key activities and milestones towards their achievement. The latter part of the document provides insight into the financial base for this plan to be accomplished.

Vision: A future where youth play a critical role in contributing to a world where peace, justice, solidarity, human dignity and respect for nature prevail.

Mission: The United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders) is a youth-led network of youth organisations working towards establishing peaceful societies. We facilitate capacity development and support advocacy work. We embrace and cherish values of non-violence, diversity, inclusion and participation.

Target group: UNOY Peacebuilders exists to support youth-led and youth-focused organisations, as well as informal youth groups^a, that embrace the UNOY Peacebuilders values and which are members of the network, in building peaceful societies.

Strategic priorities:

1: To facilitate the build-up of the capacities of members to mobilize more youth to be effective contributors to the creation of peaceful societies.

2: To develop positive youth engagement in international and national processes related to peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

3: To strengthen the effectiveness of UNOY Peacebuilders as a network based on democratic principles and a shared feeling of ownership that utilizes opportunities for members.

4: To strengthen UNOY Peacebuilders' public image.

^a Informal youth groups are youth groups that know a formalized structure of organisation and management but cannot register legally as an organisation in their region, for example due to security or political reasons.

Introduction

Since its beginning in 1989, the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders) has organised a series of international working groups and local, national, regional and global training seminars and conferences. These projects were recognized by participants, donors and governmental agencies for their high quality and relevance. Our major focus has been on peacebuilding activities in the Caucasus region and in Africa.

UNOY Peacebuilders has, among other things, been actively campaigning for the promotion of the UN declared International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence (2001-2010). In 2005, UNOY Peacebuilders contributed to the World Civil Society Mid-Term Report on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace. In 2006 the network contributed to the Global Youth Solidarity Fund Report for a Culture of Peace, which was taken up by the UN Alliance of Civilizations program in 2008. In 2010, UNOY Peacebuilders contributed to the End of the Decade Report.

Given the extensive growth of the network, the need arose to clarify the membership criteria, structure of cooperation between members and the International Secretariat (IS), and accountability within the network. A one-year consultation process was initiated in 2006 with the aim of restructuring the network and its functions. Consequently, as of 2007 UNOY has become a network composed of approximately 40 youth peace member organizations from Africa, Latin America, Europe and Asia. The IS, based in The Hague, supports the members in their projects, speaks when appropriate on their behalf, promotes the role of youth in peacebuilding processes at international forums and facilitates members attendance to these international events. The International Steering Group, consisting of representatives of the members, IS and Board was established and the board was restructured. Following the consultation process and the plans for the restructuring the network, the first strategic plan (2006-2010) was written. It focused primarily on creating the newly envisioned network structure with all its bodies and on developing and implementing a capacity building programme for the members and the IS.

Between 2007 and 2010 UNOY Peacebuilders has implemented a growing number of highly successful training projects in Europe and Africa and produced three outstanding practice-led research publications and toolkits on issues related to youth and peace. Finally, UNOY Peacebuilders has shown leadership in gender mainstreaming amongst youth peace organizations.

UNOY Peacebuilders is regarded as a well-established and widely recognised international youth network that maintains a good reputation among youth organisations, Dutch and European donors, and UN institutions. The IS and the member organizations are regarded as sources of knowledge among international, national and local organizations and institutions. Therefore, UNOY Peacebuilders was able to speak at a range of international events and expert meetings and has enabled member organisation to attend a dozen international UN and EU conferences and consultative meetings. Since 2010 the network organisation received consultative status at UN EcoSoc. UNOY Peacebuilders' presence on a global scale is made possible by a committed, involved and well trained team of young people at the IS and by the youth active in the member organisations within the network.

UNOY Peacebuilders' Strategic Plan 2011-2015

With the end of the first phase approaching, a number of initiatives were taken to develop the second strategic plan for the future. Throughout 2009 and early 2010, both the IS and the network as a whole underwent an external evaluation. Furthermore, the International Steering Group (ISG), representatives of member organisations, the IS and the Board undertook a branding process to identify the core essence of the network, its values and focus. This work was presented in January of 2010 at an international youth meeting attended by a group of representatives of the member organisations, the ISG members, the Board and the IS team. During this week-long meeting, the foundations for the strategic plan for 2011-2015 were agreed upon. During the spring and summer of 2010, the strategic plan was further developed in consultation with the Board and the ISG. The final plan was approved in September 2010. The strategic plan will guide the Management Team in developing the UNOY annual workplan and facilitate the monitoring of the developments of UNOY by the Board and ISG. The relevance of the Strategic Plan for the organisation will be assessed and reviewed half-way of its implementation.

