Agreed Language on Youth, Peace and Security

A Report by the United Network of Young Peacebuilders
Executive Summary

This report argues that the capacities of youth and the possibility of youth leadership in preventing and resolving conflict are crucial to building sustainable peace must be recognized. Ensuring the active, systemic, and meaningful participation of youth in issues of peace and security is a demographic and democratic imperative.

By analyzing agreed language on Youth, Peace and Security in past United Nations General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions this report displays wording that UN Member States are politically bound to as they have previously agreed to it. The report demonstrates the feasibility and necessity of a United Nations Security Council Resolution.
The Security Council, the body of the United Nations that is charged with the maintenance of global peace and security, should recognize the positive role youth are playing in peace processes on a global level, and support young people in their work to contribute to peaceful communities. There must be a shift from consulting with youth to putting youth at the center of the process for developing sustainable policies on peace and security and spaces for meaningful participation.

From our analysis of adopted country-specific Security Council Resolutions we see a development of the language on Youth, Peace and Security: from young people as instigators of violence, to an economic perspective in which youth unemployment is a major threat to peace, to finally arriving at the need for youth participation in issues of peace and security in order to ensure sustainable peace. We argue that these challenges recognized by the Security Council are globally cross-cutting issues, especially relevant in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. Based on this, we see a definite space for a thematic resolution on Youth, Peace and Security.

Our demand for a Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security springs from our member organizations – as they are convinced that such a resolution could directly support them in their grassroot work. A resolution would give recognition to the work by young peacebuilders already done, it would ensure support to young peacebuilders and it would put pressure on governments and inter-governmental organizations to meaningfully involve young people in issues of peace and security.

Bearing in mind the political weight of a Security Council Resolution, and the success of other thematic Security Council Resolutions, recognizing that youth involvement in peace and security is a matter of global peace and security, and noting the development of agreed language in the Security Council on issues of Youth, Peace and Security, we argue that a thematic Security Council resolution that is comprehensive and action oriented on this matter is a logical and important development that can support young peacebuilders globally to contribute to building sustainable peace.

Armed conflict is one of the most critical challenges that young people are facing today. Youth are the main victims of conflicts, not only because of direct violence perpetrated against them but also because of their unique vulnerability to both voluntary and involuntary military recruitment. These assertions have led to a dichotomous viewpoint of youth as either causal or recipient agents. We, however, argue for a third viewpoint: one in which youth are recognized as agents for peace. Youth, in fact, are at the frontlines of peacebuilding and are taking on active roles to build peace and prevent outbreaks of violence across the globe.
UNOY’S NETWORK
36 Countries
60 Members
500 Youth Workers
62400 Peacebuilders
The report has been prepared by the United Network of Young Peacebuilders together with Saji Prelis and Ravi Karkara. UNOY Peacebuilders is a global network of 60 youth peace organizations, active in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

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Acknowledgements
“...Gatherings, such as those of the United Network Of Young Peacebuilders help to create a culture of peace by addressing its requirements in an open, honest, and sensitive manner. Only by approaching the demands of peace in this way can we ever hope to overcome the many challenges of achieving a peaceful world and, ultimately, secure for ourselves a lasting, global peace...”

Message of the former UN Secretary-General

Kofi Annan
Introduction

There are currently 1.2 billion youth in the world, the largest number of youth ever to have existed. Different definitions are being used to cover “youth,” a fluid category encompassing a dynamic population with a variety of needs and abilities. When talking on behalf of and about youth, it is essential to recognize that youth is not a homogenous group. “Youth” includes young people with disabilities, young people living with HIV, indigenous young people, young people from minorities, young migrants; young people who are stateless, internally displaced, young refugees or those affected by humanitarian situations or armed conflict. Currently, the dichotomization of labeling youth either as “children” or “adults” has resulted in an underrepresentation of the voices of youth on issues that concern them – including issues of peace and conflict.

Armed conflict is one of the most critical challenges that young people are facing today. Young people in conflict and in post-conflict societies are crucial agents in building peace and positive social change. Young people simultaneously suffer in unique ways from the consequences of violence and they are also uniquely vulnerable to both voluntary and involuntary military recruitment. The portrayal of young people as either causal or recipient agents of conflict, however, neglects the fact that young people play crucial roles in facilitating peaceful transitions towards socially inclusive societies when they can meaningfully contribute at the political, social, and economic level. We argue that a thematic UN Security Council Resolution on Youth Peace and Security is a powerful tool to engage young people in issues of peace and security, and thereby strengthen the peacebuilding work done around the world.

“Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable”

John F. Kennedy
The 21st of December 2010, US Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice chaired an interactive session of the United Nations Security Council named “Voices of a New Generation.” For this event, the first Security Council event on youth ever, youth were invited to address matters of international peace and security. Ambassador Rice underpinned that no discussion on international peace and security can take place if it fails to take into consideration half of the world’s population that is under 25. Ambassador Rice is not the only one who has demanded attention for youth issues at the United Nations. In a similar vein, the UN Secretary General has sworn in his new Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, earlier this year. The fact that this position has only just been created shows the topicality of the issue of youth at the UN. The terms of reference that served to outline the role of this Envoy included a reference to the engagement of youth in peace processes. The latter signals the willingness to integrate a youth perspective into the UN’s work at headquarters level, regional levels and country level.

The abovementioned developments are hopeful, but to what extent are these sentiments translated in existing UN documents? By analyzing agreed language on Youth, Peace and Security in past United Nations General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions, this report demonstrates the feasibility of a United Nations Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security. Such a resolution will ensure increased representation and participation of youth in decision-making levels as active agents in peace and security as well as encourage the adoption of measures aimed at the protection of young people in conflict and post-conflict.

Firstly, chapter 1 will explain the unique position of youth in issues of peace and security and compare this position to the position of other vulnerable groups such as women and children. Chapter 2 will then turn to previous UN documentation and will outline the agreed language on the role of youth in issues of peace and security. Subsequently, a chapter will be devoted to meaningful youth participation and examples thereof that will only underpin the effective potential of youth-led initiatives in building peace.

The report has been prepared by the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY Peacebuilders) together with SajiPrelis and Ravi Karkara. UNOY Peacebuilders is a global network of 60 youth peace organizations, active in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. UNOY Peacebuilders is a non-political, non-religious, non-governmental organization that welcomes youth peace initiatives and organizations regardless of gender, ethnicity, social class, religion, or any other distinction. The UNOY Peacebuilders as a network organization contributes to the work of its members and affiliates in two fundamental ways: Capacity development and Advocacy and Campaigning.

Chapter 1 – Youth, Peace and Security

1.1. Context

Today almost half of the world’s population (48%) is under the age of 24, and of these 18% - or, more than one billion people – are defined as youth⁶. Many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Middle East and North Africa (MENA), have predominantly young populations⁷. Many young people are coming of age in societies that lack equal access to quality education and employment opportunities. There is an increasing concern about youth and the conditions that may encourage their participation in perpetuating violence and preventing the consolidation of peace and development⁸. Violence can break out anywhere with various participants, however in areas where there are large concentrations of youth that face unstable governments, a lack of opportunities and insecurity, the likelihood of violence occurring rises. In fact, youth play a vital role in conflicts, it has been said that war would not be possible without youth⁹. These assertions have led to a dichotomous viewpoint of youth as the problem and the perpetrators of violence or youth as victims. We however argue for a third view point: one in which youth is recognized as the solution and potential advocates for peace. There is a need to transform the way that international community engages young people in conflict and post-conflict contexts and to strengthen their involvement in peace and security processes.

This chapter will endeavor to explain the unique agency and vulnerability of youth. It aims to identify how youth participation and the interests of youth in conflict and post-conflict settings have been incorporated into the United Nations system and will use the position of children and women.

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8. Ibid.
therein as a point of reference. Finally, it will plead for better representation of youth in issues of peace and security, a statement that will be substantiated further at a later stage in this report.

Essentially, this report argues that it is crucial to recognize the positive role that youth can play in building peace and transforming conflict, taking into account the close interrelationship between social justice, sustainable development, human rights and peace as omnipresent in the daily life of the world’s youth. By challenging the youth bulge theory, a theory correlating large youth populations with increased civil conflict, showing the impact of youth-led, youth-focused peace initiatives, the international community can leverage youth engagement to uproot structural violence inherent in many conflict areas. Ensuring the active, systemic, and meaningful participation of youth in issues of peace and security is a demographic and democratic imperative. By engaging youth productively in their societies and in ways that strengthen their livelihood opportunities, the vulnerability of young people can to a large extent be addressed. If young people are held back by such conditions as lack of experience, exclusion from mainstream decision making processes and deliberate political and social marginalization, then a critical constituency of the peace and development nexus will be lost.

“A successful peacebuilding process must be transformative and create space for a wider set of actors — including, but not limited to, representatives of women, young people, victims and marginalized communities; community and religious leaders; civil society actors; and refugees and internally displaced persons — to participate in public decision-making on all aspects of post-conflict governance and recovery.” (SG Report A/67/499–S/2012/746).

Building on this argumentation, one must recognize that the capacities of youth and the possibility of youth leadership in preventing and resolving conflict are crucial to building sustainable peace. The inclusion of young people — who account for a large part of the population — will have an influence on all sectors (social, economic and political) and levels (family, school community) of society. Disparate efforts are not enough to address the scale and scope of the problem. Therefore, a common framework addressing youth security and sustainable peace needs to be articulated, debated, and applied. Indeed, this chapter serves to underscore that youth are not the troublemakers, but that infrastructures and institutions need to highlight and acknowledge the needs and aspirations of youth to ensure meaningful youth participation in peacebuilding processes.

1.2. Youth in (Post-)Conflict Settings

Youth are uniquely vulnerable and thus often referred to as victims in war-torn societies. Today, grave violations are taking place against children and youth in over twenty war-affected countries. Young people experience many forms of suffering: they are killed, maimed, orphaned, abducted, deprived of education and health care, and left with deep emotional and physical scars. The collapse of the state and the social fabric can have damaging effects on youth as it often takes away the most basic services, such as health care and the educational system. Youth suffer from other consequences of conflict such as poverty, unemployment, poor governance and the disintegration of families and communities. The consequences thereof can stretch way beyond the duration of the conflict. The structural exclusion and lack of opportunities faced by young people effectively block or prolong their transition to adulthood.

To recall the 2012 Secretary General report, inclusivity and institution-building are “critical in preventing relapse into violent conflict.” In fact, the report states that “exclusion is one of the most important factors that trigger a relapse into conflict.” In this sense, the

Secretary General is implicating that youth exclusion in the aftermath of conflict can cause for serious security issues and instability.

Furthermore, the changing nature of conflict directly impacts youth as war tactics include systemic attacks that are waged on schools. On a more personal level, conflict can generate a great sense of insecurity, instability and trauma that can be tangible throughout the lives of these youth, affecting their self-worth, dignity, identity and productive capacity. Youth has also been placed within the causes of conflict, as perpetrators, since they are highly vulnerable to (involuntary) military recruitment.

“Young people with limited education and few employment opportunities often provide fertile recruiting ground for parties to a conflict. Their lack of hope for the future can fuel disaffection with society and make them susceptible to the blandishments of those who advocate armed conflict.”