The Context

Since its establishment in 1989, UNOY Peacebuilders has seen a growing engagement with young people around the world. With the publication in 2007 of the World Bank's development report which focused on youth,^[1] young people have established themselves as a target for development programs. Since then, a growing number of organisations have incorporated a chapter on youth and/or youth involvement in their strategic plans and are exploring how to ensure meaningful youth involvement ^[2].

Despite the growing acknowledgement of the potential positive role of young people as constructive contributors to the development of their communities^[3], we believe much work still needs to be done in order to ensure the full potential of youth is utilised, especially when it relates to the peace building and conflict transformation work undertaken around the world. In particular, it seems that the motivation to incorporate youth is born primarily out of a perception of the youth as a potential security threat^[4], instead of a desire to work with youth as equal partners. This is unfortunate because this attitude disregards the fact that young people have the right to express their opinion, to take part in decision taking regarding the governance that rules over them and they have the right of equal access to all services provided in their country or community as stated in articles 19, 21 and 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)^[5]. In the case of minors, the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) also states that the minor has the right to express its views and these

should be given due weight. This can only be realised by ensuring access to information and freedom of expression.^[6]

Obviously young people are not violent by nature. A wide variety of variables can cause them to engage in violence ^[7]. For instance, as UNOY Peacebuilders' member youth organisations can confirm from their own experiences, young people are often disillusioned about their lack of employment opportunities, lack of possibilities to migrate, and their limited ability to influence the social and political settings they live in. The structural exclusion of youth, combined with gender inequality, poor governance and a legacy of past violence, does not only constitute a breach of their basic Human Rights^[8], but it also leads to a growing disillusionment among young people. This in turn makes youth increasingly susceptible to violent behaviour as a way to make their voices heard.^[9] Additionally, young people are too often targeted by fighting parties or political factions and recruited to join the forces or pressured into using violence for political gains,^[10] despite of the fact that this has been ruled unlawful by the CRC the related international legal framework.^[11] An unsupportive community or a lack of basic needs can also cause children, drawn to the rebels in search of basic needs and attention, to slowly gravitate towards armed movements.^[12] Member organisations of UNOY Peacebuilders, for example in East Congo and Colombia, can confirm these findings.

These factors, combined with the growing reality of a youth bulge in Africa, parts of Asia and the Middle East,^[13] has made it clear that the work of UNOY Peacebuilders for young people, by young people, and with young people is more pressing than ever before.

It is evident that young people represent a huge social capacity and important source for development in their communities, and that they show a strong resilience to the social and political pressures pulling them towards violent actions.^[14] Sadly, these positive attributes are often overlooked^[15] denying young people their right to contribute to the well-being of their community as required in article 29 of the UDHR. Therefore, peacebuilding initiatives should continue to focus on empowering youth to take positive action and to challenge negative attitudes. Young people should be included into their local communities, giving them a sense of belonging and thereby increasing their resilience to external social pressures.^[16]

In recent years youth policies have been developed in more and more countries, and increasing numbers of international agencies have incorporated a youth focus into their programmes. Nevertheless, despite the growing understanding that policies are most successful when developed with the stakeholders, youth policies and programmes are too

often created *for* youth and not *with* youth.^[17] Within countries experiencing conflict and among international peacebuilding agencies this tendency to talk about youth, rather than working with youth, is even stronger. This is a missed opportunity.

To conclude, UNOY Peacebuilders believes it should empower youth organisations working for peace. These organisations should be encouraged to professionalise their work even further and to proactively engage in the process of policy and programme development with their governments, intergovernmental and international agencies as they are entitled to under the UDHR and the CRC. Young people must monitor the implementation of these peacebuilding policies and programmes and ensure they will not only be for youth, but also with youth and by youth. Only in this way will we be able to ensure a world in which peace, justice, solidarity, human dignity and respect for nature prevails.

Strategic Priorities for 2011 – 2015

Strategic Priority 1: To facilitate the build-up of the capacities of members to mobilize more youth to be effective contributors to the creation of peaceful societies.