Young people’s participation in conflict has serious implications for their physical and emotional well-being. In many countries, both young women and young men are used as soldiers; and young women are at particular risk of rape, sexual harassment and abuse. Rehabilitation and reintegration is particularly critical for youth formerly associated with armed groups in order to break cycles of violence and to find a new existence after a life of conflict and distress. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes should build on individuals’ strengths, especially their resilience. Limited economic, social and political opportunities are strong contributing factors driving youth to become involved in conflicts. By leaving youth with no alternative sources of dignity and self-worth achieved by gaining respect from others, society often steers a minority group of young people towards violent roles in conflict.

However, it must be stressed that the vast majority of youth is not among these minority groups and that many young people in conflict and post-conflict countries are working for peace. Recent examples have shown young people non-violently changing the structures and institutions that are crippling the social, political and economic wellbeing of people. Across the world, “young people have taken on active roles and created youth networks to try to build peace and prevent outbreaks of violence.” Being the “primary actors in grassroots community development work,” youth are at the “frontlines of peacebuilding.” In 2005, the UN evaluation of the World Program on Action for Youth (WPAY), revealed that young people desired respect for human rights and an active role in society. Specifically, youth populations across the globe voiced desire for participation in improving hunger and poverty, education, employment, political participation in decision-making, environmental law, communication technology, intergenerational issues, health, and conflict.

Contrary to the framework suggested by the “youth bulge” theory, youth have the potential to initiate and engage in positive social change. This theory disregards the role of young people as peacebuilders and in promoting the stability of a nation. Undisputedly, youth are vulnerable to fall victim to violent acts, and the lack of future prospects and limited education can contribute to youth being prone recruits to armed groups. High levels of unemployment, social exclusion and growing discontent amongst youth are not only acute problems of social development, but may also trigger severe regional and global unrest. It is exactly because of this reason that the Security Council, the body of the United Nations that is charged with the maintenance of global peace and security, should recognize the positive role youth are playing in peacebuilding processes all over the world, and provide young people with opportunities to contribute to peaceful communities. There must be a shift from distraction to interaction, from passive partnership to participatory partnership, from seeing youth as sources of conflict to seeing them as resources for peace and development, and from asking them to wait to asking them to lead the way. Youth must

17. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
be given a chance to contribute towards resolving our conflicts. As evidenced by a recommendation made by the WPAY that rests upon the growing awareness that youth are dynamic agents of peace instead of being part of “the problem, youth continue to seek an active role in peace processes and should become part of the solution\textsuperscript{23}.

Today, the struggle youth face to gain representation parallels the struggle the women’s movement endured prior to the passage of Security Council Resolution 1325.

1.3 Children and Women in Peace and Conflict in the UN system

Collaborative efforts of the international community over the last ten years have resulted in tangible results for the children and armed conflict agenda, such as increased global awareness of the issue; strengthened international legal norms and standards; and deployment of Child Protection Advisors in UN peacekeeping and political missions\textsuperscript{24}. In 2005, the Security Council adopted resolution 1612, one of the greatest advancements in protecting children in conflict. The resolution formalized the existing monitoring and reporting practice, established a collection mechanism for timely and reliable information on violations committed against children and led to the systematic listing in the annual report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council of the parties to conflict that recruit or use child soldiers. In 2009, the Security Council adopted resolution 1882, which expanded the listing criteria to include maiming and killing children as well as using sexual violence against them. The listing exercise – or “naming and shaming” as it is commonly referred to – is a powerful measure that has led to signing action plans with various parties to conflict and the release of child soldiers.

Although women’s groups had achieved some successes locally and regionally, prior to the resolution 1325, they had struggled to gain a global voice within a legalized, international framework. In response to these needs, the UN Security Council has passed a series of resolutions dedicated to recognizing the rights of women and girls\textsuperscript{25}. In 2000, with the passage of resolution 1325, the Security Council formally integrated women’s equal participation in peace and reconciliation processes\textsuperscript{26}. Resolution 1325 not only redefined the scope of women’s involvement but also allowed for a more expansive legal framework within which women could participate in and lead the community. The resolution highlighted the need for all parties to account for the special needs of women, mainstream a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations, and foster a deep understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls.

While the interests of both women and children in peace and security have been incorporated in Security Council resolutions, the Council remains to devote a separate resolution to the promotion of youth participation in issues of peace and security. This would put youth on a par with children and women and result in tangible outputs that will further youth involvement in issues of peace and security. It is exactly the absence of such a resolution that contributes to the unprecedented underrepresentation of youth.

\textsuperscript{23} UN General Assembly. Making Commitments Matter: Young people’s input to the 10-year review of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. Report of Secretary-General. A/60/156.

\textsuperscript{24} United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Armed Conflict Factsheet.

\textsuperscript{25} United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Armed Conflict Factsheet.

\textsuperscript{26} Security Council Resolutions 1261 and 1314 are focused on the theme of Children and Armed Conflict. Resolutions 1296 is focused on the theme of the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.
Chapter 2

Analysis of UN Resolutions in Relation to Youth Participation in Peacebuilding

2.1. Introduction

Within the UN system, various resolutions and programs address youth participation in decision-making or touch upon the protection of young people in conflict and post-conflict situations. A Security Council resolution which focuses on youth participation in issues of Peace and Security has, however, never been adopted. We see the adoption of a UN Security Council resolution on Youth, Peace and Security as a crucial way to ensure effective youth protection and above all ensure greater participation of youth in decision-making on issues of peace and conflict. Generally, a UN Security Council resolution carries more political weight than a UN General Assembly resolution, which usually is not meaningfully implemented by all signatory member states. Only through a Security Council Resolution can we achieve a real commitment from the international community.

Groups of youth are already implicitly included in the Security Council resolutions on children and women, as they are young women or still fall under the definition “children”. However, these resolutions do not recognize the specificities of youth and young men above the age of 18. As such they are directly categorized as adults and do not receive any differential protection.

Despite the fact that there is no agreed international and comprehensive framework for analyzing and responding to youth and violent conflict, a number of policy instruments are

“Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal”

Martin Luther King, Jr.
relevant to the issue. Three main policy streams can be seen: (a) the “conflict prevention agenda” which places youth within the causes, conditions and dynamics of conflict (b) the “youth agenda” which treats conflict or post-conflict situations as simply one of the many environments that youth as a distinct group must navigate through as they grow up (c) the “development agenda” as defined by the Millennium Development Goals which focuses mainly on employment as a solution for a perceived youth crisis. The latter illustrates that youth are often perceived to take on only certain specific roles during or in the aftermath of conflict. To date, and as this chapter demonstrates, the UN lacks a specific policy framework on Youth, Peace and Security that offers realistic and implementable recommendations rather than ambitious wish lists.

This chapter serves to establish how existing UN documents have touched upon the subject of youth, peace and security. By analyzing the agreed language on Youth, Peace and Security, we display wording that UN Member States are politically bound to as they have previously agreed to it. First, it will deal with UN General Assembly resolutions. We have analyzed all General Assembly Resolutions on the topic of youth adopted in the period 1985-2013 for relevant language on the key words peace, peacebuilding, security and conflict. Secondly it will look at UN Security Council resolutions. We have analyzed Security Council Resolutions adopted in the period 1995-2013 for relevant language on the key words youth and young.

2.2. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

2.2.1. THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR

The 1985 General Assembly Resolution (GAR) on International Youth Year served to mobilize efforts at the local, regional, and national levels to promote and aim to ensure active youth participation in the overall development of society and implementation of new policies and programs. Essentially, it stressed that United Nations bodies should not cease to give more attention to the role of youth in the world today.

2.2.2. THE WORLD PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR YOUTH TO THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND

In 1995, the General Assembly Resolution on the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 (WPAY) and beyond acknowledged that young people aspire full participation in the life of society. It encouraged states to provide education on peace to young people, and stipulated specifically that “programmes aimed at learning peacemaking and conflict resolution should be encouraged and designed by Governments and educational institutions for introduction to school at all levels.” This resolution was progressive as it stepped away from the dichotomous view of youth as either victims or perpetrators in conflict and offered a more concrete recommendation for action to facilitate the role of youth as peacemakers.

The tenth anniversary of WPAY in 2005 entailed a thorough review of major developments and achieved progress, in which “youth and conflict” was incorporated as a specific topic. In this context, the review acknowledged that examples of youth participation in issues of peace and security were abundant, constituting the “evidence that youth are also agents of peace; with the right educational tools for crisis prevention and peacebuilding they can develop the skills needed to help prevent violent and armed conflicts.” Whereas in the initial World Programme of Action for Youth, the recommended peacemaking education could have been seen as a tool to distract youth from armed groups, the 2005 review explicitly acknowledged youth’s potential to take on meaningful, if not crucial roles in peacebuilding.

2.2.3. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS ON POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INVOLVING YOUTH

In 1995, the idea of an annual GAR addressing policies and programs related to youth was

30. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
launched and implemented. The 1997\textsuperscript{33}, 1999\textsuperscript{34}, 2001\textsuperscript{35}, 2003\textsuperscript{36}, 2005\textsuperscript{37}, 2007\textsuperscript{38}, 2009\textsuperscript{39}, and 2011\textsuperscript{40} annual GARs recalled the Programme of Action stressed again the importance of direct and active participation of youth and the need to support the activities of youth mechanisms that have been set up by various youth organizations. One of the issues that causes for a special concern was mentioned in the 2004 Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth and pertained to “the active involvement of young people in armed conflict, both as victims and perpetrators\textsuperscript{41}.” Subsequently, the 2007 GAR exploited this statement further, by acknowledging that youth are the main victims of conflicts, not only because of direct violence perpetrated against them but also because of their unique vulnerability for illegal recruitment as child soldiers. It labeled such violence not only as “extremely worrisome\textsuperscript{42}” but also as something that has “impacted negatively on [youth’s] development\textsuperscript{43}.” By taking on mature roles young people do not get a chance to develop, neither personally nor professionally. Indeed, “[w]ithout services to help them deal with their situation, youth and young adults may fail to integrate into society\textsuperscript{44}.” It was stressed that such situations are an ongoing reality for young persons “in nearly every region, from which they need to be protected.” The 2007 Resolution on Policies and Programmes Involving Youth thereafter followed the trend to go beyond the victim-perpetrator dichotomy and pleaded for “the promotion of active involvement of youth in maintaining peace and security.” In fact, it called on states to take action on this matter:

“[g]overnments should encourage the involvement of young people, where appropriate, in activities concerning the protection of children and youth affected by armed conflict, including programmes for reconciliation, peace consolidation and peacebuilding\textsuperscript{45}.” (A/RES/62/126)

In addition, it stressed that member states should take all necessary measures to prevent the recruitment of children by armed groups. Lastly, it argued that states should take all necessary measures to “promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of children and young victims of armed conflicts\textsuperscript{46}” by means of safeguarding access to education, health care and youth employment. Interestingly enough, the abovementioned two proposals for action only apply to youth under the age of 18.