UNOY Peacebuilders aims to support members and to build their capacities. This will further enable them to become more effective in mobilizing youth to become constructive, pro-active and non-violent agents of change addressing root causes and the impact of violence in their communities. The thematic focus of members is regionally specific. However, common denominators include a) addressing unequal division of resources and poverty, and b) democratic processes and the social exclusion and discrimination of young people. An underlying theme in all UNOY Peacebuilders' work is gender inequality as it is considered to be one of several indicators and aggravating components of injustice. Considering that Injustice in its different forms being a root cause of violence and conflict.

Key activities:

1. Ensure that member organisations can benefit from capacity building opportunities.
 - Enable members to take part in trainings and other opportunities provided by external parties by mapping opportunities and supporting applications of members.
 - Support members in implementing joint capacity building initiatives focusing on their specialized regional or thematic learning needs, including the IS co-organising such initiatives.
 - Support the development of UNOY member specific manuals and toolkits plus related training modules by members.

2. Ensure that member organisations connect with each other and share knowledge and skills.
 - Support job shadowing and other meeting opportunities among members.
 - Provide an information database that is easy to browse, reliable and accessible for members and/or compile an information feed from existing external forms and databases that is accessible for members.
 - Map and highlight specialisation and knowledge of network members and create links based on needs.

Milestones:

By 2011 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Disseminate capacity building opportunities for member organisations and their youth and support the applications of five member organisations for these opportunities per year.
- Have up-to-date overviews of peacebuilding activities, knowledge and skills existing among the members in the network.
- Develop one regional capacity building initiative specifically targeting the needs of member organisations in that region with the support of the IS.

By 2013 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Provide a database of tools and resources relevant for the members organisations, updated by the users and facilitated by the IS.
- Provide young people in the member organisations with opportunities to volunteer and intern with other youth organisations in the network in order to enhance the exchange of knowledge and skills between members organisations and their young people.
- Develop three regional capacity building initiatives specifically targeting the needs of members in those regions with the support of the IS.

By 2015 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Develop capacity building initiatives for members of all regions with the support of the ISG and the IS.

Strategic Priority 2: To develop positive youth engagement in international and national processes related to peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

UNOY Peacebuilders aims to secure the involvement of its members as stakeholders in peacebuilding initiatives (incl. the exploration, development, implementation and evaluation phases) of international non-governmental, intergovernmental and governmental organisations, bodies and agencies in regions where UNOY Peacebuilders is present.

Key activities:

1. Facilitate the inclusion and the active participation of UNOY members in Peacebuilding initiatives of governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental international organisations, bodies and agencies.
 - Have up-to-date mapping of key external players active in peacebuilding initiatives in the regions in which members are active (provided and updated by the members).
 - Support member organisations in the preparation of and follow up on their engagement with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental international bodies and agencies that are relevant to UNOY Peacebuilders.

2. Support UNOY members and governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental international bodies and agencies to effectively engage in fruitful cooperation in peacebuilding initiatives.
 - Provide practical tools to help guide members in the preparation and implementation of their visits and engagements in policy development and decision making. This includes providing advocacy trainings.
 - Collect the best practices of member organisations' engagements with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental international bodies and agencies and share them with relevant bodies and agencies wishing to work with youth organisations.

Milestones:

By 2011 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Create an up-to-date overview of peacebuilding initiatives in members' respective regions that is updated by members and shared with the network.
- Through the IS, enable five members each year to attend an event as a participant or speaker on topics relevant to the network.

By 2013 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Be one of the leading youth organisations working on peacebuilding at an international level contacted by international agencies and governments bodies in the regions UNOY is active.
- Join two existing alliances of international NGO's and agencies in which the IS and representatives from at least two member organisations are able to represent the needs and views of UNOY.
- Through the IS, enable ten members each year to attend an event as a participant or speaker on topics relevant to the network.

By 2015 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Be one of the leading youth organisations working on peacebuilding at an international level, owning specific expertise on certain topics resulting in international agencies and governments bodies contacting UNOY in the regions in which it is active in and at an international level.
- Join four existing alliances of international NGO's and agencies in which the IS and representatives from at least five member organisations are able to represent the needs and views of UNOY.
- Through the liaison work of UNOY representatives, enable 15 members to attend opportunities provided by external organisations each year on topics relevant to the network.