The 2010 GAR reaffirms the claim that young people are the main victims of conflicts and calls once again upon Member States “to recognize young women and men as important actors in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict processes\textsuperscript{47}.”

2.2.4. Outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth

In 2011, the General Assembly adopted the outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth as a resolution. In this document, the use of youth as combatants is condemned and it is argued that the effective social and economic reintegration and rehabilitation of demobilized young people should be ensured by Member States. In this document, youth are finally and truly recognized as “agents of development, social inclusion, tolerance and peace\textsuperscript{48}.” Even though this statement has been very hopeful for those advocating for increased youth participation in issues of peace and security, without being accompanied with concrete

38. A/RES/60/2 (2005)
40. A/RES/64/130 (2010)
42. A/RES/58/133 (2004)
44. ibid
45. ibid
46. ibid
47. ibid
recommendations for action and bearing in mind that GARs cannot create legal obligations on its addressees, the Secretary General’s encouraging words are virtually rendered futile. The disparate efforts that are scattered around varying General Assembly Resolutions are useful insofar they identify that the incorporation of youth interests can be instrumental in peacebuilding but carry no legal authority and recommendations are therefore less likely to be implemented.

2.3. SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

Since 1995, youth have been mentioned in a limited number of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) under country-specific or regional resolutions. The Security Council, as opposed to General Assembly, is the only UN body that can act on behalf of all Member States. As stipulated in Article 25 of the United Nations Charter, all members are expected to “carry out and accept the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter.” Therefore, it is crucial that the Security Council acts upon youth needs and youth protection and capacity as peacebuilders. Only in this manner, real commitment from the international community can be safeguarded.

2.3.1. COTE D’IVOIRE

UNSCR 1528 on Côte d’Ivoire marks the first resolution to mention youth in the twenty-first century, calling for national authorities to curb violent youth groups due to the country’s civil unrest in 2004.

2.3.2. SIERRA LEONE

From 2005 onwards, Sierra Leone gained regular attention from the Security Council. UNSCR 1620 tasked the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) to develop initiatives for the protection and well-being of youth. UNSCR 1886, 1941, 2005, 2065, and 2097 all called for addressing and improving the issue of youth unemployment. Moreover, UNSCR 2005, 2065 and 2097 welcomed the Government’s efforts in developing measures to prevent youth from engaging in political violence, in addition, improve youth engagement and empowerment, thereby reducing socio-economic inequalities.

2.3.3. HAITI

In Haiti, UNSCR 1702 and 2070 tasked the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) office to coordinate with the Government of Haiti to provide employment opportunities for at-risk youth and to continue its Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration (DDR) programs to reduce violence in communities. At the political level, UNSCR 1780 commended the achievements made by the Government of Haiti in the number of women and youth engaged in the political process. This UNSCR thus first emphasized the role of youth as change makers instead of solely focusing on youth as either victims or perpetrators.

2.3.4. TIMOR-LESTE

From 2006-2012, the Security Council emphasized peacebuilding activities in Timor-Leste through a variety of cross-cutting issues for youth such as employment, political processes and empowerment for long-term stability in UNSCR 1867, 1912, 1969 and 2037. UNSCR

49. A/RES/65/312 (2011)
52. S/RES/1620 (2005)
60. S/RES/1780 (2007)
1704 tasked UN agencies that focused on youth to mainstream gender equality programs to support the development of a national strategy. Moreover, taking into account the crisis in Timor-Leste, UNSCR 1704 linked high urban unemployment for youth as a factor to the crisis.

2.3.5. BURUNDI

In Burundi, the Security Council acknowledged youth groups as catalysts to the ongoing conflict in UNSCR 1902 and 2090. During the conflict, the Security Council tasked the UN Burundi Office to continue its support on socio-economic reintegration and development of youth in conflict-affected populations under UNSCR 2090.

2.3.6. SOUTH SUDAN

According to UNSCR 1996, 2057, and 2109, the Security Council linked youth and the importance of tackling unemployment in South Sudan as a means to revitalize the country’s economy. It should come as no surprise that for the past several decades, youth has been an issue that is largely associated to development, employment, reintegration into society or the need for protection of vulnerable youth groups, especially refugees and internally displaced persons, as it is stated in UNSCR 2061.

2.3.7. YEMEN

In UNSCR 2051, the Security Council emphasized the importance of including youth groups in actively participating constructively in Yemen’s National Dialogue Conference. Furthermore, UNSCR 2095 ‘emphasized the importance of promoting the equal and full participation’ of youth in the ‘political process in the post-conflict phase.’

2.3.8. LIBYA

Finally, also in UNSCR 2095, the importance of promoting full and equal participation in Libya was emphasized. In this context, the importance of the participation of youth in the political process in the post-conflict phase was mentioned explicitly.

2.4. ANALYSIS OF UN RESOLUTIONS PERTAINING TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN PEACEBUILDING

In short, the content of the UN resolutions indicates that the sentiments of Ambassador Rice and Secretary General Ban-Ki Moon as mentioned in the introduction to this report are translated relatively well in UN documents. Both the General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions discussed recognize the importance of youth engagement and empowerment in post-conflict contexts. Perhaps most importantly, they recognize the direct link between post-conflict youth exclusion and global unrest and insecurity. On the basis of this argument, actively safeguarding meaningful youth involvement in issues of peace and security is a logical if not indispensable action to undertake. However, we argue that, such sentiments are not translated clearly enough in UN documents. Even though a thorough literature review of UN documents as represented above provides a compelling argument for meaningful youth participation in issues of peace and security, separate resolutions have failed to provide comprehensive arguments with clear visions for action. An accumulation of all aforementioned UN documents already acknowledges the (a) unique position of youth, as main victims of conflict and as perpetrators, but mainly as peacemakers; (b) the potential of youth to facilitate the process of peacebuilding acting as important actors of change; (c) the devastating consequences that may arise if youth remains to be excluded from peace processes; and finally, (d) the imperative need to provide youth with the opportunities and

64. S/RES/2037 (2012)
68. S/RES/2027 (2011)
70. S/RES/2057 (2012)
73. S/RES/2051 (2012)
right tools for crisis prevention and peacebuilding.

When analyzing the country-specific Security Council Resolutions discussed above, one should note the development in the thinking of the Security Council on the matter of youth, peace and security. In the first resolution analyzed on Côte d’Ivoire youth are seen as instigators of violence – as a problem. In the resolutions on Sierra Leone, the problem element remains, but the resolutions also talk about the need for protecting young people, and take an economic perspective, very common in the UN system, when it comes to Youth, Peace and Security- they focus on the links between youth unemployment and conflict. In later resolutions on Sierra Leone, the need for youth participation is recognized.

The analyzed resolutions on Haiti take on the economic perspective, similar to the ones on Sierra Leone. One Haiti-focused resolution recognizes the importance of youth participation in the peace process. In the resolutions on Timor-Leste and South Sudan the strong economic focus remains, whereas the resolutions on Burundi focus on youth as trouble-makers. Interestingly, in the resolutions on Libya and Yemen from 2012 and 2013, the participation of youth is seen as crucial, mentioning explicitly the importance of promoting the equal and full participation of youth in the political process in the post-conflict phase.

From our analysis we see a development of the language on Youth, Peace and Security: from young people as instigators of violence, to an economic perspective in which youth unemployment is a major threat to peace, to finally arriving at the need for youth participation in peace processes in order to ensure sustainable peace. The analyzed resolutions are all country-specific. We argue that the problems recognized in the in them by the Security Council, and especially the links between youth unemployment and conflict and the need for youth participation in issues of peace and security, are globally cross-cutting issues, especially relevant in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. Based on this, we see a definite space for a thematic resolution on Youth, Peace and Security.

Notwithstanding the fact that the General Assembly in the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) has made some hopeful references to youth, labeling them as agents of development, social inclusion, tolerance and peace, the Security Council has made but cursory references to youth. Despite the progressive language of WPAY in terms of youth and peacebuilding, it is crucial to note that the implementation of WPAY is facing many challenges74, and thus, that the agreed language in this program remains wordson a paper with minimal change on the ground in the lives of young people.

Bearing in mind the political weight of a Security Council Resolution, and the – at least in part – success of thematic Security Council Resolutions such as 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, recognizing that youth involvement in peacebuilding is a matter of global peace and security, and noting the development of agreed language in the Security Council on issues of Youth, Peace and Security, we argue that a thematic Security Council resolution that is comprehensive and action oriented on this matter is a logical and important development that can support young peacebuilders globally to contribute to building sustainable peace.

Chapter 3

Examples of Youth Building Peace

3.1. The Relevance of Youth Participation in Issues of Peace and Security

Participation is a fundamental right. It is one of the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that has been reiterated in many other conventions and declarations. Through active participation, young people are empowered to play a vital role in their own development as well as in that of their communities, helping them to learn vital life-skills, develop knowledge on human rights and citizenship and to promote positive civic action. Indeed, the core purpose of youth's participation is to empower them as individuals and members of civil society (i.e. as social actors, partners and leaders) to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities. It gives them the opportunity to influence the actions and decisions that affect their lives. Participation in decision-making is a key priority area of the UN agenda on youth. In 1995, on the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, the United Nations strengthened its commitment to young people by adopting the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY), to more effectively address their problems and increase opportunities for participation in society.

The emphasis of the international community on youth participation has been particularly strong in post-conflict settings. Peace processes appear as a window of opportunity for promoting a higher degree of participation of youth. A first and basic reason for this is that young people acquire a status through conflict, and if they are defrauded of this status when peace returns and see no opportunities to engage in peacebuilding

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: You have the right to hold and express your opinion.
in a positive and effective way, they may turn into “spoilers”. In the long run, the marginalization of youth during a peace process can create an enabling environment for spoilers such as criminal gangs and non-state actors to provide incentives for youth to join their cause, so that they feel they are appreciated and valued, despite it being in the wrong way\textsuperscript{75}. The need to avoid turning young people into spoilers is not the only reason to involve them in political processes. Young people can play the role of bridge-builders and a youth capacity for peace during post-conflict situations does exist, as is evidenced in Kosovo, Palestine, Northern Ireland and South Africa. Youth inclusion in peacebuilding does not only cause for the reduction or absence of violence against youth and involuntary youth recruitment, it gives a tremendous boost to the peacebuilding process. As mentioned in previous chapters, ensuring the active, systemic, and meaningful participation of youth in peacebuilding is a demographic and democratic imperative. In addition, we argue that youth participation in peacebuilding is crucial in order to ensure sustainable peace.

3.3. EXAMPLES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN PEACE AND SECURITY

The United Network of Young Peacebuilders is a global network of 60 youth peacebuilding organizations based in 35 countries around the world. Our member organizations are working on a grass-root level to strengthen youth participation in peacebuilding on a daily basis. We are convinced that initiatives like these are crucial – both from a youth rights based perspective, and in order to build sustainable peace. Our demand for a Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security springs from our member organizations – as they are convinced that such a resolution could directly support them in their grassroot work. A resolution would give recognition to the work by young peacebuilders already done, it would ensure support to young peacebuilders and it would put pressure on governments and inter-governmental organizations to meaningfully involve young

Kenya Youth Foundation

Background

For its “Amani Mtaani” project, the Kenya Youth Foundation is currently active in Kibera, one of the hot spots of violence during the 2007/2008 post-election violence, and having a poor representation of women and youth in formal peacebuilding and governance structures.