Strategic priorities three and four will support the first and second priorities

Strategic priorities three and four will ensure that the capacities and expertise of members are recognized and that the network and members enjoy a high standing. UNOY Peacebuilders will be a point of contact and consultation for external parties and institutions, thereby opening up opportunities to achieve strategic priorities one and two.

Strategic Priority 3: To strengthen the effectiveness of UNOY Peacebuilders as a network based on democratic principles and a shared feeling of ownership that utilizes opportunities for members.

UNOY Peacebuilders aims to ensure that our network is run by and active for the members. An effective UNOY Peacebuilders network is able to create a holistic overview of the youth peacebuilding sector and identify new trends and opportunities for action quickly. An effective network is able to capture the learning of members in the network, ensuring minimum loss of time and resources and maximum build-up of capacity. To reach this aim the network can grow slowly and concise within the set criteria of membership, welcoming active youth organisation and suspending non active members. While other youth organisations can affiliate themselves with specific campaigns and projects.

Key activities:

1. Maintain a dynamic, efficient network of youth led and youth focused peace organisations built on democratic principles.
 - Organise an annual meeting of the key representatives of the network.
 - Ensure that the members of the ISG and Board are democratically elected.
 - Monitor and evaluate the meaningful and consistent contributions and active partnership and participation to the network by member organisations.
 - Monitor and evaluate the use and relevance of UNOY Peacebuilders' services. Focus on the continuous improvement and upgrading of our organisation as well as on the dissemination of our success.
 - Maintain the internal communication between members of the network through the IS.

2. Respond to emerging initiatives and trends relevant for youth led and youth focused peace organisations.
 - Benchmark youth initiatives and look out for potential new member organizations active in peacebuilding to strengthen the existing network.

- Monitor the work of UNOY Peacebuilders' members and document the best practices developed by members.
- The Board, International Steering Group members and International Secretariat liaison with organizations/ platforms/ initiatives at the regional/global level.

Milestones:

By 2011 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Develop programmes with the members that primarily respond to the needs of the members and their youth communities.

By 2013 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Ensure that members cooperate within the network with support from the international Secretariat and ISG.
- Increase the amount of active members to 45
- Show through monitoring and evaluation within the network if action is being taken to achieve set goals and further improve upon the gained knowledge of and links made by members.
- Have a democratically elected ISG that is accountable to the members.
- Make the work of the IS and Board transparent to all members.

By 2015 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Become one of the leading youth organisations working on peacebuilding at an international level with expertise on specific topics.
- Show through monitoring and evaluation conducted by members that they are taking action using their gained knowledge and links.
- Ensure that members cooperate with each other with assistance from the ISG members and the IS.
- Have a democratically elected International Board that is accountable to the ISG.

Strategic Priority 4: To strengthen UNOY Peacebuilders' public image.

UNOY Peacebuilders aims to ensure that the networks' unique work and credibility is internationally visible and recognized. This will ensure the realisation of priorities one and two and access to financial support for the network and the individual members. To guarantee this, the internet will be used as the primary form of communication with the global youth community. Presence at international events combined with the internet will be used to approach non-governmental, inter-governmental and governmental agencies and bodies.

Key activities:

1. Work experience and successful practices of members and the IS will be presented to the global youth community and peacebuilding agencies and bodies in accessible and inspiring ways, mobilizing the target groups to action.
 - Maintain an up-to-date mapping of work experience and successful practices of members and IS and present it through the means of internet.
 - Internet tools are integrated into the capacity and advocacy programs, including the follow-up phases, of UNOY Peacebuilders and play a role in the evaluation of these programs.
 - Internet tools enable networking among members within the network and enables target groups to engage with members and the International Secretariat.

2. Maintain an active presence on the websites of strategic partners and relevant social internet platforms.
 - Maintain an active presence (by ISG, IS and members) on internet platforms of strategic partners which reach a global youth community or are set up by relevant policy makers for consultation reasons.
 - Through active presence on external platforms, identify capacity building opportunities for the network's members and identify relevant developments in the field of peacebuilding.

3. Be visible at key events of relevant international non-governmental, inter-governmental and governmental agencies and bodies.