Youth Involvement

With the mission to amplify the voices & representation of youth and women in peacebuilding processes and enhance ethnic tolerance, the Kenya Youth Foundation is organizing several activities. Amongst others, they have launched two live radio talk shows with a special focus on women and youth participation in local governance issues. Key on the agenda is how the devolved government is taking into account the interest of youth, women and children in the planning and budgetary process. At the tail end, listeners were able to ask questions with regard to the devolved government as well as getting to understand the role and functions of Nairobi County Elected Leaders.

Impact

The project was set to target 100 women and 350 youths, from Mashimoni Gatwekera and Lainisaba villages. The enhanced role of youth & women would put the political and non-political leaders to be accountable to the people as women & youth form the biggest constituency in Kibera.
Coalition on Rights and Responsibilities of Youth

Background

Against the backdrop of a rise of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and rising religious extremism, the situation in Pakistan – especially for women – had deteriorated. An intervention by Pakistan appeared inevitable but to no avail, as to retaliate, the Taliban has not ceased their hostilities. In fact, they have recruited young people and have killed innocent women and children.

Youth Involvement

CRY aims to develop a sense of responsibility among youth and adolescents. By means of capacity building, CRY aims to empower adolescents and young people to be agents of change and to counteract religious extremism and to help them to prevent joining the militant organisations. Their objectives are to strengthen the leadership capacity of young people, especially young women, thus enabling them to work as agents of change and development, to equip them with necessary skills for social, cultural, economic, and political empowerment, and to promote the values of non-violence, tolerance and humanism for a peaceful society. Peer education is used as a tool to prevent military enrolment. CRY also promotes supportive and trusting relationships among young people from different ethnic backgrounds for creating harmony and peace in the society.

Impact

Their Peace Education program aims to de-radicalize youth and reaches some 500 young people.
Programme Dencadrement Et De Reinsertion Des Jeunes Ex Combattants Et En Difficulté

Background

The Democratic Republic of Congo has seen a persistent instability and insecurity. Perex-CV works on the reconciliation of young ex-combatants and other youths from different tribes and ethnicities.

Youth Involvement

Since poverty is among the leading causes of the absence of peace, Perex-CV has taken a different approach to support the vulnerable youth. It entails capacity building of ex-combatants and their family members who engage in small income-generating activities so that they will be able to proceed to move forward on the socio-economic ladder. These young people do not have access to micro credit that can help them in their socio economic activities, which is why Perex-CV has initiated a novel approach and has signed a collaboration agreement with an agency of microfinance who agreed to provide micro credits to young ex-combatants, youth and vulnerable adults who are supervised by Perex-CV.

Impact

There are already 120 members, and thus it seems that Perex-CV has successfully embarked upon the road to sustainable socio-economic re-integration.
Beyond Skin

Background

After decades of violent conflict between Catholics and Protestants, Northern Ireland has become far more peaceful. Regrettably, physical peace walls and tensions between communities still exist. As Northern Ireland is now recognised as a more peaceful place, creative, diverse place within a beautiful landscape; the country has attracted many people from around the world, which although very positive it has presented various local racism issues adding to the local sectarian element.

Established in 2004, Beyond Skin is an organisation which uses Music, Arts and Media to assist in the building and development of cultural relations in Northern Ireland, with the overall aim of addressing issues of racism and sectarianism. Their aim to promote the positive attributes of a multicultural society, and hope that we can encourage racial harmony and the exchange of cultural ideas and relations through the medium of the arts. They believe that promoting multicultural arts will benefit the inhabitants of Northern Ireland and ultimately contribute to maintaining a peaceful society.

Youth Involvement

The main targets of Beyond Skin’s activities are young people in the community- 80% of what they do directly benefits young people. Beyond Skin actively facilitates a range of global education workshops, reaching young people in schools and other environments. They use a combination of local and global partnerships that allow us to use radio as a tool for improving cultural relations and education. Young people themselves create radio programmes on issues that are of interest to them, and these programmes are then broadcast online.

Impact

On average, Beyond Skin delivers 170 events/workshops annually, with a target weekly reach of 180 people. These workshops continue to allow a safe environment for young people to learn about other cultures and breakdown stereotypes and misconceptions, aided by artistic elements of music and radio recordings. We believe that improved cultural relations and understanding are essential to creating a stable and peaceful society. A key element of our project delivery is to give ownership of the projects to those involved. The approach is one where everyone has an input, and there is a positive and proactive target-audience focus, where the motto is, “Don’t organize something you wouldn’t go to yourself’. In this sense, those who benefit from the programmes are those same people and groups who are brought into the process and inform its development along the way.
Nepal Peace Support Project

Background

Nearly four years after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord marked a ceasefire between the government of Nepal and the Maoists, many marginalized groups still remain on the fringes of the decision-making process. Across political, ethnic, and social divides, Nepal’s young people are finding it particularly difficult to make their priorities matter in the halls of power.

Youth Involvement

The Asia Foundation – under its Nepal Peace Support Project – organized from January to March 2010 a series of small town hall meetings in 45 municipalities to bring together young people to engage in constitutional dialogues. The meetings were designed to strengthen the voice and role of youth in the Constituent Assembly process, particularly among youth from smaller towns in Nepal where educational and employment opportunities are few, and where young people have less exposure to the political process.

Impact

In one meeting in Surkhet, in midwestern Nepal, participants voiced a strong preference for rethinking the stance on state restructuring, and questioned whether Nepal really needs a federal model with the promulgation of the new constitution.

One of the participants stressed that if federalism is introduced to curb the centralization prevalent in the unitary system, but the same ineffective governance mechanism currently in place continues, the chance that federalism will be able to help decentralize the system is slim.

The provision of compulsory military conscription in the draft constitution presented by the Committee on Preservation of National Interest was deemed infeasible and rejected by a majority of participants. These perceptions highlight the sharp disconnect between the voices and perceptions of the youth and the current views dominating the CA discussions.
PeaceLinks - Sierra Leone

Background

While Sierra Leone has achieved an end to its ten-year civil war, the peace is still fragile. Thousands of ex-combatants need to be reintegrated into communities. Families and communities need to recover from the trauma they have suffered in the conflict. Thousands of refugees are flooding back to Sierra Leone, seeking to return to their homes and families and restart their lives. The root causes of the war remain to be addressed.

Youth Involvement

PeaceLinks is a non-governmental youth-led organization founded in 1990 in Sierra Leone with the aim of empowering marginalized young people to step forward for positive change in their communities. Their programs reach approximately 500 young people per year. PeaceLinks works to ensure that young people, especially those in extremely difficult circumstances, acquire the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to make positive contributions to society. Young people are engaged through music and dance workshops, peace education, sports, awareness raising campaigns, vocational skills training, youth leadership training seminars and camps.

Impact

PeaceLinks has used music and dance drama as a vehicle of expression and as a means of healing the wounds of war. Their songs’ lyrics and messages challenge a culture of violence and propose a culture of peace.

The organization allows youth participants to reach out to marginalized young people and ex-child soldiers using arts and sports as tool. Through music young people can express not only their pain but also their hope for a better future.

Songs and group activities help reconcile communities, built trust among participants and boost the personal self-esteem of young people to assist in the reconstruction process.
Conclusion

Altogether, this report has reasoned from the belief that youth are, above all, agents of development, social inclusion, tolerance and peace. Simultaneously, however, it wants to recognize that restrictive conditions to youth involvement such as exclusion from mainstream decision making processes, deliberate political and social marginalization and an overall lack of capacity restrain youth from participating meaningfully in issues of peace and security. As a matter of fact, these restraining circumstances are more likely to contribute to unrest and insecurity. Limited economic, social and political opportunities are strong contributing factors driving youth to become involved in conflicts. It is because of this reason that we want to plead for safeguarding the participation of youth in issues of peace and security. Exclusion is one of the most important factors that trigger a relapse into conflict, and without meaningful involvement of youth in issues of peace and security, sustainable peace cannot be achieved.

Both the General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions analyzed in this report recognize the importance of youth engagement and empowerment in post-conflict contexts. Perhaps most importantly, they recognize the direct link between post-conflict youth exclusion and global unrest and insecurity. On the basis of this argument, actively safeguarding meaningful youth involvement in issues of peace and security is a logical if not indispensable action to undertake. From our analysis we see a development of the language on Youth, Peace and Security: from young people as instigators of violence, to an economic perspective in which youth unemployment is a major threat to peace, to finally arriving at the need for youth participation in peace processes in order to ensure sustainable peace. The analyzed resolutions are all country-specific. We argue that the problems recognized in the in them by the Security Council, and especially the links between youth unemployment and conflict and the need for youth participation in issues of peace and security, are globally cross-cutting issues, especially relevant in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. Based on this, we
see a definite space for a thematic resolution on Youth, Peace and Security.

Bearing in mind the political weight of a Security Council Resolution, and the – at least in part – success of thematic Security Council Resolutions such as 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, recognizing that youth involvement in peace and security is a matter of global peace and security, and noting the development of agreed language in the Security Council on issues of Youth, Peace and Security, we argue that a thematic Security Council resolution that is comprehensive and action oriented on this matter is a logical and important development that can support young peacebuilders globally to contribute to building sustainable peace.

Fundamentally, this report has articulated the conviction that equipping youth with the right tools and opportunities to actively participate in issues of peace and security and recognizing their differential needs in a Security Council resolution will (a) give recognition to the work by young peacebuilders already done, (b) ensure support to young peacebuilders local initiatives (c) put pressure on governments and inter-governmental organizations to meaningfully involve young people in issues of peace and security and (d) in the long-term contribute to help build sustainable peace.

We welcome the efforts that have been made to advance youth involvement in issues of peace and security, in particular referring to the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions that have touched upon this issue. However, we call for a more holistic and politically weighty document – a thematic Security Council Resolution - that will require a shift of thinking from distraction to interaction, from passive partnership to participatory partnership, from seeing youth as sources of conflict to seeing them as resources for peace and development, and from asking them to wait to asking them to lead the way.
There is a lack of consensus on the definition of youth in current literature. Many key stakeholders in the international community have adopted age-based parameters to define the concept, but even this singular approach lacks uniformity. Some of the international bodies define youth within the following age ranges:

- The United Nations: 15–24
- The World Bank: 16 and 30
- The African Charter: 15-35
- European Commission: 15-29
- The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007-2015: 15-29
- South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation: 20-35
- Asia Pacific Youth Charter 2011-2015: 15-24

A more holistic definition of youth includes factors such as life experiences, cultural background, education, gender, social group and economic status, and location. Understanding the dynamics of youth from a context-specific perspective is essential to addressing the problem. The need to recognize the necessity to go beyond the age dimension when defining youth and consequently incorporates indicators such as cultural context, political, economic, and social factors. By creating a holistic identification of youth, attempts to include all young people in a potentially unifying development processes that is focused on inter-generational peacebuilding.

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