- UNOY Peacebuilders' members, ISG, board and staff use the same UNOY brand image when attending international and global events and opportunities.
- Members of the ISG and IS ensure an active presence in a consultation body of relevant agencies and bodies to represent UNOY Peacebuilders, profile the work of the members and secure access to opportunities and information.
- UNOY Peacebuilders' members are responsible for profiling UNOY Peacebuilders locally and nationally in the regions in which they are active after approval by the ISG or IS.

Milestones:

By 2011 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Increase, through the liaison work of the IS and ISG, visibility of the work of UNOY and its members among the main organisations/ platforms/ initiatives active at international levels on peacebuilding.
- Ensure that all members are clearly visible on the UNOY website and are increasingly represented in UNOY's outreach tools.
- Ensure that the website is attractive, making use of video and photo reports and short, inspiring examples of youth initiatives of member organisations.
- Provide uniform UNOY Brand templates to members of the network to be used in their outreach.

By 2013 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Be acknowledged as one of the leading youth organisations working on peace building at an international level.
- Require that all members, ISG, Board and IS youth representing UNOY Peacebuilders use the same UNOY brand image.
- Be clearly visible on all members' tools for outreach.
- Ensure that the website is a source of information on the role of young people in peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

By 2015 UNOY Peacebuilders aims to:

- Be acknowledge as one of the leading youth organisations working on peacebuilding at an international level with expertise on specific topics.

Financial Base of UNOY Peacebuilders

Since 2007 UNOY Peacebuilders' IS has seen a steady growth of its annual budget, ensuring that the number of staff could grow and more activities could be implemented. The financial base of the IS is built primarily on the funding of one Dutch donor agency, administrative support from the Council of Europe and the European Union and a variety of small funding agencies.

In order to secure the financial base, UNOY Peacebuilders funding Strategy should include:

- Develop donor meetings and events with and for the members and for programmes run by the IS;
- Communicate with international donor agencies and inter-governmental agencies and bodies to insure continued support to the work of the members and the IS.
- Investigate and/or create private funding or sponsoring opportunities by communicating with business community
- Develop partnerships with private companies or bodies.

More specifically for each main element of the organisation the Fundraising Strategy should include for:

The Capacity Building Programmes:

Within Europe and the Netherlands funding continues to come from:

- The EU Youth in Action Programme
- The Council of Europe's 'European Youth Foundation' and the 'Study Sessions' Programmes
- A range of smaller Dutch-based donor agencies

Within Europe but also internationally UNOY Peacebuilders' Capacity Building programmes should be organised by and for the members and will last between six months and two years. Structural relations with European and international donor agencies should be further built up and could result in multi-year funding. Potential thoughts go to:

- EU funding programme 'EuropeanAid'
- Dutch and European international donor agencies (Oxfam Novib/ DIFD/ ZIVIK
- German government)
- UN-AoC / UN-Habitat / UNESCO Youth Portal

The Advocacy Programmes:

With the increased focus of UNOY Peacebuilders on advocacy and its liaison function, financial support should come from:

- EU funded 'Policy Makers-CSO's' dialogue programmes,
- EU 'Youth in Action' programme specifically designed for youth engagement in European policy making and active citizenship initiatives
- UNOY Peacebuilders should find a strategic partner in one of the Dutch Alliances of Developmental Aid for NGOs that formed in 2010 and that received support from the MFS-II
- EU programme Daphne III on Fundamental Rights, Citizenship and Combating Violence Against Children, Youth and Women
- EU programme (also available at EU missions level) 'European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights'
- Dutch and European International Donor Agencies (Oxfam Novib/ DIFD/ German government)

The Administrative Costs of the International Secretariat:

Next to the capacity building and advocacy programmes that have their own budgets, the IS has the responsibility of facilitating the network's structure. The supporting role of the IS should be simple and become more time and cost effective between 2011 and 2013 with the growing involvement of the ISG and members.

The administrative grants from the European Union and the Council of Europe and one international donor agent should be sufficient to cover all costs for the IS in the future. With the growth of successful applications at the EU Youth in Action Programme it is possible to ensure a multi-year commitment from the EU 'Youth in Action' administrative grant by 2010.

UNOY Peacebuilders' International Secretariat, ISG members and board will continue to provide services to external parties. Such services must be covered entirely by the external party enjoying the services. In some of the cases the provided service should generate revenues for the network and the IS. Such revenues will help build up the continuity reserves of the organisation and cover administrative costs and smaller onetime projects.

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